

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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Stone Hedge

Tryon vicinity, Polk County, PL0059, Listed 4/21/2015

Nomination by Clay Griffith

Photographs by Clay Griffith, June 2013



Façade view of house



Guest house

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: Stone Hedge

Other names/site number: Thomas and Lillian Costa House

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: 222 Stone Hedge Lane

City or town: Tryon State: North Carolina 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Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity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:

___A ___B XC ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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

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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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>1</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
- RECREATION & CULTURE/sports facility
-
-
-

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling
- DOMESTIC/secondary structure
- RECREATION & CULTURE/sports facility
-
-
-

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Stone

Asphalt shingle

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

Stone Hedge is a rural estate in Polk County located off Howard Gap Road approximately three miles north of the town of Tryon. The two-story stone house, guest house, and pool house were built by Thomas and Lillian Costa around 1935, after the couple relocated to Tryon from Cleveland, Ohio. The Costa's estate encompassed 125 acres at its greatest extent, but over time it has been reduced to the current twenty-five-acre residual tract containing the main house and outbuildings. A winding, tree-lined gravel drive (Stone Hedge Lane) enters the property from Howard Gap Road and approaches the house from the north. Two stone pillars topped with pineapple finials mark the entrance to the driveway, which is bordered by a stone retaining wall along its west side for much of its length. The property consists of gently rolling, grassy fields dotted by mature trees. A small creek flows through the property, roughly bisecting it from north to south.

In addition to the tree-lined drive and stone retaining wall, other landscape features built around the main house, guest house, pool house, and swimming pool employ stone construction that reflects the material of the house. Additional stone retaining walls are located in front (southwest) of the house, forming terraces that step down from the flagstone patio to the swimming pool and pool house. Stone retaining walls also extend north from the pool house to define a gravel parking area and stone patio. A round table and three curving benches constructed of stone are located on the patio along with two other wood picnic tables. Curving stone steps link the driveway to the pool house and swimming pool. The steps are framed by low stone walls with a curving metal handrail following the situation of the steps.

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The guest house is located to the northwest of the house. Stone steps on the south side of the guest house yield to a dirt path bordered by stone edging and a retaining wall that winds through the trees to the east side of the house.

A small lake was located to the rear (east) of the main house. An open grass area marks the lake site, which was filled with silt from the construction of the steep grade of I-26 less than one-half mile northwest of the house. Rockwood Lane (formerly Cherokee Drive and Ashland Drive) enters along the south side of the property and then continues to the north between the house and lake site. The paved road connects with adjacent residential parcels sold off from the original estate over the years.

Main House, 222 Stone Hedge Lane, 1935, ca. 1959, ca. 1980, 2011 Contributing building

The main house is an eclectic two-story hip-roof residence with deep overhanging eaves that was constructed of uncoursed stone masonry on an elevated site with views across the property to the west and southwest.¹ The main block presents a five-bay façade (three bays on the second story) with a one-story hip-roof wing extending to the south and a one-story entrance vestibule extending to the north. A two-story elevator shaft rises against the north elevation to the rear of the entrance wing. Two 2-story ells project to the rear of the house. The façade is dominated by a one-story flat-roof sun room constructed with full-height stone posts and stone knee walls supporting large plate-glass windows. The original owners built the house with a steel-and-glass sun room, or greenhouse, attached to the façade. The Costas grew exotic and tropical plants in the warm room, including lemon and orange trees.² The greenhouse was replaced in the 1950s with the current structure. A central single-leaf entry door on the sun room is sheltered by a flat wooden canopy supported on curved brackets. The door is solid wood with original hardware and decorative iron straps. A single-leaf entry door on the west side of the north wing is sheltered by an extension of sun room roof supported by a decorative metal post. The arched, solid-wood door features original hammered metal hardware, a four-light leaded-glass window, and decorative iron straps. With the exception of the large, late-1950s windows of the sun room, the windows throughout are typically metal-frame casements topped by flat transoms on the first story and semi-circular fanlights on the second story. Two stone chimneys rise from the interior of the house.

A flagstone patio wraps around the façade and south side elevation of the house and is bordered with a low stone wall around its outer edge. A one-story hip-roof wing on the south elevation is set back from the façade and contains the kitchen. On the front elevation of the wing, a single-leaf solid-wood entry door with a leaded-glass window provides access to the interior. A window opening to the south of the door has been filled with stone.

At the rear of the house, the two rear ells include an original wing to the south and a later wing, added around 1959, to the north. A three-bay garage extends at the basement level from the south ell. Two bays of the garage, which appear to have been added around 1959, consist of stone piers supporting a concrete slab roof and wooden overhead doors in the garage bays on the northwest elevation. A third,

¹ The main house is oriented with its façade to the southwest. The guest house is similarly oriented to the southwest and the pool house is oriented to the southeast overlooking the pool. For clarity and simplicity, the descriptions are oriented to cardinal points with the façade of the main house and guest house noted as the west side house and the rear to the east. The pool house is described with its façade to the south.

