



FIG. 7. A double log-pen derivative at the Pickering site, Vernon Parish.

THE COMPANY TOWNS

Western Louisiana sawmill towns possessed a number of attributes which sharply distinguished them from older settlements. These characteristics, briefly summarized, are:

1. Orientation toward the performance of a single function so pronounced that the town almost invariably ceased to exist when that function could no longer be discharged.
2. A large mill plant.
3. A company-owned commercial district.
4. Residential sections, called "quarters," assigned on a racial basis.
5. Adoption, by the companies, of a few house types for company housing, and their construction in great numbers.
6. An extensive system of logging railroads linking the company towns and the forests.

Function. Almost every task performed in

or about the company town had some part to play in supplying the mill with logs and converting those logs into lumber. Here were concentrated all the facilities, human and mechanical, for forest exploitation: large and efficient mills of high capacity, skilled administrators and technicians, and a large labor force. Unity of function contributed to the development of self-contained and effective settlements but was also responsible for their virtual extinction. When the town destroyed the forest nothing remained to justify its continued existence. Older settlements could discharge functions beyond the range of the lumber industry, and even absorbed those of the sawmill towns to a great degree, many acquiring sawmills and quarters as new appendages.

The mills. The mills themselves dominated the cultural landscape, including as they did the largest man-made structures in the area. The principal components of the plant were