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The First Century of Virginia Tobacco.

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THE FIRST CENTURY OF VIRGINIA TOBACCO

A THESIS PRESENTED AT THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY AS A PARTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

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Tobacco, as it is known today, was discovered by Christopher Columbus on his first voyage to the New World. In November 1492 a group of sailors, sent ashore by Columbus to explore the island of Cuba, saw natives smoking. Upon closer acquaitance, the natives showed them leaves of a certain herb rolled in Indian corn shucks; this they burned, inhaling the smoke.[1] Here we have the forerunner of the modern cigar and cigaret.

This was no doubt a novelty to the Spaniards, but it can be safely said that smoking was an ancient and universal custom which had existed among the tribes of North and Central America and the adjacent islands long before Columbus, Sir Walter Raleigh, or John Rolfe ever visited the New World.

There is no record to prove the assertion on the part of some writers that tobacco is native to other parts of the world. On the other hand, everything seems to point to the conclusion that the tobacco plant belonged to the American Indians inhabiting those regions adjacent to the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and the temperate portion of what is now the eastern part of the United States. Certain it is that these people were the first to come down to us as cultivators and users of tobacco.

The plant was differently known in different parts of the country; in Virginia the natives called it uppowuc and appoke, but it remained for the Spaniards to furnish the lasting name. They called it tobago, which was the name of the instrument used in smoking. This consisted of a forked reed, the branches of which were placed in the nose for inhaling the smoke. Thus we have our name tobacco.[2]

A number of Indian traditions grew up concerning the origin of tobacco. All of these are similar in that it was common be-

lief that tobacco was a gift from the Great Spirit. Smoking, therefore, was a sacred and religious act.

In the earlier history of tobacco some mention should be made of Sir Walter Raleigh and of Sir Ralph Lane, for it was they who first introduced tobacco into England. Not only did their use of tobacco set a style for smoking in England which afterwards contributed to the prosperity of Virginia, but Raleigh was one of the first white men to attempt the cultivation of the plant.[3]

By the beginning of the seventeenth century the use of tobacco had become popular throughout Europe. Authorities and sovereigns encouraged the habit and its practice was almost universal among the fashionable gentry.

During Queen Elizabeth's reign the tobacco trade had flourished. Her successor, James I, sought to discourage the industry by increasing the duty. He also wrote his famous "Counterblaste on Tobacco" which is one of the most rabid attacks ever made upon tobacco users. It is rather singular that tobacco was to play such an important part in the history of this same monarch's colony in America.

So we see that the colonists who settled at Jamestown in 1607 were not entirely ignorant of tobacco. Many of them were habitual users, who during the first few years were compelled to obtain their supply from the Indians or from England. The majority preferred the latter plan, for the tobacco furnished by the Indians was peculiarly bitter and biting due to the method of curing. The product imported from England had been raised in the regions controlled by the Spaniards and it had been cured and flavored by an improved method.

When the colonists arrived they found the Indians cultivating

small plots of tobacco. Having formed a previous acquaintance with the use of the weed, a number of them naturally wished to begin its cultivation. The importance of raising foodstuffs, however was paramount; so they turned their efforts in this direction. It remained for one of their number, John Rolfe, to become the father of the tobacco industry. This momentous enterprise had its beginning in Rolfe's garden in the year 1612-five years after the settling of Jamestown.[4] Rolfe was in the habit of smoking and this early cultivation of tobacco was most probably for the purpose of gratifying his own personal wants. England had been importing tobacco from the Spanish colonies for more than half a century. Why not interest the mother country in Virginia tobacco? Accordingly, the ship that sailed from Jamestown in 1613 had on board a portion of Rolfe's small crop.[5] The English pronounced this to be of excellent quality. This news spread rapidly throughout Virginia and the people turned feverishly to the new industry which promised some monetary return for their labors. By 1614 Rolfe had produced a product which was proclaimed as the equal of any grown in the Spanish dominions.[6]

