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# Ledgers of the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company: An Archival Processing Project

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LEDGERS OF THE W.T. CARTER AND BROTHER LUMBER COMPANY:  
AN ARCHIVAL PROCESSING PROJECT

By

CHRISTOPHER C. COTTON, Bachelor of Arts

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Stephen F. Austin State University

In Partial Fulfilment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Arts in History

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## ABSTRACT

The W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company began in 1898 and operated until 1968 when it was sold to the U.S. Plywood Corporation. The Polk County, Texas company harvested longleaf pine during a crucial period of development for the Texas economy. The lumber industry was the state's first large scale commercial enterprise not dependent on farming and provided a model for future extractive industries in the state. The W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company town of Camden, Texas exemplifies rural implementations of the company town system in the Texas lumber industry. This public history thesis provides a brief history of paternalism and its impact in the development of company towns in the southern lumber industry. In addition the thesis provides an updated history of the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company, its subsidiary companies, and the sawmill company town of Camden, Texas. The author discusses archival preservation and processing best practices applied to the company's extensive collection of ledgers donated to the East Texas Research Center, a regional university archive. This work demonstrates the archival decisions making process regarding a more traditional processing method over MPLP and other archival processing techniques.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Linda Reynolds. They provided valuable insight and made recommendations that made this thesis a success.

Linda Reynolds provided me with the graduate assistantship that started my work on processing the Carter Collection Ledgers at the East Texas Research Center. I must have done something right because she hired me to a full time position at the East Texas Research Center to provide me practical experience in an archival setting. Her constant support and belief in me has been nothing short of amazing. She pushed me to make this thesis a project I could take pride in and was always available to answer questions related to archival process or methods. I will be forever grateful to her for her help with this project and her support in my professional and personal life. I also want to thank Alex Schutz, Kyle Ainsworth, and Will Honea for letting me bounce ideas off of them and providing me with suggestions or ideas I hadn't even considered.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1968, the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company officially ceased operations after the company's sale to the U.S. Plywood Corporation. The sale was part of a larger consolidation movement within the American lumber industry but it also marked the end of an important chapter in Texas History. The southern lumber industry's impact on the economic development of the United States, the American South, and the state of Texas, specifically East Texas, cannot be overstated. During a period that occurred from roughly 1880 to 1910 various companies, large and small, harvested vast swaths of the previously untouched timberlands of the American South. Decreased timberlands in the Midwest and the northeast drove operators to the South and provided opportunities for southern entrepreneurs to make their fortunes. Larger operators created whole towns in rural areas where little or no infrastructure existed. These towns, known as company towns, were complete self-contained communities with educational facilities, health care, and housing for the company's employees.

Company towns did not originate with the lumber industry but were created as a result of paternalistic attitudes between labor and company owners. Company towns are generally perceived as exploitative to workers and beneficial only for management and ownership. While to many extents this is true, the company town was a necessary development. During the period of rapid industrialization which occurred in the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century many extractive industries

like coal and lumber relied on these towns and workers often saw the towns as an opportunity to improve their lives.

The W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company and its company town of Camden are representative of the lumber companies that operated during the Bonanza Period. The town of Camden, was for many of its employees, a place they called home. It was a small island community of modernity in a sea of rural communities. Although the town at its height only had around one thousand citizens, it was one of the earliest electrified communities in Polk County. Most importantly, the town represented an opportunity for people living in East Texas to make a living that was not reliant solely on subsistence farming. The town also provided regular medical care and education for its citizens, a prospect that was rare in rural East Texas.

The W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company is also unique in that it was one of the few large operators to continue after the Great Depression. The majority of East Texas lumber companies ended their operations in the 1930s as the virgin forests of the state were clear cut and the overall cost of operations increased. The W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company was an early adopter of forest conservation principles and the company operated with the approach of a long term endeavor which contrasted with the management principles of many of the other large companies in East Texas.

Although the company and its town no longer exist, the company's history can be found in the Carter Collection at the East Texas Research Center (ETRC). The Carter Collection represents a large archival collection of materials related to operations of the

W.T. Carter and Brother Company as well as its subsidiary companies. The collection is one of the largest unprocessed collections in the ETRC and is nearly 250 linear feet of material. The collection represents a wealth of information for researchers interested in the southern lumber industry's operating models, the dangers workers faced, workers' compensation, and how sawmill company towns functioned. The collection, when made available to the public will be an invaluable resource for understanding a crucial period in the development of state of Texas.

As a graduate assistant, I started work on a grant-funded project to process the Carter Collection. It was during this work that I began to appreciate and understand just what an important role the company and the larger industry played in developing the nineteenth-century Texas economy. At the suggestion of the ETRC's director, I decided to pursue an archival processing project as part of my master's thesis capstone project in public history. A public history thesis differs from a traditional history thesis in that it combines historical research with a practical project application component. As a result the Carter Collection provided me a unique opportunity to satisfy these two requirements. I could apply archival theory in a real world application and also provide an updated history of a major company involved in the southern lumber industry.

The project has hastened the public's accessibility to the Carter Collection and also provides an updated history of the W.T. Carter and Brother Company. Prior to this thesis, the last history of the company was written in 1950 while the company was still operating. Historians have unfortunately overlooked the company, despite its longevity in

the industry relative to some of its contemporaries. One of the purposes of this thesis is to remedy this lack of recent scholarship. The other purpose was to help process a portion of the collection to make it available to the public.

This thesis has three chapters that address the company's history and detail my experience of processing the company's ledgers. The first chapter provides an overview of the history of company towns and specifically their use in the southern lumber industry. The second chapter updates the W.T. Carter and Brother Company history and also discusses the subsidiary companies which operated as part of the company. The chapter also provides an overview of the town of Camden, a typical sawmill company town in East Texas. The third and final chapter addresses the archival principles I applied to the ledgers in the collection. This chapter discusses preservation steps applied to the ledgers as well as their arrangement and description. A finding aid of the ledgers is located in the appendix. The final chapter also touches on the challenges and opportunities of grant-funded projects in an archival setting.

Completion of this thesis project provides the public with an updated history of the W.T. Carter and Brother Company but most importantly it brings the Carter Collection closer to public access. The project had many challenges I anticipated and many I had not foreseen. I realized early in my project that I needed to be flexible and adjust my plans to adapt to the realities of the collection. This was an invaluable lesson that I will apply in future archival work, historical research, and historical writing. In addition, this project changed my initial preconceptions of the company town and its role in the

economic development of the country. I had wrongly assumed company towns were only beneficial to company owners and offered little in return for those who lived and worked in them. The reality, like history, is the story of company towns is multifaceted. It is my hope that this work provides a nuanced and objective view of the W.T. Carter and Brother Company and its role in the southern lumber industry.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Company Town System

As William Thomas Carter watched his sawmill at Barnum, Texas burn to the ground in 1897 from sparks created by a locomotive of the Trinity & Sabine Railroad it is difficult to determine what he must have thought about at that moment as everything he had built to that point went up in flames. Did he question his choice of going into the lumber industry? Did he consider quitting the business altogether and finding another safer career? We will never know the answers to what W.T. Carter was thinking that day but we do know that in the face of such a devastating loss he decided to pick through the ashes to salvage what he could and pressed on with his vision of a company that would become one of the largest and longest-lasting lumber companies in East Texas. Fires were a common occurrence in the Southern lumber industry and often resulted in a complete loss for the mill and equipment. In addition, mills were inherently dangerous to operate both by the men who ran them on a daily basis and as a business prospect for their owners.<sup>1</sup> Therefore W.T. Carter must have known this was a possibility as an operator of a sawmill but what possessed him to press on after such a devastating loss? The answer is he knew that a growing nation would need the lumber he

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Maxwell and Robert D. Baker, *Sawdust Empire* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1983), 71.



could provide, he had the capital to start over, and he had the determination to create a company that would harvest the large tracts of virgin timber in East Texas. His vision included the creation of a lumber company, a turpentine production company, a railroad that he would control, a house construction company, and most importantly a town to support these companies. The mill became the center of his empire and he placed the seat of his empire in Polk County at Camden, Texas. The location was not chosen arbitrarily; it was in the middle of huge tracts of land he had acquired through lease or outright purchase when land covered by virgin pine forests was considered by most landowners as worthless for their agricultural uses.

W.T. Carter was not the first entrepreneur to conceive of an operation where he controlled as many aspects directly as possible to run the most efficient and profitable business he could. He followed a model laid out by contemporaries in both the Southern lumber industry and other resource extraction industries in the United States. This was the model of the company town. Carter operated his business during the height of paternalism in the nineteenth century and the impact of paternalism strongly influenced his vision for the future of his company. Paternalism and the company town system that sprang from it was the idea where the management of workers relied on the owner acting as a benevolent patriarch to his workers while providing for all their financial, housing, social, and medical needs.<sup>2</sup> The paternalistic system which became the model for W.T.

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<sup>2</sup> Steven A. Reich, "The Making of a Southern Sawmill World: Race, Class, and Rural Transformation in the Piney Woods of East Texas, 1830-1930," PhD Dissertation (Northwestern University, 1998), 211-212.

Carter and other industrialists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries used the concept of vertical integration to maximize profits and maintain control of their workforce.

The nineteenth and early twentieth century represented the heyday for company towns in the United States. A survey of historical company towns placed three percent of the U.S. population living in some form of company town during this time.<sup>3</sup> During this time, the growth of company towns was clearly associated with the belief in paternalism but also coincided with meeting the demands of a rapidly industrializing nation. Many different industries utilized the company town system but they were and still are most commonly found among the resource extraction industries.<sup>4</sup> However, even though multiple industries utilized the company town model, they all shared similar features regardless of what they produced.

During this period, standard features of company towns included payment in credit instead of cash, the majority of infrastructure built by the company for its workers, hospital plans with a company doctor, company stores providing goods to employees, and civic organizations endorsed by the company. All of these features were usually built or centered on the company's production center with a corresponding railroad depot to connect the town with the rest of the national rail network. Across the United States companies were creating towns with little or no urban infrastructure nearby and therefore

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<sup>3</sup> Victor G. Devinatz, "Reevaluating U.S. Company Paternalism from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries." *Labor History*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (May 2012): 300.

<sup>4</sup> Oliver J. Dinius and Angela Vergara, *Company Towns in the Americas: Landscape, Power, and Working Class Communities* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 3.

had to develop these structures to attract workers. Undoubtedly, the owners of these towns used these features to exert as much control as possible over their workers but without these amenities, exploitative or not the industrialization that occurred in the United States during this time would have happened at a slower pace.<sup>5</sup>

The company town model allowed owners not to have to rely on existing infrastructure or population centers for labor if they created a population center of their own. The creation of these towns was made possible by the railroad's rapid expansion after the Civil War which permitted towns to be formed in rural areas close to the resources they needed. Industries that typically utilized the company town model were resource extraction based industries but also included the manufacture of textiles and other goods. Although these industries had their own business models they shared in the development of company towns in remote areas connected to the rest of the country via railroads. The remoteness of these towns was primarily determined by the location of resources used by each industry. However, the philosophies and approaches to the management of their workers were broadly consistent.

The history of company towns starts with the textile industry in the northeastern United States. In the 1830s majority of this production was in the state of Massachusetts and surrounding states. The consolidation of manufacturing and increased specialization in this area directly resulted from new technologies, economic growth, and increased

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<sup>5</sup> Dinius and Vergara, *Company Towns in the Americas*, 9.

trade. These factors increased the available economic capital of entrepreneurs in the area and allowed the industrialization of formerly artisanal trades.<sup>6</sup> The textile mill towns of New England represented one of the earliest forms of industrialization in the United States. The unique development of mill towns in the area is directly attributable to the abundant waterways, which acted as the primary power source for these mills and the main transportation route to get finished goods to market.<sup>7</sup> During this time the railroad network and steam power technology had not been developed sufficiently to move these mills away from the rivers and streams of New England.

The most well-known example of these towns and also the earliest mill town, was Lowell, Massachusetts. Lowell was developed after Francis Cabot Lowell famously visited Britain at the start of the industrial revolution to observe and ultimately memorize the plans of British textile machinery for use in the United States. In addition to memorizing the machinery that would make Lowell one of the country's largest manufacturing centers he also observed the poverty industrialization had brought to British workers. He conceived Lowell with his business partners, the Boston Associates, as an opportunity to address and minimize the negative aspects of industrialization for workers.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> John S. Garner, *The Model Company Town: Urban Design Through Private Enterprise in Nineteenth-Century New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), 14-15.

<sup>7</sup> Garner, *The Model Company Town*, 27.

<sup>8</sup> Cathy Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment Public History in a Post Industrial City* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 48-49.

Lowell actively marketed itself with images of nature coexisting with industry. The town's plans specifically incorporated green spaces, parks, and walkways along its many canals. In addition to being pleasing aesthetically it was believed these natural spaces would promote worker harmony even with grueling working conditions.<sup>9</sup> The Boston Associates constructed rows of boarding houses around the textile mills to house the workforce made up largely of women. This housing was designed to minimize worker discontent by providing quality housing but living in such close proximity ironically ended up fostering early worker unionization efforts when the company began to cut costs and worker amenities to maintain profitability in the 1840s.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the initial appeal of paternalism as a protecting force for women working in the mills of Lowell became perceived as overly controlling in the form of mandatory curfews, set meals, and enforced religious services became onerous limiting worker freedom.<sup>11</sup> As the town continued to industrialize, the original vision of factories in a pastoral setting was replaced by an increasingly urbanized environment and began to mimic the same conditions the owners had hoped to avoid with their model community. Lowell also presaged some of same the issues that would plague future company towns who attempted to maintain as much control as possible over their workforce.

Ludlow, Massachusetts exemplifies the transition from the small mill village to the company town model. Unlike later company towns in the resource extraction

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<sup>9</sup> Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment* 49.

<sup>10</sup> Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment* 50.

<sup>11</sup> Garner, *The Model Company Town* 54.

industry, Ludlow had existing mill town infrastructure when the company purchased it along with fifteen hundred acres of land around the town. The town expanded dramatically with early historians remarking that before the town was purchased there were a few old tenement houses for workers, a single church, and a one-room schoolhouse. The purchase of the town by the Ludlow Associates resulted in almost immediate improvements in the form of improved tenement homes, graded streets, and a six-room schoolhouse was among the first changes to occur. Over the next thirty years, the company added parks, a library, a hotel, dining rooms, and an electric plant near the turn of the century. While the rest of the improvements were welcomed by citizens of the town the tenement houses were not popular. The company realized many of the employees were commuting and not living within the town itself because they preferred single family homes. The company, wanting to retain its workers and keep them as close to the mill as possible, quickly addressed the issue, starting new single family home construction for the workers with families and converting the tenement houses to boarding houses for single men.<sup>12</sup> The preference for single family dwellings was an early lesson for company town owners learned and became the model for the future.

The example touted by many industrialists during the nineteenth century and one of the most famous company towns was the town of Pullman outside of Chicago. The end of the American Civil War resulted in labor shortages and workers' wages fell

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<sup>12</sup> Garner, *The Model Company Town*, 40-41.

significantly during the years following the war. Concurrent with the falling wages was a lack of adequate housing.<sup>13</sup> However, the end of the Civil War brought about a rapid expansion of the nation's railroad system. The architect of Pullman, Illinois was George Mortimer Pullman and he had a plan to take advantage of the growth of the railroad while also improving the lives of his workers. He was going to build a town to provide the workers with everything they would need to better themselves. Initially, the idea seemed to be a spectacular success with visitors to the town genuinely impressed by the layout and the quality of housing.<sup>14</sup>

Under the surface, growing problems suggested Pullman was not the workers' paradise the company made it out to be. Pullman was a town designed to provide housing and amenities for its workers and as another profit-generating arm of the Pullman Company. As a result, utilities were higher than in neighboring towns or the city of Chicago and employees were strongly encouraged to live within the town.<sup>15</sup> Although the housing was considered very good compared to what was available to most Americans in the country at the time, a crucial element differentiated this housing. It belonged to the company who placed onerous rental policies on its tenants and more importantly the homes could never be owned by the workers themselves. When workers lost their jobs or their hours were reduced to the point where they could no longer afford company housing

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<sup>13</sup> Lindsey Almont, "Paternalism and the Pullman Strike," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Fall 1939): 272.

<sup>14</sup> Almont, "Paternalism and the Pullman Strike," 275.

<sup>15</sup> Almont, "Paternalism and the Pullman Strike," 280.

rates, they were forced out of their homes which bred discontent among workers.<sup>16</sup>

Housing in Pullman was segregated by labor hierarchy with management residing in free-standing homes, skilled laborers living in row houses, and unskilled labor relegated to tenement housing.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to housing, the town of Pullman also built, operated, and owned all the community buildings and municipal services. These buildings included a church to be used by all the town's denominations, a hotel, markets, banks, theatres, and a sports complex. All of these buildings were set in the park like atmosphere of the planned community designed to visually differentiate the town from other industrial centers.<sup>18</sup> The town operated by Pullman took the concepts explored in previous utopian communities and reinterpreted them to preserve class structures while still improving the whole of society.<sup>19</sup> This corruption of utopian community concepts was utilized as a way to promote the Pullman company town model among industrialists but it also led to inevitable ill will between the company and its workforce.

These deficiencies in the company town of Pullman were largely minimized and ignored until the financial Panic of 1893. The economic downturn drastically reduced the demand for Pullman rail cars. As a result, the company had to cut wages and workers'

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<sup>16</sup> Almont, "Paternalism and the Pullman Strike," 282.

<sup>17</sup> David Ray Papke, *The Pullman Case: The Clash of Labor and Capital in Industrial America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 12.

<sup>18</sup> Jane Eva Baxter, "The Paradox of a Capitalist Utopia: Visionary Ideals and Lived Experience in the Pullman Community 1880-1900," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Vol 16, No 4, (Dec. 2012): 654-655.

