

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Augusta Electrical Generating Plant

other names/site number Site #WO0038

2. Location

street & number Southwest corner of 5th and Spruce Streets

not for publication

city or town Augusta

vicinity

state Arkansas

code AR

county Woodruff

code 147

zip code 72006

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional
comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the
National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the
National Register.

removed from the National
Register.

other, (explain): _____

Augusta Electrical Generating Plant
Name of Property

Woodruff, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		Total

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION//energy
facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Plain-Traditional

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
roof METAL
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Period of Significance

1905-1960

Significant Dates

1905

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Augusta Electrical Generating Plant
Name of Property

Woodruff, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property About 2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>648850</u> Easting	<u>3905671</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kip Davis/ Augusta City Planner, Edited by Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date May 26, 2010
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name The City of Augusta
street & number 210 Main Street telephone 870.347.5656
city or town Augusta state Arkansas zip code 72006

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Augusta Electric Generating Plant is located at the southwest corner of 5th and Locust streets just east of downtown Augusta, Woodruff County, Arkansas. The brick building rests on a continuous cast-concrete foundation and is topped with a metal roof with gable-on-hip and hipped sections. Most of the building's windows are boarded up, but the few exposed windows are metal-framed windows with awning sections. The interior consists of large open spaces that house the plant's electrical generators and engines.

ELABORATION

The Augusta Electric Generating Plant is located at the southwest corner of 5th and Locust streets just east of downtown Augusta, Woodruff County, Arkansas. The area around the plant is mainly residential to the north and light industrial/commercial to the south along U.S. 64B as it passes through Augusta. The brick building rests on a continuous cast-concrete foundation and is topped with a gable-on-hip- and hipped roof. The roof is covered in silver corrugated sheet metal. Most of the building's windows are boarded up, although the windows remain underneath the boards. The windows are metal-framed windows with awning sections.

The building's interior consists of mainly of large open spaces that house the plant's electrical generators and engines. The building currently houses five engines that were used to power the generators and generate the electricity.

Behind the plant is a small brick pumphouse, also with a gable roof, that contributes to the nomination.

Front/North Façade

Beginning at the east end of the north façade is a shed-roofed addition to the building, which was built sometime after 1941 as an office and apartment. The addition is fenestrated by a large window that is currently boarded up and the upper part of the addition has wood weatherboard siding.

The north side of the main building, beginning at the east has a large six-panel wood door followed by a tall, boarded-up window. To the right of the boarded-up window is one of the few exposed windows – a metal-framed twelve-pane window with an operable awning sash consisting of the middle six panes. Immediately to the right of the window is another large six-panel wood door followed immediately by a small concrete-block addition with a door on the north side. To the right of the addition is another tall, boarded-up window.

Proceeding west along the north façade, the façade is recessed. It is fenestrated by a tall, boarded-up window, which is followed by a pair of large wood-panel doors. To the right of the pair of doors is another boarded-up window.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Side/East Façade

Beginning at the north end of the east façade is the east side of the office and apartment addition. Towards the north end of the addition is a boarded-up door while towards the center of the addition are two boarded-up windows, a small window on the right and a larger window on the left.

To the south of the addition, the façade recesses back to the original building's wall. On the original portion of the building, is a boarded-up tall window followed by a pair of four-panel wood doors. A boarded-up transom is above the doors.

The gable end of the roof has a smooth stucco wall surface with two attic vents in the center. The top attic vent is square with louvers while the lower vent is rectangular. The lower vent was also likely louvered, but the louvers are missing.

Rear/South Façade

The rear façade of the plant, beginning at the east end is fenestrated by five pairs of metal-framed windows like the ones on the front façade. A slightly larger wall space is present between the second and third and the fourth and fifth pairs of windows. To the left of the last pair of windows is a wood panel door with a boarded-up transom, followed by a boarded-up tall window, followed by a boarded-up door.

Also across the rear façade are the smokestacks for the plant's engines.

