

Welcome to the Pine Crest Inn

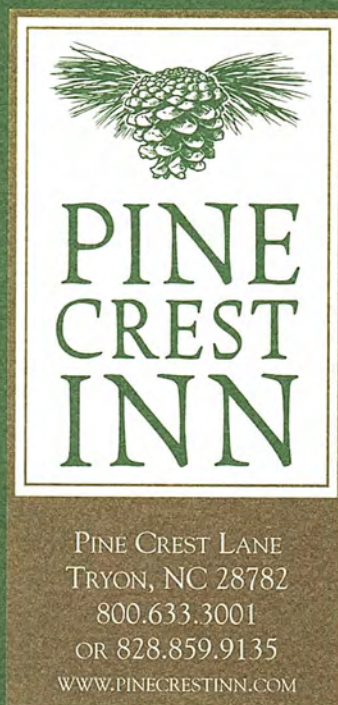


1906 PINE CREST INN IN TRYON, NC OFFERED TURN-KEY AT

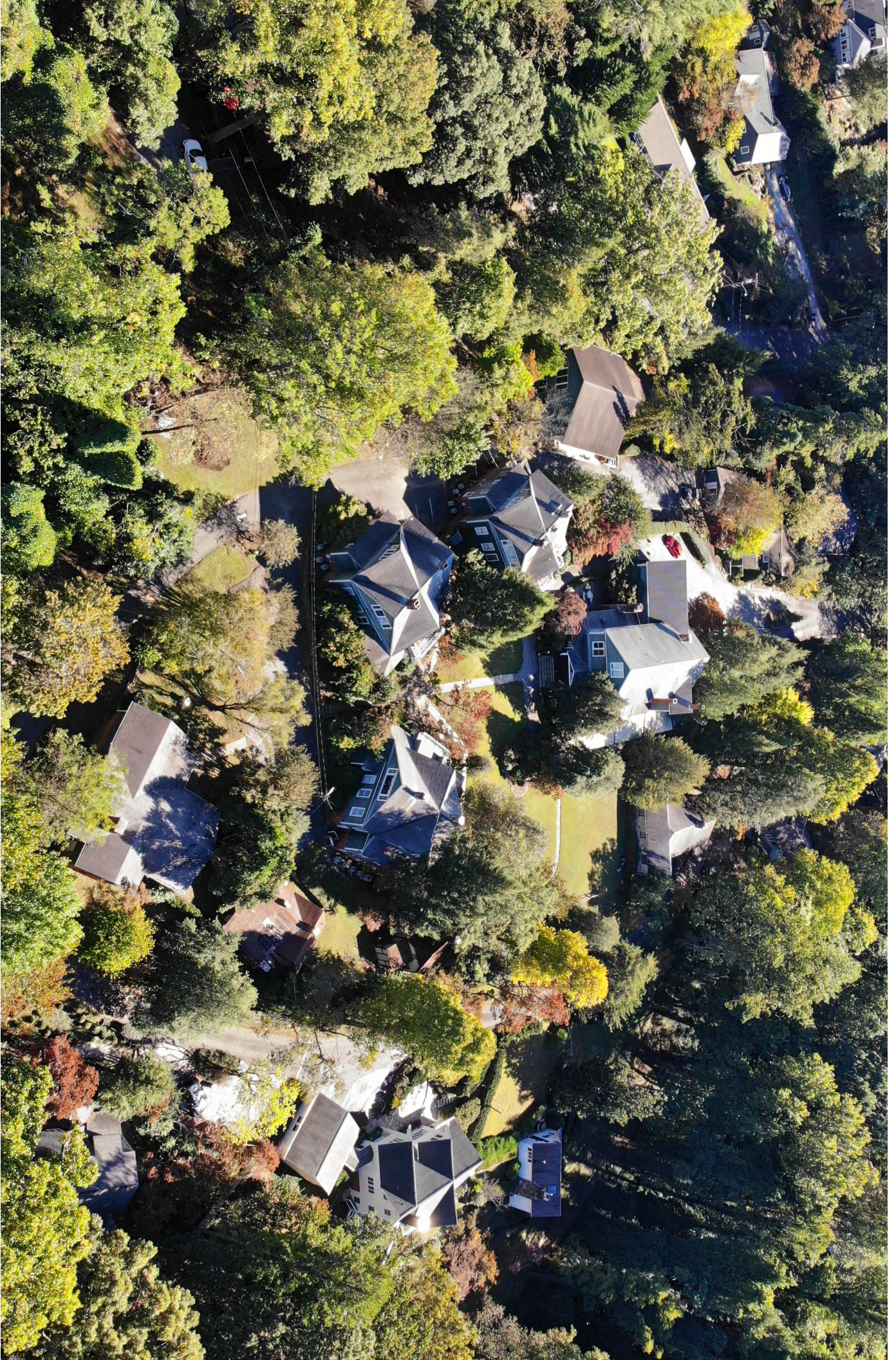
Summary of the property:

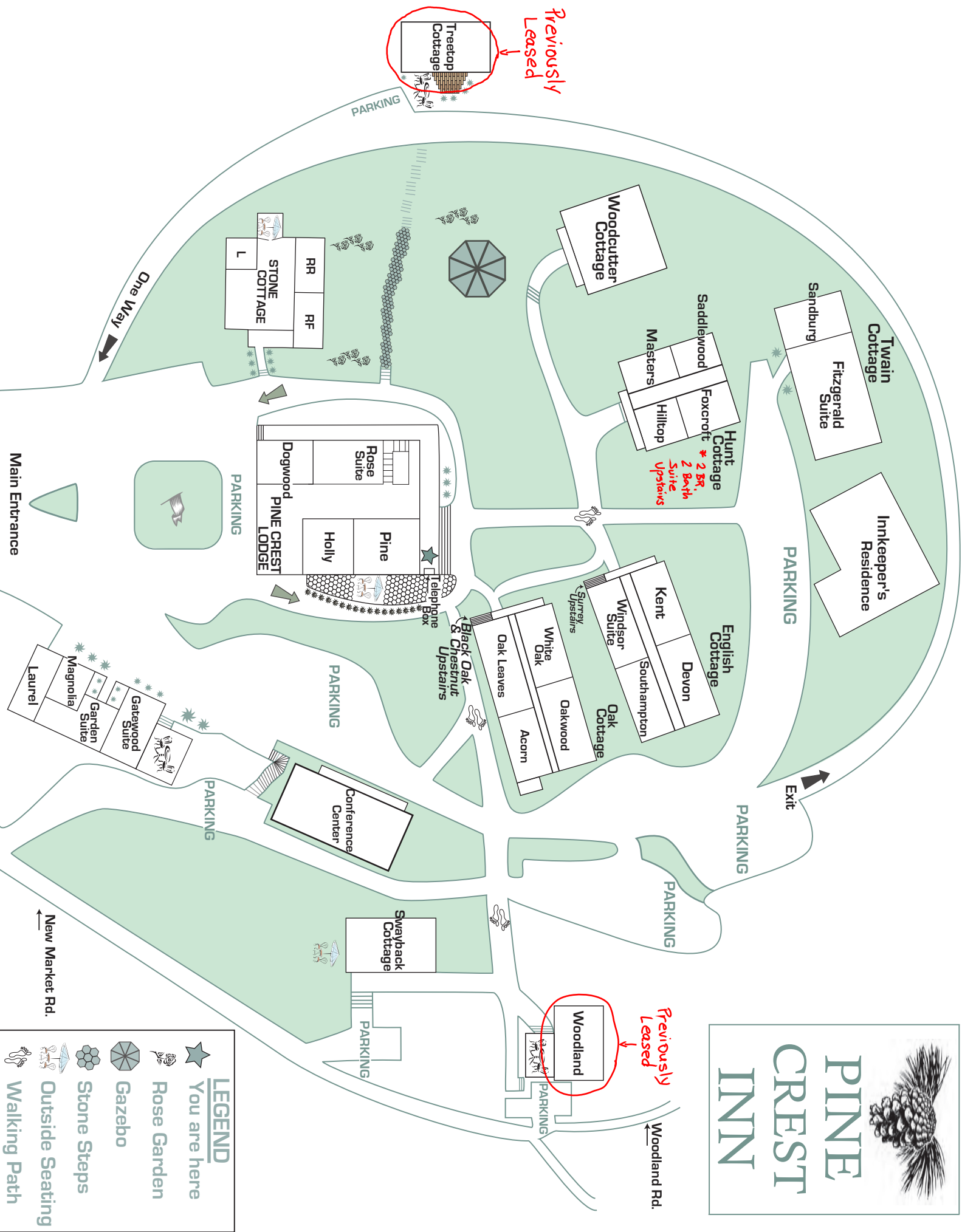
- 3 parcels of land totaling approximately 9 acres
- 11 buildings make up 37 rooms, suites, & cottages
- Two-story modern conference facility
- 80-seat full-service restaurant with bar
- Full ABC permits with award-winning wine cellar
- Large commercial kitchen
- Listed on National Registry of Historic Places

For additional information or to schedule a showing, please contact









LEGEND

- You are here
- Rose Garden
- Gazebo
- Stone Steps
- Outside Seating
- Walking Path



A Brief History of the 1906 Pine Crest Inn

The Pine Crest Inn is the last of the four major inns still in operation associated with the early development of Tryon as one of the finest resort communities of western North Carolina. The moderating climate and the notable scenery of the small town on the southern slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains began to attract summer visitors from across the nation after the arrival of the railroad in 1877.