<sup>19</sup> Papke, *The Pullman Case*, 14.



hours to maintain high company profits. This made Pullman's worker paradise façade come collapsing down dramatically with the Pullman Strike of 1894. High rents and low wages had put workers in an untenable position. The amenities provided by Pullman no longer seemed worth the high rent and utility prices as they witnessed more and more of their wages eaten up by compulsory fees associated with living within the town. To address their issues workers attempted to unionize and presented their concerns to the company which promptly rejected them.

George Pullman like many industrialists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was vehemently opposed to any labor organization. He saw his striking workers as ungrateful for all that he had provided for them and more importantly considered their labor a commodity. He attempted to use strikebreakers to continue operations but this only increased tensions among the company and workers. Ultimately, the strike spilled out beyond Pullman when members of the American Railway Union sided with fellow union members in Pullman and decided not to service any trains carrying Pullman Company Cars.<sup>20</sup> Ultimately, delays in rail shipments forced federal intervention with armed U.S. troops sent to Pullman to break the strike. After the strike was broken, President Grover Cleveland created a national commission to determine the causes of the strike and provide recommendations for preventing future labor strife.<sup>21</sup> These

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<sup>20</sup> Eric Arnsen, "American Workers and the Labor Movement in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *The Gilded Age Essays on the Origins of Modern American*, ed. Charles W. Calhoun (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1996), 56.

<sup>21</sup> Almont, "Paternalism and the Pullman Strike." 288.

recommendations were presented to George Pullman who quickly dismissed the proposed reforms. It was not until his death in 1897 that the town began to separate itself from the company and the Pullman experiment came to an end.<sup>22</sup>

The town of Pullman is essential in the larger history of company towns because it demonstrated the limits of the company town system, especially in an economic downturn. In addition, the Pullman Strike also brought to the forefront criticisms of the system and the exploitative flaws of its implementation. The Pullman Strike represented what could happen when a company attempted to exert absolute control of its workers' lives. Pullman undoubtedly proved to be a lesson for W.T. Carter and other operators in the Southern lumber industry. The town's close proximity to Chicago meant it lacked some features endemic to company towns in rural locations and especially the rural South.

Unlike Pullman, Southern company towns possessed ingrained cultural attitudes left over from the antebellum period. White elites believed in the inferiority of African Americans but also in the inferiority of poor whites. The antebellum South's power structure was primarily built on an aristocratic system of large scale planters who controlled most of the economic and political capital. This system dovetailed nicely into the company town system which relied on a patriarch much like a plantation owner who presided with complete control over his business endeavors. For most southern elites, the

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<sup>22</sup> Almont, "Paternalism and the Pullman Strike." 289.

idea of large numbers of poor black and white southerners deciding their own fates was a dangerous idea.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the use of company towns in the South can be interpreted as an attempt to maintain this aristocratic power structure and also prevent the threat of poor southerners, regardless of race, upsetting this order. These antebellum attitudes help explain why the model was embraced by both Southern entrepreneurs and accepted even if grudgingly by Southern company town employees.

The company towns of the South, on the whole, possessed better than average housing, medical care, and schools than most southerners could find in rural agricultural communities lacking a large company presence.<sup>24</sup> As electrification came into use many of these company towns boasted of being the first electrified communities in their areas. The prospects of medical care, quality housing, and consistent albeit dangerous employment proved very attractive to southerners who saw the towns as an opportunity to improve their lives. Most of these workers recognized the exploitative nature of the company town system but those who worked in these towns clearly felt the alternative was better than tenant or sharecropping.

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<sup>23</sup> William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 59.

<sup>24</sup> W.S. Brame, interview conducted by Robert S. Maxwell, No Date, OH-15, East Texas Lumber Industry Project 1954-1967, Oral History Collection, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas. There are no audio recordings or full transcriptions of Maxwell's interviews, thus there is no way to utilize direct quotes. Historians must interpret Maxwell's notes from each interview he conducted. These interviews were done as part of his East Texas Lumber History Project which recorded interviews from 1954 to 1967. Most of these interviews were conducted after many of the interviewees had left the industry or the companies they were interviewed about were no longer in operation. In addition, nostalgia and collective memory have certainly altered the true remembrances of these individuals but they represent some of the best and only firsthand accounts available to historians and scholars interested in the Southern lumber industry.

While Pullman was the model for advocates of company towns before the Pullman Strike of 1894, afterwards mining towns provided another town model for W.T. Carter and other lumber company owners in the South. This is obvious from the standpoint of both the mining and lumber industries' reliance on a resource to refine or turn into a finished product. The mining towns were often located in remote locations with only a railroad connection to the outside world. The isolated nature of these towns meant that unlike Pullman, which could rely on nearby urban infrastructure, everything a town required had to be constructed on site.

The earliest development of coal mining towns paralleled the development of the textile mill towns. The primary way to transport ore to be processed was through the use of waterways. This use of waterways forced the earliest mining operations to be located close enough to these transportation routes to maintain profitability. The expansion of the railroad meant an increased demand for coal as well as the ability to locate operations away from rivers and streams for the first time. The coal company towns of Appalachia are often the most thought of example when people hear the term. The majority of these towns had the features of other company towns but were generally less well constructed and maintained than areas outside of Appalachia.<sup>25</sup>

By the turn of the century, coal mining had extended across the country to places such as the Trinidad Coal Field in Colorado, the site of the 1914 Ludlow Massacre, one

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<sup>25</sup> John Garner, *The Company Town: Architecture and Society in the Early Industrial Age* (New York: Oxford University Press), 179.

of the most notorious and bloody labor disputes in United States history. Between the Appalachian and the Rocky Mountains are the coal mining towns of the American South that provide the best contemporary counterpart to better understand the development of the sawmill company towns of the Southern lumber industry. The mining of bituminous coal in Alabama represented one of the South's first large scale industrial enterprises. These southern mines manufactured coke which was the product of smelting raw bituminous coal in "beehive" oven smelters.<sup>26</sup> Coke was used in the iron and steel industries throughout the country which created regional centers of production. The southern coal field's primary clients were in nearby Birmingham and across the state line in Georgia.<sup>27</sup>

Alabama coal towns contained a critical aspect that was missing from other mining and coal towns throughout the United States: an ingrained culture of Racial Paternalism, a holdover from the antebellum South. Racism occurred in every company town in the United States and was not unique to the South. Immigrant workers or minority groups were often viewed with disdain or outright disgust. What was unique to the South was a previously established culture that accepted wealthy owners commanding a large labor force to exploit resources. Previously unsuccessful labor strikes at the turn of the century in the Alabama coalfields created an atmosphere where mine operators preferred African American workers over their white counterparts

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<sup>26</sup> James Sanders Day, *Diamonds in the Rough: A History of Alabama's Cahaba Coal Field* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013), 68.

<sup>27</sup> Day, *Diamonds in the Rough: A History of Alabama's Cahaba Coal Field*, 64.

because they were viewed as more controllable.<sup>28</sup> The expectation of many mine operators in the South was that the “cheap docile negro labor” provided a bulwark against labor unions and strikes. In fact, many mining towns in the South advertised for exclusively for black workers.<sup>29</sup>

As a result of the ingrained racial prejudices of the South one would expect to find that white and black miners frequently had issues working with one another but the opposite is true. White workers undoubtedly saw themselves as superior to their black counterparts but they also recognized the dangers of working in the coal industry. Accidents in the mines did not discriminate on the basis of race and working in the Alabama coalfield was significantly more dangerous than working in the coalfields of Appalachia. In the 1910s, the death rate in the mines in Alabama was nine to ten percent of the workforce compared to a rate of one to two percent in Appalachia.<sup>30</sup> Dangerous working conditions required miners to rely on each other for their own personal safety despite ingrained cultural attitudes. This does not mean that whites and blacks were not pitted against each other by mine owners along old racial lines to prevent unionization efforts.<sup>31</sup> In the coalfields of Alabama, the more organized workers attempted to become the more racial narratives were reinforced by management. This became a key tactic the

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<sup>28</sup> Brian Kelly, “Policing the “Negro Eden”: Racial Paternalism in the Alabama Coalfields, 1908-1921,” *The Alabama Review*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (July 1998): 164.

<sup>29</sup> Brian Kelly, “Policing the “Negro Eden”: Racial Paternalism in the Alabama Coalfields,” 166.

<sup>30</sup> Day, *Diamonds in the Rough: A History of Alabama’s Cahaba Coal Field* 107.

<sup>31</sup> Day, *Diamonds in the Rough: A History of Alabama’s Cahaba Coal Field* 124.

Southern lumber industry utilized with its own multiracial workforce to prevent unionization.<sup>32</sup>

The first large scale timber harvesting that occurred in the United States took place in the upper Midwest during the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>33</sup> Like their counterparts in the textile industry, these companies initially relied on waterways to provide transportation of timber.<sup>34</sup> St. Louis, Missouri represented the hub for the Midwest timber companies where they shipped the majority of their lumber and timber via the Mississippi River. St. Louis had long been a vital trading location in the United States because of its proximity to the Mississippi which serves as one of the most extensive transportation ways in the country.<sup>35</sup> As the railroad expanded, operators in the Midwest were able to locate their mills and logging operations further away from navigable waterways for transportation purposes. However, the development of this industry did not usually lead to large scale company sawmill towns like in the American South. This can be attributed to the seasonal nature of the harvesting of lumber, the reliance on smaller logging camps, and a greater reliance on shipping timber to mills located along the Mississippi River.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The Cahaba coalfield towns of Alabama provide a better analogy for understanding the company towns of the Southern lumber industry than other contemporary company towns elsewhere in the state Texas. The primary example of this would be the company town of Thurber seventy miles west of Fort Worth, Texas. Thurber resembled the coal towns of Alabama in operation and the town exhibited preferential treatment of its workers but this was based more on ethnic grounds as opposed to racial. In addition, the cultural similarities (i.e. antebellum attitudes towards race and class hierarchy) of Alabama and East Texas more closely align than those of West Texas.

<sup>33</sup> Agnes Larson and Bradley Gills, *The White Pine Industry in Minnesota: A History*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 11.

<sup>34</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 35.

<sup>35</sup> Larson and Gills, *The White Pine Industry in Minnesota*, 15.

<sup>36</sup> Larson and Gills, *The White Pine Industry in Minnesota*, 75.

As the industry gradually cutout the land of the Midwest some operators moved their operations to the South where the large scale company towns like Camden developed. The sawmill company towns of the South possessed all of the traits of company towns mentioned previously in this chapter. Still, it is crucial to understand the specific characteristics of these features. The planning of the company town was a conscious design effort by timber magnates to optimize production and the town's operations. In the timber and turpentine industries of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, a central company town facilitated the movement of finished products to urban centers. A railroad depot was always present to move this finished lumber, bring in operating materials, and laborers. The depot was the town's connection to the outside world and connected the company's privately owned railroad with the national railroad network. The depot, usually a town's first structure, was located near the sawmill with the rest of the town planned around it.<sup>37</sup>

Southern lumber company towns constructed the sawmill and supporting buildings first. The next portion of the town built was housing for the workers. Company housing was promoted as a way to improve the quality of living standards for the majority of the employees in accordance with the paternalistic approach to management. Workers were assigned housing based on their position in the company and by race. Sawmill company towns were largely segregated with black, Hispanic, and other

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<sup>37</sup> Ruth A. Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers: An Economic and Social Picture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 74-75; Tanya K. Arnold "The Daniel Lumber Company: A Half Century in East Texas," Masters Thesis (Stephen F. Austin State University, 1999), 59-61.



minority employees relegated to the least desirable part of the town. An employee's position within the company hierarchy and hourly wage determined the quality of housing employees could expect to be available to them. Despite this, even the less desirable housing was well made, if utilitarian, and provided better housing than was available to many East Texans. Residences often shared a water connection through a communal well. Space for gardens to grow personal crops and to tend individually owned livestock was standard. While generally constructed of similar materials and of a homogenous style, houses were further differentiated in desirability by their location around the mill. Typically, the areas where minority employees were segregated, were located closest to the sawmill or railroad tracks, while the more desirable housing was placed further from the loudest equipment and machinery. The cost of rent for housing was deducted every month from workers' paychecks.<sup>38</sup>

Another feature all company sawmill towns featured was a company doctor and infirmary of some sort. The company doctor attended to the many injuries workers in the lumber industry sustained. These doctors while having a vested interest in making sure employees returned to work as quickly as possible and with a minimum of expense to the company's bottom line did provide decent medical service at a time when doctors in the area were scarce. The infirmary, which was sometimes referred to as a hospital, was

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<sup>38</sup> Flossie Tyson Beck, "Development of the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Industry," Masters Thesis (Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College, 1950), 68-69.

usually connected to the doctor's on site offices or the company drug store.<sup>39</sup> The doctor was provided with some of the best available housing in the town close to other members of management. If a mill lacked a dedicated infirmary or hospital, the doctor's home would serve double duty as a residence and doctor's office.<sup>40</sup> The cost of medical services was paid with a standard deduction from workers' pay usually done on a monthly basis as a hospital plan fee.<sup>41</sup>

The company doctor was frequently called upon because the lumber industry was one of the most hazardous professions in the United States, rivaling the coal industry in the level of danger during the turn of the century.<sup>42</sup> The inherent risk of working at a sawmill with heavy machinery meant the doctor often saw crushed limbs and severed limbs. Working in the woods felling trees was even more hazardous than working in the mill where accidents were frequent and often life threatening. To compound the dangers of working for a lumber company disease often ran rampant in the form of malaria, typhoid, and tuberculosis.<sup>43</sup>

The company store in the sawmill towns of the South was operated similarly in many respects to the stores of other company towns throughout the United States but was usually referred to as the commissary. Perhaps this was the result of the already growing

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<sup>39</sup> Thad Sitton and James H. Conrad, *Nameless Towns: Texas Sawmill Communities, 1880-1942* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 61.

<sup>40</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 144.

<sup>41</sup> Mary Alice Askins Cook, "Patients and Profits: East Texas Lumber Company Doctors, 1890-1930," Masters Thesis (Stephen F. Austin State University, 2011). 113-114.

<sup>42</sup> Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers*, 111.

<sup>43</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 143.

negative connotations of the term company store but regardless the commissary was the primary supplier of goods and food to workers. These buildings were often the most well-constructed buildings outside of the mill itself and the company offices. Usually, a two-story building with a false front to make it appear even larger; it was designed to impress its patrons.<sup>44</sup> Commissaries were well stocked with dry goods, fresh meat, fresh produce, and just about anything else a general store of the time period possessed. These commissaries were explicitly designed to have anything and everything the workers might desire to purchase.

The company store intended to be a profit generating center for the company and prevent workers from seeking alternatives. To this end, the commissaries operated on a cash, voucher, and credit system. The store allowed purchases with cash but this was a rare occurrence because cash was not something most workers regularly had on hand. Usually, scrip or checks were issued to workers in lieu of cash and redeemed at the commissary for goods. The system of mandatory paycheck deductions often left workers short of enough to scrip to cover all of the goods they needed once deductions for healthcare and housing were taken into account. The commissary happily extended credit to any worker or their family members for purchases.<sup>45</sup> These purchases would then be totaled and added to the deductions from the workers paycheck in the next pay period.

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<sup>44</sup> Judge John W. Minton, interview conducted by Robert Maxwell, May 13, 1956, OH-27, East Texas Lumber Industry Project 1954-1967, Oral History Collection, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas; Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 147.

<sup>45</sup> Arnold, "The Daniel Lumber Company: A Half Century in East Texas," 67.

Larger expenses were sometimes allowed to be paid over multiple pay periods but this was the exception and not the rule. Although this system permitted workers the ability to get all the food and goods they needed it also frequently resulted in being locked into a system of chronic debt to the company.<sup>46</sup>

Civic pride and a sense of community were something the operators of these southern sawmill towns wanted to instill in their workers. In Southern lumber industry company towns most town gatherings and social and civic meetings took place in the churches or schoolhouses.<sup>47</sup> Company towns in other parts of the United States regularly built dedicated public halls or spaces in addition to churches. The most likely explanation is operators in the South already associated the church as the town meeting center and it was also one less expense companies incurred in constructing their towns. Leisure activities were usually limited in the lumber company towns of the South and were sometimes nonexistent when the mills were working at full capacity. The primary recreational activities of workers consisted of outdoor activities, watching a baseball game with a rival sawmill town team, or watching a traveling medicine show.<sup>48</sup>

A unique aspect to the Southern lumber industry was utilizing subsidiary lumber camps to bring resources to the company town. Although the towns were centrally located when they were initially built, they quickly consumed all the timber in the area. As a result, logging fronts moved with the tree line and eventually required rail transport

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<sup>46</sup> Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers*, 138.

<sup>47</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 142.

<sup>48</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 143.

to continue to feed the mill. Southern lumber operations relied heavily on the resources produced by lumber and turpentine camps to keep the mills running. Linking these camps to the town was a narrow gauge lumber railroad owned by the company. Logging railroads branched out from the camp rail depot and into the unharvested forests to help logging operations.<sup>49</sup> These camps were much more haphazardly designed but still retained a planned layout like the larger company towns. Lumber camps consisted of a series of boxcars that acted as mobile housing and offices for camp personnel. Living quarters for the lumberman were often temporary and sometimes consisted only of tents. The transient nature of these camps meant camps rarely remained as towns when they pushed further into the virgin timber of the piney woods; rarely leaving any visible lasting legacy other than cut over land.<sup>50</sup>

The workforce of the southern lumber company towns was primarily drawn from the surrounding area offering an alternative to sharecropping. The workforce contrasts with the Appalachian mining towns or Pullman which drew upon an immigrant workforce to conduct their operations. Most laborers in the sawmill towns were classified as common laborers and made around \$1.00 or \$2.00 per day with a workweek that only allowed Sunday off and usually consisted of an eleven-hour workday. Advancement in the company was slow and required a lifelong commitment to the company or special skills to become something more than a general laborer.<sup>51</sup> Employees of these towns

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<sup>49</sup> Arnold, "The Daniel Lumber Company: A Half Century in East Texas," 55.

