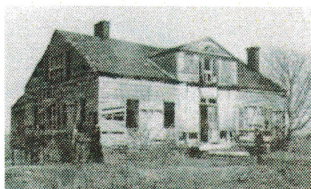




The Shirley House



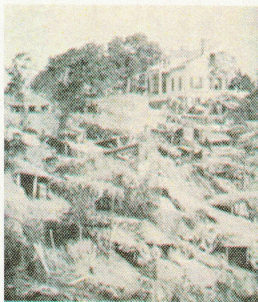
The Shirley House is the only surviving Civil War-era structure within the battlefield unit of Vicksburg National Military Park. Built in the late 1830s by Nicholas Gray, an Irish immigrant, the house was originally named 'Wexford Lodge' after his native Wexford County in Ireland. In 1849, the property was deeded, or sold, to Ben Johnson, who in turn, deeded it to Judge James Shirley on January 1, 1851. The judge, along with his second wife Adeline and James, his young son from his first marriage, had moved from Alabama to Vicksburg, where he established both a residence and law practice in the thriving city. The Shirleys had four children after moving to Vicksburg, three of whom survived to adulthood. It is through the daughter, Alice, who wrote of the family's experience during the Civil War, that the history of the Shirley House has been preserved and documented for future generations.



Falling into ruin due to neglect and decay in the decades following the Civil War, Alice sold the house to the U.S. Government in

May 1900, on the condition that her parents be buried in the back yard, and that the home be fully restored – circumstances both met at that time.

The house (called the 'White House' by soldiers of both sides) has had many uses over the years -- as headquarters for an Illinois regiment during the siege of Vicksburg --



-- as a Union army smallpox hospital during occupation in 1864 --

-- and as a visitor's center and residence for park employees, the last of whom left the house in the mid-1960s.



Today, the Shirley House is again in desperate need of repair and restoration, being maintained as a hollow shell since the 1960s. The park, in 2004, received a \$300,000 appropriation to stabilize the structure, part of which will include a new roof and repair of the central beams. This will help ensure the building remains intact as park officials work to obtain needed funds from Congress to complete restoration.

Park staff appreciates the public's support and patience while construction on the 'White House' progresses toward the anticipated conclusion of full restoration.

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