

Robert Quillen Office and Library  
Name of Property

Greenville County, South Carolina  
County and State



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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Quillen, Robert, Office and Library

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 200 North Main Street  not for publication

city or town Fountain Inn  vicinity

state South Carolina code SC county Greenville code 045 zip code 29644

## 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

Elizabeth M. Johnson  
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/8/2011  
Date

Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, South Carolina Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.

\_\_\_\_\_  
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

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

- determined eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
Signature of the Keeper

1/30/12  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		districts
		sites
2		structures
1	1	objects
4	1	<b>Total</b>

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Secondary Structure  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation/Culture - Museum  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Neo-Classical Revival

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### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Brick

walls: Brick

roof: Metal

other: Wood

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## Narrative Description

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(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Robert Quillen Office and Library, completed in 1928, is a small one-story, one-room brick Neo-Classical Revival building with a distinctive temple front situated at the southeast corner on a landscaped lot adjacent to the Fountain Inn City Hall, at the intersection of North Main Street and Fairview Avenue in downtown Fountain Inn. Directly in front of the Office is a rectangular reflecting pool with fountain, a round pool with multi-tiered birdbath, and a granite obelisk known as the "Monument to Eve". The grounds in front of the Office and Library and the City Hall also include monuments to Clayton "Peg Leg" Bates and military veterans of various wars from Fountain Inn.<sup>1</sup> The 1.75 acre lot was the location of a one-story brick, cross-gabled bungalow residence with gable-front garage built by Robert Quillen in 1921.<sup>2</sup> Various brick and concrete walkways on the lot lead to sidewalks at each of the property's boundaries. The City of Fountain Inn purchased the entire lot in 1971 and razed the one-story brick bungalow and garage for their city hall, completed in 1974.<sup>3</sup> The City preserved the Robert Quillen Office and Library as a memorial to Quillen (1887-1948) who was publisher of the local newspaper (*Fountain Inn Tribune*, 1911-1922 and 1925-1948) and a nationally-syndicated author of humorous commentaries that brought the small town of Fountain Inn national recognition. Quillen's office is a Neoclassical front-gabled building with defining architectural features characteristic of this style that include an engaged front portico supported by Tuscan columns, closely-spaced modillions under its eaves, and a denticulated frieze. The porch ceiling is covered with recessed paneling, and a brown exterior brick chimney at the north elevation is highlighted with a cross of buff-colored brick that matches the building's predominant brick color. Pairs of four-over-four double-hung pine windows, each sash with four vertical panes, are found at the building's east and west elevations, and a large pine door with a single-paned beveled glass at the building's principal façade is flanked by the same four-over-four double-hung pine windows with four vertical

<sup>1</sup> Clayton "Peg Leg" Bates was born in Fountain Inn in 1906 to Emma Stewart Bates and went to work at the cotton seed oil mill in Fountain Inn when he was twelve. He lost his leg after he slipped into an auger at the oil mill and the accident mangled his right leg. Upon recovering from the accident, he began walking and dancing with broomsticks before his uncle provided him with a wooden peg leg. He moved to Greenville after he dropped out of school to shine shoes near the black Liberty Theater. The theater's manager noticed Bates' talent making beats and dancing with his peg leg and helped connect him with local amateur shows. He became part of the "Black Birds of 1929" with Bojangles Robinson after Lon Leslie witnessed Bates' skills at the Lafayette Theater in New York. He danced at the Cotton Club in Harlem, and he performed on the Ed Sullivan Show fifty-eight times. Archie Vernon Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County in the South Carolina Piedmont* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 312; Kathy Spencer-Mention, "Fountain Inn honors two of its native sons," *The Greenville County News*, 21 May 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Quillen built his house and garage on the lot at North Main Street that combined property that he had purchased from James H. Stewart, G.E. Chamblee, John B. Hughes, and Mrs. Mattie Maroney. Greenville County Deed Book 368, Page 57-58. Greenville County Courthouse, Greenville, South Carolina. The one-story brick bungalow and garage are shown on the 1921 Sanborn map for the Town of Fountain Inn.

<sup>3</sup> Greenville County Deed Book 922, Page 458. Greenville County Courthouse, Greenville, South Carolina.

panes per sash found at the east and west elevations. A large brick fireplace with concrete outer and inner hearths and a granite mantelpiece provides the focal point on the building's interior north wall. Large exposed pine beams and pine ceiling boards afford suitable and appropriate interior architectural detailing. The building's exterior orientation and its interior maintain their historic physical appearance and integrity and, despite the adjacent intrusion of the modern city hall, the Robert Quillen Office and Library retains sufficient architectural and associative significance to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

This nominated area includes only the Robert Quillen Office and Library, its rectangular reflecting pool, round pool, and the Monument to Eve.

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## Narrative Description

### Robert Quillen Office and Library

### Contributing Building

The Robert Quillen Office and Library is a significant architectural landmark in downtown Fountain Inn, Greenville County, located at 200 North Main Street, and is one of only two Neo-Classical Revival temple-front buildings in Fountain Inn built during the early twentieth century that retain a high level of integrity. The Office and Library is the finest and best example of the Neo-Classical Revival style in Fountain Inn. The First Baptist Church of Fountain Inn, constructed in 1919 at 206 Weston Street, two blocks from the Quillen Office and Library, is another example. The only other extant building in Fountain Inn that has a temple-front is a one-story front-gabled house with Classical Revival style features on a bungalow form built ca. 1910, located at the corner of North Weston Street and Quillen Avenue. The house is not eligible for the National Register because it has been altered significantly.<sup>4</sup> Robert Quillen purchased this house in 1912, and he moved from this house to a new house that he built on Main Street in 1921.

The Robert Quillen Office and Library building is adjacent to the current Fountain Inn City Hall at its northwest elevation and faces southwest. The building is located at the southeast corner of the lot, and is located in Fountain Inn's downtown commercial district. The lot is bordered on the northeast by McKnight Street, and on the southeast by a brick wall with iron railing that historically marked the boundary of what was Quillen's front yard. The Quillen Office and Library, its pools, and the Monument to Eve, located to the west of the Office and Library, are the only historic resources associated with Robert Quillen that remain on the lot. Various aesthetic and commemorative objects are located to the west and south of the building, and a sidewalk at the building's south elevation leads from these objects to Fairview Street. His daughter, Louise Quillen Foster stipulated in a deed between her and the City of Fountain Inn on August 6, 1971, that the City of Fountain Inn be required to maintain the building and the Monument to Eve, and relinquish the building and monument to Foster if the City decided to have the building and monument removed.<sup>5</sup> This rectangular building is three bays wide by one bay deep and has remained essentially unaltered since its construction. The building was constructed of buff-colored brick, and its roof is clad with standing seam metal.

### Exterior

The building's Neo-Classical Revival façade features a single-entry engaged, pedimented tetrastyle portico with four wood Tuscan columns resting on a base that consists of a beveled torus (a later alteration) and square plinths that support an entablature with a denticulated frieze and modillioned cornice which wraps the building and is present as well in the pediment of the portico as a raking cornice. The façade also features a single-leaf pine central entry door with a large central beveled glass flanked by pairs of four-over-four double

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<sup>4</sup> Bruce G. Harvey, Principal Investigator. "A Historic Resources Survey of Fountain Inn, South Carolina," Brockington and Associates, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia, 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



hung wood windows with vertical panes that constitute two of the three bays at this elevation. The porch's ceiling features alternating recessed wood panels, and each of the windows on the building's east, south, and west elevations are surmounted by soldier course lintels. A reflecting pool that is currently utilized as a fountain is located at the building's southwest elevation, immediately to the front of the building's portico, and was installed when Quillen built his office and library in 1928. The building stands on a poured concrete foundation, and concrete pads are present at the building's east, west, and south elevations.

The building's east and west elevations are marked by detailing that define the building's Neoclassicism mixed with Mission style windows. Found at both of these elevations are pairs of four-over-four double-hung wood windows with both the upper and lower sashes containing four vertical panes. Each of the building's four corners is punctuated with simple buff-colored brick corner pilasters or cantons. The current Fountain Inn City Hall is located less than fifteen yards to the southwest of the Quillen Office and Library, and the Clayton "Peg Leg" Bates monument stands at the building's southeast boundary. One of the building's most unrecognized and unexplained exterior details is located on its east elevation. Prominently emblazoned on the external chimney of this elevation is a large Roman cross surrounded by a vertical rectangular border, both laid in buff-colored brick that matches the brick elsewhere on the building's elevations. The chimney was laid in a running bond pattern and is topped by a brick soldier course and beveled concrete coping. Quillen's virtue and humility were frequently referenced in newspaper or magazine features, and he was a devout member of the First Baptist Church of Fountain Inn. Charles H. Garrison wrote of Quillen as an 'Unselfish Christian' in an article that appeared in the *Greenville Piedmont* following Quillen's death.<sup>6</sup> Many of the newspaper and magazine articles written about Robert Quillen mentioned his unique office and library, but the presence and significance of the cross on the building's chimney is not addressed in any of them.

