

**OTHERS' COMMENTS**

**WHEN THE MOUNTAIN FOLKS CELEBRATE A HIGHWAY**

North Carolina has entered the era of connecting up important highways in recent months—and events of the kind are well worth celebrating. It has appeared to us that the mountain folks are inclined to make the greatest ado over these connecting-up affairs and they certainly have most cause for rejoicing, for almost every road connection this year has brought hitherto cut-off counties back into the State. Such was the case with celebration at Franklin, Wednesday, when a hard surface ribbon from No. 10, at Sylva, was completed to Franklin and on to the Georgia line 14 miles beyond. The occasion was emphasized as an inter-State event, Atlanta figuring at one end and Asheville at the other. There was then established what has been named the Asheville-Franklin-Atlanta route, a rather important point being that it shortens the distance between Atlanta and Asheville by 32 miles. The actual cause for celebration, however, was the circumstance that Macon county was brought back into North Carolina. The Observer was given to understand that the chief matter of consequence is that the people of Franklin and of Macon county can now "get to Charlotte." This is not unbecoming, for it is exactly what they kept on telling us. And they can get here in half a day, where in the past it was a journey beyond contemplation. Under the roof of the big tabernacle where the pow-wow was held, a farmer who lives five miles from Franklin remarked to us that he had been to Charlotte "wunst," as Gen. Jubal Early would say, and that was when he was working his way home from Appomattox. He now has a Ford truck and expresses determination to try the Charlotte market with some of the best of Macon county products before Thanksgiving.

Well, Sylva is the gateway through which one may turn either to the right for Murphy, or to the left for Franklin, so Sylva was made headquarters for assemblage of the North Carolina welcoming motorcade. Sylva waited until 10 o'clock in the morning for the Asheville crowd to come along, and then led the procession down the fine concrete turnpike toward Franklin, banners flying and cars decorated. Farmers cut in all along the line, so that when the leading car reached the gap across which the county-line sign is erected, there was a crooked line of automobiles a mile and more back down the pike. Franklin was at the line with the reception committee in 20 cars, and these led the procession into the town eight miles further through a series of the most beautiful valley lands in the world, into Franklin and on to the Georgia line, where the visitors from Atlanta and the points in between were to be formally inducted into North Carolina. They met the Georgia delegation with a whisk broom, for at this place the Georgians were jumping onto the North Carolina hard surface after a journey of over 32 miles of Georgia dirt roads. Then the North Carolina object was made plain to the Georgians. It was to peptonize and gingerize them so that they might hurry up and put a hard top on the sand-clay link, to establishment of an all-hard top road to Atlanta.

The tabernacle we are speaking of is located in a grove on a mountain side just out of town and was built three years ago for use by Evangelist Truett, a Macon county boy gone to Texas, and winner of fame in gospel service. The speaker's stand is at the foot of the slope, and the seats bent around like a crescent, rise up toward the rear. The pillars are rooted trees sawed off at angles convenient to the sloping roof, and three thousand people can find seats under its cover. In attestation of the interest manifested by the mountain people in the event, the three thousand seats were filled and groups hung around as a fringe on three sides. There was much of oratory and still more of a dinner, a full course on a paper plate, coffee in paper cups, and later a round of ice

cream and cake, with cigars and cigarettes in plenty for the men. The Observer does not often take the siding for the dinner table in its free hand discussions of mountain events and mountain people, but it must pause to paramount the dinner provided for the crowd by the women of Sylva and Franklin and of the two counties of Jackson and Macon. And all of these three thousand people were there in automobiles, where, as recent as six years ago, it would have been an assemblage of wagons and sulkies, buggies, and mule and horse-back, and 300 people would have been an enormous crowd.

The further back into the mountains one gets, the greater the revelations in magnificence of scenery and abundance of resources. A State contracting force is now at work hard-topping highway No. 28, which starts at Bat Cave and runs through Hendersonville and Brevard to Franklin—hard-topping it to Rosman to Franklin—and when this work is finished the way will be opened through Toxaway and the famous Sapphire country, High Hampton, Cashier's Valley and Highlands, into Franklin and thence between the mighty Nantahalas through peaks and gorges and heights and depths that remind of the Rockies, to Bryson City and Murphy, and through all the extreme western counties of the State. A section entirely new to the tourist public will be opened up and the greater glories of the North Carolina mountains, hidden all these years will be revealed to the world. Until the folks travel that way they do not know what lies "west of Asheville."

Every mountain town visited for the first time seems to hold some scenic or civic attraction lacking in another. Franklin is located on a plateau 2,250 feet high and is flanked on the east by the towering Cowee range; on the west by the wilder Nantahalas, and from its streets a wide stretch of valleys and hills are in view. Within sight of Franklin are 17 peaks over 5,000 feet high. The town is paved and Franklin is backed, like every town in that part of the State, by a chamber of commerce and newspapers. The Franklin Press manifested the metropolitan spirit of enterprise by greeting the visitors with a highway celebration edition, a paper filled with views and information, and it was noted that every guest stuck a copy in his pocket to carry home. A regular Army man and an overseas fighter, Major S. A. Harris is editor and publisher of the Press, and being a man of writing capacity adds to his value as a "booster" of the upstanding type. And as a finishing touch to Franklin's up-to-dateness, a modern hotel is to be opened in October. The town that beats Franklin in staging a celebration must put all four feet forward.

