

Philanthropy Backstory

Philanthropy has a long and storied past in Blowing Rock. In fact, the town would not be the beautiful village that it is without the amazing generosity of various residents, community members, and local non-profit organizations throughout the years.



Among the first in a long line of individuals known for giving to Blowing Rock would be the Stringfellows. William Stringfellow and his wife Susie Stringfellow (pictured left) are widely known for their purchase of the Chetola Estate but many may not be aware of just how giving this couple were towards a town and community that they loved so dearly. The Stringfellows donated to the Watauga County Home (this organization aided the impoverished families and individuals in the area by providing food, shelter, and clothing) and to the American Red Cross. The Stringfellows also organized the first boy scout troop in the area and held regular meetings on their property at Chetola. Susie Stringfellow organized the Blowing Rock School Betterment Association and with the help of Ethel and

Elsie Boogher she also helped in establishing the first Blowing Rock Exchange, the Blowing Rock Civic Improvement League, and a local branch of the Camp Fire Girls. (Above image: Susie Stringfellow. Image via The Anniston Star)

The Stringfellows moved to Blowing Rock from Anniston, Alabama in the hopes that William's health may improve with the cool mountain climate and thankfully William did improve during his and Susie's time in Western North Carolina. In appreciation for William's health improving, Susie dreamed of building an episcopal church in Blowing Rock. While she did not live to see its completion, the church was built thanks to Susie and later William and was named the Susie P. Stringfellow Memorial Church and would later be renamed, St. Mary's of the Hills. Upon her death, Susie left \$1,000 to the Grandfather



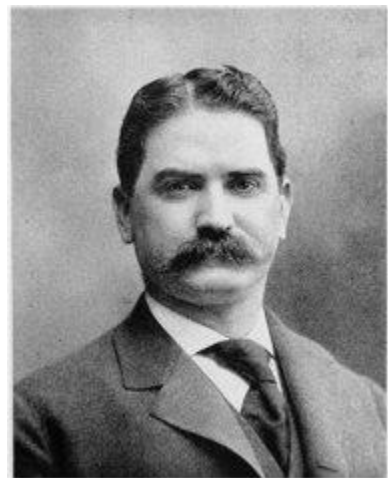
Orphanage - even in death she could not be stopped from giving. (Image above: St. Mary's of the Hills)

Another notable figure in Blowing Rock's philanthropic past is the Coca-Cola King of the Carolinas himself, James Luther Snyder. Snyder aided in founding the Blowing Rock Community Center for black Blowing Rock residents, helped maintain the Blowing Rock Methodist Church, and annually supported the Blowing Rock Community Carnival. All proceeds from the carnival also helped the community with all proceeds going towards the Blowing Rock Community Club. Perhaps one of the most well-known Blowing Rock events, the Blowing Rock Charity Horse Show was led in its infancy by Snyder who served as president and director of the event. Snyder made sure proceeds from the horse show went to local causes such as the Red Cross, the Community Club, and the Boy Scouts.



If you've ventured around the high country perhaps you have come across Moses Cone Manor or Julian Price Memorial Park off the Blue Ridge Parkway. Moses H. Cone, a.k.a. the "Denim King" began work on his scenic estate in the 1890s with his wife, Bertha Cone. The Cones were staunch environmentalists and took extra care to preserve the beautiful patch of land they now called home. The Cones would at

times employ as much as 20% of the Blowing Rock population to work on their estate, creating a significant economic boost for the community. The Cones established the Sandy Flats School on their property due to having such a large workforce and being mindful that their employees' children needed a good education. The Sandy Flats School would eventually become the Sandy Flats Baptist Church which served the community's spiritual needs. Bertha Cone left 3, 516 acres of the historic Cone estate to the Cone Memorial Hospital in the hopes that the land would be maintained for the public. The land was transferred to the federal government for proper care and management and on January 21, 1949 the Cone estate



officially became part of the National Park System. (Above image on left: Moses Cone Manor circa 1970s. Moses Cone pictured above on right)



Julian Price (pictured left), an insurance executive from Virginia, stipulated that his beautiful 42,000 acres of land be donated to the federal government to be maintained and preserved so that all could enjoy its natural beauty and wonder. The land was donated in 1952 and by 1960 the Julian Price Memorial Park was established. (Right image: Price Lake)

A surname synonymous with giving in the Blowing Rock area is Broyhill. The Broyhill family have



historically given to a multitude of charities and organizations in the high country such as the Blowing Rock Charity Horse Show, the Appalachian Regional Healthcare System, Appalachian State University, and the Blowing Rock First Baptist Church to name a few. Philanthropy seems to be a family tradition for the Broyhills. Ed Broyhill and his wife Satie often donated to churches, hospitals, universities, and numerous community development projects throughout

North Carolina. Paul Broyhill, their son, founded what would become the Broyhill Family Foundation with his father. The Broyhill Family Foundation supports medical research, higher education, and many other charitable avenues. (Ed and Satie Broyhill pictured left)



Another family well-known for giving to the Blowing Rock and Watauga area is the Cannons. Charles Albert

Cannon and his wife, Ruth Coltrane Cannon both supported the Blowing Rock Community Center and both served on the board for the Blowing Rock Charity Horse Show. Ruth Cannon was also a dedicated member of the Blowing Rock Community Club.



She and her husband were incredibly active in the Blowing Rock community and helped wherever they could. Their daughter, Mariam Cannon Hayes (pictured right), helped to establish the Blowing Rock Hospital, the North Carolina Symphony, the Cannon Music Group, and the Hayes School of Music at Appalachian State University. Mariam bequeathed her family's historic Blowing Rock family home to the Appalachian State University Foundation. She gave \$10 million to Appalachian State in 2001 and created an endowment in the School of Music which now bears her name.

Annie Ludlow Cannon, wife of Joseph F. Cannon Sr. is known for aiding in the creation of the charitable Blowing Rock Community Club, supported the Grandfather Home for Children, the Blowing Rock Charity Horse Show, the carnival, and was a dedicated Sunday school teacher for the community. Annie and Joseph's adopted granddaughter, Anne Cannon Forsyth is known for her charitable work regarding issues such as poverty and racism. Forsyth founded the North Carolina Fund, the Awards Committee for Education, and the Anne Cannon Trust was founded in her honor.



(Above image: A jump during the Blowing Rock Charity Horse Show circa 1980s)



This is only a handful of the folks who helped shape Blowing Rock into the beautiful town we know today. Their hard work, generosity, selflessness, and love for their community has helped create this lovely mountain town and the continued dedication of non-profit organizations and Blowing Rock community members ensures that our town will remain an amazing destination for centuries to come. (Left image: Beautiful downtown Blowing Rock circa 2017)