

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11, 2020
3:00 PM**

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance:

Vice-Chairperson Phoebe Pollitt, Teresa Pearman, Bettie Bond, Chuck Watkins, Rennie Brantz and Loretta Clawson

Town Staff in Attendance: Christy Turner-Senior Planner and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

Others Present: Junaluska Heritage Association Members: Robert Jackson and Dr. Kristen Baldwin Deathridge

Call to Order

Vice-Chairperson Phoebe Pollitt called the meeting of the Boone Historic Preservation Commission, held in the Planning & Inspections upstairs conference room located at 680 West King Street, to order at 3:03 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Member Clawson to adopt the agenda as written.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt suggested tabling the approval of the January 7, 2020 and January 14, 2020 meeting minutes until the next Historic Preservation Commission meeting. She explained that Chairperson Plaag had noted at the last meeting that he had not been able to review the minutes. It was the consensus of the HPC to table said minutes to the next HPC meeting.

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to table the approval of the January 7, 2020 and January 14, 2020 meeting minutes until the next Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

Vote:

Aye - All

Nay - None

The motion passed.

Junaluska Marker Application

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt welcomed Junaluska Heritage Association Member, Ms. Roberta Jackson and Dr. Kristen Baldwin Deathridge, Associate Professor of Public History and Historic Preservation from Appalachian State University to the meeting. Dr. Deathridge noted that she has been working with Chairperson Plaag and Ms. Jackson for some time on the draft application. Vice-Chairperson Pollitt explained that Chairperson Plaag was out of town but he had emailed the Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Staff information regarding the agenda items for this meeting. Dr. Deathridge noted that Chairperson Plaag had copied her on the same emails, therefore, she was familiar with Chairperson Plaag's comments. JHA Member Jackson noted she had not received the said emails because her computer was not functioning properly.

Discussion ensued on the best way to review and comment on the draft Junaluska Marker Application. Vice-Chairperson Pollitt suggested reading the 17-page draft application and making proposed changes as they occur. Member Bond read aloud the draft application starting with E. Historical Sketch found on page two of the draft application, taking into consideration Chairperson Plaag's concerns noted in his email. The proposed changes are documented in the attached proposed revised draft application (permanently attached).

Discussion ensued on 1860 Census Records and Polly Grimes. Member Bond read Chairperson Plaag's suggestion to drop the domestic reference to Polly Grimes. Dr. Deathridge said that her interpretation of the 1860 census records based on conversations with people in the community is that it is listing Polly Grimes profession and not that she is a domestic in that household but that she is a domestic somewhere else. She further stated that the census records did not say which is the case. She agreed with Chairperson Plaag to remove the domestic reference to Polly Grimes from the draft application since it is not essential to the marker. Ms. Jackson agreed with this proposed change to the draft application.

Discussion ensued on proposing a change to the wording regarding Troy Council on page four of the draft application. Dr. Deathridge agreed with Chairperson Plaag that the rewording should be: "that he kept with four black housemates, presumably his wife and children."

Discussion ensued on the transfer of land on page four of the draft application. Dr. Deathridge noted that Dr. Sue Keefe said that she assumed there was a problem with the deed. Chairperson Plaag's email explains a possible misunderstanding of the quit claim deed. He recommended leaving the draft text as is and suggested adding J. Lenoir's name along with R. Horton and W.P. Jones names in footnote eight and to the body of draft application.

Discussion ensued on the term "Junaluska". Member Clawson suggested removing the word "early" from the draft application. The HPC and Ms. Jackson agreed with this proposed change.

Discussion ensued on removing the proposed text regarding headstones on page seven of the draft application. Member Watkins suggested that the section talking about discernible

evidence found on page seven of the draft application be reworded. The HPC and Ms. Jackson agreed with this proposed change.

Discussion ensued on adding a footnote and rewording the proposed text regarding the significance of Brannock's sale of land. Dr. Deathridge said that Chairperson Plaag will work on the formatting and the adding of the footnote.

Member Brantz left the meeting at approximately 3:55 p.m.

Discussion ensued on Section F. Proposed Marker Text: The Junaluska Community. Chairperson Plaag noted in his email that he agrees that the marker name should be: "The Junaluska Community."

Discussion ensued on rewording the section regarding Church Street. The HPC and Ms. Jackson agreed that the wording should be changed to: By 1918, following construction of a black primary school, numerous black-owned residences, and the Boone Mennonite Brethren Church, this area was the geographic heart of the Junaluska Community and remains so today.

The HPC and Ms. Jackson agreed with the proposed changes made to the draft application at this meeting.

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt said in his email that Chairperson Plaag would incorporate the proposed changes made in today's meeting into the final draft application and to share with the JHA members. She further explained that the March HPC meeting the HPC can consider recommending the draft marker application to Council.

Motion and Vote:

Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Member Pearman to authorize Chairperson Plaag to make the proposed revisions to the final draft Junaluska Marker Application and to present it to Ms. Jackson, Junaluska Heritage Association member and Dr. Kristen Deathridge for their review and to bring the proposed revised draft application to the Historic Preservation Commission at their next meeting for their review and recommendation to send the final draft Junaluska Marker Application to Council.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Ms. Jackson and Dr. Deathridge left the meeting at approximately 4:20 p.m.

Turner House

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt explained that Chairperson Plaag had given her an update on this agenda item. She said that Chairperson Plaag explained that the Council and County

Commissioners have agreed to meet on February 24, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Watauga Agricultural Extension building for a joint public session. They will discuss possible solutions to the impasse. Chairperson Plaag said that he hopes to be at this meeting. He also said while there may not be an opportunity for public comment, he wants to encourage other members of the Historic Preservation Commission to attend this meeting, if they can.

District Designation Report

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt explained that Chairperson Plaag had given her an update on this agenda item. She said that Chairperson Plaag said that he had spoken to Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner on this topic and as a result he asked that this agenda item be tabled to the next meeting.

.

Burrell Monument

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt explained that Chairperson Plaag had given her an update on this agenda item. She said that Chairperson Plaag said he had written to Ms. Mary Moretz requesting a list of source materials and he is awaiting her reply back to him.

