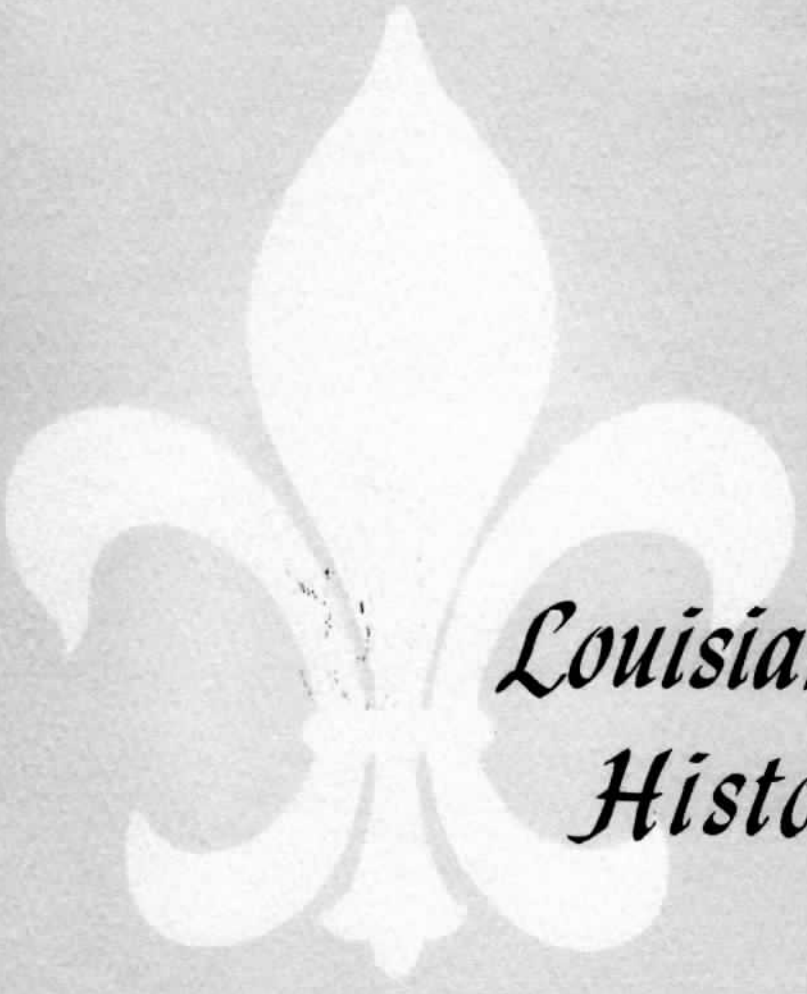
Summer 1985
Vol. XXVI, No. 3



Louisiana History

The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association

A Commitment to Leisure: The Agricultural Economy of St. Landry Parish, La., 1850

By CHRIS NORDMANN*

Graduate Student
University of Alabama

"They are nevertheless—even the poorest of them—habitually gay and careless, as well as kind-hearted, hospitable, and dissolute—working little, and spending much of their time at church, or at balls, or the gaming table." This is how one man described the people of French descent who inhabited much of southern Louisiana. That other antebellum Southerners were equally leisure oriented is the thesis of a recent study by Professors Forrest McDonald and Grady McWhiney. They contend that few Southerners liked to work, that little effort was required to produce what they needed, and that most Southern whites raised little more than enough to subsist. McDonald and McWhiney also argue that many antebellum Southerners did not have to work hard since their livestock made a living for them. To determine the validity of this thesis, these generalizations need to be examined at the local level. St. Landry Parish, Louisiana, provides a useful test case for these assertions.[1]

St. Landry Parish in southwestern Louisiana contains a variety of geographical divisions. A geographical and topographical survey report

*The author wishes to thank Grady McWhiney, Forrest and Ellen McDonald and Anna Jane Marks for their assistance in making this article possible.

