



8-1997

# Selling the Southern Highlands: Tourism and Community Development in the Mountain South

Christopher Brenden Martin  
*University of Tennessee - Knoxville*

---

## Recommended Citation

Martin, Christopher Brenden, "Selling the Southern Highlands: Tourism and Community Development in the Mountain South. "  
PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 1997.  
[https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_graddiss/3270](https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/3270)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact [trace@utk.edu](mailto:trace@utk.edu).

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Christopher Brenden Martin entitled "Selling the Southern Highlands: Tourism and Community Development in the Mountain South." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in History.

James C. Cobb, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Paul H. Bergeron, Bruce Wheeler, Charles Aiken

Accepted for the Council:

Dixie L. Thompson

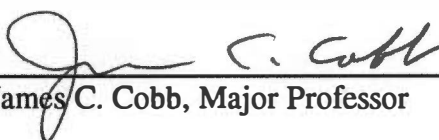
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

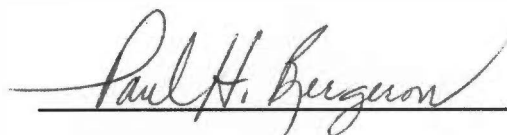
---

To the Graduate Council:

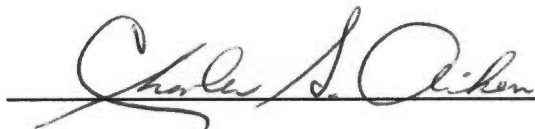
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Christopher Brenden Martin entitled "Selling the Southern Highlands: Tourism and Community Development in the Mountain South." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in History.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. James C. Cobb, Major Professor


We have read this dissertation and  
recommend its acceptance:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Accepted for the Council:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Vice Chancellor and  
Dean of The Graduate School

**SELLING THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS:  
TOURISM AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE MOUNTAIN SOUTH**

A Dissertation  
Presented for the  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Christopher Brenden Martin  
August 1997



Copyright © Christopher Brenden Martin, 1997

All rights reserved

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my late stepfather

**Dr. William B. McCash**

who first inspired my passion for history.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation could not have been written without the help and support of many people. The members of my committee, Dr. James C. Cobb, Dr. Paul H. Bergeron, Dr. W. Bruce Wheeler, and Dr. Charles Aiken, provided invaluable suggestions and saved me from numerous embarrassing errors. Though I accept full responsibility for any shortcomings in this study, the merits of this work are due in no small part to the suggestions of my committee members. I am especially grateful for the intellectual challenges and moral support of Dr. Cobb, who first led me to this topic and guided the process of researching and writing this dissertation.

Words alone cannot express my debt and gratitude for the love and support of my family. My mother encouraged me to pursue academic studies and gently prodded me to finish. My son, Eric, has been a constant source of joy and comedic relief as he has so patiently waited for me to finish "that dumb dissertation" for the last three years. But most of all I want to thank my loving wife, Sara. Without her love and support, this dissertation would have never been completed.

## ABSTRACT

Focusing on Buncombe County, North Carolina, Blount County, Tennessee, and Sevier County, Tennessee as representative resort areas in the mountain South, this study recognizes tourism as a central factor in the historical development of the region's cultural identity, economy, and landscape. In studying the variant development patterns of resort communities in the southern highlands, it is apparent that tourism has simultaneously produced both continuity and change as well as positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, tourism has often served as a source of economic, cultural, and environmental preservation. Tourism has helped to maintain cultural distinctiveness, historical identity, and a sense of place in the mountain South. Likewise, tourism has also sustained many of the economic qualities traditionally associated with the region, including a dependency on external capital, uneven distribution of economic benefits, an unorganized labor force, and seasonal employment patterns. Moreover, since scenic beauty and healthy climate have long been a main attraction for tourists, tourism has often provided the economic rationale for the protection of the environment.

On the other hand, the growth of tourism has also modified many of the qualities traditionally associated with the region. Considering the environmental changes brought by rapid commercial development and second home construction, or the cultural adaptations induced by contrived attractions and interactions between visitors and local residents in a tourist setting, or the employment, revenue, and economic

dependence generated by the mass travel industry, it is clear that tourism has been a major source of change in the southern mountains. In many ways tourism has been an important factor in the transformation of the landscape as well as the modernization of the region's culture and economy over the last century. Depending on the context in which it is pursued, tourism can be a healthy, sustainable development strategy that enhances the beauty of the landscape as well as the cultural foundation of the community, or it can hinder economic diversification, mar the scenery, and destroy the sense of community.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER	
1. "Taking the Cure": The Antebellum Origins of Tourism in the Mountain South .....	9
<b>PART I--FROM TRAILS TO RAILS, 1865-1914</b>	
2. "Millionaires Must Cost Us Something": The Economics of Victorian Tourism in the Highland South .....	43
3. Castles Among Cabins: Regional Identity, Cultural Interaction, and Tourism in the Mountain South, 1865-1914 .....	74
4. Trains, Trees, and Travelers: Tourism and the Landscape in the Southern Highlands, 1865-1914 .....	107
<b>PART II--FROM RAILS TO ROADS, 1914-1996</b>	
5. "It's a whole lot easier to pick tourists than to pick cotton": The Automobile and the Economics of Mountain Tourism .....	130
6. Hillbillies, Rednecks, and "Injuns": Modern Tourism, Regional Change, and Cultural Change in the Southern Highlands .....	185
7. "Dang if I ever seed sich a way to skin up a mountain": Modern Tourism and the Landscape in the Mountain South .....	235
CONCLUSION .....	263
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	269
VITA .....	290

## Introduction

Since World War II, tourism has quietly emerged as one of the largest industries in the world.<sup>1</sup> Its global economic importance has grown exponentially over the last several decades as transportation and accommodations improved and people throughout the industrialized world gained more disposable income and leisure time in which to travel. Few regions of the world better reflect the magnified importance of tourism than the American South, where the hospitality trade is now either the first or second most important industry in every state.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, tourism is the *only* industry in many southern communities.

Given the economic importance of tourism, it is surprising that so few historians have studied the relationship between tourism and regional development in the South. This study will help to fill this void by analyzing tourism's role in the economic, cultural, and environmental development of the southern highlands. Defined broadly, the mountain South (or the southern highlands) refers to the upland areas of the American South, including southern Appalachia, the Ouachita Mountains, and the Ozark Mountains. Tourism in these sub-regions of the South has a long, rich history that dates back to the eighteenth century when health seekers first visited the region's "salubrious" mineral springs. As resorts in the region grew more sophisticated and more accessible, visitors traveled increasingly to spas for social life and pleasure rather

---

<sup>1</sup>Donald E. Lundsberg, The Tourist Business (Boston: Cahners, 1974), 2.

<sup>2</sup>Bob Dart, "South Charged Up as Tourist Magnet," Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 March 1993.

than to "take the waters." Building upon the antebellum foundations of tourism in the southern highlands, New South entrepreneurs developed scores of new mountain resorts that catered to America's growing middle class. The rise of automobiles in America democratized tourism and spawned the growth of many *new* resort communities in the twentieth century. As a result, there are now dozens of communities in the region with a large tourist base.

While each resort community has its own distinct historical experience, there are identifiable sub-regional trends in the history of tourism in the mountain South. For that reason, after studying the broad regional trends through secondary sources, I carefully chose three counties in the region whose histories display the variant development patterns of tourism in the southern highlands. My primary research focuses on Buncombe County, North Carolina, Blount County, Tennessee, and Sevier County, Tennessee. The resort communities within these counties represent a broad spectrum of resort development patterns. In Buncombe County, Asheville is one of many longtime resorts where proponents of tourism were forced to adapt to the decline of health tourism and the rise of automobile travel. In Blount County, Montvale Springs represents the handful of famous antebellum spas that died out in the twentieth century, because they could not successfully adapt to modern tourism; the city of Townsend, on the other hand, is a relatively young resort community struggling to cope with the pressures of existing commercial development and impending rapid growth. In Sevier County, rampant commercial and second home development engulfed the once pastoral villages of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge,



permanently transforming the local economy, culture, and landscape. The evolution of these resort communities reflect the larger trends of resort development in the region, the nation, and the world, making these counties appropriate case studies for tourism's divergent roles in regional and community development.

The variant development patterns of these mountain South communities indicate that tourism is a double-edged sword that cuts both ways in terms of its economic, cultural, and environmental impacts. Tourism can simultaneously produce both continuity and change as well as positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, tourism often serves as a source of economic, cultural, and environmental preservation. During the twentieth century, the hospitality trade has been one of the most important factors in maintaining cultural distinctiveness, historical identity, and a sense of place in the mountain South. In order to attract visitors, tourist promoters in the region consciously constructed and marketed regional identity as a selling point, thus perpetuating the notion of a distinct way of life in the southern mountains. But tourism's expression of regional distinctiveness was not wholly contrived, for the industry provided the economic drive to inspire and sustain cultural and historic preservation movements that perpetuated characteristics of community life in the southern mountains. Likewise, tourism has also sustained many of the economic qualities traditionally associated with other major industries in the mountain South, including a dependency on external capital, uneven distribution of economic benefits, an unorganized labor force, and seasonal employment patterns. Moreover, since scenic beauty and healthy climate have long attracted tourists to the region's resorts, tourism

has often provided the economic rationale for the protection of the environment.

On the other hand, the growth of tourism has also *modified* many of the qualities traditionally associated with the region. Considering the environmental changes brought by rapid commercial development and second home construction, or the cultural adaptations induced by contrived attractions and interactions between visitors and local residents in a tourist setting, or the employment, revenue, and economic dependence generated by the mass travel industry, it is clear that tourism has been a major source of change in the southern mountains. It has become an important source of entrepreneurial opportunity and income for areas deficient in natural resources other than climate and scenery. In many ways tourism has been an important factor in the transformation of the landscape as well as the modernization of the region's culture and economy over the last century.

Although tourism has been an important force in shaping the modern South, academic historians have generally neglected the subject. Presently there is no broad interpretive history of tourism in the region. While historians of the Appalachian South have paid ample attention to logging, coal mining, and benevolent work in the mountains, few have recognized tourism as a major influence in the region. This study uses an interdisciplinary approach to show tourism's central role in the cultural, economic, and environmental development of the southern highlands.

Most of the scholarly studies on tourism are the work of sociologists, anthropologists, economists, and geographers. These scholars usually have a policy agenda, and they gear their research towards modern circumstances and offer little

historical perspective. For instance, sociologist Dean MacCannell, in his seminal study The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class, offers some interesting theoretical frameworks by which to understand tourist behavior, yet his theories do not explain the economic and environmental impacts of tourism nor does he incorporate a historical perspective. In The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth Century North America, geographer John Jackle offers an excellent analysis of the broad trends of tourism in modern America, but he does not analyze the impacts of the travel industry at the regional or community level. Perhaps the most thorough published study of travel in the South is Howard Lawrence Preston's Dirt Roads to Dixie: Accessibility and Modernization in the South, 1885-1935. Nevertheless, Preston's study is concerned primarily with the Good Roads Movement and highway improvement and deals with tourism only tangentially. Although the growing number of theses and dissertations on tourism indicates there is a growing scholarly interest in the subject, this study represents one of the first broad historical approaches to tourism in the southern highlands.<sup>3</sup>

In some important ways, this study challenges the prevailing interpretive paradigm in Appalachian studies which contends that the region's economic, social, and

---

<sup>3</sup>Howard L. Preston, Dirt Roads to Dixie: Accessibility and Modernization in the South, 1885-1935 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); John A. Jackle, The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth Century North America (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985); Dean MacCannell, The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class (New York: Shoken Books, 1976).

environmental woes stem from changes imposed by outsiders.<sup>4</sup> This study clearly shows that local residents encouraged and often benefitted from the growth of tourism with classic New South partnerships that gave local boosters access to outside capital. In most resort communities, local entrepreneurs pioneered the early hospitality trade. As resorts developed, however, outsiders gained larger shares of tourism profits, but many local entrepreneurs were able to survive and even thrive because there are relatively few economic barriers to entry in the tourism industry. Unlike the extractive industries of the region, tourism is a largely unregulated segment of the economy that does not necessarily require a large initial capital outlay to pay for raw materials and labor. As a result, tourism has been profitable at almost any investment level. Thus, far from being entirely externally-imposed, the tourist industry developed with the acquiescence and participation of many southern highlanders.

One of the difficulties facing those who study tourism is defining tourism. "The trouble with tourism," remarked William A. V Cecil, president of the Biltmore Estate, "is its definition. Nobody knows what tourism is. . . . If you just say 'travel industry' or 'tourism,' nobody knows what the hell you're talking about."<sup>5</sup> One reason for the complexity of tourism is that it is not a "normal" industry in the sense that its profits

---

<sup>4</sup>See Ronald D. Eller, Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization in the Appalachian South, 1888-1930 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982); David E. Whisnant, All That Is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); and Henry D. Shapiro, Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978).

<sup>5</sup>William A. V. Cecil interviewed by Karl Campbell, 22 September 1989, Tape recording, Southern Oral History Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

are derived from performing services rather than producing raw materials or manufacturing finished goods. Instead of producing a tangible product as most industries do, the travel industry offers intangible and often fleeting commodities such as scenery, recreation, climate, and culture. Tourism is a large, amorphous *service* industry that is segmented into many different types of businesses, including travel agencies, recreational establishments, real estate companies, cultural institutions, as well as companies that provide transportation, food, lodging, and other travel-related services. Tourism also includes various agencies of the federal, state, and local governments that operate and promote parks, historic sites, and recreational areas.

Further complicating the issue is the debate over who is properly called a "tourist." There is wide disagreement concerning the definition of "tourist." Are all travelers tourists? Should people traveling for reasons other than pleasure be called "tourists"? Do second home owners count? For the purposes of this study, I have defined a tourist as one who travels in search of health, pleasure, escape, recreation, entertainment, adventure, and culture. Since many tourists travel to assess the world around them and to validate their own sense of identity, the definition also includes scholars and writers who traveled through the region looking for romantic qualities and cultural peculiarities.

As a broad regional overview focusing on case study communities that illustrate larger trends in tourism development, this study is not intended to be a comprehensive history of the travel industry in the southern highlands. While I do not propose to describe all of the changes that have occurred in the region's travel industry over the

last two hundred years, I have identified important historical trends that may guide future research. I believe that this study illustrates some important historical lessons. Depending on the circumstances, tourism can be a healthy, sustainable development strategy that enhances the beauty of the landscape as well as the cultural foundation of the community, or it can hinder economic diversification, mar the scenery, and destroy the sense of community.

## **Chapter 1-'Taking the Cure': The Antebellum Origins of Tourism in the Mountain South**

In early November 1800, Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury traveled over "awful roads and dangerous passes" to reach the village of Warm Springs, an isolated settlement deep in the rugged mountains of western North Carolina. Stopping for the night at William Nielson's tavern, he found about thirty lodgers, comprised mainly of stock drovers and migrant families. Asbury stayed at Nielson's Tavern nine times over the next ten years, during which time he noticed that more and more desperate health seekers were traversing over the dangerous roads to partake the "health-restoring" waters of Warm Springs. Within fifteen years after Asbury's death in 1816, the State of North Carolina had built a first-rate turnpike to Warm Springs and an entrepreneur from Asheville, named James Patton, had erected an elegant hotel on the site of Nielson's Tavern. The improved access and accommodations brought in greater numbers of wealthy visitors from the Tidewater regions of South Carolina and Georgia who patronized the Patton Hotel for the combined appeal of health and leisure. The growth of tourism at Warm Springs highlighted the social and cultural differences between the elite visitors and the humble residents who lived nearby. James Silk Buckingham, an English socialite who visited Warm Springs in 1841, found the scenery "nobly picturesque" and the spring waters "delightful," but mountain people struck him as "very mean and dirty."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Manly Wade Wellman, The Kingdom of Madison: A Southern Mountain Fastness and Its People (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 28-33, 43-49.

The antebellum evolution of Warm Springs, North Carolina provides a microcosm of the development of the early tourist industry in the southern highlands. Most resorts in the region began as primitive spas or taverns that catered to health seekers and transients. But as Indian removal and turnpike construction reduced the difficulties and dangers of travel in the mountains, outside entrepreneurs improved accommodations and succeeded in drawing an upper-class clientele who frequented highlands spas both to "take the waters" and to participate in the social rituals of the southern elite. In the decades before the Civil War, wealthy southerners attempted to recreate the social world of Tidewater and Low Country society at highland spas. In doing so, tourism accentuated the social, cultural, and economic differences between the lowland South and the mountain South..

Formed through millions of years of geologic change, the isolated mineral and thermal springs of the southern mountains were the foundation for antebellum tourism in the mountain South. The earliest people to visit these springs were Native Americans. While the diverse aboriginal peoples of the southern highlands could not be called "tourists" in the modern sense of the word, it is well known that many Native American tribes of the region were drawn to the mystic qualities of the mysterious waters with subterranean origins. A Cherokee legend tells of how life on earth first arose from a mystical spring. Likewise, the Tunica Indians regarded the area that would become Hot Springs, Arkansas as highly sacred ground, for they believed it was where the Great Spirit had slain an evil beast that had once inhabited a cavern under Hot Springs Mountain. It was quite common for Native American



shamans to utilize spring water for its healing powers. Perhaps following the example of the game they pursued, many Native Americans went to natural springs to soak and heal their bodies. There are numerous Indian legends concerning the restorative qualities of spring water. One such legend in the Allegheny Mountains of western Virginia holds that a Shawnee warrior happened upon a thermal spring in the sixteenth century. Traveling in miserable weather along an unfamiliar route, he noticed a reflection in a small pool of water. Bending down to drink from the pool, he realized the water was warm, so he immersed himself and spent the night in the invigorating waters. The next day, refreshed and filled with confidence, he distinguished himself at tribal council and urged other kin and tribe members to partake of the "Spring of Strength."<sup>2</sup>

Despite their apparent belief in the curative powers of mineral water, Native American tribes of the region rarely established permanent settlements at mountain springs. Opting to settle closer to navigable rivers or streams, the tribes of the southern highlands generally reserved the territory surrounding the mountain springs for annual hunting expeditions. As white settlers pushed into the southern highlands in the 1700s, however, they began to encroach on these hunting grounds and to establish permanent settlements.

Throughout the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, most new settlers in

---

<sup>2</sup>Francis Scully, Hot Springs, Arkansas and Hot Springs National Park (Little Rock: Pioneer Press, 1966), 5; Marshall S. Berdan, "The Spa Life: Taking the Cure in Antebellum Bath County," Virginia Calvacade 40 (1991), 110.

the southern upcountry were of Scotch-Irish, Irish, or German descent. Many were immigrants who, after arriving in America at the ports of Philadelphia or Charleston, migrated to the mountainous backcountry and often squatted on lands for which they held no legal title. They came to farm the rich river valleys and to seek land and opportunity in the Appalachian frontier. Exactly how and when white settlers discovered each natural spring is difficult to verify for most springs, but it is likely that they found many simply by following the Indian trails or noticing the steam rising from a pool of hot water on a winter's day. Still, many springs have legends about their discovery. For instance, a legend of Warm Springs, Virginia contends that General Andrew Lewis stumbled upon it while hiding in the heavy underbrush from a raiding Shawnee party. The legend of Montvale Springs, Tennessee holds that Sam Houston, the area's famous native son who became the President of the Texas Republic, first discovered and named the springs.<sup>3</sup>

Regardless of how white settlers discovered the existence of each natural spring, it did not take long for them to recognize the entrepreneurial potential of these salubrious waters. The widespread belief in the European tradition of hydrotherapy, or what is often referred to as "the water-cure," offered a strong enticement for health-seekers to pay money to visit natural springs. The custom of frequenting mineral baths began in Homeric times among the Greek aristocracy. Although at first regarded

---

<sup>3</sup>Karl B. Raitz and Richard Ulack, Appalachia: A Regional Geography of Land, People, and Development (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 24-28; Berdan, "The Spa Life," 110-111; Adele McKenzie, "Montvale Springs, Nightclub, Health Spa of 19th Century," Maryville-Alcoa Times, 13 March 1968.

as merely a means to cleanse and refresh the body, by the time of Hippocrates, bathing had become more than a simple hygienic measure. A number of Greek and Roman physicians used water, both internally and externally, as a treatment for a wide variety of ailments. They believed the body's humours could be brought into balance by using a combination of hot and cold baths as part of a wider regimen. This therapeutic use of baths was remarkably long-lived, spanning the entire classical period. Although the practice of hydropathy declined during the Middle Ages, the rediscovery of ancient medical texts during the Renaissance revived the therapeutic use of water in France and Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A group of newly professionalized chemists and physicians legitimized the practice of hydropathy in eighteenth century England by heralding the efficacy of mineral water for treating specific ailments, such as digestive and respiratory problems, rheumatism, infertility, bodily pains, gout, and dyspepsia. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, hydrotherapy developed into an elaborate system of cleansing the body--and presumably curing it--by bathing and filling it with water in every imaginable manner.<sup>4</sup>

As Europeans had long cherished the healing qualities of mineral water, it was not long before a new leisure class in colonial America adopted the practice of hydropathy. In the Northeast, Saratoga Springs, New York was perhaps the most famous of the new social meccas which drew visitors with the blended appeal of

---

<sup>4</sup>Ray Porter, ed., The Medical History of Waters and Spas (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1990), 1-6; Christopher Hamlin, "Chemistry, Medicine, and the Legitimization of English Spas, 1740-1840," Medical History 10 (1990), 67-81.

pleasure and health. There was a handful of spas in the southern upcountry in the eighteenth century, but they were generally primitive resorts that came nowhere near to matching the luxurious accommodations of Saratoga Springs. Few health or pleasure seekers were willing to brave the many difficulties of traveling the crude roads to the highlands as well as the very real threat of being attacked or harassed by Indians.<sup>5</sup>

Those who did traverse the mountains were usually migrants en route to settlements farther west. As the trans-Appalachian frontier was opening up for white settlement in the late-eighteenth century, the number of people traveling through the mountains increased dramatically. In 1765 alone, estimates suggested that over a thousand immigrant wagons passed through Salisbury, North Carolina then situated at the southernmost point of the Great Wagon Road, one of the main routes by which Scotch-Irish and German immigrants funneled from the port of Philadelphia into the southern upcountry. By the late-1790s, about 28,000 people a year paid a twelve cent toll to cross the Clinch River at Kingston, Tennessee. These figures suggest a rapid growth of travel through the region in the late-eighteenth century, particularly in the settlements along the major transportation routes to the trans-Appalachian frontier.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Raitz and Ulack, Appalachia, 236.

<sup>6</sup>Ina W. Van Noppen and John J. Van Noppen, Western North Carolina Since the Civil War (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1973), 25; LaReine Warden Clayton, "Early Inns and Hostelries in the East Tennessee Country," manuscript, Special Collections, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

While many, if not most, travelers in the mountains before 1800 were migrants looking for land opportunities farther west, other travelers in the region included land speculators, circuit preachers, politicians, and livestock drovers. This diverse group of transients usually camped or boarded in the backcountry, but there was a number of inns, taverns, and hostelries in the region that could accommodate them along some routes.

There was, however, another much smaller group of travelers in the eighteenth century who came to the highlands solely for health reasons. The earliest white tourists who came to the region seeking health were usually desperate yet wealthy invalids who had exhausted other conventional forms of treatment for their ailments. Since "taking the cure" required at least a month and often lasted up to six months, the pilgrimage was not for those with limited means or an inflexible schedule. Just getting to a mountain spa could be an arduous and dangerous journey on the rough mountain roads. In a desperate last attempt to save their lives at any cost, these sojourners endured days and sometimes weeks of strenuous jostling on horseback or in a stagecoach. Upon arriving at their destination, they camped or boarded near the springs and spent several weeks recuperating and partaking of the waters. While there were a few bathhouses in the Allegheny and Blue Ridge Mountains, the difficulties and dangers of traveling into the highlands, combined with the primitive accommodations offered at these spas, discouraged most invalids from taking the

journey to the southern backcountry in the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

As long as there were poor roads and Indians in the mountains, most wealthy southerners shied away from the South's highland spas and instead chose to vacation at popular northern resorts such as Newport, Rhode Island or Saratoga Springs. But in the first three decades of the nineteenth century, the removal of most Indian tribes and the construction of several roads and turnpikes through the region greatly reduced the hazards of traveling in the mountain South. As the southern highlands became safer and more accessible to visitors, a number of new mountain spas emerged that catered primarily to the planter and urban elite classes of the South.

As wealthy lowlanders began to make annual summer pilgrimages to their favorite spas and summer retreats in the mountains, the pattern and timing of road improvements determined where and when resorts thrived. During the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, four distinct resort regions emerged in the southern highlands, including the Virginia Springs, the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina, the Smoky and Cumberland Mountains of East Tennessee, and the Ouachita Mountains. Since the elite of each sub-region of the South chose to frequent resorts that were closest and most accessible, each spa catered to a clientele with specific regional origins. The spas of the Virginia Springs drew visitors from the breadth of the nation's lowlands, but especially from the Tidewater regions of Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas. Resorts in the North Carolina Blue Ridge Mountains became a

---

<sup>7</sup>Berdan, "The Spa Life," 113.

favorite summer retreat for planters, merchants, and urban professionals from South Carolina and Georgia. The Smoky and Cumberland Mountains attracted health and pleasure seekers from all over the Tennessee and lower-Mississippi Valleys, but especially from Tennessee, Louisiana, and Mississippi. The Hot Springs resort in the Arkansas Ouachita Mountains drew health-seekers from all over the upper and lower-Mississippi Valley. These resort areas evolved somewhat differently because of the clientele they served and the timing of their development.<sup>8</sup>

The earliest and perhaps most celebrated of these resorts were located close to a belt of thermal and mineral springs in the Allegheny Mountains of western Virginia. Known collectively as the "Virginia Springs," these spas were the premier resorts of the mountain South before the Civil War. Officials in Williamsburg, the colonial capital of Virginia, may have known about Virginia's secluded thermal springs as early as 1716, but fearing the threat of Shawnee Indians in the highland frontier, few health-seekers braved the expedition into the Allegheny backcountry before the 1760s. A Tidewater physician traveling on horseback through the thermal springs region of western Virginia in 1750 recognized that "the People here are very hospitable and would be better able to support Travellers was it not for the great number of Indian warriors, that frequently take what they want from them, much to Their prejudice."<sup>9</sup>

The French and Indian War, the American Revolution, and subsequent land

---

<sup>8</sup>Raitz and Ulack, Appalachia, 236.

<sup>9</sup>Berdan, "The Spa Life," 110.

cessions in the late-eighteenth century, however, significantly reduced the Native American threat in the Allegheny Mountains, opening the way for white settlers as well as a handful of health seekers who believed in the efficacy of the region's thermal mineral waters. Proprietors built the first bath houses and inns in the region at Warm Springs and Hot Springs in the 1760s and by 1790, these watering holes had developed into thriving resorts. These spas, located less than five miles apart, drew so many people to the area that in 1791 the region was made into a separate county named Bath, suggesting the central role the spas played in the area's economy.<sup>10</sup> It was at about this time that White Sulphur Springs, located in what is today Greenbrier County, West Virginia, was beginning to acquire its reputation as one of the nation's most famous resorts. After a woman claimed in 1778 that the mineral laden waters of White Sulphur Springs had cured her of rheumatism, rumors of the springs' healing powers spread quickly. The absentee owners of the property moved to the area a few years later and built a boarding house and a few cottages to accommodate the invalids and travelers coming along the Midland Trail.<sup>11</sup>

At first, the resorts of the Virginia Springs region attracted mostly upper-class, male invalids who flocked to the area in a desperate last attempt at hydropathy to

---

<sup>10</sup>Berdan, "The Spa Life," 112; Andrew Hepburn, Great Resorts of North America (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 3.

<sup>11</sup>William Olcott, The Greenbrier Heritage (Netherlands: Arindt, Preston, Chapin, Lamb, and Keen, Inc., 1980), 3-5; Robert Conte, "The Celebrated White Sulphur Springs of Greenbrier: Nineteenth Century Travel Accounts," West Virginia History 42(1981), 191-217.



prolong their lives. Travel accounts describe the typical visitors drawn to the Virginia Springs in the late-eighteenth century. For instance, Francis Kinlock, a South Carolina planter suffering from yellow fever, commented on the desperation of his fellow visitors to White Sulphur Springs in 1785 by noting that "these waters are salubrious in many cases, but to have seen the figures which crowd around in the morning you would have supposed them the shades of departed souls gathering around the fountain of youth."<sup>12</sup>

In spite of their faith in the curative powers of the waters, a limited number of people risked traveling the tortuous Midland Trail to these wilderness springs until a crude state road was cut through the forests of western Virginia in 1790. As accessibility improved, so too did accommodations. The motivation for traveling to spas also changed, as more and more visitors came for leisure and social life rather than health. By 1800, there were at least half a dozen spas operating in the Alleghenies.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the rapid growth of a number of resort communities in the Virginia Springs district, the region would not witness its golden years as a resort area until after the completion of the James River and Kanawha Turnpike in 1824. With the improvement of roads and the establishment of regular commercial stage lines, the

---

<sup>12</sup>Francis Kinlock to John Rutledge, Jr., September 1, 1785, John Rutledge Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>13</sup>Olcott, The Greenbrier Heritage, 6; Berdan, "The Spa Life," 113.

resort life of the Virginia Springs was in full swing in the decades before the Civil War. Some of these resorts were very elegant and offered the finest luxuries and entertainment to their guests. Rather than limit themselves to a single resort, patrons of the Virginia Springs usually visited four or five of the springs in a ritualized succession. Individuals and entire families would visit a spa for a few weeks and then move on another resort to meet new people and to see and be seen.<sup>14</sup>

The Virginia Springs were practically the only well-known spas of the southern mountains before the 1820s, but at about the same time as the opening of the James River and Kanawha Turnpike, the resort business was just beginning to flourish farther south in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina. Under colonial rule, the Proclamation of 1763 had forbade whites from settling in the Blue Ridge district. Though some pioneers defied British law and migrated to the highlands at considerable risk to their own safety, settlers began to push into the area in greater numbers following the American Revolution.<sup>15</sup> From the outset the area's settlement, the mountain air and spring waters gave the North Carolina mountains its lasting reputation as a healthful place. Lowland health seekers began coming to the area as early as 1788, when a Dutch settler built the first tavern at Warm Springs in present

---

<sup>14</sup>Olcott, The Greenbrier Heritage, 6-7.

<sup>15</sup>Martha Norburn Allen, Asheville and the Land of the Sky (Charlotte: Heritage House, 1960), 29-31.

Madison County, North Carolina.<sup>16</sup> Blue Ridge spas of the eighteenth century, however, remained small and primitive because few people were willing to endure the hardships of traveling through the mountains. Thus, before the 1820s, the main obstacles for tourism in the Blue Ridge region were the threat of Indians and the lack of roads, making western North Carolina relatively inaccessible and isolated from the lowland South.

Though whites coveted Cherokee lands from the beginning, they lived in relatively peaceful coexistence primarily because of the Cherokees' willingness to assimilate and to concede large territories to white settlers in a series of land treaties. But with the completion of the Buncombe Turnpike in the 1820s, western North Carolina was no longer isolated from the population and plantation economy of South Carolina and Georgia. As thousands of white settlers migrated to the region with hopes of making their fortunes in farming or animal husbandry, their hunger for good land inevitably led settlers to demand the removal of what they considered to be the main obstacle to the region's development--the Cherokees. The removal of the Cherokees via the legendary "Trail of Tears" in the 1830s opened much of the land in the Carolina and Tennessee highlands to both permanent settlers and temporary visitors.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup>Federal Writer's Project, North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), 139.

<sup>17</sup>Robert Corlew, Tennessee: A Short History (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 145-50.

The early inns, taverns, and hotels along the Buncombe Turnpike catered to a diverse group of travelers. Perhaps most of these sojourners were westward-bound settlers in search of opportunities in the trans-Appalachian frontier. In 1829, a newspaper correspondent reported that "eight to fifteen wagons pass through Asheville each day bound for settlements further west."<sup>18</sup> Other travelers who frequented the inns and hotels along the turnpike included livestock drovers and health-seekers. During the fall and winter, it was estimated that nearly 200,000 hogs passed down the turnpike each year. Responding to the enormous demand for corn to feed the hungry herds as they passed through the upcountry en route to lowland markets, local farmers sold their corn to innkeepers who then resold it for a profit to their drover guests. The drover traffic usually ended at the large markets in Augusta, Georgia or Charleston, South Carolina, where planters purchased meat for their slaves and extended households. In the spring and summer, these two southern cities sent great entourages of servants and carriages with "refined" passengers back over the hog drovers' route.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps the most important attraction for these "summer people," as locals called them, was the region's cool mountain climate which offered respite from the heat and diseases of the swampy lowlands during summers. Nevertheless, some visitors also

---

<sup>18</sup>Douglas Swaim, ed., Cabins and Castles: The History and Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1981), 14.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 16.

came to partake of the healthful spring waters found in the Blue Ridge. The same year the turnpike opened, Dr. Robert Henry discovered a sulphur spring four miles west of Asheville. His son-in-law, Col. Reuban Deaver, built a large hotel at the site and catered to health-seekers. Still, the stock drives had a much larger impact on the region's economy than did the early tourist trade. As a result, many of the region's inns accommodated both wealthy tourists and humble drovers. For instance, Sherrill's Inn in Hickory Nut Gap doubled as a resort hotel in the summer and a stock stand and tavern for drovers in the fall.<sup>20</sup>

In the three decades following the completion of the Buncombe Turnpike, a number of wealthy planters and urban elites from South Carolina and Georgia built elaborate summer cottages in the mountains and gave rise to a handful of Blue Ridge resort communities. One such planter was Christopher G. Memminger, a South Carolina planter and later the Secretary of the Treasury for the Confederacy, who was among the first of many to build a lavish estate at Flat Rock in the late-1830s.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, Wade Hampton, the prominent South Carolina politician, built an estate in Cashiers Valley in Jackson County in the 1840s and influenced many of his peers to do the same. Other Blue Ridge summer home colonies that emerged in the antebellum period include Hendersonville, Blowing Rock, and Asheville. Most of these seasonal

---

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.,; Sherrill's Inn Registry, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

<sup>21</sup>Sadie Smothers Patton, A Condensed History of Flat Rock (Asheville: Miller Printing Co., n.d.) 4.

homes grew up around an already established resort hotel or, as in Blowing Rock and Cashiers, the resort hotel followed the establishment of a summer home colony.<sup>22</sup> But as more and more wealthy visitors built mountain homes and visited their favorite retreats, the resorts of the Blue Ridge grew ever more exclusive in the decades before the Civil War.

In spite of the construction of roads and accommodations, western North Carolina remained inaccessible to most people who resided west of the Appalachian continental divide. As a result, within a decade after the opening of the Buncombe Turnpike, another resort area emerged in the mountains of East Tennessee. Though a scattering of white settlements had emerged west of the Blue Ridge by the 1770s, the territory that would later become eastern Tennessee remained sparsely populated until after the American Revolution. In the 1780s and 90s, a wave of settlers swept into the region to purchase property and to claim land grants awarded for military service.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, the earliest inns and hostelries in East Tennessee accommodated this diverse group of white settlers. Typical of these early hotels was the Chester Inn, a tavern built in the 1790s to accommodate transients in the frontier town of

---

<sup>22</sup>Jeffrey Wayne Neff, "A Geographic Analysis of the Characteristics and Development Trends of the Non-Metropolitan Tourist-Recreation Industry of Southern Appalachia" (Ph.D. diss. University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1975), 35.

<sup>23</sup>Corlew, Tennessee, 38-58.

Jonesborough.<sup>24</sup>

Health spas emerged in the Smoky and Cumberland Mountains of East Tennessee much later than in the Virginia Springs or Blue Ridge districts. This was due largely to the fact that poor roads and the threat of Indians continued to hamper the region's development as a pleasuring place until the 1830s. These obstacles were significantly diminished in the 1830s and 1840s with the removal of the Cherokee Indians as well as the construction of numerous turnpikes that opened accessibility into the region.

Among the earliest resorts in the region to gain popularity was Montvale Springs, a spa on the western slope of Chilhowee Mountain in Blount County, Tennessee. Although there are conflicting legends concerning the discovery of the springs, a settler named David Foute first erected a two-story "pretentious rustic" log hotel near the springs in 1832. Using Indian labor to build a road to connect the hotel with the Unicoi turnpike, Foute quickly developed Montvale Springs into one of the region's most popular resorts. The "Golden Age" of Montvale Springs did not begin, however, until 1853, when a Mississippi planter named Asa Watson bought the property and built the famed Seven Gables Hotel. Touted as the "Saratoga of the South," the resort offered a number of diversions, including fine foods, exquisite scenery, exotic landscaping, hunting, and croquet. This carefree way of life attracted hundreds of

---

<sup>24</sup>Mary Blake Ringgold, "Jonesborough's Jackson Tavern," The Chattanooga Times, 2 August 1936.

wealthy southerners every summer.<sup>25</sup>

The rise of Montvale Springs closely parallels the history of Beersheba Springs, another famous resort in the mountains of East Tennessee. Located on Cumberland Mountain in present-day Grundy County, Beersheba Springs, developed after its discovery in 1833, when Mrs. Beersheba Cain stumbled on the spring while on a horseback journey with her husband. After the State of Tennessee authorized the construction of a "road of the first class" to the mountain in 1836, Beersheba Springs became much more accessible to travelers from all over the southwest. Over the next several years, entrepreneurs and families from the Tennessee lowcountry and Louisiana erected cabins and cottages as well as a tavern. Much like Montvale Springs, Beersheba Springs witnessed a brief golden era in the 1850s. Col. John Armfield, a planter from Louisiana, purchased the springs and the structures surrounding it in 1854, and he (or rather his slaves) constructed a lavish hotel and summer home at Beersheba Springs. In the late 1850s, the luxurious accommodations at Beersheba Springs attracted wealthy patrons such as Leonidas K. Polk, Oliver Morgan of Carroll Parish, Louisiana, Charles Dahlgren of Natchez, Mississippi, and William Murfree of Murfreesboro, Tennessee.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup>McKenzie, "Montvale Springs"; C. Bren Martin, "Getaways and Guests in the History of Tourism," Knoxville News-Sentinel, 11 September 1994; Mary Ruth Chiles, Resorts in the Smoky Mountain Region, 1832 to 1930, typescript files, National Park Service Archives, Sugarlands.

<sup>26</sup>Margaret Brown Coppinger, et al., Beersheba Springs, 1833-1983: A History and a Celebration (Beersheba Springs: Beersheba Springs Historical Society, 1983), 3-4; Vertical file on "Beersheba Springs" at the Tennessee State Library and Archives



The resorts of East Tennessee, however, did not entirely monopolize the clientele of health seekers from the lower-Mississippi valley, for by the 1850s, Hot Springs, Arkansas had established itself as a health spa. Nestled in the Ouachita Mountains of southwestern Arkansas, Hot Springs was regarded as a place for peace and healing by the Native American tribes of the region. Though Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto led an expedition of Europeans to the area as early as 1541, few whites settled there permanently until after the region passed through periods of nominal French and Spanish rule. After the area joined the United States in 1803 as part of the Louisiana Purchase, the promises of good health and easy money began to lure visitors and settlers to the region.<sup>27</sup>

Among the earliest references to health-seekers at Hot Springs was in a letter, dated June 1804, from William Dunbar, a planter from Natchez, Mississippi, to President Thomas Jefferson which referred to three Natchez residents who had gone to the spring "in the hope of being relieved of their disorders." After Jefferson assigned Dunbar to organize an expedition into the Hot Springs valley, Dunbar traveled to the area to find "an open log cabin and a few huts of split boards, all calculated for summer encampment, which had been erected by persons resorting to the Springs for

---

(TSLA), Nashville, Tennessee.

<sup>27</sup>Scully, Hot Springs, 5-20.

the recovery of their health."<sup>28</sup>

Although Native Americans continued to reside in the territory in the early nineteenth century, visitors and settlers still trickled into the area to partake of the spring's curative waters. As wealthy health seekers came from Louisiana and Mississippi, they built primitive cabins near the springs which were usually abandoned upon their departure. After Quapaw Indians ceded their rights to the land south of the Arkansas River in August 1818, the area opened up for greater numbers of settlers and visitors. Two years later, Joseph Mellard of New Orleans came to Hot Springs and built a double log cabin that he operated as a hotel, the first real tourist business in the area. The many favorable testimonies and reports of visitors regarding the salubrity of Hot Springs prompted the U.S. Congress to reserve federal ownership for the property in 1832. While the federal government never exercised its jurisdiction over the territory, this act by Congress shows that many prominent and powerful people regarded Hot Springs as a valuable asset and that the beneficial effects of the thermal waters had become widely known.<sup>29</sup>

In spite of the widespread reputation of Hot Springs, the resort's crude accommodations and lack of accessibility hampered its growth. George Featherstonhaugh, an English traveler in the region in 1834, journeyed "over bad roads

---

<sup>28</sup>William Dunbar to Thomas Jefferson, June 4, 1804, quoted in Scully, Hot Springs, 21-22.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 22-36.

and some violent streams" to reach Hot Springs only to find "four wretched cabins" that "did not offer much in the way of accommodations for travellers."<sup>30</sup>

Consequently, most who went to Hot Springs did so primarily for health reasons, but as the resort developed and roads improved, more and more visitors went for non-health purposes, namely gambling. As one visitor in 1835 put it, "Most of the guests come here out of need; they are patients; others come here in order to spend the unhealthy months safely protected from sickness; still others come here to gamble: they are gamblers who engage other guests in wagers and games and who know how to take advantage of them."<sup>31</sup> In the decades before the Civil War, Hot Springs grew from a primitive health retreat into popular resort town with two hotels, seven bathhouses, and numerous boarding houses that could accommodate over 1000 seasonal guests.<sup>32</sup>

While the antebellum resorts of the Virginia Springs, the Carolina Blue Ridge, the Tennessee mountains, and the Ouachitas each had unique development patterns, there were also some key similarities. Each resort underwent an early "exploratory" period when the spas catered to invalids from nearby areas who sought treatment for their various ailments. Indeed, for many southerners, health was the most important and

---

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>31</sup>Jerome Jansma and Harriet H. Jansma, "George Engelmann in the Arkansas Territory," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 50 (1991), 243.

<sup>32</sup>Scully, Hot Springs, 36.

pragmatic reason to frequent highland spas.

By the early-nineteenth century, the unhealthfulness and endemic diseases of the southern lowcountry in summer had become generally alarming, prompting many planters to flee their plantations and urban merchants to escape the cities during the "sickly season" from May to November. At the time, it was believed that the heat and moisture of summer in the swampy lowlands produced "bad air" and caused illnesses. In actuality, it was malaria, yellow fever, and other febrile diseases carried by mosquitoes that plagued the lowlands during summer. These seasonal diseases were especially acute in the marshes of the lower-Mississippi Valley and the South Carolina Tidewater country, where rice fields provided ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The unhealthfulness of the South's swampy lowlands in summer prompted annual migrations each summer that carried planter families and lowcountry society to the highlands in search of more salubrious residences or resorts.<sup>33</sup>

The southern elite, however, regarded going to the highlands not only as a way to *prevent* illness, but also as a measure to *cure* their ailments. The widespread belief in the efficacy of the water-cure provided a compelling incentive to venture into the highlands. In the 1830s and 40s, a water-cure craze swept over America and hydropathy became integrated with other major health reform movements of the day. Usually supervised by a house physician, each resort offered specific treatments for individual health ailments. For instance, immersion in the waters of Red Sulphur

---

<sup>33</sup>Lawrence Fay Brewster, Summer Migrations and Resorts of the South Carolina Low-Country Planters (Durham: Duke University Press, 1947), 3-9.

Springs, Virginia was said to enhance fertility; drinking the waters of Montvale Springs, Tennessee restored youth and vigor; and taking the waters at Hot Springs, Arkansas was advertised as particularly effective in curing "lower-bodily ailments and rheumatism."<sup>34</sup>

Although some visitors found the mineral and thermal springs "most luxurious," drinking and bathing in the potent mineral waters was not always a pleasant experience. One guest at White Sulphur Springs noted that "the water is very disagreeable and the scent as strong as the washings from a gun."<sup>35</sup> Visitors described the waters of other springs in the mountain South variously as an "unsavory beverage" and smelling like "rotten hard-boiled eggs" or "sour milk." Furthermore, if immersions in thermal springs were not carefully regulated, visitors could further agitate their health problems. For instance, in 1818, Thomas Jefferson, who frequently visited Warm Springs, developed two large boils on his rear-end from immersing himself too long in the heated waters. After a physician treated the boils with mercury and sulphur, Jefferson's return trip to Monticello was, needless to say, most unpleasant. Seven years later, in a letter to John Adams, Jefferson complained that his last visit to Warm Springs had "destroyed, in a great degree, my internal organism,

---

<sup>34</sup>Harry B. Weiss and Howard R. Kemble, The Great American Water-Cure Craze: A History of Hydropathy in the United States (Trenton: Past Times Press, 1967), 18-32; Ronald G. Walters, American Reformers, 1815-1860 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 153-56.

<sup>35</sup>Abram David Pollock to "mother," August 3, 1860, A. D. Pollock Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

and I have never since had a moment of perfect health."<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, during the antebellum period, more and more health-seekers braved the arduous travel and the pungent waters so they could "take the cure" at their favorite mountain spas.

Life at most hydropathic resorts before the Civil War revolved around "taking the waters." The simple, carefree life at antebellum spas is vividly captured in the diary of Newby Larkin, a merchant from Fayetteville, North Carolina who toured the Virginia Springs region in 1824. Describing a typical day during his visit to White Sulphur Springs, Larkin commented:

At first view, it would seem we live a dull sort of monotonous life of it at these watering places-but this though may be true in part, it is not true in the whole. We wake up in the morning to open the door to a servant who comes to make us a fire-after which and as soon as it is light, he brings a pitcher of sulphur water. We take a glass while yet in bed, turn over, doze a little, take another and another, to the amount of 6 to 8 glasses-get up, dress and wash by which time the "first bell" summons us to prepare for breakfast. After about 15 minutes the "second bell" calls us to the breakfast room. After breakfast we walk, lounge, get into groups and discuss common topics-retire to our cabins to read, write, and whatever we desire, until 11 or 12 o'clock when we again begin to drink the waters, assembling at the fountain for that purpose; by past 1 o'clock we have taken 3 or 4 glasses when we are summoned for dinner. This through, we again saunter about or lounge, or read or write or collect into little groups and pass the time till supper, which we have about sunset and before which a little water is taken. After supper we pass off the time till bedtime, when sleep fills up the next 8 or 9 hours very comfortably.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup>Berdan, "The Spa Life," 114.

<sup>37</sup>Newby Larkin diary, entry on June 14, 1823, Newby Larkin Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

As Larkin's description suggests, the presumed healthful benefits of mineral water were not the sole attraction. Most travel accounts indicate that people were drawn to the spas both for health and social reasons. In fact, in the first decades of nineteenth century, the spa life grew to become as much of a social indulgence as a health necessity. Therefore, another common element in the evolution of the mountain South's resort areas was the "clientele transition process" in which visitors who came purely for health reasons were gradually outnumbered by patrons who came just as much, if not more, for pleasure. The advent of more comfortable modes of travel and higher standards of innkeeping opened the way for more conspicuous displays of leisure and wealth. Consequently, resorts of the mountain South became increasingly gentrified in the decades before the Civil War.

However sincere spa-goers may have been in seeking a cure, few of these resort's wealthy patrons were willing to give up the privileges and comforts of their rank to attain it. Even traveling over primitive roads, the southern gentry managed to bring elements of their lowcountry social customs and amenities to the mountains with them in an attempt to re-create the social world of the Tidewater. One gentleman recalled that visitors to White Sulphur Springs as early as the 1790s "carried their entire springs wardrobe in saddlebags, with a bottle or so of prime French brandy and a pack of cards."<sup>38</sup>

As better roads brought in more people, the clientele of the region's resorts shifted

---

<sup>38</sup>John Esten Cooke, "The White Sulphur Springs," Harper's New Monthly Magazine (August 1878), 340.

to include more women, children, and people seeking purely pleasure and adventure. A case in point is Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky, who was a frequent visitor at White Sulphur Springs. When Clay first came to the resort in 1817, he brought only one servant and one horse with him. By 1832, however, his entourage had grown to include four servants, two carriages, six horses, a donkey, a dog, as well as his wife and grandson.<sup>39</sup>

By the 1850s, the improved accommodations and amenities offered by highland spas attracted entire families and, in particular, greater numbers of women. As the baths proved to be helpful in soothing women's otherwise untreatable urinary infections, it is no accident that hydropathic spas proved to be especially popular among women. In a booklet advertising Warm Springs, North Carolina, Dr. D. J. Cain of Charleston claimed that "in many diseases peculiar to females, the effect of the bath is very marked. Delicacy forbids the mention of them in detail, but the afflicted and their physicians will understand the character of the cases to which it is applicable." Women ostensibly went to spas for their health, but taking the cure was also a respite from family responsibilities as well as an opportunity to socialize. At the spas, they were free from their familial duties and obligations as the plantation mistress and had ample time in which to meet both men and women. One scholar contends that women especially valued the opportunity to socialize with other women at the spas, for their many family responsibilities at home left little time for

---

<sup>39</sup>Olcott, The Greenbrier Heritage, 24-25.



homosocial bonding.<sup>40</sup> Southern women in particular yearned for the company of other women, because life on rural and isolated plantations was often very dull and lonely.

