




 **M# 5 :: White Oak, *Quercus alba*** - Left of BGEA driveway (circa 1855)
Standing in a virgin forest in the Swannanoa Valley, the world outside the cove was edging towards a civil war. The state of NC published its first textbook in 1854, which included the state's most popular poem "Swannanoa, Nymph of Beauty." The southern headwaters of the Swannanoa River spring from the upper reaches of the Montreat cove. In 1855, the state of NC chartered the Western NC Railroad to bring trains to WNC. By 1858, tracks reached from Salisbury to 4 miles east of Morganton.


 **M# 6 :: Tulip Tree, *Liriodendron tulipifera*** - corner of Louisiana (Somerville house, circa 1925)
1925 saw the completion of the Lakeside building on Lake Susan. In the winter months it served as the primary school and classrooms for the Montreat Normal School. In the summer months, it served as the bookstore with preachers rocking on its inviting porches discussing theology and seeking new positions or "calls."

 **M# 7 :: American Sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis*** - Assembly Drive- side near Lake Park (circa 1915)
Dr. Robert Anderson became President of Montreat in 1911 and renegotiated the contract for the Mt. Mitchell Railroad which ran for 6 miles through the Montreat cove from Ridgecrest to the top of Mt. Mitchell logging thousands of acres of spruce and fir forest. After logging stopped, the rail tracks were removed and it became perhaps the first "rails to trails." All due to Dr. Anderson's renegotiated contract and a ruling by the NC Supreme Court in the early 1920s.

 **M# 8 :: Northern Red Oak, *Quercus rubra*** - Anderson Parking Lot - Gate Trail trailhead (circa 1865)
In 1868, work on the railroad, halted by the war, resumed, reaching Old Fort in 1873.

 **M# 9 :: 1935 Red Maple, *Acer rubrum*** - Anderson Parking Lot (Dimmock tree, circa 1925)
In 1935, The physical campus of Montreat, with its stone buildings, looked much as it does today, anchored by Assembly Inn and Anderson Auditorium.

 **M# 10 :: White Oak, *Quercus alba*** - In front of Montreat Store (circa 1925)
The first pews in Anderson Auditorium, completed in 1922, were made with seats of woven oak strips. When Anderson Auditorium burned and was rebuilt in 1941, the builders decided not to use scratchy oak seats as they caused runs in the ladies' stockings, choosing instead to use chestnut from the cove, downed by the blight, for the pews.

 **M# 11 :: White Oak, *Quercus alba*** - Robert Lake Park (circa 1825)
Standing for 200 years, I am still only middle aged in "oak" years with white oaks sometimes surviving for over 400 years. Though I am a white oak my bark is light gray, my name *Quercus alba* coming from the white color of my finished wood, a valued building product. Growing on the floor of the cove, I was spared the Montreat sawmill's blade. Many of my fellow oaks were used to construct Montreat's buildings in the early 1900s and the sawmill was located close by, at the base of the dam. In 1907, the Alba Hotel, accommodating 400 guests was built just above the lake. I like to think it was named the ALBA after me but others say it was because it was painted white. In 1825, there was no Montreat, no Black Mountain, only the beginnings of European settlements in Swannanoa. Since 1825, changes have come and gone, both here and in the world. A civil war in 1860, WWI and WWII, the founding of Forestry Schools at Biltmore and Yale, the founding of the Mountain Retreat Association in 1897 by the Rev. John C. Collins a graduate of the Yale Divinity School and founder of the Boys Club of America. A contest in 1898 gave my home its new name "Montreat" a contraction of "Mountain" and "Retreat." I look forward to seeing another 200 years of change in the cove. The Alba Hotel burned in December 1945, gone in less than 24 hours, to be replaced by Howerton Hall.


 **M#12 :: Black Gum, *Nyssa sylvatica*** - Back side of Ball Field (circa 1900)


 **M#13 :: Pignut Hickory, *Carya glabra*** - (circa 1900)


 **M#14 :: American Sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis*** - by Native Plant Memorial Garden - at wellhouse #2




SPRING 2024 Treasured Tree Walk - MONTREAT

 **M#1 :: American Sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis*** - Dorothy Theilman's House (circa 1865)
This was virgin forest when I took root in 1865. The small community of Grey Eagle was two miles south. The railroad arrived in 1880 bringing more residents and many tourists. Grey Eagle incorporated as the Town of Black Mountain in 1893. The Town of Montreat incorporated in 1967.

