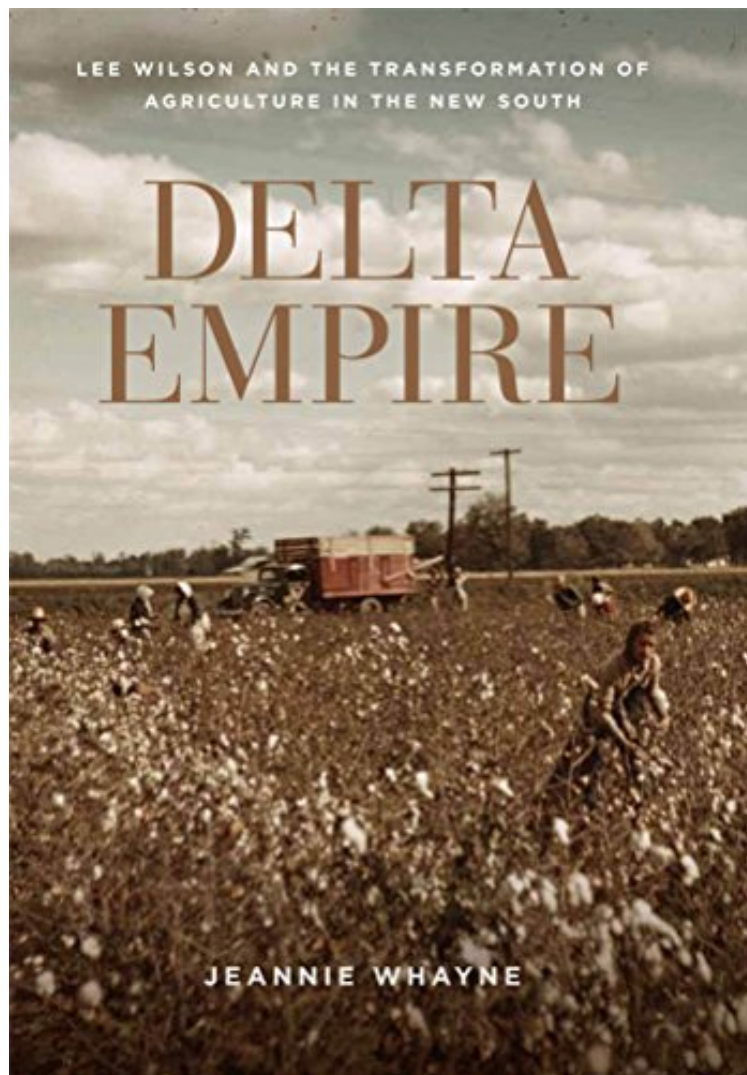


(Download) Delta Empire: Lee Wilson and the Transformation of Agriculture in the New South (Making the Modern South)

## Delta Empire: Lee Wilson and the Transformation of Agriculture in the New South (Making the Modern South)

*Jeannie Whayne*

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**Jeannie Whayne : Delta Empire: Lee Wilson and the Transformation of Agriculture in the New South (Making the Modern South)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Delta Empire: Lee Wilson and the Transformation of Agriculture in the New South (Making the Modern South):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Modern-day King and His KingdomBy CustomerIt's hard to imagine an individual owning so much property. It truly was an empire. At Robert E Lee Wilson's death it was around 43,000 acres. The Wilson descendants just sold the remaining land (23,000 acres) in 2010. During his sixty-plus years on earth, Lee Wilson established five towns, a bank, and a multitude of cotton gins, saw mills, and small businesses of

every type in Mississippi County, Arkansas. From cutting and selling timber off of a small piece of inherited property at age fifteen, Wilson eventually became one of the most powerful and wealthiest men in Arkansas. Lee Wilson certainly was a genius and he made life work for him right up until the day he died from a disease most likely caught while attending the 1934 Chicago Worlds Fair. My only complaint about the book is that there wasn't as much detail about his land holdings and farming methods as I would have liked. The book was mostly fleshed out with details of his financial transactions over his lifetime. No modern day financier could duplicate the financial wheeling and dealings described in this book. Still, a book very much worth reading. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Awesome Story. Totally Recommend It. By R. A. Hedrick Great Story! Totally Recommend this walk back in the History of the Delta Empire. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Definitely could've been written a little better but the content is interesting enough to keep ones ... By Perry D. Meh. Definitely could've been written a little better but the content is interesting enough to keep ones attention - at least for a few chapters. Also think the author should follow up with the new owner of Wilson, AR, as he is doing tremendous things for the community and is not the "faceless investor" she assumed him to be.

In *Delta Empire: Lee Wilson and the Transformation of Agriculture in the New South* Jeannie Whyne employs the fascinating history of a powerful plantation owner in the Arkansas delta to recount the evolution of southern agriculture from the late nineteenth century through World War II. After his father's death in 1870, Robert E. "Lee" Wilson inherited 400 acres of land in Mississippi County, Arkansas. Over his lifetime, he transformed that inheritance into a 50,000-acre lumber operation and cotton plantation. Early on, Wilson saw an opportunity in the swampy local terrain, which sold for as little as fifty cents an acre, to satisfy an expanding national market for Arkansas forest reserves. He also led the fundamental transformation of the landscape, involving the drainage of tens of thousands of acres of land, in order to create the vast agricultural empire he envisioned. A consummate manager, Wilson employed the tenancy and sharecropping system to his advantage while earning a reputation for fair treatment of laborers, a reputation -- Whyne suggests -- not entirely deserved. He cultivated a cadre of relatives and employees from whom he expected absolute devotion. Leveraging every asset during his life and often deeply in debt, Wilson saved his company from bankruptcy several times, leaving it to the next generation to successfully steer the business through the challenges of the 1930s and World War II. *Delta Empire* traces the transition from the labor-intensive sharecropping and tenancy system to the capital-intensive neo-plantations of the post--World War II era to the portfolio plantation model. Through Wilson's story Whyne provides a compelling case study of strategic innovation and the changing economy of the South in the late nineteenth century.