

## 4 Cannabis Comes to the New World

Written by Ernest L. Abel

Tuesday, 01 June 2010 00:00

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Like her greedy European neighbors, England eyed the New World with Midas eyes. Spain's conquistadors were sending a stream of gold and silver booty from the Aztec and Inca Empires. The English believed that they too could become rich by looting the native empires to the north of the Spanish colonies. There was also the possibility that this northern part of the New World might contain a passageway to the South Seas that would take English ships on to the East Indies and their spice-laden treasures. With colonies solidly established in the New World, England could control such a passageway and would thereby be assured of a virtual monopoly in any trade with the East.

The dream never materialized. There was no gold, no silver, no passageway to the Indies. There was, however, a different kind of wealth to be extracted from the Americas. The natives, in their ignorance, were willing to exchange furs—beaver, otter, seal, deer—for a pittance. The country was thick with trees; the waters were teeming with fish. The possibilities for trade were boundless. And by promoting the production of raw materials in the New World badly needed at home, England might become self-sufficient.

Sir Walter Raleigh became especially excited at the prospect of harvesting hemp in the American colonies as early as 1585 after Thomas Heriot, his friend and tutor, told him that he had seen a hemp-like plant growing wild in what was to become Virginia. Heriot's hemp, however, was *Acnida cannabinum*, a plant which also yields a fiber suitable for weaving, but one that is far inferior in strength to cannabis.

Even when the American variety of hemp proved not to be the same as that grown in Europe, the possibility of raising cannabis in the American colonies sent imaginations soaring. If only the energies of the colonists could be directed toward raising hemp, England might yet free herself from her heavy commercial debts.

The first settlers who founded the colony at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, however, did not make the long journey across the Atlantic to become hemp farmers. Like most Englishmen, they came to America in the belief that the country abounded in gold and silver. These early colonists expected to make a quick and easy fortune and planned to return home as soon as possible. When they found no gold or anything else of material value, they became so discouraged they refused to work to support themselves. Had it not been for the friendliness of the Indians who gave them food and showed them how to raise some basic crops, they would have starved to death.

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In 1611, formal orders to raise hemp were finally received in the colony.<sup>1</sup> Speaking to a motley gathering of His Majesty's loyal subjects, the new governor, Sir Thomas Dale, informed the colonists that the king expected them to grow hemp.

The colonists were indifferent to the royal proclamation. They cared as little about raising hemp as they did any other crop. Yet by 1616, colonist John Rolfe could boast that the inhabitants of Jamestown had raised hemp "none better in England or Holland."<sup>2</sup> However, Rolfe had also begun to experiment with growing tobacco, and it was not long before the demand for American tobacco was greater than anyone could have anticipated. Faced with a choice between raising tobacco and becoming rich or complying with the Crown's wishes that they grow hemp, the colonists planted tobacco in every nook and cranny of the Jamestown settlement.<sup>3</sup>

To combat this obstinance, in 1619 the Virginia Company directed every colonist in Jamestown to "set 100 [hemp] plants and the governor to set 5,000" and it allotted one hundred pounds to a Gabriel Wisner to hire skilled hemp dressers from Sweden and Poland at ten pounds, ten shillings per man, if they would emigrate to the new colony.<sup>4</sup>

Parliament was also prepared to offer sizable inducements. In 1662, Governor William Berkely was empowered to offer each colonist two pounds of tobacco for every pound of hemp delivered to market. Similar bounties for hemp production were also offered in Maryland in 1671, 1682, 1688, and 1698.

In 1682, Virginia tried to encourage hemp production by making hemp legal tender for as much as one-fourth of a farmer's debts. Similar laws were enacted by Maryland in 1683 and by Pennsylvania in 1706.<sup>5</sup>

While these laws and bounties had the effect of increasing hemp production throughout Virginia and Maryland, very little hemp ever found its way into English ports. If there was any extra hemp in the colonies, Yankee merchants wanted it. Hemp was so scarce in the north that supply could not keep up with demand and New England merchants were prepared to buy all the available hemp they could get their hands on.

### HEMP IN NEW ENGLAND

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The story of the Pilgrims is known to every schoolchild in America. Ostensibly, the Pilgrims left Europe to find a place in the New World where they could practice their religious beliefs in freedom. But not all the Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth in 1620 came to America because of religious convictions. In fact, most of the passengers on the Mayflower hoped to earn enough money through fishing or trading for them to return to their homeland without having to worry about the future. Few of the Pilgrims were prepared or were willing to spend even part of their lives providing raw materials for the enrichment of England's merchants.

Nevertheless, cannabis was among the first crops to be introduced into the Massachusetts Colony, and initially there was great hope that it might even become an economically viable staple in New England. The General Court of Massachusetts was particularly interested in urging hemp production on the colonists because of the possibility that, without fibers with which to make clothing, the colony might freeze to death during the winter. To forestall such a possibility,

lit] desired and expected that all masters of families should see that their children and servants should bee industriously implied, so as the mornings and evenings and other seasons may not bee lost, as formerly they have beene, but that the honest and profitable custome of England may be practiced amongst us; so as all hands may be implied for the working of hemp and flaxe and other needful things for clothing, without abridging any such servants of their dewe times for foode and rest and other needful refresh-ings. 6

In 1629, shipbuilding was started in the village of Salem, and if there was any hemp available, Salem's merchants were prepared to buy all they could get their hands on. But hemp was so scarce that it had to be imported from abroad.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the exhortations of the Massachusetts court and the clamorings of Salem's business interests, production fell far short of administrative expectations, and in 1639 the court formalized its demands by passing a law requiring every householder to plant hemp seed.

In 1640, the General Assembly of Connecticut also tried to persuade its colonists to sow hemp "that we might in time have supply of linen cloth among ourselves."<sup>8</sup> Like her sister colony, the Connecticut Assembly feared that the colonists might die of exposure if they did not take steps to raise fiber-bearing crops such as hemp.

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Clothes were not the only concern of the colonists. The growth of the New England shipbuilding industry was creating yet another demand for hemp in the form of rope. Without rope, shipbuilders could not make rigging to hoist sails, and without sails, ships were useless. Although rigging could be made from a number of other raw materials, the preferred material was hemp because of its strength and durability.

Although ropemaking had become an established and respected trade in England by the thirteenth century, few colonists were trained ropemakers. In 1635, the first ropewalk—a factory for making rope from hemp—was established in Salem. Rival businessmen in Boston soon recognized the advantage of having a local ropemaker and they invited John Harrison to come to Boston from England and set up shop. Harrison arrived in 1642 and went into business in the open lot next to his house on Purchase Street.

