

**Town of Boone
Historic Preservation Commission Advisory Meeting
3:00 PM, May 5, 2026
Planning & Inspections Conference Room
680 W. King St., Suite C
Boone, NC 28607**

The public may attend the meeting in person at the Planning and Inspections Conference Room at 680 West King Street, Suite C, or online via WebEx, a video conferencing software.

Public Comment: To give public comment, you should appear in person at the physical location of this meeting. Persons who attend the meeting remotely via WebEx may be permitted to speak during public comment but are not assured of that opportunity.

WebEx Participation: To join online or by phone, email Planning and Inspections at planning@boonenc.gov or call 828-262-6960, and you will receive an email invitation. Requests must be submitted no later than one hour before the meeting begins.

I. Call to Order

II. Adoption of Agenda

III. Public Comment

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes

1. April 7, 2026, HPC Advisory Meeting Minutes

V. Advisory Session Items for Discussion

1. Ceremony Updates and Discussion of Press Release Quote for Stoneman's Raid Interpretative Panel
2. Review Final Draft of the Watauga Kraut Factory (Boone/Kraut Creek) Marker Report
For Review Prior to Town Council Consideration.
3. Update on Text Amendment for Public Art (Murals) in the Historic District

VI. Other Matters

1. Statement of Conformity Report as of April 27, 2026

VII. Adjournment

TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
April 7, 2026, 3:00 pm
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing

Historic Preservation Commission Members Present: Vardell Smyth-Chair, Bettie Bond-Vice-Chair, Krystal Carter, Bennie Gaetano, and Melody Oxendine

Town Staff Present: Jane Shook-Director of Planning and Inspections, Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Virginia Roseman-Council Member Liaison (via WebEx), and David Pedersen-Board Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Smyth called the Boone Historic Preservation Commission meeting, held in the Planning & Inspections Conference Room at 680 West King Street, Suite C, and via WebEx to order at 3:01 pm.

Adoption of Agenda

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Carter, to adopt the agenda as presented.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes

Commission Member Gaetano made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Oxendine, to approve the March 3, 2026, Historic Preservation Commission Advisory meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Discussion and Review of Text Amendment for Public Art (Murals) in the Historic District

Ms. Mitchell directed the HPC to agenda packet, starting on page 7, which contained the proposed draft text for a text amendment regarding murals with suggested changes to Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Articles 26, 34, and Appendix D. She began by noting a change to the definition of murals where some of the regulatory language in Article 34 would be moved to Article 26 Signs. She directed the HPC to packet page 8, which started the proposed changes to Appendix D, including modification of the elevation (facade) definitions. She noted the clarification of primary, secondary, and tertiary elevations was pertinent - specifically for murals. She then pointed out the classification language on packet page 9 from the District Designation Report, stating that those designations (CA, CH, NC, and VL) were carried throughout that report. She added that those classifications represent properties that are historically or architecturally contributing (CH and CA), and clarified that those pertain to those properties during the district's period of significance only; she noted that any property not in that period of significance is classified as non-contributing.

Chair Smyth inquired whether any vacant lot would then be categorized as non-contributing, as it can't fall into the period of significance. Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Shook confirmed and noted that a clarification can be added for vacant land.

Ms. Mitchell noted the red strikethrough text on packet pages 9 and 10, stating that throughout Appendix D there were varying lists of architectural features that have been consolidated into one definition for architectural features. Ms. Mitchell continued to Section 8 of Appendix D, pointing out the addition regarding "Ghost Signs." She stated that existing text for ghost signs is currently located in the public art standards, but upon review felt that these were better categorized under signs. Additional language was also added to clarify best procedures if a ghost sign is identified on a property.

Ms. Mitchell continued discussing the proposed changes and noted that the current text in Section 11 (Public Art Standards) are presented as a re-write as it was a cleaner edit to show all changes as new text. She added that the proposed changes keep the intent of the current standards with clarification overall and reorganization. Ms. Mitchell briefly summarized the Overview (11.01) and Review Procedures (11.02) sections as presented in the packet.

Council Member Liaison Roseman joined the meeting via WebEx at 3:09 pm.

Ms. Mitchell noted the change of bringing item B in Section 11.02, regarding Town Council review, into the same section as the HPC review for better organization and continuity.

She then addressed General Standards (11.03) being applicable to any public art, with more language for murals specifically towards the end. She provided a summary of Standards (11.03), noting the refining of language. She continued to Sections 11.03.01 Installation, 11.03.02 Replacement of previously approved artwork, and 11.03.03 Maintenance, providing short summaries of those sections.

Ms. Mitchell asked if there were any questions. The HPC agreed that they were favorable to these changes.

Ms. Mitchell moved on to discuss the Murals (11.04) section, reiterating that these standards were cumulative with the previously discussed. She began by providing an overview of the property designations table provided on packet page 17. She also emphasized the importance of clarity in defining secondary and tertiary elevations, and she wanted the HPC to consider the amount of surfaces those two elevations would involve. Ms. Mitchell highlighted for discussion the text "In unusual and carefully considered circumstances, a mural may be appropriate on the primary elevation," expanding on how it may provide flexibility in certain situations depending on the building.

Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Shook discussed examples of buildings that this would be applicable to for illustrative purposes. Ms. Shook clarified by providing a speculative example (842 W King St., Magistrate Office) of an existing glass panel integrated into a primary façade and that although it is part of that façade elevation, there is potential for a small mural to be appropriate in that location. She reiterated that this would be on a case-by-case basis, but the language was written to provide guidance on similar situations.

Vice-Chair Bond inquired about the buildings facing King Street that also have a side visible from Howard Street, with respect to the Howard Street Project, and if that would affect their façade ordering. Chair Smyth clarified that those facing Howard St would still be considered tertiary as the rears of the buildings. Ms. Shook also reminded the HPC that they had previously discussed this concept relating to a previous case, and that adding to the elevation definitions "front," "side," and "rear" would provide greater clarity for applicants, Staff, and the Commission going forward.

