

BLANCHE PENLAND WINS ESSAY PRIZE

At the mass meeting held in the high school auditorium last Friday evening in the interests of the Smoky Mountain National Park campaign, one of the chief features of the evening's program was the awarding of prizes to the three high school students submitting the best essays on the advantages of the Smoky Mountain National Park, and the reading of the essay by the first prize winner, who was Miss Blanche Penland, a student in the tenth grade. The winner of second prize was Miss Miriam Henderson, of the eleventh grade, and of the third prize, Miss Nina Wheeler, of the tenth grade. The prizes as awarded by the campaign committee were five dollars for first prize, three dollars for second, and two dollars for third.

Of the 100 essays submitted in this contest, the committee judge Miss Penland's the best, and truly displayed superior talent in the art of writing, stating as it did the facts in the case in a concise, convincing and well-written style. The reading of the essay by Miss Penland was received most enthusiastically by the audience and was generally accorded an excellent discussion on the subject.

The essay follows:

"The Proposed National Park, to be located in the Great Smoky Mountains of Western North Carolina, is not only 'something new under the sun,' but it looms before the public just now in such proportions that this particular area is the cynosure of all eyes. When men of nation-wide financial and diplomatic fame are craning their necks in America's arena of progress, waiting for our next move in the game, it is high time to make such a move. The question is not are we going to do about it, but no longer be evaded or avoided."

"The region selected is most appropriate for such a park. Its towering rugged mountains, peaks, broad valleys, wide-spread forests and beautiful streams possess natural beauty unsurpassed in America. Species of every shrub, plant, flower, tree bird and fish abound. The fact that it was selected by a national committee, after eight months of research and survey in a number of states, should make us indeed proud of our State, and cause every effort to be put forth in favor of the project."

"Every intelligent citizen knows the benefits we derive each year from the 'tourist traffic'; the value of a park, comprising a great national playground for those who seek pleasure in healthful recreation, cannot be computed in dollars and cents. It would mean more tourists than ever before; tourists mean money—money for hotel owners, farmers, garage-owners; churches, theatres, and charities; to the butcher, the baker, the candle-stick maker. Money means progress. Our hotel accommodations would enlarge, our bank deposits increase, the market value of produce would rise, our churches would be filled, our schools our assembly places—Montreat, Junaluska, and others would hold those who apply at their doors."

"Our population would increase. Many tourists who came for rest and pleasure would locate permanently. California has 980,000 who first came to California as tourists. Vanderbilt and other men who have helped develop North Carolina on the coast came to Asheville as tourists seeking health and recreation. Developed water power resources call for much capital; tourists come to spend somewhere—where would you induce them to spend it if it were not needed?"

"It will mean conservative flowers, trees, shrubs, life will flourish here, making the Park a mecca for the botanist, ornithologist, and student. No lumbering is allowed in a National Park. This means conservation of water power, more hydroelectric power, to our industrial prospects. Logging destroys forests, one million trees per year. The Smokies contain trees which when Washington and the Continentals were suffering from the hardships of Valley Forge they were free to enjoy this grandeur. Shall this, one of the remnants of primeval forests, be destroyed? If it is destroyed in this district, it will deprive thousands of people but will supply the government less dangerous lumber. Lumbering is the weakest argument."

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