

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 5 1987

date entered DEC 8 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Bagdad Village Historic District

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number See attached list of addresses n/a not for publication

city, town Bagdad vicinity of

state Florida code 012 county Santa Rosa code 113

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Santa Rosa County Courthouse

street & number 801 Caroline Street Southeast

city, town Milton state Florida 32570

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Milton-Bagdad Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Division of Historic Resources, Florida Dept. of State

city, town Tallahassee state Florida

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Bagdad developed as a lumber mill community between 1840 and the 1930s. The district includes examples of a wide range of nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural styles. Among the structures are fine examples of Greek Revival, Carpenter Gothic, Craftsman Bungalow, and vernacular styles such as Creole or Gulf Coast Cottages, Shotgun, Double Pen, and Dog Trot houses, as well as a series of unique Chicago styles based on Progressive Era designs and locally known as Bagdad Saltbox. The original area of Bagdad was cut and cleared before the Civil War, and photographs up to 1910-1920 show a wide open town with few trees. Since then, a veritable oak forest has been permitted to grow up among the streets and houses, and Bagdad is now deeply shaded. The district grew in concentric rings, spreading out from the mill which sat on the west bank and islands of the Blackwater River. From 1840 to 1870, Bagdad was centered on Water and Simpson Streets, adjacent to the mill itself. Here, Greek Revival homes and Gulf Coast Cottages predominated. Between 1870 and 1910, vernacular mill housing spread throughout the district. The lumbering operations at Bagdad ended in 1939, and the mill was demolished in the 1940s.

The village of Bagdad is located at the junction of Pond Creek and the Blackwater River, a mile south of the town of Milton, seat of the county of Santa Rosa. Here, a century ago, was located one of the largest lumber milling concerns in the Southeast. Today, the Bagdad Village Historic District covers approximately 50 blocks of essentially residential streets. Like so many company towns, when the mill closed, Bagdad closed, and business interests which relied upon a thriving silva-cultural base for their sustenance vanished soon afterward.

The District is laid out in an irregular grid pattern with blocks of uneven sizes. There is no differentiation between streets and avenues; all of the slightly northwest/southeast, northeast/southwest thoroughfares are designated streets, the majority of which are named for the mill partners. Though Bagdad was platted in the 1850s, settlement has been uneven, with different streets serving different needs during the course of the town's history. Bagdad's original business district, comprising Water, Simpson, and lower Thompson Streets in the vicinity of the mill site, has long since vanished into a secondary-growth woodland that has grown up along the whole of the former waterfront.

The district primarily contains one, one-and-one-half, and two story structures. Buildings which contribute to the Bagdad Village Historic District add to the sense of time, place, and historical development of the area through their location, design, settings, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The historical time frame for the district is predominantly 1840 to 1939. Due to Bagdad's economic collapse thereafter, few post-1940 structures were built in the district.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 2

The recommended National Register district boundaries were chosen to exclude intrusive non-compatible architecture, though there has not been any large scale destruction of compatible architecture. The northern boundary of the Bagdad Village Historic District follows the Old Bagdad Highway and the bank of Pond Creek, a small, slow-moving river which once served as a holding pond for floating logs. The eastern boundary follows Henry Street and continues down Forsyth, Thompson, Cross and Ella Streets along the property lines of contributing structures. To the southeast, the boundary follows the short peninsula of Shipyard Point, where the flourishing 19th century Ollinger and Bruce Co. Drydock and Shipyard operated. The property associated with the Bruce House, located at 100 Water Street, includes all of Shipyard Point. To the south, the boundary irregularly follows Oak Street until it joins with Ventura Road, and the western boundary of the district follows up along Woodville Road to include the Bagdad Cemetery. The southern and western boundaries mark the furthest point of concentrated 1930s construction, and were specifically drawn to exclude numbers of modern homes and trailer park developments.

The first area of Bagdad to develop was in the vicinity of the Forsyth and Simpson lumber mill, along the western bank of the Blackwater River after 1840. Clustered along Water and Simpson Streets running northwest to southeast, the mill principals built their Greek Revival and Gulf Coast style homes in the midst of the mill operations and business district. This was to prove unfortunate when, during 1862, Confederate troops burned the E.E. Simpson mill and a huge store of lumber; the flames spread out of control and consumed a number of the adjacent houses.

From this era, only the Thompson House remains. The Thompson House is assuredly the finest example of Greek Revival architecture remaining in the Florida Panhandle. It was built by Benjamin W. Thompson, a Simpson and Company partner. Due to the loss of all county records in a courthouse fire on July 13, 1869, the exact date of its construction is unknown, but is believed to have been sometime between 1855 and 1860. For the same reason, the name of the architect is also unknown.

