The Lower Coast Gazette

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY

THE LOWER COAST GAZETTE CO.

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POINTE-A-LA-HACHE, LOUISIANA.

Terms: 1.00 Per Year in Advance

Application for entry as second class matter at the post office at Pointe-a-la-Hatche pending.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2, 1909.

Salutatory.

THE LOWER COAST GAZETTE with this issue flings its banner to the breeze and undertakes to do what its name implies, that is to give a record of current events and transactions on the "Lower Coast" and of such events and transactions as may affect the "Lower Coast." The "Lower Coast" is that part of the delta of the Mississippi river lying below the city of New Orleans and is so designated in contradistinction to the upper coast that part of the delta lying above New Orleans. The "Lower Coast" country represents over 200 miles of coast line, the east and west banks of the Mississippi river reaching from New Orleans to the sea, 110 miles distant. While the lands lie low and their surface generally is below the flood heights of the river, there is a charm in their immensity as they spread far away to the east and to the west. The great sugar factories, the fields of growing sugar cane, the great rice plantations, the beautiful orange orchards, the hundreds of splendid truck gardens, the oyster boats and fishermen and great oyster canning factories, the pilot station and the lookouts and the great jetty work at South Pass and at Southwest Pass, all combine to make up a country that may lack the picturesque beauty of a country of hills and valleys, but is a country that contains more of the elements of natural wealth than any equal area of land on the plannet.

Holland is rich in her alluvial lands, so rich, as Col. George E. Waring says in his "Farmer's vacation," that some of the Dutch farmers have their cooking utensils made of silver, and yet the lakes, rivers and canals of Holland are frozen over for a considerable part of the year. We live in the Holland of the western world, but live in temperate latitudes, where the land never freezes three inches deep, where roses bloom practically all the year around, where we have more units of sunshine of heat and of moisture than are had elsewhere without the tropics; where nature, in fact, has done so much for us that we are tempted to trust to nature for a subsistence and perhaps to forget that we can only get the good things of this earth by earnest and persistent struggles.

This "Lower Coast" is the garden spot of Louisiana. Its vast stretches of fertile land can support a population equal to that of all Louisiana. This is only now coming to be appreciated and there is growing up here a great truck gardening interest that is now selling its "head lettuce" up to Chicago, St. Paul and even the distant Winnipeg. Millions of our oysters are being sent far up into the West and even on to the Pacific coast,, and as far as Seattle. Our splendid oranges are going up into the West daily by car loads and our truck gardens are even now green with the present and coming crops of lettuce, cabbages, garlic and onions.

This is the country that was explored by LaSalle in 1682. He went as far down as the mouth of the river, having come down on the Mississippi by the way of the great lakes and the Illinois river. Thirty years later Bienville founded the city of New Orleans and 110 years later Etienne de Bore made the cane sugar industry a success in this state and its rapid development occurred largely on the "Lower Coast."

The "Lower Coast" is classic ground and it has been the scene of many a conflict and many a romance. The pirate LaFitte knew the channels in each of the adjacent bays and bayous and even within a few years searches have been made for LaFitte's treasures in localities where he was reported to have buried them. At Englisn Turn, some twenty miles below the city of New Orleans, where a short bend in the river makes a head wind out of what may have been a fair wind to an ascending vessel, Captain Jones who claimed that he had taken possession of the country in the name of England, turned back upon the appearance of Bienville, who asserted that he, Bienville, had already taken possession of the country in the name of the King of France, and he referred to his open boat as evidence of his occupation of the country above. The point whence Captain Jones turned back on has been known as English Turn ever since. In 1844, when Louisiana, in the electoral college, cast the vote that decided the election of James K. Polk as President of the United States, it was found that this Parish of Plaquemines gave the vote that decided the election in this state. It then gained the cognomen of the "Empire parish," and it has been known as such ever since.

Its peculiar geographical appearance will be seen at a glance on the map. It projects far out into the Gulf as a narrow peninsula, the alluvium of the Rocky Mountains, transported thousands of miles to the Gulf having built up this peninsula. The adjacent bays are now our great oyster fields, which make Louisiana the chief oyster producing state of the Union. The proxmity of the waters of the Gulf protects our orange orchards from freezing weather, excep on extraordinary occasions and altogether we believe that while we live in the finest state in the federal union, we who live on "Lower Coast" live in the finest section of this finest state. It shall be the mission of this journal to do all that it can in every way to promote the good of the people of this section and advance as far as it can the interests of the section; to call the attention of readers everywhere to the wonderful advantages that we here possess and to lead all the world to a better appreciation of them. We shall do our best to attain these ends.

