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# A Timely Idea at an Ideal Time: Knoxville's Role in Establishing the Great Smoky Mountains National Park

John Thomas Whaley  
*University of Tennessee - Knoxville*

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by John Thomas Whaley entitled "A Timely Idea at an Ideal Time: Knoxville's Role in Establishing the Great Smoky Mountains National Park." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

Paul H. Bergeron, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Charles O. Jackson, Charles W. Johnson

Accepted for the Council:

Dixie L. Thompson

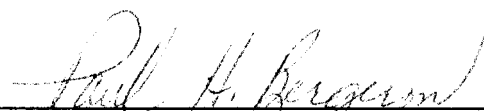
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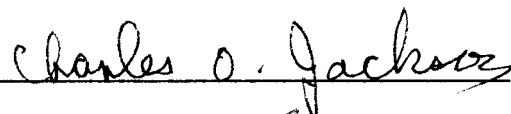

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A TIMELY IDEA AT AN IDEAL TIME: KNOXVILLE'S  
ROLE IN ESTABLISHING THE GREAT SMOKY  
MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

A Thesis  
Presented for the  
Master of Arts  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

John Thomas Whaley

March 1984

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of people should be thanked for their contributions to this effort. The staffs of the Special Collections of the University of Tennessee Library, the Charles M. McClung Collection of the Lawson McGhee Public Library in Knoxville, and the Tennessee State Library and Archives in Nashville were all most helpful. I would also like to thank the University of Tennessee History Department Awards Committee for its generous gift from the Bernadotte E. Schmitt Scholarship Fund.

With great appreciation I acknowledge the direction and aid of Dr. Paul H. Bergeron. His tolerance of the sporadic nature with which this thesis has been produced is commendable. Finally, I am grateful for his patience, his professionalism, and his friendship. I would also like to thank my readers, Dr. Charles Jackson and Dr. Charles Johnson, for their helpful suggestions and for their time.

The contributions, both spiritual and physical, of family members are too numerous and/or intangible to account. Throughout my college career, the moral and financial support of my parents, Paul and Ellouise Whaley, has been tremendous. The models that they and other family members, both my own and the family into which I have married, have provided strength in a time when my own resources might have failed.

To be an employed graduate student, part- or full-time, is a rigorous existence. To be a married, employed graduate student is even more demanding, but my wife's support has been wonderful.

Watching and aiding her in the completion of her master's degree served as an inspiration to me. Celeste's patience with me and confidence in me never wavered, though I often doubted myself. She is almost as much a part of this thesis as I am, and it is with heartfelt thanks that I acknowledge her contributions to my graduate work.

## ABSTRACT

The endeavor to establish a national park in the Great Smoky Mountains was begun in the 1920s, a period that historians of the South and of Tennessee have labeled Progressive. The intent of this study of the role of Knoxvilleians in founding the national park was to determine if the drive is a reflection of this Progressivism. From the creation of the Great Smoky Mountain Conservation Association until the dedication of the park by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940, Knoxvilleians were at the "helm" of the movement to have a national park established in the nearby Smoky Mountains. These interested individuals sought and received the aid of the federal government, the state government, Tennessee citizens, local, state, and national civic and charitable organizations, and various philanthropists. To a large extent, the commitment and labor of Knoxvilleians was what assured the establishment of the park.

The activities surrounding the drive for a national park by the citizens of Knoxville do agree with the type of Progressivism applied to the South and to Tennessee for the period of the 1920s. Knoxville's concern for progress, which to a large extent meant increased personal wealth, is quite evident in the press and in the correspondence of those leading the park drive. The traditional conservative goal of conservation can certainly be seen in the arguments presented to justify the need for a national park. Other Progressive goals, such as improved roads and better schools, are also closely linked to the park endeavor.

Although one should not generalize from a single civic endeavor, one can argue that the results of this study do serve to support the broader theses of Progressivism that historians have used to characterize both Tennessee and the South in the 1920s.



## PREFACE

Recent events in the city of Knoxville have had a great deal to do with my selection of this topic. The strong lobbying and promotional efforts for the 1982 World's Fair were key motivations, but other movements, such as the Miss America Pageant and the proposed Technology Corridor, have also contributed to my curiosity concerning civic projects. What motivates individuals to work so hard toward certain ends? Surely financial gain is a key motivation, but just as certainly it is not the only factor. Some feeling of civic pride and community service must fit in somewhere. It seems a little early to begin to identify all of the genuine motivations behind the recent projects for which Knoxville has worked, but one can consider a much similar phenomenon that occurred in Knoxville's past some sixty years ago. The promotion and planning of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park filled the lives of many Knoxvilleians and the pages of many newspapers in the 1920s. The activities and motivations of these Knoxvilleians, in light of the New Progressive interpretation of the South of the 1920s, are the subjects of this thesis.

Throughout almost all of the decade of the 1920s the city of Knoxville was concerned with the establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. To deal with this concern as a research topic involved extensive review of newspapers, personal correspondence, period publications; and numerous secondary sources. In developing a format for the best presentation of this material, it was determined

that a chronological approach would be most effective. This perspective best reveals the extent to which the potential park permeated the lives of Knoxvilleians, and thus it best supports an argument that this specific movement was a part of the general "progressive" nature of Knoxville during the 1920s.

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## CHAPTER I

### BACKGROUND AND BEGINNING

The American South of the 1920s has been the subject of many books and articles, and as such, it has been depicted and categorized in several forms. The South referred to is that region which George B. Tindall has designated as the "eleven former Confederate states plus Kentucky and Oklahoma."<sup>1</sup> Tindall maintains in The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945, that the South moved into a progressivism of a new type but with traditional "progressive roots." For Tindall, progressivism should be viewed as more of a spirit and less of a movement. He supplies a five-part definition for progressivism which includes an expansion of democracy, an emphasis on efficiency, attempts to regulate corporations, efforts toward social justice, and the incorporation of public service as a major governmental function. This progressivism was "transformed" into New Progressivism when emphasis was placed upon certain tendencies while others were ignored. Efficiency and public service, with the latter including conservation, rose in importance in the South while the significance of the other three facets of "old" progressivism diminished.<sup>2</sup> Finally, Tindall stresses

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<sup>1</sup>George B. Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), x.

<sup>2</sup>George B. Tindall, "Business Progressivism: Southern Politics in the Twenties," South Atlantic Quarterly, LVII, (1963): 92-96.

that this spirit of progressivism "had caught up the governments of the South as well as its businessmen, in a zeal for the New South Triumphant."<sup>3</sup>

Quick to tie this movement to the middle class, he points out that its strength was drawn from those professions in the middle income range: merchants, mechanics, farmers, and small manufacturers. Further, Tindall sees this progressivism directly related to "the urban middle class, chambers of commerce, and Rotary Clubs."<sup>4</sup> The concerns of these groups were primarily good government, great churches, improved schools, industry, business, and real estate booms.<sup>5</sup> Good government was to be efficient, economically minded, and comprehensive enough to oversee conservation, promotion of industry, and budgetary and fiscal matters. Finally, Tindall places all of this in a much grander scheme by suggesting that the 1920s represented a "historical watershed" in which Southerners were witnessing the death of one world and the birth of another.<sup>6</sup>

Dealing with basically the same geographical South, W. J. Cash would agree with a great deal of Tindall's thesis. In his important Mind of the South, Cash also stresses the concept of progress in this

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 105-106.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>5</sup>Tindall, The Emergence, p. 223.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 287.

region during the 1920s--even to the point that he deals with the term "Progress" as though it were a god to the Southerners. He too ties this desire for, and love of, progress (as they envisioned it) to the urban middle class which he maintains was new as an identifiable group in the South. Cash describes the 1920s as "the years of the greatest opportunity for the acquisition of easy riches . . . that the South has ever seen."<sup>7</sup> The roles of civic pride, humanitarianism, and progress for the sake of progress were secondary, in his estimation, for Cash believes that for most Southerners progress meant, above all else, increased personal wealth.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike Tindall's approach, Cash is concerned with revealing the underlying motives for the actions and attitudes of the Southerner. He views the deification of progress as "central for Southern patriotism" and as a "passionate desire to keep believing . . . that man was destined to continual advance . . . to always more splendid goals."<sup>9</sup> Further, Cash argues that progress was raised to so high a point because it alone could suppress the "plexus of fears and hates" which pervaded Southern society and Southern minds.<sup>10</sup>

A striking contrast to Tindall and Cash is Neal R. Peirce's The Border South States: People, Politics and Power in the Five Border

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<sup>7</sup>W. J. Cash, Mind of the South (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 270.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 273.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 304, 301.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 299.

South States. Although he is not dealing with the entire South, Peirce does concern himself with four of the states which comprise the South of Tindall and Cash. In a sweeping statement, Peirce argues that from the founding of Jamestown in 1607 until the time of his book's publication, 1975, "the Border States seemed like an island of quiet."<sup>11</sup> This position is a striking contrast to the fervor and clamor for progress which Tindall and Cash maintain permeated the entire South, which would obviously include the border states.

Although primarily concerned with the "modern" South, Peirce does make some references to the 1920s in his treatment of each individual state. He counters those who would mark the 1920s as the beginning of progress for Virginia by arguing that any progress for the "Old Dominion" was just the result of the state's geographic and natural advantages. It is also too much to call North Carolina progressive, because Peirce believes that all claims of progressivism can be countered with others to prove just the opposite. In another sweeping statement, he depicts Kentucky as having been a "nonstop political theater" where it was impossible for legislators "to get down to the serious business of governing."<sup>12</sup> Likewise, he contends unreservedly that Tennesseans have never been progressive in any endeavor.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Neil R. Peirce, The Border South States: People, Politics and Power in the Five Border South States (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), p. 15.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 289.

Several historians specializing in the study of Tennessee have labeled the decade of the 1920s as progressive. According to these historians, this progressivism can best be seen in the gubernatorial administrations of Austin Peay, who was elected to the state's executive office in 1922, 1924, and 1926. Tindall describes Peay as an "authentic progressive governor of the twenties."<sup>14</sup> Even Peirce admits that Peay's administrations were "the most outstanding in decades."<sup>15</sup> Further support for the progressive thesis for Tennessee is the observation that Peay was initially elected because of the support he received from business and urban interests who were stressing efficient and economic management of state government.<sup>16</sup> Peay himself boldly claimed progress by using the campaign slogan "Peay and Progress" in the 1926 governor's race and insisting that his hope was to see Tennessee "bathed in a sweeping tide of prosperity."<sup>17</sup>

Austin Peay's programs do fall neatly into the definitions of 1920s progressivism. His first action as governor, for example, was a reorganization of the state government's sixty-four bureaus into a departmental system with eight commissioners, appointed by him and accountable to him. The Peay administration also pushed through

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<sup>14</sup>Tindall, "Business Progressivism," p. 93.

<sup>15</sup>Peirce, Border South States, p. 297.

<sup>16</sup>Paul H. Bergeron, Paths of the Past: Tennessee, 1770-1970 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979), p. 93.

<sup>17</sup>T. H. Alexander, Austin Peay, Governor of Tennessee, 1923-25, 1925-27, 1927-29; a Collection of State Papers and Public Addresses with a Biography (Kingsport: Southern Publishers, 1929), p. 292.



measures for massive highway construction, financed by a new gasoline tax. Moreover, the state property tax was reduced, necessitating a three percent excise tax on corporate profits. Peay also tackled public education, resulting in the Education Act of 1925, termed "one of the major milestones in the history of Tennessee public education," and an additional education act in 1927.<sup>18</sup> The state supplemented teachers' salaries through a tobacco tax in order to establish an eight-month school term in all counties. Licensing of teachers and the establishment of the state normal schools as four-year teachers colleges were provided for. Also within the realm of education but in contrast to a progressive standard, Peay signed the Butler bill, deemed a "backward step" by many.<sup>19</sup> The bill outlawed the teaching of the theory of evolution in Tennessee classrooms and led to the Scopes trial in Dayton in 1925.

Beyond business-initiated programs and education, Peay worked strongly for conservation and reforestation. His administration secured the designation of Reelfoot Lake, in the northwest corner of the state, as a state game and fish preserve, while also backing legislation to establish the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in the mountains of East Tennessee. Some have depicted Peay's work for the park as a political maneuver to gain support for the Democratic party in traditionally Republican East Tennessee.<sup>20</sup> But others have argued

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<sup>18</sup>Bergeron, Paths, p. 94.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

that Peay's conservation policies represented the plans of the old progressives who saw the state as the agent to provide for future generations.<sup>21</sup>

Just as Tennessee might be viewed as a part of a progressive South, so too might Knoxville be seen as a part of a progressive Tennessee. Knoxville was expanding in size and population in the 1920s. The city was economically dependent upon manufacturing with textiles, marble, and furniture leading in production. Equally significant was merchandising with the city considering itself one of the leading wholesale markets in the South. The Southern and the Louisville and Nashville railroads were also extremely important economic factors. Population figures reveal a rapid increase in Knoxville from 36,346 in 1910 to 77,818 in 1920 to 148,128 in 1930. Perhaps some of Peirce's anti-progressive observations and Cash's latent fears and hates can be realized in the city directory's praise of the "purity" of the Knoxville population. The directory proudly claimed that only 1.3 percent of the population was foreign-born, and the black population was only 14.4 percent.<sup>22</sup> These claims of growth and homogeneous population are valid when the other major cities of Tennessee are considered. While Knoxville more than tripled in population from

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<sup>21</sup>Joseph T. MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism in Tennessee: The Administrations of Governor Austin Peay, 1923-1927" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1969), p. 348.

<sup>22</sup>Knoxville City Directory (Knoxville: City Directory Company of Knoxville, 1930), p. 3.

1910 to 1930, Chattanooga and Memphis doubled in population, while Nashville's gain was only slight.<sup>23</sup> Knoxville's black population was considerably lower than the other metropolitan areas. The number of blacks in Chattanooga and Nashville was twice that of Knoxville, and Memphis had a black population almost three times that of Knoxville.<sup>24</sup>

The progressive symbols of improved education, good roads movements, real estate booms, and efficient government were all present in Knoxville in the 1920s. As the home of The University of Tennessee, almost all Knoxvillians in positions of influence worked for increased funding and recognition for the institution. In a 1926 issue, Southern Opportunity Magazine tagged highways as the symbol of progress and reported that "East Tennessee [led] the state in highway building since 1923."<sup>25</sup> The most notable real estate boom occurred just west of the university in a major development known as Sequoyah Hills. The civic government was a city manager form which was deemed more efficient and non-political because of its business-like operation. The city was quick to point out that Knoxville was "nationally known as a well-governed municipality."<sup>26</sup> One historian has noted the committed support for education, better roads, the city manager form of government,

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<sup>23</sup>John B. Knox, The People of Tennessee: A Study of Population Trends (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1949), p. 54.

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

<sup>25</sup>"The Ribbons of Progress," Southern Opportunity Magazine (November 1926), p. 4.

<sup>26</sup>Knoxville City Directory, p. 3.

the national park, and Governor Peay's programs in general by Knox County's direct state senator, Andrew Jackson Graves.<sup>27</sup> Elected to the United States Senate in 1924, Knoxville's Lawrence D. Tyson would also prove to be a promoter of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

In short, Knoxville, in its own eyes, was moving forward.<sup>28</sup> The leaders believed that a growing, homogenous population with new business and industry, improved educational facilities, a fair city government, and new real estate opportunities represented progress. Knoxville was not only important to East Tennessee but also to the entire state and region. Indeed, the city definitely attracted "outside interests."<sup>29</sup>

Knoxvillians were involved in many affairs that might be labeled as progressive. The civic initiation, support, and eventual success of the city of Knoxville to have the Great Smoky Mountains National Park established is one of the most important in which the citizens were involved. Beginning in 1923, the drive reached technical success by February of 1930, when Tennessee and North Carolina presented deeds to over 150,000 acres to the Secretary of the Interior, an action that launched federal administration of the park lands. All land and park facilities were not finally completed until 1940 when, on September 2, President Franklin D. Roosevelt officially dedicated the park.

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<sup>27</sup> Joe E. Spence, "The Public Career of Andrew Jackson Graves," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, 40 (1968): 69.

<sup>28</sup> Southern Opportunity Magazine, p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

This important achievement for Knoxville and East Tennessee falls within the progressive period of Southern history as Tindall designates it. Likewise, one historian who studied the governorship of Austin Peay has termed this period of Tennessee's history as "Democratic Progressivism."<sup>30</sup> If indeed the whole is the sum of its parts, then an examination of the role and motives of Knoxvilleians in the founding of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park should help to determine the validity of the application of the term "progressive" to both Tennessee and the South of the 1920s.

The idea for the establishment of a national park in the Great Smoky Mountains had existed for a long time. It developed into an organized movement in the late nineteenth century which swelled and ebbed several times before finally "taking hold." It was only in the 1920s, when "American discussion of national parks . . . was widespread, penetrating, and enthusiastic," that success was achieved.<sup>31</sup> The traditional progressive concern for conservation was merged with a pragmatic, business progressivism in the 1920s. This union provided the necessary means for achieving an end that had been sought since the 1880s.