² Garland A. Goodwin, *A Boy in the Amen Corner* (Tryon, NC: Garland A. Goodwin, 1999), 132-133.

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outer bay is of frame construction and covered with weatherboards; it appears to have been added later in the twentieth century. The current owners have added a one-story gable-roof screened porch atop the garage at the rear of the ell. The porch is constructed of exposed wooden beams supported by square wood posts on stone piers. The north ell generally mimics the scale and materials of the original house, but it features picture windows on both stories on the east (rear) elevation. A concrete slab walkway wraps around the first story of the north ell and is supported on angled concrete brackets. Decorative metal posts carry a flat roof above the walkway, which has a metal balustrade. A single-leaf wood entry door on the basement level is sheltered by the projecting walkway.

The interior of the house is dominated by a large open room extending the full width of the structure. In the late twentieth century, the space had been obscured by alterations made during the building's use as an inn and restaurant, but the current owners returned the space to its original appearance. The entrance vestibule at the north end has a ceramic tile floor and is separated from the main room by a single-leaf multi-light door. The interior displays hardwood floors, stuccoed walls, unpainted wood moldings and door surrounds, and a beamed ceiling. A broad mantel frames a stone fireplace at the north end of the room and features fluted pilasters, a tall entablature, and carved floral details that are believed to have been executed by craftsmen from the Tryon Toy Makers and Wood Carvers. On the north side of the firebox is an arched cavity for wood storage that is enclosed by a solid wood door with hammered metal hinges. A recessed single-leaf entrance at the north end of the room opens into the elevator. Stout square piers mark the five bays across the front of the main room, with open passages into the sun room, which sits slightly below the main floor level. The sun room has a ceramic tile floor with a mill stone set into the floor at the center of the space. The wrought-iron railing that separates the living room from the sun room in two bays and a wrought-iron double gate in the north bay appear to be later additions, although their designs emulate the patterns of the main stair balustrade.

The stairs to the second story are set within a recess to the south side of the fireplace. The turned newel post, iron balusters, and paneled wainscot appear to have been crafted by the Tryon Toy Makers. The stairs ascend three curved steps to a small curved landing with an arched niche and then turn to continue rising parallel to the main room. A single-leaf doorway to the north of the fireplace enters the first-story room of the later ell, and a single-leaf doorway to the south of the stair enters into a butler's pantry that continues through to a small dining room on the first story of the original ell. The small dining room was converted for use as a commercial kitchen during the house's use as an inn and restaurant in the late twentieth century. The current owners have rehabilitated the space with a beaded board wainscot, chair rail and crown moldings, a tile floor, and flat board window and door surrounds. A single-leaf doorway at the far south end of the main room opens into a small hallway that connects to the kitchen wing and small dining room at the rear. The kitchen was also renovated by the current owners and features a tile floor, central island, and beamed ceiling.

The second story of the house is finished similarly to the first story but is more modest in its detailing. The stairs rise to a central landing with built-in linen cabinets and drawers and access to the three bedrooms. A large bedroom is located at either end of the second story above the main room below, and a third bedroom is located in the original rear ell above the small dining room on the first story. A single bathroom connects the two bedrooms at the front of the house. The second story retains its molded door frames, baseboard moldings, hardwood floors, and ceramic bathroom tiles. A fourth bedroom and separate bathroom are located on the second story of the north ell and are entered from the large bedroom on the front of the house.

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Guest House, ca. 1935

Contributing building

Situated to the northwest of the main house and oriented to the west and southwest, the one-story hip-roof guest house is constructed of the same uncoursed stone masonry as the main house. It displays an asphalt-shingle roof, two interior stone chimneys, exposed rafter tails, and log lintels in the window and door openings. The house is roughly L-shaped in plan with a bedroom and kitchen wing projecting to the east and a wood deck attached to the rear (east) elevation. A three-part wood-frame picture window overlooks the deck and distant mountain views. The windows are typically six-over-six double-hung wood sash. A single-leaf six-panel entry door, likely a replacement, is located on the west elevation at the southwest corner of the structure. Concrete steps access the stone stoop. Two additional single-leaf six-panel doors are located at the northwest corner of the building, which is configured as a small gravel courtyard. Stone retaining walls on the north and west sides help frame the exterior space.