[1] The quotation is from Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveller's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States . . .*, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger (New York, 1953), p. 328. See also Samuel H. Lockett, *Louisiana As It Is: A Geographical and Topographical Description of the State*, ed. Lauren C. Post (Baton Rouge, 1969), p. 95. Olmsted's observations were made in the 1850s; Lockett's description was drafted around 1870. Forrest McDonald and Grady McWhiney, "The South from Self-Sufficiency to Peonage: An Interpretation," *American Historical Review*, LXXXV (1980), 1095-1118. McDonald and McWhiney build upon the pioneer work of Frank L. Owsley and his graduate students, to which I am also indebted. See Owsley, *Plain Folk of the Old South* (Baton Rouge, 1949); Herbert Weaver, *Mississippi Farmers, 1850-1860* (Nashville, 1945), and Blanche H. Clark, *The Tennessee Yeoman, 1840-1860* (Nashville, 1942).

noted that the parish consisted of four distinct sections: "hilly Uplands, rolling Prairie, the Bluff plateau, and Alluvial bottoms." This study noted that "these prairies are all vast, treeless expanses, covered with a luxuriant growth of grass. . . . Scattered here and there are the little farms and homesteads of the few inhabitants, and roaming everywhere are their immense herds of cattle and horses."[2]

Of the 775 farm units in the parish in 1850, fewer than a third produced enough—2,000 pounds of cotton, 20,000 pounds of rough rice, 3,000 pounds of tobacco, or any amount of sugarcane or hemp—to be classified by the census bureau as a plantation. By this definition there were almost 165 cotton plantations and nearly 70 sugarcane plantations, though the term is somewhat misleading, since no more than two dozen of these farms had a great house and the large numbers of slaves contained on plantations of romantic legend.[3]

Cotton plantations ranged in size from those producing 2,000 pounds to those producing 40,000 pounds. The plantation of William H. Parrott fits the stereotype; he owned 75 slaves, 1,500 acres, 900 of which were improved, and produced 40,000 pounds of cotton and also grew more than 2,200 bushels of corn and 100 bushels of sweet potatoes. The cash value of his farm was $25,000, the value of his livestock $8,500. On the other hand Joseph Pender, who owned 9 slaves and only 30 improved acres, was classified as a plantation owner, though he produced only 2,000 pounds of cotton and grew 300 bushels of corn and 40 bushels of sweet potatoes. Antoine Vidrine, who owned 11 slaves and 400 acres, 200 of which were improved, also produced only 2,000 pounds of cotton, and grew 350 bushels of corn and 100 bushels of sweet potatoes.[4]

Production on sugar plantations varied even more widely. Though this was not the center of Louisiana sugarcane production, St. Landry planta-

[2] Lockett, *Louisiana As It Is*, pp. 93-95. For an earlier description, see William Darby, *A Geographical Description of the State of Louisiana: Presenting a View of the Soil, Climate, Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral Production; Illustrative of Its Natural Physiognomy, Its Geographical Configuration, and Relative Situation: With an Account of the Character and Manners of the Inhabitants* (Philadelphia, 1816), p. 203. It is similar to Lockett's except that it also included a sea-marsh land area. The difference lies in the fact that in 1840 Calcasieu Parish was created out of the western part of St. Landry Parish.

[3] Manuscript Census Returns, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: St. Landry Parish, Louisiana, Agricultural Schedule (microfilm copy, University of Southwestern Louisiana); United States Census Office, *Statistical View of the United States, Embracing Its Territory, Population—White, Free Colored, and Slave—Moral and Social Conditions, Industry, Property, and Revenue* . . . (Washington, D.C., 1854), p. 178.

[4] Manuscript Census Returns, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: St. Landry Parish, Louisiana, Slave and Agricultural Schedules (hereinafter cited as Seventh Census); followed by one or more of the appropriate schedules. All references are to St. Landry Parish.). In the census returns, Vidrine is rendered as Viderine.

tions produced nearly 6 million pounds of raw cane sugar. The partnership of Michel D. Boatwright and Caleb Swayze produced the most cane sugar of any one unit—420,000 pounds, worth about $21,000 at 1850 prices. On the other hand Pierre Lejeune was one of four "plantation owners" who each produced the smallest recorded amount, 1,000 pounds, worth about $50.[5]

