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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Blewett-Harrison-Lee House is a large two story house that represents the influence of late Georgian architecture combined with Greek Revival. The house was built in the mid-1840s by Major Thomas G. Blewett.

Originally, there was a large glassed—in conservatory opening into the drawing room on the south side. This conservatory was about one and a half stories high. Also, there had been a broad one story wing on the north side containing the master bedroom with elaborately frescoed ceiling. The ceilings on the first floor were approximately fourteen feet in height, while the ceiling on the second floor were fourteen and a half feet in height. Also, the original roof made of copper has been replaced with a more modern type roof.

The house, leased by the Stephen D. Lee Foundation in 1960, is currently undergoing limited restoration, and is the headquarters of the Columbus Pilgrimage.



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The Blewett-Harrison-Lee House was built by Major Thomes G. Blewett (1789-1871) in the mid-1840s. Major Blewett, who moved to the Columbus area in 1832, was a prominent and benevolent citizen of the community.

In 1840, Blewett's oldest daughter married James T. Harrison, who is noted for his role in helping to establish rights for women under State law. He was also selected by the Mississippi Secession Convention as a delegate to the Confederate Convention in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1861. Harrison was a member of the Confederate Congress; and, in 1865 was elected to the Federal Congress, but was refused admission along with the rest of the Mississippi delegation. The Mississippi Bar Association selected him to defend Jefferson Davis, if Davis were tried by the United States Government.

Upon the death of his father-in-law in 1871, Harrison moved into the Blewett House and lived there until his death in 1879. His widow continued to live in the house until her death in 1890.

After the death of Mrs. Harrison, the house was occupied by General Stephen D. Lee (1833-1903), and his wife, who was the granddaughter of Major Thomas Blewett. General Lee was a graduate of West Point, Class of 1854. He also served in the United States Army, as well as the Confederate Army. He is considered by many historians to have given the first order to fire on Fort Sumter. Lee advanced to the rank of lieutenant general and took part in the battles of Richmond, Second Manassas, Sharpsburg, Vicksburg, Tupelo, Atlanta, Franklin, and Nashville. After the war, he was selected to be the first President of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi, which has now become Mississippi State University. Lee remained at this post until 1899, when he accepted a position as a member of the Vicksburg National Park Association. He also served as the Commander of the United Confederate Veterans. General Lee's other achievements included serving as president of the Mississippi Historical Society, authoring numerous articles, and serving on the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Through the years the Blewett-Harrison-Lee House has been a social center for the Columbus area. General Leonidas Polk was/entertained here during the Civil War. The house also served as headquarters for Confederate Generals S. D. Lee, N. B. Forrest, and W. H. Jackson. In 1911, the house was the scene of a reception for President William H. Taft during his visit to Columbus. The house in 1915 became the property of General Lee's only

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

## INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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8.

son, Blewett Lee, who in turn, sold the house in the same year to the City of Columbus with the restriction that the property be used for educational purposes.

In 1917, the house was made a part of the S. D. Lee High School and was converted into classroom use until 1959. In 1960, the Board of the Columbus Separate School District leased the house to the Stephen D. Lee Foundation, and it is currently used for exhibitions, social activities, educational and civic meetings, as well as a museum and headquarters for the Columbus Pilgrimage. Since 1960, limited restoration of the house has been accomplished.

## 9.

Rowland, Dunbar, <u>Mississippi</u>. (n.p.: Southern Historical Association, 1916), II, 69-70.

Subject file, "General S. D. Lee." Collections of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.



