Appalachian Aristocrats: How Tourists, Elites, and Mountaineers Created a New Western North Carolina, 1880-1920

Matthew Robert Blaylock

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, mblayloc@utk.edu

Recommended Citation
https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/4680

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Matthew Robert Blaylock entitled "Appalachian Aristocrats: How Tourists, Elites, and Mountaineers Created a New Western North Carolina, 1880-1920." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in History.

Lynn A. Sacco, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Derek H. Alderman, Ernest F. Freeberg, Robert J. Norrell

Accepted for the Council:

Dixie L. Thompson

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)
Appalachian Aristocrats: How Tourists, Elites, and Mountaineers
Created a New Western North Carolina, 1880-1920

A Dissertation Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Matthew Robert Blaylock
August 2017
Abstract

Appalachian Aristocrats explores the efforts of local boosters and businessmen in western North Carolina as they developed a regional, elite branding campaign from approximately 1880 to 1920. Influenced by the cycle of prosperity that had long connected tourism to regional development and regional development to tourism, boosters and businessmen worked to reestablish elite tourism in western North Carolina after it stymied in the wake of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Turning to three promotional components, infrastructure, elite residences, and resort hotels, boosters and businessmen embarked on a branding campaign that utilized symbols evoking the region’s continuity and change. These themes became embedded within regional promotion, and a series of paradoxes began to define regional branding. In particular, boosters and businessmen worked to show that the region was both rural and urban, embracing modernity while honoring their southern heritage, and inhabited by folksy mountaineers and progressive urbanites. By maintaining a promotional model that embraced so many seemingly contradictory images, boosters and businessmen were not only able to attract elite tourists from across the nation but easily adapt their campaign to larger changes within American culture. Through these wise branding efforts, the elite tourist market flourished, and western North Carolina once again became the Land of the Sky.
Table of Contents

Introduction: Antebellum Tourism and the Beginning of a Way of Life ........................................ 1
Disruption: The Civil War, Reconstruction, and the need to Rebrand Western North Carolina 4
A New Elite Class and Changes to Western North Carolina’s Luxury Tourism ................................ 9
The Progressive Era and the Beginnings of Middle-Class Tourism ............................................. 16
Organization................................................................................................................................. 21

Chapter One: Constructing Western North Carolina: The Role of Railroads, Good Roads, and
Businesses in the Development of Post-Civil War Luxury Tourism ............................................. 31

Western North Carolina Before the War .................................................................................... 34
Local Color and the Emergence of the Hillbilly Stereotype ...................................................... 39
Appalachia as Part of the New South ......................................................................................... 43
The Importance of the Railroad to Regional Growth and Tourism ........................................... 48
Good Roads as a Driving Force of Regional Tourism and Development .................................. 53
Western North Carolina’s Modern Economy ............................................................................. 58

Chapter Two: Building Homes and Building Status: How New Houses Symbolized Position in
Western North Carolina in the New South Period ....................................................................... 63

Business Changed More than Just the Economy: How Class became Part of Industrialization 66
Moving Into the Cities: Appalachian Elites become Urban ......................................................... 70
High-End Neighborhoods: Montford and the Urban Elite Enclave ........................................... 84
What’s In A Name: Smith as the Region’s Architect to the Elite ................................................. 93

Chapter Three: Luxury Hotels and the Resurgence of Elite Tourism in Western North Carolina
.................................................................................................................................................... 97

Luxury Hotels get Rural: The History and Success of Health Tourism in Western North Carolina 98
New South Amenities Mixed with Old South Flare: The Importance of Historical Memory in
Western North Carolina’s Luxury Hotels ....................................................................................... 101
Battery Park: A New Hotel on an Old Spot ................................................................................. 109
The Manor: An English Inn with Old South Charm in Western North Carolina .................. 121

Chapter Four: The Beginning of Middle-class Tourism in Western North Carolina
..................................................................................................................................................... 129

The Importance of Continuity: Rural Places and People as Part of Tourism .......................... 131
The Role of the Great Smokey Mountains National Park in Middle-Class Tourism ............... 138
The Importance of Geography in Suburban Construction ......................................................... 143
Keeping Grove Park Pure: The Role of Race in Community Building and Advertising 150
The Importance of Homes in Western North Carolina’s Progressive Era Tourism .................. 153
William Jennings Bryan: the Great Commoner Makes Asheville Home and becomes a
Spokesperson for Middle-Class Tourism .................................................................................. 161

Chapter Five: Tourism Gets Religion: The Emergence of Middle-Class Retreats in Western
North Carolina ............................................................................................................................. 167

The Background of Lake Junaluska’s Development: The Importance of Location to Protestant
Tourism and Resort Identity ........................................................................................................ 171
Mountaineers as Part of the Local Geography and a Tourist Attraction ................................. 187
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Importance of Summer Homes at Lake Junaluska Assembly</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism after World War One</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernity as a Cornerstone of 1920’s Promotion</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Embraces the Past</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rhododendron Festival</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Role of Debutante Culture in the Rhododendron Festival</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction: Antebellum Tourism and the Beginning of a Way of Life

Throughout the antebellum period, wealthy, white planters across the South, especially those from South Carolina’s low country, ventured to the Appalachian mountains of western North Carolina to avoid the unhealthy climates of their plantations while socializing with like-minded peoples.¹ These wealthy southerners gave the small, isolated region a national prestige and soon the area was known for its high-end leisure and for having the “richest landscape [many visitors] had ever seen.”² Local residents quickly realized the benefits of being a leisure destination for the South’s wealthiest and most cultured citizens, and soon the local economy and general way of life became dependent to some degree on regional tourism. The region’s environment became indelibly linked to the nation’s elite. This encouraged many residents, like R. Deaver, “proprietor of the Sulphur SPRINGS in Buncombe County, North Carolina,” to open a hotel that could accommodate 200 guests as early as 1840.³ Deaver advertised widely to attract “southern gentlemen” who might “desire summer residences in the mountain county.”⁴ Deaver was far from the only citizen to capitalize off this fade and soon western North Carolina was full of “boosters” -- a self-referential term made popular in the Progressive Era but useful for understanding regional promoters in all periods-- and businessmen who not only took advantage of the new tourist market but who also worked to keep it going.⁵ Tourism was, in fact, part of a cycle of prosperity within the region as tourism spurred economic growth, economic growth

---

² Asheville Messenger, December 25, 1840.
³ Asheville Messenger, August 28, 1840.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Waynesville Courier, February 15, 1915.
spurred regional improvements, and regional improvements spurred luxury tourism. This cycle would remain important to regional success for decades to come.

One offshoot of this cycle was a regional elite who benefited socially and economically from tourism. Although they added to the region’s prestige, it was not just the wealthy tourists that comprised the region’s upper class. When they came to visit, many wealthy planters were “agreeably surprised to find a large assembly of fair Mountain ladies” and “attentive” “gentleman” who served as their “hosts.” Historian John Inscoe exposes this active elite group and how they formed familial and business connections with summer visitors to form a large network stretching across the South. Interactions took place more often than just in the summers as these rich Appalachians were as much a part of the South’s social hierarchy as their summer guests. These social, economic, and political connections existed in large part due to tourism, but at the heart of high-class Appalachians’ status, like anywhere in the Antebellum South, was their relationship to the slavocracy as their affiliation with it created the prestige needed to enter into relationships with their Southern peers. Inscoe argues, “Appalachian elites were, almost without exception, slaveholders…and participated in trade networks that reached well beyond their highland region.” For instance, the region’s elites, like businessman William Holland Thomas and politician Zebulon Vance, were well connected throughout the South and held impressive positions within Southern society, economy, and politics. Historian Richard B. Drake argues that William Holland Thomas was a “classic example of the mountain elite” who “typically owned several slaves.” Elite Appalachians purchased slaves as symbols of their status but still utilized their labor. Unlike in most parts of the South, Thomas’s slaves worked

---

6 Asheville Messenger, December 25, 1840.
7 John Inscoe, Mountain Masters: Slavery and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1989).
8 Ibid, 8.
within his businesses, but few worked in agriculture. Thomas was a “leading merchant, with several stores,” and he also “owned a tannery.”

In this instance, slavery was not an economic necessity, and Thomas’s ownership had as much to do with meeting a Southern, elite expectation than need.

People like Thomas and Vance were far from regional outliers, and less well-known western North Carolina elites also participated in the slavocracy. Small Haywood County -- which serves as a good example of a typical location in western North Carolina as unlike nearby Buncombe County it did not house Appalachia’s largest city, Asheville -- had several large slaveholders, including James Robert Love, its largest, who owned 55 slaves and ten slave houses in 1860. Love was not alone in slave ownership; 58 other residents in the county also owned slaves, with six owning ten or more. In all, the county had 313 slaves and 54 slave dwellings in 1860. The region’s slave holders became an important part of its society and according to local historian W. Clark Medford, in addition to the Love family, the “Welch family, too, held right many slaves; also John Dillard, Silas Kirkpatrick, David McCraken, the Lenoirs, John Leatherwood, M.J. Smathers, James Commons (now Coman), William Sitton, Thos. Dillard, D.C. (‘Doctor’) Howell, the Allmans, and the early McDowell families.” In total, Haywood County had a slave population of 5.1 percent. For years following the end of the slavocracy, it was descendants of these families that continued to dominate the region’s high society despite their loss of slaves. Similar connections between slave ownership and high status marked all Western North Carolina counties for decades following the Civil War and

---

10 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
Reconstruction. Their antebellum reputations were enough to sustain their social positions for years to come.

**Disruption: The Civil War, Reconstruction, and the need to Rebrand Western North Carolina Tourism.**

This continuation of status based on former ways of life was not automatic, and Western North Carolinians worked hard to show their prestige in a time of great change. When the Civil War and Reconstruction ended the slavocracy, Western North Carolina’s social, economic, and political ways of life were put in jeopardy. Just like the rest of the South, they had to decide how to progress when their former lifestyles ended. Despite the fact that they were faced with the same problems and underwent the same processes to find a solution, Western North Carolina’s relationship to larger post-war happenings has largely been overlooked. This dissertation sheds light on Appalachian elites in a post-Civil War/Post-Reconstruction world and how their economic and social well-being tied to their relationship with the nation at large, a relationship built on tourism.

Reconstruction has been largely covered within Southern historiography as it shaped the trajectory of life in the region and informed the New South period. Eric Foner’s work, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, offers perhaps the most comprehensive examination of the period. Foner’s work is particularly useful in understanding how people like western North Carolina’s elite fared in a post-war world as argues that one

---

“purpose” of his work is to “trace the ways in which Southern society as a whole was remodeled.”\(^{16}\) Although Foner looks at this process in the whole, his work lacks a detailed examination of Appalachia necessary to understand how their elites remained connected to mainstream high society. This omission proved the rule and not the exception as most works within the historiography do not explore Appalachia’s relationship to a national culture but rather its isolation from it.

Much more popular within southern historiography are works examining the rural side of Appalachia at the time as it was also in the post-war context that Americans began to view the region as unique. Henry Shapiro’s seminal examination of Appalachia at the time, *Appalachia in Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in American Consciousness, 1870-1920*, argues that it was through a new literary genre, local color writing, and a growing mass media that Appalachia was “discovered” by the rest of the country in the 1870s.\(^{17}\) The literary genre’s popularity resulted in the nation viewing Appalachia “in but not of America.”\(^{18}\) Regional historiography has long covered Appalachia’s portrayal in the national media.\(^{19}\) Appalachia and Western North Carolina became seen as an isolated, backward, and often dangerous place populated by poor, uneducated mountaineers. Interestingly, the nation’s nearsighted impression of the region at the end of the nineteenth century influenced a similar attitude among historians, and the majority of

\(^{16}\) Foner, xxiii.


\(^{18}\) Shapiro, xiv.

work on the region ignores the elite class for the poor.\textsuperscript{20} Although these historians worked to add depth to the fictionalized version of the mountaineer, few bothered exploring the region’s wealthy, urban, and nationally connected citizens.

Luckily, Inscoe’s exploration of the region’s slave owners in the antebellum period has sparked a new interest in this side of the region and works picking up where he left off are now emerging. The most useful monograph looking at Appalachian Reconstruction is Steven E. Nash’s \textit{Reconstruction’s Ragged Edge: The Politics of Postwar life in the Southern Mountains}.\textsuperscript{21} Not only does Nash situate Reconstruction within the region, but he also demonstrates how the former slave-holding elite used their antebellum positions to underpin their postwar power in a time of transition. Nash shows how they were not only able to maintain their former positions, but also enter more fully into a consumer society. Because of this action, the same people in charge in the antebellum period emerged as the region’s New South leaders as well.

Nash’s work relates to a longstanding historical debate over whether the postwar period displayed continuity or change. C.Vann Woodward’s landmark \textit{Origins of the New South} is largely responsible for initializing the debate of continuity and change in the historiography of the New South period. Woodward argues that the prevailing interpretations until the publication of his work favor continuity because they typically argue that the South’s leaders, Redeemers


hoping for continuity, re instituted old ways of life after Reconstruction. Woodward believes that this view is misguided and that the New South represented more a period of change for the region because the so-called Redeemers convinced the middle and upper classes to follow them in their collaboration with Northern elites, ultimately putting the South in a worst position than before the war. Many other historians have seen Reconstruction and the New South as periods of drastic change in the U.S. Although Woodward’s emphasis on change influenced the nature of the historiographic debate, many historians also see validity in arguing that the New South period, regardless of some changes, was, in fact, a period of continuity. For instance, James L. Roark’s Masters without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction argues that little changed in a post-Reconstruction South as the same social, political, and economic ideologies that permeated a slave society continued to do so in the New South period. Thus, Roark contends that it was only a superficial change that occurred in the South as the same ideologies and peoples influencing the region in the antebellum period continued to do so in the New South.

This dissertation draws from these debates and argues that Appalachian elites, in the form of boosters and businessmen, utilized themes of continuity and change within regional promotion based on need. This group recognized that different populations lauded the region for different reasons. Some guests appreciated its history of southern elite vacationing, and some for the rural


image presented in the national media. In fact, most wanted a mix of both. In order to reap the biggest benefits from a growing consumer market that was now purchasing elite vacations, boosters and businessmen developed an advertising campaign that simultaneously presented western North Carolina as urban/rural, traditional/modern, and backward/refined so they could attract the largest number of tourists, from both the southern and northern elite. This paradoxical representation spread to how elites presented themselves and helped them gain social prestige across a wide range of tourist groups as well.

This new approach to representation was necessary because the region’s elite had based their livelihoods in large part on their participation in planter society. Without this system in place, they lacked finances, prestige, and a network of business and political allies. For instance, William Holland Thomas experienced bankruptcy, and Zebulon Vance was removed from political office.24 For many Western North Carolina residents, however, this end was also a beginning as the region’s leading citizens had to examine how best to rebuild in a time of strife, with Reconstruction and the New South came new opportunities. Just like in former times, salvation lay in tourism as it allowed them entry into the country’s new social and political circles. More importantly, it allowed them to sell their biggest product, elite leisure, and through this recover the economics needed to underpin their elite lifestyles. This concern, reestablishing their economic wellbeing, was a hallmark of the New South and helped draw western North Carolina into larger regional happenings.

24 Allen, 160-163.
A New Elite Class and Changes to Western North Carolina’s Luxury Tourism

Unfortunately, it was more difficult than just starting up the old tourist trade once things settled down as the nation as a whole was transformed and the type of leisure local boosters and businessmen sold before the war was not the product the nation desired following Reconstruction. If the New South changed the region’s economy, the nation as a whole transformed as industrialization created a producing and consuming economy very different than what people had known in the antebellum period. As people made money and purchasing became a significant part of what it meant to be American, America’s social hierarchy experienced a dramatic overhaul, as class became based more and more on consumption. Therefore, understanding changes in America’s class system after Reconstruction begins with examinations of the growing American economy, a topic widely covered in the historiography of the time. 25 Alfred Chandler’s breakthrough work, The Invisible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business explores how a change in business practices, what he posits as a shift from Adam Smith’s “invisible hand of market forces” to the “visible hand of management,” resulted in a new class of workers who oversaw the development of an

industrialized America.\textsuperscript{26} Alan Trachtenberg adds to Chandler’s analysis of corporate America in the last decades of the nineteenth century in his examination, \textit{The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age}. Whereas Chandler focuses largely on the managerial class, Trachtenberg provides a more comprehensive examination of how American society changed due to growing industrialization. Trachtenberg explains that his examination is an “effort to find appropriate words and names for the powers which transformed American life in the three decades following the Civil War.”\textsuperscript{27} Specifically, he asks, “how did changing forms and methods in industry and business affect the texture of daily life, and the thinking of Americans?”\textsuperscript{28} Like Chandler, Trachtenburg sees the “emergence of the modern corporate form of ownership” as largely responsible for the transformation of American society at the time, but expands the role of managers and businessmen to only one part of the story and explores how the changes affected multiple groups in the nation.\textsuperscript{29} One of the outcomes from the changes in America’s economy were related changes in wealth, and social positions as new avenues for making money created a new upper-class across the nation.

As the nation developed economically, a new class of wealthy Americans began amassing huge fortunes rather quickly. The old establishment, comprised mainly of NYC’s Knickerbocker elites and a small contingent of elite Southerners, dubbed them nouveau riche because they lacked a history of wealth. Despite being looked down upon for their backgrounds, this group was too wealthy to be ignored and a period of conspicuous consumption began as they worked to buy their way into high-society. These unique qualities inspired Mark Twain and

\textsuperscript{27} Alan Trachtenberg \textit{The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age} (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 4.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
Dudley Charles Warner to coin the phrase the “Gilded Age” as many felt the newly wealthy looked good on the surface but were corrupt underneath.\(^{30}\) Tied to this group was a corresponding economic and political corruption as the same factors that allowed for their massive wealth also resulted in a growing poverty across the nation as the gulf between the rich and poor grew wider.\(^{31}\)

Eric Homberger’s *Mrs. Astor’s New York: Money and Power in a Gilded Age* provides an overview of how the upper class was developing in New York City during the Gilded Age. At the heart of Homberger’s work is how the old Knickerbocker elite clashed with the rising industrial elite, whose new wealth and manner they saw as gauche. This tension would prove to change America’s high society as the old elite held too much influence to be replaced and the new rich were too wealthy not to become part of the upper class. This conflict and the resulting change in lifestyle became known across the nation and influenced social hierarchies well outside of NYC. Homberger argues that the emergence of the new rich in the industrializing America of the late nineteenth century turned America’s high society into celebrities as they entered into a “Faustian bargain” with journalists, the result of which was an “acceptance of the idea that aristocracy was ‘conspicuous.’”\(^{32}\)

This fame reached western North Carolina as locals followed their happenings within their newspapers. For instance, the *Asheville Citizen-Times* article “These Have the Money: Fair Ones Of New York Who Are Rich In Their Own Right” pictured and described New York’s

\(^{30}\) Trachtenberg, 150.


wealthiest citizens for local readers. Not only did this type of print coverage happen across the nation and create a group of famous elites known by the nation as a whole, but it also exposed western North Carolinians to the type of citizens who would be guests in the region. For instance, Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt, the sister-in-law of the region’s most famous Gilded Age tourist, George Vanderbilt, was highlighted in this article. It noted, “she and her husband have a beautiful home in Washington Square, and are among the most brilliant and intellectual of the Four Hundred.” Western North Carolina was unique in that they were not simply reading about the nation’s most elite citizens, they were also living alongside them and were a direct part of their elite lifestyle. Tourism tied them into the national social hierarchy, making them as much a part of the changes occurring in a post-Civil War and post-Reconstruction world as any other group of citizens or region.

The reason why western North Carolina became directly tied to these citizens was that despite a new focus on material purchases as signifiers of class, heritage was still a leading component of the nation’s ideas of the elite citizenry. With this characteristic still central to class construction, fake backgrounds became a component of the new rich’s purchasing; they bought prestige through marriages to former southerner planters, the Knickerbocker elite, and the English aristocracy. Maureen E. Montgomery's *Gilded Prostitution: Status, Money, and Transatlantic Marriages* provides a detailed examination of the marriages between the new rich and British aristocrats, what would become a primary way for the upper class to display status by the end of the Gilded Age. Montgomery posits, “titled marriages were an integral part of the

---

33 “These Have the Money: Fair Ones Of New York Who Are Rich In Their Own Right.” *Asheville Citizen-Times.* May 17, 1890.
34 Ibid.
fierce competition in New York amongst wealthy families for social recognition.” With these complicated class constructions taking place, the nation’s elite adopted a few tried and true symbols of class, including those that pointed to an Old South or British aristocratic heritage, as a way to validate social standing.

Because western North Carolina had always been part of elite society through their tourist connections, they could easily display the symbols that went with this social standing and many new rich began vacationing in the region as a means to display status. In addition, many of the old planter elite who had recovered their economic well-being continued to frequent the region just as in times of old. For boosters and businessmen, this created an opportunity to reinvigorate the tourist market despite national changes. To recover their cycle of prosperity, Western North Carolina’s boosters and businessmen rebranded the tourist market to appeal to the larger changes taking place across the nation and appealed to an elite class who hoped to create status through them. Western North Carolina’s boosters offered them one avenue to create social prestige, as they not only sold luxury tourism but tourism that helped create elite backgrounds.

Many historians have examined the importance of tourism at this point in Western North Carolina’s history. Unlike this study, few focus solely on the role of elite tourism as most chose to examine the significance of the local environment and the mountaineer stereotype on the tourist industry, only one part of a much larger branding effort. Although historians often include elite tourism within much larger studies of western North Carolina’s tourist industry, it

---

seldom garners more than a passing glance and is stripped of its meanings and influences on the region.

One of the leading works exploring tourism in western North Carolina is Richard Starnes’s *Creating the Land of the Sky: Tourism and Society in Western North Carolina*. Starnes explores tourism in the region in its entirety and offers a comprehensive examination of its development and changes. Most importantly, Starnes demonstrates how tourism was vital to the local economy and how “after the Civil War local boosters and outside investors united to develop tourism as the cornerstone of the regional economy.”37 This, in turn, Starnes contends, led “local boosters, resort owners, and civic leaders [to realize] the importance of advertising in attracting visitors.”38 Despite his exploration of some of the elite resorts and elite tourists in the region following the end of Reconstruction, Starnes’s work is more focused on rural tourism and the development of the “tourist image.”39 Although Starnes accurately see the differences between the rural and urban parts of the region, and how these differences created tension among western North Carolina’s people, Starnes sees the tourist image as isolated to mostly the rural side of the region since “the tourist image of western North Carolina occurred at the same time Appalachia itself was emerging as a region in the national imagination.”40 Ultimately, Starnes fails to explore the nuances of regional imagery as no single tourist image emerged as local boosters and businessmen created as varied an advertising campaign as possible to develop a wide a tourist base.

Starnes’s edited collection *Southern Journeys: Tourism, History, & Culture in the Modern South* also explores the role of tourism on western North Carolina’s culture and

---

37 Starnes, 2.
38 Ibid, 5.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
economic well-being from approximately 1880-1990. Starnes contends “tourism is one of the most powerful economic forces in the South” and that tourism “has wrought pronounced changes in the contours of southern society.”

Despite the rather large argument laid out in the collection’s introduction, and the contention that the collection will examine “tourism as a causal force in southern history,” the essays within fail to fully consider the role of elite tourism on regional development and overwhelmingly focus on rural tourism as the cornerstone of the tourist trade in the region. For instance, in his essay, Daniel Peirce posits that the main impetus for the good roads movement in western North Carolina was the development of the national parks. This overly simplistic examination ignores good roads’ importance in attracting elite visitors to resort hotels like Battery Park and Grove Park Inn long before the park initiatives began, a common problem with western North Carolina’s tourist historiography.

The development of the parks has long been part of Appalachian historiography with works such as Daniel S. Pierce’s *The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park* and Margaret Lynn Brown’s *The Wild East: A Biography of the Great Smoky Mountains* looking at the economic, political, and social impacts of the park’s development on its people and the region. Although examinations like these are invaluable to understanding the region, they lack an in-depth examination of the elite class and how park development corresponded to elite leisure. This dissertation draws from these earlier works and expands their scope by providing this oversight.

What these examinations fail to explore is that at the heart of Western North Carolina’s branding campaign was paradoxical advertising meant to meet the needs of a new and diverse

---

41 *Southern Journeys*, 1.
42 *Southern Journeys*, 7.
tourist clientele. Because the nation was captivated by imagery depicting the region as an untouched wilderness populated by rugged and antiquated peoples, local boosters capitalized off the region’s rural fame. Thus a significant part of their branding went into the promotion of their local geography. By the turn of the century, this would prove to be a significant part of local promotion as a new interest in conservation saw the region earmarked as a good sight for national parks. However, the rural aspect of Appalachia that inspired park development was only one part tourism. By drawing from all the things that made Western North Carolina popular and well known across the nation, boosters and businessmen began promoting three main themes and the three main paradoxes; western North Carolina was depicted as a modern New South city yet steeped in Old South culture, a growing urban center within a rural paradise, and as cultivated citizens but also hillbillies. This two-sided promotional ploy was meant to accommodate the antebellum families who could still afford to visit the region after Reconstruction as well as the whole new tourist market based in the north. Western North Carolina’s boosters offered them any version of the region they could want.

**The Progressive Era and the Beginnings of Middle-Class Tourism**

Because western North Carolina’s tourist branding responded to national consumption and national mentality, it was constantly in a state of flux. Luckily, the decision to focus on ideas of continuity and change saved boosters and businessmen needing to revamp their regional branding and promotion with every change in the national zeitgeist. Rather, they had the much easier task of adapting their product and their advertising to reflect new tastes. The upper-class branding that began in America’s Gilded Age proved to be rather lasting, and few changes occurred within it until after World War One as it was still the Southern planter and British
aristocratic markers that helped show that citizens were elite across the nation. Elite citizens still journeyed to the region to enjoy modern comforts among the wild geography, thus still expecting the paradoxical themes long popular with high-end tourism. Of course to stay appealing to a new generation of the nation’s wealthiest, some changes in luxury tourism were needed, mainly staying up to date with tastes and trends, but little else changed.

The real change in Progressive Era branding occurred not within the upper class, but rather the middle. This new tourist base allowed boosters and businessmen a chance to diversify their product further, and elite leisure was adapted in the beginning of the twentieth century also to accommodate the needs of the middle class. Because consumption was how the middle class also showed their status in the nation, mimicking the purchasing of the upper class to a lesser degree, their vacations looked similar to their upper-class counterparts, but on a smaller scale. However, it is too simplistic to think of the middle class as the upper classes’ poor relations as they were unique in their right and developed their mentality that was separate from that of their upper-class counterparts.

The development of the middle class and their unique qualities is one topic that historians of the Progressive Era have explored in depth. Historian Robert Wiebe’s exploration of the development of the middle class serves as a primary starting point for understanding this group’s unique ethos. Wiebe argues that before this time, the nation divided into “island communities” that seldom looked outside of themselves for social belonging, but as these isolated communities slowly joined mainstream America at the end of the nineteenth century, a new middle class developed.44 It took time for the middle class to see themselves as a united group across the nation, but by the end of the century, they “[tried] to locate themselves within a national

system.” What this group found was that they shared “similar spirit, similar experiences, even roughly similar aspirations,” all coalescing into a new type of elite American. Wiebe focuses strongly on profession as a primary means of understanding how this group untied. Wiebe explains that profession was essential to middle class belonging as “their skills gave them the deference of their neighbors while opening natural avenues into the nation at large.”

Specifically, Wiebe identifies “two broad categories” of professions making up the middle class; “one included those with strong professional aspirations in such fields as medicine, law, economics, administration, social work, and architecture,” and the second group were, “specialists in business, in labor, and in agriculture.”

Like Wiebe, Historian Robert Blumin links the end of the Civil War with the beginnings of a “clearly defined social structure in American history” part of which included the new middle class. Blumin also looks at work as a significant way the middle class created belonging in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning decades of the twentieth. Blumin, however, expands on Wiebe’s examination and adds nuance by subdividing the middle class into blue-collar and white-collar workers. Although these two groups were both part of the emerging social hierarchy at the time, and both saw themselves as part of the overall middle class, they lived quite different lives. According to Blumin, belonging to the middle class was more nuanced as the type of work people did created different middle-class lifestyles.

Although Wiebe and Blumin are correct in their assumptions that work was a primary way the group united, they put too much emphasis on this single aspect of their lives and fail to

45 Ibid.
46 Ibid, 112
48 Wiebe, 112.
49Stuart Blumin, The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1790-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 258.
50 Blumin, 259-275.
see how profession was only one part of what made the middle class. Many other historians have examined the middle class, and a more complex picture of them has emerged from their more complex histories. Particularly, examinations of how consumption, made possible in large part due to the professions Wiebe and Blumin focus on, demonstrate how people across the nation created markers of their class.\textsuperscript{51} For instance, Dolores Hayden has examined how housing patterns and housing styles became a significant aspect of what defined the middle class. However, it was more than just the ownership of a home that created middle-class culture. Ruth Schwartz Cowan looks at how the overall middle-class ethos, influenced largely by education and science, resulted in a new concern for health and homes offered middle-class women places to create healthy families, a sure sign of their status. Much of how they accomplished this goal was tied to consumption as modern conveniences, such as new domestic technologies, allowed them to create healthier environments. However, Cowan posits that far from making women’s lives easier, this new obsession with health caused them to work even harder as it was simply a change in domestic duties rather than a lessening of them. Both Hayden’s look at homes and Cowan’s examination of the lifestyles that occurred within them are part of what Maria Maskovitiz calls the “standard of living” that marked the middle class in the Progressive Era. Maskovitiz argues that by purchasing the same objects, the middle class created belonging as they created similar lifestyles.

Despite many works exploring the development of the middle class at this time, Appalachia’s relationship to this phenomenon has either been only loosely implied or outright ignored. Appalachia’s, and especially western North Carolina’s, absence from this historiography is problematic because tourism was a form of consumption that created the middle-class standard of living. The ability to purchase vacations marked a citizen as part of the affluent middle classes and opened up western North Carolina to this group. It was this unique middle-class ethos that western North Carolina’s boosters and businessmen responded to as they began a new promotional ploy and their middle-class branding responded to some very specific qualities that their new clients would desire. These became embedded within their product, and soon the middle class was buying leisure uniquely promoted for them.

One component of this branding had to do with race as this in large part informed middle-class identity. Specifically, the middle class held unique ideas about the intersection of race, class, and gender. Much of this belief system was underpinned by a developing racial science, including Darwinism and eugenics, which identified Anglo-Saxon, or what they saw as traditionally American, ancestry as the top of the racial hierarchy. As the nation witnessed a period of immigration and a burgeoning free African American population, most whites responded with a period of xenophobia and racial fear. Believing that the white race was in danger of being overrun by foreign or racially impure cultures, they looked to “traditional”

---


Americans and their ways of life as saviors of the white race. Academics like Stanley G. Hall began promoting ways for the white middle class to maintain their spots at the top of racial hierarchy. For him, the answer lied in a return to a “primitive” lifestyle. Hall saw this as necessary for development and therefore necessary for white men to realize their racial superiority. As such, a new interest in the outdoors swept white America.

Because of these new ideas about race, class, and gender, many in the white middle class became captivated with Appalachia’s isolation and credited it with preserving its citizens’ Anglo-Saxon purity and traditional white ways of life. Because the region was gaining attention across the nation in different types of mass media, including print, music, and film, boosters capitalized off the region’s publicity to launch their promotional campaign that highlighted the very things that made it so interesting to the middle class. Sticking to their tried and true method of a paradoxical campaign that relied on themes of continuity and change, they advertised the region’s rural side alongside its urban comforts. Thus, Progressive Era promotions focused on rural/urban, backward/refined dichotomies that appealed to the middle classes’ desires to confront the primitive wilderness while also purchasing their form of elite leisure. By vacationing in western North Carolina, middle-class citizens could follow purchasing patterns that marked them as part of the national middle class while also experiencing the primitive lifestyles that reinforced their racial, class and gender superiority.

Organization

The first chapter of this dissertation, “Constructing Western North Carolina: The Role of Railroads, Good Roads, and Businesses in the Development of Post-Civil War Luxury Tourism,” looks at the region’s emerging infrastructure following Reconstruction and how it served as a cornerstone of the Western North Carolina’s new branding efforts. By bringing in modern
conveniences, particularly transportation which helped dispel the myth of an isolated
Appalachia, boosters and businessmen set the stage for more specific tourist promotions because they created urban centers with the amenities the nation’s elite expected. Specifically, this chapter looks at how after the Southern Railway reached Asheville in 1880 a new period of boosterism began. Because the railroad offered a clear symbol of both the region’s New South initiatives and its connection to mainstream America, western North Carolinian’s had a new cornerstone for their tourist promotions. They added to this theme of modernity by becoming wholehearted supporters of good roads. Because the good roads movement was something that helped define the New South Era, it allowed the region’s boosters and businessmen another way to show their own New South verve and the region’s growing accessibility. The railroad and good roads made the region more attractive for investment, and soon the region began advertising its growing businesses, especially within Asheville, Appalachia’s largest city. This announced that the region was keeping pace overall New South development and was therefore far from the isolated and rustic locale so popular within local color. Boosters and businessmen followed these developments with an initial period of advertising that at first glance seems to have little to do with tourism. They spent more time showing the nation Western North Carolina’s New South potential than encouraging visitors to come. This advertising decision was meant to lay the groundwork for the region’s complex branding efforts as the region’s leading citizens understood that without a modern infrastructure they could never help to attract an elite client base because no matter how famous and lauded the environment, few would choose the visit western North Carolina if they could not expect at least some modern conveniences while there.
The second chapter, “Building Homes and Building Status: How New Houses Symbolized Position in Western North Carolina in the New South Period,” follows the next phase of Western North Carolina’s branding campaign and explores the role of the region’s own elite class and how their entry into consuming society helped create an image of a prosperous Appalachian citizenry. The image of a modern, prosperous elite class was vital to the overall tourist trade because the nation’s wealthiest citizens were not only looking for a region a place to have luxury vacations, but also hosts and hostesses to socialize with at those places. The region’s elite had long performed these roles and made sure to show the nation that they were capable of keeping up this function in a time of changed circumstances. This meant both promoting their former lives as part of the Southern slaveocracy as well as new positions as leaders of the modern, New South. Thus, the same themes of continuity and changed that permeated the whole of their branding efforts was also part of their self-promotion, a self-promotion necessary for the success of regional tourism.

In particular, this chapter explores how the local elite utilized housing within promotional materials as a means to reflect their modern social positions. Because housing was one of the cornerstones of conspicuous consumption across the nation, and regardless of where someone lived a shared sense of style and housing patterns announced his or her social status, local elites could show the nation the types of people they were by the houses in which they lived. With this in mind, a period of building took place in western North Carolina and architects, like Asheville’s Richard Sharp Smith who gained fame for building the Biltmore House, were hired by the region’s wealthy to build homes that announced their status. For these citizens, it was important that their homes conjured prevailing symbols of national elitism and most chose to build either Southern Colonial or Queen Anne style homes. The embodiment of continuity and
change, these homes were meant to either show its occupants’ illustrious backgrounds or their modernity as the Southern Colonial style copied the grand mansions of the antebellum planter while Queen Anne was a style totally new to the Gilded Age.

Although home styles could do much to show a residents’ status, a house’s location became as important as style when showing prestige. Although the former planter lifestyle remained in vogue with the nation’s new elite and the southern colonial style continued to be a favorite among them, living on isolated farms, where most of the authentic plantation houses were situated, was far from popular in the Gilded Age. As the nation became more industrialized and the nation’s upper-class citizens became invested in these new ventures, living in cities or on their edges became a component of the elite lifestyle. In the south, moving into urban areas helped show the New South spirit as it was the adoption of new business practices, centered in the cities, which marked southern progress. Western North Carolinians also began building homes in urban centers as both displays of their status as well as for convenience as many entered into professions that required easy access to towns and cities. With this shaping elite lifestyles, housing developments like Asheville’s Montford became popular as wealthy citizens could build opulent homes well within city limits. By promoting these homes and housing developments in postcards, newspaper articles, and photographs, local boosters and businessmen showed the nation the urban, cultivated side of the region and met one part of their overall branding campaign.

The third chapter, “Luxury Hotels and the Resurgence of Elite Tourism in Western North Carolina,” explores how Western North Carolina’s modern infrastructure and elite class was necessary for the ultimate goal of redeveloping an elite tourist market. Specifically, this chapter looks at the region’s Gilded Age tourist market within modern, luxurious hotels like White
Sulphur Springs, Battery Park, and The Manor, and how these spaces became the perfect places to bring together themes of continuity and change.

Resort hotels became the center of elite tourism in the last decades of the nineteenth century because they combined all the other components of the regional branding campaign into single spaces. Embedded within these components was the oft-paradoxical symbolism pivotal to the region’s overall success with tourists from across the country. Luxury resort owners and managers wisely marketed their establishments as places of both continuity and change to appeal to a wide variety of potential clients and whatever elements they looked for in their vacations. One way they did so was by presenting these new establishments as part of the New South spirit. These hotels added to the local infrastructure and helped grow the southern economy as hotel owners were producing and selling luxury tourism. This connected the region to not only a producing and consuming economy but also created avenues for the region’s elite class to socially connect with the nation’s wealthiest citizens.

Because the same factors that influenced elite class construction in the nation at large were also responsible for developing prestige for local citizens, resort owners incorporated the same types of architectural detailing into their hotel designs as elite citizens did within their homes. In many ways, hotels stood as the greatest symbol of the region’s elite side as they could best mimic the conspicuous consumption of the Gilded Age. Embedded within the hotels’ styling was symbolic capital as owners chose to either evoke the Old South nostalgia through Southern Colonial designs or modernity through Queen Anne architecture. In this way hotels represented both continuity and change as they were meant to evoke the Old South tourism the region was so long known for a while still offering modern amenities and lifestyles. Tied to this was the utilization of hotel space for entertaining. Hotels offered elite Appalachians another
space to perform their roles as hosts and hostesses. Because their reputations were largely based off both antebellum lineages and New South wealth, tourists from a wide variety of backgrounds looked to the local elite as social equals. These connections validated the region’s elite status and expanded elite social circles and social influences well outside of the local or even southern sphere. Because elite tourists also wanted scenic locales that reminded them of the past, and what many saw as a simpler, better way of life, hotel owners and managers situated their establishments in spots that highlighted the region’s beauty. They made pains not only to show that they offered the best of both worlds, refinement and natural beauty, but also catered to their guests’ needs. Because resort hotels incorporated all of the components and themes of the region’s elite brand into their spaces and disseminated these widely in their advertising, luxury resorts epitomized the product Western North Carolinians were working so hard to advertise, elite leisure and best serve to illustrate the region’s new tourism.

The fourth chapter, “The Beginning of Middle-class Tourism in Western North Carolina,” explores the adaptive nature of Western North Carolina’s branding campaign as it explores how themes of continuity and change easily accommodated fluctuations in the national zeitgeist. This chapter examines how the emergence of a nationally self-conscience and active white, middle class corresponded to a new period of tourism in western North Carolina in the Progressive Era. Recognizing that the middle class, like their elite peers, were also utilizing consumption as a means of showing their class, boosters and businessmen expanded their branding efforts to accommodate a slightly less affluent group of tourists who also hoped to purchase elite tourism. This expanded client base required very little change on the part of regional leaders as the same paradoxical components embedded in elite leisure still appealed to the middle class but for slightly different reasons.
One reason Western North Carolina was so appealing to the middle class during the Progressive Era was growing racial fear across the nation. As African Americans and a new influx of immigrants, mainly from southern and eastern Europe, began to change the country’s social makeup, white Americans reacted by working to reestablish old racial hierarchies and ideologies. This pursuit corresponded with a new importance put on higher education and science, both important symbols of middle-class status, as academics became a means to understand and order society. Appalachia became part of the discourse when academics and reformers began to see it as a bastion of Anglo-Saxon lineage. Because this resulted in people seeing the region as a slice of “traditional America,” new attention was put on the region. Writers like outdoorsman Horace Kephart began to publish accounts of the region’s rural geography and antiquated peoples. Soon the region’s natural landscape became even better known across the nation, and many tourists and locals alike began initiatives to preserve it. Through their efforts, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park began, and they helped preserve the rural side of the region so important to local promotion.

This newfound attention caused many of the white, middle-class to venture into the region believing that a connection to a natural landscape would aid their development. Academics like Stanley G. Hall popularized this idea by promoting the benefits a more rugged lifestyle in healthy male development. Hall’s ideas created connections between race, gender, and environment, all huge boons to western North Carolina’s middle-class tourist market as many ventured into the region to have their rustic experiences, the type of strenuous life so popularized by celebrities like Theodore Roosevelt. To capitalize off these fades, boosters and businessmen in Western North Carolina created avenues for the white, middle class to “civilize” the wilderness. It was this process that was considered so important to development and
therefore the perseverance of the white race. It also became a huge part of being middle class at the time and worked to show status.

Men like Edwin Wiley Grove accommodated these new tourist needs by creating residential neighborhoods that offered the combination of scenic beauty and modern amenities. Even more so than the streetcar suburbs of the previous generation, these new suburbs situated on the edges of cities and towns offered convenience to urban centers while fully incorporating the local landscape into their layouts. This allowed residents to build the trendy bungalow styles homes or elite southern colonials that announced their modernity and wealth while living amongst the celebrated “wilderness” of western North Carolina. In this way, the same paradoxical imagery that marked elite tourism became significant in middle-class tourism as well. Although they shared themes of continuity and change, each embraced them for different reasons. The genius of the regional branding campaign was that boosters developed it so that almost any mindset could be manipulated to fit these themes thus appealing to a truly large group of potential tourists while making them feel as if the experience was personal to them.

The last chapter, “Tourism Gets Religion: The Emergence of Middle-Class Protestant Retreats in Western North Carolina,” explores just how adaptive regional branding was as it looks at a specific group of middle-class tourists, Protestant Christians, during the Progressive Era and how themes of continuity and change could accommodate diversified tourist groups. Protestants vacationers found the region appealing for the same reasons as other middle-class tourists but also grounded their interests in religious sentiment. Looking at the development of Lake Junaluska Assembly in Haywood County, North Carolina this chapter shows that a religious-minded middle class also used the consumption of elite leisure as a sign of their status. However, unlike their secular peers, their interest in the region was part of their religious
sentiment and their desire to experience paradoxical vacations with a mix of old/new, rural/urban, and rustic/refined not only helped with realizing their middle-class obligations but their Christian ones as well.

Western North Carolina’s Boosters and Methodist clergymen, in particular, Haywood County’s own Bishop James Atkins who was both, worked together to develop and promote Lake Junaluska to meet these demands. Therefore, the resort’s organizers built it with many of the same components that made Grove Park so popular with white, middle-class tourists a few years earlier. Like this secular community, Lake Junaluska allowed its residents to have their own taming of the wilderness as it included both scenic surroundings and modern amenities, including trendy bungalow cottages. This allowed them to display their middle-class status as their vacations both announced their affluence and ability to be active in the consumer market while also remaining true to their religious sentiments.

The epilogue explores just how lasting the regional branding campaign begun in the last decades of the nineteenth century was as it picks up following World War One. If one war and the transformations in American society following it required a wholly new approach to regional promotion and the tourist market, the true success of boosters and businessmen’s schemes became clear in the twenties, as no new efforts were needed. By focusing on themes of continuity and change, boosters and businessmen created an almost foolproof plan to selling elite leisure, as it could be adapted to meet any changed circumstances. Thus, western North Carolina’s paradoxical imagery became perfect for the Jazz Age as tourists tended to either want a rural paradise as an escape from a modern time or a luxurious escape to a long time hotspot for the nation’s wealthiest. By continuing to promote a rural/urban, antiquated/modern, and
cultivated/unrefined locale, western North Carolina remained a haven for the middle and upper classes well into the twentieth century.
Chapter One: Constructing Western North Carolina: The Role of Railroads, Good Roads, and Businesses in the Development of Post-Civil War Luxury Tourism

One of the most important developments in Western North Carolina during the New South period was when the Western North Carolina Railroad reached Asheville in 1880. Despite its importance, this branch of the railroad was only a small part of the state’s overall rail expansion. An article in Atlanta’s *Daily Constitution*, the mouthpiece of the New South, captured the importance of the railroad to the development of North Carolina when it wrote, the “people of the state are very anxious that the railroad shall be built, as it will be an important link in the great railway system of the country.” For North Carolina’s people linking with the national railway system was important because it allowed the state to better connect with the country’s growing industrial economy, the truest sign of modernity at the time. Becoming active in the new economy, a cornerstone of what it meant to be American at the time, was also at the heart of the New South as economic recovery showed the country that a defeated South was resilient and was still an active part of the nation as a whole.

