

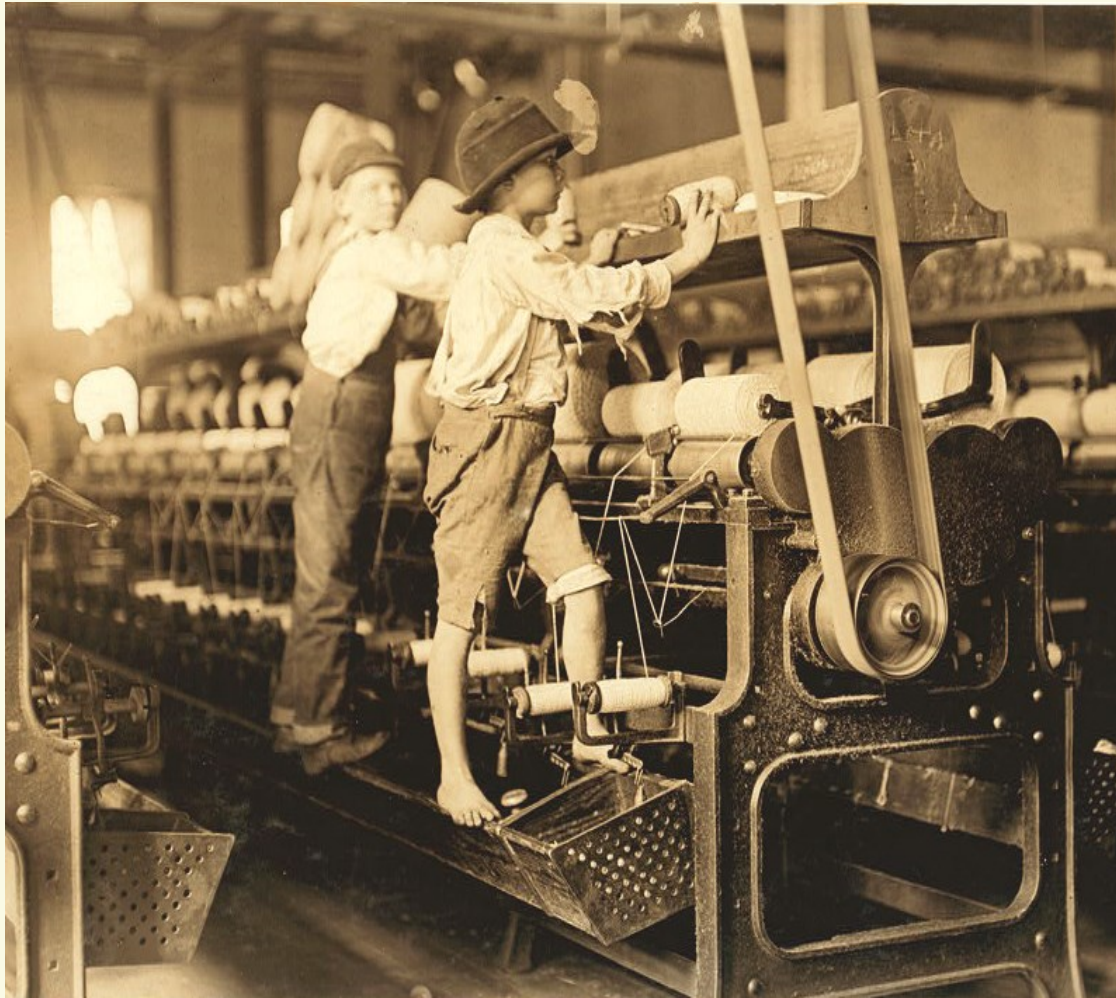


Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society

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Empire of Cotton: A Global History

Empire of Cotton: A Global History

John Boh

Readers wanting to see European political and economic achievements despite blemishes as mainly heroic will be disheartened by Sven Beckert's *Empire of Cotton, A Global History* - one of a number of recent books depicting a dark side.

Sven Beckert¹ describes "War Capitalism," which began in the 16th century and jump-started the rise of "Industrial Capitalism." Europeans, led by Great Britain, used slavery and land expropriation to create a cotton empire worldwide which - he argues - "...turned out to be the essential element in Europe's Industrial Revolution." His claim is contrary to long held interpretations that mechanical inventions, a Protestant work ethic and other developments inside Europe propelled it.

