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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA at ASHEVILLE

PACK(ED) PLACE: CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM IN BUNCOMBE COUNTY, NC  
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN CANDIDACY  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF LIBERAL ARTS

BY  
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## **Abstract**

Since before the Civil War, tourism of all kinds, including heritage tourism, has been a primary driver of the economy of western North Carolina, especially in Asheville, the seat of Buncombe County, and the region's urban center. By the end of WWII, heritage tourism as we know it today, fueled by programs like the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and Southern Highlands Craft Guild, centered authentic mountain life and culture for throngs of seasonal tourists while simultaneously benefiting local performers and craftspeople. After an economic decline in the mid-20th century, Asheville embraced historic preservation and numerous community museums and organizations burst on the scene. These institutions saw so much support and success that by the early 2000s it seemed likely that Buncombe County would host a large, state-run history museum. However, After the latest major economic recession, Asheville turned its gaze away from preservation and heritage tourism toward hospitality industry development. Focus on hotels, and general neglect for the state of heritage tourism infrastructure and the robusticity of heritage tourism programs have, over the past nearly two decades, been detrimental to the participation of working-class residents in heritage tourism programs. This paper argues that the welfare of heritage tourism and preservation institutions and organizations is more impactful to Buncombe County's working class and residential communities and that a single, large, centralized history museum would be of benefit for both tourists and residents, economically and in less quantifiable ways.



## INTRODUCTION

In 2015, *Buzzfeed*, a social media-based entertainment company, posted a video to Facebook, Youtube, and their blog, called “9 Reasons You Should Visit Asheville, NC.”<sup>1</sup> Across all platforms, the video garnered 11,000 reactions, 12,000 shares, and more than 1.5 million total views. The tagline, “Mountains, food, and beer. Need I say more?” drew viewers into a 90-second treatise on the present state of tourist culture in the Southern Appalachian city of few more than 85,000. The points in the video reflect Asheville’s legacy as a destination for heritage tourism, and a new image, constructed only in the past three or four decades, sparked by an influx of downtown redevelopment and growing arts and food and drink scene.<sup>2</sup> Among the “9 reasons” a *Buzzfeed* reader belong in Asheville, North Carolina are:

- It’s the biggest little city in western North Carolina, but you’ll always feel at home.
- You can drink your weight in beer downtown because Asheville’s been Beer City USA four year’s running.
- You can take time to explore the Blue Ridge Mountains and make it back in time to grab a drink above the Asheville city lights at Sky Bar.
- We didn’t earn the title “Gay Capital of the South” for nothing.
- The Biltmore Estate will take your breath away but so will the drum circle downtown.

The video’s travel suggestions are revealing. In 2015 Asheville was at the peak of its rediscovery as a tourist destination, and the recommendations highlight the businesses, industries, and cultural ideals that helped bolster Asheville’s new renaissance.

Status as a tourist town is nothing new to Asheville, the seat of Buncombe County, and the largest city in western North Carolina. The urban and economic center of the region,

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<sup>1</sup> Kelsey Jones, “9 Reasons Why You Belong in Asheville, NC,” *Buzzfeed Video*, May 11, 2015, 4/10/19, <https://www.buzzfeed.com/kelseyjones/9-reasons-you-belong-in-asheville-nc>.

<sup>2</sup> Nan Chase, *Asheville: A History*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007), 234-238.

Asheville became a popular destination for tourists before the Civil War. Since then, marketing the region's cultural and natural heritage, or promoting heritage tourism, has been one of the most beneficial means of driving the tourist economy. Heritage tourism, defined broadly, is traveling somewhere to experience its artifacts, stories, art, culture, foodways, and natural heritage.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, heritage tourism programs in the AshevilleBuncombe region formed successful models that benefitted residents and attracted tourists. In recent years, the Asheville Buncombe region has garnered attention for newer aspects of its cultural heritage that are new and unfamiliar to longtime residents, and some of the most successful programs focused on history and culture seem unrelatable or may be financially out of reach for many Buncombe County families.

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the hospitality tourism market in Asheville and Buncombe County has grown significantly, but the heritage tourism sector has lagged. Several waves of hotel growth, the first marked by the construction of the Inn on the Biltmore Estate have left emotional and financial scars on the local working-class community, despite providing jobs. Award-winning craft breweries and eateries exploded onto the scene and became a central part of the regional culture, attracting significant numbers of tourists, and Asheville's progressive reputation (a "cesspool of sin" as one legislator put it), attracted the city even more attention from liberal-minded retirees.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation, "[Preservation Glossary] Today's Word: Heritage Tourism," Savingplaces.org, 1/30/19, <https://savingplaces.org/stories/preservation-glossary-todays-word-heritagetourism#.XLVf4uhKjic>.

<sup>4</sup> David Forbes, "Anti-gay marriage amendment sponsor calls Asheville 'a cesspool of sin,'" *Mountain Xpress (MX)* September 9, 2011.

This thesis aims not to understand the greater Asheville area's recent cultural transformation or inspect the intricacies of the present economic situation. Rather, the goal of this paper is to investigate cultural heritage tourism practices in Buncombe County, North Carolina in the past, (to establish what cultural heritage and public history infrastructure exists, and how it came to be), in the present, (to understand how the present tourist economy is effecting heritage-focused institutions), and the future, (to make suggestions on how heritage tourism programs in Asheville and Buncombe County might be improved).

Chapter I traces Buncombe County's growth as a tourism destination and the region's first forays into heritage tourism. As early as the 1880's citizens of Asheville suggested creating a permanent historical museum for locals and visitors to enjoy, and by the end of WWII, the region was a mecca for cultural heritage tourism hosting the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, multiple local craft shops, and serving a major stop along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Chapter II reveals the extensive preservation effort and wave of new community museums that hit the region in after the city freed itself from crippling depression-era debt in the 1970s and considers the communities largely left out of the process. Chapter III examines the growth of the hospitality tourism industry in Buncombe County, the role of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), and their effects on the heritage tourism sector in the recent past and the present day. This chapter analyzes how the hospitality industry and the goals of the BCTDA tend to marginalize or backstage residents, and do not engage in models of heritage tourism proven to be effective in the region in the past. Finally, Chapter IV outlines some ways that local heritage-focused organizations might improve the state of heritage tourism in Buncombe County and highlights models for success locally and in the broader Southern Appalachian region.



The Asheville-Buncombe area has been a tourist haven for the greater part of two centuries, and that is unlikely to change. However, local sentiment toward tourists and newcomers is rapidly shifting towards angst and antagonism, and the building up of tourism-related enterprises is often faced with pushback. A Vermont resident planning to visit Asheville wrote to the *Mountain Xpress* revealing residents' sentiments when they asked, "Will I be welcome in your town?" and remarked that while reading the local paper for research before their trip, they discovered a certain amount of hostility toward tourists. They wondered why despite Asheville's long and successful history of tourism, "[visitors] seem to be the bane of your existence."<sup>5</sup> Analyzing Buncombe County's heritage tourism infrastructure across a broad spectrum of time and medium may provide valuable insight into how communities, governments, non-profit organizations, and businesses, may all work together in the future to craft a more holistic and equitable historical narrative. A complete narrative means a more robust heritage tourism industry for all of Buncombe County's residents and visitors to enjoy.

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<sup>5</sup> Adrienne Fortune, "Will I be Welcome in Your Town?" *MX* July 16, 2018.

## CHAPTER I Building a Legacy of Heritage Tourism in Asheville and Buncombe County 1875-1945

In June of 1910, the residents of Asheville were anxious for the tourist season to begin. The *Asheville Gazette-News* provided the latest report on the prospects of the summer season, reporting that the hotel operators of the area were booking rooms as quickly as they could, and “the prospects for the summer season are most encouraging.”<sup>6</sup> In November of the same year, the wheels were set in motion for citizens to contribute as stockholders to a new public golf course which promised to attract much desired “high class tourist traffic.”<sup>7</sup>

By 1910, tourists, and how to attract more of them was a year-round discussion. By the time Buncombe County residents were looking forward to a new golf course, tourism had been an important part of the local economy for nearly half a century. The impact of tourism on the economy and culture was intense. Richard Starnes examined the impact of tourism on the development of culture in western North Carolina in his study *Creating the Land of the Sky: Tourism and Society in Western North Carolina*. His work emphasized the economic impacts of tourism on western North Carolina, and the resulting cultural and political changes over time. Starnes argues that in the period where some cities in the south were looking toward industry to revitalize their economies in the post-Civil War world, Asheville turned to tourism, and as a

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<sup>6</sup> Editorial, “Prospects for the Tourist Season,” *Asheville Gazette-News* (Asheville, NC) (*AGN*), June 10, 1910.

<sup>7</sup> Editorial, “Golf Situation Free Discussion,” *AGN*, November 10, 1910.

result became the economic center of western North Carolina. Despite the region's lack of emphasis on industry, it became "A conspicuous example of what is termed the New South."<sup>8</sup>

In his seminal work, *All That is Native and Fine*, David Whisnant examines some of the early pathways of heritage promotion in Southern Appalachia.<sup>9</sup> His case studies of the work of Olive Dame Campbell, The White Top Folk Festival, and Hindman Settlement School raise critical questions about the role of cultural heritage in tourism. Noting that the craft revival movement was sparked, chiefly, by outside so-called cultural missionaries, Whisnant places cultural politics at the center of his work and critiques how social workers' obsession with nativism and tourism promotion eventually became the downfall of some of their enterprises.<sup>10</sup> However, outside organizers were not the only people interested in promoting mountain culture. Local organizers were also successful throughout this period in creating opportunities to benefit from new, widespread interest in Southern Appalachia. The Asheville-Buncombe area found its greatest long-term success at the intersection of authentic cultural heritage and tourism promotion. Throughout a period of about 60 years, the promotion of what is presently termed heritage tourism arose as a central part of the regional economy, partially, as a response to a rising national interest in southern Appalachian culture.

Both Starnes and Whisnant emphasize the importance that regional heritage and culture played in drawing tourists to the region, especially in these early years. Heritage tourism is a

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<sup>8</sup> Richard D. Starnes, *Creating The Land of the Sky: Tourism and Society in Western North Carolina* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005) 35-91.

<sup>9</sup> For a recent and in-depth discussion of *All That is Native and Fine* see: "Native and Fine and Enduring: A Roundtable on David Whisnant's *All That is Native and Fine*," Ted Olson, ed. *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, 16, no. 1/2, (spring/fall 2010), 101-121.

<sup>10</sup> David E. Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983) 8, 210.

broad term describing the visitation of travelers to sites of natural and cultural heritage, the promotion of abundant and unique natural and cultural resources. Heritage tourism can also include patronage of the arts, history, and other such local color. From the 1880s to the 1940s, as Asheville became more urban and transportation became more accessible to the nation's growing middle class, the promotion of heritage tourism became a central part of the region's appeal for many travelers. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th century, organizations, businesses, and boosters in the Asheville-Buncombe area of western North Carolina translated interest in mountain heritage into revenue as tourism changed the face of Asheville.

Because of efforts by tourism boosters, and the success that heritage tourism promotion had in the region, the Asheville-Buncombe area became well-established as a travel destination for thousands of families across the country. The Blue Ridge Parkway and surrounding state and national park preserves served to shape the region as a vacation hub that was exciting and pleasurable to a growing number of young families in the United States. From the 1880s to the mid-twentieth century, the primary focus of tourism promotions shifted such that a fuller picture of what could be defined as heritage tourism emerged as a marketing tool for both outside promoters and those who sought to preserve mountain folkways. Health and leisure plus the natural scenic beauty of the region were at the face of Asheville for most of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was only after images of Appalachia captured the popular imagination, and promoters found means to market cultural heritage, that emphasis on folkways emerged as a truly successful and central part of the Asheville-Buncombe brand.

Visionaries like Bascom Lamar Lunsford, founder of the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and Frances Goodrich, founder of the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild played a significant role in shaping visitors understanding of mountain heritage and encouraging heritage

tourism. Both the guild and the festival presented mountain culture in authentic and profitable ways. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century continued, the presentation of heritage tourism, and how municipal governments and citizens protected and promoted their heritage changed, often facing the ups and downs of the national economic climate.

As the tourists flooded in year after year, heritage tourism ventures also increased in number. As popular interest in the regional culture increased across the nation, local organizers promoted western North Carolina heritage and culture as a means to attract visitors. Through their efforts, despite the economic downturn of the Great Depression, Buncombe County built up to be one of the most well-visited resort areas in the United States while using heritage tourism as a central means of promotion. This effort kicked into high gear with a transportation explosion after the completion of the Western North Carolina Railroad.

On March 11, 1879, a new chapter began in the history of western North Carolina. James H. Wilson tapped out a hasty telegram after watching the last dust settle inside the newly completed 1,832-foot long railway tunnel connecting McDowell and Buncombe counties. Governor Zebulon Vance received the wire. It read, “Daylight entered Buncombe County this morning through the Swannanoa Tunnel.”<sup>11</sup> Wilson’s telegram expressed the tremendous consequences and anticipation of the arrival of modern transportation in western North Carolina. Rail travel made transportation faster and less expensive, thus, vacationing to the mountains more affordable than ever before. America’s growing middle class made use of the affordability of travel. Though the region had been a destination for some time before railroad access, The new convenience, combined with western North Carolina’s reputation as a desirable health resort

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<sup>11</sup> Lou Harshaw, *Trains, Trestles, & Tunnels: Railroads of the Southern Appalachians*, (Asheville: Hexagon Co., 1977), 12.

destination attracted an influx of visitors.<sup>12</sup> Over time, promoters in the Asheville-Buncombe area found meaningful and profitable ways to promote the region's cultural and natural heritage to seasonal visitors.

By 1880, the residents of western North Carolina had grown accustomed to an annual migration of travelers. In response, business people and city boosters began to implement early forms of heritage tourism attractions as a means of entertainment for these seasonal masses by promoting Buncombe County's natural beauty and climate. As the summer temperatures rose, tourists from less desirable climates made their way to higher altitudes for health and leisure.<sup>13</sup> This pattern, or one similar to it, had been the normal state of affairs in western North Carolina since before the Civil War. Native mountaineers were not the only ones to profit from early forms of heritage tourism. William Patton, a Charleston cousin of a famous Asheville family by the same name, began summering in Asheville as early as 1850.<sup>14</sup> Patton built a lodge that became known as *Mountain House* along the route to the summit of Mount Mitchell. Dozens of travelers, most hiking Mitchell's Peak, stayed at the Patton's Lodge.<sup>15</sup>

Mountain businessmen grew their wealth along trade routes like the Buncombe Turnpike. After the completion of the critical trade route in 1827, wealthy mountaineers established stock stands that proved to be a profitable venture throughout the antebellum period. These businesses known as drovers stands, stock stands, or simply, stands, were hotels not typically suited for an extended stay or a proper vacation. Their primary purpose was to serve as a rest point for

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<sup>12</sup> Starnes, *Creating the Land of the Sky*, 9-25.

<sup>13</sup> Starnes, *Creating the Land of the Sky*, 25-30.

<sup>14</sup> Douglas Swaim, ed. *Cabins and Castles: The History and Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina*, (Asheville: Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County, 1981) 70-71.

<sup>15</sup> Swaim, *Cabins and Castles*, 71-72.

livestock herders (drovers) trekking hogs, cattle, and other stock to market. Wealthy mountain families made stock stands profitable by operating them with enslaved labor.<sup>16</sup> One traveler, James Silk Buckingham, a British gentleman, remarked at the conditions of one such stand near Asheville saying, they were “Dirty and comfortless.”<sup>17</sup> Though, it should be noted that some other, more luxurious accommodations did exist. The Warm Springs Hotel several miles north of Asheville, located in modern-day Madison County, was a popular getaway for more elite travelers. According to Frederick Law Olmsted it featured “a long piazza for smokers, loungers and flirts, and a bowling alley and shuffle board.”<sup>18</sup> However, transportation remained a barrier for most, and it would not be until the completion of the Western North Carolina Railroad that tourism would truly take off in the western North Carolina mountains. The first passenger train chugged through the Swannanoa Tunnel and into Asheville in October 1880 bringing with it a load of new consequences and possibilities.<sup>19</sup>

Between 1880 and 1890 Buncombe County experienced a massive population boom as the total number of inhabitants grew by 60 percent.<sup>20</sup> The number of hotels and tourist accommodations grew alongside the population. By 1890 there were 12 hotels and even more boarding houses.<sup>21</sup> Western North Carolina’s popularity continued to grow, eventually shifting

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<sup>16</sup> John Insoe, *Mountain Masters: Slavery and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996) 46-55.

<sup>17</sup> James Silk Buckingham, Esq. *The Slave States of America*, vol. II, (London: Fisher and Sons and Co., 1842) The Internet Archive, 193. <https://archive.org/stream/slavestatesofame02buckuoft#page/n13/mode/2up>, (accessed 8/20/15).

<sup>18</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Back Country*, (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860) The Internet Archive, 251. <https://archive.org/details/cu31924030995900>, (accessed 8/27/15).

<sup>19</sup> Starnes, *Creating the Land of the Sky*, 24.

<sup>20</sup> The United States Census. Total Population Buncombe County, NC 1880 and 1890. Available at North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library.

<sup>21</sup> Starnes, *Creating the Land of the Sky*, 49.

from a destination for the sick to one for leisure and recreation. Eventually, this transition attracted a contingent of wealthy investors. These businessmen sought a slice of mountain paradise for themselves and to capitalize off the region's consistently growing popularity. The first true resort hotel was the Battery Park owned by former Confederate Major Frank Coxe in 1886. It offered steam heat and running water, modern luxuries not available at most hotels in the area. The Battery Park served to help transition Asheville's reputation as a health resort from that to a place of recreation and leisure.<sup>22</sup>

Investors flocked to Asheville during the Gilded Age. The most significant was George Washington Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt came first as a frequent visitor to the area; he enjoyed his stays so much he later a permanent resident. The story goes, that Vanderbilt purchased his expansive estate after eyeing the property from his balcony at the Battery Park Hotel.<sup>23</sup> In 1895 Vanderbilt's grand French-style chateau was complete and soon became an advertised tourist attraction to visitors at the Battery Park Hotel. The hotel promised guests views of the "noble chateau of Mr. Vanderbilt."<sup>24</sup> Workers who moved to the village of Best (renamed Biltmore after the completion of the project), came from far and wide to construct the home. Vanderbilt also had Richard Sharp Smith, his one of his chief architects, design a town for workers, deemed Biltmore Village. Biltmore was a place George could fully enjoy the climate that drew him to the mountains.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Starnes, *Creating the Land of the Sky*, 30, 49.

<sup>23</sup> Howard E. Covington and The Biltmore Company, *Lady on the Hill: How Biltmore Estate Became an American Icon*, (New York: Wiley, 2006). 19-21.

<sup>24</sup> John J. á Becket, "Asheville," *Harpers Weekly*, December 29, 1894.

<sup>25</sup> Covington, *Lady on the Hill*, 17-22.



Buncombe County became a magnet for investors, and the region began to grow in recognition and influence. George Pack was another early arrival to the region. He and his wife spent time in Asheville in hopes that the climate would help cure her of disease. In 1902, Pack provided money for the creation of a public library, paid teacher's salaries, and funded the development of a public square.<sup>26</sup> Later, Edwin Wiley Grove, who had made millions on patent medicines, saw investment potential in Asheville's real estate and hospitality market. Plus, he hoped he could be cured of his ceaseless chronic hiccups. By buying millions of dollars of real estate, razing several sanitariums and the famous Battery Park Hotel, Grove changed the face of Asheville. His efforts and investments made way for some of Asheville's most iconic hospitality structures including the Grove Park Inn, the Grove Arcade, and the replacement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century queen anne style Battery Park Hotel with a now famous Art Deco tower.<sup>27</sup> New modern hotels and resorts gave tourists luxurious accommodations during their stays. Though wealthy industrialists grew in number and influence throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, part of the draw for many tourists to the region was not in luxurious accommodations or Mr. Vanderbilt's chateau. Plenty of travelers came to the mountains to experience authentic mountain heritage and culture, or for heritage tourism. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century heritage tourism primarily meant roaming the bucolic landscape, meeting various mountain characters, and reporting back to a New York-based magazine like *The New York Post*.

There are a seemingly endless number of travel accounts and novels based on visits to Buncombe County dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. For the most part, the writings demonstrate that visitors were especially interested in local customs, and eager to explore the traditions,

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<sup>26</sup> Starnes, *Creating the Land of the Sky*, 73.

<sup>27</sup> Bruce E. Johnson, *Built for the Ages: A History of the Grove Park Inn*. (Asheville, NC: Grove Park Inn and Country Club, 1991), 1-7.

architecture, and language of the mountain south that seemed as if from another time and place. The United States was rapidly industrializing, but Appalachia seemed immune from the speed of modern life.<sup>28</sup> One of the most prolific examples of this work to come from Buncombe County specifically is Maria Louise Pool. A New England-born writer, Pool stopped in Buncombe County returning to Massachusetts for only a short stay. Her visit must have been impactful, because three of her novels, *Dally*, *Against Human Nature*, and *In Buncombe County* are all based on her experiences in western North Carolina. *In Buncombe County* is the result of a series of letters Pool wrote to *The New York Post*.<sup>29</sup> Pool's novels all emphasize the distinct culture and character of the region, and its unique natural beauty, and like other local color writers of her time, she foils her perceived notions of mountain people against the mountain weather and landscape. Pool drew on themes of Buncombe County's fresh air, a primary draw for visitors when she described the surprisingly good health of the region's citizens, "I think I have discovered what it is that prolongs the life of people who seem, from poverty and ignorance, to violate every rule of health. It is the fresh air...these wretches have enough of it; it sustains them in spite of poison whiskey, and tobacco, and sensuality."<sup>30</sup> It was not long after Pool's visit to Asheville that her career took off, and her books more widely read than ever.<sup>31</sup> Her descriptions of mountain life, heritage, and culture played a part in the broader theme of promoting heritage tourism in Buncombe County.

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<sup>28</sup> Starnes, *Creating the Land of the Sky*, 40-41.

