

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Edward Douglass White House

AND/OR COMMON

Edward Douglass White Louisiana State Commemorative Area

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 5 mi. north of Thibodaux on La. 1

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF Thibodaux

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 3

STATE Louisiana

CODE 22

COUNTY Lafourche CODE 057

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME State of Louisiana--Parks and Recreation Commission

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Drawer 1111

CITY, TOWN

Baton Rouge VICINITY OF

STATE Louisiana

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Lafourché Parish Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Thibodaux

STATE Louisiana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Edward Douglass White was born in this simple framehouse in 1845, and he lived here until age 6, when he moved with his mother to New Orleans. Although White's father had died 4 years earlier and Mrs. White had remarried, she retained the family home and the plantation on which it stood. Eventually Edward inherited the property and operated the plantation until he died in 1921. Thus, despite residing here only 6 years, he maintained an active, lifelong association with the dwelling. The only other known extant White residence is a 3 1/2-story, brick rowhouse at 1717 Rhode Island Avenue, NW., in Washington, D.C. White resided in that structure from 1897 to 1920. Neither the American Association for State and Local History nor the Louisiana State Art, Historical, and Cultural Preservation Agency has identified a surviving White House in New Orleans.

After White's death, ownership of his plantation house was transferred, as dictated by his will, to the Knights of Columbus. They retained the structure more than 35 years, during which time a caretaker and his family occupied it. In the late 1950's the State of Louisiana bought the house, carried on some restoration work, and made it the focal point of a State Park. Since about 1970 the Parks and Recreation Commission has repainted the dwelling's exterior siding and trim, repaired its roof, and restored its raised basement. While much of the former White acreage is still privately farmed under the name "White Plantation," the house stands on a small, approximately 6-acre, adjacent tract that is divided by Louisiana Highway 1. The nominated portion of this includes the residence and about 3 acres.

Built by slaves from hand-hewn cypress and fastened together with wooden pegs, the 1 1/2-story, rectangular-shaped, gable-roofed White House dates--according to the Louisiana State Parks and Recreation Commission--to 1790. Supported by a red brick foundation, the northeast-facing residence is sheathed with white-painted weatherboarding and sits over a raised, partial basement, whose exterior and interior brick walls are covered with white stucco. Originally dirt-floored, the basement was paved with red brick during its recent restoration. Full-length, balustraded verandas grace both the front and rear of the three-bay-wide dwelling, but the rear veranda is enclosed along the northwest one-third of its length. Both verandas rest on stuccoed brick piers, are accessible via a center-placed set of wide, balustraded, board steps, and are sheltered by extensions of the roof. These overhangs gain support from beveled posts, each of which rises from the gray-painted, plank, veranda floor above a corresponding brick pier. Although originally shaked, the dwelling's northwest-southeast oriented gable roof is now covered with black asbestos shingles. Three pedimented gable dormers project from both the front and rear slopes, but due to a slight upward flare of the rear slope near its midpoint, the dormers there are

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Beth, Loren P., The Development of the American Constitution, 1877-1917 (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

Kelly, Alfred H. and Winfred A. Harbison, The American Constitution: Its Origins and Development, Third Edition (New York: W.W. Norton)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

(cont.)

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY circa 3 acres.

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	70,17,8,0	3,30,110,3,0	B	1,5	70,19,2,0	3,30,0,9,7,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,5	70,18,7,0	3,30,0,8,6,0	D	1,5	70,17,3,0	3,30,0,9,2,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See last page of description.)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

George R. Adams, Managing Editor;  
and Ralph Christian, Assistant Editor

ORGANIZATION

American Association for State and Local History

DATE

April 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1400 Eighth Avenue South

TELEPHONE

615-242-5583

CITY OR TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1845-1921

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In his 27 years on the U.S. Supreme Court, Edward Douglass White had, according to historian James F. Watts, Jr., a "major influence on the nature of American civilization" which has been "too little realized."<sup>1</sup> Shortly after assuming the post of Chief Justice, White in the 1911 Standard Oil and American Tobacco cases persuaded the Court to accept the "rule of reason" in regard to enforcement of the Sherman Antitrust Act. Actually, this question of reasonableness, says historian Arthur S. Link, was the "only standard by which the antitrust law could be enforced" and it "enabled businesses to conduct normal operations without fear of reprisal, and the government to enforce the statute in good conscience."<sup>2</sup> Yet, in the long run, White's ruling, according to constitutional historians Alfred H. Kelly and Winfred A. Harbison, made it "virtually impossible to prosecute any great trust successfully, for almost any monopoly could put up a plausible argument for social responsibility and thus claim to be a 'reasonable' combination."<sup>3</sup> Thus, the "rule of reason" helps to explain, says historian James F. Watts, Jr., "the paradox of a nation whose ethic deplores monopoly and prizes self-sufficiency yet promotes oligopoly and practices economic dependence."<sup>4</sup>

White first distinguished himself in the 1901-5 Insular Cases concerning the status of the territories the United States had recently acquired as a result of the war with Spain. It was White, says constitutional historian Loren P. Beth, who developed the doctrine "that conquered territory did not become a part of the United States constitutionally unless Congress passed legislation incorporating

1

James F. Watts, Jr., "Edward Douglass White," in Leon Friedman and Fred L. Israel (eds.), The Justices of the United States Supreme Court, 1789-1969: Their Lives and Major Opinions, III (New York, 1969), 1645.

