

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic General William C. Lee House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 209 West Divine Street not for publication

city, town Dunn vicinity of

state North Carolina code 037 county Harnett code 085

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Estate of Mrs. Dava Johnson Lee  
c/o William Driver, Executor

street & number P. O. Box

city, town Dunn vicinity of state North Carolina 28334

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Register of Deeds, Harnett County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Lillington state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Standing at the center of a half-acre corner lot some four blocks from Dunn's central business district, the General William C. Lee House is an imposing example of the early twentieth century Neo-Classical Revival style of residential architecture. The ca. 1915 structure, covered in rough textured, variegated brick veneer, encompasses approximately 4,500 square feet in its two-story, double pile main block and one-story rear wings, all of which rests on a common bond brick foundation.

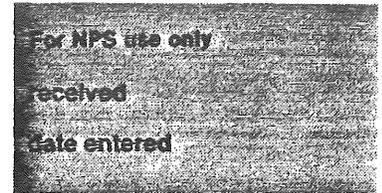
Monumental Tuscan columns support the deep but simple entablature of the full-facade porch whose hipped roof extends from the hipped roof of the central block. The original columns of the Ionic order were replaced when they began to deteriorate. Also removed was a balustrade on the roof's flat deck. Ionic pilasters remain at the conjunction of the porch and house wall. A dentil course carries around the entablature and continues on the cornice of the central block. Dentils also ornament the slightly projecting central pedimented gable and the pedimented gables above the side bays. The latter also feature lunettes.

The somewhat unusual three-bay facade has a central doorway with a three-light transom set in a molded classical surround; console brackets support a shallow, railed balcony onto which a 15-pane glazed door opens from the second floor hallway. Detached 10-pane sidelights flank the entrance. Brick pilasters support the shallow balconies which are repeated above the windows to the left and right of the entrance. These windows consist of five vertical panes in the upper sash with a single light in the lower. A panel above each of these two windows has a plaster diamond shape at the center of herringbone patterned brickwork. The second-floor windows have a three-light sash above a single light, a type repeated in most of the other windows. A single-shoulder, exterior end chimney rises on the northwest elevation, whereas two additional chimneys are located in interior positions. A one-story screened porch on the northwest elevation extends to a porte cochere supported by both square brick posts and Ionic columns. The floor for the front porch carries to the southeast side of the house where the rear portion is covered by a hipped roof on Ionic columns.

The house was built on a central-hall, double pile plan with gable-roofed bays projecting from the posterior rooms on each side. One-story, hip-roofed rear wings contain bathrooms and kitchens. The interior is finished with plaster, with simple basesboards and door and window surrounds. The division between the front and rear sections of the 12-foot-wide hall is marked by a flat arch with squat Ionic columns and pilasters on paneled bases. A two-flight stair rises along the southeast wall of the hall's rear section, joined at a central landing by a two-flight stair rising at a right angle on the rear wall. A single flight continues to the second floor. A two-flight stair to the full attic begins against the rear wall, with a double window lighting the stairwell. Turned balusters join the open string stair and banister. A transverse hallway behind the posterior room on the northwest side connects the main block with the rear wings.

Several types of mantels are found in the house, the most notable of which is one of Honduras mahogany in a classical motif with a tile hearth and face. Sliding pocket doors with six raised horizontal panels lead to the front rooms from the hallway on the first floor.

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The house now contains two private apartments, with the remainder of the space used as offices for the Dunn Area Chamber of Commerce. Future plans for the structure include development of a museum in honor of General Lee and his career.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates      ca. 1915      Builder/Architect      Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The General William C. Lee House, a significant local example of the imposing Neo-Classical Revival Style of early twentieth century residential architecture, was the home for thirteen years of an internationally known military figure and Dunn native. General Lee is known as the "father of America's airborne army," having pioneered the development of paratroopers and gliders as parts of the American military complex. During World War II General Lee wrote the airborne doctrine and devised the tactical plans employed in the D-Day invasion of the European mainland, a military operation in which he was unable to take an active role because of a heart attack which forced him to retire to his home in Dunn prior to the invasion. He continued to serve as a consultant and military advisor until his death in 1948. The house, which is to be restored to provide offices for the Dunn Area Chamber of Commerce and a museum memorial to the General, was constructed about 1915 for Jefferson Davis Barnes, a prominent Dunn businessman and one of the early residents of the Harnett County town. Barnes founded Dunn Oil Mills in 1902 and later the Barnes & Halliday Hardware Company. The house was purchased in 1935 by Dava Johnson Lee, wife of General Lee. Its size and impressive classical detailing symbolize the prestige of the men who made it their home.

