

ENGINEERING TRIUMPHS ON ROAD AND RAILROAD LEADING TO MOUNTAINS

Genius Shown By Southern Railroad Engineers and Highway Commission in the Designing and Construction of Lines Traversing the Most Picturesque Section of Western North America.

Bion H. Battle in News and Observer.

I don't know who was the genius, or the several bold fellows, for I suspect they were more than one, who conceived and built the various lines of the Southern railroad through the North Carolina mountains. But whoever they were they deserve the everlasting gratitude of all who love the majestic in nature.

In previous journeys over the Southern to the mountain country I have been interested in the Andrews fountain between Old Fort and Ridgecrest. Although the floods of the summer interfered with the flow of the fountain this winter it was not the flow of the fountain that I wanted to study, but the mountain picture that the fountain helps the observer to locate. The most of us are so ignorant of our natural advantages that we have no fair comprehension of the wonders that are ready for us if we care to go afield and see what is there. The Andrews fountain helps to get a line on some of the fascinations of the mountains. Coming up from Salisbury as I watched the thing this trip we saw the fountain

(a fine big stream of water it was in its day before the floods) soon after we passed Old Fort. Coming around a curve it showed itself on the right of the train as we approached. We rounded a curve and lost it. Presently the train came around a big horseshoe curve in the Pennsylvania mountains, and we caught the fountain in the center of that long swing around the mountain curve. We rounded another curve and climbed higher up the mountains and presently, on coming out of a gorge we could see the fountain below us at the left. Winding around the knobs above Graphiteville we caught a glimpse of the fountain from a point where we dodged across Mill Creek Valley, and then again as we rounded another point we caught sight of the fountain once more, away below us, but not very far distant. Around another promontory the train crawled, and presently the fountain was visible down the valley, still much lower down the mountain, but still not very far away. Then before we pulled into the tunnels that open the way through the summit of the mountains to the west side of the range we once more saw the fountain. For half an hour or more we had been climbing up the steep grade, weaving back and forth around the shelving slopes of the rocky faces, winding back and forth into coves and out on the abrupt points, but simply climbing up, and sawing in and out, never progressing far in any direction except upward, and at the beginning of the half hour as well as at the end, coming out around a point of rocks to see once more the fountain. I asked the conductor about the distances we were traveling, and he said that from the time we came in sight of the fountain until we passed out of sight of it we had traveled something like ten miles, but that we had progressed scarcely more than a mile and a half from the first point to last. From Old Fort to Ridgecrest is 14 miles by rail and four miles direct. But in coming up that four miles direct we were obliged to follow the devious curves of the mountain because our train had lifted itself a quarter of a mile in the four miles. To do it we had to follow a long line to get the grade.

I watched that bit of railroad engineering as long as we could see a curve in the road, and then it occurred to me that most of us are sublimely ignorant of the wonderful things that are about us. How little we appreciate the attractions that men will journey miles to see. I have been around the world enough to know that mighty few such engineering triumphs are found anywhere as this bit of work around the Andrews fountain. Yet it took the third trip over this bit of road to fully comprehend the significance of the thing. One trouble is in the road itself. The Southern folks ought to haul us up

SCHOOL TEACHER

Wards Off Nervous Break Down

Alburtis, Pa.—"I am a teacher in the public schools, and I got into a very nervous, run-down condition. I could not sleep and had no appetite. I was tired all the time. My sister asked me to try Vinol. I did so, and within a week my appetite improved and I could sleep all night and now I feel well and strong."

—ROSA M. KELLER, Alburtis, Pa.
We guarantee Vinol, which contains beef and cod liver peptonates, iron and manganese peptonates, and glycerophosphates for run-down conditions.

W. A. LESLIE, Druggist, Moyranton. Also at the leading drug stores in all North Carolina Towns.

the 14 miles from Old Fort to Ridgecrest in open cars so that we could see just what nature and the engineer have provided here in the way of universal scenery.

But this is not the end. Going on up to the top of Mt. Mitchell we get back to that same Andrews fountain, for after the train has wound in and out and switched back and forth and reversed, and almost tied itself in hard knots until it has gone a dozen miles from Ridgecrest the conductor points out to a familiar figure as we rise to a point on the summit of the Blue Ridge and informs us that it is the Andrews fountain. Four or five miles farther up toward the summit of Mt. Mitchell he calls attention again to the Andrews fountain visible from the rim of a vast amphitheater which we are rounding just on the edge of the backbone of the divide between the east and west. From the same summit are visible Mt. Mitchell, the highest land east of the Rockies, Graybeard, Pinnacle Mountain, and a dozen or two famous old peaks that are alone worth a visit to the mountains. * * *

Asheville folks say about a quarter of a million tourists visit the mountains annually. Why a million do not is probably because the other three-quarters of the million do not realize what is in store for them. After a traveler has made the trip from Old Fort to Ridgecrest and then to Mt. Mitchell and then out to the South Carolina line he should start right back on the trail, and walk deliberately through the mountains of Polk and Henderson, through mountains from Black Mountain to Mt. Mitchell summit, through the mountains from Ridgecrest to Old Fort, and all over the mountains in the adjacent country. Or, if he goes in his car he should stop at certain points, put up for the night at some convenient house, or camping spot, and devote considerable time to wearing out shoe leather ranging over the mountain trains that he will encounter. It ought to take three or four days to work the journey from Old Fort to Black Mountain, and as much more to idle about in the Mill Creek watershed from Graphiteville up toward Mt. Mitchell. But this is not the time of year to go out there with the mountain tops white with snow, and ice on the roads and streams. Spring and summer are the seasons to appoint for the holiday on this roof of creation.

