BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY
Asheville Vicinity
Buncombe County
North Carolina

HAER No. NC-42

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY
HAER No. NC-42

LOCATION:	The Blue Ridge Parkway is a 469 mile linear reservation linking Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina.
DATES OF CONSTRUCTION:	1935-1987
STRUCTURE TYPES:	Scenic parkway; bridges; viaducts.
DESIGNER/ENGINEER:	The development of the Blue Ridge Parkway was a collaborative effort between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Public Roads and the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. The principal contributors were: Stanley Abbot, Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway; Edward Abbuehl, Landscape Architect, Blue Ridge Parkway; Harold J. Spelman, BPR District Engineer; William Austin, BPR Engineer; W.I. Lee, BPR Engineer.
OWNER:	Blue Ridge Parkway, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior
SIGNIFICANCE:	Blue Ridge Parkway was the first long-distance rural parkway developed by the National Park Service. Its designers adapted parkway development strategies originating in suburban commuter routes and metropolitan park systems and expanded them to a regional scale, creating a scenic motorway linking two of the most prominent eastern national parks. The parkway was conceived as a multiple-purpose corridor that would fulfill a variety of social, recreational, environmental, and pragmatic functions. In addition to preserving and showcasing attractive natural scenery, the parkway was designed to display the traditional cultural landscapes of the southern Appalachian highlands, providing visitors with an idealized vision of America's rural heritage. At frequent intervals the

parkway borders expand to encompass smaller parks, recreational areas, and historic sites, many of which include picnic areas and/or overnight accommodations. Blue Ridge Parkway's attractive natural and cultural features, its diverse recreational attractions, and its relatively accessible East Coast location have long made it the most heavily visited unit of the National Park System.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

The Blue Ridge Parkway Recording Project was undertaken in 1996-97 by the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), Eric DeLony, Chief, a long-range program to document historically significant engineering, industrial, and maritime works in the United States. The HAER program is part of the Historic American Buildings Survey/ Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/ HAER) Division of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, E. Blaine Cliver, Chief. Funding was provided by the Federal Lands Highway Office, Thomas Edick Administrator, through the NPS Park Roads and Parkways Program. This recording project was cosponsored by HAER and the Blue Ridge Parkway, Gary Everhardt, Superintendent; Gary Johnson, Chief of Resource Planning and Professional Services; Allen Hess, Cultural Resources Specialist; and Will Orr, Landscape Architect.

The documentation was prepared under the direction of NPS historian Richard Quin and HAER architect Christopher Marston. The recording team consisted of field supervisor Lia Dikigoropoulou; architects Natascha Weiner (foreman), Matthew Stormont, and Carlos Jimenez Rosa (ICOMOS, Spain); landscape architects Ian Shanklin, Cheria Yost, and Lidia Klupsz (ICOMOS, Poland); and illustrator Jennifer K. Cuthbertson. The overview history was prepared by Richard Quin and edited by NPS historians Timothy Davis and Kelly Young. Large format photography produced by David Haas.

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> Wal, I been livin' on this hyar mountain well nigh onto eighty yars, and I been wonderin' what this mountain was fer. Now I know it's fer to put a road on it.
>
> --Mountaineer to Stanley W. Abbott[1]

INTRODUCTION

The Blue Ridge Parkway is many things. It is the longest road planned as a single unit in the United States. It is an elongated park, protecting significant mountain landscapes far beyond the shoulders of the road itself. It is a series of nature preserves replete with high mountain fastnesses, splendid natural gardens of flowering mountain plants, waterfalls and water gaps, deep forests and upland meadows. It is a collection of panoramic views extending into far-off states, making it in one sense the "largest park in the world," as the boundaries of its limited right-of-way are rarely apparent and miles of the adjacent countryside appear to be a part of the protected scene. The parkway is an historic cultural landscape preserving the rough-hewn log cabin of the mountain pioneer, the summer home of a textile magnate, and traces of early industries and transportation networks. It is miles of split-rail fence, moss on a wood shingle roof, broomcorn and flax in a pioneer garden. It is the fleeting glimpse of a deer, a wild turkey or a red fox, or for those who prefer their animal life less wild, a herd of cows lolling in a pasture or horses romping in a field. It is a chain of recreational areas, offering motorists a place to picnic in the woods, a place to sleep overnight in a campground or a charming lodge, to refuel their vehicles, enjoy a meal, or purchase a piece of mountaineer handiwork. It is the product of a series of major public works projects that helped the Appalachian region climb out the depths of the Great Depression. The Blue Ridge Parkway is all these things and much more, therefore it should come as no surprise that this is the most heavily visited unit of the National Park Service.

The Blue Ridge Parkway provides frequent expansive views across a changing countryside, mixing scenes of untouched natural beauty with landscapes reshaped by human handiwork. In addition to featuring some of the finest rural and mountain scenery in the east, the parkway presents motorists with reminders of the culture and history of the Southern Highlands. Traveling the parkway was intended to be a "ride-a-while, stop-a-while" experience. At various stops and parks along the route, old log homes, a rustic mill, outbuildings and rail fences reflect the agricultural heritage of the mountain

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[1]Stanley W. Abbott, "Parks and Parkways: A Creative Field Even When the Task is to Avoid Creation," *Landscape Architecture* XLIV (October 1953), 24.

residents. A reconstructed segment of a logging railway, a restored lock from an antebellum canal, and sites of old mines and other works tell the story of early industries. Farm lands kept in agricultural production through an innovative land lease program maintain the "picture" of the rural landscape. The design and construction of such a road was no small feat, but the culmination of many efforts over long years.

A Grand Setting

The parkway follows its namesake Blue Ridge for 352 miles south from the southern boundary of Shenandoah National Park at Rockfish Gap, to Ridge Junction near Mount Mitchell, where it shifts to follow several mountain ranges west of the Blue Ridge. Here it skirts the southern end of the Black Mountains, the highest range in the east, then passes through the Great Craggies before descending into the valley of the French Broad River. It then climbs along the Pisgah Ledge before crossing the Great Balsam and Plott Balsams highlands and dropping to its terminus at the Oconaluftee River near Cherokee, North Carolina, at the boundary of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Appalachian Mountains, which include all these chains, are among the oldest in North America. Originating at the close of the Permian Era, they once rivaled the Alps in height. Over the millennia, they wore down to a fraction of their former size, but remain the highest in Eastern North America. In the Balsam Mountains, the parkway reaches an elevation of 6,053', making it the highest continuous motor road in the east.

The broad range of elevations along the parkway offers the motorist the experience of traveling through varied ecosystems, ranging from the Southern Piedmont with its rich hardwood forests to high mountain peaks with periglacial spruce-fir forests more characteristic of northern Canada. The rich abundance of flora is one of the chief attractions for parkway visitors, and visitation peaks during summer displays of flowering rhododendron and during the brilliant fall color season. Most of the different plant zones can be observed along the road or from parkway overlooks. Some parkway trails lead to rare patches of old-growth forest.

Topography along the parkway is extremely varied, reflecting the complex structural geology of the Appalachian mountains. It crosses six mountain ranges, four major rivers and more than a hundred gaps. It provides the motorist with a variety of experiences ranging from intimate glimpses of isolated mountain farmsteads to long-reaching views of the highest peaks and dizzying depths. All along the way are parks in to explore, trails to wander, exhibits to visit and overlooks from which to take in the marvelous views.

From Shenandoah south for sixty miles, the parkway follows the main crest of the Blue Ridge before dropping sharply along Dancing and Otter creeks to the James River, one of

four rivers to cut its way through the mountain chain. At 649' in elevation, this is the lowest point along the motor road. The parkway then climbs rapidly to the crest of the Blue Ridge, reaching its highest point in Virginia, Apple Orchard Mountain (3950'), in only eleven miles. It continues southwest, passing the spectacular Peaks of Otter before traversing a knife-edge ridge for another fifty miles before dropping to the Roanoke River, the second of the rivers to cut through the chain. Skirting Roanoke, the largest city in western Virginia, the parkway enters the Virginia plateau district, characterized by gentler terrain, much of it in agricultural production. Passing the stony outcrops of Rocky Knob Park, it continues another fifty miles to reach the North Carolina border at milepost 216. The plateau character of the countryside here gives way to larger and more ridge-like mountains. Swinging around lofty Cumberland Knob, it traverses an especially rugged terrain, the Devils Garden, before breaking out into the high mountain meadows of Doughton Park. Continuing its course to the southwest at an elevation of greater than 3,000', the parkway passes by the summer resort community of Blowing Rock, then climbs high along the highest point in the Blue Ridge, 5,837' Grandfather Mountain, on the magnificent Linn Cove Viaduct, a structure designed to alleviate scarring of this fragile and beautiful mountainside. Eleven miles further southwest, the road drops to the Linville River Valley; just to the south, the river plunges over Linville Falls into the spectacular Linville Gorge. The parkway itself begins another steady climb, following the Blue Ridge another thirty miles to Ridge Junction. At Gillespie Gap, the Museum of North Carolina Minerals highlights the importance of the minerals industries to the region. At Ridge Junction, on the shoulder of 6,684' Mount Mitchell, the road leaves the Blue Ridge, crossing the edge of the Black Mountains before negotiating the Great Craggies, a cross range known for its early summer displays of rhododendron and mountain laurel. A downhill glide of more than 3,000' carries the parkway to Asheville and the French Broad River. A sixteen-mile climb takes the parkway up to Mount Pisgah, a well-known landmark of western North Carolina, then the road follows the Pisgah Ledge another ten miles to the southwest before swinging sharply to the northwest at Beech Gap. From there, it climbs to its high point of 6,053' near the summit of Richland Balsam Mountain, drops three thousand feet to Balsam Gap, then climbs over the Plott Balsams at Waterrock Knob. Passing over a spur of Heintooga Ridge, the parkway drops through the Qualla Reservation, home of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee, to reach its terminus at the Oconaluftee River in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 469.9 miles from the road's beginning.

The parkway passes through a series of distinct ecological zones, which the National Park Service have defined and delineated in order to divide the parkway into a system of scientifically based management districts. In each of these districts, the design and management of the road is influenced by the local topography and conditions. At the northern end, the parkway passes through the Ridge District, climbing and descending mountain ridges and gaps. Most of this section is forested, though several small

agricultural areas are encountered. At one point, the parkway drops along Otter Creek to the James River, but most of the zone is characterized as a ridgeline route, offering spectacular views of the Great Valley to the west and adjacent mountain ridges to the east.

Below Roanoke, the parkway enters the Virginia Plateau District. The overall elevation is lower, averaging between 2,000' and 3,000', and much of the land adjacent to the parkway is in agricultural production. For most of the distance to the North Carolina border, the parkway closely parallels the Blue Ridge escarpment, offering views down to the Piedmont region to the east and across broken mountain terrain toward the Allegheny Mountains to the west. Farm lands characterize the region, and motorists enjoy seeing what parkway landscape architect Stanley Abbott called "a managed museum of the American countryside," replete with old homesteads, barns, fields and pasture. This very countryside is rapidly changing, however, as residential developments are replacing many of the old farms. The relatively narrow right-of-way through Virginia exacerbates the problem, and many of the new developments are unfortunately visible from the parkway.

Entering North Carolina, the parkway gains elevation as it climbs into the Highland District. Experiences are quite varied; in some places, the road is a ridge-line route; at other points, it crosses mid-slope sections as it drops to follow streams. Much of the district is heavily forested, but small farms appear from time to time. The climb begins at the state line, as the parkway skirts around Cumberland Knob, passing through the convoluted "Devils Garden" before emerging in the high mountain meadows of Doughton Park. From there, the parkway drops to Deep Gap, then crosses more broken mountain country before reaching the North Carolina resort community of Blowing Rock.

Beyond Blowing Rock, the parkway enters the Black Mountain District, passing the large Moses H. Cone and Julian Price memorial parks before climbing the shoulder of 5,964' Grandfather Mountain. Crossing the Linn Cove Viaduct below the mountain's summit, the parkway makes its way through a rugged district of isolated peaks and ridges before dropping somewhat to cross the Linville River on a majestic three-arched stone-faced bridge just above Linville Falls, one of the most popular of the parkway's recreational areas. The road continues to follow the Blue Ridge beyond Crabtree Meadows park until it reaches Ridge Junction at milepost 355.4. Here, the parkway leaves the Blue Ridge to skirt around the edge of the Black Mountains, with views now dominated by 6,684' Mount Mitchell, the highest peak east of the Mississippi. Within six miles, the road enters the Great Craggy Mountains and the Pisgah District.

Passing by the Craggy Gardens with their spectacular summer rhododendron displays, the parkway makes a long descent to the French Broad River at Asheville. Skirting around

the city to the south, the parkway then climbs steadily up to Mount Pisgah, whose conical summit is a distinct landmark of the region. Running south along Pisgah Ledge, the parkway ranges through a wild high-mountain landscape, passing the exposed granite dome of Looking Glass Rock, the purportedly haunted Graveyard Fields, and lofty Devils Courthouse before making a descent to Balsam Gap. Here, the parkway makes a sharp turn to the northwest and climbs to its highest elevation where it crosses the Balsam Mountains. It passes over a final range, the Plott Balsams, before dropping to Soco Gap, then descends along Wolf Laurel Ridge to the Oconaluftee River, the parkway's southern terminus in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

For most of its 469 miles, the parkway right-of-way is a narrow band, rarely exceeding 2,000' in width except at widely spaced parks or protected areas. For more than 200 miles, the parkway passes through national forest lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service. In Virginia, the parkway traverses 60 miles through the Pedlar Ranger District of the George Washington National Forest, and 35 miles of the Glenwood Ranger District of the Jefferson National Forest. In North Carolina, it extends 85 miles across the Grandfather, Catawba and Pisgah ranger districts of the Pisgah National Forest, and 20 miles of the Highlands Ranger District of the Nantahala National Forest. The parkway also borders North Carolina's Stone Mountain State Park for five miles along the boundary between Ashe and Wilkes counties, and for a mile-and-a-half, follows the border of the Thurmond Chatham Wildlife Management Area near Doughton Park.[2] Several adjacent areas are protected as parts of the Asheville, Hendersonville, and Waynesville watersheds. All the rest of the route is flanked by private lands. The parkway's relatively narrow width is rarely evident to the traveler. The designers of the road were careful to select locations along mountain crests, midslope sections, and occasional valleys, mostly out of view of towns and developed areas. For the motorist, the experience of that of a park without boundaries, with views extending far beyond the actual right-of-way over the greater part of the distance.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

How it Was in the Old Days

Cultures long predating the Indians of historic times once occupied the mountainous region through which the parkway passes. Archaeological evidence shows the area was inhabited in pre-Columbian times. By the early 1700s, the region was home to a number of tribes, including the Catawba, Tutelo, Monoacan, Saponi, and Cherokee. During the

[2]"Federal and State Lands," map, in Blue Ridge Parkway, Division of Resource Planning and Professional Services, "Blue Ridge Parkway, Statement for Management," Blue Ridge Parkway (hereafter BLRI) Division of Resource Planning and Professional Services (hereafter, BLRI RP&PS), March 1989.

eighteenth century, the powerful Iroquois confederation defeated most of the smaller tribes in the north part of the range, while the Cherokee ruled the south mountains.

With the coming of European settlers conflicts inevitably arose. Several points along the parkway route mark scenes of strife between Indians and whites. By the early nineteenth century most of the natives had been driven out. Beginning in the 1730s, white settlers began establishing themselves in the mountain region. Many of these were Scots-Irish and Germans who preferred to live apart from the predominantly English settlements to the east. By the time of the Revolution, a distinct pattern of subsistence farming had emerged. Most settlers occupied small farms, planting crops, tending livestock, and supplementing these stores with native game. Cattle and livestock were driven to markets in the fall, producing income that could be used to purchase manufactured goods. Corn and apples were often distilled, as liquor was far easier to transport than crops and brought a better price. These practices all survive, albeit on a reduced scale.

The Southern Highlands remained a predominantly agricultural region until the parkway was created. By the early 1930s, however, much of the land had been denuded by poor farming and logging practices. Steep slopes were badly eroded, and the remaining thin soil produced less and less in the way of crops. Even before the outbreak of the Great Depression, many mountain residents faced extreme difficulties. For many local residents, the coming of the parkway would change their lives dramatically. Many sold off their lands for the new road, and their old farms were allowed to return to nature, or carefully restored to keep up the agricultural "scene." Others were resettled to make room for recreational parks. Some found employment with the parkway itself, and others were able to make better livings by providing for parkway visitors. For many, this first good road in the region marked an end to generations of isolation.

