NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. Oct. 1990)

**United States Department of the Interior** 

**National Park Service** 

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PI DECISTDATION FORM

<b>REGISTRATIO</b>	N FORM		<u> </u>	MATIONAL PAI	K SERVICE
1. Name of Property					a reavior
historic name: other name/site number:	McGehee Plantation McGehee Crossing, M	IcGehee's Gate			
2. Location	<del></del>	<u> </u>			
street & number: 950 E city/town: Senatobia	id Nelson Drive state: Mississippi	code: MS	county: Tate		for publication: n/a code: 38668
3. State/Federal Agency Certifi	cation				
As the designated authority of nomination request for the National Register of Histor Part 60. In my opinion, the puthis property be considered additional comments.)  Signature of certifying official State or Federal Agency or T	determination of eligibility oric Places and meets the property _X_ meets significant nationally	y meets the doct e procedural and _ does not meet statewide	umentation stand professional red the National Req	lards for regis quirements se gister Criteria.	tering properties in t forth in 36 CFR I recommend that
In my opinion, the property _ for additional comments.)	meets does no	t meet the Natio	nal Register crite	eria. ( See	continuation sheet
Signature of commenting offi	cial/Title	Date			
State or Federal agency and	bureau				
4. National Park Service Certifi	cation	1.,			
I, hereby certify that this prope entered in the National Reg see continuation sh determined eligible for the l see continuation sh determined not eligible for t see continuation sh removed from the National see continuation she other (explain):	gister eet National Register eet the National Register eet Register	signat	ture of the Keep	er Beal	Pate of Action  7.3.07

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(see continuation sheet)

5. Classification			
Ownership of Property: Private		per of Resources within Property ibuting Noncontributing	
Category of Property: building (s)	3	buildings  buildings  sites	
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: n/a		structures objects	
Name of related multiple property listing: n/a	<u>3</u>	_0_ Total	
6. Function or Use			
Historic Functions: Domestic/single dwelling		Current Functions: Domestic/single dwelling	g
7. Description		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
Architectural Classification: Greek Revival	Materials: foundation: walls: roof:	brick weather board tin	
Narrative Description See continuation sheets.			
8. Statement of Significance			
Applicable National Register Criteria: C		Areas of Significance: Architecture	
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a		Period(s) of Significance: c. 1855	
Significant Person(s):		Significant Dates: n/a Architect/Builder: Unknown	
Cultural Affiliation: n/a			
Narrative Statement of Significance			

9. Major Bibliographic	References			
(see continuation shee	et)			
Previous documentation	on on file (NPS):		Primary Location of Additional Data:	
preliminary determin	ation of individual listing (36 (	CFR 67)	State Historic Preservation Office	
has been requested		·	Other State agency	
previously listed in the		• .	Federal agency	
	ed eligible by the National Re	gister	Local government	
	al Historic Landmark American Buildings Survey		University Other	
#	Antaican buildings ourvey		Specify Repository:	
	American Engineering Recor	rd #		•
10. Geographical Data				
Acreage of Property:	7.71 acres			
UTM References: 16	Easting 22902	20 Northing	3828000	
Legal Location (Town	nship, Range & Section(s	s)):		
number seven (7) Wes railroad track running of westward boundary is and the south boundar Boundary Justification fact that McGehee Crodrawn to take in the ol whence water was dratwo structures of c. 18 7.71 acres described in the ancestral home of	st of the Basis Meridian. To due north/south. The cent 232' the north boundary 1 by is 1190'  Due to the business ar dessing was a full stop from decamage way from the player to re-supply the steam 55 — the board and batten	the plantation her line of the base base base base base base base bas	er seventeen (17) in township number six (6) of Rang- house sits on a gentle rise facing due west 1000' from boundary bisects the house running west to east. The boundary is the easement line of the railroad running lation the McGehee family had with the railroad, and and a whistle stop until 1955, the boundaries have be to the train stop, to also include the small pond from The westward boundary has been drawn to take in and the rough hewn beam com crib. This boundary is intation is still a working farm of twelve hundred acres	n the e 341' the peen the the the the
11. Form Prepared By				
name/title: organization: street & number: city or town:	671 Jefferson Ave		pril 5, 2007 901)277-0223 zip code: 38105	
Property Owner				
name/title:	McGehee Plantation LL	C		
street & number:	950 Ed Nelson Drive	-	telephone: (662)562-7430	
city or town:		state: MS	zip code: 38668	

