

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

LISTED ON:
VLR 12/15/2011
NRHP 03/29/2012

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name General Electric Specialty Control Plant
other names/site number VDHR File Number 136-5055

2. Location

street & number 1 Solutions Way N/A not for publication
city or town Waynesboro N/A vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Independent City code 820 zip code 22980

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility 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 x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

2/15/12
Date

Kathleen Kilpatrick, Director
Title

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Choose as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Choose only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
public - Local
public - State
public - Federal

- building(s)
district
site
structure
building(s)
object

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type. Rows include buildings, sites, structures, objects, buildings, and Total.

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION:

Manufacturing Facility (Factory)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business (Office Building)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business (Office Building)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Warehouse (Commercial Storage)

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Industrial Vernacular

foundation: CONCRETE

walls:

BRICK

METAL

roof: SYNTHETICS: Rubber

other:

Name of Property

County and State

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

See continuation sheets.

Narrative Description

See continuation sheets.

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction...
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNICATIONS: Manufacture of equipment for military aircraft, space vehicles and command centers
ENGINEERING: Development of early computer equipment
SOCIAL HISTORY: Massive Resistance

Period of Significance

1927; 1953-1969

Significant Dates

1927 (Construction date of airplane hangar)
1953 (Plant under construction); 1954 (Plant opened);
1960 (Plant expanded); 1969 (GE introduced device to transmit data between remote computers)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Dr. Louis T. Rader

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Whitman, Requardt & Associates, Baltimore, MD (architect)
J. A. Jones Construction Company, Charlotte, NC (builder)

Period of Significance (justification)

The property's period of significance includes the year 1927, to acknowledge the construction date of the one-story concrete block airport hangar. The latter part of the period of significance spans from 1953 to 1969. The year 1953 marked the beginning of construction of the GE Control Plant. In 1969 the company introduced the Terminet 300, the first electronic device to facilitate the transmittal of data between remote computers.

Name of Property

County and State

Criteria Consideratons (explanation, if necessary)

The GE Specialty Control Plant meets Criterion Consideration G because of its exceptional significance in the development of early computerized equipment in the 1960s and in the development of relays that enabled communication with ground control during the first American space missions in the 1950s-1960s. By the end of the period of significance, the Specialty Control Department in Waynesboro was the world's largest producer of numerical controls for the machine tool industry.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

See continuation sheets.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

See continuation sheets.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Virginia Department of Historic Resources,

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Name of repository: Richmond, Virginia

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR File Number 136-5055

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 25.5 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>68655</u> Easting	<u>4218290</u> Northing	3	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>686825</u> Easting	<u>4217866</u> Northing
2	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>686971</u> Easting	<u>4218115</u> Northing	4	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>686802</u> Easting	<u>4217876</u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

See continuation sheet.

Name of Property

County and State

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Mary Harding Sadler and Llewellyn Hensleyorganization Sadler & Whitehead Architects, PLCdate 09/25/2011street & number 726 W. 33rd Streettelephone (804) 231-5299city or town Richmondstate VAzip code 23225e-mail sadler@sadlerandwhitehead.com**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

See continuation sheet.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name Solutions Way Management, LLC, c/o REO Hatfieldstreet & number P. O. Box 1083telephone Unknowncity or town WaynesboroState VAzip code 22980

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. fo the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC

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General Electric Specialty Control Plant

City of Waynesboro, Virginia

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7. Summary Description

Summary

The General Electric Specialty Control Plant occupies an approximately 25.5-acre corporate campus in the northeast corner of Waynesboro, Virginia, adjacent to the city's industrial park. The campus includes the following six resources: a 340,000-square-foot main plant building (Construction on the plant began in 1953, and continued until 1955. The plant was then expanded in 1960), the original formal entry drive, the original water tower, water tank, a group of evolved and interconnected construction sheds built from 1953 to the present, and a ca. 1927 airplane hangar. The main plant building, which is institutional in character, has a two-story red brick façade with concrete trim, banded windows, and a flat roof. A vast rectangular metal-sided factory wing with long loading docks occupies the rear. The south side of the factory wing—closest to the main access roads—is designated for receiving, and the north side for shipping. The west side of the plant is a service yard that provides access to the maintenance department and an interconnected row of one-story, gable-roofed, metal construction sheds.

The red brick office and metal-sided factory wings of the plant, the entry drive, the water tower, water tank and construction shed were all constructed between 1953 and 1955. The carefully landscaped center of the curved entry drive is marked with a flagpole bearing an American flag. The construction shed, which has evolved and expanded since its construction, served as storage and workshop space. A one-story concrete block airplane hangar, built in 1927, is a remnant of the Valley Airport, which was first established by Carl C. "Rip" Loth, who sold his property to GE in 1953. This small vaulted-roof building has been used for storage since the 1950s and remains an interesting component of the plant's setting. The General Electric Plant, entry drive, water tower, water tank, construction shed, and airplane hangar all contribute to the significance of the property because of their role in the history of GE's development and use of the property.

