

"When, from the mid-nineteenth century on, farmers of the hillier land turned to row-crop, cotton-staple agriculture, erosion became epidemic... Stanley W. Trimble's careful study of erosion in the Southern Piedmont from Virginia to Alabama... points toward an increasing incidence of soil loss that reached its peak during the two generations following the Civil War. "The antebellum period," Albert Cowdry adds, "saw the transition from very low natural levels of erosion to the very high ones of the Cotton Kingdom which would eventually strip the region of an estimated six cubic miles of top-soil." The patterns of heaviest erosion occurred where Piedmont farmers were entangled in one-crop agriculture and where tenants slipped into an increasing dependency. The New South era would see thousands of these distressed farmers and their children move into the region's cotton-mill villages." *Tullos. 1989. Habits of Industry: White Culture and the Transformation of the Carolina Piedmont. p. 80*

"During the 1920s, [North Carolina] farmers produced more than buyers needed of [cotton and tobacco], creating a glut on the market. As a result, tobacco and cotton prices plummeted...

Rain washed deep gullies across the land. Such soil erosion left land unsuitable to grow other crops like grains and vegetables. As a result, North Carolina had to import some of its food during the 1930s, even though it remained a largely rural state with agriculture as its economic backbone."

<http://ncpedia.org/agriculture/great-depression>

(A)

100 million deaths [globally] were caused by tobacco in the 20th century. If current trends continue, there will be up to one billion deaths in the 21st century. Unchecked, tobacco-related deaths will increase to more than eight million a year by 2030, and 80% of those deaths will occur in the developing world.

http://www.who.int/tobacco/mpower/tobacco_facts/en/

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the United States. Each year, an estimated 443,000 people die prematurely from smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke, and another 8.6 million live with a serious illness caused by smoking... An estimated 88 million nonsmoking Americans, including 54% of children aged 3–11 years, are exposed to secondhand smoke. Even brief exposure can be dangerous because nonsmokers inhale many of the same poisons in cigarette smoke as smokers.

<http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/osh.htm>

Percentage of [U.S.] adults who were current cigarette smokers in 2012:¹

By Education

24.7% of adults with 12 or less years of education (no diploma)

41.9% of adults with a GED diploma

23.1% of adults with a high school diploma

9.1% of adults with an undergraduate college degree

5.9% of adults with a postgraduate college degree

By Poverty Status

27.9% of adults who live below the poverty level

17.0% of adults who live at or above the poverty level

http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/adult_data/cig_smoking/

(B)

“By 1800, cotton mills were constructed using the latest technology. The Spinning Mules provided the fine, but strong thread which was used by the weavers on their power looms. These looms were operated by steam engines. The steam had been produced using coal as the fuel. In less than one hundred years, the cotton industry had developed from a home-based, cottage industry to a factory based industry housed in cotton mills... In order to find work, many people needed to move into the areas where the cotton mills had been built.”

<http://www.saburchill.com/history/chapters/IR/014.html>

“The coal-powered economy brought to bear much more energy than existing technologies could easily control. Many jobs consequently became exceedingly hazardous. By the early 20th century, tens of thousands of workers were dying every year on the railroads, in factories, and especially in coal mines, including many boys and adolescents. For each laborer killed directly, several were maimed, and several more found their lives shortened by coal dust, lead, and other poisons.”

<http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/beyond-the-textbook/23923>

(C)

Take a look in your closet. Just about all of us have them: blue jeans. They're everywhere. But did you know that the first cotton mill in the south to produce denim was right here in the Bull City? The old brick factory is still standing, amid the hustle and buzz of Ninth Street.

The year 1892 was important for Durham. It marked the twin arrivals of struggling Trinity College (kept afloat by Durham citizens like Julian Carr and Washington Duke) and Erwin Cotton Mills (started by the Duke family to diversify its investments in tobacco). The mills were the driving force that made Old West Durham what it is today. Erwin Mills had a picker building, dye house, boiler room, engine house, 11,000 spindles and 360 looms producing fine muslin, chambrays, camlets, and denim. By 1905, more people worked in cotton mills in Durham than in tobacco factories.

