

Grandfather Mountain Sought For Blue Ridge Parkway Area

(By Dick Wathen, Charlotte Observer Staff Writer)
 Wanted: One mountain 200,000, 000 year old, about 6,000 feet high, covered only with the best specimens of flora and fauna, conveniently located with regard to Charlotte, at a fixed price of \$165,000.

It doesn't seem as though hunting for the above would be anything like looking for the veritable needle in the haystack. Harlan P. Kelsey, member of the National Arboretum Advisory council, and Sam P. Weems, superintendent of the Blue Ridge parkway with headquarters in Roanoke, Va., are hoping that acquisition of their mountain won't be as hard as finding the little needle in the big haystack.

They arrived in Charlotte yesterday and are here for the avowed purpose of getting some one person or group of persons to contribute \$165,000 to purchase 5,550 acres of land near Linville which will include Grandfather mountain and also the smaller Grandmother mountain close by.

The reason for purchasing this tract so familiar to motorists and travelers in this state is to make it a part of the Blue Ridge Parkway system. In order for land to be made into a national park it must, according to Mr. Kelsey,

first be purchased by individual funds and then turned over to Federal government. In other words, Uncle Sam won't buy the land himself but leaves that to the private citizens although he will agree to be responsible for the care and maintenance for years and years.

Although Mr. Kelsey now lives in East Boxwood, Mass., he spent his entire youth in the mountains of North Carolina and it is only natural that his interest in the state remains strong.

He is the son of S. T. Kelsey who pioneered Highlands and was a founder of the Macon county community. Young Harlan, born in Kansas came to the Highlands when he was two years old and remained there until he was 16. It was at Highlands that he became interested in botany and at the age of 12 had his own nursery. Subsequently the elder Mr. Kelsey became manager of the Linville Improvement company and the family moved to Linville.

Harlan's interest in plant life continued until today he is recognized as one of the leading botanists in the nation. As a member of the National Arboretum Advisory council along with Frank Graham, president of the University of North Carolina, Mr. Kelsey assists in the development and planning for the National Arboretum at Washington, D. C.

Mr. Weems has been associated with the Blue Ridge parkway development since 1935 and has spent the main efforts during the last 11 years of his life toward seeing the ambitious project completed.

Both men feel that the addition of Grandfather mountain to the Blue Ridge system is a necessary and logical development of the original highway plan. They point out that the Grandfather is the oldest mountain in North America and possibly the oldest in the entire world.

In Mr. Kelsey's opinion the flora of the mountain is as fine as can be found in the Appalachian chain. Also, Mr. Kelsey feels that the Grandfather area would be desirable as a park because of what he calls the "pitching views of the mountain." This means views that command a sheer drop of cliff giving the person seeing it the impression of extreme high altitude.

"Grandfather mountain compares closely with Pike's Peak in

Race Segregation Action Rescinded By Baptist Group

Asheville.—The North Carolina State Baptist convention last week rescinded its action of Tuesday opposing segregation of the races in the church.

The action was taken after a tumultuous debate at the closing session last week of the annual meeting. Members said they had this respect although of course it is not nearly so high. However, there are mountains much higher than the Grandfather which do not seem as high because they have no pitching views," Mr. Kelsey explained.

Mr. Kelsey was a member of the National Park commission which selected the Great Smokies and Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, as suitable for park areas in 1925.

For years he and Mr. Weems have cherished the hope of making the Grandfather area part of a national park. Their visit to Charlotte is the first real effort they have made in this direction and they are hoping their project will meet with early success.

They say they'd rather have the \$165,000 come from one man but if two, three, or five more want to chip in, well that's all right to.

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received numerous telegrams and other messages protesting against Tuesday's vote. No change was made in the convention's stand favoring en-

actment of a Federal anti-lynching law and advocating equalization of hospitalization, suffrage, and educational opportunities for different races. Dr. Sasper Warren of Charlotte was re-elected president. H. H. Gardner-Webb Junior college Blackwell of Mars Hill Robert C. Humber of Greenville and F. O. Mixon of Raleigh were named vice presidents. at Shelby was accepted as a unit of the convention's education system.

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