

Town of Boone



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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September 30th, 2022

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Boone 150 Historic Boone Nighttime Cemetery Tours in October

The Town of Boone continues the Boone 150 celebration with a series of evening and nighttime tours of the historic Boone Cemetery, starting on October 7th, and continuing on Fridays in October, including Halloween. The guided tours will feature various themes such as, “Bizarre Boone,” “Women in the Boone Cemetery,” and “Veterans in the Boone Cemetery.” Tours will be led by local historians and enthusiasts, including Bettie Bond, Trent Margrif, Ellie Mayfield, Eric Plaag, and Gary Plaag.

Dr. Bettie Bond, a retired history professor, serves on the Watauga County Historical Society and the Town of Boone's Historic Preservation Commission. She also works closely with Digital Watauga Project, and was the first inductee to the Watauga County Historical Society Hall of Fame. Among her many accomplishments and work with numerous local agencies and organizations, she is well-known for her jovial spirit and passion for local history. Bond will be leading tours at 6:00 p.m. on October 14th and 31st, and at 7:00 p.m. on October 28th.

Trent Margrif, a senior lecturer at Appalachian State University, has taught a First Year Seminar course on Historic Green Buildings and various courses with the Department of History since 2010. He received the Rennie W. Brantz Award for Outstanding Teaching, and has contributed to important historical research of Appalachian State University and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Margrif has also given dozens of tours of the Boone Cemetery to students and as part of the Founder's Day Celebration at App State. Margrif will be leading tours on October 7th at 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., and on October 28th at 9:00 p.m.

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Ellie McCorkle is from Ashe County and holds a BS and an MA in History and Public History from Appalachian State University. She works with the Digital Watauga Project, and is currently contracted with the Town of Boone to help designate local historic landmarks. McCorkle will be leading tours on October 7th at 9:00 p.m.; October 14th at 8:00 p.m.; October 21st at 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.; and October 31st at 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

Dr. Eric Plaag is the Chairperson of the Digital Watauga Project, as well as the Boone Historic Preservation Commission. As the principal consultant at Carolina Historical Consulting, LLC, Dr. Plaag has authored three books, including *Remembering Boone*, as well as numerous institutional and local histories. He has also been instrumental in a number of grassroots preservation initiatives throughout the Carolinas. Dr. Plaag will lead tours on October 7th at 8:00 p.m.; October 14th at 9:00 p.m.; October 21st at 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.; and October 31st at 8:00 p.m.

Gary Plaag holds a Masters Degree in Communication and previously taught MBA communications at The College of William & Mary. Plaag founded Couragio Consulting, a communication, presentation, and executive coaching practice in 1998 and has been headquartered in Boone since 2020. He serves as the House Manager at the renovated Appalachian Theatre and occasionally leads tours of that historic building. Plaag will lead tours on October 14th at 7:00 p.m.; and October 28th at 8:00 p.m.

Originally known as the Councill Family Cemetery, the burial ground has been regarded as the town's cemetery as early as the 1880s - even though it remained privately owned until 2015. As early as 1899, newspaper appeals called on local citizens to clear away the briars that were overtaking the graves, but maintenance of the cemetery remained a challenge for much of the cemetery's history. By 1932, the White section of the cemetery was publicly announced as "practically filled," although occasional burials of relatives of those already interred occurred in the decades to follow and still occur from time to time. The present stone gate posts were installed in 1982, but the other improved conditions, including the gorgeous perimeter fence that dissuades App students from sunbathing and other folks from walking their dogs among the graves, are the result of substantial investment by the Boone Town Council since 2015.

Boone 150 celebrates the Town of Boone's sesquicentennial anniversary. Events have been taking place throughout the year. Continuing programs include Watauga Public Library's Boone

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Reads Together, and the Boone Summit - an evening of discussion about Daniel Boone, taking place at the Appalachian Theatre on Wednesday, October 26th.

Tours of the Boone Cemetery will take place on October 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th, and 31st. Tours begin at six, seven, eight, and nine o'clock, with the exception of October 28th, which will not have a six o'clock tour, to allow the university's homecoming parade to conclude. Tours are free to attend, and each tour will allow a maximum of 15 patrons. A link to an online sign-up form is available at www.boone150.com and open spaces may be filled on-site with first-come-first-serve. For more information, please contact the Town of Boone's Cultural Resources Department at 828.268.6280