

357

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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Seven Hearths

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Junction of U.S. 176 and Harmon Field Road

CITY OR TOWN:  
Tryon

Eleventh Congressional District  
The Hon. Roy Taylor

STATE North Carolina	CODE 37	COUNTY: Polk	CODE 149
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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Business</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Mr. A. Robert Blackmon, Jr.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Seven Hearths

CITY OR TOWN: Tryon	STATE: North Carolina	CODE 37
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Columbus	STATE: North Carolina	CODE 37
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Frances Benjamin Johnston (LC J7-NC-2851)

DATE OF SURVEY: 1938  
 Federal    State    County    Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:  
East Capitol and Independence Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: D. C.	CODE
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## 7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Seven Hearths is a rambling Federal style frame house which has as its central core a two-story five-bay gable roof section with boxed eaves and exterior double shouldered chimneys at each end. At either end of the main or east facade are single-room projections one bay wide, one bay deep. These projections are said to have been originally only one story high but have been raised to two. They are covered by a low hip roof which extends across the facade sheltering a recessed two-tier porch occupying the three central bays. The central entrance has a door with six flat panels beneath a four-panel transom--the whole being set within a symmetrically molded architrave with corner blocks. A similar door occurs on the second floor. The small windows contain six-over-six sash and have plain sills and frames; the attic is lit at each gable end by four-pane casement windows flanking the chimneys. Across the rear (west) elevation of the main block is an early shed roof addition with chimneys at either end, the south chimney having single shoulders above the shed roofline. To the north the roof continues past the main block, forming the western slope of a gable roof sheltering the three-bay wide, two-bay deep kitchen wings.

The interior of the main block follows a hall-and-parlor plan with the larger three-bay room to the south, now the living room, and the smaller room, now the dining room, to the north. Entered through a door from the living room an enclosed stair rises along the west wall of the north room. To the east of the main block doors open from both major rooms into the small unheated rooms at either end of the facade. To the west are two rooms and a central passage sheltered by the shed roof. The rooms are heated by fireplaces in the end walls. Each of the rooms has access to the passage as well as the main block. The north wing, said to incorporate an early well house, is reached from both the north shed room and a small passage from the dining room. It contains two consecutive rooms, the northernmost serving as the kitchen, and has a porch recessed in the northeast corner.

The plan of the second floor is like that of the first with one room at either end; however, the rooms are separated by a narrow central hall leading back from the gallery door joining the stair hall which runs south along the west exterior wall. A bathroom has been carved out of the space at the juncture of the arms of the hall. The stair opening is protected by a simple beaded rail with a chamfered newel. Just as at the first level there are small rooms to either side of the porch to which access is gained from both bedrooms.

Though the plan of the house with its many rooms clustered around the central core is intriguing, the main architectural merit of the house lies in the handsome, finely detailed interior. Of the seven mantels, the most elaborate is the one in the living room. The large fire opening is surrounded by a cable molding. Slender reeded engaged colonnettes support a reeded architrave above which is a broad paneled frieze. The center tablet is decorated with a well carved fan with an ivory button at its center. Under the shelf the face of which is carved with a serpentine floral band occurs a heavy ovolo molding carved in a rope motif. The dining room mantel has a molded shelf and a frieze composed of three flat panels between plain end blocks. Reeded paneled pilasters flank the fire opening

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below a reeded architrave which stretches across the lower portion of the entire frieze. Each of the mantels in the west first floor rooms and the south bedroom has reeded pilasters, a two-flat panel frieze, and a molded shelf. The mantel in the south room of the kitchen wing is a replacement. The mantel in the north bedroom is an unusual vernacular three-part one with a tall frieze.

Wall surfaces are predominantly horizontally sheathed. Ceilings are also sheathed. The major rooms on both floors have Federal-style molded chair rails. The dining room chair rail is the most elaborate and is decorated with horizontal reeding. The living room has a wainscot with flat marbled panels and a broad reeded cornice. Doors are typically composed of six flat panels and are hung with HL, H, and strap hinges and often have their early hardware. Architraves vary according to the development of, and later changes within the house, with the earliest, exhibiting heavier molding, generally found in the main block and west shed rooms.

B. 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)      ca. 1800

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Seven Hearths is one of the small group of ambitious Federal period houses in Polk County. Despite moving, the large rambling frame house retains for the most part its original fabric, including very handsome interior woodwork; the reeded mantels are particularly notable. The house is of local historical significance because of its connection with the prominent Mills family; it was evidently the site of a meeting at which Polk County was organized in 1847.

