National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

7. Description

The Black Mountain College property, currently known as Camp Rockmont for Boys, is situated in the heart of the Great Craggy Mountains of western North Carolina. The property is three miles from the town of Black Mountain, located off of Highway 70, 0.4 miles south of the junction I-40 and Highway 70. The current acreage is 604 acres; during the time of the college, the Lake Eden property totaled 667 acres. A swiftly flowing creek runs a southeasterly course, dividing the property into two sections: 330 acres to the north and 274 acres to the south; the creek feeds three man-made lakes (the two connecting lakes to the north of Lake Eden were recently built by the present owner, Mr. George Pickering). To the west, the majestic Craggies look down over the North Fork Valley and upon the rambling meadows of the Lake Eden property. In the edge of the woods across the road from the property runs the North Fork of the Swannanoa River.

Lake Eden was developed by the master builder of Asheville and western North Carolina, Mr. E. W. Grove, under the premises of creating an amusement center for Asheville and for Grovemont-on-Swannanoa, Grove's "model town" which was designed yet never constructed. In 1923-1924, E. W. Grove built four summer lodges, a stone Round House (actually it is octagonal), a dining hall with a porch overlooking the lake, and two stone cottages. According to the 1927 pamphlet distributed by Grove Properties, Mr. Grove designed these summer structures in order "to add further charm to the perfect mountain setting which surrounds Lake Eden." The summer buildings have native stone foundations and functioned as the home for a Girl's Summer Camp in the 1920s and later as a Summer Resort Inn.

Structures in the Black Mountain College Historic District include four general types of architecture: (1) the 1920s Grove summer cottages, (2) 1940s International Style buildings, (3) the Farm buildings (1940s) and the Quiet House (1942) built by Black Mountain College (BMC) faculty and students, and (4) the post-1956 cabins and gymnasium built by Mr. George Pickering. This nomination focuses on the Grove buildings and the structures built by BMC faculty and students, in particular, the Studies Building (10; see inventory list), the Jalowetz home (11), Minimum House (12), Cabin #24/25(13) and the Quiet House(15). Several of the contributing buildings in the district have undergone exterior alterations in the form of rehabilitations or additions. Many of the interiors have been changed through remodeling or refurnishing. For all but the Studies Building and the structures built of native stone, brown and green is the present exterior color, suggesting the present owner's desire to blend the buildings in with the natural wooded environment. It is assumed, during BMC's occupancy, the overall building colors were not as cohesive. The property remains a mixture, however, of the vernacular wood-shingle cottage style and the smooth, low-cost International style of modern architecture. It is apparent that the architecture reflects the symbolic values of the culture which produced it. For the faculty and students at Black Mountain College, the architecture was an important symbolic-economic question.

Lake Eden is cupped in a small hollow, just north of the Eden Hall porch. Eden Hall (1), or the dining hall, is one of the larger Grove buildings on the Lake Eden property. It was built in 1923. It is a one-story rectangular structure, set on a

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fieldstone foundation, covered in wooden shingles and native stone. A broad gable stretches to cover the principal, southern facade. On the north side is a large screened-in, semi-engaged porch which runs the length of the dining hall. The view from the porch across the lake and into the valley is spectacular.

The dining hall remains much the same as it was during BMC times. Like many other buildings on the property, the dining hall was put to many uses. It was in the dining hall that the college held dances, concerts, art classes and the BMC theatrical events. It was here that Buckminister Fuller, Elaine de Kooning and Merce Cunningham appeared in the college's production of "The Ruse of the Medusa," and it was here that the famed 1952 mixed-media performance took place involving John Cage, Charles Olson and Robert Rauschenberg. Eden Hall still contains the institutional kitchen attached on the northwest end, and to the southeast is a recently constructed outdoor porch overlooking the lake. A large stone fireplace provides the dining hall with literal and figurative warmth, perfect for the ambiance of community living.

Connected to the southeastern end of the dining hall by a few stone steps is the Round House (2), a one room octagonal structure built completely of native field-stone. This building housed shelves upon shelves of sheet music, albums and music books, therefore the name, the Music Room (the name given during BMC's occupancy). The eight arched windows correspond to the octangonal shaped building. The structure now functions as a reception area for the campers and other Rockmont guests.

A fieldstone cottage, located opposite the entrance to the dining hall, is the Stone House (3). It is built completely of native stone with an exterior chimney. The two-story gabled cottage has two shed porches, one on the north end and one on the south. The Stone House functioned as a faculty residence and is presently in use as a Camp Administrator's home.

Directly north of the Stone House are two lodges built by E. W. Grove, Arrowhead (5) and Thunderbird (4), both with wood-shingled siding and fieldstone foundations. Doubletiered porches on their facades are supported by eight Y-shaped pole logs set on stone foundations. Each of the two-story structures contains eleven bedrooms, six bathrooms and a lodge room or lobby. Duberman mentions in his book, Black Mountain:

An Exploration in Community, an occasion when Joseph Albers and BMC students went on a rampage to redecorate the walls of these lodges with paintings of their own design. The lodge walls have long since been repainted, hiding what artwork may have been done.

The remaining Grove lodges are located on the northern slope of the property to the west of Lake Eden and Eden Hall. Meadows (6) is the first building to the north after the creek. It is a two-story structure, sheathed in wooden shingles with a fieldstone foundation and a fieldstone chimney, which is consumed above its base by a shingled gable. The upper floor is a dormered apartment, complete with bedrooms, kitchen, and a bath; the lower floor has four bedrooms and two baths. Meadows was used as a faculty residence during the BMC occupancy.

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Stetson (7) is a large rectangular structure, across the road from Meadows and farther north. It has triple shed dormers and an uncovered porch which extends the length of the building on its principal elevation. Two bays in the back of the lodge jut out from the weatherboarded wall. Like the other Grove buildings, Stetson rests on a stone foundation. It was used as a dormitory for BMC students.

The Pickerings' home (8), located in the center of the property, sits on a native stone foundation built by Grove, but most of the house was constructed post-1956. As Mrs. Pickering says, "It was just a shell when we got it."

The building used now as the kitchen staff residence (9) is a L-shaped cottage with a stone foundation. No information was found on the function served by this building during BMC's occupancy.

Primary among the structures built during the BMC period at Lake Eden is the International style Studies Building (10) (1940-41). The Studies Building projects from a hillside like a long, pointed finger, resolute in its whiteness and rectangularity. It is situated on the northwest side of the lake, opposite from the dining hall. The building stands as a counterpoint to the disorderly vegetation and the blurry mists which rise from the lake in the early morning.

In 1939 Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer designed a complex of buildings for BMC, but their plans were scrapped for reasons of economy. Instead, architect and faculty member A. Lawrence Kocher designed the Studies Building. With economy in mind, Kocher designed a four-wing complex which would make the best use of novice workers and of building materials on the property. Now called "The Ship" by campers at Rockmont, the Studies Building looms on the edge of the lake, dry docked —it is the only completed wing of the Kocher four-wing plan. The other three units (a second studies building, a library and a small unit for offices) would have connected to a central lobby area and were to be constructed as rapidly as finances and time would permit. The two main wings of the group were to have been laid out roughly parallel the lakeshore at a distance of twenty-five yards, with the other two units projecting westward. It is reported that the foundations were laid for the second wing in 1942; however, no physical evidence is present.

The ground floor of the completed structure, from the hillside at its western end to the terrace under the building and to the firetower against the hillside, is native stone masonry. The greater part of the building is supported by reinforced concrete columns in cantilever construction. The columns, generally called pilotis when dealing with the International style, allow the building to hover in complimentary freedom, emphasizing the building's volume despite its mass. The sheathing of the outer walls is of large corrugated sheets of Transite, an asbestos synthetic, the sections of which are easily screwed into place. Continuous steel sash windows, the second characteristic of the International style, are of the projecting type and run almost the length of the two upper floors.