As early as 1885, the mountains of western North Carolina were deemed highly suitable for those persons seeking a healthy climate. In a speech before the American Academy of Medicine, for example,

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<sup>30</sup>MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism."

<sup>31</sup>Roderick Nash, The Nervous Generation: American Thought, 1917-1930 (Chicago: Rand McNally Co., 1970), p. 87.

Dr. Henry O. Marcy advocated the formation of a park under governmental control due to the benefits to be gained by all from the climate.<sup>32</sup> But it was not until 1892, when logging companies began to disturb people by their destruction of the southern Appalachian forests, that strong action was first advocated. Charles S. Sargent, editor of Garden and Forest, recommended that a national forest reserve be established in the southern Appalachians for both forestry and botanical experimentation.<sup>33</sup> The New York Tribune strongly supported the proposal, and these strong national calls led the North Carolina legislature to pass a resolution on February 9, 1893, advocating the establishment of a national park in the southern Appalachians.<sup>34</sup> The North Carolina Press Association's draft of a memorial petition to Congress in behalf of a park followed soon thereafter. Representative John S. Henderson officially presented this document to the United States House of Representatives on March 27, 1894. It was referred to the committee on public lands where it "died" because of lack of time and dynamic support.

Action ceased on the matter until 1899, when Dr. Chase P. Ambler, A. H. McQuilken, and the Asheville Board of Trade became interested in the project.<sup>35</sup> This organization formed support groups throughout the

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<sup>32</sup>Charles D. Smith, "The Appalachian National Park Movement, 1885-1901," North Carolina Historical Review 37 (January 1960): 38.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

state and drew up its own petition to be presented to Congress in an effort to get an investigation into the park proposal. The petition cited several reasons why a park should be created in this area: to demonstrate an end of discrimination toward the South; to improve the tourist industry; to acquire lands where they could be obtained cheaply; possibly to locate a tuberculosis hospital for the Army and Navy here; and to preserve the forests, game, and fish from lumbermen and tanneries.<sup>36</sup> The group invited representatives from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and Virginia to convene in Asheville on November 22, 1899, to discuss a national park for either the Blue Ridge Mountains or the Great Smoky Mountains.

The meeting consisted of forty-two delegates, most of whom were from North Carolina and South Carolina. After some debate over a national forest or a national park, the group agreed upon the latter and therefore formed the Appalachian National Park Association. This organization included a president, twenty-five vice presidents, a twelve-member board of directors, and auxiliary branches to be set up throughout the Southeast. Both of North Carolina's United States Senators, Jeter C. Pritchard and Marion Butler, pledged their support. After a month devoted to obtaining support and publicity, the organization had prepared and approved its memorial on January 4, 1900. The reasons cited for government acquisition of the area within the Great Smoky Mountains were its rare beauty, superb forests, extreme

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

healthfulness, and agreeable climate and location. This memorial also included reference to the area's importance as the location of the headwaters of many rivers, the fact that it would "pay" for itself as a forest reserve, and the point that the title could be easily obtained.<sup>37</sup>

Senator Pritchard offered an amendment to the fiscal 1901 agriculture appropriation bill, calling for \$10,000 to survey eastern Tennessee, western North Carolina, and northeastern Georgia for possible government purchase.<sup>38</sup> In addition to this, Senator Butler introduced a resolution providing for the formation of a commission to undertake a survey and study of the region. Both items were referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, which approved them, but some important obstacles were still to be encountered. The most significant problem, actual land acquisition, was resolved by requiring the interested states to acquire title to the land and then transfer title to the federal government. Congress eventually passed the agriculture bill with the Pritchard and Butler provisions, and President William McKinley signed it into law on May 26, 1900.<sup>39</sup>

For some time there had been debate over establishing a forest reserve or a national park. The expediency and utilitarian aspects of a forest reserve were weighed against the conservation and preservation

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 52-54.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 61.



of a national park. By mid-January of 1901, the federal reserve concept gained precedence over the national park idea. This was based in part upon the desire for success. It was argued that a federal forest reserve could possibly "pay" for itself, since timber would actually be cut and sold. Further, the federal reserve idea had the strong support of then Vice President Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>40</sup> The American Forestry Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science also offered important support to a forest reserve in the southern Appalachians.<sup>41</sup> On January 10, 1901, Senator Pritchard introduced a bill for purchasing the Great Smoky Mountains as a forest reserve, but because of strong opposition from lumber interests, lingering sectional prejudice, and political opposition from Speaker of the House Joseph Cannon the attempt failed.<sup>42</sup> In the meantime, the North Carolina organization helped to form the National Forest Reserve Association, which would continue to fight for federal reserve legislation, culminating in the passage of the Weeks Law in 1911 which established the federal government's right to designate forest reserves and provided guidelines for such an action.

While the North Carolinians were promoting a forest reserve over a national park, Tennesseans, most notably Knoxvilleans, were also

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<sup>40</sup>Willard B. Gatewood, "North Carolina's Role in the Establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park," North Carolina Historical Review 37 (April 1960): 165.

<sup>41</sup>Smith, "Appalachian Park Movement," p. 62.

<sup>42</sup>Gatewood, "North Carolina's Role," pp. 165-166.

beating the drum for conservation of some area within the Appalachian Mountains. In 1910, 1911, and 1913, the city of Knoxville hosted major events promoting the concept of conservation. From September 12 to October 12, 1910, the Appalachian Exposition fostered Southern progress through exhibitions of products and services and through encouragement of continued advancement in all areas.<sup>43</sup> The exposition's first major goal was "to stress the vital importance of conserving the forests and streams of the Appalachian region."<sup>44</sup>

A second Appalachian Exposition, from September 11 to October 11, 1911, celebrated the passage of the Weeks Law in that year. It also claimed "the protection of the forests and the watersheds [as] the 'watchword' of the Appalachian Exposition."<sup>45</sup> Lawrence D. Tyson, president of the second exposition, would later be one of the individuals who advocated the establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in his capacity as one of Tennessee's United States Senators during the 1920s.

The National Conservation Exposition, also held in Knoxville, lasted from September 1 to October 31, 1913. Like both Appalachian expositions, this one was organized under a private company with

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<sup>43</sup>Premium List and Prospectus: Appalachian Exposition to be Held at Knoxville, Tennessee (Knoxville: S. B. Newman, 1910), p. 1.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Premium List and Prospectus: Appalachian Exposition to be Held at Knoxville, Tennessee (Knoxville: Knoxville Printing and Box Co., 1911), p. 3.

businesses and countries subscribing for participation. Indeed, this company took over the plant and all property of the then present Appalachian Exposition Company which was valued at one million dollars.<sup>46</sup>

In his speech before the House of Representatives calling for United States participation in the exposition, Tennessee Congressman Richard W. Austin, who represented the second district, stressed the national nature of the fair and its focus on conservation ideas. The subsequent meetings held by the National Conservation Association during the exposition led to an endorsement of the Great Smoky Mountain Park idea. Little influence seems to have been behind the support, however, because no immediate action was actually undertaken.

Efforts on both sides of the Great Smoky Mountains met with limited success in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But interest in the mountains and their inhabitants was greatly increased with the publication of Our Southern Highlanders by Horace Kephart in 1913. From his home in Bryson City, North Carolina, Kephart became a leading advocate for a national park. The preservation of the area again became a concern of many during World War I, largely because of the increased logging of the area. Following the war, the region grew in popularity as a tourist site. However, it would take the simultaneous thoughts and actions of individuals in Knoxville and

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<sup>46</sup>The National Conservation Exposition at Knoxville, Tennessee: Speech of Hon. Richard W. Austin of Tennessee in the House of Representatives, Mar. 28, 1912 (Washington: United States Government Print-Office, 1912), p. 6.

Washington, D.C., to rekindle the national park effort and see it to its conclusion.

In Washington, one of the "contenders" for the title of "founder" of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was Stephen Mather, first director of the National Park Service. Writing favorably in the seventh annual report of the National Park Service in 1923 concerning a park in the Smokies, he stressed the necessity of the land being purchased and donated by private citizens or state governments rather than directly procured by the federal government.

At the end of an article concerned with an earlier drive for a national park, an author concluded that a national park would have to be the realization of a "new generation of Americans who . . . felt in their hearts the desire to walk an Appalachian Trail which led through the grandeur of the mountains."<sup>47</sup> Such a generation was emerging in Knoxville. The strongest argument for a "father and mother" of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park comes from Carlos C. Campbell, chronicler of the establishment of the park, who maintains that Mr. and Mrs. Willis P. Davis of Knoxville should be credited with getting the idea accepted.<sup>48</sup> After traveling in the West and visiting several national parks there, both of the Davises were convinced that the Great Smokies surpassed anything they had seen. The two were in positions

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<sup>47</sup>Smith, "Appalachian Park Movement," p. 65.

<sup>48</sup>Carlos C. Campbell, Birth of a National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1960), pp. 18-19.

to take action toward the end they desired, for as general manager of the Knoxville Iron Company, Willis P. Davis had Knoxville business and civic leaders with whom he could consult and organize, and Ann Davis, a member of the Tennessee General Assembly, had the ability to present legislation and promote political support for any movement which might develop.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, the interest in a national park in the Great Smoky Mountains was once again on the rise. From the early commitment of the Davises until the dedication of the park in 1940, the movement for a national park became a key concern for the city of Knoxville. Betsey Creekmore, a historian of Knoxville, believes that Knoxville should be hailed as "the cornerstones of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park."<sup>50</sup> Another historian has aptly pointed out that "there were private citizens who believed in the park idea and were perfectly willing to invest the time and money that the project required. For the most part these were citizens of Knoxville."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>50</sup>Betsey Creekmore, Knoxville (2nd ed., Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1967), p. 223.

<sup>51</sup>MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism," p. 312.

## CHAPTER II

### KNOXVILLE TAKES COMMAND, 1924-1925

In 1924 and 1925 Knoxville took the lead in the promotion and lobbying efforts for a national park. The Great Smoky Mountain Conservation Association was established and incorporated. State government support was difficult to obtain, but finally the General Assembly was convinced that the park could be a real asset. After some close calls concerning federal government approval, the Interior Department designated the Great Smoky Mountains as an acceptable area for a national park. From the outset, it was clear that federal money would not be available to purchase park land. Thus, a great deal of energy was spent on state, sectional, and city fund-raising efforts. While these two years were filled with highs and lows, they can be considered a successful period for the early stages of such a movement.

The citizens of Knoxville became aware of the possibilities for the Great Smoky Mountains because of the determination of Willis P. Davis, and they enlisted to work for the conservation of the area. Davis' idea and his promotion of the national park concept in Washington were revealed to the public on December 12, 1923.<sup>1</sup> By that time, Davis had traveled to Washington to see Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work. Davis' intention was to encourage Work to act upon

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<sup>1</sup>Knoxville Journal and Tribune, 12 December 1923; and Knoxville News, 12 December 1923.

National Park Director Mather's 1923 report concerning a park in the southern Appalachians. Returning to Knoxville with enthusiasm, Davis set about organizing the necessary local support.

Both prior to and following his trip to Washington, Davis had been trying to sell the idea of a park to his business and organizational associates. Not so easily persuaded, "members of the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce and others who listened to Mr. Davis did not believe in his visions and were often irritated by his ravings."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, there were factors surrounding the park issue which interested many: namely, roads and publicity. The belief that a park could increase the number and quality of roads over the mountains and throughout East Tennessee was a strong incentive. New roads would mean more customers for Knoxville stores and more markets for Knoxville's manufactured goods. In addition, many citizens willingly supported the park, because it would bring publicity to the city which might contribute to population, economic, and physical growth.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever the motivations, Davis was successful in establishing the Great Smoky Mountain Conservation Association, whose first meeting was held on December 21, 1923, at which time the first officers were elected. Among them were W. P. Davis as chairman, J. Wylie Brownlee,

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<sup>2</sup>Ebbie Sandburg, "An Interview with Mr. Carlos C. Campbell About the Establishment of the Smoky Mountain Park," unpublished paper, 20 February 1976, in the possession of Dr. Paul H. Bergeron, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Carlos C. Campbell, Birth of a National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1960), p. 14.

a Gatlinburg businessman, as secretary, and Cowan Rodgers, a Knoxville automobile dealer, as treasurer. Others present included David C. Chapman, a wholesale druggist, and four attorneys who represented timber companies owning large tracts in the Smokies.<sup>4</sup> The organization's purpose was to promote the park at local, state, and national levels. These men and others who joined were usually members of the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce and/or the Knoxville Automobile Club. The national park project became a key concern of both of these organizations due to this commonality of membership.

The members of the Association went to work almost immediately. They sought and received the endorsement of the park idea from United States Senator John K. Shields and United States Representative J. Will Taylor. Largely because of a persuasive speech delivered by Association member Chapman, the Knoxville Federated Clubs backed the park proposal. He urged the clubs to call on the state to build a road across the mountains so that the area could be properly viewed and investigated.<sup>5</sup> The Conservation Association also began making a study of land costs in the Smoky Mountains because it believed that cost would be the key issue in the establishment of a park.

The Knoxville press was also supportive of the movement from its earliest days because the mountains had "a beauty that belonged

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>5</sup>Knoxville News, 3 January 1924.



to all people."<sup>6</sup> The News, however, seemed at times to be advocating a route different from that endorsed by the Conservation Association. The press, for example, began pushing for a national forest which could in time be converted to a national park. The reason for this position centered mainly around expediency. With the Weeks Law in existence, a national forest could be established quicker than a park, which required special legislation.<sup>7</sup> In an editorial printed on January 3, 1924, the Knoxville News advocated the establishment of a national forest, and the editor urged Knoxvilleans to write in support to their representatives, senators, and President Coolidge.<sup>8</sup> Only after action began for a national park on the national level did the Knoxville press begin to promote a park over a forest.

In March of 1924, Interior Secretary Work appointed a five-member committee to study the possibility of locating a national park in the southern Appalachian Mountains. The members of the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee were H. W. Temple, a Pennsylvania congressman, William A. Welch, general manager of Palisades Interstate Park in New York and New Jersey, William C. Gregg, a representative of the American Civic Association, Glenn S. Smith, a representative of the United States Geological Survey, and Harlan Kelsey, a representative of the

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 28 December 1923.

<sup>7</sup>Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., "North Carolina's Role in the Establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park," North Carolina Historical Review 37 (April 1960), p. 170.

<sup>8</sup>Knoxville News, 12 March 1924.

Appalachian Mountain Club.<sup>9</sup> The formation of this committee was seen as the result of the efforts of W. P. Davis and the Conservation Association to get the federal government interested in the Smoky Mountains.<sup>10</sup>

With an immense task before it, the committee began by sending questionnaires to interested parties. From the information gathered, the committee intended to determine the most promising sites which would then be investigated firsthand. Groups in Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia sent in over fifteen questionnaires. The committee spent a great deal of time reviewing the information provided and did not actually develop an itinerary for inspection tours until the summer of 1924.

Meanwhile, the park enthusiasts in Knoxville did not remain idle. They continued to speak before civic and service organizations, and they kept the issue in the mind of the public through the press. These interested Knoxvilleans brought pressure upon Senator Shields, an effort which in early April of 1924 resulted in the introduction of legislation to create a park. Shields' bill called for an appropriation of ten million dollars to purchase lands for a national park which would be established in the Great Smoky Mountains by December 1, 1925 and would be under the control of the Secretary of Agriculture.<sup>11</sup> By mid-April Shields stopped promoting the bill for two reasons. He thought

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<sup>9</sup>Campbell, National Park, p. 22.

<sup>10</sup>Knoxville News, 12 March 1924.

<sup>11</sup>Knoxville Journal and Tribune, 5 April 1924.

it was futile to try to get any major legislation through Congress before the adjournment for the June political conventions, and the senator wanted to wait until the Interior Department's investigation was completed to avoid any charges that he was being premature in introducing the legislation.<sup>12</sup> In other activities, the Conservation Association and the Knoxville Automobile Club strongly advocated the construction of a road through the Smokies. The motivations behind this position were twofold: to win back a "natural trade territory" and to enhance the possibility of having a park established because of the improved access the roads could provide.<sup>13</sup> As a result, the two groups sponsored "missionary groups" that traveled over three proposed routes. The successful journeys of the groups were, according to the Knoxville Journal and Tribune, "a convincing demonstration that the people of East Tennessee must break through the natural barriers which shut them off from their kindred on the other side of the Great Smoky range."<sup>14</sup>

When the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee released its itinerary in the summer of 1924, Knoxville was not on the list. But the Conservation Association and the Knoxville press were determined to plead the case of the Smoky Mountains. Several key members of the group, leading Knoxville citizens, went to Asheville, North Carolina, to intercept the group as it made its scheduled stop there.

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<sup>12</sup>Knoxville News, 10 April 1924.