Parkways

The concept of a "parkway" borrowed some elements from eighteenth century English landscape design, such as Capability Brown's design for Stowe, in which the approach roads were designed with contrived vistas. English landscape designer Humphry Repton's plans for estate roads at Woburn and Sherringham utilized circuitous routing to present interesting and attractive views from controlled points, the remainder of the approaches being through closed-in, wilder landscapes.[3]

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[3]E. Lynn Miller, "The Blue Ridge Parkway in Historical Design Perspective," in Barry M. Buxton and Steven M Beatty, editors, *Blue Ridge Parkway: Agent of Transition: Proceedings of the Blue Ridge Parkway Golden Anniversary Conference* (Boone, NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1993), 65-66.

On the continent, a series of parks were designed by Hermann Ludwig Heinrich, Fürst von Pückler-Muskau, privy councilor to the King of Saxony. Prince Pückler inherited large estates and developed them as parklands, employing a series of winding roads and carriage drives designed to present attractive views. According to landscape historian Norman Newton, he deplored the "so-called English style" where "straight roads are then curved into corkscrew forms which are just as mechanical, serpentining in the most tedious manner." To the sides of his roads, he carefully manipulated the landscape for effect, diverting the Niesse River to form a series of artificial lakes, opening up meadows to allow for broad-reaching views, and establishing flower gardens and groves of stately trees for scenic effect. His work attracted considerable attention. The French emperor Louis Napoleon later sought his advice in reworking the roads in Paris' principal park, the Bois de Boulogne, from axial *allées* to a network of winding, more naturalistic roads.[4]

These European design concepts evidently influenced renowned American landscape planners Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. Their Greensward Plan for Central Park (1858) featured pleasure drives for horsemen and carriages and the separation of park roadways from the New York City street grid. Wide boulevards were featured in their 1868 plan for Prospect Park in Brooklyn. A year later, they produced plans for parkways for Buffalo and Chicago.[5] In 1880, Olmsted proposed construction of a winding carriage drive along Boston's Muddy River between Back Bay and Franklin Park. The work, which involved rehabilitating the banks of the river, would take fifteen years to complete. Three years later, Horace W. S. Cleveland proposed a network of parks connected by boulevards for Minneapolis.[6] By this point, the term "parkway" had come to define a landscaped roadway connecting two or more parks.

In Boston in the 1890s, landscape architect Charles Eliot likewise proposed a system of parkways to connect various park units in the city's metropolitan district. His plans called for 120' rights-of-way and restricting use to pleasure traffic. The 1901 Senate Park Commission plan for Washington, D.C., proposed a series of parkways to link parks

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[4]Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 233-41.

[5]Miller, "Blue Ridge Parkway in Historical Design Perspective," 65, 69; Edward H. Abbuehl, "U.S. Parkway Chronology, 1866-1956," MSS, n.d., BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 38, Box 54, Folder 16; and Ian J. Firth, "Historic Resource Study, Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia and North Carolina," draft edition, August 1993, 16, BLRI Library.

[6]Abbuehl, "U.S. Parkway Chronology, 1866-1956," 1.

in the national capital with each other and with Great Falls on the Potomac River; these schemes were partiallly realized by the 1960s.[7]

The first acknowledged modern motor parkway was the Bronx River Parkway, which was designed to connect the Bronx Zoological Park and Botanical Gardens with the Kensico Reservoir. Planned for horse and carriage traffic in 1906 before the proliferation of the automobile, it was intended originally to clean up the fouled Bronx River valley. The 15-mile parkway drive was planned later. It was originally conceived, though not constructed, as two separated roadways on individual alignments. Easy curvature, naturalistic treatment of roadside slopes, limited access and a wide right-of-way intended to protect the roadside margins from development and preserve natural resources were all features employed n the Bronx River Parkway and later adopted for National Park Service parkway development. Another important distinction was landscape design especially for the motorist: the view ahead, rather than to the side of the road, was the controlling factor, and design was carried out to accommodate the higher speeds of the automobile.[8]

High acclaim for the success of the Bronx River Parkway led Westchester County, through which most of the route passed, to construct additional parkways. Between 1913 and 1931, the county spent $60 million to buy land and construct three additional parkways: the Hutchinson River (completed 1928), Saw Mill River (1929), and Cross County (1931) parkways. These were generally four-lane roads with protective rights-of-way ranging from 200' to 1,700' in width. In addition to the protected road corridor, the parkways feature recreational areas including parks and beaches.[9] While designed as parkways with an emphasis on landscape treatments and recreational development, they were also used heavily as commuter roads.

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[7]Miller, "Blue Ridge Parkway in Historical Design Perspective," 69-71; Nancy Kepner Robinson, "Managing Change: The Blue Ridge Parkway as a Museum of Managed American Countryside" (M.L.A. Thesis, University of Georgia, 1993), 211; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 18.

[8]John B. Bright, "The Blue Ridge Parkway: A Catalyst for Environmental Design Innovation," in Barry M. Buxton and Steven M Beatty, editors, *Blue Ridge Parkway: Agent of Transition: Proceedings of the Blue Ridge Parkway Golden Anniversary Conference* (Boone, NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1993), 55.

[9]Frank B. Burggraf, "The Parkway--A Uniquely American Construct--Is it Obsolete?," in Barry M. Buxton and Steven M Beatty, editors, *Blue Ridge Parkway: Agent of Transition: Proceedings of the Blue Ridge Parkway Golden Anniversary Conference* (Boone, NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1993), 25; and U.S. Department of Commerce, *A Proposed Program for Scenic Roads and Parkways* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, June 1966), 105-07.

The chief engineer for the Westchester County parkways was Jay Downer, appointed to the post in 1912. He subsequently assembled a team of talented engineers and landscape architects to oversee construction of the suburban parkway system. Downer and three of his staff later played important roles on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Downer was the Blue Ridge Parkway's original consulting engineer, and Gilmore Clarke was the original consulting landscape architect.[10] Their tenure as consultants with the Blue Ridge Parkway would prove short-lived after a quarrel with Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes over their pay rate, but two other staff members would be significant members of the Blue Ridge staff. Landscape architect Stanley W. Abbott, who handled public relations for the Bronx River and other Westchester County parkway projects, would become the Blue Ridge Parkway's guiding genius and first superintendent. Landscape architect Hendrick E. van Gelder would assume a similar role on the Blue Ridge and help determine much of the parkway route through Virginia.

Inspired by the Westchester County parkways, New York planning czar Robert Moses coordinated the planning and construction of an extensive series of parkways in New York City and on Long Island. By the mid 1930s there were more than 114 miles of urban and suburban parkways in the two systems.[11] These roads set the standard for modern motor parkway design, and similar projects were soon being constructed in the nation's capital and elsewhere.

A new sort of "parkway" emerged in the late 1930s and the 1940s. Unlike earlier parkways, which emphasized pleasure driving, the new parkways were essentially high-speed motorways that utilized protected rights-of-way to limit access. Connecticut's Merritt Parkway, completed in 1940, was built as a major traffic artery, but its ornate bridges and landscape design gave it distinction from ordinary highways.[12] Unlike earlier parkways, it was designed for motorists to travel at speeds of up to 60 miles per hour. New York's Taconic State Parkway, connecting the Bronx River Parkway with upstate New York, was a similar high-speed route, though most observers considered it to be much bettered designed from an aesthetic standpoint. Gilmore Clarke, who had left the Westchester County Park Commission in 1935 to enter private practice, was a design consultant on this project. Clarke also consulted on later high-speed parkways such as the Palisades Parkway along the heights on the western side of the Hudson River between

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[10]Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 18-19.

[11]Abbuehl, "U.S. Parkway Chronology, 1866-1956," 2.

[12]Gabrielle Esperdy, "Merritt Parkway," HAER No. CT-63 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, HABS/HAER Division, 1992).

the George Washington Bridge and Bear Mountain State Park, and the George Washington Memorial Parkway along the Potomac River opposite Washington, D.C.[13]

By this point, an entirely new type of high-speed highway system was introduced in Germany, a *national* highway system. The German Reichsautobahnen, started in 1934 under Nazi engineer Fritz Todt, were planned to be a network of 14,000 kilometers of high-speed highway carefully landscaped, on Adolph Hitler's insistence, as a permanent memorial to Nazi aesthetics. This national highway system was part of Hitler's ambitious plan for the motorization of Germany, though when World War II broke out in 1939, only about 3,700 kilometers of the system had been constructed, much of it on the so-called "Party Route" between Berlin, Nuremburg and Linz, Hitler's birthplace.[14] The military implications of these roads became apparent when they were used to transport Hitler's Wehrmacht rapidly across Germany in preparation for blitzkrieg offensives, and late in the war by Allied troops as they rushed toward Berlin as the Reich collapsed.

In 1944, American highway planners began planning a national highway network known as the "Interstate and Defense Highway System." Like the German system, this was intended to be a nation-wide system of high-speed highways enabling easy cross-country travel. As with the Reichsautobahnen, the potential military capabilities of the new highways helped secure the requisite mammoth funding outlays which were authorized in the 1956.... Although a few interstates are notable for their landscape design, most are simply wide, limited-access highways designed as major traffic arteries, and are often decried as blights upon the landscape.

Parkways and the National Park Service

Prior to the establishment of the Blue Ridge Parkway, a small number of parkways had been transferred to the National Park Service, or established as separate administrative units. Others were constructed simultaneously with, or after, its completion. The first of these National Park Service parkways bore many similarities to the Westchester County parkway system. They were basically limited access roadways with protected right-of-way buffers connecting already established park units.

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[13]Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 33-35.

[14]Richard Overy, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of the Third Reich* (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1996), 44-45.

The first federal parkway was the Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway in Washington, D.C.[15] Designed as a pleasure drive to connect West Potomac Park with the Rock Creek Park, the road was authorized by Congress in 1913. Like the Bronx River Parkway, the project was intended in part as an urban redevelopment project to clean up the polluted lower Rock Creek Valley. Construction began in the 1920s but the work was periodically delayed and it was not completed until 1936. Although only 2.5 miles in length, it is significant as the first federally authorized parkway. Originally administered by the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, the road was transferred to the National Park Service in May 1933 (45 Stat. 721). The Piney Branch Parkway, a shorter access route to Rock Creek Park authorized in 1907 was transferred under the same act.[16]

On 23 May 1928, Congress authorized construction of the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway between Washington and the country home of the nation's first president.[17] The enabling legislation authorized the 15-mile highway and the "planting of shade trees and shrubbery and for other landscape treatment, parking and ornamental structures," and called for a minimum right-of-way extending beyond the roadway. Built over the next four years, it was the first federal parkway to be completed. The Bureau of Public Roads, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was placed in charge of the project, but Jay Downer and Gilmore Clarke played consulting roles as they later would with the Blue Ridge Parkway. Other Westchester County parkway personnel, notably landscape architect Wilbur Simonson and plantsman Henry Nye, were directly involved with the original design. The road was completed in 1932. It too was transferred to the National Park Service in May 1933. Although the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway was essentially a suburban route, it proved influential in subsequent parkway design. It was the Bureau of Public Roads' first venture in parkway development and Wilbur Simonson described it as "a valuable research laboratory" for subsequent projects. The road utilized spiral transitional curves, separated roadway sections, planted screens along the borders, and naturalistically graded cross sections, features adopted on future parkways. An extension of the route north to Great Falls Park was authorized in 1930. Renamed the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the entire project was declared complete in

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[15]Timothy Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," HAER No. DC-697 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, HABS/HAER Division, 1992).

[16]Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway;" and Nathan R. Margold, Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, "Memorandum for the Secretary," 11 June 1935, in "Right-of-Way, North Carolina," in "Early Right-of-Way Reports and Correspondence, Design Construction Division," BLRI Library.

[17]Timothy Davis, "George Washington Memorial Parkway," HAER No. VA-69 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, HABS/HAER Division, 1994).

1966, though the northern terminus only reached the Capital Beltway, not Great Falls as originally intended.[18]

In July 1930, Congress established the Colonial Parkway as part of Colonial National Historical Park in Virginia.[19] It was intended to connect Jamestown Island with the restored colonial capital of Williamsburg and the Yorktown battlefield. The 22-mile road was intended chiefly to connect the various historical sites, but it was carefully routed to take advantage of the scenic features of the Tidewater region through which it passed. The park legislation authorized condemnatation of rights-of-way not to exceed 500' in width for the parkway. Construction began in 1931, but the parkway was not completed until 1951. It was the first parkway with which the National Park Service was formally involved, setting the precedent for Park Service administration of future parkways.[20]

In 1931, construction began on the Skyline Drive within the area being acquired by the Commonwealth of Virginia for Shenandoah National Park. While not technically a parkway in that it was an internal park road rather than a connecting link between different parks or sites, this scenic mountain crest drive was the direct progenitor of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Indeed, the Blue Ridge Parkway was conceived as an extension of the Skyline Drive all the way to Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

In the 1930s, the National Park Service proposed an elaborate parkway development program aimed at extending the concepts proven in the New York and early federal parkways to significantly longer projects. These came to be called "scenic rural parkways." In contrast to the relatively short suburban parkways surrounding New York City and commemorative routes such as the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and the Colonial Parkway, the rural parkways were intended to stretch for long distances with broader recreational areas provided at regular intervals. Although a large number of such roads were proposed, only a handful were actually constructed. The Blue Ridge Parkway was the epitome of this concept.

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[18]A. E. Demaray, Associate Director, National Park Service, "Discussion of Federal Parkways Before Council Meeting of the American Planning and Civic Association," Washington, D. C., 24 January 1936, in "Parkways: A Manual of the Revised Requirements, Instructions and Information Relating to National Parkways for Use in the National Park Service" (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, Branch of Lands and Use, 1938) Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record Library; "Highways in Harmony: George Washington Memorial Parkway" (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Historic American Engineering Record, 1996); Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 24-26; and Margold, "Memorandum for the Secretary."

[19]Michael Bennett, "Colonial National Historical Park Roads and Bridges," HAER No. VA-115 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, HABS/HAER Division, 1995).

[20]Demaray, "Discussion of Federal Parkways."

The National Park Service did not undertake the construction of rural parkways on its own, but worked in close cooperation with the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), which since 1926 had assumed responsibility for the construction of most roads in the parks. BPR Chief Thomas MacDonald, who eagerly supported the parkway concept, thought of parkways not as mere highways but as "elongated parks" that would contain "mass recreational areas" along the route, which could include natural attractions, picnic grounds, or other opportunities for outdoor activities.[21]

Whether long or short, a "parkway" was much more than the motor road itself. The concept included a substantial right-of-way to either side, partially owned outright (or "fee simple" property), and partly in scenic easements which left the land in private ownership but gave the government control over roadside uses and development. The width of the protected corridor would vary according to the topographic situation or the need to protect natural or cultural resources along the route. Certain larger areas along the Blue Ridge Parkway would be acquired and maintained as "parks," providing protection for larger areas such as entire mountains or valleys, or to afford for recreational developments such as campgrounds, picnic areas, or overnight lodging.

National Park Service Associate Director A. E. Demaray discussed the ideal characteristics of federal parkways in a 14 April 1933 address on WMAL radio, Washington, D.C. Demaray recounted the 1928 legislation that had provided for the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, and the directives that two years later authorized the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Colonial Parkway. The legislation for the three roads made reference to landscape development, ornamental structures, and plantings for scenic effect. The parkways were to be designed to a high standard, with roadsides "insulated to give the motorist . . . an impression of being out in the great open spaces, far from industrial or other commercial developments." A minimum right-of-way of 800' would prevent the erection of billboards, hot dog stands, and other "eyesores" within view of the road. Commercial traffic would not be allowed to use the roads.[22]

National Park Service landscape architect Dudley C. Bayliss, who worked with national parkways beginning in 1934, stated that national parkways were "essentially elongated

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[21]"Parkways of the Future: A Radio Discussion between Mr. MacDonald, Chief of the United States Bureau of Public Roads and Mr. Demaray, Associate Director of the National Park Service," transcript of an NBC radio broadcast, 13 April 1935, in "Parkways: A Manual of the Revised Requirements, Instructions and Information Relating to National Parkways for Use in the National Park Service" (Washington, D.C., National Park Service, 1938), Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record Library.