The story of slavery and cotton is outlined in American history books, but not with such breadth of details, nor the provocative thesis. He does not reflect on perennial human slavery and serfdom in history, nor on the generally more brutishness of life back then. The exceptional brutality portrayed in the slave trade, and especially on American plantations, still arouses objections.

Institutions like wage labor and private property rights, Beckert claims, gained footholds first through slavery and land expropriation. A new and different form of integration of labor, raw materials, markets and capital made the first ever global capitalism. From about 1770 to the American Civil War, "a terrible 90 years", slavery was the heart of the new system of global capitalism.

Beckert's book (615 pp., soft cover) is densely factual, repetitive, overlapping, and prosecuting. It focuses only on a single commodity. To present his case he provides percentages, statistics in pounds, bales, spindles, also graphs, and endless story lines

found in archives and libraries around the world. It is about innumerable connections between people and places, from Manchester, England to remote rural villages.

A number of recent books have explored similar themes: *The Business of Slavery and the Rise of American Capitalism, 1815-1860* (by Calvin Schermerhorn, 2015) was reviewed in *Ohio Valley History*. The reviewer noted that another book, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (by Edward Baptist, 2014) had made news due to a "much-disparaged" review and later apology by the *Economist*. Two more, *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World* (by Greg Grandin, 2014), and Beckert's own book had "shared the prestigious Bancroft Prize."²

Religious refugees from the continent were weaving cotton into cloth by 1600. By 1621 the British East India Co. had imported an estimated 50,000 bales of cotton. Yet, England's early products remained inferior to those from India and China.

After two centuries British peasant cottages and workshops still did most of the spinning and weaving. From 1781 to 1790, however, the growth of British cotton manufacturing increased by a factor of six and almost doubled again by 1800. Most crucially, cotton textile production, unlike other commodities, uniquely had two labor-intensive stages - in the field where thousands of slaves overcame major shortcomings in premodern agriculture and in cotton factories employing huge numbers of paid workers.

Before Modern Cotton

Starting out, Beckert reviews cotton's background - grown, spun and weaved with primitive hand tools, and to the best of our knowledge, devel-

oped independently in South Asia, Central America and eastern Africa. It was traded within Asia, African and the Americas and between far eastern Europe and Asia. Families wore their own cottage-made cotton fabric. Sophisticated regional trade networks, before European intervention, were trading yarn and dyed, beautiful fabric.

The cotton plant that ancients domesticated had slight variations in physical properties by tropical and sub-tropical region, while Great Britain and much of Europe was too cold and wet. When early English spinners and weavers could still only fabricate weak imitations, beautiful Indian Muslins, chintzes, and calicoes were landing in the ports of London, Barcelona, Le Havre, Hamburg and Trieste. India was central to cotton culture due to its location, skills in cloth making and dyeing rich colors.

The spread of Islam in the Mediterranean world brought Europeans into contact with the cotton trade. Northern Italian entrepreneurs in the twelfth century first established cotton manufacturing in Europe. They borrowed technology from Islamic cotton and their own woolen industry. By the 15th century, southern Germany was overtaking Italy exporting cotton to eastern and western Europe, Spain, the Baltic area, the Netherlands and England. Then the Ottomans cut off access to raw cotton. Europeans continued to dress mainly in their woolen and linen cloth. Scottish sheep and English flax provided domestic raw materials. After Columbus' discovery of new Atlantic trade routes and after Portugal found a route to India around Africa in 1497, the old Mediterranean-centered trade networks could be bypassed.

Plantations in the Colonies

The extraction of gold and silver was playing out in the New World, but Europeans found new sources of wealth in rice, tobacco, indigo, especially sugar and certainly cotton. As late as 1791, most of the cotton around the world was grown by small farmers in Asia, Africa and Latin America. To leverage greater volumes of raw cotton, European capitalists experimented both with unforced labor and with coercive programs trying to induce more production from peasant farmers in India and elsewhere.

Some coercive efforts involving the planting of cotton in place of subsistence food crops, according to Bechert, resulted in instances of mass starvation. In India and elsewhere, local social and infrastructure shortcomings imposed limits; native elites in port cities resisted aggressive European capitalists. So, as Bechert describes, an alternative was importation of slaves to work new plantations on lands previously occupied by decimated native peoples. Approximately half of all the slaves (46 percent) transported across the Atlantic between 1492 and 1860 arrived in the cotton years after 1780.

A trade of slaves-for-cotton cloth became an essential element of the new global system. West African consumers were legendary in their demand for fine cotton fabrics from the East, or from European manufacturers.

