

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: High Top Colony Historic District

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 143 – 225 High Top Colony Road, 14 – 42 Hoot Owl Road, and 10 – 21 Grey Eagle Road.

City or town: Black Mountain State: NC County: Buncombe

Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

<p>Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p><u>North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources</u></p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>Date</p>
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In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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**Signature of commenting official:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Title :** \_\_\_\_\_ **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_ entered in the National Register
- \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ removed from the National Register
- \_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

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**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

District

Site

Structure

Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>17</u>	<u>14</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>19</u>	<u>15</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

RECREATION AND CULTURE outdoor recreation (park)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling  
DOMESTIC: secondary structure  
RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation (park)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Rustic Revival  
LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN: Bungalow/Craftsman  
MODERN MOVEMENT: Ranch

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: wood, stone, asphalt

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

**Summary Paragraph**

Located approximately two-and-one-half miles southwest of downtown Black Mountain, North Carolina, in Buncombe County, High Top Colony is accessed from Old Lakey Gap Road, which runs in a northwest-southeast direction off of Blue Ridge Road. Blue Ridge Road runs in an east-west direction from Highway 9 in Black Mountain. High Top Colony was named for its location on High Top Mountain, with the locations of the houses in the Colony rising from an elevation of approximately 2500 feet on the north to 2700 feet on the south. High Top Colony Road runs north-south, with the Colony located at the south end of High Top Colony Road. This is the main road through the Colony, with two additional roads branching off of it to the east,

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Grey Eagle Road and Hoot Owl Road. High Top Colony is set within a rustic woodland setting, filled with a variety of deciduous and hardwood trees and rhododendron thickets, with gravel and dirt roads winding through the development. Cottages are typically set back from the road, surrounded by trees, with gravel driveways. Cottages are typically wood-frame construction built in Rustic Revival, Bungalow, and vernacular styles. Cottages are consistently one to one-and-one-half-stories, with significant features including rhododendron branch porch railings, tree trunk posts, lapped, shingle, board-and-batten, and wood bark siding, and gabled rooflines. Newer, non-historic houses in the Colony are compatible with the historic cottages in terms of locations set back from the road within woodland settings, massing, and materials. There are a total of fourteen contributing primary resources (the cottages, Roy John Park, and the water tower), and seven non-contributing primary resources, all houses built outside the period of significance except for one, 159 High Top Colony Road, whose form has been extensively altered. Of the remaining resources in the Colony, there are five contributing secondary resources (outbuildings) and eight non-contributing secondary resources (seven outbuildings and one structure). To the southwest of the historic district is Blue Ridge Assembly, a religious retreat center with close historical ties to High Top Colony, and accessible by hiking trails from the Colony. To the north of High Top Colony, off of High Top Colony Road, is another summer resort, founded in 1946, Last Resort, with a similar feel and layout to High Top Colony, including gravel and dirt roads winding through a woodland setting and houses set back from the road. There are also additional scattered houses along Blue Ridge Road and High Top Colony Road leading up to the entrance to High Top Colony.

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### **Narrative Description**

High Top Colony, named for its location on the west flank of High Top Mountain, contains a total of approximately twenty-nine acres, with lots ranging in size from .68 acres to almost six acres. Most lots are just under an acre to an acre-and-a-half. There are nineteen cottages and houses. Of these, twelve are contributing buildings that were built within the period of significance and have undergone minimal architectural changes. Most of the changes include partial or full enclosure of porches, or additions to the buildings which do not detract from the overall scale and architectural integrity of the historic cottage design. One of the non-contributing cottages has undergone alterations dating outside the period of significance that have extensively altered the form and details of the building. Six of the resources are non-contributing houses dating past the period of significance. There is one contributing structure, the water tank reservoir, and one contributing site, the Roy John Park, comprised of Lots 11 and 12 (1.34 acres) as originally platted. In addition to the cottages, there are several outbuildings, of which there are five contributing ones, seven non-contributing ones, dating past the period of significance, and one non-contributing structure, a carport, also dating past the period of significance. There are two vacant lots in the district. Typical house styles include Rustic Revival, of which there are four examples; bungalow, of which there are six examples; and one Ranch style building. Two of the cottages, 143 High Top Colony Road, and 160 High Top Colony Road, are not of any particular style and could be classified as vernacular cottages. Cottages are frame construction, with building materials including stone, weatherboard, bark, or shingle siding, and rooflines primarily side or front gable, with a handful of cottages having hip roofs. Many have porches with rustic details including the use of tree trunk posts and rhododendron branch railing. In terms of massing, cottages are one to one-and-one-half stories,

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and a few are raised on pier foundations. New homes in High Top Colony are compatible with the older cottages in terms of setting, massing, and materials, helping to maintain the historic feel, context, and association of the community. Most cottages have undergone minimal changes and these are noted with each inventory entry.

### **Inventory**

The inventory is arranged alphabetically by street name, in ascending numerical order by street address along the streets, with side of street noted. The dates of buildings are taken primarily from archival information available in High Top Colony's historical archives, along with tax records. Resources for historical information on properties is footnoted with each entry.

#### **10 Grey Eagle Road, north side. Marion Turner Bryson Cottage/Blue Bird/Blue Bird's Nest. 1921. Contributing Building.**

Located on the north side of the road, in the southeast corner of a wooded lot with a semi-circular gravel drive, this cottage faces west and is not visible from the road. Built in the Rustic Revival style, this one-story cottage is one of the most intact examples of the style in High Top Colony. Set on a foundation of heavy timbers resting on stone piers, the front-gable-roof cottage is clad in unpainted weatherboard siding. Windows are wood-frame six-over-six double-hung, in single and double configurations, and the front entrance door is multi-panel wood. The shed-roof front porch details include slightly tapered heavy timber wood posts, a rhododendron branch balustrade, and lattice below the porch floor. Wood steps lead up to the porch on the south side, with a rhododendron branch railing. There is a central, metal-capped brick chimney. The house has remained essentially unchanged since it was built in 1921, with the only exterior changes being the non-historic addition of a wood-frame, sixteen-foot-by-sixteen-foot, gable-roof screened porch on the north side, set back from the façade of the house, and accessible only from the interior; the replacement of one window on the east end of the south elevation with a smaller multi-light square casement window sometime after the 1940s, and the in-kind replacement of the rhododendron railing on the front porch. All of these changes together do not have a significant impact on the architectural integrity of the house.

This house sits on Lot 7 of the High Top Colony Plat. W. W. Alexander bought the lot from Roy John in 1919 and sold it in 1921 to Marion Turner (M. T.) Bryson (W. W. Alexander built the cottage at 16 Grey Eagle Road, aka 28 Grey Eagle Road, as his place of summer residence). The cottage was built ca. 1921 and has remained in the Bryson family until the present day.<sup>1</sup> M. T. Bryson (1887 – 1941) was from Siloam, Georgia, and according to 1940 census records, was a teacher.<sup>2</sup> His second wife, Lady Ruth Smith Bryson, attended Blue Ridge Assembly as a youth. It is possible they met there and then later bought property at the Colony. Bryson built the cottage with his father, James Turner Bryson from "...white pine that was milled at the family's sawmill in Georgia and transported by train to Black Mountain. The lumber was then moved by horse and wagon up the mountain until the road ran out, then hauled by hand the rest of the way. They, along with the workers that they brought with them from Georgia, camped out in a World War I era tent while the house was being built..."<sup>3</sup> James Bryson recalled that the workers were

<sup>1</sup>High Top Colony Property Owners Association, Inc. historical archives. Various dates, unpublished.

<sup>2</sup>United States Federal Census Records, 1940, Siloam, Georgia.

<sup>3</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community. Self-published by High Top Colony, 2019, p. 13.

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black, from Siloam, Georgia, and "...one had a talent as a brick mason...". In 1923, the family brought with them a young black woman named Stella Harris who was a nurse/nanny for the family. Furnishings in the house were built of rhododendron and other woods from trees around the house, and most remains in the house today.<sup>4</sup> In 1927, M. T. Bryson deeded the house to his wife, Lady Ruth Smith Bryson.

**16 Grey Eagle Road, north side. Mabelle and W. W. Alexander Cottage/Tree Tops/ South-Land/Craggy View. ca. 1924. Contributing Building.**

Located on the north side of the road, near the east end of a heavily wooded lot, this cottage is set back from the road at the end of a long, mostly flat, gravel driveway. The lot drops in elevation from the driveway, down to the house, and then drops away at a steep slope to the rear (north) of the house. A stone and gravel walkway, bordered by railroad timbers, steps down from the driveway to the house entry. Facing south, the one-story, unpainted, weatherboard-clad Rustic Revival cottage is set on a foundation of tall wood posts, with the rear portion of the house cantilevering out over the hillside. The hip roof has a front gable dormer in the center with a six-light casement window in the gable end, and an interior brick chimney stack on the east side of the roof. On the front of the house (south) the entry stoop has a front gable roof supported by tree posts and smaller branches in the gable end. The wood front door is five-horizontal-panel with a band of wood six-light fixed windows to the east. This band of windows wraps around onto the east elevation. There are two additional single, wood, six-light fixed windows to the west of the front entry. On the north end of the east elevation there is a small, shed-roof entry stoop with wood stairs leading up to it. The west elevation of the house includes three single, six-light fixed windows. At the northwest corner of the house is a porch with tree trunk posts and rhododendron branch railing. The house originally included a central living space surrounded by porches. Some of the porches have now been enclosed to create more rooms, including a kitchen, dining room, bedrooms, and a bathroom. The cottage has never been winterized for year-round use, and the only heat source continues to be the rock fireplace in the living room.<sup>5</sup> The adjacent undeveloped lot to the south that is associated with this cottage includes a gravel drive and level parking area, with the remaining wooded portion constituting an extended yard for the property.<sup>6</sup>

This house sits on Lot 13 of the High Top Colony Plat. Frank Day bought this lot, as he did several others in the Colony, from Roy John in 1921. W. W. Alexander bought the lot from Day in 1922 and he and wife Mabelle, from Atlanta, Georgia, built this house, which they called Tree Tops, in 1924.<sup>7</sup>

Later owners of this house included Lon B. and Barbara Southerland from Miami, Florida, who bought the property in 1944; E. C. and Marilla Collins, who bought it in 1950; and Cleo and Mutt Rhodes, of Siloam, Georgia, who bought the cottage in 1952. Since then, the cottage has remained in the Rhodes family.

<sup>4</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup>16 Grey Eagle Road is the address in Buncombe County tax listings; street sign says 28 Grey Eagle Road and this is also noted that way in the Anniversary book.

<sup>7</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 22.

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**Vacant lot north of 16 Grey Eagle Road.**

This wooded lot is 1.30 acres in size and drops in elevation from the front to the rear (west to east).

**21 Grey Eagle Road, north side. Eva and Dr. Clarence Loomis Cottage/Slabsides. ca. 1925. Contributing Building.**

Set at the end of Grey Eagle Road in a woodland setting, this cottage faces northwest and is located near the southwest corner of the lot at the end of a level gravel driveway. One of the best examples in the district of a Rustic Revival style, the one-story, wood frame cottage is built on tall concrete piers that create an open area beneath. Original piers may have been a different material, but when this change was made is unknown. Primarily sided in long horizontal slabs of tree bark (likely the reason for the name “Slabsides”), there is an enclosed basement area at the southeast corner which is clad in unpainted weatherboard. The shallow-pitch front-gable roof with soffits and rafter tails has vertical tree bark slabs in the gable ends. Windows are wood, nine-light and twelve-light casement, and the front door, facing east, is multi-light. There is a full-width porch on the east side with tree trunk posts and tree branch balusters comprising the balustrade. The ceiling of the porch is exposed structure, with flush boards between the rafters. A shed-roof extension to the porch, supported by diagonal bracing, extends halfway along the north elevation, with wider-spaced tree branch balusters than on the porch railing on the east side. The shed roof covers the steps up to the porch, with the same balustrade. There is a contemporary wood deck added on the southwest corner. The house is still used primarily as a summer residence.<sup>8</sup>

This house sits on Lot 22 of the High Top Colony Plat. Dr. Frank Day bought the lot from Roy John in 1921, and then sold it to the Loomis family in 1925. Dr. Clarence Loomis, born in Michigan and a resident of New Haven, Connecticut in 1920, was also employed as a YMCA secretary, and previous to building this cottage, had attended many summer assemblies at Blue Ridge Assembly.<sup>9</sup> In 1930 the Loomis family was living in Georgia, and Dr. Loomis was still employed as a YMCA secretary.<sup>10</sup> It is not known what Loomis’ specific role as a YMCA secretary consisted of, but likely, due to the fact that he attended many assemblies at Blue Ridge and chose to build a summer home in the Colony, he may have been involved in racial equity work. In 1944, Theresa and Stanley Buss from Vero Beach, Florida bought the property. Both of these individuals served on the board of the Colony, including as president and vice-president. Theresa served as treasurer for the Colony for five terms.<sup>11</sup> The Buss’ daughter inherited the cottage in 1997, selling it soon after to Judy and Hiram Henderson, also from Vero Beach. The Hendersons spent many summers as youth at nearby Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly, another of the religious retreats located in Black Mountain.<sup>12</sup>

**125 High Top Colony Road, west side. Robert Morehead Cottage. ca. 1919.**

<sup>8</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup>1920 United States Federal Census.

<sup>10</sup>1930 United States Federal Census.

<sup>11</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 45.

<sup>12</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 45.

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### **Contributing Building.**

Set on a gently sloping lot on the west side of High Top Colony Road, this one-story, side-gable-roof bungalow faces north. The house has a concrete block foundation, an asphalt-shingle roof, and is clad in weatherboard siding. Windows throughout are one-over-one wood sash. The north elevation (front) is three bays, with the central entry door flanked by single windows. There is a shed-roof porch extending approximately two-thirds of the width of the elevation, set on wood posts, with a replacement wood railing. Wood steps lead up to the porch on the east side. The west elevation is two bays wide, consisting of two single windows. The south elevation (rear) has an added shed-roof porch with concrete block and wood posts, a concrete floor, and no railing. There are three bays, including a single window on the west end and two smaller two-vertical-light fixed windows in the center and on the east end. The east elevation is two bays, with a large fixed horizontal window on the south end and a single window on the north end.

According to current residents, the house was built when the Colony was founded on a portion of the Robert Morehead property. Roy John purchased the first nine acres from the Robert Morehead property for High Top Colony. The cottage was not part of the original High Top Colony plat but was built ca. 1919 when the Colony was founded, and was located just outside the boundary of the platted Colony. This was so that Robert Morehead could have easy access onto Colony property while he and other members of his family served as caretakers. From the late 1920s into the 1930s mention is made in the Colony minutes that Robert Morehead and his son Clarence Morehead served as caretakers of the Colony during the winter months. Several other Morehead family members worked for Colony residents in the summers. It was annexed into the Colony in 1996, and in 2005 was named "Quiet House" after a cottage by the same name that was built at Black Mountain College in 1942. The name Quiet House was due to the fact that the Black Mountain College cottage served as a Quaker residence, and the owners in 2005 were also of the Quaker faith. Before his death in 1976, Clarence Morehead was made an honorary member of the Colony.<sup>13</sup>

### **143 High Top Colony Road, west side. Ethel and Ira J. Martin Cottage/The Hideaway. ca. 1947. Contributing Building.**

Set within a wooded lot close to High Top Colony Road, this cottage is visible from the road, behind a hedge of rhododendron. The garage sits at the center of the lot, at the driveway entrance, and at a slightly lower elevation, to the north end of the lot, is the cottage. This one-story-plus-basement, masonite-clad, L-plan cottage has a metal-clad gabled roof. There is a small wing on the east side which may have been a garage that was later enclosed once the newer garage was built. There is a central, wide brick chimney at the juncture of the "L". Windows are single, wood-frame, one-over-one, double-hung sash, with a picture window on the north elevation, at the west end. A wood deck has been added on the north side. The house was built as a full-time, year-round residence. Documentary photos of the property indicate it was built of concrete block. There have been some interior changes since 2010, including the addition of air conditioning, and the addition of insulation to the walls and ceilings.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup>LeRoy, George. Long-time Colony resident. Interview with Sybil Argintar, July 29, 2021, and obituary of Clarence Morehead, *Asheville Citizen-Times*, January 15, 1976.

<sup>14</sup>Scott, Karen. Current owner of cottage. Email to Sybil Argintar, dated June 19, 2020.

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**Workshop. 2010. Non-contributing Building.**

Located south of the main house, this one-story, side-gable roof building, sided in masonite, has a nine-light-over-panel contemporary door on the north end of the façade and a single garage bay on the south end.

This house sits on Lot 1 of the High Top Colony Plat. The lot was purchased from Roy John by Edgar L. Secrest in 1919, but a cottage was not built here until ca. 1947 when Ira J. Martin purchased the property. Ed Secrest, like many of the original purchasers of lots in High Top Colony, was associated with the YMCA. In 1918, he lived in Atlanta, and at the time was the General Secretary for the Blue Ridge Delegation at Georgia Institute of Technology.<sup>15</sup> This was one of many university delegations that sent students each summer to Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain. From 1923 - 1948, Secrest was Secretary of the Volunteer Religions Association at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, continuing to bring students to the summer school at Blue Ridge Assembly.<sup>16</sup> In 1948 Secrest accepted a church position in Dallas, Texas, as assistant to the pastor of Highland Park Presbyterian Church. Ira J. Martin, at the time he purchased the lot in High Top Colony, was a professor of philosophy and religion at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, a position he held for thirty-three years, from 1944 – 1977. Martin, like so many others in High Top Colony, likely was concerned with race relations, due to his long association with Berea College. Berea, founded in 1855 by John G. Fee, was one of the earliest colleges in the country founded, like Oberlin College, on the philosophy of providing “...equality and excellence in education for men and women of all races...”<sup>17</sup>

Originally from Pawtucket, Rhode Island, Martin’s degrees were from Brown University, Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, and Boston University School of Theology. Martin also served as the first president of the American Academy of Religion, was an associate of the American School of Oriental Research and held offices in the National Association of Bible Instructors. Additionally, he was the author of several books. Before his time at Berea College, Martin served as a minister to several Baptist churches, including in Littleton and Athol, Massachusetts.<sup>18</sup> When the Martins originally visited High Top Colony in the 1940s, they rented another cottage, Cluny Castle. Preferring the views from the lower sections of the Colony, they learned that this lot was available for purchase from Edgar Secrest, who planned to build in nearby Montreat.<sup>19</sup> Ethel Martin sold the property in 1990 to Laszlo Farkas. The Fogg family purchased it in 2006, and current owners Karen and David Scott purchased the house in 2010.

