

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Three States Lumber Company Mill Powerhouse

other names/site number Burdette Plantation

2. Location

street & number Old Mill Road

not for publication

city or town Burdette

vicinity

state Arkansas

code AR

county Mississippi

code 093

zip code 72321

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cornie Matthews
Signature of certifying official/Title

9/05/01
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

	Contributing	Noncontributing	
	1	0	buildings
	2	0	sites
	0	0	structures
	0	0	objects
	3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: energy facility

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: manufacturing facility

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Early 20th Century Industrial

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof CONCRETE

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

state

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1909-1951

Significant Dates

1909

1922

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Three States Lumber Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
Previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Three States Lumber Mill Powerhouse
Name of Property

Mississippi County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property 2.84 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 234370 3967420
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

20-14-11 Burdette Irreg. Lots. Burdette City. 2.84A Lot SE 1/4 SW 1/4- Bayou-

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the area historically associated with the mill that retains historic integrity.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ruth C. Hale (edited by Zac Cothren)
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 8/15/01
street & number 323 Center St. Suite 1500 telephone (501) 324-9880
city or town Little Rock State AR zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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SUMMARY

The Three States Lumber Company Powerhouse/Burdette Plantation Company Store located on Old Mill Road in Burdette, Arkansas, was built in 1909 to be used as the powerhouse for the Three States Lumber Company Mill. It was originally part of a large timber mill complex, but the other buildings associated with the mill were removed in 1922. This building and several concrete foundations are all that remain of the complex. The building is divided into two sections, constructed of brick, and covered by a poured concrete roof. The north portion of the building is two-story and covered with a gable roof. The smaller south portion of the building is a single-story with a shed roof. One of the prominent features of the building are the concrete encased skylights that rise up from the roof. Seven such lights are located at various points on both sections of the building.

ELABORATION

The Three States Lumber Company Powerhouse/Burdette Plantation Company Store was built in 1909 to house the power plant for the Three States Lumber Company. It was originally part of a large timber mill complex, but the other elements of the mill were removed in 1922. Although a large portion of the original Three States Lumber Company Mill was removed, the section that remained and became Burdette Plantation looks much like it has for the past eighty years. Several fires occurred at the mill from 1905-1922 that makes changes and alterations difficult to date. The threat of fire probably played a large part in the choice of materials used for this portion of the mill. Most of the mill was constructed from materials that could easily be disassembled and moved to a different location, but this portion of the mill needed to be more durable. The choice of brick for the walls and concrete for the roof make the building virtually fireproof. This was important because fires often broke out in the power rooms of such operations. Since the powerhouse was made of nonflammable materials a fire could be contained and the rest of the mill spared. It also made fires that started in other parts of the mill out of the powerhouse. This was important because the mill's power plant not only gave power to the mill, but also to the entire town.

The building is divided into two sections constructed of brick and topped by a poured concrete roof. The north portion of the building is two-story and is covered with a gable roof. The smaller south portion of the building is a single-story sheltered beneath a shed roof. Seven skylights are located at various points on both sections of the building. The wedge shaped skylights are encased in concrete and each are covered with a concrete shed roof. Each skylight displays three, four-pane, casement windows. The windows provided ventilation that helped in cooling the building. The bottom portion of what was once a towering smokestack pierces the roof on the north side of the building.

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A small oxbow lake lies just south of the building. There are still some remaining pylons from the railroad trestle that crossed the oxbow leading to the mill. Concrete foundations that were part of the sawmill building are located west of the remaining building. There is also an unidentified freestanding concrete structure directly behind the building. A large concrete circle that served as the foundation for the air dome is located directly north of the building.

East Elevation

The building's front façade is comprised of a small single-story section on the south side and a larger two-story section on the north side. The main entrance into the building is located on the south side section of the building. The door is flanked by eight pane windows and is crowned by a three light transom window.

Alterations include the concealment of one original window with plywood. The transom and north side window has also been covered with plywood. The entryway, which was originally comprised of a utility door now, displays the present door from when the building became Burdette Plantation.

The two-story section of the building had an entryway near the center of the building, however the entryway has been boarded up. Two windows fenestrated the building on the second story, but they have also been covered in plywood at an unknown date. A ghost sign that reads "Burdette Plantation" is still visible in the gable end of the building.

North Elevation

The north elevation is comprised of the two-story section of the building and faces what was at one time a sixty-acre lumberyard. Seven windows fenestrate the elevation, six on the top story and one on the bottom. All of these windows have been covered with plywood. Two sets of double utility doors are also located on the elevation; the doors are not original and an exact date of change has yet to be established.

West Elevation

The west elevation is the portion of the building that was only inches away from the actual mill building. The only fenestration on the elevation is a metal, furnace type door, and the exact function of the door has yet to be determined.

