

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name Rock House
other names/site number Bowman Gray House

2. Location

street & number 7 Chestnut Lane N/A not for publication
city or town Roaring Gap N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Alleghany code 005 zip code 28668

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Jeffrey Brown SHPO 6/23/04
Signature of certifying official Date
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: Signature of Keeper Date of Action

entered in the National Register _____
 See continuation sheet. _____
 determined eligible for the National Register _____
 See continuation sheet. _____
 determined not eligible for the National Register _____
 removed from the National Register _____
 other (explain): _____

Rock House
Alleghany County, North Carolina

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: private Category of Property building

Number of Resources within Property

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> | buildings |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | sites |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | structures |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | objects |
| 2 | 0 | Total |

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: **single dwelling**
DOMESTIC **secondary structure**

Current Functions

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: **single dwelling**
DOMESTIC **secondary structure**

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Other: Rustic Revival

Materials

foundation **Stone**
 roof **Ceramic Tile**
 walls **Wood Shingle**
Stone
 other **Wood**

Narrative Description : See Continuation Form Section 7, page 1

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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 a grave.
- d a cemetery.
- e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- f a commemorative property.
- g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance Architecture

Period of Significance ca. 1929 Significant Dates ca. 1929

Significant person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder Northrup and O'Brien

Narrative Statement of Significance: See Continuation Form Section 8, page 1

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography: See Continuation Form Section 9, page 1

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

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

Name of repository: N.C. Division of Archive and History, Raleigh

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.89 acres

UTM References Zone Easting Northing
 17 503340 4029560

Verbal Boundary Description: The property being nominated to the National Register conforms to the current Alleghany County tax parcel: L6-001-027.

Boundary Justification: The National Register boundaries encompass the 1.89-acre tax parcel that is historically associated with the house. This tract contains the Rock House, which is the primary contributing resource, the associated outbuilding, and the yard, which defines the setting.

11. Form Prepared By

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2228 Winter Street
Charlotte, N.C. 28205

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Property Owner

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Narrative Description

The ca. 1929 Rock House is located in the exclusive Roaring Gap resort community in the Blue Ridge of Alleghany County, North Carolina. The house is sited on a nearly two-acre parcel on the eastern ridge of Beech Mountain, overlooking the Yadkin River Valley. This dramatic view, which includes Pilot Mountain, remains essentially unchanged since the construction of the house. The front elevation is oriented to the west towards Roaring Gap Drive, a narrow, winding roadway running through the community. In common with other Roaring Gap residences, the house is tucked away from this main drive, buffered from the street by mature vegetation and subsidiary buildings. Just west of the house there is a circular driveway surrounded by native plantings, including large oaks, hollies, maples, hemlocks, dogwoods, rhododendron, azaleas, and hydrangea. A rock-walled service court and garage with attached servant's quarters stand on the north side of the house, and a stone retaining wall divides the service court from the steep slope with terraced gardens to the north. Another stone retaining wall is located on the southwest side near Chestnut Lane. Slate steps lead to the main entry, and slate paths lead around the exterior of the house and into the lawn. The large lawn sweeps down from the rear elevation east towards Valley View Drive. Mature hardwoods shield the property from this narrow drive along the tract's east side and provide shade on the south side of the lawn. There is a small, terraced perennial flower garden at the north side of the service court. A modern, rustic-style wooden fence separates this garden from the open lawn to the east.

Between 1999 and 2000, the Rock House underwent a certified historic preservation rehabilitation that complies with the Secretary of Interior's Standards. The rehabilitation primarily addressed alterations that occurred under different ownership in 1980 and 1995. Approximately 9,000 square feet in size, the dwelling is a rambling, rock and chestnut bark-shingled residence in the rustic style befitting an upscale mountain retreat of the period. Constructed into sloping terrain, the house includes a one-story front elevation of rough-faced, randomly coursed, mortared stone, and a two-story, frame, rear elevation with chestnut-bark siding and stone end walls. The rock sections of the house were quarried from nearby Elkin Creek. Flat slate tiles cover the roof. The consciously informal, loosely T-shaped configuration consists of four gabled wings that hold the living room, dining room, bedrooms, and kitchen/sunroom. The house features two original massive rock chimneys, one situated at the junction of the bedroom and living room wings, the other at the east gable end of the living room. A modern rock chimney similar to the original chimneys serves the new rock fireplace in the kitchen. Original or restored glazed double doors exist in the dining room, living room, stairhall, and on the west elevation.

A variety of porches, terraces, and decks mark the elevations. A pentagonal porch with heavy posts and curvilinear braces designates the main entry on the west side. A similar porch extends from the rear of the living room wing on the east elevation to afford a spectacular view of the Yadkin River Valley. During the renovation, later windows that had enclosed this rear porch were removed and a wooden railing was installed to replicate the original based on documentary photographs. Deteriorated and altered rafters and bracing were also replaced to match the original designs. A modern wooden deck with a wooden railing was constructed to join this porch with an original terrace along the north elevation. A

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matching 1980 wooden deck with a stone wall on the south side connects the living room with the long, nine-bay bedroom wing. This wing's two-tiered porch along the east elevation has a terrace at ground and original wooden railing, bracing, and stairs. The screened porch at the north end of the dining room wing has original stone flooring and beaded-board ceiling.

The former kitchen porch at the west end of the wing was converted to an office/sunroom in 1980, and the windows and supporting lower wall removed and replaced with stacked awning windows. The 1980 windows have now been replaced by full-length, multiple-paned, fixed windows. The original multiple-paned door remains intact.

With the rehabilitation, deteriorated chestnut bark shingles on the rear of the bedroom wing were replaced with matching chestnut bark shingles taken from the rear of the garage. Three French doors were added along the upper story of this wing to provide porch access from the two bedrooms and the study. These sets of French doors replaced single doorways that were later replacements, and are the most noticeable change to the house.