Side/West Façade

Beginning at the north end of the west façade, there are two large boarded-up windows. To the south of the windows is a small wing that projects west from the façade. A door, which is made out of vertical wood planks, is located near the north side of the wing.

The gable end of the roof is sided with wood weatherboard and has an attic vent in the center. The attic vent is square with louvers, although it has fallen out and is lying on the lower roof.

Pumphouse (Contributing)

The pumphouse is located immediately to the south of the main plant building. Like the main building, it is brick with a continuous cast-concrete foundation. The gable peaks, however, are sided with wood weatherboard siding. The pumphouse consists of two sections, each with a gable roof. The east side of the pumphouse has no fenestration. The south side has three rectangular window openings, two on the western section and one on the eastern section. The west side has one window opening in the center of the façade, while the north side has two doorways, one in each section of the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Integrity

The Augusta Electrical Generating Plant retains good integrity from the period of significance. Although the building evolved over time from c.1905, with the exception of some small additions, it had reached its current form by the 1940s. Additionally, the fact that the building evolved and grew over time illustrates how the building was adapted to meet the changing needs of the city. The building's integrity is also enhanced by the fact that it retains much of its historic equipment, including the Fairbanks, Morse, & Company engines. The setting around the plant also retains the small-town feel with a mixture of residential and commercial and light industrial areas that it would have had during the period of significance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as towns and cities developed in Arkansas, there arose a need to provide residents with city services, such as electricity, fresh water, police and fire protection, and sewage disposal. In Augusta, the situation was no different, and in the late 1800s and early 1900s, city services, including electricity, were brought to Augusta's residents. The Augusta Electrical Generating Plant, which was first built c.1905 and expanded up into the 1940s, illustrates the development of city services in Augusta in the first half of the 1900s. For its associations with the rise of city services in Augusta, the Augusta Electrical Generating Plant is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A**.

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

Modern Augusta residents claim Thomas Hough as their town's founder, and trace the town's beginning to Hough's 1848 land claim. Exposure to disease, competition with steadily increasing amounts of Anglo settlers, the United States' 1803 acquisition of the territory, and government policy combined to ensure that Indian populations west of the Mississippi River in eastern Arkansas diminished in the early 1800s.¹ Along the river slightly northwest of what became downtown Augusta, newcomers chartered a post office and trading post ca. 1812.² Local histories assert that a man with the family name of Hamilton became the first white person to take up residence on the site of Augusta, called by him and his contemporaries Chickasaw Crossing, in 1820.³ Hamilton's arrival was indicative of a broader trend. That same year the newspaper at Arkansas Post, an outpost established in 1686 and a thriving regional center by 1820, reported that "[s]trangers are arriving here almost daily, with the intention of exploring or settling in this country. Families and others are flooding in great numbers up the White River."⁴ Thomas and Annie Hough arrived at the site of Augusta, named for their niece, ca. 1848.⁵ The same factors of river, river crossing, and opportunities for hunting and farming that appealed to earlier residents likely appealed to the Houghs, who decided to settle there.

¹ Holder, "Geography," 134.

² Boyles, Rebecca. Conversation with Kristen Luetkemeier and Andra Kowalczyk, Augusta, 24 October 2007.

³ Massey, Mabel. Untitled Manuscript History of Augusta, Woodruff County Library, ca. 1986, 1.

⁴ National Park Service, Arkansas Post National Memorial: History and Culture, viewed at <http://www.nps.gov/arpo/historyculture/index.htm>, 1 November 2007 and Holder, "Geography," 135.

