

Backstory: Blowing Rock's History

History surrounds you in Blowing Rock and if you've ever wanted to learn more about the Crown of the Blue Ridge, you happen to be in luck. Thanks to a partnership between the Blowing Rock Historical Society, the Town of Blowing Rock, and the Blowing Rock Village Foundation the History Walk through this scenic village's downtown allows one to take in the past on a self-guided tour through 21 unique history stations. Historical Society President Tom O'Brien notes, "We are excited to open this



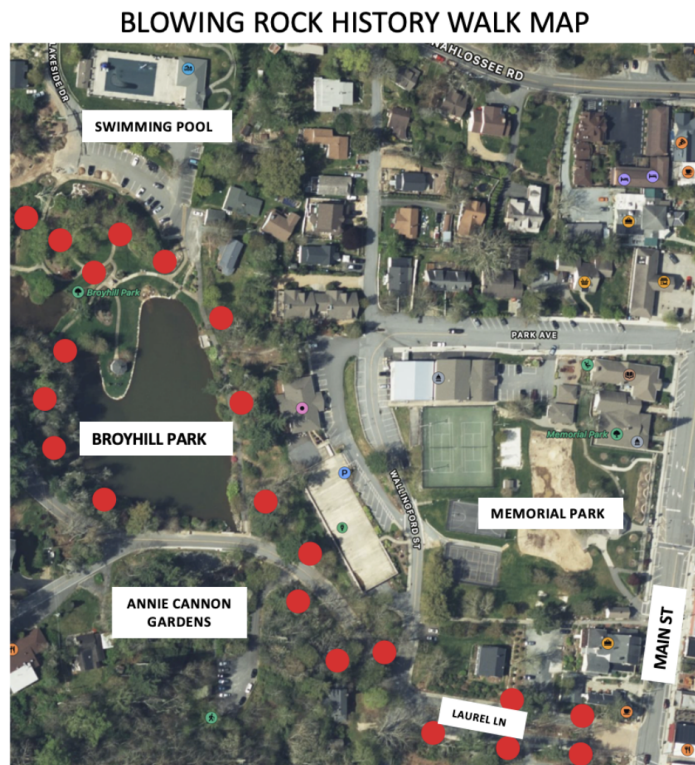
wonderful new trail during NC's Year of the Trail. The History Walk will be a significant venue for folks interested in heritage and culture, and will create a greater connection between Main Street and beautiful Broyhill Park...Our history can be quite entertaining, and the History Walk

was carefully designed to tell engaging stories...We were looking for places and ways to bring Blowing Rock's past to our visitors and the entire community. We intentionally pulled many compelling aspects of our history that tell the story of our evolution and people, events, and places that have made Blowing Rock what it is today." The History Walk's ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on June 1, a date which the Town of Blowing Rock has deemed, "Blowing Rock History Day." (Above image: A History Station along the History Walk at Broyhill Park).

This handicap-accessible walk is .25 miles in length and begins at Laurel Lane close to Main Street (Mayview Plaza). The Walk then moves onto Broyhill Park, takes you around Mayview Lake, and then brings you back to Laurel Lane and Main Street. The 21 History Stations feature beautiful bronze plaques with relief illustrations, text interpretation about notable people, buildings, eras, sites, and moments in Blowing

Rock's fascinating history, and each station has a QR code that will take you to the Blowing Rock Historical Society's website for additional information on each station's topic.

Whether it's your first time visiting Blowing Rock or your family's been calling the village home for generations, the History Walk is sure to fill you in on some of the town's colorful past. Did you know the village's first mayor drove a stampede of cattle down Main Street? Or that infamous sharpshooter Annie Oakley showcased her skills at Mayview Manor? Or that a tiny version of Tweetsie Railroad (the Tweetsie Junior) used to circle around Mayview Lake and could carry children and adults? Delve into these stories and more with the History Walk and its paired online back stories. (Above image: A map of the History Walk).