Young women also cherished their stays at highland resorts as an opportunity to meet members of the opposite sex. Courtship became a favorite preoccupation of young men and women at the spas. Virtually everything about the atmosphere and lifestyle at spas encouraged amorous affairs. The beautiful scenery, the magnificent dances, the many socialization opportunities, and the abundance of idle time all combined to produce a romantic environment. Planters encouraged courtship by formally presenting their daughters to potential suitors at annual debutante balls, such as the annual gala ball at White Sulphur Spring.<sup>41</sup> In the decades before the Civil War, courtship at the spas evolved into something of a social ritual for the antebellum southern elite.

The trappings of social class became more pronounced as wealthy southerners brought their peers and social customs with them to their mountain retreats. The account book of Christopher Memminger's estate at Flat Rock provides a glimpse at the transplantation of planter culture to the highlands. In 1838, the estate's overseer received large shipments of imported furniture, fine china and silver, French wines and

---

<sup>40</sup>Susan E. Cayleff, Wash and Be Healed: The Water-Cure Movement and Women's Health (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 159-61; Wellman, The Kingdom of Madison, 73.

<sup>41</sup>Olcott, The Greenbrier Heritage, 48.

champagnes, and a grand piano.<sup>42</sup> Such luxuries were not limited to private estates, however, for by the 1850s, most highland resorts also offered cultural and social amenities to satisfy the most discriminating tastes of the lowland elite. At most resorts, women and children engaged in a continual round of card parties and cotillions, and men occupied their time by gambling, hunting, and indulging themselves in fine cuisine and liquors.

The lavish structures and high culture of the southern gentry often stood in sharp contrast to the humble cabins and lifestyles of the mountain people who lived close to highland resorts. Indeed, the economic, cultural, and social gulf between the highland and lowland South was nowhere more apparent than in upcountry resort communities. As planters and urban elites brought their way of life to the mountains, they introduced mountaineers to an alien culture and made them aware of the disparities between the the regions. An early travel description of Red Sweet Springs, Virginia illustrates these differences by pointing out that plantations here "appear about as large as the orchard of other counties. Every hut has a crowd of children to whom every object from the lower country must be a source for amazement."<sup>43</sup>

One might expect such interactions to help break down the social and cultural

---

<sup>42</sup>Account Book of Memminger's Flat Rock residence, 1838-1846, Christopher G. Memminger Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

<sup>43</sup>Francis Kinlock to John Rutledge, Jr., September 1, 1785, John Rutledge Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

barriers between the regions, but in fact tourism reinforced regional differences. As resorts became increasingly exclusive in the 1840s and 50s, spa-goers had less and less interaction with the mountain residents, reflecting a growing sense of class consciousness in the antebellum South. In the limited interactions that did occur, lowland visitors condescended to the mountain residents whom they considered to be their social inferiors. One visitor to Beersheba Springs described her shock at encountering "crude mountain people":

Yesterday we rode out to see some of the mountain people. I do say I never imagined people could live so. One house was clean-but everything seemed to be dropped just where they were done using it, and left there until they wanted to use it again. Somehow I never conceived of anything so wholly untidy and uncomfortable. . . . The strangest thing to me was that they showed no embarrassment, but appeared to think themselves all right and just as good as anybody living.<sup>44</sup>

Thus it appears that antebellum tourism in the mountains highlighted rather than mitigated the class differences between upcountry residents and lowland visitors.

These class differences became even more obvious with the gentrification of highland resorts. Highlanders grew to resent their exclusion from the spas and were envious of the wealth and comforts so conspicuously displayed by the rich at mountain spas. Spa proprietors no doubt realized that most of their upper-class guests did not

---

<sup>44</sup>Lucy French War Journal, entry on June 22, 1863, Lucy Virginia French Papers, TSLA, Nashville.

wish to socialize with mountain residents, who were considered crude, uneducated, and even potentially dangerous. Consequently, local residents were often denied access to the springs which were reserved solely for outside visitors. Their resentment was reinforced by the fact that resort proprietors often refused to employ local people. Innkeepers usually imported their cooks, servants, maids, musicians, and even construction workers from outside the region and rarely drew from the local population for employees. To make matters worse, innkeepers and their guests sometimes brought slaves with them to the mountains to act as servants and workers.<sup>45</sup> Though slavery was not uncommon in the southern upcountry, it was a source of bitter class tensions among the highland yeomanry.

The resentment of the mountain people bubbled below the surface until the Civil War, when class tensions between local residents and visitors sometimes erupted at resorts. During the Civil War, many elite southern families regarded highland spas as a place of refuge from the ravages of the war. Confederate officials and planters often sent their wives and children to mountain retreats where it was hoped they would be insulated and protected from the invading Union army. While families from South Carolina and Georgia often went to Asheville, Blowing Rock, or other Blue Ridge resorts, some wealthy families from the Tennessee and lower-Mississippi Valleys spent the war at resorts in the mountains of East Tennessee.

Beersheba Springs, for instance, attracted a number of families from Middle

---

<sup>45</sup>Vertical File on "Beersheba Springs," TSLA, Nashville.

Tennessee after Union forces captured the area in early 1863. One temporary resident of Beersheba Springs during the war was Mrs. Lucy French, the wife of a planter/lawyer from Nashville who kept a copious journal of her wartime stay at the spa. She once complained of guests being harassed by "lawless mountain people," but she seemed much more concerned about "those despicable Yankees and their negro marauders." Seemingly far removed from the war, Mrs. French admitted "we have plenty of good provision--a beautiful place and the pleasantest of friends." However, the serenity of Beersheba Springs vanished in late July of 1863, when Union forces and a band of "wild, desperate men of the mountains, robbers, and outlaws" swept into the area. Though Union soldiers pilfered some of their food and horses, she was astonished and horrified when the poor mountain people plundered the cottages and hotel at Beersheba Springs in the wake of the invasion.

The mountain people came in crowds and with vehicles of all sorts carried off everything they could from both hotel and cottages. . . Gaunt, ill-looking men and slatternly, rough barefooted women stalking and racing to and fro, eager as famished wolves for prey, hauling out furniture, tearing up matting and carpets. . . Others seated on their piles of plunder, smoked and glared defiantly towards us. . . At Mrs. Freelin's house they held an orgie the whole night, singing, shouting, and it is believed dancing.<sup>46</sup>

Mrs. French's account of the mountaineers' plunder of Beersheba Springs provides

---

<sup>46</sup>Lucy French War Journal, entries on July 12, 20, and 26, Lucy Virginia French Papers, TSLA, Nashville.

vivid evidence that class tensions between highlanders and lowlanders sometimes erupted into conflict during the Civil War.

Though not all highland resorts witnessed such dramatic upheavals, the Civil War completely disrupted the leisurely lifestyle enjoyed by the South's elite at their favorite mountain retreats. Out of necessity, many resorts closed altogether for the duration of the war. For instance, the strong pro-Union sentiment in Blount County, Tennessee forced the pro-Confederate Lanier family (poet Sidney Lanier's father and grandfather) to close the Seven Gables Hotel in 1863 and to flee to Georgia, never to return. If resorts were not abandoned or were not inhabited by the families of wealthy southerners, upcountry spas often served as quarters for weary troops or hospitals to treat wounded soldiers. The Old White Hotel at White Sulphur Springs, for instance, briefly served as both a Confederate hospital and a Union command center during the war. Bushwhackers plundered many of the abandoned estates and resorts in the highlands during the war. An outlaw gang called the Jayhawkers looted and burned most of the bathhouses and cottages at Hot Springs, Arkansas which had been left vacant by their owners during the war. Many other hotels and estates met their doom at the torch of invading Union forces and bushwhackers.

The traumatic experience of the Civil War forever changed life at highland resorts. Prior to the war, taking the cure at highland retreats had evolved into an elaborate social ritual for the southern elite. As wealthy southerners built lavish summer homes and annually frequented their favorite highland spa, they brought their peers and social customs with them. But the war and emancipation wiped out much of the South's

wealth and hence many southerners' ability to afford a leisurely lifestyle. By the end of the war, most of the former elite patrons of highland spas were either dead or bankrupt by the collapse of the South's slavery-based economic and social system. Gone were the days when planters, merchants, southern belles, and refined gentlemen dominated the popular resorts of the southern mountains. It was the end of an era, an era that had laid the foundations for tourism in the mountain South. Some resorts successfully adapted to post-war conditions, but many spas never regained the glory of their antebellum years. The Civil War had completely disrupted the resort cycle of the South's elite, and it forever altered the character and clientele of most highland spas.

**PART I:**

**FROM TRAILS TO RAILS, 1865-1914**



## Chapter 2-"Millionaires Must Cost Us Something": The Economics of Victorian Tourism in the Highland South

In June 1867, the Old White Hotel at White Sulphur Springs reopened its doors for the first time since the Civil War under the new ownership of the Peyton family from Virginia. Upon its reopening, a reporter commented that "we cannot expect to see there the society that once gave life and gaiety and grace to that incomparably delightful summer resort."<sup>1</sup> Life at the "Old White" was indeed different, for most of its former patrons had been southern slaveholders, many of whom were now either dead or financially strapped as a result of the Civil War and emancipation.

The new proprietors quickly recognized the need to adapt to post-war circumstances. William H. Peyton informed one of his investors in May 1868 that "I am more than ever convinced that we shall have to cultivate a larger company from north of the Potomac."<sup>2</sup> The completion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway (C&O) to White Sulphur Springs in 1869 aided immeasurably in the Peyton's quest to attract more northerners. That year, the Old White Hotel hosted a Confederate officers' reunion featuring Robert E. Lee, James Longstreet, P. G. T. Beauregard, and J. E. B. Stuart. During the reunion, "the most gifted, distinguished and gentle-blooded to be found in either section of our vast country" attended the hotel's largest and most festive ball of the year held in honor of Massachusetts' philanthropist George

---

<sup>1</sup>Richmond Dispatch, 18 June 1867.

<sup>2</sup>W. H. Peyton to W. T. Sutherlin, May 8, 1868, William T. Sutherlin Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Peabody.<sup>3</sup> By honoring a northern industrialist amid a reunion of Confederate leaders, the Peytons paid symbolic tribute to a bygone era while celebrating the coming of a new era dominated by northern wealth. Within a decade after the Peabody ball, a conglomeration of northern financiers owned and operated White Sulphur Springs which then catered almost exclusively to wealthy elites from the North and the Midwest.

The post-war experience of White Sulphur Springs represents the changes many popular resorts in the mountain South experienced from 1865 to 1914. The loss of former patrons and proprietors due to death or debt induced a transition in both ownership and clientele to include more northerners and New South business elites. With the collapse of credit systems in the South, northern capital financed much of the region's new resort development and promotion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The fastest growing resorts in the southern highlands usually had direct railroad access and the financial means to attract the nation's new industrial wealth. In an age of conspicuous affluence, the capital demands of resort development in the mountain South restricted ownership largely to individuals or corporations with sufficient capital to overcome the many economic barriers to entry in the Victorian tourist market. Local residents often welcomed the employment and entrepreneurial opportunities generated by tourism but, as the development of resorts progressed, the distribution of economic benefits weighed increasingly in favor of outside interests and regional elites.

---

<sup>3</sup>Richmond Whig, 21 August 1869.

Though largely unexplored by historians, tourism was as much a part of the New South as logging camps, steel factories, textile mills, and mining camps. The travel industry was in many ways radically different from mining or lumbering; but much like the New South's extractive industries, tourism was an inherently colonial industry that exploited cheap labor (African-Americans and women) and raw materials (scenery and climate) and fostered outside dependence. Lacking capital and resources, southerners turned north for economic assistance in developing railroads and resorts. A close examination of the Victorian travel industry in the southern highlands reveals that, like other New South industries, tourism offered opportunities for the select few with ready access to northern capital markets.

The uneven distribution of economic benefits at highland resorts from 1865 to 1914 can be explained only within the context of larger economic and social patterns in the South. After the Civil War, the southern economy underwent a wrenching transition as planters, merchants, freedmen, and yeomen farmers all struggled to adapt to the scarcity of credit and capital in the region. Before the war, the value of slaves and cotton had produced enormous fortunes for large southern planters. But the ravages of war, along with the elimination of over \$3 billion in assets as a result of emancipation, rendered the South the poorest region of the nation. Increased global production of cotton reduced prices and demand. To make matters worse, sharecropping, the dominant labor system in much of the rural New South, trapped the

region into a dependency on cash-crop staples and stifled economic diversification.<sup>4</sup>

With little liquid capital or credit in the South, industrial development in Dixie lagged far behind the North. In the attempt to promote industrialization, New South boosters sought to attract northern capital with the region's cheap labor, low taxes, and abundant raw materials. As a result, the New South attracted industries like textiles, logging, mining, and tourism that kept the southern economy in a colonial status, owned largely by northern firms and New South boosters. In spite of some impressive advances in economic development, the South remained dependent upon cash-crop agriculture and northern capital.<sup>5</sup>

Economic circumstances in the South made it financially difficult for many white southerners to afford a vacation, much less own a resort. Spa proprietors responded to the diminished base of southern patrons in various ways. Small, locally-owned resorts adapted to these circumstances by catering primarily to local and regional elites. The most economically successful resorts, however, were those that gained direct railroad access and underwent a transition in their ownership and clientele to include more northerners.

Broad changes in the nation's leisure patterns in the Victorian era also shaped the character of tourism development in the mountain South. Conditioned by the

---

<sup>4</sup>See Gavin Wright, Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War (New York: Basic Books, 1986); C. Vann Woodward, The Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951).

<sup>5</sup>See James C. Cobb, Industrialization and Southern Society, 1877-1984 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1984); Paul Gaston, The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking (New York: Knopf, 1970).

Protestant work ethic to view leisure as the antithesis of work, Americans traditionally regarded recreation and idle time with suspicion or even contempt. But in the late nineteenth century, the new ethos of industrialization brought forth a new view which regarded leisure and work as necessary components. In this new view, rest and recreation restored the managers' and the masses' capacity to work. As this new "gospel of leisure" merged with the business ethos of the Gilded Age in the late nineteenth century, industrialization and the rise of big business created new classes of wealth in the United States that sought to validate their rising status in society with conspicuous displays of affluence. Economist Thorstein Veblen described the Victorian elite as pursuing "conspicuous consumption" to demonstrate their wealth. The non-productive consumption of leisure time was an ideal purveyor of social status. Thus, taking vacations at popular spas became an important display of status that evoked the luxurious lifestyle of the newly rich.<sup>6</sup>

The rise of conspicuous leisure had direct implications for the tourists' motivation for travel. Whereas antebellum spa-goers visited resorts primarily for health, Victorian tourists went more for leisure and culture. The old spas that continued to thrive in the postbellum era adapted by offering fine cuisine, modern luxuries, and entertainment rather than a regimen of drinking and bathing in foul-smelling mineral water. Also, many new pleasure resorts arose to meet the new demand for vacation

---

<sup>6</sup>Jesse F. Steiner, Americans At Play: Recent Trends in Recreation and Leisure Time Activities (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933), 6-14; John A. Jakle, The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth Century North America (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 1-2; Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class (New York: Viking, 1967), 35.

sites, but they offered indulgences that were often antithetical to the hydropathic principles of antebellum spas. The practice of hydropathy declined precipitously in the late nineteenth century as newly professionalized physicians and the study of medicine undermined the notion of the water-cure as a health panacea. By the early twentieth century, medicines had largely replaced hydropathy as a cure-all for bodily ailments.<sup>7</sup>

The decline of hydropathy changed the character of health tourism in the mountain South. Health tourism continued to thrive in the region, but postbellum health seekers came increasingly to stay at tuberculosis sanitariums rather than hydropathic spas. In addition, the elegant new spas fostered a new concept of health that was far more passively oriented for the recipient. Because fashionable watering places were usually located at mineral springs, the notion of healthful recreation was kept alive. But health in the new context could be derived from self-pampering and resting. As fewer patrons came to take the waters, more guests came to resorts simply to escape the bustling cities, to get away from their daily routines, to enjoy their leisure time with their social peers, and to breathe clean mountain air.<sup>8</sup>

Victorian tourists were not only more leisured, but they were more mobile as well. As railroads opened accessibility to a greater number of western, coastal, and mountain resorts in the United States, American tourists of the Victorian era had a much greater choice of vacation sites than antebellum tourists.<sup>9</sup> Before the Civil War,

---

<sup>7</sup>Susan E. Cayleff, Wash and Be Healed: The Water-Cure Movement and Women's Health (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 160-163.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Jakle, The Tourist, 5-8.

tourists usually stayed the entire summer at one spa or perhaps toured other nearby springs. After the war, however, vacation patterns became much more diversified. Since railroads and Pullman cars made travel relatively quick and comfortable, Victorian tourists were much more willing and able to travel greater distances to visit popular resorts. Moreover, rail access enabled safe and comfortable travel in any season, which encouraged some innkeepers to experiment with keeping their doors open year-round instead of seasonally. Accessibility also increased regional competition for tourists, for travelers now had a greater variety of vacation destinations and accommodations from which to choose. Since unhappy guests could easily board a train and travel to another resort, innkeepers and other tourism investors were burdened with the extra costs of keeping guests satisfied in a much more competitive tourist market.

While tourism was an activity still limited largely to the wealthy, railroad access and the rise of new middle class resorts in the late nineteenth century opened up travel opportunities for those with moderate means as well. Unable to afford the luxuries of elite resort hotels, middle-class tourists often vacationed at smaller resorts with relatively primitive accommodations. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, highland resorts in the South struggled to adapt to the desires of a more regionally and socially diverse clientele. As a result, the size and character of each resort varied depending largely upon the type of clientele they attracted.

Because there were different types of resorts that catered to different sorts of tourists, the economic impact of tourism on community development varied widely.

Post-war circumstances forced the old established spas to adapt to the economic demands of Victorian tourism in order to survive and thrive. Popular antebellum resorts that adapted successfully to post-war circumstances all gained direct railroad access in the decades after the Civil War. Indeed, railroad access was the most critical factor in the transformation from fashionable antebellum spas to popular postbellum resorts.

At the end of the war, virtually every highland resort could be reached only by a difficult, time-consuming journey by stagecoach over rough mountain roads. Not surprisingly, in the years immediately following the war, most of the old highland resorts languished as they could not attract either southerners, whose financial abilities to afford the spa life had been seriously diminished by the Civil War and emancipation, or northerners, who chose to vacation at more accessible spas and coastal resorts in the North. But as railroad lines penetrated the mountains in the late nineteenth century, some of the resorts that had been fashionable before the war began to reap the benefits of greater accessibility to a wider clientele. With the loss of many former southern patrons, resorts required railroad accessibility in order to tap into the large market of tourists from the North.

The Virginia Springs region was the first major resort area in the mountain South to benefit from railroad access. Taking advantage of government land grants, Colis P. Huntington of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway (C&O) completed a line to the area in the late 1860s. Designed to link the eastern coast with the farmlands of the



Midwest, the C&O also spurred the coal mining industry in southern West Virginia.<sup>10</sup> But as Daniel Boorstin has observed, "the enormous capital investment [in railroads] required that equipment be kept in constant use and that passengers be found by the thousands. Now great numbers of people would be induced to travel for pleasure."<sup>11</sup> Beginning in the 1870s, the C&O annually issued brochures that highlighted excursions to White Sulphur Springs and other mountain resorts along its line.<sup>12</sup> As a result, the C&O generated a much larger northern clientele that frequented the Virginia Springs in the late nineteenth century.

Such a change did not go unnoticed. Guests began to realize that White Sulphur Springs was losing its "distinctive Southern character" as visitors and investors poured in from the North and Midwest on the railroads. One travel account in 1878 noted that "the Old White has been rarely successful in preserving herself intact from the presence of the *nouveau riche*."<sup>13</sup> The invasion of northern pleasure and status seekers accelerated after a syndicate of Wall Street financiers, including J. P. Morgan and William Vanderbilt, bought out Huntington in 1888. Over the next decade, the C&O acquired most of the popular spas in the region, including Warm Springs, Hot

---

<sup>10</sup>William Olcott, The Greenbrier Heritage (Netherlands: Arindt, Preston, Chapin, Lamb, and Keen, Inc., 1980), 37.

<sup>11</sup>Daniel J. Boorstin, The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America (New York: Atheneum, 1975), 86.

<sup>12</sup>Robert S. Conte, "The Celebrated White Sulphur Springs of Greenbrier: Nineteenth Century Travel Accounts," West Virginia History 42 (1984), 217-18.

<sup>13</sup>John Esten Cooke, "The White Sulphur Springs," Harper's New Monthly Magazine (August 1878), 337-56.

Springs, and Healing Springs. The company also curtailed railroad accessibility to White Sulphur Springs in part to ensure that the Old White would cater exclusively to an elite group of industrial wealth families, including the Carnegies, the Morgans, the Astors, the Armours, and the Vanderbilts. As the Old White began to show signs of aging in the first decade of the twentieth century, the C&O constructed the magnificent Greenbrier Hotel in 1912. The Greenbrier featured all of the amenities affluent industrialists could hope for, including a golf course and polo grounds.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, in adapting to conditions from 1865 to 1914, White Sulphur Springs transformed itself into a seasonal playground for America's industrial wealth and remained one of the nation's most exclusive resorts.

Another popular antebellum resort that successfully adapted to post-war circumstances due to the coming of railroads was Hot Springs, Arkansas. Before the mid-1870s, the only way to reach Hot Springs was by taking a grueling 35 mile stagecoach trip from the end of the nearest rail line at Malvern, Arkansas. A visitor in 1869 called it a "remote region" and complained that it had taken him over a week to reach Hot Springs from his home in Mobile, Alabama. He believed that this inaccessibility hurt the reputation of the resort, for "it is anything but a desirable place. . . . No one I imagine is pleasure seeking."<sup>15</sup> Joseph Reynolds, a prominent grain dealer and railroad financier, sought to rectify this situation when he began building

---

<sup>14</sup>Olcott, The Greenbrier Heritage, 44-52.

<sup>15</sup>William Creagh to Mrs. William Creagh, June 18, 1869, Creagh Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

the "Diamond Joe" railroad in 1874. Upon completion of the railway, Hot Springs soon became one of the most popular health resorts in the United States. Invalids from all parts of the country flocked to the newly-accessible resort town. The Southern Railway, which carried thousands of visitors each year to the head of the Diamond Joe line, began to publish a descriptive pamphlet which extolled the city's healing waters and hotel accommodations. With railroad accessibility and national promotion provided by the Southern Railway, Hot Springs boomed in the late nineteenth century. From 1880 to 1890, the town's permanent population more than doubled from 3,554 to 8,086 and its seasonal tourist population increased from around 1,000 to over 4,000.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps the best example of an established resort community that gained railroad access and thereby successfully adapted to the changes in tourism of the Victorian period was Asheville, North Carolina. Asheville experienced phenomenal growth after the long-delayed Western North Carolina Railroad (WNCRR) finally reached the city in 1880. The push for a railroad in the area had begun as early as the 1830s, but it would not be until after the Civil War that these plans began to materialize. Although the WNCRR finished its line to the base of the Blue Ridge by 1869, completion of the line to Asheville was delayed for another ten years due to the embezzlement of over four million dollars in bonds by government officials. When the first train finally arrived in Asheville on October 3, 1880, most observers believed that economic

---

<sup>16</sup>Francis J. Scully, Hot Springs Arkansas and Hot Springs National Park (Little Rock: Pioneer Press, 1966), 43.

salvation had arrived. The economic boom that followed proved them right. Over the next twenty years, the population of Asheville increased nearly 900 percent and property values more than quadrupled. The city had long served as a regional market for agricultural goods, but the coming of the railroad spurred tobacco cultivation and industrialization in western North Carolina. By 1914, Asheville possessed a dynamic and diversified economy that revolved around agriculture, industry, and tourism.<sup>17</sup>

With the railroad bringing in ever-greater numbers of wealthy guests, Asheville and the Blue Ridge region became a favorite destination for new industrial families from the North. Charles Dudley Warner observed that Asheville was "a happy coming together, it seemed, of Southern abandon and Northern wealth."<sup>18</sup> Many northern tourists fell in love with the area and purchased property on which to build summer retreats. For instance, George Vanderbilt, the son and grandson of New York railroad tycoons, was so impressed with Asheville's scenic beauty that he purchased over 4,000 acres to the south of the city and financed the construction of the lavish Biltmore Estate. In the late 1880s and 1890s, the city of Asheville built utilities, parks, and some of the first electric streetcar lines in the nation to encourage further land speculation and tourist development.<sup>19</sup> The plan worked. William G. Raoul, an industrialist from Massachusetts, built the Manor Hotel in 1898 and began selling land

---

<sup>17</sup>Douglas Swaim, ed., Cabins and Castles: The History and Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1981), 25-28.

<sup>18</sup>Charles Dudley Warner, On Horseback: A Tour in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin, 1889), 113.

<sup>19</sup>Swaim, Cabins and Castles, 30.

to tourists who in turn built dozens of summer cottages in Albemarle Park on the north side of Asheville.<sup>20</sup> In the two decades before World War I, developers built many new hotels in Asheville, including the extravagant Kenilworth Inn and the Grove Park Inn.

Other communities in western North Carolina with an antebellum resort tradition also witnessed an influx of northerners. Sherrill's Inn, the famed antebellum inn in Hickory Nut Gorge, provides a good example. According to the hotel's registry, less than five percent of its visitors before the Civil War came from north of the Mason Dixon line; by the 1898 season, however, a majority of the people who checked into Sherrill's Inn were tourists from the North, especially from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. The shifting clientele of Sherrill's Inn also reflects the growing wealth of the New South's urban elites. In 1897-98 seasons, many of the registrants were businessmen and professionals from southern cities, such as Charlotte, Atlanta, and Columbia.<sup>21</sup>

While the growth of northern pleasure seekers in Asheville and western North Carolina was impressive, the growth of health tourism in the area demonstrates Asheville's capacity to adapt. From 1880 to 1900, Asheville grew from being a small provincial resort town into a bustling tourist mecca that catered to sightseers and health seekers from all over the country. However, the city's appeal to health seekers

---

<sup>20</sup>Mary Raoul Mills, Family of Raoul: A Memoir (Asheville: Miller Printing Co., 1943), 24.

<sup>21</sup>Sherrill's Inn Registry, 1843-1909, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

evolved as both hydropathy and malaria declined in the late nineteenth century. Whereas before the Civil War Asheville had been a haven for southern planters and urban elites escaping the febrile diseases of the southern lowlands, afterwards city boosters increasingly promoted Asheville as a health resort catering to invalids suffering from tuberculosis. Since pulmonary diseases primarily afflicted northern urban dwellers, most of the new health-seekers were "Yankees" with consumption. After the arrival of the WNCRR in the early 1880s, Asheville mayor Edward J. Aston took measures to clean up the city and enhance its reputation as a health resort catering to patients suffering from lung diseases.<sup>22</sup> Physicians responded by opening dozens of tuberculosis sanitariums in Asheville in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus, as railroads expanded its accessibility, Asheville underwent a transition in its clientele of health seekers as tubercular patients from the North gradually outnumbered malarial invalids from the South.

Not all of the popular antebellum spas of the southern highlands, however, were as successful in adapting to postbellum conditions. Resorts that did not gain railroad access often stagnated and fell into decline. Unable to attract northerners or even elite southerners on a consistent basis, some of these formerly prestigious resorts could never again recapture their former glory and were usually relegated to the status of a minor resort that catered to local elites and the regional upper-middle class.

Beersheba Springs and Montvale Springs, Tennessee are two prime examples of famed

---

<sup>22</sup>Milton Ready, Asheville: Land of the Sky (Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1986), 40.

antebellum resorts that were unable to thrive after the Civil War due in large part to a lack of accessibility.

Beersheba Springs faced a very difficult situation after the Civil War. Union soldiers and mountain marauders had looted the cottages during the war and most of the former cottage owners were either dead or bankrupt. John Armfield repossessed the cottages, but he could not afford to make the improvements and repairs necessary to reopen the hotel, so in 1868, he sold the hotel to Richard Clark and W. W. Bierce, two industrialists from Cleveland, Ohio, who had made their fortunes during the war. Clark and Bierce reopened the hotel in 1870, but the resort struggled unsuccessfully to adapt to post-war circumstances. Without direct railroad access, Beersheba Springs could not attract a more regionally diverse clientele. After a series of unprofitable seasons, they sold the hotel to Nashville businessman Samuel M. Scott. Scott seems to have recognized the futility of trying to recapture the resort's former glory by admitting in an 1875 pamphlet that "it will be the aim of the proprietor to make Beersheba, this season, a plain, quiet home for families, rather than a place of gaiety and fashion."<sup>23</sup> Despite the fact that northerners owned the Beersheba Springs Hotel throughout much of the late nineteenth century, visitors from the North never came to the resort in any great numbers because of its inaccessibility. Consequently, Beersheba Springs remained an isolated mountain retreat. By 1914, the Beersheba Springs Hotel had fallen into disrepair.

---

<sup>23</sup>Margaret Brown Coppinger, et al., Beersheba Springs: A History and a Celebration, 1832-1982 (Beersheba Springs: Beersheba Springs Historical Society, 1983), 11.

Montvale Springs followed a very similar pattern. Since railroads never came directly to Montvale Springs, the resort was unable to diversify its clientele after the Civil War. The hotel continued to survive under a number of different owners, but the hotel never again regained its antebellum prestige. Instead of attracting wealthy patrons from all over the lower-Mississippi basin and Cumberland Valley as it had before the war, Montvale Springs attracted a decidedly local clientele after 1865. When the Seven Gables Hotel burned down on May 13, 1896, no one was willing to take the financial risk of rebuilding it until after the Little River Railroad opened access to the area in 1901. Andrew Gamble, an entrepreneur from Knoxville, built a smaller hotel on the site in 1902. The Montvale Springs Hotel was in operation once again, but it catered mainly to middle class pleasure seekers from nearby Maryville and Knoxville.<sup>24</sup>

While the old resorts with antebellum roots either adapted to post-war conditions or fell into decline, a number of new resorts emerged to meet the growing demand among the upper and middle classes for vacation sites. The character of these new resorts ranged anywhere from luxurious to primitive. The most popular new resorts were those that gained direct railroad access and catered to financially well-off families from outside the South. Eureka Springs, Arkansas was among the more successful new resorts in the southern highlands . Nestled in the Ozark mountains of Carroll County in northwestern Arkansas, Eureka Springs began to acquire its fame as

---

<sup>24</sup>Inez Burns, A History of Blount County: From War Trail to Landing Strip, 1795-1955 (Nashville: Benson Printing Co., 1957), 232-37.



a health resort in 1879 when Judge Levi Saunders claimed that the springs had cured a festering wound on his leg. At first, only people from the surrounding locale came to camp and partake of the waters, but as word spread of the spring's curative powers, accommodations improved and visitation increased. Growth accelerated when the St. Louis, Arkansas, & Texas Railway extended rail service to nearby Seligman, only 20 miles away. Still, most invalids dreaded the five-hour ride in a springless coach from Seligman to Eureka Springs. To remedy this situation, future Republican governor and city booster Powell Clayton organized the Eureka Springs Railway Company and completed the line to Eureka Springs in 1883. Thereafter the town drew visitors from all over the East, Midwest, and South.<sup>25</sup>

The Blue Ridge district of western North Carolina also witnessed the rise of many new successful resorts. After the Southern Railway purchased the WNCRR in the 1880s, it became the leading promoter of tourism in the Blue Ridge region. Publishing annual travel booklets entitled "The Land of the Sky and Beyond," the Southern Railway touted the scenery, climate and healthfulness of Asheville and the Blue Ridge region, "where the blue azure touches lightly the towering summits of lofty mountains, where the purest of crystal water gushes forth from the hidden spring of an untainted soil, where malaria is unknown and contagion unfeared."<sup>26</sup> In the late

---

<sup>25</sup>Otto Ernest Rayburn, The Eureka Springs Story (Eureka Springs: n.p., 1954), 3-47; Lee A. Dew, "From Trails to Rails in Eureka Springs," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 41 (1982), 203-14.

<sup>26</sup>Frank Presbrey, The Land of the Sky and Beyond (Washington, D.C.: Southern Railway Company, 1894), 2.

nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the national promotion of the Blue Ridge region spurred the growth of a number of new middle class resorts, such as Blowing Rock and Highlands.

While railroad access often spawned the development of new resorts, new middle class retreats also frequently emerged in areas where railroads came relatively late or not at all as in Blount and Sevier Counties, Tennessee. Sevier County's foremost resort of the late nineteenth century was Henderson Springs, situated on a hill above the small village of Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Henderson Springs was first known as a health retreat as early as the 1830s, but it was not until 1878 that a 2-story hotel and 22 cabins were built that could accommodate tourists. Prominent families from Knoxville who sought to escape the bustle of the rapidly industrializing city found serenity at Henderson Springs.<sup>27</sup> Since railroads did not arrive in Sevier County until the early twentieth century, Henderson Springs remained a pastoral resort catering to a small group of Knoxvillians who travelled by stagecoach and later by automobile.

In the mountains of neighboring Blount County, a handful of resort hotels arose that also catered to a regional middle class clientele. One such hotel was the Allegheny Springs Hotel built in 1886 by Nathan McCoy, a Civil War veteran from Indiana who spent nearly \$85,000 erecting the 60-room hotel and eight cabins. According to surviving fragments of the guest register, visitors came from as far as Memphis but most came from East Tennessee. Located at the base of Chilhowee

---

<sup>27</sup>Mary Ruth Chiles, *Resorts in the Smoky Mountains Region, 1832 to 1930*, typescript files, National Park Service Archives, Sugarlands.

Mountain, guests had to take a 12-mile ride by hack from the nearest rail line in Maryville. Due to the lack of direct rail accessibility, the Allegheny Springs Hotel was rarely able to attract enough visitors to earn a profit.<sup>28</sup>

The coming of large-scale lumbering operations and railroads to Blount and Sevier Counties in the early twentieth century, however, gave rise to the most successful new resorts in the area. Logging entrepreneurs often built hotels in the mountains to house their workers and buyers that evolved into popular pleasure resorts. For instance, Andy Huff, a lumberman based in Sevier County, erected Gatlinburg's first hotel when he built the Mountain View Hotel in 1912 to house his employees and buyers. Within a few years, however, tourists outnumbered loggers in the hotel and Huff decided to expand so that he could accommodate more sightseers.<sup>29</sup>

The Little River Railroad and Lumber Company (LRR&LC) provides an even better example of how logging stimulated tourism in the Tennessee mountains. The Little River Railroad and Lumber Company oversaw the largest logging operation in the Smokies. The company's president, Wilson B. Townsend, a timber baron from Pennsylvania, purchased over 77,000 acres of dense hardwood forest in the Little River watershed and began making plans to cut-over the western slopes of the Smokies in the late 1890s. Beginning operations in 1901, the LRR&LC laid tracks deep into the Smoky Mountains and opened accessibility to this formerly remote region. Consequently, greater numbers of sightseers began travelling to the Smokies

---

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.; Burns, A History of Blount County, 232-37.

<sup>29</sup>Russell Shaw, The Gatlinburg Story (Gatlinburg: Russell Shaw, Inc., 1979), 19-21.

via rail and a handful of new resorts, including Kinzel Springs, Line Springs, and Elkmont, sprang up along the rail line. In 1909, Townsend began to organize weekend tourist excursions to lure Knoxvilleans to visit and purchase property at Elkmont, the base of lumbering operations along the East Fork of the Little River. Upon their arrival, visitors were given a map showing more than 100 plots of land for sale in Elkmont Village, "an ideal location for a vacation retreat." Thus began the successful conversion of Elkmont logging camp into a summer cottage colony for prominent families from Knoxville and all over Tennessee. In 1913, the Little River Railroad and the Knoxville and Augusta Railroad began to publish annual tourist brochures, called "The Beautiful Elkmont Country," that touted the area's magnificent scenery, salubrious climate, and fine accommodations. A year later, W. B. Townsend contracted a Knoxville entrepreneur to build the Wonderland Hotel which served as the hub of social activities for tourists at Elkmont for many years.<sup>30</sup>

Another resort spawned by the coming of the Little River Railroad was Kinzel Springs, located on Little River three miles west of Townsend. The founder of the resort was Edward J. Kinzel of Knoxville, who, in the summer of 1894, took his family camping in the mountains. He found what he believed to be the perfect spot for a summer home in between four mountains at the west end of Tuckaleechee Cove. After purchasing nearly thirty acres, Kinzel built a summer home sufficient for his

---

<sup>30</sup>"The Beautiful Elkmont Country" tourist brochure, (Knoxville: Knoxville and Augusta Railroad Company, 1912), Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum Archives, Townsend; Ronald G. Schmidt and William S. Hooks, Whistle Over the Mountain: Timber, Track, and Trails in the Tennessee Smokies (Yellow Springs, OH: Graphicom Press, 1994), 35-37.

family and guests. Then in 1901, the Little River Lumber Company improved access to Kinzel Springs by building a railroad right through his property. Over time it became clear that Kinzel's little summer cottage could no longer accommodate all of his guests, so in 1914, Kinzel and his son-in-law, Buford S. Newman, built a hotel and began to develop a resort that would eventually attract thousands of visitors every year.<sup>31</sup>

Clearly in looking at resort development in East Tennessee, western North Carolina, the Virginia Springs, and the Ozark/Ouachita region, there were many different types of resorts that varied according to clientele, accessibility, and timing of development. Regardless of their size or character, they shared a common characteristic--they all provided alternative means of income and employment. Resorts also provided a ready-made market for local farmers' commodities. Farmers often sold their crops, eggs, milk, poultry, and livestock to resort owners who had promised to provide fresh food to their guests. Tourism also had a ripple effect on local employment patterns, because resorts generated a variety of service jobs and professions. Among the employment opportunities created by tourism included skilled management positions, bookkeepers, unskilled servants, construction workers, gardeners, stable hands, liquor retailers, prostitutes, caretakers, cooks, waiters, bellhops, stagecoach drivers, as well as hunting and hiking guides.

There is ample evidence to suggest that there was a distinct division of labor in the

---

<sup>31</sup>C. Bren Martin, "Getaways and Guests in the History of Tourism," Knoxville News-Sentinel 11 September 1994; Burns, A History of Blount County, 232-37.

hospitality industry along racial and gender lines. Tourism was (and still is) dependent upon the existence of a low-wage labor force that would accept menial, seasonal work. Depending upon the resort, African-Americans or white women usually met the demand for the cheap, subservient, and seasonal labor needed for tourism. In Asheville, blacks were the most important source of labor for the menial jobs at hotels, such as waiters, bellboys, dishwashers, and janitors. In a city where African-Americans made up less than 16 percent of the population, the 1883 Asheville City Directory shows that blacks were four times more likely than whites to work as hotel employees. In 1890, more than 22 percent of the black citizens listed in the Asheville City Directory were employed in the tourist industry as opposed to less than 4% of white citizens.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, these statistics do not account for the many black women who served as "negresses" at boarding houses. Thomas Wolfe describes how his mother, a boarding house owner in Asheville, hired "negresses" for low wages and tortured them with her suspicion and scorn. "She nagged and berated the sullen negro girls constantly, tortured by the thought that they were stealing her supplies and her furnishings, and dawdling away the time for which she paid them. And she paid them reluctantly, dribbling out their small wages a coin or two at a time, nagging them for their laziness and stupidity."<sup>33</sup>

Since relatively few blacks lived in the rural parts of the southern highlands, local

---

<sup>32</sup>Asheville City Directories, 1883 and 1890.

<sup>33</sup>Thomas Wolfe, Look Homeward, Angel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), 139.

mountain women often substituted as a source of cheap labor. The traditional domestic roles of southern mountain women prepared them both physically and mentally for subservient jobs as cooks, maids, hostesses, and waitresses in the tourist industry. In some regions, jobs at hotels and restaurants offered women their first chance for employment outside of the home. For instance, in Sevier and Blount Counties, while men usually farmed or worked for the lumber companies, some women accepted jobs at nearby hotels or took in boarders to help the family make ends meet.<sup>34</sup>

While blacks and women provided an important source for cheap labor, they could not always fulfill all of the employment needs of the region's tourist trade. Developers and proprietors often had to import labor from outside the region to fulfill specialized labor needs, particularly at the more fashionable elite resorts and hotels. The skilled positions like bookkeepers, managers, chefs, and musicians were usually reserved for white men imported from outside the community. Sometimes proprietors hired educated local whites to fill bookkeeping or management positions, but bringing in professional chefs and musicians from Europe or the urban Northeast was something of a status symbol for exclusive hotels. Thus tourist entrepreneurs who sought to please wealthy guests had little choice but to bring in outsiders for some specialized jobs.

Local residents, however, often resented the importation of low skill workers.

---

<sup>34</sup>W. Bruce Wheeler, ed., The Gentle Winds of Change: A History of Sevier County, Tennessee, 1900-1930 (Maryville: Printers, Inc., 1986), 99-100.

Each year, the proprietors of the Old White contracted and transported dozens of African-Americans from eastern seaboard cities to fill jobs as waiters, bellboys, and servants. In an overwhelmingly white community, the intrusion of cheap black labor imported from lowland cities served as a symbol of outside domination and lack of local autonomy for the white residents of Greenbrier County, West Virginia.

Likewise, George Vanderbilt brought over one hundred Italian construction workers from the North during the building of the Biltmore mansion. The importation of large numbers of manual laborers prompted some Ashevilleians to complain that Vanderbilt should do more to help out his new neighbors. In a letter to the Asheville Citizen, James Wainright expressed his resentment by declaring that "millionaires must cost us something." He was sure that somehow he would end up paying for "Mr. Vanderbilt's big house."<sup>35</sup>

Although people from outside the community usually financed and operated the large hotels and attractions at popular resorts, locals with sufficient financial means often operated small, family-owned establishments that catered to less-affluent tourists. Typical of these sorts of enterprises were boarding houses offering moderately-priced, family-style accommodations. Boarding house proprietors kept overhead costs low by employing family labor and operating out of their own home. Moreover, since boarding houses usually catered to middle class visitors, boarders were more concerned with affordability than luxury. With low overhead costs and minimal expenses on amenities, there were few economic barriers to entry for locals who

---

<sup>35</sup>Ready, Asheville, 64-65.



operated boarding houses at highland resorts. Consequently, boarding houses were perhaps the most common form of accommodation for travelers before World War I.

Locally-owned boarding houses pioneered the hospitality industry long before the existence of hotels at most new resorts. Blowing Rock, for instance, was nothing more than a campsite in the mid-1870s when William M. Morris opened the area's first boarding house in 1874. He was so successful that within a few years other regional entrepreneurs, including the Sherrill family of Sherrill's Inn, opened a number of other boarding homes at Blowing Rock that catered to summer visitors. Boarding houses could be found even in the most remote mountain regions. For example, deep in the heart of the Smoky Mountains, Spence Cabin and Russell Cabin served as a boarding house for backwoods campers throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>36</sup>

Boarding houses thrived even in the larger, more established resorts of the region. For instance, Asheville, the most popular resort of the Blue Ridge region, had dozens of boarding houses. Novelist Thomas Wolfe, one of Asheville's most famous sons, spent much of his boyhood at his mother's rambling Victorian boarding house "The Old Kentucky Home." Wolfe's overtly autobiographical novel Look Homeward, Angel vividly describes how his mother's entrepreneurial ambition and tireless work to please her guests undermined the family's stability. Wolfe "hated the indecency of his life,

---

<sup>36</sup>Charles Forster Smith, "Tramping in the Mountains: The Great Smokies and Thunder Head," Christian Advocate, 23 September 1910, p. 11.

the loss of dignity and seclusion" that accompanied the "invasion of the boarders."<sup>37</sup>

Like so many other boarding house proprietors, Julia Wolfe (a.k.a. Eliza Gant in the book) sought to curtail expenses by using family labor and hiring low paid "negresses." Instead of paying for professional entertainers, "she sang for the boarders, thumping the cheap piano with her heavy accurate touch, and singing in her strong, vibrant, somewhat hard soprano a repertory of songs classical, sentimental, and comic."<sup>38</sup>

Boarding houses and other locally-owned establishments thrived in resort towns before World War I, but the distribution of economic benefits usually weighed heavily in favor of outside financial interests, especially at the elite resorts in the mountain South. At exclusive resorts such as White Sulphur Springs, Asheville, and Hot Springs, the costs of developing and operating hotels and other tourist establishments could be astronomical. The expense of purchasing property was the initial obstacle that was often compounded by the fact that land close to the railroad was more expensive. Secondly, constructing large, lavish hotels and summer homes presented several strategic and financial problems concerning materials, supplies, and labor. The costs for importing labor and shipping materials could run very high, especially in the areas without direct rail access. Furthermore, wealthy tourists demanded costly amenities such as exquisite cuisine, fine liquors, luxurious furniture, professional musicians, and all of the latest modern comforts. Since entry into the tourist market at

---

<sup>37</sup>Wolfe, Look Homeward, Angel, 143-144.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 141.

elite resorts in the late nineteenth century required a very large capital investment, there were significant economic barriers to entry into the tourist market. The exorbitant costs of developing and operating popular elite resorts restricted ownership and participation in the tourist market to regional elites and outside capital interests.

Asheville provides a good example of the flow of economic benefits to regional elites who invested in the tourist industry. Colonel Frank Coxe came from one of western North Carolina's oldest and most affluent families. He was also a leading railroad promoter in the region who, in the mid-1880s, decided to build the most popular resort hotel in the city. Atop Battery Porter where a Confederate battery had defended the city two decades earlier, Coxe constructed the lavish Battery Park Hotel. When the hotel opened in July 1886, it had fireplaces in each room, a modern steam radiator, Edison electric bulbs, and an "absolutely enchanting" view. The Battery Park Hotel quickly became the most elegant and famous hotel in all of western North Carolina.<sup>39</sup> A similar pattern of ownership flowing to regional elites can be found in many other resorts as well. For instance, a group of upper class Knoxvilleians owned and operated the hotels and cottages at Kinzel Springs and Henderson Springs, leaving only low-paying service jobs for local residents.<sup>40</sup>

While regional elites sometimes controlled a community's tourist industry, control of the tourist trade often fell into the hands of absentee owners or outside financial interests. The shift to northern ownership and management at White Sulphur Springs

---

<sup>39</sup>Ready, Asheville, 43-44.

<sup>40</sup>Chiles, "Resorts in the Smoky Mountains Region."

and Beersheba Springs is indicative of the pattern many resorts followed throughout the mountain South. Warm Springs, North Carolina, for instance, was one of the few resorts in the region owned by a southerner, Col. James H. Rumbough, when the Southern Railway completed a line through the area to Tennessee in 1881. Three years later when the old Patton Hotel burned down, a disheartened Rumbough sold the property to the Southern Improvement Company, a group of investors from New York, who built the lavish Mountain Park Hotel and renamed the town Hot Springs for greater marketing appeal. They also spent heavily on recreational attractions for the guests, such as golf course and a croquet green.<sup>41</sup>

The story of Luray Caverns, Virginia provides another example of how outside capital financed much of the resort development in the southern highlands. Discovered in 1878 by a native New Yorker, the massive subterranean Luray Caverns quickly became a popular natural wonder attraction. In 1879 and 1880, visitors traveled by stagecoach to Luray, where they filled the town's two hotels to capacity. Sensing an economic opportunity in the community's nascent tourist industry, the Shenandoah Valley Railroad Company, controlled by Philadelphia financiers, decided to build a line to Luray. In addition, the company chartered the Luray Cave and Hotel Company with a capital stock of \$100,000. By the time the railroad to Luray was completed in 1881, the company had built an elaborate Tudor-style hotel and

---

<sup>41</sup>"Hot Springs Spa Mineral Baths" brochure, c. 1948, North Carolina Collection, Pack Library, Asheville; Manly Wade Wellman, The Kingdom of Madison: A Southern Mountain Fastness and Its People (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 108-14.

purchased the caverns. Controlled totally by outside interests, Luray's tourist industry benefitted local residents only marginally.<sup>42</sup>

Outside vacationers who had amassed vast fortunes in the Gilded Age often envisioned and created the most ambitious tourist development schemes in the mountain South. Highlands, North Carolina provides an excellent example. In 1875, two developers from Kansas, Captain Samuel T. Kelsey and Charles Hutchinson, selected an ideal site for a resort by drawing a line on a map from Chicago to Savannah and another line from New York City to New Orleans. Since these two lines intersected in Macon County, North Carolina, they reasoned that a resort located there would draw visitors from all four regions. They purchased a 1,440 acre tract from J. W. Dobson and developed a resort called Highlands that became one of the most popular resorts in the region.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to the uneven distribution of economic benefits and dependence on northern capital, highland tourism also resembled New South industries in that it fostered boom-to-bust economic cycles. Luray, Virginia, for instance, rapidly rose to prominence as the premier resort in the Shenandoah Valley following the discovery of the caverns in 1879 and the construction of the Luray Inn two years later. In the

---

<sup>42</sup>Elizabeth Atwood, "Saratoga of the South: Tourism in Luray, Virginia, 1878-1905," in Edward Ayers, ed., The Edge of the New South: Life in Nineteenth Century Virginia (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1991), 157-72.

<sup>43</sup>Ina W. Van Noppen and John J. Van Noppen, Western North Carolina Since the Civil War (Boone:Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978), 378; Karl B. Raitz and Richard Ulack, Appalachia: A Regional Geography of Land, People, and Development (Boulder:Westview Press, 1984), 238.

