

William Allen White Cabins  
Rocky Mountain National Park  
Estes Park Vicinity  
Larimer County  
Colorado

HABS No. CO-63

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35-ESPK, V  
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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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Addendum to  
William Allen White Cabins  
Bear Lake Road  
Rocky Mountain National Park  
Vicinity Estes Park, Larimer County  
Colorado

HABS No. CO-63

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ADDENDUM TO:

WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE CABINS

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This report is an addendum to six drawings previously transmitted to the Library of Congress.

Location: Bear Lake Road, Moraine Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, Vicinity Estes Park, Larimer County, Colorado

Significance: This historic complex is representative of the era when families built private summer homes in the region of present-day Rocky Mountain National Park. It is also important due to its association with William Allen White, a noted writer, Pulitzer prize winner, and advisor to many political figures.

Description:

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

Date of Construction: William Allen White cabin - 1887  
Porch addition - 1913  
Studio - 1913  
Upper Sleeping Cabin - 1913  
Lower Sleeping Cabin - 1913  
Privy - 1913

Architect/Designer: Main cabin - Unknown  
All other structures - William Allen White

B. Historical Context

Biography: William Allen White (Willie) was born in Emporia, Kansas on February 10, 1868. The next year he was taken to El Dorado, Kansas, where he enjoyed a middle-class boyhood. Willie's father, Allen White, a physician, druggist, business man, and Democratic politician, had settled in Kansas in 1859. Willie's mother, Mary Hatten, met Allen when she went to Kansas to instruct ex-slaves. Mary was a Radical Republican, and in later years, Willie credited his parents' differing politics for his open-mindedness.

Allen White died in 1882, and Mary took boarders into her house so that Willie could attend the College of Emporia (1884-1886). In 1885 the teenager obtained summer employment as a printer's devil. Thereafter he held various journalistic

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jobs in El Dorado, Emporia and Lawrence, where he attended the University of Kansas (1886-1890). In 1890 Willie left school to become associate editor on the El Dorado Republican; in 1891-92 he worked for the Kansas City Journal; and in 1892-95 he wrote for the Kansas City Star. In 1893 he married Sallie Lindsay, who became his lifelong aide and editor. Two years later, determined to make a name, White purchased his own newspaper, the Emporia Gazette. As editor of the Gazette, he planned to present conservative Republican views.

A year later, at the outset of the 1896 Presidential campaign, White penned a fiercely anti-Populist Party editorial, "What's the Matter With Kansas?" He blamed this party for all the State's problems. The Republican Congressional Committee noted White's editorial and distributed more than a million reprints of it, making White nationally known. After the election, White published a collection of short stories and, ironically, started on the road to progressivism. He began a ten-year association with the muckraking McClure's Magazine and on his first trip East, he met Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt made a significant impression on White as being a man to bring about change and a new era in the United States. Influenced both by the McClure's writers and by Roosevelt, who became his friend, White evolved into a Progressive.

By the turn of the century, White had established his three lifelong careers. He operated the Gazette, devoted much time to Republican political activity, and wrote fiction and nonfiction for magazine and book publication. After Roosevelt became President in 1901, White continuously remained in the public eye due to his association with the President, and to the many articles which he penned on Roosevelt and his ideas. In addition, White served as the Chief Executive's unofficial midwestern political affairs advisor. By 1905 White ranked as a full-fledged progressive, and in 1909 he published a "progressive" novel, A Certain Rich Man, which eventually sold a quarter of a million copies. In 1910 he collected some of his essays into a book, The Old Order Changeth, which historian Richard Hofstadter regards as a work which represents the dominant progressive political philosophy.

In 1908 White backed William Howard Taft for the Republican Presidential nomination but soon became disenchanted with him. White and Senators Robert M. LaFollette, Jonathan Bourne, and Joseph L. Bristow formed the National Progressive Republican League Convention as a member of the Kansas delegation, but White bolted when Roosevelt launched the Progressive Party. For four years, White controlled Progressive politics in Kansas, and with some justification, political enemies dubbed

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him "Boss White." One of White's biographers, John DeWitt McKee, concludes that the only reason White was considered an amateur is because he never ran for an elective office. White stayed with the Progressive Party until 1916, when Roosevelt, who decided not to run, endorsed the regular Republican candidate. White returned to the Republican camp also, and resumed his leading role in that party. He even served as a delegate to several subsequent Republican National Conventions.

