

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The White Sulphur Springs Historic Site is a small clearing with a spring font encased in a c. 1916 concrete flange and set beneath a c.1916 gazebo. The spring was the center as well as the raison d'être of a nineteenth century health resort whose once numerous buildings are now all gone. It is located in the rolling piney hills near the town of Jena. The site still retains its integrity of setting as well as its identity as a natural spring.

The spring was once surrounded by a health resort community which was dependent upon its supposed curative powers. This community was founded in 1833 and was closed in 1911. It consisted of numerous buildings, including hotels, a saloon, a dance hall, livery stables, a store, etc. According to one source, it even had a post office and a school. Nothing remains of the community today except for the spring, which is encased in a concrete flange and covered by a wooden gazebo, both of which date from c.1916. The flange replaced a similar older feature which contained the spring font. The gazebo was built to commemorate the spot where the community once stood. It was re-roofed and repainted c.1975.

Assessment of Integrity:

Under the recently published draft guidelines for interpreting the National Register criteria, there are two standards used for assessing the integrity of a historic site. One is whether or not the site retains its original natural setting, which White Sulphur Springs does. The other is whether or not the site possesses authenticity, which again White Sulphur Springs does.

Gazebo as a Contributing Element:

The present gazebo was built c.1916 by Mr. W. G. "Buck" Walker, a local resident, to commemorate the historic role of White Sulphur Springs in LaSalle Parish. Since that time the gazebo has become a well known local landmark because of its close association with the former resort community. The State Historic Preservation Office has two local newspaper articles dating from 1962 which praise the gazebo and cite its important commemorative role. Consequently the gazebo is being nominated to the Register as a contributing element to the White Sulphur Springs Historic Site.

Specific dates	1833-1911
Builder/Architect	N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion A

The White Sulphur Springs Historic Site is locally significant in the area of science because it was the center as well as the raison d'être of the White Sulphur Springs community, a nineteenth century health resort which achieved at least regional fame within Louisiana.* The spring site is exemplary of a then popular philosophy of American health care called hydropathy.

Hydropathy can be defined as the therapeutic use of mineral water as a cure for infirmities of all sorts. It was based upon the theory that the treatment of disease involved the treatment of the whole person rather than the specific symptoms, as well as the theory that water was the natural sustainer of life. People came to resorts such as White Sulphur Springs and often stayed for months. Frequently people made annual or seasonal visits. In a very real sense medical treatments

such as those dispensed at White Sulphur Springs represented a distinctive era in the history of man's attempt to combat disease.

White Sulphur Springs was "discovered" in 1833 by Joseph P. Ward, who was traveling through the area on his way to Texas. He named the springs after his hometown of White Sulphur Springs, Georgia, and founded a health resort community. As noted above, the curative power of the water was the main attraction; however, the "treatment" also included such "therapeutic" activities as fishing, walking in the woods, and breathing the fresh, clean air. White Sulphur Springs was in its heyday in the mid-nineteenth century, but began to slowly decline thereafter. A newspaper account of a visit made there in 1894 refers to various guests and mentions two structures, a hotel and a dancing hall. A secondary source indicates that there was only one building left (a boarding house) when White Sulphur Springs was closed down by the Louisiana Board of Health in 1911. After analyzing the water, this body reported that it had no curative value, but instead was a menace to health because it contained harmful bacteria.

*The designation of significance at the local level requires some explanation. The scholarly research does not exist (nor may it ever) to determine with any certainty the exact geographical limits of White Sulphur Springs' appeal. The State Historic Preservation Office can only make an educated guess and assume that it was at least regionally popular within the state (i.e., central and northern Louisiana).

Major Bibliographical References

Louisiana Democrat, August 15, 1894. (A weekly newspaper published in Alexandria, LA)

Plummer, E. W. "White Sulphur Springs Resort Days Fade." A typescript of this short history of White Sulphur Springs is located in the National Register file at the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office.

Plummer, E. W. "Lest We Forget." Typescript of this short article on White Sulphur Springs located in National Register file in Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office.

Louisiana Comprehensive Statewide Survey LaSalle Parish. White Sulphur Springs Site Form (#30-003).