Ms. Mitchell continued to open up a discussion regarding murals on retaining walls, beginning by summarizing the table item on packet page 17. She mentioned that Town Staff desired to discuss this with HPC. Their thoughts were for this to apply to any property type, providing examples of potential applications

to local historic landmark properties, such as the Jones House (future local historic landmark property) parking lot retaining wall and Watauga County Jail's (currently The Pasta Joint restaurant) retaining wall.

Ms. Shook pointed out the existing mural along the TDA wall as a current example of a mural on a retaining wall. She stated that there also may be other smaller structures outside of the building footprints that may be able to be included as well, providing the example of a solid waste enclosure.

Chair Smyth inquired whether there were any known historic retaining walls dating to before 1964. Ms. Shook responded by saying that it would be difficult to have historical accuracy on the ages of specific walls, though their locations could provide insight. Chair Smyth agreed, stating that their proximity to a historic building should be taken into account, and that overall it was a good addition. Ms. Mitchell added the Comprehensive Architectural Survey report might provide information about retaining walls, depending on the property and the corresponding summary.

Ms. Mitchell continued summarizing the table rows on packet page 18. Chair Smyth clarified that the text regarding murals engulfing architectural features partially or fully applied to a previous tentative mural project, and stated that he felt this opens up space for creativity. HPC members discussed the use of the terminology "engulf" relating to architectural features.

Ms. Mitchell finished summarizing the table, noting the new definition of Architectural Features as described earlier.

Chair Smyth inquired if an applicant is required to come forward with all paint colors/types for a proposed mural. Ms. Shook replied that they are not currently, but it could be an application requirement. Ms. Mitchell clarified that often in past cases, those details have been provided.

Ms. Mitchell asked if there were any further questions. Commission Member Carter inquired as to whether the provided murals guideline/property types table would be available to applicants. Ms. Shook clarified that it is currently part of a text amendment and will have to complete that process, but will be available upon its approval.

Chair Smyth mentioned packet page 8, regarding tertiary elevations, inquiring about the language "does not face the public street and is generally not visible..." and what implications "generally" may carry. Ms. Shook stated that the term provides some flexibility to make determinations case-by-case. She stated that the Town Attorney encouraged keeping some of that language in review, noting that it provided a guidance framework for the HPC to be flexible in unique situations. Chair Smyth expressed satisfaction with this reply.

Chair Smyth proceeded to inquire if there may be the option for applicants to recreate pre-existing ghost signs in their original location if photographic evidence was found of the sign. Ms. Shook asked for time to look into this, noting that generally the theory of recreation is frowned upon, but she is not sure how that might apply to signage.

The HPC agreed that overall these changes were thorough and addressed concerns that were brought up from a previous mural discussion. Commission Member Carter inquired to confirm whether a previous case would need to re-apply once these changes took effect, which was confirmed by Ms. Shook as the case was tabled until the consideration of mural text.

Ms. Shook added that in research overall, stricter standards were found in other jurisdictions, providing an example of 1 mural per building. She noted that if the HPC felt that any stricter standards were needed, they can share those suggestions, but the overall idea in Staff's draft text presentation was to bring flexibility. She also stated that Ms. Mitchell had structured the draft to be more similar in structure and tone to the rest of the regulatory language in the UDO, noting that it is more user-friendly and provides better guidance. Chair Smyth pointed out that regarding stricter standards, he felt that the draft already contained language that

gives the HPC some latitude to make decisions case-by-case. He also lauded the provided map of property classifications in the Downtown Boone Local Historic District.

Ms. Mitchell mentioned that the topic of murals in the historic district was previously discussed with Town Council last fall, and a synopsis of today's discussion would be taken to the Town Council meeting the following day (April 8, 2026), with Staff presenting this proposed text amendment. Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Shook noted that they had both seen some small spelling/grammatical errors that would be corrected prior to presentation.

Ms. Mitchell verified that the HPC was favorable of the language regarding retaining walls being applicable to all property types.

Ms. Shook noted that she wanted to modify the "NC" (Non-Contributing) property classification to include the classification of "VL" for vacant lots for clarity to potential applicants.

Ms. Shook left the meeting at 3:41pm.

Ceremony Updates and Discussion of Press Release Quote for Stoneman's Raid Interpretative Panel

Ms. Mitchell began this discussion and reminded attendees that the date of the ribbon-cutting ceremony would be May 21, 2026, at 3 pm. She highlighted two main topics for today's discussion, being the speaker order and press release quotes. Ms. Mitchell stated that she had quotes from the Watauga County Historical Society (WCHS) and Downtown Boone Development Association (DBDA).

She proceeded to inquire with Council Member Liaison Roseman regarding the speaker order, suggesting that HPC Chair Smyth would begin with an introduction, followed by Council Member Liaison Roseman, Adelia from the WCHS, and Mayor George giving final remarks to transition to the ribbon-cutting portion of the ceremony. Chair Smyth inquired whether Civil War Trails (CWT) would be giving a quote. Ms. Mitchell replied that CWT was looking into if they had a representative available from their Western Branch, as the scheduled install in April precedes the ceremony. If so, she felt that after Historical Society may be an appropriate speaker ordering for CWT.

Chair Smyth noted that in previous discussion, they had determined they'd like to cover the Civil War Period in Watauga County specifically, up to Stoneman's Raid. As such, he felt that switching order with Adelia would be appropriate. Council Member Liaison Roseman suggested that she do an introduction and Mayor George delivers closing remarks in tandem with this. Chair Smyth agreed. Adelia Daly, attending for the WCHS, agreed as well, stating that Stoneman's Raid was very Town-oriented, so the remarks covering the larger County context as a WCHS representative felt appropriate. Chair Smyth noted that his portion would be truncated, as the Raid itself was the first unified Union action in the area up to that point, to which Adelia agreed.

The HPC agreed that Mayor George delivering final comments would be appropriate.

Adelia inquired about when the HPC would like a draft of the Historical Society's comments. Chair Smyth replied that he would send his comments out next week, but is flexible on draft delivery timelines. Ms. Mitchell pointed out that draft copies aren't necessarily required, as the remarks are from each individual and don't necessarily require approval.

Vice Chair Bond recommended approaching Mayor George soon to discuss details and logistics. Ms. Mitchell stated that she would talk to him at the Town Council Meeting the next day.

