

THE MOUNTAIN TOP ROAD.

The Charlotte Observer

Scenic highway, 24 feet wide and all concrete, the greater part of whose length will course along the mountain ranges at an average altitude of six thousand feet, will be shortly the talk of home folks and the tourist world. It strikes out to the right from No. 10 at Balsam Gap and winds skyward toward Jones Knob, thence along the crest Yellow Face, Water Rock, White Rock and Black Rock and down into No. 19 again, near the town of Sylva. It is the enterprise of J. D. Hood, of Sanford, Fla., backed by financial associates. This highway attains an elevation of 6,192 feet.

Highway No. 19, which comes up from Beaufort at the ocean and goes out into Georgia west of Murphy, a distance of more than 500 miles, comes down from Balsam Gap to Sylva, a distance of 12 miles. Mr. Hood's scenic highway, connects the same points on a survey indicating a distance of 11 1/2 miles. But people will want to go the extra mileage and wish for more of it, because of the wonderful stretch of vision in all directions. It will be talked of all over the country next year as the great feat of highway engineering in eastern America, and before we go farther, we propose to put in one important fact. The road was surveyed by native talent, by a man named S. M. Parker, born and reared in Jackson county, his education completed with the sixth grade, but who early in life developed a knack of surveying mountain roads and who covered Jackson county with highways of easy grades. It had been predicted that Parker would never "get out" on the Sylva end, but he did. And what's more, his survey has been the chief of admitted marvel by State and Federal engineers. It was in the conquest of Jones Knob that he carried the highway to an elevation of over 6,000 feet, and from which point one can look over the wooded hinging of the roof to North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee. From the high hill-sides one may look down on the tiny white ribbon that the course of No. 10 through the valleys, the patchwork of green and brown that marks the fields of grain and grasses and the plowed sections of the farming lands, the school houses and churches and homes appearing like so many lumps of white sugar scattered about. The ridge lines of the Covee and the Nantahala are sealed by the vision, while the peaks and ranges of the Great Smokies frame the landscape to the north and west. One can go up on Hood's highway and benefit by a privilege heretofore denied the people—that of a clean and unobstructed view of the lofty profile of Mount Mitchell. It is a mound of shapely ascent, topped by a dome-like peak that stands clear above the northeastern line of mountains. It gives the people opportunity to say they "have seen Mount Mitchell."

For that matter, there is not a range or dome or peak within a circle of many miles that cannot be identified from the higher reaches of this road. Water Rock is a mighty mountain stripped to its 6,400-foot head by the lumbermen, is traversed across a line that would represent the wrinkles between eyebrows and forehead; it skirts the roots of Yellow Face's promontory at over 6,000 feet, and it crosses the shoulders of White Rock and Black Rock at elevations ranging from 5,800 to 5,920 feet. When the work of construction was begun out of Balsam Gap, the road was graded to a width of 16 feet, but Mr. Hood then began reflection on the future of that highway, so he went over the work and increased the width to 24 feet. It is now graded and ready for the concrete for five miles of the gap—for it is to be a concrete road the entire distance—contract has been let for four miles more and the surveyor is finishing the engineering to the western junction with No. 10. Meantime, people might be wondering why Mr. Hood is carrying this expensive system of highway across the 6,000-foot elevations. He owns an estate on these mountains that covers more than 4,000 acres and he is going to establish there a scenic section that will rival the famous parks in the West, and the highway is only the foundation work. This highway, as a matter of course, means a tourist hotel to feed. The hotel Mr. Hood has planned will be located on top of Yellow Face, and that it is to be a hotel of some consequence is indicated by the figures called for. It is to cost \$2,000,000. And the hotel is no more on paper than the highway is. Mr. Hood lives in the delightful environs of Waynesville, convenient to the scene of this development, which he calls "Hood's Park on Top of Balsam Mountains." This highway he is building is destined to bring international fame to that section of the State. It is neighbor to the Smoky Mountain National Park. It is the park feature that distinguishes it from other develop-

ment enterprises in the mountains, for it means a park of fine hotels and handsome homes up on the great elevations, and it is enterprise from which not only Sylva, the southwestern outpost, will benefit, but from which Bryson, Andrews, Murphy, Franklin, Brevard, Hendersonville, Tryon, Waynesville and Asheville and all that section of the State will receive material impetus. Hood's Park on Top of the Balsam Mountains is an enterprise of wide-spread influence. The Observer regards it as the first start in real big things for the North Carolina mountains.

In developing the great elevations on the Balsams Mr. Hood has stolen a march on the slow-moving Government, for his main highway and its connecting roads will have been finished and at the service of the people before the Federal highway and park forces will have taken up similar work in the Smokies. Private enterprise is doing perhaps a finer type of park work than the Government will be able to do. One may even now get to the Jones Knob heights over a nicely graded highway and in comfort by automobile, but the remainder of the route is of negotiation by hardy mountain climbers afoot and by those who may invite the thrill on horseback. And, by the way, one can have no appreciable idea of the number of mountains there are in the western sections, nor how big they are, nor how high they go, until he tries them in the saddle. The stretches along which the rider may "sit easy" are few; oftener than not his ears rubbing ears with the horse, or in reverse action his stirrups are rubbing the sides of the horse's jaws.