By the terms of the agreement he worked out with Boston's town fathers, he was to have a total monopoly on making rope until 1663. During that time, Harrison's business prospered and he raised eleven children. When the monopoly expired, a John Heyman "set up his posts" and began making fishing lines. Harrison immediately began to worry that the competition would cut into his own business and he successfully persuaded the town fathers to revoke Heyman's permit. Despite Boston's need for rope, the town fathers continued to honor Harrison's monopoly until his death.

In the meantime, however, ropewalks were being erected all up and down the seacoast to meet the incessant demand of the fledgling ship-building and fishing industries. By the time of the Revolution, almost every town on the eastern seaboard had at least one. Boston alone had fourteen ropewalks. It was the taunting of His Majesty's soldiers by these Boston ropeworkers that eventually set off the "Boston Massacre" of 1770.

The early ropewalks were relatively primitive industries. All that was needed was a large open field, a number of posts to rap the rope around, and of course, a good supply of hemp fiber. The rope was made by turning two hemp strands in opposite directions around one another. When the strands untwisted they came apart somewhat, but the friction between them held them together and produced a strong durable cord. These cords were then twisted with another set, and on and on, until thick strong ropes were created.

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Later on, when ropemaking became a major industry in America, the fields were enclosed in long covered alleyways, some of which stretched over 1,000 feet in length and 20 feet in width, with three or four ropemakers working side by side. The sight of one such enterprise later inspired Longfellow's poem, the "Ropewalk" (1854):

In that building, long and low,  
With its windows all a-row,  
Like the port-holes of a hulk,  
Human spiders spin and spin,  
Backward down their threads so thin Dropping, each a hempen bulk.

### THE LIFE OF THE HEMP FARMER

One of the reasons that American farmers were unable to produce enough hemp to satisfy England and their own colonial needs was the scarcity and high cost of labor needed to harvest the crop. Both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson tried to raise hemp and both lost money doing so.<sup>9</sup> Exasperated at England's incessant demands that the colonies send her more hemp, Benjamin Franklin railed at Parliament's ignorance of the shortages of hemp in America: "Did ever any North American bring his hemp to England for this bounty. We have not yet enough for our own consumption. We began to make our own cordage. You want to suppress that manufacture, and would do it by getting the raw material from us. You want to be supplied with hemp for your manufactures, and Russia demands money."io

The shortage of labor in the colonies was only one of the reasons farmers were unable to raise enough hemp to meet domestic demand for the crop. Another important reason was that hemp farming was not the easiest of jobs.

To prepare his land for hemp seed, the farmer usually had to plow his acreage at least three times, once in the fall, a second time in early spring, and a third time just before sowing. Immediately before the seeds were actually planted, the ground had to be carefully raked to break up any clumps so that the seeds would be distributed evenly. Seeds would be scattered throughout the field beginning in late March until the end of June. Generally, a farmer sowed his land at least two or three times just in case his seeds failed to germinate. About forty to fifty pounds of seed were sown per acre, and unless his seed was less than a year old, the farmer could not expect a good crop. Hemp seed had to be fresh and had to have been stored properly. Because older seeds were so unreliable, most farmers refused to have anything to do

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with suppliers they did not know personally. Although England regularly shipped hemp seed to the colonies, it was usually stored improperly and was often too old to be any good. It was in no small measure due to the shortage of good hemp seed from England that the colonists were un-able to meet the demand for hemp at home and in the mother country.

About four to six days after sowing, the cannabis seed began to germinate. Some young plants grew at an astounding rate of five to six inches per day. Once his plants began to grow, the farmer could forget about them since no weed was a match for hemp and insects rarely attacked the plants. Thirteen to fifteen weeks later, the plants turned from green to a yellowish brown, the leaves began to droop and fall to the ground, and the flowers began to release their pollen, filling the air with clouds of hemp dust. The plants were finally ready to be harvested. Now came the back-breaking toil dreaded by all hemp growers.

Initially, farmers pulled each plant out of the ground to get as much of the stem as possible. A farmer who uprooted his crop could clear about a quarter of an acre per day. If he used a knife and cut the stems above ground, he could clear about a half acre.

Once a number of stalks had been pulled or cut, the farmer tied them into sheaves about as thick as a man's leg. These bundles were then leaned against a fence or against each other and allowed to dry for two to three days. After drying came the rotting (or retting as it was usually called). Retting was done to weaken the glue-like resin that caused the outer fibers to stick to the stalk.

The colonists used one of three retting methods, and the law stated that a dealer had to specify the way his hemp had been retted. Water retting was considered to be the best method as far as the resulting quality of the hemp fiber was concerned. This involved immersing the hemp in a stream or pond for four to five days if done in summer, or thirty to forty days if done in winter. European hemp was usually water retted, but this was not generally done in America. Instead, Americans preferred winter retting.

Winter retting was easier than water retting and it did not require a nearby water source. To winter-ret his hemp, the farmer simply threw the stalks on the ground when it began to get cold, leaving the rain, frost, and snow gradually to loosen the gum binding the fibers. Winter retting generally took about two to three months, and the result was a fiber measurably inferior in strength to water-retted hemp.

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The third method was dew retting. This was to become the most common practice in Kentucky, but in colonies such as Virginia it was not used very much. Dew retting involved spreading the hemp plants on the ground at night to catch the dew and then tying them together in the morning so that they would remain wet for as long as possible. It was both time-consuming and produced a very inferior grade of hemp. Shipbuilders refused to buy dew-retted hemp, but cotton growers preferred it because it was cheap. All they wanted it for was to bale their cotton shipments.

