United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name
Moss-Johnson Farm

historic Johnson Farm

and or common

2. Location

street & number 3346 Haywood Road

N/A not for publication

city, town Hendersonville

code 037

state North Carolina

N/A vicinity of

county Henderson

code 089

3. Classification

Category X district

- X building(s)

- structure

- site

- object

Ownership X public

- private

- both

Public Acquisition

Status X occupied

- unoccupied

- work in progress

Accessible X yes: restricted

- yes: unrestricted

Present Use X agriculture

- commercial

- educational

- entertainment

- government

- industrial

- military

- museum

- park

- private residence

- religious

- scientific

- scientific

- transportation

- other:

4. Owner of Property

name Henderson County Board of Education

street & number 125 East Allen Street

city, town Hendersonville

N/A vicinity of

state NC 28739

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds

street & number Henderson County Courthouse

city, town Hendersonville

state NC 28739

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Henderson County Historic Buildings

has this property been determined eligible? __ yes X no

Survey 1980-81

date federal X state ____ county ____ local

depository for survey records N.C. Division of Archives and History, Western Office

city, town 13 Veterans Drive, Asheville

state N.C. 28805
The Moss-Johnson Farm, now owned by the Henderson County Board of Education, lies on both sides of NC Highway 191, about four and one-half miles northwest of Hendersonville and two miles east of the French Broad River. Land to the south side of Highway 191 has been cleared and developed for the Rugby Junior High School. Fifty acres lying on the north side of the highway are preserved as the farm complex of the Johnson family and the site of the Moss-Johnson farmhouse, built between 1876 and 1880. The property fronts approximately 550 feet along the highway, known also as the Haywood Road. The farmhouse is sited on a gentle slope rising from the highway. Buildings are sited about five hundred feet north of the highway frontage, surrounded by pine seedlings, mature oaks and poplars and shrubbery. Before the turn of the century the farmhouse looked out over pasture across the old road, which was located on what is now the Rugby Junior High School property, to cleared ridges where the original owner, Oliver H. Moss, had planted tobacco.

About twenty feet from the southwestern corner of the property, a driveway leads up from the Haywood Road. Seven structures are grouped around a gravel turn area, including the brick dwelling completed in 1880, a clapboard summer house built in 1920, a granary and smokehouse built at the time of the brick house, a well with recent renovations, a barn built in 1923 and a small dwelling built in 1933. To the north, adjacent to the barn and clapboard house, is a large garden area, with the remains of any old vineyard, newly planted with walnut and poplar trees. Between the garden and barn a wagon road leads up the slope to the north some five hundred feet to a storage shed. To the east of the brick house lie a hen house and pig barn, both in disrepair. The entire property, with the exception of the garden area, lawn areas around the house and the gravel turn area, has been planted with pine seedlings by Mr. Johnson.

The brick farmhouse, completed in 1880 for Oliver H. Moss, is situated just south of the turn area. The house faces southwest, looming over the remains of a circular drive. The structure is a rectangular block approximately fifty feet by twenty-eight feet with a slight projection to the front on the west end of the building. This projecting ell contains on the first floor a three-sided bay window approximately four feet by six feet. To the rear a kitchen ell extends fourteen feet to the north; in 1915 a frame kitchen building was attached to the brick ell, extending the kitchen wing another eighteen feet to the north. Roofs over the main section and the two projecting ells are gable in form with asbestos shingles. There are two interior chimneys in the main block and one in the kitchen ell, providing for seven fireplaces in the house.

The exterior walls of the house are fifteen inches thick and constructed of brick, reportedly hand-made on the site from clay brought from the banks of the French Board River. The bricks were covered with a red-tinted or painted layer of thin stucco. On the stucco layer were painted white lines to simulate very regular and outsized masonry. The stucco layer is still intact in most areas. Sawn and pendant brackets ornament the eaves. Windows are double hung, six over six, and have arched heads beneath segmented brick arches and corbelled, arched hoods. Gable ends of the main block and of the front projection have each a small octagonal window under the eaves, set under a corbelled arch. Above the bay window on the front projection is a pair of six over six windows set under one segmented brick arch and to the east of the main door are paired, arched windows. All windows have shutters. The front door, of chestnut panels with walnut surround and transom, is centered in the front facade and leads from the porch.
The front porch runs across two-thirds of the front facade, abutting the projecting ell. It is of wood with a shallow hipped roof and exhibits handsome sawn brackets and square, chamfered posts with Doric style bases resting on wooden pedestals. An L-shaped porch runs across the rear of the house and along the west side of the brick kitchen wing. It has a shallow hipped roof and wood posts, without brackets.

