Historic Context
The Louisiana Lumber Boom, c.1880-1925

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CONTEXT SUMMARY

Prior to about 1880, timber production in Louisiana was fairly small, meeting local needs. Mills and logging were confined largely to areas along waterways. By contrast, the so-called second phase of lumbering, the industrial phase, was huge in its output. "These were the days of giant trees, giant mills, and giant lumbermen," notes Louisiana lumber historian Anna C. Burns ("Frank B. Williams: Cypress Lumber King," *Journal of Forest History*, July 1980). In 1880, Louisiana ranked thirtieth in the United States for the dollar value of its timber product. By 1900, it ranked tenth in the nation, and by 1920, second. In some years in the 1910s the state led the country in timber production.

Several factors came together to make industrial lumbering possible: (1) the availability of large tracts of timberland at low prices; (2) demand for lumber and the exhaustion of sources in the Northeast and the Midwest; (3) the arrival of railroads; and (4) technological improvements in removing lumber from the forests and swamps.

The lumber boom's impact on Louisiana is seemingly beyond exaggeration. Fueled largely by out-of-state capital, the lumber boom fundamentally changed the look of the state. With a policy of "cut out and get out," priceless natural resources were lost by the millions of acres. Large sections of the state, in a relatively short period of time, became vast "stumpscapes" of barren cutover land as rapacious mill owners moved on to yet another stand of virgin timber elsewhere in the country. Some 4.3 million acres of Louisiana virgin timber had been clear cut – a land area roughly the size of the state of New Jersey. As George Alvin Stokes aptly concludes in his 1954 dissertation ("Lumbering in Southwest Louisiana"): "The rapidity with which big-time lumbering had entered Louisiana was matched by the speed of its departure." The early to mid-1920s is generally given as the ending date for the great lumber boom, for it is then when almost all of the big mills had run out of timber and closed down.

Particularly hard hit were western Louisiana parishes, such as Vernon, which had the most timber to lose. Here it took only about twenty years to consume the forest. It was "short but intense" notes Steven Smith of the lumber boom in Vernon Parish (*A Good Home for a Poor Man: Fort Polk and Vernon Parish, 1800-1940,* 1999).

Importantly for this document, it was the industrial phase of lumbering that far and away had the greatest impact on the built environment of Louisiana. New components were added to the landscape – most notably, huge industrial plants with a sawmill at the center and scores of purpose-built company towns. And existing towns where lumber companies located were largely rebuilt due to the attendant prosperity. But today, of the thousands of historic buildings

and structures that once existed to directly represent the lumber boom, probably less than five percent survive. Many, perhaps most, were gone long ago.

TIMEFRAME

The focus of this document is the great Louisiana lumber boom, the industrial phase of lumbering, generally circa 1880 to circa 1925. However, within this timeframe, dates vary from place to place, depending upon how early industrial lumbering came to a given area. For example, this began earlier in Lake Charles and hence the timber played out earlier. Generally, the life of a mill was 20 to 25 years (sometimes only about 15). This, the second phase of lumbering in the state, was a natural choice for the focus because it was far and away the most important chapter and the one that made a dramatic impact on the built environment.

Of course, no historical development ends abruptly. The lumber industry in Louisiana did not come to an abrupt halt circa 1925, but the boom years of large-scale industrial lumbering that remade the state's landscape did end then. Lumber historian George Alvin Stokes describes what followed as the "peckerwood mill" phase – i.e., small, often portable mills with the timber hauled by trucks. Also, a few smaller sawmills (small being a relative term) from the golden age of industrial lumbering had enough timber to survive into the post-boom years. Two are known to the author of this document. The mill in Flora (Natchitoches Parish) closed in 1944. More remarkable is the Crowell Lumber Company mill at Longleaf, which did not close permanently until 1969. (This longevity is an important factor in the survival of the historic mill and very important machinery, as detailed below.)

CONTEXT DEVELOPMENT

The New South:

The great Louisiana lumber boom did not occur in isolation. To a fair extent it was part of a larger regional phenomenon in the post Reconstruction years known as the emergence of the New South. The term "New South" is used by historians to denote a broad set of interrelated historical developments that occurred as the former Confederate States sought to cope with and overcome: 1) military defeat in the Civil War, 2) the resulting devastation and economic ruin, 3) the humiliation of military occupation, 4) what many southerners saw as the social and political upheaval and archetypal misrule of Reconstruction, and 5) loss of wealth and capital.

Economic and political leadership in the New South came to rest upon a regional phenomenon commonly known to historians as Bourbonism, which may be defined as follows: the return to power of elements of the old white plantation aristocracy along with other associated substantial white business and political figures. Bourbon or Bourbon Democrat state governments quickly replaced the bi-racial Reconstruction governments as each former Confederate state was re-admitted to the Union and home-rule restored.

The term Bourbon was perhaps a misnomer, but it was widely in use throughout the South at the time. The analogy was drawn with the French Bourbon dynasty which, overthrown by the French Revolution, was restored to the monarchy after the ensuing Napoleonic Wars. In much the same way, so the analogy went, the South was restored to its traditional and natural leaders.

It is the fiscal and economic policies and programs of the Bourbon governments that bear strikingly upon the several southern states that experienced large-scale industrial timber harvesting during this period. The Bourbon vision of the South was a glorious past (the Old South) and a glittering future. Key to that future was industrial development on a colossal scale. A new South would emerge to rival the industrial power and prosperity of the North – to "out-Yankee the Yankee" as the saying went.

A vaunted ambition was abroad in the land. In 1880, the Raleigh *News and Observer* declared: "Out of our political defeat we must work … a glorious material and industrial triumph." The *News and Observer* further noted that "a fundamental distinction between the English Industrial Revolution and that of the South" is "that the latter was deliberately planned." And in 1898 prominent Richmond banker and developer John Skelton Williams noted eagerly in the pages of the *Manufacturers' Record* that he was "hoping to see in the South . . . many railroads and business institutions as great as the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Mutual Life Insurance Company, the Carnegie Steel Company or the Standard Oil Company." These accounts may stand for many. It was this vision that drove the fiscal and economic policies of the various Bourbon state governments across the South.

These policies may be summarized as follows:

Financial Retrenchment: Cutting, sometimes drastically cutting, state financial aid to traditional functions of state support, including state colleges and universities, primary schooling, state prisons and state asylums for the mentally ill.

Low Taxes: Per above, low taxes especially on business and commercial activity.

Laissez-Faire: A strong laissez-faire approach in overseeing all forms of commercial enterprises. This included overt, or at least tacit, policies against wage or hour legislation and any social legislation that might not be amicable to the business class.

Capital Investment: Sponsoring or enacting a wide variety of programs and initiatives to attract and court capital investment, including expositions, trade shows, trade delegations, promotional pieces, playing host to substantial investment prospects, tax exemptions and municipal subsidies.

All of this could present an attractive package. Indeed, in 1897, the highly influential Arkwright Club of New England, in a published piece, summed up the advantages of investing in the South. It was a singular fact that "labor is cheaper in the South; that the hours of labor are longer, and that . . . there is no disposition to organize labor unions." There were also no

restrictive laws on the books enacted at the behest of strong unions. In fact, during these years the South emerged as something of a mecca for investment. Numerous publications fanned the flames, most notably William Harrison's 1888 work, *How to Get Rich in the South. Telling What to Do, How to Do It, and the Profits to be Realized.* And, in 1894, prominent Yale graduate Chauncey M. Depew exhorted his alumni audience: "The South is the Bonanza of the future . . . with vast forests untouched [and] enormous veins of coal and iron."

And in the course of the New South era, the drive for industrialization bore some fruit. There was, for instance, the mechanized manufacture of tobacco products in North Carolina. Perhaps the most conspicuous industrial transformation was the development of Birmingham, Alabama as a center of steel production, making it arguably the Pittsburgh of the South. But these were not typical of the kind of economic development, and limited prosperity, the southern states attained under Bourbon governance.

Clearly the business Bourbons wanted industrial development, but that would take investment capital – a good deal of it. So they faced a central dilemma. Where could that capital come from? Just as clearly, the bulk of it could not come from the southern states. For in the post-Reconstruction era, the South was by a long way the poorest section of the country. There was a vast gap in wealth. Indeed, the analogy of a Third-World country might resonate with the modern reader. One set of statistics tells the tale. In 1880, the average per capita wealth of each Southerner was just $376. This contrasts with the average per capita wealth of citizens outside the southern region, which was $1,086. The Third-World analogy is not wide of the mark. At the same time roughly the same disparity in per capita wealth existed between citizens of rural, backward Russia versus those of industrially mature Germany.