Detailed Description

The significant portion of the former General Electric campus is a flat 25.5-acre site defined by the Norfolk Southern Railway on its east side, by Concord Place on the south, by Solutions Way (formerly General Electric Drive) and the border between Waynesboro and Augusta County on the west, and by a paved utility line (mapped as a continuation of Solutions Way) on the north. While the factory wing is surrounded by the acres of parking needed for employees who once numbered in the thousands, the office wing of the building fronts on a landscaped driveway and a manicured lawn planted with scattered hardwoods. White collar employees and visitors approached the office building via an axial drive that terminated with a landscaped circle whose center was marked by a flagpole with an American flag. Factory workers parked their vehicles in the parking areas north and south of the building and entered the factory through secondary side entrances. The plant is sited in a valley against the backdrop of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

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Exterior

Construction on the plant began in 1953, and continued until 1955. The plant was then expanded in 1960. The east facade of the plant, which houses the lobby and office functions, has an institutional character typical of schools and office buildings constructed in the mid-20th century. The two-story exterior walls of the T-shaped office wing are built of unpainted red brick laid in running bond. The foundation is cast-in-place concrete. The flat roof is masked by a brick parapet capped with a plain cast-stone coping. Two rows of mill-finished four-light aluminum windows are banded in groups of four by cast-stone frames.

The main entry for visitors and office workers, on axis with the flagpole centered in the circular terminus of the formal driveway, is set in a two-story, cast-stone portico which projects from the center of the building's east face. Paired aluminum-framed glass doors are protected by a tapered canopy faced with ribbed aluminum, which is also used for the spandrel panels above and below the first and second floor windows. A secondary entry to the 1960 addition, which was designed by the same architect, has a similar, but smaller cast-stone frame flanked by wall-mounted lights. The main employee entries are even more discreetly articulated.

In contrast with the office wing, the walls of the factory wing rest on a three-foot-high brick base with a cast stone sill and are clad in painted corrugated metal. Bands of steel multi-light industrial windows open into the former cafeteria on the east and the former tool room on the south. The exterior factory wing has been expanded several times without change to the building's character.

The original architectural vocabulary is repeated on the additions, making the building's exterior appear much as it did when its doors opened in September 1954 to its first employees: eight transfers from Schenectady, New York, and ten local women who had been engaged to assemble electronic components for aircraft.

Interior

Like the exterior, the building's interior is clearly divided between office and factory functions. The dominant characteristic shared by both sections of the main building is flexibility, a trait that was central to the success of a cutting-edge electronics center. While the office wing has a structural grid of concrete columns, the factory wing has steel columns and an exposed steel roof structure. Only the lobby, stairways, service core, cafeteria and auditorium have permanent walls, as most partitions in the office wing are demountable. These partitions are pre-finished panels that were designed to be temporarily installed, taken down, and reassembled in a different configuration. Similarly, the factory wing was built to accommodate the varied demands of receiving, storing, assembling, finishing, and shipping a continuously shifting assortment of electronics. Though very few pieces of original factory equipment remain, original handpainted signage remains scattered throughout the interior.

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The lobby, centered in the east façade, is a square space with a receptionist's desk and a built-in display case on the north wall. Two aluminum-framed doors lead to the office area. The display case once enclosed products manufactured at the plant.

Behind the lobby are the main stair and the service core, which contain restrooms and other utility spaces. The main stair has simple aluminum handrails and is illuminated by an ornamental pendant fixture comprised of four milk white glass tubes. Secondary stairs in the office wing are of a classic mid-century design, with plain aluminum extrusions and solid infill panels mounted in the unadorned profile of the concrete stair.

General Electric, like other major national companies, promoted a corporate culture that was expressed in the building by an employee cafeteria, an auditorium with ornamental concrete block walls, and well-equipped fitness facilities. These spaces shared by the employees, including a surprising amount of original fixtures and equipment, remain intact. The second floor of the office wing has dozens of remaining early modular office partitions with corrugated glass panels. The plant's original sign shop remains in place, as do hand-lettered signs throughout the plant, indicating the location of utilities, testing facilities, and a wide range of functions.

Unlike Richmond's Reynolds Metals Executive Office Building (Listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register in 1999 and the National Register of Historic Places in 2000, VDHR #043-0242), which was a corporate headquarters rather than an industrial facility, the General Electric Specialty Control Plant was conceived and created for the engineering, design, and manufacture of cutting edge electronics. Engineers within the office wing devised plans for new technologies, and factory employees, working in the manufacturing wing of the building, fabricated products for customers ranging from NASA and the United States Department of Defense to private businesses and industries. While Reynolds Metals' corporate headquarters was created to further a company image, the Waynesboro General Electric plant was designed to facilitate the engineering, assembly, and distribution of newly developed electronic devices.

The General Electric Specialty Control Plant in Waynesboro is an example of the industrialization of formerly rural Virginia communities. More importantly, the plant is a significant built embodiment of America's post-World War II ascendance in the electronics and early computer technology industries.

Secondary Resources

Also constructed in 1954 are the following contributing secondary resources: the paved entry drive, water tower, water tank, and construction shed. Located just east of the GE Plant is the elongated loop of the entry drive. The center median and the area flanking the drive is landscaped with grass, trees, and shrubs. At the center of the drive, across from the plant's front entry, is a pole bearing an American flag. Located across a paved access road to the west of the plant is the construction shed. The one-story metal-sided shed has expanded since its construction, but has always been used for storage and workshop space. The shed is characterized by its multiple gable roofs, garage and loading doors, and small metal windows. It was built as a temporary

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construction shed, but has evolved to serve storage and other service needs at the plant. A three-story steel-frame water tower, supporting a painted metal oval-shaped tank painted with the word "GENICOM" (the name of a company that spun-off from General Electric in 1984), is located just south of the building, across a paved parking area. Sited near the plant's southwest corner, is a large, cylindrical, painted metal water tank that rests on a concrete pad. The top of the tank is conical with a shallow pitch. A one-story concrete block airplane hangar, built in 1927, is a remnant of the Valley Airport. This small vaulted-roof building, located near the northeast corner of the main building, has been used for storage since the 1950s.

