

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received

SEP 16 1983

date entered

## 1. Name

historic White Cottage

and/or common Twin Oaks

## 2. Location

street & number 71 Homochitto Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Natchez

N/A vicinity of

state Mississippi

code 28

county Adams

code 001

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Dr. and Mrs. Homer A. Whittington

street & number 71 Homochitto Street

city, town Natchez

N/A vicinity of

state Mississippi

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Chancery Clerk  
Adams County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Natchez

state Mississippi

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1978 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Mississippi Department of Archives and History

city, town Jackson

state Mississippi

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved date N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Twin Oaks, sited with considerable prominence, sits well back and elevated above an old regional thoroughfare, now Homochitto Street, and, when the property was developed in the early-nineteenth century, stood on the outskirts of the town of Natchez. Extensive lawns, traditional plantings and old trees (particularly the pair of old oaks which give the house its name) enhance the site. Some six acres survive intact from the original property as it had evolved by the mid-nineteenth century, and there is no significant encroachment of later construction to mar the landscaped setting of this excellent example of the detached "villa" residence of the pre-Civil War period. The Palladian derivations of this and other local residences of the period, regardless of size, depend upon a landscaped rural setting as well as adept neo-classical rendering of the structure. Twin Oaks, while modest in size by comparison with many other Natchez mansions of the period, achieves a statement of restrained, but articulate, monumentality through deft siting, sense of scale, and detail rather than through overwhelming size or complication of design.

Twin Oaks, once called "White Cottage," is a large masonry structure (a gabled cottage in form) with dormers at the front roof face. The front is stuccoed and scored to resemble cut stone in a more formal gesture. Windows in the front block of the house are six-over-six sash of typical proportions and are furnished with their original fixed-vane shutters. Preceding the front is a well-proportioned, architecturally correct portico encompassing the three central bays of the structure. Rectangular section, wood box columns terminate in crisply detailed, molded capitals carrying the architrave course which continues as a frieze course across the front elevation, turning the corners at each end and terminating as pilaster corners. This state is actually applied to a low parapet extending above the pitched roof and masking a built-in gutter across the front elevation. The portico stages also terminate with a parapet both at the pediment and frontal returns in a somewhat unusual detail (see illustration). A wood railing with tapered, rectangular-section spindles encloses the porch. In the pediment of the portico, sheathed with lapped, wood siding and framed with a raking, molded cornice is a single, semi-circular window. Fireplaces which are located at interior walls terminate in chimneys which pierce the roof near the valleys of the portico roof. A finely detailed entranceway repeats the Doric order of the portico including a heavy, four-panel door with sidelights and transom sash. Pilasters framing these openings are scaled down versions of the portico columns.

The house follows a traditional plan arrangement: a central hall, nine feet in width, extends the full depth of the house from front entrance to what would have been originally the rear extremity of the house opening into a rear gallery. Within this hall a stair rises to the second floor returning in direction toward the front of the house. At either side of the hall two large rooms comprise the primary living spaces: to the left, double parlors twenty feet in width by seventeen in depth communicate by means of monumentally scaled sliding doors. The ceiling height of twelve feet-nine inches contributes to the imposing scale of these spaces. To the right of the entrance hall are located similarly scaled rooms though probably intended for more intimate usage and for many years utilized as bedrooms.

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7 - DESCRIPTION

The rear of the main block of the house has been extended to provide additional living spaces and what originally had been a rear gallery has been expanded and enclosed to communicate with the dining room - kitchen wing, a structure originally separated from the main (front) block of the house but connected by galleries. This structure, basically detached both physically and stylistically from the front block, contains a large dining room, kitchen and service spaces. It is surrounded on most of three sides by porches or galleries with colonettes and decorative brackets. While this wing was evidently remodeled around 1870, it appears to incorporate elements of earlier construction possibly dating to the early-nineteenth century, documented habitations on the site.