**151 High Top Colony Road, west side. Eunice and Edward S. King Cottage/Kingdom Kum/Locust Bend. ca. 1920. Contributing Building.**

<sup>15</sup>Georgia Institute of Technology, *The Blue Print* yearbook, 1922. “Blue Ridge Delegation”.

<sup>16</sup>“A Special Recreational Trip”. *The Atlanta Constitution*, July 2, 1933 and “Georgians Attend Christian Meeting”. *The Atlanta Constitution*, June 11, 1938.

<sup>17</sup><https://www.berea.edu/about/history/> “Berea College Early History”. Accessed July 24, 2021.

<sup>18</sup>“Ira J. Martin, ex-professor at Berea, dies”. *The Courier-Journal*, Louisville, Kentucky. November 29, 1983.

<sup>19</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, pp. 27-28.

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Set back from and slightly below the road on a wooded lot, this one-story, hip-roof bungalow is located on the east end of the lot with a semi-circular gravel driveway in front. The asphalt-shingled hip roof has wide eaves and rafter tails. Clad in horizontal flush-board siding, the cottage on the east and north elevations is built on tall stone-faced piers which allow for an above-ground basement. This basement area, on the front, has a row of six-light fixed windows. The remainder of the house, set at a slightly higher elevation than the east end, is built on a foundation of concrete block. Rustic Revival details of the shed-roof front porch include the rhododendron branch porch balustrade and tree trunk posts. Steep steps with pipe railing lead up to the porch from a stone walkway lined by a low stone retaining wall. Windows on the east side of the house are one-over-one, double-hung sash, and on the south side, there are two-light windows on the upper part of the wall, a non-historic, post 1959, change. The front door is a single-light-over-three-horizontal-panel.

This house sits on Lot 3 of the High Top Colony Plat. Built by Edward S. and Eunice King ca. 1920, this house, called Kingdom Kum, was one of the earliest built in the Colony. Like other original owners of lots developed by Roy John, King was a YMCA Secretary, based at North Carolina State College in Raleigh, North Carolina.<sup>20</sup> He served in this position for thirty-five years, from 1920 – 1955, when he retired. A native of Archdale, near High Point, North Carolina, he was a graduate of Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina and did some graduate work at Vanderbilt University. Guilford, a Quaker school, also follows a philosophy of equality among all races, so it is likely that King too ascribed to this in his role as a YMCA Secretary. Among other founding principles of the school, Guilford is known for:

...its history as a school and as land where local African Americans worked with New Garden Quakers, including famed Quaker abolitionist Levi Coffin, to implement Underground Railroad activities. Enslaved Africans escaped to the Guilford College Woods, where they were supported in their flight to freedom by local Quakers...<sup>21</sup>

Prior to his work as a YMCA Secretary at North Carolina State, he was secretary at the University of South Carolina from 1914 to 1917. While King served as a YMCA Secretary, he was directly involved in the building of Blue Ridge Assembly and bought the property "in an attempt to facilitate their proximity to the project itself."<sup>22</sup> King, who served for many years as secretary-treasurer for the Colony, sold the property in 1951 to Virginia and Hall Swain, who continued to enjoy the cottage, which they had renamed to Locust Bend, until 1990 when they sold it to current owners David Peele and Lisa Levya.

**152 High Top Colony Road, east side. Gertrude and Morris Trotter Cottage/Goodwinds/Dunravin/Squirrel Nut Cottage. ca. 1927.**

**Contributing Building.**

This house is set in a wooded lot with a semi-circular gravel driveway to the west side of the house. The lot slopes downward from south to north, allowing for an above-ground basement at

<sup>20</sup>"Welcoming Committee". *The Charlotte News*, September 22, 1947.

<sup>21</sup><https://www.guilford.edu/who-we-are/friends-center/history>, "History and Quaker Roots". Accessed July 24, 2021.

<sup>22</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 35.

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the north end, visible below the deck. The one-and-one-half-story cottage, displaying elements of the bungalow style, faces west. The side-gable-roof has open brackets in the gable end and the house has a river rock foundation on the south end. The house is clad in German siding. There are one-over-one, wood double-hung window sash with applied muntins which are replacements of the original two-over-two window sash. On the west (front) elevation of the house, there is an interior river rock chimney near the north end, a front-gable dormer with rafter tails above the door, a later replacement, and a one-over-one window which has been added on the south end. On the north elevation there is a paired window in the gable end which replaces a single-leaf door. A full-width shed-roof addition on this elevation extends out to the north, with a wood deck that extends further to the north and wraps around to the west side of the house. The deck railing consists of two-by-two, widely spaced boards. The foundation of the addition and the above-ground basement is parged masonry. On the south elevation, there is a paired window in the gable end. A sliding glass door has been added on the first floor of this elevation, at the west end, replacing an original window and opening onto a patio. There is a single window on the east end. It appears that most of these changes have happened between 1994 – 2019, based on documentary photos. However, they do not significantly alter the historic form of the cottage which is still clearly visible.

**Storage building. Post-1954. Non-contributing Building.**

Located northwest of the main house, and to the west of the driveway, is a one-story, storage building with T1-11 siding and a gambrel, metal-clad roof.

**Storage building. Post-1959. Non-contributing Building.**

Located south of the main house is a one-story, front-gable storage building with T1-11 siding and a nine-light/panel door.

This house sits on Lot 2 of the High Top Colony Plat. The lot was originally purchased by Willian Morgan from Roy John in 1919, but he never built on this lot (Morgan later built the home located at 20 Hoot Owl Road). The property was sold in 1921 to H. S. Johnson, and then to P.B. Hotzendorff in 1925. It was not until 1926 that Gertrude and Morris Trotter of Charlotte, North Carolina purchased the lot and began building, in 1927, the house that is on the property. Morris Trotter (1878 – 1966) worked in real estate.<sup>23</sup> He began working in real estate in Charlotte with Walter Alexander, and in 1900 started his own business, which, by 1935, was known as Morris E. Trotter and Son. Trotter was a founding member of the Charlotte Board of Realtors and of the Charlotte Property Management Association. In 1958 he was granted an honorary life membership in the Board of Realtors.<sup>24</sup> It is not known how Morris Trotter knew about High Top Colony or why he built here. There is no known information about him being associated with the YMCA. The Trotters owned the property until 1953 when they sold it to Eve and Paul Matthew of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The property remained in the Matthews family until it sold in 1996 to Robert Stafford. In 2019, current owners Maddie Koch and Mike Perkins purchased the property.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup>Trotter, Morris. 1930 United States Federal Census.

<sup>24</sup>Trotter, Morris. Obituary. *The Charlotte Observer*, February 11, 1966.

<sup>25</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 47.

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**159 High Top Colony Road, west side. Annie G. and Henry G. Hart Cottage/House by the Side of the Road/Peak of View/Peak-a-B00. ca. 1921.**

**Non-contributing Building.**

Set back from the road in a wooded setting, with a gravel drive on the east side of the property, this one-story-plus-basement bungalow style cottage is clad in German siding. The front-gable-roof has splayed eaves and a central stone chimney. The entry to the house faces east, with a front-gable-roof central porch with wood posts and wood steps on the north side. The north elevation, the original entry to the cottage, has undergone the most changes, according to documentary photos. Here the original screened porch has been enclosed, the central entry steps removed, and wood two-horizontal-over-two-horizontal sash windows have been added, likely a change from the 1960s, based on the style of the windows. In the basement below the porch, fixed-light, rectangular windows have been added and vertical, flush-board siding has been added over the stone foundation of the basement walls. According to previous owners, the Glore family, in the 1970s, enlarged the rear of the cabin to add closets and a small additional bath.<sup>26</sup> While the changes here, like for 152 High Top Colony Road, were made after the period of significance, they do alter the original form of the cottage, primarily with the change of the entry to the house from the north side of the house to the east.

This house sits on Lot 4 of the High Top Colony Plat. The house was built by Annie and Henry Hart, who bought the lot from Roy John in 1919. Henry Hart, of Chattanooga and later Nashville, Tennessee, was another of the YMCA Secretaries, serving as the State Secretary for Tennessee and also working for the YMCA overseas in India.<sup>27</sup> Hart moved from Chattanooga to Nashville in 1912 to begin his work as a YMCA secretary.<sup>28</sup> In 1919 he and N. T. Lowery, the state secretary for high school boys' work for the YMCA, worked together in August of that year at the high school boys' conference in Knoxville.<sup>29</sup> Howard Hubbel purchased the house from the Harts in 1937, selling it in 1944 to Henry A. Ward. The Glore family, who made the most significant changes to the house, bought the property from Henry A. Ward in 1946 and it remained in the family until 2018 when it was sold to current owner Madalyn Wofford. Jim Glore, a family member, remembers that in the late 1940s when his family visited High Top Colony in the summers that there was no electricity, they used kerosene for lighting, cooked on a kerosene stove, and brought blocks of ice from downtown Black Mountain to supply their ice box for refrigeration. Water came from the stream at the top of the Colony.<sup>30</sup>

**160 High Top Colony Road, east side. Mabel and John Bergthold Cottage/Chipmunk Lodge. ca. 1921. Contributing Building.**

Set at the juncture of High Top Colony Road and Hoot Owl Road, and accessed from a gravel drive and parking area on the south side of the property, the one-story-plus-basement cottage, facing south, is set within a wooded lot that drops steeply in elevation from south to north, and is located down the hill from the parking area. A gravel path with a metal pipe railing leads down

<sup>26</sup>Email to Sybil Argintar, dated July 13, 2020.

<sup>27</sup>"YMCA Dramatic Club Performance". *Nashville Banner*, March 11, 1916.

<sup>28</sup>"New Secretary for Boys' Work". *Nashville Banner*, January 2, 1912.

<sup>29</sup>"Y' Secretary Is Visitor To City". *The Greenville News*, February 15, 1931.

<sup>30</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 36.

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the hill to the house, with several granite slab steps at the end of the pathway to the entry patio at the house. Lining the south side of the patio is a river rock low retaining wall and a river rock fireplace on the flat area just above the wall. At the south end of the parking area are two outbuildings, constructed ca. 1948. There is a second gravel access drive on the north side of the lot, leading up to the east side of the house, and two additional outbuildings are located closer to the road, on the north end of the lot.

During the time that the Bergtholds owned the house, and soon after electricity was readily available to the Colony, in the late 1940s, Bergthold made a few changes to the house including the addition of an extra bedroom and the installation of two large windows in the front of the house.<sup>31</sup> This one-story-plus-basement, cross-gable cottage, is clad in German siding. Windows are replacement wood one-over-one sash, with some original wood six-over-six sash, and some post-1954 single-light wood casement windows. The foundation of the house is parged concrete block. The south elevation (façade) of the cottage, faces the parking area. It is seven bays wide, with several projecting front gables. Beginning at the west end, the bay window has new fixed-light casement window sash, replacing the multi-light windows that were there originally. The remainder of this elevation, continuing from the west, consists of a four-horizontal-panel wood entry door, followed by two single windows, one of which is six-over-six, a second entry door under a shed-roof overhang, and two additional single windows. The west elevation, when comparing to the 1940s photographs which showed it as a single bay, is now two bays wide, with an extension of the roofline to the north, adding a second window bay with single-light casement windows. The original window sash on the south end has been replaced with a wood one-over-one sash. Another change on this elevation is the addition of a wood deck with a metal railing, accessible from the inside of the house only, and a pyramidal-roofed, enclosed gazebo that has been added at the northwest corner. New stairs, with tree trunk posts supporting the roof, lead from the house to the gazebo. The east elevation is comprised of single and triple one-over-one windows, with the basement level visible at the north end. The north elevation (rear) has single and paired one-over-one sash windows, with the basement level visible the full width of the elevation.

**Garage. ca. 1948. Contributing Building.**

Located south of the house, this one-story, front-gable-roofed, cinder block building has a single garage bay with a roll-up door. T1-11 siding has been added to the front of the building only, with the other sides remaining as exposed cinder block.

**Wellhouse. ca. 1948. Contributing Building.**

Located south of the house, this small, shallow-front-gable-roofed building is one story in height. It is constructed of cinder block.

**Storage Building. ca. 1948. Contributing Building.**

Located west of the house and visible from the road, this one-story, log building with a front-gable roof faces east. It has been enclosed on the east side with vertical flush boards, and the name "The Castle" is constructed of sticks in the gable end. The foundation of the building is

<sup>31</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 18.

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concrete block and the roof is moss-covered asphalt shingles. While this building is not likely original to the area, it may have been moved here in the 1940s when many improvements were happening on the property.

### **Privy. Post-1959. Non-contributing Building.**

Located west of the house and visible from the road, this building, with an asphalt-shingle-clad roof, has a concrete block foundation and is clad in board and batten siding. There is a door on the south side constructed of T1-11 wood siding.

This house sits on Lots 5 and 6 of the High Top Colony Plat. John Bergthold (1882 – 1955), born in Minnesota to German and Austrian immigrants, spent his early years in Harris, Texas.<sup>32</sup> By the time he was twenty-seven, in 1910, he was living in Raleigh, North Carolina, and was a general secretary for the YMCA.<sup>33</sup> In 1917 Bergthold lived in Charlotte, North Carolina and married, in November 1917, Mabel Eileen Mann of Honea Path, South Carolina. Mabel Mann Bergthold was a graduate of Winthrop College near Charlotte and spent many of her summers working at Blue Ridge Assembly, where she met John Bergthold. A graduate of McPherson University in Kansas and Oklahoma A & M, from 1910 - 1917, John Bergthold, in his work as a YMCA secretary, served students at A & M College in North Carolina (now North Carolina State University), Tulane University in Louisiana, and at the University of Kentucky. By the time of his wedding in November of 1917 he was serving as the “Student-Inter-State Secretary of North and South Carolina”.<sup>34</sup> In 1919, Bergthold was considered to be one of the founders of High Top Colony, and his summer house was one of the first ones built in the Colony. He served as the Chair of the Board of the Colony from its founding until his death in 1955. By 1920 the Bergtholds were living in Nashville, Tennessee, living on the campus of Vanderbilt University, where Bergthold continued his work as YMCA Secretary.<sup>35</sup> The family, in 1925, was living in Atlanta, Georgia, where Bergthold continued to be employed by the YMCA.<sup>36</sup>

The Bergthold family owned the house until 1955 when it was sold to Julia and James E. McHugh, who had visited the Colony many times in the early 1950s and were friends with the Glore family, who owned Peak-of-View cottage (159 High Top Colony Road), in Miami, Florida.<sup>37</sup> Grace Bergthold, the second wife of John Bergthold, retained residency at the cottage until the McHughs retired and began using the house as their summer home in the late 1960s. McHugh sold the property in 1988 to Pearl and William Wilkinson, and Joseph Cooksey bought it in 1996. His daughter, Luan Cooksey Wilks, now owns the property. The McHughs made a few additional changes to the cottage in 1977, including remodeling the kitchen, adding a bathroom and dining room, and enlarging the master bedroom. The Wilkinson family, from Smithfield, North Carolina, made a few additional renovations.<sup>38</sup>

### **170 High Top Colony Road, east side. Michael Byrns House. ca. 2012.**

<sup>32</sup>United States Federal Census, 1900.

<sup>33</sup> United States Federal Census, 1910.

<sup>34</sup>“In Elaborate Wedding Miss Mabel Mann and John W. Bergthold Are Married”. *The Charlotte News*, November 11, 1917.

<sup>35</sup> United States Federal Census, 1920.

<sup>36</sup>United States City Directory, Atlanta, Georgia, 1925, p. 116.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

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**Non-contributing Building.**

Facing north, set away from the road on a wooded lot, this one-story, contemporary cottage has a front-gable roof, lapped wood siding, single and paired one-over-one windows, and a parged masonry foundation. There is a porch on the north side of the cottage with a front gable roof, which is the entry to the building. It is compatible with the historic cottages in the district in its setting, massing, materials and style.

**Storage Building. ca. 2012. Non-contributing Building.**

Located west of the main house, this one-story, gambrel-roof storage building is clad in T1-11 siding, with a double-leaf wood door on the south elevation.

This house replaces a 1960s cottage built on the lot, the first built on Lot 14 of the High Top Colony Plat after the land changed hands several times. The lot was purchased in 1920 from Roy John by Zella and Dr. H. C. Gossard, who owned it until 1924. H. C. Gossard, like many of the original purchasers of lots in High Top Colony, was also associated with the YMCA.<sup>39</sup> In 1924 Gossard sold the lot to Hildreth and Ernest Mileham, who owned it until 1938 when they sold it to Estelle and Emerson Wilson. The Wilsons owned the lot until 1946, when they sold it to Teresa and Stanley Buss, later owners of “Slabsides” cottage. It wasn’t until the mid-to-late 1960s that the lot was sold to Margaret and Alfred Fletcher, who built the cottage soon after, selling it in 1997 to Mike Byrns.<sup>40</sup> The Byrns family demolished the cottage built by the Fletcher family, ca. 2012, and built the current house shortly thereafter.

**Vacant lot south of 170 High Top Colony Road.**

This wooded three-quarter-of-an-acre lot is nearly level, sloping very slightly in elevation from north to south.