1880s, Luray witnessed an economic boom as hotels and businesses catering to tourists flourished in the community. The prosperity of the 1880s, however, gave way to economic decline in the 1890s when a national depression in 1893 came in the wake of a fire that destroyed the Luray Inn.<sup>44</sup> Eureka Springs, Arkansas followed this same pattern. Although Eureka Springs was one of the nation's most fashionable health spas in the 1880s, the decline of hydropathy took its toll on the resort's popularity. By 1914, Eureka Springs was only a shell of its former self.<sup>45</sup> Due to fluctuations in the national economy as well as changes in consumer tastes and fashions, boom-to-bust cycles characterized the economic development of many resort communities in the mountain South.

In spite of the boom-to-bust patterns, economic barriers to entry, the uneven distribution of benefits, Victorian tourism in the southern highlands provided an attractive economic alternative to the extractive mining and timber industries of the mountain South. Tourism complemented the productive activities of many resort areas and paved the way for economic diversification. The growth of tourism in Asheville, for instance, did not hinder the city from both acquiring an impressive manufacturing base as well as developing into an important tobacco trading and processing center. Likewise, in Sevier and Blount Counties, tourism was of secondary economic importance to logging and self-sufficient farming, but it complemented these segments

---

<sup>44</sup>Atwood, "Saratoga of the South," 165-67.

<sup>45</sup>Brooks R. Blevin, "Fallow Are the Hills: A Century of Rural Modernization in the Arkansas Ozarks" (M.A. thesis, Auburn University, 1994), 73.

of the local economy. While the pastoral landscape produced by mountain farming indirectly enhanced the area's tourist trade, the accessibility provided by commercial logging directly encouraged the growth of tourism. Tourism offered an alternative source of employment at a critical juncture in the area's demographic evolution. As birthrates continued to climb and average landholdings dwindled to below 70 acres, employment in tourism provided a viable option to outmigration.

When compared to the extractive industries taking hold in the mountain South between 1865 and 1914, tourism appears to have granted local residents qualitatively better jobs and more economic opportunities than logging or mining. But like the extractive industries, the tourist industry perpetuated the isolated low-wage labor market that stifled economic growth in the South for generations. In addition, Victorian tourism was little different from the region's other dominant industries in terms of its dependence on northern capital, seasonal demands for labor, as well as its boom-to-bust cycles.

Despite the uneven distribution of benefits and the preservation of the low-wage, low-skill labor market, by 1914 local boosters were touting tourism as a panacea for the region's economic woes. Not only did tourism seem to offer economic opportunity to all, but its environmental impacts seemed negligible compared to extractive industries. Best of all, tourism seemed to encourage cultural distinctiveness. As automobiles began slowly to replace trains as the primary mode of tourist travel, it appeared that tourism promised great things for the region's future development.

**Chapter 3-Castles Among Cabins:  
Regional Identity, Cultural Interaction, and Tourism in the Mountain South, 1865-1914**

In the summer of 1910, Charles Forster Smith, a noted literature professor from the University of Wisconsin, joined two colleagues for a week-long tramp into the backcountry of the Smoky Mountains. Like generations of tourists who preceded them in the southern highlands, Smith and his friends came "to breathe again mountain air and drink from mountain brooks and gaze upon limitless panoramas of mountain forest." During their journey, however, they discovered that the peculiarities of the mountain people were just as alluring as the natural amenities of the Smokies. His published travel account of the trip describes their interactions with the rural mountain folk as "a strange mixture of hospitality and vulgarity." One encounter with a mountaineer occurred when Smith and his cohorts took a wrong trail and got lost. They met a mountain sheep herder who had gladly cooked the hikers a hot meal and guided them back to their trail, but refused to accept any remuneration for his services. In Smith's opinion, the herder's kindness demonstrated the "hospitality and kindness of heart" of the mountain people, but his cabin was "the dirtiest human hovel I ever looked into." These non-indigenous, upper class visitors could not understand "how a man with some refinement and feature and such a sense of courtesy could live in a cabin that obviously had not been swept this season."<sup>1</sup>

Smith's encounter with the mountaineer is in many ways indicative of how tourism helped to construct and perpetuate a distinct regional identity for the mountain South.

---

<sup>1</sup>Charles Forster Smith, "Tramping in the Mountains: The Great Smokies and Thunder Head," Christian Advocate, 23 September 1910, 10-11.



Not only was his description of the mountain herder consistent with popular perceptions of southern highlanders in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, but also his account shows how interactions in a tourist setting highlighted the social and cultural differences between hosts and guests. As a result, these "authentic" encounters between tourists and mountaineers contributed to the construction of the mountain South's image as a backward region inhabited by quaint, yet uncivilized people. By its very nature, tourism was an important agent in shaping the outside world's view of the region. Wealthy visitors from urban industrial centers who came to the rural southern highlands encountered a world seemingly much different from their own--a world of log cabins, split rail fences, Old World agriculture, and handicrafts--all familiar icons of America's pioneer past. To a nation that was increasingly self-conscious of its own modernity yet sentimental of its rural past, the apparent persistence of pioneer conditions among mountaineers made the southern highlands seem like a distinct region that was frozen in time. Tourists disseminated this static depiction of the region to a national audience by word of mouth as well as by publication of tourism promotionals, local color stories, and travel accounts.

Ironically, the static image of the mountain South created by non-indigenous visitors masked major cultural changes that were caused in part by the growth of tourism. As railroads brought ever greater numbers of health and pleasure seekers to the mountains, tourists brought their way of life with them and, in the process, introduced previously isolated mountaineers to the culture of mainstream America. To many highland visitors, it appeared that the development of the commercial

mining, lumber, and tourist industries threatened to destroy the quaint folkways of the mountaineers. A few of these non-indigenous visitors responded by pioneering in the highland handicrafts revival movement that, not accidentally, first flourished in resort communities. Thus, while tourism gave rise to the notion of regional distinctiveness and encouraged the preservation of the supposed cultural legacies of the southern highlands, the growth of tourism paradoxically spawned unprecedented cultural change in the region by exposing popular culture and modern amenities to this largely isolated and rural region.

In the early-nineteenth century, the notion of the mountain South as a distinct region of the nation existed only in physiographic terms. Geologists, botanists, and physicians had long recognized the rugged topography, natural fauna, and healthful climate as distinctive environmental features of the southern mountain ranges, but antebellum visitors rarely regarded white southern highlanders as any different from poor rural whites elsewhere in the South.<sup>2</sup> Prior to the coming of railroads to the region, travelers frequently interacted with regional natives during the tourism process.<sup>3</sup> Travelers struck up conversations, however perfunctory, with mountaineers who worked as hack drivers, hotel servants, or hunting guides. Indeed, tourists often stayed in boarding homes that were owned and operated by mountaineers. While

---

<sup>2</sup>Henry Shapiro, Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), ii-iv.

<sup>3</sup>Daniel J. Boorstin, The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America (New York: Atheneum, 1975), 79.

these early visitors lamented the poor living conditions of mountaineers, few regarded the residents of the mountain South to be culturally distinctive. Poor squatters living a primitive existence were simply not that uncommon in America's rural frontiers.

After the Civil War, however, America's consciousness and conception of the mountain South gradually evolved until, by World War I, the southern highlands existed in the public mind as a distinct region inhabited by poor, uncivilized "hillbillies." The development of the mountain South's distinct regional identity was a process that involved a wide array of non-indigenous individuals, including local color writers, missionaries, settlement school workers, scholars, journalists, and philanthropists. Both writers and reformers focused on the most archaic aspects of life in the region because selling stories and raising funds required the specter of poor deprived hillbillies.<sup>4</sup> While scholars have long recognized that a myriad of "outsiders" constructed the complex mythical image of the region, few have fully appreciated the role of tourism and tourists in the process of constructing regional identity. Many individuals who shaped the public's perception of the mountain South, particularly writers, first gathered their impressions of the region while visiting as tourists. Moreover, travel accounts and tourism promotionals both contributed to and reinforced the notion of regional backwardness.

---

<sup>4</sup>See Shapiro, Appalachia on Our Mind; Allen Batteau, The Invention of Appalachia (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990); Ronald D. Eller, Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1888-1930 (Knoxville : University of Tennessee Press, 1982); David E. Whisnant, All That Is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

The static image of the southern highlands that became so deeply ingrained in the public mind reflects prevailing notions about culture in the late-nineteenth century. Most Americans believed in a progression of cultural development that extended from barbarism to civilization. Southern mountaineers, they believed, had not advanced to civilization because of their physical isolation. Hence, many travelers and writers found in the region what they believed were survivalisms of a pre-modern stage of cultural development such as handicrafts, Celtic ballads, and an Elizabethan dialect.<sup>5</sup>

The notions of Appalachian backwardness and cultural survivalisms were first articulated in fictional stories set in the region. However, there are few stories about the southern mountains that were published before 1870. One notable exception was Sidney Lanier's first and only novel Tiger-Lillies. Published in 1868, the first half of the book is an autobiographical account of Lanier's summer vacation in 1860 at his grandfather's hotel at Montvale Springs, Tennessee. While not typically classified in the local color genre, Tiger-Lillies captures the peculiar dialect and primitive ways of mountaineers as vividly as the local colorists of the 1870 and 1880s. Lanier depicts mountain people as excellent backwoodsmen with a distinct colloquial accent. For instance, a local hunting guide in the story remarks, "I recommoner Jim Razor flung fifteen bullets into a ole b'ar over on Smoky Mountain." Similar to the later local colorists, he also describes mountaineers as resistant to change and suspicious of outsiders. In chapter seven, Lanier tells the story of a wealthy German woman and

---

<sup>5</sup>Jean Haskell Speer, "Cultural Tourism in Appalachian Tennessee," Tennessee's Business 6 (1995), 19.

her faithful maid who desire to "go where there are strange mountains."<sup>6</sup> They travel to the Smoky Mountains where they arrange to stay in a cabin a few miles away from Montvale Springs. "The sparse population of simple mountaineers at first regarded with much wonder the two lone women who never visited, and were always riding and walking about the mountains; but the wonder soon settled into a vague feeling of suspicion and dislike, which vented itself in 'them stuck up creeturs over yan on the hill,' and other like epithets."<sup>7</sup> While Lanier's depiction was remarkably consistent with local colorists' vision of the southern highlands, Tiger-Lillies did not significantly shape the public's perception of the region because it was not commercially successful.

The concept of Appalachian distinctiveness reached a larger audience a decade later with the popularity of the local color literary movement. In the context of post-Civil War cultural nationalism, dialect tales and sketches of the vernacular cultures of America emerged as important literary forms. A new school of writers--including George Washington Cable, Mark Twain, Thomas Nelson Page, Bret Harte, and Joel Chandler Harris--turned away from the florid, stylized romanticism of their predecessors and confronted the phenomena peculiar to their own section of the nation. From the pen of local colorists flowed vivid descriptions of crackers, Creoles, Cajuns, and mountaineers. The mountain South appeared to be a perfect source for local color

---

<sup>6</sup>Sidney Lanier, Tiger-Lillies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 6.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 53.

literary material. The existence of this vast, rugged territory captured the imagination of America in the late-nineteenth century. Searching for a national identity amid the changes brought by immigration, industrialization, and urbanization, Americans were eager to learn about the peculiar and exotic "little corners" of the nation's rural backcountry. In addition, the mountain South seemed a particularly noteworthy area of inquiry since the region had been staunchly loyal to the Union during the Civil War.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1870s and 1880s, local color stories dominated America's popular literary market. The local color movement emerged as a response to the existence of a substantial market for descriptive pieces that the readers of new middle class monthlies would find interesting. Middle class magazines such as Scribner's Monthly, Harper's Weekly and Atlantic Monthly published dozens of travel accounts and local color stories that first conveyed the idea of the southern highlands as a unique region inhabited by a quaint people of pure Anglo-Saxon stock living a pioneer existence. But nostalgia and the desire for national approbation hampered completely reliable presentation. Appealing to middle-class magazine readers, publishers encouraged local color writers to focus on regional peculiarities and to ignore the homogeneous features of American life.<sup>9</sup> As local color stories became popular in the late-nineteenth century, a number of writers came to the southern highlands as a tourist in search of

---

<sup>8</sup>Shapiro, Appalachia on Our Mind, 3-17; Richard Cary, Mary N. Murfree (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967), 34-36.

<sup>9</sup>Cary, Mary N. Murfree, 36.

people and places that captured the essence of rural America. Consequently, the tourist process shaped the local colorists' vision of mountain life which, in turn, established the static image of the mountain South in the public consciousness. After this, "travelers, writers, missionaries, economists, geographers, sociologists, teachers, geologists, land developers, and industrialists all tended to approach the southern mountains from this point of view."<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps the most influential writer of the local color movement to write about the mountain South was Mary Noailles Murfree. Murfree was born into a distinguished Middle Tennessee family for whom her hometown of Murfreesboro was named. Her great-grandfather Col. Hardy Murfree received a large grant of land on the Stones River for his services in the American Revolution. He and his son, William, developed these lands into the 1,200-acre Grantland Estate plantation and the Murfrees became one of the most prestigious families in Middle Tennessee. Mary's father, William Law Murfree, was a lawyer, editor, and planter who owned three plantations in the Mississippi Delta. He saw to it that Mary received a good education and encouraged her development as a writer from an early age.<sup>11</sup>

Like so many privileged southern families, the Murfrees spent their summers in the mountains. Their favorite watering-place was Beersheba Springs, Tennessee, where they owned the Crag Wilde Cottage. From 1855, when Mary was five years old, until 1870, the Murfrees spent most summers at Beersheba Springs. It was there that Mary

---

<sup>10</sup>Shapiro, Appalachia on Our Mind, 18.

<sup>11</sup>Cary, Mary N. Murfree, 13-15.

first gathered her impressions of the mountain people. She once remarked in a letter to her publisher that she was "familiar with their [mountaineers] primitive customs, dialect, and peculiar ways of life, for I used to spend much time in the mountains long before I knew of the existence of such a thing as 'literary material.'"<sup>12</sup> Her biographer claims that she and her sister occasionally visited local people to buy chickens, fruits, and vegetables. In 1886, after she had achieved literary fame with her popular mountain tales, she began frequenting Montvale Springs in order to gather new impressionistic views of mountaineers for her stories.<sup>13</sup>

Life at these resorts did indeed put her in proximity to the mountain people, but the exclusivity of Beersheba Springs and Montvale Springs shielded her from much direct interaction with poor mountaineers. She must have encountered mountain people occasionally, but only in the most offhanded ways. Her experience in the mountains as a civilized lowlander of a good family encountering poor, coarse mountaineers predisposed her to see Appalachia as a strange land inhabited by a peculiar people. Nonetheless, Mary Noailles Murfree, whose literary reputation rested largely upon her "apparent fidelity in rendering mountain life," based her local color writings on her somewhat superficial impressions of the mountaineers she met around Beersheba Springs and Montvale Springs.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>Edd Winfield Parks, Charles Egbert Craddock (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 119.

<sup>13</sup>Cary, Mary N. Murfree, 22-23.

<sup>14</sup>Quote from Charles Forster Smith, "Southern Dialect in Life and Literature," Southern Bivouac 3 (1885), 147.



Although Mary Noailles Murfree was from a privileged family, she had to overcome many obstacles to achieve literary fame. The restrictive notions of southern ladyhood discouraged women in the South from pursuing writing careers. Further confined by popular publishers who generally shunned women writers, she first tried her hand at writing articles about flirting and manners in the early-1870s. Hoping to gain a wider audience for her writings, Murfree switched to writing mountain stories in the mid-1870s and began submitting her writings to publishers under the pen name of Charles Egbert Craddock. When she published her first mountaineer's tale under this name in Atlantic Monthly in May 1878, Murfree received instant critical acclaim for the power and energy of "his" writings. Over the next decade, her popular mountain sketches established the concept of the mountaineer in the public consciousness as a perennial loafer living in a log cabin with a slatternly wife and a horde of small children. She also convinced Americans that mountain people were prone to violence and drunkenness. To satisfy northern publishers who wanted more and more color, she emphasized the peculiarities of the mountain way of life and their distinct dialect of supposed Celtic origins with Chaucerian overtones.<sup>15</sup>

Many of Murfree's stories reflect her own experience as a summer visitor in the mountains. For instance, the setting for "The Dancin' Party at Harrison Cove," her first published local color story, was New Helvetia Springs, Murfree's fictional recreation of Beersheba Springs. In the story, Mrs. Johns, a mountain woman who sells Indian peaches to the city vacationers, returns to the New Helvetia Springs Hotel

---

<sup>15</sup>Cary, Mary N. Murfree, 36-52.

one day to secure medicine for her ailing husband. Using her quaint mountain dialect, the mountain woman recounts how Rick Pearson, the leader of a gang of horse thieves, has threatened to kill her son if he dares to attend a dance at nearby Harrison Cove. "[T]hem Harrison folks over yander in ter the Cove hev determinated on a dancin' party" in order to attract eligible men to their four daughters.<sup>16</sup> Mrs. Johns's son, Kossute, was determined to go the party regardless of Pearson, whose kin had been feuding with the Johns family for years. Ambrose Kenyon, a health seeker staying at New Helvetia Springs, attends the party to try to stop the impending conflict. At a "crude log hut" deep in Harrison's Cove, "the awkward young mountaineers clogged heavily about in their uncouth clothes and rough shoes, with the stolid-looking, lack-lustre maids of the hills, to the violin's monotonous iteration of The Chicken in the Bread Trough, or The Rabbit in the Pea Patch,--all their grave faces as grave as ever."<sup>17</sup> When Mr. Kenyon arrived, the mountaineers mistake his dour moralisms for a circuit-riding preacher. With a combination of courageous persuasion and deceitful trickery, the sly, cool-headed tourist dissuades violence-prone mountaineers from feuding.

Another one of Murfree's stories with a tourist as a leading character was "The Star in the Valley," perhaps the most popular story of her writing career. "The Star in the Valley" was the bittersweet story of Reginald Chevis, a city sportsman camping in

---

<sup>16</sup>Mary Noailles Murfree, In the Tennessee Mountains (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970), 215.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 227.

the mountains, who discovers a brave and virtuous mountain woman named Celia Shaw. At first, Chevis looks down on Celia "with a mingled pity for her dense arrogance, her coarse surroundings, and her low station."<sup>18</sup> He is appalled when she encourages her father and his friends to drink excessively. When he later learns that she did so to immobilize them, giving her the time to warn a man they intended to murder, "he began to have a glimmering perception that despite all his culture, his sensibility, his yearnings toward humanity, he was no so high a thing in the scale of being."<sup>19</sup> In spite of her heroism and nobility of soul, however, Chevis leaves her behind because he understands that the social gap that separates them makes their love impossible.

Murfree's enormous commercial success paved the way for numerous other fiction writers whose dialect sketches of southern mountaineers closely paralleled Murfree's characterizations. Among some of the more successful Appalachian local color writers in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were James Allen Lane, E. A. Pollard, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Christian Reid, and John Fox, Jr. Like Murfree, these writers developed their impressions of mountain life while visiting the region.

While vacations in the mountains inspired some of the most influential and popular local color writings, mountain sketches likewise often promoted the growth of tourism in southern highland communities. One of the best examples of local color fiction used as a promotional tool was Christian Reid's Land of the Sky, or Adventures in

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 152.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 152-153.

Mountain By-Ways. Christian Reid was the pen name of Frances Fisher Tiernan, the daughter of a Southern Railway executive. After Tiernan traveled with a party of friends in 1875 to the various sites in western North Carolina by stagecoach, she adapted their travel experiences into a fictional account targeted towards a general audience in an attempt to lure tourists into the region.<sup>20</sup> In recounting the adventures of a party of tourists who go sightseeing in and around Asheville and Hot Springs, North Carolina before the convenience of railroads, the book reads more like a travel guide than a work of fiction. With poetic descriptions of the beautiful scenery, exotic pleasures, and salubrious climate of western North Carolina, Tiernan portrays the "land of the sky" as the ideal vacationing spot for people in search of health, adventure, natural beauty, and fashion.

The story chronicles the vacation adventures of the Markham family, a typically upper-middle class family from the Northeast. Eric Markham, the adventuresome cousin who shuns fashionable spas for "the fair, wild mountains of Carolina," convinces the family to go to the Blue Ridge Mountains. Appealing to increasingly cost-conscious upper-middle class Americans, one of Tiernan's characters remarked, "the cost of the whole [two month] expedition will be less than a month at a fashionable watering place."<sup>21</sup> Traveling by stagecoach in the region was often a difficult, if not dangerous ordeal, but as the story indicates, the scenery was simply

---

<sup>20</sup>Vertical file on "Christian Reid," Pack Library, Asheville.

<sup>21</sup>Christian Reid, Land of the Sky, or Adventures in Mountain By-Ways (New York: Scribners, 1876), 5.

gorgeous. "Shall I ever forget that first sight of its majestic beauty? Its splendid peaks were outlined with massive distinctiveness, and its dark blue shades were purpling in the light of a luminous sunset. Round the pinnacle a few light clouds were floating, which caught the golden radiance of the west."<sup>22</sup>

Published in 1876, the book predated Mary Murfree's mountain sketches and hence the invention of Appalachia. Thus it is not surprising that, in Land of the Sky, Tiernan recognized but did not dwell on the distinctiveness of the region. Since the intent of her book was draw tourists to the region, she focused primarily on the majestic scenery and exciting adventures to be found in the western North Carolina. She commented on the idyllic lifeways of mountaineers only in passing. These passing comments, however, are consistent with the local colorists' vision of the region. During their "adventures in mountain by-ways," the Markhams encounter a few indigenous mountain residents whom they find to be humble and melancholy, but hospitable. During their first excursion outside of Asheville, the Markhams first saw mountaineers when "the road into which we turned led us past a log cabin, in front of which two or three stout men were lazily smoking and gossiping."<sup>23</sup> A few days later en route to Hot Springs, the Markhams asked a couple of mountain people why so many fishermen were out on the French Broad River that particular day. After not getting a satisfactory answer, they conclude that "unless approached with some tact,

---

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 20.

your mountaineer is apt to prove sulky and noncommittal."<sup>24</sup> Sylvia Markham later comments that "mountaineers are, as a rule, melancholy."<sup>25</sup>

But in Tiernan's book, mountaineers are also, as a rule, hospitable. When the Markham entourage's stagecoach is unable to ford a stream in a rainstorm, they find a humble local family that takes them in for the evening. "Of the lodging and fare which we find at this wayside house it is best to say no more than that the people gave us their best, and seemed honestly anxious to do all in their power to please us."<sup>26</sup> Reid's popular novel familiarized a broad audience with the hospitable people and beautiful places of western North Carolina. By depicting the idyllic folkways of mountaineers, Reid helped to create impressions of the region's indigenous people that subsequent tourists sought to validate. The importance of the book in boosting the region's burgeoning hospitality trade was highlighted by the Southern Railway's decision to adopt "Land of the Sky" as a promotional slogan to lure tourists to the region. To this day, tourist promoters continue to market "the land of the sky" to attract visitors.

Another successful novel that promoted tourism in a community of the highland South was Harold Wright Bell's The Shepherd of the Hills. Born in Rome, New York, Bell was a struggling writer and minister who was living in Kansas when he discovered that he had tuberculosis. In 1896, concern for his health led him to travel

---

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 72.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 43.

as far into the Ozark hills as the rails went. At the end of the line in Marionville, Missouri, he set off on horseback into the rugged Ozark backcountry. Turning back from the flood-swollen White River, he found shelter at the homestead of John and Anna Ross on a ridge near Mutton Hollow. He intended just to spend the night, but Bell ended up staying the entire summer and returned to the Ross homestead each summer for the next eight years as he slowly regained his health.<sup>27</sup>

In 1904, Bell began writing a fictional tale based on his impressions of the Ozark mountaineers. Using the Ross family and their neighbors as the basis for his characters, he wrote Shepherd of the Hills. When the book was first published in 1907, it was an immediate commercial success. By 1912, the book had sold millions of copies and was, at the time, the fourth most widely-read book in publishing history. Its popularity sparked a nationwide interest in the area and brought the first wave of tourism into the Missouri Ozarks.<sup>28</sup>

After the Missouri-Pacific Railroad completed a rail line to the White River Valley in 1909, tourists thronged to the area to see "Old Matt's Cabin," as the Ross home was called in the book. John and Anna Ross were so harassed by curious tourists that they were forced to move to another community. Although the Rosses may not have appreciated the tourists, there were a number of regional entrepreneurs who cashed in on the sudden popularity of the region by opening a number of Shepherd of the Hills-

---

<sup>27</sup>Harold Wright Bell, The Shepherd of the Hills (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1947), ii-iv.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., i-x.

related attractions. For instance, one local man rented rowboats that bore the names of the novel's characters. Vividly depicting quaint but violent mountaineers, Shepherd of the Hills inspired the birth of tourism in the area that would eventually develop into the tourist mecca of Branson, Missouri.<sup>29</sup>

The local color movement, however, was not limited to fiction. Since Americans wished to escape the mundane and the modern and discover the "real" America, personal accounts of travel experiences in unique American regions became one of the most popular literary forms of the day. One of the most influential nineteenth century travel account writers who wrote of southern Appalachia was Charles Dudley Warner. In a series of articles published in Atlantic Monthly, Warner recounts his backcountry trek through the mountains of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Warner refers to himself as a "tourist" in his description of the people and places he encountered during his trip. He briefly encountered some natives whom he referred to as "rough talking mountain people."<sup>30</sup> His depiction of mountaineers reinforced the local colorists' vision of Appalachia. By the time the articles were published in the mid to late 1880s, the local color writers had already constructed the image of the southern highlands as a land of pure-Anglo-Saxon folk living a primitive, backwards existence. As a result, Warner in all likelihood had preconceived notions of the mountain people that he brought with him during his excursions.

---

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.,ix-x.

<sup>30</sup>Charles Dudley Warner, On Horseback: A Tour in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1889), 47-48.



By the beginning of the twentieth century, the portrayal of poor, quaint mountaineers who lived a pioneer existence and loved to feud and drink illicit liquor had become a deeply ingrained image in the American consciousness. In fact, as Americans increasingly regarded the southern highlands as a backwards region inhabited by a poverty-stricken and depraved people, a new term was coined to describe mountain residents--hillbilly. The earliest known printing of the word was in April 1900 when the New York Journal referred to a "hillbilly" as "a free untrammled white who lives in the hills . . . , has no means to speak of, dresses as he can, talks as he pleases, drinks whiskey when he gets it, and fires off his revolver as the fancy takes him."<sup>31</sup> Although not all subsequent writers would use the term, popular travel accounts of the early twentieth century certainly propagated and perpetuated the image conjured up by the term.

When Charles Forster Smith and his colleagues hiked the Smoky Mountains in 1910, the American public understood the southern highlands in terms of the hillbilly stereotype. Therefore, it is not surprising that Smith approached the mountain natives from this perspective. Smith admitted that, before embarking on the trip, he had expected "to come in touch with simple, unsophisticated, primitive people."<sup>32</sup> Curiously, earlier in his career as a literary critic, Smith had criticized Mary Noailles Murfree's indiscriminate blending of local dialects and "arbitrary coinages." Later,

---

<sup>31</sup>Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris, eds., Encyclopedia of Southern Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 504.

<sup>32</sup>Charles Forster Smith, "Tramping in the Mountains," Christian Advocate, 14 October 1910.

however, he admitted being too pedantic and came to regard her as one of the best southern dialect writers.<sup>33</sup> Thus, his travel account is filled with vivid descriptions of mountaineers and their lifestyle that had obviously been informed by Murfree and other local color writers. Smith depicts the mountaineers as hospitable, but prone to violence, squalidness, and drunkenness. For instance, one night Smith and his companions were sleeping in a mountaineer's cabin loft, when "to our dismay, we heard enter the dark cabin below three men whose voices we did not recognize. We thought they must be riotous 'Covites' on a visit to our host. They drank and swore and told tales and sang songs, not all fit for the parlor, with evident allusion now and then to us." When Smith finally got up enough courage to descend from the loft, the unwanted guests laughed and said, "You-uns go on back to bed. We don't mean no harm. We was jest having fun in our own way."<sup>34</sup> Before they left, however, they insisted that Smith and his friends have a shot from his jug of "fiery liquor."

A classics professor, Smith seemed especially fascinated with the mountaineers' Chaucerian dialect as described by local color writers. During his tramp he had a trail guide whose "ordinary language was quite Chaucerian--e.g., when he told of the palpitation which often troubled him on the mountain, saying his heart 'thumped so he couldn't set nor lay nor do nothin'. And *hit, sich, jest, kiver, clim, clom, and holp*, and much more of the sort reminded me of the time when I read all Chaucer to find the

---

<sup>33</sup>Cary, Mary N. Murfree, 52.

<sup>34</sup>Smith, "Tramping in the Mountains," 23 September 1910.

sources of mountain dialect."<sup>35</sup> He also validated the stereotypes of superstitious, violent, drunken mountaineers. While climbing Mount Mitchell, Smith was disgusted by the "marks of shameless vandalism" on boulders no doubt left by tourists. To his surprise, his guide informed him that the most visible scar "was caused by a drunken mountaineer who swore he heard a ghost moaning within and drove his ax in to let the spirit out."<sup>36</sup>

While Smith's depiction was typical of an outsiders' view of the mountain South, perhaps the most influential Appalachian travel account of the early twentieth century was Horace Kephart's Our Southern Highlanders. Kephart was an introverted, northern-educated librarian from St. Louis whose troubled personal life drove him into the mountain wilderness. His obsession with isolation, coupled with a drinking problem, exacerbated his troubled family life and gradually narrowed his social circle in the 1890s. In 1903, he resigned from his job in St. Louis and decided to separate himself from both his family and the rest of the world by traveling into the isolated backcountry of the Smoky Mountains. Clearly, the static image of the southern highlands articulated in local color writings influenced Kephart's expectations of the region, for he "yearned for a strange land and people that had the charm of originality . . . and, in Far Appalachia, it seemed that I might realize the past in the present, seeing with my own eyes what life must have been like for my pioneer ancestors of a

---

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 14 October 1910.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

century or two ago."<sup>37</sup> For the next three years, he lived among the mountaineers as he gathered materials for his book. When he traveled in 1907 to other areas of the southern highlands "comparing what I found there with what I know in the Smokies," he "found the southern mountaineers everywhere one people."<sup>38</sup>

Published originally in 1913, Our Southern Highlanders begins by criticizing Mary Murfree and John Fox for their stereotypical portrayals of mountaineers. However, Kephart's own descriptions of mountain life do not dispel the local colorists' vision of the region, and in fact they support and reinforce the hillbilly stereotype. For instance, he describes the uniqueness of mountain residents by pointing out that "[T]he mountaineers of the South are marked apart from other folks by dialect, by customs, by character, by self-conscious isolation."<sup>39</sup> Consistent with the static image constructed by local colorists, he contends that "[T]he mountain folk still live in the eighteenth century. The progress of mankind from that age to this is no heritage of theirs."<sup>40</sup> His physical description of mountaineers also reinforces the local colorists' stereotype: "Your typical mountaineer is lank, he is always unkempt, he is fond of toting a gun on his shoulder, and his curiosity about a stranger's name and business is

---

<sup>37</sup>Horace Kephart, Our Southern Highlanders: A Narrative of Adventure in the Southern Appalachians and a Study of Life Among the Mountaineers (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 52.

<sup>38</sup>Horace Kephart, "Horace Kephart By Himself," North Carolina Library Bulletin 5 (1922), 52.

<sup>39</sup>Kephart, Our Southern Highlanders, 16.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 18.

promptly, though politely, spoken." <sup>41</sup> Moreover, Kephart describes in vivid detail the hillbilly qualities that the American public most closely associated with the region's inhabitants, including a love of moonshine and a propensity towards feuding. While it is debatable as to whether Kephart was a tourist, his landmark study became the model by which government planners would later interpret the cultural legacy of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, the most visited tourist attraction in the region.

With popular literature propagating the static hillbilly image of the mountain South, it was inevitable that this image occasionally found its way into tourist promotional literature. Aside from writers in search of local color, however, few tourists before World War I truly desired to encounter poor mountaineers. Since most popular highland resorts catered to new industrial wealth and regional elites who desired modern comforts and luxuries, Victorian-era tourists more likely wanted to avoid rather than to seek out mountaineers and their culture. Promoters may have feared that the perception of impoverished, violent mountaineers would dissuade potential upper-class visitors from patronizing resorts in the region. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that prior to 1914 most tourist promotionals altogether ignored mountain culture and the unsavory image of the mountaineer and focused instead on the health, scenery, and comforts offered by the region's resorts. Lindsay's Guide Book to Western North Carolina offers a good example. The promotional illustrates over thirty tourist attractions in western North Carolina, describes the region's climate, provides information on churches, schools, hotels, newspapers, and industries, but it

---

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 12.

never mentions the people who live in the area.<sup>42</sup> Promotionals that did recognize the existence of mountain people pitied their uncivilized existence and assured potential visitors that they were not likely to encounter any mountaineer types. A Southern Railway promotional issued in 1894 insisted that "moonshiners" were "living back in the utter-most fastness of the mountains, remote from all except their own kind."<sup>43</sup> Thus, for most tourists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Victorian high culture was a much more important cultural draw than the vernacular folkways of "primitive" mountaineers.

Nevertheless, by 1914, many tourists who came to the region expected to encounter the stereotypical mountaineers whom they had read about in travel accounts, local-color stories, and travel guides. Curiously, the unique regional identity of the mountain South arose at time when visitors had less direct interaction with mountain people than ever before during the tourism process. As railroads became the primary mode of transportation into the region, the travel experience became much more passively-oriented. Whereas earlier generations of travelers used to go about encountering natives in the backcountry, modern travel by railroad prevented these encounters and insulated tourists from the mountain people. Traveling by rail directly to an exclusive resort, tourists crossed paths with but rarely engaged local residents during the tourism experience. In addition, since proprietors of exclusive resort hotels

---

<sup>42</sup>T. H. Lindsay, Lindsay's Guide Book to Western North Carolina (Asheville: Randolph-Kerr Printing Co., 1890), 13-23.

<sup>43</sup>Frank Presbrey, The Land of the Sky and Beyond (Washington, D.C.: Southern Railway Company, 1894), 11.

often imported their labor force from outside the region, tourists had fewer opportunities to interact directly with native mountain residents. Consequently, by the end of the nineteenth century, the depiction of mountaineers in popular culture shaped the American tourists' perception of the region more than their actual experiences at mountain resorts. As writers like Horace Kephart and Charles Forster Smith indicate, many of those who propagated the mountaineer myth were visitors who came to the region with preconceived notions of primitive mountaineers derived from published local color writings and tourist literature.

Some visitors who came to the region looking for an "authentic" experience were disappointed, however, to find that the Old World folkways they had read about seemed to be quickly dying off. The penetration of railroads and extractive industries in the southern highlands had unleashed an economic, social, and cultural transformation in the region. As more and more mountain residents were drawn into the wage economy, they left behind their traditional ways of life and eagerly joined in the American culture of consumption. Some tourists who came to the region with preconceived expectations of the region's idyllic folkways lamented what they perceived as the passing of the last vestige of American pioneer heritage.

Among the non-indigenous visitors who were disappointed to find that the old mountain folkways were vanishing were Edith Vanderbilt and Frances Goodrich. Born in New York and raised in Ohio, Goodrich was among the first to realize the market appeal of Appalachian handicrafts. She studied painting at the Yale School of Fine Arts, but sometime in the late-1880s she determined that the artist's life was not

fulfilling to her and decided instead to devote her life to missionary work for the Presbyterian Church. She travelled to Asheville as a pleasure tourist in 1890 for the first time only to discover that there was a great need for missionaries "to bring some sort of order out of chaos" back in the mountains.<sup>44</sup> Like so many other northern Protestant missionaries in the late-nineteenth century, Goodrich discovered that mountaineers were an "exceptional population" who were worthy of social workers' attentions. Thus, she decided to stay in the North Carolina mountains "to help them to be good."<sup>45</sup>

Goodrich's first encounters with the rugged life in the mountainous backcountry shocked her as it did many other upper class visitors. She commented that "I had no conception of such a state of society as exists here . . . I wish you could see some of the homes where they asked me to stay overnight. I have never seen a whole town of such forlorn wretchedness."<sup>46</sup> In 1892, she began her missionary work in Brittain's Cove, twelve miles from Asheville. After she had gained the acceptance of the local residents, a woman from the cove gave her a 40-year old woven coverlet as a gift. Being an artist, Goodrich recognized the fine craftsmanship of this gift. When Goodrich discovered to her dismay that few women in the area still possessed the pre-industrial handicraft skills she had associated with the region, she believed that here

---

<sup>44</sup>Fred Eastman, "An Artist in Religion," The Christian Century 6 August 1930.

<sup>45</sup>Frances Louisa Goodrich, Mountain Homespun (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 16.

<sup>46</sup>Goodrich quoted in Jane Greenleaf, Home Mission Monthly 4 (1891), 112.



was a "fine craft dying out and desirable to revive."<sup>47</sup> She helped to foster the "rediscovery" of the mountain people's cultural roots by opening a shop to teach handicraft skills primarily to women. Founded in 1895 along the old Buncombe Turnpike, Allanstand Cottage Industries allowed tourists to take in local color in a contrived, but nonetheless marketable manner. Most patrons of the shop were tourists who wanted to see the handiworks of the mountain people without actually having to encounter these quaint, yet potentially dangerous folk. To reach a broader audience, Allanstand held an annual exhibition and sale in Asheville during the peak tourist season. A permanent salesroom in Asheville was later opened in 1908.<sup>48</sup> Appealing primarily to tourists, Allanstand Industries helped to reinforce the static image of the southern highlands by fulfilling tourist's expectations of the region's Old World folkways.

While the openings of Allanstand Industries in North Carolina and Fireside Industries at Berea College, Kentucky in the mid 1890s are said to mark the birth of the southern highland handicrafts revival movement, perhaps an even greater catalyst was the support of Edith Vanderbilt, the wife of Biltmore Estate owner George Vanderbilt. The Biltmore Estate opened in 1895, the same year that Goodrich founded Allanstand Industries. During the late 1890s, the Vanderbilts and their guests traveled extensively through the Blue Ridge Mountains looking for authentic mountain

---

<sup>47</sup>Goodrich, Mountain Homespun, 22.

<sup>48</sup>Allen H. Eaton, Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1937), 64-66.

homespun fabric to send as gifts to their northern friends. Perhaps inspired by the success of Allanstand Industries, in 1901 Edith Vanderbilt expanded wood carving classes already underway at Biltmore Village and founded Biltmore Industries, an industrial school that provided training to young men and women living in and around Biltmore Village. The school offered a number of classes on crafts, but the weaving of fine homespun cloth and the making of wooden furniture and accessories proved to be the most useful, popular, and practical.<sup>49</sup> The proximity to the large tourist market in Asheville enabled Biltmore Industries to become a popular souvenir shop where visitors could buy "authentic" mountain handicrafts. Its dependence on tourism is underscored by the fact that Grove Park Inn, one of Asheville's most popular hotels, purchased Biltmore Industries and moved its operations to the hotel in 1917.<sup>50</sup>

So began the handicrafts revival movement, a classic case of cultural interference in which outside interests restructured and re-interpreted regional culture for market appeal. The revival of mountain handicrafts was in part a response to tourists' desire to have their expectations of the region validated. In the absence of an "authentic" mountain experience, handicrafts offered tourists at least a contrived version of an authentic culture. As demand increased for handicrafts products, Vanderbilt, Goodrich, and a handful of other non-indigenous shop proprietors formed the Southern Workers Council in 1913 in Asheville. Organized to stimulate better standards and

---

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 69-70.

<sup>50</sup>Bruce E. Johnson, Built for the Ages: A History of the Grove Park Inn (Asheville: Grove Park Inn and Country Club, 1991), 58.

greater market interest in mountain handicrafts, the Southern Workers Council was the precursor of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild founded in 1930.<sup>51</sup>

Since tourists provided much of the customer base for the handicrafts market, it is no accident that Asheville, the premier resort city of the region, became the headquarters of the handicrafts revival movement. Nor is it surprising that tourism emerged in communities where settlement schools taught highland handicrafts programs. No other community better illustrates this than Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Three years after establishing a settlement school in isolated Gatlinburg in 1912, the women's Greek letter society Pi Beta Phi launched a handicrafts program that set the stage for the rise of Gatlinburg as one of the leading resort centers of the southern highlands.

While the handicrafts industry reinforced the contrived image of mythical contemporary pioneers, the reality was that the vernacular cultures of the southern highlands were evolving to accommodate modernization. The shift from a self-sufficient agrarian culture to a mainstream culture of consumption was nowhere more evident in the region than at resorts, where hosts sought to satisfy guests with modern amenities, luxuries, and the latest popular diversions. As tourists from all over the country traveled to highland resorts, they brought their culture and fashions with them. As one of the tourists in Tiernan's Land of the Sky put it, "we shall take the best of

---

<sup>51</sup>Martha Norburn Allen, Asheville and the Land of the Sky (Charlotte: Heritage House, 1960), 60-61.

society and civilization with us."<sup>52</sup> Indeed by some accounts, mountain resorts were nothing short of a cultural island amid a sea of primitive backwardness. For instance, upon arriving at Hot Springs, North Carolina, Tiernan's narrator comments: "It is not possible to imagine a sense of stronger contrast than that which we are conscious on coming to this gay watering-place out of the wild gorge through which we have passed, and after the rough life of which we have had a glimpse. We felt as if we had entered by magic into another world. Here is a large hotel, with all the appliances of civilization; well-dressed people in every direction on the piazzas and lawns; stir, movement, and all that air of do-nothing gayety which pervades such places."<sup>53</sup>

The exclusivity of many resorts prevented much direct interaction between indigenous mountain residents and tourists, but the injection of this "outsider" culture into the region exposed isolated mountaineers to mainstream America like no other medium. The exposure to popular culture because of tourism often caused concerns about the eroding values and morals of mountain people. For instance, following a clean-up campaign in 1914, Blowing Rock Mayor G. M. Sudderth voiced his concern that the town's success as a resort may undermine its moral basis: "And yet with filth moved and bad odors dispelled from sight and smell, there are 'dark clouds' on the moral horizon of our beloved community, clouds which can be dispensed only by the bright beams from the 'Sun of Righteousness.'"<sup>54</sup> Likewise, in Mary Noailles Murfree's

---

<sup>52</sup>Reid, Land of the Sky, 31.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>54</sup>Barry M. Buxton, A Village Tapestry: A History of Blowing Rock (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1989), 17-21.

"The Dancing Party at Harrison's Cove," Murfree notes that Mrs. Harrison feared that her daughters were doomed, because they "had become imbued with sophistication at Cheatham's Crossroads," where they often saw rich tourists on their way to New Helvetia Springs.<sup>55</sup>

While local residents occasionally expressed their uneasiness with the invasion of the mountains by a new way of life, it was outsiders who most often recognized that tourism brought cultural change to the region. Christian missionaries in particular feared that tourism had a pernicious effect on mountaineers who saw "only the lighter side of more privileged civilization, pick up on its vices and seldom understand its Titanic industry."<sup>56</sup> Missionaries realized that the primitive mountain people often tried to emulate the lifestyle of tourists, "whose manners and dress set new fashions and whose freely-spent money rapidly overturns all local standards of value."<sup>57</sup> In her book, The Spirit of the Mountains, Emma Miles Bell expressed her strong concerns about tourism's negative impact upon the morals of the mountain people employed in the tourist industry:

When the cottages are occupied the trouble begins. The hotel may bring its own servants; but for the summer people there are washing and sewing to be done by the women, and work in the gardens and stables by the men of the place. Later, they are hired as house servants, and as caretakers during the winter season, when the houses must stand empty. All this is hardly to be

---

<sup>55</sup>Murfree, In the Tennessee Mountains, 226.

<sup>56</sup>H. Paul Douglass, Christian Reconstruction in the South (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1909), 346.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 80.

avoided, perhaps, but a host of evils follow. Here is an easy way of making money, and the old pursuits are abandoned.

Is it any wonder that false ambition creeps in? The lady of the hotel or cottage, when she packs her trunks to go home, leaves sundry trinkets out for the mountain girl who has served her--half-worn clothing such as the girl has never seen before, trimmed hats, books and magazines, if she can read. The recipient plans for a similar donation the next year. She does not willingly return to sunbonnet and homespun. Her old mother cares little for the new clothes, but sees at once how much easier it is to buy blankets than to spin and weave. So the loom and wheel are consigned to the barn loft, where they fall to pieces with dry-rot, and the woman forgets her coverlet patterns.<sup>58</sup>

While, as we have seen, tourism helped to *revive* highland handicrafts, this passage ironically suggests that tourism served to *undermine* the mountain handicrafts culture.

Social and cultural disparities were nowhere more evident in the region than in and around resort communities. At the same time that the continuation of high birthrates and partible inheritance patterns drove more and more mountain families into living a life of poverty and squalor, rich outsiders continued to visit, buy land, and develop elaborate "cottages." At both popular resort cities and isolated cottage communities, the class disparities between host and guest manifested themselves most obviously in architecture. Whereas vernacular architectures of domiciles consisted primarily of log cabins or simple frame structures, tourist accommodations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were typically of a much more sophisticated architectural style. As was the fashion of the day, Victorian architectural themes prevailed in most tourist-related structures, especially hotels, boarding houses, and tourist cottages. Buncombe County, North Carolina provides an excellent example of how architecture symbolized the social

---

<sup>58</sup>Emma Miles Bell, The Spirit of the Mountains (1905; reprint, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), 195-196.

and cultural gulf between mountaineers and tourists. While as late as 1900 it was quite common to find people living in crude log huts in the rural areas of Buncombe County, wealthy tourists stayed in the elaborate architectural structures of Asheville like the Battery Park Hotel, Kenilworth Inn, or the Biltmore Estate. Gifford Pinchot, the professional forester hired by George Vanderbilt to oversee the Biltmore Forest, acknowledged that "among the one-room cabins of the Appalachian mountaineers, it [the Biltmore House] did not belong. The contrast was a devastating commentary on the injustice of concentrated wealth."<sup>59</sup> A less extreme example is Blount County, Tennessee, where the rambling Victorian structures of Montvale Springs Hotel or Alleghany Springs Hotel contrasted sharply with the simple log and frame structures that predominated in the county at the turn of the century. Thus the phenomenon of "castles among cabins" at mountain resorts illustrated the social disparities between mountaineers and the "furriners" who visited the region as tourists.

These differences were also highlighted by the contrast of social life between local residents and visitors at resorts. The fashionable social life found at resorts usually set tourists apart from the local people. Instead of desiring to immerse themselves in the local people's music, food, and dance, wealthy tourists more likely preferred popular or classical music, European cuisine, and the latest dance steps. If they wanted to take in the local color, they wanted to see the quaint, archaic lifeways of the mountaineers in a sanitized setting, such as that found in handicraft shops.

---

<sup>59</sup>Gifford Pinchot, Breaking New Ground (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 48.

As the visitor's experience at most highland resorts became almost totally divorced from any actual interaction with mountain people, resort life was increasingly defined by fashion, high culture, and modern conveniences. Yet there was a growing tourist-based market for domesticated versions of the Old World mountain culture they had read about in fictional local color stories. It is therefore not surprising that tourists were able to persist in believing the myth of the static mountaineer, in spite of the fact that the people of the mountain South were undergoing momentous social and cultural changes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From the visitors' perspective, everything in their insulated tourist experience validated the notion of regional distinctiveness. Tourism put wealthy urban visitors and the poor highlanders in proximity of one another, but by the 1910s they rarely interacted except in a contrived setting. Consequently, while tourism induced unprecedented cultural changes and helped to modernize the region, it also perpetuated the image of the hillbilly, an image that would become a powerful marketing tool for tourism after World War I.



**Chapter 4-Trains, Trees, and Travelers:  
Tourism and the Landscape in the Southern Highlands, 1865-1914**

"And always, be the landscape what it may--  
Blue misty hill, or sweep of glimmering plain--  
It is the eye's endeavor still to gain  
The fine, faint limit of the bounding day.  
God happily, in this mystic mode, would fain  
Hint of a happier home, far, far away."

excerpt from The Land of the Sky<sup>1</sup>

The natural amenities of the mountain environment have always been the foundation for tourism in the southern highlands. Since the colonial era, tourists traveled to the mountain South to partake of the region's healthful spring waters, beautiful scenery, salubrious climate, and natural wonders. In the late nineteenth century, however, the travel industry began to package and sell the landscape and natural amenities of the region as a commodity to tourists. Tourist entrepreneurs marketed the environment by luring tourists into the region with promotional strategies that featured the natural amenities of the mountains. With nature and wilderness at the heart of the region's lucrative tourist trade, tourism provided an economic incentive to preserve the environmental qualities that drew visitors to the region. This was especially true in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when nature was the most important attraction for tourists in search of health and adventure. Consequently, Victorian tourism in the highland South directly and indirectly spawned efforts to preserve and conserve the region's environmental resources. Indeed, some of the

---

<sup>1</sup>Christian Reid, The Land of the Sky, or Adventures in Mountain By-Ways (New York: Scribners, 1876), 21.

major nature preservation and land conservation movements of the era were conceived of and implemented at highland resorts.

While tourism sometimes inspired environmental preservation efforts, the coming of railroads and mass tourism paradoxically brought unprecedented changes to the landscape. Some resort communities witnessed the proliferation of hotels, boarding houses, second homes, sanitariums, and other tourist-related developments that significantly changed land use patterns. In some cases, it was excessive tourist-related growth that inspired efforts to preserve the land. Tourism may have sometimes provided an economic justification for environmental preservation and conservation, but the development induced by the growth of modern tourism substantially modified the landscape in and around resort communities.

