Historic and Architectural Resources

of

Watauga County, North Carolina, ca. 1763-1952

Tony VanWinkle

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

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A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic and Architectural Resources of Watauga County, North Carolina, ca. 1763-1952.

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

I. Prehistory, Exploration, and Early Euro-American Settlement, pre-1800.
II. Settlement Patterns and the Formation of the County, 1800-1850.
III. Growth, Change, and Distinction: 1842-1900.
IV. Modernization: Transportation, Extractive Industry, and the Ascendancy of National Influences, 1900-1952.

C. Form Prepared by

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organization North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office date 9/9/2003

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Historic and Architectural Resources of Watauga County, NC — North Carolina
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Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheet in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Introduction

Three hundred and thirteen square miles in area, Watauga County, along with its neighbor to the north, Ashe County, occupies the extreme northwestern corner of North Carolina. Watauga also shares a border with Avery, Caldwell, and Wilkes counties in North Carolina, and with Carter and Johnson counties in Tennessee. The majority of the county lies within the elevated Blue Ridge Plateau to the northwest of the great Blue Ridge Escarpment, the eastern continental divide separating the Atlantic and Gulf Coast watersheds. While the extreme southeastern sections of the county lie beneath the crest of the Blue Ridge at elevations of 1500 to 2000 feet, most of the county is settled at elevations of 3000 feet or higher. The surrounding mountains rise to heights nearly double that, with Grandfather Mountain, partly in Avery County, partly in Watauga County, rising to 5,934 feet, the highest in the northwestern mountains.

Although among the first of western North Carolina's counties to be settled, Watauga would later become one of three counties collectively labeled the "Lost Provinces." The first narrow gauge railroad line would not reach the county seat until 1918, and it would come not east from North Carolina but rather from Tennessee to the west. Even so, the county would exhibit an architectural landscape that by the middle of the nineteenth century gave every outward appearance of a relatively prosperous population. The earliest settlers of the eighteenth century were of widely varying ethnic origins: German, Swedish, Dutch, English, Scottish, and African. This mixing would result in a unique local landscape and multi-ethnic Appalachian culture.

Tourism began to develop in the county as early as the mid-nineteenth century in Blowing Rock, a trend that would continue unabated to the present day (with the exception of the small interruption of the Civil War). The county would remain overwhelmingly rural until the arrival of improved transportation and the timber industry in the twentieth century. Since that time, the county has grown exponentially both as a permanent and seasonal destination. The architectural development of Watauga County reflects the unique circumstances that converged here and gave birth to this mountain community. What follows is a history of the county as it is reflected in the historic landscapes that define Watauga County.

I. Prehistory, Exploration, and Early Euro-American Settlement, pre-1800.

NATIVE-AMERICAN PREHISTORY

The earliest inhabitants of what would become Watauga County were Native American peoples who occupied the area through the series of eras known to archaeologists as the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian periods of North American prehistory. In the two earliest of these prehistoric eras, the Paleo-Indian (ca. 10,000-8000 B.C.), and the Archaic (ca. 8000-1000 B.C.), Native

Americans engaged in a pre-agricultural socio-economy of small, mobile bands exploiting natural resources through hunting and gathering. By the Woodland period (ca. 1000 B.C.-1000 A.D.) these small bands were beginning to practice a small-scale agriculture that complemented hunting and gathering and necessitated a more sedentary way of life. The Mississippian period (ca. 1000-1550 A.D.) saw the florescence of a sophisticated southeastern cultural complex characterized by large sedentary towns and villages made possible through agriculture. Projectile points found in Watauga County are evidence of Native American presence in the earliest of these periods. By ca. 1400 A.D., in the midst of the great Mississippian period of southeastern prehistory, Native Americans were farming along the banks of the Watauga River, though none of the great earthen mounds associated with the Mississippian Culture are found in the county. [1]

The Mississippian peoples are considered the direct ancestors of many of the southeastern tribes encountered during the historic period of European contact. Central among these tribes were the Cherokee, whose larger territory included much of the land that now constitutes the Appalachian regions of the upland South. The nucleus of the Cherokee territory at the time of European contact and through the colonial and Revolutionary periods of American history was centered in the settled towns located in southwestern North Carolina, southeast Tennessee and adjacent upstate South Carolina. The seasonal hunting territories claimed by the Cherokee extended from this axis of settlement to include all of western North Carolina, including what would become Watauga County, though permanent settlements were limited to the core area. Thus, when the first Euro-Americans explored the county in the mid-eighteenth century, they did not encounter an established Native American presence of any kind. Unlike the southwestern part of North Carolina, the northwest exhibits no material or documentary evidence of an historic Native American population. Therefore, Watauga County's historic architectural record begins with its Euro-American settlers.

EURO-AMERICAN EXPLORATION

In 1752, Moravian Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg led the first Euro-American exploration of what would become Watauga County. The Moravians immigrated to America to escape the persecution they had experienced in Germany, establishing their first settlement in Pennsylvania in 1741. The expansionistic Moravians sought to establish a new settlement in North Carolina in 1752, having arranged the purchase of 100,000 acres with the area's colonial proprietor, Lord Granville. Spangenberg's expedition was charged with finding a location suitable for this new settlement.[2]

Just below the town that would become Blowing Rock almost 140 years later, Spangenberg's party faced the arduous task of ascending the imposing Blue Ridge escarpment into the high country just beyond it

[1] From interpretive panels displayed in the Appalachian Cultural Museum, Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina.
[2] John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 40-42.

to the northwest. In afterward describing the ascent of the Blue Ridge, Spangenberg wrote in his journal:

> We have reached here after a hard journey over very high, terrible mountains and Cliffs . . . part of the way we climbed on hands and knees, dragging after us the loads we had taken from the backs of horses, for had we not unsaddled them they would have fallen backwards down the mountain,--indeed, this did happen once; part of the way we led the horses, who were trembling like a leaf.[3]

Once atop the escarpment and within the geographic bounds of the elevated Blue Ridge Plateau the party ". . . saw mountains to right and to left, before and behind us, many hundreds of mountains rising like great waves in a storm."[4]

The party would eventually reach and set up camp in the valley that most historians believe to be the location of what would become, nearly one hundred years later, Boone, Watauga's county seat. It was here that the visual beauty of the mountain landscape would surrender its pleasures to the harsher realities of a fierce high country winter storm. As Spangenberg recalled it:

> We put up our tent, but had barely finished when there came such a wind storm that we could hardly stand against it. I think I have never felt a winter wind so strong and so cold. The ground was covered with snow; water froze beside the fire. What should we do? Our horses would die, and we with them. For the hunters had about concluded that we were across the crest of the Blue Mountains and on the Mississippi watershed.[5]

Indeed, the party had crossed the great Blue Ridge, the eastern continental divide which separates those rivers bound east for the Atlantic coast from those bound west and south for the Gulf coast and the greater Mississippi River watershed.

Whether influenced by the brutal winter storm he encountered in the high country or other factors, Spangenberg decided against the mountains as home to the nascent Moravian colony of North Carolina. Instead, he chose a location in the rolling-to-level piedmont area that would eventually grow into the westernmost metropolis of the Piedmont Triad, Winston-Salem. Nonetheless, Spangenberg and his exploratory party left us the first written description of what would become Watauga County.

In the same year that Bishop Spangenberg led his exploration into the interior of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Boone family, migrants from Pennsylvania, had established a home for themselves along the Yadkin River, not far from the Blue Ridge and the future Watauga County. Daniel Boone was

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[3] From I. Harding Hughes, Jr., *Valle Crucis: A History of an Uncommon Place* (Bookcrafters, Inc, 1995), 11.
[4] *Ibid*, 11.
[5] From John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 42.

probably exploring Watauga County in the early 1760s, making frequent long hunts into the high country. On these expeditions oral tradition holds that Boone often stayed in a log cabin owned by Benjamin Howard that stood somewhere on the present campus of Appalachian State University. A monument was erected by the university at the cabin's putative site, but has been demolished in recent years to make way for the rapidly growing university's infrastructure development. This log cabin would have been one of the earliest structures in Watauga County, and Benjamin Howard (if indeed he constructed the cabin) one of the first settlers.

On his frequent trips into the future county and beyond, Boone established a well traveled path, one that traversed the county much as U.S. Highway 421 does today--at least in its general direction from Wilkes County in the east, to Trade, Tennessee in the northwest. Several communities and individuals have erected monuments to mark its route through the county, commemorated locally as the Boone Trail. This is the same trail that Boone used on his first long hunt into Kentucky in 1769 and again on a 1775 land hunting expedition in partnership with Judge Richard Henderson.[6] That section of the trail in the eastern and central parts of the county lies largely within private landholdings, though the National Park Service has an interpretive panel marking its crossing of the Blue Ridge Parkway at mile marker 285**.** The most clearly discernable section of the original trail today, travelable by automobile, follows the Cove Creek watershed along Old Highway 421, or State Route 1233 from Sugar Grove north to its convergence with contemporary U.S. Highway 421 at Zionville, on the Tennessee state line.

EARLY SETTLEMENT

The earliest known permanent settlement of substantive population density in the greater region was known as the Watauga Settlement, beginning in 1769. As I. Harding Hughes noted, "as an outgrowth of the Regulator movement in Hillsborough which resisted the overbearing authority of the colonial governor . . . ten Wake County families under the leadership of James Robertson made . . . the journey across the Blue Ridge to Sycamore Shoals . . . By 1771 the settlement consisted of twenty families."[7] Though the settlement would serve as a catalyst in the formation of the new state of Tennessee (1796) and the short-lived, independent State of Franklin (1784-1788), it would also play a brief role in the history of what would become Watauga County.

In 1775, the administrative arm of the Watauga Settlement, the Watauga Association, negotiated the purchase of all the lands in the Watauga, Holston, and New River watersheds from the Cherokee.[8] Subsequently, in 1776, the lands within the Watauga Settlement area, along with a small settlement along the Nolachucky River farther south, were incorporated within the governmental structure of North Carolina as the District of Washington. The same area was reorganized a year later, in 1777, as

[6] John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 60.
[7] Hughes, Valle Crucis: A History of an Uncommon Place (Bookcrafters, Inc., 1995), 13.
[8] Interpretive signage, Sycamore Shoals State Historic Site, Elizabethton, TN

Washington County, North Carolina--which it remained until the state's cession of those lands west of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the United States in 1790 (out of which Tennessee was formed in 1796).[9] The future Watauga County was included within the boundaries of each of these shifting political entities. Thus, those earliest settlers in Watauga County entering official land grant applications would have to do so first at the governmental seat of Sycamore Shoals (modern Elizabethton, Tennessee), and after 1779, at the new Washington County seat of Jonesboro, Tennessee. In 1792, however, after the cession of most of the former Washington County, the portion of North Carolina that had been included therein, including parts of Watuaga, was annexed to Wilkes County. Finally, in 1799, parts of the future Watauga County again shifted political boundaries, becoming part of Ashe County, which would remain the case until the formation of Watauga fifty years later.

In January of 1779, David Hicks and Benjamin Ward filed the first recorded land grant application in Watauga County. The men lived a short distance from one another in the Watauga River Valley (the greater Valle Crucis area today). Tax lists from the previous year of 1778 listed Hicks, Ward, and a third settler, Charles Asher, all residing along the bottomlands of the county's namesake river.[10] While these are the first officially recorded settlers, they may not have been the first occupants of the county. The survival of two log houses in the county, one predating the Watauga River area land grants and another roughly contemporaneous with them, are evidence of early settlement in other parts of the county as well.

The Wilkinson Cabin (WT 443), by most accounts dating to 1760 or 1763, is the oldest standing building in the county. This saddlebag log house with half dovetail corner notching is thought by the current owner to have been built by a Mr. Reese (first name unknown), of the family after whom the northwestern community of Reese took its name. The cabin is located along the route of the Daniel Boone Trail in Zionville, on the Tennessee state line. The cabin likely served as a stopover, or stand, for travelers along this important trail, including perhaps Boone himself. The cabin's proximity to Trade, Tennessee, suggests that it was probably a part of this larger community, which by 1790 was a well-established town with a store, a blacksmith's shop, and several cabins.[11] The Wilkinson Cabin's location along this early trade route also positioned it within a fairly short and easy distance from the Great Valley of Virginia, the site of the Great Wagon Road, the major pan-Appalachian transportation route along which many of Watauga County's earliest settlers likely migrated from mid-Atlantic population centers in the greater Delaware Valley region. Thus it seems likely that the earliest settlers would have fanned out along this major entry route into the county, as the Wilkinson Cabin suggests, arriving slightly later in interior locations such as the Watauga River Valley.

A second early log house located in yet another distinct section of the county is the Tatum Cabin

[9] Hughes, 25.
[10] Hughes, 6-8.
[11] Johnson County Historic Society, *History of Johnson County*, (1986).

(relocated as part of the Horn in the West/Hickory Ridge Homestead complex--WT 518), dating to ca. 1785. The single-pen Tatum cabin was historically located in the New River Valley near the present Ashe/Watauga County town of Todd. Revolutionary War veteran James Tatum moved his family to this area in the late eighteenth century from their previous home in Rowan County, North Carolina.[12] The Tatums' entry and settlement in the eastern section of the county represents another early migratory route, one following a more direct ascent up the Blue Ridge escarpment from the south and east, much as that described by Bishop Spangenberg on his 1752 expedition. Settlers entering the county from this direction were, like the Tatum family and the families of the Watauga Settlement before them, mostly migrants from the central piedmont sections of the state, likely following roughly the same route established by Daniel Boone, entering eastern Watauga from Wilkes County.

Despite these two examples of eighteenth-century settlement in other sections of the county, by 1800, the rich bottomland along the Watauga River was the most heavily settled. Included among those settlers following close behind David Hicks, Benjamin Ward and Charles Asher in the late eighteenth century were families with names such as Holsclaw, Mast, Baird, Shull, Davis, Stephens, and Johnson.

These earliest Watauga County settlers, as in most other parts of southern Appalachia, established the pattern of settlement that would precipitate the formation of a hierarchical class structure based on the distribution and ownership of the best agricultural lands. The fertile bottomlands along the county's rivers and larger creeks, being the first occupied, left only the more marginal coves and smaller valleys to later settlers. Thus the bottomland farmer established a system of agriculture resembling--if not quite in scale of operation--that of the Deep South plantation economy, including the socio-political authority that accompanied the emergence of a genteel planter class. Supporting this argument, historian John Alexander Williams asserts that the emerging Appalachian political system "was dominated by the interests of a social elite modeled on the plantation gentry of the lowlands."[13]

The agricultural economy of these mountain planters also included the exploitation of slave labor. While not on the scale that characterized low country plantation agriculture, the institution of slavery nonetheless helped to galvanize the authority of an emerging social elite. Again, John Alexander Williams elaborates:

> In western North Carolina, an analysis of political leadership finds that "the hierarchical order of mountain society was capped by its slave owners. Both they and their black property made up a considerably smaller proportion of the populace than was true for most of the South, but their dominance of that society was as hegemonic as that of any Southern planter elite, and had been since the

[12] *Hickory Ridge Homestead Self-Guided Tour* (Boone: Brochure Printed by the Southern Appalachian Historical Association).
[13] Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 135.

> initial settlement of the region's rich river valleys in the late eighteenth century."[14]

Those settlers arriving too late to stake a claim to the valley bottomland would establish quite a different economy, one of agricultural subsistence supplemented by the exploitation of forest products and a heavier reliance on the pasturing of livestock. In comparing the two distinct systems of the mountain agricultural economy, John Alexander Williams states:

> While bottomland farms along the main rivers grew commercial crops in ways that resembled plantation agriculture, nearby ridgetop and tableland farms with gentler angles of slope and relatively good access to a river offered possibilities to stockmen.[15]

Thus what emerged for the majority of the population was what Williams calls a "farm and forest" economy, one based largely on subsistence activities involving the raising of stock animals (left to graze on the rich mast of the surrounding forest commons), kitchen gardening, the hunting of game animals and gathering of wild foodstuffs. This mixed domestic economy certainly afforded a mostly comfortable existence, but it did not afford the political and cultural authority enjoyed by the bottomland planters.

By the end of the eighteenth century the county's first ecclesiastical organizations were chartered as well. The first of these was the Three Forks Baptist Association, chartered in 1790 and named for the site near Boone where the confluence of the Middle Fork, East Fork, and Winkler's Creek marks the beginning of the South Fork of the New River. The second church organization founded during this initial period of settlement was the Cove Creek Church in 1799. Each of these church groups still maintain active congregations in the twenty-first century, occupying later generations of buildings

THE ARCHITECTURAL LANDSCAPE

Little of the historic landscape of eighteenth-century Watauga County remains today. Other than the Wilkinson and Tatum cabins mentioned above, only one other structure documented in the 2002 survey can claim origins in the eighteenth century. This latter property is the Ezekiel and Susanna Baird House (WT 336) located on the banks of the Watauga River in the Valle Crucis area. Seen today as a classic two story I-house (though much altered, especially the 1970s colonial revival porch treatment), the present nineteenth-century house form was built around the original, single-room eighteenth-century cabin, incorporating the latter into the rear T wing, a common practice throughout the mountains.

Considering what is known about the material culture traditions of greater Appalachia and western North Carolina, we can safely guess that most of the dwellings built in the eighteenth century were log structures. Log construction in the heavily forested mountains was the most expedient method of

[14] Ibid, 135.
[15] Ibid, 117.

erecting shelter and, in sparsely settled frontier areas, often the only available method. As communities were established so were early industries such as saw-milling, making milled lumber more readily available than in initial settlement periods. Despite the romance associated with the log cabin and its great popularity today, log houses were seen by some as temporary shelters, to be replaced as soon as economically possible with frame houses, the latter a clear social expression of upward mobility and industriousness. This transition to frame structures, however, was not an economic possibility, or even necessarily a preference, for all mountain families, resulting in the perpetuation of log building traditions into the twentieth century in some areas.

Nonetheless, the overall lack of log dwellings still extant in Watauga County (in comparison with other mountain counties) may suggest that the transition to frame construction took place quite rapidly. The great majority of extant log structures in the county are agricultural buildings, erected for such purposes, suggesting an early preference for using log buildings in this context rather than as dwellings. It is also possible that the lack of log dwellings might be the result of the "log restoration" craze that has severely depleted the historic log buildings of many mountain counties, often relocating these artifacts far away from their original contexts.

ETHNICITY AND ORIGINS OF EARLY SETTLERS

By 1800, the first wave of settlement was complete. The settlers who moved to Watauga County in the eighteenth century were from greatly varying locations and several ethnic backgrounds. We know that Daniel Boone's family, though they did not settle in Watauga County, migrated to the nearby foothills from Pennsylvania. As John Alexander Williams states of the Boone family migration, "Daniel's family decided to leave Pennsylvania and in its leaving became an example of how that colony's distinctive cultural milieu dispersed across the region we now call Appalachia."[16] Though many of Watauga County's early settlers would arrive from the adjacent areas of Virginia and both Carolinas, nearly all of their families had begun their lives in America a generation or two before in Pennsylvania or New Jersey, and especially in the great port city of Philadelphia.

Using Valle Crucis alone as an example, we can establish some idea of the ethnic diversity of Watauga County's earliest settlers. Of the first two documented settlers, David Hicks was of German ancestry and Ben Ward of British extraction. A list of family names and ethnic origins of settlers arriving only slightly later is instructive: Holzclaw--German; Mast--Swiss; Baird--Scottish; Shull--German; Davis and Johnson--British.[17] Thus, the population of early Watauga County was
quite diverse in its ethnic composition. Later settlement would continue this trend, with nearly equal numbers of Germanic and British families peopling the county. In addition to these Euro-American ethnic groups, a small number of African Americans, many of them slaves but also a number of free

[16] Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 34.
[17] I. Harding Hughes, *Valle Crucis: A History of an Uncommon Place* (Bookcrafters, Inc, 1995), 20-22.

blacks, entered the county as well. The 1800 Census of Ashe County, of which Watauga was then a part, listed a total of eighty-five slaves and twelve "free persons of color." The population diversity of the county and the syncretic culture that emerged from it challenges the popular myth of the Anglo-Saxon purity and Elizabethan virtue of Appalachian whites. The resultant expressive culture was one that exhibited a retention and mixing of many traits and characteristics of disparate Old World origins. As we shall see, this cultural synthesis was translated in the county's architectural history as well.