54 Wilmington Star, January 1, 1880; Raleigh News, January 1, 1880; Charlotte Observer, January 10, 1880.
If the railroad was important to the state for this reason, it was vital to Western North Carolina for this and more. The importance of the railroad to regional improvement did not go unnoticed across the country, and one paper in Baltimore wrote, the “Western North Carolina Railroad, from Salisbury to Tennessee, has done a great deal for the development of the whole western region of the state.”\textsuperscript{57} Improved transportation into the region, including new railways and good roads, allowed for new regional growth and prosperity as it helped revitalize the region’s elite tourist trade, a staple of the regional economy and the basis of the social hierarchy since white settlement a century earlier.\textsuperscript{58} Tourism was so important to the region that it became a cornerstone of the region’s very identity touching almost everyone’s life in one way or another. Although the Civil War and Reconstruction did not totally end tourism to the region, both greatly reduced it.

Western North Carolinians worked to reestablish their tourist economy because, in a time when production was at the center of the country’s development, western North Carolina produced leisure. Western North Carolina entered into a cycle of prosperity where tourism spurred economic growth, economic growth spurred regional improvements, and regional improvements spurred luxury tourism. To keep this cycle flowing, the local business elite and local boosters began new branding efforts to entice elite tourists to the region. For western North Carolinians, tourists were their consumers, and they worked tirelessly to advertise their products, luxury vacations, to them. They relied on a new development to do so, marketed advertising. According to historian Daniel Horowitz, the “role of advertising changed from providing unembellished information to surrounding products with more compelling qualities than they

\textsuperscript{57} “WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA: A Letter from the Land of the Sky in the Old North State,” Special Correspondence of Baltimore Sun, May 1, 1888; Asheville Semi-Weekly Citizen, January 10, 1885; Richmond Dispatch, May 30, 1885; Asheville Democrat, January 16, 1890.

\textsuperscript{58} John Alexander Williams, Appalacha: A History (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Peter McCandless, Slavery, Disease, and Suffering in the Southern Lowcountry (Cambridge University Press, 2011).
inherently had.”

The new railroads, good roads initiatives, and thriving economy in western North Carolina became the first step of elite promotion as the improved infrastructure served as one quality of Western North Carolina’s product. This growing infrastructure showed the nation that western North Carolina was a modern and developing area, a must since elite tourists would not visit a region that lacked the amenities they had come to expect.

However, there was much more to the region’s promotion than just showing what it had. Local boosters and businessmen also worked to develop the region’s image by imbuing it with symbolic meaning, another pivotal part of their advertising. This meant negotiating different types of themes and symbols to appeal to the greatest number of potential guests. Part of the reason why multiple versions of the region needed to be promoted was a change in clientele. In 1887 Asheville business developer and local booster Walter B. Gwyn summed up the expanded reach the population hoped tourism would take in the New South period when he told the Atlanta Constitution, “we look not only to the great South…but to the north, and the east, and the west.”

Western North Carolina’s boosters and businessmen branded the region using themes of continuity and change because it was the best way to appeal to a growing tourist base. With this goal in mind, boosters created multifaceted, often paradoxical, images of western North Carolina. The three main themes and the three main paradoxes that grew from them included depictions of western North Carolina as being both simultaneously a modern New South city yet steeped in Old South culture, a growing urban center within a rural paradise, and a cultivated citizenry but also hillbillies.


60 "IN SKYLAND: Among the Clouds and Mountain Peaks of Asheville, N. C.,” Atlanta Constitution, April 10, 1887.
Western North Carolina Before the War

The cycle of prosperity that created an elite Appalachia began in the antebellum period as both the local economy and status was dependent on antebellum tourism. According to historian Peter McCandless the “lure of the elevated lands near and in the Blue Ridge Mountains became increasingly attractive to health pilgrims after the Revolution.”61 “Vacation[s] in the highlands” particularly appealed to “low country families” in the nineteenth century who visited “spas in North Carolina and Virginia.”62 Part of the allure of summering in the mountains had to do with the influences of the British aristocracy on the planter lifestyle. Historian John Alexander Williams links the popularity of the mountain vacation destination among Southern planters during the antebellum period to their imitation of British gentry customs. Vacationing in the mountains was an approximation of the gentry visiting Bath.63 Once the region became a staple for the Southern elite, Western North Carolinians advertised widely to attract a high-class clientele using its history as its biggest feature. One such article explained that the region “had so long been the resort of persons from the low country…that many of the wealthier class built themselves summer-houses here… Many of these residences are elegant, with neat lawns and pretty shrubbery…”64

Judge Mitchell Campbell King and his wife and children were one elite, Southern family who spent their summers in western North Carolina. King was a teacher, lawyer, and Judge in Charleston, South Carolina, and the owner of a large plantation in Georgia. Around 1830 King made Flat Rock, North Carolina his permanent summer residence when he remodeled a more

---

62 Ibid.
modest dwelling into what became known as Argyle.\textsuperscript{65} The King family, like others in similar positions, were more than just visitors; they were also active members of the local community.

Due to his participation in community affairs, local citizens remembered King and his “landed estate” for many generations after he died.\textsuperscript{66} One reason for this acceptance was the “very wealthy Southerner[s]” contribution to local development.\textsuperscript{67} King donated forty acres to officially develop Hendersonville, the county seat, as a “little city of the mountains.”\textsuperscript{68} Many of King’s children, including his son Mitchell Campbell King and his daughter, Margaret King Huger, also spent much of their adult lives in western North Carolina well after the end of the Civil War and Reconstruction. When Mitchel Campbell King passed away, the local community eulogized him as a “favorite with the people.”\textsuperscript{69} The community continued to see the family as part of their local society well past the antebellum period and when Lieutenant Campbell King, Judge Mitchel King’s great grandson, who lived in South Carolina, was awarded the French Cross of Honor in 1917 the local paper boasted, “Major Campbell King is a Hendersonville County man, and Hendersonville is to lay rejoicing over his recognition and the honor conferred upon him.”\textsuperscript{70}

Western North Carolinians entered into a much larger Southern society through the social connections they made with tourists while serving as hosts and hostesses for them. These connections became important because it was around this time that people began to see Appalachia as having two halves. Historian Cratis Williams’s argument that Appalachian status was related to where one lived and what one did, resulting in citizens with the highest statuses

\textsuperscript{65}“Mitchell King Papers, 1801-1862,” Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
\textsuperscript{66} The Western North Carolina Times, August 4, 1905.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{70} Asheville Citizen-Times, September 22, 1917.
living in towns, has largely been accepted within historiography as an accurate model of social development.\textsuperscript{71} Appalachian elites owned the best land because they were part of what Ina and John Van Noppen called the “settler class.”\textsuperscript{72} Many of these settlers went into the region for investment purposes and were able to purchase “good bottom land” instead of the land in the mountains.\textsuperscript{73} This flatter land, in turn, was more profitable for farming. It was also on the flatter lands of the valleys where most urban centers were developed creating a clear difference in both the geography and citizenry of Appalachia’s rural areas and its urban centers.

Although large-scale agriculture was never a significant part of the region’s economic welfare, the nation tied slave ownership to class, resulting in the largest landowners being part of the “slave-owning elite” active in “almost every Appalachian county where slavery was legal.”\textsuperscript{74} The total percentage of slaves in each western North Carolina county was usually between five and ten percent. For example, in Buncombe County in 1850 there were 1717 slaves, 107 Freedmen, and 11,601 white citizens.\textsuperscript{75} Nearby Rutherford County had the most slaves in any western North Carolina county in 1850 with 2,905.\textsuperscript{76} It also had 220 freedmen and 10,425 white citizens.\textsuperscript{77}

The Love family serves as one example of western North Carolina’s slave-owning elite.

The Love family could trace their ancestry back to James Bell, “prominent in early affairs” of Augusta County, Virginia who was an ancestor of “Mary Bell, the mother of George

\textsuperscript{71} Richard B. Drake, \textit{A History of Appalachia} (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2001), 184.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} Richard B. Drake, \textit{A History of Appalachia} (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2001), 86.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
His daughter, Dorcas Bell, married Samuel Love who also boasted an impressive family lineage. The Loves were a “part of the sturdy English stock that rallied around the king during the long conflict between the Cavaliers and round heads in the seventeenth century.” Their connection to the Cavaliers marked them as part of an early Southern aristocracy, a position they would retain for generations to come.

The British aristocracy and the planter South were interrelated, as it was the imitation of British gentry customs that evolved into the planter lifestyle in the first place. Robert Beverly’s 1705 book, *History and the Present State of Virginia* expressed the hope that the American South could replicate an “idealized picture of the English countryside.” Antebellum elites linked their lifestyle to their presumed heritage believing that they were part of the “aristocratic Cavaliers, supposedly of Norman descent, who had then settled in the Southern states.” This approximation of the British gentry would eventually evolve into a unique Southern culture; based on what historian Thomas Cobb calls a “Cavalier legend,” and would come to represent the Old South ideal, lauded by many across the nation.

Sharing this type of background, Samuel’s and Dorcas’s sons, Thomas and Robert, moved to western North Carolina following the Revolutionary War and became leaders in the region’s political, economic, and social affairs. In 1808 Thomas founded Haywood County in western North Carolina. In 1810 Robert founded Waynesville, the county seat, after donating a significant portion of land for it. The Love family would own land abutting the town’s main

---

79 Ibid.
82 Ibid, 22.
street and downtown for generations. Robert chose the town’s name in honor of his commanding officer in the Revolutionary War, General Anthony Wayne. Local society also honored the brothers for years to come and they became symbols of the region’s antebellum high-society. The Daughters of the American Revolution remembered Robert Love as the “founder of Waynesville, one of the pioneers of Western North Carolina, a soldier of the Revolutionary War… and for thirty years a presidential elector.”  

Because the Love family was early settlers of the region, they owned land typically considered better for development. They also already had wealth and position before arriving in the region. Together, these two advantages set the stage for James R. Love, Robert’s son, to become the largest slaveholder in the county with 55 slaves and ten slave houses by 1860. In addition to running a moderately sized farm and a number of other business interests, Love was also active in both local and state politics and served in various political positions throughout his life. One of this most important achievements was when he was elected to “fill the vacancy caused by the inability of Col. Robert Love” to serve as a “member of the Electoral College.”

Appalachian slaves worked more diversified jobs than many other slaves in the South, and only a handful were employed in farming since the region was not suited to the large-scale agriculture that marked the plantation South. Because slavery was not as vital to the economic wellbeing of the region, some part of slave ownership had to do with image building. This slave-owning, Appalachian families, like the Love family, were active participants in the larger

85 Raleigh Weekly Standard, December 14, 1836.
86 Inscoe, 62-65.
Southern society. Slave ownership was part of that status, both economically and socially, as it set the parameters of class across the South.87

Local Color and the Emergence of the Hillbilly Stereotype

With such a long history of elite tourism and an elite class active within western North Carolina before the Civil War, it would seem as if America’s post-war, high society would have had little difficulty viewing the region as a perfect travel destination full of suitable hosts and hostesses. However, western North Carolina had two problems following Reconstruction that threatened both their image as a luxury tourist destination and a region with a refined citizenry. First, if some former antebellum families were still able to come to the region following the end of planter society, many were not. Economic and social changes caused many families to lose the money or lifestyle that made vacationing in the region possible.88 To overcome the loss of their Southern clientele, boosters turned to other regions to find new tourists. These new tourists did not have the long-standing relationships with the local community and were not as willing to view Appalachians, even those within the urban centers, as part of an elite class.

Adding to this problem was that following the Civil War and Reconstruction, much of the country held a different view of Appalachia than that of antebellum, elite tourists. Many saw Appalachia as a homogenized geographic region that was utterly cut off from the rest of the country. Due to this presumed isolation, many Americans saw Appalachians as at best old-

---

87 Drake, 86.
fashioned and, at worst, barbarians. Historian Henry Shapiro has argued that it was through a new literary genre, local color writing, that Appalachia was “discovered” by the rest of the country in the 1870s.\textsuperscript{89} Local color stories offered Americans a glimpse into other regions, and soon demand was high across the country.

As a result of this demand, multiple literary magazines such as \textit{Lippincott’s}, \textit{Scribner’s}, \textit{Atlantic Monthly}, and the \textit{Saturday Evening Post} began publishing local color writing to offer readers their desired glances into Southern folkways.\textsuperscript{90} An increase in national publications during the last decades of the nineteenth century helped connect the country as people were reading the same articles regardless of location. For example, by 1913 the \textit{Saturday Evening Post} enjoyed a weekly circulation of two million.\textsuperscript{91} Through shared reading, a new sense of social and class consciousness began to develop as people saw themselves belonging to social groups well outside of their local regions. Taking advantage of these new identities, publishers developed thematic publications and specific papers, magazines, etc. were meant for specific audiences with their content reflecting intended readership.\textsuperscript{92} Local color was part of the increase in readership across the nation, and these stories appealed to Americans thirsty for tales of old-fashioned folkways as a respite from modernization.

Local color authors like Mary Noailles Murfree of Tennessee depicted a rural Appalachia “in but not of America.”\textsuperscript{93} Many readers took these fictional sketches as fact and across the nation people accepted Appalachians as a “peculiar people’ and their “contemporary

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{89} Henry D. Shapiro, \textit{Appalacchia in Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in American Consciousness, 1870-1920} (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), xi.
\item \textsuperscript{90} Bill Hardwig, \textit{Upon Provincialism: Southern Literature and National Periodical Culture. 1870-1900} (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 5.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Ibid, 186.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Shapiro, xiv.
\end{itemize}
ancestors.”

Local color was in many ways responsible for turning Appalachian citizens into hillbillies through their debased depictions of the region’s inhabitants. In 1900 the term hillbilly officially entered the American vernacular when it appeared in the *New York Journal*, and soon it became synonymous with Appalachian citizens. Historian Karen Cox explains the “enduring image of hillbillies was that of Southern mountain people who were caricatures of the region and a separate ‘race’ of people who represented the last vestiges of a premodern society.”

However, the hillbilly’s appeal was also very much a response to modernity and historian Anthony Harkins posits, “‘the hillbilly’ served the dual and seemingly contradictory purposes of allowing the ‘mainstream’…American audience to imagine a romanticized past, while simultaneously enabling that same audience to recommit itself to modernity by caricaturing the negative aspects of premodern, uncivilized society.”

Local color authors’ use of the hillbilly image in their works was surprising considering many knew that those stereotypes were inaccurate. Murfree was very familiar with the most cultivated Appalachia having long vacationed within its luxury hotels. Murfree was a typical upper-class Southerner of the antebellum and New South eras and “presented herself as a cultured and refined lady.” She was born on Grantland, a cotton plantation close to the middle Tennessee town of Murfreesboro; citizens named the town to honor her great-grandfather’s accomplishments in the Revolutionary War. Murfree developed her image of rural Mountaineers while summering in the town of Beersheba Springs, Tennessee. This urban town, on the edge of the Cumberland Mountains, was a gathering place for the Southern elite similar to antebellum

97 Harkins, 7.
98 Hardwig, 48.
Asheville. In 1878 it was noted as an attraction for the “gentleman and ladies of the South” to visit and enjoy “games, music, and other society pleasures.”\textsuperscript{99} If Appalachia's citizens were as debased as those presented in Murfree’s greatest work, \textit{In the Tennessee Mountains}, where she describes an Appalachian man as a “mountaineer,” a “hairy animal,” and a “savage thing,” it seems unlikely that it could attract an elite clientele.\textsuperscript{100} Regardless of the very real differences between the urban Appalachians and their rural counterparts, local color was responsible for propagating a very stereotyped version of the region across the country that ignored these nuances of life. With local color informing them, many people across the country “[recognized] that the well-known realities of Southern mountain life were not consonant with the new notions about the nature of America and American civilization….\textsuperscript{101}

Because local color was so popular, local boosters did not try to refute its image of Appalachia as it placed a spotlight on the region and helped revitalize the tourist trade. In fact, local color was a great way to advertise the rural side of western North Carolina. For example, in 1890 the \textit{Asheville Citizen-Times} called Murfree’s work “enchanting stories” and acknowledged the truth of her depictions calling them the “romance of the eternal mountains.”\textsuperscript{102} However, they did not let these rural images stand-alone and the paper followed its review of Murfree’s work with an article titled “\textit{What Asheville Has}.”\textsuperscript{103} This lengthy summary covered all aspects of a thriving New South city, including Asheville’s schools, businesses, and modern conveniences, all meant to show “solid evidence of Asheville’s worth.”\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{99} "BEERSHEBA SPRINGS," \textit{Daily American}, August 6, 1878.
\textsuperscript{100} Charles Egbert Craddock, \textit{In the Tennessee Mountains} (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1885), 183-185.
\textsuperscript{101} Shapiro, xi.
\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Asheville Citizen-Times}, December 17, 1890.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
The image locals preferred was similar to how author Christian Reid, the pen name of Frances Tiernan, called the region “The Land of the Sky” in 1876. Tiernan was a frequent tourist, and her depictions followed the themes locals had worked hard to advertise. Tiernan’s reflections divided the region into two specific geographies, an urban geography in the valleys, what she called a “beautiful basin,” and a rural geography surrounding it, what she described as “bold cliffs and Mountains.” Her depictions perfectly fit with the two images boosters were hoping to promote, and they embraced Tiernan’s name for the region within their advertising. Beginning even before the completion of the railroad, western North Carolina became the “Land of the Sky.”

**Appalachia as Part of the New South**

Representing the multiple sides of the region in local promotions was difficult but was of utmost importance because the South was in the midst of a New South transformation. With their old way of life in conflict after the Civil War and Reconstruction, wealthy, white Southerners were working to create a new world that both embraced the growing industry and modernity of the time while also trying to maintain their place at the top of the social hierarchy, a position steeped in Old South ethos. The leaders of this group were called either Redeemers by their sympathizers or Bourbons by their detractors, but regardless of how they were perceived, they proved, according to historian C. Vann Woodward, to “[lay] the lasting foundations in matters of race, politics, economics and institutions for the modern South.”

---

Historian Paul M. Gaston posits, the “words ‘New South’ became the symbol that expressed [the] passage from one kind of civilization to another.”\textsuperscript{108} Gaston argues that for New South leaders like William Grady and Richard H. Edmonds the “term ‘New South’ in their lexicon bespoke harmonious reconciliation of sectional differences, racial peace, and a new economic and social order based on industry and scientific, diversified agriculture, all of which would lead, eventually, to the South’s dominance in the reunited nation.”\textsuperscript{109}

At the core of the New South development, therefore, was a conflict of continuity and change as the South’s elite hoped to both connect to the new wealth and industry springing up across the country, but without forfeiting their social clout based on the slavocracy. To maintain their positions, much of the South preserved old social orders, and a glorification of the Old South permeated the New. Western North Carolina’s leading class, many of whom were Bourbon Redeemers themselves, were navigating how they fit into the changing world just like the rest of the South’s elite citizens and followed the same model in Western North Carolina’s transformation.

Southerner’s glorification of what became known as the Old South and the Lost Cause would not only inform how they restructuring their new society but also began to gain admiration from other Americans outside of the South. The idealization of the Old South took on great importance across the country and American white society, both North and South, began to see the South “through the haze of moonlights and magnolias.”\textsuperscript{110}

This glorification of the Old South was a direct response to wider changes taking place in the U.S., the very same changes that inspired New South development in the first place.

Following the end of the Civil War and Reconstruction, the U.S. as a whole entered into a new

\textsuperscript{109} Gaston, 7.
\textsuperscript{110} Cox, 7.
period of industrialization. Alan Trachtenberg calls this period of industrialization the “incorporation of America” and argues that it witnessed the “emergence of a changed, more tightly structured society with new hierarchies of control, and also changed conceptions of that society, of America itself.”\textsuperscript{111} At the heart of this industrial revolution were three main developments, improved transportation and communication, reliable use of electric power, and the utilization of scientific research in industry. These changes allowed for massive development across the country.

More than just the nature of America’s economic situation changed due to increased industrialization, however, as all aspects of American life seemed to be influenced by it. Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner coined the term the Gilded Age to describe the era’s wealth, the shining surface things, but also expose how that wealth grew from corruption.\textsuperscript{112} The leaders of the industrial society grew to be the apex of high society and a new social order, a combination of NYC’s Knickerbocker elite and the new rich, developed with New York City as its base.\textsuperscript{113}

At the other end of the social hierarchy were the working poor. Laissez-faire approaches to business and governmental inaction resulted in terrible working conditions, a suffering working class, and extreme gulfs between the rich and the poor.\textsuperscript{114} The working class was composed not only of white Americans, but a newly arriving immigrant population from Eastern and Southern Europe, and an African American population who were fleeing the South in search

\textsuperscript{111} Alan Trachtenberg, \textit{The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age} (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982), 3-4.
\textsuperscript{112} Trachtenberg, 150.
of new opportunities. With this much change in America’s ethnic and racial makeup, a subsequent period of xenophobia rocked the nation, spurring the glorification of the Old South and its strict racial hierarchies.

Adding to the overall problems created by rapid industrialization was a corrupt government who supported the interests of the business owners and did little to help the working class and the poor. Government officials were often comprised of the industrial leaders or had partnered with them for their mutual benefit. Because these types of social ills had created much of modern society, many people across the country viewed the industrial period with mixed feelings. Historian M.H. Dunlop asserts that “between 1880 and 1910” America entered a “period dominated by big new money and by the perception that the pace of American life was drastically on the increase.” In a time of rapid modernization and industrialization, and with some people challenging racial hierarchies across the country, many white Americans looked to the Old South as a better time, and they longed for the world that they glorified as less complicated. Historian Karen Cox argues in “popular culture, the South was used to present the pastoral ideal and to recall a premodern America.”

Much of the New South ethos was a direct response to these larger national changes as the newly defeated region hoped to reenter American society and become even more of an influence than they were in the antebellum period. They saw business and industry as the

---

115 Painter, xvi.
118 Cox, 7.
greatest means to accomplish this goal and “industrial development was the first necessity.”

Focusing their New South development on economics also allowed for only small changes within the social hierarchy as former planters or their progeny often comprised the region’s new capitalists. This continuity helped these rich, white families stay at the top of the social order as their place as the leaders of the South’s economy had always been their main claim to social prominence. Instead of doing so through agriculture and slavery, they now did so through industry, allowing the region’s leaders to both maintain much of their Old South lifestyle while also appearing modern to the rest of the country.

Edwin DeLeon, a former Confederate diplomat and an active participant within New South literary and political circles, compared the “Old South” to a “dethroned king” with the “New South” “exhibiting a lustier life, and the promise of greater growth and strength, than did its predecessor.” Linking the Old South with the new was one way to support the Lost Cause ethos as modernizing was seen not as a loss of former folkways, but the ability to continue the South’s overall ascent.

Appalachians followed this model as well, and it formed the foundation of their tourist economy. When Henry Grady died not long after Jefferson Davis, Asheville resident, James M. Ray, wrote a joint eulogy for the local literary magazine linking the two Southerners and the movements they lead:

The two prominent characters of two great epochs—the one passing away, the other approaching—"the Old South," "the New South." The one only a little more than a memory of the past; the other a hopeful future. Ere we had put off the habiliments of mourning for Davis, we were stunned by the news of the death of Grady. How different we mourn the two! Equally dear to the hearts of our whole Southland

119 Gaston, 25.
Western North Carolina’s boosters and business elite used Old South memory to develop cultural capital by exploiting the region’s former status as a destination for elite, antebellum tourists. They paired this history with a seemingly paradoxical image of a modern and thriving place. Finishing the railroad became an important first-step in the process of image creation and regional promotion. No region could be part of the New South without good transportation, and no one could enjoy the Old South charm if he or she could not get there.

**The Importance of the Railroad to Regional Growth and Tourism**

The railroad was perhaps most responsible for the changes taking place in the nation at the time. Expanding rail lines spurred industrial growth as goods and people could now easily move across the country. The increase in rail accessibility happened quickly with a jump from approximately 35,000 miles of track in 1865 to just under 200,000 miles of track in 1897. Because so much rested on the railroads, they became the single largest business in the country at the end of the nineteenth century. By 1910 railroad companies had the greatest invested capital, used the most iron, steel, and coal, and employed the largest number of employers than any other single industry. Owners and managers amassed huge fortunes and soon men like Cornelius “Commodore” Vanderbilt, the founder of New York Central Railroad, and Jay Gould, an investor in multiple railroads, became not only some of the wealthiest men in the country but also the most influential. With so much riding on the railroad, historian Alan Trachtenberg argues it was the “most conspicuous machine of the age.” However, the railroad was more

---

122 Schlereth, 22.
123 Trachtenberg, 57.
than just about machinery and technology, it “came to epitomize progress, nationalism, and civilization…”\textsuperscript{124}

Because the railroad was at the center of the nation’s development and was a symbol of modernity, it became both a necessity to western North Carolina’s New South growth as well as its best symbol to outsiders that this growth was occurring. Franklin Coxe, a railroad magnate and local Appalachian, received much of the credit for the railroad finally reaching Asheville in 1880. Like the railroad itself, the local community saw Coxe as a perfect blending of the Old South and the New, and he gained a reputation as such. Coxe was born in Rutherfordton in 1839 and was part of the region’s business and social elite from his birth. Coxe boasted a prestigious family background through his grandfather, Tench Coxe, who was the assistant to Alexander Hamilton during his term as secretary of the treasury. Coxe received a good education at the University of Pennsylvania before entering into business, first working for his family’s coal company, then as president of the Commercial National Bank in Charlotte, North Carolina. Coxe’s early life was interrupted by the Civil War where he served as an officer in the Confederacy despite having business and personal ties in the North.

Western North Carolina’s population embraced Coxe as a symbol of Appalachia’s New South verve coming out of its Old South ethos. One tourist pamphlet from 1891 admired Coxe’s contributions as a “civil engineer, bank president, and the man largely responsible for the building of the railroad to Asheville.”\textsuperscript{125} The local literary journal, the \textit{Lyceum}, featured Coxe proudly in their magazine and highlighted the qualities that made him a “meritorious citizen.”\textsuperscript{126} The journal’s writers saw Coxe as praiseworthy because he was a “native of the district, an

\textsuperscript{125} Health Resorts of the South (Boston: Geo H. Chapin, 1891), 18.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{The Lyceum}, July 1890, 1.
extensive farmer, a member of the Alliance, a financier, and a practical benefactor.”

Coxe’s Old South heritage combined with his New South investments made him a poster child for the region’s new branding campaign.

Many people lauded Coxe and his accomplishments, both inside and outside Western North Carolina, because they saw the railroad as the reason why Asheville became “the gem of ‘The Land of the Sky.’” Elite tourists expected to utilize the nation’s improved transportation for more than making money and “railroads brought tourists to spectacular scenic landscapes” like western North Carolina’s wilderness. Articles extolling the region’s railroad system appeared in papers like the New York Times which let readers know “the Southern Railway…brings ‘The Land of the Sky’ within easy reach.” One visitor going by C.W. detailed their 1886 trip from Atlanta to Asheville in the Atlanta Constitution. Unlike the rather brief description in the New York Times, C.W.’s reflections showcased the multifaceted image of western North Carolina. One highlight of the trip for C.W. was the “Observation Car” on the railroad. From this vantage point, C.W. evenly divided the region into rural and urban parts. The rural side of the region offered a “grand view of the country…” including “lofty mountains, great gorges, dashing streams, spreading foliage, unbounding and apparently limitless.” Despite the scenery that C.W. called “equal to any on earth,” C.W. believed the “grandest sight of all was when, suddenly turning a curve, we ran alongside the large and modern Round Knob Hotel.” C.W. was similarly impressed with Asheville’s level of refinement remarking, “we

127 Ibid.
128 The Lyceum, June, 1890, 17.
129 Schlereth, 19.
131 “ATLANTA TO ASHEVILLE: Notable Scenes and Events on the Way,” The Atlanta Constitution, July 26, 1886.
132 Ibid.
133 Ibid.
expected to see some style here, but we never thought of seeing such ultra fashionable ways.”

This type of reflection from a visitor showed how local branding was proving successful as C.W.’s descriptions of the region followed the model boosters hoped to promote.

Local boosters and the railroad itself went even further to show the nation that they could easily get to Asheville and enjoy all a refined Western North Carolina had to offer. In the 1880s the Southern Railroad published a thirteen-paged pamphlet called *Western North Carolina R.R. Scenery, "Land of the Sky."* This booklet showcased drawings of the railroad and provided a mix of rural and urban locations offering guests a glimpse at both sides of the region. One image, the *Water Divide From Swannanoa Tunnel*, showed visitors the natural landscape and the railroads ability to travel easily through it, a primary concern for a region thought of as inaccessible. Another image, *Asheville From Beaucatcher Mountain*, showed the urban side of western North Carolina and portrayed Asheville as a thriving New South city, even boasting a smokestack. The differences between the two images would have been clear to potential guests. For visitors looking for the wilderness, they still had various outdoor options. For those looking for the comforts of elite society, they could turn to the urban centers.

The booklet contrasted the Old South and the New South by showing various scenes from the two periods side by side. One image, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, proved to showcase all the ways the region maintained old social orders and folkways. This historical connection added to the region’s image as a bastion of the Old South. First, it depicted African Americans in roles that reinforced former racial and social hierarchies, something many white visitors looked for when

---

134 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid, 12.
138 Ibid, 2.
hoping to escape modern life and all that went with it. The pamphlet also showed Mountaineers in dilapidated cabins and old-fashioned conveyances living the type of backward lifestyle people across the country both expected and often admired in the region and its people. By capitalizing off themes of continuity and change, the railroad showcased various aspects of western North Carolina making it attractive to almost any type of tourist who wished to visit. A guest could choose to experience a region that was old or new, backward or refined, or urban or rural based on their desires.

The railroad’s nuanced promotion would be useless if guests did not know that they could easily get into the region and a significant feature of the advertisement was the impressive engineering feats depicted within that showed the nation how the railroad had overcome the natural environment to make western North Carolina accessible.139 This type of imagery was vital to local tourism because so many people still believed that western North Carolina was difficult to reach. By not only refuting this myth within their booklet but also highlighting their use of the most up-to-date engineering and building techniques, the South Railroad promoted an Appalachia that offered scenic vistas and modern mentalities all within a train ride away for most of the U.S.

By 1895 the Southern railroad was actively promoting the ease of travel into the region from points across the country in a pamphlet written by Frank Presbrey.140 Part of this advertising campaign contrasted tourism in the region during the Old South period to the improvements made in the New South. The booklet reflected:

In the ‘Good old days’ of our forefathers the trip to the Asheville plateau was made after the fashion of the time in lumbering old state coaches- a wearisome trip which only the

139 Ibid.
hardy could undertake. Now, whether from North, West, or South, the approach is one not only of convenience but of positive luxury.\footnote{141} The railroad targeted clients from regions that previously could not realistically make into western North Carolina a generation before. This market became a major aspect of their advertising, as they hoped to get new tourists in addition to the steadfast Southerners who always went into the mountains for the summer. New York was home to the wealthiest citizens in the country and was a natural target for their advertisements.\footnote{142} With this in mind, the booklet announced, “The Southern Railway…has brought Asheville and its contiguous region to within a short distance of New York.”\footnote{143} If much of the new branding campaign focused on attracting new visitors, especially from the North, the railroad also proved to keep older ones coming. People who had visited the region for years celebrated the new ease in which they could get there. Just like other New South citizens, they expected modern conveniences, even if they had been visiting since the antebellum period. When the railroad finally connected the South Carolina low country with western North Carolina, the Charleston News and Courier informed its readers that the “dream of the dwellers by the seaside and of their friends by the snow has at last been realized.”\footnote{144}

**Good Roads as a Driving Force of Regional Tourism and Development**

It was not just the railroad that was helping tourists, old and new, easily travel to western North Carolina. The good roads movement also added to western North Carolina’s accessibility

\footnote{141} Ibid.  
\footnote{142} Homberger, 2.  
\footnote{143} Ibid.  
\footnote{144} Starnes, 9.
and was another part of regional branding. The push to improve roads was not unique to Western North Carolina, and across the South quality roads became part of New South progress. Historian Francis B Simkins argues that the good roads movement complimented both educational and industrial development in the South to be the “third god in the trinity of Southern progress.”145 Good roads initiatives were not unique to the South. The whole country was working to improve transportation to aid industry and growth. For wealthier citizens, good roads were important for leisure as vacationing became a huge part of being elite in the Victorian period. Even with more and better railroads, roads were still essential in getting around.146

Many types of western North Carolinians supported good roads for a variety of reasons. Farmers and producers around Asheville sent out multiple publications to “convince the average reader that good roads reduce the resistance of transportation of products and goods to and from farms and markets is reduced to a minimum.”147 Local boosters and businessmen also saw the economic benefits of good roads believing they were another way to add to their brand and attract more visitors. With these goals inspiring them, Asheville’s citizens were early supporters of the good roads movement, and they founded the Good Roads Association of Asheville and Buncombe County in 1899.148 It was only the second of its kind in the South. The organization’s initial goal upon founding was to “improve roads and pleasure drives of Asheville and Buncombe County so that visitors and residents may have an opportunity to use them with some degree of comfort.”149 However, it was not enough to have better roads if the rest of the

146 Schlereth, 25.
147 Asheville Citizen-Times, October 16, 1899.
148 Preston, 20.
149 Asheville Daily Gazette, March 5, 1899.
country did not know about them, so the organization quickly added “education” and “promotion” as prime objectives in the good roads campaign.¹⁵⁰

Because accessibility was so important to regional development, the Good Roads Association of Asheville appreciated the “respect of the best citizens and county officials.”¹⁵¹ Many of the most passionate followers of the good roads movement were the local boosters and businessmen who were dependent on tourism for their livelihoods. One of the founding “gentlemen” who “pledged themselves as members of the society” when it began was T.W. Raoul. Raoul needed ease of access into the region to ensure the success of his business, the Manor, a luxury hotel in Asheville. The possibilities of improved roads inspired all of western North Carolina’s elite citizens to support road improvements, not just those who would benefit from them directly. Mary Gudger Moore, a scion of local society and an amateur author born in Buncombe County in 1833, called good roads the “life blood of any country” when writing a local history before her death in 1917.¹⁵² Moore recognized the importance of good roads to the regional branding campaign and noted that at the time they were intended to “induce men of wealth and culture to come here.”¹⁵³

With all of these possible benefits at stake, western North Carolinians tended to be very enthusiastic in their support of road improvements despite the personal costs associated with them. Many politicians, such as North Carolina’s Governor in 1901, William Kitchin, believed that the “people must go down into their pockets and bear the expenses” for the enhanced

¹⁵⁰ Asheville Citizen-Times, March 7, 1899.
¹⁵² Mary Gudger Moore, My Book II, 1. Mary Gudger Moore Papers, Special Collections, D.H. Ramsey Library, University of North Carolina at Asheville
This policy essentially made the regional road improvements dependent upon the local population despite some governmental funding. The Good Roads Association of Asheville and Buncombe County paid for much of the regional road improvements through their $2 initiation fee and a 50-cent per month membership fee. The association also hoped to garner subscription fees from nonmembers to gain “popular sentiment” for road improvement. Once such subscriber, and later a member, was John A. Roebling II who donated $100 only a few days after the organization began. The association held Roebling up as an “example” and implored other citizens to donate based on the “limit of each of Asheville citizen’s means.” The local paper also noted how Roebling was “only a recent arrival in Asheville, but he is a thorough believer in the great fortune of the town.” This type of endorsement only added to Asheville’s image as a New South city.

Roebling was the type of citizen the population hoped to entice into the region through their new branding campaign in the first place. Roebling was named after his grandfather, John A. Roebling I, the famed civil engineer who designed the Brooklyn Bridge. The family amassed a large fortune and reputation through their company, the Roebling's Sons Company, primarily a producer of wire rope. Roebling first came to the region as an elite tourist and stayed in the

---

156 *Asheville Daily Gazette*, March 5, 1899.
157 Ibid.
158 *Asheville Citizen-Times*, March 9, 1899.
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid.
region’s finest hotel, the Battery Park Hotel. Soon, he began purchasing real estate and became a semi-permanent resident and active member of the city’s business and social elite.

With the support of people like Roebling, the Association was a huge success, and they added many miles of new or improved roads to the area. In 1912, N. Buckner, the secretary of Asheville’s Board of Trade, noted that before the Good Roads Association of Asheville and Buncombe County began “there were no good roads in the county outside of the city of Asheville and the Vanderbilt estate.” Due to their efforts, the region boasted some of the best rural roads in the South. Many of Asheville’s leading citizens rightfully saw themselves as the force behind the regional improvement. For example, the minutes from a 1915 meeting of The Good Roads Association of Asheville and Buncombe County noted how “all of the beneficial roads legislation which has been enacted during the past few years has been passed as a result of the activities of the association now in session at Asheville.”

Believing that perhaps too much of the burden of road development still fell on the organization or the private citizen, through mandatory labor or high taxes, the organization resolved “that it is the sense of this association that upon the completion of existing contracts all able-bodied State convicts should be used in the construction of public roads.” This change of policy would not only shift the burden of road improvement more fully into state hands, but would drastically reduce the costs for the local population. This change followed national trends

---

161 Asheville Citizen-Times, January 24, 1890.
163 Ibid.
164 Taylor, Jesse, Better Roads and Streets (United Brethren publishing house, for the Better roads publishing Company, 1915), 27
165 Ibid, 28.
as “convict labor was responsible for much of the road improvement work done in the South before 1910.”

Once their roads saw marked improvement, western North Carolinians promoted them widely. A 1909 article placed in the *Washington Post* explained the “advantages” good roads offered western North Carolina. They saw “the chief” advantage of improved roads “the opening of this section to automobile tourists, who have heretofore, to a large extent, been kept away by lack of roads affording comfortable travel.” A similar promotional article in the *New York Times* in 1913 let potential visitors know that Asheville had “added many miles of paved streets-no city having a greater mileage in proportion to population…” in order to “make itself more attractive to tourists and to add to the comforts of the ever-increasing number of Northern people who make it their home.” The improved transportation had its desired effect and by 1886 the number of tourists was estimated at 30,000 people and by 1900 this number jumped to 50,000 people.

**Western North Carolina’s Modern Economy**

It was not enough for Western North Carolinians to just make it easier for tourists to get into the region; they also needed to modernize their urban centers to meet tourist expectations. Western North Carolina’s boosters and businessmen could not promote the region as perfect for high society tourism if it had no high society amenities to offer once guests arrived. Some of the most important improvements included the addition of street lighting and a telegraph service in

---

167 “GOOD ROAD TO RESORT: Project to Be Considered at Asheville Congress. OPEN MOUNTAINS TO AUTOS Highway Planned From Eastern Tennessee Point, Probably Knoxville, to Asheville and Thence Into South Carolina by Way of Howards Gap, to Connect With Atlanta-New York Road,” September 27, 1909.
168 Ibid.
170 Joan and Wright Langley, Yesterday’s Asheville (Miami: E.A. Seeman Publishing Company, 1974), 34; *The Lyceum*, June 1890, 11.
the 1870s, a public hospital in 1883, telephone lines in 1885, a public school system in the 1880s, and a commercial section, Patton Avenue, in the 1890s.\textsuperscript{171} All of these improvements were made possible by the growth of the regional economy due in large part to the tourist industry.

Because the economy was vital to what made western North Carolina’s attractive to tourists, much of booster’s promotion focused on it. One of the Asheville Board of Trade’s promotional brochures from 1899 highlighted their growing businesses, including a “large tobacco factory, two ice factories, three planning mills, twenty-six carriage and wagon makers, the largest cotton factory in the South, two laundries, the largest tannery in western North Carolina, two daily and four weekly newspapers, two literary clubs, four tobacco warehouse, and several golf clubs.”\textsuperscript{172} This type of promotional material was meant to portray Asheville and Western North Carolina’s place in the larger industrializing nation. They almost completely ignored anything directly related to tourism, as their main goal was to display the region’s development, without which no elite tourist would even consider visiting.

This type of targeted advertising was important because local promotion differed from how the rest of the country was depicting the region. For example, \textit{The Atlanta Constitution} showcased Asheville in 1887 calling it the “poet’s dream” and the “health seeker’s paradise.”\textsuperscript{173} Although the paper’s coverage was overall quite positive, it focused on the more rural aspects of the region. This image was important to tourism, but, when the paper interviewed many of the town’s “leading citizens,” they made sure to supplement the article with the other side of the region and most commented on Asheville’s growing economy and infrastructure, ignoring the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[171] Langley, 57.
\item[172] Van noppen,385.
\item[173] “IN SKYLAND: Among the Clouds and Mountain Peaks of Asheville, N. C,” \textit{Atlanta Constitution}, April 10, 1887.
\end{footnotes}
natural environment.  For example, Captain William E. Breese observed Asheville’s “financial condition” saying, “Asheville makes no step backward. She dreams of no past; her people are tenacious of the future.” Boosters like Breese choose to highlight development rather than environment knowing that this type of branding was necessary to create the nuanced image of western North Carolina that would better serve their aims. People already knew that western North Carolina had beautiful scenery; to really inspire luxury tourism, boosters had to show a modern city as well.

Breese was well suited to reflect on Asheville’s growing economy having moved into the region because of its economic potential himself. Breese was originally from Charleston, South Carolina. He attended the Citadel and the Georgia Military Academy before serving as a major in the Confederate Army. Following the war he worked as a cashier in the Bank of South Carolina gaining experience he would apply to his work in western North Carolina. Recognizing the opportunities a New South city held for men like himself, Breese relocated to Asheville and “The First National was chartered in December, 1885, with a capital stock of $100,000.00.” Breese served as its president.

Breese’s personal qualities mirrored those described by Asheville’s major, Judge E.J. Ashton, when he was interviewed about the “character of your people” by the Atlanta Constitution. Ashton responded that they were “conservative, but wide-awake to a degree. They have more nerve and push about them than any people I know. You can see for yourselves how they push things. There are no drones here, and everybody means business when they talk

---

174 Ibid.
175 Ibid.
177 “IN SKYLAND: Among the Clouds and Mountain Peaks of Asheville, N. C,” Atlanta Constitution, April 10, 1887.
of making Asheville a great city.” Many local people shared Aston’s opinions and saw Asheville as a “city of rush and business-the pride of her people-the admiration of her visitors, and almost the wonder of the world…” Asheville’s citizens saw their regional development as a reward for their hard work:

In our own community there has been signal reward to industry, to enterprise, to sagacity. Everywhere we see splendid development; increase of business, large addition to wealth, sagacious adaptation of the most liberal agencies of development, the application of the most advanced ideas for public and private convenience; everywhere all that betokens prosperity attained and controlled by intelligence.

Asheville’s downtown was transformed to meet the new needs of its growing economy as new businesses, shops, and public buildings sprang up in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The development of a commercial district allowed the region to keep pace with the rest of the country and went far in showing potential tourists all the urban centers had to offer. For instance, The Leader Department Store opened at 12 Patton Avenue in 1890. This type of establishment offered both tourists and locals alike a place to goods buy similar to those anyone across the country could get, linking Asheville to a national consumer class. Asheville’s downtown was also the home to The Asheville Supply and Foundry Company, owned and operated by J.H. Woody and Thomas A. Speed, “well known Asheville business men.” This company began in 1895 and was pivotal in providing the structural steel necessary to meet the demands of Asheville’s growing infrastructure. It also oversaw repairs essential to any commercial enterprise and provided numerous mechanical parts. Locals were proud of this new addition because it allowed them to embrace modernization without going outside of the region for many parts and supplies previously unavailable. The company became a feature in

178 Ibid.
179 *The Lyceum*, September, 1890, 5.
180 *The Lyceum*, June, 1890, 15.
181 *Asheville Citizen-Times*, July 6, 1895.
182 *Asheville Citizen-Times*, February 19, 1896.
some local advertising that announced with the “complete equipment enjoyed by the company, and the employment of skilled workers the people of Western North Carolina will find it unnecessary in the future to send to a distance for castings of any kind.”

It was not just the stores and businesses themselves that added to Asheville’s downtown as care was taken to develop an architecturally beautiful city even within the more industrial sections. This attention to the region’s aesthetics was a must for a region dependent on tourism. With this in mind, many architects were employed to develop both functional and beautiful buildings that could meet all of the region’s needs. One of the most influential in the last decades of the nineteenth century was A.L. Melton. Melton had a long career working for Western North Carolina’s business and public leaders, and he was noted for being “one of the best masons and plasterers in Western North Carolina.” Melton was more than just a qualified contractor; he was also a certified architect noted for his beautiful structures. Melton’s advertisements announced, “plans and specifications in all orders of architecture accurately and carefully prepared. Superintending the construction of buildings a specialty.” Melton was hired for this purpose to rebuild the Chedister Building, a professional office space, in Asheville in 1887. Melton was noted to be a “man competent as an architect, and one who knows well how to apply the rules of good taste to those of architecture.” For the local population, one of the most appealing aspects of Melton’s designs was their blend of functionality and beauty. Because the region was dependent on its image of refinement and modernity, this was a perfect match for how they wanted their downtown to look. This attitude was reflected when the local.