Discussion ensued on the Burrell Monument. Member Bond explained that she doesn't think that Burrell based on the current information does not deserve a statute or historical marker. Ms. Turner said that the Council and Ms. Mary Moretz wanted more research and discussion by the HPC on Burrell.

Bryan-Hayes Cemetery

Vice-Chairperson Pollitt explained that Chairperson Plaag had given her an update on this agenda item. She said that Chairperson Plaag said that was able to trace the deeds. He explained that the cemetery appears to be a remnant of the old Judge Greene lands. He said there should be plat at the Watauga County Courthouse that covers the division of these lands probably in the late 1930's. He also said there is no plat index online and he has not been able to find the plat.

Discussion ensued on needing policies and procedures for cemeteries in the town's jurisdiction. Ms. Turner explained that the Council directed the HPC to discuss policies and procedures for cemeteries in the town's jurisdiction. Chairperson Pollitt talked about the upkeep of the cemeteries. Chairperson Plaag had explained to Vice-Chairperson Pollitt that securing a quitclaim deed from the Greene descendants would be necessary, if the Town wants responsibility for the Bryan-Hayes Cemetery.

Other Matters by Board Members of Staff

Member Watkins talked about the Queen Street parking lot and noted that the current parking lot could be a six-floor parking deck. Member Bond said that there have been previous discussions on a possible parking deck behind the Watauga County Library located on Queen Street.

Discussion ensued on the Turner House and parking. Vice-Chairperson Pollitt talked about swapping property for parking. Member Clawson said she hopes after the meeting regarding the Turner House that there will other meetings regarding parking in the Town. Member Clawson said that at the Turner House meeting the discussion will only be regarding the Turner House and not for parking in other areas of the Town.

Adjournment

With no other topics to discuss, Member Pearman made a motion, seconded by Member Clawson to adjourn the meeting at 4:34 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Phoebe Pollitt, Vice- Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

Application for Town of Boone Historical Marker for Junaluska Community

A. SUBJECT OF PROPOSED MARKER:

History and significance of the Junaluska Community in Boone, NC
Proposed Title: The Junaluska Community

B. SITE TO BE MARKED:

The geographic core of the Junaluska Community along Church Street

C. PROPOSED LOCATION OF MARKER

EITHER the northeast corner of the intersection of Queen Street and North Depot Street, OR the bulb-out at the east end of the Queen Street parking strip near its intersection with North Depot Street.

D. DISTANCE AND DIRECTION FROM THE PROPOSED LOCATION TO THE SITE TO BE MARKED:

Approximately 1,000 feet north of location of marker.

E. HISTORICAL SKETCH:

As historian John C. Inscoe has previously documented in his book *Mountain Masters: Slavery and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina*, Appalachia has long struggled against perceptions that slavery was either non-existent or largely insignificant in its antebellum communities, and that people of color accounted for few if any of its residents.¹ In actuality, several communities of color existed in the mountains of North Carolina during the nineteenth century. One such community that still survives intact is the Junaluska community of Boone, North Carolina. While often perceived as existing at the margins of a white-dominated, economically homogenous, rural county seat, the Junaluska community nevertheless has a long history of demonstrating cultural resilience, autonomy, and community pride, while also quietly having a profound influence on Boone's agricultural, commercial, and cultural history. Today, the community remains one of the oldest, intact communities of color in western North Carolina.²

Pinpointing the earliest black settler—whether slave or free—to Watauga County (and particularly the Boone vicinity) is nearly impossible, but US Census records offer some clues about the black and mixed race population of Boone shortly after the founding of Watauga County in 1849. The 1850 Census, for example, documents 129 individuals enslaved by 39 households and another 29 free people of color across 7 households who were characterized as “colored” or “mulatto.” These populations were scattered across Watauga County as a whole, as there were no separate enumeration districts in 1850.³ By 1860, the number of enslaved in the county as a whole declined slightly to 115. We also get our first glance at Boone-specific population figures in the 1860 Census, which shows 29 free people of color spread across 7 households; all of these individuals are once again characterized as “mulatto.”⁴

¹ John C. Inscoe, *Mountain Masters: Slavery and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina*, (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1996).

² The Boone Historic Preservation Commission is grateful to Dr. Susan Keefe of the Junaluska Heritage Association for submitting an initial draft application for a Junaluska marker. Dr. Keefe's original narrative has been helpful and informative to the organization and writing of this manuscript.

³ Ancestry.com, *1850 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedules* [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004); and Ancestry.com, *1850 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009). Images reproduced by FamilySearch. The slave schedules list the 129 individuals by name. Curiously, a notation at the end of the regular 1850 Census totals enslaved individuals at just 84, but no individual documentation is provided for that count.

⁴ Ancestry.com, *1860 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedules* [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010); and Ancestry.com, *1860 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009). Images reproduced by FamilySearch.

One common misperception about the antebellum South is that people of color, especially in the rural, mountainous areas of Appalachia, whether slave or free, had little interaction with one another and, for the enslaved, almost certainly no autonomy, thus suggesting that there was little opportunity for creating a sense of community with one another. Digging deeper, however, reveals a much more complex story—one where economic and social interactions, including opportunities for a modicum of autonomy for the enslaved, were increasingly more common.

Some clues are evident in those 1860 Census figures for Boone. It's important to remember, for example, that the 29 "free" individuals in 1860 are not all the same 29 individuals (or households) enumerated in 1850 for the entire county; their 1860 numbers are just for Boone, ignoring another eight separately enumerated communities in the 1860 Census for Watauga County. Instead, these numbers in Boone suggest the growth of black and mixed race families within the town. While it's true that three of these households belonged to the free Cuzzens brothers, who were early Boone pioneers, the other four free black households reflected either new families to the vicinity (the Scotts and Andersons) or the presence of domestic workers within households (one of which included Polly Grimes living as a domestic worker with her infant daughter in the mixed-race Jonathan Anderson household). As for the enslaved, some certainly worked within white households as domestic workers or laborers, but others are well-documented as working a patch of land along the slopes of Howard's Knob above Boone, typically with a small hut or cabin nearby as their residence and often at some distance from the home of the individual who kept them in bondage.

