

SOUTHERN TEXTILE BULLETIN

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1923 Health and Happiness Number

We are presenting a Health and Happiness Number, that of 1923, which exceeds in size and probably exceeds in beauty those of 1918 and 1919.

This edition is designed primarily to go to prominent men and women in each State and to carry its message of truth relative to the health and happiness of the men, women and young people who have found employment in Southern cotton mills.

The great advantage of this form of publicity is that it supports its message by the indisputable evidence of photographs of the cotton mills with their community houses, schools, churches, playgrounds, etc., and portrays the cotton mill people in a true light.

Previous Health and Happiness Numbers that we have published and distributed have brought to us many letters expressing surprise at the splendid working and living conditions that prevail in Southern mills and which are so vastly different from those the people of the North and West have been led to believe existed in our industry.

We do not claim that conditions in the textile industry of the South are ideal or that every mill has surroundings equal to those shown herein, for there are slackers among the cotton mills just as in every other walk of life, but the composite

story that is told in this edition may be taken as showing average conditions in the industry.

After the Civil War the South turned to cotton manufacturing, an industry that had thrived until the advent of slavery, but with her crippled financial condition resulting from the war made slow progress until after 1885, when it began to build mills in considerable numbers.

Today the South has more than 16,000,000 spindles producing cotton goods and yarns and has advanced in skill and knowledge until she is able to produce fine yarns and fabrics of the highest quality.

The basis of the success of the textile industry of the South has been the splendid class of labor with which it has been supplied.

Unlike the mills and factories of New England, where foreigners predominate to such an extent that mill rules frequently have to be printed in six languages, the mill operatives of the South, almost without exception, are of pure Anglo-Saxon blood and all speak the English tongue.

A very large per cent of them came from the mountain sections of the South and they brought with them the traditions and the characteristics of the mountain people.

In few industries is ambition

given fuller opportunity than in the Southern cotton mills.

From the time a boy begins as a doffer he dreams of the day when he will be superintendent. It is possible for any bright and industrious boy to advance step by step until he becomes a superintendent and the vast majority of the superintendents of today began as doffer boys or at a similar grade.

Much has been said of the illiteracy of Southern mill operatives and often unjustly. While a great many of the older operatives are illiterate it is very rare to find one under twenty years of age who can not read and write.

The older operatives grew up at a period during which the South was not financially able to furnish schools for all of her children, but the mill children now have the advantage of splendid schools, usually furnished and operated by the mills and the mill operatives are encouraged to send their children regularly.

Community or welfare work has in recent years become a well recognized feature of the cotton mills of the South. It has, of course, its humanitarian side, but looked upon as a cold blooded business proposition it has been found that dollars invested in such work yields handsome returns.

Community work in almost all its

phases is now looked upon as part of the legitimate expense of operating a cotton mill, and the mill manager who is opposed to welfare work is looked upon as unsafe and behind the times. It has been demonstrated beyond question that the best class of operatives go to the mills at which they have the best homes and best educational and social advantages.

While the smaller mills can not afford the expense of operating Y. M. C. A.'s, community houses, or to pay men and women to devote all of their time to mill village work, there are very few that do not make some expenditures for the welfare of their operatives.

Probably no industry has been as persistently and as willfully misrepresented as the cotton manufacturing industry of the South.

For a number of years it has been profitable to certain individuals and certain organizations to create the impression that the Southern cotton mill operatives were oppressed and downtrodden and that the mill owners cared nothing for the welfare of the employees.

This 1923 Health and Happiness Number of the Southern Textile Bulletin is intended to furnish a true picture of a great industry and of its living and working conditions. —Editor.



CHILDREN OF THE COTTON MILLS

Facts About Southern Cotton Mills

No industry in this country has been as grossly misrepresented as the cotton mills of the South.

We are setting forth on these pages facts that are contrary to those usually given to the public by our traducers and we invite the fullest investigation of their accuracy.

Labor Laws.

The laws of the Southern States prohibit the employment in factories of children under 14 years of age with the following exceptions:

(1) North Carolina permits a boy of 12 to work outside of school hours provided he can obtain a permit from the Welfare Commission but very few such permits are issued.

(2) Georgia permits the son of a widowed mother entirely dependent upon him for support to secure a permit to work after becoming twelve years of age. The Cotton Manufacturers' Association of Georgia asked their last Legislature to abolish this provision.

(3) Mississippi, a State with very few manufacturing industries, permits boys of 12 years of age to work but prohibits the employment of girls under 14 years.

The child labor laws of the South as contrasted with those of other States are shown by a map printed on pages 6 and 7 of this issue.

That the labor laws of the Southern States are enforced is showed by testimony given before a Senate Committee, extracts from which are printed on pages 4 and 5 immediately following these pages.

Labor of Young People.

Where the mills run an average of 10 hours per day it is estimated that boys under 16, who are employed almost exclusively as doffer boys, work from five and a half to six hours. When the bobbins become full the boys remove them,

which is called doffing, and between doffs they are at liberty so that they really work not exceeding six hours per day.