⁵ Massey, Untitled, 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Construction and population growth in Augusta were rapid. Six hundred people lived there by the early 1850s, and the town became the county seat in 1852.⁶ As Augusta's population grew, residents quickly constructed buildings along the downtown grid. Front Street, now First Street, paralleled the White River's eastern bank.⁷ Residents constructed warehouses and the settlement's original one-room courthouse along the river.⁸ Storekeepers occupied new two-story frame buildings along Second Street.⁹ A few mercantile shops and some saloons were early tenants, and bakeries, livery stables, and blacksmith shops quickly followed.¹⁰ So much traffic passed through Augusta on the river and the roads that it supported at least one hotel, run by resident Penelopy Simmons.¹¹ The Methodist and Presbyterian denominations had presences in early Augusta, as did the Masons; Thomas Hough provided a frame building used by all three in the 1850s. Baptists, also, met in early Augusta.¹² Two sisters opened Augusta's first school, a private academy, in 1860. Residences surrounded the commercial district, and farms surrounded the town.¹³ In 1861, Augusta incorporated.¹⁴

The 1850s were prosperous years for river transportation.¹⁵ The *Waverly* became the first steamboat to pass through the section of the White River around Augusta in 1831.¹⁶ The White River connected Augusta to agricultural markets and centers for consumer goods like St. Louis, Cincinnati, Louisville, and, especially, Memphis and New Orleans. Steamboats took away cotton, lumber, corn, and cattle and left cloth, sugar, coffee, flour, and whiskey.¹⁷ Local historian Davis Fitzhugh described, with a bit of dramatic license, the riverboats' steam whistles signaling their arrival to a local population that would drop everything to troop, en masse, to watch workers dock the boats and unload wares.¹⁸

The Civil War interrupted commerce, farming, and community life. As in other White River communities, the majority of free Augusta residents supported Arkansas's decision to secede from the United States once

⁶ Fryer, John B. "History of the Seats of Justice, Woodruff County," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 7 No. 4 (1979): 2 and Massey, Untitled, 3.

⁷ Boyles, Conversation.

⁸ Massey, Untitled, 4 and Davis Fitzhugh, "A Brief History of Augusta, Arkansas: Continuing the History of Augusta through the Civil War Years to the present time," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 1 No. 2 (1973): 3.

⁹ Massey, Untitled, 4 and Fitzhugh, "Continuing," 3.

¹⁰ Fitzhugh, Davis. "A Brief History of Augusta, Arkansas: From the days of the Indian settlement, Chickasaw Crossing, through the pioneer days of a river port," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 1 No. 1 (1972): 11.

¹¹ City of Augusta, "The History of Augusta," viewed at <http://www.augustaar.org/History.htm>, 31 October 2007.

¹² *Augusta Advocate*, "Churches of Augusta," 13 November 1930.

¹³ Massey, Untitled, 4.

¹⁴ *Augusta Advocate*, "Augusta Has a History," 13 November 1930 and City, "History."

¹⁵ Holder, "Geography," 136.

¹⁶ Huddleston, Duane. "Fine Steamboats Came to Augusta," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 1 No. 4 (1973): 9.

¹⁷ Huddleston, "Fine," 11; *Advocate*, "Augusta;" Massey, Untitled, 3; and City, "History."

¹⁸ Fitzhugh, "From," 10.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

armed conflict began.¹⁹ Five companies from the county joined the Confederate military. United States troops captured the area in the summer of 1862, and Augusta remained nominally United States' territory throughout the remainder of the war.²⁰ Troops tore down modest homes for building materials and officers headquartered in grander houses. Many Augusta residents left.²¹ In the surrounding rural areas, which lacked any civil or military authority during much of the war, roving deserters, stragglers, and criminals preyed on the mostly women and children civilians who remained at home during the fighting. Fleeing these gangs and the parallel threat of starvation for more densely populated areas, residents across rural northern Arkansas also became refugees.²²

After the organized fighting ended, violent racial and political conflict continued. In Woodruff County, the governor declared martial law in 1868 and imprisoned a dozen prominent Augusta citizens to stop local rebellion and the intimidation of the area's black population. Looting, the death of several citizens, and months of turmoil followed until soldiers arrived and established order.²³

