

**Boone Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2018
3:00 p.m.**

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

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

Others Present: Lane Weiss, 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 3:00 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to accept the November 13, 2018 meeting minutes as written.

Vote:

Aye – (Bond, Brantz, Pollitt, Plaag)
Nay – None
Abstain – (Clawson)

The motion passed.

Member Watkins arrived at the meeting at approximately 3:09 p.m.

Junaluska Community Marker Application Review

Chairperson Plaag began discussion on the application for the Town of Boone Historical Marker for Junaluska (permanently attached). Chairperson Plaag said that he had invited members of

the Junaluska Heritage Association, but he did not hear back from them regarding this meeting except for Dr. Susan Keefe who is out of town and not able to attend this meeting.

Discussion ensued on the revisions and possible changes to the application for the historical marker. Chairperson Plaag asked if there were any broad-type comments on the Application for the Town of Boone Historical Marker for Junaluska. Member Brantz said a lot of the information appears accurate, useful, and very important.

Chairperson Plaag informed the HPC that the Council did not approve the Historic Preservation Commission sub-committee recommendation. He said the Council asked why the HPC needed a sub-committee. He said he explained to the Council that part of the purpose was to encourage participation from the other members of the HPC rather than using an intern or the Chairperson preparing information which has occurred in the past.

Chairperson Plaag said he wanted to suggest that moving forward some of the HPC members volunteer do research on some items being discussed in the HPC meetings and re-writing sections of the draft application. He also mentioned that the HPC members would need to be aware that if there were to be a public-records request their emails may need to be turned over to the Town for that purpose.

Discussion ensued on internal text citation. Chairperson Plaag said that he has found said citation to be useless to him as a researcher and he explained the reason why. He recommended that the HPC use the Chicago citation method.

Chairperson Plaag said he sent to Dr. Susan Keefe, Junaluska Heritage Member some comments regarding the draft application. He read the opening paragraph that Dr. Keefe sent to him regarding the said application. Dr. Keefe noted that she preferred documentation with references to the sources where she has found information.

Chairperson Plaag talked about Dr. Keefe writing without citation about the Boone Mennonite Brethren Church on page four and paragraph two of the said application. He showed concern because he has not been able to find any citation in the Watauga Democrat on this topic.

Member Pollitt volunteered to contact the Mennonite church in Kansas to try to confirm the dates without citation.

Chairperson Plaag showed concern for other sections of the said application such as deeds for Mr. B.T. Brannock (permanently attached). He noted that he has not been able to research this topic yet.

Discussion ensued on the map at the Jones House created by Mr. Joe Miller. Chairperson Plaag said that he would contact Ms. Pilar Fotta, Director of Cultural Resources to get the date of said map.

Chairperson Plaag talked about a map that showed the original layout for Town of Boone. He said that the said map was loaned out in approximately the early 2000's for a research project and it was not returned. He said the map was scanned before it was loaned out.

Discussion ensued on the Tschetters in Elk Park. Member Brantz volunteered to research the Watauga Democrat around 1921 or 1919 to see if there is any information on Mr. Tschetters. Dr. Keefe responded that is fine to Chairperson Plaag's concern for what was going on in Elk Park at that time. Chairperson Plaag suggested that Member Brantz see Mr. Diane Deal Cornett, Clerk of Court because she has information on this topic. Chairperson Plaag said another free source to research this topic is to google: Chronicling America Library of Congress. He said there is free information at this website from 1888 to 1922 and there is more free information at www.digitalnc.org and click on newspapers for information from 1923 to 1963.

Chairperson Plaag suggested documenting all research for the draft application for the Junaluska Historical Marker to the extent that they can.

Discussion ensued on difficult history. Chairperson Plaag said he thought the difficult history needs to be told and he suggested telling the story that is fair to the facts.

After reviewing the section of the draft application that talked about Elk Park, North Carolina. It was the consensus of the HPC members to not include the Elk Park, North Carolina information in the said application because it is too far away from Boone, North Carolina.

Chairperson Plaag talked about the Mr. Eric Olson article on Blacks in Watauga County from 1778 to 1870. He said that he did research this one and he could not find it. Member Bond volunteered to locate it through Ms. Kit Fisher who is Mr. Eric Olson's widow.

Chairperson Plaag talked about the John and Ellington Cousins also known as the Cuzzens. He suggested reworking this section for the purpose of making a case for the origins of North Street and Depot Street. He volunteered to rework the first paragraph on page two of the draft application. Dr. Keefe suggested removing the reference to the Cuzzens from the draft application.

