

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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional 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 Ryder Hall
other names/site number Mountain Manor Hotel; St. Cloud Hotel

2. Location

street & number 305 Seminary Street not for publication N/A
city or town Saluda vicinity N/A
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 of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination/____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ____ nationally ____ statewide X locally. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Crow SHPO 7/27/05
Signature of certifying official

Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or 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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

____ 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): _____

Ryder Hall
Name of Property

Polk County, North Carolina
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	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	1	objects
1	2	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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/education-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
roof Asphalt; Metal/aluminum
walls Wood/weatherboard
Wood/shingle
other Wood

Narrative Description

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

Ryder Hall
Name of Property

Polk County, North Carolina
County and State

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 a 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

Period of Significance

1909-1922

Significant Dates

1909

1922

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Thompson, William Luther - builder

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:

Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, NC

Saluda Public Library, Saluda, NC

Ryder Hall
Name of Property

Polk County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.21 ac

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 17 377780 3899970
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____
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 Clay Griffith
organization Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. date May 6, 2005
street & number 825-C Merrimon Ave., #345 telephone (828) 281-3852
city or town Asheville state NC zip code 28804

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. and Mrs. Charlie W. Brown Jr.
street & number PO Box 473 telephone (828) 749-9385
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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Ryder Hall, Polk County, NC

Section 7. Narrative Description

(N.B. For the sake of clarity in the written description the building, which faces north-northeast, will be described with its front façade as the north elevation and its transverse corridors running east/west.)

Ryder Hall, a former girls' dormitory, stands northeast of the small business district of Saluda, at the far western edge of Polk County. The small mountain town owes its existence to the Asheville & Spartanburg Railroad, which was completed from Spartanburg, South Carolina, to Hendersonville and Asheville, North Carolina in 1879 and 1886, respectively. Located at the crest of the Saluda Grade, the steepest mainline standard gauge railroad grade in the United States, the town emerged as stopping point for trains either having completed the climb to the summit with the assistance of helper engines or preparing their descent into Tryon to the southeast. The railroad spurred late nineteenth and early twentieth-century development of the town into a summer resort with numerous hotels, boarding houses, and a compact row of one- and two-story commercial buildings that make up the Saluda Main Street Historic District (NR, 1996). The town spread over seven hills surrounding the railroad tracks, with native Saludians generally building the houses east of the railroad and summer visitors typically building seasonal houses to the west.¹

Ryder Hall is situated on a rise within a wooded lot that overlooks Seminary Street, which makes a sweeping curve as it passes the Saluda Elementary School to the west of the property, and slopes severely downward from the house to the rear of the property. At the northeast corner of the property, two square brick posts with concrete caps mark the driveway entrance to Ryder Hall. A short section of wooden picket fence extends from the brick posts to a double-leaf wooden gate with scrolled top. The gate and fence, a non-contributing structure, were added in the mid-twentieth century after the property was no longer used as a dormitory.

Shaded by several mature hardwood trees, the gravel driveway is bordered by a low fieldstone retaining wall and curves to a small, gravel parking area in front of the building. A grass lawn surrounding the parking area extends to an ivy-covered berm that slopes down to Seminary Street across the north edge of the property. A second driveway enters the property from the northwest corner and empties into a broad, open parking area with a metal carport canopy on pipe columns. The carport, a non-contributing structure erected in the late-twentieth century, stands at the western edge of the parking area and away from the building. The parking area is bordered by a stone retaining wall at the west end of the building with stone steps leading up to a walkway approaching the front entrance. At the rear of the house, a concrete patio closely ringed by large

¹ Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 191-92. D. William Bennett, ed., *Polk County, North Carolina History* (Tryon, NC: Polk County Historical Association, Inc., 1983), 67-68.

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Ryder Hall, Polk County, NC

boxwoods has been added below the rear porch and partially covers a rock outcropping that marks the point where the property begins to fall away. Low foundation planting surround the other sides of the building.