II. Settlement Patterns and the Formation of the County, 1800-1850.

Watauga County's history spanning the first half of the nineteenth century saw few monumental historical events. Nonetheless, it was during this period that the county firmly established the economic, social, and political identities that would define it through much of the century. However, little documentary evidence from this period exists, as Watauga County was not formed until 1849. Thus the reconstruction of this period comes largely from Ashe County census records and comparative analyses.

According to census records, by 1800 the total population of Ashe County, which included not only most of the future Watauga County, but the future Allegheny County as well, numbered 2,785 persons. As mentioned above, eighty-five of those were slaves and twelve were "free persons of color." In 1810 the total population had increased to 3,694; the slave population increased by 73% to one hundred forty seven and the free black population had decreased to six people. In 1820 the population of Ashe County was 4,336; the slave population again increased (by 69.3%) to 249; and the free black population increased to 40. Of the total population in 1820, 783 persons were engaged in agriculture, 26 in manufacturing enterprises, and 8 in commerce. The 1830 census lists a total population of 6,987, a slave population of 491 and a free black population of 102. By 1840, the last census conducted before the formation of Watauga County, the total population stood at 7,467; the slave population at 489 (a small decrease from 1830); and the free black population at 67 persons.

As we have seen, the population of the larger Ashe County polity grew steadily throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. This growing population continued the trend of settlement described earlier, with the first to arrive claiming the rich bottomlands and those arriving later settling on more marginal hillside and cove lands. In Watauga County, the richest bottomland areas are found along a handful of rivers and larger creeks. The county’s two major river systems--the Watauga system including Cove Creek, Beaverdam Creek, and the Upper Valley Creeks of Valle Crucis; and the New River system (particularly the South Fork) including Meat Camp and Winklers Creeks and the Middle and East Forks--collectively formed the nexus of county settlement throughout this period. These were both the first bottomland areas to be settled and the loci from which succeeding cove settlement would radiate up the adjacent hollows formed by smaller creeks and branches. While some settlers opted for the more out-of-the-way places from the beginning, they were a minority.

The farm and forest economy that followed this pattern of settlement relied heavily on the bounty of the

rich hardwood forests, especially for the more marginal cove farmer. This economy was diverse and seasonal in nature, as the following poem, a "tribute to a German-American backwoods housewife," written by Louise McNeill illustrates:

> It pleasures her to gather
> A hoard when autumn comes:
> Of grapes in scroll-worked silver,
> Red-streaked and amber plums,
> Winesaps and seek-no-farthers,
> Green peppers, russet pears,
> White roastin'-ears for drying
> On frames above the stairs,
> Queer handled gourds for dishes
> And dippers at the spring,
> Long butternuts, fat pumpkins,
> Creamed colored beans to string,
> Wild meat to jerk and pickle,
> Brown chestnuts tipped with cold,
> Cranberries from the marshes,
> Tree honey dripping gold.
> In barrels and crocks and suggins,
> In pokes upon the floor
> And hanging from the rafters
> Is Katchie Verner's store
> Against the mountain winter
> When sleet-hard drifts will freeze
> The deep loam of her garden
> And gird her orchard trees.[18]

This poem can be applied to the domestic economies of most of the county's residents through much of the nineteenth century. The smaller, alternate economy of the bottom farmers and the emergent merchant and professional classes, however, was one that diverged considerably from the quintessential mountaineer lifestyle described by McNeill. The latter were more actively engaged in an economy of trade and commerce, one driven at least in part by slave labor. This class would also form the political elite of the county by the time of its formation in 1849.

THE FORMATION OF THE COUNTY AND AGRICULTURAL TRENDS IN 1850

In 1848, most of Watauga County was still a part of Ashe County, with the seat of government located in Jefferson. As the local population grew, it became clear that a new county was needed to better serve the

[18] From John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 90.

needs of citizens located far from the center of county government. On January 27, 1849, legislation was passed approving the formation of Watauga County. The new county was carved from parts of the surrounding counties of Ashe, Wilkes, Yancey, and Caldwell. In 1823, a post office was established in the town then known as Councills Store, named for one of the area's most prosperous and influential individuals, Jordan Councill. The town of Councills Store would be chosen as the seat of government for the new county in 1849. It would be renamed and incorporated as the town of Boone in 1872.

The first census records for Watauga County were presented in 1850. In this year, the total population was 3,348 persons. Of that population, 129 were black slaves, and 29 people were classified as free persons of color. According to a study conducted by Frazier Robert Horton in 1942, the black population of the county was most heavily concentrated in the town of Boone and in the rural communities of Cove Creek and Beaverdam.[19] Combining the findings of the present study with the extant architectural record (these areas contain the largest concentrations of large farmhouses) it may then be reasonable to speculate that these were the locations of the heaviest historic slave populations as well. In turn, we might gather that these were also the areas of greatest economic prosperity, forming the agricultural and merchant centers of the local commercial economy.

Agricultural statistics from the 1850 census are useful in reconstructing the evolution of the county's agricultural economy in the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1850 Watauga County contained 442 farms occupying most of the 17,113 acres of improved land. 121,761 acres of the county's total landmass remained in "unimproved" condition at this time. Swine was the most prevalent livestock, with a total of 10,239 animals. Cattle followed, with a total of 5,220 animals. The sheep population of the county was 4,949. Of those agricultural products produced for the market, the county produced 59,709 pounds of butter and cheese and 13,031 pounds of wool. Watauga was the state's nineteenth leading producer of flax fiber and tenth in the production of beeswax and honey. The county ranked fourth in the value of its orchard products, second in the production of buckwheat, and was the state's leading producer of maple sugar, producing 10,446 pounds. Clearly, by 1850 the county had firmly established commercial agricultural patterns, ones that would continue to define agricultural production through much of the nineteenth century.

THE ARCHITECTURAL LANDSCAPE

During the period from 1800 to 1850, the local vernacular building tradition continued to dominate. Log houses were still commonly erected, though two-room hall-and-parlor-plan frame houses were also beginning to appear with greater frequency. Several log houses from this period still exist: the David Mast House, built in 1812 and part of the larger Mast Farm complex (WT 2); the Presnell-Hicks Log House (WT 362), the Gragg House (WT 10), and the Mag and Mary Harbin Cabin (WT 419), for

[19] Frazier Robert Horton, *Negro Life in Watauga County* (Boone: Unpublished BA Thesis, W.L. Eury Appalachian Collection, Appalachian State University, 1942).

example. Several log agricultural buildings also date roughly from this period, including several double-crib log barns, like the Thomas Critcher Barn (WT 280)--a form attributed to German origins.

Frame houses, many mirroring log houses in terms of interior spatial arrangement--especially the simple hall and parlor form, but also in such examples as saddlebag forms--also became common by this time. One example of a simple, frame vernacular form is the Bill Horton House (WT 452), built sometime in the early to mid nineteenth century. The one-and-one-half-story Horton House displays an original center hall. While this house does not quite qualify as a fully-developed I-house with which this feature is associated, the center hall's presence indicates that this particular interior spatial arrangement had entered the local traditional building system early in the nineteenth century. Thus these small, early frame houses (though admittedly few remain) represent an initial synthesis of local vernacular and high-style influences, a pattern that would continue through most of the county's architectural history.

Toward the end of this period we also begin to see the emergence of the fully developed two-story, I-house form. These examples, most often found in the bottomland areas of the county, were the preference of the upper-middle class farmer and merchant elite. Several of these, including the Frank and Wilma Baird House (WT 319), were actually built around preexistent log houses. Georgian precedents directly influenced the I-house form, especially in the interior spatial arrangement that most often exhibits the center hall plan of Georgian design. Even so, they were also the result of vernacular elaboration and adaptation of high style design elements. While a true Georgian form is massed, or two rooms deep, with a center hall, the vernacular I-house retains the traditional single-pile design with the addition of rear ells, T's, or sheds. Thus the primary indications of Georgian influence are in the strictly symmetrical facade and the center hall feature.

This classic I-house form, with characteristic vernacular Victorian elaboration coming slightly later in the nineteenth century, is the quintessential house form of prosperous upper-middle class bottomland farmers and would become the dominant local house form, with several variations, by the late nineteenth century. Two examples from the early nineteenth century are the former Todd Hotel, or Felix McGuire House (WT 485), and the Sherwood-Bingham House (WT 416) built in 1840 and 1846 respectively. The Todd Hotel today displays ornate Victorian elaboration in its gables and two-tier rear ell porch trim, elements added later in the nineteenth century. The Sherwood-Bingham House, though dramatically altered and modernized, also represents the early development of the local vernacular I-house form. In each of these cases, it is likely the main, four-room (two-over-two), single-pile section was the early original portion of the house, with the currently visible expansions coming at later dates.

The architectural survey indicates that no institutional or early industrial/commercial buildings survive from this period. Early churches in Watauga County were likely constructed of logs. With the availability of milled lumber, most church groups sought to replace earlier log structures. The new frame buildings would have most often been simple, single room, gable front buildings with a series of symmetrical windows along the sides. Similar examples from the late nineteenth century are more

numerous in the county, but none survive from the first half of the century.

Considering the high commercial agricultural production of buckwheat by 1850, as well as the subsistence production of corn and other grains, industrial structures such as grist mills would certainly have been common features of the local landscape by this time as well. The community of Shulls Mill, so named for the gristmill operated there by the Shull family, attests to the presence of such structures in the first half of the nineteenth century. I. Harding Hughes lists at least three other gristmills in the Upper Valley sections of Valle Crucis operating prior to 1850. These were the mills of Joel Mast, Andrew Townsend, and Jordan Townsend.[20] This pattern applies to other parts of the county as well. Additionally, the appearance of frame dwellings suggests the presence of sawmills, though these could have been simple, ephemeral operations set up by individual builders for the construction of new houses and subsequently removed. Other commercial structures were also likely present, including general stores. None of the industrial/commercial structures from the first half of the nineteenth century survive today, however.

III. Growth, Change, and Distinction: 1842-1900.

CULTURAL INTERVENTION: THE ARRIVAL OF A MISSIONARY SETTLEMENT

In 1842, Levi Silliman Ives, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, learned of a remote and beautiful valley lying in the northwestern part of the state from a friend who had recently traversed the region on a "botanical excursion." Intrigued by his friend's description and intent on establishing a missionary effort in the mountains of
North Carolina, Ives set out himself to explore this place in the same year. After his initial visit, he reported his impressions to the Convention of the Diocese:

> While my sympathies were deeply excited in view of their great spiritual destitution, my admiration was at the same time awakened by the simplicity of their character, and the deep earnestness of their petition for instruction. I addressed a few of them on their wants, and promised to send them, the moment it should be in my power, a Missionary, who should teach them the rudiments of knowledge, and preach to them the Word of God.[21]

In December of 1842, the Bishop made good on his promise, sending the Reverend Henry H. Prout to minister to the people of the Watauga Valley. Prout was initially stationed in what was known as the "Lower Settlement," that portion of the Watauga Valley lying along what is now River Road (SR 1352). He had soon established missionary stations at the "Upper Settlement," roughly that area now known as

[20] Huges, *Valle Crucis: A History of an Uncommon Place* (Bookcrafters, Inc., 1995), 171-180.
[21] From Susan Fenimore Cooper, *Missionary Life at Valle Crucis: Memoir of William West Skiles* (Valle Crucis: Valle Crucis Conference Center, 1992; original publication in 1889), 10-11.

Foscoe, and along the New River.

By 1844, Ives had determined that the location of a permanent mission complex would be in the area today known as the Upper Valley, which he named Valle Crucis for the approximation of the cruciform shape formed by the confluence of Dutch Creek, Clarks Creek, and Lower Crab Orchard Creek. The stated purpose of the Mission was:

> To extend the gospel throughout the territory, thirty or forty miles in every direction, to a religiously destitute people; to give rudimentary instruction to poor children of the immediate neighborhood on terms their parents could afford; to receive into the institution young men of talent from the surrounding country, on condition that they should serve as teachers and catechists . . . to train boys of talent or merit for the ministry . . . to give theological training to candidates for holy orders; to conduct a general school both classical and agricultural; and to maintain a model farm, both as an aid of supporting the mission and as a means of instructing the surrounding population in improved agriculture.[22]

Between 1844 and 1846, the first buildings were erected at the new mission school. These included "a saw mill, a log kitchen, an adobe dining room, a log dwelling containing four rooms, and a sixty-by-twenty foot frame building containing a large classroom and two dwelling compartments for teachers on the first floor, and a dormitory for the male students of the school on the second."[23] Other buildings were added to the complex shortly thereafter. The school opened in 1845 under the leadership of Rev. William Thurston. In the second year, Thurston died and was replaced by Jarvis Buxton. A year earlier, in 1844, William West Skiles was brought in to head the agricultural program. Missionary outreach continued in the outlying stations of Lower Watauga, Upper Watauga and the New River.

Over the succeeding years the missionary endeavor established in Valle Crucis experienced periodic cycles of difficulty in financing and in ever-changing leadership and direction. Rev. Prout had established, by 1848, a missionary outpost of more permanence in the area known as Upper Watauga. Here, in the same year, he built a large and exceptionally well-crafted log house for his permanent residence (The Prout-Atkins House, WT 304). Within a year or two of constructing his house, Prout initiated the construction of a permanent chapel for the Upper Watauga parishioners. Christened the Easter Chapel, the structure was "built of logs, very neatly hewn by the loving hands of Levi Moody . . . This rustic Chapel was about 40 feet long, and 15 feet wide, very compactly built. There was a little chancel at the east end, with an oaken alter, beneath a window. There was also a narrow window in each of the side walls. The roof was steep, and showed the rafters on the inside."[24] The Easter Chapel no

[22] From Katherine H. Richardson, *National Register Nomination for Valle Crucis Episcopal Mission*, (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1992).
[23] *Ibid, 1992.*
[24] Cooper, 89.

longer stands, but the log residence remains in excellent condition, located in Foscoe.

By 1852, the central Mission complex had all but collapsed. In that year, Bishop Ives resigned his post and joined the Roman Catholic Church. The original buildings were in a state of deterioration by this time, and the land on which the former mission had stood was sold to a local man by the name of Robert Miller. A year later, in 1853 Rev. Prout moved to Lenoir, though he continued to return frequently to preach in the Watauga area. The only remaining missionary was Williams Skiles, who had become particularly attached to his congregation at Lower Watauga. Bishop Ives's successor, Thomas Atkinson, visited Valle Crucis in 1854. According to Susan Fenimore Cooper, writing in 1889, "At this date . . . Valle Crucis had already a sadly ruinous aspect. One was reminded of a wreck, so far at least as regarded the appearance of the buildings. Put up hastily, of all sorts of materials strangely blended together, wood, brick, stone, adobe, all were now crumbling, and ruinous."[25]

Though the Mission School would be revitalized beginning in 1893 (from which period all of the current structures originate), its original presence was barely discernable by 1860. Nonetheless, Williams Skiles had remained through the difficulties and beginning in 1859, envisioned a new chapel for his parishioners at Lower Watauga. By 1860, construction had begun and by 1862 the chapel was completed and officially consecrated in August.[26] In December of that same year, Williams Skiles passed away. The charming little chapel that was the vision of Skiles remains today, still known as St. Johns of Lower Watauga (WT 323). The church was moved a short distance to its present site in 1882, as were the remains of Skiles, whose grave marker lies in the church cemetery.

Though no remnants of the original Mission complex at Valle Crucis survived this initial period, the log house of Rev. Prout and the Chapel built by Skiles remain as material reminders of this grand, if unsuccessful, endeavor. Additionally, the extended missionary efforts in the New River area resulted in the construction of another impressive chapel, St. Matthews Episcopal Church (WT 482), near present day Todd (then known as Elk Cross-Roads).

OTHER CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS OF THE MID TO LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Episcopal churches established through missionary efforts were not the only ones in Watauga County during this period. As we have already seen in the initial section of this report, the county's first Baptist groups were formed in the late eighteenth century. Though the Episcopalians spoke often of the religious destitution of the people in the area, Susan Fenimore Cooper acknowledged in her 1889 account of the mission effort, "a little colony of German Lutherans at no great distance, who gladly became connected with the parish at Valle Crucis . . . [as well as] Several Baptists and Methodists [who]

[25] Ibid, 108.

[26] Ibid, 130.

also became connected with the parish."[27]

The German Lutheran presence in Watauga County, according to current accounts by members of the Holy Communion Lutheran Church, began even prior to their organization in 1842. In I. Harding Hughes's history of the Valle Crucis area, he cites an oral testimony given by Holy Communion pastor Rev. Larry Campbell in which he states:

> The first Lutheran settlers were German immigrants who came to Valle Crucis not as late as the 1840s but instead by the mid-1700s . . . Illiterate, they could keep no written records. Refugees from indentured servant status or from German political prisons, they sought isolation by building their cabins in the most remote spots--usually up at the very head of creeks. Squatters on the land and desiring privacy, they obtained no deeds and sought no land grants . . . Friedens Kirche [German for Tranquility Church] dated back to the mid-1700s.[28]

The current Holy Communion Lutheran Church (WT 375) in Foscoe, Grace Lutheran Church (WT 575) in Boone, and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (WT 507) formerly in Deep Gap all attest to the continued and widespread presence of Lutherans in the county.

Existent church buildings from the mid to late nineteenth century from throughout the county similarly testify to a strong presence of other thriving religious denominations contemporaneous with or shortly following the Episcopal missionary effort. Among these are the former Clarks Creek Baptist Church (WT 349), former Mabel Methodist Church (WT 425), former Henson Chapel (WT 410) and Thomas Chapel (WT 614) Methodist Churches (the latter originally located in the Ashe/Watauga community of Sutherland).

EARLY TRANSPORTATION AND PROTO-TOURISM

Small, rough wagon roads and trails leading from town to town characterized transportation in Watauga County until around the mid nineteenth century. The first improved road in the county would not only create greater possibilities for the exportation of locally produced goods to nearby market centers outside of the county, but it would also bring the first influx of outside travelers into the county. Lenoir was a major outlet for goods produced in Watauga County prior to 1845. Seeing an opportunity to improve the condition of this trade connection (and to make considerable profits for himself), James C. Harper, a member of a prominent Lenoir merchant family, sought and finally won approval for the Lenoir-Blowing Rock Turnpike Company in 1845. The road between the two towns was completed in 1847.[29]

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[27] Cooper, 59.
[28] From I. Harding Hughes, *Valle Crucis: A History of an Uncommon Place,* (Bookcrafters, Inc., 1995), 5
[29] Barry M. Buxton, *A Village Tapestry: The History of Blowing Rock,* (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1989), 1.

By 1851, expanding on the initial plan introduced by Harper, the North Carolina General Assembly granted approval for the Caldwell and Watauga Turnpike Company. The road thus established traversed the county from its starting point in Lenoir to Blowing Rock, into the Watauga River Valley and Shulls Mill, on to Valle Crucis and finally into Tennessee.[30] This would be the major toll road through the county until well after the Civil War.

Taking advantage of his new road into the "high country," James Harper is believed to have been the first person to build a summer home in the Blowing Rock vicinity.[31] Appropriately naming his seasonal abode "Summerville," Harper initiated the first step in establishing what would become, after the interruption of the Civil War, an exclusive summer resort colony for wealthy merchants and industrialists from the Piedmont and lowland sections of the Carolinas, and served as the catalyst for a post-war tourism boom in the high country. Most of those who would follow Harper's lead, however, would have to wait until after the passing of the Civil War.

POPULATION AND AGRICULTURE ON THE EVE OF THE CIVIL WAR

The 1860 Watauga County census records list a total of 104 slaves in the ownership of 31 slaveholders. The largest number of slaveholders (9) owned only 1 slave. In contrast, only 2 slaveholders in the county owned between 10 and 15 slaves. The largest number of farms in the county (283) occupied between 20 and 50 acres; 110 farms ranged from 50 to 100 acres; 59 farms from 100 to 500; and only 1 farm in the county comprised between 500 and 1,000 acres. Smaller farms of 10 to 20 acres numbered 121, while the smallest farms--between 3 and 10 acres--numbered 24. Countywide, 28,085 acres of improved land was being farmed. In 1860 the total cash value of farms in Watauga County was the sixth lowest in the state.[32]

In terms of agricultural products produced for market, the county produced 9,762 bushels of buckwheat, again the state's leading producer of this grain crop. Cheese production had risen to 4,420 pounds, second in state production only to its northern neighbor, Ashe County. The value of market garden products was $13,401, ranking first in the state. Other important products in the county were orchard fruits, with Watauga ranking nineteenth in production, and butter, ranking twenty-ninth. By 1860 sheep had become the most numerous stock animal in the county, far outranking the number of cattle (no figures for swine in the county were presented for this census).[33] No figures for wool or maple sugar production are available in 1860 either, but due to the growing popularity of sheep and previous patterns in maple sugar production, it is safe to guess that these were important agricultural pursuits in the county as well.