183 Ibid.
184 The Blue Ridge Blade, April 17, 1880.
185 The Asheville Advance, January 4, 1888.
186 Asheville Citizen-Times, June 16, 1887.
paper praised Metlon’s design for the Chedister Building writing, “on the whole, the structure will prove one of the chief ornaments of the streets, and will prove as useful as ornamental.”

There was little doubt that the local population believed their branding campaign was a success when they pondered, “whether Asheville was born to be great, or greatness has been thrust on her, or greatness has come by her own well directed efforts, we will not stop to discuss. Asheville is now great and famous, and that settles the matter under consideration.” It was western North Carolina’s improved infrastructure that made this possible. Through expanded railroads, improved roads, and a growing economy western North Carolina had a foundation on which to build a comprehensive branding campaign. Boosters and businessmen would promote the brand of a varied Appalachia, rugged and refined, old and new, rural and urban, for years to come. It would continue to attract tourists who grew the economy that improved the local infrastructure that attracted tourists, and so forth. The cycle would continue to spin.

---

187 Ibid.
188 The Lyceum, April, 1891.
Chapter Two: Building Homes and Building Status: How New Houses Symbolized Position in Western North Carolina in the New South Period

It was not only Western North Carolina’s infrastructure and business centers that witnessed growth and change during the New South period. The population of Asheville jumped from 2,616 in 1880 to 10,325 a decade later and by 1900 had reached nearly 15,000. Because of this increase in permanent population and a steady stream of semi-permanent residents, real estate became big business in western North Carolina. Boosters and businessmen were proud of this increase in population and the real estate market it inspired as it showed the nation the popularity of the area and therefore the success of their modernizing efforts. One local magazine praised the increase in Asheville’s property values tabulating how in “1880 the assessed value of the property in the city was $904,428. Today is $4,393,234, an increase of 500 per cent, in ten years.” Part of this increase in property values related to the development of the downtown and commercial districts. The other part dealt with the new residential real estate.

If western North Carolinians worked to show that they were part of industrial society through their growing infrastructure, thus adding one quality to their leisure brand, they also connected to consumer culture as another way to promote their product. Part of being an elite at the time meant purchasing. Buying was such a central part of being high class at the time that conspicuous consumption, the purchase of objects specifically to demonstrate wealth and

---

190 The Lyceum, June 1890, 5.
position, became the cornerstone of showing status across the nation.\textsuperscript{191} This consumption allowed the country’s elite to connect with counterparts across the country as ownership signified belonging. For western North Carolinians, real estate was a great way to enter into this group and add to their leisure brand at the same time.

Because local elite based their status in the antebellum period on the plantocracy, western North Carolinians’ social positions following its end only really remained valid to other Southerners. This situation posed a problem for regional tourism, as the newly expanded tourist market did not always have the history of vacationing in the region that would ensure they saw the region’s leading citizens as equals. The propagation of the hillbilly stereotype through local color and mass media only compounded this problem. If elite tourists did not care about having a social group to interact with once they arrived this would only have proven to be a social problem and not an economic one to western North Carolinas’ residents. Unfortunately, this was not the case, and part of local advertising needed to show consumption as well. Residential real estate was one solution to this image problem as it showed the nation that western North Carolinians were prospering in their New South pursuits and could afford the expensive homes and furnishings popular among the nation’s affluent citizens. The way that elites utilized their homes for entertaining also announced to the nation that the region harbored ladies and gentleman perfectly suited to host high-class guests from anywhere in the country, a role they had performed for southern guests for generations, and one that elite tourists still demanded.

Through both of these aspects of residential real estate, local citizens demonstrated the region’s cultivation and status to the nation, a vital component to promoting their product.

**Business Changed More than Just the Economy: How Class became Part of Industrialization**

Just as industrialization changed the nation and served as the foundation of the New South, it also shaped how high society was structured. As industry created massive wealth, high society changed to meet the nation’s new circumstances. Many wealthy families like the Rockefellers, Carnegies, Goulds, and Vanderbilts entered into high society at the time. This group was labeled nouveau riche, or new rich because their status lacked a history of elitism, but their wealth was too vast to be ignored by the families who had long been the nation’s elite society. For example, in 1890 Jay Gould was noted for drawing “more revenue from his invested capital than…any other living soul.”\(^{192}\) Due to this extreme wealth, men like Gould created a new commercialization of high society by displaying status through the “conspicuous consumption of expensive material objects: houses, carriages, clothes, and so on.”\(^{193}\) They typically choose New York City to build their permanent residences and soon the nation looked to the city as the model of high society. This shift proved to change the nature of a formerly modest NYC elite whose status had more to do with lineage than wealth, though wealth was always a plus for maintaining an elite position. The old elite developed from former Dutch patroon families, such as the Schermerhorns, Van Renssalaers, and the Stuyvesants, with a mix of English families, who first settled the region and became known as the Knickerbocker elite.\(^{194}\)

---


\(^{193}\) Montgomery, 9.

Although Knickerbocker lineage went back to Dutch settlement, their lifestyles were based more on British models. Despite the changes brought by the new rich, the former NYC elite still set the rules of good breeding, much like former southern belles and gentleman still served as the models for southern high society well after the war, and the Knickerbockers served as models for the new rich to imitate. In the Gilded Age, if someone was going to be part of high society and did not have the pedigree to match, they faked it. In this way, British aristocratic and southern plantocratic status markers held meaning within U.S. class construction well into the new century.

One reason why the Southern planter lifestyle remained relevant in high society was due to the influence of Ward McAllister. McAllister was an NYC transplant with familial ties to both the NYC and planter elite. Because McAllister understood class in relation to Southern mores, many of the Old South customs became incorporated into the new display of status. McAllister’s influence helped the South retain its former air of sophistication, and elite Southerners remained in high society despite their changed positions. McAllister was directly responsible for many of the changes to Gilded Age society, such as the development of the Patriarchs, an exclusive men’s club, and coining the term “The Four Hundred.” The Four Hundred offered the NYC elite a means to seem more exclusive than British society as “society in Britain was estimated to be composed of 500 families.” By grounding the new high society in old southern models, McAllister directly added to the continuity of the Old South well into the new as people across the nation looked to it as a model for elite behavior.

In addition to his injection of southern status symbols into national class hierarchies, McAllister was also influential in social development by serving Caroline Webster

---

195 Homberger, 28.
196 Ibid.
197 Homberger, 4.
Schermerhorn Astor, “the Mrs. Astor,” as an informal counselor on all things high society. It was not a coincidence that Mrs. Astor’s ballroom could also only accommodate 400 guests. Mrs. Astor eventually became the undisputed champion of the country’s elite as she made and broke reputations during the Gilded Age. Before her death in 1908, Astor’s position in high society was well accepted across the country. “For the last twenty years,” one paper wrote, Astor has been the “acknowledged leader of society, with almost absolute power to make or mar the social destiny of those who sought her patronage.”\(^{198}\)

Astor was well suited to her role because she was born into NYC’s old elite, but unlike many of her counterparts, when she married William Backhouse Astor Jr. in 1853, Astor became part of a relatively new, but extremely wealthy family. Although the Astors were not one of the Gilded Age nouveau riche families, they were also not part of the old New York high society. The Astors did not really “transition from ‘new money’ to a respected and generally admired position in the city’s social elite” until the 1850s, corresponding to their connection with an old family providing the requisite lineage.\(^{199}\) This background put Mrs. Astor in an early position of merging the two different social sets together well before the influx of new rich during the Gilded Age.

Without Mrs. Astor’s patronage, a nouveau riche family could not be accepted into society, regardless of how rich they might be because the “sway of ‘the’ Mrs. Astor and the others of the name [was] indisputable.”\(^{200}\) The new rich could, however, twist her arm when push came to shove which was how the Vanderbilt family finally broke into the 400 when Mrs. Astor paid a call on Alva Smith Vanderbilt in 1883 to receive an invite to Vanderbilt’s much anticipated upcoming ball.\(^{201}\) Vanderbilt was livid that she was not fully a part of NYC society

\(^{199}\) Homberger, 270.
\(^{200}\) “Society’s Upheaval,” Atlanta Constitution, August 14, 1894.
\(^{201}\) Homberger, 270.
and withheld her invitation on purpose. Using her formidable wealth and her understanding of social customs, Vanderbilt made it almost impossible for Astor not to pay a call, what became the informal induction into the apex of the NYC elite. It helped that Vanderbilt had been Alva Smith, a member of Mobile, Alabama’s elite class before moving to NYC in the 1850s. Vanderbilt’s family had been southern elite for many years, and she grew up with the qualities typical of a southern belle. Like McAllister, Vanderbilt saw her Old South heritage as proof of her status and made sure to display it to NYC’s elite. Vanderbilt’s daughter recounted that her maternal line “produced several governors and people of importance in the south” and “all this accentuated in my mother a pride in her Southern birth and a certain disdain for the mercenary spirit of the North.”

Vanderbilt understood that it would have been easy for Mrs. Astor to write off the Vanderbilt family as gauche, they had no background after all, but it would have been much more difficult to do the same to her since she was undoubtedly Astor’s social equal. Vanderbilt had been a southern belle of impeccable breeding and still had family in high society; during her quest to break into the 400, her sister had just had her social debut in Napoleon III’s court.

Boasting a southern elite heritage was almost as influential to class as showing a British aristocratic one, and “titled marriages were an integral part of the fierce competition in New York amongst wealthy families for social recognition.” Luckily, the new rich were so rich that could buy these marriages as well. These marriages came with a heavy cost as many took place to supplement an often-dwindling aristocratic fortune. Historian Maureen E. Montgomery has traced the instances of American elite women marrying into the British aristocracy between 1870 and 1914 and found that sixty such marriages occurred accounting for “one-tenth of all

---

203 Ibid, 4.
204 Montgomery, 4.
peerage marriages” at the time. This number excludes the marriages of younger sons that would not guarantee an aristocratic title, but would bring American families into aristocratic social circles and provide aristocratic backgrounds. If Vanderbilt successfully used her southern heritage to pave a path for the Vanderbilt’s into high society, she took no chances that her daughter Consuelo was anything other than at the top of the social hierarchy. Thus, Vanderbilt worked tirelessly to arrange Consuelo’s marriage to Charles Spencer Churchill, the 9th Duke of Marlborough. With the influence of McAllister and Vanderbilt, Western North Carolina’s elite class still had a means to enter high society, but they needed a context in which to display their elite symbols. Their homes became the perfect stage to do so because they showed their wealth, position, and elite roles all in one place.

**Moving Into the Cities: Appalachian Elites become Urban**

With all the national changes to how elites were living, boosters used homes to spread an image of an elite Appalachia in two main ways. First, boosters often used impressive homes within their promotional materials. Just like their advertisements that exposed the region’s growing infrastructure, these announcements were meant to show the wealth, modernity, and cultivation in western North Carolina during the New South period. One way to do so was through the penny postcard, first used in 1873. Postcards were a cheap and easy way for people to connect across the country, and they became extremely popular with 968 million mailed across the country in 1909. The development of the chromolithograph saw massed produced imagery sweeping the nation and “color and its symbolism fascinated the nation.” These

---

205 Ibid, 4.
207 Schlereth, 193.
visual advertisements added to regional tourism because they literally showed potential clients that there was more to western North Carolina than wilderness.

One such postcard featured the Jack Boone House.208 Boone was the epitome of the New South, Appalachian gentleman and his lifestyle could easily show the nation the region’s elite side. Boone served as the Haywood County Clerk of Court for many years and built the home in 1883. Its location on Church Street, a few Blocks from Main Street, made it a convenient location for a professional like Boone. Though Boone could serve as a representation of the region and aid regional promotion, to do so without a visual demonstration of his status, people would already need to know him or accept that people like him were active in western North Carolina. Visual advertising overcame this hurdle because if potential vacationers received the above postcard, what they would see was a modern, expensive home executed in the trendiest of styles, the Queen Anne. Boone’s details would not be necessary; his home would speak for itself.

Real estate became a good symbol of the region’s elite citizenry because homeowners incorporated both Old South symbolism and New South styles and amenities into their residences. Real estate negotiated themes of continuity and change as residents hoped to both engage with a modernizing country while still honoring and promoting their Old South identities or lineages. Homes were typically either executed with the architecture of the Old South, like the Southern Colonial Revival, or with trendy, new styles announcing the region’s modernity, like Queen Anne. Although Queen Anne architecture was new, it derived from English history and the style was meant to evoke the period when the actual Queen Anne ruled England.209 The

208 *Boone-Withers House*, Haywood County Postcards, Haywood County Public Library History Collection, Haywood County Public Library, Waynesville, North Carolina.

Queen Anne home announced a resident’s wealth as only an affluent citizen could afford the fuzziness and ornamentation that marked its design. Although Queen Anne was the trendiest, to build any of these types of homes, the residents needed to have the funds to do so making them all symbols of their resident’s wealth. Historian Marina Moskowitz posits, “as people across the country had access to the same goods, placed them in similar spaces, and arranged those spaces into similar communities, they shared more than taste or design sense; rather, they shared a way or organizing life.”

Expensive home styling and furnishings became as much a part of being elite in western North Carolina than anywhere else in the country.

Residential real estate was also about more than just styling and consumption. Luxury homes became stages for elite Appalachians to perform as hosts and hostesses. Serving as a good host or hostess was part of being in the nation’s high society at the time. In fact, performing this role within one’s home was “central to the maintenance of social networks.”

The importance of hosting was not new to the time as it was also part of being a member of the planter elite. By assuming these roles, Western North Carolina’s leading class developed positions that both spoke to the continuity of the Old South and the change of the new. The 1898 booklet A Souvenir Directory to the Land of Sky highlighted these leading citizens with its depictions of “Mountain Flowers of Beauty Rare” and “Leading Officials of Land of the Sky.”

This visual advertising was a significant part of showing the nation the region’s elite side. It was not enough to just show wealthy Appalachians; their lifestyles also needed to conform to high-society standards for high society to accept them as social equals across the country.

210 Marina Moskowitz, Standard of Living: The Measure of the Middle Class in Modern America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 3.
Images such as those above went hand in hand with the depictions of elegant residences, where they performed their roles. This pairing was a huge part of the regional promotion, and the booklet went on to explain, “Asheville is an enterprising city… distinctly a resort city, and is graced with numerous palatial villas…and in the pretty parks adjacent are the handsome homes of the favored inhabitants.” To be a good host or hostess, a person needed a place to entertain.

Boosters could only get so far by sending out these types of images and descriptions. The most effective means of promoting an elite Appalachia was through the actual entertaining that took place within elite homes. This approach was a more informal way to disseminate the region’s high-end brand but was central to its construction and propagation because America’s high society still relied on social connections and introductions. Tourists who entertained among the Appalachian elite would share their relationships to Western North Carolina’s citizens far and wide letting other potential visitors know that a high society was alive and well in the region. With this in mind, one promotional booklet about western North Carolina described how “the cultivated Southern families will hospitably receive the stranger within their circle, and there are many other residents of refinement hailing from all parts of the country.” The social relationships between western North Carolina’s host and hostesses and the tourists who served as their guests were one of the most important aspects of regional tourism. Without fine homes, much of these interactions would never have taken place.

One reason why people built so much new residential real estate in western North Carolina was due to a shift in how former Appalachian, antebellum elites were living and working during the New South period. Although professional work had always been a primary

---

213 Ibid, 34.
214 Homberger, 4.
part of their way of life, after slavery ended, it became central to their livelihoods. This change precipitated a change of location, and more and more of the region’s elite began moving closer to urban centers to be close to their work. This relocation followed similar changes in where people across the country were living as well. Better transportation resulted in “streetcar suburbs,” planned communities on the periphery of urban centers. Urban centers and their suburbs became more popular with affluent peoples because they allowed them to live in elite communities while working in cities. Moving afforded western North Carolina’s elite opportunities to build homes accommodating their New South lifestyles.

A good example of one of these New South gentleman was Stephen J. Shelton whose home, built between 1875 and 1880, was located just a few blocks from Waynesville’s Main Street and its government buildings. Shelton’s elevated social position and his work within regional and state politics made the home’s location ideal as he could easily reach the town center when needed. The home boasted a Southern Colonial style with a two-story porch, a feature popular in antebellum homes. Shelton’s home blended Old South symbolism with his New South position and easily announced his place in local high society.

Shelton’s background was similar to many of the region’s elite during the New South period. His Old South past and his New South situation informed his status. Shelton came from an important local family, and during the Civil War, he served as a lieutenant in the Confederate army. This background became a cornerstone of Shelton’s New South identity, and he honored the Old South and Confederate past throughout his life. For example, Shelton was one

216 Schlereth, 94-95.
217 Ibid.
219 John W. Moore, Roster of North Carolina Troops in the War Between the States Volume II (Raleigh: State of North Carolina, 1882 ), 332.
of the organizers of an “ex-Confederate Soldiers’ reunion” in Waynesville in 1889, an event that brought together other New South elites who still lauded their Old South heritage.\(^{220}\) Old South and Confederate memory became a significant part of regional branding and events such as the one Shelton organized became part of the local promotion as they helped show the region’s place within the plantocracy. Images like *Waynesville Rebel Reunion, August 28, 1889* were circulated to commemorate the event and depicted many of the state’s and region’s leading citizens who attended, such as then governor of North Carolina, Clingman Fowle and his daughter, Helen Fowle, who are front row center.\(^{221}\)

Shelton’s remembrance of an older way of life did not stop him from becoming a New South gentleman and embracing a modern way of life at the same time. Following the war, Shelton became active in politics, education, and business. Shelton served as High Sheriff of Haywood County from 1874 until 1880. To supplement his income, Shelton also worked as a small farmer having approximately 70 acres attached to his Waynesville residence.\(^{222}\) It was through his agricultural work that Shelton earned a reputation far outside the region. Shelton worked as the Haywood County correspondent for the *Asheville Citizen-Times* providing “an encouraging account of the crops in his county.”\(^{223}\) Shelton published articles across the state in major cities like Raleigh and Wilmington. Shelton also expanded his social circle by being an active member of the Masons. Joining fraternal organizations allowed elite men to develop social connections not only regionally but across the country as well and became a significant symbol of elite status at the time.\(^{224}\) The Masons linked Shelton to men living similar lives

\(^{220}\) *Asheville Citizen-Times*, July 20, 1889.
\(^{222}\) W. Clark Medford, *The Middle History of Haywood County* (Waynesville, 1968), 87.
\(^{223}\) *The Wilmington Daily Review*, June 4, 1885.
\(^{224}\) Montgomery, 95-96.
across the nation. Although his direct contact with Masons outside the region might be limited, the shared experience of being within the same group helped show people outside of western North Carolina a different type of citizen than just the hillbilly.

It was not just Stephen J. Shelton who was creating wide social circles. His wife, Mahala Shelton, had a social life typical for a woman of her class in the south, and it reached well outside of the local community. Most of her socializing took place in her home or the home of her friends. It was through these social interactions that the region in part gained an elite image, as tourists were often guests at these local entertainments. For example, in 1900 when Captain and Mrs. Alden Howell held a twenty-fifth wedding anniversary at their impressive home they held “one of the most enjoyable social affairs in the history of [the] town.”

225 Much of the coverage of these types of events focused on the home and its furnishings, as this was an important way to show status in the age of conspicuous consumption. One paper in Asheville boasted how “the rooms were tastefully arranged, and the entire residence beautifully decorated.” The home and the party certainly showed a different side of western North Carolina than people got from popular media. It was lucky that the guests included not only other local elites like Mahala Shelton but also “some who came here from a distance.”

227 Although this was a very subtle means to promote and brand the urban centers of western North Carolina as elite, the Asheville Citizen-Times could not overstate how the “social introduction [was] valuable” to creating relationships. Elites across the country shared this sentiment, and even Ward McAllister, emphasized its importance in his book, Society as I Have Found it. McAllister likened society to “a series of intersecting circles; each one is a circle of its own, and

225 Asheville Daily Gazette, June 14, 1900.
226 Ibid.
227 Ibid.
228 Asheville Citizen-Times, June 5, 1891.
they all unite in making what is known as general society.”

229 McAllister explained, “When you introduce a man into the sanctuary of your own family…it is the greatest compliment you can pay him.”

230 For Appalachian elites, inviting guests into their homes was the best way to join these outer circles and expose a different side of the region to people across the country.

William E. Breese, a bank president in Asheville, was another western North Carolina whose home became a significant part of his social position. Unlike the Shelton family, Breese was not a native to Appalachia. Breese moved into the region in the last decades of the nineteenth century from Charleston, South Carolina recognizing the potential the region held for New South development. He and his family first moved into the former residence of Dr. J.F.E. Hardy, another local banker, in the exclusive Swannanoa Hill section of Asheville. Soon Breese was an active part of the local high society despite being relatively new to the region. A good example of the local elite accepting Breese as one of their own was his selection to provide the oration at the 1897 Civil War Memorial Service at Central Methodist Church.

231 This appointment was an honor for any local citizen because Old South and Confederate nostalgia were such an important part of what it meant to be elite in the region. By choosing Breese to take on this significant position, the local community allowed Breese to represent them, a clear sign of belonging.

In addition to his role in these types of local activities, Breese’s home also allowed for interaction with others in his class, where he and his wife acted as the perfect host and hostess. Breese and his family entertained in the manner expected of a New South gentleman and lady. A surviving invitation to one party shows the elaborate nature of their entertaining:

Mr. and Mrs. William E. Breese

229 Ward McAllister, Society As I Have Found It (New York: Cassell Publishing Company, 1890), 301.
230 Ibid.
231 The Semi-Weekly Citizen, May 11, 1897.
An early answer is requested\(^{232}\)

When the Swannanoa Hill home burnt, Breese had a new home built in the same neighborhood, Kenilworth, but in a more modern Queen Anne style.\(^{233}\) Breese’s 1891 home immediately began attracting the attention of Asheville’s citizens and the *Daily-Citizen* dutifully reported the construction progress of the impressive residence, such as letting citizens know that “C.B. Leonard has the contract for building W.E. Breese’s magnificent 20-room residence in Kenilworth to cost $10,000,” about $265,000 today.\(^{234}\)

Breese’s son also built a luxurious home within western North Carolina but chose Brevard’s Main Street over Asheville.\(^{235}\) Main Street’s proximity to the professional and governmental infrastructure made it the perfect place for a lawyer and politician to build a home.\(^{236}\) Like his father, William E. Jr.’s home became a reflection of his elevated status in the region. Breese worked as an attorney before having a successful political career serving as a mayor, legislator, and even director of the Works Progress Administration during the Depression. Breese might not have been a local from an old Appalachian family, but he easily ingratiated himself into high society just like his father and mother. When he died in 1939, *The Waynesville Mountaineer* eulogized that “no native son ever loved these hills more than Mr.

---


\(^{234}\) *Asheville Daily Citizen*, May 21, 1891.


\(^{236}\) Ibid.
Breese.**237** Unlike his father who chose to use the most modern styling, Breese Jr.’s home was executed within a classic Southern Colonial Style and boasted a 2-story Ionic portico. This home mirrored the style preferred by plantation owners and emoted a feeling of the Old South. This was a architectural design long associated with the southern elite and Breese Jr.’s background in Charleston and his wife Rebekah Woodbridge’s background in Richmond, Virginia would have made them very familiar with its Old South symbolism. This type of home would have been important for a man like Breese whose southern identity was part of his charm and his status. For instance, when serving as Mayor of Brevard in 1911, although he had formerly been a state senator, Breese Jr. traveled to New Jersey and visited Woodrow Wilson while Wilson was governor. The local paper republished an account of Breese’s visit first appearing in the *Daily Herald* of Passaic, New Jersey: “He [Breese Jr.] and the governor for two hours discussed Southern scenes, incidents and characters…Senator Breese had so many typical stories to tell of Southern statesmen and Southern traditions that the governor time after time urged him to continue.”**238**

Breese was not the only one in the family who maintained a strong connection to the Old South and hoped to capture that memory in the home. Although the local community saw the home as belonging to Breese Jr., it belonged to his mother-in-law, Martha Woodbridge, listed as the head of household in the 1910 census.**239** Woodbridge was the epitome of a southern lady having lived most of her adult life in antebellum Richmond. Woodbridge’s day-to-day life reflected the realities of being a southern woman of high social standing. For example, when Woodbridge died in 1926 her will not only deeded the home and all its furnishings to Breese Jr.,

**237** The Waynesville Mountaineer, April 6, 1939.
**238** Sylvan Valley News, August 11, 1911.
**239** 1910 Census, Brevard, Transylvania, North Carolina; Roll: T624_1134; Page: 1B; Enumeration District: 0156; FHL microfilm: 1375147.
worth a considerable amount, but also dealt with the distribution of her sizable jewelry collection to her daughter, granddaughter, and sister-in-law.\textsuperscript{240} As a southern lady, Woodbridge would have often served as a hostess within her Richmond home, why she would need so much jewelry after all. When she moved with her daughter into western North Carolina, she took care to build a home matching not only her status but also that of her daughter as the wife of a local elite.\textsuperscript{241}

If the region’s elite were building many impressive homes at the time, all paled in comparison to George Vanderbilt’s Biltmore Estate. Vanderbilt, who was a new member of New York City’s “400,” “one of the millionaires from the north,” and the brother in law of Alva Vanderbilt, made the most impressive real estate investments at the time in the region and perhaps did the most to propagate an elite image of western North Carolina.\textsuperscript{242} In 1888 Vanderbilt began what would become the Biltmore Estate by slowly buying parcels of land in the region. Eventually he would amass 125,000 acres divided into different parts. One part of this total acreage included 2,000 acres for the home and its grounds and 80,000 acres for what would become Pisgah National Forest. Vanderbilt began construction in 1889 on the Biltmore House, the largest single-family home in the country to this day at 178,926 square feet and 250 rooms. The home was modeled off a French Renaissance Chateau and boasted all of the modern conveniences the age had to offer, even having an indoor bowling alley and swimming pool. One student at the Asheville Female College visited the home while it was under construction and noted, “the Mansion will be immense… [there] will be 8 fountains, and they will fill large basins… joining the main building is a bowling green.”\textsuperscript{243}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{240} MAE Woodbridge Will, December 9, 1923, Transylvania, North Carolina, USA, Record of Wills, V. 4-5 1935-1958.
\textsuperscript{241} ibid.
\textsuperscript{243} “Excerpts from the Diary of a student at Asheville Female College,” April 23, 1893. Biltmore Estate Archives.
\end{flushright}
In 1889 Vanderbilt also purchased an entire town that abutted the estate grounds. What was then known as the town of Best, and renamed Biltmore Village, was like any other small Appalachian town during the New South period and had “a thriving industry.”\(^{244}\) However, because his guests would have to travel through the town to reach his home, Vanderbilt was more concerned with its appearance than its growing industry. Vanderbilt saw Best as a chance to develop a “model village,” a place both beautiful but also a practical location to house the many workers he would need to run the Estate.\(^{245}\) Vanderbilt called on the services of Fredrick Law Olmstead as landscape architect and Richard Morris Hunt as architect for both the village and his home. To create the village in the manner Vanderbilt wanted, “more than 490,000 cubic feet of earth were used filling and leveling before the first work could be done.”\(^{246}\) Once the land was ready to develop, Olmstead and Hunt disagreed about the style the village should take, although neither considered anything other than a European design. Like the rest of the country and his neighbors in western North Carolina, Vanderbilt’s home would tell people much about who he was. With this in mind, he turned to a style symbolic of high status at the time. Olmstead “submitted plans for an English-style plan” while Hunt wanted something more French to match the Chateau-style home.\(^{247}\) The two compromised and the village contained “English Tudor revival half-timber pebbledash cottages laid out in a French-style fan shape.”\(^{248}\) Montgomery Schuyler, a writer for Architectural Record, praised the project when he wrote, “It has been Mr. Hunt's great good fortune to have for once, in Biltmore House, an opportunity to design a true chateau, with the surroundings and accessories of nature and of art proper to a chateau, having

\(^{245}\) Ibid.
\(^{246}\) Ibid.
\(^{247}\) “Biltmore Village History,” Biltmore Estate Archives, Asheville, North Carolina.
\(^{248}\) Ibid.
not only the elaboration and the costliness, but also the magnitude, and above all the detachment, which the scheme requires…”

Vanderbilt’s decision to build in Asheville when he was “familiar with all the loveliest spots on the globe” and could “choose from the whole world where to build a home” brought needed attention to the region. Local boosters put out a flurry of advertisements incorporating Biltmore Estate and Biltmore Village into them as soon as construction began. Southern Railway was one of the biggest promoters of the Biltmore Estate within their advertisements. Because the railroad needed a strong tourist base, they also highlighted the region’s growing elite offerings to make it more attractive to potential visitors. One of their promotional booklets announced that Biltmore was “not only one of the largest and finest, but one of the most picturesquely beautiful estates in the world.” Another Southern Railway advertisement highlighted some of the most impressive homes along their different routes. The Biltmore Estate was featured, as was Edith Vanderbilt whom the article referred to as “the most genial hostess.”

Potential guests wanted more than just descriptions of Biltmore Estate and Biltmore Village, they also wanted to see them first hand. To meet this demand, boosters incorporated images from the estate and the village in many of their promotional materials as well.

---


250 “REST OR PLEASURE: RESORTS WHERE EITHER MAY BE FOUND TO THE HEART’S CONTENT ARE ALL THE YEAR ROUND Summer or Winter in the Mountains or by the Sea-- Suggestion From Southern Railways Exposition Display,” *Nashville American*, August 3, 1897.


across the nation also began to publish accounts about the Vanderbilt family moving in western North Carolina doing much to spread the image of an elite Appalachia. The Biltmore Estate and George Vanderbilt appeared in a ten-page article in *Ainslee’s Magazine* in 1891. The author of the piece, Phillip Poindexter, called the estate “the finest country place in America.”²⁵⁴ Similar opinions spread across the country and Allen Wiley, writing for *Broadway Magazine*, called Biltmore Estate “the Finest Estate in America” and argued, “there is no mansion in the suburbs of the great eastern cities, in Newport, or in the millionaire colonies on the Jersey coast that equals it in magnificence.”²⁵⁵

Josephus Daniels, a North Carolina politician, visited the estate in 1890 while it was still early in its construction. His account of his time at Biltmore and the progress George Vanderbilt was making was published across the nation in many leading newspapers, such as the *Baltimore Sun* and the *New York Times*. Daniels did much to spread word about the “beauty of [Vanderbilt’s] castle,” and also the region as a whole.²⁵⁶ Most useful to the local branding campaign was that Daniels let the public know that “it is Mr. Vanderbilt’s plan to open his grounds and roads to the public.”²⁵⁷ This access would encourage people to come into the region just for the chance to view the estate. Although Vanderbilt did not entertain everyone who came to the region in his home, by opening the grounds to the public, he shared much of it with the tourist class and inspired them to share what they saw across the nation.

One visitor who did just that was Walter Wellman. In 1892 Wellman wrote, “there is another distinguished citizen of the United States who believes [Asheville] is paradise. That is

²⁵⁶ *Mr. Vanderbilt’s Biltmore*, New York Times, December 26, 1890.
²⁵⁷ Ibid.
Mr. George Vanderbilt."²⁵⁸ Wellman went on to explain the enormity of the planned Estate writing, “just how large the Vanderbilt house is to be I don’t know, but I got lost in the cellar of it today, and probably should have been there yet if that gallant fellow, Colonel McKissick [the manager of the Battery Park Hotel], hadn’t rescued me."²⁵⁹ In may ways local citizens saw the Biltmore Estate as the property of the whole of western North Carolina and boosters frequently showed the place off like it was their own. When the Washington Gridiron Club visited the region, a number of local members, such as local real estate mogul Walter B. Gwyn, made sure to highlight the most impressive aspects of the area and of course “the visitors were driven over the Vanderbilt property and inspected the three-million-dollar mansion…”²⁶⁰

Perhaps the greatest sign that the local branding campaign was working was when Richard Coxe Weightman, writing for the Washington Post in 1897, condemned Vanderbilt for “the artificial atmosphere of snobbery and petty ostentation” that Vanderbilt “injected into the once bracing and pure ozone of the neighborhood.”²⁶¹ Weightman perhaps saw the effect the home was having on the residents who were parading it for all to see. However, as the saying goes, there is no such thing as bad press and Weightman’s account, as negative as it was, essentially confirmed to the nation that an elite area existed within Western North Carolina, exactly what boosters were hoping to achieve.

**High-End Neighborhoods: Montford and the Urban Elite Enclave**

If many of the local elite moved into urban centers on an individual basis, larger cities like Asheville witnessed more organized residential development and a string of planned

---
²⁵⁹ Ibid.
neighborhoods emerged in the New South period. This organized residential development followed national patterns as changes in both building techniques, and consumer demands changed how construction took place across the country.

Montford Park was Asheville’s most notable housing development in the New South period and followed the national trend of building elite neighborhoods just outside urban centers. Montford Park was incorporated in 1893 as a village separate from Asheville but appealed to the region’s elite because it was “contiguous to the city” and just minutes from downtown Asheville.262 The new village and all it symbolized excited the local community and Asheville’s local paper reported, “Asheville is to have another suburb, and the little sister has been christened Montford.”263 When Montford was incorporated a small group of around 50 people populated the community. Most were retirees who lived part of the year in the village, but some of Asheville’s leading businessmen also lived in Montford due to its proximity to downtown Asheville.264

One of the retirees was James Edward Rumbough, a native of Knoxville, Tennessee, and exactly the type of citizen boosters wanted to entice to the region. Before moving to Asheville, Rumbough worked at Furry & Company in Knoxville, a tobacco manufacturing firm.265 Rumbough was a frequent tourist to the region before he moved there permanently. During his years as a tourist, Rumbough entertained among the region’s elite society, and they became part of his extended social circle. For example, Rumbough was one of the guests at the 1890 “ball at

---

262 Asheville Citizen-Times, June 11, 1890.
263 Asheville Citizen-Times, February 4, 1893.
264 Asheville City Directories, 1896-1904.
265 Knoxville City Directory, 1889.
the Battery Park,” an event that brought together both permanent western North Carolina residents and tourists like himself.\textsuperscript{266}

Once he settled in Asheville permanently, Rumbough assumed an elite social position due to his background as a member of the tourist community and his status as a successful New South businessman. With these types of credentials, Rumbough served as Montford’s first mayor with T.S. Morrison, J. Joyner, and Locke Craig serving as commissioners.\textsuperscript{267} All of Montford’s citizens boasted high social positions; for instance, Craig would even go on to serve as North Carolina’s governor from 1913 until 1917. Rumbough reflected his elevated position in the impressive home he built in the community in 1892. Rumbough’s Queen Anne style home was designed by Chicago architect H.C. Hugill and cost an estimated $35,000, amounting to approximately $900,000 today.\textsuperscript{268} Rumbough’s home became a very real representation of the wealth and status within western North Carolina as only someone who was financially successful could afford such a home. Naturally, it became part of local promotion as it showed the nation the region’s growth, its ability to keep up with national trends, and hinted at an active high society in the region.

Rumbough’s home was not the only notable residence in the community and Montford collectively became part of regional advertising as photographs and postcards of the community at large were circulated across the nation. If an outsider could dismiss a single impressive home in the region as an outlier, and therefore ignore an elite class in western North Carolina, it would be much harder to ignore an entire village of similar structures and the type of citizen they connoted. Therefore, images like View From Battery Park Southwest became useful in local advertising.

\textsuperscript{266} The Asheville Semi-Weekly Citizen, March 20, 1890.
\textsuperscript{267} Asheville Times, April 16, 1941; Asheville City Directory, 1896; Asheville Citizen-Times, February 4, 1893.
\textsuperscript{268} Asheville Citizen-Times, May 21, 1891; Rumbough (James Edwin) House (aka Hopewell Hall; #49 Zillicoa St) 1890s, A542-8, Photographs and Postcards, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville North Carolina. North Carolina Collection.
branding by showing not only the impressive size of the homes in Montford, but the vast number of them as well.\textsuperscript{269}

Although some individual citizens like Rumbough began development of the community in an informal way, it was the Asheville Loan, Construction, and Improvement Company that began to invest heavily in the community in the 1890s and shaped the future of the neighborhood.\textsuperscript{270} Unlike when individual citizens were building homes within the village, the company began to create an organized plan for the community.\textsuperscript{271} This development plan was meant to ensure that the community remained beautiful and only attracted wealthy, refined citizens.

With this goal in mind, the company purchased forty-two parcels of land equaling approximately 1,000 acres within the community from many of Asheville’s leading businessmen, including M.J. Beardon, G.S. Powell, David Rankin, and W.B. Gwyn.\textsuperscript{272} Some of these sellers, and many of Asheville’s other leading citizens, became stockholders in the company. Their elevated positions within the Asheville community held sway with public sentiment about Montford Park’s development inclining the local paper to write that their “names are sufficient guarantee for the success of the enterprise.”\textsuperscript{273} They also served as symbols of who the community was for as only the region’s best or elite tourists were expected to live in Montford.

\textsuperscript{269} View From Battery Park Southwest, A243-8, Photographs and Postcards, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville North Carolina, North Carolina Collection.
\textsuperscript{270} Buncombe County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Buncombe County, Courthouse, Asheville. Deed Book 89, p. 59-66, April 12, 1894.
\textsuperscript{272} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{273} Asheville Citizen-Times, June 11, 1890.
To meet the expectations of these types of residents, the company invested in the community’s infrastructure and added many modern conveniences like macadamized roads, rock sidewalks, a streetcar track, and sewer and water pipes, things no elite citizen of the time would live without. Part of Montford’s appeal also included a major thoroughfare through the center of the community, Montford Avenue. Any community for elite citizens, both tourist and local, would need to boast modern streets as quality transportation was a leading concern for elites at the time, especially in western North Carolina. Good roads became a marker of high status as across the country leading citizens worked to improve America’s transportation system. Montford Avenue road not only boasted the most modern road building techniques, it also helped Montford’s citizens more easily connect to Asheville’s downtown, a must for businessmen and pleasure seekers alike. Just as the community’s impressive homes served as a symbol of western North Carolina’s elite side, so too did Montford Avenue. Montford Park became known for its “swank street,” and as the home of “Asheville’s Aristocracy,” who naturally lived on it. Thomas Wolfe, a novelist born and raised in Asheville, captured the essence of the Montford community in *Look Homeward, Angel* when he described Montford Avenue’s fictional counterpart, Montgomery Avenue, as “the most fashionable street in town.”

Transportation into the city did not stop with roads in Montford and a modern streetcar line also added to the community’s appeal by allowing easy access to Asheville and the neighborhood. Streetcars became popular across the nation at this time and in many ways influenced the development of neighborhoods like Montford. The nation’s elite could develop high-end enclaves within urban centers since streetcars made it easy for men to get to jobs and

---

274 Ibid.
276 *Asheville Citizen-Times*, October 9, 1938.
men and women to attend social functions. Because streetcars were synonymous with progress and showed the nation that western North Carolina was keeping pace with modern development, boosters featured them in many promotional materials like the postcard Looking Up Montford Avenue, Asheville, N.C., 1913.²⁷⁸

Montford’s appeal had more to do with more than just transportation and modernity. The company also worked to make the community’s geography attractive to buyers, thus appealing to the demand for a connection to the Appalachian wilderness so popular with tourists. Although residents wanted to live close to city centers for work and play, they also wanted to enjoy western North Carolina’s celebrated scenery. The development of attractive, garden neighborhoods also followed national trends, as elite citizens wanted the best of worlds, a convenient location, and a beautiful one.²⁷⁹ However, the company could not just leave the geography to its own devices. They needed to shape it first so it could blend with their modern amenities. With this goal in mind, the company refused to sell lots until “improvements [were] made” so their buyers could “more fully appreciate the advantages offered to those who want nice homes.”²⁸⁰ Restricting ownership until the community’s land was improved also ensured that lots would be more expensive and only be obtainable to a high social class. The company sold their cheapest lots for $2,000, around $52,000 today.²⁸¹ The company’s strategy proved successful, at least in creating demand, and they sold three lots in 1890, thirty-six in 1891, two in 1892, twenty-two in 1893, and seven in 1894.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.
²⁸¹ Asheville Citizen-Times, December 3, 1890
Despite the community’s popularity with tourists and locals, financially the company floundered, and George Willis Pack, a retired lumber baron who moved to Asheville in 1885, bought most of the remaining land in Montford Park in 1894. Like so many of the region’s elite, Pack was a testament to the local branding campaign as he was the very type of tourist locals were trying to attract to the region. Pack was a native New Yorker who amassed a fortune from lumber in Michigan. Pack’s success was a product of modernization as across the nation people were building new homes and businesses making the demand for lumber great. Pack and his wife, Frances, initially traveled to Asheville in 1884 in the hopes that the climate would improve her health, a typical reason why many came to the region. Pack would have probably been familiar with the region through business as well since western North Carolina had its own thriving lumber industry, one way the region’s economy was growing at the time. Pack and his wife liked western North Carolina so much they decided to become permanent residents and built their home shortly after visiting. Luckily for Asheville, Pack was an active booster of the city and added much to its growing infrastructure. Pack donated vast amounts of acreage that would eventually become many of Asheville’s most important turn-of-the-century building projects, including the erection of Pack Memorial Library, Ashton Park, and Pack Square.

Even though Pack was northern by birth, he worked to promote the region’s antebellum past, typical of most businessmen in the area at the time. Because Pack was a shrewd businessman, he understood the appeal that Old South and Confederate memory held across the country. For someone invested in a high-end, southern neighborhood, it would be this history that marked the region as elite and attracted potential clients. Therefore, Pack was a supporter of the Vance Monument in downtown Asheville. The 1896 monument honored North Carolina’s

283 *Asheville Citizen*, September 15, 1938; *Asheville Citizen-Times*, November 2, 1969.
Civil War Governor and Asheville resident, Zebulon B. Vance. At the time, people across the South remembered Vance for being a “great North Carolinian,” and he was believed “to rank with the foremost men in our…history.” Pack donated the $2,000 needed to cover the cost of the monument with the condition that it be placed in front of the courthouse.

Renowned architect Richard Sharp Smith designed the monument as a granite obelisk quarried from a local site, the Pacolet quarries of Henderson County. Smith gained a reputation in the region because of his role as “supervising architect on the Vanderbilt Estate” under Richard Morris Hunt and his background and training in England. Smith understood the prestige working on the Biltmore Estate carried and never failed to mention he was the “resident architect for Geo. W. Vanderbilt, esq., estate and new residence” in all his business advertisements. His background made Smith a favorite among elite clients and he was considered “one of the best-known architects in the country,” at least in their eyes. Much of this had to do with his associations with Biltmore as any connection to the Vanderbilt family added prestige to the project.

Boosters promoted the monument widely as it appealed to people’s Old South and Confederate nostalgia. Soon promotional materials, like the postcard, Pack Square, From Noland’s Corners, showed the Monument and the newly named Pack Square where it sat. Pack’s role in the Vance Monument project was just one way he influenced local development and regional branding. Although Montford was in development before Pack got involved, he revitalized the project, and it was through his management that the neighborhood became the

---

284 “THE MONUMENT TO VANCE,” Sun, April 23, 1896.
285 “$2,000 for a Monument to Vance,” The Washington Post, June 08, 1896.
286 Asheville Citizen-Times, May 18, 1892.
287 Asheville Citizen-Times, August 5, 1896.
truly elite area envisioned by the Asheville Loan, Construction, and Improvement Company. Pack’s first action was to cut prices on remaining lots drastically. High pricing might have ensured rich residents, but it also made it difficult to attract enough people to sell all the lots. Pack advertised within the local paper to announce a 30-day sale beginning immediately after his purchase of the property with “prices averaging less than one-half the former prices of the company.”  

$1,000 lots were certainly pricey enough to ensure that the community was comprised of elites, but fit much better into the budgets of the only slightly wealthy, or for people who were building second homes. Not all the region’s elites and their elite tourists were as wealthy as Pack and Vanderbilt after all. To form this new plan, Pack worked with local real estate developer, Montford investor, and friend, W.B. Gwyn who acted as his agent.

Pack made a good choice in having Gwyn handle the real estate sales of Montford Park because he worked as a lawyer and a leader in Asheville’s real estate market throughout the New South period. He was also one of the most effective boosters of the city throughout his life. “I sold eight lots October 10th, 1885, at $300 apiece,” Gwyn told the Atlanta Constitution in 1894, “an average one has just been sold for $1,000…I think the town has just fairly begun to grow…we have here added a series of most essential elements of progress and prosperity.” A decade later, Gwyn was still active in Asheville’s real estate market as prices continued to rise. In a letter to a potential client from Philadelphia, Gwyn justified the high price for a home as a product of the “excellent demand for houses” in the region.