The General Electric Plant, entry drive, water tower, water tank, construction shed, and airplane hangar contribute to the property's significance because of their role in the history of GE's development of the property.

Inventory

GENERAL ELECTRIC SPECIALTY CONTROL PLANT BUILDINGS AND CLASSIFICATIONS			
Approximate Date	Resource Type	Classification	Contributing (C)/Noncontributing (NC)
1953-55 and 1963	Industrial Plant & offices	Building	C
1953-55	Paved Entry Drive	Site	C
1953-55	Water Tower	Structure	C
1953-55	Water Tank	Structure	C
ca. 1927	Airplane Hangar	Building	C
ca. 1953-present	Construction shed	Building	C

GE PLANT RESOURCE SUMMARY — Main Plant & Associated Outbuildings			
	Contributing	Non-Contributing	Total
Buildings	3	0	3
Structures	2	0	2
Sites	1	0	1
Total Resources	6	0	6

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8. Statement of Significance

Summary

The General Electric Specialty Control Plant, constructed in 1953-1955 with an expansion in 1960, sits on just over 25 acres along the South River in the northeast corner of Waynesboro, Virginia. The Waynesboro plant was one of some 120 individual operating departments created as part of a decentralization effort by the General Electric Corporation (prior to decentralization, the company was concentrated in the northeast), and became one of Waynesboro's largest employers. Staff members at the Specialty Control Plant in Waynesboro were responsible for the development of breakthrough technologies in areas ranging from America's military efforts to space travel to computer technology. Significant at the local level under Criteria A for Communications, the plant was critical to the local economy of Waynesboro, and it was a significant location for innovation and manufacture of equipment for commercial and military aircraft, for the manufacture of relays that enabled communication between space vehicles and their command centers, and for the development and manufacture of early computer equipment. The opening of the GE plant marked an economic transformation for Waynesboro, when the company moved over one hundred forty new families from GE headquarters in Schenectady, New York, to work in the small southern city at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Waynesboro's GE Plant is significant under Criterion B in Engineering and Social History because of its association with Dr. Louis T. Rader, the engineer responsible for the Specialty Control Department's relocation to Waynesboro, and a director of the plant's business and manufacturing during most of the period of significance. An extraordinary man and a leader in the development of the earliest computers and computer equipment, Rader's inspirational work in the business and engineering fields is documented in the Special Collections of the University of Virginia and Virginia Commonwealth University and on scores of web sites. In the late 1950s, as head of the Waynesboro plant, he used his influence as a widely respected business executive to help end the state's policy of massive resistance. During his time as Vice President of the Specialty Control Division in Waynesboro, Dr. Rader, toured the state as an advocate for reopening Virginia's public schools, asserting that the state was risking economy prosperity by closing public schools to avoid integration¹.

The GE Specialty Control Plant meets Criterion Consideration G because of its exceptional significance in the early development of computerized equipment in the late 1960s. The plant was also responsible for the development of relays that enabled communication between spacecraft and ground control during early space missions in the 1950s-1960s. By the end of the period of significance the Specialty Control Department in Waynesboro was the world's largest producer of numerical controls for the machine tool industry.

The property's period of significance includes the year 1927, when the airplane hangar—a remnant of the Valley Airport—was constructed. The latter part of the period of significance begins in 1953, with the start of construction on the GE Control Plant, and ends in 1969, when GE introduced the Terminet 300. This electronic device was the first to facilitate the transmittal of data between remote computers.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Local Context

Waynesboro, Virginia, is in the central part of the Shenandoah Valley, which was first populated in the mid-1700s. Waynesboro became a town in 1801, and 24 years after its consolidation with Basic City, became an incorporated city in 1947. In the early 1920s, the city began to cultivate local industry with tax exemptions and other incentives. In 1928, Loth Stove of Waynesboro (founded in 1890; now Virginia Metal Crafters) developed a revolutionary electric stove design called "Hotpoint."² In 1930, the company was sold to General Electric (GE), who converted Loth's Hotpoint line of stoves to a GE trademark. Even though General Electric sold the foundry back to Loth Stove employees in 1932, GE remembered Waynesboro as a business-friendly location.

Waynesboro citizens approved additional capital improvements in a 1927 effort to attract more industry to the area. Textile company Crompton-Shenandoah, the first large industrial presence in Waynesboro, opened a plant that ran from 1927 to 1983. World War I pilot Carl C. "Rip" Loth opened the city's first airport, Valley Airport, just north of town in 1927. In August 1928, DuPont agreed to open a plant in Waynesboro that began producing acetate-rayon fibers in 1929. Between the late 1920s and the mid-1940s, the population of Waynesboro more than doubled from 6,000 to 13,000, and the city's size increased from 2.6 to 6.8 square miles. On February 11, 1947, Waynesboro became Virginia's 25th city.³

Economic growth slowed after World War II and Waynesboro saw a decline of railroad and passenger bus services, as well as the closing of some downtown businesses. The textile mill at Crompton-Shenandoah Plant (listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places in 2011, VDHR #136-5056) and chemical company DuPont, were also affected, with both businesses suffering reduced orders, excess inventories, and stiffer competition from imported goods. Local industry responded with cutbacks of about 300 employees.⁴

General Electric

The city's economy rebounded in 1953 when General Electric announced plans to purchase Rip Loth's Valley Airport in order to establish its Specialty Control Department on the north side of town. Loth's 1927 airplane hangar remains on the property today. Waynesboro annexed additional land in 1953-1954 to supply utilities and other public services to the new GE Plant.