Production of staple crops other than cotton and sugar was relatively unimportant. One farm produced the entire parish's tobacco crop of 1,200 pounds. There were no rice "plantations" in the parish, though a small number of farms—fewer than 200—did produce some rice, referred to as "providence rice" since it depended on rainfall and not flooding of the fields, in amounts ranging from 5 pounds to 160 pounds. St. Landry farmers did not cultivate hemp.[6]

In 1850 there were almost as many livestock raisers as there were plantation owners in the parish. There were nearly 230 landowners having livestock whose value was equal to, or greater than, the cash value of their farms, suggesting that the raising of livestock was at least as important as producing crops if not more important and that the land may have been more suitable for raising animals. Fewer than 40 livestock raisers also qualified as either sugar or cotton planters, indicating economic diversification.[7] (See Table 1.)

Table 1
Number of Plantations and Livestock Raisers, St. Landry Parish, 1850

Cotton	164
Rice	0
Tobacco	0
Sugarcane	69
Hemp	0
Total	233
Livestock raisers	228

The most important livestock raised in St. Landry were cattle, swine, sheep, and horses. Nearly 60 percent of the parish farmers owned cattle. In 1850 St. Landry contained about 82,500 cattle, an average of 180 for farmers owning cattle. This figure is misleading since two livestock

[5] United States Census Office, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850, Embracing a Statistical View of Each of the States and Territories, Arranged by Counties, Towns, Etc.* (Washington, D.C., 1853), Louisiana, Table XI, p. 486 (hereinafter cited as *The Seventh Census);* Seventh Census, Agricultural Schedule.

[6] Seventh Census, Agricultural Schedule; *The Seventh Census,* Table XI, p. 486.

[7] Seventh Census, Agricultural Schedule.

raisers owned nearly one-fifth of the parish cattle. Henry Johnson, the largest livestock raiser in the parish, had 10,000 cattle, 400 horses, 25 milk cows, 25 sheep, and 4 oxen. He owned 3,000 acres, 400 of which were improved, did not grow any cotton, and owned 7 slaves. The value of his livestock was $54,000; the value of his farm was reported as $2,500. Placid Guidry owned 6,000 cattle, 1,000 horses, 100 hogs, 30 sheep, and 8 oxen, valued at $36,000. The value of his farm was $1,200. The census enumerator recorded that he owned 300 improved acres and no unimproved acres, indicating that his livestock foraged the countryside, including land not his own. Guidry owned 15 slaves and produced 2 bales of cotton. In contrast, Jean-Baptiste Hébert, who owned 4 slaves and produced 3 bales of cotton and 150 bushels of corn, had only 3 cattle, 4 horses, 4 milk cows, and 5 hogs. The cash value of his farm was $350, the value of his livestock was $150.[8]

More than 80 percent of St. Landry farmers owned swine. In 1850 the parish contained nearly 28,000 hogs; among farmers owning swine, the average number of hogs was nearly 45. About 95 farms contained 100 or more hogs, and approximately 15 percent of all hog raisers owned nearly 45 percent of all the swine in the parish. The largest hog raiser, C.J. Johnson, owned 300 hogs and produced 900 bushels of corn and 400 bushels of sweet potatoes on 165 acres, 100 of which were improved. On the other hand Napolean Robin, who owned 40 slaves, raised only 10 hogs and produced 35 bales of cotton on 975 acres, 375 of which were improved. Joseph Colomb, who owned 15 slaves, had fewer than 10 hogs and produced nearly 35 bales of cotton and 750 bushels of corn on 600 acres, 400 of which were improved.[9]

Forty percent of the parish farmers owned sheep. In 1850 St. Landry contained about 12,450 sheep, an average of nearly 40 for farmers owning sheep. Fewer than 35 units owned 100 or more sheep. Nearly 20 percent of units owning sheep had between 50 and 99, and about 30 percent owned 50 or more. The largest sheep raiser, William H. Parrott, owned 260, and also owned 50 horses, 50 cows, 28 oxen, 600 beeves, and only 25 hogs. On the other hand, William Woods owned only 8 sheep, 4 horses, 5 cows, 2 beeves, 100 hogs, and 80 acres, 30 of which were improved, and 7 slaves. The value of his livestock was $250 and the cash value of his farm was $600.[10]

Every farmer listed in the 1850 agricultural census possessed at least one horse. The parish contained about 10,700 horses, an average of

[8] *The Seventh Census*, Table XI, p. 482; Seventh Census, Slave and Agricultural Schedules.

