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Despite continued increase in production, demand for cotton did not dwindle. Foreign and domestic demand for the crop persisted. Georgia farmers became preoccupied with cotton production and became less and less self-sufficient. By the 1850's cotton approached its pinnacle as "king." It was everywhere . . . more than a third of the cropland across the state was devoted to cotton and production soared over a half million bales annually. By 1860, it was bringing \$30,000,000 to the state.

During the war, New England mills shut down due to the halted cotton supply. Georgia planters burned cotton warehouses rather than let them fall into enemy hands. In 1862 a resolution was passed in the Confederate Congress restricting cotton production. Some farmers protested and planted anyway. However, the result for 1862 was a 60,000 bale crop rather than the usual 700,000 bale average.

After the war, Southern planters turned to a share-cropping system which lasted until well into the 1920's. Between 1900 and 1916 the value of the commodity tripled and acreage

grew to over five million acres. Up until the twenties, cotton accounted for over half of the total value of Georgia agricultural production.

While cotton was enjoying a period of prosperity in Georgia, trouble was brewing out West. The boll weevil crossed the Mexican border into Texas and multiplied. As it traveled West through Mississippi and Alabama, it left a path of poverty and destruction.

The "winged demon" reached Thomasville, Georgia on August 25, 1915. By 1921 it had swept the entire state. In 1923, for example, average yield per acre dropped to 106 pounds, contrasted with the average yield of 252 pounds per acre in 1914 before the weevil became a serious problem. Weevil damage reached its peak in 1925 and the pest has remained. Larger farms, more machinery and better insecticides now keep cotton damage under control. The weevil certainly persuaded the state to avoid a one-crop economy.

Although cotton is not the "king" it once was, it is still in high demand and an important Georgia crop.