Chairperson Plaag talked about the location of the Watauga County courthouse on page two and paragraph two. Member Pollitt noted she thought there should be an east and west boundary.

Chairperson Plaag noted that he would email the HPC members and Ms. Lane Weiss, Downtown Boone Development Coordinator the post card links.

Discussion ensued on the Junaluska Community map (permanently attached). Chairperson Plaag noted that some clarification is needed on the Junaluska community being a consolidated neighborhood. He said there is mention of two churches and a consolidated school. He read the comments from Dr. Keefe. She noted in her comments that there was a map made around 2004. She suggested using community rather than neighborhood to characterize it. She explained that there was a dense cluster of homes on the hillside including North Depot Street, North Street, Tremont Street, Church Street and Church Street Extension. She said other Junaluska residents

are scattered along Junaluska Road and Old Junaluska Road to the top of Howard's Knob. Chairperson Plaag asked the HPC members if they were talking about a geographic area or a non-geographic community.

Chairperson Plaag talked about the forming of the Junaluska Turnpike in 1905. He further explained that the name Junaluska is associated with the turnpike built by the Junaluska Turnpike Company. He said the turnpike went up the hill from North Street to where Junaluska Road runs into Eastview.

Ms. Lane Weiss, Downtown Boone Development Coordinator left the meeting at approximately 4:19 p.m.

Chairperson Plaag said the HPC members would discuss their research at the next meeting. He said he told Dr. Keefe that the HPC members would share their research with her.

Historic Context on Phase One Survey Report Review

Chairperson Plaag noted that at this meeting, he did not have information on the Phase One Survey report. He said he would be able to provide information on said report at the next HPC meeting.

Linville River Railway 100th Anniversary Celebration Task List

Chairperson Plaag began discussion by asking the HPC members if they wanted to suggest having the food for the event catered.

Discussion ensued on the various ways to cater the food for the event. Member Bond suggested having food-trucks like Bettys Biscuits that offer southern type foods. Member Pollitt and Member Bond suggested contacting Tweetsie Railroad and Krispy Kreme to see if they have an interest in sponsoring the catering for the event.

Discussion ensued on the location of the event. Chairperson Plaag suggested having the event at the Jimmy Smith Park because it is owned by the Town of Boone which would make it easier to obtain permission for the event.

Discussion ensued on closing some of the streets for the event. Member Brantz said in the past when events were held at Jimmy Smith Park, Depot Street was closed from River Street to Howard Street.

Chairperson Plaag said at the next HPC meeting discussion would ensue on the invitations for the said celebration.

Motion and Vote:

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz for Ms. Turner, Senior Planner to prepare an action request for Council to review the Historic Preservation Commission's recommendation to have the Linville River Railway 100th Anniversary Celebration on May 3, 2018 at Jimmy Smith Park.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

Other Matters by Commission Members or Staff

Chairperson Plaag showed the HPC members a photo of a historic building plaque that one of his clients is using in the Town of Blowing Rock (permanently attached). He said this style of plaque could be used in the Town of Boone and he suggested that the HPC members discuss it at their next meeting.

The HPC members suggested the following agenda items for the next meeting: Junaluska Community Marker Application Review, Historic Context on Phase One Survey Report Review, Linville River Railway 100th Anniversary Celebration Task List and Discussion of residential historic building plaques.

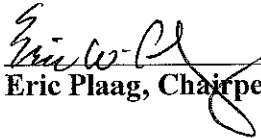
Adjournment

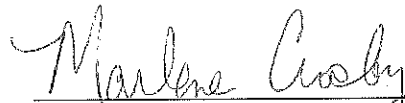
Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Member Watkins to adjourn the meeting at 4:43 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.


Eric Plaag, Chairperson


Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

November 16, 2018

Roberta Jackson, Facilitator, Junaluska Heritage Association

jacksonrh@appstate.edu

APPLICATION FOR TOWN OF BOONE HISTORICAL MARKER FOR JUNALUSKA

Contrary to the stereotype that Appalachia was historically populated only by whites, blacks have lived in the southern mountains since colonization, having come originally as slaves with the early Spanish explorers. While never large in numbers, African Americans have always had a place in western North Carolina, including Watauga County.