Council Member Liaison Roseman reiterated being favorable of this order of speaking, feeling it was appropriate with respect to both time and place. The HPC agreed, noting that the Civil War ended soon after the Raid.

Ms. Mitchell inquired if Chair Smyth's comments would be brought forward at the May HPC advisory meeting for input. Chair Smyth confirmed and noted that he would also be able to send copies out for review prior to that.

Adelia inquired about whether her attendance at that meeting would be pertinent, which the HPC affirmed.

Ms. Mitchell stated that she had been in touch with Lane Moody (Downtown Boone Development Director) regarding DBDA's potential involvement and that they likely will not speak, but are excited to see the project come to fruition.

Vice Chair Bond inquired whether Ms. Mitchell had heard from the TDA (Tourism Development Authority). Ms. Mitchell stated that once the invitations were ready, she'd ensure one was sent to them.

Chair Smyth noted that he wanted to ensure credit was given to all stakeholders involved, and that he'd obtain a list.

Ms. Mitchell returned to the topic of the press release used to announce the ribbon-cutting ceremony and the quote needed from the HPC. She noted that previous Civil War Trails (CWT) press releases were formatted differently than the Town's press releases with more narrative elements and reiterated that the CWT directive for the press release quote was to discuss the project and should communicate community excitement. Ms. Mitchell proceeded to read the quotes shared with her:

WCHS press release quote: *"While Stoneman's Raid on Boone was a relatively minor incident in the American Civil War, its impact on the people of Boone and Watauga County was profound. The Watauga County Historical Society is delighted to see the Town of Boone take this important and long-overdue step of partnering with the Civil War Trails program to acknowledge, interpret, and commemorate the significance of Stoneman's Raid and the American Civil War more broadly for our community."*

DBDA press release quote: *"The Downtown Boone Development Association is grateful to the Historic Preservation Commission for their thoughtful work in bringing this piece of Boone's history to life. This marker honors an important moment in our past and invites residents and visitors alike to connect more deeply with our downtown. We look forward to celebrating with the community and hope everyone will take a moment to experience it."*

The HPC was favorable of the quotes. Ms. Mitchell stated that Civil War Trails will compile the press release and that the Town had the option to use it or modify it via the Town's communications staff member. She also stated that she would provide a program handout at the ceremony. She continued to detail the decorations she obtained and related logistics for the event with the HPC, who were favorable of them. To close, she briefly recapped and there were no further questions from the Commission.

Review and Discuss the Rivers House Park NPST (Northern Peaks State Trail) Sign

Vice Chair Bond opened this topic by confirming that the date of the event for the NPST at Rivers House Park would be the Friday of the following week, April 17, 2026. Ms. Mitchell confirmed this date with the activities beginning at 3 pm, and she directed the HPC to packet page 21, which contained a sign proof for review. She mentioned that review of the top paragraph which briefly describes the history of the park was requested of the HPC. Ms. Mitchell added that although the Park's current name on the proof is "Rivers House Park," the existing monument at the property lists the park as "Rivers Park." She stated the park is 13 acres in size, but one parcel of that total is owned by the Town of Boone, meaning that it was over 12 but under 13 acres provided by the Rivers Family. As such, she highlighted the modified text on packet page 22 relating to this point. Ms. Mitchell also stated that she contacted Digital Watauga - who has the image available of Rachel Rivers-Coffey - and that they had provided an image credit to be used.

Chair Smyth stated that the wording “began donating the house” was confusing. Vice Chair Bond stated that it likely referred to the process of the donation through a will. The HPC deliberated about this wording, eventually concluding that the wording should be adjusted in some way to remove “began.”

Vice Chair Bond inquired about the wording regarding the park’s size, “round out the park’s 13 acres.” Commission Member Gaetano inquired about the wording “over 12 acres” specifically, and Ms. Mitchell clarified that it was a land donation amount that was over 12 and under 13 acres.

Vice Chair Bond inquired about the remaining parcel not from the Rivers family, and Ms. Mitchell replied that based on county tax records, the deed was from a family with the last name of “Hill”.

Chair Smyth suggested an alteration to the first sentence of the second paragraph, proposing “true to the intent of the will” in place of “true to the intent of the donation”, stating that it is a noble act. Ms. Mitchell replied that they hadn’t altered the second paragraph.

Ms. Mitchell stated that the sign proof in the packet would be located in the trail kiosk, and that the desire was for the sign to be printed as soon as possible.

Vice Chair Bond proposed replacing “R.L. Clay” with the full name instead of initials.

Chair Smyth revisited the donation language, suggesting “arranged for the donation” opposed to “began donating”. The HPC was favorable of changing the language. After discussion, the HPC revised the language as follows:

Rivers Park is named for the Rivers family, who owned and edited Boone's primary newspaper, the Watauga Democrat, from 1889 to 1994 and resided in the nearby R. L. Clay House (Rivers House) for many years. Rachel-Rivers Coffey and her husband Armfield Coffey arranged in their will for the donation of the house and over 12 acres of surrounding parcels to the Town of Boone. The Town purchased additional property in 2000 to round out the park's 13 acres. Deed restrictions stipulate that the land may be used for recreation, wildlife preservation, and historical purposes.

Vice Chair Bond confirmed the time of the event would be from 3 pm to 7 pm, and Ms. Mitchell concurred. Ms. Mitchell then discussed event parking logistics with the HPC, noting that it will coincide with the Town’s Earth Third event.

Review of Boone/Kraut Creek Historic Marker Report

Ms. Mitchell opened this topic by recapping the discussion at the previous March 3, 2026, Advisory meeting. Commission Member Oxendine stated that she was unable to edit the report as previously discussed. She started with discussing the proposed marker text and revisited the notion of where in the facility’s timeline they should end the report. Specifically, she was inquiring as to whether the marker should include the former wicker company being in the facility. Vice Chair Bond stated she thought it should end with the kraut factory closing in 1981, and Chair Smyth agreed. She added that she felt Option 1 of the proposed marker text captured this best in the closing sentence. Chair Smyth read Option 1 aloud for the HPC, ensuring the factuality of the entire text with the HPC. The HPC was favorable and Commission Member Oxendine confirmed the factuality. She also reiterated the change discussed at the previous meeting, changing from “North State Canning Company” to “Watauga Kraut Factory” to maximize naming accuracy. She briefly touched on keeping names of important figures in the report and changing language from “polluting Boone Creek” to other phrasing such as “runoff” or “drained.” The HPC briefly discussed the language, opting to eliminate “polluting Boone Creek over the years” from the text.