[9] *The Seventh Census*, Table XI, p. 483; Seventh Census, Slave and Agricultural Schedules.

[10] *Ibid.*

about 14 per farm. Nearly two-thirds of the farmers owned fewer than 10 horses and less than 4 percent owned 50 or more. The largest owner, Placid Guidry, who was also the second largest cattle owner, had 1,000 horses. In contrast, Joseph McBride owned only 2 horses, in addition to 12 cows, 8 oxen, 15 cattle, and 250 swine. The value of his livestock was $500, and the cash value of his farm was $2,000. He also owned 240 acres, 80 of which were improved.[11] (See Table 2.)

Table 2
Livestock, St. Landry Parish, 1850

Horses	10,725
Asses and mules	2,030
Milch cows	9,877
Working oxen	4,293
Other cattle	82,517
Sheep	12,457
Swine	27,935

The raising of livestock was clearly important to the parish's economy. The value of livestock was nearly 5 times greater than the estimated value of cotton, almost 3 times greater than that of sugar, and three times the value of corn. The value of St. Landry livestock was $110,000 greater than the combined value of these crops.[12]

Let us look more closely at the McDonald-McWhiney thesis in an effort to determine how much time and labor were required to produce the parish's corn and cotton.

It is relatively simple to compute the approximate amount of labor required to produce "plantation" crops. For the South as a whole the average yield per acre was approximately 530 pounds of seed cotton or an estimated 180 pounds of ginned lint. The average hand could work about 10 acres of cotton, or approximately 1,800 pounds of baled cotton, in addition to enough corn and other provisions for two persons. As for tobacco, under normal conditions an average hand could cultivate two acres, with a gross yield of 1,600 pounds, plus corn and other necessary provisions. The average hand could cultivate about 6 barrels of rice, and

[11] *The Seventh Census*, Table XI, p. 482; Seventh Census, Agricultural Schedule.

[12] The average price of cotton at New Orleans in 1849 (September-December, 1849, and January-August, 1850) was 11 cents a pound. At this rate a 400 pound bale of cotton was worth $44. St. Landry produced 3,920 bales of 400 pounds each, for a total value of $172,480. The average price of corn at New Orleans for 1850 was 66¢ a pound. The parish produced 372,180 bushels of corn valued at $245,638. The average price per hogshead of Louisiana sugar for the year 1849-50 was $50. The parish produced 5,951 hogsheads valued at $297,550. Lewis C. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United* States to 1860, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1933), II, 1027, 1028, 1033, 1039; *The Seventh Census*, Table XI, pp. 483, 484, 486.

5 acres of sugar cane, under favorable conditions, or about 3,000 to 5,000 pounds of sugar. Thus, McDonald and McWhiney write that an average field "hand" could "produce 1,800 pounds of ginned cotton, 1,600 pounds of tobacco, 3,600 pounds of rice, 4,000 pounds of sugar, or 6,000 pounds of hemp, in addition to the corn and other provisions necessary for himself and another."[13]

As for St. Landry, in 1850 the parish's production of staple crops was nearly 6 million pounds of sugar, over 1½ million pounds of cotton, more than 6,100 pounds of rice, and 1,200 pounds of tobacco. Dividing the productivity of an average hand into St. Landry's production provides the total hands needed to produce each crop: 81 hands for cotton, 1 hand for tobacco, 2 hands for rice, and 1,488 hands for sugar—a total of 2,362 hands.[14] (See Table 3.)

Table 3
Production of Staple Crops,
St. Landry Parish, 1850 (in pounds)

Sugar	5,951,000
Cotton	1,568,000
Rice	6,144
Tobacco	1,200

Before work loads can be estimated a "hand" must first be defined. There were about 5,600 male and nearly 5,300 female slaves in the parish, for a total slave population of almost 10,900. The number of male slaves between the ages of 15 and 49 was nearly 3,000, approximately 25 percent of the slave population. But not all male slaves were field hands, and women and children often worked in the fields. Historians disagree on the ratio of slaves to field hands, but this study will follow Lewis C. Gray's conservative assumption that two slaves constituted one field hand. St. Landry Parish, then, had approximately 5,400 field hands. Assuming slaves did all the work to produce all the parish's staple crops, an obviously ridiculous assumption, fewer than half of the field hands would have been required.[15] (See Table 4.)