<sup>13</sup>Knoxville Journal and Tribune, 25 May 1924.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

Included among them were W. P. Davis, Cowan Rodgers, David Chapman, Knoxville lawyer Forrest Andrews, Knoxville lawyer and merchant Cary F. Spence, and Knoxville civil engineer Frank Maloney.<sup>15</sup> Also at this time, the Knoxville News called upon its readers to send one-dollar contributions toward a special two-thousand dollar fund which would finance the visit of the national park committeemen to Tennessee.<sup>16</sup> These efforts received Governor Peay's endorsement through a telegram which pledged all of the state's influence to get "as much of [the park] located in Tennessee as possible."<sup>17</sup>

Arriving in Asheville on July 29, the Knoxvilleians carried six-foot photographs of the Smokies in an attempt to capture the committee's interest. The group was persuasive enough to get the committee members to agree to inspect the Smokies in early August. The city was very excited about the visit, and the roll and the treasury of the Conservation Association began to increase. A large gathering of Knoxville citizens was on hand to meet Smith, Welch, Gregg, and Kelsey when they arrived by train on Wednesday, August 6. Congressman Temple was unable to be present at this time. The committee members were escorted to Gatlinburg and then participated in an extensive hiking tour of Mt. Le Conte and other areas. Governor Peay joined the group on Sunday,

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<sup>15</sup>Knoxville Journal, 29 July 1924.

<sup>16</sup>Knoxville News, 26 July 1924.

<sup>17</sup>Knoxville Journal, 29 July 1924.

August 10, partly in response to Chapman's invitation in which he pointed out that the "national park would bring to Tennessee great wealth and great prestige."<sup>18</sup> The Knoxville press reported that the committee members were very impressed with the area and that their expectations had been surpassed. The visiting officials expressed concern about inadequate access, however, and made no promises concerning a favorable recommendation.<sup>19</sup>

Knoxville leaders of the park movement continued to work, while the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee went off to deliberate and write its report. Since the committee had been worried about proper access, David Chapman believed that a road through the Smokies should be built as soon as possible. In a letter to Governor Peay, dated August 18, 1924, Chapman pointed out that the road should be "the best commercial route and . . . also be very high in scenic value."<sup>20</sup> The Knoxville Journal covered a speech delivered to the Knoxville Rotary Club by Harlan Kelsey in which he distinguished a national park from a national forest. A front-page editorial cartoon on August 25 depicted a man prying open a door marked "good roads" which would unlock the mountains' "scenic splendors and commercial advantages."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Chapman to Peay, 25 July 1924, Austin Peay Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

<sup>19</sup>Knoxville Journal, 11, 13 August 1924.

<sup>20</sup>Chapman to Peay, 18 August 1924, Peay Papers.

<sup>21</sup>Knoxville Journal, 25 August 1924.

Conservation Association Chairman Davis busily enlisted Governor Peay's support. Late in July, Davis had written to Peay stressing the beauties of the proposed park lands.<sup>22</sup> When W. B. Townsend, owner of the Little River Lumber Company, announced that the Little River Watershed in the Smoky Mountains was available for option, Davis did not hesitate to push Peay to action. Davis wanted Peay to buy this area of the park lands for state park purposes in the event that the national park idea should fail. In a letter to Peay, Davis appealed to the governor's pride by insisting that he could do no greater service to the state, and that he would be esteemed by generations to come.<sup>23</sup> He also pointed out the practical aspects, namely that the sixty-thousand acre Townsend tract and the road up the gorge would be worth millions of dollars in a very short time. According to the Knoxville News, Peay came out strongly for the idea.<sup>24</sup> He hoped to acquire Townsend's option and establish a state park commission. This endorsement elated Knoxville Davis, who in a later letter praised the governor's proposal which would "bring millions and millions of revenue into the state."<sup>25</sup> Convinced by Davis and his own inspection, Peay acquired the option in September.

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<sup>22</sup>Davis to Peay, 29 July 1924, Peay Papers.

<sup>23</sup>Davis to Peay, 16 August 1924, *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>Knoxville News, 21 August 1924.

<sup>25</sup>Davis to Peay, 23 August 1924, Peay Papers.

Tennessee was in the throes of an election year in 1924, and Governor Peay's endorsement of a national park was deemed political by some observers. The most vocal proponent of this position, not surprisingly, was Peay's rival for the governor's office, Republican T. F. Peck. He insisted that the state needed to spend its money elsewhere and that Peay was only trying to gain Republican votes in East Tennessee through his call for a state park there.<sup>26</sup> The Knoxville News also questioned the governor's motives since the option acquired by the state gave the Little River Lumber Company the right to continue cutting timber for several years. The Knoxville newspaper believed Peay should have found some other area for a state park, since the national government would probably acquire the area eventually.<sup>27</sup> In a speech at the East Tennessee Division Fair in Knoxville on September 25, 1924, Peay maintained that there was "no politics in the matter" but that he was just "trying to do what [was] best for the country."<sup>28</sup> The results of the 1924 governor's race were strikingly similar to those of the 1922 race. Governor Peay made no gains in East Tennessee, thus indicating that his park support had no political ramifications in this particular election.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Knoxville Journal, 24 October 1924.

<sup>27</sup>Knoxville News, 10 November 1924.

<sup>28</sup>Knoxville Journal, 25 September 1924.

<sup>29</sup>David D. Lee, Tennessee in Turmoil: Politics in the Volunteer State, 1920-1932 (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1979), p. 50.

With the news that members of the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee would be returning to Knoxville in mid-November, the state park idea was set aside for the time being. The Knoxville News reported that only three areas were being given serious consideration: the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Great Smoky Mountains, and the Asheville-Linville Gorge area.<sup>30</sup> The committee's second look at the Smokies was to help it in preparing its final report. On Saturday, November 15, Temple and Smith arrived as the committee's representatives, and they were met by a sizable Knoxville delegation. Welch was also expected to attend, but he was called away because of a fire at his park, Palisades Interstate Park. Davis had requested the governor's presence, but Peay was unable to attend, even though Davis pointed out that the park was worth setting aside all other matters because the state would "profit wonderfully" from the park.<sup>31</sup> The committeemen were accompanied to the proposed area by the state geologist, state forester, Davis, Chapman, and a few others. When they returned to Knoxville from their inspection on Wednesday, November 19, Smith spoke highly of the area and noted that it met all of the criteria for a park as specified by the Interior Department. With great optimism, the Knoxville promoters awaited the committee's final report.

Early December was somewhat tense for those who had worked so diligently for the park. Both of Knoxville's major newspapers reported

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<sup>30</sup>Knoxville News, 10 November 1924.

<sup>31</sup>Davis to Peay, 11 November 1924, Peay Papers.



rumors that the National Park Committee was having difficulty deciding between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Great Smoky Mountains. The report, made public on December 14, was a blow to the Knoxville movement, for it recommended development of a national park in the Blue Ridge area because of its greater accessibility. Congressman Temple of the National Park Committee subsequently drafted a bill calling for the establishment of such a park. The committee did propose that a Smoky Mountain park be undertaken as soon as possible after the completion of the Blue Ridge park. The report both saddened and infuriated many, not the least of whom was David Chapman. He argued that the Virginia site did not meet Secretary Work's criteria as closely as the Smokies did. Chapman also asserted that "some secret and powerful influence [was] at work against the Knoxville proposed area."<sup>32</sup> In editorials, both the Knoxville News and the Knoxville Journal, fearing that because such harsh comments could jeopardize the possibility of some future action for a Smoky Mountain park, came out strongly against Chapman's criticisms.<sup>33</sup> The Journal pointed out that at least Knoxville would benefit from the publicity it received by having been considered by the committee.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Knoxville Journal, 14 December 1924.

<sup>33</sup>Knoxville News, 15 December 1924; and Knoxville Journal, 15 December 1924.

<sup>34</sup>Knoxville Journal, 15 December 1924.

Not satisfied with the report or its possible benefits for Knoxville, however, the Conservation Association met and drafted telegrams to Senators McKellar and Shields and Representatives Taylor and Reece. The Association called upon them to support two national parks in the southern Appalachians to be constructed simultaneously. The legislators agreed to work toward this end. Reece introduced a bill on December 18, 1924, calling for the federal government to appropriate monies to set boundaries, determine costs, and gather information for establishing a national park in the Great Smoky Mountains.<sup>35</sup> Both the Reece bill and the Temple bill, which provided for a Blue Ridge Mountain park, were sent to the Committee on Public Lands. But it was soon recognized that the Committee's crowded docket would preclude any action on the bills until late January or early February 1925.

Ever the optimist and not easily daunted, W. P. Davis continued to work to get the state of Tennessee to acquire the Little River Watershed as a state park. In a letter to the governor, two days after the public revelation of the park committee report, Davis urged that Peay proceed with the state park in which timber might possibly be used as a source of revenue.<sup>36</sup> In the final hours of 1924, David advocated the state park in a letter to the governor in which he predicted that acquiring the Townsend option would be Peay's greatest achievement. He also argued that the money from the tourists could not even be

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 18 December 1924.

<sup>36</sup>Davis to Peay, 16 December 1924, Peay Papers.

estimated, and he even offered to negotiate with Townsend for the state if the governor wished.<sup>37</sup> As the year drew to a close, the national park concept seemed to be fading, but Davis continued to provide some hope that at least a portion of the area would be set aside.

Since the establishment of a national park appeared to be somewhere in the future, the creation of a state park became the key concern. Governor Peay's option on the Townsend property, which called for \$273,557 for 76,507 acres, was to expire on February 1, 1925. Interested Knoxvilleians wanted the state legislature to act on the matter as quickly as possible. The Knoxville lobby had found a friend in Governor Peay, for in his program for 1925, the governor appealed to the legislators to acquire the area in behalf of their children and future generations. He described his commitment to the state park as "unqualified," and he called on both houses of the General Assembly to make studies which would provide recommendations for purchasing the area.<sup>38</sup>

Swift action was necessary, because Townsend was beginning to waver a bit on a renewal of the option. Davis, informing Peay of this in late January, expressed concern about the state legislature's delays over an issue which he believed would bring millions of people into the state and would be "the biggest thing ever done for the South or

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<sup>37</sup>Davis to Peay, 31 December 1924, *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup>T. H. Alexander, Austin Peay, Governor of Tennessee, 1923-25, 1925-27, 1927-29: a Collection of State Papers and Public Addresses with a Biography (Kingsport: Southern Publishers, 1929), pp. 217-218.

for Tennessee."<sup>39</sup> Another Knoxvilleian, James B. Wright, also wrote to the governor concerning the option. Wright was a lawyer with both business and personal interests concerning the mountains, not the least of which was the fact that he was legal counsel for the Little River Lumber Company. He worked for and against the park, depending upon which position could most greatly benefit him and his clients.<sup>40</sup> In his correspondence, he advised the governor not to push Townsend for a reduction in price, pointing out that Townsend was giving the state a good deal at four dollars per acre, because earlier the United States Forestry Department had offered five dollars and seventy-five cents per acre.<sup>41</sup>

In late January, Governor Peay along with several members of the administration and the State Park Legislative Committee went to Knoxville to discuss the state park and to visit the Townsend property. Several prominent Knoxvilleians met and entertained Peay. During this visit, Peay, along with David Chapman and William S. Shields, a Knoxville banker, met with Townsend concerning an extension of the option to the state. The state was successful in having the option extended for sixty days and in getting a ten percent reduction in the purchase price.<sup>42</sup> In a speech given at the Hotel Farragut concerning the

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<sup>39</sup> Davis to Peay, 21 January 1925, Peay Papers.

<sup>40</sup> Sandburg Interview with Campbell, pp. 3-5.

<sup>41</sup> Wright to Peay, 20 January 1925, Peay Papers.

<sup>42</sup> Joseph T. MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism in Tennessee: The Administrations of Governor Austin Peay, 1923-27" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1969), p. 320.

purchase of the Townsend tract, Governor Peay announced that the city of Knoxville would have to provide one-third of the purchase price of the property. Knoxville Mayor Ben A. Morton quickly endorsed the plan, because the city would certainly benefit from the tourism, increased population, and increased property values that the park would bring.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, the Knoxville Journal was reporting that the State Park Legislative Committee, appointed to determine the feasibility of establishing a state park, was composed only of Democrats and that the committee would probably support the purchase out of loyalty to the governor and the party. In an effort to capitalize on these positive signs, the civic clubs of Knoxville met to discuss the issue. Addresses to the group by Chapman and Russell Hanlon, Secretary of the Knoxville Auto Club, stressed that the park would bring more tourists and more investments into Tennessee. The clubs, being convinced, endorsed the proposal calling for the legislature to pass an enabling act to allow the purchase of the Little River Watershed.<sup>44</sup>

But the state park proposal was not meeting support everywhere, not even in Knoxville. The Knoxville News, showing a concern for conservation, took a strong stand against the option because it allowed the Little River Lumber Company to continue cutting.<sup>45</sup> The newspaper

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<sup>43</sup>Knoxville News, 28 January 1925.

<sup>44</sup>Knoxville Journal, 29 January 1925.

<sup>45</sup>Knoxville News, 23 January 1925.

also described the area as already so cut over that it resembled a battlefield. Nashville Banner editor E. B. Stahlman thought state acquisition was unwise, because he was convinced that the national park would materialize and would be purchased by the federal government.<sup>46</sup> Disturbed by this opposition, W. P. Davis traveled to Nashville to try to halt Stahlman's criticisms, but Davis made little headway. In a letter to Peay concerning his visit and other matters, Davis expressed consternation over Stahlman's stubbornness; meanwhile he assured the governor that Knoxville would accept financial responsibility for one-third of the Townsend tract. Davis continued to praise the governor's support of the state park project because there would be "no end to the wealth coming into the state" as a result.<sup>47</sup>

Upon its return to Nashville, the investigating committee of the state legislature endorsed the appropriation bill to acquire the Townsend tract. On February 4, 1925, several Knoxville citizens drafted and sent a telegram to Governor Peay in support of the park. These "financiers and businessmen" promised that Knoxville would supply one-third of the purchase price. The Knoxville News reported that the park enthusiasts were advocating that this money be raised through contributions and not by taxation.<sup>48</sup> Russell Hanlon of the Knoxville Auto Club wrote to the governor, promising Peay his unqualified support and

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<sup>46</sup>MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism," p. 321.

<sup>47</sup>Davis to Peay, 28 January 1925, Peay Papers.

<sup>48</sup>Knoxville News, 4 February 1925.

informing him that four bank presidents were working to assure that Knoxville would meet its share of the park cost. Hanlon even offered to form a lobbying group of Knoxvilleians who would go to the state capital on behalf of the park.<sup>49</sup>

But the bill to appropriate the necessary funds was not introduced immediately because of Governor Peay's wishes. This delay bothered many, including David Chapman, who insisted that quick action was "necessary to save a part of the indigenous flora."<sup>50</sup> The governor, however, was afraid to begin action on the bill because he feared its defeat. In letters to both Davis and Hanlon, Peay pointed out that the present General Assembly was not adequately informed or concerned about the issue, and he urged the Knoxvilleians to "enlighten" the legislators about the park.<sup>51</sup> Chapman again revealed his displeasure with the delay in a second letter to Paul Fink, a park promoter from Jonesboro. He wrote that Secretary Work was insisting that "unless the people of Tennessee help themselves to get a national park, so far as he [Work] is concerned, the matter can be dropped."<sup>52</sup>

Action in Washington, D.C., gave a real boost to the national park in the Great Smokies. On February 5 the Senate Public Lands

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<sup>49</sup>Hanlon to Peay, 4 February 1925, Peay Papers.

<sup>50</sup>Chapman to Fink, 16 February 1925, Paul Mathes Fink Collection, McClung Historical Collection, Lawson McGhee Public Library, Knoxville.

<sup>51</sup>MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism," p. 321.

<sup>52</sup>Chapman to Fink, 25 February 1925, Fink Collection.

Committee recommended the McKellar-Swanson bill, which called for simultaneous surveys of the Great Smoky Mountains and the Blue Ridge Mountains for national park purposes. The bill, authorizing twenty thousand dollars for the survey, passed the full Senate on February 17 without debate and was signed shortly thereafter by President Coolidge. In late February, Interior Secretary Work appointed the members of the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee to the survey committee which was to set boundaries and to receive and obtain donations of land or money for options.<sup>53</sup>

Tennesseans continued their efforts to obtain lands for state park purposes while the same area was under consideration in Washington. In early March the bill to acquire the Little River acreage was introduced in the House by Ann Davis, wife of W. P. Davis and Knoxville's representative to the lower body of the General Assembly. At the same time, Andrew Jackson Graves, Knoxville's direct state senator, issued an invitation to the entire state legislature to visit Knoxville, at the expense of the Chamber of Commerce, in order to inspect the park site and to visit the University of Tennessee, for which increased funding was being sought. Most of the legislators participated, and they arrived in Knoxville by chartered train on Saturday, March 14. While in the city, they were "wined and dined by various business and fraternal organizations."<sup>54</sup> On Sunday morning, they traveled to Townsend

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<sup>53</sup>Knoxville Journal, 28 February 1925.