Among these early visitors were people suffering from various respiratory ailments, and the original four buildings of the Pine Crest Inn were built in 1906 as a tuberculosis sanatorium called the Thermal Belt Sanatorium. In 1917 Carter Brown, a young resort developer from Castle Park, Michigan, took over the property and managed it as the Pine Crest Inn. Brown attracted a large clientele, many of whom stayed and contributed to the growth of Tryon. He was also the moving force behind Tryon earning a national reputation as an equestrian center.



Brown's architectural interests also were manifested throughout the area and are most evident at the Pine Crest Inn, where he designed and built four cottages and a private residence, as well as making other improvements. The inn and its associated cottages are simple structures that reflect the unpretentious comfort that characterizes Tryon's overall quality.



The history of the Pine Crest Inn and the town of Tryon are intertwined. Tryon has gained fame in many areas, from its vineyards to its crafts and furniture-making to its variety of architecture, but it is perhaps its reputation as a resort with which it is best identified. Engendered by its climate, recreational activities, and friendly citizens, Tryon's resort status is embodied in the numerous inns and boarding houses that have operated over the years and in turn have contributed to the success of the other endeavors associated with Tryon.

Since the late 1870s, four hostelries -- McAbey Inn, Oak Hall Hotel, Pine Crest Inn, and Thousand Pines Inn -- signified Tryon's fame as a resort. Of these four, only the Pine Crest Inn continues to operate and maintain the high standards established by its developer, Carter Brown, standards that create a reputation of excellence for its gracious hospitality that is unpretentious yet is in keeping with the Inn's position as a resort.

Although Brown's name was synonymous for several decades with the Pine Crest Inn and, indeed, with Tryon's architectural and sporting developments, prior to Brown's arrival in Tryon the Inn property was closely associated with the town's reputation for a healthy climate that initially attracted those ailing from lung disease. Tryon is in the Thermal Belt -- an area in the foothills of the



Blue Ridge Mountains protected from the northern winds -- where temperatures are milder than in neighboring towns. Prior to 1877, with the advent of the Spartanburg-Asheville railway, there was little major commerce in the area and no tourism as it is known today.

During the early 1870s, Dr. L. R. McAboy had purchased the Dr. Columbus Mills House just north of Tryon and had expanded and converted it to the McAboy House, soon to become a popular inn. With the construction of the railroad, many of those who had been traveling to Asheville, famous for its tuberculosis sanatoriums, began to visit Tryon and the McAboy House in search of the "cure"; apparently many of the invalids attracted to the warmer climate and pleasant surroundings of Tryon were disillusioned with the unpredictable Asheville weather and tired of being around so many tuberculosis patients.

In 1906, three doctors, Earle Grady, E. M. Sally, and W. R. Engel, acquired the nucleus of the Pine Crest Inn property and proceeded to have what would become the main inn building and the Oak, English, and Hunt Cottages, erected as a sanatorium.



During the first decade of the twentieth century, Tryon experienced a great deal of growth. Crafts operations were established, and land values rose rapidly as investors became interested in the town. The number of visitors, increasingly more tourists instead of patients, rapidly increased. Many of these visitors were train passengers who had time to look around Tryon during stopovers and liked it so much that they decided to stay, often becoming seasonal visitors, and permanent residents. Property records indicate, however, that one enterprise that did not succeed was the Thermal Belt Sanatorium. In December of 1911, E. M. Sally purchased the interests of Drs. Grady and Earle, and when Brown arrived in Tryon in 1917, the property had been idle for several years.

In 1916, Brown had graduated from the University of Illinois, married and immediately purchased from his uncle, John Parr, the Castle (later known as Castle Park), a modest summer resort near Holland, Michigan. In September of 1917, realizing that the winter would be long and unproductive after their first season of operating the Castle, the Browns visited Tryon at the urging of Mrs. Brown's grandmother who recently had visited the area. They were so impressed with the town and the sanatorium property that they rented the property from Dr. Sally for the winter seasons of 1917-1918 and 1918-1919 and with H. A. Wilkie, Mrs. Brown's father, purchased it in 1920. The Browns named the Tryon property the Pine Crest Inn and continued to operate it from October to May until 1951. (They operated Castle Park from June through September until 1977.)

Over the years the Browns upgraded and enlarged the Pine Crest Inn and attracted a substantial carriage trade clientele to Tryon. Many of their guests continued a trend that had been established in Tryon during the late 19th century by buying property in the town. These seasonal or year-round residents in turn attracted others who would stay at the Inn and perpetuate the trend. The Inn became the focal point for Tryon's growth and development.



The Pine Crest Inn has entertained a diverse assortment of guests during its 100+ years of operation. They include South Carolina governor Jimmy Byrns; "Lefty" Flynn of silent movie fame and his wife Nora Langhorne, the screen's Gibson Girl; authors F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemmingway, who frequented the Swayback Cabin; French artist George Aid; Lord and Lady Astor; and the historians Mary and Charles Beard (he wrote



The Republic in the Woodcutter Cottage). Industrial magnates include Harry Ferguson of Ferguson Tractors and John Kimberly of Kimberly-Clark Paper Co. Many of the guests were upper mid-westerners, due to Brown's ties there, and the majority were sporting people.

Although many Pine Crest Inn guests were merely looking for the relaxed atmosphere it affords, a strong interest in horses always has been in the foreground. Brown was a principal force in establishing Tryon as an equestrian center of national importance. He opened riding trails, started Tryon's annual horse and hound show, steeplechase, and popularized fox hunting. At the Inn he maintained the Galax Stables of riding and steeplechase horses and he kenneled hounds.

In developing Tryon's reputation as a riding and hunting center, he built on a tradition that dated from the early 1800s when settlers from the South Carolina Low Country laid out race paths in the area for horse racing and fox hunting. Many of the first residents of Tryon had re-established these sports, and Brown proceeded to make them part of Tryon's essential business and community character.



Brown's interest in horses was associated with his interest in local architecture. He stabilized a fort and trading post known as the Block House and converted it to a private residence, as well as encouraged its nomination to the National Register. He also carved out the Harmon Field race course next to the Block House, the site of the horse show and football, baseball and track events. Brown strongly demonstrated his architectural interests at the Inn; he designed and built four of the cottages and moved three log cabins to the property and converted them to cottages. One of those cottages, Swayback, was a revolutionary war period cabin originally constructed in eastern Tennessee that is now 260+ years old.

Brown also instituted many activities associated solely with the Pine Crest Inn. These included Thanksgiving dinners preceding the opening formal fox hunt of the season; weekly barbecues at the large outside stone fireplace; mid-day and moonlight picnics in the surrounding mountains; and candlelight Sunday evening buffet suppers, followed by group singing.

He also established a school in a cottage once located on the site of the innkeepers' quarters. This one-room building with a large porch on which the desks were located could accommodate five to 20 students. They were Inn guests and children of former guests who became permanent Tryon residents.

In 1951, Brown sold the Inn to a partner, Edwin McLean. Brown continued to live in Tryon until the late 1960s when he returned permanently to Castle Park, where he died in 1978.

Pine Crest Inn then passed through a number of capable hands, but during the last decade the inn had developed a growing conference and meeting trade, adding a state-of-the-art conference center. The Caudle Family purchased the property in 2003 and continues to preserve and improve the standards of comfort, cuisine, and service necessary to maintain the wonderful history and high standards for both lodging and dining, as well as the *Wine Spectator* Best of Award of Excellence for the Pine Crest's extensive wine collection.