During the renovation, single-pane windows installed on portions of the house in 1980 were replaced with custom-made, double-hung, six-over-six and four-over-four windows modeled after original existing windows. All of the windows have simple surrounds and hewn chestnut lintels. In particular, 1980 windows with large wood moldings across the front elevation were replaced with operable, double-hung windows to match the originals. Similarly, 1980 windows across the upper level of the rear (east) elevation were replaced with six-over-six and four-over-four windows using existing original windows as models. The windows and multiple-paned door along the lower level of this elevation are original. In 1980, all shutters were removed for stripping but were lost. New custom-made board shutters similar to the originals have been installed at all the windows and doors.

The original main doorway on the west elevation was later enclosed with stones to match the surrounding rock exterior. The principal entry was then through the office/sunroom. With the rehabilitation, the infill stones were removed and replaced with a glazed double door modeled after the original doorway.

Inside, the house retains its original plan, with intersecting wings serving different domestic functions, and bedrooms opening onto the long north-south side hallways on both levels. The stairway is situated at the junction of the bedroom and living room wings. The interior is characterized by painted and unpainted beaded-board walls and ceilings, hardwood flooring, large rock fireplaces with raised stone hearths, and stone end walls. The original hardwood floors remain through the lower level and in the upper bedroom wing and kitchen. Water damage in 1995 required the removal of wood flooring in the living room, dining room, hall, stairhall, and study. With the current renovation, hardwood flooring similar to the original was installed in these rooms.

At the north end of the stairhall on the upper level, glazed double doors open onto to the small, single-run stairway that descends to the sizable living room. The beaded-board stairway has turned balusters and

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square newels with rounded knobs. The living room features a large stone fireplace with stone walls and a wood mantel shelf supported by heavy wood blocks. In 1980, pale flagstone hearths were installed in the living room, as well as the living room porch and the upper and lower south bedrooms. These flagstone hearths were replaced during the rehabilitation with stone hearths that match the original stone flooring on the dining room porch. The living room has beaded-board walls and exposed heavy timber chestnut ceiling trusses. Three sets of glazed double doors open onto the north terrace, while arched door openings flanking the fireplace provide convenient access to the back porch.

The dining room has raised paneling on the walls and ceiling. The hardwood flooring was installed as part of the certified restoration, replacing a later tile floor. Glazed double doors open onto the screened porch. To the west of the dining room, the kitchen had been extensively remodeled in 1980. That year, the original interior partitions were removed to create the present open space, incorporating the 1929 kitchen, pantry, and closet. The original ceiling was also removed to create the higher ceiling with exposed wood trusses, the present wood cabinets were installed, a brick fireplace constructed, and new windows installed along the north elevation. With the present rehabilitation, the brick fireplace was replaced by a rock fireplace with a rock wall and simple wood mantel. The 1980s windows were replaced by glazed double doors. The 1980 cabinets, kitchen configuration, exposed trusswork remain unchanged.

Opposite the entrance and entry hall, glazed double doors lead to the study. The study was originally a sitting room adjacent to a bedroom with a doorway between. In 1980, the partition wall was removed to create a single room. In 1995, the partition was replaced to form two rooms with no access between them, and the ceiling was raised to create the present eleven-foot tray ceiling. With the present renovation, glazed double doors were installed between the rooms. The study's arched stone mantel and horizontal beaded-board walls are original, though a later Colonial Revival mantel has been replaced by a simple wood mantel shelf similar to others in the house.

South of the study, two bedrooms and two bathrooms complete the upper level. The bathroom between the two bedrooms was altered and enlarged in 1980, and has been remodeled to its original size and layout, thus restoring the guest bedroom to its original dimensions. The bathrooms on both levels of the bedroom wing at its south end were also extensively altered over time, and have been modernized during the present renovation. The rock fireplace walls in the master bedroom on the upper level and the south bedroom on the lower level were originally unpainted, but were painted white in 1980s. They remain painted. The master bedroom ceiling, which had been lowered, was been restored to its original full height, with exposed rafters and beaded boarding.

On the lower level of the bedroom wing, the south end of the hall features a rock fireplace on the west wall, painted white. The lower-level bedrooms have plaster walls and ceilings, and batten doors that open onto the long, side hall. The north end of this level holds a small storage room with original wood cabinets, boiler room, and former laundry room, which had been extensively altered over time and now serves as an entertainment room.

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Garage/Servant's Quarters, ca. 1929 (Contributing)

The side-gable, frame garage with servant's quarters is sited northwest of the house, within the walled service court. The substantially intact building has a slate-tile roof with four shed dormers on the east side, and is constructed of river rock and chestnut bark siding to match the house. Extending from the south elevation is the one-story, two-bay, gable-roofed servant's wing with chestnut bark siding, a rock chimney, and standing-seam metal roof. The wing's simple interior consists of one bedroom and bathroom, and has beaded-board walls and ceiling.