Alfalfa.

The people of the Centennial State, Colorado, and of the wilds of Western Kansas, were among the first in this country to nationalize, so to speak, that great leguminous plant, alfalfa. For generations agriculturists have been familiar with the merits of the plant under the English name of Lucerne, but it required the arid climate of Western Kansas and of Colorado to search for crops that would grow with a limited water supply. It was found that sorghum would grow where Indian corn would entirely fail and many thousands of acres of sorghum were grown in Western Kansas as a forage plant and the magnitude of the industry led to efforts to convert sorghum into sugar, the state of Kansas offering to pay bounties for the successful production, as our readers will remember was the case a quarter of a century ago.

Over in Colorado they took up alfalfa because of its great capacity for searching for water, its roots penetrating, it is stated to a depth of ten feet, and the Spanish name for the plant then current in that country has now become generally adopted for it throughout the United States. Alfalfa is recognized as the legume containing in its stems and leaves more protein matter than does any similar plant. Experiments with alfalfa in Louisiana have demonstrated that as a protein food, when cut up in short lengths and mixed with molasses, practically all hydrocarbons, the mixture constituted an almost perfect ration. Those who have not the alfalfa can use ordinary hay in consuming molasses as stock food, provided they use enough cotton seed meal to supply the protein which alfalfa only supplies and which is missing in the ordinary hay.

The United States Department of Agriculture has recently issued a bulletin on alfalfa which gives a resume of the spread of alfalfa and a discussion of the best means of securing and maintaining a stand of it. The special features requisite to securing an adequate stand seem to be those of soil inoculation and the presence in the soil of sufficient lime. The alluvial lands of Louisiana, or, in fact, any lands where snails prevail, are said to contain lime enough for the production of leguminous plants. We all know that in our allluvial districts we have an ample supply of tie vines, a sort of morning glory plant, and also the wild, or deer pea. It would therefore be fair to infer that our alluvial soils do not need inoculation. In fact the experiments at Audubon park made by Dr. Stubbs showed quite a successful growth of alfalfa without inoculation. On the other hand in the hills of North Louisiana it seems very difficult to secure a stand of alfalfa. Some experiments made in Calhoun in inoculating the soil remedied this in degree, but we believe that the stand of alfalfa there has not become all that was desired. In the bluff lands at Baton Rouge, which are presumable an alluvial of another sort, it, was found that inocculation, while not absolutely essential, gave better results than did the plots without inoculation.

All the agricultural world has come to recognize alfalfa as one of the very best possible crops for the farmer to produce. On the other hand there have been many failures, due, perhaps, to the choice of the wrong time of of the year, or the ground may have been in too rough a condition. Any way, the failures have come and this has discouraged so many persons that we have really but few successful fields of alfalfa in this state. It is now said that alfalfa should be planted in the late summer or early in the fall, so as to escape the prolific growth of summer grasses and get fairly under way in its growth before the freezing weather of winter comes along. Alfalfa planted in the spring in Southern Louisiana seems to be immediately covered with a growth of other grasses and choked out. Those interested in alfalfa culture should write to the Department of Agriculture and secure copies of this bulletin, which gives all the latest information up to the present time and is a very valuable contribution to our agriculture. The bulletin is Farmers' Bulletin No. 339.

The Progress of Human Society

Prof. S. A. Knapp, of Lake Charles, La., who has been connected with the U. S. Department of Agriculture for a number of years and has done an immense amount of good work in connection therewith, was delegated by Secretary Wilson to take up farmers' co-operative demonstration work in its relation to rural improvement. Prof. Knapp believes that steps should be taken to increase the earning capacity of rural toilers. If they are able to increase their earnings but unwilling, then the next step would be to increase the rural pride, and by arousing this and the force of public opinion, an improvement can ordinarily be had. Even in the matter of schooling, it is generally recognized that compulsory attendance is demanded in most of the states of the federal Union.