<sup>54</sup>MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism," p. 325.



in a motorcade of over one hundred cars provided by volunteers from Knoxville. There, they boarded the Little River Lumber Company's train which took them to Elkmont. Afterwards, they returned to Townsend for lunch, went on to visit Cades Cove, and finally returned to Knoxville for dinner. A weary group of state leaders went back to Nashville that night by train.

This hands-on, eyewitness appeal worked, and on March 19 the Senate Finance, Ways, and Means Committee approved the bill introduced by Mrs. Davis calling for the acquisition of the land by the state for national park purposes and calling for the establishment of a State Park and Forestry Commission. Chapman and other Knoxvilleians were present to provide testimony and lobby for the measure. Those opposing the state's acquisition of the property, especially the editor of the Nashville Banner, accused the Knoxvilleians of seeking only personal gain and of having a paid lobby. On March 24, Senator Graves strongly denied the charges in the defense of his constituents.<sup>55</sup> The bill moved on to the full Senate which it cleared on April 1 by a vote of twenty to twelve. But eight days later the bill failed in the House by a close vote of forty-five to forty-seven. Working feverishly, Chapman, Davis, Graves, and others revised the bill, so that it required that Knoxville would provide one-third of the purchase price of the Townsend tract. Governor Peay also lobbied for the park by

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<sup>55</sup>Unidentified Newspaper Clipping, Andrew Jackson Graves Papers, Special Collections, University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville.

summoning several legislators to his office on the night of April 9. As a result, the bill passed a re-vote in the House on April 10 with fifty-eight in favor and thirty-six opposed. The governor signed the bill the same day.

The bill that resulted from this political dealing was very different from what had been envisioned months earlier. In addition to Knoxville's financial obligation, the bill stipulated that land would be bought only if the federal government designated the area a national park within two years. Nevertheless, it provided time to promote the park and to raise money. Benefits for Knoxville were outlined almost immediately by those working for the park's establishment. David Chapman was full of praise for the city and its Chamber of Commerce when he returned to Knoxville on April 11. The promoter also lauded the park as an excellent statewide endeavor. He claimed that the city was receiving valuable advertisement from the action. Chapman was also certain that the investment would pay off, because tourists driving into the state would "pay back every dollar in gasoline taxes alone."<sup>56</sup> With equal optimism, Chapman wrote to Paul Fink that the next step was to get Knoxville to agree to purchase one-third of the Townsend land, but he insisted that this could be done.<sup>57</sup>

In mid- and late April, the Knoxville Journal strongly began to advocate the formation of a national park. An April 15 editorial

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<sup>56</sup>Knoxville Journal, 11 April 1925.

<sup>57</sup>Chapman to Fink, 11 April 1925, Fink Collection.

declared that the park project needed to be the concern of all the eastern United States. The editorial also pointed out that increased tourism spawned by the park would bring outside investment to Knoxville, because "Knoxville and this section [were] ninety-nine percent American born and one hundred percent American in principle."<sup>58</sup> Obviously, the Journal felt that these were the kind of attributes for which investors were searching. At the same time, the News reported that Acuff, Rodgers, and Chapman would represent the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce at the national chamber convention at which they hoped to garner an endorsement of the park project.<sup>59</sup> By April 24, the Journal was calling for a conference to be held in Knoxville of the twenty-four governors of the eastern United States, the Secretary of the Interior, and the President to support the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Quick to realize the possibilities of such an action, the Conservation Association sent telegrams to the governors of Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia asking for their support of such a conclave.<sup>60</sup> A few days later, W. P. Davis informed Governor Peay that he and several other Knoxvilleans were going to Washington, D.C., to meet with Secretary Work and the President about the proposed conference.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Knoxville Journal, 15 April 1925.

<sup>59</sup>Knoxville News, 25 April 1925.

<sup>60</sup>Knoxville Journal, 25 April 1925.

<sup>61</sup>Davis to Peay, 27 April 1925, Peay Papers.

While Davis and his companions were in Washington, Governor Peay announced that he would be happy to host such a conference. Interior Secretary Work and National Park Director Mather were very receptive to the conference idea, although Work and Mather again stressed that the lands would have to come from the states. Davis informed Peay that the Association hoped to get sizable contributions from leading eastern millionaires.<sup>62</sup> The Knoxville delegates to the national convention of the Chamber of Commerce were also successful in securing the passage of a resolution calling for more national parks.<sup>63</sup> The Knoxville News also reported that two representatives of the Knoxville Club of Business and Professional Women, Miss Ran Yearwood and Miss Mabel Mitchell, planned to ask for support from their group which was holding its national convention in Maine.<sup>64</sup>

The work and enthusiasm paid off when, on May 26, Secretary Work officially endorsed both national parks, one in the Blue Ridge and one in the Great Smokies, and referred to them as "twin parks."<sup>65</sup> With the news that the Smoky Mountain park was not a stronger possibility, Knoxville promoters swung into full action at the local level. Assured that the dividends of the investment would "find their way into every business and every home," the presidents of the five Knoxville banks

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<sup>62</sup>Davis to Peay, 13 May 1925, *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup>Knoxville Journal, 21 May 1925.

<sup>64</sup>Knoxville News, 20 May 1925.

<sup>65</sup>Knoxville Journal, 26 May 1925.

sent three hundred invitations to Knoxville and East Tennessee businessmen to attend a park promotion luncheon.<sup>66</sup> The luncheon, held on June 6, raised \$8300 toward a \$50,000 foundation fund for collecting information, taking options, and advertising the park. The Knoxville Council of Civic Clubs endorsed the fund as did the Knoxville Journal which pointed out that Knoxville was hearing "opportunity knocking at the door."<sup>67</sup> The Knoxville News was strangely silent on the matter. A week later another luncheon was held in support of the park. Banker William S. Shields, one of the strongest and most persuasive speakers, exclaimed: "This is the age of enterprising, when communities go out and get things. The time has come when Knoxville must put up. . . . It is the duty of every man and woman to get behind this proposition."<sup>68</sup> At the conclusion of this second luncheon, the fund had reached \$11,950.

To aid in its organizational matters, the Conservation Association asked the Council of Civic Clubs to be responsible for raising the remaining funds. At an Association meeting in late June, it planned the fund drive and drew up lists of possible contributors. It would be the job of the civic clubs to do the actual collecting. In order to gain some significant national publicity, the group also decided to invite the principals of the Scopes Trial to come from Dayton to visit the park site. On the eve of the fund drive, the Knoxville Journal

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 29 May, 4 June 1925.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 6 June 1925.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 13 June 1925.

strongly endorsed the campaign, while the News continued to print little about the efforts. The Journal editorial predicted that millions of dollars from the federal government, tourists, and outside investors would create more business, more jobs, and more money for everyone.<sup>69</sup> Meanwhile, Davis kept the governor apprised of Knoxville's activities and also noted United States Senator Tyson's support of the park through his speaking engagements and his \$500 contribution.<sup>70</sup>

The campaign officially began on June 30 with addresses given to workers from Mayor Ben A. Morton, David Chapman, and Cowan Rodgers. The clubs represented and prepared to participate were the Conservation Association, Chamber of Commerce, Knoxville Auto Club, Knoxville Real Estate Board, Shrine Lunch Club, Optimist Club, Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, Exchange Club, and Civitan Club.<sup>71</sup> The drive began with \$18,890 already collected. One-fourth of a pledge had to be paid within ten days of the pledge date, and the remainder was divided into three quarterly payments. The Journal printed pledge slips on the front page and urged the public to respond, but the News took no part in the fund drive. By July 3, the fund had increased by \$6,000. After this the wind went out of the sails, and only \$4,000 more were raised over the next ten days. The civic clubs refused to admit defeat and vowed to make up the difference at \$25 per member if the funds could not be raised.

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 29 June 1925.

<sup>70</sup>Davis to Peay, 29 June 1925, Peay Papers.

<sup>71</sup>Knoxville Journal, 30 June 1925.

Southern Appalachian National Park Committeeman William Gregg arrived in Knoxville on July 15 and delivered a speech to the civic clubs the following day. He told his listeners that East Tennessee would become the "Switzerland of America" if they succeeded in establishing the park, and he pointed out the necessity of obtaining options quickly to put a stop to timber-cutting in the area. Gregg included a \$500 contribution to the effort during his visit.<sup>72</sup> Still, the fund drive faltered with only \$31,649 raised by July 23. A shot in the arm to the movement occurred when Clarence Darrow arrived from Dayton on July 27. As Chapman's guest, Darrow toured Elkmont and was greatly impressed. This visit brought the park movement some much-needed national publicity, but ultimately the civic organizations had to fulfill their pledge and complete the \$50,000 total from their own coffers.<sup>73</sup>

August and September of 1925 were busy months for the park movement. Interstate cooperation on the national parks began with Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee pledging to work together to raise \$5 million for land purchasing. Once organizational needs were met, representatives from the three states met in Richmond and agreed to work together to raise funds both within and without the "park states." In late August park promoters from the three states met in Washington with Tennessee represented by Chapman, Hanlon, and

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 16 June 1925.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 14, 23, 28 July 1925.

W. M. Clemons, managing editor of the Knoxville Journal and a member of the executive committee of the Conservation Association. Governor Peay also appointed members to the Tennessee State Park and Forestry Commission: David Chapman of East Tennessee, Henry Colton of Middle Tennessee, and A. E. Markham of West Tennessee. Chapman was selected as the chairman of the group. The park site was also visited by distinguished individuals. The Scopes trial participants were present in early August, and Assistant National Park Director Arno B. Cammerer and National Park Committeemen Kelsey and Gregg toured the park site in mid-August.<sup>74</sup> On August 13, Cammerer issued a strong endorsement for the site, and Robert Sterling Yard, Secretary of the National Park Association, was also favorably impressed when he visited in mid-September.<sup>75</sup>

The last quarter of 1925 was significant for the park movement. The Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association had incorporated and was forming a statewide board of directors. David Chapman wrote to Governor Peay asking him to serve as a director and to suggest the names of leading citizens of Middle and West Tennessee who should be approached.<sup>76</sup> It was Chapman's conviction that the movement would bring the three divisions of the state closer and would help to heal

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<sup>74</sup>Knoxville News, 4, 10 August 1925.

<sup>75</sup>Knoxville Journal, 13 August and 19 September 1925.

<sup>76</sup>Chapman to Peay, 15 October 1925, Peay Papers.



past differences.<sup>77</sup> Also in mid-October, the Chambers of Commerce of Knoxville, Nashville, Memphis, and Jackson met together in Nashville to map out support for the park. Another important endorsement came on October 19 from several Nashville realtors who had just toured the site.

Roads for the mountain areas also emerged as a key issue during the fall of 1925. In a letter dated September 27, Davis called on Peay to get a one cent increase in the gasoline tax for road building purposes. It was his belief that excellent roads were necessary to get tourists in the state and to keep them coming back.<sup>78</sup> Chapman, Rodgers, Hanlon, and Dr. Herbert Acuff, President of the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce, met with Sevierville officials concerning the Indian Gap Road from Sevierville to the North Carolina line. Chapman urged Peay to get the necessary appropriation for the road in the next session of the General Assembly. The Knoxville druggist's argument included his continuing claim that "no project at the present time will do more for Tennessee."<sup>79</sup>

Cooperation between Tennessee and North Carolina became a major part of the park movement in late 1925. The Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association and its North Carolina counterpart, Smoky Mountains, Inc., agreed to work together on a one million dollar fund

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<sup>77</sup> Knoxville Journal, 16 October 1925.

<sup>78</sup> Davis to Peay, 27 September 1925, Peay Papers.

<sup>79</sup> Chapman to Peay, 23 October 1925, *ibid.*

for obtaining options, titles, and information. Knoxvilleian David Chapman was named as the head of the interstate commission organizing the fund-raising campaign. The week of December 7 was set by the executive committee of the Conservation Association as the beginning of the fund drive for Knoxville. Knoxvilleians were quick to show support for the fund-raising drive as several organizational and promotional meetings were held to prepare for it. On October 31 the Chamber of Commerce and several civic and service clubs met together to show unity for the park fund campaign. The Central Labor Union, representing twenty-two local unions, also endorsed the project in late October.<sup>80</sup> In early November the quotas for the East Tennessee drive were set in a joint meeting of the Conservation Association and representatives from various East Tennessee towns. Out of a total of \$600,000, Knoxville was responsible for raising \$300,000. Automobile dealer Cowan Rodgers, who was to head the Knoxville drive, believed that the benefits would come "direct to every banker . . . hotel man, and . . . merchant . . . and indirectly to every man and woman who receives a salary."<sup>81</sup> In another statement, Rodgers stressed that the state and the nation were looking to Knoxville to set an example and this made the success of the fund-raising activities even more imperative.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Knoxville Journal, 31 October 1925.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 5 November 1925.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 22 November 1925.

There was some concern about opposition and apathy among the East Tennessee towns that were expected to participate with Knoxville in reaching the \$600,000 goal. Their reluctance was basically two-fold: they disliked the leadership role Knoxvillians had assigned themselves; and many believed that only Knoxville would really benefit from the national park.<sup>83</sup> A luncheon was held for representatives of these towns to provide information and to elicit their much-needed support. On Sunday, November 8, a motorcade left Knoxville to visit ten cities in the region to try to get their backing. The participants in the motorcade, encouraged by the reception they received in these towns, returned to Knoxville on November 25. It was firmly believed that success would result from the foundation which had been established throughout East Tennessee.<sup>84</sup>

Early December was the busiest organizational and promotional period. A National Park Founder's Certificate was drawn up by the Conservation Association to award those contributing to the park fund effort. The workers were divided into military-style units with Rodgers as commander-in-chief, two generals under him, several captains under the generals, and privates under the leadership of the captains. Cowan Rodgers solicited funds from Lawrence D. Tyson, one of Tennessee's United States senators. Rodgers pointed out that large property owners like Tyson would have their contributions "repaid as

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<sup>83</sup>MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism," p. 330.

<sup>84</sup>Knoxville Journal, 11, 8, 25 November 1925.

a business investment" if property values rose only five percent.<sup>85</sup> Tyson, who ultimately pledged only \$2000 out of the \$5000 Rodgers was seeking, explained that there were too many causes he was requested to aid for him to donate the amount desired. Rodgers later asked Tyson to secure a \$25,000 contribution from the McGhee estate which would come through Tyson's wife, Bettie McGhee Tyson. But this too resulted in a much smaller gift than that solicited.<sup>86</sup>

With the drive to begin on December 7, Sunday, December 6, was the last opportunity for pre-drive appeals. The Conservation Association declared December 6 "Smoky Mountain Sunday," and seventy-five Knoxville ministers agreed to give all or part of their morning services to the issue of the fund drive. The Sunday Journal contained a full-page advertisement endorsing the park and noting the "growth, development, and prosperity" that the park could provide. Five banks, two jewelers, two florists, two utilities companies, a furniture company, a hotel, and a law firm were among those purchasing the promotional advertisement.<sup>87</sup>

The drive for funds to purchase land for the park began Monday morning, and within thirty-six hours \$91,951 had been raised. Mayor

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<sup>85</sup>Rodgers to Tyson, 8 December 1925, Lawrence D. Tyson Papers, McClung Historical Collection, Lawson McGhee Public Library, Knoxville.

<sup>86</sup>Rodgers to Tyson, 15 December 1925; and Tyson to Rodgers, 6 January 1925, Tyson Papers.

<sup>87</sup>Knoxville Journal, 6 December 1925.

Morton assured everyone that their money was not a gift but a "splendid business investment."<sup>88</sup> The Knoxville News carried photographs of various mountain scenes and continued to hammer away at the importance of conserving the area. By December 17 the total had reached \$200,972 with \$12,000 of that coming from the Knoxville banks and \$85,000 from a city government pledge.<sup>89</sup> Forty-five hundred school children in Knox, Blount, Cocke, and Sevier Counties gave \$1,391.72 through nickle and dime contributions.<sup>90</sup> The last day of the drive, December 19, the goal was reached when the Sterchi brothers, Knoxville furniture dealers, gave an additional \$4,000. This put the city \$739 over the \$300,000 goal. Many of the other drives in East Tennessee towns were still in progress or were not to begin until the first of the new year. But Tennessee and North Carolina had raised \$554,000 toward their one million dollar goal by year's end. Many people now agreed with the Knoxville Journal which reported: "Establishment of the Smoky Mountain National park is assured. With the enthusiastic backing of the people demonstrated in the Knoxville fund drive . . . the proposition will go to the government in a way that assures favorable consideration."<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>Knoxville News, 8 December 1925.

<sup>89</sup>Knoxville Journal, 12, 17 December 1925.

<sup>90</sup>Campbell, National Park, p. 38.

<sup>91</sup>Knoxville Journal, 21 December, 1925.

