

## **THE COTTON BELT**

### **Farming in the South Cotton Belt.**

The south consists of the sub-tropical and East coast warm temperature regions of USA. In this region, the following states are found;

- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Georgia
- Alabama
- Florida
- Mississippi
- Louisiana
- Texas
- Tennessee

The major crops grown in this region included;

- Cotton
- Tobacco
- Sugar cane
- Tea
- Rice
- Other Cereals.

Cotton together with sugar cane and tobacco were the major cash crops but in 1860, cotton became the leading cash crop. It was mainly exported to UK and the

domestic markets in the North i.e. the industrial centers and the Great Lakes region and the New England states.

The cotton belt is the region known for growing of cotton in the south Eastern part of USA. It is also referred to as the Old Cotton Belt because cotton growing began here in the following states;

- Alabama
- Louisiana
- Mississippi
- Texas
- Tennessee
- North and South Carolina
- Georgia

### **The uses of Cotton**

- For making clothes
- The seeds are crashed to get cooking oil
- Soap is made from cotton seeds
- Residues are used in the manufacture of animal feeds
- Raw material for making cotton wool.

### **MAP SHOWING THE OLD AND NEW COTTON BELT**

## **Factors that favored Cotton Growing in the Old Cotton Belt.**

### **Physical Factors**

- Adequate rainfall between 500-1000mm. Most of it falling in the first six months.
- Presence of vast land which is sparsely populated hence fit for growing the cotton.
- Well drained fertile soils (alluvial) which are deposited by river Mississippi which floods occasionally.
- Hot summer with temperatures ranging between 23-27 C
- Frost free conditions
- The area experiences 200 days of the frost free. This time is long enough for cotton to mature.
- The gentle relief that favors mechanized agriculture

### **Human / other Factors**

- Availability of cheap slave labor

- The discovery of the ginning machine which made work more easier for the farmers
- Availability of large market especially in Europe
- Well-developed transport. In the South East, there are different types of transport by road, railway and water.

After the civil war of 1861-65, the slaves were set free and the whole economic system of USA was disrupted. Plantations fell into disorder and some cropping was now introduced. Share cropping is a situation where large plantations were subdivided into smaller units and given to individual farmers who would share the profits.

### **Disadvantages of Share Cropping**

- There was a decline in crop yields because farmers were not motivated.
- The soils became exhausted thus soil erosion resulted.
- Shortage of food because farmers were interested in producing cash crops at the expense of food crops.

### **Factors that led to the decline in the Cotton production in the Old Cotton Belt**

- The growing of one crop year after year
- Soil erosion and loss of fertility due to poor soil cover
- The cotton ball weevil which infested the South East reduced the yields.
- The introduction of new crops reduced the acreage of land for cotton.
- The low prices and incomes earned from cotton discourages the farmers and many abandon it.
- The agricultural workers reduced in number as many looked for better paying jobs in industries.
- The cotton fields in other areas were replaced with pasture to feed the cattle.

## **Steps taken to improve conditions of people living in the Old Cotton Belt**

- Setting up large ranching schemes for cattle and pigs.
- Introduction of a wide range of crops like tobacco, sugarcane, maize, beans
- A forestation to reduce soil erosion.
- Setting up industries to offer better employment opportunities to the people.
- Introduction of mechanization to work on the farms.

## **THE NEW COTTON BELT**

### **Characteristics of the New Cotton Belt.**

- Medium sized farms owned by individuals
- Use of machines
- Use of hired labor who are paid for the work done
- Mixed farming is used as opposed to monoculture in the Old Belt
- There is irrigation farming e.g. through canals and aqueducts
- Use of modern farming methods e.g. use of fertilizers, crop rotation, mulching etc.

### **Factors that led to a shift of Cotton growing from the Old to the New Cotton Belt**

- Soil exhaustion due to monoculture in the old cotton belt made cotton growing difficult and yet in the New Cotton belt several areas had fertile soils e.g. Texas and Oklahoma.
- The relief in the new Cotton belt was generally flatter therefore machines could easily be used
- The drier climate in the south west could not support the spread of the cotton boll weevil which had destroyed cotton in the south east

- High levels of technology were available in the new area
- Presence of light soils in the new cotton belt were easy to cultivate.
- Competition from the overseas producers meant more efficient and cheaper methods of producing cotton had to be adopted. This was possible in the new area
- The warm humid conditions in the South East (Old Cotton Belt) encouraged rapid growth of weeds and it became expensive to attend to their removal whereas the New Cotton belt because of dry conditions, there was little weed growth.

## **Other Developments in the New South**

### **Industrialization**

A number of industries have been established and they include the following;

- Space industry
- Petroleum and Natural Gas extraction

There are over 30 oil refineries in Texas and this started way back in 1910.

- Agro based industry; located in areas that produce agricultural raw materials and industries include; textile mills, tobacco processing, meat packing.

### **Problems Facing Industrial development in the South**

- Congestion due to over concentration of industries such as Houston, New Orleans, Birmingham, Port Arthur
- Pollution of the environment through emission of industrial fumes
- Competition for market for the produced goods
- Exhaustion of raw materials due to rampant growth of industries
- Lack of room for expansion in the industrial towns.

### **Solutions to the Problems**

- Carrying out market research to overcome the problem of competition for the market
- Laws against pollution / treating industrial wastes
- Advertise industries
- Importation of raw materials can be used
- Create more room for expansion

### **Comparison in the methods of Cotton growing in USA and Uganda**

<b>USA</b>	<b>UGANDA</b>
1. Grown on large scale	Grown on small scale
2. Highly mechanized	Less mechanization i.e. use of manual labor
3. Irrigation is highly practiced	Depends on the weather conditions
4. Scientific methods highly applied	Less scientific methods are used
5. High crop yields	Low crop yields

### **MAP SHOWING INDUSTRIES IN THE SOUTH.**

### **Benefits of Industrial Development in the south.**

- Employment opportunities have been created
- Co-operation between South and North America has been created
- Foreign exchange is earned through the manufactured exported products
- People's standards of living have improved due to high incomes
- The economy in the South has been diversified
- Infrastructure development has occurred
- Urban centers have developed e.g. New Orleans, Houston, and Charlotte.
- The government now earns taxes.