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[30] Hughes, 1995, 54.
[31] Buxton, 1989, 1.
[32] Joseph C.G. Kennedy, *Agriculture of the United States*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864).
[33] Ibid.

THE CIVIL WAR IN WATAUGA

The Civil War in Watauga County, as in the rest of western North Carolina and Appalachia generally, was a conflict of bitter division and divergent loyalties. As we have seen, the institution of slavery had been an active component of the agricultural and commercial economies of the county since the late eighteenth century. This did not mean, however, that the county's population at large would jump headlong into the Confederate cause. Slave ownership was after all limited to only the most elite of the county's bottomland farmers and merchant class. The great majority of Wataugans owned no slaves at all and may have held the county's elite in contempt anyway. Thus, when the time came to join the fight many Watauga County residents joined the Union, and many the Confederacy. Others refused to go to war for either side, choosing instead to evade conscription and stay at home to defend their families and land.

In describing the unique situation of the Civil War in Appalachia, historian John Alexander Williams writes:

> . . . Appalachia was the scene of a dual war. On the one hand, there was the "the Civil War, the war which is spelled in capital letters and read about in textbooks highlighted by names like 'Gettysburg' and ' ‘Chancerlorsville’ and 'Shiloh.'" On the other . . . "the war was not in these fields, but in their towns and their farms and homesteads.". . . This other war was a genuine civil war that split and bloodied neighborhoods and families that featured the hardships and atrocities with which irregular warfare has always been associated. The incidents of this war made only a slight imprint on the official histories and produced no famous engagements, only a fragmented record of raids and counter-raids, ambushes and murders, robbery, arson, and rape. The roots of this conflict lay in the region's class structure and divided loyalties, in its complex geography, and in the fact that both of the regular armies penetrated the region sufficiently to unsettle it but not enough to control it.[34]

This statement certainly applies to the situation that developed in Watauga County during the war.

The heavy presence of Union sympathizers, draft evaders, army deserters, and renegade marauders known as bushwhackers produced a particularly volatile situation in the Southern mountains. In many mountain counties, Confederate "home guards" were established to patrol the backcountry in search of evaders and deserters, and to keep the peace (though ideas about keeping the peace in this situation depended on where your loyalties lay). The Watauga Home Guard was organized with such purposes in

[34] Williams, *Appalachia: A History*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 171.

mind. The guard was based at Camp Mast, located in the Cove Creek area behind the Harve Deal House (WT 412), from which they patrolled the county. Their intentions were well known by the county's many Union sympathizers, however, and more often than not their visits proved antagonistic and unproductive. Shepherd Monroe Dugger of Banner Elk (then a part of Watauga County), whose family was sympathetic to the Union, recalled his family's response to the patrolling Home Guard:

> My father was a Union sympathizer. . .Our house was near a laurel thicket where the scouters and outlyers [dodging confederate service] took refuge. When we signaled to them it was safe they'd come out and help the family hoe. I'd stay on top of the roof and as soon as I saw the danger and signaled them, they'd slip off up a safe branch. We helped feed them. . .[35]

The Watauga Home Guard was not to last to the end of the war, however. In February of 1865 a group of pro-Union men led by Captain James Champion set out from Banner Elk to overtake Camp Mast. Having thoroughly surrounded the camp in the predawn hours, when the Home Guard awoke they were forced to surrender.[36]

The proximity of Watauga County to the Union stronghold of Upper East Tennessee made it an obvious gateway for those avoiding Confederate service. According to local historian I. Harding Hughes, an "underground railroad" designed for just such a purpose traversed Watauga County. As again recalled by Shepherd Dugger:

> February 17, 1864, young men were drafted from 18 down to 17 and hundreds of these new draughts from counties east of the Blue Ridge were avoiding Confederate service by scouting their way to the Yankee lines in Tennessee, and these were sometimes joined by a Federal Soldier who had escaped from the Confederate prison at Salisbury. They were met in the Blowing Rock region by one of three scouts, Keith Blalock, Harrison Church, or Jim Hartley, and conducted by Shulls Mills, Dutch Creek and Hanging Rock Gap to Banner Elk, where after getting relief from fatigue and hunger, they went on by Cranberry to Crab Orchard, now Shell Creek, Tennessee, where they were taken in charge by Dan Ellis . . .[37]

Hughes admits that other than this testimony by Dugger, local memory seems to have forgotten the presence of such an escape route, making its actual location difficult to substantiate with any certainty. Nonetheless, the division of loyalties that characterized the county would certainly have been conducive to such escapist strategies.

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[35] From Hughes, 1995, 65.
[36] Ibid, 67.
[37] Ibid, 65-66.

The most famous Civil War event to occur in Watauga County was the brief march and raid of Federal troops led by General George Stoneman. From his base in Tennessee, Stoneman led some six thousand cavalrymen through Boone en route to the larger towns of Lenoir, Morganton, and Wilkesboro in March of 1865.[38] Stoneman intended the raid to be one of destruction, riddling what supply lines and other Confederate infrastructure remained in the northwestern part of the state. While Stoneman continued on to Wilkesboro, a second regiment split in Boone, heading toward Lenoir and Morganton. Stoneman left one of his leading officers, George W. Kirk, in Boone to guard Union supply lines. Kirk further divided troops, sending small detachments to Deep Gap and the Blowing Rock area, while he and about 400 troops remained headquartered in Boone.

According to local historian Barry Buxton, the detachment sent to Blowing Rock, led by Major Rollins, "set up a stockade near the future site of the Blowing Rock Hotel. He felled trees to give himself a view to the south and east. One report indicates that the original Harper home [James Harper's Summer home, thought to be the first in Blowing Rock] was demolished at this time to provide lumber for the Yankee fortifications. The site was appropriately named for its commander: Fort Rollins."[39] Stoneman's Raid destroyed several buildings in Boone, including the original jail. While this was one of the more visible and noted Civil War skirmishes in the county, many smaller, less visible events characterized the war and its aftermath in much of Appalachia, including Watauga County.

POST-WAR AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS: 1870

Five years after the close of the Civil War, agricultural statistics initially appear to indicate that the economic and commercial life of Watauga County had continued for the most part unaffected and in some cases had actually prospered. From 1860 to 1870 the county leapt from the fortieth to the twenty-first leading county in the number of sheep raised, and from twenty-ninth to fifteenth in the related production of wool. Irish potatoes became an important agricultural product in this time as well, with Watauga the state's sixteenth leading producer. Cheese had remained a mainstay of the agricultural economy, with Watauga once again ranking second in state production.[40]

All was not well, however. The overall cash value of farms in the county had actually decreased since 1860 (of course this was true for most of the state, recovering as it was from the war), ranking as the fifth lowest in the state. Only one other mountain county, Yancey, had lower farm values. The dollar amount of paid wages, including board, was the eighth lowest in the state. Likewise, the total acreage in "improved" condition had risen only slightly since 1860--from 25,085 in 1860 to 28,240 in 1870.[41]

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[38] John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 170.
[39] Barry M. Buxton, *A Village Tapestry: The History of Blowing Rock*, (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1989), 3.
[40] Francis A. Walker, *The Statistics of the Wealth and Industry of the United States*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872).
[41] Ibid.

Clearly, while the staple agricultural products were still produced throughout this period, some with increased yields, the overall state of agriculture and commerce had stagnated during the immediate post-war years. However, as we shall see, by 1880 the local economy was once again on the rise.

TOWN DEVELOPMENT: BLOWING ROCK

As mentioned earlier, the first summer home in Blowing Rock is thought to have been built by James Harper in 1856. Blowing Rock would not take off until after the Civil War, however. As Barry Buxton wrote, "War's end saw the birth of a full-fledged summer resort business in Blowing Rock. During the fighting, war refugees from throughout the South had fled to the relatively safe North Carolina highlands . . . Although their first exposure may have been forced by war, many of these people would return as tourists."[42] Buxton continues:

> The first post-war vacation facilities were provided by boarding houses, not hotels. The Martin House [WT 202], which still stands beside the Park, was built in 1870 as a private residence. The demand for lodging resulted in a series of additions to the house, with eventual space for fourteen roomers . . . William Morris bought the Amos Greene property in 1874, and built Blowing Rock's first true boarding house . . . The Harper property was bought about 1877 by W.W. Sherrill, who built two or three small houses for summer renters where Blowing Rock's first summer home had stood . . . L.W. "Len" Estes developed the Chetola property into the town's second largest boarding house. The lake was then called Silver Lake, and trout fishing was a major attraction.[43]

The eventual result of this growing seasonal tourism industry in Blowing Rock would be the formation of a semi-permanent residential town, seasonally occupied by those "visitors [who] were taken enough with mountain life to want to stay the entire season. They chose to build second homes in the highlands, and referred to themselves as 'cottagers.' "[44] The great period of cottage development, however, would come mostly in the early decades of the twentieth century.

By the 1880s, Blowing Rock's first hotels were completed to accommodate the growing influx of summer tourists. The first of these was the Watauga Hotel, opening July 1, 1884. Next was the Blowing Rock Hotel, which opened its doors in June of 1889. Neither of these hotels remains today, but a few of their auxiliary structures, though from later dates, do still stand. The former Watauga Hotel Guest Cottage (WT 223) currently houses the headquarters of the Blowing Rock Historical Society and is a remnant of the detached cottages once offered as options to patrons. The former Blowing Rock Hotel Guest Cottages (WT 210) and Servants Quarters (WT 211) remain from the latter of these

[42] Buxton, 1989, 4.
[43] Ibid, 4.
[44] Ibid, 4.

establishments. The Blowing Rock Hotel Guest Cottages are actually early twentieth century Arts and Crafts-influenced houses, thus exhibiting little continuity with the original 1889 hotel. Nonetheless, they attest to its continued vitality through the early decades of the twentieth century.

The surviving Servants Quarters of the Blowing Rock Hotel are indicative of the master-servant tradition that many of Blowing Rock's visitors and later residents brought to the mountains with them. This system of servitude in the Piedmont and coastal sections of the state was one based largely on race differentiation, eventually resulting in both seasonal and permanent African American populations in Blowing Rock. As Barry Buxton noted of this phenomenon:

> The 1890 census was destroyed by fire, but the 1900 census revealed some interesting changes in the town. The black population had gone from five to twenty-nine. These were local, primarily tourist-related seasonal workers. Twelve of the twenty-nine, for example, were cooks. But blacks were also listed as farmers, and three of them--John Henry Hall, George Long, and Charley Pope--were also registered to vote in the 1890s. A sizable summer servant group increased the black population seasonally, giving Blowing Rock a distinctive black community. Servants' days off became standardized as Thursday and Sunday afternoons and evenings, and those days became the focus of black social life, and of white dining-out.[45]

Another development in the latter decades of the nineteenth century would also have profound influence on both the growth and architectural development of Blowing Rock: the expansion of railroads. Though Watauga County would not receive its own rail line until 1915, the general expansion of rails throughout the surrounding region opened up Blowing Rock to a much greater range of potential visitors. A spur line in Lenoir would continue to bring in tourists from that direction, coming largely from industrial piedmont population centers. The Western North Carolina Railroad had also completed the spur to nearby Hickory in 1884.

Perhaps most directly influential to the future architectural development of Blowing Rock was the expansion of the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad (ET&WNC) in the 1880s. By 1882, the narrow gauge line had been expanded to the Cranberry iron mines (now in Avery County) for the purpose of extracting and exporting that resource. Shortly thereafter, in 1885, the Linville River Railroad was extended from Cranberry to Linville. By 1889, the Linville Improvement Company had been incorporated with the intentions of developing a resort town in Linville. In the same year the construction of the Yonahlossee Trail, connecting Linville and Blowing Rock, had begun along the route that would later become US Highway 221.[46] The road would be completed in 1892. Hereafter, these two prominent resort towns would be directly connected, with ideas and aspirations flowing freely between

[45] Buxton, 1989, 20-21.
[46] Buxton, 1989, 6-7.

them.

Among the most significant and highly localized architectural details that traveled between Linville and Blowing Rock was the widespread use of chestnut bark exterior shingling. Intentionally rustic chestnut bark shingling was first introduced in Linville by renowned architect Henry Bacon, better known as the designer of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. The earliest known application of chestnut bark shingling occurred in Linville on the Donald McRae Cottage, built in 1890 and designed by Bacon. Among his other Linville creations, Bacon designed the All Saints Episcopal Church building, probably the best known and most visible of his works there.[47] By the turn of the century, the use of chestnut bark shingling had spread to Blowing Rock, where it became widely popular and would acquire the status of one of the most characteristic markers of the town's distinctive architectural history.

By 1889, Blowing Rock had sufficient population and political clout to win approval for the charter of the Town of Blowing Rock. Shortly thereafter, with the town's tourism industry showing no signs of slowing, a third hotel would be constructed to compete with the Watauga and the Blowing Rock Hotels. In 1891, the Green Park Inn (WT 7) was finished and opened to the public. As the *Green Park Historic District* publication states, "At its opening, the Green Park Hotel was the finest of Blowing Rock's hotels and it remained the resort's leading hotel until the Mayview Manor opened in the 1920s."[48] Indeed, the elaborate three-story Queen Anne structure must have been an impressive sight as visitors finally topped the Blue Ridge escarpment along the Lenoir and Blowing Rock Turnpike. The larger Green Park area would actually function independently from Blowing Rock until its incorporation in the 1920s.

With the incorporation of the town in 1889 and completion of the Green Park Inn in 1891, the first era of Blowing Rock's development as an emergent seasonal resort town and exclusive summer residence for wealthy "cottagers" was complete. The town would continue to grow and attract summer visitors, but the great boom in summer houses would not come until after the turn of the century. There were already several summer houses by 1891 to be sure, but most would come later.

By the late 1890s, Blowing Rock's reputation as a seasonal get-away was attracting the attention of railroad promoters. The Seaboard Air Lines monthly publication, the *S.A.L. Magmagundi* offered the following invitation in 1897:

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[47] Bishir, Southern, and Martin, *A Field Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 223-231.
[48] Baucom and Ewing, eds., *Green Park Historic District*, (Blowing Rock: Blowing Rock Historical Society, 1998), 6.

HAPPINESS FOR ALL

Mountain Retreats in Western North Carolina
Where Torrid Heat is Subdued by Cooling
Breezes and the Mosquito Pest
is Unknown.

Pure Air that Refreshes and Invigorates Like
Wine-Cold, Crystal Water Trickling from
Sequestered Rocky Glens.

Billowy Verdure of Boundless Forests in the Blue
Range-Lovely Valleys and Brawling
Streams-Incomparable Diversity
of Scenic Splendor.

Everything in Earth, Air, Sky and Water to En-
hance Human Health and Comfort-Making
Outdoor Life in Midsummer and
Autumn a Rapturous Delight.

Lenoir, Blowing Rock and Linville-United by En-
chanting Drives over Excellent Roads
under Majestic Overarching Trees,
through Groves of Gorgeous
Laurel, Azalea and Rho-
dodendron Blooms.

Ample Hotel Accommodations at Low Rates;
Superb, Well-Trained Horses, Careful
Drivers and Easy Riding Con-
veyances.

Lofty Peaks for the Climber, Spotted Trout for the
Angler, Game for the Hunter, Repose for
the Invalid-A Glorious, Good
Time for Everybody.[49]

Blowing Rock's development as a tourist destination would have significant impact on the larger county

[49] From Buxton, 1989, 8.

as well. The greater high country's current status and economic dependence on the tourism industry has its roots in the development of Blowing Rock. Later promoters of local ski resorts and tourist destinations would use Blowing Rock's status as a well-established tourist town to secure the success of these ventures.

TOWN DEVELOPMENT: BOONE AND THE RURAL TOWNSHIPS

Finally incorporated in 1872, the town of Boone continued to grow as the seat of county government and its primary commercial center. Writing of his horseback tour of the mountains of North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee in 1888, explorer Charles Dudley Warner noted "the guideboards and the trend of the roads had notified us that everything in this region tends towards Boone as a centre of interest." Warner continues:

> A short ride of nine miles, on an ascending road, through an open, unfenced forest region, brought us long before sundown to this capital. When we had ridden into its single street, which wanders over gentle hills, and landed at the most promising of the taverns, the Friend informed his comrade that Boone was 3,250 feet above Albemarle Sound, and believed by its inhabitants to be the highest village east of the Rocky Mountains . . . Its inhabitants numbered perhaps 250, a few of them colored. It had a gaunt, shaky courthouse and jail, a store or two, and two taverns.[50]

An 1890 North Carolina business directory gives us an idea of how Boone's downtown commercial district had developed by this date. In addition to governmental and municipal buildings, Boone had two hotels in 1890, the W.L. Bryan Hotel and the T.G. Coffey and Bros. Hotel (possibly the two "taverns" referred to by Warner). Boarding was also available at the home of Dr. W.B. Councill. Three blacksmiths operated shops in Boone proper. Three sawmills were also located in Boone.[51] Though still a small mountain village, Boone was beginning to show signs of an active downtown commercial district. A road connecting Boone and Blowing Rock, the Boone-Blowing Rock Turnpike, was completed in 1891. Boone, however, would not see much benefit from the tourist traffic flowing into Blowing Rock. As Watauga County historian John Preston Arthur noted in 1915, "there are but a few visitors to the town in the summer season, almost all stopping at Blowing Rock and seemingly unconscious of the fact that Boone is on the map at all."[52]

The real impetus for the growth of Boone would be the founding of what would become, in 1968,

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[50] Charles Dudley Warner, *On Horseback: A Tour in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee*, (Boston and New York: Houghton Miflin Company, 1888), 36.
[51] Branson's North Carolina Business Directory, 1890.
[52] John Preston Arthur, *A History of Watauga County*, (Easley, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1976; original publication in 1915), 157.

Appalachian State University. In 1899 brothers Dauphin Disco and Blanford Barnard Dougherty planted the seed that would eventually develop into ASU. The original institution was intended as a teacher training school as envisioned by the Dougherty Brothers. The real impact of the school on the town's growth, however, would not be fully realized until after World War II.[53]

Modern Boone has expanded at an astonishing rate, due largely to the presence of ASU, but also as the result of an expanded tourism industry and general population growth. The majority of Boone's historic architectural resources date from the first half of the twentieth century. Within the extended town limits of Boone, only a handful of late-nineteenth century structures remain. In or near the downtown district, the Councill-Hardin House (WT 537), the E.F. Lovill House (WT 560), and the former Watauga County Jail (WT 67) are the three most noteworthy survivors of the nineteenth century. While the historic structures at the Horn in the West/ Hickory Ridge Homestead complex (WT 518), a reconstructed interpretive site containing several relocated log houses, are located within the town limits of Boone, none of these structures are in their original locations. Within the outlying areas incorporated within the town of Boone in the last half of the twentieth century, the Blair House (WT 71) remains an outstanding example of a farm complex in the rich valley lands to the southeast of Boone. Most of Boone's nineteenth-century structures have been demolished in recent years to make way for infrastructure development, the expansion of ASU, and the modern commercial district along the Blowing Rock Road (US HWY 321/221).

By 1890, the most populous rural townships in Watauga County were Sugar Grove, Sweetwater (that area roughly between the Bethel and Beaverdam areas today, and likely including parts of these localities in 1890), and Valle Crucis.[54] In 1915 historian John Preston Arthur recognized the Cove Creek area, located within the larger Sugar Grove Township, as a significant area of local enterprise. As he wrote of the area, ". . . Cove Creek is recognized as the Egypt of Watauga County. It contains some of the most fertile land in the state. Its people are progressive and co-operate in all public enterprises."[55]

Both the Sugar Grove and former Sweetwater areas retain ample architectural evidence of their relative prosperity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. In fact the greater Bethel/Beaverdam area (including former Sweetwater) contains the largest concentration of late nineteenth-century, upper-middle class farm houses (mostly I-house variants) in the entire county. Within the greater Sugar Grove area, among the most notable of these late-nineteenth-century houses are the Tom Ward House (WT 50), the Dr. Fillmore Bingham House (WT 408), the John Mast House (WT 432), and the Malden Harmon House (WT 617). Within the greater Bethel/Beaverdam area (including former Sweetwater), notable late nineteenth-century houses include the Wilson-Vines House (WT 54), the John and George Sherrill Houses (WT 107 & 108), and the Louis William Farthing House (WT 99).

