

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**The Cotton Patch**

Tryon vicinity, Polk County, PL0311, Listed 5/25/2021  
Nomination by Clay Griffith, Acme Preservation Services, LLC  
Photographs by Clay Griffith, March 2019



View west from Perkins-Kuhn House to Cotton Patch Bottoms and Pacolet River



T Barn, south elevation, view to northeast

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# 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.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: The Cotton Patch

Other names/site number: Cotton Patch Farm; James H. Perkins Estate

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 426 South River Road

City or town: Tryon State: NC County: Polk

Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:

### 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

	Deputy SHPO	5/17/2021
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>		<b>Date</b>
<u>North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources</u>		
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>		

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

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#### 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling
- DOMESTIC/secondary structure
- AGRICULTURAL/agricultural outbuilding
- AGRICULTURAL/animal facility
- AGRICULTURAL/agricultural field
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation
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- 

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling
- DOMESTIC/secondary structure
- AGRICULTURAL/agricultural outbuilding
- AGRICULTURAL/animal facility
- AGRICULTURAL/agricultural field
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation
- 
-

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Rustic Revival

### Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Wood/waney-edge siding

Wood/board-and-batten

Brick

Metal

Stone

Stone/slate

Asphalt

Concrete 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.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Cotton Patch is a rural equestrian estate located along the Pacolet River in southern Polk County approximately two miles east of the town of Tryon. Begun in the late 1930s as a summer and retirement home for James and Katrine Perkins of Connecticut, the estate is located in "Hunting Country," an area renowned for its equestrian activities and extensive network of riding trails. At present the entire estate encompasses nearly 420 acres that has been placed in a conservation easement held by Upstate Forever. A core 105 acres, spread across two parcels, contains the main house, principal outbuildings, and significant landscape features associated with the equestrian uses of the property from the 1940s to the present time. The gently rolling terrain of the Cotton Patch consists of wooded hillsides and open pastures. The main house and associated domestic buildings occupy a central knoll with expansive vistas of the countryside and distant mountains to the north and west. A stable complex located south of the main house serves as the center of the property's equestrian operations. A network of unpaved roads and trails through the property and along the river link scattered riding rings, run-in sheds, an arena, and other landscape features. The buildings are typically rendered in a Rustic Revival style that emphasizes stone and frame construction, natural materials, and a muted earth-toned color palette. The Cotton Patch is a distinguished collection of residential and utilitarian buildings and landscape elements associated with the area's significant twentieth-century equestrian heritage.

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## Narrative Description

The Cotton Patch is an expansive rural estate in Polk County located off South River Road approximately two miles east of the town of Tryon. The two-story rustic stone and frame house and associated buildings were designed by architect Russell S. Walcott in 1938 and built for James and Katrine Perkins as a summer estate and retirement home. The property purchased was purchased in 1948 by Willis and Jacquelyn Kuhn of Indiana, who further developed the property as one of the premier equestrian estates in Polk County's renowned Hunting Country. The inventory of resources at the Cotton Patch is organized in nodes related to the predominantly domestic and equestrian areas of the estate. Following a discussion of the overall landscape (1), the inventory begins with the domestic resources (2-9) including the main house, guest house, and affiliated structures. The equestrian node (10-15), situated to the south, includes the main barns and stables, as well as the caretaker's house. The inventory concludes with the scattered resources (16-21) located throughout the estate.

### 1. Estate Landscape

### Contributing site

The Cotton Patch is an equestrian estate encompassing more than 400 residual acres along the Pacolet River east of the town of Tryon in southern Polk County. The rolling topography of the estate landscape includes the homestead, pastures, woodlands, and network of roads and trails through the property. The landscape contains both natural and manmade features, although the majority of manmade resources are discussed separately in the inventory. While the current extent of the Cotton Patch covers more than 400 acres, much of the property has been placed under a conservation easement with Upstate Forever, a land trust based in Greenville, South Carolina. The nominated property includes two tracts encompassing 105 acres directly surrounding the homestead and equestrian facilities of the estate, as well as the primary landscape elements.

The property is entered from unpaved South River Road (SR 1516) along a winding driveway. Two curving stone retaining walls shaded by sweet gum trees mark the entrance to the driveway, and a wrought-iron sign bears the name of the estate, "The Cotton Patch."<sup>1</sup> The historic sign appears to have been designed and crafted by Clifton Meek (1888-1973), an artist and cartoonist who began creating iron signs in 1935 under the Works Progress Administration's federal arts program. Based in Norwalk, Connecticut, Meek produced bronze and iron signs from Silvermine Forge. A number of enormous boxwoods frame the driveway as it approaches the house and connects two, paved, loop drives in the vicinity of the house, garage, guest house, and studio. The main house occupies a hilltop site near the center of the nominated property with prominent westerly views and the associated domestic buildings generally arranged to the north, south, and east. The circular drive immediately in front of the house was repaved in the early 1990s and planted with three river birches at its center. Several retaining walls and terraces built close to the

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<sup>1</sup> The name of the estate alternately appears in records and articles as The Cotton Patch, Cotton Patch, and Cotton Patch Farm, but the nomenclature is used interchangeably.

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dwelling reflect the house's construction materials and link the residence with the nearby garages, studio, guest house, and pool.

The majority of the estate's barns and stables are located to the south of the knoll containing the house. The area is reached from a fork of the main driveway or through a second entrance from South River Road. A gate house stands near the secondary entrance to the property, while a gravel driveway encircles the informally arranged buildings comprising the stables. A gravel carriage road leads west, passing a pond and connecting to pastures and riding trails beyond.

The original owners of the Cotton Patch developed the property as a working farm and equestrian estate beginning in the late 1930s, but the agricultural aspects have diminished as subsequent owners, beginning with Willis and Jacquelyn Kuhn, emphasized equestrian uses. These changes included clearing woodlands to the west of the house for pasture, riding rings, and improved vistas of the distant mountains. Cotton Patch Bottoms, at the western edge of the nominated property and bordering the Pacolet River, was developed into an Olympic training ground in the mid-1950s with a terraced stadium built into the hillside. Only a faint outline of the Olympic ring remains visible at Cotton Patch Bottoms. The Kuhns developed Jackie's Bottoms to the northeast as a training course for young riders. The network of carriage roads and horse trails through the nominated property extends nearly 1.5 miles. An old roadbed running along the Pacolet River on the north side of the property connects the Cotton Patch to the system of riding trails coordinated by the Foothills Equestrian Trails Association (FETA). The FETA trail network is estimated to comprise approximately 125-150 miles of privately owned equestrian trails throughout the region.