By the 1870s, life became more stable. Augusta continued to grow economically and physically throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. Seven different general merchandise stores advertised in one 1876 edition of the local *Augusta Bulletin*. A jeweler also sought customers with an advertisement.²⁴ In 1881, citizens constructed a community school at the corner of Third and Pearl Streets. Fire consumed thirty downtown buildings in 1884; destroyed were two hotels, the post office, a warehouse, a factory, and a shed with over 100 cotton bales. Such was the strength of the economy and the population that within five years more than twenty general or specialty stores, hotels, a restaurant, stables, shops, and mills rose to replace the lost buildings.²⁵ Another major fire raged in 1897, destroying 28 businesses, and again the town rebuilt.²⁶ The fires and reconstruction efforts resulted in Augusta's downtown largely reflecting the rebuilding efforts at the turn of the century.

¹⁹ Holder, "Geography," 137.

²⁰ *Advocate*, "Augusta;" Holder, "Geography," 137; and Bill Shea, "Regional Summary: Northeast Arkansas," viewed at <http://www.arkansasheritage.com/education-information/educators/pdfs/NEArkansassummary.pdf>, 31 October 2007.

²¹ Barnett, Paula Harmon. "Augusta (Woodruff County)," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, viewed at <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=1017>, 30 October 2007.

²² Shea, Bill. "Regional Summary: Northwest Arkansas," viewed at <http://www.arkansasheritage.com/education-information/educators/pdfs/NWArkansassummary.pdf>, 31 October 2007.

²³ Barnett, "Augusta."

²⁴ McGregor, Mrs. Dale. "1876 News From the Augusta Bulletin," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 13 No. 2 (1985): 18.

²⁵ Boyles, Virginia L. "Augusta's Three Worst Tragedies," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 2 No. 2 (1974): 37 – 38.

²⁶ Massey, Untitled, 9.

River traffic resumed high levels in the 1870s and continued to be a major economic and social force. The steamboat *Chickasaw*, constructed in 1883, was the first boat with electric lights. One local steamboat expert

Augusta Electrical Generating Plant
Name of Property

Woodruff County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

wrote of the excitement in Augusta and other river communities when the *Chickasaw* turned a spotlight on houses and other buildings.²⁷ Showboats docked to perform for residents. Lanterns strung on the docks leant a festive atmosphere.²⁸ Elites in Augusta and other towns hosted parties for steamboat captains and passengers, and the boats themselves were the sites for additional dances and festivities.²⁹ Captains competed to run the most luxurious boat, and steamboats became symbols of opulence and good times.

River traffic was such a fundamental part of Augusta life that city leaders rejected an 1880s proposition to extend the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railway through the town. They hoped to control access to town, avoid the hazards and inconvenience of a town bisected by tracks and fast-moving trains, and maintain a quiet character. River traffic quickly decreased following the establishment of rail service, however, and residents relied increasingly on the railroad for shipping. Transportation between the rail station a mile south in New Augusta and Augusta proper was inconvenient, so residents in the late 1880s constructed a depot on Second Street and a one-mile spur for improved access.³⁰

The 1890s brought increased commercial activity and population growth. Though river-related industries generally slowed over the 1890s, mussel harvesting was important to Augusta in the last decade of the nineteenth century and through the middle of the twentieth century. Lumbering, likewise, continued to rely on the town's river transportation network.³¹ Rail transport played a larger role in the latter industry, however. The "lumber and coal industries developed in conjunction during the period from 1880 – 1900 as they did in no other state," according to one history of Arkansas railroad development.³² While lumbering and railroads coexisted, each fueled the other's profitability. The number of Augusta residents doubled between 1890 and 1900, jumping from 519 to 1,040. The Commercial Hotel, located at the corner of Second and Main Streets near the depot, hosted visiting businessmen from across Arkansas, from Memphis, St. Louis, and Kansas City, and occasionally from places as distant as Virginia, San Francisco, Atlanta, and Nebraska.³³

²⁷ Huddleston, "Fine," 19.

