United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 15000900 Date Listed: 12/15/2015

Property Name: Downtown Tryon Historic District

County: Polk State: NC

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Signature of the Keeper

12-15-2015
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 5: Number of Resources within the Property

The number of contributing buildings is hereby changed to 12.
The total number of contributing resources is hereby changed to 13.

The previously listed Bank of Tryon was mistakenly included in the resource count.

The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

NPS Form 10-900
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

OMB No. 1024-0018

RECEIVED 2280

900

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

OCT 30 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: **Downtown Tryon Historic District**

Other names/site number: **N/A**

Name of related multiple property listing: **N/A**

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

2. Location **Both sides of North and South Trade Streets and the railroad**

Street & number: **right-of-way between 98 N. Trade Street and 55 S. Trade Street**

City or town: **Tryon** State: **North Carolina** County: **Polk**

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

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**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X **A** ___ **B** ___ **C** ___ **D**

Devin Cherry, SHPO 10/20/2015

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **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: 12-15-2015

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	X
Public – Local	X
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	
District	X
Site	
Structure	
Object	

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
13	6	buildings
0	2	sites
1	0	structures
0	1	objects
14	9	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
COMMERCE/business
COMMERCE/professional
COMMERCE/financial institution
COMMERCE/specialty store
CULTURE/theater
TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
COMMERCE/business
COMMERCE/professional
COMMERCE/specialty store
CULTURE/theater
CULTURE/work of art
WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Romanesque Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:
Brick
Stone
Stucco
Glass block

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The small mountain town of Tryon, North Carolina, lies in the far southern section of Polk County, just north of the North Carolina/South Carolina state line. Tryon is located approximately four miles southwest of Columbus, the county seat, and Interstate 26. The town was laid out in a circle, roughly bisected by a prominent commercial street, Trade Street, which runs parallel to the railroad tracks from Howard Street at the north end of downtown to McCown Street at the south end. Given its proximity to the railroad tracks and first depot (which was located on the east side of the tracks roughly opposite the Tryon Theatre, 45 S. Trade Street), Trade Street (US Highway 176) became the center of business and industry, although the town grew slowly, but steadily, in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In 1889, Tryon consisted of twenty-four houses, three stores, and the depot.[1]

The early commercial architecture of Tryon, specifically nineteenth-century resources built after the arrival of the railroad, has been lost in the intervening decades to both growth and

[1] D. William Bennett, ed., *Polk County, North Carolina, History* (Tryon, NC: Polk County Historical Association, Inc., 1983), 76.

fire. As Trade Street developed into the primary business location, with its buildings standing along one side and overlooking the street and railroad tracks to the west and southwest, the ever-present threat of fire eventually led to the replacement of the early frame buildings with more permanent masonry structures through the first decades of the twentieth century.[2]

According to Sanborn maps of Tryon, the two main blocks of Trade Street (north and south of Oak Street) had reached their present level of development by 1929, and the block between Maple Street and Palmer Street was generally built up by the early 1940s. The majority of commercial buildings found on Trade Street are one- and two-story, rectangular-plan brick buildings with flat roofs behind stepped or shaped parapets, corbelled cornices, recessed panels, and large windows, often arranged in groups. The three-story Missildine's Drug Store was built in 1913 at the southeast corner of Trade and Oak streets to replace an earlier building that burned. It is one of the more elaborate structures within the commercial area and displays segmental-arched window openings, decorative window hoods, stone belt courses and accents, and a corbelled cornice. Only one building within the commercial district alludes to a particular architectural style—the 1908 Romanesque Revival-style Bank of Tryon Building (NR, 2008).

The district inventory is organized sequentially by street number, with North Trade Street appearing before South Trade Street. The district inventory consists of fourteen contributing resources and nine non-contributing resources. One resource, the Bank of Tryon Building, is individually listed in the National Register. The inventory entries provide a brief summary of the property's history, when known. Named properties are identified by their first, longest, or best-known occupant or function during the period of significance, 1908 to 1965, but the absence of city directories hindered the naming and dating of resources in the district. Construction dates have been determined as accurately as possible by correlating information from deed research, tax records, Sanborn maps, documentary photographs, physical assessment, and other published sources.

A contributing building, site, structure, or object adds to the historic associations, historic architectural qualities, or archaeological values for which the district is significant, were present during the period of significance, and possess historic integrity. Built in the early 1920s, the small, one-story, painted brick commercial building at 86 N. Trade Street retains many of its original design elements and materials. The storefront contains a recessed entrance, metal-frame display windows and transoms, and brick bulkheads, and the upper façade exhibits a recessed decorative panel with two, square vents and a corbelled cornice. In 1994, the single-leaf entrance door, sidelights, and transom were replaced. The new entrance, however, replicates the form and scale of the original entrance and, as a result, does not detract from the overall integrity of the building.

A non-contributing building, site, structure, or object does not add to the historic associations or historic architectural qualities, or archaeological values for which the district is significant; was not present during the period of significance; or no longer possesses historic integrity due to alterations, disturbances, or other changes. Alterations to a building's overall form, massing, and scale; changing or obscuring the majority of exterior materials; or the removal of character-

[2] Diane E. Lea and Claudia Roberts, *An Architectural and Historical Survey of Tryon, North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1979), 9 and 13-14; and Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 188.

defining stylistic elements make a resource non-contributing. Despite its construction in the 1910s, the North Trade Building at 22-26 N. Trade Street is a non-contributing resource due to later alterations to the façade. The building was remodeled around 1973, when the storefronts were removed and the lower façade replaced with modern brick veneer, an open, recessed entrance bay, replacement windows, and decorative gray stucco elements. The changes to the façade have obscured or replaced much of the exterior materials and substantially altered the design of the storefront.

Historic District Integrity Assessment

Although the center of the district includes several non-contributing resources, all of the buildings were constructed during the period of significance, they stand in their original locations, and they do not significantly diminish the district's overall integrity. Storefronts have been extensively altered on three buildings, 10, 22-26 and 28-38 North Trade Street however, their second stories have good integrity. There is very good potential for returning the storefronts to a compatible historic appearance and that would allow their reassessment as contributing. Although the filling station at 62 North Trade has been dramatically remodeled, historically the station was a free-standing building on an open corner lot, and the parcel still retains that spatial arrangement.

Classification key:	NR	Individually listed in National Register of Historic Places
	C-B	Contributing building
	C-S	Contributing structure
	C-O	Contributing object
	NC-B	Non-contributing building
	NC-S	Non-contributing structure
	NC-O	Non-contributing object
	NC-Site	Non-contributing site

INVENTORY LIST

Asheville-Spartanburg Railway Right-of-Way, ca. 1873 **C-S**

The single mainline track runs roughly northwest-southeast through downtown Tryon. A short siding that was originally part of a second, parallel track is located on the north side of the main track to the northwest of the depot. The right-of-way through downtown Tryon is relatively flat and grassy. The southern portion of the right-of-way within the district is typically at grade with South Trade Street from its intersection with Pacolet Street south to where the tracks cross South Trade Street near the intersection with McCown Street. North of Pacolet Street and alongside the depot, the right-of-way occupies a tall berm that elevates the tracks above North Trade Street.

The railroad tracks were originally laid out in 1873 and completed to Tryon in 1877 for the Asheville-Spartanburg Railway. By the late 1880s, six trains a day passed through Tryon,

frequently stopping to cool brakes and wheel bearings or preparing for the long ascent at the base of the difficult Saluda Grade. Regular passenger service over the line between Tryon and Saluda was discontinued in December 1968, and the last train to use the line ran in 1989. The tracks were isolated in 2003.[3]

NORTH TRADE STREET

Ballenger Building, 10 N. Trade Street, ca. 1910, ca. 1955, ca. 2000 **NC-B**

Built around 1910 for the Ballenger Company, an established general store in town, the two-story brick building was set back from the sidewalk. By the mid-1950s, the lower façade was altered with the addition of two new metal-frame storefronts projecting from the building, bringing the front even with the façade of the adjacent Bank of Tryon Building (16 N. Trade Street). The storefronts have Roman brick bulkheads, recessed entrances, and cloth awnings. The south storefront was remodeled again to add a third, paneled frame entrance at the far south end of the façade. The façade bricks are painted. Around 2000, a metal-roof shed canopy was installed above the projecting storefronts to create a covered balcony with a wood railing. The canopy shelters the two groups of four windows under flat architraves. The upper façade features a brick soldier course with alternating recessed bricks, a dentil course, a recessed panel, and a corbelled cornice with a metal coping. The exposed southeast side and rear elevations feature segmental-arched window and door openings with corbelled brick hoods, but the windows throughout have been replaced.