At the second floor of the main (front) block of the house are located bedrooms communicating by means of a wide, central hall with low-vaulted ceiling which extends forward to the front window in the portico pediment. There are interesting, apparently original, ventilating panels between the hall and sleeping spaces. Additional bedrooms are provided in an extension to the back of the house accomplished at a later period.

Undoubtedly the configuration of the rear roof with originally similar to that of the front: steeply pitched with dormers punctuating the roof planes and providing light and ventilation from the rear.

The main or front block of Twin Oaks, with its straight-forward and conservative plan, complemented with appropriate, but almost severely restrained detail, falls into the Greek Revival period stylistically. Lacking conclusive documentary references relating to the exact date of construction it can certainly be assigned to the period of the flourishing of this style in the lower Mississippi Valley: 1830-1850. With its juxtaposition of constructions of different dates it may be viewed as a linear extension frontward of earlier structures on the property much the same as was accomplished at Richmond in Natchez.

Interior detailing of the front block, particularly a recurring mold (see illustrations) found in paneled doors and in paneled spandrels beneath the windows is of a type found widely in the 1830s and usually superceded in the lower Mississippi and Louisiana regions by another type, the common ogee and slant, by the late 1840s and 1850s. Door and window facings original to the front block of the house are simple, flat-face, unmolded boards with the architraval member overhanging slightly the vertical, side facings. The horizontal member is cut to form a low pediment and is emphasized with an applied cap molding. Mantelpieces are of a severely simple design: gray-white marble in the parlors with the fireplace opening forming a low Tudor arch. In the bedrooms and in the upstairs spaces the mantelpieces are rectilinear, of wood, with side pilasters or mold-supported shelf. Doors in the front block of the house are four-panel in format with recessed, flat panels and the ubiquitous, applied panel mold previously mentioned.

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7 - DESCRIPTION

The stairway, moved at some period in the past, was relocated by the present owners to what could be seen to be its original location. Its railing begins with a turned newel post and includes spindles consistent with the character of the bulk of the detailing of the house.

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

The plan at Sunnyside is more complex, incorporating an additional primary room behind the main hall, probably originally used as a dining room. Sunnyside also retains its plaster ceilings which incorporate rocco revival design elements and a fine red marble, rococo mantelpiece with round-arch openings (DeCell). Given the documented date of construction of Sunnyside in 1852 (see Mary Warren Miller, preservation consultant with The Historic Natchez Foundation, interviewed by R. J. W. Schmieg at Natchez, Miss., Dec., 1982; and Brown Lumber Company, Records, Jan., 1852, Item 331, Archives of the University of Mississippi, Oxford, Miss.), from the above internal evidence, it would be logical to postulate a somewhat earlier construction date by the same or related building crews for the front block of Twin Oaks.

Owners of the property at Twin Oaks as revealed in recorded transfers included the Routh family (Deed Book D:183), extensive landholders of the Natchez area around 1800 (D. Clayton James, Antebellum Natchez [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968], pp. 20, 150). Lewis Evans, a wealthy planter and territorial sheriff (James, pp. 42n, 84, 150, 228), occupied the house on the site during his ownership from 1810 to 1814 (Deed Book H:59). In 1832 it was acquired by Pierce Connelly, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church (Vestry Minutes of Trinity Episcopal Church Natchez 1822-1890, Microfilm, Judge George W. Armstrong Library, Natchez) and his wife (Deed Book V:44), who became Mother Cornelia, foundress of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus (Mother Marie Therese S.H.C.J. Cornelia Connelly, Foundress of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Westminster: The Newman Press, 1963, p. 76). Judge (Natchez [Miss.] Daily Courier, Nov. 5, 1853, p. 2) Charles Dubuissou acquired the property in 1841 (Deed Book CC:528), after serving as president of Jefferson College (William T. Blain, Education in the Old South-West: A History of Jefferson College, Washington, Mississippi [Natchez: Hudson Printing Company, 1976] p. 83) and later representing the Natchez District in the State Legislature during the 1850s (Natchez [Miss.] Daily Courier, Oct. 14, 1852, p. 2). A succession of owners followed for short periods in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (Deed Books LL:186, PP:676, QQ:458, WW:251, 3-A:763, 3-A:765, 3-A:766, 4-F:203, 4-F:206, 4-F:227) until the house and property were bought by Dr. and Mrs. Homer Whittington in 1940 (Deed Book 4-Z:383). Rescued from a ruinous condition at that time and renamed Twin Oaks (Dr. Homer Alexander Whittington, owner of Twin Oaks, interviewed

