

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Cumberland	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Oak Grove

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
.15 miles west of NC 82, .8 miles north of junction NC 82 and SR 1875

CITY OR TOWN:
Erwin vicinity

STATE
North Carolina

CODE
37

COUNTY:
Cumberland

CODE
051

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both 	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress 	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Eugene Byrd

STREET AND NUMBER:
Route 4

CITY OR TOWN:
Dunn

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE
37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Cumberland County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Fayetteville

STATE
North Carolina

CODE
37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE

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COUNTY: Cumberland

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Oak Grove is a large, imposing two-story frame house of rather severe dignity. It is set in the midst of a field dotted with large trees and faces north, toward the traces of a road that once led from the main road, located to the east. The house, which is covered with beaded siding, consists of a rectangular two-story main block with a gable roof, and one-story shed additions to the side and rear. It rests on a full basement of brick with rectangular vents with diagonally set vertical members.

The front (north) facade of the main block has five irregularly spaced bays at the first level, with all but the central entrance bay containing windows with nine-over-nine sash. The wing to the west adds one more bay, with a window containing six-over-nine sash. The second level of the facade is marked by three evenly spaced bays, each with six-over-nine sash. All the windows have simple molded frames and plain sills. A molded cornice finishes the eaves of both this and the rear facade.

The central entrance is now a wide double door with narrow five-light sidelights and a ten-light transom. It appears that this was changed from an earlier single door. The doors, with panels raised on fillets on the outside, and flat panels on the inside, resemble those throughout most of the house. The enlargement of the opening, which was extended to the west, necessitated the two west windows⁴ being placed much closer together than are those on the eastern half.

Extending across the facade is a full-width porch set high on brick piers. The shed roof of the porch is supported by chamfered posts with lambs' tongues. Between them runs a balustrade with slender square balusters and molded rails above and below. The wall beneath the porch has flush weatherboards. The sides of the shed roof are covered with beaded weatherboards, which continue unbroken from the sides of the house.

The two-bay east side of the house is dominated by a large common bond double-shoulder chimney with flat-surfaced weatherings and a molded cap. The windows flanking the chimney at the first two levels repeat the sash of those on the main facade; the gable windows contain six-over-six sash. The chimney on the west side of the main block was removed by the present owner. The first level on this side is covered by the shed-roof wing, to the west side of which has been added a makeshift tin addition. The rear of the house has three bays at the second like the main facade. At the first level a shed addition extends across the main block and the west wing as well. The rear and west additions appear to be early but not original. The fenestration is somewhat irregular. A one-bay porch, walled on three sides with flush siding and having a single chamfered post, gives access to the central rear entrance of the main block. This entrance consists of a raised-paneled door with four-light transom. Doors on the sides of the porch lead to the flanking rooms of the rear addition.

The interior of Oak Grove corroborates the changes suggested by the exterior arrangement. It appears that the plan was originally a hall and parlor, with the single front and rear doors entering the east room, and an enclosed stair entered from that room but rising in the west room. It

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seems likely that when the front door was widened, the original partition was removed and the two present partitions installed, creating a center-hall plan. Now the stair is entered from and rises in the hall. The hall is finished with walls plastered above a flat-paneled wainscot.

The east room is dominated by an extremely handsome Georgian-style mantel, which is finished with wood-graining. Above a square fire opening are three flat panels; both are framed by a common molded architrave. A wider architrave flanks this one and is outlined by a molding. A pair of consoles interrupts the outer architrave and supports the molded shelf, which is augmented by a band of dentils alternating with shallow scallops. The overmantel, flanked by fluted pilasters terminating in similar consoles, has three larger flat panels. The consoles support a cornice that consists, from bottom to top, of a vernacular band resembling Wall of Troy, the dentil and scallop motif, and a rather wide molded band. This upper element continues around the room and into the hall, ending on the front wall where the early partition is thought to have been and, in the rear, extending across the rear wall and along the stair wall--thus almost delineating the outline of the original east room.

The mantel in the west room was removed when the chimney was eliminated; only the brick hearth at this level and the base of the chimney in the basement remain. The walls are plastered above a flush wainscot; with molded baseboards and chair rails. The shed additions--two rooms deep on the west, and two more in the rear--have flush-sheathed walls; that on the west has a crude chair rail.

The stair, entered at the rear of the hall, begins with winders and rises in one flight along the west wall. It is enclosed and its interior walls finished with flush sheathing. Protecting the stair well at the second level is a Chinese Chippendale balustrade beneath a heavy molded rail, terminated by a full-height chamfered post. The rooms on this floor have walls plastered above flush-sheathed wainscots. In the east room is a simple Georgian mantel with a molded architrave and shelf. Stored in the west room are three other mantels: those from this room, the west main block room and west shed room--all formerly served by the west chimney. One is like that in the east second-floor room, one has flat-paneled pilaster strips and frieze, and one has small pilasters rising from the upper corners of the fire opening to the molded shelf.