Built as a girls' dormitory for Saluda Seminary in 1909, Ryder Hall is an imposing two and one-half story Colonial Revival style frame building covered with weatherboards and built on a brick foundation. The main block of the building is topped by a gambrel roof extending east to west with gambrel-roof pavilions projecting to the front and rear at either end, giving the building its exaggerated H-plan. The central section features shed-roof dormers with paired windows flanking a center dormer with four windows on the front and rear of the building. Each flank of the roof of the end pavilions contains a shed-roof dormer with a single window on the side elevations. These dormers flank the main gambrel roof form. The roofline is slightly bellcast and flares outward above the eaves. The gable or upper portion of each is covered with wood shingles and projects under the eave with supporting curved purlin brackets below. Exposed rafters at the eaves and dormers display carved ends. Windows throughout the house are two-over-two, double-hung wood sash. The end gambrels contain a three-part louvered vent in the upper portion and paired windows flanking a single window in the center.

On both the front and rear elevations of the building, a one-story shed roof porch extends across the façade between the two end pavilions and projects slightly beyond. The orientation of the building has changed since its construction such that the original front of the building, facing south, now serves as the rear. The front porch (in its present orientation) is supported on square posts with decorative brackets. An entrance vestibule projects beneath the porch roof, and the single-leaf wood door with a large leaded-glass oval window is framed by a Classical surround with sidelights and a broken pediment. The rear porch, now screened, is supported by plain square posts with double-leaf four-light-over-single-panel doors flanked by two-over-two sash windows and topped by a four-pane transom. The porch rail on the front and rear displays a simple "X" pattern between vertical balusters. Each end elevation contains a one-story, shed-roof side entry porch sheltering a single-leaf two-light-over-single-panel door with a transom and sidelights. The side porches, which are supported on tall brick piers, are approached by a straight run of wood stairs with simple rails of plain balusters. Fenestration of the front and rear of the central block and of the side walls mimics that of the dormers and gambrel ends directly above. On the front and rear walls of the pavilions it consists of two bays of simple windows, with the exception of one smaller, double window in the upper side of the northeast pavilion.

Upon entering Ryder Hall, the entrance vestibule opens directly into a large central living area that extends the full depth of the house. This space originally served as the dining room for the girls' dormitory and now functions as a large living and dining room. Two rows of wood posts with ornately carved brackets support large wood beams topped with elaborate molding in egg and dart, cable, and bead and reel. The room retains its original wood floors, beaded board wainscot, tall baseboards, and carved chair rail and crown molding.

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Four-panel doors and windows are framed with plain wood surrounds. Double-leaf doors at the west end of the room open into a stair hall and suite of rooms containing a bedroom, bathroom, sitting room, and closet that possibly served as a dorm mother's apartment. (These rooms were not available for inspection.) A bar and bathroom accessed from the main room are located at the northwest corner of the building. A projecting bay with single-leaf door at the east end of the room opens into a stair to the second floor. At the northeast corner, a separate door with transom enters the large butler's pantry with substantial built-in three-part china cabinet. The top section contains glazed doors and display shelves above a base with paneled wood doors. A laundry room remodeled in the late twentieth century lies beyond the pantry and is entered from a compact service hall that is accessed from the east side porch. The kitchen stands at the southeast corner of the house with access from the main living room, service hall, and rear porch. The kitchen has been thoroughly remodeled over the years when the building was used as an inn between the late 1920s and the 1980s. A later owner installed a commercial kitchen when the inn's restaurant was open to the public. The kitchen, however, retains some original features including its wood floor, doors, trim, and moldings.