The beauty of the country back in the great hills is the multiplicity of the valleys and water courses. Between Sylva and Franklin is a place named by the Indians indicating a region of "many meadows." We thought we could carry it in our mind, but have lost it and all the pity, for it is one of the most beautiful of all the beautiful Indian names that survive and that are perpetuated by the geographers. It was the Indians that made fine contribution to the music of our language. The valleys are narrow in places, so narrow that the rippling stream contests right of way with the road which is carved along the hillside; in other places they spread out into plantation size, with all the level lands in green-carpeting which runs in many instances to the tops of the slopes on either side. All the way from Balsam Gap through Sylva and Bryson City, Andrews to Murphy, gorge and valley exhibit a contest between river and railroad and highway for a footing presenting a series of moving pictures which cannot be excelled in impressive splendor in any part of the world. And the Charlotte man starting from home after breakfast, can now go through it all before sundown. The wonders of North Carolina's highway system

multiply each year and are taking stronger and stronger grip on the people. Of course, no town can make too big an event of the celebration affair.

Sylva! The town has a main street as broad as Tryon, in Charlotte, and equally well paved. On the south and east the homes, rise in three tiers, back of and above that a mountain wall goes skyward, giving the effect of a settlement under the Tyrolean Alps. Along the north and west flows the rushing Tuckaseege River, the railroad and a newly laid concrete avenue along which homes are being built. The people there seem ever mindful of the memorable courthouse removal fight of a dozen or so years ago, when they won over ancient Webster, and seem determined to make location permanent—for every once in a while Webster threatens to get the courthouse back. So Sylva put up \$250,000 in bonds for street paving and sewerage, and has laid concrete all around. At the west end where court house mountain splits Main street east and west, they have paved a 24-foot-wide concrete strip up the around the court house and passing town on the other, making a circle hill on one side and back down into by the sight given Kuester for a Charlotte club home. Sylva is the most completely paved town in the State. Its water comes by gravity, and the pressure is such that the town will never be required to buy a fire engine. They were washing off the street by electric light in preparation of the coming of visitors next day, and the Observer noted that it required four men to hold the squirring hose.

Apples! Traveling along any mountain road this season one may get an idea of the abundance of the apple crop of the year 1926, but it is between Waynesville and Balsam Gap that one grasps the real idea, for No. 10 leads by the orchard of W. N. Barbee a distance of a mile. Barbee's orchard runs back up the mountain a mile more. He has occupied himself and his orchard help so far this season in propping up the trees. In spite of that, some trees show broken boughs and others were saved the cracking point because the boughs found resting place on the ground. This orchard must look beautiful in blossom time; it certainly looks wonderful in apple-ripe time, for the trees are polka-dotted with shiny red fruit to development of a spectacle that makes people stop and talk. Barbee has three storage houses in his orchard and his packing houses will be kept busy as he begins stripping the trees because he calculates on a crop of 75,000 bushels.

Golden Rod! Talk of the big crops is becoming a little shop worn, but it might be in order to remark that it is a big year for other things, likewise, and among the beautiful things that are in abundance in the landscape this year is the golden rod. The crop is not only more thicker and taller, but the coloring is brighter and richer. The golden rod has captured the sub-divisions that sprung up along the highway out of every town in the State, and has even thrown its golden covering over the white stakes that caused so many golden dreams to the sub-division promoters. These have in fact realized a golden harvest, even if not of the metallic character. The people who do not slip along over the mountain highways of this State during the gorgeous months of September and October are missing a store of glories so abundantly provided by Nature for the joy of mankind.—Charlotte Observer.

**THE TALLULAH ROUTE**

On Wednesday, September 15, at Franklin, N. C., Georgians and North Carolinians will together celebrate the completion of North Carolina's part of the permanently paved highway between Asheville and Atlanta, via Franklin, Clayton, Tallulah Falls, Cornelia, Clarkesville, and Gainesville. Continued on Page 6

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It's true you do not know us personally.

**BUT**

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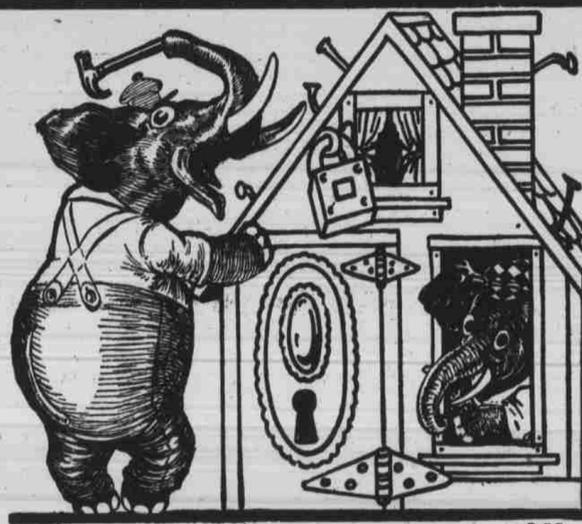
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