General Electric was established by Thomas Edison in 1878 as the Edison Electric Light Company. Edison's company merged with the Thomson-Houston Electric Company in 1892 to form the General Electric Company, now the sixth largest company in the United States. The company began manufacturing electrical insulation products in 1910, and then developed industrial resins and electrical grade laminates. By 1917, the U.S. government was using aircraft engines made by GE. Between 1919 and 1941, the company contributed

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tremendously to the development of wireless radio and television technologies. General Electric began manufacturing refrigerators in 1923 and acquired patents for air conditioning and electric stoves by 1930.⁵

In the 1950s, GE was centralized with six major manufacturing plants located in Schenectady, New York; Pittsfield, Massachusetts; Lynn, Massachusetts; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Erie, Pennsylvania; and Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Under president Ralph Cordiner, the company was decentralized, and large department groups were broken into 120 individual operating departments, each the equivalent of a small business, with new plants in dozens of new locations. The Control Division, headquartered in Schenectady, New York, was subdivided into four individual plants. The Industrial Control Department, located in Salem, Virginia, manufactured building control systems for big industries, such as steel and paper. The General Purpose Control Department, which built smaller control components, was located in Bloomington, Illinois. The Appliance Control Department in Morrison, Illinois, built control systems for consumer products including refrigerators, oil burners, and small switching devices. In 1953, a request for \$3.5 million was approved by the management team at GE, and the company purchased Loth's 75-acre airport property in Waynesboro. Construction of the new plant began immediately. The major business in Waynesboro at the time was DuPont, which, as a chemical company, would not compete with GE for electronics workers.⁶ Eight supervisory staff from Schenectady, New York, were relocated; ten local women were hired. A former employee of the factory recalls that "almost all the work was done under microscope ... all by women with dexterous, small hands",⁷ and that the Specialty Control Department's new 200,000 square-foot plant began manufacturing photoelectric devices in September 1954.⁸

Over the next several months, GE's Specialty Control Department moved 143 families, including marketing professionals, production control staff, and fifty-five engineers, from Schenectady, New York, to Waynesboro, Virginia. The staff members spearheading the startup of the Waynesboro Plant were its general manager Dr. Louis T. Rader, his secretary Maggy Fitzgibbons, Ernie Hutton of the Engineering Department, Charles Hughes in Purchasing, planner Cyril Lee, manufacturing specialist Joe Ponzillo, Fred Curto of Buildings and Grounds, and Bill Walter of the Laboratory Division. General Electric published reports that provided relocating families with detailed information about housing, schools and other aspects of life in Waynesboro and provided an all-expense-paid trip to Waynesboro for the husband and wife of each family, as well as two additional trips for the husband to finalize details for the family's move. Living expenses were paid by the company until families were able to settle into a house or apartment. If a family's Schenectady home could not be sold in time for the move date, GE purchased it.

In the spring of 1955, General Electric's Specialty Control Department completed its 550-mile move.⁹ At the time of GE's arrival, Waynesboro was still a rural area, with two industrial plants. For many local residents, employment at the new GE plant meant their first industrial job or their first job off the family farm. The Specialty Control Department hired more than 400 factory workers in its first year. Due to the dramatic influx of new residents, the Cortland Street and Club Court areas of Waynesboro were quickly filled with new houses, and vacant lots in Waynesboro and nearby Augusta County were bustling with construction. Over the next

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several years, new churches, a new hospital, and shopping areas were built to serve the newly populated neighborhoods.¹⁰

The new plant was a two-story institutional building designed in a straight-forward mid-century idiom similar to suburban public schools in the 1950s and 1960s. The building's flat roof, horizontal bands of windows, and simple cast concrete trim established an economical, no-nonsense corporate presence on a large campus at the edge of town. The lobby and entry to the plant's office and engineering functions were (and still are) centered on the east façade, facing the flagpole at the end of the entry drive. The factory wing, which had a more industrial aesthetic, opened loading doors on the north and south fronts for shipping and delivery, while the west side of the plant faced a service yard with a metal shed. The building included a gymnasium and cafeteria as part of the employees' amenities.