 **M#2 :: Cucumber Magnolia, *Magnolia acuminata*** - Ann and Ron Vinson's House (circa 1900)
Most of you know me by my common name of cucumber magnolia rather than by my Latin name of *Magnolia acuminata*. I was first described in 1739 by Mark Catesby one of North Carolina's earliest explorers and given my Latin name by none other than Carl Linnaeus in 1759. It is easy to identify me by my beautiful white flowers which grow at the tip of bare twigs in the early spring. I have been growing in this location since 1900 and have seen many pass by on what you now call Assembly Drive. First came the Congregationalists from New England in 1897. Southern Presbyterians arrived in 1906. Early residents traveled the two miles from the Black Mountain train station to Montreat by foot, horseback, and hack often miring in axle deep mud. Assembly Drive was paved by the Presbyterians in 1933 and automobiles brought thousands more by me each year for summer conferences. But it is the Abernethy family that I know best. A Presbyterian minister and his wife, John and Jean Abernethy, finished their retirement home next to me in 1974. But "retirement" was not to be. John served as the Mayor of Montreat from 1977-1985. Their daughter Ann and her husband Ron reside there today. They are well known to me and the community, gardening in their fairy land of red and white trillium.















 **M#3 :: White Oak, *Quercus alba*** - Elizabeth Lord Huskey House (circa 1860)
Taking root in 1860, I can claim title to the term a "mighty oak", a survivor. Once part of a virgin forest, before settlers came to Grey Eagle/Black Mountain, I am one of the few survivors of the millions upon millions of acorns that have fallen in this cove. I survived early attempts by settlers in 1888 to clear the forest, from what is now the gate to what is now Lake Susan, to start a sheep farm. The sheep farm failed. The sheep died after eating the plentiful mountain laurel. In 1897, Congregationalists from New England bought the failed sheep ranch for a new Assembly Grounds. I survived the building of a home by Julian Shoemaker of Philadelphia in 1905. It is now owned by the Presbyterian Church of Reidsville, NC. The year 1900, brought many changes, after only 3 years the Congregationalists turned over ownership of Montreat to John Seys Huyler, a wealthy philanthropist, a self-made man who made his fortune making and selling candy. A Methodist, Huyler took Jacob's Pledge, Genesis 28:22, pledging to tithe 10% of his income. Montreat was the fortunate beneficiary of Huyler's generosity. Huyler took over the Assembly Ground's debt, became its second President, built a 124-room luxury heated hotel with plumbing on the current site of Assembly Inn and sold the cove to southern Presbyterians in 1906 with very generous terms. Huyler died in 1910 at the age of 74. I have survived to see his legacy flourish.