<sup>29</sup> J.R. Burrows and Company Historical Design Merchants, "Containing A Brief Sketch Of The Life Of Maria Louise Pool, By Dr. Amand M. Hale Published in 1899" Maria Lousie Pool Biography, 4/10/19, <http://www.burrows.com/poolbio.html>.

<sup>30</sup> Maria Louise Pool, *In Buncombe County*, (Chicago: Herbert S. Stone and Company, 1896) 147-148.

<sup>31</sup> J.R. Burrows and Company Historical Design Merchants, "Containing A Brief Sketch Of The Life Of Maria Louise Pool, By Dr. Amand M. Hale Published in 1899."

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Asheville was one of the premier health and leisure resorts in the country. Top tier private hospitals and sanitariums advertised the benefits of Asheville's clean mountain air, some of the nation's foremost experts on tuberculosis called the region home.<sup>32</sup> With the advent of the railroad, more tourists were arriving each day, and finding ways to cash in on their presence soon became a priority. Though the craft and heritage revival would not be in full swing for some time, the people of Asheville and Buncombe County realized the opportunity and benefit of cashing in on their regional history and heritage. Late 19th century displays of historical objects and local art demonstrate that Asheville and Buncombe County residents were interested in promoting local heritage to seasonal visitors.

In August 1892 Asheville city officials and civic clubs planned a grand celebration of the town's centennial. The fete might be considered one of the town's first official forays into heritage tourism. Included in the celebrations was the establishment of a temporary centennial museum, that, according to newspaper reports, attracted a large crowd to enjoy its "wonderful collection of curios." The exhibition was well received and successful, for the paper further recommended that the museum remain open permanently "for the amusement [the city's] many visitors."<sup>33</sup> The museum, and the celebrations for the centennial, while perhaps planned in the spirit of local civic pride, are an early example of how boosters and citizens in Asheville and Buncombe County used cultural heritage to bolster tourism and entertain seasonal visitors.

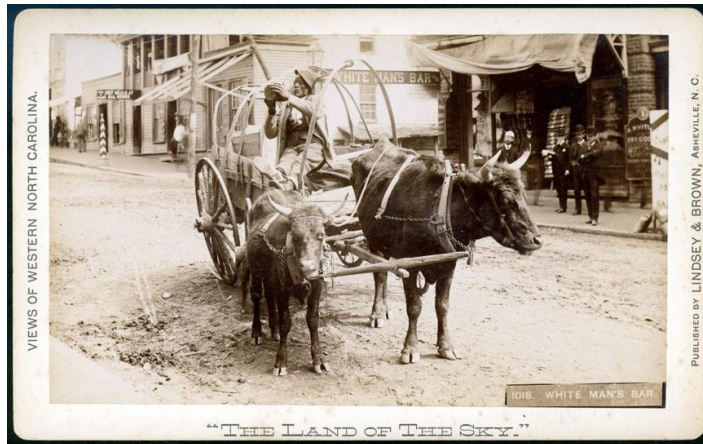
Other cultural heritage displays could be found in the city and across the world in the late 19th century. Thomas H. Lindsey was well known for his photographs featuring scenic views of

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<sup>32</sup> Freeman Irby Stephens, *The History of Medicine in Asheville*, (Asheville: Grateful Steps, 2013), 35-64.

<sup>33</sup> Editorial, "Centennial Celebrations," *The Asheville Democrat*, (Asheville, NC) August 14, 1892.

Asheville and western North Carolina. In late 1899 Lindsey accepted a contract with the Southern Railway Company to produce scenic views of the WNC and East Tennessee region to be exhibited at the 1900 World's Fair in Paris. Before traveling abroad, the photos were on



display in Lindsey's Studio in Asheville for public viewing. The photos included in the Paris exhibition included views of the Biltmore Estate, the French Broad River, and hotels in Asheville. <sup>34</sup>

Lindsey produced other photos as well,

Figure 1. "The White Man's Bar" Photo By T.H Lindsey ca. 1889 deemed "character and comic" photos, characterized as a "Character and Comic" style photo.

Courtesy of the North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library. many of the prints depict mountaineers in stereotypical scenes. One famous photo shows an African American man drinking from a stoneware jug of liquor outside one of Asheville's famous saloon's, The White Man's Bar, a scene that would have appealed to a white audience in the Jim Crow era, particularly in the South. <sup>35</sup> Lindsey's photos of the region promoted both tourism and the perceived cultural heritage of WNC, and serve as an early example of how businesses with an interest in tourism promotion, in this case, railroads, promoted the idea of heritage tourism at home and abroad.

Early attempts to market the cultural heritage of western North Carolina to visitors met with no shortage of enthusiasm. The attention the town received from outside visitors was welcome, and officials took every opportunity to market the area to potential tourists. As early as

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<sup>34</sup> Editorial, "Pictures for Paris," *Asheville Citizen* (Asheville, NC) January 23, 1900.

<sup>35</sup> See Figure 1.

1905 town boosters started promoting tourism in an organized tourism campaign. The Asheville Board of Trade began the publication an informational pamphlet for current and potential tourists including information on boarding, climate, conventions, and recreation opportunities. The pamphlets, while covering a wide range of topics, were especially focused on outdoor recreation and the desirability of the highland climate. In 1907 boosters touted the excellence of Asheville citing “the seal of approval from the thousands who throng...in winter and summer,” who have “their ample provision for comfort” supplied by both hoteliers and citizens of the city. <sup>36</sup>

Early board of trade pamphlets did not emphasize cultural heritage. Instead, leisure opportunities attracting a more traditionally wealthy clientele were most commonly featured, like the Swannanoa Country Club. <sup>37</sup> For those not seeking club life, the brochure had plenty of other options. Chief among these was the Riverside Park and the popular but short-lived Woolsey Ostrich Farm. Riverside Park offered a free outdoor recreation space where local equestriennes competed in horse races, spectators gathered for music and fireworks, and children could play on swings and gaze at captive bears. The Ostrich Farm, located at the end of a streetcar line in North Asheville, was owned by one of the leading physicians in the region. The farm hoped to be a refined attraction. The Ostrich Farm offered a location to stroll through a carefully curated apiary and the opportunity to purchase fine boas and hats crafted from discarded feathers. The situation quickly became a nightmare, however, when the ostriches refused to settle into their new surroundings. Measures were taken by the owners of the farm to mitigate damage and animal hostility, and the farm soon became more popular than a nuisance. Although the farm increased

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<sup>36</sup> Asheville, NC, North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville Board of Trade Pamphlets, 1907 ed., 7.

<sup>37</sup> Asheville, NC. North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library. The Asheville Board of Trade Pamphlets, 1905 ed., 14.

in popularity, investors sold the Ostrich Farm and all of its inhabitants in the spring of 1905. The inventory included a flock of 20 pheasants, 17 ducks, a raccoon, a monkey, a great horned owl, four pairs of pigeons, and one parrot.<sup>38</sup>

Besides small parks and zoos, new waves of visitors were interested in the natural heritage of the region. Though anticipation for the Great Smoky Mountain National Park was high, Buncombe County perhaps benefitted more directly in these early years from the protection and promotion of other natural landmarks. North Carolina Governor Locke Craig signed a bill creating Mt. Mitchell State Park in 1915. Already a destination for many travelers since William Patton built his lodge, Mountain House, in the 1850s, the designation as a state park drew more



Figure 2. *En. Tom Wilson and unidentified man, painted backdrop, from the George Mason set, 1890's. Courtesy of the North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library.*

attention than ever, plus it ushered in a wave of travel to Black Mountain, the small but growing resort town in eastern Buncombe County.<sup>39</sup> Black Mountain became the first stop for travelers who were bound to hike Mount Mitchell, stay at Mountain House, or drive the Mount Mitchell motor road to stay at Camp Alice. Eventually, a passenger train allowed for the convenient travel to Mitchell's Peak.<sup>40</sup> Spending time in the mountains was quickly becoming a fashionable and tasteful thing to do. People all over the country had

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<sup>38</sup> David C. Bailey et. al., *Trolleys in the Land of the Sky: Street Railways of Asheville, NC and Vicinity*, (n.p.: 2000), 83.

<sup>39</sup> Timothy Silver, *Mount Mitchell and the Black Mountains: An Environmental History of the Highest Peaks in Eastern America*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003) 122-150.

<sup>40</sup> Silver, *Mount Mitchell and the Black Mountains*, 177.

heard the tale of Dr. Mitchell and the legendary Big Tom Wilson and made the pilgrimage to encounter the mountaineer in his natural habitat. Tom Wilson, photographed by Lindsey and legendary photographer George Masa, was the perfect picture of what a mountain man ought to be and captured the imaginations of many tourists.<sup>41</sup> He too, recognized that engaging in the tourist trade could be profitable and served as a guide for hikers as they summited Mt. Mitchell.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, organizations like the Carolina Mountain Club and the Appalachian Mountain Club bolstered enthusiasm for such activities and sightseeing to the Southern Highlands.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the early 20th century, enthusiasm grew for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The first mention of such a park by the Asheville Board of Trade pamphlets is as early as 1916, though the park would not officially open until 1930.<sup>44</sup> The scenic beauty of the region, outdoor recreation, and the health benefits thereof became the featured more prominently in the board of trade promotional pamphlets between 1916 and 1925.<sup>45</sup> As people continued to visit the region and hopes of the creation of a national park rose, Asheville was poised to be the profitable urban center of nature's wonderland. Celebrating the natural heritage and landscape of the region became a profitable venture.

The emphasis in the Asheville Board of Trade marketing materials in the early 20th century was on climate, health, and outdoor recreation. Local color, the arts, and history flew

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<sup>41</sup> See Figure 2.

<sup>42</sup> Silver, *Mount Mitchell and the Black Mountains*, 174-176.

<sup>43</sup> For a fuller discussion of the influence of hiking clubs on the common perception of common tourists to the Smokies and Blue Ridge on sightseeing and outdoor activity see: Edward Slavishak, "Loveliness but with an Edge: Looking at the Smoky Mountains, 1920-1945" *Journal of Social History* 45 no.4 (Summer 2012) 1074-1096.

<sup>44</sup> Asheville, NC., North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library. The Asheville Board of Trade Pamphlets, 1916 ed., 17.

<sup>45</sup> Asheville, NC., North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library. The Asheville Board of Trade Pamphlets, 1916 ed., 17.

under the radar, though, the popularization of the stereotypical mountaineer was already underway in popular culture. By the 1920's Asheville Board of Trade, pamphlets began touting the desirability of native, Anglo-Saxon mountain stock as a hardy workforce.<sup>46</sup> The popular imagination took on images of mountain people based on all manner of descriptions of Appalachian Culture emerging from visitors from all over the United States. Fascination with the hillbilly character and their rugged lifestyle began to entice visitors. It became fast apparent to locals that the hillbilly image and local culture were marketable, and over the course of the 20th century, emphasizing heritage, perceived and otherwise, became a useful tourism marketing tool.

Throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the nation had its gaze fixed on the Appalachian region. Films, local color novels, and all manner of artistic interpretations of the hillbilly stereotype entered the market and found a welcoming audience.<sup>47</sup> Popular interest in the music, foodways, language and other traditions of mountaineers was on the rise. In this period, some found creative methods to export and promote mountain heritage in meaningful and profitable ways. The establishment of the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and craft promotion groups like the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild each buoyed Appalachian culture in socially and economically positive ways while the region was at a vulnerable crossroads. This period also saw the public celebration and marketing of other aspects of the tourist economy and heritage, like the now vital health tourism industry in unexpected ways.

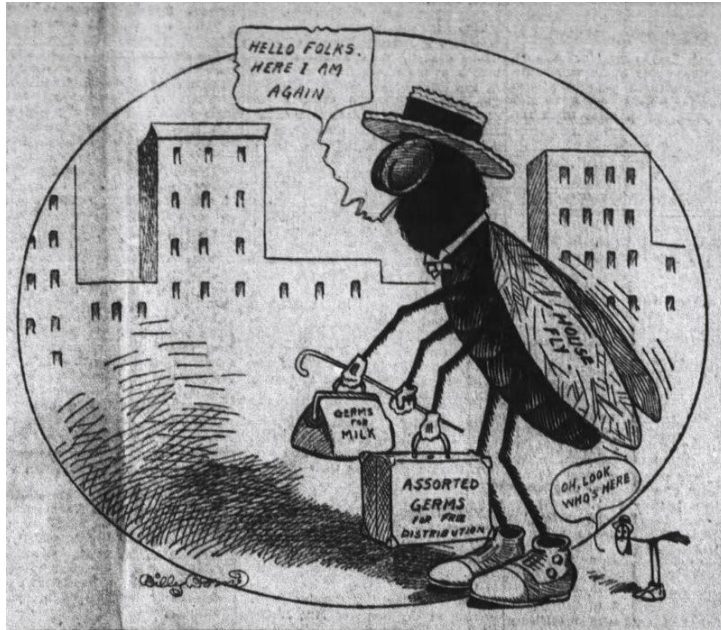
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<sup>46</sup> Asheville Board of Trade Pamphlets Collection, North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library.

<sup>47</sup> J.W. Williamson, *Hillbillyland: What the Movies did to the Mountains, and what the Mountains did to the Movies*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995) 1-20.



Sustained efforts in advertising by tourism boosters alongside the booming economy of the 1920s meant a prosperous era for Asheville. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, officials seemed to narrow their focus on heritage and culture as an effective means to market Asheville and Buncombe County as a tourist destination, and they found a variety of ways to implement cultural imagery into seemingly unrelated ventures. Even before the beginning of the prosperous decade,



Asheville invested \$200,000 in a baseball field for its already existing baseball team, becoming one of the only cities in the country to own its own a baseball park. McCormick Field celebrated Asheville’s heritage as a health resort, named for Dr. Lewis McCormick, the city’s only bacteriologist. Over the years,

Figure 3. Cartoon by Billy Bourne for the Asheville Citizen promoting the "Swat that fly" campaign. The cartoon depicts the house fly as a tourist. McCormick’s “Swat that Fly” April 14, 1914. campaign became a part of the culture

of Asheville. The largest local paper featured cartoons often on the front page reminding residents to resume the campaign in the warmer months.<sup>48</sup> Townsfolk complied with the doctor’s orders, and the campaign was successful.<sup>49</sup> A new venue for a summer pastime seemed like a fitting place for a memorial to Dr. McCormick. Though Asheville’s baseball team took on several names over the years (each hinting at local culture or tourism), including the

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<sup>48</sup> See Figure 3.

<sup>49</sup> See collection of newspaper cartoons created in connection with McCormick’s campaign by Asheville artist Billy Bourne: “Swat that Fly,” collection available at [ashevillecartoonist.org](http://ashevillecartoonist.org) 3/30/19.

“Moonshiners,” and “Mountaineers” the city finally landed on the “Tourists” nodding to the importance of the industry to the town.<sup>50</sup> Over the years the public stadium served not only baseball fans but as an all-purpose outdoor venue hosting all manner of events, including the Rhododendron Festival, Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, and stock car racing.<sup>51</sup><sup>52</sup>

The Mountain Dance and Folk Festival served as an especially, democratic, accessible, and grassroots example of creating a space for heritage tourism in Buncombe County. The brainchild of Bascom Lamar Lunsford, a Madison County native, musician, and country lawyer, the festival came onto the scene in 1928 on the heels of the already popular, but decidedly more cosmopolitan, Rhododendron Festival.<sup>53</sup> Lunsford’s festival, presented “along about sundown” starting on Friday the first weekend of August exploded in popularity as Lunsford scoured the hills and valleys of the Southern Highlands for those with extraordinary talent and knowledge of traditional folk tunes, ballads, and dances. The knowledge possessed by the individuals was not in and of itself extraordinary, but Lunsford understood that the gathering and presentation of their craft to a broader audience was critical for the continuity of these traditions. Almost immediately city boosters recognized the genius and importance of the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and the potential revenue to be had from the promotion of traditional mountain folkways.

Lunsford and the festival received praise in local and national media and gained notoriety by traveling the country on a lecture circuit speaking to the importance of preserving folkways

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<sup>50</sup> Bill Ballew, *Baseball in Asheville*, (Chicago: Arcadia History Press, 2003) 1-15.

<sup>51</sup> Bob Terrell, *McCormick Field: Home of Reality*, (Asheville: Terrell and The Asheville Tourists, 1991)

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<sup>53</sup> Folk Heritage Committee, “Along About Sundown: The Mountain Dance and Folk Festival Celebrates 75 Years” (Raleigh: North Carolina Dept. of Cultural Resources, 2002.)

and entered into a successful partnership with the Asheville Chamber of Commerce.<sup>54</sup> Lunsford also joined with Lamar Stringfield to preserve classic Appalachian folk tunes. His *30 and 1 Folk Tunes* (1929) and *It's Fun to Square Dance* (1942) further served to promote mountain folk heritage and the festival. In 1934, Sarah Gertrude Knott, the director of the National Folk Festival, praised Lunsford's efforts on WWNC, an Asheville based radio station. She noted how "the spontaneous response of the audiences" at the festival were a measure of how "tremendously interested in the arts" the participants were. She continued, emphasizing that the festival and folk arts should be further developed in the region and are an important facet of attracting tourists to the mountains because they are part of what makes Southern Appalachia distinctive and unique. Knott predicted that the festival would, "doubtless serve to attract to the region thousands of people who are interested in the valuable heritage from our pioneer ancestors."<sup>55</sup>

Mountain craft heritage, too, became increasingly desired viewing for seasonal visitors as the 20th century pushed on. Enterprising organizations like the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild and Biltmore Industries led the way in advertising and increasing the overall appeal of traditional handmade crafts among visitors. Over time, more and more craft shops appeared in the area selling mountain made home-goods and souvenirs. Besides the Southern Highlands

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<sup>54</sup> David E. Whisnant, "Finding a Way Between the Old and The New: Bascom Lamar Lunsford's Work as a Citizen" *Appalachian Journal* 7 no. 2 (fall/winter 1979-1980).

<sup>55</sup> Folk Heritage Committee, "Along About Sundown: The Mountain Dance and Folk Festival Celebrates 75 Years," 1.

Craft Guild shop, (Allenstand Cottage Industries) and the Biltmore Industries shop in Asheville, other major retail stores, Three Mountaineers, The Spinning Wheel, The Treasure Chest, and others were specializing in mountain-made goods.<sup>56</sup>

Though all of these shops and organizations found great success, perhaps the most influential and successful of all, was the Southern highlands Craft Guild organized by Frances Goodrich. A Presbyterian missionary, Goodrich began her work supervising the Dulah Springs Day School in 1895. She made her way to the Buncombe County when after completing her formal education at Yale. As a worker for the Presbyterian Local Home Missions Board, Goodrich noticed a decline in homemade goods and the knowledge of how they were produced. Understanding that there was a market for these goods in rapidly industrializing areas, she began working with the women in her adopted community to revive traditional styles of weaving. After several years, this social work blossomed into a partnership with other, similar operations across western North Carolina.<sup>57</sup> Eventually, the artisans established the Allenstand Cottage Industries shop, and the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild was born. The guild was, and remains, an important institution of the promotion of Appalachian heritage, particularly in western North Carolina. The craft revival played an important role in heritage tourism throughout the middle twentieth century.<sup>58</sup>

Other businesses grew out of the promotion of mountain craft heritage, too, like Three Mountaineers, a souvenir manufacturer founded in Asheville that specialized in wooden and

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<sup>56</sup> Asheville, North Carolina. North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library, vertical clipping and reference file, "CRAFTS," vol. 32-33 no. 33.

<sup>57</sup> Katherine Caldwell, *From Mountain Hands: The Story of Allanstand Craft Shop's First 100 Years*, (Asheville, NC: NP, 2008) 3-5, 7.

<sup>58</sup> Katherine Caldwell, *From Mountain Hands*, 5-7, 9-11.

ceramic household goods like bookends, decorative serving platters, and lamps. Some of their later souvenir-style goods more directly played on the hillbilly motif, like an outhouse occupancy sign (one of their best-selling items) found in most of their catalogs.<sup>59</sup> The company, like other craft stores in the region, sold small pieces of mountain heritage to take back home. Three Mountaineers, in particular, produced goods that appealed to a wide audience but still reminded travelers of their visit to the hill country.

The prosperous early 20th century could not last forever. A collapse was on the horizon as city officials borrowed more than they could manage, and the nation entered the great depression. All was not lost; however, as Asheville and western North Carolina boosters were successful in using their strong foundation of heritage tourism to turn things around. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park officially opened in 1930, and the Blue Ridge Parkway lagged not far behind, opening in 1936. Each provided a thoroughfare for tourist dollars, and despite the Great Depression began to fill local coffers once more. Other efforts to bring tourist dollars directly to Buncombe County meant city officials pressured Cornelia Vanderbilt Cecil, heiress of the Biltmore Estate, to open her home to the public in order increase tourism. The Biltmore House opened to the public for a small fee in 1930, yet another attraction to draw revenue to the Asheville-Buncombe area.<sup>60</sup> Heritage programs like the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and the Southern Highlands Craft Guild remained successful throughout this period. Tourism numbers only grew after World War II as the Smokies became a popular destination for the growing number of postwar middle-class families.<sup>61</sup> The increased flow of visitors to tourist

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<sup>59</sup> See Figure 4.

<sup>60</sup> Starnes, *Creating the Land of the Sky*, 89-90.

<sup>61</sup> Daniel S. Pierce, *The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park*, (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 2000) 186-193.

centers like Asheville found local boosters crafting new ways to promote local heritage, natural and cultural, to draw in an ever-increasing number of visitors.

In the following years, Asheville's popularity as a tourism destination would decrease, but grassroots heritage programs like the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, the Southern Highlands Craft Guild and the grand historic architecture and beauty of the region including the incredibly well-visited Biltmore House remain cornerstones of the tourist economy. Lunsford, Goodrich, and their popular programs, helped lay the groundwork for successful efforts in the heritage tourism sector in later years. The Southern Highlands Craft Guild and the Mountain Dance and Folks Festival attracted a broad audience built on preconceived notions of local culture while remaining authentic, thus appealing to both residents and tourists. In the late 20th century as the city attempted to rebuild after a long period of economic downturn, their same formulas of grassroots heritage promotion and preservation would prove to be essential in rebuilding a healthy tourism-based economy.