Before Governor Dale turned over the reins of government to Deputy Governor Yeardly in 1616 he noted that tobacco was being cultivated at the expense of the essential foodstuffs. He therefore issued an order prohibiting the planting of tobacco until a certain proportion of corn-ground had been prepared and planted for the master and each servant. After his departure for England, however, his law and his example were utterly laid by and forgot; the new governor, Yeardly, suggested that production be commenced on a large scale and he himself lead

the way.[7]

When Samuel Argall arrived in 1617 he found that tobacco had become the all-absorbing topic. Every available space had been pressed into service for its cultivation. Plants were growing in the streets of Jamestown, in the market place, and within the palisades. Worst of all, the fields once used for the cultivation of corn and other foodstuffs had been given over almost entirely to the production of the salable weed.[8] The same year saw the George set sail for England with the first real cargo of Virginia tobacco:[9] a twenty thousand pound forerunner of the millions that were to follow. The English smoking populace had tasted the Virginia product and they had found it good.

In 1618 under Governor Argall improved methods of planting and curing were introduced. Plants were reset in the fields and the leaves were strung on rope in order that the air and heat could circulate more readily. This naturally would improve the Virginia product. These methods were still further advanced under Governor Yeardly two years later. Just at the time when the colony was prepared to offer the largest and best crop of its existence Providence intervened. There was a long period of drought which was terminated by a wind and hail storm that did much damage to both corn and tobacco. The tobacco which was saved ranged in price from three shillings to eighteen pence. Here again we have the second official act in regard to tobacco: Governor Argall issued an edict stating that all goods should be sold at twenty-five percent and tobacco allowed for at three shillings a pound, and not under nor over, on the penalty of three years slavery to the colony.[10]

From this time on, the colony began to extend its boundaries and to conquer the wilderness. The colonists were inspired with new hope and were encouraged to further effort. They quit searching for gold and turned to the more severe labor of clearing new land for their tobacco patches. It was this reformation which probably saved the colony from the fate of its predecessor. Tobacco cultivation was the stimulus for new growth and development.

The Crown and the London Company had expected something more staple than the Indian weed, and they were disappointed at the turn events had taken. So much so, in fact, that they failed for sometime to realize that Virginia was furnishing something which England had been buying from Spain. It was considerably later that they realized the vast commercial possibility held out by an export tobacco trade.

The London Company forgot its disappointment and determined to give its fullest support to the newly created venture. The first cargo of Virginia tobacco had sold for five shillings, three pence a pound-a price which afforded a rich profit to the planters in Virginia and to the stockholders in England.[11] The company officials preferred a prosperous colony with its prosperity based on tobacco trade rather than an impoverished colony which would be a drain on the resources of the company and subsequently of no value to England.

Under the impetus of the demand for Virginia tobacco and the encouragement by the London Company, the exports of tobacco from Virginia grew rapidly. During the seven year period from 1614 to 1621 the amount exported was 142,085 pounds. From

the following statistics, additional information can be gathered as to the increase of amounts of Virginia tobacco received in England.[12]

1619	20,000 pounds
1620	40,000
1621	55,000
1622	60,000
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1626	500,000
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1629	1,560,000
1630	1,500,000
1631	1,300,000

It is needless to add that this importation displaced to a great extent the expensive Spanish tobacco.

Governor Yeardly began his administration in 1619 by encouraging a more diversified crop. The cultivation of tobacco was so neglected in contrast to the previous administrations that he made apologies to the company in England. The House of Burgesses passed laws requiring every man to plant mulberry trees for the culture of silk worms and at the same time the planting of wheat, corn, grape vines and flax was emphasized.

The thoughts of the Virginia planter could not be turned long from the cultivation of tobacco, however. More and more, values were being estimated in pounds of that product. Blacksmiths, coopers, shipwrights and even ministers had their plot of tobacco. Moreover, a sturdier class of the British populace was being drawn to Virginia by prospects of tobacco growing.

These were afterwards to become the backbone of Virginia's leadership in colonial affairs. On the other hand, negro slaves were introduced to perform the labor for the larger plantations; here entered a problem which was later to threaten the very existence of the country.

