

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 10, 2019
3:00 PM**

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance: Chairperson Eric Plaag, Bettie Bond, Teresa Pearman, Chuck Watkins, Loretta Clawson and Rennie Brantz

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

Others Present: John Ward-Town Manager and Lane Moody-Downtown Boone Development Coordinator

Call to Order

Chairperson Eric Plaag 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

Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Member Pearman to approve the August 13, 2019 meeting minutes as amended.

Vote:

Aye – (Bond, Brantz, Pearman, Pollitt, Plaag)

Nay – None

Abstention – (Clawson, Watkins)

The motion passed.

State/Local Marker & Statue for Burrell Street

Mr. John Ward, Boone Town Manager explained the request to rename South Water Street between West King Street and Poplar Grove/River Street as Burrell Street. He further explained the request to commission a statue of Burrell to be placed on the front lawn of the Rivers Park property and the Historic Preservation Commission be referred to for the design and placement

of an historic marker describing Burrell's importance near the cabin thought of as Dan'l Boone's cabin.

Ms. Mary Moretz gave a presentation on Mr. Burrell who was a slave, who acted as a scout and guide to Dan'l Boone and his hunting party, when they visited the area in which the Town of Boone was founded (permanently attached).

Chairperson Plaag explained the HPC's experience with dealing with the State Historical Marker Committee and noted that this type of local marker information will not be significant to the State. He further explained that because of the State, the Town of Boone has started its own marker program. He explained the process starting with the drafting of the report to show the justification of the local marker. He noted that it might take approximately eight-months to complete the process for this local marker. Chairperson Plaag noted that if the statue is placed on County property, the County would need to give approval to do so. Mr. Mark Freed, Director of Cultural Resources added that the Cultural Resources Department is working on an initiative towards having a series of benches and sculptures in the Downtown area.

Discussion ensued on the funding for the Burrell statue. Mr. Ward noted that if Town money is used for the statue, it must be located within the Town. Ms. Moretz talked about different ways to raise money for the statue such as grants and restaurant fundraisers. Mr. Freed, Cultural Resources Director explained that bids would need to go out for the proposed statue project.

Ms. Moretz left the meeting at approximately 3:57 p.m.

Foundation Forward, Inc.

Mr. Ward gave a brief presentation and answered questions on Foundation Forward, Inc. Mr. Ward explained that he was approached by an educational non-profit, regarding Foundation Forward, Inc. He further explained that he wanted to inform the Historic Preservation Commission members about the said topic and ask them their thoughts on it. Chairperson Plaag asked Mr. Ward about the cost to the Town to have the displays; of the Declaration of Independence, The United State Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Mr. Ward said only the location of the displays would be a cost to the Town. Member Brantz said he was hesitant to discuss it until he can receive more information about it. Chairperson Plaag talked about several possible locations for the displays. Chairperson Plaag noted that he is hesitant to give up valuable acreage for these types of displays.

Mr. Ward and Ms. Moody left the meeting at approximately 4:20 p.m.

Junaluska Marker Application

Chairperson Plaag welcomed Ms. Roberta Jackson, Junaluska Heritage Association member to the meeting who was present to answer questions on the draft application. He read aloud the proposed draft application for the town of Boone Historical Marker for Junaluska Community included in the meeting packet. There were some minor proposed changes made to the draft

application. Chairperson Plaag said he would revise the draft application in include the changes made in this meeting.

Discussion ensued on asking Ms. Jackson to gather information on the people in the Community that served in all of the wars. Ms. Jackson said she could gather the information and send it to Chairperson Plaag to include in the text of the draft marker application.

Motion and Vote:

Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Member Clawson to authorize Chairperson Eric Plaag to send the draft Junaluska marker application to the members of the Junaluska Heritage Association for their review and to invite them to attend the next Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chairperson Plaag talked about the turn-around time of approximately two to three months being the time from when the marker is ordered to when it can be installed and unveiled.

Discussion ensued on the location of the Junaluska marker. Chairperson Plaag said the parking strip in the middle of Queen Street near Depot Street has been identified as possible location. He also said that another location has been discussed at the corner of North Depot and Queen Street, he explained that this location would need the County's approval.

Historic Design Guidelines

Chairperson Plaag talked about tabling the historic design guidelines agenda item to the next HPC meeting. The HPC members were in agreement with tabling said agenda item.