**Criteria Assessment:**

B. The house is associated with the life and career of Major General William C. Lee, a Dunn native and internationally known military figure; it also is associated with Jefferson Davis Barnes, a locally prominent businessman in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for whom the house was built.

C. The house is a locally significant example of the brick version of the Neo-Classical Revival Style of residential architecture erected in small towns in much of the state in the early twentieth century, incorporating the massive size and classical detailing typical of the style.

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The General William C. Lee House in Dunn takes its name from the internationally known figure who lived there for thirteen years. The home was constructed, however, about 1915 by Jefferson Davis Barnes, a prominent Dunn businessman and one of the early residents of the Harnett County town.<sup>1</sup>

J. D. Barnes was born on August 6, 1861 in Bladen County but had settled by the early 1880s on a farm within four miles of a Harnett County community known as Tear-shirt (later Lucknow).<sup>2</sup> The arrival of the railroad in the mid 1880s brought prosperity to the area and growth to the small community which in 1886 changed its name to Dunn in honor of Bennett R. Dunn, construction engineer of the Atlantic Coastline Railroad.<sup>3</sup> Several mercantile stores sprang up in the new town and J. D. Barnes began his business career in the establishment of J. A. Taylor. With fifteen years experience in various enterprises, Barnes established his own business, Dunn Oil Mills, in 1902. He used his 400 acre cotton farm to help supply raw material for the cotton seed oil mill.<sup>4</sup> When Barnes added fertilizer production equipment to his mill, local people began referring to it as "one of the biggest enterprises in this section";<sup>5</sup> the Industrial Revolution then sweeping across piedmont North Carolina had come to Dunn on a small scale. J. D. Barnes, who spent some time as a town commissioner, also co-founded Barnes & Halliday Company, a mercantile establishment specializing in hardware, furniture, pianos, and organs. The company also sold caskets and handled funeral arrangements.<sup>6</sup>

At an early point on his road to success, J. D. Barnes decided to buy property in Dunn. On January 30, 1891, he purchased Lot 3 in Block I on the corner of King and Divine streets. The price of \$175 suggests that no structure then stood on the approximately half-acre lot.<sup>7</sup> Barnes built a frame structure on the lot before 1908, but as his business prospered, he decided to build a larger brick home. The frame structure had been removed by August of 1913 and the present brick house, now known as the General William C. Lee home, erected between then and 1918.<sup>8</sup> It seems unlikely that the lot would have been left vacant for too long, and the size of the structure would have taken some time to construct; thus, ca. 1915 is given as the approximate completion date.

J. D. Barnes never married, but living with him in Dunn were his mother, Jeanetta, and his sisters, Nettie, Mattie, Betty, and Rena. J. D. Barnes was one of thirteen children, most of whom married. As the family seat, the home at any given time could have had a number of residents.<sup>9</sup> No record could be found of Barnes's death but he apparently died sometime between 1915 and 1918. In the latter year, the Dunn Directory lists only Rena Barnes in the W. Divine Street residence.<sup>10</sup> Upon her brother's death Rena assumed title to the property along with outstanding debts incurred in the construction of the house. Throughout the 1920s she struggled financially to maintain possession, and when she died in 1932, the property was sold to relieve the estate of indebtedness.<sup>11</sup> For the next three years the house was rented; on September 30, 1935 it became the home of William C. Lee, United States Army.<sup>12</sup>