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#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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		Tate County, Mississippi	

#### **DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**

The McGehee Plantation sits on a rise at the end of a winding gravel road on a farm of twelve hundred acres. The house sits on the top of an incline overlooking the railroad tracks at the bottom of the slope. As the house is approached from the west a row of black walnut trees flank the house's side elevation. The house itself is an outstanding example of Greek Revival architecture having many of the typical characteristics of that style. The overall form is a simple rectilinear box with low hipped roof; full entablature wrapping all four facades; pilasters marking all four sides and a prominent two story frontal colonnade with triangular pediment. The prominent colonnade faces the railroad. Hugh McGehee, the original owner's father, was influential in routing the railroad through the region.

The plantation house was built c. 1855. It is a five bay center hall plan constructed of heavy timber. It has a low hipped metal corrugated roof that replaced an original shake shingle roof. There are two internal chimney stacks symmetrically placed. The chimney stacks are not conspicuous to the façade and are stuccoed. Below the roof line is a prominent entablature that surrounds the structure. The entablature includes a deep fascia at the roof line, a frieze with dentil trim and an architrave delineated by moldings. On all four corners of the structure are pilasters with vernacular capitals. All fenestration is aligned vertically and horizontally. All windows have full length exterior shutters and are ranked 6 over 6. The foundation is exposed brick with original brick piers replaced with concrete piers during the 1950s.

The main façade's distinguishing feature is a well proportioned, three-bay, two-story portico. The portico has a triangular pediment with a heavy cyma molding that delineates the raking cornice. The tympanum is clad in tongue and groove sheathing. Below the cornice is a deep entablature that connects with the entablature surrounding the structure. The columniation is tetrastyle. The columns are vernacular, square in cross section with entasis and recess panels. The capitals consist of a square abacus, a prominent cyma and fascia. The porch area is delineated by two matching pilasters which copy the column design. Between the pilasters of the portico area the main façade is clad in tongue and groove sheathing.

The entrance is the main focus of the portico area. The frontpiece is composed of pilasters and a full entablature above. The door is double-leafed, four paneled and flanked by internal pilasters and sidelights of cobalt blue stained glass. Above is a five light transom of cobalt blue stained glass. All of the doorway is constructed of black walnut. Above the cornice of the doorway is a balcony with cast iron support brackets in a rinceau pattern. The balcony is surrounded by cast iron panels with arabesque motifs and decorative post. The single-leaf, four paneled door to the balcony is also black walnut. It too has a pilaster surround with full entablature with a heavy cornice. Hanging from the

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underside of the balcony is a light fixture originally of gas that has been converted to electricity

The original wood deck to the portico area has been removed (early 1950s) and a circular plan stair has been made from the original bricks of the deck foundations. The floor to the porch area is paved with bricks and the columns now rest on brick pedestals. The ceiling of the porch is clad with a pressed metal ceiling material. The area of the façade beyond the portico is clad in weather board and pilasters frame the ends.

The north and south façades mirror each other. The central chimney stacks are visible on these facades and the entablature below is a major feature. They are both clad in weather board framed on either side by vernacular pilasters. The two window bays are aligned horizontally and vertically and symmetrically placed. The windows are the prominent feature in the façade being noticeably attenuated at ten feet. They all have exterior louvered shutters painted dark green. The exposed brick foundation continues from the main façade.

On the longitudinal, rear façade (north) both symmetrically placed, stuccoed chimneys stacks and low hipped roof are visible. The corner pilasters enframe only the upper story of the façade. A former one story, shed-roofed porch that covered the breadth of the back façade was enclosed in the 1950s to make a kitchen, den and the only bathroom in the house. The back door is aligned to the central window above and is covered by a small porch. The lower fenestration is two over two. The enclosed porch area is clad in weather board.

#### Interior Description McGehee House

The floor plan is a typical central hall plan with two rooms on either side of the central hall. The original house included four rooms downstairs and upstairs. The two rear first floor rooms include shallow closets. An original back porch spanning the west façade was enclosed in the 1950s, creating a kitchen, den and full bath.