The steady, loud hum of the mills could be heard throughout the village. On Sundays, the noise stopped and the air was unnaturally still. The mills pumped hot soapy water into South Ellerbe Creek. Back then it was called the dye ditch. The color of the creek water changed depending on the color of the fabric that day. Long-time neighbors tell me the whole neighborhood smelled like a laundromat.

http://www.thedurhamnews.com/2014/10/24/4256282_john-schelp-blue-durham-blue-denim.html?rh=1

(D)

“Up there in the factory, he’d sing all day long. And naturally when you’d raise a song up in the factory say your section there, where you were stemming, you got anywhere from a hundred, a hundred and twenty-five...Not doing anything but humming, you got something going on...And the bosses, I mean it was so good, the bosses used to come out and gather around and just stand and just listen...Men and women... And of course the whole floor could take up the chant, you know. Not to mention those hundreds of women that was working on the line and sorting tobacco that was coming in out of the chutes, you know...”

Interview with Reginald Mitchiner by Glenn Hinson, February 7, 1979

http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/tobacco_durham/index.php/documents/view/43

“...I’m going to tell it like it is now. On that side where we were working, black women did all the hard and nasty work, that’s what I say. On the cigarette side, where they wore those white uniforms and made sure no blacks worked over there...they had a season of year – they’d send tobacco in sheets from Georgia. It’d come in sheets, full of sand, full of everything. It was the (black women’s) job to take this tobacco out of the sheets and put it in the machine...feed it in the belt that ran down to a large machine.”

Interview with Annie Mack Barbee by Beverly Jones, May 28, 1979

http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/tobacco_durham/index.php/documents/view/64

“Throughout many of the accounts women would talk about the Burley tobacco and the impact of that in terms of their health, that many of them could not catch their breath when they went out from the factory... they worked on their feet... and many times they would put a handkerchief or something over their face or their nose so that Burley tobacco would not be as strong as it was or put a lemon in their mouth to keep from throwing up in regard to that. But they complained in terms of breathing, was one factor. Some of them of course were smokers so that even complicates it as the knowledge that we know in terms of smoking being deleterious to the health... Many women indicated that they had problems with abortions, maintaining the children, stillbirths. Aborting on the floors. Women would say, "I know a woman who aborted." It was nothing that was unusual for that to happen... “

Interview with Beverly Washington Jones by Perry Pike and Barbara Lau, 2001

http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/tobacco_durham/index.php/documents/view/44

“[James B. Duke’s] primary education, however, was in the family's business—first farming, then the hand manufacture and "drumming" (marketing) of tobacco products, and finally, the mass production and mass marketing of cigarettes... Duke emerged as the president of the American Tobacco Company, which within a decade became a multinational corporation.

Duke's older brother, Benjamin Newton, had launched the family into the textile business as early as 1892. As their textile interests developed, the need for economical water power led the Dukes into the hydroelectric generating business. In 1905, they founded the Southern Power Company, now known as Duke Power, one of the companies making up Duke Energy, Inc.

In December, 1924, James B., who was by far the wealthiest member of the family, established The Duke Endowment as a permanent trust fund with designated beneficiaries. In so doing, he was following the family's long-standing patterns of philanthropy. In 1892, Washington Duke had helped a Methodist-related institution, Trinity College, relocate to Durham, and since 1887 Ben had been a member of the school's Board of Trustees. A new university built around Trinity was to be the prime beneficiary of the Duke Endowment.”

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/uarchives/history/articles/james-buchanan-duke>

“The next year, upon his death, he made an additional bequest to the Endowment and the University, including \$4 million to establish a medical school, hospital and nurses home.

One of Duke's primary motivations in establishing the Endowment and Duke School of Medicine was the improvement of health care in the Carolinas, a relatively poor region of the country at that time, lacking in physicians, hospitals and medical schools.”