The interior of the guest house, which consists of a bedroom, sitting room, kitchen, and two bathrooms, retains wood-paneled walls and built-in shelving. The bedroom is finished with pine paneling on the walls and ceiling, a built-in corner shelf with a cutout frame and carved rosette, and sawn wood valences on the windows. The rosette on the built-in shelf is believed to have been executed by the Tryon Toy Makers and Wood Carvers.³ A large stone fireplace with a solid wood mantel shelf dominates the north end of the room. The bathroom in the bedroom has a ceramic tile floor, but the bedroom and sitting room floors are carpeted. The sitting room is simply finished with vertical wood paneling, a sheetrock ceiling, and flat board window and door surrounds. The kitchen, along with the bathroom off the sitting room, has vinyl flooring, and the kitchen retains paneled wood cabinets. It has a vertical wood paneled wainscot on the east wall, patterned skirt molding on the upper cabinets, and a sheetrock ceiling with a textured finish.

Pool House, ca. 1935

Contributing building

The pool house, which stands immediately northwest of the pool, is a two-story stone structure banked into the hillside to the southwest below the main house. The building is a hip-roof structure of uncoursed stone masonry that features a terra cotta tile roof, exposed rafter tails, peeled log lintels on the window and door openings, metal-frame casement windows, and a broad exterior stone chimney rising against the north elevation. The chimney, which includes an exterior fireplace on the lower level, has two angled wings extending from its base to form an outdoor kitchen with stone counters and a built-in stove and oven. The kitchen area consists of the exterior fireplace and cooking features, large flagstone terrace, and stone retaining wall on the east side. A round stone table and four curved benches stand to the north of the kitchen area. The table and benches have uncoursed stone masonry bases and support flat stone seats and a round table top.

The two-story south elevation of the pool house overlooks the swimming pool and displays window boxes composed of stone on each of the upper-story windows. A deeply recessed, central opening on the lower story provides access to two changing rooms, which flank the center passage. The changing rooms

³ Although no specific documents identifying the work of the Tryon Toy Makers and Wood Carvers for Stone Hedge have been located, the rose design strongly resembles the design for a "Tube Rose Book End" (cow059) in the collection of Pauline Miller Cowan (1909-1986), master woodcarver with the Tryon Toy Makers. *Pauline Miller Cowan Collection*, D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville 28804.

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contain showers and toilets and are lit by high windows with six-light wood sash. The rooms have concrete floors, concrete block shower stalls, and a wood plank ceiling.

The one-story east elevation of the pool house contains a single-leaf solid wood entrance door to the upper story that is approached by low concrete steps. The upper-story interior consists of a single guest room and a small bathroom. The guest room interior is finished with pine paneling, a beamed ceiling, wood floors (partially carpeted), and a stone hearth and fireplace, which has a quarter-log mantel. The fireplace is flanked by built-in shelves with cutout frames and rustic twig handles and drawer pulls. The windows feature sawn wood valences that are smaller versions of those found in the main bedroom of the guest house.

Swimming Pool, ca. 1935, ca. 1959, ca. 2011

Non-contributing structure

An in-ground swimming pool built at the same time as the main house is located immediately south of the pool house and to the west of the main house. The pool is situated several terraces below the elevation of the main house patio. A rough stone retaining wall extends along the east side of pool. The pool was reduced in size around 1959 due to cracks in the concrete. Instead of repairing the damage, two new walls were constructed within the pool footprint to create the current pool shape, which is surrounded by a flagstone patio. The outline of the old pool walls remains visible in the grass to the south. A pine deck was installed by the current owners on the south and west sides of the pool. The wood deck covers the sloping bottom of the old pool.

Integrity Assessment

Stone Hedge generally retains a high degree of integrity, however, the stone sun room and additions made to the main house in the 1950s have somewhat altered the original appearance and visual character of the house. The steel and glass sun room erected by the Costas when the house was built gave Stone Hedge a lighter appearance on the exterior. The flat-roof sun room with stone piers, stone knee walls, and large plate-glass windows, along with the other additions, gives the house a different character and massing. However, the additions to the house have been executed in a manner that is compatible with the architectural materials and workmanship of the original design, and do not substantially detract from the overall character and architectural significance of the estate. The guest house, pool house, and numerous landscape elements echo the stone construction of the main house. The integrated use of stone construction on the associated buildings of the estate and landscape elements create a cohesive design with an overall high degree of integrity.

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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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1935

Significant Dates

1935

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Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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.)

Completed in 1935, Stone Hedge is a rural estate located at 222 Stone Hedge Lane, off Howard Gap Road, approximately three miles north of the town of Tryon, North Carolina, in southern Polk County. Situated on nearly twenty-six acres, the estate consists of the main house, a two-story rustic villa-influenced form with an uncoursed stone exterior; a one-story guest house, and a pool house, as well as an in-ground swimming pool. The guest house, pool house, and numerous landscape elements echo the stone construction of the main house. Stone Hedge was constructed by Thomas and Lillian Costa, who relocated to the Tryon area from Ohio in the early 1930s. Stone Hedge meets National Register Criterion C for architecture for the collection of distinctive and finely crafted architecture. The rustic stonework of the main house combines local materials and traditional building practices with the more formal villa-like mass and form of the building. The integrated use of stone construction on the associated buildings of the estate and landscape elements serves to reinforce the cohesive design of the estate, which was influenced by Tryon's image as a popular mountain retreat and seasonal tourist destination. The period of significance for Stone Hedge is 1935, when the locally significant buildings were constructed.