All rooms are of grand scale with fourteen feet tall ceilings. Baseboards, door trim and doors are proportionately grand. Baseboards are one foot tall and doors are ten feet tall. The stair has lathe turned balusters with dark stain. There is not a newel post but a circle of balusters capped by a whorl that at one time held a finial. The first rise and tread has a radius end with the circle of balusters mounted above. The stair railing is formed and continuous to the top of the stair.

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The entrance doors are double leaf and are four paneled with heavy moldings. The doors and their surround are of black walnut. The transom above is divided into five lights in blue glass. Muntins are very thin and fine. There are also sidelights flanking the doors also in blue glass. Above the entrance door is a full entablature with a heavy, box projecting cornice. The door side trim is Greek ear form with an entasis. The door includes its original white porcelain door knob and twist door bell in working condition. The rear door to the center hall duplicates the entrance doors in overall form and design.

All other door designs in the house are consistent in design. All the remaining doors are single leaf four paneled doors with molding. All include a full entablature and side trim with Greek ear design and entasis. All doors appear to have their original hardware including porcelain white door knobs.

From room to room the doors and overall room trim are painted in varying faux wood grain finishes. The doors appear to have their original painted finish. The east first floor rooms are finished in dark faux wood grain. The parlor has white painted wood trims and door. The upstairs rooms have original faux wood grain doors and trim with differing finishes from room to room. All appear to have original hardware. Included in the door treatment is an outer screen system reaching from floor to door lintel. The floor to door lintel screen outer doors are on all bedroom doors entered from the central hall.

Windows are of grand scale and many retain original glass panes. The first floor front rooms have floor to ceiling windows. All windows have trim consistent with the design of the door surrounds. All include full entablatures at the window lintels and all side trim include Greek ear designs and an entasis. The windows are also consistently painted with wood faux finish to match the appropriate trim in the various rooms.

Of the eight original rooms seven have their original chimneypieces. The removed chimneypiece face is presently stored in an upstairs bedroom. All chimneypieces are consistent in design. Each has paneled pilasters with heavy moldings. Above the pilasters is a full entablature with a shallow mantel shelf. All chimneypieces project into the room. Most have a sunken hearth of bricks.

There are no ceiling and frieze moldings in any of the rooms. Walls are of original plaster and continue uninterrupted from the baseboards to the ceiling plane. Overall walls are painted with a frieze area suggested in all rooms by a contrasting paint color at the ceiling plane.

There are no original light fixtures presently used in the interior of the house. Built-in lighting in each room consists of a single lamp extending from a single chord fixture in the middle of the room.

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Floors are waxed heart pine in overall good condition.

All the rooms of the original house are grand in scale and proportion. Each reflects a restrained quiet dignity typical to the Greek Revival style.

The enclosed porch area is carpeted with walls of varnished pine paneling typical to the 1950's.

The Plantation house has two contributing structures to the rear of the property. Both structures were built at or about the same time as the main house.

The **Cookhouse** is a two room, 18 foot x 16 foot gabled roof structure of vertical board and batten cypress construction. The roof is tin over milled lumber rafters. A simple plank door hangs on forged hinges. Single light small windows open on the east and west elevations and are centered on the walls. This building was the residence for the cook and her family. The condition of the structure is very poor. The roof has collapsed over the back half of the building. The floor has also rotted through in over two-thirds of the interior. The building is currently used for tool and junk storage.

The **Corn Crib** is a heavy timbered, shed structure. The dovetailed corners show the rough cut timbers to be 16 inches high by 12 inches wide in section. The corner pilings, originally of stacked stone, have been replaced with pre-cast tapered concrete piers. The original gabled roof crib measures 16 feet x 20 feet in plan and has a later shed-roofed addition on the north face. The addition is rough cut, vertical cypress planks. The rafters in the original structure are peeled poles. Some of the original split cedar shingles are evident from the interior. The current condition of the structure is poor. Twenty percent of the tin roof is missing and the floor has collapsed.

The detached kitchen structure was demolished in the 1950s. The brick foundation outline is still visible at ground level.

