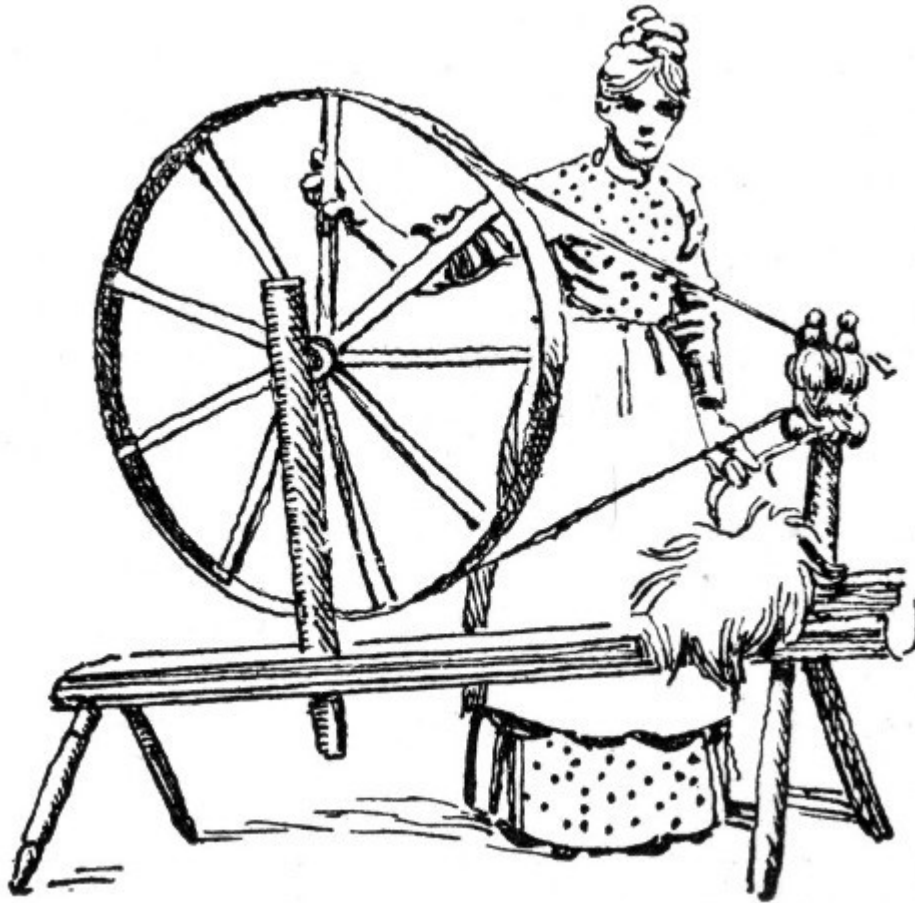


Wealthiest Woman in the South Despised Plantation Life

By Jeannette Holland Austin



spinning wheel

At one time, cotton was "King" in Georgia. The crop is still grown today in South, Central and Southwest Georgia in counties such as Dooly, Colquitt, Mitchell, Worth, and Decatur. During the early days Georgia grew the lucrative cash crop of rice, however, before the American Revolution (1775 to 1783) cotton became another staple in the southern home.

The Sea Island Cotton imported from the West Indies was grown along the

coast because it produced a long, strong fiber easily separated from the seed. The invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitley was a welcome relief to planting and weaving. Southerners wove their own cloth from raw cotton, hemp and other crops.

The plantation life from sun up to sun down was shared by all of the family members, including the lady of the house whose duty it was to teach slaves to sew and weave cloth as well as to harvest herbs and plants for medicines.

It is laughable to read how the actress, Fanny Kemble, hated plantation life and wrote a stinging criticism and rebuke of it in her book *Life on a Georgia Plantation*.

Fanny was married to one of the richest men in America, Mease Butler, who owned thousands of acres in New England, South Carolina and Georgia.

No doubt, the actress lived a finer existence than the average planter.