The skeleton of the building is wood frame, with inner walls of plywood over an accoustical core. The roof is flat, another International style concept. It is

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built of alternate layers of asphalt and heavy building paper, and has a gravel surface for walking and for fireproofing.

On the interior, the building was designed with fifty-five individual studios for students and faculty, to be outfitted and decorated as each desired, some with junk and salvation army furniture, some bare, white and pure. There were two classrooms, a periodical room, an art studio and two faculty apartments. Two decks were constructed on either end of the building for sunbathing and art shows.

The Studies Building now houses Camp Rockmont's business office as well as an infirmary, several dorm rooms, a weight room, a storage structure for canoes and other outdoor recreational equipment.

The building functioned as the central living area for the college; it served as focus for the tightly knit community the BMC faculty had come to value. If one were to have walked the extension of the building, down its double-loaded corridor, during the BMC days, some doors would have been closed and some open, with students and teachers, painting, studying, listening to music, talking. The building provided easy access to classes and faculty.

The "Kocher Room" so called in honor of designer A. Lawrence Kocher, is located on the second floor of the Studies Building and was where the first faculty meeting was held in the completed new structure. The walls of the room are sheathed in chestnut paneling. The panels, which were taken from trees on the Black Mountain property, are full of "character" markings, small worm holes, because the trees were killed by a blight. The width of one wall is taken up by one of the first new chalk boards. Instead of conventional "blackboard," it is a polished piece of plate glass which has gone through a special hardening process. It is ivory in color so green, blue, or black chalk could be used on it. The principle involved is the same as in printing: it is easier to read dark figures from a light background than vise versa. The board is especially illuminated by lights behind it, so that at night speakers may illustrate their talks by the use of a luminous board. (The board is still intact; whether it works or not is not known.) Large windows, the same height as the chalk board, run the length of one side. The flooring, as in all other rooms in the building, is from oak trees cut on the college property by faculty members and students and milled in Asheville. The ceiling is an overlay of plywood panels, four feet square, which give a checkerboard effect. This overlapping was invented and adopted by the college in order to conceal the disfiguring cracks between the pieces; the cracks were caused by modern steam heat. The room is lighted by four long flourescent lights which make a rectangle conforming with the ceiling pattern. These lights were adopted because of their "daylight" illumination and because they eliminate the glare. 8 The room, in addition to faculty meetings, was used as a classroom. At the present time, the "Kocher Room" functions as a conference room.

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In the space below the building's elevated mass, BMC art classes used to assemble for studio work in the portion open to the weather. Two exceptional frescoes by Jean Charlot are exhibited on two of the reinforced concrete pilotis under the building. Charlot was an important figure behind the scenes of the first generation of Mexican artists; he was a summer teacher at BMC in 1944. The frescoes are entitled "Study" and "Tempest" (1944) and depict two massive blunt figures executed with the vitality characteristic of the early Mexican art movement. The frescoes are still there, somewhat faded and bird-spattered, however, negotiations have been made to move the frescoes to the new Museum of Art in Raleigh, N. C. There, the frescoes will receive proper care; the owners believe it is important to preserve two of the few pieces of art work left on the property from the days of Black Mountain College. 9

Immediately to the northwest of the 1940-1941 Studies Building and also constructed in the International style is Cabin#24/25(13), sometimes referred to as "Overlook." It was built soon after the Studies Building but received major alterations in the late 1960s by the present owner. Overlook is a two-story rectangular structure anchored to the steep hill overlooking Lake Eden. Its freestanding stilts are made of steel (the later stilts are made of wood) and constitute the essential part of the structural foundation. The effect of the stilts is an allowance of circumambient space to pass under the enclosed building above. The stilts enhance very strongly the look of volume as opposed to mass. The first floor window-wall, facing east, opens up the interior of the cabin and allows a wonderful view of the lake. The second-story ribbon windows run the length of the building, bordering the gabled roof-line. The roof was originally flat but in the post-1956 alterations, the Pickerings changed the flat cantilevered International style roof to a gabled roof for maintenance reasons. A porch extending the length of the cabin was added to the west side and a large restroom was added in the rear. The raising of a building on pilotis or stilts was one of the most significant formal devices differentiating the new International style of the 1920s and 1930s from what preceeded it. Despite its alterations and additions, Overlook is an important example of the International style.

The Jalowetz House, presently called Black Dwarf(11) was remembered by a former BMC student as having "white planes and a sharply canted roof." 10 The white planes and the canted roof over the music room were related, says the student, "like the geometric elements in Albers' archetech-tonic paintings." The Jalowetz house is organized in an assymmetrical composition of contrasting patterns, reminescent of the texture problems assigned in the introductory BMC workshop course. A Lawrence Kocher used an assortment of materials in his design, in order to construct a model of the techniques he had discussed in his classes. A corrugated sheet of Transite (left over from the Studies Building project) sheaths the entrance wall but is interrupted by the smooth half of the building which projects forward; this flat-roofed L-shape part of the cottage has a facade which is ribboned with steel-sashed windows on the borders of the roofline. The L-shaped section houses three bedrooms, the kitchen and the bathroom. Behind the corrugated facade is the living room, used by Jalowetz as a music room; a ribbon window placed along the ceiling's edge gives a skylight effect and counterpoints the western side of the music room, where a single two-over-two

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window appears. This window could be taken as an "exclamatory punch" in this stretch of blank wall. Of interest on the back side of the cottage is the circled geometric screen on the porch and the ribbon windows along the kitchen and bathroom walls.

Minimum House (12) is a one-story, low-cost home designed, and constructed in 1942 by BMC students, Paul Williams, Al Lanier and Si Sillman. They wanted to show that a good design need not be expensive; the money (\$1000) for the building was provided by Paul Williams' mother and the stones for the walls were gathered from the woods. The building is located northwest of the Jalowetz house and is set back from the road, next to the stream. The east and west walls of the rectangular-shaped home are sheathed in corrugated metal panels; the panels create an interesting counterpoint to the picturesque natural setting. The south wall is built of native stone masonry with a stream-line window band bordering the sloping cantilevered ceiling; this stone wall echoes the masonry wall built as an extension to the window-wall or north The stone extension makes one more aware of the entrance to the building. (The door is covered in corrugated metal and is flush with the wall). The north wall of the Minimum house is built entirely of windows. The windows are all rectangular in shape and were originally made with metal sashes (now they have wooden sashes). A glass door was placed on one side of the window wall; it is quite easy to grasp the door as a form before considering whether or not the form accords a The door form blends into the total plane of the wall.

The interior of the Minimum house is filled almost entirely with unused bed frames and other camp equipment. The building is known to the young campers as "Mildew Lodge" which explains its state of condition; the building is in need of repair. Across the stream from the Minimum house and in the woods can be found the two gravesites of the former BMC faculty—Heinrich Jalowetz and Max Dehn. It has been said that a student, while on a foraging trip for stone for the construction of the house, accidently picked up Jalowetz's unmarked gravestone and the stone was incorporated into the rear masonry wall of the Minimum house. The graves have been marked correctly since then, by ceramic gravestones. 11

A second building designed and constructed by BMC students, was the Quiet House (15), a small stone house built for "meditation" by Alex Reed (a graduate of BMC and former assistant in the college art department) and Molly Gregory (art assistant and farm manager). Quiet House was built in 1942 to commemorate the death of the Dreiers' son, Mark, who died in 1940 in a car accident at Lake Eden. Reed and Gregory intended the building as a place where persons who felt the need of quiet and undisturbed thinking could find such peace. The building was designed after the manner of a Friend's Meeting House; Reed wanted the Quiet House to be used by persons of any denomination or religion. The building was constructed with a plain gabled roof; a fireplace was built into the south wall, it's exterior chimney of native stone. The building has two-over-two fenestration; on the interior, the floors are built of oak and the walls remain a solid white. Although the function of the building has changed from a meditation house to a lodge for campers, the physical appearance remains practically the same. An additional restroom/shower room was added to the northwest end of the building by the present owners, post-1956.