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#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The McGehee Plantation House at 950 Ed Nelson Drive, south of the town of Senatobia in Tate County, Mississippi is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion C for its outstanding Greek Revival architecture.

Early in the nineteenth century Americans fell in love with the Greek Style. The Greek War of Independence reminded Americans of their own revolution. Contemporary discoveries in archeology and architecture of the period also sparked a renewed interest in the style. Concurrently, the War of 1812 cooled the American zeal for all things British including the adherence to the Federal/Sheraton style from the British Isles. The Golden Age of Greece reminded us of our democratic government and sense of citizenship. For much of the 19th century the Greek Revival style dominated residential and public architecture. It was so popular that it became known as the National Style.

The model for Greek Revival architecture was the ancient Greek temple. Several design elements identify the revival style. Triangular pediments, columns and porticos, and facade pilasters are all indicative. The decoration is usually far more austere than the original Greek temples. Unlike the friezes of the real Greek temples with their elaborate sculptures and moldings, most American homes drew their parallel by mimicking the geometry rather than the details of their Greek counterparts. The American entablatures, for example (the horizontal structures lying on the tops of the columns and supporting the pediment) was often very plain, decorated only by well-proportioned dentil molding. The shape of the temple was usually rectangular with columns placed in a variety of ways. In this case it is a porticoed front, facing the railroad line at the bottom of a rolling hill. Frequently end elements are portrayed as flattened pilasters at the corners and elsewhere on the facades. Other signature elements of the style include monumental entry doors surrounded by glazed transoms and sidelights and a strict adherence to the central hall/four room plan.

This two-story columned pediment house is one of a quickly vanishing breed. Other surviving Greek Revival structures in the Panolal Tatel DeSoto county area are:

Fredonia Church	c. 1825	6 miles east of Como, Panola County
Miller Plantation	c 1845	Olive Branch, DeSoto County
The Oaks	c1850	Sardis, Panola County

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#### **Local and Regional History**

The land on which the plantation home is located was purchased by Abner F. McGehee on March 16, 1854 from a representative of the New York Chickasaw Land Association. While president of the United States from 1829 to 1837, Andrew Jackson worked to remove Native Americans from their land to west of the Mississippi. This land purchased by McGehee had once belonged to the Chickasaw nation until their removal around 1830.

The original size of the plantation was approximately 1,920 acres, consisting of the west half of Section 17, Township 6, Range No. 7, West of the Basis Meridian. The plantation was purchased for \$3,360 (as cited in the original Deed). Currently 1,200 acres are owned by four direct descendants of the original owner. Cattle are raised on the pasture land and pine trees are grown and harvested. The farm is situated on hills of loess soil which is very fertile. The high elevation keeps the area free of flooding.

The main house was built in 1856 by Abner F. McGehee. It was a very desirable site because the M & T (Mississippi & Tennessee) Railroad line ran through the property. Mr. Frank White wanted to complete the railroad line that already existed from Louisiana to Grenada, MS. The next section was going to be very expensive because a number of rivers had to be spanned. White was the son-in-law of Hugh McGehee, Abner McGehee's father, and when White ran out of money, he asked Hugh to invest in the railroad. Hugh did so under the condition that the plantation would be a scheduled stop on the line. This contract was honored as a "whistle stop" until the early 1950s. With the investment, the railroad was completed across the Tallahatchie River and the track was completed from Grenada to Memphis in 1861. In 1884, the Illinois Central Railroad bought the M & T Railroad rights. Even though many of the railroad bridges had to be repaired, it was a good investment to own the Grenada-to-Memphis line.

The train regularly stopped at McGehee Plantation, which was also referred to as McGehee Crossing and McGehee Gates. The latter name came from the double gates located at the whistle stop. A small pond located nearby served to refill the boiler for the steam engine. A gazebo-covered platform could be seen from the front door of McGehee Plantation and travelers would debark to stretch their legs while the boiler was refilled. Train workers were welcomed to stop by for refreshments.

The cotton grown on the plantation was conveniently transported to market in Memphis, Tennessee. A gin existed on the plantation. Crops were also grown to feed the farm animals.