Positive identification of the builder of Seven Hearths has been rendered virtually impossible due to the absence of reliable data. The original owner of the land on which the house was built is said to have been Colonel Ambrose Mills, a noted Loyalist of the Revolutionary period; unfortunately no deed bearing Colonel Mills's name could be found among the existing records of the counties from which Polk County ultimately was created. This absence probably results from a law enacted by the General Assembly in 1777 which decreed that the property of "divers persons who have . . . attached themselves to Enemies of the United States of America . . ." be confiscated. Because Mills and his son William were notorious Loyalists, it is likely that their landholdings on Green River in present-day Polk County were confiscated for at least a time.

The Safety Committee of Tryon County, corresponding with its counterpart in neighboring Rowan, referred to Colonel Mills as "one of the greatest Enemys of our pese" and remarked that "his Character is so netorious [sic] that we expect that every gentleman in Rowan is acquainted with it. . . ." Colonel Mills fought on the side of the Tories at Earle's Ford and King's Mountain, where he was captured and later taken to Biggestaff's Fields near Rutherfordton and hanged in October, 1780. This action apparently offended the sensibilities of Lord Cornwallis, who later wrote that "the hanging [of] poor old Colonel Mills, who was always a fair and open Enemy . . . was an act of the most Savage barbarity."

Colonel Mills's son William served as a major under his father at King's Mountain and was seriously wounded there. He was later set free and settled in the present-day Fruitland section of Henderson County. Why he failed to relocate on the family's landholdings on Green River is uncertain, but one of his sons, Marvill Mills, returned to this area sometime before 1812. The house in which the younger Mills resided is unidentified by name, but it is likely that it was built by him on part of the tract said

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to have been acquired by his grandfather about 1765; this is believed to be the house now called Seven Hearths.

On February 22, 1847, Marvill Mills's homeplace was the site of a meeting of a group of commissioners authorized by the General Assembly to lay off and organize the proposed new county of Polk. The first recorded session of the nascent county's Superior Court and Court of Equity was held on November, 1847, at a mill located on Mills's homeplace tract.

Marvill Mills apparently died early in 1850. At its spring term in that year, the Superior Court of Rutherford County awarded to Mills's widow Mary her dower rights to her husband's landholdings. This amounted to "seven hundred acres valued to Twelve hundred dollars Including the improvements where Marvill Mills Dec formerly lived." It is not certain what became of the property during the ensuing twenty-year period, but it is likely that Mills's widow continued to reside in the mansion house until her own death in September, 1870.

Three years later, a commissioner was appointed by the Superior Court of Polk County "to sell the lands known as Marvill Mills homestead and dower of the widow . . . including the home place where the late Marvel Mills last lived. . . ." Nesbit Dimsdale, the successful bidder, paid \$1,440.94 for the tract, now said to contain 300 acres.

Between 1882 and 1935, the Mills homeplace tract exchanged hands three times. About 1935 Mr. and Mrs. Arthur W. Brintnall of Wayne County, Michigan, purchased the badly-deteriorating house, dismantled it, and had it completely restored and rebuilt on a three-acre lot in the town of Tryon, a winter resort in southern Polk County. The house served for a time as an arts and crafts shop and is presently owned by Mr. A. Robert Blackmon, Jr., who resides there.

*line 1*

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research by Robert Topkins, survey specialist; architectural description by Bruce MacDougal, Chief, Historic Sites Section.  
 Bennett, D. K. Chronology of North Carolina. New York; James M. Edney, 1858.  
 Clark, Walter, ed. The State Records of North Carolina. 16 volumes, numbered XI-XXVI, 1895-1906; Winston and Goldsboro: State of North Carolina, XIV, XXIV.  
 Draper, Lyman C. King's Mountain and Its Heroes: History of the Battle of King's Mountain, October 7th, 1780, and the Events Which Led To It. Cincinnati: Peter G. Thomson, 1881.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE			
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "	35 °	13 ' 20 "	82 ° 15 ' 07 "
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "			
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "			
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 2 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

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History DATE: 17 July 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:  
109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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 Thornton W. Mitchell