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8. Statement of Significance

Summary Statement

Constructed between 1928 and 1929, Rock House is associated with the rise of elite summer colonies in the North Carolina mountains, and particularly with the 1920s phase of development at the exclusive Roaring Gap resort in Alleghany County. Beginning with the antebellum Flat Rock colony in Henderson County, the scenic beauty and refreshing mountain air of western North Carolina drew wealthy families escaping the summer heat. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, an emerging class of prominent, urban tobacco and textile industrialists based in the Piedmont established intimate, private resort villages in the Blue Ridge. These included Linville, Little Switzerland, Blowing Rock, and Roaring Gap. Such places were part of a larger pattern of tourism in the region, as new rail connections and later paved roadways made remote mountain areas increasingly accessible. At Roaring Gap, the magnificent views of the Yadkin River Valley to the southeast attracted rich families from the state's western Piedmont cities, especially Winston-Salem. The colony's development began at a leisurely pace in the 1890s and then hit its stride in the 1920s, when Roaring Gap Incorporated invested in the grand Graystone Inn (1926) and purchased additional land for cottage sites, a golf course, polo field, and roadways. The Rock House was built during this active period of development. The first owner, Bowman Gray, president and later chairman of the board of R. J. Reynolds Company in Winston-Salem, epitomized Roaring Gap's prestigious summer inhabitants. Rock House was subsequently the seasonal getaway for a series of prominent individuals, including Greensboro industrialist J. Spencer Love, who owned the property from 1954 to 1962. In its well-crafted rustic architecture, spacious scale; consciously informal landscaping, and sweeping view of the Yadkin River Valley, Rock House clearly expresses an elite, mountain retreat of the era, and the particular appeal of Roaring Gap as one of the state's most exclusive summer colonies.

Rock House fulfills National Register Criterion C for architecture. Rock House is a rambling, rock and chestnut bark-clad design that epitomizes the Rustic Revival style. This informal style emphasized the use of native materials and evoked a leisurely, healthful association with mountain landscapes that captured the appeal of the region. It rose to popularity in the North Carolina mountains during the growth of tourism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Before the chestnut blight of the 1930s devastated the forests of chestnut trees in the region, architects and builders combined rough, chestnut-bark shingles with a variety of native wood and rock to fashion an array of Rustic Revival-style architecture. In Roaring Gap, Bowman Gray commissioned the Winston-Salem architecture firm of Northrup and O'Brien, which also designed the Grays' Norman Revival country house, Graylyn (1929-1932), outside Winston-Salem. While the firm's work concentrated on formal, period revival styles in the Piedmont's growing cities, Northrup and O'Brien designed Rock House with an informal elegance exemplary of the Rustic Revival. Constructed into a sloping tract, the carefully restored residence displays such hallmarks of the style as walls clad in rock and chestnut-bark shingles, massive stone chimneys and fireplaces, exposed timber trusses, and porches, decks, and terraces that afford magnificent, sweeping views of the Yadkin River Valley.

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Historical Background

Situated along the Eastern Continental Divide in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Alleghany County, Roaring Gap took shape as a wealthy resort community amidst the region's tourist boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Overlooking the great Yadkin River Valley to the southeast, this scenic and private retreat was established in the 1890s for elite summer visitors, many of who had earned their wealth from the thriving tobacco and textile industries in the North Carolina Piedmont. By the end of the nineteenth century, cities in the North Carolina Piedmont were rapidly expanding as tobacco and textile manufacturing centers. A growing class of urban industrialists and professionals--with unprecedented riches and leisure time--emerged who sought mountain retreats for relaxation and healthful recreational pursuits. Roaring Gap attracted visitors from the nearby northwestern Piedmont, where new railroad connections in the late nineteenth century and paved highways in the twentieth provided residents of Winston and Salem (later Winston-Salem) and Greensboro convenient access westward to the Blue Ridge. By the 1890s, rail trips from these places to mountain retreats took just hours, instead of days by carriage. Greensboro was seven and a half hours from Roaring Gap, and Winston and Salem several hours closer. Passenger cars carried mountain-bound families to the rail terminus at Elkin, where a fifteen-mile hack ride up the mountain completed the journey. In June 1894, one guest described the magnificent view of the rolling Piedmont that accompanied the final leg of the trip to Roaring Gap. He observed,

Leaving Elkin, the beautiful railroad town in the Yadkin Valley, I begin the ascent to Roaring Gap Hotel, which was in plain view most of the way from the start, and with a company of congenial companions had a most delightful drive of four hours over a very picturesque plateau of country. . . . With the natural eyes, aided only by some short-ranged field glasses, could be seen the towns of Mt. Airy, Dobson, Rockford, Boonville, Winston, East Bend, Donnah, Yadkinville, Elkin, Jonesville, Hamptonville, Wilkesboro, Sparta, and other minor ones (Quoted in Taylor 1991: 8:2; Noel and Wilson 1976: 10).

Roaring Gap was one of a collection of exclusive, tightly knit summer colonies that arose and flourished in western North Carolina. While each developed in its own way to express a distinct character, they also shared many of the same traits. Perhaps the earliest was Flat Rock in Henderson County, where members of Charleston's antebellum gentry sought relief from the oppressive low-country summers. Over time, generations of wealthy Charlestonians summered at Flat Rock to create an elite mountain village, complete with dwellings, a church, a large hotel, and recreational amenities (Hood and Phillips 1994: 8:36; Bishir et al. 1999: 171, 316-321).

Blowing Rock in Watauga County, Linville in Avery County, and Little Switzerland in McDowell County were other upscale resorts. Blowing Rock attracted families of Piedmont industrialists who built grand mountaintop retreats as well as smaller summer cottages around the 1891 Green Park Inn. The building of a railroad from Hickory to Lenoir in 1884, and the completion of a twenty-mile pike road northward up the Blue Ride from Lenoir to Blowing Rock provided the requisite access. In the 1890s,

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Alabama entrepreneur, William W. Stringfellow, came to Blowing Rock and commissioned Chetola Manor as his grand summer retreat. Between 1899 and 1901, Greensboro textile industrialist Moses Cone erected Flat Top Manor, a twenty-three-room summer getaway. By the early twentieth century, Blowing Rock had become a fashionable resort, where rich families enjoyed the spectacular scenery and salubrious mountain air (Bishir et al. 1999: 214-217; Hood and Phillips 1994: 8:36-59; Taylor 1991: 8:3-4).