290 Asheville Citizen Times. April 14, 1894.
In addition to Gwyn’s promotion, another reason why the development had such an impressive image was that Richard Sharp Smith built many of its homes. Some of Montford’s residents, like Annie West, a resident of Durham, North Carolina who spent her summers in Asheville, had Smith employ the same stylistic and building practices as those he used at Biltmore. West looked to Smith when building her “eight-room cottage” in Montford so she could achieve a home “English half-timber in design.” West’s home featured the “pebble dash and rough hewn trimmings” like many of Smith’s projects at Biltmore Estate and Biltmore Village. This styling caused the local paper to describe the home as “of quaint old English style.” Smith was very good at creating designs evoking elite status with ties to earlier architectural periods. Although the most sought after and employed architectural style within Montford Park during the last decades of the nineteenth century was Queen Anne, Smith infused many different styles into his designs and Montford Park boasted Tudor-Revival, Craftsman, Classical Revival, and Colonial Revival architecture as well.

What’s In a Name: Smith as the Region’s Architect to the Elite

Many of Western North Carolina’s elites outside of Asheville also employed Smith to create similarly impressive homes like those he erected in the Montford community. In Waynesville, Dr. Joseph Howell Way employed Smith to erect a new Queen Anne style home on North Main Street in 1899. Way’s “large, elegant brick residence” was a replacement for an older home on the same spot. Dr. Robert Vance Welch gifted the original house and 11 ¾ acres to Way’s wife, Marietta Welch, in 1894. This land was part of the original tract that

---

293 Ibid.
295 Ibid.
297 The Waynesville Courier, May 26, 1899.
Colonel Robert Love provided to found Waynesville. Marietta Welch was Love’s granddaughter on her mother’s side. Way initially built a small medical practice on the plot while living in the modest dwelling already there. However, soon Smith was employed to create what would be one of Waynesville most impressive structures at the time, one that would represent Way’s and his wife’s place within local high society.

Just like his wife, Way could boast an impressive lineage. Although Way was born in Waco, Texas in 1865, his mother. Julia Howell Way was a descendant of many of Haywood County’s early founders and grew up in western North Carolina. Through her familial connections, Way’s father, Charles Burr Way, was granted a teaching position in Buncombe County in the early 1870s and eventually became the superintendent of Buncombe County Schools.²⁹⁸ Way’s father tutored him, and then he taught briefly in the region himself. Way went on to get a license to practice medicine from the Medical College of Virginia in 1885 and his Doctor of Medicine from Vanderbilt University in 1886.

Because both Way and his wife had social prestige in the region, and Way was a new brand of New South professional, his home and office helped add to the regional image. Residents saw Way’s home as a symbol of modernity and success not only for him, but the community at large prompting the local paper to write “it is not only the largest residence in Waynesville but it is the most comfortable and substantial. It is also among the most handsome ones of this section. We congratulate Dr. Way on his taste in building matters and Main Street on this pretty structure.”²⁹⁹

The Way’s entertained within their home and the homes of their friends just like the other Appalachian elite. Way’s home served as the meeting place for the local chapter, the Dorcas

²⁹⁹ The Waynesville Courier, January, 1900.
Bell Love Chapter, of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Mrs. Way was a regent of the chapter named after her ancestor and founded by her cousin, Mary Love Stringfield. In addition to hosting the general meetings, the Way’s home was also the setting for some of the club event’s like “a colonial tea” given in 1915.  

Although Way’s home was completed early in his career as a doctor, his continued improvement to it, but mostly to the nearby medical office, coincided with his ever-increasing professional accomplishments. Again, the local paper covered the improvements as a sign of the town’s continued progress noting “Dr. Way’s office, when completed, will be one of the finest and largest in the state.” Way’s medical career was not isolated to Western North Carolina but spanned the country. This reputation helped the Way family to extend their social circles well outside of the region, something that added greatly to the western North Carolina’s elite image. Way joined the North Carolina State Medical Society in 1887 and was an active and important member throughout his career. Way also served on the State Board of Medical Examiners in 1897. Within this organization, he served first as secretary from 1902 until 1907 and then as president from 1907 to 1908. Way was a member of the Tri-State Medical Society of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, the Southern Medical Association, the American Medical Association, and the American Public Health Association. Way’s most influential position was within the North Carolina Board of Health where the governor appointed him in 1905.

With such impressive lineage and influential positions, anyone who knew Way and his wife would immediately recognize them as a New South gentleman and lady, people who embraced modernity but also honored the Old South. By creating social connections well outside of the region through his profession, Way helped spread the reputation of an elite western

---

300 Waynesville Courier, February 5, 1915.
301 The Waynesville Courier, January, 1900.
302 Allen, 154-155.
North Carolina; one elite guest would want to visit not only for the scenery but the company as well. Way’s wife created the same reputation within her role as hostess in their modern, expensive, and trendy Queen Anne home. Anyone visiting the residence would not fail to see that the Ways were at the top of high society. However, not everyone would have this level of familiarity with local elites like the Ways. Luckily, their home and the homes of their regional counterparts could stand in for them and represent their high social standing in the age of conspicuous consumption. The homes of the Appalachian elite and the roles they performed within them did much to expand the elite brand boosters were promoting in the last decades of the nineteenth century. As people across the country saw images of these residences in newspapers and on postcards and tourists shared their stories of the lavish entertaining taking place within them, it became clear that Western North Carolina boasted a citizenry capable of socializing with America’s high society, making elite tourism even more attractive. Asheville’s people had become known for “their refinement, culture, and hospitality” in large part because of their homes.303

Chapter Three: Luxury Hotels and the Resurgence of Elite Tourism in Western North Carolina

Boosters’ utilization of a growing infrastructure and new housing to showcase western North Carolina’s elite side was just preliminary preparation for regional tourism itself. These indirect promotions were necessary to set the stage for the region’s tourist industry, but the actual tourist trade happened in luxury hotels. Leisure was a significant part of being elite at the time and was one part of the larger changes within society. The wealth created by the industrial age led to a high society who prided themselves on their spending. Much of this consumption went into elaborate vacations and helped validate their status.\(^{304}\) Asheville’s boosters and businessmen, like their counterparts across western North Carolina, made sure to capitalize off this new importance of luxury vacations and they prided themselves for “offer[ing] advantages second to no other place in the South for summer resorts.”\(^{305}\) They did so because the region’s resort hotels brought together all the other components of boosters and businessmen’s’ branding campaigns into single locations. Embedded within these components was the oft-paradoxical symbolism pivotal to the region’s overall success with tourists from across the country. At the heart of these themes were issues of continuity and change as hotels utilized whichever best fit their immediate needs. First, boosters and owners presented hotels as part of the growing local infrastructure, thus tying them directly into a modern producer/consumer economy. The region’s hotel owners were producing and selling luxury tourism and elite tourists were purchasing their product. Second, hotels incorporated the same types of architectural detailing into their designs as elite citizens did within their homes. Embedded within the hotels’ styling was symbolic.

---


\(^{305}\) *The Lyceum*, April 1890, 5.
capital as owners chose to either evoke the Old South nostalgia through Southern Colonial designs or modernity through Queen Anne architecture. Through this extravagant detailing, hotels acted as consumers, and their opulent exteriors and interiors became part of the nation’s conspicuous consumption. This practice set local resort hotels at the top of the national social hierarchy because few spaces could compete with the sheer luxury they offered guests. Tied to this was the utilization of hotel space for entertaining. Hotels offered elite Appalachians another space to perform their roles as hosts and hostesses thus validating their elite status and expanding the region’s elite social circles and social influences well outside of the local or even southern sphere. Last, hotels paired their urban refinement with convenient and scenic locations letting visitors know that they could easily enjoy the wilderness without forfeiting the modern comfort of their establishments. Because resort hotels incorporated all of the components and themes of the region’s elite brand into their spaces and disseminated these widely in their advertising, luxury resorts epitomized the product Western North Carolinians were working so hard to advertise, elite leisure. Boosters and hotel owners knew exactly whom their product was for and minced few words when they announced to the nation, “we want the men of leisure and character to come... Notably Mrs. Harrison, present Lady of the White House, who came to drink in this sea of bliss, and in rapture she could only say: “Oh! How beautiful.”

Luxury Hotels get Rural: The History and Success of Health Tourism in Western North Carolina

Western North Carolina had initially garnered an elite tourist base from planters in South Carolina who fled the low country each summer in search of a healthier climate. The planters’ dedication and glorification of western North Carolina’s salubrious climate resulted in a

306 The Lyceum, April 1891, 10.
longstanding image of western North Carolina as being a bastion of good health. Antebellum boosters capitalized off this image to attract their tourist base and one promotional pamphlet from 1850 called Western North Carolina “nature’s trundle-bed of recuperation.”

Health tourism resurfaced in the region during the last decades of the nineteenth century because of this history and because new ideas about modern health began to shape American life. A significant aspect of health became tied to climate and people ventured to locations deemed scientifically healthy. Health tourism combined ideas of continuity and change as it both spoke to the region’s elite past but looked to the future through scientific progress. In 1875 journalist Edward King documented the South for a growing national audience, and noted that Asheville attracted “enthusiastic invalids, who there regained their health” and “have from time to time sung its charms.” The region’s reputation went far outside of the South and it was featured in Booth Tarkington’s 1918 Pulitzer Prize winning novel The Magnificent Ambersons as a last resort for a dying Wilbur Minafer. Although Tarkington’s novel came out in 1918, it was actually an examination of the changes wrought on society due to increasing modernity and industrialization in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The fictional Wilbur Minafer was in Asheville to take advantage of the very real sanitariums that opened to accommodate the influx of health tourists, the first opening in Asheville in 1871. These establishments attracted some of the best doctors working in the field, like Dr. Karl von Ruch who opened the Winyah Sanitarium in 1888. Previously, Ruch had worked with the discoverer of tuberculosis, creating a

---

309 King, Edward, The Great South; A Record of Journeys in Louisiana, Texas, the Indian Territory, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1875), 505.
national reputation. Ruch was far from the only doctorate turning to the region to practice and doctors like J.W. Gleitsmann flocked to the region. Gleitsmann, a physician from Baltimore, opened the Mountain Sanitarium for Pulmonary Diseases to treat the region’s health tourists. One reason why health tourism was so popular at this time was its connection to new scientific discovery. As science became a means to order and understand life, people turned to it to explain western North Carolina’s effect on health. In 1874 The Boston Daily Globe used the “Vital Statistics” within the 1870 census to deem Western North Carolina “undoubtedly, exceedingly healthy” with “as many natural as medico-statistical advantages.”

Despite its longstanding reputation as a bastion of health and scientific data to back this reputation up, not all visitors to western North Carolina were as easily convinced of the region’s healing qualities. One tourist visiting the “warm and hot Springs of Madison County,” calling themselves M.D., questioned the “special medical effects of these water” despite knowing the “admitted professional fact” that “hot baths from 92 to 102 degrees are a very valuable therapeutic agent.” Despite these misgivings, for this guest the “advantages of this charming spot” did not stop with the potential medical benefits because the region itself was “superior to the most prominent in the southern and middle states” making it a good vacation destination nevertheless. M.D. accurately predicted that the popularity of the region would only increase “when the projected railroad connections [were] completed” and more people could easily reach the new health resorts. The region would continue to draw tourists seeking a location famed

312 Ibid.
313 Ibid.
314 Abel, 79.
316 M.D., “THE WARM SPRINGS: Thermal Waters of Western North Carolina,” Atlanta Constitution, August 11, 1876.
317 Ibid.
318 Ibid.
for its healing properties for generations to come, but health tourism was only one part of the luxury tourism trade in western North Carolina in the last part of the nineteenth century.

**New South Amenities Mixed with Old South Flare: The Importance of Historical Memory in Western North Carolina’s Luxury Hotels**

Although many people traveled to the region looking for healing, something dependent on western North Carolina’s rural setting, most also expected a resort to stay in once they were there. Although western North Carolina offered modest boarding houses and cheap hotels for less wealthy visitors, the majority of the region’s guests were part of the nation’s high society, and resort hotels became synonymous with the region. Because their guests wanted and expected so many things while staying in the area, many resort hotels in Western North Carolina not only played with themes of urban and rural and old-fashioned and refined but also combined Old South and Confederate nostalgia with New South spirit in their promotional campaigns to meet guests’ demands.

The Haywood White Sulphur Springs Hotel of Waynesville, North Carolina serves as a good example of the blending of multiple themes and symbols into a single branding campaign. Maria Love Stringfield, and her husband, Colonel William Williams (W.W.) Stringfield opened the hotel in 1878 in a grand antebellum structure, Love’s childhood home. Because the hotel had been a home for generations before it opened, it had a very real history that its owners’ capitalized on. The hotel was named White Sulphur Springs for the “inspiring spring” on the property. The springs became a central feature of the hotel, and the Stringfields tied the surrounding geography and health tourism into their branding efforts, and its reputation spread far and wide. In 1882 the *Raleigh News and Observer* told readers, these “springs have long been noted for their valuable properties of their waters, as well as for the beauty and health of
their location.”

When Wilbur Gleason Zeigler and Ben S. Grosscup visited the hotel, they shared a similar experience, commenting on the “Sulphur Spring bubbling up in a stone basin within a small summer-house. There is a comfortable, healthy air about the hotel and its surroundings.”

The Stringfields made sure that although the springs were part of the natural environment, they were also elegant enough to meet the needs of their elite guests, thus the erection of the “summer-house” surrounding them. The Stringfields circulated imagery of the “summer-house” within promotions like the postcard *White Sulphur Springs, Waynesville, N.C.* showing potential guests just how refined their establishment was. The spring’s niceties did not stop with its accommodations, and one regional booklet, *Information to Visitors Concerning Greater Western North Carolina*, published by the Greater Western North Carolina Association explained how, the “proprietor of White Sulphur Springs keeps attendants for the purpose of supplying winter visitors with the famous water from the springs, and no visitor to Waynesville fails to take advantage of the opportunity of deriving the benefit accruing from their use.”

Although boosters sometimes promoted the springs as part of Western North Carolina’s Cherokee history, this did not conform to the elite image the Stringfields hoped to develop for their hotel. This was why they built such elaborate structures around the springs and workers were on hand to cater to guests’ needs; it was not meant to be a wild place, how most people in the U.S. viewed Native Americans, but a cultured one. It was the hotel’s former life as the home

---

323 Zeigler and Grosscup, 291.
of a southern planter and Confederate officer that appealed to tourists and what the Stringfields advertised. In fact, a possibly apocryphal story circulated about the discovery of the springs tying them to the history of the county’s largest slaveholder. In 1950 the local newspaper reported on the development of the hotel as part of the “story of the progress of Waynesville and Haywood County.”324 The newspaper wrote, “it is said that the water was found by a slave of James Robert Love, who was given his freedom because of his discovery.”325 The generations-old origin story tied the springs directly into planter society adding to its charm for many guests. This angle allowed the Stringfields to both highlight health tourism, a major part of antebellum vacationing while applauding the antebellum way of life and their direct connection to it. It was more than just the Stringfields who believed it was important to connect the space to the Old South and the Confederacy. An 1892 article by R.T. Conley in the Atlanta Constitution served to highlight the home’s original owner, the “gallant Colonel James R. Love.”326 Conley went on to propose a historic designation for White Sulphur Springs as the official place of the “last soldier to fall and the last gun fired in the war between the states.”327 Clearly, the hotel’s former life as a plantation house and the location of a Confederate battlefield captured the interest of many far outside of the region.

However, it was not just memory that made the hotel appealing; its architectural style still evoked the Old South. During their 1883 visit, Zeigler and Grosscup noted more than just the springs, they commented on the hotel’s origins as “a large farmhouse, remodeled and added to until its original proportions and design are lost…the grounds are naturally adapted for a summer

325 Ibid.
327 Ibid.
What they were describing was the continuing improvements made on the original 1830 Love home. By the end of the antebellum period, the family modeled the home on a style of “typical southern colonial design with columns reaching to the roof line.” Despite its rather grand appearance and massive size, equal to most of the other luxury hotels of the time, the Stringfield family advertised White Sulphur Springs Hotel as a “beautiful summer home in the ‘Land of the Sky.’” The Southern Rail Way also promoted the hotel’s former life as an antebellum mansion and wrote how the hotel had, “its picturesqueness preserved.” The appeal of the former antebellum home turned luxury resort would be short lived however as a fire destroyed the property less than a decade after it opened.

When the White Sulfur Springs Hotel burned in 1883, at an estimated loss of $30,000, the Stringfields rebuilt it into a “long three-story brick structure with porches running the length of the building on the first and second floors.” Unlike with the former antebellum home, the new hotel’s branding focused on modernity, at least within its architecture. The hotel’s managers and local boosters sent out a flurry of advertisements noting how the hotel was “up-to-date” with electricity and indoor plumbing and conveniently located on the Western Carolina Railroad route. At this time electricity was something that even the nation’s wealthiest might not yet have within their homes. As historian Ernest Freeberg argues, the “new light stimulated countless innovations, new machines and new ways of living.” Few inclusions within the hotel would make it seem more luxurious and more modern than electricity. With this type of

328 Zeigler and Grosscup, 291.
330 Asheville Citizen, July 21, 1885.
332 “EN ROUTE FOR THE ADIRONDAKS.: President Cleveland Entertained by Friends at Forks, N. Y,” St. Louis Post, August 11, 1885; Asheville Citizen, July 21, 1885.
333 Asheville Citizen, June 29, 1887.
luxury on offer, in 1885 and 1886 promotional materials described the new hotel as “paradise regained,” the “most beautiful place in North Carolina,” and the “loveliest in all God’s wonderland of beauty.” With a new modern styling, local boosters featured the new hotel on many promotional materials, like the postcard *Haywood White Sulphur Springs Hotel, Waynesville, N.C.* The Stringfields also began including imagery of the new hotel within all their advertisements. This method deviated from their former advertisements that described Maria Love’s childhood home, but never actually showed it. Interestingly, the advertisements put out by the Stringfields included added features which did not exist at the actual hotel, like the much more elaborate cupola on top of the hotel and a fountain in the front. These exaggerated features fit into the Stringfields’ plan to promote a hotel intended for only the best of society.

This promotional campaign was successful, and soon the hotel was known as the “gem of Western North Carolina.” The new hotel continued to attract an elite crowd and shortly after it reopened the *Charlotte Observer* told readers, “parties desiring to engage board at Haywood White Sulphur Springs will do well to telegraph to the proprietors as the place is rapidly filling up. A brilliant and fashionable company had already gathered... At night, music, mirth and dancing make the merry hours fly.”

The new hotel seemed to be even more popular than the old, do in large part to the region’s overall branding campaign, and in 1885 the local paper noted, the “crowd at the Haywood White Sulphur Springs continues to increase each week...for as his
springs become better known, and the facilities for reaching them become better, he may expect increased attendance."

With this type of acclaim, the hotel soon became the “center of social activity of the community.” The hotel held “dances, germans, and musicals…and amusements included parlor games, tennis croquet, riding, and driving.” One reason why the hotel continued to attract a large number of guests was that it became part of the local elite’s own socializing. Just as private residences served as major entertainment hubs for the tourist community with the locals serving as the hosts and hostesses, so too did the luxury hotels with their owners filling the same roles. Central to this entertaining at White Sulphur Springs was William and Maria Stringfield who operated as the hotel’s host and hostess. Elite guests, like William Lowndes Calhoun, a judge from Atlanta, expected a “great many nice people” to socialize with, and luxury hotels like White Sulphur Springs could offer them that expectation. This socializing was also a way that the hotel retained its Old South and Confederate nostalgia. The Stringfields and other local boosters highlighted their former places within antebellum society in tandem with their roles as New South elites as a sign that they were respectable company.

A significant part of the family’s extended social relationships and their high status came from William’s work as a politician. Stringfield’s political work centered on honoring the Old South and Confederate memory and “he was ever the friend of the Confederate veteran.” Through his political clout, William helped organize the Confederate Veteran’s Reunion in

---

340 Ibid.
341 Asheville Citizen, July 21, 1885.
342 “Resort Items,” Atlanta Constitution, September 2, 1883.
345 Ibid.
Waynesville in 1889. This event boasted an array of distinguished personages, including Governor Daniel G. Fowle, former Governor Thomas J. Jarvis, former state congressmen Thomas L. Clingman and Robert B. Vance, and the Principal Chief of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee, Nimrod Jarrett Smith.

William and Maria’s daughter, Mary Love Stringfield, also helped the family develop a reputation far outside of the local community. Although Mary Love Stringfield was born in 1873, much of her status was dependent on her family lineage and their place within the antebellum high society. In fact, Mary Love was the regent of the North Carolina Daughter’s of the American Revolution, a position responsible for preserving historical memory. Her relative by marriage, Bishop James Atkins, summed up how important lineage was to her status when he said, “Mary Love had a good ancestry, and she knew how to make good use of it.”\footnote{Ibid.} This meant combing the Old South with the new.

Mary Love met the expectations of a woman of her class in the New South and was known to be a “woman of strong character and vigorous mind.”\footnote{Ibid.} Unlike her antebellum counterparts, including her mother who received tutoring at home, Mary Love was able to get a good education outside the home. She was a graduate of Asheville Female College; her cousin Bishop James Atkins ran the school. Following her education, Mary Love taught in the “graded schools in Waynesville” until she married.\footnote{“In Memoriam, Mary Love Stringfield Wulbern, 1873-1907,” (National Society Daughters of the American Revolution of North Carolina. Dorcas Bell Love Chapter), 1873.} Mary Love joined another old southern family when she married J.H.C. Wulbern in 1904. Wulbern was “one of Charleston’s most prominent young business men” working mainly as president of the Wulbern Fertilizer Company, but also
holding investments in other Charleston businesses. Following her marriage and relocation to Charleston, Mary Love became involved with the Women’s Exchange of Charleston where she held the position of secretary and was on the Board of Managers. Throughout her life, people identified Mary Love Stringfield as a “leader in many of the benevolent social movements of the community” and a “universal favorite with all classes, white and black, rich and poor, high and low.” Through all these connections the Stringfields greatly expanded their social community far outside the region. They also helped change the image of the region by showing people a very real and active elite family who had been in western North Carolina for generations.

These types of social relationships became central to the hotel’s success. The Stringfield family embraced their roles as host and hostesses at the White Sulphur Springs Hotel in 1883 when a “reception was given Mrs. Governor Jarvis and Mrs. T.J. Jackson and her daughter, Miss Julia.” Included within this party was one of the South’s leading personages at the time, “Mrs. Stonewall Jackson and Daughter.” Mrs. Stonewall Jackson served as a very real symbol of Old South and Confederate nostalgia, and she was treated like royalty wherever she went. The Stringfields made sure to honor Jackson whenever she visited and the Raleigh News and Observer, reprinted in the Atlanta Constitution, noted how the “entertainment was very appropriately opened by ‘Stonewall Jackson’s March,’ a piano solo by Mrs. Stringfield.” Of course, with such an august figure of the Confederacy like Mrs. Jackson present, the band also “played Dixie.” Mrs. Stringfield was an appropriate hostess for Jackson being the “accomplished wife of the member of the legislature from this county” and a “sister of ex-State

---

349 Asheville Citizen-Times, June 16, 1904; American Fertilizer, December 30, 1922.
351 Ibid.
352 Raleigh News and Observer, August 31, 1883.
353 “Resort Items,” Atlanta Constitution, September 2, 1883.
354 Raleigh News and Observer, August 31, 1883.
Auditor Love.” In fact, the family had a long-standing relationship with Mrs. Jackson and throughout their lives frequently entertained together. With the hotel garnering this type of clientele it was no wonder that its reputation spread far and wide prompting one guest to proclaim that the hotel often hosted “some of the best people in the South.”

Battery Park: A New Hotel on an Old Spot

The White Sulphur Springs Hotel was far from the only luxury resort attracting prestigious guests like Mrs. Stonewall Jackson. It was Franklin Coxe, the famed bringer of the railroad, who built the region’s most important and most luxurious hotel, Battery Park, in Asheville in 1886. Just like with the White Sulphur Springs, the Battery Park Hotel’s management used a branding campaign that brought together the myriad of symbols responsible for local promotion. With this in mind, much of Battery Park’s early promotion had to do with place.

The Battery Park Hotel was located at and named for a Confederate stronghold during the Civil War, Battery Porter. People across the region honored the spot’s ties to the war, and it became imbued with symbolic capital. For example, the year before Coxe built the hotel, “Rev. J.H. Smith, D.D., of Greensboro and chaplain of the 3rd Regiment” visited Waynesville where he “preached to a full congregation, soldiers, and civilians.” Smith took the time to “hold services” later in his trip at Battery Porter where the “attendance of the military, in full dress uniform… was a great attraction…and probably a thousand people, ladies, gentleman, and

355 Ibid.
357 Asheville Citizen, July 27, 1885.
children, white and colored, filled the ground that was made holy ground for the time.”

Clearly, both locals and those outside the region still honored the location’s Confederate past and worked to remember it.

The hotel’s management embraced the military history of the site understanding how it would appeal to their southern guests’ sentiments. Many promotional materials noted the hotel’s location for its “historical interest” where “grim cannon belched forth their murderous fire.”

Battery Park’s first brochure included a “vignette illustration on the title page” which suggested the “military associations of the locality.” The imagery within the brochure included “a plumed Knight in full armor…holding…a streaming banner, with the legend playing on the wind ‘Battery Park Hotel.’” By showcasing a more stylized version of the military associations of the location, the hotel could appeal to those who honored the Confederacy, but also not antagonize those who may not, a way to appeal to the region’s growing tourist base. The hotel’s military history would continue to be spotlighted not only within the hotel’s own promotional materials, but by others outside of the region. For example, in 1892 when the Atlanta Constitution ran a story on the hotel, they made sure to let readers know that the “old breastworks still remain[ed]” but “instead of supporting artillery” they were “giv[ing] life and beauty to flowers and shrubs.”

If the site where the hotel stood tied the hotel into an older way of life, the hotel itself was anything but old fashioned. Boosters announced, the “structure is modern, architecturally

358 Ibid.
359 “Battery Park Hotel, Asheville, N. C.,” Atlanta Constitution, June 19, 1892.
360 Asheville Citizen, June 9, 1886.
361 Ibid.
362 “Battery Park Hotel, Asheville, N. C,” Atlanta Constitution, June 19, 1892.
beautiful, and singularly free from the stilted conventionalities of the usual hotel.”

One travel writer, going simply by B.P.S., commented that the Battery Park Hotel was “large and elegant.” Visitors even reflected that Battery Park could meet the “highest ideal of the northern pleasure resorts.” The Queen-Anne style hotel designed and built by John Adam Wagner sat on 25 acres and was approximately 475 feet in length with 125 guest rooms. The hotel’s “magnificent style” was meant to make the best of the local environment and climate with plenty of porches available to enjoy the “charms of the new hotel.” Long-time hotel manager and scion of local society, E.P. McKissick, described the hotel’s most noted architectural detail, its porches, as “broad and almost never-ending.” The porches looked out on a spectacular view of the city with the mountains in the background. Because so many elites hoped to get both Appalachian scenery and modern comforts, the view from the hotel featured in its advertising because it showed how guests could enjoy it without even leaving the hotel. Multiple images of Battery Park’s view circulated across the country.

The hotel had more to offer than just good scenery as it paired the rural enticements of western North Carolina with a resort that was modern, beautiful, and comfortable. With such an

---

365 *Asheville Citizen*, July 14, 1887.
368 Ibid.
impressive exterior, one literally showing the wealth and modernity of the region, the hotel’s image became part of the regional branding campaign and few promotional materials about western North Carolina failed to include it within their pages. Local booster, H. Taylor Rogers, incorporated the hotel’s different exterior views, pictured below, within the promotional booklet he authored, *Rogers’ Asheville*, in the 1890s.\(^{370}\) This publication was not meant to just advertise the hotel, but the region in general. By including the area’s most impressive structure at the time, the Biltmore House would not be finished for several more years, the booklet was proclaiming western North Carolina as a growing New South region, one keeping up with the rest of the nation in every way.

The hotel’s beautiful and impressive exterior was also perfect for postcards, like the 1886-1889 postcard created by Lindsay & Brown of Asheville in a series called *Western North Carolina Views*. Because the hotel evoked a growing economy and a wealthy citizenry it was useful for all advertisers in the region.\(^{371}\) The hotel was so popular that Lindsay and Brown included it on three different postcards showing the exterior from different angles. Other western North Carolina businesses dependent on tourism also used Battery Park’s image in their own promotional materials, like a postcard from the J.H. Law Company of Asheville.\(^{372}\) Battery Park was so popular that companies across the country featured it on postcards as well, like the Detroit Photographic Company’s 1902 postcard and the Hugh C. Leighton Company of Portland Maine 1906 postcard.\(^{373}\) The Southern Postcard Company also put out a postcard beginning in

---


1912 and published until 1930, well after the hotel was demolished, that showed the Battery Park Hotel with the region’s other magnificent structure, the Biltmore House.\textsuperscript{374}

The number of postcards representing Battery Park Hotel, both inside and outside of Western North Carolina, shows the popularity of the resort across the nation. It also shows how people accepted the region as an elite tourist destination and therefore the success of the local branding campaign. Because the very point of the postcard was to share an experience, the quantity of postcards in circulation depicting Battery Park did much to spread western North Carolina’s elite image. Through this medium, people who had never heard of or seen western North Carolina were presented with an elegant, modern, and high society portrait of what the region was about. For those who looked to local color and other popular media depictions to form an image of a rural and hillbilly-inhabited land, they were shown a very different image of the region, one that could compete with any resort across the county.

If local boosters and postcard companies made sure to include imagery of Battery Park in their materials, the hotel itself went even further in its promotion and Battery Park’s image was included in most of the hotel’s advertisements and paraphernalia. This inclusion helped spread the hotel’s reputation across the country even further. For example, a depiction of the hotel appeared on stationary provided by the hotel for its guests.\textsuperscript{375} The stationary not only offered visitors a nice perk when staying at the luxury resort but also helped promote the hotel among its clientele. Because much of the hotel’s and the region’s elite reputation was still dependent on social connections, sending a letter showing the impressive structure did much to attract new clientele as the letter’s receiver became included within the hotel’s extended social network.


It was not just the exterior of the hotel that boosters and the hotel’s managers promoted across the country. The interior was equally opulent, modern, and comfortable and many images of Battery Pak’s interior spaces became part of local promotion and the hotel’s advertising as well. In 1896 Battery Park’s manager, E.P. McKissick, created a twelve-page booklet that highlighted the hotel’s striking interior spaces alongside its nostalgic location and beautiful exterior. The booklet showcased some of the hotel’s most interesting rooms, like the Palm Room and the Turkish Room. The interior offered guests more than just style and promotional pamphlets told readers, “there are also bowling-alleys, billiards-rooms for both ladies and gentleman, a shooting-gallery and all the accessories for popular amusement for old and young.”

One of the most popular and widely advertised rooms was the grand ballroom. Boosters and Battery Park’s management promoted the grand ballroom because it was where the hotel hosted “special entertainments…the handsomest of any resort in the country.” Having a ballroom was vital for an elite establishment like Battery Park because balls acted as a cornerstone of high society at the time. It was the size of a ballroom after all that informed how Ward McAllister and Caroline Astor decided on the number of elites in NYC.

Also appealing to guests was that the hotel boasted modern building techniques and included the most up-to-date amenities. To ease guests’ minds that a vacation in Appalachia meant forgoing luxury, early promotional materials let people know that the “new hotel, just completed…” contains “all the modern appliances for doing a first-class business: hydraulic

---

378 Ibid.
elevator, electric light, heated by steam and open fires.” For guests looking to be pampered, “electric bells connecting every room with the office” provided an added amenity, guaranteeing around the clock service.

In addition to its interior luxuries, the hotel’s management worked to create outdoor spaces and outdoor activities appealing to guests wanting to experience the region’s geography. This blend of the hotel’s modernity with the region’s celebrated geography required promotion and many of the outdoor and sports activities at the hotel became part of the local booster’s and hotel management’s branding campaigns. Two examples include a postcard displaying the tennis court and the hotel’s 1896 booklet that showcased its golf facilities at the Swannanoa Golf Club.

For guests hoping to affect an English air, the Battery Park offered fox hunting as one of its premier outdoor attractions and the Swannanoa Hunt Club became one of the most “enjoyable and popular features of the Battery Park.” Hunting was not just popular with a southern audience who had adopted the sport from the British gentry in the colonial period, but also appealed to a northern elite who modeled much of their lifestyles off the British Aristocracy. The hotel’s hunting reputation grew widely and one Washington Post writer observed how “Gentleman come from the North for the quail shooting and hunting.” The hotel’s

---

380 “Display Ad 1 -- No Title” Daily American, July 9, 1886.
381 Ibid.
384 LARKIN, Special Correspondence of THE POST GAY. “THE LAND OF THE SKY.: A TRIP TO THE TOP OF MOUNT MITCHELL DESCRIBED. An Ascent of Twelve Miles Through the Forests--Prof. Mitchell’s Rosting Place--A Night in a Cave. DINNER. THE START. ‘BIG TOM,’ THE MOUNTAINEER. ‘SENATOR VANCE’S STORY ABOUT BIG TOM.’ SWANNANOA VALLEY. SUNSET FROM MT. MITCHELL. REGION OF THE
management also advertised widely informing guests how “foxhunting is another one of the pleasures” offered at Battery Park.\textsuperscript{385} For guests who did not want to travel with their hunting equipment, the hotel even contained “two excellent packs of hounds and weekly hunts are always on the programme.”\textsuperscript{386} Although hunting took guests into the wilderness, it remained a high society activity. With this goal in mind, the hotel worked hard to make the activity suitable for elite guests by offering club-houses “artistically and appropriately furnished” with “special rooms being fitted for ladies who ride in or enjoy the chase.”\textsuperscript{387} These options were just one way Battery Park created “comfort and elegance” for their guests as hunting and the society that went with it blended rural activities with an elite citizenry. Battery Park’s guests would not have to hunt alone, and boosters let potential visitors know that “The Hunt Club, of which Dr. S.W. Battle, of Asheville, is president, and Mr. Henry M. Steele, of Baltimore, is secretary, is the ‘swell’ feature socially of the city.”\textsuperscript{388} Through the Hunt Club the region’s “leading people” socially connected with elite tourists both through this outdoor activity but also during its balls.\textsuperscript{389} Boosters made sure potential tourists knew that these took place at Battery Park itself and were “brilliant affairs” with “many guests coming from New York and other Northern cities to attend them.”\textsuperscript{390}

With so much to recommend it, it was no surprise when Judge Marshall J. Clarke called Battery Park the “most beautiful and elegant summer hotel” he had seen after staying as a guest

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{386} Ibid.
\bibitem{388} Ibid.
\bibitem{389} Ibid.
\bibitem{390} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
in 1886. Clarke’s recommendation would have done much to spread the reputation of the hotel because he was as good an example of the type of elite southern visitor still coming into the region in the New South period. Clarke’s continued visitation was a testament to the success of boosters’ regional branding campaign as they were able to appeal to multiple types of elite tourists. Like most New South gentlemen, Clarke honored his southern past but embraced the future. After his death in 1899, the Georgia Bar Association dedicated a few pages of its Annual Session report to eulogizing Clarke where they noted his “English ancestry” and that he “was to the Georgia manor born” in 1839. The eulogy also praised how Clarke joined the Confederate Army after he “heard with quickened pulse that electric call to arms in 1861…doing his duty to the close of the war.” Following the war Clarke spent most of his career practicing law and then serving as a judge in Atlanta. Clarke was remembered for his “feminine traits of gentleness and refinement mingled with his manly characteristics, and elevated them to the highest type of manhood.”

Clarke was not the only guest happy with the Battery Park Hotel. Gay Larkin, a traveler writer and guest in the fall of 1886, wrote about the hotel’s “manifold attractions” including, “situation, scenery, beauty of architecture, etc., etc.” Larkin indicated the Battery Park could not “be excelled, if indeed, Equaled, throughout the whole South!” With so much to offer, Larkin reflected, it was no surprise why the “fashionable world [was] lured” to the Battery Park

---

391 “Personal,” Atlanta Constitution, July 20, 1886.
393 Ibid.
394 Ibid.
396 Ibid.
Hotel.\textsuperscript{397} Many leaders of the nation’s elite often did visit the region and the Battery Park became a leading destination spot for them. The hotel gained a reputation so quickly among the nation’s elite that in 1887, only the second ear it was opened, President Cleveland and his family took “shade at Asheville,” staying at Battery Park while doing so.\textsuperscript{398} Naturally, this visit garnered much attention from the city and “men from every section of western North Carolina” hosted the president.\textsuperscript{399} Leading male citizens met the President’s train creating an escort for him to the hotel with “three score carriages” and “1200 men on horseback.”\textsuperscript{400}

Part of the Battery Park Hotel’s success was general manager E.P. McKissick’s acceptance as a “gentleman” with “fine social qualities,” and therefore his ability to serve as a host for visitors, even those as illustrious as a president.\textsuperscript{401} Because elite guests specifically looked for this in a resort hotel, one local booklet told potential clients, “Mr. E.P McKissik, the manager of the Battery Park, is a gentleman whose genial personality and all-round good fellowship has given him a reputation as an ideal host which has reached far beyond the limits of North Carolina. He has the rare faculty, to a wonderful degree, of not only managing the practical part of the business with consummate skill but of making visitors feel from the moment they enter the house that they are his personal guests.”\textsuperscript{402} Because of his reputation, McKissick did much to develop social connections between tourists and the local community. McKissick

\textsuperscript{397} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{399} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{400} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{401} “Battery Park Hotel, Asheville, N. C.” \textit{Atlanta Constitution}, June 19, 1892.
showed the nation that an elite citizenry was active in western North Carolina by literally inviting them into the hotel for all major social functions.

Because McKissick was so pivotal to western North Carolina’s elite image, when the community felt someone demeaned McKissick’s position in 1897, they responded in kind. While President William McKinley visited the region that summer, he stayed at the Battery Park Hotel where McKissick arranged his social activities. McKissick oversaw the President’s entire itinerary beginning with his arrival in Asheville when the “President was received by mayor Rankin and E.P. McKissisck” at the railway station.403 The arrival of the president attracted the attention of local boosters who documented and disseminated many pictures from the president’s visit, like one which showed McKissick in the forefront walking next to the president.404

While in the region, the president, and his family wanted to visit the region’s most well-known residence, the Biltmore Estate. The estate representative in charge, E.J. Harding, extended an invitation to them since George Vanderbilt was abroad at the time. If the local community was surprised and upset that the estate was closed to the local newspapers, because according to Harding, Vanderbilt “spits on newspaper notoriety,” they were shocked and insulted that “he even refused permission to Manager McKissick of the Battery Park Hotel, in charge of the party here.”405 The crisis was averted when McKinley refused to “step his foot inside the estate” if McKissick and the rest of the local party were not treated as his “invited guests.”406 McKinley’s response shows just how well regarded McKissick was, not only by the local

405 Ibid.
406 Ibid.
population but by even someone as prestigious as a president who would not let a slight against
him go unaddressed.

The president was not the only important personage to be hosted by the local
community. “Jay Gould and party” visited the Battery Park Hotel in 1891. Just as McKissick
served as the President’s host, a “committee of leading men of Asheville” hosted Gould and his
party during their stay.407 Many within this group were active local boosters, and almost all were
important businessmen in the region. Notable among this group were “William E. Breese,
President of the First National Bank of Asheville; V. E. McBee, Superintendent of the Western
North Carolina Division of the Richmond and Danville Railroad; Dr. S. W. Battle, Richmond
Pearson, G.B. Gwynn, C.D. Blarton, H.D. Collins, and J.H. Barnard, General manager of the
Asheville Electric Street Railway.”408 These local boosters and businessmen organized Gould’s
itinerary and focused on the region’s elite image. During his visit, a “special electric car” met
Gould and his party at the train station and took them to the hotel. 409 To make the guests feel at
home, one room at the hotel was “beautifully decorated with bunting, flowers, and plants
procured from New York.”410 The hotel served them dinner where the “table was elaborately
decorated with silver and cut glass, with a palm at each end and a high silver bowl of roses in the
centre.”411 The hotel made sure not to overlook even the smallest details and the menu cards
were crafted especially for each guest in the “shape of a stalk of celery ties with a bow of
ribbons, on which was painted the name of each guest and the date.”412 William E. Breese began
the evening “with a few words of welcome” followed by a round of toasts given by the local

407 “Mr. Gould’s Party in Asheville: Entertained at Dinner by Business Men of the Place,” New York Times,
February 5, 1891.
408 Ibid.
409 Ibid.
410 Ibid.
411 Ibid.
412 Ibid.
businessmen in honor of their guests.\textsuperscript{413} Gould’s social interactions with the local business elite show the ease in which Western North Carolina’s elite branding was gaining traction across the nation. Gould was not only one of the wealthiest citizens in the country at the time, but he was also a product of the industrial era itself and was just the type of new tourist boosters and businessmen were hoping to attract. By extending their social connections into Gould’s world, local businessmen became a very real part of the modern age themselves doing much to further their image and promote a growing, wealthy, and modern western North Carolina.

**The Manor: An English Inn with Old South Charm in Western North Carolina**

Some of the hotel owners who helped spread the image of an elite Appalachia had been tourists themselves. One such person was Thomas Raoul who opened The Manor and Cottages of Asheville in 1898. Raoul came from a wealthy and well-known southern family mainly from Georgia. Like many elite southern families in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Raoul family came to Asheville first as summer visitors. In 1886 William Raoul, Thomas’s father and a wealthy railroad executive bought a farm on Charlotte Street in Asheville and the family became semi-permanent residents of the city.\textsuperscript{414} When William Raoul took a job in New York, he abandoned his original plan to build a grand summer home on the farm.\textsuperscript{415} However, Thomas set his sights on Asheville as a good place to develop his permanent home and began developing the farm into a luxury resort. Part of his decision had to do with ill health. Raoul

\textsuperscript{413} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{414} Buncombe County Deed Books Office of the Register of Deeds Buncombe County Courthouse Asheville, Deed Book 56 252-256.

\textsuperscript{415} “Sequence of Events Led to Development of Manor Grounds,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, July 9 1967.
thought he would benefit from the rumored healthy qualities of Western North Carolina’s climate.

Raoul’s resort included a main hotel, The Manor, as well as some smaller cottages all on what would become known as the “little estate” of Albemarle Park.\(^{416}\) Raoul hoped to develop a “sort of Country Club such as those to be found at various places in the North, where patrons may always be assured of finding a refined and congenial gathering of friends.”\(^{417}\) Raoul’s planning for the Manor and Cottages followed a similar pattern to those long used by local boosters. Raoul’s resort brought together an appreciation of the past, in this case, British and European nostalgia, not exactly the Old South but still with Old South connections, with New South modernity, all surrounded by Asheville’s unparalleled scenery. The Manor’s overall feel was meant to emote that of a grand British Inn. Because the nation’s wealthiest families looked up to the British Aristocracy as a model for elite behavior and had also modeled Old South mores off of it, this type of establishment would have held symbolic capital for potential guests regardless of where they were from. Like other hotel owners, Raoul wanted to have a resort that was both evocative of an older way of life, but still current in its comforts. This combination was what most high society guests were looking for in an Appalachian vacation after all.

To meet these goals, Raoul employed architect Bradford Lee Gilbert, who built the family’s Peachtree Street mansion in Atlanta in 1892 to also help design the resort.\(^{418}\) Raoul made it clear to Gilbert that the style of the hotel and cottages should approximate the type of dwelling one would see in Europe. With the manor itself, Raoul wanted a “charming manor


\(^{417}\) *The Manor*, D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

\(^{418}\) Ibid.
house of English quaintness as a central feature.” Gilbert responded to Raoul’s wishes and the Manor was designed in the Tudor Revival style and combined rock, shingle, and timber in its constructions. Just like with the other luxury hotels in the region, Raoul and other local boosters promoted The Manor’s exterior widely within both the hotel’s advertisements and regional promotional materials. For example, the hotel’s promotional booklet from the turn of the century included an exterior image of the hotel as a centerpiece of its advertising campaign.

Because The Manor had such a distinctive style that embodied the elite image boosters were hoping to disseminate across the country, The Manor’s image made its way into their pamphlets and booklets as well, like Rogers’ Asheville that also depicted The Battery Park Hotel and Biltmore Estate within its pages. By showcasing all three impressive structures together, boosters were developing a consistent and clear message; Western North Carolina was a place of wealth, refinement, and modernity. Although its style was mixed, Raoul advertised The Manor as being of “English Architecture” to promote “his plan of an English Inn.” Raoul paired the Manor’s style with regional history to create an overall sense of nostalgia for bygone eras within the resort. He did so by drawing attention to the region’s famed geography and healthy climate. Raoul capitalized directly off the region’s past as a hotspot for antebellum tourist, tourists who based Old South personas off imitations of the British gentry. For example, an early promotional

---

booklet explained, “Even in the days of slow stage-coach travel, tourists were attracted to the place, and found themselves amply repaid for the journey by the wonderful beauty and healthfulness of the ‘Land of the Sky.’”