After the hemp was retted by one of these three methods, it was allowed to dry once more. Then came the most tedious job of all, the "breaking" or freeing of the outer fibers from the stalk. During the Middle Ages, breaking was done by hand. But this was too slow a process and eventually "hand brakes" were introduced into the hemp industry. The simplest of these devices usually consisted of several vertical boards attached end to end with a movable arm hinged at one corner to the top board. The hemp was placed over the stationary edge and the top arm, which was sharpened somewhat, was brought down onto the hemp stalks with enough force to cut the fiber but not enough to go through the entire stalk. It was a task that required a great deal of skill as well as strength and stamina. Thomas Jefferson, one of Virginia's major hemp producers, gave up on hemp because of the back pain his slaves experienced in connection with the herculean breaking process:

The shirting for our laborers has been an object of some difficulty. Flax is so imperious to our lands, and of so scanty produce, that I have never attempted it. Hemp, on the other hand, is abundantly productive and will grow forever on the same spot. But the breaking and beating it, which has always been done by hand, is so slow, so laborious, and so much complained of by our laborers, that I have given it up. . . . 11

Before slaves were put to work in the hemp fields, the English had toyed with the idea of shipping the "multitude of loyterers and idle vagabonds" to the New World "where they would be put to worke in beatinge and workinge of hempe for cordage" as they were in England. The Virginia Assembly had also considered the possibility of "seating all convicts that should be imported into Virginia, in a county by them-selves, under the care of proper overseers, who should confine them from doing any hurt, and keep them to their labor by such methods as are used in Bridewell."<sup>12</sup>

In fact, jail was where a great deal of hemp was processed, as shown in William Hogarth's (1697-1764) *The Harlot's Progress*, a series of engravings depicting what to Hogarth was the

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insidious influence of city life on the morality of a country girl named Mary Hackbout.<sup>13</sup>

The fourth illustration in the series depicts Mary beating hemp in Bridewell Prison, a house of correction in Tothill Fields, Westminster, for harlots such as herself and other sundry immoral characters. Hogarth portrays her holding a large mallet in her hands while the hemp strands lie in front of her on two tree stumps. A prison officer is shown standing beside her drawing Mary's attention to the pillory, already occupied, which bears the warning: "Better to Work than Stand Thus." A little to the right of the pillory is a whipping post which also bears a message: "The Wages of Idleness." To the far right of the picture an effigy of a "Sr. J. G." is shown hanging from a gallows, a starkly realistic foreboding of one of the uses to which the hemp Mary is working on is to be put.

Mary herself is pictured dressed in finely designed clothing totally inappropriate to prison life, whereas close beside her another woman is shown destroying the vermin in her pest-ridden garments. Quite possibly, Hogarth may have got the idea for Mary's attire from the September 24, 1730, issue of the Grub Street Journal which contained an item concerning a Mary Muffet who had recently been sent to Bridewell. The lady was a "woman of great note in the hundreds of Drury," said the Journal, "who about a fortnight ago was committed to hard labor in Tothill-fields, Bridewell . where she is now beating hemp in a gown very richly laced with silver."<sup>4</sup>

In any case, it was commonplace for prisoners to be put to work breaking hemp by their jailers. The work was arduous and punishing. However, prisoners were not made to work on hemp to teach them remorse. The fact was that few English men or women would willingly do such work. Forcing prisoners to do so kept them busy and also provided their keepers with a product that could be sold in the marketplace. With the money they earned from exploiting their charges, jailers were expected to pay the prison food bill. More often than not, a little something extra wound up in the jailers' pockets at the expense of a little something extra in the prisoners' bellies.

Frequently, the very hemp prisoners broke in jail was used to snap a fellow inmate's neck. In fact, because rope was so often made of hemp, the word "hemp" gave rise to several slang terms and expressions that were once familiar in England and America, but which have now disappeared from our language. Among the more current terms of a bygone era were "hempen collar," meaning a hangman's noose, and "hempen widow," a woman widowed by the hangman's hempen noose. "To die of hempen fever" was another way of saying a man had been hanged. During the heyday of the American Wild West, vigilantes were sometimes referred to as "hemp committees," and "sowing hemp" was another way of saying that someone

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was on his way to a rendezvous  
with the hangman.

### THE HEMP FARMER'S WIFE

Once hemp had been splintered into shreds on the brake, it was ready for market. More often than not, however, the farmer kept his harvest for his own needs.

During pre-Revolutionary times, hemp fabric was one of the most common materials in the colonial homestead. Hemen cloth covered the backs of farmers and their entire families, hemen towels wiped their hands, hemen napkins and handkerchiefs mopped their brows and faces, and hemen tablecloths graced their fine furniture. There was virtually no household that did not contain an item made from hemp.

The popularity of hemp and the consequent dearth of hemp fiber to leave the American colonies for England was in no small measure due to the enterprising and dedicated pioneer women of the colonies, who transformed the raw fibers from the fields into cloth and fine linen. It was not an easy task.

After her husband brought her the broken hemp fiber, the farmer's wife placed it across the top of a "swingling" block, a strong wooden board three to four feet high mounted on a sturdy wooden frame. She and her older daughters now began to pound the fibers as hard as they could with wooden paddles until it was beaten free of woody particles. The long fibers that survived this beating were then drawn through a hatchel, a wooden comb that removed remaining short fibers. Hatcheling was done several times, each time with a comb with teeth set more closely together than the previous one. After the final combing, the fine soft pliable threads were spun into cloth. Short fibers removed during the preliminary hatchelings were called tow, and were made into heavy thread for burlap and cord.

Spinning involved twisting loose fibers together to make a single strand. The pioneer woman who was lucky enough to own a spinning wheel sat facing her prized possession and pulled a few strands of hemp from a rod or spindle and twisted these onto a bobbin. The bobbin was then set revolving by pressing down on a foot treadle. As the bobbin turned, it caused the thread to be wound. After a number of bobbins had been filled, the thread was wound into

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skeins on a hand-turned reel. The number of strands per skein was determined by the number of times a projecting peg tripped another peg.

After "reeling," the yarn was bleached to give it color. This too was a time-consuming job. First, the yarn was submerged in running water. Then, it was covered with piles of ashes and hot water, rewashed, pounded again, and washed once more. Now it was ready for bleaching. To give the yarn a white color, it was soaked in flaked lime and butter-milk. Walnut bark gave a brown tinge; oak and maple gave purple; hickory bark produced a yellowish color; sumac berries produced pinks and reds; blueberries gave blue.

Once dyed, the yarn was ready for weaving. This step involved passing a horizontal or "weft" thread over and under alternating vertical or "warp" threads. There were various types of looms in the colonies and there were always improvements in loom technology. Basically, however, the loom was an elaborate tool that allowed the weaver to hook the weft thread over and behind warp threads faster than could possibly be done by hand.

### **MERCANTILISM AND THE "SPINNING BEE"**

As long as spinning and weaving were primarily household activities, they were encouraged by Parliament. But when they developed to the point that colonial imports began declining due to homemade goods, England tried to restrict these activities.

