

and structures that once existed to directly represent the lumber boom, probably less than five percent survive. Many, perhaps most, were gone long ago.

## TIMEFRAME

The focus of this document is the great Louisiana lumber boom, the industrial phase of lumbering, generally circa 1880 to circa 1925. However, within this timeframe, dates vary from place to place, depending upon how early industrial lumbering came to a given area. For example, this began earlier in Lake Charles and hence the timber played out earlier. Generally, the life of a mill was 20 to 25 years (sometimes only about 15). This, the second phase of lumbering in the state, was a natural choice for the focus because it was far and away the most important chapter and the one that made a dramatic impact on the built environment.

Of course, no historical development ends abruptly. The lumber industry in Louisiana did not come to an abrupt halt circa 1925, but the boom years of large-scale industrial lumbering that remade the state's landscape did end then. Lumber historian George Alvin Stokes describes what followed as the "peckerwood mill" phase – i.e., small, often portable mills with the timber hauled by trucks. Also, a few smaller sawmills (small being a relative term) from the golden age of industrial lumbering had enough timber to survive into the post-boom years. Two are known to the author of this document. The mill in Flora (Natchitoches Parish) closed in 1944. More remarkable is the Crowell Lumber Company mill at Longleaf, which did not close permanently until 1969. (This longevity is an important factor in the survival of the historic mill and very important machinery, as detailed below.)

## CONTEXT DEVELOPMENT

### The New South:

The great Louisiana lumber boom did not occur in isolation. To a fair extent it was part of a larger regional phenomenon in the post Reconstruction years known as the emergence of the New South. The term "New South" is used by historians to denote a broad set of interrelated historical developments that occurred as the former Confederate States sought to cope with and overcome: 1) military defeat in the Civil War, 2) the resulting devastation and economic ruin, 3) the humiliation of military occupation, 4) what many southerners saw as the social and political upheaval and archetypal misrule of Reconstruction, and 5) loss of wealth and capital.

Economic and political leadership in the New South came to rest upon a regional phenomenon commonly known to historians as Bourbonism, which may be defined as follows: the return to power of elements of the old white plantation aristocracy along with other associated substantial white business and political figures. Bourbon or Bourbon Democrat state governments quickly replaced the bi-racial Reconstruction governments as each former Confederate state was re-admitted to the Union and home-rule restored.