

Messrs Editors, Cotton having become of such vast importance, not only to the producers, but to the world, everything relating to its history is of interest. Therefore, I am induced to give a little information I lately obtained of the great staple, and the rather because you have promised in a late number of your paper, to lop off the unreadable portions of your correspondents communications. Knowing that mine will undergo the pruning of a judicious hand, I feel some security that I shall not thrust before the public an unsightly or useless article. I am well aware that when we are possessed of an idea, so much of a "hobby" that we must write about it, there is a danger of becoming prosy. Besides, we planters are generally unused to composition, and when we have anything to say, usually take twice the space that you would, who know so well the use and connection of words. I hope you will strike out any and every portion of this, if not of sufficient interest to go before the public.

I rode, a few days since, six miles below this place, to see my old friend Thos. Talbot, and his kitchen and barn. Mr. Talbot is eighty-three years old, in full possession of all his faculties, and he is living where he settled sixty two years ago. Whitney, the inventor of the cotton gin, settled a plantation adjoining him, on which he placed one of his gins; the first that was used in Wilkes county; perhaps the first in the State. He and his partner, Durkee, erected a gin house, and a large cotton house. The latter to hold the cotton they expected to receive from customers to gin. The gin house was grated, so that visitors might look through and see the cotton flying from, without seeing the gin. He suffered women to go into the gin house to see the machinery not apprehending that they could betray his secret to builders. Lyon, who lived some eight or ten miles above this place, by dressing himself in women's clothes, procured admittance and came out and made his improvement, the saw gin. Mr. Talbot says that Billy McFerran, a little Irish blacksmith, who died a few years ago in this county, made the saws, the first that ever were made. Durkee, Whitney's partner, being dissipated and inattentive to business, he sold out his place, and the gin and cotton house coming into the possession of Mr. Talbot, he moved them to his place. The former is now his kitchen, and still has its long grated windows, as in the time of Whitney. The cotton house makes a large and commodious barn. Mr. Talbot says that Allison or Ellison, who had been connected with Whitney in business, told him that the latter got his first idea of the invention from a gin used to prepare rags for making paper, and which he saw on a wrecked vessel.

On the place sold by Whitney, was erected in 1811, a cotton factory, and, I presume, the first in the state. The prime mover in the enterprise was a Mr. Bolton from Savannah who spent his summers, then, in Washington. Mr. Talbot had four shares. The factory had one hundred and sixty spindles, cost \$1700, and made fifty yards of cloth a day, which sold from fifty cents to a dollar per yard. The weaving was done by handloom weavers, who were obtained from Long Cane in South Carolina. The factory proved an unprofitable affair.

In this connection, it may be interesting to say, that during the War of 1812, cotton was hauled from this county to Baltimore and Philadelphia, and the waggons loaded back with goods. Waggoners are now living in the county, who used to drive the teams engaged in this service.

I cannot close this communication without a word about my aged and highly respectable friend in his character of planter. Some of the land now in cultivation by Mr. Talbot was old when three fourths of Georgia was in possession of the Indians. Originally of strong soil, as Wilkes county was, Mr. Talbot, by paying some attention to improvement, has not only preserved but much improved some of his old lands. But that to which I particularly wish to direct attention, is his regret that he had not commenced hill side ditching long ago, before the creeks and branches had carried off the best of his soil. The walnut, locust and other shade trees in his yard, planted with his own hands, have the appearance of aged trees. His servants, some as old or older than himself, with their generations of children, grand-children and I don't know how far to go in the great-grand-children, give to the white haired citizen the appearance of a patriarch at the head of his tribe. He has had born on this place, one hundred and nine children, but has kept no record of deaths.

[signed] Garnett Andrews  
Washington Wilkes Co Geo August 1852