A major expansion of the GE plant was completed in 1960. More manufacturing space, a new auditorium, cafeteria, and "white room" for the assembly of hermetically sealed relays were constructed. The 1960 extension brought the plant close to its current size of 340,000 square feet. In the late 1960s, the workforce at the Waynesboro plant reached 3,000, and the payroll for the plant exceeded \$17 million.¹¹ At its peak in the 1970s, the Specialty Control Department in Waynesboro plant surpassed DuPont as the largest employer in the city, with several thousand employees, many of whom were local residents.¹²

Products

The Waynesboro General Electric Specialty Control Department manufactured a variety of products, including:

- Hermetically sealed relays for aerospace and military applications. Relays allowed voice communication with astronauts, made instant sports replays on television possible, guided missiles, and helped fly airplanes.¹³
- Numerical control systems for machine tools (such as lathes and milling machines), with input from tracers, punched tape, punched cards, magnetic tape, and digital switches. In the late 1960s, the Specialty Control Department in Waynesboro was the world's largest producer of numerical controls for the machine tool industry.¹⁴
- Thy-Mo-Trol adjustable speed drives for the printing industry, winding/loop controls, and many other controls where adjustable regulated speed was required.
- Regulators and static exciters for electrical power generation systems. The power regulation equipment built here was utilized in nuclear power stations and hydroelectric installations, and controlled the largest turbine generators in the world.¹⁵
- Photoelectric devices for a wide range of uses, including pinhole detectors, register controls, speed controls, and loop controls.
- Hot-box detectors for detecting over-heated bearings on railroad cars.

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- Aircraft and military products, including airborne protective panels, static exciters, regulators, military ground power supplies, regulators, and amplidyne regulators.
- Machinery automation systems that included weighing systems, test and inspection systems, and automated material control systems.¹⁶
- Thickness gauges for sheet steel using nuclear radiation.

The diversity of the plant's products allowed the Waynesboro plant to weather decades of business cycles, resulting in fewer layoffs and providing economic stability to both the plant and the city of Waynesboro. The Specialty Control Department was the only GE department that turned a profit the year of the decentralization and move from Schenectady, New York, in 1953-54.¹⁷

Among the many devices first manufactured in the Waynesboro plant was the Mark Century, a machine control that had a huge impact on machine automation. General Electric's work with resins and plastics brought rapid growth in aerospace, medical, electrical, and other technology fields.¹⁸ The relay operation of the Special Control Department was a primary supplier of control relays for the aircraft and space industry in the 1960s. By 1967, 85% of commercial and military aircraft relays were made at the Waynesboro plant. GE relays and other electronics were utilized in military aircraft and many NASA spacecraft, including those used in the Apollo 5 and Apollo 11 space missions. Crucial components of the Apollo series spacecraft manufactured by GE in Waynesboro included the Dead Face Relay and the Relay Junction Box, which were designed to start and stop electricity flow through power wires during departure from the lunar surface, and the Ascent and Descent Units, which measured the current from the power source batteries to indicate how much power was left and provided automatic overload protection. The components worked flawlessly on the Apollo 5 mission, as did their updated counterparts, which were carried to the moon on July 20, 1969, by Apollo 11 and its Lunar Excursion Module.¹⁹ Relay switching devices from GE-Waynesboro were also put to use on the Voyager and Trident Spacecraft, as well as the Space Shuttle.

Military applications for devices made in the Waynesboro GE plant included electronic controls found on the B-52 bombers and F4C Phantom jets used in the Vietnam War, and the U.S. Navy's nuclear powered submarines. Great advances in the automation of manufacturing were conceived at the Waynesboro GE Plant. In their book *A History of Waynesboro, Virginia: 1900-1976*, George Hawke and Earle Meese summarized the impact of the Waynesboro General Electric Plant: "Their products were used by other industries to count, measure, sort, identify and inspect items faster than ever possible before, increasing America's productivity and standard of living".²⁰

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Dr. Louis T. Rader

Dr. Louis T. Rader (1911-2003), a native of Alberta, Canada, was in GE's Schenectady plant when he was appointed to head a committee to plan the potential Waynesboro location²¹. He arrived in Waynesboro in 1954 as the General Manager of the Specialty Control Department. Dr. Rader had a long and accomplished career with General Electric, was chairman of electrical engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology, and from 1969-74 he served jointly as Chairman of Electrical Engineering and Professor of Business Administration at the University of Virginia. He taught and lectured at the University's engineering and graduate business schools until his death in 2003.

Dr. Rader had a profound impact on public education in Virginia following U.S. Senator Harry Byrd's campaign of massive resistance to the desegregation of public schools in Virginia in response to the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The Byrd-initiated policy triggered a major education crisis across the state, and as a result, most Virginia public schools closed. Overnight, more than 10,000 Virginia children were without schools. Although some private schools were formed, most families could not afford the tuition. Management at GE Headquarters agreed to let the Specialty Control Department in Waynesboro speak out against school segregation.

Dr. Louis T. Rader, then Vice President of the Specialty Control Division in Waynesboro, acting as a corporate spokesman, toured the state as an advocate for the reopening of Virginia's public schools, asserting that the state was risking a booming economy over the integration issue²². Dr. Rader eventually threatened to close GE's Virginia plants if the state's resistance to integration persisted. Finally, Virginia Governor James Lindsey Almond, Jr., appointed a legislative committee to study the issue, and their recommendation was for the state to cease resistance. The recommendation was put to a vote in the Virginia Assembly, and it passed by a single vote. On January 19, 1959, the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals declared the massive resistance laws unconstitutional, thereby ending massive resistance at the state level. Schools were reopened in February 1959. Dr. Rader was among the rare corporate spokesmen to push for the integration and re-opening of Virginia's public schools.²³

Dr. Rader and the Terminet 300

In the early 1960s, computers were only available to large organizations, due to their enormous size and high price. Although computer technology was in demand, there was not yet a device for effectively transmitting information between computers. The Specialty Control Plant included a computer-development division. Dr. Rader wanted his plant to create a communication device that was capable of linking computers together, and felt confident in the capabilities of his Waynesboro-based engineers. Management at GE Headquarters rejected Rader's concept. In spite of this setback, Dr. Rader opted to move forward with the development of his computer terminal, and a team of engineers and support staff, led by J.K. Snell, began work on the new device in 1965.