## 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

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**Specific dates** Ca. 1814, 1850, 1870    **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Twin Oaks is significant architecturally as a vernacular interpretation of Greek Revival styling and as the residence of several prominent early-Natchez citizens.

The intact records outlining property transactions involving Twin Oaks indicate that a dwelling structure existed at the site in 1814 (Adams County, Miss., Deed Book H:59). Other references through the 1820s and 1830s refer to the existence of a house (See Deed Books L:215, O:377, V:44, W:408; Cornelia Connelly papers, Sept. 22, 1835, Archives of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, Rome, Italy; and Joseph H. Ingraham, *The South-West. By A Yankee*, Vol. II New York: Harper & Brothers, 1835], p. 97). A map dating from 1824 (Deed Book O:37) includes primitive, perspective renderings of structures in the vicinity and if the accuracy of this document can be accepted, Twin Oaks (or White Cottage) (see Connelly; Deed Books BB:673, CC:528, CC:658, LL:186, PP:676, QQ:458, WW:251, 3-A:763, 3-A:765; 3-A:766, 4-F:203, 4-F:206, 4-Z:383; and Adams County, Miss., Will Book 2:462) at that time comprised a full, two-story construction. It is difficult to match with certainty documentary references to particular parts of the construction of the house as it survives today, but it would appear that the dining room - kitchen wing incorporates elements of the very early construction on the site (John E. DeCell, AIA, inspection of Twin Oaks, December, 1982).

Certainly the front block of the house is stylistically a product of the Greek Revival period and is consistent within itself from saw-cut and matched underfloor framing to the bulk of its interior detail identifiable as original (De Cell).

The dining room - kitchen wing to the rear retains elements which link it to the earlier construction known to have existed at the site. Though remodeled probably shortly after 1870 (the dining room French doors and a slate mantel removed by the present owners would date from this period) other surviving details: deep-cut, six-panel doors with raised panels and an early, simple, beaded baseboard in the service areas probably survive from the earliest periods of construction (see illustrations). Floor and ceiling framing in this wing utilize very old, hewn members (see illustrations) which show evidence of re-use here from even earlier locations (DeCell).

Another Natchez house, Sunnyside, has notable similarities to Twin Oaks' front block. Both houses are one-and-one-half-story masonry cottages, in part stuccoed over and scored. Door and window facings are similar, utilizing unmolded trim and low, pediment detail. Panel spandrels at Sunnyside, however, lack the applied molding at the recessed panels (John E. DeCell, AIA, inspection of Sunnyside, December, 1982).

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Adams County, Miss. Chancery Clerk. Deed Books D, H, L, O, V, W, BB, CC, LL, PP, QQ, WW, 3-A, 4-F, 4-Z.

Adams County, Miss. Chancery Clerk. Will Book 2.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approx. six

Quadrangle name Natchez, Miss.-La.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

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3	4	9	1	5	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Map 53, block 6, parcel 27, as outlined on attached official tax map for the city of Natchez.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
N/A			

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John E. DeCell, Architect; R.J.W. Schmieg, Historian

organization N/A

date December 22, 1982

street & number 327 East Madison Street

telephone (601) 746-2902

city or town Yazoo City

state Mississippi 39194

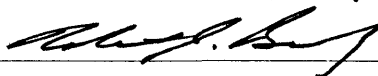
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date September 9, 1983

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date

10/13/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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8 - SIGNIFICANCE

by R. J. W. Schmieg at Natchez, Miss., Nov. 12, 1982), it has been their family home since that time and is one of the most popular houses to be visited in the annual Natchez Pilgrimage (Pilgrimage Tour Association, Archives, Natchez, Miss.).