The Thompson House was originally sited on a location overlooking the Blackwater River, but in 1912 was harnessed to mule teams and transported on log rollers over a period of months to its present location, facing onto Forsyth Street. This mammoth undertaking was precipitated by a near-disastrous fire in May 1911, when the attic story was heavily scorched, and the lower floors damaged. It is believed that this event, as well as the expansion of mill facilities along the waterfront, spurred the removal of the house to the more accessible Forsyth Street. The Thompson House is constructed entirely of heart pine, and all moldings, windows, and doorways are of Egyptian Revival "Temple of Luxor" design. The windows are largely the original rolled glass. The magnificent facade of the Thompson House is dominated by its sweeping double verandahs, bracketed classical columns, and balustrade.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 3

When the E.E. Simpson and Co. partners returned to Bagdad after the Civil War, they found the town in ruins. Little but the mill was rebuilt immediately; Reconstruction was a very difficult time in Santa Rosa County. In 1870, Bagdad experienced a dramatic recovery as demand for lumber and forest products increased. Taking advantage of the new prosperity, James Creary constructed his large, essentially Greek Revival dwelling off Main Street, replacing the family's previous Gulf Coast Cottage style home. Interestingly, Greek Revival features never went out of fashion in Bagdad. Well into the twentieth century, Classical forms remained ideal, while utilitarian mill housing received only limited Queen Anne treatment. After 1900, the Creary House became the official quarters for a succession of mill presidents, each in turn adapting the house to his own taste and use. The present owners have painstakingly restored the home to its original lines.

Though several fine one-and-one-half story wood frame Creole or Gulf Coast style cottages are still found in the vicinity of Water and Simpson Streets, the unfortunate loss of all pertinent mill records since 1939 have left them of indeterminate age. They most certainly date from the nineteenth century, but the construction techniques and materials used in a Bagdad Gulf Coast cottage of 1880, for example, are virtually identical to one of 1850. The same great stands of cypress and virgin long-leaf yellow pine provided the lumber for both. The remaining workingman's cottages, despite modification, often retain a core of two or four rooms off a central cross hall, with a loft/attic area above.

Among the remaining larger examples of the Gulf Coast style is the Bruce House at Shipyard Point. Built in 1867 by Martin F. Bruce, a partner in the drydock and shipbuilding firm of Ollinger and Bruce, the Bruce House exhibits a fine assimilation of Gulf Coast and Greek Revival styles and craftsmanship. Though neglected, its exterior lines survive intact from its elegant dormer windows and wrap-around verandah to transom and side lights.

The Bagdad United Methodist Church on the corner of Forsyth and Overman Streets is an exquisite structure dating from the post-Reconstruction lumber boom. Built in 1885 with the backing of Bagdad Sash and Door Factory partners W.H. Sindorf, H.W. Thompson, and W.A. Watson, the architectural design was drafted by lumberman Charles H. Overman. Though without formal training in architecture, Overman used his immense talents, with the aid of master carpenter A.J. Brown, to create one of the finest high-Victorian churches in west Florida. Built of cypress and heart pine, the church utilizes a ship-lapped pattern of construction, of cut nails with the under-pinning wedged with wooden pegs. In recent years the original cedar-shake roof has been restored. The front facade, employing an amalgam of Carpenter Gothic and Renaissance Revival styles, rises into a lofty steeple.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet Description

Item number 7

Page 5

Throughout the years 1840 to 1939, simple one and one-and-one-half story wood frame vernacular houses were built in Bagdad. It is doubtful that any surviving examples, other than possibly a few of the Gulf Coast Cottages, are actually ante-bellum. These were relatively inexpensive houses to build, and are all variations on the Double Pen, Dog Trot, and Shotgun themes. Though some of these are found on Forsyth Street, they tend to cluster in greater density in the blocks of Church and School Streets, where the mill's work force was housed, and on Limit Street which served as Bagdad's Black quarter. The Double Pen, with its two front parlors with exterior strut doors, is less common in Bagdad. These houses often possessed two exterior chimneys at either gable end, which is also relatively uncommon in the district. The Dog Trot, with its central breezeway, is an Alabama import, and did not become common in Bagdad until the turn of the century when the mill began to employ great numbers of immigrant sharecroppers who sought work in the Panhandle. Bagdad's Shotgun style houses are found in the greatest number on Limit Street, though small groups of them are found throughout the district. These are generally one story with gable roof facing the street, and have a single, central brick chimney. Originally, this Shotgun mill housing came in two varieties, three rooms and five rooms. When the mill closed in 1939, these dwellings sold for \$35.00 and \$75.00 respectively. Since that time, virtually every example has been considerably altered with tacked-on rooms, porches, etc. The popularity of the style lies in no small part with its amazing adaptability. All of Bagdad's vernacular houses are distinguished with little or no ornamentation, are constructed on brick piers, and often have an attached porch. While most of these houses originally had wood shingle roofs, they now have composition shingles or galvanized metal. Many also have been covered over the decades with a variety of exterior "fabrics" ranging from tar paper, to board and batten, to asbestos tile.

Perhaps the most important vernacular style home in Bagdad is also one of its most aesthetically unique. A number of French-Canadian lumbermen and their families were brought to Santa Rosa by the mill to fill the manpower shortage brought about by the first World War. The Forcade House at the corner of Church and Allen Streets uses a blend of Shingle and early Craftsman Bungalow styles to striking effect. The house was built in 1919 by Exie Fournier for his sister, Emma Fournier Forcade, and her husband. Heart pine was used throughout, from subfloor to attic. Because glass was still a scarce commodity immediately following World War I, panes were not included in interior cabinets, and mullion windows were substituted for traditional broad lights.

After 1920, the Bungalow style spread through Bagdad. These one-and-one-half story houses have multiple gables featuring exposed rafters, ridgebeam, and tie beam and battered and/or tapered porch posts. A very popular design in its day, its added significance for Bagdad lay in the fact that it made the most of limited quality. The great timber stands were gone, and the Craftsman Bungalow made knotholes a decorative virtue, an aspect

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 6

unacceptable to discerning carpenters of fifty years before. The best of many examples of the Bungalow style in Bagdad is probably the Watson House on Main Street.