<sup>50</sup> Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers*, 141-142.

<sup>51</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 122-123

often had similar cultural and religious influences with the most obvious distinction being race. White supremacy was the rule of the southern lumber industry mill towns and enforced with company attitudes reflected in housing segregation, even more limited advancement than their white counterparts, and reduced compensation for hourly pay or injuries. However, despite this black and white employees often worked together in the mill and felling trees at the logging front. Discrimination was commonplace and prevalent attitudes of white superiority reinforced by the companies when employees with the same jobs received different compensation for work or injury on the basis of race.<sup>52</sup>

The Southern sawmill town owners were vehemently anti-union as many of their contemporary company town owners in different industries. Unions represented an existential threat to the industry and the social order of the South in most operators' minds, especially in the state of Texas.<sup>53</sup> However, attempts at unionization did occur most notably culminating in the Graybow Riot or Massacre depending on one's point of view. The incident happened in Graybow, Louisiana in 1912 when shooting started during a meeting held by A.L. Emmerson, the president of the Brotherhood of Timber Workers (BTW). The Brotherhood had recently aligned itself with the International Workers of the World (I.W.W.) to strengthen its union power and bargaining position. However, the radical reputation of the I.W.W. resulted in a violent crackdown from

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<sup>52</sup> Reich, "The Making of a Southern Sawmill World," 258-259.

<sup>53</sup> Reich, "The Making of a Southern Sawmill World," 268.

owners who felt the alliance between the BTW and I.W.W. only confirmed their worst fears. The resulting aftermath set back worker unionization efforts in the South dramatically.<sup>54</sup> The company towns of the Southern lumber industry faced issues of worker discontent, like many of their counterparts, with the suppression of unions through the encouragement of passing friendly regulations and the creation of loyalty contracts.<sup>55</sup>

The development of company towns from their beginnings as textile mill villages in the Northeastern United States to the company town fiefdoms of the American South was a constant series of refinements. Lessons learned by owners from previous failures in other industries were incorporated to create a workers' paradise. The workers' paradise rarely ever materialized for either the owners or the employees. Owners seemed to genuinely believe that if they provided the proper resources they could minimize discontent among their workforce. This might be perceived as hubris on the owner's part but it was also the most successful model available at the time to allow an area to industrialize out of a rural economy rapidly. The most obvious flaws in this system seem most apparent when one considers the limited opportunities for advancement offered to those working in these communities combined with ever present company influence in every aspect of daily life creating a feeling of dependence and intrusion into workers'

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<sup>54</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 130-131; Ryan Gullett, "East Texas Theatre of the Timber War: Kirby Lumber Company's War with the Brotherhood of Timber Workers," *East Texas Historical Journal*, Vol 48, No 2 (Fall 2010): 58.

<sup>55</sup> Gullett, "East Texas Theatre of the Timber War," 67.

lives. The company town system is rightly criticized for its exploitative nature but those criticisms rarely suggest an alternative model available to entrepreneurs industrializing a rural area lacking in infrastructure. The system was most definitely imperfect but it was fundamental to the industrialization of the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. W.T. Carter's choice in utilizing the company town model was one made of necessity. It was also the only viable model available for a lumber company operator in the Southern United States at the time.



## CHAPTER TWO

### The Carter Company

A passenger on the Houston, East, and West Texas Railroad traveling through Polk County, Texas in the late 1800s and early 1900s would have been struck by the towering longleaf pine forests which stretched as far as the eye could see. This seemingly never ending sea of pines was only broken by dramatic openings of cutover land or islands of civilization in the form of sawmill towns. Entrepreneurs ventured into this world of supposedly limitless timber and saw opportunity. Some brought their trade from the other timber producing regions of the country, others recognized the prospects within their own backyards. The United States was in the midst of recovering from the devastation of the American Civil War but it was also expanding westward to the Pacific with the promise of a new life just beyond the horizon.

Expanding the frontier and, more importantly, urban growth meant an increase in demand for lumber for construction materials and building infrastructure. Sawmill towns of East Texas were loud and dirty but they provided quality jobs for thousands of Texans looking for economic opportunity outside of a traditional agricultural system of subsistence or tenant farming. They were places where workers toiled for long hours in physically demanding and dangerous working conditions. The mill owners lorded over their workers as either a benevolent patriarch or a brutal taskmaster depending on the owner's personality and philosophy towards their workers.

However, sawmill towns also were places where rural East Texans could find a well-stocked commissary, public schools, and decent medical care. These mill towns provided East Texas with its first large scale commercial industry not dependent on the cultivating, growing, and harvesting of crops. The sawmill towns of East Texas simultaneously represent an exploitative economic model that disenfranchised its workforce and a viable alternative for Texans who wanted opportunities and a lifestyle different from the traditional agricultural model.

Reconstruction represented a period of radical change for Southerners and Texans. A society that seemed so unchanging in the preceding antebellum period had to address the devastating effects of a failed war and a failed economic system. The Southern United States had been a largely agrarian economic system reliant on slave labor increasingly focused on monoculture crop production.<sup>1</sup> Minimal industrialization had taken place in the South and the railroad system was woefully underdeveloped when compared to areas north of the Mason-Dixon Line. This nascent industrialization was further concentrated in the few urban centers of the South.

In the face of these economic realities, the South largely fell back on its agrarian economic system. Chattel slavery was replaced with a system of tenant farming and sharecropping.<sup>2</sup> This is not a surprising development because the remnants of the slave

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<sup>1</sup> James P. Barnett and Everett W. Lueck, *Sawmill Towns: Work, Community, Life, and Industrial Development in the Pineywoods of Louisiana and the New South* (Asheville, NC: U.S. Forest Service Research and Development Southern Research Station, 2020) last accessed 05/03/2020 [https://permanent.fdlp.gov/gpo148417/gtr\\_srs257.pdf](https://permanent.fdlp.gov/gpo148417/gtr_srs257.pdf) 7.

<sup>2</sup> Barnett and Lueck, *Sawmill Towns*, 7.

economy relied on wealthy landowners to act as financiers for poor farmers, often with exorbitant rates, to farm the lands formerly worked by slave labor. In addition, many former slaves who now had their freedom lacked the financial means to purchase their own land. In some cases, the land was donated to former slaves but most were simply given the option of remaining on the land they had always worked.<sup>3</sup> This option to work the land came with contracts that put the burden on the workers and protected the landowners to the greatest extent possible. Formerly enslaved people were not the only ones subjected to this economic system. The lack of education and an unskilled workforce meant that most Southerners, regardless of race, had few options but to participate in this economy.<sup>4</sup>

Texas generally followed the trends of the South but some distinct differences existed in the state especially in East Texas. During the late 1870s and 1880s land ownership by individuals actually increased and represented the high point of individual farm ownership in East Texas.<sup>5</sup> These farmers practiced a mix of subsistence and cash crop farming. From the 1880s until the 1910s the number of small farms owned decreased dramatically as an influx of new residents to the state simultaneously increased land prices and limited supply.<sup>6</sup> Before the Civil War, East Texas was the most heavily

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<sup>3</sup> T.J. Byres, *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers* (Totowa, NJ: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1983), 120.

<sup>4</sup> Byres, *Sharecropping*, 122.

<sup>5</sup> Kyle G. Wilkinson, *Yeoman, Sharecroppers, and Socialists: Plain Folk Protest in Texas, 1870-1914* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 12.

<sup>6</sup> Wilkinson, *Yeoman, Sharecroppers, and Socialists*, 14-15.

settled portion of Texas, resisted this trend to the greatest extent but was not immune. Increasing land prices combined with the expansion of the railroad network in the state drove cotton production as the state's primary agricultural crop. Cotton slowly took up more significant portions of subsistence farms and consolidation of land among those who could afford it decreased the overall number of landowners until by 1910 tenant farmers were the majority of farmers in Texas.<sup>7</sup> Despite the dangers and hardship, the sawmills offered an alternative economic system for those who did not want to sharecrop or live a subsistence lifestyle. Working for a southern lumber company provided workers with regular pay, the chance to learn a skilled trade, and living in a community.

In this economic environment W.T. Carter created his company the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company. Operating a sawmill was not an unfamiliar endeavor, his first mill was rebuilt from his father's own burnt mill at Trinity. The Barnum Mill, Carter's first mill built from the ground up, was also his first endeavor into the lumber industry without the backing of his father and undoubtedly provided him lessons for the future construction of Camden. Carter first purchased vast tracts of timberland along the eastern border of Polk County and in northwestern Tyler County. He eventually amassed nearly three hundred thousand acres of holdings in this area. His first mill was at Barnum, Texas, built in 1882, precisely because of the mill's close proximity to the lands he owned. The location importantly also represented the eastern terminus of the Texas and

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<sup>7</sup> Wilkinson, *Yeoman, Sharecroppers, and Socialists*, 23.

New Orleans Railroad during this time. This connection was vital for all company towns to provide a way to transport large amounts of raw and finished goods to the larger national market. Barnum possessed all the hallmarks of a company town: a commissary, hotel, schoolhouse, church, and even a public hall. The town had a population of around 350 people at its peak in 1889.<sup>8</sup> Barnum is important for understanding W.T. Carter's long term vision for his company and the type of community he later built. Carter valued agriculture as both a necessity and a benefit for the town. To improve the town's agricultural production, he cleared two hundred acres for raising hogs and planting crops. These agricultural endeavors supplied the town with food and were unmatched by any other East Texas sawmill operators in size and scope.<sup>9</sup> Unique practices like these were designed to attract and keep employees with his company and in the town.

The mill at Barnum was small compared to Carter's later mills at Camden with a maximum capacity of around sixty-five thousand board feet a day when running day and night shifts.<sup>10</sup> In 1887, W. T. Carter suffered his first fire, which destroyed parts of the mill and planer at a cost of around ten thousand dollars.<sup>11</sup> Undaunted, Carter rebuilt the mill with the latest equipment and machinery but just ten years later sparks from a locomotive of the Texas and New Orleans railroad started another fire. This 1897 fire was particularly devastating for the company; completely destroying the mill, the

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<sup>8</sup> W.T. Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns* (Lufkin, TX: Best of East Texas Publishers), 294.

<sup>9</sup> Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns*, 295.

<sup>10</sup> Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns*, 296.

<sup>11</sup> Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns*, 294.

planner, and storage facilities including finished lumber. The loss was estimated to be a staggering one hundred thousand dollars. The fire was initially determined to be the fault of the Texas and New Orleans Railroad and a court found the railroad liable for paying for the losses. However, in an appeal of the ruling the railroad located a contract that Carter had signed earlier which absolved the railroad from paying damages.<sup>12</sup> The fire proved to be too much for Carter and he decided it was the time to move on from Barnum. He shifted his company's focus further into the eastern section of Polk County and selected the site of his new mill at the location which would become Camden. The surviving equipment, housing, and materials were sent by railroad to Camden to build a new mill in the heart of the company's new holdings in Polk County. The Barnum mill town of the Carter Company was short lived in comparison to Camden but acted as an early blueprint for the future mill and company town.

Camden was designed to be a larger, better constructed, and more prosperous Barnum. Carter created a long running mill through the efficient utilization of the company's timber resources. At the time, the preferred business model for the lumber industry was called "Cut and Get Out." This model predicated its success upon buying or leasing timberlands at the lowest possible rates and constructing short term mills with supporting facilities for workers in a central location. These mill towns rarely left any

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<sup>12</sup>"The Passing of W.T. Carter" *The Lufkin Line* Vol.1 No. 2, March 1921, last accessed May 22, 2021, [https://www.thehistorycenteronline.com/uploads/resources/Lufkin\\_Line\\_1921\\_03\\_March\\_OCR\\_reduced.pdf](https://www.thehistorycenteronline.com/uploads/resources/Lufkin_Line_1921_03_March_OCR_reduced.pdf)

timber standing within the mill's serviceable range.<sup>13</sup> Cutover land with rotting breast high stumps and piles of slash scarring the land dominated the East Texas timberlands. Timber operators who embraced the cut and get out model were wildly successful in making money as long as they had access to timber to harvest. As cutover land increased many entrepreneurs saw the cost of timber leases increase to the point where it was no longer possible to become profitable. This led many lumber companies to cease operations or relocate to the Pacific Northwest to successfully reimplement this model.<sup>14</sup> In Texas the cut and get out model was utilized most efficiently during the Bonanza Period of the 1880s to the 1910s. The industry received a brief boost in the post-World War I era from shipbuilding contracts and increased demand for lumber worldwide but each year the amount of leased timberlands and timber to be cut shrank. In the early 1920s, the future looked bleak for those who had believed there would always be another place to cut timber in East Texas. One big mill after another closed as operations became too expensive or there simply was not any timber left for the mills to process. William L. Bray almost precisely forecasted the Bonanza Period's end when in 1904 he wrote the following summary for the Bureau of Forestry, a forerunner to the U.S. Forest Service:

The longleaf pine in Texas is being cut out at the rate of some three quarters of a billion feet of lumber each year, with a rapidly growing market and output. The ease and cheapness with which longleaf is got to the sawmill, combined with a climate that permits heavy logging throughout the year makes possible a very rapid handling of the crop. At

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<sup>13</sup> James E. Fickle, "Comfortable and Happy, Louisiana and Mississippi Lumber Workers 1900-1950," *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 45, No 2. (July 1990): 411-412.

<sup>14</sup> Robert S. Maxell and Robert D. Baker, *Sawdust Empire* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press), 195-196.

the present rate of lumbering it would appear a reasonable estimate that the virgin pine might hold out twenty year longer.<sup>15</sup>

The end of the 1920s showed Texas only possessed around one million acres of timberlands remaining in the state. Only fifty years earlier, before the wholesale harvesting of East Texas timber, the state was home to an estimated fourteen to eighteen million acres. Southern lumber companies were at a crossroads; they could either become extinct or come up with an alternative model. Some companies like the Long-Bell Lumber Company, a massive lumber company with mills and timberlands across the United States, sold cutover to farmers and used the revenue to continue operations.<sup>16</sup> The concept of selling the land for agricultural use made sense because the land was largely precleared for the farmer however, the soil which created such outstanding stands of pine lumber was impractical for farming. As more and more companies shut down operations in the 1920s because of a lack of timber to cut even skilled workers who were not considered laborers had to take lesser jobs to find employment.<sup>17</sup>

The W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company were noted for their early attempts at forest conservation and the belief that the long term health of the company would be related to the company's ability to manage its timber holdings. W.T. Carter was in the minority among operators when he chose to forgo the cut and get out model. Historians have suggested several reasons the cut and get out system represented the

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<sup>15</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 169.

<sup>16</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 196.

<sup>17</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 196.



dominant way to operate a lumber company. These reasons range from emulating previous models utilized in the East and Upper Midwest, company ownership by non-southern operators who did not have ties to the land they owned, and the erroneous belief the supply of cheap timberlands in the South would never end. All of these rationales possess some validity, however the simplest explanation is conservation was rarely considered a viable business model because the perceived unnecessary expenses operators incurred would cut too deeply into profits.

The Carter and Brother Lumber Company was one of the few lumber companies operating in East Texas to practice forestry conservation but had a notable contemporary in the Southern Pine Lumber Company operated by Thomas L. Temple. Although Temple's Southern Pine Lumber Company and the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company were both large operations, they were significantly smaller than the Kirby Lumber Company run by John Henry Kirby. However, of the three only Temple and Carter survived the end of the Bonanza Era. Kirby embraced the cut and get out model and in the early 1900s during the end of the Bonanza Era was the dominant operator in East Texas. Kirby was hailed as one of the state's leading entrepreneurs, based on the financial success he achieved in such a short period, with his approach to lumber operations. However, his success was short lived, by 1933 he lost controlling interest in his company when his massive operations were forced into bankruptcy as a direct result

of depleted inventory and falling lumber prices.<sup>18</sup> Forest conservation embraced by both Temple and Carter was not driven by environmental concerns but simply understanding the resources which their companies relied on were not limitless.<sup>19</sup> Both leaders realized that creating a viable long term company required careful management of their increasingly limited resources to maintain inventory for their mills.

Conservation methods employed by the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company allowed the company to outlast the majority of operators in Texas. Harvest operations tended to avoid clear cutting and preferred a model of selective thinning.<sup>20</sup> The thinning was often performed in a spiral shape from a designated point in the virgin forest.<sup>21</sup> This process left strips that opened the canopy allowing younger trees to reach maturity faster. The majority of the cut trees had to be a minimum of fourteen inches in diameter. In addition to limiting the size of trees that could be harvested, the company implemented understory burns to allow trees to mature by limiting competition from smaller trees and shrubs. A final conservation practice utilized by the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company was careful skidding of felled timber to waiting lumber cars.<sup>22</sup> Skidding lumber referred to moving logs with mule teams or steam powered skid loaders. Both methods could easily destroy smaller trees and hinder the process of natural forest

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<sup>18</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 101.

<sup>19</sup> William G. Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators: Political Economy of the U.S. Lumber Industry 1890-1941* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press), 10.

<sup>20</sup> Flossie Tyson Beck, "Development of the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Industry" Masters Thesis (Stephen F. Austin State College, 1950), 72.

<sup>21</sup> Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns*, 303.

<sup>22</sup> Beck, "Development of W.T. Carter," 75-76.

regeneration by damaging the soil. Some of these conservation methods were practiced by a few other operators but most did not see the benefits when another stand of virgin forest was simply a few hundred yards away.

