

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Tennessee	
COUNTY: Shelby	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 76-247.0001	DATE 2/11/71

1. NAME

COMMON:
The Lee and Fontaine Houses of the James Lee Memorial

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
680-690 Adams Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Memphis

STATE Tennessee	CODE 047	COUNTY: Shelby	CODE 157
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Memphis

STREET AND NUMBER:
City Hall

CITY OR TOWN: Memphis	STATE: Tennessee	CODE 047
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Shelby County Register's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
Court House

CITY OR TOWN: Memphis	STATE Tennessee	CODE 047
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

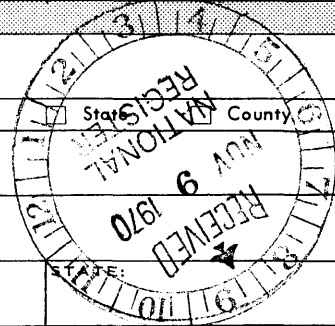
TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:



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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Lee and Fontaine Houses, together with the carriage house between them, comprise the James Lee Memorial. Both the Lee and Fontaine houses are good examples of French-Victorian architecture.

The Fontaine House was built in 1870-1873 by Amos Woodruff at a cost of \$100,000.00. In 1883-84 he exchanged this residence for that of Noland Fontaine on Madison Avenue. After the passing in 1928 of Mr. Fontaine's widow, and the sale of the house in 1929, Miss Rosa Lee acquired the house for use as an art school.

The architecture of the Fontaine House is French-Victorian. The house is built of hand-made brick. Its walls are 14" to 16" thick, and rise from a full basement up through the first, second, and third stories. Filigreed iron decorates the mansard slate roof's edge, somewhat like a tiara crowning an elegant lady. Stonecoat quoins at building corners and on the front tower add interesting exterior detail, along with ornamental terra cotta window lintels and elaborate cornices. Tinwork embossed designs are on ceilings of the front porch and portico entry and also on the hallway ceiling at the top of the stairwell. It is hand-hammered in classical designs and exhibits a great art.

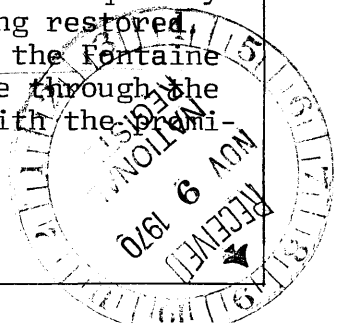
There are a total of 20 rooms excluding halls, baths, and basement. On the first floor are a long parlor with restored fresco ceiling and twin marble mantels; a music room (formerly the library); a morning room (formerly a music room); an octagonal dining room, and kitchen. The second and third floors have at least four bedrooms each, with a two-room rear area over the kitchen converted for custodian quarters. Carved cornices at 16-foot ceilings, plaster arabesques, sculptured wide woodwork and shimmering chandeliers mark the interiors. Some rooms have parquet floors, and every room has a fireplace where mantels range from Carrara marble to iron and old pine.

A handsome spindled stairway, with metal rosettes on each riser, ascends from the first floor reception hall to the third floor. Stained glass is on the double front doors and fanlight, and in the stair window. Heating, air conditioning, and utility pipes and wires have been cleverly concealed to maintain the original look.

The house has been furnished with fine furniture in the period of the house and is open to the public at a small charge.

The Lee House, another fine Victorian house but not the quality of the Fontaine House, is on the grounds and is now being restored. It is also a three-story house, similar in many ways to the Fontaine House. Many changes in room arrangements have been made through the years. Presently there are nine rooms on each floor, with the prominent tower above. Its exterior is of brick and stone.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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(Continuation Sheet)

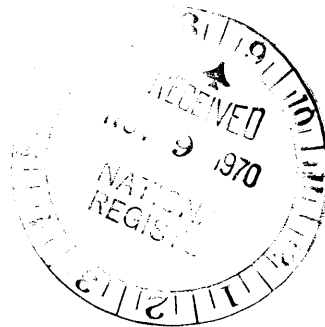
STATE	
Tennessee	
COUNTY	
Shelby	
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7. (Description - cont.)

The first part of the house was the square brick section in the rear which was built in 1843 by William Harsson, a native of Baltimore. In 1853, the present center section was added by his son-in-law, Charles Wesley Goyer, who also added the present front and tower in 1873. In 1890 the house was sold for \$25,000 to Captain James Lee, Jr. of the noted Lee Line Steamers.

The carriage house was previously two separate carriage houses used by two families, and joined together after acquisition by Miss Rosa Lee. It was used by the Memphis Little Theatre and by art students for many years, and is now used by the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities for monthly meetings.