The Bagdad Cemetery is another important site which merits inclusion in the district. Here lies a fair representation of Bagdad's citizenry over the past century and a quarter, including such names as Bruce, Watson, Thompson, and Sindorf. Civil War veterans to "Woodmen of the World" are interred here, along with immigrants ranging from Scotland to Italy. The gravestones range in size from small wooden crosses and monuments, weathered into anonymity, to the obelisk of Joseph Forsyth who, according to legend, was buried in an upright position so that he could survey his mill even in death.

Historic non-residential structures within the district include the Bagdad Post Office on Thompson Street, built in 1905 and now being preserved in private hands, and the Bagdad Elementary School on Forsyth Street, a fine example of brick Mission Revival architecture built in 1923. Prior to the establishment of the Bagdad Village Historic District in 1986, two historic structures, the Bagdad Oddfellow's Hall and Bagdad's nineteenth century schoolhouse, were razed. Lumber and fixtures from both structures were salvaged and sold to area homeowners.

Demolition within the district has been the exception, rather than the rule. Bagdad's economically depressed status since 1939 has preserved much which might otherwise have been swept aside in prosperity. Historically, fires have destroyed many significant and contributing buildings. Before electric service came to Bagdad with the Stearns and Culver management, fires were so common that it was probably deemed the ultimate fate of wooden structures, public, commercial, and residential. The high resin content of Bagdad's nineteenth century heart pine construction preserved the town from the depredations of rot and insects, but made it highly susceptible to fire. Fortunately, in recent decades fire has been a rare occurrence.

In the Bagdad district, most alterations have been made to the small three- and five-room houses. After individual families bought them from the mill, rooms were added to allow for family growth. Minor alterations exist on larger houses on Forsyth Street, such as replacing wooden porches with concrete porches and replacing wooden pillars with brick or iron work. Alterations to houses in the district are confined mainly to the enclosure of porches, addition of rooms, and construction of wings. Fortunately, none have been so completely disfigured as to become unrecognizable or noncontributing. The Creary House on Main Street is an excellent example of a once radically altered house that has been completely restored to its 1870 design. The Sweat House on the corner of Main and Forsyth Streets, built in 1926, is in turn an excellent example of a nondescript vernacular Bungalow transformed with the modern addition of a collection of antique beveled and stained glass windows. Because of Bagdad's modern status as a residential community for expanding economic activity in Pensacola and Escambia County, local businesses are

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 7

limited in number and scope, and there have not been any houses adaptively restored from residential to commercial use. Noncontributing commercial buildings are of limited number in the district, while modern church buildings are more prominent at either end of Forsyth Street. A new Bagdad Post Office opened on Forsyth in 1986, but its design, character and color are unobtrusive. The site of the mill property itself is now occupied by a pre-stressed concrete plant, but remains a valuable archaeological site.

Few houses have been moved since the mill closed; however, a few small ones were sold and moved to Milton or to other Bagdad properties around 1939. One house which was moved to Milton was moved back to Bagdad in 1986.

The Bagdad Village Historic District is not only an immensely important link in Santa Rosa County's heritage, but provides the most comprehensive surviving example of a west Florida mill community. Bagdad was the working heart of west Florida's nineteenth and early twentieth century lumber economy.

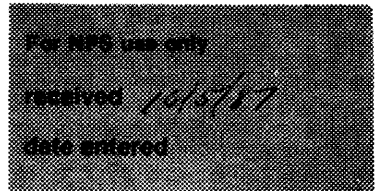
Several homes may have been built before the Civil War, but written documentation goes back only to 1855.

Number of contributing resources: 144
Number of non-contributing resources: 78

See Item 7, page 8ff for complete list of resources.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



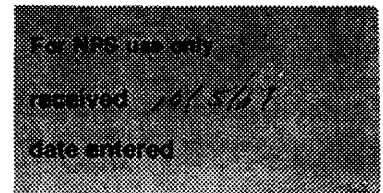
Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 8

Not all houses in Bagdad have house numbers, and those that have them are not always in sequential order. To avoid confusion, block and lot numbers are given in addition to house numbers. A # indicates no house number. The following list is arranged alphabetically by street and then sequentially by house numbers. Those marked # are placed within the sequence approximately where their numbers would fall, if there were numbers.

Street Address	C/NC	Block/Lot
100 Alice St	C	32/A
106 Alice St	C	32/B
110 Alice St	C	32/C
1 Allen St	C	30/3
2 Allen St	C	29/1.1
3 Allen St	C	30/2
4 Allen St	C	29/1.2
5 Allen St.	C	30/2.1
9 Allen St.	NC	45/2
# Allen St.	NC	49/1
# Bushnell	NC	15/2
# Bushnell	NC	54/2
# Bushnell	NC	39/13
# Bushnell	NC	40/1
# Bushnell	NC	40/1
76 Bushnell	NC	40/2
2 Cater	NC	31/3.3
4 Cater	NC	30/1
4 1/2 Cater	NC	30/1
# Cater	NC	31/2
14 Church	NC	30/3.1
16 Church	NC	30/3.2
18 Church	NC	30/4
19 Church	C	E/18