Ms. Mitchell inquired whether the HPC would like to include the new research they had about the wicker production in the facility in the marker report. After some discussion, Chair Smyth added that it also fell outside of the period of significance to be included in the marker text. Commission Member Oxendine clarified as to whether American Wicker should be included in the historical sketch, which the HPC affirmed.

They felt that extending this idea to include the facility's current use in the historical sketch would be appropriate as well.

Ms. Mitchell requested an updated version of the report from the HPC before presenting it to Town Council for consideration. Vice Chair Bond inquired about a potential timeline. Ms. Mitchell noted that to determine this, she needed to confirm a proposed location for the marker. The HPC noted that they were in agreement with the one location in the report (971 W King St) for ease of accessibility and visibility. Ms. Mitchell noted that she would need to obtain approval from Watauga County for that location, and also take the full marker proposal to Town Council. Ms. Mitchell stated that the marker company's production time would also affect their timeline significantly. Overall, she broadly estimated a timeframe of later this year.

New Town of Boone Logo, Seal, and Story Badges: For Information

Ms. Mitchell presented the new Town branding including the new Town Logos, Seal, and Story Badges officially to the HPC, who were enthusiastic about them overall. Vice Chair Bond provided some feedback on the story badges, with Ms. Mitchell noting the Town Council resolution to adopt them would be the following day, so actual changes were unlikely. Ms. Mitchell proceeded to describe that the HPC would be using the Town primary logo for any future projects and shared use cases of them all for informational purposes.

Other Matters

There were no other matters for discussion.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Smyth at 4:34 pm.

Vardell Smyth-Chair

David Pedersen, Board Clerk

Proposal for a Town of Boone Historical Marker

Prepared by Melody Oxendine, April 2026 [DRAFT]

A. SUBJECT OF PROPOSED MARKER:

Watauga Kraut Factory

B. SITE TO BE MARKED:

Parcel ID: 2900-69-7872-000, 971 West King Street

C. PROPOSED LOCATION OF MARKER:

971 West King Street is located roughly 15 yards east of the building that was once part of the factory. Next to the lower (northwest) entrance to the parking lot, near the front facade in a landscaped green space.



Fig. 1. Google, *Google Maps*, screenshot of 971 West King Street, Boone, NC.

D. HISTORICAL SKETCH:

The history of kraut production in Watauga is a complicated, winding story. The first hints of a sauerkraut factory date back to 1923. Originally operated by The Blue Ridge Farmers Association, the factory was located on the west side of Boone. The company operated under the North State Canning Company Historical Marker Report

title “Watauga Kraut Factory,” producing sauerkraut made with cabbage supplied by the local farmers. Mr. John B. Steele, the Watauga County agricultural agent, was an overseer of the company and provided advice when needed. Steele met with the local farmers at the courthouse and formed the Watauga Cabbage Growers Association. “Each of 100 farmers agreed to raise one acre of cabbage and pay \$40.00 to build a kraut factory in Boone....”¹ The Blue Ridge (Farmers) Association was formed to sell the factory’s products, as well as those of other local agricultural associations located in Western North Carolina. Mr. H. Neal Blair was elected as the cabbage expert and head of product development. Other leaders were elected by sections of the county: Messrs, W. L. Winkler, H. Neal Blair, J. C. Miller, Carter Farthing, N. L. Mast, and one unrecorded.²

The Watauga Kraut Factory had humble beginnings with 10 small vats. The vats and canning equipment were all stored in the same wooden building, which had an operating capacity of producing 250 tons of kraut per season.³ The factory was led by H. Neil Blair and John B. Steele and funded by C.D. Matthews when the company was financially stable. H. Neil Blair and John B. Steele launched a large advertising campaign to spread the word of the Watauga Kraut Factory. Dr. J. R. Lowery, a renowned “stomach” specialist in Raleigh, stated that the mountain kraut was healthy for the stomach lining and, overall, a beneficial addition to any diet. “I know of nothing that gives as good results as eating pure lactic acid kraut, therefore anything that I can do that will educate the people to eat this healthful product, I will be glad to do”.⁴

The factory offered better prices for the canned kraut than selling privately down the mountain.⁵ Farmers found they favored selling their high-grade cabbage to the local factory due to fair pay and familiarity with the owners. Noting the success of the kraut factory, the Watauga Farmers Association met on April 10th, 1926, to discuss the dissolution of the corporation. Spearheaded by W. L. Winkler as vice president and H. Neal Blair as secretary, their efforts could come to fruition in September of 1926. The Blue Ridge Farmers Association leased the building and land to the newly emerged company, North State Canning Company, and James L. Hemphill. Mr. H. Neal Blair was appointed as manager of the new operation. The company also expanded the product line to include canned fruits.⁶ Soon, the cannery was operating at full

¹ “Watauga’s Kraut Factory Is Success in First Season,” *Greensboro Daily News*, November 18, 1923, https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/936675408/?terms=%22blue%20ridge%20farmers%20association%22&pqsid=ie1mFcM_aBqSNEMAnZSO0Q%3A2121307%3A250077210.

² “Watauga’s Kraut Factory Is Success in First Season”.

³ F. H. Jeter, “State’s Kraut Industry,” December 15, 1924, https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/936664867/?match=1&terms=%22blue%20ridge%20farmers%20association%22&pqsid=ie1mFcM_aBqSNEMAnZSO0Q%3A2121307%3A250077210.

⁴ F. M. Jeter, “Kraut Industry Now on Its Feet,” *Greensboro Daily News*, December 18, 1924, https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/936664867/?match=1&terms=%22blue%20ridge%20farmers%20association%22&pqsid=ie1mFcM_aBqSNEMAnZSO0Q%3A2121307%3A250077210.