From the very beginnings of highland tourism in the eighteenth century, the environment played a crucial role in the evolution of regional tourism. Most antebellum tourists traveled to the region primarily for the scenery and healthfulness of the mountains. Nature continued to be the most important tourist draw after the Civil War, but the relationship between tourism and the environment was modified somewhat in the Victorian Era. One important difference was that the decline of hydropathy diminished the importance of natural springs as an attraction for tourists. As physicians systematically discredited hydropathy in the late nineteenth century, the practice of "taking the waters" decreased precipitously.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>Susan E. Cayleff, Wash and Be Healed: The Water-Cure Movement and Women's Health (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 160-63.

But despite the decline of hydropony, the health-restoring mineral waters of mountain springs continued to bring many visitors to the region long after the Civil War. In fact, "taking the waters" endured as a folk treatment for some ailments well into the twentieth century. Perhaps the best evidence for the continued appeal of hydropony appears in the advertisements and guide books that lured tourists to the region with promises of beneficial spring waters. For instance, in a description of Hot Springs, North Carolina, the 1890 Lindsay's Guide Book to Western North Carolina vividly extols "the life-giving virtues of the waters that bring back to the faded cheek the bloom of health."<sup>3</sup> An 1894 Southern Railway promotional booklet of western North Carolina likewise boasted that the waters of Hot Springs were famous "for their efficacy especially in cases of rheumatism and gout."<sup>4</sup> This same promotional pointed out that "the purest of crystal water gushes forth from the hidden springs of an untainted soil" in the Blue Ridge mountains.<sup>5</sup>

Henderson Springs, a much smaller hydroponic resort across the mountains in Sevier County, Tennessee, also continued to draw tourists with its "health-giving" spring waters until after World War I. Advertisements for the Henderson Springs Hotel proudly cited Dr. J. W. Slocum, a local chemist whose tests showed that the mineral content and healthfulness of Henderson Springs was greater than any other

---

<sup>3</sup>T. H. Lindsay, Lindsay's Guide Book to Western North Carolina (Asheville: Randolph-Kerr Printing Co., 1890), 40.

<sup>4</sup>Frank Presbrey, The Land of the Sky and Beyond (Washington, D.C.: Southern Railway Company, 1894), 17.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 5.

natural spring in the region. Despite the decline of hydropathy, many other new highland resorts that developed in the late nineteenth century were located near natural springs. In the Smoky Mountains, for instance, there were eight new resorts developed between 1878 and 1900, all of which derived their names from nearby mineral springs, including Henderson Springs, Mt. Nebo Springs, Doyle Springs, Wildwood Springs, Line Springs, Alleghany Springs, Glen Alpine Springs, and Dupont Springs.<sup>6</sup> All of these hotels' advertisements boasted of the healthful qualities of their spring waters. Among the other spas that continued to attract visitors with "efficacious" waters were Hot Springs and Eureka Springs, Arkansas, Red Boiling Springs, Tennessee, Hot Springs, North Carolina (formerly Warm Springs), and the resorts of the Virginia Springs region.

Nevertheless, despite the enduring appeal of the water cure, by 1900 natural springs were no longer the primary environmental attraction for tourists. This shift is clearly manifested in late nineteenth century advertisements that continued to mention natural springs, but gave less and less emphasis to the efficacies of their waters. The decline of hydropathy, however, did not at all diminish the importance of health tourism in the southern highlands, for other salubrious environmental amenities replaced natural springs as an attraction for invalids. Once again, this change is readily apparent in tourism promotionals that stressed other healthful natural amenities besides natural springs, namely the region's clean air and salubrious climate. This

---

<sup>6</sup>Mary Ruth Chiles, *Resorts on the Smoky Mountain Region, 1832 to 1930*, typescript files, National Park Service Archives, Sugarlands.

shift in promotional strategy was due in large part to the rise of the southern highlands as a health retreat for patients with respiratory ailments.

Nowhere was this trend more apparent than in and around Asheville, which became a major center of tuberculosis sanitariums in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. People had long acknowledged the beneficial effects of mountain air in Asheville, but it was not until after the city gained direct railroad access in 1880 that it became well known as a retreat for invalids with lung disease. As more and more health seekers came from the North, promotionals increasingly emphasized the city's "salubrious climate" and the "pure and bracing air." Appealing directly to pulmonary patients, Lindsay's Guide Book indicates that "this region possesses a greater number of conditions favorable to recovery from lung diseases than any other part of the United States."<sup>7</sup> To give legitimacy to Asheville's claims of healthfulness, promotionals quoted figures from the U.S. Census Bureau showing that western North Carolina had far lower pulmonary-related death rates than any other region of the nation. One advertisement cited Dr. J. E. Dickson of Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, who claimed that he was "not aware of any other spot in Europe or America so full of all that is desirable" to cure lung problems.<sup>8</sup> Another advertisement claimed that the Blue Ridge is "where malaria is unknown and contagion unfeared." Perhaps the best endorsement came in 1875 when Dr. J. W. Gleitman, a German-born physician who established a sanitarium for consumptives in Asheville, circulated about

---

<sup>7</sup>Lindsay, Lindsay's Guide Book, 20.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

64,000 copies of a paper that he presented to the American Public Health Association entitled, "Western North Carolina as a Health Resort."<sup>9</sup>

With mountain air billed as "a delight to inhale, a very luxury to breathe" and the climate guaranteed "to increase strength and vigor," pulmonary health seekers flocked to western North Carolina's sanitariums.<sup>10</sup> Among the famous health tourists who visited the region in the late nineteenth century was John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club. When Muir visited western North Carolina in 1898, he had been ill with a bronchial cough for many months. But after climbing Grandfather Mountain, he wrote to his wife, "the air has cured me. I think I could walk ten miles and not be tired."<sup>11</sup> As western North Carolina's reputation as health resort area grew, the number of tubercular sanitariums also grew. Perhaps the most celebrated sanitarium in the region was the Winyah House, one of at least two dozen sanitariums in the Asheville area in the late nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

While the healthfulness of the climate and air was an important promotional tool for tourist entrepreneurs, pleasure seekers of the Victorian Era traveled more for scenery, wildlife, and natural wonders rather than for health. Poetic descriptions of mountain scenery were included in virtually every local color story, travel account,

---

<sup>9</sup>Ina W. Van Noppen and John J. Van Noppen, Western North Carolina Since the Civil War (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978), 379; Skyland Springs brochure (1896), verticle file on "Sanitariums," Pack Library, Asheville.

<sup>10</sup>Lindsay, Lindsay's Guide Book, 3-4.

<sup>11</sup>"A Short History of Grandfather Mountain," vertical file on "Grandfather Mountain," typescript, Pack Library, Asheville.

<sup>12</sup>George H. Chapin, Health Resorts of the South (Boston:n.p., 1891).

and tourism advertisement published about the highland South in the late nineteenth century. The writers who shaped the public's image of the southern highlands, including Mary Noailles Murfree, John Fox, Charles Dudley Warner, Christian Reid, and Harold Wright Bell, all vividly described the majestic scenery of the mountains in their respective writings. Christian Reid (or Frances Tiernan), for instance, described the view from Lover's Leap above Hot Springs, North Carolina as such:

We overlook the green valley, with the hotel in the foreground, and a beautiful stretch of varying landscape behind. Blue, wooded hills enclose it like the walls of an amphitheater, and we see beyond still bluer heights, with the pomp of the sunset-sky spread above. It is a pomp which is dazzling in its glory. Fantastically-shaped clouds of crimson and rose color are shot with luminous splendor, and their edges are gilded with a radiance at which we can scarcely look. What royal magnificence!"

Such rhapsodic descriptions of the mountain views in literature helped to sell scenery and create high expectations for tourists.<sup>13</sup>

In advertisements and guide books, tourism promoters made mountain scenery the heart of their marketing appeal to tourists. Lindsay's promised that visitors would be awe-struck by scenery "as beautiful as ever charmed the eye" and went on to offer vivid descriptions of many "breathtaking" sights.<sup>14</sup> A Southern Railway promotional in 1894 commented that the scenery of western North Carolina "forms a picture of natural beauty and grandeur, the equal of which would be difficult to find in any

---

<sup>13</sup>Reid, Land of the Sky, 65.

<sup>14</sup>Lindsay, Lindsay's Guide Book, 3.

land."<sup>15</sup> In East Tennessee, scenery was the central selling point in the Little River Railroad's promotion of "The Beautiful Elkmont Country." According to brochures, Elkmont offered "spectacular scenery" and "entrancing views" that were "beyond description."<sup>16</sup> Advertisements for Dupont Springs in Sevier County, Tennessee promised that visitors would see "one of the finest pictures of natural scenery ever presented to the natural eye from the balcony of the hotel."<sup>17</sup> Selling scenery was so fundamental to highland tourism in the Victorian era that scenic descriptions were included in all the travel literature of the day.

Among the other landscape features that tourism promoters marketed to visitors were the natural fauna and wildlife of the mountains. Nature appealed especially to urban dwellers who longed to leave behind the hustle-bustle of the city and escape to serene forests. As a result, many tourism advertisements touted nature as a main selling point to potential visitors. For instance, an 1883 advertisement for Hot Springs, North Carolina promised that visitors "will find nature, in her wildest mood, 'when unadorned is adorned the most.'" Many resorts sold themselves to tourists as a sportsman's paradise, offering many popular outdoor activities, such as fishing, hunting, and camping. Elkmont, it was advertised, "is an excellent place for rest and quiet for campers, and enjoyment for the anglers. . . The fisherman who visits this

---

<sup>15</sup>Presbrey, The Land of the Sky and Beyond, 1.

<sup>16</sup>"The Beautiful Elmont Country" tourist brochure (Knoxville: Knoxville and Augusta Railroad Company, 1912), Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum Archives, Townsend.

<sup>17</sup>Chiles, "Dupont Springs."



country is indeed in luck, as Little River with its numerous branches has long been noted for its black bass, rainbow and mountain trout."<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the Southern Railway claimed that western North Carolina "offers to the sportsman a perfect paradise. The streams are full of trout, and through the vast forests roam deer, bear, and wild turkeys."<sup>19</sup> This ad also promised that the region's game was so bountiful that "a bag of one hundred quail is an average day's sport."<sup>20</sup>

While the scenic, salubrious, and recreational qualities of the mountain environment had long been important tourist draws, a new type of environmental attraction--the natural wonder--emerged in the late nineteenth century. Inspired perhaps by the success of Mammoth Cave, a popular tourist attraction in central Kentucky since before the Civil War, some entrepreneurs hoped to turn a profit from the curious geological formations found throughout the southern highlands. One notable example was Luray Caverns, a tourist attraction that transformed the isolated, rural community of Luray, Virginia into a popular resort in the late nineteenth century. Shortly after its discovery in 1878, the Luray Caverns attracted hundreds of stagecoach travelers to Luray every week. By 1881, northern railroad interests had bought the property around the cave, built a rail line to Luray, illuminated the caverns with electric lights, and erected a fabulous Tudor-style hotel to accommodate wealthy tourists from the North. The resort's developers marketed "Luray's wondrous caverns"

---

<sup>18</sup>"The Beautiful Elkmont Country."

<sup>19</sup>Presbrey, The Land of the Sky and Beyond, 12.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 9.

in a national advertising campaign. The Cumberland and Ohio Railroad published brochures proclaiming that "no straining or expansion of a terminology derived from the upperworld will enable it to describe adequately the wonderful phenomenon presented in the realm of stalacta."<sup>21</sup> The Luray Caverns was one of many "natural wonder" tourist attractions in the southern highlands. Among the other natural geological formations that enticed travelers were the Craighead Caverns in Tennessee, the Natural Bridge in Virginia, and Chimney Rock in North Carolina.

Clearly, the environment, with all of its recreational, scenic, salubrious, and wondrous qualities, was the central selling point that effectively lured tourists to highland resorts. The combined appeal of great scenery, healthy climate, bountiful wildlife, and natural wonders meant that the environment was, in many respects, the basis for tourism in the region. Rather than focusing on one particular natural quality, advertisements marketed the total appeal of the mountain environment to attract visitors. For instance, Lindsay's guide book asks, "what more can one ask for than healthful climate, pure air, good water, unsurpassed scenery and congenial people?" The primacy of the environment in promoting highland tourism is underscored by Lindsay's claim that "nature has done everything and offers every essential to human happiness."<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup>E. W. Clark and Co., Description of the Shenandoah Valley Railroad and its Connections, Resources, and Proposed Extensions (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane, and Scott, 1881), 11; Elizabeth Atwood, "'Saratoga of the South': Tourism in Luray, Virginia, 1878-1905," in Edward Ayers, ed., The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth Century Virginia (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1991), 157-72.

<sup>22</sup>Lindsay, Lindsay's Guide Book, 15.

With environmental amenities at the heart of highland tourism in the Victorian Era, the travel industry provided a strong financial interest in preserving the landscape. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the desire to promote, enhance, or preserve tourism often motivated environmental conservation efforts. Since an unspoiled view and pristine air were valuable commodities at resort areas, it was only natural for those with an interest in the travel industry (including both investors and visitors) to try to preserve the natural amenities that fueled tourism. Consequently, resort communities spawned some of the region's most significant and successful land conservation and environmental preservation movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Often the purpose of these movements was more to benefit tourism interests than to preserve the landscape.

Since Asheville was the premier resort city of the southern highlands, a number of these tourism-inspired environmental movements developed there. As Asheville's reputation as a health resort grew, local authorities became increasingly concerned about the city's sanitary and environmental problems. Consequently in the 1880s and 1890s, the city mounted a concerted effort to clean up and improve the appearance of the city for the sake of enhancing tourism. In 1885, the city launched a pioneering campaign to clean up sanitary conditions which were detrimental to Asheville as a health resort. The city council adopted a new municipal code in 1887 that prohibited "dogs, swine, horses and cattle running at large within the town." Shortly thereafter, a sanitary chief and a sanitary inspector were appointed.<sup>23</sup> As town boosters became

---

<sup>23</sup>Van Noppen and Van Noppen, Western North Carolina, 382.

increasingly conscious of Asheville's natural advantages as a health resort, they did everything in their power to protect its environmental resources. In 1896, for instance, the editors of Asheville's society newspaper, the Asheville Hotel and News Reporter, launched a campaign to ban the use of black-burning bituminous coal in the city. An editorial insisted that "since Asheville poses as a health and pleasure resort, its citizens should see to it that nothing which is preventable should be permitted to make the city less desirable as a temporary residence for visitors who come here for clean air."<sup>24</sup>

But the concern for the environment was not limited to the Asheville city limits, for it became a larger regional concern in the 1890s and early 1900s. A regional conservation effort inspired in part by tourism was the scientific forestry movement initiated at the Biltmore Forest. Like so many other tourists who built second homes at highland resorts, George Vanderbilt was so impressed with Asheville during a stay at the Battery Park Hotel in 1887 that he decided to build a vacation home there. After quietly buying up over 7,000 acres of land to the south of Asheville, Vanderbilt financed the construction of the lavish Biltmore Estate. Vanderbilt's land, however, bore the scars of decades of misuse. In an attempt to restore the scenic and recreational value of the Biltmore Forest, Vanderbilt hired Gifford Pinchot, a rising young forester at the time, to experiment with scientific forestry techniques on his woodlands. When Pinchot explored Vanderbilt's property, he found that "the forest

---

<sup>24</sup>Asheville Hotel and News Reporter, February 1, 1896, in North Carolina Collection, Pack Library, Asheville.

was deplorable in the extreme."<sup>25</sup> Pinchot noted that the Biltmore Forest "had been put together from small impoverished farms, the forest on which had been burned, slashed, and overgrazed until it was little more than a shadow of its former self."<sup>26</sup> To improve the aesthetic appearance of the property as well as to earn profit from its timber stands, Pinchot began "the first practical application of forestry management in the United States."<sup>27</sup>

Pinchot brought in Dr. C. Alvin Schenck as his assistant and began a series of "improvement cuttings" and tree plantings to diversify the species of trees. Schenck was a German-trained forester whom Pinchot never trusted because he had a "lack of faith in American Forestry." After Schenck's arrival at Biltmore in the spring of 1895, he recognized the need for professional forestry training in the region. He began taking forestry students in 1896 and a year later he established the Biltmore Forest School, the first school of modern forestry in the United States.<sup>28</sup>

Another Asheville-based regional environmental movement inspired by tourism was the effort to create a national park in the southern Appalachian Mountains. During the inception and development of the movement, the impetus for a park in Appalachia came from non-indigenous visitors who wanted to see the region spared

---

<sup>25</sup>Gifford Pinchot, Biltmore Forest, the Property of George M. Vanderbilt: An Account of Its Treatment and the Results of the First Year's Work (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1893), 14.

<sup>26</sup>Gifford Pinchot, Breaking New Ground, 2nd Edition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 50.

<sup>27</sup>Pinchot, Biltmore Forest, 5.

<sup>28</sup>Pinchot, Breaking New Ground, 152.

the environmental blight caused by the rapacious lumbering and mining industries then sweeping into the region. The earliest recorded statement promoting the idea of a park in Appalachia was in October 1885 when Dr. Henry O. Marcy of Boston, Massachusetts called for the establishment of western North Carolina as a health resort area under state control. Dr. Marcy had himself been a health seeker in Asheville who believed that the salubrious qualities of the region were a treasure to be cherished and preserved.<sup>29</sup>

After several years of editorializing and discussing the idea, the movement finally got off the ground in 1899 when the Appalachian National Park Association (ANPA) was formed in Asheville. Judge William Day and Dr. Chase Ambler, both of whom were natives of Ohio who had moved to Asheville for their health, organized a meeting of forty-two newspaper editors, politicians, and industrialists from all over southern Appalachia. The purpose of the meeting, which took place in the Battery Park Hotel on November 22-23, 1899, was to discuss the establishment of a national park in Appalachia. The two-day meeting resulted in the establishment of the ANPA. The organization, led by Sen. Jeter Pritchard of Hot Springs, North Carolina, began petitioning Congress for the creation of a national park in essentially the same location as the present Great Smoky Mountain National Park, but with a larger area. In 1901, the ANPA indicated that tourism was an important motivation for their movement when they published and distributed 5,000 booklets stating that they sought the

---

<sup>29</sup>George A. McCoy, A Brief History of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Movement in North Carolina (Asheville: Inland Press, 1976),19-23.

"aesthetic protection of the Southern Appalachians, the finest resort region in the United States." Thus, tourism was at the heart of their movement to prevent "the defacement of the grand scenery of the mountain regions."<sup>30</sup>

With their tourism/conservation rationale in hand, the ANPA began enlisting more supporters from all over southern Appalachia. They succeeded in convincing the six states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Virginia to pass legislation giving the federal government the right to acquire lands within those states and to hold them tax free for the purpose of creating a national park. The drive for a national park, however, lost its momentum late in 1901, when Congress passed a resolution stating its opposition to purchasing privately-held lands for the creation of a national park. Shortly afterwards, the ANPA changed its name to the Appalachian National Forest Association (ANFA) and began working for the creation of a national forest rather than a national park.

With the help of the American Forestry Association, the ANFA finally succeeded in 1911, when Congress passed the Weeks Bill providing for the establishment of forest reserves and national forests in the southern Appalachian mountains. One of the first national forests set aside for recreational purposes was Cherokee National Forest, a wilderness reserve in western North Carolina created in 1911 that eventually grew to over a million acres. Although ANPA did not succeed in establishing a national park

---

<sup>30</sup>Chase Ambler, Synopsis of Work, 4th Edition (Asheville: Appalachian National Park Association, 1901), 2-3.

in southern Appalachia, it was an important first step towards state-promoted tourism.<sup>31</sup> More importantly for the purposes of this study is that ANPA's literature clearly indicates that tourism was a primary justification for this environmental preservation movement.

Thus, Asheville, the most popular resort of the Blue Ridge region, was the birthplace of municipal sanitation campaigns, modern forestry conservation, and the movement to create a national park in southern Appalachia. On the Tennessee side of the mountains, however, there was much less interest in such natural preservation efforts. One reason for East Tennesseans' apathy towards the first national park movement was that tourism was simply not as important in Tennessee as it was in North Carolina. There were a number of successful resorts in the mountains of Tennessee, but the travel industry was not a major pillar of the region's economy as it was in North Carolina. In short, tourism provided a much greater economic interest in preserving the landscape in western North Carolina than it did in East Tennessee.

In the early twentieth century, logging and mining were far more important segments of East Tennessee's economy than tourism. These extractive industries stripped the land of its resources with devastating impacts to the landscape. But some logging companies had a secondary interest in tourism that influenced their treatment of the land. The Little River Railroad and Lumber Company provides a good example. For years the company clear cut the Little River watershed in the Smoky

---

<sup>31</sup>Carlos C. Campbell, Birth of a National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1960), 15-16.



Mountains without any consideration of how their logging practices were affecting the landscape. But as early as 1908, Wilson B. Townsend, president of the lumber company, was aware that, unless he could sell the company's property, he would have over 77,000 acres of essentially worthless, cut-over land on his hands within a few years. For that reason, he made a concerted effort to enhance the property's recreational and scenic value to boost the land's value as a tourist attraction. After Elkmont was converted from a logging camp into a resort and the company began offering weekend tourist excursions, Townsend showed more concern for the environmental consequences of his company's logging methods, at least in the areas close to Elkmont. As the company developed a secondary interest in tourism, he ordered his employees not to cut or stockpile timber within view of the train's scenic excursion route "so as not to mar the scenery."<sup>32</sup> But aside from influencing where loggers cut, the company's interest in tourism had little effect on their logging activities. Still the movement for a national park in the Smoky Mountains emerged in East Tennessee in the 1920s in large part because the Little River Railroad opened tourism to the area as never before and made Elkmont into a popular resort.

In older, more-established resort communities, the sentiment for preservation tended to be much stronger than at new resorts. Second-home owners at exclusive resorts sometimes fought over-development to preserve the character of their chosen vacation retreat. For instance, most cottage owners at Beersheba Springs preferred the

---

<sup>32</sup>Little River Lumber Company Board of Trustees, Minutes, Vol. 1, March 21, 1911, Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum Archives, Townsend.

slow pace of life and rustic qualities of the spa. As a result, they did not want to see the resort turned into a popular resort. As one Beersheba Springs summer visitor claimed, "we cottagers at Beersheba never really wanted the railroad to come any closer than Coalmont. It would bring many undesirable elements, we figured." In a similar situation at White Sulphur Springs, the C&O Railroad curtailed railroad access and limited development around the Greenbrier so as to preserve the exclusivity of the resort.<sup>33</sup>

Although tourism often acted as an incentive for nature preservation and conservation, tourist-related development sometimes brought significant changes to the landscape in and around resort communities. Nowhere were these tourism-induced changes in the land more visible than in Asheville. After railroads came to Asheville in the early 1880s, the city quickly became a tourist mecca. Over the next twenty years, the city of Asheville developed a tourist infrastructure to sustain the thousands of visitors who traveled to the "land of the sky" every week. To accommodate the rapid growth of the city's permanent and seasonal population, land development in Asheville boomed, resulting in significant landscape modifications. Perhaps the most visible change to the city's landscape was the erection of Battery Park Hotel. During the Civil War, a Confederate battery had camped on a hill to the west of Asheville that became known as Battery Porter. After the war, Battery Porter became a

---

<sup>33</sup>William Olcott, The Greenbrier Heritage (Netherlands: Arindt, Preston, Chapin, Lamb, and Keen, Inc., 1980), 74-78; Margaret Brown Coppinger, ed., Beersheba Springs: A History and a Celebration, 1832-1982 (Beersheba Springs: Beersheba Springs Historical Society, 1983), 20.

sightseeing attraction for Asheville visitors who climbed the hill to see the absolutely enchanting views. One of these visitors commented that "if some enterprising company would build a handsome hotel [atop Battery Porter], and furnish it with all the modern improvements, it doubtless would become the most popular resort in the city."<sup>34</sup> In 1886, railroad promoter Col. Frank Coxe answered this visitor's call by building the Battery Park Hotel. Towering over the city atop Confederate Battery, the hotel dominated the view of the city and became Asheville's most prominent and visible manmade landmark for nearly forty years.

Development accelerated in Asheville in the 1890s, when the city government committed funds to improving its tourist infrastructure. To help the growth of the community's travel industry, the city financed the construction of municipal trolley lines, utilities, and parks. In addition, the construction of hotels, boarding homes, summer cottages, and sanitariums continued unabated throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Add to this a population increase of over 34,000 from 1870 to 1910 and Asheville had a major development boom during this period. All of this growth and construction resulted in significant changes in land use patterns as farmlands and wooded areas were developed for tourist-related purposes. The growth of second home neighborhoods for seasonal visitors, such as Albemarle Park and Grovemont, also modified the landscape in and around Asheville.<sup>35</sup> Consequently,

---

<sup>34</sup>Milton Ready, Asheville: Land of the Sky (Northbridge: Windsor Publications Inc., 1986), 41.

<sup>35</sup>Douglas Swaim, ed., Cabins and Castles: The History and Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina (Asheville: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources,

much of Asheville's physical growth from 1880 to 1914 can be attributed to the tourist-related development of hotels, summer homes, boarding houses, and sanitariums.

Changes in land use patterns were evident not only in Asheville, but also at other highland resorts throughout the region. In western North Carolina, there were several small settlements at the end of the Civil War that developed into thriving resorts by 1914. The communities of Highlands and Blowing Rock are good examples. Highlands was born a resort in 1875 when Samuel T. Kelsey and Charles Hutchinson laid out and built the town on 1,440 acres of densely-wooded land in the Nantahala Forest. Blowing Rock was an isolated campsite in 1874, when William M. Morris opened the first boarding home for visitors. When Blowing Rock incorporated fifteen years later, there were three hotels and many boarding homes on this previously undeveloped land.<sup>36</sup>

Tourism also spawned landscape changes in resorts communities throughout each subregion of the southern highlands. In East Tennessee, Kinzel Springs provides a good example. The property on which Kinzel Springs would develop was rugged land covered with a dense primeval forest in 1894, when Dr. Edward J. Kinzel of Knoxville purchased thirty acres at the west end of Tuckaleechee Cove for his family's

---

1981), 20-26.

<sup>36</sup>Karl B. Raitz and Richard Ulack, Appalachia: A Regional Geography of Land, People, and Development (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 238; Barry M. Buxton, A Village Tapestry: A History of Blowing Rock (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1989), 35.

mountain cottage. The area remained an isolated retreat for Kinzel and his friends and family until 1901, when the Little River Railroad completed its line from Walland to Townsend. Kinzel and his family understood the opportunity presented to them with a railroad linking their riverfront property directly to the population center of Knoxville. Kinzel sold some small parcels of his property to his friends and associates who cleared the land and built vacation homes at Kinzel Springs. As the popularity of the resort grew, Kinzel and his son-in-law, Buford S. Newman, built the Kinzel Springs Hotel in 1914. By that time, there were over twenty cottages in the community and plans for two more hotels.<sup>37</sup> Thus, at Kinzel Springs, tourism brought the development of a previously isolated area, resulting in the clearing of many acres of forest land. Moreover, without modern sewage and septic systems, the cottagers at Kinzel Springs had no choice but to dump their refuse straight into the Little River, polluting this once pristine stream.

The same pattern of development can be found in the Ozark community of Eureka Springs. Located deep in the Ozark country, Eureka Springs remained largely unsettled woodlands until 1879 when the curative powers of the springs became widely-known. Following the completion of a railroad to the community in 1883, Eureka Springs became a boomtown. Over the next ten years, the town witnessed major physical growth as many hotels, boarding homes, and private cottages were built

---

<sup>37</sup>Inez Burns, A History of Blount County: From War Trail to Landing Strip, 1795-1955 (Nashville: Benson Printing Co., 1957), 232-237.

to accommodate tourists.<sup>38</sup>

Clearly, the growth of tourism induced much land development at many resort communities in the southern highlands. Yet the changes in land-use patterns produced by the tourist industry were far less devastating to the landscape than mining or logging. Indeed, tourism served as a check on the environmental destructiveness of extractive industries by providing an economic interest in preserving nature. With environmental amenities as the foundation of the highland South's lucrative travel industry, tourism often served as an economic rationale for natural preservation and conservation movements in the Victorian era. By 1914, however, the seeds of future changes were already planted with the rise of nascent automobile tourism. As highland tourism expanded and adapted to include middle class car tourists, the relationship of tourism to the environment would change, especially after World War II. Although Victorian tourism provided an incentive to preserve nature, modern tourism would serve more as a catalyst for land development and environmental modification.

---

<sup>38</sup>Lee A. Dew, "From Trails to Rails at Eureka Springs," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 41 (1982), 203-214.

**PART II:**

**FROM RAILS TO ROADS, 1914-1996**

## **Chapter 5-'It's a Whole Lot Easier to Pick Tourists than to Pick Cotton': The Automobile and the Economics of Tourism in the Mountain South**

Steve Whaley was a modest farmer who owned a small apple orchard in the bucolic village of Gatlinburg, Tennessee. When the State of Tennessee announced plans to build Highway 71 through Gatlinburg, Whaley knew the road would inevitably bring more tourists and economic opportunities into the community. As a result, in 1922 Whaley sold his apple orchard and built a small tourist court to accommodate automobile tourists. His tourist court was so successful that he reinvested the profits and developed the Riverside Hotel in 1925. Learning the ropes of the hospitality trade without any prior experience, he later admitted: "I don't know no more about runnin' a hotel now than when I started, and I didn't know nothin' then. All I know is you cook and make beds and charge 'em a little." By the time he opened the Riverside Hotel, the movement to create a national park in the Great Smoky Mountains had gained momentum. Like some other residents who were lucky enough to own property along the highway that reached Gatlinburg in 1926, Whaley and his family understood that the impending creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park would transform the community into a tourist mecca. Instead of selling their property to outside developers, the Whaleys kept their property and developed it themselves. Today, nearly 75 years after Steve Whaley built his tourist court, Whaley's descendants own a number of hotels, motels, and restaurants in the thriving resort city of Gatlinburg.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ernie Pyle, "Roving Reporter," Knoxville News-Sentinel, 1 Nov. 1940; "'Dominant' Native Families Still Control Gatlinburg Property," *ibid.*, 4 October 1981.



The story of Steve Whaley illustrates how automobile travel fundamentally changed the economics of tourism in the mountain South. As the automobile became the primary mode of transportation for visitors in the southern highlands after 1914, the region experienced a clientele transition as more and more middle class car tourists vacationed in the mountains. While older, established resorts like Asheville struggled to adapt to the changes brought by car tourism, a number of new middle class resorts like Gatlinburg thrived by catering to motorists. Since the new breed of working class tourists desired affordability and convenience over luxury and comfort, the capital demands for entering the tourist business were far less forbidding than in the Victorian Era. With fewer economic barriers to entry into the tourist market, indigenous residents like Steve Whaley not only pioneered tourism in many new middle class resorts, but they were able to establish tourist courts, restaurants, giftshops, and other small businesses along the roadside at older, elite resorts as well.

Although modern car tourism in the southern highlands offered more entrepreneurial opportunities for indigenous residents than Victorian tourism, the largest share of tourism profits left the community at most resorts. Local residents often initiated a community's tourism trade, but as resorts grew over time, the distribution of economic benefits increasingly flowed away from local and regional investors to outside corporate interests, leaving behind only seasonal, low-wage jobs for local people. This usually occurred with the acquiescence of indigenous residents in a classic New South partnership of local landholding entrepreneurs and outside capital. The modern tourist trade provided much-needed income, employment,

entrepreneurial opportunities, and revenue to areas deficient in natural resources other than scenery and climate, but it also preserved the low-wage labor force, seasonal employment patterns, and boom-to-bust economic cycles that characterized larger New South economic patterns after 1914.

Beginning in the early twentieth century, a combination of interrelated economic, demographic, and social trends dramatically changed the nature of tourism in modern America. The rise of automobile travel, improved road accessibility, and the increased role of the federal government all contributed to the "democratization" of tourism. In addition, the tourist trade changed in response to national upheavals caused by war and economic crisis, the corporatization of the hospitality industry, the diversification of tourist attractions, and innovative marketing programs. All of these trends came together after 1914 to produce patterns in regional tourism that were markedly different from earlier eras.

The rise of a car culture in modern America made possible the growth of modern tourism. The introduction of assembly line automobile production and the widespread availability of consumer credit made cars much more affordable to middle class Americans in the post-World War I era. Consequently, from 1915 to 1929, the number of registered automobiles in the United States skyrocketed from 2,332,426 to 23,120,897. Since the automobile became a virtual necessity in modern American society after World War II, the number of registered automobiles in the United States continued from 61 million in 1960 to over 200 million in 1980. As more and more working class Americans purchased cars, leisurely automobile travel ceased to be a

recreational pursuit enjoyed only by the wealthy and rose as a favorite pastime of the middle class as well.<sup>2</sup>

Due in part to the successes of labor unions, American workers of the twentieth century had more income and leisure time at their disposal, especially after World War II, when real incomes and living standards rose steadily in the United States for three consecutive decades. Consequently, more working class Americans had the time and money to take vacations. In what one scholar has called "the democratization of tourism," vacationing emerged as a favorite leisure time activity for Americans of all classes, not just for the rich. Vacation patterns for the middle class, however, were different from those of upper class tourists during the Victorian Era. Rather than the traditional season-long vacations, social and economic conditions forced middle class families to take shorter, but more frequent vacations. Additionally, since most middle class tourists were unable to afford exclusive spas, they gravitated towards new resorts that catered to a less affluent clientele.<sup>3</sup>

However, in many regions of the nation, particularly the South, the poor conditions of roads in the early twentieth century made them virtually impassable by automobile. At the turn of the century, roads in the southern highlands were often little more than rutted dirt paths that usually hugged the banks of a river, making them susceptible to

---

<sup>2</sup>John Jakle, The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth Century North America (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 120-21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., xi-xiv; Jesse F. Steiner, Americans At Play: Recent Trends in Recreation and Leisure Time Activities (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933), 35-47; Foster R. Dulles, America Learns to Play: A History of Recreation (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), 386-89.

wash-outs and rock slides. As a result, it is not surprising that the Progressive Era's Good Roads Movement took root first in the resort communities of the mountain South. Two of the first good roads associations in the South were the Good Roads Association of Asheville and Buncombe County, North Carolina (1899) and the Appalachian Good Roads Association (1901). While Howard Lawrence Preston argues in Dirt Roads to Dixie that the initial impetus behind the good roads movement was to improve country life by providing farmers with access to urban markets, it is noteworthy that resort areas saw more progress in road improvements than most areas in the South. Buncombe County, for instance, had accomplished more road improvements by 1914 than any other county in North Carolina. Although the rhetoric of the early Good Roads Movement emphasized improving rural life, there was also a strong secondary interest in improving accessibility for tourists even before World War I.<sup>4</sup>

After 1914, however, the focus of the Good Roads Movement shifted away from farm-to-market roads to constructing long-distance tourist highways. A new group of "highway progressives" emerged in the South who understood the unprecedented economic potential presented by automobile tourism. These were mostly young, upwardly mobile business people who saw good roads as a means to draw more tourists and profits into the region. In the 1920s, several southern states elected "progressive" governors, such as Austin Peay of Tennessee and Cameron Morrison of

---

<sup>4</sup>Howard Lawrence Preston, Dirt Roads to Dixie: Accessibility and Modernization in the South, 1885-1935 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 12-29.

North Carolina, who supported and delivered good roads programs.<sup>5</sup>

During this period, highway progressives overtook the old farmer-oriented good roads associations and published newsletters that offered paved roads and tourism as a panacea to the region's economic deficiencies. One such newsletter was Appalachian Journal, published by J. R. Williams, a highway progressive from Knoxville, who enthusiastically promoted good roads and tourism in the southern highlands. His January 1932 headline screamed out: "TENNESSEE CAN 'GET RICH QUICK' BY ENTERTAINING TOURISTS!" With such pie-in-the-sky promises, southern highlanders must have expected that paved roads and tourism to bring economic salvation to the region.<sup>6</sup>

While highway progressives literally paved the way for the rise of car tourism in the mountain South, road building in the region by no means died out with progressivism. In the 1930s, the federal government began construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway, the most popular tourist highway in America. In the 1940s, a network of hard-surfaced state and national highways connecting the nation's major population centers was completed. In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Interstate Highway Act which authorized the construction of a 41,000-mile network of limited access expressways across the United States. As a result of the development of interstates, by the 1960s tourist attractions in southern Appalachia could boast that

---

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 39-68.

<sup>6</sup>"Tennessee Can 'Get Rich Quick' By Entertaining Tourists," Appalachian Journal 25 (1932), 1.

they were within a day's drive of over two-thirds of the nation's population. In the 1970s, construction resumed on the long-planned, but often delayed (and as yet unfinished) Foothills Parkway, a scenic highway on the Tennessee side of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The federal government's commitment to building interstates and scenic highways opened accessibility and eased travel in the southern highlands in ways that earlier generations of tourists could have only dreamed about.<sup>7</sup>

Clearly, the federal government played a crucial role in opening access and promoting tourism in the mountain South after 1914. In addition to constructing roads, highways, and interstates, the federal government also encouraged the growth of tourism in the region by creating national parks, wildlife preserves, national forests, man-made lakes, utility infrastructures, historic sites, and recreational areas. During the Great Depression, the federal government made a concerted effort to uplift the economically-depressed mountain South, a region that had been devastated by the decline of logging and mining. Since much of the region had little to offer other than scenery and cheap labor, promoting tourism seemed to government planners like a rational economic development strategy. Thus, from the 1930s to the present, various agencies of the federal government have consciously strived to promote the growth of tourism in the southern mountains.

Many of these efforts were the product of Franklin D. Roosevelt's tenure as

---

<sup>7</sup>Mary Beth Norton, et al., A People and a Nation: A History of the United States (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), 932; Jakle, The Tourist, 120-145.

president of the United States. The most active tourism-promoting agencies during the New Deal period was the National Park Service which administered three national parks founded in the 1930s that became the region's most popular tourist attractions--the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (1934), the Blue Ridge Parkway (1934), and the Shenandoah National Park (1935). In promoting these parks, Stephen Mather, Director of the National Park Service, promised that "tourist money goes straight into circulation and immediately benefits the locality visited." The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) was another federal New Deal agency that actively encouraged the growth of tourism in the mountain South. Not only did millions of tourists visit TVA dams (such as Norris Dam) to marvel at these engineering feats, but TVA also built roads and created lakes and recreational areas where none had previously existed. Furthermore, during the New Deal era, the federal government began encouraging the growth of tourism in several of the region's national forests, including Cherokee National Forest (1911), Pisgah National Forest (1916), Jefferson National Forest, Ozark National Forest, and Nantahala National Forest (1920).<sup>8</sup>

The federal government continued to play a central role in promoting tourism and recreation in the southern highlands after World War II. In the 1950s, the man-made lakes of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (such as Table Rock Lake near Branson, Missouri, created in late 1950s) brought recreational tourism to a number of areas. The federal government initiated several new programs in the 1960s designed

---

<sup>8</sup>"Records Set for Tourists," Knoxville Journal, 2 March 1941; North Carolina Park Commission, A National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains (Asheville: Inland Press, c. 1928), 7.

specifically to encourage tourism in the southern mountains. The earliest of these programs was the Area Redevelopment Administration (ARA), created in 1961 to aid economically depressed regions. During its four-year existence, ARA spent over \$70 million on tourist projects in the mountain South, including programs on the Cumberland Plateau in Kentucky and in West Virginia's New River Gorge and Middle Island Creek. Local initiative in these and other communities was directed at tourism development in large part because ARA funds were more readily available for tourism-related projects.<sup>9</sup>

Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty brought another wave of government planners who looked to tourism as a way to bring prosperity to the economically-troubled region. One of the most important federal agencies created by Johnson that promoted tourism in the southern highlands was the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). To address the lingering problems of poverty in Appalachia, in 1965 Congress enacted the Appalachian Regional Development Act that provided \$1.1 billion for highway construction and development of resources. In 1966 the ARC issued a study of the potential of tourism development in Appalachia. While the ARC report noted that "tourism is not the answer to Appalachia's economic ails," it nonetheless singled out fourteen areas for an in-depth market analysis. Released in 1971, the ARC's in-depth study recommended public subsidies for private tourism developers. "In those complexes that are not yet developed as recreational centers," it said, "the public

---

<sup>9</sup>David E. Whisnant, Modernizing the Mountaineer (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1980), 144-46.



sector might have to pioneer the initial construction and operation of the facilities, until . . . markets become large enough to justify private investments." In spite of the report's emphasis on fledgling resorts, one of the ARC's initiatives provided funds to construct better utility systems for booming tourist towns like Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, Tennessee and Boone, North Carolina. ARC also funded a "hospitality training center" at the Asheville-Buncombe Technical Institute to train local young people as workers in the tourism industry. In 1973, the ARC formed a Culture and Tourism Committee to study and promote tourism in the region. Reinforcing all of these efforts was the ARC's commitment to build a better highway and interstate infrastructure in the region.<sup>10</sup>

The tourism promotion efforts of the National Park Service (NPS) after 1960 also reinforced the ARC's agenda. Due largely to the promotional campaigns of the NPS, the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park became the two most visited tourist attractions in the United States, drawing more visitors than Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Niagara Falls, Glacier, Mount Rushmore, and the Rocky Mountains combined. The NPS also expanded its presence in the region by adding new parks to the system, including the Buffalo National River (1972) in the Arkansas Ozarks and the Big South Fork National Recreational Area (1979) on the Cumberland Plateau. Each of these new national parks spawned the growth of a tourist industry where none had previously existed. The Big South Fork, for example, gave rise to a significant tourist trade in the small towns of Stearns, Kentucky as well

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 185-89.

as Oneida and Rugby, Tennessee.<sup>11</sup>

Closely tied to the increased role of the federal government's tourism promotional efforts were the changes brought by the national upheavals of World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II, all of which had major ramifications for resort development in the southern highlands. Generalizing about the impact of two world wars and economic crisis, however, is difficult, for each community fared differently during these periods. Wars typically, but not always, produced a temporary decline in tourism for most communities. The registry for Shepard Inn in Dandridge, Tennessee, for instance, indicates that, while visitation increased by 248 percent from 1910 to 1915, it dropped over 30 percent in 1917-1918 during America's involvement in World War I. However, not all hotels suffered in wartime. During World War II, when the rationing of gas curtailed automobile travel, visitation to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park dropped from 1,310,101 in 1941 to a low of 383,116 in 1943. The Grove Park Inn in Asheville and the Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs compensated for the decline in pleasure visitors by contracting out their facilities to the federal government--first to house interned diplomats and correspondents from belligerent nations, and later to serve as a resting place or redistribution center for American soldiers. The Great Depression also affected resort communities in a variety of ways. Whereas the economic downturn devastated Asheville's tourist industry, Gatlinburg began its meteoric rise as a premier highland resort during the Depression.

---

<sup>11</sup>Benita Howell, "Heritage Tourism and Community Development: Lessons from Rugby and the Big South Fork Area," Tennessee's Business 6 (1995), 37-44.

The register of the Mountain View Hotel, once the most popular hotel in Gatlinburg, shows that from the peak of the "roaring 20s" in 1927 to the depths of the Great Depression in 1932, visitation actually grew by nearly 35 percent. Moreover, whereas in 1927 most of the guests were from Knoxville and other East Tennessee cities, the geographic origins of the hotel's clientele in 1932 was much more diversified, including many visitors from cities in the Midwest and the Northeast.<sup>12</sup>

While the federal government did much to promote the growth of modern tourism in the mountain South, the corporate sector produced the most sweeping changes in the region's tourism industry as chain motels and restaurants gradually displaced locally-owned lodging and eating establishments. As a result of the emergence of automobile tourism, new forms of accommodations emerged that catered exclusively to motorists. Since most middle class car tourists had only a limited amount of time and money to spend on vacations, they demanded accommodations that were convenient and reasonably priced. Camping was one of the first lodging alternatives for the less affluent. People initially parked on the side of the road and set up camp, but eventually municipal and private campsites were established. For travelers who desired more comfort, primitive tourist cabins became a popular option in the 1920s. Another type of affordable lodging in the 1920s and 1930s was the motor court, small tourist cottages that were often integrated under one roof. These early types of

---

<sup>12</sup>Mountain View Hotel Register, Special Collections, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; 1955 Travel Statistics-Great Smoky Mountains National Park, typescript records, National Park Service Archives, Sugarlands; Kate D. Davis, "Saga of a City and its Hotels," Southern Hotel Journal (March 1946), 30-31; Shepard Inn Register, Special Collections, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

motorist accommodations required little capital outlay and promised substantial profits for marginal investments. Consequently, prior to World War II, most roadside accommodations for automobile tourists were owned and operated by local or regional entrepreneurs.<sup>13</sup>

Amid the economic prosperity and rapid growth of the tourist industry after World War II, however, a new form of lodging for motorists arose--motels. With such amenities as indoor plumbing, electricity, swimming pools, and televisions, motels offered more conveniences and amenities than campgrounds or motor courts and, therefore, were more expensive to build. Independent motel owners were often in direct competition with chain motels that had greater financial resources, an established reputation, and the convenience of reservation networks. As automobile tourism gradually shifted away from the old network of state and national highways to the new interstate system, many locally-owned lodging establishments found themselves stranded along abandoned routes and were forced to close. However, corporate motel chains, such as Howard Johnson's and Holiday Inn, flourished at interstate exits in the post-World War II period. Offering standardized quality, reasonable prices, and convenient locations near the interstates, corporate chains came to dominate the motel industry. By 1987, motel chains accounted for about 75 percent of the industry's revenue, leaving only a 25 percent share for independently-owned

---

<sup>13</sup>Warren James Belasco, Americans On the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1979); Alex Tooman, "The Evolving Economic Impact of Tourism on the Great Smoky Mountains Region of East Tennessee and Western North Carolina" (Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1994), 87-90.

motels.<sup>14</sup>

The shift from local control to corporate dominance was also apparent in the evolution of travel dining. Initially, cost-conscious automobile tourists packed their own food and picnicked along the road. As automobile travel became more popular, however, roadside diners and drive-ins gradually replaced picnicking. Like early roadside accommodations, nearly all travel dining establishments were locally-owned and operated prior to the 1950s. But the creation of a national interstate network gradually displaced the mom-and-pop roadside diners and gave rise to fast-food restaurant chains, such as McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Providing the "sameness" in environment and quality apparently desired by most American travelers, fast-food restaurants came to dominate the travel dining industry with over 80 percent of the market share.<sup>15</sup>

While the corporate consolidation of roadside lodging and eating establishments largely standardized the travel experience, tourist attractions in the mountain South became more diversified than ever before. Whereas the main tourist draws of the Victorian Era were the environmental and social amenities of the region, many new types of attractions emerged after 1914, especially after 1945, that appealed to a much broader clientele with a variety of interests. Among the types of tourism that either first emerged or took on a new form after 1914 were recreational tourism, cultural tourism, and entertainment tourism.

---

<sup>14</sup>Belasco, Americans On the Road, 175-92; Jakle, The Tourist, 191-92.

<sup>15</sup>Jakle, The Tourist, 195.

Recreational attractions drew tourists into the southern highlands after World War I as never before. Perhaps the most popular new recreational diversion for tourists was snow skiing. In the late 1930s, the Ski Club of Washington, D.C. pioneered southern snow skiing by clearing a few slopes in the Shenandoah National Park. One of those slopes was Pinnacle Knoll, an old mountaineer's pasture that was accessible from Skyland Drive. Another favorite Shenandoah ski site was the nearly 3 mile drop from the Skyland Resort to the floor of the Shenandoah Valley on the Old Skyland Road. Farther south, North Carolinian Tom Alexander was said to have ski slopes planned for his property in Maggie Valley, N.C. as early as 1939, but these slopes did not materialize until 1961. A number of other skiing enthusiasts tried to establish slopes in the mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina, but all these efforts proved unsuccessful until after the invention of snow-making machines.<sup>16</sup>

While there are conflicting accounts concerning the origins of the snow-making machine, one story holds that it originated in 1950 within the Larchment Engineering Company, a Massachusetts manufacturer of farm irrigation systems. In 1950, the Minute Maid Orange Juice Company hired Larchment to devise a way to protect orange groves from freezing temperatures. Knowing that high humidity protected oranges down to 26 degrees, Joseph C. Tropeano, the owner of Larchment, developed a "gun" that propelled compressed air and water to create a foglike mist. But in cold weather tests, the machine made snow. The following year, Larchment Engineering

---

<sup>16</sup>Randy Johnson, Southern Snow: The Winter Guide to Dixie (Boston: Appalachian Mountain Club, 1987), 29-41.

began small-scale marketing of the primitive machines until the 1960s, when southern ski areas began using snow-making machines on a large-scale.<sup>17</sup>

During the 1950s, a few skiing areas opened in Virginia, including the Homestead. Opening its first slope in 1959, the Homestead near the old Hot Springs spa was "the region's first ski area that could rightly be called a ski resort." The success of snow-making systems at Homestead made entrepreneurs farther south realize that skiing was feasible in the southern highlands. Consequently, within the next few years, local investors and regional entrepreneurs opened several new ski resorts that relied on snow-making machines. In 1961, Tom Alexander revived his idea and built ski slopes at Cataloochee near Maggie Valley, North Carolina. The same year also saw Gatlinburg open its ski area after the city purchased the land for the resort and entered into a long-term lease with the Gatlinburg Ski Corporation, an organization made up of local stockholders. In 1962, Alabama native Bill Thalheimer opened Blowing Rock Ski Lodge in Blowing Rock, North Carolina, becoming the first of six ski resorts near Boone, which over the next decade saw the creation of ski slopes on Appalachian Mountain, Beech Mountain, Sugar Mountain, Mill Ridge, and Hounds Ears. The highland South's ski resorts brought important economic consequences by broadening the region's tourist clientele and more importantly, by extending the tourist season into winter.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 33-34.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 41-57; Barry Buxton, A Village Tapestry: A History of Blowing Rock (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1989), 185-87.