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

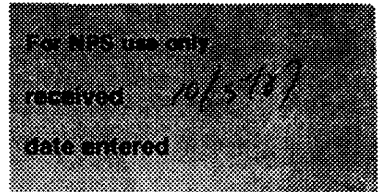


Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 9

Street Address	C/NC	Block/Lot
20 Church	NC	31/3.2
22 Church	NC	31/3.1
23 Church	C	E/17
25 Church	C	E/16
27 Church	C	E/14
28 Church	NC	31/3
37 Church	C	E/13
41 Church	C	E/12
42 Church	NC	32/7
44 Church	C	32/2
45 Church	C	E/11
47 Church	C	E/10
47 Church (rear)	NC	E/10
50 Church	C	33?a
51 Church	C	26/A
53 Church	C	26/B
54 Church	C	33/B
58 Church	C	33/C
59 Church	C	26/C
60 Church	C	34/A
61 Church	C	25/A
62 Church	C	43/B
63 Church	C	25/B
64 Church	NC	34/C
65 Church	C	25/C
67 Church	C	25/D
70 Church	C	35/A
71 Church	C	24/A
72 Church	C	35/C
74 Church	C	24/B

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

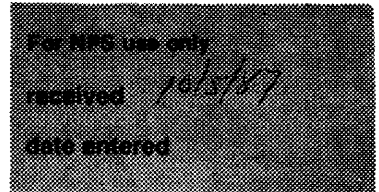


Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 10

Street Address	C/NC	Block/Lot
73 Church	C	24/B
75 Church	C	24/C
80 Church	NC	36/3
80a Church	NC	36/3
100 Cross	C	7/9
102 Cross	C	7/1.1
104 Cross	C	8/2
100 Dorr	NC	15/3
3 Ella	NC	12/7
7 Ella	NC	12/3
# Ella	NC	12/3
9 Ella	NC	12/2
11 Ella	C	11/3
13 Ella	C	11/3.1
# Ella	C	53/2
# Forsyth	C	A/9
2 Forsyth	C	A/1
3 Forsyth	NC	4/3
# Forsyth	NC	D/1
4 Forsyth	NC	D/1.1
# Forsyth	NC	D/2
16 Forsyth	C	D/3
18 Forsyth	C	E/1
20 Forsyth	C	E/2
28 Forsyth	C	E/3
22 Forsyth	C	4/1
29 Forsyth	C	4/1
30 Forsyth	C	E/4
33 Forsyth	C	7/3
34 Forsyth	C	E/5

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

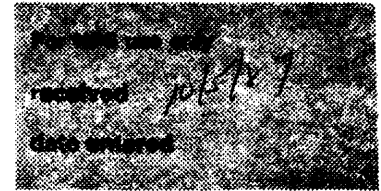
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 11

Street Address	C/NC	Block/Lot
38 Forsyth	C	E/6
39 Forsyth	C	7/2
41 Forsyth	C	7/1
43 Forsyth	C	10/2
44 Forsyth	N/C	E/7
46 Forsyth	C	24/3
47 Forsyth	C	10/1
# Forsyth	C	E/8
48 Forsyth	C	E/9
53 Forsyth	C	11/1
54 Forsyth	C	26/3
60 Forsyth	C	25/3
# Forsyth	C	25/4
64 Forsyth	C	14/1.1
65 Forsyth	C	15/2
66 Forsyth	C	15/1
72 Forsyth	C	24/4
85 Forsyth	C	18/1
100 Henderson	C	A/4
102 Henderson	C	A/4
# Limit	C	51/7
# Limit	NC	51/7
# Limit	NC	51/2
50 Limit	C	42/1
# Limit	NC	43/3.1
53 Limit	C	43/3
55 Limit	NC	42/5
62 Limit	C	53/1.1
63 Limit	C	41/6.1
64 Limit	C	54/4

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

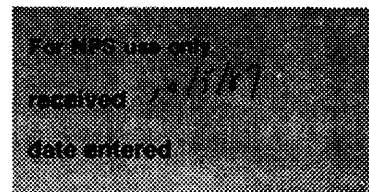


National Register of Historic Places
 Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet	Description	Item number	Page
		7	12
Street Address		C/NC	Block/Lot
67 Limit		C	41/3
68 ½ Limit		C	53/3
69 Limit		C	41/2
73 Limit		C	40/5
# Limit		C	53/5
75 Limit		C	40/3
# Limit		C	54/3
80 Limit		NC	54/2
# Limit		NC	54/2
# Limit		C	55/2
82 Limit		NC	55/6.1
84 Limit		C	55/8
87 Limit		C	39/3
# Limit		NC	39/8
90 Limit		C	55/10
101 Limit		C	39/7
103 Limit		C	39/6
# Main		NC	1/1
1 Main		C	C/1.1
2 Main		NC	C/1
5 Main		C	D/5.1
6 Main		C	B/1
7 Main		C	29/2
7½ Main		NC	29/2
8 Main		C	A/5
9 Main		C	29/1
10 Main		C	A/6
11 Main		C	46/1
# Main		NC	A/7