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[53] Bishir, Southern, and Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 212.
[54] Branson's North Carolina Business Directory, 1890.
[55] Arthur, 1915, 210.

Valle Crucis, the third most populous rural township in 1890 and the site of the failed Episcopal Missionary endeavor of the mid-nineteenth century, would experience a revitalization of the mission complex in 1893. Episcopal Bishop Joseph Blount Cheshire oversaw the revival of the Valle Crucis Mission, with the first of the new structures, the Mission House (WT 21), being built in 1896-97. The Mission complex would continue to expand its buildings into the early decades of the twentieth century. The renewed school would operate on principles similar to its forebear, though it too would see only a limited life in service. The school finally closed down, for a second time, in 1942. The larger Valle Crucis Episcopal Mission Complex (WT 18) as it appears today, dates from the second period of activity.

Other indicators of Valle Crucis's emergence as a substantial rural township in the late nineteenth century are still visible in the contemporary landscape. These include several late nineteenth century I-houses and farm complexes, indicative of a prospering upper-middle class. Among these are the Frank and Wilma Baird Farm (WT 319), mentioned earlier but which did not reach its present appearance until the 1880s and 90s. Others include the Edith Taylor House (WT 309) and the Finley Mast House (part of the larger Mast Farm Complex--WT 2). Another Valle Crucis landmark built in the late nineteenth century is the widely known Mast General Store (WT 3). The store, originally built by the prominent local entrepreneur Henry Taylor in 1882, passed into the ownership of W.W. Mast in the early twentieth century and has retained the Mast family name ever since.

The county’s late nineteenth-century architectural landscape indicates that several other small rural communities were well established by this time as well. These included Stony Fork and Deep Gap in the east; Pottertown, Meat Camp, Elk Crossroads, and Zionville in the north; Mabel, Mast, Sherwood, and Silverstone in the central sections; Rominger, Shawneehaw, Matney, Shulls Mill, Beech Mountain, and Beech Creek in the south; and Timbered Ridge, Forest Grove, Reese and Peoria in the west.

In terms of townships and distribution of land, Watauga County at the turn of the century had developed into much the county that it is today. The area was still overwhelmingly rural, still relying on the farm and forest economy as it had since its initial settlement. Agricultural patterns persisted, with Watauga County among the leaders in the production of wool, cheese, and flax fiber by the turn of the century. The county remained the state’s leading producer of buckwheat. Railroads had still not entered the county by 1900. The first half of the twentieth century, however, would bring dramatic changes to the socio-economy of the county, ushering in the era of modernization.

THE ARCHITECTURAL LANDSCAPE

The latter half of the nineteenth century saw the full florescence of the local building tradition combined with increasingly visible national influences. Log buildings were still being constructed in this period, though newly built dwellings of log were becoming a rarity. Unlike other parts of western North

Carolina--particularly the southwest, where the residential log building tradition continued well into the twentieth century--extant structures in Watauga County indicate that the last log houses were built toward the end of the nineteenth century. [56] One such example of a late nineteenth-century, two-story, single-pen log house with a rear shed kitchen is the Hodges-Walls Log House (WT 347) located in the Valle Crucis area. A much more common use of logs by this time was in agricultural outbuildings, especially barns. Several double-crib log barns date to the latter decades of the nineteenth century. In log construction both half-dovetail and v-notch corner joinery are commonly found. The former seems to be limited to log houses (though it is found less commonly in barns and outbuildings as well), while the latter is more commonly found in log crib barn construction.

Small frame houses of proportions similar to those of log house forms also continued through this period. The most conspicuous house form of the last half of the nineteenth century, however, was the I-house. Variants of this house form are found throughout the county by the 1880s. The great majority of the larger houses exhibit the common center hall plan, while a few retain the hall and parlor plan of earlier house forms. Other formal and structural variations of the I-house include rear ell, T, and shed additions. Rear ell and T extensions exhibit both single-story and two-story variants. The rear shed is almost always a single story in height, though occasional one-and-one-half-story sheds are also present. Another common point of variation is in chimney placement, with double exterior end chimneys and paired, center-hall flanking interior chimneys occurring with roughly the same frequency. The material used to build chimneys also varies, with some built of stone, some of brick, and some composite.

National Victorian influence becomes highly evident by this period. The characteristic two-tier entry porch with flat-sawn decorative porch trim and other minor Victorian embellishments became the dominant porch form by the mid 1880s. Two variants of the common local porch treatment seem to fall within distinct and definable geographic boundaries within the county. In the eastern half of the county, the lower level of the front porch spans nearly the full width of the facade, with the second level being a true entry-width portico. By contrast, in the western parts of the county, the front porch treatments almost always exhibit a full two-tier entry porch. In either case, the porch is the major location of ornamental embellishment. Full width front shed porches are found on a few I-houses from the late nineteenth century, though they are more common in earlier houses and then again after the turn of the century.

Specific I-house forms falling under the designation of Vernacular Victorian stylistic development are too numerous to list but a few examples. Smaller vernacular frame house types, including saddlebag and hall and parlor examples also exhibit intentional Victorian elaboration as well. Examples of these smaller forms include the saddlebag Wallace House (WT 454) in the Trade, Tennessee vicinity and the one-story Nathan Greene House (WT 479) in the Meat Camp Area.

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[56] Michael Ann Williams, *Homeplace: The Social Use and Meaning of the Folk Dwelling in Southwestern North Carolina*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991).

Other national influences, mostly from within specific Victorian period styles, appear as well. Gothic Revival influence appears in steeply pitched, double and triple cross gable facades. Examples of Gothic influenced houses of this type include the Emory Greer House (WT 421) in Zionville, the John Johnson House (WT 427) and the Jack Campbell House (WT 434), both in Mabel, and the John Wilson House (WT 437) in the Silverstone area. Subtle vernacular adaptations of Queen Anne stylistic elements appear in this period as well, especially in the use of scaled shingling in gable ends and cutaway bay windows. Examples of vernacular Queen Anne styled houses include the James A. Aldridge House (WT 302) in Foscoe, the Albert Hodgson House (WT 474) in Meat Camp, and the more fully developed Queen Anne Tom Ward House (WT 50) in Sugar Grove. Vernacular Queen Anne influence becomes more common after 1900.

The earliest nineteenth-century summer houses and resort buildings in Blowing Rock also come largely from the repertory of local vernacular and Victorian design influence. As we have seen, the Blowing Rock landmark Green Park Inn was originally a fully developed Queen Anne style hotel, though later Colonial Revival additions detract from the overall integrity of the original design. Among other early houses in Blowing Rock, the D.P. Coffey House (WT 213) and the Carter-Horner House (WT 236) both originated as vernacular I-houses that could be equally at home in the rural county. The bulk of Blowing Rock's architecture, however, would develop in the early twentieth century under the direct influence of Arts and Crafts, Shingle, and Adirondack inspired Rustic Revival stylistic influences.

At the end of the period under discussion here, construction on the first of Blowing Rock's manorial estates began as well. Textile magnate Moses Cone and his wife Bertha had been acquiring the property for their summer estate since 1893, a parcel of land that would eventually total 3,516 acres.[57] The construction of the Colonial Revival mansion that would be known as Flat Top Manor (WT 4, also listed as the Parkway Craft Center) would begin in 1899. The Cone Estate would set a new precedent for the development of the town in the twentieth century, one including ever more opulent "high architectural" styled homes. (The Cone Manor will be discussed in more detail later in the report).

Numerous early industrial and commercial buildings survive from this period as well. By the late nineteenth century, almost every rural community had its own general store, a principal institution within these communities. Survivors include the Mast General Store (WT 3) in Valle Crucis, the relocated Mabel General Store and Post Office (WT 426), the Payne-Mast Store (WT 399) in Sugar Grove, and the Shulls Mill General Store (WT 272). Just as certainly, these rural communities would have had their own mills as well. The most intact gristmill in the county, though currently in a state of deterioration, is the Winebarger Mill (WT 478) in the Meat Camp area. The former Sugar Grove Mill (WT 406) also survives, but due to significant alterations is hardly recognizable as such.

[57] Buxton, 1989; 66.

IV. Modernization: Education, Transportation, Extractive Industry, and Ascendancy of National Influences, 1900-1952.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1899 as Watauga Academy by the Dougherty brothers, the school that would become Appalachian State University would have more influence on the growth and development of Boone than any other single development. Conceptualized as a training school for mountain children and teachers, the latter goal would be galvanized in 1903 when legislature was passed selecting the nascent Watauga Academy as the site for a teacher training school in the northwestern part of the state. It was renamed Appalachian Training School, with founding brother B.B. Dougherty serving as the first superintendent. The training school grew steadily, with an increase from 325 students in 1903 to around 1,000 by 1925.[58] By 1929, the school had grown enough in both reputation and student body to be renamed again, this time Appalachian State Teachers College. It kept this name until its incorporation into the larger state university system as Appalachian State University in 1968.[59]

Architecturally, the current campus of ASU is composed largely of modern institutional buildings, though a few structures from the early twentieth century remain. The most notable of these include the Dauphin Disco Dougherty Library (WT 566), Founders Hall (WT 563, also known as the former Watauga Hospital), Smith-Wright Hall (WT 565), and Chapell-Wilson Hall (WT 564), all built during the 1930s. Significant contemporaneous structures, including Faculty Row (WT 529), a series of small stone and brick houses built as faculty residences and once lining Faculty and River Streets, have recently been demolished or moved to make way for expanding development. Significant structures from earlier periods, including the late nineteenth-century home of the Dougherty Brothers (WT 75), have also been relocated away from the modern campus. Due to this history of removing or razing historic structures, ASU has limited architectural significance within the town of Boone or the larger county. Nonetheless, the presence of ASU transformed the town of Boone from a sleepy county seat to its eventual status as the largest town in the northwestern mountains. This change would be gradual, however, and would not be fully realized until the periods following the Second World War and especially after 1968.

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LARGER COUNTY

From the post Civil War period up until the great advances of the Civil Rights Movement, an era of nearly one hundred years, the public education system in Watauga County, as in most of the South, observed a race-based segregation policy. Writing in 1949, Clara Mae Sheperd and Daniel Whitener

[58] Bishir, Southern & Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 212.
[59] Ibid.

noted:

> The people of the state decided they would do without schools rather than be forced to establish mixed schools . . . When the new State Constitution was written in 1868 it was silent on the issue, but an amendment a few years later . . . prohibited mixed schools. The School Law of 1869 definitely established separate schools for the two races, setting a policy that has prevailed to this day.[60]

Both discriminatory policy and public opinion pervaded all aspects of this bifurcated educational system. Black teachers, limited of course to black schools, were paid lower salaries than their white counterparts. Black school buildings were more poorly built and maintained than the white schools and black children were subjected to truncated school terms, effectively ensuring lesser educational advancement. By 1900, the county had a total of seventy-three schoolhouses, and as Sheperd and Whitener state, "All but three of these were of frame structure. The other three, all for Negro children, were log buildings."[61]

As recalled by Shepard and Whitener, the history of segregation in the county's public school system is poignantly reflected in the architecture of the school buildings themselves. Though the log cabin today has been romanticized and recast as the quintessential symbol of the Anglo-American subjugation of North America, it was not always so fashionable. With the nadir of the frontier period, the log cabin soon became associated with backwoods poverty and backwardness as the frame houses replacing them rose in status as symbols of affluence and progress. Thus, while white children received schooling in newer frame structures, black children were relegated to the log structures, the material manifestation symbolizing discrimination and supposed racial inferiority.

Unfortunately, none of these African-American log schoolhouses still stand in the county, and the researcher can only guess at their former locations. Several rural frame schoolhouses, however, still stand in various locations throughout the county as evidence of at least one side of early educational developments. The most notable of these early twentieth-century rural schoolhouses are the Stony Fork School (WT 291), Bamboo School (WT 255), the former Valle Crucis Academy (WT 327), and Green Valley School (WT 481) which exhibit similar characteristics in terms of interior partitioning and spatial arrangement. The first three are all divided with a central partition creating two classrooms of equal size, each with its own entrance. Likewise, they all contain raised platforms that were probably used to stage plays. The latter of these schools, Green Valley, is partitioned into four separate classrooms, all accessible from either exterior entrances or a common center-hall front entrance. Green Valley is also the most recent of the schools, built in 1934. The other three schoolhouses date to the 1910s or 1920s.

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[60] Daniel J. Whitener, *History of Watauga County: A Souvenir of Watauga Centennial, Boone, North Carolina*, (Boone: Watauga Centennial Incorporated, 1949), 64.

[61] Ibid, 66.

These rural school buildings are representative of a distinct period in the educational history of the county. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is likely that most of the rural townships in the county had similar educational structures. As noted above, the county had seventy-three schools in 1900. In the 1930s, when President Franklin Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration program began public works projects in Watauga County, they would continue to build new school buildings in discrete rural communities. Two such WPA schools, both built of native granite in a masonry style that characterized most WPA construction projects in the county, are Cove Creek School (WT 48) and Valle Crucis Elementary School (WT 332), both continuing to serve their immediate communities. Community school buildings would not persist, however, as educational advancements promoting centralization pushed increasingly toward the consolidation of county schools, a policy that would be enacted in the immediate post World War II period, ending the era of the country schoolhouse.

TRANSPORTATION AND INDUSTRY IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

At the turn of the twentieth century Watauga County's major transportation route was still the Caldwell and Watauga Turnpike. Though talk of railroads had been ongoing since the middle of the nineteenth century, this transportation modality had yet to materialize, with the exception of an extractive railhead at the Cranberry iron mines, then located in Watauga County but still far from a centrally located commercial center. This was about to change. The East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad (ET&WNCRR), the Tweetsie as it came to be known locally, with the financial backing of the Ritter Lumber Company, extended its line from Cranberry to Pineola in 1900. Then in 1915 to 1916, the Whiting Lumber Company (shortly renamed the Boone Fork Lumber Company), extended the line to Shulls Mill, the first rail terminus within the current boundary of Watauga County. In 1918, the line was finally extended to Boone.

The arrival of the railroad and the logging industry that precipitated that arrival, would signal a period of profound change for the county and the region. It was both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, it connected Watauga County to external markets that had never before been so accessible, making possible a level of prosperity that was heretofore unknown. Concurrently, influences from the outside world could more easily find their way into this formerly isolated region, a reality that would transform the local landscape and usher in the era of modernity. On the other hand, the logging industry would transform both the landscape and the domestic economies of countless mountain families. In the first instance, the logging industry would ravage the landscape, leaving vast areas of formerly virgin forest denuded of vegetation of any kind, which would in turn exacerbate the destructive potential of natural disasters such as flooding and forest fires. Secondly, the abrupt transition from a historic subsistence economy to the emergent cash-based market economy meant that more and more people would have to seek wage labor to supplement (and later altogether replace) subsistence activities at home. This would not be an easy transition.

As Appalachian historian John Alexander Williams wrote of the changes wrought by the

industrialization of the region:

> Appalachia at the end of the nineteenth century was a society of farmers and herdsmen on the verge of becoming industrial workers. It was a society governed by custom and case law about to enter the age of bureaucracy. It was an age of wood about to become an age of iron and steel--and paper. The psychological distance to be covered was enormous, and so were the changes in everyday life.[62]

Working by the clock for a wage on the railroad section crews or logging crews meant a stable cash income to be sure, but the local economy had never before been so dependent on legal tender for conducting trade transactions. Never before had men of large families (these wage-earning jobs were limited exclusively to males) had to leave home in order to make a living. Nonetheless, the transition from subsistence to market economy would facilitate an era of unprecedented growth and commerce.

Shulls Mill before the arrival of the ET&WNCRR was a typical rural township. In a boom and bust pattern typical of sudden and rapid town growth initiated by extractive industry, Shulls Mill initially thrived with the timber industry's presence, but just as quickly died with its flight. As E.T. Campbell noted:

> Shulls Mill . . . was a thriving community long as the mill lasted [the industrial band mill of the Boone Fork Lumber Company]. It had a hotel, hospital and doctor's office, theatre, grist mill, a phone line, feed and grain store, post office, many houses and commissary that sold goods to whomever had money to buy. In less than ten years the timber ran out and in 1925 Whiting moved the operation to sites in Tennessee, West Virginia, and Black Mountain in North Carolina. Workers and businesses moved, too, most buildings were torn down and the community reverted to agricultural pursuits.[63]

The timber industry also served as a vehicle for emergent forms of local cultural expression, utilizing the imagery and esoteric knowledge accumulated in the logging camps to forge a collective occupational culture. The new order established by the presence of the industry worked quickly in solidifying this new sense of occupationally defined identity among its workers, a phenomenon that occurred again and again as various forms of extractive industry penetrated the greater Appalachian region. One of the greatest contributions of these new occupational cultures to the lexicon of American vernacular expression manifested in the form of songs such as "John Henry" and "Nine Pound Hammer." One such local song about the lumbering days of Shulls Mill was collected by one of Watauga County's musical legends,

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[62] Williams, *Appalachia: A History*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 216-217.
[63] E.T. Campbell, *Tweetsie Tales: A Collection of Reminiscences*, (Blowing Rock: New River Publishing Company, 1989), 47.

Frank Proffitt. The song, entitled "Shulls Mill," expresses much about the ambivalence many loggers felt toward their new livelihood in the market economy as well as the sense of frontier-like rowdiness associated with the heyday of many industrial boomtowns.

I'm long and I'm tall Lord,
I'm skinny and I'm mean
When the women sees me coming,
You can hear them scream.

The girls on Beaver Dam,
They think they're so fine,
But I'll take the women on Whore's Knob
Every doggone time.

My old double bit,
It's filed good and keen,
It's the choppin'est axe
That's ever been seen.

My axe makes my money,
I keep it mighty keen,
The girls on Beaver Dam
Thinks I'm purty damn mean.

Got to the keep the skidway
Filled up all the time.
Got to keep the train a runnin,
Or you can't make a dime.

I hear that long train a-coming,
Sounds like it's running away.
I hope it don't wreck
Till I gets my pay.

Goin' by the commissary,
Only way to get my pay.
I won't have a nickel
When it comes pay day.

The girls at Shulls Mill
Got loving on their minds
But the girls on Beaver Dam
Wants money all the time.

Goin' to leave Monday,
Make the big trees fall.
Goin' to where I can hear
Old Whiting's log train squall.

Away up on Grandpappy Mountain,
Makin' the big trees fall.
When I gets my pay
Hain't gonna work a-tall.[64]

The timber industry left the county as quickly as it came. Shulls Mill was one of several such communities scattered throughout the greater region. A similar fate attended the development of the lumbering town of Todd, on the Watauga/Ashe County border. The Virginia Creeper railroad line finally made its way to Todd (formerly known as Elk Crossroads) in the same year the ET&WNCRR reached Shulls Mill. Todd, like Shulls Mill, boomed with the arrival of the timber industry. After the exhaustion of the local timber reserves along the South Fork New River watershed in both counties, however, the timber company pulled out, leaving local citizens to fend for themselves. Lumbering camps were also established in the extreme southeastern corner of the county, that area lying below the Blue Ridge Escarpment—towns such as Penley and Sampson. These southeastern areas were oriented more toward the lumbering enterprises of Wilkes County, a socio-economic orientation that would persist through much of the history of this most isolated area of the county.

The lasting material legacy of the lumber camps is minimal, due largely to the ephemeral nature of the enterprise. Lumber companies and their workers erected virtual shanty-towns quickly and cheaply, not intending them to be permanent. One important architectural form that may have reached something of a zenith in the lumber camps, however, was the boxed house. Though a few boxed houses were built in the county before the arrival of the timber industry, both the temporary nature of camps and the availability of sawn plank lumber within them made the boxed house an obvious choice in this context. The form is not limited to temporary timber camp housing, however, and was adopted as a rural house form throughout the county. As vernacular architecture scholar Michael Ann Williams has noted of the relationship of boxed construction to the timber industry:

> Boxed construction was sometimes used in timber-camp housing. While it is possible that the construction of this temporary housing was responsible for the introduction of the boxed house in the region, it is likely that boxed construction already existed to a limited degree in the local building repertoire.[65]

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[64] From Barry Buxton, *A Village Tapestry: The History of Blowing Rock*, (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1989), 34-35.

[65] Michael Ann Williams, "Pride and Prejudice: The Appalachian Boxed House in Southwestern North Carolina," (*Winterthur Portfolio*, vol. 25, no. 4, 1990), 225.