Motion and Vote:

Member Brantz made a motion, seconded by Member Bond to table the historic design guidelines discussion to the next Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Other Matters by Commission Members or Staff

Chairperson Plaag suggested adding the following agenda items to the next meeting agenda: Junaluska Marker Application, Survey Presentation to Council and Historic Design Guidelines.

Chairperson Plaag talked about the “Downtown Boone Walking Tour”, he said that the content of the tour needed to be reviewed.

Adjournment

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

BOONE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 15, 2019

REQUEST TO HONOR OUR PAST

BY

MARY ETTA MORETZ

BOONE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

AUGUST 15, 2019

REQUEST TO HONOR OUR PAST

Thank you for allowing me to petition you this evening to recognize an iconic pioneer who helped to tame our beautiful mountain home.

Before I continue with my petition, I would like to thank the Town of Boone for all of the amazing historic preservation work you have done in the past few years. I know that many people have been involved, from the Historic Planning Board to the Watauga Historical Society to the Junaluska Heritage Association and to leaders such as Dr. Eric Plaag and Dr. Bettie Bond.

Because I am part of the history of our area not only because I will celebrate my 77th birthday in a few days, but also because I descended from many of the earliest settlers in our area, those who came from the Plantations of Happy Valley as well as the Greenes who came from the Jersey Settlement in Lexington, NC right after the Revolutionary War bringing their brothers-in-law the Eggers and the Wilsons with them, and the Moretzes who came in the early 1800's from the Hickory

area, and because I have always loved history, I have made it my quest to learn about our past.

There were few settlers west of the crest of the Appalachian Mountains until after the Revolutionary War, and the ones who were here were in danger and were in violation of British Law. The British issued the Proclamation Act of 1763 following the French and Indian War establishing the Proclamation Line at the crest prohibiting settlers from going over the line. Even though they had won the French and Indian War with the help of the Colonists, they absolutely could not afford any more wars, and war they thought they would have with the Indians if settlers crossed the line. This made Colonists angry, and a few did cross the line especially desperate people such as freed or runaway indentured servants. For reference, read The Last of the Mohicans by James Fenimore Cooper, a romanticized version yet full of basic truth. Herders and hunters did cross the line, people such as Benjamin Howard who claimed the entire Boone Valley as his western lands, and his neighbor Daniel Boone, who did not claim ownership but only the right to hunt. Howard's ancestors were the younger sons of royalty, the Dukes of Norfolk, who had settled in Jamestown in hopes of making their fortune. Mathew Howard, who had indentured servants thereby gaining additional land in Virginia, moved to Maryland at the request of his brother-in-law, Lord Baltimore, who was married to his sister. There is a Howard County in Maryland. Benjamin Howard was one of Mathew Howard's

descendants. He eloped with his bosses' daughter, moved to Stokes County and then to what today is in the Wilkes County section of Happy Valley.

There are many native Watauga residents who are descendants of Benjamin Howard and other plantation owners from Happy Valley such as the Councils, the Harmons, the Dulas, the Lenoirs, and the Hortons. Some of them know their lineage, but many more do not.

The iconic Pioneer that I want to tell you about today is an African American slave whose name is Burrell. Although little is known about him, much is known about him considering that he was a slave. When women and minorities are even mentioned in history, we know that something happened that was outstanding.

Burrell was one of Benjamin Howard's slaves. My sources have allowed me to pin down Burrell's life span as being from approximately 1745 to 1845. He was said to be over 100 in 1845 by Colonel James Martin Isbell (1837-1913), the great grandson of Benjamin Howard and who knew Burrell.

Howard himself was born in 1742 in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, and died in 1832 in Wilkes County, so he and Burrell were not only master and slave but also contemporaries. I believe, and will try to find more evidence, that Burrell was named for the slave trader who sold him to Howard.

According to Colonel James Martin Isbell, who was the original source cited as an authority in many local histories, newspaper articles and records, Benjamin Howard, his great grandfather, “owned land near the village of Boone and used to range his stock in the mountains surrounding that picturesque village. He built a cabin of logs in front of what is now the Boys’ Dormitory of the Appalachian Training School for the accommodation of himself and his herders whenever he or they should come from his home on the headwaters of the Yadkin, at Elkville. Among the herders was an African slave named Burrell. When Col. Isbell was a boy, say, about 1845, Burrell was still alive, but was said to have been over 100 years old. He told Col. Isbell that he had billeted [sic] Daniel Boone across the Blue Ridge to the Howard cabin in the first trip Boone ever took across the mountains.”

