

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

NAME

HISTORIC

Kerr Mill

AND/OR COMMON

Same

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Sloan Road, on south side of S.R. 1768, at junction of S.R. 1770

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Millbridge

VICINITY OF

8th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

North Carolina

37

Rowan

159

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. James A. Sloan

STREET & NUMBER

Route 1, Box 20

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Mt. Ulla

VICINITY OF

North Carolina

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Rowan County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Salisbury

North Carolina

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Kerr Mill, a substantial brick structure, is pleasantly situated in a wide creek bottom surrounded by rolling hills in a rich farming area of Rowan County. The two-story structure, three bays wide and two deep, rests on a stone foundation which is hardly visible on the front but is exposed to form a full basement on the rear or creek side of the building. The brick, well finished with closers, is laid in four-to-one bond. Facades terminate in well-executed molded brick cornices. The three-bay main facade has a central entrance consisting of a heavy board-and-batten Dutch door, surmounted by a three-light transom. A simple molded door frame is neatly set into the thick brick wall. The door is surmounted by a handsome gauged brick flat arch and there is a well worn stone door sill. Flanking the door are windows with six-over-nine sash, also set into simply molded frames, with stone sills and similar brick flat arches. This window treatment recurs throughout the first floor. The window to the right of the door has batten shutters consisting of two vertical boards in each leaf joined by a horizontal board near the top and bottom; the shutters are held in place by strap hinges hung on pintles.

Directly above the central entrance is a large batten door with stone sill below and flat arch above. Since there is no evidence of a porch, this door was probably used for loading and unloading. The second-floor windows, which repeat the stone sills and molded frames of the first level, have six-over-six sash and flat arches one brick high.

Both of the two-bay gable ends have two large openings in the gables. The south end has two windows with six-over-six sash, and the north end has one window to the rear and a batten door for loading to the front. On the first floor of the south end is a door; otherwise the fenestration is like the front. The rear fenestration is similar to the front but lacks doors, except for the basement level. There is an interior end chimney in the north gable, but the stack is broken to the roofline.

The interior appears originally to have had one large room at each level, although some partition walls have been added. The heavy timber framing is sawn and chamfered with lamb's tongues. The interior walls are exposed brick and over each door and window are wooden lintels with supportive blind arches above. The only heat in the building was provided by one unadorned fire opening in the north wall of the first floor. The mill is not in working order now but all floors and the basement are filled with milling equipment. The equipment on the second floor and attic appears to be predominantly twentieth century while the material stored in the basement may be earlier. The floors have various shaped holes, reflecting where belts, shafts and wooden pipes have passed through during different stages in the operation. In the twentieth century, the mill was steam-powered; this equipment has been dismantled. No remnants of its water power source remain in place, though there was once a large mill pond (now a field).

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kerr Mill in Rowan County is an unusually handsome and substantial brick grist mill, one of the few brick antebellum grist mills in the state. Evidently constructed for Joseph Kerr in the early 1820s, it was run by his son, Dr. Samuel Kerr, during much of the nineteenth century, producing 360 barrels of flour and 3,000 bushels of corn meal in 1850 and 1,500 barrels of flour in 1860. The mill, which was operated until the 1940s, is to be rehabilitated as a local preservation project.

Located on Kerr Creek near the community of Millbridge in Rowan County, the grist mill that bears the name of Doctor Samuel Kerr was in existence in 1824. In that year reference to "Kerr's Mill" on "kerr Creek" appears in county road overseer orders. Local tradition also claims that Samuel Kerr built the mill in the 1820s, but since Samuel Kerr was not listed as owning taxable property before 1830, it is more likely that his father, Joseph Kerr, built the mill probably sometime between 1820 and 1824.

Kerr Creek on which the Kerr Mill is located was known in the 1790s as "Cathey's Mill Creek" or "Cathey's Creek" named for James Cathey, head of a large landholding family in Rowan County at that time. Joseph Kerr received land on Cathey's Creek in three different deeds, the first in 1791 and the second two on February 3, 1796. Because the land granted in these deeds was divided according to landmarks that are now obscure, it is not absolutely certain which document referred to the mill site. In all probability, however, the mill location was included in a deed of February 3, 1796, granted to Joseph Kerr by his brother Samuel Kerr (Dr. Kerr's uncle). Although this land transaction does not specify the number of acres awarded to Joseph Kerr, it does list the tract of land as being "next to James Cathey" whose land bordered on the site of Kerr's Mill.¹

Joseph Kerr died in 1829, and in his will probated in that year he divided his property in Rowan County among his sons, Richard and Samuel, and his daughter Mary. His estate in that county consisted of "1,500 acres of land valued at \$7,000, two town lots in Salisbury, mills, and twenty slaves." Samuel's share of the land evidently included the mill property on Cathey's Creek. Two other sons, Andrew and John, as well as a daughter, Elizabeth Wilson, received land in Tennessee near the Mississippi River.