Indeed, as Williams argues, the boxed house was in fact a direct descendent of the log house in relation to both social function and spatial arrangement, a building type necessitated by the transition from subsistence to market economy and the resulting disparity of wealth. One advantage of vertical plank construction in this context is that it allowed the older cultural practice of cooperative community house-raising to continue. As Williams contends:

> While the widespread adoption of boxed houses might seem to signal the demise of traditional log construction, in many communities it enabled the prolongation of the traditional cooperative building system. Unable to help to build log houses, the rural individual who was drawn into the cash economy might still afford the time to help put up a boxed house.[66]

Examples of boxed houses in Watauga County include the Dr. J.E. Hodges House (WT 281), the Byrd House (WT 330), the Ed and Falah Hollars House (WT 376), the Sam Hodges House (WT 394), and the Greene Boxed House (WT 480), all from the early decades of the twentieth century.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the county's first hard surface roads further enhanced the transportation revolution in Watauga County and its attendant economic revolution. More so than the railroad, these improved roads fueled a transformation of the local agricultural economy. As Elizabeth Stevens noted in her 1989 survey report on the history and architecture of the town of Boone:

> Commercial farming of long-popular subsistence crops like Irish potatoes and cabbage became viable now that farmers could truck their surplus to market. . . . Burley tobacco was introduced into the area in 1929. Ten years later, a tobacco warehouse was opened in Boone to accommodate sale of this locally grown crop . . . Other commercial enterprises in town about 1930 processed other harvested products. The North State Canning Company opened a plant on West King Street in 1924 to can sauerkraut and sauerkraut juice. Appalachian Evergreen Company shipped galax leaves, holly, and native plants and shrubs around the country. Wilcox Drug Company bought locally-collected roots, herbs and bark and shipped those items to destinations around the world.[67]

Thus again, virtually overnight, the local subsistence economy was commodified, marking a new era in the county's potential for growth and individual prosperity. What the railroad and hard surface roads also brought to the county was a dramatic increase in tourist traffic, a trend that would continue to grow and soon arise as the mainstay of the local economy.

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[66] Ibid, 227.
[67] Elizabeth Stevens, *Town of Boone Historic Sites Survey*, (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1989), 5.

TOURISM, COMMERCE, AND THE ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF BOONE, BLOWING ROCK, AND THE RURAL COUNTY IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY.

With improved transportation, the two largest towns in the county experienced unprecedented growth and development in the early twentieth century. This growth was the result of several factors: the emergence of large-scale agricultural industries such as those mentioned above; the growth of Appalachian State Teachers College; and most importantly, the increasing influx of tourist traffic. Tourism and commerce would result in the development and expansion of municipal infrastructure in both Boone and Blowing Rock that reflected increasingly visible national influences, both in commercial and residential architecture. The historic architectural fabric of the commercial districts of these towns that we see today came largely from this period. Likewise, the majority of in-town residential development occurred alongside downtown development. Tourism related architecture also grew, and summer houses proliferated (particularly in Blowing Rock).

Boone

After the arrival of a railroad spur line into Boone in 1918 and the improved hard surface roads of the 1920s and 1930s, the town made a decisive effort to expand its offerings to tourist traffic. The most ambitious effort toward this end was the construction of the Daniel Boone Hotel (WT 6), first opened to the public in May of 1925. The hotel was a two-and-one-half-story brick structure with minimal Colonial Revival elaboration. According to researchers Michael Southern and Jim Sumner, "the Daniel Boone Hotel was the town of Boone's first major tourist hotel and for many years was the center of social activity in the Watauga County seat."[68] Demolished to make way for condominium development in recent years, its former presence attests to the early efforts of Boone to accommodate tourist traffic during this time of rapid expansion. Another hotel, the former Carolina Hotel (WT 595), built circa 1920, occupied a utilitarian commercial building on King Street that currently houses several retail businesses. While not as elaborate as the Daniel Boone Hotel, the Carolina is yet another example of the growth of tourist-related architecture in the town of Boone. Though the town made significant efforts toward attracting tourists, it would continue to be overshadowed by the increasingly popular destination of Blowing Rock.

Boone's commercial downtown architecture saw its greatest period of development during the early twentieth century as well. Utilitarian commercial buildings of brick masonry and a few more stylistically developed buildings suggest the ascendancy of modern, nationally derived architectural forms facilitated by the flow of current ideas and materials that accompanied internal transportation improvements. Of Boone's remaining historic commercial architecture, simple utilitarian structures such as the former

[68] Southern and Sumner, *National Register Nomination for the Daniel Boone Hotel*, (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1981).

Hunt's Department Store (WT 591) and the H.W. Horton Building (WT 593), built in 1910 and 1919, respectively, are examples of minimally adorned popular commercial architecture that was common throughout the country. One of Boone's most stylistically developed commercial buildings, the former Watauga County Bank Building (WT 590) built in 1922, is elaborated in the then nationally fashionable Neoclassical Revival style, complete with decorative pilasters, a second level Diocletian window, decorative basket-weave brickwork, and prominent classical entablature.

By the 1930s, more explicitly modernistic nationally derived architectural styles made their appearance in downtown Boone as well. Though currently clad in plain exterior composite siding, the original Appalachian Cinema Building (WT 609), built in 1938 and remodeled after fire in 1950, exhibited an original Art Deco facade, a popular treatment for theatres nationwide at this time. The building occupying the southeastern corner of the South Depot and Howard Street commercial block (WT 603) likewise exhibits the modernistic design influence of the Art Moderne style. Clearly, by this time Boone had thoroughly entered the modern age of commercial, city development.

Another important architectural development of the 1930s for Boone's downtown district were the buildings constructed under Franklin Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration program. The former Watauga County Library and Offices Building (WT 607), built in 1938, is one such example. This standard commercial-type building is constructed of local stone in a masonry style that dominated WPA structures throughout the county. The most significant WPA building in Boone, however, is the Post Office Building (WT 49), also built in 1938. The U.S. Post Office in Boone features Colonial Revival style decorative elements while retaining a sense of local, mountain vernacular influence through the use of native stone as the primary exterior material. The interior features a mural depicting Daniel Boone and the frontier era of the county's history, thus serving as a symbolic mechanism connecting Watauga's legendary past with the progressivism of the New Deal era.

The continued growth in the early twentieth century of what was then the Appalachian Training School also resulted in a significant industrial development off of the central campus in 1915. Conceptualized by B.B. Dougherty, the county's first commercial hydroelectric project was initiated to provide nighttime electricity to the school. The project was contracted to Knoxville, Tennessee electrician David Shearer in 1914. By 1915 a dam and powerhouse on the South Fork of the New River provided electricity to Appalachian Training School dormitories, administration buildings, and six private residences lying along the route of the power lines.[69] The generating station and dam operated until 1923 when a fire destroyed much of the generating house. The New River Light and Power Dam Site (WT 68) today is a deteriorating ruin of the former stone powerhouse. The site is accessible via the Lee and Vivian Reynolds Greenway Trail.

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[69] Sharon Fairweather, "Utility lit up Boone in 1915," (*Watauga Democrat*, March 23, 1988).

Residential development in Boone reached its greatest period of activity in the early twentieth century as well. Like the town's commercial architecture, the homes of this period in the immediate downtown Boone vicinity display the ascendancy of nationally popular stylistic influences in residential construction. Though a few examples of Queen Anne style houses were built in the early twentieth century, these predated the arrival of improved transportation. Most notable among these earliest twentieth-century homes in Boone is the Queen Anne styled Jones House (WT 8) built in 1908.

The most common nationally influenced house form in Boone (and throughout the county) after improved transportation was the Arts and Crafts derived bungalow. No other house form swept the county with such acceptance as this one. The great majority of Boone's early twentieth-century historic residential architecture falls under this broad designation. The bungalow form and its many variations signaled the full arrival of modernity and likely symbolized the progressive spirit to the many Watauga Countians who adopted this style in favor of older traditional house forms. The ubiquity of the bungalow makes it impossible to list them all here, but a few noteworthy examples include the G.E. Ashley House (WT 523), the Rex Hagaman House (WT 528), the Dr. George Moose House (WT 543), the Doris Church House (WT 556) and the Pearl and Rufus Greene House (WT 558).

Incorporating a wide range of international stylistic detailing, Boone residential architecture also displays a degree of eclecticism that characterized national housing trends in the early to mid twentieth century. Among the more notable examples of eclectic styled houses in Boone include the D.G. Moretz House (WT 513), built in 1928, which exhibits several features that suggest conscious Mission style elaboration. These include a low-hipped roof, arcaded front porch treatment, and the use of terra cotta roofing tiles. Though the house lacks the characteristic Mission style dormer or roof parapet, it is highly suggestive of this general stylistic group. Another notable eclectic house form in Boone is the Ala McGuire House (WT 545), built circa 1920. This house exemplifies the Spanish Eclectic stylistic revival of the early twentieth century. Its stuccoed exterior, flat roof, and projecting pueblo-esque entry treatment make this house the only one of its kind in Watauga County.

Ecclesiastical architecture also proliferated in the downtown Boone area in the early twentieth century. Though most of Boone's church buildings have been significantly altered, a few notable examples remain. Among the most architecturally significant (and relatively unaltered) church buildings in Boone is the Advent Christian Church (WT 577), built in 1920 of local cut stone with no exposed mortar joints, imitative of dry-stone work. Stone buttresses regularly flank the long axis of this gable front building. Though recently demolished, the Boone United Methodist Church (WT 610), completed in 1925, was among the more architecturally ambitious of local church buildings, built in an ornate and highly detailed Colonial Revival style. Among the most socially significant church buildings in Boone is the Boone Mennonite Church (WT 552). Located in the Junaluska area of Boone, the church has long served as this area's principal religious institution for the local African-American population.

Blowing Rock

In 1900, the downtown district of Blowing Rock was composed exclusively of frame structures. Many of these, including the Watauga Hotel (no longer standing) and the Martin House (WT 202) were built in the late nineteenth century. The first automobile made the ascent from Lenoir to Blowing Rock in 1908, with many soon following after the hard surfacing of the road in 1910. With this significant increase in traffic and the town's growing popularity, the town boomed, but not without the problems associated with rapid and often shortsighted growth. As town historian Barry Buxton wrote:

> Growth had taken place so quickly that the charming mountain village was on its way to becoming a dirty little town. Hog pens and wooden shacks mingled with elegant cottages on Main Street, cattle and horses fragrantly marked their trails, and hordes of flies drew attention to the lack of a Village sewer system. Even the clean sections of streets turned into mud pits during rains or thaws.[70]

Though town officials grew increasingly concerned with issues of sanitation and attractive appearance, visitors often defined Blowing Rock's charm by the lack of modern influence that seemed to manifest in its unkempt, disorderly, rustic atmosphere--its very quaintness as a mountain retreat. As one tourist visiting the town in 1919 commented:

> "Maybe the infection (of progress) will someday reach Blowing Rock . . . But the day we know is far distant when Blowing Rock will 'boast' of paved streets, for then the glory of the town would have disappeared. One pleasant occupation always provided for the visitors is flopping down on some wayside bench or chair and shaking the sand from the shoe. What would life amount to in Blowing Rock if that entertaining diversion should be withdrawn from the people? Why, lots of folks would get mad, say it is not the same old Blowing Rock at all, and swear to never go back there again."[71]

This perception of Blowing Rock's mountain rusticity, its "primitive" quaintness, would contribute a significant strain to the ideological development of the resort town as a restorative antidote to the modern urban-industrial world from which many of its visitors came. This idea, as we shall see--similar in its implications to the development of rustic hunting and fishing camps and resort lodges for wealthy gentlemen in the Adirondack Mountains of New York--would have tremendous influence on the architectural development of the town of Blowing Rock.

The rusticity perceived in Blowing Rock's lack of modern improvements and proliferation of ramshackle frame buildings would soon become a moot point, however. In October of 1923 a disastrous fire swept

[70] Buxton, 1989, 30.
[71] From Buxton, 1989, 31.

the downtown area, destroying most of the frame buildings on the east side of Main Street. During the 1923 fire, the west side of Main Street remained untouched, and many of the residences lining that side of the street still stand today, most from the early twentieth century. Likely seen as a blessing by most permanent townspeople, they seized the opportunity to reconstruct the village more to their liking. Soon after the fire, a new ordinance was passed prohibiting wood construction in the commercial downtown district. The result would be the utilitarian commercial architecture of stone and brick that still lines the east side of Main Street today. Among those surviving commercial structures raised soon after the fire are the R.S. Reinhardt Building (WT 219), the former Bank of Blowing Rock (WT 190), the former Village Pharmacy (WT 218), Storie's Soda Shop Commercial Building (WT 220), Craig's Grocery (WT 206), and the former Hayes Department Store (WT 217). In these new commercial structures the heavy use of stone provided continuity with the town's perceived mountain rusticity while brick buildings simultaneously announced its full entry into modern, nationally influenced downtown development. Far more stone buildings are present in downtown Blowing Rock than in Boone.

The other type of structure that most defines Main Street Blowing Rock is its churches. The two oldest of the downtown churches are the Blowing Rock Methodist Church (WT 221), built in the early 1900s, and the Rumple Memorial Presbyterian Church (WT 224), built in 1912. The Methodist Church is a frame, gable front building integrating Gothic Revival elements (particularly in the windows) with the local preference for naturalistic rustication through the use of original exterior chestnut bark shingling. In recent years, the deteriorating chestnut bark has been replaced with poplar bark, an increasingly popular contemporary replacement material for the now-extinct chestnut variety. The Rumple Memorial Presbyterian Church is a gable front, Gothic Revival structure built of local fieldstone. The use of interior stone for the altar and the presence of exposed wood-beam trusses contribute to the overall rustication of the building. A third church, St. Mary's of the Hills Episcopal Church (WT 623), built in 1921 of local fieldstone, again implies the intentional rusticity of local architectural preferences.

The continued growth in the early 20th century of Blowing Rock's commercial district was mirrored by the expansion of tourist-related landscapes and structures on the periphery of town. By the second decade of the twentieth century, town tourism promoters determined that the only component Blowing Rock lacked as a complete resort town was a good golf course. In 1915 to 1916 the construction of a nine-hole course on the land immediately adjacent to the Green Park Hotel removed this deficiency. The designer of the original course is not known, but when the course was expanded to a full eighteen holes in 1922, the redesigned course was the work of Donald James Ross, "America's most prolific golf course architect in the 1920s."[72] The completion of the course would prompt the growth of the surrounding Green Park neighborhood, today the only National Register Historic District fully within the borders of Watauga County. (The Todd Historic District, while mostly in Ashe County, does have a few properties in Watauga County as well. Valle Crucis also has a historic district, but it is locally designated and not in

[72] Baucom and Ewing, *The Green Park Historic District*, (Blowing Rock: The Blowing Rock Historical Society, 1998), 18.

the National Register.)

As the Green Park area expanded its offerings to tourists with new recreational opportunities, a new hotel was under construction in the area that would be known as Mayview. Construction of the Mayview Manor Hotel (WT 130) and its surrounding residential neighborhood were begun in 1917 by Charlotte resident Walter L. Alexander. When finished and opened to the public in 1922, the 108-room Mayview Manor Hotel was a monumental achievement in the evolution of the larger Blowing Rock area. Heretofore the area immediately west of downtown was entirely undeveloped. The grandest of Blowing Rock's resort hotels, the Mayview was enormous. Clad in exterior chestnut bark shingling with every conceivable effort toward promoting the "refined rusticity" that the hotel and the town at large came to embody, Mayview had a profound influence on the architectural development of Blowing Rock, finally codifying the localized version of "mountain rustic."

The Mayview Manor Hotel and the numerous residences that would spring up around it in the Mayview neighborhood (and elsewhere in the greater Blowing Rock area) were directly influenced by several important architectural antecedents. The most obvious and most commonly cited architectural influence was that of the contemporaneous Craftsman style. The larger Arts and Crafts movement, led initially in late nineteenth-century England by William Morris and John Ruskin, advocated the use of indigenous materials and a return to dignified hand-work as an antidote to the mass production and decline in quality they saw as a result of modern industrialization. The rusticated Blowing Rock structures were certainly intended to serve just such a purpose as Morris and Ruskin promoted. Blowing Rock's rustic resort architecture symbolized the possibility of a pure and authentic experience grounded in the unspoiled nature of the Southern mountains--the very counterpoint of the urban industrial world most of Blowing Rock's visitors occupied the remainder of the year.

Two other important influences, both directly or indirectly the result of Henry Bacon's pioneering use of chestnut bark shingling in Linville, were the Shingle style and the Rustic Revival style that had been popularized in northern camp and resort architecture. Bacon's work in New York with the renowned architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White would have placed him under direct contact and influence of the New England born Shingle style that dominated east coast resort development in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Similarly, he would have had direct access to the highly rusticated camp and resort architecture beginning to develop in the great camps of the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York. Blowing Rock's rusticated resort and summer home architecture then, is a highly localized synthesis of three major stylistic influences: Craftsman, Shingle, and Rustic Revival. Each of these styles had something to offer in the construction of Blowing Rock's image. It was a strange and thoroughly modern juxtaposition really--simple, mountain rusticity coupled with the refined elegance of high society. Although, for instance, the Mayview Manor was one of the most consciously rusticated buildings in Blowing Rock, Barry Buxton could still speak of it as "more than just a hotel, it was a way of life. It stood for gracious living, of white linen suits and straw hats, tennis dates and afternoon tea on the veranda, fresh flowers and white gloved bellmen . . . ballroom dances and

fashion shows, wicker chairs and stone fireplaces . . ."[73]

Residential examples of Blowing Rock's "mountain rustic" style abound, notwithstanding the great number of houses whose deteriorating chestnut bark has been replaced by modern materials. Examples in the Green Park Historic District include the "cottages" WT 32, WT 45, and WT 46. Notable examples in the Mayview area include "Shadowlawn" (WT 166), Mayview Bark Cottage (WT 167), "Green Pastures" (WT 158), the Jim Cannon House (WT 161), and the Joe and Annie Cannon House (WT 162). Examples in or near the downtown area include "Wayside" (WT 151), Hanna Bark Cottage (WT 189--no longer standing), and the Washburn House (now Ragged Gardens Inn, WT 70). Many examples once clad in chestnut bark no longer exhibit this material. The original number of chestnut bark shingled houses is difficult to determine, but it must have been great.

Though mountain rustic chestnut bark shingling may be the most collectively characteristic style in the greater Blowing Rock area, not all buildings exhibit this intentional rustication. Pure "high" style examples are the exception throughout Watauga County, but two residences in particular are worth noting for their architectural significance as stylistic examples. These are the Colonial Revival style mansions, the Cone (or Flat Top) Manor (WT 4--mentioned earlier) and Westglow (WT 5). Construction on the Cone Manor began in 1899, but the house would not be finished until 1901. The Manor currently belongs to the National Park Service, which rents the space to the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild. The second of Watauga County's Colonial Revival mansions, known as Westglow, was built for painter Elliot Daingerfield in 1916. The pedimented front entry, supported by Ionic columns suggestive of classical temple forms, is the only such monumental example of Neoclassicism in the county. The Cones and Daingerfield built two of the most notable "high style" architectural examples in the Blowing Rock area, houses that are anomalous yet very important in the larger story of the area’s emergence as a summer resort for wealthy patrons from the piedmont and coastal plain sections of the state.

As the discrete communities of Blowing Rock continued to develop in the twentieth century, internal institutions therein also arose to accommodate the local populations. Central among these were of course, churches. The downtown churches mentioned above ministered to many of the people in the outlying areas of town, but smaller churches also developed to serve more localized groups of people. The building originally erected as a school by the Cones to serve the large tenant population of their estate was converted to a place of worship in 1928. As when it was a school, Sandy Flat Missionary Baptist Church (WT 620) served mostly the tenant population of the Cone Estate. The population of the Green Park area continued to grow (the greatest period of growth being the decade of the 1920s), and by 1948 they would build their own church, the Church of the Epiphany (WT 39). Blowing Rock's African American population would not have their own place of worship until 1949, when a committee made up of prominent white townspeople selected the location and raised the money to construct the church. Seeing themselves as providing a more wholesome alternative to the bar known as Tin Top, a popular

[73] Buxton, 1989, 104.

diversion for the some of the town's African American population, white townspeople dedicated the Blowing Rock Negro Community Church (WT 238), now a Baptist church serving a white congregation.