Awards & Associations

The 1906 Pine Crest Inn & Restaurant has received numerous awards and acknowledgments that reflect the high standards of hospitality and dining that have become trademarks of this property. Our affiliations & awards include:

- AAA Four-Diamond Inn for 13 consecutive years
- AAA Four-Diamond Restaurant for 6 consecutive years.
- Select Registry Distinguished Inns of North America 18 consecutive years
- Condé Nast Johansens Recommended Luxury Hotel Guide 9 consecutive years
- Classic Inns of the South – 11 consecutive years
- Mobil Travel Guide – 3 Stars
- Wine Spectator Award of Excellence – 9 consecutive years
- Wine Spectator Best of Award of Excellence – 2006-2010
- National Historic Register of Historic Places since 1982
- Professional Association of Innkeepers International (PAII)
- “Best Breakfast in the Southeast” – Arrington’s Inn Traveler, 2005 & 2006
- “Best Location for a Business Meeting” – Arrington’s Inn Traveler, 2004 & 2005
- Bronze Medal Winner – “Inn-Credible Breakfast Cook-Off” Competition 2008



English Cottage



Community Involvement

The 1906 Pine Crest Inn & Restaurant and its owner's and employees work hard to maintain and develop strong local community ties. Our involvement includes:

- Going Green, Board of Directors
- President, Board of Directors, Polk County Chamber of Commerce
- Secretary, Board of Directors, e-Polk / PANGAEA
- President, Innkeepers of the Carolina Foothills
- Vice-President, Board of Directors, Blue Ridge Mountain Host
- Board of Directors, Tryon Downtown Development Association (TDDA)
- Board of Directors, Polk County Travel & Tourism
- Chairman, Board of Directors, Tryon Tourism Development Authority
- Director, Polk County Regional Image Campaign

Conference Center



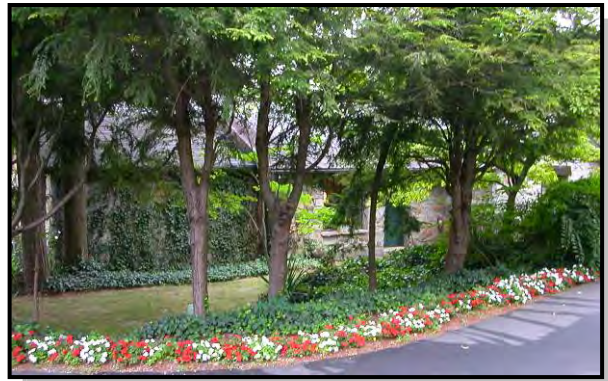
Romantic Getaways



View from Oak Cottage



Beautiful Gardens



Special Events

Stone Cottage & Gazebo



Weddings



Convenient to 3 local Airports

AVL

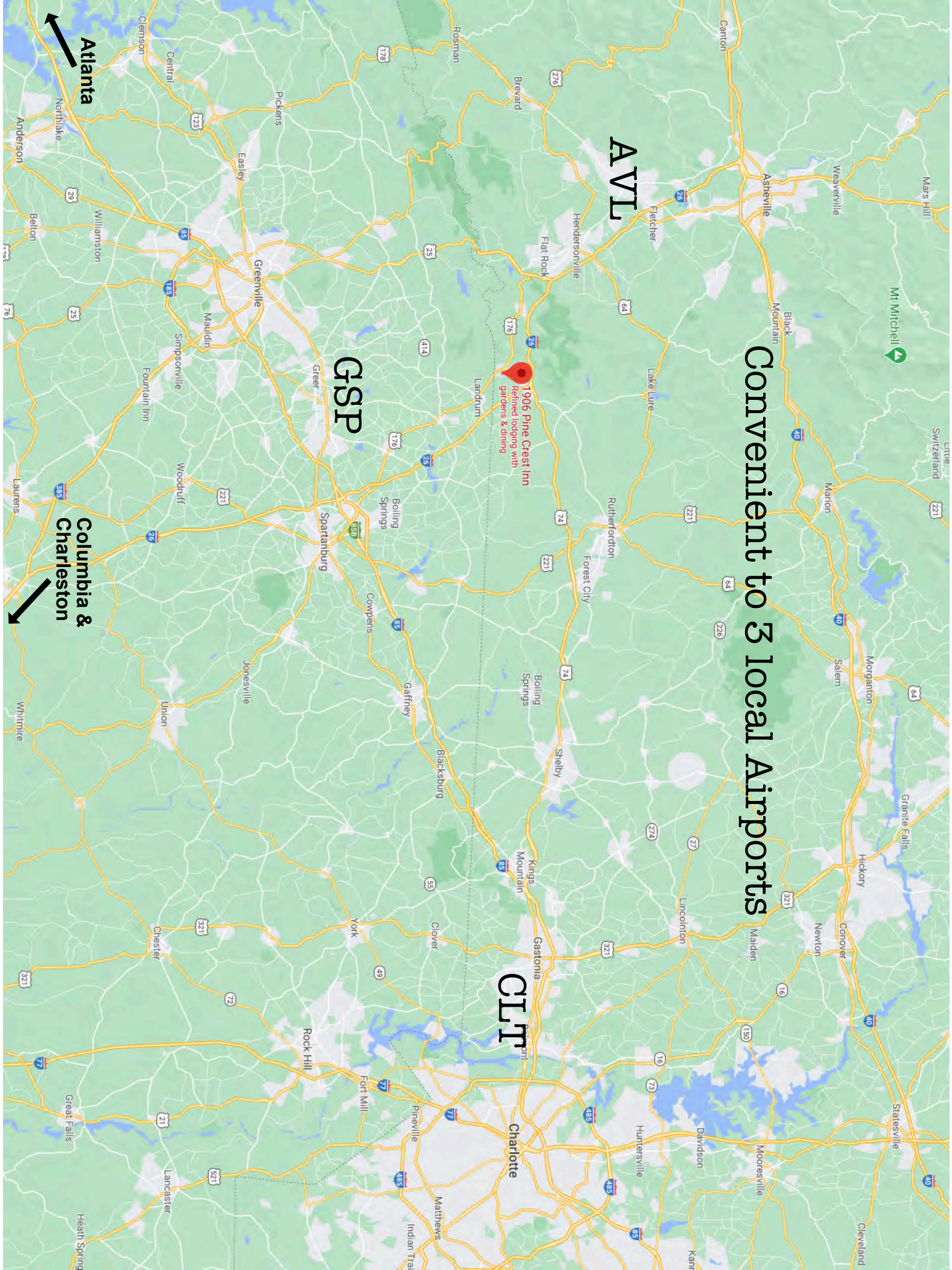
GSP

CLT

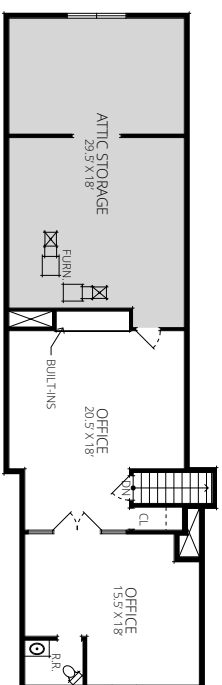
1906 Pine Crest Inn
Refined lodging with
gardens & dining