(https://www.wikitree.com/index.php?title=Isbell-687&public=1#_note-2)

Daniel Boone and the Howards were not only neighbors but also friends. In fact, Isbell says that Boone often visited with the Howards no doubt sharing in their hospitality. Dr. Ina Van Noppen, a scholar on Boone, told me that Howard is the only person we know about whom Boone visited after he moved to Kentucky. On that visit, he likely reconnected with Burrell, the man who guided him through the passes to the High Country and who shared shelter and sustenance with him.

Dr. Robert L. Isbell, the great-great-grandson of Benjamin Howard, wrote about Burrell in his collected essays, The World of My Childhood (1955), a book about the settlers and plantation owners of the Happy Valley community which follows the Yadkin River into Wilkesboro. He says:

“Uncle Burrell was a slave of my great-great-grandfather Benjamin Howard’s home who later fell into the hands of my great-grandfather, Thomas Isbell, who had married Discretion, Benjamin Howard’s oldest daughter.

“Uncle Burrell lived alone in his cabin and at night had a custom of sitting and watching the stars in their movements, and was looked upon as a weather prophet. He must have seen farther than some the political life of his day, for Aunt Sophia recalls that he would say to her when she was a little girl: ‘You will be free some day [sic], child, but I will never be free.’ Aunt Sophia lived to see his words come true and spent most of her life a free woman....

“Uncle Burrell lived on the Yadkin River in the World of My Childhood at the time when Daniel Boone lived in his cabin a few miles below. When he finally came to the end of his days he was laid to rest under the broad spreading arms of a large black pine tree about 200 yards from the white folks’ graveyard on the same upland that overlooks the delta of Kings Creek and the fertile valley of the Yadkin for two miles, a scene of rare and matchless beauty.

“Two flat stones with round head and shoulders were placed and these stones were always very interesting to me. They remained intact through the long years- a century of them- and during the development at Grandin about 38 years ago, some vandal slyly took them to parts unknown, presumably to the North. They had listened to the soft and mournful requiem signed in the pine above through the long, long nights and guarded with sleepless vigilance their sacred trust until a ruthless hand carried them away.” (pp. 94,95)

There is no doubt in my mind that these words were spoken about a man who was dearly loved and respected. That he actually had burial markers is also remarkable since this was in a time when many white people had so such memorial and certainly not slaves.

Burrell was allowed to live with the Isbells, even though he had been willed to others. Benjamin Howard was in his 80's when he died. Burrell was also an elder. Howard willed Burrell, to my great-great- great grandmother, Mary (Polly) Howard along with his home. He willed slaves to his other children as well, including his daughter who married Jordan Councill, his son-in-law. Why would he will an elderly slave to his daughter Mary rather than to his sons? I believe it was because Burrell was his treasured friend as well as servant. I believe it is possible that Burrell saved his life when the Patriots were chasing him. (This old Tory later became a Patriot.) I feel certain that Howard knew that Mary would

take care of this now elderly servant. Mary in turn left Burrell specifically to her daughter Prudence, not her son, for the same reason. When Prudence married and moved into what today is Ashe County, she no doubt allowed Burrell to remain in Happy Valley with her Aunt Discretion Howard Isbell for his final years and among his own people. The fact that Burrell lived to be over 100 years of age speaks loudly to me that he was cared for, that he was respected and, yes, even loved.

So today, I petition the Boone Town Council, in the name of historic justice, to recognize this iconic pioneer by naming a street for him, placing an historic marker recognizing him as a pioneer, guide, herder, profit and beloved settler of our area, and commissioning a statue of him to stand beside the erroneously named “Boone Cabin” marker which was actually the “Howard Cabin” where he spent so many days guarding the livestock of his master and hosting hunters such as Daniel Boone.

(You may be wondering why Boone is named Boone. The Town Fathers deliberated about the name for the new County Seat. Should it remain Council’s Store, should it be named for Howard? They decided upon naming it for Daniel Boone who only hunted here for a few years but who was already a famous man in Europe and America for marketing purposes. Oh, yes, they were in the real estate business way back then!)

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

B. SITE TO BE MARKED:

The historical 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.

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 1850.² 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.”³

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

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

² 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.

³ 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.

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.⁴ 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.

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 Councill (1826?-1901) was a mixed-race man who

⁴ Ancestry.com, *1870 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009). Images reproduced by FamilySearch.