So the progressive industrialization of the South came to be fueled principally by northern capital and, secondarily, by European capital – mostly British. (Historian Thomas D. Clark termed the Northern investors "carpetbaggers of the woods," *The Greening of the South*, 1984.) This represented a huge variety of investors mainly interested in profiting from the southern region's abundant natural resources and agricultural products. Most had little interest in sponsoring local manufacturing plants that would ultimately compete with their own. So the glorious industrial transformation envisioned by the Bourbons, with some exceptions, failed to come to pass. What emerged in its place was, at bottom, an extractive, raw materials economy.

That was the prevailing trend of the age. It has been neatly summarized by C. Vann Woodward, the dean of historians of the New South. His assessment (*Origins of the New South,* 1971) deserves to be quoted at some length:

> "By far the greater part of the products of the South's mines, farms and forests continued to leave the region in the form of raw or crudely processed materials to be fabricated at factories in the North or abroad. The abundant natural resources that the New-South school predicted would develop Ruhr Valleys, Pittsburghs, and Detroits from the Potomac to the Gulf produced no such results. Like republics below the Rio Grande the South was limited largely to the role of a producer of raw materials, a tributary of industrial powers, an economy

dominated by absentee owners."

When it came to questions of prosperity, progress and economic development, what southerners brought to the market were: 1) the region's wealth of natural resources, and 2) its inexpensive, generally docile, non-union labor. Woodward's own phrase sums up the phenomenon: "Colonial Economy."

Post-Civil War Louisiana:

"We must admit…that we are …Bourbons."
Baton Rouge Mayor and Pillar of the Louisiana Democratic Party, Leon Jastremski, 1882

In 1877 Louisiana took its place alongside Florida and South Carolina as one of the last former Confederate states to be re-admitted to the Union. To the all-white roster of state officials that took power, the term Bourbon was a high compliment, a badge of honor. And Louisiana's new government followed the overall fiscal and economic program of the other Bourbon states, including financial retrenchment and low taxes. Indeed, the "taxpayer's government," as it called itself, adopted a new state constitution in 1879 that placed strict ceilings on state and local taxes.

The drive for industrialization was also much in the air. In 1881 the New Orleans *Times-Democrat* trumpeted, "The stagnation of despair has, by some magic transformation, given place to the buoyance of hope, of courage…our land has had a new birth" which will produce "a commercial evolution unparalleled in the annals of American progress." Louisiana also trumpeted itself as a great investment opportunity. Its boosters even went so far as to praise its climate as "deliciously delightful," "warm" in winter, and "cool" in summer.

The state also ultimately fell victim to an extractive, raw-materials economy. Lumber harvesting holds a very important place in this regard. Timber was the only major extractive commodity that was of interest to investors and speculators, there being no coal, bauxite or iron ore. And it drove the post-Reconstruction Louisiana economy. The only other extractive commodity of note was sulfur, but its impact was limited to the coastal parishes and it only became important after 1900 when extraction techniques had been perfected.

Types and Distribution of Timber:

In 1880, at the dawn of the great lumber boom, forests covered an estimated 85% of Louisiana's land area (some 22 million acres). Hence there were few parts of the state not exploited for their timber, the exceptions being the southwestern prairies and the coastal marshes. Virtually every parish had at least one mill, and many were dominated by sawmill landscapes.

Most of the trees in Louisiana were southern pine, with longleaf pine (also known as yellow pine) being particularly plentiful and valuable. The trees in these magnificent virgin stands of timber were often 150-200 years old.

Longleaf pine was found in pure stands (often 100% pure) in three large areas: western Louisiana, central Louisiana, and the eastern portion of the Florida Parishes. "The longleaf forests were remarkable for their clean, open appearance, almost entirely free of undergrowth," writes George Alvin Stokes in his 1954 dissertation "Lumbering in Southwest Louisiana." "The forests themselves were a logger's dream – clear and open – promising the cheapest and most rapid of logging operations."

Cypress, dubbed the "wood eternal," was king in the swamps of southern Louisiana. (See photo 1 depicting the size of cypress trees in the state.) With the largest cypress inventory in the United States, Louisiana led the nation in cypress production in the first two decades of the twentieth century. That said, there were not as many major cypress mills in Louisiana as pine simply because less of the state was swampland than forested.

Distribution of Large Mills:

A 1917 document in *The American Lumberman* (a major trade publication) lists Louisiana sawmills with board foot capacity given. Measurement by board foot is the standard in the lumber industry. One board foot equals a board one foot wide, one foot long, and one inch thick. To put this in perspective, the behemoth sawmill in Bogalusa was described in *The Southern Lumberman* (another trade publication) in 1921 as consuming 60 acres a day when processing 750,000 board feet. (Billed the world's largest sawmill, its daily capacity was roughly one million board feet.)

For the purposes of analysis, mills in the 1917 list with a 100,000 or more board foot capacity were identified by parish. This enabled the researcher to determine the concentration of large mills. (Based on previous research and the physical size of the state's only surviving historic sawmill, the author decided to use this as the benchmark for a "large" mill. Admittedly "large" is a relative term.)

LARGE PINE MILL CONCENTRATIONS
(parishes with 3 or more large mills, large as defined above)

Parish Name	Number of Large Mills
Rapides	7
LaSalle	3
Grant	3
Beauregard	7
Vernon	6
Allen	4

Large cypress mills: There were no parishes in the 1917 list with three or more large cypress mills (or even 2). The following parishes had one large (100,000 or more board feet) cypress mill each: Ascension, Lafourche, Orleans, St. James, St. John, St. Mary and Terrebonne.

Out-of-State Lumbermen and Other Interests:

To a large extent out-of-state capital fueled the great Louisiana lumber boom. While it is typical to refer to this as a "Northern" invasion, that label is a bit too general. The out-of-state ownership was just as likely to be in Kansas City or St. Louis, or sometimes in adjacent Texas or Arkansas. To be sure, there were many locally owned mills in Louisiana, but the industry was dominated by companies headquartered elsewhere – large companies that sometimes owned several mills in Louisiana as well as other states.

Lumber manufacture, writes George Alvin Stokes ("Lumbering in Southwest Louisiana") "became the great nomad among American industries, driving from one virgin forest to another like a threshing machine from one ripe wheat field to the next." When the forests of Maine were depleted, lumbermen then moved on to New York, then Pennsylvania, then into the Great Lakes region. When the supply there was depleted (in about twenty years), they turned their eyes to southern states such as Louisiana.

Add to this demand the tremendous availability of untouched timber in large blocks at bargain prices. Huge tracts of land in Louisiana were virtually given away, sometimes for as little as 45 cents per acre. Historian Thomas D. Clark (*Greening of the Land*, 1984) gives the following examples in Louisiana of "unusually large" timber purchasers: N. B. Bradley, Bay City, Michigan, 111,188 acres; F. H. Head, Chicago, 109,645 acres; and J. B. Watkins, Douglas County, Kansas, 145,335 acres. Bradley would emerge as a major player in the Lake Charles lumber industry (see below).

A change in federal public land policy made these purchases possible. In 1866, it was reported to Congress that there were 6,228,103 acres of surveyed but unsold federal land in Louisiana. In that year, Congress passed the Southern Homestead Act, which was intended to make this land available at a nominal charge to "poor people." Congress repealed the law in 1876, opening public acreage in the South to any and all cash buyers.

This made possible, observes Louisiana historian William Ivy Hair (*Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest,* 1969), "the monopolization of Louisiana land by lumber and other non-farming interests." Between 1880 and 1888, continues Hair, "the great majority of Louisiana land sold went to just fifty individuals or firms who purchased over 5,000 acres each. Of these, forty-one were Northerners who obtained a total of 1, 370,332 acres." Among them was industrialist Jay Gould, who owned a "sprawling timber empire" (Hair) in northern Louisiana.

Coming of Railroads:

Louisiana had very few railroads prior to the Civil War (only 335 miles of track in 1860). The boom years for railroad construction were between 1880 and 1910, when almost five thousand miles of mainline track were laid (from 652 miles of track in 1880 to 5,554 in 1910). This transformative growth opened up previously sparsely settled parts of the state, created new towns, and made possible timber extraction on an industrial scale. (One such line, the Kansas City Southern, is discussed below.)

The Industrial Plant:

The industrial lumbering process consisted of: 1) cutting the trees, 2) transporting the cut trees to the sawmill, 3) cleaning the logs, 4) sawing them into usable lumber, 5) drying to remove moisture and sap, 6) planing to remove the saw kerf marks and create flat-surface finished lumber, and 7) grading to sort lumber for quality.

In pine timber operations, timber was cut and hauled on cables to a train traveling on a temporary rail line (known as a "dummy line"). Cut trees were hauled to the dummy line via steam-powered winches on a device known as a skidder (invented in 1883) (photo 2). They were then loaded onto special flat cars via a steam-powered log loader (photo 3). At the sawmill, the logs were off-loaded into the mill pond (photo 4). The mill pond formed the center of operations for virtually all pine timber industrial plants. Mill ponds were usually created by digging for an artificial lake and then damming a local stream. From the pond the logs were brought into the sawmill via a chute and a steam-powered chain conveyor.