## CHAPTER III

### VICTORIES AND DELAYS, 1926-1927

Hard work filled the years of 1926 and 1927. Knoxville and East Tennessee continued to raise money which had a positive impact upon federal legislation providing for a park in the Smoky Mountains. Speculation and court action caused some delays in the park's progress, but they were adequately settled. Governor Peay, a strong park ally, was re-elected in 1926 with the help of grateful East Tennesseans, but this strong friend of the park died unexpectedly in late 1927. The state legislature authorized the issuance of \$1.5 million in bonds for land-buying after legislators had once again traveled to the park site as the guests of Knoxville. A seven-member Smoky Mountain Park Commission was named by the governor, and by year's end this body was busily acquiring property toward a 150,000-acre minimum set by the federal government.

Many uncertainties filled a great deal of 1926, although some wanted to declare victory in late 1925. The first main concern was the fund-raising drives in surrounding towns. To increase the enthusiasm for the campaign, a second motorcade, planned by the Conservation Association, toured Rogersville, Kingsport, Johnson City, Elizabethton, and Jonesboro.<sup>1</sup> The motorcade, composed of energetic boosters,

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<sup>1</sup>Knoxville News, 4 January 1926.

presented to the citizens of the towns on their itinerary an image of "the main streets of the cities and towns of this section crowded with passing tourists."<sup>2</sup> At one stop, the creation of the park was described as "the greatest event in the history of Tennessee since the . . . Civil War."<sup>3</sup> At every town, prosperity was the watchword of the promoters. The motorcade participants maintained that an increased demand for everything from more hotels to more mules would result from the park's establishment. A bus trip to Florida, planned by the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce, provided park enthusiasts and the Knoxville High School Band a chance to promote East Tennessee.<sup>4</sup> While on the tour, Dr. Herbert Acuff, Chamber of Commerce president, spoke of East Tennessee's resources and attractions, while David Chapman invited all listeners to visit the park site.

By late February it became clear to readers of the Knoxville press that all was not well, for the fund-raising efforts dropped behind set quotas. David Chapman revealed this concern in a letter inviting Paul Fink to an emergency meeting of park enthusiasts. He feared that the park was going to fail because of the apathy of East Tennessee.<sup>5</sup> In hopes of locating financial assistance elsewhere,

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<sup>2</sup>Knoxville Journal, 6 January 1926.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 7 January 1926.

<sup>4</sup>Carlos C. Campbell, Birth of a National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1960), pp. 41-42.

<sup>5</sup>Chapman to Fink, 22 February 1926, Paul Mathes Fink Collection, McClung Historical Collection, Lawson McGhee Public Library, Knoxville.

Chapman appealed to Governor Peay to provide him with a list of prominent Middle Tennesseans who would aid the park cause.<sup>6</sup> To save the effort, Chapman and W. P. Davis called a meeting of fifty East Tennesseans to discuss the plight of the park drive and to stress the need to complete the fund-raising activities by April 1.

Knoxville Mayor Ben Morton sent an emergency call to the heads of all organizations to be represented at a meeting slated for the Lyric Theatre on Thursday, March 11. Urging attendance, Chapman stressed that "each tourist will leave ten dollars a day" when the park was completed. Representatives and/or the presidents of clubs and businesses, the East Tennessee towns, and the Conservation Association officers attended. They established Tuesday, March 16, as "Smoky Mountain Day" for Knoxville and Friday, March 19, as "East Tennessee Smoky Mountain Day." The aim of these two events was to raise the remaining \$200,000 of their \$600,000 goal. At this meeting, the Alex McMillan Company, a Knoxville real estate agency, pledged \$10,000 upon the condition that nine other firms or individuals pledged the same.<sup>7</sup> The Knoxville Journal strongly endorsed the special drives and praised the action of the Alex McMillan Company who realized that "Knoxville is a good investment and anything . . . to make it a better one is sound business judgment."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Chapman to Peay, 26 February 1926, Austin Peay Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

<sup>7</sup>Knoxville News, 12 March 1926.

<sup>8</sup>Knoxville Journal, 15 March 1926.



A mass meeting of over one thousand fund-raisers was held in Knoxville on the eve of Smoky Mountain Day. Congressman J. Will Taylor, who insisted that the park would "increase per capita wealth . . . and bury what it costs in dollars and cents to get it," addressed the workers.<sup>9</sup> The Tuesday canvass netted \$55,387 from the Knoxville citizenry. An additional \$8,499 was raised on East Tennessee Smoky Mountain Day on March 19, and other towns continued to collect. Two days later, the Knoxville Journal reported that \$506,453 had been raised and that the remaining \$93,547 must be raised within the next ten days if the April 1 deadline was to be met.<sup>10</sup> During this final period, the fund-raising groups, the Knoxville High School Band, and others worked diligently to reach the goal. Several firms, such as Standard Knitting Mills, increased their pledges in the final hours.<sup>11</sup>

On March 31, the Knoxville City Council gave a big boost to the morale and the success of the movement. In 1925, Governor Peay had been assured that Knoxville would provide one-third of the purchase price of the Townsend tract. This promise had come, however, from businessmen and not government leaders. The Knoxville City Council considered the matter in March of 1926. The question was basically whether Knoxville would issue bonds for approximately \$150,000 to meet the one-third obligation. The final vote came on March 31 after motions

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<sup>9</sup>Knoxville News, 16 March 1926.

<sup>10</sup>Knoxville Journal, 21 March 1926.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 30 March 1926.

for delay had failed. An economy faction of the council strongly questioned whether the city should take on this obligation, but by a six-to-five vote, the City Council decided to participate in the deal with the state and Townsend. It was this show of support which brought in the remaining necessary pledges. By nightfall of April 2, the fund went over by four thousand dollars with the biggest last-minute pledge, \$10,000, coming from Tennessee Electric Power Company.<sup>12</sup> Chapman then went off to Washington to report to the Interior Department, and Knoxville was aglow with the prospects of the future which were certain to hold "a rapid increase in prosperity."<sup>13</sup>

With assurances that Tennessee could make up any North Carolina shortfall, an optimistic David Chapman presented his report to the park commission.<sup>14</sup> On April 10, the final park commission report was sent to Secretary Work, who forwarded it on to Congress with his recommendation. Representative Temple introduced the bill which called for the Smoky Mountain Park to be composed of 704,000 acres, but it was not to come under the administration of the federal government until 300,000 acres had been acquired. Chapman perceived of these stipulations as significant problems. He wanted the minimum acreage lowered to 150,000 acres, and he felt Governor Peay might have to go to

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 2 April 1926.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 4 April 1926.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 6 April 1926.

Washington to get the figure decreased.<sup>15</sup> Attention turned to other matters briefly in mid- and late April, when Chapman had to go to New York City to confer with W. A. Welch about a large fund-raising campaign to raise the estimated seven million dollars necessary to secure the park. Chapman returned to Washington in May, however, to testify before the House Committee on Public Lands; and on May 12 it passed the Temple Bill, with an amendment lowering the minimum area to 150,000 acres. The Senate committee passed the bill on May 13 and the full Senate did likewise on May 14. The House passed the bill the following day, and it received President Collidge's signature on May 22.

Knoxvillians were ecstatic over the passage. The Alex McMillan Company ran a full-page advertisement in the Knoxville News calling attention to the passage of the park bill and the subsequent rise in land values. The firm was certain that it was "the time to buy real estate."<sup>16</sup> A Knoxville Journal editorial stressed the urgency of acquiring park lands so that Knoxville could reap the benefits as soon as possible.<sup>17</sup> David Chapman was given a "hero's welcome," with a Whittle Springs Hotel banquet celebrating the success. Sponsored by the Knoxville Automobile Club, the banquet, on May 28, had David Chapman as guest of honor, along with Governor and Mrs. Peay and other dignitaries. A number of telegrams, including one from President

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<sup>15</sup>Chapman to Peay, 19 April and 23 April 1926, Peay Papers.

<sup>16</sup>Knoxville News, 14 May 1926.

<sup>17</sup>Knoxville Journal, 15 May 1926.

Coolidge, were read. Senator Tyson called this "a great day for Knoxville, East Tennessee, and the entire South."<sup>18</sup> Chapman was showered with praise and was presented with a silver loving cup. It was a festive occasion because many benefits had been enjoyed and were waiting to be capitalized upon, and the city had "done herself proud."<sup>19</sup>

The park enthusiasts decided to take a break from their rigorous promotion activities, but those persons who posed a threat to the movement did not remain idle. Throughout June and July of 1926 speculators bought up property within the park area, hoping to make a profit when the state began making purchases. By mid-August four large developments and several small ones were underway which drove up land prices. The Knoxville newspapers came out strongly against the money-making schemes, as the News expressed its fear that the federal government would abandon the project. The newspaper advised that Knoxville's citizens should be patient so that all might share in the "outside wealth" being brought into the state.<sup>20</sup> Chapman, Davis, Russell Hanlon, and the Chamber of Commerce all issued stern reprimands to those engaging in the speculation.<sup>21</sup>

But such criticism did not stop James Wright from promoting the construction of roads in the area which would also increase property

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<sup>18</sup>Telegram, 28 May 1926, Lawrence D. Tyson Papers, McClung Historical Collection, Lawson McGhee Public Library, Knoxville.

<sup>19</sup>Tyson to Rodgers, 26 May 1926, *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>Knoxville News, 23 July 1926.

<sup>21</sup>Knoxville News, 21 July and 11, 19, 25 August 1926.

values. Even remonstrance from Governor Peay did not deter Wright, who wrote to the governor saying that "I have long since learned not to waste time in arguing with people about religion, politics, or National Parks."<sup>22</sup> Wright hosted a meeting of land owners, the state highway commissioner, Townsend, Claude Reeder, and others at Elkmont on Labor Day to discuss road construction. One of the results of this meeting was Townsend's announcement that his verbal option to the state for the Little River Watershed had expired. This brought the governor to action. Peay refused to allow the highway commissioner to deal further with Wright and his associates. After Frank Maloney had rushed to Nashville from Knoxville to encourage him to do so, Peay also wrote Townsend to urge him to cooperate with the state.<sup>23</sup>

While these matters were in progress, Tennessee and North Carolina continued to cooperate on land acquisition details. In a July 1 meeting, for example, the two states agreed that the initial 150,000 acres would be acquired by the states so that monies from the national fund-raising drive could be used to complete the park after government administration of the park had begun.<sup>24</sup> The two states also announced that some appropriation would be asked from the states for land-buying

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<sup>22</sup>Wright to Peay, 27 June 1926, Peay Papers.

<sup>23</sup>Knoxville Journal, 9 September 1926; and Joseph T. MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism in Tennessee: The Administration of Governor Austin Peay, 1923-1927" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1969), pp. 333-335.

<sup>24</sup>Knoxville News, 1 July 1926.

purposes. North Carolina had already appropriated two million dollars with the stipulation that Tennessee must appropriate a similar amount.<sup>25</sup> The representatives of the two states met again in mid-September to present progress reports and plan strategies.

By mid-September Governor Peay and a strong newspaper effort had convinced Townsend to honor his promised option to the state. This acreage alone represented Tennessee's half of the initial 150,000 acres. At a meeting with Peay, Mayor Morton, and W. P. Davis, held on September 21, Townsend agreed to take up the matter of renewing the option with the board of the Little River Lumber Company in early October. By October 7 the board had consented to permit Townsend to negotiate the purchase, but this was not carried out until mid-November, because of the state election. After several days of negotiations, the state and the lumber company agreed that the 76,000 acres would be transferred to the state at the price in the original deal. The settlement also provided that the company could continue to cut on the property for a period of fifteen years, with the cutting limited to those trees at least ten inches in diameter and three feet tall as of the date of the agreement. The deed and the payment were prepared and placed in escrow at the Bankers Trust Company of Knoxville on December 31, 1926.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 19 August 1926.

<sup>26</sup>MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism," p. 335.

Two other significant, but unrelated, matters concerning the park occurred in 1926. In October Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford visited Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate. Knoxvilleians recognized this as an ideal opportunity to get a leading American millionaire to contribute some "big money" to the park effort. A group therefore drove to Harrogate in a conspicuous fleet of new Lincoln automobiles. The Fords were convinced to visit the mountains, but the trip did not result in the needed contribution.<sup>27</sup> The other important event was the state election. As early as September 9, General Knox, a Knoxville News column, expressed Knoxville's gratitude to the governor for his park support, and the writer pointed out that the city was looking forward to helping Peay "make history in the future." Peay's 1926 victory was the result in part of his strong showing in East Tennessee. His popularity in this section stemmed from his endeavors to get the national park established.<sup>28</sup> At the local level, Andrew Jackson Graves, running for re-election as Knoxville's direct state senator, characterized himself as a "true and tried friend of the Smoky Mountain Park."<sup>29</sup> He believed his support for the park, especially his part in the legislature's visit, was a strong reason to endorse his candidacy.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Campbell, National Park, pp. 59-60.

<sup>28</sup>MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism," p. 331.

<sup>29</sup>Campaign Advertisement, Andrew Jackson Graves Papers, Special Collections, University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville.

<sup>30</sup>Knoxville Journal, 31 October 1926.

A multitude of events and occurrences concerning the park filled 1927. The major concerns included getting the Townsend tract deeds collected and reviewed and obtaining the funds for the Townsend property. In its January and February meetings, the Knoxville City Council passed motions authorizing the sale of \$91,500 in bonds and empowering Mayor Morton to execute that sale. The bonds, dated February 15, earned interest at 4.75 percent payable semi-annually. Once the 331 Townsend deeds were consolidated, they were given to the state attorney general's office for review on January 18. By late March, the Townsend deal was completed, to the relief of many. Attorney General Smith's office announced approval of the deeds on March 20, and two days later Townsend had the state's payment of \$182,000 in hand as well as the Knoxville city bonds which he had accepted at par.<sup>31</sup>

Concern over the acceptability to the Interior Department of lands within the Little River Watershed brought action by several people in early 1927. In mid-January Chapman insisted that Interior Secretary Work supported the purchase, but questions about the acceptability of the property lingered.<sup>32</sup> In early February, Governor Peay and North Carolina Governor Angus McClean went to Washington, accompanied by several others, including Knoxville Frank Maloney, who had taken on the job of land acquisition for the Great Smoky Mountain National Park Commission. Their purpose was to persuade Secretary

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<sup>31</sup>MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism," p. 330.

<sup>32</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 12, 20 January 1927.



Work to make some definite commitment concerning the quality of land that both states were soon to acquire. Peay and his party returned with optimistic outlooks fostered by Work's promise that he would send someone to assess the lands as soon as the winter weather would allow.<sup>33</sup>

Strong opposition to further land purchases of the Townsend type reared its head in March of 1927. Five Tennesseans from Hamilton, Davidson, and Wilson Counties filed a petition in chancery court in Nashville to halt any further buying of land. The court granted an injunction to stop the acquisitions. Those filing the claim, mostly Middle Tennesseans, asserted that the timber-cutting rights granted to the Little River Lumber Company would delay the federal government's acceptance of the property for fifteen years. They also claimed that the sale violated the 1925 act authorizing the deal. State Attorney General Smith filed a counter suit to dissolve the measure, and Knoxville lawyer James B. Wright traveled to Nashville to fight the injunction on Townsend's behalf. What might have resulted in a serious setback was avoided when the court order was dismissed on March 22 because the timber-cutting rights were limited to only 10,000 acres of the total purchased.<sup>34</sup>

An extremely important issue for the success of the park resulted from a challenge to Tennessee from North Carolina. In February of 1927, the North Carolina legislature passed a two-million dollar bond

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 15 February 1927.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 6, 17, 22 March 1927.

issue for purchasing park lands. The action carried with it three significant conditions: first, the Interior Department would have to designate the lands as acceptable; second, all lands had to be appraised and a total price set; and finally, Tennessee must appropriate a like amount before any of the North Carolina funds would be spent.<sup>35</sup>

Knoxvillians were quick to react to the challenge. The Conservation Association began the process of drawing up the necessary legislation, and several Knoxvillians traveled to Nashville to work on behalf of the "Match North Carolina Bill," which called for a \$1.5 million bond issue. The Knoxville promoters had negotiated a credit for one-half million dollars for the Little River purchase. The governor endorsed the bill, and Andrew Jackson Graves introduced it on April 8, 1927. Graves, who "declined the speakership of the Senate in 1927 to fight for park legislation," also issued a second invitation to the General Assembly to visit the proposed park site.<sup>36</sup>

Again, a majority of the members of the General Assembly traveled to East Tennessee to be convinced of the need to acquire the Great Smoky Mountains. Some fourteen senators and sixty-seven representatives took the tour which began at the Cherokee Country Club in Knoxville on Saturday morning, April 16. They traveled by cars, again furnished by interested citizens of Knoxville, through the site and hiked to the top

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<sup>35</sup>Campbell, National Park, p. 70.