In computing the work load necessary to produce the parish cotton crop one finds that little work was required. It has been estimated that to produce a pound of cotton required approximately 0.8 hand-hours. St. Landry produced 1,568,000 pounds of cotton. Multiplying the number

[13] Gray, *History of Agriculture*, II, 708-09, 730-31, 751, 776, 912; McDonald and McWhiney, "The South from Self-Sufficiency to Peonage," 1097.

[14] *The Seventh Census*, Table XI, pp. 483, 484, 486.

[15] *Ibid.*, Table I, pp. 471-473; Gray, *History of Agriculture*, I, 542, 544, 549; II, 664-65. For a summary of the debate on what constituted a hand, see McDonald and McWhiney, "The South from Self-Sufficiency to Peonage," 1097-98.

of pounds by 0.8 hand-hours results in 1,254,400 hand-hours needed to produce the parish crop, or about 230 hours per hand. This assumes that only slaves worked.[16]

Table 4
Slave Population and Field Hands, St. Landry Parish, 1850

Male	5,601
Female	5,270
Total	10,871
Estimated field hands	5,390

The work load necessary to produce St. Landry's nearly 373,000 bushels of corn was light. It took approximately 2.5 hours to produce a bushel of corn. That means nearly 930,500 hand-hours were necessary to produce the parish crop. Converting this figure to hours per hand, an average hand would have had to work less than 175 hours to produce the corn. Thus less than 410 hours per hand were required to produce both corn and cotton. Converting this number into ten-hour work days means that an average hand in the parish would have had to work forty ten-hour days a year to produce all the corn and cotton.[17] (See Table 5.)

Table 5
Work Loads and Production, St. Landry Parish, 1850

Cotton (pounds)	1,568,000
Hand-hours	1,254,400
Hours per hand	233
Corn (bushels)	372,180
Hand-hours	930,450
Hours per hand	173

Two cases will illustrate that slaves did not work hard to produce St. Landry's corn and cotton. It should be kept in mind that, for St. Landry Parish, the last killing frost normally falls within the first two weeks of March and the first killing frost in fall is around the middle of November. Cotton planting generally begins about 10-20 days after the last killing frost, and the cotton-growing season free from killing frosts is about 200 days. First, Widow Elisha G. Foster's household consisted to two young daughters and one adult male. She owned 12 salves—6

[16] McDonald and McWhiney, "The South from Self-Sufficiency to Peonage," 1098; *The Seventh Census*, Table XI, p. 484; U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Progress of Farm Mechanization*, Miscellaneous Publication, no. 630 (Washington, 1947), p. 3.

[17] See McDonald and McWhiney, "The South from Self-Sufficiency to Peonage," 1098, 1100-1101, for estimated work loads and the selection of a ten-hour work day. *The Seventh Census*, Table XI, p. 483. U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Progress of Farm Mechanization*, p. 3.

males, half between the ages of 15 and 49, and 6 females, four between the ages of 18 and 45. In 1850 she produced, on 110 improved acres, 800 bushels of corn and 8,000 pounds of cotton. The work load for producing these crops was 8,400 hand-hours. If none of the whites and only half the slaves worked, 140 ten-hour days would have been necessary. If the two adult white members of the household are assumed as having worked to produce the corn and cotton, the per-hand work load was 105 ten-hour days. Second, Benjamin Haw's family consisted of his wife and one child. He owned 8 slaves, four of whom were adult. In 1850 Haw, on 70 improved acres, produced 350 bushels of corn and 3,600 pounds of cotton. The work load for producing these crops was 3,755 hand-hours. If half the slaves labored, they would have had to work less than 95 ten-hour days; if Haw is included in the work force the figure drops to about 75 ten-hour days.[18]

It becomes apparent that white and free black farmers of St. Landry did not have to work hard, even if it is assumed that slaves did not produce any of the corn and cotton. Corn production in the parish amounted to nearly 33 bushels per free person. In 1850 the per capita work load in corn production for free persons would have been less than 85 hours. If only half the free population produced the corn they would have had to work less than 165 hours per person, or about 16 ten-hour days per year per person. In 1850 cotton production in the parish amounted to less than 140 pounds per free person. The per capita work load for parish farmers would have been approximately 110 hours. Assuming only half the free population worked, an average farmer would have had to work about 220 hours to produce the cotton, or approximately 22 ten-hour days.[19] (See Table 6.)