South Elevation

The south elevation was at one time fenestrated by four four-pane windows. The windows along with a door were all infilled with brick at an unknown date. A pair of doors also fenestrate the elevation. It is unknown what was originally in the space, but at some point a portion of the opening was infilled with cinder blocks shrinking the size of the opening.

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Integrity

Although a large part of the original complex was removed in 1922 the remaining portion of the mill looks much like it did when Burdette Plantation moved into the building. The form of the building has remained the same for nearly eighty years. The building is located on a natural oxbow lake that still has pylons where a railroad trestle crossed the water going to the mill. Located just across the street from the mill is a pair of company houses where mill workers once lived. The close proximity to these things along with the large nearby tracts of farmland gives the building strong association of both the mill and the plantation. Although windows have been boarded up and some entryways altered the building remains very sound structurally, and with the exception of the south elevation, no permanent alterations have occurred. All alterations have occurred are easily reversible.

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SUMMARY

The Three States Lumber Company Powerhouse/Burdette Plantation is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **state significance** for its association with the development of the Delta region of Arkansas from a heavily forested wetland to the agricultural center of the state. It is also being nominated under **Criterion C** as the only known example of a large industrial building associated with the early deforestation of the region. Since most timber mills were made to be, and were, disassembled after the completion of operations, a building of this permanence is quite rare. The fact that it later served as a plantation headquarters makes it even more significant, because it shows a clear transition from logging to agriculture as the eastern half of Arkansas's chief economic provider. Constructed in 1909 to house the powerplant of the Three States Lumber Company Mill, the building was the only part of the complex that was not disassembled and moved upon completion of the company's logging operation in Mississippi County in 1922. Although windows have been boarded up the building appears much like it did at the time of its construction and at the time of the mills disassembly in 1922.

ELABORATION

In Arkansas, Mississippi County was one of the last areas in state to be developed. The county was formed in 1833, three years before Arkansas became a state. Early European settlers were hunters and trappers or small subsistence farmers. Because its topography and environment did not encourage immediate widespread settlement; nor did the state government have the means or the inclination to improve conditions, the population of Mississippi County grew very slowly. In the 1800s, like many other Delta counties, Mississippi County was swampy and insect infested; humid in the summer and cold and damp in the winter; and home to wild animals including bears and panthers. The county generally lacked the attractions other areas of the state had to offer. It had a history of natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, and in fact, the first of the three large quakes that became known as the New Madrid earthquake of 1811-1812 occurred near the present town of Blytheville, which is only a few miles north of Burdette. The eastern border of the county was the untamed Mississippi River where river overflows were annual events. The roads that existed were frequently impassable and there was no railroads making transportation difficult, therefore the Mississippi River was the county's lifeline.

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What the area did have to offer was thousands of acres of virgin hardwood timber and amazingly fertile alluvial soil. The last decade of the nineteenth century saw national expansion and a nation-wide building boom. A number of northern lumber companies saw the opportunity to expand and purchased large tracts of timber throughout the south. One of these companies was the Three States Lumber Company, an Eau Claire, Wisconsin corporation.

The Three States Lumber Company

Three States incorporated in Arkansas in 1894, shortly after it purchased approximately 35,000 acres of land in Mississippi County. Three States also owned land in south Arkansas, Missouri, and Mississippi. For a number of years it contracted with local timber and lumber operators to cut and mill, and ship the lumber to its Cairo and Joppa, Illinois yards. In 1905 Three States Lumber Company purchased a mill from one of its primary contractors in Luxora, closed it down, and relocated to Burdette. Parts of the Luxora mill were transported by company railroad to Burdette, and framing was shipped down river from an earlier Three States operation at James Bayou, Missouri.

The Burdette operation was quite large. The Burdette mill opened in 1906 and was operated by the company until it closed in 1922. In 1917 the company had on hand 1,201,138 board feet of logs. It cut 22, 500,848 board feet of new logs and produced 21,973,799 board feet of lumber. It marketed 17, 118, 742 board feet of lumber in the same year. Property assets of the company were listed as \$1,497,581.98 at the end of 1916. As was the case with many logging/lumber operations, the company built a town to support its facility. It also operated the Blytheville, Burdette, and Mississippi County Railway to transport logs to the mill and then to transport lumber to river ports or to connect with other railroads to ship the lumber north.

Burdette was incorporated in 1905 after being chosen as the site for the Three States Lumber Company's mill. The town was named Burdette in honor of Alfred Burdette Wolverton, who was the first superintendent at the mill. Transportation was still primitive and caused the town to be relatively self-sufficient. The company provided a store, doctor's office, hotel, bathhouse, ice cream parlor, pool hall, open air movie theater, and a

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park with a bandstand where concerts and lectures were held. William Jennings Bryan spoke there on the Chatauqua circuit, and W.C. Handy played at the town's honky tonk. There were also a jail, baseball diamond, community garden and canning kitchen, and schools for both white and black children. The town had sewage and water systems and as a result of the generator used to power the mill, residents had electricity.