<sup>36</sup>Joe E. Spence, "The Public Career of Andrew Jackson Graves," (Master's thesis: University of Tennessee, 1967), p. 65; and Knoxville Journal, 12 April 1927.

of Mount LeConte. A supper meeting was held in Gatlinburg at the Mountain View Hotel on Saturday night. Among the speakers was J. Will Taylor, who urged the legislators to recognize the practicality of the national park because it was an ideal "profitable investment from a purely commercial standpoint."<sup>37</sup> When they opened their Knoxville Sunday morning newspapers, the legislators read strong pro-park editorials. The News-Sentinel stressed that the outlay would quickly be made up by increased revenue from the gasoline tax.<sup>38</sup> The Journal pointed out that the park's development would "lead the way into a new historical era of prosperity for the state."<sup>39</sup>

Those members who took the East Tennessee holiday returned to Nashville with positive impressions of the national park endeavor. To ensure and maintain support, many Knoxvilleians went to Nashville to continue their lobbying efforts. By Friday, April 22, the bill passed the Senate twenty-three to eight. Providing for an appropriation of \$1.5 million in bonds, it also set up a seven-member Great Smoky Mountain National Park Commission to coordinate land purchases. The two most significant amendments forbade the cutting of timber on any lands acquired with the money appropriated and halted any further purchasing until the federal government designated a specific area. Meanwhile in the House, the bill had difficulty reaching the floor for debate and

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<sup>37</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 17 April 1927.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Knoxville Journal, 17 April 1927.

voting. The House was in the throes of overriding Governor Peay's veto of a \$750 bonus that the General Assembly had recently voted itself. Eventually, the bill gained the representatives' attention who passed it on April 26 by a vote of sixty to thirty-three. Governor Peay signed the measure on April 28, and the Knoxville lobbyists, led by David Chapman, received a warm welcome upon their return to the city.<sup>40</sup>

The remainder of the year was filled with tactical, organizational, and administrative efforts. The biggest concern for both Tennessee and North Carolina was to get the area surveyed and acreage quotas set by the federal government. In May and June, officials went to both states for the surveys. Arno B. Cammerer, Assistant Director of National Parks, and Glenn Smith, a member of the Southern Appalachian National Park Commission, arrived in Knoxville on Saturday, May 21, to inspect the Smokies in order to set boundaries and prepare a report for Interior Secretary Work. The other members of the National Park Commission were supposed to arrive on Monday, May 25, but only William C. Gregg could come. He was accompanied by David Chapman, who was returning from visits with officials in New York and Washington. Before their inspection of the area, Smith made some observations about the park's future. He stressed that no recommendations could be made until a survey was completed, he pointed out that the survey was going to be expensive, and he observed that the four to five million dollars that

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<sup>40</sup>MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism," pp. 341-342.

Tennessee and North Carolina had planned for would not be enough to purchase all of the necessary land.<sup>41</sup>

By Sunday, May 29, the boundaries were established on the eastern and central Tennessee sections of the park. Cammerer was setting topographical boundaries rather than geometric ones which could not be imposed effectively on the mountains at all. At this point, the surveyors moved their base of operations to Gatlinburg. By June 3 the surveying team was prepared to move on to Bryson City, North Carolina, to begin establishing boundaries there. A minimum area of 427,000 acres having been identified, Cammerer returned to Washington to compile his data and write the report for Secretary Work. This large area confirmed Smith's earlier speculation that more money would be needed. Consequently, the Southern Appalachian Park Commission planned a national fund drive, to be coordinated by W. A. Welch from a base of operations in New York City, to raise ten million dollars to be divided equally between the Smoky Mountain Park and the Shenandoah Park in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The campaign for funds was to begin in the fall of 1927 when the "big spenders" returned from their summer vacations.<sup>42</sup>

In the meantime, the State Park Commission began the job of acquiring land with the funds available. In July, the park leaders busily promoted the project; for example, in a speech to the Kiwanis Club, Chapman maintained that the nation's wealthy men would volunteer

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<sup>41</sup>Knoxville Journal, 31 May 1927.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 8 July 1927.

to contribute to the park. He also insisted that the federal government would build the best roads in the country in the park.<sup>43</sup> By mid-July, some 2,000 acres in twelve tracts had been purchased. The Conservation Association urged people to make their pledge payments on time or early if possible. Governor Peay made appointments to the Tennessee Great Smoky Mountain Park Commission in early August, when he decided after some disagreement between Knoxvilleians and residents of area counties, to appoint one man from each county in which the park was to be established. He selected former Governor Ben Hooper from Cocke County, E. E. Conner from Sevier County, and John Clark from Blount County. His fourth choice was Ben Morton of Knoxville, since the city had such a keen interest in the park. Peay justified these choices on the grounds that two were bankers, Morton was a prominent businessman, and Hooper would lend his prestige to the efforts.<sup>44</sup> Along with the three members of the Tennessee State Park and Forestry Commission, these four new appointees made up the seven-member commission. The governor was anxious for them to begin their duties because he had received a letter from Interior Secretary Work officially designating 427,000 acres for the park, of which 228,500 acres were in Tennessee.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 1 July 1927.

<sup>44</sup>Knoxville Journal, 6 August 1927.

<sup>45</sup>MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism," p. 345.

Throughout the remainder of the year, the state surveyed and appraised the designated acreage, with some delays resulting from the tedious process of appraising timber growing on the land. The momentum for the park received a setback with the unexpected death of Governor Austin Peay in early October. His successor, Henry Horton, promised continued state support, but the movement had lost one of its strongest allies who had been with it from the beginning. Shortly after Peay's death, the Smoky Mountain Park Commission met for the first time in Sevierville. After passing resolutions of sympathy for the Peay family, it began its task. The Commission elected David Chapman chairman and appointed Frank Maloney of the Conservation Association secretary-treasurer. Maloney's job would be to collect pledge monies, negotiate options, and make purchases. He reported at this meeting that 3,600 acres in twenty-eight tracts had been purchased to date and that \$121,334 in pledges had been collected.<sup>46</sup>

By October 31, more land was being offered for sale than there was money available to purchase it. Again, the Conservation Association urged people to mail in their pledges as quickly as possible. The acreage total reached 5,000 by December 1. It was the commission's hope that the surveying would be completed by January 1. Throughout the fall of 1927 and into the winter, Chapman traveled back and forth from Knoxville to New York City to confer with William Welch about the

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<sup>46</sup>Knoxville Journal, 7 October 1927; and Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 October 1927.

national fund drive. Welch was rather vague about the drive, though he insisted it was going well. The New Yorker thought it only proper that the names of the contributors remain confidential.<sup>47</sup> Though it was an up and down year for the park, the year ended with promise: the federal government was completing the survey so that state monies appropriated for land sales could be utilized; land owners were voluntarily offering their property to the commission; and the national fund drive was reported to be progressing. Through it all, Knoxvilleians in Nashville, Washington, New York, and Knoxville itself, were hard at work to get the park established.

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<sup>47</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 16 October 1927.



## CHAPTER IV

### A PIVOTAL YEAR, 1928

Nineteen hundred and twenty-eight would prove to be an extremely pivotal year for the park, with the concerns of promotion, financing, and purchasing dominating the movement. Several important groups toured the park site in 1928, including an influential group of five hundred newspaper editors. The money problems of the park promoters were answered in part by a gift from one of America's leading millionaires. Land-buying was increased significantly as a result of this new money. Governor Horton was elected in his own right and continued the late Governor Peay's support of the park project. The biggest problem for the park was the provision of the state's deal with Townsend that allowed timber-cutting on the Little River Watershed. The issue caused concern in Washington with federal government officials and in New York with the Rockefeller Foundation. The timber-cutting problem also acted as the catalyst of a split between the two major Knoxville newspapers.

Park advocates continued to make public pleas for the park. In an address to a joint meeting of the Alcoa Civic Club and the Maryville-Alcoa Kiwanis Club, Carlos C. Campbell, President of the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce, urged his audience to honor its subscriptions and called on others to make donations.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, W. P. Davis,

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<sup>1</sup>Knoxville Journal, 25 January 1928.

Conservation Association President, insisted that the park would be a reality only if donations were forthcoming from individuals and philanthropic organizations.<sup>2</sup> Other promotional activities in early 1928 included an unsuccessful attempt to get the park featured in National Geographic Magazine.<sup>3</sup> The Chamber also hosted a tour for several Chicago businessmen who were visiting the Smokies in search of investment opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

March of 1928 may well represent the point at which the park was definitely assured. It was in this month that the much-needed funds for land purchases were obtained. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., had agreed to donate five million dollars to the park on a matching funds basis. This money was provided from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund, a trust set up by John D. Rockefeller, Sr., in memory of his wife. Conflicting stories exist as to how and why Rockefeller came to the park's aid. National Park Director Mather, Associate National Park Director Cammerer, and Tennessee State Park and Forestry Commission Chairman David Chapman have all been credited with convincing the millionaire of the soundness and worthiness of the project.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 7 February 1928.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 8 February 1928.

<sup>4</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 27 February 1928.

<sup>5</sup>Ebbie Sandburg, "An Interview with Mr. Carlos C. Campbell About the Establishment of the Smoky Mountain Park," unpublished paper, 20 February 1976, in the possession of Dr. Paul H. Bergeron, p. 9; and Carlos C. Campbell, Birth of a National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1960), p. 61.

Nevertheless, the money became available as Cammerer, Chapman, and Mark Squires, North Carolina park leader, were designated as trustees for the contribution.<sup>6</sup>

Knoxvillians were ecstatic over the report of the gift and more confident than ever. The day the gift was announced "whistles and bells sounded throughout the city."<sup>7</sup> The Knoxville Journal and News-Sentinel quickly pointed out what this meant for each citizen. According to the Journal, the park's establishment would increase tourism, provide advertising, increase population, and increase real estate values and sales.<sup>8</sup> The News-Sentinel noted that increased population would lead to a greater demand for all goods and services and create a broader tax base for roads, schools, and libraries.<sup>9</sup> The News-Sentinel also called upon the city to prepare itself for its visitors by building city parks, stopping the smoke from industries, and widening the streets.<sup>10</sup> Of course it was to be remembered that among these dreams of wealth and plenty that the "prime purpose of the park is to preserve places of especial beauty and grandeur for generations to come."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Campbell, National Park, p. 61.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>8</sup>Knoxville Journal, 7 March 1928.

<sup>9</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 6 March 1928.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 7 March 1928.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 6 March 1928.

The construction and improvement of roads continued to be a chief concern for park promoters, and the Rockefeller gift made the need for access to the park lands much more pressing. Park leaders wanted roads as quickly as possible so that the millions of Americans traveling south could be lured to stop in Tennessee. The state highway commissioner announced on March 23 that the road connecting Maryville and Townsend would receive fifty thousand dollars in improvements.<sup>12</sup> Less than a week later, the highway department also announced that 250,000 dollars would be spent to improve the Scenic Loop within the park area.<sup>13</sup> Further evidence of the concern for roads can be seen in correspondence from R. C. D'Armand, President of the Knoxville Automobile Club, to Governor Horton. In late March he wrote to the governor requesting that a new road be constructed between Knoxville and Sevierville in order to handle the anticipated increase in sight-seeing motorists.<sup>14</sup>

Those in charge of the Rockefeller gift became gravely concerned over the continued cutting of trees on lands within the park area. This matter, along with negotiations for large holdings within the area, became the Park Commission's chief interest for most of 1928. In its meeting in early April, the commission decided that one

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<sup>12</sup>Knoxville Journal, 23 March 1928.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 28 March 1928.

<sup>14</sup>D'Armand to Horton, 29 March 1928, Henry H. Horton Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

purchasing agent with a qualified staff should be appointed to oversee all land acquisitions, but all purchases would require the final approval of the commission.<sup>15</sup> The commission also agreed to begin dealing with Townsend to acquire the timber-cutting rights granted to the Little River Lumber Company under the provisions of the purchase agreement for the Little River Watershed. In further actions, the state commission decided that serious bargaining should begin with the Champion Fibre Company which owned forty thousand acres on the Tennessee "side" of the park. Negotiations were also to begin with agents of the Morton Butler Lumber Company which held title to 25,500 acres of Tennessee park land.<sup>16</sup>

May of 1928 saw the beginning of some serious doubts about further financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation. During the May commission meeting, former Governor Ben Hooper resigned as a commissioner in order to become one of the chief purchasing agents along with John Toomey of Helenwood.<sup>17</sup> This positive action was soon overshadowed by accounts appearing in the "park-minded" News-Sentinel. On May 22 the newspaper carried a bold, banner headline reading, "National Park Lands Laid Waste." The entire front page, complete with photographs, accused the Little River Lumber Company of leveling certain areas in the park of all trees, a blatant violation of the purchase

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<sup>15</sup> Knoxville News-Sentinel, 9 April 1928.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 10 April 1928.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 14 May 1928.

agreement.<sup>18</sup> This news shocked the Park Commission, as well as the Rockefeller Foundation officials in New York.

David Chapman went immediately to the area in question for a personal inspection, and upon his return to Knoxville he urged the Park Commission to probe the methods of the lumber company for violations. It was Chapman's hope that resorting to the courts would not be necessary, for if the park commission got a court injunction to halt the cutting, then some five hundred men would lose their jobs. The commission feared that this action would bring damaging criticism to it and its efforts.<sup>19</sup> By early June, Townsend agreed to stop the "skidding" removal method responsible for the devastation. Not content with Townsend's word, the News-Sentinel urged the state to place inspectors on the site to monitor the cutting, whereupon the state responded by placing John Toomey, purchasing agent, on the site to inspect and observe all future cutting operations.<sup>20</sup>

The News-Sentinel's exposé did not go unnoticed by the Rockefeller Foundation, which dispatched Arno B. Cammerer, Assistant Director of the Park Service and Chairman of the Rockefeller Memorial Fund, to Knoxville to assess the situation and to relay the Foundation's apprehensions. Cammerer met with the Park Commission and expressed his belief that Townsend had violated the contract with the state. He

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 22 May 1928.

<sup>19</sup>Knoxville Journal, 27 May 1928.

<sup>20</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 10, 13 June 1928.

informed the commission that this and other timber-cutting was placing the park's future in serious jeopardy because such practices might cause the commission to lose the Rockefeller donation.<sup>21</sup> In response to these warnings, the commission announced on June 13 that it would go to court to seek a cessation of the timber-cutting.<sup>22</sup> Chapman also left for New York City to meet with the Rockefeller Foundation officials in an effort to allay their fears.

Mid-year was also a busy time for the promotion of the park. Dr. Frank Bohn's visit to the park was given special attention by the Knoxville Journal, because Bohn, a lecturer and writer for the New York Times, asserted that all reading people of the major eastern cities would visit the Great Smoky Mountains for a brief escape from city life.<sup>23</sup> At the invitation of the Chamber of Commerce, the Tennessee Federation of Women's Clubs toured the park site during its Knoxville convention. Promoting the park at the Tennessee Bankers Association convention in Memphis, Floyd E. Haun, cashier of the City National Bank of Knoxville, described the park as "one of the biggest economic assets in the bright business outlook for East Tennessee."<sup>24</sup> The most important promotional endeavor was carried out by the Chamber of Commerce and several Knoxville civic clubs when these groups hosted a

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<sup>21</sup>Knoxville Journal, 12 June 1928.

<sup>22</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 13 June 1928.

<sup>23</sup>Knoxville Journal, 7 April 1928.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 18 May 1928.

tour of the park for five hundred editors from across the nation, following the June convention of the National Editorial Association in Memphis. Citing the advertising that the city and the park would receive, the organizations provided transportation for and information to the visiting editors. A thirty-five page brochure contained a section concerning the park, one about Knoxville, and a third with information on adjacent East Tennessee towns.<sup>25</sup>

Both major Knoxville newspapers continued to promote the park, but at this time their editorial policies began to take somewhat different paths in those promotional stances. The Journal was concerned that complacency might kill the park, and it urged that everyone "boost, boost, and keep boosting."<sup>26</sup> The News-Sentinel, however, cautioned against boosting because it equated this strategy with spoiling the area and cheapening the park endeavor. A national park was to be "preserved in an unmodified state for the study and enjoyment of mankind," according to the News-Sentinel.<sup>27</sup> The Journal called for saving the trees in the park area, because without trees few tourists could be enticed to visit. Further, if trees were lost, then many people were going to be greatly disappointed when they failed to secure "the advantages which they . . . hoped to reap." Another article focused on the tourist industry with claims that there was a potential for

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 3, 6 June 1928.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 4 April 1928.

<sup>27</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 5 April 1928.



some thirty million sightseers for Tennessee and Kentucky annually. This influx would convert Knoxville's predicted "wonderful 'future' into a glorious present."<sup>28</sup> While the Journal was focusing upon the economic gains that the park would provide, especially for Knoxville, the News-Sentinel adopted a different tone. When bickering among several East Tennessee towns occurred in early April, the News-Sentinel recommended that the entire southern Appalachian region should be boosted jointly so that "we'll all prosper." When the Little River Lumber Company was accused of violating the agreement with the state, the News-Sentinel referred to the national park area as "sacred ground." In a later editorial the national park was defined for the readers as a "reservation of primitive nature."<sup>29</sup> While the Journal was wrapped up in profits, the News-Sentinel featured flowers and trees of the Smokies in the magazine section of the Sunday issue.<sup>30</sup> These differences would continue and increase as the park movement and land-buying progressed.