Table 6
Work Loads for the Free Population, St. Landry Parish, 1850

Corn production per person (bushels)	32.7
Per capita work load (hours)	81.7
Work load for half the population (hours)	163.5
Cotton production per person (pounds)	137.8
Per capita work load (hours)	110.2
Work load for half the population (hours)	220.4

[18] U. S. Department of Agriculture, *Atlas of American Agriculture . . .*, 6 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1936), V, Section A, *Cotton*, 10; Seventh Census, Population, Slave, and Agricultural schedules.

[19] Many free blacks living in St. Landry Parish in 1850 contributed to the agricultural production. See Herbert E. Sterkx, *The Free Negro in Ante-Bellum Louisiana* (Rutherford, N.J., 1972), pp. 204-07. *The Seventh Census*, Table IV, p. 475; *The Seventh Census*, Table XI, p. 484.

There is no formula for estimating labor on sugar plantations but a recent study of the lives of slaves in the "lowcountry" region of South Carolina and Georgia suggests that their work loads under the task system were light. They had a particular job to perform, whether they cultivated rice, sea-island cotton, corn, or sugar. Slaves often finished their tasks with ample time to grow their own crops and to acquire their own property. A number of field hands completed two or three days' amounts of work in one day in order to have an entire day free. This study reinforces the notion that slaves did not work hard.[20]

In addition to the work required for corn and cotton, farmers had chores around the farm and other crops needed attention. Farmers had to grind corn for meal and milk cows, a task that required about 30 minutes per day per cow. According to Sam B. Hilliard, sweet potatoes, a vegetable that nearly 90 percent of the parish farmers grew, in general yielded "quite heavily with little attention." The census enumerator did not record production for cowpeas, which were grown in between the cornstalks by most southern farmers.[21]

Because of their animal production, however, St. Landry farmers had a great deal to eat though they did not work hard. Using estimates of the average consumption of pork, beef, and corn, the extent of self-sufficiency can be determined.

Antebellum Southerners considered pork an integral part of their diet. "Cotton often paid for the land, and corn provided the bulk of the food," explained a student of antebellum food supply, "but the southern agriculturist looked upon the hog as one symbol of his success, and pork was the food item he sought with more vigor than any other." Even though whites probably ate more beef and other meats than slaves did, estimates indicate that slaves and whites consumed approximately 150 pounds of pork per person per year.[22]

On the basis of a recent study that determined about 2.2 hogs per person were necessary for a year's supply of pork, selected St. Landry households were tested for self-sufficiency. Of the 171 farm units examined, 75 percent were self-sufficient for the needs of the nonslave members of the household. When slaves are included in figuring con-

[20] Philip D. Morgan, "Work and Culture: The Task System and the World of Lowcountry Blacks, 1700-1880," *William and Mary Quarterly*, XXXIX (1982), 582-83, 586-87.

[21] See Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, p. 322; McDonald and McWhiney, "The South from Self-Sufficiency to Peonage," 1103; Sam B. Hilliard, *Hog Meat and Hoecake: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860* (Carbondale, Ill., 1972), pp. 174, 178.

[22] Hilliard, *Hog Meat and Hoecake*, pp. 92, 104-05. See also Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York, 1956), p. 282, and Joe Gray Taylor, *Negro Slavery in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1963), p. 107.

sumption nearly half were self-sufficient. On the whole, St. Landry was not self-sufficient since the average number of hogs per person was less than 2.2.[23] (See Table 7.)