[22]Harley Jolley, *Painting with a Comet's Tail: The Touch of the Landscape Architect on the Blue Ridge Parkway* (Boone, NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1987), 13-14.

parks, in which the campgrounds, picnic areas, lodges and other visitor services are planned and developed [and] selected to best fit the topography and requirements of the project."[23] In 1936, the Recreational Committee of the National Resources Committee also issued a definition of "parkway," terming it "a strip of public land devoted to recreation which features a pleasure-vehicle road through its entire length, on which occupancy and commercial development are excluded, and over which abutting property has no right of light, air, or access."[24]

By the mid-1930s, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes had approved basic standards for the various national parkway projects. These set forth requirements for sufficient right-of-way to protect roadside environments, the elimination of grade crossings for railways and major highways, limiting access from minor roadways, a high standard in road design to allow for easy and safe motoring, design of bridges and structures to harmonize with the adjacent scenery, roadside landscape treatments to enhance the appearance of the roads, and recreation and service areas to provide for recreation and motorist needs.[25]

The acquisition of right-of-way in order to protect the sides of the Blue Ridge Parkway was borrowed from earlier precedents such as the Westchester County parkway system, as was the provision for limited access. By avoiding grade crossings with railways and major highways, and limiting the number of crossings of minor roads, "friction" in the traffic stream would be reduced. Traffic would not have to halt at major intersections or slow for cars entering from side roads. The wide right-of-way would provide both for protection of the roadsides and allow for naturalistic landscape treatments along the corridor.

The high design standards called for carefully studied alignment and grades, easy curvature, and location to present scenic features to one traveling at motorway speeds. Properly designed bridges, overpasses and underpasses, and other road-related structures might entail construction in native materials, or at least unobtrusive design so as not to call attention from the natural setting. Development of roadside "parks" and other developments would provide opportunities for outdoor recreation such as picnicking and

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[23]Dudley C. Bayliss, *Planning Our National Park Roads and Our National Parkways* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1957), 423.

[24]Dudley C. Bayliss, "Parkway Development Under the National Park Service" *Parks and Recreation* XX (February 1937), 255.

[25]Bayliss, "Parkway Development," 256.

hiking, or for motorists services such as gas stations, coffee shops, or overnight lodging. Some such areas might be set aside only to protect natural or cultural features.[26]

Parkways differed from national park roads in that their locations were established to conform with the selected route, whereas park roads were developed within existing designated areas. They differed from ordinary state and federal highways in that they carried no commercial traffic, featured wide rights-of-way to protect the roadside environs, and were located for the best scenic effect. Most ordinary roads followed the shortest route between destinations; and little attention was paid to aesthetic issues.[27]

The Interior Department established a policy that the states through which a national parkway would pass would be required to acquire the necessary land for rights-of-way and scenic easements, then deed them to the federal government. The Interior Department would then work with the Bureau of Public Roads (and its successors, the Public Roads Administration and the Federal Highway Administration) to design and construct the road. To direct the states in the acquisition of the requisite land, the Interior Department prepared a pamphlet on the standards, entitled *Requirements and Procedures to Govern the Acquisition of Land for National Parkways*.[28]

The Blue Ridge Parkway, proposed in 1933, was not originally authorized as a National Park Service project. However, it soon became an NPS responsibility. Other parkways that followed in close succession were NPS projects from the beginning. The Natchez Trace Parkway, connecting Natchez, Mississippi and Nashville, Tennessee, was authorized on 19 June 1934 (48 Stat. 791). It was to share characteristics of both the Colonial and Blue Ridge parkways. As with Colonial, it was intended largely as an "historical parkway," following the route of the Indian trail and post road and interpreting various related historical sites along the way. However, it also was designed to showcase the varied natural scenery along the way, from southern blackwater swamps of Mississippi to the rolling hill country of Tennessee's Highland Rim. Like the Blue Ridge Parkway, it includes a number of roadside parks or developed areas along its 445-mile stretch. Construction of the Natchez Trace Parkway began in 1938 but some segments remained incomplete as of 1998.

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[26]Bayliss, "Parkway Development," 257.

[27]Stanley W. Abbott, "Requirements and Procedure to Govern the Acquisition of Rights of Way for National Parkways," 15 August 1936, in National Park Service, "Parkways: A Manual of Requirements, Instructions and Information for Use in the National Park Service" (Washington, D.C., National Park Service, 1937), Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record Library.

[28]Bayliss, *Planning Our National Park Roads*, 426.

The Colonial Parkway, Skyline Drive, and early segments of the Natchez Trace Parkway were all largely funded with public works funds as a part of the New Deal, President Franklin Roosevelt's relief program aimed at bringing the United States out of the throes of the Great Depression. The main objective was to relieve unemployment. The projects placed thousands of unemployed workers back on the payrolls. Funds spent on materials, supplies and construction equipment also had a beneficial effect by stimulating economic growth in these industries. The public works aspects of parkway construction would be epitomized by the Blue Ridge Parkway, the most extensive, and expensive, of all parkway projects.

Two other parkways in the National Capital Region were initiated as military access roads connecting Fort Meade and Andrews Air Force Base with Washington. After World War II, the 22-mile Baltimore-Washington Parkway and the 9-mile Suitland Parkway were transferred to the National Park Service for completion. Although they share certain parkway characteristics such as protected rights-of-way and stone-faced bridges and retaining walls, the two parkways carry heavy volumes of commuter traffic and function primarily as freeways rather than as recreational or scenic parkways. As early as the 1950s, the National Park Service sought to transfer them to state jurisdiction; in 1995, the Clinton administration announced similar plans, but no concrete action was taken in that direction.

In 1931 to honor the recently deceased first director of the National Park Service the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service jointly designated 61 miles of the Washington Highway 410 between Seattle and Yakima, Washington as the "Mather Memorial Parkway." Eleven miles of the road passed through Mount Rainier National Park, crossing the Cascades at Cayuse Pass. Although the highway had already been constructed, the Forest Service agreed to set aside a half-mile strip along the road as it crossed fifty miles of Forest Service land, protecting some 24,500 acres of timbered land from logging. The portion of the road through the park was, of course, already protected. Protection of the right-of-way beyond the roadway is the feature which marks the road as a parkway; there are no recreational areas or other interpreted sites along its course.[29]

The Foothills Parkway was planned to skirt the northern boundary of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, offering scenic vistas of the lofty mountain chain from the lower hills. The 72-mile parkway was authorized in 1944 and construction began in

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[29]Richard Quin, "Mather Memorial Parkway (Washington Highway 410)", HAER No. WA-125 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, HABS/HAER Division, 1992).

1960.[30] Several sections were completed and opened to travel. Work on the project was suspended due to funding problems and environmental concerns, chiefly worries that acid leachate from road cuts would contaminate streams.

The John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway, authorized in 1972, is an 82-mile corridor linking the north entrance of Grand Teton National Park with the south entrance to Yellowstone National Park. A redesignation of an existing highway to commemorate Rockefeller's contributions to many park units (including the Blue Ridge Parkway), the road's chief purpose was to protect the corridor between the two national parks from development and commercial exploitation.

Several proposed parkways were never even begun. In 1933, $50,000 was allocated under the National Industrial Recovery Act for surveys for a "Green Mountain Parkway" in Vermont, though construction was never authorized. In 1935, Congress authorized the "Washington Lincoln Memorial-Gettysburg Boulevard," a parkway connecting the Lincoln Memorial with the Gettysburg battlefield.[31] Probably intended as another parkway, the project was never funded and no construction ensued. A Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Parkway was authorized in 1950 as part of the development of Chesapeake & Ohio National Historical Park. It was to run alongside the canal for 25 miles through the Green Ridge State Forest near Hancock, Maryland.[32] Although studies were carried out in the 1950s, the parkway was never constructed.

In 1951, the National Park Service completed a survey for the Mississippi River Parkway, later redesignated The Great River Road, which would generally follow the Mississippi River from a junction with the Trans-Canada Highway to the Gulf of Mexico. Unlike other national parkways, most of the route was planned to incorporate existing roads, adapting large stretches to parkway-like standards through the use of scenic easements, purchase of natural or cultural resources along the route to ensure their protection, and provision of recreational areas for travelers.[33] The National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads would work with the states in the planning for the road's design and development. The project depended on authorization and funding from the various states and provinces, however, and progress was haphazard. Although much of the route was designated and posted, only small segments have been developed to parkway standards.

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[30]Foothills Parkway Association, "Welcome to the Foothills Parkway, Walland to Caylor Gap," information leaflet, October 1996.

[31]Demaray, "Discussion of Federal Parkways."

[32]Bayliss, *Planning Our National Park Roads*, 425.

[33]Bayliss, *Planning Our National Park Roads*, 436-40.

While construction continues on the Natchez Trace and Foothills parkways, the Great River Road effectively marked the closing chapter of National Park Service efforts to create new scenic parkways.

Park-to-Park Highways

While the urban parkways in Westchester County, New York, Boston, and other metropolitan areas set the precedent for publicly owned and protected scenic or recreational roads connecting two or more parks, there were other precedents for long-distance tourist oriented motor roads. The National Park Service followed the general concept in the construction of its first parkways.

In the 1920s, automobile clubs and tourism interests pushed for a improved highway system between the national parks and monuments, which were then almost entirely located in the West. The National Park Service encouraged the efforts, and a national "Park-to-Park Highway" movement was organized. State highway departments were pushed to improve connecting state roads, and the federal State Aid Highway Program helped fund some segments. At the encouragement of National Park Service Director Stephen Mather, a National Park-to-Park Highway Association was formed, and it worked to designate existing roads as parts of this nationwide network, publishing guides and maps to help motorists navigate between parks. For a while, the National Park Service provided limited assistance to states access roads to certain parks, but the association folded by the 1940s.

In 1930, a new Eastern National Park-to-Park Highway Association proposed a series of highways connecting the various national parks in the east. The proposal, spearheaded by Kentucky Congressman Maurice H. Thatcher, included a highway between the newly created Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains national parks. It was published in 1930, three years before what is now the Blue Ridge Parkway was formally proposed. The Eastern parks highway scheme was never implemented, but it set the precedent for the Blue Ridge Parkway.[34]

In 1934, National Park Service Historical Technician R. L. Jones prepared a study for another major National Park-to-Park Highway for the eastern states. Jones proposed a roadway connecting the White Plains Battlefield in the Hudson Valley with Morristown National Military Park, Gettysburg National Military Park, Antietem National Military Park, Shenandoah National Park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Mammoth Cave National Park, Fort Donelson National Military Park, Shiloh National Military

[34]Robinson, "Managing Change," 8.

Park, Vicksburg National Military Park, and the Chalmette Battlefield Site (now a unit of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park & Preserve). Spur roads would lead from this corridor to connect with most of the other existing battlefield parks and historic sites in the eastern states.[35]

Jones placed special emphasis on the section between the Shenandoah and the Great Smoky Mountains national parks. For scenic and historic interest, he claimed, such a road "would be difficult to match on this continent." Jones did not propose a ridgeline route, but suggested the road should follow a line connecting the communities of Waynesboro, Buena Vista, Salem, Radford, Wytheville, and Damascus, then traverse southwest to the Great Smokies. This route, following the Great Valley to the northwest of the Blue Ridge, had historical significance, having been used by most of the pioneers who settled Kentucky, Tennessee and southwest Virginia. An alternate line would veer south from Roanoke, then cross into North Carolina as far south as Sparta, at which point it would lead west to the Tennessee-North Carolina border, which it would follow to the Smokies.[36] This report did not lead directly to any parkway construction, either, but the 30 June 1936 act formally creating the "Blue Ridge Parkway" (Public Law 848, 74th Congress), introduced by Congressman Robert L. Doughton, stated the road's purpose was to connect the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains with a recreationally oriented motor road.

What is now the Blue Ridge Parkway was proposed in 1933 though its current name, route and appearance had not yet been determined. To many state officials, what was proposed was merely a new road to connect two new national parks. State officials gave little thought to design details and limitation on frontage rights and access. Instead, they mostly thought of the parkway as another road project, albeit on a lengthy scale. Indeed, the bill passed by the Virginia General Assembly in February 1934 merely authorized the State Highway Commission "to add to the State highway system a route from a point at or near Jarmans Gap running generally in a southwesterly direction, at or near the crest of the mountain as it may deem advisable, to the North Carolina or Tennessee line."[37]

A major reason for this vague language was that, outside of the northeastern United States, parkways were still few and far between . In a 1938 report, Stanley Abbott described the parkway concept as "a relatively new and highly specialized solution for the

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[35]R. L. Jones, Historical Technician, National Park Service, "Memorandum for Mr. Chatelain," 14 March 1934, 1-2, National Archives, Blue Ridge Parkway Catalog No. 7957, RG 7, Series 41.

[36]Jones, "Memorandum for Mr. Chatelain," 2-5.

[37]Granville Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, MSS, n.d., 30-31, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 38, Folder 2.

traffic problem." The Blue Ridge Parkway was a pioneer type of interstate recreational planning of a magnitude never before attempted. Abbott defined it as "a road devoted to recreation and located within an 'elongated park.'" According to Abbott, a broad strip of surrounding park land would eliminate the "parasitic and unsightly border development of the hot-dog stand, the gasoline shack, and the billboard," and allow the natural scenery to be preserved and beautified. Road crossings would be eliminated through grade separation structures, and at-grade accesses would be restricted to reduce disruptive and dangerous cross-traffic.

The planned series of recreational parks would be attractions in themselves, and provide the visitor with both recreational opportunities and service facilities.[38] Abbott insisted the ambitious undertaking was a "pioneer project of a scale and character new to the National Park Service and new as well to the field of recreational planning."[39] But the idea of a road down the Blue Ridge had been floated long before.

The "Crest of the Blue Ridge Highway"

Long before the Blue Ridge Parkway was conceived, there was a proposal for a mountain roadway following much of its route. In 1906, Dr. Joseph Hyde Pratt, the head of the North Carolina Geological and Economic Survey, launched a campaign for the construction of a scenic highway down the spine of the Blue Ridge. The road was intended as a toll road, but Pratt and his backers hoped that the counties through which the road would pass, as well as the state and federal governments, would make appropriations for the project. The road was planned to extend from Marion, Virginia to Tallulah, Georgia, via Boone, Blowing Rock, Linville, Altapass, Little Switzerland, Asheville, Hendersonville, Brevard, Lake Toxaway and Highlands, then on into Georgia. Pratt estimated the 350-mile road would cost $55,000 per mile for a total cost of $1.75 million. The right-of-way would be 24' wide and the road itself would be 9' wide and surfaced with sand and clay or gravel. He touted the merits of the proposed road, boasting "It is destined to be one of the greatest scenic roads in America, surpassing anything in the East and rivaling those in Yosemite Valley and the Yellowstone National Park."[40]

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[38]Stanley W. Abbott, "Blue Ridge Parkway, 20 January 1938," Report to National Park Service Associate Director A. E. Demaray, 1-2, BLRI Library.

[39]Quoted in Jolley, *Painting with a Comet's Tail*, 13.

[40]Louisa DeSaussure Duls, *The Glory of Little Switzerland* (Little Switzerland, NC: The Chalet, 1982), 17.

The route was surveyed, and in June 1912, Pratt announced that work would begin on the section between Altapass and Linville. He stated that the 40-mile Blowing Rock Turnpike had already been taken over and would form an integral link. Newspapers hailed the plans, stating that the road construction would open up a heretofore inaccessible area to development, and that the highway would be "lined on either side by handsome summer homes."[41]

In March 1914, Pratt and his associates secured a charter for the "Appalachian Highway Company" from the North Carolina General Assembly. At the 1912 meeting of the Good Roads Association of North Carolina, Pratt reported that his associates had been surveying the road for ten years. The highway would be financed by private subscription, repaid through the collection of tolls. Construction began that July on a stretch between Altapass and Linville. One hundred men were reportedly at work, and the company hoped to have the first 50 miles open by the following summer. Pratt reported that landowners along the road were donating rights-of-way and subscribing in the venture, which he characterized as one of the grandest in the nation.[42]

Construction was ultimately completed between Altapass and Pineola, and the road was graded north to Humpback Mountain (1.5 miles southwest of Linville Falls) but the outbreak of World War I spelled the end for the grand scheme. Manpower and materials were diverted to the war effort, and the work ground to a halt. In the end, the Blue Ridge Parkway would follow virtually the same routing for a brief segment between parkway mileposts 317.6 and 318.7.[43]

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY: AUTHORIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Blue Ridge Parkway Is Proposed

Generically, the project is no closer than a distant relative of the parkways near New York City and that near Washington, D.C., nor does it bear more than remote likeness to the Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park from which it grows. While, by accepted legal definitions, "a parkway is a

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[41]Duls, *Little Switzerland*, 17; John Foster West, "The First Parkway," *The State*, January 1971, 10-11; and Harley E. Jolley, *Blue Ridge Parkway: The First 50 Years* (Boone, NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1983), 4.

