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BENNETT, BARBARA NAPIER. William T. Sutherlin and the Danville Tobacco Industry. (1974) Directed by: Dr. Richard N. Current. Pp. 88.

The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the part William T. Sutherlin played in the rebuilding and expansion of the Danville tobacco industry during the period 1865-1890.

The postwar problems that existed in the tobacco industry have been divided into four categories -- labor, transportation, education, and agriculture unrest. A careful study has been made of the Sutherlin manuscript collections at the Duke library and the Southern Historical Collection at Chapel Hill as they apply to the tobacco industry. The ideas that Sutherlin expressed in his public speeches on agricultural problems have been compared with his private correspondence in an effort to understand his motivation. Published secondary accounts of his business and political activities have been re-evaluated from the standpoint of what he had hoped to accomplish. Both published and unpublished sources have been combined in order to describe each agricultural problem, as Sutherlin saw it, how it was handled, and the results of his intervention.

This research leads to the conclusion that Sutherlin played an important role in the tobacco industry. His interest in railroad construction directly contributed to the

h

growth of the market, and his activities in agriculture societies and the Grange movement indirectly led to better farming practices and reforms within the tobacco industry. His belief in a work ethic and his espousal and application of the dominant values of the Gilded Age made him representative of the kind of man who worked to build a new South.

Barbara Repler Bennett

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Greensboro

1974

Approved by

Richard H. Bennett

Thesis Advisor

APPROVAL PAGE

WILLIAM T. SUTHERLIN AND THE DANVILLE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

"This thesis has been approved by the following
committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The
University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

by

Barbara Napier Bennett
"

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Committee Members

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Approved by

Richard N. Cument

Thesis Adviser

5/14/74
Date of Acceptance by Committee

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I want to acknowledge my sincere appreciation for the help and guidance given to me in the preparation of this thesis.

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Tobacco and Textile Museum for allowing me to use its library.

Thesis Adviser

Richard N. Gement

Committee Members

Richard Bradford

Jean Gordon

5/31/74
Date of Acceptance by Committee

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contributions to agriculture in the Southside has been largely overlooked. It is hoped that this study will show that Sutherlin did much to alleviate the hardship and confusion immediately after the war and that his efforts to upgrade the agriculture and manufacture of tobacco from 1863 to his death in 1891 have had significance lasting far longer than the time span in which he worked.

While there has been much written on the postwar tobacco industry in general, there is a definite lack of specific secondary material prior to the rise of the tobacco trusts in the late 1880's and early 1890's. The outstanding and most detailed source is Nannie Mae Tilley's The Bright Tobacco Industry 1860-1929 (1948) which cites the importance of Sutherlin and the Danville tobacco market but fails

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to define the role that William T. Sutherlin played in rebuilding and expanding the tobacco industry in Danville, Virginia after the Civil War. Much has been written on Sutherlin's political activities during the reconstruction years in Virginia but his contributions to agriculture in the Southside has been largely overlooked. It is hoped that this study will show that Sutherlin did much to alleviate the hardship and confusion immediately after the war and that his efforts to upgrade the agriculture and manufacture of tobacco from 1865 to his death in 1893 have had significance lasting far longer than the time span in which he worked.

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to elaborate on the methods and motivations that Sutherlin, and others like him, used to promote scientific agriculture in the border area. History of the Tobacco Industry in Virginia from 1860 to 1894 (1897) by B. W. Arnold, Jr. contains a wealth of statistical material and is valuable for the methodology used in growing tobacco but pays little attention to the accomplishments of the Grange movement in the Southside. Joseph Clarke Robert's The Story of Tobacco in America (1949) and The Tobacco Kingdom: Plantation, Market and Factory in Virginia and North Carolina, 1800-1860 (1938) are good general references. J. B. Killebrew's "Culture and Curing of Tobacco in the United States," in the Tenth Census (1880) is used as the basis for most of the published works on tobacco for the time period under study.

Most of the books and articles written on the tobacco industry have been concerned with the phenomenal growth after the war based on the development of bright leaf tobacco, grown first in the Danville area in the 1850's by Abisha Slade in Caswell, North Carolina, about six miles from Danville.¹ The soil in Pittsylvania, Halifax, and Caswell (N.C.) counties was thin, gray, and worn-out--a perfect combination to grow the new strain of tobacco.² This

small area, only eighty by one hundred fifty miles, was already experiencing a boom before the Civil War, although Danville had not reached the prominence of Petersburg or Lynchburg as a market. During the war, both Union and Confederate soldiers learned to appreciate the superior qualities of bright leaf tobacco and much was produced and manufactured into chewing tobacco in the Danville factories during the early years of the war. In 1860, Danville had ranked fourth in the manufacture of leaf tobacco³ but its location away from the battlefields led to its growth during the war. Danville's continued growth after war is well documented but the men responsible for the development of this growth have been mentioned only in passing. It will be the purpose of this study to show the importance of William T. Sutherlin's role in the growth of Danville's tobacco industry.

The opening of the National Tobacco and Textile Museum at Danville in 1973 has made available a collection of both primary and secondary source material, including the minutes of the Danville Tobacco Association, organized in 1869. Sutherlin's private papers at the Duke University library and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

are made more valuable when used in conjunction with the materials at the Museum. The research methods for this study are based on piecing together previously unused material to expand on accepted secondary information in order to fully show the position Sutherlin held in relation to the Danville tobacco industry and to agriculture, in general, in the Southside and border areas of Virginia and North Carolina.

This study is a narrative history of Sutherlin's agricultural activities after the Civil War. It is divided into four sections, each dealing with an agricultural problem--labor, education, transportation, and farmer unrest. Each problem will be explained as Sutherlin saw it, giving its cause and its pre-war background. His recommendations for a solution as well as his direct intervention, in some instances, will be described in full. It is hoped that research in these areas will prove that Sutherlin's actions have been of long range benefit to Virginia agriculture. Research into the transcripts of Sutherlin's public speeches and into his private papers will be used to document his understanding of the farming problems and his subsequent actions. Research in primary and secondary

sources already published will be used to evaluate the 1860-1929 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina results of Sutherlin's activities.

²The Southern Planter and Farmer, April 1857, p. 225.

³Joseph Clarke Robert, The Story of Tobacco in America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 79.

¹Nannie Mae Tilley, The Bright Tobacco Industry 1860-1929 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), p. 28.

²The Southern Planter and Farmer, April 1857, p. 225.

³Joseph Clarke Robert, The Story of Tobacco in America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 79.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF SUTHERLIN
 William Thomas Sutherlin was born April 7, 1822, near Danville, Virginia. He was the oldest son of George S. and Mary Norman Sutherlin. He was educated in local schools and spent almost three years at Joseph P. Godfrey's Private School in Franklin county. Family finances prevented his attending college and he returned home to work on his father's farm until he was twenty-one.

Sutherlin became a clerk in a tobacco factory in Danville when he left home in 1843. Later he bought and sold tobacco and peddled the manufactured leaf in other areas, making \$700 on his first trip south as a peddler. He soon became a dealer in leaf tobacco in Danville. In 1845 he entered a partnership to manufacture leaf tobacco and became the sole owner of the factory in 1850. In that year, Sutherlin's labor force totaled forty hands and his products were worth \$55,000. He used negro slaves in the factory, owning twenty-seven of them over twelve years old, and hiring others from their owners. By 1860, Sutherlin's

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factory was the most extensive in Pittsylvania county and second in size in the State. He employed 75 hands in producing 435,000 pounds of manufactured leaf valued at \$97,732. By this time he owned 40 slaves. He was a pioneer in the use and improvement of steam hydraulic presses for prizing tobacco and had the reputation for always using the most scientific and up-to-date methods known for the manufacture of leaf tobacco.¹

On October 18, 1849, Sutherlin married Jane E. Patrick in Greensboro, North Carolina. They made their home in Danville where Sutherlin was already becoming prominent. Two daughters were born, the younger dying in infancy. The older daughter, Janie Lindsay, married Francis L. Smith of Alexandria in 1871. She died in 1876. Her only living child, Janie Sutherlin Smith, was reared by the grandparents in Danville.

Sutherlin was elected to the board of aldermen in 1851 and became president of the board. He was elected mayor of Danville in 1855, a post he held for six years until he resigned upon his election to the Virginia convention in 1861. As a delegate to the session convention, he voted to remain in the Union. At the outbreak of the

Civil War, he joined the army of the Confederate States of America and was made major and quartermaster for the Danville post. He served in that capacity until the end of the war.

After the war, Sutherlin concerned himself with rebuilding the economy of Virginia. He became a large-scale tobacco farmer and worked throughout the area to encourage and promote scientific farming. He organized and was the first president of the Border Agriculture Society. He helped in the reorganization of the Virginia State Agriculture Society and was its president in 1870. He was an organizer of the Border Grange and the Virginia State Grange. He was president of the Virginia State Board of Agriculture at the time of his death and was also the oldest member of the Danville Tobacco Association.²

Sutherlin's political activities on the state level included membership on the Committee of Nine that went to Washington to intercede on the passage of the Underwood Constitution. He was a member of the State Legislature from 1872-1874 when he was the prime instigator for the Virginia Agriculture and Mechanical College (later Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.) He was a

member of the state Executive Committee of the Democratic Party and was prominently mentioned as the next lieutenant governor of the state at the time of his death.³

Sutherlin's business activities were primarily concerned with tobacco, transportation, and banking. The latter two being a necessary part of the tobacco economy in his way of thinking. As part of rebuilding and expanding the postwar tobacco industry, Sutherlin became a director of the Richmond and Danville railroad and worked diligently to make Danville a railroad center. He was a vice president of the Piedmont Railroad, a branch of the Richmond and Danville Railroad. He built two railroads that became branch lines of the Richmond and Danville--the Milton and Sutherlin Railroad and the Danville and New River Railroad, later known as the Danville and Western. He served on the Board of the Richmond and Danville for thirteen years, during its greatest period of expansion. He organized the Bank of Danville and later the Border Grange Bank, serving as the first president of the latter bank. For many years he was in partnership with Peter W. Ferrell in the Sutherlin & Ferrell Tobacco Company. He was an organizer of the Border Storage Warehouse and was head of

the Sutherlin Meade Tobacco Company at his death.⁴

His other activities included serving as a trustee of Randolph-Macon College and the Danville College for Young Ladies. He supported the Methodist church with both his time and money. He was active in the Masonic Lodge and was noted for his philanthropy.