Historical Background

Located in the southernmost section of Polk County, Tryon, North Carolina, is a small mountain town that lies along the southern edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains, just north of the South Carolina border. The area consists of varying terrain, with elevations ranging from 750 feet above sea level in the southern part of the county, to 3,238 feet in the northwestern section. Due to its proximity to both the Blue Ridge and the upper Piedmont, Tryon and the surrounding area enjoy a moderate climate resulting from a phenomenon called the Thermal Belt, where freezing temperatures are less likely to occur. Of all North Carolina counties, Polk County development, including its agriculture and tourism industries, has perhaps been shaped most by the weather.⁴

⁴ D. William Bennett, ed., *Polk County, North Carolina, History* (Tryon, NC: Polk County Historical Association, 1983), 75. Bill Sharpe, *A New Geography of North Carolina*, Volume III (Raleigh, NC: Sharpe Publishing Company, 1961), 1536-1538.

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The arrival of the Asheville-Spartanburg Railroad in 1877 signified a new era of social and economic development in Tryon, following nearly a century of modest settlement. Completion of the railroad line, which was intended to connect the southern coastal regions with North Carolina, Tennessee, and the Ohio Valley, began a pattern of steady growth in the community and introduced a broad range of visitors to the area. Tryon's location at the base of the steep Saluda Grade provided a necessary stopover for northbound trains to prepare for the difficult ascent into the higher mountains, while southbound trains cooled their wheels following the dramatic descent. To accommodate the new influx of travelers and tourists, the town's first hotel, the Tryon City Hotel, was built in 1882 by T. T. Ballenger and his father-in-law, John Garrison. Renamed Oak Hall in the 1890s, the hotel was Tryon's largest and most elaborate building at the time and featured Italianate- and Queen Anne-style ornamentation. The Tryon City Hotel hosted a variety of famous visitors over the years and was a local landmark until its demolition in 1979.⁵

Advertised for its temperate climate and agricultural potential, Tryon's tourism industry continued to rapidly increase during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and many of those who visited stayed on to build vacation homes or become permanent residents. The town of Tryon, officially incorporated in 1885, attracted a variety of important citizens in the latter part of the nineteenth century, many of whom greatly influenced the evolution of the community. A number of these new residents came from the North or upper Midwest sections of the country, including noted New York actor William Gillette, Wisconsin industrialist Charles E. Erskine, Michigan hotelier Carter Brown, and General Ulysses Doubleday, one of the pioneers of commercial agriculture in the area.⁶

As Tryon entered the twentieth century, resort activity continued to flourish and new municipal services and amenities were added.⁷ In addition to its successful agricultural and manufacturing operations, Tryon's unique crafts industry began to blossom. After fourteen years in service at the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, Eleanor P. Vance and Charlotte L. Yale moved to Tryon to begin their new enterprise, the Tryon Toy Makers and Wood Carvers Shop. Vance, an accomplished woodcarver, who had studied at the Cincinnati Art School, as well as in England, moved to Biltmore in 1901, along with Yale, who had also studied in England. Both had become proficient in traditional English crafts, including wood carving, furniture making, needlework, and other decorative arts, and as such, were the leading instructors at Mrs. George Vanderbilt's Biltmore Industries. Noting that many of the best craftspeople hailed from the Tryon area, the two decided to move to Tryon in 1915 to begin their own business.⁸

The Tryon Toy Makers employed predominantly local craftspeople, and utilized mostly native walnut and oak to create custom furniture, as well as their famed toys. According to author Michael McCue, "The Tryon toys were the finest made in the United States at that time...they were the Tiffany of toys." The crafts of the Toy Makers attracted national attention, and even that of three first ladies, including

⁵ 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), 1-5, 9-13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-8.

⁷ Bennett, 75.

⁸ Michael J. McCue, *The Tryon Toy Makers and Wood Carvers: A History 1915-1940* (Columbus, NC: Condar Press, 2004), 3. Bennett, 90.