9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Blain, William T. Education in the Old Southwest: A History of Jefferson College, Washington, Mississippi. Natchez, Miss.: Hudson Printing Company, 1976.

DeCell, John E., AIA. Inspection of Twin Oaks and Sunnyside, December, 1982.

Ingraham, Joseph Holt. The South-West. By A Yankee, Vol. II. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1835.

James, D. Clayton. Antebellum Natchez. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968.

Miller, Mary Warren, preservation consultant with The Historic Natchez Foundation, interviewed by R. J. W. Schmieg at Natchez, Miss., December, 1982.

Mother Marie Therese S.H.C.J. Cornelia Connelly, Foundress of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Westminster: The Newman Press, 1963.

Natchez, Judge George W. Armstrong Library. Vestry Minutes of Trinity Episcopal Church Natchez 1822-1890. Microfilm.

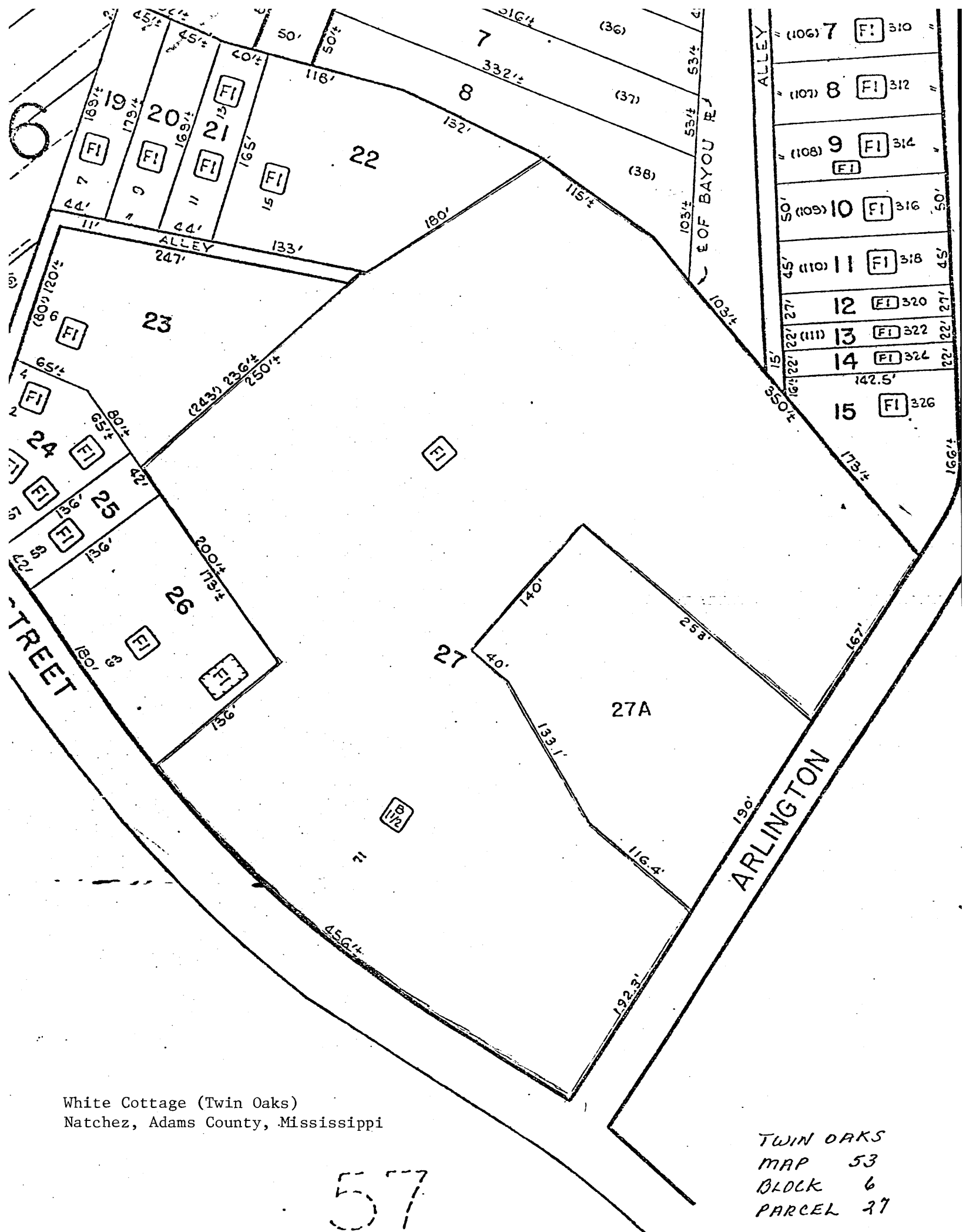
Natchez (Miss.) Daily Courier, October 14, 1852, November 5, 1853.