The second floor corridor stretches the full width of the building from east to west with stairs from the first floor located at either end. The wide corridor retains its original character and finish, including the plain stair rails and balusters with square newel posts, tall baseboards, chair rail molding, four-panel doors with operable transoms, and double staircase to the third floor, with two sets of stairs rising in opposite direction from the center of the hall. Rooms located off of the hallway include five bedrooms, five bathrooms, kitchen, laundry room, and sitting room. The interior arrangement of these rooms has likely changed to some degree over time during the building's use as an inn and boarding house from 1928 through the late twentieth century, but most rooms retain their original wood floors, moldings, and window and door trim. The sitting room occupies the southeast corner bedroom. There were likely two bathrooms at the time of construction, which connect to the hallway—one on the north side and one on the south side. The laundry room likely occupies one of the original bathrooms and the kitchen was created from a bedroom during the period the house functioned as a boarding house in the mid-twentieth century. The remaining bathrooms are located within bedrooms and appear to be added later while the building was in use as an inn and boarding house.

The third floor corridor and rooms are finished similarly to the second floor with original plain stair rails and balusters, square newel posts, tall baseboards, chair rail molding, and four-panel doors with operable transoms. Five bedrooms, two large bathrooms, and a small office (occupying a bedroom) are located off the hallway. At the west end of the corridor, double-leaf doors open into a large recreation room that originally served as the girls' study hall. Dances were also held in this room, which consists of a single open space with sloping walls at the front and rear formed by the roof slope and a wet bar that has been added. The room also retains its original wood floor, moldings, and window and door trim.

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Section 8. Statement of Significance

Summary

Built in 1909 as a girls' dormitory for the Saluda Seminary, Ryder Hall is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for its fully developed expression of the Colonial Revival style on both the interior and exterior of the imposing two and one-half story frame building. Built by local builder Luther Thompson, Ryder Hall survives as a good example of an early twentieth-century school building. Though somewhat altered in later years for use as an inn and boarding house (and finally as a single-family residence), the main features of the building remain intact, including the large dining hall, kitchen, and pantry; second- and third-floor corridors lined with bedrooms; and the third-floor study hall. Despite changes to the number and arrangement of bedrooms and bathrooms, Ryder Hall retains a high degree of integrity. As the last remaining structure built for the Saluda Seminary, Ryder Hall is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its association with the development of education in Polk County. Emily C. Prudden founded Saluda Seminary in 1891, with financial backing from the American Missionary Association. Beginning in 1882, at the age of fifty, Miss Prudden established fifteen schools in western North Carolina for disadvantaged students including seven schools for African Americans. Saluda Seminary offered one of the earliest education opportunities in the Saluda area, operating until 1922, when the Polk County school system assumed control and operation of the school as a public facility. Few structures at any of the original fifteen schools remain, and Ryder Hall is one of the most intact surviving examples. The period of significance for Ryder Hall extends from the construction of the building in 1909 until the closing of Saluda Seminary in 1922.

Historical Background and Education Context

The town of Saluda, at the far western edge of Polk County, which borders South Carolina to the south, developed as an important railroad stop and summer resort community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Originally settled in the early nineteenth century by a few families, the town began as a rural crossroads community—then known as Pace's Gap—with a few scattered homesteads and a drover's inn run by the Pace family. Located on the Howard's Gap wagon road between Asheville and Spartanburg, South Carolina, the inn offered a fenced yard to keep livestock overnight while the drovers slept. The small mountain town owes its existence, however, to the Asheville & Spartanburg Railroad, which was completed from Spartanburg, South Carolina, to Hendersonville and Asheville, North Carolina in 1879 and 1886, respectively. Located at the crest of the Saluda Grade, at 4.7 degrees the steepest mainline standard gauge railroad grade in the United States, the town emerged as stopping point for trains either having completed the

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climb to the summit with the assistance of helper engines or setting their brakes prior to descending into Tryon, an established winter colony to the southeast at the base of the grade.²