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A quarter of a mile northwest of the central campus area is the BMC farm (20-A, 20-B, 20-C, 21, 22), a complex of three barns entitled A, B and C, two red ceramic silos and a tack room made of cement blocks. Barn A is a large board and batten structure, complete with a second floor loft and a shed roof. Barn B is a three sided frame structure with a shed roof; the walls are sheathed of verticle boards which are spaced apart; included on the interior are five stalls. Barn C is set up as a feeding area for the horses; a plain hip roof covers the structure. The tack room is built of concrete blocks and constructed in the dogtrot style. Construction of the farm complex began in the late 1930s; additions were made to Barn A in 1941 and in 1942, a milk house (20-C) and a bull shed (20-B) were constructed. The BMC community expanded its farm in order to try to save on food costs; the new barns were built in order to accommodate the new produce and progeny.

Other structures built at Lake Eden during the BMC occupancy were the Shop (16), the Canteen (18), the Gate House (19), and Lakeside (17). These buildings are described in the inventory. There is no information concerning these buildings, i.e., when they were built and for what purpose; they are not of the modern architectural style like the other BMC-built buildings, therefore one may deduce that these four buildings may be what Martin Duberman discusses as "government surplus army housing." Duberman relates that in the spring, 1946, the college could not afford new construction. One of the faculty members suggested applying to the government for surplus army housing. These buildings were installed: one was used for a student study, one for classrooms and storage and the third, for BMC's first adequately lighted library. This idea is only a proposal.

Note should be taken of the two fires which occurred during the BMC occupancy: one fire occurred in September, 1948. This fire totally destroyed the chemistry lab, formerly the Grove bath house; the lab included a darkroom for photography where a gifted student, Hazel Larsen, had stored her negatives. The building burnt to the ground; it was valued at \$12,000.13 The second fire occurred in 1953, when a building by the name of "Roadside" was destroyed. There is no information on where this building was located on the property or when it was built.

Two buildings, built by BMC faculty and students which have since been demolished are: the Pot Shop and the Music Practice Room. The Pot Shop was constructed by the resident potter, Robert Turner and included a magnificent kiln. The Pot Shop inaugurated a distinguished tradition of "potting" at BMC. 14 The Shop was torn down by the present owners and replaced by one of the two recently built man-made lakes. The second building, the Music Practice Room, designed and built by students, was demolished in 1979; it was a fire hazard. Its two massive, opposing walls were of stone held apart by glass walls which tilled outwards. The only furnishing was a grand piano. Two remaining cinder block walls designate the site of this building (35).

The final BMC structure of interest is the reservoir (36) built of concrete and well-hidden, in the woods northwest of the main campus area, towards the Craggy Mountains. No date has been found for this structure.

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FOOTNOTES

Martin Duberman, <u>Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community</u> (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1972), p. 318.

BMC sold 70 acres of land (for which only 63 acres are accounted) located across the road from Lake Eden to Grove Sand & Stone Company in 1949 for \$30,000 due to financial problems with the college.

²From a pamphlet, dated 1972, entitled "Grovement On Swannanoa, E. W. Grove Estate, Lake Eden Properties and Kimberly Section of Grove Park," on file in the North Carolina Collection at Pack Library in Asheville, N. C.

Grove came to Asheville in 1900 to establish a chemical company; he was owner of a St. Louis pharamaceutical firm that manufactured Bromo-Quinine "chill-tonic." Grove developed other business interests as well: once Grove wandered along the banks of the Swannanoa River and noticed big gravel deposits of well-worn rounded stones. He saw possibilities for this stone, so he organized the Grove Sand & Stone Company at Swannanoa, sorting, washing, and loading gravel. The stones used in the buildings at Grove at Lake Eden are from this quarry.

3_{Ibid}

⁴Ibid.

⁵Martin Duberman, p. 169.

Mr. George Pickering, personal interview on the changes he has made to the Lake Eden property since he bought the land in 1956; July 18, 1981.

Mr. Pickering relates there was a large swamp in the vicinity of what is now the soccer field, in between the edge of the lake and the Studies Building. Pickering had the area filled in with dirt and he seeded grass. The name, "The Ship," however, was given to the building because of its architectural style. (Le Corbusier would highly approve of such a title.)

"Work Launched On New Building," from material on Black Mountain College, on file in the North Carolina Room, Pack Library, Asheville, N. C.

8"Faculty Holds First Meeting In Kocher Room," <u>Asheville Citizen</u>, December 4, 1941; from material on file concerning Black Mountain College in the Black Mountain Library, Black Mountain, N. C.

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9Mr. George Pickering, personal interview on the future plans for the frescoes by Jean Charlot on the piloties of the Studies Building; July 18, 1981.

Wanda Lee Austin, "A Love Affair...30 Years Later," The Arts Journal, 3, (April, 1978), p. 11. Kocher's designes for the "Jalowetz Cottage" are in Architectural Forum, July, 1944.

^{11&}lt;sub>Martin Duberman, p. 273.</sub>

¹²<u>Ibid</u>., p. 272.

¹³<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 304.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 320.

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Inventory of Buildings in the Black Mountain College Historic District*

Rustic Resort Architecture From E. W. Grove's 1920s Site Development

	Ru	stic Resort Architecture From E. W	. Grove's 1920s Site Development
(+)	1.	Eden Hall (Dining Hall) 1923	One-story wood-shingle and stone structure on a stone foundation, backed with a semi-engaged, screened-in porch which overlooks Lake Eden. It functioned as a dining hall, theatre, dance studio, and recreation room.
(+)	2.	Round House (The Music Room) 1923	One room octagonal-shaped structure built completely of native stone; functioned as the storage room for sheet music, music books and albums; now functions as a reception area for campers. The eight arched windows correspond to the eight sided structure.
(+)	3.	Stone House 1923	Three room residence built completely of native stone with an exterior chimney and two shed porches.
(+)	4.	Thunderbird 1923	Two floor lodge (formerly a dormitory) with a double-tiered porch supported by stone column foundations and Y-shaped pole logs. On the interior are eleven rooms, 6 baths and a lobby.
(+)	5.	Arrowhead 1923	Two-floor lodge, similar to Thunderbird, with a double-tiered porch and hipped dormers. An addition was made to the south end; the date is unknown.
(+)	6.	Meadows 1923	Two-floor residence with a complete apartment on the upper floor, 4 bedrooms and 2 baths on the lower. The structure is sheathed in wood shingles with an exterior half-chimney of stone and fieldstone foundations.
(+)	7.	Stetson 1923	Two-floor lodge with triple shed dormers and a facade porch. Built of wood shingles with a stone foundation.
(0)	8.	Pickering Home Stone foundations 1923	Large wood shingle and stone residence, most of which was built post-1956. Home of the present owners of the property, Mr. and Mrs. George Pickering.
(+)	9.	Kitchen Staff House	L-shaped one-floor residence with a stone

foundation and a shed porch.

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International Style Buildings and Structures influenced by Bauhaus Style of Architecture

(+) 10. The Studies Building (presently The Ship). 1940-1941

Two-story rectangular block raised on pilotis and sheathed in white corrugated sheets of Transite, sections of which were easily screwed into place. Designed by A. Lawrence Kocher, the planned fourwing complex was chosen by BMC over the Gropius-Breuer design (1939) because Kocher's design made the best use of novice workers (students and faculty) and building materials on the property. Only one wing was completed; it functioned as a structure consisting of fifty-five individual studies, a library, art studio, faculty offices and classrooms. Of importance, are the two frescoes by Jean Charlot located on two reinforced concrete pilotis under the building.