The mercantile system which England adopted as an integral part of her policy toward her American colonies was basically one which required the colonists to be suppliers of raw materials to and consumers of finished goods from the mother country. By the eighteenth century, spinning and weaving had increased to such a degree that British merchants began complaining to Parliament that the colonists were not buying enough British-made goods given their alleged dependency on English manufacturing.

In response to this pressure from the business sector, Parliament passed the Wool Act in 1699 which essentially deprived the colonists of the right to import wool. To circumvent this restriction, the colonists made more and more use of hemp and flax fibers. In 1708, Calib Heath-cote, a New York colonist seeking a contract from the British Board of Trade to supply naval stores to England, wrote that his neighbors "were already so far advanced that three

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fourths of the linen and woolen used, was made amongst them . . . and if some speedy and effectual ways are not found to put a stop to it, they will carry it on a great deal fur-ther. . . . "15

Parliament demanded an explanation from Governor Dudley of Massachusetts concerning the reluctance of the colonists to buy British goods. Dudley replied that Americans would be more than happy to buy and wear goods made in England if they could pay for them. But since they could not earn enough money from chopping wood and sawing lumber, they were forced to make and sell their own goods, leaving those that were made in Britain to more affluent New Englanders.

The event which ultimately transformed the colonies from part-time household producers of clothing to full-time manufacturers, and caused more than one ulcer in the British business community, was the arrival in Boston in 1718 of a number of professional spinners and weavers from Ireland. Although colonial women had been spinning their own thread for some time, their expertise was nowhere near that of professional European craftsmen. When these newcomers landed in Boston, the women of the town asked for advice on how to make better cloth. The immigrants were more than obliging, and soon Boston's women, young and old, rich and poor, were flocking to the Common where a makeshift spinning school had been set up to teach the colonists how to spin thread professionally. The whirr of spinning wheels soon filled the air from morning to night as each woman competed with her neighbor to produce more and better thread. Boston's womenfolk, it was said, had been bitten by the "spinning craze."

It was the passage of the Stamp Act in 1765, however, that really sent the women of New England to their spinning wheels in earnest. The new law promulgated by Parliament did more to crystalize opposition to the import and consumption of British goods in the colonies than did any other single measure. Businessmen refused to purchase any products made in England and colonists agreed not to wear any clothing except that manufactured domestically. In New England, the campaign not to buy British goods was led by a group of women who called themselves the Daughters of Liberty. To meet the expected demand that a boycott against English goods would create in the colonies, the Daughters turned to "spinning bees," as the "spinning crazes" were now called.

Between 1766 and 1771, women across New England met in churches, meeting halls, private homes, and anywhere else that was available, to spin in groups. Speaking of one such gathering held in Providence, Rhode Island, the Boston Chronicle on April 7, 1766, wrote that the women gathered there "exhibited a fine example of industry, by spinning from sunrise until dark, and displayed a spirit for saving their sinking country, rarely to be found among persons of more age and ex-perience."

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These spinning bees were not without results. Production of cloth materials increased in every town and village, and it was not long before there was more than enough homemade cloth to clothe anyone who wanted American-made garments.

The spinning bee soon spread to other colonies as well. In Philadelphia, a market was opened especially for the sale of domestic fabrics. In Virginia, George Washington erected a spinning house on his plantation. Even as far as South Carolina, domestic production of fabrics increased markedly as the spirit of resistance filtered down from New England to the southern colonies.

As a result of these spontaneous gatherings, the colonists became self-sufficient in clothes. When the Revolution came and textile materials from England were completely cut off, the colonists were not faced with the kind of predicament they might have been in had they not learned to manufacture their own household goods. Until trade relations could be started with other countries, the colonists were able to care for their own needs and were generally able to supply uniforms and basic clothing for their army.

### **MORE VALUABLE THAN CASH**

To maintain their newly declared independence, the American colonies not only had to field an army, they had to become self-reliant in all the resources necessary to support that army and the civilian population. Grain and beef suddenly became the chief priorities for the fledgling nation.

Once they were sure of food, the colonists could devote their efforts to raising raw materials for the war effort. Foremost among the raw materials being demanded was hemp. The Revolution's impact on the hemp industry was reflected in the prices for hemp fiber. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, hemp sold for about twenty-seven to thirty-five shillings per hundredweight. Between 1780 and 1782, the price soared to three hundred shillings.<sup>16</sup>

Much of Virginia's hemp was produced by small farmers and was subsequently processed into rope and cordage. There were no fewer than eighteen "ropewalks" in Virginia transforming

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raw hemp fiber into badly needed rope during the Revolution, and there was still a shortage of rope. These ropewalks and various sailmaking factories sprang up all over the colony to supply the needs of the colonial navy. So important were rope and sail to the war effort that any man who worked at these jobs for at least six months was excused from military duty for the duration of the war.<sup>17</sup>

Virginia's ropewalks were also considered an important war industry by the British. In April 1781, when Benedict Arnold led a force of British infantry up the Jones River and penetrated as far as Richmond, one objective of his mission was the "Public Rope Walk" in Warwick, which he destroyed. This ropewalk was the biggest rope-manufacturing factory in Virginia and its loss dealt a considerable blow to Virginia's rope production for the war effort.

In addition to making clothes and rope from hemp, the Americans had another equally important need for the precious fiber during the Revolution—paper. Although hemp was a basic ingredient in the invention of paper, other materials such as flax and cotton had long since replaced it. However, in 1716, a pamphlet was published on the art of papermaking entitled *Essays for the month of December 1716*, to be continued monthly by a Society of Gentlemen for the benefit of the people of England, which urged papermakers to return once again to hemp. Detailed instructions were given as to how to prepare the hemp for the job and paper mill owners were invited to plant hemp in their yards so that they would have their own supplies of raw material.

In 1765, a dedicated English paper manufacturer named Jacob Christian Shaffer began writing a long and thorough text on the art of papermaking which was based on experiments he himself had made during his career in the paper industry. In going over the different materials that had been used to make paper in the past, Shaffer noted that while rags and wornout linen were the main raw materials for making paper in his day, "the dearth of this material is now complained of everywhere." To deal with this shortage Shaffer proposed hemp fiber as an alternative, and to prove its feasibility, he printed portions of the third volume of his textbook on pages made from hemp fiber.<sup>18</sup>

Several years after the publication of Shaffer's books on the art of papermaking, Robert Bell, an American printer who in 1777 identified his shop as "next door to St. Paul's Church, in Third Street, Philadelphia," likewise suggested that hemp be used as a raw material for making paper in the colonies, since now that they had declared their independence from England they could no longer count on cotton or flax imports.