Bank of Tryon Building, 16 N. Trade Street, 1907-1908 **NR, C-B**

Built in 1907-1908 for the Bank of Tryon, the two-story Romanesque Revival-style brick commercial building features distinctive stone quoins, belt courses, and window arches and a projecting parapet with decorative brickwork on the façade. The flat parapet has a metal coping. The first floor features two entryways, one at the northwest corner of the building, with a double-leaf, three-panel wooden door with transom above, and one at the center of the façade with a twelve-light door and transom above. A large thirty-light, arched picture window is also located on the first floor. The second story features two arched windows with decorative stone quoins and stone sills, both flanked by two one-over-one, double-hung windows.

Organized in 1905, the Bank of Tryon was the first bank organized in Polk County, and following a bank merger in 1927, James B. Hester, the bank's cashier, purchased the building and leased its offices to various businesses. Seth Vining Sr., founder and editor of the *Tryon Daily Bulletin*, moved the newspaper's offices into the building around 1935, where it has operated since. Vining acquired the building for the *Bulletin* offices in the 1950s, and today the newspaper occupies the entire building.[4]

[3] *Tryon Daily Bulletin*, July 22, 1978.
[4] Clay Griffith, "Bank of Tryon Building," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, NC, 2008.

North Trade Building, 22-26 N. Trade Street, ca. 1915, ca. 1973 NC-B

Built in the 1910s, the two-story brick building was remodeled around 1973 according to designs prepared by local architect Holland Brady. The lower façade was covered with a brick veneer and a recessed entrance; the second-story is accessed by an open exterior stair that fills the gap between this building and the adjacent Wilkins Building (28-38 N. Trade Street). A single cast-iron post (backed by a brick pier) remains in place supporting the span of the recessed entrance. The windows and doors are replacements with stylized lintels of smooth grey stucco. Similarly, a band of grey stucco divides the remodeled lower façade and the intact upper façade, which features flat-arch window openings, decorative brick bands, and a corbelled cornice. The second-story windows have been replaced with twenty-five-light fixed-sash windows topped by stylized lintels of stucco.

Although it does not appear to have been built by W. Y. Wilkins, the building was home to his business, and historic photographs and postcards show a painted sign on the upper façade that read "Wilkins & Co." On June 1, 1922, Wilkins sold the business and all its stock to Oliver and Ellison Andrews, who operated as Andrews Brothers. The purchase of the building included four pairs of Toledo scales and a Ford truck. The building later housed Slack's Pharmacy, which was owned and operated by Arlie Slack. Fred and Essie Owen acquired the pharmacy in 1939 and operated it as Owen's Pharmacy. After Owen's Pharmacy moved next door in the late 1960s, it became home to the Brady Insurance Agency.[5]

W. Y. Wilkins Building, 28-38 N. Trade Street, ca. 1922, 1924, ca. 1970s NC-B

The Wilkins Building has been the long-time home to Owen's Pharmacy among other businesses. The two-story brick building appears to have been built in two sections, although at approximately the same time. The two sections are similar in height and mass, but the façade of the section to the southeast has pilasters formed by triple, stacked, stretcher courses; a soldier-course cornice; and soldier-course lintels around the single one-over-one double-hung sash windows. The northwest section has paired one-over-one double-hung sash windows on the second-story façade and side elevation. In the 1970s, the lower façade of the both sections was remodeled into a continuous storefront with brick infill, two recessed metal-frame entrances, and arched plate-glass windows resting on corbelled brick sills. A hip-roof awning covered with metal roofing shelters the lower façade. The northwest elevation of the building is relatively plain with second-story windows and two basement storefronts (10 and 16 Maple Street). The storefront for #10 consists of a single-leaf glazed entry door to the east of a large display window, which has later one-over-one window inserted to hold a portable air conditioner unit. A steel I-beam lintel spans the full width of the storefront. The storefront for #16 contains a double-leaf entry door flanked by display windows over brick bulkheads. The east window is covered with plywood sheathing.

After selling the Wilkins & Company business in 1922, it appears that William Y. Wilkins built the south portion of the building first and then added the north section a couple of years later. Drs. Allen J. Jervey and Marion Palmer opened a twelve-bed hospital in 1924 on the

[5] Polk County Deed 70/454 and Deed of Trust 20/62. Register of Deeds Office, Bryant H. Womack Justice & Administration Building, Columbus, NC.

second floor of the building, and Holland Brady Jr. and Dorothy Millikin, both born in 1925, were the first babies delivered in the small facility. The second story served as the local hospital until 1929, when St. Luke's Hospital opened in Tryon. The basement of the W. Y. Wilkins Building was home to the *Tryon Daily Bulletin* until 1935, when the paper moved to its current location at 16 N. Trade Street. At the time, the storefront of the Wilkins Building was occupied by an A & P Grocery, and later by Peeler's Jewelry Store and Buchanan's Five & Ten Store. It became home to Owen's Pharmacy in the late 1960s, who moved their store from the adjacent building at 22-26 N. Trade Street. Proprietors Fred and Essie Owen operated the store, which offered a pharmacy and soda fountain, and was a popular family gathering place on Saturday evenings. Prior to construction of Interstate 26, Owen's Pharmacy was a popular stop-over for travelers passing through Tryon on Highway 176. The store offered curb service for passing automobile traffic and often sold more than 2,000 Cokes on busy Sunday afternoons.[6]

Filling Station, 62 N. Trade Street, ca. 1940, ca. 1955, 2013 **NC-B**

Built around 1940, substantially enlarged in the 1950s, and thoroughly remodeled in 2013, this one-story masonry building was originally erected as a freestanding Sinclair filling station. Set back from the street and sidewalk, the brick building was completely remodeled with a tall hip roof, two front-gable bays on the façade, an attached shed-roof canopy on the south end bay, and multi-light metal-frame window and door units in the three garage bays. The projecting front-gable bays are supported by wide brick posts with cast-concrete caps. The south bay contains a single-leaf glazed-and-paneled wood door and two large windows topped by multi-light transoms. The metal-roof canopy is supported by triangular brackets. The remodeling uncovered the original tin ceilings, brick walls, and wood floors on the interior.

A two-story rear addition doubled the size of the original building when it was constructed around 1955. Covered with stucco, the addition was remodeled in 2013 with plate-glass windows and a metal-frame door and window entrance on the side elevation.

A concrete and brick patio extends from the façade of the building to the sidewalk as part of streetscape improvements made in 2013 by the Town of Tryon. A wooden arbor extends southeast from the side of the building with a fountain and curving stone wall projecting forward from the arbor to form the south end of the public space known as St. Luke's Plaza.[7]

Commercial Building, 70-74 N. Trade Street, ca. 1925, ca. 1985 **NC-B**

Built in the 1920s, the small, one-story, concrete-block commercial building contains three storefronts. The façade has been altered with the application of a stucco and half-timbered finish. Three original, single-leaf, glazed wood doors and two metal-frame display windows are sheltered by a cloth awning. The applied half-timbering partially obscures the original door and window frames. The two-story rear elevation has a stucco panel veneer, replacement twelve-light windows, and a single-leaf wood paneled door flanked by sidelights into the basement. An attached one-story shed-roof porch extends the full width of the rear elevation at the basement level and is accessed by wood steps. The metal-clad roof is supported by square wood posts.

[6] Bennett, 271-272. Deeds 42/232 and 42/593.

[7] Jason Spencer, "Downtown Tryon's Face-Lift," GoUpstate.com website (http:// http://www.goupstate.com/article/20141102/ARTICLES/141039881; retrieved August 24, 2015).

Commercial Building, 78-82 N. Trade Street, 1950s **C-B**

Built in the 1950s, the one-story, brick commercial building is divided into two storefronts and rests on a full basement. The brick façade features recessed entrances under a soldier-course lintel, original storefront windows, decorative panels in the upper façade, and a flat parapet with a terra cotta coping. Each storefront is sheltered by a cloth awning and has a replacement entry door—one (#78) is a single-leaf glazed door surrounded by aluminum siding infill and the other (#82) is a single-leaf wood door with a fanlight and sidelights. The south half of the façade displays a buff-colored brick veneer, while the north half is painted. The exposed original two-story rear elevation of #82 contains metal-frame industrial sash windows, a metal exterior door, and an overhead garage door at the northeast corner. A large, two-story, brick addition was built at the rear of #78 in the 1980s and contains one-over-one windows and an enclosed loading bay with double-leaf replacement doors.