Although Raoul’s branding efforts might seem convoluted today, southern and northern guests would have both appreciated the symbolic ties to British aristocracy and Old South planters within the Manor as these same markers were often part of their social status. Quite simply, Raoul made the two major signifiers of status in the U.S. part of the Manor’s image, a shrewd business plan for anyone selling luxury tourism in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

It was not just the main building’s style that received Raoul’s attention. He was also very devoted to building cottages that were beautiful and evocative as well. Many people in Asheville remembered that Raoul often used photographs of architectural styles he admired from buildings in Europe as the basis for the cottages. Raoul openly shared his ideas with Asheville’s leading businessmen and boosters to garner their opinion. Raoul was less concerned with maintaining a British style in the cottages than in The Manor, but he still wanted the cottages to evoke European designs. Because Raoul was flexible with the designs of the individual cottages, the resort took on an eclectic look as Shingle, Tudor, and Colonial Revival styles were all employed.

With such beautiful and interesting architecture, the imagery of the Cottages also became part of the hotel’s and the local boosters’ promotion of the region. For example, the Southern Railway frequently advertised the Manor in many of its publications and often included images of the cottages.

Raoul openly shared his ideas with Asheville’s leading businessmen and boosters to garner their opinion. Raoul was less concerned with maintaining a British style in the cottages than in The Manor, but he still wanted the cottages to evoke European designs. Because Raoul was flexible with the designs of the individual cottages, the resort took on an eclectic look as Shingle, Tudor, and Colonial Revival styles were all employed.

With such beautiful and interesting architecture, the imagery of the Cottages also became part of the hotel’s and the local boosters’ promotion of the region. For example, the Southern Railway frequently advertised the Manor in many of its publications and often included images of the cottages.

The cottages, unlike like The Manor, were meant to be unique and Raoul gave

---

424 The Manor-Albermarle Park-Asheville, N.C. E.M. Ball Photographic Collection, D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville


each of the cottages a name meant to “enchant and allure.” These names were typically of the local flora and fauna, such as Galax, Dogwood, and Clematis, reasonable choices considering the appeal the local geography had with tourists. This naming was also wise considering Raoul’s use of heath tourism within many of his promotional campaigns. This complicated promotional plan created an odd combination of foreign design elements, European and Old South symbolism, and the local environment into a single space. Despite this seemingly incongruous development plan, the cottages were a huge success. Part of this success had to do with Raoul’s understanding that the cabins would appeal to guests who desired “all the privacy of their homes, with sitting rooms, piazzas, etc., and yet be relieved of the cares of housekeeping, as all this is attended to by the hotel servants, the occupants taking their meals at The Manor.” Cottages offered people the approximation of vacation homes in the region without the expense of actually purchasing one.

If the architectural styles of the resort’s buildings were old fashioned, its appointments were anything but antiquated. Raoul promoted the modern amenities of The Manor widely, and one newspaper advertised, the “Manor is a small inn equipped with steam heat, electric light[s] and open wood fireplaces… After January 1st street cars will operate on a regular schedule in front of the Park.” The resort also had up-to-date plumbing with new “sewers and surface drainage.” These types of modern amenities were a must when appealing to the nation’s high society. In many cases the guests who stayed in the region’s luxury resorts would lack these luxurious amenities in their homes for years to come, making places like the Manor truly fit for only the nation’s best.

427 Ibid.
429 Asheville Daily Gazette, December 31, 1898.
However, even if the Manor had the most expensive and longed for amenities, they did no good if tourists did not think they could get there. With this concern in mind, Raoul utilized Asheville’s improving infrastructure as a major promotional aspect of his resort. The Manor’s advertisements highlighted accessibility, to Asheville and the resort, so people knew they could reach it easily. One brochure let visitors know “four lines of the Southern Railway, with convenient schedules and comfortable trains, operate from Asheville…”431 Another early pamphlet stated, it is “located on the line of the electric railroad that reaches the centre of town in a ride of seven minutes, and the Southern Railway station in twenty-three, yet in touch with the woodland that covers the mountain slopes of Albemarle Park.”432

The Manor offered not only elite tourists luxurious accommodations but also provided multiple entertainments and activities in its interior spaces. Care was taken with the decoration of The Manor’s interior and when the resort was being finished the local paper reported, “Mr. Raoul is procuring handsome furniture from New York, and the entire interior will be handsomely fitted.”433 These beautiful rooms became part of the hotel’s advertising campaign and many images of them circulated the county, like one 1910 photo showing The Manor’s Lobby and the chimes that were played to announce meals.434 Because one of Raoul’s guiding motivations was to create a social resort, the interior spaces at The Manor were made for mingling. One of the most important rooms to achieve this goal was the grand ballroom, often depicted within photos like one during a New Year’s Eve party in 1914.435 The party was hosted

431 The Manor, D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.
433 Asheville Daily Gazette, October 6, 1898.
by Mrs. Alice Thomas Connally, a local citizen, and was meant to bring both the local elite and
the tourist elite together for the night. Connally would have understood tourists’ desire to be
included within local entertainments because she was a regional tourist before a permanent
citizen. Connally moved to Asheville from Richmond in 1865 after she married her husband,
John Kerr Connally, who viewed the region’s growth as a good investment opportunity. John
Kerr Connally grew up in Yadkin County, North Carolina, attended the U.S. Naval Academy,
and served as a Colonel for the 55th Regiment NC Troops during the Civil War. Following the
war, he worked as an attorney in Texas and then served briefly in the Virginia State Legislature.

The couple took advantage of Asheville’s growing economy by investing heavily in local
real estate. Much of their investments were in undeveloped land. In fact, Mrs. Connally would
sell the top of Mount Mitchell to North Carolina in 1915 for what would become Mount Mitchell
State Park. Camp Alice, a popular destination in the park, was named for her.

Like most of the region’s elite, the Connallys built an impressive home in 1875.
Fernihurst was an Italianate inspired home named after the Kerr family castle in Scotland.436
Such an opulent residence garnered attention from both the local population and those outside
the region. In 1880 the local paper printed an account from a visitor who remarked on the
“superb home of Rev. J.K. Connally” calling it a “handsome dwelling.”437 Mrs. Connally’s
decision to host her party in the Manor rather than her home demonstrates how important resort
hotels were to the local high society. They offered people a place to connect with a much wider
social network, and through these relationships, both become part of the national social hierarchy
and spread an image of western North Carolina’s refinement at the same time.

436 Fernihurst, 1875-1933 (?), A470-5, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library,
Asheville, North Carolina.
437 Asheville Semi-Weekly Citizen, August 12, 1880.
Local elites like the Connallys were instrumental in spreading the region’s elite brand by acting as hosts and hostesses for tourists. They showed the outside world that western North Carolina was not just full of elite tourists and the impressive accommodations that were necessary to entertain them, like White Sulphur Springs, The Battery Park Hotel, and The Manor, but also a permanent community who lived lives similar to their own. They accomplished much of this goal through resort hotels. Luxury hotels brought together all aspects of the region’s elite branding campaign as their owners utilized the region’s growing infrastructure to get guests to their hotels, employed architectural styles blending the old and the new, and offered a stage for locals to serve as hosts and hostesses. Embedded within all these components of the local branding campaign were themes of continuity and change that appealed to a wide tourist market. Most importantly, luxury hotels were influential in the continuation of the tourist trade, western North Carolina’s greatest commodity, thus allowing for the continuation of the region’s cycle of prosperity by selling leisure to the nation.
Chapter Four: The Beginning of Middle-class Tourism in Western North Carolina

In 1907 Edwin Wiley (E.W.) Grove began construction on a new suburb in Asheville, North Carolina. Naming it after himself the Grove Park neighborhood was meant to appeal to a new type of American citizen, the white, middle class. This group began to develop across the nation at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, commonly known as the Progressive Era. According to historian Robert Wiebe the new middle class shared “similar spirit, similar experiences, even roughly similar aspirations,” all coalescing into a new type of American. Vacations modeled off their upper class counterparts were one way this group created shared belonging across the country. Vacations were so important to status that it prompted one middle-class Methodist in 1910 to call this “summer problem…one of the most important problems of our modern civilization…where to go, what to do, with the greatest benefit to the body, mind and character, and with the least damage to the family life of our people.”

For Grove, and the rest of western North Carolina’s boosters and businessmen, the middle-class “summer problem” offered opportunity as it opened up the region’s tourist market

---


439 Wiebe, 112

440 Asheville-Citizen-Times, July 2, 1911.
to a whole new group of citizens. With a new consumer base came an evolved branding campaign as local boosters and businessmen got to work promoting the region as now perfect for both elite tourism but middle-class tourism as well. Asheville’s Progressive Era mayor, J.E. Rankin, summed up the new expansion in regional tourism when he encouraged the city’s boosters to “show our city at its very best to those who know her not.”\footnote{Ibid.} This expansion proved to be quite easy for boosters because the same things that drew elite tourists to the region also appealed to the middle-class. Middle-class tourism and the promotion it required was more about scale than transformation and boosters began to adapt their previous methods to fit their new clients. Middle class branding still incorporated paradoxical imagery and the region was advertised with the same rural/urban, rustic/refined, and old-fashioned/modern dichotomies as before. This method worked because it played off themes of wilderness and civilization, one way this group showed their social positions.\footnote{Gail Bederman, \textit{Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and race in the United States, 1880-1917} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 23; Stuart Blumin, \textit{The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1790-1900} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 279.}

Middle class tourists delighted in western North Carolina as a vacation spot because of its rural setting, healthy climate, and traditional peoples, as well as the opportunities to create middle-class lifestyles within its midst. This process allowed them to show their racial and social progress as their ability to purchase modern homes and live comfortable lifestyles, in an otherwise rural and backward locale, marked them as fulfilling Hall’s theory of white, male development. Savvy boosters recognized that at the heart of this middle-class identity were themes of the continuity and change long utilized within their branding efforts. By connecting middle-class symbolism with this tried and true method, local boosters and businessmen had the best means to attract a new client base. The middle class proved to keep the cycle of prosperity
flowing as they invigorated a new tourist market with only a slight adaptation to the overall regional branding campaign.

**The Importance of Continuity: Rural Places and People as Part of Tourism**

Few boosters and businessmen understood how to attract the new middle class to western North Carolina better than Grove whose suburb was designed to capitalize off their vacation demands. Grove, and other boosters and businessmen like him, brought together the region’s multiple attractions, the very things that made it appealing to the middle-class, into single spaces. At the heart of his branding was the theme of wilderness vs. civilization and Grove advertised his wish to “adorn and beautify Western North Carolina” by adding a suburb to its natural landscape.443 Local boosters mimicked this promotional ploy and the local paper lauded Grove for taking Sunset Mountain, what they called the “magnificent basis upon which to work his skill,” and for “adding to what nature placed to his hands.”444

Before he could improve it, Grove needed a natural landscape on which to begin, and luckily for him, western North Carolina had long been known as the “most exquisitely beautiful region in all America.”445 While positive reputation of Western North Carolina’s land remained in tact, a new element, race, also began to be linked with local geography and proved to only benefit the rural side of regional branding. A leading aspect of the middle class ethos was based around ideology in large part developed by Stanley G. Hall, a psychologist and educator whose theories on adolescence linked gender, race, and environment. While the nation was quickly

---

444 *Asheville Gazette-News*, October 9, 1909.
industrializing, many people began to laud older folkways believing that a connection to nature and a more rugged lifestyle was important to development, especially healthy male development. Historian Gail Bederman contends, “between 1890 and 1917, as white middleclass men actively worked to reinforce male power, their race became a factor which was crucial to their gender.”

In order to reinforce their manhood, and therefore maintain racial superiority, Bederman argues that middle-class men, “imagined the primitive past,” which was, “above all characterized by the purest form of primal, violent masculinity—in contrast to the overcivilized present, threatened by decadence effeminacy.”

The most famous example of an effete gentleman retreating from the comforts of modern living for a “primitive” encounter in the wilderness was Theodore Roosevelt whose 1899 speech, The Strenuous Life, later published, exposed the nation to his rugged lifestyle. Roosevelt became a symbol of manhood to many across the nation and others mimicked his connection to nature. This new interest in the outdoors put a spotlight on western North Carolina as its presumed isolation made it ideal for men seeking their own challenges with nature. Being able to venture into the wilderness and then civilize it through their middle class vacations represented tourists’ racial and class superiority. It also made the wilderness a very hot commodity.

By the Progressive Era, Western North Carolina was also gaining the attention of many white Americans who viewed Appalachians’ “racial purity,” something they saw as a component of the isolated geography, as an antidote to “race suicide.” Their fears that the white race was being destroyed related to an influx of immigrants into the U.S. in the last decades of the


447 Bederman, 208.

448 Matthew Frye Jacobson, Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 50; Shapiro, 120.
nineteenth century, with nearly nine million arriving in the U.S. by the turn of the century.

Mostly of eastern European and southern European descent, with unique languages, religions, and customs, Americans began to distrust immigrants who did not fit into mainstream white, middle-class, American society. In order to safeguard white America, politicians, at the urging of their constituents, spearheaded immigration legislation to restrict peoples based on their ethnic and racial origins. Many white Americans saw these new peoples as threats to their way of life, leading to a new period of xenophobia; one so vitriolic that historian Nancy Mclean credits it with the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in 1915. If this bigotry led to hate groups like the KKK gaining new traction across the nation, it also sparked Progressive reformers’ work in Appalachia and made the region attractive to middle-class vacationers.

To reformers Appalachia represented eugenics in practice believing that its isolation was responsible for the preservation of Anglo-Saxon lineage. This mindset was based on the newest science of the day. Sociologist Matt Wray explains, “by the 1880s Darwin’s theory of evolution offered a scientific framework for European and American ideas about the natural basis of the social order.” In 1882 Francis Galton, Darwin’s cousin, coined the term eugenics for a new science that argued positive and negative traits could be transmitted through genes. Eugenicists, who represented a large proportion of white, middle-class America, believed that society could be improved by encouraging sexual reproduction in who they identified as more advanced peoples or by limiting it in who they identified as less advanced peoples. This science

---

451 Wray, 120; Shapiro, 120.
was also what informed Hall as he developed his own theories about race and civilization. Because the middle-class lauded education and saw it as a cornerstone of their identity, it “held an unquestioned power to legitimize.” By grounding racial ideology within an academic framework, race became an extension of what it meant to be middle class. Education reified social hierarchies based on racial lineage, as the new scientific hierarchies looked very similar to racial ideologies long held by white Americans. Multiple source books developed charts outlining racial hierarchies, like Funk and Wagnall’s Standard Dictionary of the English Language, and academics across many fields accepted them as fact. At the top of these hierarchies were Anglo-Saxons, the very heritage white Americans believed was preserved in the Appalachian Mountains due to the region’s isolation.

With this science informing them, many Americans saw Appalachians, however backward they might be, as redeemable because of their whiteness. This possible redemption created new interest in the region, and a flurry of intellectuals and reformers began to write about Appalachia. With this attention the rural side of the region gained a national reputation both connected to but different from its celebrated landscape. For instance, in 1917 Martha Sawyer Gielow, a reformer and academic, wrote about the importance the region held to the country’s welfare arguing, the “public is awakening, even if slowly, to the importance and economic necessity of developing this native element of pure-blooded Americans.”

---

454 Gielow, Marhta Sawyer, “The Call of the Race: Save and Lift Up Our Own Neglected People!—A Woman’s Eloquent Plea for a Great and Noble Patriotic Cause,” Journal of American History 11, (June 1917), 215-219; This type of ideology was widespread and occurred in many national publications, such as Alvin H. Harlow, “The Frontier People of the Appalachians. The Southern Mountainers, Our Purest Racial Stock—A Surviving Segment of the 18th Century Real ‘Made in America’ Goods—Our Most Independent and Self-Reliant Citizens.” Travel 39 (June 1922); Gerald B. Breitigam, “Lifting Up Mountains: Bringing a Knowledge of America to Pure-Blooded Americans.” Ladies Home Journal 37(July 1920); E.C. Branson, Our Carolina Highlanders. Chapel Hill: 134
the “call of the southern mountains that is drawing the heartstrings of national thinkers is the ‘S.O.S’ of the race.”

One group who answered this call was Protestant missionaries whose publications spread both an image of a backward Appalachia but an obligation to help. Rather than just appealing to religious sentiment, they combined faith and science to appeal to multiple aspects of the middle-class ethos. For instance, Victor I. Masters, Superintendent of Publicity for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, used statistical data about “mountain people” to justify Appalachian missionary work in the region. Masters’s interest in Appalachia, just like many of his counterparts, was a product of the Social Gospel, a new idea permeating Christian denominations that charged congregants to fulfill their Christian duty through progressive reform. Historian Susan Curtis contends that the social gospel represented a new type of Protestantism during the Progressive Era as “every Christian had a dual obligation: to himself and to society.” This mindset led to “social and political reforms designed to eliminate poverty, disease, filth, and immorality.” In this way religious sentiment became connected to Progressive idealism and many middle-class, white Christians turned to Appalachia to realize their obligation.

Masters highlighted mountaineers’ Anglo-Saxon heritage and let readers know that “there are more native white people per square mile to be helped.” According to Masters, their purity related to geography because most southern regions were “more than one-fourth negro” while

---

455 Ibid.
458 Ibid.
only “about ten per cent of the population of the Highland region of the South is black.”

Masters argued that due to these unique characteristics, “these people are less spoiled than others by some perverse currents which have conditioned modern life.” Ellen Churchill Semple even wrote that one reason why Appalachians were racially pure was that through their regional isolation “the stock has been kept free from the tide of foreign immigrants which has been pouring in recent years into the States.” This type of seemingly scientific analysis added to people’s belief that Appalachians were racially pure because to their minds the miscegenation that took place, and was taking place, within other regions of the nation was not possible in Appalachia. This further supported a link between the Appalachia geography and racial purity in American culture.

Academics and reformers were not the only ones putting a spotlight on Appalachia at the time. In fact, it was the popular media that did more to disseminate an image of a rural and traditional Appalachia than anything else during the Progressive Era. Just as the region featured heavily in literary accounts in the previous generation, Appalachia was popularized in national written publications during the Progressive Era as well. But, unlike local color, which was meant to expose the nation to a backward American, many of the publications featuring Appalachians during the Progressive Era celebrated its qualities and how they added to the region’s Anglo-Saxon heritage. For instance, one of the most read authors at the time was Horace Kephart, an outdoor writer living in a rural part of western North Carolina.

Kephart’s writing was popular in part because he was a middle-class gentleman and wrote for a similar audience. He was well educated and worked as a librarian in St. Louis from

---

461 Ibid.
462 Ibid.
1890 to 1903. After losing his job and then his family in 1903, his wife took their six children to Ithaca, New York without him after he was fired, Kephart moved into the Hazel Creek section of western North Carolina. The rural location interested Kephart because he wanted to escape from the modern world after it had offered him little success and happiness. After moving to western North Carolina, Kephart had a fruitful career as a writer for outdoor magazines like *Field and Stream, Camping and Woodcraft, Camp Cookery, Sporting Firearms*, and *Guns, Ammunition and Tackle.* These outdoor publications were popular because they featured the type of strenuous life promoted by celebrities like Theodore Roosevelt and supported as important to white development by academics like Hall.

It was the perspective of a white, middle-class gentleman braving the rustic outdoors that was such a hit with readers because it was the very type of masculine experience lauded in the middle-class ethos. Kephart used his experiences in western North Carolina to write *Our Southern Highlanders*, what the New York Times described as a “comprehensive study of the region.” It was Kephart’s reputation as an “ardent outdoorsman” and the author of “several books on camp life” that added to the book’s reputation because people saw him as uniquely suited to understanding rural lifestyles. Because Kephart symbolized the middle-class conquering of the wilderness, people were only interested in Kephart’s depictions of that side of the region. Understanding this interest, Kephart wrote *Our Southern Highlanders* only as an exploration of western North Carolina’s rural areas, what readers wanted after all, but Kephart did not see it as examination of the region as a whole, despite how leading newspapers covered

---

464 Shapiro, 189.
the work. To make sure audiences knew the differences in western North Carolina’s two parts, Kephart even explained in his introduction, “this book deals with the *mass* of mountain people” and not “the relatively few townsmen, and prosperous valley farmers.”\(^467\) Regardless of his attempt to explain the region’s diversity, it was the rural side that sparked interest and Kephart’s book did much to further ideas about the interconnection of geography, lifestyle, and race. Like many Americans at the time, Kephart saw the rural mountaineers as “backwards kinsmen” who were “creatures of environment, enmeshed in a labyrinth that has deflected and repelled the march of our nation for three hundred years.”\(^468\)

**The Role of the Great Smokey Mountains National Park in Middle-Class Tourism**

As the type of rural geography Kephart wrote about took on significance for the white, middle-class many of western North Carolina’s local boosters and businessmen began supporting and capitalizing off the establishment of the Great Smokey Mountains National Park. It was the appeal of an untouched wilderness that motivated the park’s development as boosters hoped to “preserve a bit of nature, as it looked when Noah left the ark.”\(^469\) The park offered tourists a safe and easy way to encounter nature, a huge boon for local tourism.\(^470\) Dr. Chase Ambler and Judge William R. Day were two early park supporters who both ventured to western North Carolina as middle-class tourists. After many years as a summer guest, Ambler permanently moved to

---


\(^468\) Kephart, 19.

\(^469\) *Asheville Daily Gazette*, June 24, 1899.

Asheville from Salem, Ohio to practice medicine in the 1880s.\textsuperscript{471} In many ways Ambler was a quintessential middle-class gentleman and his career marked him as one of the new professionals of which much of the middle class was comprised.\textsuperscript{472} Historian Alan Trachtenberg calls the emergence of many new types of employment during industrialization the “Incorporation of America” because it created a culture of professionalism important within the middle-class ethos.\textsuperscript{473} Profession was essential to middle class belonging as, “their skills gave them the deference of their neighbors while opening natural avenues into the nation at large.”\textsuperscript{474} The type of connections middle class tourists created in the region helped spread the region’s reputation and acted as one part of middle-class promotion. For instance, Ambler continued to visit Salem often and helped spread western North Carolina’s image as perfect spot for middle-class tourists. After one visit in 1889 the local, Salem paper reported, “he is very much attached to his mountain residence and holds in high esteem the southern people.”\textsuperscript{475} This experience was exactly the type of publicity boosters were hoping to receive from their efforts to make the region attractive to middle-class guests.

Ambler’s endorsement of the region enticed one of his closest friends, Judge William R. Day, to also visit western North Carolina. Like Ambler, Day was a middle-class professional and his own life and career mimicked those of the tourists western North Carolina’s boosters were targeting. Day was also originally from Ohio where his father, Luther Day, served on the

\textsuperscript{471} Salem Daily News, June 21, 1889.
\textsuperscript{473} Trachtenberg, \textit{The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age} (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).
\textsuperscript{474} Wiebe, 113.
\textsuperscript{475} Salem Daily News, September 28, 1889.
Supreme Court. Day became a lawyer following his education at the University of Michigan and practiced for many years in Canton, Ohio. Day was most well known for his political career during William McKinley’s and Theodore Roosevelt’s presidencies. Day first served as the Assistant Secretary of State under John Sherman from 1897 until 1898. When it looked as if Day might be appointed to Secretary of State, one Asheville paper, claiming Day as one their own, reported how he was “urged to take the office.” McKinley did indeed replace Sherman with Day, but he served less than a year in 1898. Day then served as Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit from 1899 until 1903. Following this position Day worked as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court from 1903 until 1922. With such an impressive background, Day was exactly the type of citizen boosters hoped would visit.

It was not just enough to get Day to western North Carolina, however, as local boosters also hoped to capitalize off Day’s fame and frequently let the country know that he was “favorably impressed with the Western Carolina country.” Of course, with such a well-known and respected politician frequenting the region, locals also advertised Day’s participation within their social circles, as he was a perfect symbol of the region’s middle-class citizenry. During one visit in 1899 while Day and his wife were “guests of the Manor…several Asheville people” feted the couple and reported that Day was “one of the most approachable men in public.” The following day the hotel “gave an elaborate banquet…a dinner of nine courses” in Day’s honor with “a gathering of men prominent in law and politics.” This group brought together nationally famous politicians like Day, other elites from outside western North Carolina, like Judge Bumpus of Boston and Dr. Van Valash from New York, and the region’s own professional

---

476 Asheville Citizen-Times, April 25, 1898.
477 Asheville Citizen-Times, May 24, 1899.
478 Asheville Citizen-Times, March 23, 1898.
479 Ibid.
class, including Asheville’s District Attorney, A.E. Bank Examiner E.P. Moxey and the Manor’s owner, Thomas W. Raoul.\textsuperscript{480} For any middle-class visitor who worried that there was not appropriate society in the region, these types of announcements did much to ease their minds and promote western North Carolina’s more professional side.

It was not long after this visit that Day became involved with the National Park arguing that there was “certainly no more beautiful nor healthful region in any part of this country than this mountain section.”\textsuperscript{481} After vacationing and living in the region for several years, Ambler and Day began working hard to preserve it, and in 1899 they organized the Appalachian National Park Association, whose goal was a federally protected park in western North Carolina. Their interest in conservation followed a pattern similar to other middle-class gentleman’s new interest in nature across the country. It was at this time that men like John Muir, a naturalist who believed the natural landscape should remain untouched, and Gifford Pinchot, a professional forester who supported the conservative and planned use of the nation’s natural resources, began to advocate for preservation or conservation of America’s natural landscapes. In many ways they were successful due to governmental support, such as the establishment of the Division of Forestry in 1881 and the National Park Service in 1916. Like many white, middle-class men who looked to nature as a means to regain their masculinity and racial superiority, Theodore Roosevelt was one of the biggest governmental supporters of conservation and through his support a number of new measures, like use of the Forest Reserve Act to protect 172 million acres of timberland, helped set the stage for the nation’s national parks.

Although Ambler and Day helped spearhead the formation of the Appalachian National Park Association through their “glowing tribute to this mountain region,” and were often given

\textsuperscript{480} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{481} Asheville Citizen-Times, May 29, 1899.
credit for the formation of the park itself, they could not have achieved their goal without the help of local boosters. 482 In fact, the association they developed was part of the Asheville Board of Trade which “at [Ambler’s] urging” developed a “parks and forestry committee” placing Ambler as its chairman. 483 Day stressed that he was first introduced to the project by locals when he spoke with newspaper in 1899: “I was spoken to concerning this matter by several of your leading gentlemen, and told them that if my hearty endorsement of the scheme would further it in any way they were thoroughly welcome to use it.” 484

One of the “leading gentlemen” that Day referenced was George S. Powell. Like the other members of the Board of Trade and the local boosters working hard to brand western North Carolina during the Progressive Era, Powell was part of the new white, middle-class who had a vested interest in expanding the region’s tourist market. At this time, that meant appealing to the middle class and therefore promoting the natural landscape and all that went wit it. Powell was a successful local businessman working primarily as a merchant in the wholesale grocery trade. Powell also had a few more diversified investments in areas such as timber and real estate, long the staples of the region’s wealthier citizens. 485 Like others in his position, Powell led a comfortable life and could afford to hire Richard Sharp Smith, the architect of the Biltmore House, to build him a home in 1903 in the elite Montford development. 486 When his wife Alice died in 1927 her estate was valued at around $30,000, approximately $400,000 today, including real estate and personal property. 487

482 Ibid.
483 Asheville Citizen-Times, June 6, 1932.
484 Asheville Citizen-Times, May 29, 1899.
Like most local businessmen, Powell understood that his economic wellbeing and his social position were dependent on tourism as it was the driving force behind the region’s cycle of prosperity. As such, he was an active booster and Powell served as the secretary for the Appalachian Parks Association. Unlike men like Ambler and Day who were less dependent on tourism for their way of life and supported the park because of a dedication to preserving the natural environment, Powell saw the establishment of a national park as economic and “of very great importance to the welfare of the Eastern part of the United States.” Powell also understood the importance of branding and in 1916 made the suggestion that “the park should be named ‘Vanderbilt Park’ or ‘Pisgah National Forest-Founded by George W, Vanderbilt’” after the region’s most famous citizen.

The Importance of Geography in Suburban Construction

It was during this growing interest in Appalachian geography and culture that Grove began his own middle-class community. By moving into Grove Park, Grove offered the white, middle class their own chance to civilize the wilderness and therefore display their racial, gender, and class superiority. Grove’s tourist community realized these goals through an adherence to the garden-city ideal. Across the nation, semi-rural communities and suburbs adopted the garden city ideology popularized first in England by Sir Ebenezer Howard at the end of the nineteenth century. Grove already had experience building a suburb and his Atkins’s Park neighborhood in Atlanta, developed a few years before Grove Park, was a “growing colony of [Atlanta’s] best citizens.”

Communities like Aitkin’s Park and Grove Park were intended for the middle-class who desired living conditions that embraced a more natural environment. In his 1902 book,

---

489 Ibid, 79.
490 Atlanta Constitution, February 21, 1909.
Garden Cities of To-morrow, Howard emphasized that there was a “third alternative” between town and country.\footnote{Ebenezer Howard, Garden Cities of To-morrow (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd., 1902), 15.} What Howard called the garden city, and looked very similar to high-end suburbs, offered residents “all the advantages of the most energetic and active town life, with all the beauty and delight of the country.”\footnote{Ibid.} This alternative allowed the white middle classes that return to nature so important to their race and gender without abandoning their elite comforts. This blending of natural beauty, healthy climate, and elite comforts were exactly what local boosters had long been promoting and what middle-class tourists, like Grove Park’s residents, desired.\footnote{Community Life in Western North Carolina (Philadelphia: Press of Loughead, late 1800’s/early 20th century), 3-4, D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville; Land of the Sky: Southern Railway, Premier Carrier of the South (N.C.: Southern Railway Company, Passenger Traffic Department, 1913), D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville; Land of the Sky: Western North Carolina Mountains (U.S.: Southern Railway System, 1922), D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.}

One reason why this mix worked so well was that the garden city appealed to a middle class now obsessed with health. Suburbs became a perfect alternative for people wishing to live closer to the city and town centers where their business and social interests rested, but hoping to avoid other inconveniences of city life, like noise, dirt, and living within close proximity to the poor. Part of the new desire to live on the edge of urban centers related to how modern education created better understandings of health and disease.\footnote{Dolores Hayden, Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000 (New York, Vintage Books, 2003), 97; Ruth Schwartz Cowan, More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave (New York: Basic Books, 1984); Alan Gowan, The Comfortable House: North American Suburban Architecture, 1890-1930 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986).} With this new knowledge the middle-class worked hard to safeguard against disease within their homes.

Grove would have well understood this mentality as his initial financial success was also based on middle-class health. Before he began developing Grove Park, Grove made a fortune on “Grove’s Tasteless Chill Tonic,” a cure-all that utilized his invention of bottling quinine without
the typical bad taste. The product was so popular that when he died in 1927 Grove’s estate was valued at $10,000,000 approximately $134,000,000 today.\textsuperscript{495} A significant part of the product’s popularity was due to Grove’s utilization of a new business practice, national marketing, and through well-placed advertisements aimed at women concerned with health, he developed a national consumer for his product.\textsuperscript{496} Grove had a large consumer base to work with because health and cleanliness became one way the middle-class, particularly middle-class women, showed their status.\textsuperscript{497}

It was the same mindset that made this group look for new places to live as advances in health education awakened people to the realization that urban living was often the cause of disease. Poor sanitation, overcrowding, and the environmental aftereffects of the industrial age all added to the problem. While progressive workers championed urban cleanliness through public health initiatives, many others in the white, middle class personally fled the city in droves favoring the scenic and healthy climate of the new residential parks going up along city borders.\textsuperscript{498} The popularity of the suburb was nationwide and architectural historian Alan Gowans posits, “by 1930 every American city had rings of suburbs like the skins of an onion.”\textsuperscript{499}

Because western North Carolina had long been touted as an elite, health destination, and Grove first starting vacationing there in the New South period for exactly those reasons, it was easy for him to create a branding campaign that highlighted the natural environment and all it offered potential residents. Grove simply shifted the focus of regional tourism from elite visitors like himself to the middle-class peoples who were buying his tonic. Grove turned to the Olmstead Brothers, the sons of Frederick Law Olmstead, to help plan a neighborhood that could

\textsuperscript{495} St. Louis Globe Democrat, January 27, 1928.
\textsuperscript{496} Maskowitz, 10; Cowan, 75; St. Louis Post-Dispatch, May 19, 1897.
\textsuperscript{497} Cowan, 183-184: Hayden, 97.
\textsuperscript{498} Cowan, 183-184: Hayden, 97.
\textsuperscript{499} Cowan, 20.

145
accommodate the modern needs of its residents while still being naturally beautiful. This choice would only add to the community’s national prestige, as the Olmstead family was long associated with high-class landscape design, an important draw for a consuming middle-class hoping to impress their counterparts through their purchases.

Chauncey Beadle worked as the main developer for the Olmstead Brothers and had previously been an employee of Frederick Law Olmstead during Biltmore Estate’s development. After the project was complete, the Estate hired Beadle to work as Biltmore’s permanent nurseryman in 1890. Beadle would go on to serve as the superintendent and treasurer of the entire Biltmore Estate. Beadle’s impressive educational background, he studied at both the Ontario Agricultural College and Cornell University, added to his professional prestige, and caused the community to view him as an expert on the local flora and fauna. Beadle’s knowledge of botany and horticulture helped him maintain the natural Appalachian environment within the Estate’s high-end setting, exactly the blend Grove wanted in his neighborhood and what symbolized a conquering of the wilderness.

Specifically, Beadle’s expertise on azaleas was significant to his work on maintaining the atmosphere of the Biltmore Estate because like other elite citizens across the nation, Vanderbilt lauded the local geography and wanted to feature it within his home. Because azaleas, and their cousins, the rhododendron, were native to western North Carolina, they represented the natural geography of the region. Boosters publicized these shrubs widely because of this, such as in a 1900 promotional article for nearby Black Mountain that told potential guests how, “in their season thickets of rhododendron and azaleas [lend] a charm to the tourist or the invalid." Left to their own devices, both shrubs could grow to an impressive size, losing any sense of

500 Asheville Citizen-Times, January 12, 1900.
cultivation. But, if properly maintained, they could serve as a centerpiece to any ornamental
garden. Beadle’s ability to care for the 1,000 azaleas on the grounds of Biltmore Estate added to
its impressive appearance and it became known for, “scenery unsurpassed on a scale of actual
grandeur.” By taming the azalea, Beadle was literally cultivating the region’s wild landscape.
Across the nation this shrub became a staple of most middle and upper class gardens and by
1930 national garden columnist Jane Leslie Kift informed readers “the shrub is an addition to
to any garden.”

The 1913 map of the Grove Park community shows how Beadle’s plan embraced the
garden city ideal as homes merged with parks and other natural elements to create a modern
neighborhood, but one that merged with the local environment. Grove put restrictions on the
size of lots sold to guarantee the natural setting; lots were not sold at less than 1/3 an acre and
buyers could not later subdivide lots into sections smaller than 1/3 an acre. Although Grove
instituted a standard that left plenty of room for natural elements within each resident’s own
yard, many residents wanted even more space, and most lots tended to be slightly larger at half
an acre, showing just how important natural space was to middle-class buyers.

Because the blending of modern comforts and local geography was something middle-
class peoples across the nation appreciated, Beadle’s design was an important part of the
community’s appeal and it was promoted widely to attract potential buyers. In 1908 the
Asheville Citizen let people know, “Mr. Beadle of the Biltmore nurseries has been at work
designing and creating parks and streets…fountains and cemented pools, grass tracts and

504 Ibid.
trees."\[^505\] With the Olmstead Brothers and Beadle working on the neighborhood and frequent advertisements chronically their progress, interest in the neighborhood grew, and it “attract[ed] attention from all passersby.”\[^506\] The development became so popular so fast that in 1909 Grove bought an additional 378 acres to add to “the most beautiful and extensive residential park in the South.”\[^507\]

Because the community was removed from the city center, Beadle also worked to blend transportation into the neighborhood’s design without losing the natural qualities the section had to offer. Although the distance from Grove Park to Asheville’s downtown was relatively small, about 5 miles, it was important that Grove could show potential clients that they could quickly and easily reach Asheville.\[^508\] He did so by creating modern, yet scenic roadways between the two. By the time Grove began constructing the community, the price of cars had dropped across the nation, making them a mainstay of the middle class. Henry Ford, a close friend of Grove, was largely responsible for affordable auto prices as his utilization of the assembly line within car manufacturing resulted in his famously inexpensive Model T hitting the market in 1908. Ford envisioned a car “so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one.”\[^509\] By 1916 the $345 price tag for the Model T made Ford’s vision possible. Although the price of cars was reduced through Ford’s innovation, they were still too expensive for anyone other than the affluent middle or upper classes. This new affordability helped people create social belonging through their consumption as owning a car was still restricted to only part of the nation’s citizens. Soon the car became a must for any suburban commuter, both out of

\[^505\] Asheville Citizen, December 15, 1908.
\[^506\] Ibid.
\[^507\] Asheville Citizen-Times, October 29, 1909.
general need and the symbolic weight they carried, and good roads between suburbs and cities became essential to any successful development plan.

Knowing the importance the car had on his own success, Grove had his planners turn an old railway track into the Sunset Mountain Autoway, also known as Grove Autoway, and later called Sunset Boulevard, so residents could easily drive into Asheville’s city center. Grove Park’s modern roads gained notoriety when the North Carolina delegation of the Good Roads association made a visit to the region, and “a number of delegates went out to Grove Park where they witnessed the actual work of road construction by improved methods.” One promotional pamphlet about Asheville at the time stressed the gains made in transportation noting, “splendid motor roads of macadam and sand-clay network this exquisite mountain country, meandering through valleys, over hills and mountains, affording views unsurpassed, perhaps, on the American Continent.” Grove Park was mentioned specifically: “The Grove autoway to the summit of Sunset Mountain, 31 miles exclusive autoway…are special features that attract the attention of the tourists and visitors.”

As Grove and other boosters worked to spread the image of the region’s improved roads, for them, nothing worked better than imagery. One such postcard was circulated to show both the modern roads through Grove Pak as well as the celebrated scenery that surrounded them. These promotions displayed the themes of continuity and change within western North Carolina and showed potential guests all it had to offer. Specifically, this type of imagery showed exactly how people like Grove, and by extension Grove Park’s citizens, conquered the natural

---

510 *Asheville Citizen-Times*, September 11, 1912.
513 Ibid.
environment as they could preserve the natural environment while still enjoying the comforts of their class.

Because this conquering of the environment was central to citizens’ social positions and helped comprise part of the middle-class ethos, Grove insisted on continued “maintain[ence] of the Parks, drives, etc.,” well after Beadle finished designing the Grove Park neighborhood. Grove charged each citizen an annual fee, a forerunner of the homeowner association’s fee, amounting to “7 1-2c. per front foot.”515 These fees helped maintain the neighborhood’s reputation for “fine views, splendid cement sidewalks, macadamized streets, water, sewer, electric lights, telephone connections, handsome fountains, large grass lawns for children, tennis courts, etc.”516 In short, the fees paid for all the amenities that made the neighborhood modern, both those that were part of the local geography and those that Grove and his designers incorporated into it. Because the neighborhood’s image was so important, and its amenities were what made it appealing to modern buyers, Grove covered the cost of the annual fees for any unsold lots to make sure all expected maintenance needs could be meet in the neighborhood’s early years.517

Keeping Grove Park Pure: The Role of Race in Community Building and Advertising

With so much invested within America’s elite communities at the time, residents wanted to make sure that only the nation’s “best” would be their neighbors, and for them this meant keeping the communities white and Protestant. Because whiteness and “traditional American” ways of life were the predominant factors in status, “developers of affluent suburbs increasingly

515 Asheville Citizen-Times, June 2, 1909.
516 Asheville Citizen-Times, September 2, 1909.
517 Ibid.
wished to exclude potential buyers on the basis of race, religion, and social class.”

This attitude added to Appalachia’s appeal among the white middle class because they believed it was a racially pure locale. Grove ensured that this was what his customers would find in his community through multiple restrictions on ownership in Grove Park as people of “low character” were kept out of the neighborhood. Grove even assured his clients, “your property is fully protected in Grove Park.”

Neighborhood restrictions became popular at this time because white Americans began to fear that their traditional way of life was being threatened by a diverse immigrant population and a more politically and socially active African American population. As nonwhites began to gain socially and politically, a backlash ensued from the white communities who had always enjoyed being at the top of the social hierarchy and feared a loss of power and status. White Americans worked hard to maintain the status quo by restricting the social and political power of nonwhite groups. A flurry of legislation at the local, state, and national level proved to undermine many of the gains nonwhite groups were making. Much of this had to do with access to space. The Plessy v. Ferguson ruling of 1896 created the idea of separate but equal allowing for the legal segregation of races. This policy captured the ethos of many whites at the time who did not want African Americans living within close proximity to themselves or their families. Adding to this issue was the importance of consumption on social position. Because ownership was a significant means of displaying status at the time, restricting nonwhite and non-Protestant groups from elite purchases, like homes within affluent communities, allowed white Americans to in turn restrict social mobility as other groups lacked the symbols necessary to display belonging.

518 Hayden, 69.
519 Asheville Citizen-Times, September 2, 1909.
520 Asheville Citizen-Times, June 1, 1909.
While these issues were developing on a national scale, North Carolina was facing its own unique racial and class tensions. For a brief period in the 1890s a new political movement, called fusion, spread across the state as Republicans and Populists joined forces. This coalition recognized that African Americans and the poor whites who embraced Populist ideology had more in common than the elite whites represented by the Democratic Party. Fusionists advocated that by voting together each group could better serve their own self-interests. From 1894 until around 1900, Fusion politics saw the election of many African Americans into state office.\(^521\) To counteract the fusionists, North Carolina’s Democratic Party used racial ideology to convince poor whites to vote Democratic. They developed a campaign of racial fear arguing that white women’s sexual purity was at risk from African American men.\(^522\) This practice had its intended affect and fusion politics soon died out with poor whites rejoining the Democratic fold. Historian Glenda Gilmore traces how this fear lead to a campaign of terror against African Americans in North Carolina and was the root of events such as the “Wilmington Slaughter” in 1898 as a way to reestablish antebellum racial hierarchies.\(^523\) It was within this racially charged climate that Appalachians gained the attention of white America and their presumed Anglo-Saxon heritage became glorified across the country.

With these tensions playing out across the state and the country, Grove explicitly denied the sale of lots to “negroes” and further mandated that once a property’s ownership shifted, the new owner could not subsequently sale to African Americans.\(^524\) For a region largely attractive to tourists because of its presumed whiteness, an all white community was a wise business

---


\(^522\) Gilmore, 84-85.

\(^523\) Gilmore, 108-114

\(^524\) Gilmore, 84-89.
decision on Grove’s part. This demand meet the expectations of Grove’s potential client base as the types of elite citizens living within Grove Park would expect a racially pure neighborhood.

**The Importance of Homes in Western North Carolina’s Progressive Era Tourism**

Grove’s restrictions became important because he wanted to develop “the finest residential community in the South,” and this required following patterns of what it meant to be middle class in America. Although environment and race were important to set the stage for the community, it was the actual homes which showed the world residents’ status. Historian Maria Maskovitiz posits that in the case of homes, the material world not only reflected the status of those who lived in it, but could in fact help shape that status. Consumption was partially an outgrowth of employment, and therefore education, as the professional and business classes that overwhelming comprised the middle class had the related finances to afford goods and services in a way few across the nation could. This allowed them to approximate the buying habits of the very wealthy, but on a smaller scale. Therefore, one significant way the middle-class ethos developed was through ownership as how the middle class lived their lives was dependent on the purchases they made. Historian Katherine C. Grier posits that ownership especially that of the “decorative arts” that made up a middle-class parlor, held the possibility “of creating long, complex chains of cultural associations and meanings.” Ownership allowed people who were separated by geographic space to still see themselves as part of a connected

---

525 *Asheville Citizen-Times*, June 7, 1909.
527 Grier, 18.
group because they used shared possessions as markers of status and therefore as a means of belonging.

Grove Park offered the middle class the perfect site to realize their identities as consumers and therefore display exactly what it meant to be white and middle class at the time. To safeguard the neighborhood against any buildings that might impede the development’s reputation, Grove let potential buyers know, “anyone who builds in the park may build a modest home, at a fixed minimum price, or a palace-as suits him.” Although Grove made it seem as if the community was open to many different types of people, the community had a much more rigid policy which stated, “no one will be allowed to build a house in this Park costing less than $2500.00.” This high cost effectively restricted Grove Park to only the middle and upper classes.

Regulations did not end with prices because for the middle class consumption was not just about spending, but spending in the right way. It was the shared ownership of certain goods that helped mark people as middle class so there was an expectation that consumption met a class standard. These guidelines informed the regulations within Grove Park and Grove asserted, “there will be little restriction as to architecture…but there is the general restriction: that home builders in the park must exercise thorough consideration for their neighbors.” Peer regulation and intervention became an important component in maintaining the high quality of the community as residents made sure their neighbors adhered to the standard of good taste that marked their social positions. Because reputations were literarily being constructed through these homes, no resident wanted the community to fall below the expectations of the middle

---

528 Asheville Gazette-News, October 21, 1909.
529 Asheville Citizen-Times, June 2, 1909.
530 Ibid.
class. Therefore, care was taken in the construction of homes and although there was no one
style that marked the middle class, all the homes were modern, comfortable, and attractive.