Sutherlin died July 22, 1893. The State Board of Agriculture said in a resolution honoring him: "He was a man wise in the counsels of this Board toward the direction of measures for the advancement of the agricultural prosperity of each district, and it ever seemed to be his determined effort to do everything which would secure to any individual or locality every benefit of improvement by which land could be made more valuable, farm labor magnified and farm homes happier."⁵

¹Joseph Clarke Robert, The Tobacco Kingdom: Plantation, Market, and Factory in Virginia and North Carolina, 1800-1860 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1938), pp. 179-80.

²"Obituary - William Thomas Sutherlin," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography Vol. I, 1893-94, pp. 339-340.

³Obituary, Richmond Dispatch, quoted in Memorials to William T. Sutherlin as Written by his Friends and published by his Family (Danville, Va.: Dance Brothers, 1894), pp. 66-67.

⁴"Obituary," Virginia Magazine, pp. 339-340.

⁵Memorials, p. 60.

CHAPTER 2

THE LOCAL BACKGROUND

A. The Danville System

After the Panic of 1837 the marketing system in Danville became distinctly different from that of the other tobacco markets. Prior to that time, a state inspector inspected all tobacco sold for both export and domestic use, to insure that the quality met the standards set up for tobacco exported from Virginia. Warehouses had been built to facilitate the inspection; tobacco prized (packed) into hogsheads and tierces was brought to a central point where the inspector took samples from each lot. The tobacco was then branded and sold, still packed within the container. Many manufacturers wanted to inspect the tobacco themselves when it was in loose leaf form because prizing often made the tobacco undesirable for use as wrappers. If the buyer could inspect the tobacco himself, there would be no real need for an official state inspection. The inspection system soon died out in Danville.

When the Panic of 1837 destroyed the Danville market, the buyers went directly to the farms to buy tobacco. Often, farmers brought wagon-loads of tobacco to Danville where it was sold on the street by amateur auctioneers. Horns were blown to let the buyers know a street sale was to be held. The buyer would then inspect samples from the wagon and, when the purchase price had been agreed upon, the tobacco was taken to his factory for weighing. These informal sales led to abuses on both sides. The farmer often "nested" (concealed poor leaf inside of good leaf) the tobacco, and the buyer often weighed the tobacco to the farmer's disadvantage.

Enterprising Danville tobacco dealers, among whom Thomas D. Neal was the most prominent, built warehouses¹ where the farmer could display his tobacco in piles, the buyer could make his own inspection, and the sale would then be carried out by auction. This lessened the chance of "nesting". The warehouse, being impartial, provided accurate weighing facilities. The farmer no longer lost his best tobacco to the official inspector; competition increased prices and he received his cash immediately. The buyer did not suffer the inconvenience and cost of

buying on the Richmond market. A manufacturer could buy as much or as little tobacco as he needed and was not limited to hogshead or piece lots.

Neal's warehouse obtained legal sanction for the charges made for weighing tobacco soon after it became licensed as an official inspection station. This method of selling loose leaf tobacco by auction became known as the Danville system and was functioning smoothly before the Civil War. It was revived rapidly after the war and several warehouses were built. Northern buyers, in particular, liked the Danville system and it was not until the 1870's that other markets adopted the loose leaf auction sales system.²

B. Postwar Danville

At the close of the Civil War, Danville and the surrounding area, although untouched by military actions, found its economy in ruins. The boom experienced in the late 1850's and early 1860's, with the advent of the Danville sales system and bright-leaf tobacco, had bogged down and the tobacco industry, upon which the economy of southside Virginia was based, faced seemingly

insurmountable problems. The soil had been neglected and abused, the population was reduced, and capital and credit was almost non-existent.³

In 1860, Virginia was the largest tobacco producer in the country with 123,968,312 pounds⁴ of which over 5,000,000 pounds were sold in Danville under the loose leaf sales system. Danville was the only important loose leaf market prior to the war. There were 13 tobacco factories with an investment of \$99,200 and with a work force of 496. The factories used 3,612,860 pounds of tobacco in turning out a finished product valued at \$610,332.⁵ Many tobacco manufacturers set up their factories around Danville to be near the bright-leaf tobacco that was used in making wrappers for plug tobacco. The leaf could be bought loose and undamaged by prizing. Located in the middle of the new bright-leaf tobacco belt and at a safe distance from the scenes of battle, Danville soon became the Virginia center for raw and manufactured tobacco.⁶

By the end of the war and certainly by 1870, Kentucky had surpassed Virginia tobacco production by three fold. White burley tobacco, developed around 1864 in Kentucky,

soon came close to equaling the demand for the Danville yellow leaf. Although the war helped to spread the demand for plug tobacco made from the choice yellow leaf, it also handicapped the production and marketing of the leaf to the point that the public developed a taste for the more readily available and highly advertised western leaf tobacco.⁷

Almost the only tobacco sold on the 1865 Danville market was two or three years old, since almost none had been grown in the previous seasons.⁸ Many factories were empty, not only because of the lack of local tobacco, but because of the heavy state taxes placed on tobacco manufactured in Virginia. The tax--30 cents to 40 cents per pound on chewing and smoking tobacco--worked to decrease production since the added cost, passed on to the consumer by a higher price, lessened the sales.⁹

General confusion reigned in Danville after the war. A Freedmen's Bureau was set up to bring order and direction to the newly freed Negroes, but they continued to wander around aimlessly, often making Danville their headquarters. Rumors spread that the federal government would divide the land and give each black head of a family forty acres and a mule. The Negroes wanted to own the land, not work for

wages on it.¹⁰ It became very difficult to obtain reliable labor for the tobacco industry.

Business had come to a near standstill. No national banks had been established and almost no money was in the hands of the soldiers returning to their farms.¹¹ There being little money in circulation, a large part of the local trade was carried on by barter. Wood, corn, and other produce were exchanged for salt, dry goods, and groceries. Debts were nearly impossible to collect and there was little capital available to restock and reseed the rundown farms. Land values decreased on the average of 27 percent in postwar Virginia.¹²

The bright leaf belt--Pittsylvania, Halifax, and Caswell counties--had never been an area of really large-scale farming. Farms had rarely exceeded 300 acres before the war, and they became even smaller during Reconstruction. Of the 2,366 farms in Pittsylvania county in 1869, only 45 were over 500 acres. Of the 1,146 in Halifax and Caswell counties, only 70 were over 500 acres.¹³ Many of the farms were worked by families instead of being large plantations with many slaves. The usual tobacco farm had very few slaves, if any, and the tenant farmer was already well

established in the tobacco-growing region. These small farmers were particularly hurt by the lack of capital and credit. The uncertainty of the racial situation contributed to the difficulty by making the labor supply unreliable.

It became very obvious to Major Sutherlin, and others like him, that they must work themselves to find the answers to the many problems inherent in rebuilding Danville's economy. Obtaining capital and credit seemed to be the most urgent need, so Sutherlin set out upon a journey through the lower South to tie together his many business interests and collect, whenever possible, the overdue debts owed to him. On his return he made loans to many local farmers, enabling them to plant for the next season.¹⁴ These individual loans were only a small part of his effort to ease the credit situation. He became a supporter of bank expansion for the area, but the situation in the state legislature made the chartering of new banks an impossibility. A change in the political scene was necessary if the Virginia southside was to succeed in the rebuilding of its economy. Capital expansion became a permanent long-range goal.

Sutherlin, excluded from amnesty under the \$20,000

clause, had petitioned President Andrew Johnson for pardon on June 3, 1865.¹⁵ Most of the South, not yet embittered by Reconstruction, was anxious for reconciliation and a return to a stable life. In July 1867, a convention of blacks and former Whigs met in Pittsylvania county to try to work out political problems.¹⁶ Sutherlin was a signer of the "Rosencrans" letter,¹⁷ firmly believing that the South truly wanted peace. Sutherlin made his greatest contribution toward a return to stable government through his membership on the Committee of Nine in December 1868 and January 1869.¹⁸ This committee, appointed by a group of prominent Virginians, went to Washington, D.C., to negotiate with federal officials on Virginia's readmission to the Union. The committee asked for relief from the Underwood Constitution and proposed universal amnesty to go along with universal manhood suffrage. The Committee received much criticism from old-line conservatives who opposed universal suffrage, but was successful in easing some of the harshness of Reconstruction government.¹⁹

Other major problems confronting the southside tobacco farmer were the lack of knowledge of scientific farming methods, the emigration of able young farmers to other

areas, and the low status of labor in general. The tobacco dealers were concerned with making Danville the major bright-leaf tobacco market permanently, since the end of the hostilities might see Lynchburg regain the supremacy it had held before 1860. Both the farmer and the dealer saw the need to rebuild the Richmond and Danville Railroad and expand it with branch lines into the surrounding area, particularly Patrick and Henry counties, so as to bring all their tobacco to the Danville market. Many men worked diligently in many ways to solve the problems of the tobacco industry. Only Major Sutherlin seemed to be involved in every area-- labor, education, and transportation.

⁸John Richard Bennett, The South As It Is, 1865-1866, ed. Henry H. Christian (New York: Viking Press, 1949), p. 74.

⁹Arnold, p. 22.

¹⁰Hamilton James Brantford, The Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction, Johns Hopkins University series in Historical and Political Science, Series XXII, Nos. 6-7-8 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1904), p. 65.

¹¹Bennett, p. 99.

¹²Theodore Saloutos, Farmer Movements in the South 1865-1933 (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 7.

¹³Tilley, p. 90.

¹When not used for sales, the warehouses were used for public rallies, lectures, industrial exhibits, community functions and military musters.

²Danville Tobacco Association, One Hundred Years of Progress, 1869-1969, Centennial Edition. (Danville, Va.: Womack Press, 1969), p. 56; Tilley, pp. 202-203; and Joseph Clark Robert, "Rise of the Tobacco Warehouse Auction System in Virginia, 1800-1860," Agricultural History, VII (1933), pp. 170-182.

³B. W. Arnold, Jr., History of the Tobacco Industry in Virginia from 1860 to 1894, Johns Hopkins University, Studies in Historical and Political Science, XV, Nos. 1-2 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1897), p. 20.

⁴Compendium to 9th Census, p. 700.