The railroad spurred late nineteenth and early twentieth-century development of the town into a summer resort with numerous hotels, boarding houses, and a compact row of one- and two-story commercial buildings that make up the Saluda Main Street Historic District (NR, 1996). Beginning in 1877, Andrew Tanner, a contractor helping to build the railroad, bought property alongside the proposed line at the top of the grade. Tanner built a commissary and boarding house for railroad workers known as Mountain House, which also housed the first post office in the community. The first train chugged to the top of the grade on July 4, 1878. During the following year, while the line was constructed to Flat Rock and Hendersonville, visitors from Columbia, Charleston, and New Orleans began to develop a summer resort around the community. Formally chartered in 1881 and renamed Saluda, the town spread over seven hills surrounding the railroad tracks, with native Saludians generally building the houses east of the railroad and summer visitors typically building seasonal houses to the west.³

The history of public schools and education in Polk County follows patterns typical to many western North Carolina counties. During the nineteenth century the first schools were private subscription schools taught by educated individuals in private homes or small log schoolhouses for short three- or four-month terms. Early public schools, established beginning in the 1830s through the State Literary Fund, usually met in one-room log structures. These one-teacher schools were supplemented in the later nineteenth century by church-sponsored mission or field schools, which often added a secondary education curriculum. Toward the turn of the century, the county board of education offered more organized administration of the many disparate schools. As in many other mountain counties, the lack of improved roads greatly influenced the development and location of Polk County schools.

Prior to the founding of Saluda Seminary in 1891 as a boarding and day school, only a few other subscription schools existed in the county. These small, scattered schools were located at Friendship Church, Macedonia, and Mountain Page. Emily C. Prudden (1832-1917) came into this environment beginning in the 1880s and quickly recognized the need for better education opportunities across the mountains of North and South Carolina. Born and raised on a Connecticut farm, Miss Prudden's father, Joseph Prudden, was a Congregationalist deacon with a zealous commitment to Christian service, a commitment he clearly passed on to his daughter. Though nearly deaf and slowed by arthritis, Miss Prudden began her work in earnest around her fiftieth birthday when, in 1882, she accepted a position as a housemother for forty girls at the

² Bennett, 67-68 and Bishir 1999, 191-92.

³ Ibid.

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Brainerd Institute in Chester, South Carolina. Two years later she purchased fifty acres at All Healing Springs near Crowder's Mountain in Gaston County, North Carolina, bordering South Carolina and contracted for a large school building. She felt that she "could build a home in some lovely place where every influence is pure and uplifting, and take fifteen girls and train them as [her] own, and send them out to useful lives." After three years Prudden turned over All Healing School to Judge Edwin Jones of Minneapolis, Minnesota, who ran the school as Jones Seminary until 1888, when it passed to the Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church.⁴

Following the successful opening of the All Healing School, Prudden began planning and building a second school in Blowing Rock, North Carolina, establishing her pattern for opening and operating a school for two or three years before turning it over to a church or church-related agency. The Skyland Institute in Blowing Rock opened in September 1887, and in 1890 it was deeded to the American Missionary Association, an outreach organization sponsored by the Congregationalist church. During the same period, Prudden established Lincoln Academy in Gaston County, near her All Healing School, for African American students. The American Missionary Association also assumed operation of Lincoln Academy and agreed to finance a new school, Saluda Seminary, which would be the largest of three schools directed by the association in western North Carolina.⁵

In 1891, Prudden was also at work organizing a school in the community of Altamont in Avery County. Two schools in Elk Park—one for white students and one for African Americans—were opened under Prudden's supervision. The county-supported public school for African Americans remained at Elk Park through integration in the 1960s. Prudden established a school near Lick Mountain, outside of Lenoir in called Caldwell County, called the Oberlin School. In 1900, Oberlin School was transferred to the Methodist Church, relocated to Stanly County, and eventually evolved into Pfeiffer University (NR, 1999). In 1901, Prudden built an African American school, Douglass Academy, on ten acres near Lawndale in Cleveland County. Two years later fourteen acres were donated for Clarkson, a boys' school for whites, and both properties were deeded to the American Missionary Association.⁶

⁴ Emily C. Prudden, "Emily C. Prudden: An Autobiographical Sketch," *The American Missionary* (March 1914). Also see *The Star*, Shelby, NC (January 8, 2002).