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

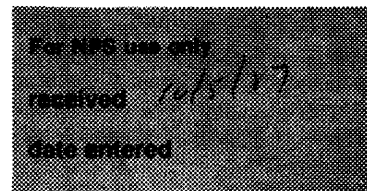


Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 13

Street Address	C/NC	Block/Lot
# Magnolia	NC	6/4
208 New	C	62/1.1
210 New	C	62/6
# New	C	51/1
# New	C	51/3
# New	NC	51/8
2 Overman	NC	12/9
4 Overman	C(2)	12/5
4 Overman	NC(2)	12/5
9 Overman	C	14/6
# Overman	C	14/1
11 Overman	C	14/4
14 Overman	C	11/4
17 Overman	NC	12/4
1 Pooley	C	31/1
2 Pooley	NC	31/1
3 Pooley	NC	43/2.1
4 Pooley	NC	59/8.1
50 School	NC	43/2
54 School	C	42/2
56 School	NC	42/3
64 School	C	40/6
66 School	NC	41/1
# School	C	41/5
74 School	NC	40/4
77 School	C	35/1.1
81 School	C	36/5
83 School	C	36/7
84 School	NC	39/5
84½ School	NC	39/5

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet	Description	Item number	Page
	Street Address	C/NC	Block/Lot
	# School	C	37/2.1
	87 School	C	39/10
	89 School	C	37/2
	95 School	NC	37/3.3
	102 School	NC	39/12
	102½ School	NC	39/12
	104 School	NC	39/6.1
	2 Simpson	NC	8/2.2
	# Simpson	C	7/7
	3 Simpson	C	8/1.1
	4 Simpson	NC	11/5
	5 Simpson	C	7/8
	# Simpson	C	10/6
	16 Simpson	NC	10/5
	17 Simpson	C	12/1.1
	18 Simpson	C	12/1.3
	20 Simpson	C	11/6
	21 Simpson	C	12/2.1
	25 Simpson	C	12/1.2
	25½ Simpson	NC	12/1.2
	26 Simpson	NC	14/5
	41 Simpson	NC	16/2.1
	27 Simpson	NC	16/2
	# Thompson	C	7/5.1
	1 Thompson	C	7/5
	2 Thompson	NC	8/2.3
	57 Triangle	NC	59/5
	# Triangle	C	59/7
	125 Ventura	C	36

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received *10/1/87*
date entered

Continuation sheet	Description	Item number	Page
	Street Address	C/NC	Block/Lot
	# Water	C	12/9
	1 Water	NC	12/10
	2 Water	NC	12/10.1
	56 Water	C	13/7
	58 Water	NC	13/7
	66 Water	C	17/2
	68 Water	C	17/5
	70 Water	C	17/10
	74 Water	C	17/4
	100 Water	C	11/0.0
	# Whitworth	C(2)	68/2
	# Woodville	NC	71/2
	227 Woodville	C	72/1
	459 Woodville	C	75/2
	# Woodville	NC	71/1
	502 Woodville	C	78

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1855-1939 **Builder/Architect** N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The village area of Bagdad developed between 1840 and 1939 as the home of mill workers and their families employed in the extensive lumbering operations at this site. For nearly a century, Bagdad served as an all-inclusive, self-sufficient, self-contained community, with limited recourse to Santa Rosa's agricultural economy and commerce which nourished the county seat of Milton to the north during the same period. Bagdad was home to every level of southern mill society of the era, from wealthy mill principals to a professional class of doctors, teachers, and clergy, to an entrepreneurial class of shipbuilders and shopkeepers, to mill foremen and mill laborers, to a large Black underclass which served all of the above. This district represents an extraordinary cross-section of the life and history of a nineteenth and early twentieth century northwest Florida mill community. Included in the district are a variety of architectural styles popular between 1840 and 1930, and a minimal number of intrusive twentieth century commercial buildings. The integrity of these houses, very few of which have been significantly altered, and of the community as a whole argues for the inclusion of this district on the National Register.

Nothing has ever come to light indicating that the Spanish gave more than a cursory glance to this site on the Blackwater River until their last period of occupation, before General Andrew Jackson accepted the transfer of West Florida from the last Spanish governor, Jose Callava, on July 17, 1821. The British had certainly explored the region after 1764, and it is presumed that the traders of Panton, Leslie & Co. (later John Forbes & Co.) must have known the area well. Between 1763 and 1781, two land grants were made in the vicinity, though it is uncertain if these tracts were ever settled.

What is known is that a minor incident in the "Battle of Pensacola" was played out in the Blackwater River (then known as the Middle River) off Bagdad. On March 20, 1781, the twenty-four-gun British warship H.M.S. Mentor was sent by Captain Robert Deans, with the authorization of British royal governor Peter Chester, to safety in the "Middle River," to prevent its capture by the Spanish fleet of Bernardo de Galvez. The ship remained hidden until March 23, when a sudden squall capsized her at her mooring. A few of the crew remained with the stricken vessel until April 14, when a Spanish scouting party appeared in the vicinity. Before they fled back overland to reinforce the troops of General John Campbell, defending Fort George at Pensacola, they set fire to what remained above the waterline to forestall any Spanish salvage attempts. Fortunately for the British, the Mentor had been stripped of all her guns and fittings before she was sent into hiding. The ship's timbers and 90-foot-long copper plated keel are still believed to lie at the mouth of Pond Creek or among the river's large central islands off Bagdad.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 140 acres

Quadrangle name Milton South

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	6	4	9	6	6	2	0	3	3	8	4	2	4	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B

1	6	4	9	15	6	14	10	3	13	8	15	1	10	10
Zone		Easting						Northing						

C

1	6	4	9	6	6	2	0	3	3	8	5	9	8	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