A development that would greatly impact parts of the rural county and Blowing Rock was the construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway, another program sponsored by Franklin Roosevelt during the years of the Depression. Beginning with the project's approval in 1933, Blowing Rock promoters lobbied for the town's inclusion along the proposed route of the Parkway.[74] Blowing Rock was included in the route of the Parkway, but would have to wait until 1987 for its completion around nearby Grandfather Mountain. In the meantime, the main road connecting Blowing Rock to the route of the Parkway was the old Yohnolassee Trail, modern U.S. Highway 221. The early automobile tourism Hwy 221 experienced for many years resulted in some of the county's first roadside tourist architecture. Specifically, the former Blue Moon Station (WT 243) tempted auto travelers with its bright blue painted vertical log in-fill between milled framing members. The structure is unique in the county and represents the earliest period of roadside touristic architectural development. After the completion of the Lynn-Cove Viaduct around Grandfather Mountain in 1987, however, Blue Moon Station and Highway 221 would fade from prominence as the Parkway funneled ever more traffic into Blowing Rock.

The Rural County

Before the coming of the railroad and improved hard surface roads, vernacular forms continued to dominate the architectural development of the rural county. The presence of Victorian elaboration, especially the Queen Anne variety that appeared in the late nineteenth century, continued to inform traditional house types in the early decades of the twentieth century as well. The full two-story I-house form that had been the most popular house in the mid to late nineteenth century occurred occasionally in the first decade of the twentieth century, but smaller, scaled down, one-and-one-half-story variants became the norm before the modernization of residential architecture. These smaller scaled I-houses often exhibited a single-story front shed porch rather than the two-tier versions of their predecessors. They also exhibited single-story rear shed and ell additions with greater frequency than had been the case with earlier, fully developed I-house forms that usually had full two-story rear ells. Additionally, these early twentieth-century vernacular farmhouses displayed both the center hall and hall and parlor (or two-over-two) interior spatial arrangements that had influenced the local building tradition since early in the county's history.

Far more than in the nineteenth century, early twentieth-century vernacular house forms displayed an extremely wide range of variation. The common single-pile, one-and-one-half-story house with front shed porch was the simplest and least elaborated of these forms. Examples of these simplified, scaled down I-house descendants include the Rubin Walker House (WT 352), the Jim Brown House (WT 326)

[74] Buxton, 1989, 161.

and the Paul Gregory House (WT 398). Similar one-and-one-half-story forms with expanded, partial wrap-around porches, probably an indirect influence of the Queen Anne style, also appeared with greater frequency in the early twentieth century. One notable example of this type is the Nathan Hicks House (WT 364). While decorative ornamentation was minimal on these late vernacular forms, a few houses do display conscious decorative elaboration. The W. F. Winkler House (WT 357), for example, uses diagonal siding in the gable ends to add a degree of visual complexity to an otherwise unadorned house. Continuity with earlier, full two-story I-house forms, though becoming rare in the early twentieth-century, can be noted on but a few examples. One outstanding example of this type, retaining the two-tier entry porch treatment common on mid to late nineteenth-century houses, is the J.S. Miller House (WT 468).

Other popular vernacular variants of the early twentieth century include the "Triple-A" form. Formally similar to the simple one-and-one-half-story vernacular farmhouse, Triple-A forms take their name from the presence of a visually prominent, flush set, front cross-gable. Examples of this type include the Ed Bingham House (WT 337) and the Richardson House (WT 344).

Vernacular forms with more highly developed Queen Anne elaboration were also common in the rural county in the early twentieth century. The most common and visible areas of Queen Anne elaboration in vernacular houses include the presence of scaled shingles in gable ends, large wrap-around type porches, and cutaway bay windows. Notable examples of these early twentieth-century vernacular Queen Anne types include the Josie and Gaither Critcher House (WT 254), the James A. Aldridge House (WT 302), and the Lionel Ward House (WT 615).

With the coming of the railroad to Boone in 1918 and improved hard surface roads in the 1920s and 1930s, Watauga County's rural architecture displayed a rapid transition from local vernacular forms to a preference for modern, nationally influenced dwelling types. The single house form that best represents this transition in the rural county is the Art and Crafts-derived bungalow. So ubiquitous are bungalow forms throughout the county that full documentation of the great majority of these houses was foregone in favor of simply indicating their presence through map-coding. Three major bungalow variants recur in the county with enough frequency for each to have been designated as a distinct sub-type, identified here for convenience as Types I, II and III. The Type I bungalow is typically a massed plan, one-and-one-half-story form with an engaged porch and characteristic low shed dormer. Type II is differentiated from Type I only by the dormer, with the former displaying a gable-front dormer rather than the shed type. The Type III bungalow variant, with numerous sub-variations within this general type, is characterized by its gable front orientation. Specific examples of all three types were included in the survey with full documentation. Representative of Type I are the George Greene House (WT 298) and the Fred and Okie Rominger House (WT 338); Type II--the main house of the Walker-Harmon Farm (WT 84) and the Tom Jones House (WT 464); Type III--the Campbell House (WT 335), "Stone Bungalow" (WT 341), and the Nooney House (WT 340).

Rather than in their individual architectural merit, (though some examples are certainly noteworthy on this criterion alone--the Roby T. Greer House (WT 501) for example, the greatest significance of these rural bungalows lies in the socio-cultural transformation they represent). As a thoroughly modern house form that became common throughout the United States in the first half of the twentieth century, the bungalow in rural Watauga County experienced an ascendancy in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s that signaled the county's full entry into larger trends toward modernity and nationality. In a pattern that swept the county, these new, modern bungalow forms replaced older vernacular farmhouses when economically feasible. Though occasionally necessitated by fire or natural disaster, as was the case when the original I-house form of the George Greene Farm (WT 298) was replaced by the present Type I bungalow after fire in 1938, other home owners demolished or disassembled older houses to erect modern bungalows. The original I-house of the W.H. Mast Farm (WT 402) was carefully dismantled in the 1930s and the current brick Type II bungalow erected in its place. On the Walker-Harmon Farm (WT 84), the original nineteenth-century vernacular farmhouse stands abandoned and deteriorating beside the large modern Type II bungalow that has served as the farm’s main residence since 1927. In each instance, the bungalow often symbolized the owner's progressiveness and willful participation in what was clearly a brave new modern age. By the 1940s, this house type became so common as the main residence of larger farms that most current residents of the county refer to the bungalows simply as "farmhouses."

As other national influences made their way into the county in the first half of the twentieth century, some eclectic house forms emerged in the rural county as well. Most prominent among these were residences inspired by the English Cotswald/Tudor style. Examples of houses displaying this influence are the H. Grady Greer House (WT 500) and the Stanley Harris Sr. House (WT 439), both built in the 1930s. The smaller urban variant of the Tudor Revival style, characterized by a polychromatic effect achieved through the random intermixing of brick and stone and at least one large, prominent front facing gable, became quite common in the county by the 1940s and 1950s.

New commercial and industrial architecture in the rural county in the twentieth century was quite rare, as Boone's continued growth as the center of commercial activity began to render such outlying development obsolete. Nonetheless, a few new structures did emerge during this time. The former Matney General Store (WT 339) and the Victor Ward Store (WT 356), built in the 1920s and 1939, respectively, were built to compete with older, nineteenth-century general stores. After the 1940 flood, the B.O. (Ben) Ward Sawmill (WT 358) was reconstructed to replace the earlier mill that had served the former Watauga Falls area since the late nineteenth century.

The new materials now available through improved transportation thoroughly transformed agricultural buildings in the twentieth century. The great majority of the large barns that currently dot the landscape were built during this period, often with the ground level constructed of concrete blocks. Though it is uncertain at what point it was introduced into the county, the highly localized practice of cladding barn exteriors with diagonal siding had become nearly universal by this time as well. Large twentieth-century

farm complexes such as the Fred and Lillie Critcher Farm (WT 276) exhibit the full range of architectural development at this time. The main residence, built in 1942, is a bungalow/Tudor hybrid. The barns, a mixture of pure frame and concrete block/frame structures, all date to the 1930s and 1940s. The farm complex was a thriving dairy operation in its heyday and reflects the integration of nationally-influenced architectural forms within a traditional working farm context.

The availability of imported materials and the influx of national stylistic influences also facilitated major changes in rural church architecture. Decorative elaboration unknown in most nineteenth-century church buildings was becoming more visible in the early twentieth century. Scaled shingling such as was commonly used in residential Queen Anne elaboration appears on churches such as the Forest Grove (WT 395) and Poplar Grove (WT 242) Baptist churches. Arts and Crafts design influence is evident in the prominent eave brackets utilized in the early twentieth century Meat Camp Baptist Church (WT 476).

Rural church organizations had consistently sought more modern, permanent structures to replace earlier ones, as frame structures often replaced previous log buildings in the nineteenth century. The substantial stone churches erected for the older congregations of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church (WT 268) and the Holy Communion Lutheran Church (WT 375), both built in 1938, testify to this desire for more permanent structures. As brick became more readily available in the twentieth century, some rural churches adopted this resilient material in the construction of new church buildings as well. After 1950, the use of brick in new church buildings became universal. One of the earliest brick churches, and perhaps the most ambitious and stylistically developed of Watauga County's rural churches, is the Henson Chapel Methodist Church (WT 409). Constructed entirely of brick between 1926 and 1931, the highly developed Gothic Revival style Henson Chapel replaced the earlier frame structure (WT 410) that was moved by horse and log rollers across Cove Creek to its present location. The use of brick continued into the 1940s on such buildings as the Stony Fork Church (WT 293) and the Three Forks Baptist Church (WT 572), the latter still housing the oldest continuous religious organization in the county.

Watauga County Since 1952

By 1952, Watauga County was fully integrated into the larger national market economy. One of the three original "Lost Provinces" (Ashe and Allegheny being the other two), so called because of their remote isolation from the rest of the state, Watauga County has grown exponentially in the last fifty years. After the incorporation of Appalachian State University into the state system in 1968, the school has steadily grown, both in its infrastructure and student body. That growth has resulted in modern Boone's considerable expansion--a contemporary boomtown. The tourism that began in earnest in mid-nineteenth-century Blowing Rock has grown into the county's leading industry in the twenty-first century. Another significant component of the area's growth as a tourist Mecca was the arrival of the skiing industry in the 1960s. The development of ski resorts such as Beech Mountain, Appalachian Ski Mountain, Hound Ears, Sugar Mountain, Wolf Laurel, and Ski Hawksnest have all contributed to the

prominence and continued vitality of the local tourist industry.

The summer house phenomenon that also began in Blowing Rock has expanded into nearly every corner of the county, sending real estate values and local land taxes skyward. Though small working farms continue to be a vital part of the local landscape, more common are former farmlands subdivided to make way for permanent and seasonal residential developments. The historic landscape has been commodified and incorporated into the economy through the continuing commercial success of such sites as the original Mast General Store in Valle Crucis. The former railroad days of Watauga are packaged for consumption in the Tweetsie theme park, where visitors relive the "wild west" through one of the original narrow-gauge engines that once transported lumber from remote southern mountain coves and hollows. Blowing Rock continues to thrive as a premier tourist destination in the northwestern mountains.

As the county continues to grow in the twenty-first century, some of its historic architectural resources will fall as casualties, while local, state and national preservation efforts will continue to protect others. The historic landscape of Watauga County is a unique and invaluable resource for local citizens, the state and the region of which it is a part, and for the nation as a whole. Its architectural resources reflect the historical trajectory that has defined this distinctive mountain county.

F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

I. Farm complexes
II. Residential Housing (Non-resort)
A. Nineteenth Century
B. Twentieth Century
III. Resort Architecture, Seasonal Homes
IV. Institutional Buildings
A. Churches
B. Schools
V. Commercial and Civic Buildings
VI. Industrial Resources

After the narrative section for each property type, those properties listed in the National Register or the North Carolina National Register Study List have been listed with parenthetical initials (NR or SL) indicating that status.

I. FARM COMPLEXES

Agriculture has been a central component in the development of Watauga County since its initial settlement in the late eighteenth century. Historically the county exhibited both the relatively large-scale agricultural operations of the upper-middle-class bottomland farmers as well as the smaller subsistence farms of those residing in less productive cove and hollow lands. An orientation toward the market dominated the activities of the former, forging, early on, the commercial agricultural base that would define the county's agricultural character through much of its history. The smaller subsistence farms engaged in a more diversified domestic agricultural economy, one as reliant on adjacent forest products as on cultivated crops and livestock production.

Due to the rapid rate of growth and the resultant increases in local costs of living that Watauga County has experienced in the last half of the twentieth century, continuously working historic farms have become extremely rare. Likewise, both permanent and seasonal residential housing developments have resulted in the subdivision of a great many farm holdings. Most commonly, houses that formerly served as primary farm residences have been stripped of their associated outbuildings and agricultural landscapes to make room for encroaching development. In other instances, former working farm complexes have been converted to bed and breakfast lodging facilities to accommodate tourist traffic, and some of these establishments have kept the historic farm complex at least structurally intact.

Farm complexes are composed of several individual parts that together form a coherent whole whose primary purpose is or has been agricultural in nature (commercial or subsistence). Central to the farm

complex is the main residence, whether a nineteenth-century single-pen log house or large I-house, or a twentieth-century boxed house or bungalow. Associated resources include outbuildings—barns, spring-houses, cribs, granaries, root cellars—adjacent crop and pasture-lands, and the natural landscape features that define boundaries and contribute to the inner workings of the domestic and agricultural economies.

The physical layout of the mountain farm complex is one overwhelmingly determined by topography. Streams were often the primary natural features around which the farm was established. The main residence is usually situated on high ground well above the flood plains of these waterways, most often backed up to a steep slope. At varying distances from the main residence are the myriad outbuildings that form the interrelated working components of the farm complex. Placement of outbuildings varies widely, dictated by a number of factors, of which topography again serves as the final determinant. Surrounding croplands and pasturage followed the limitations and advantages of the mountain landscape as well. The most productive croplands occur along the fertile alluvial river and creek bottoms while the cleared pasturage was located on much steeper, rockier hillsides and coves.

Even amid the domestic agricultural landscapes, the surrounding forests were omnipresent and formed another important component in the subsistence economies of many mountain families. The mixed deciduous, mesophytic forests of southern Appalachia are among North America’s most biologically productive and complex ecosystems, providing people and animals alike with abundant resources. For mountain people the woods served as a commons for pasturing hogs, as a source of wood for both building and heating, and as a veritable smorgasbord of wild comestibles—spring greens such as poke, dandelion, and cress; ramps; nuts; and game animals—as well as numerous medicinal plants. Thus while the forests may not be considered part of the farm by contemporary perceptions, they were very much a part of the extended resource base including both farm and forest utilized by the people of Watauga County.

Barns of greatly varying size, form, material, and intended use are usually the most visible and defining of the farm complexes’ numerous dependencies. Most of Watauga County's barns date from the middle span of the twentieth-century, at which time concrete blocks became the most common material used for the ground level of large dairy barns. Several nineteenth-century barns survive as well. A significant number of double-crib log barns are scattered throughout the county, though most of these have been severed from their original agricultural contexts. These log barns display a wide range of construction techniques, including half-dovetail and V-notch corner joinery and hewn, split, and pole type logs. Without invitation from the owners for close inspection, several of these double-crib log barns would have gone unnoticed, as many of them have been integrated into later, wood-sided expansions. Two particularly exceptional nineteenth-century barns testify to the innovation, ambition, and success of the county's bottomland farmers. These are the barns of the Mast Farm complex (WT 2) and the Frank and Wilma Baird Farm (WT 319). Both are defining landmarks in the greater Valle Crucis area and have no equals elsewhere in the county.

Other defining farm complex dependencies in the county include springhouses, root cellars, frame granaries, and wood sheds. Detached springhouses, most often small gabled, frame structures with occasional poured concrete foundations, such as those of the Bradley Farm (WT 446) and Frank and Wilma Baird Farm, are actually much less common locally than attached springhouses, most often a single-story projection built of a masonry material. These provided easy access to butter and cheese, the culinary staples that were most often stored in them. The county's root cellars are among the most defining features of the agricultural landscape. These cellars are two stories in height, with the bottom level being constructed of masonry (most commonly of stone or form-poured concrete) and the upper level of frame construction. Nearly all of the farm complexes documented in the survey have a cellar of this type, but in a few instances they have more makeshift cellars were constructed. At the Larkin Michael House (WT 359), for example, a twentieth-century concrete block extension conceals an excavated root cellar hand carved in the solid stone embankment.

Other less common outbuilding types are also present in a few instances. The George Greene Farm (WT 298) features among its many outbuildings a large frame poultry barn built in the 1940s, the only one of its kind documented in the 2002 survey. The size and form of the poultry barn—a two story, long rectangular frame structure with numerous small openings—is indicative of its function as a large-scale, commercial poultry production unit, a significant agricultural activity in the southeastern part of the county at this time. It also foreshadows the large, modern, metal chicken houses used by corporate industrial poultry producers such as Tyson.

While intact farm complexes are a rarity in the county, a few noteworthy examples exist. The Mast Farm (WT 2), Frank and Wilma Baird Farm (WT 319), Bradley Farm (WT 446), Joe Harmon Farm (WT 370), Oscar Ward House/Farm (WT 393), and A.L. Greene Farm (WT 465) are all representative of relatively intact nineteenth-century farm complexes. Several of the above complexes exhibit a mixture of both twentieth and nineteenth-century structures, but are distinguished as nineteenth-century examples based on the age of the main residence or the majority of the outbuildings.

Significant twentieth-century farm complexes illustrate the transformation of the local architectural landscape after the arrival of improved transportation and the national influences that came with it. Representative of pre-railroad twentieth-century farms, the 1910 main residence of the Lee Carender Farm (WT 348) is a vernacular form with minimal Queen Anne elaboration, a common house type before the arrival of the bungalow. The complex features many nineteenth- and twentieth-century dependencies and is one of the best preserved and most representative farm complexes in the county. Much more common are twentieth-century complexes featuring a bungalow as the primary residence along with characteristic contemporaneous outbuildings. These include the Walker-Harmon Farm (WT 84), the Fred and Lillie Critcher Farm (WT 276), the Ben Farthing Farm (WT 16), the George Greene Farm (WT 298), and the W.H. Mast Farm (WT 402). Though anomalous as a farm complex as defined here, the remaining agricultural structures of the Valle Crucis Mission Complex (WT 18) are a significant part of that property’s landscape as well, intended as the mission was to provide both

"classical and agricultural" training to its parishioners.

These twentieth-century farm complexes represent the diversification that attended the local agricultural economy before and after the arrival of improved transportation. Each displays a degree of specialization that was characteristic of this diversification for increasingly important commercial markets. The twentieth century agricultural enterprises of tobacco farming, dairy farming, and poultry production are all represented here, as each of these discrete areas became important components of the local agricultural economy.

NATIONAL REGISTER AND STUDY LIST PROPERTIES

--Blair Farm (WT 570), Boone (SL)
--Lee Carender Farm (WT 348), Matney vic. (SL)
--Ben Farthing Farm (WT 16), Sugar Grove vic. (NR)
--A. L. Greene Farm (WT 465), Meat Camp vic. (SL)
--Mast Farm (WT 2), Valle Crucis vic. (NR)
--Walker Farm (WT 84), Sugar Grove vic. (SL)

SIGNIFICANCE

Watauga County’s historic farm complexes are potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for agriculture and Criterion C for architecture. The farm complexes obviously represent the long agricultural history of the county better than any other resource. These complexes provide material evidence of the patterns in crop and livestock production that formed the economic base of the county into the last quarter of the twentieth century.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

In order for a Watauga County’s farm complexes or individual buildings therein to be eligible for listing in the National Register, certain registration requirements must be met. First the complex should date to 1953 or before, or the majority of buildings in the complex should antedate 1953. The complex should exhibit a number of buildings that clearly represent a theme in the county’s agricultural development and retain integrity of form, material and workmanship. Integrity of setting contributes to the eligibility of a farm complex due to the indivisible relationship between the buildings and the surrounding fields that supported farming activities, although the lack of historic setting does not necessarily detract from eligibility. Integrity of location—that is, the preference for resources (houses mainly, as outbuilding may have been moved over the course of the farms working life) which have remained in their original locations—should be considered. However, a farm complex should also be recognized as a working landscape that is by its very nature ever changing and adapting.