In 1917, during the First World War, White went to Europe to serve as a Red Cross observer, and in 1919 he returned to cover the Paris Peace Conference as a syndicated columnist. White supported President Wilson's League of Nations plan and wrote and spoke extensively in favor of it. In fact, the ex-Progressive backed most of Wilson's domestic program and foreign policy, but he did not consider joining the Democratic Party and tried instead to liberalize the Republicans. Although White ran independently against the National Party's Ku Klux Klan-endorsed candidate for Kansas Governor in 1924, he neither alienated the Republican Party nor ran to win. Because of his countrywide fame, however, White achieved his campaign goal of drawing the Nations's attention to the vast and pernicious influence of the Klan.

During a controversy in 1922 concerning the right of railroad workers to strike, White penned "To an Anxious Friend," a defense of free speech, that earned him a Pulitzer Prize. The year before, however, he wrote what remains his best known and loved editorial, "Mary White," a paean to life inspired by the accidental death of his 17-year-old daughter. White did not publish any fiction after the First World War, but he wrote biographies, including Woodrow Wilson (1924), Masks in a Pageant (1928), and A Puritan in Babylon: The Story of Calvin Coolidge (1938). When the Great Depression began, White implored Republican President Hoover to take decisive steps and after 1932, White approved most of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Characteristically, though, the Kansas Republican withdrew his praise at election time. White loyally supported FDR through out his successive terms, except in election years, when his endorsement followed along the Republican Party line. For example, in 1936, White endorsed fellow Kansan Alf Landon, the son of an old Progressive friend.

After the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe, White supported Roosevelt's foreign policy in particular. In 1939 he became chairman of the Non-Partisan Committee for Peace through the Revision of the Neutrality Law, and the next year he joined Clark Eichelberger in forming the Committee to

Defend America by Aiding the Allies. White served as the organization's chairman and imparted to it its popular name, the "White Committee." The organization helped Roosevelt win public support for the Lend-Lease Act and the transfer of overage American destroyers to Great Britain. After about a year, however, poor health forced White's resignation, and the committee's influence declined, one measure of the septuagenarian's personal prestige. White devoted his last years to State politics and to writing his autobiography. He died, without completing the book, on January 29, 1944.

History: In the early 1900's the resort industry in the vicinity of present-day Rocky Mountain National Park was growing rapidly. Along with the development of these resorts, private summer cabins began appearing in great numbers. The families owning these cabins often spent every summer in Estes Park. This continued for several generations until the government began purchasing as much private land as possible within the Park and removing the buildings.

William Allen White first came to Estes Park with some college friends in the 1880's. They spent the summer living in a rented cabin and exploring the area. He had not yet, of course, achieved his fame as a newspaper publisher and writer, novelist, advisor of presidents, reformer, political liberal, and a prime mover in Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party. However, this first visit to Estes Park, which White remembered fondly, proved to be very influential in his life. Over the years he and his family continued to visit the Park, and in June of 1911, White with his wife and two children again decided to spend their summer in the Estes Park area. They rented a cabin in Moraine Park, near the site of the cabins which he eventually purchased for his summer home. White set up a tent a hundred feet up the hill from the cabin. He put his cot and typewriter in the tent, and every morning after breakfast went up to the tent to write. The result was his second novel, In the Heart of a Fool. In 1912 White purchased a cabin built in 1887 that was perched at the eastern end of Moraine Park along with another cabin on the property that had been built around 1900. He acquired the entire property for around \$3,000. In 1913, the Whites built a 14-foot porch on three sides of the main cabin, built two small bedroom cabins, and constructed a log cabin 100 feet up the hill being the house where White could work on his writing.

Many great people sat on the porch of his cabin discussing world and national affairs. Among these were William Jennings Bryan, Clarence Darrow, and Jane Addams.

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White spent a total of thirty summers in Moraine Park. This annual residence at the park offered White a secluded environment, allowing him time to think, relax, and view the world from a different perspective. The main cabin, work cabin, and the two sleeping cabins became the property of William L. White, the son of William Allen White, upon the death of his father in 1944. Despite a National Park Service policy begun in 1918 by Director Horace M. Albright, which aimed at purchasing all private inholdings within the national parks, William L. White retained ownership of his father's land until 1972. Not until 1965 did the White family express interest in any of the Park Service offers to buy their Moraine Park property, even though a life tenancy provision was included in the offers. At this time, the sixty-five year old William L. White cited his age as motivation to sell the property. However, due to several business and financial delays, the final transaction of the property did not occur until 1972.

The purchase of the White property was important to Rocky Mountain National Park officials who feared that land developers and speculators would compete for its ownership due to the stature of the White family. The main cabin and the studio will remain on the property to be used for National Park Service purposes. The Park Service plans to remove the upper and lower sleeping cabins and the privy.

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