

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Railway Clerks' Mountain Home

other names/site number Mountain Home, Clerks' Mountain Home, Orchard Inn

2. Location

street & number S side US 176, 0.6 miles SE of jct with Ozone Road n/a not for publication

city or town Saluda  vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Polk code 149 zip code 28773

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey J. Cross SHPD 6/19/00  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Railway Clerks' Mountain Home  
Name of Property

Polk Co., NC  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
4	1	Total

**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**

-0-

**6. Function or Use**

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

DOMESTIC: hotel

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

DOMESTIC: hotel

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Craftsman-influenced

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD

roof ASPHALT

other STONE

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

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 of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1926 - 1950

Significant Dates

ca. 1926

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Railway Clerks' Mountain Home  
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County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 12.22 acres

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	7
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3	7	8	5	8	0
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3	8	9	9	6	5	6
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Zone Easting Northing

2 

1	7
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3	7	8	6	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	9	8	9	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

3 

1	7
---	---

3	7	8	0	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	9	9	1	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

4 

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See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Langdon E. Oppermann, Preservation Planner

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date October 1999

street & number 1500 Overbrook Avenue telephone 336/721-1949

city or town Winston-Salem, NC state NC zip code 27104

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### 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.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

#### Property Owner

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

name Robert B. and Katherine B. Thompson

street & number P.O. Box 725 telephone 800/581-3800

city or town Saluda state NC zip code 28773

**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. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Narrative Description**

The Railway Clerks' Mountain Home, now known as the Orchard Inn, sits on a twelve-acre tract on the south side of U.S. Highway 176, approximately one and one-quarter miles southeast of the town of Saluda. The paved entrance drive to the Clerks' Home winds up a steep hill through hardwood trees. The surrounding landscape is wooded, but affords striking views of the Warrior Mountains to the east and a series of smaller ranges to the southeast. The house faces west towards the drive. Boxwood hedges lead to the raised front porch, and evergreen and deciduous plantings encompass the dwelling. Directly behind the house the ground slopes steeply down the mountainside with a terraced garden and recently-planted vineyard. Behind and north of the house are three small frame cottages original to Mountain Home. West of the house is the owners' residence, an unobtrusive modern frame dwelling screened from the house and entrance road by heavy planting.

**1. House, ca. 1926. Contributing building.**

The two-story frame house was constructed ca. 1926 by the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks of the Southern Railway System to serve as the organization's Mountain Home, as it was aptly named. The most striking feature of the house is the original hip-roofed one-story porch extending the full width of the front facade. The porch is twelve feet deep and supported by slender Tuscan columns with an X-pattern balustrade. At one time it encircled the house. The original tongue-and-groove ceiling remains intact. Leading to the porch is a stone and concrete walkway and eight wood steps with later balustrade and rails matching those of the porch. The slender, cement-faced stone walls flanking the walkway are later additions. Two documentary photographs show freestanding stone posts and a continuous, though irregular, run of low steps to the porch. No railing or balustrade is visible on the steps.<sup>1</sup>

The house is a loose combination of the Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles. It is rectangular in plan, about forty by sixty feet, and is covered with a composition-shingle, high hip roof with later decorative scalloping at the deep eaves. Originally, the eaves of the main roof had exposed rafter ends typical of the Craftsman style, while the porch roof eaves were boxed.<sup>2</sup> It retains original German siding beneath the porch and wood shingle siding on the upper story. The first floor is six bays wide with an asymmetrical pattern of windows and

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<sup>1</sup> Ca. 1937 photo from *Saluda Magazine*, and 1940s or later photo from Byrd's *Sense of Heritage*.

<sup>2</sup> Documentary photographs and stylistic evidence.

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doors reflecting the use of spaces within. The approach to the porch is off-center as is the front entrance to the house. At the entrance bay of the house are half-glazed, horizontal-pannelled double doors. Paired one-over-two windows are in the bays on each side of the front door. The upper front facade is five bays wide and is symmetrical though not centered over first floor fenestration. Paired windows are in the central three bays and single windows in the outer bays. Most windows are replacement one-over-one sash, and fenestration retains the original plain surrounds with a small upper lip on the lintels typical of the 1920s. Later louvered shutters have been added to the second floor.

On the south side of the house, the southwest portion of the porch was enclosed and serves as a library. Square wood lattice masks the enclosure's front wall, and a six-over-six front window provides light. A brick chimney stack with tall metal cap rises above the south wall. The back part of the porch on this side connects to an unpainted wood deck with pergola added in the 1990s. On the north side of the house, the open porch continues around from the front to the second column bay. At that point it was enclosed by the Brotherhood at an early date to create dormitory space for summer staff.<sup>3</sup> A one-story addition extends west from beneath the porch at basement level, and wide steps lead from the enclosed kitchen to the side yard. Fenestration is asymmetrical on the upper levels of both side elevations.