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Eleanor Roosevelt, who is said to have bought Tryon toys to put under the White House Christmas tree for her grandchildren.⁹

The successful evolution of Tryon Toy Makers and Wood Carvers is demonstrative of a broader fascination with traditional handicrafts and building techniques that was prevalent in the early twentieth century around the region. Tryon's picturesque mountain setting was ideal for recreating the quaintness of rustic country estates and cottages, and, as such, several of the most notable estates in the area feature English Cottage, Tudor Revival, and Italian villa influences, as well as landscaped gardens. Estate culture was also influenced by the area's popularity among equestrian circles.¹⁰

Thomas and Lillian Costa of Cleveland, Ohio, developed Stone Hedge as a rural country estate near Tryon around 1935. Originally born in Puerto Rico, Thomas Costa immigrated to the United States in 1907 and became a naturalized citizen in 1914. According to the 1920 U. S. Census, Thomas Costa married his wife Lillian, of New York, in 1913, and the couple lived in the Mayfield Township of Cuyahoga County, Ohio. Through the 1920s, Costa worked as manager of the Euclid-105th Market in Lyndhurst, an eastern suburb of Cleveland.¹¹ Soon after moving to Tryon, Thomas and Lillian Costa purchased nearly forty-seven acres from John and Mary E. Habernicht in 1934, which formed the core of the Stone Hedge estate, and began building on the property soon thereafter (Deeds 60/305 and 64/290). Known as the Habernicht Farm, the property adjoined the Windsor place, where the Costas lived while Stone Hedge was under construction.¹²

As the Costas settled into life in Tryon, the couple became increasingly involved in the community. Thomas Costa became manager of the Tryon Fuel Supply on Trade Street in downtown Tryon. The Costas also purchased a hotel, the Edgewood Inn, in the mid-1930s. The building had originally been built as a school in 1906, but was converted into a hotel by Mr. and Mrs. Burnette. After purchasing the hotel, the Costas extensively remodeled the building and renamed it Hotel Tryon. The hotel suffered significant damage after a fire in October 1935. A newspaper report from the time estimated the damage at \$4,000-5,000.¹³ In 1950, the Costas sold the hotel along with all of the "furnishings, fixtures, and equipment" to Stanley M. Buckingham of Cuyahoga, Ohio (Deed 92/141). The name of the hotel was again changed, to the Buckingham Hotel, and operated until 1953, when the Town of Tryon purchased the property for its Town Hall (301 N. Trade Street).¹⁴

In addition to the Edgewood Inn, Thomas Costa purchased the Skyuka Hotel property, which consisted of 405 acres between Tryon Peak and Skunkawaken Falls. After purchasing the property in the 1940s, Costa tore down the hotel building and sold off the lumber. He sold the property in 1950, to the Spartanburg County YMCA for use as a summer camp.¹⁵ He held a position with the Tryon Real Estate

⁹ "Woodcarving Women Built Tryon's Toy Tradition," *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* (December 9, 2012).

¹⁰ Lea and Roberts, 12-13.

¹¹ United States Census, 1920, "index and images," *Family Search* <https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/MD1J-5ZW> : accessed 26 Jun 2014 (accessed June 25, 2014).

¹² Polk County Register of Deeds. *Tryon Daily Bulletin* (January 8, 1935).

¹³ "Tryon Hostelry Damaged By Fire," *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* (October 11, 1935).

¹⁴ Jeffrey A. Byrd, *A Sense of Heritage: A Pictorial History of the Thermal Belt* (Tryon, NC: Tryon Chamber of Commerce, 1991), 53.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 94-95.

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firm, which he used to broker parcels of the Skyuka property, and was the listing agent in 1946 for his former estate.¹⁶

Along with his business ventures, Thomas Costa was also an accomplished horticulturalist. Although it has since been replaced with a stone sun room, the Costas originally had a steel-and-glass sun room, or greenhouse, attached to the façade of the main house at Stone Hedge. The Costas grew a variety of exotic and tropical plants in the greenhouse, including lemon and orange trees.¹⁷ While managing the Tryon Fuel Supply, which was housed in a brick building on Trade Street, Mr. Costa created a hanging garden of sorts on one of the brick walls for the enjoyment of town residents and visitors. In an effort to recreate the beautiful mountain scenery, he transplanted ferns, moss, and wildflowers to ledges within the wall and designed a water system that would drip constantly over the plants. He also constructed a greenhouse adjoining the business to cultivate different kinds of plants.¹⁸ Later that year, in 1940, Thomas and Lillian Costa set up a charity event selling flowers from Tryon Fuel Supply, whose proceeds went to benefit the Association for War Relief.¹⁹

Thomas Costa became involved in Polk County's larger agricultural efforts. In January of 1939, Costa assembled a group of farmers to discuss the benefits of cultivating high-quality celery. After experimenting with growing celery for three years, his product was in high demand, and local merchants lauded it as the best available. Between thirty and forty farmers agreed to grow celery in the first year, with profits estimated at \$500 per acre.²⁰ Additionally, Costa offered to supply growers with the necessary seeds free of charge if they agreed to sell through him and followed the specific growing instructions he had devised.²¹