⁵Robert, The Tobacco Kingdom, p. 176.

⁶Tilley, p. 36.

⁷Arnold, p. 34.

⁸John Richard Dennett, The South As It Is, 1865-1866, ed. Henry M. Christman (New York: Viking Press, 1945), p. 94.

⁹Arnold, p. 22.

¹⁰Hamilton James Eckenrode, The Political History of Virginia During the Reconstruction, Johns Hopkins University Series in Historical and Political Science, Series XXII, Nos. 6-7-8 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1904), p. 65.

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¹³Tilley, p. 90.

¹⁴Many letters in the Sutherlin papers, examples: D. Dyer to William T. Sutherlin, Pittsylvania County, dated 3-10-1866 and M. E. Carter to William T. Sutherlin, Clarksville, dated 1-10-1866.

¹⁵Copy of Sutherlin's request for pardon, William Thomas Sutherlin papers, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University.

¹⁶Richmond Whig, July 25, 1867.

¹⁷In 1868, W. S. Rosencrans, a former Union general, who became minister to Mexico, asked Robert E. Lee to consult with other southerners on a written pledge of devotion to restoring peace to the South. Lee wrote to Rosencrans assuring him that all of the signers of the letter, 32 prominent southerners including Sutherlin, wanted peace and tranquility restored to the South as soon as possible and would all work toward that aim. "We can safely promise on behalf of the Southern people that they will faithfully obey the Constitution and laws of the United States, treat the Negro with kindness and humanity, and fulfill every duty incumbent on peaceful citizens loyal to the Constitution of their country." The letter is quoted in Memorials, pp. 20-25.

¹⁸Members of the committee were Alexander H. H. Stuart, John B. Baldwin, John L. Marye, Jr., former governor Wyndham Robertson, James Neeson, James F. Slaughter, William L. Owen, James F. Johnston, and Sutherlin.

¹⁹Jack P. Maddex, Jr., The Virginia Conservatives 1867-1879: A Study in Reconstruction Politics (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), pp. 69-72.

CHAPTER 3

THE LABOR PROBLEM

A. The Labor Supply

The labor problem in southside Virginia after the Civil War was one of quality, not quantity. There were more than enough laborers available among the freed Negroes, but finding dependable hands presented almost as much of a problem as finding money to pay them. Many of the Negroes did not want to settle down or make long-term work commitments, yet throughout the long tobacco season the farmer had to be sure of adequate labor at the times he needed it.

The employer and the laborer drew up work contracts under the regulations set down by the Freedmen's Bureau. The farmer greatly resented the Bureau's intervention, but it was necessary to protect the Negro. The regulations emphasized that the contract must be explained to the Negro and that no contract was binding for more than two months unless it had been signed and acknowledged before some officer of the law or by two witnesses.¹ A typical

one-year contract called for wages around \$9 per month with 1 1/2 pecks of meal and 3 pounds of bacon per week to be furnished to the employee.² On his Halifax farm, Sutherlin made contracts with 15 hands for wages ranging from \$75 to \$140 per year, depending on the job category. Women employed for household chores were paid much less than field laborers.³ Even with legal contracts, laborers often left in midseason, sometimes taking the employers belongings with them. While the laborer often abused the employers trust, the employer sometimes took advantage of the laborer by not paying him promptly or fairly. But when there was a willingness on both sides to make the best of the situation, there was very little conflict.⁴

Most of the southerners, when they were forced to discard their proslavery sentiments, recognized that free labor was superior to the old slavery system. In 1866 Sutherlin said that emancipation injured only a "parasitic minority" and now the vigorous young men had unprecedented opportunities to make their fortunes. He amazed experienced planters by describing his success in farming with free black labor, using the same type of managerial system he had used in his factories. Sutherlin felt that black labor would

eventually disappear and be replaced by white labor but, in the meantime, black labor was quite satisfactory.⁵

Sutherlin often reiterated his belief that many opportunities awaited the young white man in the postwar south. When he was invited to address the opening meeting of the newly formed Mechanics Association of Danville, he expanded on his views on labor. The primary problem, he said, was the low status held by labor, even in the mind of the laborer or mechanic himself. Sutherlin talked at length on his belief that work, well done, was a source of pride and dignity. He pointed out that society would always have its classes and that society had a definite need for a laboring class that did not downgrade itself. He gave the illustration of a young gentleman willing to work very hard as a clerk in a store but unwilling to apprentice himself to a trade even though the trade might be more interesting and financially rewarding. He said this unwillingness to enter a trade was the fault of the mechanics themselves, since they did not believe in their own worth and saw their labor as degrading. Sutherlin called upon the mechanics to change their thinking and recognize their own ability. He told them that all society depended upon the skilled

workman and it was time for the mechanic to recognize and accept, with pride, his honorable role in society.

In the same speech, Sutherlin called upon the mechanics to devote part of their time to improving farm machinery, thereby helping the farmer to improve his status in life and decrease his dependence upon northern factories. He said a union of mechanics and farmers would go far in restoring Virginia if both groups worked enthusiastically and with pride. An imperative need, and a special project of Sutherlin's, was an agricultural and mechanical college in central Virginia. He visualized a college, with a small farm attached, where the most advanced and scientific methods of industry and agriculture would be taught to the youth of Virginia. While not belittling the importance of a classical education, Sutherlin stated that Virginia needed better educated farmers and workmen and fewer people in the already overcrowded professions.

Sutherlin also called for an immigration bureau to be set up to encourage intelligent, industrious immigrants to come to Virginia.⁶ An immigration society was formed in Virginia and Sutherlin became a member of the executive committee in March 1877.⁷ He also asked the mechanics to

put away their bitterness toward the North and to stop complaining, as all the South was complaining, about the political situation. Instead, he called upon both farmers and mechanics alike to improve the country with their industry and pride in their productivity.⁸

B. The Tenant System

It did not take long for the Negro to move from the status of hired hand to that of tenant farmer. Tenant farming was particularly well suited to tobacco agriculture. Credit was fairly easily obtained since tobacco was a cash crop and all claims could be settled when the tobacco was sold in the fall. It cost from five to eight cents per pound to raise tobacco, and yellow tobacco sold for an average of twelve and one half cents per pound on the 1870 market. The tenant farmer, with his family, usually tended about three acres with an average yield of 572 pounds per acre.⁹ The owner furnished the land, tools, and work animals and paid for half of the taxes, fertilizer, and marketing costs. In return, he received one half of the proceeds from the sale of the tobacco. By 1889, over fifty percent of all the farmers in Caswell, Pittsylvania, and Halifax counties were tenant farmers, evenly divided

between black and white.¹⁰

While the aimlessness of the Negro presented a problem for several years, his movement into the class of tenant farmer alleviated most of the labor uncertainty. Many large farm owners moved into the urban areas and turned their farms over to tenants. For this reason, many young white men also entered the tenant class. The shift from hired labor to the tenant system caused many problems but not usually ones concerned with race relations. The main black-white problems occurred in the cities and were tied in with the political situation.¹¹

C. The Political Situation and the Labor Problem

Immediately after the war, the ex-slaves did not have their own leaders in the chaotic political scene but by 1867, they had turned to politics with relish.¹² In Danville, where the blacks outnumbered the whites, there was great competition between the white mechanics and the black semi-skilled laborers, who were willing to work more cheaply. Political leaders played up the competition over the years. State office seekers, such as William Mahone and other members of the Readjustor party, encouraged the

Danville Negroes to assume control of the municipal government, which they could easily do since they outnumbered the white voters.

The tobacco factories used mostly black labor, and the white laborers had so much difficulty in finding employment that many of them chose to leave the area. During the 1870's, Danville came completely under the rule of Negroes and carpetbaggers, and vagrant Negroes were attracted by the black rule. The warehousemen were very concerned over losing trade to other markets since many farmers were reluctant to bring their tobacco to Danville. Unruly groups of Negroes often roamed the street and insulted the white farmers. Each year the resentment increased between the races. The white citizens, for the most part, tried to make the best of it but tempers often ran high, particularly near election time. The troubled situation came to a head just before the election of 1883.

The 1883 election was bitterly contested. In Danville, the Democrats published a political circular addressed to the "Citizens of the Southwest and Valley of Virginia." The circular cited many instances of the humiliation of white citizens at the hands of the Negroes and told of the

deterioration of the tobacco industry because of Negro rule.¹³ It was signed by 28 prominent citizens, including 6 tobacconists and 4 warehousemen. The circular expressed the feelings of most of the white population.

At that time, there were 3,129 whites and 4,397 blacks in Danville. The whites paid \$38,894 in taxes while the blacks paid \$1,206.63. The city spent \$2,000 for the education of Negro children. The town council had a black majority, all the justices of the peace were black, as were 4 of the 9 policemen, the health officer, the weighmaster, clerk of the town market, and 20 of the 24 renters of market stalls.

On the Saturday before the election, November 3, 1883, rioting broke out between the coarser elements employed in the tobacco factories, both black and white. Soon, utter confusion, interspersed with violence and arson, raced through the town. By the time the riot was quelled, 4 Negroes had been killed and 2 whites serious injured. When news of the riot spread over the state, the Democratic party gathered many more votes, marking a turning point in Virginia politics and a new bitterness in the race-labor relations of southside Virginia.¹⁴

¹Eckenrode, pp. 44-58.

²Contract between Sutherlin and Nat Jones, notarized on 2/7/1871, Duke Library.

³Letter from W. B. Payne to Sutherlin, Halifax Farm, 1/17/1866, Duke Library.

⁴A Handbook of Virginia by the Commission of Agriculture (Richmond, Virginia, 1879), p. 68.

⁵Maddex, pp. 185-186.

⁶Of the 213,000 immigrants that entered the U.S. in 1868, only 713 came to Virginia. During the 1870's, only about 2,900 more foreign born moved into the state than left Virginia. Maddex, pp. 181-182.

⁷Letter to Sutherlin from the Rappahanock and Potomac Immigration Society, dated March 12, 1877, Duke Library.

⁸Address to the Mechanics Association of Danville on March 11, 1867, reprinted in Memorials, pp. 76-105.

⁹Killebrew, p. 806; and "The Great Tobacco Industry," Headlight, A Journal of Progress and Development (Danville, Virginia Souvenir Edition, Vol. 10, March, 1896), p. 29.