With freedom following the Civil War, there was an even greater concentration of black and mixed race families at Boone: 117 individuals (40 "mulatto" and 77 "black") across 30 households.⁵ In many cases, the last names of the black and mixed-race households reflected the families to which former enslaved people had been attached before the war: Councill, Hardin, Horton, Mast, and Whittington. Census data also reveals the economic opportunities available to the black and mixed race population in the predominantly agrarian community of Boone following the Civil War. Of the 55 black or mixed race individuals in the 1870 Census with enumerated jobs, 24 were farm laborers on farms run by others, 17 were "keeping house" (maintaining the household in which they resided), 6 were farmers typically working their own land or a sharecropped parcel belonging to someone else, 6 were housekeepers (presumably in other households), 1 was a "servant," and 1 was a shoemaker. Local tradition within the Junaluska community holds that the vast majority of those farmers and farm laborers were formerly enslaved individuals who were still working land on the slopes of Howard's Knob that still belonged to those who had once enslaved them.

⁵ Ancestry.com, *1870 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009). Images reproduced by FamilySearch.

One of these individuals offers us particular insight into the changing settlement patterns of Boone after the Civil War, as well as the evolution of what would become the Junaluska community. Troy Council (1826?-1901) was a mixed-race man who had been enslaved by Jordan Council, Jr., prior to 1865. We know this with certainty because he told us so in 1873, when he served as a witness on a Southern Claims Commission claim by Sallie Council (Jordan's widow) for damages suffered during Stoneman's Raid in 1865.⁶ Troy Council shows up in the 1870 Census as having his own household that he kept with four black housemates, all younger than he was, three of whom were possibly his children. This home likely was located on land still owned by Sallie Council in 1873, since he said that he lived on her land at the time of his witness statement. In 1907, the land that Troy Council had once worked and lived on was sold by W. B. and Elizabeth Council to J. M. Moretz as a roughly 20-acre parcel. This property was described at that time as "the Troy Place," presumably a reference to Troy Council.⁷

Deed research from a separate project on the land along the historic Junaluska Turnpike strongly suggests that "the Troy Place" may have been located just to the north and west of the land above the intersection of Wyn Way (the old Junaluska Turnpike roadbed) and present-day Junaluska Road. What's particularly intriguing about Troy Council's home place in 1870 is that four other black families were located nearby, based on their order of presentation in the Census records—George Horton, Greene Horton, Collins Horton, and George Council. This strongly suggests that a collection of black families were beginning to settle along the hill above Boone to the north as early as the 1870s. It thus makes sense that just a few years later, in June 1894, Dr. J. B. Council transferred just under a quarter acre of nearby land to W. P. Jones and W. R. Horton, Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church (Colored) of Boone for the erection of a church building.⁸ This parcel was located adjacent to land owned by Greene Horton and W. B. Council, just east of where the lower water tower is located today on the old roadbed of the Junaluska Turnpike.

Four years later, congregation members built the first church building in Watauga County dedicated to a black congregation, often referred to as the Boone Chapel. It stood for nearly 100 years before being demolished in 1996 after decades of decline in membership following the 1932 Horton Incident, outmigration of members from the community, and competition from other black churches. ~~finally succumbing to decades of neglect and demolition in 1996.~~ It was the only church to serve Boone's black community until 1918 and thus initially represented the geographic heart of the growing Junaluska

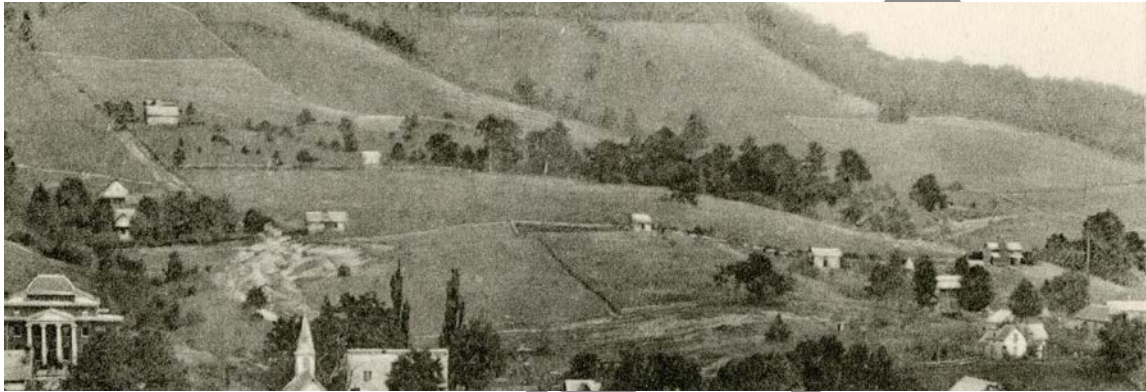
⁶ Deposition of Troy Council, Petition of Sally Council, Ancestry.com, *U.S. Southern Claims Commission, Disallowed and Barred Claims, 1871-1880* [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2007.)

⁷ W. B. Council to J. M. Moretz, November 5, 1907, Deed Book 8, Page 348, Watauga County Register of Deeds. The land is described as bounded on the west by "the land of Brannock" and on the north and east "by the old road," the entirety of it enclosed by a fence. All subsequent deed references

below originate with the Watauga County Register of Deeds.

⁸ J. B. Councill to W. P. Jones and W. R. Horton, Trustees of the M. E. Church (Col.) of Boone, June 27, 1894, Deed Book R, Page 474.

community.⁹ By this point, Boone residents were clearly beginning to perceive of the hillside above Boone as a generalized area of settlement for the town's black residents. In 1907, for example, Benjamin J. Council transferred a half-acre parcel known as "the Sylva place"—likely a lot once worked by someone named Sylva that was close to "the Troy place" and adjacent to the W. B. Council line and the Junaluska Turnpike—to the Watauga County Board of Education explicitly for the use of "the colored school district." It's not clear that a school was ever built there, however, as the Board of Education sold the property just seven years later to B. T. Brannock, who was already engaged in buying up much of the land on the Junaluska hillside.¹⁰ Brannock also served as the county's tax assessor at the time.¹¹



This detail crop from a circa 1905 postcard by J. J. Coffey shows the Junaluska hillside between the original Junaluska Turnpike at far left and what would become North Depot Street at extreme right. North Street is the lane running left to right at the center of the image. In 1905, the Junaluska hillside was very thinly settled. At upper left is the Boone Chapel on the east side of the Junaluska Turnpike. Image is from the Bobby Brendell Postcard Collection, courtesy of the Digital Watauga Project.