2

Arthur S. Link, American Epoch: A History of the United States Since the 1890's (New York, 1967), 117.

3

Alfred H. Kelly and Winfred A. Harbison, The American Constitution: Its Origins and Development, Third Edition, (New York, 1963), 605.

4

Watts, "Edward Douglass White," in Friedman and Israel (eds.), The Justices of the United States Supreme Court, III, 1667.

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CONTINUATION SHEET White House ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

shorter than their mates in front. A red brick interior chimney pierces the roof crest at each gable end, and a third interior stack rises near the southeast end of the rear slope.

All windows in the White House are rectangular sashes set in white-painted wooden surrounds. Most windows have nine-over-six lights, but those in the rear dormers have six-over-six. Three first-story and two upper-story windows grace the southeast side of the residence; four lower and two upper adorn the northwest side; and a single window lights the first-story rear facade. In each of the three first-story, front bays, a pair of glassed, French double doors opens to the interior of the dwelling. Each individual door consists of a vertical row of three glass panes above a wood panel, and each pair of doors sits within a shouldered architrave. A three-light transom tops the middle pair. The center bay of the rear facade holds the only other entrance, which is a single door with four vertical rows of three lights set over two wood panels. At least nine small, board-and-batten doors admit to the three-room basement; the chief of these is the rearmost door opening on the southeast side. Originally light-blue-painted, louvered wood shutters flanked all windows and all exterior doors except basement entrances, but recently these decorative pieces were removed for repair.

Inside, the White House follows a central-hall plan, with a spacious corridor extending from the center front door to the rear entrance. Here, as throughout, the residence retains its original pegged cypress floors. The recently refinished walls and ceilings consist of plaster on wood sheathing and are painted in various pastel shades. Baseboards are plain and painted black; door and window frames are painted gray. The furnishings are period pieces of the years 1830 to 1860. Only one White piece remains: a massive carved armoire, part of the wedding dowry of White's mother.

On the first floor, two rooms lie right of the hallway and two left, and each is accessible through a single door from the corridor. Both rooms on the right display pale yellow walls. The front one, which holds a brick, stucco-faced fireplace with plain, asymmetrical, black-painted, wood mantel, served the Whites as a parlor; the rear chamber, connected to the front one by double sliding doors, was the White dining room. Rear of it, in the enclosed portion of the rear veranda and accessible only from that porch, is the pantry. Both compartments left of the central hall were bedrooms. Each has blue-painted walls and a fireplace and mantel similar to the one in the parlor.

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Near the center of the first-story hall, a single-flight, open-string, balustraded and railed stairway rises rear-to-front along the right wall to the second floor. The area underneath the staircase is enclosed, but an end-placed door opens onto a single flight of steps that descend to the basement. On the upper story are two bedrooms, both of which are painted light green. The left room contains a fireplace and mantel similar to those downstairs.

Formerly, slave quarters stood rear of the White House, but now the only outbuilding--other than two small, modern restrooms in traditional-looking outhouses--is a one-story, rectangular-shaped, gable-roofed, beige-painted, frame caretaker's cottage of undetermined origin. Live oak and other trees and a well-maintained expanse of lawn complete the setting.

Boundary Justification. Included within the boundary are the White House and approximately 3 acres. Although the State's commemorative area includes a somewhat larger area, the designated 3-acre tract is set off by tree lines on three sides and by Louisiana 1 on the fourth.

Boundary Description. As indicated in red on the accompanying maps [(1) U.S.G.S. 7.5' Series, Louisiana, Labadieville Quad., 1962; and (2) AASLH Sketch Map, April 1976], a line beginning at the northeast corner of the property--near where a northeast-southwest tree line intersects a brick-and-iron fence that runs southeast to northwest in front of the White House--a line extending northwestward along the south edge of the right-of-way of Louisiana 1 approximately 400 feet to a second northeast-southwest tree line; thence, southwestward along that tree line approximately 330 feet to a northwest-southeast tree line; thence, southeastward along that tree line approximately 400 feet to the first-mentioned northeast-southwest tree line; thence, northeast along that tree line about 330 feet to the point of beginning.

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it."5

Edward Douglass White was born in this simple framehouse in 1845, and he lived here until age 6, when he moved with his mother to New Orleans. Although White's father had died 4 years earlier and Mrs. White had remarried, she retained the family home and the plantation on which it stood. Eventually Edward inherited the property and operated the plantation until he died in 1921. Thus, despite residing here only 6 years, he maintained an active, lifelong association with the dwelling. It has been restored and is in good condition.