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Teletype machines, which were capable of printing up to ten characters a second, were the standard technology at the time. Rader's goals were to develop a machine with dramatically improved performance and reduced shortfalls. The Teletype machine was very loud. GE engineers envisioned a machine with a keyboard that was portable, capable of making carbon copies and transmitting information with no errors. Newly developed components, computer chips, which contained hundreds of transistor circuits etched on a tiny silicon surface, were necessary to make the device portable. At the time, computer chips were only produced for military use. Within four years, the team developed the most advanced communications terminal in the world.

Because of Rader's vision and determination, the Terminet 300, a revolutionary dot-matrix printer, was released on March 24, 1969. At \$4,000 each, the new terminals printed thirty characters per second, weighed 65 pounds, ran quietly, and could transmit and receive data electronically. General Electric's first big order for the Terminet 300 machines was from Dow Jones & Company. The device became well-known for keeping the stock market ticker tape current. The Terminet 300 was extremely popular in the computer and business data industries, and the sales quickly topped \$100 million dollars.²⁴ More advanced Terminet models were developed and released from 1969 to 1977, and they became an essential part of early computerized communication systems.²⁵

General Electric Leaves Waynesboro

Over the years, as the Specialty Control Department developed and manufactured new products, fabrication was transferred to other GE Departments. The manufacture of adjustable-speed drive controls and aircraft controls was transferred to the plant in Erie, Pennsylvania. The General Purpose Control Department in Bloomington, Illinois, absorbed the photoelectric control business, and the Industry Control Department in Salem, Virginia, undertook the manufacturing of power systems components, including static exciters and power regulators. The Numerical Control portion of the company was transferred to Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1979, and became part of the Factory Automation Division there. After these transfers, the remaining subdivisions at GE-Waynesboro were renamed the Data Communications Products Business Department, whose main business was the design and manufacture of Terminet electronic printers and relays.²⁶

GE prepared to sell the Terminet printer and relay manufacturing business (the remaining components of the Waynesboro plant) in 1981, and the facility was sold to Genicom on October 21, 1983.²⁷ The new company, Genicom, was formed in order to expand the market for the Terminet printers. Genicom was highly successful in its early endeavors, and its stock went public in 1987-1988. The success was short-lived, however, as impact printer technology was quickly replaced by laser printing technology. Genicom went bankrupt in 2001, and Northrup-Grumman Company took over the parts and service operations of Genicom printers under the name Genicom, LLC, which continued to operate a Customer Service Center and a small printer development and repair office from the GE Plant until ca. 2010.²⁸

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In 2010, the current owners, Solutions Way Management LLC, purchased the GE plant in order to preserve the significant remaining Genicom business and to rehabilitate the property, lease offices, warehouse space and manufacturing facilities to business tenants. The company now occupying most of the building is a trucking, warehousing, shipping, and receiving business. In 2008, the current owner began a certified rehabilitation of the GE Specialty Control Plant, with the goal of completing interior and exterior renovations that will comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

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UTM References (Continued)

5	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>686796</u> Easting	<u>4217861</u> Northing	6	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>686687</u> Easting	<u>4217909</u> Northing
7	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>686615</u> Easting	<u>4217917</u> Northing	8	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>686586</u> Easting	<u>4218017</u> Northing
9	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>686595</u> Easting	<u>4218167</u> Northing		<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The historic property boundaries of the General Electric Specialty Control Plant are defined by the Norfolk Southern Railway on the east side, by Concord Place on the south, by Solutions Way (formerly General Electric Drive) and the border between Waynesboro and Augusta County on the west, and by a paved utility road (mapped as an extension of Solutions Way) on the north. (See the outlined portion of tax parcel number 17-1-1 on the attached parcel map. Information can be found on the City of Waynesboro's Internet Mapping Service at: <http://waynesboro.mapsdirect.net/Search.aspx>.)

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The historic property boundaries of the General Electric Specialty Control Plant contain the main factory and office building, construction shed, the entry drive, two water tanks, and an historic hangar. The boundaries include the site, buildings and structures associated with the property's history and significance and exclude a non-contributing 1970s water treatment plant and undeveloped acreage.

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Section Photographs Page 15

Photographs

Name of Property: General Electric Specialty Control Plant
City or Vicinity: City of Waynesboro
State: Virginia
Name of Photographer: Mary Harding Sadler
Date of Photographs: See below
Location of stored Digital Files: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia.