## Interior

The central entry opens to a small, unadorned room with an exposed pine ceiling that is supported by exposed pine beams. Visible from the interior are the exposed pine windows, window surrounds, front door, and door surround. A large brick fireplace with concrete outer and inner hearths, a firebox with a brick segmental arched opening, granite spandrel and granite mantel shelf occupy the building's interior north wall. A poured concrete pad provides the material for the building's interior flooring that is currently covered with carpet. The City of Fountain Inn began collecting artifacts related to Robert Quillen and his life and work in Fountain Inn after they purchased the property on which stood his house and office and library in 1971, and they have placed these artifacts, along with those associated with Clayton "Peg Leg" Bates, inside the building in large pine showcases with rear glass doors as a memorial to the memory of both Quillen and Bates. Some of these artifacts include Quillen's desk and chair, historic photographs of the office and library and Quillen and his family, a portrait of "Aunt Het", and various editions of Quillen's newspaper, the *Fountain Inn Tribune*.

## Rectangular Pool, 1928

## Contributing Structure

A two-foot deep pool that measures approximately twenty nine-and-one-half feet by twenty-four feet was built in 1928 by Robert Quillen as a "reflecting pool" immediately in front of his office and library. The City of Fountain Inn installed lights and a fountain in the pool in 1974 that is used during festivals and other special events.

## Round Pool, 1928

## Contributing Structure

A round pool approximately eight feet in diameter was installed by Robert Quillen to the west of his rectangular "reflecting pool" in conjunction with the construction of his office and library. A 1928 photograph of Quillen's Office and Library shows the round pool and the original birdbath that was situated in the center of the pool, surrounded by widely-spaced square concrete pavers. The current multi-tiered birdbath is a later replacement, but the round pool remains operable.

<sup>6</sup> "Robert Quillen Was 'Unselfish Christian,'" *Greenville Piedmont*, 11 December 1948.

### Monument to Eve, 1925

### Contributing Object

This approximately four-foot obelisk mounted on a square pedestal bears the inscription "IN MEMORY OF EVE/THE FIRST WOMAN" over a carved apple with a twig and leaf and physically conveys Quillen's sense of humor and the wit reflected in his writing. Quillen erected the monument because he said "Eve was a distant relative of mine on my mother's side," and Eve was "the first lady of the land...a reigning belle of her day." His stated purpose for erecting the monument on the property was to bring reconciliation for the "unpardonable neglect of her by her posterity." Quillen hired a local stonecutter to execute his design and erected it near an apple tree at the northwestern corner of his property.<sup>7</sup> The City of Fountain Inn removed the monument from its original site and stored it until it completed construction of its new city hall and fire station in 1974. Upon completion, they erected the monument at the western edge of a concrete pad and walkway around the Quillen Office and Library, rectangular pool, and round pool.

### Birdbath, ca. 1974

### Noncontributing Object

A four-tiered birdbath with four molded concrete fluted bowls mounted on four molded concrete, tapered pedestals is located in the middle of the historic 1928 round pool. The City of Fountain Inn replaced the original birdbath with this birdbath when it erected its new city hall in 1974.

### Integrity Statement

The Robert Quillen Office and Library retains its physical integrity and is in excellent condition. The Robert Quillen Office and Library is situated on North Main Street near downtown Fountain Inn in its original location. The Quillen family and the City of Fountain Inn have preserved the building's original 1928 exterior and interior architectural integrity. The building's exterior retains its original massing, materials, exterior chimney bearing a large Roman cross, and Neo-Classical Revival and Mission style detailing. The interior's exposed pine window and door surrounds, mantel, ceiling boards and beams have received no material alteration. Louise Quillen Foster, Quillen's daughter, ensured the preservation of this building with a covenant attached to the deed between her and the City of Fountain Inn in 1971 that the City agreed to "maintain the memorial to the memory of the father of the grantor, Robert Quillen." Additionally, Foster included the stipulation that the City of Fountain Inn was "required to save the Monument to Eve as located on the property and to relinquish possession to the grantor if removed."<sup>8</sup> Quillen erected the monument in 1925. Although these covenants expired in 1997, the City of Fountain Inn is committed to the preservation of this monument as it has been admired, recognized, and designated as one of the remaining artifacts of Quillen's legacy in Fountain Inn.

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### Statement of Significance

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#### 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

- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- 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.

<sup>7</sup>"Monument to Eve Causes Furor In Quiet South Carolina Town," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, 19 December 1925.

<sup>8</sup>Greenville County Deed Book 922, Page 458. Greenville County Courthouse, Greenville, South Carolina.

**Criteria Considerations**  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- 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.)

Literature

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**Period of Significance**

1928-1948

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**Significant Dates**

1928

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**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Quillen, Robert

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**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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**Architect/Builder**

unknown

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**Period of Significance** (justification)

1928-1948

**Criteria Considerations** (explanation, if necessary)

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Robert Quillen Office and Library is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association Robert Quillen, a local literary figure who became nationally known for his humorous newspaper columns. Although Robert Quillen's associative significance was claimed in the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Cannon Building in downtown Fountain Inn (listed in the



Register 28 September 2005), where Quillen's *Fountain Inn Tribune* was located from 1920 to 1940, his significance under Criterion B was shared with many other individuals of local significance. Additionally, the Cannon Building was not listed on the National Register primarily for its association with Quillen, rather it was listed under Criterion C for Architecture. The Office and Library is the single best resource in Fountain Inn associated with Robert Quillen. The Quillen Office and Library is a front-gabled building that features Neo-Classical Revival detailing at the exterior, including Tuscan columns that support a pedimented portico with a denticulated frieze and modillions under the building's eaves. The interior has minimal Mission style detailing with four-over-four double hung wood windows with vertical panes.

The only other extant building in Fountain Inn that is directly associated with Quillen is a front-gabled house with Classical Revival style features on a bungalow form built ca. 1910 at the corner of North Weston Street and Quillen Avenue. The house is not eligible for the National Register for its association both because it has been altered significantly by the application of synthetic siding and replacement windows, and because Quillen did not live in the house during his most productive period.<sup>9</sup>

Robert Quillen built his Office and Library as a sanctuary for writing "without bother from home folks or passing tourists."<sup>10</sup> Quillen reportedly posted over the front door to his office a sign with the explicit demand: "Keep out darn you."<sup>11</sup> J.B. Southern who wrote the short editorial "Monday Morning Line" for the *Greenville News* explained that many of Quillen's actions could be attributed to his "talent for the unusual."<sup>12</sup> After his office and library was completed and featured in many newspapers and magazines, he reportedly never worked there. He is said to have slept during the day and worked at night in the corner of the living room of his house. Quillen explained to another local writer that "I just could not change my habits and I always write in my living room."<sup>13</sup> While mindful of his habits, Quillen also had a proclivity for irony, satire, and obscurity. It is possible that he built his office and library as an architectural folly – a building that was perfectly usable but viewed by Quillen as an iconic edifice that represented his personality and gave people something to talk about.

The Robert Quillen Office and Library meets National Register Criterion B in the category of literature for its association with Robert Quillen. The office and library is the best surviving resource that conveys his life as an American journalist and humorist, and has represented Robert Quillen from the time of the building's construction in 1928 to the present. The building's importance as the best resource associated with Quillen in Fountain Inn is evidenced further in a postcard printed ca. 1930s, with the caption "Home and Study of Robert Quillen, Fountain Inn, S.C." Currently, there are no postcards, photographs, ephemera, or newspaper articles of the Cannon Building that include any association with Robert Quillen. The Greenville County Historical Society publicly recognized the building's significance in 1977, when they named it the Robert Quillen Memorial and unofficially designated it as an historic point of interest because of its association with Quillen.