**194 High Top Colony Road, south side. Virginia and Frank Day Cottage/Day Dreams/Cluny Castle. ca. 1921. Contributing Building.**

Set back from the road at the north edge of the lot, with a gravel driveway encircling the house, this one-story, hip-roof Rustic Revival cottage faces south. The lot rises slightly in elevation from south to north, so that the porch on the front of the house is raised, and the house sits at ground level on the north. The house is square in plan and is clad in unpainted weatherboard. The house has an interior stone chimney, rafter tails, a stone pier foundation, and a wraparound porch on the south and east sides. Windows throughout are wood six-over-six. On the south (front) elevation, the wraparound porch has a locust post foundation, tree trunk posts and tree branches for the balustrade, key features of the Rustic Revival style. Floors of the porch are wood and the ceiling is bead board. The elevation is three bays wide, consisting of single six-over-six, wood double-hung windows flanking the multi-panel door. On the east elevation, a portion of the porch has been partially enclosed. On the south end is a single six-over-six window. There are stone steps with a metal pipe rail leading up to the porch. The north (rear) elevation is three bays wide. In the center is an enclosed entry area that projects out, with a wood paneled door. Flanking this entry area are single six-over-six windows. The west

<sup>39</sup>“Sooner Gobs May Return to Briny”. *The Oklahoma Daily*, April 27, 1920.

<sup>40</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, pp. 29 – 30; 85.

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elevation is three bays wide, each consisting of a single six-over-six window. This house has undergone only minimal changes and is one of the most intact of the early cottages in the Colony. The adjacent undeveloped lot associated with this property constitutes an extended yard area for the property.

This house sits on Lots 16 and 17 of the High Top Colony Plat. Built by Virginia and Dr. Frank Day, who lived in Lynchburg, Virginia, the supervision of the construction of the house was left to John Bergthold. As “payment”, Dr. Day provided materials to Mr. Bergthold for building his house, Chipmunk Cottage. The Day Trail leading over to Blue Ridge Assembly from the Colony is named for Dr. Day.<sup>41</sup> Frank Day (1868 – 1966) was a professor of philosophy and Bible studies at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia from 1908 - 1938. He received his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Vanderbilt University and was an ordained Methodist minister. In 1902 he was on the faculty of George Washington University as a professor of Bible and Hebrew, later receiving his doctorate from that institution.<sup>42</sup> It is not known if Frank Day was directly involved in racial equity efforts in his career. In addition to the retaining these two lots plus Lot #20 for their own use, Dr. Day purchased four other lots from Roy John in High Top Colony (#19-221 High Top Colony Road; #21-215 High Top Colony Road; #22-21 Grey Eagle Road; and #23-vacant lot) and later sold them to others who built on them. The Day family did not own their cottage for very long and sold it in 1927 to Helen and Rufus Young McPherson of Raleigh, North Carolina. Rufus McPherson was born in Iredell County, North Carolina, graduating from Davidson College, and Helen, a native of Raleigh, North Carolina, was a graduate of the Peace Institute (now Peace College) in Raleigh. Rufus McPherson ran a life insurance company in Raleigh until he died in 1942. Children of the McPhersons included Rufus Alexander (1905-1944); William Primrose (1909-1998) and Primrose McPherson Paschal (1915-1998). Primrose was an accomplished artist, illustrating several children’s books, with one of her early paintings, *Beulah’s Baby*, located in the North Carolina Museum of Art’s permanent collection.<sup>43</sup> Several generations of McPhersons spent summers at the High Top Colony cottage, and the property has remained in the hands of McPherson descendants.<sup>44</sup>

**215 High Top Colony Road, north side. Allyn Robinson III House/Robinwood. 2011. Non-contributing Building.**

One of several new houses at the south end of High Top Colony Road, this house maintains the woodland setting of High Top Colony, and the house itself is architecturally compatible in terms of massing and materials. Facing west, set slightly below the road, accessed from a gravel drive, this one-and-one-half-story, front-gable-roof, shingle-clad cottage features a gabled entry porch at the southwest corner with an exposed roof structure, two by two balusters, and stone steps, and an exterior, double-shoulder, front stone chimney. There is a shed-roof dormer on the north side, and a shed-roof porch, also on the north side. Porch details include heavy wood posts and two by two balusters. Windows are single and paired six-over-six, double-hung wood sash, and the front door is stained glass/three-vertical-panel.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: *Celebrating 100 Years of Community*, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup>“Retired Bible Professor, Dr. F. L. Day, Dies at 97”. *The Charlotte Observer*, April 28, 1966.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: *Celebrating 100 Years of Community*, p. 21.

<sup>45</sup>Tax records list this as High Top Colony Road, but Colony name is Red Bird Road.

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This house sits on Lot 21 of the High Top Colony Plat. This lot was one of several that Dr. Frank Day purchased from Roy John in 1921. He sold the lot to L. R. Reynolds in 1924, but no cottage was built until ca. 1940 after Agnes and William Warren purchased the property in 1939.<sup>46</sup> Betty and Allyn Robinson, from New York, purchased the property in 1945, and the Robinson family has retained ownership of the property since then. The original cottage was severely damaged by a tree in 2008, and the current cottage was built to replace it in 2011, by Allyn Robinson III. The name “Robinwood” was kept for the new building.

**221 High Top Colony Road, south side. Lisa Levya and David Peele House/Ravinia. 2015. Non-contributing Building.**

This house, also located at the south end of High Top Colony Road, faces southwest, is set back from the road, up a hill in a woodland setting, and is accessed from a gravel parking area. This one-and-one-half-story, steep side-gable-roof, weatherboard-clad contemporary cottage has a wraparound porch on the southwest corner, with wood posts and rhododendron branches on the balustrade. Windows are one-over-one, double-hung sash, and the foundation is parged concrete block.<sup>47</sup>

This house sits on Lot 19 of the High Top Colony Plat. It was another lot purchased by Dr. Frank Day, in 1921, from Roy John. There was not a cottage on this property until the current building was constructed in 2015, built by current owners Lisa Levya and David Peele.

**225 High Top Colony Road, south side. Evelyn and Allan McCartney House/Wabac. 1974. Non-contributing Building.**

Set at the south end of High Top Colony Road, at the highest point in the Colony, this cottage, facing northwest, is set back from the road, in a woodland setting, and is accessed from a gravel driveway.<sup>48</sup> Stepping stones lead down the hill on the west side. This one-story-plus-basement, side-gable-roof, contemporary house is clad in T1-11 siding with a parged concrete block basement. The porch, located on the front (west) elevation of the house, has a shed roof, wood posts, and a two by four railing. There is an entry stoop on the north side of the house with a shed roof and wood steps on the south side of the porch. The water tank that serves the Colony is located to the northeast of this property. According to the current owner, the house was built with a locust pole foundation. In 1975 the front porch was added, and in 1976 the lower portion of the cottage was enclosed to create a workshop, bedroom, and bath. The carport was added in 1980. In 2012 and 2014, the kitchen and main bathroom were remodeled. In 2019, after a fallen tree damaged the roof, the roof structure was raised to create better mountain views. The house was built as a year-round residence.<sup>49</sup>

**Carport. 1980. Non-contributing Structure.**

Located north of the main house, this one-story, two-car, front-gable-roof carport, located north of the main house, has an exposed roof structure and T1-11 siding in the gable end.

<sup>46</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 43.

<sup>47</sup>Tax records list this as High Top Colony Road, but Colony name is Red Bird Road.

<sup>48</sup>Tax records list this as High Top Colony Road, but Colony name is Red Bird Road.

<sup>49</sup>Email to Sybil Argintar, June 24, 2020.

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**Wellhouse. 1974. Non-contributing Building.**

Located north of the main house, this small one-story, cinder block building, also located north of the house, has a shed roof, and is clad in T1-11 siding on the upper one-fourth of the walls.

This house sits on Lot 18 of the High Top Colony Plat. Robert W. Wunsch bought the lot from Roy John in 1924. Robert Wunsch was a YMCA Secretary at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1918 to 1921. In 1921 he left the University and moved back to his home in Monroe, Louisiana.<sup>50</sup> Wunsch later moved to Asheville, appearing in the Asheville city directory in 1928, rooming at the YMCA and working as a teacher at David Millard High School.<sup>51</sup> In 1940, Wunsch lived in Swannanoa, near Black Mountain, North Carolina, and at the time was a teacher at Black Mountain College.<sup>52</sup> By 1941 he was director of dramatics and was a professor of drama and creative writing at the College. According to newspaper accounts from 1941, he was re-elected that year as rector of the College, a position which involved serving as chief administrator of the College.<sup>53</sup> Wunsch held this position until at least 1945.<sup>54</sup> It is not known why Wunsch never built on the property, but he clearly had many of the same philosophical interests as many of the High Top Colony owners, through his work as a YMCA secretary and at Black Mountain College. It sold twice after Wunsch owned it, once to David Key, and then to A.C. Lewis Jr. Evelyn and Allan McCartney, from Vero Beach, Florida, purchased the lot in 1974 and soon after built this house.<sup>55</sup> Prior to its construction by the McCartney family, there was not a cottage on this property. The McCartneys rented other cottages at High Top Colony before they built their own place. Allan McCartney's father had been a YMCA Secretary in Greenville, South Carolina, and he recalled staying in one of the High Top Colony cottages for several summers as a young child, so was already familiar with the place. The property remains today under the ownership of descendants of the McCartney family.<sup>56</sup>

**High Top Colony Road, south side. Water Tank Reservoir. 1954. Contributing Structure.**

Set at the high point of the development, at the northeast corner of the lot associated with 225 High Top Colony Road, this cylindrical, painted steel tank sits on the ground, and serves the water supply needs of all of High Top Colony. In 1954, the Colony contracted with Asheville Steel and Salvage Company to purchase a 10,000 gallon storage tank to be located at the highest point in the Colony. This was installed on December 8, 1954 and has remained in use since that time.<sup>57</sup>

**Hoot Owl Road, north side. Roy John Park. 1919. Contributing site.**

As noted, two of the original contiguously platted lots for High Top Colony, lots 11 and 12, were reserved for use as a community park. These lots were located on the north end of the development, at a lower elevation, and were roughly centrally located to the cottage properties

<sup>50</sup>"YMCA Secretary Quits the Work Here". *The Daily Tar Heel*, January 7, 1921.

<sup>51</sup> United States City Directories, for W. Robert Wunsch, 1928, p. 374.

<sup>52</sup>United States Federal Census, 1940.

<sup>53</sup>"Wunsch Re-elected". *The High Point Enterprise*, October 17, 1941.

<sup>54</sup>"Three Students Finish Work at Black Mountain". *Asheville Citizen-Times*, June 10, 1945.

<sup>55</sup>High Top Colony Property Owners Association, Inc. historical archives. Various dates, unpublished.

<sup>56</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 49.

<sup>57</sup>Folger, D. F. "History of High Top Colony 1919 - 1962", p. 3.

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on this side of the development, but further away from the cottages on the south that were further up the mountain. These heavily wooded, primarily level lots, a total of 1.34 acres, remain in reserve today, with some trails added through the area for access. There are a few remnants of the original stone circle that was used for community meetings in the 1920s, but no other built features, including a picnic area and a cook stove, built in the 1940s, remain on the site. It is unknown when these features were removed. There are a few recently-constructed trails through the property, but no large area of open space.

**14 Hoot Owl Road, north side. Monica Greene and Cappy White House/Hoot Owl Retreat. ca. 1988. Non-contributing Building.**

Facing south and close to the road, this one-and-one-half-story-plus-basement side-gable-roof contemporary cottage is clad in board and batten siding. Two prominent, shingle-clad, front-gable dormers are located about the two-car garage on the front of the house. The main portion of the house, a full three stories at the rear, is set back from the garage bays, with a large, wooded lot to the rear. Windows are one-over-one, double-hung wood sash, and the front door is a multi-panel metal.

This house sits on Lot 10 of the High Top Colony Plat. W. B. Gordon, from Columbia, South Carolina, bought Lots 9 and 10 from Roy John in 1949. He then sold the lots to William H. Morgan. Morgan retained Lot 9 for his own but sold Lot 10 to Pete Madsen in 1972. This house was not built until the property changed hands again, to Cappy White and Monica Greene, in 1988. The property has changed hands since then, to Karen Vermillion (1995 – 1999), and to the current owners, George LeRoy and Shirley Taffel.<sup>58</sup>

**19 Hoot Owl Road, south side. Vivian and Dr. D. F. Folger Cottage/Bob White/E Top. 1919. Contributing Building.**

Set high on a hill above the road within a wooded lot that drops steeply to the north, this one-story-plus-basement bungalow has a metal-clad front-gable roof with splayed eaves. The entry to the house is on the east side, reached from a steep gravel driveway accessed from Hoot Owl Road. There is a level area behind the house on the south, at a higher elevation than the driveway, accessed from the house by several steps that lead up to a flat lawn. Known as “Bob White” during the Folgers’ ownership, the house is clad in unpainted weatherboard siding and has one-over-one, wood double-hung sash windows throughout. The east elevation of the house is three bays, with the central nine-light-over-panel door with a front-gable entry stoop flanked, on the south end, by a rectangular fixed window, and on the north end by a one-over-one window. The south elevation consists of a small, screened porch with a shed roof awning over a screen door at the southwest corner, followed by paired and single one-over-one windows. The north elevation of the house, facing Hoot Owl Road, has a tri-partite picture window on the east end, followed by a paired window to the west. This elevation retains the original shed-roof porch which extends across most of the elevation and is accessible from the inside only. The Rustic Revival details including tree trunk posts and tree branch railing that appear in documentary photos of the house have been replaced with square wood posts and a rough-sawn

<sup>58</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 85.

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board railing, with lattice below, covering the tall concrete block foundation pillars.<sup>59</sup> While many of these changes were done primarily before the end of the period of significance, when Dag Folger owned the house from 1919 – 1962, there have been a few non-historic changes made as well. According to the current owner, on the east side of the house, a side sleeping porch was enclosed, adding an additional bedroom and bath. The front-gable entry stoop was then added, along with wood steps up to the entry stoop. The driveway on the east side, and the smaller screened porch at the southwest corner of the house are additional changes built since 1962. Between 1975 and 2014, under the ownership of the McDonalds, the kitchen was updated, a half-bath was installed off the kitchen, baseboard heating was added throughout the house, and windows were replaced. In 2015 a new septic system was installed, and from 2016 – 2018 the kitchen was renovated, the half bath was moved to a bedroom, and the attic was insulated. The house is still a three-season cabin and has not been winterized.<sup>60</sup>

This house sits on Lot 8 of the High Top Colony Plat. Dag Folger bought the lot from Roy John in 1919, and built the house the same year, making it one of the earliest houses in the Colony. Dr. D. F. (Dag) Folger (1894 - 1984) was also a YMCA Secretary. Born in Central, South Carolina, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from Clemson College, a master's degree in social service from Vanderbilt University and a doctorate in education from Yale University. Folger was a veteran of World War I, and was associated with YMCA's at Clemson, Emory and Yale.<sup>61</sup> In the early 1930s, based out of Nashville, Tennessee, where he served as an instructor at the YMCA's graduate school there, Folger was a regional secretary, where he would speak on various college campuses in North and South Carolina. His work focused upon assisting each institution he spoke to and helping them in their efforts with the work of the YMCA. This included training courses offered by the YMCA and how their local groups could be more involved in the organization.<sup>62</sup> From 1934 - 1940 Dr. Folger worked for the Tennessee Valley Authority in Knoxville, Tennessee. He followed this work at West Georgia College where he was Dean of Instruction until 1945, and then returned to Knoxville to head up the John C. Campbell Folk School. In 1959 Dr. Folger was named as head of the Department of Education of Georgia College for women, where he remained until he retired in 1971. He died in Asheville in 1984.<sup>63</sup> Vivian Folger, Dag Folger's first wife, died unexpectedly in a car accident in 1932.<sup>64</sup> He later remarried, to Genevieve Morrow.<sup>65</sup> Dag Folger continued to spend summers at High Top Colony after the death of his first wife, and later, after he remarried, not selling the house until 1962, when he sold it to Selma Erwin and Gene Brannon, of Milledgeville, Georgia. Selma Erwin then took over full ownership of the house in 1968 and retained it until she sold it to Gloria and Arthur McDonald, from Charleston, South Carolina, in 1975. Current owners are Frank Rupp and Cynthia Montague, also of Charleston, South Carolina, who bought the property in 2014.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>59</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 5 and p. 16.

<sup>60</sup>Emails to Sybil Argintar, dated June 11, 2020 and June 25, 2020.

<sup>61</sup>Folger, Dr. D. F. Obituary. *The Greenville News*, March 28, 1984.

<sup>62</sup>“Y Secretary Is Visitor To City”. *The Greenville News*, February 15, 1931.

<sup>63</sup>Folger, Dr. D. F. Obituary. *The Greenville News*, March 28, 1984.

<sup>64</sup>“Mrs. Vivian R. Folger”. *The Greenville News*, June 17, 1932.

<sup>65</sup>Folger, Dr. D. F. Obituary. *The Greenville News*, March 28, 1984.

<sup>66</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 85.

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**20 Hoot Owl Road, north side. Mildred and William Morgan Cottage/Crest Haven.  
ca. 1949. Contributing Building.**

This one-story-plus-basement, asphalt-shingle-clad, side-gable-roof Ranch style house faces southeast and is set on a large three-and-one-half-acre wooded lot that slopes down from south to north. The house is located near the south end of the property, with most of the lot to the rear. The lot has been expanded from its original size, with a section added to the north. Even with this expansion, this was originally one of the larger lots in the Colony. There are several stone and gravel walkways to the front and west of the house leading to the wooded lot at the rear. Set below the road and a level gravel parking area, the house is typical of a Ranch style house in its long, linear form, but its board and batten siding is not as typical. The use of this type of siding helps it to fit more within the natural surroundings and be compatible with older cottages built in the Colony. The only example of the Ranch style in the district, this house features brick facing over approximately one-fourth of the façade, one-over-one, double-hung wood sash windows and a concrete block foundation. The south (front) elevation is five bays wide, beginning at the west end with two single windows, a nine-light-over-panel front door, and a paired and single window on the east end. The entry stoop to the house has a front gable roof supported by narrow wood posts, with mosaic tile applied to the low brick wall supporting the posts. A wood deck has been added on the east side. The east elevation is one bay wide, with a triple, fixed-light window. This side of the house cantilevers out over the basement, with stone cheek walls around concrete steps leading down to the above-ground basement door. The north (rear) elevation of the house has a projecting screened porch with a front gable roof above the basement level. To the east, on the main block of the house, are two single windows and a sliding glass door. To the west of the porch are two square fixed-light windows and wood steps and railing leading up to the screened porch.