William C. Lee (March 12, 1895 - June 25, 1948) was born in Dunn and was the fifth of Eldridge and Emma Jane Lee's seven children.<sup>13</sup> Eldridge, a hardware merchant, and Emma Jane Lee first lived on Wilson Street but later moved to W. Divine Street, two blocks from the Barnes House, where William grew up.<sup>14</sup> William attended both Wake

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Forest and North Carolina State colleges and was graduated from the latter in 1917. With training in the R.O.T.C. program at N.C. State, Lee decided upon a career in military service.<sup>15</sup>

Commissioned as a second-lieutenant, Lee began his active career at age twenty-two. Following his attendance at Infantry School, Lee entered World War I with the American Expeditionary Army in France where he served as platoon leader and company commander. After the war he continued his military training in the tank warfare schools at Fort Meade and Versailles, France. In the 1930s, Lee attended Command and General Staff School and was promoted to major.<sup>16</sup> On one of two extended European tours, he observed the German parachute and glider operations which he felt would be an invaluable asset to the United States Army's military development. Returning home he was ordered to the Office of the Chief of Infantry in Washington which gave him the opportunity to promote his ideas.<sup>17</sup>

Major Lee encountered stiff opposition from the military high command until President Franklin D. Roosevelt took special interest in the concept of an airborne army and ordered the creation of such a division. A parachute school was established at Fort Benning with Lee as commander. Under his guidance improvements were made to the German system, and when World War II broke out, the airborne army stood ready to play a vital role in the ultimate victory.<sup>18</sup>

By the time the United States entered the war, Lee had been promoted to general and placed in command of the 101st Division. From his division headquarters in Reading, England, General Lee directed America's airborne troops. As a military strategist and advisor to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lee wrote the airborne doctrine and devised the tactical plans employed in the D-Day Invasion of the European Continent. Unfortunately, Lee suffered a heart ailment that forced him to return to the United States in 194 before the invasion began.<sup>19</sup> He watched the successful implementation of his plans from his home in Dunn.

General William C. Lee was in active military service when his wife, Dava Johnson Lee, whom he had married in 1918, bought the house on W. Divine Street in 1935.<sup>20</sup> Though officially retired, Lee continued his activity in the role of advisor and consultant. Numerous prominent figures visited his Dunn home, including General F. A. M. Browning, chief of Great Britain's airborne forces and later treasurer to Prince Phillip with offices in Buckingham Palace, who spent several weekends with Lee during his American tour.<sup>21</sup>

General Lee died on June 25, 1948. Two days later, the grandest funeral ever held in Dunn honored "the father of America's airborne troops." Surrounded by state and U.S. Army dignitaries and thousands paying homage, Lee was laid to rest in Greenwood Cemetery.<sup>22</sup>

Dava Johnson Lee retained ownership of the Lee house but spent her last years in a rest home. The house on W. Divine Street was rented to tenants, including Henry C. Tyler, manager of Carolina Power & Light Company in Dunn.<sup>23</sup> The property remains in the estate of Dava Lee but is under option to the Major General William C. Lee Memorial Commission, Inc. Plans are being formulated to restore the homeplace and to convert it into a museum honoring airborne troops and also to provide offices for the Dunn Area Chamber of Commerce.

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FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Dunn Weekly Guide, 1913, as cited by Barbara Wilson Brown in preparation for master's thesis, "Victorian Homes in Dunn" at East Carolina University on file in Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Dunn Weekly Guide.

<sup>2</sup>Dunn Weekly Guide; and William S. Powell, The North Carolina Gazetteer (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 151, hereinafter cited as Powell, Gazetteer.

<sup>3</sup>Powell, Gazetteer, 151.

<sup>4</sup>Dunn Weekly Guide. See also notes by Barbara Wilson Brown in preparation for master's thesis, "Victorian Homes in Dunn" (1982), at East Carolina University on file in Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Brown, Notes for "Victorian Homes."

<sup>5</sup>Dunn Weekly Guide.

<sup>6</sup>Brown, Notes for "Victorian Homes"; and Dunn Weekly Guide. See also Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: North Carolina, Harnett County, Enumeration District 35, sheet 5, line 30, hereinafter cited as 1900 Census.