Born on March 25, 1887, in Syracuse, Kansas, Quillen worked for various newspapers in the northwestern United States, before settling permanently at Fountain Inn in 1911. Quillen published the *Fountain Inn Tribune* newspaper from 1911 to 1922, and again from 1925 to 1948. Quillen was best known for his paragraphs, editorials, one-liners, and cartoons for the *Baltimore Sun*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *The American Magazine*, and *The Literary Digest*. He syndicated two single-panel cartoons, "Aunt Het" and "Willie Willis," drawn by John H. Striebel, and was the prototype for Hollywood screenwriter Lamar Trotti and producer George Marshall's *Life Begins At Forty* (1934), a film featuring Will Rogers as small-town newspaper editor. Quillen also published two novels: *One Man's Religion* (1923) and *The Path Wharton Found* (1924).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Bruce G. Harvey, Principal Investigator. "A Historic Resources Survey of Fountain Inn, South Carolina," Brockington and Associates, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia, 1999.

<sup>10</sup> "Robert Quillen Builds Haven of Quietude," *The Morning News Review*, Florence, S.C. 11 January 1927.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> J.B. Southern, "Eve's Monument Stays," *The Greenville News*, 22 October 1973, Monday Morning Line.

<sup>13</sup> Caroline S. Coleman, "Robert Quillen: The Sage of Fountain Inn," *The Sandlapper*, May, 1968.

<sup>14</sup> John Hammond Moore, ed., *The Voice of Small-Town America: The Selected Writings of Robert Quillen, 1920-1948* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), xi-xxi.



The period of significance for the Quillen Office and Library is from 1928 (the year of the building's construction) to 1948 (the year of Quillen's death). Additional information specific to this building is included below.

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

### **Literature**

The Quillen Office and Library meets National Register Criterion B in the category of literature for its association with Robert Quillen. Hailed as "the Mark Twain of his time," Quillen was an American journalist, writer, and humorist who started the *Fountain Inn Tribune* in Fountain Inn, South Carolina, and wrote two novels: *One Man's Religion*, 1923, and *The Path Wharton Found*, 1924. Born in Syracuse, Kansas, Quillen moved to Fountain Inn in 1911 to start the *Fountain Inn Tribune*. He wrote paragraphs, editorials, one-liners, and cartoons for *Baltimore Sun*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and *The American Magazine*. Once his work was recognized by George Horace Lorimer of the *Literary Digest*, Quillen's columns were syndicated in nearly four hundred newspapers in the United States and Canada. He syndicated two single-panel cartoons, "Aunt Het" and "Willie Willis," drawn by John H. Striebel. Quillen was the prototype for Hollywood screenwriters Lamar Trotti and producer George Marshall's *Life Begins at Forty* (1934), a film featuring Will Rogers as a small-town newspaper editor.

Nearly all of the articles about Robert Quillen from the late 1920s to the late 1940s picture Quillen at the Monument to Aunt Het, his home, and his office and library at 200 North Main Street. The Office and Library is the single best resource in Fountain Inn associated with Robert Quillen. It was described in 1941, in *South Carolina: The WPA Guide to the Palmetto State*, as "the little study in which Quillen daily prepares his widely syndicated column of biting epigrams and familiar essays," and its mention in the *WPA Guide* most likely drew visitors to Fountain Inn as a result.<sup>15</sup>

The Quillen Office and Library is a front-gabled building that features Neo-Classical Revival detailing at the exterior, including Tuscan columns that support a pedimented portico with a denticulated frieze and modillions under the building's eaves. The interior has minimal Mission style detailing with four-over-four double hung wood windows with vertical panes.

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### **Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

Verni Robert Quillen was born on March 25, 1887, the son of a printer, in Syracuse, Kansas, a small town near the Kansas-Colorado border. One of four children born to J.D. and Bella Joslin Quillen, Verni grew to maturity in the village of Overbrook that boasted a population of 273 people, where his father was the publisher of the *Overbrook Citizen*.<sup>16</sup> Quillen used his first name until he settled in Fountain Inn in 1911. He received his early education at local schools and began his career in publishing by learning to set type in his father's office. He produced his first publication in January 1904. Titled *Vox Populi*, this small semi-monthly magazine contained articles, cartoons, and sayings that would come to define Quillen's work. Less than two months after he began work on his magazine, Quillen joined the U.S. Army in Omaha, Nebraska, for military service under the name of William Stewart. He was discharged from service in January 1905 after his father made the U.S.

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<sup>15</sup> *South Carolina: The WPA Guide to the Palmetto State. Compiled by Workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of South Carolina* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941; reprint ed. with a new introduction and two new appendices by Walter B. Edgar, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), p. 383.

<sup>16</sup> North Carolina State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics. *North Carolina Death Certificates*. Microfilm S.123. Rolls 19-242, 280, 313-682, 1040-1297. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina. Robert Quillen's mother was born in Columbia City, Indiana. Marcella Babb, Quillen's wife, was the informant for her husband's death certificate and included his father's name as James B. Quillen while other sources, specifically John Hammond Moore's book *The Voice of Small Town America: The Selected Writings of Robert Quillen*, list his father's name as J.D. Quillen.

military aware that Quillen was only seventeen years old, and that he had enlisted under a false name. The resulting course that his life took after a brief stint in the military would leave Quillen's indelible mark on the City of Fountain Inn, South Carolina, and the literary world.<sup>17</sup>

Quillen came to Fountain Inn, South Carolina in 1906 to work as the editor of a weekly newspaper that a Belton, South Carolina, publisher planned to establish in this small town located seventeen miles from Greenville. This initial association was short-lived, lasting only ninety days, as Quillen was unfulfilled with his new position and relocated to Americus, Georgia, to assume a position at a printing company. Quillen answered the advertisement for the position in Fountain Inn because he had "long dreamed of the South and mockingbirds."<sup>18</sup> Although unhappy with his position in Fountain Inn, Quillen met and fell in love with a local milliner whose father's business was adjacent to Quillen's newspaper office in downtown Fountain Inn. On September 2, 1906, against the wishes of her father, Donnie Cox wed Robert Quillen in Americus, Georgia. This union provided the link that within less than five years took Quillen back to Fountain Inn to establish the *Fountain Inn Tribune* and gain national literary notoriety as the "Mark Twain of his time," and the "Sage of Fountain Inn."<sup>19</sup>

While in Americus, Georgia, with his new bride, Quillen published an eight-page monthly magazine titled the *Americus Christian*. Featured in one of the editions from the *Americus Christian* was a passage that is indicative of a recurring theme in Quillen's writing: the prominence of religion and alcohol in the daily lives of some small town folks. Titled "The Drunkard's Psalm," this passage is a parody of the Twenty-Third Psalm. The passage reads as follows:

"Booze is my shepherd; I shall not prosper. It maketh me to lie down in the filth of the gutter; it leadeth me before the police court. It restoreth my spirits; it leadeth me in the paths of cussedness for its taste's sake. Yea, though I walk through the slums and alleys, I shall fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy stench and thy fiery taste they comfort me. Thou prepares a case for me before the grand jury; thou annointest my head with ashes; my cup runneth over. Surely poverty and wretchedness shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in a barroom forever."<sup>20</sup>

Quillen and his wife later moved to Washington State to join his family which had relocated from Kansas in an attempt to improve Quillen's mother's health. It was in Washington State in 1905 that Quillen's father and his brother LeRoy purchased a newspaper in the farm-lumber community of Winlock. Early in 1907, J.D. Quillen moved his family to Puget Sound and started the *Anacortes Citizen*. By the end of 1907, Robert joined forces with his father, and by October 1907 they published the first edition of their twenty-eight page monthly magazine, *Love One Another*. Robert Quillen's work on *Love One Another* combined a literary prowess of religious material, essays, and quotations that he utilized to distance his work from the simplicity and arbitrary listings of social announcements and advertisements. Their efforts proceeded to no avail, and by 1910 they decided to focus their attention on the *Port Orchard Independent*, published in closer proximity to Seattle. It was with the *Port Orchard Independent* that Robert Quillen made his literary contributions with a dialect column titled "The Observations of Knute Olafson."<sup>21</sup>

While Robert Quillen was in Washington State assisting his father with his printing endeavors, his brother-in-law, Ford Todd Cox, became co-owner of Fountain Inn's *News and Notions*. This paper was established in Fountain Inn in 1908 by a group of local citizens as an avocation, and mailed to a newspaper in Atlanta to print. As Quillen learned of this paper's leadership and processing, and while his efforts in Fort Orchard failed to materialize, he relocated to Fountain Inn in December 1910 to establish his new newspaper, drop his first name, and build what would become his legacy. He changed the name and structure of the *News and*

<sup>17</sup> Moore, ed., *The Voice of Small-Town America: The Selected Writings of Robert Quillen, 1920-1948*, xii.