[42]West, "First Parkway," 11; and "An Act to Incorporate Appalachian Highway Company," North Carolina General Assembly, Chapter 421, 7 March 1911.

[43]West, "First Parkway," 11; and Edward Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," MSS, 8 February 1948, 1, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 38, Folder 16.

> road devoted to recreation," it is notable that those parkways carry a large volume of traffic which is clearly not pleasure or recreation bound. . . From them the Blue Ridge Parkway has borrowed the basic design principle of the broad right-of-way but the project is not simply a first use of this principle over a greater length of rural countryside. It is the first use of the parkway idea, purely and wholeheartedly for the purposes of tourist recreation distinguished from the purposes of regional travel.[44]
>
> --Stanley W. Abbott, 21 April 1938

The originator of the Blue Ridge Parkway concept has been debated for years. Senator Harry Flood Byrd and Governor Jonathan Pollard of Virginia, Bureau of Public Roads Chief Thomas MacDonald, Senator George L. Radcliffe of Maryland, the Public Works Administration advisor for Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee, and Radcliffe's advisor Theodore E. Strauss have all been credited with the original proposal, but the strongest evidence suggests that Byrd was the originator of the idea.

While it may never be possible to reconcile the conflicting accounts of the parkway's origins, Shenandoah National Park's Skyline Drive was clearly the inspiration for the project. Begun during the early stages of the Depression as a public-works project, the original 30-mile mountain crest road proved so popular that it was extended north and south across the entire park.[45] On 11 August 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt visited Shenandoah National park for an inspection of one of the first Civilian Conservation Corps camps. Roosevelt was favorably impressed by the scenery from the Skyline Drive, then under construction, and Senator Byrd, a member of the party, suggested the mountain road could be extended all the way to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Roosevelt showed strong interest in the idea, and Byrd advanced the project.[46]

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[44]Stanley W. Abbott, untitled MSS, 21 April 1938, in General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, 1933-38, BLRI Maintenance Division files.

[45]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 1.

[46]William G. Lord, Naturalist, Blue Ridge Parkway, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," MSS, 1954, 3, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 38. Hunter Miller of Bedford, Virginia, a businessman long involved with the Peaks of Otter Company, wrote in the *Roanoke Times* (VA) in 1951 that Byrd had merely suggested extending the Skyline Drive south to the Peaks of Otter, but that representatives from Tennessee and North Carolina "got on the bandwagon" and pressed for the road to be extended to the Great Smoky Mountains. In 1953, Senator Byrd wrote Sam P. Weems, Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, that he had suggested connecting the two parks, and that President Roosevelt not only heartily agreed, but suggested the road be extended all the way to Maine. However, the governors of Maine and other northern states were lukewarm to the proposal, and the project was reduced to a parkway between the two southern national parks. (Hunter Miller, letter to the editor, *The Roanoke Times* (VA), 9 November 1951; and Harry Flood Byrd to Weems, 7 December 1953, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 44, Box 54, Folder 8).

In September, Byrd attended a meeting of the League of Virginia Municipalities in Richmond. Following the conference, he attended a luncheon at the Executive Mansion that included Governor Pollard and Theodore Strauss. The groups discussed the extension of the road to the Great Smokies, and Pollard agreed to appoint a "Virginia committee" to study the matter. Pollard then telegraphed governors Hill McAllister of Tennessee and J. C. B. Ehringhaus of North Carolina to ask them to appoint similar commissions to work with the Virginia body.[47]

On 7 October 1933, Byrd discussed the project in further detail with Senator J. W. Bailey of North Carolina. Funding for the project would come from Federal Works Program funds, though the states would have to maintain the road. The President suggested a small toll to liquidate the costs of the project. About 400 miles of road was contemplated--75 in Virginia, 40 in North Carolina and 95 in Tennessee.[48] The cost of the project was estimated at $16 million.

Ten days later, Byrd convened a meeting at his offices to discuss the project. In attendance were U.S. Senator R. R. Reynolds of North Carolina; National Park Service Director Arno B. Cammerer and Assistant Director Conrad L. Wirth; Bureau of Public Roads Chief Thomas MacDonald ; George L. Radcliffe, Director of District 10 of the Public Works Administration and his board member, Theodore Strauss; Joseph Kirschner, Regional Forester for the U.S. Forest Service; delegations from Virginia and North Carolina, and O. F. Goetz, Chief Engineer for the Tennessee State Highway Department. Byrd opened the meeting by announcing that plans had been confirmed to extend Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park down the full length of that park, and that President Roosevelt was amenable to the proposal to extend the road roughly five hundred miles further to Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Byrd had called the group together to prepare a definite proposal for funding to be presented to the Public Works Administration. He credited MacDonald with the idea for the project. MacDonald, however, demurred, claiming the parkway concept originated in a conversations among Byrd, Radcliffe and Strauss.[49]

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[47]Lord, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 4; and "Park Road Commission Named by Governor," *The Roanoke Times* (VA), 7 October 1933.

[48]Harry Byrd to Bailey, telegram, 7 October 1933, BLRI Archives, R. Getty Browning Papers, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 1.

[49]"Transcript of Meeting Held to Discuss Shenandoah-Great Smoky Mountains National Park Parkway," 17 October 1933, 1-5, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 44, Box 54, Folder 11. Twenty years later, Byrd was more willing to accept the credit for conceiving the idea of the parkway. In a letter to parkway superintendent Sam Weems, he stated he had been invited to ride with President Roosevelt at the dedication of the first Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Shenandoah National Park, and at that time recommended extending the park's Skyline Drive to Great Smoky Mountains National Park. In a

Virginia state engineer James A. Anderson suggested that there were three ways by which the project could be realized. The first called for the formation of a not-for-profit corporation, which might build the parkway as a toll road and then turn it over to the states for maintenance. The second called for a public authority to be created, which would build and operate the parkway, again as a toll road. The third alternative called for the Federal Government, through the Bureau of Public Roads and the National Park Service, to build the road. This would require an act of Congress.[50]

The group discussed the merits of building the new parkway as a toll road. MacDonald was unenthusiastic about the proposal, believing returns from concessions operated along the route might cover some of the financing, but otherwise feeling the state highway departments should carry much of the burden. Other discussions mainly centered around the possible route for the parkway, which had yet to be determined. Radcliffe offered a preliminary estimate of the cost for the project of $16.8 million, which would allow for the construction of 414 miles at a cost of $40,000 a mile, the figure adopted for the final section of Skyline Drive. Such a project would, he stated, provide employment for 4,000 men for two years. Byrd concluded the meeting by suggesting the creation of a committee with representatives from the three states, the National Park Service, and the Public Works Administration, then recommended that Radcliffe serve as chairman.[51]

Landscape architect Edward Abbuehl, one of the first employees of the parkway, offered a different version of the genesis of the parkway idea in a draft history of the parkway he prepared in 1948. Abbuehl claims that Radcliffe contacted BPR Chief McDonald to discuss several highway projects, and in the course of the conversation suggested that a road to connect the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains national parks would be an ideal federal public works project. Strauss then supposedly relayed the suggestion to Governor Pollard, who subsequently appointed Senator Byrd head of a committee to work out arrangements for the new road.[52] Like Byrd, Tennessee Senator Kenneth McKellar gave credit for the proposal to BPR Chief MacDonald. Testifying before an initial parkway planning meeting in February 1934, McKellar, who had been one of the two sponsors of the bill creating the Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah national parks, stated that MacDonald had suggested "a scenic highway" between the two parks

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December 1933 article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, Secretary Ickes also gave credit for the road to Senator Byrd. (Byrd to Weems, 7 December 1953)

[50]J. A. Anderson, State Engineer, Commonwealth of Virginia, to Byrd, 10 October 1933, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 44, Box 59, Folder 95.

[51]"Transcript of Meeting," 5-18.

[52]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 3.

while the bill was being discussed.[53] Strauss would later claim he had suggested the establishment of the parkway. Over the years, he would periodically ask the parkway to forward him information on its progress. In 1962, at the age of 89, he wrote asking when he might expect the parkway to be completed, stating that he hoped "to be here on earth to participate in the ceremonies," again claiming he had originated the idea for the road.[54]

While the originator of the road concept is not clear, the proposal quickly gathered the support of federal agencies and representatives from the three states. A report on the proposed road was then presented to Interior Secretary Ickes, who signed an order on 24 November 1933 authorizing the construction of the "Park-to-Park Road."[55] The Blue Ridge Parkway was no longer a concept, but a full-fledged federal works project.

A New Deal Project

Although the Blue Ridge Parkway was proposed as a park-to-park highway, the impetus for its construction was firmly rooted in the New Deal policy of creating massive public works projects aimed at bringing the country out of the throes of the Great Depression. The Depression of the 1930s hit the Appalachian region especially hard, throwing thousands into desperate subsistence living conditions. A project such as the Blue Ridge Parkway, which might provide employment both through construction jobs and tourist services, would have a major economic effect on the troubled region. The National Industrial Recovery Act of 16 June 1933 [48 Stat. 195] initiated a program of public works to relieve the endemic unemployment. Under the terms of Title II, Section 202a of the act, the President was authorized to construct a program of public works, including "public highways and parkways."[56] This clause would allow projects such as the Blue Ridge Parkway to be built by the government, not just to provide for new roads, but for much-needed employment. The concept of using road construction for public relief did not originate in the New Deal by any means. For example, in 1894, Jacob S. Coxey proposed a multi-million dollar "roads for relief" program as part of his populist program. At the onset of the Depression, the Hoover administration began a series of limited public works projects, some of which were employed in the early development of Shenandoah

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[53]Public Works Administration, "The Shenandoah-Smoky Mountain Parkway and Stabilization Project, [Transcript of a Meeting Held at] Baltimore, Maryland, February 5, 1934," 210, BLRI Library.

[54]Theodore H. Strauss, Baltimore, MD, to National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway, 10 April 1962, National Archives, RG 79, Blue Ridge Parkway files, Container 23, Folder 19.

[55]Harry Byrd to Pollard, 24 November 1933, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 44, Box 54, Folder 10.

[56]Robinson, "Managing Change," 7; and A. E. Demaray to Estes Kefauver, U.S. Senate, 30 October 1943, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 44, Box 54, Folder 4.

National Park. However, Roosevelt's New Deal programs were on a scale unheard of in American history.

On 5 December 1933, the Public Works Administration (PWA), one of the principal New Deal agencies, officially authorized the first expenditures for what would become the Blue Ridge Parkway project, a $4 million allotment to begin construction of a "scenic highway connecting the Shenandoah and Smoky Mountains National Parks."[57] Over the next decade, a series of New Deal "alphabet agencies" would be involved in the project; these included the PWA, the Emergency Relief Administration (ERA), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

From the outset, the Blue Ridge Parkway project was administered to provide the greatest economic benefit to the blighted region. In the acquisition of land for the right-of-way, the National Park Service urged the states to offer land owners better than fair prices for their properties. Companies were required to hire as many unemployed local men as possible for the parkway construction, often under quotas set in the contracts. In 1939, Abbott announced that at least 1,000 workers would be engaged in roadside planting and cleanup programs, giving further encouragement to area unemployed, especially those untrained in modern road construction methods. A project superintendent for one of the contracts recounted that "about 90% of the hand labor came from nearby creeks and coves. Only the skilled labor was brought in from the outside."[58] Because the construction was carried out in discontiguous sections by contract, the employment opportunities were spread throughout the mountains.

In 1937 George E. Blevins, a resident of the Doughton Park area, described how the project had given new hope to residents of the area in terms that epitomized the project's public works agenda and underscored its value as an embodiment of New Deal principles.

> The building by the Government of the Blue Ridge Parkway with the several recreation Parks have given a great stimulant to all this Blue Ridge section, thousands of worthy citizens are being employed from the Shanadoh (sic) to the Smokies . . . Hunderds (sic) of us who have stood arround (sic) like an owl grumbling at the sun must now wake up and take a part however humble our stations of life. We was crushed by defeat, our traditions all gone. We had no money, credit or employment, we was

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[57]Edward H. Abbuehl, "Fifty Years Under Construction," typed MSS, 1985, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 38, Box 1, Folder 14.

[58]Granville Liles, "Saving the Cultural Landscape of the Blue Ridge Parkway," *The State*, July 1989, 17; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 70.

> confronted with the gratest (sic) problem that ever confronted human intelligence. As ruin was never before so overwhelming, never has restoration been more swifter, from the ashes left in 1932 our President has raised a brave and beautiful country, for some reason the people have caught the sunshine in the motar (sic) of their homes, prosperity is being handed down to the most humble.[59]

Even after work was complete on the first segments, the parkway offered employment to individuals who were engaged to maintain the road and its roadside features. Concessions along the parkway offered other opportunities, and visitors attracted to the parkway bolstered the local economies of communities located near the route. The project clearly fulfilled its New Deal mandate.

Initial Plans

> We are trying to provide for the people of America, and particularly for those in the eastern area, a chance for travel and recreation, amid splendor and inspiration, that only mountains like these can provide: an approach from park to park that will be a continually unfolding panorama of magnificence, to be from one recreation area to another, that will give to the struggling and poorly financed a chance to see more in the same period of time of nature's magnificence and of the wonders of our eastern country than any other route will provide.
>
> --North Carolina Governor J. C. B. Ehrlinghaus, 1934[60]

The project shifted into high gear after Interior Secretary Ickes announced the parkway had been approved in November 1933. In early December, Ickes, in his dual position as Administer of Public Works, allotted $4 million to begin the work. The project needed a staff to plan the road and manage its construction. Ickes turned to the National Park Service, which was overseeing the construction of the Colonial Parkway, to take on the project. The new road remained officially a Public Works Administration endeavor, but the NPS would take the lead in its planning.

The NPS realized that its experience with suburban parkways would be valuable, but that planning a 500-mile rural parkway was an entirely different manner. No one on the staff had any experience with such roads. The closest parallel was the Westchester County

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[59]George E. Blevins, "Bluff Park," MSS, 10 October 1937, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 4, Box 51, Folder 4.

[60]Public Works Administration, "Parkway and Stabilization Project," 191.

parkway system, and the NPS looked to its governing commission for an experienced landscape architect. On 26 December, Thomas Chalmers Vint, the Chief of the Branch of Plans and Design of the National Park Service, hired Gilmore D. Clarke, landscape architect for the Westchester County Park Commission (WCPC) and a member of the National Commission on Fine Arts, as consulting landscape architect for the new scenic road. He also engaged Jay Downer from the WCPC as consulting engineer. On Clarke and Downer's recommendation, Vint appointed 26 year-old Stanley W. Abbott as resident landscape architect.[61] The choice of the WCPC staff was somewhat unusual, in that the National Park Service generally assigned personnel already in its ranks to administer park units and projects, but Vint wanted to engage someone "who at least knew something about parkways," even though their experience was with suburban parkways.[62]

The hiring of Abbott was a pivotal moment in the history of the parkway. Abbott was a native of Yonkers, New York. Like Clarke and Simonson attended Cornell University and received a degree in landscape architecture in 1930. Although a talented draftsman and possessed with an uncanny ability to adapt roadways to the landscape, at the Westchester County Parkway Commission he was basically functioning as a public relations specialist. Clarke and Downer must have recognized his other talents, and his choice to manage the new federal project proved a propitious one. Not only could he develop the broad concept for the road and oversee the myriad details of its planning, but he could also "sell" the ideas to the state highway departments and other government agencies which cooperated on the project, and to the mountain people who would be most directly affected.[63]

Abbott reported to the brand-new Interior Department building in Washington, DC at the beginning of 1934 to receive his appointment papers so he could begin work on the project. In front of the building was a heavy Dodge truck, with which he was instructed to "lone-wolf it down to the Great Smokies and to get to know the mountains." Two weeks later, Clarke, Downer and Vint would join him for their first look at the challenges ahead. Abbott later recounted his introduction to the Blue Ridge.