Because most of the residents in Grove Park were semi-permanent residents of the area,
many residences in the community were second home. Grove Park residents’ ability to have
multiple homes meeting national standards proved just how successful they were and added to
the community’s reputation. Naturally, residents in Grove Park wanted to share this part of their
lifestyle with not only friends and family, but also the nation at large. With this in mind, many
Grove Park residents, their homes, and the lifestyles the created were captured in photographs,
such as a 1916 photograph showing a group of neighborhood kids in front of 123 Edwin Place in
Grove Park. These types of images did much for local branding as they highlighted the
region’s blending of modern comforts and natural landscape and announced an active middle
class living there.

Because these types of images showed potential tourists that the region was perfect for
middle-class tourism, boosters also began featuring photographs of homes like those in Grove
Park in their promotional materials, like the postcard below depicting “Gertrude House.”
Unlike the family snapshots, these promotional materials were meant to directly aid the local
branding campaign and reached large audiences across the nation. Important to the postcard of
“Gertrude House” was the way the modern home blended with the natural landscape. This went
far in showing the conquering of the Appalachian wilderness so attractive to Progressive Era
Tourists. Boosters had plenty of options when choosing which homes to display in their
promotional materials as a flurry of building took place as soon as Grove began selling lots. For

532 Scene in Grove Park, 1920, AA119, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library,
Asheville, North Carolina.
instance, between 1908 and 1918, 12 bungalow style homes were built in the neighborhood, the most common design for that time. The bungalow was the trendiest design for the Progressive Era and building a home like that spoke of the owner’s ability to not only understand design trends, but to keep up with them.

One such resident was Annie Rose Morton who built a bungalow in Grove Park in 1916 as her vacation retreat. Morton was originally from Charleston, South Carolina where her father, Dr. Arthur Barnwell Rose, worked as a physician. In addition to being a doctor, her father was a southern planter after inheriting his family’s plantation. Like many southern planter families, a significant part of the Rose family’s lifestyle meant vacationing in western North Carolina during their summers. Because the family had been vacationing in the region for so long and was one example of the antebellum planters who first made the region popular among elite circles, Morton was well-known and active in local high society well before she built her home. Just like western North Carolina’s own elite class, Morton was one example of a citizen who became more middle than upper class following the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Morton’s home in Grove Park allowed her to entertain her extended social network, such as the 1920 “tea” where Morton served as “hostess,” a party that brought together tourists and locals alike.\textsuperscript{533} Because Morton was one citizen who expanded the scope of the region’s social connections, and therefore helped aid their branding campaign by making the region look attractive to others like herself, the community seldom failed to announce when Morton was back in town and where she had been, such as the 1919 announcement in the local paper let residents know, “Mrs. Daniel Morton has returned to Asheville after spending the winter at Greenville, and Columbia, S.C. Mrs. Morton will occupy her cottage in Grove Park during the

\textsuperscript{533} \textit{Asheville Citizen-Times}, August 17, 1920.
summer season.” In the summer of 1920 alone the local paper reported Morton travelling to South Carolina, Detroit, Maryland, and Philadelphia. These types of wide social connections aided western North Carolina’s image as Morton showed people around the country that a white, middle class lady chose to not only vacation in the area but also invited the local community into their homes and lives as well.

Although the bungalow was the most modern and trendy style of home being built at the time, not all of the white, middle class favored them and bungalows like Morton’s were far from the only style of home in Grove Park. The Colonial Revival style was the second most popular housing design within the Grove Park community with eight such styled homes built between 1908 and 1918. The Colonial Revival style could take many forms, including New England Colonial, Dutch Colonial, and even Spanish Colonial. However, the Colonial Revival style most popular in Grove Park was the Southern Colonial Revival. This tried and true style spoke to the community’s desire to honor their Southern pasts as these homes often approximated plantation homes. Although southern heritage and plantation society took on less importance with regional promotion aimed at the middle class during the Progressive Era, it still carried symbolic weight and helped show a person’s status because it was still being used by nation’s elite to show their own elevated positions.

One resident of Grove Park who chose a Southern Colonial Revival home was W.B. Northrup. Because Northrup was not from the South, a Southern Colonial Revival home would aid his social position as it would at least symbolically tie him to Southern planter culture. Like other middle-class residents at the time, Northrup was a local transplant, he was born in Massachusetts in 1854, who took advantage of the region’s growing infrastructure to develop a

534 Asheville Citizen-Times, April 29, 1919.
thrive in the post-Civil War period. Northrup was the president of a local hardware firm, The Northrup-McDuffie Hardware Company, and was an active member of the region’s business elite. Because Northrup’s financial success was dependent on the continuing development of the region, he and his wife became active boosters to keep the cycle of prosperity moving.

Northrup added to residential development at the time when he built a home in Grove Park. Estimated at $25,000 in 1930, or about $360,000 today, Northrup’s home was much more expensive than an average house in America at the time but below that of an upper-class citizen. For example, historian Dolores Hayden estimates that a Sears, Roebuck and Co. home, a popular choice among many Americans at the time, completely finished with the purchase of a lot would be around $5,000 in 1910 or $125,000 today. Because the middle class generally purchased these homes, albeit usually those we would now consider lower-middle class, the cost of Northrup’s own home shows how Grove Park was meant for a more affluent middle class. However, his home paled in comparison to the upper-class elites who were still vacationing and building in the region and were following the conspicuous consumption habits very similar to their class in the Gilded Age. One such gentleman was Fred Seely, Grove’s son-in-law and business partner. Seely’s magnificent 22,000 residence, “Overlook” or “Seely’s Castle,” was meant to draw comparison between Seely and the British Aristocracy and contrasted with the elegant but much simpler and cheaper middle-class homes of men like Northrup.

536 Ibid.
537 Year: 1930; Census Place: Asheville, Buncombe, North Carolina; Roll: 1675; Page: 14A; Enumeration District: 0005; Image: 416.0; FHL microfilm: 2341409
Northrup and his wife were more than just residents of the region, they were also active boosters. One way Northrup served the community’s development and its image was his service as the President of the Asheville chapter of the North Carolina Retail Merchants’ Association.\textsuperscript{540} Northrup was well respected for his business acumen and in 1914 his company was recognized as “one of the oldest hardware concerns of the state.”\textsuperscript{541} Northrup connected progressive reform with his work as a booster after he was named a member of Asheville’s “committee on the high cost of living” by mayor Gallatin Roberts in 1919 and was tasked “to see if the high cost of living [could] be lowered.”\textsuperscript{542} This committee investigated “prices charged by retailers of all lines” to ensure that local citizens could afford to live in the area.\textsuperscript{543} Much of the region’s high cost of living was actually a product of tourism itself as inflated pricing was one way the region capitalized off its tourist market. Despite the clear benefit to business owners, it made it difficult for poorer citizens to make ends meet. The committee’s solution to the problem revealed their dedication to tourism. They did not encourage retailers to lower prices, thus potentially damaging the cycle of prosperity that secured economic wellbeing through tourism, but rather suggested “purchas[ing] government food at the prices which the federal authorities are now selling these articles” and then selling them “to the consumers at actual cost in small lots.”\textsuperscript{544} This solution would ensure that poorer, urban citizens were able to survive without hurting businessmen’s pocket books.

Mrs. Northrup also worked in progressive causes that aided regional tourism. She was an active member of the Civic Betterment Club, a group dedicated to improving Asheville and the

\textsuperscript{540} The Southern Merchant 17 (Atlanta, Georgia-Richmond, Virginia, May 14, 1906), 18.
\textsuperscript{541} Iron Tradesman: Machinery, Hardware, and Mill Supplies 79 (Atlanta: W.R.C. Smith Publishing Co., February, 1918), 68.
\textsuperscript{542} Asheville Citizen-Times, August 13, 1919.
\textsuperscript{543} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{544} Ibid.
Mrs. Northrup was a leader of regional cleaning and by 1920 she served as the club’s treasurer and helped them organize a major “clean-up” of Asheville that year. This activity followed a period of inactivity because “during the war, when the Red Cross demanded all of the spare time from the women of Asheville, civic ideals were forgotten, and the Civic League gradually faded from view.” Before the war interrupted their work, the club pointed to “the presence of trees, sanitary boxes, attractive beds of flowers and other improvements” as signs of the club’s “efficacy.”

These types of groups sprang up across the nation as the very ideas about health and disease that caused elite migration into suburbs also inspired the same middle-class progressive workers to reform urban centers through organized cleanups. For instance, in 1900 one North Carolina newspaper let residents know the town expected “all persons” to “cleanup their premises at once” especially those “keeping hogs.” They stressed the health benefits of a clean town arguing, “clean up and stay clean.” But for place like western North Carolina, cleanups were about more than just health. Cleaning up the city had long been part of the efforts of the Board of Trade to aid local tourism and in 1902 they told all residents that by partaking in a “good spring cleaning…the entire city will take on a more cleanly and inviting appearance.” Creating an inviting region would only add the to region’s brand as a scenic beauty and cleanups became one way the middle-class participated in local branding.

545 *Asheville-Citizen Times*, April 30, 1914.
547 Ibid.
548 Ibid.
549 *Daily Concord Standard*, November 27, 1900.
550 Ibid.
551 *Asheville-Citizen Times*, April 23, 1902.
William Jennings Bryan: the Great Commoner Makes Asheville Home and becomes a Spokesperson for Middle-Class Tourism

The surest sign that the new regional branding was working was the sheer number of middle class tourists coming into the region during the Progressive Era. Although western North Carolina had many tourists who embodied what it mean to be in the white, middle class at the time, and could serve as representatives within regional promotion, few were as famous as William Jennings Bryan. Because Bryan served as the perfect example of who local boosters had been hoping to entice into the region, they made a point of letting the nation know that Bryan and his family were part of “the society circles in Asheville.”

This branding began when he first arrived in 1896 while campaigning for president. “Bryan Day…the biggest day in Buncombe’s history” was held at Riverside Park in Asheville where Bryan orated to the “largest crowd ever to hear a speaker in Western Carolina.” Boosters circulated articles and images of Bryan’s visit widely, such as the photos showing the parade held through Asheville’s downtown in Bryan’s honor and cadets from Bingham Military School assembled for the parade. Although Bryan was an infrequent guest to western North Carolina for over a decade, the local community continued to promote Bryan’s connections to the region as they counted him among their extended social network. For example, in 1903 Bryan’s oldest daughter, Ruth, and Captain Richard Pearson Hobson, “the hero of the

---

553 *Asheville Citizen-Times*, September 8, 1896; *Asheville Citizen*, July 29, 1925.
Merrimac,” were rumored to be engaged, although “Capt. Hobson himself declin[ed] to either confirm or deny the rumor.”

Hobson was a frequent summer guest in western North Carolina, and he was considered part of the local, elite society. Hobson was a typical Southern, middle-class gentleman of the time and came and from a prominent Southern family. He was born at Magnolia Grove Plantation in Greensboro, Alabama in 1870. Although he grew up in Alabama, his family’s background could be traced to North Carolina where his grandfather, Richard Mumford Pearson, served as Chief Justice for the state’s Supreme Court.

Hobson became a national celebrity when he was taken captive during the Spanish American war. Becoming a major headline across the country, Hobson was touted as the epitome of Southern manhood. One national paper wrote how “the country is singing the praises of another southern boy whose brave feat is the toast of both the fleets.” Hobson’s military prowess became linked to Old South and Confederate memory because his father was noted for being “a gallant confederate soldier” and he was seen as inheriting these characteristics.

When two such prominent people like Hobson and Ruth Bryan began to be linked, local high society took an interest and boosters got to work promoting the relationship since each had connections to western North Carolina. For boosters, adding to the importance of the relationship, and what made it perfect for their elite branding campaign, was Hobson’s familial ties to a prominent western North Carolina family. While the rumored relationship between Hobson and Bryan was gaining attention in the press, Hobson was “the guest of his relative, Major W.W. Stringfield, near White Sulphur Springs.”

It was the flurry of correspondence...

---


557 Ibid.

arriving at the hotel between him and Ruth which first captured the attention of the local community and got them talking about impending nuptials. Although Hobson and Ruth Bryan never married, and the true nature of their relationship was never made public, their very real connections to western North Carolina made it perfect for regional promotion.

Despite boosters keeping Bryan’s name associated with the region, he did not personally return until 1912. Bryan gave a speech entitled “The Making of a Man” in Asheville, North Carolina “to an audience of 2,000 people at the city Auditorium” as part of his Chautauqua circuit.559 Once he arrived boosters made sure to establish social connections with him as he represented exactly the type of citizen who they hoped to bring into the region. It was no surprise that he was “royally entertained” by the local population and was met at the train station by the region’s finest gentlemen, including “Mayor J.E. Rankin, President Frank M. Weaver, of the Board of Trade…Governor-elect Locke Craig and [state senator and local attorney] Charles A. Webb.”560 One photograph from 1912 depicted Bryan with a group of local citizens, including both Grove and Mayor Rankin, on Sunset Mountain, the site of Grove Park. The photograph’s description read “William Jennings Bryan and some of his friends.”561

Because Grove and Bryan really were friends, and because Bryan’s national celebrity was a good way to advertise his new hotel, The Grove Park Inn, Grove invited Bryan to serve the following year as the guest of honor for the hotel’s grand opening on July 1, 1913. Grove captured Bryan’s visit in a photograph that was later turned into a postcard by the Southern Postcard Company.562 This visit would mark a turning point in the Bryan family’s visitation to

---

559 Asheville Citizen-Times, December 19, 1912.
560 Ibid.
the region as if before this time they were causal tourists, after, they became semi-permanent residents. Although Bryan had a luxury resort at his disposal, he chose to stay in a rented home, “Blue Briar.”

Grove owned “Blue Briar” but later sold it to Bryan at Bryan’s behest. Because Bryan’s national image was based on his reputation as the “Great Commoner,” a place like the Grove Park Inn, which hosted the nation’s wealthiest citizens such as Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, would have created a disconnect between Bryan and his largely middle-class supporters.

For a man in his position, a neighborhood like Grove Park was a much better fit.

Boosters and businessmen appreciated when national celebrities like Bryan visited the region because descriptions of their trips often circulated in national news, especially within the society pages, creating instant advertising for western North Carolina. For example, in 1914 when the Bryans were still at “Blue Briar,” the Raleigh News and Observer featured a photo of the home noting, “here’s ‘Blue Briar,’ the charming summer home near Asheville, N.C. of Secretary of State W. J. Bryan. It is located on Sunset Mountain…The front porch commands a fine view to the west…in the distance, range upon range of mountains…” This level of press actually forced the Bryan’s out of their home and into the Grove Park Inn for much of the summer as the paper all but invited people to drop by.

The free press the region received from Bryan’s visitation only increased when after he retired as Secretary of State in 1915 due to his pacifist stance on World War One, he decided to visit Asheville for some much needed rest. Bryan’s wife, Mary Baird, recorded their trip to

---

565 Tennessean, May 1, 1913; Evening Chronicle, June 2, 1913; Charlotte Observer, July 6, 913; Salisbury Evening Post, July 7, 1913; Washington on Herald, July 11, 1913; Philadelphia Inquirer, July 14, 1913; Des Moines Register, July 14, 1913; Atlanta Constitution, July 20, 1913; Baltimore Sun, July 20, 1913.
566 Raleigh News and Observer, July 26, 1914.
western North Carolina in her journal noting, “we have come here to Asheville, N.C., for two
days of rest, being worn out by the strain of the last four or five weeks.” The Bryan family’s
relationship with the region became so important to the local community that Thomas Wolfe, a
novelist from Asheville who captured local life within his two most famous works, Look
Homeward Angel and You Can’t Go Home Again, wrote about the excitement Bryan’s visits
inspired in the local population. Wolfe fictionalized Bryan debating his retirement to the region
when he wrote Bryan pontificating, “Perhaps I shall come back to this beautiful region, and take
up my life among my good friends here as one who, having fought the good fight, deserves to
spend the declining years of his life not only within sight but within the actual boundaries of the
heavy land of Canaan.”

Wolfe had the luxury of hindsight when writing his novels and knew that Bryan would in
fact move into the region, at least for part of the year, but the narrative he provides shows the
importance of Bryan’s endorsement to the region as he did much to promote western North
Carolina to his supporters across the nation. It’s unlikely that any such monologue took place as
the Bryan family had been buying real estate in the region for several years before Bryan
resigned from office, including ten acres on Sunset Mountain in 1914, thirty-two acres on
Chunn’s Cove in 1917, multiple residential lots in Grove Park in 1917, and lots in the Asheville
Country Club in 1917. Bryan also built a home, “Edwin Place,” and sold “Blue Briar” back to
Grove once it was finished. Like “Blue Briar,” “Edwin Place” was a modest New England

Winston, 1925), 419; New Bern Sun, July 30, 1914; the Washington Post, August 2, 1914; and Lumberton North
Carolina’s the Robesonian, September 24, 1914.
569 Thomas Wolfe, Look Homeward Angel (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1929), 341.
570 Buncombe County Deeds, Book 196, 563-565; Buncombe County Deeds, Book 212, 512; Buncombe County
Deeds, Book 213, 532; Buncombe County Deeds, Book 215, 531-534.
Colonial Revival residence perfect for Bryan’s public image as “The Great Commoner,” as evidenced in the original architectural drawing.\textsuperscript{571}

The Smith and Carrier architectural firm designed the Bryan’s home. Richard Sharp Smith was already famous for his work on the Biltmore Estate and had a reputation as a leading architect for wealthy western North Carolinians having already built many of the homes in Montford and Grove Park before designing Bryan’s. Bryan’s choice to eschew the more luxurious stylings of Southern Colonial and Tudor Revivals or the more faddish, arts and crafts Bungalows doting the neighborhood was symbolic of who he was. He did not need to prove he was an elite, in fact he hoped to show he was just like everyone else, certainly a superficial act when there was no doubt that Bryan had both the wealth and social position of one at the top of high society.

Attracting Bryan into the region was a huge boon to local boosters and their Progressive Era branding campaign. Almost no public figure was better known or more synonymous to the times than Bryan. In many ways it was Grove’s ability to respond so well to national tends that attracted Bryan to Grove Park. By creating a community that incorporated markers of the middle-class, and a place that embraced the local geography, Grove created a perfect place for the Great Commoner to spend his summers. Grove’s neighbored was just one product of the larger regional branding that was happening at the time. By promoting communities like Grove Park, local boosters could show the nation that they were middle-class without forfeiting the attention the region garnered for its natural environment. They did so by blending themes of continuity and change into single spaces. The new emphasis they put on the geography of the suburbs reminded the nation of their celebrated landscape and hinted at their Anglo-Saxon

heritage. This appealed to the nation’s traditionalists and those wishing to safeguard the white race. This sense of continuity was paired with luxurious and modern homes that allowed their new consumer base to become part of consumer society while still honoring all it meant to be part of the white, middle class.
Chapter Five: Tourism Gets Religion: The Emergence of Middle-Class Retreats in Western North Carolina

In 1950 Mason Crum, a professor of divinity at Duke University and a long-time vacationer at Lake Junaluska Assembly in Waynesville, North Carolina published The Story of Lake Junaluska, a history chronicling the Methodist resort’s founding. Crum believed his history would “prove of wide interest to Methodists especially and to Protestants generally” as it captured a unique aspect of their historical development and in many ways informed how middle-class tourists in the South formed their modern identities. To compile his history, Crum interviewed several residents who were present in 1913, the resort’s first summer. William F. Quillian was one of these residents and he reflected on what brought him and his family to Lake Junaluska Assembly in an account he gave Crum to include in his book:

Because of the opportunities afforded in culture, fellowship, recreation, and spiritual inspiration for children and young people as well as adults, Mrs. Quillian and I are thoroughly convinced that the building of this cottage, and thus becoming affiliated with the Junaluska Assembly, probably has been the very best investment of our lives.

It is no surprise that Quillian’s main reasons for vacationing in western North Carolina, “culture, fellowship, recreation,” were similar to his middle-class, tourist counterparts at the time. But, unlike their Grove Park peers, Crum, Quillian, and the rest of the residents at Lake Junaluska Assembly were all part of a new type of religious tourism that was flourishing in western North Carolina during the Progressive Era and their hope to receive “spiritual inspiration” while on vacation set them apart from their secular peers. With this new desire spreading across the nation, western North Carolina’s boosters and businessmen worked hard to make the region

---

attractive to religious resorts, often working in collaboration with clergy to ensure that they met congregations’ needs.

Part of the reason tourism was profitable and growing in Progressive Era western North Carolina was that local boosters and businessmen utilized new branding that diversified the marketplace and encouraged more types of tourists to visit, making the region known as a “resort section” for more than just the nation’s wealthiest citizens. Boosters learned that rather than having a singular branding campaign, they could attract more visitors by appealing to individual wants and needs. This first began rather broadly as boosters started branching out from marketing the region to just elite tourists to include the middle classes. Boosters did not drastically change techniques, they still used symbols of continuity and change and created paradoxical branding, but adapted them to their new middle-class clientele. Thus, the region became known for a new product, middle-class leisure.

Although the middle-class ethos and all that went with it served as the underpinning of this new product, savvy boosters could further adapt the specifics of local branding to attract particular groups of middle-class tourists rather easily. Local boosters targeted middle-class Protestants because what they wanted in their vacations, natural landscape and modern comfort, fit the region’s new product perfectly. *The North Carolina Christian Advocate* summed up their seemingly paradoxical desires when it explained how one of the advantages of Lake Junaluska Assembly was that it would “furnish the conveniences of the city on the shores of the lake in midst of the most picturesque mountain scenery.” This blending of old/new, rural/urban, and rustic/refined made it easy for local boosters to attract religious tourists because their desires mirrored what made the region attractive to the nation’s most elite citizens, what boosters had

---

574 *Evening Chronicle*, June 7, 1913.
575 *The North Carolina Christian Advocate*, October 5, 1911.
long been promoting. Because a significant part of middle-class status was built on imitation, tourists, even those within religious resorts, hoped to gain from the region’s national reputation for hosting some of the nation’s wealthiest peoples, and they copied the elite’s vacations on a smaller scale.

However, just as Quillan expressed within his reflection, religion was still the foundation of the Protestant resorts, and unlike their secular counterparts, they intended to realize their religious obligations through them. The Southern Railway encapsulated these various desires when it wrote:

The religious communities—of which there are many in Western North Carolina—hold summer conferences for purpose of discussing the advancement of all phases of Church Work… Select social clubs have been organized, club houses and cottages built and colonies formed, where the entire season or just ‘vacation time,’ may be whiled away in rest, comfort and recreation in this Summer Paradise.

Because western North Carolina could actually accommodate such a large list of hopes, Buncombe County alone saw the development of four important Christian resort communities in the Progressive Era, including Presbyterian Montreat in 1897, Baptist Ridgecrest in 1906, and Episcopalian Kanuga in 1909. Another protestant resort, Crum’s and Quillan’s Lake Junaluska Assembly, would choose nearby Haywood County as its location as the county’s local boosters and the retreat’s organizers worked hard to make it attractive to a new consumer base, middle-class protestant tourists.

---

The Background of Lake Junaluska’s Development: The Importance of Location to Protestant Tourism and Resort Identity

Lake Junaluska Assembly began after the Layman’s Missionary Movement, a group of white, middle-class southerners meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1908 voted to develop a summer conference center. Although Lake Junaluska Assembly began as a layman’s retreat, church leaders like Bishop James Atkins, Dr. George R. Stuart, and Dr. James Cannon, all Methodist clergymen in the South, began to take over its development, as it quickly grew too important to the Methodist Church to be run by laymen alone. Together the layman and clergy were the “leading business and religious men of the Southern Methodism” and their input made sure that the retreat would appeal to middle-class standards.\textsuperscript{577} If the assembly would eventually manifest into a middle-class resort, at first, organizers wanted a conference center that mimicked a typical camp meeting with Chautauqua-like educational programming. Specifically, it was imagined to “[awaken]…layman to their opportunities in connection with Christian work of every kind” and inspire, “Missions, Home and Foreign, City Evangelization, Education, Sunday-schoo/s Epworth Leagues, personal work, philanthropy, reform, benevolence and fraternity.”\textsuperscript{578}

Camp meetings had been a significant part of Methodism since antebellum times when itinerant preachers and rural congregations meet out of doors frequently when the weather permitted.\textsuperscript{579} Imagining the retreat at a traditional camp meeting helped middle-class Methodists connect to their religious pasts, something that developed an important sign of race and class during the Progressive Era. But, organizers wanted something that was also modern and at its

\textsuperscript{578} North Carolina Christian Advocate, March 5, 1908; Oxford Public Ledger, February 4, 1910; North Carolina Christian Advocate, October 5, 1911; North Carolina Christian Advocate, May 7, 1908.
core Lake Junaluska was a Chautauqua, one of hundreds of retreats developed specially to entertain and enlighten the middle-class during the summer. Chautauquas appealed to a certain type of citizen, those who desired more than just leisure. Historian Cindy S. Aron contends that these types of “self-improvement vacations,” what these Protestant resorts embodied, became popular with the white, middle class across the nation as although citizens hoped to enjoy their time off, a staple of their class, they still embraced the progressive spirit of the time.\textsuperscript{580} The Chautauqua movement exemplified the aspirational middle class ethos of the time as these talks and demonstrations brought educational programming to mainly rural areas as a way to inspire people to live better lives.\textsuperscript{581} Chautauqua programs were one way for people living outside of major urban centers to receive the same enlightenment and entertainment as their metropolitan counterparts and therefore join mainstream progressive society. Because they grew out of the new white, middle class, Chautauqua programs were extremely popular from the turn of the century until around 1920, when this group was undergoing its own development.\textsuperscript{582} When Lake Junaluska Assembly’s organizers made the decision to create a Chautauqua, their retreat because middle-class regardless of their initial intentions to develop an assembly for all Methodists.

Just like with their middle-class, tourist counterparts, the first step in developing the new retreat was location and Lake Junaluska’s organizers began sharing plans with their constituents in order to pick the perfect spot. Location was important because the right spot could evoke symbols important to both Methodism and status. To ensure that all possibilities meet certain standards, developers used the \textit{Nashville Christian Advocate} to announce the plans for the retreat and laid out specific parameters for what they wanted. First, it needed “accessibility to the whole

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{580} Aron, 101.
\textsuperscript{581} Rieser, 11.
\textsuperscript{582} Rieser, 3.
\end{flushleft}
Second, “it should be a health resort where the Church may be benefited physically as well as mentally and spiritually.” And last they wanted, “curative mineral waters, mountain air, and scenery…” with a “body of water which will furnish facilities for fishing, rowing, and other aquatic recreations.” These parameters mirrored the types of vacation communities the growing middle class were demanding as they allowed a relationship to the natural environment, yet with modern amenities and comforts expected within a vacation resort.

With these requirements informing developer’s plans for the resort’s location, western North Carolina became a primary point of interest as it could easily offer these demands and already had a reputation for scenic beauty and elite comfort. Another thing in western North Carolina’s favor was its historical connections to Francis Asbury. Asbury, a leader in early American Methodism and an itinerate preacher, “had preached outdoors to audiences large and small since colonial times.” Because Lake Junaluska Assembly’s developer’s founding rhetoric imagined the community as a new type of camp meeting, one with clear ties to the church’s history, they were excited by the idea of choosing a place that memorialized “the pioneer preacher who laid the broad foundations of Methodism in this Western World.” This history was important to founders because it appealed to the many white, middle-class Americans who were hoping to gain a more traditional way of life through their vacations,

583 Ibid.
584 Ibid.
587 Charlotte Observer, November 19, 1915.
something that reinforced their racial superiority. By choosing a location that honored their religious history, they could better display their own heritage. This symbolism added to their sense of nativism as it developed historical connections between themselves and the nation’s white, religious past, thus setting them apart from immigrants and their “new” religions.

For many in the white, middle class at the time, having a tourist retreat based on religious belief was important, because just as education and profession helped define status in the Progressive Era, religion also created belonging across the country. This was nothing new; religion had long defined social position in the country, especially in southern elite society, as belonging to certain congregations showed a person’s race, wealth, and prestige. But, in the Progressive Era, religion was equally important as a marker of status because it helped separate white Americans from immigrant and African American populations. Being a member of a Protestant denomination helped create symbols of whiteness and nativism as in the face of growing xenophobia, non-Protestant religions were viewed as detrimental to American ways of life. Historian Matthew Frye Jacobson argues that this mindset emerged because “religion was sometimes seen as a function of race.”

It was because of this attitude, posits historian Nancy MacLean that “evangelical Protestants particularly flocked to the Klan” as their religion served

---


as a symbol of race and nativism.\textsuperscript{591} In 1911 \textit{The North Carolina Christian Advocate} reflected this commonly held belief when it let readers know, the “M.E. Church, South, has a larger white membership within the extent of territory than any other Protestant Church in the United States.”\textsuperscript{592} The paper linked the church’s “native born” population to positive character and announced that its “social and religious standards are well established” because of it.\textsuperscript{593}

As religion and race became linked in a time of racial and ethnic unrest, the country witnessed a growing bigotry, as attacks against “foreign” religions, particularly Judaism and Catholicism, grew widespread.\textsuperscript{594} Many newspapers and other national publications began featuring articles aimed at the takeover of American society by these suspect religions. For example, in 1871 \textit{Harper’s Weekly} featured a Thomas Nast cartoon, “The American River Ganges,” showing bishops as alligators invading American schools.\textsuperscript{595} One local paper in small town Goldsboro, North Carolina weighed in on the national debate when they argued that “few Chinese” would convert to another religion as their “foreign religion” was “part of their blood, changeless, nearly as old as their race, enduring.”\textsuperscript{596} Because many Protestant missionaries worked in Asian countries and with Asian immigrants in the U.S., this assertion was meant to undermine their attempts at conversion arguing that they were a product of race and therefore unchangeable.

\textsuperscript{592} \textit{North Carolina Christian Advocate}, October 5, 1911.
\textsuperscript{593} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{595} \textit{Harper’s Weekly}, September 30, 1871.
\textsuperscript{596} Goldsboro Daily Argus, June 26, 1909.
As religion and race became increasingly linked in this way, many white Americans turned to their Protestant heritages as signs of their elevated status. In 1911 the North Carolina Christian Advocate lauded how the M.E. Church, South had a larger white membership” than anywhere else in the United States.597 It was this “great mass” of “native born” congregants, the paper argued that resulted in the church’s “social and religious standards.”598 Savvy boosters in western North Carolina took care to share their own Methodist backgrounds with the nation and soon promotions, like one 1902 article in the Asheville Citizen-Times, reported the region’s “inheritance” from its “Methodist fathers.”599 For a region capitalizing off a presumed racial heritage, adding to this Anglo-Saxon myth by highlighting how their religious heritage remained intact was a wise decision when trying to attract Protestant vacationers.

This only added to the region’s appeal because western North Carolina was already on the radar of Protestant tourists who were first exposed to Appalachia in part from the articles their progressive congregants published in national magazines, such as Missionary Review of the World, Outlook, Biblical Review, and Home Mission Monthly.600 Not only did these missionary publications show the types of Christian work being executed in Appalachia, they also highlighted the region’s qualities that made the area attractive to the middle class in the first place, like its racial heritage, beautiful scenery, and traditional lifestyles, the very things that made it perfect for middle class tourism in general.

597 North Carolina Christian Advocate, October 5, 1911.
598 Ibid.
599 Asheville Citizen-Times, June 9, 1902.
Although western North Carolina had many qualities in its advantage, it was not the only place that could meet founding requirements and some founders preferred other locations. Bishop Canton went so far as to run announcements in Virginia telling potential vacationers that the church was planning an assembly “somewhere on the coast.” In a 1950 interview, Bishop Cannon explained that, “it was in his opinion at the time that a particular site on the Virginia shore, between Virginia Beach and Hampton Roads, would be most desirable.” Because there was little consensus as to place, founders who wanted the retreat to be in western North Carolina worked hard to sing its charms and became active boosters for regional tourism. It was at this point that local boosters and the retreat’s founders began to work together promoting western North Carolina for their mutual benefit.

Bishop Atkins was one clergyman who “desired” western North Carolina for the retreat’s center and he began to actively advocate for Haywood County’s seat, Waynesville, as the perfect place to begin construction. One reason why Waynesville was attractive to Atkins and others was that Haywood County’s boosters, of which he was one, had been working hard to attract the types of middle-class tourists the Methodist retreat was intended for and a significant part of local promotion meant showing this side of the county to potential guests. To attract these tourists, Haywood County’s boosters, like Atkins, began to call Waynesville the “top city in the ‘Land of the Sky,’” and they promoted it as “Waynesville, The Beautiful.” Waynesville gained this sobriquet because it became transformed with new amenities, like electric lights and better roads, as well as with new structures for the town’s commercial needs. As the town continued to grow and become more modern, the Southern Railway disseminated promotional

601 North Carolina Christian Advocate, September 23, 1909; Assembly Prospectus, “
602 “Historical Forward,” In Crum, 118.
materials that announced, “The streets are broad and well shaded. There is a fine court-house, a public library, numerous attractive residences, and substantial business men in all branches of trade.” With such visible symbols of the town’s modernity, boosters also circulated images that captured these improvements, like two postcards from 1906 and 1908. Prominent in both postcards were the modern buildings, power lines, and quality roads synonymous with regional progress.

Boosters also used images of the county’s growing urban centers as a contrast to its rural counterparts, such as a postcard showing a developing Waynesville above an undeveloped Plott Balsam below. The differences in development within urban and rural locales was meant to be obvious within the postcards and show guests that Haywood County could provide elite comforts within urban settings and natural beauty and traditional ways of life within its rural ones. These types of images were paired with announcements telling outsiders how suited Haywood County was to resort vacations. For instance, a 1912 booklet published by the Southern Railway announced, “Hazelwood [one small town in Haywood County] is a delightful spot frequented by seekers of both health and pleasure who prefer its beauty and quietude to the livelier attractions of larger resorts.”

Advertisements also made a point of highlighting the county’s “prominent citizens” as one way to promote the region’s suitability to middle-class guests. Dr. J. Howell Way, a local physician and President of the State Board of Health, let potential visitors know, “socially

---

607 *Waynesville*, 1910-1911, Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina.
608 *Jackson County Journal*, July 23, 1913; *State Chronicle*, July 28, 1891; *News and Observer*, July 15, 1892.
609 *Western North Carolina Section at a Glance* (American Lithographic Co. 1912), 44.
610 *Asheville Gazette-News*, August 24, 1912.
considered the little city may be compared with those several times its size, there being few of the smaller towns which have made equal progress.” This type of endorsement set the stage for elite vacations by showing potential guests that Waynesville had the natural landscape popularized in national publications across the nation, and also the comforts, both material and social, of any middle-class town.

As one of the “influential and aggressive people” Way referenced in his promotion above, Akins had many reasons beyond just boosterism for bringing the Methodist retreat to his backyard. Atkins was born in Knoxville in 1850 to a Methodist preacher and soon followed in his father’s footsteps by attending first Emory and Henry College and then Trinity College where he received a Doctor of Divinity in 1872. It was also in 1872 that Atkins became a minister within the Methodist Episcopal Church South, an organization he would work for in various positions for the remainder of his life. In 1879 Atkins became the president of the Asheville Female College making him a permanent resident of western North Carolina. He had a brief intermission in 1889 serving as the president of his alma mater, Emory and Henry College, before returning to Asheville Female College four years later. Atkins moved to Nashville in 1896 when he assumed the position of general secretary of the Sunday school board and editor of Sunday school literature for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in 1896. Although Atkins’s position took him across the south, in 1899 Atkins he settled in Waynesville. Atkins status within the church continued to grow, and he was elected a bishop at the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Birmingham in 1906. Within this role Atkins

---

611 Ibid.
612 Ibid.
oversaw the development of all Methodist conference centers, making him the perfect person to oversee Lake Junaluska Assembly’s development.  

Part of why Atkins lived and worked in western North Carolina despite a job that took him across the country was his “noble wife.” Atkins married Ella M. Branner, a life-long resident of Haywood County, in 1876. Ella came from a very prominent local family and her mother, Mary Josephine Love Branner, was a daughter of Waynesville’s largest antebellum slaveholder, James R. Love. Ella Branner and James Atkins would have made a good match not only because of their southern lineage, but because like many of the middle class at the time, they were devoted to their Christian denomination and much of their identity was built on it. Both came from long lines of prominent Methodists and like their counterparts across the country, their religion served as one marker of their middle-class status.

Although religious affiliation was one important way of showing status in the Progressive Era, it was not distinct to this period, as it had long served as a component of class construction. Just as the Love family’s ties to the southern plantocracy and the Confederacy held meaning for generations following the Civil War and Reconstruction and marked them nationally as elite, their history of religious devotion also did much to mark them as middle class a few generations later. The James R. Love family were long remembered for being active Methodists beginning in the antebellum period, although their mother, Maria Coman, the daughter of a revolutionary war colonel, James Coman of Raleigh, was a Baptist. Maria Love Stringfield, Ella’s great aunt, proprietress of the Haywood White Sulphur Springs Hotel, and the longstanding head of local high society, was known for her role within local Methodist circles and often hosted the

---

614 The North Carolinian, May 24, 1906.  
615 Allen, 225.
Women’s Home Missionary Society within her home.\(^{616}\) Her husband, local hotel owner and booster, W.W Stringfield, was also an active Methodist and his father, Thomas Stringfield was “a well known Methodist minster…”\(^{617}\) With such a long history within the Methodist Church, within both his own and his extended family, Atkins served as a perfect representation of the region’s Methodist elite and his endorsement of Waynesville showed people that it was not only perfect for the retreat due to location, but also local citizenry.

Atkins added to his family’s religious prestige when he became the first person in North Carolina’s history to be inducted into the episcopacy of the Methodist Church. People across the state were proud of this “true North Carolina mountain man, with the virile qualities and patriotic citizenship found in that section of the state.”\(^{618}\) He was lauded as a “man of learning, of varied accomplishments, and a man of affairs.”\(^{619}\) Atkins became a symbol of the region’s white, middle-class citizenry, exhibiting the manly qualities long celebrated with the area’s natural environment, but with the cultivation expected of someone of his race and class. In many ways Atkins’s personal qualities mirrored what people were looking for in their vacations in the region. Atkins represented the blending of the local geography with middle-class refinement and was the perfect person to both develop and promote a middle-class resort.

With Atkins’s backing, conference organizers did choose Haywood County and Waynesville officially became the site for Lake Junaluska Assembly in March 2, 1909 after the developers formed an investment company and spent $250,000 on its purchase.\(^{620}\) Although he was given most of the credit, Atkins was far from the only organizer who saw Waynesville as the

---

\(^{616}\) Western Carolina Enterprise, February 24, 1909.

\(^{617}\) Nashville Union and American, June 15, 1870.

\(^{618}\) The North Carolinian, May 24, 1906.

\(^{619}\) Ibid.

perfect location for the retreat and not long after the decision was made, many of the retreat’s planners worked hard to let potential vacationers know why Waynesville was selected with many other options available. C. F. Reid, one of Lake Junaluska Assembly’s planners and one of the first residents of the resort, told his peers how, “many things had to be considered, such as accessibility, healthful climate, beautiful scenery, good water, good roads, and easy access to abundant supplies.” Reid’s justification of Waynesville showed the strength of regional branding as all the qualities, both rural and urban, which made Waynesville attractive to Lake Junaluska Assembly’s developers had long been part of local promotion.

Lake Junaluska Assembly’s founders purchased a large parcel of land from Captain Ward of Waynesville who had previously used it as a cornfield, but this rather indistinct landscape did not fit what they desired. In order to create their retreat community, planners needed to shape the local geography to meet their needs because, as the local paper noted, “the scenery is without the ruggedness” typical of the Appalachian environment, one of the very things that influenced its selection in the first place.

To form a community that meet their particular needs, what Dr. Sam T. Senter, one of the resort’s earliest residents, summed up as the “healing influences of nature, the inspiration of great programs, and the fellowship of kindred spirits,” Lake Junaluska Assembly’s developers and residents embraced the garden city ideal. Living within a rugged, yet refined, environment was important to both their social status and their religious life because the

622 Crum, 37.
623 “Southern Assembly at Waynesville,” Waynesville Courier, August 11, 1911; Sixty Four Selected Views of Western North Carolina (Asheville: Southern Postcard Co., 1912).
624 Notes from Dr. S.T. Senter, in Crum, 66.
“mountain setting evoked images of the Lord’s majesty, and the programs allowed them to reaffirm their lives in service to the Lord.”

This required a blending of the local geography with fine homes and modern conveniences, just like their secular counterparts in suburbs across the nation and in nearby Grove Park. Because this blending was difficult, it required a manipulation for the natural environment.

Lake Junaluska Assembly developers divided the total 1300 acres into parts which “The Haywood County Industrial and Resort Edition,” advertised as a “Lake, 250 acres; drives, parks, and reservations for public buildings, 250 acres; building lots, 800 acres. About 1,000 lots of varying size have been planted.” For Lake Junaluska Assembly residents the most important part of creating their garden community was the lake itself, what they hoped would “rival Lake Chautauqua,” as this allowed for recreational activities and a closer relationship to the natural environment. Because Lake Junaluska Assembly was based in part off Chautauqua, the embodiment of the typical middle-class resort, a lake became synonymous with the middle-class summer experience. To meet this demand, developers constructed a dam on the property and flooded nearby Richland Creek to create this desired feature.

The lake also became the embodiment of the community’s ability to conquer the landscape, a component of their identity, and as such their “artificial lake” because a significant feature of the resort. In 1914 the New York Times went so far as to report, “Waynesville, the location of the Southern Methodist Chautauqua, presents an added feature in Lake Junaluska, an artificial mountain loch” bringing

---

626 “Haywood County Industrial and Resort Edition,” Waynesville Courier, (1916), 31; Waynesville Courier, June 18, 1912; Asheville Citizen-Times, July 2, 1911.
627 The Charlotte Observer, October 21, 1912.
628 Asheville Citizen-Times, July 2, 1911.
629 Asheville Gazette-News, August 24, 1912; Raleigh Times, August 30, 1912; Charlotte Observer, September 29, 1912; Houston Post, July 29, 1917.

183
together many themes important to the community’s character, including their racial and religious backgrounds as the paper utilized language evoking the region’s Anglo-Saxon heritage.\textsuperscript{630}

Creating the lake was much more difficult than most of the country realized since the county had previously dumped sewage into Richland Creek and the lake would be beset with problems of cleanliness for years to come. However, because the county wanted to honor the “spirit of the contract” they developed with Lake Junaluska’s developers when they enticed the community into the area, they not only changed their sewage dumping policy, but also spent $20,000 to “extend the main trunk line of the town system” into Lake Junaluska Assembly.\textsuperscript{631} Local boosters were dedicated to the lake because the growth of the community, which was dependent on this feature, was mutually beneficial. One paper in Asheville predicted that the “opening of the assembly will be one of the greatest events in the history of western North Carolina” bringing upwards of “20,000 visitors annually” to the “greatest Chautauqua and playgrounds ever seen.”\textsuperscript{632} With these grand expectations, both Lake Junaluska Assembly developers and Haywood boosters spent great sums on its development and actively promoted its qualities to attract tourists. To this end, multiple images began to circulate showing the lake’s progress.\textsuperscript{633}

But, it was not the lake alone that was popular with potential guests. Lake Junalaska’s “unsurpassed beauty of the scenery and its temperate climate,” of which the lake was seen as just one part, was also an attraction for many, inspiring boosters to highlight these features of the

\textsuperscript{630} The New York Times, Dec 13, 1914.
\textsuperscript{631} Asheville Citizen-Times, November 17, 1913.
\textsuperscript{632} Asheville Citizen-Times, June 3, 1913.
community as well. This had long been an attraction of western North Carolina in general and soon became important in promoting Lake Junaluska Assembly as well. For instance the local papers ran articles explaining the healthy benefits of the climate, like one from The Waynesville Courier that announced, “it is doubtful if a more delightful mountain climate can be found anywhere in the Southern States than that which invigorates the body and refreshes the mind of those who take their summer sojourn at this choice and beautiful spot.”

The region’s “far-famed” climate and geography were important to vacationers as they allowed for outdoor activities, something that became both a central part of being middle-class and Christian at the time. As people like Stanley G. Hall, Horace Kephart, and Teddy Roosevelt showed white, middle-class men that they could rediscover their masculinity, and therefore their racial superiority, through the “Strenuous Lifie,” protestant denominations began to embrace a similar lifestyle. Historian Clifford Putney describes this aspect of religious life as “muscular Christianity” and posits “supporters of Christian manliness hoped to energize the churches and counteract the supposedly enervating effects of modern living.” The solution was the promotion of “competitive sports, physical education, and other staples of modern-day

---


635 The Waynesville Courier, June 20, 1913; Asheville Citizen-Times, July 2, 1911; North Carolina Christian Advocate, October 11, 1911.