Between 1781 and 1791, raw cotton imports from the British West Indies to England quadrupled and were supplemented by imports from French planters in Saint-Dominique. Saint-Dominique also doubled production for French manufacturers. French plantations in the 1770s produced an estimated 56 percent of the total cotton grown in the Caribbean. Having received nearly 30,000 slaves annually in the 1780s, Saint-Dominique in 1791 exported 56 percent more cotton to France than eight years earlier.

South America farmers also realized the newly profitable market in cotton. In Guyana, cotton production increased more than 800 percent with the importation of 20,000 slaves. After experimentation, Portugal imported more slaves to Brazil. Between 1785 and 1792, while the West Indies imported 12 million pounds to Great Britain, Brazil, with 8 million pounds, surpassed the Ottoman Empire's 4.5 million pounds. After 1791, Brazil's cotton exports became greater than that of the Caribbean Islands.

As mechanized cotton manufacturing expanded, more slaves were forced into holds of ships and sold at Port-au-Prince to planters who dispatched them to remote sites to clear land, grow and harvest the "white gold." Yet Caribbean sugar plantations outnumbered cotton and hardly any owner would switch from lucrative sugar to cotton.

The Caribbean cotton heyday was a most important stage in the spread of global capitalism, Beckert claims. *"Innovations in labor management were first implemented in the Caribbean plantation system."*

By the 1780s, West Indies and South American slaves were growing the vast majority of cotton sold on the world market. A new kind of slavery propelled the intensity and profits of the European cotton industry. The African continent was drawn into the network increasingly supplying sharply rising numbers of enslaved workers.

A turning point that almost cut off the cotton supply from Saint-Domingue was the slave revolt in 1791. By 1793, war between France and England had also intervened. Between 1790 and 1794, Saint-Domingue cotton had dwindled from 24 percent of all cotton entering Britain to 4.5 percent. By 1795, cotton imports to France had been reduced by 79 percent. Manufactures needed to rely heavily on U. S. cotton.

U.S. Domination of Raw Cotton

The first American grown cotton reaching Liverpool was a small amount in 1795. American slaves were still growing tobacco, rice, indigo and some sugar. Cotton did not yet dominate a wide swath of the American South where the climate and soil were ideal. But shortages and rising prices of Caribbean cotton after the slave revolt drew more attention to cotton growing in the United States.

Eli Whitney's cotton gin soon increased the ginning rate by a factor of 50, elevating profit opportunities to double those of other crops and trebling the price of potential cotton-growing land. Production rapidly spread out of South Carolina and Georgia. The slave population of Georgia nearly doubled in the 1790s to 60,000; in South Carolina from 21,000 in 1790 to 70,000.

Great Britain and the U. S. became twin hubs. The U.S. produced 1.5 million pounds in 1790; 36.5 million in 1800; 167.5 million in 1820. The U.S. was already the single most important supplier of cotton to the English market by 1802.

More and more land was needed to satisfy the growing global demand for raw cotton. After 1815, planters moved into the rich uplands of South Carolina and Georgia, then to Alabama, Louisiana and later to Mississippi, Arkansas and Texas. Yet foreign manufactures as early as the 1810s envisioned certain dangers. The U.S. might divert too much raw cotton to its own textile factories which would be opening in significant numbers; other global competitors might cut into the supply; and there was the uncertainty of slavery. To a foreign observer visiting the U.S. cotton fields the struggle between masters and slave eventually might be won by the latter. Looking for more cotton production, the British East India Co. in the 1840s induced U.S. born cotton planters to operate experimental farms in India hoping to find an alternative source to U.S. cotton.

Most important in the development of the cotton-growing South was the removal of native inhabitants. In the late eighteenth century they still controlled substantial territories a few hundred miles inland from coastal provinces. But decades of war and removal eventually emptied regions of native tribes. By war, forced treaties, shoddy land trades and forced removal the U.S. in the early 1800s dispossessed Creeks, Chickasaw, Choctaws, Cherokee and Seminoles of sometimes ancient homelands in the southeast including Georgia, Tennessee and the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta. Then, after the Mexican War, Texas became U.S. cotton land. The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 nearly doubled the U.S. land mass. It did not lack nearby rivers for the low cost transportation of bales of cotton. Steamboat service was operating on the Mississippi by the 1820s and railroads were soon connecting inland farms to waterways. Mississippi by the 1830s was producing more cotton than the other states. New Orleans was America's key cotton port.