Title Acting Director, Division of Archives and History

Date 17 July 1974

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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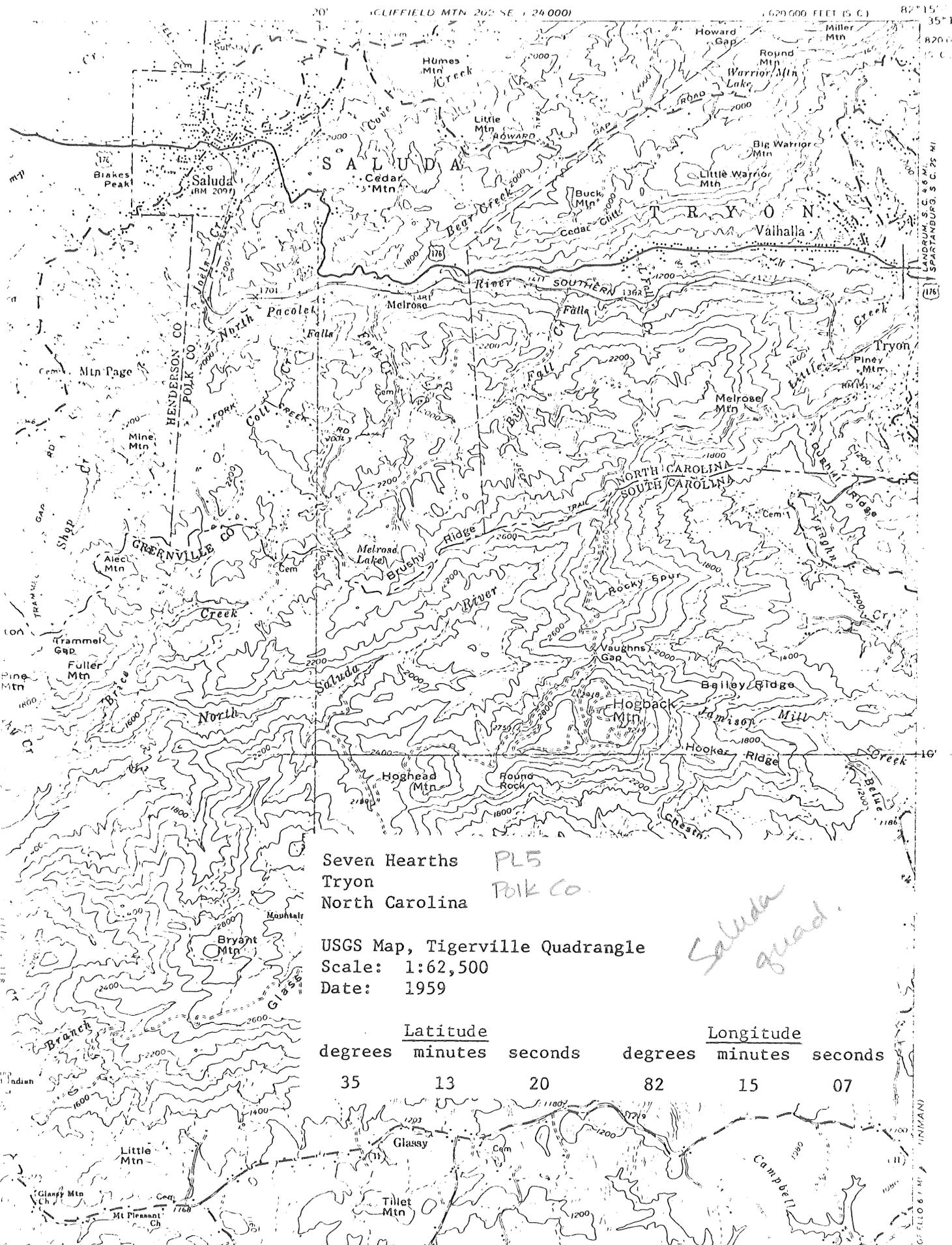
(Number all entries)

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- Patton, Sadie Smathers. Sketches of Polk County History. Hendersonville: By the Author, 1950.
- Polk County Records, Polk County Courthouse, Columbus, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Court Records).
- Polk County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Court Records).
- Rutherford County Records, Rutherford County Courthouse, Rutherfordton, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds).
- Rutherford County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds).
- Saunders, William L., ed. The Colonial Records of North Carolina. 10 volumes, 1886-1890; Raleigh: State of North Carolina, X.
- Western Democrat (Charlotte). Obituary of Mary Mills, September 27, 1870.

TIGERVILLE QUADRANGLE  
 SOUTH CAROLINA-NORTH CAROLINA  
 15 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

(LAKE LUPE)



Seven Hearths PLS  
 Tryon Polk Co.  
 North Carolina

USGS Map, Tigerville Quadrangle  
 Scale: 1:62,500  
 Date: 1959

*Saluda quad.*

Latitude			Longitude		
degrees	minutes	seconds	degrees	minutes	seconds
35	13	20	82	15	07

SPARTANBURG, S. C. 25 MI

POLK CO. 6 MI