By 1917, however, Brannock was eager to leave Boone and relocate to Catawba County. While his mother's accident at his Boone home slightly delayed his relocation plans, Brannock nevertheless moved quickly to sell many of his parcels on the hill above Boone.¹² Many of these parcels were located along what was by then known as African Street (later Church Street)—another indication that locals

⁹ "Local News," *Watauga Democrat*, May 13, 1897: 3. For more on the history of the Boone Chapel, see Susan E. Keefe and Jodie D. Manross, "Race, Religion, and Community: The Demolition of a Black Church," *Appalachian Journal*, 26:3, (Spring 1999): 252-63.

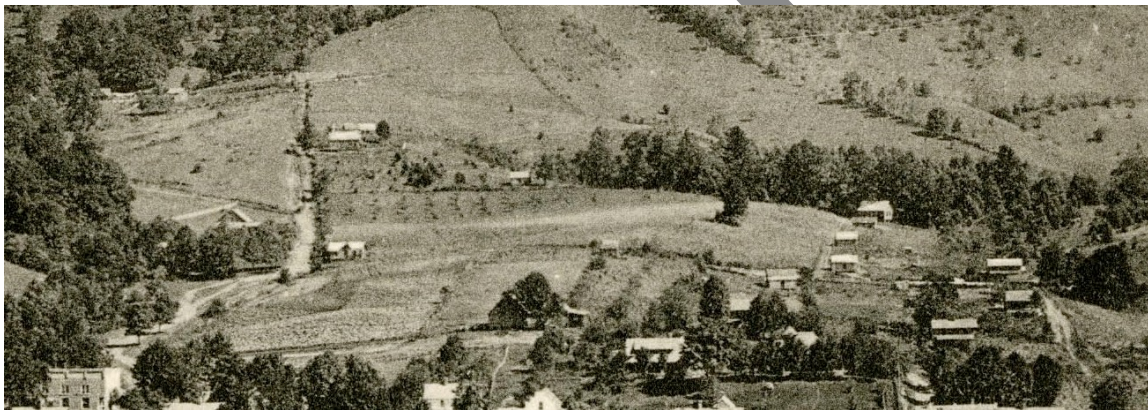
¹⁰ Benjamin J. Council and wife to Board of Education and their successors, July 29, 1907, Deed Book 16, Page 240; and T. P. Adams, et al, members of the Board of Education to B. T. Brannock and wife, Josephine L. Brannock, October 5, 1914, Deed Book 18, Page 201. Brannock quickly flipped the property to John Grimes in 1915, and it went through a number of transfers in the years thereafter. See B. T. Brannock and J. L. Brannock to John Grimes, October 16, 1915, Deed Book 18, Page 306.

¹¹ The *Watauga Democrat* makes several references to Brannock as the county's "tax lister." See, for example, *Watauga Democrat*, June 22, 1916, 3. Benjamin Thomas Brannock (1864-1943) was first married to Josephine Loretta South (1876-1923), the daughter of Enoch South (1854-1904) and brother of Austin Enoch South (1892-1965), Robert Blaine South (1894-1970), and Nora South Eggers (1889-1985), whose husband was Stacy Clyde Eggers, Sr. (1890-1976). These interfamilial relations are relevant to the eventual disposition of much of the land along the Junaluska hillside, primarily west of the African Street area described below.

¹² *Watauga Democrat*, March 15, 1917, 3.

regarded portions of the Junaluska hillside as the geographic heart of Boone's black community.¹³ Brannock also sold 100 acres of land to his brother-in-law, Robert Blaine South, who in turn sold this land to Austin E. South.¹⁴

Part of the land originally once owned by Brannock and later conveyed to Nora South Eggers and Stacy Clyde Eggers, Sr., would later become the Buena Vista subdivision that was clustered around Carolina Avenue, Summit Street, North Street, and Junaluska Road. The lots in this subdivision were owned almost exclusively by whites, even as the lots directly abutted black-owned land to the east and north.¹⁵ While the black residents of the Junaluska community owned or lived on land stretching from Queen Street all the way north to the top of Howard's Knob, black development of the Junaluska hillside tended to occur in clusters, often with white-owned land or white residents nearby. Key clusters of the black Junaluska community included the area around the Boone Chapel and above (near the intersection of present-day Wyn Way and Junaluska Road) as well as the area around African Street, but other black settlement was also scattered across the hillside. Despite living interspersed with each other, the term "Junaluska" has been used to refer to the African American community of residents of the area, not a physical neighborhood, since at least the early 1960s.



This detail crop from a circa 1915 postcard by J. J. Coffey shows the old Junaluska Turnpike heading straight up the hill at left, with the new route angling to the left about halfway up the turnpike. The Boone Chapel is visible just above this junction on the east side of the turnpike. North Street runs

¹³ For a handful of examples along African Street, see B. T. Brannock and J. L. Brannock to John Grimes, March 20, 1917, Deed Book 20, Page 6; B. T. Brannock and J. L. Brannock to R. D. Horton, May 5, 1919, Deed Book 22, Page 591; B. T. Brannock to Edward Folk and Gertrude Folk, September 10, 1921, Deed Book 28, Page 249; and B. T. Brannock and J. L. Brannock to Austin E. South, February 13, 1923, Deed Book 29, Page 280.

¹⁴ See B. T. Brannock and J. L. Brannock to Robert B. South, January 10, 1917, Deed Book 20, Page 69; and Robert B. South to Austin E. South, August 6, 1917, Deed Book 20, Page 166.