Cypress was more challenging to remove from its natural habitat. In the cypress timber operations of southern Louisiana, workers arrived on small boats (pirogues) to cut timber in the swamp. An amazing 1927 silent film on the Frank B. Williams Cypress Mill operations in Patterson at the city's Louisiana State Museum shows timber fallers (or "swampers") cutting the trees from a pirogue. In the early days lumbermen floated cut logs from the swamps to major streams during the annual spring floods. The invention of the skidder (1883), the introduction of barges called pullboats (1889), and the building of "dummy" railroad lines into the swamps (beginning in the early 1890s) revolutionized the industry, making possible large-scale industrial lumbering. The skidders were located either on the pullboats, or when rail lines were present, on a flat car. When pullboats were used (rather than railroads), cypress logs were organized into rafts and floated to the cypress mill, which was often located on a body of water.

In both pine and cypress operations the immersion in water, be it via a mill pond or a natural swamp lake, was crucial. It made large numbers of logs easy to move around, and thus helped manage the supply of incoming logs for cutting. Immersion also cleaned the logs, removing mud and gravel which could ruin saw blades or otherwise damage the sawing and conveyor machinery. Once the logs had reached the sawmill, the internal process did not differ greatly between pine and cypress operations. In general, the sawing operation involved two building types: 1) the sawing building itself, and 2) one or more boiler houses that provided steam to power the various sawing operations.

Boiler houses were usually contained within high brick walls to separate them from the sawing buildings, fire being a constant danger in any lumber facility. Be it with fire-tube or water-tube boilers, the steam production system was always wood-burning. A favorite fuel was timber scraps and sawdust from the sawing operation. Boiler houses usually had a separate, and fire-proof, chamber for storing sawdust. Many also had steel conveyors to bring the sawdust from the sawing building to the sawdust storage area. All boiler houses were serviced by smoke stacks, often of metal and held in place by guy wires, though some stacks were of brick. Smoke-stacks were frequently equipped with spark-screens at the top (another fire preventative). Finally, the risk of fire was also minimized by the fact that stacks usually rose to considerable height.

Sawmills were usually constructed of heavy timbers to absorb the vibrations of the machinery. The sawing area was often on the second story, and was well roofed over, but largely open on the sides. The lower story usually contained power steam pipes, belt-drive machinery and the all important tubular oil lubricant system to keep the machinery running smoothly.

In the sawing building the first operation was the so-called "cut-off," using a circular saw of vast diameter to cut the incoming logs to the desired length (photos 5 & 6). The newly cut logs were then fastened to carts mounted on steel tracks. These carts were moved back and forth by steam pistons (called "shot-guns") to pass the logs through another set of circular saws. With each pass another plank was sawn off. Following this, the planks were conveyed via steel rollers to a third set of circular saws. These were edger saws designed to cut off the bark and produce the finished planks. (See photo 7 for sawing floor interior.)

Freshly cut planks were then conveyed to the dry kiln, usually a brick building with long heating chambers. Here the lumber was dried using super-heated steam which, at such a temperature, takes on the characteristics of hot compressed air. The drying process removed moisture and any remaining tree sap.

If finished smooth surface lumber was desired, the planks were then conveyed to the planing mill which often had its own power plant. These, too, were usually two stories and of heavy timber construction, with mechanical planing machinery on the upper floor actuated by belts driven by one or more steam engines below. The lower machine room also had its own lubrication system.

Planks were planed smooth. This differs from the modern practice in which rough planks are mechanically sanded. Finished planks were then conveyed to lumber sheds to be stored, generally by grade, and kept for sale or shipment.

These various buildings were often linked via transport systems, either plank thoroughfares or train rails. Wood was conveyed via special carts called "hogs" which operated by mule power, and later by diesel tractors.

The Purpose-Built Company Town:

The impact of industrial lumbering on the Louisiana landscape was staggering to say the least. In addition to the incalculable loss of vast virgin tracts of timber, there was a furious spurt of building. Whole new towns – company towns built by lumber companies – mushroomed on the landscape. They were particularly plentiful in the pine industry, and within that industry, particularly plentiful in western and central Louisiana. Although certainly present, company-built towns were not as common in the cypress industry. According to Louisiana cypress lumbering historian Ervin Mancil, most cypress mills were located in or near pre-existing towns ("An Historical Geography of Industrial Cypress Lumbering in Louisiana,"1972 dissertation).

Company towns existed for the sole purpose of producing lumber. Generally, everything was built and owned by the company – housing, churches, schools, hospital, commissary, etc. As George Alvin Stokes observes in "Lumbering in Southwest Louisiana": "Babies were born in company hospitals, housewives bought their groceries at a company store, and families lived in houses built and owned by the company. Few towns ever existed in Louisiana with a greater singleness of function than those devoted to lumbering."

As the timber played out in the 1920s, Louisiana began to almost immediately lose its purpose built lumber company towns, one-by-one. With a cut-out and get-out policy, lumber companies either dismantled towns or left them to soon become ghost towns. The Library of Congress holds poignant pictures taken in the 1930s of the remains of the once large mill town of Fullerton in Vernon Parish. Only a wall or two of major buildings remained.

"Oblivion was the usual fate of the strictly sawmill town after the local timber supply was exhausted," writes John Michael Caldwell in his thesis "The Forest of the Vintage: A Geography of Industrial Lumbering in North Central Louisiana"(University of Oklahoma, 1975). He quotes from a 1923 fictional description of an abandoned "Nameless Town":

> No wonder the hotel was empty, the bank closed, the stores out of business; for on the other side of the railroad, down by the wide pond that once had held beautiful, fine-grained logs of Louisiana longleaf pine, the big sawmill that for twenty years had been the pulsing heart of what was now Nameless Town was already sagging on its foundations, its boilers dead, the deck stripped of all removable machinery. A few ragged piles of graying lumber were huddled here and there along the dolly-ways in the yard where for years lumber had been stacked by the million feet, waiting to be sent into thirty states and half the countries of the world. The mill had sawed-out.

Lake Charles Emerges as Early Lumber Center:

George Alvin Stokes accords Lake Charles the distinction of being "the first great center of logging and lumber production in Louisiana" ("Lumbering in Southwest Louisiana").

Located at the southern end of western Louisiana's long leaf pine belt, Lake Charles enjoyed an advantageous location on a lake (of the same name) through which flowed the Calcasieu River and its various tributaries. This made possible the transport of lumber on schooners to the Gulf of Mexico and beyond. Transportation was further enhanced in 1880, when the first railroad arrived, to be followed soon by others.

Locals Jacob Ryan and Daniel Goos operated two small sawmills in Lake Charles as early as the 1850s. Timber production almost doubled in the 1870s. But it was the industrial phase of lumbering, beginning in the early 1880s, and fueled largely by Northern capital, that made possible the city's great lumber boom.

In Lake Charles the term "Northern invasion" is apt, for the lumbermen in question were from Michigan. Among the "Michigan men" (as they were termed at the time) was William E. Ramsey, of sufficient national prominence in the lumber business to be in included in a 1906 publication by *The American Lumberman* entitled *The Personal History and Business Achievements of One Hundred Eminent Lumbermen of the United States*. A Canadian by birth, Ramsey entered the lumber business in Saginaw, Michigan. He and other Michigan lumber tycoons such as R. H. Nason and N. B. Bradley began buying large tracts of timber in the Lake Charles area in the early 1880s.

In 1887, Ramsey, in connection with Nason, Bradley, Lewis Penoyer and Benton Hatchett (all presumably from Michigan), formed the Bradley-Ramsey Lumber Company in Lake Charles. According to the above piece in *The American Lumberman*, the company's local land holdings exceeded 150,000 acres. The company had two huge mills on or near Lake Charles (the Michigan mill and the Mt. Hope mill).

But "Michigan men" were not the only players in the Lake Charles lumber industry. The area's second largest mill was owned by local J. A. Bel. A native of New Orleans, Bel moved to Lake Charles as a teenager and worked his way up through the lumber business.

Western Louisiana and the Kansas City Southern Railroad:

The western Louisiana parishes of Vernon and Beauregard had few rivals in the state for sheer intensity of sawmill activity. And most of it had strong ties to Kansas City, Missouri. Within a few short years, out-of-state capital transformed these out-of-the-way agrarian parishes into industrial giants. New mill towns were created (Bon Ami, Longville, Fullerton and Neame, to name a few), and already existing towns (most notably, the parish seats of DeRidder and Leesville) were soon dominated by lumber prosperity. It all started with the completion in 1897 of the Kansas City Southern Railroad, linking Kansas City with the virgin forests of eastern Texas and western Louisiana. The line ended in Port Arthur, Texas.