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The problem was, however, that once war broke out, hemp became just as scarce as any other fibrous materials. For a time American papermakers had to scrounge, beg, and plead for people to bring them their old rags so that the United States would have paper upon which money, business accounts, military commands, etc., could be written. The shortage did not last forever and after the War of Independence papermakers could choose what materials to use in producing paper. But for a time, the acute hemp and paper shortage threatened to undermine the American war effort.

One of the better known Virginia landholders who astutely anticipated both the war and the demand for hemp was Robert "King" Carter, an early ancestor of President Jimmy Carter. Although he owned more than 300,000 acres in Virginia, Carter was much more than just a wealthy land baron. During his career, he held many colonial offices among which were justice of the peace, member of the House of Burgesses, speaker of the House, colonial treasurer, and commander of the local militia. The Carters and the other Virginia aristocrat societies were leaders in every social, religious, and political event that took place in the colony. So held in awe was Carter that it was said that no Christian save the minister would think of entering Christ's Church on the Sabbath before "King" Carter arrived.

In 1774, on the eve of the Revolution, Carter took stock of the political situation in the colonies and decided that tobacco would no longer be a profitable concern. Accordingly, he wrote to one of his foremen, "I apprehend that tobacco which may be here, next summer will be in little demand. . . . [Therefore] in place of tobacco—hemp and flax will be grown."<sup>19</sup> At the same time, he erected a spinning factory on his plantation to process the future hemp crop.

Even with the hemp from his own vast farmlands, Carter did not have enough hemp to suit his needs. In 1775, he bought five hundred pounds from his stepbrother. In 1776, he bought two tons more. Much of this hemp was spun into osnaburg, a coarse fabric used to make shirts and trousers for workmen and the Revolution's soldiers.

Hemp was more than just fiber for clothes, however. It was also money. In 1781, Governor Thomas Jefferson received a note from David Ross, Virginia's purchasing agent, stating that his buyer in Philadelphia "writes me the 2,000 Stand of Arms will be ready this week." But to pay for them, he was "obliged to engage hemp" since there was "no encouragement from Congress that they can do anything for [us] in money matters. Tobacco will not do there and we have nothing to depend upon but our hemp."<sup>20</sup> In a later note, Ross acknowledged that Jefferson was reserving "the hemp in the back country . . . to be used in paying for articles bought in Philadelphia for the use of the Army. This is an article very much in demand in Philadelphia and a valuable Fund. . ." <sup>21</sup> A year later, a Philadelphia businessman likewise noted that "hemp, tar, pitch, and turpentine command cash in preference to any other goods."<sup>22</sup>

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The reason hemp was more valuable than cash was simple. Paper money had no value in the colonies. A thousand dollars in Virginia currency, for example, was only worth one dollar in silver. Because of the lack of faith in paper money, the American economy operated on the barter system. And because of hemp's "comparative uniformity, its comparative freedom from deterioration, the universal and steady demand for it, and its value, which exceeded all other raw produce," it "was recognized as the standard commodity for the first three or four decades" of the new American republic.<sup>23</sup> Anything and everything could be bartered for hemp, from the local newspaper to the services of stud racehorses.<sup>24</sup>

The American Revolution altered the lifestyles of the American people in many ways. Hitherto, the colonists had relied heavily on imports from England, especially for clothing. Had it not been for organizations like the Daughters of Liberty, whose enthusiasm and efforts encouraged colonial women to make their own clothes, the disastrous winter of 1778 at Valley Forge might have been typical of life throughout the northern colonies.

To make sure the army had uniforms and Americans did not freeze to death, Congress implored the colonists to raise as much hemp as possible so that clothing could be manufactured. Soldiers needed uniforms not only to keep warm, but also to keep up their morale. On at least one occasion, for instance, the Americans refused to fight alongside their French allies because they looked so pitiful next to the elegantly uniformed French.

### **KENTUCKY'S HEMP INDUSTRY**

Although Kentucky was to become the nation's most productive hemp supplier, hemp production was not started there until 1775. By 1810, however, hemp had become "the grand staple of Kentucky." In 1850, there were 8327 hemp plantations in the United States, putting hemp second only to cotton and tobacco production.<sup>25</sup> Most of these plantations were located in Kentucky; the remainder were spread throughout Tennessee, Missouri, and Mississippi.

The major reason hemp production began to increase once again following the initial depression of the hemp markets after the Revolution was the import tariffs Congress levied against hemp brought into the United States from abroad. In 1792, the tariff was placed at twenty dollars per ton. During the war of 1812, it rose to forty dollars per ton, and by 1828, it was sixty dollars per ton.<sup>26</sup> These tariffs were first imposed at the urging of Alexander

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Hamilton, who as secretary of the treasury, saw these imposts against foreign hemp as a means of stimulating domestic hemp supplies and thereby making the United States independent of foreign nations for this essential military item. After Hamilton, the fight to retain the tariff was spearheaded by one of Kentucky's most distinguished spokesmen, the indefatigable Henry Clay.

Clay was not a native Kentuckian. He had been born in Virginia but had moved to Lexington in 1797 where he became a well-known trial lawyer and husband to Lucretia Hart, the daughter of a rich hemp man-ufacturer. Soon after his marriage, Clay began to espouse the cause of Kentucky's hemp farmers, a career that helped elect him to Congress where he was instrumental in promoting Kentucky's hemp industry through the tariff.

Not surprisingly, northern manufacturers and shipbuilders were opposed to these tariffs. Through Daniel Webster, their spokesman in Congress, they demanded an unrestricted supply of cheap raw hemp to make rope and cordage, and since they refused to use southern hemp because of its poor quality, they had to rely on imports. Placing a tariff on hemp from abroad hurt their business and they pressured their own congressmen to vote against these tariffs. But, more often than not, Clay and his supporters won out over Yankee business interests.

However, the tariffs did little to discourage imports from foreign countries. Their main effect was simply to increase prices to consumers. Before 1800, the United States imported about 3400 tons of hemp a year. At the time of the War of 1812, imports rose to 4200 tons, and by the 1830s they increased to 5000 tons per year.<sup>27</sup>

Northern manufacturers preferred foreign hemp, especially that from Russia, to domestic hemp because of the superior manner in which the fiber was processed abroad. In Russia, for example, the stalks were hung on rocks as soon as they were cut. If the weather remained dry, the stalks were not disturbed. If it rained, they were placed in a kiln. Regard-less of how they were initially dried, on the third day after harvesting the plants were completely submerged in warm water for three weeks and then cold water for five weeks more. Then they were allowed to dry for two additional weeks, followed by a second kiln drying for twenty-four hours. Finally, the stalks were broken. The husks were torn off and the fiber was carefully hatched. The finished fiber was then placed in storerooms until it was sold.