Woods operations for the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company were conducted by men with job titles like flatheads, choppers, mule skimmers, punchers, wood's bosses, and steel gangs. These crews harvested the timber destined for the mills at Camden. Initially, most of this work was done in the town's immediate areas but expanded as the timber was thinned. The development of a logging front was dependent on the use of forward operating camps like Camp Ruby one of the largest camps in Polk County.<sup>23</sup> Working in the woods was an inherently dangerous job that required constant attention and was backbreaking work but the pay was slightly higher than common laborers in town. In 1907, it was reported the average woods crew member made \$2.00 a day.<sup>24</sup> Flatheads were the preferred term for the men who felled the trees in East Texas instead of the more familiar lumberjack term used throughout the country. The name came from a grub that burrowed into the trees and ate away pine trees from the inside.<sup>25</sup> Flatheads worked in pairs with two-man crosscut saws, double-bitted axes, and kerosene. Kerosene was used to lubricate the saw by clearing sawdust and debris. Trees were cut at approximately the same height above the ground as the diameter of the tree being

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<sup>23</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 152.

<sup>24</sup> Ruth A. Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers: An Economic and Social Picture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 37.

<sup>25</sup> Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers*, 38.

felled.<sup>26</sup> The workers preferred to cut the trees as high up as possible, ideally around chest height, to minimize the strain from working low to the ground but the woods bosses often insisted their cuts be much lower to increase log length. Woods bosses acted as foremen of the crews or “gangs” who felled timber in the woods either designating an area to be cleared or marking the trees for selective thinning.<sup>27</sup> After a tree was cut down it became the job of the choppers to measure and buck the downed tree. Choppers removed limbs and tops through the process of bucking while other choppers scaled or measured the sections of the tree to determine the final size logs to be cut for transport by either a puncher or mule skimmers.<sup>28</sup> Punchers drove the large wheeled oxen led carts that moved the largest logs out of the forest to the awaiting railcars. The mule skimmers, as their name suggests, drove mule teams for smaller logs. Each of these teamsters had a unique way of handling their animals which woods crews often remarked upon.<sup>29</sup> A near constant communication with the animals with shouting and the crack of whip signaled their arrival. The majority of mule skimmers and punchers were African American.<sup>30</sup> The steel gangs were responsible for maintaining the railroad lines, constructing tram roads, and providing road upkeep to connect the logging front with either Camp Ruby or Camden.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 55.

<sup>27</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 55-56.

<sup>28</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 56.

<sup>29</sup> Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers*, 38.

<sup>30</sup> Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers*, 39.

<sup>31</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 62.

The town of Camden, established in 1898, was the heart of the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company. The town represented a major economic and population center in Polk County. Before World War I near the end of the Bonanza Era, the town had approximately four hundred and fifty houses for the employees in the company.<sup>32</sup> This impressive size was not the high point of the development of the town of Camden as a sawmill company town. By 1950 the town boasted over six hundred houses and over one thousand residents which was the largest size Camden achieved as a mill town.<sup>33</sup> Descriptions of the town varied from “nicer than average” to “charming and quaint”. The town had a total of five roads, originally made of sand, which progressed to gravel and finally asphalt for the two roads which formed a complete circuit of the town. A full map of the town was searched for within the unprocessed collection but one was not able to be located.

The town initially had a single pine mill that was constructed from some salvaged material from the Barnum Mill and new equipment purchased by W.T. Carter to provide Camden with a modern sawmill.<sup>34</sup> The pine mill, the town’s primary mill, was the heart of the town. The mill went through various iterations during the company’s operations at Camden. In 1910 a fire burned the original pine mill severely damaging it.<sup>35</sup> W.T. Carter finally had enough of the destruction wrecked by fire on his sawmills. He rebuilt his mill

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<sup>32</sup> Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns*, 319.

<sup>33</sup> Beck, “Development of W.T. Carter,” 65-66.

<sup>34</sup> Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns*, 295.

<sup>35</sup> Beck, “Development of W.T. Carter,” 21.

once again but this time it was constructed of steel and concrete to minimize the risk of fire.<sup>36</sup>

The timing of the fire and the decision to rebuild the mill out of less flammable materials is notable for several reasons. First, the choice to use steel and concrete bucked the trend of wooden construction, the most popular and cheapest form of sawmill construction at the time.<sup>37</sup> W.T. Carter's history with fire makes this choice seem obvious but it speaks to his long term vision of the company's future. Second, the choice to rebuild the mill to an even larger size that could process up to 150,000 board feet of lumber a day meant W.T. Carter and the company did not anticipate running out of merchantable timber, a situation that was starting to plague some other mills at the time who practiced the cut and get out model.<sup>38</sup> Not only did the company build a larger more expensive fireproof mill but in 1922 the town added a hardwood mill to process non-pine timber harvested from the company's timber holdings.<sup>39</sup> The continued investment in mill machinery equipment further indicates that the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company intended to be in the lumber business for the long haul.

Housing within the town of Camden was never considered substandard and was of a significantly higher construction standard than log pen style houses most southerners called home. The first company houses constructed in 1898 were all three or four-room

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<sup>36</sup> Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns*, 320.

<sup>37</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 71-72.

<sup>38</sup> Beck, "Development of W.T. Carter," 74.

<sup>39</sup> Beck, "Development of W.T. Carter," 6.

homes with some being ones transported from Barnum to the new site of Camden.<sup>40</sup> Later construction created frame houses with up to six rooms and they received better interior finishing. Most of the homes were of clapboard construction built out of boxing boards. Construction materials consisted almost entirely of products produced in the mill itself.<sup>41</sup> The rental costs employees paid for their housing directly corresponded to their pay rates and position within the company. The average cost notated in the company ledgers was \$4.00 per month in the 1950s and early 1960s but rental rates ranged from as low \$1.75 to as high as \$9.00 per month for the largest houses.<sup>42</sup> The houses were considered plain but well built by residents of the town.<sup>43</sup> All company houses had gardens with room for livestock. Yard chickens being the most commonly utilized animal by the citizens of Camden. Water was provided by wells built by the company and needed to be carried into the houses by hand initially. In the late 1930s, indoor plumbing and running water became common in the majority of the homes with water being supplied by two community wells dug by the company and condensate from the Pine Mill. Originally, kerosene lamps lighted the homes but in 1926 the houses were provided with electric lighting.<sup>44</sup> The company provided electricity at no cost through the town's generator. However, the lights were frequently turned off after ten o'clock at night unless

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<sup>40</sup> Beck, "Development of W.T. Carter," 48.

<sup>41</sup> Beck, "Development of W.T. Carter," 6.

<sup>42</sup> Items 629-630, Rent Books, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1949-1952, 1960-1961, Subseries I: W.T. Carter and Brother Company Ledgers, 1893-1973, Series I: Ledger Collection, the ledgers are located in the unprocessed Carter Collection (F-0016) in the East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>43</sup> Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns*, 319.

<sup>44</sup> Beck, "Development of W.T. Carter," 65.

an emergency or birth was occurring in town during the evening or the mill was running a 24-hour shift.<sup>45</sup> Heating was initially done with wood burning stoves and chimneys but by the late 1940s, the homes were all heated by butane gas. The town, like all southern towns, was segregated, with a section known as the “Negro Quarter” where the company’s African American employees lived.<sup>46</sup> The quarter was located closer to the pine and hardwood mills which made them less desirable areas to live but the housing was not demonstrably different in construction quality or layout.<sup>47</sup> The most well-appointed section of town referred to as “management row” was built along a hill overlooking the town. These houses were significantly larger and better furnished relative to the homes of the average worker.<sup>48</sup>

The business district of Camden represented both the operational offices of the company and acted as an informal central meeting place for the citizens of the town regardless of their position within the company. The business district was the home to the company’s offices, the commissary, and the hotel which also acted as a boarding house for single laborers within the company.<sup>49</sup> These buildings like those in the majority of sawmill company towns were designed to be as impressive to the town’s citizens as

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<sup>45</sup> Steven A. Reich, “The Making of a Southern Sawmill World: Race, Class, and Rural Transformation in the Piney Woods of East Texas, 1830-1930,” PhD Dissertation (Northwestern University, 1998), 126.

<sup>46</sup> Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 143-144.

<sup>47</sup> Beck, “Development of W.T. Carter,” 67.

<sup>48</sup> Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns*, 320.

<sup>49</sup> Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns*, 319.



possible. The purpose of these design choices was to both attract people to the commissary and instill confidence in the company's operations.

The offices, located to the east of the commissary, were a two-story building with a wraparound porch where the company's bookkeeping operations, paymaster, and upper management offices were located. The location of the paymaster in the company offices directly across from the commissary was an intentional placement by the company and a practice matched by other company towns in the southern lumber industry. The commissary was also a two-story building but to make it appear even more impressive it was constructed with a false front, making it the largest building in the town that was not directly involved in the production of lumber. The well-stocked commissary provided the citizens of Camden with their primary shopping option with a large selection of food, dry goods, and equipment. Items could be purchased with cash or be added to a customer's account if they did not have the pay to cover their purchases.<sup>50</sup> Ledgers within the collection demonstrate the wide range of items the commissary stocked as well as the prices of items throughout the years. For example, the 1931-1932 Store Inventory Ledger, details the store's inventory into the categories of dry goods, shoes, warehouse goods, hats, feed, furniture/hardware, food/fresh, food, and fixtures. In addition, to the

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<sup>50</sup> Beck, "Development of W.T. Carter," 49. Payment was provided in the form of "metal checks", company tokens, and cash in the company's later years. "Metal checks" and tokens represented a type of scrip used by the company until the early 1940s and ledgers within the collection demonstrate this practice even after being declared illegal by federal government in 1938 as part of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Payment in cash was reserved for special occasions like holidays and to reward workers but scrip payments predominated until after World War II when cash became standard.

item categories, item prices, inventory totals, and the total monetary value of the commissaries inventory can be found within these ledgers.<sup>51</sup>

The commissary also acted as the location of Camden's drug store which was the town's source of medicine and operated a sandwich counter. The drug store had its own entrance and exit in the building and was one of the only buildings in town with air conditioning. Inventories of the drug store at Camden indicate the drug store sold medicines of both a pharmaceutical nature and traditional folk cures. Items like eucalyptus, sandalwood, and cedar share the pages with items like aspirin, quinine, and morphine. The large numbers of chemicals and solutions indicate the drug store prepared medicines for their patients directly and only relied on a few premixed medications.<sup>52</sup> In addition to acting as the primary merchant for the town the commissary and drug store also acted as a profit-generating center for the company. This practice was encouraged by employers both directly and indirectly to retain control over their workers through a system of debt peonage. The company provided the workers with the goods they needed on credit because workers indebted to the company required less capital at payday for production and the debt acted as an anchor to hold employees to the town and most importantly the company.

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<sup>51</sup> Item 530, Inventory, Camden Store, Ledger, Inventory, Camden Store, Ledgers, Subseries I: W.T. Carter and Brother Company Ledgers, 1893-1973, Series I: Ledger Collection, These ledgers are located in the unprocessed Carter Collection (F-0016) in the East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>52</sup> Item 558, Inventory, Drug Store, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co., 1931-1934, Subseries I: W.T. Carter and Brother Company Ledgers, 1893-1973, Series I: Ledger Collection, the ledgers are located in the unprocessed Carter Collection (F-0016) in the East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

The town also possessed its own hospital to provide medical services to the citizens of the town. The hospital, built in the early 1920s, had twelve beds, a maternity ward, surgery room, and an x-ray machine. The hospital had one doctor on staff at any given time and three to five nurses.<sup>53</sup> The company paid for the expenses of providing medical care through a hospital fee of \$1.50 per month deducted from the workers' pay.<sup>54</sup> This hospital fee provided medical coverage for the worker's family but additional costs were incurred with overnight stays due to injuries or illness. Purchases of prescribed medicines from the hospital were not covered as part of the fee and required workers to pay for the medicine at the company drug store.

The hospital was a standard building in most East Texas sawmill towns and the need for such a facility is evident in the accident report ledgers created by the company. The ledgers within the collection provide detailed accounts of the types of injuries sustained by company employees. The injuries recorded demonstrate the dangers of working in the lumber industry with frequent mentions of lost fingers, amputated limbs, broken bones, and lost eyesight being the most common. While the accident reports relate the common injuries employees sustained in the lumber industry some of the ledgers also show the amount of money deemed appropriate to compensate injured employees. For example, common injuries like back strains were deemed to be worth between ten and

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<sup>53</sup> Beck, "Development of W.T. Carter", 68.

<sup>54</sup> Items 604-615, Employment History Records, 1937-1952, Subseries I: W.T. Carter and Brother Company Ledgers, 1893-1973, Series I: Ledger Collection, the ledgers are located in the unprocessed Carter Collection (F-0016) in the East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

thirty dollars while injuries causing permanent damage and disfigurement only paid claims of a few hundred dollars.<sup>55</sup>

The constant dangers of working for the company combined with the long hours employees worked made the need for recreational opportunities vital to maintaining employee morale. In Camden, the recreational facilities of the town were primarily the town's recreation hall, two churches, the pine mill pond, and a baseball diamond. The recreation hall provided a place for the white citizens of the town to hold dances, see a traveling show, or throw large parties.<sup>56</sup> The town of Camden's black population did not have their own hall and no record exists of a separate hall for their use. Black citizens of Camden did have their own church which provided services for all denominations and likely served as the black community's recreation hall. The white church also served all denominations with Methodists and Baptists making up most of the congregants. The pine mill pond which primarily served as a storage facility for unmilled logs also provided the citizens of Camden with a place for fishing and recreational space on Sunday when the mill was often closed. Athletic competitions between competing towns always provided a highlight for the sawmill towns with baseball being the preferred sport. To this end, Camden had a baseball diamond constructed to support the town's white

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<sup>55</sup> Item 635 Workers Compensation Book, W. T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1939-1960 and Item 650 Industrial Accident Accounts, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1967-1968, Subseries I: W.T. Carter and Brother Company Ledgers, 1893-1973, Series I: Ledger Collection, the ledgers are located in the unprocessed Carter Collection (F-0016) in the East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>56</sup> Beck, "Development of W.T. Carter," 68-69.

team. Town rivalries were often quite serious and could lead to physical altercations between players and fans.<sup>57</sup> Despite the rowdy atmosphere accompanying some games, the activity was recognized as an important outlet for employees to provide downtime.

Camp Ruby, as mentioned earlier, was one of the largest forward camps in Polk County and one of the few semi-permanent camps in East Texas. The camp was vital to the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company operations. The camp relied on a semi-permanent tramline to connect the camp with the Moscow, Camden, and San Augustine Railroad (M.C. & S.A. RR) and ultimately with the town of Camden itself.<sup>58</sup> Camp Ruby was established in 1926 in central Polk County at the site of a farming community known as Old Hope. The land for the camp was part of a long term lease of fifty eight acres owned by the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company.<sup>59</sup>

Unlike many of the other logging camps operated by East Texas lumber companies, Camp Ruby was a semi-permanent.<sup>60</sup> The majority of logging camps were designed to be quickly moved and transported. As a result, many of these more transient camps were often just a collection of tents or boxcar housing that could be moved as soon as the logging front got too far ahead of the camp. Camp Ruby in contrast almost acted as a miniature company town. Like Camden, the camp had company housing, a

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<sup>57</sup> Thad Sitton and James H. Conrad, *Nameless Towns: Texas Sawmill Communities, 1880-1942* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 186.

<sup>58</sup> Norma Hammand McLoughlin, *Camp Ruby...A Place in Time* (N.P: N.P., N.D.), 5.

<sup>59</sup> McLoughlin, *Camp Ruby...A Place in Time*, 3.

<sup>60</sup> McLoughlin, *Camp Ruby...A Place in Time*, 3-4.

commissary, and even a class B High School.<sup>61</sup> The much more developed Camden did not even have its own high school with students being sent to nearby Chester, Texas for high school level classes. Alternatively, Camp Ruby's housing was not as well constructed as the town of Camden with a generally rougher appearance. The camp commissary however retained the dual function of general store and drug store like its larger counterpart in Camden but on a smaller scale. The inventories of the collection indicate similar item categories as the commissary in Camden but items had slightly higher prices and unsurprisingly a smaller overall inventory size.<sup>62</sup> The railroad was the sawmill town of Camden's link to the outside world and the railroad brought the equipment from Barnum to the new site of Camden was the M. C & S.A. RR. The railroad was owned and chartered by W.T. Carter personally in 1898.<sup>63</sup> The railroad was constructed primarily to provide a connection for the mill to ship finished lumber to market and to move timber from the field to the mill. However, the railroad was also the town's only all-weather outside connection to the surrounding area. The unpaved sandy roads were widely considered poor even in dry periods but were often impassable after heavy rains.

The name of the railroad suggested a much grander rail line than the reality. The line from Camden to Moscow was completed in 1899 but the planned linkage to San

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<sup>61</sup> Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns*, 304.

<sup>62</sup> Items 3-12, Inventory, Camp Store, Camp Ruby, Subseries II: Camp Ruby Ledgers, 1926-1967, Series I: Ledger Collection, the ledgers are located in the unprocessed Carter Collection (F-0016) in the East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>63</sup> Beck, "Development of W.T. Carter," 5.

Augustine never occurred.<sup>64</sup> Creating a dedicated railroad was not unique among the southern lumber operators but the M.C. & S.A. RR remained in active service long after many of the other lumber line railroads were retired. The railroad was the shortest mainline track within the entire state of Texas.<sup>65</sup> The railroad ended its line in the shape of a Y just east of Camden. This Y allowed locomotives to be turned around without a siding, roundhouse, or switchback. The Y was located near the company's tramline ran out to Camp Ruby, the company's primary lumber camp at the logging front.<sup>66</sup> The railroad was described as a "cracker-barrel" style tram that provided passengers with open cabins and rattan seats.<sup>67</sup> Covering a mere 6.9 miles, the railroad was integral to the Carter and Brother Lumber company operations and the town of Camden itself.