## CHAPTER II Reviving the “Dead Mackerel”: Urban Redevelopment and Historic Preservation Efforts in Asheville and Buncombe County 1970-2001

During a festival to celebrate the birthday of beloved Asheville writer Thomas Wolfe, Floyd C. Wright delivered an address entitled “Thomas Wolfe and Asheville, Again, and Again, and Again.” The year was 1975, and he claimed that despite locals’ obsession with restoring it, the Asheville of Tom’s youth was “deader than a mackerel” and “not all the tours and celebrations in his native town [could] bring it back.”<sup>62</sup> Born in 1900, Tom came of age right in the middle of Asheville’s first major population boom.<sup>63</sup> Mrs. L.D Whitson remembered of the period that there were “Boarders! Boarders! Everywhere!”<sup>64</sup> Thomas Wolfe’s mother, Julia Westall Wolfe, owned a boarding house in the center of town placing Tom, and his other siblings, more so than most children in town, *in the thick of it*. As Thomas Wolfe was coming of age, Asheville transitioned from a small mountain village to the urban center of western North Carolina. Wright’s 1975 declaration came at a time when it seemed as though the beating heart of a once vibrant city was boarded up behind one of its downtown windows, despite an influx of tourism infrastructure in during the depression years. Tom’s Asheville was long gone, but there were plenty of people interested in bringing it back. Even before 1975, there were efforts to preservation efforts were underway in Buncombe County. By the next year, the nation’s bicentennial sparked a jolt of enthusiasm for cultural heritage tourism and sunlight began streaming through the plywood-covered fenestrations across Asheville once more.

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<sup>62</sup> Floyd C. Wright, “Thomas Wolfe and Asheville, Again, and Again, and Again,” *The Southern Literary Journal* 10, no. 1. (Fall 1977): 31.

<sup>63</sup> United States Census Bureau Population Statistics, Buncombe County, NC. Available in North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library.

<sup>64</sup> Asheville, North Carolina, North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library, Newspaper Clipping File, Vol. 70, File 65., Mrs. L.D. Whitson, “A Panoramic View of Asheville and Sketches of Some of its Most Famous Citizens,” Asheville, NC, 1881.

Asheville, like most municipalities across the country, suffered tremendously at the hands of the Great Depression. The city took on a tremendous sum of debt, crippling the municipal budget long after the depression was over.<sup>65</sup> However, unlike most cities, Asheville decided to pay off its debts rather than have them canceled by the federal government. Finally, in 1976, the year of the nation's bicentennial and one year after Wright's determination that the historic Asheville had passed away, the enormous task was complete. To the tune of "God Bless America" citizens of Asheville, arm in arm, looked on as the mayor and "Miss Asheville" burned the oppressive notes.<sup>66</sup> This moment, much like the completion of the Swannanoa Tunnel, shined a light of optimism on Buncombe County. The city's decision to pay off its debts was a primary factor in the preservation of historic buildings. Investing in the urban landscape and architecture was not a major priority for city officials because Asheville was so poor compared to many other cities. Therefore, many of the oldest buildings downtown remained well into the 1970s.<sup>67</sup> The Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County notes that interest in preservation, sparked by the bicentennial celebration, as well as issues related to urban renewal (like a planned through street in the historic Montford neighborhood and the construction of the "open cut" through Beaucatcher Mountain) as the impetus for its organization the same year.

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<sup>65</sup> Chase, *Asheville: A History*, 181.

<sup>66</sup> Chase, *Asheville: A History*, 181-183.

<sup>67</sup> Chase, *Asheville: A History*, 186-188.



Though the city had finally paid their debts, the overall economic climate in Asheville and Buncombe County was not entirely favorable. In the wake of the decline of industries like textile manufacturing, Buncombe County struggled to attract new businesses, and there was a sincere desire to clean up and modernize downtown



Figure 5. The Akzona Building on North Pack Square, ca. 1992. Courtesy Asheville. It was welcome news in *of the North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library.*

September 1975 when the Akzona company (a new corporation created to manage American Enka rayon manufacturers and other industrial businesses) announced that they were relocating one of their operations, Brand-Rex into the previously vacated American Enka plant near Asheville.<sup>68</sup> Later, Akzona made its official mark on the city by purchasing and razing all the property on North Pack Square to build a seven-story office building designed by I.M. Pei.<sup>69</sup> The massive structure changed the entire character of the square, imposing stark modernity on the surrounding late 19th and early 20th century shops, offices, and municipal buildings.<sup>70</sup> Though Akzona's arrival symbolized hope for rebuilding blue collar jobs in Buncombe County as well as revitalizing the lifeless city center, downtown was still considered an undesirable place to visit, especially after dark.

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<sup>68</sup> Editorial Board, "Good News for Local Economy," *ACT*, September 14, 1975.

<sup>69</sup> Chase, *Asheville: A History*, 188-190.

<sup>70</sup> See Figure 5.

In the late 1970s, the Asheville Police Department was working with new methods to enforce prostitution laws, a problem so out of hand sex workers were described as “crowding” the sidewalks of Coxe Avenue.<sup>71</sup> The Fine Arts Theater on Biltmore Avenue, and other theaters around the city and county sold tickets to racy and pornographic films and faced pushback. Sheriff Tom Morrissey led a charge to expel pornographic material from cinemas and drugstore shelves throughout Buncombe County.<sup>72</sup> The atmosphere in Downtown Asheville was almost like a miniature, deserted Times Square. The Fine Arts Theater, a well-known pornographic movie house, and their “immoral” pictures disturbed even local high school students who collected the signatures of 700 city residents on a petition presented city council requesting that the theater close.<sup>73</sup> The students’ protest signaled a divergence between the culture of Downtown Asheville as an entity and the residents of Buncombe County. Overall, the citizens of Asheville and Buncombe County were ready to clean up the city and breathe new life into the streets. The promise of government programs packaged under the umbrella of urban renewal seemed to be the appropriate answer for a city anxious to rebuild.

Asheville got its taste for preservation at about the same time cities all over the country were seriously navigating and feeling the first effects of policies under urban renewal-style initiatives and programs. Urban renewal as a movement began as early as the interwar period, spearheaded by so-called rationalist and modernist planners like Robert Moses who aimed to reduce the seeming chaos within cities. Urban renewal policies emphasized the elimination of perceived slums, the construction of highways and expressways, and the establishment of public housing. One of the primary critics of urban renewal was Jane Jacobs, who issued a scathing

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<sup>71</sup> Editorial, “Police Enforcing Prostitution Laws,” *ACT*, November 11, 1978.

<sup>72</sup> Billy Pritchard, “Theater Cancels ‘Last Tango’ Here,” *ACT*, September 13, 1973.

<sup>73</sup> Phillip Clark, “‘Art’ Films, ‘Suggestive’ Ads, Draw Protests From Students,” *ACT*, November 16, 1962.

critique of urban renewal policy as a killer of communities and cities in her 1961 book, *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*. Jacobs argued that for a city to be functional, not everything had to be shiny, new, or rational. Instead, she proposed that the most resilient and livable cities include “generators of diversity” that “create effective pools of economic use.” Her suggestions include preserving buildings of various ages and states of repair.<sup>74</sup> Overall, Jacobs argued that urban renewal was bad for cities, and described her work in the introduction as “an attack on... the principles and aims that have shaped modern, orthodox city planning and rebuilding.”<sup>75</sup>

Communities throughout Buncombe County suffered the effects of urban renewal in clearly identifiable and quantifiable ways. The broadest single historical study of urban renewal in Asheville to date was completed in 2015 by Steven Nikolloff. Nikolloff argues that Asheville’s desire to appeal to tourists led to their particular implementation of urban renewal policies, and created segregated and inequitable communities along racial lines.<sup>76</sup> What is most significant about Nickollof’s work, is that it highlights how urban renewal was detrimental to the African American people of Buncombe County. The destruction of African American Communities because of Urban Renewal Policies left them with few historic buildings to preserve while a wave of historic preservation efforts hit the region. In addition to quantity, one might argue that the perceived quality of structures related to the black community meant fewer historically black sites found their way on to the National Register of Historic Places, and therefore preserved long-term, due to systemic racial bias.

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<sup>74</sup> Jane Jacobs, *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*, (New York: Random House, 1961), 151.

<sup>75</sup> Jacobs, *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*, 3.

<sup>76</sup> Steven Michael Nickolloff *Urban Renewal in Asheville: A History of Racial Segregation and Black Activism*, Western Carolina University, (Cullowhee, NC) 2015, 50-57. Copy on file in the North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library

A number of structures made the cut for the National Register of Historic Places (first established in 1966) in Asheville and Buncombe County in the 1970s, and two crucial agencies arrived on the scene, the Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County (HRC) and the Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County (PSABC). The nationwide National Register of Historic Places preservation program, operated through the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service, provided municipal governments, businesses, and individuals incentives to preserve historic structures for the first time.<sup>77</sup> In 1979 a state law and local ordinances adopted by Asheville and Buncombe County created the HRC to protect the cultural and architectural character of Asheville and Buncombe County.<sup>78</sup> PSABC is not a government body, however. Founded in 1976, the Preservation Society is responsible for saving several of the area's historic landmarks and encouraging the State of North Carolina to create a western branch office for the Department of Cultural Resources.<sup>79</sup> The 1970s were critical for downtown Asheville's historic structures, and the HRC and PSABC played a significant role in ensuring their survival. 38 of Asheville and Buncombe County's count now reaching slightly over 100 sites listed on the National Register of historic places made the cut in the 1970s alone.<sup>80</sup> By the mid-1980s enough research was compiled on Buncombe County's historic architecture to provide material for a book. Published by the HRC in 1981, *Cabins and*

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<sup>77</sup> National Park Service, "What is the National Register?" National Register of Historic Places, 4/1/19, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/what-is-the-national-register.htm>.

<sup>78</sup> City of Asheville, "Historic Resources," 3/30/19, [https://www.ashevillenc.gov/departments/urban\\_design/historic/default.htm](https://www.ashevillenc.gov/departments/urban_design/historic/default.htm).

<sup>79</sup> Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County, "History," 3/30/19, <https://psabc.org/history/>.

<sup>80</sup> See Appendix F.

*Castles* remains the definitive guide to the region's historic architecture, homes, and design, in particular, those that succumbed to time and decay.<sup>81</sup>

Though all the preservation efforts of this period were well intended, looking back, it is easy to fit them within the narrative of damaging urban renewal policies. Nickoloff illustrated that the desire to lure tourists was a driving factor in implementing urban renewal policies in Asheville and Buncombe County. Tourism, preservation, and downtown revitalization go hand in hand throughout the 1970s, '80s, and into the 1990s. In the aftermath of its debt repayment, an urgency to preserve Asheville's historic structures and revitalize Thomas Wolfe's Asheville led to an almost zealous effort to preserve historic sites in the Asheville-Buncombe area, and many of the programs that financed its reconstruction (as we know it today) sprouted from urban renewal-era revitalization programs. In the process, Asheville and Buncombe County's historically Black communities saw very little of this support, and as a result, of the 38 historic structures nominated for the National Register of Historic Places in the Asheville Buncombe area in the 1970s, only two are in historically black neighborhoods.<sup>82</sup>

Real estate prices and urban redevelopment plans in Downtown threatened buildings that did not receive federal recognition. Thankfully, the Young Men's Institute Building and St. Matthias Episcopal Church were among those that did, and the African American community saw some share of Asheville's preservation efforts launched into the restoration of these central landmarks of Asheville's East End. The YMI building secured its nomination to the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. In 1980, a coalition of nine black churches with other financial support purchased the building. Originally founded in 1892 as a social hub for the

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<sup>81</sup> Douglas Swaim, et. al., *Cabins and Castles: The History and Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina*, (Asheville: Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County, 1981).

<sup>82</sup> See Appendix F.

young black workers of the Biltmore Estate, the YMI lived numerous lives over several decades. The building was home to restaurants, drug stores, libraries, ultimately becoming the anchor of the neighborhood now known as The Block.<sup>82</sup> The coalition renovated the building to create the YMI Cultural Center, a space for shops, classrooms, an auditorium, and gallery exhibitions.<sup>83</sup> Another important preservation achievement for Asheville's African American community during that period was the nomination of St. Matthias Episcopal Church, home to one of the oldest free black congregations in North Carolina as a national historic place.<sup>84</sup> Unfortunately, however, African American communities received a disproportionate share of attention from preservationists, and a larger share of those communities' historic structures was marred in the process of urban renewal.

Some communities took to the streets to make their voice heard when it came to the destruction of treasured historic sites and resources. In 1974, before the establishment of PSABC or the HRC, a plan to build a large mall on the north end of Downtown Asheville threatened several blocks of city space. Billed as "Building for a Better Asheville" or "Asheville Downtown Commercial Complex," the project imagined a mall and hotel complex that would serve to attract tourists and help cease the "blight" of downtown. Shopping malls were nothing new to Asheville, but what many found befuddling about the proposal, is that after the Westgate Shopping Center and the Asheville Mall, (both suburban complexes came along), the urban economy suffered. Another mall, especially one that threatened historic buildings, seemed

<sup>82</sup> Darin Waters, "Philanthropic Experimentation: George Vanderbilt, the Young Men's Institute, and Racial Uplift Ideology in Asheville, North Carolina, 1892-1906" *North Carolina Historical Review*

incomprehensible. However, city officials and planners seemed keen to the idea. The Asheville Revitalization Commission (ARC) studied the plans for the retail complex and determined that it was just what Asheville needed to get back on its feet, residents, however, had a different idea.

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<sup>83</sup> YMI Cultural Center, "About Us," YMI Cultural Center, 3/30/19, <https://ymiculturalcenter.org/about-us/>.

<sup>84</sup> Fr. James Abbott, *A Brief History of St. Matthias' Episcopal Church, Asheville, NC: Celebrating 150 Years of Work in Ministry and Service*, (Asheville: NP, 2016), 1-3.

The proposed plan would destroy both residences and retail buildings, displacing more than 125 people. As city planners were gearing up to move forward with the proposal, residents were planning their resistance.<sup>85</sup>

After more than six years in various stages of planning and development, the “Building for a Better Asheville” project seemed as if it was going to move forward, but not without funds and a significant struggle. The plan required millions of dollars that city officials decided they could raise through General Obligation Bonds. General Obligation Bonds require a popular vote. As soon as it officials announced that the vote would become necessary, the mall issue become political, with those opposed to the mall urging voters to vote “no” on the bond measure.<sup>86</sup> In a show of resistance, residents came together to urge voters to choose “no” on their ballots in what would become known as “The Wrap.” Led by community members Peggy Gardener and Wayne Caldwell, residents tied pieces of cloth together and encircled the area proposed for destruction to make way for the mall. The Wrap captured voters’ attention, the bond measure failed, and the mall was never built, saving the historic character of most of North Lexington, Broadway, and Rankin Avenues.<sup>87</sup>

Thanks to the survival of a large number of historic resources in Buncombe County, as early as the 1960s and into the late 1990s, a catalog of community museums, historical societies, and interpretive programs developed out of a strong community desire to continue to preserve historic resources and historical memory. At the same time, new funding sources and resources

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<sup>85</sup> Downtown Asheville Mall Project, “The Mall Proposal,” UNC Asheville Digital History Archives, 3/30/19, <http://avldntn.uncadighist.org/build-a-better-asheville/mall-proposal/>.

<sup>86</sup> Downtown Asheville Mall Project, “Downtown Asheville vs. The Mall,” UNC Asheville Digital History Archives, 3/30/19, <http://avldntn.uncadighist.org/save-downtown-asheville/downtown-reacts/>.

<sup>87</sup> Downtown Asheville Mall Project, “Downtown Asheville vs. The Mall,” UNC Asheville Digital History Archives, 3/30/19, <http://avldntn.uncadighist.org/save-downtown-asheville/downtown-reacts/>.

for preservation were becoming more widely available across the country and in the Asheville-Buncombe region. Though grassroots efforts and government support played a major role in the survival of Buncombe County's historic landscape, responsible private investment was ultimately the most critical factor in revitalizing the local urban economy in the late 20th century.

Downtown Asheville's business district did not have to succumb to a mall because of the investments and success of small business owners. Many of the new businesses to come to Asheville arrived in search of cheap rent and found what they were searching for in vacated downtown retail space with some inspiration from landscape architect John L. Lantzius. Lantzius saw "buildings in mothballs," along North Lexington Avenue that had the potential to become a diverse, clean, and safe retail environment for all kinds of people in Asheville to enjoy. After purchasing several of the oldest buildings along the street and renovating them for businesses, the "Lexington Park" development quickly took off as a place for both locals and tourists to visit, and a hub for local business development.<sup>88</sup>

Along with the preservation movement, there was a resurgence in the cultural heritage of the Appalachian region in the 1970s. Due in large part, because of the growth of the Appalachian Studies movement among scholars like Cratis Williams and the founding of *The Appalachian Journal*. Though primarily an academic movement, interest in the region trickled into the popular conscience through iconic works like the *Foxfire* series. Books about traditional foodways, crafts, and lore based on north Georgia high school students' interviews with mountain elders. During a period of cultural transition inside the city of Asheville, and within the

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<sup>88</sup> Chase, *Asheville: A History*, 193-194.



broader culture, the founders of small museums saw a sense of urgency to preserve cultural heritage within their communities and rode a wave of rising interest to accomplish their goals.

In October 1980, neighbors in Barnardsville, a community on the Big Ivy Creek in rural northwestern Buncombe County, met to lay the plans for the Big Ivy Historical Society and the preservation of a cabin used at a CCC camp in their community. Eventually, the group was successful and put the restored cabin to use as a museum.<sup>89</sup> The Dry Ridge Museum began collecting items and set up shop in the basement of the Weaverville Library in 1983. Exhibits at the Dry Ridge Museum featured items like a broadaxe once used by John Weaver (the town's namesake), and early 19th-century furniture and textiles. The board's relationship with local representative Gordon Greenwood secured them funding from a state grant meant to support small museums.<sup>90</sup> Meanwhile, history buffs in the eastern section of Buncombe County trailed not far behind when, in 1989, The Swannanoa Valley Museum took up residence inside a vacant Black Mountain firehouse designed by Richard Sharp Smith. Residents and visitors to Downtown Black Mountain now had a place to enjoy a menagerie of local items and stories.<sup>91</sup> These are just a few of the historical societies and organizations that developed in response to the preservation movement in the Asheville Buncombe area in the '80s and '90s. Others include the Old Buncombe Genealogical Society (1980), the Smith-McDowell House Museum (1981), the Biltmore Village Historical Museum (1993), and the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center (1994).

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<sup>89</sup> Editorial, "Big Ivy Historical Society," *ACT*, October, 5, 1980.

<sup>90</sup> Louise Wright, "Dry Ridge Museum to Open with Ceremonies December 3," *ACT*, November 27, 1983.

<sup>91</sup> Swannanoa Valley Museum & History Center, "About," 3/30/19, <https://www.history.swannanoavalleymuseum.org/about/>.

Archives and libraries were also growing in size and importance in this period. The most critical archives increased their holdings and collected oral histories and upped their visibility and support along with the Appalachian studies movement. UNC Asheville established its first archives and special collections program, the Southern Highlands Research Center in 1977. The program was initiated under the umbrella of the Department of History and directed by two history professors. By 1992, the program developed into a full special collections program under the direction of the university library.<sup>92</sup> The Buncombe County library system also developed a special collections program, now known as the North Carolina Collection at Pack Memorial Library. The present collection developed over the course of more than six decades and multiple legal and interpersonal battles concerning the core of the collection, the personal library of F. A. Sondley, willed to the City of Asheville in the 1930s.<sup>93</sup> The North Carolina Collection as a proper special collections library was not formally established until about 1990 when the library hired Morgan Barclay to perform an extensive assessment of their collections. Barclay made a long series of recommendations for funding and conservation.<sup>94</sup> After his report, the library hired their first special collections supervisor to oversee and implement Barclay's suggestions, and in 2010, the North Carolina collection moved into its own space after the 1979 Pack Library underwent extensive renovations.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Archives and Special Collections at D. Hiden Ramsey Library at UNC Asheville, "Southern Highlands Research Center Oral History Collection," 4/10/19, [http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/oralhistory/SHRC/default\\_shrc.htm](http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/oralhistory/SHRC/default_shrc.htm).

<sup>93</sup> Phillip Blocklyn, "Breaking Up with Sondley," *NP*, (2018) 47pp, 1-26. Copy on file in the North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library, see vertical file 73.4 "Sondley."

<sup>94</sup> Morgan J. Barclay, "Final Consultants Report Prepared for the Asheville-Buncombe Library System for the Conservation and Preservation of Special Collections," August 1990, Copy on hand in the North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library.

<sup>95</sup> Author interview with North Carolina Room Staff Members, Ann Wright and Zoe Rhine, 4/3/19.

The preservation sentiment became so influential in Asheville that the local community college stepped in to provide training for builders, contractors, and others working on historic buildings. In early 1988, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (AB Tech) partnered with the Biltmore Company and the City and Guilds of London to create a one of a kind technical decorative restoration program. Students in the program, often those left unemployed by the exit of other blue-collar jobs in the region, learned the art of restoring fine antique structures (jobs required at Biltmore and across the county at the time). Students in the demanding program were even responsible for the restoration of the Buncombe County Courthouse ceiling over the course of several years. Thanks to the program's accreditation from the City and Guilds of London, students who earned the certificate could seek employment just about anywhere in the world, but preservation work in Asheville, at least for a time, created steady work.<sup>96</sup> Other local colleges became involved in the preservation effort as well. In the late 1990s archaeology students at Warren Wilson College took part in an effort to survey the South Asheville Cemetery, the oldest public African American Cemetery in western North Carolina, and art students at UNC Asheville cast bronze statues to serve as markers for a new historical, self-guided walking tour of downtown Asheville, The Urban Trail.<sup>97</sup>

Work began on the Urban Trail in 1990. Led by a committee of historians and community members, the vision was to create a walking or jogging path in downtown Asheville that marked the history of famous people and places. The committee secured funding from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation for trail construction, and the North Carolina Humanities Council supplied the funds for UNC Asheville History professor Milton Ready to serve as a consultant

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<sup>96</sup> Deanna Murray, "Class Brings New Life to Courthouse Ceiling," *ACT* May 18, 1994.