²⁸ *Advocate*, "Augusta."

²⁹ Huddleston, Duane. "The Steamer Pocahontas at Augusta in 1915," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 7 No. 2 (1979): 5 – 6.

³⁰ Massey, Untitled, 6 and Holder, "Geography," 142.

³¹ Holder, "Geography," 134.

³² Wood, Stephen E. "The Development of Arkansas Railroads," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* Vol. 7 No. 3 (1948): 170.

³³ Eskew, Ollie. "Registrants at the Old Commercial Hotel, Augusta," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 13 No. 1 (1985): 26.

Agriculture continued to deeply affect life in and around Augusta in the last part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Cotton was the primary crop, but farmers also grew wheat and

Augusta Electrical Generating Plant
Name of Property

Woodruff County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

raised hogs. Plantations outside of town relied on sharecropping for owner profits and tenant subsistence.³⁴ An article in the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* in 1889 described the passage to Woodruff County of 400 white farm families from North and South Carolina coming to pick cotton that season and contract for the next. Owners were so flush with cotton that they advanced travel costs to the new workers and offered more than double the amount of wages, 75 cents per 100 pounds picked, typical in the Carolinas, where wages were 35 cents per 100 pounds picked. Workers contracted to farm shares and retain half the crop for the year following.³⁵ Augusta Mercantile and Conner Mercantile were both downtown Augusta company store-type operations that supplied early-twentieth-century tenant farmers with goods in exchange for plantation scrip.³⁶

Augusta continued to grow and add services and facilities, including electricity, in the early 1900s. Electric lights were a novel item for many in the first decade of the twentieth century until the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. As nighttime came to the 1904 World's Fair, something special took place for all its visitors to see. Electric lights were placed along the columns and borders of the fair's palaces, making them look even grander than they did in the daylight. As they shone with magnificence, people gathered together and wondered just how they worked, as did a traveler, E.L. Billingslea, who lived in the City of Augusta. The Augusta citizen was so amazed by the sight, that he returned home to spread the word and soon a committee was formed to bring electricity to Augusta. The Electrical Company was then formed and a new building was constructed about 1905 at the southwest corner of 5th and Locust streets.

By 1908, the building housed the Augusta Light & Water Co. and had a 100 horsepower engine and dynamo. The Sanborn map also indicates that the facility had "2 Cook upright pumps" with a capacity of "100,000 gal's per day." Interestingly, the fuel for the plant was "coal & shavings." The plant started out as a much smaller building than the current one, but was added onto as more space and generating capacity was needed, a common practice for city plants of the period. Soon after the new plant was constructed electric public lights were installed, as indicated on the October 1913 Sanborn map for the city.³⁷

The popularity of electricity and the increased need and desire for it in Augusta was reflected in the development of the city's electric plant. By October 1913, the building had been expanded to the south and was the "Arkansas Public Service Co's. Elec. Light Plant, City Pump Ho. Ice Fac. & Laundry." Apparently,

³⁴ *Advocate*, "Augusta." and Frank Bronaugh, "Dad's Country Store," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 12 No. 2 (1984): 3.

³⁵ *Commercial Appeal*, 28 August 1889, quoted in *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 1 No. 3 (1973): 6.

³⁶ Bronaugh, "Dad's," 3.

³⁷ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Augusta, Arkansas: June 1908 and October 1913.

a new, higher horsepower engine had been installed since it was then rated at 150 horsepower and ran on coal, although the plant still had only one dynamo, although that would soon change.³⁸

Augusta Electrical Generating Plant
Name of Property

Woodruff County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

By 1919, the ice plant portion of the building had apparently been turned over to private operation as the Sanborn map showed it as the W. C. Berry Ice Plant. However, the City of Augusta apparently still had control of the light plant and the pumping station. Further improvements to the equipment were also undertaken during the 1910s. By 1919, the plant had two engines, one rated at 60 horsepower and the other rated at 175 horsepower, and a second dynamo had also been installed. (One dynamo was rated at 40 kilowatts and the second was rated at 100 kilowatts.) The plant still ran on coal, and was “run night & day.” Furthermore, a “man [was] on duty all night” at the plant.³⁹