The Moscow Camden and San Augustine Railroad served as a mixed-use railway shipping finished lumber to Moscow where it connected with the Houston East and West Texas Railroad.<sup>68</sup> This connection provided the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company access for its lumber products to markets around the country. In addition, the M.C.& S.A. RR provided the town of Camden with a way to bring replacement industrial equipment and the goods required to operate the rural town. In the late 1940s and early

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<sup>64</sup> Polk County Bicentennial Commission, *A Pictorial History of Polk County* (Livingston, TX: Polk County Historical Committee, 1978), 122.

<sup>65</sup> George C. Werner, "Moscow, Camden, and San Augustine Railroad", *Handbook of Texas*, Last accessed May 23, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/moscow-camden-and-san-augustine-railroad>.

<sup>66</sup> Werner, "Moscow, Camden, and San Augustine Railroad", Last accessed May 23, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/moscow-camden-and-san-augustine-railroad>.

<sup>67</sup> Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns*, 319.

<sup>68</sup> Werner, "Moscow, Camden, and San Augustine Railroad", Last accessed May 23, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/moscow-camden-and-san-augustine-railroad>.

1950s improvements in the rural road system made over the road transportation of logs by truck the dominant method for moving lumber to the mill. The railroad then become a minor destination for tourists to ride the old fashioned train from Moscow to Camden.<sup>69</sup>

Another aspect of the larger Carter lumber empire was the Carter-Kelley Lumber Company which operated in Southeast Angelina County at Manning, Texas. The company formed as a partnership between W.T. Carter and G.A. Kelley in 1903. The town of Manning had a previously established sawmill but the location combined with cheap land and abundant longleaf pine encouraged the venture between Carter and Kelley.<sup>70</sup> Operations in Manning unlike Carter's operations in Camden utilized the cut and get out model with no record of conservation practiced by the Carter-Kelley Company. The company was relatively short lived but cut significantly more lumber than the mills at Camden based on a review of company ledgers during a similar time period.<sup>71</sup> The company, averaging 100,000 board feet of pine lumber a day was larger than Camden at the same period. The building of a church complete with stained glass windows, a dedicated picture show, and a masonic lodge suggested the town had long

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<sup>69</sup> Werner, "Moscow, Camden, and San Augustine Railroad", Last accessed May 23, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/moscow-camden-and-san-augustine-railroad>.

<sup>70</sup> Sitton and Conrad, *Nameless Towns*, 16.

<sup>71</sup> Items 43-47 Shipment Lumber Journal, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1910-1931, Subseries III: Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. Ledgers, 1903-1941, Series I: Ledger Collection, the ledgers are located in the unprocessed Carter Collection (F-0016) in the East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.



term prospects but a fire in 1934 combined with depleted inventory ended the company's operations.<sup>72</sup>

Through the business ventures of the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company, the Moscow, Camden, and San Augustine Railroad, and the Carter-Kelley Lumber Company, W.T. Carter created one of the largest timber operations in East Texas during the early 1900s. These companies operations provided lumber to an increasingly urbanized country but more importantly helped develop the economy of East Texas and specifically Polk County. The town of Camden provided the employees of the company and their families a community and a life where modern conveniences like electricity and quality housing were achievable even for the poorest workers in the company. The conditions of working for the Carter and Brother Lumber Company were without a doubt difficult and dangerous but represented the best opportunity for rural East Texans to find an alternative way to earn a living. The company's forward thinking approach to forest conservation ensured the company survived the end of the Bonanza Era and its continued operation until 1968 when the company was sold to U.S. Plywood. The capital generated by the sale of the company was directly responsible for the Carter Family's continued role in the state's economic development through investment in the next booming resource extraction industry, oil, and natural gas.

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<sup>72</sup> Laurence C. Walker, *The Southern Forest: A Chronicle* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), 118; Sitton and Conrad, *Nameless Towns*, 54.

## CHAPTER 3

### The W.T. Carter Collection Ledgers

The project of processing, preserving, and organizing the ledgers of the W.T. Carter Collection provided me the opportunity to learn about archival collection management, preservation methods, and gave me insight into a grant-funded project. Hands on experience in applying archival theory to a collection provided an excellent opportunity to put theory into practice. This project forced me to make decisions that might initially seem counterproductive to completing the project as quickly and efficiently as possible but ultimately produced the best possible results. The use of grant funding also created its own unique set of challenges and influenced my decisions regarding processing the collection.

In addition, to learning about archival theory and collections management, this project allowed me to put into practice fundamental concepts of public history. Specifically the focus on presenting history for a larger audience than historians and furthering the public's connection to the past. Frederic Miller correctly states that archives "might be thought of as the original public history programs." Archives have long been a source for historians and those interested in the past to learn about history. However, the vast majority of users of archival materials are those outside of the

Professional history profession and are often just community members interested in their local history.<sup>1</sup> My updated history of the W.T. Carter and Brother Company is something that uses an academic history research approach but will be of interest to forestry professionals, former employees of the company, and the larger East Texas community striving to understand their own local history. In addition, the organization and processing of the collection allow the public to interact with history in a hands on fashion by using the ledgers for research purposes. Research has demonstrated that when members of the public engage with history in a hands on manner they feel a more tangible connection to the past.<sup>2</sup> It is for these reasons that I chose to pursue the processing of the W.T. Carter Collection Ledgers as my thesis capstone project.

The W.T. Carter Collection housed in the East Texas Research Center at Stephen F. Austin State University represents an invaluable collection for understanding a crucial period of Texas's economic development, specifically East Texas, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Historians have chronicled the importance of the Southern lumber industry in the past but the focus has largely remained on the industry as a whole. Some excellent histories exist on specific companies, but they are missing overall, especially in recent historical scholarship. One of the reasons for this is many of the companies, especially smaller ones, who operated during the highly transformative

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<sup>1</sup> Howe and Kemp Ed, Frederic Miller, "Archives and Historical Manuscripts," in *Public History: An Introduction*, ed. Barbara J. Howe and Emory L. Kemp (Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1986), 38.

<sup>2</sup> M. Elaine Davis, *How Students Understand the Past* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2005) 110.

Bonanza era left little primary source material for historians to research and analyze. In addition, the preserved collections that exist are primarily from larger operators who generated extensive records to maximize company efficiency and profitability. The East Texas Research Center (ETRC) houses fifteen processed collections of these larger company records as part of its Forest History Collection and the W.T. Carter and Brother Collection will be an excellent addition to the larger collection.<sup>3</sup>

Acquisition of the W.T. Carter and Brother Company Records for archival preservation at the ETRC has been a long-term endeavor. The first donation of company records occurred in July of 1996. However, as early as the 1950s collection managers at Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College, precursor to Stephen F. Austin State University, recognized the importance of these records and actively pursued the materials. The control file in the ETRC shows correspondence from Professor Robert Maxwell dated February 18, 1955 inquiring of Aubrey L. Carter about the possibility of the company donating its records to the university. Maxwell noted the company was a “pioneer of the lumber industry in East Texas” and emphasized the company’s role in developing the economy of East Texas.<sup>4</sup> Maxwell later wrote with Robert D. Baker one

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<sup>3</sup> The current forest history collection contains business and personal documents from the following companies: Aneglina Lumber Company, Chronister Lumber Company, Daniel Lumber Company, Edens-Birch Lumber Company, Edwards Brothers Lumber Company, Foster Lumber Company, Frost-Johnson Lumber Company, Kirby Lumber Company, Lutchter-Moore Lumber Company, Newton County Lumber Company, Pickering Lumber Company, San Augustine Lumber Company, Temple Industries Records, Thompson Brothers Lumber Company, and Trinity River Lumber Company Ledgers. These company records can be found in the Forest History Collection, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>4</sup> Memo from Robert Maxwell to Aubrey L. Carter, 1955, Control File, W.T. Carter Collection. East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

of the foundational books on the lumber industry in East Texas, *Sawdust Empire*. Maxwell's interest in acquiring the company's papers demonstrates the importance of the collection to the historical record. In 1968, Maxwell again reached out to the W.T. Carter and Brother Company after the company's sale to U.S. Plywood about having the company records donated to the university.<sup>5</sup> Maxwell emphasized the other lumber company records the university had added as part of its Forest History Collection including the Temple Papers and the Kurth Papers. The April 4, 1968 letter again reemphasized the importance of the W.T. Carter and Brother Company papers to the historical record of the Southern lumber industry in East Texas.<sup>6</sup>

In the early part of 1995 correspondence by then ETRC director Linda Nicklas and Al Cage, former director of the Steen Library, showed an agreement was reached with the custodians of the W.T. Carter and Brother Collection to acquire the materials for the ETRC. This correspondence had reinforced the importance of the collection's preservation and acquisition as well as its importance as a historical resource for understanding the lumber industry. The collection was formally accepted to the ETRC on July 23, 1996. Initial steps of surveying the collection had occurred in late 1995 after a visit to the Camden drying shed where the records had been stored after the company's

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<sup>5</sup> Memo from Robert Maxwell to U.S. Plywood, 1968, Control File, W.T. Carter Collection, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>6</sup> In June of 1970, Dr. Laurence C. Walker, dean of the school of Forestry at Stephen F. Austin State College, completed negotiations with Tom Carter, owner of the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company in 1968, to have one of the companies tram locomotives donated to the college. Dr. Walker emphasized the importance of the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company to the development of East Texas and to the forest industry.

sale in 1968. As part of the negotiations to obtain the materials, the ETRC added a caveat that space constraints required the donor to allow the ETRC to transfer or donate materials that they could not properly store to a partner institution, specifically the Texas Forestry Museum in Lufkin, Texas. Provisions were made with Tom W. Carter, the records custodian and grandson of company founder W.T. Carter, to eliminate duplicate materials, specifically boxes of transaction receipts located in corresponding ledgers. The collection of materials at the drying shed was noted to be remarkably complete with many boxes displaying identifying information.

The earliest documented attempt to process the collection occurred in 1997 with a grant initiated by Virginia K. P. Rigby a librarian at Stephen F. Austin State University. The grant proposed a budget of \$2,000.00 to pay for the arrangement and organization of the materials in the collection with an ambitious timeline of completion in three months. The cost of \$2,000.00, paltry in comparison to the most recently awarded grant funding of over \$100,000.00, suggests a significantly reduced collection size or an underestimate of the proper amount of financing required to process a large collection. The primary purpose of the grant was to “create a finding aid...entailing a listing of the materials in each box and their corresponding labels.”<sup>7</sup> This grant was authorized but did not achieve its purpose which would be an ongoing issue with grant-funded projects associated with the W.T. Carter Collection.

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<sup>7</sup> Control File, Grant Proposal Submission Form from Virginia K. Rigby, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX.

A report created on April 23, 1999 by Anne Elizabeth Parsons, assistant director of the ETRC, noted what had been completed and what remained to be done to make the collection available to researchers and the public. This report is the first to recognize the collection's immense size, suggest additional items were received after the initial donation of materials in 1996. Importantly, this report is the first to discuss the organizational issues of the collection. The report describes the collection as "overwhelming" and "strongly suggest(s) that this collection only be touched by someone with experience in processing collections of more than 40 cubic feet."<sup>8</sup> The report further recommends that a contract archivist position be created with the sole responsibility to process the collection. The report warns that the collection at best is "haphazardly arranged and does not need to be further upset by an inexperienced professional."<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately for the collection, this advice was not heeded as additional efforts at processing the collection were attempted by various library faculty members and student assistants from different academic departments. In 2002, the ETRC in conjunction with Geography Professor Darrel McDonald attempted to catalog the maps within the collection. This effort utilized student assistants but no results from their attempts have been found among the records of the archives. In addition, Librarian Phil

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<sup>8</sup> Printed Email from Anne Elizabeth Parsons to Al Cage regarding the status of the W.T. Carter Collection, 1999, Control File, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX.

<sup>9</sup> Report by Anne Elizabeth Parsons titled "What is Done and What Remains to be Done with the W.T. Carter Collection," Control File, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX.

Reynolds attempted to organize the collection as well in the early 2000s. Neither of these attempts successfully organized the collection or made the collection available to researchers and the public.

On May 13, 2013 the size of the W.T. Carter Collection increased by an additional 192.5 linear feet further complicating efforts to process the collection. The new material was obtained when ETRC personnel made another trip to the Camden drying shed to collect materials that had not been received as part of the original acquisition. (Figures 1 and 2) This trip was when the majority of the ledgers of the collection were moved to the ETRC and the initial few hundred ledgers grew to 748 ledgers.

As a result of the increased size of the collection the director of the ETRC, Linda Reynolds, successfully applied for a grant of \$105,279.66 in 2015 to process the collection. The project called for a dedicated project archivist, two graduate assistants, and two student assistants to process the collection. The grant budgeted \$88,042.40 for positional salaries and set the remainder of the grant money aside as part of a supply budget of \$17,237.26. The project had an ambitious timeline of a year and a half for the completion of the project. Discussions with the director and myself during the project revealed that the ETRC knew the funds were insufficient to adequately complete the project. Still, the hope was that progress would allow further funding to be obtained in future grants.

In the spring of 2016 two other graduate students and I were fortunate enough to be given an opportunity to work on the W.T. Carter Collection as part of the grant to



organize and catalog the company's records. The initial plan was to have each graduate student focus on different aspects of the collection with one student Kathryn Schieferstein, working on maps, another student Shelby Winthrop, processing boxed materials, and I processing the ledgers. It was hoped that this division of labor would minimize further disruptions to the already poorly organized collection and specialization would allow for faster processing speeds. Each category of material was planned to be a series within the W.T. Carter Collection including a dedicated series for maps and ledgers with plans to divide boxed materials into multiple series based on the items contained within the boxes.

As stated previously, my responsibility was processing the ledgers within the collection according to established archival principles. In developing my project, I decided to divide the processing into two stages in accordance with archival practices. The major phases of my archival project were arrangement/description and the creation of a finding aid. These phases frequently overlapped with one another and components of each were used simultaneously to complete the project. One of the early lessons I learned from the project was that many excellent archival resources are not designed to be step-by-step guides but rather to provide the principles to ensure archives maintain generally agreed upon standards to preserve and more importantly make their collections available to the public.

The arrangement and description portion of the project involved some accessioning steps in addition to the required surveying of the ledgers to better

understand the series' contents. Accessioning can be defined as “the process of transferring physical and legal custody of permanent records.”<sup>10</sup> This particular definition from the Society of American Archivists too narrowly defines the term in the context of my archival project. First, the process of physically transferring the materials had already occurred between the donor and the ETRC. Secondly, although this transfer had taken place the documentation for the transfer was largely incomplete in the collection's control file. Email printouts and correspondence ultimately allowed me to piece together the history but a more complete control file would have provided a clearer picture of the collection's materials and history. Finally, the ETRC's archival management software, ArchivesSpace, did not have an accession record in the system for the initial transfer of materials in 1996 or when an additional donation of material occurred in 2013. These conditions necessitated an alternative approach be taken towards the arrangement and description phase.

The primary issue in the arrangement and description phase of the project was determining the best archival approaches for the ledgers within the larger collection. The first step I undertook as part of my process was to survey the ledgers and compare them to previously compiled lists of ledgers created during various processing points. I anticipated this initial review would take a couple of weeks at the most but quickly

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<sup>10</sup> Society of American Archivists, “Accessioning,” *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*, accessed on June 22, 2021, <https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/accessioning>. Society of American Archivists defines the term accessioning as previously stated above however it also involves creating an up to date inventory which did not exist.

discovered I had underestimated the size of the collection and more importantly, my understanding of the materials contained within the ledgers. My first concern was to maintain any original order that existed as part of the collection. Original order is a foundational concept that is vital to understanding archival theory properly. Original order provides both context for the materials and arranging materials in their original order can improve a researcher's ability to utilize records.<sup>11</sup>

The concept of original order is tied directly to one of the first standardized archival concepts of *respect de fonds*. The concept originated in Belgium and France in the 1840s. *Respect de fonds* is the belief that archival documents were part of preexisting or current administrative units and should be kept separate from one another and in their current order whenever possible to provide context for researchers.<sup>12</sup> This concept also emphasizes provenance when dealing with archival materials. Kathleen Roe defines provenance as “the relationship between records and the organizations or individuals that created, accumulated, and/or maintained and used them in the conduct of personal or corporate activity.”<sup>13</sup> These two concepts of provenance and *respect de fonds* are often used interchangeably but involve two different concepts. In the case of my project

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<sup>11</sup> Kathleen D. Roe, *Arranging and Describing Manuscripts* (Chicago, IL Society of American Archivists, 2005), 13.

<sup>12</sup> Ernst Posner, “Some Aspects of Archival Development Since the French Revolution,” in *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice*, ed. Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch (Washington D.C: National Archives and Record Service, U.S. General Services Administration, 1984), 10-11.

<sup>13</sup> Roe, *Arranging and Describing Manuscripts*, 15.

provenance was easy to determine and ensure other records with a different provenance had not been comingled but original order proved to be a much more difficult situation.

The initial survey of ledgers quickly led me to discern that if there was an original order it simply no longer existed. Simultaneously I discovered the ledgers were not solely from the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company but also contained materials from the Carter-Kelley Lumber Company and the Moscow, Camden, and San Augustine Railroad. This further complicated matters of original order because the ledgers from different companies had been placed next to each other without regard to the actual company they represented. This occurred while they were stored at the Drying Shed and during their storage at the ETRC. I was also concerned that the various companies represented issues with provenance but determining that the associated companies were all operated in some capacity by the same owner eliminated these concerns.