## **2. Perkins-Kuhn House, 1938, 1990s, ca. 2005**

### **Non-contributing building**

At the center of Cotton Patch Farm is the rustic stone-and-frame country house designed by Russell S. Walcott for James and Katrine Perkins in 1938. The asymmetrical façade and multiple exterior materials contribute to the rambling character of the house, which is constructed of stone and timber from the property and nearby sawmills. Situated on a knoll with sweeping views of the Pacolet River valley, the dwelling is generally aligned north-south with the façade oriented to the east addressing the circular driveway and associated domestic buildings. The rear of the house generally faces west overlooking pastures, the former Olympic ring, and distant mountains.

The house is organized around a large central living room contained within a one-story side-gable block, while a two-story split-level block to the south contains the bedrooms. The house rests on a stone foundation and is capped by a slate roof. Two exterior stone chimneys dominate the façade, which is clad with waney-edge wood siding, and flank a single-leaf wooden entry door. A small plaque for the United Firemen's Insurance Company mounted on the south façade chimney reflects one of Perkins' business affiliations. Projecting forward two bays, the heavy timber frame entry porch, added in the early 2000s, supports a slate roof on wood posts with curved brackets and exposed trusses. The porch foundation is stone with low piers carrying the posts. A hip-roof wing at the north end was added with an inset corner porch supported on a bracketed wood post. The main one-story block of the house extends to the north beyond the façade chimney to include a

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kitchen and breakfast area, while a hip-roof wing covered with board-and-batten siding added in the early 2000s projects forward with an inset corner porch supported on a bracketed wood post. The façade windows are typically single-light casements appearing in pairs or larger groups.

The lower walls of the two-story bedroom wing on the façade are constructed of stone. The upper story is clad with board-and-batten with waney-edge wood siding in the gable ends. Groups of three casement windows are positioned at the center of each story. An exterior brick chimney rises against the rear wall of the two-story wing. The alterations made to Walcott's plans in the early 2000s are typically executed in a manner consistent with the character of the house. At the south end of the house, a second story was constructed above the original one-story shed-roof wing at the end of the house. The new construction is similarly finished with waney edge siding, board-and-batten, and a slate-covered hip roof.

At the rear of the house, a stone terrace spans the rear elevation of the living room, with steps at the south end leading to a small stone patio. As part of the ca. 2005 renovations to the house, the projecting hip roof of the dining room was extended outward to shelter a wood deck that was attached to the rear elevation and connected to the stone terrace. The new porch is carried by bracketed wood posts consistent with other material additions.

The interior of the house is dominated by the open living room extending the full depth of the house. The room features exposed wood trusses in the ceiling, wood paneled walls, a stone fireplace, and built-in shelves. The west wall, overlooking Cotton Patch Bottoms, has been altered with an additional horizontal band of windows above the original large window and door openings. The dining room to the north exhibits fully paneled walls, original fireplace, and built-in shelves and niches, including a glass case for displaying a model of a ship insured by one of Perkins' companies. Two solid-wood single-leaf doors open from the dining room into the kitchen wing, which was remodeled in the 1990s. The original kitchen was enlarged by removing walls from the adjoining flower room, pantry, and maid's sitting room to form a continuous kitchen and breakfast area. The remodeled kitchen was finished with reclaimed heart pine from a cotton mill in Shelby, North Carolina. On the south side of the living room, a small stair hall accesses the bedroom wing of the house. The hall is finished with wood paneling and has a small display niche positioned at the base of the stairs, which rise to the second-story rooms. A short run of stairs descends to the lower level rooms, which have been remodeled into a master suite. The bedroom contains a brick fireplace with a molded wood surround and displays a wainscot of pine paneling. The studio, as it was labelled on Walcott's plans, is a small den finished with pine paneling, built-in shelves and cabinets, window bench, and a brick fireplace, which features a corbelled wood mantel shelf.

### **3. Garage, ca. 1938**

### **Contributing building**

The two-bay frame garage is constructed with a stone foundation and corner piers, waney edge siding, and a slate-covered hip roof. The two garage bays are accessed through overhead doors, which are framed by board-and-batten panels on the façade. The blind side elevations and rear shed-roof extension are clad with waney edge siding. The rear wing has an overhead door on the east elevation that was added around 2005 and a single-leaf door on the west elevation. Two

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sets of four original metal-frame casement windows illuminate the interior of the rear wing, which was originally used for dog grooming and kennels. The kennels extended to the concrete slab at the rear of the building, which is partially surrounded by stone retaining walls.

**4. Well House, ca. 1938**

**Contributing structure**

Located to the rear (north) of the garage, the well house is one-room shed-roof building constructed of stone. The small structure is entered through a single-leaf wood door on the east elevation.

**5. Guest House ("Boll Weevil"), ca. 1969, ca. 2005**

**Contributing building**

The one-story two-bedroom guest house stands to the north of the main house on a heavily wooded site. Resting on a concrete block foundation, the dwelling has an asphalt-shingle side-gable roof, exposed rafter tails, and waney edge siding. The windows are typically paired three-light metal-frame casements. An exterior stone chimney is located on the façade adjacent to the entrance vestibule. The house was originally entered through a recessed porch, which was enclosed around 2005; the new vestibule reused the single-leaf wood entry door and paired three-light casement windows of the original porch. The interior is finished with pine paneling and pine floors. A large stone fireplace dominates the living room. A stone terrace lies in front of the house. The gable roof was extended to the west around 2005 to create a screened porch, which is carried on heavy timber posts with curved brackets.

**6. Guest House Garage, ca. 1969**

**Contributing building**

The garage for the guest house is a two-bay frame structure capped by an asphalt-shingle side-gable roof and clad with waney edge siding. The overhanging roof shelters the open façade, which is supported by stone posts at the corners. The structure has a central wooden support post on the interior, exposed rafter tails, and six-light metal-frame casement windows along the rear (west) wall.