(+) 11. Jalowetz Cottage (Black Drawf) ca. 1942 L-shaped, one-story residence organized of contrasting textures and geometric patterns reminiscent of the texture problems assigned in the introductory workshop course. Designed by A. Lawrence Kocher, the living room (Music room) is housed under a canted roof while the rest of the cottage rests under a flat roof. The cottage has a combination of steel-sashed windows and two-over-two fenestration.

(+) 12. Minimum House ("Mildew House") ca. 1942

One room, low-cost home constructed by three architectural students under a self-imposed restriction that its cost not exceed \$1,000.

East/west walls are of corrugated metal panels; the south wall is of stone and the north wall is of glass with a masonry wall extension.

(+) 13. Cabin 24/25 (Overlook) ca. 1942

Two-story rectangular block on stilts of steel and wood, designed by two BMC architectural students; it functioned as the chemistry/physics building. Flat roof has been altered to a gabled roof by the present owners and a porch and rear restroom have been added.

Other Structures Designed and Built By BMC Faculty and Students

(+) 14. "Treetops Hilton Resort" ca. 1942/post-1956

L-shaped residence, of which only the section around the interior stone chimney is of importance. The rest was added post-1956.

23- Cabins 13 and 14.

25. Cabin 19 and 20

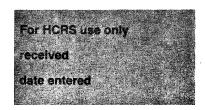
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United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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(+)	15. Quiet House ca. 1942	One-room stone structure, design and Molly Gregory (BMC students of a Friends' Meeting House, an for meditation. An addition (rwas added to the northwest end	s) after the manner nd used as a place restroom/shower)
(+)	16. The Shop ca. 1940s	Two-room rectangular shed used	as a wood shop
(+)	17. Lakeside ca. 1940s	One-room gabled roof structure built of wood shingle construct equipment room and snack bar.	
(+)	18. Canteen ca. 1940s	Two-room plain gable roof struc stoop on the east facade; forme room.	
(+)	19. Gate House ca. 1940s	One-room structure with a plain porch.	hip roof and a shed
	The BMC Farm		
(+)	20-A Barn A. ca. 1939-1941	Large board and batten structur floor loft and a shed roof.	e with a second
(+)	20-B Barn B. ca. 1942	Three-sided frame structure wit formally a bull shed, the inter five stalls.	
(+)	20-C Barn C. ca. 1942	One-room plain hip roof structu house and now as a feeding area	
(+)	21 Two Silos ca. 1942	Red ceramic block cemented toge two unusual-looking silos; quit	
(+)	22 Tack Room ca. 1942 Cabins: Post-1956	Two-room dog-trot style structus block.	re, built of cement

One story frame, square-in-plan cabins on pole

Two room rectangular structure with two entrances

log supports, under a plain hip roof. Step

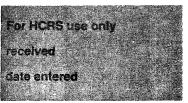
entrances face each other.

under a plain hip roof.

*Status within district: (+) positive

(0) neutral(-) negative

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(0)	26- 27.		One story frame, square-in- criss-crossed pole log supp hip roof. An exterior porc structure on the east end o	ports, under a plain ch is attached to each
(0)	28.	Cabin 23	One room rectangular struct roll log supports. An exte three sides of the cabin.	
(0)	29- 30.	Cabins 26 and 27	One room rectangular struct porches on roll log support	
	Othe	er Post-1956 Structures		
(-)	31.	Gymnasium ca. 1979-80	Large stone facade with a m	etal and aluminum frame.
(0)	32- 34.	Private homes on leased land		
	35.	The Music Practice Room ca. 1940s	(Recently demolished except concrete walls) This build BMC faculty and students, walls, held apart by glass to outwards. The only furnish a grand piano.	ling was designed by ith two massive opposing walls which tilled
(0)	36.	Reservoir ca. early 1940s	Located northwest of the main well-hidden in the woods, mare reinforced concrete).	

8. Significance

1400–1499	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agricultureX architectureX art commerce communications	community planning	landscape architectur lawX literature military music t philosophy politics/government	e religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1923. 1940 and later	Builder/Architect	Unknown	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Black Mountain College was significant as an experiment in progressive educational ideals, as a place in which abstract art and expressionism were formally conjoined and where a college became the name of a literary movement. It was founded and developed largely through the efforts of John Rice and four other Rollins College faculty, not to mention the many students, who left Rollins in 1933 over a dispute involving academic freedom. BMC rented quarters at the Blue Ridge Assembly (1933-1941) and from 1941-1956 established itself on its own Lake Eden property, previously the site of an E. W. Grove development. BMC's central building, the Studies Building, is a primitive yet convincing example of the International style architecture that was developed in the 1920s in Europe and later spread through the western world. The Studies Building, Cabin 24/25, the Minimum House and the Jalowetz Cottage are all significant early explorations of the new modern building vocabulary: steel or concrete skeletons, flat roofs, ribbon windows, slabs cantilevered or wings hovering on stilts. The experimental nature of the college attracted wide attention in academic circles, and drew a faculty that was to include at various times: Joseph Albers, formerly of the Bauhaus in Dessau, Germany; poet Charles Olson, avant-garde composers John Cage, Edward Lowinsky and Lou Harrison; Oliver Freud, son of Sigmond Freud, the psychiatrist; and artists of the caliber of Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, Ben Shahn and Robert Motherwell. The college was supported over the years by Albert Einstein, physicist; Thorton Wilder, playwright; Aldous Huxley, essayist; Henry Miller, novelist; John Dewey, educator; Peggy Guggenheim, art patron; and Walter Gropius, architect and founder of the Bauhaus. Gropius and his partner, Marcel Breuer, designed a studies complex for BMC on the Lake Eden property; however, the school could not afford the construction of such a complex and chose an alternate plan by A. Lawrence Kocher, which utilized student and faculty labor. Most of the BMC structures survive today, along with earlier rustic cottage architecture, on the property which is in use as a summer camp for boys.

Criteria Assessment

- A. Black Mountain College is significant due to its association with events that established twentieth-century modern art and architecture in America and which incorporated progressive educational ideals into the American academic mainstream.
- B. BMC gains significance from the roles played there by nationally prominent figures in art, architecture, science and education.
- C. Several buildings constructed during the BMC tenure comprise a significant collection of early International style architecture.

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Page one

Black Mountain College was founded in the fall of 1933 at Blue Ridge Asembly, 18 miles east of Asheville on the main slope of the Blue Ridge. The college flourished for twenty-three years: eight years at Blue Ridge Assembly, fifteen years at Lake Eden, and in 1956 fell victim to its own blight. Yet, before it fell, Black Mountain College pointed out new directions for United States higher education and for the state of the arts in a way that is best illustrated through a chronological survey.

During May and June, 1933, the idea of starting a new college took hold. The impetus for the idea was a crisis at Rollins College in Florida; the crisis concerned the firing of John Andrew Rice, Professor of Classics, in a dispute over academic freedom. Rice, a close associate of John Dewey, the progressive educator, felt that a truly liberal arts college should be free from impediments as imposed rules and regulations, required courses and grades, deans, registrars and boards of trustees. The result was the dismissal and resignation of more than a quarter of the Rollins faculty and student body. Four of these faculty—John Andrew Rice, Theodore Dreier, Ralph Lounsbury and Frederick Georgia—together with the students who left Rollins, decided to start a new college which would put into practice alternative ideas about education and the arts. 1

It was Bob Wunsch, the Rollins drama coach and before that, a teacher with the Asheville City Schools, who suggested Blue Ridge Assembly as the site for the new college; the Assembly was then used in the summers for YMCA conferences. A native of North Carolina (his roommate briefly at Chapel Hill had been Thomas Wolfe) Wunsch remembered the set of buildings at Blue Ridge, especially the huge white columned Robert E. Lee Hall, a 1911-1912 structure designed by the New York architect, Louis Jallade. The site seemed perfect; Rice said they would take it.