Archives are not always fortunate to have materials that possess an original order and archivists have put forward alternatives to the *respect de fonds* model. The most prominent is Peter J. Scott's "The Record Group Concept: A Case for Abandonment." Scott recognized the issues many archives have regarding provenance, especially when materials had gone through multiple chains of custody or changing record keeping practices. Scott proposed the use of series based primary classifications as opposed to a record group classification.<sup>14</sup> He argued that this less restrictive model allowed flexibility

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<sup>14</sup> Peter J. Scott "The Record Group Concept: A Case for Abandonment," *The American Archivist* 29, No. 4 (October 1966): 497.

when processing because series were now the primary classification.<sup>15</sup> This proposal looked like a promising alternative based on my initial findings but I realized Scott's model could further complicate the ledgers' organization and ultimately the rest of the ETRC's collections utilize the traditional *respect de fonds* approach.

The lack of original order necessitated a change in my approach to processing the ledgers and required me to determine an organizational system that approximates an original order. Archivists must be careful when creating order within an archival collection especially when trying to overlay an "artificial" original order over the materials they are processing. Michel Duchein warns of the "despotism" of an archivist who creates an order where one does not exist and that when a sure reconstruction of the original order is not possible it is best abandoned.<sup>16</sup> Although the term despotism is a little strong, Duchein is warning archivists not to be so tied to fonds that they may create divisions where none existed in their quest to recreate the original order.

I created an order which incorporated these concepts while striving to make the collection organization manageable. The original order, as previously stated, has been lost in the process of storage of the ledgers and in the acquisition of the collection by the ETRC. In determining the appropriate order to organize the materials I strove to organize the materials in a manner that provided clarity to the company's operations and the different subsidiary companies operating under the W.T. Carter and Brother umbrella of

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<sup>15</sup> Scott "The Record Group Concept," 495.

<sup>16</sup> Michel Duchein, "Theoretical Principles and Practical Problems of *Respect Des Fonds* in Archival Science," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 76.

companies. If possible, I would have maintained the order in which the ETRC received the documents as this would have provided an original order. However, previous attempts at processing as well as being moved within the archive destroyed this possibility.

Discussions with the director of the ETRC and later the project archivist, Candice Cloud, led to a decision to continue to organize the ledgers as a series but then to create subseries based on the different companies represented in the ledgers of the W.T. Carter Collection. The result was four subseries of ledgers: W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company, Camp Ruby, the Moscow, Camden, and San Augustine Railroad, and the Carter-Kelley Lumber Company. Before I could arrange the collections ledgers into the subseries I needed to understand the contents of the ledgers themselves. This required researching the companies referenced in the ledgers to understand what they did and how they operated. While learning the operational aspects of each company allowed me to organize the materials to reflect how the company might have used the ledgers, it primarily allowed me to understand the contents of the ledgers. The ledgers contain a multitude of different topics including the amount of lumber milled, housing records, injury reports, financial records, employee records, and store inventories. To understand the information, this research led to a study of the Southern lumber industry to understand the materials each ledger contained.

The ledgers within the collection vary widely in their size, their material makeup, and the information contained within. The majority of the ledgers within the collection fall between twelve to twenty inches long with a width of between nine and fourteen

inches. These common-sized ledgers, which weigh a few pounds apiece, are items like daybooks, store ledgers, store inventories, employee records, and accident reports. Most of these ledgers have around two to three hundred pages apiece but rarely are all the pages filled out. These smaller ledgers represent the bulk of the collection in regards to the total number of items. However, the large ledgers used primarily for bookkeeping purposes, like accounting, mill production records, and harvest records, take up the most physical space of the ledger series. These large ledgers are very bulky and heavy with thick covers and bindings. Generally, they are fifteen to twenty-five inches tall and have a width of eighteen to thirty inches. These ledgers all have five hundred or more pages with many eclipsing the seven-hundred-page mark. In addition, to their large size, the accounting ledgers are also heavy, weighing anywhere between thirty-five and fifty pounds. Like their smaller counterparts, the pages are rarely completely filled. The materials that make up the ledgers are primarily leather-wrapped wood or cardboard and metal fasteners, but plastic becomes increasingly common for ledger construction after the mid-1940s.

The next step I took on this project was to initiate an appraisal of the materials in the collection.<sup>17</sup> Reviewing the ledgers individually started to reveal additional problems

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<sup>17</sup> Society of American Archivists, "Appraisal," *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*, last accessed on November 12, 2021, <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/appraisal.html> The term appraisal is used in an archival context. This is defined as the process of determining whether records and other materials have permanent archival value. This is different and distinct from the more common use of the term appraisal outside of an archival setting implies a monetary valuation of the materials and this is not something the East Texas Research Center does for its collections.

with the collection that had not been anticipated, especially in regards to the condition. The majority of the ledgers, having been stored in the drying shed, were somewhat protected from the elements but mold, rust, and animal damage were prevalent on a good number of the ledgers. (Figure 3) Discovering the poor shape of the ledgers while I reviewed their contents led me to catalog the condition of each ledger as well as the contents contained inside. I consulted with the ETRC director to come up with an informal rating system of poor, fair, and good to rate each ledger's current state. The inventory of the 748 ledgers lists 238 in good condition, 392 in fair condition, and 118 in poor condition. Ledgers that were rated good had all of the pages and binding intact with minimal damage to the covers or pages inside. The majority of the ledgers qualify as being in fair condition indicating some damage to the binding, torn/damaged pages, and damage to the covers. Poor ledgers made up the smallest number of ledgers but required the longest time to address their preservation. The condition of the poor-quality ledgers meant completely missing binding or minimal original binding, a majority of the pages inside were damaged with writing being difficult to read, and abundant rust damage primarily from metal fasteners.

Many ledgers, regardless of condition, had also undergone some dubious preservation practices in the past with duct tape being a favorite way to hold binding together. In some cases, the entire outside of ledgers was covered in duct tape to hold them together. (Figure 4) It is unclear if this was done at Camden by the company or during the housing of the collection at the university. Consideration was given to



removing the duct tape from the ledgers but I ultimately decided against it due to my lack of experience in removing adhesives from materials. The Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) suggests the first rule to follow in the preservation of paper documents is to “do no harm.”<sup>18</sup> Consultation of their preservation leaflets as well as the Director of the ETRC, Ms. Linda Reynolds; we decided that attempting to remove the old duct tape would likely further delay the completion of the project and my lack of experience in removing pressure-sensitive tapes would likely cause more significant damage than leaving the duct tape on the ledgers. The general condition of most of the ledgers despite the use of duct tape, qualified as fair condition but I decided in consultation with the director of the ETRC to “sponge”<sup>19</sup> the outside of all the ledgers to perform some preservation on the exterior of the ledgers. This was done because many of these ledgers had collected so much dust and debris from their storage that handling the ledgers for any period of time resulted in filthy hands.

The large amount of rust damage some of the ledgers received from fasteners used to bind the ledgers created an additional preservation concern. I determined that despite the extra work and time it would involve, the best preservation practice for the ledgers was to remove rusty metal from the ledgers whenever possible. The primary

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<sup>18</sup> NEDCC Staff, “Conservation Procedures, 7.2 Surface Cleaning of Paper,” *Preservation Leaflet* (Andover: MD, Northeast Document Conservation Center, 2019). Last accessed November 11, 2021 [https://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/Preservation%20Leaflets/7\\_2\\_SurfaceCleaning\\_2018.pdf](https://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/Preservation%20Leaflets/7_2_SurfaceCleaning_2018.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> The sponge is an all-purpose soot sponge which does not use any water in the process of cleaning. The sponge is made of vulcanized rubber and gently cleans surfaces of dust, dirt, and debris without the use of any additional cleaning products. The specific brand of sponge I used was the *Absorene Dirt Eraser*.

fasteners used that caused the most damage to the paper inside the ledgers were from posthole style binders. The posthole style binders were a popular style of ledger utilized by the company. (Figure 5) This binding created a specific problem as rust from the posts was beginning to extensively damage pages within the ledgers. (Figure 6) In many cases, these rusted posts were removed entirely and the ledgers were arranged in folders and then placed in Gaylord archival boxes. The removal of the exterior bindings and placement of the contents in folders and boxes provided the added benefit of reducing the shelving space required to house the ledgers.

The post bindings proved to be an especially difficult challenge to preservation because the original post binder tools used to place the original bindings were no longer available and the post removal required the use of hand tools. The hand tools used in removing the bindings consisted of a pair of pliers and a flathead screwdriver or micro spatula. (Figure 7) The majority of these posthole binders had between two and three posts but some ledgers used up to six posts. The screwdriver was used to hold the binding in place while the opposite hand used the pliers to unscrew the post from the base. In an ideal scenario, this resulted in whole posts being removed and the papers easily separated. However, in most cases, the rust caused some posts to only partially separate and the papers had to be carefully removed to avoid damage until a lower section that was not rusted together could be separated. This process was repeated as many times as required until the paper inside the ledger was separated. Once the previously bound

materials were removed they were wiped with a PEC pad<sup>20</sup> to collect any debris that had accumulated in the removal of the posts. The now unbound pages were placed in folders with labels indicating their contents and completed folders were placed in Gaylord archival boxes. These boxes were placed on shelving in a temporary location as I reviewed and assessed the ledgers.

The poor state of preservation of many of the ledgers led me to consider the concept of intrinsic value from an archival perspective. Intrinsic value is the idea that original records must be preserved because they inherently possess some characteristics that cannot be achieved with copies. These characteristics can range from unique physical features, pleasing aesthetics, association with historically significant events/people, and documenting the establishment of an institution.<sup>21</sup> The poor state of condition of ledgers in the collection brought serious consideration to making copies of original documents and destroying those which might present long term preservation issues. However, the use of copies presented an option that could further complicate the order of the collection. Ultimately, it was determined the preservation issues even on poorly preserved ledgers could be adequately addressed.

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<sup>20</sup> PEC pads are lint free, super soft pads of cotton manufactured for the cleaning of glass without causing scratches specifically optics, lenses, and other sensitive materials. The PEC pads used in the project were 4x4 inches in size and manufactured by Photographic Solutions. These pads have been found to be an ideal solution to cleaning dust and debris from documents without causing an further damage.

<sup>21</sup> "Intrinsic Value in Archival Materials," *A Modern Archives Reader*, ed. Daniels and Walch, 91-94.

Completing the appraisal stage of processing the W.T. Carter Collection ledgers took approximately four months, significantly longer than the originally estimated few weeks. The extra time mainly involved the additional preservation steps that were not anticipated at the start of the project. The use of a working list in the form of an Excel spreadsheet allowed me to improve the speed at which the arrangement of the ledgers occurred. The decision to assess each ledger for condition also influenced the level of description I decided on for the processing of the ledgers. The majority of the collections within the ETRC are done to a folder level description with some extremely large collections only containing a box level description. Even though item level description is more detailed than most of the collections in the ETRC, the additional steps taken in preservation as well as developing an understanding of the contents meant this level of detail did not add significant time to the overall processing of the collection.

Once I completed the assessment of the ledgers in the collection and addressed the preservation issues the next step I undertook was the formal arrangement of the ledgers in a physical space in the ETRC. Arrangement is the process of “the process of organizing materials with respect to their provenance and original order, to protect their context and to achieve physical or intellectual control over the materials.”<sup>22</sup> As previously stated the original order was no longer discernable. Still, provenance was something I could determine and it guided my choices in the arrangement of the ledgers

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<sup>22</sup> Society of American Archivists, “Arrangement,” *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*, accessed on June 22, 2021, <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/arrangement.html>.

in the ETRC. I first allocated sections of open shelving for the associated companies (W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company, Carter-Kelley Lumber Company, and the Moscow, Camden, and San Augustine Railroad) with the one exception being for Camp Ruby. Camp Ruby was a part of the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company but it operated on a semi-independent basis. In many respects, the operations at Camp Ruby represented the company's operations at Camden in a miniature format. The camp also represented one of the few semi-permanent logging camps within the East Texas area and because of these reasons, I determined a separate sub series would be appropriate for ledgers directly associated with the camp. After sections had been designated, I placed ledgers that consisted of similar materials together (i.e. financial records, employment records, store inventories, etc.) in a roughly chronological fashion. Many of the ledgers had overlapping years or were reused years later, making an exact chronological layout impossible. The space requirements for such a large collection made it necessary to mock up the arrangement of the ledgers in this fashion because space is always at a premium in archives.<sup>23</sup> To best utilize the space, I started by putting the ledgers on the designated shelving beginning with the largest ledgers first and shelving the smaller volumes to determine if the shelving was sufficient for the ledgers. This arrangement creates an artificial layer of organization by ledger type, chronology, and corresponding company

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<sup>23</sup> Mark A. Green and Dennis Meisner, "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing." *The American Archivist* 68 (Fall/Winter 2005); 253, accessed on June 22, 2021, <http://www.archivists.org/prof-education/pre-readings/IMPLP/AA68.2.MeisnerGreene.pdf>

which is not an ideal organization but represents the best possible arrangement of the collection.

Arrangement of the ledgers also required the creation of a finding aid. This process was straightforward as during the process I kept a running excel spreadsheet that listed all of the ledgers in the collection. If I were to do the project over again I would have put the ledgers listed on the spreadsheet into their respective subseries as I assessed them. To create the finding aid I utilized the collections management software program ArchivesSpace. The reason for selecting ArchivesSpace over other popular programs like Archivists' Tool Kit, Archon, or Collective Access is the ETRC uses ArchivesSpace for all of its collections and using a different program would not have been compatible.

Working on the processing of the W.T. Carter Collection ledgers provided an insightful perspective on the challenges presented by grant-funded projects in an archival setting. Obtaining grants and applying for grants is vital for archival institutions to address backlogs and the usually insufficient funding most archives receive. The ETRC is emblematic of both of these issues not through a failure to manage its collections but simply because of the real-world issues many archives face today. The ETRC is part of Stephen F. Austin State University, a public university, and is heavily reliant on public funding and donations to properly maintain its collections and make the collections available to the public. Trends in higher education funding nationally and the state of Texas have been on a downward slope that generally means academic departments must

continue to do more with less year after year. The Steen Library, which the ETRC is a component of, is one of these academic departments at Stephen F. Austin. The library has consistently seen its budget reduced over the past decade with eliminations of positions and reduced operating budgets.<sup>24</sup> In addition, the increases in the cost for materials and journal access often means the archive often is allocated whatever is leftover in the departmental budget after these necessary expenses to maintain existing collections and acquire new collections.

Grant funded projects provide an opportunity to address these issues and allow the ETRC to improve its collections in ways that would not be possible if the archive relied solely on the university-appropriated budget. As a staff member of the ETRC for the past few years, one of my responsibilities is to manage the archives supply budget and the funding we receive provides us with the resources to operate and maintain our collections. If the ETRC was to only operate on this budget we would be able to maintain and refine our current collections but would lack the resources to process the archive's backlog as well as properly acquire new collections.

The successful application by the director of the ETRC, Linda Reynolds, for \$105,279.66 in 2015 was a great step towards addressing the backlog in getting the W.T. Carter Collection processed. Linda and I believed the funds would be enough to get the

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<sup>24</sup> Annual Budget Reports of Stephen F. Austin State University, 2001-2020, University Archives, Closed Stacks, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX. A review of the library departmental budget over the last twenty years clearly notates the loss of revenue as well as staffing resources.

collection minimally processed at the box level but more importantly make the collection available to the public. Mrs. Reynolds believed getting it open to the public and demonstrating progress would allow for more funding to be forthcoming and allow the collection processing to be further refined to a folder level organization. However, even after hiring a dedicated project archivist to coordinate the graduate students, it was realized the funding secured through the grant would not be enough even to complete processing at the box level.

The reasons for the failure to get the collection minimally processed and available to the public primarily rely with the state of the collection and a lack of resources. Ms. Reynolds had done a survey of the collection before applying for the grant but the majority of the boxed materials she had reviewed demonstrated some sense of original order and most boxes had some labeling indicating what was contained. For my particular portion of the project, the ledgers, she relied on an older index that was unfortunately inaccurate. Once we began working on the project, it became evident that although some boxes did contain some original order they were few and far between. The labels which were present on some boxes were often completely inaccurate. As a result, the proposed time frame, allocated resources, and assigned personnel were insufficient to complete such a large and disorganized collection within the period specified in the grant.

Linda Reynolds and the project archivist, Candice Cloud, reached out to the donor throughout the processing of the collection, providing updates on specifically how much



had been processed, the materials within the collection, and the amount of work that remained. These updates were provided in the form of electronic newsletters and emails. Despite frequent contact with the donor in the form of updates and progress reports, they could not secure additional funding to properly complete the project. This was the most frustrating aspect of working on a grant funded project because despite maintaining a good relationship with the donor and demonstrating progress, the donor did not feel additional funding was warranted at the time. There is hope that further progress can be made on the collection and funding to complete the project can be obtained.

The experience of having a donor who was unwilling to provide the funding we needed to complete a project was extremely frustrating but I learned some important limitations in regards to using grant money to process collections. First, you should always ask for more than you think you will need. This was acutely demonstrated in the grant funding for the W.T. Carter Collection. Estimations on funding for graduate student staffing needs to complete processing the collection were accurately estimated for the original time frame envisioned to complete the project. However, when it became clear the project would take longer than anticipated, the funding was insufficient to keep staff working on the project and properly complete the processing. Second, do not rely on proper donor relations and demonstrated progress to secure additional funding for a project. Linda Reynolds planned on asking for the donor for more money as part of the initial request but felt the best approach would be to ask for a smaller amount and use progress as a proof of concept to secure additional funding. Despite the regular

communication and the good rapport developed when the time came for additional money, the donor was unwilling to provide it. In a conversation with Ms. Reynolds, she stated that the donor did not understand how the over one hundred thousand dollars initially provided was insufficient to organize a bunch of old papers. This anecdote demonstrates the disconnect between those who actively work in an archival setting and those who do not. The costs associated with processing and maintaining collections properly are quite substantial but are often seen as excessive by those who do not understand proper archival practices.