Perhaps an even more profound change to tourism than the rise of new recreational attractions was the flourishing of cultural tourism in the mountain South. The trend towards marketing Appalachian distinctiveness in the late Victorian Era accelerated after 1914 as popular culture--namely comic strips, country music acts, and Hollywood--ingrained the hillbilly stereotype deep into the American consciousness. The tourism-driven revival of highland handicrafts consolidated with the establishment of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild in the early 1930s which standardized and regulated the handicrafts industry to appeal to a mass tourist market. Influenced by the depictions of mountaineers in popular culture, visitors to the region expected to find natives making coverlets, weaving baskets, playing dulcimers, and singing ancient Celtic ballads. As the next chapter will show, indigenous mountain residents readily played the role of hillbilly to validate their guests' preconceptions; but as the region's tourist industry came to be dominated by outside interests, cultural tourism took on new forms in contrived attractions such as theme parks.

The nature of theme parks in the southern mountains ranged from historical realism to bizarre escapism. Few people were more influential in shaping the character of the region's theme parks than the Robbins family of Blowing Rock, North Carolina. The son of a former Blowing Rock mayor who owned the "Blowing Rock," Grover Robbins, Jr. was born into tourism. One of his earliest ventures was Tweetsie Railroad, based on the historic railroad founded in 1881 that ran through the mountains from Boone to Johnson City, Tennessee. In 1956, Robbins bought the former Tweetsie engine from Gene Autry, the singing cowboy, who had purchased it a



few years earlier to use in western movies. After completion of a 3 mile circular track, Tweetsie Railroad began full operations in 1959, drawing well over 300,000 visitors by 1963.<sup>19</sup>

The success of Tweetsie Railroad encouraged Robbins to expand his railroad theme park idea to other areas. In 1961, he and his brother Harry opened the first theme park in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee--"Rebel Railroad," which eventually evolved into "Dollywood." Unlike Tweetsie, however, Rebel Railroad was ahistorical, contradicting the area's strong Union sentiment during the Civil War. The Robbins brothers departed even further from reality with their next major theme park in the mountains, "The Land of Oz," a theme park at the crest of Beech Mountain with a Wizard of Oz theme. After riding a chair lift to the top of the mountain, visitors were invited to "follow the yellow brick road" and encounter the characters based on Frank Baum's book. Other theme parks in the southern highlands with a contrived cultural theme were Maggie Valley's "Ghostland in the Sky" and "Dogpatch, USA" in the Arkansas Ozarks.<sup>20</sup>

Closely tied to theme parks was a new type of tourism that appeared in the region--entertainment tourism. As tourists' motivations to travel shifted away from health,

---

<sup>19</sup>James H. Bearden, ed., The Travel Industry in North Carolina: Proceedings of the Governor's Travel Information Conference (Greenville: East Carolina College, 1964), 97-98; John Corey, "Tweetsie," The Carolina Farmer (August 1959), 7-9; Buxton, A Village Tapestry, 183-84.

<sup>20</sup>Charles Alan Watkins, "Somewhere Over Beech Mountain: Contemporary Appalachian Artifacts and the Land of Oz," in Contemporary Appalachia: In Search of a Usable Past (Boone: Appalachian Studies Association, 1987), 106-15; Tom Seig, "The Land of Oz Crumbles," Winston-Salem Journal, 19 May 1985.

visitors increasingly came to resorts wanting to be entertained. Consequently, several new middle class resorts drew visitors with a variety of entertainment diversions, including musical revue shows and outdoor dramas. Perhaps the most obvious examples of a new resort based upon entertainment tourism is Branson, Missouri. While Branson got its start as a resort in the early twentieth century due to the popularity of Shepherd of the Hills, it did not come of age until after 1960, the year that local entrepreneurs built both the Shepherd of the Hills Outdoor Theater and the mountaineer theme park, "Silver Dollar City." In the next decade, a couple of popular hillbilly musical revue shows opened in the Branson area, including Presleys' Mountain Music Jubilee (1963) and Baldknobbers Hillbilly Jamboree Show (1968). Branson's entertainment base grew exponentially in the 1970s and 1980s, when a number of "past their prime" musical entertainers built theaters in the town and began performing there on a regular basis. Appealing to an older clientele, the performers who invested in Branson included Andy Williams, Kenny Rogers, Anita Bryant, the Osmond Brothers, Jim Stafford, "Boxcar" Willy, Ray Stevens, and Mel Tillis. Today, Branson's vacation guide proudly boasts that the resort is "America's Music Show Capital," where one can find "more live entertainment than anywhere else in the country."<sup>21</sup>

With the diversification of tourist attractions in the mountain South, visitors can find almost anything they could imagine at the region's resorts. For tourists who want

---

<sup>21</sup>"The 'Overnight Success' Began Three Decades Ago," 1993 Branson Vacation Guide (Branson: Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, 1993), 20, 22-24, 130-133.

to "shop 'til they drop," they can find several outlet malls at Pigeon Forge, which also features indoor skydiving, helicopter rides, Elvis impersonators, putt-putt golf, go-cart racing, and bungee jumping. Tourists who want to see "real" Indians or spend their money gambling can visit Cherokee, North Carolina. Visitors who yearn to discover history can choose from a wide variety of historic sites, such as Jonesborough, Tennessee, the lavish Biltmore Estate, or the Cumberland Gap. Tourists who wish to immerse themselves in a contrived Bavarian village can visit Helen, Georgia. Fans of the film "Deliverance" can even retrace the route of the ill-fated rafters with a guided tour down the Chattooga River in northern Georgia. The proliferation and diversification of tourist attractions in the southern highlands had important economic consequences. First, by offering a wide variety of attractions, highland resorts were able to attract a broader clientele with a wide range of interests, ages, and incomes. Secondly, the diversification of attractions opened opportunities for local residents to capitalize on the seemingly ever-expanding tourist market. Perhaps most importantly, the wide variety of new attractions successfully extended the tourist season and opened up year-round employment opportunities at many resorts.

These diverse new attractions, however, could not have succeeded without innovative marketing techniques by private entrepreneurs. The Robbins brothers put Tweetsie Railroad bumper stickers on visitors' cars without asking their permission. Gatlinburg boosters dressed up like hillbillies and drove to Florida in a caravan encouraging visitors to stop by the Smokies on their way home. But the best known tourism marketing program in the region, if not the nation, was that of Rock City,

Tennessee. In 1932, Chattanooga resident Garnet Carter bought fourteen acres atop Lookout Mountain and opened Rock City as a tourist attraction. Having difficulties drawing visitors during the Depression, Carter turned to the Southern Advertising Company for help in getting people to "See Rock City." The Chattanooga-based ad agency came up with an ingenuous idea--offer farmers to paint their barns free of charge as long as they would allow a Rock City advertisement to be painted on the roof. Carter approved the idea and hired Clark Byers, a young sign painter who spent the next 33 years (1935-1968) painting Rock City slogans on over 900 barns all over the South. Widely recognized as one of the most successful marketing schemes in American history, Rock City barns emerged as one of the most distinctive features of the southern landscape.<sup>22</sup>

While tourism in the mountain South underwent significant changes in the twentieth century, each resort community adapted to these changes in different and unique ways. The rise of modern tourism spawned the birth of many new resort communities in the southern highlands that catered to a socially, culturally, and demographically diverse clientele of automobile tourists. Some of the most prominent new resorts of the region include: Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge, and Townsend, Tennessee; Cherokee, Maggie Valley, and Boone, North Carolina; and Branson, Missouri. Meanwhile the older, elite resorts of the Victorian Era struggled to adapt to the changes brought by modern tourism. Each of these older resorts fared differently

---

<sup>22</sup>Fred Brown, "The Rock City Renoir," Knoxville News-Sentinel, 13 August 1995; Bert Vincent, "Car Caravan Is En Route to Florida," *ibid.*, 16 January 1950; Bearden, ed., The Travel Industry in North Carolina, 99.

in the era of modern tourism: some thrived, some merely survived, and some died. Each of these patterns--from the booming new resorts to the dying old spas--can be found in the case study areas of Buncombe County, North Carolina, as well as Sevier and Blount Counties, Tennessee.

In 1914, the tourist industry in Buncombe County appeared to have a very bright future. Not only did area have a proud spa tradition, but the completion of the Grove Park Inn in 1913 solidified Asheville's claim as the preeminent resort of the mountain South. Additionally, Asheville's Board of Trade (which changed its name to the Chamber of Commerce in 1921) aggressively promoted tourism in the region with its national "Land of the Sky" campaign aimed at the upper middle class. Asheville was also quickly acquiring a reputation as the headquarters of the Appalachian handicrafts movement. Perhaps most importantly, there were a number of wealthy boosters in Asheville (such as George Pack, Jim Stikeleather, Tench Coxe, George Vanderbilt, and Edwin W. Grove) who were committed to developing the community's potential as a tourist center.<sup>23</sup>

The land speculations of E. W. Grove and other like-minded boosters fueled a real estate boom in Asheville in the early to mid-1920s. As the real estate boom in Florida began to cool off after 1916, bankers and investors (or, as Thomas Wolfe called them, "the binder boys") began rushing to Buncombe County in the anticipation that

---

<sup>23</sup>"History of Asheville Chamber of Commerce," apparently written by the Asheville Chamber [ca. 1960], Archives, Asheville Chamber of Commerce, Asheville; Douglas Swaim, ed., Castles and Cabins: The History and Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina (Raleigh: Department of Cultural Resources, 1981), 37-42.

Asheville was a community ripe for profitable land speculation. Land values rose precipitously until property in downtown Asheville was selling for as much as \$8,150 per frontage foot! Asheville's city government encouraged this speculation by investing heavily in improving the city's tourist infrastructure. By 1920, there were over 52 miles of paved streets in the city and 132 miles in the county, 65 miles of sidewalks, and 20 miles of electric streetcar service. The city also spent lavishly on city parks, landscaping, and a new municipal golf course.<sup>24</sup>

To pay for these improvements, the city went heavily into debt. The city continued to borrow by issuing municipal bonds even after Asheville's real estate boom collapsed in 1926, which caused land values in Buncombe County to plummet. By the end of the decade, the city was nearly \$24 million in the red. When western North Carolina's largest bank, the Central Bank and Trust Company, collapsed on November 11, 1930, so too did the city's fiscal standing. Having lost more than \$8 million in the collapse of Central Bank and ten other cooperating banks in the region, the city of Asheville defaulted on its debts. This financial debacle would inhibit the growth of Asheville for the next fifty years.<sup>25</sup>

With the onset of the Depression, tourism in Asheville declined rapidly. In response, the Asheville Chamber of Commerce took several measures to boost visitation. One such effort occurred in 1930 when the Chamber succeeded in

---

<sup>24</sup>Asheville Handbook, 1920 (Asheville: Asheville Chamber of Commerce, 1920), 4; "Asheville: A Guide to the City in the Mountains, 1941," unpublished Federal Writers' Project guide book, North Carolina Collection, Pack Library, Asheville, 14.

<sup>25</sup>Swaim, Castles and Cabins, 44.

convincing the Cecil family (George Vanderbilt's heirs) to open the Biltmore Estate to the public in 1930, an event that was widely publicized and carried on NBC radio. Organized as a private corporation in 1932, the Biltmore Estate eventually became Asheville's most popular tourist attraction, but during the widespread suffering of the Great Depression, many regarded such an obscene display of wealth as in bad taste. The Chamber of Commerce also tried to boost tourism by sponsoring annual festivals in Asheville, such as the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and the Rhododendron Festival. Additionally, the Asheville Chamber of Commerce was among the most vocal supporters for establishing the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway. In fact, the Asheville Chamber took a leading role in the battle between Tennessee and North Carolina concerning the route of the Blue Ridge Parkway. After much politicking and petitioning, the Chamber helped to secure an "all North Carolina route" for the Parkway as a means of boosting tourism in western North Carolina.<sup>26</sup>

In spite of these efforts, Asheville lost its claim as the premier Appalachian resort, because there were too many factors working against tourism in the community. First, after the bankruptcy of Asheville, the city's new creditors imposed conditions that in effect limited future indebtedness and city services. As a result, the city grew only very slightly over the next fifty years at a time when other cities in the region, such as

---

<sup>26</sup>Harley E. Jolley, The Blue Ridge Parkway (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969), 9-44; "A History of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce," 3-5; William A. V. Cecil, interviewed by Karl Campbell, 22 September 1989, Tape recording, Southern Oral History Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Knoxville, saw rapid growth. Another factor which inhibited Asheville's tourism industry was the virtual eradication of tuberculosis and febrile diseases in the United States. The treatment of these ailments was once the basis of the community's tourist trade, but as modern medicine brought the decline of these diseases, it also resulted in the rapid decline of health tourism in western North Carolina. As federal, state, and local governments began to assume health care as a social obligation by the mid-twentieth century, they built hospitals and health care facilities which forced most sanitariums in the region to close down. Another limitation was that Buncombe County had a diverse economic base of agriculture, industry, and tourism. Since tourism did not dominate the local economy, it had to compete with other growing sectors of the economy for a limited amount of land, labor, and capital. Ironically, perhaps the most important factor that limited the growth of tourism in Asheville was the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Although the Asheville Chamber had been ardent supporters of the park movement, the national park drew more tourists away from rather than to Asheville. With interstates and scenic highways that could carry tourists past the city and directly to more affordable accommodations closer to the park, more and more tourists and developers bypassed Asheville for the park's gateway communities, such as Cherokee, Maggie Valley, and Gatlinburg.<sup>27</sup>

Tourism in Asheville, however, was far from dead. Asheville remained a popular

---

<sup>27</sup>David E. Carpenter, "Impacts and Influences of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park: An Annotated Bibliography with a Discussion and Review of Selected Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusions," Research/ Resources Management Report SER-64 (Atlanta: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1982), 27-28.



resort, but its economic development took on a new, more complicated character after World War II. The city's unique development stems in part from its struggle to adapt to the changes in the scope and patterns of modern commercial tourism.

Entrepreneurs in the city sought the often contradictory goals of both maintaining its upper class clientele and seeking to exploit the mass middle class tourist market.

Nowhere was this better illustrated than in the evolution of the Grove Park Inn after World War II. Like many of the formerly celebrated hotels of Asheville, Grove Park Inn had trouble turning a profit after the 1920s. After E.W. Grove's death in 1927, the hotel passed through a series of owners until the 1950s, when it ended up in the hands of Isaac Hall. Since the hotel was rapidly deteriorating due in part to years of mismanagement, Hall was eager to sell it to someone with enough capital to make the necessary renovations.<sup>28</sup>

In August of 1955, Ed Leach, an employee of the Jack Tar Hotels Corporation from Dallas, Texas, came to Asheville to bid on another hotel built by Grove, the New Battery Park Hotel. Leach, however, was intrigued by the news that the famous Grove Park Inn was also for sale, and he contacted his boss, Charles Sammons, to inform him of this development. Sammons had made his fortune in the insurance business before he entered the tourist industry in the late 1940s by buying Jack Tar Hotels. By the mid-1950s, he was ready to expand his financial empire beyond the southwest into southern Appalachia. Like Leach, he was intrigued by the prospect of owning this

---

<sup>28</sup>Bruce E. Johnson, Built for the Ages: A History of the Grove Park Inn (Asheville: Grove Park Inn and Country Club, 1991), 107-154.

historic hotel, so he negotiated to buy the hotel for just \$450,000. Over the next two years, Sammons spent over \$100,000 in renovating and modernizing the hotel in a way that would broaden the hotel's clientele to include middle class car tourists. One measure to draw more car tourists to the Grove Park Inn was to construct a motel adjacent to the hotel. Leach explains: "We knew that people were flocking to the latest rage--motels. We didn't want--and we couldn't if we tried--to turn Grove Park Inn into a motel, but we made a decision to build Fairway Motor Lodge next to it so that hopefully we could attract new business." Much to the chagrin of many of Grove Park Inn's wealthy guests, the Fairway Motor Lodge did succeed in drawing working class car tourists to the exclusive resort before the motel was finally demolished in 1982.<sup>29</sup>

The Fairway Motor Lodge was one of several motels that emerged in Asheville after World War II. Indeed, in the five year period from 1946 to 1951, the number of tourist courts and motels in Buncombe County escalated from 11 to 53. By 1970, there were 85 motels in Buncombe County. Most of these new motels were owned and operated by local entrepreneurs. Only six of the 85 motels in Asheville at that time were chain affiliated. Meanwhile, the number of hotels in the county declined dramatically from 27 in 1930 to 11 in 1970.<sup>30</sup>

The decline of hotels and the proliferation of tourist courts and motels in

---

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.,157-186; quote from page 180.

<sup>30</sup>Asheville City Directory, 1930; Asheville Phone Book, 1970; "Motor Courts Become Big Business Here," Asheville Citizen, 8 July 1951.

Buncombe County signaled an important shift in the area's tourist economy. Although local entrepreneurs who experienced a windfall from these new developments hailed the revival of tourism in Asheville, the city was past its glory days. Whereas earlier generations of tourists stayed at large hotels all summer, motels on the outskirts of town attracted visitors whose stay was fairly short and presumably involved little local expenditure. Moreover, local domination of motels was short-lived. The building of a Civic Convention Center in downtown Asheville in the early 1970s sparked large-scale corporate investment in the city that eventually dominated the local tourist market. By 1988, chain motels accounted for 72 percent of the county's motels rooms. Perhaps the most important change in Buncombe County's tourist economy was the rise of numerous second-home and retirement communities in the area, which, as a later chapter will show, imposed further limitations on the development of the county. In short, Asheville remained an important tourist stopover, but it no longer retained the primary destination status of the city's golden years. Although the city has maintained a substantial tourist market, its growth does not even approach that of the booming resort cities of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge in Sevier County, Tennessee.<sup>31</sup>

Sevier County's pattern of economic development was, in many ways, inverse to that of Buncombe County during the same period. Sevier County acquired its tourist base at a time when resort development in Asheville was in decline. The growth of tourism that was thrust upon the communities of Sevier County by the coming of the national park provided much-needed jobs for the area at a critical time. Since the

---

<sup>31</sup>Tooman, "The Evolving Economic Impact of Tourism," 239.

days of large-scale logging in the mountains were coming to an end and self-sufficient agriculture was no longer a viable option, indigenous residents took jobs in the burgeoning tourist industry and supplemented their family's income with part-time farming. While some of the better-off residents opened their own businesses to cater to car tourists en route to the park, many landowners leased their property to regional investors who had the necessary capital to develop the land. In spite of the long-term growth of outsiders investing in Sevier County's tourist industry, control of economic activity continued to rest firmly in the hands of local landowning families. This suggests that commercial tourism was not forced upon these communities, but instead, locals welcomed and encouraged tourism as a means to stem outmigration and to keep the family together. However, few could have imagined that tourism, instead of helping to diversify the area's economic activity as they had believed it would, would come to dominate the local economy and stifle diversification.

The rapid growth of tourism in Sevier County came first to Gatlinburg. In 1914, Gatlinburg was a sleepy mountain village in the Smoky Mountains that showed little promise as a resort community. The primary industry in the area was logging due largely to the operations of the Little River Lumber Company and Andy Huff's lumber mill at Sugarlands. While these lumber operations gave rise to Gatlinburg's first hotel, Huff's Mountain View Hotel, and the Elkmont resort, tourism did not yet play a major role in the community's economy. Aside from a few local people employed in area hotels and a small amount of income generated from selling fresh vegetables, eggs, and poultry to nearby resorts, most local residents were not directly affected by

tourism in the Smokies.<sup>32</sup>

All of this changed within a relatively short period of time for a number of reasons. One of the major sources for change in Gatlinburg and the surrounding area was the Pi Beta Phi settlement school, Arrowmont. Established in 1912, Arrowmont began a handicrafts program in 1915 that would forever alter the economic and cultural patterns of the region. In an attempt to "revive the dying traditions of the mountaineer," Arrowmont instructors taught local residents, particularly women, how to spin and weave so they could make the quilts, coverlets, baskets, and other handicrafts associated with the region. When the school opened the Arrowcraft Shop in 1926 to sell the wares of the school's students, it became a popular stop for car tourists along the new Highway 71. The rise of the handicrafts industry in the area helped to prepare the community for the coming of modern tourism in many ways. First, it gave many women their first opportunity to earn cash income. This was an important transition considering that tourism came to depend on women as employees in service-oriented jobs. Secondly, the handicrafts industry spawned cultural tourism by generating visitors who were eager to buy "authentic" mountain crafts. Perhaps most importantly, it prepared residents of the area to contrive the image that visitors desired to see.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup>W. R. Woolrich, et al., Agricultural-Industrial Report-Sevier County, Tennessee, 1934, typescript volume, Tennessee Valley Authority Archives, Knoxville, 89-90; Ed Trout, Gatlinburg: Cinderella City (Sevierville: Griffin Graphics, 1984), 81-107.

<sup>33</sup>"Notes on the History of the Settlement School," November 25, 1953, Special Collections, Arrowmont School, Gatlinburg; Philis Alvic, Weavers of the Southern Highlands: The Early Years in Gatlinburg (Murray, KY: for Arrowmont School, 1991),

Another factor which led to rise of modern tourism in the area was the growth of the Elkmont community, the first major resort nearby to Gatlinburg. As the Little River Lumber Company moved its operations out of the Little River's west prong, it sold much of the property to a group of prominent Knoxvilleians who formed the Appalachian and Wonderland Clubs. Opened in 1912, the Wonderland Hotel at Elkmont employed some area residents as servants, tour guides, maids, and cooks. Although most visitors to Elkmont rode the train from Walland, some came in by horseback from Gatlinburg, bringing more outside visitors through the community. The success of Elkmont indicated to local residents that tourism could also succeed in Gatlinburg, especially when it became apparent that Gatlinburg would be the main gateway of what promised to be the nation's most popular tourist attraction--the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.<sup>34</sup>

By far, the most important harbinger of change for Sevier County was the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The successful movement to create a national park in the Smokies began in 1923, when Mr. and Mrs. Willis P. Davis of Knoxville began discussing the idea with their friends. As frequent visitors to Elkmont, they were able to enlist the support of several other Elkmont cottagers, including Col. David C. Chapman and Tennessee Governor Austin Peay. When

---

1-6.

<sup>34</sup>Vic Weals, Last Train to Elkmont: A Look Back at Life on Little River in the Great Smoky Mountains (Knoxville: Olden Press, 1993), 95-96; Mary Ruth Chiles, compiler, Resorts in the Smoky Mountain Region, 1832-1930, typescript files, National Park Service Archives, Sugarlands.

enough people supported the cause, the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association formed in 1924 and proceeded to gain support from politicians, newspaper editors, and business leaders in East Tennessee and western North Carolina. Through massive fund-raising efforts, appropriations from the Tennessee and North Carolina legislatures, and a generous donation from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Foundation, the park movement eventually succeeded in the early 1930s, when most of the land was turned over to the federal government.<sup>35</sup>

As a result of the pattern of roads through the park, the residents of Gatlinburg quite suddenly found themselves at the gateway of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Those who were lucky enough to own land along Highway 71 realized that they were sitting on a gold mine. As a result, most residents of Gatlinburg refused to sell their property and chose to develop the land themselves. For the most part, five prominent indigenous landowning families--the Ogles, Whaleys, Maples, Huffs, and Reagans--led the early development of Gatlinburg. The Ogles were the oldest and most prominent of these families. Jane Huskey Ogle was the community's first settler in the 1790s and her grandson, Noah Ogle, started the first general store in 1850 when the settlement was known as White Oak Flats. The Whaleys, Maples, and Reagans also settled the area in the early to mid-nineteenth century and played

---

<sup>35</sup>For the most thorough published account of the park movement, see Carlos Campbell, Birth of a National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1960).

important roles in Gatlinburg's colorful early history.<sup>36</sup>

Of the five families, the Huffs were the most recent arrivals and played the most important role in the early history of Gatlinburg's tourist industry. Andrew (Andy) Jackson Huff and his brother moved to the area in 1901 and began a lumber operation at Sugarlands. After opening a boarding house for his workers and buyers in 1912, he built the town's first hotel, the Mountain View, in 1916. During the crucial period of early resort development before World War II, Andy Huff and his son, Jack, were pivotal figures in developing the town. Not only did they enlarge the Mountain View Hotel, but they also established a number of other tourist courts and lodges, including the Huff's Court, the Rocky Waters Motel, and Le Conte Lodge at the summit of Mount Le Conte.<sup>37</sup>

The second hotel opened in Gatlinburg was Riverside Hotel, built in 1925 by "Uncle" Steve Whaley. His son, Dick, later enlarged the Riverside Hotel and built Greystone Lodge, two of the four large hotels in Gatlinburg before World War II. When the town was incorporated in 1945, Dick Whaley became its first mayor. The Whaley family, which built Edgepark Inn, River Terrace Hotel, and handful of other hotels and restaurants, also became prominent real estate brokers in the community.<sup>38</sup>

The other large hotel in town during the pre-World War II period was the

---

<sup>36</sup>"Dominant Native Families,"; Russell Shaw, The Gatlinburg Story (Gatlinburg: Russell Shaw Inc., 1979), 25-26; Pyle, "Roving Reporter".

<sup>37</sup>Shaw, The Gatlinburg Story, 26; Ernie Pyle, "Roving Reporter," Knoxville News-Sentinel, 30, 31 October 1940.

<sup>38</sup>Pyle, "Roving Reporter," 31 October 1940.



Gatlinburg Inn, built by Rellie L. Maples, one of the town's most venerable citizens who built the hotel on top of a corn patch. He also owned the Log Cabin Sandwich Shop and was president of the Gatlinburg First National Bank. Another very prominent early developer of Gatlinburg was Charles A. Ogle, who owned much of the land along the west side of the highway. On this property, he built twenty tourist cabins, the Bear Skin Craft Shop, and the largest general store in Sevier County.<sup>39</sup>

After the establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Gatlinburg grew rapidly. From 1930 to 1940, the town's population grew from 75 residents to nearly 1,300 residents according to census figures. A TVA Agricultural-Industrial Report of Sevier County reported that there were 93 structures in Gatlinburg in 1934. Yet, a TVA map of the area in 1942 showed 641 structures in the community, indicating rapid development in the area. While outmigration from the park area accounts for much of this growth, it also reflects the steady development of a tourist industry.<sup>40</sup>

What distinguished Gatlinburg's development from most other highland resort communities was how local families were able to maintain control of the business district even during the post-World War II development boom. Through the 1950s and 1960s, the majority of economic benefits still flowed to local families. Gatlinburg's five leading families managed to keep their property by leasing it (often to family members) instead of selling it. Furthermore the Gatlinburg First National

---

<sup>39</sup>Woolrich, TVA Agricultural-Industrial Report, 89-90.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 87-90.

Bank, founded in 1951, provided a local source of capital to finance much of the community's development. This enabled local families to preserve control of their property and develop much of the land in the business district. As a result, the Ogle family built the Mountain Mall, Baskin's Square Mall, Ogle's Buffet, and several other motels and restaurants. The Reagan family, which owns much of the land along U.S. 321, developed Ramada Inn, Brookside Village, Mountaineer Museum, Reagan Mall, and numerous other establishments. The third generation of Huffs built the Burning Bush Restaurant, Carousel Mall, Pioneer Inn, the Brass Lantern, Baskin Robbins, and several other motels and restaurants in Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge. The development of Gatlinburg's ski lodge provides another indication of the tightly-knit local control in Gatlinburg. In 1961, the city of Gatlinburg leased the property for 99 years to a group of local stockholders, the Gatlinburg Ski Corporation.<sup>41</sup>

The 1960s through the 1980s, however, brought more outside influences into Gatlinburg. After the first chain motel in Gatlinburg opened its doors in 1962, outside investment grew substantially, albeit gradually. Although in 1972 local residents owned 83 percent of the property in Gatlinburg's business district, much of this land was leased to outsiders. In an interview in 1975, Dick Whaley admitted, "I used to know everybody in town. Now the town is filled with new people who own new businesses--but in most cases the land still belongs to us, the original families."

---

<sup>41</sup>Sam Venable, "Something's New On the Mountain," Knoxville News-Sentinel, 2 February 1978; Louise Durman, "Gentlemen of Gatlinburg," *ibid.*, 15 February 1987; Willard Yarbrough, "Opening of Mountain Mall Would Please Ephraim Ogle," *ibid.*, 24 September 1978.

Likewise, Wilma Maples, the proprietor of the Gatlinburg Inn, lamented that "what really changed Gatlinburg was when people who owned the businesses got too tired or too old, and they either leased or sold."<sup>42</sup>

While local families still controlled the business district, outsiders financed most of the development outside of the city. Much of this development took place on land leased to outside developers. For instance, in 1975 Claude Anders, a real estate broker from Johnson City, Tennessee, bought out the remaining 84 years of the locally-controlled Gatlinburg Ski Corporation's 99 year lease on the ski resort above Gatlinburg. Anders brought in other outside investors, such as resort developer Bruno Rock of Sarasota, Florida, to finance the \$2 million development of Ober Gatlinburg, a winter resort with a contrived Bavarian environment, complete with an "oom-pah-pah" restaurant called the Old Heidelberg Castle. Ownership of most of the land outside of Gatlinburg's business district, however, fell to outsiders. The large second-home subdivisions on the outskirts of Gatlinburg, such as Sky Harbor and Chalet Village, were controlled by non-indigenous developers. Thus, although local families maintained extraordinary control over the property and businesses in the business district, there was a growing presence of outside developers which threatened local control of Gatlinburg by the 1980s.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup>"Fortress From Change," *ibid.*, 21 June 1967; Flo Gullickson, "Resorts Must Keep Pace, Says Whaley," *ibid.*, 26 January 1975; Jerome Eric Dobson, "The Changing Control of Economic Activity in the Gatlinburg, Tennessee Area, 1930-1975" (Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1975), 77-85.

<sup>43</sup>Dobson, "The Changing Control of Economic Activity," 80-93; Venable, "Something's New on the Mountain."

By that time, rampant tourism-related development was spilling over into the neighboring community of Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. From the earliest settlement of the area in the late 1700s to the mid-twentieth century, self-sufficient farming was the primary occupation of most settlers along the Little Pigeon River's loamy floodplain. Although Isaac Love built a bloomery forge in Pigeon Forge in 1820, it shut down in the 1860s due to the low iron content of ore from nearby mines and the lack of adequate transportation. Consequently, small-scale agriculture remained the community's main livelihood in the late nineteenth century despite trends that made farming less profitable. The high birthrate in Sevier County, coupled with the continuation of partible inheritance patterns, resulted in the reduction of the average farm size from 270 acres in 1860 to just 78 acres in 1900. Without better transportation networks and expanded regional markets, it was very difficult to make farming a profitable venture. Moreover, since Sevier County offered fewer industrial jobs than most counties in southern Appalachia, factory work was simply not a choice.<sup>44</sup>

Outmigration to the industrial centers of Appalachia appeared to be the only viable option--and viewed as one of last resort--for local residents seeking non-farming employment. While logging provided a temporary solution to this problem, tourism

---

<sup>44</sup>Michael McDonald and Bruce Wheeler, "Part-Time Farming in Sevier County: An Appalachian Case Study," unpublished essay presented to the 1988 Social Sciences Historical Association Conference, St. Louis, 3-4; United States Department of Agriculture, U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1860-1900 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office); Beulah D. Linn, Reunion at the River: Official History of Pigeon Forge, 1783-1930 (Pigeon Forge: Pigeon Forge Homecoming '86 Committee, 1986), 4-5.

seemed to offer a long-term source of jobs. The tourist industry is deeply rooted in the consciousness of Pigeon Forge. Although its origins date back to the 1890s, when visitors first came to immerse themselves in the "health-restoring" waters of nearby Henderson Springs, tourism did not have a major impact on local employment patterns until after the establishment of the national park in 1934. That year, TVA issued an Agricultural-Industrial Report that reported no tourism-related structures in the Pigeon Forge community aside from the decrepit buildings at Henderson Springs. Dependent principally upon agriculture and chronically underemployed, many locals became increasingly receptive to the prospects of jobs generated by tourism as a means to stem outmigration.<sup>45</sup>

The ability to earn non-farm income became a virtual necessity during the Great Depression when agriculture prices dropped sharply. For example, corn, a staple crop for the community, dropped from \$1.26 per bushel in 1925 to a low of \$.29 per bushel in 1932. The decline of commodity prices encouraged farmers to devote more acreage to cultivating burley tobacco in the 1930s and 1940s. Whereas in 1929 Sevier County farmers devoted only 657 acres to tobacco, by 1946 they harvested nearly 20,000 acres of tobacco. The increase in tobacco acreage came at the expense of acreage devoted to grain, oats, and corn. Acreage planted in wheat dropped from 14,867 in 1919 to 7,957 in 1924. Corn acreage also declined precipitously from 34,932 acres in 1925 to 17,459 acres in 1946. As more and more Pigeon Forge farmers shifted to part-time farming, the labor demands of tobacco farming were flexible enough to allow family

---

<sup>45</sup>Woolrich, TVA Agricultural-Industrial Report, 57-58, 91-92.

members to work in the area's seasonal tourist industry without risking crop failure.<sup>46</sup>

Pigeon Forge grew very slowly at first, but the construction of U.S. 441 provided a huge boost to the community's embryonic tourist industry. In the early 1950s, the federal government acquired a 300-foot right of way to build the highway through the local farms. While many farmers initially resented the forced government acquisition of their property, some local property owners sensed the potential profits in speculating land along the highway. The construction of U.S. 441 and the subsequent completion of I-40 made the community much more accessible to a growing number of tourists. Thus, road improvements reinforced the community's transition to tourism and created economic opportunities both for outside investors as well as locals with means.<sup>47</sup>

Following the completion of U.S. 441, a flurry of tourist-related development along the highway ensued in the mid to late 1950s. As in Gatlinburg, local landowners directed much of this early development. Among the landholding local families that developed their property along the highway include the Ogles, the Householders, the Harmons, the Butlers, and the Whaleys. These families undertook small development projects that did not require a large capital investment. Ross Ogle, for instance, built "Flower Garden Court," about twenty primitive tourist cabins, by the river to accommodate car travelers who couldn't find lodging in Gatlinburg during peak

---

<sup>46</sup>Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Trends in Tennessee: A Record of Tennessee Crop and Livestock Statistics, 1866-1947 (Nashville: Tennessee State Printing Office, 1948), 26-30.

<sup>47</sup>Pigeon Forge Anvil, 17 September 1968.

season. Local residents also developed two campgrounds and small tourist court in the 1950s.<sup>48</sup>

Outside entrepreneurs, however, played a much greater role in developing Pigeon Forge than in Gatlinburg. Since local families shut out virtually all outside investors from Gatlinburg, non-indigenous business people who sought to enter the tourist trade in Sevier County turned to Pigeon Forge, where land was more readily available. Consequently, outside entrepreneurs developed the largest and most popular early attractions in Pigeon Forge. While these outside developers were not from Sevier County, most were indigenous to the southern highlands. One prime example is Douglas Ferguson, who owned and operated Pigeon Forge Pottery. A native of western North Carolina, Ferguson graduated from Mars Hill College and joined TVA's Ceramic Research Lab at Norris Dam in 1935. In 1946, he bought an old barn on Highway 71 across from the old mill in Pigeon Forge and converted it into Pigeon Forge Pottery, which quickly became the community's most popular tourist attraction for nearly two decades.<sup>49</sup>

Following the incorporation of Pigeon Forge in 1961, land values in Pigeon Forge rose exponentially. The Knoxville News-Sentinel reported that 32 acres of land in Pigeon Forge purchased for \$92,000 in 1961 sold for \$309,000 in 1965. By the mid-1980s, land values had escalated to over \$4,000 per square foot of frontage property. This rise in property values helped outside developers elbow out the community's

---

<sup>48</sup>Julia Householder, interviewed by Bren Martin, November 6, 1992, Tape recording.

<sup>49</sup>"Pigeon Forge Pottery Still a Favorite," Knoxville News-Sentinel, 2 March 1969.

declining number of farmers who still cultivated fields along the highway in the 1960s. Shortly after incorporation, some local families, such as the Butlers, sold their property to real estate agents and developers for what they thought were inflated prices. Many families tried to hold on to their land, but the mounting property taxes which accompanied rising land values forced most to sell or lease their property to developers.<sup>50</sup>

As land in Pigeon Forge became available for developers to purchase or lease, outside investors swarmed into the community. Perhaps the best example of a popular attraction dominated by outside interests was the evolution of Pigeon Forge's most popular theme park, "Dollywood." The origins of the park date back to 1961, when Grover and Harold Robbins opened "Rebel Railroad." By the late 1960s, however, the Robbins brothers decided to sell Rebel Railroad to the most unlikely of investors, Arthur Modell and the Cleveland Browns, who transformed the park into "Goldrush Junction." In 1975, Pigeon Forge city manager Don Scalf called the park "our biggest employer and biggest taxpayer." Despite the success of Goldrush Junction in generating revenue and tourists for the community, the park was losing money. As a result, Modell sold the park to Jack and Pete Herschend, who owned Branson, Missouri's first theme park, "Silver Dollar City." After purchasing the park for \$2 million and investing another \$800,000 to improve its attractions, visitation quadrupled to 500,000 in three years, putting the operation out of the red and into the black. The

---

<sup>50</sup>McDonald and Wheeler, "Part-Time Farming in Sevier County," 13; Knoxville News-Sentinel, 12 November 1965.



Herschends brought in native Sevier Countian Dolly Parton as a minority partner in 1985, rechristened the park "Dollywood," and used Parton's image to market it. Due to Parton's high visibility in promoting the park, many visitors assumed she was the sole owner of the park. Visitation doubled the year Parton signed and continued to grow steadily thereafter, reflecting the marketability of Americans' weakness for even vicarious proximity to celebrities.<sup>51</sup>

The popularity of Dollywood helped to propel the rapid growth of Pigeon Forge in the 1980s. From 1980 to 1992, the total number of motel rooms in Pigeon Forge jumped from 1,932 to 5,852. During this same period, the community's gross business receipts exploded from \$51 million to \$379 million due in large part to the development of several outlet malls. The opening of Factory Merchants in 1982 initiated the phenomenon of outlet malls in Pigeon Forge. After shoppers flocked to Factory Merchants, three new outlet malls opened within four years that were equally successful. The success of the malls contributed more than any single factor to the rampant development of the city in the 1980s. For visitors, outlet malls are now the city's most important tourist attraction; for local residents, malls are the largest source of revenue and employment in the community. Perhaps most importantly for locals, the outlet malls are helping to level out seasonal fluctuations in tourism, resulting in a

---

<sup>51</sup>Pat Arnow, "Tourist Central: Scourge or Salvation?" Now and Then 8, (Spring 1991), 6; Lisa Gubernick, "A Curb on the Ego," Forbes, 14 September 1992, 418-19; "Family Emphasis Planned, Says New Goldrush Owners," Knoxville Journal, 8 April 1976; "Goldrush Junction Creating Old-Time Atmosphere," *ibid.*, 13 May 1971.

38 percent decline in winter unemployment.<sup>52</sup>

Driving Pigeon Forge's rapid development were several outside entrepreneurs who moved to Pigeon Forge and initiated commercial enterprises. Many of these newcomers were from other cities in Tennessee. Jim Sidwell, for instance, was a Murfreesboro, Tennessee native who moved to the area in the early 1960s and built the area's first miniature golf courses and amusement parks, including Funland and Adventure Golf. Charles A. "Z" Buda was a former mayor from Newport, Tennessee, who built a large drugstore in Pigeon Forge before he expanded his interests into tourism-related developments, such as the Z. Buda Campground and the Z. Buda Mall. Ken Seaton was a Knoxville native who became Pigeon Forge's most prominent hotel developer, building the Grand Hotel Resort and Convention Center and Family Inns. His \$3,500 investment in Valley Motor Inn in 1963 parlayed into KMS Enterprises, Inc., a conglomerate of 40 companies reportedly worth over \$30 million.<sup>53</sup>

In spite of the fact that most tourism profits left the community after 1970, locals continued to play an important role in the development of tourism in two ways. First, wealthy local residents continued to invest heavily in the community's tourist industry (i.e. Ogle's Waterpark, Norma and Dan Hotel, etc.). Secondly, tourist development proceeded with the acquiescence of locals, for most of the land that was developed

---

<sup>52</sup>Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism, Statistics for Prospective New Businesses (Pigeon Forge: Department of Tourism, 1991), 11, 37, 42; Arnow, "Tourist Central," 8.

<sup>53</sup>"Sevier County Entrepreneur: 'Work Hard and Do it Right,'" Knoxville News-Sentinel, 22 May 1994; Knoxville Journal, 26 February 1977; Jim Sidwell, interviewed by Bren Martin, 14 April 1993, Tape recording; Buda earned the nickname "Z" during his high school football days, when, as a running back, he "zig-zagged" down the field.

was leased rather than purchased. By the 1980s, however, outside corporate interests controlled the largest and most profitable tourist attractions, namely Dollywood and the outlet malls that proliferated in Pigeon Forge after 1982. Today, it is estimated that, although local families still own most of the land in Pigeon Forge, more than 75 percent of tourism profits are funneled out of the community.<sup>54</sup>

Whereas tourism came to dominate Sevier County's economy, it played a much less important role in the economy of neighboring Blount County, causing the county to develop very differently. Blount County entered the post-World War I period with seemingly every advantage over Sevier County in developing a strong tourism base. Since Montvale Springs had been one of the South's great resorts since before the Civil War, tourism had a much stronger tradition in Blount County than in Sevier County, where tourism developed relatively late. Additionally, while railroads never made it to Sevier County's highland communities (Elkmont excepted), the Little River Railroad penetrated Blount County's mountainous backcountry early in the twentieth century. Furthermore, the Knoxville and Augusta Railroad and the Little River Railroad jointly promoted tourism in the area with "The Beautiful Elkmont Country" brochures. The county also stood to benefit as a gateway community for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The scale of tourism development in Blount County, however, paled in comparison to Sevier County for numerous reasons. First, the pattern of roads to and through the park channeled tourist traffic primarily to the Gatlinburg entrance. Secondly, since the

---

<sup>54</sup>Tooman, "The Evolving Economic Impact of Tourism," 345.

Little River Lumber Company continued to cut timber from the upper Little River watershed within the park area until 1938, it took many years for the land to recover. The ugly sight of timber slash, mountains scarred by forest fires, and cut-over land discouraged most visitors from entering the park via Townsend. Thirdly, there were very few lodging accommodations in the area prior to the 1960s. One reason for the lack of accommodations is that the county's old resorts had been in a state of decline since the 1900. Perhaps most importantly, the mountainous parts of the county lacked sewage and utility systems to support tourism.

Of Blount County's old resorts, Montvale Springs had the grandest tradition. Once celebrated as the "Saratoga of the South," the resort was never able to recapture its glory days after the Civil War. Montvale Springs survived into the twentieth century, but instead of catering to the South's rich and famous, it accommodated primarily local elites from Maryville and Knoxville. The coming of railroads spawned new resorts such as Elkmont which drew tourists away from the older, more established hotels off the beaten path in Blount County. Because of the resort's isolation and inaccessibility, it had difficulty competing in the era of automobile tourism. Some local residents still frequented the resort for its "reasonable price" and convenience, but few came for the healthful springs anymore. Almost symbolic of the transition from Victorian tourism to modern tourism, Montvale Springs Hotel met its final demise in a fire in 1933, a year before the official birth of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Today, a YMCA camp occupies the site of the formerly celebrated spa. The only remnants of its past glory are the towering ginko trees,

exotic shrubs, and the crumbled stairs where the entrance to the hotel used to be.<sup>55</sup>

While Montvale Springs was one of many highland resorts that could not make the transition to modern tourism, Kinzel Springs was a Blount County resort representing the new breed of middle class resorts dependent upon easy access. Built in 1914 by Edward J. Kinzel and Buford Newman of Knoxville, Kinzel Springs Hotel was situated next to the Little River Railroad. Visitors rode the train and alighted at the doorstep of the hotel. It featured tennis courts, croquet, miniature golf, a swimming area with a beach, a dance pavilion, and excellent family-style meals. Knoxvilleians caught on to Kinzel Springs very quickly. In 1926 there were over 100 cottages and a summer population of over 2,000.<sup>56</sup>

By the mid-1920s, however, Kinzel Springs Hotel had some competition. Back in 1907, Edward Kinzel had donated some of his land across the Little River to the International Sunshine Society for the purpose of building a cottage where poor working girls could spend their vacation. After a few years, however, the Society sold the "Sunshine Rest Cottage" to private developers who promptly renamed it "Smoky Mountain Inn" and operated in direct competition with the Kinzel Springs Hotel. To attract more tourists, they also changed the name of the area to "Sunshine," which was the name of the community when it was incorporated from 1925 to 1935. Though the city manager claimed that "our chief purpose is to bring law and order," the

---

<sup>55</sup>Chiles file on "Montvale Springs"; Inez Burns, History of Blount County, Tennessee: From War Trail to Landing Strip, 1795-1955 (Nashville: Benson Printing Co., 1957), 83-85.

<sup>56</sup>Burns, A History of Blount County, 90-91.

enforcement of temperance laws was apparently lax. A popular expression among visitors in the 1920s was "The moon shines at Sunshine."<sup>57</sup>

But the Great Depression hit Sunshine hard. Visitation dropped off sharply and many owners abandoned their cottages. In 1935, the town of Sunshine was formally dissolved when it was unable to raise enough tax revenue to support any services. Visitation further dried up after the Little River Railroad pulled up its rails in the late 1930s, leaving behind only a bumpy and rutted roadbed. The Kinzel Springs Hotel managed to survive into the 1940s, but it was finally forced to close due to World War II. The hotel was literally obliterated by the coming of car tourism when it was razed to clear the right of way for TN 73 (presently US-321). After the Smoky Mountain Inn burned down in the 1950s, the only remains of the heyday in Kinzel Springs were the few remaining cottages along the Little River.<sup>58</sup>

By that time, Kinzel Springs had been annexed into the city of Townsend, the former mill town of the Little River Railroad and Lumber Company. As long as the mill operated, thousands of tourists went through Townsend on their way to Elkmont, but few ever stopped. There was, nevertheless, a hotel in town--the Townsend Inn--which was operated by the lumber company to house people there on business. After the mill shut down in 1938, Townsend went through a difficult transition in which the community's economic base gradually shifted towards a dependency on tourism. Most former employees of the Little River Railroad and Lumber Company either returned to

---

<sup>57</sup>Knoxville Journal, 7 January 1936.

<sup>58</sup>Chiles file on "Kinzel Springs/Sunshine."

farming, worked for New Deal agencies, took jobs with the Aluminum Corporation of America (ALCOA), or moved elsewhere for employment. However, some residents of Blount County had the vision to realize that, since Townsend was now one of the main gateways to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the community's future lay with tourism.<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps Townsend's most important early tourism booster was Dean Stone, the longtime editor of Blount County's newspaper, The Daily Times. Although Stone owned no tourist-related business or property, he was (and still is) a leading promoter of the tourist industry in Blount County. Not only did his picturesque postcards of the Smoky Mountains sell visitors on the area, but he also pushed tourism in the area with his civic activities. Stone was instrumental, for instance, in organizing both the Blount County Chamber of Commerce and the Smoky Mountain Visitors Bureau, the two most important tourism promoting agencies in Blount County.<sup>60</sup>

As in Sevier County, locals played an important role in the early development of Townsend. Paul Clark, for instance, was a Maryville attorney who was chairman of the Townsend Investment Company, a land company created to subdivide the remaining property holdings of the Little River Railroad and Lumber Company after the mill operations shut down. His main development project in Townsend was Tuckaleechee Village, a series of tourist cabins along Little River built in the 1950s.

---

<sup>59</sup>Burns, A History of Blount County, 110-115; Chiles file on "Townsend Inn."

<sup>60</sup>Dean Stone, interviewed by Bren Martin, 3 December 1994, Tape recording, Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum Oral History Collection, Townsend.

Tom Talley was a Blount County native who pioneered the community's tourist trade by opening the Talley-Ho Motel in 1960. Among the other early local tourist developers in Townsend were Dodie Thompson, owner of Valley View Lodge, and John Wilson, proprietor of Wilson's Hillbilly Restaurant. These local entrepreneurs laid the foundation for the community's tourist trade at a time when "the only tourists coming through here were lost," as one Townsend hotel owner put it.<sup>61</sup>

Like most other highlands resorts, however, as Townsend gained popularity as "The Peaceful Side of the Smokies," outside interests began investing heavily in the area, causing property values to soar and local residents to lose exclusive control of the tourist trade. Anticipating a windfall from the 1982 Knoxville World's Fair, outside developers descended on Townsend and built a number of chain motels, including Family Inn, Days Inn, and Best Western. Also capitalizing on the opportunity, however, were local residents such as Don and Sandra Headrick, who built the Highland Manor Motel in 1982. Even though the externally-controlled share of the local tourist market has grown rapidly in recent years, local residents still dominate Townsend's restaurant businesses and most hotels. With outside developers and local entrepreneurs building restaurants, motels, and giftshops with unprecedented rapidity in the last decade, land values have skyrocketed and Townsend now appears on the verge of becoming a boom town.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup>Helen Talley, interviewed by Bren Martin, 5 December 1994, Tape recording, Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum Oral History Collection, Townsend.