The Blowing Rock Historical Society



The Blowing Rock Historical Society was founded in 1984 to preserve, protect, and promote Blowing Rock's rich and colorful history. The Historical Society was co-founded by Ginny Stevens (pictured left) who ensured the preservation of Blowing Rock's history through her passion and dedication to this Land of Sky. Ginny spent the last 30 years of her life working to make sure that critical features of Blowing Rock would not be lost to time. Ginny had a significant role in the preservation of Edgewood Cottage, the refurbishment of the 1888 Museum, having the historic Green Park District listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in the

establishment of the Historical Society's historic marker program which recognizes significant buildings and structures throughout Blowing Rock. Today, there are over 40 historical markers throughout the village. The Historical Marker Program is a collaborative effort between the Historical Society and the Blowing Rock Art & History Museum (BRAHM). Members of the Historic Marker Committee note that over 125 properties in downtown Blowing Rock are 50 years old or older. Keep a lookout for these red oval plaques to learn more about some of the unique structures and buildings throughout town. (Right image: A Historical Marker at Blowing Rock's Memorial Park. Below image: A Historical Marker for Rumble Memorial Presbyterian Church).



The Blowing Rock Historical Society also manages Edgewood Cottage and the 1888 Museum on Main Street. Edgewood Cottage can be found by BRAHM, directly across the street from St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church. Edgewood was built in 1890 and was the home and studio of renowned artist, Elliott Daingerfield

(1859 - 1932). Daingerfield would go on to construct two additional homes in Blowing Rock (the Windwood in 1900 and Westglow in 1917) and spent each summer in the

village. His work, "Madonna of the Hills" is on display at St. Mary of the Hills and BRAHM also features a permanent Daingerfield exhibition.

(Topmost right image: The writing reads "Interstate workers removing front addition over porch. Fall 2005." and "David Jackson & BRHS Vice President, Carole Miller at back of cottage being removed." Middle right image: The new framework to Edgewood Cottage during construction. Bottom right image: Construction progressing on Edgewood).

Restoration on Edgewood Cottage was a uniquely complicated process. Before work could begin studies showed that it would be necessary to dismantle and rebuild the cottage. During the reconstruction of the cottage original materials were used as much as possible which can be seen in the four-room fireplace which was built using the cottage's original bricks. The same footprint was used for the reconstruction with improvements only being made as necessary to accommodate for modern building codes, lighting, heating, plumbing, electricity, insulation, and fire protection. Daingerfield's original architectural drawings can be seen on display at Edgewood. Restoration to the Cottage was completed in 2008 and in 2010 the Historical Society began the Artist in Residence program utilizing the cottage as a wonderful gallery space. Local artists display their work within Edgewood Cottage and even provide



public demonstrations on their artistic processes. New artists are featured every Monday during this event. Edgewood is open daily from 10:00am to 5:00pm during the

Artist in Residence program which runs May 27 - September 10, 2023. The 2023 schedule can be found [here](#).

Edgewood remains open daily during the remainder of the year for self-guided tours. (Left image: Edgewood Cottage's Artists in Residence of 2023. BRHS members Tom O'Brien and Lynn Armbrust also present. Image via the Watauga Democrat).



Just a few blocks from Edgewood sits the 1888 Museum Historical Hotel Cottage. The Blowing Rock Historical

Society re-curated the 1888 Museum during the summer of 2020. This little historic cottage is the only remaining cottage from the Watauga Hotel. The Watauga Hotel, built in 1884, was the first hotel erected in Blowing Rock and aided in ushering in a new wave of tourism the likes of which the area had not yet seen. (Topmost right image: the 1888 Museum in the present day. Bottom right photos: The cottages of the Watauga Hotel and the rightmost image shows the hotel's main building circa 1910). Due to seemingly unending demand for room and board, the Watauga constructed several cottages on either side of the hotel in 1888 to accommodate additional guests. These single room cottages were the perfect place for the summer cottager to relax in



town. Rooms rented for fifteen dollars a month and guests could take their meals in the main hotel building. The 1888, named for its construction date, features two connecting units with one room showcasing photos and items related to other historic hotels in Blowing Rock and the second room shows visitors how this little cottage may have been styled for guests in the late 1800s. The 1888 is open from 9:00am to 5:00pm daily and on weekends during the winter months.



In addition to managing Edgewood Cottage and the 1888 Museum and creating the Blowing Rock History Walk the Blowing Rock Historical Society has also supported the local community by aiding in the

Moses Cone Manor House restoration, construction of the American Legion building, salvaging and restoring the town's first fire truck, generously giving to the Blowing Rock United Relief Fund to support local businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Society also continues to fund and support a variety of important projects and initiatives. Interested in becoming a member? Click [this link](#) to be taken to the Historical Society's membership page and help us preserve this Crown of the Blue Ridge. (Above image: Edgewood Cottage with BRAHM in the background and the Elliot Daingerfield statue in the foreground).