The 1917 list of sawmills in Louisiana shows 49 to have a capacity of 100,000 board feet or more. Thirteen (a little more than a fourth) of these were located in Vernon and Beauregard parishes, not to mention numerous smaller mills. Of these thirteen, all but two were owned by companies headquartered in Kansas City.

"Even as the tracks were laid, lumber mills, big and small, sprouted overnight along the main line," writes Vernon Parish historian Steven D. Smith (*A Good Home for a Poor Man: Fort Polk and Vernon Parish, 1800-1940)*. And from this trunk line, branch lines made possible the erection of other mills. "From the turn of the century [twentieth] until the late 1920s," observes Smith, "Vernon Parish forests echoed with the sounds of chopping axes, shouting men, crashing trees, braying mules, and snorting steam engines." The boom ended as fast as it happened. Less than fifteen years after beginning, the first lumber companies had exhausted the timber supply. By 1933, says Smith, sixteen of the large mills in Vernon and Beauregard stood abandoned. Fully seventy percent of Vernon was cutover land (with its "ugly nakedness," to borrow an apt description of cutover land in general from *The American Lumberman* in 1922).

The largest landowner in the area was the Long-Bell Lumber Company, a lumber retailer headquartered in Kansas City. To meet the needs for its lumberyards, Long-Bell purchased, over a period of time, around 600,000 acres in Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas and the Pacific Coast. Of fourteen western Louisiana large landowners identified in a government study in 1913, Long-Bell, with 203,600 acres, owned the largest tract. Long-Bell operated four large (over 100,000 board feet) mills in Beauregard Parish, each operating as a subsidiary with its own name. They were the Hudson River Lumber Company, DeRidder; the Longville Lumber Company, Longville; the Ludington Lumber Company, Ludington; and King Ryder Lumber Company, Bon Ami. (Long-Bell also owned mills elsewhere in the state -- Woodworth, Rapides Parish; Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish; and Yellow Pine, Webster Parish.)

No summary of the lumber boom in western Louisiana would be complete without mention of the region's largest sawmill at Fullerton (Vernon Parish), created and operated by Gulf Lumber Company, with headquarters in Missouri. It bore the name of its creator, Samuel Holmes Fullerton, who invested some 3.5 million dollars to build a huge mill and company town. The mill began operations in 1907, and within twenty years, shut down because it had consumed all the timber available. Historians estimate that the mill, during its lifetime, cut 2.25 billion board feet, consuming 4.2 million trees. (The mill was almost as large as, or as large as, depending upon the source, the "world's largest sawmill" at Bogalusa. See immediately below.)

Photos taken in the 1930s and held by the Library of Congress show Fullerton to have already become a ghost town. Today, there are no standing structures there at all. A large archeological district is listed on the National Register.

<u>Bogalusa: Home of the World's Largest Sawmill:</u>

In early 1905, seemingly endless acres of virgin long leaf pine occupied the site of what would become Bogalusa. By 1914, the area had been transformed into a mighty industrial engine fueled by huge sums of northern capital. Bogalusa, only nine years after being established, was a "magic city" of 10,000 people – home to the world's largest sawmill – thanks to the Goodyears of Buffalo, New York.

In typical fashion, the firm of Frank H. and Charles W. Goodyear had exhausted their timberlands in western New York and northwest Pennsylvania. Looking southward to Mississippi and Louisiana, they chartered the Great Southern Lumber Company in 1902 in Pennsylvania. A list of the early company officers and board of directors is dominated by men from New York and Pennsylvania.

How Louisiana came to be chosen over Mississippi as the locus of operations is revealed in a letter from Charles W. Goodyear dated March 8, 1905. The stationary is headed "Great Southern Lumber Company, Ellicott Square, Buffalo, N.Y." The letter, to the company's agent in New Orleans, transmits a check of $1,250,000 for "the most recent purchase of timberlands which you have made as our agent." Goodyear writes: "We are most anxious to go South as soon as possible to select a site for the sawmill and town. On account of the Mississippi laws, which we find are definitely unfavorable to corporations, we have about reached the conclusion that a location in Louisiana would be preferable."

Later that year, in September, a party of Great Southern officials settled upon the present-day site of Bogalusa to build their mill and town. Among them was William Henry Sullivan, of Buffalo, the acknowledged "father of Bogalusa." Sullivan was general manager and vice-president of Great Southern as well as mayor of Bogalusa from its incorporation in 1914 until his death in 1929. (He was appointed mayor when the town was incorporated in 1914 and was elected three consecutive times.)

The fact that the chosen townsite was not serviced by a railroad was remedied when that same year (1905) the Goodyears established the New Orleans Great Northern Railroad to lay tracks connecting Bogalusa with New Orleans to the south and Jackson, Mississippi to the north. They created their own construction company to do the work.

The town and vast sawmill plant were built in 1907-1908 using skilled workers from the North as well as local people. From the very beginning Bogalusa was meant to be a model sawmill town and to be permanent (not the typical "cut out and get out," leaving an abandoned mill town). According to the minutes of incorporation for the City of Bogalusa, July 4, 1914, Sullivan was instructed "to build the largest and best equipped plant in the world; to make the town a good town in which to live; to give the people good schools, churches, well arranged homes with electric lights, pure water, sewerage and all modern conveniences; to build good streets, good sidewalks, and to make the town so attractive that men who worked in lumber enterprises would be glad to live in Bogalusa."

Charles W. Goodyear III, in his 1950 privately published history of Bogalusa, relates that landscape architect Harvey Murdock, who had planned cities in the North, was responsible for the sawmill town's design. The huge sawmill plant, enclosed within a linear 278 acre fenced industrial compound, was at the center of the community. (See photo 8 for early aerial view of Bogalusa.) Railroad tracks ran along the perimeter of the compound. At the head was an unusually shaped 20 acre mill pond. Reading almost like a landscape feature, the pond has a sweeping curve outlined by railroad tracks. On the west side of the mill were various major buildings (headquarters building, commissary, two hotels, hospital, YMCA, YWCA, etc.) and street after street of houses for white workers. The highest level of officials lived on a curved

street of fine two story homes in what was known as "Little Buffalo" or "Buffalotown." Nearby was a large park. African-American workers lived in company houses located to the east of the mill.

While clearly a purpose-built lumber company town of the first rank, Bogalusa had numerous private mercantile establishments in addition to the quite large two-story company-owned Bogalusa Stores Commissary. According to Charles W. Goodyear III, "the competition of other mercantile establishments was deliberately encouraged in Bogalusa to offset any impression that the Company might be creating a monopoly by forcing its employees to trade in its own commissary" (*Bogalusa Story,* 1950).

The American Lumberman sent reporters and photographers to the "magic city" on more than one occasion. One reporter wrote in 1922: "This mill, by the way, is the largest sawmill in the world. At the time of our visit it was working on the basis of two 10-hour shifts and was turning out daily about 750,000 feet of lumber. The capacity of the mill is something over 1 million feet daily. Six logs go through the mill every minute, and one day's work will strip 60 acres of timberland." According to the reporter, about 3,000 men were employed by Great Southern. (This employment figure is corroborated in other sources.)

Workers houses were built by the hundreds. They could either be purchased from Great Southern or rented; most were rented. *The American Lumberman* reporter referenced above was particularly impressed with the quality of the housing, including what he claimed was a bathroom in each house. (It is unlikely that this amenity in 1922 was found in the African-American housing.)

The Great Southern Lumber Company's sawmill continued to consume timberlands in the area until 1938, when the mill closed, thirty years after the first log was processed. But Bogalusa did not suffer the ghost town fate of almost all other mill towns in Louisiana. It survived because Great Southern had diversified. In short, Bogalusa, because of the foundation laid by Great Southern, changed from a lumber mill town to a paper mill town. Paper mills were first introduced to the plant in the 1910s (to consume sawmill waste), and by the 1930s, Bogalusa Paper Company (a subsidiary of Great Southern) was a large industrial concern. In 1937 Bogalusa Paper merged with Robert Gaylord, Inc. of St. Louis to form the Gaylord Container Corporation. Gaylord continued to expand the paper products it produced, and in 1954, it merged with Crown Zellerbach Corporation. The production of paper products dominates the Bogalusa economy today.

<u>Major Players in Cypress:</u>

There were fewer cypress mills in Louisiana simply because there were fewer acres of swampland in the state than acres supporting other types of wood (most notably, pine). That said, cypress mills were huge players in their respective local economies. Generally, because of the expense involved in extricating cypress from the swamps, most cypress lumber companies were large concerns. Many were out-of-state companies. Four large players in the cypress industry will be profiled below: the Ruddock Cypress Company, with a mill in the Pass

Manchac swamps some 10 miles north/northeast of LaPlace, St. John the Baptist Parish; the Lyons Cypress Lumber Company, Garyville, St. John the Baptist Parish; Lutcher and Moore Cypress Lumber Company, Lutcher, St. James Parish; and Frank B. Williams Cypress Company, Patterson, St. Mary Parish.

