

The historic, modified, Federal Revival-style home was constructed by Alfred B. Hays in 1892. Hays, a Civil War veteran and native Kentuckian operated a hotel in Paragould and later served one term as Mayor of the newly-designated first-class city and also served 28 years as Justice of the Peace. After his death in 1932 at age 90, Mr. Hays' descendants, including children Lilla and Lizza Porter, James and Henry Hays, and Anna Meriwether, and their families occupied the house continually until at least 1964. Family members worked in a variety of retail occupations in Paragould, including dressmaker (Lilla), department store buyer (Lizza), and teacher (Orine Porter). Several family members were employed at Meriwether Hardware Company.

The house, which had been partly destroyed by a "cyclone" which damaged the east end of the home shortly after it was completed in December, 1892, has again been totally rebuilt. Over a two-year period, Innkeepers Marilyn and Bob White, along with their architect, structural engineer, and contractor have completely renovated and "revived" the historic home, striving to make it sound for another 100 years, comfortable and safe, while retaining the "character" and ambiance of the historic home. Foundation improvements and strengthening, the addition of shear walls and new roof supports and decking allowed the engineer to certify the house now meets current seismic load (earthquake) requirements. Completely new electrical wiring, plumbing and insulation were added, along with multi-zoned central heating and air conditioning. Private baths were added for each guest room, one handicap-accessible, some with antique tubs (original to the house), some with Jacuzzi whirlpool tubs, all with pedestal sinks and tile floors. The kitchen was completely remodeled and updated to meet Health Department specifications, including a commercial, sanitizing dishwasher. Gas fireplaces were added to the Great Room and two bedrooms. New, fire-code-rated drywall and soundproofing were added, the entire interior refinished and oak beams, trim and molding added in the Great Room, Library, and Dining Room, along with a completely new front staircase. Original oak and pine floors were refinished or replaced as necessary. The front porch and balcony were rebuilt and improved to current requirements, as well, including ADA handicap accessibility. New concrete driveways and parking areas were provided, along with security lighting.

New additions included a new rear entrance/foyer, family breakfast room, Ivy Room fitness center, and small gift shop area, as well as a new garage and upstairs Guest House apartment, connected to the main house by a wooden deck. All life safety requirements were met or exceeded, including wired-in smoke detectors with battery back-up, carbon monoxide detectors, emergency exit signs and lighting, fire extinguishers, and a rear staircase for fire safety. Exterior security lighting and video camera monitoring of entrances, lower floor hallway and gift shop were provided (of course, guest privacy in their rooms is strictly observed!) Finally, Marilyn provided her decorating touches throughout the house and a mix of comfortable antique and modern furniture was provided. The White House Inn is still a work in progress, with additional improvements and furnishings planned for the future!