Photo #1 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0001)
General Electric Plant and entry drive, 05/2011

Photo #2 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0002)
Office wing of General Electric Plant, east elevation, 05/2011

Photo #3 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0003)
Office wing entry portico, 05/2011

Photo #4 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0004)
Original windows in office wing, 05/2011

Photo #5 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0005)
General Electric Plant, factory and office wings, 05/2011

Photo #6 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0006)
Factory wing of General Electric Plant, south elevation, 05/2011

Photo #7 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0007)
Typical interior stair, 05/2011

Photo #8 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0008)
Engineering wing, interior office partitions, 05/2011

Photo #9 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0009)
Interior of manufacturing wing, 05/2011

Photo #10 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0010)
Water Tower constructed in 1954, photo 05/2011

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Photo #11 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0011)
Water Tank constructed in 1954, photo 05/2011

Photo #12 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0012)
Airplane Hangar constructed in 1927, photo 05/2011

Photo #13 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0013)
Construction shed built, expanded and modified from the 1950s-present, photo 05/2011

Photo #14 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0014)
Aerial view of the General Electric Plant site (provided by Google, 2008)

Supplemental Materials — Historic Photographs

Photo #15 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0015)
General Electric Waynesboro parade float, photo 1960

Photo #16 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0016)
1960s Aerial view of General Electric Waynesboro Plant

Photo #17 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0017)
General Electric Plant water tower, residential area in background, photo 1960s

Photo #18 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0018)
General Electric Plant with former airplane hangar in background, photo 03/28/1960

Photo #19 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0019)
General Electric plant and base of water tower, photo 1960

Photo #20 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0020)
General Electric Plant during engineering wing construction, 06/06/1960

Photo #21 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0021)
General Electric Plant during engineering wing construction, 06/06/1960

Photo #22 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0022)
Airplane hangar, 1960 view

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General Electric Specialty Control Plant



City of Waynesboro, Virginia

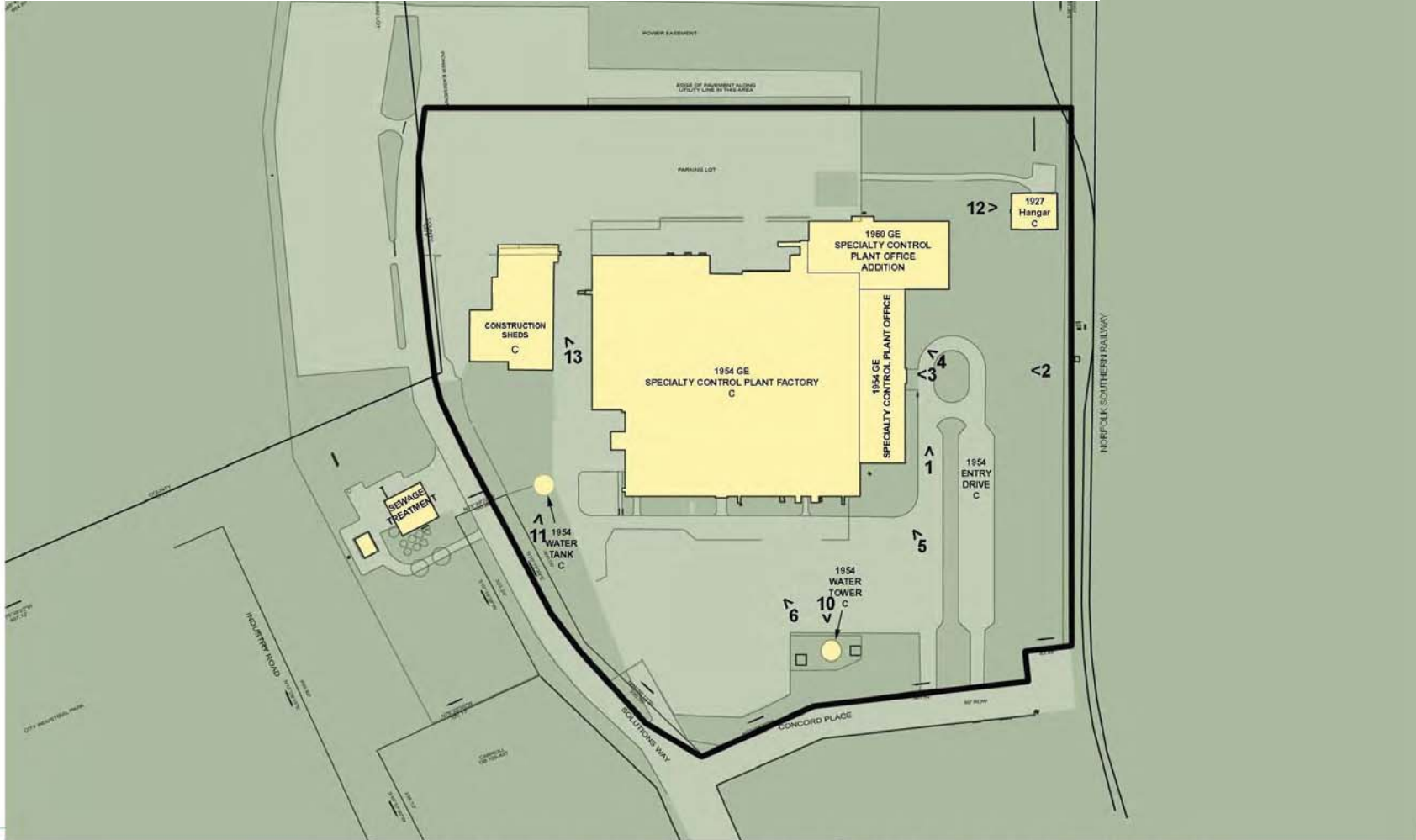
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Photo #23 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0023)
General Electric Waynesboro, Volunteer Fire Brigade, 02/1965

Photo #24 (VA_Waynesboro_GE_Specialty_Control_Plant_0024)
General Electric Waynesboro, First Aid Crew, 12/01/1971

SITE PLAN KEY

	HISTORIC PROPERTY BOUNDARY
	CONTRIBUTING BUILDING / STRUCTURE / SITE



GENERAL ELECTRIC SPECIALTY CONTROL PLANT -- VDHR File Number 136-5055
1 SOLUTIONS WAY, WAYNESBORO, VA
SITE PLAN

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Endnotes

¹ "People Important Asset At General Electric Co." *The News Virginian* [Waynesboro, VA] 19 Sept. 1967 (Print).