Commercial Building, 86 N. Trade Street, early 1920s **C-B**

The small, one-story, painted brick commercial building was built in the early 1920s. The storefront contains a recessed entrance, original metal-frame display windows and transoms. The replacement entry, added in 1994, consists of a single-leaf wood door flanked by sidelights and a boarded transom. A cloth awning shelters the storefront. The upper façade features a decorative panel with two square louvered vents and a corbelled cornice. At the rear, two flat-arch window openings have been altered—one has been converted to a doorway and the other has been bricked. The interior retains its original pressed tin ceiling.

The building has housed many businesses, including the John Cowan's grocery, which opened here in 1933. In 1934, Pop Burnette opened Pop's Beer Garden in the building. Burnette's bar is reportedly the first establishment to legally sell beer following the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution. A bar remained in this location for many years, despite numerous name changes, including Whitey's, Sam's Place, and Doc's. Following the death of Horace "Doc" Sain, the business was sold and moved next door (#82), keeping the name Doc's at first and later was renamed Preston's.

Gentry Building, 90-98 N. Trade Street, ca. 1920 **C-B**

Built sometime between 1919 and 1925, the one-story brick commercial building is divided into three storefronts separated by brick firewalls. The continuous brick façade is defined by a single decorative panel extending above the three individual storefronts. Two square vent openings, with decorative metal grilles, are set within the panel above each of the storefronts. The flat parapet is topped by a concrete coping. The original storefronts consist of a single-leaf glazed door and large display window on a brick bulkhead surmounted by leaded-glass transoms. Each of the storefronts is composed with the entrance to the north of the display window. Two storefronts (#90 and #94) are sheltered by cloth awnings and the north storefront (#98) has an attached metal awning. The south bay of the building is painted. The interiors display decorative

Rotary Plaza, SW side N. Trade Street, 1980, 2002, 2005 NC-Site

Located on the southwest side of North Trade Street north of its intersection with Pacolet Street and opposite the building at 70-74 N. Trade Street, Rotary Plaza culminated with the construction of a small, paved plaza at the base of the railroad right-of-way. A set of wide stone steps with a central metal handrail was built in 1980 by the Polk County Community Foundation to allow access between N. Trade Street and the town-owned Southern Railway Depot. In 2002, the Rotary Club of Tryon donated a clock to the town, which was located at the base of the steps. The clock tower consists of a battered stone pillar supporting a square enclosure with clock faces on the north and south sides. The metal-frame structure has metal screen panels, decorative curved brackets, and a metal-clad pyramidal roof surmounted by a weathervane in the form of Morris, the Tryon Horse. In 2005, the Rotary Clubs of Tryon and Tryon-Thermal Belt donated the small plaza that encompasses the clock and steps. Designed by Brady/Trakas Architects and built by contractor Jim Peterman, the plaza features paving stones, a retaining wall with built-in bench against the berm of the railroad right-of-way, and metal railing surrounding the raised base.

SOUTH TRADE STREET

Missildine's Drug Store, 13 S. Trade Street, 1913, 1960s, ca. 1974, 2014-2015 C-B

Built in 1913 to replace an earlier building that burned, the prominent two-story, painted brick, corner building housed Missildine's Drug Store until the 1960s when the business merged with the Tryon Pharmacy, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Julian, and moved to a different location. The remodeled building was made taller and the several elements of the original design, including the metal cornice and window placement on the façade, were changed significantly. The exposed northwest elevation was substantially remodeled with new fenestration patterns on both the first and second stories and the addition of an exterior door on the second story. A side display window with an arched transom and hood was added on the northwest elevation.

Currently, the upper façade is enlivened by a rough ashlar parapet of rectangular stone blocks, a corbelled brick cornice, two pairs of louvered segmental-arched window openings with brick hoods, and an ashlar belt course. Two wide ashlar blocks are also set within recessed panels above slender, paired second-story segmental-arched window openings with brick hoods. The lower façade was severely remodeled when it was connected to the two adjacent buildings, which together operated as Tryon Federal Bank in the late twentieth century. A continuous hip-roof, asphalt-shingle awning sheltered the lower facades comprising largely brick-infilled storefronts. The rear and exposed northwest side elevations display similar pairs of segmental-arched window openings with brick hoods. A segmental-arched doorway on the second story of the northwest elevation contains a replacement double-leaf door and four-light transom. The basement wall and projecting water table have been stuccoed.

For many years Missildine's Drug Store was a popular community gathering place, with F. Scott Fitzgerald even penning a verse about it. A native of Lebanon, Missouri, E. E. Missildine moved to Tryon in 1895, and worked briefly as a teacher and tutor, before going on to become a pharmacist. Missildine served several terms as mayor of Tryon. Maj. William Strong, who

worked on several prominent Tryon buildings, oversaw the rebuilding of the drug store following the 1913 fire. In addition to the drug store on the first story, the second story contained offices and a large hall, which accommodated meetings of the Masonic Lodge, Chamber of Commerce, USO, and other civic groups. Dr. Earle Grady, an early Tryon physician, had a second-story office in the building. The building was the first with steam heating in Tryon. Often called the "Big City Store," Missildine's offered coal, ice, paints, books, laundry service, and flowers for sale. The business was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Julian, also a pharmacist, in 1962. Operations remained in the building until 1967 when Julian merged the business with the Tryon Pharmacy and moved to a location further south on Trade Street. In 1967 the building was purchased by Mrs. F. P. Bacon to house the Blue Ridge Weavers, who remained in the building before relocating to Pacolet Street in the mid-1970s. At that time, the building became part of Tryon Federal Bank and was remodeled to function with the adjacent buildings.[8]

Rehabilitation work begun in 2014 has thus far involved removal of the asphalt-shingle awning, removal of replacement single-pane plate-glass windows, removal of the storefront infill, and interior demolition that has revealed original wood floors and a decorative pressed-tin ceiling on the first story. The majority of windows have been replaced with two-over-two double-hung sash, and work to reconstruct the storefront in a manner typical of the period of significance is ongoing.

Tryon Federal Savings & Loan, 15 S. Trade Street, ca. 1909, 1960s, 2014-2015 C-B

Two-story painted brick building with a decorated parapet featuring rows of corbelling, stepped brick bands, and a corbelled cornice across the width of the façade. The four second-story windows with molded sills and flat-arch brick lintels had been replaced with fixed plate-glass windows, but new three-over-one double-hung sash windows were installed in 2014. The lower façade, like the adjacent buildings, was remodeled in the 1960s as Tryon Federal Bank expanded. The original façade, which featured plate-glass windows, a recessed entryway, and a four-panel transom, was later replaced with a recessed storefront comprising floor-to-ceiling plate-glass doors and windows with metal surrounds, and an asphalt-shingle awning continuing across the two flanking buildings. Tryon Federal Bank purchased the building in 1935 and operated from this location until 2006, when it moved into a new facility on North Trade Street outside the district.

Rehabilitation work begun in 2014 has involved removal of the asphalt-shingle awning, replacement of the second-story windows, and interior demolition. Work to reconstruct the storefront in a manner typical of the period of significance is ongoing.

Jackson Building, 17 S. Trade Street, ca. 1909, 1960s, 2014-2015 C-B

Built around 1909, the two-story painted brick commercial building has a decorated parapet featuring a molded metal cornice with end brackets and rosettes, recessed squares across the width of the façade, four narrow panels with mousetooth brick, and recessed panels above the windows. The four second-story windows had been replaced with fixed plate-glass windows, but new two-over-two double-hung sash windows were installed in 2014. The lower façade, like

[8] Jeffrey A. Byrd, ed., *A Sense of Heritage: A Pictorial History of the Thermal Belt Area* (Tryon, NC: Tryon Chamber of Commerce, 1991), 131.

those of the adjacent buildings, was remodeled in the 1960s as Tryon Federal Bank expanded. The original storefront, which featured plate-glass windows, a recessed entry, and transom windows with a canvas awning, was replaced with a brick-infilled storefront with two, narrow, floor-to-ceiling plate-glass windows, and a single glass entry door at the south end of the building. Historic photographs and postcards show a painted sign on the upper façade that read "Jno. L. Jackson." An asphalt-shingle awning added in the 1960s continued from the Jackson Building across the two buildings to the north.