The rear of the building is rarely seen as a whole and difficult to photograph, perched as it is over the steep descent to the garden and vineyard. The back porch has been enclosed with rows of large wood casement windows to create a dining area. The X-balustrade of the porch remains visually exposed through single-pane sheets of glass. Beneath the back porch, the tall brick piers of the foundation are infilled with wood lattice, while the area beneath the kitchen has been enclosed with cinder block.

**Interior**

The original interior floor plan of the Clerks' Mountain Home remains intact and reflects its design as a guest lodge. The double entrance doors open into a spacious living room measuring forty feet by forty feet and extending to the rear porch. On the south wall is a large stone fireplace. Another stone fireplace was added to the east wall in the 1970s. The 1938 *Saluda Magazine* boasted that the living room's hardwood floor "made a wonderful dance floor." Just off the living room in the northwest corner of the building is the former "keeping room" where stores were kept and reportedly where Brotherhood members held

<sup>3</sup> Interview, Robert Thompson.

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meetings, keeping the room off-limits to women. The room retains its exterior door and today is used as a guest bedroom. Across from the front entrance of the house is the enclosed back porch now used as the dining room and overlooking the rolling peaks of the Warrior Mountain range. The north side porch is enclosed and serves as kitchen and dishwashing room. Throughout the house the plaster walls, hardwood floors, and simple surrounds remain impressively unaltered.

Near the southwest corner of the living room is the stairway to the second floor with Craftsman style newel post and balustrade. At the stair landing a somewhat intrusive enclosure with glazed door was built, perhaps in the 1960s, to reduce heat loss. At the landing, the stair turns ninety degrees to the south and rises to the upper level central hall, which runs the length of the building from north to south. The newel posts and balustrade here are also in the Craftsman style but simpler than those on the first floor. When built, the Mountain Home had ten bedrooms upstairs. The 1938 magazine reported, "...on the second floor we have ten bedrooms, with two double beds in each room, two bathrooms, one at each end of the hall."<sup>4</sup> In the 1980s this plan was modified to meet the expectations of today's visitors, creating eight bedrooms, each with its own bath, while retaining the spacious hall and the character of the second floor. The bathroom doors at each end of the hall remain, though their interior plan has been altered to create smaller, modern bathrooms joined to bedrooms. Original four-panel bedroom doors with plain surrounds retain their louvered bottom panel. Originally, a piece of plywood over the louvers could be pulled up from inside for ventilation or let down for privacy. The louvers are now covered on the bedroom side but remain visible on the hall side.

The basement has always been functional space for the house. The kitchen was originally in the basement under the north porch. Beneath the back part of the living room was "... a dining room twenty by forty feet capable of seating thirty-six people comfortably."<sup>5</sup> The former dining room and kitchen were the only excavated part of the basement. Beaded board siding sheathes the wall of the simple steps down to the basement; beaded board is found in other parts of the basement as well. The old cistern that collected water from the spring remains in the basement, unused since city water was piped in in 1990.<sup>6</sup> Today, the basement is used for the inn's laundry operations and for storage. The former dining room

<sup>4</sup> *Saluda Magazine*, 1938.

<sup>5</sup> *Saluda Magazine*, 1938.

<sup>6</sup> Interview, Robert Thompson. The electric pump remains at the spring.

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is used as a meeting room, though the current owners have plans to convert it into a wine room.

## OUTBUILDINGS

Three cottages are located behind and to the left of (north of) the Clerks' Home and are named for trees found in the area. Today they are used as guest cottages for the inn.

**2. "Paulownia" Cottage, ca. 1926. Contributing building.**

Small one-story frame house facing west, German siding; side-gabled composition-shingle roof with engaged, gable front, one-bay porch and concrete porch floor. The largest of the three cottages, with two bedrooms, bathroom, and a recent large rear deck overlooking garden and mountains. At times a manager couple would live in this cottage. Paulownia is a tree native to China and grown in the Saluda area for its lightweight hardwood and showy, fragrant violet blossoms.

**3. "Boxwood" Cottage, ca. 1926. Contributing building.**

This cottage is almost identical to Twin Poplar Cottage (see below). The two cottages are side by side facing south. Boxwood is a small one-story frame house, German siding; side-gabled composition-shingle roof with engaged, gable front, one-bay porch with later wood lattice masking plain supports; concrete porch floor. Windows are double-hung vertical-pane-over-one, typical of the 1920s, with louvered shutters. Modernized interior holds one bedroom and later bathroom. Recent unpainted wood deck at rear.

**4. "Twin Poplar" Cottage, ca. 1926. Contributing building.**

Similar to Boxwood Cottage: small one-story frame house facing south, German siding; side-gabled composition-shingle roof with engaged, gable front, one-bay porch with later wood lattice masking plain supports; concrete porch floor. Windows are double-hung vertical-pane-over-one, typical of the 1920s, with louvered shutters. Modernized interior holds one bedroom and later bathroom. Recent unpainted wood deck at rear.