⁵ F. H. Jeter, “State’s Kraut Industry,” *Greensboro Daily News*, December 15, 1924, https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/936664867/?match=1&terms=%22blue%20ridge%20farmers%20association%22&pqsid=ie1mFcM_aBqSNEMAnZSO0Q%3A2121307%3A250077210.

⁶ “Boone Will Get New Canning Firm,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, February 19, 1929, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/932511851/?match=1&terms=North%20State%20canning%20company&pqsid=ztygor3kyB0sVvKMgz64Mw%3A2177566%3A12351938,82>.

capacity, and a building expansion was needed to meet the growing product line and high demand.⁷ H. Neil Blair and John B. Steele would sell the North State Canning Company to W. Frank Miller Sr., Charles Hulcher, and J.B. Church. By 1930, the North State Canning Company was projected to produce 2,000,000 pounds of kraut.⁸ The company was slowly bought out from the shareholders: H. B. Perry bought out J.B. Church's shares, and in 1938, Perry and W.F. (Bill) Miller Jr. bought out Hulcher's portion.

In November of 1959, North State Canning Company had products being sent as far away as Germany, according to Assistant County Agent W. C. Richardson's records. W. F. (Bill) Miller Jr. and his mother, Mrs. W. F. Miller, were managers of the company, who employed around 30 individuals seasonally their pay ranging from \$18,000 to \$20,000.⁹ Farmers under contract for the company were paid roughly \$20,000 to \$25,000 per harvesting season; they would have to yield around 80 acres of cabbage yearly to fulfill their obligations to the company.¹⁰

Advertising for North State Canning Company would grow as a marketing campaign with a heavy focus on the well-known tourist destinations in the High Country began. Notably, labels gained picturesque images of the Blue Ridge Mountains that had text noting "Pride of the Blue Ridge" and "Grandfather Mountain."¹¹ The focus of this campaign was due to the popularity of the Blue Ridge Parkway and Grandfather Mountain, which would further become recognizable as a product of the well-known landscape. The canning labels highlight the cultural and historical staple that kraut has served in the diets of individuals in the high country.¹² Many newspaper articles from western North Carolina highlight recipes for sauerkraut dishes, which aided in sharing these traditional recipes from the mountains to the coast. One common recipe was for sauerkraut during the winter, marketed as a fundamental part of the mountain diet. This "old-fashioned" cuisine was a staple on the plates of residents who faced the cold and brutal winters in the mountains.¹³

⁷ Ted League, "More Kraut," *The Cleveland Star*, April 22, 1929,

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn97064509/1929-04-22/ed-1/seq-20/#words=North+State+Canning+company>

⁸ "Kraut Factory Do Bigger Business," *Johnson City Chronicle*, August 22, 1930,

<https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/585686688/?match=1&terms=%22north%20state%20canning%20company%22&pqsid=m82XQAzQ0pSBSw1rIHe5ww%3A13808%3A1480761698>.

⁹ John Corey, "Sauerkraut Factory," *Johnson City Press*, November 40-ton 20, 1959,

<https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/586914805/?match=1&terms=%22north%20state%20canning%20company%22&pqsid=m82XQAzQ0pSBSw1rIHe5ww%3A222520%3A1834193534>.

¹⁰ John Corey, "Sauerkraut Factory".

¹¹ North State Canning Company, "10 oz. Chopped Kraut Label From North State Canning Co.," *Digital Watauga*. <https://digitalwatauga.org/items/show/20894>.

¹² North State Canning Co. "10oz. Chopped Kraut."

¹³ Cecily Brownstone, "For Good Winter Supper, It's Old-Fashion Kraut," *Carteret County News Times*, January 28, 1955, <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn94058246/1955-01-28/ed-1/seq-10/#words=Creek+kraut+Kraut>.

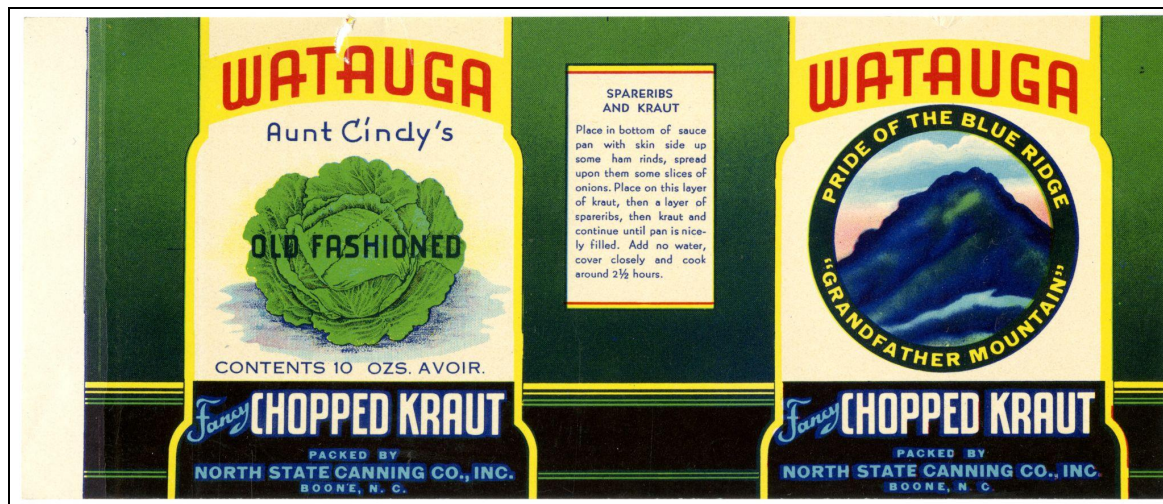


Fig 2. "10 oz. Chopped Kraut Label From North State Canning Co." Image courtesy of Eric Plaag Collection, Digital Watauga Project.

