

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Number 1, 3, 4 Page 1

Cabin Ben—Additional Documentation  
Macon County, North Carolina

[Note: Only amended items and the required NPS certification are included below.]

### Section 1

NAME OF PROPERTY: Cabin Ben—Additional Documentation

### Section 3

**STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION:** As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant locally.

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  |  |
| Signature of certifying official/title  | Date  |

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

### Section 4

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

| I, hereby certify that this property is:                                   | Signature of the Keeper | Date of Action |
|--|-------------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register                  |                         |                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.                           |                         |                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register     |                         |                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.                           |                         |                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register |                         |                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register                |                         |                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____                            |                         |                |

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### Section 8 -- Additional Documentation

When the National Register nomination for Cabin Ben was prepared in 2002 Lewis C. Doggett Jr., the owner, remembered having seen blueprints for the house; however, their location was then unknown.<sup>1</sup> In early October 2003 Mr. Doggett located the blueprints. Comprising a set of six unnumbered sheets, the drawings are each labeled “Residence for Prof. W. E. Godfrey, Clemson College, Clemson, S. C., Rudolph E. Lee, Architect, Clemson College.” The undated blueprints are stapled together. The “First Floor Plan” appears on the first sheet, and the “Second Floor Plan” appears on the second sheet. The elevations appear on the succeeding third, fourth, fifth, and sixth sheets. The third sheet, labeled “Front Elevation” shows Cabin Ben’s west elevation, while the following sheets, labeled “Side Elevation,” “Rear Elevation,” and “Side Elevation” reflect the built south, east, and north elevations, respectively.

The absence of cardinal references to the log house’s elevations indicates a design geared to its function as a summer cottage, but not specifically sited on its lot overlooking Mirror Lake. In the event the plans were followed, with little variation, when Joe Webb built Cabin Ben in 1932, except that the first “Side Elevation” with its “Stone Terrace” became the south-facing front of the cottage, visible on the approach along Cullasaga Road. Mr. Lee’s designated “Front Elevation,” with its shed porch, became the west side of Cabin Ben and the porch was screened as an outdoor sitting extension of the living room with paired glazed doors linking the two. The other visible difference is that, when built, the kitchen door on the north elevation was well above grade and a service porch and steps were added during construction. The interior of the cottage was effectively built as designed except that the balcony, designed to carry full across the (built upper east) side of the living room in front of the stone chimney, was truncated to a simple landing serving the second-story hall on the north side of the chimney. The general plan for the four bedrooms and a bathroom on the second story is sketched in; however, the area is labeled “For Future Development.” It was essentially partitioned and finished as indicated.

Rudolph Edward Lee (1876-1959), the son of Major Thomas Broome and Miriam Mays (Earle) Lee, was born in Anderson, South Carolina, and attended The Citadel, Charleston, S. C. for two years before he transferred to Clemson Agricultural College in 1893.<sup>2</sup> Doing so, he became in 1896 a member of the first class to graduate from Clemson, earning a bachelor’s degree in engineering. Upon graduation he joined the faculty of his alma mater and remained a professor until retiring in 1948. During this period of fifty-two years, his title and the names of his professorships changed in tandem with the evolution of architectural education at Clemson. In 1900 he was made head of the Drawing and Designing Division at Clemson which, in 1914, became the Division of Drawing and Architectural Engineering. Renamed the Division of

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Architecture and Drawing in 1917, and the Architecture Division in 1932, the architectural program became the Department of Architecture in 1933. Through this sequence he served as the founding head of the architecture education program and remained in charge until retirement.

During this period he undertook post-graduate study at Zanerian Art College at Columbus, Ohio, Cornell University, and the University of Pennsylvania, and in 1928 was awarded a Master of Architecture Degree from Clemson. For over half of his tenure at Clemson he served as college architect, from 1911 to 1939. However, his first known college building, an alumni association clubhouse, dates to 1908 when he also designed an addition to the engineering school building. In 1911 he designed dairy buildings for the school and dwellings for three professors. The Clemson Y.M.C.A. building was designed in 1915 when he also undertook the design of a series of (eight known) public schools in South Carolina. In the 1920s he designed buildings for Clemson as well as the Epworth Orphanage in Columbia, the University of South Carolina, Lander College at Greenwood, and some few private commissions. The work at Clemson comprised a dormitory and mess hall in 1923, the college auditorium enlargement in 1924, the remodeling of the agricultural building for a library in 1925, the Riggs School of Engineering and Architecture in 1927, and the Field House in 1929. His design of the W. W. Long Agricultural Building at Clemson, completed in 1937, is believed to be his final building on campus.

Rudolph Edward Lee retired as head of the Department of Architecture in 1948. He lived in Greenville until his death on 23 October 1959 when his funeral was held from Christ Episcopal Church and his body interred in the churchyard beside that of his wife, Mary Louise Egleston (1875-1952). In 1961 his daughter and heir, Louise Egleston (Lee) Page (1903-1985), donated the bulk of his surviving professional and personal papers, and those of his wife and their family, to Clemson University where they are housed in the Gunnin Architectural Library. Additions were made to the Rudolph Edward Lee Papers in 1984, 1986, 1989, and 1993. The collection includes relatively few architectural drawings except for a group of measured drawings of area historic buildings executed by his students in the early 1930s.

The extent of Rudolph Edward Lee's private, residential work has yet to be documented or researched. His design of Cabin Ben for a fellow departmental head at Clemson was likely part of a pattern of undertaking work for colleagues and friends. For a brief period, in the early 1920s, he had an office in Charlotte, N.C., in association with T. Angus McEwan and Arthur R. Turnbull; however, the extent of that practice is not known. His own house, an expansive Tudor Revival brick cottage at 12 Victory Avenue in Greenville, S.C, which he designed, was published in CAROLINA ARCHITECTURE AND ALLIED ARTS in 1942. The discovery of these blueprints and the design of Cabin Ben by Mr. Lee contributes to the ongoing research into

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the history of log summer house construction in Highlands and the distinguished body of work produced there by builder Joe Webb.<sup>3</sup>

### ENDNOTES

1. See Cabin Ben nomination page 8/9.
2. The principal biographical sources for Rudolph Edward Lee are the “Register of Rudolph Edward Lee Papers, 1891-1985,” Gunnin Architectural Library, Clemson University, and “Rudolph Edward Lee” in *THE SOUTH CAROLINA ARCHITECTS*. Sarah Legins, Visual Resources/Reference Librarian, Gunnin Architectural Library, provided a copy of the “Register” to this author.
3. The blueprints are held by Mr. Doggett, the owner, at Cabin Ben, 115 Cullasaja Drive, Highlands, North Carolina.

### **Section 9**

#### Bibliography

CAROLINA ARCHITECTURE AND ALLIED ARTS, 1942.

Sarah Legins, letter to the author, 3 March 2004.

“Prof. R. E. Lee,” *THE GREENVILLE (SC) NEWS*, 25 October 1959.

“Register of the Rudolph Edward Lee Papers, 1891-1895,” Gunnin Architectural Library, Clemson University, Clemson, S.C.

Wells, John E., and Robert E. Dalton, *THE SOUTH CAROLINA ARCHITECTS, 1885-1935*, Richmond: New South Architectural Press, 1992.

### **Section 11**

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