

African American Heritage & Culture — C E N T E R —

STORY FOR PUBLICATION

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The Mural at Five Points

Local Artist and Muralist Lee Hood Completes the Mural depicting Historic Five Points

(Submitted February 19, 2021 New Bern, North Carolina by the African American Heritage and Culture Center)

Five years in the making, the mural at Five Points is complete. New Bern artist Lee Hood captured historic images for his mural on the Pollock Street wall of The New Bern Mexican Bakery. Starting with his own paint, brushes and art supplies, grants and private funding, Lee sketched the overall mural of early 1930's buildings, automobiles, people, and the remarkable fountain that stood in the intersection at Five Points.

Inspiration for the mural came from Lee's passion for honoring this neighborhood of New Bern. Historic pictures were provided by his early collaborator, Kathy Adolph, a founding Board member of the African American Heritage and Culture Center. The building at 1201 Pollock Street, home of the New Bern Mexican Bakery, is owned by former Ghent residents Simon and Tasha Weatherington.

To start the mural, two walls of the building were prepared for murals. The Pollock Street side was chosen for this first mural. As depicted in the completed piece, the fountain at Five Points was a gathering place for local residents and families. This was a vibrant neighborhood with thriving businesses serving all New Bernians including African American residents and recent immigrants to the region. When more closely explored, it is clear that the fountain drew walkers all days of the week, and especially on Sundays. Women are in dresses, men are in suits and children are also

dressed for visiting relatives and family friends. When viewing the mural, New Bernians may recognize the people who were in the original photos.

Artist Hood has regularly painted images of New Bern residents, people seen in his travels while in the Army, and historical depictions. Most notable and recognizable is his piece entitled “Independence Day” depicting an African American family moving with their belongings on a road to their future.

Lee has commented on the learnings from this mural. It carries heavy detail of people, automobiles and buildings which are greatly admired by those of us walking and stopping to study the mural. As he says, murals must also capture the attention and share ideas with those who are driving through the area. New Bernians regularly use Pollock Street to pass through and around the downtown neighborhoods, but how many actually see what is presented in murals. Raymundo Munoz, owner of The New Bern Mexican Bakery at 1201 Pollock Street knows that his customers have noticed Lee’s mural. With freshly made croissants, turnovers and other pastry in hand, they walk out his door and around the building, passing by the mural. Some stop and study the images. Many have struck up a conversation with Lee as he worked on the mural. Other customers park along the street, walk up to the mural and then go inside. But Lee acknowledges that many people drive past that building and do not actually see the mural or its images. He knows his next creation will be larger and more engaging, and will easily catch the eye of drivers by.

For now, stop into the bakery and to say hi to Raymundo. Then take your croissant to the umbrella covered table and have a seat as you enjoy Lee Hood’s mural. It is an inspiring image of New Bern from over 90 years ago.

Lee Hood has exhibited his portfolio in the region. In Fall, 2019 the African American Heritage and Culture Center (AAHC) sponsored his exhibit in Gallery 919 at the former New Bern Arts and Wellness Center. Lee’s studio is located on Middle Street in downtown New Bern and his work is regularly seen at shows, in business and homes throughout the region. His images currently appear throughout the AAHC website: www.AfricanAmericanHeritageandCulture.org. Reach Lee Hood directly at largebrushstrokes@gmail.com.

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See attached pages with Images for this story

NOTE: If higher resolution images are needed to support large pictures for the story, please contact Carrie Gallagher and photographer Norman J. McCullough

Images for Mural at Five Points

All Images by Photographer Norman J. McCullough, New Bern



Lee Hood at his Five Points Mural – 2.4.2021



Close-up of Fountain in Lee Hood's Five Points Mural



Lee Hood adding detail to his Five Points Mural



Artist Lee Hood with Raymundo Munoz, owner of the New Bern Bakery at the Five Points Mural, 1201 Pollock Street