To tobacco is attributed the Virginia county system of government as opposed to the township system of her northern sisters. Tobacco planting on a large scale required a correspondingly large tract of land. There sprung up the plantation, which has until today, influenced our habits and customs. Women were needed on the plantations, for there were hungry men to feed and medical attention to be rendered. As a result, a cargo of carefully selected women was sent from England in 1620 to take their place in the history of the young colony. Tobacco played an important role here, for after having wooed and won the lady of his choice, the prospective husband had only to pay her passage in pounds of the plant.

From the beginning there had been some effort to fix the price of tobacco sold in the colonies at three shillings a pound for the better grade and one shilling, six pence for the inferior quality.[13] Tobacco bought in the colony at this price could not be sold in England for profit. That being true, the law was not effective. The highest price for which tobacco had ever been sold in England was five shillings, three pence, the price paid for the first of Rolfe's crop. In 1620 the best tobacco was selling for two shillings ten pence, and the inferior grades for two shillings and one shilling, respectively.[15]

From this this we see that ~~a~~ the attempts to fix tobacco prices was unsuccessful. The merchants and traders in the colony exchanged their wares for tobacco at the legal valuations, but they raised their merchandise prices as tobacco fell in value. This commodity had become the standard of value in Virginia and that standard tended comtinually to depreciate. In 1623 the price had dropped to about one shilling and the following year saw the market at a still lower ebb.[16]

A provision adopted by the first assembly provided that the tobacco should not only be cured before it was brought to the magazine, but all that was mean in quality when offered in exchange should be destroyed.[17] This, the first of the general inspection laws, was necessary because so much indifferent tobacco was being raised. Several years after this, provision of the law was further extended by requiring the appointment of sworn men in each settlement to condemn bad tobacco.[18] At the same time it was ruled that only one thousand plants should be permitted to each head, and that the leaves of each plant should not exceed mine in number.

Despite the efforts to place Virginia's product on a higher plane the quality remained poor and the price was correspondingly low. The low price was also partly due to the large quantity of tobacco raised and to the unreasonable requirements of James I, who claimed the right to lay charges on all colonial imports. It appears that his whole policy prior to 1624 was to discourage the production of Virginia tobacco.

One of the first steps taken by James I in this direction was the publishing of his quarto, " A Counterblaste on Tobacco ".

This, as has already been explained, was an attack upon the user in the attempt to halt the spread of the habit in England. As early as 1615 he had granted to two individuals the sole privilege of importing tobacco and of naming persons entitled to sell it.[19] Later, the exclusive right to import tobacco was bestowed upon a body of men who paid the king 16,000 pounds in English currency for the privilege.[20] The project did not prove profitable so the monoply was surrendered at the end of the first year. The monoply was then granted to Abraham Jacob who had been the means of causing great loss to the colonists in 1619. In this year Jacob had been collector of the tobacco import and he had held a large amount of tobacco until it had spoiled. The controversy over this marked the first encounter that the Virginia colony had with the government. In the same year "garbling" began; this was a system of inspection designed to prevent the sale of inferior grades and to prevent smuggling. The crowning blow of James's interference came in 1620 when he issued a proclamation restricting the crop to be exported from Virginia and the Somers Isles to fifty-five thousand pounds.[21] The effect of this can be understood well when it is called to mind that Virginia alone exported 40,000 pounds during the previous year.

The colonists were alarmed thoroughly at the prospect of the curtailed trade. They petitioned the king declaring that tobacco was the only commodity that they could successfully produce which would bring a monetary return, and that if this trade were prohibited, they must either abandon Virginia or perish. The London Company took a hand at this juncture and