Rehabilitation work begun in 2014 has involved removal of the asphalt-shingle awning, replacement of the second-story windows, interior demolition, and removal of the replacement storefront. Work to reconstruct the storefront in a manner typical of the period of significance is ongoing.

South Trade Building, 25-27 S. Trade Street, ca. 1915, 1980s **C-B**

Built around 1915 after a fire destroyed a number of frame buildings on South Trade Street, the two-story brick commercial building has a symmetrical nine-bay façade. The building contains two first-story commercial spaces, with a central stairway to the second-story offices. The north storefront appears to be original with recessed entrances, double-leaf single-pane wood doors, wood-frame display windows, and paneled bulkheads; the south storefront was rebuilt in the 1980s. Three cloth awnings shelter the two storefronts and the center stairway opening. The upper façade exhibits segmental-arched window openings, recessed panels, decorative brick bands, arched openings with louvered vents in the parapet, and a corbelled cornice. The second-story windows were replaced in the 1980s with single-pane fixed glass. The replacement windows diminish the integrity of the building, but the façade still retains the rhythm and scale of the second-story openings. One interior space (#25) retains its decorative pressed-tin ceiling, while the other space (#27) has been remodeled with dropped acoustical tiles and a carpeted floor.

The Tryon Post Office was located in the building for several years before a new post office building was constructed on Pacolet Street in 1948. The Blue Ridge Weavers occupied the building for a number of years in the mid-twentieth century.

Commercial Building, 31 S. Trade Street, ca. 1925, 1950s **C-B**

The small, one-story, painted brick building was constructed around 1920 after a fire destroyed a number of frame buildings on South Trade Street. The façade features metal-frame storefront windows and a single-leaf entry with a transom, which were probably replaced in the 1950s or 1960s. The storefront was also remodeled, switching from the recessed central entrance that appears in early photographs to a single-leaf door positioned on the north side of the display window. A retractable cloth awning shelters the storefront. The upper façade has a single recessed panel, corbelled cornice, and a metal coping, and the interior retains its decorative pressed-tin ceiling. The building has housed a number of businesses, including Tryon Real Estate, Appalachian Weavers, and a bookstore, which has occupied the space for many years.

Williams Building, 35 S. Trade Street, ca. 1925, ca. 1968 **C-B**

A small, one-story, painted brick building constructed around 1920 after a fire destroyed a number of frame buildings on South Trade Street. The storefront features a recessed entrance with a single-leaf entry door, sidelights, and a replacement metal-frame display window to the south. The low wall beneath the storefront window is covered with stucco. A cloth awning shelters the storefront, and the transom has been covered. The upper façade displays two openings with rowlock-course lintels and sills that contain louvered vents. The corbelled brick cornice has a metal coping. The interior has been remodeled with a dropped acoustical tile ceiling.

A. H. Williams erected this building in the mid-1920s to house his meat market. Williams shared the space with his brother Leroy, who operated a grocery in the front part of the building. The grocery business was later sold and operated under different owners, including Farthing and Swann in the 1940s and 1950s, while the Williams Meat Market remained active. The meat market and processing area at the rear of the building was separated from the grocery by screens. The business closed in the 1960s and the building was first rented to the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in 1968 for use as a reading room. The church later purchased the building in 1982 as a permanent home for the Christian Science Reading Room.[9]

Tryon Bank and Trust Company Building, 39 S. Trade Street, ca. 1927, ca. 1940, ca. 1980s **NC-B**

The two-story brick Tryon Bank and Trust Company Building has a heavily altered façade. Documentary photographs of the bank dating to the 1940s depict an Art Moderne-style façade with smooth stucco framing a large structural glass block wall, portions of which are still visible as display windows. The application of vertical brick veneer pilasters, cast concrete panels, a projecting metal box at the parapet, and a boxed metal entry canopy have obscured the simple modernism of the earlier design. The single-leaf entry door is a replacement. The rear elevation contains metal-frame casement windows and two smaller glass-block panels, which may serve to illuminate an interior stairwell.

Tryon Theatre, 45 S. Trade Street, ca. 1938, ca. 2000 **C-B**

At this location, an earlier silent movie theater was heavily damaged by fire in the 1930s. It was rebuilt as Tryon Theatre, with the current design, around 1938. The Moderne-influence façade features a stucco finish, decorative belt courses, and double-leaf entrance doors with half-circle windows. The recessed entrance with original ticket window on the south side is flanked by two single-leaf entrances, one of which leads to the balcony. The upper façade displays a corbelled belt course that was the cornice of the original, burned building, with a tall parapet added above to house the projection room of the theater. Three square, single-light windows resting on the belt course illuminate the projection room. Around 2000, a replacement marquee, which replicates the general outline of the original, was added to the façade, and the interior, which seats 285 people, was remodeled.

[9] Byrd, 46; and Bennett, 106.

Originally home to the Polk County Telephone and Telegraph Office, the first Tryon Theatre opened at 45 S. Trade Street in the mid-1920s. After the original building was severely damaged by fire in the 1930s, the theater was redesigned, rebuilt, and opened to the public in 1938. The new theater building featured balcony seating and an outside concession stand for black citizens. Upon its reopening, the theater received dozens of telegraphs from Hollywood, including a personal note from actor David Niven. After owner Marvin Ball was fatally shot in the 1950s, the theater was operated by the Scoggins and Fender families through the 1970s. The theater was later sold to Bill and Anne Foster Crowell in 1985, and became the first in North Carolina to receive a malt beverage license. Remarkably, the theater's original carbon arc projectors were still in use. Weighing more than four hundred pounds each, the projectors were located in a room directly above the building's marquee. The theater was sold to its current owner in 1991, and continues to be a gathering place for the community, with movies showing Wednesday through Sunday.[10]

Tryon Supply Company, 49 S. Trade Street, ca. 1910, ca. 2000 **C-B**

Built around 1910, the one-story brick commercial building is one of the oldest structures on this block of South Trade Street. A photograph taken after the 1913 fire that destroyed most of the frame buildings on the block shows the distinct peaked parapet façade of the Tryon Supply Company remaining intact. A corbelled brick and rough ashlar cornice of rectangular stone blocks cap the façade. At the center, corbelled brick pilasters support the peaked parapet, which is also topped by rectangular stone blocks of rough ashlar. The original storefront consisting of a large display windows and recessed entrance under a continuous multi-light transom was removed around 2000 and replaced with a modern recessed storefront of metal and glass. The steel I-beam lintel, which appears in documentary photographs above the original storefront, remains intact. A large, steel fire escape stair has been attached to the rear of the building.

Nina Simone Plaza, 54 S. Trade Street, 2010 **NC-Site**

The small, paved plaza is located on the southwest side of South Trade Street, adjacent to the railroad right-of-way. The paved area is bordered by a low, stone wall and surrounded by planting beds. A six-foot-tall stone obelisk stands just outside the paved area of the plaza to the southwest, and a small circular fountain is located to the southeast. An old mill stone forms the centerpiece of the fountain.

The focal point of the plaza is an eight-foot-tall, bronze sculpture of the famed jazz musician and singer Nina Simone (1933-2003), which was created in 2010 by internationally acclaimed sculptor Zenos Frudakis. The sculpture commemorates the musical legacy and civil rights activism of Tryon-born Eunice Waymon, who adopted the stage name Nina Simone in 1954. A portion of Simone's cremated remains, donated by her daughter, are encased within the sculpture in a secondary, heart-shaped bronze sculpture.

Commercial Building, 55 S. Trade Street, ca. 1910, ca. 1935 **C-B**

Built around 1910, the small, one-story brick commercial building is one of the oldest structures on this block of South Trade Street. The façade contains two storefronts, each with a

[10] Byrd, 100.

single-leaf door flanked by a display window and topped by transoms. The window and door openings have segmental-arch openings and the transoms have been boarded. The upper façade contains significant brick corbelling, but the façade is now covered with rough stucco that obscures the brickwork details. Based on historic photographs, the stucco appears to have been applied by the mid-1930s. A narrow alley accessed by concrete steps runs along the north side of the building, and small segmental-arched window openings are located on the exposed side elevations. A segmental-arch window and door opening on the north elevation at the basement level are accessed from the alley. Metal-frame casement windows at both levels are located on the rear elevation. The interior retains its original decorative pressed-tin ceiling.