<sup>18</sup> Caroline S. Coleman, "Robert Quillen: The Sage of Fountain Inn," *State*, 2 April 1950.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*



*Notions to the Fountain Inn Tribune* with funds that he borrowed to buy a printing press, type, and gasoline engine to power his operation. Quillen's new seat as the editor and owner of the paper resulted in its restructuring from a small publication of eight pages of advertisements and limited columns of any substance to a paper teeming with news of local significance to Fountain Inn and surrounding communities.<sup>22</sup>

The Fountain Inn that Robert Quillen knew after his initial, short-lived professional stay in 1906 underwent some changes by the time he returned five years later. The town was named for an inn and gushing natural spring (the "fountain") that was located on an old stage coach road between Greenville and Laurens, South Carolina.<sup>23</sup> A post office was established in Fountain Inn in 1832, and the town was a stagecoach stop before the Civil War. Very little recorded information on Fountain Inn between the establishment of the first post office and the beginning of Reconstruction is extant, but William Toney had a store in what is today Fountain Inn as early as 1818, and two houses of the Babb and Gault families are still standing in Fountain Inn. The Babb and Gault families were two of the earliest families to establish their residence in the nascent town. Noah Cannon purchased the acreage that encompasses the town at the end of the Civil War and opened a store there. His son, James A. Cannon, eventually operated the Cannon Store [Cannon Building listed in the National Register in 2005] after his father relocated to Greer, South Carolina. The town received its charter after the establishment of a railroad depot along the Greenville and Laurens Line. After James I. West purchased half the Cannon family's property, he and James Cannon divided the land near the depot and laid off sixty-five lots that would become the town of Fountain Inn.<sup>24</sup>

During the New South period (1880-1920), Fountain Inn witnessed a variety of religious, social, and commercial changes. This period was led by men who possessed a commitment to the progressive modern movement and the ideals of the new southern middle class. They adhered to the New South creed devised by propagandists as a defense mechanism against the woes of defeat in the Civil War and the humiliation of Reconstruction. The creed espoused the belief in sectional reconciliation, racial harmony, and industrial development and diversified agriculture based on northern models. Additionally, New South propagandists and progressives believed the South's rebirth was contingent upon modernization and social reform, without a complete abandonment of its cavalier values and time-honored traditions. New South industrialists across the Piedmont possessed the ambition, financial investments, and vested local interests to build textile mills, construct new churches and commercial buildings, serve as stakeholders in local and regional banks, and lead automotive and electric initiatives.<sup>25</sup>

Fountain Inn's religious development took form during this period with the establishment of congregations from various denominations and the subsequent construction of their houses of worship. The Baptist church established its congregation in the town in 1880, and constructed its second building in 1892. Trinity Methodist, organized in 1887, built their church on South Weston Street near downtown Fountain Inn in 1889 and their parsonage in 1892. The local Presbyterians established their congregation in 1889, and built their church building in 1891. The Laurens and Greenville Railroad's arrival in Fountain Inn in 1884 provided the impetus for the town's commercial, residential, and institutional development. Within two years of the railroad's arrival in Fountain Inn, the town boasted a Masonic lodge building, and welcomed the town's first and largest industry.<sup>26</sup>

Fountain Inn was an archetypal small town in the Southeast whose growth and development was tied to a reliance on cotton during the New South period. The town's first industrial ventures included the Fountain Inn Oil Mill and Cotton Gin, and the Fountain Inn Cotton Mill, founded in 1897 and operated by the Graham family. John T. Woodside, a textile entrepreneur born in Greenville County, purchased a controlling interest in the mill

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County in the South Carolina Piedmont*, 184.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Jason L. Harpe, "Lest We Forget: Alfred Nixon: Southern Progressive, Public Historian, and Lost Cause Devotee" (master's thesis, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 2006), 62-64.

<sup>26</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County in the South Carolina Piedmont*, 184; Harvey, "A Historic Resources Survey of Fountain Inn, South Carolina," 15.



from the Graham family in 1906. Born in 1865, the son of Dr. John Lawrence Woodside and Ellen Charles Woodside, Woodside had worked at the Reedy River Mill in Conestee with his uncle Joseph D. Charles before venturing to one of the larger industrial southern cities of Birmingham, Alabama during the New South period. He and his brothers built their first cotton mill in Greenville in 1902, before relocating to Fountain Inn to operate the cotton mill there. In 1908, John's brother Edward joined him and his other brother J.D. in the investment and construction of a textile mill in Simpsonville, S.C. Soon after this addition to their already large financial and textile dynasty, John Woodside consolidated the mills in Fountain Inn, Simpsonville, and Greenville into one large corporation. Woodside's commercial influence in Fountain Inn spanned many years, and although the Woodside Mill is no longer extant, the mill's large village of eighty houses is still standing off Fairview Street in Fountain Inn.<sup>27</sup>

The railroad and textile industry's economic influence in Fountain Inn spurred other modern advances that helped define the town during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The town installed its first telephones in 1904, and supplied electricity to the Fountain Inn Cotton Mill by 1909. A select number of houses and downtown businesses were able to use electric lights by 1913.<sup>28</sup> These advancements and the town placement along the railroad affected the geographic layout of Fountain Inn's central business district. Like other towns of similar size, older one and two-story frame buildings were situated on either side of Main Street and utilized as dwellings, blacksmith and wagon shops, apothecaries, haberdasheries, and feed stores, and were replaced during the first three decades of the twentieth century with two-story brick buildings occupied by and utilized as automobile garages, undertakers and furniture stores, newspaper offices, law offices, and hardware stores.

Robert Quillen returned to Fountain Inn in 1911 to find that its central business district had changed because new businesses had occupied the buildings in this district, and there was a clear defining line (Hellams Street) between the town's residential areas and the central business district. Upon his return, he purchased a two-acre lot on North Weston Street at the northeast corner of what is today Quillen Avenue for \$1,100, on which stood a one-story, front-gabled bungalow with engaged front porch and a pedimented portico supported by four wood columns.<sup>29</sup> The building's engaged front gabled porch extends beyond the façade and forms a temple-front porch. It is not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places because it has been altered significantly, including the application of artificial siding and replacement windows, and because Quillen did not live in this house during his most productive and prolific period.<sup>30</sup>

Quillen's *Fountain Inn Tribune* took form on February 11, 1911, and by March 2 of that year the newspaper featured the first of seventeen chapters from the novel titled "Red Star: A Love Story with a South Sea Setting."<sup>31</sup> As his essays, editorials, fables, and short articles surfaced in each of the newspaper's editions, some of the locals in his new home showed disdain for his bluntness and honesty. He wrote about subpar sermons by his minister at the First Baptist Church of Fountain Inn (his home church), unethical farmers, and harshness to local African-Americans. Quillen's standard response to complaints was that he was only telling the truth. The most frequent or loudest of the offended eventually stopped seeing their names in Quillen's columns. Quillen's unvarnished characterizations of locals were more appreciated out of town and his 1911 column "Small Towns," about the virtues and benefits of life in a small community, was recognized by mainstream magazines and print outlets including the nationally-prominent *Collier's* magazine.<sup>32</sup>

Between 1911 and 1930, Quillen's adherence to an ever-changing format of his newspaper, involvement in the real estate business, and contract work for the *Greenville Piedmont*, *Greenville News*, *Literary Digest*, *Baltimore Sun*, and the *Saturday Evening Post* provided him with the economic means and literary clout to

<sup>27</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County in the South Carolina Piedmont*, 236-237.

<sup>28</sup> Harvey, "A Historic Resources Survey of Fountain Inn, South Carolina," 18.

<sup>29</sup> Greenville County Deed Book 324, Page 20. Greenville County Courthouse, Greenville, South Carolina.

<sup>30</sup> *Greenville [SC] Piedmont*, June 11, 1971, "Quillen Homestead Acquired for Complex." The Town of Fountain Inn City Hall was completed in 1974.

