



Agriculture and Textiles

Interaction of Two Major North Carolina Industries

Agriculture and Textiles: the Interaction of Two Major North Carolina Industries



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Cover Images

Left to right:

Daybook, "[A List of Remedy Sales](#)," Joyner Library, East Carolina University

Photograph, "[Japanese Men Buying Tobacco](#)," Joyner Library, East Carolina University

Advertisement, "[Wool Carding!](#)" Broadside and Ephemera Collection, Duke University Libraries

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Objectives:

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- ✓ *Use primary and secondary sources to interpret the past*
- ✓ *Identify two important industries in North Carolina*

Guiding Questions:

- ✓ *What roles did North Carolinians play in growing and manufacturing cotton?*
- ✓ *Why was cotton production important in North Carolina?*
- ✓ *Why was the textile industry important in North Carolina?*
- ✓ *How did cotton production affect the textile industry?*

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Historical Context:

Agriculture

From the very earliest times people have been farmers. American Indians grew crops for food and clothes. European settlers brought in new ways of farming. One important crop grown in North Carolina was cotton.

Cotton was not a main crop before 1793. It required too many hours of work to separate the cotton from the seeds. But in 1793 Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, a machine that would remove the seeds. Soon cotton became a major cash crop. But cotton still had to be picked by hand. Farmers often sold cotton to manufacturers to make products.

Textile Manufacturing

Another important industry in North Carolina was textile manufacturing. Although the state had textile factories from early in its history, textile mills became a major industry during the Civil War. Many mills made uniforms for soldiers.

After the war textile mills created jobs for people in the state. Workers in textile mills would use the cotton grown by farmers. They would operate machines that would spin the cotton into yarn. The yarn could be used to make cloth for clothes and other products.

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CONNECTIONS TO NORTH CAROLINA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

- 4.E.1 Summarize the literal meaning of historical documents to establish context.
 - 4.E.1.1 Understand the basic concepts of a market economy: price, supply, demand, scarcity, productivity and entrepreneurship.
 - 4.E.1.2 Understand how scarcity and choice in a market economy impact business decisions.
 - 4.E.1.3 Analyze the historical and contemporary role that major North Carolina industries , have played in the state, nation and world.

CONNECTIONS TO C3 FRAMEWORK

- D1.5.3-5. Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration the different opinions people have about how to answer the questions .
- D2.Eco.3.3-5. Identify examples of the variety of resources (human capital, physical capital, and natural resources) that are used to produce goods and services.
- D2.Eco.4.3-5. Explain why individuals and businesses specialize and trade.
- D2.His.9.3-5. Summarize how different kinds of historical sources are used to explain events in the past.

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Documents Used—Group I: Photographs Showing Agricultural Workers

Display or distribute documents. Students may work individually or in groups. For each document used, ask students to complete a primary source worksheet to evaluate the type of source. [Document analysis worksheets](#) are available for use from the National Archives.

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Photograph, [“Workers Picking Cotton”](#) Courtesy, Joyner Library, East Carolina University.

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Photograph, "[Cotton Workers](#)" Courtesy, New Hanover Public Library.

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Activities for Group I

Have students read individually or aloud the historical context on agriculture. Display the photographs and lead a discussion of how the photographs support the information they have read. Use the guiding questions to discuss the importance of the industry in the state.

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Documents Used—Group II: Photographs Showing Textile Workers and Equipment

Display or distribute documents. Students may work individually or in groups. For each document used, ask students to complete a primary source worksheet to evaluate the type of source.

[Document analysis worksheets](#) are available for use from the National Archives.

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Photograph, [“Woman at Spooling machine, Gastonia”](#) Gaston County Museum of Art and History.

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Photograph, [“Man Working at Textile Loom”](#) State Archives of North Carolina.

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Activities

Have students read individually or aloud the historical context on textile manufacturing. Display the photographs and lead a discussion of how the photographs support the information they have read. Use the guiding questions to discuss the importance of the industry in the state.

Enrichment and Extension

1. Choose one photograph from each section. Have students, working individually or in groups, complete the worksheet after examining the photographs.
2. Identify potential vocabulary words found in the historical context section and review them with students.
3. Using these photographs or others from the online collection, have students choose one of the people depicted in the photograph and write a narrative describing some aspect of that person's life.
4. Help students understand how and why these industries have changed over the years.

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QUESTIONS

1. Which picture relates to agriculture?
2. What clues in the picture helps you know this?
3. Which picture relates to textiles?
4. What clues in the picture help you know this?
5. The agriculture and textile industries can work closely together. Answer the following questions to help you understand why this is true.
6. What did cotton farmers do with the cotton they grew?
7. What is the thread on the spools made from?
8. What might happen to cotton farmers if textile mills can't or won't buy cotton?
9. What might happen to textile workers if the cotton crop fails?

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ANSWER KEY

1. Which picture(s) relate to agriculture?

Cotton market, children picking cotton

2. What clues in the pictures help you know this?

Help students recognize raw cotton and people engaged in agricultural activities.

3. Which picture(s) relate to textiles?

Woman at the spooling machine; man with lappers

4. What clues in the pictures help you know this?

Each picture has machinery and spools of thread.

The agriculture and textile industries can work closely together. Answer the following questions to help you understand why this is true.

1. What did cotton farmers do with the cotton they grew?

Often sold it to textile industry.

2. What is the thread on the spools made from?

Cotton

3. What might happen to cotton farmers if textile mills can't or won't buy cotton?

Without markets to buy the cotton, they will not make money on their crop.

4. What might happen to textile workers if the cotton crop fails?

Without being able to buy cotton, textile mills will have no raw materials with which to make their products.