The first permanent settlers in the county at the close of the American Revolution brought slaves, and other settlers purchased them after their arrival. But, as John Inscoe (1989) points out, slaveholding was not common in the Appalachian Mountains. Ninety percent of mountain people in Western North Carolina had no slaves, and those who did generally had only a few. There were thirty-nine slaveholders in 1850 in Watauga County, and they held a total of 129 slaves (Olsen 1984). Slaveholders owned the larger farms, had more farm equipment and livestock, and owned the more fertile bottomland in the county's many valleys. The two largest slaveholders in Watauga in 1860, Jordan Councill, Jr., and John Whittington, held eleven slaves apiece. The largest slave populations in both 1850 and 1860 were in Boone Township, where the town of Boone is located.

Free blacks also resided in Watauga County at the time, and their number grew as slavery declined. In 1850, 29 free blacks lived there, and by 1860, there were 78 free blacks. Following Emancipation in 1870, there were 210 free blacks in the county (4% of the population), and half of them lived in Boone Township. This suggests that the freed slaves continued to live in the county well after the Civil War (see also Horton 1942).

The people of Junaluska do not speak much about their slavery past. "History is sensitive and painful," says local resident Sandra Hagler. "Blacks don't want to remember those things" (Hagler 1989). Most if not all residents trace descent to slaves held in Watauga County and its environs. This is evident in the surnames shared by many Junaluskans and county slaveholders in the 1850 and 1860 censuses, including Councill, Horton, Whittington, Folk, Hatton, Shearer, and Moore (Olson 1984).

The first mention of named African Americans in Boone in the historical literature comes in a book by John Preston Arthur (1915). According to Arthur, two free men of color, John and Ellington Cousins (also known as Cuzzens), moved into the area from Forsyth County bringing white wives with them. Ellington bought an acre of land on Blackburn Branch (now Depot Street) in 1857 where he built a house, which possibly marks the founding of the Junaluska neighborhood. According to a recent architectural survey of Junaluska, the oldest standing house in the neighborhood (at the corner of Depot and North Streets) dates to 1880-1899, providing further evidence that the community was founded in the nineteenth century (Margrif 2012). Junaluska residents describe their neighborhood as the result of whites segregating them on the hillside above Boone toward Howard's Knob on steep land that nobody else wanted.

Residents suggest that the land where Junaluska is located was originally held by Jordan Councill, Jr., a claim supported by the fact that the community lies just north of the main street in town between the county courthouse (built on land donated by Councill after the county's formation in 1849) and the historic site of Councill's store. Frazier Horton (1942) and others say that early residents were sharecroppers for the Councills, Coffeys, and other landowners on the foothills north of the town of Boone, eventually paying off their land. Some black residents who moved into the area were able to buy their parcel outright or allowed to clear land and keep a portion. In any event, most Junaluska residents became landowners and home owners, a fact that is still true in the community today. In fact, land ownership has been critical to the survival of Junaluska as an ethnic community.

Free black residents in Junaluska were farmers originally. They owned land, but for the most part not farms. Rather, they had small plots for house gardens, and they raised and slaughtered hogs for home consumption. They farmed and sharecropped fields on the side of Howard's Knob, which at the turn of the century was largely clear-cut. Residents clustered on the hillside, eventually taking up several blocks, including North Depot Street, North Street, Tremont Street, Church Street, and Church Street Extension, with other households strung up the mountainside along Junaluska Road and Old Junaluska Road. Horton (1942) describes the community going from Queen Street to the top of Howard's Knob, which is still the case for the community today.

By 1890, 431 blacks lived in Watauga County. The population has fluctuated between 200-400 for most of the twentieth century, increasing especially after 1980 with the growth of Appalachian State University and a doubling of the county's population between 1970 and 2010. By 2010, 877 blacks lived in Watauga County, 603 of whom lived in Boone. Nevertheless, the black population of Junaluska decreased over the twentieth century. Horton (1942) counted 191 blacks in Junaluska in 1942, making up 59 black families. By 2013, there were 97 individuals in 42 households, while dozens of other family members lived elsewhere in town or in the county.

Many African American communities have disappeared in the twentieth century as the result of various policies and processes. Rural black communities shrank with segregated school consolidation prior to the Civil Rights Act which caused migration to urban centers. Out-migration to escape Jim Crow laws reduced the African American population in the South generally. Government-funded urban renewal projects throughout the twentieth century razed blighted (often black) housing areas. Moreover, gentrification of urban residential neighborhoods in the twenty-first century continues to erase African American communities. Boone's Junaluska neighborhood has thus far avoided this fate and can lay claim to being one of the oldest continuously-occupied African American communities in western North Carolina.

