

The WHITE HOME

Self-Guided Tour

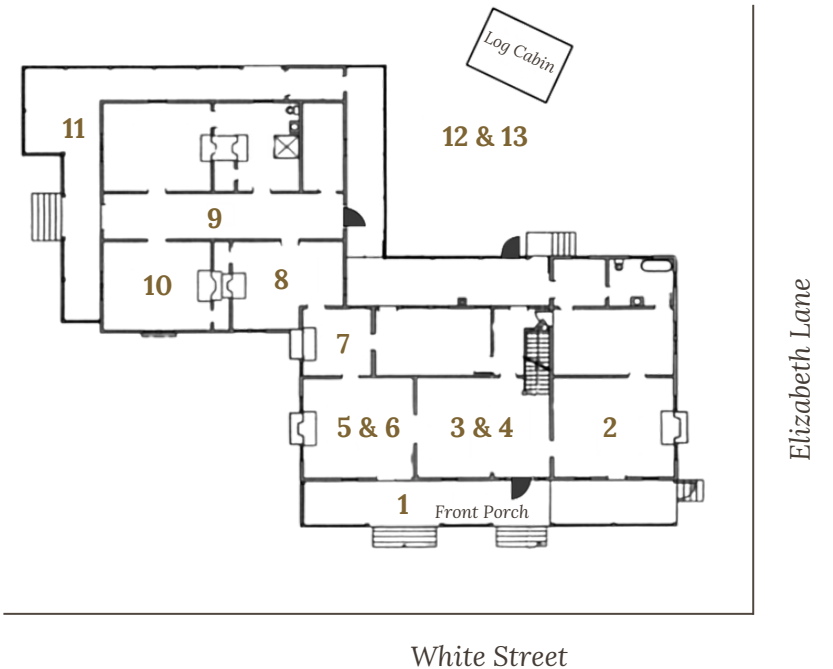


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The WHITE HOME

Welcome to the Historic White Home. On this self guided tour, you will learn about the White family and five generations who made this their home from 1838 until 2003.

You'll trace the history of this corner of South Carolina, starting with the Catawba Indians, the arrival of settlers and the creation of a place called Rock Hill. You'll also learn about the enslavement of African Americans and the role of enslaved people in creating the wealth that allowed the Whites to build this fine home.



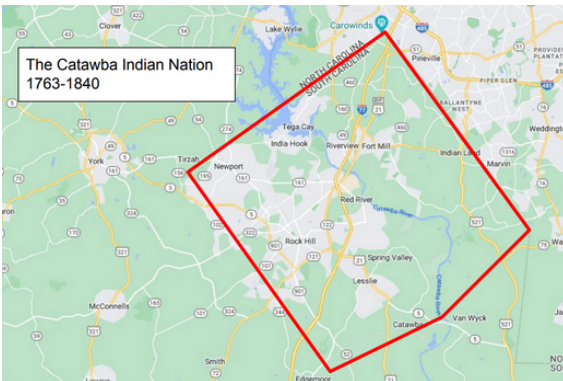
14.
History Plaza (optional)

1. The Lands of the Catawba Indian Nation

Walk to the front porch of the White Home. Here, you'll see a map of the Catawba Indian Nation overlaid by modern Rock Hill & Fort Mill.

Inspect the map showing this corner of South Carolina – it really is a corner! All of Rock Hill, Fort Mill, and Indian Land, an area stretching from the NC-SC border at Carowinds to Chester County, once belonged to the Catawba Indian Nation. Native Americans lived in this area for hundreds or thousands of years before European settlement.

In 1768, by a treaty with the King of England, the Catawba Nation was granted these 225 square miles for the exclusive use and benefit of the Catawba Nation. In the next decades, the Catawba Nation leased their lands to European settlers. In 1840, unable to collect rents from the settlers and weakened by disease and poverty, the Catawba Nation ceded their lands to the State of South Carolina in exchange for promises of land in North Carolina and cash payments. These promises were not kept.



2. The White Family Moves to a New Home

In the late 1700's, two of the most prominent families to settle in the Indian Land were the Hutchisons and the Whites. The White family lived in today's Fort Mill area on the east side of the Catawba River, the Hutchison family settled on the west side of the river in today's Rock Hill area. In 1837, George Pendleton White (age 36) and Ann Hutchison (age 32) were wed. The newlyweds purchased the rights to a lease of 153 acres of Catawba Indian land located on the Landsford Road. The land included two primitive log cabins, where the couple settled and began building a life together.

This room is one of the original log cabins. Behind these walls and under these floors are the remains of the original log structure. At that time, this site was considered to be part of Ebenezer. Ann and George worshiped at Ebenezer Presbyterian Church and their children attended school at Ebenezer Academy.



Ann Hutchison White

Once they were settled, the Whites began construction of a new house just to the east.

Ann and George had five children: Mary Elizabeth (1838), David (1840, died before first birthday), James Spratt (1841), Andrew Hutchison (1843), and Adeline (1847)

View the portrait of Ann White in her later years. This unsmiling portrait hints at the many challenges that Ann faced through her life. More on that later in the tour.