> I lone-wolfed for two weeks of winter weather through the mountains; wound along on those little mountain roads, sometimes snowdrifted,

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[61]Jolley, *Painting with a Comet's Tail*, 14.

[62]Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 7.

[63]Kathleen Jacklin, Archivist, Cornell University, to Harley E. Jolley, History Department, Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, NC, 26 September 1986, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 2, Folder 20; and S. Herbert Evison, "Introduction to Oral History Interview with Stanley W. Abbott," 1958, ii, BLRI Library.

> sometimes frozen, many times thawing in the middle of the day in the southern sun; getting stuck and unstuck; pulled out by horses or mules or a chestnut rail taken from a nearby snake fence. But by the end of the first trip with Clarke, Downer and Vint, I had some sense of those awesome mountains.[64]

Part of Abbott's trip was spent in company with BPR Engineer W. I. Lee from Great Smoky Mountains National Park. BPR District Engineer Harold J. Spelman, in charge of the Bureau's eastern office, and engineer William Austin later joined the party. Spelman had worked with on the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and with the National Park Service on the construction of the Colonial Parkway. Austin had supervised the BPR's reconstruction of the Generals Highway in Sequoia National Park, and later oversaw much of the work on the Pan American Highway.[65]

On 6 January, Abbott returned to New York for three days of consultations with Gilmore Clarke. By 12 January he was back in the area, making a detailed inspection of the parkway route between Jarmans Gap (the south boundary of Shenandoah National Park) and Reeds Gap, milepost 13, in the company of the locating engineers.[66] The actual determination of the parkway route was underway.

In February 1934, the Public Works Administration convened a meeting in Baltimore, Maryland to discuss the project. George Radcliffe, the chairman of the steering committee, presided. Among those present were Spelman, Clarke, Vint, Abbott, Theodore Strauss, and officials of the Virginia and North Carolina highway commissions. The purpose of the meeting was to set forth to the landscape architects the views of the states concerning the general character and route of the road. On the first day of the meeting, Virginia's delegation set forth two possible routes. The state highway department chairman, William Shirley, reported that initial surveys had been completed for a route extending from the terminus of the Skyline Drive south to the Peaks of Otter. No land for rights-of-way had been acquired, because the commission had yet to be granted the proper authority, though the necessary bill was already before the legislature. The choice of a route south of the Peaks of Otter had been deferred pending decision regarding the larger question of whether a general route through North Carolina or Tennessee would be selected. Virginia had no preference in the latter matter, and the

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[64]Stanley W. Abbott, interview by S. Herbert Evison, 1958, transcript, 6-7, BLRI Library

[65]Abbott interview, 7-8; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 45.

[66]"Resume of Period December 26, 1933 thru March 31, 1934, Park to Park Scenic Highway," in "Blue Ridge Routes, North Carolina," in "Blue Ridge Parkway Routing and Correspondence Reports, 1933 *ff*," BLRI Library.

highway commission officials reported they could design a route to connect with whatever route was chosen further south.[67]

Clarke then announced that an interbureau agreement had been reached between the Bureau of Public Roads and the National Park Service to construct the parkway. The states were to supply a right-of-way two hundred feet in width and the federal government would do the actual construction. Clarke then spoke on the difficult design challenges ahead.

> Mountain roads as such in the past have been altogether too crooked, the grades have been too steep, to provide for arteries for motors having a speed of thirty to forty miles per hour. It is hoped we can build a road which will give the motorist a pleasurable drive, and with sufficient ease that he won't feel that he is going to slide off a brink 2000 feet down, if he goes too fast around a corner.[68]

Clarke spoke of his extensive experience in locating parkways both in New York and in the mountain west, but warned "your country, in a measure, presents a more difficult problem than in the far West where the mountains are higher." In his opinion, locating the new parkway would perhaps be the greatest challenge yet faced by highway engineers and designers.[69]

The Virginia delegation then laid forth general plans for two different routes south of the Peaks of Otter. One would follow the Blue Ridge south to Roanoke, through the Pine Spur country and Rocky Knob southwest to the North Carolina state line at Fancy Gap. The other proposed route was to the east, leaving the Blue Ridge for the higher chain of the Alleghenies to a point on the Tennessee line. Representatives from the various counties along the two routes spoke on the respective merits of each alternative, but the state officials affirmed they would be satisfied with either. The crux would be the selection of the route further south, whether through North Carolina or Tennessee; Virginia could supply a route to connect with either choice.[70]

North Carolina representatives, including Governor Ehrlinghaus, senators Robert Reynolds and Joshua Bailey, congressmen Robert L. Doughton, Zebulon Weaver,

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[67]Public Works Administration, "Parkway and Stabilization Project," 3-8.

[68]Public Works Administration, "Parkway and Stabilization Project," 10-11.

[69]Public Works Administration, "Parkway and Stabilization Project," 11-12.

[70]Public Works Administration, "Parkway and Stabilization Project," 40-7,4 *passim*.

William Umstead, A. L. Bulwinkle, and Franklin Hancock, and state highway department officials, testified the next day. The Carolina case was set forth by Governor Ehrlinghaus, state highway commission chairman E. B. Jeffress (for whom a parkway recreation area would later be named), and the state's chief highway location engineer, R. Getty Browning. The Carolinians argued for an all-Carolina route, stressing its scenic advantages--such a road would be located at a higher general elevation than a line that diverged into Tennessee--and the importance of the parkway to the nascent tourism industry of the state.[71]

The Tennessee delegation testified on February 7. Speaking for the state were senators Kenneth McKellar and Nathan L. Bachman; congressmen C. E. Reese, Gordon Browning, John Mitchell and J. W. Taylor; state highway commission chairman Frank W. Webster; Col. D. C. Chapman, President of the Great Smoky Mountain Conservation Association, and various highway officials. Senator McKellar began by insisting that Tennessee sought no advantage over North Carolina, only an "equal share" of the road. To him, the proposed road should not favor either state, but rather follow the main line of the mountains that separated the two. True, these mountains were not as high as North Carolina's Mount Mitchell, the highest point in the east, but they were only ten feet or so less in elevation. The scenic values of the border line route would rival any all-Carolina route, he maintained, and might even be superior. Having made these points, McKellar issued a warning that the planners would "face a rocky road" if Tennessee were denied her share of the road. The money had not been appropriated, and might not be forthcoming if Tennessee did not receive its "fair share."[72]

General Frank Maloney of the Tennessee State Highway Commission supported McKellar's proposed route, but conceded that a route built strictly on the state line would be extremely difficult from an engineering standpoint due to the complex topography of the high crest of the Unakas. Instead, he proposed a crossover route, which would follow the Blue Ridge from the Virginia line through North Carolina as far as Linville, then swing west into Tennessee at Roan Mountain, at which point it would veer southwest to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. He argued that an approach to the main range of the Smokies from the Tennessee side would be more dramatic, as the whole mountain mass would rise before the visitor for a distance of more than 5,000', where the approach from the Balsams in North Carolina would involve much less contrast in elevation. If there were any objection to having Gatlinburg, Tennessee selected as the sole entrance for the parkway into the park, this could be remedied by constructing a loop through the

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[71]Public Works Administration, "Parkway and Stabilization Project," 79-195, *passim*.

[72]Public Works Administration, "Parkway and Stabilization Project," 202-45, 209-217.

Cataloochee country to Cherokee, North Carolina, giving both states an entrance point.[73] By the end of the meeting, the views of the states had been put forth, but no decision had been reached on the ultimate route of the road.

At this point, the planning team lost two of its key figures. Clarke and Downer had been hired as consultants because of their experience with the Westchester County parkway system, but their association with the Blue Ridge project was to be short-lived. Following another inspection of the mountains with Abbott and Vint, the party returned to Washington and were called into a meeting with Secretary Ickes. Ickes greeted the group, and then turned and said, "Mr. Clarke, I understand the Government is paying you $75 a day and your expenses for your services." Clarke replied, "That is right, Mr. Secretary." Ickes then said, "We have a policy here in Interior of not paying consultants more than $25 a day in these Depression times." Clarke, a man of firm temper--Abbott later wrote that he was known for his initials as Major God Damn Clarke--stepped forward, pounded Ickes' desk, and thundered "I have worked, Mr. Secretary, for years for the Government at $1 a year, which I would be glad to continue to do. My regular fee here, as elsewhere, is $75 a day." He turned and left the office, the quiet engineer Downer following him. They never returned.[74] The major responsibility for planning the project now rested on young Stanley Abbott, who immediately had to deal with a number of critical concerns.

The first major policy question to be resolved was financial: who was to pay for the road? President Roosevelt had suggested the route be constructed as a toll road, but the governor of North Carolina was adamantly opposed to toll roads and the state rejected the proposition. Both North Carolina and Virginia wanted the federal government to assume all costs, but Ickes insisted the states bear a major share of the burden, reasoning they would benefit from the road and the tourist revenues it would generate. A compromise was soon reached, under which the states would purchase the land for the right-of-way, and the federal government would build the road.[75]

Virginia's state senate formally approved the project on 21 February 1934, when it passed a bill authorizing the road. The legislation treated the road a de facto state highway, though it was to be transferred to the federal government, which was to construct it or improve existing roads as segments of the new parkway. At this point, it would cease to be a state road, and all responsibility for its construction and upkeep would be vested

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[73]Public Works Administration, "Parkway and Stabilization Project," 249-59.

[74]Abbott interview, 9-10.

[75]Abbuehl, "Fifty Years Under Construction," 6.

with the federal government.[76] North Carolina adopted similar legislation soon afterwards.

Another early consideration concerned the extent of right-of-way necessary to secure protection for a scenic parkway. Normal highways of the time generally had a right-of-way of 60' or less. At the meeting in Baltimore, Clarke had recommended a width of 200', which had been adopted for the Westchester County parkways. Abbott had raised his eyebrows, clearly concerned that the width would be insufficient, and Clarke said, "Well, maybe you better have scenic easements of about 400 feet on either side for added protection."[77] In the crowded New York suburb, with relatively gentle terrain, the 200' buffer had proved just adequate, but in the Virginia and North Carolina mountains, with their far more expansive views, it would be far too little. This became the basis for the early right-of-way acquisition, which would lead to myriad problems in the near future, especially with the management of scenic easements.

One of the first problems faced by project planners was a dearth of maps of the areas through which the road would pass. Maps of most areas in the mountains were very poor, and in some cases, unavailable. There were, for instance, no U.S. Geological Survey maps of the Floyd Plateau; a sketch map from the Appalachian Trail Club was the only map available for that area. Consequently, much time would have to be spent in the field inspecting the layout of the land or preparing adequate topographic surveys.[78]

Abbott also had to assemble a staff, prepare budgets, review location surveys, deal with a skeptical mountain people, and see the project through its crucial initial stage. Luckily, he had both the skills and the fortitude to carry out the immense task. Following Abbott's death, his successor as superintendent, Sam Weems, spoke of his predecessor's pivotal role in the design and planning of the parkway:

> Stan was a dreamer, and it took a dreamer to do the planning job he did on that Blue Ridge Parkway. To me, this Parkway will be a planning monument to Stan Abbott if to no one else. The very concept of the location of it, the proportion of recreational areas all along its nearly 500

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[76]"A Bill to Authorize the State Highway Commission to Add to the State Highway System, a Road from a Point at or near Jarman's Gap, Following Generally at or near the Top of the Mountain in a Southwesterly Direction to the North Carolina and Tennessee Line, to Transfer Thereof to or for the United States of America, and to Sign an Agreement as to the Maintenance of the Same," Virginia State Senate Bill No. 108, 21 February 1934.

[77]Edward H. Abbuehl, interview by S. Herbert Evison, 9 April 1971, transcript, 8, BLRI Library.

[78]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 2.

> mile route, the selection of parking overlooks along the way at strategic places, the location of the road itself around certain mountains and through certain gaps--this was the result of Stan's fine planning hand.[79]

Abbott did not, or course, work alone, but rather established a talented staff with their own special skills. He quickly brought in an old friend and former professor, Edward H. Abbuehl, as his chief assistant. Abbuehl received his master's degree in architecture from Cornell in 1928. He was an instructor in descriptive geometry and mechanics there until 1933 when Cornell, like other institutions faced with Depression-era financial problems, had to let him go. In April 1934, he joined Abbott's staff as parkway landscape architect.[80] Mary F. Crumpler, the first secretary assigned to the parkway, later recalled that if Abbott was the visionary, then Abbuehl was the realist.

> Mr. Abbott would have these marvelous visions, you know, and he'd be sitting in there and would go way out about what we'd do this, that or the other thing, especially on some of the old buildings and how they would be used; and Ed would sit back and say, "It can't be done. Can't be done, Stan;" and then finally. . . Mr. Abbott would say, "All right, Ed, we'll do it your way." He was great, and it was always good natured disagreement. He knew that he had to have the visions, had to go way out and that Ed would bring him down to earth. It was a beautiful working together.[81]

A third key figure also joined the team in April. Hendrick van Gelder was another veteran of the Westchester County Parkway Commission. Described by Abbott as "a very picturesque Dutchman," he was a landscape architect by profession, but his specialty was road location, making him an invaluable asset. The planning work for the vast project was now divided up. Abbuehl would oversee the route reconnaissance in North Carolina, and van Gelder took responsibility for the Virginia section.[82] Abbott remained in overall charge.

In February 1934, Abbott established offices for the parkway project. The first headquarters for what would become the Blue Ridge Parkway was the dining room of Abbott's apartment, a converted second story in a private residence in Salem, Virginia.

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[79]Sam P. Weems interview by S. Herbert Evison, 28 August 1975, transcript, 34, BLRI Library.

[80]Jacklin to Jolley, 26 September 1986; Edward H. Abbuehl, "Blue Ridge Parkway Early Chronology, 1933-1950," MSS, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 38, Box 54, Folder 16; and Abbott interview, 10.

[81]Mary F. Crumpler interview by S. Herbert Evison, 22 July 1971, transcript, 8-9, BLRI Library.

[82]Abbuehl, "Blue Ridge Parkway Early Chronology;" and Abbott interview, 10.

The dining table was the drafting board over which the initial plans were made. These makeshift arrangements continued for three or four months before Abbott was able to secure offices in the Shenandoah Life Insurance Company building in Roanoke.[83] Roanoke remained parkway headquarters until 1972.

In June 1934, a report on the parkway project was submitted to Secretary Ickes by George Radcliffe, chairman of the project coordinating committee, BPR Chief MacDonald, and NPS Director Cammerer. They reported that Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee had all submitted data on their proposals for the route through their respective states. Field examinations of the routes had been conducted by MacDonald, Radcliffe, Clarke and Theodore Strauss. The report recommended a route beginning at Shenandoah, passing the Peaks of Otter and the Pinnacles of Dan in Virginia, then south into North Carolina as far as Grandfather Mountain, at which point the road would veer west to the Unakas, then down that chain to the Great Smoky Mountains at Gatlinburg, Tennessee. As the road approached the Smokies, they suggested it might fork to provide for termini at both Gatlinburg and Cherokee, North Carolina. The committee favored this route for its variety of topography, easy road alignment, and excellent scenery. The name "Appalachian Parkway" was recommended for the project.[84]

In October 1934, the Bureau of Public Roads was formally assigned the task of constructing the motor road. Initial BPR planning took place in its Luray, Virginia office where the bureau was overseeing completion of the Skyline Drive; the following year the office relocated to Roanoke.[85] The BPR was charged with construction supervision; major planning efforts for the endeavor remained the responsibility of the National Park Service.

On 25 September 1935, Secretary Ickes, in his capacity as Public Works Administrator, announced that $6 million had been appropriated to the National Park Service to begin the project. Construction could now begin.

Mountain Route or Valley Route?

For a brief period at first, there was the possibility that the parkway would not ride the mountain crest, but rather follow the lower valley lands to the northwest for much of its length. The parkway planners had inspected the Skyline Drive in Shenandoah and were

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[83]Abbott interview, 11-12.

[84]George L. Radcliffe, Thomas H. MacDonald, and Arno B. Cammerer to Ickes, 13 June 1934. National Archives, RG 79, Blue Ridge Parkway files, Container 23, Folder 19.