RESIDENTIAL HOUSING (Non-Resort)

A. LATE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

Watauga County was settled possibly as early as the mid eighteenth century, but very little of the historic architecture from this period survives. Only two houses survive from the eighteenth century, both of log construction: the Wilkinson Cabin (WT 443) and the Tatum Cabin (part of the Hickory Ridge Homestead complex, WT 518), representing two distinct log forms that were likely the most common built throughout the county at this time. The Wilkinson Cabin is a saddlebag form, with two separate, equally sized pens attached to a single, central chimney. As with most saddlebag houses, it likely originated as a single-pen house with the second pen added at some later point to accommodate a growing family, or in this case, perhaps to house boarders. The dead space created by the two pens set flush against the outer dimensions of the chimney was used here to house a split-run interior stairway leading to each of two upper-level rooms. In contrast to the Wilkinson Cabin, the Tatum Cabin represents the most basic log house form, the single-pen house with single exterior end chimney.

Watauga County exhibits an unusual paucity of nineteenth-century log houses for a county in the western third of North Carolina. While the only surviving structures from the settlement period are of log construction, relatively few from the nineteenth century are still extant in the county. While this could be the result of the removal of many such structures to satisfy the "log restoration" craze, it could also be that the transition from log to frame dwellings was complete quite early in the county's history. Also contributing to the visual lack of nineteenth-century log dwellings may be their incorporation into later frame expansions, a practice that was quite common throughout the greater Appalachian region.

Nonetheless, it is likely that log construction was an important component of the local building tradition until at least the middle of the nineteenth century. The several log houses assembled at the outdoor interpretive museum, Hickory Ridge Homestead (WT 518) in Boone, are mostly relocated structures from around the county. The Tatum Cabin is permanently displayed here, as well as at least two other significant nineteenth-century log buildings from the county. The "Weaving House" is an oddity for two reasons--its gable front orientation, and the use of V-notch corner joinery. It could be that this structure was once used as a church building, as many early church houses were in fact built of log and are almost universally gable front in orientation. Though V-notching is present throughout the county, it seems to be limited to double-crib log barn construction, while the half-dovetail type is otherwise universal in more substantial structures. The one-and-one-half-story, double-pen Tom and Ellen Cook-Coffey House, also part of the Hickory Ridge complex (WT 518) is probably more representative of nineteenth-century log dwellings.

Other nineteenth-century log dwellings from around the county include the double-pen Gragg House (WT 1), the single-pen Hodges-Walls House (WT 347) with its frame rear shed kitchen addition, the single-pen Presnell-Hicks House (WT 367), and the single-pen Thomas Wheeler Cabin (WT 287).

Although built in 1842, the Prout Log House (WT 304), built by Reverend Henry Prout of the first Valle Crucis Missionary effort, is clearly not of the local building tradition. The Prout House exhibits enormous hewn poplar logs in the main section. In its large size, general form (not a traditional plan), and architectural features such as decorative dormers, the house built by Reverend Prout seems influenced by high style sources, despite execution with a common local material. The Prout House remains a well preserved and significant log structure in the county.

Small frame dwellings emerged sometime by the early to mid nineteenth century. Often these houses were spatially identical to their log predecessors. Early frame houses could take the form of a single or double-pen or saddlebag log house. Few examples of these small, early frame house types remain in the county, but they were likely almost as common as log houses by around 1840.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, we begin to see the emergence of the house form that constitutes the great majority of Watauga County's surviving nineteenth century architecture. This was the vernacular I-house, characterized by its single pile (one room) depth, its two-story height, the presence of a center hall, either double exterior or paired interior chimneys, and most commonly, rear ell or T additions. The form is not actually a pure vernacular house type, as the common center hall passage was borrowed from the high style, massed plan (two rooms deep) Georgian design. Vernacular architecture in this case can be defined as the informally learned building traditions that emanate from the local cultural tradition, as opposed to the formal, architect-designed structures of “high style.” One must be cautious in this differentiation, however, as both kinds of architecture constantly influence one another, making pure examples of either high or vernacular buildings the exception in most areas. In the case of I-houses, the retention of the single pile depth (based loosely on the square unit used in log houses) and the social use of the interior space rendered the house a highly adaptable form that was quickly integrated into traditional building repertoires all over the country. In Watauga County, as in most of western North Carolina, the I-house was the form of choice for the upper-middle class elite that dominated local commerce and politics. Though intermixed with log and smaller frame houses through much of its ascendancy to prominence, the I-house with its many variants is the most common local house form for much of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The adaptability of the I-house and other single-pile variants such as the gable front and wing form, made them particularly suitable for vernacular adaptations of high-style decorative elaboration. By the latter decades of the nineteenth century, both Gothic and generalized Victorian ornamentation were commonly applied, though minimally, to two-story, single-pile houses throughout the county. The most common areas for such decorative elaboration were the roofline, porch, and gables. Steeply pitched multiple front cross-gables added an element of Gothic design to otherwise simple, plain vernacular forms. Examples of such treatments include the Jack Campbell House (WT 434), the Emory Greer House (WT 421), and the John Wilson House (WT 437). The two-tier entry porch with patterned, curvilinear, flat-sawn trim work that is so characteristic of local architecture was one manifestation of vernacular Victorian adaptation. Examples of this common porch treatment are numerous, but some of

the more notable ones include the Frank and Wilma Baird House (WT 319), the Andy Tester House (WT 380), the Mamie Millsaps House (WT 384), and the Dr. Filmore Bingham House (WT 408). The use of scaled shingling or diagonal siding in the gable ends was yet another expression of vernacular Victorian design. The combination of both decorative porch and gable elaboration presented itself on gable front and wing forms such as the Henry Greene House (WT 387) and the Wilson-Vines House (WT 54). By the last two decades of the nineteenth century, more stylistically specific vernacular Queen Anne ornamentation was becoming common, an influence that would become more fully developed in the early twentieth century, but that is perhaps most highly evident in the nineteenth-century Ward Family House (WT 50).

The continuity of vernacular building traditions remained the norm in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Watauga County. From the unadorned, diminutive log dwellings of settlement period to the pretentious frame I-houses of the late nineteenth century, Watauga County exhibits the full range of traditional Appalachian house types. By the end of this period, national influences, especially of the Victorian strain, find their way into the local building repertoire, though they are internalized and re-projected as clearly vernacular interpretations. But by the end of the nineteenth century, we also begin to see the nadir of the most elaborate of these full two-story vernacular Victorian I-house forms and the emergence of scaled down, one-and-one-half-story descendants returning to more simplistic and plain exterior treatments such as single-story shed porches. This latter form would dominate the local building tradition at the turn of the century and into the first decades of the twentieth century, though a few vernacular Queen Anne forms would bring the Victorian influence into the new century as well.

NATIONAL REGISTER AND STUDY LIST PROPERTIES

--Dr. Filmore Bingham House (WT 72), Amantha vic. (SL)
--Gragg House (WT 1), Blowing Rock vic. (NR)
--Prout House (WT 304), Foscoe vic. (SL)
--Tom Ward House (WT 50), Sugar Grove vic. (NR)
--Wilson-Vines House (WT 54), Bethel vic. (NR)

B. TWENTIETH CENTURY

By the turn of the twentieth century, the full two-story I-house form with two-tier entry porch that had dominated the landscape in the late nineteenth century was becoming less and less common. In its place, three general house forms would emerge until the coming of improved transportation would supplant the local vernacular building tradition altogether. The first was the simple, minimally ornamented, one-and-one-half-story, single-pile house with single-story front shed porch and most often a single-story rear shed or ell. These houses are scaled down, simplified descendants of the larger, more pretentious and commanding I-houses of the late nineteenth century, displaying both the center hall and hall and parlor plan with roughly equal frequency. It could be that as the local population grew and wealth became more widely distributed, and as members of differing socio-economic classes began to inter-marry, this simplified hybrid house form emerged, reflective of both older log and simple frame (hall and parlor type) and I-house elements (center hall). In any case, it was a dominant form in the early decades of the twentieth century. Examples include the J.O Harrison House (WT 260), the Jim Brown House (WT 326), the Tempie Eggers House (WT 331), the Rubin Walker House (WT 352), the Floyd Billings House (WT 354), and the Thelma Farthing House (WT 361).

The second turn-of-the-century house type that may have descended from the earlier full two-story I-house, or perhaps simple double-pen forms, is represented by a handful of single-story houses that retain many of the decorative features of their antecedents. In these examples, diminutive, often two-room houses display either single-story projecting entry porches with elaborate flat-sawn trim work, scaling and diagonal siding in the gables, or center halls, or all of these elements. Examples of this house type include the Clay Eggers House (WT 396), the Will Greene House (WT 418), and the Wes Fletcher House (WT 435). All three display a single-pile depth with two rooms of roughly equal dimensions flanking a center hall, despite their small size. Most of these house types also exhibit a single-story rear ell addition, though small sheds are also present on a few. The most highly developed example of this house type, featuring all of the elements listed above, is the Jestes House (WT 253) of the Grandfather community.

Conscious vernacular Queen Anne elaboration continued into the early twentieth century. The most common area of elaboration is again the porch, but these more ornamented houses are also characterized by scaled shingling in the gables, prominent bay windows and cutaway corners often in a front facing gable. These houses are one, one and one-half, or two stories in height. Examples include the Josie and Gaither Critcher House (WT 254) with its wrap-around porch and scaled shingling in a projecting second level cross gable; the James A. Aldridge House (WT 302) and the Lionel Ward House (WT 615). Both of the latter houses are gable-front and wing forms, with the front facing gables featuring scaled shingling and polygonal, bay window sections with cutaway corners.

Another important house type that emerged in the rural county in the early twentieth century is the boxed house. The boxed house is thought by some scholars to be a direct descendant of the log house, both in

terms of general form and social use and function. As milled lumber became more readily available, this house type became a common alternative to the more labor intensive log house. This construction technique is defined by the use of a contiguous interior/exterior structural wall of vertical planks nailed to the sill and plate; that is, there is no internal structural framing. Vertical battens often cover the gaps between the planks. Though this type may have been present in the county before the coming of the timber industry, it is likely that logging camps, both in modeling the construction technique in ephemeral camp housing and in providing an excess of milled lumber, accelerated the spread of the type through the county. It is nearly certain that this house type was once far more common than the results from the current survey indicate. The paucity of surviving examples is a direct result of the short-lived nature of this construction method. Nonetheless, quite a few boxed houses still exist throughout the county. They include the Byrd House (WT 330), Ed and Falah Hollars House (WT 376), Emily Guy Cabin (WT 377—demolished), Greene Boxed House (WT 480), John Beech House (WT 459), and the Samuel Hodges House (WT 394). All of these feature simple two-room plans with the exception of the Samuel Hodges House, which exhibits an anomalous center hall. And while all these examples are side gable in orientation, the John Beech house displays a decorative, projecting front gabled entry porch complete with diagonal siding.

After the coming of the railroads and improved hard surface roads, the unbroken history of the local vernacular building tradition would be thoroughly supplanted by nationally popular house forms. The most significant and ubiquitous of these modern houses was the simplified Arts and Crafts-derived rural bungalow, sometimes referred to as the southern bungalow. The variants of this form are so common in the county that most of the properties were map-coded rather than fully documented to keep the survey within its allotted time frame. Three major bungalow subtypes were identified during the survey and identified here for convenience as Type I, Type II, and Type III. The Type I and Type II bungalows, both with side-gable roofs, are differentiated and characterized by their respective dormer type. Type I displays a low, front shed dormer while Type II examples feature a gable-front dormer. The Type III variant is the common gable-front variety that exhibits Arts and Crafts elaboration in the inclusion of prominent eave brackets and other minor details, as exemplified by the Bollinger-Hartley House (WT 14) in Blowing Rock. The arrival of the bungalow signaled the county's full immersion in an increasingly nationalistic modern discourse and its departure from its regional, vernacular roots.

Other nationally popular house forms also followed the modernization of the county. These include the English Cotswald/Tudor influenced house form as represented by the H. Grady Greer House (WT 500) and the Stanley Harris Senior House (WT 439). While built of brick and stone, respectively, WT 500 and WT 439 display diagnostic features of the style such as prominent front facing gables and steeply pitched roofs. Other eclectic house styles such as Mission and Spanish Eclectic also appear in the urban area of Boone. These are represented by the D.G. Moretz House (WT 513), which while not displaying the defining Mission parapet or dormer, nonetheless is highly suggestive of the style with its convex red tile roof and arcaded porch area; and the Ala McGuire House (WT 545), featuring a locally distinctive flat roof, rounded corners, and smooth white stucco finish.

NATIONAL REGISTER AND STUDY LIST PROPERTIES

--Bollinger-Hartley House (WT 14, Blowing Rock (NR)
--Dougherty House (WT 75), Blowing Rock vic. (SL)
--H. Grady Greer House (WT 500), Boone vic., (SL)
--Roby T. Greer House (WT 501), Boone vic. (SL)
--Samuel Hodges House (WT 394), Forest Grove vic. (SL)
--Jones House (WT 8), Boone, (NR)
--J.S. Miller House (WT 468), Meat Camp vic. (SL)

SIGNIFICANCE

Watauga County's residential, non-resort resources are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion C for architecture. These houses reflect the wide range of styles, forms, plans, materials, and construction techniques available in the county from the late eighteenth century to 1953. Some of the county's houses are rare in the state, others represent the work of prominent local and regional builders and architects. Certain domestic resources may also be eligible under criterion B for their association with persons of local, state, or national significance.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

In order for the county's residential, non-resort resources to be eligible for listing in the National Register, they must meet certain registration requirements. First, the resources must date to 1953 or before. Resources eligible under criterion C must illustrate some aspect of the county's architectural development, either as a rare survival or as a representative example of a style, form, plan type, construction technique, use of materials, or the work of notable builder or architect. Thus, the resources should maintain a high level of integrity, that is, they should be in good repair and retain original features with a minimum of alteration or addition. Associated landscaping and outbuildings would also contribute to eligibility. The resource should also retain integrity of setting, that is, the physical surroundings should reflect something of the historical character of the period of significance. This latter requirement is particularly important in the evaluation of potential residential historic districts. These general requirements can be flexible to a degree in the case of exceptional properties that clearly qualify for the National Register under other criterion.

III. RESORT ARCHITECTURE/SEASONAL HOMES

Since its first effort toward establishing itself as a resort town in the middle of the nineteenth century, Blowing Rock has developed a great variety of resort architecture and seasonal homes. Of the earliest hotels built in the town, the Watauga Hotel, the Blowing Rock Hotel, and the Green Park Inn (WT 7), only the latter still stands today. Even the later twentieth-century hotels built in both Blowing Rock and Boone--the Mayview Manor Hotel (WT 130), and the Daniel Boone Hotel (WT 6), respectively--have been demolished in recent years. Nonetheless, the county still retains much significant resort and seasonal architecture that reflects the development of a unique local architectural identity as well as the continued vitality of the local tourism industry.

The use of exterior chestnut bark shingling by the early twentieth century, a practice pioneered in Linville by renowned architect Henry Bacon, is among the more defining local elements of a distinctive resort architecture in Blowing Rock. Prior to this development, Victorian influence was the most visible stylistic designation. The Queen Anne style Green Park Inn is itself reflective of this nineteenth century preference for Victorian styling. After the turn of the century, however, the stylistic development of Blowing Rock's architecture fell heavily under the influence of Shingle Style, Craftsman, and Adirondack-inspired Rustic Revival forms. This conscious rustication reflected the town's internally and externally defined self-image as a quaint mountain retreat free of the trappings of the modern industrial society from which most of its visitors and summer residents came. It was an image of refined rusticity informed by an anti-modern sentiment that had arisen among modern society's elite leisure class, those seeking respite from the ills of modern industrialism in which they themselves were complicit.

The use of chestnut bark shingling, and the sense of the primitive and naturalistic vacation experience that it symbolized, while most heavily concentrated in the summer home neighborhoods of Blowing Rock, also managed to make its way to other parts of the county. Three other residences also display the use exterior chestnut bark shingling. These are the Bark House (WT 301) of the Foscoe area, and the Rev. Harding Hughes House (WT 308) and Nannie Smith House (WT 311), both in Valle Crucis. All three houses display Arts and Crafts influence, with massed plan, two-and- one-half-story plans, and prominent dormers. What distinguishes these houses from other bungalows is simply the use of chestnut bark. Only the Hughes House is known with certainty to have been built exclusively as a summer vacation house, but it is quite likely the other two were as well.

But rustication was not the only architectural element that would arise in and around the Blowing Rock area. The wealthiest summer residents chose instead to develop not just a mere summer house, but vast manorial estates with a “big house” implying the concomitant sense of landed aristocracy and situated within the newest manifestation of the venerable old tradition of western classicism. The contemporaneous style that reflected that preference was known as the Colonial Revival. Two summer estates, both in the Colonial Revival style—the Cone family's Flat Top Manor (WT 4), and artist Eliot Daingerfield's Westglow (WT 5)—are the only two houses in the county that qualify as true mansions.

Though anomalous in the context of either the county at large or even Blowing Rock, they are two of the county's most commanding architectural achievements.

Past efforts have thoroughly documented the resort and seasonal home architecture of Blowing Rock. The 2002 survey was in fact largely a re-survey of the Blowing Rock area. Many of the town's most significant structures are already listed as individual National Register properties or as part of a larger historic district. The town's single district, the Green Park Historic District, includes the landmark nineteenth-century Green Park Inn, the early twentieth century golf course, as well as numerous twentieth-century residences that reflect the Shingle/Craftsman/Rustic Revival stylistic development of local summer "cottages."

NATIONAL REGISTER AND STUDY LIST PROPERTIES

--Moses Cone House (Flat Top Manor) (WT 4), Blowing Rock vic. (NR)
--Green Park Inn (WT 7), Blowing Rock, (NR)
--Green Park Historic District (WT 29), Blowing Rock (NR)
--Martin-Duff-Smith House (“Chestnut Knoll”), Blowing Rock (SL)
--Vardell Family Cottages (WT 62), Blowing Rock, (NR)
--Westglow (Elliott Daingerfield House) (WT 5), Blowing Rock vic. (NR)

SIGNIFICANCE

Watauga County’s resort and seasonal residential resources are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion A for resort development and criterion C for architecture. These buildings and houses reflect the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century development of recreational and touristic resort development in Blowing Rock, Watauga County, and throughout select communities in the western part of the state. These resources represent a confluence of ideas and aspirations that attended the ascendancy of the leisure class and the nascent tourism industry of the early twentieth century. Certain of these resources may also be eligible under criterion B for their association with persons of local, state, or national significance.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

In order for the county’s resort and seasonal home resources to be eligible for listing in the National Register, they must meet certain registration requirements. First, the resources must date to 1953 or before. Resources eligible under criterion A must embody and convey the distinctive trajectory of resort development in the mountains of western North Carolina. Those eligible under criterion C must illustrate some aspect of the architectural development of resort communities in the county and the western part of the state, either as a rare survival or as a representative example of a style, form, plan type, construction technique, use of materials, or the work of a notable builder or architect. Thus, the resources should

maintain a high level of integrity; that is, they should be in good repair and retain original features with a minimum of alteration or addition. Associated landscaping and outbuildings would also contribute to eligibility. The resource should also retain integrity of setting; the physical surroundings should reflect something of the historical character of the period of significance. These general requirements can be flexible to a degree in the case of exceptional properties that clearly qualify for the National Register under other criterion.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS

A. CHURCHES

Watauga County's two earliest church organizations, the Three Forks Baptist Association and the Cove Creek Baptist Church, were chartered in the late eighteenth-century. Their earliest church buildings were log structures, though none of these early buildings remain today. The congregations sought to replace initial log buildings with frame structures throughout the nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century, more substantial church buildings were constructed of brick and stone. Many of these frame, brick, and stone buildings are still present today, although many of them have been substantially altered and modernized.

A few largely intact nineteenth-century frame churches still survive throughout the county. These structures were universally gable-front, with some, like the small frame Thomas Chapel Methodist Church (WT 614) moved from its original location in the Sutherland Community, displaying entry and bell towers. Typically, tall windows with Gothic arches were placed at regular intervals, in strict symmetry, along the long axis of the building. In many instances this is the only indication of attempted decorative elaboration. The interiors usually displayed a simple, one-room plan with symmetrical wooden pews and a central raised platform at the front. The most highly decorative of the county's churches are those of the Episcopalians. St. John's of Lower Watauga (WT 323) near Valle Crucis and St. Matthews Episcopal Church (WT 482) near Todd are perhaps the best preserved and most picturesque church structures in the entire county. Each church is a small gable front, frame building; St. John's having a central bell tower and St. Matthews displaying an offset tower on its north side. Both retain most of the original interior floor to ceiling woodwork.