¹⁵ As further evidence of this racial divide, every single resident (26) of Carolina Avenue (then known as Carolina Street) and every single resident (44) of Summit Street as listed in the 1940 Census was white. Ancestry.com, "Boone Township, Watauga County, North Carolina, Enumeration District 95-7," *1940 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012). Curiously, most black residents of Boone Township located within Boone's corporate limits—with the exception of two domestic workers living in white homes—were presented uniformly in the 1940 Census as living in the "Negro settlement."

from the house on the east side of the turnpike just below the junction near the center of the image, and runs to the right (east) to the cluster of houses on the extreme right side of the image, where it intersects with a cart path that will become North Depot Street. Note that African Street is also evident just to the west of this with four structures on the east side of African Street. The northernmost building is likely the Hagler (Haigler) residence, with the old school (likely before the 1915 storm that destroyed it) just below (south) of the Hagler residence. Note also that there is no discernible evidence of headstones on the west side of African Street where the graveyard would have been located. Image is from the Bobby Brendell Postcard Collection, courtesy of the Digital Watauga Project.

Perhaps the most significant of Brannock's sales, however, was that of a quarter acre of land on African Street to the Krimmers Mennonite Brethren Church on August 1, 1919.¹⁶ Church tradition holds that the church building on this lot—presently known as the Boone Mennonite Brethren Church—was built in 1918, but primary source evidence awaits discovery, though there is no reason to doubt the community's knowledge. It is possible the deed registration was delayed while awaiting final payment for the land from the Krimmer Mennonite Conference in Kansas. Similarly, no deed records for the graveyard parcel have been located, although it clearly preceded the 1919 church deed and is now considered part of the church parcel, with no headstones evident on its thickly vined portion of the lot. This suggests that the land may have been owned and used by the local black population as a burial ground for several years prior to the erection of the church building, then abandoned.¹⁷

A similarly cloudy situation existed for the local black school, whose existence is documented at least as early as 1921, when the Brannocks sold a half-acre parcel on African Street to John Grimes. This parcel was described as lying just south of the "school lot" on the east side of African Street. A 1916 news item offers some insight as to why clear deed records for the early school do not seem to exist: "Rev. J. A. Cherry, the colored minister here, opened school in the public school building, which is owned by the negro population yesterday morning." Local black residents appear to have either pooled their money or relied on the generosity of one landowner who donated land for the school. This may have been the same building badly damaged in a 1915 storm and rebuilt by Hodges and Farthing.¹⁸

¹⁶ B. T. Brannock and J. L. Brannock to Krimmers Mennonite Brethren Church, August 1, 1919.

¹⁷ It seems noteworthy that Jerry Lenoir, Gus Horton, and June Horton—all serving as trustees, understood by current community members to be on behalf of the Boone Methodist Episcopal Chapel, acquired Lot 45 of the E. S. Coffey partition to Boone, "adjoining the burying ground of the colored people in the town of Boone...for the purpose of enlarging said bur[y]ing grounds for the colored," in April 1919. This transaction occurred just months prior to the Mennonite Brethren Church's purchase of the parcel adjacent to the African Street graveyard and may have indicated an intention to move burials at African Street to the east part of the Boone Cemetery, which was still technically owned by Council heirs at that time, even though it had long served as the town's public cemetery for black burials. Local tradition holds that the Councils originally used this section for the burial of enslaved persons. See A. D. Blair and Josie Blair to Jerry Lenoir, Guss Horton, and June Horton, Trustees, April 30, 1919, Deed Book 28, Page 240.

¹⁸ *Watauga Democrat*, December 9, 1915: 2.

In 1935, John Grimes sold a differently sized parcel to the Watauga County Board of Education near this same location, perhaps as a combination of his own 1921 parcel and the existing school lot, in preparation for the county to build a consolidated school in nearly the same location. Press coverage from 1938 addressed the difference between the old and new school: “Then we have the colored school in Boone. Where these children had only a shack to go to three years ago, they now have a building to be proud of. It has all the modern conveniences found in any of the best planned structures.”¹⁹ Funded in part with Works Progress Administration (WPA) support, the school was completed in 1937.²⁰

In short, by 1935, the cluster of buildings along the upper part of North Depot Street, the east half of North Street, African (later Church) Street, and Tremont Drive functioned largely as the geographic heart of the Junaluska community. As Susan E. Keefe and Jodie D. Manross have noted, during the early twentieth century, members of the Junaluska community continued to see the Mennonite Brethren Church and the Boone Chapel as “twin centers of community religious and social life in Junaluska. Religious activities alternated between the two churches, and community members often participated in events sponsored by both churches.”²¹ By the 1940s, however, membership at the Boone Chapel was in rapid decline in large part due to the exodus of many church members (more than 30 Horton family members) following the Horton Incident in 1932. A small Missionary Baptist Church (Little Rock Zion Church) established in 1940 at the corner of Church and Tremont Streets also drew some members away. Further, the Hagler brothers, Rossalee and Allan, left to begin holding Pentecostal Holiness services in a tent in what is now Junaluska Park, before moving to other ministries out of town. The absence of Sunday School classes for the children in the now-smaller-membership Methodist Chapel led others to opt to attend the Mennonite Brethren Church.²² By the end of the decade, services at the Boone Chapel declined in frequency to monthly sessions served by a circuit preacher.²⁴ As a result, black residents increasingly viewed the Boone Mennonite Church as the social and religious heart of the Junaluska community.

As with many communities in the rural south, racism and segregation were part of black life in Boone and directly impacted the members of the Junaluska community. While many local whites have consistently described race relations during the early

¹⁹ “Reports Progress of WPA in County,” *Watauga Democrat*, March 31, 1938: 2.

²⁰ “More Than Quarter Million Spent on WPA Program in Watauga,” *Watauga Democrat*, May 6, 1937: 1. The Watauga Consolidated School was formally dedicated on October 3, 1937, with Frazier Horton as its first principal. See “Dedication of School for Colored Sunday,” *Watauga Democrat*, September 30, 1927: 4.

²¹ Susan E. Keefe and Jodie D. Manross, “Race, Religion, and Community: The Demolition of a Black Church,” *Appalachian Journal*, 26:3 (Spring 1999), 254.