The house contains on the first floor a square entrance hall, which formerly ran through the house to the rear porch, a parlor, bedroom, dining room, kitchen and bath, which was remodeled from a locked pantry. On the second floor are five bedrooms and two baths. A quarter turn stairway with landing and turned newel post rises in an open stairwell from the first floor to the attic. Interior walls are of plaster on wood lath and floors are of pine. The second floor hall is approximately twelve feet square. Two bedrooms on the west side of the house and a small bath to the rear lead from this hall. To the east an arched doorway leads to a hall which runs from front to back, giving access to three bedrooms along the east side of the house.

The interior of the house is noted for handsome woodwork made by the builder, Riley Barnett, of the Haywood Road area of Henderson County, who spent four years completing the structure. Doors are generally of stained pine, with four raised panels and crossettes at the architrave. The molded surrounds are of walnut and chestnut. Mantels are of walnut and/or chestnut and vary in design from room to room but are generally of trabeated design with molding. Plainer mantels are located on the second floor. All windows have chestnut and walnut surrounds and crossettes. The hand rail of the stairway is of pine as are the treads; the turned balusters are of oak. Stringers have sawn work scrolls. The arched doorway leading from the second floor hall to the side hall is particularly handsome; its shallow arch springs from simple Doric columns on either side. A keystone and molding are of chestnut, enclosing a surface painted pale green. Because of recent remodeling on the first floor, no picture molding is visible; according to the owner, none existed on either floor.

The house was remodeled by the Henderson County Board of Education in 1982. Plywood panelling was used on walls of the first floor with the exception of the entrance hall, and a modern kitchen was installed.

To the west of the gravel turn area and one hundred feet west of the main house is a two-story clapboard house constructed in 1923 for summer boarders. It is unheated and has no basement. The hipped roof with exposed rafters is covered with asphalt shingles and frame exterior walls are of pine weatherboard outside and sheetrock inside. Flooring is pine. The house was built by the Johnson brothers, Vernon and Leander, for use by summer boarders and their families and contains a hallway running north and south the length of the house, four bedrooms and a bath on the first floor and seven bedrooms and bath on the second floor. Three of the second floor bedrooms are built over the open porch of the first floor. The porch continues around the east side of the building, covering about one-third of the east facade. Windows are one over one, double hung. Furniture used by the boarders is in place and includes iron bedsteads, wood dressers and Arts and Crafts side chairs and rockers. The first floor rooms are used as family museums and for storage.
Two outbuildings on the property were built at the time of the construction of the main brick dwelling; the twenty feet by sixteen feet granary located about 140 feet north of the brick house, and the smokehouse, located adjacent to the brick house and about six feet from the northeast corner of the frame kitchen addition. The granary, now used for storage, was constructed in 1872 by Riley Barnett, builder of the brick house. According to Mr. Johnson, Barnett lived in the granary while he was working on the larger house. The granary is made of board and batten. The gable roof is covered in tin. The foundation is native stone piers and the front door, centered in the east gable end, is of board and batten. There is one small window on the south side, closed with a large one-piece plank shutter. Similar to the granary in design is the smokehouse, fifteen feet by eighteen feet. It is constructed of brick, covered on the outside with stucco and painted white. Oak log rafters and the brick walls, fifteen inches thick, are exposed on the inside. When originally built, the gable roof of the smokehouse was elevated above the supporting walls to allow smoke to escape. Early in the twentieth-century the smokehouse was sealed to become a storage area. Floor is concrete over dirt. The door is board and batten. A one-story frame addition, ten feet wide, was constructed in the 1920s to the east wall of the smokehouse, but there is no entrance between smokehouse and addition.