The American Lumberman in its June 24, 1899 issue showed a bird's eye view of the large plant and company town of Ruddock Cypress Company Limited in the town of Ruddock in the Pass Manchac swamp region. Some sixteen years later (September 1915) the town and mill were destroyed by hurricane. The mill originated with a land purchase in 1889 of 3,100 acres by William Burton of Kentucky near the small village of Frenier on the southwestern shore of Lake Pontchartrain. Three years later Burton partnered with Chicago lumber magnate C. H. Ruddock to form the Ruddock Cypress Company, Ltd. This company would come to own more than sixteen thousand acres of swampland. Due to the remote location no doubt, there was a large purpose-built company town, which at its peak had a population of 1,200. Now gone almost one hundred years, the swampland company town is described as being built of wooden buildings placed on wooden pilings. Buildings were connected to one another by wooden walkways.

A longer lasting cypress company town, one that still exists in part today, is Garyville in St. John the Baptist Parish. Garyville was founded in 1903 when Lyon Lumber Company of Illinois reorganized as Lyon Cypress Lumber Company. The mill claimed to be the largest and most modern cypress mill in the world. The company relied entirely on rail transportation to procure cypress, building its own railroad, the Garyville Northern. In its heyday Garyville had the typical components of a company town: office building, commissary, hotels, etc. and street after street of workers' houses. Some key buildings have been lost, but the town retained sufficient integrity in 1990 to be listed on the National Register.

The founder of Lutcher in St. James Parish, Henry Jacob Lutcher, was a lumberman of national stature. He was profiled in 1906 in *The Personal History and Public and Business Achievements of One Hundred Eminent Lumbermen of the United States*, by *The American Lumberman.* Rated in that publication as "several times a millionaire," Lutcher entered the lumber business in Pennsylvania, and when the timber played out there, he looked to southeast Texas, building a large mill at Orange in 1877. By 1906 he had purchased thousands of acres in Texas and Louisiana. He built a mill in St. James Parish in 1889, operating under the name Lutcher and Moore Cypress Lumber Company. Some forty acres on the Mississippi River were set aside for the sawmill plant, and a company town developed nearby. Lutcher and Moore had exhausted the supply of cypress by 1925. Today the only known survivors from the company town are the company office (listed on the National Register) and a few workers houses.

Unlike the above examples, Frank B. Williams, sometimes called the "cypress king," was a local lumberman. Williams was born in Alabama in 1849 to a family of modest means. By the 1870s he was in the lumber business in Patterson, St. Mary Parish with Captain John Pharr, a local sugar planter, as his partner. In 1876, Williams married a local woman. Eventually buying out Pharr's interests, Williams organized in 1902 the F. B. Williams Cypress Company, Ltd., with his wife and four sons as partners. The huge sawmill (another claimant for "largest cypress sawmill") was located on the Atchafalaya River in Patterson, an already existing

town. Patterson was also home to two other cypress mills, both much smaller than the Williams mill.

Williams and his wife moved to a palatial mansion on St. Charles Avenue in New Orleans in 1913. They left their four sons to run the business. The company expanded, eventually owning 86,000 acres and four large sawmills in south Louisiana (Patterson, Garden City, Arabi, Ponchatoula). Today there are absolutely no vestiges of the once vast industrial plant at Patterson. Likewise, the grand Queen Anne Revival residential-looking F. B. Williams Company office building is no longer extant, nor is the F. B. Williams House in that community. Three small houses of the right vintage remain adjacent to the mill site. Board members of the Louisiana State Museum (located in Patterson) indicate that they were not built by the company, but that they were occupied by mill workers.

Impact on Existing Towns:

Not only did the great Louisiana lumber boom create whole new towns (company towns), it changed the face of existing communities. Many towns across the state were small, insubstantial places until sawmills were built on their outskirts, ushering in great prosperity. Some of the towns were so dominated by the mill that they might be termed quasi-company towns. As John Michael Caldwell notes, "many smaller towns into which saw mills had been introduced were almost as dependent upon the mill as were the communities which began as saw mill towns" ("The Forest of the Vintage: A Geography of Industrial Lumbering in North Central Louisiana"). In some cases, the mill was not only the biggest employer by far, but it also made possible, in typical paternalistic fashion, various community improvements. For example, Beaumont, Texas-owned Nona Mills in Leesville, according to historian W. T. Block, paid for in total or in part the town's waterworks, fire department, ice plant, hotel, baseball team, militia company and brass band.

Sanborn maps and other sources show that the sawmill plants were built either within sight of the community's downtown or a mile or so away. Some had company built housing for workers; some did not. But the housing, where it existed, was generally not as extensive as that found at company towns. Most employees lived in the town itself (in homes they owned or rented) and walked to work at the mill. There were also some company-built buildings in the following categories near the mill: houses for upper level management, an office, and sometimes a commissary.

DeRidder, the Beauregard Parish seat, is a case in point. Founded by the Kansas City Southern Railroad in 1897, DeRidder was a growing town of 2,500 when incorporated in April of 1903. The Long-Bell Lumber Company of Kansas City, Missouri established a large mill within sight of the central business district in 1904 and quickly became the town's largest employer. It was a subsidiary of Long-Bell operating under the name Hudson River Lumber Company.

The company built, in addition to the industrial plant, a commissary, an office, a hotel, and roughly one hundred workers cottages. There were also a handful of houses for management

(some it appears built by the company and some built by the occupant). In the 1910s the wood frame commissary was replaced with a two story party-wall brick building (Standard Mercantile) in the town's central business district. All of this is gone, with the exception of a handful of workers cottages, in varying states of integrity, Standard Mercantile, and three management houses that retain sufficient integrity. The three management houses are those of the general manager, the superintendent, and the company doctor.

The Webster Parish seat of Minden, in northern Louisiana, had been a town for decades (founded in 1836) when the Minden Lumber Company erected a large mill there in 1900. (Minden Lumber was one of six large mills in north-central Louisiana owned and operated by William Buchanan of Arkansas.) At least four hundred men were employed by the company. In addition to the industrial plant, there were company owned cottages rented to white and black workers. Caldwell indicates that the white workers cottages numbered 50. He does not give a number for housing for blacks ("The Forest of the Vintage: A Geography of Industrial Lumbering in North Central Louisiana").

Reforestation Pioneer:

The frantic "cut out and get out" great Louisiana lumber boom reached its peak production in 1913. That same year, on June 14, lumberman Henry E. Hardtner, a Louisiana native, was thinking of future forests when he signed the state's first reforestation contract for thousands of acres of Urania Lumber Company land. This ahead-of-his-time action, along with many others, earned him the title "father of forestry in the South." From his remote headquarters in Urania, a sawmill town in LaSalle Parish he named for the Greek muse of astronomy, Hardtner throughout his career was an activist for forestry conservation.

His was a small sawmill by the standards of the day (capacity of 60,000 board feet per day). As Louisiana lumber historian Anna C. Burns notes, Henry Hardtner was always interested in the woods part of the company's operation, leaving his brother Quentin to handle the mill and sales ("Henry E. Hardtner: Louisiana's First Conservationist," *Journal of Forest History*, April 1978). In an article published in *The Southern Lumberman* in 1925, Henry wrote that he began to recognize the problem of cutover lands around 1905 and to ponder the idea of producing a second crop after the initial virgin forests were depleted. Some of his early policies were setting a diameter limit for trees to be cut (rather than cutting down every tree, no matter how young); leaving seed trees for natural production; and a primitive fire protection system.

According to Burns, Hardtner "very likely had a hand" in the enactment of Louisiana's first forestry legislation in 1904, which provided for a department of forestry, reforestation, etc. Although ahead of its time, the bill was never implemented due to lack of appropriations. In 1908 Hardtner was appointed chairman of the state's first Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources. Within two years the commission recommended a six point forestry program which would serve as the foundation for the state's reforestation efforts.

Particularly important was the passage in 1912 of an act making possible reforestation contracts with the state. In such instances the state assessed cutover lands at a low tax value provided that timber was grown and maintained on said lands. As noted above, Hardtner signed

the first reforestation contract. On the lands under contract (25,719 acres), Hardtner chose natural reproduction via seed trees (as opposed to planting new trees).

Always experimenting on his own lands at Urania, Hardtner was keenly interested in forestry research. In 1917, he began a collaboration with the Yale Forestry School wherein the school conducted a yearly field course for senior students in Urania. Burns notes that this developed into a "long tradition through which many American foresters received training at Urania."