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The ancestral home has been in the hands of family descendents since it was built. African-American slaves built the house and there is no architect of record or existing plans. In the home today are furnishings, paintings, and documents passed down through the last 150 years.

Plantation homes of the same era and form in this area are no longer extant.

After the Civil War, many of the former/freed African-American slaves stayed on the property, with little means to relocate elsewhere. The family was not pressed to sell their land and after Reconstruction they were again profitable. Contemporary diary account of former McGehee slave and freeman, Louis Hughes, can be found in the book, A Year in the South: Four Lives in 1865 by Stephen V. Ash (Palgrave MacMillan, 2002).

Stark Young (1881-1963) was born in Como, Mississippi and was raised on the McGehee Plantation. Born in Como, MS, his mother, Marv Clark Starks (1858-1890), was the daughter of Caroline Charlotte McGehee (1821-1861) and Stephen Gilbert Starks (1816-1859). When Young was nine, his mother died and he was sent to live with relatives on the McGehee Plantation. Young attended college in Oxford, MS, and earned a Masters Degree in English from Columbia University. He would later teach at the University of Mississippi, Oxford and at other universities. Young became a very prolific writer of plays, travel books, fiction, poetry, and drama criticism.

In 1934, Young had a bestselling novel with *So Red the Rose*. It chronicled the life of two families, the Bedfords and the McGehees. Although he moved the story's location to Natchez, MS, he used the McGehee Plantation as the setting for this drama of two Southern families' experiences from 1860 to 1865. It was very favorably reviewed, reached the number two position on fiction lists, and was made into a motion picture in 1935. Novels and films about the Civil War were popular in the 1930s. *So Red the Rose* was viewed by some critics as a literary work that transcended the historical context and stood as fine literature. The success of *So Red the Rose* may well have encouraged the serious consideration for publication of another Civil War story, *Gone with the Wind*, by Margaret Mitchell, that appeared later that decade.

This excerpt is from an article originally appeared in the book *Lives of Mississippi Writers*, 1817-1967, edited by James B. Lloyd. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1980.

Stark Young, born in Como, Mississippi, 11 October 1881, is the most cosmopolitan and multitalented of the state's major literary figures. Widely traveled—especially in Italy, England, and France—thoroughly familiar with Greek, Latin, and English literature, a poet, novelist, essayist, dramatist, translator, painter, professor, letter writer and brilliant conversationalist, Young

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achieved distinction in a number of artistic fields; but he is perhaps best remembered for his weekly essays on the drama which appeared in the New Republic for more than twenty years and for his best-selling novel of Mississippi during the Confederacy, *So Red the Rose*. Throughout his long career, Young retained the characteristically Southern attitudes which he acquired during his youth in Mississippi.

In summary, we see that the rich history and colorful lives of people are played upon the stage of this great temple house—not as the idealized, whitewashed fantasy of books like *Gone with the Wind*, but instead as the story of backbreaking work, lives intertwined, and ancestral history. This textbook example of the Greek Revival style, the great scarcity of other structures of similar style, and the stories we will one day learn, make the McGehee Plantation the ideal candidate for the National Register of Historic Places.

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Hamlin, Talbon. Greek Revival Architecture in America. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1985.

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McGehee Plantation Tate County, Mississippi

#### **APPENDIX C**

#### PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

McGEHEE PLANTATION TATE CO. MISSISSIPPI

Photographed by Mo

Monty Shane Johnson

Design 500 Inc. Memphis Tennessee

Date:

November 2006

**Negatives** 

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Photo 1 Front (east) façade and side (north) elevation

Photo 2 Front (east) façade

Photo 3 Front door and balcony details

Photo 4 Rear (west) façade with enclosed porch, and partial south elevation

Photo 5 Rear (west) façade with enclosed porch and the north side elevation

Photo 6 View from upstairs central hall looking down the stairs to the front door

Photo 7 Ballustered newel post and stair detail from central hall looking west

Photo 8 Upstairs north east bedroom with details of window, door and mantel

Photo 9 Doorway detail. View from D.S. hall into northeast (front) bedroom

End of listing

East Line of Signal posed plank 15 edroon 20 wx 18'd 20'w x 18'd. + 14'- 0" ceiling Dining Hall Room 20 x 18' 12:8x 38-0" long PORCH EMCLOSURE OFFICE KITCHEN FULL BATH POURED CONCRETE Porch First Jloor Plan Ma Genee Stantation Seale 1/8"-1-0" Nate County Mississippi West

