

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The now extinct town of Fullerton was once the site of the largest pine sawmill west of the Mississippi River. Once a thriving company owned town of 5,000 people, it was abandoned at the close of Gulf Lumber Company. The industrial area of the site contained two sawmills, a five-story alcohol plant, a dry kiln, a bakery, and machine shop which centered around the harvesting of vast stands of virgin pine timber which were left virtually untouched until after the Civil War.

The town itself has been described as aesthetically pleasing with attractive park areas, waterfalls, foot bridges and tree lined avenues. The houses provided for the mill workers were very modern for their time with free electricity, running water, inside plumbing, and other modern conveniences. The town had many progressive features such as the Hotel Des Pines with 50-60 guest rooms, a hospital, two schools, swimming pool, commissary, drug store, theatre, post office, and two churches.

Presently, the site is in forest which covers concrete and steel foundations and subsurface structural remains and now is a part of a Forest Service recreation area. A developed nature trail passes the original mill pond and the concrete foundations of the alcohol plant and sawmills. Other foundational remains of the commissary, lumbering facilities, a school, and the hotel are also visible. Domestic structural remains are also present but are covered in thick vegetation and are not easily detected.

Approximately 17 acres of the site is being presently used as a recreation area with camping, picnic, and support facilities. This area undergoes periodic facility construction as roads, campsites, etc. are needed and therefore is subject to land disturbing impacts. It is suggested that this area be excluded from the nomination property. The boundaries of this area are shown on Figures 1 and 2.

SPECIFIC DATES 1907-1927
BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fullerton was an important economic entity in early 20th century Louisiana and its significance must be primarily regarded in that light. The mill at Fullerton had a profound effect on the land surrounding it, ninety-seven thousand acres of longleaf pine were completely denuded and not reforested. The town was abandoned and the cutover land was sold to the Federal Government. The sites association with early lumbering practices serves as a contrast to the very different forestry practices of today. The lumbering industry is still an important part of the region's economic well being and its cultural heritage. Even today, the site serves as a central gathering for the annual Fullerton Reunion which attracts former mill employees and their families from all over the United States.

A survey of the area was conducted to relocate previously recorded structural remains and to determine the nature of potential subsurface deposits. Limited investigations using 30 cm² shovel tests verified the existence of industrial midden which appears to cover a broad area in the sawmill vicinity. Miscellaneous nuts, bolts, and unidentified machine parts were observed to be contained in refuse deposits as much as 30 cm in depth. Shovel tests placed in proximity to the residential area also discovered what appears to be the town dump. Two 30 cm² tests at this location revealed a refuse deposit 70 cm thick containing dense concentrations of ceramic and bottle sherds. The deposit is sealed by 30 cm of light brown sandy loam which is sterile of cultural remains. Subsurface deposits of cultural material were also discovered at the location of the hotel site. Although

subsurface investigations were not intensive, the potential for in-situ subsurface remains appears to be high over much of the site.

Aside from its economic and cultural importance, Fullerton has scientific significance in that it represents the best extant example of an early lumber industry complex in Louisiana. As a research area for industrial archaeology, the site has considerable significance. Both its size and relative degree of preservation are important factors in this laboratory aspect. In addition, the multiple ethnic quality of the town provides opportunities for social stratification studies and investigations of cultural divisions within the context of a relatively centralized society devoted to the utilization of a single natural resource.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Burns, Anna C. Fullerton - The Mill, The Town, The People 1907-1927. 1970.

Richardson, Otis D. "Fullerton, Louisiana: An American Monument," in Journal of Forest History, 1983.