Struggling for financial support in the face of the depression, Rice spent the summer raising funds for the school and on August 24, 1933, a lease was signed with Blue Ridge Assembly for \$4500 a year. It was agreed Black Mountain College (BMC) would occupy Blue Ridge during the winter months, then stow its belongings in the attic for the summer when the YMCA conferences, camps and graduate school continued. There was no endowment for the school; funds came from private supporters and student tuition. Theodore Dreier writes that "the lack of endowment insured self-government and freedom from outside control...Constant risk seemed to be the price of our independence."

On September 24, 1933, Black Mountain College opened its doors in Lee Hall with seven professors (four from Rollins) and nineteen students (fifteen from Rollins). The prime aim of the college at first was to "get back to fundamentals." The founders believed the students and faculty should have complete control over the educational program and that a curriculum should be developed which would create in the students, the capacity for independent thought, initiative, imagination and emotional maturity—qualities which the founders deemed critical to the survival of the democratic society. They realized there is more to the liberal arts college than intellectual training; feelings and emotions must be disciplined as well. The

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means of achieving these goals was to emphasize the creative arts and practical responsibility in a community setting, where students and teachers lived in close contact. Learning and living were to be intimately connected. For example, creative participation in the arts was more important than art appreciation or art history. The student was to learn the method of the artist. Through the direct experience of the creative process, it was anticipated that the student would develop toughness of mind and a steadiness of purpose that is based on the sure knowledge derived from experience, understanding and practical competence. It was further anticipated that the student would transfer these qualities to whatever profession he/she chose, whether it be a teacher, a farmer, a scientist.

A divergence BMC chose from conventional college life was the establishment of selfrule. There were no required courses and grades were given only for the purpose of transferring credits to other colleges. Class structure was divided between two divisions: a Junior Division and a Senior Division. In the Junior Division students took courses in all areas of the curriculum, which included fine arts, sciences, languages and literature, and the social sciences. When the students felt ready, they took an examination which qualified them for the Senior Division. examination consisted of two parts: a comprehensive test of knowledge and understanding in the chosen areas of study, and a group of questions to which there may have been no answers but which tested a student's judgement, observation, imagination, appreciation and capacity to reach decisions. Students in the Senior Division specialized in a subject of their choice and prepared for graduation under tutorial guidance rather than in course work. Graduation was achieved, first by passing a preliminary examination by the college faculty in the student's area of concentration, and second, by passing an exam by an outside authority on the student's subject. The college did not seek accreditation; despite this fact, BMC graduates were accepted at major universities including UNC-Chapel Hill, University of Chicago and Harvard University. 7

In regard to faculty control, the college was owned and administered by the faculty who formed a non-stock corporation. The faculty elected a Rector who chaired faculty meetings and Board of Fellowsmeetings but who had no special administrative authority. The idea of hiring a non-professional Board of Trustees was discarded and a Board of Fellows was drawn primarily of faculty members and one student member; the Board was responsible for hiring faculty and for the financial administration of the college. An Advisory Council was appointed by the faculty. The Council had no authority but supported the college by their endorsement of its program; they offered advice when it was sought. Members of the Advisory Council included such people as Walter Gropius, a founder of the Bauhaus and Chairman of the School of Architecture at Harvard University; John Dewey, the founder of the Progressive Education Movement; Franz Kline, the Abstract Expressionist painter; and Albert Einstein, the eminent nuclear physicist.

In November, 1934, two months after the college opened, the American idealists were joined by the first of the many European immigrants who decided to come to this country to escape the holocaust of World War II. Joseph and Anni Albers arrived

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three

in Black Mountain with no knowledge of the English language yet they remained at the college for sixteen years. It was largely through their efforts that the college was to realize its innovative concepts of the role of the arts in education. A painter and an educator, Joseph Albers was a student at the Bauhaus in Weimar from 1920-1923. He became a professor of art at the Bauhaus in Dessau until 1933. In 1925 Albers married Anni Fleischman, a textile artist and an educator in her own right, and in 1933 they both moved to the United States and began their long association with Black Mountain College (1933-1949). From 1950-1958, Albers taught at Yale University where he became Chairman of the Department of Design. His wife, Anni, still lives in Orange, Connecticut.

Albers was a great color scientist, whose theories of line, form and color have influenced countless students of art and design all over the world. In his famous paintings of squares within squares, his mastery of technique and simplicity of expression reflect Albers' aesthetic philosophy, "in producing art, I please and educate others to see." The courses which Albers taught at Black Mountain were an adaptation of the Preliminary Course which he taught at the Bauhaus. However, whereas the Bauhaus Preliminary Course was structured for the professional artist and craftsman, the Black Mountain courses--painting, drawing, design and color--were modified to meet the needs of the general liberal arts student. Rice invited Albers to join the BMC community because of Albers' orientation to the Bauhaus principles of werklehre. Werklehre is an approach to art which is participatory. Albers wanted to make his students see that the life of an object involved three things: the object's inner qualities, its external appearance and its relationship to other objects; "one thing leads to another: you see through the orange marmalade and the feather to an image; you see through the tree bark, the rusty nail, the torn paper and the dripped paint to an image."10

Albers' specialty, however, was to juxtapose colors to demonstrate how they change value in relation to each other--"like making a gloomy raw sienna look as alive and shining as gold, by working on its neighbors." Depending on the moment and the perspective, Albers proved one part of an interaction achieves more prominence than another:

It's like people; no one person is continually most important. An individual, like a color or a line, could dominate temporarily but perceptual ambiguities soon shift and mix, with someone or something else merging into the foreground. When you really understand that each color is changed by a changed environment, you eventually find that you have learned about life as well as color. 12

This was the heart of Albers' sociology as well as his art. At BMC, workshops in weaving, woodworking, bookbinding, printing, photography and eventually architecture were laboratories where students could apply the skills and principles taught by Albers in the basic course.

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Albers was the first of the European innovators to bring to the college continental standards of excellence, a background of personal discipline, and an abundance of energy. Alexander (Xanti) Schawinsky, who also had been a student at the Bauhaus, arrived at Black Mountain in 1936. He stayed for two years teaching drawing and "stage studies" before moving on to The New Bauhaus in Chicago. Schawinsky's first production at BMC, "Spectodrama," aimed at the interchange between the Arts and the Sciences, using the theatre as a laboratory—a place of action and experimentation. The working group was composed of representatives from all disciplines, tackling prevailing concepts and phenomena from different viewpoints and creating stage representations expressing them. It focused on the visual—on color and form, motion and light, sound and word, gesture and music, illustration and improvisation—in search of a more complex means of expression and communication. His second production, "Danse Macabre" was a total theatre production—a mixed media celebration which predated by almost fifteen years, the famed 1952 "Happenings" performance at BMC that involved John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Charles Olson and Robert Rauschenberg.

Other important visitors to Black Mountain in the 1930s, were John Dewey (1934-1935), Thorton Wilder, the cubist artist Fernand Leger (1936), the playwright Henry Miller, Aldous Huxley (May, 1937), and Louis Adamic, the Yugoslavian writer; Adamic admits he arrived at BMC, with the idea of only staying an hour, "to shorten a long tale, I remained for two and half months. I realized I had stumbled on what might eventually prove to be one of the most fascinating and probably important stories developing in America today." 14

In June, 1937, Black Mountain College purchased the Lake Eden property, located across the Swannanoa Valley from Blue Ridge Assembly. The site had been developed in 1923 by the E. W. Grove Estate for a girl's summer camp. The property consisted of sixteen buildings, a man-made lake and 667 acres of land and was purchased for \$35,000. BMC leased the property during the summer of 1937 and during the next school year, students and faculty members of the college cleared fields, repaired and insulated the buildings at Lake Eden. Plans were made to convert the stone round house into a music room, the bathhouses into chemistry labs and the various cottages were to be converted into faculty homes.