In contrast to the Russian method of production, Kentucky growers left the chopped cannabis stalks on the ground to become dew retted. Water retting was discouraged because Kentucky

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farmers believed that fish and livestock that drank from a pond in which hemp had been placed would be poisoned. Then, too, the water smelled like rotten eggs after hemp had been soaking in it, "which was considered unhealthy for slaves and twice as bad for whites."<sup>28</sup>

Not only were the northern manufacturers reluctant to use dew-retted hemp, the United States Navy also refused to buy Kentucky hemp despite Congress's efforts to promote the industry. In 1824, Congress inquired as to the basis for this discrimination. The secretary of the navy's reply was that "cables and cordage manufactured from it [Kentucky hemp] . . . are inferior in colour, strength and durability to those manufactured from imported hemp, and consequently are not safe or proper for use in the navy."<sup>29</sup> An expert in rope making was quoted as stating, "I would not use cordage made from Kentucky yarn or hemp, even if I could produce it at one half the price of cordage made from Russian."<sup>30</sup>

Actual experiments conducted in the 1820s aboard the U. S.S. North Carolina supported the navy's position. Although initially as strong as cordage made from Russian hemp and able to support a weight of 125 pounds when new, after eighteen months at sea cordage made from Kentucky-raised hemp could not even support a weight of 18 pounds!<sup>31</sup>

### HEMP AND SLAVERY

One of the industries to experience a sudden growth as a result of the shortage of labor and the demand for hemp was slavery.

Before the war there were only about 2500 slaves in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. By 1790 there were 10,000.<sup>32</sup> Although the demand for hemp declined precipitously after the war, rope and cordage were still important commodities and large-scale hemp production required manpower. "Take away slaves," argued William C. Bullitt, a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1849 which debated the slavery issue, "and you destroy the production of that valuable article, which is bound to make the rich lands of Kentucky and Missouri still more valuable."<sup>33</sup>

After Virginia's farmers lost interest in raising hemp due to the drop in prices, Americans in other parts of the country decided to move into the hemp market. Foremost among these new hemp producers were the farmers of Kentucky. And like their neighbors in Virginia, Kentuckians

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found that the only profitable way to raise hemp was through slave labor.

"Without hemp," writes J. F. Hopkins in his History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky, "slavery might not have flourished in Kentucky, since other agricultural products of the state were not conducive to the extensive use of bondsmen. On the hemp farm and in the hemp factories the need for laborers was filled to a large extent by the use of Negro slaves, and it is a significant fact that the heaviest concentration of slavery was in the hemp producing area."<sup>34</sup>

Kentucky hemp growers estimated that three slaves could cultivate about fifty acres. This resulted in a yield of about 35,700 pounds of fiber and a return of about thirty-five dollars per acre.<sup>35</sup>

Although working in the hemp fields was backbreaking toil, many slaves preferred it to other kinds of labor since it was task work. Under the task system, the slave was given a fixed amount of work for the day. If he finished his work, he could spend his remaining time as he wanted. A slave could even earn money on the task system, although his wages were minimal. For every pound of hemp over the 100 pounds he was required to break per day, the slave was paid one cent.<sup>36</sup> A good worker could break about 300 pounds,<sup>37</sup> so it was possible to earn about two dollars a day.<sup>38</sup> Some slaves earned enough money in this way to buy their freedom. Under the gang system, which was more common in the cotton fields, slaves worked in groups under the watchful eye of a driver whose job it was to get as much work out of each fieldhand as possible.

Labor in the hemp factory was also task work. A northern visitor to a Lexington ropewalk in 1830 wrote that there were "60 to 100 negro slaves, of all ages," working in the factory and they were "all stout, hearty, healthy and merry fellows, some of whom contrive to while away the time and drown the noise of the machinery by their own melody."

On another occasion, this same visitor remarked that

every man and boy in this establishment, as I before mentioned, has his allotted portion or his stint to perform, and each one is paid for what he does beyond it. This keeps them contented, and makes them ambitious, and no one, who knows anything of mankind, will doubt but that more labor is obtained from the same number of hands than could possibly be forced from them by severity.... I have never seen a happier set of workmen than these boys; there was no overseer in their apartment; each boy placed his raw material beside his wheel, spun his thread

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the length of the room, returned to his place, and after winding the thread upon his reel, went on with his spinning with the utmost regularity and good order, singing the while with great earnestness, and not altogether without melody."39

Another surprised northerner told the readers of the Boston Courier on November 10, 1830: "I have no hesitation in saying that to the best of my knowledge, there is more real freedom of body, and quite as much independence of mind, among the slaves of Kentucky, as there is to be found in any other portion of our country. . . . ,f 40

These favorable reports were not welcomed by northern Abolitionists, who preferred to read and tell stories of beatings and torture. While such atrocities occurred, they were far less common than the Abolitionists contended. It would have been poor business to treat any slave brutally since this would have impaired his ability to work, and cheap labor was what slavery was all about.

Compared to his fellow workers in the cotton fields, however, the slave who worked in the hemp factory was far better off, and there are records showing that some of these laborers earned as much as nine hundred dollars under the task system." This was more than many white workers were able to earn and save during their lifetimes.

One of the many slaves who worked in the Kentucky rope factories and who later wrote about his experiences was William Hayden. Born in Virginia in 1785, Hayden was separated from his mother and taken to Kentucky when he was only five years old. In 1803, he was hired out to the owner of a ropewalk in Lexington where he showed himself to be so proficient that he was taken into the foreman's home. It was during this time that he learned to read and write. In his memoirs, which he wrote as a free man in Cincinnati, Hayden boasted that not only was he very good at his work, he was actually "acknowledged to be the best spinner in the country," and when he asked for an increase in his wages to six dollars a year, his request was immediately granted.

Hayden's task quota was forty-eight pounds of spun hemp per day, which he proudly observes was "considered a good day's work for two men." Yet not only was he able to accomplish this work, he was so proficient that he was able to gain two days in every week, exclusive of the sabbath: "The proceeds of these two days amounted to three dollars, which it was optional with me to make, or devote my time to pleasure, if I saw fit so to do."

