

BEAUTY PARADISE IN SMOKIES AREA

Scenic Highway Between Shenandoah and Great Smoky National Parks Would Traverse Section Where History and Beauty Are Splashed Together

WYTHEVILLE, VA., BY WAY OF SPARTA AND BOONE

Now that the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Shenandoah National Park are both assured, and with feature stories about both appearing in many newspapers and magazines, the thoughts of the American people will soon be turning to the question of how to get to these beautiful playgrounds; and the question of highways leading to the Smokies has become one of the utmost importance to North Carolina. writes Rodney Crouther in the Asheville Citizen.

One such highway has not yet received the attention from the public that its potential importance demands. As soon as the full tide of travel turns toward the parks tens of thousands of people will be coming down through the Shenandoah Valley toward the Great Smokies and other tens of thousands will be coming from the great Middle West in the same general direction. Those from the north, traveling over the Robert E. Lee highway, and those from the west, coming by way of Bluefield, should have the chance when they reach Wytheville, Va., to pursue their journey toward the Smokies over one of the most magnificently picturesque highways in America.

To make this possible there is need only for the improvement of a comparatively short mileage of highways already in use which can be easily made into one of the most beautiful to be found anywhere. It is these highways, now receiving attention, that North Carolina is beginning to be deeply interested in—that from Wytheville, Va., to Blowing Rock, by way of Independence, Va., Sparta, Jefferson, Boone and other points; and then the Yonahlossee turnpike, by way of Grandfather Mountain and Linville Gorge toward Asheville.

Famous Route

This route can become and should become one of the most famous in eastern America. It would penetrate a region lying between the Shenandoah Park and the Great Smoky Mountain Park long famed as a rendezvous for those who love the mountains and its caves, its rushing streams and its fauna tribe. This playground will be the beaten path for those who travel from the Smokies to the Shenandoah Park, and from the Valley of Virginia into the heart of the peaks of the Land of the Sky where the eagle still soars in its lonely solitude, and the "black bar" still rules with somber majesty.

The heart of this wonderland is Linville and the Linville Gorge, while towering down upon it are majestic Mount Mitchell and rugged old Grandfather Mountain. In the heart are Blowing Rock and Linville Falls Table Rock, and the headwaters of the Catawba River. On all sides of it, from the alluring beauty of Mt. Pisgah on the far south, to the verdant splendor of the Unaka reserve on the north are national forests, and through the midst of it are shadowed caves which nestle in their ancient bosoms a mountain life, which, due to the threading of modern highways by their very inaccessibility, retains their primal ways, and their quaint, but fascinating customs.

Great Beauty

And through the very center of this paradise of natural beauty, which at every turn of the traveler furrows the highway mentioned above to bear the traveler along in ease, as he motors from town to town, and from peak to peak, from fertile valley to wind-swept mountain heights. It is a state highway, and from the lips of those who have often traversed it come repeated assurances that when the two national parks become realities, and are opened for travel the territory through which it meanders will win for itself the name "Wonderland of the South."

Before taking a glimpse at the specific beauties that lie within this region, a glance at the highway which links these two national parks will give an understanding of the possibilities for tourists.

Tourists From South

If one is a tourist from the south, coming up from the flat countries for a touch of the cool mountain breezes and a glimpse of rugged peaks, one would get to the Great Smoky Mountain National Park over Highway No. 10, by way of Murphy or Highway No. 85 by way of Franklin, Bryson City and Sylva lie along the south and east of the park. When one had seen its panorama of peaks, and its virgin forests, come down from primeval days, unspoiled and almost untouched, one would set out for the Shenandoah park in Virginia by North Carolina Highway No. 10, passing through Waynesville and Canton, and coming to Asheville. Here, doubtless, the traveler would want to spend a day, perhaps several days, taking side trips and enjoying a turn at the golf courses.

Out of Asheville the motorist

SCENES ALONG PROPOSED PARK HIGHWAY



The beautiful Blowing Rock and Linville sections lie along the new highway now being promoted between the Shenandoah and the Great Smoky National Parks. No. 1—Linville Lake, one of the Bridgewater lakes. No. 2—Balance Rock above Yonahlossee road. No. 3—Grandfather Mountain. No. 4—Linville Falls, one of the most photographed falls in eastern America. No. 5—Shark Face rock, on the Yonahlossee road.

(Photos Courtesy Asheville Citizen)

would travel by Highway No. 69, through the beautiful Beaver Dam development, through Weaверville, and the Forks of Ivy, and over the mountain ridge to Bernsville and Spruce Pine, and Ingham, thence by Highway No. 175 to Linville, heart of the magic region we are describing; and from Linville the motorist would make his way over charming Yonahlossee road to Blowing Rock, with stern old Grandfather rock frowning down from his 5,600 feet of rugged splendor; then from Linville over Highway No. 17 to Boone, the village nestled in the hills, thence over Highway No. 69 to West Jefferson and Jefferson, also tiny towns of the hills, through Scottdale to a point three miles west of Sparta where Highway No. 26 would be taken north to Wytheville, Va. It is this spot of territory across North Carolina which nature has blessed with a prodigious diversity of scenery and beauty. But to carry the traveler onward, before taking a glance at the scenery, he would travel out of Wytheville, Va., over the Appalachian Scenic Highway to Christiansburg thence to Roanoke and up the Valley of Virginia by way of Natural Bridge, spot famed by a caprice of nature, and by the fact that George Washington in a moment of prowess endowed the caprice of nature with the immortality of his initials, and onward to Staunton, Va., near the gateway of the Shenandoah Park.