Most of the remaining nineteenth-century churches are no longer in use as places of worship and have been converted to serve other purposes or simply stand vacant. Among these remnant church buildings are St. Anthony's Episcopal Church (WT 334) and Henson Chapel (WT 410), both converted to residences; Clarks Creek Baptist Church (WT 349) and Mabel Methodist Church (WT 425), both used as storage buildings; and the Thomas Chapel Methodist Church (WT 614), which currently stands vacant on a relocated site. All are gable-front, frame buildings with strictly symmetrical window placement along the long axes. St. Anthony's, Clarks Creek, and Thomas Chapel are all quite small buildings while the former Henson Chapel and Mabel churches are of larger size.

Beginning in 1893, the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina revitalized the missionary efforts at Valle Crucis. The large Valle Crucis Mission Complex (WT 18) reflects the regeneration of this endeavor and its expansion in the early twentieth century. Though all of the structures of the Mission Complex are religiously affiliated, the stone Church of the Holy Cross (WT 28) stands as the principal place of worship, built in the early decades of the twentieth century. Other contemporaneous stone churches include the Holy Communion Lutheran Church (WT 375) in the Foscoe vicinity, the dramatically altered Mt. Vernon Baptist Church (WT 268) in the Bamboo vicinity, the Advent Christian Church of Boone (WT 577), and the St. Mary's of the Hills Episcopal (WT 17) and Rumple Memorial Presbyterian (WT 224) Churches of Blowing Rock. Like their frame and wood sided counterparts, all of these stone churches exhibit a gable-front orientation.

By the 1920s, brick became a fairly common material used in the construction of new church buildings. The frame building utilized by the congregation of Henson Chapel Methodist Church in the mid-nineteenth century had replaced an earlier log structure. In the 1920s a decision was made to replace the frame church building with a much more substantial structure. The result was the current Henson Chapel Methodist Church (WT 409). This brick church is the most highly developed Gothic Revival style church building in the entire county, exhibiting elaborate decorative brickwork in stepped parapet gables and an impressive scale that was rarely achieved in most non-Episcopalian rural churches. Brick continued to be used throughout the county as more churches sought more permanent, low maintenance, modern replacements. The massive Neoclassical Revival-style Boone First Baptist Church (WT 611), built in the mid-1930s, continued the growing trend toward brick as the twentieth century's material of choice. The Stony Fork Church (WT 293) and the Three Forks Baptist Church (WT 572), two of the older congregations in the county, constructed their new brick churches in the 1940s. Not all churches built in the 1920s onward were constructed of brick, however. One particularly noteworthy example of a substantial 1920s frame church building is the Meat Camp Baptist Church (WT 476). Even so, by 1950 the use of brick in the construction of new churches had become nearly universal.

NATIONAL REGISTER AND STUDY LIST PROPERTIES

--Church of the Holy Cross (WT 28), Valle Crucis vic. (contributing in NR district)
--Henson Chapel Methodist Church (WT 409), Amantha vic. (SL)
--St. John’s of Lower Watauga (WT 323), Valle Crucis vic. (SL)
--St. Mary’s of the Hills Episcopal Church (WT 17), Blowing Rock (SL)
--St. Matthews Episcopal Church (WT 482), Todd vic. (SL)
--Valle Crucis Episcopal Mission (WT 18), Valle Crucis (NR)

B. SCHOOLS

Though the educational history of the county stretches back much further, all of the extant school buildings in the county, with one exception (Rominger School, WT 69) originate in the first half of the twentieth century. None of the original log schoolhouses used by white and later exclusively black students remain. What does remain are some of the twentieth-century rural frame schoolhouses that were once a central part of every community. Most of these buildings today are used as storage or agricultural buildings, though their continued presence on the landscape serves as a powerful reminder to the citizens who once attended them as children.

The earliest frame schoolhouses still standing in the county, such as the Stony Fork School (WT 291) and the Bamboo School (WT 255), both from the 1920s, exhibit striking decorative features. The clipped front gable of the latter and the central bell tower along the primary façade of the former suggest conscious ornamentation rather than strict utilitarian structures. Indeed, in their prime they were likely considered among the finest buildings ever seen locally. The interior of these buildings was divided by a central partition into two equal-sized rooms, each with a separate exterior entrance. Slightly later schools such the 1930s Green Valley School (WT 481) were larger and thus further divided, in this particular case into four classrooms of equal size, each accessible from individual exterior entrances or an entry accessible from the common center hall.

Also arriving in the 1930s were workers and local trainees of Franklin Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration. The WPA was responsible for the construction of several local buildings, all in a characteristic stone masonry style. One such school was the Valle Crucis Elementary School (WT 332), though modern brick additions have all but swallowed the original stone section. The most impressive and by far the most ambitious of the local school buildings executed by the WPA, was the Cove Creek High School (WT 48), built toward the end of local WPA activity in 1939. Built in a Collegiate Gothic style reminiscent of structures gracing many university campuses, the school was the center of community pride.

Racial segregation attended the public education system until the progress made during the 1960s in the Civil Rights Movement. From the post-Civil War period until the early to mid twentieth century, black students were relegated to symbolically inferior log school houses while the white students attended school in newer frame structures; unfortunately none of the log buildings remain. The only representative of former racial segregation in public education is the presence of the Watauga Consolidated School (WT 551) in the Junaluska neighborhood of Boone, built in 1937 by the WPA. Unlike the other WPA schools in the county, all substantial structures built of stone, this small, two-room frame school building resembles the early twentieth-century frame structures that the larger, new stone WPA schools were then fast replacing. After its construction, the school served the entire African American population of Watauga County until integration in the 1960s. The building has been converted to a modern duplex apartment building.

NATIONAL REGISTER AND STUDY LIST PROPERTIES

--Cove Creek High School (WT 48), Sugar Grove vic., (NR)

SIGNIFICANCE

Watauga County's institutional buildings are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion A in the areas of religion and education. The county's surviving churches illustrate the centrality and variety of religious life from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Whether small, simple rural churches or the grand elaborate churches of Boone or Blowing Rock, these buildings represent the full spectrum of institutional religious experience in the county. The county's surviving educational buildings signify the transition from the one- or two-room country schoolhouse to the large consolidated institution of the age of educational reform. Certain of the county's institutional resources may also be eligible under criterion C for architecture as largely intact examples of their type or style.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

In order for an institutional resource to be eligible for the National Register, it must meet certain registration requirements. First, the resource must have been built by1953 or earlier. Each potentially eligible resource should be a representative of the types of institutional buildings that have existed in the county historically. All resources should retain a significant level of architectural integrity, that is, they should not exhibit substantial alterations or additions, interior or exterior.
Though still of incalculable significance to their local communities and the story of the county's educational history, nearly all of the county's former school buildings have substantially altered to serve purposes other than education or are in a state of severe deterioration. Thus, only one property Cover Creek High School (WT 48), already listed, meets the National Register's criteria for inclusion.

V. COMMERICAL AND CIVIC BUILDINGS

Watauga County's earliest commercial architecture is represented by the once ubiquitous and thriving country general store. This often romanticized relic of simpler times remains a powerfully evocative symbol of the country's golden pre-industrial age when rural America still reigned; when convivial old men gathered on the front porch or around the wood stove, when barter was the principal means of commercial exchange. While these ideas may be based more in the modern myth of an Edenic American past than in actual reality, the general store was nonetheless a central institution in most rural communities. General stores were once a common feature in all of Watauga County's rural townships, though they have become one of the many casualties of rapid development in recent years. Where they do remain, however, they stand as reminders of the county's earliest entrepreneurial commercial enterprises.

Of the county's remaining nineteenth-century general stores, none is more widely known than the Mast General Store (WT 3). Originally built in the 1880s by Valle Crucis business leader Henry Taylor, the store passed into the ownership of W.W. Mast in the early twentieth century. The Mast Store finally passed out of the family in the late twentieth century and has expanded into a small North Carolina retail store chain with store locations in downtown Boone, Asheville, Hendersonville, and Waynesville. Though it is certain that every rural community had a general store of its own by the late nineteenth century, few of these are still extant. These stores in the nineteenth-century were gable-front frame structures with double-leaf-door entrances flanked by recessed display windows. Few windows occur along the long axes of these buildings to maximize shelf space. Those few surviving nineteenth-century general stores (though none other than the Mast Store currently function as such) include Shulls Mill General Store (WT 272), Ward's Store (WT 355) of the former Watauga Falls area, the former Mabel Store and Post Office (WT 426), and the Silverstone Store (WT 431, recently demolished). The latter was distinctive among the others for its false front and flat roof.

The development of general stores continued through the earliest decades of the twentieth century. The large frame Payne-Mast Store (WT 399) of the Sugar Grove area was built around the turn of the century to serve that community. By 1909, the Valle Crucis Supply Company (on file as the Mast Store Annex--WT 314) was established as the principal competitor of the Mast Store. The current stone structure that once housed the Matney General Store (WT 339) was built in the 1920s to replace an earlier frame store that had served the community since at least the late nineteenth century. The Matney Store, with its two garage bays and a port cochere defining its primary façade, signals the full arrival of the automobile in the area.

Even as late as the 1930s and 1940s, rural general stores were still being built. Two of the most recent of the county's general stores include the frame Victor Ward Store (WT 356) of the Sugar Grove/Rominger area, featuring a flat roof and false parapet front; the concrete block Daisy and Rom Adams Store (WT 231) in the Blowing Rock vicinity; and the frame Beaverdam Supply Company (WT 100). The architecture of the general store remained largely the same in both nineteenth- and twentieth-century buildings. With the exception of the Victor Ward Store, the county’s rural store buildings constructed in the mid-twentieth century are gable-front with large double-leaf entry doors recessed in a storefront display window.

Another important commercially related building type that emerged in the early twentieth century was one that sought to capitalize on the county's status as the state’s second leading producer of cheese. Though in the course of the 2002 survey homeowners from disparate locations throughout the county could recall the presence of a local cheese factory, only two such structures have been documented, and one of them has been recently demolished. Estimated to have been built and thriving in the period between 1916 and 1930, the Bethel and Beaverdam Cheese Factories (WT 85 and 101, respectively) are remnants of the county’s once prominent role in cheese production, having been through most of its

history second only to its northern neighbor, Ashe County. The structures themselves are unassuming, small, gable-front, frame buildings that reveal nothing of their purpose explicitly through their architecture.

With improved internal transportation networks, beginning with the railroad in 1918 and hard surface roads in the 1920s, the downtown commercial districts of both Boone and Blowing Rock grew rapidly, reflecting larger national trends in their architectural development. Both towns began to take on the look of small towns across the nation as brick was more easily transported into the county and quickly became the preferred material for downtown commercial buildings, although Blowing Rock also used stone quite heavily. While both downtown districts have been changed and altered over time, as constantly evolving commercial districts tend to do to meet changing market demands, the historic downtown architecture we see today came largely from this period. Plain, utilitarian, multiple-story commercial buildings dominated this period of commercial growth, though a few more stylistically developed examples exist as well. The former Watauga County Bank Building in Boone, for example (WT 590), reflects classical elaboration in its full-height pilasters and prominent entablature. The stone commercial buildings of Blowing Rock continued to reinforce that town's rustic image as a rugged, yet refined, mountain resort.

Of Boone's notable downtown buildings, a number were built for civic purposes. The oldest is the former Watauga County Jail (WT 67), a two-story hip-roofed brick building constructed in 1889. From the twentieth century, two stone Works Progress Administration (WPA) structures are among the more noteworthy. The WPA-built former Watauga County Library and Office Building (WT 607) is executed in a characteristic masonry style utilizing random-coursed local granite and raised mortar joints—a style repeated throughout the county by WPA tradesmen. Boone's Post Office Building (WT 49), built in 1938, is arguably the most notable WPA structure in the county. The Post Office is ostensibly a high-style Colonial Revival structure, but manages to retain a strong sense of the local in the use of stone as the primary exterior material.

As downtown Boone and Blowing Rock developed as commercial centers, most of the outlying general stores faded from the scene. The exception is of course the Mast Store, which has managed to use its historicity to bolster its reputation as a popular retail and heritage tourism destination. Boone has lost much of its historic downtown architecture to rapid contemporary development, though some notable buildings remain. Blowing Rock's downtown has similarly lost something of its historic appeal as it has been cloaked in kitschy modern touristic storefronts and business establishments. It seems likely that the immediate downtown architecture of both population centers will continue to be lost unless incorporated into modern development schemes.

NATIONAL REGISTER AND STUDY LIST PROPERTIES

--Blowing Rock Historic District (SL)
--Mast General Store (WT 3), Valle Crucis vic. (NR)
--Payne-Mast Store (WT 399), Sugar Grove vic. (SL)
--(former) Randall Memorial Building (WT 9), Blowing Rock (NR)
--U.S. Post Office (WT 49), Boone (NR)
--Watauga County Bank Building (WT 590), Boone (SL)
--(former) Watauga County Jail (WT 67), Boone (SL)

SIGNIFICANCE

Watauga County's historic commercial and governmental resources are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion A for commerce or politics/government and criterion C for architecture. From the country general store to dense downtown commercial districts, these resources represent the evolution and diversification of the local economy from the mid nineteenth century onward. Some commercial structures may exemplify mixed use and may thus be eligible under criterion A for other areas, such as medicine, recreation, or tourism, among others. In downtown commercial areas, government-sponsored building projects reflect local strides to provide services to a growing population. Those resources eligible under Criterion C for architecture should be outstanding examples of a particular type, style, or construction technique. Certain examples of these property types may also be eligible under criterion B through association with persons of local, state, or national significance.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

In order for commercial and governmental resources to be eligible for listing in the National Register, they must meet certain registration requirements. First, the resources must have been built by 1953 or earlier. Commercial properties should be representative of the types and styles of commercial buildings that historically existed in the county and should have good architectural integrity, with a minimum of alterations or additions and a maximum retention of original interior and exterior materials. Attributes such as doors, windows, interior details such as shelving, counters, and letter boxes would also contribute to eligibility. Some commercial resources may have sufficient integrity to warrant individual listing in the National Register, but may be considered contributing resources within larger historic districts. Eligible government buildings should be associated with significant programs or undertakings that provided enhanced public services and also should be retain a high level of integrity.

VI. INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES

Industrial structures in the county are few in number. Though many communities had gristmills and sawmills of their own historically, only a few of these structures remain today. The

timber industry left virtually no material sign of its presence, though the second growth forest is a constant reminder of its prominent role here. The cheese factories of Bethel and Beaverdam were not really factories in the modern sense, but cooperatives giving producers a commercial outlet for their product. No major industrial enterprise other than the brief presence of the timber industry has managed to get a lasting foothold in the county. The result is a scarcity of industrially related architecture.

Of the gristmills and sawmills that were once as central a feature of the landscape as the general store, only three remain. The former Sugar Grove Mill (WT 406) has been thoroughly transformed into a modern rental property rendering its original function unrecognizable. The most notable gristmill in the county, the Winebarger Mill (WT 478), built in 1873, is in a state of worsening deterioration and will likely not stand much longer. This mill complex includes the impressive mill house and several other structures and outbuildings. The mill house itself is a two-story, gable-front building with decorative diagonal siding. The water wheel is of the overshot variety.

The county's only remaining sawmill is the B.O. Ward Mill (WT 358) in the Sugar Grove area. The turbine mill wheel was the first of its kind in the county, housed in a mill-house reconstructed after the 1940 flood wiped out the original late nineteenth-century structure. This rambling frame and concrete block complex stands along the bank of the Watauga River. The adjacent B.O. Ward House is a testament to the milling history of the family, with numerous mill stones integrated into eclectic masonry landscape towers and into the house itself. The great flood of 1940 spared the original dam, which still backs the waters of Watauga River far upstream. The mill and its builder Ben Ward, an exceptional local character, were featured in an article in *Foxfire 6*.

The only other notable industrial structure (or rather, the deteriorating ruins of that structure), is the powerhouse at the New River Power and Light Dam Site (WT 68). A stone powerhouse and dam built in 1915 and conceptualized by Appalachian Training School (ATS) president B.B. Dougherty, the site was the county's first commercial hydroelectric project. The dam and powerhouse successfully delivered nighttime lighting to ATS buildings and a few residences along the power line route. Fire gutted the main power house in 1923, at which point it ceased to operate. The site is accessible today only on foot via the Lee and Vivian Reynolds Greenway Trail. The stone masonry ruins of the power house are choked in ivy and continue to deteriorate.

NATIONAL REGISTER AND STUDY LIST PROPERTIES

--Winebarger Mill Complex (WT 478), Meat Camp vic., (SL)

SIGNIFICANCE

Watuaga County’s historic industrial resources are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion A for industry and possibly under Criterion C for architecture and/or engineering. While

the remaining industrial structures in the county are paltry, those that remain are representative of the industrial heritage of the county, one that has been largely an adjunct to the county's pervasive agricultural heritage. The exception to this is the massive undertakings of the timber industry, but little structural evidence of their presence in the county remains. Those resources eligible under criterion C should be outstanding examples of their types.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

In order for an industrial resource to be found eligible for listing in the National Register it must meet certain registration requirements. First, the resource should be at least fifty years old, built by 1953 or earlier. The resource should be an outstanding example of a particular functional type. The resource should have good integrity, that is, it should retain as much its original historic fabric as possible. Machinery associated with industrial sites does not have to be intact for eligibility purposes, but the presence of such machinery would enhance that eligibility. Some industrial resources may not have sufficient integrity to warrant individual listing but may be considered contributing properties in larger historic districts.

G. Geographical Data

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H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

The preliminary planning phase, or Phase I, of The Watauga County Historic Resources Survey began in October of 2001 under the direction of Dr. Michael Ann Williams with the assistance of Tony VanWinkle and Debbie Loveless. This phase included reviewing all existing files, reviewing published sources, preparation of a preliminary historic context and bibliography, making initial contacts, completion a weeklong windshield survey conducted from March 17 through the 23, 2002, and outlining the survey methodology. The field survey commenced in May of 2002, and was conducted by Tony VanWinkle. The survey methodology involved dividing the county into manageable units, defined by major roadways, and surveying each of these units within an allotted amount of time. USGS maps and findings from the windshield survey were used to locate potential survey sites, broadly defined as those properties that appeared to be fifty years old or older. Sites were located by vehicle or on foot.

The survey involved not only the documentation of newly uncovered resources, but also a significant re-survey component. The areas of Blowing Rock, Boone, Valle Crucis, Bethel/Beaverdam, and other individual sites throughout the county had been surveyed over the years (most notably through the efforts of Deborah Thompson and Elizabeth Stevens), though the level and quality of that documentation varied dramatically. In re-surveying these areas and properties, original documentary materials (especially photographs) were compared to present conditions and statuses. In cases of major alterations, additions, or as was occasionally the case, demolition, these changes were indicated on the original survey forms and documented through updated photographs. In instances of outdated survey forms and minimal informational content, new survey forms and photographs were submitted for each property file.

Surveying previously undocumented sites involved standard field documentation techniques. For most properties over fifty years of age retaining a sufficient degree of architectural integrity, or those with otherwise notable qualities, the site was photographed and a North Carolina Historic Structures Survey Form was completed on site. Photographic documentation included exterior overviews from all possible elevations, interior shots when possible, and shots of specific architectural details or landscape features. The survey form includes both standard information provided for each field as well as site sketches of varying levels of detail. Historical information on each site was obtained through informal oral interviews with knowledgeable individuals and from primary and secondary source materials. Narrative descriptions combining historical and architectural information were composed and filed with each surveyed property.

Certain properties, though they may have met the fifty-year criteria, either did not appear to warrant in-depth survey or were too numerous and recurrent to include within the limited time frame of the survey. Of the latter type, the county's ubiquitous bungalow forms were largely map-coded during the survey (though notable examples of each identified type were fully documented). These properties were not

assigned Survey Site Numbers and have no individual files. Nonetheless, their locations are indicated on USGS maps on file in the Western Office of Archives and History. It is hoped that these resources will be fully documented in future survey efforts.

The survey resulted in several products. One of these is this report, completed in the Multiple Property Documentation Form format developed by the National Park Service for just such large scale, extensive surveys of historic properties. The report provides necessary contexts and property type descriptions for the county's potentially eligible National Register resources. The field surveyor and the staff of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office's Survey and Planning Branch used standard National Register criteria to evaluate the eligibility of new properties for consideration in the state Study List, the preliminary step in North Carolina toward National Register listing. These additional properties were presented before the National Register Advisory Committee on October 9, 2003.

It is hoped that this document and associated materials from the survey will prove valuable aids in future historic preservation and planning efforts in the county. The property files, maps, and the original copy of the final report are permanently housed in the Western Office, Archives and History, located in Asheville, North Carolina

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