Oxford, Miss., Brown Lumber Company, Records. University of Mississippi.

Pilgrimage Tour Association, Archives, Natchez, Miss.

Rome, Italy. Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Archives. Mother Cornelia Connelly papers.

Whittington, Dr. Homer Alexander, owner of Twin Oaks. Interviewed by R.J.W. Schmieg, Natchez, at Natchez, Miss., November 12, 1982.







Twin Oaks, view of front from Homochitto  
Street

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA

December, 1982

Photo 1 of 13



Twin Oaks, view of front and left side  
Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi  
John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA  
December, 1982  
Photo 2 of 13





Twin Oaks, detail of front portico; column,  
entablature and dormer

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA

December, 1982

Photo 3 of 13



Twin Oaks, detail of pilaster, front  
entrance

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA

December, 1982

Photo 4 of 13





Twin Oaks, detail view from right side,  
portico roof and front return on side  
elevation

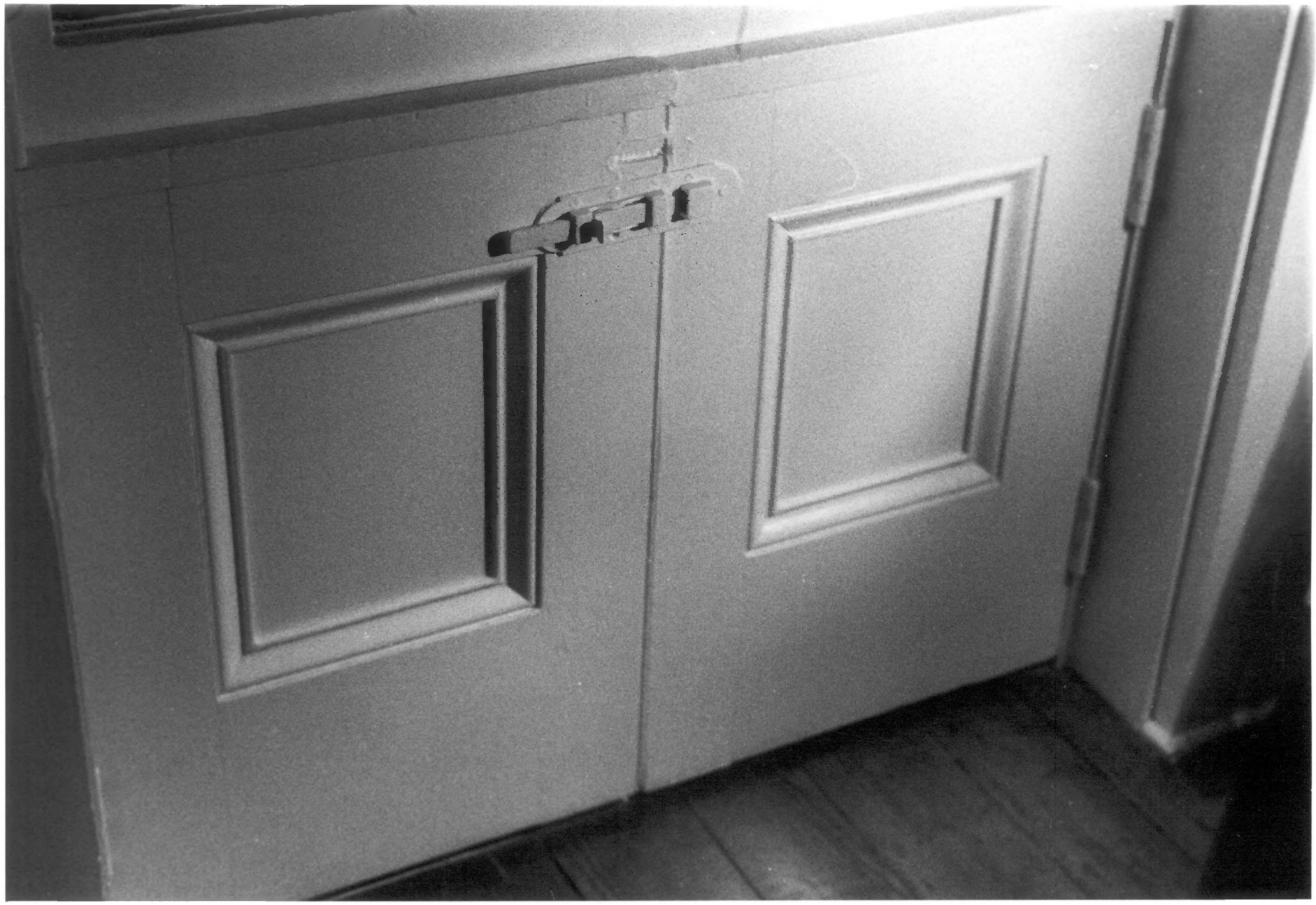
Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA

December, 1982

Photo 5 of 13





Twin Oaks, detail, paneled jib doors under  
window, rear of double parlors

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA

December, 1982

Photo 6 of 13



Twin Oaks, detail, paneled inset under  
window, front of double parlors

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA

December, 1982

Photo 7 of 13





Twin Oaks, detail, sliding doors between  
double parlors

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA

December, 1982

Photo 8 of 13





Twin Oaks, detail, beaded baseboard,  
kitchen-dining room wing

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA

December, 1982

Photo 9 of 13



Twin Oaks, detail, six-panel (raised  
panels) door, kitchen-dining room wing  
Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi  
John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA  
December, 1982  
Photo 10 of 13



Twin Oaks, detail, raised panel door,  
kitchen-dining room wing

Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi

John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA

December, 1982

Photo 11 of 13





A black and white photograph of a construction site. In the foreground, a measuring tape is stretched across a wooden surface, showing measurements from 0 to 12 inches. To the left, a piece of corrugated metal is visible with the text "6" THICK-R-10" printed on it. In the background, several pieces of rebar are visible, some of which are embedded in a concrete structure. The scene is cluttered with various construction materials and debris.

6" THICK-R-10"

Twin Oaks, ceiling framing beam seen from  
attic, kitchen-dining room wing  
Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi  
John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA  
December, 1982  
Photo 12 of 13





Twin Oaks, ceiling framing beam seen from  
attic, kitchen-dining room wing  
Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi  
John E. DeCell, Architect, AIA  
December, 1982  
Photo 13 of 13