

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1229

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office

Other names/site number: AR0328

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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



## 2. Location

Street & number: 508 South Monroe Street

City or town: DeWitt State: AR County: Arkansas

Not For Publication: ☐

Vicinity: ☐

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

    A X B     C     D

*Cathie Meadows*

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Date

*11/28/12*

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

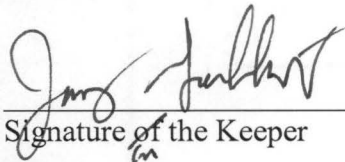
L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office  
Name of Property

Arkansas, AR  
County and State

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:)

  
Signature of the Keeper

1/29/2013  
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 ☐

L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office  
Name of Property

Arkansas, AR  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

0

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Business

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Business

L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office  
Name of Property

Arkansas, AR  
County and State

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, CONCRETE

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

#### Summary Paragraph

Located in the east Arkansas community of DeWitt, Arkansas County, the L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office is the last remaining building from the L. A. Black Rice Milling Association. The building is a one-story, red, modular brick commercial building with minimal detailing. The building was constructed with load-bearing exterior triple wythe walls on a concrete slab with a wood truss roof framing system. The roof slopes from the front (east) of the building to the rear (west) of the building. Originally, the front portion of the building's interior space was constructed as two separate businesses with a solid dividing wall between the two spaces. Each separate business had separate, but adjacent front entrances.

Though the building is not highly ornamented, it does have detailing with specifics presented facade by facade. However, the brick was laid in a half running bond. The window heads are accented with soldier courses and the window sills are rowlocks. The base of the building at the slab line is concrete that protrudes about one inch past the brick veneer and is chamfered at a forty-five degree angle. The top of the parapet is terminated with a pre-cast concrete cap stone that is four inches high on the exterior, but shaped more like a sill block in profile on the interior surface.



L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office

Arkansas, AR

Name of Property

County and State

Other than extremely minor modifications, the building is in its original condition. The minor modifications include the addition of white storm windows over the original wood windows and the removal of an exterior door for the installation of ductwork to accommodate an exterior packaged HVAC unit for conditioning the building.

---

## **Narrative Description**

### **Front/East Façade**

Centered in the fifty foot wide front façade is a recessed porch about ten feet deep and twenty-eight feet long with two pre-cast concrete columns located at third points in the entry. Centered above the recessed entry is a pre-cast concrete building sign about twenty inches high and ten feet long with a "19" at the north end and a "42" at the south end for the year of construction. Between the large "19" and "42" is "L. A. Black" centered over "Rice Milling Association, Inc." Presumably, these were the two tenants of the front offices. The wall of the recess has two doors with transoms and steel security gates adjacent in the center with eight-over-eight wood double-hung windows on each side of the entry doors. Storm windows have been installed over the wood windows. There are no windows on the actual front façade at either side of the recessed porch, as vaults were constructed in each of these corners of the building.

### **South Façade**

The south façade is sixty feet long with a rear projection visible from a central office located at the rear of the building. Starting about ten feet from the east wall six eight-over-eight double-hung windows are equally spaced to the west end of the building. About six feet from the west end of the building, is an exterior door. The building overhead electrical power connects to the building at the rear portion of this façade.

L. A. Black's original office is located at the rear of the building and is visible from this façade. It was centered so that there was access to both businesses from the one office. The office is visually not as tall as the main building because there is no parapet around the office walls. There is a fireplace at the west end of the office, as can be seen from the chimney. The windows in this office area are steel with two pairs of casement windows. Each casement panel consists of five panes.

### **West/Rear Façade**

The west façade appears longer than the front, east façade because there is a projection to the north on the rear façade. This being the case, there is approximately twenty-seven feet of wall area from the north to the office projection on the rear of the building. There are three equally spaced eight-over-eight double-hung windows in this façade. The office projection south of this wall area is about seventeen feet wide with a seven foot wide chimney projection centered in the wall. There is a single steel casement window with five panes located on each side of the chimney in the office wall. From the seventeen feet south to the corner of the building there is a six-over-six double-hung window located tightly in the corner next to the office and former door a few feet from the corner of the building that has been enclosed to accommodate ductwork for the HVAC system.

