

Booklet traces tobacco history

LANCASTER — Pennsylvania, home of the Pennsylvania Dutch, coal mines and steel mills, gave birth also to a tobacco specialty, Pennsylvania seedleaf.

Today, this distinctive leaf, once used as cigar filler but in recent years largely in chewing tobacco, is grown almost exclusively in Lancaster County. And at least half is cultivated by Amish farmers, descendants of those who settled in Lancaster's rolling hills 300 years ago.

This and more is detailed in an illustrated pamphlet, "Pennsylvania and Tobacco," published by The Tobacco Institute, a Washington-based trade association representing the major U.S. cigarette manufacturers. The booklet is one of a series on the history, culture and economic importance of America's first export product.

Tobacco in the Keystone State predated the arrival of the Amish

However, early attempts in the 17th century under Dutch, Swedish and English rule to grow export tobacco failed, because the emigres were working the wrong areas with the wrong seeds and the European market was over-supplied by other colonies.

The ensuing years, from Philadelphia's emergence as a tobacco manufacturing center and port to a York County farmer's experiment which started the

seedleaf industry, are detailed in The Institute's colorful account.

Today, the booklet notes, some 2500 tobacco farms clustered in Lancaster and spilling into surrounding counties produce more than 22 million pounds of heavy-bodied, dark Pennsylvania seedleaf. With a value of \$15 million in 1979, the Keystone State's tobacco crop ranked 13th in the nation.

Tobacco, which largely defies mechanization, is still mostly worked by hand as it was a century ago, according to the booklet. While some farmers in the early 1970's switched to less labor-intensive crops to cut costs, the Amish, with their large families and doctrine of hard work, are staying with tobacco.

But the sturdy and practical old-world farmers and their families

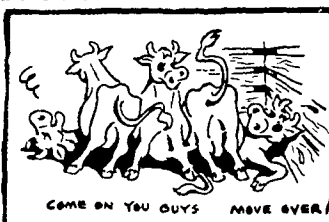
are only one part of tobacco's continuing story in Pennsylvania.

The Keystone State leads the nation in cigar making, producing one-third of all U.S. cigars.

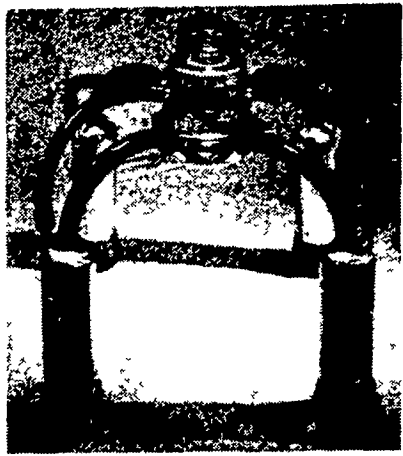
According to the 24-page booklet, cigarettes sold in the state add more than \$259 million yearly in state tax revenues to the general fund, as well as some \$115 million to the U.S. Treasury. The more than 95,000 retail outlets that sold

almost \$1.2 billion worth of tobacco products in 1979 provide jobs and additional tax revenues for the state, as do the tobacco wholesalers who distribute products worth more than three-quarters of a billion dollars.

Copies of "Pennsylvania and Tobacco" are available free of charge from The Tobacco Institute, 1875 I Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.



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