Samuel Kerr was born in Rowan County in 1799. He was the son of Joseph Kerr and the former Mary Allison who were married on October 31, 1785. In 1822 Kerr received an A.B. degree from the University of North Carolina, but alumni records for the school show no further medical education. Upon graduation he returned to Millbridge to live with his parents. After his father's death he and his mother lived in a house built by his father near the site of the Kerr Mill. His mother died in 1839. Unmarried, Dr. Kerr practiced medicine, farmed, and served in the state senate, 1846-1847. He continued to run the mill on Kerr Creek until his death in 1865.

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The Rowan County physician was a wealthy man. In addition to Samuel Kerr's vast landholdings in Mississippi and Tennessee as well as North Carolina, he owned fifty-one slaves in 1860. In that year the value of his real estate was placed at \$228,200 and his personal estate at \$171,820. He also possessed considerable stock in the North Carolina Railroad Company. The 1850 census indicates that after the death of his mother, he lived alone with the exception of Dr. Francis N. Luckey, with whom he shared his medical practice for a short time, and an overseer named Stanhope J. Brown. By 1860 Dr. Kerr had given up the practice of medicine and had turned solely to farming, investment, and the mill as sources of income.

Kerr's Mill, one of twenty-two grist mills in Rowan County in 1860, made a nice profit for its owner. The 1850 census reveals that the facility annually produced 360 barrels of flour worth \$1,440 and 3,000 bushels of corn meal valued at \$1,220. Up to that time the capital investment in the mill was \$5,000, and one miller was employed there at \$10 per month. In 1860 the mill was used only for the production of flour, and it produced 1,500 barrels of the staple worth \$9,750. An additional man was also hired to work in the mill at a salary of \$10 per month.

In his will of 1865 Samuel Kerr left all of his property in Rowan County, including his household furnishings and mill property, to his niece Catherine C. Barnes. "Kate" Barnes, as she was known to her family, was the daughter of Elizabeth Kerr (Samuel's sister) who had married James Wilson of Georgia in 1823. Kate had married George T. Barnes in Rowan County in October, 1864.

In 1872 George and Catherine Barnes sold "593 acres on Cathey's Creek" that evidently included the Kerr Mill to James McCubbins. McCubbins operated the mill until August 1893 when he sold a half interest in the "McCubbins' Mill" and "six acres more or less" to his mill operator, John Page, and also deeded a half interest in the same property to J. N. Harrison. The deed to Harrison was made "in compliance with a bond for title given said McCubbins and wife to said Harrison and dated March 21st, 1881." In October, 1895, Harrison also sold his share of the mill and surrounding six acres to John Page.

Sometime between 1895 and 1908 the mill property was transferred to P. O. Tatum of Rowan County. John Page died intestate in 1911, and neither the county deed books, final settlements, or special proceedings make any reference to the sale of the mill property to Tatum.

In June, 1908, P. O. Tatum sold the "Harrison-McCubbins" mill site to James W. Sloan who in September, 1927, sold the property to his nephew, James A. Sloan, for "one dollar and other consideration." James A. Sloan continued to operate the mill until the 1940s. Since that time he has used the building for office and storage space for his scale business. In 1973 Mr. Sloan agreed to donate the mill to the county of Rowan through the Rowan Historic Properties Commission, providing that the commission raise adequate funds for preservation. The people of the county are now making plans to restore the mill. The preservation of the mill is also a Bicentennial project.

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- 1 Rowan County Deed Book 14:302.
- 2 Rowan County Deed Book 79:36, 57

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Battle, Kemp P. History of the University of North Carolina From its Beginning to the Death of President Swain, 1789-1868. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1907.
- Brawley, James S. Old Rowan: Views and Sketches. Salisbury: Rowan Printing Company, n. d.
- Brawley, James S. Rowan County: A Brief History. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1974.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 6 acres
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 7	5, 3, 1, 8, 5, 0	3, 9, 4, 4, 7, 2, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Research by Joe Mobley, survey specialist; architectural description by Charles Greer Suttlemyre, Jr., survey specialist

ORGANIZATION Division of Archives and History DATE 5 April 1976

STREET & NUMBER 109 East Jones Street TELEPHONE 919/829-4763

CITY OR TOWN Raleigh STATE North Carolina

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Larry E. Dm

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 5 April 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