Linville drew many of its residents from Wilmington, North Carolina. Hugh MacRae of that port city was the leading developer, and the MacRae family and their prosperous friends and business associates built a compact village consisting of private homes, the spacious Eseeola Inn, and a deluxe private country club. Many early visitors reached Linville by carriage along Yonahlossee Road (present NC 221) from Blowing Rock, a seventeen-mile ride (Bishir et al. 1999: 223-225; Roberts 1978; Taylor 1991: 8:3).

Little Switzerland attracted the upper class of Charlotte. In 1909, Charlotte attorney Heriot Clarkson and a group of associates, including Charlotte textile-mill owner Daniel Augustus Tompkins, bought 1,100 acres in upper McDowell County to create "the Beauty Spot of the Blue Ridge." The building of the Clinchfield Railroad from Spartanburg, South Carolina, over the mountains to Spruce Pine, just four miles from the Little Switzerland, provided the impetus for development. In 1910, the stockholders invested in the twenty-five-room Switzerland Inn, in 1913 the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection was completed, and in the ensuing years numerous summer bungalows appeared on wooded lots of at least one acre (Bishir et al. 1999: 171-172).

Roaring Gap in the Blue Ridge of Alleghany County was founded in the 1890s by Hugh Gwyn Chatham, who owned a textile mill in Elkin, North Carolina. As recounted by his daughter, Mrs. Ralph Haynes, "Father was riding horseback through the mountains to buy wool for the mill when he came upon this great place-Roaring Gap. And he was so struck with its splendor that he wanted everybody he knew in the world to come up there to see for themselves." Subsequently, Chatham and several prominent Winston-Salem friends, William T. Vogler, Colonel William A. Blair, and A. H. Eller, organized the Roaring Gap Summer Resort Company. Chatham was also president of the Elkin and Alleghany Railroad, which by 1915 extended northward from Elkin to the base of the Blue Ridge below Roaring Gap. Chatham's rail line never reached Roaring Gap, but it shortened the carriage ride and Roaring Gap quietly matured as a private resort (Alleghany Historical/Genealogical Society 1983: 22-23; Taylor 1991: 8:4).

In the summer of 1893, investor William T. Vogler, a Winston-Salem banker, builder, and entrepreneur, moved to Roaring Gap to supervise the building of the Roaring Gap Hotel. The hotel was a three-story, shingled building with some thirty rooms and grounds for tennis and other sports. It opened in 1894, and the guest list included Winston-Salem's elite: William Blair, Henry Fries, James A. Gray, and R. J. Reynolds. In 1909, local builders completed Vogler's own summer cottage, an informal frame dwelling with a large wraparound porch (National Register 1991; razed 2000). At the time of construction, the Vogler family cottage was one of six summer cottages in Roaring Gap, occupying choice real estate along

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the high ridge overlooking the Yadkin River Valley (Noel and Wilson 1976: 6-8, 18; Taylor 1991: 8:1-4).

The Roaring Gap Hotel burned in 1913, effectively ending the first era of growth at Roaring Gap. However, an important second phase began in the early 1920s, launched by the arrival of the automobile and the formation of a new land development corporation. The construction of paved US 21 in 1922 linked Roaring Gap to Elkin and the major cities of the Piedmont. Access to the resort by motorcar promised new opportunities for growth. In 1925, Roaring Gap Incorporated was formed and plans were drawn to build a larger resort hotel. Philadelphia architect Charles Barton Keen was commissioned to design the Graystone Inn, completed in 1926. The imposing, fifty-five-room Colonial Revival inn of gray ashlar stone still stands as the centerpiece of the Roaring Gap resort. The following year, the small, Gothic Revival Roaring Gap Church was opened. This interdenominational chapel was also probably designed by Keen. The development corporation purchased additional land for cottage sites, a golf course, polo field, and roadways. The corporation sold shares of stock, and on July 1, 1925, 190 wealthy stockholders came to Roaring Gap for the "drawing of lots," and all-day event. Also in 1925, Lake Louise, a fifty-four-acre lake, was constructed for the use of hotel guests, cottage owners, stockholders, and their guests. In 1926, the Roaring Gap Post Office was opened and construction began on new summer homes along the winding, wooded lanes around the inn and the ridgeline (Noel and Wilson 1976: 18-19; Alleghany Historical/Genealogical Society 1983: 22-23; Taylor 1991: 8:4-6; Opperman 1998: 2; Bishir et al. 1999: 201).

In 1926 and 1927, during this busy second phase of development at Roaring Gap, Bowman and Nathalie Gray acquired four lots along the eastern face of the ridge for their summer home, Rock House. The couple commissioned the Winston-Salem architecture firm of Northrup and O'Brien to design the house, which was completed ca. 1929. Northrup and O'Brien also designed the Grays' Norman Revival country house, Graylyn (1929-1932), outside Winston-Salem. (Graylyn is listed in the National Register and the significance of Bowman Gray as a business and civic leader is represented through this primary residence) (Alleghany County Deed Book 38: 98-99, 318; Opperman 1998: 2-3; Bishir and Southern 2003: 68-69, 393).

Born in Winston-Salem, Bowman Gray (1874-1935) was the son of James A. Gray, who was one of the founders of Wachovia National Bank in that city in the 1879. The young and ambitious Bowman Gray first clerked at his father's bank. In 1895 he began his impressive career at the powerful R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company in Winston-Salem. He started as a salesman and in 1924 became president. He rose to chairman of the board in 1931. At the time of his death in 1935, Gray's fortune included twelve million dollars in R. J. Reynolds holdings alone (Powell 1986: 349; Opperman 1998: 3; Bishir and Southern 2003: 369, 380, 393).