In order to bring about increased gains to the farmer in the demonstration work inaugurated by Prof. Knapp, efforts are made to secure the best crops for the lands under consideration and the best and most profitable methods of producing those crops on the lands. These demonstrations are being made on several hundred farms in the state and wherever practicable, the farmers are made parties to the work and their assistance is found immensely beneficial.

A part from this selection of the lands and the crops, Prof. Knapp undertakes to demonstrate that there is no necessity for the deterioration of the farms, which s one of the chief factors in the too common poverty in the rural districts. He believes, hence, that by selecting proper crops, by utilizing the best methods and by gradually improving the fertility of the soil, the farmer can become well off, and perhaps very well off, where now he may feel extremely poor and unable to indulge in the good things of this life, such as churches, schools, good houses, good sanitary conditions, good food, good clothing and whatever else money well spent usually brings. In the course of his investigations in the rural districts Prof. Knapp noted years ago that among people who were thought to be the most unprogressive increased earnings brought about increased expenditure, in order to secure improved living conditions. Better clothing and more comfortable homes quickly resulted from the increased earnings.

One of the misfortunes of our Gulf coast parishes of Louisiana is the fact that nature has been so bountiful in supplying fish and game that can be had for the catching, that the intense effort utilized in the more progressive parts of the Union have not been necessary. Unless necessity is felt in some way, but little effort will be made to secure greater wealth. Prof. Knapp told us some years back of a comparatively wealthy neighbor who lived reasonably well and in accordance with the oldfashioned customs of the country, going barefooted in the summer time and having but limited house room and that of a primitive style. The new comers from the western states, of whom Dr. Knapp was one, soon got on visiting relations and the young ladies of the native households were asked to return the calls of the incoming westerners. To do this they had to have good shoes and they made the necessary demand upon the paternal ancestor and get the shoes. The shoes were followed by rugs on the floor, by better furniture and finally by a piano and many other of th good things that come with reasonable prosperity. Such progress is certainly very legitimate and where nature is as bounteous in her supplies of food as in the Gulf tier of states, it requires an apppreciation of the advantages of improved homes, improved sanitary conditions, of good clothing, good education and of good transportation. All of these demand a considerable outlay and that outlay can only be provided for out of the profits of the industry in which the heads of the families are engaged, It has been noted of recent years that thousands of automobiles are owned by farmers up in the western states, where the high prices of corn and wheat have made the farmer as a class, comparatively rich, We don't have many automobiles in the country in Southern Louisiana, and perhaps we ought to be studying as to just how we can get them. Every one engaged in agriculture, whether the cultivation of cane, corn, cotton, rice or garden truck doubtless knows that in some way or other, the methods he practices could be improved at least to some extent and as a rule better crops mean more net ain to the farmer.

The American Farmer Leads the World.

As far back as history gives us any records , the Black Sea in Russia has been the granary of Europe. This may have led to reduced crops on any given area in Southern Russia and in considering the mattter U. S. Consular Agent, R. R. Denis, reports that the uncertainty of other grain crops in Southern Russia is now leading them to consider with much care the possibility of turning their lands over to corn culture, that is to Indian corn, maize. It seems that thus far some moderate exprimenets in corn have done moderately well, even under conditions that were injurious to the wheat crop, In the government of Bessarabia, west of Odessa, Mr. W. I. Bogdan, President of the Government Agricultural Society, has taken the matter in hand and has secured an appropriation equal to $5,150 per year for the purpose of practically and scientifically demonstrating to the farmers of that country the possibilitses of corn as a profitable crop. It is thougt that there were nearly thirty millions of acres of land in that section of Russia that could be utilized in corn culture. If this be done at an early date, our corn producers of the western states may not reap the golden harvest that they have been doing of late years, a harvest that has brought much gold to them and their product to nearly a dollar per bushel when distributed in New Orleans.

Mr Bogdan now desire... tablish an experimental ... at some convenient point ... province and to supply it w... the necessary implements ... apparatus for planting, cult... ing, harvesting, shelling ... shredding corn. In order to ma... sure of success in these matters ... with which his people are entirely unfamiliar, he desires to secure the services of some highly educated and thoroughly practical agriculturist from the United States to take entire charge of the station. The Society is prepared to pay $4,000 a year and to furnish gratis a comfortable house for such a man to live in. Besides the Society will make a contract for a term of years and promises all of the assistance needed in the way of hand or horse labor. A man of mature years is wanted ond preferably a married man, as being perhaps more contented under the different conditions of life in Russia as compared with the United States. The person selected would also be expected to be well posted theoretically, if not practically, as to the profitable utilization of the corn crop.

