

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUN 30 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name The Oasis
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Main Street (LA Hwy 845) N/A not for publication
city, town Clarks N/A vicinity
state Louisiana code LA county Caldwell code 021 zip code 71415

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Leslie P. Tassin June 26, 1989
Signature of certifying official Leslie P. Tassin, State Historic Preservation Officer, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism Date
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. 1/31/89
 See continuation sheet. _____
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. _____
 determined not eligible for the National Register. _____
 removed from the National Register. _____
 other, (explain:) _____

_____ Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/specialty store

SOCIAL/meeting hall

GOVERNMENT/post office

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/specialty store

SOCIAL/meeting hall

GOVERNMENT/city hall and post office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls weatherboard

roof metal

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

"The Oasis" is a c.1905 two story frame building constructed by Louisiana Central Lumber Company in the heart of the sawmill town of Clarks. Historically the first floor contained a drugstore, barber shop, and post office, while the upper story served as a lodge hall. "The Oasis" has not been altered too seriously and hence easily conveys its historical significance.

The exact date of construction is not known, but the company began work on the town in 1903, and there is no reason to doubt that it is one of the early buildings. Various individuals in their 80s and 90s who have lived in Clarks practically from the beginning say "The Oasis" has always been there. They also indicate that the building has always been called "The Oasis." Apparently the drugstore portion was known as the "confectionery."

"The Oasis" is a large linear two story building with a ground level gallery under a skirting roof. Originally the gallery encompassed the entire front and wrapped around the sides about half way, as shown in a c.1945 photo. Since that time the side galleries have been extended and enclosed. The original plain square posts have been replaced with round metal pipes, and the porch floor has been lowered to grade level. (It should be noted that the original wooden porch floor was almost at grade level.) The enclosed staircase is entered directly off the gallery.

The most distinguishing feature of the building is the use of large paired floor-length windows with a fanlight on the second story. On the facade these windows project above the cornice line in two symmetrically placed gabled dormers. This articulation is marked on the front gallery by corresponding gables in the skirting roof. The side elevations have gable end returns and the same paired window with fanlight treatment. The numerous other windows on the building are of the more conventional six over six type, with those on the second story being floor-length.

The second floor is still being used for its original purpose. It consists of a large meeting hall and an ancillary service space on the other side of the stairwell. The narrow gauge beaded board lodge hall features a faceted ceiling which accommodates the previously mentioned fanlight dormer windows.

The first floor is now used for a town office, post office and grocery store. The latter is the only ground story space that retains its original character. It has beaded board walls and ceiling and square posts down the

See continuation sheet

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center. The other downstairs spaces have plywood paneling and lowered ceilings.

The original appearance of the ground story rear elevation is not known. It presently has a single story 1930s vintage wing and an enclosed gallery. The second story has two gabled dormers corresponding to those on the facade. The one on the lodge hall side has the paired window with fanlight treatment, while the other has an off-center six over six window.

All of the windows on the second story have been painted over in white. It should be noted that the bottom sashes were done this way in a c.1945 photo.

Assessment of Integrity:

Although there have been several alterations, "The Oasis" still very much retains its historical appearance, as can be seen in a comparison with a c.1945 photo of the building. There is no question that it would be immediately recognizable to someone who worked in Clarks in the early twentieth century.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
industry

Period of Significance
c.1905-1939

Significant Dates
c.1905-1939

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

"The Oasis" is locally significant in the area of industry because it is about all that is left to represent the history of the lumber company town of Clarks. The community was founded, owned and operated by the Louisiana Central Lumber Company.

The lumber boom in Caldwell Parish was made possible by the arrival of the railroad in the 1890s. The story of Clarks begins in 1899 when the Union Lumber Company of Alexandria, owned by the Clark family, purchased a small sawmill west of Grayson and moved it to a site adjacent to the railroad. The local company was named Clark's Spur Lumber Company. In February 1902 the Missouri Lumber and Mining Company purchased the mill and timber acreage from the Clark family. This Kansas City firm owned mills in its home state as well as the Louisiana Longleaf Lumber Company in Fisher. The parent company's next step was to organize a new company for its Caldwell Parish mill called the Louisiana Central Lumber Company, as chartered on April 16, 1902. The company's plans were to build a much larger mill as well as a town. The American Lumberman in its May 9, 1903 issue reported that a total of 168 people were employed in building the town and mill. It is interesting to note that various key employees and families were brought in from the parent company's Missouri mills.

Louisiana Central emerged as one of the largest lumber companies in the state, soon acquiring over one-third of the total acreage of Caldwell Parish as well as other forest lands in adjacent parishes. In 1906 it established a second large mill in nearby Standard. According to a 1921-22 Louisiana Labor Commission Report, Louisiana Central employed 1,114 people.

Like various other lumber companies in the state, Louisiana Central practiced "industrial paternalism" -- the notion that a stable contented work force was necessary for successful operations. Clarks was the typical lumber company town in the sense that the company built and owned almost everything and provided various necessities and amenities in addition to housing. In short, Louisiana Central "took care of its own."

Clarks' "golden age" is revealed in various old photos and other primary See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Childers, William T. Echoes from the Millpond: A Brief History of the Louisiana Central Lumber Company, 1902-1953. Columbia, Louisiana: Caldwell Parish Library, 1987.

Personal communication with Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Peterson, who interviewed various long-time citizens of Clarks.

- Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
- 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 15 581250 3543450
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Boundary lines follow the property lines of the parcel of land on which the building stands, said lot measuring 128 feet in width by 112 feet in depth.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Boundary lines follow legal property lines.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date May 1989

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state Louisiana zip code 70804

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documents. In addition to the mill complex, housing, and the nominated building, Clarks in its heyday boasted a large two story doctor's office, a huge commissary, a combination movie house/library, a large two story hotel, three boarding houses, a two story company office building, a school, and two churches (one for whites and one for blacks). Also, as was often the custom in company towns of the period, Louisiana Central provided outdoor recreational facilities such as a ball park and a swimming pool complete with a canopy roof. The company also sponsored athletic teams as well as a band.

Although the lumber boom reached its peak statewide in 1920 and was on a downward curve thereafter, the industry continued to be a major employer in many areas well into the post-World War II era. Louisiana Central Lumber Company continued its Clarks operation until 1953, when on February 20, Walter Johnson, who had come there in 1911, blew the final blast on the mill's whistle. Louisiana Central then proceeded to sell off its property, offering the homes first to the current residents and then advertising them to outside buyers. The second era in Clarks' history began on September 15, 1953 when the community was incorporated as a village.

Today's Clarks bears little resemblance to the lumber company town shown in historic photos. The only buildings to survive with any amount of integrity are the nominated building, a black church, and a handful of scattered cottages that have been modernized in varying degrees. Unfortunately, the quite impressive commissary building was recently encased in a modern metal shell and is only recognizable by its distinctive shape. Most of the historic housing is gone, and those residences that do survive have for the most part been overly modernized.

Against this background, "The Oasis" is of immense significance in the town's history. The building is unfortunately in poor repair, and its future is insecure. The sponsors of this nomination hope that National Register recognition will provide a psychological boost to the local effort to preserve this survivor of Clarks' "golden age."

Note Regarding Period of Significance:

The fifty year cutoff is being used as the end of the period of significance. Louisiana Central continued to be a major employer in Clarks in the 1930s and '40s, and "The Oasis" continued in its historic role throughout this period. As noted above, Louisiana Central ended its Clarks operation in 1953.