Sadly, there are no extant buildings directly associated with the "father of forestry in the South," as confirmed by his grandson as part of the research for this document. His homes in Urania and Alexandria are gone. A home in Urania identified in survey documents as the Hardtner home is a circa 1950 remodeling of brother Quentin's house.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

The following observations on surviving buildings are made based on almost three decades of fieldwork by the author while employed at the Louisiana SHPO, plus additional fieldwork conducted specifically for this historic context statement. The property types given are only those with survivors to represent them. Pullboats used in the cypress industry are not listed because there are no known survivors.

Industrial Plants:

The industrial plant is described above. Amazingly, one historic sawmill plant survives in Louisiana, that of the Crowell Lumber Company, now part of the Southern Forest Heritage Museum (Longleaf, Rapides Parish). Built in 1901 and remodeled significantly in 1910, it is listed on the National Register at the national level of significance. The industrial plant includes the sawmill (photo 9), a 1910 planing mill (photo 10) and two boiler houses.

Railroad and Railroad-Related Resources:

The roughly three miles of railroad track at the Southern Forest Heritage Museum is listed on the National Register as contributing. Presumably the tracks have been replaced over the years. It is the only known sawmill-related railroad network remaining in the state.

Three locomotives original to the site are displayed at the Southern Forest Heritage Museum (formerly Crowell Lumber Company). They are #400, a 1919 Baldwin 4-6-0 pine knot burning locomotive with a "cabbage head" stack; #202, a 1913 Baldwin 4-6-0 with tender; and #106, a 1923 Baldwin 4-6-0 with tender. (The numbers separated by dashes refer to wheel arrangement.) (See photo 11 for the 1923 Baldwin 4-6-0, presently displayed in the car shop.)

Other railroad-related resources on the property are a roundhouse (1930), a machine shop (1910s), and a car shop (1920s).

Machinery (Skidders and Log Loaders):

A skidder is a steam-powered, rail-mounted device that hauled logs from the forest floor via cables. The cables were housed in drums. The extremely rare 1919 Clyde skidder at the Southern Forest Heritage Museum (photo 12) has two drums on each end and had the ability (called rehaul) to run its cables in reverse.

Log loaders were rail-mounted, steam-powered machines that lifted the logs gathered by the skidder and loaded them onto log cars. Put in the simplest of terms, the log loader was raised up, allowing enough space for a log car to be pulled underneath and loaded. Two rare McGiffert log loaders (1919) original to the site are on display at the Southern Forest Heritage Museum. (One is shown in photo 13.)

Company Towns:

Company towns are described above. Only four survive with any semblance of their original appearance, and all of these have suffered significant losses (in varying degrees). The four are Garyville, St. John the Baptist Parish (National Register); Elizabeth, Allen Parish (photos 14 & 15); Fisher, Sabine Parish (National Register) (photos 16 & 17); and Bogalusa, Washington Parish. (Fragments of company towns survive in places such as Urania, Trout and Good Pine, all in LaSalle Parish.)

The author offers the following comments on the two not currently listed on the National Register (Elizabeth and Bogalusa). Elizabeth retains its layout, a hospital building prominently sited at the head of a street, and enough repetitive housing stock (despite alterations and losses) to merit National Register listing. Bogalusa, home to probably the most ambitious company town built in Louisiana, has lost all of its many major and quite splendid public buildings. Nonetheless, enough repetitive workers housing survives to make one realize they are in a company town. However, it is too scattered to form a cohesive district. A viable small district of four upper level management houses does exist in "Little Buffalo," centered on the William H. Sullivan House (National Register).

Owners' Houses:

There were never many lumber company owners houses in Louisiana, for the great lumber boom was fueled largely by out-of-state capital. The owners lived, for example, in Buffalo or Kansas City. The houses of the owners of three locally owned lumber companies survive: the Kurth House in Leesville, Vernon Parish (photo 18); the Hanson House in Garden City (St. Mary Parish); and the home of Allen Crowell of Crowell Lumber Company, Longleaf. Two houses in Lake Charles survive to represent "Michigan Men" owners R. H. Nason (photo 19) and W. E. Ramsey (photo 20). Finally, while the Patterson home of Frank B. Williams does not survive, the St. Charles Avenue mansion he moved to in New Orleans in 1913 does (photo 21).

The accompanying photos of owners houses offer an interesting contrast. Joseph Kurth, the owner of a small sawmill in the company town of Kurthwood, lived in a fairly modest house – the type of house one would associate with management rather than an owner. By contrast, the homes of Nason and Ramsey, both owners of large mills, are quite large and architecturally distinguished. The home of Williams, the so-called "cypress king," is indeed a mansion.

Management Housing:

Houses of upper level management survive today in Louisiana, in limited numbers, in both former company owned towns and pre-existing towns that came to be dominated by the timber industry. They were and are generally of two stories and range in size and character depending upon the level of the individual for whom the house was built. They were typically in an enclave of their own within the white residential area of a company town. The most important surviving example is the William Henry Sullivan House in Bogalusa (photo 22). As explained above, Bogalusa was a one man town and that man was Sullivan. Three other large management houses remain near that of Sullivan, forming a small sawmill management historic district (photo 23).

In cases where a mill located in an already existing town, the houses of upper level management were located generally within sight of said mill. Surviving examples include the Ferguson House in Leesville (photo 24), the home of Nona Mills' vice-president and manager; the Hudson River Lumber Company Manager's House in DeRidder (photo 25); and a residence in McNary, Rapides Parish, that housed upper level management (photo 26).

Commissaries:

The commissary, a department store owned and operated by the lumber company, was the commercial heart of a company town. Lumber historian George A. Stokes writes: "Without leaving the building one might buy a pound of bacon, a box of shotgun shells, a gallon of kerosene, a rocking chair, and a pair of overalls" ("Lumbering in Southwest Louisiana"). In many cases the commissary also housed other facilities such as a barbershop or post office. With their roomy interiors and generous front porches, commissaries were also social centers for what were typically isolated communities – where families gathered to visit and catch up on the "latest."

The look of lumber company commissaries can be ascertained from the very few survivors and old photographs. Of wood frame construction, they were generally (but not always) one story and had a large footprint. They often had a characteristic false front formed of a stepped or shaped gable parapet and a porch spanning the façade.

The four surviving historic commissaries are at Fisher, Sabine Parish (photo 27); Tioga, Rapides Parish (photo 28); Longleaf, Rapides Parish; and Flora, Natchitoches Parish. While all are important in their own right, those at Fisher and Tioga are of particular value because they illustrate the look of early commissaries. Fisher, in fact, has the quintessential early commissary

look. The buildings at Flora and Longleaf are replacements of earlier buildings destroyed by fire (1931 and 1947, respectively).

Company Office Buildings:

Buildings housing lumber company offices were particularly important. They symbolized the company and were the "nerve center" of the business operation. They were typically located near the commissary, were often of two stories, and invariably of wood frame construction. Occasionally, like that at Bogalusa, they were quite splendid buildings that made an architectural statement.

Five company office buildings survive in Louisiana: Garyville, St. John the Baptist Parish (photo 29); Fisher, Sabine Parish (photo 30); Garden City, St. Mary Parish (photo 31) Good Pine, LaSalle Parish (photo 32); and Longleaf, Rapides Parish.

Miscellaneous Company Town Buildings:

The above category includes a handful of surviving company town buildings in the state that do not exist in sufficient number to break out in separate categories. They include one hospital building (Elizabeth, Allen Parish, photo 33); the Oasis in Clarks, Caldwell Parish, a company built multi-purpose building housing a drugstore, post office, barber shop on the first floor and a lodge hall on the second; a few churches; and at least one school (the latter being the Yellow Pine School in Webster Parish).

Workers Housing:

The single most character-defining feature of workers housing is its repetitiveness ("remarkably uniform in construction and appearance" observes lumber historian George A. Stokes, "Lumbering in Southwest Louisiana"). Historic photos and the rare survivors show that workers houses took various forms, as noted below.

A particularly common model in the pine towns of western and central Louisiana (a signature) was a one story pyramidal roof house, generally with a separate roof over the front porch. Generally the footprint was roughly a square (as at Elizabeth, photo 34). Sometimes (as at Good Pine, photo 35) the pyramidal roof was elongated to produce a rectangular shape footprint.

Good Pine and nearby Trout (LaSalle Parish) also retain workers houses in what might be termed a folk Victorian style. These are one story houses with a forward projecting squared off bay and a porch spanning the remainder of the façade (see photo 36).

Yet another model is seen in Urania, LaSalle Parish (see photo 37): a gable end house with a smaller wing to the side under its own slightly lower gable end roof. There is a fairly small inset porch on the main block. (There is no documentation on these houses. They appear to date to the 1910s.)