[85]Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 31; and Lord, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 7.

skeptical that such a ridge line route, extended for another five hundred miles, could really hold the interest of motorists. Abbott said, "One panorama following right on another, thinking of that as *fortissimo*, doesn't make the interesting piece of music that *fortissimo* mixed with a little *pianissomo* provides." BPR engineer Bill Austin expressed the same thought more bluntly if less melodically: "One could get gorged on scenery, and you can have too much ice cream and too much Beethoven."[86] There were other concerns as well, as stated by Park Service Chief Architect Vint in a memorandum to Director Cammerer in June 1934.

> Any mountain route would involve heavy construction with the necessary amount of scarring of the mountain slopes. It would have mountain road alignment and have the disadvantage of being closed from time to time by storms and fogs. There is a good deal of feeling of isolation to one driving over a mountain road, which up to a certain point is one of the objectives of the project. It is a question in our minds whether the average person would enjoy driving over its entire distance.[87]

Vint had gone over the matter with Abbott, and they recommended that consideration be given to the possibility of locating major portions of the road in the valleys below. Such a route would entail less construction costs which would offset the higher right-of-way costs which could be expected. The road could be constructed on a better alignment, allowing motorists to make better time. The same narrow right-of-way as proposed for the mountain sections would be more effective in protecting the roadside landscape, as views to the side would be much greater in the mountains. A valley road might also serve through-passenger traffic, which otherwise would shun the scenic road. Vint and Abbott wondered if the traffic on a mountain road would ever be sufficient to justify its construction.[88] Despite the power of these arguments, a line following the Blue Ridge and other mountains was adopted, and traffic would make use of it; by the late 1940s, the Blue Ridge Parkway was the most heavily used unit of the national park system.

What's in a Name?

For the first couple of years, the project did not even have a name. Park planners first called it the "road to connect the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains national parks." In 1934, Theodore Strauss suggested the "Shenandoah Great Smoky Mountains

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[86]Abbott interview, 12.

[87]Thomas C. Vint to Director, National Park Service, 8 June 1934, in "Blue Ridge Parkway Routing and Correspondence Reports, 1933 *ff*," BLRI Library.

[88]Vint to Director, 8 June 1934.

National Parks Parkway and Stabilization Project," emphasizing *stabilization* because of the economic role the project was expected to play in revitalizing the depressed mountain economy. This name proved far too unwieldy for acceptance. National Park Service Acting Director A. E. Demaray suggested the simpler name "Appalachian Parkway" in January 1936.[89] Later that month, Secretary Ickes formally designated the project the "Blue Ridge Parkway." The name was confirmed by House Resolution 12455, Number 848, 74th Congress, introduced by North Carolina Rep. Robert L. Doughton on 24 April 1936, the same bill that placed the project under the administration of the National Park Service.[90]

Even after the Blue Ridge Parkway designation was officially adopted, there were several attempts to re-open the naming debate. Following the death of President Roosevelt in 1945, several citizens called for the parkway to be renamed in his honor. Stewart Woodward of Raleigh, North Carolina suggested extending the parkway to Warm Springs, Georgia and renaming it the "Roosevelt Memorial Highway." He estimated the cost of the 230 additional miles at $100,000 a mile, or $23 million for the project.[91] In 1952, North Carolina Rep. Thurmond Chatham introduced a bill to change the name of the parkway to the "Robert L. Doughton Parkway" after the retiring North Carolina congressman who had long sponsored the project. It passed the House with only Congressman Doughton dissenting, but the Virginia and North Carolina legislatures, city councils and chambers of commerce objected, and the bill was defeated in the Senate.[92] Doughton's name had recently been applied to the former Bluffs Park recreational area on the parkway, which probably mollified the supporters of the name change. Chatham's name was later given to a large North Carolina wildlife management area adjacent to Doughton Park. The road remains the "Blue Ridge Parkway."

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[89]Abbuehl interview, 5; Thomas C. Vint, "Memorandum for the Director," 10 February 1934, General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, 1933-38, BLRI Maintenance Division files; and A. E. Demaray to Col. George C. Martin, Executive Secretary, Board of Geographic Names, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2 January 1936, General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, 1933-38, BLRI Maintenance Division files.

[90]A. E. Demaray, "Memorandum for Messrs. Vint and Spelman," 30 January 1936, in General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, 1933-38, BLRI Maintenance Division files; and Granville Liles, "The Blue Ridge Parkway: Some Personal Notes on its Early History," *Appalachian Journal*, Winter 1977, 176.

[91]Stewart Woodward to Clyde R. Hoey, U.S. Senate, 3 July 1945, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 41, Box 51, Folder 6.

[92]Sam P. Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1952, BLRI Archives, 1; and Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1952, BLRI Archives, 1.

The "War Between the States"

The 1933 authorization of the "Road to connect the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains national parks" did not specify a route, only that the project provide a connection between the two new national parks, then still under development. A significant part of the route would necessarily run for two hundred miles or more through Virginia, but both Tennessee and North Carolina were determined to have the lower section of the road routed through their states. Gatlinburg, Tennessee was the principal gateway to the Great Smokies, and Tennesseans naturally favored that town as the terminus. North Carolina wanted the road to enter the park from Cherokee, which would require a route through the North Carolina mountains, likely bypassing Tennessee altogether.

Each of the states considered several alternate lines. Virginia, already assured of a significant part of the road, was ambivalent about the route. North Carolina and Tennessee each tried to claim the lion's share of the southern part of the road. North Carolina submitted a proposal which was essentially the same as the line eventually adopted and built, and its rival Tennessee suggested a line entering that state from Virginia near Bristol and continuing southwest to Gatlinburg. As an alternative, Tennessee also proposed a "compromise" route generally following the North Carolina-Tennessee border, but this was never seriously considered because the high ridge of the mountains separating the two states was too rugged for construction of the road. For a while, there was even discussion of a route that would run into West Virginia, then down through Virginia, bypassing North Carolina entirely.[93]

On 17 October 1933, delegates from the three states met in Washington and all pledged their state's support for the project. There was some discussion of routing possibilities but no action was taken. The representatives called for an allocation of $16 million to construct the parkway. In mid-November, they met with Secretary Ickes, who told them the President had approved the road and the Interior Department was prepared to begin surveys for the route. The parkway would be funded through Public Works Administration funds, though the states were to defray the costs of the surveys, and to acquire and deed to the federal government the necessary rights-of-way.[94] The delegates were delighted at the good news, but soon the states would begin an ugly fight to capture the lion's share of the parkway route.

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[93]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 4; and Lord, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 5.

[94]Carl Ross and Norman Schaich, "Battle for the Blue Ridge Parkway," MSS, 3 May 1976, 2-3.

North Carolina wanted the route south of Virginia to stay within its boundaries, entering the state at Low Gap and continuing from there to Roaring Gap, Glendale Springs, Deep Gap, Blowing Rock, Linville Gorge, Little Switzerland, Buck Creek Gap, along the Craggies into Asheville, then west and northwest to Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Tennessee favored the same route as far south as Linville Gorge, but then wanted it to veer northwest through Carvers Gap to Roan Mountain, then turn southwest along the Unakas to the Gatlinburg entrance to the Great Smokies.[95]

The National Park Service at first leaned toward the Tennessee proposal, which it saw as a "compromise" route, giving both states a major portion of the road. The NPS suggested that as the road approached the eastern end of the park, it might fork, providing spurs to the park at Gatlinburg, Tennessee and Cherokee, North Carolina. NPS planners spent much of the first summer investigating these routes. The three states were asked to consider all proposals for routes within their respective boundaries and consolidate them into a recommendation for a single route. The three state proposals would be considered at a hearing in early 1934.[96]

Abbott, Abbuehl, and other parkway planners were concerned about the difficulties involved in the proposed Carolina route. It would cross the some of the most rugged mountains in the east--the Blacks, the Craggies, the Balsams and Plott Balsams. Routing a road through such terrain was bound to leave construction scars. Some conservationists were also alarmed at the potential for devastation.[97] The decision, however, would not be made by the staff in Roanoke, but by higher level authorities.

In January 1934, a general meeting was held in Baltimore to consider the three state proposals for the parkway route. George Radcliffe, now Senator from Maryland, presided over the meeting in his capacity as chairman of the project committee. Officials were present from the National Park Service, the Bureau of Public Roads, and each of the three states. Virginia officials were generally restrained, as much of the route would necessarily pass through their state, but North Carolina and Tennessee each wanted as much of the road as possible. No decision was reached at the meeting, but the Park Service organized a reconnaissance field trip of the various routes in March 1934. Unfortunately, inclement weather hampered the inspection, as well as a second survey of

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[95]Ross and Schaich, "Battle," 4.

[96]Abbuehl interview, 6-7; and "Finding Aid, B.R.P. History," 1953, 4, BLRI Library, vertical files, History file.

[97]Abbuehl interview, 7.

the parkway lines made by airplane in April. A third survey was made by state and federal officials in May.[98]

The parkway staff in Roanoke made a more detailed investigation of the routes, and in June recommended a line extending south from Virginia into North Carolina as far as Linville, then shifting west to the Unaka Mountains of Tennessee. The road would then run southwest to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, terminating in a loop that served the Gatlinburg (Tennessee) and Cherokee (North Carolina) entrances, connecting with each other across the present Newfound Gap area.[99]

In June, the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads submitted a joint report to Secretary Ickes, recommending the "crossover" route which would carry the parkway west from the Linville area into Tennessee. Senator Radcliffe and his advisor, Theodore Strauss, both worked on the preparation of the report.[100] It listed a number of advantages for the crossover route.

> This route will provide for the wider variety of topography, scenery and roadside conditions. It will provide mountain, flat plateau, interior valley and stream side location. It will permit of much relatively easy road alignment. Its altitude will be generally high, since the interior valleys will be largely at elevations of 2500 feet or more, and it will be the most directional in character.[101]

In addition to its scenic variety and ease of construction, the crossover route would also lend itself to the construction of the fork road leading to both the Tennessee and North Carolina gateways to the Great Smokies. Indeed, it suggested the road might even fork at Linville, allowing for the construction of the very line the North Carolina interests were proposing.[102] This would have entailed the construction of two parallel parkways over half the length of the project.

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[98]"Early History of the Blue Ridge Parkway as Reported in January 10, 1937 Report of the Resident Landscape Architect for the Years 1934, 1935, 1936," MSS, n.d., BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 44, Box 59, Folder 93.

[99]"Early History of the Blue Ridge Parkway."

[100]Radcliffe, MacDonald, and Cammerer to Ickes, 13 June 1934.

[101]Radcliffe, MacDonald, and Cammerer to Ickes, 13 June 1934, 2.

[102]Radcliffe, MacDonald, and Cammerer to Ickes, 13 June 1934, 2.

Although the report was kept secret for several weeks, North Carolinians heard rumors of its findings and were outraged. Asheville Chamber of Commerce manager Fred L. Weede met with NPS Director Cammerer and told him that North Carolina would not accept the "compromise" route. Weede noted that Cammerer was clearly disappointed in the rejection of the plan, and made a "chilly" exit from the meeting. Weede and other Carolinians then tried to take the issue to the President. They assembled an album of photographs of North Carolina mountain scenery which governor Ehrlinghaus presented to Roosevelt. While pleased with his favorable reaction, they did not receive any commitment from the President regarding a resolution of the matter.[103] The North Carolinians also elicited the support of Josephus Daniels, U.S. Minister to Mexico. A native Carolinian who maintained a summer home at Lake Junaluska in western North Carolina, Daniels was a close friend of President Roosevelt. Meeting with a delegation of Carolinians, Daniels told them he would do whatever he could to promote the Carolina route.[104]

On 19 July, Secretary Ickes approved a route from Jarmans Gap in present Shenandoah National Park to the James River, and from Adney Gap south of Roanoke southwest to Blowing Rock, North Carolina. The final section between Blowing Rock and the Great Smoky Mountains was yet to be determined, but the adoption of the first sections would allow construction to proceed. Ickes scheduled a hearing to discuss the remaining section for September 1934.

That fall, Robert Marshall, Director of Forestry for the Interior Department, spent five days on an inspection of the two routes at Secretary Ickes' direction. Marshall reported that the choice between the two routes was "so close that you could with perfect propriety pick either one and justify yourself." He suggested five factors should be considered in the choice of the route. Three favored Tennessee, and two North Carolina, but two of the factors could be rated essentially the same.

To Marshall, the North Carolina route had two advantages:

1. It was more scenic, due to a significant section which would be located at high elevation on the slopes of Mount Mitchell.

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[103]Ross and Schaich, "Battle," 8-9.

[104]Ross and Schaich, "Battle," 12-13.

2. Mount Mitchell itself would be a major attraction, as many tourists would wish to boast of visiting the highest mountain in the east.[105]

The other factors favored the Tennessee route.

1. It would be less costly to construct.

2. It would scar the scenery less than construction in the Carolina mountains.

3. The Tennessee route, being at somewhat lower elevation, would be blocked less often by snow in winter and less shrouded by fog in summer.[106]

Marshall considered another matter more important than the actual choice of location between the two states, and that was "the necessity of keeping the parkway out of the few important primitive areas which are still left in this region." Such forests and mountain lands that were still undisturbed should not be invaded by the parkway. Marshall thought such areas should be protected as wilderness. The parkway should be planned through areas already developed, saving the primitive forests for those who enjoyed their special charms. He thought three areas in particular should be avoided by the parkway: the crest of the Blue Ridge between Shenandoah and the Peaks of Otter, and in North Carolina, the Pisgah Ledge and the Balsam Mountains.[107] As it turned out, the parkway would eventually traverse each of these areas.

Citizens from both states urged their representatives to fight for securing the right-of-way, citing both the potential economic impacts and the chance of finally having a good road to provide access to the outside world. One Tennessee correspondent offered an entirely different argument.

> I am in hopes you will insist on a straight line regardless of what towns or cities it misses. Also insist on its being built in Va. And Tenn. as much as possible as no tourist wants to tour through a dry state and N.C. has gone against our administration by not voting wet and I say let her suffer for her mistakes. Damn poor state anyway.[108]

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[105]Robert W. Marshall, Chief of Forestry, U.S. Department of the Interior, "Memorandum to Secretary Ickes," 1934, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 44, Box 54, Folder 13.

[106]Robert Marshall, "Memorandum to Secretary Ickes," 1-2.

[107]Robert Marshall, "Memorandum to Secretary Ickes," 2-3.

[108]Quoted in Ross and Schaich, "Battle," 6.

Both North Carolina and Tennessee had stopped working together to advance the parkway project, and each state increased its efforts to secure as much of the route as possible. North Carolina's well-orchestrated fight, led by state highway location engineer R. Getty Browning, was strongly supported by state government officials and the important tourism industry. Tennessee forces gathered behind powerful U.S. Senator Estes Kefauver. In September 1934, Secretary Ickes agreed to a second hearing to discuss the location matter.[109]

Getty Browning later recounted the meeting.

> Both sides were ready. Governor Ehringhaus, realizing that this might be North Carolina's last chance, had commissioned 350 prominent citizens to attend the meeting. We went up in 17 Pullman cars. The speakers chosen to tell our story included the Governor, Mr. Jeffress, Representative R. L. Doughton, Frank Page, our first highway commission chairman, and Senators Bailey and Reynolds. I was to speak last, giving the advantages of our route from an engineering viewpoint.[110]

Ickes kept the speeches short. As planned, Browning was the principal speaker on North Carolina's behalf. He touted the state's scenic advantages, calling attention to views from different locations, continuing until Ickes indicated he was tiring. Browning stated he had a great deal more evidence, but Ickes bluntly directed him to "File it."[111]

Tennessee's pleas were chiefly voiced by senators Kefauver and McKellar. McKellar dropped a bombshell by bringing up the ostensibly secret Radcliffe report, which favored the Tennessee route. The Tennesseans also protested that North Carolina had "no monopoly on the land and sky," and made the case that North Carolina was seeking to deny Tennessee any benefits from the parkway. It would only be fair, they insisted, for all three states to share in the project they had jointly supported so far.[112]

At the conclusion of the presentations, Ickes commended both states for their efforts, and assured them that he would render a decision based entirely on the merits of the proposed

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[109]Lord, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 5-6; and "The Pathfinder of the Moonshine Mountains," reprint from the *Saturday Evening Post*, *The Blowing Rocket* (Blowing Rock, NC), 5 July 1985.

[110]Ralph Howland, "Mr. Browning Moves Mountains; and Once Even Changed Ickes' Mind," *The Observer*, undated clipping, BLRI Library, vertical files, R. Getty Browning file.

[111]Howland, "Mr. Browning Moves Mountains."

