



Black MOUNTAIN NEWS

Serving the Swannanoa Valley

Second class postage paid
at Black Mountain, NC 28711

Thursday, February 10, 1983, Volume 31, Number 6

Member of the NCPA

25¢

Facelifts

TVA designs 9 more

Nine more Black Mountain businesses including the new Chamber of Commerce building on State Street received face lift plans from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) last week. The plans were presented by developmental planner John Smalling at a lunch meeting Thursday.

Smalling told the small group of merchants present that Black Mountain "is one of the best towns I've ever had in nine years with the TVA" Townlift program. Black Mountain is the first North Carolina town to receive assistance from the TVA.

Smalling said he hoped Black Mountain would be "a pilot area, a model

Townlift community for the mountain areas."

Businesses and buildings receiving drawings Thursday included:

--Underground Cutters, plans for a sign.

--Black Mountain Savings and Loan, plans for landscaping.

--Union 76, painting and trim.

--McMurray's Chevrolet, striped awning entrance and wood trim around windows.

--Valley Realty, complete redesign of the front, including removal of aluminum facade.

--Don's Restaurant, new roof which

creates a porch framed with landscaping.

--Sobol's House of Furnishings, awning and landscaping.

--Chamber of Commerce, extensive landscaping and parking plans.

The local Townlift committee plans to select one area of town to concentrate on completing Townlift plans. According to Joe Tyson, the committee will appear soon before the Town Board with specific requests for assistance.

The committee also plans a March meeting with Black Mountain merchants to kick off a clean-up, fix-up campaign.



Members of the Townlift committee show drawings submitted by TVA for renovations in the central business district of Black Mountain. Pictured (L-R) are: Sam Woolwine, Chuck Campbell, John Smalling of TVA, Chairman Bob Watts and Joe Tyson.

Sign ordinance to be enforced

Portable electrical signs are limited to certain conditions in the sign ordinance which was passed in September 1982.

Article X of the Ordinance states:

Section 1002.7 -- Sign setback requirement -- no portion of any sign may be located closer than ten (10) feet to any pavement for a street in the Town of Black Mountain. No sign in the Town shall be located in such a manner as to constitute a traffic or safety hazard.

Section 1003.6 -- Any flashing device or sign displaying flashing or intermittent light or lights of changing degrees of intensity except a sign indicating time and/or temperature with changes alternating not less than a five second cycle.

Section 1003.8 -- Any sign posted to utility poles, trees, fences, rocks or other signs are prohibited.

Compliance to these sections of the Ordinance must be made by May 1, 1983. Violation notices will be issued beginning June 1, 1983 for non-compliance. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

C. J. Manis
Zoning Administrator

Black Mountain College listed in National Register

by Priscilla Hopkins

In the early 1930's, John Andrew Rice was a professor at Rollins College in Florida. After a falling out with administrators, he was fired. Eight other professors resigned in protest.

The nine men shared a dream of a college that would be run by its professors and students, not administrators. At the core of their educational philosophy was the idea that democratic living and art should be at the center of life.

They came to Black Mountain in the fall of 1933 and opened Black Mountain College in Lec Hall at Blue Ridge Assembly with a faculty of nine and a student body of ten.

In 1937, the college bought property at Lake Eden off Old U.S. 70. Architect

A. Lawrence Coker designed buildings for the campus that were so simply done that novice workers (students and faculty) and materials at hand (wood and stone) could be utilized in their construction.

The college was avant garde, decades ahead of its time. Many of the greats of the arts visited and/or taught there for varying lengths of time. Even a partial list reads like the Who's Who of the approximately twenty years the college was in existence. Among those associated with the school were Edward Albers, Buckminster Fuller, John Dewey and Thornton Wilder.

By the early 1950's, Dr. Rice had become disillusioned with what he felt was the dilution of his educational philosophy and disassociated himself from the college. There were faculty disagreements, financial problems and,

as one wag has succinctly put it, too much democracy, that led to the disintegration of the college.

A portion of the property had already been purchased by Mr. and Mrs. George Pickering for the establishment of a summer camp. When the college dissolved, they purchased additional tracts from it. Camp Rockmont for boys has been located there for nearly thirty years.

Last Monday evening, Feb. 7, Miss Page Pless of Asheville gave a moving slide talk on the history, philosophy and physical facilities of the unique Black Mountain College.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Mr. Doug Swaim of the Western Office of the Division of Archives and History of the N.C. Dept. of Cultural Resources spoke briefly about the criteria that a building, group of buildings, sites or

objects must meet before they can be included on the National Register of Historic Places.

Black Mountain College qualified on more than one count and is now registered on that list of pre-eminent properties. Swaim presented a certificate acknowledging the listing to Pickering who still owns the site of the former college campus.

The Executive Secretary of the Black Mountain-Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce, Andy Andrews, said that he was happy that this recognition had come for the college. He said that the Chamber regularly receives inquiries about it from people all over the country.

The Friends of the Black Mountain Public Library is building a collection of materials about the college. If anyone has information to share, please contact President Betty Tyson at 669-2564.