D

1	6	4	9	7	8	2	10	3	13	8	15	1	10	10
Zone		Easting						Northing						

E

Zone		Easting						Northing						

F

Zone		Easting						Northing						

G

Zone		Easting						Northing						

H

Zone		Easting						Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property is outlined in yellow on the Santa Rosa County Office of Civil Defense Street Map of Bagdad. Boundaries include the entire area historically associated with the town of Bagdad excluding only modern buildings and commercially developed areas.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code

state	N/A	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peggy Toifel and Lea Wolfe, Ph.D., Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation **date** September 28, 1987

street & number Florida Department of State **telephone** (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee **state** Florida 32399-0250

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer **date** 9/24/87

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 **date** 12/8/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: **date**

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 2

The earliest recorded settlement in the Milton/Bagdad area occurred in 1817, when Juan de la Rúa, the 27-year-old son of the overseer of royal works for Pensacola, received a grant of 800 arpents of land from Spanish royal governor Jose Masot. One source indicates that de la Rúa, who was to be elected mayor of Pensacola in 1822, attempted to establish a saw mill on his holding, but was frustrated by labor shortages. This site was located on the upper reaches of Pond Creek, to the west of the Milton area, and to the northwest of Bagdad, above where Highway 90 crosses Pond Creek today. In 1828, Joseph Forsyth, an energetic young entrepreneur from New Orleans, purchased the site from de la Rúa; it became the location of the original Forsyth and Simpson lumber mill, and was dubbed "Arcadia." When it was subsequently joined by a cotton-spinning mill and a juniper pail factory, both largely staffed by slaves, an extraordinary development had taken place -- an ante-bellum industrial park.

In the year 1840, Joseph Forsyth and Ezekiel E. Simpson realized that their water-powered saw mill at Arcadia was both obsolete and poorly located. The transportation of finished boards to the Blackwater River over the mule-powered Arcadia Railway was slow and laborious. Furthermore, the capacity of the Arcadia mill was easily outstripped by any of the new steam-powered mills which began to appear in west Florida after 1835. The decision by Forsyth and Simpson to modernize and relocate their saw mill to the confluence of Pond Creek and the Blackwater River led to the creation of the village of Bagdad.

Tradition holds that the name Bagdad was bestowed by a visionary Joseph Forsyth, after the famous city of the Middle East. Like the Baghdad of the Old World, which was situated on the banks of the Tigris River and took economic advantage of the Euphrates to the west to become a great shipping entrepot of the Mesopotamian valley, the Bagdad of the New World was situated on the Blackwater with the Escambia River to the west, and would enjoy the same advantages.

The charm must have worked, because the new Forsyth and Simpson mill rapidly became the largest industrial operation in west Florida. By 1849, the mill ran five gangs of saws with from one to ten saws per gang, with a total capacity of 20,000 feet per day. The steam engines were powered by sawdust refuse, and received fresh water from Arcadia through a system of wooden pipes. Forsyth and Simpson produced in excess of \$100,000 worth of mill products each year.

Unlike the mill operations at Arcadia, Forsyth preferred to bring skilled laborers from the North to run the saw mill, instead of using local slave labor. He certainly could well afford to do so. Many of these skilled workers later became partners in the firm, such as Benjamin Thompson, James Creary, and Richard Bushnell. Housing for these workers was supplied by

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 3

Forsyth and Simpson. By 1855, when Joseph Forsyth died, the mill town of Bagdad had been platted. On his death, the firm changed its name to E.E. Simpson and Company.

The Civil War years brought great hardships to Bagdad. On March 11, 1862, an armed detachment of one hundred men under the command of Lt. Colonel W.K. Beard of the First Regular Florida Volunteers, acting on the orders of Brig. General Samuel Jones, commanding the Confederate forces at Pensacola, put the whole of the lumber operations at Bagdad to the torch to prevent Union seizure following the Confederate retreat from Pensacola. The homes of Ezekiel Simpson, Richard M. Bushnell, and Benjamin Overman were inadvertently destroyed in the fire. At the adjacent Ollinger and Bruce shipyard, workers acted quickly to sink the 500-ton-capacity floating drydock (the only one in west Florida at the time) beneath the surface of the Blackwater, but a 110-foot twin-screw Hampton Class gunboat, built in 85 days for the Confederate Navy at a cost of \$15,000, was boarded and set afire by the soldiers. The mill partners, their families and slaves, and most of the population of the Milton/Bagdad area fled to the new Confederate lines in the vicinity of Greenville, Alabama. James Creary remained behind to watch over the remaining property. Taken captive by a Union scouting party, he was sent to a Federal prison in Cuba, where he spent the duration of the war.

During the Civil War, numerous Union raids were made into Santa Rosa County from the Federal stronghold of Pensacola, as reported in complete detail in the "Official Dispatches of the Civil War." One raid is of particular interest, having taken place over the period October 25 to 28, 1864, as recounted in the dispatches of Brig. Gen. Joseph Bailey, of the U.S. Army Commanding District of West Florida, and Lt. Col. Andrew B. Spurling, Second Maine Cavalry Commanding Expedition. Evidence of the occupancy of the Thompson House by units of Spurling's troops was uncovered during the restoration of the drawing room in 1976. Scrawled with charcoal from a cooking fire on the original layer of plaster, and later covered with wallpaper, a soldier had written: "Bagdad, Mr. Tompson, Spurling's First Florida Cavalry camped in your house October 26, 1864." A similar message was also found on the wall of the upstairs crosshall, written by a different individual, and dated October 28, 1864. The house was to remain in the Thompson family until the death of Ella Creary Thompson in 1974.