**7. Studio, ca. 1960**

**Contributing building**

The one-story side-gable frame dwelling was originally built as a home office with three rooms and a half-bath on the main level. The concrete block foundation, which is exposed at the rear, contains a partially finished lower level. The building has an asphalt-shingle roof, exposed rafter tails, waney edge siding, and six-over-six double-hung wood-sash windows. Two single-leaf entrances are located on the façade and contain wood doors composed with six lights over two vertical panels. The north door is sheltered by an attached gable-roof entry porch with bracketed wood posts. A decorative front-gable vent to the south connects to the ridgeline of a gable-roof rear ell. The interior is finished with oak floors and sheetrock walls.

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**8. Swimming pool, ca. 1970s**

**Non-contributing structure**

An in-ground 40,000-gallon gunnite swimming pool was built in the 1970s. The oval-shaped pool is situated to the south of the main house and screened from view by a tall evergreen hedge.

**9. Pool House, ca. 1970s**

**Non-contributing building**

The one-story stone-and-frame pool house stands to the south of the swimming pool. The flat-roof building has an exterior stone chimney, waney edge siding, single-leaf glazed entry door flanked by four-light sidelights, and large window bays. The large windows, which are currently being repaired, illuminate a single open room finished with a stone floor, stone fireplace, and paneled walls and ceilings. The building also contains a full bathroom and separate dressing room.

**10. Gate House, ca. 1941, ca. 2005**

**Contributing building**

The one-story L-shaped dwelling is located near the entrance to the property and adjacent to the horse stables and barns. Resting on a brick foundation, the house has an asphalt-shingle gable roof, exposed rafter tails, waney edge siding, two exterior stone chimneys, and an exterior brick chimney. Windows are typically six-over-six double-hung sash or picture windows with a large central light flanked by four-over-four double-hung sash. An attached wood deck was added around 2005 and provides access to the two single-leaf entry doors located in the interior angle of the "L." The door into the east wing is sheltered by an attached gable-roof hood supported on metal brackets. The interior contains two bedrooms, living and dining rooms, and an office. A gable-roof screened porch extends to the rear (south).

Originally built in the 1930s, the residence served as the home of Elbert Nanney, James Perkins' caretaker and farm manager. Nanney's house was destroyed by fire in May 1941, although Nanney and his family survived unharmed. The Nanneys lived in the main house during the summer while the Gate House was built.

**11. Barn ("T Barn"), ca. 1945, 1990s**

**Contributing building**

The main barn, known as the "T Barn" because of its shape, consists of two wings connected by an open breezeway located between the top and the stem of the "T." The west wing, forming the top of the "T," is a two-story gambrel-roof building with waney edge siding, a pyramidal-roof cupola, and six-over-six double-hung windows. It contains an office, kitchen, bathroom, and tack room, with two horse stalls located on the north side. The east wing is a long gable-roof building containing four stalls and a work room at the east end. The overhanging roof on the south side is supported by wooden posts and shelters a brick walkway. The stalls, which extend the full depth of the wing, are accessed by Dutch doors. Robert Wallace, a later owner, converted three stalls to work rooms and a kitchen in the 1990s.

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**12. Stables (“U Barn”), ca. 1979**

**Non-contributing building**

Resting on a concrete block foundation, the thirteen-stall stable, known as the “U Barn,” is located to the west of the main barn. The building is laid out around a central gravel area with a sheltered concrete walkway wrapping around the interior court. It is constructed with concrete block walls for the side and rear elevations and a frame front wall clad with waney edge siding. The building has an asphalt-shingle gable roof, pyramidal-roof cupola, wooden posts supporting the roof overhangs, and two-light wood-sash windows on the rear elevations. The stalls are entered through wooden single-leaf Dutch doors with two-light windows in the upper door. Stalls on the north wing of the barn have single-leaf metal-frame sliding doors that are open on top with wooden tongue-and-groove panels below. Curved three-bar rails in the opening limit the area where horses can place their heads through the upper portion of the stall door.

**13. Muck House, ca. 1979**

**Non-contributing building**

Located adjacent to the stables, the two-story muck house has a concrete block foundation, waney edge siding on the upper story, and a front-gable roof. The open bay on the lower story allows access for a manure spreader. The upper story is accessed through double-leaf wood doors and contains storage and a muck chute.

**14. Carriage House, ca. 1944**

**Contributing building**

The carriage house, as it is known, consists of three primary bays for storing farm vehicles, including horse trailers, automobiles, tractors, and carriages. A shed-roof extension at the west end of the building forms a fourth bay. The frame building rests on a concrete block foundation, is covered with waney edge siding, and is capped by an asphalt-shingle side-gable roof. At the east end, a tall front-gable bay houses the horse trailer. A small stone terrace adjacent to the trailer bay is bounded by a low, stone retaining wall with an integrated outdoor grill and chimney. The structure displays exposed rafter tails, purlin brackets in the gable ends, and six-over-six double-hung windows. The two bays at the west end are enclosed with double-leaf wood garage doors.

**15. Equipment Shed, ca. 1945**

**Contributing structure**

A tall one-story frame building for equipment storage measures 100 feet by 30 feet. It has an asphalt-shingle side-gable roof, exposed rafter tails, concrete floor, and waney edge siding. The south elevation presents six open bays and an enclosed seventh bay at the west end. The end bay is accessed through an overhead metal door.

**16. The Pond Shed, ca. 1945, ca. 2005**

**Contributing building**

A tall one-story frame shed with a metal-clad side-gable roof, waney edge siding, and exposed rafters. It was originally built as a pole shed for storing hay and equipment, but was it was converted to a run-in shed for horses around 2005, when the leaky roof was replaced. A concrete walkway across the front is sheltered by the overhanging roof, which is supported by wood

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brackets. An enclosed portion of the building is accessed through two single-leaf wood doors. A single open bay is located to the east of the enclosure and five open run-in stalls are located to the west.

**17. Goat Barn, ca. 2005**

**Non-contributing building**

A one-story frame shed with an enclosed pen at the north end is used to shelter goats in a small pasture near the Pacolet River. The shed has a wide opening on the east elevation and displays a tall shed roof, exposed rafters, and waney edge siding. The interior pen is enclosed with vertical wood sheathing.

**18. Cotton Patch Bottoms Shed, ca. 2005**

**Non-contributing building**

A one-story frame run-in shed displays an asphalt-shingle side-gable roof, pyramidal-roof cupola, and waney edge siding. An enclosed tack room at the northeast end is accessed through a single-leaf wood door and adjoins the large, open run-in bay.