A few surviving houses in Lutcher (a cypress mill town) represent a modification of the indigenous southern Louisiana gable end galleried cottage. These houses have an attached gallery (under its own hipped roof) spanning the façade rather than the integral gallery so typical of the form (photo 38). This modification creates an entirely different geometry.

Among the most unusual workers houses known to ever exist in Louisiana were in Garyville and Garden City, cypress lumber company towns in southern Louisiana. The two story relatively narrow Garyville houses were strongly vertical in proportion, resembling housing from a northern mill town. A few of these survive today (photo 39). A two story model in Garden City had a rectangular shape with a hip roof and an attached hip roofed porch. None of the worker housing is believed to survive in Garden City. (There are presently two historic two story houses there. One is the sawmill owner's house; the other, one suspects, housed management. It seems too large for typical workers housing.)

Bogalusa, a large company town in the pine belt, also had (and has) unusual (for Louisiana) two story workers houses. The houses have a standard cross gable roof form made unusual by the incorporation of the front facing bay within a prominent sloping roof (photo 40). The sloping roof provides for a porch and the ascent of the staircase.

Houses for African-American workers were at some distance from white residential sections and the commercial sector. Here the most common house type was the shotgun – a narrow house one room wide and two or more deep with a shed roof over the front porch (photo 41).

Workers houses are found here and there in former sawmill towns, generally abandoned and/or notably altered. In only a very few communities (for example, Urania in LaSalle Parish and Elizabeth in Allen Parish) does one find rows of houses that survive with enough integrity to convey their historic identity.

APPLYING THE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

The following comments on applying the National Register criteria are generally applicable to all of the property types noted above. When a National Register Criterion, or portion thereof, is applicable in particular to a specific property type, that information will be noted (for example, engineering significance under Criterion C).

Criterion A:

National Register Criterion A is most commonly used, and generally most appropriate, for lumber boom-related resources in the state. It recognizes properties that are "associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." Criterion A may apply to a single event or a broad pattern of events such as the lumber boom. Because so little is left in Louisiana to represent this hugely important economic force, one that pervaded the state, certain buildings have been listed at the state level of significance (Criterion A, industry

area of significance). It is important to note that these have been major properties that directly represent the lumber boom (rather than byproducts of lumber boom prosperity). They include company built towns, a sawmill plant, commissaries, and lumber company headquarters buildings. (The sawmill plant is also listed at the national level of significance.) One might also nominate major company buildings at the local level under Criterion A, for they represent easily the economic foundation of a given area at that time.

Recognizing workers' housing in the National Register presents its own set of issues. As noted above, they are scattered here and there and often are abandoned and deteriorated. Because repetitiveness is the character-defining feature of workers housing, the best candidates would be rows of houses. Would a single worker's house be a viable candidate? Obviously it would not be nearly as compelling a candidate as a row of the same. But perhaps a case could be made if said worker's house was all that remained of a once thriving sawmill town (i.e., it was all that was left to tell the story of the economic impact of the mill).

While buildings directly associated with lumbering are the most important resources to be listed on the National Register under Criterion A, in certain instances one can list buildings that are byproducts of lumber industry prosperity. This was one component of the statement of significance for the Lake Charles Historic District (National Register). The preparer, however, should make a strong case (prove) that the buildings in question specifically reflect the lumber boom prosperity (rather than one of a series of economic forces that made prosperity possible in a given community at a given time). In the case of Lake Charles, lumber was clearly the foundation of the economy. This author finds the byproduct of lumber prosperity argument more compelling with a district nomination rather than a single building. (It would be difficult to demonstrate that one particular building in a given community, where there were others, best represents lumber boom prosperity.)

Criterion B:

National Register Criterion B (properties "associated with the lives of persons significant in our past") can also be used for lumber-related properties. For example, the home of William Henry Sullivan, the recognized founder of Bogalusa, general manager of the sawmill company and mayor, was listed under Criterion B. Other buildings eligible under Criterion B would be the two homes of the "Michigan Men" lumber magnates in Lake Charles, the heads of major sawmills in that city. (The two at present are major contributing elements in the Lake Charles Historic District.) Generally, it would be the homes of individuals at the founder or owner levels that would qualify under Criterion B – for these were significant individuals. By contrast, the home, for example, of the lumber company bookkeeper or doctor would not be eligible under Criterion B. Generally the homes of founders and owners would be nominated at the local level under Criterion B.

Criterion C:

Criterion C (architecture, art, engineering) has very limited applicability in Louisiana for industrial plants and their equipment, which are virtually extinct. The one exception, as noted

elsewhere, is Crowell Lumber Company in Longleaf (now the Southern Forest Heritage Museum).

Some of the homes of sawmill owners, founders and upper level management would meet National Register requirements under the architecture component of Criterion C (as exemplary examples of their styles, generally at the local level of significance). Notable examples include (but are not limited to) the William Sullivan House in Bogalusa and the W. E. Ramsey and R. H. Nason homes in Lake Charles.

Criterion D (archaeology) has been used for one lumber company site in Louisiana: that of Fullerton in Vernon Parish. Individuals pursuing similar nominations for mill sites in the state should keep in mind that Criterion D reads: "That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important (emphasis added) in prehistory or history." The nomination must explain why the information is important and that it has been identified through a research design as data worth seeking.

Criteria Considerations:

Two National Register Criteria Considerations (A and B, religious properties and moved properties, respectively) would be most likely to come into play for lumber industry nominations.

Under Criteria Consideration A, candidates will qualify if they fall within the following categories: "a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance." Criteria Consideration A would be applicable to the handful of remaining churches in lumber company towns. They would be nominated not for their religious history, but for their historical importance. A potential obstacle is documenting that the church was actually company built – that it represents the company town and its paternalism.

Criteria Consideration B (buildings removed from their original locations) is challenging for candidates nominated for their historical importance (Criteria A and B). Herewith a hypothetical example: Would a lumber company commissary or office building moved from one lumber company town to another still be eligible? Historic preservation professionals might well have conflicting views on this matter. On balance, the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation believes that such a building would be a viable candidate as long as the commissary or office building was moved into an appropriate historic context (another lumber company town), and its setting was similar to the original.

EVALUATING INTEGRITY

Quoting from National Register guidelines: "Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the National Register criteria, but also must have integrity."

Evaluating integrity for National Register candidates is almost by definition subjective. There are no easy formulas such as percentage figures for original fabric versus replaced or altered. It must be done on a case-by-case basis grounded in a thorough understanding of the candidate, the National Register criterion (or criteria) being used, and the period of significance.

The National Register recognizes seven aspects or qualities "that, in various combinations, define integrity": location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. A candidate does not have to possess all of the qualities to meet requirements for retaining integrity. Additionally, the importance ranking of the different aspects of integrity will change according to each candidate and the National Register criteria being used. One must decide which of the seven aspects is/are most important for the candidate being evaluated.

Generally speaking, what might be called the "integrity threshold" is not as high for candidates under Criteria A and B as it is under Criterion C. Put in the simplest of terms, for Criterion A, would someone from the sawmill era still recognize the building, even with alterations? Does the building retain enough of its original character and fabric to convey its significance? Using the qualities or aspects of integrity noted above, the materials may be covered in substitute siding and some of the design features may be altered, but someone from the historic period would still recognize the building.

For Criteria B, does the building still look much as it did during the period of significance when the significant individual was residing there? A candidate under Criterion B can be the home of an immensely important individual, but if it was significantly remodeled after that individual's period of significance, then it would no longer be eligible for the National Register. Here, as in Criterion A explained above, not all of the qualities of integrity need be present.

Evaluating integrity for workers' housing can be particularly challenging, for it is generally these buildings that have received the most changes and that are sometimes severely deteriorated. A good case study is in Elizabeth, Allen Parish. The author of this document, some twenty years ago as the state's National Register Coordinator, felt that the workers houses had received too many alterations to nominate Elizabeth as a historic district. The most notable alteration was (and is) replacement of original wooden porches with decorative wrought iron porches. Sometimes porches are now at grade level. Various houses had received additions and window replacement.

But upon returning to Elizabeth for this historic context statement, the author suspects that she was applying too high a standard of integrity. Add to the mix a heightened awareness in the intervening years of the extreme rarity of the resource. One would suggest that a portion of Elizabeth is eligible as a National Register district. The original plan is still there, with a grand vista down a row of workers houses to the company-built hospital building (individually listed on the Register). The company built church is still there. And enough houses group together (on certain streets—not all streets) to convey the look of a sawmill town – particularly the repetitiveness of the houses. Yes, the houses have been altered, but they still retain their overall form – enough to convey their identity as repetitive sawmill worker housing. (See photos 42 and 43 for streetscape views with altered workers' houses that convey enough of their identity to be included in a National Register district.)