In 1865, of all cotton in the South 85 percent was grown on farms larger than 100 acres; the planters, merchants and financiers owning these farms controlled 91.2 percent of all slaves. They benefited from the economies of scale, could afford the gins to remove the seeds from the bolls and the equipment to produce tightly compressed bales for lower shipping costs. They could procure more slaves and en-



Above: Women and girls in a cotton field

Courtesy nkyviews.com

force greater productivity from them. Between 1783 and the abolition of the international slave trade in 1807, approximately 170,000 slaves were imported into the U.S. - one-third of all the slaves imported since 1619. Soon the internal trade was another source of slaves. In the 30 years after the invention of the cotton gin, 250,000 slaves were traded from the upper to the lower South.

Slave traders, slave pens, slave auctions, physical and psychological violence and the disruption of families were features of the trade. The sediment rich Yazoo-Mississippi Delta in 1859 having 60,000 Delta slaves produced 66 million pounds of cotton becoming the world's most productive cotton land. Slaves cleared the land of vegetation, to hoe the soil, sow seeds, prune the young plants, and harvest the cotton.

Delta plantations were not typical, being very highly capitalized businesses with assets greater than nearly every other northern industrialist could have afforded.

U.S. cotton exporting deepened institutional links between the American South and Europe. European import merchants sent agents to Charleston, Memphis and New Orleans. Merchants built a dense network of shipping, commerce and integrated the trade. Raw cotton flowed to Europe, financial capital came calling from the opposite direction.

Astoundingly, the expansion of cotton agriculture depended on the availability of credit secured more often by mortgages on slaves. From the London money market, capital could be moved to wher-

ever cotton might be produced. Cotton's profitability was also a reflection on the price of a slave. In 1800 a young male in New Orleans sold for \$500; right before the Civil War for \$1,800.

Improvements in production involved hybrid seeds and technology but mainly slave mobilization. Cotton production in the US increased much faster than the number of slave employed. Getting slaves to produce more and more was, it is now widely claimed, generally very brutal. American slaves and Southern farmers once supplied raw materials for clothing half the civilized world.

The Industrial Revolution in England

British merchants had established new global cotton networks by 1800 but the British East India Co. still purchased piece goods from Asian merchants. English cotton merchants had yet to overcome the superiority of high quality but cheaper Indian products. With English wages being significantly higher the solution was to increase productivity through mechanization thereby significantly reducing the competitive unit price on finished products. This was the era of legendary inventions being installed in new factory buildings, the "heyday of the Industrial Revolution," especially from 1780 and 1815.

From a family made rich in the sugar industry, Samuel Greg in 1784 opened the first British cotton factory on the banks of a stream in the Manchester area. He started with 90 children from poorhouses ages 10 and 12, apprenticed seven years, soon to be supplemented by adult wage earners.

Beckert outlines mechanization: the first noteworthy invention, John Kay's Flying Shuttle in 1733; James Hargreaves' Spinning Jenny to keep up with the weavers in the 1760s; Richard Arkwright's water frames by 1769 further improving spinning but requiring the consolidation of mechanical energy in factory buildings. Samuel Crompton's Mule combined elements of the Jenny and Water Frame in 1779. Steam engines became the prevailing power source in the 1820s.

With new machines, factory owners only needed to recruit more and more workers from the coun-

tryside. In 1833, Greg employed 2,084 in five mills, his number of spindles quadrupled to 10,846 in his first mill. In 1795, Robert Peel increased his holdings to 23 mills. Eventually, the price of English yarn became less than that from India and yarn quality was comparable. After two centuries of slow growth, British cotton manufacturing boomed between 1870 and 1800. After 1830, British yarn and cloth was being sold in India itself. Even small mills were profitable by the 1780s and 1790s.

There were obstacles along the way. Machines were replacing less efficient workshop weavers causing protests about loss of jobs and job independence. In 1770, Cotton manufacturing constituted just 2.6 percent of the British economy; by 1801 - 17 percent; and by 1830 - 22.4 percent. In 1795, 340,000 worked in the spinning industry. By 1830 one in six labored in cottons, generally centered at Lancashire. In the last year of the eighteenth century, 61 percent of cotton produced in Britain was exported. Tariffs and other monopolistic restrictions protected the British global free market of cotton. Europeans mobilized vast numbers of factory workers and developed tight managerial supervision, with strategies often pioneered on plantations overseas.