Exit this room the way you entered.

3. A Town is Born

This room, and all of the house on this side of the room you just exited, are part of the new home constructed by George and Ann in multiple phases between 1838 and 1849. By 1849, the original log cabin had been incorporated into a simple two story farmhouse typical of the Piedmont.

In the late 1840's plans were made to extend a rail line from Columbia to Charlotte. The people of Ebenezerville opposed having a loud, smoky railroad passing through their tranquil village so, instead, the railroad was routed to the south, passing through the lands of George and Ann White. George was contracted to construct a portion of the rail line through his property. During the construction, George contracted pneumonia and died in 1849. Ann was left to care for four children, all under 11 years of age, and a large farm.

With the completion of the Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad and the opening of an adjacent post office in 1852, the village of Rock Hill was born.

Now move to the opposite side of the room.

4. Enslaved People at the White Home

The enslavement and forced labor of African Americans was the foundation of the economic system of the US South for more than 200 years leading up to the American Civil War. The institution of slavery was perpetuated by violence or the threat of violence against the enslaved. George and Ann White, like most of their neighboring landowners, were enslavers and depended on the unpaid labor of African Americans for their prosperity.

It appears that the Whites brought 8 slaves with them to this site in 1838. By 1850, there were 14 enslaved people and by 1860 17 enslaved people. At this time, we know little about the lives of the people who were enslaved at the White Home. It is Historic Rock Hill's goal to learn and share more about these people, their lives, and their contributions to the development of this site and, ultimately, to the development of Rock Hill.

Now move to the next room.

5. Making Ends Meet: A Boarding House

This room served as the dining room for the White family. Following the death of her husband, Ann was challenged to raise her family and manage the farm alone.

One way of making ends meet was to take in boarders. Originally a stairway was located just inside this door. The stairway led to several rooms upstairs intended for boarders. During the Civil War, Ann regularly hosted people seeking to escape the violence of the Lowcountry. Wounded soldiers and soldiers returning from the war were provided a place to stay. One room was reserved for visiting Presbyterian ministers and was known as “The Prophet’s Chamber.”

Now move to the opposite side of the room.

6. A Fruitful Inheritance

The challenges of operating a large farm by herself left Ann little cash for improvements to the house or farm. Luckily, Ann had a brother, Hiram Hutchison, who she could call on in times of need. Hiram was a successful investment banker in New York. In 1854, she called on Hiram to fund a school for her children and neighboring children. Rock Hill’s first school, Pine Grove Academy, was born nearby. In 1856 Hiram died. Ann received some income from the estate in the late 1850’s, allowing her to complete the two level veranda that you see on the front of the house today.

The oldest photo in existence of the White Home from the 1870’s shows the house as it looked at this time, just before the Civil War.



Hiram Hutchison

Now enter the small room to the rear.

7. White Family Photos

This small room which, in later years, the White family used as a breakfast area, displays photos of the White family. Take a minute to look at these photos and see how different, and similar, their lives were to ours today. Notice the photograph of two young cyclists, Ann's grandsons, James White II and John C. Witherspoon. Cycling was an immensely popular sport around the dawn of the 20th century. Rock Hill was the location of several bicycle racing tracks, and the White family boasted some of the best riders in the region.

Move to the next room. Watch your step, there is a small step down as you enter this room.

8. Affluence amid Devastation

Due to legal disputes, Hiram Hutchison's estate was not finally settled until 1867. Though this surely frustrated Ann, it turned out to be a great blessing: had the estate been settled before the Civil War, the income Ann received would likely have been converted to Confederate money. In this event, Ann would have been penniless at the end of the war like most of her neighbors. However, in 1867 Ann traveled to New York to settle the estate. She returned a wealthy woman, with cash, furniture, clothing and gifts. She immediately set about investing in her home once again.

You have just entered the Annex, a Victorian cottage completed between 1869 and 1871 using funds from Hiram's estate. The cottage was built for Ann's youngest son Andrew H. White. Though attached to the main house the Annex had its own front door, address and driveway. The portrait you see over the mantle is of Andrew White. Andrew managed Ann's affairs in the years before her death in 1880. He served as one of Rock Hill's early mayors from 1890-92.

Now enter the hallway of the cottage.

9. White Home Through the Years

The Annex was the final phase of construction of this home. View the exhibit "The White Home Through the Years" to see all of the changes. The Annex is a simple four room structure laid out around a central hallway. Its double doors and high ceilings allowed air flow through the quarters on hot summer days and allowed the hottest air to rise to the top of the 14-foot ceilings. Explore the rooms on the right side of the hallway and notice the antique furnishings. Some of this furniture is original to the house, others pieces are from the same era and have been donated by family members or others.

End your exploration of the annex in the blue room in the front left corner of the cottage.