<sup>97</sup> South Asheville Cemetery Association, "Interactive GIS Map," 3/30/19, <http://www.southashevillecemetery.net/gps-map/>.

for the committee.<sup>98</sup> Ultimately, the \$9,000 Reynolds grant paid an outside consulting firm to design the trail in concert with the city and the committee.<sup>99</sup> Original plans for stops along the trail, or stations, included tobacco leaves tied in a basket near the location of a former tobacco processing plant, and farm tools and equipment on Walnut Street near the site of hardware stores.<sup>100</sup> The trail launched with opening ceremonies in 1993, but those two nods to Asheville's working-class history did not make the cut. However, the Urban Trail was a success, and the project secured funding for 30 stops and conceived many more.<sup>101</sup>

Boosters and local government officials responded to homegrown interest in museums and the desire to draw more tourists and residents downtown with a plan for a museum complex in the city center. City planners announced Pack Place in 1985. The project, billed as the ultimate field trip location, would be a 70,000 square foot museum complex, hosting the Asheville Art Museum, Colburn Mineral Museum, The Health Adventure (a children's science museum), and Diana Wortham Theater, all at the site of two of Asheville's historic landmarks, the Pack Memorial Library and the former Plaza Theater.<sup>102</sup> Pack Place was presented to the public as a worthy initiative, and it certainly was. The board encouraged visitation among local families by hosting opening day on the Fourth of July that same year.<sup>103</sup> Unfortunately, however, Pack Place was not as well received as planned. From the beginning the venture seemed troubled, visitation was low and so were revenues.<sup>104</sup> In the face of wavering stability, Pack Place lost several key

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<sup>98</sup> Editorial, "Urban Trail Moves Forward," *ACT*, December 22, 1990.

<sup>99</sup> Editorial, "Foundation Funds Scenic, Historical Downtown Trail," *ACT*, August 11, 1991.

<sup>100</sup> Paul Johnson, "Passages Through Time," *ACT*, August 16, 1991.

<sup>101</sup> Lucretia Finlay, "Step Back in Time on the Urban Trail," *ACT*, July 13, 1993.

<sup>102</sup> G. Dale Neal, "Pack Square Holds Key to Crowds," *ACT*, September 11, 1985.

<sup>103</sup> Tony Kiss, "Pack Place: Curtains Rising on Cultural Center," *ACT*, May 5, 1992.

<sup>104</sup> Don Voorhis, "Pack Place Board Holds Closed Meeting," *ACT*, October 10, 1992.

players. President Vincent Marron stepped down in early 1993, less than a year into the complex being fully operational.<sup>105</sup> Pack Place as a concept struggled throughout the 1990s, though the Asheville Art Museum saw growing success. Eventually as the art museum expanded, the Health Adventure moved to the Biltmore Square Mall on Brevard Road in West Asheville.<sup>106</sup> Pack Place was marketed to residents as a community-oriented museum complex, but ultimately, the concept was not as successful as planners imagined.

Successful efforts like “The Wrap” and small institutions like the Swannanoa Valley Museum are an example of how spaces for preservation and interpretation can serve the community in meaningful ways. While Asheville struggled with how to revitalize downtown in the face of modernity, during The Wrap, the public display of affection for downtown Asheville’s historic structures presented an overwhelming case in favor of their protection. In 2002, the Swannanoa Valley Museum served as a place of reflection, discussion, and healing after a major fire at the Beacon Manufacturing Company.<sup>107</sup> The textile manufacturer suffered a long, slow death over the four decades of the 20th century along with others across the southeast, but when it closed in 2001 many had dreamed it would resume production.<sup>108</sup> A massive blaze started by an arsonist in 2002 razed the mill and banished all hope of realizing that dream. The museum managed to bring the community together around memories of the mill, however, hosting a reunion of workers, roundtable discussions, and an event similar to what archivists and

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<sup>105</sup> Paul Clark, “Pack Place Director Resigns from Post,” *ACT*, January 5, 1993.

<sup>106</sup> John Boyle, “Health Museum to Move to Mall,” *ACT*, July 14, 2011.

<sup>107</sup> Beacon Manufacturing Company Collection, Swannanoa Valley Museum and History Center, Black Mountain, NC 28711.

<sup>108</sup> Jerry and Kathy Brownstien, *Beacon Blankets Make Warm Friends*, (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 2001).

museum professionals term “history harvests.”<sup>109</sup> Grassroots efforts in museums and cultural heritage preservation played a vital role in the city of Asheville and Buncombe County during this period of growth and redevelopment.

By the beginning of the 21st century, this flurry of preservation activity, plus the uptick in tourist interest in Asheville, situated the area as a premier location for a comprehensive local history museum. The long-term success of the Biltmore Estate, the Asheville Art Museum, and the success of preservation efforts were indications that a history museum would be successful in western North Carolina’s urban center. Since the art museum opened in its present location in 1992, its collections have expanded steadily, and it has maintained high visitorship, even though the Pack Place as a concept as a whole was not entirely successful.<sup>110</sup> When he first arrived in Asheville to serve as manager of the Western Office of State Archives and History, Ron Holland imagined that he might oversee the creation of a history museum dedicated to western North Carolina. As an employee of the NC Department of Cultural Resources, he could assist in locating the funding and space for such a massive project. Holland, along with others, spent many years scoping out the perfect spot. Finally, the Biltmore High School property in south Asheville came up for sale just in time for the latest recession to set in. The budget of more than \$1.8 million was too much as fundraising slowed along with the economy.<sup>111</sup>

Holland retired with the state of North Carolina in 2001, and since then, there has been no further action to establish a comprehensive local history museum in Buncombe County.

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<sup>109</sup> Many of the oral histories held at SVM about Beacon were collected just after the blaze. For more on history harvests see the “History Harvest Community” network, <http://historyharvest.net/>.

<sup>110</sup> Asheville Art Museum, “History,” 3/30/19, <https://www.ashevilleart.org/history/>.

<sup>111</sup> Thomas Calder, “Dedicated Residents Keep Dream of Local History Museum Alive,” *Mountain Xpress*, (Asheville, NC), November 17, 2017, <https://mountainx.com/news/dedicated-residents-keep-dream-of-a-regionalhistory-museum-alive/>.

However, tourism is increasing, and tourists are interested in history. In turn, local history museums and other institutions are thriving and growing. However, since 2001, the community desire to advocate for such a space may have declined. In a *Mountain Xpress* article highlighting the absence of a history museum, Jack Thompson, the current executive director of PSABC (describing Buncombe County) pointed out, “We’re a relocation community,” hinting that newcomers to the area have a find it difficult to connect with regional history, or empathize with the benefit to long term residents in a history museum.<sup>112</sup> Since then, the regional economy has bounced back, but tourism, namely, the expansion of the hospitality industry, has been the driving force of the local economy since the early 2000s.

### CHAPTER III

#### **Tourism Development, Dependency, and Backstaging in Asheville and Buncombe County and its effects on Cultural Heritage Tourism, 1980-2019**

Long-time *Asheville Citizen-Times* columnist Bob Terrell declared that “there was no way anyone could grow accustomed” to the filth on Haywood Street in the summer of 1983.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Calder, “Dedicated Residents Keep Dream of Local History Museum Alive.”

<sup>113</sup> Bob Terrell, “Haywood Street ‘Just Plain Dirty,’” *ACT*, July 21, 1983.

However, by the 1990s, things seemed to be looking up for the central business district. After a long period of being “Just Plain Dirty” the once bustling shopping center of Downtown Asheville was looking like it was finally back on its feet. Thanks to a surge of funding from various development and successful public-private partnerships, a new wave of businesses began to take hold in the central business district.<sup>114</sup> In 1982 Malaprop’s Bookstore and Cafe moved on to Haywood Street and completed the end of the block shared with Pack Memorial Library. In 1991, Earth Guild, a thriving craft supply business, moved into the former Bon Marche building on Haywood Street breathing new life into a building that sat vacant for nearly a decade.<sup>115</sup>

The historic re-opening of the Grove Arcade officially marked the phoenix-like rebirth of Asheville’s historic downtown. Originally intended to be a twin tower to its sister building, the Battery Park Hotel, the project was never completed after E.W. Grove’s death. Nonetheless, it was a bustling commercial center for nearly two decades. Later, the shopping center served as offices for the United States Government, then finally reopened as a public marketplace in 2002.<sup>116</sup> The revitalization of downtown with an emphasis on the preservation of historic structures helped maintain Asheville’s small town charm and historic vibe, and public programs and desirable real estate prices attracted and supported small business owners who now called Asheville home.<sup>117</sup> After a long period of economic stagnation, it seemed as though, tourism, especially heritage tourism, was once again going to be Asheville and Buncombe County’s central economic driver.

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<sup>114</sup> Chase, *Asheville: A History*, 207-212.

<sup>115</sup> Paul Johnson, “The Earth Guild Moves to Haywood Street,” *ACT*, May 19, 1991.

<sup>116</sup> National Park Service, “Arcade Building (Grove Arcade),” National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary, Asheville, NC, 3/10/2019, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/asheville/arc.htm>.

<sup>117</sup> Chase, *Asheville: A History*, 207-211.



By the early 1990s, Asheville and Buncombe County morphed its preservation efforts of the 1970s and 1980s into a successful tourism marketing scheme that continued into the new millennium. The preservation of the city's art deco architecture, the completion of the Pack Place project, Urban Trail, new private non-profit museums and preservation societies, and, of course, the draw of the Biltmore Estate and regional environmental attractions, set the region up for success with tourists. It was not long before they came in droves, initiating the city's largest-ever hotel building boom, sparking new conversations about the public reception of tourists, and new directions in marketing local heritage amid a shifting culture. Though preservation and the growth of the tourist industry were positive for Asheville's economy, symptoms of over-tourism began to arise over time.<sup>118</sup>

Scott Shuford, the former planning director for the City of Asheville, observed in a 2006 interview that Asheville's mounting problems were "not problems of failure, but problems of how to deal with the success that's here."<sup>119</sup> Shuford's observation is reflective of the rise of over-tourism throughout the 2000s. The renaissance of downtown and tourist infrastructure in Asheville and Buncombe County resulted in a major rise in visitor numbers, new hotels, and other economic problems that came as a result. Over-tourism is a common problem in areas where hospitality and travel make up a large portion of the economy. In cities all over the world, local populations are becoming increasingly frustrated with increasing numbers of vacationers. Often antagonism is fueled by social problems similar to those Asheville is currently facing. Feelings of apathy and antagonism toward large numbers of visitors are explained by Doxy (1975) and Butler (1980) by the Tourist Area Life Cycle. The cycle begins with the exploration

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<sup>118</sup> Chase, *Asheville: A History*, 223-228.

<sup>119</sup> Chase, *Asheville: A History*, 228.

of an area as a potentially desirable place for travel, reaches a peak when locals find themselves overwhelmed and frustrated with development, and finally ends with the stagnation and decline of an area once the culture becomes too unwelcoming, or the area has lost its appeal to visitors and has to rejuvenate.<sup>120</sup>

As early as 1994, Appalachian economists, Salstrom and Hollenhorst, speculated that over-tourism could soon burden mountain communities with effects similar to of practices of mining, timber, and other resource extraction models that have exploited workers in the region for decades. Salstrom and Hollenhorst cite secondary work performed by families in coal mining communities as an example of how early industries fractured the economy and exploited the labor of rural workers. In their paper, “Increasing Dependency and the Touristization Rag,” the authors suggest that tourism places similar burdens on Appalachian workers, many in the tourism industry holding down multiple jobs and filing unemployment claims in the offseason.<sup>121</sup> Salstrom and Hollenhorst emphasized the volatility of seasonal work and regular income in tourism-dependent areas, and the rising segregation or “back-stage” life and work of residents away from recreational and sightseeing areas, severing contact between visitors and the communities they temporarily inhabit.<sup>122</sup>

As tourism has become increasingly central to the local economy in the past three decades, backstaging is increasingly apparent in the Asheville-Buncombe area. A housing crisis continues to push residents out of the city, and downtown shops are increasingly less affordable

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<sup>120</sup> Papatthanassis Alexis, “Over-Tourism and Anti-Tourist Sentiment: An Exploratory Analysis and Discussion,” *Ovidius University Annals, Economic Sciences Series* 18 no.2 (2017): 288-289.

<sup>121</sup> Paul Salstrom and Steve Hollenhorst, “Increasing Dependency and the Touristization Rag,” *Appalachian Journal* 21 no. 4. (Summer 1994), 417.

<sup>122</sup> Salstrom and Hollenhorst, “Increasing Dependency and the Touristization Rag,” 417-418.

for the average family.<sup>123</sup> Local reporters recognized the trend of falling wages early in the 1990s and warned that dependence on tourism had the potential to be damaging. Writing on the state of the economy in western North Carolina an *Asheville Citizen-Times* reporter noted that tourism generated \$863 million in the 19 county WNC area in 1993. However, the article also revealed the pitfalls of a tourism-based economy, and the dangers to local wages if the region were to have an economy with too many service industry jobs, noting that tourism-related jobs “pay less than half of all other jobs.”<sup>124</sup>

Despite the warnings of economists, in the early 1990s, investing in tourism seemed like the logical path to economic vitality in the Asheville-Buncombe region. This was especially true after the preservation efforts of the 1970s and 1980s left officials and residents with a greater understanding of the abundance of historic resources on hand in Buncombe County, and interest was growing in the region as a creative center.<sup>125</sup> Investments in tourism were successful in drawing attention to the area. Early in the 2000s, the City of Asheville and businesses in the Asheville-Buncombe area reemerged as attractive and affordable travel destinations. The food and drink scene was critical to the town’s rediscovery, and in 2009, Asheville was crowned “Beer City USA” by *Imbibe Magazine*. By 2012, Asheville topped *Good Morning America*’s list of “Most Beautiful Places in America.” and continued to make top ten travel lists in publications like *National Geographic*, *Fodor’s Travel*, and *TripAdvisor*.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Mackensy Lunsford, “Local Service Workers Organize for Rights,” *ACT*, December 17, 2018.

<sup>124</sup> Paul Johnson, “Making a Living: Tourism” *ACT*, November 8, 1993.

<sup>125</sup> Chase, *Asheville: A History* 184-187, 194-195.

<sup>126</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, “Accolades,” Explore Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau/Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority, 3/5/2019, <https://www.exploreasheville.com/pressroom/ranked-rated/>.

The marketing that placed Asheville at the top of travel lists was coordinated and funded by the Buncombe County Tourism and Development Authority (BCTDA). The BCTDA (also known as Explore Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau/ Explore Asheville CVB) was established in 1983 by legislation passed in the North Carolina general assembly. The new legislation allowed municipalities to levy a hotel occupancy tax to spend specifically on tourism promotion. Originally, the tax was 13 percent and could be used only on advertising, directly benefiting hotel investors and developers. Over time, changes to legislation have allowed for more flexible spending. In 2001, a change established the Tourism Product Development Grant fund, a fund to develop so-called tourism products or recreational resources that might drive tourist stays and benefit the community. The revenue for these tourism products comes from a one and a half percent of the six percent tax benefit. The most recent change to the occupancy tax came in 2015 when the tax extended to single occupancy lodging (i.e., homestays like those brokered by Airbnb).<sup>127</sup>

In order to best market to visitors, BCTDA collects tremendous amounts of data and outsources reporting to various firms throughout the country to process and present the numbers in several reports each year. One of the most revealing reports is the “Visitor Profile.” Published every two years, the “Visitor Profile,” is a study highlighting the fine details of the planning and activities of visitors to Asheville. The most recent visitor profile dates to 2016. The study revealed the area has a large market for cultural and heritage tourism and found that visitors to Buncombe County easily outpaced the national average when it came to tourists’ overall interest

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<sup>127</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, “History of the BCTDA,” Explore Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau/Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority, 3/5/2019, <https://www.ashevillecvb.com/history-ofbctda/>.

in historic landmarks and sites, museums, and national parks and outdoor recreation.<sup>128</sup> The 2014 study presented similar findings and demonstrated that Asheville attracted more visitors to its heritage tourism sites than the average tourist town.<sup>129</sup>

Seemingly in response to the numbers of the 2014 report, the following year, the Historic Resources Commission (HRC) of Asheville and Buncombe County revealed a Historic Preservation Master Plan. The plan surveyed the immense number of historic structures and neighborhoods in Asheville and Buncombe County, the types of visitors drawn to these attractions, and goals for the future of the county's historic resources.<sup>130</sup> Established in 1979, the same year as the North Carolina Historic Resources tax credit, the primary goal behind the Asheville-Buncombe HRC (and other groups like it across the nation), is to encourage preservation through architectural review and the lure of historic tax credits. These measures allow counties and municipalities the means to stabilize at-risk historic buildings and neighborhoods. Asheville's success story in this program is the revitalization of the Montford neighborhood and the Downtown Asheville Business District.<sup>131</sup>

The Historic Preservation Master Plan explains that the benefits historic rehabilitation projects include economic growth, benefits to tourism and placemaking, fostering community building and that rehab projects for older buildings can be more environmentally friendly than new builds. For instance, the plan praises (rightfully so) the successful rehabilitation of 173

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<sup>128</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, "Visitor Profile, 2016," Explore Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau/Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority, "Research & Reports," <https://www.ashevillevb.com/research-reports/>, 3/10/2019, 47-50.

<sup>129</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, "Visitor Profile, 2014," Asheville, NC, Copy obtained at [ashevillevb.com "Research & Reports," https://www.ashevillevb.com/research-reports/](https://www.ashevillevb.com/research-reports/), 3/10/2019, 14.

<sup>130</sup> Heritage Strategies, "Historic Preservation Master Plan for Asheville and Buncombe County, NC," (Historic Preservation Master Plan) Asheville, NC, Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe

income producing buildings and more than 100 homes under the direction of the HRC between 1979 and 2014.<sup>132</sup> Praising preservation in neighborhoods where it has been successful is valid and important, but when it comes to discussing community engagement, however, the plan falls short.

According to the plan, the Asheville-Buncombe HRC hoped to improve their understanding of “working with disadvantaged property owners” and “preservation of resources in the unincorporated areas of Buncombe County” at the end of the report.<sup>133</sup> Those comments reflect a desire to include many kinds of community members in the historic preservation process. However, the plan focuses most of its attention on the economic benefits of fostering

County, March 2015. Copy on File in North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library. For survey of historic resources see “Appendix C” and “Appendix D,” 108-115.

<sup>131</sup> “Historic Preservation Master Plan,” 1.

<sup>132</sup> “Historic Preservation Master Plan,” 3.

<sup>133</sup> “Historic Preservation Master Plan,” 6.

spaces primarily oriented toward suiting visitors. Considerable portions of the plan focus on developing preservation efforts with economic benefits in mind, and just a small portion is dedicated to local community engagement. The community-building and cultural resiliency benefits that active historic sites and museums have for residents were not at the center of the report, though, the word community is used more than 200 times in the document. The key messages found in the “Public Outreach and Advocacy” section of the report emphasize “tax credits,” “investment,” “developers,” and “uniqueness.”<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> “Historic Preservation Master Plan,” 2.

The HRC Preservation Master Plan set long term goals for historic resources in Buncombe County, including homes, commercial buildings, and public history resources like museums and historic sites. The plan formulated its goals based on the feedback of HRC members, city council, and community members. At the end of the process, the goals of the plan were outlined thus:

Heighten public appreciation of Asheville and Buncombe County's heritage and historic resources; Ensure that public sector initiatives and actions are models for best practices in the preservation and treatment of historic resources; Support private initiative as a major way through which historic resources are recognized, preserved, and enhanced; Enlist historic preservation in the quest for great 21st century growth – make historic preservation central to Asheville and Buncombe County's understanding of the ways and means of achieving a high quality of life and economic and environmental sustainability.<sup>132</sup>

Worthy goals they may be, preservationists in the Asheville-Buncombe area have made only small steps toward engaging the community in the past 30 years. The once unstable Montford and Downtown Asheville are now gleaming examples of historic architecture, however, the majority of preserved buildings in areas where high volumes of tourists are likely to view them, resulting in the backstaging effect. The funneling of visitors into specific areas tend to force locals away from perceived tourist destinations because they feel unwelcome, uncomfortable, or simply because they are priced out.<sup>133</sup> The overall impact on the quality of life for most residents remains in question, but as tourism rises, public access to cultural heritage resources, at least in Buncombe County, is limited for most.

Though the HRC Master Plan provided a formal survey of structures, neighborhoods, and landscapes that make up part of the heritage tourism infrastructure of Asheville and Buncombe County, what could be considered heritage tourism in the area varies widely. A new, broader

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<sup>132</sup> "Historic Preservation Master Plan," 7-8, 29-30.

<sup>133</sup> Salstrom and Hollenhorst, "Increasing Dependency and the Touristization Rag," 415-416.

idea of local heritage has been shaped, at least in part, by BCTDA advertising campaigns over the past five years. Through their marketing efforts, the BCTDA has formulated an image of Asheville that results in a new heritage, one that encompasses craft beer, food, and modern wellness culture, plus the appeal of historic sites and resources. From 2014 until 2016, BCTDA marketing plans described their primary target audience for travel as “experimental travelers” who are “Eclectic doers who relish discovery and collection of experiences.”<sup>134</sup> However, the most recent strategic marketing plans have shifted the focus away from these eclectic visitors and on to “Elite Empty Nesters” or those who have “sophisticated lifestyles with a taste for the finer things in life,” including high-end food, cultural experiences, and purchasing art and other luxury goods.<sup>135</sup> Despite the apparent interest of visitors in visitation to historic sites, BCTDA makes no little effort to promote sites other than the Biltmore Estate in advertising campaigns and place more emphasis on outdoor activities and the food, music, and arts scene. These most recent campaigns reflect a shift in how both visitors and residents view Asheville and Buncombe County’s cultural heritage and ultimately perceive heritage tourism promotion efforts that serve residents and tourists alike.