⁵ Prudden, and George C. Burrage, "Saluda Seminary in the Hills of North Carolina," *The American Missionary* (January 1910).

⁶ Oberlin Home and School Photograph Collection, Mary Fisher Floyd Archives and Special Collections, G. A. Pfeiffer Library, Pfeiffer University (<http://library.pfeiffer.edu/ohsphoto.html>).

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Miss Prudden continued to organize a number of other schools in North and South Carolina, the last being Mount Hermon Academy for African Americans in Brevard in Transylvania County. She returned to direct the Skyland Institute in Blowing Rock for a couple of years around 1911, and following her eightieth birthday, Prudden retired to Hickory, where she died in 1917. She is buried in Orange, Connecticut. Of the fifteen schools she founded in western North Carolina, eight were built for white students and seven for African Americans. Few buildings associated with the fifteen original schools remain, although it is not known for certain how many still survive.⁷

Work on the main building at Saluda Seminary began in June 1891 and was ready to open (though hardly finished) in October of that year. The school opened with approximately thirty-five boarding students and almost as many day students. Saluda Seminary was one of only two schools in Polk County to offer anything approaching a high school curriculum at the time, offering a ten-year course with a range of subjects beyond fundamental reading, writing, and arithmetic. There is no evidence of seminary courses or specific religious training being offered at Saluda Seminary despite its underlying Christian values and prevalent religious influence. The original building, a plain, two and one-half story, side-gable, frame structure with a two-tier portico, housed teachers and boarding students in addition to containing classrooms. Other smaller ancillary structures located on school grounds supported the school's operations including a nineteenth-century log house that according to oral tradition was one of two houses located within the town limits at the time Saluda was incorporated in 1881. Boarding students helped maintain the school buildings: girls performed all housework except for cooking and boys did all the janitorial work, maintained the grounds, and cut wood.⁸

Saluda Seminary prospered for nearly thirty years and earned a good reputation for its educational program and Christian values. The school was partially supported through donations of clothes and other household items from wealthy patrons that were then sold or bartered to poorer local families for produce, livestock, or other farm products. Early twentieth-century ledgers from the M. A. Pace General Merchandise Store on Main Street in Saluda show that the school occasionally bought food stuffs including fruit, eggs, potatoes, and onions for the kitchen. A few entries for the purchase of shoes also appear, though far less frequently than food. In 1906, tuition, room, and board were offered for six dollars and fifty cents to seven dollars per month, while day students were charged fifty cents to one dollar per month.⁹

⁷ Prudden.

⁸ Burrage.

⁹ Anne Osborne and Charlene Pace, *Saluda, N.C.: One Hundred Years, 1881-1981*, Vols. I & II (Saluda, NC: Holly Hill Publishers, 1981), 9, 39. Robert Pace. Saluda, NC. Interview with author, August 31, 2004. Mr. Pace is the current owner of M. A. Pace General Merchandise, which his family has owned and operated for over one hundred years.

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Around 1909, the town of Saluda donated land and contributed to the construction of a new girls' dormitory for the school, which previously operated in one large main building with classrooms for day students and a girls' boarding department. The building, Ryder Hall, was likely named for Rev. Charles Jackson Ryder (1848-1917), a Congregational minister and long-serving secretary of the American Missionary Association. The school, which had been open for almost twenty years, had grown considerably. The town presented the site and a considerable sum of money to the American Missionary Association for the building; the Association appropriated ten times as much and the dormitory was considered one of the finest buildings in its system. Ryder Hall accommodated forty girls and ten teachers, with rooms for all, large kitchen and dining facilities, and a study hall on the third floor. The third-floor study hall was also used for dances. The construction of Ryder Hall meant that the small dormitory in the original building could be used to board male students.¹⁰