10. Legacies of the Civil War: Furnishings of the White Home

This room contains one of the most interesting furnishings in the White Home. Note the large Cherry secretary against the far wall. During the Civil War refugees from the fighting in the Lowcountry escaped the threats of violence by escaping to Rock Hill and other upcountry towns and villages. Often, these refugees brought with them valuable household items to protect them from burning and looting. Ann White opened the doors of her home to these refugees. In some cases, the refugees could not pay in cash (by the closing months of the war Confederate currency had become worthless) and so Ann accepted household items in payment. This antique secretary is one the household items left by refugees at the White Home. The large wardrobe next to the door belonged to Ann.

The portrait over the mantle is Hiram H. White (1895-1950), Ann's grandson and Andrew's son. By the 1920's Hiram had moved his family into the Home and became the new steward of the property. At this time, the family's wealth was largely gone. Hiram was a surveyor, a profession that has been handed down through several generations of the White family. During the first half of the 20th century, the family sold nearly all of the remaining farmland for residential development in the growing city of Rock Hill.

Exit annex through the front door onto the porch and down the stairs.

11. The Victorian Cottage

Step back and view the exterior of the Annex. Notice the architecture of the Annex (completed 1881) is very different from the main house (completed to current appearance in 1859). The early “Queen Anne” or “Folk Victorian” architecture of the Annex can be seen in features like the full width porch that wraps around the left side of the house, spindlework porch detailing, and scrollwork brackets on the porch columns.

Now, exit the porch through the ramp and follow the brick walkway to the patio at the rear of the house.

12. The Log Cabin

This log cabin was standing on this site when Ann and George arrived here in 1838. The age of the cabin and its builder are unknown. The log structure is covered in wood siding, as it would have been through most of its history. The image below shows how the logs look underneath the siding. For much of the history of the White Home this cabin served as an exterior kitchen. It had a large open fireplace on the west wall (toward White Street) and a loft on the upper level. Full restoration of this cabin is planned for the future.



Now, move to the stone trough at the edge of the patio.

13. The Gardens of the White Home

At the end of this tour, take a few moments to explore the grounds of the White Home. Hiram H. White, the owner and steward of the property from about 1920–1950, had a deep interest in landscaping. When a destructive tornado struck downtown Rock Hill and the White Home in 1926, most of the trees and other vegetation were uprooted. Hiram began to re-landscape the White Home using many non-native plants.

As you explore, note the live oaks that border White Street and Elizabeth Lane. These trees are native to the coastal areas of South Carolina, but have thrived for nearly a century in Rock Hill. The azaleas are another plant brought to Rock Hill by Hiram White. He was one of the first people to attempt growing azaleas in the Piedmont, with great success. Note also the fountain and the other ornamental plants that are rare in this part of the world.

14. Along the Landsford Road (optional)

Cross White Street to visit the History Plaza.

Where you are standing at the corner of White Street and Elizabeth Lane was once a gentle bend in the Landsford Road. Read the history of the Landsford Road and view the map showing nearby plantations from the early 1800's. Note that the water trough is an actual relic of the days before automobiles, when horses and mules carried people and goods.

15. Historic Rock Hill and the White Home

Founded in 1985, HRH sprouted as an association of residents and businesses dedicated to the preservation of the downtown and historic neighborhoods of Rock Hill. By 2003, the last members of the White family to live here had passed away. The property was in poor condition and its future was threatened. Historic Rock Hill raised more than \$2 million dollars to purchase and restore the White Home. The White Home opened to the public in 2010.

Today, it serves as the organization's headquarters, a historical site, and an elegant venue for weddings and private events.

The White Home is still owned and managed by Historic Rock Hill. Our mission is to preserve and tell the stories of Rock Hill's history. We receive no funding from local governments for operation or maintenance of this property or for staffing. We are totally dependent on memberships, donations, and income that we can generate from events and tours. If you would like to become a member of Historic Rock Hill, or to make a donation to the preservation of the White Home, please pick up a brochure on your way out, or leave a donation in the box located in the entryway.

This concludes the tour. Thank you for visiting us today and please let us know if you have any questions!

Be sure to visit our website: www.historicrockhill.com



Preservation • Education • Community

Our Mission

Historic Rock Hill seeks to preserve and promote the collective history of Rock Hill, South Carolina by collaborating with our community to provide the stewardship of historical resources along with educational programming in celebration of our shared past.

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How can YOU get involved?

Become a member of Historic Rock Hill today.

Memberships are essential to the success of Historic Rock Hill. They are tax-deductible and valid January–December. HRH membership benefits include:

Join today.



- Exclusive access to member-only lectures, exhibit previews, guided tours of local historical landmarks, and member picnics and celebrations
- Discounts on White Home rentals & fundraising events
- Free or discounted entrance to U.S. museums through the North American Reciprocal Membership Program

Senior (60+)	Individual	Senior Couple	Family
\$30	\$40	\$50	\$60



258 E White Street, Rock Hill SC 29730

The White Home is a full-service event venue located in the heart of Old Town Rock Hill. Our Rentals & Events Director, Matt Starnes, will work closely with you to craft your dream event in a lush, historic, southern setting.

Weddings • Corporate Events • Private Events

For more information, contact:
rentals@historicrockhill.com

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