**5. Owners' House, 1988. Non-contributing building.**

One-and-one-half-story frame house, coastal cottage-style with engaged screened front porch, six-over-six windows, composition shingle roof. Located off the entrance drive west of the main house; view is screened from the Clerks' Home by a tall hemlock hedge.

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**Summary**

The coming of the railroad changed the history of Polk County, shifting the county's wealth and development away from the lowland farm areas to the area between Tryon and Saluda, which it reached in 1877 and 1878, respectively. The mountain resort town of Saluda rapidly became a destination for those seeking relief from the diseases of Lowcountry summers. Saluda thrived as the summer population increased and with it the number of hotels, boarding houses, and private houses devoted to summer living. Always a part of the booming community were the employees of Southern Railroad. Among these were the railway clerks, who were organized as the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks of Southern Railway System. The Brotherhood selected Saluda as the site for a summer retreat for railroad clerks and their families, and around 1926 they built the Railway Clerks' Mountain Home high in the woods overlooking surrounding mountains. The Brotherhood retained the property for over thirty years until 1962. Since then the property has continued its use as a summer retreat under various owners. Today the twelve-acre property retains its original landscape characterized by wooded surroundings and striking views of the Warrior and Blue Ridge mountains.

The dwelling itself is a large, two-story frame house with a deep porch. Together with its three guest cottages, the Railway Clerks' Mountain Home is exceptionally intact, and the Saluda area's only surviving example of the traditional boarding houses and hotels for which the town was known before the Depression. In both architecture and use it remains an important vestige of Polk County's past, and fulfills Criterion C for architectural significance. The Railway Clerks' Mountain Home is also significant in the area of recreation and entertainment because of its role as a mountain retreat for railroad families during the first half of the twentieth century (Criterion A). The property gained its primary significance ca. 1926 when the Railway Clerks optioned the land and built the house; the period of significance ends in 1950, a year that marked the beginning of the decline in use of the inn. Also beginning in 1950, railroad activity in Saluda waned culminating in the running of the last passenger train in 1968. The current owners operate the Railway Clerks' Mountain Home as the Orchard Inn, taking care to preserve the tranquil character of the buildings and grounds.

**Historical Background and Recreation Context**

## DEVELOPMENT OF SALUDA

In 1855 the French Broad Company received a charter from the state of North Carolina for a

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railroad across the Blue Ridge Mountains from South Carolina. The rail line was first known as the Spartanburg and Asheville Railroad and later changed to the Asheville and Spartanburg.<sup>7</sup> It became part of the Southern Railway System in 1894.

By 1873, work began on the line that would connect to a Tennessee line. This would be the first railroad to cross North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains from the south and was of broad interest because its completion would create a trade link between eastern ports and the Midwest. Financing was provided by stock subscription and by the sale of bonds issued by counties in both North and South Carolina. By 1877, the line had been completed north to Tryon, in the foothills, and trains operated to that point. The plan for the line up the mountain followed an old trading path and wagon road by Howard's Gap. Captain Charles W. Pearson found the ground to be unstable due to underground artesian springs, and was concerned as well about the cost for several needed tunnels. He rejected the plan and chose instead to build the railbed up the steep gorge of Saluda Mountain along the Pacolet River. While Saluda Mountain is more stable than some in that area of the Outer Blue Ridge, it is very steep. The resulting road is the steepest mainline standard-gauge railroad in the United States. The three-mile Saluda Grade from the community of Melrose to the top of the grade at Saluda ranges from a three-and-seven-tenths to four-and-seven-tenths percent grade. As freight trains began the steep grade at Melrose, "helper" engines were needed to push them up the Grade.<sup>8</sup>

A community known as Pace's Gap began to develop at the top of the grade while the railroad was under construction, at first serving railroad officials and workers, and later the summer visitors. Lowcountry families were the first of the "summer people." They came to mountain settlements by carriage to escape the disease of the lowlands of South Carolina, stopping even then at the top of the grade to rest the horses. And so there was great excitement the morning of July 4, 1878, when the first passenger train crept up the Saluda Grade to Pace's Gap. This began a new era, and a year and a half later the town was renamed Saluda in honor of the grade. Saluda developed quickly near the railroad right-of-

<sup>7</sup> In the 1880s the line was leased for ninety-nine years to the Richmond and Danville Railroad Company.

<sup>8</sup> Osborne & Pace, pp. 4-6; Patton, pp. 57-60; Polk County Historical Association, p. 67; Jefferys. Melrose is an altitude of 1,424 feet; Saluda is at 2,097. Despite the success of helper engines, the Grade became famous for wrecks and runaway trains, and by 1903 when 27 men had been killed, Southern Railway built steep uphill safety tracks for runaway trains to slow and stop. Almost a hundred years after Captain Pearson's decision to select a new railroad route, Interstate 26 was being built between Charleston and Asheville. The route chosen went over Warrior Mountain. This was the route Pearson rejected in the 1870s, and in the 1970s construction difficulties added eight years to the interstate project.