<sup>62</sup>Sandra Headrick, interviewed by Bren Martin, 9 February 1995, Tape recording, Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum Oral History Collection, Townsend;



The experiences of Townsend, Montvale Springs, Kinzel Springs, Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg, and Asheville illustrate dramatically some of the successes as well as the pitfalls of a tourism-driven economy. Since each community evolved in a unique manner, it is difficult to draw broad conclusions about the desirability of pursuing tourism as a development strategy. Nevertheless, in evaluating the economics of modern tourism, one must balance the pros and cons of the entrepreneurial opportunities, land ownership, employment, income, revenue, and infrastructure costs generated by tourism.

In all of the case study communities, the growth of tourism afforded economic opportunities for a diverse group of entrepreneurs, including local residents, regional investors, as well as corporate interests. Since tourism is largely an unregulated industry that has few barriers to entry and offers substantial short and long term profits with only moderate investments, local and regional entrepreneurs played an important role in the economic development of these resort communities. Locals often played the most important role during the pioneering stages of resort development. Once the resort became popular, however, regional investors and corporate interests gained a foothold and usually wrested control of the tourist industry from local residents in a gradual manner. The economic opportunities for local individuals appear to have diminished over time as land values and taxes rose and control of the local tourist market fell to outside interests. Yet, tourism still offered many entrepreneurial

---

Among the community's locally-owned tourist businesses are Wear's Motel, Dock's Motel, River Shoals, Headrick's Motel, Shirley's Restaurant, Two Sisters' Restaurant, Smoky Junction Restaurant, and the Kinzel House Restaurant.

opportunities to local residents who invested in low-cost attractions, such as giftshops, roadside vending stands, small eating establishments, and campgrounds. In short, tourism parallels other regional industries in that it usually siphons profits away from the host community, but it offers more opportunities for local residents to reap economic benefits than most other industries in the southern highlands because of the relatively low initial capital investment.

Closely related to the distribution of economic benefits in a tourist economy is the issue of land ownership. In communities where local residents were able to maintain ownership of the land, such as Gatlinburg and to a lesser extent Pigeon Forge and Townsend, local residents profited and were able to derive many of the economic benefits of tourism. But many other resort communities witnessed a wholesale transfer of land ownership from local residents to absentee owners, especially in areas of major second home development such as Beech Mountain or Grandfather Mountain. In these communities, local residents suffer the economic consequences of higher taxes due to escalating land values and increases in the cost of living.<sup>63</sup>

Employment patterns in resort communities suggest that tourism generates primarily seasonal, low-wage jobs with few benefits and little chance of advancement. Since unions never made much headway in the tourism industry, hospitality workers who live in resort communities have little choice but accept the minimum wage jobs to be found in restaurants, motels, theme parks, and other attractions. Indeed, the

---

<sup>63</sup>See James Branscome and Peggy Matthews, "Selling the Mountains," Southern Exposure 11, (1974), 122-29.

labor pool in the southern highlands seems especially well-suited for tourism. Tourism is partly dependent on the existence of a labor market willing to accept menial, seasonal labor at low wages. From the 1920s to the 1970s, there were numerous communities in the mountain South where workers needed jobs to replace those lost to the decline of mining, logging, and farming. For this reason, some communities in the region possessed an isolated, low-wage, low-skill labor pool that was ideal for tourism. Thus, average personal incomes in areas dominated by tourism are far lower than in diversified economies. Whereas Sevier County ranked among the lowest in Tennessee with an average annual personal income of \$15,578 in 1994, Blount County, with its diversified economic base, ranked much higher with the average income at \$23,253.<sup>64</sup>

The seasonality of employment is one of the most striking features of a tourism-based economy. As new resorts acquired a tourist economy, employment patterns shifted to accommodate the seasonal labor demands of the local tourist industry. For instance in Sevier County, residents increasingly abandoned full-time farming, and turned instead to part-time farming and husbandry. The shift to less labor intensive agrarian pursuits freed locals to work in the local tourist industry and to claim unemployment in the off-season. In every year since 1980, Sevier County has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Tennessee during the peak tourist seasons of summer and fall, but unemployment claims sometimes soar to above 30% of the

---

<sup>64</sup>Tooman, "The Evolving Economic Impact of Tourism," 44.

workforce in the winter months.<sup>65</sup> These seasonal fluctuations in unemployment are far less severe in Blount and Buncombe Counties, which both possess more diversified economies.

Critics of tourism charge that the hospitality industry can stifle economic diversification, putting resort communities into a position of exclusive dependency on tourism. This criticism certainly holds true for Sevier County, which now lives and dies by tourism alone. Because of the high land values, it would not be very cost-effective for any non-tourist related industry to establish a business in Gatlinburg or Pigeon Forge. Additionally, county leaders have not encouraged large-scale manufacturing endeavors for fear that belching smokestacks would drive tourists away. The zoning regulations in Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, which single-mindedly encouraged tourism, made it very difficult for any non-tourist business to establish itself in these communities.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, Blount and Buncombe Counties developed diversified economic bases. The economies of both counties revolve around manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism. Thus, while tourism can stifle economic diversification, it can also enrich a diversified economy with more jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

One of the strongest arguments used in favor of encouraging the growth of tourism is that it provides a source of revenue for areas with a small tax base. Pigeon Forge

---

<sup>65</sup>Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism, Statistics for Prospective New Businesses, 42.

<sup>66</sup>Pigeon Forge Regional Planning Commission, City of Pigeon Forge Zoning Plan, 1975.

provides a good example of how tourism can produce a lot of revenue for a small community. The records of the Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism show that the 1 percent tourism tax generated \$3,332,716 in revenues for the community in 1990, up from just \$254,149 collected in revenues in 1980. One must consider, however, that most of this revenue goes to support the community's infrastructure of utilities, law enforcement, and roads that sustains tourism. In short, a community of under 4,000 residents must shoulder the tax burden of supporting an infrastructure of a city over twelve times its size. Yet these tourism revenues allow Sevier County to spend more on education and other services than most other rural counties in East Tennessee. For instance, whereas the average teacher's salary in Sevier County in 1988-89 was \$25,147, neighboring Cocke County paid their teachers an average of only \$21,932. Tourism generates much-needed local revenue, but it also raises the cost of living, causes traffic problems, and increases the infrastructure costs of a community.<sup>67</sup>

To summarize, the economics of modern tourism cuts two ways. Although tourism provides income, revenue, and entrepreneurial opportunities to local residents, it generates primarily low-wage, seasonal jobs and creates additional tax burdens for resort communities. Moreover, the distribution of economic benefits tend to favor outside investors over local interests as resorts develop and mature. For better or for worse, tourism contributed to the economic modernization of the region as resort communities abandoned agriculture and developed service-oriented economies.

---

<sup>67</sup>Arnow, "Tourist Central," 13; Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism, Statistics for Prospective New Businesses, 11.

Despite the many economic changes ushered in by the rapid growth of tourism, the hospitality industry perpetuated the seasonal employment patterns and low-paid labor force that characterized the region's other industries. In spite of all the drawbacks, many communities throughout the region continue to pursue tourists and tourism development with a vengeance because it seems to be a safe and inexpensive economic opportunity. As Ned McWherter, the former Governor of Tennessee, once said: "It's a whole lot easier to pick tourists than to pick cotton."<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup>Alisa Davis, "McWherter Praises Community's Efforts," Nashville Tennessean, 12 June 1991.

## **Chapter 6-Hillbillies, Rednecks, and "Injuns": Modern Tourism, Regional Identity, and Cultural Change**

On January 16, 1950, the rough and rowdy behavior of "Slim Jim" Pryor attracted a crowd of curious onlookers at a busy intersection in downtown Chattanooga. Brandishing a hog rifle and a moonshine jug and donning a coonskin cap, Pryor made a spectacle of himself by waving his gun in the air, clogging, and yelling "like a wild man." When a policeman investigated the cause of this public disturbance, Pryor feigned drunkenness and collapsed in his arms. Just as Pryor was about to be arrested, a motorcade arrived with more than fifty others who also dressed and acted as hillbillies. It was only then that the policeman discovered "Slim Jim," this seemingly intoxicated mountaineer, was actually a Gatlinburg booster trying to attract tourists to the Smoky Mountains. Pryor had arrived a few minutes in advance of the "Travellin' Hillbillies," a promotional motorcade touring the South to lure visitors to Gatlinburg with stereotypical depictions of themselves.<sup>1</sup>

As illustrated by this incident, modern tourism has consciously perpetuated the hillbilly stereotype and reinforced notions of regional distinctiveness. Although outside visitors constructed the popular image of the mountaineer, a number of native mountain residents readily accepted, adopted, and exploited the images of southern highlanders to promote tourism and earn profits. In a conscious attempt to validate middle class America's perception of the region, various government agencies as well as private entrepreneurs provided visitors with staged demonstrations of "authentic"

---

<sup>1</sup>"Coonskin-Capped Smokies Booster Halts Traffic, Nearly Goes to Jail," The Chattanooga Times, 17 January 1950.

culture and other packaged forms of regional identity that, in essence, reshaped and "commodified" mountain culture for the sake of promoting tourism.

Even though the perceived uniqueness of cultural identity in the southern highlands was an important selling point for tourists, rampant tourism-related development in the twentieth century erased the primitive world of the mountaineer. Herein lies an irony in the relationship between culture and tourism in the region. Tourism has provided a strong economic incentive to conserve cultural resources, preserve historic sites, and maintain a sense of regional distinctiveness; yet it has also been a major source of cultural change. For better or for worse, tourism helped to end the cultural isolation of mountaineers as they came in contact with new ideas, new products, and new ways of doing things that outside visitors brought to the region. As highland resort communities developed, local residents adapted their way of life to accommodate the modern tastes and desires of their urban guests. In some resort boom towns, the traditional agrarian way of life rapidly gave way to the standardized roadside culture of modern America, with its proliferation of motel chains, fast food restaurants, and convenience stores. To preserve regional identity and sense of place amid crass commercialism, many outside and local entrepreneurs consciously fostered a sense of regional distinctiveness with contrived attractions and events that often reinforced the false, and often negative stereotypes associated with the residents of the southern mountains.

As noted in an earlier chapter, the image of the southern mountaineer was already deeply entrenched in the American consciousness by the dawn of the twentieth



century. In the late-nineteenth century, a myriad of outsiders (including local color writers, settlement school workers, scholars, journalists, missionaries, and travel account writers) constructed the notion of southern highlanders as a "peculiar people" of pure Anglo-Saxon stock living a pioneer existence. The externally imposed image of southern mountaineers remained a powerful stereotype in the twentieth century in large part because Americans nostalgically longed for the romanticized pre-industrial society that they genuinely believed still existed in the southern highlands.<sup>2</sup>

In reality, the mountain South witnessed profound economic, social, and cultural changes in the decades before and after World War I, but nevertheless, the American mainstream continued to imagine mountain residents as contemporary pioneers. To Americans ambivalent about the rapid changes brought by industrialization, immigration, and urbanization, Appalachia represented a symbolic counterfoil to the progressive thrust of modern urban society. Searching for the source of national uniqueness, many Americans looked to the southern highlands as one locus of the nation's folk heritage. With the campaign for "100% Americanism" during and after World War I, Americans increasingly sought out the nation's Anglo-Celtic folk roots in the isolated southern mountains, where there supposedly resided a purely white

---

<sup>2</sup>For more thorough discussions of the the process of creating a regional identity for the southern highlands, see Allen W. Batteau, The Invention of Appalachia (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990); Ronald D. Eller, Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1888-1930 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982); Henry D. Shapiro, Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978); and David E. Whisnant, All That Is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

people whose lives were untouched by the forces of modern society. In southern Appalachia, it was believed one could find authentic Anglo-American folk traditions untainted by foreign influences. As a result, many twentieth century writers, scholars, benevolent workers, and government planners reaffirmed the pioneer myth in their works.<sup>3</sup>

The region's Anglo-Celtic cultural survivalisms "discovered" by nineteenth century scholars continued to excite scholars and folklorists of the twentieth century as well. One of the most renowned scholars who studied culture in the region was Dr. Cecil J. Sharp, a British folklorist who traveled throughout the mountain South from 1916 to 1918 in search of old English ballads. Like most outsiders, Sharp came to the region with preconceived notions of the southern highlanders as "the direct descendants of the original settlers who were immigrants from England." Echoing the popular view, he believed that mountain residents "have for a hundred years or more been completely isolated and cut off from all traffic with the rest of the world." Since mountaineers supposedly lived isolated from modern influences, Sharp came to America convinced that he would find examples of untainted English folksongs in the Appalachian backcountry. Hosted by Olive Dame Campbell of the John C. Campbell Folk School, one of the most important institutions that pushed for "preservation" of "authentic" Appalachian culture, Sharp toured parts of western North Carolina, East Tennessee, eastern Kentucky, West Virginia, and southwestern Virginia to collect over 270 ballads

---

<sup>3</sup>Jane Stewart Becker, "Selling Tradition: The Domestication of Southern Appalachian Culture in 1930s America" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1993), 3-8.

and folksongs with British origins.<sup>4</sup>

Sharp's work helped to create a cottage industry for folklorists who sought out the nation's Anglo-American folk roots in the southern highlands. Among the scholars who carried on Sharp's pioneering work were George Pullen Jackson, Dorothy Scarborough, and Edward Henry Mellinger, who searched the highland South to collect distinct regional forms of music.<sup>5</sup> These and other scholars echoed the idea that folk ballads and other aspects of life in the region represented "a survival in culture" from a long forgotten era. Throughout the first three quarters of the twentieth century, scholars reinforced the notion of regional uniqueness with numerous studies that highlighted Appalachia's distinctive folk culture. Yet many highlanders did not appreciate being "gloated over by exultant Ph.D.'s (who find in the mountain shacks the accents of Elizabeth)," according to Thomas Wolfe.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, in validating notions of a static society in the southern highlands, scholars and folklorists contributed to the rise of a number of movements to preserve

---

<sup>4</sup>Cecil J. Sharp, English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), xxii.

<sup>5</sup>See George Pullen Jackson, White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands: The Story of the Fasola Folk, Their Songs, Singing, and Buckwheat Notes (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933); Dorothy Scarborough, A Song Catcher in the Southern Mountains: American Folk Songs of British Ancestry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937); Edward Henry Mellinger, Folk Songs From the Southern Highlands (New York: J.J. Augustin, 1938).

<sup>6</sup>Thomas Wolfe, The Hills Beyond (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), 238; Other studies proclaiming the southern highlands as a culturally distinctive region include: Jack Weller, Yesterday's People: Life in Contemporary Appalachia (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965); and Harry Caudill, Night Comes to the Cumberland: The First Frontier in the War on Poverty (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1962); Jackson, White Spirituals in the Southern Highlands, 3.

what was believed to be a dying way of life in the region. Among the earliest of these "cultural preservation" efforts was the handicrafts revival movement of the early-twentieth century. Consistent with popular depictions of southern mountain residents as contemporary pioneers, the handicrafts revival movement represented an attempt to cash in on the nostalgia for a romanticized pastoral lifestyle that many Americans longed for amid the unsettling changes brought by technology and the shift to an urban industrial lifestyle. Curiously, the primary purveyors of the backward-looking handicrafts revival were progressives--settlement school teachers who were sent to the region to "uplift" poor mountaineers to the standards of modern American society.<sup>7</sup>

Settlement schools reflected the larger national urge to identify the sources of national uniqueness in the southern highlands. Most settlement schools made an effort "to maintain a sense of continuity in the lives of the people by strengthening, instead of destroying, their traditional culture."<sup>8</sup> These schools recruited mostly well-educated northern women from upper and middle class backgrounds to help "poor mountain people" through education and vocational training. Before they lived in the mountains, settlement school workers (like most Americans) believed that mountaineers lived a backwards, pioneer-like existence. But instead of finding a static society, they discovered a region undergoing rapid economic and social changes with the coming of railroads, extractive industries, and tourism. From the perspective of many benevolent

---

<sup>7</sup>Allen Eaton, Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1937), 21-28; Becker, "Selling Tradition," 6-8.

<sup>8</sup>Sharp, English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians, xvi.

workers, it appeared as though the region's Old World lifeways depicted in the writings of local colorists and scholars were rapidly eroding away.<sup>9</sup>

The belief that this quaint culture was under assault by modern society inspired a number of efforts to preserve elements of the region's lifeways. Settlement schools proved to be a major agent of cultural preservation in the southern highlands with their efforts to "revive" the handicraft "tradition" of the southern highlands. While the mission and curriculum of each settlement school was different, most schools initiated arts and crafts programs called "fireside industries" that were intended to train mountaineers how to earn money by making and selling handicrafts to tourists. Among the settlement schools that developed handicrafts programs were the Hindman Settlement School, Berea College, Arrowmont School, Pine Mountain Settlement School, and the John C. Campbell Folk School. In what David Whisnant calls "cultural interference," these non-indigenous settlement school workers launched crafts programs to teach mountaineers their own culture. Assigned as traditional and authentic by outsiders, mountain handicrafts were sold mainly to tourists who wanted to purchase a souvenir symbolizing the pioneer lifestyle that supposedly still existed in the region.<sup>10</sup>

Pi Beta Phi's Arrowmont School in Gatlinburg, Tennessee operated one of the most successful handicrafts program in the mountain South. In 1912, Pi Beta Phi, the first

---

<sup>9</sup>Becker, "Selling Tradition," 5-6.

<sup>10</sup>Whisnant, All That is Native and Fine, 13-14; Eaton, Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands, 69-90.

national women's Greek letter society, located the settlement school in the tiny village of Gatlinburg. Andy Huff and Steve Whaley, who pioneered tourism in Gatlinburg, arranged for the community to finance the purchase of a portion of Ephraim Ogle's land on which to build the school. In 1915, the Arrowmont School began a handicrafts program under the direction of Caroline Hughes, a University of Michigan graduate. Although some natives scoffed at "them wimmin" who were going to "teach tools," the industrial arts program was, according to Pi Phi records, "instrumental in reviving among the older women the almost forgotten art of spinning and weaving." A few years later, Arrowmont expanded its industrial arts program to include basket making and woodworking--trades that drew more men into the program.<sup>11</sup>

Arrowmont's handicrafts program entered a new stage in 1925, when Winogene Redding arrived from Massachusetts to take over the weaving program. Redding came at a critical time, because U.S. Highway 71 was nearing completion through Gatlinburg and the movement for a national park in the Great Smoky Mountains was gaining momentum. Moreover, mountain handicrafts had become very fashionable during the inter-war period. The handicraft market boomed as woven coverlets, quilts, and handmade baskets emerged as a popular home designing trend in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup>A Century of Friendship in Pi Beta Phi, 1867-1967 (Chicago: Pi Beta Phi, 1969), 171-84; Philis Avlic, Weavers of the Southern Highlands: The Early Years in Gatlinburg (Murray, KY: for Arrowmont School, 1991), 1-4; Kate B. Miller to Mr. Carman, August 7, 1913, Arrowmont Special Collections, Gatlinburg.

<sup>12</sup>A Century of Friendship in Pi Beta Phi, 198-99.

Sensing the commercial opportunities for the school's handicrafts program, Redding urged the school to open a craft shop along Highway 71. Previously, students had sold their wares from a small display room in the basement of the Arrowmont School; but the opening of the Arrow Craft Shop in May 1926 gave students a highly visible gallery that catered to an ever-burgeoning number of car tourists in the Smokies. The new Arrow Craft Shop was immediately successful. The shop had more than \$1000 in sales the first month--more than three times the amount of prior monthly sales! Over the next several years, Arrow Craft sold tens of thousands of handicrafts to car tourists in search of "authentic" local color. Arrow Craft later expanded its market by publishing its own mail order catalog in the 1930s as well as by opening a shop in the lobby of Andy Huff's Mountain View Hotel.<sup>13</sup>

Not only did Arrowmont pioneer in marketing handicrafts, the institution also helped to consolidate handicrafts producers throughout the region into the Southern Highland Handicrafts Guild (SHHG), a trade union that regulated the handicrafts industry. Although the origins of the organization date back to the creation of the Southern Workers Council in 1913, the SHHG formally organized in 1929 at a meeting of regional handicrafts producers in Penland, North Carolina. The SHHG quickly established itself as the main arbiter of authenticity and quality for mountain crafts. In essence, the organization mediated between the tastes of consumers and the individual styles of producers. This meant creating "accepted" designs and standardizing mountain handicrafts, even to the point of stifling individual creativity.

---

<sup>13</sup>A Century of Friendship, 199; Avlic, Weavers of the Southern Highlands, 4-8.

As one of the SHHG's founders, Isadora Williams put it, "You don't have to make it like you like it--you have to make it like the person who buys it likes it. . . . You have to forget yourselves."<sup>14</sup>

Because tourism fueled the handicrafts revival movement, craft producers naturally clustered at highland resorts. In Asheville, for instance, there were numerous craft shops and producers, including the Spinning Wheel, Biltmore Industries, Allanstand, the Asheville Normal School, and many other smaller producers. Among the craft producers in and around Gatlinburg were Arrow Craft, the Wood Carver's Shop, Le Conte Craft Shop, Smoky Mountain Handicraft Shop, the Bear Skin Craft Shop, Pittman Center, and numerous others. In turn, successful handicrafts programs often attracted visitors to communities without an existing tourist base, such as Berea, Kentucky. Although local people produced crafts, they were not priced for local consumption nor were they used by the local population who, contrary to the image projected by these souvenirs, rarely utilized such archaic things in their homes.<sup>15</sup>

While the handicrafts industry helped to perpetuate the pioneer myth long after pioneer conditions ceased to exist in the southern highlands, travel account writers were equally important in reinforcing the region's static image in the minds of American tourists. As local color writers had done in the late-nineteenth century, the writers of twentieth century travel accounts created images and expectations of the

---

<sup>14</sup>Becker, "Selling Tradition," 124-139.

<sup>15</sup>W. R. Woolrich, et al., *Agricultural-Industrial Report-Sevier County, Tennessee, 1934*, typescript volume, Tennessee Valley Authority Archives, Knoxville, 88-91; Asheville City Directory, 1940.



southern highlands for travelers. Following the example set by Horace Kephart's classic book, Our Southern Highlanders, a number of outsiders wrote extended travel accounts that described the culture and scenery of the southern mountains in order to promote tourism. One example was Robert Lindsay Mason's The Lure of the Great Smokies.<sup>16</sup>

Mason, a tourist from Pennsylvania, loved to camp and trek in the Smokies. After numerous visits to the area, he became an ardent supporter of the movement to create a national park in the Smoky Mountains. To promote the park movement, he penned The Lure of the Great Smokies, a prosaic travel account that embraces a romantic view of southern highlanders. For instance, in an incident that "we thought . . . thoroughly exemplified the life of the Smoky Mountaineer," an elderly mountain man became very angry when his friend shot a large raven, claiming that "Hit's seven year o' bad luck." Based on his limited interactions with mountain guides during his travels in the region, he concluded that southern highlanders were hospitable, but extremely superstitious and fatalistic. The book goes on to insist in vivid detail that "here exists the purest strain of that [Anglo-Saxon] origin, and that, because of the isolation of the people in the untouched mountains, this blood has kept its original force and individuality." This depiction of contemporary pioneers mirrored and reinforced the

---

<sup>16</sup>Horace Kephart, Our Southern Highlanders: A Narrative of Adventure in the Southern Appalachians and a Study of Life among the Mountaineers (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976); Robert Lindsay Mason, The Lure of the Great Smokies (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927).

American public's view.<sup>17</sup>

Another popular travel account book that reinforced the static image of the southern highlands was Margaret Morley's The Carolina Mountains. Born in Iowa, Morley grew up in Brooklyn. Around 1905, she traveled to western North Carolina to do missionary work for the Presbyterian Church. In the hollows of the mountain South, she encountered a people and a way of life that was so alien to that which she was accustomed to in the metropolis of Brooklyn. Consequently, she kept an account of her strange experiences in the region and published it in 1913 under the title, The Carolina Mountains. She supplemented her text with many carefully chosen photographs that reinforced her main point that life had changed very little in the southern highlands since the first pioneers arrived in the eighteenth century. Among the other books written by visitors that offered such a romanticized depiction of the southern highlands were Muriel Sheppard's Cabins in the Laurel and Laura Thornborough's The Great Smoky Mountains.<sup>18</sup>

Articles in travel magazines that portrayed the region as a land forgotten by time had a more direct and immediate influence on tourists' perceptions of the mountain South. As tourism became an increasingly important leisure activity for middle class Americans, travel magazines emerged as a vital source for resort owners to inform and

---

<sup>17</sup>Mason, The Lure of the Great Smokies, 57 and xviii.

<sup>18</sup>Laura Thornborough, The Great Smoky Mountains (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1937); Muriel Early Sheppard, Cabins in the Laurel (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935); Margaret Morley, The Carolina Mountains (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913).

attract potential travelers. Travel was the most widely read travel magazine in America in the 1920s. A number of articles in Travel attempted to attract visitors to highland resorts with exaggerated stereotypes and false perceptions of the region. For instance, in April 1928, Travel published an article about Gatlinburg, Tennessee by Laura Thornborough entitled, "Americans the Twentieth Century Forgot."

Thornborough, a Knoxville native who frequently vacationed at Elkmont, depicted the residents of Gatlinburg as "descendants of pioneer ancestors, proud of their Anglo-Saxon stock" who "cling to pioneer ways because of the condition under which they live." In declaring that "they are dependent upon their own industries for the necessities of life," she gave the false impression that residents of Gatlinburg lived completely isolated from the outside world, when in fact the town was by this time developing rapidly as the premier resort of the Smokies. When Thornborough described the handicrafts of the Smokies, she failed to mention that the handicrafts industry was a tourist-driven, standardized endeavor that Pi Beta Phi had introduced to Gatlinburg a little more than a decade earlier. Thornborough noted that "the women weave towels, rugs, draperies, coverlets, and piece quilts. . . . In and around Gatlinburg there is scarcely a home without a loom." To tourists reading Travel who longed to escape from the hustle-bustle of their everyday lives and visit a place where life was simple and quaint, she offered such idyllic images of life in the mountains: "Stopping at the home of a weaver you find her singing to a flaxen-haired, blue eyed child of two or three playing at her knees. You pause to catch the words of the song.

It is an old English ballad."<sup>19</sup>

Six years after Thornborough's article, Travel published a travel account entitled "America's Yesterday" by Thomas Hart Benton, the celebrated American artist. Recounting a recent visit to the Arkansas Ozarks, Hart described it as "a trip through one of the few regions where a belated frontier life still exists." The article describes mountain people "whose manners and psychologies antedate those of Andrew Jackson's time." According to Benton, the "slow language of the people in the back hills" had "linguistic forms running back into the times of Elizabeth." Such static depictions of the region in travel accounts were intended for an audience of potential tourists. Obviously, the writers and editors of Travel believed that the romantic images of the southern highlands would appeal to visitors who wanted to spend their vacation time exploring such quaint and romantic locales as those described in these articles. The articles gave the distinct impression that visiting these places would be like stepping back in time, when things were slower, less hectic. In short, by reading these articles, potential tourists must have believed that they could escape the modern world by going to these places.<sup>20</sup>

The editors of Travel were by no means alone in recognizing the marketing appeal of quaintness in drawing tourists to the region, for there were many others who used the region's perceived cultural heritage to attract visitors. Folk festivals were among

---

<sup>19</sup>Laura Thornborough, "Americans the Twentieth Century Forgot," Travel (April 1928), 1-7, 44-45.

<sup>20</sup>Thomas Benton, "America's Yesterday," Travel (July 1934), 1-10, 45.

the first events aimed at attracting visitors with staged versions of regional culture. The earliest and most popular festival was the annual Mountain Dance and Folk Festival in Asheville, North Carolina. The main person primarily responsible for conceiving and coordinating the festival was Bascom Lamar Lunsford, a lawyer and farmer from South Turkey Creek, North Carolina who was concerned that, with western North Carolina's growing sophistication, the folk songs and dances of the region were quickly dying out. Lunsford was also a showman who recognized the public's interest in regional culture as an opportunity to attract people and attention. In 1927, Lunsford approached the Asheville Chamber of Commerce and, under the Chamber's sponsorship, established the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival. When the first festival was held at the height of the 1928 tourist season, the Asheville Chamber of Commerce and the Asheville Citizen vigorously promoted the event as a tourist attraction. While the Chamber's ads promised "the finest folk musicians and dancers ever assembled in one place," the Citizen urged visitors to "witness this once in a lifetime event."<sup>21</sup> Due largely to the combination of Lunsford's showmanship and the Asheville Chamber's promotional efforts, the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival was a huge success and this "once in a lifetime event" became an annual festival that, even today, draws tens of thousands of tourists to Asheville every year. It was the first of several other tourist-oriented highland folk festivals, such as Jean Thomas's Folk Song

---

<sup>21</sup>Asheville Citizen, 23 June 1927; "History of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce," apparently written by the Asheville Chamber [1960], Archives, Asheville Chamber of Commerce, Asheville; Scrapbook on Bascom Lamar Lunsford at Mars Hill College Archives has numerous newspaper clippings about the life of Lunsford.

Festival in Ashland, Kentucky (1930) and Annabel Morris Buchanan's White Top Folk Festival in southwest Virginia (1931).<sup>22</sup>

While individuals and local agencies did much to present staged versions of regional culture to attract tourists, it was the federal government that led the way in preserving and marketing regional identity as a tourist attraction. Indeed, the National Park Service was among the first agencies, public or private, to use regional identity in a coordinated manner as a means to draw tourists. In developing and promoting the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Park Service strove to portray the region as a land forgotten by time. They not only built miles of split-rail fences and restored numerous log cabins, but they also systematically removed structures that did not fit with the pioneer image they sought to convey in these parks.

The National Park Service (NPS) based much of its cultural interpretation of the Great Smoky Mountains on Horace Kephart's, Our Southern Highlanders. As noted in an earlier chapter, Kephart was a well-educated mid-westerner who moved to the Smokies to escape his family and alcohol problems. After living in the Smokies for a few years, Kephart wrote Our Southern Highlanders, a highly acclaimed book that came to be regarded as the authoritative work on life in the Smoky Mountains. In the book, Kephart graphically describes many stereotypes associated with the region, including the pioneer lifestyle of mountaineers, their Elizabethan dialect, as well as feuding and moonshining. Directly quoting Kephart, one NPS brochure refers to the

---

<sup>22</sup>Whisnant, All That Is Native and Fine, 185.

mountaineers' "strong and even violent independence that made them forsake all the comforts of civilization." Echoing Kephart, NPS promotionals highlighted "the great asset afforded the park by the presence of the rough-hewn cabin, the highlander, and the folk-songs and ballads."<sup>23</sup>

Kephart's widely accepted interpretation of life in the mountains guided the development of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in profound ways. For instance, in developing Cades Cove, one of the most popular sections of the park, the NPS sacrificed historical accuracy to create a picturesque pioneer landscape. Durwood Dunn has shown that, contrary to the public view, Cades Cove was by no means isolated from the outside world. In fact, the area was rapidly modernizing in the early-twentieth century with the coming of better roads, industrial logging, commercial farming, and tourism. Nevertheless, the NPS consciously worked to portray the area as a land of isolated and independent pioneers. After the land in Cades Cove had been purchased, the NPS systematically razed dozens of modern frame houses and stores, but carefully restored the primitive log cabins, barns, and churches that captured the pioneer image they sought to project.<sup>24</sup>

To be consistent with the contrived physical environment that they constructed for tourists in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the National Park Service

---

<sup>23</sup>National Park Service, The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, The Land and Its People (Washington, D.C.: Department of Interior, 1941), 128-29. Sugarlands Publicity File 13127.

<sup>24</sup>Durwood Dunn, Cades Cove: The Life and Death of an Appalachian Community (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 255-56.

launched a cultural preservation effort in the early-1940s that drew heavily from the Kephart paradigm. For instance, in 1941, the NPS published a report entitled, "Mountain Speech in the Great Smokies." The report plainly stated that "mountain speech represents a survival of Elizabethan English, as some romantic writers have claimed. One cannot deny that fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth century forms persist in the Great Smokies." Also in 1941, the NPS published a "Report on the Preservation of Mountain Culture in Great Smoky Mountains National Park" which argued that "every care should be taken to preserve as many of their heirlooms as possible and to keep the spirit of mountain culture alive." Insisting that "there can be no doubt about the fact that mountain culture and the way it appeared when it was first made known to an astonished world, are dying," the report urged the government to take measures to preserve the "pioneer culture that cannot be found in any other part of the country." The report recommended the creation of a "Mountaineer Museum," living history demonstrations throughout the park, selling "authentic handicrafts" in the park, and creating an environment that evokes the region's pioneer lifestyle. Although a mountaineer museum was never built, the report nonetheless provided a blueprint for the Park Service's cultural interpretation of the Great Smoky Mountains.<sup>25</sup>

The pattern of interpretation and promotion employed by the National Park Service

---

<sup>25</sup>Hans Huth, Report on the Preservation of Mountain Culture in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1941); Charles Grossman, Mountain Speech in the Great Smokies, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1941).



for the Great Smoky Mountains was much the same for the Blue Ridge Parkway. As with the Smokies, the popular pioneer myth guided the NPS's development and interpretation of the Blue Ridge Parkway. To project the pioneer theme, the Park Service built split rail fences along the highway and selectively retained and reconstructed log cabins and old farmsteads. Likewise, they removed or excluded from view all elements that did not fit the pioneer myth. Consequently, the major historical and cultural attractions along the Blue Ridge Parkway revolve around the supposed pioneer lifestyle of southern highlanders--such as demonstrations of grist milling and blacksmithing, a reconstructed pioneer homestead, and displays of regional handicrafts.<sup>26</sup>

As with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Park Service exploited the mountaineer image to promote the Blue Ridge Parkway. NPS officials used the photographs of Earl Palmer in their advertisements to draw tourists to cultural attractions along the Parkway. As Jean Haskell Spear points out in her book on Palmer, he chose to ignore modern elements in Appalachia in his photographs and instead focused on the mythical mountaineer, "the quaint embodiment of cherished American values: independence, pride, self-reliance, loyalty."<sup>27</sup> One of Palmer's favorite subjects to photograph was Newton Hylton, who became the poster boy of sorts for Blue Ridge Parkway promotionals. Fitting the public's image of southern

---

<sup>26</sup>Phil Noblitt, "The Blue Ridge Parkway and the Myth of the Pioneer," Appalachian Journal 21 (1994), 394-408.

<sup>27</sup>Jean Haskell Spear, The Appalachian Photographs of Earl Palmer (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), ix.

mountaineers with his long beard, weathered face, and old-fashioned clothes, Hylton looked and acted like a quintessential Appalachian mountaineer. One advertisement explained that their "Uncle Newt" character "was born out of love and admiration for the mountaneousque local color he represents." By celebrating mountain life with characters like Uncle Newt and the images evoked by Kephart, the Park Service reaffirmed mountaineer stereotypes in its conception of cultural tourism in the Mountain South.<sup>28</sup>

In using the pioneer myth to draw tourists, the National Park Service sympathetically portrayed mountaineers as hard working, independent yeomen farmers who represented all that was good about America. Private tourism entrepreneurs, however, were not as committed as the government was to depicting mountain residents in a positive light. Consequently, entrepreneurs, including those native to the region, often chose to entertain visitors with the less flattering, but more recognizable images of the southern hillbilly. Although the contemporary pioneer image remained a strong selling point for tourists, the hillbilly image emerged as the most powerful and most popular stereotype of the region primarily because comic strips, hillbilly music, and Hollywood depicted southern highlanders as backwards, ignorant, and violent hayseeds. Reflecting the images of mountaineers in popular culture and at tourist resorts, Americans generally came to believe that mountain people lived a life of feuding, moonshining, ignorance, incest, laziness, and moral

---

<sup>28</sup>William G. Lord, Blue Ridge Parkway Guide Book (Asheville: Hexagon, 1976), 110.

depravity.

This shift in perception was generated in part by some of the same well-intentioned settlement school workers who spawned the handicraft revival movement. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, as northern humanitarian efforts to aid freedmen in the South dried up, many philanthropists shifted their attention to white southern highlanders who seemed to be especially worthy of northern aid because of their racial purity and, perhaps more importantly, their allegiance to the Union during the Civil War. To attract financial support and validate the need for their benevolent work, some missionaries and settlement school workers highlighted the social and cultural ills of the region. In identifying Appalachian deviance as a problem to be solved with outside help, some benevolent workers emphasized the need to uplift these "noble degenerates" from the ignorance, poverty, and squalor of their lives.<sup>29</sup>

Such negative portrayals of mountaineers contributed to the rise of the hillbilly image. Unlike the quaint and sympathetic image of self-sufficient contemporary pioneers projected by the local color writers of the late-nineteenth century, popular culture after World War I highlighted the humorous and undesirable qualities associated with southern highlanders. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in rise of early commercial country music, which was commonly called "hillbilly music." Hillbilly music developed in the southern mountains from the folksongs and ballads

---

<sup>29</sup>Harry Robie, "Appalachian Public Relations and the Conscious Manipulation of a Regional Stereotype," unpublished paper presented to the American Studies Association Conference, 12 March 1993, Barren Lake State Park, Lucas, Kentucky, 3-4.

brought to North America by Scotch-Irish immigrants. As Cecil J. Sharp found, while Old World tunes were largely forgotten by Americans in the nation's ever-changing urban areas, many of these old folksongs survived in a modified form in the more rural regions of the South, particularly the Appalachian South.<sup>30</sup>

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, southern white folk music evolved and interacted with African-American forms of musical expression until hillbilly music emerged in the 1920s as a dynamic form of commercial music. By the mid-1920s, recording companies were labeling and marketing the white folk music of the rural South under the generic term "hillbilly." Many performers detested the term, but "hillbilly" music was the universally accepted term for country music until the late-1940s. The performers of the 1920s found that it paid off to play up the hillbilly image. Recording companies and radio sponsors encouraged performers, such as "The Original Hillbillies" and the "Georgia Skillet Lickers," to act like hayseeds and wear mountaineer garb and straw hats on stage. Fiddlin' John Carson, who gave his daughter the stage name of "Moonshine Kate," laced his performances with off-color jokes and frequent references to moonshine. As the popularity of hillbilly music spread, so too did the hillbilly stereotype. Consequently, commercialized folk music of southern whites provided a powerful reinforcement of the hillbilly image.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup>Bill C. Malone, Country Music, U.S.A.: A Fifty Year History (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 1-8.

<sup>31</sup>Pamela Grundy, "We Always Tried to be Good People": Respectability, Crazy Water Crystals, and Hillbilly Music On the Air, 1933-1935," Journal of American History 81 (1994-95), 1600-01; Malone, Country Music, U.S.A., 12-35.

As important as hillbilly music was in shaping the public's perception of the mountain South, comic strips were even more important. Al Capp's "Li'l Abner" was the earliest and most popular hillbilly comic strip, reaching approximately 60 million readers in 900 American newspapers and 100 foreign papers in 28 countries. Debuting in 1934, the strip developed many familiar hillbilly caricatures, including the naive and slow-witted Abner Yokum, the feisty, corn cob-smoking Mammy Yokum, and the innocent, buxom blonde Daisy Mae Scragg. The same year that Capp launched "Li'l Abner," the hillbilly characters of Snuffy Smith and his wife Loweezy appeared in Billy De Beck's widely popular strip, "Barney Google." Snuffy Smith, a lazy mountaineer with a weakness for moonshine and feuding, quickly became the strip's most popular character. After De Beck's death, his assistant, Fred Lasswell, has continued to draw Snuffy Smith strips for over fifty years. These and other popular hillbilly comic strips created vivid caricatures that were instantly recognized by Americans of all ages and social classes. In short, comic strips entrenched the hillbilly image in the American consciousness.<sup>32</sup>

Perhaps even more important than comic strips in fixing the hillbilly image in the minds of Americans born after World War II was Hollywood's depiction of mountaineers in television shows and movies. Undoubtedly, the most popular hillbilly TV show was "The Beverly Hillbillies," which premiered in 1962 and reached an estimated weekly audience of 60 million. For the first two seasons, it was the most

---

<sup>32</sup>M. Thomas Inge, "Comic Strips," in Charles Reagan Wilson, ed., Encyclopedia of Southern Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 914-15.

popular show on television. The show maintained high ratings during its first eight years on the air. After the show was canceled in 1971, the series was syndicated and it continues to run on cable television stations to this day. The series revolved around the Clampetts, a family of laughable bumpkins from the Ozark Mountains whose simple, rural ways constantly clashed with the sophistication, greed, and materialism of Beverly Hills. "The Beverly Hillbillies" helped to perpetuate the hillbilly myth in the minds of a new generation of Americans by rehashing the familiar hillbilly caricatures, including the simple, honest patriarch Jed, the cantankerous, moonshine nippin' Granny, the big, slow-witted Jethro Bodine, and the naive, buxom blonde Elly May. Among the other television shows that reinforced hillbilly stereotypes were "Hee Haw," the "Andy Griffith Show," and "Petticoat Junction." Hollywood gave the hillbilly image a more menacing character in the movie adaptation of James Dickey's novel, "Deliverance," which portrayed mountain residents as frightening, inbred degenerates who sodomized and even murdered male-bonding tourists.<sup>33</sup>

As the hillbilly image became deeply entrenched in the American mind, it is not surprising that it became a popular theme to attract tourists raised on L'il Abner and the Beverly Hillbillies. After World War II, many private entrepreneurs developed a variety of contrived events, attractions, and souvenirs that projected the hillbilly identity. Though one might expect such an unsavory image to be rejected by indigenous mountain residents, there is ample evidence to suggest that tourist

---

<sup>33</sup>Sandra Ballard, "The Hills Meet Hollywood," Now and Then 8 (1991), 8-9; Christopher D. Geist, "The Beverly Hillbillies," in Wilson, ed., Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, 946-47.

entrepreneurs who were native to the region embraced and exploited the hillbilly theme for economic gain. In order to give the people what they wanted and thereby make more money, many mountaineers played the part of a hillbilly to validate the expectations of their visitors.

This phenomenon is quite obvious in Gatlinburg, where the tourist economy was long dominated by a handful of local families. When Gatlinburg emerged as a popular resort in the 1920s, visitors were initially drawn to the rusticity and quaintness of this mountain village. The community offered relatively primitive accommodations, but it had a thriving handicrafts "tradition" established by the Arrowmont settlement school a decade earlier. Learning by example from the National Park Service and the Arrow Craft Shop, local business leaders gradually accepted the use of regional identity and cultural stereotypes as selling points to tourists. In the 1920s and 1930s, before the onset of major commercial development, promotional materials attracted visitors with the rustic images of mountain life that were still readily apparent in Gatlinburg. For instance, a 1927 ad pitched the Mountain View Hotel as a "rustic hotel" and included a picture of a typical mountaineer's cabin to illustrate the local color of the area. Prior to World War II, quaint images of a pastoral ambience in Gatlinburg reflected the reality of the town's rural environment.<sup>34</sup> Ironically, the town's success in promoting the image of a quiet mountain village helped to erase the reality of the people's rural mountain lifestyle. As commercial development gradually erased the bucolic character of

---

<sup>34</sup>Great Smoky Mountains Travel Bureau, Tours in the Great Smoky Mountains (Knoxville: Great Smoky Mountains Publishing Co., 1929), Sugarlands, Publicity file #13098.

Gatlinburg and neighboring Pigeon Forge after World War II, many local business people developed contrived attractions and projected a false identity that enabled visitors to validate their stereotypical expectations of the region's "primitive" culture.

The "Travellin' Hillbillies" motorcade of 1950 marked a turning point in Gatlinburg's invented hillbilly identity. The promotional tour was the brainchild of Allen Stalcup, a western North Carolina native who moved to Gatlinburg in the late 1930s and opened the town's first giftshop, the Nut Shop. Hoping to divert Midwestern tourists to Gatlinburg on their way back from their winter trip to Florida, he convinced most of the town's leading business people to dress as hillbillies and drive around the South acting like country bumpkins. As Fran Stalcup later remembered, "we talked just as hillbilly as we could." In early January, Gatlinburg's wealthiest business leaders, including mayor Dick Whaley and Rellie Maples, put on their most shabby clothes and coarse mannerisms and set off for Florida. They decorated their cars with posters of Snuffy Smith and signs reading "Florida in Winter, Gatlinburg on Your Way Home" and "We Ain't Mad With Nobody." Arrow Craft even mounted an antique loom on the roof of a car. Needless to say, they intentionally caused a scene everywhere they went. After Slim Jim Pryor's brush with the law in downtown Chattanooga, they proceeded to Atlanta, where they sang "On Top of Old Smoky" with the Georgia State Senate. As they traveled to and through the Sunshine State, they held impromptu square dances and sang traditional mountain ballads at each stop. These conscious demonstrations of regional stereotypes by Gatlinburg boosters prove that native mountain residents were quite willing to portray



themselves as hillbillies to attract tourists.<sup>35</sup>

After World War II, the hillbilly motif emerged as a dominant theme for Sevier County's tourist industry. The county's tourist attractions, however, often intermingled the hillbilly image with other powerful symbols of the Deep South, namely "rednecks" and the Confederate flag. The southern fried symbols of Dixie grew increasingly apparent after 1960 as more and more white tourists from the Deep South, many of whom were unhappy with the racial changes spawned by the civil rights movement, spent their vacations in Sevier County. A comparison of the 1956 and 1985 Visitor Surveys in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park shows that the total market share of tourists from Deep South states grew by nearly 100 percent over this twenty-nine year period. The trend for more southern tourists visiting Sevier County during a period of racial turmoil in the South explains why private entrepreneurs turned to the racially-charged symbols of Dixie to attract and satisfy their overwhelmingly white clientele. Ironically, the appeal to Confederate images contradicts the county's strong pro-Union sentiment during the Civil War. Indeed, the Confederacy is much more popular in Sevier County today than it was 1861, when the county rejected secession by a vote of 1,302 to 1. Nevertheless, in virtually every attraction, including restaurants, museums, gift shops, and entertainment parks, entrepreneurs blended

---

<sup>35</sup>Fran Stalcup, interviewed by Bren Martin, 12 March 1993, Taped interview; Vic Weals, "'Traveling Hillbillies' Greet Georgia Senate," Knoxville Journal, 18 January 1950; "Mountain Folk in Colorful Costumes Pay Tampa a Visit to Plug Their Town," Tampa Morning Tribune, 28 January 1950.

Appalachian stereotypes with symbols of Dixie.<sup>36</sup>

As noted earlier, one of the first gift shops in Sevier County was the Nut Shop, which Allen Stalcup opened in 1941 and later expanded into the Pioneer Trading Post. The Nut Shop provided visitors with a variety of souvenirs and trinkets that were meant to evoke the unique mountain lifestyle of the area. Stalcup sold hillbilly postcards, whittled carvings, plaster figures of hillbillies, and other inexpensive mountaineer trinkets. Over the next twenty years, several other gift shops with a hillbilly format opened in Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, including the Ole Smoky Trading Post and Hillbilly Village, both established by families indigenous to Sevier County. Today, among the most popular souvenirs in these shops are hillbilly bumper stickers, hillbilly postcards, hillbilly joke books, and other hillbilly trinkets, such as miniature moonshine stills or plastic "Horny Hillbilly" dolls. To the chagrin of many local residents and to the delight of many visitors, these mountaineer giftshops have "trinketized" regional culture by reducing native mountain folkways to cheap artificial souvenirs manufactured outside the community.<sup>37</sup>

Beginning in the 1960s, however, souvenirs associated with southern identity became increasingly popular in local giftshops. Indeed, among the most visible items sold in these shops today are Confederate flags and bumper stickers celebrating the

---

<sup>36</sup>John D. Peine and James R. Renfro, *Visitor Use Patterns at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park*, Research/Resources Management Report SER-90 (Atlanta: Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1988), 25; Jack Neely, "Where Dolly Meets Dali," *Metro Pulse* 4 (June 3-June 17, 1994), 13.

<sup>37</sup>Stalcup interview.

unreconstructed redneck. One can now walk into almost any giftshop in Pigeon Forge and find bumper stickers and license plates reading "If I'd have known this, I'd a picked my own damn cotton" or "Save your Confederate money boys, the South's gonna rise again." One giftshop goes so far as to depict Confederate hillbillies, contradicting the region's stance during the Civil War and obfuscating the area's historical and cultural identity.

Museums in Sevier County have also presented visitors with a contrived version of the hillbilly myth. The earliest museum in Gatlinburg was the Great Smoky Mountain Museum, where Russell Harlan of Knoxville displayed his collection of Indian relics, hog rifles, pottery, and other artifacts associated with the region. Perhaps the first locally-owned museum in the area was "Homespun Valley Mountaineer Village," operated by Gatlinburg resident William Postlewaite. At Homespun Valley, visitors immersed themselves in an invented hillbilly environment of log cabins, moonshine stills, a grist mill, pioneer guns, and handicrafts. Every night, tourists were invited to come hear "real hillbillies makin' mountain music." Owned by Hal Reagan, the Mountaineer Museum was another locally-controlled museum that displayed stereotypical depictions of mountain life.<sup>38</sup>

But more recently, Sevier County's museums have strayed from the hillbilly theme. As with souvenir shops, museums increasingly projected the symbols and images of Dixie after 1960. This phenomenon holds especially true in Pigeon Forge, where

---

<sup>38</sup>"Gatlinburg's Mountaineer Museum Sold," Knoxville News-Sentinel, 26 February 1988; Brochure for "Homespun Valley Mountaineer Village," Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce Archives, Gatlinburg; Woolrich, et al., Agricultural-Industrial Report, 88.

museums have featured many sacred redneck icons, such as Elvis collections and the vehicles driven by "Walking Tall" Sheriff Buford Pusser, Billy Carter, and Hank Williams, Jr. Museums that have little to do with local history have further skewed the meaning of regional culture in the minds of tourists who visit Sevier County in search of local color.