**Playhouse. ca. 1949. Contributing Building.**

Located southeast of the main house, on the east side of the parking area is built on wood posts and cantilevers out over the hill below it on the east. Facing west, this one-story, asphalt-shingle-clad front-gable-roof building is clad in board and batten siding. There are plywood panels and two narrow vertical fixed-light windows on the front.

**Workshop. ca. 1949. Contributing Building.**

Located southwest of the main house, on the west side of the parking area and facing east, this one-story, front-gable roof building is clad in board and batten siding. It has one-over-one, double-hung windows and a paneled metal door on the east elevation, and no window or door openings on any of the other elevations.

This house sits on Lot 9 of the High Top Colony Plat. Roy John and his wife Florence built their first cottage in the Colony on this site, in 1919. The house was sold by John to W. B. and Virginia Gordon not long after it was built, and the Johns moved across the creek and built a house at 42 Hoot Owl Road, their second home in the Colony. W. B. Gordon was also a Y secretary. Bill and Mildred Morgan bought the property from the Gordons in 1949, tore down the existing cottage, and built this house in its place.<sup>67</sup> William and Mildred Morgan, of

<sup>67</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 25.

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Tallahassee, Florida, both with doctorates in their fields, were authors of a book entitled *Thinking Together About Marriage and Family*, which was published in 1955. Bill Morgan had previously been employed as Dean of Asheville-Biltmore College (now the University of North Carolina at Asheville), and at the time of the book's publication in 1955 was on the faculty at Appalachian State Teachers College at Boone. Mildred Morgan was the founder of the Asheville Family Life Program. She was also president of the Southeastern Council on Family Relations and a professor of home and family life at Florida State University. Additional books the Morgans wrote included *Student Religion During Fifty Years* and *Planning for Marriage*.<sup>68</sup> During the time the Morgans lived in this house, Bill Morgan advocated for a better water system for the Colony, with a new system to be put in at the top of the Colony, so water was available at all times (the extant water tank and new system was installed in 1954, at the high point of the Colony).<sup>69</sup> The Morgans owned the house until 1972 when they sold it to Bette and Pete Madsen. The Madsens sold it to Cappy White and Monica Greene in 1988. Monica, an artist, created the decorative mosaics at the entrance to the cottage. (White and Greene later moved and built 14 Hoot Owl Road in 1988).<sup>70</sup> In 1992 the property was sold to Luanne and John Barbour, who retained ownership until 2001 when they sold it to the current owners, Susan and Jack Campbell.<sup>71</sup>

**30 Hoot Owl Road, north side. Theresa and Dennis Clower House. 2020.  
Non-contributing Building.**

X

**42 Hoot Owl Road, north side. Alice and Howard Kester Cottage/Piney Moors. 1939.  
Contributing Building.**

This one-and-one-half-story, side-gable-roof, shingle-sided bungalow sits up on a hill above the gravel drive and creek below, on a 5.79-acre site. Built on the largest lot in High Top Colony, at the end of Hoot Owl Road, the house is located across and to the north of the creek which was used at times for the water system in the Colony. There are stone retaining wall terraces on the south side of the yard, with a gravel drive running in front of the house. There are two front-gable dormers on the front of the house (west elevation), and one shed-roof dormer at the rear, with knee braces under the main roof. The front elevation of the house has four bays, consisting of, from north to south, a bank of six-light casement windows, a picture window, the twelve-light-over-panel front door, and another picture window. The front porch extends north past the main block of the house, and there are concrete steps with stone cheek walls leading up to the house at the southwest corner. The south elevation of the house has six-over-six and multi-light casement windows, including four-light casement windows in the gable end. The north elevation of the house consists of two bays, each with a picture window flanked by six-light casement windows, and four-light casement windows in the gable end. There is a one-story, side-gable-roof wing on the south end with six-over-six, double-hung sash windows. Only minimal changes have been made to the house, the main one being the digging out of a basement in the 1970s during the time the Kesters owned the property and enclosing the area below the front porch with

<sup>68</sup>"Morgans Write New Book on Marriage and Family". *Asheville Citizen-Times*, May 29, 1955.

<sup>69</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 25, p. 85.

<sup>70</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 26.

<sup>71</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 26.

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pierced concrete block, hiding the original stone piers. The original rustic detailing on the porch consisting of tree trunk posts and a railing of rhododendron branches has been replaced recently by 1 x 1 balusters and square posts.<sup>72</sup> This house sits on Lot 24 of the High Top Colony Plat, the largest lot in the Colony. As noted in the information related to 20 Hoot Owl Road, the second home of Florence and Roy John in the Colony was built on this lot. This house was torn down and the current cottage, "Piney Moors", was built by Alice and Howard Kester.

### **Garage. ca. 1970. Non-contributing building.**

Facing south and located north of the main house, this one-story, two-car, concrete block building has a front-gable roof with exposed rafter tails.

Howard and Alice Kester met in the summer of 1926 at a program at Blue Ridge Assembly. Howard was representing Lynchburg College in Virginia, and Alice represented Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia. Married in 1927, the couple returned to Black Mountain whenever possible, often renting the Bergtholds' cottage, Chipmunk Lodge or the McPherson's Cluny Castle. In the early 1930s, Kester began his social justice work in earnest. Kester's work was difficult, and often dangerous. By the late 1930s, with so much time apart from his wife and young daughter, and the toils of the dangers inherent in his work, Kester began to feel the need to move on and create a permanent, year-round home for his family.

In 1938 the family purchased five acres of land in High Top Colony, in walking distance from Blue Ridge Assembly, where Howard and Alice had met. They tore down the simple cottage which had been built by Roy John, and in 1939 built Piney Moors as a year-round residence. During the time they owned the house, from 1939 to 1972, they added a garage, a basement, insulation, and a furnace. Several stone retaining walls were built all around the house, creating a terraced effect. Alice landscaped a great deal of the property, including naming the creek on the property Lullaby Creek, and Howard built several dams along the creek to help control the flow and direction of water. While he lived at the Colony, he was in turn Director at Christmount, a religious assembly in Black Mountain, founded in 1944, and Dean of Students at Montreat College, both places where he could continue following his Christian ideals and his social justice work. In the early 1950s he also served as Director of the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina.<sup>73</sup> The Kesters' daughter, Nancy Kester Neale, inherited the cottage from her parents in 1972, and sold the property to the current owners, Annie and Ryan Carlson, in 2017.<sup>74</sup>

### **Integrity Statement**

Overall, the High Top Colony Historic District maintains a high level of integrity, especially in terms of its location and setting within a wooded environment, including minimal impact on the landscape in terms of placement of cottages and use of gravel for all roadways. The majority of the historic cottages retain a high level of integrity in terms of design, materials, and workmanship, with the biggest changes being the addition in some cases of additional wings or

<sup>72</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: *Celebrating 100 Years of Community*, p. 39.

<sup>73</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: *Celebrating 100 Years of Community*, p. 39. This book notes that a Mr. Fortune built the house, as he did others in the Swannanoa Valley. It does not indicate if he also built other cottages in the Colony.

<sup>74</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: *Celebrating 100 Years of Community*, pp. 39-40, p. 86.

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full or partial enclosure of porches. Overall, these changes only minimally impact the integrity of design, material, and workmanship, and character defining features are still evident. Original materials remain and materials used for these changes utilize the same materials seen throughout the district, including the use of wood and stone. Some lots have been recombined or enlarged through the years, but most lots are the same size as they were in the original plat. This reconfiguration and combining of some lots has in no way affected the integrity or setting of the district. Lot 1 (143 High Top Colony Road) has diminished in size, with a portion of the lot on the east side combined with Lot 2 (152 High Top Colony Road). This same Lot 2 has also been expanded to the north. Lot 4 (159 High Top Colony Road) has been enlarged slightly to the east. Lot 9 (20 Hoot Owl Road) has been enlarged the most, with an expansion to the north. Lot 10 (20 Hoot Owl Road) has been slightly expanded to the south, taking in a portion of Lots 5, 6 and 8. Lots 5 and 6 have been combined (160 High Top Colony Road). Lots 16 and 17 have been combined. Lot 13 (16 Grey Eagle Road) has been subdivided into three parcels. Lots 20 and 21 (215 High Top Colony Road) have been combined. While some degree of integrity is lost with these changes to the lots, the district, overall, retains integrity of design in the architectural styles prevalent throughout the district. New houses, built outside of the period of significance, are compatible in terms of settings back from the road, woodland surroundings, and scale and use of similar materials as the historic cottages. The feeling of the district, as originally intended as a place of retreat and solitude, is maintained throughout, but the association with the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly no longer exists.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack

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individual distinction.

D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture  
Social History  
Entertainment/Recreation  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1919 - 1954  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Significant Dates**

1919  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The district is significant at the local level and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of social history and entertainment/recreation and under Criterion C in the area of architecture. Under Criterion A, High Top Colony is significant for its association with social justice movements of the day as well as for its association with the religious retreat and summer resort movements of the first quarter of the twentieth century in western North Carolina. High Top Colony was associated with the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly, one of several religious retreats which were built in Black Mountain, North Carolina, in the first two decades of the twentieth century. High Top Colony developed as an extension of Blue Ridge YMCA Assembly, and while it also served as a summer resort for the property owners, it would not have developed without the religious retreat movement taking place in Black Mountain at the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth centuries. Blue Ridge Assembly in particular was founded by individuals who were working in the early years of the twentieth century for racial equity concerns. Many of the cottages in High Top Colony were built for leaders and secretaries of the YMCA throughout the southeast associated with these social issues, adding to the district's significance in the area of social history. High Top Colony developed as an extension of Blue Ridge YMCA Assembly, and while it also served as a

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summer resort for the property owners, it would not have developed without the religious retreat movement taking place in Black Mountain at the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth centuries. With the Colony located within easy walking distance from the Assembly grounds for summer programs taking place there, many of the secretaries purchased lots in the Colony and built summer homes there. High Top Colony is also important as a summer resort that created an atmosphere of rest, renewal, and retreat. The mountains of western North Carolina was a location which drew many people from all over the south for its cool summer climate and woodland environment, and those who built in High Top Colony were drawn to the area for these reasons. Under Criterion C, High Top Colony is significant not only as a collection of popular architectural styles of summer resort communities, but for its retention of a woodland setting that minimally impacts the environment, including small cottages set back from the road, utilization of materials often available on site, and gravel roadways, all of which create a small footprint within the natural landscape. High Top Colony was founded in 1919, with the cottages built from 1919 to 1949 and the construction of the current water system completed in 1954. Within the boundaries of the historic district is a collection of primarily Rustic Revival and Craftsman style houses built in the bungalow form, as well as one example of the Ranch style. All of the cottages are located within a woodland setting and typical of resort and retreat architecture seen in other parts of western North Carolina during this time period. This overall character, of creating a development with minimal impact upon the woodland mountain environment, is evident in other mountain resort communities, including those in Albemarle Park in Asheville and portions of Montreat in Black Mountain. All of these communities preserve the mountain setting with their use of steep, winding roadways, use of stone and other natural building materials, and retention of woodland settings for houses. Of all of these, however, High Top Colony maintains the least impact on the environment, due to the retention of large heavily wooded lots, gravel roadways, and houses, in most cases, set far enough away from the main roads that they are not easily visible, including the location of newer non-contributing houses. High Top Colony, with a Period of Significance of 1919 to 1954, the time when the Colony underwent its greatest period of development in terms of building of cottages and establishment of electrical and water systems, is important not only for its architectural and environmental significance, but for its association with the religious retreat, resort movement, and forward-thinking connection with racial and equity concerns of the day.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

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## **Historic Background**

### *Founding and Development of Black Mountain*

Black Mountain is located in western North Carolina, approximately twenty miles east of Asheville, near the eastern edge of Buncombe County. The town is located in the Swannanoa Valley, a broad valley approximately eighteen miles long and surrounded by the Black and Craggy Mountains to the north, and the Swannanoa Mountains to the south. Two major streams run through the town, Flat Creek and the North Fork of the Swannanoa River.

The town of Black Mountain was originally known as Grey Eagle, but it is not known where the name came from. It is possible that it was named this by the earliest inhabitants, the Cherokee.<sup>75</sup> The earliest white settlers in the Swannanoa Valley began to arrive from eastern North Carolina and Virginia in the mid to late 1700s, and like in other parts of Buncombe County, did not co-exist well with the Cherokee.<sup>76</sup> The early white settlers in Black Mountain included the Frederick Lafayette Burnett, William Stepp, John Kyle, Elijah and Elisha Kerlee, Godson, Brown, Allison, Walker, and Padgett families.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, travel to Grey Eagle (later Black Mountain) was not easy. The steep mountain terrain prevented the development of roads or rails through the region. In the mid-nineteenth century, a stagecoach road, the Western Turnpike, chartered by the state General Assembly in 1849, laid out a route running in an east-west direction (now Highway 70/State Street). This helped further the development of the town and opened the way to livestock drovers coming from points west, though primary development in the area was farming and small mercantile operations.<sup>77</sup>

By the middle years of the nineteenth century, the Swannanoa Valley still remained as a relatively isolated place, despite the development of the stagecoach routes. Serving as the main transportation access through the Swannanoa Valley, the stagecoach helped to transport goods and visitors until the arrival of the railroad in the late nineteenth century.<sup>78</sup> While North Carolina communities to the east had the advantage of rail service, getting the train up the mountains was a difficult endeavor. Work began towards the goal of completing the rail lines in the early 1850s and 1860s. But when the Civil War began in 1861, men were called to serve and construction came to a halt. Rail access and the additional economic development and prosperity it would eventually bring to the town would have to wait.

Railroad construction didn't pick up again until the Reconstruction era of the 1870s that followed the War, with the Western North Carolina Railroad reaching Black Mountain in 1880. The rail station was changed from Grey Eagle to Black Mountain by the railroad company and the town

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<sup>75</sup>Bisher, Catherine W., Michael T. Southern and Jennifer F. Martin. [A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina](#). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999, p. 10.

<sup>76</sup>Sondley, F. A. Asheville and Buncombe County, Asheville: The Citizen Company, 1922.

<sup>77</sup>"Black Mountain Downtown Historic District", National Register nomination, 2004, p. 8-25.

<sup>78</sup>History of Black Mountain and Its People, p. 17.

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was officially incorporated on March 4, 1893.<sup>79</sup> As in many other mountain communities, it was not until the railroad arrived that Black Mountain began to see more rapid growth in terms of tourism, residential neighborhoods, commercial development, and religious development. The railroad brought building supplies and tourists, making the period from 1880 through 1915 a prosperous time for the town. Once the railroad arrived in Black Mountain the ease of access to the mountains in general was greatly increased, and Black Mountain experienced a major boost to tourism, drawing its share of tourists escaping to the cool mountain climate in the summers. Boarding houses, inns, and grand hotels were popular, along with the establishment of resort communities, all with the goal of rest, rejuvenation, and relaxation. Retreating to the mountains of western North Carolina to escape the heat of the low country further south was not the only draw for tourists. Western North Carolina also became known as a center for health and rejuvenation, including the development of many sanatoriums to treat tuberculosis. The area grew in popularity as a center for summer religious retreats as well, due to the cooler climate and the mountain environs which were conducive not only for providing physical relief and relaxation, but also as a place where spiritual growth could take place.

By the middle of the 1910s, Black Mountain was a thriving community, with many new homes, a well-established and prosperous commercial center, a railroad, paved roads, and an influx of tourists every summer boosting the overall economic development of the town. By the late 1910s and 1920s Black Mountain continued to grow and develop. By 1918, there were electric lights, a sewer system, and a central water system in place in the town, and some homes had telephone service. Hundreds of summer visitors continued to come to the area, and many families made the choice to settle in Black Mountain on a permanent basis due to the magnificent mountain scenery, climate, and prosperous nature of the town.<sup>80</sup>

## **Social History Context**

### *Religious Retreats*

High Top Colony developed as an extension of Blue Ridge YMCA Assembly, and while it also served as a summer resort for the property owners, it would not have developed without the religious retreat movement taking place in Black Mountain at the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth centuries. With the Colony located within easy walking distance from the Assembly grounds for summer programs taking place there, many of the secretaries purchased lots in the Colony and built summer homes there. As noted above and in High Top Colony's book, High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, "...by 1893 Black Mountain was incorporated, and many folks began coming to the little town for the cool mountain climate in the summers. This included a number of investors developing various retreats, conference centers, and camps, including Blue Ridge YMCA Assembly...".<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup>"Black Mountain Downtown Historic District", p. 8-27.

<sup>80</sup>The History of Black Mountain, p. 34. and A Pictorial History of Black Mountain, p. 47.

<sup>81</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 3.