The stair to the attic rises above the main stair. It has somewhat heavy square balusters below a robust molded handrail. This is repeated in the balustrade that protects the stair well in the large, finished one-room attic. The most notable feature of the attic is the presence of quite convincing holes in the lower slope of the roof on front and rear, which pierced roof, rafters, and inner wall; these are said to have been caused by cannonballs shot during the Battle of Aversboro (March 1865), which occurred around the house.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Alexander Smith, the probable builder of Oak Grove, was a member of a family that settled in the Cape Fear River area in the 1740s. Among the early deeds to him is one made in 1764 for 232 acres on the Cape Fear River "opposite the mouth of Lower Little River." At this location the principal road leading north from Cross Creek (now Fayetteville) met the Cape Fear River and necessitated a ferry. Collet's map of 1770 shows this road and its continuation northward beyond the Cape Fear. The Price-Strother map of 1808 also shows the location, naming it "Smith's Ferry." After Alexander Smith bought the above tract, and perhaps after he had established himself there as the operator of a ferry, he probably built the present house, Oak Grove.

Alexander Smith died in 1777. His widow's estate in 1780 was valued at 17,908 pounds and included 1,145 acres of "River land" worth 10,305 pounds. Smith's widow married Farquhard Campbell, who then occupied Oak Grove. A bond was executed by him in 1782 in which he promised to deliver to John Smith, son of Alexander Smith, "a certain parcel of land and plantation whereon Alexander Smith, deceased, formerly lived." This bond in the amount of 4,000 pounds required him to "keep the plantation and houses in good repair" and to deliver it to John Smith when he reached the age of eighteen. Under the terms of the bond, Smith was to come into possession of the property in 1790.

(Although stylistic evidence and deeds seem to confirm that Oak Grove was built by Alexander Smith, cared for by Farquhard Campbell, and inherited by John Smith, the possibility exists that John Smith might have built the present house after he inherited the land from his father.)

John Smith continued to operate the ferry during his tenure at Oak Grove. He became a prominent citizen and was senator from Cumberland County in the state legislatures of 1812, 1813 and 1814. In 1815 his property included 27 slaves and 4,408 acres of land with a total tax value of \$12,782.00. In 1843 John Smith deeded a number of tracts to his three sons amounting to about 8,700 acres. One of these conveyances is in the form of a bonded agreement in which he stipulated that within a year after his death a deed would be made to his son, John C. Smith, for 2,238 acres, "lying on the East side of Cape Fear River including my residence." Also included was "one third part equal interest with Farquhard and William T. Smith in the Ferry Landing, Flat and Fixtures together with the right of way to and from said landing . . . likewise to one half of my Saw and

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Grist Mills on Black River."

John C. Smith actually must have taken possession before his father died, for on the 1849 tax list he was shown as being the owner of 3,254 acres and sixteen slaves while his father was listed as the holder of fifty acres and twelve slaves. John C. Smith lived at Oak Grove, and his brothers, Farquhard and William T., had newer plantation houses in the area as well; the general neighborhood was called "Smithville."

During the Civil War, in March, 1865, a battle was fought on the grounds of Oak Grove, with the old house situated between the opposing lines. Officially known as the Battle of Averasboro, it was a stalling action on the part of Confederate units against elements of Sherman's army on its northward march. The report of Confederate Brigadier General W. B. Taliaferro, operating with Hardee's Corps, contains a mention of the Smith house:

On the morning of the 15th one of my brigade (Rhett's) encamped near Smith's house, at the intersection of the Fayetteville and Raleigh road with the road leading to Smith's house and on to Smith's Ferry across the Cape Fear River . . . the infantry of the enemy were pressing our cavalry back, when I selected a position for Rhett's brigade near Smith's house in rear of an open field. . . . I erected such a hasty breast-works as our means permitted.

That afternoon a pitched battle ensued, involving numerous assaults and counter-assaults. During the night the Confederate force withdrew. General Sherman's report of the battle stated that his men "captured 3 guns and 217 prisoners, of which 68 were wounded and left in a house nearby with a rebel officer, four men, and five days' rations. One hundred and eight rebel dead were buried by us." That the house he refers to is the Smith house is evident from a letter written after the battle by John Smith's niece. She wrote,

The battle commenced on the 15th of March at Uncle John's. . . . Their house was penetrated by a great many shells and balls but was not burned. . . . The Yanks left fifty of our wounded at Uncle John's whom we have been busy nursing.

Evidence of some of the cannonballs may still be seen in the attic of Oak Grove.

John C. Smith died in 1875. One year later in the division of his estate, his widow, Eliza, was awarded lot number one containing the house and one hundred acres, valued at \$750. In 1877 she sold the property to W. Douglas Smith for \$1,100. W. P. Holt bought Oak Grove in 1920 at a public sale for \$12,075, from the heirs of Bettie P. Smith, the widow of W. D. Smith. Later James R. Byrd acquired Oak Grove, and it is now in the possession of his son, Eugene Byrd, who has built a brick house between Oak Grove and the highway. The older house is used for storage of farm equipment and surplus

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produce.