L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office  
Name of Property

Arkansas, AR  
County and State

It is noted that this rear façade does not have a parapet, because of the single slope of the roof to the rear. Also, continuous metal gutters and downspouts have been installed on the roof edge to handle the roof runoff. There is also a small brick chimney visible serving the room on the southwest corner of the building where the HVAC system was originally located.

### **North Façade**

The north façade is similar to the south façade, with the exception of an office addition at the rear portion of the façade. The north elevation is almost sixty feet long, but the main portion of the elevation to the office is approximately forty feet from the east corner of the building to the east corner of the office wing. Like the south façade, there is a vault located on the interior that precludes window openings at the front portion of the building, so the first window from the east is about eleven feet from the corner. There are four equally spaced eight-over-eight wood double-hung windows in this wall area. The office area projection is about twenty feet wide and has three equally spaced eight-over-eight wood casement double-hung windows on its façade. Far beyond the main façade, the north façade of the central office at the rear of the building is visible. It is a mirror image of the south façade of this component of the building.

### **Integrity**

The L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office retains a high degree of integrity. It continues to sit on its original lot, with nearby rice milling facilities visible from the windows. Very few changes have been made on both the interior and exterior of the building. A heating/cooling unit was added to the south side of the building in the rear, but has had a minimal impact on the building's integrity. It retains an interior partition constructed to keep business interests separate, as well as continues to use original windows and doors.

L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office  
Name of Property

Arkansas, AR  
County and State

## 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.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office  
Name of Property

Arkansas, AR  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ECONOMICS

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Period of Significance**

1942-1945

---

---

**Significant Dates**

1942

---

---

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Lester Asher Black

---

---

**Cultural Affiliation**

---

---

---

**Architect/Builder**

---

---

---

L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office  
Name of Property

Arkansas, AR  
County and State

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B with Local Significance for the period 1942-1945. It is being nominated for its significance to the productive life of Lester Asher Black, a businessman who impacted both his local community in DeWitt, as well as the State of Arkansas. The period of significance is limited to the years between the buildings construction, and Mr. Black's death in 1945.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### Developmental History

#### *History of Arkansas County and DeWitt*

The L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office is located in DeWitt, Arkansas County, Arkansas. Early settlement in Arkansas County was concentrated in the southern end of the county at Arkansas Post, which was the first settlement in what would become the state of Arkansas. While Arkansas Post was originally the county seat, it became less strategically important in the mid-1800s. In 1853 a committee was selected to choose a new county seat, and the location of DeWitt, near the geographic center of the county, was selected.<sup>1</sup> The town was named after General DeWitt Clinton from New York, and was selected by committee members drawing names out of a hat.<sup>2</sup> While this may not have been the most glamorous process, DeWitt was founded and became the seat of county government in 1853.

In its early years, commerce was at a minimum. It was not until 1891 that a railroad was accessible to the people of DeWitt. The town did not sit on a navigable river, so while it was centrally located in the county, freight had to be hauled by wagon for those living in the town.<sup>3</sup> After the introduction of rails, the town began to export a few products, such as livestock and hay (with hay estimated at about a quarter of a million tons at its peak). Not long after, rice was introduced to the area, and quickly took hold as a major crop.<sup>4</sup> In the years between 1904 and 1910, rice acreage in Arkansas exploded from 75 to 55,000 acres. In 1909, there were just six rice mills in the state, one of which was in DeWitt.<sup>5</sup> From the beginning, DeWitt was at the

<sup>1</sup> Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1853-1900," *DeWitt Era-Enterprise*, October 2, 2003, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1853-1900," 1.

<sup>3</sup> Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1853-1900," 14.

<sup>4</sup> Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1853-1900," 14.

<sup>5</sup> Pete Daniel, *Breaking the Land: The Transformation of Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice Cultures Since 1880* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 48.