By the 1960s, North State Canning Company had launched Watauga County as the number one cabbage producer in the state, and 32nd in the United States.¹⁴ W. F. (Bill) Miller Jr. reported that by 1967, the kraut factory expanded to 40-ton vats from the previous 32-ton vats, which allowed the factory to double its production. The previous vats were constructed from cypress lumber, a material that is long-lasting with minimal maintenance.¹⁵ This new facility was of brick and steel construction, replacing the old, original wooden structure that the factory had been housed in for years.¹⁶ A wooden storage building held unused material on the property. The rock building and two-story warehouse were the main sections of the kraut production process.¹⁷ With this expansion, the factory was able to process 24,000 cans of kraut a day or 3,000 tons of kraut annually. The kraut had a fermentation period of around 30 days, with the vats being refilled with fresh cabbage two to three times each season. After processing, the kraut would be canned, labeled, and shipped across America and the world. Notable reports of enjoyers of the kraut span from Florida to Maryland.¹⁸ The owners of the factory were listed as Dr. H.B. Perry Jr., Miss Gertrude Perry, son and daughter of Dr. Perry Sr. and Mrs. W.F. Miller Sr., and W.F. (Bill) Miller Jr.¹⁹

By 1968, the factory was a powerhouse in Watauga County, contributing \$225,600 to the local economy.²⁰ The county agent in 1969, L. E. Tuckwiller, estimated 80 acres of land within

¹⁴ North State Canning Company, "10 oz. Chopped Kraut Label From North State Canning Co.," *Digital Watauga*, accessed September 26, 2025, <https://digitalwatauga.org/items/show/20894>.

¹⁵ Minor. "New Boone Cannery."

¹⁶ Minor. "New Boone Cannery."

¹⁷ Minor. "New Boone Cannery."

¹⁸ Minor. "New Boone Cannery."

¹⁹ Minor. "New Boone Cannery."

²⁰ "Market and Kraut Cabbage in Watauga Bring \$225,000," *Watauga Democrat*, August 28, 1969, <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn82007642/1969-08-28/ed-1/seq-12/#words=Creek+kraut+Kraut>.

Watauga County would comprise of kraut cabbage.²¹ This was a slight increase for kraut cabbage from previous reports from 1959. However, Tuckwiller argued that there was a shortage of and a higher cost of labor, requiring farmers to cut back on how much they grew, which is why the acreage had not grown even more.²² Most of the cabbage production was managed through four local companies: V. C. Shore and Sons, Hollar and Greene Produce Company, Critcher Brothers, and Goodnight Brothers Produce Company. The North State Canning Company took the majority of the kraut cabbage grown in the county to produce the famous Watauga Kraut.²³

In May of 1978, Mr. W. F. (Bill) Miller Jr. and Mrs. W. F. Miller sold North State Canning Company to the successful candy maker Charles P. Minges and his daughter, Mrs. Nina Ennis. The Ennis family was originally from Rockingham, North Carolina, but had recently moved to Valle Crucis, a decision spurred on by Minges' preferred taste for the Watauga kraut. The candy company moved the manufacturing facility into the North State Canning Company building and merged with the Nin-a-Menz company. The company changed the name to "North State Foods," a fusion of the two food-based companies. The Minges' main goal was to triple the production of kraut from 1977, due to a "bad year of cabbage", with the main cause of the decrease in quality and quantity of cabbage being a fungal disease that heavily impacted local cabbage populations.²⁴ During this time, Charles Minges excitedly wrote that to celebrate the merger of companies, he was attempting to secure a sauerkraut candy recipe.²⁵ The continuous function of the building proved to be kraut production until the company's liquidation in 1981.²⁶ The closure is attributed to a multitude of factors; the most significant was the fungal disease that plagued the crops of the late 1970s, but also the limited and declining available and useful farmland in the county.²⁷ The lasting legacy of the Watauga Kraut Factory is most notable in the environmental impacts of the building design and placement. The runoff from the cabbage fermenting process would make its way into the Boone Creek, creating a pungent and recognizable scent of kraut within the waterway. This odor gained the stream its nickname "Kraut Creek."²⁸

Many Watauga County locals saw the production of sauerkraut at the factory as an enlargement of the rural traditions of the region and were large consumers of the product.²⁹ The locals acknowledged the canning company as a powerhouse in the county that turned their

²¹ "Market and Kraut Cabbage." *Watauga Democrat*.

²² "Market and Kraut Cabbage." *Watauga Democrat*.

²³ "Market and Kraut Cabbage." *Watauga Democrat*.

²⁴ Sheri Castle, "Green Cabbage Remains a Symbol of Old Mountain Ways and Comforting Suppers," *Our State*, September 26, 2019, <https://www.ourstate.com/where-the-cabbage-is-king-the-history-of-green-cabbage-in-watauga-county-north-carolina/>.

²⁵ Conrad Paysour, "Candy and Kraut Do Mix,"

²⁶ "Watauga County, NC," *Watgov.org*, accessed February 23, 2026, <https://tax.watgov.org/WataugaNC/maps/mapadv.aspx#2>.