made an agreement with the Somers Isles Companies whereby they were to export the full quota of 50,000 pounds to England; Virginia was to ship her crop to Holland.[22] Thus, warehouses were established in Holland and other necessary arrangements were made to receive the shipments. As a result, many pounds of Virginia tobacco found its way to the continental markets. The king and privy council protested vigorously, and a proclamation followed which stated that all Virginia tobacco must first go to England before it could be shipped elsewhere. This move to regain the lost customduty was not successful, since Virginia continued to export her tobacco to Holland. Finally, the company came to terms with James; a contract decidedly favorable to the king was signed. Under the provisions of thiscontract, England would import Virginia and Bermuda tobacco only, with the exception that for two years 60,000 pounds of Spanish tobacco were to be admitted annually; the king was to have absolute property right in one third of the quantity imported; a duty of six pence was imposed on the remaining two thirds; and James was to prohibit the cultivation of tobacco in England and Ireland.[23] The excessive terms of the second provision killed successfully the little hope that remained to the colonists. Then came the dreadful massacre which occupied every thought of those who were left alive. The crop of the previous year was exported to the amount of 60,000 pounds but no attempts were made to prepare a crop for the next year's trade. In consequence, there is no record of any exportation for the year 1623.

The following year saw the colony well on the road of com-

plete recovery. The people had learned their lesson; there was no further communication with the Indians and therefore no reliance on them for food. Each head of a family was compelled to plant grain sufficient to assure bread for those dependent upon him. For the first time since its introduction, tobacco cultivation was subordinate to the production of other commodities.

In 1624 the king, upon investigation, decided to dissolve the London Company. He appointed a commission to assume charge of the affairs of the colony. One of the first acts of the commission was an attempt to devise a method by which the volume of tobacco revenue from Virginia would not be diminished and at the same time have the plan fall not too heavily upon the planters. Several plans were suggested but none was accepted in its entirety. On September 29 of the same year James issued a proclamation completely excluding Spanish tobacco and again forbidding its growth in England and Ireland. Nevertheless, it was arranged that all colonial tobacco had to be brought to London where it was to be marked and sealed; the sale of unmarked tobacco was prohibited. The contract as announced later provided for the delivery to the purchasers of the monopoly of 200,000 pounds of tobacco annually for ~~tow~~ two years, and 250,000 pounds annually for five years. If a larger amount was delivered it was to be re-exported to Turkey. For the first ~~tow~~ two years the price was to be two shillings, four pence for the best quality and one shilling, four pence for the worst; for the next five years the price was to be three shillings and two shillings, respectively. The tobacco was to be delivered in rolls and it did not have to be paid for at once: the monopoly was to enjoy a long period

of credit. No duty was to be collected but the monopoly was to pay the king 15,000 pounds sterling the first two years and 20,000 for the last five years. Of this amount, 5,000 pounds was to be devoted to the defence of the colonies.[24]

Of course the grievances to this arrangement were manifold: It was pointed out that the colony must export as much as 400,000 pounds annually in order that all her people be provided for; that it was unjust to compel all tobacco to pass through England, as the additional expenses cut the margin of profit to a negligible amount; that the monopoly in London could grade the tobacco to suit their own advantages; that the long credit could not be borne, and that the shipment of tobacco in rolls was not necessary and only added to the growers' expense. In consequence of this bitter opposition and because of the death of James I, this contract was never fully carried into effect.

Within a few weeks of his accession, Charles I issued a proclamation forbidding the importation and sale of any but Virginia and Bermuda tobacco.[25] A few months later he issued another proclamation enjoining strict obedience to the first regulation and asserting that he intended to create a government monopoly of tobacco. Charles' intentions were undoubtedly good; however, due to Parliament's refusal to grant adequate supplies to the Crown, he was forced to look for means of obtaining revenue. Consequently, there was soon a reversion to the old scheme of a tobacco monopoly. The commission of this monopoly were to seize all tobacco imported contrary to the previous proclamation; to buy and import annually for the government 50,000 pounds of