The need for electric power continued to grow in Augusta throughout the 1920s and 1930s, necessitating further improvements at the plant by the 1940s. By 1941, the building had been expanded yet again, this time to the west, approximating the building’s current form, and the entire building was used as the “City Electric Light Plant & Pumping Sta.” (Interestingly, it also housed the fire station.) The space formerly occupied by the ice plant had become the dynamo room, and new engines had also been installed at the plant. Although coal was still used as a fuel for something at the plant, “fuel oil” was also listed as a source of power. It is likely that by the early 1940s, at least one of the current Fairbanks Morse engines had been installed at the plant.⁴⁰

Although there were several manufacturers of industrial engines, Fairbanks, Morse & Company was already recognized by the 1920s for, at least, its role in agricultural irrigation in Arkansas. The program for the 10th Annual Arkansas Rice Carnival in 1928 indicated that “Under the very able conduct of C. R. Ham their [Fairbanks, Morse & Company] products are playing a leading part in the development of rice irrigation and united to this is their complete replacement service. Every part from the most minute to a massive cylinder or a complete engine is in stock at Fairbanks, Morse & Company headquarters and this service is of vital value to rice growers.”⁴¹ The success of Fairbanks, Morse & Company engines in rice irrigation and other farming operations, something that would have been important in rural Woodruff County around Augusta, meant that the company’s engines would have likely been well-known and respected when new engines were sought for the electric plant.

By the early twentieth century, Fairbanks, Morse & Company had already been around for several decades. The beginnings of Fairbanks, Morse & Company occurred in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, in 1830, when

³⁸ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Augusta, Arkansas: October 1913.

³⁹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Augusta, Arkansas: August 1919.

⁴⁰ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Augusta, Arkansas: August 1919, updated November 1941.

⁴¹ Sampson, G. G. “The Heart Throbs of the Rice Belt: Evolution of the Irrigation Plant on Grand Prairie.” *Program of the 10th Annual Rice Carnival*. October 17-19, 1928, p. 60.

Thaddeus Fairbanks invented a scale that sped up the pace of commercial transactions. Thaddeus, along with his brothers Erastus and Joseph, established E & T Fairbanks & Company in St. Johnsbury in the 1830s. In

Augusta Electrical Generating Plant
Name of Property

Woodruff County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

1850, with the hiring of Charles Hosmer Morse, Fairbanks, Morse & Company began its growth into the legendary engine manufacturer that it became by the early 1900s.⁴²

Morse moved to Chicago in 1857 to sell E & T Fairbanks scales for Fairbanks Greenleaf and in 1865 moved to Cincinnati to open the first branch of the business to carry the Fairbanks, Morse & Company name. The branch of Fairbanks, Morse & Company sold not only the Fairbanks scales, but other products as well. In 1870, Morse returned to Chicago and when Fairbanks Greenleaf reopened after the Great Chicago Fire in 1871 it opened as Fairbanks, Morse & Company.⁴³

Morse's leadership of the company greatly expanded the company's product line, first adding products such as windmills and pumps from the Eclipse Wind Engine Company, and then expanding into other products that were geared towards agriculture. Fairbanks, Morse & Company ventured into internal combustion engines beginning in the 1880s when it became a sales agent for the Williams Engine Works of Beloit, Wisconsin. Morse purchased the company in 1893 and really began developing gasoline internal combustion engines.⁴⁴