56' Front Jacade (East) Baleony w/ cast ivon railing Upstaire Hall 12'8"x 38'-0" Bedroom Bedroom 20'x 18' 20'x18' ceiling is + 12'-8" aff. Hest

Scale 1/8"-1-0"

McGehee Plantation

R. E. Orne Rucia To 3 Dud W12 814 J. 6 Ry West Mch 16.5-4

This indentive made the Sixteenth day of March in the year A. F. Mc Geher of our Lord 1854 letween Richard to Orne of the first part receive in Chancey and Ulow F. Mr Juhe of the County of Paurla State of I Strivise this of the second peat Mitme seth " Whereas by an inter locatory

Decree of the District Chancery bant of diviniple at Holly Springs July Jam 1846 Richard E. Ome oras appointed received in a race which Thomas N. Niles is complainant and Russell Stithing and other comparing the New York Chickaeur Land Association are defendants and as ench re. ted with full form and authority to rell my of the land belonging to the audiation not already sold the Title to which stand in the name of claimed Septim and aler to collect all notes due and un, havid given for the furthere of lands hereto fore sold or which may be hereafter sold klonging to the association. Now therefor in consideration of Thirty three hundred and sixty dollars to me in hand paid the useifst whireof is hereby acknowledged I have this day bargained sold and conveyed and by the freeents do bargain & Mand convey north the said Abner I. She Gebre the party of the seemed part all of their tract of land estrated in the bounty of Devote State of Miseiserphi Known and described in the Chrickarun surveys as the West half of Section Name bered sevent een (17) in Forouship Rumber six (6) of Range no secont 11 West of the Baris Mered, ian to have and to hold the above granted premises with all the privileges and appartenan, ces thereunts belonging ovin any mice appertaining unto the said party of the word fact his him and apigms to the cole and only proper new benefit and behoof of the said party of the second frant his him and assigns former And Richard b. One receiver an aforesaid do hereby and will forever wanant and defend the title to the above described land unto the enil Atner F. M. Tehie his his and apigns so far as I the said Richard to Orne by wither of the order and proceedings of the earl District bout and the authority verted in me as viewer may or can wanant and defend

In witness whereof I have hounts set my hand and seal on the day and year first above written

Richard E. Vine Receive in Chancey

State of Timewer?

Shelty bounty 3 Personally appeared before me James Strain a Commissione appointed by the Goronno of Mississifific with authority to take the asknowledgement of deeds to be med and runded in said State the within named Richard & bene recei. ver in Chancey who arknowledged that he eighed scaled and delivered the within Sud on the day it bear date for the purposes therein expused

Given under my hand and seal at Meruphis this the 16 day of Marsh 1854 James Strain

Nommissioner de



Photo Plate & of 9 Front (Cast) Facade & siche (north) elevation Melgeehee Plantation Tate Co. Mississippi



Photo Plate 2 of 9 Front (East) Facade Melfrehre Plantation Nate Co. Minisippi



Photo Plate 3 of 9 Front door + haleony details,

Sate Co, Mississippi McGechee Plantation



Photo Plate 4 of 9 Kear (west) facade and part of south side elevation. Mc Techer Plantation Nate Co. Mississippi



Plate 5 of 9 Kear (west) focade with enclosed parch. And the north side elevation.

north side elevation. McGeehee Plantation Nate Co, Minisper



Plate & of 9 Thew from upstairs central hall down MGeehee Plantation Nate Co. Mississippi



Plate 1 of 9 Ballustered newell post & stain detail from the central hall looking to the rear, (westward,) M Geeher Plantation Nate Co. Minimppi



Whate Plate 8 of 9 Upstains north east bedroom showing details of the windows, mantles and closet door. Mc Seeher Dlantation Nate Co. Mississippi



Photo Plate 9 of 9 Dornay Detail. Niew is from D. S. central hall Sooking into northeast (food) beelram -McGechee Plantation Pate Co. Mississippi