**19. Jackie's Bottoms Shed, ca. 1938**

**Contributing building**

A one-story frame run-in shed features a shed roof, waney edge siding, and exposed rafters. A single-leaf door on the northwest end enters a small tack room.

**20. Run-in Shed, ca. 2018**

**Non-contributing structure**

Located in a front pasture above Jackie's Bottoms and near South River Road, the one-story frame run-in shed has a side-gable roof, pyramidal-roof cupola, and waney edge siding. The front of the run-in shed is open on three sides.

**21. Arena, 1998**

**Non-contributing structure**

Located in a clearing on a wooded knoll, the arena was erected in 1998 by Morton Buildings of Fletcher, North Carolina. The tall one-story frame structure encloses an Olympic-sized dressage arena. The metal-clad building has a front-gable roof, open side bays, dirt floor, and a wide entrance gate on the south elevation.

**Integrity Statement**

The Cotton Patch retains a high degree of integrity as a fully realized example of a rural equestrian estate in southern Polk County. The property retains the majority of residential and equestrian facilities from the late 1930s and expanded through the 1970s. Specific landscape patterns and features have changed over the years with the clearing of new pasture and abandoned agricultural fields, but the overall rural character and equestrian nature of the estate remains intact with open pastureland, wooded hillsides, gently rolling topography, and unpaved carriage roads and riding trails. Although rehabilitation and remodeling work in recent years has compromised the

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architectural integrity of Russell Walcott's original designs for the main house and associated buildings, the property retains integrity of setting, location, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. While it does not possess enough integrity to be eligible for its architecture, the property retains sufficient physical and associative integrity to be eligible under Criteria A and B for its role in the development of Polk County's equestrian culture.

### **Statement of Archaeological Potential**

The Cotton Patch is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological deposits and remnant landscape features such as paths and fence lines, remains of the Olympic training ground, debris that accumulated from domestic and property maintenance activities, former outbuildings, and other structural remains which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the property. Information concerning the character of daily life at the Cotton Patch, the transformation of the property from a working farm to equestrian estate, as well as structural details and landscape use, can be obtained from the archaeological record. Archaeological investigations can also yield details concerning pivotal moments in the history of the Cotton Patch, such as its use as an Olympic training ground and recovery from the fires of 1941 and 1972. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the Cotton Patch. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and these potential remains should be considered in any future development within the property.

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## 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 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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation/Entertainment  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1948 – 1970  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1948  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Walcott, Russell S.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**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.)

Located on rolling terrain along the Pacolet River east of Tryon, the Cotton Patch is a locally significant rural equestrian estate built by James and Katrine Perkins in 1938 and owned and operated by Willis and Jacquelyn Kuhn from 1948 to the early 1980s. Under the Kuhn's ownership the property played an important role in the development of Tryon's equestrian culture in the mid-twentieth century. The period of significance begins with the Kuhns' purchase of the Perkins estate in 1948 and continues until 1970 near the end of the Kuhns' ownership.

Willis and Jacquelyn Kuhn made Cotton Patch an important and integral part of Tryon's equestrian culture in the mid-twentieth century—hosting events, offering extensive riding trails and training grounds, and providing breeding services. The prominence of Cotton Patch in local and national equestrian circles was solidified when it became a training ground and qualifying trial site for the equestrian games of the 1956 Olympics, the first year that the United States' equestrian team was composed of publicly sponsored civilians rather than members of the military. The Cotton Patch is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the area of recreation/entertainment for its significant association as an important center for equestrian activities in the Hunting Country of Polk County. The Kuhns, who both served as president of the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club, hosted numerous events and organizations at their estate. The Cotton Patch became a regular hunt fixture, contained a large riding ring and extensive network of trails, and operated as a breeding facility. The Kuhns, who had no children of their own, were especially supportive of young riders, organizing the Junior Equitation Association and regularly hosting the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club's Junior Horse Show. The Cotton Patch was a significant component of Tryon's development into a nationally renowned equestrian center.

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

### *Historical Background and Equestrian Context*

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. Lying on the southern slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Polk County enjoys characteristics of both the mountain and Piedmont regions. Natural and geographic conditions strongly influenced agriculture, tourism, and recreation as important components of the county's economy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> D. William Bennett, ed., *Polk County, North Carolina, History* (Tryon, NC: Polk County Historical Association, Inc., 1983), 5; Bill Sharpe, *A New Geography of North Carolina*, Volume III (Raleigh, NC: Sharpe Publishing Company, 1961), 1536-1538; Elizabeth Doubleday Frost, *Tryon Memories* (Tryon, NC: Polk County Historical Association and Tryon Publishing Company, Inc., 1995), 7-10, 27-28.

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As Tryon and the surrounding area began to grow in the late nineteenth century, many of the new residents, including artists, writers, and industrialists, came from the North or upper Midwest regions of the country and helped to solidify and spread Tryon's reputation as a first class resort town in the early twentieth century. While a substantial number of the new residents first came to Tryon as visitors, often for the salubrious climate, they frequently became enchanted with the community and decided to buy property for seasonal or year-round use.<sup>3</sup>

These new arrivals found a largely undeveloped and rural landscape well suited to equestrian pursuits. Carter Brown, a hotelier and equestrian enthusiast, came to Tryon from Michigan in 1917, and converted a former tuberculosis sanitarium into the Pine Crest Inn (NR, 1982). While Brown's primary interest in Tryon was creating the inn, he soon became an enthusiastic promoter of equestrian activities. The stables and barns at Pine Crest Inn could accommodate 30 horses, which Brown rented to guests and locals for guided rides through the mountains. Brown founded the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club in 1926 and organized the Tryon Hounds that same year. He established the Tryon Horse Show, which soon became the biggest social event in Tryon, hosted by the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club and held at Harmon Field, a 36-acre public recreation ground on the banks of the Pacolet River north of town. The Tryon Horse Show included a bench show for Walker and July night hounds that later evolved into a more formal show for fox hounds. In addition to the Tryon Horse Show, the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club hosted a number of regular events and races including a variety of hunter/jumper horse shows, "Morris the Horse" trials, hound shows, the Any and All Dog Show.<sup>4</sup> The Tryon Horse, or Morris as the horse is often called, was originally created by Meredith Lankford and Odell Peeler of the Tryon Toymakers and Woodcarvers based on one of their popular toys. Standing 22 hands high, the Tryon Horse was built to advertise the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club's events but soon became a symbol of both the club and the town. The sixth-generation Morris the Horse, constructed of fiberglass, was restored in 2012 and stands at the intersection of Trade and Pacolet streets in Tryon.<sup>5</sup>