It is a great experience and we may have something to say about it at another time, but just now we are telling about the mountains whose elevations the general run of tourists have never scaled. The grandeur of the unfolding panoramas must be left to the imagination, but it is up there that the traveler gets into the second Spring of the season, for the oaks and poplars, the hickories and the smaller hardy trees are just putting out the pale leaves of the early season. The dogwood, weeks ago vanished from the woods in the lowlands, are just now putting forth on the slopes of the high mountains, and the dogwood that grows above the 5,000-foot level is a thing of gorgeous beauty, its petals being twice as large as those of its kinsman lower down. And the masses of color up on the Balsams is a thing that holds one entranced. The interesting story about the flowers up there is that people who have gloried in the present rhododendron and laurel show of the lower mountains, may go up on the Balsams in late June and early July and find these blooming at their best. The laurel and rhododendron are just now in the first stages of building. But the white cucumber tree is sharing honors with the dogwood, and the pink, white and maroon trillium trees remind of the Japanese magnolia festival of the early Spring in the lowlands. The trillium is also known as the Trinity Flower. There is a profuse sprinkling of orange, pink and white azaleas, the white moosewood, the white, blue and peacock violets and lilies of the valley, ladies' tresses, Solomon's seal, Indian squaw weed, wake robins, spangle the wood slopes like stars. Along the streams one can find a peculiarly beautiful flower of the lily family known as the Indian turnip, its intricate tracings in white and brown being curled inside. The Indian paint brush, in red and green, yellow buttercups, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, bellwood, poison hemlock, red honey-suckle, mandrake and crab apple, sweet shrubs, all varieties of ferns, abound in great profusion. No wonder the botanists have raved over the floral wealth of the North Carolina mountains. Too many people rambling these slopes, through force of habit, keep their eyes up and around, rather than down.

WAYNEWOOD THEATRE.
June 7th to 12th.
Monday
Tom Mix in
MY OWN PAL.
A 1926 typical Tom Mix picture de luxe. It's the snappiest, zippiest, speediest thriller that Tom Mix ever made.
Tuesday
Carol Dempster in
SALLY OF THE SAWDUST.
A D. W. Griffith production, he of the "Birth of a Nation" fame, so as Spring-time ushers in the great white tops, we have booked this "CIRCUS" picture so you can all see the elephants and things.
FOX NEWS.
Wednesday
Jack Hoxie in
THE DEMON.
A fightin', hard ridin' cowboy who got his man! They thought he was the worst outlaw among them until he got his evidence.

Comedy "ALICE BLUES."
Thursday
Claire Windsor in
MONEY TALKS.
The biggest laugh of the season.
An ocean of fun on a sea of Laughs.
Friday
Colleen Moore in
IRENE.
There wasn't a beautiful left in Hollywood when "IRENE" was being made. You'll see them all in the style pageant.

FOX NEWS.
Saturday
Lillian Rich in
THE ISLE OF RETRIBUTION.
A shipwreck in a raging gale at sea—the stricken vessel crashing on the dreaded iceberg. Lost in a blizzard on a far-flung Alaskan Island.
Comedy "FROM CABBY'S SEAT."

ROGERS REUNION.
On Sunday, May 16th, Mr. C. M. Rogers celebrated his 77th birthday with a family reunion at his home on

Fines Creek. All the family was there except one son-in-law, Theodore Ferguson. Those present were: Mr. and Mrs. D. J. Noland and six children of Crabtree, Mr. and Mrs. R. M. McCracken and one child of Fines Creek, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Bryson of Ratcliff Cove, Mr. and Mrs. Thos. H. Rogers and six children of Hazelwood, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Charles Rogers and five children of Fines Creek, Mr. and Mrs. Cauley Rogers and five children of Fines Creek, France Rogers of Fines Creek, three children of Mrs. Theodore Ferguson, deceased, Fines Creek, Mr. and Mrs. Homer G. Rogers of Canton. A long table on the lawn served a bounteous dinner.

The centerpiece being a birthday cake furnished a generous slice to each member of the reunion.
Deceased of the family are Mrs. Rogers, the mother, Wiley and Florence, Mrs. A. T. Ferguson and two small grand children.
"Uncle" Melvin was born and

reared in Haywood county, son of the late Hiram Rogers.
He was a professional school teacher in his young manhood and later served several years as magistrate. He is one of Fines Creek's most respected citizens. Having a record of never being intoxicated nor never being indicted in court.
(Contributed.)

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE.
The undersigned having qualified as Executor of the Last Will and Testament of Geo. W. Rathbone, deceased, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of Geo. W. Rathbone, deceased, to present them to the undersigned Executor for payment within one year from this date or else this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate are hereby notified to come in and settle at once.
This the 1st day of June, 1926.
GEO. A. BROWN,
Executor of the Last Will and Testament of Geo. W. Rathbone, deceased.
July 8-c

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