

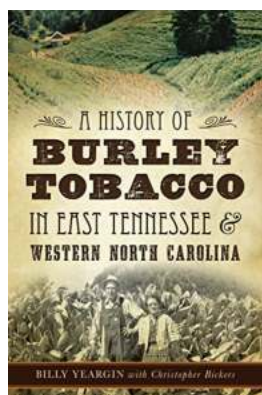
# The Fascinating History of Burley Tobacco in East Tennessee and Western North Carolina

When it comes to the history of tobacco, one cannot overlook the significant role played by Burley tobacco in East Tennessee and Western North Carolina. This type of tobacco has a rich heritage deeply intertwined with the culture and economy of the region. Let us take a journey into the past to discover the origins and evolution of Burley tobacco, and how it shaped the lives of many individuals.

## The Origins of Burley Tobacco

Burley tobacco, scientifically known as *Nicotiana tabacum*, is a breed of tobacco that was first cultivated in the late 19th century. Its name is derived from the Burley region of Kentucky, where it was initially grown. However, its popularity quickly spread to neighboring regions, including East Tennessee and Western North Carolina.

Native American tribes in the area had long been familiar with tobacco and its uses. They used traditional methods of growing and drying tobacco, which were later passed on to the settlers who began to cultivate it on a larger scale. Burley tobacco soon gained recognition for its unique characteristics, making it highly sought after.



## A History of Burley Tobacco in East Tennessee & Western North Carolina by Daniel Reynolds (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 4724 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 233 pages



## **The Rise of Burley Tobacco Production**

As demand for tobacco increased during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, farmers in East Tennessee and Western North Carolina turned to Burley tobacco as a profitable cash crop. Its ability to adapt to different climates and resistance to disease made it a preferred choice for many tobacco farmers.

During this period, Burley tobacco became the backbone of the regional economy. Small family farms and large plantation owners alike relied on its cultivation to sustain their livelihoods. The tobacco industry grew rapidly, and towns emerged around the processing and trading centers, where buyers and sellers would gather to conduct business.

## **The Labor-Intensive Process**

The cultivation and processing of Burley tobacco were labor-intensive activities that required the involvement of numerous workers. The process began with the preparation of the fields, followed by sowing the seeds, careful nurturing, and monitoring for pests and diseases.

Once the leaves reached maturity, harvesting took place. The leaves were then hung in well-ventilated barns for drying. This stage, known as curing, was crucial for developing the tobacco's distinct flavor and aroma. Throughout the drying process, the leaves needed careful attention to prevent mold or discoloration.

After curing, the tobacco was sorted and graded based on its quality and characteristics. Skilled workers would carefully inspect each leaf, determining its market value. Rejected or subpar leaves were used for other purposes, like cigar fillers or chewing tobacco.

## **The Transformation of Burley Tobacco**

While Burley tobacco had always been primarily used for smoking, during the early 20th century, new processing techniques and market demands led to innovation in its utilization. The creation of flue-cured tobacco, which involved using heated air to cure the leaves, revolutionized the industry.

Flue-curing imparted a milder flavor and produced a lighter-colored leaf. This type of tobacco gained popularity, particularly in cigarette manufacturing. Burley tobacco underwent significant modifications to cater to the evolving preferences of consumers and to meet the demands of the tobacco market.

## **The Decline and Resurgence of Burley Tobacco**

In the latter part of the 20th century, the tobacco industry faced numerous challenges. Growing health concerns, increased regulations, and reduced government subsidies caused a decline in Burley tobacco production. Many farmers had to switch to other crops or look for alternative sources of income.

However, in recent years, there has been a renewed interest in locally grown and artisanal products, including tobacco. This has sparked a resurgence in Burley tobacco cultivation. Many farmers are returning to the traditional methods and varieties, focusing on organic and sustainable practices.

