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## Farming popular occupation in Clark County

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# Farming popular occupation in Clark County

By Wendy Richter  
For the Siftings

At this time of year, many people begin to plant vegetable gardens and hope for a successful growing season.

In the first part of the twentieth century, when farming was the occupation of many in Clark County, a good bit of agriculture-related news appeared on the front-page of the local newspaper. Stories often pertained to first or early harvests, as well as large or unusual produce. Legends and lore, as well as factual information, were all included in the paper. From the articles, it is clear that a wide variety of items were raised in the Clark County area, and many of the reports are quite extraordinary.

Some people had great success growing cabbage. The July 18, 1912, Southern Standard reported that "J.F. Wingfield brought into our office probably the largest cabbage ever raised in this part of the country. The cabbage was sent in to us by Mrs. W.L. Terrell from out on DeGray, and it certainly would win the prize in any exhibit. This cabbage, stripped of all superfluous leaves, weighed ten pounds



COURTESY OF THE CLARK COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
Arkadelphia served as a marketplace for a variety of crops, including cotton. The image is a westward view of Main Street in Arkadelphia in 1908.

and measured in circumference thirty-four inches."

Turnips and onions were also noteworthy. "E.D. Voss was in town from over in Dallas County again last Saturday and brought with him another display of the turnips which he raises on his farm. Some two weeks ago Mr. Voss brought over a crate of some exceptionally large turnips, but these were babies beside the ones he had Saturday. It took only four of them to fill the crate and the four

weighed exactly 28 pounds."

In June of 1917, the paper told about Sam Dawson's harvest from "his farm near the Deceiver," south of Arkadelphia. "The four onions weighed three pounds, and Sam says that he has many more at home as large as them. On a piece of ground 120 feet long and 16 feet wide he raised 15 bushels of onions."

A popular item grown by most home gardeners today was also mentioned.

of watermelons was usually noted. For example, on July 10, 1913, J. E. Cox of Hearn produced the first load of home-grown watermelons to reach the market in Arkadelphia. On July 1, 1915, the paper stated, "The first watermelons of the season were brought into this market on yesterday. One load brought in by Jim Petty from out in Unity was bought by Williams & Phillips and another load brought in by C.F. Clark from Copeland Ridge was bought by J.W. Carter. The merchants paid about 25 cents apiece for them."

Sweet potatoes drew a lot of attention. On November 14, 1912, the newspaper reported, that "Mr. Guinn, living over on Sweet Hill, seems to be the champion sweet potato raiser of the season. He was over in town Monday with a bunch of sixteen potatoes which he got from one hill, and which weighed about ten pounds and very nearly filled a peck measure."

In October of 1915, C. C. Turquette brought in a large bunch of Jersey Sweet sweet potatoes which had been grown on L.E. Burns' farm. "There were 19 on one vine, which weighed 5½ pounds." In

September 1917, "Lee Outlaw from out on Bradshaw brought in five, the largest of which weighed 3 pounds and 7 ounces, and the others nearly as large. Lee brought in 10 bushels which he dug from 4 rows. Another large potato which weighed three and a half pounds was brought in by J.H. Terrell of DeGray."

About a month later, A.J. Banks of Curtis, showed off "a large sweet potato which he brought in on his load of cotton seed Saturday. It was of the Key West variety and weighed 4½ pounds."

A book to be published this summer by the Clark County Historical Association will feature front-page stories from 1911-1920, including these agriculture-related items and many other fascinating articles that tell the story of the county in a time of great change.

For additional information about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum ([www.clarkcountyhistory.org](http://www.clarkcountyhistory.org) or 230.1360) or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library ([www.obu.edu/archives](http://www.obu.edu/archives) or 245.5332).

On July 19, 1917, "W.G. Watson of Unity brought in a large tomato last Tuesday which was raised by his sister, Miss Myrtle Watson of Unity. The tomato weighed a pound and a half and was well formed. Miss Watson is a member of a canning club and has a plot of ground a tenth of an acre in tomatoes. Last year off this plot she gathered 2414 pounds of tomatoes for home use and then sold the rest for \$25.00."

Each season's first load