“Land of the Sky,” the slogan used by promoters of yesteryear has been reinterpreted for a new audience. Promoters began reshaping Asheville’s heritage brand in 2013. “Welcoming, natural, and vibrant” were the core values used to market the popular image of the AshevilleBuncombe area. New marketing campaign proofs for brochures and billboard branded with slogans like, “There’s More to Life than the Climb” market the area to people across the

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<sup>134</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB “Sales and Marketing Plan,” (Multiple years, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016) Explore Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau/Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority, com “Research & Reports,” <https://www.ashevillecvb.com/research-reports/>, 3/10/2019.

<sup>135</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, “Sales and Marketing Plan 2018-2019,” 4.



Southeast.<sup>136</sup> The BCTDA website, “Explore Asheville,” features concierge-style vacation itineraries like the “Beercation Getaway.”<sup>137</sup> BCTDA campaigns run in multiple platforms in southeastern markets, including major southern cities like Charleston and Savannah. They depict an idyllic, luxurious getaway, in line with the ideals of the “elite empty nester” market discussed in the newest strategic marketing plan. Since 2013, successful BCTDA marketing campaigns have increased tourist numbers by nine percent.<sup>138</sup> Ever-increasing interest in the “new” culture of Asheville tapped an almost continuous flow of tourists to the area and sparked a hotel spending boom that has lasted, arguably, since the beginning of the 20th century. Though the boom has created jobs and revenue, many locals find themselves increasingly frustrated with the growth of the tourist economy.

From 1990 to the present, several hotel building booms took place in Asheville and Buncombe County. Some have suggested that the latest hotel building spree began in 2015 with the construction of The Village Inn, the Biltmore Company’s second hotel on the estate. The trend continued into late 2018, as developers continued to file new permits. Since this construction cycle began, there has been an increase of 15 percent in available hotel rooms.<sup>139</sup> The years 2015-2017 saw record hotel investment resulting in the \$390 million in lodging sales in 2018.<sup>140</sup> However, new and improved lodging began cropping up around the

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<sup>136</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, “Annual Report 2018-2019,” 3.

<sup>137</sup> Jen Nathan Orris, “Beercation Getaway” Explore Asheville, [ashevillecvb.com](https://www.exploreasheville.com/stories/post/beercation-getaway/), 3/10/2019, <https://www.exploreasheville.com/stories/post/beercation-getaway/>.

<sup>138</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, “Annual Report,” (Multiple years: 2013-2019).

<sup>139</sup> Matt Bush, “Hotels About to Transform More of Downtown Asheville,” Blue Ridge Public Radio, full interview aired, 10/8/2018, audio and transcription excerpt available at, <https://www.bpr.org/post/hotels-abouttransform-more-downtown-asheville> 3/10/2019.

<sup>140</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, “Annual Report 2018-2019,” 5.

AshevilleBuncombe area before this most recent upswing. There were signs early in the late 1990s and 2000s that a new wave of hotel spending and civic development was on the horizon.

One of the first hotels to cause a public stir was the Inn on Biltmore Estate. Announced in, 1999 and planned for completion in early 2001, The Biltmore Company's new \$31 million luxury resort promised to treat visitors to views of mountain vistas and the estate vineyards.<sup>141</sup> It was also, along with half of western Buncombe County, within earshot of Asheville Motor Speedway on most Friday nights in the summer and into the fall. Asheville Motor Speedway was a West Asheville tradition reaching back decades. Famed as one of the most challenging and exciting stock car racing tracks in the southeast, Charley Brown, a long-time driver, described racing on the riverside track like "driving an airplane through a shopping mall."<sup>142</sup>

The noise on any given race night was comparable to an airport, too. Though a long time West Asheville tradition, in 1999, the track was quietly put up for sale. Its location alongside the French Broad River was a prime location for a new, quiet, family-oriented park. Although the Biltmore Company was not directly responsible for the closure of the beloved Asheville Motor Speedway, it was revealed late in the process that it was one of the major donors for the 1999 purchase of the track by the local environmental non-profit, Riverlink. *Asheville Citizen-Times* reporters broke the news that the donation that allowed Riverlink to make the purchase, came at about the same time construction was underway for the Inn on Biltmore Estate.<sup>143</sup>

Asheville area race fans found themselves frustrated with Asheville mayor Lini Sitnick, city council, Riverlink, and the track owner. Most of the negotiations and decision making

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<sup>141</sup> Steve Dickson, "Inn Construction Continues," *ACT*, March 14, 2000.

<sup>142</sup> Keith Jarrett, "Asheville Motor Speedway was a 40 Year Racing Tradition" *ACT*, September 20, 2010.

<sup>143</sup> Mark Barrett, et. al., "Timeline of Events Concerning the Sale of Asheville Motor Speedway." *ACT*, September 17, 1999.

happened behind closed doors and with almost no input from the public. Biltmore put up between \$250,000-\$300,000 (along with another anonymous donor) to assist Riverlink in supplementing grants from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund and the Janierve Foundation to foot the bill for the \$1.1 million purchase of Asheville Motor Speedway.<sup>144</sup> The goal was to transform the space into a community riverside park. The sale of the track was devastating to many local families who considered the track a second home and spent Friday nights religiously watching their favorite drivers zoom around the asphalt. One driver told an *Asheville Citizen-Times* reporter that change had brought on the loss of friends. He mourned the loss of the track and the changing face of the city "...a lot of the friends I made at Asheville are all gone--- especially my biggest friend, the track." Construction began on Carrier Park in 2000.<sup>145</sup> The closure was an effective announcement of the gentrification of the riverside industrial district, the outmigration of blue-collar workers from what would eventually materialize into the "River Arts District."<sup>146</sup> No doubt that the process for the sale of the track left a bad taste in the mouth of a lot of working-class western North Carolinians and skepticism for the relationship between Asheville City Council, hotel developers, and non-profits.

In the wake of the Great Recession, Buncombe County residents seemed more optimistic about growth and renovations at the historic Grove Park Inn. The Inn's first transfer came when Sammons Enterprises purchased the property in 1955. The Sammons family was much beloved for the way they maintained the business. Unfortunately, throughout the 1990s, the inn

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<sup>144</sup> Mark Barrett, et. al., "Timeline of Events Concerning the Sale of Asheville Motor Speedway." *ACT*, September 17, 1999.

<sup>145</sup> Dean Hensley, *When the Thunder Stopped: The History and End of Asheville Motor Speedway*, (Alexander North Carolina: Land Of Sky, 2003) 82.

<sup>146</sup> Chase, *Asheville: A History*, 234.

experienced a series of hasty departures and rapid turnaround of managers.<sup>147</sup> By 2008, Mrs. Sammons passed away, leaving the inn for sale. In 2012 KSL Capital Partners negotiated a sale for \$120 million. The *Asheville Citizen-Times* editorial board reported that the company planned \$25 million in renovations. The board appeared to place their faith in KSL writing, “William Jennings Bryan, speaking at the inn’s grand opening on July 12, 1913, said it has been ‘built for the ages.’ We have no reason to believe that will not continue to be the case.”<sup>148</sup> However, the optimistic headline of their piece, “Here’s hoping GPI transition goes smoothly” foreshadowed oncoming dispassion for hotels and tourists.

Hospitality tourism has been the primary focus of the greater Asheville economy for the last several years. However, the effects of a shifting culture and growing numbers of tourists, plus the richness of Asheville and Buncombe County’s historic resources, has resulted in exciting new methods of interpretation and innovation in heritage tourism and public history. Since the completion of the Inn on the Biltmore Estate, some of the city’s newest entrepreneurs have attempted to cash in on the widespread interest in Asheville as a heritage tourism destination. As of March 2019, there were more than 60 different tour businesses featured on the ExploreAsheville.com “Tours” page. Topics range from history, art, food and beverage, and “Detours” designed to show visitors around to local hangouts.<sup>149</sup>

Considering the broadest definition of heritage tourism, every tour agency featured on ExploreAsheville.com focuses on some aspect of local heritage, be that food and beverage,

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<sup>147</sup> David Nivens, “Von Treskow’s Departure Shocks City Tourism Officials,” *ACT* June 15, 1991. See also: *ACT*, 11/30/2000, 04B.

<sup>148</sup> Editorial, “Here’s hoping the GPI transition goes smoothly,” *ACT*, April 14, 2012.

<sup>149</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, “Tours,” Explore Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau/Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority, 3/10/2019, <https://www.exploreasheville.com/thingstodo/tours/?skip=40&sort=rankTitle&dnids=9223%2C141%2C8131%2C300%2C293%2C9145%2C7039%2C3883>.

natural resources, or history, art, and culture. 8 focus primarily on history and culture, 5 on art, 9 on food and beverage, and 14 on hiking and mountain sports. Others fall in a miscellaneous category.<sup>150</sup> This list includes tried and true business and programs like Asheville by Foot, a popular walking tour, and the Urban Trail. However, new models are cropping up all the time. One of the newest tour providers in the history and culture category is Asheville Augmented Reality Quests. For \$25, tour-goers have their choice of two different tours downloaded to their smartphones. The “Prohibition Tour” and the “Weird Asheville” tour, lead users around the city using augmented reality graphics and directions on a smartphone application.<sup>151</sup>

LaZoom Tours has managed to eke out a significant share of the heritage tourism business in Asheville. Despite the appearance of simply rolling around Downtown Asheville telling jokes in a big purple bus, the company shares the city’s history with large numbers of people each day. The payoff is no joke. Jim Lazoun founded the business after moving to Asheville from New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Lazoom Tours has expanded from a one bus fusion comedy-history tour to an iconic Asheville institution.<sup>152</sup> After almost a decade in business, LaZoom now owns their own bar space on Biltmore Avenue and has expanded their tours to include a haunted ghost tour, and has begun advertising a tour that is suitable for field trips, indicating that they are making an effort to reach beyond tourists and into the residential and educational market.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>151</sup> “Asheville Augmented Reality Quests,” 3/10/2019, <https://www.ashevilleaugmentedrealityquests.com/choose-your-quest>.

<sup>152</sup> Marla Hardee Milling, *Only in Asheville*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia History Press, 2015) 105-107.

<sup>153</sup> LaZoom Tours, “Tickets and Tours,” 3/10/2019, <https://www.lazoomtours.com/tours/>.

Though private businesses are successful in engaging tourists with bold formats like whacky bus rides and augmented reality applications, there is also the consideration of the cost of many of these activities. Many locals may have the desire to take a Lazoom tour, but the cost (\$26) is prohibitive. The most important thing to learn these new models is that they are successful in generating interest by interpreting local history in an engaging, social, and colorful way. What is required is a solution to the “backstaging” of residents that isolates them from their cultural heritage resources.

In recent years, tourism development dollars have made a direct impact on the visibility of historic resources projects that impact minority and working-class communities in the Asheville-Buncombe area. Although BCTDA sales and marketing campaigns have placed little emphasis on historic sites and museums, the lure of such attractions remains one of the primary pull factors for visitors to the region. Thanks to the Tourism Product Development Grant program, funds exist for a new wave of cultural heritage and arts organizations, similar to the one seen in the 1980s and 1990s. The BCTDA has offered Tourism Product Development Grants since 2001. Since then, the grants have funded 33 projects, totaling 34.5 million dollars. Some funds are directly benefiting museums, arts centers, and historic sites.<sup>154</sup>

In October 2018, six major projects won a record amount of grant funding from BCTDA. The most recent cycle of Tourism Product Development Grants awarded \$1 million to the Enka Recreation Destination, the LEAF Global Arts Center, the African American Heritage and Cultural District and Interactive Museum (plus improvements to the YMI Cultural Center), the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design - National Craft Innovation Hub, and finally, enhancements to lighting and parking at the North Carolina Arboretum. The idea behind funding

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<sup>154</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, “Annual Report 2018-2019,” 13.

the projects from BCTDA's point of view is their potential to draw in more tourists, and therefore additional revenue into the community. Jim Muth, chair of the organization, said, "maintaining the quality of our city for locals is maintaining the quality of our city for visitors," and important for "placemaking."<sup>155</sup>

One of the grants will pay to erect interpretive signage at the recently developed Enka Recreation Destination, a group of athletic fields and trails designed by Buncombe County Recreation Services to attract large, weekend-long tournaments. The idea behind the development project in the Enka community is to revive a former industrial village with new jobs and a sports complex.<sup>156</sup> This grant will also pay for improvements to the sports fields such as lights. The series of interpretive signs along a new greenway path, deemed The Enka Heritage Trail, will connect the residential community of Sand Hill Road to the park and highlight the early history of the area including Native Americans, and the American Enka Corporation, a large rayon mill that provided hundreds of jobs in the area for most of the 20th century.<sup>157</sup>

Another recent grant project, The African American Heritage and Cultural District, is a long time coming, and finally materializing from the efforts of multiple stakeholders.<sup>158</sup> The BCTDA awarded the grant to the River Front Development Group, a self-described community

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<sup>155</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, "BCTDA Approves Nearly \$10 Million In Funding For Six Community Projects," Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority/Explore Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau, 3/5/2019, <https://www.ashevillecvb.com/bctda-approves-nearly-10-million-in-funding-for-sixcommunity-projects/>.

<sup>156</sup> Buncombe County Parks and Recreation, "Enka Recreation Destination," Copy on file in North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library. <https://www.buncombecounty.org/common/Commissioners/20181016/Heritage%20Trail%20Map%20Revised.pdf>.

<sup>157</sup> Buncombe County Parks and Recreation, "Enka Recreation Destination."

<sup>158</sup> The African American Heritage Association of Asheville and Buncombe County was created to advise the Buncombe County Commission and Asheville City Council on matters related to African American history arts and culture in 2014. One of the key initiatives of the commission has been to install a prominent marker honoring the Black History of Asheville and Buncombe County. [https://www.ashevilenc.gov/departments/city\\_clerk/boards\\_n\\_commissions/heritage\\_commission.htm](https://www.ashevilenc.gov/departments/city_clerk/boards_n_commissions/heritage_commission.htm).

development organization.<sup>159</sup> The project aims to develop a museum at the site of the StephensLee Community Center, a former African-American high school, in partnership with the Asheville Art Museum and the Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County. The project also plans for interpretive kiosks developed by the Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau along sidewalks and greenways.<sup>160</sup>

Placemaking using heritage trails and kiosks is the emphasis of several of the most recently funded tourism products by BCTDA. Heritage trails provide interpretive signage in outdoor spaces and can establish a sense of place. What may be missing from these signage-heavy projects, however, is a space for active engagement with historic resources including community discussion and professional interpretation, suggested as best practices for community engagement by public historians.

As the tourism economy in the Asheville-Buncombe area has grown since 1990, so have opportunities for tourists and residents to engage with regional heritage. However, local apathy toward the growth of tourism has only sped up since the sale of Asheville Motor Speedway. A housing crisis now looms over the city, and the ever-increasing number of hotels has caused public outcry. When the announcement came in late 2018 that a developer wanted to purchase Asheville's iconic Flat Iron building and convert it into a boutique hotel, the negative response from residents was overwhelming.<sup>161</sup> Mayor Esther Manheimer responded to antagonism among locals to hotel development in October 2018 by stating that the city council was placing an "effective moratorium" on approving new hotel plans. All the while, as of March 2019, the city

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<sup>159</sup> "River Front Development Group: A Community Development Corporation" 3/5/2019. <https://www.rfdgasheville1.org/>.

<sup>160</sup> BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, "BCTDA Approves Nearly \$10 Million In Funding For Six Community Projects."

<sup>161</sup> Matt Bush, "Hotels About to Transform More of Downtown Asheville."



remains embroiled in multiple legal battles with hotel developers in the North Carolina supreme court over declined development permits.<sup>162</sup>

Meanwhile, some of the most stable heritage tourism and popular programs in the Asheville-Buncombe area are those founded in the early 20th century. These programs also seem to be those that are the most successful in engaging both locals and visitors. Organizations and businesses that promote authentic mountain heritage and culture have remained pillars of local heritage programming and promotion. By working in close concert with BCTDA and other promotions groups and nonprofits, continuing to provide outstanding products, and remaining relevant in shifting culture, the oldest programs have continued to thrive. The Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and its sister gathering, Shindig on the Green, a mini-festival series held on Saturday nights throughout the summer, are still successful ventures after many years.<sup>163</sup> Other long-running organizations, like The Southern Highlands Craft Guild, also engage a large number of people. The Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands packs Asheville's Civic Center each summer.<sup>164</sup> Other programs, too, like the Swannanoa Gathering, an annual folk music festival held at Warren Wilson College, draws local and outside crowds year after year.<sup>165</sup>

Though traditional programs are apparently effective, new interpretations of mountain traditions are embraced by Asheville-Buncombe residents, as well. Brewgrass, an annual bluegrass and beer festival, draws plenty of locals and tourists to celebrate traditions old and new. The long-term stability and vibrancy of these cultural heritage traditions, alongside the

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<sup>162</sup> "Asheville Hotels: What Will it Take to Pass a Project Now?," *ACT*, November 26, 2018.

<sup>163</sup> Folk Heritage Committee, "About the Folk Heritage Committee," Folk Heritage Committee/Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, 3/30/19, <https://folkheritage.org/about/>.

<sup>164</sup> Southern Highlands Craft Guild, "Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands," Southern Highlands Craft Guild, 3/30/19, <https://www.southernhighlandguild.org/shops-and-fairs/craft-fair-of-the-southern-highlands/>.

<sup>165</sup> Swannanoa Gathering, "Our First 20 Years," Swannanoa Gathering/Warren Wilson College, 3/30/19, <https://www.swangathering.com/about-us/20th-anniversary/>.

growing number of projects geared toward cultural heritage, demonstrates that there is a high local interest in cultural heritage moving among the masses. The newest projects like the African American Heritage Trail and Cultural District and the Enka Heritage Trail are in their earliest stages and will not be complete for some time. Many of their predecessors, like the Urban Trail, are now more than 20 years old.

At present, the Asheville-Buncombe area finds itself at a crossroads. Though Asheville has been successful in preserving historic resources, the local economy's growing dependency on hospitality tourism has initiated a backstaging effect, segregating residents from those resources. Currently, there is a wave of interest in minority and working-class history, and through Tourism Product Development Grants, interpretive signage and a new museum will meet some of those interpretive goals. During the early planning stages of these new projects, and as other programs are developed and redeveloped throughout the area, it is critical that stakeholders act to end backstaging of residents and reunite them with historic resources. This is a time when it is especially important to examine the heritage tourism models and practices already in place in Asheville and Buncombe County, and think critically about what aspects of these models will benefit both residents and the economy moving forward.

## CHAPTER IV

### **Where Do We Go From Here?: Establishing Positive and Mutually Beneficial Insider- Outsider Relations with Cultural Heritage Tourism Ventures in Asheville and Buncombe County**

So far, this thesis has established that Asheville and Buncombe County have a long history of strong cultural and heritage tourism programs, and an abundant number of historic resources. The region has developed a heritage tourism economy over more than 100 years, but in the most recent wave of economic growth, the regional economy has become increasingly dependent on tourism. Dependency has resulted in the backstaging of residents, severing them from areas that are promoted to tourists, including a large number of historic resources. This final chapter will examine some of the primary factors that contribute to the backstaging of residents at local cultural heritage sites and programs, plus, suggest new ways that museums, historic sites, and archives, might use tried and true models to become more actively engaged and invested in the grassroots promotion of historic resources.

Many of the museums founded in Buncombe County in the mid to late 20th century are still active. Chapter II discussed the explosion of new museums and historic preservation projects in the region after the founding of the HRC and PSABC in the 1970s. The majority of these institutions are small non-profits, and the two state-owned historic sites receive additional support from non-profit boards. Some of the museums and programs established in that period have failed or diminished in influence over the years, but most of them have seen steady success. Some are even emerging models for community engagement and growth. While there are many museums in Buncombe County, and one is in its earliest development stages, (part of the African

American Cultural heritage District Project), each has their own story to tell and diverse collections and interpretive goals. Ultimately, there is no single location that someone can visit go to learn the history of Asheville and Buncombe County. In order to get the full picture, it may take several trips to a handful of institutions.<sup>166</sup>

The gap left by the absence of such an institution is perceptible. The rich, diverse history that the Buncombe County area has to offer is somewhat understated due to a disjointed public history infrastructure. Without a central institution, the so-called highlights of regional history find their way into programs like the Urban Trail and working class and minority histories get lost in translation. While the stories of architectural masterpieces and great philanthropic deeds are foundational to the development of the region, the stories of everyday citizens are equally as fundamental. The grassroots actions that have gone into preserving cultural heritage in Asheville and Buncombe County since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century demonstrate a long-term commitment to presenting authentic local culture and heritage in an up close and accessible way and traditional programs like the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival demonstrate the formula is successful. However, the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and the Southern Highlands Craft Guild cannot be the only successful programs. While they do provide some outlet of interpretation of traditional folk practices and the perfect recipe for interactivity, they are not museums.

Museums provide uniquely meaningful experiences for visitors. Engaging with artifacts is an experience that is critical when learning about the past and creating empathy. In a brief article for the *History News* Rainey Tisdale writes that people who come to history museums crave authenticity and feel validated when they encounter objects from the past. Tisdale explains

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<sup>166</sup> See Appendix B.

that museum patrons want to see the objects, because, in our increasingly digital world, objects have the power to transport them back to a very real time and place. Objects in museums are beneficial because they help people feel grounded.<sup>167</sup> Expanding upon this idea, one could argue that a historical object is more relevant, meaningful, and authentic when viewed in the context of its original geographic surroundings. Presenting objects in their home environment, (an idea similar to presenting authentic culture at popular heritage festivals), defies the concept of backstaging discussed in Chapter III. Museums full of objects that both community members and visitors can enjoy can serve as a place where these two groups encounter and connect, or come into contact in a positive and mutually beneficial way.