²² “To Build Church,” *Watauga Democrat*, April 24, 1941: 1; and Johnnie Jackson and Granville Jackson to Missionary Baptist Church of Boone (Colored), April 1, 1941, Deed Book 54, Page 196. Curiously, this land remains under the ownership of this church, which is presumed defunct. The church building no longer stands on the lot.

²³ “News of the Colored Community,” *Watauga Democrat*, November 25, 1943: 7. The location where services of the United Holiness Church were held has not been identified but is presumed to have been in the African Street vicinity. See also: Susan E. Keefe and The Junaluska Heritage Association (editors), Junaluska: Oral Histories of a Black Appalachian Community, Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., forthcoming.

²⁴ For more on the decline of the Boone Chapel, see Keefe and Manross, “Race,” 255.

and mid-twentieth century as better than in other locations in the South, and race conflict as nonexistent at Boone, news coverage from the 1920s and 1930s tells a different tale.²⁵ In 1923, for example, a local, white dentist, L. R. Bingham, shot Junaluska resident John Grimes in the knee while Grimes was tending to livestock as part of his job in the Councill barn. Bingham appears to have suffered no legal consequences for his actions.²⁶ Stories of cross burnings and parades, as well as Klan advertisements, appeared frequently in the *Watauga Democrat* during the 1920s, too, culminating in 1926 in the meeting hall of the old 1875 Watauga County Courthouse being renamed “Ku Klux Klan Hall.”²⁷ These tensions culminated in a horrific, September 1932 event known as “the Horton incident,” when local police conducted a brutal, warrantless, door-to-door manhunt through the Junaluska community, ultimately resulting in the deaths of two Junaluska residents—one of which has been identified by the Equal Justice Initiative as a racial terror lynching.²⁸ This persistent threat of racial violence further isolated the Junaluska community and caused many Junaluska residents to pursue survival strategies based on accommodation rather than confrontation.

Just as insidious for the Junaluska community was the looming specter of racial segregation and its often contradictory standards. De jure segregation was most evident in education, with black students required to attend a school that was inferior to white schools in construction, services, and educational materials until desegregation occurred in the 1960s. De jure segregation was occasionally evident in the architecture of Boone’s buildings, such as the Boone train depot, which was built with segregated waiting rooms to comply with state law.²⁹ Commercial interactions and their attendant de facto segregation were more flexible—a common trait of some rural, southern communities. According to interviews with

²⁵ In 1948, when local blacks were “register[ing] for participation in election for the first time in [a] generation,” R. C. Rivers, Jr., editor of the *Watauga Democrat*, noted, “It is likely that their voting will be accomplished without incident in this locality, where there has been no race problem.” Rivers added, however, that if there were problems, “those who promoted the registration will have rendered the race a distinct disservice.” See “King Street,” *Watauga Democrat*, October 28, 1948: 1. Writing in 1956, Rivers again insisted, “In Watauga...race tensions are negligible.” See “Pearsall Plan Pleases,” *Watauga Democrat*, September 13, 1956: 4. In numerous oral history interviews conducted for the Appalachian Theatre of the High Country between 2013 and 2018, older white residents of Boone continued to insist that “there were never any problems.”

²⁶ “Local Dentist Accused of Shooting Negro,” *Watauga Democrat*, June 21, 1923: 1.

²⁷ “Notice,” *Watauga Democrat*, April 8, 1926: 1. On one occasion, the Klan burned an enormous, 30-foot-tall cross on the Lovill ridge overlooking the west side of Boone. See “Ku Klux Klan Burns Fiery Cross,” *Watauga Democrat*, June 5, 1924: 1.

²⁸ The Horton Incident arose from a dispute between black members of the Horton family and white men in Deep Gap who owed them money. Sheriff’s deputies went into the Junaluska community to arrest two of the Hortons after the Hortons had attempted to collect what was owed, and matters devolved quickly from there. The posse killed Ralph Horton near Mabel during the manhunt. Norwood Horton, who was also shot, died from complications related to his injuries in November 1932. For the community’s account of events, see Susan E. Keefe and the Junaluska Heritage Association, *Junaluska: Oral Histories of a Black Appalachian Community* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Forthcoming 2020). See also Rev. Ronda Horton interviews by Winston Kinsey in 1973, Tapes 82 A, B, C, Black Oral History Project, W.L. Eury Appalachian Collection, Appalachian State University,

Boone, NC.. For local press coverage, see “Deputy Albert Farthing Shot; Negro Killed and One Injured in Gunplay,” *Watauga Democrat*, September 22, 1932: 1; and “Blood Poison Is Fatal to Negro Assailant of Law,” *Watauga Democrat*, November 17, 1932: 1.

²⁹ “Local Affairs,” *Watauga Democrat*, May 22, 1919: 3. The Equal Justice Initiative, founded by Bryan Stevenson, attorney and author of *Just Mercy*, has been working to recognize and memorialize victims of lynching, as defined by that organization, for several years. They have founded both The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration and The National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama. Ralph Horton is listed for Watauga County, NC, at the memorial. For more information see: www.elj.org

numerous residents, the Pastime Theatre (opened on King Street in 1924) reportedly had partitioned seating for blacks in its balcony and essentially became the default “black theater” after the grander Appalachian Theatre opened in 1938.³⁰ The Appalachian, meanwhile, was a whites-only theater until 1948, when Robert Agle took over as the regional manager for the Statesville Theater Company, which managed both the Appalachian and the Pastime. From 1948 to 1960, balcony seating was available to blacks at the Appalachian.³¹ The Terminal Roller Rink, located above the bus depot, also dabbled with segregation, reserving Friday nights in 1949 “for colored only.”³² As Frazier Horton noted in 1942, waiting rooms in doctors’ offices typically were not segregated, nor were drinking fountains, although photographic evidence from Palmer Blair’s photos of the interior of the Watauga County Courthouse courtroom demonstrate that de facto segregation was clearly evident there, with black attendees all seated in the balcony of the courtroom during farm meetings.³³ White-owned restaurants in Boone, meanwhile, almost always barred table service to blacks during the first half of the twentieth century, instead requiring black patrons to come to the rear of the building for takeaway service.³⁴