Biography

Edward Douglass White, Jr. was born November 3, 1845, in Lafourche Parish La., to Edward and Catherine White. Edward, Sr., who had been a Louisiana Congressman and Governor, died when young White was 2, and when his mother remarried 4 years later, she sent him to a convent school in New Orleans where he received his basic education. In 1858 White attended Mount Saint Mary's, a Jesuit preparatory school in Emmitsburg, Md., and the following year entered Georgetown College in Washington, D.C. Shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War, White returned to New Orleans and studied briefly at Jesuit College. At the age of 16, he joined the Confederate Army as a private, serving as aide de camp to various officers. In 1863 he was taken prisoner at the fall of Fort Hudson but was eventually paroled.

After the war White read law under the guidance of distinguished attorney Edward Bermudez and won admission to the bar in 1868. Already financially comfortable because of his considerable holdings in sugar plantations, White settled in New Orleans where he practiced his profession and became increasingly involved in Democratic politics. Closely identified with Democratic Redeemer Francis T. Nicholls, White in 1874 won election to the State Senate. Shortly after Nicholls won the governorship, he appointed White to the Louisiana Supreme Court where he served from January 1879 to April 1880. His tenure was cut short when supporters of the Louisiana Lottery, which he and Nicholls opposed, won approval of a new constitution which shortened the Governor's term of office and reconstituted the State Supreme Court.

For the next few years, White concentrated on his law practice and his sugar interests. In 1888 he managed ex-Governor Nicholls' success-

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Loren P. Beth, The Development of the American Constitution, 1877-1917 (New York, 1971), 161.

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ful gubernatorial campaign against Republican Henry Clay Warmoth, who was backed by proponents of the Lottery. Three years later, the Louisiana Legislature elected White to the U.S. Senate where he supported President Grover Cleveland on all issues except tariff reform. In 1894 White became the beneficiary of the feud between President Cleveland and New York Senator David B. Hill. After the death of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Blatchford of New York, the President tried to appoint another New Yorker in his stead, but Hill, by invoking senatorial courtesy, defeated two Cleveland nominees from the State. Finally, Cleveland in order to end the wrangling and win quick confirmation selected White for the post.

On March 12, 1894, the Louisianan was sworn in as an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1910 President William Howard Taft, who according to White biographer Howard Lee McBain was "probably influenced by his desire to break the 'Solid South' politically," elevated White to the Chief Justiceship, making him the first Associate Justice to be promoted to this position.<sup>6</sup>

During his 27 years on the Court, White wrote the decisions in more than 700 cases. Although moderately conservative in his views, he showed, according to distinguished constitutional historian Paul L. Murphy, "a clear concern for the welfare of labor and labor unions" and unlike many of his colleagues who consistently upheld property rights, he believed that "property's sacredness was clearly qualifiable when curtailment of its freedom was in the public interest."<sup>7</sup> White first distinguished himself in the 1901-5 Insular Cases regarding the status of the territories the United States had recently acquired as a result of the war with Spain. It was White, says historian Loren P. Beth, who developed the doctrine "that conquered territory did not become a part of the United States constitutionally unless Congress passed legislation incorporating it."<sup>8</sup>

White made his greatest impact on American constitutional law in the 1911 Standard Oil and American Tobacco cases when he persuaded the Supreme Court to accept the "rule of reason" in regard to enforcement

<sup>6</sup>

Howard Lee McBain, "Edward Douglass White," Dictionary of American Biography, X, Part Two (New York, 1936), 96.

<sup>7</sup>

Paul L. Murphy, The Constitution in Crisis Times, 1918-1969 (New York, 1972), 11.

<sup>8</sup>

Beth, Development of the American Constitution, 1877-1917, 161.



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of the Sherman Antitrust Act. Since his dissent in the Trans-Missouri Case in 1897, White had been the foremost advocate of reasonableness, and his 1911 triumph, says historian James F. Watts, Jr., "permanently dulled the cutting edges of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act" and even today provides the "ill-defined guidelines for the legal relationship between the federal government and the oligopolies which dominate American business."<sup>9</sup> Actually, this question of reasonableness, says historian Arthur S. Link, was the "only standard by which the anti-trust law could be enforced."<sup>10</sup> Yet, in the long run, White's ruling, according to constitutional historians Alfred H. Kelly and Winfred A. Harbison, made it "virtually impossible to prosecute any great trust successfully, for almost any monopoly could put up a plausible argument for social responsibility and thus claim to be a reasonable combination."<sup>11</sup>

White remained Chief Justice until his death in Washington, D.C., on May 19, 1921, at the age of 75.

9

Watts, "Edward Douglass White," in Friedman and Israel (eds.), The Justices of the United States Supreme Court, III, 1646.

10

Link, American Epoch, 117.

11

Kelly and Harbison, The American Constitution, Third Edition, 605.

CONTINUATION SHEET White House ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE one

& Company, Inc., 1963).

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McBain, Howard Lee, "Edward Douglass White," Dictionary of American Biography, X, Part Two (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 96-98.

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Watts, James F., Jr., "Edward Douglass White," in Leon Friedman and Fred L. Israel (eds.), The Justices of the United States Supreme Court, 1789-1969: Their Lives and Major Opinions (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1969).