¹⁰William DuBose Sheldon, Populism in the Old Dominion: Virginia Farm Politics, 1885-1900 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935), p. 8.

¹¹Tilley, p. 920.

¹²Eckenrode, p. 81

¹³Copy in Sutherlin papers, Duke Library.

¹⁴LaWanda Cox and John H. Cox, eds., Reconstruction: The Negro and the New South (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 259-263; Charles Chilton Pearson, The Readjuster Movement in Virginia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917), p. 164; and Jane Gray Hagan, The Story of Danville (New York: Stratford House, 1950), pp. 18-19. Sutherlin was chairman of the Committee of Forty appointed to investigate the circumstances surrounding the Danville Riot.

CHAPTER 4

RAILROADS AND THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Unlike some of the other tobacco towns in the Virginia and North Carolina piedmont, Danville very early recognized the importance of the railroads to the growth of the tobacco market after the war. By the time that Durham and Winston realized what had happened to them, Danville had the railroads tied tightly to its own market, not only through construction of new roads but by leasing the North Carolina roads and charging advantageous rates to farmers shipping to the Danville market. It took twenty years of litigation and vigorous campaigning for the struggling North Carolina markets to break their dependence on the Richmond and Danville Railroad. Danville used those twenty years wisely on its way to becoming the world's largest loose leaf tobacco market.¹ The large role that railroad expansion played in the growth of the Danville market is, to a great extent, the contribution of William T. Sutherlin.

At the end of the war, the Richmond and Danville, the

only major north-south railroad line in the state, was in a dilapidated condition. The roadbed was badly in need of repair and the rolling stock was literally worn out.

Sutherlin, who had been the chairman of the general commissioners for the Piedmont Railroad, a subsidiary of the Richmond and Danville, was elected to the board of directors for the Richmond and Danville Railroad in 1865.² For thirteen years, Sutherlin was a leader in the growth of the railroad. He also saw that the greatest need for the Danville market was a branch line of the Richmond and Danville into the rich tobacco counties to the west, a line that would tie them to Danville, but capital for railroad expansion, a perennial problem in the south, was almost impossible to find.

The Richmond and Danville had begun operation in 1856. By 1867 the state owned three-fifths of the stock and had loaned the troubled line \$400,000 and guaranteed a loan for \$200,000 more.³ Northern railroads were anxious to buy up almost defunct southern railroads, like the Richmond and Danville, and make them the base for interstate trunk lines. Bitter debates were held throughout the state between people who wanted to keep Virginia railroads in the hands of Virginians and the people who supported the "bucktails,"

the Pennsylvania railroads that wanted to buy a controlling interest in Virginia railroads. The "native" versus "foreign" railroad argument led some people to believe it would be better to close Virginia to the exchange of goods by interstate railroad. The fear of what western competition would do to Virginia farmers resulted in a statement by the Virginia Agricultural Society that railroads might turn Richmond and Norfolk into another Cairo and Alexandria but the rest of the state would be like the barren sands of Egypt.⁴

In some instances, the rivalry was carried into the state legislature. Sutherlin felt that the main consideration was the fact that the "bucktails" had capital for expansion and the Virginia railroads did not. Since most southern railroads, including those in Virginia, were partially state owned and the states didn't have enough money for operating expenses, let alone funds for expansion, the only logical choice was to sell the state-owned stock to the northern companies and put the railroads in the hands of private enterprise. For this reason, Sutherlin, then a member of the state legislature, proposed a bill that would open up Virginia to a "free railroad" policy by adopting

general incorporation laws.⁵ Although the bill failed to pass, the state did sell its stock in the Richmond and Danville Railroad to the Pennsylvania Railroad on August 31, 1871.⁶

With ample resources for expansion, after its purchase by the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Richmond and Danville began a program of building branch lines into Danville and adding connecting links to its network. Sutherlin was called upon to lead in the construction of three lines. The most important, the Danville and New River Railroad, was chartered on March 20, 1873, with a capitalization of \$2,000,000. The city of Danville bought \$50,000 worth of the stock and many Danville tobacco men, including Sutherlin, made large purchases. Sutherlin was one of the original directors of the new company and on August 20, 1879, before construction was started, he was named president. Construction began on March 18, 1880, on a new line that connected Danville with Stuart, seventy-five miles to the northwest. After the completion of this track, the rich yellow tobacco grown in Patrick and Henry counties was brought to the Danville market. Sutherlin resigned as president of the Danville and New River in March 1885, because of ill health,

but he saw the line connect with the Norfolk and Western Railroad in later years, opening up all of the western cities to Virginia markets.⁷

The Milton and Sutherlin Railroad was another branch line built by Sutherlin under the aegis of the Richmond and Danville Railroad. Although much shorter than the Danville and New River, its construction was more difficult. It connected Sutherlin Station in Halifax county with Milton, North Carolina, which then connected with the Danville road. The third line built by Sutherlin was an independent one, the Danville and Western, which had run into construction and financing difficulties. Sutherlin was called in to take over the line when its problems seemed insurmountable. He was able to complete its construction. Soon the Danville and Western was another link connecting Danville to the new tobacco lands in the western part of the piedmont.⁸

The Richmond and Danville Railroad, with its many branches and subsidiaries, gained enormous power in Virginia and was successful in opposing the charter for a railroad between Durham and Lynchburg and in preventing its construction until 1890. Through leases on North Carolina railroads, the Richmond and Danville was able to prevent the

building of spurs and kept Winston virtually isolated until 1892, when the Roanoke and Southern Railroad connected Winston with Martinsville and Roanoke.⁹

Railroad connections were extremely important to the warehousemen in Danville. Farmers in the immediate area brought their tobacco to market in wagons, but with roads often impassable in rainy weather, it was necessary to ship the tobacco by rail if any distance was involved. If Danville was to become more than just a local market, it was imperative to make it easily accessible to the farmer. Many of the warehouses placed empty tierces at each railway station for the farmer's convenience. The farmer used the tierces to loosely pack his tobacco for shipment by train to Danville. The warehouse, whose tierces had been used, would provide help in moving the tobacco from the Danville train station to the floor of the warehouse for the next sale. This practice certainly encouraged the farmer to sell on the Danville market.¹⁰ The cooperation between the Richmond and Danville Railroad and the Danville warehousemen was mutually beneficial, and the phenomenal growth of the Danville market was based on this full cooperation, particularly as it was influenced by Sutherlin's activities within the Richmond and Danville Railroad hierarchy.

¹Danville held this position until 1919 when Wilson, North Carolina had a larger sales volume. Since then, Winston Salem and Danville have vied for the number two position, usually held by Danville in recent years. This was a result of increased production in the coastal area rather than a decline of sales on the Danville market. Tilley, p. 218.

²Letter to the stockholders of the Piedmont Railroad, June 10, 1862, Duke Library, quoted in Memorials, p. 28.

³Stuart Daggett, Railroad Reorganization (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1908), p. 146.

⁴Maddex, pp. 148-149.

⁵Ibid., p. 156.

⁶Daggett, p. 146. The Pennsylvania Railroad retained control of the Richmond and Danville until 1880 when it sold its interests to the W. P. Clyde syndicate, composed of both northern and southern capitalists, for \$1,200,000. The Richmond and Danville was the base of the Southern Railroad system. John F. Stover, The Railroads of the South 1865-1900, A Study in Finance and Control (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), p. 234.

⁷Edward Pollock, Illustrated Sketchbook of Danville, Virginia: Its manufacturers and Commerce (Petersburg, Virginia, 1885), pp. 77-82, 129.

⁸Memorials, p. 28.

⁹Tilley, p. 568.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 222.

CHAPTER 5

SUTHERLIN AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

William T. Sutherlin was a pioneer in using scientific improvements in the manufacture of tobacco¹ and when he turned to large-scale farming after the war, he used the most scientific agricultural methods known to his generation. He felt very strongly that the only way southside Virginia could be prosperous was to educate its farmers in the use of the most modern practices and most efficient machinery for the production of their crops. This kind of education naturally divided itself into two types--formal and informal. Sutherlin actively sought the establishment of an Agricultural College to provide formal but practical training in agriculture for young men going into farming. For those farmers who needed more informal instruction, the agricultural societies were very helpful. Agricultural pamphlets and journals, published both privately and by fertilizer companies, provided other sources of information.

A. The Agricultural College

In 1873, Sutherlin was a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, representing Danville and Pittsylvania County. At that time Congress had provided for the distribution of certain funds to each state to be used for educational purposes. Each state was obligated to use the funds for the support and maintenance of at least one college whose primary course of study was to be agriculture and mechanical arts. Debates broke out in the Virginia legislature, as they had in other state legislatures, over whether the funds should be used to establish a new college or to add new departments in the necessary areas to already existing colleges. Sutherlin led the fight in the legislature for the establishment of a new college.²

Sutherlin addressed the House of Delegates regarding the education bill on January 24, 1873, and proposed a bill calling for the establishing of an Agricultural and Mechanical College, a project that he had publicly supported for several years.³ He was constantly interrupted by Mr. Poague, the delegate from Rockbridge county who represented the Virginia Military Institute, and Mr. Hill, the delegate from Albemarle county who represented the University of

Virginia. Poague and Hill led the opposing forces who wanted the Congressional funds diverted to the established schools they represented. Sutherlin praised both institutions for their outstanding contributions in the fields of liberal arts and military education but told of the experiences of other states that had tried to change the emphasis of existing colleges. None had satisfactorily filled the Congressional requirements. Then he cited examples of other states that, after the same conflicting debates that Virginia was having, had successfully started new schools that provided a great service to agriculture and industry. He admitted the added expense of duplicating buildings and adding new faculties but pleaded that agriculture and industry would always take a back seat in education unless they were in an institution expressly for them. In such a college, the student would still be required to study the classics, but these would not be the main objective. Sutherlin saw no way that either the University of the Military Institute could offer a comparable program. The only exception, as he saw it, was the Hampton Normal Agriculture College, a Negro institution that already offered a program in agriculture. Sutherlin proposed that one third of the

Congressional funds be turned over to the Negro school.