In 1860 Manchester businessmen stood at the center of a world cotton empire relying on factories employing tens of thousands of workers operating huge spinning machines and noisy power looms processing cotton arriving from the slave plantations of the Americas. Steam engines powered millions of mechanical spindles.

Cotton Factories in Early America

Before cotton factories, American pioneer settlers wore linen and woolen fabric. After powered-loom weaving was introduced into the U.S., local cotton yarn and cloth manufacturing began to spread and textile manufacture became the most important American industry.

Though illegal for British textile workers to immigrate, Samuel Slater brought over designs from Richard Arkwright. In 1790, Slater built the first American cotton mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island



Woman and young girl working in a cotton factory

Courtesy nkyviews.com

and eventually other successful mills in New England. He built in 1813 the first American power loom which weaved thread or yarn into sheets of fabric.

From a family of Boston merchants, Francis Lowell and others built a power loom. He and other merchants established a cotton factory along the Charles River in Waltham, Massachusetts, in 1814, producing coarse, cheap cloth that competed successfully with the British textile industry. It led to high profits, and allowed him and his Boston associates to expand to other locations.

One of Beckett's recurring themes is peasants and farmers making the transition with adjustments and compromises from the rhythms of rural lifestyles to those in the factory whether in India, the U.S. or elsewhere. Many daughters of New England farmers operated machines in the early mills.

Cincinnati, Covington, Newport

In addition to an extensive woolen manufactory, by 1815, Cincinnati had four mostly small cotton spinning establishments, operating a combined 1200 spindles moved by horses. An 1856 directory listed five cotton factories for Cincinnati employing 580 workers. They included the Covington Cotton Factory. Proprietors Robert Buchanan and son were among the numerous commission merchants and forwarders with offices on the Cincinnati side near the waterfront when that city was in its heyday as a commercial and steamboat center.³

The Covington Cotton Factory in 1828 had opened in a four-story building 120 by 40 feet in size costing \$66,000 to build; soon it was said to be operating 2,288 spindles, employing 60 workers, and producing 4,000 pounds of cotton yarn and 2,000 yards

of cloth daily. In 1836, it was producing yarn and wick worth \$75,000 and cotton gins worth \$35,000. The cotton factory expanded to add the manufacture of jeans and linseys. In 1840, the cotton factory employed 90 workers producing 30,000 pounds of yarn. In 1844, the Covington Cotton Factory was consuming 850 bales of cotton, making 32,500 pounds of yarn, employing 70 to 100 (three-fourths, women), paying wages of from \$1.50 to \$3.25 weekly. A 40-horsepower steam engine at the factory used 22,000 bushels of coal. In 1864, a Cincinnati company purchased the abandoned Covington Cotton Factory for conversion to a woolen factory.

Newport had lost the competition for the cotton factory built on the Covington Riverfront. Nevertheless, by the 1840s Newport had become the acknowledged local center for fabric production, according to one source. The Newport Manufacturing Co. incorporated in 1831, purchased 27 acres along the Ohio River and then built 36 workers' dwellings, a cotton and a woolen factory, a ropewalk, and a hemp bagging mill. The *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* recalled that in October 1835, employing 329, this Newport Manufacturing Co. had manufactured 4056 yards of Kentucky Jeans, 3716 [yards] of Linseys, 5299 [yards] of Cotton Plains, 200 lbs. of Cotton Bagging, 2,500 [lbs.] of Cotton Yarns, 18,284 [lbs.] of Bale Rope, 36,568 yards of Cotton Bagging.⁴

After Slavery

The unfortunate historical developments for African Americans after the Civil War reviewed by Beckert have recently become much better known through historians and the media. A short drop-off in raw cotton supply during the Civil War and thereafter compelled governments and financial interests to seek new sources of cheap cotton by engaging peasant farmers in the rural back country to join the global cotton network. When slavery collapsed the demand exploded for cotton. Motivated by the urgency they implemented strategies to recruit peasant farmers and field workers in the different cotton growing regions. Yet potential new growers were embedded in local family subsistence farming, in their cultural obligations, customs and politics making secondary any desire to grow cotton for the more distant global

market. After the Civil War these peasant inclinations needed to be redirected. New forms of labor, new forms of coercion and even violence spread over the cotton growing parts of the world.