The floods for the summer gave the mountain country a hard jolt in many ways. One was in the ruin of the crops which has made it necessary for the farmers to dispose of a lot of their cattle for want of feed to carry them through the winter. In some ways this will be a serious setback. In another way it will work out in the long run perhaps to advantage. A number of these mountain counties are becoming famous beef sections, the moist soil making good grazing. Of recent years the beef men have been improving their stock materially, and it will not be a great while until the type of beef cattle from the North Carolina mountains will be of the highest standards. For years the stock feeders of other sections have been scouring the mountain countries for the cattle raised here and brought to an age ready to be turned off to feeders who fatten and sell them. Of late the idea of high-class beef has been getting a popularity, and the quality of the stock is rapidly reaching a plane that tells of a cattle industry in the near future that will make western North Carolina beef famous. The present bit of adversity will be overcome, and from it will probably be an advance to a still better grade of stock of all sorts. Better beef on some farms will be paralleled by better milk and butter cows on other farms, and the live stock industry will stand on a much widened plane. The interest in butter and cheese in the mountains has grown wonderfully in the last three or four years, aided largely by the animal industry department of the State. Any man who is disposed to grow about the taxes that go to maintain the agricultural department should know that the work of his tax money does is saving him money at every turn. Undoubtedly the butter and cheese that North Carolina is making now is an important factor in keeping prices lower than they would be if we had to depend on the outside world for our total supply of

Found a Sure Thing.

I. B. Wixon, Farmers Mills, N. Y., has used Chamberlain's Tablets for years for disorders of the stomach and liver and says, "Chamberlain's Tablets are the best I have ever used." Obtainable everywhere.

those products. Already the cheese and butter men have shown that North Carolina can not be outclassed in the quality of butter and cheese made, and the future is one of promise.

The future gives promise because small farmers are turning to live stock in the mountains. Some years ago, when farms were bigger and hands could be hired, farm operations were on a different scale. But of late, with the inducements to the laborer to go to the centers of organized industry the farmer has been compelled to depend on his individual effort. The result is the smaller farm, and the smaller farmer. And the result of that is the more intensive application of the small farmer, and the specializing in things like butter, cheese, leaf, poultry and the things that bring money and bring it every week in the year. In consequence the mountain farmers are among the most self-dependent farmers of the State, and when the man who makes figures brings out his reports that always show favorably for the mountain counties. Thrift and its substantial rewards have struck the mountain counties as well as the mountain towns.

The thrift may not be suspected, but when it is remembered that the mountain farmer makes things on which he can live, and that he sells the surplus after he has cared for his family, while the man further down the mountains toward the sea makes tobacco and cotton, which he must sell to get his living, the importance of the work of the mountain farmer is more apparent. The latest figures I have on this line are those of the census of 1910, which are getting a trifle old now. But they tell a story, nevertheless. In the census year the State had a population of 2,206,287. The cattle in the State then were valued at \$12,550,000, or a little more than \$2.50 to each inhabitant. But the cattle in Ashe were valued at \$490,897, an average of over \$25 to each inhabitant, while in Alleghany the value of the cattle was an average of over \$47 to each inhabitant. Robeson, one of the biggest farm counties of the whole United States in the value of its products, had cattle worth only about \$3 to the inhabitant.

One thing is always to be said about cattle in farming. No matter how low the selling price of a beef steer may go, the eating value of it never deteriorates. If the farmer in the mountain has no cotton or tobacco to sell to buy beef, he can always have beef without selling anything if he raises cattle. And if he raises cattle he does not worry about how low cotton and tobacco go, for he does not have to sacrifice his crop to buy supplies for his table if he has not raised them. He still has beef and milk and butter. The cattle man is more independent of the market than the low ground farmer, for the cattle man has the choice of selling or eating his crop. The lowlands man must sell his crop to some one else and depend on it for his living. Or that is what he has done largely in the past. It is a good sign that he is a changing his tactics in the last two or three years. * * *

With all of the material prosperity that is overtaking the mountains the visitor cannot get away from the interesting fact that the stupendousness of the mountains, the climate, the constantly changing scenery, or putting it all in one word, the mountain, is the real factor. Material production is an essential to the comfort of the human race, for men must eat and be clothed and sheltered. Those things, however, are incidental. Most of us manage to take care of the bodily needs. It is when we have stepped beyond the compelling physical needs and reached the satisfaction of the emotional that we have felt the enjoyments of life. We may admire the works of the denser centers of civilization, the product of human hand, the art of nature, but to arouse the sense of appreciation of the greatness of creation we must get to the product of a more capable hand than that of men. The mountains and the sea are the climaxes of construction, and in Western North Carolina the mountains are at the climax. To the North Carolina mountains the people will come in steadily increasing numbers because the mountains have a fascination, a continually increasing drawing.