The objection was raised that the Congressional funds would not be sufficient for the support of a new college, but Sutherlin pointed out that the Virginia Military Institute had been started with an endowment of only \$6,000 and the currently available funds would provide around \$12,000 annually. Since it would be necessary to secure other money for capital expenditures, he proposed that the location of the college be determined by the size of the contribution that any city or county would offer. Presumably this would amount to a sum between \$50,000 and \$100,000, since the college would greatly benefit the area in which it was located. Additional revenue would come from scholarships provided by prosperous farmers who would be eager to employ graduates of the new college. Several farmers had already spoken to Sutherlin about the pressing need for trained managers for their farms and their willingness to sponsor the education for likely candidates.

Sutherlin emphasized the great service to the state that would result from the proposed college, particularly if an experimental farm was an integral part of it. Every farmer in the state would have the right to go to the

college and examine stock and crops. Good seed suitable to the climate and soil of Virginia could be developed. New inventions and innovations for the improvement of machinery might be developed. The entire state would profit immensely from improved agriculture.

One of the biggest obstacles in the way of Sutherlin's plan was the University of Virginia. Friends of the University wanted to use the new money to add an agricultural and mechanical program to that institution and drop all talk of a new college. Some of them questioned the value of an academic or collegiate education for a farmer, offering the opinion that the best farmers often were the least educated. In response to this argument, Sutherlin said:

Give a young man the right kind of agricultural education, interest him in his studies, and I hardly think that he can become averse to farming. The tendency in too many institutions of learning, particularly, I fear, in our State, Mr. Speaker, has been to look upon professional life as preferable to any other, and when the farmer's son leaves such institutions he is too apt to wish to make his living in some other manner than by tilling the soil. But in a college such as I propose the result will be very different. The student will go there with a farmer's or mechanic's life in view. He will be trained to the business, and will become attached to and take pride in it. Farming and the mechanic arts will be dignified in his eyes, and labor be considered respectable. At present the laboring classes, although the bone and sinew of the State, have too little to

do with the management of public affairs, and unless some provision is made for the improvement of this class, as can be done by a proper use of this appropriation, the agricultural interest of the State will continue to decline, and farming become less profitable year by year. Many of our best citizens are now leaving the homes of their childhood and going to other parts of the country, or to the cities of our own State, hoping to better their fortunes. The young men are abandoning their farms and seeking more congenial and remunerative employments. What will the credit of Virginia be worth if the cry continues to come up that farming is unprofitable? Our towns, too, must suffer; for they cannot flourish unless sustained by a successful system of agriculture. Our internal improvements must languish and depreciate in value. I tell you, sir, that this state of things ought not to be allowed to continue. We must extend the hand of encouragement to the laboring classes, that they may be induced to remain in Virginia, and not leave us, as thousands are doing every year. We cannot blame them for leaving if the soil refuses to yield. It must be made to yield if prosperity is to dawn upon the land. . . . I regard the establishment of an agricultural college as one of the best means of improving our waste lands, and of thus enriching the State, so that the public credit may be re-established upon the firm basis of material wealth.⁴

Sutherlin's efforts to secure an agricultural college for Virginia, complete with an experimental farm, were successful. A land-grant college, under the Morrill Act, had been chartered in Blacksburg in 1872. It was designated to receive the funds as a college for the training of mechanics and farmers under Sutherlin's bill. The college is now known as the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The school established an agricultural

experimental station in 1888, under the Hatch Act of the United States Congress, and later a bright leaf tobacco experimental station near Chatham.⁵ The growth of the school and its success in improving the role of agriculture in Virginia attest to the need for the type of college Sutherlin visualized.⁶

B. Agricultural Societies

The Virginia State Agricultural Society met in Richmond in November, 1866, for the purpose of reorganizing to suit the new farming conditions brought about by the war. It was concerned with devising methods for raising capital as well as coping with the change in the labor system.⁷ Members believed that the Society must offer help and encouragement to the farmer in more tangible ways than before the war. It must become more involved with agricultural education if the state was to retain its former position in the Union. Sutherlin was prominent in the reorganization of the State Society and was elected its president from 1868 to 1870.⁸

On the state level, a series of Agricultural Fairs were held to exhibit prime stock and crops. Farmers exchanged ideas and were encouraged to learn new agricultural

methods from their more successful neighbors. The railroads acted in conjunction with the State Society by offering liberal terms for transporting the farmers and their exhibits to the Fair and offering free return tickets.⁹ In later years, the railroads transported all new members of the Society both ways for fairs and meetings in order to encourage the aims of the Society.¹⁰ The Southern Planter, an agricultural journal established in 1840,¹¹ became the voice of the society and printed many articles that were useful in upgrading agriculture in the state. This journal printed reports from the Society presidents as well as reports on crops and livestock production.¹² Sutherlin remained active in the Virginia State Agricultural Society and was president of the Virginia State Board of Agriculture when he died but he felt that it was on the local level that agricultural societies could be of the most benefit. For this reason, in 1867, he was an organizer of the Border Agriculture Society, serving the bright leaf tobacco area along the Virginia-North Carolina border, and later served as its president.¹³ He addressed the opening meeting of the Society in Danville on October 1, 1867. In that address, he talked of the problems facing the farmers and discussed his views on

agriculture.

Sutherlin described the purpose of the Society to the members present at the opening meeting. The main objective, he said, was to unite the efforts of all the people in the improvement of the land, stock, tools, and labor and to stimulate the members, and everyone around them, to raise the position of agriculture to the high place it deserved. He called on every citizen of Danville and the surrounding area, whatever his profession or occupation, to help the Society and its goals.

At that time (1867) many farmers were undecided whether or not to continue farming themselves, lease out the land in small lots since no one had the money to buy land, or simply abandon the land and move on to new country. Sutherlin pleaded with them to remain in Virginia and start anew, forgetting past bitterness and working together to improve their native state. He told them that they were in the beginning of an agricultural revolution and had a great opportunity to participate in the building of a new south. He admitted that labor, as presently employed, was adequate for the cultivation of only one third of the open land but improved technology could offset that problem. He said that labor

saving devices could save 25 percent of working time and that abandonment of the old slavery system, after a period of adjustment, would increase production. He warned the members that failure to accept the passing of slavery might lead them to irretrievable losses while fast acceptance of the free labor system allowed quick adaption to altered conditions and rapid solutions to the agricultural problems.

Sutherlin stressed the importance of agricultural fairs for the education of the farmers. He called on the Society to hold semi-annual fairs so that all the members could be exposed to the latest mechanical farming inventions and have their uses explained. He wanted the farmers to exhibit their best stock and their best products from the fields, looms, and dairies. Prizes would be offered and the competition would stimulate the farmer to improve his products. He hoped that the fellowship of the meetings would lead to cooperation and that the young men of the county would be attracted to farming when they realized that agriculture was an "honorable calling."

Another function of the Society was to educate its members to make intelligent and thrifty purchases. By becoming informed consumers they could accumulate capital to

improve their farms and buy up surplus land. He asked the women to assist their husbands by using all their skill and enterprise and asked all the people in the border area to support the Society. He reminded them that improvement of agriculture improved every phase of the economy.¹⁴

The ideas expressed by Sutherlin in his various speeches and reports to local and state agricultural societies were the same ideas that led to later cooperative movements among Virginia farmers. The Virginia State Grante and Border Grange, and later the Farmer's Assembly, were direct outgrowths of the agricultural societies.¹⁵ All of Sutherlin's ideas were pointed toward the uplifting of the status of the farmer through intelligent and cooperative agriculture practices.

C. Education From Commercial Sources

The fertilizer companies, in particular the Southern Fertilizing Company of Richmond, were very active in publishing pamphlets on tobacco agriculture for southside Virginia. Just after the war, the Virginia State Agricultural Society was still recommending Peruvian guano for tobacco production¹⁶ but its exorbitant price and soil depletion soon made the new chemical fertilizers more popular.

William Gilham, a former chemistry professor at the Virginia Military Institute, became the president of the Southern Fertilizing Company when it was formed in 1866. He produced a fertilizer for bright tobacco that was far superior to guano. John Ott, secretary of the company and a friend of Sutherlin's traveled through the southside promoting the fertilizer and demonstrating its proper use. He distributed much printed material about tobacco agriculture to the farmers while he sold fertilizer. Both Gilham and Ott served as associate editors of the Southern Planter, at different times, and preached the value of chemical fertilizers.¹⁷

All of the agricultural societies encouraged their members to read agricultural journals and newspapers and, in the border area, the Southern Planter was the most popular. It published articles by leading tobacco producers, such as Sutherlin, and by tobacco experimenters, such as R. L. Ragland of Hyco. All manner of equipment and fertilizers were advertised and the farmer was offered a wide variety of products for sale.¹⁸ The pamphlets, circulars, and books offered by the fertilizer companies were valuable contributions to the education of the farmer, as were the journals. Sutherlin recommended the Southern Planter to his friends

and to the members of all agricultural societies as being useful to the farming community.¹⁹

It was unfortunate that the fertilizing companies, after being of so much benefit to the farmer, soon lowered their standards for chemical composition and raised the prices on their products. The farmers had become so dependent on the fertilizer manufacturers that the companies took advantage of the farmer. By 1875, the most popular tobacco fertilizer, Anchor Brand, sold for \$75 per ton and the North Carolina State Board of Agriculture declared it chemically unsatisfactory.²⁰ Dissatisfaction with the fertilizers was a basic reason for the Grange movement and Sutherlin, who had endorsed Anchor Brand in 1871,²¹ led the attack to reduce prices and raise the quality of the fertilizer.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 137.

²⁰ *Northern Plaster, 1867-1890.*

²¹ *History of Virginia Agriculture.*

²² *Address to the State Agricultural Society at Norfolk, Virginia on October 1, 1887, reported in Proceedings, pp. 141-142.*

²³ *ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

²⁴ *Journal of the Proceedings of a General Meeting of the Virginia Agricultural Society and Convention of Farmers, Winchester, Virginia, 1881, p. 24.*

¹Pollock, p. 120.

²Maud Carter Clement, The History of Pittsylvania County, Virginia (Lynchburg, Va.: J. P. Bele Co., Inc., 1929), p. 243.

³See speech to the Mechanics Association of Danville, March 11, 1867.

⁴Address to the House of Delegates, January 24, 1873. Reprinted in Memorials, pp. 125-142. Quotation taken from pp. 137-138.

⁵Tilley, p. 170.

⁶Memorials, p. 26.

⁷Arnold, p. 46.