636 Asheville Citizen-Times, July 2, 1911; North Carolina Christian Advocate, October 11, 1911.


638 Bederman, 208.

life.”639 Across the nation Protestant men joined fraternal lodges, the YMCA, and put their sons in Boy Scouts all as a way to embrace muscular Christianity.

Lake Junaluska embraced this ideal and it became a significant part of their identity. It was in fact one reason why location and geography was so important to Lake Junaluska Assembly as the right spot could allow muscular Christianity to be part of the community’s ethos. This influenced developers to choose western North Carolina and boosters made sure that potential guests knew that there were multiple ways to get involved in the “strenuous life” at Lake Junaluska Assembly, such as the “athletic sports” which became a central feature each summer.640 The 1916 special edition of the Waynesville Courier, “Haywood County Industrial and Resort Edition,” informed readers how Lake Junaluska Assembly was a community “where vacations may be spent in ideal surroundings, permitting for boating, fishing, bathing, golf, baseball, bowling, croquet, tennis, and other athletics, riding, mountain climbing, camping...”641 The Atlanta Constitution ran a similar advertisement which let readers know that they could enjoy not only “tennis, boating, swimming,” but also “excursions on the beautiful lake Junaluska.”642 In addition to highlighting leading recreational activities within print, boosters also used promotional imagery to advertise the outdoor activities the community offered guests.643 These visual representations were central to the community’s promotion because they

639 Ibid.
641 “Haywood County Industrial and Resort Edition,” Waynesville Courier, (1916), 31
642 Atlanta Constitution, June 22, 1919.
actually showed vacationers what to expect when coming to Lake Junaluska Assembly, something that was important to a group who expected “comfort and delight.”

Mountaineers as Part of the Local Geography and a Tourist Attraction

Recreation was not the only thing that visitors liked about Lake Junaluska, and for many one of the most appealing aspects of being in the mountains included the rural population. Unlike some accounts that painted the picture of a rather violent and dangerous bunch, the tourists going into places like western North Carolina were hoping for the rugged, yet laudable, mountaineers that reinforced ideology about the connection between white manhood and primitive lifestyles. This image spread for many reasons. Not only were the local people well known through religious and missions accounts the writings of outdoorsmen like Horace Kephart, but around the time Lake Junaluska Assembly was founded, Appalachia and the stereotype of the mountaineer in particular began to find its way into music and film.

Appalachian music became extremely popular at the turn of the century in large part due to its associations with Anglo-Saxon heritage. The belief that Appalachian isolation preserved both the racial and cultural identities of its inhabitants inspired many ethnographers and academics into the region. One such group were ballad hunters, like Cecil Sharp and Olive Dame Campbell, who worked to record English folk ballads in the mountains. Campbell was first introduced to Appalachian ballads in the first decade of the twentieth century while traveling through the region with her husband, John C. Campbell, an employee creating a social survey of Appalachia for the Russell Sage Foundation. Campbell became increasingly interested in

---

644 Asheville Citizen-Times, August 4, 1913.
645 Harkin, 7.
Appalachian ballads, what she called “all that is native and fine,” and began collaborating with Cecil Sharp, an English ballad collector. Both Campbell and Sharp were attracted to Appalachian ballads because they saw them as inheritances from the citizens’ Anglo-Saxon backgrounds and therefore significant to white American’s cultural ancestry. Sharp went so far as to write Campbell explaining that collecting within Appalachia was simply a means to “complete the work upon which I have been engaged in so long in England.” In order to share their work with America at large, Campbell and Sharp published a book of their collections in 1917, *English Folk Songs of the Southern Appalachians*. After working within the region collecting ballads, Sharp concluded that mountaineers possessed the “elemental wisdom, abundant knowledge and intuitive understanding which only those who live in constant touch with Nature and face to face with reality seem to acquire.” It was this belief that made mountaineers so captivating to white Americans as so many turned to them as one way to reestablish their own connections to nature and therefore a means to redevelop their gender and racial superiority.

This academic interest in the regional music corresponded with a newfound popular media craze, hillbilly music. Popular music became a staple of American life throughout the Progressive Era as it became more accessible to peoples across the country through new radio stations and affordable recordings. According to historian Anthony Harkin “by the end of 1922, 510 radio stations were broadcasting in the United States (89 in the South), and radio sales rose so dramatically in this decade (nearly fifteen-fold) that, by some estimates, nearly a third of the

647 Whisnant, 117.
648 Ibid.
649 Ibid.
homes in America had radio by 1929 (and two-thirds of homes by 1933)."\textsuperscript{650} Music became a significant part of American culture and even rural eras incorporated it into their lifestyles. For instance, in 1919 rural Guildford College in North Carolina had its own “Guildford Jazz band and red hot African burlesque.”\textsuperscript{651}

It was in this same period that hillbilly music began to gain in popularity. This country western genre was designated as being racially pure, “white” music and was intended to counter the growth of musical genres seen as belonging to racially impure groups, what was literally referred to as “race” music.\textsuperscript{652} During this time feelings about race were so heightened that when the Allen Brothers were included in Columbia Records “race” series for their recording of “Chattanooga Blues” they sued the company for $250,000 citing a potential loss of reputation if they were believed to be nonwhite by audiences.\textsuperscript{653} Oddly, many labels seemed to market hillbilly music and “race” music together, such as Bluebird Records who put the two distinct genres under the label “Hill Billy and Race Records.”\textsuperscript{654} This conflation was in fact part of the larger confusion of the Appalachian stereotype as hillbillies were seen as simultaneously racially pure, yet not part of mainstream society. Within these terms, it made sense that hillbilly music belonged to a genre of music on the periphery of society. They were not quite part of “race” music, but they were not within mainstream music either.

Regardless of how audiences perceived the genre, it was appealing for what it was universally accepted as not being, African American or foreign. The African American origins and influences in Blues and Jazz music, also gaining popularity at the time, were seen by many

\textsuperscript{651} "The Guilfordian. April 02, 1919.
\textsuperscript{652} Harkins, 73.
\textsuperscript{653} Harkin, 75.
\textsuperscript{654} Harkin, 75.
Americans as a sign of the declining state of American culture. In addition, an influx of new ethnic minorities migrating to the U.S. in the teens and twenties resulted in a backlash from many xenophobes. Hillbilly music appealed to those within the country who hoped to recreate earlier racial hierarchies and maintain racially pure stock. They might be on the outskirts of society, but hillbillies, at least in the minds of the white masses, had maintained their Anglo-Saxon purity because of their very existence on the periphery. Hillbilly music offered white Americans a glimpse into both their history and the primitive present, both believed to exist without the tainting of white culture with outside influences, races, and ethnicities.

Appalachians’ Anglo-Saxon stereotypes took on new meanings as they were seen as the best example of racial purity in the United States. As a result hillbilly music appealed to a large audience of white Americans as it reminded them of what they saw as a past where racial hierarchies were still in place and it promoted a racially pure group of Americans and their cultural productions. Of course, this appreciation was acted out within the hillbilly stereotype, explaining the genre’s name. If audiences of hillbilly music appreciated many of the associations the music evoked, they still saw the actual performers as on the periphery of society. As a result many Appalachian performers found themselves working within a genre of music whose name and characteristics they found insulting.

This was certainly the case for the first musical group actually referred to as hillbillies. When Ralph Peer, a the talent scout and producer responsible for the development of the hillbilly genre, finished an Okeh Records recording session In New York City with a string band from Galax Virginia, he was left wondering what to call the unnamed band. When Peer asked the bandleader, Al Hopkins, what he wanted their name to be, he responded in a manner he considered lighthearted saying “we’re nothing but a bunch of hillbillies from North Carolina
and Virginia. Call us anything."  Peer latched on to the term hillbilly recognizing the meaning it already held for many Americans and its power in a time of growing racial anxiety, dubbing the group “The Hill Billies.”

The band did not identify with the hillbilly, what band member Tony Alderman called “a back-woods person who knew nothing at all about city life…” Much of the band’s negative reaction can be understood because the group was comprised from Appalachia’s white, middle class, a group, like western North Carolina’s on boosters and businessmen, who had long worked to connect to their counterparts across the nation. It was not a coincidence that Alderman’s largest objection to the name dealt with the differences between being rural and being urban. The fact that Peer did not recognize the differences between Appalachians within the urban centers and those in rural areas shows the overarching belief held by most Americans that all Appalachian citizens fell within the hillbilly category regardless of their actual lifestyles. But, just like with the region’s boosters, the potential monetary gain that the image created caused the band decided to keep the name recognizing the economic benefit of capitalizing off stereotypes.

The image of Appalachians Alderman hated was what most Americans would have expected as many developed their idea of how mountaineers looked through the burgeoning film industry. Film was perhaps the greatest disseminator of the idea of the mountaineer to a mainstream American audience because it had an audience of “some 40 million a week by 1922.” Historian J.W. Williamson has shown how the depictions of the mountaineer or hillbilly varied often throughout film, being variously shown as a clown, a savage, or a laudable

655 Harkin, 79.
656 Harkin, 79.
657 Harkin, 79.
658 Harkin, 57.
holdover from colonial times, but their overall symbolism rarely changed. At heart of each permutation was the idea of formers ways of life, the very thing that so captivated many white, middle-class people. Because the mountaineer was so prolific in early film, showing up in over 400 movies between 1904 and 1920, their unique folkways created a following among many Americans who longed to see them for themselves. Tourism in Appalachia began to become voyeuristic as people across the nation ventured into the region to view the native inhabitants in their natural settings.

With such a growing reputation across the nation, it is no surprise that local hillbillies became part of why the region was attractive for many of Lake Junaluska Assembly’s residents. Mason Crum was one Lake Junaluska Assembly resident who viewed both the rural citizens as attractions. He wrote that a “highlight of such a trip is a visit to a mountain house, away back in the cove, to share the hospitality and friendship of people who are down to earth and who live beautifully close to nature.” Crum was far from the only resident of Lake Junaluska who looked forward to viewing the rural populace. The community’s residents were so captivated by the mountaineers that they even held a special event every summer called Haywood County Day. Although the name would suggest it was an event for all the county’s residents, of which they

---

661 The Mizell Family, J.B. Ivey, Caroline Hudson, and Ida W. Penny all shared similar portrayals of the local, rural population as Crum in their own recollections of LAKE JUNALUSKA ASSEMBLY’s earliest years and were all recorded in full Mason Crum, *The Story of Lake Junaluska* (Greensboro: Piedmont Press, 1950). Less positive impressions of the local population appears in the recollection of Mrs. Edward C. Mccelees, also recorded in full Mason Crum, *The Story of Lake Junaluska* (Greensboro: Piedmont Press, 1950). Mccelees views the local population as “natives” and evokes as the negative connotations that term implies.
662 Crum, 24
were semi-permanent members, it was really an event designed so they could interact with mountaineers.\textsuperscript{663}

The types of activities that community residents most enjoyed during this event closely mirrored why the region was popular across the nation at the time. For instance, Lake Junaluska Assembly resident Caroline Hudson remembered that, “Haywood County Day and occasionally an old-fashioned singing were two occasions that drew big crowds.”\textsuperscript{664} The Mizells had a similar recollection about Haywood County day commenting that, “in the afternoon the county choirs competed in a singing contest.”\textsuperscript{665} Because the region was gaining popularity for its traditional ballads, the ability to experience them first-hand was a huge draw for many tourists at the time. But, it was more than just music that was so appealing to tourists. It was the overall difference in way of life that was so fascinating to Lake Junaluska Assembly’s residents as mountaineers offered a contrast to their modern, middle-class lifestyles. The Mizell family recalled these differences when they reflected on the use of old-fashioned transportation used during by mountaineers during Haywood County Day: “the mountain people of the surrounding county came in wagons, in buggies, and on foot.”\textsuperscript{666} This description is similar to how mountaineers were shown as clowns within popular media as the overcrowded, jalopy making a visit to town was a common trope in literature, film, and even music. It also contrasted with the region’s middle-class citizens who owned cars just like the elite citizens Lake Junaluska

\textsuperscript{663} All of the accounts about the rural population recorded Mason Crum, The Story of Lake Junaluska (Greensboro: Piedmont Press, 1950) utilized language that separated them from LAKE JUNALUSKA ASSEMBLY’s residents. For instance, Carolina refers to them as “mountain friends,” and J.B. Ivey refers to their residences as “mountain country.”
Assembly’s own population. Their cars allowed both to overcome the natural environment, their own small conquering of nature as well as a means into the consumer market.

Because cars symbolized a middle-class lifestyle, it is no surprise that Dr. Sam Stringfield used his as a way to move into a more rural area while still being part of the county’s urban elite. Although Stringfield’s medical practice was located on Main Street Waynesville, he chose to live in Sunburst, a more rural community about twenty miles outside of the city built in part from the businessmen working at nearby Champion Paper Company. Stringifeld’s car allowed him and his family to maintain social ties to the elites outside of his immediate residential area. Because Stringfield was part of Waynesville’s high society and the car was still rather new, the local paper covered his ability to maintain this social life in large part due to it. For instance, in 1918 they reported, “Dr. Sam Stringfield and family, of Sunburst, motored here Sunday for dinner at Blink Bonnie with the Sloans.” It was the car that made it possible for elites, like Stringfield, to again live in the region’s rural areas, the very thing tourists were now hoping to do, without losing their social positions.

Even middle-class women within smaller communities like Waynesville looked to cars as a means to show their status. This was the case for Margaret Stringfield, Sam Stringfield’s younger sister, who received “a new Overland Country Club automobile” in 1917. The car shaped social interactions and for Margaret it was a way to connect with other elite young women who “enjoy[ed] it with her.” The car was the key to a new type of lifestyle. Whereas young women were formerly restricted to a very small space, the car allowed them a sense of freedom and began to change some of their social patterns.

667 The Carolina Courier and Waynesville Mountaineer, June 6, 1918.
668 The Carolina Courier and Waynesville Mountaineer, October 18, 1917.
669 Ibid.
The Importance of Summer Homes at Lake Junaluska Assembly

If cars did so to some degree, the most significant way Lake Junaluska Assembly’s “leading Methodists” showed their elevated status was through their homes. These were meant to contrast their lives with those of the region’s “hillbillies” thus symbolizing their ability to conquer the local geography and meet modern standards of living. This was important because Lake Junaluska was always meant to both connect its residents to the local geography but also offer residents “every convenience to make [their] stay happy and comfortable.”

Historian Richard Starnes explains that western North Carolina’s Christian retreats often looked like their secular counterparts, as “on the surface, these religious resorts seem to contradict the traditional southern religious ethos and its emphasis on salvation, self-denial, and an aversion to worldly pleasures in favor of those in the world to come.” Although protestant tourists wanted to ground their vacations in religious sentiment, they still hoped to create experiences that marked them as part of the white, middle class. This meant buying a very similar product as their secular counterparts, in this case elite leisure. If this type of high-end consumption at first seemed in conflict with their religious sentiments, and many following the social gospel did condemn it, for the majority of middle-class Christians, “commerce and religion were not in conflict.”

With this guiding them, local boosters and Lake Junaluska Assembly’s organizers worked hard to promote the community as a resort. Advertisements let people know that Lake Junaluska Assembly was meant for a specific clientele, according to one early pamphlet the “best

---

670 Cincinnati Enquirer, June 28, 1918.
671 Ibid.
people,” and boosters frequently referred to the community as a resort in many publications and advertisements.\textsuperscript{674} For example, in 1914 the \textit{Waynesville Courier} made sure potential guests knew exactly what type of retreat Lake Junaluska Assembly was when described it as a “RESORT designed for the wholesome amusement of the Christian private in the ranks and his family.”\textsuperscript{675} The community’s connection to Chautauqua added to its prestige and the local paper began calling Waynesville “Chautauqua City.”\textsuperscript{676}

If the resort enhanced its residents’ status, it was still a religious institution and vacationers chose it over other middle-class resorts for this reason. Within their promotions Lake Junaluska’s boosters made a point of explaining the resort’s Christian atmosphere so potential guests also knew that it differed from secular resorts in sentiment if not comfort. J.B. Ivey, a founder of the community, reflected how important faith was to the community’s identity and why people chose it over other options when he explained, “I am afraid if their summers had been spent under the demoralizing effects of most of the summer resorts, the result in their lives might have been very different.”\textsuperscript{677} Publications made sure to highlight this unique aspect of the resort and its “aim” was advertised as the establishment of a “community of Christian fellowship, a summer colony where the moral atmosphere and the associations will be helpful and uplifting.”\textsuperscript{678} Lake Junaluska Assembly’s residents shared this attitude and moved into the

\begin{flushright}

\textsuperscript{674} \textit{Concord Daily Tribune}, June 22, 1910.

\textsuperscript{675} \textit{Waynesville Courier}, “Haywood County Industrial and Resort Edition” (1914), 30.

\textsuperscript{676} \textit{Waynesville Courier}, July 14, 1911; \textit{Asheville Citizen-Times}, August 4, 1913.


\textsuperscript{678} \textit{Waynesville Courier}, July 14, 1911; \textit{Asheville Citizen-Times}, August 4, 1913.
\end{flushright}
community because of it. This prompted one resident, Mrs. W.I. Herbert, to call Lake Junaluska Assembly the “Summer Home of Methodism.”

By the time the resort’s prospectus was released in 1910, Lake Junaluska Assembly’s planners saw residences as a major component of the community and included an entire section dedicated to the “summer home feature.” It was within this section that the blending of the natural environment with middle-class comforts was explained. Developers told potential vacationers how the resort would offer the “opportunity for summer homes amidst the best environments, both physical and social.” Summer homes were important to the identity of the resort because it changed the community from a retreat for all Methodists into one specifically for middle-class congregants. Lake Junaluska’s organizers explained “here men can build such homes…and place their families for the entire summer amid scenes of beauty, in the healthiest of all atmospheres, with the purest water known gushing from the mountain hard by, and surrounded by intellectual and moral conditions which are impossible to find except at such a place.” Developers envisioned a semi-permanent community where families would spend the “summer season on the shores of Lake Junaluska… in the midst of delightful, elevating, and inspiring society.” In order to create this type of lasting social connection, it was ideal for people to have their own homes.

Because the homes, what residents and boosters called “cottages,” no doubt in imitation of the colloquialism used the by the nation’s wealthiest citizens when referring their summer mansions, were the “nucleus of the colony,” much of Lake Junaluska Assembly’s 1300 acres,

---

681 Ibid.
682 Ibid.
683 Waynesville Courier, Friday 29 1912.
around 800, were turned over to home construction. Its development in the “hands of civil engineers and landscape architect” was one way organizers promoted the resort’s suitability to middle-class clients. Hiring modern builders was important to developing not only Lake Junaluska’s infrastructure, but also its reputation and boosters made sure to let visitors know that part of the community’s “material comfort[s]” included “electric lights, water, sewage, good roads and drives, telephone and telegraph, railroad station on the grounds, quick transportation by boat on the lake, or motor cars or busses on the land.”

The engineers and architects mentioned in promotional materials were employees of the Richard Sharpe Smith Firm of Asheville. The firm was responsible for manipulating the land into a garden-city type community and making sure homes would blend beautifully with the community’s features, like the lake itself, shown in their 1912 sketch of the community. The firm was not only a perfect choice for developing an elite community in western North Carolina because of its years of experience doing so, but also because it still carried the name of the region’s leading builder; a name still synonymous with the best the region had to offer. As a principle contributor on the Biltmore House and a long career working for the region’s middle and upper classes, building homes in both the Montford and Grove Park neighborhoods, Smith’s association with Lake Junaluska Assembly helped mark it as refined, cultivated, and expensive, exactly what a class-conscious middle class most desired.

Because the community offered so many modern amenities, and organizers hired the region’s premier firm to provide them, the cost of building a home in the community became

---

686 North Carolina Christian Advocate, October 5, 1911.
quite expensive. This eliminated the resort as a summer option for all but the denomination’s wealthiest citizens. For instance, initial prices of the lots varied from $300 to $1000, a relatively expensive price for what would be the location of most residents’ second homes, and kept out poorer members of the church.\textsuperscript{688} Although prices would soon drop as low as $167, the community was still meant for affluent members of the church.\textsuperscript{689} As a comparison, Chestnut Park was a nearby neighborhood the \textit{Waynesville Courier} described as a “high class bungalow colony.”\textsuperscript{690} The lots within this middle-class community ranged in price from “$200 to $500 dollars according to size and location” making Lake Junaluska Assembly’s prices comparable.\textsuperscript{691} Lake Junaluska Assembly’s choicest lots, those along the lake’s shore, were purchased by the community’s founders, including Bishop Atkins, as they were “offered first to the stockholders…”\textsuperscript{692} These lots were most-desirable not only because they had views of the lake, but also because of the road, Lake Shore Drive, that circled the lake and made it easy for residents living on it to come and go. Because Lake Junaluska Assembly’s developers put up the initial $250,000 to fund the project, and paid the highest prices for their lots, they wanted to ensure that they got the best that the location had to offer.

Just like other elite communities across the nation, the purchasers of the lots had to adhere to guidelines in their homes’ construction. Guidelines were put in place to ensure that the community maintained its blending of the natural geography with modern housing and there were “limits as to the kind of buildings to be erected in certain sections.”\textsuperscript{693} Because Lake Junaluska Assembly’s buildings were meant to blend in with the natural elements, no lot could

\textsuperscript{688} \textit{Asheville Citizen-Times}, July 2, 1911.
\textsuperscript{689} \textit{North Carolina Christian Advocate}, August 8, 1912.
\textsuperscript{690} \textit{Waynesville Courier}, January 24, 1913.
\textsuperscript{691} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{692} \textit{Waynesville Courier}, Tuesday, June 11, 1912.
\textsuperscript{693} “Satisfactory Sale,” \textit{Waynesville Courier}, Friday, June 21, 1912.
have less than 40 feet frontage with “ample space between cottages.” booster capitalized off this blending and circulated imagery of Lake Junaluska Assembly’s cottages and their relationship to the landscape, such as one postcard depicting the homes on Lake Shore Drive.

In addition to protecting the garden city ideal, Lake Junaluska Assembly’s guidelines made sure that residents adhered to middle-class standards in the construction of their homes, thus ensuring that the resort remained elite. Although no minimum price was ever enforced, the first “handsome cottages” completed ranged in price from $3,000 to $10,000 and set the standard. Many Lake Junaluska Assembly residents turned to craftsman style bungalows in the manner of Gustav Stickley when building their homes. Stickly was one of the strongest influencers of the arts and crafts aesthetic in America and published the first issue of the influential magazine *The Craftsman* in 1901. In fact, Stickly suggested that the bungalow, a style previously considered only useful as a vacation home, could also offer year-round living, thus sparking the rise of the style as primary dwellings across the country for the middle classes. But, Lake Junaluska Assembly’s owners were so affluent that a style often serving as a primary residence for others at the bottom of their social class was used for their vacation homes, a clear symbol across the nation of just how elite the community really was.

One reason why the craftsman aesthetic and bungalow structure was so popular in the Progressive Era was that it deviated in both appearance and the type of living it accommodated from the previous generation’s preferred Queen Anne style. According to historian Edward Clark, these new homes departed from Gilded Age fussiness and “stressed the need to reduce the

---

694 *Asheville Gazette-News*, January 15, 1912.
695 *Asheville Gazette-News*, June 24, 1913.
697 *Asheville Gazette-News*, June 24, 1913.
dwelling’s structure to its essentials in order to simplify the daily life of the homeowner.”\textsuperscript{698} In order to realize this ideal, a home offered, “fewer objects to be dusted or repaired, more compact and efficient use of space, and a reorganization of the routines of life such as the preparation of meals and the washing of clothes.”\textsuperscript{699}

The “informal domestic design” of a craftsman bungalow was a popular choice at Lake Junaluska Assembly for many reasons.\textsuperscript{700} The new craftsman bungalows were the height of modern fashion and tied the community into the national social hierarchy by allowing them to mimic popular consumption habits. In fact, nearby Grove Park Inn, a summer resort for the nation’s wealthiest peoples, utilized the arts and crafts styling within its interior decoration, such as its “Big Room.”\textsuperscript{701}

Adding to the rustic elements of the Inn were the “seven hundred pieces of furniture and over 600 lighting fixtures of solid copper…made by hand by the Roycrofters, at East Aurora.”\textsuperscript{702} The upstate New York company was founded in 1895 by artist and writer Elbert Hubbard and grew to be one of the leading arts and crafts producers in the country. Arts and crafts design was based on older folk styles, both American and European, something many Americans valued in a time when a return to traditional values and rural lifestyles was gaining popularity across the country. Arts and crafts style was also the trendiest design style and even though its styling evoked the past, it was very much a part of the present. This made Roycroft furnishings a perfect fit for the overall feeling of rustic elegance Grove Park’s owners wanted for their Inn as it

\textsuperscript{699} Clark, 147.
\textsuperscript{701} View of the Big Room of Grove Park Inn, AA293, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina.
\textsuperscript{702} Reiff, 172.
brought together themes of the past yet still marked the Inn as modern. Because some of the nation’s most elite places and people were appreciating the new simpler styling, it appealed to the middle-class tourists at Lake Junaluska who were hoping to affect their own social status through their consumption and living habits. On a simpler scale, they too could enjoy the rustic comfort of a craftsman styled and decorated home.

An added convenience for some of Lake Junaluska Assembly’s residents were that many bungalows and craftsman home plans could be purchased through mail order catalogues. Catalog sales allowed for uniformity in purchasing across the nation and further helped people create belonging through shared ownership. These homes were so popular with a developing middle class that numerous companies either began selling them, like Pacific Ready-Cut Homes, Lewis Manufacturing Company, and Sears, Roebuck & Co.\(^{703}\) One reason why they were popular was their cost which typically fell below that of a traditionally built home. Historian Dolores Hayden estimates that a Sears, Roebuck and Co. home completely finished with the purchase of a lot would be around $5,000 in 1910 or $125,000 today.\(^{704}\) However, many catalog homes, like Sear’s most expensive option, “The Magnolia,” a magnificent southern colonial style home that sold in 1919 for $7,960, made the catalog home a great option for a community like Lake Junaluska where people had varying finances available to spend on their summer homes.\(^{705}\)

Mason Crum’s family relied on catalogs to choose their home at Lake Junaluska Assembly. Crum explained that his family “selected a little house from the picture in some sort of house catalogue. We cut out the picture, sent it to the construction company, and asked how...

\(^{704}\) Ibid.
\(^{705}\) Ibid.
much it would cost to build. A price was agreed upon, and work was begun immediately.”

Lake Junaluska’s “Rainbow Cottage” was another example of a home purchased through a Sears and Roebuck catalog.

“Rainbow Cottage’s” style was very common for Stickley bungalows, and according to architectural historian Duane Oliver “Rainbow Cottage” was one of Sears’ “Sunbeam” designs. The Sears’ plan was appealing to Lake Junaluska Assembly residents because it included almost all of the elements needed to build a home and came “complete with windows, doors, asphalt shingles, cypress or cedar siding, maple and oak flooring, built-in ironing board and enough paint for three coats, all for only $2,700 (plumbing, heating and wiring were extra).”

For Lake Junaluska Assembly’s wealthier residents, those who might want a modern arts and crafts bungalow but could afford more than a catalog version, they turned to the many local architects in the region who had long been building homes for the region’s elite. John R. Pepper, deemed “the leading Methodist layman of the South,” and an original developer and investor of Lake Junaluska Assembly, employed the Richard Sharp Smith Firm to build his summer cottage. Pepper’s position as a banker in Memphis and President of the Tennessee Trust Company provided him with the finances to afford such an impressive second home. Unlike one early Lake Junaluska Assembly resident, Mrs. W.I. Herbert, who explained that their vacation home was modest because she had, “nine children in need of college diplomas in

---

706 Crum, 23.
708 Ibid, 81.
709 Oliver, 77.
preparation for life,” Pepper could afford a lavish residence, even in a second home. But, more than the promise of a resort community and luxurious residence enticed him and his family to Lake Junaluska Assembly as Pepper could have easily afforded to purchase such a home at a secular resort like Grove Park. As an original founder and “one of the large stockholders of the Southern Assembly” Pepper was dedicated to his Methodist faith and wanted a resort that both accommodated his middle-class lifestyle, but also his religious devotion. It was this ethos that set Lake Junaluska Assembly and its residents apart from the multiple resorts throughout the region.

Although the craftsman bungalow was a favorite among Lake Junaluska Assembly residents, it was far from the only type of home being erected at the assembly. For instance, Bishop Atkins’s home, “Sunset,” was a grand Colonial Revival structure built in 1913. The Atkins family would have wanted a grander home than many of the other residents of the community because it served as their primary residence since they lived in Haywood County year round. They also wanted something as opulent as their former residence, “Bannercrest,” a home one Lake Junaluska Assembly visitor, J.B. Ivey described as a “spacious mansion shadowed by the mountains.”

Although “Sunset” offered Atkins exactly what he was looking for in his Lake Junaluska home, he only lived in the residence briefly. When his wife died suddenly a few years after they moved in, a bereft Atkins would no longer stay in the home. He built a smaller cottage next door

713 The Carolina Mountaineer and Waynesville Courier, November 20, 1917.
715 “Waynesville as Seen by Visitors,” Waynesville Courier, Friday, September 6 , 1912.
where he lived until his own death in 1923.\textsuperscript{716} At the time of his death, Atkins was lauded in papers across the nation as a “leading figure in the Methodist Episcopal church, South.”\textsuperscript{717} But, Atkins was renowned for more than just his work in the church and had for years prior to his death been known as the “father and principal promoter of the Chautauqua scheme for Waynesville.”\textsuperscript{718} Upon his death, the Ashboro Courier went so far as to report that “Lake Junaluska, the center of the great Methodist assembly grounds, was a creation of his.”\textsuperscript{719} It was within this position as one of western North Carolina’s boosters that Atkins shaped not only the nature of tourism in the region, but also its connection to mainstream America. By promoting the region as a perfect location for a middle-class, religious resort like Lake Junaluska Assembly, Atkins was one of the local boosters responsible for forever changing the nature of the region’s branding. By responding to both larger changes in the national social hierarchy and adapting local promotion to meet these needs, people like Atkins were able to appeal to the growing base of middle-class tourists who were looking for their own vacations as a means to enter into the consumer marketplace and as symbols of their status. To make the region attractive, boosters advertised the region’s rural landscape and traditional ways of life as well as its urban centers known for comfort and refinement. Together this blending of old/new, rural/urban, and rustic/refined fit the needs of religious tourists looking for ways to connect with nature, smoothing that held importance to their religious, racial, and gender identities, but also created the context to display their place within the nation’s middle class. They did so by not only exploring the local wilderness, but in essence conquering it as they built beautiful homes and comfortable summer lifestyles in the heart of Appalachia.

\textsuperscript{716} Greenville News, December 6, 1923.  
\textsuperscript{717} Ibid; Detroit Free Press, December 6, 1923; Lincoln Evening Journal, December 6, 1923; Palm Beach Post, December 6, 1923; Indianapolis Star, December 6, 1923; Los Angeles Times, December 6, 1923.  
\textsuperscript{718} Concord Daily Tribune, June 22, 1910.  
\textsuperscript{719} Courier, December 13, 1923.
Epilogue

In 1922 the Battery Park Hotel’s new owner, Edwin Wiley Grove, a longtime booster and businessmen living in Western North Carolina, decided to demolish the original 1883 structure and replace it with a modern, art deco skyscraper. Grove, the undisputed leader of Asheville’s development during the Progressive Era, was a shrewd observer of the times and believed that for Asheville to succeed as a tourist destination it needed to stay modern, at least within its amenities. This approach meant following the trends of the Jazz Age, one of which included a new type of consumer optimism perfectly suited to high-end leisure. The art deco styling was, in fact, a direct response to Jazz Age themes as it was meant to evoke progress, movement, and modernity. When locals and visitors alike were horrified by the decision to tear down the old hotel and raze Battery Porter, Grove released a statement saying that while he “appreciate[d] the sentiment that has existed for many years on the part of patrons of the Battery Park Hotel and the residents of Asheville, the hotel is rapidly outgrowing its usefulness.” Many other business leaders in the city supported Grove’s decision, believing that “advancement largely depends upon adequate hotel facilities.” The dispute over the fate of the famous hotel typified the push and pull of the region’s branding, as what was in question was whether the region should promote continuity, the old hotel, or change, the new hotel.

This dispute was certainly not a new conflict for the region’s boosters as they had long debated which aspects of the region they should promote - old/new, urban/rural,
refined/antiquated - and therefore form the center of Western North Carolina’s branding campaign. Battery Park was able to rebuild a modern structure but maintain a historical reputation thus bringing together the best of both worlds. In fact, following the demolition of the old hotel and the construction of the new, savvy boosters and the hotel’s owners began referring to it as “historic Battery park” as a way to remind potential guests of its historical significance.724 Much was at stake for local boosters and the rest of the region’s citizens as tourism was a crucial part of a cycle of prosperity that ensured their continued wellbeing. Battery Park’s decision to update but maintain a historical reputation demonstrates the ultimate decision of the region’s boosters to continue a method developed generations before as the same paradoxical campaign that proved so successful in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era because of its flexibility continued through the 1920s and the Great Depression. The continued utilization of a branding campaign in another time of great change serves as a testament to the success of a paradoxical promotion in western North Carolina and all the efforts they took to develop it in the previous generation. By choosing a plan that was adaptable to any circumstance or client base, boosters and businessmen successfully advertised and sold their product to elite Americans for over sixty years.

**Tourism after World War One**

If one war disrupted the tourist market in western North Carolina, another war proved just how durable their post-Reconstruction plan was. Although WWI did not see the dramatic changes in everyday life that happened with the Civil War, it certainly affected America’s character after it ended. Not only were loved ones were killed, but America also became indelibility linked to worldwide affairs gaining a social, economic, and political influence like

---

724 *Asheville Citizen-Times*, December 3, 1922; *Asheville Citizen-Times*, February 3, 1926; *The Tennessean*, September 23, 1923.
never before. With all this change, the country underwent a significant shift in attitude, much like it did following the Civil War and Reconstruction, as people tended to either have one of two reactions to life after the war.

The first, and the one most synonymous with the period now, was an embrace of novelty and all that went with it. Often referred to as the Jazz Age or the Roaring 1920s, this attitude glorified modernity and a new youth culture. Historian Paula Fass argues, “in the 1920’s, youth appeared suddenly, dramatically, even menacingly on the social scene.” Hoping to eschew the traditional values of their parents and grandparents, many people coming of age in the 1920s worked to develop their unique way of life, one completely different than what was happening before the war. For instance, new forms of mass culture, like jazz, became accessible to peoples across the country through both print materials and new radio stations and affordable recordings. According to historian Anthony Harkin, “by the end of 1922, 510 radio stations were broadcasting in the United States (89 in the South), and radio sales rose so dramatically in this decade (nearly fifteen-fold) that, by some estimates, nearly a third of the homes in America had radio by 1929 (and two-thirds of homes by 1933).” Music offered people a release from everyday life and filled the background of 1920’s revelry. A rural American far removed from places like New York and Chicago could become a part of the roaring 1920s by playing a record in their living room. Musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, and Bessie Smith and clubs such the Cotton Club, the Stork Club, and Connie’s Tavern became famous with people across the nation and served as symbols of the times to those living outside the urban centers. For example, in 1919 even rural Guildford College in North Carolina had its “Guildford

---

725 Fass, 6.
Jazz band and red hot African burlesque.” Similarly, when the “Old Hickory Division,” who had just returned from service in France, put on a “minstrel show” in Brevard their “excellent jazz music…was much enjoyed by the local jazz fans.”

This mentality also influenced America’s social hierarchy, and a new type of elite celebrity emerged. Novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald along with his wife Zelda, a writer and artist in her right as well as a genuine southern belle from Montgomery, Alabama, were perhaps the best symbols of the white, Jazz-Age elite. Both were also frequent tourists in western North Carolina and Zelda lived in the region for health reasons beginning in 1936 until her death ten years later. Zelda influenced how many young women, sometimes called “flappers,” modeled their lives. Historian Joshua Zeitz goes even argues she was the “archetype of the 1920s flapper.” Zelda showed how an elite southern woman could combine being a southern belle with the Jazz Age. In fact, she was the epitome of the elite southern woman so long lauded in the nation coming from a prominent Montgomery, Alabama family. In a 1923 interview that appeared in countless US papers about Zelda modeling his “flapper heroines,” F. Scott specifically credited her southern background as significant part of her charm. Although Zelda was a debutante by birth, her antics marked her as different from the young ladies of her mother’s generation. When she left town, her local paper sarcastically wrote, “hurry back to Montgomery…country club is intending firing the chaperone as there is no further need for her.” Together, the Fitzgeralds’ lifestyle and their artistic productions set the stage for a new type of elite America; one western North Carolina would hope to entice to the region.

727 Guilfordian, April 02, 1919.  
728 Brevard News, July 18, 1919.  
729 Zeitz, 24.  
730 Baltimore Sun, October 7, 1923.  
731 Ibid.
Modernity as a Cornerstone of 1920’s Promotion

This task seemed to fall to County Commissioner Edgar M. Lyda who was responsible for many of the initiatives Asheville’s elite citizens promoted during the 1920s to make the city modern and inviting to these types of tourists. A modern gentleman himself, Lyda understood the needs and wants of the new tourist base who looked to people like the Fitzgerald’s as models for their lives. For instance, Lyda was early to recognize that elite motorists would only continue to grow their tourist base as automobiles and travel became embedded within Jazz Age culture. In fact, the fast-paced and vibrant nature of car culture became significant on the work of Jazz Age artists like Fitzgerald. In *The Great Gatsby* Fitzgerald wrote how Gatsby’s car served as a symbol of his newfound elite status and how Gatsby understood and utilized it to his benefit: “He was balancing himself against his car…I’d seen it. Everybody had seen it. It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphent hat-boxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of wind-shields that mirrored a dozen suns.”

As a response to car culture, Lyda worked to demonstrate that the region had modernized its transportation and could easily accommodate tourists from across the nation. This utilization of growing local infrastructure, although very much a response to the era, followed almost the exact method enacted by the Lyda’s Gilded Age counterparts. Similarly, boosters’ emphasis on modern transportation was important to tourism because it allowed guests a means to view the rural scenery. To help disseminate the ease of travel throughout western North Carolina’s celebrated landscape, Lyda personally escorted Alice Bradley, the cooking editor of the *Woman’s Home Companion*, and a representative of the American Home Economics

---

Association, “to the top of Sunset Mountain” in his car.733 Their destination took them through one of the region’s most elite neighborhoods to date, Grove Park, and showed the ease with which tourists could go from urban to rural in a short car ride. Bradley was impressed with the “splendid roads” and “attractive city” she saw during their outing.734 Lyda also helped arrange Asheville’s participation in a “big Motorcade from New Orleans to Quebec and Montreal” in 1927, a huge boon to regional tourism as it showed people just how accessible the western North Carolina was to any modern motorist.735

If making the region attractive to motorists was a must for any 1920s marketing plan, boosters like Lyda also had to make clear why tourists should choose Western North Carolina rather than another vacation spot. If the post-Reconstruction Era witnessed a flurry of modern infrastructure building, so too did the post WWI period as in both cases boosters and businessmen hoped to develop modern and trendy structures within urban centers as an inducement for people coming into the region. This modernity was meant to pair with the celebrated scenery as tourists could step back in time in the wilderness, but then have comfortable and beautiful amenities in the cities. Thomas Wolfe captured Asheville 1920s building boom in his novel You Can’t go Home Again:

On all sides he heard talk, talk, talk – terrific and incessant. And the tumult of voices was united in variations of a single chorus – speculation and real estate…The real estate man was everywhere. Their motors and buses roared through the streets of the town and out into the country carrying crowds of perspective clients…Everyone bought real estate; and everyone was a real estate man” either in name or in practice.736

734 Ibid.
736 Thomas Wolfe, You Can’t go Home Again (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940), 110-111.
The building boom was the result of another period of rapid growth as Asheville’s population almost doubled during the 1920s from 28,000 to approximately 50,000.\textsuperscript{737} Citizens of Asheville worked to promote the city as a thriving and developing city, and a larger population helped demonstrate Asheville’s progress. The 1930 directory indicated that Asheville was the “commercial center of Western North Carolina” and that this part of the region had “increased greatly during the past decade in industrial prosperity, in commercial activity and in the amount of annual tourist trade which is an important factor in the wealth of the section.”\textsuperscript{738} The directory also let readers know that “since 1900 the value of manufactured products in Buncombe County has increased from $3,000,000 to more than $36,000,000.”\textsuperscript{739}

Again, just like in the previous generation, one way many of Asheville’s elite responded the Jazz Age by rebuilding their downtown as a visual representation of success and modernity. The luxury hotels and ostentatious homes boasting the styles of Gilded Age architecture and the arts and crafts styling of the Progressive Era were updated to reflect the new progress of the time. City leaders, like Lyda, wholeheartedly supported the growth of Asheville’s infrastructure and invested in civic buildings as well. In all, the 1920s witnessed 65 new commercial and public buildings in Asheville.\textsuperscript{740}

Douglas Ellington became Asheville’s most preeminent architect in the 1920s, and his style would come to define the city. During the 1920s alone Ellington designed and oversaw the construction of eight public buildings in Asheville, all executed in his signature art deco style, including the First Baptist Church (1925-1927), the Asheville City Building (1926-1928), the

\textsuperscript{738} Ernest H. Miller, \textit{Miller’s Asheville, North Carolina City Directory} (Commercial Service Co.: 1930).
\textsuperscript{739} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{740} Chase, 91.
Merrimon Avenue Fire Station (1927), the Park Avenue School Additions (1927), the Lewis Memorial Park Cemetery Office (1927), Lee H. Edwards High School (1929), S&W Cafeteria (1929-1930), and the Biltmore Hospital Extension (1929-1930). Naturally, with such modern and attractive building being built, boosters made sure to promote them in photographs and postcards, like those of Asheville High School and S&W Cafeteria.\(^741\) Ellington understood the importance of designing Asheville as a tourist town and his styles represented this aspect of the city well, such as the S&W Cafeteria’s “note of gaiety” which he explained was intended to convey a sense of Asheville by being “in keeping with the life of the community itself where recreation is an important activity.”\(^742\) Because Ellington worked at the forefront of the design field, Asheville was setting architectural trends rather than just following them. Ellington explained how the S&W Cafeteria’s design “embrace[d] many innovations in points of plan and use of materials, uses and shades of color, and other matters of proportion and detail.”\(^743\)

Although all of Ellington’s projects helped modernize the city and were important to regional promotion, arguably his greatest contribution was the City Building.\(^744\) Because this building was meant to represent the city itself, Ellington worked hard to make sure that the Asheville City Building brought together the modernity of downtown with the region’s celebrated geography. Ellington’s design displayed the “evolution of the desire that the contours of the building reflect the mountain background…” with modern conveniences with “such as elevators, lighting fixtures, metal partitions and similar items…designed with harmony in


\(^{742}\) Asheville Citizen Times, July 15, 1929.

\(^{743}\) Ibid.

The region’s boosters praised how the City Building embraced “originality in architecture” but was not “merely a revolt against tradition,” but rather embraced “what nature had done here and what man had added to it.”

**Tourism Embraces the Past**

If Ellington was one of the most influential and most famous architects working in Asheville in the 1920s, he did not redesign Asheville alone and art deco was not the only style used in Asheville’s new architecture. In fact, many of the city’s civic elite feared that Ellington’s designs were too modern and could damage Asheville’s image by diminishing its traditions. This reaction to Ellington’s modern designs reflected the second response to World War One as many citizens, especially in the South, embraced traditional American folkways as their escape from the conflict. The conflict between old/new became important to regional branding because the region could easily boast an elite past and no longer saw the need to continue modernizing despite its long time usage as a means to promote tourism. The appeal of “moonlights and magnolias” culture was creating a national interest in the South as a whole, and these boosters felt the region should focus firmly on history to attract elite tourists.