Table 7
Hog Self-sufficiency, St. Landry Parish, 1850

	Sufficient Households	*Deficient Households*
For nonslave members	129	42
For family and slaves	83	88

Several factors must be considered before a reliable ration of beef can be ascertained. Data on the size and weight of cattle are not readily available which means that any figures given are only estimates. The poor treatment of cattle and the inclusion of all cattle in the census are determinants for a ratio of beef consumption. It has been estimated that consumption of beef averaged about 30 pounds per person per year. Considering all factors, then, it can be assumed that a ratio of 0.5 animals per person per year will determine beef self-sufficiency.[24]

More than half of the households tested were self-sufficient in beef production. Nearly 100 farmowners could supply the nonslave members of the farm with enough beef. When slaves are included in figuring consumption nearly 95 households were self-sufficient. The number of deficient households may be considered high since over 40 percent of the selected farms did not contain any cattle. As a unit St. Landry was self-sufficient, having an average of over 3½ cattle per person. With such an abundance of cattle, parish residents probably consumed more beef and less pork than other Southerners did.[25] (See Table 8.)

Table 8
Beef Self-sufficiency, St. Landry Parish, 1850

	Sufficient Households	*Deficient Households*
For nonslaves	99	72
For family and slaves	94	77

[23] The 2.2 ration for hog self-sufficiency was based upon the work of Hilliard, *Hog Meat and Hoecake*, pp. 106-07. He has determined that the size and weight of adult hogs varied throughout the South. He concludes, however, that, on the average, hogs weighed less than 150 pounds. There are no data on animal production; therefore, we can only estimate the amounts. See *ibid.*, pp. 101-02. There were eighteen pages of forty-one names and one page with thirty-seven names listed in the agricultural schedule. I selected nine households per page. I had three pages of notes per census page and generally selected the top, middle, and bottom names. *The Seventh Census*, Table I, p. 473; Table XI, p. 483; Seventh Census, Population, Slave, and Agricultural schedules.

[24] Hilliard, *Hog Meat and Hoecake*, pp. 128-131.

[25] Seventh Census, Population, Slave, Agricultural schedules; *The Seventh Census*, Table I, p. 473; Table XI, p. 482.

Computing corn self-sufficiency is a relatively simple task. Farmers usually supplied each of their adult slaves with 13 bushels of corn per year. On the whole, both blacks and whites ate an average of 13 bushels of corn per year, whereas the average consumption for hogs was 4 bushels per year and about 7½ bushels for horses, asses, and mules. Corn self-sufficiency can be determined by adopting the following formula:

$$C = \frac{\text{corn production (bushels)}}{(13 \times Z) + (4 \times S) + (7.5 \times H)}$$

Z = number of human consuming units

S = number of swine

H = number of horses, asses, and mules

if C is less than 1.000—non-self-sufficiency
if C is greater than 1.000—self-sufficiency.

More than half of the selected parish farmers grew enough corn for the non-slave members of the households and livestock, but when slaves are included in figuring total human consumption, along with livestock, less than half were self-sufficient. On the whole St. Landry had a supply of corn sufficient for its free population and livestock, but when considering the free and slave population as a whole and livestock the parish was deficient.[26] (See Table 9.)

Table 9
Corn Self-sufficiency, St. Landry Parish, 1850

	Sufficient Households	***Deficient Households***
For nonslave members and livestock	107	64
For family, slaves, and livestock	78	93

The results of this investigation, then, support the contentions of Professors McDonald and McWhiney. Few St. Landry Parish residents seem to have been overworked. The data suggest that neither farmers nor slaves had to labor hard to produce their cotton and corn. The growing of staple crops was not a major activity of most farmers. The raising of livestock was far more important and valuable to the parish than producing crops for market. The value of livestock exceeded the value of the parish's staple crops and contributed significantly to the economy of the parish. By comparison with Southerners elsewhere, St.

[26] Hilliard, *Hog Meat and Hoecake*, pp. 157-158; Seventh Census, Population, Slave, and Agricultural schedules; *The Seventh Census*, Table I, p. 473; Table XI, pp. 482-83.

Landry farmers produced insufficient amounts of corn and pork, but they raised a considerable surplus of beef. Perhaps had they exerted a little more effort, they could have turned the parish into a rich agricultural area. Instead, they apparently were more committed to their leisure.