Although steam power had been used for farm machinery by the late 1800s, it was inefficient and hazardous. As a result, the application of internal combustion power to farm equipment represented a major milestone in farming. Even though Fairbanks, Morse & Company was not the first company to manufacture internal combustion engines, "Fairbanks, Morse & Co. swamped their competitors in short order and went on to become one of the world's largest engine builders." The Type Z engine, especially, was one of Fairbanks, Morse & Company's most popular engines early on. As the Fairbanks, Morse & Company magazine *Name-Plate* stated, "This sturdy engine has helped revolutionize farming methods. It has released countless farm hands for the production work of feeding the world. Its uses are as varied as the applications of power itself. Its dependability is a by-word wherever the 'Z' is used."⁴⁵

Because the American market for engines was looking for a simpler and more fool-proof engine, Fairbanks, Morse & Company began in the field of Diesel engines in 1912. Initially, Fairbanks, Morse & Company concentrated on hot bulb or semi-Diesel engines (although they would manufacture full Diesel engines later

⁴² Benjamin, Susan. "Fairbanks, Morse & Company Building, Cook County, Illinois." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. From the files of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 1988.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

on), and in 1914 they began manufacturing a vertical two-cycle crankcase scavenging stationary engine called the Type Y with a similar type for marine service called the Type C-O. As an unpublished company history states, "They filled such a need that they practically dominated their respective markets for years."⁴⁶

Augusta Electrical Generating Plant
Name of Property

Woodruff County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

By the time that the current engines were installed in the Augusta plant, and it appears by their designs that they would have all been installed by 1941, Fairbanks, Morse & Company had also started production of a high horsepower Opposed Piston engine that, although developed to power submarines and locomotives, would have been ideal for this type of industrial application. The satisfaction of the City of Augusta with the products of Fairbanks, Morse & Company is illustrated by the fact that a total of five of their engines were installed in the building.⁴⁷

The Augusta Electrical Generating Plant remained an integral part of Augusta's infrastructure up until the early 1980s when it closed its doors. In fact, a small pump house was built behind the building sometime after 1941, indicating that demands on the building continued to increase. Once the plant at 5th and Locust streets was closed, the city switched its services to the new Carl E. Bailey Plant at the south end of town. Although the Augusta Electrical Generating Plant has not been used regularly since the 1980s, the engines and generators could easily put back in service and once again provide the city's power.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

As Augusta grew, the providing of city services, including electricity, would have been an important part of the community. Bringing electricity to Augusta would have meant monumental changes to the daily lives of the city's residents. Rather than relying on such items as candles and ice boxes, the people of Augusta could now have electric lights in their homes and appliances such as refrigerators, making daily life much simpler and easier.

However, bringing electricity to Augusta did not only mean changes and advances in private homes. It also meant that electric streetlights came to the city, and they were installed c.1910. The importance of electricity in Augusta is also illustrated in the fact that the plant changed and evolved so much during the first part of the twentieth century. The increased demand for electricity meant that the building kept expanding and the equipment housed in the building was constantly updated until the 1940s when the current equipment was in place. The increased demand for electricity also illustrates just how important it was to Augusta.

The development and expansion of electricity in Augusta was only one small aspect of the expansion of city services in the city. By 1941, for example, nearly all of the streets were paved and fire suppression had evolved from hoses scattered around the city in 1908 to a Chevrolet pumper capable of pumping 300 gals per

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Fairbanks Morse Engine Timeline found at: http://www.fairbanksmorse.com/media/fme_timeline.pdf.

minute. The fire alarm in Augusta had also evolved from a whistle on the pumping station in 1908 to an “alarm by telephone and whistle.”⁴⁸

Augusta Electrical Generating Plant
Name of Property

Woodruff County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

The growth of city services in Augusta throughout the early twentieth century was an important part of the city’s history – as it was all across Arkansas. As a result, for its associations with the rise of city services in Augusta, the Augusta Electrical Generating Plant is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A**.

⁴⁸ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Augusta, Arkansas: June 1908, and August 1919 updated in November 1941.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Augusta Advocate (13 November 1930). "Augusta Has a History."

Augusta Advocate (13 November 1930). "Churches of Augusta."