As to whether newly freed African Americans would return for wages to the plantations to contribute the bulk of labor for a resurgence of U.S. raw cotton exports - there was justifiable pessimism among industry and government leaders. But the consensus was - they had to. Plantation labor even for wages was of course not attractive to newly freed African Americans looking to own their own land and control of their own labor. Some plantation owners actually envisioned ex-slaves for meager wages again working from sunup to sunset and even attending to plantation business seven days a week with little family or sick leave. Unilateral conditions might still be imposed on these freed people who were nevertheless dispossessed. With vagrancy laws state governments wanted to coerce ex-slaves to return. They fought back aided by northern allies.

The new pattern of sharecropping that emerged in the South indicated a determination not to join a system of gang labor for wages. Share cropping maybe avoided some of the daily harassments of slave labor, but it became not a glorious compromise.

As is known, Southern state governments after the Civil War provided inferior education, refused legal protection, and tolerated violence including lynching to suppress African American ambitions. By the turn of the century, and thereafter, sharecroppers lived in great poverty with few rights or a political voice. There were further economic injustices as tenant farmers and other growers were dependent on outside capital. Typical interest rates might be 12 to 24 percent in worst instances over 100 percent. The landlords themselves saw a depression of cotton prices, tariffs on consumer goods, scarcities, and the high cost of capital, and they never recovered the economic power shared with cotton merchants before the Civil War. Black sharecroppers and "white yeoman farmers" did provide the cotton for world markets. For the latter cotton required small investment; cash payments for crops were available directly from near-by merchants.

The crisis of cotton supply that had emerged during Civil War military disruptions and the end of slavery was overcome by an alliance of capitalists with governments who, aided by coercion, accelerated the transformation of the countryside. Cotton prices returned to pre-Civil War levels and even lower. State interference around the world played a huge role.

A Cincinnati Based Network

The Covington city directory in 1866, listed two woolen mills including the Glaser brothers, manufacturers of wool at the old Covington Cotton Factory site, but the Glaser operation apparently had closed by 1869. Still there were other woolen mills in the city. Cincinnati boosters in August 1869 arranged an "Exposition of Textile Fabrics" inviting cotton, flax, hemp, silk and wool, manufacturers, and also growers, to attend.

The Cincinnati area resumed its cotton trade. Commerce to the east and west of the Cincinnati region accelerated. In 1866 the Putnam, Hooker & Co. was formed from an older company that had marketed cotton. By 1891, the Putnam, Hooker Co., a commission and management firm, claimed to represent about thirty of the largest cotton and woolen mills in the South and western portions of the U. S. In these years Cincinnati directories regularly listed cotton brokerage offices, mills, and other textile firms including the Putnam-Hooker Co. In 1914 Putnam, Hooker & Co. was described thusly: In addition to woven cotton fabrics of great variety it was the sole agent for the largest cotton batting mill in the United States. It traded with the best merchants in the American West. It marketed to every state in the Union, and large foreign markets in China, the Philippine Islands, Asia Minor, Africa and the East Indies. Manufacturers were developing more textile products for daily wear, for workers and for industrial consumption.⁵

As the world's cotton manufacturing industry moved to the Global South (including the U.S. South), the Argonaut Cotton Mill opened around 1892 operating in Covington to about 1915, spinning yarn at the southeast corner of Second Street and Madison. When the factory closed temporarily

in 1893 it was employing 150. After being closed in 1909, in 1910 Argonaut announced a resumption of operations and 100 or more employees, mostly girls, were put to work.

The Reliance Textile & Dye Works Co. - later renamed - operated from approximately 1894 to 1985 in Covington, in the 200 block on the west side of Madison. In its most recent years it was dyeing and finishing fabric for carpet, vacuum cleaner, and furniture and car manufacturers nationwide. Cotton materials came from the American South, China, Thailand, South Russia, Egypt, Pakistan; synthetics from DuPont; polyester cotton came from the same suppliers. Customers included Kroehler Furniture, Cleveland Canvas, the Fulton Bag & Cotton Mill, Ed S. Alf Co. of Tupelo Mississippi, and Acme Mills which supplied General Motors.⁶

Manufacturing Flees South

Global raw cotton consumption doubled from 1860 to 1890 and by 1920 had doubled again. Consumption increased outside of Great Britain with the growth of the cotton industry in Eastern Europe and North American and in the early twentieth century, in Brazil, Mexico, India, China and Japan. The British cotton industry peaked in 1912. By 1933 Japan had become the world's largest manufacturer.