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 1865.⁵ 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.⁶

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.⁷ 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, members of the church 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, 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 community.⁸ 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

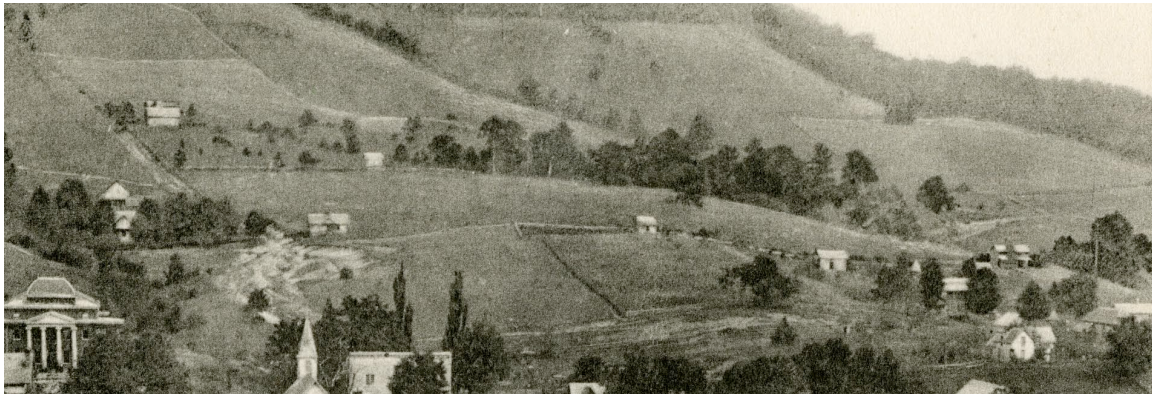
⁵ Deposition of Troy Council, Petition of Sally Council, Ancestry.com, *U.S. Southern Claims Commission, Disallowed and Barred Claims, 1871-1880* [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2007.)

⁶ 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.

⁷ J. B. Council 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.

⁸ "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.

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 unloaded 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.⁹ Brannock also served as the county’s tax assessor at the time.¹⁰



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.¹¹ Many of these parcels were located along what was by then known as African Street (later Church Street)—another indication that locals regarded portions of the Junaluska hillside as the geographic heart of Boone’s black community.¹² 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.¹³

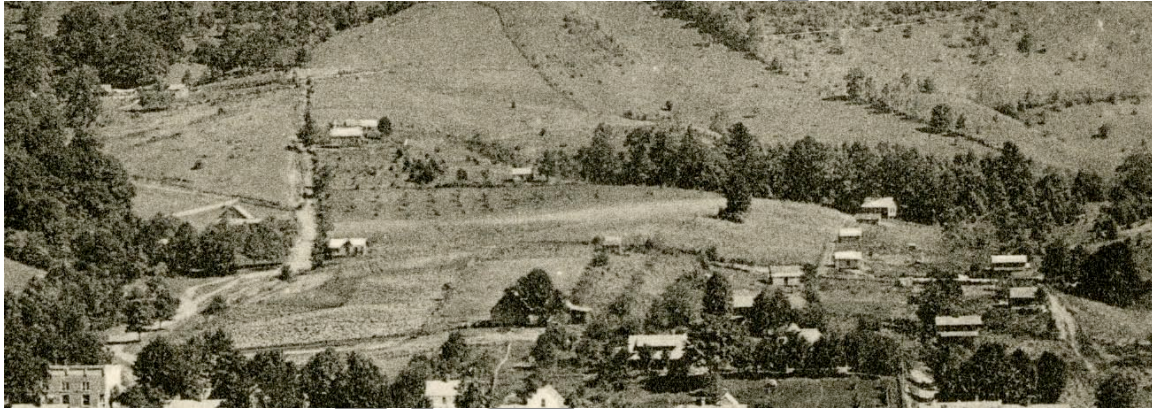
⁹ Benjamin J. Council and wife to Board of Education and their successors, July 29, 1907, Deed Book 16, Page 240; and T. P. Adams, et al, members of the Board of Education to B. T. Brannock and wife, Josephine L. Brannock, October 5, 1914, Deed Book 18, Page 201. Brannock quickly flipped the property 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ *Watauga Democrat*, March 15, 1917, 3.

¹² 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,

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, thus illustrating the problem in thinking of the Junaluska community in purely monolithic, geographical terms as a “neighborhood,” rather than as a community.¹⁴ 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.



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 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

1921, Deed Book 28, Page 249; and B. T. Brannick and J. L. Brannick to Austin E. South, February 13, 1923, Deed Book 29, Page 280.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.”