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way at the top of the grade, and for some time the railroad ended there. Each day in the warm months, passengers disembarked, resting or eating before continuing their journeys to Flat Rock or Asheville, and perhaps staying overnight in one of the hotels or boarding houses that sprang up in the fast-growing town. Soon, summer visitors remained in Saluda, staying in boarding houses for the summer or building summer houses of their own. By the turn of the twentieth century there were general stores, a barber shop, two banks, a drug store, a library, and four churches.<sup>9</sup> Saluda thrived. Prosperity came to the town rapidly, and for five decades Saluda was one of the mountain resorts visited regularly by the established families of South Carolina and by wealthy Northerners.

Hotels, inns, and boarding houses multiplied to accommodate the visitors, and the influx of wealthy outsiders influenced all parts of Saluda's life. The boarding houses rented rooms and served meals, year-round, to shifts of railroad men and to summer guests. One of these was Mrs. Baumberger's three-story boarding house with its fifteen bedrooms; the railroad men had the third floor to themselves and summer guests stayed downstairs. A Saluda promotional booklet published around 1900 lists about a dozen summer cottages and rooms for rent in Saluda, mostly operated by women from Charleston and Columbia. By 1910 there were seven inns and hotels and a multitude of boarding houses.<sup>10</sup>

Private housing was built as well. Many families built their own summer dwellings, and in 1893 local Episcopalians formed the Clergy Association to build summer cottages in Saluda where members of the Episcopal clergy might come with their families for vacation and rest. Two houses were built for the Dioceses of South Carolina and Georgia on seven acres of land. These and the Clerks' Home were among the few guest lodges that served an association of members.

## THE CLERKS' MOUNTAIN HOME

"The Brotherhood of Railway Clerks of the Southern Railway System, after an exhaustive investigation of mountain resorts along the Southern [Railway line], determined to locate a 'Mountain Home' for their members in Saluda."<sup>11</sup> So reads a souvenir booklet of the

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<sup>9</sup> Osborne & Pace; Patton.

<sup>10</sup> Osborne & Pace, p. 10 & 23; Patton, p. 69.

<sup>11</sup> Clerks' Souvenir Booklet, p. 13.

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Railway Clerks' Mountain Home as it introduces visitors to the pleasures of Saluda. The Brotherhood of Railway Clerks was a labor union of clerks employed by Southern Railway.<sup>12</sup> Although the Brotherhood bought the eighteen-acre property in late 1931, this was not their first involvement with the land. Five years earlier the Brotherhood had secured an option on eleven acres that apparently was never executed.

## EARLY HISTORY OF THE CLERKS' LAND

In 1888, Dr. G. Robert Little, Dr. E. McQ. Salley, and others bought a 370-acre tract of land near Saluda. Little was a prominent Saluda resident and served at times as mayor. He owned several downtown properties including the Saluda Pharmacy, the Princess Theater, and the Bank of Saluda. With others he built a towel mill. Dr. Little was the town's druggist; Dr. Salley was the town's physician. The two were close friends and owned many parcels of land together over the years, often swapping property with others.<sup>13</sup>

The Brotherhood's association with the Mountain Home property began with Little and Salley. On June 18, 1926, the Mountain Home Committee of the Brotherhood acquired a "bond of title," similar to today's option, for 11.8 acres of land from Little, Salley, *et al.* The option was never exercised.<sup>14</sup> As a tireless promoter of Saluda, Dr. Little strongly encouraged the Railway Clerks' establishment of their Mountain Home there. Little often searched for ventures he called "payroll" to help the people of Saluda earn a living, and may have offered to give land to the Brotherhood as enticement.<sup>15</sup> But that was before the Depression.

<sup>12</sup> TCU International, "Many People, Many Crafts." A national Brotherhood of Railway Clerks was founded on December 29, 1899, when thirty-three railroad clerks gathered in the back room of Gehren's cigar store in Sedalia, Missouri. That night they formed Local Lodge Number 1 of a union they named the Order of Railroad Clerks of America. The name was changed to the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, and in 1919 was changed again to become the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees. In 1967 the word airline was added with the long name generally shortened to BRAC. After the 1960s, half a dozen labor organizations were added and in 1987 convention delegates renamed the union to TCU. Today the union includes clerks, carmen, computer programmers, skycaps and redecaps, secretaries, supervisors, truck drivers, accountants, and more.

<sup>13</sup> Interview, Bobby Little. Osborne, p. 10. Little's 1915 advertisement in the *Polk County News* touted the Saluda Pharmacy's wire pavilion in the back, a spring with dance floor beyond, and "enjoyment of ice cream and sodas."

<sup>14</sup> Deed book 58/238, using the name "Mountain Home Committee, Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, Southern Railway System." The bond was extended in 1927. Black's Law Dictionary for definition of "bond for title."