No attraction, however, more clearly illustrates the bizarre nature of marketing regional identity for tourists than the evolution of "Dollywood," Sevier County's premier theme park. An amusement park called "Rebel Railroad" first opened on the site in 1961, just in time for the centennial of the Civil War. Owned by Grover and Harry Robbins from Blowing Rock, North Carolina, Rebel Railroad offered "good Confederate citizens" the opportunity to ride a five-mile train route through "hostile" territory and to help repel a Yankee assault on the train, an experience that must have seemed almost surrealistic to Northern tourists. After the Rebs whipped the Yankees in a staged skirmish, the train returned to the village, where tourists could shop in the general store, watch the blacksmith, or eat a sandwich while catching the can-can act in the saloon. The park was initially a moderate success, but by the late-1960s, the Robbins were strapped by other investments and opted to sell the park to the most unlikely of investors, Art Modell and the Cleveland Browns football team.<sup>39</sup>

Departing from the Appalachia/Dixie motif of development, Modell and the Browns created an Old West theme park called "Goldrush Junction." They gave the

---

<sup>39</sup>Robert Freeman, "Pigeon Forge: A Progressive Little City," The Tennessee Planner 23 (December 1963), 1; Neely, "Where Dolly Meets Dali," 13-14; "The Dollywood Story," (Pigeon Forge: Dollywood Publicity Office, 1994), 1.

place a multi-million dollar facelift which included the construction of a wood shop, a grist mill, a sawmill, as well as several children's rides. Tourists still rode the train, but Indians replaced Yankees as the ambushing aggressors. Shortly after the reopening of the park, the Cleveland investors realized that the quaint images of mountain life were a much stronger selling point than the Old West to visitors who came to the Smokies. By this time, popular TV shows such as "Hee Haw" and "The Beverly Hillbillies" had reaffirmed the hillbilly stereotypes in the mind of a new generation of Americans. Consequently, they abandoned the Old West theme and, by the start of the 1972 season, they had converted Goldrush Junction to an "ole-timey" mountain pioneer format with "down-home vittles and wholesome family entertainment."<sup>40</sup>

In spite of their heavy investments in the park, the Cleveland Browns proved to be just as unlucky in the tourist industry as they were on the gridiron. Mired in debt, they decided to sell Goldrush Junction in 1976 to Jack and Pete Herschend, the pioneers of modern tourism in Branson, Missouri. In Branson, the Herschend brothers had developed a successful mountaineer theme park called Silver Dollar City, a park they sought to replicate in Pigeon Forge. Employees wore hillbilly garb and were instructed to provide visitors with "down-home hospitality and constant smiles." Visitors came to watch crafts people making "authentic" Appalachian handicrafts and to listen to genuine mountain music. While crafts displays and hillbilly musicians

---

<sup>40</sup>"Goldrush Junction Creating Old Time Atmosphere," Knoxville Journal, 13 May 1971; "The Dollywood Story," 1.

were mainstays for the park, one of the more memorable attractions was a mock re-enactment of the Hatfield/McCoy feud. Every few hours a gunfight broke out between the two warring clans and ended with the arrest of the fiesty, moonshine nippin' Ma McCoy, played by Blount County native Flo Headrick.<sup>41</sup>

In 1985, the Herschends heard that country music star Dolly Parton wanted to invest in the booming tourist industry of her native Sevier County. They approached her and, after a year of negotiations, she came in as a minority partner. The park was rechristened "Dollywood," giving most visitors the impression that she was the sole owner of the park. Since Parton's buxom blonde image is consistent with the Daisy May/Elly May stereotype of Appalachian women, she was an appropriate symbol to promote the park. On opening day, Parton proclaimed that "one of the things that I wanted to do with a park like this was to preserve the Smoky Mountain heritage for people to come here and see what we're really all about, rather than just have some Hollywood bunch of people portray Tennessee mountain people in the ways they often do."<sup>42</sup>

Nevertheless, the hillbilly attractions of Dollywood continued to perpetuate many of the region's negative stereotypes. For instance, the "Elwood Smooch Hillbilly Revue" was one of the most popular and visible attractions at Dollywood for several years. Elwood Smooch was the stage name of entertainer Billy Baker who dressed,

---

<sup>41</sup>"Family Emphasis Planned, Says New Goldrush Owners," Knoxville Journal, 8 April 1976; Silver Dollar City Scrapbook, Dollywood Publicity Office, Pigeon Forge.

<sup>42</sup>The Mountain Press, 23 July 1985; Lisa Gubernick, "A Curb on the Ego," Forbes (September 14, 1992), 418-19.

talked, joked, and sang as a stupid hillbilly. Often wearing a toilet seat around his neck, Elwood Smooch played on the popular stereotype of the ignorant and lazy hillbilly. Some native mountain residents were offended by what one letter to the Knoxville News-Sentinel called a "tasteless, degrading portrayal of a Tennessee hillbilly." But judging from the reaction to this letter, the Elwood Smooch act apparently went over well with most of Dollywood's visitors who expected to be entertained with hillbilly caricatures. In defense of Smooch, a tourist from Chicago wrote to the newspaper that "[w]hen I showed my family from Chicago the pictures [of Smooch] they found them funny." Likewise, a Knoxville resident indicated that many people in the region embrace this stereotype: "we free Southerners can appreciate our hillbilly culture as shown by Elwood Smooch."<sup>43</sup>

Native mountain residents embracing a stereotype in order to promote tourism is by no means limited to cultural images of hillbillies and rednecks, for Native Americans, particularly Cherokees, have also exploited depictions of Indians in popular culture to draw visitors and make money. The Eastern Band of Cherokees represent the Cherokees who stayed behind in western North Carolina after the U.S. Army forcibly removed their brethren from ancestral lands in the late-1830s. Living on the Qualla Boundary in western North Carolina, Cherokees saw very few tourists until the twentieth century. The age of the automobile and North Carolina's good roads program, however, made tourism a reality for the Cherokee people. As tourism

---

<sup>43</sup>Joanie L. Byrd, letter to the editor, Knoxville News-Sentinel, 1 January 1995, p. F-5; Michelle Shelton, letter to the editor, *ibid.*, 1 January 1995, p. F-5; Melanie Bennett, letter to the editor, *ibid.*, 18 December 1994, p. F-5.

boomed in western North Carolina in the 1920s, more and more tourists visited the Qualla Boundary to see "real" Indians and to buy "authentic" Indian wares.<sup>44</sup>

The development of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the construction of a network of highways in the region set the course for the Eastern Cherokees' economic dependence on tourism. In the 1920s, Cherokee leaders joined an alliance of businessmen, conservationists, and politicians in the movement to set aside land for a national park in the Great Smoky Mountains. By the early 1930s, it was clear that the pattern of roads to and through the national park would converge on the eastern side of the park in the town of Cherokee on the Qualla Reservation. In addition, the terminus of the Blue Ridge Parkway led right into the town of Cherokee. This situation made "prospects for . . . this place quite attractive," according to tribal superintendent R. L. Spalsbury.<sup>45</sup>

Reinforcing the new orientation to tourism was the new federal Indian policy initiated by John Collier, F. D. R.'s commissioner of Indian affairs, who reversed earlier efforts to eradicate Indian cultural identity and encouraged cultural pluralism among Native Americans. Consequently, the reversal of the federal government's policy, coupled with the rise of mass tourism, revived Cherokee craftsmanship which had declined significantly with the advent of a money economy. Although the Cherokees held a successful annual tribal crafts fair beginning in September 1914, it

---

<sup>44</sup>John R. Finger, Cherokee Americans: The Eastern Band of Cherokees in the Twentieth Century (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 54-56.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 78-79.



was not until the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park that handicrafts emerged as big business on the reservation.<sup>46</sup>

With the creation of the national park, Cherokee leaders and National Park Service officials alike recognized that the Indians' presence was "a valuable asset to the Park. They will be a big drawing card for it."<sup>47</sup> In their attempt to attract tourists to the Qualla Boundary, flair was more important than historical accuracy. Much like the mountain whites who embraced the hillbilly stereotype to draw tourists, Cherokees proved to be just as apt at adopting cultural stereotypes of Native Americans to meet the expectations of visitors raised on the images of Indians in popular culture. Most Americans derived their perceptions of Native Americans from dime novels, Wild West Shows, and perhaps most importantly Hollywood. Since these mediums of popular culture presented primarily the image of Plains Indians, the ingrained stereotype in the American mind was that of a Sioux warrior, wearing a feathered headdress and war paint, and sitting on a horse holding a tomahawk or a bow and arrow, with his Indian "squaw" and papoose living in a tepee. Consequently, some Cherokees would adopt these images to lure visitors who wanted to see what they thought of as "real" Indians.<sup>48</sup>

One of the earliest examples of a Cherokee playing the role of a Plains Indian was

---

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 98; Lawrence C. Kelly, The Assault on Assimilation: John C. Collier and the Origins of Indian Policy Reform (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983).

<sup>47</sup>Finger, Cherokee Americans, 98.

<sup>48</sup>Larry French, "Tourism and Indian Exploitation: A Social Indictment," The Indian Historian 10(1977), 19-24.

in a 1935 parade in Asheville, when Goingback Chiltoskey garbed himself in the regalia of a Sioux warrior and mounted a horse. Years later, Chiltoskey admitted, "I hadn't never been on a horse" before that parade. Fifteen years later, McKinley Ross, vice chief of the Cherokee reservation, accompanied the Travellin' Hillbillies motorcade wearing a feathered headdress and greeting everyone with the ubiquitous Indian salutation, "how!" Perhaps the most visible and popular example of Cherokees playing the stereotypical Plains Indian role is in Cherokee itself, where for the last several decades, several Cherokee men have donned warbonnets and hawked the Pan-Indian Hollywood stereotype along the U.S. 441 and U.S. 19. During the tourist season, they stand in front of gift shops dressed in Plains regalia to lure customers into the shops. They often receive tips and charge money to allow the curious to take their pictures. Consequently, for those who look like "real" Indians with copper skin and black hair, "chiefing" can be quite profitable. The fact that tepees and warbonnets have nothing to do with Cherokee culture does not seem to bother them. Henry Lambert, one of the more popular "chiefs," once experimented by wearing authentic Cherokee clothing and beadwork. To his dismay, the tourists almost without exception passed him by so that they could take pictures of "real" Indians in front of other nearby stores. "I'm not stupid," Lambert later remarked, "I stuck with the warbonnet." Realizing where their earning potential lay, Lambert and the other "chiefs" simply give the tourists the fantasy they want.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup>Finger, Cherokee Americans, 163 and 98; Larry R. Stucki, "Will the 'Real' Indian Survive?: Tourism and Affluence at Cherokee, North Carolina," in Richard Salisbury and Elizabeth Tooker, eds., Affluence and Cultural Survival (Washington, D.C.: American

Though "chiefing" suggests that tourism has eroded the Cherokees' cultural identity, the tourist industry has also paradoxically boosted the preservation of Cherokee culture. Prior to the post-World War II tourist boom, there was not a great cultural difference between the residents of Cherokee and neighboring communities in terms of dress, language, food, housing, jobs, and religion. Little remained on Qualla Boundary of the Cherokee's cultural heritage. But tourism helped to spawn an interest in the cultural and historical legacy of the Cherokees. The potential profitability of tourism motivated the Cherokee Historical Association, a largely white-controlled agency spawned by the tourism-minded Western North Carolina Associated Communities, to produce the outdoor drama "Unto These Hills" and to construct the Museum of the Cherokee Indian and the Oconaluftee Indian Village. While each of these endeavors have their faults, they are by far the most accurate and authentic representations of Cherokee history and culture. Indeed, these efforts helped to inspire a modest revival in the study of the Cherokee language at nearby Western Carolina University.<sup>50</sup>

Cherokee is by no means the only place where tourism has been a catalyst for cultural and historic preservation. Indeed, there are numerous instances in the Mountain South in which a burgeoning tourist industry provided the economic rationale to preserve a community's historical structures and cultural traditions. In and around Asheville, North Carolina, for instance, tourism was the incentive for many

---

Ethnological Society, 1984), 65-66.

<sup>50</sup>Stucki, "Will the 'Real' Indian Survive?," 65-71.

preservation-minded individuals who restored old Victorian summer cottages and converted them into bed and breakfasts that attract visitors looking for a slice of southern hospitality and history. Heritage tourism often revived former summer cottage colonies that had fallen into decline. The belief that history could draw tourists justified the restoration of many historic structures in several old resort communities, namely Hendersonville and Flat Rock, North Carolina, Beersheba Springs, Tennessee, and Eureka Springs, Arkansas. In fact, the historic preservation movement in the southern highlands and the nation as a whole owes much of its impetus to heritage tourism.<sup>51</sup>

Heritage tourism not only provides the economic rationale for historic preservation efforts (even in areas without a tourism base), but it also can serve as a source of community pride and community identity. For example, in the late-1980s, the town of Etowah, Tennessee poured tens of thousands of dollars and hundreds of volunteer man-hours into meticulously restoring the old L&N depot and building a community museum in the hopes of luring visitors to their once bustling railroad center. Although Etowah had at best only marginal success in drawing tourism, the project was much more successful in bringing the community together and serving as a rallying point for a beleaguered community. In Townsend, Tennessee, hotel owners Don and Sandy Headrick recently spearheaded an effort to preserve the community's heritage through

---

<sup>51</sup>See Priscille Boniface and Peter J. Fowler, Heritage and Tourism in the Global Village (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); John Jakle, The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth Century North America (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985); Lynn Hulan and Wanda Johnson, "Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism," Tennessee Preservationist 1 (1992), 1.

a public history project that resulted in an oral history program and the major renovation of the Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum. While the Headricks stood to benefit economically from the renovated museum across the street from their hotel, the museum and the public history project has helped to preserve the community's identity amid rapid commercial tourism development in the popular Smoky Mountain resort.<sup>52</sup>

Tourism also helped to sustain cultural institutions in resort communities. Many museums of art and history would close if it were not for the patronage of vacationers. For instance, the small town of Highlands, North Carolina, with a population of about 700, has churches for six different denominations, a weekly newspaper, a summer newsletter, a public library, a community theater, a movie theater, concerts by outstanding musicians, art exhibits, and a science museum. Residents of Highlands would enjoy few of these cultural amenities if there were no tourists.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to inspiring historic preservation efforts and sustaining cultural institutions, tourism has also helped to preserve a sense of cultural distinctiveness in the southern highlands. The National Park Service has done more than any other single entity to preserve many cultural practices of the region. But much of the emphasis is on cultural elements that are overly simplistic or of dubious authenticity,

---

<sup>52</sup>The author worked with the Headricks as the exhibit coordinator for the Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum from 1993 to 1996; Linda Caldwell, et al., eds., Growing Up With the L&N: Life and Times In a Railroad Town (Etowah: Etowah Arts Commission, 1989), 7-8.

<sup>53</sup>Rembert W. Patrick, "The Mobile Frontier," Journal of Southern History 29 (1963), 17.

such as log cabins, dulcimer music, and handicrafts. Herein lies an irony in the relationship between tourism and cultural identity. While it is true that tourism is the source of most cultural and historic preservation efforts, tourism often creates and sustains romanticized, if not false, cultural identities that often have little to do with historical reality.

As examined earlier, the National Park Service consciously constructed pastoral landscapes and depicted mountaineers as static pioneers in its cultural interpretation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Though in reality the region was undergoing major transformations as a result of industrialization and the introduction of consumer culture, the NPS's interpretation of life in the southern highlands fixed the static image of the Mountain South in the minds of hundreds of millions of tourists. But sustaining simplistic, romanticized images of Appalachia was not unique to the NPS, for private entrepreneurs have also depicted the region in similar ways. A good example is John Rice Irwin, an East Tennessee native who developed the Museum of Appalachia in Norris, Tennessee. Irwin has spent most of his adult life collecting artifacts and antiques from mountain folk and developing his museum. Less than a mile off Interstate 75, the Museum of Appalachia annually draws over one hundred thousand visitors, many of whom are Midwesterners en route to Florida looking for a convenient, packaged version of rustic mountain color. John Rice Irwin gives them what they want. To his credit, he avoids allusions to moonshine and feuding, but his living history museum brings Appalachia to life as a pastoral land of log cabins, split rail fences, apple butter, and hillbilly

musicians.<sup>54</sup>

Although tourist attractions have helped to perpetuate the idea of regional distinctiveness in minds of tourists as well as native residents, in reality, the growth of the tourist industry has contributed to the erosion of cultural distinctiveness in the southern highlands. When tourists came to the region, they brought their own lifestyles and imposed them on the residents of highland resort communities, forever changing their character of life. As more and more highlanders became economically dependent on the tourist trade, they recreated and adopted new lifeways in order to accommodate and satisfy the desires of their guests. In the process, people who had long clung to agrarianism and religious values saw the character of their lives change as a seasonal influx of tourists injected a different set of values into their communities. With the transition from agriculture to tourism, mountaineers assumed a new lifestyle that was no longer directly wedded to the soil.<sup>55</sup>

Nineteenth-century benevolent workers in the mountains had long been concerned about the tendency of mountain residents to imitate the lifestyles of wealthy tourists. This concern intensified in the twentieth century because tourism grew exponentially, making cultural interactions between mountaineers and outside visitors much more frequent. Moreover, unlike tourism in the Victorian era when visitors were largely

---

<sup>54</sup>"Museum of Appalachia," (c. 1994), brochure.

<sup>55</sup>Edgar Bingham, "The Impact of Recreational Development on Pioneer Life Styles in Southern Appalachia" in Helen Matthews Lewis, et al., eds., Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case (Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978), 59-60.

insulated from the local population, modern tourism had fewer economic barriers, enabling small local entrepreneurs and wage earners to participate in the tourist economy as never before. This afforded mountain residents more opportunities to interact with travelers. Almost invariably, mountain people modified their own way of life--values, speech, food, dress, etc.--to accommodate the tastes and expectations of their guests.<sup>56</sup>

Like the missionaries of the nineteenth century, many people in the twentieth century have fretted about tourism's perceived tendency to corrupt traditional cultures. As one teacher at the Pi Beta Phi settlement school in Gatlinburg put it: "The poor mountain people . . . need the touch of our school, its training, its background, to teach them the difference between right and wrong ideas brought to them by our tourist population."<sup>57</sup> Another person worried about the effects of outside influences on Appalachian culture was Maud Karpeles, a companion of Cecil J. Sharp on his tour of the highlands. During their travels, Sharp and Karpeles were essentially tourists, staying in towns where "there was usually a house larger than the rest, which was glorified by the name of 'hotel' and there it was the practice to accommodate travelers, or 'take care' of them as the expression went." Noting that "the mountain people were always willing and glad to receive us and give us their best," Karpeles was

---

<sup>56</sup>For a discussion of this general trend in resort communities, see Dennison Nash, "Tourism as a Form of Cultural Imperialism," in Valerie Smith, ed., Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 37-50.

<sup>57</sup>Stella Sue Huff Cox, Report on Court Proceedings, c. 1926, Special Collections, Arrowmont School, Gatlinburg.



curious to find that they "were so obviously interested in our lives, which were so different from their own." She lamented that mountaineers seemed to casually abandon their own traditions and adopt new values when they encountered outside visitors. She commented that: "It is surprising and sad to find how quickly the instinctive culture of the people will seem to disappear when once they have been brought in touch with modern civilization, and how soon they will imitate the manners and become imbued with the tastes of 'polite society.'"<sup>58</sup> Likewise, in his 1934 article on the Ozark backcountry for Travel magazine, Thomas Benton observed that "where tourists have entered, and because of the beauty of the countryside and improvement in the roads they are beginning to do so, old-time practices are being modified."<sup>59</sup>

More recent critics of the cultural destructiveness of tourism include Richard Jackson, a native of Henderson County, North Carolina who grew up across the road from a tourist summer camp. The tourist camp boasted many amenities that were beyond the reach of local folk, such as a swimming pool, an outdoor pavilion for dancing, and air conditioning. Occasionally, a few tourists would leave the comforts of the camp to mingle with the local people. As Jackson indicated in an article he wrote for Mountain Review magazine, such interactions highlighted cultural differences and bred resentment. "A friend of my uncle had gone into the county seat for apple-tree spray, having run out about halfway through the orchard. He had to wait, so he walked uptown in his smelly, yellow, spray-splattered overalls and sat

---

<sup>58</sup>Sharp, English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians, xvi-xvii.

<sup>59</sup>Benton, "America's Yesterday," 10.

down on one of the long green benches which lined the sidewalks of the summer resort town. Two matron-type ladies from Florida occupied the other end of the bench. After a few minutes, one of the ladies sniffed critically and remarked that mountain towns certainly had some dirty, undesirable people in them. The orchard man turned, looked at them carefully, and agreed with the lady's observation. He added, 'One nice thing about it, tho'--come frost and they all go back home.'<sup>60</sup>

Jackson voiced the frustrations of mountain residents who were embittered by the intrusion of tourists and insulted by their often patronizing attitudes. Echoing Thomas Wolfe's assertion a generation earlier that he hated "to be gawked at by tourists . . . in search of the picturesque," Jackson especially took offense to visitors who expected him to fulfill their stereotypical expectations of people in Appalachia. In an oral history interview, Jackson commented, "I resented, and still do resent, being quaint, stimulating, and strange. It's like being background music for somebody else's Technicolor daydreams." He ascerbically pointed out that tourism represents a form of cultural imperialism that transforms everything in its way. "If the early tourists who came into the area as summer-home people had learned, and been able to adopt, some of the values they encountered in the mountains we might not be in quite the mess we're in right now. Instead, they brought in values and viewpoints and imposed them so that Appalachia is not just an economic colony, it is a cultural colony as well."<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup>Richard Jackson, "Come Frost," Mountain Review 8(1974), 13-14.

<sup>61</sup>Laurel Shackelford and Bill Weinberg, eds., Our Appalachia: An Oral History (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 373; Wolfe, The Hills Beyond, 238.

A good case study community that demonstrates how tourism can be a culturally transformative process is Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, a town that, in less than thirty years, evolved from a sleepy agrarian village of about 200 residents into a bustling tourist mecca with an annual influx of over eight million tourists. Prior to the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the residents of Pigeon Forge had interacted with tourists only on a limited basis at nearby Henderson Springs. Beulah Linn, a lifelong resident of Pigeon Forge, remembers as a teenager her devout Baptist parents forbade her from attending the "sinful" Saturday night dances at Henderson Springs. On the other hand, Wiley Lamons has fond memories of a party he attended at Henderson Springs which served Kentucky whiskey rather than the local moonshine he was accustomed to. Local people who interacted with vacationers at Henderson Springs picked up new songs, games, and dances which they blended into their own lifestyle. If the cultural elements introduced by tourists conflicted with their value system--as did dancing for Baptists--then local residents rejected them. Although tourism exercised some influence on local culture prior to the creation of the national park, it did not have the same impact of modern tourism, which would utterly transform the cultural foundations of the community.<sup>62</sup>

For two decades after the opening of the park, most tourists passed through, but

---

<sup>62</sup>Margaret Ann Roth, "The End of Isolation: Transportation and Communication" in W. Bruce Wheeler, ed., The Gentle Winds of Change: A History of Sevier County, Tennessee, 1900-1930 (Maryville: Printers Inc., 1986), 71; Wiley Lamons, interviewed by Bren Martin, Taped recording, 23 October 1992, Pigeon Forge; Beulah Linn, interviewed by Bren Martin, 29 September 1992, Sevierville.

rarely stopped, in Pigeon Forge on their way to Gatlinburg. But with the rapid growth of tourism following the incorporation of Pigeon Forge in 1961, many in the community came to view tourists as a nuisance and a threat to the community's morals. The tone of the city council's early ordinances imply a deep concern for the moral fiber of the community. Before they adopted building codes or even established the boundaries of the city, the city council passed a series of ordinances regulating what they deemed to be immoral practices and behavior. The language of these early ordinances suggests that residents were especially concerned about the effects of tourist diversions on local youths. For instance, ordinance number six, which made it illegal for minors to enter pool halls or to play pinball machines, began with the statement: "It is declared that an emergency exists because it is necessary for the protection of our youth from the enticement to play games which take their money and degrade their morals for no adequate service or amusement." The city council also took measures to prevent pornography, gambling, and alcoholic beverages from invading the community.<sup>63</sup> This concern for the morality of youth reflects the deeply conservative values of a community undergoing profound cultural changes brought by mass tourism.

Not only did tourism threaten the community's moral underpinnings, it was also undermining agriculture, the economic and cultural foundation of the community since its inception. Since Pigeon Forge was still largely an agrarian community in the early 1960s, the presence of farms along U.S. 441 posed unique problems for a city ever

---

<sup>63</sup>Pigeon Forge City Council, Ordinance Book Number 1: Ordinances 6 and 15.

mindful of tourists. In 1965-66, the Pigeon Forge city council confronted the problems caused by farms within the city limits and did much to bring an end to the agrarian lifestyle that had characterized life in the community for so long. The city declared it would impound all roaming livestock and sell it if not claimed within ten days. The city also outlawed noxious odors emanating from livestock and pig pens that might be "offensive to the citizens and visitors of the city."<sup>64</sup> These ordinances imposed new regulations and restrictions on farmers and forced them to adapt their farming methods so as not to interfere with tourism.

The mounting property taxes which accompanied rising land values forced many farmers to sell out to developers. As tourism rapidly replaced agriculture as the economic base of the community, some residents were troubled by these rapid changes. When the Pigeon Forge Regional Planning Commission held a public meeting in 1974 to discuss a TVA proposal to build a 3 mile bike path to parallel the Little Pigeon River, several residents expressed their disapproval of the plan. Beulah Linn, for instance, objected to "tourists and strangers coming in, resulting in vandalism and pollution," clearly indicating that she perceived tourists were a nuisance.<sup>65</sup>

In spite of the ambivalence expressed by some local residents, tourism development continued at a feverish pace throughout the 1970s and 1980s, transforming this once small, agrarian community into a seasonal tourist mecca for the masses. In one generation, the people of Pigeon Forge abandoned full-time farming

---

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., Ordinances 13 and 19.

<sup>65</sup>Sevier County News Record, 4 September 1974.

and adapted to a new urban way of life based on commercialism and serving tourists. As the population of Pigeon Forge grew by over 300% from 1970 to 1990, many newcomers arrived and changed the nature of the community. Instead of raising crops or livestock as their parents did, younger residents took jobs in restaurants, hotels, amusement parks, and outlet stores. In the past, life revolved around the church as well as the ebb and flow of the crop cycle. Today, life in Pigeon Forge is characterized by traffic jams, cable TV, helicopters whirring above, frenetic shoppers, rude tourists, and high prices.<sup>66</sup>

But cultural impact of tourism on Pigeon Forge was not completely transformative. The community's agrarian values by no means died out completely, for part-time farming and gardening are alive and well in Sevier County. Indeed, life behind the strip still appears essentially rural, standing in sharp contrast to the neon lights and bustling activity of the parkway. Tourism has ironically preserved the seasonal ebb and flow of labor practiced in agriculture. Nor has tourism erased the community's long-held commitment to religious values and family. "Family values" are not just a selling point for tourists, they are a tool for survival in a culture where multiple generations share the responsibility of sustaining the family. With a legacy of extended closely-knit families, it is no wonder that familialism is still a predominant cultural trait of the community.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup>Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism, Statistics for Prospective Businesses (Pigeon Forge: Department of Tourism, 1991), 3.

<sup>67</sup>Michal Smith, Behind the Glitter: The Impact of Tourism on Rural Women in the Southeast (Lexington: Southeast Women's Employment Commission, 1989), 59; Michael

As indicated by the example of Pigeon Forge, the relationship between tourism and culture in the mountain South is complicated and even paradoxical. Tourism has often acted as a catalyst for cultural and historic preservation movements; but the interpretation and presentation of these efforts were often tailored for commercial appeal. Hence, historical accuracy and cultural authenticity were often sacrificed to fulfill tourists' desires to experience local culture without the messiness and complexities of the real thing. Local residents proved to be quite willing to play the role of hillbilly or Indian to make money and preserve the illusion of local color in overly commercialized resorts. As rampant tourist-related development erased the primitive world of the mountaineer, the traditional agrarian way of life gradually succumbed to the standardized roadside culture of modern America. In many communities, the growth of tourism brought a dramatic shift to an urban commercial lifestyle that belied the rustic, down-home image they tried to convey in their day jobs. Despite the false stereotypes projected by the regional travel industry, tourism has preserved a sense of regional identity, however skewed and fallacious. Due in part to tourism's perpetuation of regional stereotypes, the image of the hillbilly seems to be a cultural slur that is still acceptable in our politically correct society. When a reporter recently asked a tourist to describe what hillbilly meant to him, he said:

"Hillbilly? You know, outdoor toilets, kind of stupid, kind of backwards, kind of

---

McDonald and W. Bruce Wheeler, "Part-Time Farming in Sevier County: An Appalachian Case Study," unpublished paper presented to the 1988 Social Sciences Historical Association Conference, St. Louis.

dumb."<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup>Rodger Lynn Brown, "Hillbillies of Outhouse and White House: Mountain Folk Still Dumped Upon," Atlanta Journal, 18 July 1994.



**Chapter 7-"Dang if I ever seed sich a way to skin up a mountain":  
Modern Tourism and the Landscape in the Mountain South**

"The person who thinks that the people of Gatlinburg are interested in preserving the beauty of the Smokies for the sake of the tourist or out of sheer love of unspoiled nature should try visiting there without his billfold sometime. In Gatlinburg, a tourist without a billfold is considered a blight on the beauties of nature. . .Gatlinburg's only reason for existing is to capitalize in a cheap commercial fashion on the 'unspoiled beauties' of the Smokies."<sup>1</sup>

As this quote suggests, preserving nature and promoting tourism can go hand in hand, but the latter too often gets out of hand. With the rise of automobile tourism, the dilemma confronting highland resort communities throughout the twentieth century has been how to balance development and preservation. For many resorts, the environmental amenities of the southern mountains are the main attraction for tourists. Consequently, for resort communities with a vested interest in preserving a picturesque landscape and a clean atmosphere, tourism provides an economic rationale for conservation and environmental preservation projects. Indeed, many of the major conservation movements in the mountain South have come from people who moved into the area as tourists.

At the same time, however, commercial tourism also acts as a major catalyst for land development and environmental change. After World War I, the democratization of travel redefined the economic relationship between tourism and the environment. As more and more middle class visitors came to the mountains by automobile for contrived attractions, and fewer came for health and scenery, commercial development

---

<sup>1</sup>Charles L. Jones, letter to the editor, Knoxville News-Sentinel, 27 March 1960.

engulfed some resort communities and utterly transformed the landscape. Moreover, a boom in vacation home development in the mountains contributed to environmental degradation and drove up property values, making the land more valuable as a commodity to be developed rather than a treasure to be preserved.

Prior to the twentieth century, the environmental qualities of beautiful scenery and healthful climate were by far the most important attractions for visitors who vacationed in the mountains. Many nineteenth century tourists were health seekers who visited hydropathic spas and tuberculosis sanitariums in the southern highlands. They toured the mountains for the mild climate, pure air, and mineral springs, hoping that the mountain environment would cure their ailments. Other tourists traveled to the region for the beautiful scenery as well as the social life at highland spas. Still others ventured into the highland backcountry for adventure, serenity, botanical studies, or hunting. While tourists' motivations for travel were varied and complex, their reasons almost invariably revolved around nature and the environment.

After 1900, however, the relationship between tourism and the environment gradually changed for a couple of reasons. First, the decline of health tourism diminished the importance of environmental amenities as a draw for tourists. Once the foundation of the travel industry in the southern mountains, hydropathic spas and tubercular sanitariums declined significantly in the wake of medical advancements and sanitation improvements that virtually eradicated malaria, yellow fever, and tuberculosis from American society. As a result, the references to salubrious climate and natural springs that had long been at the heart of tourism promotional appeals

were not as evident after World War I.

Some health resort communities struggled to adapt to the decline of health tourism by changing their image and appealing to a broader group of visitors. This trend was especially evident in Asheville, where Edwin W. Grove led the campaign to alter the city's reputation as a health resort. Originally from Paris, Tennessee, Grove made a fortune in the pharmaceutical industry with his patented formula for tasteless quinine, "Grove's Tasteless Chill Tonic." He later enhanced his wealth by developing the first tablet for the common cold which he commissioned to Parke-Davis to manufacture. Grove made his fortune from developing medicines for invalids, yet he himself was an invalid who in the mid-1890s traveled to Asheville hoping that the mountain air would help his chronic bronchitis. Always on the lookout for new investment opportunities, he quickly recognized the city's untapped potential as a pleasure resort and convention center during his stay at an Asheville sanitarium. He was all too aware, however, that Asheville's reputation as a resort for the sick made healthy people reluctant to visit.<sup>2</sup>

After moving his residence to Asheville in 1898, he decided that if Asheville were ever to fulfill its potential as a pleasure resort, the city would have to shed its image as a health retreat for invalids. Over the next few decades, Grove worked tirelessly and spent lavishly to reshape the public perception of Asheville. First, he quietly purchased a number of Asheville's tuberculosis sanitariums and boarding houses that

---

<sup>2</sup>Sydney Nathans, The Quest for Progress: The Way We Lived in North Carolina, 1870-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 89-90.

catered to invalids and tore them down. In his many real estate speculations in and around Asheville, Grove attached covenants to lots that he sold preventing the construction of any structures for tuberculosis patients. He also bought large tracts of real estate at the foot of Sunset Mountain, formed the E.W. Grove Park Company, and financed the construction of Grove Park Inn. Opening in July 1913, Grove Park Inn was touted as "the finest resort hotel in the world" that catered to the very wealthy. Advertisements explicitly pointed out that "Grove Park Inn is not a sanitarium, a hospital, or a health resort. It is a resting place for tired people who are not sick."<sup>3</sup> To ensure that his guests were not at risk of encountering any pestilence, Grove ensured that the hotel used only new dollar bills, washed all coins, and boiled all silverware twice. In the 1920s, Grove worked to transform downtown Asheville into a convention center by building a new hotel, an auditorium, and a shopping arcade. Grove's efforts largely succeeded in changing the identity of Asheville, enabling the city to make the difficult transition from a health resort to a pleasure resort.<sup>4</sup>

While "health tourism" in the southern highlands declined, it by no means died completely. In fact, health tourism survived and continued to thrive in some areas. Even as Asheville was trying to throw off its image as a resort for the sick, a cartoon in a 1924 North Carolina tourbook depicted an elderly man dancing around a group of sickly tourists saying, "If invalids who go down to Florida every year for their health

---

<sup>3</sup>Grove Park Inn advertisement, National Geographic (November 1913), 24.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.; Bruce E. Johnson, Built for the Ages: A History of the Grove Park Inn (Asheville: Grove Park Inn and Country Club, 1991), 34-35.

would leave the train at North Carolina they would find a climate where the very air is pure tonic."<sup>5</sup> Some of the old highland spas still attracted health seekers in spite of the decline of hydrotherapy. Both Hot Springs, Arkansas and Hot Springs, North Carolina continued to thrive by offering the water cure to health tourists. A recent brochure for Hot Springs, North Carolina (motto: "Where the Goddess of health waved her magic hand") ensures that the warm, healing spring waters will help cure anemia, heart problems, indigestion, stress, rheumatism, arthritis, and gallbladder ailments.<sup>6</sup>

Aside from the decline of health tourism, an even more important trend which altered the relationship between tourism and the environment was the rise of automobile tourism. As more and more middle class people traveled by car into the mountains, tourists went to the southern highlands more to see contrived entertainment, recreational, and cultural attractions rather than to experience nature. Sevier County, Tennessee provides a good example. Prior to the creation of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, tourists in Sevier County came to partake of the "health-restoring" Henderson Springs, to hunt and fish, to witness spectacular mountain scenery, and to escape the modern world in the vast expanse of rugged wilderness in the Smoky Mountains.

But the creation of the national park brought paved roads and car tourists who increasingly avoided any encounters with wilderness and spent their time at the man-made attractions and commercial novelties that line the highway running through

---

<sup>5</sup>Irwin S. Cobb, North Carolina (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1924), 1.

<sup>6</sup>"North Carolina's Hot Springs Spa," (c. 1990), brochure.

Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge. Although the national park is still a big attraction for visitors to Sevier County, visitation statistics suggest that the mountain environment is becoming less important as a tourist draw. A recent study of visitor use patterns indicates that the overwhelming majority of the park's patrons are "windshield visitors." Nearly 20 percent of the park's visitors never leave their cars and 95 percent stop only at man-made facilities. Furthermore, for every hour of driving time in the park, visitors spend only eight minutes outside of their cars. As park visitation levelled out in the 1980s, visitation to Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge continued to grow rapidly, suggesting that many of today's tourists come more for recreation and entertainment diversions rather than for the natural amenities of the national park.<sup>7</sup> Millions of visitors to Sevier County simply never go into the park. A recent survey of tourists in the area revealed that more visitors go to the outlet malls in Pigeon Forge than to the national park.<sup>8</sup> In fact, tourists can now experience the mountain environment vicariously at one of Dollywood's new attractions called "Heartsong," an indoor celebration of mountain life complete with outdoor sensory experiences produced by special effects.<sup>9</sup>

In spite of the fact that nature is no longer the primary attraction, the wonders and beauty of the landscape continued to be a central selling point for the travel industry

---

<sup>7</sup>John D. Peine and James Renfro, Visitor Use Patterns at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Research/Resources Management Report SER-90, typescript volume,(Atlanta: Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1988), 33-38.

<sup>8</sup>Melonee McKinney, "Shopping Tops Smokies," Knoxville News-Sentinel, 20 July 1995.

<sup>9</sup>"Dollywood, The Smokies Entertainment Capital For All Ages" (1994), brochure.

throughout the twentieth century. Indeed, wilderness recreation as a tourist experience remains a very popular leisure activity. The growing popularity of the wilderness encounter is a direct outgrowth of the post-industrial society. Few people earn a living off of the land as they did in the pre-industrial phase of America life. Most Americans now live in a service-oriented society in which teachers, bureaucrats, students, managers, professionals, and service industry wage-earners far outnumber those who produce food and material goods. As America has been physically and spiritually pulled from its agrarian roots, its people have seemingly become more appreciative of and sentimental towards wilderness. As Roderick Nash points out in his landmark study, Wilderness and the American Mind, those who are farthest removed from nature appreciate it the most. So for many modern American tourists, "getting out of sight and sound of humanity for extended periods is satisfaction enough."<sup>10</sup>

One of the first concerted efforts to preserve the mountain landscape for the sake of enhancing the wilderness experience of tourists was the drive to create the Appalachian Trail. Massachusetts native Benton McKay first proposed the idea for a 1,300 mile trail running atop the crest of the Appalachian Mountains in a 1921 article for the Journal of the American Institute of Architects. By 1925, trail clubs along the route had established the Appalachian Trail Conference, a private organization that created, maintained, and administered the trail. When completed in 1937, the AT

---

<sup>10</sup>William Bake, The Blue Ridge (Birmingham: Oxmoor House, 1977), 71; Roderick Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), ix.

extended over 2,000 miles of rugged mountain country from Mt. Katahdin in Maine to Mt. Oglethorpe in Georgia. Although the trail is not directly sponsored by federal or state governments, over 1,100 miles of its route are across state and federal land. Because much of the land was in private hands, the Appalachian Trail Conference was helpless to prevent commercial development and scenic blights along the trail until 1969, when Congress passed the National Scenic Trails Act to prevent further despoilation along the trail. Today the Appalchian Trail is a nationally protected wildlife corridor that links eight national forests and the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains national parks. It attracts millions of outdoor-oriented tourists from all over the world.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps a more important movement to preserve wilderness in the southern mountains for the sake of tourism was the effort to create the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Although the earlier efforts of the Appalachian National Park Association had failed, a new movement was born in the 1920s in the mountains of East Tennessee. The impetus for the movement grew from a group of people from Knoxville who were frequent vacationers at Elkmont, the logging camp of the Little River Lumber Company that was converted into a mountain retreat for Tennessee's elite. Tourism and logging had existed side by side for years, but as more and more visitors came by train to Elkmont, many saw that industrial logging operations were

---

<sup>11</sup>Robert A. Browne, The Appalachian Trail: History, Humanity and Ecology (Stafford: Northwoods Press, 1980), 1-5; Karl B. Raitz and Richard Ulack, Appalachia: A Regional Geography-Land, People, and Development (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 251.



destroying the aesthetic beauty of the Smokies.

One visitor warned that unless the area was protected from the lumber companies, the forests would be "wrecked, ruined, desecrated, turned into a thousand rubbish heaps."<sup>12</sup> Promotionalists for the park movement cautioned that "if the cutting of this timber by private interests is to be prevented, it is now or never." Heralding such dire warnings, park promoters assured the public that the creation of a national park would save the environment from these terrible consequences: "by creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park the last remnant of the American wilderness of any considerable size left in the Eastern states will be preserved, and a great tract of virgin timber of the Southern Appalachians will be allowed to stand forever in its natural grandeur, forever safe from the forces of devastation."<sup>13</sup> While the desire to protect wilderness provided much of the emotional drive behind the movement to preserve the Smokies, the potential profitability of tourism provided the economic rationale for the movement.

The successful park movement began in 1923, when Mr. and Mrs. Willis P. Davis, an iron manufacturer from Knoxville who owned a cottage at Elkmont, began discussing with their friends the possibility of a national park in the Smoky Mountains. When they had attracted enough support for the idea, they helped to

---

<sup>12</sup>North Carolina Park Commission, A National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains (Asheville: Inland Press, c. 1928), 4.

<sup>13</sup>Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association, "Why We Need A National Park in the Smokies," (Knoxville: Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association, c. 1930), published booklet, 7-8.

create the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association in 1924. With the help of Col. David Chapman, a Knoxville wholesale druggist and also an Elkmont cottage owner, the organization gained the support of many politicians, businessmen, and newspaper editors in East Tennessee and Western North Carolina. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the States of Tennessee and North Carolina purchased over 500,000 acres of land in the Smokies in 6,600 separate tracts and turned the land over to the federal government. In 1934, Congress passed legislation creating the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.<sup>14</sup>

With the profit motive at the heart the park movement's appeal, promoters and local boosters alike understood that the creation of a national park had important economic and environmental implications for gateway communities. Promotionalists for the park recognized that "[P]robably no hotels would be permitted in the park itself, but they would spring up like magic along the boundary line. . . . Every trade and business associated with tourist life would plant itself on that park border and thrive."<sup>15</sup> In 1930, Roy Montgomery, editor of Sevier County's newspaper, The Vindicator, indicated that the area "will see much progress in years to come . . . it will be the stopping place for tourists both in the immediate future and when the park has actually come under the supervision of the government."<sup>16</sup> Although the success of the

---

<sup>14</sup>See Carlos Campbell, The Birth of a National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1960).

<sup>15</sup>North Carolina Park Commission, A National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains, 3.

<sup>16</sup>The Vindicator, 7 May 1930.

park movement in the 1930s ensured that the landscape within the park's boundaries would remain forever inviolate, the decision to limit development within the park guaranteed rapid commercial growth in the park's most accessible gateway communities. Thus, the pattern of roads through the park determined the location of development clusters.

In developing the park, the federal government often worked at cross purposes. On the one hand, it enhanced the scenic beauty of the park with a massive Civilian Conservation Corps reforestation project, but at the same time, the National Park Service planned to create a road infrastructure "plainly aimed at making practically all of its parts easily accessible by road."<sup>17</sup> The original development plan for the park called for over 500 miles of trails and nearly 200 miles of paved roads to be cut into the mountainsides, including a controversial 40-mile stretch of road from Newfound Gap, across Clingman's Dome and Gregory's Bald, to the west end of the park at Deal's Gap. Opinions varied concerning the environmental impact of such an ambitious development program. A 1934 article in The Earth Mover, a magazine geared towards construction contractors, insisted that "as this is to be a scenic highway, the project has been so planned that the natural beauty of landscape will be preserved and trees protected. Very little of the excavated material can be cast. It must be hauled in trucks and used for widening out parking areas where tourists can

---

<sup>17</sup>Bernard Frank, "Farewell to the Smokies," Nature Magazine (February 1939), 99.

pause and go into ecstasies over the grandeur of the scene."<sup>18</sup> But environmentalists did not see it that way. In 1939, Nature Magazine complained that "it has become increasingly plain that road and trail construction have occurred, not so much as part of a balanced, carefully thought-through recreational program in harmony with the main objective of preserving the natural environment, but more as a means of qualifying for CCC camps and providing ample work for them, satisfying demands of local tourist-boosting organizations, and giving expression to ideas of landscaping and construction more fitting to state and city parks. . . . Unqualifiedly the promiscuous trail and road construction . . . has harmed considerably the natural qualities of the Smokies."<sup>19</sup> Preservationists were especially upset about the Skyline Drive which, although it was never built over Gregory's Bald to Deal's Gap, extended from Newfound Gap to Clingman's Dome. "The most vivid example of concentrated destruction to Park features, however, is the Skyline road. Among other effects the construction of this highway has brought about the complete despoliation of Indian Gap, once the most beautiful grassy bald of the Smokies. . . . With the death of Indian Gap went a rare wilderness gem that can never be restored."<sup>20</sup>

Clearly, the creation of the park brought major changes in land use patterns to the Smoky Mountains. Indeed, in resort communities throughout the southern highlands,

---

<sup>18</sup>George Dempster, "The Great Smoky Mountains National Park-Heavy Road Work is Involved in Preparing for Tourists this 'Baby' of the National Park System," The Earth Mover 7 (July 1934), 16.

<sup>19</sup>Frank, "Farewell to the Smokies," 100-01.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 102.

tourism dramatically affected land use. Asheville, for instance, saw its landscape rapidly altered by the frenzied speculation and land development of the 1920s.

Thomas Wolfe eloquently described the changes in his hometown during this period in his novel You Can't Go Home Again:

"The sleepy little mountain village in which he had grown up--for it had been hardly more than that then--was now changed almost beyond recognition. The very streets that he had known so well, and had remembered through the years in their familiar aspect of early-afternoon emptiness and drowsy lethargy, were now foaming with life, crowded with expensive traffic, filled with new faces he had never seen before. . . . Along all the streets in town the ownership of the land was constantly changing; and when the supply of streets was exhausted, new streets were feverishly created in the surrounding wilderness. . . . A spirit of drunken waste and wild destructiveness was everywhere apparent. The fairest places in the town were being mutilated at untold cost."<sup>21</sup>

No individual was more responsible for this transformation of the city's landscape than, once again, E. W. Grove, who invested heavily in Asheville's real estate market, fueling a sudden, if temporary, boom in land speculation. One of Grove's most ambitious development schemes stemmed from his desire to transform the Battery Park area into a shopping and convention center. Battery Park, according to Thomas Wolfe, "had been a beautiful green hill, opulent with rich lawns and lordly trees, with beds of flowers and banks of honeysuckle, and on top of it there had been an immense, rambling old wooden

---

<sup>21</sup>Thomas Wolfe, You Can't Go Home Again (New York: Harper Brothers, 1934), 109, 110-11.

hotel"--the famed Battery Park Hotel.<sup>22</sup> When Grove purchased the Battery Park property in 1922 from the heirs of Frank Coxe, he assured them that he would "continue Battery Park Hotel as a strictly resort hotel keeping it open only for the winter and summer seasons."<sup>23</sup> But in the heady days of Asheville's real estate boom, Grove concluded that "this very valuable vacant property is standing idle and not bringing any returns to me," so he decided to raze the old Victorian structure and redevelop the property.<sup>24</sup> After tearing down the historic hotel, he financed the removal of over 50,000 cubic yards of soil and levelled Battery Porter, erasing the most distinctive feature on Asheville's landscape. In its place, he constructed a modern, fireproof convention hotel and a large shopping arcade. Thomas Wolfe lamented this change:

"An army of men and shovels had advanced upon this beautiful green hill and had leveled it down to an ugly flat of clay, and had paved it with a desolate horror of white concrete, and had built stores and garages and office buildings and parking spaces--all raw and new--and were now putting up a new hotel beneath the very spot where the old one had stood. It was to be a structure of sixteen stories, of steel and concrete and pressed brick. It was being stamped out of the same mold, as if by some gigantic biscuit-cutter of hotels, that had produced a thousand others like it all over the country."<sup>25</sup>

Grove used the soil removed from Battery Porter to fill a drainage ravine in order to

---

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 111.

<sup>23</sup>E. W. Grove to Tench C. Coxe, 25 July 1922, Coxe Papers, Special Collections, D. Hiden Ramsey Library, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

<sup>24</sup>E. W. Grove to Tench C. Coxe, 23 January 1923, Coxe Papers.