Atlanta

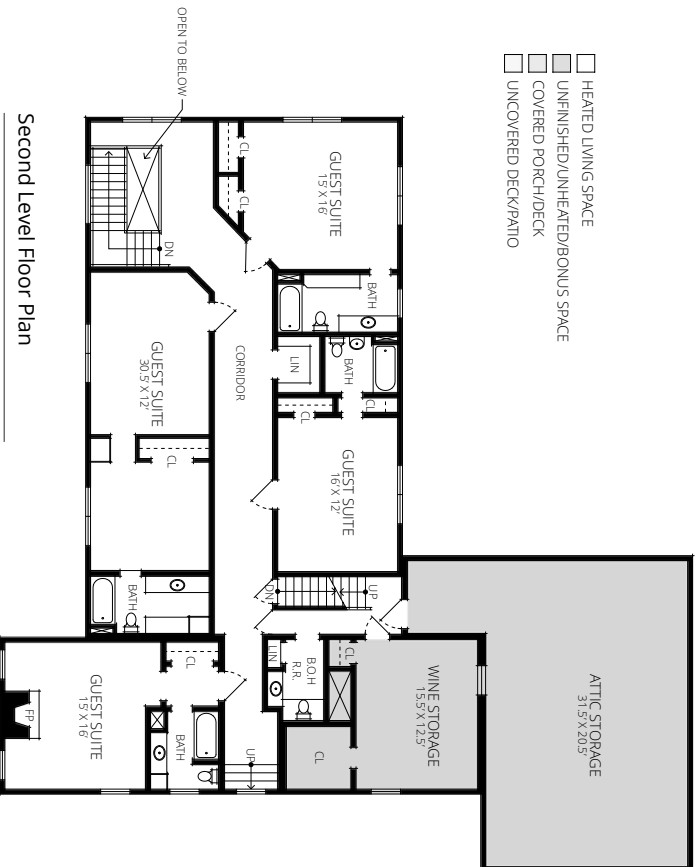
Columbia &
Charleston



Pine Crest Inn & Restaurant Tryon, NC Main Inn & Restaurant



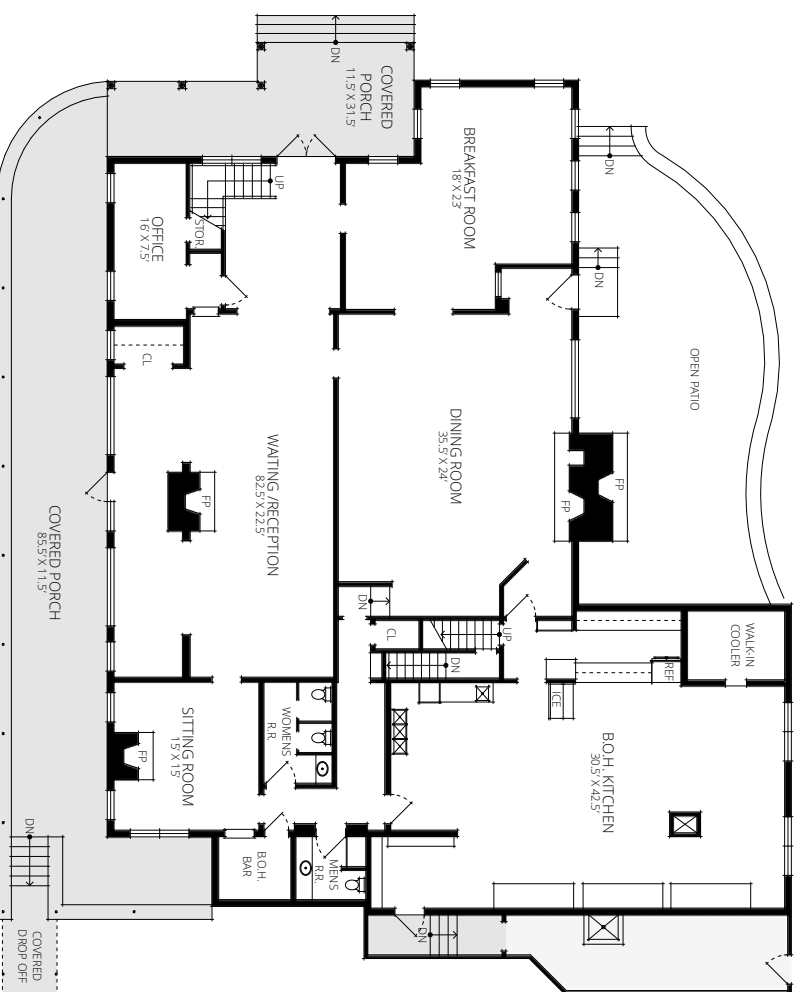
- HEATED LIVING SPACE
- UNFINISHED/UNHEATED/BONUS SPACE
- COVERED PORCH/DECK
- UNCOVERED DECK/PATIO



NOTES:
 * LIVING SPACE REQUIRES A MIN. OF 7'-0" CEILING HEIGHT (9'-0" BELOW A SLOPED ROOF). FINISHED SURFACES, HEATED SPACES, & DIRECT CONNECTION WITH OTHER LIVING SPACE. *BONUS SPACE MEETS SOME BUT NOT ALL OF THESE QUALIFICATIONS.
 1. MEASUREMENTS WERE OBTAINED VIA THE NORTH CAROLINA REAL ESTATE COMMISSION GUIDELINES.
 2. DIMENSIONS ARE ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST 1/2 FOOT AND ARE APPROXIMATE.
 3. INFORMATION WITHIN THESE DRAWINGS ARE INTENDED SOLELY FOR THE USE OF REALTY MARKETING. NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION.
 4. FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING MEASUREMENTS, MARKETING FLOOR PLANS, OR REMODEL, DESIGN & CONSULTING, CONTACT WES HOGAN AT: FeaturedListingsWNC@gmail.com, 1.828.577.1915, OR www.FeaturedListingsWNC.com



Main Level	Third Level
GUEST AREA/AMENITIES: 2,960 SQ. FT.	B.O.H. OFFICE: 722 SQ. FT.
OFFICE/FRONT DESK: 159 SQ. FT.	SUBTOTAL HEATED SPACE: 722 SQ. FT.
B.O.H./KITCHEN: 1,397 SQ. FT.	ATTIC STORAGE: 582 SQ. FT.
SUBTOTAL HEATED SPACE: 4,452 SQ. FT.	SUBTOTAL UNDER ROOF: 1,304 SQ. FT.
COVERED PORCH: 1,449 SQ. FT.	
SUBTOTAL UNDER ROOF: 5,901 SQ. FT.	
Second Level	TOTALS
GUEST ROOMS: 1,547 SQ. FT.	TOTAL HEATED SPACE: 7,394 SQ. FT.
COMMON SPACE/CORRIDOR: 519 SQ. FT.	TOTAL AREA UNDER ROOF: 10,466 SQ. FT.
B.O.H. BATH/STAIRWELL: 144 SQ. FT.	
SUBTOTAL HEATED SPACE: 2,210 SQ. FT.	
UN FINISHED ATTIC STORAGE: 1,041 SQ. FT.	
SUBTOTAL UNDER ROOF: 3,251 SQ. FT.	



Pine Crest Inn & Restaurant
Tryon, NC
Conference Center

Upper Level

MEETING & SUPPORT SPACE: 1,476 SQ. FT.

B.O.H. STORAGE: 131 SQ. FT.

SUBTOTAL HEATED SPACE: 1,607 SQ. FT.

COVERED PORCH: 210 SQ. FT.

SUBTOTAL UNDER ROOF: 1,817 SQ. FT.

Lower Level

MEETING & SUPPORT SPACE: 1,374 SQ. FT.

B.O.H. KITCHEN & STORAGE: 313 SQ. FT.

SUBTOTAL HEATED SPACE: 1,687 SQ. FT.

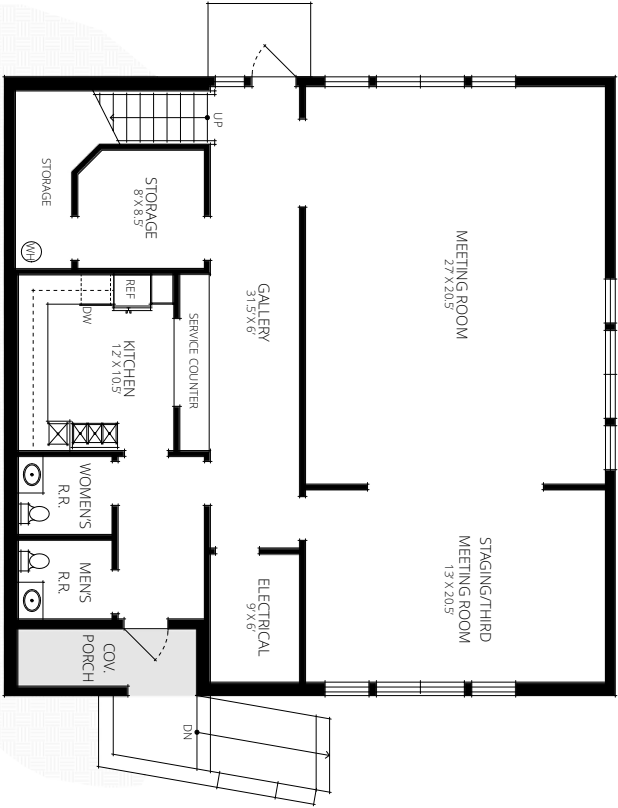
COVERED PORCH: 59 SQ. FT.

SUBTOTAL UNDER ROOF: 1,746 SQ. FT.

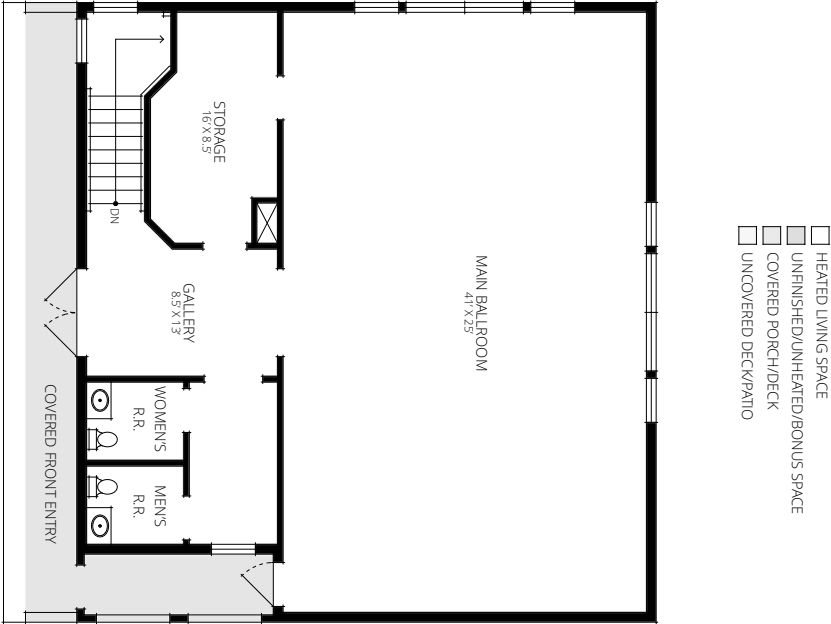
TOTALS

TOTAL HEATED SPACE: 3,295 SQ. FT.

