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Agrarian Network Commodities

In the Agrarian era, there were goods which served as commodities. Some of the commodities were much more dominant than others, such as sugar. The commodity I would like to speak about is Tobacco. Tobacco played a solid and massive role in the Agrarian Network. I always wanted to know more about Tobacco. My grandparents farm tobacco, and I used to wonder why Tobacco was their crop. After my research, I understand why and more.

First, I would like to give a brief history of tobacco. (1) In 1492, Columbus set in the newfound continent America. He met Native Americans, and they showed Columbus a warm reception and great hospitality. The Native brought Columbus gifts of food, and weapons and much more. Among all the gifts, the Native gave Columbus dried-up leaves of Tobacco leaves. Tobacco was not edible, the Natives smoked it for medicinal and for religious ceremonies.

Columbus used to throw the tobacco leaves overboard but realized that the tobacco must have some value if it was given to him as a gift. Two of Columbus's crew members, Rodrigo de Jerez, a voyager, and Luis de Torres, Columbus's interpreter. Luis spoke three languages, which is beneficial for the Network. The two seamen observed the Native smoking Tobacco, but seaman Rodrigo de Jerez picked up the smoking habit and brought it back to Spain. Unfortunately, Rodrigo smoking frightened the people in Spain, so they jailed him for about seven years. But neither to say, that so many of the seafarers pick up the smoking habit in Spain and Portugal.

In the 15th Century Portuguese sailors start planting Tobacco by the mid-century growing commercially in Brazil. Tobacco became a demand commodity, and they traded across the ports of Europe and in America. In the 16th Century, Tobacco plants and the use of Tobacco were introduced and shown to every country in Europe. (2) This plant to who one believes or regard it as a medical substance. After the Spanish colonized the West Indies, South and Central America 1492, Tobacco was grown and exported as a recreational drug. It became so popular, especially in Europe, it made Tobacco highly profitable. Jamestown, Virginia began to grow, which they were taking more land from the Natives that end (2) in the Powhattan Wars (1610-1646 CE) which drove out most of the original Natives to make more room for bigger plantations. It grew so that surrounding colonies also joined, it became too much that it was encouraged the use of the Slavery trade.

What I learned about Tobacco and slavery, on the Tobacco plantation was at first the slaves were indentured servants. Indentured servants are the ones who come voluntary to work for usually seven years for free for a passage to America. After they complete seven years, they will be granted land. So, the Africans arrive via Dutch ship to Jamestown, the African was treated as indentured, which can be black or white servants. But as times goes by the blacks were treated unequal to the whites. The Black servant's treatment was very harsh.

The economy for tobacco has significantly prospered. The Colonial government saw a need to fulfill in develop more land and create more roads, ships building and business for its booming economy. In 1620-1700 the number of farmhands and servants (other than the slaves) harvesting Tobacco had decreased, while the number of slaves increased due to the great demand for the Tobacco product. The colonist became more dependent on Tobacco both as recreation and as currency.

Tobacco has revolution on currency. In 1765 not long accept as a form of money. New laws came about in London. However, these new laws had increased tension between the colonies and Great, leading to the outbreak of the rebellion that became American War of Independence. After the war tobacco production resumed. Tobacco uses in the United States became more popular and its trend continued throughout the next Century.

In conclusion, from its time of introduction up to the 18th century Tobacco was being smoked or chewed. Cigarettes became popular after the American Civil War (1861-1865 CE). Tobacco came a long way through the Agrarian era from a gift from the Natives Americans, which led to significant economic gains, which must include slavery that also led into war, then also constituted laws. This community called Tobacco has a significant role in the Agrarian Network and in history.

References

- (1) <https://tobaccofreelife.org>

(2) Mark, Joshua J." A Brief History of Tobacco in the Americas." World History Encyclopedia. World History Encyclopedia. 10 Feb 2021. Web. 28 Jan 2023