Mr. Bogdan further urges upon the Minister of Agriculture at St. Petersburg the importance of admitting free of duty all implements used in corn cultivation. Corn harvesters are already on the free list. Mr. Bogdan has already applied for assistance in this matter to Mr. J. C. Meyer, the manager of the Odessa office of the International Harvester Co

The Damage by Rats

We believe that we in Louisia... are very much damaged by the musk rat, because of their burrowing into the public and private levees. When the burrows are invaded by high water the holes thus made carry the water nearly through the levees and a moderate amount of seepage softens the land side of the levee to such an extent as to admit the precolation of water and then the invasion af crawfish and snakes in search of the animalculae on which they feed, does the rest.

The most serious loss by rats is, however, in the great grain fields and warehouses, storehouses, etc., of the country. Even in our own cane fields we find that the rats and mice do more or less harm and in the tropics they are said to be especially hurtful.

Our attention is called to this by the fact that recently a deputation, headed by Sir James Crichton Browne and the Duke of Bedford, representing the incorporated Society for the Destruction of Vermin in Great Britain, waited upon Lord Carrington at the offices of the Board of Agriculture to urge him to appoint a commission to inquire into the subject of the destruction caused to crops by rats. The deputation pointed out the enormous damage done by rats and estimated it at seventy millions of dollars per annum. This estimate was had by allowing one rat per cultivated acre of land and assuming that each rat does damage to the extent of half a cent per day. On the forty millions of acres of land under consideration this works out the damage estimated. Reference was also made to the fact that two millions of people died of plague in India and that the rat was the proven cause of the spread of the infection. In Great Britain the annual expenture for rat poison is placed at a million and a quarter dollars and it is thought that the rat plague in England could be reduced, if not eradicated, at a considerably less cost than is now occurring through their depredations.

Sowing Rice Instead of Planting it.

The very rapid development of the rice industry in British Guiana is attracting the attention of te sugar colonies elsewhere, becouse of the ease with which the planters can engage in the rice iudustry should the sugar industry prove un profitable. The rice industry is, necessarily, a very close one, because it is a staple crop and is produced to the extent of millions of tons in the British East Indies, which now controls the cheapest supply of human labor in the word,

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Four Million Bags of Rice.

Secretary Marshall of the Louisiana and Texas Rice Millers and Distributors' Association, in his crop report for December. makes the estimate for the Louisiana and Texas rice crop for the year 1908 as a total of 4,391,000 bags. As such a considerable quantity will be needed for seed rice, he estimates that the actual crop available for food purpo... will amount to about four mi... of bags.

Considering the large ... rice that is saved fo... tnis estimate is not very ... that made by the Unite... Department of Agr... which, in its recent e... placed the rice crop at ... millions of bushels of f... pounds each. Estimati... bushels to the bag of ... should then have about fo... one-half millions of bags, ... ponding closely with Mr. ... shall's figures.

The rapidly increasing co... sumption of rice in the Uni... States and the outlet that ... have for considerable quan... of rice in Porto Rico, have ... a healthy tone generally t... rice industry and we sin... hope that this will continue ... that this great staple crop ... annually in quantity until ... hundreds of thousands of ... of our Louisiana and Texas ... yet unemployed, may be ... therein.

It is incidentally s... crops of the Carolin... kansas will amount ... a quarter of a ... bags, or to only about ... cent. of the total proc... the United States. The ... show what a wonderfu... ment there has been in r... ture in the Southwest, wh... ty years ago practically a... American supply came ... Carolinas.

Domestic Ric...

In the report of t... of Agriculture, just ... large rice crop of this ... 000,000 bushels, giving ... close to that of the rye ... 18 millions of dollars. ... 28.7 per cent. above it in ...

Secretary Wilson says th... year has produced such a... crop as this one in quantity, ... has the rice crop of any ... mer year been worth as much ... the producer. It would ... that the ...

Imports of Rice

Although the United S... has become such a large prod... of rice, the imports of fo... rice still continue. For the ... months of the current yea... ing October 31st, the ... have been about ... short tons of stand... about 55,000 short ... flour, rice meal a... The broken ri... slightly unde... and is i... rate ... co...