



NATIONAL
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FOR THE ARTS

South Georgia: Culture of farm work

Like the farmers of Apopka, South Georgia farmers used German POWs during World War II, but most labor was local. Since the 1970's, agriculture has become **dependent on migrant labor** from various ethnic backgrounds. Most U.S. farmworkers today are **male, foreign born, young, poor, and single** or living separately from spouses and children.

Farmworkers tend to **specialize in particular crops.**

Like any job, there is a culture of work: labor organized by crews, personalized tools, co-worker nicknames, lunch trucks that bring food to the packing houses or fields, fish fries and barbecues put on by crew leaders or farmers at season's end.

"Forty years ago I was doing the same thing they're doing. I went to Canada for seven years starting in the late 1950s picking tobacco, made three to four times what I could here in Georgia. So I can relate to why they do it. To better yourself."

James S. Rogers, farmer, Echols County



This tobacco crew near Tifton was typical of farm labor through the 1970s.

Photo Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Hispanic farmworkers
at Planters Warehouse
in Nashville.

Photo by
Laurie Kay Sommers,
1997.