AGENT

SUBJECT OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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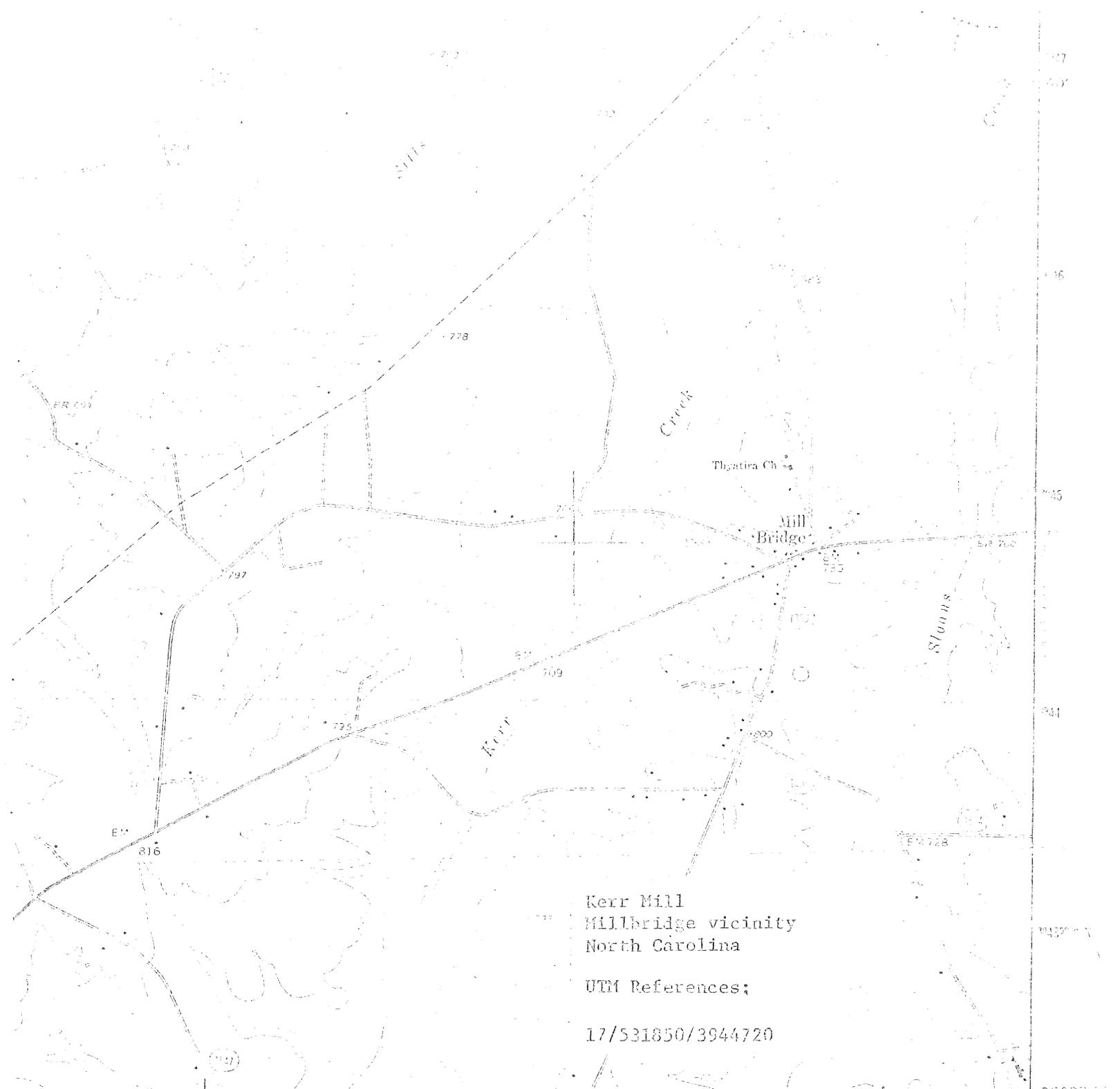
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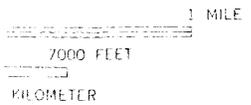
- Brawley, James S. The Rowan Story: A Narrative History of Rowan County, North Carolina. Salisbury: Rowan Printing Company, 1953.
- Cheney, John L., Jr., ed. North Carolina Government, 1585-1974: A Narrative and Statistical History. Raleigh: North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, 1975.
- Grant, David Lindsey, ed. Alumni History of the University of North Carolina. Durham: Christian and King Printing Company, 1924.
- McCubbins Collection. North Carolina State Library, Raleigh.
- Rowan County Records, Rowan County Courthouse, Salisbury, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Tax Lists, Marriage Bonds, Miscellaneous Papers).
- Rowan County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Tax Lists, Marriage Bonds, Miscellaneous Papers).
- Salisbury Evening Post, 1973.
- U. S. Census Office, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Rowan County, North Carolina. Population Schedule; Schedule 5, Industry.
- U. S. Census Office, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Rowan County, North Carolina. Population Schedule; Schedule 2, Slave inhabitants; Schedule 5, Industry.
- Works Progress Administration, Cemetery Index. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.



Kerr Mill
 Millbridge vicinity
 North Carolina

UTM References;

17/531850/3944720



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Light duty road, hard or improved surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Unimproved road
- Interstate Route
- U. S. Route
- State Route

CLEVELAND, N. C.
 N3537.5 — W8037.5/7.5

