



### **Curing Barn c. 1870**

Tobacco has a long history in North America, starting with Native American culture. After adopting the use of tobacco from Native peoples, early American colonists began air-curing tobacco, which resulted in a dark tobacco leaf. By the mid-1800s, farmers in the Piedmont region were producing Brightleaf Tobacco. Brightleaf, also known as flue-cured tobacco, has a bright golden color and is created through the flue-curing process, which was developed over generations of work by farmers and enslaved laborers. Combined with the right seed and soil types, this tobacco yielded a sweet, lemony yellow leaf ideal for smoking, and fetched high prices.

When it was time to cure the tobacco, it was usually the women's job to tie the tobacco leaves to tobacco sticks, while children handed them bundles of leaves. The men would tend the fire around the clock for nearly a week, carefully monitoring the heat and progress of the leaves inside. Today the process looks very different, but requires the same highly specialized knowledge and skill.