<sup>15</sup> Interview, Bobby Little.

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The Depression hit Saluda hard, but may have helped the Brotherhood in their purchase of land. Little and Salley had executed a deed of trust on the land, but defaulted during the Depression. The large property was sold at auction in August 1930 to the North Carolina Securities Company (NCSC).<sup>16</sup> The many transactions and foreclosures on this and other land during these years reflect the effects of the Depression on Polk County real estate. Both Dr. Little and Dr. Salley were well-to-do and Saluda was flourishing in the mid-twenties. Nevertheless, Little's bank closed in 1929, and the towel mill and theater closed shortly thereafter. The drugstore was the last to go, closing about 1934.<sup>17</sup> The Little-Salley default, however, provided an opportunity for the Brotherhood, and on December 31, 1931, they bought an 18.2-acre tract from the NCSC, including the eleven-acre tract optioned earlier.

By the time of the purchase, the "Mountain Home Committee" of 1926 had formalized. The 1931 deed was made to "Board of Directors, Mountain Home, Southern Railway System Board of Adjustment, Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, of the County of Hamilton and State of Tennessee."<sup>18</sup> The deed referenced a survey map of the tract that locates "House" at its present location. Apparently, the Brotherhood had built the house when it optioned the land in 1926. Convincing support for this assumption is the Spring 1937 issue of *Saluda Magazine*, which reports, "Mountain Home, owned and operated by the...Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, was planned as a vacation center for the clerks and other vacationists." Perhaps more significant are the recollections of older Saludans who saw the house under construction.

Despite significant research, little is known of the management and guests of Mountain Home.<sup>19</sup> It was managed for years by Mr. and Mrs. M.R. Holmes, Mark and Nell.<sup>20</sup> In the late 1930s they asked their friends the Ward family to live at Mountain Home while they spent the winter in Chattanooga. Charles Ward, a boy at the time, spent that winter in the

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<sup>16</sup> Deed of Trust book 25/392, 9/26/1925.

<sup>17</sup> Interview, Bobby Little.

<sup>18</sup> Deed book 62/148; the deed was recorded 1/25/1932 following a deed of trust dated 1/11/1932.

<sup>19</sup> Several railway-related organizations were contacted; about 75% responded, but with little helpful information.

<sup>20</sup> In the 1937-1938 *Saluda Magazine*, a column on the Mountain Home lists a partial list of the season's guests and a description of "...an August birthday party given for all those who had birthdays in that month. Mrs. Holmes, the hostess, being one of these, was presented with a lovely gift from the guests. A large cake was cut. Games and dancing were enjoyed by all."

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main house with his family. He remembers the cottages behind the house. Mrs. Nell Holmes Gross was the next manager. Mrs. Anna Slaughter ran the Mountain Home for many years, also living there year-round. Nearby, the Pace family lived on a farm and raised pork. Each winter when the pork was butchered, the Paces sold the hams to Mrs. Slaughter, who with help would cure the hams herself. The Paces used the money to pay their taxes, and Mrs. Slaughter used the hams for the summer's guests.<sup>21</sup>

Clerks and their families came for one-week or two-week sessions, and all came on the train using employee passes. In the Clerks' Mountain Home were large, half-inch-thick "Souvenir Booklets" with promotional entries for Saluda and nearby towns, but also for large cities in North Carolina (Charlotte, Hickory, Asheville, Hendersonville, Winston-Salem, High Point, Greensboro, Burlington, Raleigh, Durham), South Carolina (Spartanburg, Greenville, Florence), Georgia (Augusta, Macon, Columbus), Tennessee (Knoxville, Chattanooga, Bristol City, Johnson City), and as far away as Mobile, Alabama. Near each essay were several pages of advertisers in those cities who anticipated the clerks' rail travel to their region of the South.

Most information on summers at the Clerks' Home comes from the Clerks' advertising materials. An undated brochure on "The Clerks Mountain Home" announced its summer season: "Mountain Home, owned and operated by the Southern Railway System Board of Adjustment, Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, will open the season on June 1st to October 1st, under the management of Mrs. Nell Holmes Gross, who has been in charge of the Home for the past six seasons...." Visitors entered the property beneath an arch spanning the entrance road at the highway.<sup>22</sup> "Driving the short distance east of town on State Highway 191 [today's U.S. 176] and passing through the tall stone pillars which hold aloft the name of the estate and the friendly greeting 'Visitors Welcome,' one comes to the 'Home' itself."<sup>23</sup> Another undated brochure gave more information:

The building is situated near the center of an 18-acre tract of land which is approximately 2600 feet above sea level which gives you a wonderful view of the nearby mountain peaks and valleys. This is one of the most beautiful sections of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

<sup>21</sup> Interview, Charlene Pace. Caretaker at the time was Walt Johnson.

<sup>22</sup> Deed book 62/148.