Reflecting the exclusivity of Roaring Gap, the Grays were the first of a series of influential families to own Rock House. In 1954, J. Spencer and Martha Love of Greensboro purchased the dwelling. In the 1920s, J. Spencer Love founded Burlington Mills, which he expanded into Burlington Industries, the

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largest textile company in the world by 1980. The Loves bought the house and land as well as “all the furniture, appliances and furnishing of every kind and nature in the dwelling house. . . except for the personal property that is in the vault. . .” (Bishir and Southern 2003: 241-242; Powell 1991: 99; Opperman 1998: 3; Alleghany County Deed Book 64: 91).

In 1962, the Loves sold Rock House to Philadelphian, Stuart T. Saunders, chairman of the board of the Pennsylvania Railroad. In 1980, the Saunder family sold the property to Merrick Coates Brants, who owned the house for sixteen years before selling it to Robert and Lynette Grossenbacher in 1996. The house is now owned by LKBL Realty Trust of High Point, North Carolina, whose president is S. Davis Phillips, former North Carolina Secretary of Commerce (Alleghany County Deed Books 73:12’ 114:304; 211;728; Opperman 1998: 3).

Architecture Context

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, numerous summer resorts flourished in the mountain counties of western North Carolina as wealthy industrialists and their families, both from nearby Piedmont cities and from outside the state, pursued leisure activities and escaped the summer heat within picturesque mountain enclaves. These summer colonies were often consciously informal and rustic in their layout and architecture with designs that reflected the relaxed nature of these retreats. Architecturally, the Rustic Revival style became a favorite choice in such elite vacation havens as Linville, Blowing Rock, and Roaring Gap. Built ca. 1929 for Winston-Salem industrialist, Bowman Gray, Rock House survives as one of the most substantial and architecturally sophisticated houses in Roaring Gap and the epitome of the Rustic Revival style from its heyday in the early decades of the twentieth century.

The Rustic Revival style was one manifestation of the larger back-to-nature movement that gained momentum in the United States during the rise of industrialization and urbanization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In architecture, this trend towards self-conscious informality was promoted by the Arts and Crafts movement, which championed traditional craftsmanship and popularized the use of native stone, rough wood surfaces, and a variety of textures to evoke nature's own diversity. The Rustic Revival style epitomized this informal aesthetic in its natural vocabulary of stonework, bark shingles, log construction, exposed trusses, and earthen tones. Before the chestnut tree was lost to a blight in the 1930s, its shaggy bark was a popular shingling material and a distinctive feature of the Rustic Revival architecture of western North Carolina. The most sophisticated interpretations often had rambling, irregular forms with deep, sheltering eaves, abundant fenestration, and a variety of porches and terraces. Houses were often sited as elements of the natural landscape and to enhance the natural qualities of the setting. The summer cottages were often tucked into secluded sylvan tracts or built into landscaped, terraced slopes along mountain ridges that offered spectacular vistas (Martin 1995: E: 88-89; Bishir et al. 1999: 72; Hood and Phillips 1994: 8: 60-61; Roberts 1978: 8: 1).

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In western North Carolina, the Rustic Revival style rose to popularity with the emergence of tourism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The informal, evocative style captured the imagination of vacationers and was used for a variety of building types including houses, inns, crafts schools, churches, and roadside businesses. An impressive example is the grand Edward F. Worst Craft House (1935) at the Penland School of Crafts in Mitchell County which was designed by Tennessee architect, D. R. Beeson. Other expressions range from the exclusive Glen Ghoga Lode (1934-1935) on the shore of Lake Nantahala in Macon County to the automobile-oriented Log Cabin Motor Court (ca. 1930) alongside Weaverville Highway in Buncombe County. In the mountain resort of Cashiers in Jackson County, architect Erle Stillwell designed the sprawling High Hampton Inn (1932) in the Rustic Revival style, employing sweeping verandas, massive rock chimneys, chestnut bark exterior shingling, and other natural materials. In the thriving tourist town of Highlands in Macon County, contractor Joe Webb built a host of Rustic Revival style residences that featured rounded logs, chestnut bark siding, and porch balustrades and railings of rhododendron branches. Some of the finer expressions of the domestic Rustic Revival style appeared in the region's elite summer colonies where Piedmont industrialists commissioned vacation cottages of river rock and chestnut bark shingles that stood in sharp contrast to their permanent residences which were often executed in the formal revival styles of the period (Martin 1995: E:89; Taylor 1991: 8: 6; Sizemore 1983: xiii-xiv; Bishir et al. 1999: 50, 72, 233, 299, 362-363).

The resort enclave of Linville in Avery County features an especially fine collection of Rustic Revival style dwellings that occupy wooded sites around the great, rambling, bark shingled Eseeola Lodge (1920s). In Linville during the 1890s and early 1900s, architect Henry Bacon designed such sophisticated examples of the style as the Donald MacRae Cottage, the Van Landingham Cottage, and The Studio. All exemplify the rustic informality of the style in their chestnut bark and log exteriors, rock chimneys, deep eaves, and broad porches. During the 1920s, the popularity of the style was evident in the work of architect Harry Stearns, who designed a host of rustic, bark clad cottages along Linville and Watauga avenues. In Blowing Rock in Watauga County, local builders constructed Rustic Revival cottages and Craftsman bungalows with chestnut bark shingles for their wealthy Piedmont clientele (Martin 1995: E: 89; Bishir et al. 1999: 223-225; Roberts 1978: 8: 1).

At Roaring Gap in Alleghany County, residents opted for a variety of informal designs during the colony's two distinct phases of development before World War II. There has been no comprehensive architectural inventory of Roaring Gap, and the colony's secluded lots and emphasis on privacy limits the discussion of its architecture. Although a selective countywide inventory in 1983 included some of Roaring Gap's earliest summer cottages, little is known about the scores of later residences, which were built during the second phase of development and which dominate the community's housing stock (Sizemore 1983; Vogler 1991; Bishir et al 1999: 201).