[112]Ross and Schaich, "Battle," 15-16.

routes. Promising he would "take my head between my hands and after wrapping a wet towel around said head shall try to be fair and just," he dismissed the hearing.[113]

On 10 November, Ickes rendered his decision. In a letter to governors McAlister and Ehrlinghaus, he stated "After a careful study . . . I cannot escape the conclusion that the decided weight of the evidence is in favor of the so-called North Carolina route." The new parkway would follow the route proposed by the Carolina contingent, running southwest from Blowing Rock along the Blue Ridge, then through the Black and Craggy ranges to Asheville, then by Mount Pisgah before veering northwest to enter the Great Smoky Mountains National Park near Cherokee, North Carolina.[114]

An Interior Department press release issued two days later set forth the reasons for Ickes' decision. Both the Tennessee and North Carolina routes seemed equal from a scenic standpoint, but as Tennessee already had the chief entrance to the Great Smoky Mountains at Gatlinburg, it seemed unfair that it should receive the new approach road. The nascent western North Carolina tourist industry would be decimated if all parkway traffic were diverted away toward the Tennessee side. Tennessee, on the other hand, would still be the chief gateway to the park for travelers approaching from the west and northwest. Tennessee was already the recipient of millions of dollars in federal funds for the new Tennessee Valley Authority project, while North Carolina had nothing comparable. As a final consideration, if the parkway were to become a part of a greater Appalachian parkway extending from New England into Georgia, the Carolina route would provide a more logical connecting link. Should this extended route be successfully completed, Ickes visualized a second parkway following the main Appalachian chain, running from Western New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, eastern Kentucky, and thence through Tennessee to Gatlinburg. Tennessee might secure a parkway after all.[115] In the end, the state secured two, the Natchez Trace Parkway and the as-yet incomplete Foothills Parkway.

The North Carolinians were jubilant. The *Asheville Citizen* carried the headline "Ickes Decision Placing Route for Parkway in N.C. Hailed as Great Victory by Entire State." A grand victory celebration dinner was held at the George Vanderbilt Hotel to honor those who worked on the effort. Across the western border, however, Tennesseans were outraged at the defeat. Senator McKellar rushed back to Washington for a meeting with

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[113]Ross and Schaich, "Battle," 16.

[114]Harold Ickes to Hill McAlister, Governor of Tennessee, and J. C. B. Ehrlinghaus, Governor of North Carolina, 10 November 1934, BLRI Archives, R. Getty Browning Collection.

[115]U.S. Department of the Interior, "Memorandum for the Press", 12 November 1934, BLRI Archives, R. Getty Browning Collection.

President Roosevelt, urging him to reverse the decision. Roosevelt, however, refused to get involved, and the lower part of the parkway was built in North Carolina.[116]

DEFINING THE ROUTE

> When Government technicians were searching the country for the proper Parkway location, they would inevitably be informed by a local citizen that the "best view" in the country was "just over yonder," and the Parkway has included thousand and one of these "best views." There can be no question of the scenic values of the Parkway.[117]
>
> --Edward H. Abbuehl, 1948

At the onset of the project, the only decision regarding the route was that it would connect the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains national parks. For a while, there were no firm plans that the road would be a mountain parkway. As late as June 1934, Park Service planners were suggesting that consideration should be given to routing the road through valley lands. They pointed to potential problems with a mountain location, including heavy scarring during construction, likely closures due to storms and fogs, and "feeling of isolation to one driving a mountain road." The latter point was such a concern that they questioned whether the average motorist would enjoy such a trip. A valley route would be more direct, less expensive to construct, and require a narrower (and less expensive) right-of-way for protection of roadside features, as a mountain route would afford much greater visibility. Significant features in the mountains could still be reached by spur roads. The valley location, they stated, would not only serve park-to-park travel, but also afford a practical route for through passenger car traffic.[118] Still, the allure of a mountain road held sway, and the route eventually made its way down the spine of the Blue Ridge and ranges to its south.

In contrast to the Skyline Drive, the Blue Ridge Parkway was not planned as a ridge-line route, though extensive segments do follow the crest of the mountains. Instead, variety was introduced by routing the road along mountain sides, beside mountain streams, and in a few places, through broad river valleys. "Changing road position" was an important factor. Stanley Abbott's plans stated that "only intermittent sections will ride on or near the skyline in the manner of the Shenandoah Drive," reasoning that "Rugged topography has served to deflect a continuous skyline location," and adding that the designers "have

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[116]Ross and Scbaich, "Battle," 17-18.

[117]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 20.

[118]Vint to Director.

deliberately chosen to avoid certain mountains in order to introduce other types of scenery."[119]

Likewise, parkway designers aimed to provide the road with a high standard of grade and curvature so that motorists might safely devote much of their attention to the scenery. The parkway was not, however, designed for high speed motoring, but rather for leisurely travel. Prohibitions against commercial vehicles helped enhance safety and distinguish the drive from normal traffic arteries.

Great care was taken to plan the route to cause the least possible scarring of the wild mountain terrain. Roadside grading was "warped" into the contours to reduce the appearance of heavy machine work. Such damage as was unavoidable was concealed wherever possible by landscape plantings of native trees and shrubs. In focal points, concentrations of flowering trees and shrubs heightened the natural beauty. Vistas and bays were opened to allow "glimpses" into the surrounding woods and fields, as well as distant views.[120]

Most of the early field inspection was carried out by Abbott and Abbuehl. This was no easy task, there being few good maps of the area. Access to the area was also very difficult. There was no existing road down the mountain chain. Such roads as did exist crossed the mountains through the numerous gaps, but did not follow the crest where the parkway was subsequently constructed. Just getting to the areas being surveyed was often a challenge, and usually involved considerable hiking and climbing through rough terrain.

Local communities often pressured the planners to route the parkway through their area. "Everybody figured that they had the best views in the State of Virginia or in the entire East right in their backyard and insisted that they be included," Abbuehl later related.[121] The staff's public relations skills were often called upon. Once in the field, they had to be somewhat circumspect about their activities, lest word that the parkway was coming through would drive up real estate prices.

Since the instructions the parkway planners received from the Secretary of the Interior were merely to connect the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains national parks with a roadway following the general crest of the mountains, the planners were left with considerable leeway in the choice of a route. Generally, the planners would reconnoiter

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[119]Abbott, untitled MSS.

[120]Abbott, "Blue Ridge Parkway, 20 January 1938," 3.

[121]Abbuehl interview, 5.

over a considerable distance of up to 100 miles. Major control points would then be established, usually in mountain gaps. From these, they would work down to lesser control points and then finally established a flagged line between the points. Abbuehl described the process as a fairly simple task.

> Where the location follows a ridge the details of location simplify to one of three possibilities--between any two controlling gaps the location may be on one side or the other of a ridge or possibly on the actual crest. It is only a case of looking out each of these three possibilities and there is generally some feature that determines the choice.[122]

Parkway planners interpreted Secretary Ickes' instructions to follow the mountain crest as a general guideline, and consequently routed the road away from it at various points for scenic effect or to inject variety into the motoring experience. The location of almost any road could be determined by following in such a manner, but the successful design of the Blue Ridge Parkway involved more intangible factors. Asserting that the design process was "almost a form of sculpture," Abbott proclaimed:

> It takes a third-dimensional mind and insight into what is the main contour of this particular land form, whether one broad main curve, or sometimes--since nature doesn't always deplore a straight line--there are places where the road wanted to straighten out for a while because the conformation of the land straightened out; or there had been a straight cut farm field against a straight line of woods.[123]

Shifting metaphorical media, he enthused, "I can't imagine a more creative job than locating the Blue Ridge Parkway, because you worked with a 10-league canvas and a brush of comet's tail. Moss and lichens collected on the shake roof of a Mabry Mill measured against the huge panoramas that look out forever."[124]

Several factors helped determine the final location of the roadway. These included horizontal alignment, grades and topography, and cost. Views and directions of views were important factors, but planners soon decided that there would be many potential vistas from any chosen location, so locating the road in order to seek a view in itself rarely became an overriding consideration. Balancing costs against topographic conditions was not easy; often, land that states could acquire for modest costs was so

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[122]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 2.

[123]Abbott interview, 4, 14.

[124]Abbott interview, 4, 14.

rugged that construction would prove very expensive, and level land suitable for easy construction would require the states to pay higher right-of-way costs.[125]

The approximate boundaries of the right-of-way were determined by an NPS landscape architect (in the early stages of the project, usually Abbuehl or Van Gelder), who prepared preliminary property maps, which were based on U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle maps where these existed. The landscape architect would determine the general boundaries for the right-of-way, but without the aid of a survey party to provide exact measurements, he could only approximate the boundaries on the maps. The maps were then turned over to the states, which sent out survey parties to determine the exact boundaries of each tract to be acquired.[126]

Survey parties were in the field as early as January 1934. Abbott accompanied a BPR survey team on its work preparing a line between Jarman Gap and Reeds Gap that month. In March, the flagged line was inspected and approved by consulting landscape architect Gilmore Clarke, who was then still on the payroll. Parties then began laying out a general route between Reeds Gap and Fancy Gap (milepost 198) in southwestern Virginia. By the end of February, the centerline location had been approved as far south as Irish Gap. Preliminary location surveys were underway between Peaks of Otter and Maggotty Gap, southwest of Roanoke.[127] In March, Abbott and BPR crews began reconnoitering on the North Carolina sections of the route between Roaring Gap (just south of the Virginia line) and Asheville. Some inspection was also made of lines proposed by Tennessee. As the decision on the parkway route through North Carolina or Tennessee had not yet been made, only general routes between principal controls were inspected.[128] All work in Tennessee ceased after Ickes ruled in favor of the all-Carolina route.

To guide the construction and design of the parkway, the project staff prepared the first of a long series of "Master Plans" in 1934. It was authorized the following year along with the first part of the route. A new plan was prepared and approved in 1936, showing the parkway location all the way to the Smoky Mountains and outlining nineteen areas

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[125]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 2.

[126]"Memorandum of Information and Instructions Issued by the National Park Service Governing the Preparation and Transmittal of Deeds for National Parkway Land," 28 December 1936, in "Parkways: A Manual of Requirements, Instructions and Information for Use in the National Park Service" (Washington, D.C., National Park Service, 1938), Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record Library; and Abbott interview, 14.

[127]"Resume," 2.

[128]"Resume," 3-5.

proposed as recreational parks.[129] Thereafter, master plans were issued or revised at regular intervals.

Once Abbott and Abbuehl had a rough idea about a desired routing, the BPR assigned engineers to investigate the suggested route. The project was fortunate in having excellent personnel assigned to the task. BPR resident engineers William M. Austin and W. I. Lee both had experience locating park roads in the West. Austin, who had determined the location for the Skyline Drive in Shenandoah, later headed the Roanoke office during for formative years of the parkway. Once the parkway and BPR staffs agreed on a suitable location, they would call in Clarke and Downer (while they were still under contract to the National Park Service) and NPS Chief Architect Thomas Vint and make a joint trip to finalize details so that work could get started. The earliest investigations extended southward from Shenandoah National Park.[130]

Much of the route between Asheville and Great Smoky Mountains National Park was investigated by North Carolina State Highway Department chief location engineer R. Getty Browning, who had spearheaded the state's effort to secure a route through its western mountains during the debate on road location. Walking over most of the difficult terrain himself, armed with maps, aerial photographs and a snake stick, he personally determined most of the roadway location through this section. He directed the state highway department crews in conducting the location surveys, running the preliminary lines, establishing levels, and preparing topographic maps. When troubles arose with the Eastern Cherokee over location of the final segment through the Qualla Reservation, he attended Council meetings and helped work out the agreement that finalized the parkway route between Soco Gap and the Oconaluftee River.[131] Once a route had been agreed upon and flagged by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads, parkway land acquisition maps were prepared and turned over to the states so that they could begin purchasing the necessary land for the right-of-way. The states would often object to the plans, and the Park Service would have to convince them why the proposed location was

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[129]Abbuehl, "Blue Ridge Parkway Early Chronology;" Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 19; and Stanley W. Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, BLRI Archives, 18.

[130]S. Herbert Evison, "Finding a Route for the Blue Ridge Parkway," *National Parks Magazine*, September 1969, 12; and Dudley C. Bayliss interview by S. Herbert Evison, 11 February 1971, transcript, 6, BLRI Library.

[131]"The Pathfinder of the Moonshine Mountains," 6-7; and North Carolina State Highway and Public Works Commission, press release on retirement of R. Getty Browning, 27 July 1956, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 44, Box 59, Folder 97.

desirable from a scenic standpoint, even if it appeared impractical from an economic standpoint.[132]

Abbott's proposed route for the northernmost section left the Blue Ridge at Tye River Gap (milepost 29), dropped into the James River watershed, then rejoined the Blue Ridge crest at Powells Gap just west of the Peaks of Otter. He also proposed an alternative that would have carried the parkway by Virginia's famous Natural Bridge, which he termed "a chief natural wonder of the East." In March 1935, Abbott laid out the various arguments for and against the two routes. The second alternative would also provide access to the old James River & Kanawha Canal and two old blast furnaces from the antebellum iron industry, as well as providing easy access to the historic city of Lexington, Virginia. From a scenic standpoint, the route afforded an "excellent psychological effect" through its descent and ascent along fine mountain streams and a traverse through the broad valley of the James River. A minor ridge paralleling the Blue Ridge would have provided splendid views of the main mountain range for 13 miles. The lower line would make for safer driving, lower cost, and easier construction than a road in the more rugged mountain topography.[133] The upland or Blue Ridge route, by contrast, would run for a greater distance through national forest land, 31 miles as opposed to 17 miles, which would result in less expensive land acquisition. The route would display fine mountain scenery when considered separately from the distribution of similar scenery over the remaining 450 miles of parkway. There would be less conflict with developed real estate, and the route would provide more direct access to the Peaks of Otter. The average summer temperature would also be more favorable due to the higher elevation.[134] Nevertheless, Abbott favored the Natural Bridge line.

Although he highly desired it for a parkway recreational area, Stanley Abbott failed to secure Virginia's Natural Bridge for the parkway. The lowland route was opposed by Senator Carter Glass of Virginia, who argued that land acquisition in the agricultural Shenandoah Valley would be much higher than the proposed mountain route, where much of the land could be turned over by the U.S. Forest Service. Although he did not state it, the valley route would also divert the parkway away from his home town of Lynchburg, and this was probably a major factor in his opposition. Whatever his reasons,

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[132]Bayliss interview, 25.

[133]Stanley W. Abbott, "Memorandum to Mr. Vint: Natural Bridge Route versus Blue Ridge Route," 19 March 1935, BLRI Library, Road Location.

[134]Abbott, "Memorandum to Mr. Vint: Natural Bridge Route."

Glass succeeded in having the parkway kept to the top of the mountains through the area.[135]

In the late 1930s, the final location of the parkway in the Blowing Rock, North Carolina, area remained uncertain. The State of North Carolina, seeking to avoid damage to a golf course and numerous private resort properties in the area, was studying a new line through the Moses Cone estate by which the town could be passed to the north. The bypass concept was accepted by the state in 1940. Another problem area was in the Graveyard Fields area southwest of Mount Pisgah, where the U.S. Forest Service objected to the original line. The Forest Service also wanted the parkway to be routed away from its Bent Creek Experimental Forest on the outskirts of Asheville. This was resolved by introducing a long tunnel and increasing the overall length of the road in the area. Although the change would be more expensive, Abbott conceded that a much better alignment would result.[136]

Another early routing problem concerned the right-of-way through the Qualla Reservation of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee. Parkway planners intended for the parkway to enter Great Smoky Mountains National Park through the reservation over a parkway segment about fifteen miles in length. Late in 1934, the Cherokee raised objections to the plan. The tribe was not opposed to the parkway *per se*, but wanted frontage rights along the road along which they could establish commercial facilities. This was at complete odds with the whole parkway concept. The Cherokee discussed the parkway project at numerous council meetings, and in 1936 voted against the federal government's proposal for the road. Parkway planners, seeking a compromise, recommended the state build a new highway connecting a new proposed parkway terminus at Soco Gap with Cherokee, North Carolina.[137]

Until this time, plans called for the parkway to drop from Soco Gap down into Soco Creek Valley, which it would follow into Cherokee. The Cherokee rejected this proposal, claiming the road with its broad right-of-way would pre-empt much of their best farmland, while allowing parkway motorists to bypass their shops and tourist attractions. In 1938, an alternate route that would carry the parkway down a ridge from Soco Bald into Cherokee was proposed, and the state planned to construct a new highway over the old parkway line between Cherokee and Waynesville. The new parkway route between Soco Gap and Ravensford, on the southern boundary of Great Smoky Mountains National

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[135]Bayliss interview, 16-21.