Saluda Seminary closed in 1922, when the school was brought into the county system and operated as a public school. In 1927, a new public school building and gymnasium were erected on the site to west and south of the seminary's buildings, which were sold off to private owners. The new school, known as Saluda School, taught students from first grade through high school until 1974, when the high school grades were transferred to East Flat Rock in Henderson County. In 1940, a stone building with brick accents and a full-height portico replaced the buildings erected in the 1920s.¹¹

In 1928, Ryder Hall was converted into the St. Cloud Hotel under the direction of Alice Fulton, who had previously managed the Crystal Springs Hotel on Henderson Street. In the late 1930s and 1940s, the building was also operated as the Howard Hotel and as Mountain Manor, a boarding house. Joe and June Ashley purchased the property in the mid-1960s and reopened the building as an inn. The Mountain Manor Inn was sold again in the early 1970s to Royce and Ruth Waites, who continued to operate the inn and utilized the kitchen and dining room as a public restaurant for a period of time. The property was sold to the current owners, Charlie and Judy Brown, in 1992. The Browns have restored and renovated much of the building for use as a single-family residence, and returned the building to its original name, Ryder Hall.¹²

¹⁰ Burrage. Osborne and Pace, 9, 39.

¹¹ Osborne and Pace, 9; Bishir 1999, 193; and Polk County Schools website (<http://server.sec.polk.k12.nc.us>).

¹² Osborne and Pace, 21-25. Polk County Register of Deeds.

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Architecture Context

The Colonial Revival style represented a broad rebirth of interest in the early English and Dutch house of the Atlantic coast states. The 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia is generally cited as the first awakening of interest in the nation's colonial architectural heritage. The renowned architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White further popularized colonial architectural precedents through a widely publicized tour of New England to study original Georgian and Federal style buildings. The firm's work in the late nineteenth century began to influence Queen Anne and Shingle Style houses and contributed to the often eclectic nature of early Colonial Revival style buildings, which were rarely historically correct copies of colonial precedents. A renewed emphasis on symmetry and a prominent entrance, along with classicized embellishments around entrances, cornices, and windows, are hallmarks of the style. Beginning in the mid-1910s the style shifted toward more carefully studied designs with correct proportions and details influenced, in part, by new published sources of information including the *White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs* (1915-1928). These widely available publications contributed to a greater understanding of the original buildings, and from 1915 to 1935 Colonial Revival style house more closely reflected the early prototypes. From the mid-1930s through World War II changing fashions and economic conditions led to a simplification of the style before it lost favor. Across the country, Colonial Revival was the dominant style for domestic architecture in first half of the twentieth century.¹³

In North Carolina the Colonial Revival entered residential architecture at the turn of the twentieth century with classicized adornments grafted onto Queen Anne forms. As the Colonial Revival became accepted in the state, the style grew to represent the architecture of Anglo-Saxon heritage and encompassed not only seventeenth- and eighteenth-century precedents but also examples from the early nineteenth century. A "Southern Colonial" variant of the Colonial Revival style emerged with a central portico of colossal order and one-story porches extending out to sides as its principal feature. The symmetrical form returned to a central-passage, double-pile plan familiar in antebellum architecture of southern states. Although the Southern Colonial model frequently appeared in towns and rural areas across the Piedmont and coastal regions of North Carolina, it found less favor in the western mountain region where the associations with idealized antebellum society and values were not as strong.¹⁴

In western North Carolina—especially outside Asheville—the Colonial Revival style commonly appears as classicized embellishments applied to transitional Queen Anne or vernacular house forms. In the sparsely populated rural areas of Polk County examples of Colonial Revival buildings are less common than in the

¹³ Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 321-326.

¹⁴ Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 416-423.

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resort towns of Saluda and Tryon, which contain an eclectic mix of architectural styles. Development followed the completion of the railroad to Saluda in 1878, and accordingly many of the substantial residential buildings—summer homes and boarding houses—were executed in the Queen Anne style. Early examples of the Colonial Revival style often continued the commodious, rambling forms of the Queen Anne with classicized elaborations at the entrances, cornices, and windows. The 1906 Pine Crest Inn in Tryon, a two-story frame building and three detached cottages with simple Colonial Revival detail, displays the informality typical of the area. More formal variations of the style, exemplified by the symmetrical, red brick and white trim Georgian model, did not appear in these resort communities.