When the 'Winds of War' blew in the valley

by Priscilla Hopkins

Ed. note: A special word of thanks is due Mrs. Claudia McGraw, Dr. Thomas H. Spence, Mrs. Kay Stockdale, the late Rev. Robert C. Anderson, and the Historical Foundation of Presbyterian U.S. and Reformed Churches for their co-operation in furnishing the information for this article.

As many residents of the Swannanoa Valley watch the screen adaptation of novelist Herman Wouk's monumental work about World War II, "The Winds of War," this week on ABC, old memories of that time, now forty years ago, will be stirred.

When President F.D. Roosevelt issued the call to arms following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the sons, brothers, husbands and fathers of the Swannanoa Valley responded. Some never returned. Others came home to find their lives marked indelibly by the war.

But those who remained in the Valley shared in the war, too. They worried about their loved ones far away, remembered them in their prayers, bought bonds, worked in factories, did volunteer work for the war effort and tended their Victory gardens.

Others in the Valley found themselves caught up in an unexpected way with the Japanese and German nationals who were interned at Assembly Inn in Montreat from Oct. 29, 1942 through April 30, 1943.

In early October of 1942, the Rev. R.C. Anderson, president of the Montreat College, was approached by two representatives of the U.S. government to see if Assembly Inn could be used to house 138 Japanese women and children and 126 German men, women and children who had been interned.

The Rev. Anderson knew that the government could requisition the property for such a use, but he was not opposed to "entertaining" the internees; his only concern was that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian

Church U.S. was scheduled to convene at Assembly Inn on May 1, 1943.

The government representative and Rev. Anderson agreed in their contract that the internees could remain until April 30, 1943.

Rev. Anderson instructed his staff that the internees were to be "treated with the utmost courtesy and kindness."

They were to be shown by example what the Christian life was. Bibles were placed in each of the rooms used by the Germans on the third floor and New Testaments in those by the Japanese on the first and second floors.

Members of the faculty were asked to serve food cafeteria style. Mrs. Claudia McGraw, who was in charge of the kitchen and dining hall, recalls that the faculty was eager to perform this task because the internees were well-educated, interesting people.

She also recalls that hymn books were made available to the internees. Some were talented and trained musicians and soon beautiful music was heard daily. As Christmas approached, serious rehearsals were held in anticipation of the Christmas Eve celebration.

Rev. Anderson asked if the "guests" wished to have a Christmas tree. They

did. The Japanese placed theirs in the upper sun parlor.

The Germans, Mrs. McGraw remembers, had theirs in the lobby and it was so tall that it "nearly touched the ceiling and was beautifully decorated with exquisite, handmade ornaments."

When asked by Rev. Anderson if they wanted gifts for the children, the Japanese accepted. The German spokesman said, "Thanks, but you know that we are enemies." Rev. Anderson responded that "Christians love their enemies." Then the reply came, "Thank you. We will appreciate it."

Mrs. McGraw related that each evening the Germans dressed for dinner, but that Christmas Eve was, indeed, a special occasion. They were dressed in their finest for the festivities and she remembers how impressive they looked coming down the stairway that night.

The Japanese celebrated separately upstairs, the Germans around the tree in the lobby. But there was singing of carols and recitations by the children of both groups. Later in the evening, young people from Black Mountain assembled on the bridge that crossed the nearby lake. Windows were then

thrown open and all joined together in the singing of Joy to the World and Holy Night.

Rev. Anderson became fond of the children and they of him. He found that they were "most obedient," never having to be spoken to a second time. He noted in his reminiscences that there was no damage done to either the building or the grounds by the children.

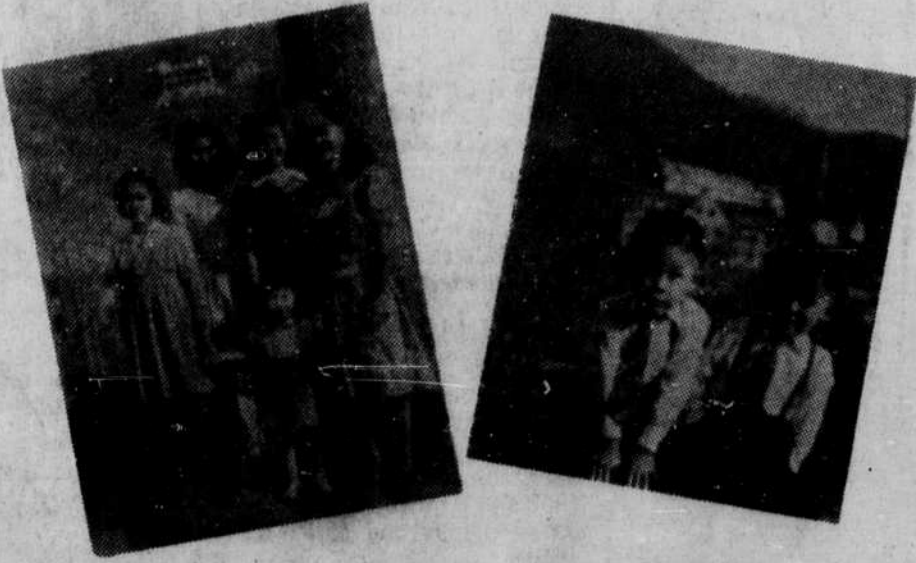
The internees maintained their own rooms. The Germans organized almost at once and assisted the housekeeper with her duties, especially the collection and distribution of laundry and linens.