⁸Robert Enoch Withers, M.D., Autobiography of an Octogenarian (Roanoke, Va.: Stone Printing and Manufacturing Co. Press, 1907), p. 273.

⁹Broadside for Virginia State Agricultural Fair at Richmond, November 2-5, 1869, Duke Library.

¹⁰Southern Planter, July 1878.

¹¹Tilley, p. 159.

¹²Southern Planter, 1867-1890.

¹³"Obituary" in Virginia Magazine.

¹⁴Address to the Border Agricultural Society at Danville, Virginia on October 1, 1867, reprinted in Memorials, pp. 142-148.

¹⁵Sheldon, pp. 23-24.

¹⁶Journal of the Proceedings of a General Meeting of the Virginia Agricultural Society and Convention of Farmers (Richmond, Virginia, 1866), p. 26.

¹⁷Tilley, p. 150.

¹⁸Southern Planter, April 1875.

¹⁹Letter from John Ott to Sutherlin, Richmond, March 6, 1877.

²⁰Tilley, pp. 158-159.

²¹Circular for Southern Fertilizing Co., March 2, 1871, Duke Library.

Virginia tobacco industry. The production fell from 123,948,312 pounds in 1860 to only 37,086,364 pounds in 1870.¹ While both prices and production declined in Virginia, the per capita consumption of tobacco increased throughout the country.² It was obvious that other states were replacing Virginia in tobacco production and equally obvious that something had to be done soon if Virginia were to regain her standing in tobacco production. In Danville, the farmers banded together in the Border Agriculture Society where they could learn to improve the quality of tobacco and increase production so they could enlarge their income. The tobacco dealers were more concerned with expanding the market and increasing the efficiency of marketing procedures, thereby cutting costs. Both the grower and the dealer recognized the need to cooperate in an organized manner for their mutual benefit, so the Danville Tobacco

CHAPTER 6

AGRARIAN UNREST

The postwar years were exceedingly difficult for the Virginia tobacco industry. The production fell from 123,968,312 pounds in 1860 to only 37,086,364 pounds in 1870.¹ While both prices and production declined in Virginia, the per capita consumption of tobacco increased throughout the country.² It was obvious that other states were replacing Virginia in tobacco production and equally obvious that something had to be done soon if Virginia were to regain her standing in tobacco production. In Danville, the farmers banded together in the Border Agriculture Society where they could learn to improve the quality of tobacco and increase production so they could enlarge their incomes. The tobacco dealers were more concerned with expanding the market and increasing the efficiency of marketing procedures, thereby cutting costs. Both the grower and the dealer recognized the need to cooperate in an organized manner for their mutual benefit, so the Danville Tobacco

Association was formed.

A. The Danville Tobacco Association

In 1869³ a group of warehousemen and tobacco dealers joined together in the Danville Tobacco Association with the key aim of giving permanency and stability to the Danville market. They elected Peter W. Ferrell as their first president. Ferrell was Sutherlin's partner in the Sutherlin-Ferrell Tobacco Company, a firm that bought tobacco on commission for speculation.⁴ Other organizers were Sutherlin, T. J. Talbott, I. S. Bendall, Matt P. Jordan, W. W. Worsham, F. X. Burton, T. C. Skinner, E. F. Acree, J. M. Neal, G. W. Linthicum, J. W. Hunter, George O. Wilson, O. R. Hall, J. M. Skinner, John G. Friend, P. C. Venable, George S. Hughes, E. G. Mosely, R. M. Abbott, and George A. Lea.⁵

In order to establish a code of ethics, the Association set up regulations for warehouse operations and enforced a series of penalties when the regulations were violated. Typical rules covered a schedule of fees for storing tobacco and inspection fees. The inspector was required to provide a certificate of inspection for the farmer and was held responsible for samples taken for inspection. He was also forbidden to sell or speculate for himself, or for others. He

or his deputy could be removed for malfeasance. The warehouse had to provide receipts to the farmer showing the weight of the tobacco and the date of sale. The Association set up a committee for arbitration of all claims between the warehouseman and the farmer. Effort was made, particularly in later years, to settle all claims fairly.⁶

Competition was strong among the warehouses. Most of them had two or more owners, each with connections in different areas of the bright tobacco region. Wide acquaintance among the farmers was necessary to insure having enough customers, so employees were chosen for geographical reasons. Often people were employed to drum up business for a particular warehouse by traveling through the area and making individual selling arrangements with the farmers. The Association passed several resolutions condemning "drumming" and fined any warehousemen who employed drummers.⁷ Nevertheless, the practice was widespread and continued for many years.

The Association provided a great service to the industry when it organized selling time and rotated the sales among the warehouses, giving each house an equal number of first sales and last sales during the month.⁸ Also the

size of the piles of tobacco offered for sale were standardized. In earlier years, a pile might weight as much as 1500 pounds. The Association set a limit of 300 pounds, giving the farmer a better price since the tobacco was better displayed. Sales were speeded up by setting a minimum number of piles to be sold each hour, which increased the volume of sales. In an effort to insure fair weighing practices, fines were imposed on warehouses that gave certificates of false weights to the farmers or the buyers. Fines were also levied against ticket markers who shortchanged buyers. The Association employed a supervisor to see that the rules and regulations were enforced since it was determined that the Danville market would have the best possible reputation.⁹

One of the primary functions of the Association was to publicize and promote the Danville tobacco market. In 1874, it distributed 20,000 circulars extolling the advantages of the Danville market.¹⁰ Individual warehousemen promoted their own houses by using "drummers," even though the Association considered drumming unethical. In other promotions, the Association cooperated with other organizations to benefit the tobacco industry. A committee from the Association

worked with the Danville Chamber of Commerce in a successful campaign to get crop insurance rates reduced.¹¹ The Association had a sliding scale for membership dues. Each warehouse paid dues based on a percentage of the volume of tobacco sold and the dues were sufficient to cover the Association's expenses. The financial accounts were audited each year and the president made a report to the membership, which was published in the Danville Register.¹² No formal records were kept by the Association for the first nine years but accurate sales figures were included in the annual report. The success shown by the Association in promoting the Danville market is reflected in the sales figures:
10,621,557 pounds of tobacco were sold in 1870 and 27,698,125 pounds in 1877. Prices ranged from a high of \$20.42 per hundred pounds in 1874 to a low of \$8.80 in 1877.¹³

Within a short time, the Danville warehousemen, through the Danville Tobacco Association, held a near monopoly on the sale of bright leaf tobacco. All of the sales houses were so allied in common interests that their charges were uniform. The southside farmer had no choice, other than a long distance haul to Richmond or Lynchburg, except to sell

his tobacco in Danville. When the farmer was unable to sell his crop at a profit, he directed his antagonism to the Danville Tobacco Association.¹⁴

B. The Grange Movement

The generally depressed state of agriculture during the Reconstruction years led to the establishment of the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry in 1867. In Virginia, the southside was the center of agrarian discontent and the tobacco farmers led the way in organizing the Virginia State Grange on February 16, 1872.¹⁵ At the first annual meeting held in Richmond in late December, 1873, Sutherlin was elected to the committees on Commercial Relations and Transportation, and to the Advisory Committee of the Worthy Master.¹⁶ He was a leader in organizing the Border Grange in Danville. By 1875, Virginia had 13,885 Grange members, with Pittsylvania county having 800 members in 27 chapters.¹⁷

The Virginia State Grange listed its main objective as being the same as that of the National Grange, the betterment of the lot of the farmer in every way. Farmers in the South joined those in the West in complaining about the middlemen who regulated prices paid to farmers, merchants who

set the prices on the farmer's purchases, railroads that discriminated on freight rates, and the federal government's control of currency. The Grange members, landlords and tenants alike, saw themselves growing poorer and the city people growing richer,¹⁸ so they drew up a list of purposes, all aimed toward improving the farmer's position. While most of the statements of purpose were broad enough to appeal to all farmers, two interested the tobacco farmers more than the others -- dispensing with middlemen and opposition to monopolies.¹⁹ They felt that many of their problems were the result of the monopoly the Danville Tobacco Association held over the tobacco market. Among other problems facing the Grangers in the tobacco belt were the high prices and low quality of commercial fertilizers and the scarcity of labor and capital.²⁰

The Grange was fairly successful in its fight against the fertilizer companies. The intense competition among the companies for Grange business forced adjustments in price and quality.²¹ The Grange was also successful in getting a state railroad commission established to end rate discrimination.²² While the Grange actively campaigned for more equal distribution of taxes and worked to bring industry to

the southside, the main energies of the Border Grange were directed against the Danville Tobacco Association, which it held responsible for lower prices and higher marketing costs.²³

The warehousemen blamed the low price of tobacco on its poor quality. They said loose leaf selling pinned the price to the quality of leaf more firmly than ever before since the farmer could not nest inferior leaf inside of good leaf nor could he "sand" the tobacco to add more weight as had been done with prized leaf.²⁴ The Grangers accused the Danville Tobacco Association of setting excessive rates for warehouse fees and began a bitter contest to force the reduction of the fees.

All of the warehouses in Danville belonged to the Association and charged a basic 3 percent commission for selling the tobacco. The Grange said any amount over 2½ percent was exorbitant. In support of this contention, it published a broadside in October, 1875, stating that more than \$3,000,000 worth of tobacco had been sold in Danville in the previous season. If the five warehouses had charged 2½ percent commission, they would have realized \$75,000, or \$15,000 each. With each warehouse averaging from \$7,000 to \$8,000 for

expenses, each would have made a profit of at least \$7,000, an ample return on their investment. Furthermore, the Grange objected to the loss of tobacco from inspection sampling by the Association. The broadside demanded a renegotiation of the fees to 2½ percent or the farmer would sell directly to the buyer and bypass the warehouse completely.²⁵

In March 1874, more than a year before the broadside was published, the Grange had successfully pressured all seven of the Danville warehouses to lower the fees to 2½ percent but by September, the Association was in control again and five of the warehouses raised the fee back to 3 percent. The sixth house returned to the schedule later in the season and only the warehouse operated by William P. Graves held out for the rest of the selling season. The Association voted to fine any sales house that did not levy the 3 percent fee from \$100 to \$500 and expel from the group any house that did not pay the fine. This meant that the warehouse would be dropped from the sales schedule and was an effective threat to keep the warehouses in line.²⁶ The strong language in the Grange broadside was in answer to the position taken by the Association and was not an idle threat.