PHOTO GALLERY

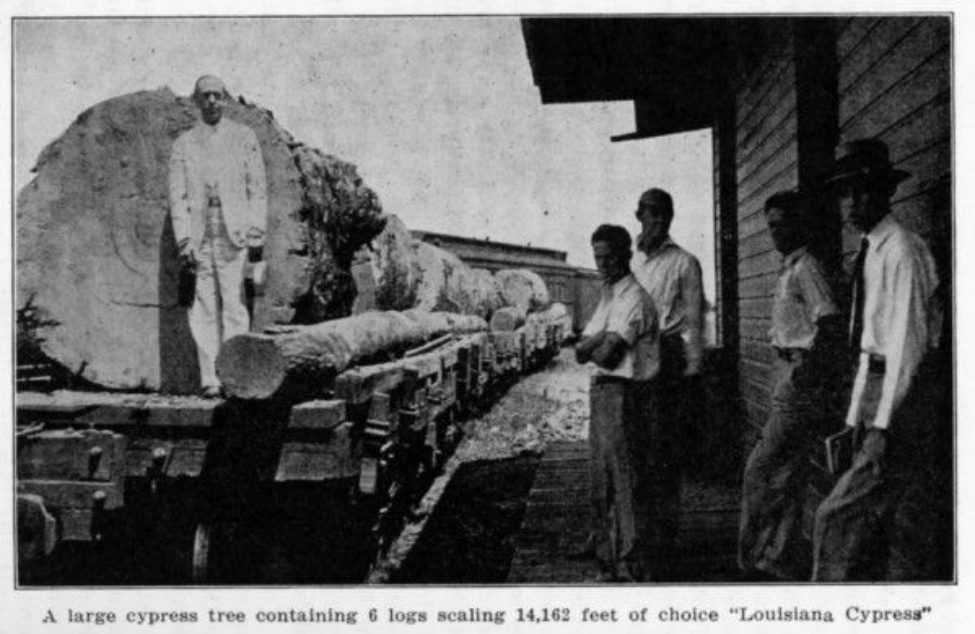

Photo 1. This cypress tree's girth was not unusual for Louisiana's ancient forests – in both cypress and pine. Photo courtesy Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries.

Photo 2. An extremely rare Clyde Ironworks skidder (1919) at the Crowell Lumber Company sawmill plant, now the home of the Southern Forest Heritage Museum, Longleaf.

Photo 3. A log loader in action. Courtesy Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries.

Photo 4. Great Southern Lumber Mill and Log Pond, Bogalusa. Courtesy Louisiana Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries.

Photos 5 & 6. Log chute entering sawmill and circular saw making first cut, Southern Forest Heritage Museum, Longleaf.

Photo 7. Sawing floor of the Crowell Lumber Company sawmill (1901, remodeled 1910), Southern Forest Heritage Museum, Longleaf.

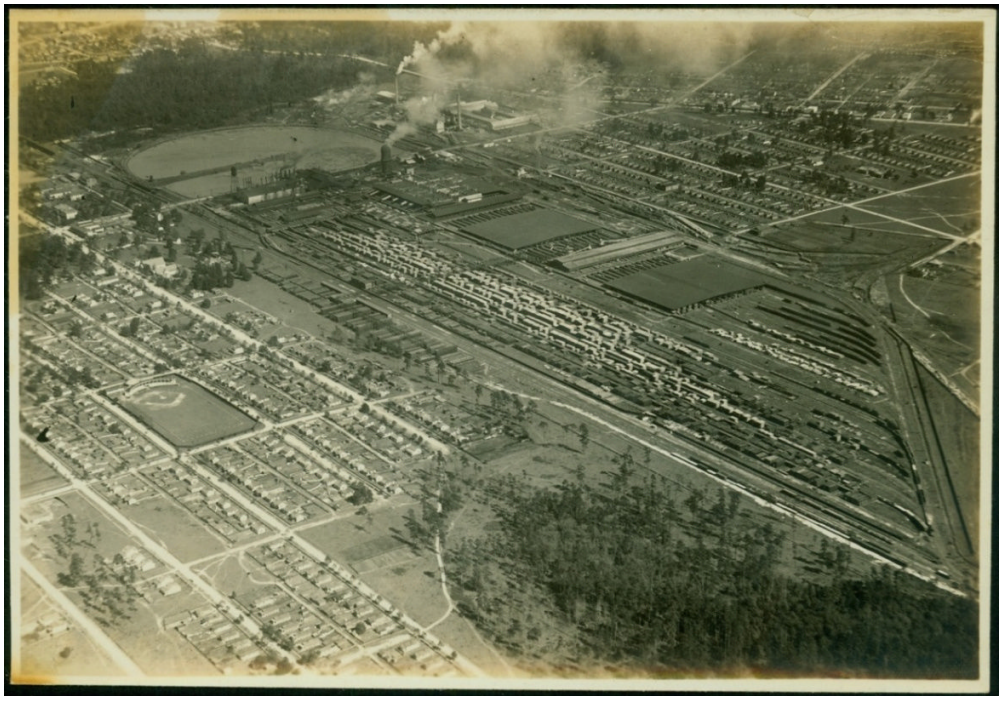

Photo 8. Aerial view of Bogalusa. Note crescent-shaped mill pond at top. Courtesy Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU

Photo 9. Crowell Lumber Company sawmill (1901, remodeled 1910), Southern Forest Heritage Museum, Longleaf.

Photo 10. Crowell Lumber Company planning mill (1910), Southern Forest Heritage Museum, Longleaf.

Photo 11. One of three early twentieth century locomotives original to the site, Southern Forest Heritage Museum, Longleaf.

Photo 12. Clyde skidder (1919) at Southern Forest Heritage Museum, Longleaf.

Photo 13. One of two McGiffert log loaders (1919) at Southern Forest Heritage Museum, Longleaf.

Photo 14. The former sawmill town of Elizabeth, with the company built hospital at the head of the avenue. On each side are workers' houses.

Photo 15. Row of workers' houses at Elizabeth.

Photo 16. Panoramic view of the heart of the former sawmill town of Fisher, showing from left to right, the church, the office, and the commissary.

Photo 17. Fisher commissary (left) and opera house (right).

Photo 18. Home (1920) of Joseph H. Kurth, Jr., the sawmill owner of the company built town of Kurthwood, Vernon Parish.

Photo 19. The c. 1890 home of R. H. Nason, one of Lake Charles' "Michigan Men" lumber tycoons.

Photo 20. C. 1890 home of "Michigan Man" W. E. Ramsey, Lake Charles, president of the huge Bradley-Ramsey Lumber Company.

Photo 21. New Orleans mansion of cypress king Frank B. Williams, now a branch of the New Orleans Public Library system.

Photo 22. Circa 1907 home of William Henry Sullivan, vice-president of Bogalusa's Great Southern Lumber Company, the manager of the huge sawmill plant and the city's mayor.

Photo 23. Some of the top level management houses of Great Southern Lumber, located across from the Sullivan House.

Photo 24. Nona Mills (Leesville) built this home c.1900 for G. R. Ferguson, its vice-president and manager.

Photo 25. Hudson River Lumber Company General Manager's House (c.1910), DeRidder.

Photo 26. This house of an upper level manager is all that remains from the once thriving lumber company town of McNary.

Photo 27. The Louisiana Longleaf Lumber Company Commissary (1900 & 1914) at Fisher is particularly evocative of the early look of such buildings.

Photo 28. The circa 1900 commissary at Tioga is also very typical of the look of lumber company commissaries. The building is now part of the Louisiana Secretary of State Museum system.

Photo 29. Lyons Lumber Company headquarters (c.1905), Garyville, formerly the home of the Garyville Timbermill Museum, vacant at present.

Photo 30. Louisiana Longleaf Lumber Company Office, Fisher, circa 1905.

Photo 31. Hanson Lumber Company Office, Garden City, c.1900.

Photo 32. Good Pine Lumber Company Office (1906), Good Pine.

Photo 33. Hospital constructed in 1924 in the sawmill town of Elizabeth by the Industrial Lumber Company for its workers.

Photo 34. A typical pyramidal roof sawmill worker's house in Elizabeth.

Photo 35. A pyramidal roof sawmill worker's house in Good Pine.

Photo 36. A folk Victorian sawmill worker's house in Trout.

Photo 37. A sawmill worker's house in Urania.

Photo 38. A few workers' houses survive in the former sawmill town of Lutcher.

Photo 39. A handful of Garyville's distinctive two story workers' houses remain.

Photo 40. Several of this type of two story workers' houses remain in Bogalusa. (The house has been covered in asbestos shingles, but the important distinctive form survives.)

Photo 41. Typical shotguns for black sawmill workers. These are in Bogalusa.

Photos 42 & 43. Altered workers' housing in Elizabeth. (The building to the far right in the top photo is the church.)

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