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Hayden later went to work in Georgetown and "notwithstanding there was an experienced white man superintending the business, he could show me nothing that I did not already know, hence I soon be-came the foreman of the factory. From this time I was treated more as a white man than any thing else." By 1824, Hayden had saved enough money to purchase his freedom. Able to go where he pleased, he left the hemp factories of Kentucky and eventually moved to Cincinatti where he spent the remainder of his life working as a barber in his own shop.<sup>42</sup>

### THE DEMISE OF THE AMERICAN HEMP FARMS

The death blow to the American hemp industry came in the wake of the Civil War. Once trade broke off with the north, suppliers in the south lost a major market for bagging and cordage. Things were no better in the south. With no cotton to be shipped to the north or to Europe, the Confederate Congress prohibited the raising of cotton ex-cept for home use. Since no cotton was being baled, there was no need for bale rope and farmers lost their best customers.

While northern demand for hemp was unabated, businessmen had to rely exclusively on costly foreign fiber even for jobs that did not need high-quality fiber. With the loss of the cotton trade, an investigation was begun to consider the practicality of producing thread from hemp. Con-gress appropriated twenty thousand dollars to pay a Pennsylvanian congressman to look into the matter. His report was offered in 1865, too late to have any impact, and was ignored. Moreover, all the information he submitted was taken from contemporary encyclopaedias and from some letters written to the commissioner of agriculture.<sup>43</sup>

After the Civil War, hemp production never recovered. Faced with competition in the form of iron wire cables and bands, and cheaper jute bagging, many farmers simply gave up on hemp and turned instead to other agricultural staples such as wheat.

Yet hemp did not disappear from the American landscape. As late as 1890, thirty-three million dollars' worth of cordage was manufactured in the United States, and during World War I the hemp industry experi-enced a temporary revival. But the vast hemp plantations in Kentucky, Missouri, and Mississippi were gone forever. In later years it would even become illegal to grow hemp, as Americans learned that the once-commonplace plant was a "depraver of youth" and a "provoker of crime" called marihuana.

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### THE HEMP PLANT IN CANADA

Like their English rivals, when the French laid claim to North America in the sbcteenth century, they too envisioned the New World as a vast repository of naval supplies, especially hemp and timber. These hopes were fueled by reports from her early explorers such as Jacques Cartier who, like many others, had mistaken *Acnida cannabina* for *Cannabis sativa*.

Unlike the English, however, the French did not need to import hemp. They wanted more so that they could sell it to other countries.

The earliest record of hemp in France goes back to around 200 B.C., when the Greeks brought hemp from the Rhone Valley to outfit their ships. The manufacture of French fabrics made from hemp is almost as ancient.

The export of hemp abroad began around the fifteenth century. By the sixteenth century, France was said to possess "two magnets" which attracted the wealth of Europe. One of these was wheat. The other was hemp. The yearly exports to England alone between 1686 and 1688 were over two million pounds. It was not without reason that the English complained so bitterly about the draining of their economy as a result of their imports of hemp from France.

"This most prosperous kingdom," declared the chancellor of France in 1484, "has a great number of provinces which, because of the beauty of the countryside, of the fertility of the soil, of the health-giving air, easily surpasses all the countries of earth." To take advantage of these bountiful assets, French workers were continually urged to work harder to produce wool, flax, and especially hemp.

Ironically, despite the abundance of hemp, French merchants still imported large quantities of fiber from countries such as Italy and Swe-den. The reason was that French merchants were able to make greater profits selling hemp abroad than they could possibly earn by manufac-turing it and selling it domestically. Thus, while France sold enormous amounts of hemp to countries like England and Spain, she herself im-ported large quantities from other European countries. Consequently, when French merchants heard that hemp was growing wild in the New World, they sensed an opportunity for enormous profits. (Unfortu-nately, Cartier was a better explorer than a naturalist. The European variety of hemp did not grow wild in the New World.)

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After the first disappointments subsided, the French thought they could still make a profit in hemp if they could simply persuade the colonists who were settling in New France to cultivate cannabis as a crop. To this end, Samuel Champlain, the great explorer and colonizer, brought hemp seeds with him on his early expeditions to New France. By 1606, hemp was growing in Port Royal in Nova Scotia under the watchful eye of the colony's botanist and apothecary, Louis Hébert.<sup>45</sup>

However, like their counterparts in the British colonies, the early French settlers were faced with an acute labor shortage and the pioneers had trouble just trying to grow enough food to stay alive. For anyone to spend time clearing land to grow hemp would mean time lost growing food. To deal with such obstinance, Jean Talon, the wily finance minister of the Quebec colony, confiscated all the thread in the colony and de-clared he would sell it only in return for hemp. At the same time, he gave hemp seed free to farmers with the understanding that they were to plant it immediately and replace the gift with seed from their next year's crop. Since their children had to be clothed, the women either persuaded their husbands to raise hemp or they bought it themselves and used it to barter with Talon. In this way, Talon created a demand for hemp and an industry to supply that demand."

In the meantime, relations between France and England were rapidly deteriorating and eventually the two countries went to war. The French proved to be no match for the English, and in 1763 all of New France became an English domain. Almost immediately, England tried to promote hemp production in her new colony. When her initial en-treaties failed, the new governor of Québec was told not to grant any land to any settler unless he promised to raise hemp on his new hold-ings. It was to no avail. Despite these efforts, England received only token amounts of hemp from the colonists in Canada.

After the American Revolution and the loss of her colonies to the south, England redoubled her efforts to promote hemp production in Canada. In 1790, 2000 bushels of Russian hemp seed were brought to Québec and were distributed free to all the agricultural districts of the province. Only fifteen farmers showed any interest.

By 1800, Russia was charging sixty-one pounds per ton of hemp. England reacted by urging her governors to offer more bounties. A public relations campaign of sorts was also initiated claiming hemp was a valuable economic commodity to colony and mother county alike. If hemp production increased, there would be more money and more employment. The standard of living would rise. Prosperity was within each colonist's grasp if only he would turn his efforts to

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growing hemp.