The girls under 16 are employed almost exclusively in the spinning room, and while they are required to be in the room all the time they are not constantly at work. Each girl has a certain number of sides (meaning one side of a spinning frame) to look after and on which she replaces the ends when they break. When the ends are up the girl sits at the end of the spinning frame and makes an occasional trip down the alley to see that everything is all right.

The largest weight that a young girl in a cotton mill has to lift is less than two pounds.

All of the Southern States prohibit the employment of children in factories at night if under 16 years of age.

Child Labor Decreasing.

According to the United States Census Bureau there were in 1920 378,063 children between 10 and 14 years of age gainfully employed in the United States. The great majority of these (328,958 or 87 per cent) were employed in agricultural pursuits, 17,213 were engaged in trade, 12,172 in domestic and personal service, 9,473 in manufacturing and mechanical industries, and 6,927 in clerical occupations.

We call attention to the fact that the entire number employed in the United States in manufacturing and mechanical industries, including part time workers, was only 9,473. There was a decrease of 71.1 per cent from 1910 to 1920 in those under 14 years of age employed in manufacturing and industrial pursuits.

Child Labor Not Cheaper.

Those not familiar with cotton manufacturing jump at the erroneous conclusion that child labor is cheap labor.

Girls in cotton mills are paid a certain price per side (meaning the tending of the side of a spinning frame).

An older girl will often tend twelve sides whereas a younger girl might be able to tend only four sides.

As the mill pays the same price per side the younger girl will make less wages but the cost per side and the cost per pound to the mill is the same.

The same rule applies to doffer boys who are paid in proportion to the number of sides they can doff.

In spite of the repeated statements to that effect, no one can show that cotton mills can produce goods cheaper by employing young children.

Hours of Labor.

The State of South Carolina limits the hours of labor to 55 per week.

The other Southern States limit them to 60, but many of the mills only operate 55 hours.

Health of Mill People.

In testifying before the Interstate Commerce Committee of the Senate at Washington, D. C., one prominent physician said:

"I practiced medicine in the country districts prior to 17 years ago and now for 17 years have practiced in a mill town. I have the opportunity to observe the health, growth, and the development of mill children, in comparison with the country children. I have practically seen no difference. I have observed children who have worked in the mills as early as 12 years of age who have now developed into manhood and womanhood and who, as fathers and mothers, have produced healthy offspring."

Another physician testifying at the same time said in part:

"At all times the cotton mills have aided myself and the other members of my profession in bettering the sanitary conditions in the mills and among the operatives. We have never gone to them for money to aid us in carrying out sanitary measures in the mills or in the mill town that we have not been given the amount of money we asked. That is notably true in the matter of the eradication of malaria.

"I do not suppose that in our mill population, which includes the mill operatives and their families, those who do not work in the mills, a total population of close to 5,000 people, that there are over 50 cases of tuberculosis in the entire population. I think that would compare favorably with any community of 5,000 people in the United States.

"We do not permit any employee to work in the mills who has tuberculosis. They are taken care of. If the families of the employees who have tuberculosis are not able to take care of them the mill company does that.

"Seventy-five per cent of the women who bore children last year in my mill village had formerly worked, as girls, in the mill. Cotton mill work has absolutely no bearing upon their ability to bear healthy children."

The death rate in cotton mill villages is not higher than in other communities and in any mill village the men and women who have grown up in mill work are healthier and better physical specimens than those who have moved in from the farm or from other vocations.

Regular habits, good food and liv-

CLASSIFICATION OF SOUTHERN MILLS

January 1, 1923

In the tables given below, an accurate tabulation of the spinning, weaving and knitting mills in the Southern States is shown, together with their equipment. The mills are grouped according to their equipment and product. Mills that spin only are grouped accordingly and the same is true of the mills that spin and weave, spin and knit, knit only and weave only. The table also gives the number of mills in each State, the number of spindles, looms and knitting machines, and the total figures, by States and for the whole South.

The convenient arrangement of the tables clearly shows each division of the mills, together with their equipment. The information contained in the tables is compiled from Clark's Directory of Southern Mills January 1, 1923.

STATE	SPINDLES						LOOMS				KNITTING MACHINES				Total Mills	Total Spindles	Total Looms	Total K. M.
	Spin Only		Spin & Weave		Spin & Knit		Spin&Weave		WeaveOnly		Spin & Knit		Knit Only					
	Mills	Spindles	Mills	Spindles	Mills	Spindles	Mills	Looms	Mills	Looms	Mills	K. M.	Mills	K. M.				
Alabama	33	319,746	34	975,450	2	18,600	34	22,514	2	216	2	140	6	866	80	1,318,796	22,730	1,006
Arkansas	1	6,656	1	7,800			1	150							2	14,456	150	
Georgia	46	526,252	87	2,165,134	7	62,112	87	48,627	3	505	7	3,282	28	3,631	176	2,788,988	49,132	6,913
Kentucky	5	51,384	3	54,040			3	1,394	2	42			5	413	15	105,424	1,436	413
Louisiana	1	5,184	2	90,000	1	8,000	2	2,100			1	450	2	177	6	103,184	2,100	627
Mississippi	3	17,776	12	161,944	1	5,000	12	4,619			1	300			16	184,720	4,619	300
Missouri	1	2,472	1	29,000			1	730					2	16	4	31,472	730	16
N. Carolina	214	2,387,802	133	2,917,978	11	224,408	133	77,224	14	1,622	11	1,976	129	16,314	501	5,530,188	78,846	18,290
Oklahoma			1	5,712			1	64							1	5,712	64	
S. Carolina	31	288,514	130	4,836,234	1	10,656	130	119,277	6	227	1	240	12	1,233	180	5,135,404	119,504	1,473
Tennessee	10	179,408	8	218,596	5	53,688	8	6,033			5	953	71	10,640	94	451,692	6,033	11,593
Texas	3	14,552	17	163,384			17	4,633					2	150	22	177,936	4,633	150
Virginia	2	15,378	10	651,568			10	18,737					12	2,309	24	666,946	18,737	2,309
Total	350	3,815,124	439	12,276,840	28	382,464	439	306,102	27	2,612	28	7,341	269	35,749	1121	16,514,918	308,714	43,090