L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office

Arkansas, AR

Name of Property

County and State

center of the state's rice production economy. Advertising material for DeWitt from about 1909 even boasts that the town's rice mill could process 600 barrels of rice in a 12-hour period.<sup>6</sup> More general materials promoting the area's potential for rice production claimed, "The United States Government Experiment Station has found that the Grand Prairie rice fields produce a better quality of rice and a larger yield per acre than any other section in the United States."<sup>7</sup> The area was clearly poised for massive agricultural growth, and many people tried unsuccessfully to take advantage of it.

In the early twentieth century, industrial production of goods was well under way in DeWitt. "In the 1930s, DeWitt had two sawmills, one stave mill, and three hickory mills and two large rice mills. It handled about one-third of Arkansas's rice crop, had two gins, and ginned about 3,000 bales of cotton per season."<sup>8</sup> At this time DeWitt was both the governmental and economic hub of Arkansas County.

### *The Life of Lester Asher Black*

Lester Asher Black was a child of Arkansas County who went from humble beginnings to dominate rice production in the county and state. He was born in 1880 to P. M. Black and Caroline Elisabeth Black on a small farm about six miles outside of DeWitt.<sup>9</sup> He grew up doing various farm chores. At one point, he also worked for the local brick maker, who paid him 75 cents per day to haul bricks for the making of the county courthouse.<sup>10</sup> L. A. Black was a businessman to his core. One of his first business enterprises was to buy cows from around the county, feed them for a time, and then finally re-sell them for a profit.<sup>11</sup> L. A. Black was 29 years old when his father died, leaving for his son a mercantile business in DeWitt valued at approximately \$500.<sup>12</sup> L. A. Black was elected as the first president of DeWitt's First National Bank when it was formed in 1912, and so he became a pillar of the local business community by his early thirties.<sup>13</sup> He remained the president of the bank until his death in 1945.<sup>14</sup>

Black put together a large combination of business interests in DeWitt. In particular, he embraced the local agricultural economy centered on rice cultivation, aiming to supply local farmers with everything they needed to be successful. To that end, he bought a hardware store where he supplied seed and farming implements such as tractors to local growers. He also built a cotton gin and sold petroleum products.<sup>15</sup> An advertisement for John Deere tractors sold by L. A. Black Hardware shows the use of marketing by Black to encourage Arkansas County farmers

<sup>6</sup> Unknown, *DeWitt: Arkansas County* (Little Rock: Central Publishing Co., 1909), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Frank L. Perrin, *Arkansas Rice: The Development of a New Industry* (1910), 101.

<sup>8</sup> Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1853-1900," 14.

<sup>9</sup> Dallas T. Herndon, *Annals of Arkansas, 1947* (Little Rock: The Historical Record Association, 1947), 1403.

<sup>10</sup> Herndon, *Annals*, 1403.

<sup>11</sup> Herndon, *Annals*, 1403.

<sup>12</sup> Herndon, *Annals*, 1403.

<sup>13</sup> Herndon, *Annals*, 1403.

<sup>14</sup> Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1926-1949," 8.

<sup>15</sup> Herndon, *Annals*, 1403.

L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office

Arkansas, AR

Name of Property

County and State

to purchase his products.<sup>16</sup> *Lion Oil News*, a publication by the El Dorado-based oil company, featured an article on Black's varied business interests in February 1945.<sup>17</sup> The article says of Black,

"One of his enterprises, the Blue Seal Petroleum Company, purchases light fuels from Lion Oil and sells them under the Blue Seal name in retail and wholesale quantities. Sales are substantial throughout the year, but they rise during the busy season for rice and cotton farming, when Blue Seal distributes many tank cars of Lion products in Arkansas County and part of Jefferson County."<sup>18</sup>

Much of the oil that was sold under the Blue Seal Petroleum name was likely sold to some of Black's own tenants. However, he was also supplying many other farmers around the county. In this way, he was a man running a highly integrated corporation that produced profits in several interconnected ways.

