



NEWS

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For immediate release:

## **TACS Exhibit Showcases Bayard Wootten's NC Photos**

**August 13, 2024 (Tryon, NC) –**

Bayard Wootten (1875-1959) is celebrated as one of North Carolina's most remarkable, versatile, and productive photographers. While she photographed throughout the state from her home base in New Bern, she spent time in the 1930s documenting life and nature in the western Carolina mountains, including Tryon. Her compelling images of our region's past, as well as a few other locales, will be on display at Tryon Arts and Crafts School from August 24 to October 18. The public is invited to attend the exhibit opening reception at TACS on Friday, August 23, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

The photographs presented consist of archival pigment prints made from digitizing the original 5"x7" and 8"x10" negatives in the Mary Bayard Morgan Wootten Photographic Collection in the North Carolina Photographic Archives at UNC, Chapel Hill. The images were chosen from among two earlier Wootten exhibits, *Light and Air* and *The Joy is in the Going* as well as newly printed work, much of it never exhibited before. In fact, this show, curated by Lili Corbus, art historian and TACS board member, and Will Barclift, Director of TACS, with the help of UNC archivist Stephen Fletcher, will constitute the largest-ever gathering of her work to be exhibited.

Wootten's photographic contributions are significant. Never afraid of adventure, she is considered the first woman aerial photographer, designed the first trademarked Pepsi-Cola logo, and was a member of the NC National Guard. She reached a level of professionalism few in her era achieved. She supported her two sons and family by maintaining successful studios from the early 1900s through 1954 when she retired, making "my Old North State" her field of work. Her collection includes a wide variety of subjects and genres, including portraits, postcards, street scenes, architecture, gardens, and landscapes.

Wootten first visited the western mountains when she accepted her cousin Lucy Morgan's offer to make promotional photos of the Penland School of Craft that Morgan founded in 1929. Some of these Penland photos of the school will be featured in this exhibition.

Wootten returned to the mountains often and photos from her jaunts in Appalachian communities were published in classic books including *Backwoods America* (1934), *Cabins in the Laurel* (1935), and *From My Highest Hill: Carolina Mountain Folks* (1941).

She also visited Tryon in the 1930s, at least twice, staying with her friends George and Sally Cathey, owners of the Blue Ridge Weavers. While here, she photographed many landscapes and people, including Tryon toymakers, basket weavers, farmers, country roads, waterfalls,

mountain vistas, and more. Most of the images in this show will be of our local region. Some places and faces may be hard to identify from our current perspective, some 90 years later, so it will be interesting to learn if any viewers recognize these scenes from our past.

The opening reception, on August 23, will highlight some favorite foods of North Carolina, with sponsors Biltmore Wines and Cinda Austin of the Mill Spring Farm Store. TACS exhibitions are supported by Annual Sponsor New View Realty.

There will also be future lectures on Wootten by her collection's archivist Stephen Fletcher and Dr. Corbus who will re-present a lecture on women photographers in Tryon from 1890 to 1950 (including Wootten) that was previously offered as a Tales in Tryon event.

*Tryon Arts and Crafts School is a non-profit organization that exists to provide creative opportunities for everyone through education, instruction and expression of heritage and contemporary arts and crafts in a friendly, stimulating and enriching environment. For more information about the School, please contact the office at (828) 859.8323 or visit our website, [www.tryonartsandcrafts.org](http://www.tryonartsandcrafts.org).*

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Photograph by Bayard Wootten, Toymaker [Pauline Miller Cowan], Tryon, NC, 1930s