<sup>31</sup> Moore, ed., xiii.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv-xv.

meet his ambition and desire to stay in Fountain Inn where he had no boss, only friends, open country roads, enjoyment of his town's good people. According to author John Hammond Moore, Quillen was "right up there with the best of them, for during the early 1920s the [*Saturday Evening Post's* staple of writers included Samuel Hopkins Adams, Kenneth Roberts, Dorothy Parker, Ring Lardner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Sinclair Lewis."<sup>33</sup> On January 3, 1920, his article "Small Town Stuff" appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* and the newspaper paid him \$150 for an assortment of articles, anecdotes, essays, and one-liners. The following year Quillen contracted with a syndicate team from Chicago and artist John H. Striebel to print an illustrated derivative of "Small Town Stuff" titled "Folks Back Home." Two of his most endearing, memorable, and time-honored characters ("Willie Willis" and "Aunt Het") emerged from the pages of "Folks Back Home." "Aunt Het" has weathered the course of time to find herself the subject of a painting that hangs in the Quillen Office and Library and the annual celebration sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of Fountain Inn that is named in her honor.<sup>34</sup>

During the period of Quillen's most professional success, he also experienced both highs and lows in his personal life. After unsuccessful attempts by Robert and Donnie Quillen to find a son to adopt, they adopted a daughter whom they named Louise. She would be featured and immortalized in Quillen's newspaper articles entitled "Letters to Louise." The happiness that Quillen enjoyed with the addition of Louise to his family was short-lived because Donnie died in 1921, within twenty-hours of routine surgery. This traumatic experience led Quillen to have little, if any, faith in medicine and surgery, and likely played a part in his own death from chronic digestive problems and associated bad health in 1948.

Quillen married his second wife, Marcelle Babb, on December 22, 1922, and she became the "Miss Marcelle" of many of his writings. It was during his marriage to Marcelle that Quillen purchased the property on North Main Street and built the brick bungalow that the Quillen family inhabited until Quillen's death on December 9, 1948.<sup>35</sup> Caroline Coleman raved about this property and the "drooping boughs of water oaks" and "red rambler roses...climbing everywhere." Coleman explained that the property had a "plot of evergreen shrubbery in one corner of the garden, [and] glimpses of a marble obelisk are seen – the world famed Monument to Eve."<sup>36</sup> Quoted later in life, Quillen said that he was "qualified to write on the subject of 'Southern Women,' [because he] married two Southern women, and adopted another."<sup>37</sup>

Quillen built the Monument to Eve, a slender granite obelisk that rises to a point of approximately four feet atop a stepped pyramidal base, on his 1.75 acre lot on North Main Street in Fountain Inn in 1925. News of the monument, and local reaction, reached as far as Iowa City, Iowa, and appeared on the front page of *Iowa City Press-Citizen* under the headline of "Monument to Eve Causes Furor In Quiet South Carolina Town." Quillen was quoted in the article saying that many of his neighbors in Fountain Inn "stared at the marble with incredulous horror...they accused me of an unbecoming levity towards things that are sacred." "All my little jokes go awry," Quillen wrote, leading him to quip apologetically, "I never intentionally hurt anybody's feelings or offended against anybody's pet superstitions...this is purely a family affair."<sup>38</sup>

Visited by many interested local folks and followers of Quillen's work, the monument features the words "IN MEMORY OF EVE THE FIRST WOMAN" above an etched apple and still stands on the property now owned by the City of Fountain Inn, west of the Quillen Office and Library. When asked why he erected the monument, Quillen explained that Eve "was a relative of mine – on my mother's side."<sup>39</sup> On one occasion, a local group of youngsters adorned the monument with a shawl and bonnet, and placed a large sign on it that said: "Dear

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. xviii.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. "Fountain Inn Sage Is Dead: Robert Quillen Dies After Illness at 61," *The Greenville [SC] News*, 10 December 1948; Coleman, "Robert Quillen: The Sage of Fountain Inn"; Caroline Coleman, "Famed Quillen Is Just 'Bob' To Fountain Inn Neighbors; He Not Success, Wins Them," *The Greenville [SC] Piedmont*, 23 June 1939.

<sup>36</sup> Caroline S. Coleman, "Robert Quillen: The Sage of Fountain Inn," *Sandlapper*, May 1968.

<sup>37</sup> Caroline Sprouse Coleman and Burnett Cawood Givens, *History of Fountain Inn; Fountain Inn, South Carolina* (Fountain Inn, S.C.: The Tribune-Times, 1965), 53-55.

<sup>38</sup> "Monument to Eve Causes Furor In Quiet South Carolina Town," *Iowa City [IA] Press-Citizen*, 19 December 1925; Moore, ed., 8.

<sup>39</sup> Caroline S. Coleman, "Robert Quillen: The Sage of Fountain Inn," *State*, 2 April 1950.



Mother Eve; long and wide they have searched for your grave, Scientists and learned men; Who would have thought we'd find it, right here in Old Fountain Inn."<sup>40</sup> So important and integral to Fountain Inn was the Monument to Eve that J.B. Southern wrote in his "Monday Morning Line" in *The Greenville County News* on October 22, 1973, that Quillen's house had been razed by bulldozers for the new city hall and the Monument to Eve was "missing from view." Southern further explained that to quell any local discomfort, the City Clerk and City Treasurer Frank Howard ensured the landmark's preservation by relocating it to an off-site facility until the Fountain Inn City Hall was completed.<sup>41</sup> The City of Fountain Inn situated the monument near its original location after completing the city hall in 1974.

Reeling from the death of his first wife, Quillen made a few career changes. Donnie's death and the upstart *Fountain Inn News* led Quillen to sell the *Fountain Inn Tribune* to Melvin Sipe, postmaster of Fountain Inn for one dollar.<sup>42</sup> He changed his professional pursuits at this time from writing short pieces, cartoons, and anecdotes, to writing novels. Although not very successful, Quillen wrote and MacMillan published two novels: *One Man's Religion* in 1923, and *The Path Wharton Found* in 1924. The disappointing results of Quillen's two novels, the unsettling conditions in his home that daughter Louise recalled as a period when "everyone had to tiptoe around and be awfully quiet so that daddy could write," and the need for quips in the local outlet for his syndicated work led Quillen to regain control of the *Fountain Inn Tribune* during the spring of 1925.<sup>43</sup> Quillen described his literary hardships in a letter that appeared in the *Fountain Inn Tribune* on October 17, 1929. In this article he explained that "nothing happened for ten years, except that I worked hard and kept bombarding the magazines with stuff they didn't want."<sup>44</sup> His freelance consulting was limited during the latter years of the 1920s to occasional articles in the *American Magazine*, and he focused his literary attention on his local newspaper. It was also during the late 1920s that he built his Neo-Classical Revival temple-front office and library at the northeast corner of his property in downtown Fountain Inn.<sup>45</sup>

Although Quillen moved away from his consulting and novel writing during the late 1920s and focused more of his attention on the *Fountain Inn Tribune*, various popular magazines presented feature articles on Quillen's life and work. Mary H. Phifer wrote an expository article on Quillen for the September 1930 edition of Holland's *The Magazine of the South*, entitled "Southern Personalities: Robert Quillen." The article featured photographs of Quillen in his trademark Stetson hat, Quillen beside the monument to Eve, and Quillen's house and office and library. Phifer outlined Quillen's life and provided various quotes from Quillen regarding his work with magazines and periodicals. She explained that Mr. J.H. Adams of the *Baltimore Sun* requested a daily editorial and a few daily paragraphs, and Quillen said that "Baltimore had no lure; that he could not forsake his little weekly sheet; that the small town was his by right or recognition, and that he could not leave his *Tribune* of Fountain Inn."<sup>46</sup> Alexander Woolcott wrote an article on Quillen that was entitled "The Sage of Fountain Inn" and appeared in *Cosmopolitan* in September 1933. Woolcott's subheading read: "The greatest gossip of his time motors a thousand miles to meet the editor of a very small-town newspaper – who turns out to be the Mark Twain of our day."<sup>47</sup>

Quillen spent the final two decades of his illustrious life in Fountain Inn continuing his work with the *Fountain Inn Tribune* while struggling internally with his own personal doubts about his literary accomplishments. Albeit his appellations of "The Sage of Fountain Inn," and the "Mark Twain of his Time," Quillen subconsciously believed he had failed as a novelist and a magazine publisher. His introverted nature prevented him from providing any speeches, and his craft as a writer kept him in the solitude of his home in a rural setting that

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> J.B. Southern, "Eve's Monument Stays."

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. Caroline S. Coleman, "Robert Quillen: The Sage of Fountain Inn," *The Sandlapper*, May, 1968.

<sup>43</sup> Bob W. Holland, "Not A Very Large Kingdom," *Tribune Times*, 23 February 1977.

<sup>44</sup> James M. Richardson, *History of Greenville County, South Carolina: Narrative and Biographical* (Atlanta, Georgia: A.H. Cawston, 1930), 144.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Mary H. Phifer, "Southern Personalities: Robert Quillen," *Holland's, The Magazine of the South*, September 1930, 5-6; Ann Green, "Syndicated writer preferred the 'sticks' of Fountain Inn," *The Greenville News and Piedmont*, Sunday, 5 March 1978; Harvey, "A Historic Resources Survey of Fountain Inn, South Carolina," 51.