Tourists From North

If one is a traveler from the north and comes down over the Appalachian Scenic Highway, either from Washington and Baltimore, or from Pennsylvania and points north, one may simply reverse the above order, beginning at Staunton, Va., and traveling along the self-same route, meander in and out of valleys, through shaded woodlands, into the shadows of towering peaks, through detached mountain towns and so from one wonderland to another, to the region embraced by the Smokies. Linville, in the heart of this region, and within the shadow of some of eastern America's most impressive scenery, is within a full day's travel from a large part of the eastern seaboard. A glance at this table will show just how close it is by motor to some outstanding and centrally located cities:

City	Hours By Motor
Jacksonville	22
Richmond	21 1/2
Columbia	10
Charleston	14
Atlanta	16
Meridian, Miss.	24
Asheville	4
Raleigh	10
New York	24
Washington	18
Knoxville	7
Nashville	17
Memphis	19 1/2
Birmingham	19 1/2
New Orleans	30
Cincinnati	18
Greensboro	8

Linville was discovered as a resort site in 1888 by S. T. Kelsey, while a survey was being made from north-

ern Georgia to southern Maryland for a railroad which was to have followed the line of the Blue Ridge mountains. Not that the region's glories had been unknown before that. As early as 1794 the French botanist, Andre Michaux, climbed Grandfather Mountain, which lies very close to Linville, and after describing wrote, "Long Live America, Glorious Country." But Kelsey's enthusiasm led him to establish the Highland Nursery, which has done much to make the myriad of shrubs and plants and trees of western North Carolina favorably known to the world. His enthusiasm also led to the cutting and grading of the Yonahlossee Road from Blowing Rock to Linville, traversing the southwestern slope of Grandfather Mountain, giving occasional glimpses of its awe-inspiring summits, the contour of one of which, seen from a distance, reveals the profile of a face that gives the mountain its name, Grandfather's top is bald, and black, made of hard, wind-blown rock.

The name Yonahlossee Road is Indian and means "The Trail of the Bear." Some years ago a highway from Spartanburg northward, by way of Linville was named the Black Bear Trail. The distance between Linville and Blowing Rock is 31 miles, and the average elevation of the trail is 4,500 feet.

Sublime View

One of the sublimest views of the Linville Valley, and the panorama of mountains about it, may be had from Donald's Chair, 500 feet above Esceola Inn. From this eminence one can see the Black Mountains, seat of the giant Mitchell, far away in the southwest; in the west, before one's eyes rise the Rean Mountain and the Yellow Mountain, white all about, lower in the immediate vicinity, but impressive is the Blue Ridge range.

Grandfather Mountain was once known as the tallest peak in the south. Even after scores of other peaks were measured and found higher, the natives clung to their first love, and not without reason. For the adventurous climbers, three separate peaks are available on Grandfather. It has been said that more different streams pour forth from the springs on the side of Grandfather Mountain than from any other mountain in eastern America. Some, like Catawba, reach the Atlantic, while the waters of the Toe find their way to the Gulf of Mexico. Beneath Callaway's Peak of Grandfather lies Cold Spring, the water of which tested in August, proved to be 41 degrees Fahrenheit. Old Grandfather holds many lures—the face, seen from Callaway trail just below the peak; Eagle's nest in the side of the cliff of the second peak; and the old Indian camp, all these are favorites.

Fleecy Clouds

Probably the best view of Grandfather is to be had from Blowing Rock, some 20 miles away. Indeed, one of the most majestic views of the whole region that may be had is to stand on Blowing Rock, the countryside and lesser peaks

ed cities of the lowlands.

Brilliant Hues

Autumn brings a Joseph's coat of brilliant hues. With the first touch of frost to the peaks, nature runs riot with a prodigality of color; bronze galax leaves; burnished and purple maples; yellow chestnuts and poplars and subtle tinted beeches, gold and purple and bronze everywhere mellowing and softening into browns. A tingle in the atmosphere makes autumn in this region of peaks a moment worth living.

Nearly the gorge of Linville river rushes on and on regardless of season. Curving out a magnificent gorge separating Linville mountain and Table rock, on its way to join the Catawba river on the Piedmont plains, this river, deep and swirling, and inaccessible to is one of the most alluring spots in all North Carolina. A view of it, a turn in its cool shadows, a fighting rainbow lured from its emerald depths, make a trip over the meandering highway from either national park worth all the hours to reach it. For it is not easily reached. Descent to the depths of the gorge is no easy one—but the journey is rich with rewards in beauty and flashing rainbow trout.

The national affairs committee of the New York National Club last week adopted a resolution urging repeal of the eighteenth amendment. The action was taken in executive session and reported at the close of the meeting by Congressman Benjamin Fairchild, who presided as chairman of the committee.

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