The Association did not respond to the demands made by

the Grange, so on March 25, 1875, the Virginia Legislature granted a charter to the Border Grange Warehouse and Supply Company. The new warehouse was chartered in the name of eighteen prominent Grangers, led by Sutherlin. Capitalization was to range from \$5,000 to \$120,000, issued in shares of \$20 each. The company was also authorized to furnish capital, credit, and farming implements under specified contracts. The Grange warehouse operated for only four years before being ruled out of the regular sales schedule by the Association, for unannounced reasons, so the battle for lower fees resulted in only a short-term victory. Nearby towns in North Carolina took advantage of the fight between the Grange and the Association to open their own markets. They solicited Grange business by offering the 2½ percent rate but they, too, soon adopted the 3 percent fee. Yet competition did loosen the hold the Association held on the bright leaf market and eventually led to a more effective and more equitable Association.²⁷

In the same month the Border Grange Warehouse was chartered, The Border Grange Bank of Danville also was granted a charter. Sutherlin, again, was the leader and the bank's capital structure was similar to that of the ware-

house but necessarily greater, \$50,000 to \$500,000. The bank began operation in 1877 when its capital stock was secured. Sutherlin invested heavily in the bank and believed it filled the great need of providing credit and capital to Grange members in the border area. The bank lasted much longer than the warehouse, serving the southside until the turn of the century.²⁸

Sutherlin was prominent in Grange activities for several years. While the Grange served a need during the depression years of the 1870's, it quietly died away when higher prices for tobacco temporarily eased the farm problems in the southside. The Grange did bring about some positive gains for the border area, primarily by teaching the farmers the benefit of group action. The Southern Planter became the voice of the Grange, as it had been for the Virginia State Agriculture Society, and led the fight for reform in all agriculture marketing procedures. The Grangers in the tobacco region were successful in destroying the state inspection system and proved the value of competition in lowering prices.²⁹

C. The Farmers Alliance

The fall of tobacco prices in the late 1880's led to the second attempt at organization by the southside farmers, this time in the Border Alliance. As the Grange had done, the Farmers Alliance in Virginia found its leaders in Pittsylvania county. Sutherlin, although no longer as active in farming, supported the principles of the Alliance. The Alliance was more militant and political than the Grange but its target was still the same in the southside -- The Danville Tobacco Association.

The Border Alliance, at a meeting on August 7, 1889, in Danville, passed a resolution to do away with middlemen in both buying and selling. The Alliance members wanted to deal directly with manufacturers, not with agents. Since the Association refused to lower its fees, the Alliance built its own warehouse, as did many other Alliances in North Carolina and Virginia. All of the Alliance warehouses were temporarily successful, but they soon found that they had to raise their fees to the same level as the Association warehouses in order to stay in business. This led to the conclusion that Association charges were not excessive and that competition had made the charges as low as

would support business.³⁰

Other projects of the Alliance were more successful. Cooperative buying led to lower prices for fertilizers and farm equipment. The Alliance warehouses, by providing competition, led to reforms in areas such as weighing charges and auctioneers' fees. As in other years, when tobacco prices rose, Alliance influence lessened. The most long lasting effects of the Farmer's Alliance movement were to raise the quality of agriculture production through education and to increase the farmer's purchasing power through the buyer's cooperatives.³¹

³⁰Minutes of the Danville Tobacco Association, 1867-1893. Property of Danville Tobacco Association, Danville, Virginia (National Tobacco and Textile Museum), May 8, 1974.

³¹Minutes, March 11, 1892.

³²Minutes, December 1, 1888, and One Hundred Years, p. 58.

³³Minutes, February 8, 1874.

³⁴Minutes, August 6, 1884.

³⁵Minutes, March 11, 1891.

³⁶One Hundred Years, p. 47.

³⁷Facts concerning the Danville Tobacco Market, compiled by United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 1969, p. 18.

¹Compedium to 9th Census, pp. 700-701.

²Meyer Jacobstein, The Tobacco Industry in the United States, Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law. Ed. by the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University, Vol. 26, No. 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1907), p. 44.

³Although the Danville Tobacco Association was established in 1869, it was formally chartered by the Virginia General Assembly under House Bill No. 247 in 1888. One Hundred Years, p. 49.

⁴Daybook of the Sutherlin-Ferrell Tobacco Co., Sutherlin Collection, Duke Library.

⁵One Hundred Years, p. 56.

⁶W. N. Ruffin, Rules and Regulations Governing Blair's Leaf Tobacco Storage and Inspection Warehouse, Danville, Virginia (Danville, Va.: E. R. Waddill and Brothers Power Presses, 1883).

⁷Minutes of the Danville Tobacco Association, 1869-1893, property of Danville Tobacco Association, Danville, Virginia (National Tobacco and Textile Museum), May 6, 1874.

⁸Minutes, March 11, 1883.

⁹Minutes, December 1, 1884; and One Hundred Years, p. 58.

¹⁰Minutes, February 4, 1874.

¹¹Minutes, August 6, 1884.

¹²Minutes, March 11, 1883.

¹³One Hundred Years, p. 49.

¹⁴"Facts concerning the Danville Tobacco Market," compiled by United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 1969, p. 18.

¹⁵Solon Justus Buck, The Granger Movement, A Study of Agricultural Organization and its Political, Economic and Social Manifestations 1870-1880 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913), p. 56.

¹⁶Minutes of the First Annual Meeting of the Virginia State Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, 29, 30, & 31st of December 1873, also of the called Session held at Richmond on the 31st of March, 1, 2, & 3 of April, 1874 (Richmond, Virginia, 1874).

¹⁷Minutes of the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Virginia State Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, held at Richmond on the 11, 12, 13, 14, & 15th of January, 1876 (Richmond, Va.: Clemmitt & Jones, 1876); and Saloutos, p. 33.

¹⁸Francis Butler Simkins, The South Old and New, A History 1820-1947 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), pp. 255-259.

¹⁹1st Minutes of Grange, p. 38-39.

²⁰Southern Planter, March 1874, pp. 107-111.

²¹Tilley, p. 159.

²²Sheldon, p. 23.

²³"Facts Concerning the Danville Tobacco Market," p. 18.

²⁴Ibid., p. 2.

²⁵Broadside published October, 1875, Duke Library.

²⁶"Facts Concerning the Danville Tobacco Market," p. 18; and Tilley, pp. 398-399.

²⁷Tilley, pp. 397-401.

²⁸Pollock, p. 165; Tilley, p. 402; and letter, Border Grange Bank to William T. Sutherlin, Danville, 3/7/1877.

²⁹See various issues of the Southern Planter, 1874-77.

³⁰Richmond Dispatch, August 7, 1889; Sheldon, pp. 23-4, 44; and Arnold, p. 48.

³¹Sheldon, pp. 44-74; and Tilley, pp. 405-414.

The time between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the century was one of great expansion and economic growth for the entire country but the South grew at a slower rate than the North and West. It was slow to accept change and reluctant to face the fact that the old South was dead. It was left to a few forward-looking Southerners to cry to push the South into the new era. Sutherland filled that role in eastside Virginia. An evaluation of the long-range results of his work leads to the conclusion that Sutherland was one of the new breed of Southerners, particularly the new breed of tobaccoist.

The place of tobacco in society changed after 1865. Its use was more widespread.¹ Soldiers who had developed a taste for bright leaf tobacco created a demand for the Danville leaf. Chewing was no longer accepted in social circles but hand-rolled cigarettes became very popular since they were no longer considered effeminate. In 1876, machine-made cigarettes were introduced at the Philadelphia Exposition.² Previously women were employed to roll cigarettes by hand,

CONCLUSION

The time between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the century was one of great expansion and economic growth for the entire country but the South grew at a slower rate than the North and West. It was slow to accept change and reluctant to face the fact that the old South was dead. It was left to a few forward-looking Southerners to try to push the South into the new era. Sutherlin filled that role in southside Virginia. An evaluation of the long-range results of his work leads to the conclusion that Sutherlin was one of the new breed of Southerners, particularly the new breed of tobacconist.

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averaging 2,000 cigarettes per day. Each new machine took the place of 50 women and production increased from 41,000,000 cigarettes in 1875 to 4,000,000,000 in 1896. Tobacco also came into use in other roles. Leaf tobacco was used as poultices on human beings and as a raw material for insecticides to kill vermin on dogs and cats. Tobacco smoke was used in greenhouses to kill pests. Stems were used as fertilizer and brews made from tobacco were used to destroy grubs on fruit trees and ticks on sheep.³ The uses for tobacco seemed almost unlimited, and Sutherlin was quick to see that increased production of quality tobacco was necessary to capitalize on the demand for bright-leaf tobacco.

The success of Sutherlin's efforts to expand the Danville market is reflected in the growth of the town of Danville as well as in marketing figures. In 1870, Danville had a population of 3,463; in 1873, the population had grown to 5,130, with 52 licensed tobacco dealers; in 1878, the population was 7,500, with 96 dealers; and in 1890, the population was over 20,000. One-half of the total population was employed in either leaf houses or tobacco factories, the plug and twist factories alone employing over 4,000 hands. There were 10 warehouses; nearly 30 factories for plug and

twist tobacco; 2 factories for smoking tobacco; 100 small factories for handling, picking, and reprizing tobacco; and 148 firms purchasing tobacco on the Danville market. Danville remained prominent in manufacturing until the late 1880's, when the formation of the American Tobacco Company put an end to small scale manufacturing.⁴

The success of the Danville tobacco market is shown by its growth from 1870 to 1890,⁵ the period in which Sutherlin worked to make Danville the railroad center of the state. The branch lines that Sutherlin built made Danville the most easily accessible market for the bright tobacco region. His influence as a member of the board of directors of the Richmond and Danville Railroad was certainly a factor in that railroad's actions in North Carolina. Through its leases on the North Carolina Railroad, the Richmond and Danville prevented spur tracks being built to Winston warehouses until 1873. It also was able to keep other railroads out of Winston until 1885, giving Danville the opportunity to consolidate its hold on the area market. The growth of Durham as a market was also retarded by the Richmond and Danville Railroad through its leases, but Durham manufacturing interests were more successful than Winston in getting new

railroad construction.⁶ Because of its transportation advantages, Danville became the largest loose-leaf tobacco market, and held that title until 1919 when Wilson, North Carolina claimed first place because of increased production in that area. Danville's success during those early years was based, to a large extent, on Sutherlin's railroad activities.