As an active community member, Thomas Costa served as chairman of a committee at the Tryon Kiwanis Club selected to start a movement to beautify highway entrances into Tryon in 1940.²² He was also elected president of the Chamber of Commerce, where he initiated efforts to make downtown more attractive to residents and visitors.²³

Stone Hedge remained in the Costa family until 1940, when the "show place" estate was sold to Colonel Daniel Boone of Winston-Salem, an attorney who was originally from Tryon.²⁴ Col. Boone held ownership of the property very briefly, selling Stone Hedge less than two weeks later to Leslie Savage of New Jersey.²⁵ The estate was offered for sale beginning in 1946, and later purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Blumfield-Brown of Hawaii in November 1948.²⁶ The property was later transferred to Maurice and Ruth Puckett, who retained ownership of Stone Hedge until 1955. Maurice Puckett owned the George Vanderbilt and Battery Park Hotels in downtown Asheville, and he sold the estate, valued at

¹⁶ *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* (April 25, 1946).

¹⁷ Goodwin, 132-133.

¹⁸ Curb Reporter, *Tryon Daily Bulletin* (May 20, 1940).

¹⁹ "Gladden with Glads," *Tryon Daily Bulletin* (June 29, 1940).

²⁰ "To Grow Celery," *Tryon Daily Bulletin* (January 9, 1939).

²¹ "Celery Seed Given to Polk Farmers," *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* (May 22, 1939).

²² "Fun at Kiwanis," *Tryon Daily Bulletin* (September 4, 1940).

²³ Curb Reporter, *Tryon Daily Bulletin* (May 26, 1944).

²⁴ "Two Estates at Tryon Are Sold," *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* (July 23, 1940).

²⁵ "Tryon Residence Sold For \$40,000," *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* (July 28, 1940).

²⁶ "Costa Estate Sold," *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* (November 16, 1948).

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more than \$100,000, to Jose de Acosta, a retired businessman from Uruguay. Acosta planned to raise thoroughbred horses at Stone Hedge, but it is unclear if he ever did so.²⁷

Acosta sold the property just three years later, and it was purchased by Joseph and Viola Berta in 1958 (Deed 113/145). Stone Hedge remained in the Berta family until 1977, when it was sold by Robert W. Berta, executor of the estate, to Lamark, Inc. (Deed 167/245). The property passed through a succession of owners and was reduced in size with the partitioning of adjacent residential lots until 1980, when a forty-acre tract was sold to John C. and Norma Weiner (Deed 174/2055). The Weiners converted the house and outbuildings to the Stone Hedge Inn, which they operated for seven years. The Weiners sold the property to Reiner and Anneliese Weingartner in August 1987, who continued the inn and restaurant (Deed 195/1439). Stone Hedge Inn was purchased by the Dinsmore and Snidaker families in 1995, but Gary and Margo Snidaker sold their half interest in the property and business to Tom and Shaula Dinsmore in 1999 (Deeds 229/359 and 257/131). The Dinsmores operated the inn and restaurant through the early 2000s, until bankruptcy forced them to sell Stone Hedge in 2011, to its current owners, Scott and Gayle Lane (Deed 388/452).²⁸

Architectural Context

As Tryon, North Carolina, transitioned into the twentieth century, the town's reputation for being a resort destination was well established and visitors to the area frequently stayed to build second homes or become permanent residents. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were marked by a fascination with the picturesque and rambling quaintness of old English cottages and European country estates, as evidenced by Tryon architecture built around the turn of the century. In the 1910s resort developer Carter Brown, who came to Tryon from Michigan, touted the area's equestrian activities and emerged as one of Tryon's most successful promoters. In the 1920s Brown founded the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club and helped to start the annual Steeplechase, one of Tryon's most enduring social events. Brown also worked to revitalize the Block House, originally a trading outpost; establish riding trails; and organize horse shows. The influence of Brown's revitalized Block House and the area's popular equestrian events led to the development of a number of country estates surrounding Tryon in the early to mid-twentieth century.²⁹

Stone Hedge was one of Tryon's distinctive rural country estates in the period from the 1920s through the 1940s, with a substantial dwelling, numerous associated outbuildings, and extensive acreage. The construction of Stone Hedge was especially remarkable considering that it came at the height of the Great Depression. In addition to the villa-like main house and surviving guest house and pool house, a caretaker's house, barn, and small cottage were also part of the property. Five acres of the estate were planted in grapes and other fruits, and the original sun room on the façade of the house was used to grow tropical plants. The architecture of the house and associated buildings display eclectic influences, both local and European in precedent, and the stone masonry construction placed it among a notable group of structures located in the Tryon area.

²⁷ "Puckett Sells Property Near Tryon," *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* (June 3, 1955.)

²⁸ Polk County Register of Deeds.

²⁹ Lea and Roberts, 1-8. Claudia P. Roberts, "Pine Crest Inn" National Register of Historic Places Nomination (1980).