Spanish tobacco; and to buy and contract for the colonial crops of tobacco, and to sell them for the Crown's benefit. In order to enforce this plan Charles issued another proclamation in February confirming the existing regulations which forbade the importation of foreign tobacco and the cultivation of tobacco in England and Ireland. This was followed by a set of instructions to the planters which were for the purpose of moderating the volume of tobacco and of improving its quality. The plants were to be set four feet apart and the leaves of each plant were to be limited to six in number. The masters of a family were to produce only two hundred pounds and each servant only one hundred and twenty-five pounds. The tobacco was to be shipped in rolls; the stalks were to be excluded; the quality was to be declared by viewers sworn to a strict performance of their duty; and all tobacco of a very poor grade was to be thrown out. Appointing a commission and giving them instructions was easy; arranging an acceptable contract with the colonies was another matter. A price agreement could not be arrived at. The Virginia assembly offered to sell all Virginia tobacco at three shillings, six pence a pound in the colony or at fourteen shillings in England provided 500,000 pounds were taken yearly. These prices were so absurdly high that Charles barely considered them.

The bitter political struggle between Charles and Parliament forced the tobacco question into the background, but Charles never gave up his idea of a monopoly. By 1630 so much tobacco was being produced in England that the governor of Virginia made a protest to Parliament. This caused Charles to issue another

proclamation which again prohibited the cultivation of tobacco in England and Ireland. In the meantime, the planters had been carrying on a system of bartering with the English merchants. In 1632 Governor Harvey wrote the Virginia Commissioners that the merchants trading in the colony demanded such high prices for their wares that the colony's tobacco brought very slender returns. The price of tobacco had reached a new low level, the best quality bringing not more than one shilling per pound, and the worst not more than one penny. Harvey's letter was designed to raise this price. It bore no fruit until 1634, however; in that year Charles issued another decree prohibiting the growth of tobacco in England and Ireland, and appointing a commission to investigate the situation with the purpose in view of relieving the economic distress in Virginia. A crown agent sent to Virginia to contract for the crop died en route. The governor and the Assembly attempted to carry through the plan, but the disputes which followed were partly responsible for the governor's deposition by the Council. That body especially opposed the provisions of the proposed contract which were designed to curtail the production of tobacco with the idea in mind of diverting the colonists' energies to the cultivation of more staple commodities.

The king, however, did not give up his ideas concerning a monopoly and the curtailing of the production. In 1636 he sold the monopoly to Lord Goring for 10,000 pounds sterling the first year and 20,000 yearly thereafter. At the same time he warned the colony against overproduction. There were some in the colony

who thought the king's plans practicable but they were in the minority. The majority objected strenously to any agreement that would restrict the acreage, and they insisted that a minimun of twelve pence perpound be made the legal price. Lord Garing offered to purchase yearly 1,600,000 pounds at six pence per pound in the colony or eight pence per pound in England. This appeared entirely reasonable since the maximun price paid during the preceding eleven years had been two pence per pound. Despite this advance in price, the contract was not accepted and the dispute continued. This was probably the last attempt of Charles I to promote a contract controlling Virginia tobacco. The next five years were reserved almost exclusively to his struggle with Parliament.

Throughout the reigns of James I and Charles I especially,(and in fact, from the time tobacco became an important topic) varied edicts, proclamations and laws had been announced which sought to promote the quality of the product. The first statutory regulation looking to this end was adopted at the meeting of the first assembly in 1619. This law provided that all tobacco brought to the cape merchant to be exchanged for goods should be examined by four inspectors; all leaves discovered to be of worse quality than those appraised at eighteen pence per pound- which was the most inferior grade accepted for barter- were to be burnt on the spot.[26] This provision was enforced only during the current year. In 1621 the Virginia Company urged the authorities in the colony to see that all base and rotten tobacco was burned and that none but the very good be cured.[27]

Also, there were restrictions placed upon the number of plants to be set by one person and the number of leaves to be allowed to the stalk. These restrictions were but poorly observed, however, and for nine years no constructive plan was followed. In 1630 the General Assembly, in order to prevent bad tobacco from being exported, provided that the head of each plantation should call in two or three men to help inspect tobacco which had been paid him for debt; if this leaf were found tobe of mean quality it was to be burnt and the person who made payment was to be barred from further planting until the General Assembly removed the disability.[28] Probably one of the most effective acts tending to eliminate the poorer grades followed in 1632-33. This act provided that five warehouses were to be erected severally at James City, Shirley Hundred, Denbigh, Southampton river ~~&~~ in Elizabeth City, and at Kiskyoke. All tobacco produced was to bedelivered by the planters before the first of December of each year; here it was to be inspected once a week by men acting under oath. The tobacco judged mean was to be burnt, and that judged good was to be stored away only to be withdrawn when exported from the colony. Planters were allowed to pay debts at the warehouses in the presence of the keeper.[29] Later the number of warehouses was increased to seven.