In the first phase, which began in the 1890s and ended with the burning of the Roaring Gap Hotel in 1913, the vacation cottages tended to be traditional, rectangular shapes adapted with deep wraparound verandahs, open plans, and large, glazed dormers that sheltered sleeping porches. Although these summer houses were sometimes larger than other Alleghany County houses, they shared the traditional, side-gable

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forms and weatherboard exteriors found throughout the region. By 1908, there were five or six such cottages at Roaring Gap, most of which were sited along the crest of the mountain, facing east to take in the long, spectacular vistas across the Yadkin River Valley. One of the oldest houses in Roaring Gap is the John Ross House, set within acres of rhododendron forest. The house was originally a farmhouse for the Ross family, built in 1887 before the founding of Roaring Gap. The one-story, frame house has a hall and parlor plan with a broad, front porch. Although somewhat modernized, the interior retains its flush board sheathing and simple, post and lintel mantels. The G. T. Roth Cottage (1903) is a story-and-a-half dwelling with a long, four-bay facade and a wide dormer that affords scenic views from the upstairs rooms. The deep, engaged porch wraps around the house, adding to its leisurely feel. The 1908 Vogler Cottage (National Register listed, but now gone) featured a spacious porch with Queen Anne-inspired trim that wrapped around the simple rectangular form. The prominent dormer above contained the sleeping porch (Sizemore 1983: xiii-xiv, 77-81; Taylor 1991).

In 1898, Hugh Chatham, Roaring Gap founder and Elkin industrialist, built his own cottage on a prime site overlooking the Yadkin River Valley. Originally a two-story, three-bay dwelling, the Chatham cottage has had numerous additions over the years. For example, in 1910, a gambrel-mansard hybrid roof was added as was a large porch with an overhanging roof. The interior has had some Colonial Revival finishes installed including the mantels and diagonally paneled wainscoting (Sizemore 1983: xiii-xiv, 78, 80-81; Taylor 1991: 8:6).

Perhaps the grandest of the early cottages in Roaring Gap is Monte Rosa, the home of the Fries family, a prominent Moravian family of Winston-Salem. Built in 1906, Monte Rosa also occupied one of the most desirable locations along the community's east ridge, and like its neighbors, is oriented towards the Yadkin River Valley. The two-and-one-half story, weatherboard dwelling has gable dormers and a prominent, two-story, wraparound porch supported by turned posts with picturesque brackets. The otherwise simple, rectangular building has a largely unchanged interior with tongue and groove, pine walls and massive, rock fireplaces (Sizemore 1983: 78).

The second period of construction in Roaring Gap did not begin until the early 1920s when a new paved highway, U.S. 21, improved access to the community. In addition to better transportation throughout the mountains, the prosperity of the 1920s spurred resort development. Grander hotels, more elaborate cottages, recreational facilities, and other amenities were all added to many of western North Carolina's exclusive summer colonies. At Roaring Gap, an imposing, stone, Georgian Revival hotel, the Graystone Inn (1926), a recreational lake named Lake Louise, a golf course, and a polo field all joined the new summer residences that were then being built. Regarded as the most monumental building in Alleghany County, the three-story, fifty-five room hotel was designed by noted Philadelphia architect, Charles Barton Keen, who had undertaken a number of commissions for Winston-Salem's elite, many of whom had summer cottages at Roaring Gap (Taylor 1991: 8: 6; Sizemore 1983: xiii-xiv, 79).

The architectural designs of interwar Roaring Gap differed from those of its earliest cottages. The traditional house forms, simple, frame construction, and weatherboard exteriors gave way in the 1920s to

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a mix of informal styles that frequently incorporated chestnut bark, native stone, log, and brick. Today, a collection of bark-clad and stone dwellings inspired by the popular Rustic Revival style survives along the winding, wooded lanes platted during the colony's second era of development. A windshield survey reveals approximately a half dozen examples located along Roaring Gap Drive and Valley View Drive, but there may possibly be more tucked away on secluded lots. Sited along Valley View Drive near Rock House, the house, Pine Logs (1920s), stands among the most visible examples of the Rustic Revival style, combining chestnut bark shingles, log, and stone in a rambling, two-story dwelling and carriage house. As with Rock House, Pine Logs occupies a sloping, terraced site with the most impressive elevation facing eastward away from the main drive and towards the Yadkin River Valley. Other examples appear to be simpler versions that express Rustic Revival informality in their chestnut bark-shingled siding, spacious porches, and rock chimneys.

The ca. 1929 Rock House, designed by the Winston-Salem architectural firm of Northrup and O'Brien, appears to be Roaring Gap's largest and most sophisticated interpretation of the Rustic Revival style. In its irregular form constructed into the sloping terrain, use of natural materials, myriad porches and terraces, and interrelationship of interior and exterior spaces, Rock House epitomizes the style. The house has an exterior of chestnut bark shingles and river rock, an informal plan with numerous doors and windows that open onto porches and terraces, and rough-hewn, wood detailing. The Rustic Revival interior features beaded board walls and ceilings, stone fireplaces and fireplace walls, and exposed trusses supporting high ceilings. Like many of the finest houses at Roaring Gap, Rock House is oriented along the eastern slope, allowing for expansive valley views from an array of porches and terraces. Rock House was originally the summer home of Winston-Salem resident, Bowman Gray, president of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. Northrup and O'Brien would also design the Grays' Winston-Salem estate, Graylyn (National Register 1978), an elegant Norman Revival home, executed in stone and set within the grounds of the Reynolda estate. Rock House is the firm's only known commission in the Rustic Revival style (Bishir and Southern 2003: 393).