The Tryon Riding and Hunt Club's most prestigious event, the Block House Steeplechase, began with little forethought. After riding in the nascent Carolina Cup in Camden, South Carolina, in the early 1930s, Carter Brown sought to organize a steeplechase at Harmon Field beginning in 1934. The race, called "the March Hare" because it was run in March, was a modest race among a small group of family and friends up until the U.S. entry into World War II. In 1942, industrialist Alfred D. Plamondon, Jr., of Indiana visited Tryon, staying at the Pine Crest Inn and striking up a friendship with Carter Brown. An offhand remark led to Brown purchasing the eighteenth-century Block House property (NR, 1970) on the North Carolina-South Carolina state line, for Plamondon and renovating the house. Plamondon, who originally planned to graze cattle on the property, became engaged in

<sup>3</sup> 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), 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> Tryon Horse Show program, Tryon Riding and Hunt Club, 2016, 4-5; Norman Powers, "The Innkeeper, the Steel Man, and the Tumbledown Ruin: A Brief History of the Block House Steeplechase," Manuscript, Tryon Riding and Hunt Club, January 2012, n.p.

<sup>5</sup> Clay Griffith and Alex Cole, "Downtown Tryon Historic District" National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Acme Preservation Services, Asheville, NC, 2015.

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local equestrian activities and after hearing recollections of Brown's March Hare races suggested that the steeplechase be revived on his Block House property. Often working under cover of night, Brown surreptitiously graded and built a half-mile course around the Block House with a judges' platform located on the roof of the house.<sup>6</sup>

The first Block House Steeplechase was run in April 1947 under the auspices of the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club. Steeplechase racing, aside from the Carolina Cup, was little run in the southeast, so Brown and his sons vigorously promoted the event. Although the early years were relatively small, local affairs, word began to spread and, in 1950, the fourth running of the steeplechase was the first to be officially sanctioned by the National Steeplechase and Hunt Association, which cleared the way for more horses and better riders to participate. The steeplechase continued to be held at the Block House until 1988, when it moved to a new course at the Foothills Equestrian Nature Center (FENCE). The Block House Steeplechase continues to be the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club's signature event with attendance averaging around 20,000 spectators.<sup>7</sup>

One family drawn to the charms of Polk County's equestrian society was James H. Perkins (1876-1940) and his wife Katrine Coolidge Perkins (1883-1977) of Greenwich, Connecticut. A corporate banker who was president of his class at Harvard, Perkins was an executive with the City Bank Farmers' Trust Company and with the National City Bank of New York. Through his positions he was engaged in civic affairs and became involved with a number of businesses in insurance, real estate, and railroads.<sup>8</sup> In 1937, the Perkinses, with the encouragement of well-known Tryon promoter Maurice 'Lefty' Flynn, came south to Tryon with plans to build a summer home.<sup>9</sup> Katrine Perkins purchased extensive acreage from the estate of Cuyler Adams (1852-1932), mining engineer and discoverer of the Cuyuna Iron Range in Minnesota.

An avid hunter, outdoorsman, and rider, Perkins took an active interest in his new farm, which he called "The Cotton Patch." He cultivated the bottom lands along the Pacolet River with barley, corn, and cotton and raised a large flock of turkeys until his untimely death in 1940. The Perkinses hired noted Chicago architect Russell S. Walcott, himself a recent arrival in the area, to design the main house. Walcott (1889-1959), who retired to Tryon in 1936, was born in suburban Evanston, Illinois, and started his own practice in 1922, designing large houses and estates along Chicago's North Shore. His designs were typically executed in the Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, or Normanesque styles, with pleasant proportions and fine craftsmanship but lacking excessive ornament.<sup>10</sup> The rambling one- and two-story Perkins residence is constructed of stone and frame with various material expressions on the exterior. The use of the Rustic Revival style was not uncommon for private houses in western North Carolina, especially seasonal residences that would

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<sup>6</sup> Powers, n.p.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "James H. Perkins," *The Tryon Daily Bulletin*, July 13, 1940; "J. H. Perkins, Leading Financier, Dies in N.Y.," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, July 14, 1940.

<sup>9</sup> Raymond Diamond, "Equestrian Activity Will Soon Reach Its Peak In Tryon Area," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, January 7, 1940.

<sup>10</sup> "Interview with Walter T. Stockton" (rev. ed.), interviewed by Betty J. Blum, Chicago Architects Oral History Project (The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 2005), 1-5, 7; vital records, Polk County Register of Deeds.

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allow the owners a sense of escape to the mountains without completely forgoing modern conveniences. The style emphasized a close harmony of built structures and the natural environment, frequently manifest in horizontal buildings constructed of native stone or rock, massive logs, or heavy timbers.

During the brief tenure of James Perkins, Cotton Patch became a regular hunt fixture for the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club and hosted regular visitors while the Perkinses were in residence. James and Katrine Perkins oversaw the construction of the principal buildings and the creation of the estate's two basic nodes, including the main house, garage, well house, gate house, T barn, carriage house, and equipment shed. Two run-in sheds—one near the pond and one at Jackie's Bottoms—were located along the riding trails through the estate and helped establish the general distribution of resources throughout the property.

Elbert Nanney served as caretaker for the Perkinses, tending to the property, stables, and turkey farm. Each November, the Cotton Patch advertised its prized turkeys in the local newspaper for holiday meals, which were sold through Andrews & Swann in Tryon.<sup>11</sup> In April and May 1941, the Farmers Federation arranged to have Warcraft, a noted thoroughbred stallion, stand at Cotton Patch for breeding. Warcraft was a son of Man of War, the country's leading sire of hunting and steeplechase horses.<sup>12</sup> In May 1941, Nanney's cottage on the estate was destroyed by fire, although Nanney and his family escaped unharmed. Unable to save the house, the Tryon Fire Department protected the stables and turkey farm from any damage. At the time, the stables housed a number of fine horses including a government stallion.<sup>13</sup> The Nanneys resided in the Perkins' main house through the summer while the cottage was rebuilt and they returned to their home in October 1941.<sup>14</sup>

