

Hogshead ^[1]

Hogshead

by John F. Ansley, 2006

See also: [Tobacco Barrels: Hogsheads](#) ^[2]; [Tobacco](#) ^[3]; [Tobacco Auctions](#) ^[4]; [Inventions in the Tobacco Industry](#); ^[5][Tobacco Belts](#) ^[6]



"Packing a Hogshead". Image courtesy of Filson Historical Society via Smithsonian Institute.

^[7]A hogshead is a large barrel used primarily to store and/or transport tightly packed, or "prized," leaf [tobacco](#) ^[3]. By the mid-1700s, tradition, convenience, and statutes to discourage smuggling ultimately required tobacco to be shipped in a hogshead rather than by bulk. Hogsheads were transported by water and land, and they often were rolled a mile or more by hand from the [plantation](#) ^[8] to the wharf. So-called tobacco rollers would haul a hogshead to market with the aid of one or two horses.

Over time, loose-leaf tobacco warehouse auction sales replaced the traditional method of selling tobacco in a hogshead. Loose-leaf sales allowed buyers to examine the entire bulk of the tobacco they were bidding for, while those buying by the hogshead could only examine a small sample. Prizing leaf into hogsheads was a way to help protect it during shipping and to economize on shipping space. However, the prizing damaged the leaf, and a planter in the 1870s could get more money for tobacco that was wrapper quality (leaves that were used to wrap tobacco plugs).

The hogshead is no longer the standard means of tobacco shipping or marketing but is chiefly used by manufacturers for storage during the curing process. A uniform size for the hogshead was never successfully established in [colonial](#) ^[9] times or afterward; consequently, its changing size has remained a source of frustration for researchers trying to determine tobacco statistics from colonial and nineteenth-century North Carolina.

Reference:

Robert K. Heimann, *Tobacco and Americans* (1960).

Image Credit:

"Packing a Hogshead". Image courtesy of Filson Historical Society via Smithsonian Institute. Available from http://americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater/exhibition/1_3.html ^[7] (accessed October 15, 2012).

Additional Resources:

Duke Homestead Historic Site: <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/duke/duke.htm> ^[10]. Accessed 12/2010.

Morgan, Edmund S. 1975. *American slavery, American freedom: the ordeal of colonial Virginia* ^[11]. New York: Norton.

[NC Digital Collections resources](#) ^[12] on tobacco in North Carolina (Government & Heritage Library and NC State Archives)

[NC LIVE resources](#) ^[13] on tobacco and North Carolina

[Resources in libraries](#) ^[14] about tobacco in North Carolina [via WorldCat]

[Resources on tobacco](#) ^[15] on Learn NC.

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[Early Statehood \(1789-1820\)](#) ^[19]

Tobacco ^[20]

Authors:

Ansley, John F. ^[21]

From:

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.^[22]

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Links

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