<sup>25</sup>Wolfe, *You Can't Go Home Again*, 111-112.

create Coxe Avenue, another of Grove's speculative ventures.<sup>26</sup>

Land use patterns were changing rapidly in Asheville when the real estate market suddenly collapsed in 1926. The city defaulted on a debt of nearly \$20 million which hindered growth for the next five decades. As a result, most of the tourist-related development in Buncombe County after 1930 occurred outside the Asheville city limits. The tourist industry used to be centered in downtown Asheville, but highway construction spawned a spatial change in the county's travel industry as developers moved away from the city's center to cater to middle class car tourists along the outlying roads. The construction of interstates in the 1960 and 1970s accelerated the dispersal of Asheville's travel industry. Since this new breed of tourist desired affordability, convenience, and familiarity above all else, Asheville entrepreneurs gradually developed the standardized roadside environment of motels, tourist courts, fast-food restaurants, and gas stations by the highways and interstates exits on the outskirts of Asheville. The shift in land use patterns extended to many previously rural areas in Buncombe County as tourism development became more spread out to accommodate the growth of automobile travel.<sup>27</sup>

Though dispersed tourism development significantly altered land use patterns, there were several factors which limited the scope of commercial development in Buncombe County after 1930. First, the topography and soils of the area restricted development in much of the county.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the area's growing retiree population helped to check

---

<sup>26</sup>E. W. Grove to Tench Coxe, 6 February 1923, Coxe Papers.

<sup>27</sup>Asheville City Directories, 1920-1960.

<sup>28</sup>Asheville City Planning Department, 2010 Asheville City Plan (1993), 11-13.

development because "in general, retirees are not in favor of growth but advocate 'shutting the door.'"<sup>29</sup> More importantly is the fact that tourism competes with other segments of the county's diversified economy for the limited amount of land suitable for development. Still, tourism brought significant changes in land use patterns as agricultural land in outlying areas was often converted for tourism-related development.

Such changes in land use were even more pronounced in other western North Carolina counties, especially those that saw rapid development of vacation home communities. As corporate developers, such as the Sea Pines Company, Realtec Incorporated, Carolina-Caribbean Corporation, and First Communities Corporation, bought up large tracts of land in the North Carolina mountains, many second home communities were developed after 1950.<sup>30</sup> From 1950 to 1980, the number of seasonal homes in western North Carolina skyrocketed from 6,986 to 26,721.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, from 1970 to 1980, the amount of acreage used for agriculture decreased in the mountain counties of

---

<sup>29</sup>David E. Carpenter, *Impacts and Influences on the Great Smoky Mountains National Park: An Annotated Bibliography with a Discussion and Review of Selected Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusions-Research/Resources Management Report SER-64*, typescript volume, (Atlanta: U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1982), 19.

<sup>30</sup>James Brascome and Peggy Matthews, "Selling the Mountains," *Southern Exposure* 11 (1974), 126.

<sup>31</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Housing: 1950, Vol. 1, General Characteristics* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1953); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Housing: 1980, Vol. 1, Characteristics of Housing Units* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1983).



North Carolina three times faster than in the state as a whole.<sup>32</sup>

The environmental consequences for these changes in land uses can be dramatic and long lasting. When a residential subdivision is built on a mountainside, the land must be at least partially cleared of trees and vegetation and roads must be built, resulting in heavy erosion, sedimentation of streams, flooding, and a lowering of the water table.

"Most of the pollution in our area is caused by developers, by the sedimentation from their projects," insists a soil conservationist from Macon County, North Carolina, where much recreational development has occurred near Highlands and Scaly Mountain.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps even more damaging, inadequate septic fields can cause bacterial pollution of nearby springs and streams. Many mountain soils are too thin and property lots are too small for septic systems to function properly, causing raw sewage to seep through the rock bed into the water table. Some Blue Ridge communities now have to chlorinate their municipal water heavily because raw sewage from second home subdivisions contaminated their previously pristine water sources.<sup>34</sup>

These changes in land use are even more evident on the Tennessee side of the mountains in Sevier County, where tourist-related development transformed the once small rural communities of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge into noisy and congested urban areas. When the people of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge suddenly discovered themselves at the

---

<sup>32</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture: 1970, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1972); U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture: 1980, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1982).

<sup>33</sup>Branscome and Matthews, "Selling the Mountains," 128.

<sup>34</sup>Raitz and Ulack, Appalachia, 264-65.

gateway of what promised to be the most popular tourist destination in the country, few fully realized what was in store. A few months before the national park movement began, William Montgomery, editor of Sevier County's newspaper The Vindicator, suggested that Pigeon Forge's pastoral qualities held much promise for the future:

"From the Pigeon Forge Railroad Depot the stranger who alights looks upon the expanse of beautiful farmland and homes which at once impresses upon him the beauty and importance of this section. When the railroad is completed and the pike road is modernized the people of Pigeon Forge will not have to go see the world, but the world will want to see Pigeon Forge."<sup>35</sup>

Montgomery was correct in asserting that transportation improvements would bring people to the community, but he was wrong in suggesting that the beauty of the rural landscape would be the main draw.

In the 1920s, the pastoral village of Gatlinburg began to entertain more and more visitors. To accommodate a growing number of tourists, some local entrepreneurs began the process of modifying land use patterns with tourism development. The first hotel in town was the Mountain View Hotel, built by local lumberman Andy Huff to house his business guests and workers. When this 10-room boarding house proved insufficient to accommodate the growth of his "pleasure visitors," Huff tore down the original structure in 1924 and built a large frame hotel. Locals followed his lead by constructing several tourist courts, cabins, and vacation cottages over the next ten years. Development accelerated after 1928 with the completion of Highway 73, a paved road through the

---

<sup>35</sup>The Vindicator, 21 July 1921.

mountains that opened access to Gatlinburg as never before. By the time Congress authorized the park in 1934, Gatlinburg boasted nearly forty tourist cabins, two hotels, four handicraft shops, and five restaurants.<sup>36</sup>

The tourist-related development during the inter-war period, however, pales in comparison to that after World War II. The city began a new phase in its development in 1945, when Gatlinburg incorporated and elected hotel-owner Dick Whaley as mayor. Perhaps the greatest challenge facing city was the lack of a municipal sewage system. After receiving several complaints from Gatlinburg visitors who became sick from drinking the area's water supply, the State Department of Health demanded a resolution to this problem in 1947. Within three years, the city had constructed a \$500,000 waterworks plant to provide municipal sewage services to businesses along the newly paved U.S. 441 highway. The creation of this infrastructure of good roads and municipal utilities set the stage for rapid growth in the 1950s and 60s, changing this small farming village into a booming resort town. As visitation to the national park rose to over three million annually by the late-1950s, Gatlinburg quickly became one of the most popular resorts of the South.<sup>37</sup>

To satisfy the tastes and desires of the community's ever-growing clientele of middle class car tourists, rapid commercial development ensued, bringing major modifications to the city's landscape. Land use shifted dramatically in the decade after

---

<sup>36</sup>W. R. Woolrich, et al., Agricultural-Industrial Report-Sevier County, Tennessee, 1934, typescript volume, Tennessee Valley Authority Archives, Knoxville, 89-90.

<sup>37</sup>H. B. Teeter, "Gatlinburg Eyes the Future," Nashville Tennessean Magazine 28 June 1953.

World War II until "nearly every available space in the floodplain of Gatlinburg filled up" by the late-1950s.<sup>38</sup> Development, however, was not limited to the low-lying areas along the Little Pigeon River, for local and outside developers also constructed hundreds of chalets, condominiums, and vacation homes on the mountainsides surrounding Gatlinburg. Nevertheless, it was the construction of contrived scenic attractions that produced the most visible blights on the landscape. In 1954, for instance, developers completed a chairlift carrying visitors from downtown Gatlinburg to the top of Burg Mountain. Promoted as "the one spot in the South where sightseers may climb a mountain while sitting down," many complained that the chairlift marred the scenery. As one local resident commented, "Dang if I ever seed sich a way a skin up a mountain."<sup>39</sup>

By the late-1950s, many visitors and locals feared that over-development threatened to ruin the scenery of the resort. One visitor griped that "Gatlinburg. . . spoils the beauty of the Smokies."<sup>40</sup> Many residents were shocked to find a picture of Gatlinburg in their children's sociology textbook to illustrate the ugly blight of "sign pollution."<sup>41</sup> Concerns about over-development, however, did not prevent the city from financing the construction of the South's first ski lodge and aerial tramway in the early 1960s. At the ski lodge, snow machines and plastic turf produced an artificial ski surface,

---

<sup>38</sup>Craig Owen, "Gatlinburg Flood Danger Cited in T.V.A. Survey," Knoxville News-Sentinel, 5 October 1958.

<sup>39</sup>Bart Leiper, "Not Ski Lift but Sky Lift," Nashville Tennessean Magazine, 18 July 1954.

<sup>40</sup>Jones, letter to the editor, Knoxville News-Sentinel, 27 March 1960.

<sup>41</sup>Willard Yarbrough, "'Sign Pollution' Remains Dilemma in Gatlinburg," *ibid.*, 14 November 1976.

giving new meaning to the phrase "manipulating the environment." To many, however, the most offensive eyesore came in 1969, when local businessmen financed the construction of the "Space Needle," a 500 foot tower at the heart of Gatlinburg's business district that is visible for miles around.<sup>42</sup>

By this time, development was spilling over from Gatlinburg into the neighboring community of Pigeon Forge, located a few miles down U.S. 441. The gently-sloping loamy soils of Pigeon Forge had long sustained subsistence farming in the community. Indeed, photographs of the community in the 1920s and 30s capture the bucolic essence of the Pigeon Forge. But as Gatlinburg filled up after World War II, the value of this farmland skyrocketed as developers sought more real estate conducive to large-scale commercial development.

After the construction of U.S. 441, a flurry of development occurred in the late-1950s, prompting some local businesspeople to launch a movement to incorporate Pigeon Forge. Leaders of the movement realized that without a municipal utility and sewage system, the community would never realize its potential as a tourist center. After incorporation boosters finally won out in 1961, the city of Pigeon Forge launched an aggressive campaign to construct an infrastructure to promote the development of "the strip." After constructing a sewage and utility system in the mid-1960s, the city embarked on a program to light up the parkway with twice the amount of wattage approved by the state. These "improvements" spawned feverish development in the 1960s and early-70s, forever erasing the rural landscape of the community. By 1968, most of the lots along the

---

<sup>42</sup>Willard Yarbrough, "Gatlinburg to be Busier in '69," *ibid.*, 25 May 1969.

parkway, which ten years earlier had been productive agricultural fields, had been converted to commercial use. Pigeon Forge's mayor Garland Hammond admitted, "I've been here for 22 years, but if had been gone and just returned I wouldn't believe what's happened here."<sup>43</sup>

The growth of tourism in Sevier County occurred so rapidly that by the early-1970s, Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg had over-burdened and polluted the West Prong of the Little Pigeon River. The river managed to sustain the growth of both communities until the rampant tourist development of the 1960s finally overwhelmed its limited water supply. By 1970, more than half of the river's water below Gatlinburg was treated sewer effluent. Since the Little Pigeon River is a cold, fast-moving stream, the water would not cleanse itself before it reached the Pigeon Forge water treatment plant, making the river unsafe for human contact. In 1973, the Tennessee State Department of Public Health imposed a moratorium on all future construction until the water pollution issue was resolved.<sup>44</sup> For the next several years, officials of both cities battled one another for access to the area's limited water resources. The highly-publicized "water wars" between Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge finally ended when both communities opted to draw their water supply from alternative sources. After the Department of Health lifted the construction moratorium in 1979, a wave of development swept over Gatlinburg and

---

<sup>43</sup>"New Image Being Forged at Pigeon Forge," *ibid.*, 30 April 1972.

<sup>44</sup>"\$10 Million in Projected Construction Shelved," *ibid.*, 21 October 1973; Jeannie McKamey, "The Sewer Saga: What's Happened, What's Next," Sevier County News Record, 17 December 1974; Williard Yarbrough, "New Gatlinburg Sewer Plant Begun," Knoxville News-Sentinel, 12 March 1977.

Pigeon Forge that continues to this day.<sup>45</sup>

Such rapacious development with no concern for the aesthetic impact on the land has caused protest in some resort areas of the southern highlands. In western North Carolina, for example, the construction of a large condominium project atop Little Sugar Mountain angered many residents, property owners, and even tourism developers in Avery County. In 1982, an out-of-state developer leveled the peak of Little Sugar Mountain and started building Sugar Top, a ten-story condominium building with 320 units that sold for between \$115,000 and \$150,000 each. In response to the construction of Sugar Top, the North Carolina Sierra Club adopted a resolution in early 1983 urging state support for the greater land use planning and the protection of mountain ridges. Pressured by mountain residents, local governments, tourists, and environmental groups, the North Carolina state legislature began considering bills to regulate ridge development. After months of debating, the state government ratified the Mountain Ridge Protection Act on July 5, 1983. Banning all construction on ridgetops over 3000 feet, or on crests 500 feet or more above the adjacent valley floor, the Ridge Law "represents the first state-level imposition of land-use restrictions for primarily aesthetic purposes." While the legislation includes sections about sewage and septic systems, the main thrust of the law is that "tall or major buildings and structures located on ridges . . . detract from the natural beauty of the mountains."<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup>Willard Yarbough, "Gatlinburg, Water Woes in Hand, Looks to Future," *ibid.*, 10 October 1979.

<sup>46</sup>North Carolina General Statutes, "Mountain Ridge Protection Act of 1983," (1983), 113A-205 to 113A-214; Milton S. Heath, "The North Carolina Mountain Ridge

Such local concern for the aesthetic impact of tourist-related development, however, has been the exception rather the rule in the mountain South. Like many people in resort areas all over the nation and the world, many mountain residents do not seem to be concerned about the blight caused by tourism development and the intrusion of highways and cars in their communities. During a visit to Roan Mountain in 1956, Knoxville resident Nancy Tanner noticed that some mountain people have different definitions of what is beautiful: "Hundreds of people came to see the magnificent displays of wild rhododendron, acres and acres blooming in a setting of blue spruce against a background of mountains rolling to the horizon. When I returned to the hot, dusty parking area, crowded with cars from many states, I was struck by the rapt expression of a local woman. 'Beautiful sight, isn't it,' I said. 'Shore is purty,' she agreed. 'All them beautiful cars. Every year I come up here just to see them.'"<sup>47</sup>

While many highlanders would like to preserve the mountains, "a long and basic sense of 'let things be'" prevents them from voicing their opposition, according to activist Richard Jackson. "The thing that has blown my mind is the number of people who wouldn't lift a finger to stop development . . . but grieve for the fact that it's here."<sup>48</sup> One reason that local efforts to stop development are somewhat impotent is that "zoning

---

Protection Act," North Carolina Law Review 63 (1984), 183-96; Robert M. Kessler, "North Carolina Ridge Law Reviewed," *ibid.*, 200.

<sup>47</sup>Jennifer Bauer Wilson, Roan Mountain: Passage of Time (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1991), 134.

<sup>48</sup>Laurel Shackelford and Bill Weinberg, Our Appalachia: An Oral History (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 378.



remains political anathema in many parts of the region."<sup>49</sup> The highlanders' ingrained sense of independence prevents many of them from embracing the notion of planned development and zoning restrictions. Both Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge organized Regional Planning Commissions in the 1960s, but these commissions served only in an advisory capacity and had no enforcement powers. In effect, zoning laws became the tools of developers in these communities. Consequently, even though the planning commissions paid lip service to beautification plans and the ideal of preserving the "rustic, mountain theme in development," they were in fact powerless to stop frenzied, unplanned development that destroyed the rustic character of these communities.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, in 1995, voters in the Great Smoky Mountains gateway community of Townsend, Tennessee rejected zoning laws by choosing not to re-annex large portions of the city after a court ruling on zoning restrictions dissolved most of the city. As a result, Townsend is now undergoing a boom in development with little planning and few restrictions. While the majority of the community resents any government interference in land-use, many residents say they do not want Townsend to become "another Pigeon Forge." Meanwhile, land values are skyrocketing and more and more farmland is being sold to outside developers.

Recently, however, many local tourist entrepreneurs have become very concerned about the environmental degradation of the mountains, especially in the resort

---

<sup>49</sup>Heath, "The North Carolina Mountain Ridge Protection Act," 186.

<sup>50</sup>Pigeon Forge Regional Planning Commission, Summary Plan, 1974-1984, (Nashville: Tennessee State Planning Office, 1974), 3; Roger King, "Mountain Motif Central to Gatlinburg Growth plan," Knoxville Journal, 23 August 1982.

communities surrounding the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Views from the Smokies today are drastically different from those that inspired the movement for the national park in the 1920s. Summer visibility, which was in the range of 100 miles just 60 years ago, is now more often around 10 to 20 miles due to pollution and high ozone levels. The mountain barrier, regional humidity, and unfortunate wind currents cause airborne pollution from as far away as Louisiana and Illinois to accumulate in the Smokies, shrouding the mountains in a gray haze of smog and ozone. Compounding the problem is the fossil fuel exhaust spewed from the millions of automobiles that travel through the park every year. Visibility is little better on the North Carolina side of the mountains, where an atmospheric condition known as "temperature inversion" muddles the view. Acid rain and exotic pests are taking a tremendous toll on plantlife in the park, wiping out entire species of trees, such as Fraser firs. The mammal wildlife in the park remains relatively healthy so far, but tourists complain that they don't see bears as often as they used to. Kim Delozier, a wildlife specialist at the park, recently remarked: "I had a Gatlinburg hotel owner call me earlier this year. He said he sends his customers up to the mountains and tells them where they can see bears, but they don't see them anymore. He said it was hurting his business."<sup>51</sup> The deterioration of the environment in the Smoky Mountains deeply concerns people who depend on the tourist trade for their livelihood. Said one Townsend hotel owner: "If it weren't for the mountains, tourists wouldn't have

---

<sup>51</sup>Chris Barrett, "Smoky Prospects," Metro Pulse 4 (July 29-August 12, 1994), 11-12 and 28-31; Quote from page 28.

any reason to come here."<sup>52</sup>

The irony of the relationship between tourism and the landscape is that tourist-related development destroys the very thing that attracts people. Richard Jackson pointed out that developers "move in here and then build all that crap that they said they were trying to escape in the city. Pretty soon you got traffic problems, you got 7-11's stacked up on every corner, you got service stations, and all the attendant services they expect in the city."<sup>53</sup>

Clearly, the growth of modern automobile tourism in southern Appalachian resorts modified the economic relationship between tourism and the environment. In the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when resorts such as Asheville catered to health-seekers and an elite clientele, the environmental amenities of the mountains provided the foundation for tourism. As a result, tourism provided an economic incentive to protect scenery and clean air. Furthermore, prior to the 1920s, the technological limitations and the economic barriers to entry into the travel industry restricted the sprawl of tourist-related development. After World War I, however, when new middle class resorts such as Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge emerged, the economic gains of commercial development outweighed the benefits of preserving the landscape. Since the federal government assumed the responsibility for preserving scenery and wildlife, investors were able to justify reckless over-development of resort communities. Recently, environmental

---

<sup>52</sup>Helen Talley, interviewed by Bren Martin, 5 December 1994, Tape recording, Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum, Oral History Collection, Townsend.

<sup>53</sup>Shackelford and Weinberg, Our Appalachia, 376.

degradation has concerned many local businesspeople who fear an imminent decline in tourism. Yet rampant tourist-related development continues to mar the natural scenery visitors come to see. With the beating of helicopter overhead, former Pigeon Forge resident Wiley Lamons stands on the bank of the Little Pigeon River beside a sign warning people to "AVOID BODILY CONTACT WITH THE WATER." He looks across the once pristine river towards the developed strip where cornfields used to be when he was a boy, and sadly laments, "outsiders brought what they came to get away from . . . everything's changed now."<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup>Wiley Lamons, interviewed by Bren Martin, Tape recording, 23 October 1992.

## Conclusion

In the New South period, tourism emerged as one of the most important forces shaping economic development, cultural identity, and landscape in the southern highlands. Tourism in the region underwent an evolutionary process as it grew from a handful of small antebellum spas into a massive and complex industry that now dominates many communities in the mountain South. During this evolutionary process, each resort community adapted to major transitions in transportation systems, clientele, and tourists' motivations for travel. The manner in which local leaders responded to these changes shaped the character of each resort community.

Before the Civil War, southern elites traveled to highlands spas on horseback or in stagecoaches for the combined appeal of health and pleasure. As railroads penetrated the mountains in the late nineteenth century, however, more and more northerners came to the southern mountains on trains to escape the bustling cities and to enjoy the climate, scenery, and recreation at highland resorts. The rise of automobile tourism in the twentieth century brought unprecedented numbers of middle class visitors from across the nation and the world who traveled for a variety of reasons, including entertainment, contrived cultural attractions, shopping, and outdoor recreation. These broad evolutionary patterns of tourism in the southern highlands significantly influenced the course of economic, cultural, and environmental development in the region.

As this study has shown, however, the impact of tourism on community and regional development is a complicated, even contradictory process. Economically,

tourism has historically offered an abundance of employment opportunities for local residents and generated a great deal of revenue for communities deficient in natural resources other than climate and scenery. Intermingled with the New South ethos, tourism offered high profit potential to entrepreneurs willing to exploit the region's cheap labor and resources. With relatively low initial investment costs in certain sectors of the tourism economy, small entrepreneurs have often thrived in a resort community. Much like many other New South industries, however, tourism fostered low wages, seasonal fluctuations, and a dependency on external capital. As resorts grew and developed, the distribution of economic benefits increasingly favored outside interests as larger shares of tourism profits were funneled away from the community.

Tourism's impact on the cultural development of the southern highlands shows a similar dichotomous pattern. The travel industry has been the impetus behind countless historic preservation and cultural restoration projects in the region. Indeed, tourism was an important agent in constructing and perpetuating the notion of regional distinctiveness in the southern highlands. By its very nature, tourism was an important agent in shaping the outside world's view of the region. Because interactions in a tourist setting highlighted the social and cultural differences between outside visitors and highlanders, tourists came to believe that the mountain South was a land inhabited by quaint, yet uncivilized people.

Although outside visitors first suggested that the mountain South was a backwards region, many native highlanders embraced and exploited this perception by marketing the region's culture. In the process of commodifying regional distinctiveness, tourists

and tourism entrepreneurs reinvented the cultural identity of the region by highlighting the quaint and traditional folkways of mountaineers in travel accounts, advertisements, as well as contrived attractions. In a conscious attempt to validate America's stereotypical perceptions of the region, government agencies and resort owners offered staged demonstrations of "authentic" culture and other packaged forms of regional identity that depicted the mountain South as a place frozen in time.

Ironically, the static image of the region projected by tourism shrouded dramatic cultural changes that were caused in part by the growth of the travel industry. Indeed, tourism helped to destroy the primitive way of life it celebrates. Not only did interactions between visitors and local residents induce cultural adaptations, but tourism transformed the mountaineers' way of life as both travelers and resort owners brought modern conveniences and cultural trends to the region. As highland resort communities developed, local residents adapted their way of life to the tastes and desires of their more urbane guests. In some communities, the traditional agrarian way of life rapidly gave way to urban sprawl. To preserve local color and sense of place in the midst of fast food restaurants and motel chains, entrepreneurs fostered a false sense of regional distinctiveness with contrived attractions and events that reaffirmed the negative stereotypes of southern highlanders as contemporary pioneers and hillbillies.

Tourism has also played a central role in shaping the landscape and land use patterns of the mountain South. Since the environmental amenities of climate and scenery have always appealed to tourists, the travel industry has provided the

economic rationale for many of the mountain South's major land conservation movements of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nevertheless, the rapid commercial development and second home construction generated by tourism has paradoxically diminished the environmental qualities visitors wish to see. Therefore, while tourism has generated economic opportunity and preserved the region's environment and culture, it has also stifled economic development and transformed the landscape and lifeways of the southern highlands.

Today, more and more communities across the South are pursuing the wily tourist in hopes of luring people and profits. Governors and mayors across the region now attract visitors with the same vigor they once reserved for luring new factories to the South. Proponents often hail tourism as a panacea--a rapidly growing industry that offers plentiful jobs, abundant revenue, and investment opportunities for the local folks. Best of all, they claim, tourism does not pollute the environment as many other industries do, and it encourages southerners to remain culturally distinct. With such grand promises, it is no wonder that tourism has appealed to many communities searching for solutions to their ongoing economic woes.

On the other hand, critics of tourism have raised some serious questions about the impact of tourism. They point out that tourism produces mainly seasonal employment that offers few benefits and almost no hope for advancement. Furthermore, critics claim that tourism consigns local residents to degrading, subservient, low-wage jobs while forcing them to cope with higher costs of living, greater tax burdens, and a degraded environment.



This study shows that both sides of the debate are correct, for tourism's impacts may be both beneficial and detrimental depending on the context in which it is pursued. If tourism dominates a local economy, it can have devastating effects on a community. For communities like Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge that came to be almost wholly dependent on it, tourism is not a sustainable development strategy, because a tourist-driven economy stifles economic diversification, mars the landscape, and destroys the sense of community. Inflated land values and single-minded zoning policies drive most non-tourism enterprises away from resort communities. Local boosters discourage industry for fear that belching smokestacks will drive away visitors. Instead of preserving the environment, mass tourism can cause urban sprawl that detracts from the scenery and erases the pastoral qualities that initially attracted visitors. To make matters worse, as more and more tourists and newcomers arrive in a resort community, they graft their own culture and values onto an existing community, forcing local residents either to move away or modify their way of life. This cultural adaptation often entails the loss of self-sufficiency and a lost sense of community. In areas dominated by the travel industry, tourism destroys the very things tourists that attract tourists--culture and nature.

On the other hand, if tourism is part of a diversified local economy, it can have very beneficial effects on the community. In Asheville, where the local economy is balanced upon tourism, agriculture, and industry, the travel industry increases employment and revenue, sustains cultural institutions and historic sites, and serves to check the environmental damage caused by other regional industries. In a diversified

economy, tourism can actually boost overall wages and income in the area by absorbing much of the community's surplus labor. Moreover, tourism can have a major multiplier effect on the local economy. It can also provide the economic and political rationale for limiting development and curbing pollution in the region. Furthermore, communities get to reap the benefits of recreational, educational, and entertainment amenities such as parks, theaters, and museums that, in many cases, would not exist were it not for the tourist market.

Since tourism's impact at the local level can be either positive or negative depending on its role in the local economy, it is important for communities to avoid becoming overly dependent on the travel industry. This requires, among other things, good local planning and regional cooperation. In most cases, communities that maintain tourism at healthy, sustainable levels have leaders with the foresight to plan for growth and the vision to cooperate with other regional communities to control commercial development. However, communities where leaders fail to plan and do not set up the cooperative guidelines needed to check tourism's growth are doomed to become exclusively dependent on tourism. Tourism can be a sustainable, dynamic plan for development or an unsound strategy for growth with deleterious effects. To use tourism as an effective development strategy, however, communities must learn from the past experiences of other communities that once faced the same circumstances.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Newspapers

- Appalachian Journal, 1932.
- Asheville Citizen, June 23, 1923 and 1951.
- Asheville News and Hotel Reporter, February 1896.
- Atlanta Journal, July 18, 1994.
- Chattanooga Times, August 2, 1936 and January 17, 1950.
- Christian Advocate, September-October 1910.
- Christian Century, August 6, 1930.
- Knoxville Journal, 1950-1976.
- Knoxville News-Sentinel, 1950-1996.
- Nashville Tennessean, June 28, 1953 and June 12, 1991.
- Richmond Dispatch, June 18, 1867.
- Richmond Whig, August 21, 1869.
- Sevier County News Record, 1950-1990.
- Sevier County Vindicator, July 1921.

### Government Documents and Reports

- Asheville Chamber of Commerce. Records of the Asheville Board of Trade and Chamber of Commerce. Minutes, Executive Summaries, & Promotional Records, Asheville, North Carolina.
- Asheville City Planning Department. 2010 Asheville City Plan. Asheville: Planning Department, 1993.

Asheville City Directories, 1883-1980.

Carpenter, David E. Impacts and Influences on the Great Smoky Mountains National Park: An Annotated Bibliography with a Discussion and Review of Selected Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusions. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Interior, 1982. Research/Resources Management Report SER-64

Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce. Records of the Chamber of Commerce, Executive Summaries and Historical Files, Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

Grossman, Charles. Mountain Speech in the Great Smokies. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1941.

Huth, Hans. Report on the Preservation of Mountain Culture in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1941.

Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Archives, Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum, Townsend, Tennessee.

National Park Service. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, The Land and Its People. Washington, D. C.: Department of Interior, 1941.

Peine, John D. and James R. Renfro. Visitor Use Patterns at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Interior, 1988. Research/Resources Management Report SER-90.

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. City Ordinance Books.

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. City Commission Minute Meeting Books.

Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism. Statistics for Prospective New Businesses. Pigeon Forge: Department of Tourism, 1991.

Pigeon Forge Regional Planning Commission, Summary Plan: Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, 1974-1984. Nashville: Tennessee State Planning Office, 1977.

Tennessee Department of Agriculture. Agricultural Trends in Tennessee: A Record of Tennessee Crop and Livestock Statistics, 1866-1947. Nashville: Tennessee State Printing Office, 1948.

Tennessee State Planning Office, East Tennessee Section, Land Use Plan: Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Nashville: Tennessee State Planning Office, 1980.

United States Department of Agriculture. U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1860. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1862.

\_\_\_\_\_. U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1900. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901.

U.S. Department of Interior. Census of Population, 1880-1990.

Woolrich, W. R. Agricultural-Industrial Report: Sevier County, Tennessee. Tennessee Valley Authority Archives, Knoxville.

### **Manuscripts and Typescript Files**

A.D. Pollock Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Coxe Family Papers. Special Collections, University of North Carolina, Asheville.

Coxe Papers. North Carolina Collection, Pack Library, Asheville..

Chiles, Mary Ruth, compiler. Resorts in the Smoky Mountain Region, 1832-1930. typescript research files. National Park Service Archives, Sugarlands.

Christopher G. Memminger Papers. Southern Historical Collection, University of North

Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Clayton, LaReine Warden. "Early Inns and Hostelries in the East Tennessee Country," unpublished manuscript. Special Collections, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Creagh Family Papers. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

E. W. Grove Papers. North Carolina Collection, Pack Library. Asheville.

John Rutledge Papers. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Records. Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum, Townsend, Tennessee.

Lucy Virginia French Papers. Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

Mountain View Hotel Register, 1926-1935. Special Collections, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Newby Larkin Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Shepard Inn Register, 1905-1919. Special Collections, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Sherrill's Inn Register, 1843-1909. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

William T. Sutherland Papers. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## Oral Histories

Cecil, Willaim A. V. Interview by Karl Campbell, 22 September 1989. Southern Oral History Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC.

Headrick, Sandra. Interview by Bren Martin, 9 February 1995. Tape recording, Oral History Collection, Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum, Townsend, TN.

Householder, Julia. Intevrview by Bren Martin, 6 November 1992. Tape recording.

Lamons, Wiley. Interview by Bren Martin, 23 October 1992. Tape recording.

Sidwell, Jim. Interview by Bren Martin, 14 April 1993. Tape recording.

Stalcup, Fran. Interview by Bren Martin, 12 March 1993. Tape recording.

Stone, Dean. Interview by Bren Martin, 3 December 1994. Tape recording, Oral History Collection, Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum, Townsend, TN.

Talley, Helen. Interview by Bren Martin, 5 December 1994. Tape recording, Oral History Collection, Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum, Townsend, TN.

## Books

Alvic, Philis. Weavers of the Southern Highlands: The Early Years in Gatlinburg. Murray, KY: for Arrowmont School, 1991.

Allen, Martha Norburn. Asheville and the Land of the Sky. Charlotte: Heritage House, 1960.

Ambler, Chase. Synopsis of Work, 4th ed. Asheville: Appalachian National Park



Association, 1901.

Bake, William. The Blue Ridge. Birmingham: Oxmoor House, 1977.

Batteau, Allen. The Invention of Appalachia. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990.

Bearden, James H. ed. The Travel Industry in North Carolina: Proceedings of the Governor's Travel Information Conference. Greenville: East Carolina College, 1964.

Belasco, Warren James. Americans On the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1979.

Bell, Emma Miles. The Spirit of the Mountains. 2d ed. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975.

Bell, Harold Wright. The Shepherd of the Hills. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1947.

Boniface, Patricia, and Peter J. Fowler. Heritage and Tourism in the Global Village. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Boorstin, Daniel J. The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America. New York: Atheneum, 1975.

Brown, Dee, and W. J. Megginson. The American Spa: Hot Springs, Arkansas. Little Rock, Ark.: Rose, 1982.

Browne, Robert A. The Appalachian Trail: History, Humanity, and Ecology. Stafford: Northwoods Press, 1980.

Burkart, A. J. and S. Medlick. Tourism: Past, Present, and Future. London: Heinemann, 1974.

Burns, Inez. A History of Blount County, Tennessee: From War Trail to Landing Strip, 1795-1955. Nashville: Benson Printing Company, 1957.

Buxton, Barry. A Village Tapestry: A History of Blowing Rock. Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1989.

Caldwell, Linda, et al., eds. Growing Up with the L&N: Life and Times in a Railroad Town. Etowah: Etowah Arts Commission, 1989.

Campbell, Carlos C. Birth of a National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1960.

Cary, Richard. Mary N. Murfree. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967.

Caudill, Harry. Night Comes to the Cumberlands: The First Frontier in the War on Poverty. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1962.

Cayleff, Susan E. Wash and Be Healed: The Water-Cure Movement and Women's Health. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987.

Chapin, George H. Health Resorts of the South. Boston: n.p., 1891.

Clark, E. W. and Co. Description of the Shenandoah Valley Railroad and its Connections, Resources, and Proposed Extensions. Philadelphia: Allen, Lane, and Scott, 1881.

Cobb, James C. Industrialization and Southern Society, 1877-1984. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1984.

Cobb, Irwin S. North Carolina. New York: George H. Doran C., 1924.

Copeland, Lewis and Leona Copeland. Tennessee's National and Regional Tourist

Market in 1972. Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, 1973.

Coppinger, Margaret Brown, ed. Beersheba Springs: A History and a Celebration, 1832-1982. Beersheba Springs: Beersheba Springs Historical Society, 1983.

Corlew, Robert. Tennessee: A Short History. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981.

Dorsey, Leslie. Fare Thee Well: A Backward Look at Two Centuries of Historic American Hostelrys, Fashionable Spas, and Seaside Resorts. New York: Crown Publishers, 1964.

Douglass, H. Paul. Christian Reconstruction in the South. Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1909.

Dulles, Foster R. America Learns To Play: A History of Recreation. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965.

Dunn, Durwood. Cades Cove: The Life and Death of an Appalachian Community. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985.

Eaton, Allen H. Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1937.

Federal Writers' Project. North Carolina. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939.

Finger, John R. Cherokee Americans: The Eastern Band of Cherokees in the Twentieth Century. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991.

Gaston, Paul. The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking. New York: Knopf, 1970.

Goodrich, Frances Louisa. Mountain Homespun. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989.

Hepburn, Andrew. Great Resorts of North America. New York: Doubleday, 1965.

Jackson, George Pullen. White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands: The Story of the Fasola Folk, Their Songs, Singing, and Buckwheat Notes. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933.

Jakle, John A. The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth Century North America. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985.

Johnson, Bruce E. Built for the Ages: A History of Grove Park Inn. Asheville: Grove Park Inn and Country Club, 1991.

Johnson, Randy. Southern Snow: The Winter Guide to Dixie. Boston: Appalachian Mountain Club, 1987.

Jolley, Harley E. The Blue Ridge Parkway. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969.

Kelly, Lawrence. The Assault on Assimilation: John C. Collier and the Origins of Indian Policy Reform. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983.

Kephart, Horace. Our Southern Highlanders: A Narrative of Adventure in the Southern Appalachians and a Study of Life among the Mountaineers. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976.

Kramer, J. J. The Last of the Grand Hotels. New York: Reinhold, 1978.

Lanier, Sidney. Tiger-Lillies. 3d ed. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969.

Lewis, Helen Matthews, et al. eds. Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case. Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1973.

Lindsay, T. H. Lindsay's Guidebook to Western North Carolina. Asheville: Randolph-Kerr Printing Co., 1890.

Linn, Beulah D. Reunion at the River: Official History of Pigeon Forge, 1783-1930. Pigeon Forge, TN: Pigeon Forge Homecoming '86 Committee, 1986.

Lord, William G. Blue Ridge Parkway Guide, Book II. Asheville: Hexagon, 1976.

Lundberg, Donald E. The Tourist Business. Boston: Cahners Books, 1974.

MacCannell, Dean. The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class. New York: Shoken Books, 1976.

Malone, Bill. Country Music, U. S. A.: A Fifty Year History. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968.

Mason, Robert Lindsey. The Lure of the Smokies. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927.

McCoy, George A. A Brief History of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Movement in North Carolina. Asheville: Inland Press, 1976.

McNeil, William K. Appalachian Images in Folk and Popular Cultures. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989.

Mellinger, Edward Henry. Folk Songs from the Southern Highlands. New York: J. J. Augustin, 1938.

Mills, Mary Raoul. Family of Raoul: A Memoir. Asheville: Miller Printing Co., 1943.

- Morley, Margaret. The Carolina Mountains. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913.
- Murfree, Mary Noailles. In the Tennessee Mountains. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.
- Nash, Roderick. Wilderness and the American Mind. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.
- Nathans, Sydney. The Quest for Progress: The Way We Lived in North Carolina, 1870-1920. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983.
- North Carolina Park Commission, A National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains. Asheville: Inland Press, c. 1928.
- Norton, Mary Beth, et al. A People and a Nation: A History of the United States. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1994.
- Olcott, William. The Greenbrier Heritage. Netherlands: Arindt, Preston, Chapin, Lamb, and Keen, Inc., 1980.
- Parks, Edd Winfield. Charles Egbert Craddock. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941.
- Patton, Sadie Smothers. A Condensed History of Flat Rock. Asheville: Miller Printing Company, n.d.
- Pi Beta Phi. A Century of Friendship in Pi Beta Phi, 1867-1967. Chicago: Pi Beta Phi, 1969.
- Pinchot, Gifford. Biltmore Forest, the Property of Mr. George M. Vanderbilt: An Account of its Treatment and Results of the First Year's Work. Chicago:

Lakeside Press, 1893.

\_\_\_\_\_. Breaking New Ground, 2d ed. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972.

Porter, Ray, ed. The Medical History of Waters and Spas. London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1990.

Presbrey, Frank. The Land of the Sky and Beyond. Washington, D.C.: Southern Railway Company, 1894.

Preston, Howard L. Dirt Roads to Dixie: Accessibility and Modernization in the South, 1885-1935. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991.

Raitz, Karl B. and Richard Ulack. Appalachia: A Regional Geography of Land, People, and Development. Boulder: Westview Press, 1984.

Rayburn, Otto Ernest. The Eureka Springs Story. Eureka Springs: n.p., 1954.

Ready, Milton. Asheville: The Land of the Sky. Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, 1986.

Reid, Christian. The Land of the Sky, or Adventures in Mountain By-Ways. New York: Scribners, 1876.

Scarborough, Dorothy. A Song Catcher in the Mountains: American Folk Songs of British Ancestry. New York: Columbia University Press, 1937.

Scully, Francis J. Hot Springs, Arkansas and Hot Springs National Park. Little Rock: Pioneer Press, 1966

Shackelford, Laura. and Bill Weinberg. Our Appalachia: An Oral History. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.

Shapiro, Henry. Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978.

Sharp, Cecil J. English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians. London: Oxford University Press, 1932.

Shaw, Russell. The Gatlinburg Story. Gatlinburg: Russell Shaw, Inc., 1979.

Sheppard, Muriel Early. Cabins in the Laurel. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935.

Smith, Michal. Behind the Glitter: The Impact of Tourism on Rural Women in the Southeast. Lexington: Southeast Women's Employment Commission, 1989.

Smith, Valerie L., ed. Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977.

Speer, Jean Haskell. The Appalachian Photographs of Earl Palmer. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990.

State of North Carolina. The Economic Impact of U.S. Travel on North Carolina Counties. Raleigh: North Carolina State University Press, 1991.

Steiner, Jesse F. Americans at Play: Recent Trends in Recreation and Leisure Time Activities. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933.

Swaim, Douglas, ed. Cabins and Castles: The History and Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina. Asheville: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1981.

Tessier, Mitzi S. Asheville: A Pictorial History. Norfolk, VA: Donning Company, 1982.



- Thornborough, Laura. The Great Smoky Mountains. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1937.
- Trout, Ed. Gatlinburg: Cinderella City. Pigeon Forge, TN: Griffen Graphics, 1984.
- Van Noppen, Ina W. and John J. Van Noppen. Western North Carolina Since the Civil War. Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978.
- Veblen, Thorstein. The Theory of the Leisure Class. 4th ed. New York: Viking, 1967.
- Walters, Ronald G. American Reformers, 1815-1860. New York: Hill and Wang, 1978.
- Warner, Charles Dudley. On Horseback: A Tour in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1889.
- Weals, Vic. Last Train to Elkmont: A Look Back at Life on Little River in the Great Smoky Mountains. Knoxville: Olden Press, 1993.
- Weiss, Harry B., and Howard R. Kemble. The Great American Water-Cure Craze: A History of Hydrotherapy in the United States. Trenton: Past Times Press, 1967.
- Weller, Jack. Yesterday's People: Life in Contemporary Appalachia. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965.
- Wellman, Manley Wade. The Kingdom of Madison: A Southern Mountain Fastness and Its People. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973.
- Wheeler, W. Bruce, ed. The Gentle Winds of Change: A History of Sevier County, Tennessee, 1900-1930. Maryville: Printers, Inc., 1986.
- Whisnant, David. All That Is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983.

\_\_\_\_\_. Modernizing the Mountaineer. Boone, N.C.: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1980.

Wilson, Charles Reagan, ed. The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

Wilson, Jennifer Bauer. Roan Mountain: Passage of Time. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1991.

Wright, Gavin. Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War. New York: Basic Books, 1986.

Wolfe, Thomas. Look Homeward, Angel. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.

\_\_\_\_\_. You Can't Go Home Again. New York: Harper Brothers, 1934.

Woodward, C Vann. The Origins of the New South, 1877-1913. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951.

### **III. Articles and Essays**

Abbott, Shirley, "Hot Springs, Ark., Fondly Recalled as a Paradise Lost," Smithsonian 22 (1991), 104-115.

Arnow, Pat. "Tourist Central: Scourge or Salvation," Now and Then 8 (Spring 1991), 6-10.

Atwood, Elizabeth. "'Saratoga of the South': Tourism in Luray, Virginia, 1878-1905." In The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth Century Virginia, ed. Edward Ayers, 157-172. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1991.

Ballard, Sandra. "The Hills Meet Hollywood," Now and Then 8 (Fall 1991), 8-9.

Barrett, Chris. "Smoky Prospects," Metro Pulse 4 (July 29-August 12, 1994), 9-12 and 28-31.

Beckham, Sue Bridwell, "We Have Met the South and It Is Us: Southern Souvenirs and the American Image," Prospects 11, (1986). 247-259.

Benton, Thomas. "America's Yesterday," Travel (July 1934), 1-10 and 45.

Berdan, Marshall S. "The Spa Life: Taking the Cure in Antebellum Bath County," Virginia Calvacade 40 (1991), 110-119.

Bingham, Edgar. "The Impact of Recreational Development on Pioneer Life Styles in Southern Appalachia," in Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case. Helen Matthews Lewis, et al., eds. Boone: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978.

Branscome, James, and Peggy Matthews. "Selling the Mountains," Southern Exposure 11 (Fall 1974), 122-129.

Brewster, Lawrence Fay. Summer Migrations and Resorts of the South Carolina Low-Country Planters. Durham: Duke University Press, 1947.

Cooke, John Esten. "The White Sulphur Springs," Harper's New Monthly Magazine (August 1878), 337-56.

Corey, John. "Tweetsie," The Carolina Farmer (August 1959), 7-11.

Corte, Robert S., "The Celebrated White Sulphur Springs of Greenbrier: Nineteenth Century Travel Accounts," West Virginia History 42 (1981), 191-221.

Davis, Kate D. "Saga of a City and its Hotels," Southern Hotel Journal (March 1946), 28-33 and 54.

Dempster, George. "The Great Smoky Mountains National Park--Heavy Road Work is

- Involved in Preparing for Tourists in this Baby of the National Park System," The Earth Mover 7 (July 1934), 14-18.
- Dew, Lee A. "From Trails to Rails in Eureka Springs," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 41 (1982), 203-214.
- Esman, Marjorie R. "Tourism as Ethnic Preservation: The Cajuns of Louisiana," Annals of Tourism Research 11 (1984), 451-467.
- Frank, Bernard. "Farewell to the Smokies," Nature Magazine (February 1939), 95-102.
- Freeman, Robert. "Pigeon Forge: A Progressive Little City," The Tennessee Planner 23 (December 1963), 1-3.
- French, Larry. "Tourism and Indian Exploitation: A Social Indictment," The Indian Historian 10 (Fall 1977), 19-24.
- Grundy, Pamela. "'We Always Tried to be Good People': Respectability, Crazy Water Crystals, and Hillbilly Music On the Air, 1933-1935," Journal of American History 81 (March 1995), 1592-1621.
- Gubernick, Lisa. "A Curb on the Ego," Forbes (September 14, 1992), 417-421.
- Hamlin, Christopher. "Chemistry, Medicine, and the Legitimization of English Spas, 1740-1840," Medical History 10 (1990), 67-81.
- Heath, Milton S. "The North Carolina Mountain Ridge Protection Act," North Carolina Law Review 63 (1984), 183-196.
- Howell, Benita. "Heritage Tourism and Community Development: Lessons from Rugby and the Big South Fork Area," Tennessee's Business 6 (1995), 37-44.
- Hulan, Lynn, and Wanda Johnson. "Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism,"

Tennessee Preservationist 1 (1992), 1-12.

Kephart, Horace. "Horace Kephart By Himself," North Carolina Library Bulletin 5 (1922), 50-54.

Kessler, Robert M. "North Carolina Ridge Law Reviewed," North Carolina Law Review 63 (1984), 197-210.

Jansma, Jerome, and Harriet H. Jansma. "George Engelmann in the Arkansas Territory," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 50 (Autumn 1991), 238-253.

Lawrence, Henry W. "Southern Spas: Source of the American Resort Tradition," Landscape 27 (1983), 1-12.

MacNair, Henry S. "The Southern Appalachians from a Motor," Travel 21 (May 1913), 13-15.

Neely, Jack. "Where Dolly Meets Dali," Metro Pulse 4 (June 3-June 17, 1994), 12-16 and 24-26.

Noblitt, Phil, "The Blue Ridge Parkway and the Myths of the Pioneer," Appalachian Journal 21 (Summer 1994), 394-408.

Rembert, Patrick. "The Mobile Frontier," Journal of Southern History 29 (February 1963), 5-22.

Shipley, Ellen Compton. "The Pleasures of Prosperity: Bella Vista, Arkansas, 1917-1929," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 37 (1978), 99-129.

Smith, Charles Forster. "Southern Dialect in Life and Literature," Southern Bivouac 3 (1885), 145-148.

Smith, Stephen A. "The Old South Myth as a Contemporary Southern Commodity," Journal of Popular Culture 16 (1982), 22-29.

Speer, Jean Haskell. "Cultural Tourism in Appalachian Tennessee," Tennessee's Business 6 (1995), 17-22.

Stucki, Larry R. "Will the 'Real' Indian Survive?: Tourism and Affluence at Cherokee, North Carolina," in Affluence and Cultural Survival. Richard Salisbury and Elizabeth Tooker. Washington, D. C.: American Ethnological Society, 1984.

Thornborough, Laura. "Americans the Twentieth Century Forgot," Travel (April 1928), 1-7 and 44-45.

Watkins, Charles Alan. "Somewhere Over Beech Mountain: Contemporary Appalachian Artifacts and the Land of Oz," Contemporary Appalachia: In Search of a Usable Past (Boone: Appalachian Studies Association, 1987), 106-115.

#### **IV. Dissertations and Theses**

Becker, Jane Stewart. "Selling Tradition: The Domestication of Southern Appalachian Culture in 1930s America." Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1993.

Blevin, Brooks R. "Fallow Are the Hills: A Century of Rural Modernization in the Arkansas Ozarks." M.A. thesis, Auburn University, 1994.

Brown, Margaret Lynn. "Power, Privelege, and Tourism: A Revision of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park Story." M.A. thesis, University of Kentucky, 1990.

Dobson, Jerome Eric. "The Changing Control of Economic Activity in the Gatlinburg, Tennessee Area, 1930-1973." Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee 1975).

Neff, Jeffrey Wayne. "A Geographic Analysis of the Characteristics and Development Trends of the Non-Metropolitan Tourist-Recreation Industry of Southern Appalachia." Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, 1975.

Nicholls, Leland Leon. "A Geographical Analysis of Selected Ski Resorts in the South." Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, 1972.

Tooman, Alex. "The Evolving Economic Impact of Tourism on the Great Smoky Mountains Region of East Tennessee and Western North Carolina." Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, 1994.

## VITA

Brenden Martin was born in Murfreesboro, Tennessee on April 4, 1967. He attended public schools in Rutherford County, Tennessee, where he graduated from Riverdale High School in May 1985. After one year in the University of Tennessee's music program, he returned to Murfreesboro and enrolled at Middle Tennessee State University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in History in December 1989. One month later, he entered the Master's program in History at Middle Tennessee State University. After graduating in August of 1991, he returned to the University of Tennessee to pursue a Ph.D. in History. Over the next five years, he taught college level history courses, worked as a tourism consultant, and entered the field of public history as an exhibit coordinator for a Tennessee Humanities Council project in Townsend, Tennessee.

He is presently working as the Historian at the Museum of the New South in Charlotte, North Carolina.