The firm of Northrup and O'Brien clearly represented the professional architectural firms that arose during the early twentieth century, particularly in the emerging cities of the Piedmont. With an industrial wealth created primarily by tobacco, furniture and textiles, the burgeoning urban centers of the North Carolina Piedmont developed an elite that hired these architectural firms to design their factories, homes, and summer cottages. Northrup and O'Brien had been established in Winston-Salem in 1916 by Michigan native, Willard C. Northrup, and North Carolinian, Leet O'Brien, who had studied design at Carnegie Technical University in Pittsburgh.

Unlike the metropolitan areas of the Northeast and Midwest, which had the populations and wealth to support large, highly specialized design firms, the first generation of professional architects in North Carolina practiced in a range of styles as their commissions demanded. Northrup and O'Brien was a particularly prolific firm, designing a variety of governmental, residential, ecclesiastical, and commercial buildings throughout the state during the first half of the twentieth century. One of their first commissions was the O'Hanlon Building, Winston-Salem's second skyscraper, designed in 1914 to reflect

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the classicism of the then current Beaux Arts movement. In addition to Rock House (ca. 1929) and Graylyn (1929-1932) for Bowman Gray, the firm's 1920s commissions included a Moravian church in Winston-Salem, a English style cottage for a Wachovia Bank officer, the Beaux Arts Forsyth County Courthouse and Winston-Salem City Hall, and several Art Deco commercial buildings. In the 1930s, Northrup and O'Brien designed the imposing Tudor Revival residence, Adamsleigh, in the exclusive Greensboro enclave of Sedgefield as well as one of the finest Art Deco commercial buildings in the state, the six-story Snow Building, built in Durham in 1933. Among their governmental commissions of the 1930s were the State Education Building (1938) in Raleigh, which was designed in a stylized classicism, and the Art Moderne Albemarle City Hall (1938) in Stanly County (Bishir et al. 1990: 301, 319-320, 347; Bishir and Southern 2003: 110, 284, 339, 370, 380, 382-383, 389, 393).

Although construction in Roaring Gap slowed during the Depression and stopped during the Second World War, building resumed in the postwar period. The chestnut blight of the 1930s brought an end to building with chestnut bark shingles throughout the region and effectively marked the end of the Rustic Revival style in Roaring Gap and the other summer colonies of western North Carolina. Postwar architecture has remained informal in its designs and forms, maintaining the leisurely ambience and pace of such communities. At Roaring Gap, new construction in the second half of the twentieth century has been characterized by simple forms with large porches, open plans, and board-and-batten or weatherboard exteriors, as well as contemporary, low-slung, ranch-style dwellings. Amidst this new construction, Roaring Gap continues to be a private and exclusive summer haven, and Rock House remains one of the colony's largest and most architecturally sophisticated houses as well as the epitome of the Rustic Revival style.

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Photographs

The following information pertains to each of the photographs:

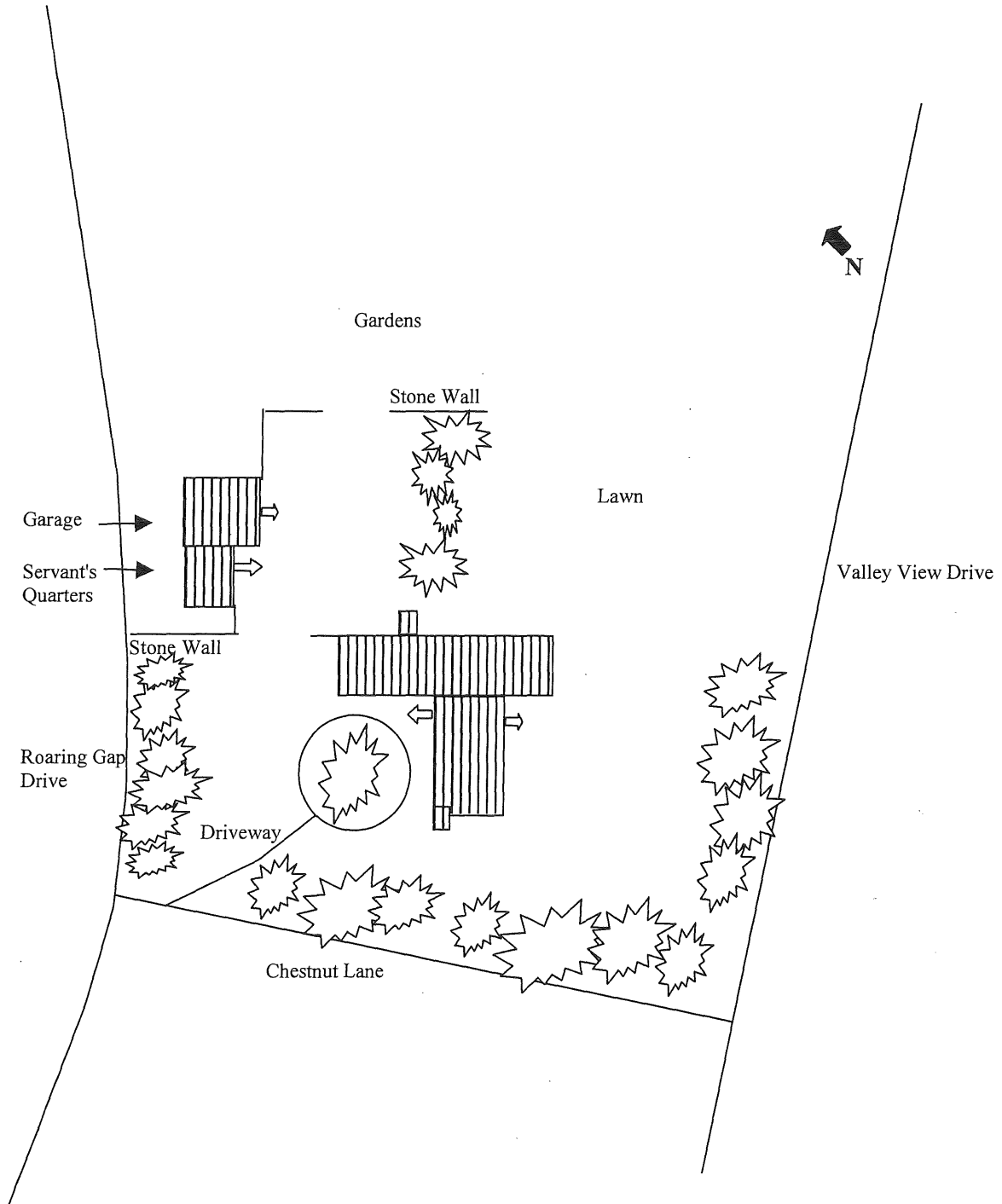
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Location: Roaring Gap, North Carolina
County: Alleghany County
Name of Photographer: Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.
Location of Negatives: Survey and Planning Branch
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
109 E. Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2807