William Luther Thompson, a local builder from one of the early Saluda families, constructed Ryder Hall in 1909, greatly expanding Saluda Seminary's facilities. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Thompson developed a skill for constructing commodious, well-appointed houses for Saluda's wealthy tourists, which is demonstrated in the design and construction of the 1895 Capps House, a restrained rendition of the transitional Queen Anne-Colonial Revival style, and the Queen Anne style Goelet House (ca. 1890) and The Oaks (1908). Ryder Hall displayed Thompson's familiarity with the Colonial Revival movement, especially the free interpretation of stylistic elements seen in early examples of the style in New England.¹⁵

At Ryder Hall the symmetrical arrangement of the exterior elevations channels the typical formality of the Colonial Revival style, while the busy roofline, layered gable ends, and gently rounded purlin brackets prevent the exterior from feeling overly rigid. On the interior, the spacious dining hall dominates the layout and is enlivened by the exposed post and beam structure, carved moldings, beaded board wainscoting, and well-crafted woodwork throughout. The wide second and third floor corridors, with their intact staircases and repeating door frames and transoms, clearly convey the original multi-tenant residential use of the upper floors, whether as a dormitory or as an inn and boarding house. Although Ryder Hall has been altered as it has changed functions over the years, the overall form and character of the building remain intact, with most changes occurring within the private areas of the building. Changes over time to the number and arrangement of rooms—either adding bathrooms or enlarging bedrooms—does not dilute the integrity of the building. The current owners have carefully restored and renovated the building, keeping much of the original fabric, especially in the public spaces, and as a result Ryder Hall retains a high degree of integrity.

¹⁵ "Through Our Eyes: Images of Saluda's Historic Homes," (Report, Saluda School, Saluda, NC), 2001, n.p., and Bishir 1999, 192-94.

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Section 10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property for Ryder Hall is shown by a heavy line on the accompanying survey map, "Property Conveyance to Joe C. & June W. Ashley," prepared by H. B. Frankenfield, Jr., and dated December 28, 1965 (Polk County plat A-62, 237).

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the residual 2.21-acre parcel historically associated with Ryder Hall. Encompassing two lots that comprise the current tax parcel, the boundary follows the legal limits of the parcel conveyed to Charlie and Judy Brown, current owners, on February 20, 1992. Approximately one half acre of Lot 2 was sold to the Polk County Board of Education in 1966, reducing the parcel size to its present 2.21 acres.

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Photograph Index

All photographs of Ryder Hall at 305 Seminary Street in Saluda by Clay Griffith of Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., on August 31, 2004. Negatives are kept at the North Carolina Office of Archives and History Western Office in Asheville, North Carolina.

1. Oblique front view, looking west
2. Rear view, looking north
3. West end elevation, looking east
4. Interior – main living room, looking south
5. Interior – main living room, west end doorway
6. Interior – 2nd floor hallway, looking west
7. Interior – representative bedroom, 3rd floor, northeast corner

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

PL 43

1900 Country 2 dm

82° 22' 30"
35° 15' 40"

376 000m E

1 000 000 FEET (N. C.)

378

20'

379

380

390 1000m N

560 000 FEET
(N. C.)

RYDER HALL

SALUDA, POLK CO.