Facts About Southern Cotton Mills

ing conditions, together with the supervision of health conditions by mill authorities are all on the side of the mill operative.

Many mills spend considerable upon their health department, because healthy operatives mean efficient operatives.

During the World War boys who were raised in the mills stood far better physical examination than those who lived upon the farm until they were fifteen years of age.

Accidents in Cotton Mills.

There seems to be a general impression, among those not familiar with cotton mill machinery, that a very large number of children are maimed and injured for life while working in cotton mills.

As a matter of fact very few accidents occur in cotton mills because the only machinery that can be regarded as at all dangerous is the opening and card rooms where only men are employed.

Only by gross carelessness can a boy or girl be injured in the spinning rooms where they are employed, for the machinery is light and there are no exposed gears.

The best proof that accidents are rare in cotton mills are the rates charged by employment liability insurance companies for insurance on cotton mill employees.

The evidence of the people who pay money for accidents, and therefore keep an accurate record of same, is that there are fewer acci-

dents and less risk in cotton mills than in any other line of work. They show the remarkable fact that there is more risk in working on a farm than there is in a cotton mill.

Little Insanity in Mills.

The claim that cotton mill work has a disastrous effect upon the minds of employees seems to be based upon nothing but supposition.

The superintendents who are holding the highest positions and drawing the largest salaries in Southern cotton mills are the boys who began work at early ages, and have kept at it ever since.

If cotton mill work injures children it does seem that there would be some evidence in insanity and yet it is generally admitted that 60 per cent of the women in the insane asylums come from the farm while less than 3 per cent come from cotton mill villages.

Educational Advantages.

The charge has frequently been made and was formerly true that children employed in cotton mills were denied a chance for education, but such is not the case except in very rare instances today.

The cotton mills of the South almost without exception have splendid schools for their employees and encourage them to attend. The cotton manufacturers do not wish their mill operatives to remain ignorant because they believe that education increases their efficiency. The mills have been the great factor in decreasing illiteracy in the South for every mill operative has

a school close at hand, whereas those children in sparsely settled or rural communities often can only attend school by going a considerable distance.

A Textile Students' Loan Fund has recently been organized by prominent cotton manufacturers in order to make loans to cotton mill boys who desire to enter college or attend textile schools.

While loans can only be made to boys living in cotton mill villages, it is especially provided that the boy who secures the loan may select his college and his course of study.

The mill boy who desires to become a doctor or a lawyer is just as welcome to a loan as the one who wishes to enter a textile school.

The object of the Textile Students' Loan Fund is to insure that a college education shall be in reach of every boy in a Southern cotton mill village.

Why New England Cannot Compete.

In recent years the New England mills have found it increasingly difficult to compete with Southern cotton mills and have loudly proclaimed that the advantages of the South were in longer hours and lower age limits but their claims can not be substantiated.

Massachusetts is the only New England State that restricts the hours of labor to less than 54 and in the South one State has a limit of 55 while a large portion of the mills in other Southern States work only 55 hours.

The Southern States prohibit the

employment of children under 14 years of age and the New England States have the same provision.

The competition of the Southern mills is not based upon long hours or young children but upon two factors.

(1) The operatives of the Southern mills are becoming more skilled and more efficient and the South is now producing fabrics upon which New England mills formerly had a monopoly.

(2) The cost of living in the South is so much less that it requires less wages to maintain the same standard of living conditions.

New England operatives pay rents of \$5 to \$7 per week as compared to \$1 to \$1.25 per week in the South, and their annual fuel cost is \$86 per year as compared with \$18 for Southern operatives. New England operatives have to buy more and heavier clothing and to buy the vegetables which the Southern operative gets from his garden.

It is estimated that the Southern operative has an advantage of \$7.80 per week which means that if the Southern operative gets \$15 per week he can live as well as the New England operative who gets \$22.80 per week.

If the New England mills establish the same wage scale their operatives will not receive enough to cover their living cost whereas if they pay the operatives enough to allow them to live upon the same scale as Southern operatives, they cannot compete with Southern made goods.



MODERN TYPE OF COTTAGES FOR COTTON MILL EMPLOYEES