

Answers to Questions

“WHAT IS TOBACCO BAG STRINGING?”



Empty tobacco bag with string. Photograph from North Carolina Collection gallery, UNC Libraries.

1. What is tobacco bag stringing?
2. Why was it necessary to hire workers to sew drawstrings into the tobacco bags?
3. What was the approximate amount of money a tobacco bag stringer would earn per bag?

4. Very little income was earned from the stringers. Why was this small amount of money so important to the families of the stringers? Why particularly in 1939?

5. Why do you think that the Golden Belt Manufacturing Company did not share its method of mechanically inserting the strings with the other two companies?

6. What do you believe “running short time” means? Why would that affect the tobacco bag stringing jobs?

7. How could the position of bag agent become a powerful one? Why is this significant?

8. In what possible situations would you have wanted to be a tobacco bag stringer?

“TOBACCO BAG STRINGING AND THE MINIMUM WAGE”



President Franklin Delano Roosevelt speaking in Denver, Colorado, circa 1936. Photograph from American Memory, Library of Congress.

9. What was the minimum wage required by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) passed by Congress and signed into law by President Roosevelt in 1938? What was the average hourly wage estimated to have been made by tobacco bag stringers?

10. Why was the Virginia–Carolina Service Corporation hoping to get an amendment to the FLSA?

11. What methods did the corporation use to argue for the amendment?

12. Do you think these methods would be effective? Why or why not?

13. Do you think most of the tobacco bag stringers were for or against the minimum wage required by the FLSA? Why or why not?

14. "Report on Tobacco Bag Stringing Operations in North Carolina and Virginia" was produced for what purpose? Why is it necessary to remember that when you begin to read and analyze these documents and visuals? How does that influence your evaluation of these primary sources materials?