The industry Black became the most personally involved in was the industry of Arkansas County – rice. Sometime before 1918, he established the L. A. Black Rice Mill. This mill was located at 5<sup>th</sup> and Monroe Streets in DeWitt.<sup>19</sup> While the rice mill itself does not stand today, his company offices built in 1942 do. Black accumulated many, many acres of rice fields in Arkansas County. At its peak, it is estimated that he had six thousand acres dedicated to rice cultivation, potentially making him the largest rice grower in the state of Arkansas.<sup>20</sup> Arkansas's status as the largest rice-growing state in the country means that L. A. Black was likely the largest rice grower in the United States.

In 1933 rice production was so high that the federal government felt the need to step in. During the 1920s agricultural depression, rice prices had dropped from \$1.25 per bushel to just 10-15¢.<sup>21</sup> They attempted to prevent prices from again dropping so drastically. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) was created by the Roosevelt Administration during the Great Depression. Its goal was to increase the price of some agricultural products, in order to raise prices. This was achieved in two primary ways. One way was by paying farmers to leave land un-productive. The other way was to raise the price of a good by subsidizing it.<sup>22</sup> All of this was done to help farmers in places like Arkansas County. While Black was not a destitute

<sup>16</sup> Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1926-1949," 8.

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth Bridges, "Lion Oil Company," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, 3/15/2012. Accessed on 10/8/2012. <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=5583>

<sup>18</sup> Unknown, "L. A. Black of DeWitt Heads Vast Enterprises," *Lion Oil News*, February 1945, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1926-1949," 8.

<sup>20</sup> Herndon, *Annals*, 1403. Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1926-1949," 8.

<sup>21</sup> J. M. Spicer, *Beginnings of the Rice Industry in Arkansas* (Arkansas: Arkansas Rice Promotion Association and Rice Council, 1964), 35.

<sup>22</sup> Jeannie M. Wayne, *A New Plantation South: Land, Labor, and Federal Favor in Twentieth-Century Arkansas* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1996), 158.

L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office

Arkansas, AR

Name of Property

County and State

farmer who would have been hit hardest by these policies, he did still benefit from their implementation. For instance, in 1935 L. A. Black was the largest recipient of AAA monies in the state, at \$28,261 for 2,205 acres grown. There were only three other producers who received more than \$10,000 in support.<sup>23</sup> This number illustrates once again the amount of land, specifically rice cropland, that had been accumulated by Black in the 1930s.

Mr. Black's rice was grown by the many tenants that lived on land owned by him. In the Census for 1930, 44 percent of farms were tilled by tenants, and Black's were likely among them.<sup>24</sup> Black processed rice at his mill, and re-sold cleaned seed to farmers, as testified by a 1938 ad for his company.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps it was true or perhaps not, but sacks containing rice from Black's mill often stated, "largest rice grower in the world."<sup>26</sup> He was always looking for new markets for his products. In July 1938, Black and several other local businessmen attended a Purina Feeds Convention in St. Louis.<sup>27</sup> Undoubtedly they were trying to find a way to get more exposure for their products and to introduce new ways of using their goods. Mr. Black's influence on the rice industry was also felt beyond DeWitt and Arkansas County. Mr. Black was elected President of the National Rice Miller's Association in 1942, and served in that capacity for one year.<sup>28</sup> The young man who had started his business career hauling bricks had risen to holding the top office of a national agricultural organization.

Mr. Black married Mary Boone and the couple had three daughters, Georgea Oliver Black, Hattie Boone Black and Mary Elisabeth Black. He clearly loved his daughters, and he encouraged them to see the world. In 1937, he sent his daughters Georgea and Hattie on a two-month European tour. The Black family was even so well-connected in international circles that the two daughters of Mr. Black attended the coronation of King George VI while they were in London.<sup>29</sup>

Lester Asher Black was very civic-minded. Through his role as the President of the First National Bank, as well as serving on state committees, Mr. Black strove to improve his community. One example of this is the 1931 construction of the existing courthouse in DeWitt. Finances were very tight because of the Great Depression, and the town could not find anyone to buy the bonds needed to raise the building funds. When Mr. Black saw this, he bought half of the bonds himself, and committed the First National Bank for the other half.<sup>30</sup> Mr. Black was also civically active on the state level. He served on the State Highway Commission under Governor J. Marion Futrell, helping to ensure paving of necessary roads for the citizens of DeWitt.<sup>31</sup> He also found himself appointed to the Penitentiary Committee under Carl E.