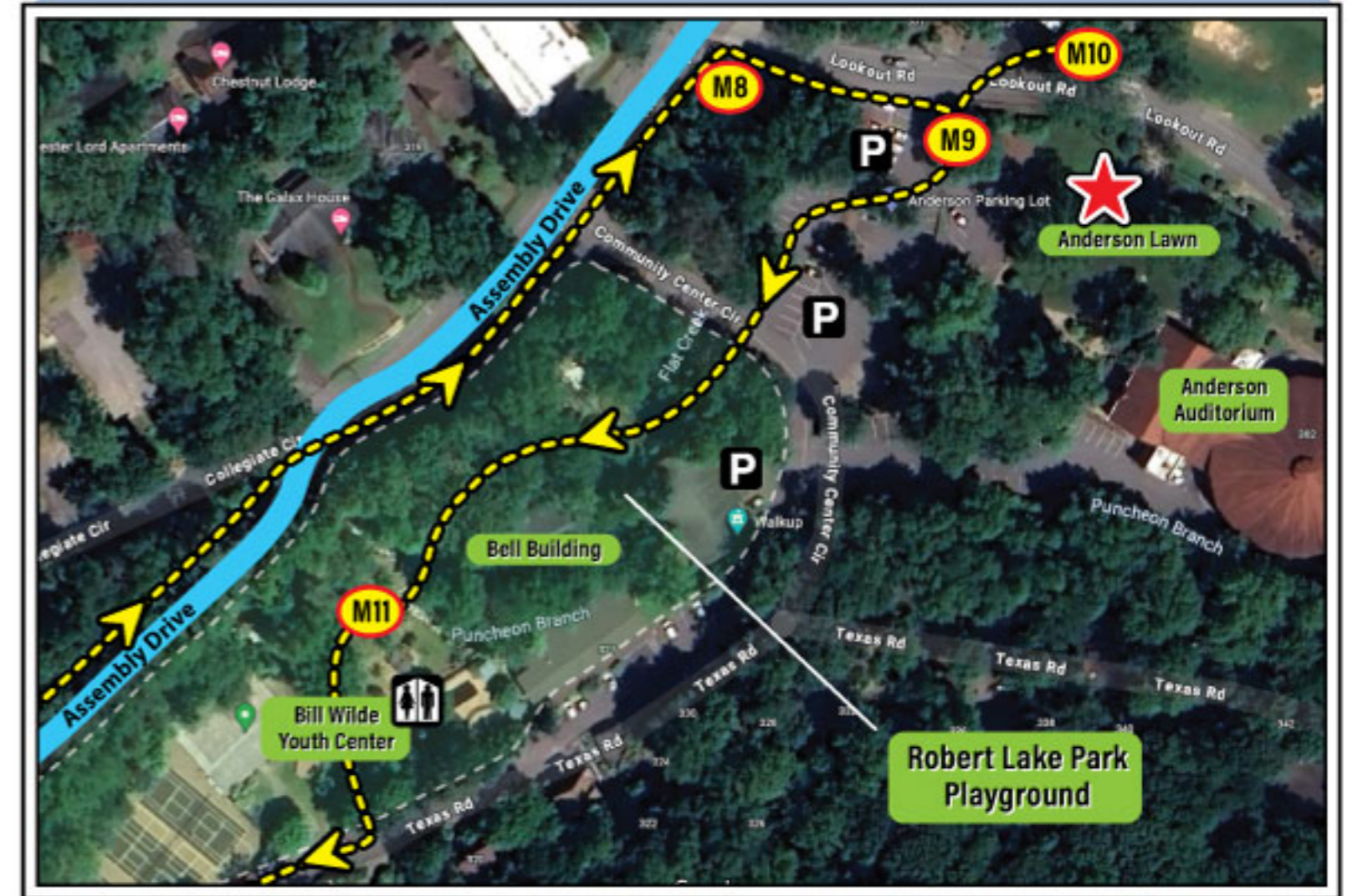
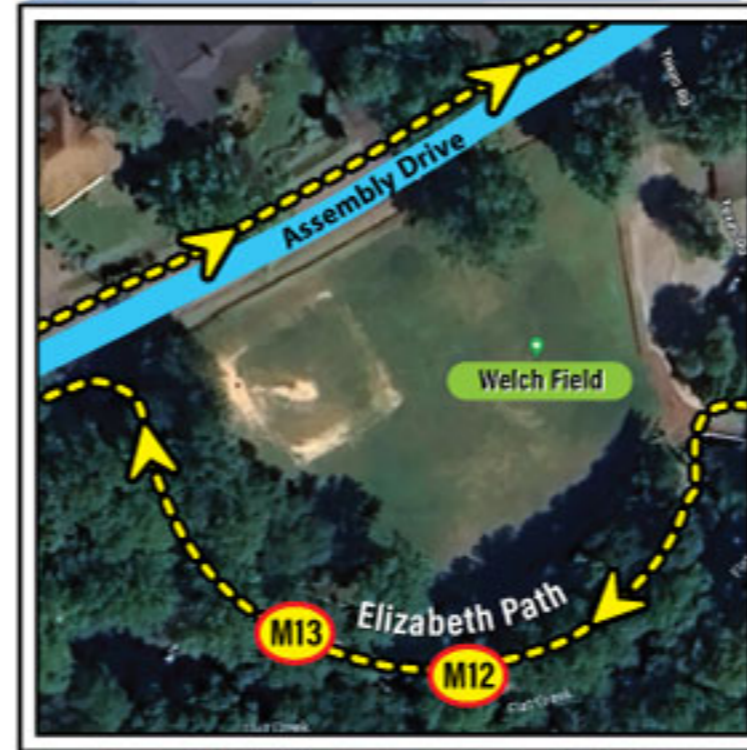
 **M#4 :: Hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis*** - 145 Assembly (between Vinson and BGEA, circa 1900)
Montreat began to grow in 1900. The red building at the corner of Assembly and Georgia Drive was completed that year. It cost \$1500 and served as the church, the community building and the school. Today it is the US Post Office. All residents and many others have Post Office boxes. There is no home delivery of mail in Montreat. I have survived but hemlocks are threatened by the wooly adelgid. Montreat individuals raised funds to release *Laricobius* beetles which feed on the adelgid and to chemically treat key hemlocks.

SPRING 2024 Treasured Tree Walk

MONTREAT



-  M1: American Sycamore @ 120 Assembly Drive
-  M2: Cucumber Magnolia @ brook/footbridge
-  M3: White Oak @ 141 Assembly Drive
-  M4: Eastern Hemlock @ 145 Assembly Drive
-  M5: White Oak @ 155 Assembly Drive
-  M6: Tulip Tree @ corner of Louisiana & Assembly Dr
-  M7: American Sycamore @ south side of Assembly, just past post office
-  M8: Northern Red Oak @ corner of Anderson Parking Lot
-  M9: Red Maple @ Anderson lawn/parking
-  M10: White Oak, on Lookout Rd, adjacent to Moore Center
-  M11: White Oak, in Robert Lake Park Playground, near Bill Wilde Youth Center
-  M12: Black Gum along right field, on Elizabeth Path
-  M13: Pignut Hickory along right field, on Elizabeth Path
-  M14: American Sycamore @ wellhouse #2 in memorial garden



Montreat Stone Entrance



Anderson Parking starting point for walking loop



Montreat Memorial Garden entrance/access



Alternate loop starting point

Would you like to financially support the SVTA's Treasured Tree program?

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