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Established in 1912, the Blue Ridge YMCA Assembly was founded to serve as the YMCA conference center for the southeastern United States.<sup>82</sup> The Blue Ridge Assembly served as a student conference and religious training center, offering summer retreats on its campus, with housing and meals provided. Blue Ridge Assembly was founded by Willis Duke Weatherford (1875 – 1970).<sup>83</sup> Weatherford was an International Student Secretary for the YMCA for colleges in the south and southwest United States, and being a native of western North Carolina, began looking around for a permanent home for the YMCA's summer student conferences.<sup>84</sup> These conferences, from 1892 up until the turn of the twentieth century, had been held at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, with some gatherings held around other places in western North Carolina. The international committee of the YMCA would not take this on, but Weatherford pursued this on his own. He purchased 952 acres, noting that he "...believed that its unsurpassed view of the Blue Ridge and Black Mountains would give the peaceful and inspirational setting necessary for the successful training of student Christian leaders..."<sup>85</sup> Blue Ridge Assembly, still an active conference center, was "...one of the most prominent of the numerous assembly grounds centered around Asheville in western North Carolina..."<sup>86</sup>

Weatherford was also a founder of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, striving to make the Assembly "...one of the forward-looking leaders of the entire south..."<sup>87</sup> This philosophy was carried by the men who served as regional YMCA secretaries in the south, many of whom attended Assembly summer retreats and later purchased property in High Top Colony. These forward-thinking social justice and racial equity philosophies of founder Willis D. Weatherford that were part of the Blue Ridge Assembly and of many of the founders of High Top Colony, make Blue Ridge Assembly and High Top Colony unique among other religious retreat centers of the time. While these retreat centers today ascribe to more inclusive philosophies, in the first half of the twentieth century their focus was more upon Christian education and training that did not consider the issues of other races and peoples as did Blue Ridge Assembly and High Top Colony.

Two other religious retreat centers that developed in Black Mountain and Buncombe County from the end of the nineteenth century through the first quarter of the twentieth century, around the same time as the Blue Ridge YMCA Assembly, included Montreat and Ridgecrest. In addition to its regular programming, Ridgecrest offered Mountain Chautauquas. Founded in 1874 in Lake Chautauqua, New York, Chautauqua was an adult educational program established by leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Initially set up as a training program for Sunday

<sup>82</sup>Bisher, Catherine W., Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin. A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999, p. 306.

<sup>83</sup>"Blue Ridge Assembly Historic District". National Register Nomination, 1979, p. 8-1. Dr. Willis D. Weatherford, Jr. was the sixth president of Berea College, serving from 1967–1984. Dr. Weatherford's intellectual background, service and experience were a good fit for Berea as he strongly believed in transforming the lives of Berea students in the ideals of racial justice, civic responsibility, and Christian service. Weatherford married Anne Smith in 1954—they raised five children together, all of whom graduated from Berea College. Dr. Weatherford passed away in Black Mountain, North Carolina, on May 22, 1996 at 79 years old. <https://berea.libraryhost.com/?p=/findingaid&id=253&q=&rootcontentid=56620>, accessed July 6, 2020.

<sup>84</sup>"Blue Ridge Assembly Historic, p. 8-1.

<sup>85</sup>"Blue Ridge Assembly Historic District", p. 8-1.

<sup>86</sup>"Blue Ridge Assembly Historic District", p. 8-0.

<sup>87</sup>A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999, p. 306.

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school teachers, the program later expanded to include topics of historic, philosophical, and general educational interest. While it is not known if other religious retreat centers in the area took part, Ridgecrest was one of the religious retreats associated with this nationally-recognized program, indicative of the importance of the religious retreat centers in the mountains of western North Carolina.<sup>88</sup> Two other religious retreat centers were founded in the 1940s, Christmount, in Black Mountain (founded 1944), and Lutheridge, in Arden (founded in 1946). While developed closer to the middle of the twentieth century, these later religious retreats are indicative of the continuation of the religious retreat movement in the area that still exist in the present day.

The Mountain Retreat Association, founded in 1897 by an interdenominational group of ministers, including the Reverend John C. Collins, a Congregational minister from Connecticut, came to Black Mountain looking for a place of beauty and comfort. Their vision was "...to build a Christian Settlement, a mountain retreat, shortened to the name "Montreat", where people could come for physical and spiritual renewal...".<sup>89</sup> After obtaining approval from the Synod of North Carolina, the Reverend J. R. Howerton purchased the 4,000-acre forested land which became Montreat, a town separate from the town of Black Mountain. Funds were raised by selling stock, with the property owned by the entity Mountain Retreat Association. Montreat connected to the town via a road that was graded, later paved, and named Montreat Road. The first Presbyterian conference was held at the property in 1907.<sup>90</sup> Montreat continued to develop, and in 1916, Montreat Normal School for Women opened on the campus. In 1933, this school became Montreat Junior College, and Montreat College in 1934.<sup>91</sup> Montreat College still operates in the town of Montreat, and summer retreats are held every year, as happened at Montreat's founding.

Located two miles to the east of downtown Black Mountain, Ridgecrest was founded and developed in 1907 by the Southern Baptist Assembly.<sup>92</sup> Bernard Washington Spilman envisioned, in 1895, a "...place for Baptists to meet and to learn how to teach the Bible to the multitudes...". Spilman, who served as Sunday School secretary for the Baptist Convention of North Carolina often held mountain retreats known as Mountain Chautauquas. He searched throughout western North Carolina for the ideal spot for his envisioned retreat center, finding the Black Mountain location on August 4, 1906.<sup>93</sup> The place was all he had hoped it would be and was centrally located to larger cities such as New York, Chicago, Little Rock, New Orleans, and central Florida, making it accessible to "multitudes of Baptists".<sup>94</sup> Spilman was elected as general manager and secretary for the new assembly, overseeing the incorporation on March 8, 1907 of the Southern Baptist Assembly and the purchase of 1,100 acres. The land was laid out by the same engineering firm that had laid out Biltmore Estate in Asheville. The first summer program took place in 1909, drawing 600 people. In 1912, the assembly name was changed to

<sup>88</sup><https://www.ncpedia.org/chautauqua> Powell, William, "Chautauqua". Accessed July 30, 2021.

<sup>89</sup><https://montreat.org/about/history> Accessed July 7, 2020.

<sup>90</sup>Griffith, Clay. "Dougherty Heights Historic District". National Register nomination, 2011, p. 8-29.

<sup>91</sup><https://montreat.org/about/history> Accessed July 7, 2020.

<sup>92</sup>"Dougherty Heights Historic District". National Register nomination, 2011, pp. 8-29 – 8-30.

<sup>93</sup><https://ridgecrestconferencecenter.com/about-us/history-of-ridgecrest/> Accessed July 7, 2020.

<sup>94</sup><https://ridgecrestconferencecenter.com/about-us/history-of-ridgecrest/> Accessed July 7, 2020.

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Ridgecrest.<sup>95</sup> Until recently, Ridgecrest hosted over 70,000 visitors annually, and operated as a retreat center until it announced it would be closing in 2020 due to ongoing financial difficulties.

There were other retreat centers in Buncombe County that developed through the first half of the twentieth century, during the period of significance of High Top Colony. Christmount, located on Highway 9, just south of Black Mountain, was founded in 1944. While developing later in the twentieth century than the Colony, Christmount also provided summer retreats and training centers for religious leaders and established summer camp programs for Christian youth which it continues today.

Lutheridge, located in Arden in southern Buncombe County, was established in 1946. In 1907, as part of the early twentieth century interest in Christian education, a committee of the North Carolina Conference of the Tennessee Synod of the Lutheran Church was established to look at a Sunday Normal School for training religious educators. One was established in 1908 in Concord, North Carolina, followed by one in Newberry, South Carolina in 1911. As the program changed from a training institute to more of a retreat focus, a location in the mountains of western North Carolina was sought, beginning in 1919. Until land could be purchased, the Lutherans shared space with other retreat centers, including Blue Ridge Assembly. In 1922, Lutheran representatives of several southern states, including North and South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, and Alabama, met to "...promote the idea of a summer center...". Several possible locations were investigated, but it wasn't until 1946 that the 172-acre campus in Arden, North Carolina was purchased for the retreat center.<sup>96</sup>

## **Entertainment/Recreation Context**

### *Summer Resorts*

High Top Colony, although connected philosophically to the Blue Ridge YMCA Assembly and its programs, was also its own entity as a summer resort for families from all over the southeast. Summer homes were an important part of the built environment and culture of the mountains of western North Carolina, not only for their association with religious retreats, but for many who bought property for building a private summer home in a woodland setting. These homes were bought as single lots or as part of subdivisions. Summers would mean that families would pack up and visit the cool mountains, visiting from Florida, South Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Often cottages were rented for the summer. One early summer resort, Albemarle Park in Asheville, was initially set up for families to rent cottages, with all of their meals and necessities provided for them at the associated hotel, the Manor Inn. Other places in the mountains of western North Carolina served as summer homes for visitors, including Linville in Avery County, Cashiers in Jackson County, and Highlands in Macon County.

The religious retreat centers, in addition to the summer spiritual programs they offered to all ages, were also summer retreats for families, with some owning their houses and others renting cottages for the summer. Montreat, developed beginning in 1906 – 1907, featured many private cottages as well as apartment buildings throughout the town, built from the early years of

<sup>95</sup> <https://ridgecrestconferencecenter.com/about-us/history-of-ridgecrest/> Accessed July 7, 2020.

<sup>96</sup> <http://divinityarchive.com/bitstream/handle/11258/8282/gotellitonmounta00jenk.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> Jenkins, H. Harrison. "Go Tell It On the Mountain: A History of Lutheridge", pp. 1-8. Accessed July 30, 2021.

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Montreat through the mid-twentieth century. Originally most of this housing was available for rent in the summers, with most homes later converted to full-time residences. Blue Ridge Assembly included nineteen rental cottages as part of its summer retreat program. Ridgecrest, in addition to the dorms on its campus, also had cottages available for summer residents.

High Top Colony, unlike some of the other religious and non-religious summer retreats, was clearly intended to be more of a rustic environment, with families enjoying the natural woodland setting and more primitive accommodations than were provided at other religious retreats. While all of the summer resort communities emphasized the focus upon natural mountain settings, the residents at High Top Colony, in its early years, were taking part in more of a camping environment. Its cottages were minimalist in what they included, with water, food, and kerosene carried in from Blue Ridge Assembly, and electricity not available until 1946.<sup>97</sup>

Last Resort, located to the north of High Top Colony, and accessible from High Top Colony Road, was developed in 1946, with several small cottages built in its early years through the 1950s. It was developed in much the same way as High Top Colony, with winding dirt and gravel roads, simple wooden signage, and houses set back from the road in rhododendron thickets and woods. The development was re-platted in 1964, and most houses built since that time, as noted from a brief windshield survey, are contemporary in design, possibly replacements of earlier cottages.

### *Racial Equity and Social Justice*

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, at the time when High Top Colony was founded, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Blue Ridge Assembly stood at the forefront of early social change in regard to their philosophies of racial justice and equity. The founding of High Top Colony was closely associated with Blue Ridge Assembly and the racial equity programs of the YMCA. Many of the Colony's owners were involved in this racial justice and equity work, in the summers at Blue Ridge Assembly, and during the remainder of the year in their home locations throughout the southeast.

High Top Colony, too, stands out, for its time, as a place where those who were involved in early racial equity issues bought property. Through their association with Blue Ridge Assembly and the YMCA, many of the original owners of the Colony served the YMCA as secretaries or recruiters, and, like those associated with Blue Ridge Assembly, followed these forward-thinking philosophies. Some of these individuals who served the YMCA who built in High Top Colony and participated in the summers in programs at Blue Ridge Assembly, included Roy John, purchaser of the land to become High Top Colony, and builder of two cottages in the Colony, neither of which is extant; W. W. Alexander (**Mabelle and W. W. Alexander Cottage**, 16 Grey Eagle Road, ca. 1924); Dr. Clarence Loomis (**Eva and Dr. Clarence Loomis Cottage**, 21 Grey Eagle Road, ca. 1925); Edward S. King (**Eunice and Edward S. King Cottage**, 151 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1920); Henry G. Hart (**Annie G. and Henry G. Hart Cottage**, 159 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1921); John Bergthold (**Mabel and John Bergthold Cottage**, 160 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1921); Dr. D. F. Folger (**Vivian and Dr. D. F. Folger Cottage**, 19

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<sup>97</sup>Minutes of High Top Colony Annual Meeting, August 30, 1946.

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Hoot Owl Road, 1919); and Howard Kester (**Alice and Howard Kester Cottage**, 42 Hoot Owl Road, 1939). One owner in the Colony was involved in racial justice work not related to the YMCA or Blue Ridge Assembly. These included Ira J. Martin, a professor of philosophy and religion at Berea College in Kentucky, one of the first private colleges in the country to serve students of all races (**Ethel and Ira J. Martin Cottage**, 143 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1947).

The YMCA, from as early as 1853, served the African American community.<sup>98</sup> Anthony Bowen (1809 – 1871) was the organizer of this movement, known as the “YMCA for Colored Men and Boys”, founded just nine years after the world’s first YMCA was founded in London in 1844, and two years after the first YMCAs were founded in Boston and Montreal in 1851.<sup>99</sup> In 1890 the national YMCA created a “Colored Men’s Department”. Soon after this, Bowen worked to open the first YMCA for black residents in Washington, D.C., incorporating a YMCA organization in 1892 and opening its first building on May 12, 1912, with the local black community contributing \$27,000 toward the cost.<sup>100</sup> While these early facilities were segregated, they still “...provided a fertile ground for many black leaders of this country, who in turn provided positive symbols for African American young people...”. Programming included Bible studies, moral and religious discussions, adult education, physical education, and organized sports. They were places where members could gather to have free, open discussions.<sup>101</sup>

Despite the creation of numerous YMCA facilities for black men, the organization as a whole remained segregated, despite wishes of individual members to overcome this for true “...Christian and democratic fellowship...”.<sup>102</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s, movement towards full integration of the facilities began in earnest, with much of the drive happening on University campuses nationwide. In the mid-1930s, an integrated YMCA on the campus of the University of Minnesota began to turn the tide when they persuaded leaders of the University to integrate dormitories.<sup>103</sup> The work of the YMCA secretaries, especially those that served overseas, also were instrumental in moving towards integration of the YMCA facilities. From their work around the world, many knew first-hand that “...times were changing, that persons of color constituted a majority in the world, and that the days of colonialism at home and abroad were quickly fading...” Delegates to the YMCA’s 1931 World Conference passed a resolution “...condemning racial discrimination and calling for an end to segregation in the YMCA..”, noting that “... racial and cultural variations offer an opportunity for enrichment of culture through fellowship across racial and cultural lines...”.<sup>104</sup> The National Council of the United States, in the following year, “...urged all associations to move forward in remedying this condition of interracial inequality and injustice as rapidly as possible...”. The Depression years put some of this work on a temporary hiatus, but after World War II, the work continued, with segregation of YMCAs officially ending in 1946. This policy was not implemented

<sup>98</sup><https://www.lib.umn.edu/ymca/guide-afam-history> “A Brief History of the YMCA and African American Communities”. Accessed July 8, 2020, p. 1.

<sup>99</sup><https://www.lib.umn.edu/ymca/guide-afam-history>, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup><https://www.lib.umn.edu/ymca/guide-afam-history>, p. 2.

<sup>101</sup><https://www.lib.umn.edu/ymca/guide-afam-history>, p. 4.

<sup>102</sup><https://www.lib.umn.edu/ymca/guide-afam-history>, p. 5.

<sup>103</sup><https://www.lib.umn.edu/ymca/guide-afam-history>, p. 6.

<sup>104</sup><https://www.lib.umn.edu/ymca/guide-afam-history>, p. 6.

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immediately, however, and it took as much as forty years for some facilities to be fully integrated.<sup>105</sup>

Founding principles of the Assembly, in keeping with the guiding philosophies of the YMCA in the early years of the twentieth century, included the fact that there was 1) dignity in all labor and that ministers to human need was a “God-given responsibility”; 2) that religion must be intellectually respectable; 3) that religion was indispensable to building life values; 4) that every person was created in God’s image and was worthy of love and respect; and 5) that in the beauty of the place, guests and staff should spend quiet time in reflection, meditation, and prayer.<sup>106</sup> Blue Ridge Assembly, offering programming for all races, followed this ahead-of-its-time philosophy, and the YMCA secretaries, many of whom bought lots and built cottages in High Top Colony, individually also fought for racial justice issues and equality.

Willis Duke (W. D.) Weatherford, through his founding of and work at Blue Ridge Assembly, knew many of the YMCA secretaries who originally purchased lots in High Top Colony, including Roy John, who he may have helped purchase land for the Colony.<sup>107</sup> The similarity in philosophies and social justice that he shared with these secretaries likely helped to shape the purpose and meaning of life at High Top Colony. W. D. Weatherford “...pioneered in many areas of social and cultural development in the south...”.<sup>108</sup> He believed that men, women, blacks, and whites could be together. He was a pioneer for his time in the area of race relations, and organized the Commission of Interracial Cooperation, an organization which W. W. Alexander, a YMCA secretary and builder of a cottage in High Top Colony, headed as executive director (**Mabelle and W. W. Alexander Cottage**, 16 Grey Eagle Road, ca. 1924).

Weatherford also served as a trustee for Berea College, in Berea, Kentucky, a college association he held in common with another Colony builder, Ira Martin (**Ethel and Ira J. Martin Cottage**, 143 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1947).<sup>109</sup> Berea’s overarching philosophy has always been, since its founding in 1855 by abolitionist John Gregg Fee, to treat the races equally and admit both black and white students, men and women, in a fully integrated curriculum. Berea was the first non-segregated, coeducational college in the South, an institution, like Blue Ridge Assembly and the founders of High Top Colony, ahead of their time in the areas of racial equity and social justice.<sup>110</sup>

As noted, many of the early owners in High Top Colony knew each other by their connections to Weatherford and the YMCA. Three of these individuals in particular, William W. Alexander, John W. Bergthold, and Howard Kester, stand out for their racial equity work, adding to the significance of the association of High Top Colony in this area of social history.

<sup>105</sup><https://www.lib.umn.edu/ymca/guide-afam-history>, p. 7.

<sup>106</sup> Eureka! A Century of YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly. YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly, 2005, p. 7.

<sup>107</sup>This is oral tradition in the Colony’s archives, but deed records do not list Weatherford along with Roy John. However, it is still possible he helped fund the purchase of the property for High Top Colony.

<sup>108</sup>“Blue Ridge Assembly Historic District”. National Register Nomination, 1979, p. 8-1.