Morris, the Tryon Horse, West side of Trade Street, 2012 **NC-O**

The sixth-generation Tryon Horse, standing twenty-two hands high, is located at the center of town at the southwest corner of the intersection of S. Trade and Pacolet streets, and in keeping with its original purpose, serves as a community message board. Meredith Lankford and Odell Peeler of the Tryon Toymakers and Woodcarvers built the original wooden horse in 1928, based on one of the group's most popular toys. Morris, as the horse is often called, was built for the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club to advertise the club's events. The original was consumed by fire in the 1930s, and the second damaged by vandalism in 1946. The third horse succumbed to weather-related deterioration in the 1960s. The fourth iteration was restored and rebuilt in 1983, when a local boat builder constructed a fiberglass body for the horse. The Tryon Horse was completely restored again in 2012.[11]

[11] Elizabeth Doubleday Frost, *Tryon Memories* (Tryon, NC: The Polk County Historical Association and Tryon Publishing Company, Inc., 1995), 62-63.

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.)

- [x] 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 or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] 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.)

- [ ] 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.)
Commerce

Period of Significance
1908 – 1965

Significant Dates
1913 (fire)

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Brady, Holland – architect
Strong, Maj. William – builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Summary

The Downtown Tryon Historic District is the historic commercial center along Trade Street, parallel to the Asheville-Spartanburg Railway right-of-way in Tryon, North Carolina. The arrival of the Asheville-Spartanburg Railroad in 1877 spurred the development of Tryon as a

resort area and a market center for area farmers. Running parallel to the east and northeast of the railroad tracks, Trade Street became the town's primary commercial corridor with businesses supporting the residents of Tryon, farmers, and tourists arriving by train. After a fire largely destroyed the town's two main commercial blocks in 1904, the central blocks of Trade Street were slowly rebuilt and began taking their present-day shape during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The Downtown Tryon Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of commerce. The buildings facing the railroad tracks on Trade Street, along with the businesses and functions associated with them, served as Tryon's bustling downtown. Opened in 1896 and rebuilt in 1913, Missildine's Pharmacy at 13 S. Trade Street served as the central gathering place for residents, travelers, and commercial activities. Its significance within the community was supplemented by banks, professional offices, pharmacies, general and specialty stores, and a movie theatre. The period of significance for the district begins in 1908, with the construction of the Bank of Tryon Building, and ends in 1965, the fifty-year cut-off date for the National Register. The post-1965 period is not of exceptional significance, although commercial development continued through the 1980s, when interstate construction started to undermine local businesses by allowing easier access to larger shopping centers in Hendersonville, North Carolina, and Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Historical Background and Commercial Context

Located along the southeastern edge of the Blue Ridge, Tryon, North Carolina, is a small mountain town nestled in the southernmost section of Polk County, near the border with South Carolina. Due to its proximity to both the Blue Ridge and the Piedmont, Tryon and the surrounding area benefit from a climactic phenomenon, known as the Thermal Belt, which allows for moderate temperatures throughout the year and little to no frost. In addition to being a significant draw for tourists, the mild climate has also allowed for vineyards and fruit growing to thrive in the area, in addition to traditional agricultural production of livestock and staple crops.[12]

The much anticipated arrival of the Asheville-Spartanburg Railroad in Tryon in 1877 ushered in a new era of economic and social development. Completion of the new railroad line, which was built with the intention of connecting the coastal regions of South Carolina with western North Carolina, Tennessee, and the Ohio Valley, began a pattern of steady growth and introduced visitors to the region. Tryon's location at the base of the Saluda Grade, the steepest mainline railroad grade in the country, provided an ideal stopping place for northbound trains to prepare for their ascent into the higher mountains, while southbound trains stopped over to cool their wheels.[13]

In order to accommodate the influx of travelers, several boarding houses were erected in close proximity to the railroad depot, as well as Tryon's first hotel, the Tryon City Hotel. Built in 1882 by T. T. Ballenger and his father-in-law, William Garrison, the Tryon City Hotel was the town's most elaborate structure at the time, and featured Italianate- and Queen Anne-style ornamentation. Later known as Oak Hall, the Tryon City Hotel hosted a variety of famous

[12] Bennett, 75; and Bill Sharpe, *A New Geography of North Carolina*, Volume III (Raleigh, NC: Sharpe Publishing Company, 1961), 1536-1538.
[13] "Bank of Tryon Building," National Register Nomination.

visitors, such as noted New York actor William Gillette, and was a local landmark until its demolition in 1979.[14] Along with erecting Tryon's first hotel, Ballenger was one of Tryon's most prominent citizens. He acted as the town's first mayor, was elected to three terms, and later served in the state Senate.[15]

Advertised for its temperate climate and mountain scenery, Tryon's tourism industry rapidly increased during the latter part of the nineteenth century and many of those who visited stayed on to build vacation homes or become permanent residents. Many visitors with respiratory ailments came to the area, seeking the reputed healing mountain air.

Following Tryon's incorporation in 1885, the town was formally laid out in a one-half-mile circle around the railroad depot, which was located at the time on the east side of the tracks near their crossing with South Trade Street.[16] Trade Street quickly emerged as Tryon's primary commercial corridor running parallel to the railroad tracks along their east and northeast side. At the time of the town's incorporation, several businesses, including T. T. Ballenger's dry goods store and blacksmith shop, were located along Trade Street. By 1889, the town also boasted twenty-four residences, as well as multiple fruit farms and vineyards in the surrounding area. According to a sketch written by Tryon resident Susan Erskine Rogers in 1897, Trade Street was also home to Missildine's Drug Store, the post office, Livingston's Livery Stables, and a few residences.[17]

At the turn of the twentieth century, as Tryon's population surpassed three hundred people, commercial activity along Trade Street increased in order to meet the needs of the surrounding community. Commercial buildings were built along one side of the street, overlooking the railroad tracks to the west. According to the *North Carolina Year Book and Business Directory* for 1904, Tryon business services included two doctors, a pharmacist, an architect, one hotel and seven boarding houses, two livery stables, and a newspaper, the *Tryon Bee*.[18] The population continued to grow and the town expanded its municipal services, including the construction of a new school on North Trade Street in 1906. The three-story brick structure was later used as a hotel and eventually came to house the town's municipal offices; today it is the Tryon Town Hall.

Despite devastating fires in 1904 and 1913 that destroyed many of Trade Street's earliest frame buildings, the two main commercial blocks began to take on their present-day form in the first two decades of the twentieth century, when the large majority of the street's existing one- and two-story buildings were constructed. Typical of commercial architecture of the era, the buildings were mostly built of masonry with corbeled brick work or stone and cast metal storefronts.[19] In January 1904, fire broke out in the clothing section of Ballenger's store, located at the northeast corner of Trade and Oak streets, destroying several nearby buildings. The Ballenger Building (10 N. Trade Street) was soon rebuilt, however, and immediately became

[14] Lea and Roberts, 1-5, 9-13.
[15] Bennett, 75; and Lea and Roberts, 8.
[16] Bennett, 75; and Clay Griffith, "Historic Architectural Resources Inventory Survey Report, Downtown Tryon Survey, Tryon, North Carolina," prepared for Town of Tryon and Tryon Downtown Development Association, Tryon, NC, April 2008 (hereinafter cited as "Downtown Tryon Survey Report").
[17] Lea and Roberts, 5.
[18] *The North Carolina Year Book and Business Directory* (Raleigh, NC: The News & Observer, 1904), 466.
[19] Bishir, et al., 52-53.

home to the newly formed Bank of Tryon. Organized in 1905, by James B. Hester, James Norwood, J. D. Freeman, and T. T. Ballenger, the Bank of Tryon was the first bank located in Polk County.[20] Hester relocated to Tryon from Pickens, South Carolina, in 1903, and was employed as the station agent for the Southern Railway. He also served as the first cashier for the new bank. In 1907, the Bank of Tryon announced plans to build a new building immediately adjacent to the Ballenger Building on Trade Street. Completed in late 1907 or early 1908, the Bank of Tryon Building (16 N. Trade Street) was constructed in the Romanesque Revival style and is one of the oldest structures remaining on Trade Street.[21]