Date of Photographs: September 2003

1. East Elevation, View Looking Northwest
2. West (Front) Elevation, View Looking Northeast
3. West (Front) Elevation, View Looking East
4. East Elevation, Porch, View Looking West
5. North Elevation, View Looking South
6. Rock Wall and Service Court, View Looking North
7. Garage and Servant's Quarters, View Looking West
8. Rock House Interior, Dining Room
9. Rock House Interior, Hall, Main Level
10. Rock House Interior, Kitchen
11. Rock House Interior, Living Room
12. Rock House Interior, Hall, Lower Level
13. Rock House Interior, Hall, Lower Level
14. Yard, Rose Garden North of House, View Looking North
15. Yard, Plantings South of House, View Looking Southeast

**Site Plan
(not to scale)**

**Rock House
Alleghany County, North Carolina**



Alleghany County GIS

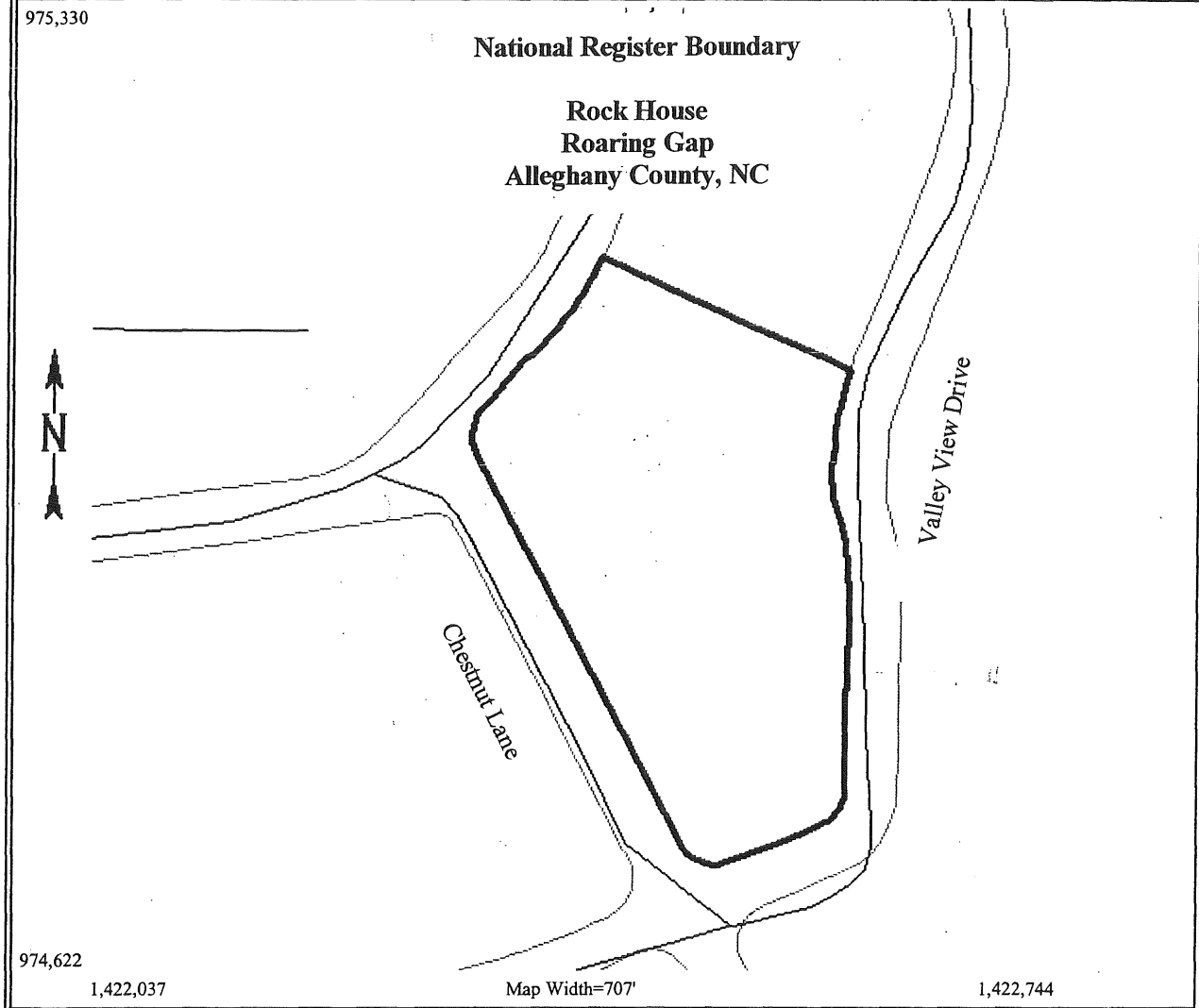
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GPIN: 4927244816

Owner: LKBL REALTY TRUST

Deed Book: 211 Pg: 728 Date: 12-23-98

Acres: 1.89



Location Map