The time was whiled away with music, conversation, reading and the maintenance of cultural customs. The women were proficient in needlework. The men did woodworking. An outside area was roped off for exercise that included spirited games of volleyball.

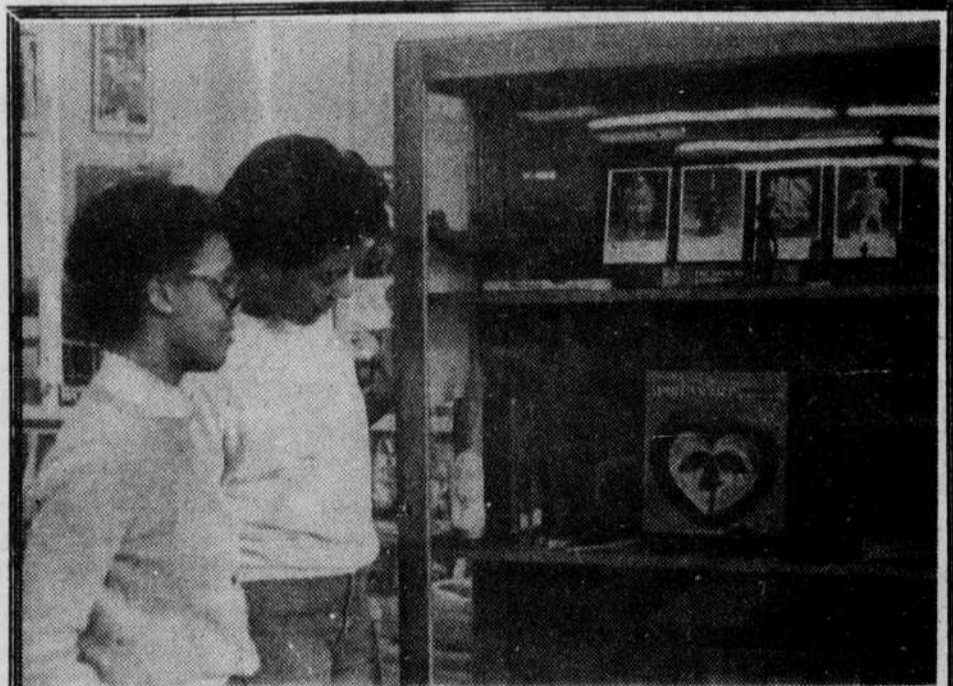
Although local men were hired as guards, there was no confrontations between them and internees. This precaution was more of a formality than necessity for as Dr. Spence, then director of the Historical Foundation, asked rhetorically, "Where would they have gone?"

Rev. Anderson's writings tell that the "entertainment of these internees was a service to the government, to the internees, and to the college." Mrs. McGraw remembers his coming to talk with her the morning of their departure and telling her that for the first time, Assembly Inn was out of the red. With some of the money, immediate refurbishing of the Inn was undertaken. Mrs. McGraw laughingly recalls that the upholsterers came that day and worked around the clock to ready the Inn for the convention whose delegates arrived the following day.

The internees, Dr. Spence believes, were transferred from the Grove Park Inn in Asheville. When they left on the last day of April, he thinks they were sent somewhere in the "Southwestern part of the U.S."



Pictured above are some of the Japanese internees who lived in Assembly Inn, Montreat in 1942-43.



Shown are (L-R) Sharon Harper and Lynette Lytle as they look over the Black history display in O.H.S.'s media center.

Owen High School observes Black History Month

The Black Beauties Club of Owen High School is leading the school in its observance of Black History during February. Mrs. Jean McNeill, an English teacher, is the club sponsor. Club officers are: president, Stephanie White; secretary, Denise Keeter; treasurer, Lynette Lytle.

The following activities are planned: an artifacts exhibit in the school media center; a bulletin board that will be changed weekly to depict four different

phases of Black history--African beginnings, historical Black leaders, Black women in history and N.C. Black contributors to the American way of life and a school wide assembly on Thursday, Feb. 17.

The assembly will feature Darce Grimes, co-anchor of WLOS-TV. A special tribute will be paid to six living Black women who are making significant contributions to our society and our state of North Carolina.

Aldermen meet Monday

The Aldermen of Black Mountain will meet on Monday, Feb. 14, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall. The agenda is as follows:

1. Resolution - Lease Agreement
2. Policy Manual Ordinance - 2nd reading
3. Revisions to Zoning Map Ordinance - 1st reading

4. Acceptance of Deed
5. Tax Releases
6. Recreation Commission
7. MSP Appointment - 208 Water Quality Appointment
8. Planning Board Appointment
February 7, 1983
1. Executive Session - Personnel
Al Richardson, Town Manager