The Bank of Tryon Building became home to the *Tryon Daily Bulletin*, "the world's smallest daily newspaper," in 1935. Founded in 1928 by Seth M. Vining, the *Tryon Daily Bulletin* was first located in the Wilkins Building (28-38 N. Trade Street) at the corner of Trade and Maple streets. The newspaper was printed on paper five-and-a-half inches by eight-and-a-half inches, and served the community by reporting on its "good news" and the people of Tryon. Seth Vining Jr. took over the paper in 1975, upon his father's retirement, and it remained a family-owned business until 1989.[22]

A second fire devastated Trade Street in August 1913, destroying the original two-story brick building that housed Missildine's pharmacy. A native of Lebanon, Missouri, E. E. Missildine moved to Tryon in 1895, after graduating from Rollins College in Florida. He first taught school in the area, but recognized the community's need for a pharmacy and immediately set to work to become a registered pharmacist. In 1896, he opened a drugstore with local doctor Earl Grady, which was known for some time as the Polk County Drug Store. After buying Dr. Grady's shares in 1901, Missildine became sole proprietor of the business and the pharmacy was later renamed Missildine's.[23] Following the 1913 fire, a new two-story brick commercial building was constructed on the same site. It was Tryon's first steam-heated building and still occupies the prominent southeast corner of Trade and Oak streets. Over the years, Missildine's Drug Store hosted many famous visitors, including David Niven, Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, Randolph Scott, Mrs. George Marshall, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.[24]

The popularity of Tryon and the surrounding area as a resort destination continued to increase through the early to mid-twentieth century, which further boosted commerce. Tryon attracted many prominent citizens, particularly from the Midwest, who sought out the area for its scenic vistas, rolling country estate property, and healing mountain air. New residents built summer homes or established resorts for visitors. One such developer, Carter P. Brown, owner of the Castle Park Hotel in Michigan, came to Tryon in 1918 in search of resort property. After arriving in Tryon, Brown purchased a lodge and several buildings, built as a sanitarium in 1917, located just south of downtown. He converted them into the Pine Crest Inn (NR, 1980), which quickly became renowned for its rustic charm and attracted a variety of well-heeled visitors to Tryon.

Alongside Tryon's bustling tourism industry, equestrian culture played an integral role in its social and economic development. After establishing his successful resort, Brown went on to

[20] "Bank of Tryon Building," National Register Nomination.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] *Tryon Daily Bulletin*, July 27, 1962.
[24] *Tryon Daily Bulletin*, no date.

found the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club. He also worked to revitalize the Block House, originally a trading outpost, for equestrian events, establish riding trails, and organizing horse shows. Brown helped to start the annual steeplechase, one of Tryon's most enduring social events. Tryon has long been called an "equestrian paradise," with its lush valleys, miles of riding trails, and annual fox hunts.[25]

Morris, the famed Tryon Horse, still presides over Trade Street, as an ever-present reminder of local pride for the community's equestrian heritage. Originally built in 1928 by Meredith Lankford, an employee of the Tryon Toymakers and Woodcarvers, Morris quickly became an icon in the community, with his likeness being recreated on everything from t-shirts to postcards. Lankford also made miniatures for the Tryon Toymakers and Woodcarvers, which were an important addition to their business. The original wooden Morris burned in the 1930s, and has since seen several recreations. The present Tryon Horse, the sixth iteration, remains in the original location at the corner of Trade and Pacolet streets and is frequently used to advertise equestrian events in the area.[26]

Several other industries thrived in the Tryon area during the first part of the twentieth century. The Tryon Electric Company, formed in 1910 by Ralph Erskine, represented a leap forward into the modern era for the community. The electric company initially derived power from Erskine's dam and boiler, but the company eventually contracted with the Melrose Power and Manufacturing Company to bring power to its subscribers. The Tryon Electric Company was later sold to Broadriver Power Company in 1926, which has since merged with Duke Energy. Erskine simultaneously began the Tryon Chair Factory on Screven Road. In its early years, the Tryon Chair Factory utilized native craftsmen and designed traditional mountain furniture. The company later expanded to become Danersk and manufactured fine period furniture.[27] After Erskine moved operations out of state, the factory building was sold to another local entrepreneur, F. P. Bacon. Along with Frank Wilcox Jr. and Edwin Wilcox, F. P. Bacon founded the Southern Mercerizing Company in 1910, which was one of Polk County's oldest continuously active industries for much of the twentieth century. Although none of these industries were located in downtown Tryon, they provided employment for local residents and contributed to the economic base that supported downtown commerce in the early and mid-twentieth century.

The area craft industry also blossomed, following the arrival of Eleanor Vance and Charlotte Yale from Asheville in 1915. After working at Biltmore Estate for some time and helping form the successful Biltmore Industries alongside Mrs. George W. Vanderbilt, the two women retired to Tryon and quickly set to work forming the Tryon Toymakers and Wood Carvers. With their new enterprise, Vance and Yale trained local craftspeople in traditional European craftwork, such as weaving, woodcarving, furniture design and construction, and toy making.[28] The Toy House, a picturesque house at 25 Grady Avenue outside the Downtown

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[25] Claudia P. Roberts, "Pine Crest Inn," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, NC, 1980; Lea and Roberts, 6-7; and Bennett, 5.
[26] *Tryon Daily Bulletin*, April 14, 2000.
[27] Lea and Roberts, 6.
[28] Ibid. Michael J. McCue, *The Tryon Toy Makers and Wood Carvers: A History 1915-1940* (Columbus, NC: Condar Press, 2004), 3.

Tryon Historic District, was built in 1923 for business operations and as showroom for the Tryon Toymakers' work.

By the early 1920s, hitching posts for horses along Trade Street had disappeared, having been replaced with new parking spaces for automobiles.[29] In 1924, Drs. Allen Jervey and Marion Palmer opened a small twelve-bed hospital on the second story of the Wilkins Building at 28-38 N. Trade Street. The facility served as the local hospital until St. Luke's Hospital on Carolina Drive (outside the district) in 1929. New downtown businesses, including groceries, jewelers, real estate offices, and restaurants, continued to emerge, with the two main blocks of Trade Street taking their present day form by 1925, according to Tryon Sanborn maps. Additionally, the block of Trade Street between Maple and Palmer streets was partially built up by 1929.[30]

The increased use of automobiles in the second quarter of the twentieth century led to expansion of residential areas located further from the town's commercial center. Tryon's first filling stations, however, were built along Trade Street in the late 1930s and 1940s. A Sinclair station opened around 1940 at 62 N. Trade Street, on the northeast corner of Trade and Maple streets. The Tryon Motor Supply and several auto repair garages were located along Trade Street to the north of the Downtown Tryon Historic District.[31]

Although the Great Depression brought significant financial hardship to many in Tryon, especially as land speculation in the area came to a halt, the community remained relatively unscathed, and "gaiety" remained the order of the decade. In lieu of cash, downtown store owners accepted more produce and farm products as payment for goods and services during the leanest years. With the economy recovering in the late 1930s, the Blue Ridge Weavers, one of the area's local craft enterprises opened a gift shop at 49 S. Trade Street. Fred and Essie Owen purchased Slack's Pharmacy from Arlie Slack in 1939, and continued the business as Owen's Pharmacy. In addition to the pharmacy, Owen's had a popular soda fountain. Owen's Pharmacy began in the North Trade Building at 22-26 N. Trade Street, where Slack's Pharmacy had been located, but moved next door to the Wilkins Building at 28-38 N. Street in the 1960s.[32]

The building at 45 S. Trade Street, formerly occupied by the Polk County Telephone and Telegraph Office, was converted to a movie house and vaudeville theater for white people only in the mid-1920s, after the government mandated that telephone and telegraph services be freestanding. Fire significantly damaged the building in the late 1930s, but a newly remodeled building opened in 1938 as the Tryon Theater, with a balcony and outside concessions to accommodate black citizens. The smooth stucco façade of the remodeled theater was emulated by the neighboring Tryon Bank and Trust Company at 39 S. Trade Street. The bank façade was remodeled around 1940 in the Moderne style with smooth stucco framing a large storefront of structural glass block with fluted pilasters and marble-veneer bulkheads (the appearance of the building has since been significantly altered).[33]

The significance of downtown was best summarized by Tryon native Betty Frost, who stated that "...for a long, long time, the hub of Tryon was just on Trade Street. That's where

[29] Bennett, 79.
[30] Lea and Roberts, 13-14.
[31] "Downtown Tryon Survey Report."
[32] Bennett, 80 and 271-272.
[33] Byrd, 100.