Many Junaluska community members found this last practice particularly frustrating and nonsensical, since many of the wait staff in Boone’s restaurants were black, and thus worthy in the eyes of their employers of working there but not of being served.³⁵ Indeed, throughout the early twentieth century, black residents of Boone—nearly all of them from the Junaluska community—saw their employment opportunities increase in downtown Boone businesses, even if access to services for those black residents was not always on an equal footing. The widely circulated 1936 H. Lee Waters film of Boone, for example, shows two black men—Rob Williams and Frank Landers—working at downtown businesses. David “Strawberry” Horton, in a 2015 interview, recalled working for an Esso station at the age of 12, in 1937, and he also recalled a black projectionist at the Pastime Theatre during the 1940s.³⁶

The 1940 Census provides even greater clarity on employment opportunities for Boone’s black residents before World War II. Grouping residents of the lower part of the Junaluska hillside located within the town limits under the generic label of

³⁰ David “Strawberry” Horton, film interview with Philip Arnold and Roberta Jackson, September 26, 2015, Appalachian Theatre of the High Country Archives.

³¹ Bobby Agle, film interview with Philip Arnold and Eric Plaag, August 30, 2014, Appalachian Theatre of the High Country Archives. Agle reportedly eliminated all segregated seating in 1960, shortly after the Greensboro sit-ins.

³² Advertisement, *Watauga Democrat*, May 5, 1949: 4.

³³ Frazier Robert Horton, “Negro Life in Watauga County,” unpublished thesis typescript, Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina, 1942, Appalachian Collection, Appalachian State University, 29-30. For images demonstrating segregated seating at the courthouse in 1954, see Pal-Bla-2-128 and Pal-Bla-2-126 in the Palmer Blair Collection, Digital Watauga Project, available online at DigitalWatauga.org.

³⁴ Horton, film interview, September 26, 2015.

³⁵ Horton, film interview, September 26, 2015.

³⁶ Horton, film interview, September 26, 2015.

“Negro settlement,” the census takers counted 142 black residents. Of these, 57 were employed. Eight were engaged in work as commercial cooks in cafes, restaurants, and hotels, with another three working as wait staff in restaurants. Another four were cooks for private, white households yet retained their own residences. One notable exception—one of only two black residents within town limits who were not grouped with those in the “Negro settlement”—was Willie Mae Clemmons, who worked as a live-in cook in the Linney household on King Street. Cleaning staff accounted for another large group of employees, including seven performing private housework (typically in white homes), two working as janitors, and two working as maids in hotels. Two others worked as bellboys at hotels. The WPA was also a continuing source of work for some black residents, with three men working on the WPA Cottage (the weaving room) and two others performing road work for the WPA. Other construction work (four), truck driving (three), auto repair and service stations (four), and delivery work (two) accounted for another thirteen individuals. Four others continued to be engaged in farm work, typically as day laborers or on rented land. But there were also signs that work opportunities were slowly beginning to change. One black resident operated his own barbershop, while another owned his own grocery store. Two men operated their own shoeshine stands. Three women took in laundry at their own homes. One other man found work as a hospital orderly, and yet another was a local preacher.³⁷

Other anecdotal evidence of black employment at white-owned Boone businesses following World War II has turned up in the recently discovered “Workers of Boone” photographs shot by Palmer Blair in 1951 and 1952. Two black workers have been identified—Neal Grimes, working at Swofford’s Tire Service (he was listed as a servant in a white home in the 1940 Census) and Lee Whittington, working behind the pharmacy counter at Boone Drug Store. Several other black employees photographed by Blair have yet to be identified, but their images suggest a continuing growth of opportunity in more lucrative and less service-oriented positions during the 1950s.³⁸

³⁷ The 1940 Census data for Boone Township individuals is split between those located within town limits in Boone Township and those located either north or south of US 421 outside of town limits but still within Boone Township. As a result, several families traditionally associated with the Junaluska community are not grouped in the “Negro settlement” part of the town limits. This includes several Whittington families, the Frazier Horton family, the Joe Odom family, the McQueen family, the John Grimes family, the Andrew Jackson family, the Charlie Ervin family, and the Mitchell family, all of which are known to have been located above the Boone Chapel along the Junaluska hillside. Most of these individuals who were working were engaged in farm labor, reflecting the continued agricultural use of the more thinly settled, upper portion of the Junaluska hillside. Some others found work in domestic or restaurant opportunities in town, like many of their black neighbors just down the hill. Frazier Horton was a noteworthy exception, having served as the teacher at the black school during this time. These known black residents of the upper part of the Junaluska hillside accounted for another 64 members of the community, making the combined total of black residents on the Junaluska hillside in 1940 an estimated 206 people. For individual detail, see Ancestry.com, “Boone Township, Watauga County, North Carolina, Enumeration District 95-8,” *1940 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012).

³⁸ The “Workers of Boone” series from the Palmer Blair Collection is currently being digitized and is not yet online at the Digital Watauga Project.

In response to these limited employment options, the Junaluska community often compensated for de facto segregation in the best way they knew how—by creating their own, black-owned businesses. One such operation was the Chocolate Bar, a café and social club located in a concrete block building just north of the intersection of Queen Street and North Depot Street.³⁹ Keefe and Manross have also described “a small black business district” in the area surrounding African Street, “including two homefront grocery stores, a barber shop, a basement teenage hangout, a night club,” and the Chocolate Bar.⁴⁰

Junaluska community members also have a long history of military service, including World War I veterans Ronda Horton, Rockford Hatton, Sr., Edward Folk, Granville Jackson, Ebb McQueen, Harve Whittington, and Frank Grimes. During World War II, 23 men from the Junaluska community served in the US Armed Forces, while seven men saw service in Korea and another seventeen in Vietnam.⁴¹ As seen in several photographs contained in the Junaluska Heritage Association Collection in the Digital Watauga Project, military service often provided Junaluska’s men with a freedom of commerce, increased leadership opportunities, and complex, integrated social activities that typically were not available at home in the decades prior to racial integration in the United States. These paradoxes no doubt motivated those veterans to push for greater equality when they returned to Boone.