Following the death of her husband, Katrine Perkins sold Cotton Patch to Willis and Jacquelyn Kuhn of Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1948. Willis E. (Bill) Kuhn (1897-1977) was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and in 1925, Kuhn married Jacquelyn (Jackie) Montague (1898-1985) of Charleston, West Virginia. Kuhn, whose father worked as a driver for an express company, apparently grew up around automobiles, working as a mechanic's assistant and an employee of the short-lived Harroun Motor Company of Wayne, Michigan. After marrying, the couple moved to Indianapolis in 1932 after buying North Side Chevrolet. He later opened East Side Chevrolet in 1938 and Central Chevrolet in 1940, as well as an agency in Muncie, Indiana, that he eventually sold. Kuhn became one of the ten largest Chevrolet dealers in the country. As an avid sportsman but bothered by sinus and bronchial trouble, Bill Kuhn began visiting Tryon for its mild climate and terrain for riding and fox hunting. When the opportunity came to purchase Cotton Patch, the Kuhns were excited to learn their offer on the property was accepted.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "For Thanksgiving" advertisement, *The Tryon Daily Bulletin*, November 16, 1939.

<sup>12</sup> "Son of Man of War at the Cotton Patch," *The Tryon Daily Bulletin*, April 7, 1941: "Warcraft" advertisement, *The Tryon Daily Bulletin*, April 22, 1941.

<sup>13</sup> "Fire Destroys Home of Elbert Nanney," *The Tryon Daily Bulletin*, May 30, 1941.

<sup>14</sup> "Move In New Home," *The Tryon Daily Bulletin*, October 13, 1941.

<sup>15</sup> United States Census 1910 and 1930; Charles Vaughan, "Bill Kuhn's Life is Wrapped Up in Horsepower," *The Indianapolis News*, February 22, 1960.

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The Kuhns soon immersed themselves in Tryon society although at first they divided their time between Tryon and Indianapolis. By the mid-1950s, however, they were spending most of the year in Tryon, and kept an apartment above one of Bill Kuhn's automobile dealerships.<sup>16</sup> After serving as vice-president in 1950, Bill Kuhn became president of the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club in 1952. He also served as chairman of the horse show that year, and Jackie Kuhn was selected chairman of the Any and All Dog Show.<sup>17</sup> The Horse and Hound Show in 1950 attracted more than 9,000 spectators to Tryon and, as its welcoming name would suggest, the Any and All Dog Show always drew large, supportive crowds. In 1954, Jackie Kuhn organized, and initially sponsored, the Junior Equitation Association of the Carolinas to encourage horsemanship among young people. Originally headquartered at Cotton Patch, the group grew to include 40 youth. The Kuhns developed Jackie's Bottoms as a training area for the group's junior riders, modeled on a training facility she had seen in Switzerland.<sup>18</sup> The Kuhns, along with the Mahler family, were important supporters of the Junior Horse Show, held each year in March and hosted at Cotton Patch. Jackie Kuhn also served as vice-president of the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club before being elected president in 1963, the first woman to hold the position.

The Cotton Patch rose to national prominence in 1956, when Tryon hosted the United States Equestrian Team (USET) for training and trials ahead of the 1956 summer Olympics. Since the introduction of equestrian events to the Olympics in 1912, the United States Army sponsored the nation's equestrian team, which was composed of horses and riders from the calvary. Government funding ended after the 1948 Olympics, but a small group of backers organized the USET in 1950 and sponsored competitors at the 1952 games in Helsinki. For the 1956 Olympics, the USET depended on public support and funding to cover the estimated \$100,000 cost of sending nine riders, 16 horses, a coach, manager, and eight-person stable crew to the games in Stockholm.<sup>19</sup>

Tryon's equestrian community enthusiastically welcomed the USET, who were housed at Carter Brown's Pine Crest Inn. Training and trials were largely held at the Cotton Patch where the Kuhns developed Cotton Patch Bottoms for the jumping ring and constructed a terraced stadium for spectators on the hillside to the southeast. Only faint outlines of the Olympic ring and terraces remain visible. Competitors vied for spots on the four-man three-day event team and for three spots on the four-man Prix des Nations team as William Steinkraus of Connecticut had already been

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<sup>16</sup> Jane Moore Howe, "Picnics, Outdoor Events Usher in Autumn Season," *The Indianapolis Star*, September 26, 1956.

<sup>17</sup> "New Hunt Club Officers Named in Polk County," *Asheville Citizen*, January 24, 1952.

<sup>18</sup> Katherine Gaines, "Kuhns Boost Junior Equitation as Young Road to Sportsmanship," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, March 4, 1956.

<sup>19</sup> George J. Rosenberg, "Over the \$100,000 Hurdle in the Horse Olympics," *Sunday Mirror Magazine*, May 27, 1956. The Games of the XVth Olympiad were held in Melbourne, Australia, in November-December 1956. The 1956 Equestrian Games, however, were held in Stockholm, Sweden, in June as a result of the host country's strict equine quarantine policies. Asa S. Bushnell and Arthur G. Lentz, eds., *United States 1956 Olympic Book: Quadrennial Report of the United State Olympic Committee* (New York: United States Olympic Association, 1957.), 232-236.

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named to the squad. The trials, held over several days in March 1956, were well attended with more than 2,000 spectators present for the opening day of jumping tests.<sup>20</sup>

The riders who qualified for the Olympics at Cotton Patch remain highly admired and are regarded among the best in their disciplines, including jumping team members William Steinkraus, Frank Chapot, Hugh Wiley, and Warren Wofford; and three-day event team members Jonathan Burton, Frank Duffy, William Haggard, and Walter G. Staley, Jr.<sup>21</sup>

Following the Olympic training and trials, the Kuhns resumed activities with the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club, which incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1960. The Cotton Patch became known as a prominent thoroughbred breeding and training facility, and the Kuhns kept a distinguished stable of equine athletes. Kuhn-owned horses, including Open Spring, J.E.B. Stuart, Scaramouch, Midge, and Ultimate Folly, were all past winners at the Tryon Horse Show. Ultimate Folly was one of only two horses to win multiple events in 1955.<sup>22</sup> Bill Kuhn incorporated the operation, which bred Illiterate. After her successful racing career, Illiterate retired to a long tenure as broodmare, producing 11 foals, all winners.<sup>23</sup>