Conflicts over building style reflected differences in opinion as how Asheville looked influenced the type of campaign boosters could undergo. For instance, when the county was looking for a design for its new courthouse, the County Building, Ellington was at the top of the list of potential architects. Because Ellington was already working on the Asheville City

---

745 *Asheville Citizen Times*, July 15, 1929.
Building, which was next to the proposed County building, his design would join the two architecturally. This plan followed the idea originally established by the same county and city leaders who hoped to create “twin buildings” with the “City building to be erected on the Southeast corner of said property, the County building on the Northeast corner.”748

However, because Ellington and his designs embraced, many other boosters and businessmen felt that his buildings detracted from the region’s southern, elite reputation, what they hoped to stress within 1920’s tourism. This same group had opposed Ellington’s work on the City Building from the start and cautioned the city that “in our opinion” Ellington’s involvement would “lead to the utter ruin of the entire project.”749 Adding to the dispute was Ellington’s belief that he had been employed to create both projects and he even prepared sketches for the county.750 In 1926 Ellington even promised, “a plaster model of the entire project” to better demonstrate how his designs worked in conjunction with one another.751

Yet that same year, local architect Ronald Greene thought the importance the City Building and courthouse so crucial for the city and county’s national image he suggested that the county commissioners employ two different architects to complete the projects. The first, he cautioned in a 1926 letter, should be a “local man because of his knowledge of labor and material conditions and the technical assistance he can give.”752 And the “second selection of the outside architect because, being in positions of public trust the retaining of an architect that has been

---

748 “Joint Meeting of City and County Commissioners in re Court House and City Hall Grounds, etc.,” July 6, 1926, Edgar M. Lyda Collection, D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.
751 Letter from Douglas D. Ellington to the Commissioners of Buncombe County, November 4, 1926. Edgar M. Lyda Collection, D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.
752 Letter from Ronald Greene to the Commissioners of Buncombe County, December 9, 1926. Edgar M. Lyda Collection, D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.
tried and proved worthy on many of the nation’s most important buildings, to guide your local architect and strengthen his work, you will be acting with a praiseworthy caution that cannot be criticized.\textsuperscript{753} Although Greene’s letter might have appeared as a bid for himself to be included in the project, it also emphasizes that the building was expected to meet national expectations and in some way respond to the paradoxical promotion so often a part of regional development and advertising.

To make sure that they were keeping up with national trends, the commissioners responsible for the project corresponded with other cities and even traveled the nation viewing other courthouses. When Henry Bannon, chairman of the Portsmouth Ohio Courthouse Building Commission, learned that Asheville was considering their design, he wrote a letter to Lyda detailing their project. Bannon’s letter mentioned the classical styling of the exterior, with “columns on the front of the main entrance,” and an interior with “eight murals.”\textsuperscript{754} The murals were “classical in design and emblematic” of Portsmouth’s history.\textsuperscript{755}

Ultimately, architectural firm, Milburn-Heister & Co., were engaged in building the courthouse because they worked in the more classical style. This created building that were not twins but opposites, one being modern and the other traditional.\textsuperscript{756} Although the official reason behind Ellington’s rejection was not made public, it seems to relate to the symbolism that county commissioners wished their new courthouse to suggest. Ellington was an architect whose work spoke of Asheville’s modernity, an important part of maintaining elite status, but he did little to incorporate the city’s historical memory into his designs. The Portsmouth courthouse and its

\textsuperscript{753} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{754} Letter from Henry Bannon to Edgar M. Lyda, October 8, 1926, Edgar M. Lyda Collection, D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.
\textsuperscript{755} Ibid.
very deliberate use of classical styling and even historical murals as a means to capture that city’s long history shed light on why the county commissioners might have gone with what ultimately was much more traditional design for the Buncombe County Courthouse. The new courthouse utilized its classical allusions to remind people of the county’s past. Milburn, Heister & Company understood the aims of the new building and wrote Lyda in 1927 saying “we found the style universally used for this type of building was the Classic and we have found, through years of experience that that style has been unvarying in its success and pleasing results… we therefore have used a development of that style in modified form for the County Building.”

The Rhododendron Festival

Once boosters had worked on developing local infrastructure, they then turned their attention to creating events that helped highlight it and their people. The Rhododendron Festival began in 1928 and was meant to display the region’s elite heritage with a fusing of the region’s celebrated landscape and its history of elitism. The similarities between the Gilded Age branding campaign and the festival promotions were not a coincidence as boosters, comprised of “leaders in civic and business circles of the city,” modeled the festival off old practices understanding that it was the region’s nostalgia that potential guests most wanted. John D. Topping, publicity director for the Asheville Chamber of Commerce and one of the most important organizers of the event, reminded the nation that the festival “dates back beyond the present phase of its presentation to the early part of the century when each year in mid-summer there was held at the Old Battery Park Hotel…what was known as the Rhododendron Ball.”

Boosters’ drew from this former elite function to promote the current event, and when it began in

758 “Radio Network To Broadcast Festival Ball,” Asheville Citizen Times, May 26, 1935.

217
1928, the festival was described as an “artistic representation of the life and beauty of this region” and was ranked “among the high-class civic entertainments in the country.”

The Role of Debutante Culture in the Rhododendron Festival

Although the event was at first glance meant to highlight the region’s scenery, how it got its name, it was also a promotion of the region’s elite citizens as a way to foster luxury tourism, why organizers based it off a ball. In fact, the symbolism the event evoked, British Aristocratic and Southern Planter, were the same two components embedded in Gilded Age promotions and continued to be important for regional branding as they helped validate the region’s elite history and citizens. Although the event originated at the tail end of the roaring 1920s, it eschewed Jazz Age mentality to focus on the moonlights and magnolias South so popular with some Americans. At the center of the festival was debutante culture, a new fad in an America looking to older folkways as an escape from modernity. An article from 1929 displayed this escapist attitude when it showed how that season’s Atlanta debutantes were “wearing old-fashioned costumes” rather than new trends at their debuts. For boosters, debutante culture not only offered their tourists a type of escapism but also highlighted the region’s elite past and their place within it. Through debutante culture Asheville’s boosters continued to develop social connections among the South’s wealthiest and most prestigious peoples, thus making the region suitable for these people to vacation within. To this end, an announcement for Asheville’s Junior League Debutante Ball in 1933 asked readers to “return to

a tradition of the old south when society life was never limited to cliques and to one community, but embraced the ‘best people’ of a state, even a section.”

One reason why it was important to promote an image of a refined citizenry in western North Carolina despite years of high-end social connections was the continuation of hillbilly stereotypes that denigrated the area and its people. Local boosters used debutante imagery to counter a negative portrayal of Appalachian women; something that could seriously damage elite tourism as the region was dependent on their reputation for suitable female hostesses to entertain guests during their stay. Al Capp’s Li’l Abner comic strip, popular during the height of the Rhododendron Festival, displayed the types of stereotypes connected to Appalachia women during this period. In comics reached a wide audience and “by early 1930s, American comics had become a national institution.” Abner’s mother, Mammy Yokum, drawn smoking a corncob pipe, barefoot, wearing rags and a nineteenth-century bonnet, was an example of the old-before-her-time Appalachian woman. Mammy Yokum also defied traditional gender roles. She is outspoken, opinionated, violent, and clearly the head of the household. Daisy Mae, Abner’s neighbor, was depicted as a beautiful yet backward and ignorant young woman. Daisy Mae pines for Abner throughout the series drawing off the romantic as well as overly sexualized trope often applied to “uncivilized” Appalachian girls. These portrayals of Appalachian women, although clearly negative, would have been easy for Appalachian elites to dismiss. Mammy Yokum and Daisey Mae were poor, isolated, and uncouth. They shared few characteristics of elite Appalachian women.

---

762 “Miss Jane Raoul Extended Invitation To Attend Terpsichorean Club Ball,” Atlanta Constitution, August 23, 1933.
764 Ibid.
Perhaps more troubling to the elites of Appalachia was Abner’s aunt. In the first weeks of the comic in 1934, readers are told, “meet Li’l Abner’s Aunt, the Duchess of Bopshire who forgets to remember when she was Bessie Hunks of Dogpatch, Kentucky.”765 The Duchess and Mammy Yokum at first seem to be opposites within the comic and could serve as the perfect example of the paradoxes boosters promoted about the region. However, although the Duchess is a beautiful, sophisticated woman of means, the comic’s message becomes clear--she is a fraud. She cannot ever really be part of the elite society in which she lives; she is still a hillbilly. Mammy Yokum serves to point this out when they see each other for the first time in twenty years. When the Duchess, failing to recognize her sister, asks, “What do you wish, my good woman? I am the Duchess of Bopshire!,” Mammy Yokum responds “Yo’ hain’t nuthin’ but Bessie hunks to me! I’m yo’ sister Pansy!”766 This type of message could do much to undermine regional branding because if refuted the paradoxical image of western North Carolina for the rural, backward one. Due to this type of media attention, boosters still had to work hard to promote an elite version of the region because luxury tourism needed this aspect to be viable.

Luckily their long-term work paid off. By creating a promotional ploy which did not work to eliminate the hillbilly image, but show it in relation to another side of the region, boosters and businessmen could reap the benefits of the region’s hillbilly and wilderness publicity but still promote it as a perfect destination for high-end leisure. The Rhododendron Festival became the perfect vehicle for this promotion. In 1931 western North Carolina’s Rhododendron Queen, Kate Jones, captured the idea of the festival when she spoke to the nation via radio:

765 *Li’l Abner*, August 22, 1934.
766 *Li’l Abner*, October 9, 1934.
I esteem it a great privilege to be chosen to rule over this fanciful realm of Rhododendron, an empire known everywhere as the Land of the Sky, where the rhododendron blooms so profusely. This festival ushers in the summer season, mornings bright and sparkling, and evenings cool and pleasant with a distinctive dewy beauty… In such an environment we are again staging our spectacular Rhododendron Festival. It will present to our visitors and to our own people as well, another opportunity of inviting their soul in witness of the perfect beauty of our mountain flowers, the soft and alluring atmosphere of our delightful climate, and the mystical appeal of our tender mountains.767

Although organizers always made the wilderness a part of the festival itinerary with “thirty-six official tours through the blooming areas of Western North Carolina” offered the first year, it was only the stage for the festival’s most important status symbol, themselves.768 The festival’s “royal court” was central to their goals of attracting an elite clientele and promoting the region’s luxury tourism because they served as the festival’s hosts and hostesses.769 Being a good host or hostess was still central to high society and Emily Post, the preeminent authority on all things “Best Society,” made this clear in 1922 when she wrote, “the hostess of great wealth, who constantly and lavishly entertains, will shine.”770 The Rhododendron Festival became the means for western North Carolinians to lavishly entertain and therefore shine in the face of many negative views about the region and its people. By promoting a group that was simultaneously aristocratic, antebellum, and racially pure, festival organizers showed the world that they had a history of elitism that tied them into mainstream high society, thus making it the perfect spot for their counterparts to visit each summer.

767 “W.N.C. Becomes Principality of Beauty and Mirth,” June 1931.
768 “Rhododendron Tours,” N.C. Asheville- Rhododendron Festival, 1928; “This Week in the ‘Land of the Sky’ Asheville and Western North Carolina, Official Program 13th Annual Rhododendron Festival June 16th through 22nd,” Asheville Chamber of Commerce, 1940.
769 King (James Mason Westall), Queen (Stuart Hensley), and Court on the steps of the Battery Park Hotel, Rhododendron Festival 1940, 1940, B432-8, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina.
To accomplish this goal, the royal court “follow[ed] the lines of a monarchy.” At the head was The Rhododendron Brigade of Guards, a men’s club comprised of prominent local citizens, many of who also served on the Chamber of Commerce, whose positions within the kingdom fell “within three orders of knights.” The brigade made up the festival’s organizers, and they operated through a college of heralds, “similar to the traditional British College of Heralds.” The brigade introduced aristocratic and elite symbols such as “the original arms and standards” of the Royal Court and the Coronation Ball. They were also responsible for making sure the royal court followed proper etiquette by “governing the form, usage, and custom” of all aspects of the festival.

In addition to the Brigade, a King and Queen of Rhododendron, “members of the Asheville younger set,” served as the public faces of the festival. The Queen and King became representations of the region’s elite class and were meant to epitomize southern womanhood and manhood. Specifically, the Queen was meant to approximate a debutante, a position relating directly to aristocratic and planter heritage. Because debutante imagery was growing across the nation at this time, the Queen did much to further the region’s high-end brand as she became a useful advertising tool as viewers easily understood what she was meant to represent. Throughout the 1920s, ads used the debutante to represent any elite woman. For instance, advertisers within women’s magazines like *Ladies’ Home Journal*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, and *Vogue* used debutante imagery because she conjured the ideal of the refined young lady. For example, “How the Society Women, the Debutante, Meets the Demands of Daily Modern Life,”

---

772 Ibid.
773 Ibid.
774 Ibid.
775 Ibid.
776 “This Week in the ‘Land of the Sky’ Asheville and Western North Carolina, Official Program 13th Annual Rhododendron Festival June 16th through 22*nd.*” Asheville Chamber of Commerce, 1940.
published in 1925 for Kotex sanitary napkins, asked its readers to consider “a luncheon, a lecture, a dinner, the opera” for “thousands of women, whose lives direct the social calendar.” The debutante was a wise choice for these companies because she was an ideal for which women could aspire. It is no wonder that the festival’s organizers turned to the debutante as the model for their queen because not only was her position already well-known across the nation but a legitimate part of the region’s history of high-end tourism.

Because the Queen’s position was central to festival goals, and she was meant to show the world a refined western North Carolina, organizers made careful considerations when deciding who would serve each year. The Queen was expected to be beautiful, have a good lineage, and be “prominent in Asheville social circles.” Festival publications went to great lengths to advertise these qualities, and in 1929 they let people know it was Daphne Brown’s “beauty and grace [that] recommended her for the position of festival queen.” Similarly, the 1933 queen, Miss Martha Morrison, was an “active member of the Asheville Junior League” and a “member of one of the oldest families in this section.” She was also a “graduate of Fassifern School, Hendersonville, and the National Cathedral School, Washington, D.C.” Miss Elvira Bryson, the 1937 queen, was described as a “member of a prominent family,” and a member of the Junior League. The 1938 queen, Miss Evelyn Radeker was a debutante in “Washington D.C.”, “a member of the Junior League,” and a former Miss Asheville. The characteristics

781 Ibid.
782 “King and Queen Chosen for Rhododendron Fete.” Asheville Citizen Times. May 23, 1937.
783 “King and Queen of 1938 Festival.” Asheville Citizen Times. May 8, 1938.
which organizers shared about their Queens were the same that comprised elite women everywhere.

To share their debutantes even more with the nation, organizers sent out multiple photographs of each years’ Queen were in official festival promotions. These photos helped boosters bring together paradoxical branding as festival organizers worked hard to show the Queen both in her fanciful position as well as her everyday life. The photos of the Queen in her full festival costume, like those below, did much to spread the idea of the region as an aristocratic locale with their nobility as participants spared no expense in creating their realistic and sumptuous gowns, pictured below.\footnote{Untitled photograph of Miss Stuart Hensley, Queen of the 13th annual Rhododendron Festival (1940), 1940, I323-8, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville. Untitled photograph of Miss Stuart Hensley, Queen of the 13th annual Rhododendron Festival (1940), 1940, I324-8, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina.} These types of promotional materials were important in creating an aristocratic image of western North Carolina as one even ran in the \textit{New York Times} on June 9, 1940.\footnote{\textit{New York Times}, June 9, 1940.} If it was important for organizers to spread an image of the region’s elite past, they also wanted to make sure that guests understood that the Queens were real, modern women who were keeping pace with the rest of the nation. Therefore, photographs of the Queens outside of costume were also a feature in festival promotions.\footnote{Untitled portrait of Miss Pauline Bourne, 1941, I369-5, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville. Untitled photograph of Miss Pauline Bourne debarking a Pennsylvania-Central Airlines plane, 1941, I338-8, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina.}

Equally important to festival organizers was choosing a King who could represent Appalachian manhood. If the Queen was meant to approximate a southern debutante, the King was meant to be the perfect southern gentleman. This persona needed to be a clear and convincing rebuke of hillbilly characters, like L’il Abner and Snuffy Smith, so well-known across the nation at the time. To stand in contrast to these ill-bred and ne’er-do-well men, the
King was expected to have good breeding, education, and gainful employment, all characteristics of an elite man anywhere across the country. For instance, in 1933 King Robert Kenley Richbourg was an assistant manager at his family’s auto dealership, Richbourg Motor Company, a “graduate of Citadel” with a “second lieutenant’s commission…in the reserve Officer’s training corps,” and a member of the local Kiwanis club. The 1937 King, Frank M. Parker, was identified as “prominent in the younger social circles…” as a “member of one of Asheville’s oldest families..” and with a father who was “one of the city’s most prominent citizens.”

1938’s King, Herman Nichols was described as a graduate of the University of North Carolina where he was in “Beta Theta Pi, social fraternity.” Just like with the Queens, the festival Kings were also depicted in promotional photographs them in and out of costume.

Promotional images also circulated showing the Queens and Kings together, such as those below. By displaying educated, refined, and wealthy young women and men, with an emphasis on both the region’s past and its present, boosters showed the region’s suitability to similar guests and reinforced its position as a luxury vacation destination.

However, it was not enough for organizers to just show an elite, local population. They also wanted to highlight the region’s connection to southern culture and society in general. Social and business connections had long helped develop the region’s wealth and position and

---

787 “Royalty for Annual Fete Here Chosen,” *Asheville Citizen Times*, June 28, 1933.
788 “King and Queen Chosen for Rhododendron Fete,” *Asheville Citizen Times*, May 23, 1937.
789 “King and Queen of 1938 Festival,” *Asheville Citizen Times*, May 8, 1938.
791 Untitled portrait of King (Herman Gudger Nichols) and Queen (Miss Evelyn Elizabeth "Betty" Radeker; Mrs. Logan Robertson) of the 11th Annual Rhododendron Festival, 1938, I317-5, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina; Untitled photograph of King, James Mason Westall, and Queen, Miss Stuart Hensley, of the 13th annual Rhododendron Festival dancing at an indoor festival function, 1940, I321-5, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina.
were foundational to post-Civil War promotions. These relationships had helped spark high-end tourism once, and boosters hoped to highlight them once again to do the same. With this in mind, all southern states were invited to participate in the festival with “state sponsors” comprised of their deserving young women serving as the Queen’s ladies in waiting, pictured below at the Biltmore estate.792

This practice of having out of town guests paralleled a similar practice of visiting debutantes at balls and added to the festival’s debutante essence. For instance, North Carolina’s first official debutante ball, the Terpsichorean Club Debutante Ball in Raleigh, began in 1927. Although the state capital was the location of the ball, it was a statewide event with “groups from other North Carolina cities.”793 Asheville alone had twelve debutantes attend in 1933.794 Of particular note among Asheville’s debutantes that year was Miss Jane Raoul, daughter of local booster and business owner Thomas Raoul. Miss Raoul could boast family connections to Atlanta, arguably the center of the southern high society, in her grandmother, Mrs. W.G. Raoul, “a prominent Atlanta woman.”795 The debutante ball, like most across the south, often included “visiting belles” from other states.796 That was the case in 1941 when Helen McDuffie represented Atlanta at the ball, “her appearance,” according to the Atlanta Constitution, would “bring genuine pleasure to her many admirers there.”797 State sponsors and the promotional images and accounts that boosters circulated of them became powerful advertisements of the

793 “Miss Jane Raoul Extended Invitation To Attend Terpsichorean Club Bat,” The Atlanta Constitution, August 23, 1933.
794 Ibid.
795 Ibid.
796 Ibid.
region’s elite. Sponsors made the festival “an all-Southern social event” rather than just an Appalachian one.\textsuperscript{798}

In most cases, the state’s governor chose the sponsors directly for “their beauty, charm and grace” expecting them to be “in every sense representative of their particular States.”\textsuperscript{799} Like the Queen, sponsors were expected to serve as “typical representations of the young womanhood of the South,” at least that of the typical upper-class woman.\textsuperscript{800} Strict rules ensured that sponsors adhered to this image and they were required to have both a personal chaperone, in most cases their mothers, as well as an assigned member of the Royal Brigade of Guards who met sponsors at the train station and served as a their “date” at all social functions.\textsuperscript{801} A sponsor’s reputation was important not only to the festival’s image but their state’s as well. \textit{The Atlanta Constitution} made potential sponsors understand that the “Rhododendron Festival is an event sponsored by many of the leading people of the country” and that they were to “hold [their] own with the beauties of other states” and “reflect additional luster to the reputation won by Georgia girls in other contests.”\textsuperscript{802} They were clear that this event should not be confused with a “‘bathing beauty’ contest or other contests of that character.”\textsuperscript{803}

Part of their reputation was showing the nation that they were maintaining elite standards and as part of their overall status, beauty, and lineage, the “sponsor for each state [was] selected from among girls who [were] students at principal universities of the South” where they received

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{798} “The Rhododendron Festival,” \textit{Asheville Citizen Times}, June 12, 1932.
\textsuperscript{799} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{800} “This Week in the Land of the Sky,” (Asheville: Miller Press, June 12 to June 27, 1931).
\textsuperscript{803} Ibid.
Typically this was the winning of a pageant title, as was the case of the 1934 Miss Louisiana who was a “member of the beauty section and queen of Atlanteans at the Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans.”

Although pageant titles were the most common, other honors were also accepted, such as when “Miss Kentucky, Miss Jean Dawson…a senior at the University of Kentucky…was elected colonel of the R.O.T.C. of the university.”

The important thing was for the state sponsors to bring an air of exclusivity to the festival and show the region’s large social connections with the South’s best citizens.

To foster these social networks, a major part of what made the region attractive for luxury tourism, the Queen, King, Brigade and sponsors fulfilled roles as hosts and guests during festival events, and images circulated showing them together such as below a lunch at the Grove Park Inn in 1940 and a scenic flight over wild rhododendron patches in 1941.

This duty kept them busy as the itinerary was packed with social events, the most important of which were the myriad of balls and pageants which added to the festival’s program and most resembled debutante culture. For instance, the Military Ball, sponsored by the Royal Brigade of Guards, officially opened the festival on the evening of the second day, and many smaller balls, such as the Carnival Night Ball, “a fancy-dress affair,” The Jester’s Ball, and the Sponsor’s Ball, occurred throughout the festival.

Because the festival became foundational for reinforcing the region’s connection with elite history, especially that of the British Aristocracy and the antebellum south, the balls, and parties associated with it took on new importance as they were meant to conjure these
associations. Obviously, the court visually most resembled a medieval kingdom, but it also incorporated clearly antebellum symbols as well. For instance, 1935’s coronation witnessed “small Nubian slaves… [enter] and [approach] the throne with gifts in the form of representative products of the provinces: cotton, oranges, peaches, sugar cane, etc.” Moreover, when “several hundred talented Negro singers” opened the 1940 festival with “a program of Negro spirituals” few guests would misunderstand or fail to enjoy the connections festival organizers were drawing to the antebellum south and their place within its social hierarchies.

The most lavish of the balls and pageants was the coronation of the King and Queen where “approximately 1000 costumed folk dancers welcomed the new Royals.” The pageant was held right before the coronation ball and “portray[ed] many scenes of mystical and fantastic character,” a few are pictured below. Local boosters took an active role in this event and in 1933 “John M. Geary, president of the Chamber of Commerce, was named cardinal, his highest duty being to crown the king and queen at the coronation of royalty, one of the major events of the festival.” During the coronation, local citizens assumed roles typical within a kingdom and enacted the crowning of the Royals while sponsors were “costumed to represent the State flower of her respective Commonwealth.” The coronation became a significant part of regional promotion, and multiple photographs were taken to document the event and the citizens involved in it, such as the 1941 rehearsal in the Biltmore Estate Gardens, circulated widely in

809 Ibid.
810 “IN MIDSOUTH: Asheville Celebrates The Rhododendron.” Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES, June 16, 1940.
813 “Royalty for Annual Fete Here Chosen.” The Asheville Citizen Times, June 28, 1933.
images.\textsuperscript{815} The local paper made sure to not only share a detailed photographs and descriptions of the rehearsal but also point out leading citizens who were taking part, including Frank Coxe, son of Gilded Age developer Franklin Coxe, who served as Cardinal.\textsuperscript{816} Photos and their accompanying articles did much to reinforce western North Carolina’s elite side and encourage people to participate in the festival.

The Rhododendron Ball, the largest and most luxurious of all the festival’s balls, followed the coronation and marked the presentation of the state sponsors to the King and Queen of Rhododendron, also circulated in images.\textsuperscript{817} If the coronation evoked the festival’s medieval themes, the pageant harkened a typical debutante ball with state sponsors presented to the King and Queen in white gowns. Regardless of what elite symbols organizers utilized during different parts of the festival, the coronation and the coronation ball were considered the “most important social gathering of the festival program” and added greatly to its success and the image of an elite western North Carolina.\textsuperscript{818}

The Rhododendron Festival was a success from 1928 until 1942 when the looming conflict in Europe forced organizers to cancel the event. During its heyday, \textit{The Chicago Tribune} observed that “many visitors from Chicago and vicinity attend the festival each year…” and the following year \textit{The Washington Post} estimated that “over 50,000 persons are expected to attend the spectacle.”\textsuperscript{819} This demand was not an outlier as interest in the festival was so widespread in 1937 that the Asheville Chamber of Commerce’s first printing of 20,000

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{816} \textit{Asheville Citizen Times}, June 6, 1941.
\textsuperscript{817} Chase, 125; Untitled photograph of the Coronation Ball, 1940 or 1941, I414-8, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina.
\end{flushleft}
informational booklets was not enough to meet demand. The festival experienced such growth by 1932, one of the lowest points of the Depression, L. R. Phillips, Chairman of the Jester’s Revel part of the event, predicted that “the celebration is destined to become one of the greatest civic fetes in America” and would, in fact, become “an even greater event” than Mardi Gras.

**Conclusion**

The Rhododendron Festival never became greater than Mardi Gras even while it lasted, but it did serve as a significant part of pre-war tourism in Western North Carolina and helped the region in some part continue their cycle of prosperity despite the Great Depression. It was the flexibility of local branding that helped this event and other promotional ploys become so successful. Although the erection and promotion of modernist architecture and a revamping of the local infrastructure seemed opposed to the simultaneous development and promotion of the nostalgic Rhododendron Festival, the success of these seemingly opposed developments was a testament to the lasting impact of a post-Reconstruction branding campaign that embraced both continuity and change.

When Franklin Cox helped negotiate the completion of the Western North Carolina Railroad in 1880, he did more than just add the most modern type of transportation to the region; he also initiated the start of a new branding campaign. The railroad allowed boosters and businessmen the base on which to build a new modern infrastructure and in turn reestablish their luxury tourist market, a staple since the antebellum period. Tourism was part of a cycle of prosperity as it spurred economic growth, economic growth spurred regional improvements, and regional improvements spurred luxury tourism. Antebellum tourism was important to the region

---

821 *Asheville Citizen Times*, June 19, 1932.
because it both added to the region’s financial stability and helped tie its elite citizens enter into the planter south. When the Civil War and Reconstruction disrupted these economic, social, and political connections, the region’s upper class lost a significant part of their wellbeing. Therefore, it was vital that they find a means to once again entice the nation’s upper crust to western North Carolina.

Luckily, they had both the former planter elite to draw off of as well as a new elite class of wealthy Americans who developed as a result of the growing industrialization and consumerism of the Gilded Age. Comprised of both the old Knickerbocker class of New York and the Nouveau Riche who grew wealthy after the Civil War, America’s Gilded Age elites looked to symbols to mark them as upper class in a time of economic and social turmoil. The two most popular were British Aristocratic and planter south. Whereas much of planter society was based on lineage, the Gilded Age was based on consumption and even status could be bought. Western North Carolina’s boosters and businessmen capitalized off this new American mentality and began selling luxury tourism embedded with both British and Southern themes.

Because America’s elite expected luxury, modernity became a staple of the region’s branding as boosters worked hard to show that the media’s portrayal of an isolated and backward Appalachia was only partially true. By promoting modern transportation, new architecture and infrastructure, and refined and respectable citizens, western North Carolina showed the Gilded Age upper class that they would be comfortable and entertained while visiting. In addition, the region’s luxury hotels, like White Sulphur Springs, Battery Park, and The Manor, advertised their amenities, comfort, and suitability for any elite American.

However, it was not enough o just have urban centers and high society, America’s elites had to choose western North Carolina over other destinations which offered the same luxuries.
This was where paradoxical branding became vital to the success of Western North Carolina’s branding campaign and tourism as it was the region’s celebrated scenery which ultimately encouraged visitors. While boosters and businessmen worked to show an urbane, modern, and refined side of the region, they simultaneously promoted a rural, antiquated, and rustic side as well. Drawing off the popularity of a national media that promoted Appalachia as a region lost in time, boosters drew the upper crust by promising an almost voyeuristic experience where they could enjoy wilderness and hillbillies in a short car ride into the mountains, but still live their normal lives in the cities and towns.

The genius of this branding campaign was that it could adapt to any changes in the nation because it relied on inconsistency. When a self-conscious and active middle class began to mimic the purchasing habits of the elite class during the Progressive Era, local boosters and businessmen easily adapted their own branding to incorporate a new client base into luxury tourism and slightly less expensive options emerged for these slightly less wealthy citizens. Boosters and businessmen even began targeting specific groups and interests, such as white Protestants, and whole retreats like the Lake Junaluska Assembly were built to offer them vacations surrounded by like-minded peoples.

It was this variability that allowed for such an easy transition into the 1920s and ultimately helped preserve tourism during the Great Depression. By following the methods initialed generations earlier, almost down to the letter, after World War One boosters and businessmen promoted modern transportation, architecture, and citizenry while still lauded the region’s wilderness. This paradoxical branding set the stage for one of the region’s greatest cultural productions to date, the Rhododendron Festival. By highlighting western North Carolina’s natural beauty and its elite citizenry, the festival not only showed the nation that the
region truly was the Land of the Sky but also populated by a Royal Court, their very own Application Aristocrats.
References
"82,000 for a Monument to Vance," *The Washington Post*, June 08, 1896.


"Joint Meeting of City and County Commissioners in re Court House and City Hall Grounds, etc.," July 6, 1926, Edgar M. Lyda Collection, D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.


“Battery Park Hotel, Asheville, N. C,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 19, 1892.

“Battery Park Hotel, Asheville, N. C,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 19, 1892.

“Battery Park Hotel, Asheville, N. C.” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 19, 1892.


“Chosen King and Queen of 1934 Festival.” *Asheville Citizen Times.* 1934.


“Display Ad 1 -- No Title” *Daily American,* July 9, 1886.


“EN ROUTE FOR THE ADIRONDACKS: President Cleveland Entertained by Friends at Forks, N. Y,” *St. Louis Post,* August 11, 1885 Asheville Citizen, July 21, 1885.

“Excerpts from the Diary of a student at Asheville Female College,” April 23, 1893. Biltmore Estate Archives.

“Flower Festival Draws Throng to Asheville, N. C.” *Chicago Daily Tribune,* June 14, 1931


“GOOD ROAD TO RESORT: Project to Be Considered at Asheville Congress. OPEN MOUNTAINS TO AUTOS Highway Planned From Eastern Tennessee Point, Probably Knoxville, to Asheville and Thence Into South Carolina by Way of Howards Gap, to Connect With Atlanta-New York Road,” September 27, 1909.


“IN MIDSOUTH: Asheville Celebrates The Rhododendron.” *Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES,* June 16, 1940.

“IN MIDSOUTH: Sponsors Named for Asheville Fete.” *Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES,* May 22, 1938.
“IN SKYLAND: Among the Clouds and Mountain Peaks of Asheville, N. C.,” Atlanta Constitution, April 10, 1887.

“King and Queen Chosen for Rhododendron Fete,” Asheville Citizen Times, May 23, 1937.

“King and Queen of 1938 Festival,” Asheville Citizen Times, May 8, 1938.


“Miss Jane Raoul Extended Invitation To Attend Terpsichorean Club Ball,” Atlanta Constitution, August 23, 1933.


“Personal,” Atlanta Constitution, July 20, 1886.

“Radio Network To Broadcast Festival Ball,” Asheville Citizen Times, May 26, 1935.

“Resort Items,” Atlanta Constitution, September 2, 1883.

“REST OR PLEASURE: RESORTS WHERE EITHER MAY BE FOUND TO THE HEART’S CONTENT ARE ALL THE YEAR ROUND Summer or Winter in the Mountains or by the Sea- Suggestion From Southern Railways Exposition Display,” Nashville American, August 3, 1897.

“Rhododendron Tours,” *N. C. Asheville-Rhododendron Festival*, 1928 “This Week in the ‘Land of the Sky’ Asheville and Western North Carolina, Official Program 13th Annual Rhododendron Festival June 16th through 22,” Asheville Chamber of Commerce, 1940.

“Royalty for Annual Fete Here Chosen,” *Asheville Citizen Times*, June 28, 1933.


“Society’s Upheaval,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 14, 1894.


“Sponsors From Ten States of South in City,” *Asheville Citizen Times*. June 1934.


“THE MONUMENT TO VANCE,” *Sun*, April, 23, 1896.


“This Week in the ‘Land of the Sky’ Asheville and Western North Carolina, Official Program 13th Annual Rhododendron Festival June 16th through 22,” Asheville Chamber of Commerce, 1940.

“This Week in the Land of the Sky,”. Asheville: Miller Press, June 12 to June 27, 1931.


“W. N. C. Becomes Principality of Beauty and Mirth,” June 1931.

“Waynesville as Seen by Visitors,” *Waynesville Courier*, Friday, September 6, 1912.
“WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA: A Letter from the Land of the Sky in the Old North State,” Special Correspondence of Baltimore Sun, May 1, 1888.


1860 United States Federal Census.


“IN SKYLAND: Among the Clouds and Mountain Peaks of Asheville, N.  C,” Atlanta Constitution, April 10, 1887.


Arkansas Democrat, January 9, 1915.

Asheville Citizen Times, April 14, 1894.

Asheville Citizen Times, July 15, 1929.

Asheville Citizen Times, July 15, 1929.

Asheville Citizen Times, June 19, 1932.
Asheville Citizen Times, June 6, 1941.

Asheville Citizen Times, November 28, 1922.

Asheville Citizen Times, November 29, 1922.


Asheville Citizen, December 15, 1908.

Asheville Citizen, July 14, 1887.

Asheville Citizen, July 21, 1885.

Asheville Citizen, July 21, 1885.

Asheville Citizen, July 21, 1885.

Asheville Citizen, July 21, 1885.

Asheville Citizen, July 27, 1885.

Asheville Citizen, July 29, 1925.

Asheville Citizen, June 29, 1887.

Asheville Citizen, June 9, 1886.

Asheville Citizen, September 15, 1938.

Asheville Citizen. July 17, 1886.

Asheville Citizen-Times, April 13, 1920.

Asheville Citizen-Times, April 25, 1898.

Asheville Citizen-Times, April 29, 1919.

Asheville Citizen-Times, August 13, 1919.

Asheville Citizen-Times, August 17, 1920.

Asheville Citizen-Times, August 4, 1913.

Asheville Citizen-Times, August 5, 1896.

Asheville Citizen-Times, December 17, 1890.
Asheville Citizen-Times, December 3, 1890.

Asheville Citizen-Times, December 3, 1922.

Asheville Citizen-Times, February 19, 1896.

Asheville Citizen-Times, February 3, 1926.

Asheville Citizen-Times, February 4, 1893.

Asheville Citizen-Times, February 4, 1893.

Asheville Citizen-Times, January 12, 1900.

Asheville Citizen-Times, January 24, 1890.

Asheville Citizen-Times, July 20, 1889.


Asheville Citizen-Times, July 6, 1895.

Asheville Citizen-Times, June 1, 1909.

Asheville Citizen-Times, June 11, 1890.

Asheville Citizen-Times, June 11, 1890.

Asheville Citizen-Times, June 16, 1887.

Asheville Citizen-Times, June 16, 1904.

Asheville Citizen-Times, June 18, 1887.

Asheville Citizen-Times, June 2, 1909.

Asheville Citizen-Times, June 2, 1909.

Asheville Citizen-Times, June 3, 1913.

Asheville Citizen-Times, June 30, 1920.

Asheville Citizen-Times, June 5, 1891.
Asheville Citizen-Times, June 6, 1932.
Asheville Citizen-Times, June 7, 1909.
Asheville Citizen-Times, June 9, 1902.
Asheville Citizen-Times, March 23, 1898.
Asheville Citizen-Times, March 7, 1899.
Asheville Citizen-Times, March 9, 1899.
Asheville Citizen-Times, May 18, 1892.
Asheville Citizen-Times, May 21, 1891.
Asheville Citizen-Times, May 24, 1899.
Asheville Citizen-Times, May 29, 1899.
Asheville Citizen-Times, May 29, 1899.
Asheville Citizen-Times, November 17, 1913.
Asheville Citizen-Times, November 2, 1969.
Asheville Citizen-Times, October 16, 1899.
Asheville Citizen-Times, October 29, 1909.
Asheville Citizen-Times, October 9, 1938.
Asheville Citizen-Times, September 11, 1912.
Asheville Citizen-Times, September 12, 1920.
Asheville Citizen-Times, September 2, 1909.
Asheville Citizen-Times, September 2, 1909.
Asheville Citizen-Times, September 22, 1917.
Asheville Citizen-Times, September 8, 1896.
Asheville City Directories, 1896-1904.


*Asheville Daily Citizen*, May 21, 1891.

*Asheville Daily Gazette*, December 31, 1898.

*Asheville Daily Gazette*, June 14, 1900.

*Asheville Daily Gazette*, June 24, 1899.

*Asheville Daily Gazette*, March 5, 1899.

*Asheville Daily Gazette*, March 5, 1899.

*Asheville Daily Gazette*, October 6, 1898.

*Asheville Democrat*, January 16, 1890.

*Asheville Gazette-News*, August 24, 1912.

*Asheville Gazette-News*, January 15, 1912.

*Asheville Gazette-News*, June 24, 1913.

*Asheville Gazette-News*, June 24, 1913.


*Asheville Gazette-News*, October 9, 1909.


*Asheville Messenger*, August 28, 1840.

*Asheville Messenger*, December 25, 1840.

*Asheville Messenger*, December 25, 1840.

*Asheville Semi-Weekly Citizen*, August 12, 1880.

*Asheville Semi-Weekly Citizen*, January 10, 1885.
Asheville Times, April 16, 1941 Asheville City Directory, 1896.


Asheville-Citizen Times, April 23, 1902.

Asheville-Citizen Times, April 30, 1914.

Asheville-Citizen Times, April 30, 1920.

Asheville-Citizen-Times, July 2, 1911.


Atlanta Constitution, February 21, 1909.

Atlanta Constitution, July 20, 1913.

Atlanta Constitution, June 22, 1919.

Automobile Road, Grove Park, 1912, AA457, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial


Baltimore Sun, July 20, 1913.

Baltimore Sun, March 5, 1915.

Baltimore Sun, October 7, 1923.


Boone-Withers House, Haywood County Postcards, Haywood County Public Library History Collection, Haywood County Public Library, Waynesville, North Carolina.


Brevard News, July 18, 1919.


Buckner, N. “Asheville the Center for Work for Good Roads in South: Association Established in 1899 Has Opened Up New Highways and Improved the Existing Routes In Mountain Region Road Signs Placed,” Christian Science Monitor, January 6, 1912.


Buncombe County Deeds, Book 196, 563-565 Buncombe County Deeds, Book 212, 512 


*Charlotte Observer*, January 10, 1880.

*Charlotte Observer*, July 20, 1883.

*Charlotte Observer*, July 6, 1913.

*Charlotte Observer*, September 29, 1912.

*Cincinnati Enquirer*, June 28, 1918.


*Concord Daily Tribune*, June 22, 1910.

*Concord Daily Tribune*, June 22, 1910.


*Courier*, December 13, 1923.

Courthouse Asheville, Deed Book 56 252-256.


*Daily Concord Standard*, November 27, 1900.


*Des Moines Register*, July 14, 1913.


*Detroit Free Press*, December 6, 1923.


*Greenville News*, December 6, 1923.


*Haywood White Sulphur Springs Hotel, Waynesville, N. C.*, 1893, Haywood County Postcard, Haywood County History Collection, Haywood County Public Library, Waynesville, North Carolina.


*Houston Post*, July 29, 1917.


*Indianapolis Star*, December 6, 1923.


*Jackson County Journal,* July 23, 1913.


King, James Mason Westall., Queen, Stuart Hensley., and Court on the steps of the Battery Park Hotel, Rhododendron Festival 1940, 1940, B432-8, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina.


Knoxville City Directory, 1889.

253


Letter from Douglas D. Ellington to the Commissioners of Buncombe County, November 4, 1926. Edgar M. Lyda Collection, D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.


254
Letter from Ronald Greene to the Commissioners of Buncombe County, December 9, 1926, Edgar M. Lyda Collection, D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.


Li’l Abner, August 22, 1934.

Li’l Abner, October 9, 1934.


Lincoln Evening Journal, December 6, 1923.


Los Angeles Times, December 6, 1923.

M. D. “THE WARM SPRINGS: Thermal Waters of Western North Carolina,” Atlanta Constitution, August 11, 1876.

MAE Woodbridge Will, December 9, 1923, Transylvania, North Carolina, USA, Record of Wills, V. 4-5 1935-1958.


Mr.  Vanderbilt’s Biltmore, New York Times, December 26, 1890.

Mt. Pisgah and The Rat from Battery Park Hotel. A244-8, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, N. C.


Nashville Union and American, June 15, 1870.


New Bern Sun, July 30, 1914


New York Times, June 9, 1940.


North Carolina Christian Advocate October 5, 1911.

North Carolina Christian Advocate, August 8, 1912.

North Carolina Christian Advocate, March 5, 1908.

North Carolina Christian Advocate, May 7, 1908.

North Carolina Christian Advocate, October 11, 1911.

North Carolina Christian Advocate, October 5, 1911.


Pelton, Herbert W. Tennis Court from Sun Lounge, Battery Park Hotel. AA253, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, N. C.


Philadelphia Inquirer, July 14, 1913.


President McKinley arriving at the Southern Railroad Station on Southside Ave., 1897, A437-8, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, N. C.


*Raleigh News and Observer,* August 31, 1883.

*Raleigh News and Observer,* July 26, 1914.

*Raleigh News and Observer,* May 2, 1882.

*Raleigh News,* January 1, 1880.

*Raleigh Times,* August 30, 1912.

*Raleigh Weekly Standard,* December 14, 1836.


Richmond Dispatch, May 30, 1885.


Schlyer, Montgomery “Works of the Late Richard M. Hunt,” Architectural Record, October-December, 1895, 168.


*State Chronicle,* July 28, 1891 *News and Observer,* July 15, 1892.


*Sylvan Valley News,* August 11, 1911.


*Tennessean,* May 1, 1913.

*Tennessean,* May 18, 1906.
The Asheville Advance, January 4, 1888.

The Asheville Semi-Weekly Citizen, March 20, 1890.

The Asheville Semi-Weekly, June 6, 1878.

The Asheville Times, January 28, 1927.

The Blue Ridge Blade, April 17, 1880.

The Carolina Courier and Waynesville Mountaineer, June 6, 1918.

The Carolina Courier and Waynesville Mountaineer, October 18, 1917.

The Carolina Mountaineer and Waynesville Courier, November 20, 1917.


The Charlotte Observer, October 21, 1912.


The Lyceum, April 1890.

The Lyceum, April, 1891.

The Lyceum, August 1890.

The Lyceum, July 1890.

The Lyceum, June, 1890.

The Lyceum, September, 1890.

The Manor, D. H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Asheville.


The New York Sun, February 7, 1915.


The North Carolina Christian Advocate, October 5, 1911.
The North Carolinian, May 24, 1906.

The Semi-Weekly Citizen, May 11, 1897.

The Southern Merchant 17.


the Washington Post, August 2, 1914.


The Waynesville Courier, January, 1900.

The Waynesville Courier, May 26, 1899.

The Waynesville Mountaineer, April 6, 1939.

The Western North Carolina Times, August 4, 1905.

The Wilmington Daily Review, June 4, 1885.


Untitled Photograph of Miss Mary Solari, member Asheville Civic Ballet, as Rhodora for the Rhododendron Festival Pageant, "Rhodora, the Prince, and the Flower Girl," 1938, I415-8, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North

Untitled photograph of Miss Stuart Hensley, Queen of the 13th annual Rhododendron Festival, 1940. , 1940, I323-8, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, Untitled photograph of North Carolina.


View from Battery Park Hotel looking Southwest, 1898, A246-4, Photographs and Postcards, North Carolina Room, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, N. C.


Washington Herald, July 11, 1913.

Waxahachie Daily Light, March 2, 1908.


Waynesville Courier, February 5, 1915.

Waynesville Courier, Friday 29 1912.

Waynesville Courier, January 24, 1913.

Waynesville Courier, July 14, 1911.

Waynesville Courier, Tuesday, June 11, 1912.


Waynesville, 1910-1911, Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina.


Western Carolina Enterprise, February 24, 1909.

Western Enterprise, August 25, 1909.


Western North Carolina Section at a Glance. American Lithographic Co.  1912.


White Sulphur Springs, Waynesville, N. C., Dated July 20, 1908, Haywood County Postcards, Haywood County History Collection, Haywood County Public Library, Waynesville, North Carolina.


Wilmington Morning Star, June 30, 1915.

Wilmington Star, January 1, 1880.


Year: 1930 Census Place: Asheville, Buncombe, North Carolina Roll: 1675 Page: 14A


Vita

Matthew Robert Blaylock received his BS in Business Administration from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill in 2005. He later majored in history at the University of North Carolina Asheville and then received an MA in American History from Western Carolina University in 2011.