One thing about a trip to the North Carolina mountain country that will not be overlooked is the agreeable nature of the trip that winds up there. Whether by automobile or by rail the journey is through a pleasant country, cities, villages and rural scenes

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PRESIDENT'S BIRTHDAY.

Something of His Life and Ancestry and Interesting Facts About Other Presidents.

Charlotte News.

President Wilson was 60 years old Thursday, December 28. He was born in Staunton, Va., in 1856. Entering upon his second term of the presidency of the United States, Mr. Wilson is at the threshold of the most important epoch in American history, if not in world-history. It would now appear that he is to be spokesman for a world-peace during the early months. He is just emerging from a term of office during which unparalleled strains and stresses confused and confounded the American mind, swayed public opinion and tossed the sentiment of the American people about on its bosom like flotsam and jetsam. Despite the heavy burdens that the President has borne and despite the fact that he has reached the age of three score years, time seems to be dealing gently with him. His health is splendid and he looks to be much younger than the record of the years that are upon him would indicate.

The president is the third son of a clergyman to attain the highest office within the gift of the American republic. Grover Cleveland was the son of a Presbyterian minister, like Wilson, these two being the only Democratic presidents in the last half century. The other clergyman's son to become president was Chester A. Arthur, whose father, Scotch-Irish and a native of Ireland, was a minister of the Baptist denomination. In the earlier period of the republic's history the majority of the chief executives were the sons of planters or farmers, but of late years the offspring of professional and business men have been most favored. Since Lincoln only two farmer's sons—Garfield and Benjamin Harrison—have reached the white house.

The president is the eighth native of Virginia to be selected to that high office since the birth of the republic, his Virginia predecessors having been Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, William Henry Harrison, Tyler and Taylor. Both of Mr. Wilson's parents were of Scotch-Irish descent. There have been nine Scotch or Scotch-Irish presidents of the United States—Monroe, Jackson, Polk, Buchanan, Grant, Hayes, Arthur, McKinley and the present occupant of the white house. Fifteen of the presidents have been English by paternal ancestry, and one, Thomas Jefferson, was Welsh. Only two presidents have been descended from continental European stock—Van Buren and Roosevelt, both Dutch.

from the time the trip has commenced until the foothills begin to give variety, and the mountains finally are approached. Whether by rail or automobile the approaches are delightful, the roads good, the surroundings always pleasing, and at the end of the journey are ample accommodations, either at expensive hotel, cheaper place, or woods camp, to make the outing satisfactory.

I don't know anybody that has done more for the people that the Highway Commission of the State of North Carolina in building the good roads through the mountains and the Southern railroad in building its always interesting line into and out of this roof of the world. The highway is winding around to newer corners every day, the counties are taking up the work, and the railroad from time to time gets out to some new and interesting quarter. This will continue as more people come this way, as they will, until the mountain country of the future will be the vast park and playground that the mountain folks hope for. It takes a bigger man than I to foretell the development of this part of North Carolina, for the mountains have a marvelous future.

Christmas Sandstorm on Border

A dispatch from El Paso, Texas, to the Raleigh News and Observer says the North Carolina boys in camp on the border experienced the most disagreeable Christmas of their lives Monday. "Mere words cannot describe adequately the horrors of a Texas sandstorm, such as has been raging in camp all day," says the dispatch. "For hours today it was impossible to see the headquarters' tents from the windows of the brigade office only a few feet away.

"The day closed with rapidly falling temperature and rising wind and many tents were torn down. The men were served an abundance of turkey and other fine eatings, but it was all with dobe mud."

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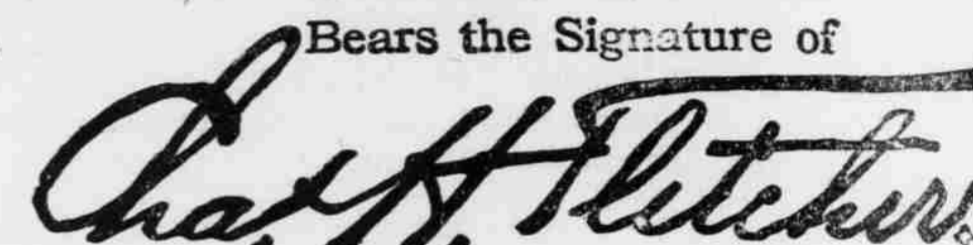
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