<sup>23</sup> Daniel, *Breaking the Land*, 147.

<sup>24</sup> Daniel, *Breaking the Land*, 60.

<sup>25</sup> Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1926-1949," 8.

<sup>26</sup> Herndon, *Annals*, 1403.

<sup>27</sup> Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1926-1949," 7.

<sup>28</sup> Stacy Stafford, e-mail message to author, September 27, 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1926-1949," 2.

<sup>30</sup> Herndon, *Annals*, 1404.

<sup>31</sup> Herndon, *Annals*, 1404. Various, "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1926-1949," 8



L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office

Arkansas, AR

Name of Property

County and State

Bailey.<sup>32</sup> All of this shows the belief that Black had in civic duty, outside of his influence as a local businessman, to help his county and state prosper.

Mr. Black was a very shrewd businessman, known throughout the county for both his large volume of rice production, and his many diverse investments. One innovative idea he had was how to keep his business interests divided. When the L. A. Black office was built in 1942, he was a man of very diverse investments. He owned and oversaw thousands of acres of land used for things like rice cultivation, cotton growing, oil and gas distribution and timbering. He also had to oversee his processing plant in DeWitt and make sure that all of his farmers got paid. To do this, he constructed his office with two sides. When approaching the office, there are two entrances. The one on the left was for all business having to do with the rice mill operations. This side of the office had a vault and safe, in order to keep money and papers safe. On the other side of the office, accessed by an entrance on the right side of the building, was his office for all of his other business interests. This office also had its own vault and safe. Both offices were connected to each other in the rear by L. A. Black's personal office. He had a door opening to each office, through which he conducted his different businesses. This allowed him to maintain a separation that he felt was important for management.

#### *L. A. Black, Inc.*

Mr. Black built a lasting infrastructure of land, businesses and industry. He left all of it to his children, and the company continues to be in the hands of his descendants. L. A. Black Inc. combines holdings from many of Mr. Black's descendants to continue to run companies like Blue Seal Petroleum. They even owned DeWitt's first rice mill, constructed in 1908-1909, in 1964.<sup>33</sup> One tragic loss to Black's infrastructure was the burning of the rice drier in February 1953. After fighting the fire for more than a day, and trying to save unburned rice, the building was lost, along with 75,000 to 85,000 bushels of rice.<sup>34</sup> But much of his legacy lives on. Lester Asher Black's impacts continue to be felt throughout Arkansas County, but most importantly in his home town of DeWitt.

#### **Statement of Significance**

L. A. Black was a pillar of his community in the early twentieth century. He knew what the people of his town and county wanted and needed, mostly because he had grown up with many of them, and had lived in their place. His connections as a farmer and banker put him in contact with many townsfolk in DeWitt. He either sold seed and supplies to them, underwrote their loans, or sold them gasoline for their tractors. He also employed many people throughout the county. His extensive land holdings required on-the-ground managers and farmers. Perhaps one of the current employees of L. A. Black Inc., Kent Cormier, said it best when he wrote,

L. A. Black's mission was to accumulate as much land as possible. Through his cattle, farming, timber, and other supporting businesses, it is amazing to look at what must be deemed one of the most multiple use management plans ever. The

<sup>32</sup> Herndon, *Annals*, 1404.

<sup>33</sup> Spicer, *Beginnings of the Rice Industry*, 26-27.

<sup>34</sup> "DeWitt: A 150 Year Journey, 1950-1959," 7.