Barnett, Paula Harmon. "Augusta (Woodruff County)," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, viewed at <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1017> 30 October 2007.

Benjamin, Susan. "Fairbanks, Morse & Company Building, Cook County, Illinois." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. From the files of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 1988.

Boyles, Rebecca. Conversation with Kristen Luetkemeier and Andra Kowalczyk, Augusta, 24 October 2007.

Boyles, Virginia L. "Augusta's Three Worst Tragedies," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 2 No. 2 (1974): 37 – 38.

Bronaugh, Frank. "Dad's Country Store," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 12 No. 2 (1984): 2 – 5.

Calloway, Colin G. *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004.

City of Augusta. "The History of Augusta," viewed at <http://www.augustaar.org/History.htm>, 31 October 2007.

Commercial Appeal (28 August 1889). Quoted in *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 1 No. 3 (1973): 6.

Davis, Kip. Interviews with the following people – all 2010 in Augusta:

Ms. Rebecca Boyles, town historian and great-grand daughter of E.L. Billingslea.

Ms. Virginia Boyles, town historian.

Bobo Unvritsch, town historian.

Jay Oaks, former employee of the Electrical Plant.

Mr. Robin Coleman, former employee of the Electrical Plant.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Eskew, Ollie. "Registrants at the Old Commercial Hotel, Augusta," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 13 No. 1 (1985): 26.

Fairbanks Morse Engine Timeline found at: http://www.fairbanksmorse.com/media/fme_timeline.pdf.

Fitzhugh, Davis. "A Brief History of Augusta, Arkansas: From the days of the Indian settlement, Chickasaw Crossing, through the pioneer days of a river port," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 1 No. 1(1972): 7 – 13.

Fryer, John B. "History of the Seats of Justice, Woodruff County," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 7 No. 4 (1979): 2 – 9.

Holder, Virgil H. "Historical Geography of the Lower White River," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* (1968): 132 – 145.

Huddleston, Duane. "Fine Steamboats Came to Augusta," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 1 No. 4 (1973): 9 – 19.

Huddleston, Duane. "The Steamer Pocahontas at Augusta in 1915," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 7 No. 2 (1979): 4 – 7.

Massey, Mabel. Untitled Manuscript History of Augusta, on file at the Woodruff County Library. c. 1986.

McGregor, Mrs. Dale. "1876 News From the Augusta Bulletin," *Rivers and Roads and Points In Between* Vol. 13 No. 2 (1985): 18 – 21.

National Park Service. Arkansas Post National Memorial: History and Culture, viewed at <http://www.nps.gov/arpo/historyculture/index.htm>, 1 November 2007.

Sampson, G. G. "The Heart Throbs of the Rice Belt: Evolution of the Irrigation Plant on Grand Prairie." *Program of the 10th Annual Rice Carnival*. October 17-19, 1928, p. 60.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Augusta, Arkansas: June 1908, October 1913, August 1919, and August 1919 updated in November 1941.

Shea, Bill. "Regional Summary: Northeast Arkansas," viewed at <http://www.arkansasheritage.com/education-information/educators/pdfs/NEArkansassummary.pdf>, 31 October 2007.

Augusta Electrical Generating Plant
Name of Property

Woodruff County, Arkansas
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 3

Shea, Bill. "Regional Summary: Northwest Arkansas," viewed at <http://www.arkansasheritage.com/education-information/educators/pdfs/NWArkansassummary.pdf>, 31 October 2007.

Wood, Stephen E. "The Development of Arkansas Railroads," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* Vol. 7 No. 3 (1948): 155.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From the southwest corner of 5th and Locust street, proceed westerly along the south side of Locust Street for 140 feet, thence proceed southerly perpendicular to Locust Street for 115 feet, thence proceed westerly parallel to Locust Street for 140 feet to the west side of 5th Street, thence proceed northerly along the western side of 5th Street for 115 feet to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encompasses the land historically associated with the Augusta Electrical Generating Plant.