<sup>7</sup>Harnett County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Harnett County Courthouse, Lillington, Deed Book J2, p. 476, hereinafter cited as Harnett County Deed Book.

<sup>8</sup>See Sanborn Maps Company, Dunn, N.C., 1908, 1913, 1925; and Dunn Directory, 1918-1919. In the latter, Rena Barnes, sister of J. D., is a resident at 209 W. Divine Street where a vacant lot appeared on the 1913 Sanborn Map. See also Brown, Notes for "Victorian Homes." Brown interviewed Miss Blanche Grantham who appears as the daughter of George Grantham living next door to Barnes in the 1900 Census, hereinafter cited as Grantham interview.

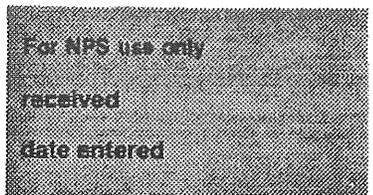
<sup>9</sup>Grantham interview; and 1900 Census.

<sup>10</sup>Dunn Directory, 1918-1919. A search of the vital statistics records of North Carolina did not show a death record for J. D. Barnes despite the law requiring such in 1913. His death was either unrecorded or misspelled and misfiled in the official records.

<sup>11</sup>Harnett County Deed Book 122, p. 469; Book 218, p. 73; Book 231, p. 87; and Books of Administration, Harnett County Courthouse, Lillington, Book 5, p. 237.

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<sup>12</sup> Harnett County Deed Book 258, p. 98. The deed was issued to Dava Johnson Lee, wife of William C. Lee.

<sup>13</sup> 1900 Census, Enumeration District 35, sheet 6, line 6.

<sup>14</sup> See Harnett County Deed Book 0-2, p. 136; Book Z, p. 503; and fn. 13.

<sup>15</sup> Who Was Who in America, vol. II, 1943-1950 (Chicago: A. N. Marquis Company, 1950), 317, hereinafter cited as Who Was Who. See also Major General William C. Lee Memorial Commission, Restoration Project for the Homeplace of Major General William C. Lee, Dunn, N.C. (Dunn: Record Publishing Company, 1982 [?]), 15, hereinafter cited as Memorial Commission, Homeplace of Major General William C. Lee.

<sup>16</sup> Who Was Who, 317; and L. Rapport and A. Northwood, Jr., Rendezvous With Destiny: A History of the 101st Airborne Division (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1948), 4, hereinafter cited as Rapport and Northwood, Rendezvous With Destiny.

<sup>17</sup> Rapport and Northwood, Rendezvous With Destiny, 4; and Memorial Commission, Homeplace of Major General William C. Lee, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Memorial Commission, Homeplace of Major General William C. Lee, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Rapport and Northwood, Rendezvous With Destiny, 6-7; Memorial Commission, Homeplace of Major General William C. Lee, 2, 5; and Who Was Who, 317.

<sup>20</sup> Harnett County Deed Book 258, p. 98.

<sup>21</sup> News and Observer (Raleigh), August 12, 1942 and June 26, 1948, hereinafter cited as News and Observer; and Memorial Commission, Homeplace of Major General William C. Lee, 2.

<sup>22</sup> News and Observer, June 26, 1948; and Memorial Commission, Homeplace of Major General William C. Lee, 5-6.

<sup>23</sup> Dava Johnson Lee, interviewed by Barbara Wilson Brown. See Brown, Notes for "Victorian Homes."

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Dunn

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	7	7	1	6	9	3	0	3	9	0	9	5	4	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached plat map

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Description and criteria assessment by Allison Harris, Survey and Planning Branch; historical significance by Jerry Cross, Research Branch

organization Division of Archives and History date July 1983

street & number 109 E. Jones St. telephone 919 733-6545

city or town Raleigh state North Carolina

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William J. Price, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer date September 28, 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Books of Administration  
Deeds  
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Wills