L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office

Arkansas, AR

Name of Property

County and State

vision and management ability to successfully run an operation of this magnitude, make substantial land improvements, such as irrigation and impoundments, during a time of limited transportation and the lack of sophisticated equipment is remarkable. While farming practices and equipment, transportation, and recreational hunting and fishing have changed dramatically since Mr. Black was alive, his original concept of the land supporting his businesses can be seen today.<sup>35</sup>

## Comparisons

### *House of L. A. Black*

The house in which L. A. Black lived during his productive and significant years continues to stand in DeWitt. However it has been moved, affecting its integrity. It has also been veneered in brick, while it had been built as a wood-frame wood-sided structure. With its highly altered nature, the L. A. Black Office is clearly a better representation of the productive life of Mr. Black than his family home.

### *Commercial Buildings associated with Black in DeWitt*

There are several commercial buildings located in downtown DeWitt that are associated with L. A. Black, the most prominent among them those is the 400 block of Court Square. This block initially housed Mr. Black's hardware store, but the store and other buildings were destroyed by fire in the late 1920s. Mr. Black re-constructed the row of commercial buildings in 1938, but other businesses were housed in them.<sup>36</sup> While this block was built by Black, the significance of his diverse commercial interests can be better represented by the office he had built just four years later.

<sup>35</sup> C. Kent Cormier, "Essay," unpublished, Cormier Forestry Service, Inc.

<sup>36</sup> Rachel Silva, "Walks Through History: DeWitt Commercial Historic District," 9/18/2010, 9.



L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office  
Name of Property

Arkansas, AR  
County and State

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- Bridges, Kenneth. "Lion Oil Company." Encyclopedia of Arkansas. Accessed on 10/8/2012. <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=5583>.
- Cormier, C. Kent. "Essay." Unpublished. Cormier Forestry Service, Inc.
- Daniel, Pete. *Breaking the Land: The Transformation of Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice Cultures Since 1880*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985.
- Herndon, Dallas T. *Annals of Arkansas, 1947*. Little Rock: The Historical Record Association, 1947.
- Perrin, Frank L. *Arkansas Rice: the Development of a New Industry*. 1910.
- Silva, Rachel. "Walks Through History: DeWitt Commercial Historic District." 9/18/2010.
- Spicer, J. M. *Beginnings of the Rice Industry in Arkansas*. Arkansas: Arkansas Rice Promotion Association and Rice Council, 1964.
- Unknown. *DeWitt: Arkansas County*. Little Rock: Central Printing Co., 1909.
- Unknown. "L. A. Black of DeWitt Heads Vast Enterprises." *Lion Oil News*. February 1945.
- Whayne, Jeannie M. *A New Plantation South: Land, Labor, and Federal Favor in Twentieth-Century Arkansas*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1996.

### 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 Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** AR0328

L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office  
Name of Property

Arkansas, AR  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than one

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 34.290823° | Longitude: -91.340498° |
| 2. Latitude:            | Longitude:             |
| 3. Latitude:            | Longitude:             |
| 4. Latitude:            | Longitude:             |

**Or**

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927    or    ☐ NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

From Point A (Latitude: 34.290142°, Longitude: -91.341411°) proceed 380 feet east toward the intersection of South Monroe and West 5<sup>th</sup> Streets to Point B (Latitude: 34.290141°, Longitude: -91.340154°). From Point B, proceed 365 feet north along South Monroe Street toward the intersection of South Monroe and West 4<sup>th</sup> Streets to Point C (Latitude: 34.291141°, Longitude: -91.340142°). From Point C, proceed 380 feet west along West 4<sup>th</sup> Street to Point D (Latitude: 34.291145°, Longitude: -91.341407°). From Point D return to Point A.