SIGNIFICANCE

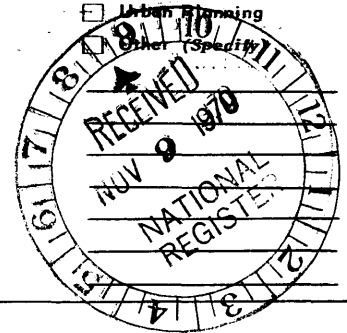
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Lee and Fontaine houses are significant both because of the fine example of Victorian architecture and the prominence of the families connected with them.

Amos Woodruff moved to Memphis from New Jersey in 1841. Woodruff prospered as a businessman and purchased the land for the Fontaine house in 1870 for \$12,000. Woodruff was one of the founders of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, the first East-West railroad to link the Atlantic Ocean with the Mississippi River. The railroad was completed in 1853. During the war, Woodruff stayed in Memphis; during the Reconstruction period, Woodruff played a major role in putting the city back on its feet.

Woodruff made acquaintance with Charles W. Goyer, another leading citizen, and wealthy businessman of Memphis. When Woodruff purchased his tract of land and began his home, the property was adjacent to Goyer's property. Goyer's home is the second Victorian home of the James Lee Memorial, now known as the Lee House.

Woodruff's fortunes failed in the panic of 1873 and he sold his home to Noland Fontaine I, for \$40,000. Fontaine at this time was a cotton factor for Hill, Fontaine, and Company. Fontaine's fortunes grew and the home remained the center for social events of wealthy Memphians. Two of Fontaine's daughters were married in this house - leading social events of the time. Influential men were entertained at the Fontaine home. In 1892, governors from five states and over two thousand guests were entertained at a celebration marking construction of the first bridge across the Mississippi at Memphis. Grover Cleveland, John Phillip Sousa and Adlai Stevenson were some of the other luminaries entertained at the home.

In 1929, the Fontaine House was acquired by Miss Rosa Lee, the daughter of James Lee, Jr., founder of the Lee Steamboat Line and good friend of Charles E. Goyer. Miss Lee willed the Fontaine House together with the Goyer House to the city of Memphis in memory to her father, to be known as the "James Lee Memorial."

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hutchins, Fred L., What Happened in Memphis (Kingsport, 1965).

McBride, Robert M., (Ed.), More Landmarks of Tennessee History (Nashville, 1969).

Moore, John T., and Foster, A.P. (Ed.), Tennessee, the Volunteer State (Chicago, 1923).

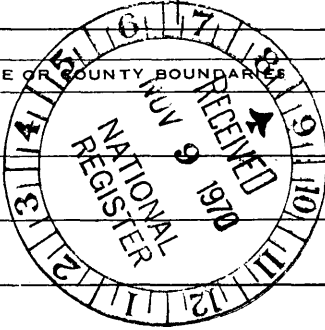
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "		35 ° 08 ' 39 "	90 ° 02 ' 07 "	
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 5

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Herbert L. Harper, Director of Field Services

ORGANIZATION: Tennessee Historical Commission DATE: 11/4/70

STREET AND NUMBER:
403 7th Avenue, North

CITY OR TOWN: Nashville STATE: Tennessee CODE: 047

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Stephen S. Lawrence
Stephen S. Lawrence NSD -
Executive Director
Title Tennessee Historical Commission

Date 11/5/70

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

Ernest A. Connelly
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

FEB 1 1971

Date _____

ATTEST:

William J. Mumby
Keeper of The National Register

Date **FEB 4 1971**

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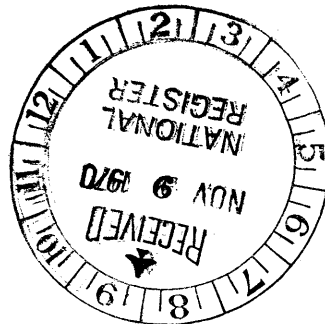
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8 (Significance - cont.)

The home is significant as an excellent example of high Victorian architecture of the 1870's. The home is also significant as it was a center of Memphis society and wealth during the late nineteenth century. The interior of the Fontaine house has been extensively restored and presently serves as a museum. Fine tapestries, a Boulle clock, paintings, and authentic Queen Anne, French, Federal and Victorian furniture have been put in the house.

Miss Rosa Lee established the first free art school for Memphis in 1930 in the Lee House. In 1936 she willed the house to the City of Memphis for use by the Memphis Art Association. The building was vacated in 1959 and was scheduled for demolition, but was saved from destruction by the Memphis Chapter of the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities. It, along with the Fontaine House and the carriage house, form the James Lee Memorial, in memory of the famous founder of the Lee Line Steamers.



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