Whether or not Sutherlin was as successful in improving the quality of production through agricultural societies is not easily ascertained. The aims of the societies were commendable and the fairs they sponsored stimulated interest in quality production. The societies probably filled a need for the farmer during those unsettled times by providing an outlet for discussion of problems and offering encouragement for their solution. It is unlikely, however, that measurable long range benefits resulted from Sutherlin's leadership in the societies. He did emphasize that quality was more important than quantity in commanding higher prices, but his major contribution to the societies was in his attitude toward labor.

Much has been written about the work ethic in the Gilded Age, but its application has usually been confined to

the industrialized North. While many white Southerners still took the attitude that work was undignified, Sutherlin took every opportunity to preach the dignity of labor, equating hard work with virtue. He subscribed to the belief that any man could improve his position in life through work and thrift. Furthermore, he thought each man had the duty to educate himself by any means available in order to do his best at whatever his task might be. Sutherlin saw no reason why any man who applied himself diligently to his work could not succeed and considered it obligatory for each man to do so. Telling former slaveowners that they were better off working themselves instead of using slave labor made Sutherlin unique during Reconstruction years. He tried in every possible way to teach both farmers and mechanics his own work ethic and, much to the dismay of his neighbors, applied it to both blacks and whites.

Sutherlin did not believe in equality of the races and often expressed the opinion that black labor would eventually disappear from the South, but he was one of the few planters who believed the negro could work successfully in a free-labor system. Many tobacco planters, when forced to divide their land into tenant farms, did not want the ex-slave to

have the status of tenant farmer, a status that had been strictly confined to whites before the war. Sutherlin's acceptance of the free black laborer on his own farms must have influenced other planters. The tenant system was the only practical way of producing tobacco during those years. Few people had money enough to buy land from the large planters, and the planters did not have the money to pay the labor supply to work the land. The tenant, by farming on shares, solved both problems. The tenant system grew rapidly in the bright-tobacco area during the years 1870-1890,⁷ and Sutherlin's public expressions of his belief in the dignity of labor contributed to the ease of transition to free labor in the southside.⁸

The Grange movement does not seem to have had long range effects on the tobacco industry other than demonstrating the effectiveness of group action as opposed to individual action. The Grange was able to achieve only temporary reforms with the Danville Tobacco Association, but possibly its efforts were responsible for the Association's gradual self-reform, making it the positive influence for the good of the industry that it remains today. Sutherlin, being both a Granger and a member of the Association, was able to

see both sides of the problem. He saw the need for an adjustment of the marketing procedures but realized that low prices were due to overproducing, not to the activities of the Association.⁹ It is probable that Sutherlin's investments in the Grange warehouse and bank were made as much in his own financial interests as in furthering the interests of the Grange since both interests were compatible.

There is no doubt that Sutherlin's endeavor to secure an agricultural and mechanical college for Virginia has had long lasting benefit to the tobacco industry. Without Sutherlin's leadership in the debates in the legislature on the use of the land distribution funds, the funds would have probably gone to the University of Virginia for a secondary program and been used less effectively than at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The experimental work with tobacco carried on by the Institute has been of direct benefit to the southside. The conclusion must be drawn that Sutherlin, through his business interests and his philosophy, did make valuable and long lasting contributions to the Danville tobacco industry.

While Sutherlin's motives in promoting the tobacco industry have no real bearing on the value of his

contributions, it is interesting to note that he never pretended to be altruistic. He always referred to himself as a businessman and acknowledged that his actions were meant to increase his material wealth. If he was able to help others at the same time he helped himself, he gladly did so in the belief that financial success was the desirable goal of every American. This attitude, a prevailing one during the postwar years in the North, did not reject the values of Christianity since the Church, itself, often equated morality with ambition. Shiftlessness was considered sinful and hard work was rewarded with success. In this light, Sutherlin, a highly moral man, gave his support only to institutions that encouraged work and thrift. These included the Methodist church and colleges that prepared young men to compete in industry and agriculture. He consciously worked to improve the economy of his region and state because he strongly believed that material progress for himself, and those others who were willing to apply themselves, led to prosperity for the country.¹⁰

¹See Table 1 in Appendix I

²Arnold, p. 36.

³J. B. Killebrew and Herbert Myrick, Tobacco Leaf: Its Culture and Cure, Marketing and Manufacture (New York: Orange Judd Co., 1902), pp. 465-481.

⁴Pollock, pp. 6, 85, 121-122; Arnold, p. 14; A Handbook of Virginia by the Commission of Agriculture (Richmond, Virginia, 1879), p. 126; and Historical, Industrial and Statistical Review: Cities and Towns on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, with their Early History, Progress and Development, together with the Manufacturing and Mercantile Industries, and Sketches of Leading Public and Private Citizens (New York: Historical Publishing Co., 1887), p. 155.

⁵See Table 2 in Appendix I

⁶Tilley, pp. 565-568.

⁷See Table 3 in Appendix I

⁸Maddex, pp. 185-186.

⁹Southern Planter, January 1887, pp. 1-3; and see Appendix II for the Danville Tobacco Association's tribute to Sutherlin at his death.

¹⁰Speech made to the Washington and Franklin Literary Society at Randolph-Macon College in 1880, Memorials, pp. 105-125.

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INFORMATIONAL TABLES ON THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Table 1

SALES STATISTICS FOR THE DANVILLE MARKET			
YEAR	VOLUME	TOTAL SALES	AVERAGE PER 100 LBS.
1870	10,621,557	\$1,301,149.73	\$12.25
1871	13,191,406	1,582,968.72	12.00
1872	14,065,637	1,746,413.10	12.34
1873	15,827,846	1,842,820.13	11.64
1874	16,147,715	2,178,631.75	13.47
1875	14,679,421	3,002,218.17	20.45
1876	23,466,413	3,126,084.97	13.32
1877	16,426,297	2,033,979.21	12.38
1878	27,698,828	2,439,959.22	8.80
1879	26,827,922	3,223,689.51	12.01
1880	33,151,310	3,775,500.79	11.38
1881	30,552,504	3,326,957.16	10.80
1882	25,572,536	2,509,338.89	9.81
1883	35,503,112	4,776,456.45	13.45
1884	27,548,014	3,601,419.90	13.07
1885	41,017,904	5,554,599.19	13.54
1886	40,353,942	3,796,843.49	9.41
1887	29,342,728	2,536,915.90	8.65
1888	31,969,257	3,315,831.00	10.60
1889	28,803,846	2,619,295.05	8.75
1890	24,925,076	3,297,540.07	13.22

Compiled from the Annual Reports of the Danville Tobacco Association.

Table 2

 ANNUAL CONSUMPTION OF TOBACCO PER CAPITA IN THE UNITED STATES

1863-1865	1.6 pounds	1881-1885	4.3 pounds
1866-1870	1.8	1886-1890	4.6
1871-1875	3.2	1891-1895	5.1
1876-1880	3.2	1896-1900	5.3

From the 1907 edition, Meyer Jacobstein, The Tobacco Industry in the United States, p. 44.

Table 3

 PERCENTAGE OF TENANT FARMING IN THE BRIGHT TOBACCO BELT

<u>County</u>	<u>1879</u>	<u>1889</u>
Caswell	36.12%	49.48%
Pittsylvania	38.45%	57.17%
Halifax	41.74%	58.75%

From Nannie Tilley, The Bright-Tobacco Industry 1860-1929, p. 94.

APPENDIX II

RESOLUTION OF THE DANVILLE TOBACCO ASSOCIATION
ON THE DEATH OF WILLIAM THOMAS SUTHERLIN

WHEREAS, In the providence of an Allwise God, death has again invaded our ranks and taken from us our oldest, and one of our most honored members, MAJOR W. T. SUTHERLIN, who, although not continually in the trade, has for the past forty-seven years been prominently identified with the tobacco industry of our city and community, first as manufacturer, then as planter, and at the time of his death as the head of the Sutherlin Meade Tobacco company, and recognizing the loss our trade, city, and community have sustained by this visitation of Providence, we, the Board of Trade, desire to express our deepest sorrow at his death, and to this end be it

RESOLVED, 1st. That we bow submissively to the will of God in summoning from amongst us by the hand of death, our associate, MAJOR W. T. SUTHERLIN, a leader whose judgment was sought, as a counselor wise and sagacious, ever willing and ready to lend his influence and energy for the upbuilding of our trade and city, and a helping hand to those in distress.

2nd. That we tender to his bereaved family our heartfelt sympathy in his death, and pray that God will shield and protect them in this their sad affliction.

3rd. That these resolutions be spread upon our records, and the same published in our city papers, and resolved further, that the trade attend the funeral in a body.

(This resolution was moved and adopted at a special called meeting of the Danville Tobacco Association at Planter's Warehouse in Danville on July 22, 1893.)

Minutes of the Danville Tobacco Association, July 22, 1893.

A TRIBUTE TO SUTHERLIN

This poem lacks literary merit but does express Danville's sentiments about Sutherlin:

William Thomas Sutherlin

by Duval Porter

He is gone! Th' imposing presence no more
Shall move among us: The giant mind,
That could the future as the past explore,
Must live forever: Death has no power to bind
The immortal part: Upon a brighter shore
'Tis kindled afresh to shine forever more.

His vision was prophetic, he foresaw
The coming event ere the shadow came;
Seem'd to know by instinct th' inexorable law
That would fulfill itself and put to shame
The idle fancies of all who prophesied
Or merely guessed, but his were justified.

His city mourns the loss of such a son,
The most illustrious in her annals found;
The triumphs he has for her commerce won
Shall speak for him, though silent in the ground:
In trumpet tongues throughout the coming years
Will Danville claim this mighty son of hers.

He was the poor man's friend, who better knows
That this is true than he to whom was given
The boon to know him well. He did disclose
A heart of tenderness to such as driven
By cruel fate their miseries to plead,
And find in him a friend in all their need.

Alas!! No more shall trusting friend invite
The counsel wise he was so free to give,
No more the fond wife in whom he did delight,
Nor lovely grand-child for whom he seemed to live,
Hear his voice again until they meet once more
Beyond the veil upon that blissful shore.

(This poem was written by Porter to be included in a book of memorials to Sutherlin written and published by his friends after his death in 1893.)