Three States Lumber had finished their logging operation by 1922. Like most timber mills, the setup was meant to be temporary so the mill could disassemble and move elsewhere upon completion of each operation. The powerhouse was more permanent due to its solid brick and concrete construction. The rest of the components of the mill were sold to the R.J. Darnell Lumber Company and were shipped down the Mississippi River to Louisiana. Citizens of Burdette that had relied on the mill for employment would have to find new occupations.

With timber being harvested in increasingly large numbers, both the landscape and economy of Mississippi County begin to change. Large areas of land were opened up as the timber was harvested; however, the land was still not suitable for farmland. Although the trees were gone stumps still remained throughout the recently cleared land. There was also the problem of drainage. Much of the county remained under water for large periods of the year. The rich alluvial soil, a result of an almost yearly overflow of the Mississippi River, would remain useless until stumps were cleared and a drainage system was in place. Three States Lumber Company President W.A. Gilchrist saw the potential of the land and was a strong supporter of early drainage efforts in the county.

Burdette Plantation

As early as 1914 the company had a farm manager to oversee the cutting of drainage ditches, clearing of stumps, and the sale of the improved agricultural land. When the Three States Lumber Company left Burdette, the company's farm manager James Tompkins formed Burdette Plantation Incorporated and purchased a 3,200-acre block of this land. Since the powerhouse could not be moved, Three States also sold it to Tomkins. The building was converted to the plantation headquarters and company store. The building, though deteriorated, appears much the same as it did when Burdette Plantation purchased it in 1922.

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Residents of the town who decided to stay after the mill left went to work for Burdette Plantation. The town, though smaller in scale, continued to be essentially a company town. The economics of the area had shifted from timber to agriculture, and the landscape had also changed. What had been swamp and forest less than a quarter of a century before was now some of Arkansas's finest farm land.

Burdette Plantation was a typical agricultural operation of its time and place. The lumber company had cleared the land but much of it was still very rough, filled with stumps and with little drainage. The combination of mule and man power resulted in the clearing of the "wild lands", digging of ditches that drained the swamps, and planting and harvesting of crops that made Mississippi County one of the state's leading agricultural producers. The Plantation offices and store occupied this building through the 1960s when mechanization, migration and population shifts, and modern transportation made its mode of operation obsolete. During its heyday it exemplified both the good and the bad of the twentieth century plantation system. It stands today as a symbol of a way of life experienced by many citizens of Mississippi County and the Arkansas Delta.

Significance

The Three States Lumber Company Powerhouse/Burdette Plantation is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **state significance** as the most extant resource associated with the deforestation of the Arkansas Delta. The building's transition from part of a timber operation to a plantation headquarters and company store shows the transition from an economy based on timber to one based on agriculture. It is also being nominated under **Criterion C** as the best example of a large industrial building associated with the deforestation of the Arkansas Delta. Constructed in 1909 as part of the Three States Lumber Company Mill, it is the only surviving building of the mill complex that was disassembled and moved in 1922. Although windows have been boarded up the building appears much like it did at the time of its construction.

Three States Lumber Mill Powerhouse
Name of Property

Mississippi County, Arkansas
County and State

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Fischer, Duane Dale. The John S. Owen Enterprises. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1964.

Fischer, Duane Dale. Notes for and unpublished draft of manuscript on Three States Lumber Company, ca. 1965-2001.

Fox, J.A. The Garden Spot of the Mississippi Valley: Mississippi County in the St. Francis Basin of Arkansas, Osceola, AR, published by the author, 1902.

Blytheville Courier News, Mid-Century Edition, Oct. 10, 1950, Section E, p. 11 and Section D, p. 16.

Map of Burdette, AR up to 1922 as Remembered [by] Charles Ramey and Emily Tompkins Sullivan in 1995. Privately printed, 1999.

Real Estate Record Card, Mississippi County Courthouse, Osceola, AR.

Interview with Jim Tompkins, County Assessor, Mississippi County, and legal representative of Burdette Plantation, October, 2000.











Three States Lumber Co.
Mill Powerhouse
Burdette, Mississippi Co.,
AR.

UTM:
16T 234370/3967420

Burdette

Tuckertown

ST LOUIS - SAN FRANCISCO

Full Gospel, Ch

COUNTY

L FARM

BR 238

19 NO 6

20

21

237

240

242

242

244

BR 242

NO 36

x238

NO 24 30

BR 242

29

248

28

DITCH

240

237

x238

241

239

243

BR 244

BR 238

NO 25 31

BR 239

32

BR 243

33

237

237

BR 239

239

242

243

NO 31

(120)

COUNTY

6

237

5

242

4

240