Immediately following the war, Simpson and the other partners returned to Bagdad and constructed a small mill with a circular saw and an edger with a moveable table. Improved economic conditions in 1872 justified the expansion of Simpson and Company's operations. A new gang mill was built near the river. The following year Simpson perceived the growing demand for long timbers and constructed the island mill on Island No. 2 in the Blackwater

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 4

River. By 1874, Simpson was referred to as "a rich man" by Edwin DeLeon writing in Harper's New Monthly Magazine.

By 1889 Bagdad had a population of 300 and its own post office, private school, and machine shop. The splendid Victorian Bagdad Methodist Church, utilizing elements of Renaissance Revival within an essentially Carpenter Gothic facade, was built in 1885, and remains as a testament to the economic prosperity of the era. This particular congregation was established as early as 1832, and originally met in the open under a bush arbor. The early accounts of Methodist missionaries and circuit riding ministers in the Panhandle are stories in themselves, and give new meaning to "a voice in the wilderness."

Two major industrial enterprises flourished in addition to the E.E. Simpson mills. The Ollinger and Bruce Shipyard had been rebuilt in Bagdad in 1867, while the Bagdad Sash and Door Factory had been established in 1872. However, though these firms contributed to the industrial significance of Bagdad, the history of the town remained tied most closely with Simpson and Company. By 1903 most of the firm's third generation of partners had died, and the firm was sold to Thomas R. Lyon in order to settle estates. At the time of the sale the firm owned some 200,000 acres of timber land, a logging railroad with 12 miles of track, 40 miles of log ditches, two saw mills, a planing mill, an electric light plant, two drying kilns, a fleet of lighters, and the tug Okaloosa.

Lyon was part of a Chicago syndicate which reorganized the milling operations under the name of the Stearns and Culver Lumber Company. The Chicago firm immediately began an aggressive campaign of modernization. An elevated monorail tramway for moving lumber raised the ire of some older Bagdad citizens, but increased the efficiency of operations. In 1910, Stearns and Culver became the proud owner of the largest locomotive in the area. The company employed 600 men in its mills, lumber yards, machine shops, and railways. Logging operations centered in the northern Santa Rosa town of Munson employed additional workers.

Between 1903 and 1922 the Stearns and Culver firm went through two name changes, becoming first the Bagdad Lumber Company and later the Bagdad Land and Lumber Company. Finally, in 1922, the Chicago syndicate sold its entire interest in the Bagdad Land and Lumber Company to a group of Florida mill operators led by W.B. Harbeson, J.D. Henderson and George O. Waits. The firm had survived the general collapse of the lumber industry in northwest Florida in 1913, partly because of its extensive timber holdings, and partly because its financial interests were centered in Chicago rather than in Pensacola. However, by 1922, the firm began to be confronted with serious depletion of its timber stocks. Efforts to reforest began in earnest under the Harbeson-

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Significance

Item number 8

Page 5

Henderson-Waites management, but the damage to west Florida's forests was too well advanced. By 1939 it became unprofitable for the mills at Bagdad to continue to operate, and they were shut down. At the time the company still owned virtually the entire town of Bagdad, so the Bagdad Corporation was formed to dispose of real estate. Most of the homes built by the company to house workers quickly passed into private hands. Unlike many west Florida mill towns, however, Bagdad continues to survive as an identifiable community.

Bagdad's building stock consists almost entirely of company housing designed and built by local artisans. A variety of vernacular styles appear, including the Shotgun, the Double Pen, and Gulf Coast Cottage, and a series of two story designs imported by Stearns and Culver from Chicago. The buildings of Bagdad display a high level of craftsmanship, and remain an unwritten testament to the many unknown builders who erected them.

Though folklore attributes the construction of several homes in Bagdad to before 1855, written documentation confirms only the latter date.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Bibliography

Item number

9

Page

2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES:

Acts and Resolutions of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida.
20th Session. Tallahassee: C.E. Bartlett, printer, 1842.

Acts and Resolutions of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida.
21st Session. Tallahassee: C.E. Bartlett, printer, 1843.

Acts and Resolutions of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida.
22nd Session. Tallahassee: C.E. Bartlett, printer, 1844.

Acts of the Governor and Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida.
13th Session. Tallahassee: William Wilson, printer, 1835.

Blount Family Papers. Special Collections Division. John C. Pace Library.
University of West Florida.

Thomas Johnson Papers. Special Collections Division. John C. Pace Library.
University of West Florida.

Santa Rosa County Circuit Court Records. Office of Clerk of Circuit Court.
Santa Rosa County Courthouse.

Santa Rosa County Deed Records. Office of Clerk of Circuit Court. Santa Rosa
County Courthouse.

Santa Rosa County Probate Records. Office of Clerk of Circuit Court. Santa
Rosa County Courthouse.

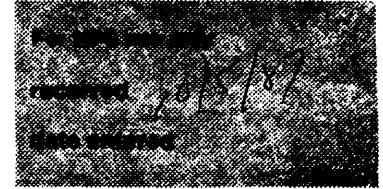
Santa Rosa County Tax Rolls. Office of Property Appraiser. Santa Rosa County
Courthouse.