L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office  
Name of Property

Arkansas, AR  
County and State

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary takes in the entire block on which the L. A. Black Office sits, and on which it is the only structure.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Benjamin Harvey, National Register Historian

organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

street & number: 323 Center St., Suite 1500

city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201

e-mail: ben@arkansasheritage.org

telephone: 501-324-9789

date: November 8, 2012

---

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office  
Name of Property

Arkansas, AR  
County and State

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office

City or Vicinity: DeWitt

County: Arkansas

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Benjamin Harvey

Date Photographed: 1/24/2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 9 – View of east façade of L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office, facing west
- 2 of 9 – View of north façade, facing south
- 3 of 9 – View of west façade, facing east
- 4 of 9 – View of south façade, facing north
- 5 of 9 – Detail of metal storm door on south façade, facing north
- 6 of 9 – Detail of metal casement window on west façade, facing east
- 7 of 9 – Detail of large office casement windows, facing south
- 8 of 9 – Detail of dual front entrance, including metal storm doors, original wood doors and transoms, facing west
- 9 of 9 – Interior view of L. A. Black's personal office located in rear of building, facing west

**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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



**L. A. Black Rice Milling Assoc., Inc. Office, DeWitt, Arkansas County**



WGS 84

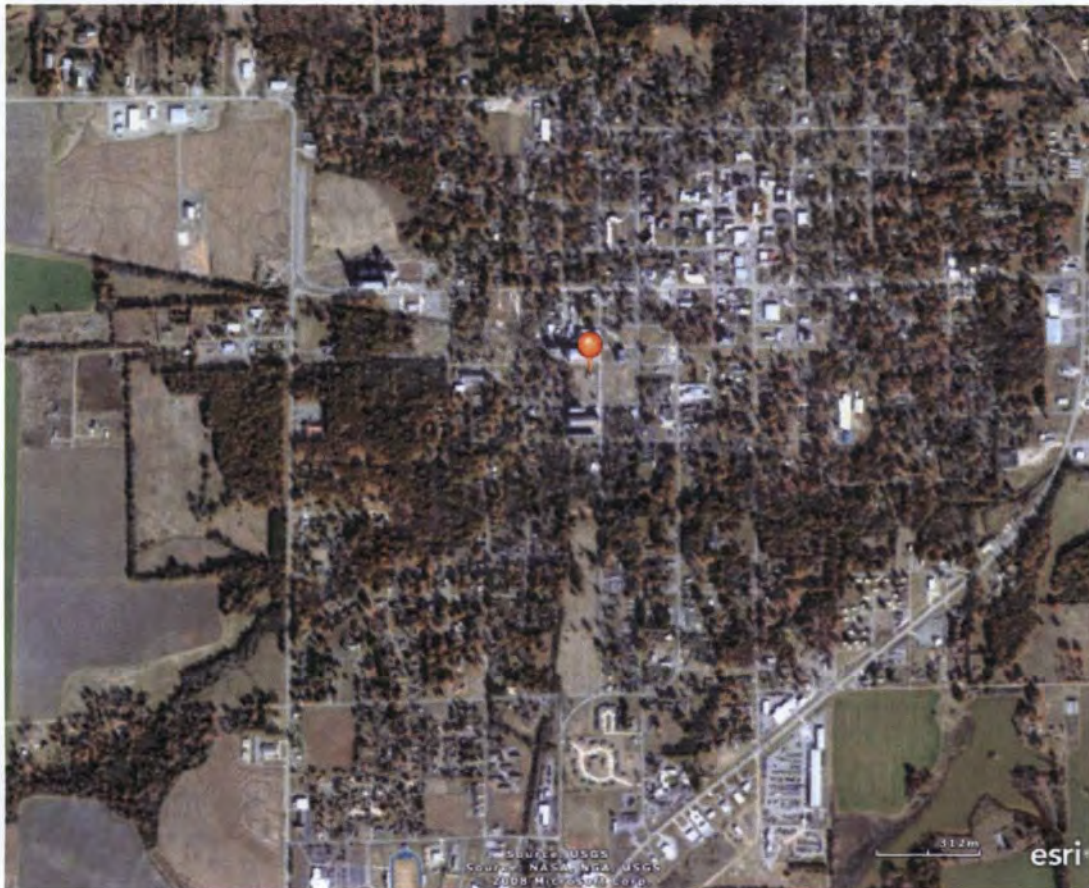
Latitude 34.290823

Longitude -91.340498





**L. A. Black Rice Milling Assoc., Inc. Office, DeWitt, Arkansas County**



WGS 84  
Latitude 34.290823  
Longitude -91.340498



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

\_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

## SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 12001229

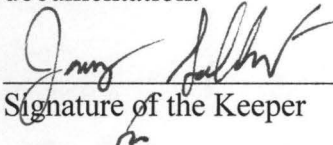
Date Listed: 1/29/2013

Property Name: Black, L. A., Rice Milling Association, Inc.