<sup>109</sup>“Blue Ridge Assembly Historic District”. National Register Nomination, 1979, p. 8-3.

<sup>110</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berea\\_College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berea_College). Accessed July 6, 2020.

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William W. Alexander was born in Morrisville, Missouri in 1884 (**Mabelle and W. W. Alexander Cottage**, 16 Grey Eagle Road, ca. 1924). He received his degrees from Scarritt-Morrisville College and later Vanderbilt University, and became an ordained Methodist minister, serving as pastor of Belmont church in Nashville from 1912 to 1916. Dr. Alexander, like many others who were the early owners of property in the Colony, worked closely with the YMCA, serving, in 1918, during World War I, as one of the main recruiters of men who wanted to serve the YMCA overseas, through the Army and Navy YMCA headquarters based in Atlanta. After his work with the YMCA's army and Navy headquarters, he became chairman of the Social Science Research advisory committee on race studies.<sup>111</sup> During the time he owned a cottage at High Top Colony, from 1922 to 1944, he was working extensively in the field of racial equity issues, speaking often at YMCA gatherings. In 1922, he spoke to a group gathered at one of the "colored" YMCAs about the idea of being a true Christian. He noted that "...men get down to real service in everyday life...".<sup>112</sup> In 1924, when George Washington Carver visited Blue Ridge Assembly as the guest of later Colony resident Howard Kester's YMCA college delegation from Virginia, he was the guest of the Alexanders at their home in the Colony. Even though the YMCA's own philosophies pushed for racial equality, carried through in many of Blue Ridge Assembly's programs, Carver was not allowed to stay or dine on the Blue Ridge Assembly campus.<sup>113</sup> The William E. Harmon Foundation, in 1926, awarded Dr. Alexander their first prize for "...outstanding work in the field of interracial relations...". Berea College and Boston University honored him with honorary degrees in 1927.<sup>114</sup> Alexander, as director of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation in the 1930s, spoke out, in 1931, in response to a lynching that took place in Blountstown, Florida, advocating for equal pay for Negroes under Roosevelt's National Recovery Administration. In the 1931 lynching incident, Alexander wrote a letter to the governor of Florida that stated:

...let us commend heartily your vigorous statement relative to Blountstown lynching and your expressed determination to do everything possible to apprehend and punish culprits. This case of mob murder was peculiarly flagrant and indefensible. Florida owes it to herself and to the south to bring the perpetrators to justice as the only possible means of vindicating in some degree our laws and our civilization. If this organization can help, please command us...<sup>115</sup>

Alexander was outspoken in other instances during his tenure as executive director of the Commission on Interracial Co-operation, noting in a 1933 newspaper article that efforts to write a lower wage into the code for the National Recovery Administration (NRA) under President Franklin D. Roosevelt:

...constitutes a threat to the president's program and to the wage and living standards of the white working people [as well]...the Negroes maintain that in case of equal work and

<sup>111</sup> "Alexander is Noted for Interracial Work". *The Atlanta Constitution*, November 19, 1936.

<sup>112</sup> "Dr. W. W. Alexander Speaks to Negroes". *The Atlanta Constitution*, April 24, 1922.

<sup>113</sup> Despite the YMCA's and Blue Ridge Assembly's philosophies, it was still the norm in the 1920s for facilities to remain segregated.

<sup>114</sup> "Alexander is Noted for Interracial Work". *The Atlanta Constitution*, November 19, 1936.

<sup>115</sup> "Carlton Pledges Probe of Lynching". *The Atlanta Constitution*, September 1, 1931.

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equal efficiency justice demands equal wages...Negroes have to pay just as much for the necessities of life...<sup>116</sup>

Dr. Alexander became a prominent national figure in racial equity issues. In the mid-1930s, Alexander was a member of several commissions on economic recovery, including work with the Resettlement Administration, serving as the assistant administrator, and concerned about farm tenancy programs.<sup>117</sup> His later work included heading the U. S. Farm Security Administration in 1940.<sup>118</sup> Alexander held many other important positions including as a member of the Commission on Care and Education of American Youth; serving on the Board of Directors of the Julius Rosenwald Fund; and as a member of the Board of Trustees of Atlanta University, Bethune-Cookman College, Gammon Theological Seminary, Morehouse College and Paine College. Alexander's work in these and other racial equity issues made him a prominent and nationally known figure, where, in addition to his work on the Commission, he served on the boards of the Julius Rosenwald Foundation and Morehouse College.

John W. Bergthold (**Mabel and John Bergthold Cottage**, 160 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1921), at the time he purchased a lot and built a cottage at High Top Colony, ca. 1921, was living and working in Nashville, Tennessee. Bergthold was ahead of his time in his pioneering work towards interracial and intercultural relationships between students, and worked closely with Dr. W. D. Weatherford in establishing the Blue Ridge Assembly in 1912.<sup>119</sup> Bergthold, in addition to his studies and employment as noted above, also attended the YMCA Graduate School in Nashville (later part of Vanderbilt University), Vanderbilt University, the Union Theological seminary, and Columbia University, and also served as a YMCA Secretary at North Carolina State College and Alabama Polytechnic Institute at Auburn, Alabama.<sup>120</sup> After leaving Auburn, Bergthold became the southern regional secretary for the Student Christian Movement, where he worked with his students to better understand the problems resulting from World War I. In 1922, he became a member of the American Pilgrimage of Friendship to Europe, where he worked to "...promote understanding between all peoples". Through his work with Willis Duke Weatherford at the YMCA Graduate School, Bergthold was exposed to the philosophies of that school which included intensive study and understanding of race relations in the south and their intrinsic relation to both the work of the YMCA and that of Blue Ridge Assembly. In 1926 Bergthold was serving as the student secretary for the National Council YMCA in the South, where he worked closely with George Washington Carver and others from the Tuskegee Institute in the summers at Blue Ridge Assembly.<sup>121</sup> Bergthold was a dietician at the Blue Ridge Assembly, and also taught at the YMCA summer graduate school there. In 1936, John Bergthold served as the United States Resettlement Director for the southwest, including the states of

<sup>116</sup>W. W. Alexander Cites Negro's Place In NRA". *The Atlanta Constitution*, August 27, 1933.

<sup>117</sup>"Alexander is Noted for Interracial Work". *The Atlanta Constitution*, November 19, 1936.

<sup>118</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 22.

<sup>119</sup> "Bergthold Passes at 73 in Black Mountain Home". *Asheville Citizen-Times*, July 19, 1955.

<sup>120</sup>Antone, G. (1973). The Y.M.C.A. Graduate School, Nashville 1919-1936. *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, 32(1), 67-82.

Retrieved July 28, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42623359> The YMCA Graduate School was founded in 1919 by Willis Duke Weatherford, primarily to educate personnel of the YMCAs in the south. It now is part of Vanderbilt University.

<sup>121</sup> Canady, A. (2009). The Limits to Improving Race Relations in the South: The YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, North Carolina, 1906—1930. *The North Carolina Historical Review*, 86(4), 404-436. Retrieved July 28, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23523568>

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Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Bergthold, during World War II, served as the USO director.<sup>122</sup> At the time of his death in 1955, Bergthold was living in Tampa, Florida.<sup>123</sup>

Howard Anderson Kester (1904 – 1977), especially in the years before he and Alice built their home, Piney Moors, in High Top Colony, was a staunch advocate of human rights and social justice (**Alice and Howard Kester Cottage**, 42 Hoot Owl Road, 1939). According to the book Can I Get A Witness?, a chapter of which focuses upon the work of Kester, he learned as a child born in Virginia about the ideas of "...benevolent paternalism and white supremacy...".<sup>124</sup> As a young man, Kester questioned this ideology, and in 1923 began working for the YMCA as an international secretary to Europe, as one of fifteen students who were part of the Student Pilgrimage of Friendship. There he witnessed the battlefields, the anti-Semitism evident in Poland at the time, and began to think more about how the United States treated its African American populations.<sup>125</sup>

Howard Kester met his wife Alice at Blue Ridge Assembly in 1926. Although they didn't build a home there until 1939, the couple lived in High Top Colony beginning in 1927, renting a cottage there every summer. Kester began "...challenging the systems of racism, injustice, and violence", deciding to attend Princeton Theological Seminary in 1926, hoping to find "...the progressive social gospel of the YMCA.". There he quickly learned that his ideas were not supported, and in a presentation at Miller Chapel at Princeton in 1926, he spoke about "...war, child labor, exploitation of the poor, churchmen and the Klan, and racism...".<sup>126</sup> After this talk, J. Ross Stevenson, president of the college, told Kester that he was "...rejecting eighteen centuries of Christian thought and practice...". Kester didn't buy it, and left Princeton the next day, so he could "...work directly in the lives of common men and women...".<sup>127</sup>

In 1933 Kester was active in working with the striking miners in Wilder, Tennessee when a striking employee, Barney Graham, was murdered as part of the protests. Then in 1934, he responded to the lynching of Claude Neal in Marianna, Florida, including a report he prepared in support of anti-lynching laws that was sent by a colleague to Eleanor Roosevelt. Eleanor Roosevelt responded that she had "...talked to the President...and he said he hoped very much to get the Costigan-Wagner (anti-lynching) Bill passed. The Marianna lynching was a horrible thing...".<sup>128</sup> In 1936 Kester wrote a book entitled *Revolt Among the Sharecroppers*, bringing together his work related to race and economic conditions. He saw that blacks and whites could work together against a single oppressor, the tenant farming system (he was mistaken

<sup>122</sup> "Bergthold Passes at 73 in Black Mountain Home". *Asheville Citizen-Times*, July 19, 1955.

<sup>123</sup> Bergthold, J. W. Obituary. *Rocky Mount Telegram*, Rocky Mount, North Carolina, July 19, 1955.

<sup>124</sup> Marsh, Charles and Shea Tuttle, Editors. Can I Get A Witness? Thirteen Peacemakers, Community Builders, and Agitators for Faith and Justice. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William P. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2019. Kindle Edition, 1257/6685.

<sup>125</sup> Marsh, Charles and Shea Tuttle, Editors. Can I Get A Witness? Thirteen Peacemakers, Community Builders, and Agitators for Faith and Justice. Kindle Edition, 1257/6685.

<sup>126</sup> Marsh, Charles and Shea Tuttle, Editors. Can I Get A Witness? Thirteen Peacemakers, Community Builders, and Agitators for Faith and Justice. Kindle Edition, 1299/6685.

<sup>127</sup> Marsh, Charles and Shea Tuttle, Editors. Can I Get A Witness? Thirteen Peacemakers, Community Builders, and Agitators for Faith and Justice. Kindle Edition, 1313/6685.

<sup>128</sup> Marsh, Charles and Shea Tuttle, Editors. Can I Get A Witness? Thirteen Peacemakers, Community Builders, and Agitators for Faith and Justice. Kindle Edition, 1315 - 1330/6685 and 1446-1447/6685. Anti-lynching legislation was not passed until 1968, but Kester's report brought the issue to the forefront.

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unfortunately and no legislation was passed at this time to improve this system either). By the late 1930s, with so much time apart from his wife and young daughter, and the toils of the dangers inherent in his work, Kester began to feel the need to move on and create a permanent, year-round home for his family. He built his home in High Top Colony in 1939.

### History of High Top Colony

All of the land that became High Top Colony was located northeast of and close to Blue Ridge Assembly, a Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) religious retreat center which was founded in Black Mountain in 1912 by Willis D. Weatherford. According to long-time residents of High Top Colony, Weatherford assisted in purchasing the land for High Top Colony with YMCA Secretary, Roy John.<sup>129</sup> Roy John, like many of the original buyers of lots in High Top Colony, was, at the time he bought the property, a Secretary in the YMCA. As part of the international Christian missionary work taking place in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the YMCA secretaries helped to organize YMCAs instead of churches, which eventually came under control of the local communities they served.<sup>130</sup> Roy John was born in Arkansas in 1889 to John T. and Nancy J. John.<sup>131</sup> Roy John, just before he bought the property in Black Mountain, was in 1916, serving at Clemson University in South Carolina as a YMCA Secretary.<sup>132</sup> By 1917, he was still serving the YMCA as a general secretary, but was based at Fort Oglethorpe in Georgia, just south of Chattanooga, Tennessee, where he spoke at the dedication of a new building for cadets.<sup>133</sup> As part of his work as a YMCA Secretary, Roy John served overseas during World War I, with the title of Camp General Secretary for Fort Oglethorpe. In November 1918, he and wife Florence Sargent John were called back from Paris, France to the United States. This recall was under a request in a letter from G. J. Watson, Movement Order Department of the YMCA, where he asked that Roy John return to New York.<sup>134</sup> It was the following spring, in 1919, that Roy John purchased the property in Black Mountain, with the purpose of High Top Colony being to serve as a summer retreat for those most closely associated with the work of the YMCA (many of whom were YMCA Secretaries), as a "...group of camp-like summer homes of intimate friends...".<sup>135</sup>

Roy John and wife Florence John purchased nine acres of land in Black Mountain from Robert Morehead on April 3, 1919.<sup>136</sup> Robert Morehead Sr., an African American, owned a great deal

<sup>129</sup>Deed records do not list Weatherford, but he may have been an investor in the property with Roy John. Both Dag Folger, builder of 19 Hoot Owl Road, and John Bergthold, builder of 160 High Top Colony Road, noted in their memoirs that Weatherford was involved in the purchase. Folger, D. F. "History of High Top Colony 1919 - 1962". Unpublished, undated. From High Top Colony's historical archives, located at High Top Colony, p. 1. There is mention made of Roy John purchasing land with Dr. Weatherford, but county records do not list him as a co-purchaser. It may be that he still supported the land purchase financially, but was just not named on the deed and Bergthold, J. W. "Our Mountain Home". Unpublished, 1953. From High Top Colony's historical archives, located at High Top Colony.

<sup>130</sup>[http://www.mfldymca.org/about\\_us/history\\_national.php](http://www.mfldymca.org/about_us/history_national.php) "A Brief History of the YMCA Movement". Accessed June 29, 2020.

<sup>131</sup>John, Roy. United States Federal Census Records 1900.

<sup>132</sup>"The Week's News of Clemson College". *The Greenville News*, May 10, 1916.

<sup>133</sup>"YMCA Building Opens at Oglethorpe". *Chattanooga Daily Times*, May 31, 1917.

<sup>134</sup>John, Roy. United States Emergency Passport Application, November 29, 1918, United States Passport Records

<sup>135</sup>Bergthold, J. W. "Our Mountain Home". Unpublished, 1953. From High Top Colony's historical archives, located at High Top Colony.

<sup>136</sup>Buncombe County Deed Book 226, p. 159.

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of acreage in the area. He and others in the African American community around him formed one of two black communities in Black Mountain, the other being around Cragmont Road, located to the west of downtown Black Mountain. Several members of the Morehead family worked for Colony residents through the years, and both Robert Morehead and Clarence Morehead served as caretaker for the community in the off season.<sup>137</sup> A second parcel consisting of an additional adjoining nineteen acres was purchased from S. A. McKoy on August 14, 1919.<sup>138</sup> Roy John continued his work as a YMCA Secretary through at least 1920, where he was living in Nashville, Tennessee, but by 1930 was living in Illinois where he was employed in retail merchandising.<sup>139</sup> Florence John, in a newspaper article from 1919, recalled the work she did while in France for a year with her husband. She and other wives of the YMCA secretaries worked hard, working in "...huts without floors...sleeping in tents...and were subjected to the shell fire of the enemy...". Many of the war wounded would come to the YMCA temporary camps set up to attend to them.<sup>140</sup>

The twenty-eight acres that comprised High Top Colony were divided into twenty-four lots. The land was not formally platted until 1958, with property boundaries approximately laid out for the original owners, with not a great deal of attention paid to exact property lines.<sup>141</sup> In the early years of the Colony, the farm at Blue Ridge Assembly provided milk and vegetables for the residents. The initial road into the Colony was an old wagon road, in poor condition. Water was carried from a spring on the property or from a stream on the west side of the Colony property. There was no electricity, mail had to be picked up either at the Assembly or at the post office in Black Mountain, the only fuel available was kerosene, groceries had to be carried to the Colony from the Assembly, and overall, the experience was very rustic.<sup>142</sup>

The original purchasers of lots from Roy John in High Top Colony included J. W. Bergthold of Atlanta, Georgia (Lot 6, 160 High Top Colony Road); C. A. Williams of Atlanta, Georgia (Lot 5, 160 High Top Colony Road); Ed S. King of Columbia, South Carolina (Lot 3, 151 High Top Colony Road); Henry G. Hart of Nashville, Tennessee (Lot 4, 159 High Top Colony Road); Dag F. Folger of Central, South Carolina (Lot 8, 19 Hoot Owl Road); Edgar L. Secrest of Atlanta, Georgia (Lot 1, 143 High Top Colony Road); Frank L. Day of Ashland, Virginia (Lots 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23; 194 High Top Colony Road (16, 17) 221 High Top Colony Road (19); 215 High Top Colony Road (20, 21); 21 Gray Eagle Road (22); vacant (23); Frank Steager of Cardington, Ohio (Lot 15, vacant); William. H. Morgan of Knoxville, Tennessee (Lot 2, 152 High Top Colony Road); H. C. Gossard of Norman, Oklahoma (Lot 14, 170 High Top Colony Road); J. J. King of Nashville, Tennessee (Lot 24, 42 Hoot Owl Road); W. W. Alexander of Atlanta, Georgia ((Lot 7, 10 Grey Eagle Road; and Lot 13, 16 Grey Eagle Road); Robert Wunsch of Chapel Hill, North Carolina (Lot 18, 225 High Top Colony Road); and W. B. Gordon of Columbia, South Carolina (Lots 9 and 10, 20 Hoot Owl Road and 14 Hoot Owl Road). Of the original twenty-four lots, all of them sold except for Lots 11 and 12. Lots 15 and 23 were never

<sup>137</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 4.

<sup>138</sup>Buncombe County Deed Book 230, p. 403.

<sup>139</sup>John, Roy. United States Federal Census Records 1920, 1930.