Another relatively unique thing about Junaluska is that it is the home of the largest black Mennonite Brethren church in the region. In 1894 Emily Prudden, Protestant missionary and educator from Connecticut who was working in North Carolina, purchased property in Elk Park, Avery County, NC, and built a school for black children (Ostwalt and Pollitt 1993). However, because of "hatred and jealousy" of the white population, students and teachers were frightened away, and the school sat vacant for several years. In 1900, Prudden "sent a call westward" to recruit Christian teachers who could be supported by their home churches to come teach at the black school. Krimmer Mennonites had immigrated to the United States from Crimea, Russia, in the late nineteenth century, fleeing persecution for their Anabaptist Protestant beliefs. They responded to Prudden's call by sending Henry and Elizabeth Wiebe to Elk Park.

For eight years the Wiebes operated the Salem Mennonite Mission School and Orphanage, with assistance from the Mennonite Conference, enduring a great deal of harassment and suffering due to discrimination by whites (Richert 1984). They were joined by Jacob and Katherine Tschetter and, later, by Joseph and Katharina Tschetter. The Salem Mission and

Orphanage closed in 1912, and the Mennonites changed their mission from schools to establishing churches in black communities in the region. The Joseph Tschetters were joined by Peter and Katherine Siemens in 1924, and in the next several decades they built thirteen churches, one in Tennessee and the rest in western North Carolina -- in Avery, Caldwell, Watauga, and Wilkes Counties. Six of the original black mission churches remain open and, together with a new Mennonite church serving Hispanics in Caldwell County, they form the North Carolina District of the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. These black Mennonite Brethren churches are certainly the oldest and among the few black Mennonite Brethren churches in the United States (Bechler 1986).

Boone Mennonite Brethren Church (BMBC) has always been the largest and most active in the North Carolina District. It was established in 1911 by Joseph Tschetter, the members meeting in private homes until the chapel was built on Church Street in 1918. The Siemens pastored the church in the beginning, encountering considerable harassment by local whites. According to Katherine Siemens Richert, the Ku Klux Klan visited Peter Siemens in 1925, calling him a “nigger preacher” and warning him that “the colored people did not need white men to work with them” (Richert 1984:39). Nevertheless, the Mennonite missionaries continued to train and ordain many black preachers, including four from Boone: Rev. Rockford Hatton, Rev. Ronda Horton, Rev. Coy Williams, and Rev. Morris Hatton (son of Rockford). The Boone church has been served by 12 pastors since the departure of Peter Siemens, all but one of them African American. Over the years, the church has worked to become relatively independent and self-sufficient, and as a result, Junaluska residents have always considered it “their” church.

Establishing an historical marker for Junaluska will be a fitting way for Boone to recognize this neighborhood and its persistent people and unique culture.

Suggested inscription:

JUNALUSKA

People of color have lived in the Junaluska neighborhood since the mid-nineteenth century, and most black residents trace their descent to slaves held in Watauga County and its environs. Free blacks were farmers originally, working as sharecroppers for landowners in the foothills, eventually paying off their land. In the 1940's, the community extended from Queen Street to the

top of Howard's Knob. Although it has fewer residents today, Junaluska remains one of the oldest continuously occupied African American communities in western North Carolina.

It is also home to the Boone Mennonite Brethren Church, constructed in 1918 by Krimmer Mennonite immigrants from Russia. Despite racial discrimination by local whites, these white missionaries built 13 churches for African Americans in four N.C. counties and trained and ordained four black preachers in Boone. The church is the largest black Mennonite Brethren church in the region and one of the few in the United States.

(158 words; 1025 characters with spaces)

References Cited

Arthur, John Preston. 1915. A History of Watauga County, North Carolina, with Sketches of Prominent Families. Richmond, VA: Everett Waddey Co.

Bechler, LeRoy. 1986. The Black Mennonite Church in North America 1886-1986. Scottdale, PA and Kitchener, ON: Herald.

Hagler, Sandra. 1989. Personal interview with Susan Keefe.

Horton, Frazier Robert. 1942. "Negro Life in Watauga County." B.S. Thesis. Greensboro, NC: Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina.

Inscoc, John C. 1989. Mountain Masters: Slavery, and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina. Knoxville. TN: University of Tennessee Press.

Margrif, Trent. 2012. "Architectural Survey, Junaluska Neighborhood, Boone, North Carolina." Unpublished PowerPoint.

Olson, Eric. 1984. "Blacks in Watauga County, 1770-1870." Unpublished paper. Special Collections, Belk Library, Appalachian State University.