<sup>23</sup> *Saluda Magazine*, Spring 1937, p. 12.

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It is possible for our people to enjoy a Millionaire Vacation, on a Clerk's income, in a section of our county which has been noted for years as a summer vacation center, at the following rates: (including 3 good home cooked meals per day) RATES: Members of Brotherhood and other Railroad unions \$2.25 per Day--\$15.00 Per Week. Children between 2 and 8 years of age, one-half the Adult Rate.<sup>24</sup>

A description in a Saluda souvenir booklet highlights the attributes thought to be most appealing to a potential guest:

Our mountain home, one and one-half miles from Saluda station, is situated at an elevation of 2,500 feet in one of the most picturesque sections of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It contains a well equipped dining room, shower and tub baths, a spacious and well furnished lobby, providing an ideal place for lounging and rest, and with its hardwood floor, making it also an excellent ball room. The entire building is flanked by a large and commodious porch which together with the house and grounds, is lighted by electricity.... We have our own water system, which supplies water in abundance, and of a quality unsurpassed, from mountain springs which abound in this region. An electric engine and pump, in connection with a large storage tank, insures an ample supply of pure water and fire protection."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Railway Clerks' brochure.

<sup>25</sup> Souvenir booklet, p. 15, and Clerks' brochure.

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**Architectural Context**

The Clerks' Mountain Home today retains to a remarkable extent the character of the mountain hotel described in the early brochures. It is a handsome building reminiscent of Saluda's earlier boarding houses, with its deep porch, large living area adaptable to many uses, and upstairs bedrooms. Its shape was determined in part by the need for numerous bedrooms opening onto a common hall. Stylistically, the Clerks' Home is somewhat of a late mountain vernacular, perhaps best described as a combination of Colonial Revival form and Craftsman influence. This form was not unusual in this area of North Carolina, and may have been typical of guest houses in Saluda in the early decades of the twentieth century.

However, of the numerous boarding houses built in Saluda in the 1910s and 1920s, only the Clerk's Home remains. The only other hosteries in Saluda today are the Ivy Terrace, The Oaks, The Saluda Inn (formerly the Charlton-Leland House), and the Woods House. Three of these have histories as inns; however, none is similar to the Clerks' Home. Ivy Terrace was built in 1890 as a private residence and served as a boarding house from the early 1930s to the late 1940s. It reopened in 1993 as a bed-and-breakfast inn, but today it operates part of the year as a business/conference center. The Oaks is a large, turreted 1894 Victorian house that operated as a boarding house from 1905 until the 1940s. In recent years it reopened as a Victorian bed-and-breakfast inn. The former Charlton-Leland House (Saluda Inn) was built as an inn in 1914. It is a tall, multi-gabled, somewhat run-down building that no longer serves as an inn; instead, groups are able to rent the large thirty-eight-room building, unstaffed. The Woods House is a family residence converted to a bed-and-breakfast inn. It has been altered significantly through the addition of vinyl siding, surrounds, shutters, porch ceiling, and soffits; the porch floor has been disc-sanded and varnished.<sup>26</sup>

The Clerks' Home is distinctive because of its rural siting and acreage, whereas other inns were located within the town itself, and because it was designed to serve a membership organization while other lodging served the general public. In short, the 1926 Railway Clerks' Mountain Home is the only remaining example of the early twentieth-century inns and boarding houses once operating in Saluda. The Craftsman-influenced Clerks' Home is a prominent piece of the area's historic architectural fabric.

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<sup>26</sup> Osborne and Pace, pp. 21-25; tourist publications, interview with Robert Thompson.

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## THE DECLINE OF SALUDA AND CLOSING OF THE CLERKS' MOUNTAIN HOME

The success of the automobile and the state's "Good Roads" movement in the 1920s affected Saluda as much as the railroad had in the 1880s, but in a different way. Although the paved "all-weather road" that reached Saluda in 1928 made Saluda more accessible, it also enabled visitors to travel farther for their summer stays. The completion of the road in 1928 combined with the start of the Depression in 1929 crippled the town for decades. Many of the larger inns and boarding houses closed for lack of patrons, and several others burned under questionable circumstances. The local towel mill closed putting many out of work, and people turned to the land for subsistence farming to endure these years.<sup>27</sup> A measure of prosperity slowly returned in the 1930s: summer visitors reappeared, the *Saluda Magazine* was published, and WPA projects helped the town recover. However, those boarding houses that had remained in operation during the Depression later closed with the collapse of the tourist industry brought on by World War II.<sup>28</sup> After the war, many young families moved from Saluda.