<sup>140</sup>"Details Work Women Did". *Chattanooga Daily Times*, February 17, 1919.

<sup>141</sup>Buncombe County Plat Book 29, p. 140.

<sup>142</sup>Folger, D. F. "History of High Top Colony 1919 - 1962". Unpublished, undated. From High Top Colony's historical archives, located at High Top Colony.

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built on and these remain today as historically vacant lots. Roy John deeded Lots 11 and 12 to the community for a park, which was later named Roy John Park.<sup>143</sup> Many of the early cottages were built on the lots purchased by these early owners, but some lots were later sold and houses built later.

Of the lots originally purchased from Roy John, only five were built on by the original purchasers (the **Vivian and Dr. D. F. Folger Cottage/Bob White/E Top**, 19 Hoot Owl Road, 1919; the **Eunice and Edward S. King Cottage/Kingdom Kum/Locust Bend**, 151 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1920; the **Annie G. and Henry G. Hart Cottage/House by the Side of the Road/Peak of View/Peak-a-Boo**, 159 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1921; the **Mabel and John Bergthold Cottage/Chipmunk Lodge**, 160 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1921; and the **Virginia and Frank Day Cottage/Day Dreams/Cluny Castle**, 194 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1921.

Many of the lots were bought from Roy John and later sold, with cottages then built by a second or later owner. Frank L. Day purchased several lots from Roy John which he later sold. These included Lot 23 to W. W. Alexander on February 10, 1925; Lot 22 to C. B. Loomis on April 20, 1925; Lot 21 to L. R. Reynolds on July 8, 1925; Lot 19 to J. J. McConnell Jr. on September 22, 1925; and Lots 17 and 20 to Mrs. R. Y. McPherson on September 12, 1927.<sup>144</sup> Of these original buyers, Clarence Loomis, Ed Secrest, Edward S. King, Henry G. Hart, John W. Bergthold, Robert Wunsch, Dag Folger, W. B. Gordon, and Howard Kester, were all YMCA Secretaries like Roy John, or had other associations with the YMCA, as did W. W. Alexander and H. C. Gossard.<sup>145</sup>

Cottages were built on four of these lots, including the **Marion Turner Bryson Cottage/Blue Bird/Blue Bird's Nest**, 10 Grey Eagle Road, 1921; the **Mabelle and W. W. Alexander Cottage/Tree Tops/South-Land/Craggy View**, 16 Grey Eagle Road, ca. 1924; the **Eva and Dr. Clarence Loomis Cottage/Slabsides**, 21 Grey Eagle Road, ca. 1925; and the **Gertrude and Morris Trotter Cottage/Goodwoods/Dunravin/Squirrel Nut Cottage**, 152 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1927.

Three lots were built on in the Colony in later years in its development from ca. 1930 – 1954. Roy John retained several lots where he built cottages, but these are no longer extant and were replaced by later houses (the **Alice and Howard Kester Cottage/Piney Moors**, 42 Hoot Owl Road, 1939; and the **Mildred and William Morgan Cottage/Crest Haven**, 20 Hoot Owl Road, ca. 1949). One additional later cottage built in this time period is the **Ethel and Ira J. Martin Cottage/The Hideaway**, 143 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1947.

Some lots in the Colony remained vacant until recent years when six non-contributing houses, dating from outside of the period of significance, were built (the **Evelyn and Allan McCartney House/Wabac**, 225 High Top Colony Road, 1974; the **Monica Greene and Cappy White**

<sup>143</sup>Buncombe County Grantor Index, Roy John to various parties as noted. The park was never “developed” as such and remains as two vacant wooded lots.

<sup>144</sup>Buncombe County Grantor Deed Index, Frank L. Day to various individuals as noted.

<sup>145</sup>United States Federal Census Records, 1920, occupations listed as Y Secretary or field secretary. Newspaper articles of individuals relating their association with the YMCA.

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**House/Hoot Owl Retreat**, 14 Hoot Owl Road, ca. 1988; the **Allyn Robinson III House/Robinwood**, 215 High Top Colony Road, 2011; the **Margaret and Alfred Fletcher House/Ho Hum**, 170 High Top Colony Road, ca. 2012; the **Lisa Levya and David Peele House/Ravinia**, 221 High Top Colony Road, 2015; and the **Theresa and Dennis Clower House**, 30 Hoot Owl Road, 2020).

Lots were sold with covenants attached. As noted in the deed from Roy John to J. W. Bergthold, (and all other deeds), if a buyer of a lot in High Top Colony wanted to sell a lot, he was required to first offer it for sale to other owners in the Colony; if a house was not built on a lot within three years from the purchase date, it was to be offered to other Colony owners first, and a price was to be established; all streams and springs on the lot were to remain available for everyone's use; every resident was allowed to have a view of the surrounding scenery, and trees on a lot were to be topped or partially cleared to allow for this; all public improvements within the subdivision, including road construction, water-works, and sewerage was to be of benefit to the entire community, and each owner was responsible to contribute a portion of funds necessary for these projects.<sup>146</sup>

High Top Colony underwent its greatest period of development from its founding in 1919 through 1954, the time when the majority of the cottages were built, all of the sought-after utilities and upgraded water system was in full swing, and families could opt to continue to use their homes as summer cottages only or to winterize them and be able to use them as year-round residences. A new set of by-laws for continued operation of the Colony into the future was completed in 1959 to 1960, and no new cottages were built until the 1970s, with only five constructed between ca. 1974 – 2015, and one under construction in 2020.

According to John Bergthold, in his 1953 account of the Colony's history, he noted that in 1920 to 1921 an organization called "Hi-Top Colony" was formed, with the terms of the deeds making it a co-operative type of community. At its initial organization, every owner of property was made a member of this co-op.<sup>147</sup> As life in High Top Colony got underway, residents began to hold an annual meeting every summer. The earliest available record of minutes dates from August 20, 1923. It was held at Chipmunk Lodge, home of J. W. Bergthold, with members attending including Bergthold, J. J. King, Dr. W. W. Alexander, Dr. F. L. Day, D. F. Folger, M. T. Bryson, and E. S. King. Officers were elected, with J. W. Bergthold as president, M. T. Bryson as vice president, and E. S. King as secretary-treasurer. A committee was formed to investigate the laws related to incorporation of High Top Colony and issuing of a charter. A report was given on the condition of the water works and the roads by Dr. Folger. He reported that the air valve on the old ram had closed, causing the ram to break. Dr. Folger reported that Blue Ridge Assembly, via Dr. Weatherford, had given his permission to cross the Assembly property. Dr. Folger also noted that a road had been built "...from the farmhouse up the hill to Ed Secrest's lot instead of up the valley to the gate...". This was due to the fact that the Assembly was planning to build a dam and construct a lake. Another order of business of this meeting was that if anyone rented their property, the tenants must be approved by the Board

<sup>146</sup>Buncombe County Deed Book 228, p. 710.

<sup>147</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 7.

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executive committee. Committees were appointed to work out a signage system, to investigate taxes, and to obtain an estimate of cost for installing an electric plant. Dr. Day and Dr. Alexander noted they would cover the cost of building a road from the bridge to Dr. Alexander's property, if the community would keep it up. This was approved. The name High Top Colony was officially adopted for the community.<sup>148</sup> The next available record is dated July 22, 1926, where "Bergomaster Bergthold", as president, led the meeting. A motion was made and approved to build a "suitable gate" at the entrance of the Colony, to be paid for from the treasury, but it no longer exists. Additionally, it was decided to build a bridge across the ravine on the day trail, and a settling basin for the water system. The secretary was asked to report on the water quality in the Colony, and a test was shown to be "pure" water.<sup>149</sup> The 1927 minutes noted that in regard to the water system, the engineer (no mention of who this was), was asked to install a screen over the intake pipe into the system, and to have the water analyzed each year. The new bridge across the day trail ravine had been completed, and it was approved to put a large sign at the foot of the hill on Colony Road "...to prevent persons endeavoring to reach Blue Ridge from coming into the Colony...".<sup>150</sup> Business in 1929 included having Colony Road officially recorded, and a discussion regarding signs to divert traffic away from the Colony, with pillars to be designed to demarcate the entrance, and to build them if funds allowed. The secretary was asked to arrange with Black Mountain Plumbing Company to close the water system in the fall and open it back up in the spring. Robert Morehead was hired as caretaker, to be paid \$25.00 per year, and the county was to be petitioned to negotiate a reduction in property taxes.<sup>151</sup>

In the 1930s, due to the Depression, it was difficult for the Colony to keep up with its expenses. Some owners were able to contribute annual dues, but others could not. In a letter to High Top Colony owners in August 1932, Edward S. King, treasurer for the Colony, noted that there was twenty-six cents in the account, with bills remaining to be paid to a plumber and to Robert Morehead, who served as caretaker for the community in the off-season. Part of the reason for the low balance was due to the local Black Mountain bank failure, which was tying up Colony funds. King also noted that keeping the water running and the roads open and passable were necessities for summer residents to be able to live in their houses. He further noted that no dues had been collected in 1931.<sup>152</sup> By August 10, 1933, dues, as always, would go to the water system, road repair, care of property by the caretaker, postage, and stationery.<sup>153</sup> By the end of the 1930s, Colony owners were able to pay their annual assessments, and outstanding bills were paid in full.<sup>154</sup>

The 1940s annual meetings were typically held at different owners' homes, beginning with a picnic dinner, followed by the business meeting. Expenses included building of stone posts for a chain gate at the entrance to the Colony, and money designated for road repairs on the State road (High Top Colony Road, or sometimes called Colony Road), in case the State failed to maintain.

<sup>148</sup>Minutes of High Top Colony Annual Meeting, August 20, 1923.

<sup>149</sup>Minutes, July 22, 1926.

<sup>150</sup>Minutes, August 2, 1927.

<sup>151</sup>Minutes, August 5, 1929. If these pillars were built, there is no photographic record of them and they no longer exist.

<sup>152</sup>Letter from Edward S. King to High Top Colony owners, August 1, 1932.

<sup>153</sup>Letter to owners from Edward S. King, August 10, 1933. Owners with a cottage on the lot paid dues of \$10/year and those who owned vacant lots paid \$5/year.

<sup>154</sup>Minutes of High Top Colony Annual Meeting. Statement dated June 23, 1937 – December 2, 1938.

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Additional business included the formation of a park committee which included W. B. Gordon, John Alexander, Howard Kester, Dag Folger, and Morris Trotter. J. W. Bergthold announced a "...\$50.00 gift and deed to Lots 11 and 12 were deposited in the bank. On motion, these lots, 11 and 12, were named Roy John Park...". W. M. Fortune was named as off-season caretaker for the Colony, to be paid \$25.00 for the year. J. W. Bergthold was president of the Colony, Morris Trotter was vice-president, and Howard Hubbell was secretary-treasurer.<sup>155</sup> The 1941 annual meeting was held at Roy John Park, with twenty-four people in attendance. The road committee was asked to contact the State to request more road maintenance, and to see about extending the road to some additional cottages. The park committee reported they had worked on trails, a bridge, and a picnic area, and would build a cook stove and other improvements.<sup>156</sup>

No meetings were held during World War II, from 1942 to 1944. Morris Trotter was elected as Road Commissioner in charge of all the roads. Street names were officially approved, Colony Road (now High Top Colony Road), Hoot Owl Road, and Gray (now Grey) Eagle Road.<sup>157</sup> In 1946, Morris Trotter, as road commissioner, reported that a surveyor had been hired to mark out the continuation of Colony Road. A resolution was read regarding selling of property to "...help secure desirable owners...", but no further explanation was noted as to the intent. President Bergthold, vice president Trotter, and secretary-treasurer King were appointed as a committee to decide upon new owners.<sup>158</sup> The 1947 annual meeting minutes included a report that repair work on the roads was nearing completion, and road signs would be up soon. President Bergthold had worked out with CP & L to extend electric lines to whoever wanted them. It was decided that this should be a community cost just like roads and water had been. The reservoir was to be repaired and pipes changed in the water system, with all lines closed in the fall and opened in the spring by the caretaker.<sup>159</sup> At the 1948 meeting, it was approved to put the names of all householders on signs at the gate. Gravel was placed on Hoot Owl Road, not a State road, and was paid for by the Colony.<sup>160</sup> The 1949 meeting was held at the home of the Buss family. A road improvement assessment was approved, with the understanding that a request would be made for the State to take over maintenance of all the roads in the Colony.<sup>161</sup>

Organizational and administrative work of the Colony continued through the 1950s. The 1950 annual meeting was held at the home of Ira Martin, with twelve members present and many children. With the drought going on, it was noted that everyone should use water wisely so there was enough for everyone. It was announced that the State would maintain Colony Road to the Robinson property but would not maintain Hoot Owl Road or Grey Eagle Road. Minutes noted that having a "...State road through the Colony, mail delivery, milk delivery, electric service, new families moving in, new houses in prospect show the Colony is really a thriving community...".<sup>162</sup> The 1951 meeting was held at the Collins home, with eight members in attendance. It was noted that the Highway Commission was doing good maintenance work on

<sup>155</sup>Minutes, August 19, 1940. The stone gates, if they were ever built, no longer remain.

<sup>156</sup>Minutes, August 16, 1941. It does not appear that these park improvements remain.

<sup>157</sup>Minutes, August 23, 1945.

<sup>158</sup>Minutes, August 30, 1946.

<sup>159</sup>Minutes, August 7, 1947.

<sup>160</sup>Minutes, August 9, 1948. This is still the case in the Colony, but signs are more recent.

<sup>161</sup>Minutes, August 13, 1949.

<sup>162</sup>Minutes, August 5, 1950.

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Colony Road, including the building of a culvert. Other business conducted at the meeting noted that Wild Life Preserve signs were to be put up at the entrance to the Colony.<sup>163</sup> Held at the Robinson home, the 1952 meeting had eleven members in attendance. Several committee reports were made, including one on roads which noted that Colony Road had been scraped twice by the State in the summer, Hoot Owl Road had four loads of gravel installed in late winter, and Grey Eagle Road had been scraped, leveled, and all trenches and drains had been cleared. The sanitation committee noted that individual garbage disposal would be the procedure from here forward, and the conservation committee reported that a Colony Wildlife Record was underway to take inventory of feeding and nesting wildlife in the area. The water system committee reported that the current system was inadequate and four items needed to be tended to. Several recommendations were made, including finding and capping a spring above the current one in use, installing additional settlement basins in the current system, drilling a well or wells to pump to all of the colony, and tapping into the Asheville city water system. The committee was authorized to obtain cost estimates for the first and fourth items.<sup>164</sup> In 1953, the annual meeting was held at Piney Moors, home of the Kester family. It was noted in the minutes that Asheville could not supply water since the Colony elevation was higher than the reservoir, but Asheville engineers had looked at the Colony water system and approved it. President Bergthold gave a report, noting that renting to outsiders had become a problem, some trespassing was occurring, and proper garbage disposal and protection of wildlife were both major concerns. Speeding along the Colony roads had become an issue, with parking taking place on private property. He also noted that even though the water system overall was in good shape that water storage was a problem and more was needed.<sup>165</sup> By 1953, in a report John Bergthold wrote about the Colony, there were "...good, all-year roads, water was available from the slopes of High Top Mountain to every home, electricity was in every home, mail was delivered to Colony mailboxes, and three homes had telephones...all of this without disturbing the natural beauty of the woods or interfering with the seclusion and privacy of individual homes...". Bergthold also noted in this 1953 report to the Colony that the original purpose of the Colony as a summer retreat was beginning to change as more cottages were being converted to year-round residences.<sup>166</sup>

At the 1954 meeting, Bergthold was again elected as president, with Dag Folger as vice president and Hall Swain as secretary-treasurer. Members voted to "...install a 10,000 gallon steel tank to serve as a reservoir...".<sup>167</sup> The Colony contracted with Asheville Steel and Salvage Company to purchase the tank, to be located at the highest point in the Colony. It was installed on December 8, 1954.<sup>168</sup> The 1955 meeting, held at the home of the Swain family, continued many of the same items of business as noted at the 1954 meeting. The most important piece of new business, however, was the election of officers, as J. W. Bergthold had passed away on July 18,

<sup>163</sup>Minutes, August 24, 1951. The wildlife preserve signs no longer exist.

<sup>164</sup>Minutes, August 19, 1952.

<sup>165</sup>Minutes, August 12, 1953. There is currently no formal gate, pillars, or formal entrance into the Colony except for a wooden sign which has been placed there in recent years.

<sup>166</sup>Bergthold, J. W. "Our Mountain Home". Unpublished, 1953. From High Top Colony's historical archives, located at High Top Colony.

<sup>167</sup>Minutes, August 14, 1954.

<sup>168</sup>Folger, D. F. "History of High Top Colony 1919 - 1962". Unpublished, undated. From High Top Colony's historical archives, located at High Top Colony.