TOTAL AREA UNDER ROOF: 3,564 SQ. FT.



Lower Level Floor Plan



Main Level Floor Plan

NOTES:
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 www.FeaturedListingsNC.com

A Brief History of Tryon

How a hidden-away hamlet changed into a haven for tourists.

**From An Architectural & Historical Survey of Tryon, N.C. by Diane Lea and Claudia Roberts Raleigh:
N.C. Dept. of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives & History, 1979.**

Tryon, N.C. is a unique community which has maintained a spirit of continuity and tradition while developing as a well-known resort. The small town which owes its existence to the arrival of the railroad in 1877 has not lost a sense of its past, either in its built environment or in the attitudes of its people.

Because of this awareness of its history, Tryon has been a leader in Polk County in developing its historical resources and making them known to visitors and new residents. The railway depot which once served the first wave of tourists to the scenic western North Carolina mountains, "The Land of the Sky," has recently been adapted to a new use as offices for four community organizations and as the Polk County Historical Association's local history museum. It is but one example of the town's commitment to keeping alive links with its past.

Another example of Tryon's efforts to preserve the past in the modern context is this publication which is based on the results of a block-by-block architectural and historical survey of the properties within the town limits. The survey was undertaken in the fall of 1978 by Robert M. Leary and Associates under the sponsorship of the Town of Tryon, the Polk County Community Foundation, the Polk County Historical Association and the North Carolina State Division of Archives and History. The survey is a means of identifying structures that are notable for their architectural and historical merits and thereby encouraging their preservation.

Members of the Polk County Historical Association were especially helpful in the completion of the survey and publication. Special thanks are due to Association member Mrs. Norme D. Frost and to Seth M. Vining, President of the Association.

The Polk County Historical Association is located at 1 Depot Street, Tryon, N.C. 28782. Copies of the publication are available at that address.

Before the coming of the railroad in 1877, there was little to lure the casual traveler to Tryon, then a picturesque settlement on the southern slope of the Blue Ridge above the Pacolet River Valley. The 3,000-foot peaks and the rolling foothills along the North Carolina-South Carolina boundary had been the scene of growth and conflict on the western frontier since the mid-eighteenth century. In 1767, William Tryon, colonial governor of North Carolina, had come in person to the frontier to negotiate a treaty line separating lands claimed by white settlers from the Cherokee hunting grounds to the west. The resulting survey named one of the landmark peaks Tryon Mountain in the governor's honor, and the name became a fixed and prominent part of the area's history.

In 1839, a frontier post office named Tryon was established on the Howard Gap Road, once a trading path used by Indian trappers to carry their furs from the western mountains to the Block House, a fortified trading post just south of the present city of Tryon. It was, also, the trail followed in 1776 by Captain Thomas Howard and his mounted rangers to the Battle of Round Mountain, which broke the Cherokee dominance in the area. The citizens served by the Tryon post office

were for the most part homesteaders and small farmers. Others were members of Tory families who had moved west when their properties were confiscated after the Revolutionary War. Some of them were drawn by the promotions of the Speculation Land Company, formed in 1796 by Tench Coxe of Philadelphia, to market vast land grant holdings in North Carolina. Yet another group were descendants of prospectors who had come to work the veins of gold discovered west of the Catawba River just before the turn of the nineteenth century. Other than the trading of essential supplies, there was little major commerce in the area and nothing that could be defined by modern standards as tourism.

When the railroad pushed north into Polk County in the early 1870s, Tryon was still little more than a foothills settlement, hardly an impressive end-of-the-line station for the ambitious Asheville-Spartanburg Railway, built to connect the markets and seaports of the South Carolina Low Country with the people and resources of North Carolina, Tennessee and the Ohio Valley. Planning for a railroad into the remote and scenic western North Carolina mountains had begun as early as 1831, but the death in 1839 of Robert Y. Hayne, the energetic South Carolinian who was spearheading the project, brought it to a temporary standstill. The next attempt to build a railroad from South Carolina across the Blue Ridge Mountains was launched in 1850, when several charters were granted by the North Carolina State Legislature to companies willing to undertake the task. The need to raise money for building the railroad by issuing railway bonds was a major reason for the legislature's creation of Polk County in 1855. (Ironically, when given the opportunity to vote on issuing such bonds, the people of Polk County voted no by a margin of 372 to 114.)

Despite the active interest in rail transportation through the area in the 1850s, it was not until 1873 that ground was broken in Polk County for the first railroad to cross the difficult terrain of the Blue Ridge Mountains from the south. The Asheville-Spartanburg Railway eventually reached Tryon, less than 50 miles short of its goal, Asheville. When completed to Asheville, the railroad would join the Western North Carolina Railroad to Tennessee and the Ohio Valley, opening up the much desired though much delayed transportation route between the western lands and the coast.

The railroad was to have a dramatic impact upon the course of Tryon's economic and social development. But when the first trains began to arrive, Tryon had few goods to be transported and little to offer as accommodations for the railway passengers. Branson's Business Directory of 1877-1878 lists only two general stores, owned by Isaac Henderson and by W.M. Thompson, and an establishment called the Toll House, operated by Jesse Rhodes. There was also the McAboy House, a comfortable and well-regarded inn located on the Howard Gap Road in the Township of Lynn, about one and one-half miles north of the Tryon depot.

The McAboy House welcomed and sheltered many who were to shape Tryon's future, and so it played a special role in the town's history. The building had originally been one of three plantation houses owned by the Mills brothers, descendants of Colonel Ambrose Mills, an early settler of Rutherford County who was hanged as a loyalist by American troops in the Revolutionary War. (Only one of the three houses is still standing: Screven Plantation, which passed out of the Mills family in 1900 when the house was purchased by John B. Cleveland of Spartanburg as a wedding present for his daughter, Mrs. William J. Screven.) The house which became the inn had been the home of Dr. Columbus Mills, donor of the land for the Polk County Courthouse in the nearby town of Columbus, which was named for him. Shortly after the Civil War, Mills sold his house and land to a Presbyterian minister from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Dr. L. R. McAboy.

McAboy added a third floor to the plantation house, and the hospitable McAboy House was born. The inn soon became popular with northern visitors attracted by the promotional flyers put out by the Southern Railway, who took over the Asheville-Spartanburg Railway from an interim owner shortly after 1879, and by the Speculation Land Company. The aptly named Speculation Land Company's holdings included one-half million acres in Buncombe, Rutherford and Mecklenburg Counties. Later Polk, Henderson, Cleveland, Gaston, McDowell and Union Counties were formed from the earlier three, and contained within their boundaries the so-called Speculation Lands. The advertisements dubbed Tryon and neighboring resort towns "The Land of the Sky." Brochures touted the temperate climate of the 2,000-foot wide Thermal Belt which encompassed Tryon and suitability of the area's soils for fruit growing and viticulture.

Many guests who came to Tryon and McAboy House in those early years were seeking a "cure" for tuberculosis. Asheville had become famous for its tuberculosis sanatoriums, and many invalids, disillusioned with the unpredictable Asheville weather or perhaps weary of the company of other patients, found their way down the mountain to the warmer climate and pleasanter surroundings of Tryon. Poet Sidney Lanier was dying of tuberculosis when he was brought from Asheville to McAboy House in 1881. Lanier had been living and working in Baltimore when he became seriously ill from the disease he had contracted in prisoner-of-war camps during the Civil War. Lanier did not live long enough to become a resident of the Pacolet Valley, but his wife and two young sons, Sidney, Jr. and Robert, moved from the Wilcox House, where Lanier died, to Tryon. (The Wilcox House was built across the road from the McAboy House by Lemuel Wilcox, Dr. McAboy's son-in-law. It is still standing.)