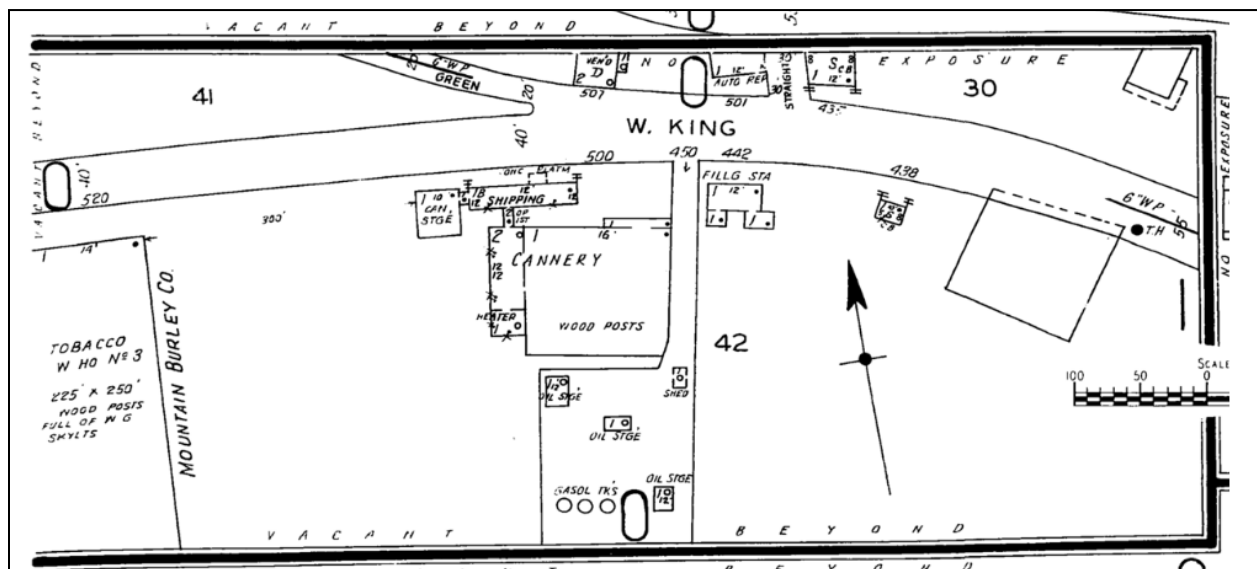
²⁷ Rick McDaniel, "Recipe for Success," *WNC Magazine*, November 2015, https://wncmagazine.com/feature/recipe_success.

²⁸ Castle, "Green Cabbage Remains a Symbol of Old Mountain Ways and Comforting Suppers,"

²⁹ Roger Whitener, "The Black Mountain News," *DigitalInc.org*, February 12, 1981, 2, info:lcen/sn96086030.

cabbage into a cash crop, bolstering the local economy.³⁰ The closure of the factory would affect the local economy. The tradition of kraut making in Watauga never ended but was revived in at-home fermentation processes, a long tradition for mountain families dating back before the 1920s. In particular, a 1924 article from the *North Wilkesboro Hustler* advised readers not to rely entirely on the factory kraut and keep their barrel fixtures and other kraut-making supplies.³¹ Such a tradition could prove useful when, in 1981, the company officially liquidated its assets, paid out its shareholders, and ended its manufacturing operations.³²

The kraut factory was located at the west end of Boone, according to the 1947 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map and supported with news reports from 1967.³³ Situated on Upper King Street, the facade faced the modern streets of Green Street, the southern side situated near Poplar Grove Road. The Geographic Information System, which documents the buildings and topography of Watauga County, reported this parcel as just outside the Boone Historic Downtown district and corridor to residential and commercial properties.³⁴ The Watauga County tax database records the site as 971 West King Street. The parcel of land was sold to Watauga County on November 24th, 1987, for \$400,000 from Old American Wicker Property.³⁵



³⁰ Whitener, "Cabbage for sauerkraut."

³¹ "Mountain Cabbage and Kraut," *The North Wilkesboro Hustler*, October 8, 1924, <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn92072938/1924-10-08/ed-1/seq-1/#words=Creek+kraut+Kraut>.

³² Robert and Mary Capps to Watauga County. *Deed of Sale*. neighborhood Book 83, p. 187, Watauga County Register of Deeds, Boone, North Carolina.

³³ Boone, *Watauga County, North Carolina 1947*, Map, New York, Sanborn Map Company 1947, Library of Congress, Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970.

³⁴ Boone, *Watauga County, North Carolina 1947*, Map.

³⁵ "PARID 2900697872000," Watauga County North Carolina, accessed Apr 26, 2026, <https://tax.watgov.org/WataugaNC/Datalets/Datalet.aspx?mode=&UseSearch=no&pin=2900697872000&jur=095&taxyr=2026>

Fig. 3. *Boone, Watauga County, North Carolina 1947, Map*, New York, Sanborn Map Company 1947, Library of Congress, Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970.

The architectural distinctions are consistent with mid-20th-century industrial design in construction. While these discrepancies align with historical accounts, there are no large reports of the building being altered or renovated drastically since its construction in 1967.³⁶ The building is composed of red brick masonry laid in a running bond pattern. The building consists of a row of commercial metal-frame double-pane windows and a flat roof with no overhang. The east elevation lacks a brick exterior, but is clad in gray weatherboard siding. This side features the service entrance for loading and shipping, remnants of the building's original use. The rear or southern elevation faces Popular Grove Road. After the closure of the canning company, the building remained vacant for about six years until the Watauga Agricultural Center opened in 1987. Currently, Watauga County uses the building to hold conferences, educational seminars, classes, and offer equipment rentals. This Agricultural Center serves as a component of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension led by North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T University. The Extension's goal is to establish a branch in each county as a research-based educational resource that identifies problems and issues within the agricultural discipline while providing solutions. This information is then broadcast to communities at seminars hosted at the Agricultural Centers across the state.³⁷



Fig. 4. Google, *Google Maps*, screenshot of 971 West King Street, Boone, NC.

³⁶ *Boone, Watauga County, North Carolina 1947, Map*.

³⁷ "How Extension Works," www.ces.ncsu.edu, accessed February 23, 2026, <https://www.ces.ncsu.edu/how-extension-works/>.