The appeal fell upon deaf ears. There were simply too few people to work in the hemp fields. Whatever manpower was available could be more profitably used clearing land to grow food crops essential for survival. An equally formidable problem was the Catholic church. Since hemp was exempt from tithes, the Catholic clergy refused to encourage their parishioners to grow hemp. Even had they had the time and will, French Canadians would not have listened to the English pleas. In Nova Scotia, the hemp shortage became so acute that the legislature complained that hangings had to be delayed!<sup>47</sup>

Not easily discouraged, Parliament offered a deal to James Campbell and Charles Grece, two experts in hemp production. Should either of them sow twenty-five acres of land with hemp during their first year of settlement in Canada, and agree to continue cultivation on a scale thereafter deemed satisfactory to the local authorities, and should they also be willing to teach the settlers the fine points of hemp production and serve as inspectors for all finished hemp, they would be assured of a purchase price of forty-three pounds per ton for any hemp they raised, for five years. In addition, each man would be given an annual allowance of two hundred pounds, a loan of four hundred pounds which had to be forfeit if the contract were broken, free passage to Canada, money to pay hemp dressers, free seed, and 150 acres of land to use for experimentation. And as frosting on the cake, Parliament promised a lifetime annuity of two hundred pounds if the venture proved a success.

Alas, both men failed. Grece tried very hard to raise a crop the first year, but a combination of bad seed, late sowing, and poor weather was less than conducive to success. Campbell fared no better. What the spring floods left of his crop, the fall frost destroyed."

Meanwhile, Napoleon's brilliant victories in Europe were beginning to pose a threat to England's Baltic hemp suppliers. If Napoleon defeated Russia, England would no longer have a reliable hemp source. In desperation, she once again turned to Canada. Promises of seventy pounds per ton and 300 acres of land were made to anyone who would raise five tons of hemp in a year. To make sure these offers were heard throughout the country, they were issued from church pulpits immediately after services were concluded. Yet, even with these substantial inducements, little hemp ever made its way from Canada to England.

## HEMP IN LATIN AMERICA

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Even before the English and the French were thinking about exploit-ing the New World, Spain was trying to promote hemp production in her colonies throughout Latin America. As early as 1545, hemp seed was sown in the Quillota Valley, near the city of Santiago in Chile. Most of the hemp fiber from these initial experiments was used to make rope for the army stationed in Chile. The rest was used to replace wornout rig-ging on ships that docked at Santiago. Eventual surpluses were shipped north to Lima, Peru.<sup>49</sup> Attempts were also made at cultivating hemp in Peru and Colombia, but only the Chilean experiments proved successful.

Hemp is believed to have been brought to Mexico by Pedro Cuad-rado, a conquistador in Cortes's army, when the conqueror made his second expedition to Mexico. Cuadrado and a friend went into business raising hemp in Mexico and were very successful at it. In 1550, however, the Spanish governor forced the two entrepreneurs to limit production because the natives were beginning to use the plants for something other than rope.<sup>50</sup>

In the eighteenth century, Spain's economy began to plummet drasti-cally and she began to turn to her colonies. In 1777, several hemp experts were sent to various colonial outposts in Spanish America to teach the inhabitants the fine points of growing and preparing hemp for markets' Three years later, special orders from the king instructed all viceroys to encourage hemp production throughout New Spain.

In Mexico, the authorities decided that the province of California would be an ideal place to begin hemp farming. But despite pleas to church prelates for cooperation, the missions and the individual farmers in the parishes preferred raising food crops and cattle to hemp.

When no hemp arrived for shipment to Spain, experts were sent to California to instruct the people how to grow and prepare hemp for market. The area around San José was chosen as an experimental farm area in 1801 and an earnest effort was made to raise hemp for market.

The first results were encouraging. By 1807, California was produc-ing 12,500 pounds of hemp. About 40 percent came from Santa Barbara. Good harvests were also reported around San José, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. By 1810, California was producing over 220,000 pounds of dressed hemp.

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Production would probably have continued to increase, but in 1810 a revolution in Mexico effectively isolated California from the main seat of government. As a result, the subsidies that had stimulated hemp production were no longer available, and with the elimination of this incentive, commercial production of hemp ceased and was never started up again.<sup>52</sup>

No one knows for certain when cannabis was introduced into Brazil, Portugal's main colony in South America. The words for marihuana in Brazil include maconha, liama, and diamba, which closely resemble West and South African terms such as riamba, diamba, and liamba. On the basis of this linguistic similarity it is possible that Negro slaves abducted from their homes in Africa and brought to Brazil as plantation laborers may have brought some seeds with them to the New World. This is not very likely, however. The ships that crossed the Atlantic loaded with slaves did not afford any opportunity for comfort. Seeds that happened to be hidden in some clothing would have been eaten on ship, not saved for future farming. More probably the Portu-guese themselves brought hemp seed to Brazil, since they too recognized its economic potential. Once sown, however, the slaves would have used the plant as they had in their native land. There was no need to invent new terms for plants already familiar to them.

The earliest actual reference to cannabis in Brazil dates back to the early decades of the 1800s. In 1808, the king and queen of Portugal fled to Brazil rather than risk capture by Napoleon who at that time was threatening to overrun the Iberian Peninsula. After Napoleon's defeat, the royal couple returned to Lisbon in 1814. Three years later the queen became ill and death was imminent. As she lay awaiting her death, she summoned a Negro slave who had accompanied her to Brazil and asked her to "bring me an infusion of the fibers of diamba do amazonas, with which we sent so many enemies to hell."<sup>53</sup> The slave concocted an infusion of marihuana and arsenic for her mistress which had such analgesic properties that the queen felt no further pain, and shortly before her death she sang and played her guitar.<sup>54</sup>

Although this anecdote casts a favorable light on marihuana, the sentiment was not shared by Brazilians. In 1830, for example, the Municipal Council of Rio de Janeiro prohibited importation of marihuana into the city. Anyone selling the drug was liable to a large fine and any slave found using it could be sentenced to three days' imprisonment.<sup>55</sup>

There is also no exact date for the importation of hemp to Jamaica. Around 1800, the British sent a Russian hemp expert to Jamaica to see if the plant could be profitably raised on the island, but the attempt failed and production was abandoned.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, the plants began to grow wild. When indentured laborers from India came to work in Jamaica following the emancipation of the Negro slaves in the British Caribbean in the mid-nineteenth century, they found ganja already growing there.

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In 1793, cannabis was brought to Cuba to see if it could be grown profitably on that island, but the planters were more interested in growing sugarcane and little effort was devoted to hemp production.<sup>57</sup> About the same time, hemp was introduced into Guatemala. Although serious efforts were made to cultivate the plant on a large scale in that colony, very little hemp was ever produced.

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#### 4 Cannabis Comes to the New World

Written by Ernest L. Abel  
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