This reversal of backstaging could be considered the creation of a *contact zone*. Since the 1990s the concept of *contact zones* has emerged in scholarly conversation. Literary scholar Mary Louise Pratt introduced the idea in 1991 as a term to discuss what she called “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths...” But in the post-colonial world, contact zones do not have to be negative, in fact, they can be spaces for cultural understanding and healing.<sup>168</sup> In the past, many scholars of the Appalachian region have criticized Mary Noailles Murfree’s local color fiction for subjecting mountain people to harsh stereotypes. Marjorie Pryse took a different approach when she examined Murfree’s novel, *In the “Stranger People’s” Country* as an early attempt to explore the nuances of the contact zone or

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<sup>167</sup> Rainey Tisdale, “Do History Museums Still Need Objects?,” *History News* 66, No. 3 (SUMMER 2011), 19-21.

<sup>168</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” *Profession*, (1991), 33-40, 34.

Borderlands-style negotiations and interactions occurring in Appalachia in the late 19th century.

<sup>169</sup> Pryse argued that by writing complex characters that engage in close and frequent contact in an Appalachian space, Murfree responded “to the damaging caricature of local color” and made an attempt “to disrupt readers’ assumptions” about the region. <sup>170</sup>

Asheville author Thomas Wolfe used a similar strategy writing about the region several years later. Wolfe’s *Welcome to our City* described the systematic dismantling of contact zones between locals and tourists and blacks and whites in his fictionalized version of 1920’s Asheville. Born to a middle-class family in Asheville in October 1900, Wolfe arrived just in time to bear witness to the great cultural renaissance of the city. By the time he was 23, Tom had graduated from the University of North Carolina and was off to participate in the Harvard 47 Workshop. That year, students selected *Welcome To Our City* as the feature production.<sup>171</sup> The inspiration for *Welcome to our City* struck after a visit to Asheville when he was 22. Thomas was discouraged and angered by the greed of real estate investors and rampant boosterism in the city and began writing about what he saw happening in his hometown using the pseudonym Altamont in place of Asheville. <sup>172</sup>

*Welcome To Our City*, set in 1923, chronicles the plot of a group of wealthy real estate investors and “progressive” city boosters who conspire to “do away with” the historically black business and residential district of the town and turn it into a primarily white hotel and residential

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<sup>169</sup> Marjorie Pryse “Exploring Contact: Regionalism and the “Outsider” standpoint in Mary Noailles Murfree’s Appalachia” *Legacy* 17 no. 2 199-212. (2000)

<sup>170</sup> Marjorie Pryse, “Exploring Contact: Regionalism and the “Outsider” standpoint in Mary Noailles Murfree’s Appalachia,” 199-200.

<sup>171</sup> Thomas Wolfe, *Welcome To Our City: A Play in Ten Scenes*, Richard S. Kennedy, ed. (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1983 1-3.

<sup>172</sup> Wolfe, *Welcome To Our City*, 21-22.

district. The main conflict arises when an affluent black doctor leads a resistance, and a race riot ensues. Although much of the play centers on conversations of the well-to-do in Altamont, Wolfe satirizes their boosterism and emphasizes the impact of their real estate schemes and the impact of tourism on average citizens, especially the African American community. While the town fathers and real estate investors emphasize that “Niggertown” is an eyesore and an impediment to Altamont’s progress, Wolfe highlighted the deep, sometimes unexpected connections between various actors of different races and classes to highlight injustice and hypocrisy in his hometown.<sup>173</sup>

*Welcome To Our City*, then, is a literary saga of the boom and bust tourism culture of western North Carolina which intersects race, class, and gender while grappling with other sociopolitical themes of the New South. Though none of the events described in the play happened exactly the way Wolfe portrayed them, they are a rearrangement and exaggeration of fact. In the forward to his fictionalized autobiographical novel, *Look Homeward, Angel*, Wolfe explained to readers that, “Fiction is not fact, but fiction is fact selected and understood, fiction is fact rearranged and charged with a purpose.”<sup>174</sup> His style of satirizing the troubles of Altamont (or Asheville) provides readers, especially when provided factual historical context, a new lens for viewing the history of the city, primarily through the lens of contact zones and their dismemberment.

Discriminatory policies and poor financial decisions can lead to the dismantling of contact zones. However, new contact zones can be engineered in spaces that serve and interest a large

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<sup>173</sup> Wolfe, *Welcome To Our City*, 21.

<sup>174</sup> Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel*, (New York: Scribner, 1997) xxix.

number of people. The implementation of manufactured contact zones can allow museums, historic sites, and other places where cultural heritage is shared to function as a crossroads where people of various social classes share space and time. The idea of creating contact zones in museums and historic sites as a means of promoting inclusion, understanding, and social equity has been a point of discussion among scholars of the social sciences for some time. Some scholars of museology and sociology suggest that museums have long been institutions of exclusion and argue that improving relations between so-called insiders and outsiders can improve equity and inclusion. Gordon J. Fyfe argued that museums developed out of the Western Civilization's need to propagate a progressive narrative of the ruling class, and often they are institutions where "established groups close ranks against outsiders."

Furthermore, Fyfe suggested that "we require a concept of a museum that grasps its properties as a space of social interdependencies between different life-worlds." The best museums exist when the community they exhibit is as invested in the museum as the nonresidential or non-exhibited visitors. Otherwise, museums become a place of backstaging and cultural extraction. In order to prohibit exhibited cultures and peoples from feeling exploited, the museum, or other cultural heritage programs must become a place of contact for insiders and outsiders to encounter each other as equals.

Museums, or other cultural heritage spaces and programs, have the potential to exist as manufactured contact zones. Creating space for insiders and outsiders to engage with one another can allow these institutions to function as a location where people of various social classes and cultural backgrounds share space and time. James Clifford promoted this idea in 1997. Clifford, an anthropologist, aimed to explore how colonialist institutions could become spaces for intercultural collaboration in his book, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late 20th Century*.



In the chapter “Museums as Contact Zones,” he wrote that when museums engage the community reflected in their collection, they act as contact zones, “their organizing structure as a *collection* becomes an ongoing historical political and moral *relationship*-- a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull.”<sup>175</sup> Clifford used the example of a museum that held collections belonging to a native Alaskan tribe. The fact that these collections were now in a museum, and that the museum had established a working relationship with the tribal elders, created a contact zone within the museum's walls. Three different groups, the museum staff, the tribal elders, and the museum visitors, all encountered each other and the sacred items in the collections in a new way because of their presentation within the space of the museum.<sup>176</sup>

The most successful and long-running heritage tourism programs in the AshevilleBuncombe region provide a similar contact zone. The prime example is the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and Shindig on the Green, now in their 92nd and 53rd years, respectively. These programs are spaces where locals and visitors encounter each other in authentic and mutually beneficial ways. According to French philosopher Nicolas Bourriaud, these manufactured *contact zones* create realms of the *exformal*. He describes the exformal realm as, “The site where border negotiations between what is rejected and what is admitted... a ‘socket’ or a ‘plug’ in the process of exclusion and inclusion – a sign that switches between the centre and the periphery, floating between dissidence and power.”<sup>177</sup> At programs where one can observe the realm of the exformal, the stories of historically marginalized or othered communities find a new voice. The balance of power that traditionally segregates, or backstages

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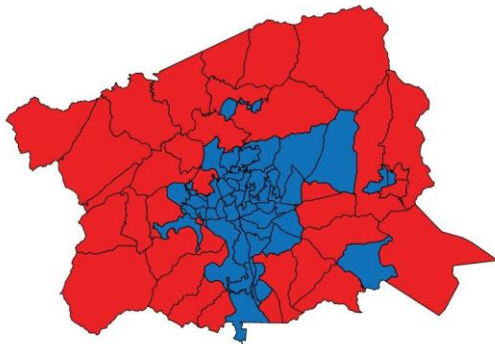
<sup>175</sup> James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1997). 192, emphasis original.

<sup>176</sup> James Clifford, *Routes*, 190-195.

<sup>177</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *The Exform*, trans. Erick Butler (London: Verso, 2016), iii.

these groups, is lost in new border negotiations. At the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and Shindig on the Green, locals, especially elders, are lauded for their craft and experience in folk art traditions. The typical hillbilly stereotype falls away and the people Maria Louise Pool called “wretched” are center stage as visitors see them as serious artists and performers.<sup>178</sup> In this way, the festival acts as the socket or plug, connecting the two generally disconnected groups, tourists and locals, through authentic cultural traditions.

According to Bourriaud, social and capital energy create “zones of exclusion where the proletariat, popular culture, the squalid and the immoral pile up in a jumble.”<sup>179</sup> Generating contact zones in museums or galleries can bring whatever finds itself at the periphery, or what is backstaged, to the forefront or center of the conversation. Centering people and stories normally excluded creates an anti-formal space or an *exformal space*; space where what is traditionally marginalized becomes the center of attention. Recent reports show that the growing impact of tourism concerns many Buncombe County Citizens, partially, because of issues related to erasure.<sup>180</sup> The current housing crisis has pushed more and more residents and service industry



workers outside the Asheville City limits or, in some cases, outside Buncombe County.<sup>181</sup> It is also important to note that the rural areas of Buncombe County experienced Asheville’s

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<sup>178</sup> Pool, *In Buncombe County*, 147-148.

<sup>179</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *The Exform*, viii.

<sup>180</sup> Amanda Magnus and Frank Stacio, “The Problem with Airbnb,” WUNC’s *The State of Things*, April 12, 2018. 4/10/19, <https://www.wunc.org/post/problem-airbnb>.

<sup>181</sup> Hayley Benton, “Cost of Living Undermines Workers’ Pay,” *MX*, March 31, 2015.

culture shift in a very different way that *Figure 6. Result by precinct of the Buncombe County Sheriff's*

*Election, November 2018. Results sourced from the North Carolina State Board of Elections.*

residents within city limits. Most rural areas generally carried on more conservatively and see themselves as very separate from the city.

Electoral maps provide a clear example of the experience of two “life worlds” converging in Buncombe County. Results from the most recent Buncombe County Sheriff’s election

(November 2018) show blue puddles, primarily the City of Asheville and Town of Black Mountain, surrounded by a sea of red.<sup>182</sup> Urban spaces are becoming increasingly less affordable and recognizable to longtime residents, and contact zones and exformal experiences are fewer.

As Clifford and Bourriaud see it, forward-thinking museums and galleries are an answer to developing spaces where people of different “life worlds” encounter each other. As it exists currently, the cultural heritage infrastructure in the Asheville-Buncombe area is disjointed and without a singular mission. There are very few contact zones for established communities and outsiders to engage in meaningful conversations about the past. According to BCTDA’s most recent numbers, 43 percent of travelers to Asheville are interested in visiting a museum or historic site. Though the Biltmore Estate does dominate a large share of that statistic, The Historic Preservation Master Plan accounted for 1 million outside visitor trips to the Biltmore Estate in 2014, meaning the majority of the region’s 10 million visitors are enjoying some other attraction. Other options for visitors include walking and bus tours, small independent museums scattered across the county, and two state-run historic sites.<sup>183</sup> Resident access to these institutions is limited by several factors, but for most, it may be cost and lack of relatability.

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<sup>182</sup> See Figure 6.

<sup>183</sup> See Appendix B.

There is clear evidence that residents have a desire to engage with the past, but the relatability of many of the areas cultural heritage institutions may be lacking. A Facebook group titled, “You Know You Grew Up in Asheville, North Carolina If...” has more than 18 thousand members. The page has eleven moderators, a set of rules for posting, and garners hundreds of new interactions each day. Posts focus primarily on working-class history, idyllic images of times gone by, and nostalgic memories of life in rural Buncombe County. For example, posts in March 2019 included reminiscences on the traditional delicacy liver mush that garnered more than 700 reactions, comments, and shares, and a conversation about the many lives of the building at 101 Biltmore Avenue (currently occupied by the Orange Peel Social Aid and Pleasure Club).<sup>184</sup> As of March 2019, the last post about the Biltmore House specifically on the group page was in February 2018. Other posts containing the word “Biltmore” from March 2018 – March 2019 discuss workers and school trips to Biltmore Dairy.<sup>185</sup>

Though it is the giant of museums and cultural heritage interpretation in western North Carolina, the Biltmore Estate is inaccessible to many residents of the Asheville-Buncombe area in several ways. Not only is the narrative of Gilded Age finery unrelatable, but the price of entry is also too steep for many. Entry fees to the Biltmore Estate are expensive, as of March 2019 ranging anywhere from \$60 to \$85. An audio tour of the Biltmore House costs only \$12.99, while a visit with a trained historical interpreter can cost up to \$175 after one has paid a grounds entrance fee of \$75. If a family of four living in Buncombe County wanted the full experience of the Biltmore House on the weekend in May 2019, it would cost somewhere in the range of \$815.

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<sup>184</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>185</sup> Facebook Public Group Archive query for term “Biltmore” in *You know you grew up in Asheville, NC if...*, conducted 3/30/19.  
[https://www.facebook.com/groups/50614403543/search/?query=biltmore&epa=SEARCH\\_BOX](https://www.facebook.com/groups/50614403543/search/?query=biltmore&epa=SEARCH_BOX).

That cost amounts to 20 percent of the area's median monthly household income.<sup>186</sup>

The high cost of entry to Biltmore House means that many people will never make it on to the estate or into the house to experience the museum and that various groups will have different learning experiences. The price tag separates the audience. Those who can afford it will have a more exclusive and perhaps more engaging educational opportunity. Additionally, the focus the estate places on the Vanderbilt family and the extravagance of the home may alienate some visitors who find the artifacts unrelatable. Rather than draw attention to Biltmore stories local visitors may find more nostalgic or relatable, those narratives have fallen to the wayside to promote exhibits highlighting the Vanderbilt's apparent wealth and extravagance like the newest exhibit "Vanderbilt Dinner Party - The Gilded Age."<sup>187</sup>

Although Biltmore is the largest, it is not the only museum in Buncombe County. Many of the museums and historic sites established in the late 20th century are still operating successfully, performing incredible outreach, and finding new strategies to present a more balanced picture of the past, all the while integrating other aspects of heritage tourism into their plans. What is most beneficial about these sites, in particular, is that they were each founded in grassroots community outreach efforts and provide some level of a contact zone. Both discussed in Chapter II, the Swannanoa Valley Museum & History Center and the Urban Trail have each evolved, and only improved with age.

The Urban Trail is one of the best examples of the integration of Asheville and

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<sup>186</sup> United States Census Bureau, "Buncombe County, NC Quick Facts, 2018," 3/25/2018, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/buncombecountynorthcarolina>.

<sup>187</sup> The Biltmore Company, "Tickets and Pricing," 3/25/19, <https://www.biltmore.com/visit/plan-your-visit/buy-tickets>.

Buncombe County's disjointed historical narratives. Created in 1991, Asheville's Urban Trail was part of a larger effort to revitalize Asheville's downtown arts and culture scene.<sup>188</sup> The 1.7-mile circle through the heart of downtown Asheville leads walkers to a series of bronze sculptures and pink granite markers that share bitesize highlights of the city's history. The tour begins at Pack Square, then proceeds on a self-described "amble" through the city's "quirky and magical past." The trail of 30 bronze markers makes stops along various street corners including The Block where it very briefly highlights Asheville's African-American community.<sup>189</sup>

The Urban Trail, which aspires to be Asheville's outdoor museum, is incredible in many ways, but it does have its shortcomings. There are no designated group leaders, and the entire experience is outdoors. Tour-goers have no way of knowing who else is participating, and no one is prompting most tour-goers to interact with one another in a meaningful way. Visitors to the Urban Trail who may be of various classes do not encounter one another along the trail in the same way they might by being together in a closed physical space like a gallery. This de-facto separation reinforces the historical themes of race and class in Asheville perpetuated in the Urban Trail tour literature. Of the 30 stops along the trail, three focus on the architecture of Douglas Ellington, two on Richard Sharp Smith, and four on the life and family of author Thomas Wolfe. In the two mentions of African American history, there is only one brief mention of slavery in passing and no mention of the struggle for civil rights. The entire tour only mentions one woman by name.<sup>190</sup> The trail prioritizes prominent white architects, politicians,

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<sup>188</sup> Leslie Anderson "It takes a village: How a cast of thousands transformed downtown Asheville" *MX*, 4/30/17, <https://mountainx.com/opinion/the-downtown-story-you-didnt-know-you-knew-downtown-asheville-inthe-1990s/>.

<sup>189</sup> Asheville Urban Trail "Map," ExploreAsheville.com, (3/25/19). [https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/asheville/AshevilleUrbanTrail\\_82afe60f46dc-42f4-8f27-be4ff4af78da.pdf](https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/asheville/AshevilleUrbanTrail_82afe60f46dc-42f4-8f27-be4ff4af78da.pdf).

<sup>190</sup> See Appendix C.

hoteliers, philanthropists, and some of the county's largest and most prominent slave owners. Many of those featured most often entered the area between 1880 and 1930, thereby further marginalizing, or backstaging, the story of the established local citizenry.

The Urban Trail because of its free form structure can weave multiple narratives together with relative ease, and because it has no associated cost for visitors, allows a high level of accessibility to people of various incomes. Even a person with no income can walk the Urban Trail. However, the tour does suffer from issues of race, class, and gender equity, and like other heritage trail markers, does not readily initiate contact zones between visitors. The Urban Trail primarily tells the story of a wealthy, white, cosmopolitan Asheville. However, the history of Downtown Asheville, like many urban settings, provides multiple opportunities to engage with the history of some historically marginalized groups, including African Americans, women, and the working class. The trail creates a contact zone in one way, though, through the sculptures that dot the downtown landscape. Most are large and difficult to ignore, essentially forcing the city's history on anyone who encounters them, whether they intended to walk the trail or not. However, many of the accompanying informational plaques are small, on the ground, and do not necessarily provide comprehensive information.

There have been several efforts over the years to improve the Urban Trail. Some older (and still widely available) versions of the interpretive map have featured out of date phrases no longer used by historians like, "The War Between the States," to refer to the American Civil War, and offered little information in addition to what is presented on the street sculpture.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> City of Asheville Parks and Recreation, "Urban Trail Walking Tour" *The City of Asheville*, Accessed April 30, 2017, <http://www.ashevilenc.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=24226>.

Since 2010, the Urban Trail has had additions to available interpretive materials including a teacher guide, scavenger hunt, interactive map, and an audio tour to accompany the updated printable interpretive map. These efforts also include the development of a new walking architecture tour which highlights more buildings and architects than the original Urban Trail.<sup>192</sup>

Other museums around the county have experienced growth and change over the years as well. One of the most successful museums in Buncombe County is the Swannanoa Valley Museum and History Center located in historic downtown Black Mountain. Established in 1989, the Swannanoa Valley Museum is celebrating its 30th anniversary. Through the years the small museum has managed to grow while remaining affordable and focused on community history. Today, the entry fee is just \$5 by donation. The museum's collection was originally sought after and curated almost single-handedly by museum co-founder Harriet Styles, who often created handmade models and displays. She prided herself in the idea of the Swannanoa Valley Museum as an institution that served the community, saying in a 2001 interview that one of her goals with the Swannanoa Valley Museum was to highlight what “makes Black Mountain a *special* and *different* community from everyone else,” and to display items that would highlight that history, including a moonshine still acquired by her father-in-law, a local attorney, as payment for representing some local bootleggers.<sup>193</sup>

This kind of local-perspective interpretation has not changed in recent years as the museum has updated its building and modernized its practices. Over the years, the museum began cataloging its collections with professional software, presenting programs, and engaging

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<sup>192</sup> The Asheville Urban Trail “The Urban Trail,” 3/25/19, <https://www.exploreasheville.com/urban-trail/>.

<sup>193</sup> Black Mountain, North Carolina, Swannanoa Valley Museum & History Center, “Interview with Harriet Allen Styles, 9/27/2001” Transcription Available in museum archives.



in serious fundraising efforts. The most important of those efforts and one of the museums best means of creating contact zones is their hiking series. Swannanoa Valley Museum offers two different hiking series each year, the Valley History Explorer and Swannanoa Rim series each offer a different experience for varying levels of interest and experience.<sup>194</sup> The hikes, especially the Valley History Explorer Hikes, are led by experienced and local, or long-time resident outdoors people with a broad knowledge of the cultural and natural history of the region. Both residents and newcomers to the area enjoy the hikes and often repeat the series multiple times. Their efforts are rewarded with a packet if they finish the series (multi-year hikers earn a patch). The hike series costs about \$175 for the full series per person each year. The program is one of the museum's primary income streams.<sup>195</sup> However, the museum offers one scholarship for each program a year, and the programs are a beneficial force in the community. Other positive outreach efforts include a book club, now in its third year. The book club focuses on Appalachian literature and authors and draws readers that range from lifelong residents to parttime retirees.<sup>196</sup>

Profitability, plus planning a strategic capital campaign allowed the museum to renovate their space and expand in 2016. Since the expansion and renovation, the museum has offered several major exhibits. The first displayed part of the major collection of photographs it acquired in 2010 by local artist Ed DuPuy. The exhibit featured his portraits of craft revival artisans from across western North Carolina and in his book, *Artisans of the Appalachians*, plus what he meant

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<sup>194</sup> Swannanoa Valley Museum & History Center, "Hiking Program," 3/30/19, <https://www.history.swannanoavalleymuseum.org/hike-series/>.

<sup>195</sup> Fred McCormick, "Swannanoa Valley Museum and History Center to Kick off 30<sup>th</sup> Season," *Black Mountain News* (Black Mountain, NC) April 10, 2019.