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¹⁴ "People Important Asset At General Electric Co." *The News Virginian* [Waynesboro, VA] 19 Sept. 1967 (Print).

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²³ Dixon, Corbin. "It Happened Here and Changed the Business World." *The News Virginian* [Waynesboro VA] 7 June 1998: C-3 (Print).

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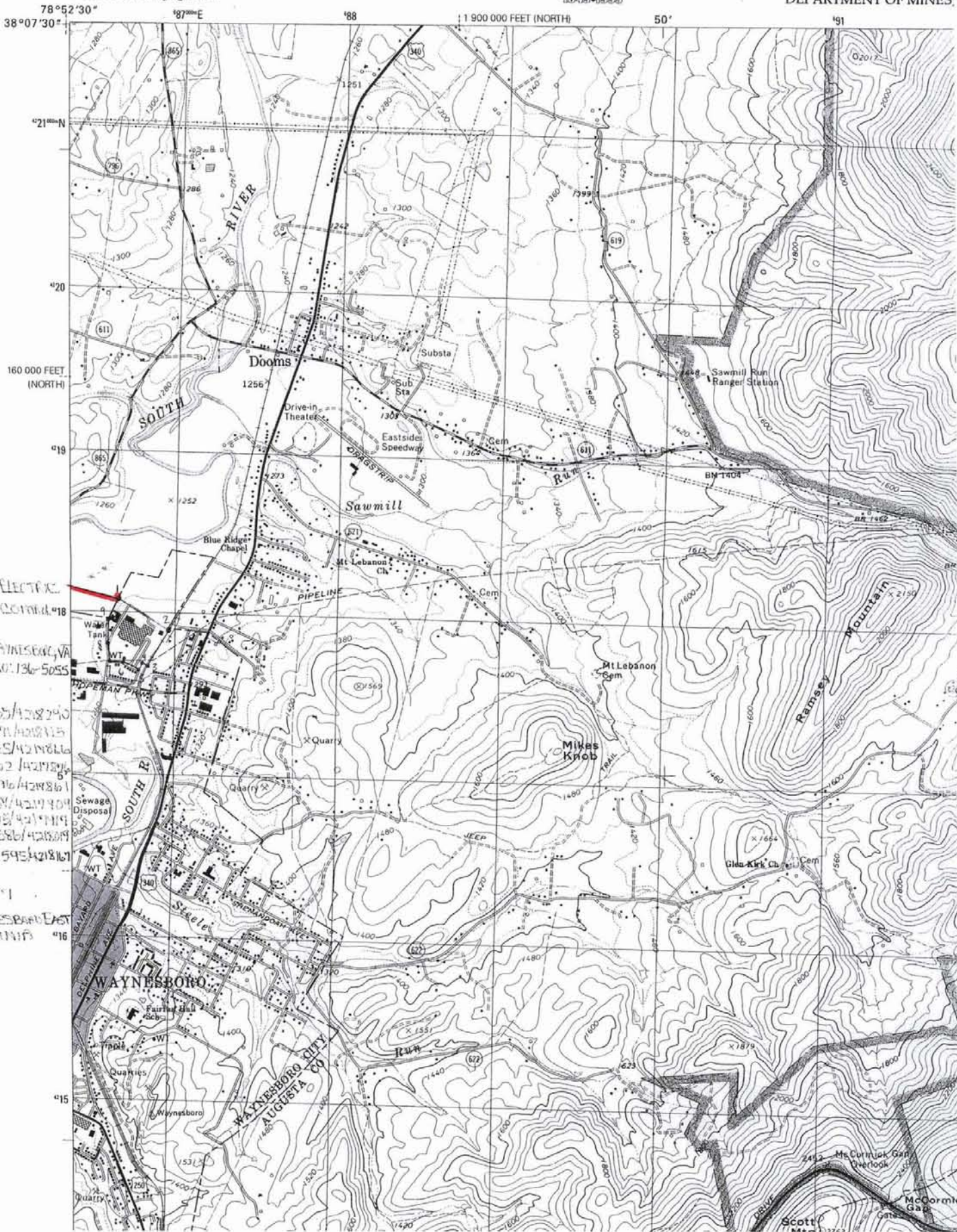
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF MINES



GENERAL ELECTRIC
SPECIALTY CORP. #18
PLANT
CITY OF WAYNESBORO, VA
VDHR FILE NO. 136-5055
UTMS:
 1. 17/68655/428290
 2. 17/68655/428115
 3. 17/68655/428616
 4. 17/686802/428701
 5. 17/686716/428801
 6. 17/686802/428901
 7. 17/686818/428909
 8. 17/686886/428809
 9. 17/686593/428167

ZONE 17
ROAD: WAYNESBORO EAST
VA 61115 #16
NAO: 112