<https://archives.mc.duke.edu/history>

“[Erwin] offered 11 weeks of free night school to workers, and financially supported clubs, libraries, and nurseries for the workers. He repeatedly referred to the employees of the mill as "my people" and, per multiple anecdotes, seemingly knew every worker by name. He freely supported churches and community organizations. Failure to live by his standards, though, could exact harsh penalties. Erwin would ride his bicycle around the neighborhood to ensure that residents adhered to a 10pm 'lights-out' rule. Arrests for public intoxication were grounds for dismissal from the mill, and loss of housing.

Tobacco workers in the city had begun to organize during the 1930s as well, as had building trades in Durham... Increasing unionization of employees and dissatisfaction with working conditions and wages led to a general strike of thousands of textile employees throughout the southeast beginning on labor day - September 3, 1934... In total, 5200 workers in Durham from [Golden Belt](#), [Durham Hosiery Mill No. 1](#), [the Durham Cotton Manufacturing Company](#), and Erwin Mills participated in the strike. At the end of the strike, though, little had changed, and union membership decreased in Durham.

...By 1937, the Textile Workers Organizing Committee had unionized all five Erwin mills... Difficult working conditions changed little leading to repeated strikes over the subsequent decades.

Opinions of the working conditions at Erwin mill obviously varied widely, given all of the factors that influence people's opinion of their jobs both then and today. While some oral histories bemoan the very difficult working conditions, other histories speak to how wonderful a job at Erwin mill was compared to what else was (or wasn't) available.”

<http://www.opendurham.org/buildings/erwin-cotton-mill-no1-burlington-industries-erwin-square>

(F)

MITCHINER: My two older sisters and my oldest brother persuaded Mama – sold Mama on the idea of moving to Durham... That was in 1920. So off they went to the tobacco factories. But one thing I always said about this town, if a man can't make it in Durham, he can't make it nowhere.

GH: Were there a whole lot of people that were coming from around the countryside, or from other cities into Durham?

MITCHINER: That's right. Especially around the state of North Carolina. And just oodles of South Carolinians. It looked like all of South Carolina moved into North Carolina, and a lot of Georgia.

GH: What kind of reputation did Durham have as a town, to outsiders?

MITCHINER: As that, it was a place you could make money. Because one thing – one of the biggest drawing cards for Durham was Liggett and Myers and American Tobacco Company – what used to be the Bull Durham Factory. That was the biggest incentive to come to Durham. The average man, he could get a job – a job that paid a salary. You know when a person is used to living and trying to raise a family on sporadic work, you know, where sometimes you got it and sometimes you ain't – well at least you come to these places and get these jobs. Whatever they're paying you was usually the average or sometime better than the average, but you could look forward to it week after week. And that way you could predict your future. But without regular work, that's what thrown so many of 'em to these areas, because they could get regular work. That's what brought them here."

Interview with Reginald Mitchiner by Glenn Hinson, November 15, 1976, H-212, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/tobacco_durham/index.php/documents/view/27

(G)

"The first year of severe boll weevil destruction in North Carolina was 1922, when the pest claimed 13 percent of the state's cotton crop. In 1929, 21 percent of the crop was lost; the damage was substantial but considerably less than in other states' worst years. The problem persisted throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century."

<http://ncpedia.org/boll-weevils>

It has taken 111 years, but the cotton industry is finally beginning to believe it can rid agriculture of the boll weevil. In the century since the small pests entered the United States by traveling over the Rio Grande from Mexico, boll weevils have cost cotton producers more than \$45 billion. Moving about 60 miles per year, the boll weevil made it all the way from its introduction in Texas in 1893 to Virginia by 1922.

<http://southeastfarmpress.com/boll-weevil-changed-face-cotton-industry>

"Conventionally grown cotton uses more insecticides than any other single crop. Nearly \$2.6 billion worth of pesticides are sprayed on cotton fields each year — accounting for more than 10% of total pesticide use and nearly 25% of insecticides use worldwide."

<http://www.panna.org/resources/cotton>

(I)