By about 1950, the helper engine that pushed trains up the grade had become obsolete due to the introduction of diesel trains, and was removed. In the same years the section crew of the Southern Railway System, stationed in Saluda to test brakes, was dissolved.<sup>29</sup> Railway passenger traffic dwindled, and the last passenger train to Saluda ran on Christmas Day, 1968.<sup>30</sup>

By the 1950s the Clerks' Mountain Home was the only survivor of Saluda's many former hotels and boarding houses.<sup>31</sup> According to local residents, use of the Clerks' Home declined steadily during the 1950s, and in March 1962, the property was sold with the selling parties recorded as: "Southern Railway System Board of Adjustment, Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees, an unincorporated association, and Board of Directors, Mountain Home, Southern Railway

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<sup>27</sup> Polk County Historical Association, p. 3; Swaim, Osborne & Pace.

<sup>28</sup> Osborne & Pace, pp. 14, 24-25.

<sup>29</sup> Osborne & Pace, p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> Osborne Supplement, p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> Osborne & Pace.

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System Board of Adjustment, Brotherhood of Railway Clerks." These two parties sold the property with "...the following personal property: All fixtures, apparatus, machinery, furniture, furnishings, linens, tableware and other equipment contained in the premises and used in the general operation thereof...." A series of owners then operated the property variously as the Railroad House, the Wayside Inn, and the White Stag Inn. In 1981 the property was renamed The Orchard Inn by Kenneth and Ann Hough who made interior changes to update the inn and restaurant. Robert and Katherine Thompson are the current owners and innkeepers of The Orchard Inn, which is now open year-round. Saluda itself had a resurgence in the 1980s and today is again a popular summer vacation spot with a busy downtown of shops and restaurants.

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*Saluda Magazine*, Vol I, No. 1 (1936), "Saluda, the Gem of the Blue Ridge;" Vol. II, No. 1 (Spring 1937), "Mountain Home, Built for Your Comfort and Enjoyment," "Who Cares?" and "Sharing Saluda;" Vol. III, No. 1 (Summer 1938), "A Few Facts About Saluda."

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*The State Magazine*, Vol. VII, No. 42 (March 16, 1940), "Tryon and Saluda."

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*Polk County News*, early newspaper.

Osborne, Ann Riggs. "Saluda is my hometown." Article in unnamed, undated newspaper. Collection of Orchard Inn.

"Saluda Makes the Grade." *Southern Living*, 1995. Collection of Orchard Inn.

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Several railway-related organizations and associations were contacted and about 75% responded, but with little helpful information.

**Interviews (conducted fall 1999 by Langdon Oppermann)**

Greg A. Hodges, son of former Railway Clerk (Internet interview).

J.W. Lawrence, local historian, *News Leader* newspaper, Landrum, S.C.

G. Robert "Bobby" Little, Spartanburg; son of Dr. G.R. Little and Nell Brown Little who owned land later sold to Railway Clerks.

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Herman Nodine, former minister of Saluda Presbyterian Church and author, "Sights and Sounds in Saluda."

Charlene Pace, Saluda resident since 1945, local historian and co-author of Saluda history.

Bill Ryan, Saluda.

Kathy and Bob Thompson, current owners & innkeepers, Orchard Inn.

Seth Vining, Jr., formerly with *Tryon Daily Bulletin* newspaper, Tryon.

Charles Ward, Thompson's Store; as a boy spent a winter with his family at the Clerk's Mountain Home.

Lola Ward, 95-year old Saludan.

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries of the nominated area contain **Parcel B-1 on Map S-4**, Polk County Tax Collections Office. The boundaries are shown by the heavy black line on the accompanying tax map at a scale of 1" = 100'.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property represents the land historically associated with the Mountain Home of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks and that remains a part of the property today and provides a historically appropriate setting for the Clerks' Mountain Home. Acreage to the east formerly owned by the Brotherhood was sold in the 1980s; a single family residence was built and the land remains mostly wooded.

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**PHOTOGRAPHS:**

The following information for #1-5 applies to all nomination photographs. Photo locations are indicated on the sketch map accompanying this nomination.

1. (former) Railway Clerks' Mountain Home
2. Polk County, North Carolina
3. Langdon E. Oppermann
4. August 1999
5. State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina
- 6-7
  - A. House and entrance drive, setting. Photographer facing E.
  - B. Front (west) elevation. Photographer facing E.
  - C. Rear (east) elevation. Photographer facing S.
  - D. Porch detail. Photographer facing S.
  - E. First-floor stair. Photographer facing W.
  - F. Enclosed rear porch/current dining area. Photographer facing S.
  - G. Second-floor hall. Photographer facing S.
  - H. Three cottages. Photographer facing NE.
  - I. View of mountains from back porch. Photographer facing E.
  - J. Modern Owner's cottage. Photographer facing NW.

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Site Plan/No Scale



US 176

Driveway

Modern Cottage

J

Boxwood Cottage

H

Twin Poplars Cottage

Paulownia Cottage

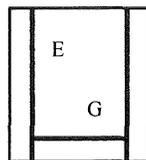
D

F

A

C

B



Clerks' Mountain Home

Key

■ Noncontributing resource

Letters are keyed to photos

374.9  
NORMAL

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Railway Clerks' Mountain Home  
Saluda vicinity, Polk Co., NC  
Saluda Quad, Zone 17  
A. N 3899656 E 378580  
B. N 3898960 E 378610  
C. N 3899100 E 378030

PL 37 1926  
Frontiers  
Lodge  
Chert

82° 22' 30"  
35° 15'

376000m E

1 000 000 FEET (N. C.)