The number of visitors to Tryon continued to grow in the early 1880's and the demand for accommodations increased. In 1882, Theodore Thomas Ballenger and his father-in-law, John Garrison, built Tryon's first hotel, ambitiously named the Tryon City Hotel. Ballenger, an enterprising young South Carolinian related by marriage to two of the area's largest land-owning families, the Williamses and the Garrisons, was enthusiastic about the possibilities for tourism in Tryon. He gave the industry a substantial boost with his hotel, later renamed the Oak Hill by Mrs. Delia Williams, its manager from 1892-1895. Perched on a bluff overlooking the depot, Ballenger's hotel soon became a Tryon institution, hosting ever more famous visitors as the town's reputation as a resort grew. The hotel is still in operation almost a century later, though plans have been made to raze it and use the site for a townhouse complex.

Upon its incorporation in 1885, Tryon was formally laid out in a circle around the railroad depot, which was then located on the east side of the railroad tracks. Trade Street, the single commercial street, was the location of T.T. Ballenger's dry goods store and his blacksmith shop, as well as the depot. Ballenger was already one of Tryon's most prominent citizens. In 1885, he was named the town's first mayor. He helped to draft the town's ordinances, and he meted out justice when disputes arose among the moonshiners, known locally as the Dark Corners Boys for the South Carolina mountain slope where they distilled their product. The latter duty may have accounted for a special exemption in the ordinances, which allowed the mayor and town council to carry weapons on their persons.

By this time, some six trains a day were bringing visitors seeking the healthful climate or just a pleasant place to rest. Some of the visitors had not intended to stop in Tryon at all, but the inevitable delays due to a "hot box" (an overheated wheel bearing) or the addition of a second engine known as "The Little Helper" to push the train up the 200-foot grade to Saluda gave many people the

opportunity to descend from the train and look around. Often the delay necessitated an overnight stay at the Tryon City Hotel, or, if its thirty-six rooms were filled, a friendly Tryon home hastily converted to a boarding house would provide lodging.

It was in such circumstances that one of Tryon's most distinguished early residents first viewed the town. In 1889, William Gillette, a noted actor who would create the definitive Sherlock Holmes on the New York stage a few years later, was enchanted by Tryon's peace and beauty while making a trip to recover from the loss of his wife. Almost immediately after arriving in town, Gillette began purchasing the first of his many parcels of land within what are today's town limits. His first permanent home, built around 1890 in Tryon, was Thousand Pines, a small cabin with a massive fireplace constructed of native stones at an eccentric angle in the two-room dwelling. Gillette continued to add to his cabin and to his land holdings around it until his departure from Tryon in 1910. Both he and his property would play important roles in Tryon's history.

As Tryon's tourist industry steadily increased during the late 1880's, a second industry began to develop. Several new residents, encouraged by the advertising that had brought them to Tryon, began to plant peach orchards and vineyards, and a local fruit growing and shipping industry was established. The fruit was shipped by rail to cities around the region and often sold by vendors to train passengers as they waited for departure time.

Among the early fruit growers was George Edward Morton, who came to Tryon in 1886 suffering from acute respiratory and stomach ailments; his physicians predicted that he had less than a month to live. He recovered and lived thirty more years to enjoy Valhalla Fruit Farm, which he developed on forty acres of land taken from a parcel in the valley known as the old Hannon Plantation. In 1896, Morton started *The Tryon Bee*, Tryon's first weekly newspaper. The paper continued for twenty years as *The Polk County News* under W.F. Little.

Perhaps the earliest resident to become interested in commercial agriculture was General Ulysses Doubleday, a Civil War General who owned a large tract of land on Laurel Avenue. Doubleday brought Alexis J. Lamort, a French-Swiss grape grower, to Tryon to ship his grapes and improve his vineyards on Laurel Avenue and Piney Mountain. Lamort left Tryon briefly around 1893 to manage one of George Vanderbilt's farms in Asheville. While at the Biltmore estate, Lamort no doubt learned valuable techniques for dealing with the red clay soil of the region. He later returned to Tryon with his brother-in-law, another French-Swiss named Golay, and both men started successful vineyards and wineries. In 1912, grapes from Lamort's vineyard and those of fellow grape grower William T. Lindsey won first prize for "best of quality and appearance" at a Toronto fair.

In her book about Tryon, *Reminiscences*, Helen Ashley Carver states that by 1895, "the landscape in Tryon and environs was mostly vineyards," and enumerates several people who were engaged in the industry at that time. In addition to General Doubleday, Alexis Lamort and George Morton, there were William T. Lindsey, a native of Kentucky who came to Tryon for his health; Lieutenant Commander Eugene B. Thomas of Ohio, who retired to Tryon and started a vineyard on some orchard land he purchased near McAboy House; and J.W. Whitney, whose vineyards were located on Warrior Mountain and behind his house in what is now the Lyncourt Drive neighborhood. Thomas later sold his vineyard to Judge Bacon, when the Bacon family was visiting the McAboy House. Miss Carver notes that the judge's son, F.P. Bacon, obtained the vineyard as his first business, and "if he has skipped a Tryon enterprise since, I am sure it was an oversight and not

intended." Harold Doubleday, the son of General Doubleday, joined in partnership with Sidney Lanier's oldest son and maintained the family vineyards. Mrs. Hatch owned a small vineyard near the Doubleday's Laurel Avenue property; Roberth Alston owned a vineyard on the south side of the railroad track. Alexander Beatson was noted not only for grapes but for "an astonishing number of other fruit"; and Stephen Hadley sold his peach orchard and vineyard, which covered the slopes beneath the present Tryon elementary school, to Miss Carver in 1895. Later vineyards mentioned in *Reminiscences* were those of the Rankin family, owned eventually by Dr. Louis Fulder, and Dr. Juanita Lea and Dr. B.C. vonKahlden's vineyards. The extensive Vollmer vineyards originated in 1924.

By 1889 Tryon's tourist and agricultural industries, though small, were well established and were drawing to the area people of diverse backgrounds and broad interests. The village comprised only twenty-four houses, three stores and the depot, but that year Tryon's permanent residents and seasonal visitors joined in a project which stimulated the development of the community's civic and cultural character. It began when the three Le Duc sisters from Minnesota saw a need for a public library and took on the task of filling that need. The sisters, new residents of Tryon, and two friends, Mrs. Amelia Spencer and Mrs. Thomas Knott, set out to canvass the occupants of the houses, which included a generous number of boarders, as to the interest in forming a club to promote a library. The club would also serve as a focus for intellectual and cultural stimulation. On January 9, 1889, a meeting of thirty-eight women was held at "The Laurels," a boarding house run by Mrs. Gould from Massachusetts and Miss Bowman from New Orleans. The women decided to name the club in honor of Sidney Lanier, and Miss Lily Wilcox walked across the red clay of Lanier Street to inform the poet's widow of this decision. Mrs. Lanier responded with a gift of two volumes of her husband's poems. These were the first books donated to the library, and they were later placed in a bookcase in the Methodist Church on Melrose Avenue where the Congregational Church now stands.

The library in the church was opened to the public on April 27, 1890, and as the Lanier Library's diamond jubilee publication notes, "It became immediately obvious that said public could use a great many more books than the library owned so the club set to work to raise money for more books." The money-raising effort was an evening program series held the following winter for an admission fee of twenty-five cents. The first program, "Wax Works" and "Tableaux of Nations," was followed by an impersonation of Mark Twain by actor William Gillette. These entertainments were given at the Opera House that stood on the lot just east of where the Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross stands today.

The Lanier Club and their evening entertainments, which developed into the full-fledged little theatre productions held today in the Tryon Fine Arts Center, ushered in the decade of the "Gay Nineties." Tryon began to take on the character and charm that distinguishes it today. The social life in the friendly little village was greatly enhanced by the ambitious programs planned and carried out by the club, and soon the group's interest in civic improvements added other dimensions to the community. The organization's first venture into civic affairs was a joint project with the Village Improvement Society to provide a cemetery for Tryon. In the spring of 1892, the land was purchased and plots laid out. (The cemetery remains on its hillside site, which rises above Markham Road.) The cemetery was the first of many successful efforts by the club to better the community. Other projects included an early educational program to alert people to the hygiene necessary to prevent the spread of tuberculosis; the establishment of a horse-and-buggy traveling library serving the neighboring towns of Lynn and Landrum, South Carolina; a campaign to bring about beautification of the new (1896) depot by Southern Railway; a study of health conditions in

the county; the promotion of the position of County Home Demonstration Agent; and the staffing of a USO during World War II.

