

The sandy loams are easily improved and admirably adapted to the raising of early fruits and vegetables, and require very little labor for their cultivation.

From the location of this county with reference to the water, its climate is very mild, and its fruits and vegetables mature at a period sufficiently in advance of its northern sisters to give it the advantages of the high price always found in an early market. Sweet potatoes is here a most valuable crop, and from their cultivation alone large returns are realized.

The white oak soils partake of the general character of those in the other counties, and present the same advantages here which distinguishes them in the other localities. Wherever due attention has been given to the cultivation of the soil, the same returns in the form of increased value in the land, and crops equally remunerative are experienced here as in other sections.

Much of the county is in wood, and a part heavily timbered with pine, white oak and cypress. The preparation of this for market gives employment to a large part of the population, and is a considerable source of wealth to the county. The facilities for the cheapest transportation gives it great advantages as to nett profits over other parts of the country which help to supply the markets on the Chesapeake with lumber, the most remote of it being but a few miles from navigable water, and much of it on the very shores of the tidal rivers and other waters of the Bay.

The *planting* of oysters is another branch of industry here which employs a large part of the population, and gives to those who have the local advantages for its prosecution, very large profits. This agricultural term needs some explanation in reference to shell fish, which I will here briefly explain.

Oysters in their native state are frequently found in large *beds* which are sometimes many feet in thickness and extend many miles in length on the bottom of the Bay. In this condition they do not acquire a large size, and therefore do not command the highest prices in the market. These when taken and carried into shallow water and there deposited are said to be *planted*; they then rapidly grow, soon attain a large size, improve in flavor and command the highest prices in the market. This process is attended with such ample, speedy and certain reward that almost every one who is adjacent to favorable waters engage in it to the almost total exclusion of agricultural pursuits. It is one of the most certain, and at the same time most profitable forms of manual labor. From the inexhaustible quantities of oysters in the adjacent waters, and the many favorable locations for its pursuit, it is followed by a numerous class of citizens and is a source of great revenue to the county.