The money and resources provided through grants represent an excellent opportunity for archives to work through their backlogs but require careful management of the resources to ensure projects are complete. In the case of the money provided to the ETRC, a more direct management approach with firmly defined goals would have allowed the grant funding to be utilized more efficiently. I learned an important lesson that properly trained and experienced staff is necessary when coordinating on such a large collection. The use of graduate students as the project's primary staff, while providing an invaluable learning experience for myself and the others, was not the best choice due to the total lack of organization within the collection and the minimal experience of the students in processing archival collections. In addition, the delay in hiring a dedicated project archivist hamstrung the project from the outset by not providing a cohesive plan or setting processing deadlines for the graduate students. Instead, when the project did not have a dedicated archivist with appropriate experience

and training, we had to consult with Ms. Reynolds the ETRC Director. Ms. Reynolds tried to manage the project to the best of her ability but her other responsibilities as the director did not allow her to provide her complete focus on the grant funded project and as a result, progress suffered.

Processing the W.T. Carter Collection ledgers provided me with a unique learning experience to put archival theory into practice and reckon with the competing visions of MPLP (More Product, Less Process) and traditional processing. MPLP is an archival approach specifically designed to address the increase in the size of twentieth-century collections and address the growing backlogs that have resulted from the explosion of collection sizes at archival repositories.<sup>25</sup> Many archivists are drawn to this approach for the promises of improved access to collections for patrons, the ability to improve processing times, and eliminate backlogs. Despite these advantages, MPLP has plenty of downsides for archivists: a decreased focus on preservation, limiting archivist knowledge of collections, and MPLP processing causing more damage to documents than traditional processing.<sup>26</sup> The reality is that no archival project has a one size fits all approach. Each method has its benefits and drawbacks but the collection itself determines the best approach.

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<sup>25</sup> Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner *MPLP* <http://www.archivists.org/prof-education/pre-readings/IMPLP/AA68.2.MeissnerGreene.pdf> , 209 last accessed June 26, 2021.

<sup>26</sup> Robert S. Cox “Maximal Processing or, Archivist on a Pale Horse” *Journal of Archival Organization* Vol 8 No 2 (2010), 141; Jessica Phillips, “A Defense for Preservation in the Age of MPLP,” *The American Archivist* Vol 78 No. 2 (2015), 480; Stephenie H. Crowe and Karen Spilman “MPLP@5: More Access, Less Backlog?,” *Journal of Archival Organization* Vol 8 No 2 (2010), 112.

In many cases, archivists must make judgment calls based on their institutional resources, mission, and scope when deciding on the processing approach that will best address their collections. For example, with the W.T. Carter Collection, its immense size and lack of original order make MPLP a desirable approach for the boxed documents. However, with the ledgers, MPLP would have been possible but would have left the series completely lacking in any description of what the ledgers contained. The finding aid would have consisted of most of the ledgers being described as miscellaneous— the favorite catch-all term for archivists. Using MPLP would have made the collection available to the public sooner but the collection’s usefulness to patrons would have been significantly reduced.

The argument for MPLP insists a collection that has minimal description with a box level or higher organization is better than one that is not available to the public. This sounds good in theory. In my opinion, this is where the reality of theory and practice diverges. In reality, a large collection without good description or finding aid often sits open to researchers unused. Researchers who are intimidated by the size or inaccessibility will look for an alternative that covers similar materials or topics. As an employee, I have seen this occur in person in the ETRC when we get requests for some of our larger forest history collections. While dedicated researchers may take the time to sift through the documents, most will choose another resource due to a lack of time or inability to discern a collection’s contents. Our mission as archivists and my mission as a public historian should be to cater to all of our patrons not just the most dedicated. These are the reasons I

decided the more traditional, slower, and more labor intensive approach was the best for the ledger series of the W.T. Carter Collection.

Working on processing the ledgers of the W.T. Carter Collection provided me the opportunity to put into practice archival theory while experiencing the work professional archivists perform daily. Applying and understanding the appropriate processing method to apply towards a collection is an experience that cannot be duplicated solely through the understanding of archival theory. I believed processing would be something that would be straightforward and would require little deviation from my initial plan. I quickly realized this would not be the case, but the experience provided me with the knowledge I will utilize in my future work in an archival setting.

Key lessons I learned from the project portion of my capstone thesis project include being adaptive in your processing, understanding the limitations of grant funded projects, and recognizing that archival theory is meant to guide archivists in making decisions in collection management. The lesson in flexibility for me represents the most important lesson of this project. I quickly realized processing is not a linear procedure but one that requires backtracking and reassessing at every stage. The opportunity to participate in a grant funded project provided me with a better understanding of how to utilize resources in the best possible manner but also the pitfalls that can occur when estimating the financial resources needed for a project. The project I worked on was not able to completely process the W.T. Carter Collection but it still provided a valuable

learning experience for public history students and brought the collection closer to public availability. Archival work is challenging to comprehend without hands-on experience. As a graduate student, I was able to experience processing for myself and then apply archival theory in this practical setting. Throughout the process, I frequently consulted archival resources and archivists within the ETRC about different strategies I wanted to apply to the collection. I realized that contradictions can often occur between different resources, but more importantly, every collection will require its own unique approach.

The W.T. Carter Collection Ledgers are a resource that researchers and the public will utilize to create a complete and more comprehensive picture of the southern lumber industry in Texas. The collection provides materials that will be utilized to understand better the lumber industry's role in developing the East Texas regional economy and more broadly the larger Texas economy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Updated scholarship utilizing the materials within the collection also has applications for scholars looking to further research into the labor and social history of those who lived and worked in the Southern lumber industry. The ledgers of the collection represent the first step in the process of making the materials available to researchers and the public.

The history of the southern lumber industry is one that has been documented in the past but requires updated scholarship to improve our understanding of the industry's impact on the environment, the economy, and the lives of those who worked in the industry. Large corporate collections, like the W.T. Carter Collection, demonstrate the

shared characteristics of companies operating within the industry but also the different approaches each organization took towards operating. Lumber company records donated to archives represent a valuable resource for scholars and the public to create updated histories of the companies that helped shape Texas's economy in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Most of the scholarship has focused on the industry as a whole and discussed the collective characteristics every company shared. Few dedicated company histories have been created recently. Updated company histories using archival collections like the W.T. Carter Collection, highlight the opportunity scholars have to create a more nuanced and complete view of the history of the southern lumber industry.

## CONCLUSION

Completing my thesis project of processing the Carter Collection provided invaluable lessons I will apply in future archival projects and historical research. The most important lesson I learned was to let my sources tell the history and not let my preconceptions drive the historical narrative. I had many ideas of how I thought the lumber industry operated in East Texas, and I quickly found those assumptions were incorrect. Famously, a 1915 story in *Harper's Weekly* titled "The Feudal Towns of Texas" by George Creel made it seem like every sawmill company town owner was out to exploit and control their workers in the pursuit of maximum power and profit. While there is truth to aspects of this narrative, it quickly ran counter to oral histories and other accounts I read where workers seemed to appreciate the opportunities working for a lumber company provided genuinely.

After researching the Southern lumber industry and the company towns the industry relied upon, the story became more complicated. Labor strife and employee discontent were a real problem, but the advantages of living in a company town were just as tangible. Compared with the opportunities available to East Texans, the lumber industry importantly offered alternatives to a lifetime of farming. In addition, the company town system was an ideal model to exploit the resources of the southern forests of the United States. The system allowed southern lumber company operators to



construct entire towns from scratch in areas previously only dotted by wilderness and farming communities.

Operators of these lumber company towns certainly reaped their rewards from this system. The most apparent benefit for the operators is financial. Utilizing the company town system, vertical integration, and taking advantage of drastic improvements in the nationwide rail network, operators created a viable business model to exploit the resources of the Southern timberlands. A more subtle yet equally important benefit was present in the company town system, the ability to influence their communities into a “model society.” Theories explored by historians Robert H. Wiebe and Alan Trachtenberg argue paternalism and progressivism were philosophies designed to counter uncertainty while bringing order to a rapidly industrializing society.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, Wiebe’s concepts on exclusion and bureaucratic thought are most applicable to the company town system of the Southern lumber industry.<sup>2</sup> These philosophies stress the models of organization and isolation to minimize labor strife and impose the morality of owners upon their workers.

In the case of the company towns of the Southern lumber industry, this is demonstrated in the differing rules among towns regarding the presence of drinking establishments or the social clubs actively encouraged by ownership. The structures put

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<sup>1</sup> Wiebe, Robert H. *The Search for Order 1877-1920* (New York, Hill and Wang, 1967), 49-50.

<sup>2</sup> Wiebe, Robert H. *The Search for Order*, 147, 156.

in place within the Southern lumber industry sawmill towns, both in a physical form and in the form of company policy, demonstrate the efforts of owners to exert as much control as possible due to their desire to preserve or improve their position within the larger social and class hierarchy of the United States.

Although this concerted effort to exert maximum control over their workers, the company town system was not entirely one-sided in favor of the operators. While undoubtedly exploitative and controlling, the company sawmill towns provided benefits for their workers, which were more attractive than farming alternatives. These benefits were a sense of community created through the shared experience of working in the lumber industry, the opportunity to receive regular income that was more reliable than farming, healthcare from the town doctor, decent housing, and education. The large number of workers employed within the industry demonstrates a significant portion of the population of the American South judged the benefits outweighed the drawbacks.

Chapter 1 of this thesis provides an overview of the different types of company towns and how they were utilized in the United States by various industries, specifically the lumber industry. Expansion of the nation's railroad network made the company town possible in rural areas. It became the predominant business model for extractive industry during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The railroad provided the literal connection company towns required to conduct business with the rest of the country. Rail lines acted as a network of lifelines to the more industrialized parts of the country that

allowed company towns to operate in remote rural areas while bringing in equipment, supplies, materials, and even people to work in the towns.

Chapter 2 of this thesis focused on providing an updated history of the W.T. Carter and Brother Company, specifically the company town of Camden. The chapter discussed the company's operations, the subsidiary companies that supported the main company, and how the town functioned. This updated history was needed as the most recent scholarship on the company and the town of Camden was conducted in 1950 in a master's thesis by Flossie Beck Tyson, at Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College. This thesis was one of the sources often utilized by multiple scholars studying the lumber industry in East Texas.

The lessons of flexibility and being adaptive is something I will carry forward in my work in the archives. Chapter 3 provided a history of the Carter Collection and discussed the preservation and processing steps I applied to the company's ledgers. The work I conducted on the Carter Collection ledgers' processing was extremely frustrating at first. The ledgers seemed overwhelming when I started my work on the project and quickly demonstrated that the collection had lost its original order. I found the previous ledger inventories were largely inaccurate, adding or omitting ledgers seemingly on a whim. As I continued to work on the project, it seemed every plan I came up with for organization or arrangement hit an unexpected snag.

The initial plan with the ledgers was to take an MPLP approach of getting minimal information gathered and then index the ledgers as quickly as possible. However, as previously stated in Chapter 3, this was not feasible. The preservation issues, primarily related to rust damage, had to be addressed. More importantly, a cursory examination of the ledger titles often provided little helpful information to be used as part of a description. The inability to process the ledgers using MPLP because of these issues and a lack of original order forced me to reconsider my approach, ultimately settling on a more traditional processing model. This decision meant the project portion would take significantly more time than I had initially anticipated and required a different archival approach. This required researching the alternatives to MPLP processing and understanding archival approaches to determine the best possible method to apply to the ledgers. I ultimately settled on a traditional processing model because I had to take the time to determine the exact contents of the ledgers and apply significant preservation measures to the ledgers.

The Carter Collection at the East Texas Research Center represents an important collection for understanding a transformational period of Texas's economic development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The state's lumber industry provided jobs, economic growth, and transformed its landscape. Although the collection is still not fully processed, completing the ledger series and creating the finding aid found in the appendix brings the collection one step closer to public access. If resources and time were unlimited, I would continue to dedicate my time towards processing this collection. The

remaining materials, unlike the ledgers, can and should be processed with an MPLP approach because of the size and state of the collection. The reasons for this are simple, the boxed materials retain some of their original order and are also more organized than the ledgers. Completion of the Carter Collection as a whole will provide future researchers and scholars with a comprehensive collection of materials related to the southern lumber industry and sawmill company towns.

As a public historian, it is my responsibility to act as a conduit between historians and the public. A meaningful way the public interacts with the past is through archival materials and completion of this project allows this to happen. Real experiences where history can be “touched” or interacted with directly demonstrate a higher level of engagement from the public.<sup>3</sup> I have personally observed this occur with students using archival materials for research projects. There is almost always an “ah-ha” moment when conducting a class of students with minimal experience using archival materials. Students seem genuinely surprised and intensely fascinated by an item when they learn its provenance. The connections formed in these interactions between the public and the history they are researching demonstrate the importance of archival collections to public history. The direct engagement of the public with the past is something all public historians should strive for regardless of the field they are working in.

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<sup>3</sup> Kathleen D. Roe, “Public Programs,” in *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions*, ed. James Gregory Bradsher (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 224-225.

As an archivist and a public historian, the opportunities for using the Carter Collection Ledgers in public programming are prospects that excite me most about the future of the Carter Collection. As Kathleen Roe states, “public programs serve a crucial function for archives by acting as the interpreter between a repository and the public.”<sup>4</sup> Conducting these programs allows me to put on my interpreter hat, but for interpretation to be successful, the interpreter must have a thorough understanding of their subject matter.<sup>5</sup> The historical research I conducted on the company and the industry will allow me to better tailor these materials to the public and provide access to materials the public expresses interest in while improving their connection to the past. The materials of the Carter Collection offer the public the unique opportunity to make connections to individuals who worked in the Southern lumber industry and expand on the incomplete history of an industry that continues to be an active presence within East Texas.

The Southern lumber industry continues to shape the economy and landscape of East Texas today. The industry employs thousands of workers and contributes billions of dollars to the region’s economy.<sup>6</sup> The industry’s impact on the area in the past and today is undeniable. Although harvesting and conservation attitudes have changed, the pines of East Texas continue to be a valuable economic resource exploited by timber companies.

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<sup>4</sup> Roe, “Public Programs,” *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions*, 218.

<sup>5</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 190.

<sup>6</sup> Texas Forest Service, “East Texas 2015, Economic Impact of Forestry in East Texas”, last accessed Nov. 6, 2021,

<https://texasforestinfo.tamu.edu/EconomicImpact/assets/pdfs/Texas%20Flyer/EastTexas2015.pdf>.

Previous practices of leasing land, which were the preferred method of obtaining harvestable timber, are again becoming the industry standard. The U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station report stated “the forest products industry divested about three-fourths of its timberland holdings between 1998-2008, the largest ownership transition in the last century.” The reasons for this switch from an ownership model back to a leasing model range from reducing tax burdens, corporate mergers, and changes in technology.<sup>7</sup> These reasons were factors in the stumpage leasing practices during the Southern lumber industry’s zenith in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This cyclical pattern demonstrates yet another potential audience for the materials of the Carter Collection who may learn lessons of the past to apply to today. In addition, it follows a pattern set by Texas’s oil and gas industry, which used aspects of the Southern lumber industry leasing practices as its model in the early days of the oil boom.

My thesis project allowed me to apply principles of public history, archival theory, and historical research while teaching valuable lessons in a practical setting. Further scholarship needs to be conducted by researchers to look at specific aspects of the W.T. Carter and Brother Company, including labor relations, timber industry practices, historic conservation models, corporate management, race relations, and the architecture and landscapes of company towns. The Carter Collection represents an opportunity for all

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station, Brett J Butler and Wear, David N. “Chapter 6 Forest Ownership Dynamics of Southern Forests,” in the *Southern Forest Futures Project* ed. David N. Wear (Raleigh: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 2013), last accessed Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, <https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/futures/technical-report/06.html>.

of these research subjects and undoubtedly countless others not considered by myself. The size and scope of the collection could easily provide scholars with a lifetime of opportunities for analyzing the company. Researchers utilizing the collection will be able to further update the company's history as part of the southern lumber industry, the economic development of Texas, specifically the East Texas region, and the functional aspects of southern sawmill company towns.



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## APPENDIX

**Title:** W.T. Carter Lumber Company Collection

**Series:** I: Ledger Collection

**Dates:** 1893-1973

**Scope and Contents:** The W.T. Carter Lumber Company Collection contains 748 bound and unbound. These ledgers contain mainly information on daily operations accumulated by the company from a time period spanning roughly from 1895 to the company's sale to U.S. Plywood in 1968. The ledgers primary data concerns company bookkeeping, company store ledgers, employee records, company housing records, timber scaling, timber sales, and lumber shipping records. The ledgers in the collection contain records from the W.T. Carter Company but also its subsidiaries including Carter and Brother Lumber Company, Carter-Kelly Lumber Company, the Moscow, Camden and San Augustine Railroad. The collection's ledgers were organized by earlier archivists who had attempted to catalogue the collection. These previous attempts had left the ledgers in an unorganized state with misleading or incorrect labels. As a result no discernable original order existed among the ledgers and a complete re-cataloging was required.

**Arrangement:** The ledgers are organized into an overall series with four subseries representing company based divisions within the ledgers. Subseries I: W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company Ledgers, 1893-1973 is the largest subseries with 661 items and deals with the company's operations at Camden. Subseries II: Camp Ruby Ledgers, 1926-1967 consists of 21 ledgers and concerns the W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber company's forward logging camp operations. Subseries III: Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. Ledgers, 1903-1941 consists of 52 ledgers regarding Carter-Kelley's operations at Manning, Texas. Subseries IV: Moscow, Camden, and San Augustine Railroad Ledgers,

1899-1948 consists of 14 ledgers and focuses on the passenger and freight operations of the railroad.