everything was."[34] Along with Trade Street, the life of Tryon centered on the railroad, which was operating five northbound and five southbound passenger trains a day in the 1940s. Frost recalled that a favorite activity was getting dressed up to meet the 5:00 train, especially when there were soldiers on the train. The crowd from the depot typically went across Trade Street to Missildine's to have a Coke and wait while the mail was being sorted in the post office.[35]

The 1950s and 1960s were a period of change in Tryon. Diesel trains replaced the steam engines that came through town. Following World War II, commercial development in downtown began to expand south and west of Trade Street, with a trend toward business development across the railroad tracks along Pacolet Street. Tryon's post office, which had been located in different businesses on Trade Street since 1876, was the first to move its operations in 1948. Additionally, Tryon Bank and Trust Company (formerly located at 39 S. Trade Street), which had merged into the North Carolina National Bank, moved to the corner of Pacolet and Chestnut streets in 1967. While the commercial area on Pacolet Street continued to attract new businesses, Trade Street remained the primary commercial corridor of the town. [36]

Several of Trade Street's stalwart businesses, however, struggled in the 1960s, or changed hands. A. H. Williams' meat market in the building he erected at 35 S. Trade Street in the mid-1920s closed in the 1960s. In 1968, the Blue Ridge Weavers moved from the South Trade Building at 25-27 S. Trade Street to the Missildine's building, after the pharmacy closed. Around the same time, Owen's Pharmacy moved from the North Trade Building to Wilkins Building. The final passenger train between Tryon and Saluda ran in December 1968.

The completion of Interstate 26 through Polk County in 1976 drew traffic off of old US Highway 176 (Trade Street) between Hendersonville, North Carolina, and Spartanburg, South Carolina. While easier access to shopping malls and larger retailers changed the commercial landscape to some degree, boutiques, specialty stores, and cottage industries emerged and began to thrive along Trade Street during the late twentieth century. Tryon's downtown remains as an integral part of the community's character and economic vitality.[37]

[34] Frost, 32.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Bennett, 80-81; and Frost, 16.
[37] "Downtown Tryon Survey Report."

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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 #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
_X_ Other
Name of repository: Polk County Historical Museum, Columbus, NC
Polk County Library, Columbus, NC

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PL0058

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approx. 6 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

[ ] NAD 1927 or [x] NAD 1983

1. Zone: 17 Easting: 387210 Northing: 3896830

2. Zone: 17 Easting: 387440 Northing: 3896570

3. Zone: 17 Easting: 387340 Northing: 3896470

4. Zone: 17 Easting: 387100 Northing: 3896730

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The district boundary is shown by a heavy black line on the accompanying Polk County tax map at a scale of 1 inch = 123 feet.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the Downtown Tryon Historic District are drawn to encompass the most intact and cohesive collection of commercial buildings in the downtown area constructed during the period of significance, 1908 to 1965, contributing to the district's historic character. The area outside the boundaries is characterized by later, or heavily altered, commercial development and residential construction. Substantially altered commercial buildings to the north of the district and later commercial development to the east help to define the significant core buildings within the boundary. Commercial development on South Trade Street to the south of the district is typically lower density and reflective of different development patterns. West of the railroad right-of-way and separated from the historic district by the railroad, a modern bank, and the altered depot, a small commercial area developed in the post-World War II period and abuts an older residential section on Melrose Avenue. Most of these commercial buildings have been significantly altered.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Clay Griffith and Alex Cole
organization: Acme Preservation Services
street & number: 825C Merrimon Ave., #345
city or town: Asheville state: NC zip code: 28804
e-mail: cgriffith.acme@gmail.com
telephone: (828) 281-3852
date: August 26, 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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 100 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. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Photographs

Name of Property: Downtown Tryon Historic District

City or Vicinity: Tryon

County: Polk State: North Carolina

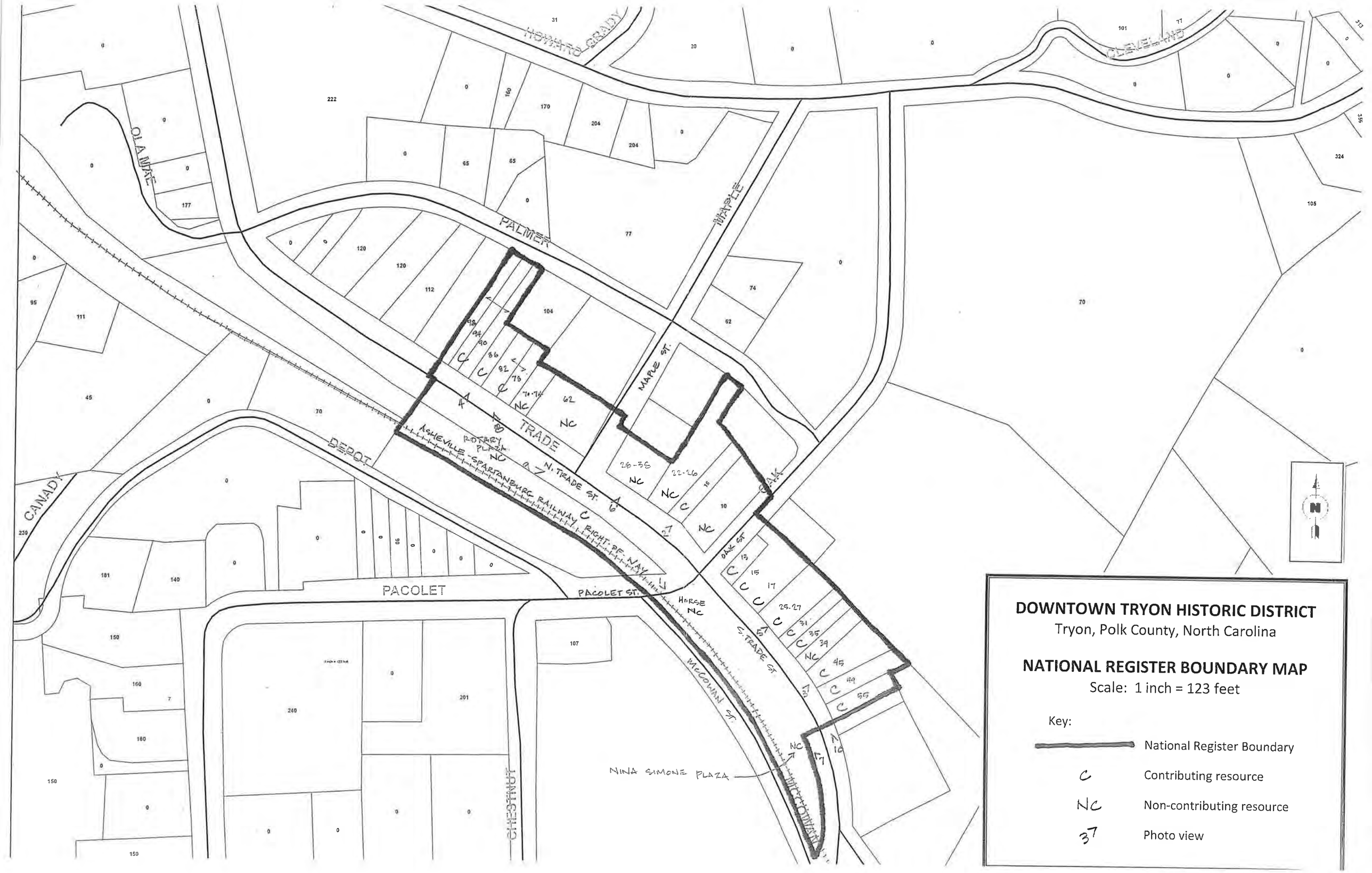
Photographer: Clay Griffith and Alex Cole