<sup>46</sup> Phifer, "Southern Personalities: Robert Quillen," *Holland's, The Magazine of the South*, September 1930, 5-6

<sup>47</sup> Moore, *The Voice of Small-Town America: The Selected Writings of Robert Quillen, 1920-1948*, 2-3.



itself was solitary.<sup>48</sup> Known locally as 'Uncle Bob,' Quillen was sympathetic to less fortunate members of Fountain Inn and was a large benefactor to that community's hungry and needy. He aided the poor because he vividly remembered "when he belonged to the 'have nots.'" Fountain Inn resident Bill Hughes called him "one of the most generous men that ever lived. He was a friend of the down-and-out, the old, the crippled, the blind, regardless of race, creed, or color."<sup>49</sup> Quillen's philanthropy apparently began as early as the Great Depression when, according to local Quillen enthusiast Lois Woods, his home was, figuratively speaking, "the Food Stamp office, Social Security, DSS [Department of Social Services] and everything else rolled into one for those who were in need and hungry." Mrs. Woods continued, in a 1978 *Greenville News and Piedmont* article, to say that, unlike these later government assistance programs, Quillen's philanthropic operation "was never in the red or under investigation. Children never had empty Christmas stockings if Mr. Quillen knew about it. His generosity knew no bounds."<sup>50</sup>

Quillen died after a prolonged illness on December 9, 1948, in a nursing home in Hendersonville, North Carolina. His death certificate was filed in Hendersonville on January 6, 1949. Quillen wrote his own obituary and described his own funeral service in a manner that only he could achieve: "When the last clod had fallen, workmen covered the grave with a granite slab bearing the inscription, 'Submitted to the Publisher by Robert Quillen.'" His memorial service took place at the First Baptist Church of Fountain Inn, and he was interred in the family crypt at the Cannon Memorial Mausoleum. In addition to many of his friends and supporters from Fountain Inn, E.P. Conley, president of the Publishers Syndicate of Chicago, flew from Chicago to Greenville to attend Quillen's funeral. Quillen had supplied the Publishers Syndicate with his work for over thirty years. Quillen's concern for the welfare of his small town folks persisted to the end as he wrote just days before his death to his friend George Wencke of Fountain Inn asking: "What plans have you made in Fountain Inn for helping the poor at Christmas? Count me in on any plans you have, especially for helping the colored people."<sup>51</sup>

Quillen was a Rotarian, Freemason, and member of the First Baptist Church of Fountain Inn. His faith in God may have prompted him to include a large buff-colored cross surrounded by a buff-colored vertical rectangle on the chimney of his office and library. Quillen left his estate, reported to have been valued at \$104,579 to his wife Marcelle Babb Quillen.<sup>52</sup> Marcelle Babb Quillen sold the property to her adopted daughter, Louise Quillen Foster, on August 24, 1970.<sup>53</sup> Foster sold the property to the City of Fountain Inn on August 6, 1971, and it included the property on which were located Quillen's House, Office and Library, an alley between Fairview Street and Hellams Street, and the Monument to Eve. She also stipulated that the City of Fountain Inn would maintain the memorial to her father and would preserve the Monument to Eve that is located on the property and grant the monument to her if the town decided to remove the monument from the grounds. This provision was to be held until 1997.<sup>54</sup> Although this covenant has expired, the City of Fountain Inn has remained committed to the monument and office and library's preservation as local historic landmarks that serve as a testament to Robert Quillen's history, influence, and legacy in Fountain Inn.

The Robert Quillen Office and Library is an intact example of Neo-Classical Revival institutional architecture with minimal Mission style details in Fountain Inn, South Carolina. It is most probably architect-designed, though no record of its designer has been found. The Office and Library is a significant architectural landmark in downtown Fountain Inn, Greenville County, located at 200 North Main Street, and is one of only two Neo-Classical Revival temple-front buildings in Fountain Inn built during the early twentieth century. The First

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., xxi.

<sup>49</sup> Caroline S. Coleman as dictated by Bill Hughes, "Ft. Inn Resident Describes Modest Life of Quillen," *The Greenville Piedmont*, 9 December 1948.

<sup>50</sup> Green, "Syndicated writer preferred the 'sticks' of Fountain Inn"; Caroline S. Coleman, "Fountain Inn Will Miss 'Uncle Bob' Quillen: Genius As A Writer, Neighbor To His Friends," *The Greenville Piedmont*, 10 December 1948. Caroline S. Coleman, "Robert Quillen: In Retrospect," *The Greenville Piedmont*, 21 March 1958.

<sup>51</sup> "Fountain Inn Sage Is Dead: Robert Quillen Dies After Illness at 61," *The Greenville News*, 10 December 1948; Coleman, "Robert Quillen: The Sage of Fountain Inn," *State*, 2 April 1950.

<sup>52</sup> "Robert Quillen's Estate Is Valued At \$104,579; Wife Is Beneficiary," *The Greenville County News*, 13 February 1949.

<sup>53</sup> Greenville County Deed Book 897, Page 69. Greenville County Courthouse, Greenville, South Carolina.

<sup>54</sup> Greenville County Deed Book 922, page 458. Greenville County Courthouse, Greenville, South Carolina.

Baptist Church of Fountain Inn, built in 1919 and located at 206 Weston Street two blocks from the Quillen Office and Library, is the other example from this style, and it is possible that both buildings were designed by the same architect. Its construction was executed with great care and skill and, with the minor exception of the substitution and/or alteration, possibly due to deterioration, of the portico's Tuscan columns' torus molding with a faceted cast stone base set atop each column's plinth, it appears largely unaltered. Though its historic domestic setting has been diminished by the presence of the modern Fountain Inn City Hall and its extensive concrete paving, the office and library in and of itself is an excellent attempt by Quillen and his architect to build an appropriate and suitable office and library on his property and near to his residence, not unlike what many medical doctors, lawyers and/or planters of the antebellum period built on their plantations. There are examples of this in South Carolina, such as Dr. William W. Anderson's little Greek Revival temple-front office at Borough House in Stateburg in Sumter County [listed in the National Register in 1972, and designated as part of a National Historic Landmark property in 1988], or even in the city of Columbia with the little Greek Revival temple-front office at the Horry-Guignard House [listed in the National Register in 1971]. Typically, in that era, they were diminutive and in the form of small Greek temples. There is no evidence to show that Quillen was aware of that or had that specifically in mind, but he was well-read and well-travelled and must have understood it to some degree. The Robert Quillen Office and Library is quintessentially Greek Revival in character and proportion, and the reflecting pools in front only add to that feeling and sense of classical antiquity, whether Greek or Roman, that he likely was trying to evoke. It is probable that he felt and understood that if he was going to build himself an office and library in his garden, that it should be not only functional but be an appropriately beautiful and eye-catching piece of classical architecture. The use of such a form not only evoked the past but connoted learning, that Quillen was a man of words and appreciative of the classics. The building is an architectural folly, and almost a garden ornament for ornament's sake. It is now a significant remnant of what was a domestic setting and garden and is the best surviving historic resource directly associated with Quillen's life and work.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

South Carolina Room, Hughes Library,  
Greenville County Library System, Greenville,  
South Carolina

Name of repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 177 1125



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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>390035</u> Easting	<u>3839663</u> Northing	3	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing
2	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing	4	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing

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

The National Register boundary is shown with a heavy black line on the attached Greenville County GIS map at a scale of one inch equals 122 feet.