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With its open meadows and rolling topography, Stone Hedge resembles other estates around Tryon established in the first half of the twentieth century for equestrian and agricultural pursuits. Maurice (“Lefty”) and Nora Flynn built an estate they called “Little Orchard” for the plentiful peach trees on the property. After a visit to the Flynn’s house in 1937, New York banker James H. Perkins developed a 130-acre estate he called “Cotton Patch Farm.” Chicago architect Russell Walcott, who retired to Tryon in 1936, designed the log and wood shingle house for Perkins. Walcott himself retired to a farm off Howard Gap Road a short distance northwest of Stone Hedge where he built a log house for him and his wife.³⁰

Located one-half mile south of Stone Hedge on Harmon Field Road, Mill Farm Inn (NR, 2009) evokes both European and local vernacular farmhouses. After living in Grasse, France, for more than two decades, Frances N. Williams of Kentucky moved to Tryon and purchased the Mill Farm property, from J. J. Flossie Cantrell, following the Great Depression. Ms. Williams hired Russell Walcott to design the inn, which was built in 1939. The two-story Colonial Revival-style building features a six-bay symmetrical façade and irregularly-coursed stone exterior of blue granite, with French provincial farmhouse influences.³¹

The stonework found at Stone Hedge is unusual among the surviving examples of stone construction in Tryon for its rugged, rustic character. The stacked stone walls of the house have little visible mortar and exude an organic quality similar to the Grove Park Inn (NR, 1973) in Asheville. The stone work at Stone Hedge, which carries through all of the buildings and landscape features on the property, differs significantly from the relative uniformity of the Mill Farm Inn’s granite exterior. The random-coursed stone walls of St. Luke’s Hospital, built by Wright J. Gaines in 1929, and the stone and stucco exterior of Top O’ Piney, built in 1927, do not possess the rustic character of Stone Hedge.

Nearby Lynncote (NR, 2010), located less than a mile south of Stone Hedge, is a Tudor Revival-style estate built by Carroll and Susan Erskine Rogers between 1927 and 1928 and designed by prominent regional architect Erle Stillwell. Lynncote features common Tudor Revival-style elements that reflect the rustic charm so desired by Tryon residents, such as a steeply-pitched roof with multiple gables, prominent chimneys, an asymmetrical plan, multiple exterior materials, and decorative half-timbering. The house has both uncoursed rubble masonry walls and coursed ashlar stone inlays in the gable bays. Wood carver Frank Arthur, who came to Tryon with the Tryon Toy Makers and Wood Carvers, designed and executed many of Lynncote’s decorative interior features, including the staircase and mantels.³²

The presence of the Tryon Toy Makers and Wood Carvers in Tryon beginning in the early 1900s created a unique parallel between architectural representations and the continuing interest in traditional English crafts that had become so prevalent in the area at the time. After moving from the Biltmore Estate in Asheville to Tryon in 1913, proprietors Eleanor P. Vance and Charlotte L. Yale opened the Tryon Toy Makers and Wood Carvers shop. While the Toy Makers became most well-known for their unique, hand-crafted children’s toys, their wood carving and custom furniture was popular among area

³⁰ Raymond Diamond, “Tryon Hunt Club Offers Endless Attractions for Lovers of Horsemanship,” *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* (December 18, 1939). Bennett, 276.

³¹ Clay Griffith, “Mill Farm Inn” National Register of Historic Places Nomination (2009).

³² Clay Griffith, “Lynncote” National Register of Historic Places Nomination (2010).

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residents and can be found in various houses and estates throughout Tryon from the early to middle part of the twentieth century.³³

The Villa, built in 1910 by Ralph Erskine, brother of Susan Rogers, is also representative of the area residents' affinity for estate culture. The architecture of the Villa clearly illustrates the rustic charm so popular in Tryon's country estates at the time. The house, built in the provincial Italian villa style, features a stucco exterior, many banks of windows, and two dramatic columns made from Verona marble. The estate also features lushly landscaped grounds, with sweeping views of the mountains to the west.³⁴

Constructed by Thomas and Lillian Costa in 1935, Stone Hedge remains as one of Tryon's most prominent estate properties. The villa-like main house displays eclectic and rustic elements such as a rugged, uncoursed stone exterior, arched casement windows, and Tudor Revival-style main entry door. The form and massing of the main block evokes the architecture of the Mediterranean, including rural Spanish and Italian villas. Thomas Costa, a Puerto Rican-born immigrant, may have influenced, or selected, the architectural form based on his family background, but such a connection is undocumented at this time. Certainly the mild climate of Tryon would have been markedly different from the Costas' home in Cleveland, and the steel-and-glass sun room originally erected with the house allowed Mr. Costa to grow tropical plants and flowers. The rustic stone construction, however, related the house and associated buildings with their setting in the southern Appalachian mountains, where stone was abundant as a building material. The use of natural materials was championed in the early twentieth century as a central tenet of the Arts and Crafts movement. In addition to the fine craftsmanship associated with the Arts and Crafts and Craftsman styles, rustic architecture also developed from the National Park Service's design standards for national parks and forests, which emphasized a close harmony of built structures and the natural environment.