Between 1860 and 1920 the number of spindles tripled. Worldwide the number of operating power looms increased from 650,000 in 1860 to 3.2 million by 1929. America increased its number at the expense of Great Britain, from 10 percent in 1860 to 20 percent in 1900. It was increased foreign capital investments and greater labor costs that led to the eventual demise of cotton manufacturing in the Global North including New England, Great Britain, Europe, and elsewhere and the emergence in the Global South including the U.S. South, Brazil, Japan and China where labor and other costs were cheaper. Brazil, Japan and China desired to replace imports with their own domestic production.

Workers in the Global South, in the U.S. and elsewhere around the globe, lacked the protections gained in the Global North by organized workers who

in New England, Great Britain and the European continent had won higher wages, shorter hours and better working conditions by protests, strikes, and political influence.

The Asian market, Great Britain's most important, collapsed after WWI with a 46 percent decline to India, 55 percent to the Dutch East Indies, 59 per cent to China. From 1919 to 1939, 43 percent of British power looms were turned off for good. In England between the world wars, 345,000 workers were laid off and 800 mills closed. Its long held colony, India, boycotted British cotton exports and dozens more mills closed. In the 1950s and '60s, many newly arrived immigrants from India temporarily increased the workforce enabling night time work shifts. The momentum however soon was lost and Great Britain became a net importer of cotton cloth. There were weekly closures in the 1970s and 1980s in Lancashire.

New Southern Workforces

Beckert uses the example of Fall River, Massachusetts which had become the leading center for production of printed cotton cloth, with 111 mills employing a textile work force of 300,000 at its peak in 1920. But labor organizers were a steady presence and there were thirteen major strikes between 1848 and 1904. The mills were dirty and polluted with cotton dust, deafeningly noisy and dangerous from the movement of many mechanical parts causing horrible injuries. There was strict regimentation and the low wages, until workers gained and used political influence. Wages increased, working hours decreased but eventually the cotton factories closed.

By 1910 the American South's cotton industry was the third largest behind that of Great Britain and that of still thriving counterparts in the northern states. Ten years later the South had practically taken over textile production from New England. Mills in the South were closer to raw material and offered jobs to desperate job seekers. Manufacturers could lobby isolated jurisdictions for municipal public bond issues exempt from Federal taxation, generally find cheap real estate and secure other tax advantages. Entire families labored together in the tex-

tile mills of Georgia and the Carolinas. Workers labored 64 hours, maybe 75. Manufacturers blocked workers from organizing.

Cotton Consumerism Today

"Cotton is no longer a leading industry, nor the most important industry," Beckert notes. After World War II mechanical cotton pickers replaced thousands of workers spurring further migration of African Americans to the north. Now massive federal subsidies keep 25,000 farmers, mostly in Texas, and Arizona, growing inferior cotton. In 2013, 123 million bales of cotton weighing 400 pounds were grown. Huge farms operated in China, India, Africa and Asia and cotton factories still employed hundreds of thousands. Workers in various locales now also specialize in stages of production. It would take "seven billion sheep" to produce wool in amounts equal to the current production of cotton. Cotton products are sold from remote village stores to Walmart. The scale of cotton industry numbers can still evoke awe and wonder - but not the slogan, "made in China!"

1. A professor of American History at Harvard
2. Franklin Sammons, a review of *The Business of Slavery and the Rise of American Capitalism, 1815-1860* by Calvin Schermerhorn, *Ohio Valley History* (Vol.16, No. 3, Fall 2016), pp. 90-92
3. Daniel Drake, *Natural and Statistical Views or Picture of Cincinnati and the Miami Country* 1815, reprint from the Ohio Philosophical Society of Ohio, circa 1956; *Williams Cincinnati Directory, City Guide and Business Mirror; or Cincinnati in 1856*, C. S. Williams & Co., reprinted through the Ohio Historical and Philosophical Society, 1955; Charles Cist, *Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati in 1859*
4. Quote found in Thomas L. Purvis, ed. *Newport, Kentucky: Bicentennial History*. Newport, Ky.: Otto Zimmerman & Son, 1996, p. 54
5. *Cincinnati – The Queen City*, Vol 4, 1914; *The Cuvier Press Club*
6. Interview, Harold J. Krantz, Jr., by John Boh, July 11, 1990

Mary Elise Regan

Mary Elise Regan, who passed away suddenly on December 16th at age 74, served ten years on the board of the Kenton County Historical Society (September 2004 to September 2014). A retired Catholic elementary school teacher, her community involvement included membership in the Covington Art Club and Christopher Gist Society and volunteering at St. Elizabeth Hospital and the Behringer Crawford Museum. Mary Elise resided as a youngster and adult on East 26th Street, Covington, was a lifelong member of the Cathedral, Basilica of the Assumption, and was very active and well known to parish members and the clergy.