Seeking election in 1928, Governor Henry Horton was quick to endorse the park, and at a Shrine luncheon in Knoxville on June 7 he pledged his utmost support to the park.<sup>31</sup> He also noted that the park would positively advertise the section, bringing thousands of visitors

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<sup>28</sup>Knoxville Journal, 14, 22 April 1928.

<sup>29</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 9 April, 22 May, 10 June 1928.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 13 May 1928.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 7 June 1928.

with millions of dollars. When a crisis emerged over the issuance of state bonds for park purposes, Horton canceled his campaign plans. Following speeches at Sevierville and Newport where he was greeted enthusiastically, Horton rushed to Washington to confer with park officials and North Carolina Governor Angus McClean. Obviously this politically wise move did not go unnoticed, for the Knoxville Journal lauded the governor's sacrifice of his campaign so that the "park interests will not be jeopardized."<sup>32</sup>

The purpose of the emergency meeting in Washington to which Governor Horton, accompanied by State Treasurer John Nolan and Judge John Aust, the Park Commission's legal counsel, went was unknown to the Tennesseans. The meeting dealt with the issuance of North Carolina's bonds, an action that was necessary before Tennessee's bonds were to be issued. North Carolina had issued its short-term notes at four and one-half percent to fund its two million dollar appropriation. Almost immediately, the opponents of the park in North Carolina had the issuance stopped by a court injunction. The question now was whether the Tennessee officials would interpret the injunction as an act negating North Carolina's bond issuance. If so, Tennessee's bonds could not be issued. But if the state concluded that the bonds had indeed been issued, then Tennessee could legally prepare and sell its bonds. The Tennesseans left the conference undecided, but quick court

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<sup>32</sup>Knoxville Journal, 20 June 1928.

action in North Carolina saved them from making the bond issuance decision. North Carolina courts cleared the way for their bonds to be sold, and they were made available on July 9, 1928.<sup>33</sup>

The remainder of the summer was spent in preparing and selling Tennessee's bonds. Governor Horton and Treasurer Nolan, conferring about the bonds on July 11, expressed concern whether Attorney General L. D. Smith would allow the bonds to be issued before the Little River Lumber Company's timber-cutting rights were acquired. The legislation approving the bond sale had stipulated that no bond sale money could be spent for lands upon which timber-cutting rights were granted.<sup>34</sup> But about two weeks later, Smith approved the issuance, citing that the Little River Watershed purchase and the bond legislation were separate transactions and that the latter had no bearing on the former. Smith announced that the money from the bond sale would be placed in a special fund. In addition to the non-timber-cutting provision, this money was not to be spent outside the state nor was it to be used for any Park Commission expenses.<sup>35</sup> With the legal questions aside, the State Funding Board met on August 3 and authorized Governor Horton to solicit bids for the state's 1.5 million dollars in short-term notes. The notes, bearing five percent interest, were

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<sup>33</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 9 July 1928.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 11 July 1928.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 24 July 1928.

purchased by the American National Company of Nashville on August 10.<sup>36</sup>

The concern over timber-cutting within the Little River Watershed led the state to file for an injunction in Sevier County Chancery Court on August 23. Sevier County Clerk and Master A. H. Love granted an injunction halting the cutting of trees less than ten inches in diameter. This action was followed by Townsend's agreeing to stop all cutting, pending negotiations for the purchase of his timber-cutting rights. Townsend insisted that he would "go the limit" to aid park formation and that he would sell at a reasonable price.<sup>37</sup> In early September it was discovered by all concerned that the injunction was invalid because Sevier official Love was not empowered to grant such a measure. On September 13 the suit was moved from Sevier County to United States District Court in Knoxville at the request of James B. Wright, attorney for the Little River Lumber Company. But because of the heavy docket of the court, the case was not to be heard until November.

In another hearing in early November, the state requested that the suit be remanded to the Sevier County court because this was a state concern. Wright argued, however, that the case was a federal matter, since it was all based upon federal legislation to establish a national park. He further contended that Townsend had only agreed

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 10 August 1928.

<sup>37</sup>Knoxville Journal, 26 August 1928.

to the sale of the Little River tract because of coercion; he maintained that the company was "forced by newspaper and civic club propaganda into the contract."<sup>38</sup> With timber-cutting again underway, the case was sent back to the Sevier County court on November 18. The continued cutting brought a summons for David Chapman to appear in New York to explain the situation. The Knoxville News-Sentinel, conceding that the Rockefeller Foundation officials were justifiably concerned, also criticized the Park Commission for not acting sooner.<sup>39</sup> Chapman returned from New York with gloomy news: the Rockefeller officials wanted all cutting stopped or all funding would be halted. Park Commission counsel John Aust tried to speed up action, but the stalemate over the timber-cutting rights continued through December. On December 7 the lumber company requested 1.2 million dollars for the cutting rights, a figure completely beyond consideration in the minds of the park commissioners. As a result, the fate of this particular tract and the continued support of the Rockefeller Foundation remained in doubt as 1928 came to a close.

While the state bonds were being issued and the controversy over the Little River Lumber Company contract was occurring, the State Park Commission was also purchasing land as it became available. The Tennessee side of the park consisted of 6,200 separate tracts, approximately five thousand of which were small lots and slightly more than

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<sup>38</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 2 November 1928.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 29 November 1928.

one thousand of which were family-owned farms. Only five large tracts were owned by companies or individuals. These were held by the Aluminum Company of America, Champion Fibre Company, the Morton Lumber Company heirs, the Little River Lumber Company, and the Chilhowee Extract Company.<sup>40</sup> In May of 1928 the purchase of some seven thousand acres in small tracts was completed and approved, and then in June another eight hundred acres was acquired in Cades Cove.<sup>41</sup> In August, 4,500 acres in over sixty separate tracts were purchased, and in November almost seven thousand more acres were added to the Park Commission's holdings.<sup>42</sup> Negotiations for the larger holdings were underway by the end of 1928. If the Townsend timber-cutting problem could be overcome, the prospects of rapid land acquisition in 1929 were promising with the state and the Rockefeller matching funds now available.

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<sup>40</sup>Campbell, National Park, pp. 68-69.

<sup>41</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 4 May 1928.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 14 August, 12 November 1928.

## CHAPTER V

### STRUGGLE AND SUCCESS, 1929-1930

Charges of mismanagement of funds and immoral behavior by members of the State Park Commission, settlement of the Little River Lumber Company dispute, promotion of road construction, and land acquisitions filled the days of 1929. Though 1929 was a difficult year for the park enthusiasts, the results of their struggle were worth the trials. By year's end, only technicalities remained to be completed before the federal government would assume administration of the park lands. In early February of 1930 Tennessee and North Carolina presented the first 150,000 acres to the United States government.

The charges against the State Park Commission were leveled at the very time that the commission was attempting to get the General Assembly to pass a bill increasing the commission's condemnation rights to include timber-cutting rights. This legislation was introduced on January 29, but was followed two days later by a resolution calling for an investigation of the Park Commission. The investigation's focus was to be on charges that some State Park Commissioners were profiting from land sales to the state. These accusations, according to the News-Sentinel, were the results of rumors by those hoping to block the recently introduced condemnation bill.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 31 January 1929.

In a vote that surprised confident park promoters, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted six to five against recommending passage of the new condemnation bill. But the House committee did not act as quickly, giving the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce time to wire the committee to ask it not to proceed without hearing the "park side" of the issue. On February 6, the proponents of the increased condemnation rights bill decided to withdraw the bill until a more opportune moment. At the same time, discussion of increasing the size of the present Park Commission began. On February 15, Senator Calder and Representative Riley introduced a bill to increase the body from seven to eleven members with both the governor and the state finance commissioner serving as ex officios. The other nine commissioners would serve at the appointment of the governor. The bill also required that all park monies be deposited with the state treasurer.<sup>2</sup>

The supporters of this increase, who viewed the commission posts as a source of political patronage and who were usually anti-Chapman or anti-East Tennessee, argued that more business-oriented members needed to be placed in positions of leadership in the park effort. The News-Sentinel was somewhat perplexed, however, by this argument. On February 17, it printed a list of the present park commissioners and their various business connections: David Chapman was vice-president of City National Bank and of the Home Building and Loan Association, president of the Chapman Drug Company, and Chairman of the National

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 15 February 1929.



Conference of State Parks; Ben Morton was a former Knoxville mayor, president of the H. T. Hackney Company, and a director in various business and financial concerns; J. M. Clark was president of the Bank of Blount County; E. E. Conner was vice-president of the Sevierville Hosiery Mills; L. S. Allen of Newport was a large property owner; Henry Colton was a lawyer, land dealer, and trustee of a large estate; and A. E. Markham was mayor of Tiptonville, an oil operator, bank president, and large property owner. The News-Sentinel was therefore not convinced that the argument for more businessmen was a valid one.<sup>3</sup> Concurrently, Arno B. Cammerer, Assistant Director of the National Park Service and Rockefeller Foundation trustee, expressed his complete confidence in the present commission and emphatically insisted that by no means would Rockefeller money be deposited with the Tennessee state treasurer.<sup>4</sup>

On February 20 the General Assembly formed a ten-member committee to investigate the activities of the Park Commission during the legislative recess. The report of this committee was expected to have a strong impact upon the legislation to increase the size of the Park Commission.<sup>5</sup> The committee, composed of seven representatives and three senators, arrived in Knoxville in late February for several days of hearings and auditing the Park Commission's financial records.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 17 February 1929.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 16 February 1929.

<sup>5</sup>Knoxville Journal, 20 February 1929.

Among the accusations against the commission were that overhead expenditures were too high, that North Carolina had been loaned \$250,000 of Tennessee money, and that Commissioner E. E. Conner was profiting from personal land sales to the Park Commission. David Chapman, chairman of the commission, testified before the committee for two days. His knowledge and recall of figures and his justifications for expenditures greatly impressed the committee members. He informed the investigators that the \$250,000 was a loan of Rockefeller money, funds available to both states. Finally, documentation revealed that Conner's holdings in the park area were acquired before he was appointed to the State Park Commission. Further, the committee's audit revealed no bookkeeping errors.<sup>6</sup>

But testimony from later witnesses brought new allegations against some of the commissioners. For example, James B. Wright, lawyer for the Little River Lumber Company and long-time park foe, criticized David Chapman's business acumen and referred to Chapman as a heavy drinker. Moreover, he attacked Cammerer for interfering in what was obviously a state matter.<sup>7</sup> On March 7, former governor Ben Hooper, who had been serving as chief purchasing agent for the commission, testified. He accused Chapman of poor leadership, because he did not understand the mountain people with whom land deals must be delicately negotiated. Further, Hooper asserted that some land buyers

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 3, 5 March 1929.

<sup>7</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 6 March 1929.

appointed by Chapman were far too close to various real estate firms.<sup>8</sup> Wright took the stand again on March 8 in an attempt to tie Commissioner Conner and Purchasing Agent A. O. Delozier to the Sevierville real estate firm of Owensby and Ingle. The firm was re-locating park inhabitants into homes which were conspicuously priced with the same figure as they had received for their park property. Wright provided no substantive evidence, and the charges amounted to nothing.<sup>9</sup> On March 9, two discharged purchasing agents, W. A. Dunlap and E. W. Cates, made additional allegations against Chapman. They accused Chapman of being publicly intoxicated while representing the state and with being indecently attired on the front porch of a Cades Cove boarding house while on commission business. The two men could produce no proof of the first charge, and the Myerses, owners and operators of the boarding house, testified that to their knowledge at no time was Chapman indecent.<sup>10</sup> Hooper also brought up the excessive use of liquor by Chapman, asserting that the commission chairman, headquarters purchasing agent John Jones, and others were known to have drinking parties in the park area. Again, no evidence or reliable testimony supported the accusations.<sup>11</sup>

The investigating committee terminated the hearings on March 15 and returned to Nashville to begin writing its report. On April 2,

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 7 March 1929 and Knoxville Journal, 7 March 1929.

<sup>9</sup>Knoxville Journal, 8 March 1929.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 9 March 1929.

<sup>11</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 10 March 1929.

Hooper resigned from his job as chief purchasing agent in order to go to Nashville to lobby for the bill to increase the Park Commission.<sup>12</sup> On April 3, the bill, because of a tie vote, was voted out of committee without a recommendation. In a bold move, Cammerer announced on April 5 that all Rockefeller money would be cut off if state or federal plans were placed in jeopardy by an altered State Park Commission.<sup>13</sup> A mass meeting was held in Knoxville on the Market Square Mall to show support for Chapman and the present commission, and numerous letters and telegrams flooded the offices of the governor and state congressmen. Among these was a letter to Governor Horton from Harold Hayes, Secretary of the Knoxville Real Estate Board, which supported the present commission and informed the governor that a petition was being circulated to maintain the present commission.<sup>14</sup> By mid-April the General Assembly was inundated with legislative work. Because of a lack of time and support, the enlargement bill "died."<sup>15</sup> The issue was put to rest more soundly when the majority of the investigating committee filed its report on April 14. It was complimentary of Chapman's leadership, the present commission as a whole, and the progress being made toward land acquisition.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Knoxville Journal, 2 April 1929.

<sup>13</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 5 April 1929.

<sup>14</sup>Hayes to Horton, 13 March 1929, Henry H. Horton Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

<sup>15</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 12 April 1929.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 14 April 1929.

The controversy over the investigation of the Park Commission and the bill to increase the size of the commission brought about a somewhat heated exchange in the Knoxville press. For example, on February 6, the News-Sentinel insisted that the legislation to increase the number of park commissioners was a deliberate attempt to oust Chapman because he refused to be swayed by special interests. These special interests included members of the Horton administration who wanted control of the Park Commission's three to four million dollars in purchase funds. The News-Sentinel maintained that Chapman represented success for the park and that to lose him would be to lose the park.<sup>17</sup> The Knoxville Journal responded by accusing the News-Sentinel of overreacting. In an obvious reference to Chapman, the Journal editor noted that "the public understands that the park movement is the result of the vision, labor, money, and brain of more than one man."<sup>18</sup>

The two newspapers clashed again over their treatment of Thomas J. Poe, a Knoxville state senator, who sat silently through the Senate Judiciary Committee's consideration of the park commission's bill to increase its condemnation powers. The News-Sentinel attacked Poe for his failure to support actively a measure so important to his constituents.<sup>19</sup> The Journal focused upon the News-Sentinel's attack on Poe but did not criticize the senator. The Journal was quick to quote

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 6 February 1929.

<sup>18</sup>Knoxville Journal, 8 February 1929.

<sup>19</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 February 1929.

Poe's colleagues who had come to his defense. A few days later the Journal accused the News-Sentinel of blowing things out of proportion, and the Journal editor expressed his conviction that the News-Sentinel needed to stay out of the park business.<sup>20</sup>

In mid-February the two dailies took the gloves off to reveal their true political colors. On February 15, the News-Sentinel insisted that the bill to change the Park Commission would change the complexion of the body, transforming it from the Knoxville group which had "taken care of the interests of the park since its inception" to a group of Horton appointees who would be dominated by the Lea-Caldwell organization.<sup>21</sup> Luke Lea and Rogers Caldwell were financial and political partners who represented a major faction of the Democratic party in Tennessee which supported Governor Horton. They owned a state banking and publishing empire, a part of which was the Knoxville Journal. In response to this attack, the Journal accused the News-Sentinel of merely trying to hurt Governor Horton because the News-Sentinel was an organ belonging to Boss Crump, a Memphis political leader who represented the other major faction of the Democratic party in Tennessee in the 1920s. The Journal maintained that the News-Sentinel's concern for the future of the Park Commission was a result of their anti-Horton sentiments and not out of a concern for the

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<sup>20</sup> Knoxville Journal, 10, 13 February 1929.

<sup>21</sup> Knoxville News-Sentinel, 15 February 1929.

establishment of the park.<sup>22</sup> The News-Sentinel countered that the increased Park Commission legislation was Luke Lea's attempt to get his hands on the money of the Park Commission and the Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>23</sup> One recent historian has concurred with this stance, citing the Lea-Caldwell empire's shaky financial status at the time and its collapse shortly after its failure to acquire the funds associated with the park. The park money was to be deposited with the Lea-Caldwell bank in Knoxville, and these funds could have saved the crumbling financial empire.<sup>24</sup>

Following these exchanges the Knoxville Journal ceased its critical editorials and focused upon the news events surrounding the park. But the News-Sentinel continued to hammer away at the Park Commission enlargement legislation. The newspaper argued that it would be in the interest of every Knoxville and East Tennessee businessman to be in Nashville working to defeat the bill to increase the Park Commission.<sup>25</sup> Following the mass meeting in Knoxville in support of the present commission, the News-Sentinel criticized Senator Poe again. The newspaper complained that it took such a meeting to change Poe's mind, and it asked, "will the businessmen of Knoxville stand by and

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<sup>22</sup>Knoxville Journal, 19 February 1929.

<sup>23</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 17 February 1929.

<sup>24</sup>Joseph T. MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism in Tennessee: The Administrations of Governor Austin Peay, 1923-1927" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1969), p. 346.

