

Ripley, Oklahoma



The W. H. Coyle cotton gin, in Ripley, Oklahoma, did a thriving business in the early part of the century. This photograph was probably taken sometime between 1915 and 1925.

During the years after the land runs of 1889 and later, farmers in Oklahoma were just learning what would grow well in the new territory. During the 1890s, [Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station](#) bulletins featured research on such subjects as wheat, fruits, potatoes, cabbage--even wine making. In 1895, George L. Holter published research entitled "Food Value of Corn Scorched by Hot Winds."

However, by the early part of the century, researchers were beginning to look at cotton as a valuable crop for Oklahoma. In 1908, the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station, at Oklahoma A&M College (now Oklahoma State University), published Bulletin No. 77, "Cotton Culture." The authors, L. A. Moorhouse and J. F. Nicholson, concluded:

Cotton is a banner crop in Oklahoma. This crop has been tested for several years in succession in the two territories, and the practical grower has reached the conclusion that cotton can be cultivated with profit in the new state.

By 1922, cotton was the most valuable cash crop in Oklahoma. In fact, in that year Oklahoma ranked fourth among the cotton-producing states, and the Experiment Station had been doing cotton variety tests for several years. In 1928, Oklahoma A&M cotton specialist L. L. Ligon published his report on "Varieties of Cotton for Oklahoma."

Today, cotton is still an important cash crop for Oklahoma's farmers. During the 1990s cotton has consistently ranked within the top three or four cash crops for the state, behind winter wheat, hay, and at times, peanuts. The year 1996, with unusually good corn and sorghum crops, was an exception. The value of the cotton crop for that year put it in sixth place. Nationally, Oklahoma ranks 14th in production of cotton.

Most of Oklahoma's cotton is grown in the southwestern part of the state, although cotton can be grown as far north as Kay County, bordering Kansas. Wheat and cattle may be the dominant agricultural commodities in Oklahoma today, but cotton, which has played a significant role in the state's agricultural history, continues to be one of Oklahoma's most valuable crops.

The community was named for William P. Ripley, railroad president. The latitude of Ripley is 36.017N. The longitude is -96.905W. It is in the Central Standard time zone. Elevation is 846 feet. The estimated population, in 2003, was 452.