At the same time, the club continued to pursue its original goal of building a library for the town. In 1904 a fire destroyed John Orr's store on Trade Street and the Lanier Club's 700-book library that was temporarily housed there. The calamity spurred the club to incorporate and to build a permanent library building. The building of the library was a community effort and a reflection of the many hours of edification and enjoyment that the Lanier Club had given to the citizens of Tryon. The building committee was a source of talent for every aspect of the job. Major William E. Strong, a retired civil engineer whose office had once housed the bookcase that constituted the library drew the plans and made the blueprints. John Orr, whose store had been destroyed, was a retired contractor, and he undertook the construction of the building, bringing it to completion for the \$1,375 that the club had to spend. William Lindsey, a retired lawyer, did the legal work. Other help was obtained from E.E. Missildine, the town's pharmacist, who contributed the bricks for the fireplace; Judge Charles Godshaw, a retired executive from Kentucky, who donated the wainscoting and had it installed; and George Warner, William Gillette's brother-in-law, who saw to the grading and planting of the grounds. On December 21, 1905, the first meeting was held in the new Lanier Library, standing at the head of Melrose Avenue as a tribute to the cultural interests and the cooperative spirit of the community that built it.

Tryon continued to grow through the decade of the 1890s as tourists came first to visit and then, in many cases, to stay. New inns were built. One of the most popular lodgings was the Skyuka Hotel, which was built on White Oak Mountain by Aaron French and David Stearns in the late 1890s. Stearns later bought the McAboy House and remodelled it completely, adding a hydraulic elevator, hot and cold running water, steam heat, gaslights and call bells, and renaming it the Mimosa Inn. Stearns also built a "casino" in the rear of the hotel, a building containing bowling alleys, pool rooms and a club house. The renovated Mimosa Inn burned around 1914, but a new Mimosa Inn was built on the same location, utilizing part of the old casino structure. The rebuilt inn still stands, though it is now a private residence.

Among those who were Tryon visitors and then Tryon residents were the Charles E. Erskine family of Racine, Wisconsin. Erskine was a partner in the Case Threshing Machine Company. He, his wife Emma Payne Erskine, and their first three children, Alfred, Harold, and Ralph, visited McAboy House in 1885. Erskine returned to Tryon in 1892 and purchased a hill, not far from the inn, which commanded a panoramic view of the mountains. The following year, he employed a young architect who was working on George Vanderbilt's Biltmore Village, possibly Richard Sharp Smith, an Englishman employed by the firm of R.M. Hunt of Baltimore. Erskine and his architect began building a large, Tudor-style house with an adjoining studio for Mrs. Erskine, a talented amateur artist. The house was completed in 1897, and the Erskines named it Lynncote, a Scottish word meaning "cottage on a rocky hill." The family, now including three younger children, Violet, Malcolm and Susan, moved in.

In the twenty years since the coming of the railroad, Tryon had grown and changed. Susan Erskine Rogers draws a clear sketch of Tryon in 1897:

...On Trade Street there was one general store, "Ballengers for Everything" painted on its false second story front. Missildine's Drug Store, the Post Office and Livingston's Livery Stable and a few residences about completed Trade Street. The nucleus of the Oak Hall Hotel stood on its

hilltop, and the two-block-long Melrose Avenue boasted Kenworthy's Boarding House, eight or ten residences, Mrs. Dow's Opera House and the Episcopal and Congregational churches, both small, frame buildings. Up another hill toward the present Pine Crest Inn were a few more residences dominated by one large, white house owned by Judge Godshaw, grandfather of Anson Merrick. No pavements, no telephones, no electricity...

But with the growth of population came the growth of municipal services. The Tryon School District and the Polk County Board of Education voted to levy a 20-mill property tax in the community in order to improve area schools, a remarkably progressive movement for the time and one led by T.T. Ballenger. In 1895, Ballenger introduced and strongly supported a special bond issue to build a new school in Tryon, and the brick structure was standing on Trade Street by 1906. (The building is now used as the Town Hall.)

Tryon began changing even faster after the turn of the century. The first three decades of the twentieth century saw dramatic progress in the community. Its municipal services and amenities developed, as did those of many towns in this period. A number of crafts operations were established in Tryon, reflecting the growing appreciation of regional crafts, responding to the local tradition of mountain craftsmanship and, to some extent perhaps, the influence of Biltmore Industries near Asheville. Also reflecting developments in Asheville, land values rose more and more rapidly, as investors entered the resort area. Tryon's resort activities expanded as well with the development of riding and hunting as important factors.

By 1905, local businesses included a building firm, a real estate firm and the Bank of Tryon. The community was moving into an era of modernization and of limited industrialization. Substantial contributions were made to these processes by men and women for whom Tryon was an adopted home. Charles E. Erskine's greatest joy and perhaps his finest contribution to Tryon was the building of the new Congregational Church in 1908. His son Hal, trained at Columbia University and later at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, was the architect for the building. Shortly after seeing the grey stone, Gothic-style sanctuary completed and a new pipe organ installed, Erskine died, leaving his property to his wife Emma. Mrs. Erskine continued to be very active in Tryon's growth. She developed some of her property and purchased more. In 1914, she donated the land for the Tryon Country Club and employed Donald Ross to design the golf course, foreshadowing the growth of golf as a mainstay of the recreational resort industry which would develop around Tryon over the next decade.

The senior Erskines were involved in many community projects, but it was the next generation of the family that ushered the town into the modern era with the formation of the Tryon Electric Company in 1910. The electric company was the joint enterprise of Ralph Erskine and two Erskine in-laws. William Allan Newall, a circuit-riding Methodist preacher who married Mrs. Charles Erskine's sister, Bertha Payne, suggested the idea of the electric company to Ralph and Carroll P. Rogers. Rogers, a South Carolina native, was then managing the Skyland Hosiery Mill at East Flat Rock, while courting Susan Erskine, whom he married that same year. Ralph Erskine had returned to Tryon in 1910 and had begun building a home not far from Lynncote on the Erskine Road. "The Villa," as it was known, was modelled after an Italian country estate. At the same time, Erskine began the Tryon Chair Factory, located on Screven Road where the Carolina Yarn Processing Company stands today. Erskine built a dam across an old ford in order to use water power in furniture making.

The electric company initially derived its power from Erskine's dam and boiler, while Newall scouted the countryside for land to provide additional water courses for generating power. Rogers worked out a franchise for the Melrose Power and Manufacturing Company. Subscribers were enrolled, and the business was a success. It was sold to Broadriver Power Company (since merged with Duke Power Company) in 1926.

By 1914, the chair factory, which had begun with native craftsmen and designs reminiscent of traditional mountain furniture, had expanded into Danersk, a manufacturer of fine period furniture with offices in Connecticut and showrooms in New York. When Erskine and his new partner, Frank Danforth, moved operations to Connecticut, they sold the chair factory to F.P. Bacon, owner of the Southern Mercerizing Company. Bacon had founded the company in 1910 in cooperation with Frank Wilcox, Jr., and Edwin Wilcox. (The Wilcoxes had begun the Wilcox Hosiery Mill in Lynn near the McAboy House in the late 1890s. It was the first hosiery mill in western North Carolina.) Southern Mercerizing Company is still flourishing sixty-nine years later. Now located on a site south of Tryon, it stands as Polk County's oldest continuously active industry.

Other local industries started during the productive years between 1910 and the beginning of World War I include F.K. McFarland, Sr.'s funeral business rounded in 1911 (McFarland was the first licensed funeral director in Polk County) and Cloth of Gold, a fabric business established in 1913 by Nelson Jackson, Sr., and Nelson Jackson, Jr. The McFarland family roots go deep in Polk County, whereas the Nelson Jacksons were drawn to Tryon because of its reputation as a health resort. The businesses are still owned and operated by the families that started them.

In 1915, the Misses Eleanor Vance and Charlotte Yale moved to Tryon from Asheville and soon the Tryon Toy Makers and Wood Carvers was under way. The women had worked for years on the famous Biltmore Estate and had been instrumental in founding the successful Biltmore Industries which produced hand crafts. After retiring to Tryon, the women soon became involved with training local people in such craft work as weaving, wood carving, light furniture manufacturing and toymaking. The business began in the ladies' home on Grady Avenue and soon expanded to a second Grady Avenue house. In 1925, the Toy House was built on Howard Street, and it is still standing today, though it no longer houses the Tryon Toy Makers business which is established in new quarters on S. Trade Street.

At the end of World War I, Tryon had a branch of the American Red Cross. Later named the Polk County Chapter of the American Red Cross, the organization continues to provide services for the county sixty-two years later. That same year, 1918, the Lanier Library received its first legacy, \$1,000 from the estate of Miss Frances M. Wright, an early Lanier Club president. The bequest was the first of many that have helped support the library through its eighty-nine years of existence.

The Lanier Library's diamond jubilee publication notes that "the war, and the unsettled conditions of Europe that followed, brought many new people to Tryon." One new person who came to Tryon in 1918 did not come as a result of the war, but in response to reports from friends and relatives about the town's natural beauty and friendly citizens, Carter P. Brown, who owned and managed the Castle Park Hotel in Michigan, visited Tryon while looking for a new resort property to develop. He found an unprepossessing lodge which was formerly used as a tuberculosis sanatorium and from it created the **Pine Crest Inn**, which quickly became noted for its conviviality, good food and rustic charm. (The inn, now under the ownership of Robert and Frances Hull, is still noted for these attributes.)