<sup>25</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 31 March 1929.

allow the park project to be thus hindered?"<sup>26</sup> Poe insisted, however, in a story printed in the Knoxville Journal following this, that such charges were ridiculous and that he had always endorsed the present commission.<sup>27</sup> The Knoxville News-Sentinel ended its defense of the present commission on April 7 in an editorial that called for common sense. The writer pointed out that the future of the park rested in the hands of Arno B. Cammerer, who was a member of the Rockefeller Foundation and an Interior Department official. Cammerer was solidly behind the present commission, so it only followed, according to the News-Sentinel's logic, that the present commission should be maintained.<sup>28</sup> The two dailies would take occasional "pot shots" at one another in the future, but they halted their routine belligerent exchanges concerning the park.

The arduous negotiations for the timber-cutting rights of the Little River Lumber Company lasted the entire year of 1929. The year began with little hope of any "simple" settlement. The lumber company claimed that there was a potential forty-seven million board feet from its holdings, while the state insisted that fifteen million board feet was a more accurate figure.<sup>29</sup> Townsend's company was asking for 1.25 million dollars for the timber-cutting rights. Townsend went even

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 1 April 1929.

<sup>27</sup>Knoxville Journal, 13 April 1929.

<sup>28</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 7 April 1929.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 14 January 1929.



further in late January when he offered the timber-cutting rights for 65,000 acres of the 76,000 acre tract for only \$250,000. He maintained that the Middle Prong, some 11,000 acres, was worth one million dollars, but a state survey in early February reported that only one-sixth of the timber Townsend claimed was actually standing.<sup>30</sup> The state intended to offer Townsend \$250,000 for the entire 76,000 acres. If this offer were refused, the State Park Commission threatened to reintroduce its timber-cutting rights condemnation bill in the General Assembly.<sup>31</sup>

Both sides were convinced that they were justified in their estimates. Real progress only resulted when logical, honest arbitration was suggested. Ben Morton, Park Commissioner from Knoxville, proposed that a state representative, a lumber company official, and a disinterested third party form an arbitration team which would derive a fair estimation of the timber value. This group's decision was to be binding on all parties.<sup>32</sup> Some headway was made immediately. A new line was drawn giving the state all the acreage other than the Middle Prong. It was this area, rich in virgin timber, that was to be the focus of the arbiters. By late February, the Park Commission chose E. E. Conner as its representative, and the Little River Lumber Company appointed D. H. Tipton as its spokesman. These two hoped to

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 27, 30 January 1929.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 7 February 1929.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 11 February 1929.

reach an agreement without involving the third impartial party.<sup>33</sup> By September, Conner and Tipton had successfully arbitrated the release to the state of approximately one half of the Middle Prong, but the remainder proved to be too controversial an area for the two. As a result, the United States Forest Service named James W. Girard as the third arbiter.<sup>34</sup> He spent all of November inspecting the disputed area, with the result that the three arbiters did not meet together until December 12. On December 14, Townsend offered to give the state the disputed acreage free, in return for being allowed to cut on it.<sup>35</sup> The offer was not even honored with a response from the State Park Commission.

In late December, Girard returned to Washington to report to Interior Secretary Wilbur. The final agreement netted the state the deed to timber-cutting rights on a strip 660 feet wide and eight miles long. This was an agreement acceptable to Cammerer, the key government and Rockefeller representative.<sup>36</sup> As a result, the final completion and transfer to the federal government of the initial 150,000 acres in an unbroken tract was in sight.

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<sup>33</sup>Knoxville Journal, 12 February 1929; and Knoxville News-Sentinel, 17 February 1929.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 18 October 1929.

<sup>35</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 14 December 1929.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 23 December 1929.

Concern over adequate accessibility to the park was a major issue in 1929 as gradual land acquisitions made the reality of federal government control ever closer. Road construction once more was an important topic in the correspondence of interested individuals. In June, W. P. Davis, president of the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association, wrote to Governor Horton, urging him to press for the construction of a new highway from Knoxville to Sevierville, one of the gateways to the park. The following month he wrote again concerning the road, claiming that it would be worth "a billion dollars to Tennessee."<sup>37</sup> Finally, the governor was convinced of the need for a new road. Governor Horton added his own twist to the idea, suggesting that it be called the Volunteer State Memorial Highway to honor all Tennessee servicemen who had died in defense of their country.<sup>38</sup> Both Knoxville newspapers were quick to endorse the project, with the Journal noting that such a road would have unlimited "drawing possibilities" and that it would become one of the world's greatest man-made wonders.<sup>39</sup>

David Chapman added fuel to the fire for accessibility in September of 1929. The chairman of the State Park Commission proposed that a large airport be built in the Smokies in order to make the

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<sup>37</sup>Davis to Horton, 15 June and 12 July 1929, Horton Papers.

<sup>38</sup>Knoxville Journal, 12 August 1929.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 14 August 1929.

aeronautical world take notice.<sup>40</sup> Chapman urged that the airport's size should be such that it would rival the world's largest airports. Again, both daily newspapers favored this project which would further open the Smokies to tourists. The Journal included a list of Knoxville businessmen who had endorsed the idea.<sup>41</sup> In the eyes of many, the airport was as important as the construction of the memorial highway.

Throughout 1929 the Park Commission continued to negotiate for and acquire lands within the park area. Its aim was to gain 150,000 acres in an unbroken tract to present, along with North Carolina lands, to the federal government as soon as possible. With the settlement of the long dispute over the Little River tract, the state was rapidly approaching the "magic" number. The Knoxville News-Sentinel reported on December 30 that the necessary acreage would be in three deeds, one for each county involved: Sevier, Blount, and Cocke. The document, when completed, would be over five hundred pages long and would be signed by the governor, the secretary of state, and the state park commissioners.<sup>42</sup>

Indeed, the first and most significant hurdle would soon be leaped. On January 5, 1930, David Chapman announced that the necessary 150,000 acres were in hand and that his staff was busily preparing the

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 19 September 1929.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Knoxville News-Sentinel, 30 December 1929.

deeds to over six hundred separate properties.<sup>43</sup> By the end of the month the volume of deeds was completed. The signatures of the state's officials were applied to the document in ceremonies in Governor Horton's office on February 1. The News-Sentinel said of the action: "a significant burden rests, at last secure."<sup>44</sup>

On Thursday, February 6, 1930, the transfer of the deeds was carried out. In ceremonies in Interior Secretary Wilbur's conference room in Washington, Governor Horton presented to the United States Tennessee's deeds to 100,176.63 acres. Also representing Tennessee at the ceremonies were Attorney General John Aust, the entire State Park and Forestry Commission, and Tennessee's twelve members of the United States Congress.<sup>45</sup> North Carolina Governor Max O. Gardner delivered his state's deeds to 52,000 acres. In a thirty-minute ceremony, the labor of six long years was completed. Though much work was left to be done, this significant initial victory was the sweetest for all who had dreamed of and labored for the day when this "gift of gifts," the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, would become a reality.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 5 January 1930.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 1, 2 February 1930.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 6 February 1930

<sup>46</sup>Knoxville Journal, 7 February 1930.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

One must now return to the question posed in the first chapter. Was this movement a progressive phenomenon which can be seen as the New Progressivism of the New South writ small? Considering this New Progressivism in the terms of the descriptions provided by George B. Tindall and W. J. Cash, one finds that the Great Smoky Mountains National Park movement fits nicely in many respects. First, both authors place an emphasis upon the role of the urban middle class in this New Progressivism.<sup>1</sup> Those men spearheading the Knoxville drive for a national park were a part of this middle class: David Chapman was a druggist, Willis P. Davis was the general manager of the Knoxville Iron Company, Cowan Rodgers was an automobile dealer, and the list goes on. Tindall's stress on an ever-present hand of the chamber of commerce and civic organizations can certainly be seen in Knoxville.<sup>2</sup> These groups were largely responsible for the park's success through their fund-raising endeavors, their letter-writing campaigns, their lobbying efforts, and their positive promotion. Clearly, the park movement fits within the confines of New Progressivism when one notes the participants in the movement.

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<sup>1</sup>George B. Tindall, "Business Progressivism: Southern Politics in the Twenties," South Atlantic Quarterly LXII (1963): 95; and W. J. Cash, Mind of the South (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 95.

In a recent book concerned with Knoxville's place in the New South, the role of Knoxville's in the national park's establishment is described as "an exercise in disinterested civic leadership," representing the "benevolent influence of the elite at its best."<sup>3</sup> But any examination of the correspondence of Knoxville's or of the Knoxville press reveals that the city was far from "disinterested." Indeed, the financial gains that the park would provide were constantly hailed as one of the most significant reasons for getting the park established. Early in the movement the park was heralded as a boon that would "open a new unprecedented flood of commerce to the South and the Southeast."<sup>4</sup> Throughout the remainder of the movement, newspapers, articles, speeches, publications, and other appeals invariably returned to the economic benefits as the key selling point for support. How does such a crass concern for profit fit into New Progressivism? Once again, the descriptions of Tindall and Cash support this side of Knoxville's fervor for the national park.

Tindall maintains, for instance, that the New South was struggling to raise its standards from those of the previous century out of a sense of its own backwardness in relation to the rest of the country. This desire for improvement was directly tied to the "struggle for economic development." Indeed, he goes on to contend that the "progressive cause of the South was founded chiefly on the aspirations of

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<sup>3</sup>William J. MacArthur, Jr., Knoxville: Crossroads of the New South (Tulsa: Continental Heritage, 1982), p. 111.

<sup>4</sup>Knoxville Journal, 23 March 1924.

the middle-income groups to own and develop productive property."<sup>5</sup> As has already been noted, Cash asserts that progress to the Southerner meant, for the most part, increased personal wealth.<sup>6</sup> Thus, one is able to recognize this profiteering attitude of the Knoxvilleians as a part of this historical climate as various historians have interpreted it.

One of the key factors of progressivism, the old and the new, was a concern for conservation. While this area was often overshadowed by the struggle for money and national recognition, the conservation of the land and the wilderness was a very real motivation. Conservation was one of the "prewar ideas and ideals" to which Americans continued to cling.<sup>7</sup> While many values were being questioned and society's "moorings" were being re-evaluated in the 1920s, the conservation of nature remained an important American goal, largely because many people believed that the American character could be preserved only if the traditional contact with nature was somehow maintained.<sup>8</sup> It is noteworthy that attendance figures for national parks increased from 250,000 in 1914 to one million in 1920 to 2.5 million in 1928.<sup>9</sup> The original

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<sup>5</sup>George B. Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>Cash, Mind of the South, p. 273.

<sup>7</sup>Roderick Nash, The Nervous Generation: American Thought, 1917-1930 (Chicago: Rand McNally Co., 1970), p. 3.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 87.



suggestion by the Davises was the result of their visits to national parks in the American West and their desire to preserve the beauty of the Smoky Mountains in a similar fashion. The conservation motive can also be seen in Governor Peay's desire to set the area aside. If it had not become a state park. Not only was Peay a key player in the Smoky Mountain National Park drive, but also he was instrumental in having the Smoky National park drive, but also he was instrumental in having the Reelfoot Lake area established as a state game and fish preserve. To one historian this best represents Peay's "concept of positive government, working to preserve the resources of the state for all the people to use."<sup>10</sup> Locally, the Knoxville newspapers, especially the News-Sentinel, often exhibited a genuine concern for the preservation of the forests as an end in and of itself. For example, it was the newspapers of Knoxville that brought Townsend to task over his violations of his agreement with the state. Finally, the roles of long-time conservationists like Paul Fink of Jonesboro, Tennessee, and Horace Kephart of Bryson City, North Carolina, demonstrate that conservation was a key motive behind this drive.

The "trinity" of the New Progressivism has been designated to be a convergence of industry, good schools, and good roads.<sup>11</sup> The third member of this trinity can be seen as an important motivation

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<sup>10</sup>Joseph T. MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism in Tennessee: The Administrations of Governor Austin Peay, 1923-27," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, 40 (1968): 57.

<sup>11</sup>Tindall, "Business Progressivism," p. 103.

for the establishment of a national park in the Great Smoky Mountains. It is beyond question from any research of this period of Knoxville's history that new and improved roads were of primary importance to the city. To many park enthusiasts the park campaign and better roads were benefits that could and should come together.<sup>12</sup> The earliest support for the park came from individuals who believed that the construction and improvement of roads would have to accompany a new national park.<sup>13</sup> More and better roads meant a great deal to Knoxville. A man like Cowan Rodgers, an automobile dealer and a park enthusiast, would certainly benefit economically from new roads. The Knoxville Automobile Club, which had motorists' interests at its heart, also worked diligently for the park. Finally, roads represented increased business for Knoxville since access to the city would be increased, as well as routes for shipping goods both into and out of the city. Thus, the Chamber of Commerce and members of the business community saw park success as road success which in turn meant greater economic success for all.

While the role of the urban middle class, the desire for increased personal wealth, the concern for conservation, and the clamor for new and improved roads all represent facets of the New Progressivism, the political nature of the Great Smoky Mountains National

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<sup>12</sup>Carlos C. Campbell, Birth of a National Park in the Great Smoky Mountains (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1960), pp. 14, 71

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

Park movement does not really fit the "personality" of New Progressivism. The park became a "political football" at both the state and local levels. The aid of both Governor Peay and Governor Horton has been interpreted as attempts to gain East Tennessee's political favor.<sup>14</sup> The Knoxville press and the correspondence to the governors from some Knoxvillians show that their park support did gain them some political support in traditionally Republican East Tennessee. It has also been noted that Peay's political success from his support of the park caused the park movement to become "a natural focus of . . . resentment" for his political foes.<sup>15</sup> On the local level, Senator Andrew Jackson Graves was quick to point out his support for the park when he sought re-election. He went so far as to claim that his park work even took precedence over the possibility of his seeking the speakership of the state Senate.<sup>16</sup> The use of a conservation effort for political gain does not fit the progressive nature of the period as historians have interpreted it, and thus they remove the movement from any claims of being purely progressive in nature.

To a large extent some balance must be struck concerning the progressive nature of Knoxville's role in founding the park. First,

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<sup>14</sup>David D. Lee, Tennessee in Turmoil: Politics in the Volunteer State, 1920-1932 (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1979), p. 54.

<sup>15</sup>MacPherson, "Democratic Progressivism in Tennessee: The Administrations of Governor Austin Peay, 1923-1927" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1969), p. 336.

<sup>16</sup>Joe E. Spence, "The Public Career of Andrew Jackson Graves," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications 40 (1968): 65.

an understanding of what New Progressivism and the New South were is essential, if one is to interpret the park drive correctly. One must accept that New Progressivism had "deep roots in both the progressive movements and the 'New South' creed of economic development."<sup>17</sup> Thus, there is room for the profit motive and for boosterism to be included with the traditional progressive concern for conservation. Conserving natural resources was an important motive of those involved, but it was often eclipsed by the means to achieve that end. Certainly for some the "earthy" motives of economic gain, advertising, and personal aggrandizement were ends in and of themselves. Regardless of these factors, the goal of conservation was the ultimate accomplishment, a goal that was definitely one of both "old" and "new" progressives. It would appear that this business-oriented approach, coupled with the traditional conservation motive, was the key combination for success.

Another recent book dealing with Knoxville's history, which conspicuously omits any mention of the park movement, maintains that the city's "Appalachian style and tone" keep it from being a "generalized American model."<sup>18</sup> Whereas it might be correct that the city does not serve well as a good "American model," it does seem to serve well as a southern model for cities of the 1920s. A more intense analysis of other aspects of Knoxville in the 1920s might prove this point better.

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<sup>17</sup>Tindall, "Business Progressivism," p. 106.

<sup>18</sup>Michael J. McDonald and William Bruce Wheeler, Knoxville, Tennessee: Continuity and Change in an Appalachian City (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), p. 5.

Clearly Knoxville was engrossed in this movement to "catch up" with the rest of the country. Neil R. Peirce's claim that "collectively and consciously . . . Tennesseans have never been progressive" is just not supported by the facts.<sup>19</sup> The movement for a national park in the Great Smoky Mountains was the product of a progressive South, a progressive Tennessee, and, most notably, of a "vigorous, progressive, ambitious city," Knoxville, Tennessee.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Neil R. Peirce, The Border South States: People, Politics, and Power in the Five Border South States (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), p. 289.

<sup>20</sup>Knoxville Journal, 5 December 1928.

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## VITA

John Whaley is a native of Knoxville, Tennessee, who has grown up in the city and in the shadow of the mountains that are the subject of this paper. He attended Karns Elementary and High Schools in Knox County, graduating with honors in 1977. He was graduated summa cum laude from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro in May of 1981. At Middle Tennessee, he was a history and English major with a minor in secondary education. Mr. Whaley began graduate school at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, as a Hilton Smith Graduate Fellow in September of 1981. In August of 1982 he was employed by the Oak Ridge Schools as a part-time English teacher. He is presently a full-time social studies teacher at Robertsville Junior High School in Oak Ridge. He was married in May of 1981 to Celeste Patton who serves as a speech pathologist for the Campbell County Schools.