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AGRONOMIC PRACTICES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE LOUISIANA SUGAR INDUSTRY

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WILLIAM GILBERT TAGGART, B. S.

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ABSTRACT
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A THESIS ON
AGRONOMIC PRACTICES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
THE LOUISIANA SUGAR INDUSTRY

This thesis presents literature relating to the development of cane production in Louisiana during a period of time, and undertakes to discuss the major reasons for the variations which have occurred.

Statistical evidence of these variations is presented.

This thesis is divided into three main portions; namely, The Literature, The Discussion and the Statistics.

The Literature consists of a ninety-nine year cross section of the writings on the Louisiana sugar industry. Most of such writings are found in Journals which have no index or one so poorly arranged that it is of little value. In this work we have arranged articles or abstracts of articles, selected to show the conditions of the industry at the time of their writing. This material is presented in the order of the year in which it was published, and is intended to show the condition of the industry at that time. It is included in this thesis as a matter of convenience. Through it we can get a good idea of the development of the sugar business, and at the same time find those factors which are

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responsible for such changes as took place.

The Discussion takes up in detail the important phases of sugar cane growing. Through the use of the literature and reference to other published material, it points out the changes in general practice as well as the application of the results of investigation to the business of raising cane. The chief subjects discussed are: the soil, the climate, the rotation of crops, the varieties of cane, the fertilization and the cultivation of the crop. In addition, this paper shows that the Louisiana planter has in many instances failed either to post himself on the best information of the day, or he has failed to take advantage of his opportunity. The statistics show that the sugar industry has had its high tides and its low tides. The Literature gives logical explanation for these, and the discussion points out how science has been of use in turning some of the low tides into high tides.

The Statistics, presents in tabular form the crops of sugar from 1815 through 1832¹⁸³², and in addition there too is shown a graph of a moving five-year average of these yields. The graph is intended to smooth out the sharp variations as they occur from year to year, and to show more clearly than do the annual yields, the general trends of production. In the table is listed some of the more important happenings which influenced the development of the in-

dustry. These are listed opposite the year when they came into use. A discussion of the history involved in the light of the statistics is presented for the purpose of measuring the influence of such factors as seems worthwhile.

After the Statistics, the Conclusions are given. The conclusions point out briefly and concisely the writer's opinion of the most important thought which has been found in this work. It gives the planters' reaction to such thought, and its effect upon his business.

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INTRODUCTION

It has been said that "blood and tears, piracy and bitter despair, as also ambition, invention and great adventure are inextricably woven with the history of sugar in the world." All of these have been the portion of those who would make the sugar business their business in Louisiana. Her sons and daughters have shed their blood and their tears, they have suffered bitter despair, but truly they have been ambitious, for through their invention and great adventures they have built not only an industry for themselves, but given of their experience and their learning to their bretheren of the sugar world.

The Louisiana Sugar Industry dates back to 1725-6. It has lived through the pioneer stage, the Ante-Bellum slavery days, Civil War and Reconstruction, and finally through the Machine Age.

During its two centuries of existence sugar cane has been studied by many able men, some of them planters and some professional investigators, all scientists, who had the forethought to record their observations, findings and practices, that we who followed might benefit, if we would. The literature is full of their work, but it has not been thoroughly studied with the view of bringing together the best of those factors, which have been chiefly

instrumental in the development of the industry. The object of this work is to attempt to assemble and to study such records and to show particularly those Agronomic practices that have influenced the development of the Louisiana Sugar Industry. In doing this, it will be necessary to treat the subject broadly; to record and point out some influencing facts other than Agronomic. Were this not done, confusion would result and misinterpretation arise. In this thesis, an attempt will be made first to record the findings in the literature and afterward to discuss and interpret the results.