Stone Hedge embodies the informal grandness of Tryon architecture during the early part of the twentieth century, especially the rural estates developed as second homes and vacation homes for equestrian and agricultural pursuits. Along with the main house, the Stone Hedge property features a guest house, a pool house, and in-ground swimming pool. The terraced landscaping evokes the elegant rural and rambling qualities then desired by area residents. Additionally, the interior of the house features architectural details, such as hand-carved mantels and stairways that further illustrate the connection between the revival of traditional English crafts and Tryon's estate culture.

³³ See "Biography" in *Pauline Miller Cowan Collection*, D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville 28804, (<http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/mss/cowan/cowan.htm>; accessed January 2, 2015).

³⁴ Lea and Roberts, 33.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Bennett, D. William, ed. *Polk County, North Carolina, History*. Tryon, NC: Polk County Historical Association, 1983.

Brady, Holland. *Architects in the Life of Tryon*. Tryon, NC: published by author, 2007.

Byrd, Jeffrey A. *A Sense of Heritage: A Pictorial History of the Thermal Belt*. Tryon, NC: Tryon Chamber of Commerce, 1991.

Diamond, Raymond. "Tryon Hunt Club Offers Endless Attractions for Lovers of Horsemanship." *Spartanburg Herald-Journal*, December 18, 1939.

Goodwin, Garland A. *A Boy in the Amen Corner*. Tryon, NC: Garland A. Goodwin, 1999.

Griffith, Clay, "Mill Farm Inn" National Register of Historic Places Nomination. Survey and Planning Branch, Historic Preservation Office, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, 2009.

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Lea, Diane E. 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.

McCue, Michael L. *The Tryon Toy Makers and Wood Carvers: A History 1915-1940*. Columbus, NC: Condar Company, 2004.

Newspapers (1935-2012)
Hendersonville Times-News
Spartanburg Herald-Journal
Tryon Daily Bulletin

Pauline Miller Cowan Collection. D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville 28804.

Polk County Register of Deeds Office, Columbus, NC.

Roberts, Claudia P. "Pine Crest Inn" National Register of Historic Places Nomination. Survey and Planning Branch, Historic Preservation Office, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, 1980.

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Sharpe, Bill. *A New Geography of North Carolina*, Volume III. Raleigh, NC: Sharpe Publishing Company, 1961.

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
Polk County Public Library, Columbus, NC

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PL0059

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 25.94 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

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UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Zone: 17 | Easting: 386710 | Northing: 3900900N |
| 2. Zone: 17 | Easting: 386776 | Northing: 3900550N |
| 3. Zone: 17 | Easting: 386300 | Northing: 3900460N |
| 4. Zone: 17 | Easting: 386330 | Northing: 3900850N |

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

The nominated property for Stone Hedge contains the full extent of Polk County tax parcel P47-152. The property boundary, encompassing 25.94 acres, is defined as Lots 1 and 2 and delineated by the heavy black line on the accompanying survey map prepared for Ray G. and Anneliese C. Weingartner by Sam T. Marlowe & Associates and dated January 28, 1980.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the nominated property includes the residual acreage historically associated with Stone Hedge and provides an appropriate setting for the house and associated buildings.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Clay Griffith and Alex Cole
organization: Acme Preservation Services
street & number: 825C Merrimon Ave., #345
city or town: Asheville state: NC zip code: 28804
e-mail: cgriffith.acme@gmail.com
telephone: (828) 281-3852
date: January 5, 2015

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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.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

The following information pertains to each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Stone Hedge
Location: 222 Stone Hedge Lane, Tryon vic., North Carolina
County: Polk
Name of Photographer: Clay Griffith / Acme Preservation Services
Date of Photographs: June 3, 2013 (unless noted otherwise)
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. House, façade, view to northeast
2. House, façade, oblique view to north
3. House, south elevation, view to northeast
4. House, rear elevation, view to southeast
5. House, great room, fireplace and stair, view to southeast
6. House, great room, view to southeast
7. House, great room, view to northwest
8. House, sun porch, view to southeast
9. Guest House, façade, oblique view to north
10. Guest House, bedroom, view to southeast (December 9, 2013)

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11. Pool House, south elevation, and swimming pool, view to northwest
- 12 Pool House, north elevation, view to south
- 13 Pool House, guest room, view to north (December 9, 2013)
- 14 Entrance drive and front lawn, view to west

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.