Date Photographed: as noted

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

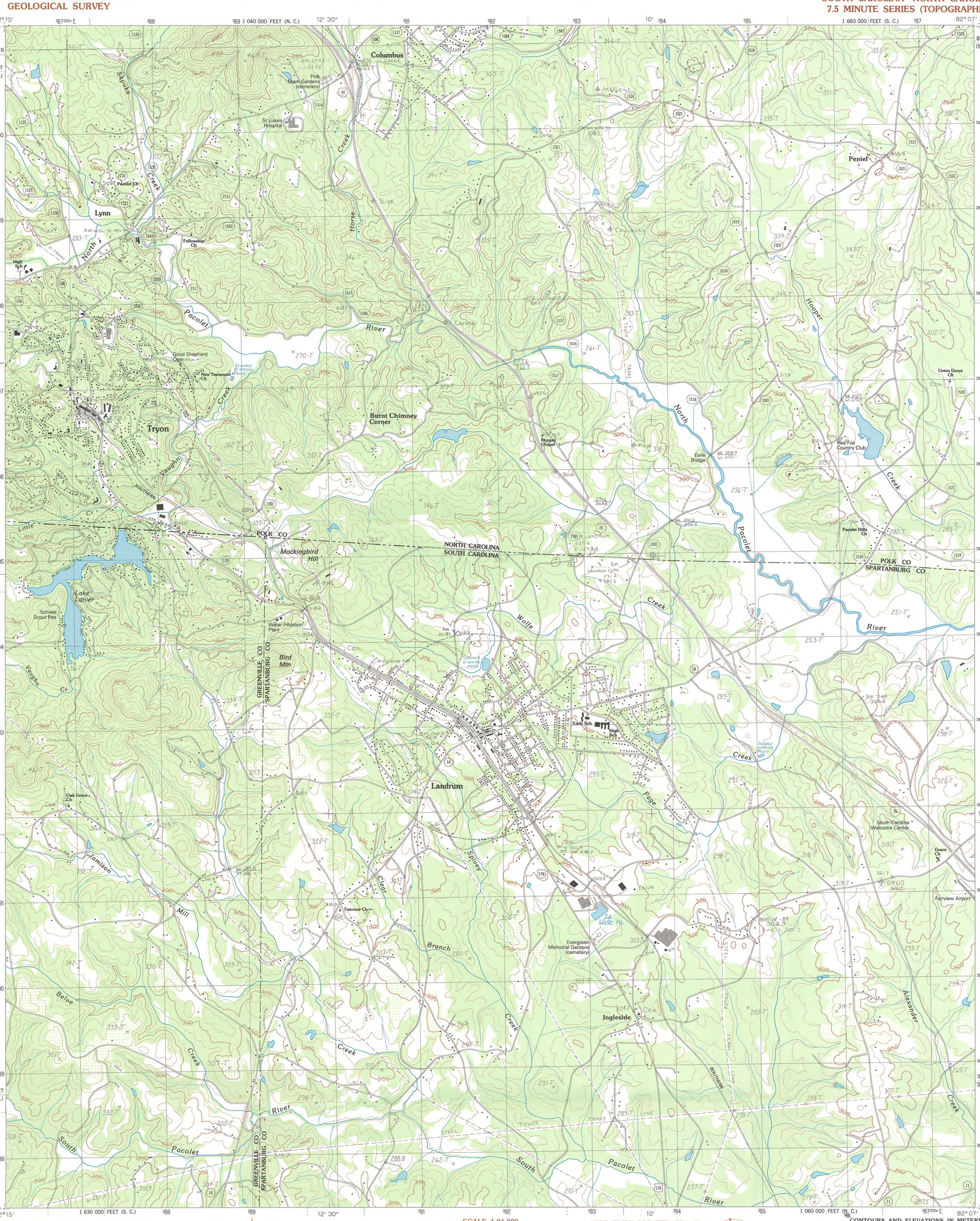
Photo Log

1. Asheville-Spartanburg Railway railroad right-of-way, view to southeast from Pacolet Street, August 25,2015
2. Bank of Tryon Building, 16 N. Trade Street, view to northeast, July 13, 2014
3. Tryon Theatre, 45 S. Trade Street, view to northeast, August 25, 2015
4. Commercial Building, 86 N. Trade Street, view to northeast, July 13, 2014
5. South Trade Building, 25-27 S. Trade Street, view to northeast, July 13, 2014
6. W. Y. Wilkins Building, 28-38 N. Trade Street, view to northeast, July 13, 2014 (non-contributing resource)
7. Nina Simone Plaza, 54 S. Trade Street, view to northwest, May 5, 2015 (non-contributing resource)
8. North Trade Street, streetscape view to north, August 25, 2015
9. North Trade Street, streetscape view to southeast, July 13, 2014
10. South Trade Street, streetscape view to north, July 13, 2014


HOWARD GRADY
CLEVELAND
OLA MAE
PALMER
MAPLE
MAPLE ST.
TRADE
N. TRADE ST.
S. TRADE ST.
DEPOT
CANADY
PACOLET
PACOLET ST.
CHESTNUT
OAK
OAK ST.
McCOWAN ST.
ASHEVILLE-SPARTANBURG RAILWAY RIGHT-OF-WAY
ROTARY PLAZA
NINA SIMONE PLAZA
DOWNTOWN TRYON HISTORIC DISTRICT
Tryon, Polk County, North Carolina
NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY MAP
Scale: 1 inch = 123 feet
Key:
National Register Boundary
C Contributing resource
NC Non-contributing resource
37 Photo view

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

LANDRUM QUADRANGLE
SOUTH CAROLINA – NORTH CAROLINA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



DOWNTOWN TRYON
HISTORIC DISTRICT
N+S TRADE STREET
TRYON, POLK CO., NC
UTMs
ZONE 17
1. E 387200
N3896820
2. E 387390
N3896630
3. E 387360
N3896490
4. E 387150
N3896730
Landrum Quad

PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
CONTROL BY . USGS, NOS/NOAA, AND NORTH CAROLINA GEODETIC SURVEY
COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN 1976
FIELD CHECKED . . . . . 1977. MAP EDITED 1983
PROJECTION . . . . . LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONIC
GRID: 1000-METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR . . . . . ZONE 17
10,000-FOOT STATE GRID TICKS . . . SOUTH CAROLINA, NORTH ZONE
NORTH CAROLINA
UTM GRID DECLINATION . . . . . 0°41′ WEST
1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION . . . . . 3°30′ WEST
VERTICAL DATUM . . . . . NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
HORIZONTAL DATUM . . . . . 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM
The difference between 1927 North American Datum and North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) for 7.5-minute intersections is given in USGS Bulletin 1875. The NAD 83 is shown by dashed corner ticks

Map photoinspected 1987
No major culture or drainage changes observed

PROVISIONAL MAP
Produced from original manuscript drawings. Information shown as of date of field check
2

NORTH

SCALE 1:24 000

KILOMETERS 1000 0 METERS 1000 2000
MILES 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000 9000 10 000
FEET

CONTOUR INTERVAL 12 METERS
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST METER
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808
To convert feet to meters multiply by .3048

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1991

S. C.
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
4		5
6	7	8

1 Cliffield Mtn
2 Mill Spring
3 Pea Ridge
4 Saluda
5 Fingerville West
6 Tigerville
7 Campobello
8 Inman

ADJOINING 7.5′ QUADRANGLE NAMES

CONTOURS AND ELEVATIONS IN METERS

ROAD LEGEND
Improved Road
Unimproved Road
Trail
Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route

LANDRUM, S. C. – N. C.
PROVISIONAL EDITION 1983
35082-B2-TM-024
PHOTOINSPECTED 1987

TRYON
FILM SOCIETY
AUG 24 - 25
TESTAMENT
OF
YOUTH
TRYON THEATRE
MAX
ANT-MAN
THE
TRYON HORSE

16
Tryon Daily Bulletin
TryonDailyBulletin.com

TRYON THEATRE
NOW SHOWING
MAX
COMING NEXT WEEK
ANT-MAN
TRYON
FILM SOCIETY
7PM
AUG 24 - 25
TESTAMENT
OF
YOUTH
upstairs
Smoke Free Building
ANT-MAN
Show Times
Tryon Film Society
NOW PLAYING
MAX
Smoke Free Building

BILL
INGHAM
Polk County
Commissioner
86
DRESS SHOP
&
ALTERATIONS

SOUTH TRADE BUILDING
GRACE
GRACE
Old Books

OWENS PHARMACY
Buck's Pizza
Hand-Tossed Pizza & Stromboli
Large Pizza
2 Toppings
$9.99

Nina Simone
PLAZA

The Nest
ARTISAN MARKET
TRYON
LAVENDER BISTRO
CLASSES • WORKSHOPS

Brock's
CLEANERS
ONE BLOCK
Rx
OWEN'S
PHARMACY
ONE WAY

TRYON THEATRE
NOW SHOWING
50 TO 1
COMING NEXT WEEK
BLENDED
50 TO 1
TRYON
Rogers Park
Summer
Tracks
Concerts