<sup>196</sup> Fred McCormick, "Swannanoa Valley Museum and History Center to Kick off 30<sup>th</sup> Season."

to the town of Black Mountain where he kept a studio and taught some summers at Black Mountain College. The most recent major exhibit titled “Black Mountain College: Town Meets Gown” explored the impact of Black Mountain College on the town of Black Mountain, and experiences locals had with students and professors there. In the spring of 2019, the museum will mount its first major exhibit to highlight the Beacon Manufacturing Company, at one time the world’s largest blanket manufacturer, once headquartered in the Swannanoa Valley.<sup>197</sup>

The 2016 renovation practically doubled the Swannanoa Valley Museum exhibition space. The second floor of the two-story firehouse had once been unuseable storage, but now it serves as a permanent exhibit called “Pathways to the Past.” This permanent, but always changing exhibit tells the history of the Swannanoa Valley beginning with the first animal pathways, telling the story of Native Americans in the Valley, then continuing to feature various important points along the community’s journey to the present. The exhibit discusses the impact of slavery and civil rights, highlighting specific impactful local community members with detailed research. Community members are also highly likely to see themselves reflected in this exhibit, as local churches, schools, hospitals, doctors, and business also make their way to the center of the narrative.<sup>198</sup> One Facebook review called the museum a “true community asset.” This kind of public response is made possible by effectively bringing authenticity to the center, and creating a contact zone, or an exformal space. As an active local repository and exhibition space, the Swannanoa Valley Museum actively center a broad range of the Valley community in

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<sup>197</sup> Museum visit, October 2018.

<sup>198</sup> Fred McCormick, “Swannanoa Valley Museum and History Center to Kick off 30<sup>th</sup> Season.”<sup>202</sup>

See Appendix A.

its exhibitions and programs and is quickly becoming a model of success for small museums across the region.<sup>202</sup>

Unfortunately, at this time, there is no local repository for memorabilia of historical importance related to the Asheville-Buncombe area as a whole. Despite the existence of several museums and archives, each has its barriers to taking in various realia of historical significance to the region. These barriers range from subject matter, (the Smith-McDowell House, Vance Birthplace, and Thomas Wolfe Memorial each focus on specific families and individuals), to regionalism (the Swannanoa Valley Museum collects items from the area around the unincorporated area of Highway 70 outside of Asheville to Ridgecrest, on and Broad River, townships the Buncombe County line), or in the case of archival institutions, the limitations of material collections goals. Willing donors in the Asheville-Buncombe area find themselves in a pickle. Those with the desire to donate an object related to Asheville or most of Buncombe County, have a few options, but each has its drawbacks. The closest institution with the broadest collecting goals geographically is the Mountain Heritage Center at Western Carolina University.

The Mountain Heritage Center has wide-ranging collections and has many items related to Asheville and Buncombe County, primarily related to the craft revival of the early-mid 20th century.<sup>199</sup> While the Mountain Heritage Center is a good option for donors, there are still some considerations. For instance, the distance may place pressure on working-class families to travel with a fragile object, and geographical distance isolates the object from its origins, therein disassociating it from its historic past and place — these items, or artifacts, and how their ultimate presentation, are essential to placemaking. When there is no exhibition space for

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<sup>199</sup> Western Carolina University, Mountain Heritage Center, “Online Collections,” (3/25/19) <https://www.wcu.edu/engage/mountain-heritage-center/exhibits-and-artifacts/collections.aspx>.

historical items thought of as working class in the Asheville-Buncombe area, they are in essence rejected from the cultural landscape by process of exclusion.

The Asheville-Buncombe region's well-established and evolving cultural heritage tourism and public history programs and organizations are continually growing and evolving. Even during the process of this research, new efforts have emerged.<sup>200</sup> A survey performed as a part of this thesis found that, including archives, there are at least 67 businesses, museums, archives, governmental organizations, and non-profits that interpret the cultural, historical, and artistic history of Asheville and Buncombe County.<sup>201</sup> What is unfortunate, however, is how very seldom these organizations seem to work together to meet their mutual goals. What seems to be missing in Buncombe County, is an umbrella organization that brings these mutually interested groups together to better serve the residential community.

While it might seem like a stretch to create such an organization, a model exists at the other end of the French Broad River. The East Tennessee Historical Society (ETNHS) headquarters are in Knoxville, Tennessee, almost two hours west of Asheville in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains. Their historical society, initially founded in 1834, provides a positive model for the seeming lack of intercommunication and partnership in the public humanities sector in the region and could solve the problem of the absence of a large, more comprehensive public history museum in Buncombe County. Beginning in 1924, ETNHS entered into a public/private partnership with the Knox County Public Library to headquarter

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<sup>200</sup> Beginning in the spring of 2019, the City of Asheville and the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources began the process, along with an outside consulting firm, of surveying and identifying historic structures in Asheville's historically African American communities. "The African American Heritage Resource Survey" aims to document the built environment as it relates to oral history, and preserve the historic architecture, history, and landscape in Asheville's Black neighborhoods.  
[https://www.ashevilenc.gov/departments/urban\\_design/african\\_american\\_heritage\\_resource\\_survey.htm](https://www.ashevilenc.gov/departments/urban_design/african_american_heritage_resource_survey.htm).

<sup>201</sup> See Appendix B.

their offices alongside the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, the county's special collections archive. The society, still in partnership with the library, opened its outreach arm, the Museum of East Tennessee in 1994. The museum saw enough success in the 1990s that in 2008 the group built the East Tennessee History Center. The center has remained successful and true to the organization's original goals of maintaining a public/private partnership, "recognizing that East Tennessee's history, heritage, and geography are distinct from the rest of the state," and preserving and promoting the history of their region.<sup>202</sup>

One can already find many of the best aspects and practices of the ETNHS and their museum at work in the heritage tourism industry Buncombe County. For example, like the Swannanoa Valley Museum & History Center, the East Tennessee History Center features two galleries. *Voices of the Land* at the East Tennessee History Center is a permanent exhibit about the lives and work of the people of the region. The museum is home to the Calvin M. McClung historical collection, the historical archives of the Knox County Public Library. Buncombe County also boasts an extensive and well-established archive held at Pack Memorial Library. The North Carolina Collection also features a group of active supporters and a fundraising board, the Friends of the North Carolina Room who fund monthly local history programs.<sup>203</sup> The Western North Carolina Historical Association, the Western Branch of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, and other recognized, active, and influential supporters also exist. What seems to be missing, is an active partnership among these organizations for the

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<sup>202</sup> East Tennessee Historical Society, "About" 4/10/19, <http://www.easttnhistory.org/east-tennessee-historical-society>.

<sup>203</sup> North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library, "Friends of the North Carolina Room," [ncroom.buncombecounty.org](https://packlibraryncroom.wordpress.com/friends-of-the-north-carolinaroom/), 3/30/19. <https://packlibraryncroom.wordpress.com/friends-of-the-north-carolinaroom/>.

mutual benefit of residents, the organizations themselves, and the overall heritage tourism infrastructure.

In addition to the many active and successful cultural heritage organizations in the Asheville-Buncombe area, there are a large number of signs, kiosks, and interpretive programs that serve to promote the region's history. Millions of visitors flock to the region each year with the idea of visiting these institutions on their itinerary. The problem, however, is while there are successful organizations, and even local models for successful community-oriented museums, some residents do not see their history or cultural heritage reflected in the broader narrative. At the same time, the immediate focus of the tourism economy is only serving to increasingly marginalize working-class residents to make room for more visitor-oriented infrastructure. Heritage tourism, once the life-blood of the region, has fallen by the wayside, perhaps to the detriment of residents. By embracing successful models seen locally and regionally, and working-class and marginalized communities, institutions in Buncombe County could create a heritage tourism space that is beneficial to both residents and visitors.

## CONCLUSION

For nearly two centuries Buncombe County has served as a tourist destination. Over the course of that time, it is inevitable that culture and passions change, but since the 1880s, the region has looked to heritage tourism, the promotion of culture, natural resources, history, and art, as a driving factor in the tourist economy. The desire to draw in tourists and benefit the local economy by promoting local heritage led to the creation of programs like the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and the Southern Highlands Craft guild in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and after a long period of financial stagnation, a boom in historic preservation and community museums lead up to the new century.

As the tourism economy shows no signs of slowing down, and as Buncombe County has a strong cultural heritage infrastructure, it is not beyond the reach of potential local stakeholders to establish a history center not unlike the East Tennessee History Center in Knoxville. What is missing, it seems, is sustained communication and partnership between extant organizations. Ideally, organizations like the North Carolina Collection at Pack Memorial Library, the Western North Carolina Historical Association, YMI Cultural Center, the Swannanoa Valley Museum and History Center, the Historic Resources Commission, Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County, organizations under the North Carolina Department of Archives and History and others, should be holding regular, if informal, meetings. One of the primary hurdles in constructing a cohesive and inclusive narrative is poor communication among agencies who, at their core, all have the same goal.

While a museum is perhaps, a long-term and idealistic proposal, urging heritage tourism-focused organizations to partner more often on comprehensive programming, and reevaluating existing infrastructure for issues of equity are goals that can be achieved over a

shorter timeframe. Adding more stops or adjusting the language on existing stops on the Urban Trail to promote the history of women and minority groups might be one project that all these organizations could agree to tackle together.

Over the past 200 years, heritage organizations in Buncombe County managed to attract an immense number of tourists and preserve dozens of landmarks, landscapes, and structures. The element that is missing at present, is a connection to the working-class residents of the area that might be remedied through a museum that centers the story of traditionally marginalized people. That is, a large, comprehensive historical museum that creates an authentic contact zone between residents and tourists and prioritizes a diverse range of authentic Buncombe County voices.

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*Asheville Democrat*, Asheville, NC (AD)  
*Asheville Gazette-News*, Asheville, NC (AGN)  
*Black Mountain News* (BMTN)  
*Mountain Xpress*, Asheville, NC (MX)

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A comprehensive list of all BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB Reports consulted in this research can be found on the web. See: BCTDA/Explore Asheville CVB, “Research and Reports,” <https://www.ashevillecvb.com/research-reports/>.

Sales & Marketing Plans:	2016-2017
2018-2019	
2017-2018	BCTDA Annual Reports:
2016-2017	2017-2018
2015-2016	2016-2017
2014-2015	2015-2016
	2014-2015
Media Plan:	2013-2014
2017-2018	

##### Research & Data:

2017 Assessment of Impacts of Buncombe County Tourism  
2016 Advertising Effectiveness & ROI Executive Summary  
2016 Asheville Visitor Profile  
Portrait of an American Traveler November 2016  
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## APPENDIX

Note to appendix:

These appendices were compiled, in part, to highlight the diversity and scope of the heritage tourism industry in Buncombe County at this time. Broader study of heritage tourism sites and programs in Buncombe County might be facilitated by these consolidated enumerations. Some social media posts consulted are included as examples of the type of discussion commonly found on sites like Facebook among residents concerning history, heritage and culture. As they are organized, each can provide insight into the past, present, and future of heritage tourism in Buncombe County.

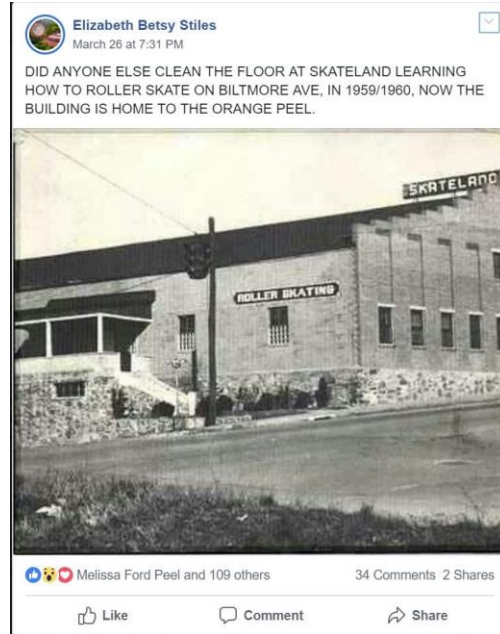
### Appendix A: Facebook posts



*Facebook Post 1*



Facebook Post 2



Facebook Post 3



**Appendix B: Interpretive centers, museums, and tour agencies**

Name	Established	Type	Notes
<b>Interpretive Centers</b>			
Big Ivy Historical Park	1980	Interpretive Center	
Blue Ridge National Heritage Area	2003	Interpretive Agency	
Blue Ridge Parkway Visitors' Center	1990	Interpretive Center	
Folk Art Center	1978	Interpretive Center	
YMI Cultural Center	1981	Interpretive Center	



Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design	1996	Interpretive Center, Art	
<b>Museums and State Historic Sites</b>			
Asheville Art Museum	1948	Museum, Art	
Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center	1994	Museum, Art, Special/Local	
Asheville Museum of Science	2017	Museum, Science	
Biltmore House and Estate	1930	Museum, Special/Local	
Dry Ridge Museum	1983	Museum, Special/Local	The Dry Ridge Museum has been under considerable financial stress and recently, vacated their space in the Weaverville Public Library. LINK
Gorvewood Village and Galleries	1992	Museum, Special/Local	
Presbyterian Heritage Center	2008	Museum, Special/Local	
Smith McDowell House Museum	1981	Museum, Special/Local	

Swannanoa Valley Museum & History Center	1989	Museum, Special/Local	Renovation in 2016 doubled exhibit space and added critical modern tools and conveniences.
Gov. Zebulon B. Vance Birthplace State Historic Site	1960	State Historic Site	The exhibit in the visitor's center was redesigned in 2013 for the first time since the site opened in 1960.
Thomas Wolfe Memorial State Historic Site	1948	State Historic Site	

**Tour Agencies**

Appalachian Mural Trail	2016	Tour, Art	Interstate "trail" network of murals in NC and southern VA. See website for more info: <a href="https://www.muraltrail.com/#About_Us">https://www.muraltrail.com/#About_Us</a>
Asheville Art Studio Tours	Not Available	Tour, Art	
Asheville Camino Trail	2016	Tour, Art	
Asheville Photo Tours	Not Available	Tour, Art, Other	
Vegabond Vistas Photo Tours	2003	Tour, Art, Other	
Asheville Brews Cruise	2009	Tour, Food and Beverage	
Asheville Farm to Table Tours	Not Available	Tour, Food and Beverage	
Asheville Food Tours	2011	Tour, Food and Beverage	
Creative Mountain Food Tours	Not Available	Tour, Food and Beverage	
Eating Asheville	2008	Tour, Food and Beverage	
No Tatste Like Home	1996	Tour, Food and Beverage	Specializes in food foraging, outdoor food tours, see website for more information: <a href="https://notastelikehome.org/">https://notastelikehome.org/</a>
Taste Carolina Gourmet Food Tours	2009	Tour, Food and Beverage	Tours in cities across North Carolina including Raleigh, Charlotte, and Greensboro.

Asheville Rooftop Bar Tours	Not Available	Tour, Food and Beverage, Other	
BREW-ed Brewery and History Walking Tours	2013	Tour, Food and Beverage, Other	
Dark Ride Tours	2015	Tour, Haunted	
Ghost Hunters of Asheville	Not Available	Tour, Haunted	

Haunted Asheville	1995	Tour, Haunted	
Asheville By Foot	2014	Tour, History and Culture	
History at Hand	2001	Tour, History and Culture	
Hood Huggers International, Hood Tours	2016	Tour, History and Culture	
Asheville Augmented Reality Quests	2018	Tour, History and Culture, Other	
Asheville Lit Map	2018	Tour, History and Culture, Other	
Moving Sidewalk Segway Tours	Not Available	Tour, History and Culture, other	
LaZoom Tours	2007	Tour, History and Culture, Other, Bus	
Greyline Trolley Tours	2007	Tour, History and Culture, Haunted, Bus	
Amazing Scavenger Hunt Adventure	Not Available	Tour, Other, Misc.	
Asheville Detours	Not Available	Tour, Other, Misc.	
Asheville Wellness Tours	2017	Tour, other, Misc.	
Leap Frog Tours	2017	Tour, Other, Misc.	
Namaste In Nature	Not Available	Tour, Other, Misc.	
Star Watch Night Vision Tours	Not Available	Tour, Other, Misc.	
Raven Wolf Vortex Journey	Not Available	Tour, Other, Spritual	See website for more information: <a href="http://www.ravenwolfvortexjourney.com/faqs.html">http://www.ravenwolfvortexjourney.com/faqs.html</a>
Walk With Me Tours	Not Available	Tour, Outdoor, other	
Asheville Adventures	Not Available	Tour, Outdoors	

Asheville Hiking Tours	2016	Tour, Outdoors	
Asheville Hot Air Balloon Tours	Not Available	Tour, Outdoors	
Asheville Waterfall Tours	Not Available	Tour, Outdoors	
Blue Ridge Hiking Comapny	2015	Tour, Outdoors	Owned and operated by Jennifer Pharr Davis, record holding Appalachian Trail Thru Hiker and author.
French Broad Boatworks	Not Available	Tour, Outdoors	
Hike Asheville	Not Available	Tour, Outdoors	
Outfitter Bicycle Tours	Not Available	Tour, Outdoors	International Company
Pisgah Mountain Bike Adventures	Not Available	Tour, Outdoors	
The Wildland Trekking Company	Not Available	Tour, Outdoors	Nationwide Company
Tumblestone Waterfall Tours and Transportation	Not Available	Tour, Outdoors	
Wai Mauna Asheville SUP Tours	Not Available	Tour, Outdoors	
Ventures Birding Tours	Not Available	Tour, Outdoors, Other	

\*\*\*This appendix was compiled using multiple sources, primarily ExploreAsheville.com as an index, with the aid of local newspapers, and agency websites to secure as much context and information as possible.

### Appendix C: Prominent Interpretive panels, highway markers, and waysides

Name	Date	Type	Location	Notes
Zebulon B. Vance	1935	Highway Marker	US 19/23 at Reems Creek Road, South of Weaverville	

Riverside Cemetery	1935	Highway Marker	Broadway St. at Magnolia Ave. in Asheville/Montford	
David L. Swain	1938	Highway Marker	Merrimon Ave. at Beaverdam Rd. in Asheville	
Stoneman's Raid	1940	Highway Marker	Hendersonville Rd. South of I-40 in Asheville	
Bingham School	1948	Highway Marker	Riverside Dr. South of Old Leicester Hwy. in Woodfin	
Thomas Wolfe	1948	Highway Marker	College St. at Spruce St. in Downtown Asheville	
Newton Academy	1949	Highway Marker	Biltmore Ave. at Unadilla Ave. in Downtown Asheville	
Andre Micheux	1949	Highway Marker	State St. at the Swannanoa Valley Museum & History Center in Black Mountain	
Locke Craig	1949	Highway Marker	Broadway at Chestnut St. in Asheville	
Lee's School	1951	Highway Marker	Tunnel Rd. at Chunn's Cove Rd. in Asheville	
Forester A. Sondley	1951	Highway Marker	US 70 at Beverly Rd. in Asheville	
Jeter C. Pritchard	1951	Highway Marker	Merrimon Ave. at Chestnut St. in Asheville	
Francis Asbury	1951	Highway Marker	Merrimon Ave. at Beaverdam Rd. in Asheville	
Dr. L.B. McBrayer	1952	Highway Marker	US 191 South of Asheville	
Richmond Pearson	1952	Highway Marker	Riverside Dr. at Pearson Bridge Rd. in Asheville	
Rutherford Trace	1953	Highway Marker	US 25 North of I-40 in Asheville	
Rutherford Trace	1954	Highway Marker	US 191 SW of Asheville	
Rutherford Trace	1954	Highway Marker	US 19/23/74 at Enka	
Kiffin Y. Rockwell	1954	Highway Marker	Merrimon Ave. at Hillside St. in Asheville	
Swannanoa Tunnel	1955	Highway Marker	Old US Hwy. 70 at Ridgecrest	

Swannanoa Gap	1956	Highway Marker	I-40/US 70 Access Road east of Ridgecrest	
Joseph Lane	1959	Highway Marker	Merrimon Ave. at Beaverdam Rd. in Asheville	
Sulphur Springs	1959	Highway Marker	Patton Ave. at Old Haywood Rd. in West Asheville	
William Moore	1960	Highway Marker	Sand Hill Rd. east of Enka	
Stoneman's Raid	1960	Highway Marker	Old US Hwy. 70 east of Ridgecrest	
Confederate Armory	1965	Highway Marker	College St. near Buncombe County Courthouse in Downtown Asheville	
Sherill's Inn	1970	Highway Marker	US 74-a at Hickory Nut Gap Southeast of Fairview	
Asheville Normal School	1972	Highway Marker	Victoria Rd near Mission Hospital in Downtown Asheville	
University of NC at Asheville	1976	Highway Marker	Broadway St. at Weaver Blvd. in Asheville	
Black Mountain College	1986	Highway Marker	US 70/State St. at W College St. in Black Mountain	
Biltmore House	1986	Highway Marker	McDowell St. in Downtown Asheville just past Asheville High School	
Warren Wilson College	1987	Highway Marker	US Hwy 70 at Warren Wilson Rd. Swannanoa	
Mount Mitchell Railroad	1989	Highway Marker	Old US Hwy 70 at the Old Toll Rd. east of Black Mountain	
Weaver College	1990	Highway Marker	US 19/23 Business/Main St. at Brown St. in Weaverville	
Buncombe Turnpike	1993	Highway Marker	Broadway St. at Weaver Blvd. in Asheville	
Olive Tilford Dargan	1994	Highway Marker	US 19/23 Business/Haywood Rd. at Balsam Ave. in West Asheville	
Lillian Exum Clement Stafford	1998	Highway Marker	College St. at Charlotte St. in Downtown Asheville	
Montreat College	2004	Highway Marker	NC 9 (Broadway) near the White Horse in Black Mountain	

Electric Streetcars	2006	Highway Marker	Haywood Rd. at Euclid Blvd. in West Asheville	
Battle of Asheville	2007	Civil War Trails Wayside	Botanical Gardens at UNC Asheville, 151 WT Weaver Blvd., Asheville, NC 28804	
Riverside Cemetery	2007	Civil War Trails Wayside	Riverside Cemetery, 53 Birch St., Asheville, NC 28801	
Confederate Prison	2007	Civil War Trails Wayside	Near present Buncombe County Courthouse., Court Plaza, Asheville, NC 28801	
USCT	2007	Civil War Trails Wayside	Near Newton Academy Cemetery, Victoria Rd., Asheville, NC 28801	
Battery Porter	2007	Civil War Trails Wayside	Battery Hill, Near Battery Park Hotel, Downtown Asheville, NC 28801	
Enslavement	2007	Civil War Trails Wayside		
Camp Clingman	2007	Civil War Trails Wayside		
George Avery	2007	Civil War Trails Wayside	At South Asheville Cemetery, 20 Dalton St., Asheville, NC 28803	
Smith-McDowell House	2007	Civil War Trails Wayside	283 Victoria Rd., Asheville, NC 28801	
Vance Birthplace	2007	Civil War Trails Wayside	911 Reems Creek Rd., Weaverville, NC 28787	
Asheville Community Theater	2008	Interpretive Panel	35 E Walnut St. Asheville, NC 28801	
Ronald Manheimer	2008	Interpretive Panel	UNC Asheville, 1 University Heights, Asheville, NC 28804	
Center for Jewish Studies	2008	Interpretive Panel	UNC Asheville	
Karl Straus	2008	Interpretive Panel	UNC Asheville	
The Jewish Community Center	2008	Interpretive Panel	236 Charlotte St. Asheville, NC 28801	

Congregation Beth Isreal	2008	Interpretive Panel	229 Murdock Ave. Asheville, NC 28804	
Sprinza Wizenblatt	2008	Interpretive Panel	UNC Asheville, Warren Wilson College	Also on display at Mars Hill University in Madison County.