These efforts to curtail the crop and increase the quality were in vain. In a few years the price was so low that the planters hardly gained a bare subsistence. A most stringent law was at once enacted.[30] All of the mean product and one half of the good were to be destroyed in order that the volume

of the crop be reduced to 1,500,000 pounds. It was provided further that 270 pounds be the maximun amount cultivated per head; that debts were to be satisfied in tobacco at three pence per pound; and that the weight of a hogshead should approximate 500 pounds net. Due to the provisions of this law and to the stress of low prices, the colonists turned their attention to an increasing production of other commodities. Silk culture occupied the thoughts and efforts of some , while others transferred their energies to the cultivation of flax, hemp, cotton, corn, and grapes. It was found that new land would have to be cleared for these products, however, as successive tobacco crops had exhausted the lots under cultivation.[31]

The tobacco cured in 1640 was not to be sold under twelve pence per pound, and the crop made in 1641 was to bring not under two shillings per pound.[32] This was only another useless trial on the part of the General Assembly to fix the price of tobacco, a thing which they had tried to do from the first. Prices during the forties continued to fluctuate and in 1649 the small sum of three pence per pound was the market value.[33] Nor was there any relief in sight, for only a year later Parliament passed an ordinance depriving Virginia of all independent right to sell her commodities in the markets of any country whatever unless it did so with the special permission of the Council of State.[34] A year later there followed the first of the famous Navigation Acts which made it compulsory that goods shipped to England be carried in English owned ships. Thereupon, the colonists indulged in an orgy of smuggling

negotiations with the Dutch.

During the years 1650-1660 the Assembly passed a number of laws looking towards the betterment of the product, and regulating the fees of officers, ministers, and other public servants which were paid in terms of tobacco. In 1643 a partial list of minister's fees had been determined by law which provided the following:[35]

For solemnization of matrimony without a lycence	40 pounds
If with a lycence	100 pounds
For buriálls	10 pounds
For churching	10 pounds

Thesecond Navigation Act included tobacco in the number of those commodities which were to be imported only into England or English dominions. For several years after the passage of this act its provisions were evaded. Tobacco was shipped to New England and from there to Holland, and occasionally it was forwarded from Virginia directly to the Low Countries.[36] The Crown tried to suppress these violations of the Act by issuing rigid instructions to Governor Berkeley. The instructions provided that he send to England a full account of all tobacco exported from Virginia including the names of the vessels upon which it was loaded, the names of the ship masters, and their destination.[37] A few years later a small duty, one penny a pound, was imposed on all tobacco imported from colony to colony, and tobacco so handled could not be reshipped to any foreign country; finally, if reshipment was made to any other English colony an additional tax of one penny per pound was to

be paid.[38] Thus the market of Virginia's only salable product was so restricted that prices were affected seriously. In 1662 the price in Virginia fell from twelve shillings per hundred weight to ten shillings per hundred.[39] Competition in tobacco trade from Maryland, North Carolina, and New York was partly responsible for the drop in prices.