While integration did change both the de jure and de facto “rules” for black access to businesses and public spaces in Boone, the Junaluska community remains close-knit,

³⁹ Curiously, the land on which the Chocolate Bar sat appears to have been owned by Kenneth Linney, whom Junaluska community members remember as having been particularly gracious to members of the black community. It’s likely that Linney leased the building to the Chocolate Bar’s proprietors. See Horton, film interview, September 26, 2015. See also Kenneth B. Linney to Margaret Linney Coffey and Mrs. Kenneth B. Linney, January 8, 1949, Deed Book 65, Page 630. The originating deed for this parcel has not been found, but this appears to have been part of a large holding of Frank A. Linney dating back to the very early twentieth century. It was likely conveyed to Kenneth B. Linney via probate. The building still stands on a unified parcel belonging to the Reins-Sturdivant Funeral Home.

⁴⁰ Keefe and Manross, “Race,” 256. Independent references to the Chocolate Bar are scant. One example, however, is a March 8, 1951, news item in the *Watauga Democrat* noting that clothing donations to the Explorer Scouts would be sorted and packed at “the Chocolate Bar building on Depot Street across from the Mountain Burley Warehouse No. 1.” This location coincides with the building identified above as the Chocolate Bar. The same location was sometimes called the “Chocolate Bar Café.” See “Young Men’s Club Entertains Wives and Girl Friends,” *Watauga Democrat*, February 23, 1950: 7. Residents of the Junaluska community were the officers of the Young Men’s Club.

⁴¹ A list provided by Sandra Hagler includes the following veterans, in addition to those already listed for World War I: *World War II*: Winston Greer, James McQueen, Avery Goins, Dallas Grimes, Charles Paul Grimes, Lee Whittington, Coy Hagler, William Whittington, Linnie Whittington, George W. Horton, Jay William Grimes, Grady Jackson, George W. Grimes, Henry Horton, Green Horton, Henry Clay Folk, Roddy Turner, Howard Folk, Cecil Webb, Christmas Pettiford, James D. Wilson, Willie Ferguson, James Whittington; *Korea*: Jackie McQueen, Parvin Whittington, James West, Jr., Ralph Hagler, Bobby Whittington, Robert Mathes, Leroy Kirkpatrick, Jr.; *Vietnam*: Dana Folk, Rex McQueen, Lee Gary Whittington, Sam Kirkpatrick, Philip McQueen, Adam Jackson, Jimmy Jackson, James R. McQueen, Tommy Kirkpatrick, James A. Hagler, Anthony Hagler, Joseph Grimes, Harvey Coles, James A. Goins, Gary Kirkpatrick, Virgil Greer, Alex McQueen.

with many black residents continuing more than a century of practice at “accommodation rather than confrontation.” As noted by Keefe and Manross, this remained evident well into the late twentieth century in “cautious and reserved behavior by black Appalachians in town political affairs.” In recent decades, this pattern has begun to shift as several residents, including Virgil Greer, Roberta Jackson, Dana Folk, and Lynn Patterson, have taken on high-profile roles on Town of Boone committees and in other Boone community organizations over the last couple of decades.⁴² This approach to managing issues that affect the Junaluska community is perhaps most evident in the use of the Boone Mennonite Brethren Church as a locus for community meetings and discussions, with the church pastors, including the current pastor Reverend Mike Mathes, often playing the role of community leader, facilitator, and organizer for discussions among the community’s residents.

While the community’s insularity during the twentieth century probably helped to preserve Junaluska’s sense of community over time, increasing land development pressures have resulted in a new, physical threat to the Junaluska community. In recent years, some homes and vacant land in the traditional clusters of black Junaluska settlement have either been rented out to students from the nearby Appalachian State University or sold to new owners with no connections to the community. This pattern has been further amplified by the departure of many descendants of the older Junaluska community residents, who have often sought employment or other opportunities outside of Watauga County. These external pressures were perhaps most recently evident in 2016, when the Watauga Community Housing Trust and the Boone Town Council proposed an affordable housing project on long-vacant land within yards of the old Boone Chapel site. In response, Junaluska community members were quite vocal at a community meeting at the Mennonite Brethren Church regarding their misgivings about the project, as well as ongoing concerns reflecting a perception that local government has routinely and historically denied Junaluska the new infrastructure and other local services afforded to majority-white neighborhoods elsewhere in town.⁴³

The Junaluska community continues to play an important part in Watauga County’s broader history, with the cluster of homes, churches, and other resources centered around present-day Church Street serving as the geographic heart of that black community for more than 100 years. In light of ongoing pressures from population outflow, gentrification, new construction efforts, and the wider population’s generally poor understanding of the Junaluska community’s history as a whole, an historical marker devoted to the community’s history would seem to be a critical asset to aid its long-term preservation. While it is a small footnote in the rich history of the Junaluska community, this marker nevertheless is an acknowledgment of this thriving black community that has endured in Boone and Watauga County for well over a century.

⁴² Keefe and Manross, “Race,” 257.

⁴³ Anna Oakes, “Junaluska Housing Project Tabled,” *Watauga Democrat*, online, December 30, 2016.

F. Proposed Marker Text: The Junaluska Community

The Junaluska community is one of the oldest, intact communities of color in western North Carolina. Beginning with a small, mixed-race population of free and enslaved individuals who settled and farmed the hillside between Boone and Howard's Knob prior to the American Civil War, the Junaluska community began to coalesce by 1898, when local black residents built the Boone Methodist Episcopal Chapel (demolished 1996) about halfway up the hillside. In the 1910s, local blacks acquired numerous parcels near African Street, now Church Street, located approximately 1,000 feet north of this marker. By 1918, following construction of a black primary school, numerous black-owned residences, and the Boone Mennonite Brethren Church, African Street was the geographic heart of the Junaluska community, which Church Street remains today. Despite the injustices of segregation and racial inequality, the Junaluska community remains a cohesive and vibrant part of Boone's historical, economic, and social development.

36" X 24" Georgia, Sewah Studios

5/8" letters

(Limited to 27 lines, 38 sp/ltr per line, 1,026 total characters, 174 words)

Current count: 1,014 characters with spaces, 150 words)