In 1923 Vernon and Leander Johnson themselves constructed a barn, forty feet by forty-eight feet, about twenty-three feet north of the granary. It is of oak with gambrel roof covered in aluminum. Most of the first floor is exposed earth, and contains cattle stalls, a garage and several small storage rooms. An enclosed stair rises to the second floor, where the one large room is used as a farm museum, with many household and farm implements and articles from the turn of the century. Most of the artifacts were used by the Johnson Family and were refurbished by the Johnson brothers. Articles include wagons, furniture, cooking utensils, farm implements, pottery, buckets, baskets, barrels, children's toys and tools.

Vernon Johnson constructed a small dwelling for himself in 1933. It contains one bedroom, bath and small kitchen area on the first floor and a woodworking shop on the basement level. The house, about forty-five feet east of the smokehouse, is frame with gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. A large chimney of local stone was built on the exterior wall to the south, serving an interior fireplace in the bedroom. A small stoop covers the single exterior door on the first floor.

About five-hundred feet northwest of the barn is a storage shed of pine, built as a garage and storage area in the 1920s. A wagon road leads between garden and barn to the shed.

Both the brick farmhouse and the small dwelling are occupied. The nominated property is a twenty-five acre (approximate) tract on the north side of Haywood Road which includes all the surviving farm buildings.

Resource Count
This nomination includes 10 buildings, all contributing. All were built prior to ca. 1933 and are traditional in style.
8. Significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Areas of Significance—Check and justify below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prehistoric</td>
<td>archeology-prehistoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1400-1499</td>
<td>archeology-historic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500-1599</td>
<td>agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600-1699</td>
<td>X. architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700-1799</td>
<td>art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. 1800-1899</td>
<td>commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. 1900-</td>
<td>communications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                      | invention |
|                      | X.         |
|                      | religion |
|                      | science |
|                      | medicine |
|                      | literature |
|                      | X. humanitarian |
|                      | social |
|                      | music |
|                      | X. theater |
|                      | industry |
|                      | philosophy |
|                      | politics/government |
|                      | transportation |
|                      | rural development |
|                      | other (specify) |

Specific dates 1874–80 (main house)  Builder/Architect Riley Barnett (builder/architect?)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Moss–Johnson Farm Complex, in rural Henderson County, originated with the construction of a brick farmhouse, smokehouse and granary for Oliver H. Moss between 1874 and 1880. Although local tradition identifies Moss as a "tobacco planter," census records reflect a typically diversified farming operation. The builder, and probable designer, of the Moss–Johnson farmhouse was Riley Barnett, a local craftsman of considerable talent. The vernacular farmhouse stands out in its local context both due to its scale and substance, and due to several features that reflect an unusual level of knowledge and skill on the part of the builder. The surface of the two–story brick building was originally partially pargeted, tinted with brick dust and overdrawn with penciling to represent very regular, outsized brickwork. Sawn and pendent brackets ornament the eaves and porch, and arched–headed windows are set beneath segmental arches and corbelled, arched hoods. Riley Barnett is also given credit for the extensive walnut, chestnut and pine woodwork on the interior, including a refined three–story staircase with a retardataire mid–century character. After the decline of the tobacco industry in western North Carolina, Moss sold the property to Robert Liverett, who farmed it until his death in 1913. Liverett's daughter, Sallie Johnson and her sons, Vernon and Leander, operated a boarding house for summer tourists on the property from about 1913 until 1958, and during that time additional buildings were added to the complex, including a separate frame house for boarders, a barn and another small dwelling. After 1970 the property was donated in several gifts to the Henderson County Board of Education for use as a farm museum.

Criteria Assessment:

A. The Moss–Johnson farm reflects the changing local economy in western North Carolina between 1880 and 1930—from agriculture (and particularly flue–cured tobacco culture) to a heavy dependence on tourism.