In order to raise revenue for the payment of public officials a two shilling duty on each hogshead of tobacco exported was revived in 1662. This duty was to be paid in coin, bills of exchange, or in goods valued at an advance of thirty per cent upon the original cost.[40] Special laws were passed for the collection of this duty to prevent the loss of revenue resulting from violation. No tobacco was to be delivered to the purchaser until the district collector had given his certificate that the duty had been paid.[41] The margin of profit to the planter was so small that a petition was sent to the king asking him to command a total cessation of tobacco culture in Virginia and Maryland during the year 1663. This petition was rejected and the people were warned not to present a similar document again; this marked a decided change in the policy of the Crown.[42] A short time afterwards Virginia approached Maryland in an effort to lessen the quantity of tobacco produced; Maryland refused to cooperate and Virginia rescinded all restrictions that she had placed upon the output.[43] As a result of this action, a crop out of proportion to all demand was produced. The market became so demoralized that Virginia, Maryland, and North

Carolina agreed that planting for the year February 1, 1666 to February 1, 1667 should be prohibited.[44] This plan was carried partly into execution amd for the first time in years there was no overproduction of the plant in Virginia. The average crop of the individual ~~and~~ did not exceed 1200 pounds, and since the price was about half a penny the pound, it is clearly understood that the planters were in destitute circumstances.[45] Practically all of the crop of 1667 was destroyed by one of the worst storms ever experienced in the section of the country. Only one third,at the most,of the expected harvest was saved. It is estimated that the colony as a whole produced only 10,000 hogsheads;on every hand there was actual need for the bare necessities of life. In this condition the people were open to any suggestion, and the propaganda favoring diversification of crops fell on fertile soil. For the next few years tobacco prices continued low but the people had prepared themselves for just such a contingency. Although money was anything other than plentiful, there was no want for food. In 1682 the price had not risen above ten shillings per hundred weight; however, a small crop was raised and the price advanced slightly. The next season a much larger crop was marketed at the advanced price, and 1684 found the colony again on the road to contentment. The following few years brought fairly large crops of good quality which sold for approximately fifteen shillings per hundred weight. A fair profit was realized and the colony became peaceful and happy by 1687.

A year previous to this, an act of the General Assembly

required that hogsheads be branded with the weight contained and with the initials of the owner. In 1695 the size of hogsheads was fixed at forty-eight inches in length and thirty inches in diameter.[46] This facilitated the storing in warehouses and the placement in the holds of vessels.

A duty of one shilling, three pence per ton was placed on Virginia tobacco to maintain the cost of postal service in the colony. This duty was obnoxious and upon the objection of Virginia the tax, along with the duty of two shillings per hogshead which had been in force for sometime, was remitted to the tobacco owners.[47]

The Assembly passed an act in 1705 aimed at the smuggling practive along the coasts of the colonies. This act placed custom officials and searchers at vantage points along the rivers and bays to prevent the illegal shipment of tobacco. It was not successful in breaking it up entirely, however, for in 1723 we find the president and masters of William and Mary complaining to the king that they were not receiving the income that they should receive under the decree of 1692. This decree, by King William and Queen Mary, provided that the college should receive the revenue collected from a duty of one pence per pound on all tobacco exported from Virginia and Maryland to other colonies.[48]

From Virginia and Maryland during the period 1699-1709 the average annual export of tobacco was 28, 858,666. Of this amount England consumed 11,260,659 pounds and the remainder was reshipped to Continental Europe.[49] As a result of overpro-

duction, the price continued low, and the lot of the planter remained practically a break-even proposition. This unfortunate state of affairs cannot be blamed totally upon the British colonial system: a goodly portion of the responsibility rests with the planters themselves. Overproduction, the quality of the product, and the production of tobacco to the exclusion of other necessary commodities must take their share of the odium.

One last citation will suffice to show just how the tobacco situation had changed. In October 1712, almost exactly one hundred years after Rolfe tended a few plants in his garden at Jamestown, an act[50] was passed providing that a warehouse be established in each county in the colony. The exportation had increased from a few pounds of Rolfe's crop in 1613 to 18,157,000 pounds in 1688 and 18,295,000 pounds in 1704,[51] and the price had fallen from five shillings, three pence to two pence per pound.

Throughout the following century and on into the next, the struggle against overproduction and unfavorable marketing conditions occupied the thoughts of the planters and buyers alike, and today the same kind of bugbears present practically an unbroken front to those who have attempted to solve the problem.

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