Then and Now



Two views of Covington's Madison Theater. Left image is circa 1950, right is 2016.

Left photo courtesy Kenton County Public Library, right courtesy the business's current website

Mystery Photo

Can you identify the mystery photo below? The answer can be found at the bottom of the page.



ANSWER:

Steeple of the Monte Casino Chapel, once located on the hill overlooking Latonia and now standing on the campus of Thomas More near Turkeyfoot Road..

Kenton County Historical Society

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I Bet You Didn't Know

*Tidbits from Kentucky's heritage
for every day of the calendar year*

January 10, 1786: Act was passed by Virginia favoring separation of Kentucky County as an independent state.

January 15, 1973: The little *Morehead and North fork Railroad*, the smallest in Kentucky history, made its final, one-mile run.

January 26, 1937: More than 1,300 prisoners from the flooded State Penitentiary in Frankfort were evacuated to Lexington.

February 3, 1900: William Goebel died, and his Lt. Governor, J.C.W. Beckham became the fourth person to hold the office of governor within a two-month time period. He served over seven years.

February 8, 1778: Daniel Boone and 27 Boonesborough salt makers were captured by Indians at the Upper Blue Licks.

"On This Day In Kentucky" — Robert Powell

Programs and Notices

The Judicial Lynching of John Montjoy

On Saturday, February 18, beginning at 10:30 a.m., Kamilah Bryant will present the story of the "judicial lynching" of her ancestor John Montjoy. The location will be the, Kenton County Public Library - at the **Covington** branch. It is one in a series of public programs presented jointly in 2017 by the Kenton County Historical Society and the Kenton County Public Library. The public is invited.

History Day 2017 — **NOTE NEW LOCATION**

The 24th Northern Kentucky Regional History Day is scheduled for Saturday, March 25th at the Boone County Public Library, in its Main Branch. (Exit I- 75 on to Highway 18). See details soon on the Boone County and Kenton County Public Library websites and elsewhere. The schedule will be similar to history days held for the last 23 years at Northern Kentucky University. Display booths will be lined up on the second floor of the library.

Behringer Crawford Museum

For the 25th year (through Sunday, January 15th) the Behringer Crawford Museum's model trains are chugging and whistling through a country-side which is dotted with miniature barns, garages, animals, rail crossings and the like. Child-friendly push-or-pull levers allow the kid to interact with the passing trains. Also on view in another room is the very elaborate Charles Dickens Victorian Christmas Village featuring endless miniature buildings and streetscapes decorated with plenty of miniature Christmas evergreens, holly, wreaths, candles, ribbons and fireside scenes. In addition see two rooms full of carved Santas displaying the creative imagination and precision of Fort Mitchell resident Jim Schmidt who carved them over many years. Check the BCM calendar on its website for any remaining programs and events late in the holiday season. Other activities in the museum will also keep the kids excited and adults engaged.

Keepsake Dolls

Sheila Lubbers, Little Flower Doll Hospital and Peggy Carson Lietzenmayer, Collector

The Kenton County Historical Society and the Kenton County Public Library invite you to a doll display at the Covington Branch on April 22, 2017. Some examples of German, French, American, African American, Native American, and Cajun dolls will be featured for your enjoyment (mostly bisque heads ca. 1890-1935). Some popular post-WWII dolls will also be available for inspection.

Find that dolly that Auntie passed on to you (or perhaps you have a great yard sale find) and bring it along! Share how the doll came to you: older, newer, GC or suffering injury, e.g., limbs missing/head off/compo peeling/eyes missing or loose, etc. Expert doll doctor/appraiser Sheila Lubbers, of the Little Flower Doll Hospital in Covington, will be on hand to suggest what might be done for a doll needing "medical" attention. Here's an opportunity for you to check reference books and possibly discover more of your doll's origin. The two-volume *Collector's Encyclopedia of Dolls* by Dorothy S. Coleman covering 2000+ manufacturers, with accompanying black-and-white pictures and markings, will be available as well as several other reference books by doll experts Jan Foulke and Patricia Smith.