Horses almost certainly served as the introduction between Dr. Oliver Carmichael, Jr., and Bill and Jackie Kuhn. Carmichael's wife, the former Ernestine Morris of South Bend, Indiana, was a close friend of Jackie Kuhn. Dr. Carmichael, president of Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, from 1956 to 1960, bought the historic Block House in 1956 (DB 106:17). He asked Carter Brown to oversee renovations and expansion of the dwelling.<sup>24</sup> Bill Kuhn was named to Converse College's Board of Trustees in 1958, while Jackie Kuhn served on the board in the 1970s.<sup>25</sup> The Kuhns helped underwrite the construction of a new science building at the college. Kuhn Hall, built in 1967, was dedicated in honor of their service to the school.<sup>26</sup>

After his tenure as president, Dr. Carmichael donated the Block House to the college for use by its equestrian team and as the potential site for an amphitheater to stage performances of Shakespeare's plays. The Kuhns, in a move that appears to have been altruistic in nature, purchased the storied Block House in 1970 from Converse College to maintain the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club's popular steeplechase course. The Kuhns hosted the steeplechase at the Block House before selling the property to Mr. and Mrs. Milton Edward Prevost of Massachusetts in 1972. The annual steeplechase continued to be held at the Block House until 1988, when it moved to a new course at

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<sup>20</sup> "Many Tryon People Help U.S. Team," *Asheville Citizen*, December 1, 1955; Bob Collins, "10 Riders Vie for Three Vacant Posts on Olympic Equestrian Team," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, March 11, 1956.

<sup>21</sup> Tryon Horse Show program, Tryon Riding and Hunt Club, 2016, 18.

<sup>22</sup> Bob Terrell, "Ashlyn Wyman Rides 2 Firsts," *Asheville Citizen*, April 22, 1954; Mal Mallette, "Ashlyn Wyman, Nova Bill Win Blue Ribbons in Tryon Horse Show," *Asheville Citizen*, April 21, 1955.

<sup>23</sup> Ed DeRosa, "Illiterate, dam of Alphabet Soup, dies at Lambholm South," *Thoroughbred Times Today*, January 14, 2003.

<sup>24</sup> "Block House Estate Sold," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, July 29, 1956.

<sup>25</sup> "Tryon Man Named Converse Trustee," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, December 14, 1958; "Mrs W E Kuhn," *The Tryon Daily Bulletin*, July 8, 1985.

<sup>26</sup> "Dedication Set For Kuhn Hall," *The Greenville News*, September 24, 1967.

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the Foothills Equestrian Nature Center (FENCE) on land donated by the Mahler family.<sup>27</sup> After selling the Block House, the Kuhns made Cotton Patch available to Converse College for its riding program and other activities and events. Their connection to Converse College continued after Mrs. Kuhn's death in 1985 with a bequest of the estate to the school. Converse College briefly owned Cotton Patch from 1986 to 1989.

The Cotton Patch experienced a series of mysterious and devastating fires over a two-week span in May 1972. The first fire, which began in the stables, was originally believed to have been started by lightning. Reported around midnight, the fire destroyed one of the Cotton Patch stables and killed 20 horses. An adjoining stable also caught fire but was quickly controlled and caused minimal damage. Six of the horses belonged to Kuhns, while the other 14 were owned by other people. Collectively, the horses were valued between \$250,000 and \$350,000.<sup>28</sup> A second fire, occurring just a week later, destroyed an office building containing important farm records and irreplaceable items. Less than a week later, a third fire began in an equipment shed and was destroyed before firemen arrived. The Kuhns, now suspecting arsonists, offered a reward for information about the fires, blocked all trails and roads through the estate, and hired a security guard.<sup>29</sup> In July, the Kuhns hired a 17-year-old South Carolina man to stand guard while the regular night watchman was on vacation. The young guard reported two more fires on his first weekend including in a carport attached to the house and a building near the swimming pool. In addition to the fires, the guard reported seeing, and firing at, two men fleeing the scene. The youth was later arrested for stealing one of the Kuhns' cars and accused of setting the July fires, which caused minimal damage. The earlier fires went unresolved.<sup>30</sup>

The Kuhns expanded the number of built resources at Cotton Patch during the 1960s and 1970s, some replacing structures damaged or destroyed by fire. The couple added buildings near the house for conducting business and hosting visitors and guests. The studio, guest house, and garage for the guest house were built in the 1960s near the main house. The swimming pool and pool house were added in the 1970s and located to the south of the house beyond a tall hedge. The large U barn and muck house were constructed in the late 1970s in the stable area and likely replaced buildings destroyed during the fires a few years earlier.

In addition to promoting the equestrian culture of Tryon and Polk County, the Kuhns became involved in a number of civic activities. Bill Kuhn, building upon his business experience in Indianapolis, opened Tryon Motors, while Jackie Kuhn served as president of the St. Luke's Hospital Auxiliary. With a professed interest in improving educational opportunities, the Kuhns donated

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<sup>27</sup> Lewis W. Green, "Historic Block House Sold," *Asheville Citizen*, October 31, 1970; William Dobbyn, "Block House in Polk Has New Owner," *Asheville Citizen*, December 15, 1972; "Colleges' Responsibilities Cited at Inauguration," *Spartanburg Herald*, December 7, 1957; Powers, n.p.

<sup>28</sup> "Asheville, Tryon Fires Cause \$500,000 Damages," *Asheville Citizen*, May 16, 1972.

<sup>29</sup> "Fire Hits Horse Farm," *Asheville Citizen*, May 24, 1972; "Arson Believed Cause in Third Blaze," *Asheville Citizen*, May 31, 1972.

<sup>30</sup> "2 More Fires Strike Tryon Horse Farm," *Asheville Citizen*, July 18, 1972; "Youthful Guard at Cotton Patch Farms Arrested," *Asheville Citizen*, July 19, 1972; "Security Guard Charged in Polk with Burning," *Asheville Citizen*, July 25, 1972.

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\$25,000 toward the purchase of land for Tryon High School, which opened in 1968 adjacent to Harmon Field. The Tryon Board of Education dedicated the library to Jackie Kuhn for her lifelong interest in educating young people.<sup>31</sup>

Converse College, who became owners of Cotton Patch at the death of Jackie Kuhn, sold the estate to Robert H. Wallace in 1989, and he undertook a number of improvements to the property, particularly addressing the neglected landscape of the farm. In 1992, as part of a broader land management program, the property was designated as a Stewardship Forest by the United States Forest Service. Wallace rehabilitated portions of the house, most significantly in the kitchen wing. The original kitchen was enlarged by removing walls from the adjoining flower room, pantry, and maid's sitting room to form a continuous kitchen and breakfast area. The remodeled kitchen was finished with reclaimed heart pine from a cotton mill in Shelby, North Carolina. In 1998, Wallace added the covered riding arena to the property. The residual acreage, approximately 420 acres, was placed under a conservation easement with Upstate Forever in 2003, to help preserve the character of the landscape.