County: Arkansas

State: AR

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

1/29/2013  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

### Section 8: Area of Significance

The Area of Significance for this property is hereby changed to Commerce.

While Black's various interests may have had an impact in the management of wealth, his interests meet the definition of "commerce" as noted in the National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*.

\_\_\_\_\_  
The Arkansas State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

### **DISTRIBUTION:**

**National Register property file**

**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Black, L.A., Rice Milling Association Inc. Office  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Arkansas

DATE RECEIVED: 12/14/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/14/13  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/29/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/30/13  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12001229

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 1/29/2013 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*L.A. Black was a prominent figure in DeWitt's overall economy,  
but his prominence as a commercial rice grower & processor  
had an impact beyond that of a mere merchant & banker*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Criterion B

REVIEWER J. Gubler DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/~~N~~ see attached SLR ~~Y~~/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



19 L.A. BLACK 42  
RICE MILLING ASS'N., INC.



Bedford (1) 12/04/12

0047798 1/67 AR- Arkansas County- L A B





AR- Arkansas County- L.A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office- 0002

Bedford (2) 12/04/12

0047798 2/67 AR-Arkansas Countell A B





AR\_ Arkansas Courty - L.A. Black Rice milling Association, Inc. Office\_0003

Bedford (3) 12/04/12

0047798 3/67 AR\_Arkansas County L A B





AR - Arkansas County - L.A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office - 0004

Bedford <4> 12/04/12

0047798 4/67 AR-Arkansas County-L A B





AR- Arkansas County - L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office - 0005

Bedford (5) 12/24/12

0047798 5/67 AR-Arkansas County-L A B





AR\_ Arkansas County - L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office\_0006

0047798 6/67 AR\_Arkansas County\_L A B

Bedford (6) 12/04/12





AR- Arkansas County- L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office- 0007

Bedford (7) 12/04/12

0047798 7/67 AR- Arkansas County- L. A. B





AR - Arkansas County - L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office - 0008

Bedford (8) 12/04/8

0047798 8/67 AR-Arkansas Countys L A B





AR - Arkansas County - L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office - 0009

Bedford (9) 12/04/12

0047798 9/67 AR-Arkansas County L A B



## Missing Core Documentation

**Property Name**

Black, L. A., Rice Milling Association  
Inc. Office

**County, State**

Arkansas,  
Arkansas

**Reference Number**

12001229

The following Core Documentation is missing from this entry:

☐ Nomination Form

☐ Photographs

☒ USGS Map



## The Department of Arkansas Heritage

Mike Beebe  
Governor

Cathie Matthews  
Director

Arkansas Arts Council

\*

Arkansas Natural Heritage  
Commission

\*

Delta Cultural Center

\*

Historic Arkansas Museum

\*

Mosaic Templars  
Cultural Center

\*

Old State House Museum



### Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

1500 Tower Building

323 Center Street

Little Rock, AR 72201

(501) 324-9880

fax: (501) 324-9184

tdd: (501) 324-9811

e-mail:

[info@arkansaspreservation.org](mailto:info@arkansaspreservation.org)

website:

[www.arkansaspreservation.com](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com)

An Equal Opportunity Employer



November 28, 2012

Ms. Carol Shull  
Chief of Registration  
United States Department of the Interior  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
8th Floor  
1201 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005

RE: L. A. Black Rice Milling Association, Inc. Office – DeWitt,  
Arkansas County, Arkansas

Dear Ms. Shull:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Benjamin A. Harvey of my staff at (501) 324-9789. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathie Matthews  
State Historic Preservation Officer

CM:bah

Enclosure