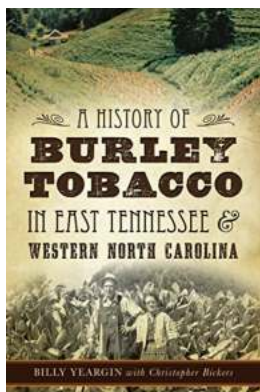
## **The Legacy of Burley Tobacco**

The history of Burley tobacco is deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of East Tennessee and Western North Carolina. It has shaped the identity of communities and contributed significantly to their economies. The traditions and techniques passed down through generations continue to be cherished and preserved by those who recognize the significance of this agricultural heritage.

Today, while the influence and presence of Burley tobacco may not be as prominent as in the past, it continues to hold a special place in the hearts and minds of the people of East Tennessee and Western North Carolina.

## In

The history of Burley tobacco in East Tennessee and Western North Carolina is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of farmers and the impact of agriculture on local communities. From its humble origins to its role as a major cash crop, Burley tobacco has left an indelible mark on the region's history. The fascinating journey of this tobacco variety reminds us of the significance of knowing and preserving our agricultural heritage.



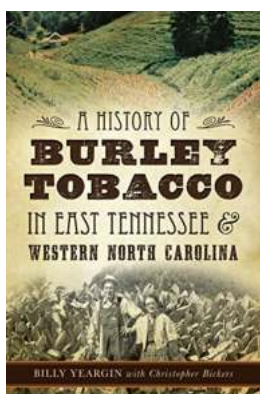
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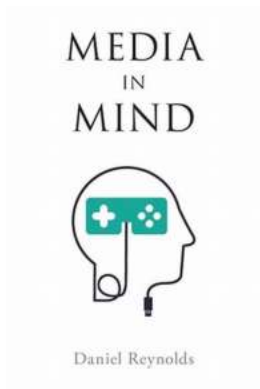


Burley tobacco revolutionized the industry in east Tennessee and western North Carolina. What started from two farmers planting white burley in Greeneville ignited an agricultural revolution and significantly changed crops, production and quality. Burley transformed the tobacco industry with new cultivation techniques and a shift from dark and flue-cured tobacco. By the 1990s, burley tobacco production in the region had drastically declined, and it is a tradition that few local farmers still practice. Agricultural experts Billy Yeargin and Christopher Bickers take a nostalgic look at the historic rise of burley tobacco and its gradual decline.



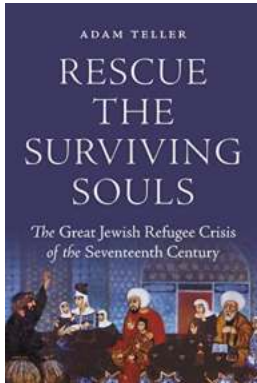
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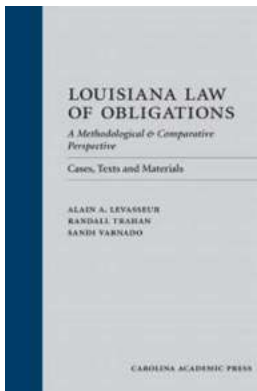
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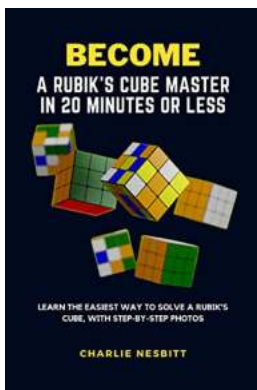
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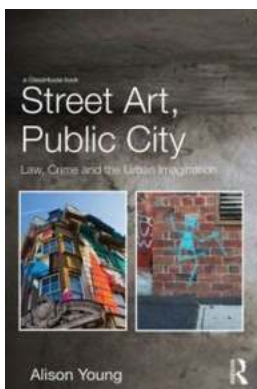
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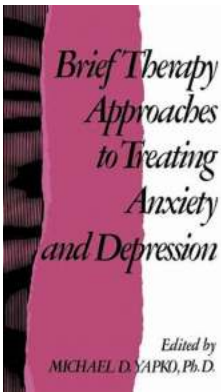
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