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, 1919.¹⁵ Confusion abounds as a result of the date of this transaction and the deed reference to a graveyard located just south of the church lot. Regarding the date, church tradition holds that the church building on this lot—presently known as the Boone Mennonite Brethren Church—was built in 1918, but no direct, primary source evidence for this date has been found. Unfortunately, no news items have been found in the *Watauga Democrat* to clarify the date of construction, either. 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.¹⁶

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 popular 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.¹⁷

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

¹⁵ B. T. Brannock and J. L. Brannock to Krimmers Mennonite Brethren Church, August 1, 1919.

¹⁶ It seems noteworthy that Jerry Lenoir, Gus Horton, and June Horton—all serving as trustees for an unnamed organization, 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.

¹⁷ *Watauga Democrat*, December 9, 1915: 2.

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."¹⁸ Funded in part with Works Progress Administration (WPA) support, the school was completed in 1937.¹⁹

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 Trenholm 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."²⁰ By the 1940s, however, membership at the Boone Chapel was in rapid decline, in part because of the founding of a new Missionary Baptist Church at the southeast corner of the intersection of Trenholm and African Streets, which drew some members from the Boone Chapel congregation.²¹ By 1943, members of the Hagler family left the Boone Chapel congregation to support their kinsman, R. L. Hagler, who was the new pastor of the United Holiness Church.²² By the end of the decade, services at the Boone Chapel declined in frequency to monthly sessions served by a circuit preacher.²³ 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, segregation was part of black life in Boone and directly impacted the members of the Junaluska community. 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.²⁴

¹⁸ "Reports Progress of WPA in County," *Watauga Democrat*, March 31, 1938: 2.

¹⁹ "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.

²⁰ Susan E. Keefe and Jodie D. Manross, "Race, Religion, and Community: The Demolition of a Black Church," *Appalachian Journal*, 26:3 (Spring 1999), 254.

²¹ "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.

²² "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.

²³ For more on the decline of the Boone Chapel, see Keefe and Manross, "Race," 255.

²⁴ "Local Affairs," *Watauga Democrat*, May 22, 1919: 3.

Commercial interactions and their attendant de facto segregation were more flexible—a common trait of some rural, southern communities. According to interviews with 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 1938.²⁵ 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.²⁶ The Terminal Roller Rink, located above the bus depot, also dabbled with segregation, reserving Friday nights in 1949 “for colored only.”²⁷ 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.²⁸ 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.²⁹

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.³⁰ 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.³¹

²⁵ David “Strawberry” Horton, film interview with Philip Arnold and Roberta Jackson, September 26, 2015, Appalachian Theatre of the High Country Archives.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ Advertisement, *Watauga Democrat*, May 5, 1949: 4.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ Horton, film interview, September 26, 2015.

³⁰ Horton, film interview, September 26, 2015.

³¹ Horton, film interview, September 26, 2015.

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 "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.³²

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

³² 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).

continuing growth of opportunity in more lucrative and less service-oriented positions during the 1950s.³³

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 drinking establishment located in a concrete block building just north of the intersection of Queen Street and North Depot Street.³⁴ 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.³⁵

Junaluska community members also have a long history of military service, including World War I veterans Rhonda Horton, Ed Folk, Ed McQueen, Harv Whittington, and Frank Grimes; and World War II veterans George Horton (OTHERS???); (KOREA???). As seen in several photographs contained in the Junaluska Heritage Association Collection in the Digital Watauga Project, military service often provided Junaluska’s military service personnel 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 service personnel 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, 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

³³ The “Workers of Boone” series from the Palmer Blair Collection is currently being digitized and is not yet online at the Digital Watauga Project.

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ 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.

Jackson, 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.³⁶ 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's 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, 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, rather than stay rooted to their local community. 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.³⁷

The Junaluska community continues to play an important but often overlooked 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 a long overdue acknowledgment of this thriving black community that has endured in Boone and Watauga County for well over a century.

F. Proposed Marker Text

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

³⁶ Keefe and Manross, "Race," 257.

³⁷ Anna Oakes, "Junaluska Housing Project Tabled," *Watauga Democrat*, online, December 30, 2016.

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 Chapel about halfway up the hillside. In the 1910s, B. T. Brannock sold off parcels to local blacks near African Street (present-day Church Street), 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. Despite the injustices of segregation and racial inequality throughout much of the twentieth century, 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: 1,000 characters with spaces, 149 words)