C. The house is significant architecturally in its local context as an unusually substantial brick structure displaying a curious mix of relatively sophisticated popular and vernacular details.
After the American Revolution, the steep mountains and fertile valleys of what was to be Henderson County attracted many settlers to the area. The valley of the French Broad River and the smaller valleys of the Mills River and Mud Creek, surrounded by wooded hills and mountains provided abundant surface water and good drainage. A "salubrious climate" encouraged farming, vegetable gardening, and later, attempts at tobacco and rice.1

After 1828, the area was divided by the "most traveled road to the west," the Buncombe Turnpike, which connected Tennessee with the cities of Spartanburg, Greenville, Columbia, Charleston and Augusta.2 Henderson County farms were close to this avenue of commerce. One of the early settlers of the French Broad valley was Samuel King. He and his descendants settled on both sides of the French Broad River at what is now the crossing of Haywood Road; the Haywood Road bridge over the French Broad River is known today as King's Bridge.3 In 1871 Benjamin King, a great-grandson of Samuel, sold several tracts to C. S. Thompson of Haywood County.4 Thompson sold his purchase to D. L. Boyd in 1873; Boyd in turn sold it, on December 26, 1874, to Oliver H. Moss.5 The sale to Moss included five hundred acres known as "Mr. King's farm lying on the waters of the French Broad River."6

Oliver H. Moss came to Henderson County from Spartanburg County, South Carolina. According to Leander Johnson, subsequent owner of the property, Moss was interested in growing tobacco in the valley of the French Broad, an interest he shared with almost everybody in the counties of western North Carolina.7 Sondley states:

Like the stock-feeding in the days of the drivers, the business of tobacco came suddenly; rapidly grew to enormous proportions; engaged the entire activities and attention of everybody; and then, all at once, disappeared completely. It came and went almost as Aladdin's palace that rose in one night and vanished in an instant. Like its predecessor, the stock feeding, the tobacco craze left its mark upon the country. Thousands of acres of forests were cleared for it, thousands of fertile areas exhausted by it, thousands of beautiful prospects destroyed for it.8

In 1879 the Spartanburg and Hendersonville Railroad was completed to Hendersonville, giving Henderson County growers access to markets in Lynchburg, Danville and Richmond.9 In 1880 Oliver Moss's major crop was corn; he had one hundred acres of corn that year, thirty acres of oats and lesser amounts of rye, wheat, sugar, potatoes and sweet potatoes. According to the census of that year, he had under cultivation less than ten acres of tobacco, from which he produced one hundred pounds of tobacco.10 Likely he produced more in other years, as Leander Johnson remembers his father telling him that "Mr. Oliver" had so much tobacco that he needed "fourteen barns" to fire-cure it all. In 1884 Henderson County produced 4,087 pounds of tobacco.11

In 1874 Oliver Moss began to build his country seat, a brick farmhouse on a knoll between the Haywood Road and the Buncombe Turnpike, near the old road to Mills River. His site was two miles from the French Broad River. The house was built of brick made on the site from clay brought by ox cart from the banks of the French Broad, possibly
from the area where Benjamin King made bricks for his house at the King Bridge. For the construction Moss hired Riley Barnett, a talented local builder and descendant of John and David Barnett, who were noted for their fine cabinet work and furniture making in the Haywood Road area. Barnett installed delicate interior woodwork and exterior Victorian detail, all still in good condition. A quarter-turn stairway with landings climbs up the stairwell from ground floor to attic, giving the house an unexpected elegance. The building was completed in 1880.

But the tobacco dream vanished and within ten years the tobacco market had collapsed. In 1888 Oliver Moss sold 310 acres of property on Haywood Road, including the brick farmhouse, to Robert H. Liverett, for $4,000.

Robert Henry Liverett was born in 1836 and in 1859 married Mary Malinda Woodfin of Boyston (1828-1914). She was a daughter of George Woodfin and granddaughter of Col. John Woodfin, an early settler of Mills River. She was also the niece of Nicholas W. Woodfin, who became one of North Carolina's "most brilliant and astute lawyers," and who represented Buncombe County in the state legislature for five terms, beginning in 1844. Robert and Mary Woodfin Liverett raised four children including a daughter Sallie, who was born in 1866 and married in 1890 to Leander B. Johnson (1855-1896.) After Johnson's death, Sallie Liverett Johnson and her two small sons moved to the Liverett property to live with her parents. After the death of Robert Henry Liverett in 1913, Sallie Johnson supported herself and two sons, Leander and Vernon, by opening the brick farmhouse to summer boarders. Business was so good that in the early 1920s a clapboard house containing eleven bedrooms was built adjacent to the brick house.