Samuel Robinson	2008	Interpretive Panel	Rhodes-Robinson Hall, UNC Asheville	
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute	2008	Interpretive Panel	OLLI/Rueter Center, UNC Asheville	
The Reuter Center	2008	Interpretive Panel	OLLI/Rueter Center, UNC Asheville	
Ernest A. Mills	2008	Interpretive Panel	Mills Hall, UNC Asheville	
Morris Karpen	2008	Interpretive Panel	Karpen Hall, UNC Asheville	
Beth HaTephila	2008	Interpretive Panel	43 N Liberty St. Asheville, NC 28801	
Young Men's Institute	2009	Highway Marker	S Market St. at Pack Sq. at Municipal Building (Firehouse) in Downtown Asheville	
Zelda Fitzgerald	2009	Highway Marker	Broadway St., at WT Weaver Blvd. in Asheville	
Geodesic Domes	2013	Highway Marker	US Hwy 70 West of Cragmont Rd., Black Mountain	
Jimmie Rodgers	2013	Highway Marker	Haywood St. at Woolworth Walk Gallery, Downtown Asheville	
Flood of 1916	2015	Highway Marker	Biltmore Ave. at Swannanoa Rover Road, Asheville	
Anne Penland 1885-1976	2016	Highway Marker	Haywood St. at Vanderbilt Place, Downtown Asheville	
Montford/Cullowhee Bus Shelter Panel 1	2018	Interpretive Panel	Corner of Montford and Cullowhee, Asheville, NC 28801	
Montford/Cullowhee Bus Shelter Panel 2	2018	interpretive Panel	Corner of Montford and Cullowhee, Asheville, NC 28801	



Montford/Cullowhee Bus Shelter Panel 3	2018	Interpretive Panel	Corner of Montford and Cullowhee, Asheville, NC 28801	
Montford/Cullowhee Bus Shelter Panel 4	2018	Interpretive Panel	Corner of Montford and Cullowhee, Asheville, NC 28801	
Visitor's Center Bus Shelter Panel	2018	Interpretive Panel	36 Montford Ave., Asheville, NC 28801	
Who was Wilma Dykeman?	2019	Interpretive Panel	Craven St. at Riverside Drive near New Belgium Brewing	Also on display at the Asheville Museum of Science
Who Killed the French Broad?	2019	Interpretive Panel	Craven St. at Riverside Drive near New Belgium Brewing	Also on display at the Asheville Museum of Science
The French Broad by Wilma Dykeman	2019	Interpretive Panel	Craven St. at Riverside Drive near New Belgium Brewing	Also on display at the Asheville Museum of Science
<b>In Process</b>				
Enka Heritage Trail	N/A	Buncombe County Greenways		
African American Heritage and Culture District	N/A			
Town Branch Greenway	Summer 2020	City of Asheville Greenways		

\*\*\* Listed in ascending date order. The appendix was compiled using multiple sources, including the North Carolina Historic Highway Markers Search Tool, <http://www.ncmarkers.com/search.aspx>, the History-At-Hand Portfolio <https://www.history-athand.com/>, and local news sources.

#### **Appendix D: Annual cultural heritage programs and festivals**

Name of Program	Year Started	Focus of Programming	Location	Notes
Mountain Dance and Folk Festival	1928	Music and Dance	Location Varies, 2019 program is scheduled for Lipinky Auditorium, UNC Asheville	There is also, in Mars Hill, Madison County, an annual Bascom Lamar Lunsford Festival

Craft Fair of The Southern Highlands	1947	Crafts	US Cellular Center ( Asheville Civic Center Arena) Haywood Street, Asheville, NC 28801	Biannual, July and October.
Shindig on the Green	1967	Music and Dance	Pack Square Park, Asheville, NC 28801	Season-long, each Saturday, June-August.
Goombay African American Heritage and Culture Festival	1970	Culture	Pack Square Park, Asheville, NC 28801	
Greek Festival	1986	Food and Culture	Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church 227 Cumberland Ave., Asheville, NC 28801	
Swannanoa Gathering	1991	Music and Dance	Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, NC	Takes place over a span of weeks.
HardLox Festival	2013	Food and Culture	Pack Square Park, Asheville, NC 28801	

\*\*\*This appendix is not intended to be comprehensive, rather, it is intended to list long-running festivals specifically related to regional heritage and culture. If one considers the regional heritage as it has been developed and marketed over the past decade or so, the absence on this list of regular downtown farmer's market days, a vegan festival, the replacement of the once loved Bele Chere with the now annual LEAF Downtown festival, Christmas Jam, (and so many other regular cultural happenings that keep regular visitors coming back for an "Asheville" weekend), should perhaps, also be considered when evaluating Buncombe County's current and future representation and interpretation of its regional heritage.

### Appendix E: Archives, Special Collections, and Historical Societies

Name	Type of Institution	Innaguaral Year	Location	Notes
Biltmore Estate Archives	Archive/Special Collection	1930	1 Lodge St. Asheville, NC 28803	
Friends of the Vance Birthplace	Friends/Support Group	1966	911 Reems Creek Rd. Waverville, NC 28787	
Western North Carolina Historical Association	Historical Society	1976	283 Victoria Rd. Asheville, NC 28801	

Special Collections, D. Hyden Ramsey Library, UNC Asheville	Archive/Special Collection	1977	1 University Heights, Asheville, NC 28804,	
Old Buncombe County Genealogical Society	Historical Society	1980	128 Bingham Rd. #950 Asheville, NC 28806	
Big Ivy Historical Society	Historical Society	1980	550 Dillingham Rd. Barnardville, NC 28709	
North Carolina Collection, Pack Memorial Library	Archive/Special Collection	1991	67 Haywood St. Asheville, NC 28801	
Stephens-Lee Alumni Association	Alumni Association*	1995	30 George Washington Carver Ave. Asheville, NC 28801	In recent years, alumni associations have become critical sources of historical information and memory, particularly, in African American communities. The Stephens-Lee Alumni also have their own office and archives space at what is now the Stephens-Lee Recreation Center.
Western Regional Archives, North Carolina State Archives	Archive/Special Collection	2013	176 Riceville Rd. Asheville, NC 28805	
Mountain History and Culture Group	Friends/Support Group	2018	911 Reems Creek Road. Weaverville, NC 28787	
Buncombe County Law Library	Archive/Special Collection	Not Available	60 Court Plaza Asheville, NC 28801	

**Appendix F: Locations on the National Register of Historic Places in Asheville and Buncombe County and Otherwise Protected Historic Landmarks**

Name of Site	Address	Date of Designation	Notes
Biltmore Estate	1 Lodge St. Asheville, NC 28803, and surrounding properties	10/15/66	Additional documentation and boundary reduction completed 4/5/05
Thomas Wolfe House	48 Spruce St. Asheville, NC 28801	11/11/71	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC

Grove Park Inn	290 Macon Ave. Asheville, NC 28804	4/3/73	
Sherrill's Inn	Private Residence. 2.5 miles S of Fairview off U.S 74	4/16/75	
Smith-MCDowell House	283 Victoria Rd. Asheville, NC 28801	8/1/75	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Arcade Building (Grove Arcade)	Battery Park, Battle Sq. Asheville, NC 28801	5/19/76	
First Baptist Church	Entire church property and landscape at Oak and Woodfin Sts. Asheville, NC 28801	7/13/76	
Asheville City Hall	City County Plaza, Asheville, NC 28801	11/7/76	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Zealandia	40 Vance Gap Rd., Asheville 28805	3/14/77	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
S&W Cafeteria	56 Patton Ave. Asheville, NC 28801	3/28/77	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC

Battery Park Hotel	Battle Sq. Asheville, NC 28801	7/14/77	
Young Men's Institute (YMI Building)	Corner of Eagle and Market Sts. Asheville, NC 28801	7/14/77	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Montford Area HD	Follows irregular pattern along Montford Ave. Asheville	11/25/77	
The Manor and Cottages	265 Charlotte St. Asheville, NC 28801	1/26/78	City of Asheville Designated Historic District as "Albemarle Park HD"
Church of St. Lawrence (Basilica of St. Lawrence)	97 Haywood St. Asheville, NC 28801	3/24/78	Additional documentation 5/11/10
Ravenscroft School	29 Ravenscroft Dr. Asheville, NC 28801	12/12/78	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Downtown Asheville HD	Various addresses, Downtown Asheville, NC 28801	4/26/79	Biltmore Ave. Amendment, 5/25/89, Ravenscroft Amendment, 8/23/90, Downtown Asheville Boundary increase/decrease III, 12/28/11
E.D. Latta Nurses' Residence	159 Woodfin St. Asheville, NC 28801	4/26/79	

George A. Mears House	137 Biltmore Ave. Asheville, NC 28801	4/26/79	
130-132 Biltmore Ave.	N/A	4/26/79	
134-136 Biltmore Ave.	N/A	4/26/79	
140 Biltmore Ave.	N/A	4/26/79	
Conabeer Chrysler Building	162-164 Coxe Ave. Asheville, NC 28801	4/26/79	
Sawyer Motor Company Building	100 Coxe Ave. Asheville, NC 28801	4/26/79	
Richbourg Motors Building	50 Coxe Ave. Asheville, NC 28801	4/26/79	
Schoenberger Hall	60 Ravenscroft Dr. Asheville, NC 28801	4/26/79	Originally a part of Asheville MRN, since destroyed
Buncombe County Courthouse	City County Plaza, Asheville, NC 28801	5/10/79	
St. Matthias' Episcopal Church	1 Dundee St. Asheville, NC 28801	5/10/79	
Blue Ridge Assembly HD	S of Black Mountain of SR 2720 (Blue Ridge Assembly Dr.) Black Mountain, NC 28711	9/17/79	

Biltmore Village Multiple Resource Designation	Multiple Addresses	11/15/79	Includes structures like All Souls Episcopal Church and Parish House, Biltmore Estate Office, and more.
Biltmore Industries	111 Grovewood Rd. Asheville, NC 28804	2/1/80	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
William E. Breese Sr., House	674 Biltmore Ave. Asheville, NC 28801	4/28/80	
Overlook (Seely's) Castle	710 Town Mountain Rd. Asheville, NC 28804	10/22/80	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Demens-RumbaughCrawley House	31 Park Ave. Asheville NC 28801	6/1/82	
Dr. Carl V. Reynolds House	86 Edgemont Rd. Asheville, NC 28804	8/19/82	

John A. Lanning House	West of Fairview on SR 3128	9/23/82	No longer standing
Black Mountain College HD	Along SR 2468 in Black Mountain, NC 28711	10/5/82	
Chestnut Hill Historic District (HD)	Bounded by Hillside, Washington, Broad, Hollywood, Orchard Sts. and Merrimon Ave.	3/17/83	
William Jennings Bryan House	107 Evelyn Pl. Asheville, NC 28801	6/23/83	
Richmond Hill House	N/A	3/15/84	Destroyed by fire, March 15, 2009, arson.
Alexander Inn	Private residence, address restricted.	5/31/84	No longer standing
Reynolds House	100 Reynolds Hts. Asheville, NC 28804	9/13/84	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Church of the Redeemer	1202 Riverside Dr. Asheville, NC 28804	9/19/85	
Camp Academy	Along Hwy 63, (New Leicester Hwy) Leicester, NC 28748	9/19/85	
Oteen Veteran Administration Hospital HD	N Side of U.S. 70 in Asheville, NC 28805	11/20/85	
Douglas Ellington House	491 Kimberly Ave. Asheville, NC 28804	10/16/86	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Ottari Sanitarium	583 Chunns Cove Rd. Asheville, NC 28805	10/16/86	

Carter-Swain House	Roughly bounded by Evelyn Pl., Macon Ave., Howland Rd., Woodland Rd., Canterbury Ln., Charlotte St., and Murdock Ave.; also roughly Kimberly Ave. from Maywood St. to north of Evelyn Pl., including Grove Park Inn Country Club	7/2/87	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Grove Park HD	Multiple Addresses Asheville, NC 28804	4/13/89	Kimberly Ammendment to Grove Park HD 12/18/90
Rafael Guastavino Sr., Estate	NC Hwy 9, .8 miles south junction with SR 2713 Black Mountain, NC 28711	7/13/89	

Mrs. Minnie Alexander Cottage	218 Patton Ave. Asheville, NC 28801	12/21/89	
In the Oaks	510 Vance Ave. Black Mountain, NC 28711	4/10/91	
Gunston Hall	324 Vanderbilt Rd. Biltmore Forest, NC 28803	10/24/91	
Claxton School	241 Merrimon Ave. Asheville, NC 28804	6/4/92	
Eliada Home	2 Compton Dr. Asheville, NC 28806	4/22/93	
Bent Creek Campus of the Appalachian Forest Expierement Station	Brevard Rd. south of junction with I-26 Asheville, NC 28806	4/29/93	Federal Nomination, Bouondary decrease, 12/30/96
Thomas Jarrett House	46 Luisiana Ave. Asheville, NC 28806	1/21/94	
St. Mary's Episcopal Church	337 Charlotte St. Asheville, NC 28801	12/23/94	
Dr. Cicero McAfee McCracken House	1384 Charlotte Hwy. Fairview, NC 28730	9/1/95	
Weaverville United Methodist Church	85 N Main St. Weaverville, NC 28787	3/1/96	
Asheville High School	419 McDowell St. Asheville, NC 28801	4/26/96	
Asheville School (Former) Buncombe County Boys' Training School	Roughly bounded by Patton Ave., Southern RR line, US 40, Sand Hill Rd., and Malvern Hills subdivision 177 Erwin Hills Rd. Asheville, NC 28806	6/3/96 9/30/97	
St. Luke's Episcopal Church	219 Chunn's Cove Rd. Asheville, NC 28805	9/30/97	

William Nelson Camp Jr., House	92 Flat Top Mountain Rd. Fairview, NC 28730	12/17/98	
Rice-Cornell-Brown House	29 Rice Branch Rd. Asheville, NC 28804	12/24/98	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC

NC Electrical Power Company Electric Generating Plant	2024 Riverside Dr. Asheville, NC 28804	6/25/99	
The Spinning Wheel	1096 Hendersonville Rd. Asheville, NC 28803	7/28/99	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Fire Station Number 4	300 Merrimon Ave. Asheville, NC 28804	4/6/00	
Engadine	US 19/23, .3 miles E of Haywood County line in Candler, NC 28715	9/24/01	
Judge Junius G. Adams House	11 Stuyvesant Rd. Biltmore Forest, NC 28803	10/5/01	
Kennilworth Inn	60 Caledonia Rd. Asheville, NC 28803	12/31/01	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Bledsoe Building	771-783 Haywood Rd. Asheville, NC 28806	4/18/03	
Biltmore Hardware Building	28-32 Hendersonville Rd. Asheville, NC 28803	8/21/03	
Black Mountain Downtown HD	From the Black Mountain Train Depot, roughly 1/2 mile each direction.	6/2/04	
Brigman-Chambers House	NC 1003, .6 miles W of jct. with NC 2118	6/2/04	
Clingman Ave. HD	Roughly along Clingman Ave. from Hillard Ave. to Haywood Ave.	6/9/04	
Riverside Industrial HD	Roughly bounded by Clingman Ave, Lyman St., Roberts St., and Riverside Dr.	8/11/04	
Joseph P. Eller House	494 Clarks Chapel Rd. Weaverville, NC 28787	8/11/04	
Municipal Golf Course	226 Fairway Dr. Asheville, NC 28805	4/20/05	City of Asheville Designated Historic District
Whitford G. Smith House	263 Haywood St. Asheville, NC 28801	5/4/05	
Biltmore Hospital	14 All Souls Crecent Asheville, NC 28803	9/1/05	



Broadway Market Building	201 Broadway Asheville, NC 28801	9/1/05	No longer standing
Sunset Terrace HD	9-48 Sunset Terrace Asheville, NC 28804	12/16/05	
West Asheville End of Car Line HD	Both sides of Haywood Rd. from 715 to 814 and 7-9 Brvard Rd. Asheville, NC 28806	8/9/06	
West Asheville-Aycock School HD	401-441 Haywood Rd. Asheville, NC 28806	8/23/06	
Thomas W. Raoul House	394 Vanderbilt Rd. Biltmore Forest, NC 28803	11/28/06	
Monte Vista Hotel	308 W State St. Black Mountain, NC 28711	4/30/08	
Norwood Park HD	District is bounded roughly on the W. and S. by Murdock St.; on the N. by Woodward Ave; on the E. by Norwood Ave.	8/29/08	
Proximity Park HD	Roughly bounded by Macon Ave., Howland Rd., Woodlink Rd., Charlotte St., and Sunset Trail	10/8/08	
Richard Sharp Smith House	665 Chunn's Cove Rd. Asheville, NC 28805	1/22/09	Also has "Local Landmark" designation from Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Thomas Chapel A.M.E Zion Church	300 Cragmont Rd. Black Mountain, NC 28711	4/30/09	
Zebulon Baird House	460 Weaverville Rd. Weaverville, NC 28787	4/30/09	
Blake House	150 Royal Pines Dr. Arden, NC 28704	8/30/10	
South Montreat Road HD	Along Montreat Rd., Montreat, NC 28757	12/27/10	
Dougherty Heights HD	Church St., Connally St., and North Dougherty St., Laurel Circle, Prospect St., and New Bern Ave. Black Mountain, NC 28711	1/14/11	
Dr. John G. and Nannie H. Barrett Farm	75 Ox Creek Rd. Weaverville, NC 28787	5/8/13	

Bruce A. and June L., Elmore Lustron House	70 Hapden Rd. Asheville, NC 28805	8/27/13	
Seven Oaks	82 Westwood Pl. Asheville, NC 28806	8/13/15	

Kate and Charles Noel Vance House	178 Sunset Dr. Black Mountain, NC 28711	12/20/16	
Foster's Log Cabin Court	330 and 332 Weaverville Rd. Asheville, NC 28804	5/1/17	
James Madison and Leah Arcouet Chiles House	21 Chiles Ave. Asheville, NC 28803	1/25/2018	

**Other Protected Historic Places and Designations**

Leicester HD	Area around Hwy 63, New Leicester Highway bounded by Whitt Rd. and Newfound Rd.	N/A	The community was surveyed in 2000 and 2001 and recommended for nomination to the register. Since then, as far as is apparent, no further action has been taken, and the NCDOT has moved forward on a highway widening plan threatening the historic landscape.
Albemarle Inn	86 Edgemont Rd. Asheville, NC 28801	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville- Buncombe HRC
Beaufort Lodge	61 N Liberty St. Asheville, NC 28801	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville- Buncombe HRC
Bynum House	Near Grove Park Inn Golf Course, Asheville, NC 28804	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville- Buncombe HRC
Carroll House/Homewood	Private residence. Address not available.	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville- Buncombe HRC
Ceadercrest (William Breese House)	674 Biltmore Ave. Asheville, NC 28803	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville- Buncombe HRC
Drhumour Building	Patton Ave. Downtown Asheville, NC 28801	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville- Buncombe HRC
Flat Iron Building	20 Battery Park Ave. Asheville, NC 28801	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville- Buncombe HRC
Grove Park Inn Country Club Clubhouse	Macon Ave. Asheville, NC 28804	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville- Buncombe HRC

Hammond-Knowlton House	Private residence. Address not available.	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
J.M. Westall House	Private residence. Address not available.	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Jacob Weaver House	39 Briarwood Rd. Weaverville, NC 28787	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Kress Building	19 Patton Ave. Asheville, NC 28801	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Loughran Building	70 Block, Haywood St. Asheville, NC 28801	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
National Bank of Commerce		N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
North Market St./Langren Alley	N/A	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
O.B Wright House	Private Residence. Montford.	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Old Pack Library	South Pack Sq. Asheville, NC 28801	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Patton-Parker House	95 Charlotte St. Asheville, NC 28801	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Public Service Building	89-93 Patton Ave. Asheville, NC 28801	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Rankin-Bearden House	32 Elizabeth Place Asheville, NC 28801	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Samuel Harrison Reed House	119 Dodge St. Asheville, NC 28803	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC, Within the Biltmore Village MRN.
Sondley House	Haw Creek Rd. Asheville, NC 28805	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
South Asheville Cemetery	20 Dalton St. Asheville, NC 28803	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Stephens-Lee Gymnasium	30 George Washington Carver Ave. Asheville, NC 28801	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC

Thomas Wolfe Cabin	Azalea Park near Oteen, Asheville, NC 28805	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC
Von Ruck House	52 Albemarle Pl. Asheville, NC 28801	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC, within the Chestnut Hill HD
William Nelson Camp Jr., House	92 Flat Top Mountin Rd. Fairview, NC 28730	N/A	"Local Landmark" designation for Asheville-Buncombe HRC