### **Series I Ledgers**

#### **Subseries I: W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Company Ledgers 1893-1973**

Item 1: Financial Statement Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1897-1911

Item 2: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1891-1893

Item 3: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1893-1896

Item 4: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1896-1899

Item 5: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1899-1902

Item 2: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1902-1903

Item 6: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1903-1905

Item 7: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1906-1907

Item 8: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1908-1909

Item 9: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1910-1912

Item 10: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber  
Co. 1912-1917

Item 11: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber  
Co. 1917-1922

Item 12: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1922-1927

Item 13: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1928-1933

Item 14: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1934-1938

Item 15: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1939-1942

Item 16: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1943-1946

Item 17: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1946-1948

Item 18: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1949-1952

Item 19: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1952-1954

Item 20: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1955-1957

Item 21: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1958-1960

Item 22: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1961-1963

Item 23: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1964-1966

Item 24: General Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1967-1968

Item 26: General Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1911-1913

Item 27: General Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1926-1928

Item 28: General Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1930-1932

Item 29: General Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1926-1928

- Item 30: General Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1928-1930
- Item 31: General Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1930-1935
- Item 32: General Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1949-1953
- Item 33: Misc. Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1908-1912
- Item 34: Misc. Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1913-1916
- Item 35: Misc. Accounting Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1917-1919
- Item 36: Expense Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1893
- Item 37: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1892-1893
- Item 38: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1892-1893
- Item 39: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1893-1896
- Item 40: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1896-1898
- Item 41: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1898-1900
- Item 42: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1900-1902
- Item 43: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1902-1904
- Item 44: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1904-1905
- Item 45: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1905-1906
- Item 46: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1906-1908

- Item 47: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1908-1909
- Item 48: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1910-1911
- Item 49: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1912-1916
- Item 50: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1917-1923
- Item 51: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1923-1928
- Item 52: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1928-1932
- Item 53: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1932-1936
- Item 54: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1936-1939
- Item 55: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1939-1942
- Item 56: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1942-1945
- Item 57: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1945-1949
- Item 58: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1949-1953
- Item 59: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1953-1957
- Item 60: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1957-1961
- Item 61: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1961-1965

- Item 62: Expense Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1965-1968
- Item 63: Daily Operating Expenses, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1911-1915
- Item 64: Daily Operating Expenses, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1915-1920
- Item 65: Daily Operating Expenses, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1920-1926
- Item 66: Daily Operating Expenses, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1926-1927
- Item 67: Daily Operating Expenses, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1926-1936
- Item 68: Daily Operating Expenses, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1937-1947
- Item 69: Daily Operating Expenses, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1947-1949
- Item 70: Daily Store Reports, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1920
- Item 71: Daily Store Reports, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1921
- Item 72: Daily Store Reports, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1921
- Item 73: Daily Store Reports, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1921
- Item 74: Daily Store Reports, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1923
- Item 75: Daily Store Reports, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1924
- Item 76: Daily Store Reports, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1925
- Item 77: Daily Store Reports, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1925
- Item 78: Daily Store Reports, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1925
- Item 79: Daily Store Reports, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1925
- Item 80: Daily Store Reports, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1926
- Item 81: Cost Sheets, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1952

- Item 82: Cost Sheets, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1952
- Item 83: Cost Sheets, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1965
- Item 84: Cost Sheets, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1965
- Item 85: Cost Accounts, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1969
- Item 86: Cost Accounts, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1970
- Item 87: Outside Accounts, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1911-1916
- Item 88: Outside Accounts, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1912-1915
- Item 89: Outside Accounts, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1914-1917
- Item 90: Outside Accounts, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1917-1920
- Item 91: Accounts Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1893-1911
- Item 92: Accounts Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1911-1916
- Item 93: Accounts Payable, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1950-1951, 1965-67
- Item 94: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1967
- Item 95: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1967
- Item 96: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1967
- Item 97: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1967
- Item 98: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1967



Item 99: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1967

Item 100: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1967

Item 101: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
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Item 102: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
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Item 103: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
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Item 109: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
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Item 110: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1967

Item 111: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1967

Item 112: Profit and Loss Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co.  
1967

Item 113: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1903-1905

Item 114: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1905-1906

Item 115: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1909-1910

Item 116: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1911-1912

Item 117: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1913-1914

Item 118: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1915-1916

Item 119: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1917-1921

Item 120: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1922-1930

Item 121: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1926-1930

Item 122: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1931-1935

Item 123: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1939-1942

Item 124: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1942-1947

Item 125: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1948-1955

Item 126: Trial Balance, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1955-1966

Item 127: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1914-1916

Item 128: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1916-1918

Item 129: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1918-1920

Item 130: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1920-1922

Item 131: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1922-1924

Item 132: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1924-1925

Item 133: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1926-1927

Item 134: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1927-1930

- Item 135: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1930-1933
- Item 136: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1933-1935
- Item 137: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1935-1938
- Item 138: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1938-1939
- Item 139: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1940-1942
- Item 140: Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1942-1945
- Item 141: Invoices Payable, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1945-1948
- Item 142: Invoices Payable, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1951
- Item 143: Invoice Voucher Index, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1919-1920
- Item 144: Partial Invoice Voucher Index, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1921-1929
- Item 145: Monthly Expenses, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1934-1964
- Item 146: Monthly Statement Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1912-1913
- Item 147: Purchase Invoice Record W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1911-1913
- Item 148: Purchase Invoice Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1951
- Item 149: Record of Invoices Payable, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1948

- Item 150: Record of Invoices Payable, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1948
- Item 151: Record of Invoices Payable, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1949
- Item 152: Record of Invoices Payable, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1950-1951
- Item 153: Check Register, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1960-1968
- Item 154: Financial Statement, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1897-1911
- Item 155: Insurance Appraisal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1966
- Item 156: Debit Suspense Book, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1938-1943
- Item 157: Credit Suspense Book, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1917-1919
- Item 158: Credit Suspense Book, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1922-1929
- Item 159: P/R Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1911
- Item 160: P/R Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1912
- Item 161: P/R Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1912
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Item 585: Merchandise Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1908-1911

Item 586: Merchandise Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1950-1951

Item 587: Time Book, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1895-1897

Item 588: Time Book, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1897-1898

Item 589: Time Book, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1899-1900

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Item 591: Time Book, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1902-1903

Item 592: Time Book, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1903-1904

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Item 596: Time Book, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1907-1908

Item 597: Time Book, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1908-1909

Item 598: Time Book, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1909

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Item 600: Time Book, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1910-1911

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Item 609: Employment History Records (Camden) 1943-1947

Item 610: Employment History Records (Camden) 1943-1947

Item 611: Employment History Records (Camden) 1943-1947

Item 612: Employment History Records (Camden) 1943-1947

Item 613: Employment History Records (Camden) 1948-1952

Item 614: Employment History Records (Camden) 1948-1952

Item 615: Employment History Records (Camden) 1948-1952

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Item 618: Individual Account Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1916-1919

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Item 620: War Savings Bonds, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1941-1943

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Item 623: Receipts for Metal Checks, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1931

Item 624: Receipts for Metal Checks, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1932

Item 625: Receipts for Metal Checks, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1934

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Item 628: Employee Housing Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1931

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Item 633: Rent Booklet, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1925-1926

Item 634: Rent List, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1927, 1946-1948

Item 635: Workers Compensation Book, W. T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1939-1960

Item 636: Withheld Tax Records (Camden), W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1945.

Item 637: Employee Tax Payroll Deductions, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1929-1930.

Item 638: Daybook, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1908

Item 639: Payroll, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1911-1913

Item 640: Hours Worked, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1949-1951

Item 641: Payroll Journal, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1968

Item 642: Miscellaneous Employee Accounts, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1904

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Item 650: Industrial Accident Accounts, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1967-1968.

Item 651: Personnel Files, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1972-1973

Item 652: Acknowledgement Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1902-1908

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Item 655: Union National Bank Record, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1911-1913

Item 656: Interstate Corporation Records, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1906-1938

Item 657: List of Patents, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. N.D.

Item 658: Sweets Catalog File For Mechanical Industries, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1941

Item 659: Sweet's Power Plant Manual, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1951

Item 660: Miscellaneous Ledger, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. 1893

Item 661: Texas Southern Yellow Pine Pamphlet, W.T. Carter and Brother Lumber Co. N.D.

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Item 1: Employment History Records, Camp Ruby, 1937-1938

Item 2: Employment History Records, Camp Ruby, 1939-1942

Item 3: Inventory Camp Store, Camp Ruby, 1926

Item 4: Inventory Camp Store, Camp Ruby, 1933-1934

Item 5: Inventory Camp Store, Camp Ruby, 1935-1936

Item 6: Inventory Camp Store, Camp Ruby, 1937

Item 7: Inventory Camp Store, Camp Ruby, 1938

Item 8: Inventory Camp Store, Camp Ruby, 1940-1941

Item 9: Inventory Camp Store, Camp Ruby, 1941-1942

Item 10: Inventory Camp Store, Camp Ruby, 1943-1944

Item 11: Inventory Camp Store, Camp Ruby, 1937, 1947

Item 12: Inventory Camp Store, Camp Ruby, 1948-1949

Item 13: Inventory Camp Store, Camp Ruby, 1960, 1965-1967

Item 14: Daily Store Reports, Camp Ruby, 1926

Item 15: Daily Store Reports, Camp Ruby, 1927

Item 16: Daily Store Reports, Camp Ruby, 1928

Item 17: Daily Store Reports, Camp Ruby, 1928



Item 18: Daily Store Reports, Camp Ruby, 1929

Item 19: Daily Store Reports, Camp Ruby, 1929

Item 20: Store Inventory, Camp Ruby, N.D.

Item 21: Daily Time Sheets, Camp Ruby, 1944

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Item 1: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1912

Item 2: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1912-1913

Item 3: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1913-1914

Item 4: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1913-1914

Item 5: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1914-1915

Item 6: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1915-1916

Item 7: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1916

Item 8: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1916-1917

Item 9: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1917-1919

Item 10: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1919-1921

Item 11: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1919-1922

Item 12: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1923-1925

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Item 16: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1928-1929

Item 17: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1929-1930

Item 18: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1931-1932

Item 19: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1933-1934

Item 20: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1935-1938

Item 21: Cashbook, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1939-1941

Item 22: Cashbook Camp Store, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1925-1928

Item 23: Cashbook Camp Store, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1928-1932

Item 24: Cashbook Camp Store, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1933-1939

Item 25: Cashbook Camp Store, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1940-1947

Item 26: Accounting Ledger, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1921-1922

Item 27: Accounting Ledger, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1935

Item 28: Bank Accounts Ledger, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1918-1921

Item 29: Bank Accounts Ledger, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1921-1923

Item 30: Bank Accounts Ledger, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1926-1928

Item 31: Voucher Register, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1919-1920

Item 32: Voucher Register, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1921-1923

Item 33: Voucher Register, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1928-1931

Item 34: Coupon Journal, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1903-1904

Item 35: Daily Logging Expenses, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1928-1934

Item 36: Lumber Ledger Index, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1911

Item 37: Lumber Ledger Index, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1912

Item 38: Lumber Ledger Index, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1913

Item 39: Lumber Ledger Index, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1914

Item 40: Lumber Ledger Index, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1915

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Item 42: Lumber Journal Accounts, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1933-1935

Item 43: Shipment Lumber Journal, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1910-1917

Item 44: Shipment Lumber Journal, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1918-1924

Item 45: Shipment Lumber Journal, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1918-1924

Item 46: Shipment Lumber Journal, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1924-1928

Item 47: Shipment Lumber Journal, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1926-1931

Item 48: Miscellaneous Accounting Ledger, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co.  
1924-1930

Item 49: Miscellaneous Payroll Ledger, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1923-  
1934

Item 50: Record of Associated Businesses, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co.  
1911-1916

Item 51: Soda Fountain Inventory, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1928

Item 52: Boyton-Conn Lands Owned, Carter-Kelley Lumber Co. 1934

**Subseries IV:** Moscow, Camden, and San Augustine Railroad Ledgers, 1899-1948

Item 1: Baldwin Locomotive Manual, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1920

Item 2: Railroad Shipping Ledgers, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1899-1906

Item 3: Railroad Shipping Ledgers, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1899-1907

Item 4: Order Book, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1909-1911

Item 5: Train Car Reports, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1905-1909

Item 6: Train Car Reports, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1916-1920

Item 7: Train Tickets Issued, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1914-1919

Item 8: Railroad Distribution Operations, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1914-  
1920

Item 9: Foreign Roads Car Service, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1921

Item 10: Railroad Records of Vouchers, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1911-  
1916

Item 11: Station Records, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1926

Item 12: Telegram Records, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1937

Item 13: Telegram Records, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1946

Item 14: Telegram Records, M.C. and S.A. Railroad, 1948



Figure 1. Inside of the drying shed in Camden, Texas. The photograph demonstrates the collection's lack of organization when this large addition of new materials were added and shows the ledgers poor storage conditions. Photo taken May 14, 2013 by East Texas Research Center Staff.



Figure 2. Boxed ledgers in the drying shed at Camden, Texas when the bulk of the collection was picked up and transported to the East Texas Research Center. Photograph taken May 14, 2013 by East Texas Research Center Staff.



Figure 3. Example of Damage. Demonstrates damage sustained by some ledgers due to poor storage conditions of the drying shed in Camden, Texas. Photograph taken May 14, 2013 by East Texas Research Center Staff.



Figure 4. Improper “Duct Tape Preservation.” Shows improper preservation measures from previous processing attempts. Photograph taken June 25<sup>th</sup> 2021 by Christopher Cotton.

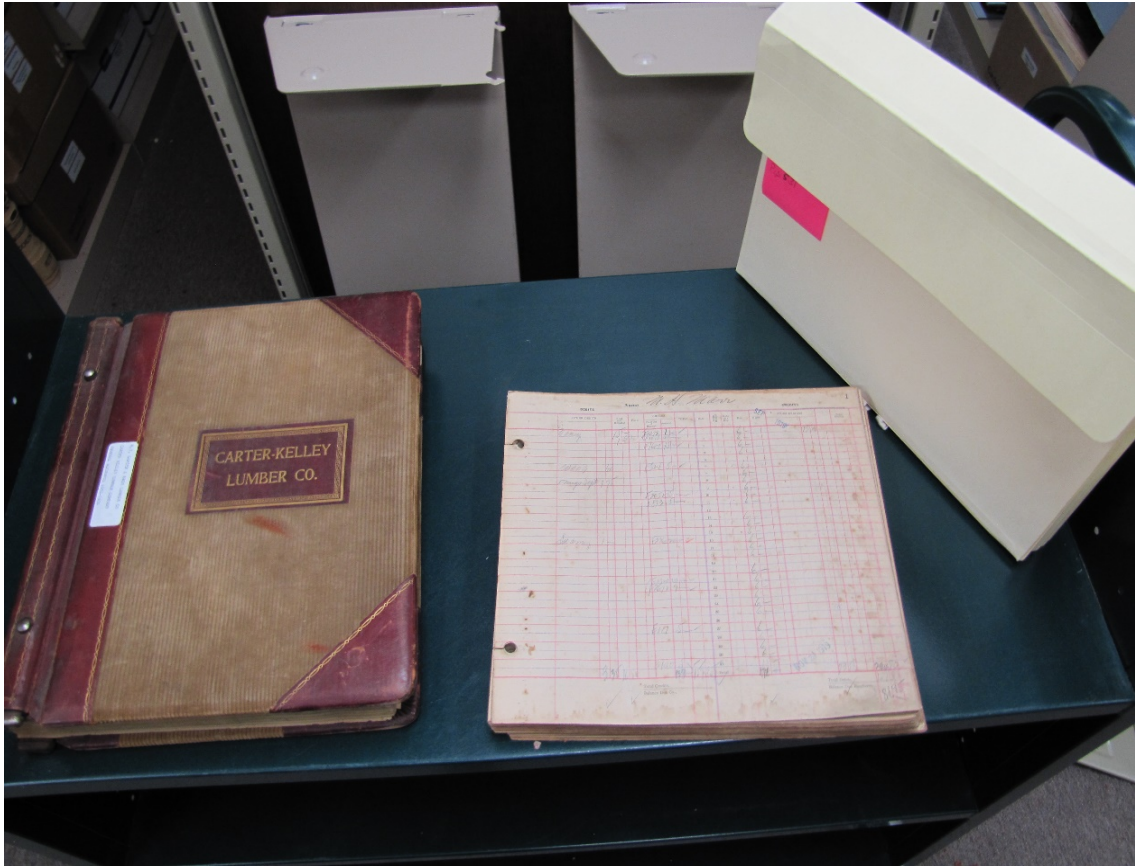


Figure 5. Posthole Binder Before and After. Left, posthole style binder which made up a fair number of ledgers in the collection. Center, papers inside of binder after post from binder have been removed. Photograph taken June 25<sup>th</sup> 2021 by Christopher Cotton.





Figure 6. Rusted Posthole Binder Covers. Old post style ledger covers showing extensive rust and condition damage. These ledgers required disassembly to prevent further damage to the paper inside the ledgers. Photograph taken March 24<sup>th</sup> 2016 by Christopher Cotton.



Figure 7. Tools for Removing Posts in Posthole Binders. Primary tools used in the removal of posthole style binders. Photograph taken June 25<sup>th</sup> 2021 by Christopher Cotton.

## VITA

In 2002 Christopher Cotton began studying history at Texas A&M University at College Station. He completed his degree in 2014 after taking a long academic hiatus while pursuing a career in finance from 2005-2014. In 2015 he started the pursuit of his master's in public history at Stephen F. Austin State University. As part of his master's studies he attended academic conferences assisting with the operational aspects of the conferences. He was awarded the Portia Gordon Award for Best Graduate Paper at the October 2017 East Texas Historical Association Conference in Galveston, Texas. While pursuing his degree he accepted a full time position with Stephen F. Austin State University at the East Texas Research Center. He graduated from the Public History Program in December 2021.

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*The Chicago Manual of Style*. 17<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017

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