The **Pine Crest Inn** was the first of Brown's many enterprises in Tryon, and over the course of the next sixty years his influence on the town was profound. Eugene Warner, writing in the Official Program and Race Card of the Thirty-Third Running of the Block House Steeplechase (April, 1979), gives tribute to Brown for his many developmental projects which, in Warner's words, "make Tryon so unique, so appealing to newcomers..., that make it known worldwide." Among these projects were the founding of the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club, the establishment of Tryon's annual horse show (originally for the many residents who owned fine horses and stables), and the Steeplechase. Brown initiated the restoration of the Block House and its entry on the National Register of Historic Places. He saw to the recovery of old log cabins from the countryside around Tryon and had them moved to the town and converted into fine homes. His enterprises covered the spectrum from introducing fox-hunting to creating a fine athletic and show facility at Harmon Field.

In developing Tryon's reputation as a riding and hunting center, Brown was building on a tradition that dated from the early 1800s, when cosmopolitan settlers from Charleston and the Low Country laid out race paths on the level lands of what was later Polk County and enjoyed the sports of horse racing and fox hunting in the enticing wilderness. Later, as Tryon was becoming a community, many of its first residents re-established the sport of riding for pleasure and for competition. The townspeople even held mock medieval jousting tournaments, complete with costumed knights and presided over by a king and queen. Brown made these genteel sports part of modern Tryon's essential business and community character.

Continuing the community's tradition of crafts and reflecting the growing appreciation of such crafts in the early twentieth century, in 1923 Mr. & Mrs. George Cathy started "Mountain Crafts of the Very Best." The early employees were area crafts people who produced a variety of hand-made products, including woven products, carvings, homespun, and knitted items. The firm was taken over by Mrs. F.P. Bacon in 1946 and was later sold to the present owners, the Robert Richardsons. Today Blue Ridge Weavers, as it is now called, is a retail outlet not only for regional crafts, but for fine gifts from a variety of sources.

By 1925 land speculation in resort areas like Florida and North Carolina was reaching its zenith. In Tryon, the Blue Ridge Development Company was formed. Newcomers bought lots from sales people at the newly built rock and log real estate office at the corner of Pacolet and Chestnut Streets. The building, now the Rock House Art Gallery, is standing today. Another group of local businessmen made plans to build a recreational resort, to be called the Hogback Mountain Club. They purchased William Gillette's home, Thousand Pines, and a substantial amount of acreage around it. In the mid-1890s, the original log cabin had been expanded to accommodate the George Warners, Gillette's sister and brother-in-law and their daughter. At the time of its sale to the Tryon businessmen in 1925, the house had been vacant for several years; Gillette had begun a new house in Lyme, Connecticut, and Mrs. Warner had left Tryon about 1919 following the death of her husband.

The Hogback Mountain Club was designed to include a golf course and country club. Thousand Pines was refurbished as a clubhouse for members; food and overnight lodging would be provided for guests. Mrs. Lesesne Meegan was hired to manage the club.

That same year, the Lake Lanier Dam broke, and the ensuing financial disaster brought an end to the plans for the Hogback Mountain Club. The Hogback Mountain Club investors lost a great deal

of money. The Gillette Woods Company was formed and received a mortgage extension from William Gillette. The land was sold as individual homesites, and the residential neighborhood of Gillette Woods was developed. Mr. Meegan purchased Thousand Pines and converted it into an inn. It became a well-known resort in its own right and operated until 1976 when the present owner, Miss Selina Lewis, Mrs. Meegan's sister, returned it to its original status as a private home.

In 1928 two new Tryon institutions were launched, each in its way characterizing the town's singular community spirit. The first was the Tryon Daily Bulletin, "the world's smallest daily newspaper," begun by Seth M. Vining, a printer for the Polk County News. The Bulletin merged with the News in 1955. Fifty-one years after its founding, the Bulletin is a family business carried on by Seth M. Vining, Jr.

The second institution was created when a non-profit organization was formed for the purpose of building a hospital for Tryon and the surrounding area. A hospital was long overdue. Tryon physicians Allen J. Jervey and Marion C. Palmer had been treating patients, first in a makeshift infirmary in a local boarding house and later in a tiny twelve-bed hospital located on the third floor of W.Y. Wilkins' brick building on Trade Street--today the home of Owens' Pharmacy. The new twenty-five bed hospital was opened in 1929 with funds from an initial bequest by Miss Lucy Embury (whose will stipulated that the hospital be named St. Luke's) a grant from the Duke Foundation, and \$57,000 contributed by local citizens. The gray stone hospital was located on Carolina Drive in Gillette Woods, on a steep site parcel which prevented a planned expansion of the building in the 1960s. In 1968, the county approved a \$1,500,000 bond issue to supplement \$2,500,000 contributed by local citizens and the Duke Endowment to build a new hospital, which opened in 1972 on a site donated by the hospital's Women's Auxiliary, between Tryon and Columbus.

Tryon weathered the years of the Great Depression intact if not unscathed. In the difficult year of 1931, the Tryon Garden Club rallied to prevent the sale of Pearson's Falls Glen to a timber company, thereby saving one of the area's most appealing natural attractions. The Glen, located between Tryon and Saluda, was discovered by William Pearson in the mid-1800s as he was searching for a suitable grade for the proposed railroad to Asheville. Pearson settled in Pacolet Valley and acquired the land around the falls, which remained in his family until the forced sale of 1931. The Garden Club, which had been organized in 1928, was unable to secure a bank loan to buy the 308 acres surrounding the falls. C.A. Lightner, of Tryon and Detroit, advanced the money for the purchase. Lightner designated part of the money as a gift, and the club repaid the rest eight years later.

Tryon has contributed its share of leadership to the state of North Carolina over the years. Following three terms as mayor of Tryon, T.T. Ballenger was elected to the state Senate in 1903, the first Polk Countian to be sent to the Senate since the county was formed in 1855. Ballenger served a second term in the Senate in 1907-1908. He was asked to serve as a trustee for the new state college in Raleigh, now North Carolina State University, a post he held until 1923. Others from Tryon who served in the state Legislature over the years include F.P. Bacon, who served in the state Senate in 1925-1926 and again in 1937-1938. In 1949 Bacon was elected to the state House of Representatives. Carroll P. Rogers sat in the House of Representatives for three sessions, 1929, 1939 and 1941. He was a state Senator in 1945-1946 during which time he co-sponsored the bill enabling the state to purchase the site of Tryon Palace in New Bern so that reconstruction of

the colonial capitol could begin. Rogers served on the Tryon Palace Commission after he left the senate.

In its relatively short history, Tryon has created and sustained a unique community character, made up of a sense of self-sufficiency, an appreciation of the area's natural beauty and an awareness of the past. Recent Tryon history records two manifestations of this character. The first was the building in 1969 of the Tryon Fine Arts Center on Melrose Avenue. The second was the restoration in 1978 of the abandoned Southern Railway Depot as offices for the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club, the Polk County Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Polk County Historical Association and a local history museum. The Fine Arts Center began with a bequest from Violet Erskine Parish-Watson for a "civic auditorium and art center," with the stipulation that matching funds "be raised by public subscription on a broad scale." A special section in the Tryon Daily Bulletin devoted to the tenth anniversary of the Tryon Fine Arts Center boasts that a fund-raising drive conducted by the Tryon Little Theater "raised \$35,000 within a month!" The Center serves the Tryon Crafts, Inc., the Tryon Concert Association, the Tryon Little Theater (the spiritual heir of the Lanier Club's "theatricals") and numerous other community organizations.

The effort to "Save the Depot" had equally satisfying results. On July 22, 1978, a replica of the 1830 steam locomotive "The Best Friend of Charleston" was on hand for Depot Day opening ceremonies of the restored building, which dates from about 1914. Tryon has not, over the some one hundred years of its community life, remained unchanged. Its charm and its character do not depend upon sameness. The crowds of citizens who gathered for Depot Day in 1978 may be unlike the decorously dressed Tryonites who strolled down to the depot every afternoon to meet the deluxe "Carolina Special," plying the tracks between Charleston and Cincinnati. The comfortable seats in the new Fine Arts Center are a far cry from the drafty Opera House where the audiences for William Gillette's play "Esmerelda" kept their coats buttoned against the mid-winter cold.

But for all the growth, progress and refinement of the community and its way of life, there are qualities of Tryon that do not change. Tryon's appeal and the essence of its character is its continuity.