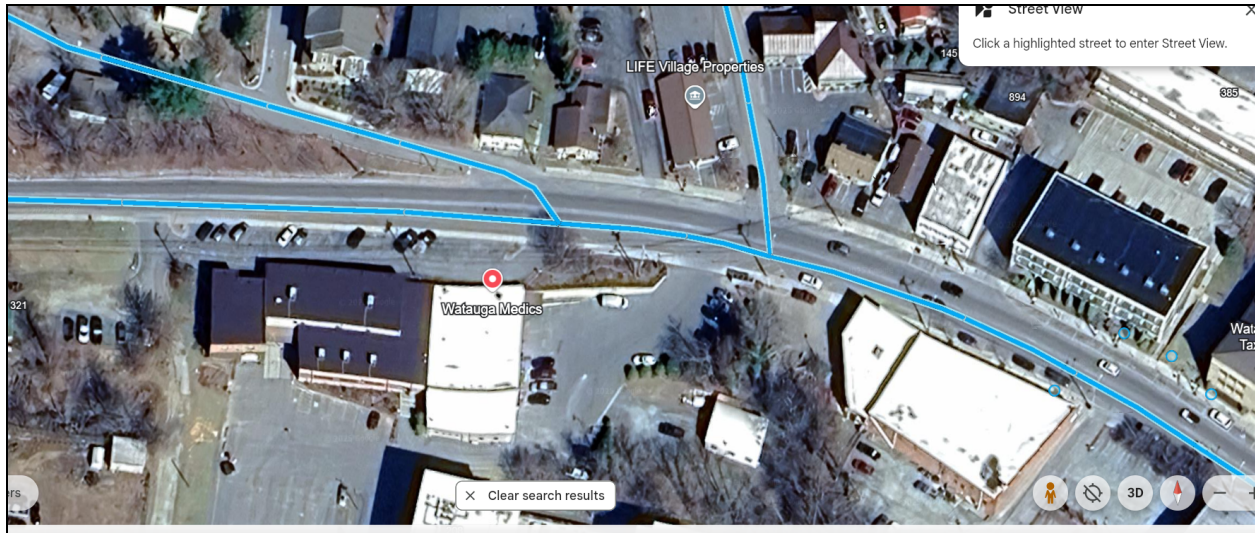


Fig. 5. Google, *Google Maps*, aerial view of 971 West King Street, Boone, NC.

Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture (BRWIA) manages the High Country Food Hub, which has been housed in the Agricultural Center since September 2016. Watauga County Commissioners approved the use of the building for operations, and BRWIA secured funding from sources including the NC A&T Extension, The Golden Leaf Fund, Z. Smith Reynolds, and Appalachian State University's Appalachian Studies Department. Locals requested more areas for food storage and supplies within Boone, especially during the winter months, and the Agricultural Center, with its familiarity to farmers and gardeners, proved to be the ideal location.³⁸ The Food Hub operates as an online farmers' market offering a variety of products, including vegetables, fruits, flowers, meat, and body care products. Its large selection of goods can be picked up in several locations, including Boone, Banner Elk, Blowing Rock, West Jefferson, and Deep Gap. The Food Hub now proves to be a useful tool for farmers to work within the local community, sharing and selling their goods.³⁹ It also plays a key role in keeping local heritage and traditions alive while maintaining the spirit of the building, based on providing the community with nutrition. The connection between the current Watauga Agricultural Center and High Country Food Hub, from its birth as a locally focused major supplier of high-quality sauerkraut and other farm products through the North State Canning Company, shows a profound correlation and connection to the heritage of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

³⁸ "About," High Country Food Hub, 2016. <https://www.highcountryfoodhub.org/about.html>

³⁹ "Local Food at the Click of a Button." n.d. High Country Food Hub. <https://www.highcountryfoodhub.org/>

E. PROPOSED MARKER TEXT:

Option 1:

The Watauga Kraut Factory operated near here from 1923 to 1981. County agent John B. Steele and local farmers, including H. Neil Blair Sr., created the Blue Ridge Farmers Association, which managed the company. By the 1960s, Watauga County was the number one kraut producer in the state, sourcing its supply of cabbage from local farmers. Run off from the kraut production process would seep into the stream; the smell was so pungent across the Town of Boone that the waterway gained its nickname “Kraut Creek.” In 1978, North State Canning Company, then owned by W. F. Miller, Jr., sold the company to Nina and Tom Ennis, who merged kraut production with their business, Nina-Menz. In 1981, the factory stopped production. [121 words]

Option 2:

The North State Canning Company, operating from 1923 to 1981, was a local company established at the west end of Boone through the collective efforts of county agent John B. Steele and local farmers like H. N. Blair under the Blue Ridge Farmers Association. By the 1960s, Watauga County was the number one cabbage producer in the state and 32nd in the nation. The factory raked in \$225,600 for the Watauga County economy in 1968. During processing, the Canning Company dumped Kraut drainage into the creek, which led to the pollution of the Boone Creek over the years. The smell was so pungent across the town of Boone that it gained its nickname “Kraut Creek.” In 1978, North State Canning Company, under W. F. Miller Jr. sold the company to Nina and Tom Ennis, who merged kraut production with their candy business, Nina-Menz. In 1981, the factory shut its doors and stopped producing kraut and candy. [156 words]

Option 3:

The North State Canning Company, operating near here from 1923 to 1981, was managed by the Blue Ridge Farmers Association, established through the collective efforts of county agent John B. Steele, and local farmers like H. N. Blair. An essential part of the local agricultural economy, by the 1960s, the company produced over 3,000 tons of kraut a year and was the number one kraut producer in the state. Distributed from Maryland to Florida, it was the 32nd largest producer in the nation. Between the pungent smell from production and periodic discharges into the Boone Creek, the waterway gained the nickname “Kraut Creek.” In 1978, North State Canning Company, under W. F. Miller Jr. sold the company to Nina and Tom Ennis, who merged kraut production with their candy business, Nina-Menz. In 1981, the factory shut its doors and stopped producing kraut and candy. [145 words]

Option 4:

The Watauga Kraut Factory, operating near here from 1923 to 1981, was managed by the Blue Ridge Farmers Association, established through the collective efforts of county agent John B. Steele. 125 local farmers and businessmen contributed to the factory's construction. At its peak, the company produced over 24,000 cases a day and approximately 3,000 tons of kraut products annually. The factory became an essential part of the local economy, the number one kraut producer in the state, and sold from Maryland to Florida. Between the pungent smell from production and periodic discharges into Boone Creek, the waterway gained the nickname "Kraut Creek." In 1981, the factory shut its doors and ceased production of kraut.

[140 words]

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ToB - Statement of Conformity (SoC) Monthly Reporting for HPC

File Date	Application Number	Project Name	Permit Type	Permit Use	Location	Status	Issuing User
February 12, 2026	26-0085	Town of Boone Post Office - HVAC Replacement	Zoning	Statement of Conformity	680 W KING ST	Approved	Amy Snider
April 23, 2026	26-0262	Wildlife Unlimited - Statement of Conformity	Zoning	Statement of Conformity	713 W KING ST	Pending	Amy Snider

2 Permits