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

The boundary encompasses only the footprint of the Robert Quillen Office and Library extending out directly in front of the building to include the rectangular reflecting pool, round pool with birdbath, and the Monument to Eve, located at 200 North Main Street in Fountain Inn. The boundary includes only the four contributing and one non-contributing resources discussed in the nomination.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Jason L. Harpe (with assistance from the SHPO Staff)  
organization Harpe Consulting date 8 December 2011  
street & number 200 North Main Street telephone (704) 477-0987  
city or town Lincolnton state NC zip code 28092  
e-mail Jason.harpe@charter.net

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

---

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Robert Quillen Office and Library  
**Location:** 200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
**County and State:** Greenville County, South Carolina

**Photographers  
and Date of**

**Photographs:** Jason L. Harpe, October 2009  
Andrew W. Chandler, South Carolina SHPO, February 2010

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

- 1 of 17: Facade (Southwest Elevation)
- 2 of 17: Oblique View From West
- 3 of 17: Oblique View of Facade from Southwest
- 4 of 17: Detail of Portico from South
- 5 of 17: Paneled Portico Ceiling
- 6 of 17: Left Side (Northwest) Elevation
- 7 of 17: Right Side (Southeast) Elevation
- 8 of 17: Rear (Northeast) Elevation
- 9 of 17: Oblique View from South with Fountain Inn City Hall at Left
- 10 of 17: Oblique View from East
- 11 of 17: Detail of Brick and Front Entrance
- 12 of 17: Detail of Paired Window and Modillioned Cornice
- 13 of 17: Detail of Brick and Stone Mantel
- 14 of 17: Detail of Fireplace
- 15 of 17: Interior View looking Northwest
- 16 of 17: Detail of Plank and Beamed Ceiling
- 17 of 17: Monument to Eve, looking Southwest

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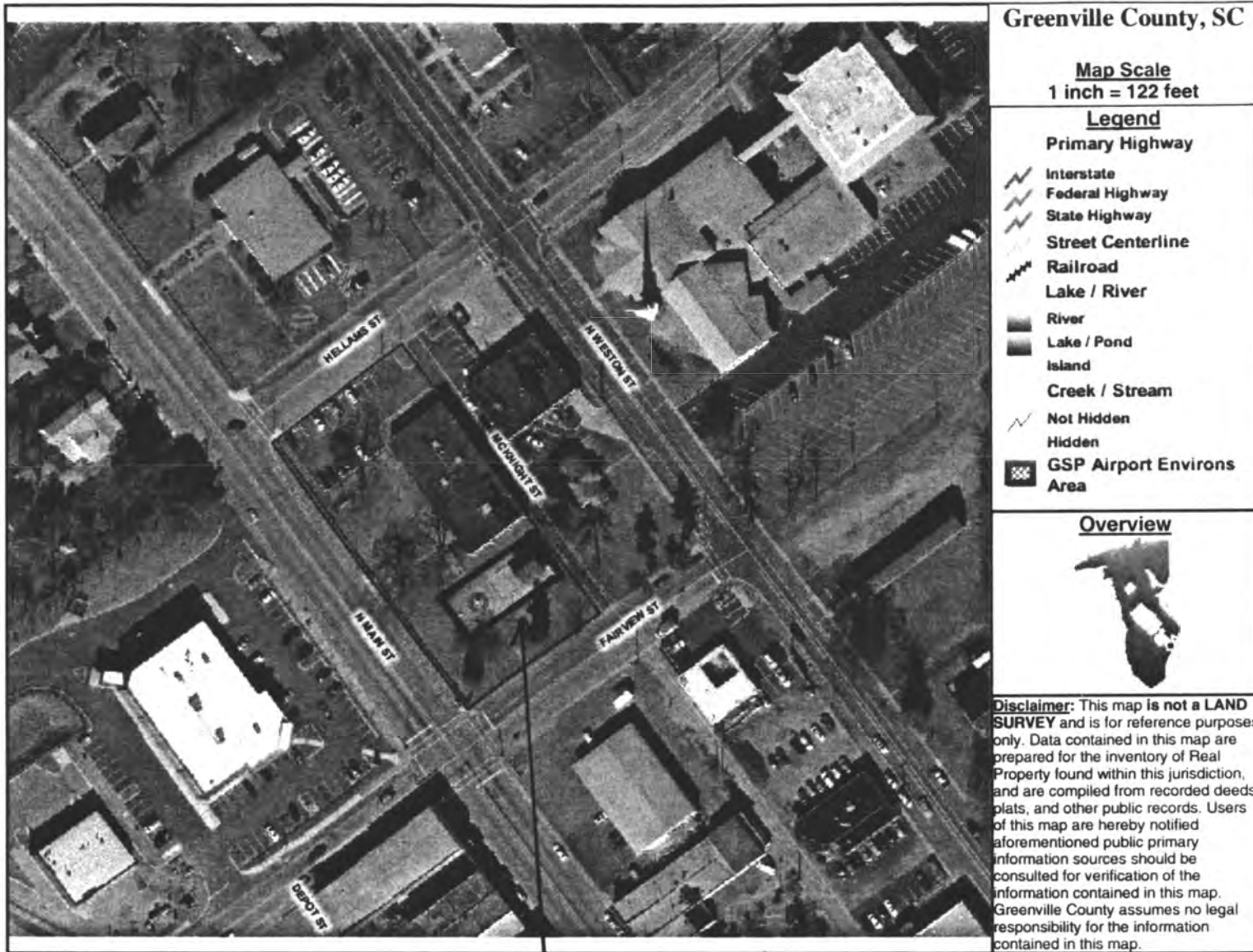
**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Fountain Inn  
street & number 200 North Main Street telephone (864) 862-4421  
city or town Fountain Inn state SC zip code 29644

**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 18 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.



Robert Quillen Office and Library  
Fountain Inn, Greenville County, South Carolina



Recommendation: SLR Return

Action: SLR Return None

**Documentation Issues-Discussion Sheet**

State Name: SC County Name Greenville Resource Name Quillen, Robert Officer...

Reference No. 10-316 Multiple Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Solution:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
see return comments  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Problem:** JPEG's format for digital images instead of TIF's  
Commemorative property?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Resolution:**  
**SLR:** Yes No  
**Database Change:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Quillen, Robert, Office and Library

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: SOUTH CAROLINA, Greenville

DATE RECEIVED: 4/23/10      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/21/10  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/05/10      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/07/10  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10000316

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: Y PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

     ACCEPT         RETURN         REJECT    6/7/10 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Return  
REVIEWER W. J. Dennis DISCIPLINE Historic  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 6/7/10

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

## United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places

### Comments Evaluation/Return Sheet

**Property Name:** Quillen, Robert, Office and Library  
**Property Location:** Fountain Inn, Greenville County, SC  
**Reference Number:** 10000316  
**Date of Return:** 06/07/2010

#### Reason for Return

The nomination of the Robert Quillen Office and Library is being returned for technical corrections and substantive revisions. The nomination claims Criterion B for the office/library association with Robert Quillen, a local literary figure and newspaper columnist under the area of significance of Literature. Architectural significance at the local level under Criterion C is also cited. The property's period of significance is 1928 – 1948. The office/library is now used to commemorate Quillen and includes remaining landscape features and a 1925 Monument to Eve.

Eligible properties, under Criterion B, are those associated with the productive life of the person in the field in which he or she achieved significance. Documentation must explain how the property being nominated represents an individual's significant contributions. While the nomination indicates this property is the "best surviving resource;" apparently the living room in Quillen's second house (demolished in c.1974) is where he conducted most of his writing. The nomination clearly cites that after he constructed the small office/library, "he reportedly never worked there." If the property was not used as his office/library, what was its use during the period of significance? The National Register Bulletin, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons (#32), page 5, indicates, "The important accomplishments of specific individuals whose significance is *associated with the property* must be demonstrated to justify significance under Criterion B." Provide additional information to support the association under Criteria B, or if unsubstantiated, drop this criterion.



The nomination indicates that during Quillen's latter years, he "focused more of his attention" on his local newspaper. Further explanation is needed to demonstrate Quillen's literary contributions throughout the period of significance. How often was he writing his column for the Fountain Inn Tribune? Was he actively writing up until the time of his death in 1948?

The 1933 *Cosmopolitan* article written about Quillen contains a photograph of the Fountain Inn Tribune office building. When was this building used by the Fountain Inn Tribune and explain its association with Quillen's work as newspaper publisher and columnist.

The nomination indicates the property meets **Criterion C** as an example of Classical Revival style architecture. However, additional contextual information is needed to describe the property's architectural style at the local level of significance. Are there other examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> century, temple-front, classical buildings in Fountain Inn? If so, how does this property compare? What is the date and use of the small addition on the back of the building?

Please clarify if the 1928 round pool remains or is now a garden surrounding the c. 1974 birdbath.

If Criterion B is dropped from the nomination, please revise Section 8 for the areas of significance. The period of significance should be 1925 – for the Monument to Eve; 1928 – for the construction dates of the remaining resources on the property. Significant dates would be listed as: 1925, 1928. Under significant person, drop the name of Quillen. Revise the summary and narrative statements of significance accordingly.

#### Technical Issues

Section 10. Geographical Data. The GIS Greenville County map does not include a north arrow. Please correct.

Photographs. Please send a CD using tif formatted images. The submitted disk contains jpegs.