Oak Grove is an imposing Georgian house notable for the severe dignity of its proportions and such well-executed interior details as the handsome mantel and overmantel, and the Chinese Chippendale balustrade. Despite superficial damages resulting from the neglect and misuse of recent years, the structure is firm and essentially intact, inside and out. Oak Grove has considerable historical significance because of the central and well-documented place it occupied during the Battle of Aversboro near the end of the Civil War.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Barnett, John G. The Civil War in North Carolina. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1963.
 Cumberland County Records, Cumberland County Courthouse, Fayetteville, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Tax Records).
 Cumberland County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Tax Records).
The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1895.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		35° 15' 00"	78° 41' 25"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 6 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Survey and Planning Unit Staff

ORGANIZATION: State Department of Archives and History

DATE: 9 May 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:
 109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh

STATE: North Carolina

CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: H. G. Jones

Title: Director, State Department of Archives and History

Date: 9 May 1972

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

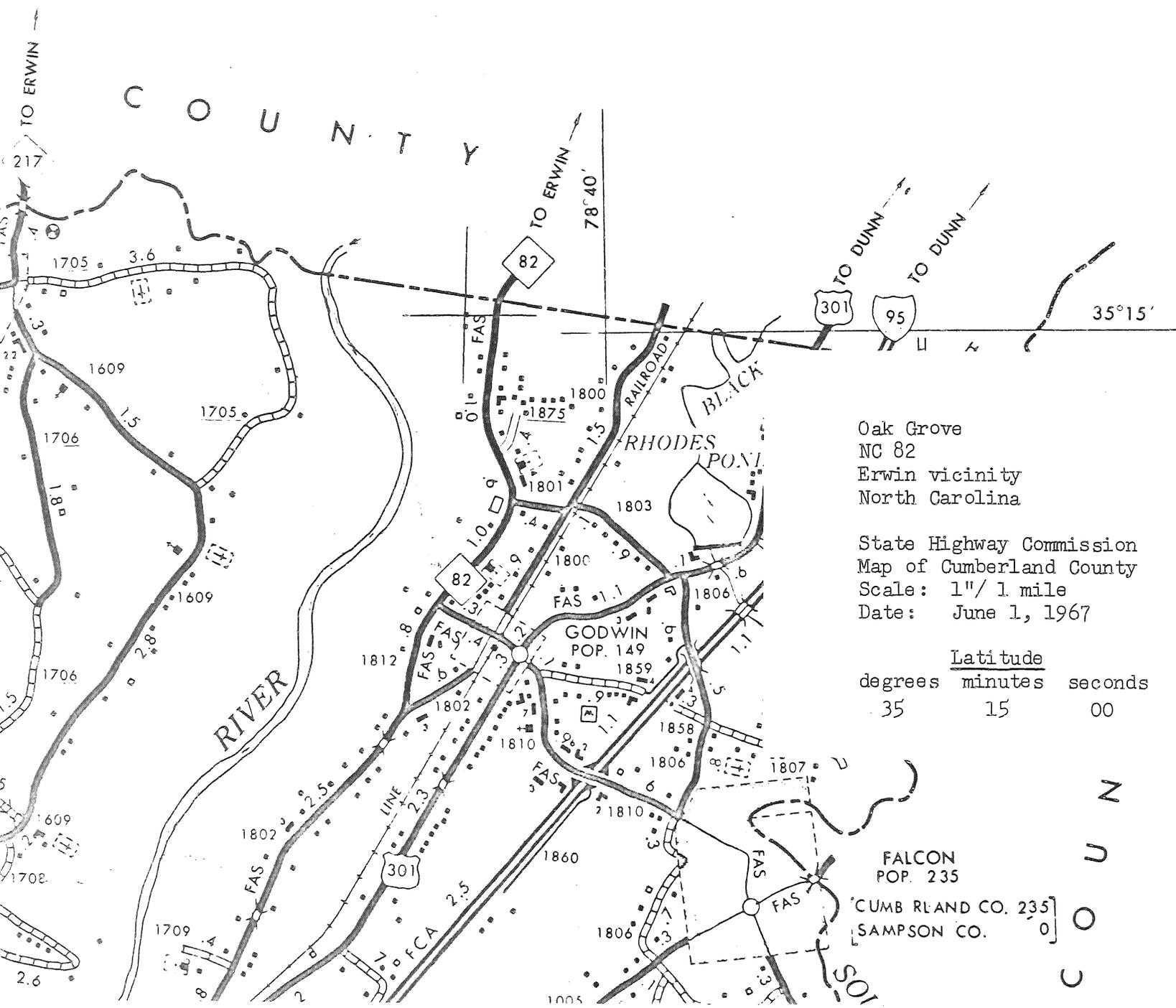
Date: _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date: _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

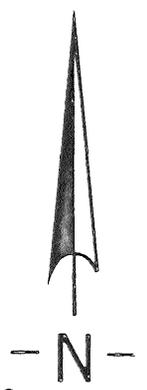


Oak Grove
 NC 82
 Erwin vicinity
 North Carolina

State Highway Commission
 Map of Cumberland County
 Scale: 1" / 1 mile
 Date: June 1, 1967

Latitude			Longitude		
degrees	minutes	seconds	degrees	minutes	seconds
35	15	00	78	41	25

FALCON
 POP. 235
 CUMBERLAND CO. 235
 SAMPSON CO. 0



C O U N T Y