The dreams of the college were large and in 1939, at Albers' suggestion, Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus and currently at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, was invited to BMC to discuss possible building plans for the new property. Along with his partner, Marcel Breuer, Gropius was commissioned to design a complex for the Black Mountain lakeside campus, that could house the college's main activities and also provide living quarters for the faculty and the students. Gropius and Breuer made a model of a grandly stilted and extravagantly glazed structure shaped in a broad curve for the ridge in the mountain and to follow the lake's edge. The series of interconnected buildings contained a study, classrooms, a library, and office space. It was the largest single building of their collaborative designs and one of the most completely within the tradition of the International Style as this has been formulated by Hitchcock and Johnson. 16 Unfortunately, architectural models and photographs of the models were as far as the Gropius-Breuer design could go. Financial difficulties caused these plans for BMC never to be carried out.

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Instead, an alternative plan, utilizing student and faculty labor, was decided upon. A. Lawrence Kocher, an internationally-known functionalist architect, proposed a complex of International Style buildings for a self-contained college plant. Kocher specialized in low-cost housing; he was a former professor at the University of Virginia and Carnegie Tech, and a former editor of the Architectural Record. He designed the four-wing Studies Building with the idea of constructing one wing at first, and later, when the primary unit was completed, the college would further expand its program. BMC's long range plan was to gradually replace the old Grove Buildings with the buildings designed in 1939 by Gropius and Breuer. The faculty and students felt this plan for growth avoided waste since the old structures would be used as long as it was economical, and all new buildings would fit into a comprehensive building scheme. The Studies Building, still in use at Camp Rockmont, was the only part of the building scheme completed.

"Larry" Kocher and his family took up full time residence at the college in the fall of 1940. Kocher not only participated on a daily basis in helping to construct his own blueprints, but also offered courses on architecture and design. In his architecture classes, the emphasis was not on the study of classical styles or historically notable buildings. Kocher believed the value of a building must not be determined by how clearly it approximates a colonial cottage, Georgian mansion, or a Gothic cathedral, but by how well it fits the needs of its time. He stressed to his students that the primary job of the architect was to supply low-cost, livable homes for the people of today's world. 18

In espousing such doctrines, Kocher reinforced the philosophy of architecture as proposed by Gropius at the Bauhaus. Gropius taught that architecture is an expression of its age and so of the circumstances, social structures and political conformation of that age. The Bauhaus stood for a complete liberation of the creative personality from the ecclectic styles of the past. ¹⁹ In his first statement on arriving in this country in 1937, Gropius said,

It is not my intention to introduce a...cut and dried "Modern Style" from Europe, but rather to introduce a method of approach which allows one to tackle the problems of our generation which is unbiased, original and elastic. 20

A democrat at heart and a tireless advocate of collaborative work, Gropius approved of BMC's work program. Out of financial necessity, the college's work program changed from "an educational possibility" into a BMC principle. Under the supervision of Richard Goethe, a German refugee with work camp experience, the entire college community raised the walls of their sleek new Studies Building. Different work groups drained the swamp, diverted the stream, dug and poured the foundation and gathered stone and lumber from the college grounds. The whole thing was a business-like proposition. The students and faculty were divided into two groups; one group worked two days a week and the other, three days. The workers checked in promptly and were issued tools and equipment by the tool checker; they worked from 1:30 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.²¹

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The building program was not a thing apart from the academic aspect of the school. While the building was going up at Lake Eden, labor and production problems and architectural principles were being studied in the classrooms at Blue Ridge. Many problems in production, architecture, as well as psychology were illuminated with a new meaning by the experiences of working in various capacities on the community project. The combined construction/classroom experience excited BMC and received outside interest. During the summer of 1941, the college did not run Lake Eden as an Inn, as it had in the past two summers; instead it conducted two four-week work camps as adjuncts of its program for "democratic citizenship." A number of students from Harvard School of Architecture came down to BMC for the camp sessions and ended up staying the academic year. The idea of building your own house was not new in this country but it was an innovation in the field of higher education.

In late September, 1941, seventy-three students and eighteen faculty members took up residence at Lake Eden. The boys were housed in one lodge, the girls in another, and the faculty lived in the cottages. The building program and the move to Lake Eden had given the community a sense of cohesion and purpose. In seeking to maintain this bond, extra time and effort was required by faculty and students in the upkeep of the college. The ordinary chores took on a scope adequate to 667 new acres. 23 The farm program, started modestly when the college was housed at Blue Ridge, was enlarged considerably when BMC moved to Lake Eden. Molly Gregory was hired to manage the farm. She helped to enlarge the program even more after America entered the war. Seventy-four acres of crops were cultivated, three Guernsey milk cows supplied most of the milk and cream consumed by the college and the college owned twenty-four beef cattle, fifty pigs and a flock of laying hens. 24 Dreier believed BMC should be self-sufficient, growing and cooking its own food and maintaining its own grounds. The college produced almost their entire food stock during the war. After that, as Dreier put it, "the farm provided large amounts of exercise and modest amounts of food."25

From 1939-1943, more European faculty appeared at BMC. In Europe they had been innovators and leaders in their various fields of endeavor and at BMC they brought yet another phase of development. Among those who taught were Heinrich Jalowetz, former pupil of Arnold Schoenberg and conductor of orchestras in Europe; Fritz Cohen, a musician who was co-founder of the Joos Ballet and composer of "The Green Table" (which is currently danced by Joffery Ballet); Elsa Kahn, who had been a dancer with the Joos Ballet; Edward Lowinsky, historian of Renaisance music and pianist; and Max Dehn, internationally known Frankfurt mathematician. Of the new faculty, Heinrich Jalowetz was the most readily accepted and admired. Forced to leave his post as a conductor of the opera in Cologne in 1933 during a purge of "non-Aryan" artists, Jalowetz spent three years in Vienna and from 1936 to 1938, became Operachef in Regensberg, the cultural center of the Sudentnland. He entered the United States in 1939 and took up residence at BMC with his wife and daughter in time for the 1939-1940 academic year. 27

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A cottage was designed for the Jalowetz family by chief architect, A. Lawrence Kocher. Kocher designed the house in a tensely knit asymmetrical composition of contrasting materials and patterns, reminiscent of the texture problems assigned in the introductory workshops at BMC. The canted roof over the living room provided the space needed for Jalowetz's grand piano; "Jalo" invited students into his home for lessons instead of meeting them in a classroom. He was beloved by the whole community. It was a great loss to the school when Jalowetz died; on February 2, 1946, Jalowetz played a program of Beethovan sonatas, acknowledged the applause, walked out on the porch, sat down and died. It was later found he had suffered from a heart attack. 28

A second heart attack victim among the BMC faculty was Max Dehn. Dehn taught at many of the great Universities of Europe and was world-famous for his mathematic abilities (Dehn's Law). Because he read Greek as well as English, at BMC, Dehn offered courses not only in math but occasionally in Plato and Ethics. Dehn died in 1952. Jalowetz and Dehn's funerals were held in the Quiet House, a small stone building built as a memorial for the Dreier son who was killed in a car accident in 1940. Both the men were buried in the woods; unmarked stones were placed on the graves until, in 1950, Karen Karnes made stoneware tablets for them. Madame Jalowetz relates that during the construction of a "Minimum House" in 1949, built by Paul Williams and other architecture students, her husband's grave stone was incorporated, quite by accident, into the stone masonry of the back wall of the house. Since the stone had no special shape or inscription to mark it as a conventional grave stone, one of the students simply gathered it up on a foraging trip. Only after the stone was placed in the wall, did someone recognize it as being from Jalo's grave. 29

The outbreak of the war between the United States and the Axis powers produced immediate tension and long-range dislocations for the Black Mountain community. The difficulties were compounded by the fact that BMC had stood apart from politics for so long and had been unused to having public issues impinge on its consciousness. By mid-October, 1943, only a single male student, a polio victim, remained on campus; all the others left with the last unit of the Enlisted Reserve Corps. The toll on the faculty rose to such proportions that not a single young, American-born teacher remained in the community. But BMC did not give up. Most of its students were women, most of its staff transplanted foreigners, most of its present income mortgaged and its future income imaginary, but the determination to continue was still there.