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1955, and a memorial tribute to him was presented. He was remembered as the "...guardian, promoter, fashioner of common welfare...". New officers included Dag Folger as president, Howard Kester as vice president, and Hall Swain as secretary-treasurer.<sup>169</sup> The 1956 annual meeting, held at the Folger house, included election of Dag Folger as president, and Howard Kester as vice president. The water committee noted that the new water tank reservoir was "overflowing most of the time" and there was an ample supply of water for all. Colony Road was in good shape, and Hoot Owl Road was as well, with several loads of gravel having been added. New name signs had been installed at the gate, and new Colony signs had been placed at the foot of Colony Road. C. L. Rhodes was given permission to widen Grey Eagle Road, and a Constitution and By-laws Committee was assigned and given the task of re-writing of the Colony by-laws, something that had not been undertaken since its founding.<sup>170</sup> At the annual meeting on August 16, 1957 nineteen Colony members attended. Several projects had been completed or were underway, including re-writing of the by-laws and painting of the reservoir with aluminum paint. It was noted that the directional signage at the foot of the mountain had disappeared and a "suitable entrance sign at the edge of the Colony property" was needed. The water committee reported that a water filter was needed on the current system and that the county health department was looking at two springs in the area to possibly change the source of the water to the Colony rather than installing a filtering system on the existing source. A discussion took place regarding selling the Roy John Park lands with proceeds to go to something the Colony needed, such as the well. Leon Hall was hired as the new caretaker, at a cost of \$100 per year.<sup>171</sup> On August 24, 1958, the thirty-ninth annual business meeting for the Colony was held at the home of Mrs. Grace Bergthold, widow of J. W. Bergthold. The main order of business was a report by the by-laws committee, with the document accepted as a "working document" for one year only. The committee noted that the "...pervading and continuing purpose of the Colony is to provide and maintain a place of withdrawal and rest...". Additional business discussed included a report from the roads committee to petition to the county to black top Colony Road that had been signed by Colony members and those in the adjacent Last Resort community. Elected officers included Hall Swain as president, Stanley Buss as vice president, Ethel Martin as secretary, and Grace Bergthold as treasurer.<sup>172</sup> In 1959, the fortieth-year anniversary of the founding of High Top Colony, at the full business meeting held on August 20, the proposed new by-laws were presented, with some revisions proposed after the presentation.<sup>173</sup> The 1960 annual meeting had an extensive agenda. Ira Martin noted that dead trees on State property in the Colony (right-of-way) would be removed and all culverts would be cleaned. The treasurer's report was approved, and Bill Morgan brought up the legality of selling the Roy John Park. It was determined that an attorney would be consulted. Additional business included a report that work needed to be done on Hoot Owl Road, that a tree had fallen on the main water line but it was being removed, a historical committee was formed, and discussion was held about the best time for future annual meetings.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>169</sup>Minutes, August 22, 1955.

<sup>170</sup>Minutes, July 21, 1956.

<sup>171</sup>Minutes, August 16, 1957. Park lands were never sold, and a well was never dug.

<sup>172</sup>Minutes, August 25, 1958. High Top Colony Road was never paved.

<sup>173</sup>Minutes, August 20, 1959.

<sup>174</sup>Minutes, August 20, 1960.

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Life at High Top Colony was described by Ann Randall, daughter of Marion Turner and Lady Ruth Bryson (**Marion Turner Bryson Cottage**, 10 Grey Eagle Road, 1921), from her memories of summers in the Colony. She noted that "...we would walk the Day Trail to Blue Ridge to attend vespers or just to sit on the porch to admire the view...these trails have been maintained by those of us who use them...the streams proved a constant source of pleasure for the children of the colony...we feel that those who have homes here are special people. People who love the area, who love the out of doors, the wildflowers, the birds, the wildlife, and who seek to protect all these things...[it is] a place of peace, a quiet retreat..."<sup>175</sup>

### Architectural Context

High Top Colony is significant not only as a collection of popular architectural styles of summer resort communities, but for its retention of a woodland setting that minimally impacts the environment, including small cottages set back from the road, utilization of materials often available on site, and gravel roadways, all of which create a small footprint within the natural landscape. High Top Colony was designed to be a place of quiet retreat for those who came to the mountains in the summer. Laid out on the side of a mountain, in a woodland setting, cottages were tucked back into the trees, set back from the road, with ample size lots to provide privacy. High Top Colony was unique in that while there was a great deal of association with the Blue Ridge Assembly religious retreat, the housing here was also a separate community, crossing the line between religious retreat and a rustic summer resort development. Houses built in the Colony fit into the natural environment, including examples of Rustic Revival, Bungalow, and later Ranch styles. Of these styles, the most common seen within the Colony are the Rustic Revival and the Bungalow.

The cottages built in High Top Colony in its earliest years of development, from ca. 1919 – ca. 1925, include the **Robert Morehead Cottage**, ca. 1919; the **Vivian and Dr. D. F. Folger Cottage/Bob White/E Top**, 1919; the **Eunice and Edward S. King Cottage/Kingdom Kum/Locust Bend**, ca. 1920; the **Marion Turner Bryson Cottage/Blue Bird/Blue Bird's Nest**, 1921; the **Annie G. and Henry G. Hart Cottage/House by the Side of the Road/Peak of View/Peek-a-Boo**, ca. 1921; **Mabel and John Berghold Cottage/Chipmunk Lodge**, ca. 1921; the **Mabelle and W. W. Alexander Cottage/Tree Tops/Southland/Craggy View**, ca. 1924; and the **Eva and Dr. Clarence Loomis Cottage/Slabsides**, ca. 1925.

Four of these cottages were built in the Rustic Revival style (the **Marion Turner Bryson Cottage/Blue Bird/Blue Bird's Nest**, 1921; the **Virginia and Frank Day Cottage/Day Dreams/Cluny Castle**, ca. 1921; the **Mabelle and W. W. Alexander Cottage/Tree Tops/Southland/Craggy View**, ca. 1924; and the **Eva and Dr. Clarence Loomis Cottage/Slabsides**, ca. 1925). Four bungalows were built in this time period, the **Robert Morehead Cottage**, ca. 1919; the **Vivian and Dr. D. F. Folger Cottage/Bob White/E Top**, 1919; the **Eunice and Edward S. King Cottage/Kingdom Kum/Locust Bend**, ca. 1920, and the **Annie G. and Henry G. Hart Cottage/House by the Side of the Road/Peak of View/Peek-a-Boo**, ca. 1921 (non-contributing due to post-1959 changes altering its original

<sup>175</sup>High Top Colony 1919 – 2019: Celebrating 100 Years of Community, p. 8.

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form). The **Mabel and John Bergthold Cottage/Chipmunk Lodge**, ca. 1921, was not built in a particular style.

Later houses in the Colony, built from the late 1920s through the 1930s, were built in the bungalow style. These include the **Gertrude and Morris Trotter Cottage/Goodwinds/Dunravin/Squirrel Nut Cottage**, ca. 1927 and the **Alice and Howard Kester Cottage/Piney Moors**, 1939. One house in the Colony that falls within the period of significance was built in the Ranch style, but with more rustic materials that help it to blend into the natural setting and be more in keeping with the older cottages (**Mildred and William Morgan Cottage/Crest Haven**, ca. 1949). Also built in the late 1940s, is the **Ethel and Ira J. Martin Cottage/The Hideaway**, ca. 1947, built of no particular style, but still blending into the overall setting and context of the other cottages. The six post-1959 houses built in the Colony have maintained the design and feel of the 1919 – 1959 development of the community in their choice of woodland settings, massing, and materials.

Some of the styles for the cottages in High Top Colony may have been chosen based upon what was typically built in mountain summer communities, and some may have been chosen based upon what was built at the associated Blue Ridge Assembly at the time. While very few of these cottages remain, the original cottages at the Assembly included nineteen rental cottages as part of its summer retreat program. These were built between 1913 to 1927, and included five, one-and-one-half-story, square plan, pyramidal-roof cottages. Features of these cottages include stone piers, porches, casement windows, and dormers. Six of the cottages were two-story, gable-roofed cottages set on stone piers, with double-hung, two-over-two window sash. Three cottages were square-plan pyramidal-roof cottages with porches. Also built in the Assembly were three rectangular-plan cottages and two hip-roof cottages with a single dormer, turned porch posts, and casement windows.<sup>176</sup>

### *Rustic Revival Style*

The first use of the Rustic Revival style in the United States can be seen in the cottages of the Adirondacks in New York, dating from the final two decades of the nineteenth century. Rustic architecture continued to gain in popularity in the early part of the twentieth century, spurred on in part by the development of National parks. The style's overriding philosophy was that the scenery, not the building, was the main attraction. Buildings were meant to blend in with the landscape, including the use of stone and timber as some of the main building materials, along with design elements that were not overly-finished in nature. Hand-tooled finishes, colors that blended with the landscape, and stone, tree posts and branches for structural elements were common features of the style.<sup>177</sup>

Rustic Revival architecture gained in popularity in western North Carolina in the late nineteenth century as railroads arrived and the summer visitors increased. These cottages, which featured

<sup>176</sup>Southern, Michael and Betty Lawrence. "Blue Ridge Assembly Historic District". National Register Nomination, 1979, pp. 7-2 to 7-6. Blue Ridge Assembly has been closed during the pandemic and more detailed survey work of the cottages will take place for the final nomination, to be able to compare these with the early cottages built in High Top Colony.

<sup>177</sup><https://www.nps.gov/sagu/learn/historyculture/upload/NPS-Rustic-Style-Brief.pdf> "NPS Rustic Style Architecture". Accessed August 3, 2021.

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native materials in a natural setting, influenced building in the mountains of western North Carolina where native materials could be found in abundance. Tourism in western North Carolina, in the first decades of the twentieth century, was a big business, as more people were able to travel easily to the mountains. Many of these tourists built summer homes, some of them in the Rustic Revival style, an architecture that drew its inspiration from the mountains. Popular in resort communities throughout the mountains of western North Carolina in the early decades of the twentieth century, the style was meant to blend into the mountain setting, featuring natural, rustic materials available in the mountains such as stone, dark-stained round log walls, often combined with shingles, unpainted weatherboard, or board and batten siding. Tree trunks were used for porch supports, tree branches and rhododendron branches were often employed for porch balustrades, and stone or sometimes locust posts were often used for foundations. Interiors were simple and unadorned, sometimes including rustic balustrades, stone mantels, and flush board, log, or beaded board walls. The buildings in the Rustic Revival style were carefully placed within the mountain landscape with great care taken to blend them into their natural surroundings. Roads and fencing materials carefully followed the natural topography, and buildings were set upon natural hillsides or valleys so as to make the least impact on the environment.<sup>178</sup> The most common feature of all of these buildings is a heavy emphasis on natural materials.

The landscape and the design of many of the early cottages in the summer resort community of Albemarle Park, in Asheville, North Carolina drew from this style, including the use of winding roads following the natural topography, locust trunks as street signs and lamp posts, and the use of stone for steps and retaining walls. Cottages were built in woodland settings, with many exhibiting the use of the Rustic Revival style or adding elements of this style on porches and adornment. Another example of the style in Buncombe County is the **William Nelson Camp Jr. House** in Fairview (NR 1998). This house, along with several cottages on the site, utilized this style as a means to blend in with and only minimally disturb the surrounding landscape. Architectural features include the use of half logs planed flat to fit in neat stacks without notching on the first floor, with wood framing covered by shingle siding on the upper floor. Simple framing is used for all window and door openings, and the house is stained dark to blend with the environment. The house was built with materials on site, including planing of lumber. There is a prominent fieldstone chimney, and granite slabs, also found on site, set into concrete form the patio of the house. The Rustic style of the exterior continues on the interior with the use of field stone for the fireplace, with an oak mantel shelf and a granite slab hearth in the main living space. Ceilings are built of hand-hewn beams, with ceiling joists above the beams left as exposed structure.<sup>179</sup>

There were a total of four cottages in High Top Colony built in the Rustic Revival style between 1919 and 1925, three of which are excellent examples of the style that retain most of their original features. The **Marion Turner Bryson Cottage/Blue Bird/Blue Bird's Nest** (10 Grey Eagle Road, 1921) is one of these intact examples, with its use of heavy timber and stone pier

<sup>178</sup>Argintar, Sybil. "Singletary-Reese-Robinson House", National Register Nomination, 2010, pp. 8-12 – 8-13.

<sup>179</sup>Argintar, Sybil. "William Nelson Camp Jr. House", National Register nomination, 1998, pp. 7-2 – 7-3.

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foundation, unpainted weatherboard siding, and heavy timber posts and rhododendron branch railing on the front porch. In keeping with the Rustic Revival philosophy, this house is set back in the woods and blends with the natural environs. Set back from, and not visible from the road, the **Virginia and Frank Day Cottage/** (194 High Top Colony Road, ca. 1921) features unpainted weatherboard siding, a stone chimney, and locust post foundation. The porch details include tree trunk posts, tree branch balustrade, and stone steps leading up to the porch on the east side. The **Eva and Dr. Clarence Loomis Cottage/Slabsides** (21 Grey Eagle Road, ca. 1925), is a bit later use of the style within High Top Colony. Rustic Revival features it exhibits include the long, horizontal tree bark slabs used to side the house and the full-width tree trunk porch posts and tree branch balustrade on the porch.

### *Bungalow/Craftsman Style*

Bungalow/Craftsman homes originated from the Arts & Crafts movement of the late nineteenth century. The style was a reaction to the heavily ornate Victorian Era home of the same time period and focused upon the skills and workmanship of the individual builder/craftsman that still existed in the midst of a mechanized and often depersonalized industrial revolution of the day. The first Craftsman homes built were often costly due to the high cost of materials and labor in producing them. But over time this style house became the home of the working class. It was a practical, functional style for the middle class, built at a time when household servants were no longer part of the family. With this in mind, the house was simple in layout with built-in cabinets, kitchens that were functional and part of the main living space, simplified front porches, and plain, unadorned door and window trim.

The Craftsman Bungalow style, in its high-style form, was popular from 1905 – 1930. It typically features one to one-and-one-half stories, irregular massing, gable or hip roofs, partial or full-width porches with battered posts on brick or stone piers, exposed rafter ends, knee braces, open or closed porch balustrades, shingle, weatherboard, or stone walls, and often the use of stone foundations. The bungalow house form, a simplified version of the more high-style Craftsman bungalow, was a common house design utilized by all economic classes. Examples of this style exist throughout Buncombe County. One of these is the **Dr. Gaillard S. Tennent House**, 207 Pearson Drive, 1907, with its one-and-one-half-story massing, pebbledash walls, corner porch with heavy braces, and clipped gable roof.<sup>180</sup> Also in Asheville, located within the Manor and Cottages Historic District (NR 1978), is **Manzanita** cottage (1914), a one-and-one-half-story bungalow with shingle siding, rustic porch details, and a stone foundation.<sup>181</sup> In Black Mountain, is the **House** at 118 Church Street, (ca. 1915), which is also a good example of a bungalow. The one-story house exhibits details including a cross-gable roof, wood shingle siding, triangular purlin brackets, and exposed rafter tails.<sup>182</sup>

The Craftsman style, built as bungalows, was a common architectural form seen in High Top Colony, with six bungalow cottages built, dating from 1919 – 1939. Only one cottage, the **Annie G. and Henry G. Hart Cottage/House by the Side of the Road/Peak of View/Peek-a-Boo**, ca.

<sup>180</sup>Historic Montford. Asheville: The Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County, 1985, p. 332.

<sup>181</sup>Turberg, Edward F. "Manor and Cottages Historic District", 1978, p. 7-2.

<sup>182</sup>Griffith, Clay. "Dougherty Heights Historic District", National Register nomination, 2009, p. 7-4.

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1921, has lost a significant amount of its original integrity and is a non-contributing house. One of the best examples of the use of the bungalow form in High Top Colony, although built late for the typical time period of the bungalow, is the **Alice and Howard Kester Cottage/Piney Moors** (42 Hoot Owl Road, 1939). Features of the Bungalow exhibited on this house include its one-and-one-half-story form, shingle siding, and side-gable-roof with knee braces. Dormer windows, multi-light casement windows, and a full-width front porch with stone cheek walls at the steps leading up to it are additional significant features of the house and the style.

The collection of architecture within the boundaries of the High Top Colony Historic District are significant not only for including several excellent examples of the Rustic Revival and Bungalow/Craftsman styles, but also for the manner in which the buildings are sited, maintaining throughout the district a woodland setting that minimally impacts upon the natural mountain environment.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** BN2473

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** approximately 30 acres

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Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Latitude 35.593547  | Longitude -82.332382 |
| 2. Latitude 35.593146  | Longitude -82.332446 |
| 3. Latitude 35.592483  | Longitude -82.330150 |
| 4. Latitude 35.589604  | Longitude -82.330730 |
| 5. Latitude 35.588574  | Longitude -82.332640 |
| 6. Latitude 35.590930  | Longitude -82.332554 |
| 7. Latitude 35.591087  | Longitude -82.335064 |
| 8. Latitude 35.593181  | Longitude -82.334614 |
| 9. Latitude 35.593181  | Longitude -82.333519 |
| 10. Latitude 35.593564 | Longitude -82.333498 |

**Or  
UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The historic district boundary follows the accompanying National Register boundary map, at a scale of 1" = 300'. The source of the base map is NCHPO HPOWEB. Boundaries follow parcel lines as shown on HPOWEB and the county tax maps.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary follows the historic boundary of High Top Colony, as platted in 1958, with some expansion of this boundary to include recent additions to lots on the north side, specifically historic lots 2 and 9, and the addition of 125 High Top Colony Road at the northwest corner of the district. This property was not part of the 1958 plat, but is related to the history of the district. A portion of High Top Colony Road is not included at the southwest section of the map, since boundaries follow plat lines. The boundary encompasses all of the cottages historically and currently associated with High Top Colony. New residential development and homes not platted as part of the High Top Colony subdivision, outside of the boundary, are not included.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Sybil H. Argintar  
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street & number: 166 Pearson Drive  
city or town: Asheville state: NC zip code: 28801  
e-mail sybil.argintar@yahoo.com  
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date: August 9, 2021

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: High Top Colony Historic District

City or Vicinity: Black Mountain

County: Buncombe

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Sybil H. Argintar

Date Photographed: May 2020

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 12. Grey Eagle Road streetscape, view east

2 of 12. High Top Colony Road streetscape, view northwest

3 of 12. Hoot Owl Road streetscape, view east

4 of 12. 159 High Top Colony Road, view southwest

5 of 12. 160 High Top Colony Road, view northeast

6 of 12. 194 High Top Colony Road, view southwest

7 of 12. 221 High Top Colony Road, view northeast

High Top Colony Historic District  
Name of Property

Buncombe, North Carolina  
County and State

- 8 of 12. 10 Grey Eagle Road, view northeast
- 9 of 12. 21 Grey Eagle Road, view south
- 10 of 12. 20 Hoot Owl Road outbuilding, view west
- 11 of 12. 42 Hoot Owl Road, view north
- 12 of 12. Water Tank Reservoir, view southeast

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.