BOOKS, JOURNALS, THESES AND DISSERTATIONS:

American Guide Series. Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State. New
York: Oxford University Press, 1946.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 3

American Lumbermen: The Personal History and Public and Business Achievements of Eminent Lumbermen of the United States. Chicago: American Lumberman, 1905-1906.

Barbour, George M. Florida for Tourists, Invalids, and Settlers. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1882; reprint ed., Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964.

Blumenson, John J.D. Identifying American Architecture. Nashville: American Association of State and Local History, 1977.

Campbell, A. Stuart. Studies in the Forestry Resources of Florida: The Lumber Industry. Gainesville: University of Florida, 1956.

Civil War Naval Chronology 1861-1865: Compiled by the Naval History Division of the Navy Department, Washington 1971.

Clark, Thomas D. "The Lasting Heritage: Land and Trees." In The Cultural Legacy of the Gulf Coast. Ed. by Lucius F. Ellsworth and Linda V. Ellsworth. Pensacola: Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference, 1976.

Clubbs, Occie. "Pensacola in Retrospect: 1870-1890." Florida Historical Quarterly 37 (January-April 1959).

Coker, William S. and Inglis, G. Douglas. The Spanish Censuses of Pensacola, 1784-1820: A Genealogical Guide to Spanish Pensacola. Pensacola: The Perdido Bay Press, 1980.

DeBow, J.D.B., compiler. Statistical View of the United States. Washington: Beverly Tucker, Senate printer, 1854.

DeLeon, Edwin. "The New South: Industrial Manufacturing and Material Progress." Harpers New Monthly Magazine 48 (February 1874).

Dickins, Asbury, and Allen, James C., eds. American State Papers: Documents of the Congress of the United States in Relation to Public Lands. Vol. IV. Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1859.

Dodd, Dorothy. "Florida in 1845." Florida Historical Quarterly 24 (July 1945).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Bibliography Item number 9 Page 4

- Dovell, J.E. Florida: Historic, Dramatic, Contemporary. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1952.
- Eisterhold, John A. "Lumber and Trade in Pensacola and West Florida: 1800-1860." Florida Historical Quarterly 51 (January 1973).
- Elliott, E.J., publisher. Elliott's Florida Encyclopedia or Pocket Directory. Jacksonville: Times Union Book and Job Office, 1889.
- Ellsworth, Lucius F. and Linda V. "House Reading: How to Study Historic Houses as Symbols of Society." History News (May 1980).
- Fernald, Edward A., ed. Atlas of Florida. Tallahassee: Florida State University Foundation, Inc., 1981.
- Foley, Mary Mix. The American House. New York: Harper and Row, 1980.
- Harris, Cyril M., editor. Historic Architecture Sourcebook. New York: McGraw Hill, 1977.
- Holmes, Jack D.B. "Pensacola Settlers, 1781-1821." Typewritten, 1970. Copy on file at Historic Pensacola Preservation Board.
- Howard, Clinton N. The British Development of West Florida 1763-1769. Berkley: University of California Press, 1947.
- Kennedy, J.C.G., comp. Preliminary Report on the Eighth Census. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862.
- King, M. Luther. History of Santa Rosa County: A King's Country. Privately printed, n.p., 1972.
- Lanier, Sidney. Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1876.
- Massey, Richard. A History of the Lumber Industry in Alabama and West Florida 1880-1914. Ph.D. Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1960.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Bibliography Item number 9 Page 5

Morris, Allen, comp. The Florida Handbook 1981-1982. 18th Edition.
Tallahassee: The Peninsular Publishing Company, 1981.

Musgrove, Rufus H., Barraclough, Jack T. and Grantham, Rodney G. Water Resources of Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, Florida. Tallahassee: Florida Geological Survey, 1965.

Newton, Milton B., Jr. "Louisiana House Types: A Field Guide." Melanges 2 (1971).

Overman, C.H. "History of Bagdad." Typewritten, n.d. [c. 1939]. Copy on file at Historic Pensacola Preservation Board.

Parks, Virginia, Rick, Alan, and Simons, Norman. Pensacola in the Civil War. Pensacola: Pensacola Historical Society, 1978.

Rerick, Rowland H. Memoirs of Florida. Vol. I. Atlanta: Southern Historical Association, 1902.

Rifkind, Carole. A Field Guide to American Architecture. New York: New American Library, 1980.

Scott, Joan Helen. Santa Rosa County, 1900-1920. M.A. Thesis, University of West Florida, 1971.

Tyson, Willie Kate. History of Utilization of Longleaf Pine (pinus palustris mill.) in Florida from 1513 until the Twentieth Century. University of Florida, 1956.

Walker, Francis A., compiler. A Compendium of the Ninth Census. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1872.

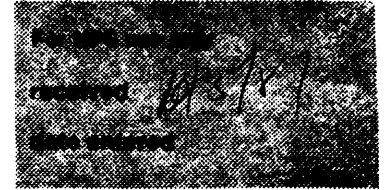
War of the Rebellion. Series 1, Vol. IV. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1872.

Wells, William James. Pioneering in the Panhandle. Ft. Walton Beach, FL: Melvin Business Services, 1976.

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 6

Wilson, Eugene M. Alabama Folk Houses. Montgomery: Alabama Historical Commission, 1975.

Yonge, P.K. "The Lumber Industry of West Florida." In Makers of America: Florida Edition. Atlanta: A.B. Caldwell, 1909.

Milton Gazette.

Pensacola Gazette.