To meet the financial burdens of the college, BMC began a series of summer institutes which offered classes in the visual arts, music and drama. These were an enormous success and a stimulus to the college and to the American art movement. The first of these institutes was held in the summer of 1944; a Music Institute honoring Arnold Schoenberg and an Art Institute which brought to the college many artists who were Schoenberg's contemporaries in the visual arts. During the first summer, guest artists included, in music, Rudolf Kolisch, violinist; Marcel Dick, violinist; Joanna Grauden, pianist; Nikolai Grauden, cellist; Lotte Leonard, vocalist; Yella Pessl, harpsicordist; Edward Steuermann, pianist; Ernst Bacon, composer; Agnes

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de Mille and Doris Humphries, choreographers and dancers; George Beiswanger, critic and editor; Lorna Freedman, violinist. Among the art faculty were painters Jean Charlot and Armedee Ozenfant; sculptors Jose de Creeft and James Prestini; photographers Barbara Morgan and Joseph Breitenbach; art educators Belle Boas and Victor d'Amico; architect and designers Walter Gropius and Bernard Rudofsky; 31 gallery director J. B. Neumann; and Gerta Rudofsky who taught sandle making.

By the late 1940s the war had caused numerous changes in the faculty, and as a result, the remaining members of the original group were losing their influence. Also fatigue of the older members of the faculty who had borne the burden of maintaining the college standards during the war played its part. The tension between the old and the new faculty continued until 1948 when a fight for leadership resulted in the ousting of BMC's long-serving treasurer Theodore Dreier. There could be no reconciliation and here the basic weakness of the school organization showed up; the BMC founders had authorized no one, officially, to take command at the time of a basic disagreement among individuals. In 1949 five of the old staff left—three of whom were Joseph Albers, Anni Albers and Theodore Dreier. Dreier said then, he hoped the college would continue but that it was no longer the experiment envisioned by its founders.

The academic work done at the college maintained its quality, but there was a shift in emphasis. The emphasis of study changed from the visual arts to the literary arts. The major contributions were now in the field of creative writing; the summer institutes maintained the art focus, only this time, not with European faculty but with emerging young American artists. For the summers of 1948-1953, the guest faculty included Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell, and Willem de Kooning, Abstract Expressionist painters; David Tudor and John Cage in music; Merce Cunningham and Katherine Litz in dance; and Buckminister Fuller in architecture. 34

The fifties were difficult years for experimental institutions in America and BMC was no exception. The enthusiasm for experimental education on which Black Mountain College had relied during the 1930s no longer existed and the influx of the new students supported by the GI Bill who had brought a surge of creative energy to the college, declined after the war. The enrollment dropped from ninety-five in 1948 to twelve in 1956. Despite the diminished income and the loss of the "community ideals" of the founders of the college, creative activity continued. Charles Olson inspired in his students an enthusiasm similar to that won by Albers. With Olson's encouragement, active programs in theatre, printing and writing flourished. Olson joined the faculty of BMC in 1948 as a visiting professor and became rector in 1951, a position held until 1956. He had given up a career in government service in 1947 to devote his time to his study of history and his enthusiasm for theatre and dance. BMC provided him with talented students with which to work and for Olson, that was the best. 35

Charles Olson helped Black Mountain College establish a reputation as one of the country's most important literary centers. In the tradition of Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams and Edward Dahlberg, Olson regarded poetry as a transfer of energy.

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In his widely printed essay on "Projectivism," he wrote that the poem "must, at all times, be a high-energy construct and at all points, an energy discharge." He felt that in the process of poetry, "one perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception." For the poet to discover cadence, he believed, the poet must register "both the acquisition of his ear and the pressure of his breath." The poem's rhythm depends on the breath of the writer. Olson placed an emphasis in his poems on the kinetic elements of our existence—an emphasis on the moment as lived. The North Mark Tolson was "a sophisticated thinker. He obviously knows his poetic history and is capable of writing passages and whole poems that by most standards have elegance as well as power. He is, in fact, a solid theorist and practitioner in what by this time can well be called the tradition of the experimental."

The main goal for BMC in 1953 was to establish a way to publicize its existence and therefore, attract more students. Confronted with the impossibility of getting their work published by commercial presses or in established magazines, the students and faculty brilliantly came up with the idea of starting their own journal to print their writing. The "Black Mountain Review," edited by Robert Creeley, published the work of Olson and other Black Mountain writers such as Joel Oppenheimer, Michael Rumaker and Fielding Dawson. The college printshop also became an instrument with which faculty and students in collaboration with printers and artist illustrators could publish their work. Jonathon Williams, a native of Highlands, N. C., and a former student at BMC in 1952, printed early issues of his Jargon Publications at the college. Williams is still publishing Jargon Society books and attributes his success to Charles Olson:

In terms of writing, I've felt the impact of knowing him... somehow in writing, without any conscious attempt to hold Olson's precepts before mine eyes, I've found the words coming closer than ever before to the way I breathe, the way I sound when talking. The broken rhythms, the jets of energy, the tumbling sequences that break chronology and violate canons of orderly narrative, are where I am—and want more to be. Contact with Olson, in other words, has brought me into closer contact with my "own voice." That's a lot to be thankful for. 39

Of the ten poets categorized as "The Black Mountain School of Poetry," (a categorization designated by Donald M. Allen, in his 1960 anthology, The New American Poetry) six of them-Ed Dorn, Joel Oppenheimer, Jonathon Williams, Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, and Robert Creeley-had a connection with the school, ranging from Oppenheimer's role as a student and printer, to Ed Dorn's as a student/farm-worker/advisor, to Robert Duncan as resident-dramatist/link to the San Francisco "Beats." Donald Allen pointed out in his anthology that the label "Black Mountain" was meant to

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reflect their association with the magazines, Origin and The Black Mountain Review, rather than the college. 41 Jonathon Williams, when asked in 1978 about his association with the Black Mountain poets replied, "The tag is a convenience.. I remain glad that I was in Buncombe County in those years with an opportunity to learn from Charles Olson and the others." 42

Besides the literary activity of the college in the 1950s, active programs in other areas of the arts continued. A pot shop was built (now demolished) and pottery was taught by Robert Turner, Karen Karnes and David Weinrib, all of whom had been students or teachers at Alfred University in New York. Art was taught by two former BMC students, Joseph Fiore and Pete Jennerjahn. Hazel-Frieda Larson taught photography, M. C. Richards and Wesley Huss taught drama and Robert Creeley and Robert Duncan taught writing. 43 The composer, John Cage, frequented the college several times in the late 1940s and again in 1952. A recital of Cage's music was given in 1949 at BMC by William Masselos, pianist and champion of experimental music. Cage's music, at that time, centered on the "prepared" piano. Nuts, bolts, screws, paper clips, strips of metal and paper were introduced into the piano, in advance and at specific places, and the resulting sounds were extremely colorful. Masselos announced the program and commented on it. After an intermission he returned and explained that the second half would be the same as the first half, since it was unlikely that the music would be heard again in the future. He added, it was quite a lengthy operation "preparing" the piano.44

The next performance of John Cage's music was more experiemental than the first. In 1952, Cage arranged with Olson, Mary Caroline (M. C.) Richards, Robert Rauschenberg, David Tudor and Merce Cunningham to perform what has been labeled "Happenings" or a "mixed-media" event. The key to the performance was to give each individual performer absolute freedom to do what he/she wanted, by way of a composition or a performance during an allotted time; each participant in turn, preplanned what he/she would do. Olson and M. C. Richards read poetry, Rauschenberg showed his paintings and played a recording of his choice, David Tudor performed on the piano any compositions he wanted and Merce Cunningham danced. Cage's theory, taken from Marcel Duchamp's doctrine, was that the work of art should be completed by the observer; the art fuses together to make a theatrical event in which the things that take place are not casually related to one another, but in which there is a penetration; anything that happens after the penetration, happens in the observer himself. 45 The flexible format of the "mixed-media" performance ensured the impossibility of the occasion ever being repeated. There have been several attempts by others to create a "happenings" in life. Cage believed the Zen philosophy that "Art should not be different than life but an act within life."47 Cage's performances are experiments, "the outcome of which are not forseen."48