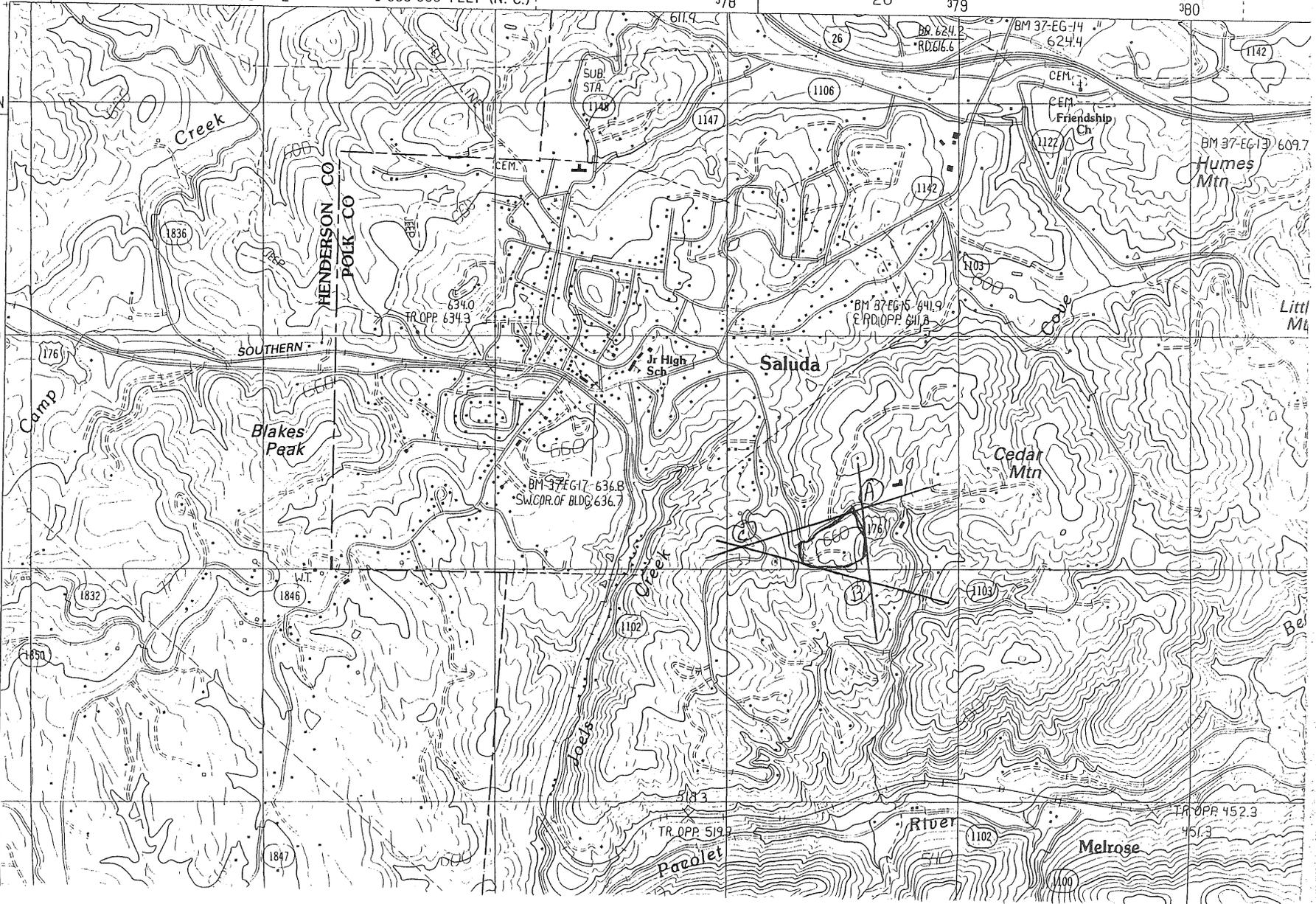
378

20'

379

380

391000m N  
560 000 FEET  
(N. C.)



**(former) RAILWAY CLERKS' MOUNTAIN HOME**

**(current name ORCHARD INN)**

S side US 176, 0.6 mi. SE of jct. with Ozone Road  
Saluda vicinity, Polk County, NC

Polk County Tax Map S-4

Parcel B-1

Scale: 1" = 100'

Prepared for National Register of Historic Places  
L.E. Oppermann 1999

- A Clerks' Home
- B Paulonia Cottage
- C Boxwood Cottage
- D Twin Poplars Cottage
- E Owners' house (1988 NC)