The work of Vernon and Leander was with the boarding house kept by their mother from the time they were very small. They had to carry wood and keep a blazing fire in the fireplaces in the guests' bedrooms in the winter. They had to draw water from the well for washing and for fresh water for the pitchers in the guests' rooms. Leander went in an apron to help his mother, and Vernon did the cabinet-making and woodworking. They have fond memories of going into town in two horse-drawn wagons to pick up the boarders and their trunks at the depot. It was not all work, though. For entertainment, they held square dances and cornshuckings. On Sunday afternoons, young couples could be seen on the front porch on the jogging board. Not only was this entertainment, but also good exercise and good for counting. This farm-boarding house was a mecca for tourists. When their mother died in 1958, they closed the boarding house, but many of the boarders still come back to visit, bringing their children and grandchildren to meet these two fine men.

In 1970, Leander and Vernon Johnson deeded approximately fifty acres of the property to the Henderson County Board of Education. In 1978, following the death of Vernon, Leander Johnson donated the remaining ninety acres to the Board of Education. Rugby Junior High School was constructed on this donated property, which included the farmhouse tract. The farmhouse and farm complex, located across Haywood Road from Rugby School, is used for school activities and houses a teacher-caretaker.
FOOTNOTES


2 Sharpe, op. cit., page 846.


4 Henderson County Deed Book 9, page 337.

5 Henderson County Deed Book 11, page 491.

6 Henderson County Deed Book 11, page 491.

7 Interview with Leander Johnson, Hendersonville, November 4, 1985.

8 Sondley, Foster A., LL.D., History of Buncombe County, North Carolina, (Spartanburg, 1977), page 733.

9 Patton, op. cit., page 223.

10 U. S. Department of Commerce, Census of 1880, agricultural schedule.


12 Interview with Leander Johnson; Patton, op. cit., page 223.

13 Patton, op. cit., page 44.

14 Henderson County Deed Book 25, page 234.

15 Henderson County Marriage Register, page 42.

16 Patton, op. cit., page 72.

17 Interview with Leander Johnson.

18 Rugby School scrapbook, Rugby Junior High School, courtesy of Doris Lovell.

19 Henderson County Deed Book 488, page 179.

20 Henderson County Deed Book 566, page 627.
9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: 25 acres +

Quadrangle name: Horse Shoe, N.C.

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

UTM References

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Easting</th>
<th>Northing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>612.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>681.0</td>
<td>391.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>131.4</td>
<td>681.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>131.4</td>
<td>391.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>362.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>691.0</td>
<td>391.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>131.4</td>
<td>681.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>131.4</td>
<td>391.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>363.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>121.0</td>
<td>391.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>131.4</td>
<td>681.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>131.4</td>
<td>391.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>362.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>841.0</td>
<td>391.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>131.4</td>
<td>681.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>131.4</td>
<td>391.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached surveyor's plat. Boundary of nominated property outlined in red.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>state</th>
<th>code</th>
<th>county</th>
<th>code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Carolyn A. Humphries, consultant

organization: N.C. Division of Archives and History
date: July 10, 1986

street & number: 109 E. Jones Street
telephone: 919-733-6545

city or town: Raleigh
state: North Carolina

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- national
- state
- X. local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Title: State Historic Preservation Officer
date: December 16, 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item number</th>
<th>BIBLIOGRAPHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Henderson County Deed Books, Henderson County Courthouse, Hendersonville.

Henderson County Marriage Register, Henderson County Courthouse, Hendersonville.


Rugby Junior High School, A Tribute to Vernon and Leander Johnson, scrapbook, James A. Case, Principal, December 2, 1977.


U. S. Department of Commerce, Census of 1880, agricultural schedule, Henderson County.
Moss-Johnson Farm  
Henderson County  
Horse Shoe, N.C., Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1:24,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Easting</th>
<th>Northing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 362680</td>
<td>3913680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 362960</td>
<td>3913950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 363120</td>
<td>3913840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 362840</td>
<td>3913540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>