In 2003, Mark and Faith Jorgenson of Florida purchased The Cotton Patch from Robert Wallace, who had not resided on the property for several years. The Jorgensons began a two-year rehabilitation of the house and equestrian facilities. Under the terms of the conservation easement, they are not allowed to alter the footprint of any of the existing structures, so in large measure the alterations have been within the existing envelope of the buildings. In addition to renovations at the main house, the Jorgensons have made renovations and updates to the other domestic buildings, including the guest house, studio, and pool house. The built a new run-in shed at Cotton Patch Bottoms and in the pasture above Jackie's Bottoms. A new goat barn was erected in a clearing south of Cotton Patch Bottoms. The Jorgensons have emphasized using comparable or compatible materials for any changes to help maintain the cohesive architectural character of the property.

The Cotton Patch continues to serve as one of the premier equestrian estates near Tryon and a vital component in the network of rural properties that comprise the Hunting Country of Polk County. The Kuhns' lasting legacy in Tryon derives directly from their love of and direct involvement in the community's equestrian activities, which remain an important facet of life in Tryon and Polk County. The Tryon Riding and Hunt Club continues to preserve and enhance the area's equestrian heritage through its numerous social and sporting events, clinics, and scholarships for graduating high school seniors in Polk and surrounding counties. FENCE offers a large equestrian center with stables, training facilities, and trails, while the Foothills Equestrian Trails Association (FETA) preserves the historic equestrian trail system in and around Polk County's Hunting Country. The Tryon International Equestrian Center opened in 2014 as one of the premier centers in the equestrian world. Developed by six families as a resort for horse enthusiasts, the 1,400-acre facility hosted the World Equestrian Games in 2019, once again shining an international spotlight on Tryon's significant equestrian culture.

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<sup>31</sup> "Converse Trustee Dies," *Greenville News*, February 17, 1977; "Mrs W E Kuhn," *The Tryon Daily Bulletin*, July 8, 1985.

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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:**

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

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** PL 311

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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** approx. 105 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| A. Latitude: 35.218752 | Longitude: -82.203700 |
| B. Latitude: 35.218249 | Longitude: -82.199866 |
| C. Latitude: 35.216279 | Longitude: -82.200295 |
| D. Latitude: 35.213974 | Longitude: -82.203306 |
| E. Latitude: 35.214397 | Longitude: -82.205179 |
| F. Latitude: 35.212839 | Longitude: -82.205557 |
| G. Latitude: 35.213248 | Longitude: -82.212158 |
| H. Latitude: 35.213796 | Longitude: -82.212185 |
| I. Latitude: 35.215594 | Longitude: -82.209267 |
| J. Latitude: 35.217923 | Longitude: -82.207957 |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |          |           |
|-------------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: 17 | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: 17 | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: 17 | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: 17 | Easting: | Northing: |

The Cotton Patch  
Name of Property

Polk County, NC  
County and State

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

The eligible boundary is shown by a solid black line on the accompanying Polk County tax map. The boundary encompasses two tax parcels [PINs 2771-87-5298 and 2771-97-1412] containing the portions of Cotton Patch Farm most directly associated with the residential areas, equestrian facilities, and riding trails. The eligible boundary generally follows the Pacolet River on the north and west sides, South River Road on the east, and property lines along the south.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The eligible boundary for the Cotton Patch encompasses all of the built resources associated with the main residence and equestrian facilities on the property, which covers approximately 105 acres. The boundary includes the main house, garages, guest houses, dependent structures, terraces and retaining walls, barns, stables, and run-in sheds, along with the entrance drive, unpaved farm roads, riding rings and trails, and a pond. In addition to the cleared and maintained areas surrounding the buildings, the boundary includes some of the wooded surroundings to provide an appropriate setting for the rural estate. Excluded from the boundary are additional agricultural fields, undeveloped land, and stewardship forest away from the in a conservation easement.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Clay Griffith  
organization: Acme Preservation Services, LLC  
street & number: 825C Merrimon Ave., #345  
city or town: Asheville state: NC zip code: 28801  
e-mail: [cgriffith.acme@gmail.com](mailto:cgriffith.acme@gmail.com)  
telephone: 828-281-3852  
date: December 31, 2020

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**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.)

The Cotton Patch

Name of Property

Polk County, NC

County and State

## Photographs

The following information pertains to each of the photographs:

Name of Property: The Cotton Patch  
Location: 426 South River Road, Tryon vic., North Carolina  
County: Polk  
Name of Photographer: Clay Griffith / Acme Preservation Services  
Date of Photographs: March 29, 2019 (unless otherwise noted)  
Location of Digital Master: Historic Preservation Office  
North Carolina Division of Archives and History  
109 E. Jones Street  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2807

### Photographs:

1. Entrance from South River Road
2. Entrance drive to Perkins-Kuhn House, view to northwest
3. View west from Perkins-Kuhn House to Cotton Patch Bottoms and Pacolet River
4. Cotton Patch Bottoms
5. Riding trail along Pacolet River
6. Carriage road between Jackie's Bottoms and dressage arena
7. Perkins-Kuhn House, façade, view to northwest (Non-contributing resource)
8. Perkins-Kuhn House, entry porch and kitchen wing, view to northwest (Non-contributing resource)
9. Perkins-Kuhn House, rear elevation, view to northeast (Non-contributing resource)
10. Perkins-Kuhn House, dining room, view to northeast (Non-contributing resource)
11. Garage, façade, view to north
12. Studio, oblique front view to northeast
13. Guest House, façade, view to north
14. Pool House, oblique front view to southeast
15. Gate House, overall view to south
16. T Barn, south elevation, view to northeast
17. Carriage House, oblique front view to southwest (T Barn in foreground)
18. Pond Shed, oblique front view to southwest
19. Cotton Patch Bottoms and Shed (Non-contributing resource), view to northwest
20. Jackie's Bottoms Shed, oblique front view to west
21. Arena, façade, view to northwest (Non-contributing resource)

**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.