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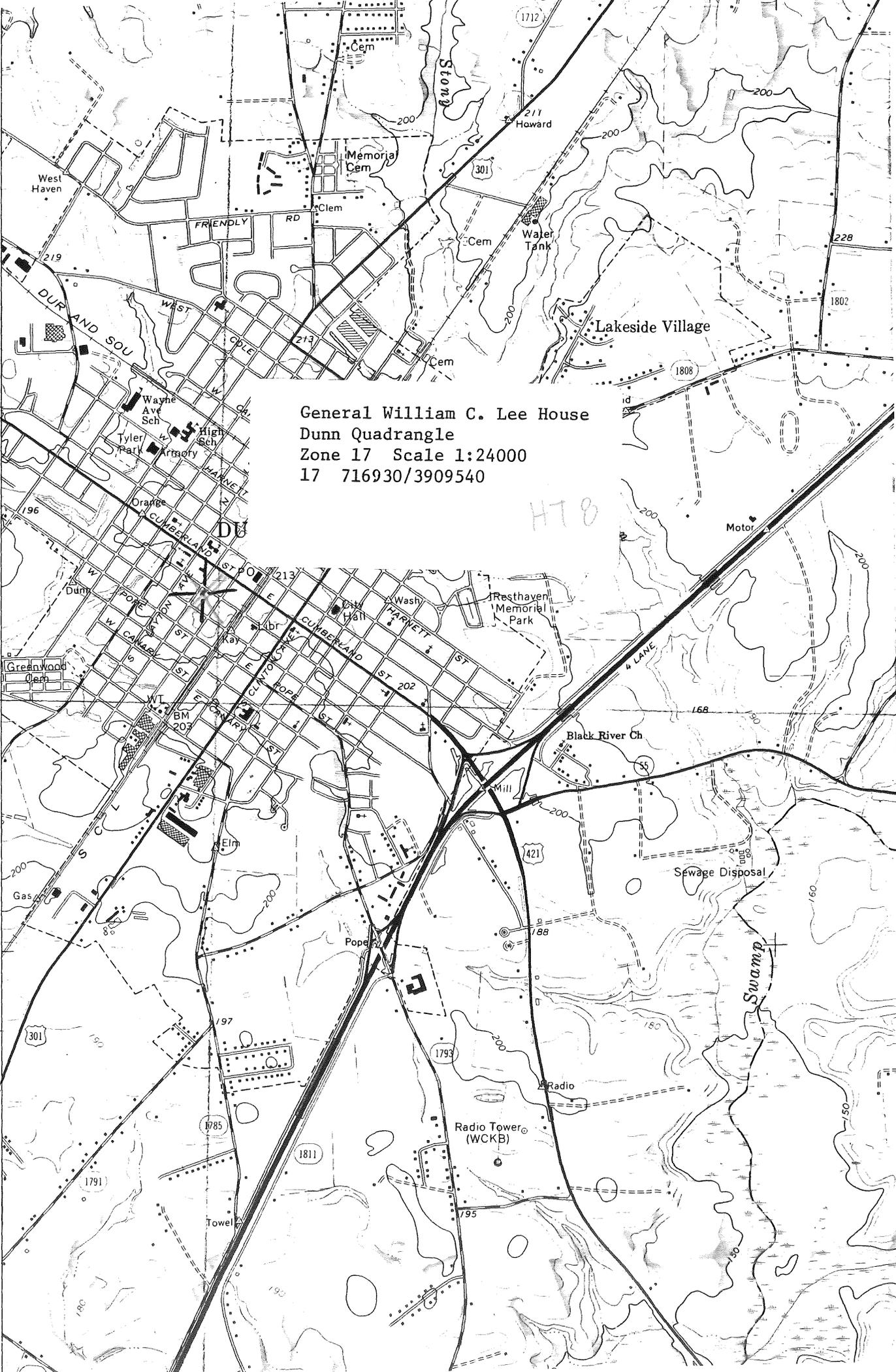
3912  
3911  
3909  
3908  
3906

5254 / SW SANFORD 3.7 MI.  
ERWIN 3.1 MI.

55 (421)  
55 (421)

17'30"  
560 000  
FEET

FAYETTEVILLE 2.1 MI.  
GODWIN 6 MI.



General William C. Lee House  
Dunn Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000  
17 716930/3909540

HT 8

