## Tobacco Use Began Early In America

Visitors to the gallery of the Senate will find that this nation's most august deliberative body has, in a corner to the spectators' right, a cuspidor, a relic from the days

when the Colonists lustily embraced a New World discovery - tobacco.

Even the halls of Congress were not immune to the effects of "chawin, 'n spittin' ",



or the signs of men with tobacco plugs bulging their pockets and yellow stains marking their shirts Dr. Alexander Hamilton reported that he had made a day's journey with an old codger in New Jersey who"... spoke not a word all the way but coughd and chawd tobacco "

As chewing gained favor among farmers, storekeepers and the upcountry lawyers and printers who led the Jacksonian generation, tobacco juice fouled the national scene to an extent that horrified both alien visitors and abstaining Americans Tobacco chewing was the one thing more than any other that caused tidy Europeans to label the new nation "barbaric."

Even

bacco

unmanful. No matter

how plentiful such targets

were in steamboats, saloons,

hotel lobbies, railroad cars,

courtrooms or domestic sitt-

ing rooms, the nation's car-

By 1860, a full nineteen-

twentieths of the tobacco pro-

cessing in Virginia and North

Carolina, where the industry centered, was of chewing to-

This variously admired and

detested farm product had its

origin with the Indians, who

used it for medicinál, cere-

monial and pleasurable pur-

poses Nearly all the Indian

tribes of the two Americas

used tobacco, in pipes, as

snuff or cigars Among some

of the tribes, in fact, tobacco

was so highly prized that the

men worked at growing it,

leaving the women and child-

Tobacco played a very im-

portant role in the develop-

ment of many southern states.

In Virginia especially, tobacco

growing became the economic

backbone of the colony Tobacco was not only chewed, smoked and sniffed, it was

also used as money In 1732,

Maryland made it legal tender, and the salaries of clergymen and state officers were

actually paid in tabacco at the

about soil husbandry, tobacco

Before the colonists learned

rate of a penny a pound

ren to tend the lesser crops

pets were literally soggy.

lates of long range and accuracy in spitting were generally more legendary than truthful. Care to consistently hit the sandbox or cuspidor was considered unnecessary.





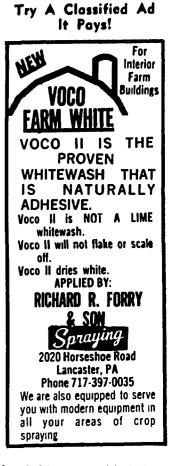
Lancaster Farming, Saturday, May 17, 1975-11

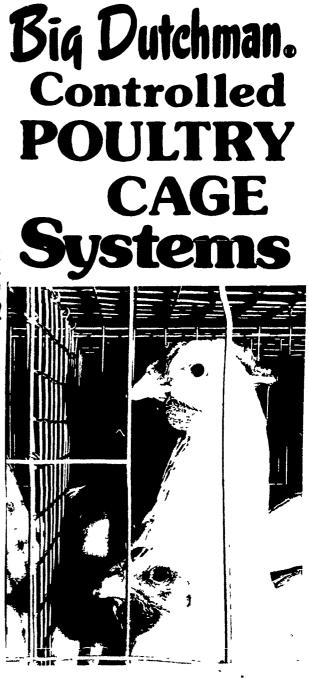
culture was almost as hard on the land as it was on the nation's carpets. As fields wore out, tobacco growers moved west, leaving barren lands behind where even weeds found little foothold Wind and rain eroded what little topsoil remained on once fertile fields, and scrubrush and pine took over

Virginia maintained its lead in tobacco culture until about 1860, but Kentucky was close behind Ohio. Tennessee and Missouri had likewise made considerable advances in tobacco acreage by the time the Civil War erupted

While the South continues to be the country's leading tobacco area, it is by no means the only source of tobacco Northern states like Pennsylvania. Connecticut and Massachusetts also produce the crop, and in recent years, Wisconsin has grown more tobacco than even Maryland

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