Ostwalt, Conrad and Phoebe Pollitt. 1993. "The Salem School and Orphanage: White Missionaries, Black School." Appalachian Journal 20(3):264-275.

Richert, Katherine Siemens. 1984. Go Tell it on the Mountain: The Story of the North Carolina-Tennessee Mennonite Mission. Fresno, CA: Jet Print.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA—Watauga County

THIS DEED, Made this 1st day of August, 1919, by B. T. Brannock and wife, J. L. Brannock of Catawba County and State of North Carolina, of the first part, to Krimmers Mennonite Brethren Church of Watauga County and State of North Carolina, of the second part, WITNESSETH:

That said B. T. Brannock and wife, J. L. Brannock, in consideration of One Hundred Dollars, to them paid by Krimmers Mennonite Brethren Church, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, has ye bargained and sold, and by these presents do lot bargain, sell and convey to said K. M. B. Church and assigns, a certain lot or parcel of land in Boone, Watauga County, State of North Carolina, adjoining the lands of A. E. South, Ronda Horton

and others, bounded as follows, viz.: BEGINNING on the Northwest corner of Grave Yard, thence North with South's line 160 feet to Ronda Horton's corner; thence East 110 feet with Ronda Horton's line to African Street; thence with African Street, South 160 feet to a stake; thence West to the beginning, containing 1/4 acre, more or less.

To HAVE AND TO HOLD the aforesaid lot or parcel of land and all privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging, to the said Krimmers Mennonite Brethren Church, their heirs and assigns, to their only use and behoof forever.

And the said B. T. and J. L. Brannock for themselves and their heirs do hereby covenant to and with the said Krimmers Mennonite Brethren Church, their heirs and assigns, that they are seized of said premises in fee, and have a right to convey the same in fee simple; that the same are free from all encumbrances, and that they do hereby forever warrant and will forever defend the said title to the same against the claims of all persons whatsoever.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, The said B. T. Brannock and wife, J. L. Brannock have hereunto set their hand s and seal s, the day and year first above written.

Attest: B. T. Applegate. B. T. Brannock, (Seal)
J. L. Brannock, (Seal)

NORTH CAROLINA Catawba COUNTY

I, D. T. Applegate, a Notary Public for said County and State, do hereby certify that B. T. Brannock and J. L. Brannock his wife, personally appeared before me this day and acknowledged the due execution of the annexed Deed of Conveyance; and the said J. L. Brannock being by me privately examined, separate and apart from her said husband, touching her voluntary execution of the same, doth state that she signed the same freely and voluntarily, without fear or compulsion of her said husband or any other person, and that she doth still voluntarily assent thereto. Witness my hand and official seal

This 2 day of Aug. A.D. 1919, 1919

D. T. Applegate, (SEAL)

My commission expires Aug. 11, 1920.

Notary Public.

NORTH CAROLINA _____ COUNTY

The execution of the foregoing instrument was this day _____ before me by _____ the _____, for the purposes therein expressed. Let the same, with this certificate, be registered.

This _____ day of _____, 1919

NORTH CAROLINA—WATAUGA COUNTY

The foregoing certificate of D. T. Applegate, a Notary Public of Catawba County, is adjudged to be in due form and correct, and the foregoing instrument is adjudged to have been duly acknowledged and proven. Let the instrument, with the certificate, be registered.

Witness my hand this 7 day of Aug. A.D. 1919, 1919

O. L. Coffey, Clerk Superior Court.

Filed for registration at 10 o'clock A. M. Aug. 7, 1919, and registered in the office of the Register of Deeds for Watauga County, August 14, 1919, 1919

W. R. Gragg, Register of Deeds.

CREEKSIDE CA. 1928

THE TUDOR REVIVAL STYLE OF THIS HOUSE IS RARE IN BLOWING ROCK. THE GREENSTONE USED FOR THE HOUSE WAS QUARRIED BY PAUL COFFEY. COFFEY'S BROTHER-IN-LAW, ERNEST BANNER, WAS THE STONEMASON. BANNER'S WORK FEATURES KEYSTONES AND YOUSOIRS OVER THE WINDOWS AND RUSTICATED QUOINS ON THE BUILDING'S CORNERS.



IN RECOGNITION OF THIS PROPERTY'S SIGNIFICANCE, THIS MARKER IS PLACED BY THE BLOWING ROCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE BLOWING ROCK ART & HISTORY MUSEUM

Junaluska Community