Please call me at 202-354-2239, or e-mail at <lisa\_deline@nps.gov> if you have any questions.

Lisa Deline, Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
June 7, 2010

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Quillen, Robert, Office and Library

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: SOUTH CAROLINA, Greenville

DATE RECEIVED: 12/16/11      DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY:      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/31/12  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10000316

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    1/30/12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*revised nomination. provided a much stronger case for Quillen & Criterion B.*

RECOM./CRITERIA B  
REVIEWER Christaline      DISCIPLINE Historic  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE 1/30/12

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



1. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Façade (Southwest Elevation)





2. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Oblique View From West



3. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Oblique View of Façade from Southwest



4. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Detail of Portico from South





5. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Paneled Portico Ceiling



6. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Left Side (Northwest) Elevation



7. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Right Side (Southeast) Elevation





8. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Rear (Northeast) Elevation



9. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Oblique View from South with Fountain Inn City Hall at Left



10. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Oblique View from East



11. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Detail of Brick and Front Entrance





12.

Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Detail of Paired Window and Modillioned Cornice



13. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Detail of Brick and Stone Mantel



14. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Detail of Fireplace



15. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Interior View looking Northwest





16. Robert Quillen Office and Library  
200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn  
Greenville County, South Carolina

Detail of Plank and Beamed Ceiling



17.

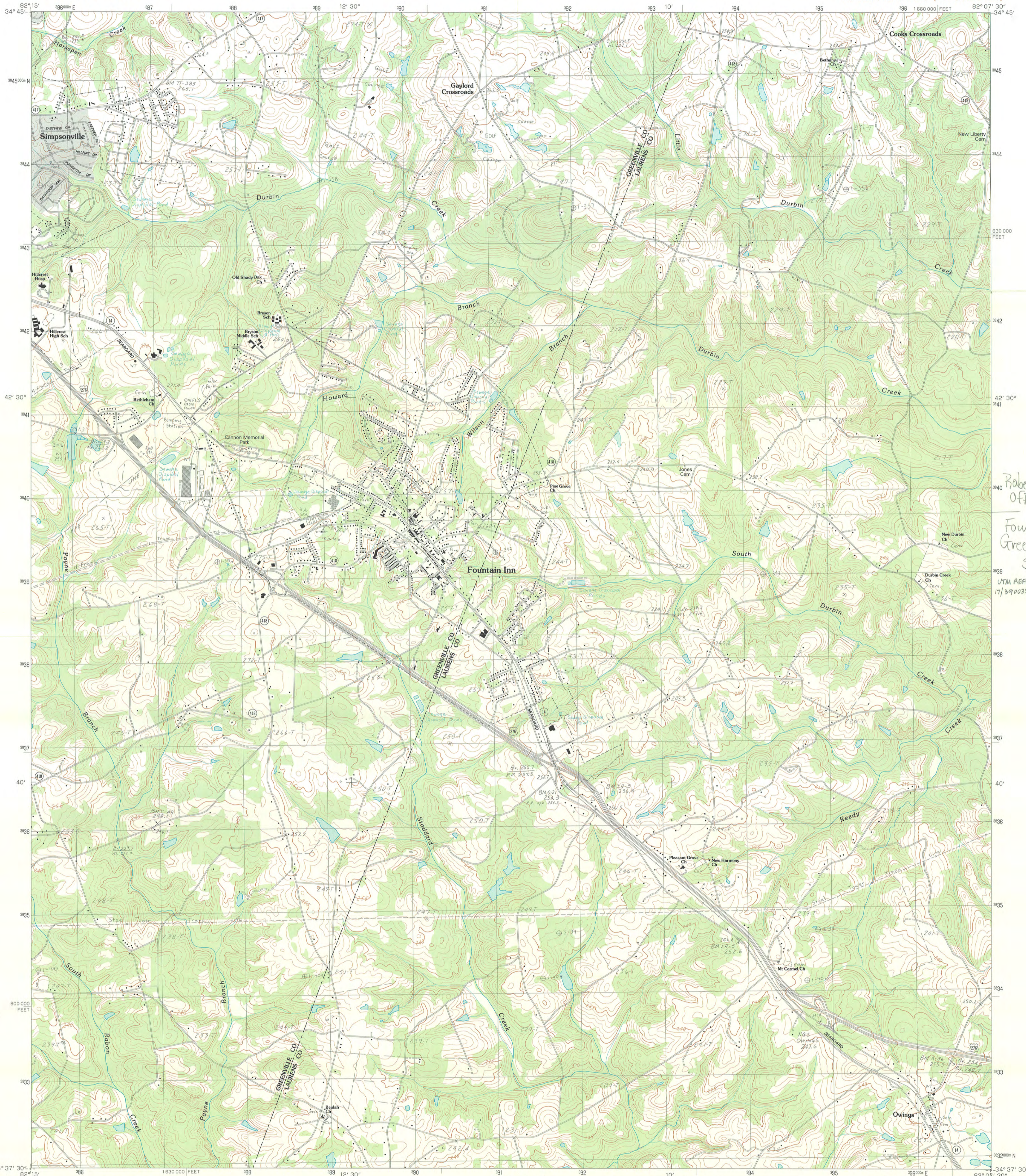
Robert Quillen Office and Library

200 North Main Street, Fountain Inn

Greenville County, South Carolina

Monument to Eve, looking Southwest





Robert Quillen  
Office/Library  
Fountain Inn,  
Greenville Co.,  
SC  
UTM REFERENCE:  
17J90035/3439463

PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY CONTROL BY USGS, NOS/NOAA, AND SOUTH CAROLINA GEODETIC SURVEY COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN . . . 1976 FIELD CHECKED . . . 1978 MAP EDITED . . . 1983 PROJECTION . . . LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONIC GRID: 1000-METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR . . . ZONE 17 100000-FOOT STATE GRID TICKS . . . SOUTH CAROLINA, NORTH ZONE UTM GRID DECLINATION . . . 1983 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION . . . 330 WEST VERTICAL DATUM . . . NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1959 HORIZONTAL DATUM . . . 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM To place on the predicted North American Datum of 1983, move the projection lines as shown by dashed corner ticks (10 meters south and 14 meters west) Gray tint indicates area in which selected buildings are shown

**PROVISIONAL MAP**  
Produced from original manuscript drawings. Information shown as of date of field check



CONTOURS AND ELEVATIONS IN METERS  
ROAD LEGEND

1	2	3	1	Mauldin
2	3	4	2	Pelham
3	4	5	3	Reidville
4	5	6	4	Simpsonville
5	6	7	5	Woodruff
6	7	8	6	Fork Shoals
7	8		7	Hickory Tavern
8			8	Laurens North

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS  
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER  
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST METER  
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808  
To convert feet to meters multiply by .3048  
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

FOUNTAIN INN, S.C.  
PROVISIONAL EDITION 1983  
34082-F2-TM-024





Friday, 16 April 2010

Ms. Carol Shull  
Interim Keeper, National Register of Historic Places  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye (I) Street, NW, 8th Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Here are the National Register nominations for the Robert Quillen Office and Library in Greenville County, and the James M. Davis House in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, recently approved by the South Carolina State Board of Review.

We are now submitting these nominations for formal listing in the Register.

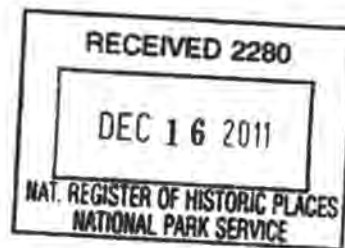
If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below, call me at (803) 896-6182, fax me at (803) 896-6167, or e-mail me at [power@scdah.state.sc.us](mailto:power@scdah.state.sc.us). I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Tracy Power".

J. Tracy Power  
Historian and National Register Co-Coordinator  
State Historic Preservation Office





Thursday, 8 December 2011

Ms. Carol Shull  
Interim Keeper, National Register of Historic Places  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye (I) Street, NW, 8th Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Here is the National Register nomination for the Robert Quillen Office and Library in Fountain Inn, Greenville County, South Carolina, submitted to you for listing in April 2010 and returned for substantive revisions in June 2010.

We are now submitting this revised nomination for formal listing in the Register.

If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address below, call me at (803) 896-6182, fax me at (803) 896-6167, or e-mail me at [power@scdah.state.sc.us](mailto:power@scdah.state.sc.us). I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Tracy Power".

J. Tracy Power, Ph.D.  
Historian and National Register Co-Coordinator  
State Historic Preservation Office