The duration of the experimental college in Black Mountain was an unforeseen event as well. BMC had started on a shaky financial foundation and never gained stability. Several "salvation attempts" were made by BMC, one of which was to close and then lease the lower campus, from the dining hall to the Studies Building--putting an end

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to the twenty year old tradition of communal dining. The money from the leased land helped to cut the operating budget, but the odds were just too strong. 49 BMC's 667 acres dwindled to approximately 604 acres in 1949; 50 in 1954, 300 acres were sold as farm land. The Eden Rock Corporation took over 205 acres in 1955 under a lease-purchase contract 1 and finally, in the fall of 1956, the college doors closed. On September 26, 1957, the remainder of the property was sold to Mr. George Pickering, president of Camp Rockmont, Inc. for \$110,500. The new owners expanded their camp operations into what is today, 600 acres of green and rolling land which is constantly being put to good use.

Most North Carolinians were and are aware that they had a "paradigm" in their midst-a paradigm of progressive educational ideals contributing to the special inflections of American arts since World War II. To many of the mountain folk of the western part of the State, Black Mountain College was "that place" where people different from them were doing things they did not understand. Although some believe the college existed in a world of its own, poet Jonathon Williams disagrees; "The one thing everybody says is that BMC had very little to do with the people and the State. That isn't true. BMC had a tremendous influence on the art thinking of North Carolina." 53 Black Mountain College firmly established a central place for North Carolina in the history of modern art and architecture.

The structure, of course, is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

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FOOTNOTES

1 Mary Emma Harris, "A History in Perspective (1933-Present)," <u>The Arts Journal</u>, 3, (April 1978), p. 4.

²"Wunsch, New BMC Rector," from <u>BMC Scrap Book</u>, property of Mr. George Pickering, Camp Rockmont, Swannanoa, North Carolina.

³National Register Nomination prepared for Blue Ridge Assembly Historic District, in 1979 by Michael Southern, Survey Specialist and Betty Lawrence, Consultant, for the N. C. Division of Archives and History.

⁴Kate Erwin, "Interest in Papers Revives College's Spirit," The News and Observer, Raleigh, N. C., August 6, 1967. From material on Black Mountain College on file in the North Carolina Collection, Pack Library, Asheville, N. C.

5 Ibid.

Mary Emma Harris, The Arts Journal, p. 4.

⁷Kenneth Kurtz, "Black Mountain College, It's Aims and It's Methods," Black Mountain College Bulletin 8, <u>BMC</u>, property of Mr. George Pickering; reprinted from The Haverford Review, Vol. 3, No. 1, Winter 1944.

⁸Mary Emma Harris, <u>The Arts Journal</u>, p. 4.

9Mary Alice Young and Sara Sagar, "Retrospective of Interaction," The Arts Journal, 3, (April 1978) pp. 26-27.

¹⁰M. C. Richards, "Black Mountain: A Golden Seed," <u>Craft Horizons</u>, publication of the American Crafts Council, 37, (June, 1977), p. 17.

Martin Duberman, <u>Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community</u> (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1972), p. 68.

12 Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 98.

14 Louis Adamic, "Education On A Mountain," Harper's, (April 1936), p. 563.

15 Martin Duberman, p. 160.

¹⁶William H. Jordy, "The Aftermath of the Bauhaus in America: Gropius, Mies and Breuer," in <u>The Intellectural Migration</u>, ed. by Flemming & Bailyn (Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 507.

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Photographs of the Gropius-Breuer model may be found in James Marston Fitch, Walter Gropius (New York: George Brazilier, Inc., 1960) and in Peter Blake, Marcel Breuer: Architect and Designer (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1949), Fig. 134. The architectural drawings for the design are published in Form, No. 5, September 1967. An account of a speech by Gropius on his plans for BMC can be found in The New York Herald Tribune, January 10, 1940.

17"Building Project," BMC, a compilation of pamphlets on the Summer Institutes and BMC Bulletins. Property of Mr. George W. Pickering, Camp Rockmont for Boys, Swannanoa, N. C. Also mentioned in James M. Rogers, "Manual Labor Combined With Book Learning," The Asheville Citizen-Times, September 29, 1940. From the material on file on Black Mountain College in the North Carolina Collection, Pack Library, Asheville, N. C.

18"Kocher, Dynamic Force at College in Black Mountains," <u>The Forest Hills/</u>
<u>Kew Garden Post</u> (not dated) and from Kopp Appointed To Faculty at BMC, Will Broaden Scope of Architecture Work At College, from <u>BMC Scrap Book</u>, property of Mr. George Pickering.

19 James Marston Fitch, <u>Walter Gropius</u> (New York: George Brazilier, Inc., 1960), p.13.

²⁰Ibid.

 21 James M. Rogers, "Manual Labor Combined with Book Learning," Pack Library.

22_{Martin Duberman, p. 157.}

23, Work Is Begun On New College Wing At Black Mountain, The Asheville Times, April 29, 1941. From material on BMC on file in the North Carolina Collection, Pack Library, Asheville, N. C.

24"Farm Program At College Is Being Enlarged," <u>The Asheville Citizen</u>, August 10, 1942. From material on Black Mountain College on file in the North Carolina Collection, Pack Library, Asheville, N. C.

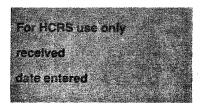
25 Kate Erwin, "Interest In Papers Revives College Spirit," Pack Library.

26 Mary Emma Harris, The Arts Journal, p. 4.

²⁷"Dr. Heinrich Jalowetz Dies of Heart Attack," <u>The Asheville Citizen</u>, February 4, 1946. From material on BMC on file in the North Carolina Collection in Pack Library, Asheville, N. C.

28_{Martin Duberman, p. 457.}

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 273.
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³⁰Ibid., p. 168.

³¹ Mary Emma Harris, The Arts Journal, p. 4.

From summary article on Black Mountain College on file at the Black Mountain Library, Black Mountain, N.C.

³³ Kate Erwin, "Interest in Papers Revives College's Spirit," Pack Library.

³⁴ Mary Emma Harris, The Arts Journal, p. 5.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Carter Horsley, "Charles Olson, Poet and Leader of BMC Group Dies," (no date). From BMC file at the Black Mountain Library, Black Mountain, N. C.

³⁷ Ibid.

^{38&}lt;sub>Ibid</sub>.

³⁹ Martin Duberman, p. 384.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Chandler Gordon, "The Small Press Chronicle: Keeping the Ice from the Storm," The Arts Journal, 3, (April, 1978), p. 37.

^{43&}lt;sub>M. C. Richards, "Black Mountain: A Golden Seed," p. 18.</sub>

⁴⁴John Bridges, "BMC Music and Drama: A Personal Memoir," <u>The Arts Journal</u>, 3, (April, 1978), p. 41.

⁴⁵ Martin Duberman, p. 45.

⁴⁶ Mary Emma Harris, The Arts Journal, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Martin Duberman, p. 318.

⁴⁹"College Property Is Sold," <u>The Asheville Citizen</u>, September 27, 1957. From material on BMC on file in the North Carolina Collection in Pack Library, Asheville, N. C.

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- 50_{Thid}
- 51_{Ibid}.
- 52 Ibid.
- ⁵³Patricia Krebs, "The Lost Seed of Modern Art," <u>The Greensboro Daily News</u>, p. B-12. From the material on BMC on file at the Black Mountain Library, Black Mountain, N. C.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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