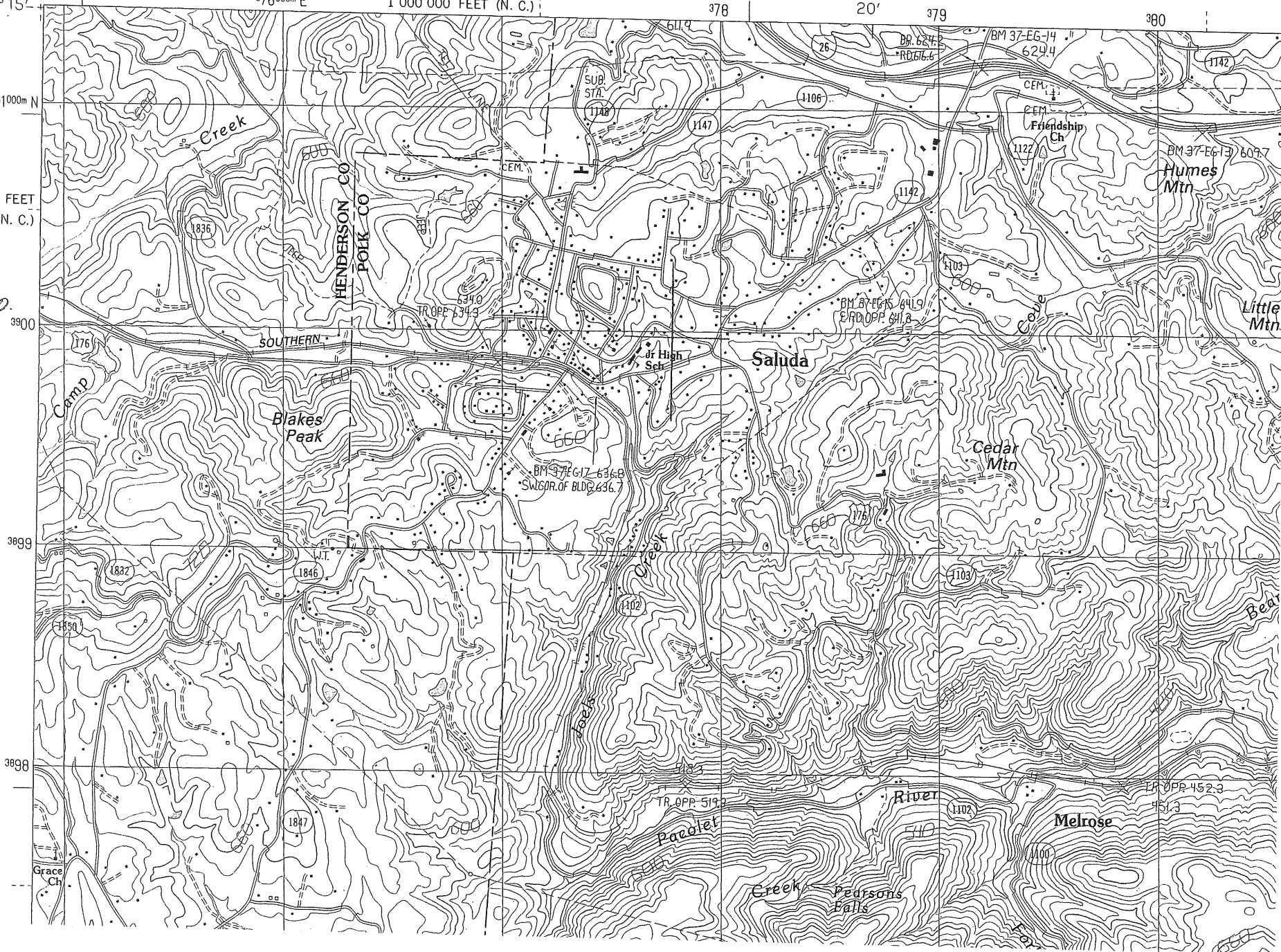
UTM's:

ZONE: 17

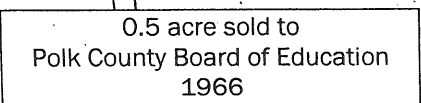
E 377780

N 3899970

Saluda Quad
VC



Survey prepared by H. B. Frankenfield, Jr.
(Polk County plat A-62, 237)



10

Boundary Map
Scale: 1" = 67' (approx.)

