State Claims Oldest Recording System in Nation

(The Times-Picayune Capital Bureau)
Baton Rouge, La., April 29 — Louisiana's first official livestock brand book, containing more than 17,600 brands, will be available to the public about June 1, Noah Ward, secretary of the Louisiana brand commission, announced Saturday.

"A great many of the brands used by Louisiana cattlemen and other stock raisers today," Ward said, "were introduced by Spanish settlers during the late 18th century and handed down from generation to generation within the same family.

"As a matter of fact, Louisiana probably has the oldest recorded livestock brand system in the United States."

Until act 352 of 1944 changed the system, all livestock brands in Louisiana were recorded with the various parish clerks of court, a system which, Ward said, "led to a great many duplications in brands over the state and consequent confusions regarding ownership."

The Louisiana brand commission created by the act took over the task of recording and authorizing brands and in 1946 the publication of the forthcoming book was undertaken. It will be complete up to April 1 this year.

The brand book, which is to be corrected and brought up to date at five-year intervals, when all brands must be renewed, will be available to the public from Ward at a price of $3 per copy.

With each revision, the secretary said, "dead" or unused brands will be made available for reassignment. Ward pointed out that his office is now receiving 15 to 20 applications for brand authorizations daily. Such symbols are assigned only for cattle, horses and sheep.

"This brand book should prove extremely valuable to all law enforcement officers in identifying stolen and strayed animals," Ward declared. "Already we have been able to recover a great many head of cattle, both in Louisiana and out of state, through our records here. We have the closest cooperation in this field with other federal and state brand agencies."

The book, he added, should be of interest also to commercial firms interested in the state's farm-ranch market because of the large number of names and addresses it contains.