



Making cane syrup once was a routine fall activity on many farms throughout the South. Most farms used horse or mule driven cane mills, cast iron boilers and family labor to make enough sugar and syrup for their own use.

production. By 1850, cane was a market crop on only three plantations in coastal Glynn County.

During the mid-1800's, the small sugar cane farmer was typical of the Georgia-Florida growing area. These small growers, in contrast to the Louisiana sugar producers, were relatively self-sufficient farmers who consumed most of what they produced. Their major crop was cotton, but sugar provided a small supplementary income.

In the 1840's, sugar cane culture and the manufacture of sugar for local consumption spread from the coastal region into the interior of Georgia. By mid-century, production was concentrated in the south central section of the state near the Florida line, in the area of Lowndes and Thomas Counties.

During this period the state's sugar industry was much different

from that of earlier decades. Hundreds of small farmers used only inexpensive, horse or mule driven cane mills, cast-iron boilers, and family labor to make enough brown sugar for their own use. Those who made more than they needed, packed it in empty flour or whiskey barrels and sold it to local merchants in nearby towns. But the majority of farmers made no more than about 60 to 100 gallons each.

Many farmers in middle and south Georgia tried to develop the sugar cane industry as an alternative to cotton during the 1890's. In that part of the state, sugar cane acreage tripled between 1875 and 1900, increasing from about 8,000 acres to more than 26,000 with sugar cane syrup production increasing six-fold. By 1880, cane syrup production had passed that of sorghum syrup.