[136]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 3-4; and Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 3-4.

[137]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 7-8.

Park, was surveyed and flagged by W. I. Lee of the Bureau of Public Roads in 1939. This location also called for a spur road to Black Camp Gap, where it makes a connection with the Round Bottom Road in Great Smoky Mountains park. [The parkway connector is the present Heintooga Spur Road.][138]

Early in 1940, Congress passed a law giving authority to the State of North Carolina to purchase a right-of-way for the parkway across the Qualla Indian Reservation, "with or without the consent" of the Cherokee. The tribal council approved the transfer in February, and the state proceeded with the land acquisition. The deed for the right-of-way through the reservation was accepted from the state in January 1941, allowing the advertisement of construction contracts for the southernmost two segments of the parkway.[139]

By 1940, the location of most of the route for the parkway had been determined. There were still several areas where the location had not been resolved. There was considerable uncertainty about how the road should be routed around the cities of Roanoke and Asheville, and exactly where it should cross the James River. Between Blowing Rock and Linville, North Carolina (Sections 2G and 2H), the parkway planners were at a quandary. The state wanted a route along the line of the old Yonahlossee Trail, or US 221, but development along the route made the route undesirable to parkway officials. In 1941, a second line on Grandfather Mountain, paralleling the Yonahlossee Trail at a higher elevation, was surveyed and flagged. This location was challenged by the owners of Grandfather Mountain, who ultimately delayed the completion of the parkway for another 46 years.[140] Even though the final route was not defined in places, by 1934 enough of the route had been set that land acquisition could proceed.

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[138]Bayliss, "Memorandum for Dr. Russell," 3 September 1938, in "Blue Ridge Parkway Routing and Correspondence Reports, 1933 *ff*;" and W. I. Lee, Highway Engineer, Bureau of Public Roads, "Blue Ridge Parkway, Sections 2-Y and 2-Z, From Soco Gap to Ravensford, N.C.," 1939, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 2.

[139]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 3; Stanley W. Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," January 1941, BLRI Archives, 1; Harold L. Ickes, to René L. de Rouen, Chairman, Committee on the Public Lands, U.S. House of Representatives, 23 June 1939, attached to "Report to Accompany H.R. 6668 Granting the State of North Carolina a Right-of-Way for the Blue Ridge Parkway across the Cherokee Indian Reservation in North Carolina,"Report No. 1334, 76th Congress, 1st Session, 27 June 1939; and Tribal Council, Qualla Band of the Eastern Cherokee, Resolution approving right-of-way for Blue Ridge Parkway, 6 February 1940, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 2.

[140]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 4; and Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 3.

LAND ACQUISITION

> Acquisition by the States of Virginia and North Carolina of a broad right-of-way for transfer to the Park Service is obviously important in conserving the kaleidoscopic pattern of roadside types along the parkway.[141]
>
> --Stanley W. Abbott, 21 April 1938

Stanley Abbott called the land acquisition "the most stubborn and time-taking problem" in the development of the parkway. Unlike the western national parks, which were generally established from lands that had been part of the public domain, right-of-way for the parkway would have to obtained through purchase or condemnation. Literally thousands of pieces of land had to be acquired in whole or in part. In many cases, families would have to be relocated, and many of them did not want to budge for sentimental or emotional reasons.[142]

The purchase of land and the removal of residents was the most delicate challenge faced by the states and the NPS. Although the parkway right-of-way would be barely 200' wide in places, nearly 90,000 acres of land was required for the 469-mile road and associated recreational areas. About a third of the land would be taken from national forests, but the remainder would have to come from private property owners. It is impossible today to know the state of mind of those who were displaced by the project, but parkway accounts indicate that most property owners were, if not outright willing to sell, at least consigned to the necessity. Most of the land was purchased at the height of the Great Depression, and many property owners were quite content to sell their exhausted farms and move on, if not to a new farm over the ridge, then to an altogether new destiny. Tenants were of course sorely affected, but they had no means of fighting back. Larger landowners might lose only a portion of their property and could make do on the remainder. Some property owners outright refused to part with their land and were faced with condemnation. Although the states and the parkway did not relish going to court, the law was on their side, and in the end, the land was acquired.

The Bureau of Public Roads, which negotiated with the states over the right-of-way, proposed a uniform strip of 100' to either side of the proposed center line, regardless of property lines, topographic conditions, or any other factor.[143] It quickly became obvious

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[141]Abbott, untitled MSS.

[142]Abbott, "Blue Ridge Parkway, 20 January 1938," 3; and Sarah Boggs BeMiller, "Building the Parkway," *Shenandoah Valley Magazine*, July 1981, 34.

[143]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 6.

such an arbitrary measurement would not work. In many instances, it was inadequate to protect desired views, and in a few cases, boundaries extended over cliffs or other site line obstructions, requiring acquisition of property that was unnecessary for the protection of parkway vistas. Although the policy was adopted at first, parkway planners quicky realized this 200' width would have to be reconsidered. In some areas of mountainous terrain, the 200' would not even contain the cuts and fills necessary for construction. Consideration was given in such cases to moving the motor road off the center line, but the right-of-way was clearly too narrow. Arbitrary boundaries also cut up properties, leaving small residues where in many cases it would have been preferable to acquire the whole of some properties while leaving others untouched.

In January 1935, the North Carolina General Assembly passed an act authorizing the State Highway and Public Works Commission to acquire the right-of-way for the parkway through the state. Within six months, the commission had completed right-of-way maps for the route in Alleghany and Surry counties, and had filed the maps with the register of deeds in the counties, effectively designating the land for condemnation. By late summer, the first contract was issued and work got underway.[144]

Virginia, however, did not pass any right-of-way acquisition legislation until February 1936, delaying the start of construction in that state. When the parkway was first proposed, the land acquisition concept was worked out in an oral agreement between Secretary Ickes and the chairman of the Virginia Highway Commission, Henry G. Shirley. After considerable negotiation, Shirley would only agree to purchase 200' in right-of-way with an additional 400' to either side in scenic easement. This was the same width recommended by Clarke in the early planning phase for the parkway, and objected to by Abbott as woefully inadequate. Eventually, the state was told that such a narrow strip was unacceptable, at which time it began purchasing a right-of-way totaling 100 acres per mile, making for an average width of 825'. North Carolina, on the other hand, was more generous; the state legislature authorized purchases of right-of-way totaling 125 acres per mile, allowing for a strip about 1030' wide.[145]

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[144]"A Bill to Be Entitled an Act to Amend Consolidated Statutes 3846 (bb) Relating to the State Highway and Public Works Commission, So as to Provide for the Acquirement of Right of Way for Scenic Parkways," North Carolina General Assembly, 23 January 1935; and Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 3.

[145]"An Act to Authorize the State Highway Commissioner to Acquire, by Gift, Purchase, Condemnation, or Otherwise, Scenic Easements, or in Lieu thereof Parcels of Land, on Either Side or Both Sides of the Roadway or Highway from a Point Near Jarman's Gap and Extending Generally in a Southwesterly Direction to the North Carolina Line, which Roadway or Highway the State Highway Commissioner has been heretofore been Authorized to Convey to the United States, and which has been Set Apart and Designated by the United States as the Proposed Shenandoah-Great Smoky Mountains

In February 1935, Abbott proposed that the states acquire land on the basis averaging 100 acres per mile in fee simple and an additional 50 acres per mile in scenic easement, though the width might vary from point to point depending on sight line distance. Thus in mountain cuts or other points where visibility was restricted, less land might be purchased, allowing the state to buy more land where longer viewsheds needed protection. This arrangement would provide for a right-of-way approximately 825' wide in fee simple land, with another 400' in scenic easement. In 1937, North Carolina amended its parkway acquisition policy to provide for acquisition of 125 acres per mile; Virginia adopted a policy of acquiring roughly 400' in scenic easements in addition to the 200' right-of-way. This policy acknowledged a scenic interest beyond the 100' fee simple line but otherwise proved to be of little benefit.[146]

The division of responsibilities between the states, which handled the land acquisition, and the federal government, which built the road, resulted in considerable planning complications and additional expense. If only one agency had been responsible for the land acquisition and construction, it would have been possible to compare the two costs. In some cases, by paying more for gently-sloped agricultural land, the costs of construction could be reduced. Conversely, cheap mountain land was often considerably more expensive to build upon. This separation of responsibilities invariably led to delays and higher overall costs.[147]

The states optimistically expected that much of the right-of-way would be donated by property owners. Indeed, when the scenic highway was first announced, numerous mountain residents did offer to donate land, thinking the new road would supplant the poor, unpaved roads of the region and end their relative isolation. Once these property owners learned that access to the road was to be restricted, and the right-of-way might require over a hundred acres per mile, they were no longer eager to give up their property, and the states had to resort to purchases and condemnation.[148]

National Parkway; and to Authorize the State Highway Commissioner to Transfer, Assign and Convey to the United States Said Scenic Easements, or Land, so Acquired," Virginia General Assembly, 12 March 1936; Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 4; Bayliss interview, 8-9; and Evison, "Finding a Route," 12.

[146]Bayliss interview, 13-15; Abbuehl interview, 17-18; Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 6; Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 31-32; "Finding Aid, B.R.P. History," 9; and "An Act to Amend Chapter Two of the Public Laws of One Thousand Nine Hundred and Thirty-Five with Reference to the Acquirement of Rights of Ways for Scenic Parkways," North Carolina General Assembly, 18 February 1937.

[147]Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 13; and "An Act to Authorize the State Highway Commissioner."

[148]Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 32.

The states were even more confident that the scenic easements would be donated or sold for a very low price; after all, the property owners would not actually be giving up their land and could continue farming it. However, the mountain people were generally shrewd enough to realize that the easements would severely restrict the potential development of their land, and before long, the states were finding the price of scenic easements was nearly as great as fee simple acquisition. At this point, the National Park Service scaled back the easement program, and recommended the states take the money they had reserved for scenic easements and use it to purchase as much land as possible in fee simple.[149]

Instead of passing legislation specifically outlining a process for acquiring land for parkway purposes, the states proceeded under existing highway legislation. In the case of North Carolina at the time, the existing laws provided that if the state wanted to locate a highway, it merely had to stake out the route and post maps showing the location at the county courthouse. The property owner either had to accept the new road as an apparent benefit and thereby adequate compensation, or wait one year and sue the state for damages. In the case of the parkway, though, a much wider right-of-way was sought, and property owners would have restricted access if any at all. This situation was clearly unacceptable, and the parkway soon had the state notify property owners before construction began and compensate them for damages.[150]

Virginia acquired by individual deed each parcel and transferred it to the federal government. After the state received the maps for the proposed rights-of-way, state engineers would conduct field surveys and prepare final right-of-way location maps. The state right-of-way engineer would then make a field inspection to appraise the various tracts and determine what deed reservations were required, whether property residues would be left and if so, what access had to be provided for them. After determining other factors that might affect the purchase price, the state could begin negotiations with the property owner. If the owner was agreeable to the offer, the matter could be concluded quickly, but if condemnation proceedings were required, another two or three months might be required. The entire process could take six months or more, but at the end, the federal government would receive a clear deed to the property. North Carolina's system of using land maps to condemn properties, by contrast, did not leave in the county courthouse any official record of conveyances of the properties from the individuals to the state. Over the years, this omission would cause occasional headaches for parkway land-use planners. The whole process might be drawn out for years. Problems with the

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[149]Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 32.

[150]Abbuehl interview, 9-10.

two separate land acquisition schedules caused long delays in awarding construction contracts for some sections. [151]

Most owners of land along the route were willing to sell, and many were eager to do so. The Depression had impoverished the mountain economy, and lands were generally worn-out from poor farming practices. Some residents thought the construction of the first hard-surfaced road through the region would end their isolation and were willing to sell off a portion of their holdings for this purpose. Still, others did not want to part with their property, and the state land acquisition people often faced difficulties in work with the mountain people. Blue Ridge Parkway Ranger Mac Dale recalled one incident:

> There was this mountaineer and his wife who had had quite a feud among themselves and they'd separated. And under Virginia law, the acquisition agent needed both their signatures in order to complete this land sale. So, by Joe, every time he'd see her, she never had anything but a bad word about her husband. And when he saw her husband, he hadn't anything but a bad word about his wife. But whenever the agent saw one or the other, he started building this up you see. As he went from one to the other he planted the seed; and he said, "You know, I saw your wife the other day, and she was telling me how considerate you were about doing some little thing, chopping the wood instead of her having to do it." Then the next time he saw her, she was cussing the old man as regular, and the agent said, "Well, you know, I was talking to him the other day and he was telling me what an excellent cook you were." And this is the way be finally got them together long enough to sign the deed, but he got it signed real quick before they found out he'd been lying like hell on both sides.[152]

In some cases, farmers had no deeds to their land. Years before, their ancestors or other settlers had simply taken possession of land and passed it down for generations. Lack of clear title was another complication in acquiring the necessary land for the parkway. Often, existing surveys were inaccurate due to the practice of measuring lines on the slope of the ground, rather than by following the conventional standards of horizontal measure.[153]

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[151]Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 38-39; and Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 8.

[152]Mac Dale interview by S. Herbert Evison, August 1980, 17-18, BLRI Library.

[153]Robinson, "Managing Change," 12, 14.

The parkway planners were reluctant to force people off their land unless absolutely necessary. Sometimes, they moved people's houses to residual property retained by the owners. In a few cases, life tenure rights were granted to property owners, generally elderly residents who did not want to relocate. In the case of the Brinegar Cabin at Doughton Park, the widow Caroline Brinegar was allowed to remain in the single-pen log cabin that had been her home since 1886.[154] These compassionate practices were in stark contrast to the draconian resettlement policies involved in the establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah national parks, where hundreds of families were forced out of the mountains to lowland farms or resettlement communities. Still, condemnation proceedings, though not the rule, were reluctantly sought in a number of instances.

Nearly a third of the parkway route traversed the Jefferson, George Washington, Pisgah and Nantahala national forests. The Congressional act of 1936 authorized the transfer of forest lands for the parkway.[155] The states did not have to purchase these lands, and of course recommended the construction of the parkway through extensive sections of the national forests. This was a major factor leading to the rejection of the proposed "Natural Bridge" route for the parkway in Virginia. By keeping to the ridge, the parkway would remain in the Washington and Jefferson national forests, alleviating the need to acquire the property for the alternative right-of-way. Where the parkway passed through national forest land, a "parkway zone" was delineated on roughly the same equivalent as the right-of-way obtained by the states. The zone would have the same basic effect as a scenic easement. The parkway acquired a 200' width of land outright for construction purposes, but the remaining land to either side would remain under U.S. Forest Service jurisdiction. In 1942, this concept was dropped and the Forest Service agreed to transfer title to land comparable to the 100 acres per mile right-of-way on private land. In 1949 the Forest Service transferred title to 5,850 acres of land from the George Washington and Pisgah national forests to parkway administration.[156]

The parkway also received several key tracts as donations. These constituted the major part of three parkway recreational areas: Moses H. Cone Memorial Park, Julian Price Memorial Park, and Linville Falls. A number of smaller tracts were also donated to the parkway, and certain lands were purchased by cooperating associations for the protection

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[154]BeMiller, "Building the Parkway," 35.

[155]Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 37.

[156]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 5; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 5-6; and J. Carlisle Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1949, BLRI Archives, 4.

of scenic values. As welcome as these donations were, the majority of the route had to be purchased by the states or transferred from the national forests.

By World War II, most of the land for the parkway had been acquired and more than half the road had been constructed. The Commonwealth of Virginia still had not acquired the right-of-way for the crucial segment bypassing the city of Roanoke, however. At the conclusion of the war, Superintendent Sam Weems recognized that the land would need to be purchased before the population of Roanoke exploded out into the area. He pressured General J. A. Anderson, Chairman of the Virginia Highway Commission, to acquire the land. The commission assigned T. C. Melton to the task, and the troublesome 15-mile section around Roanoke was finally acquired.[157]

This section is novel in that there is not a single grade crossing on the entire section, in sharp contrast to most other Virginia sections where they are all too common. There were numerous road crossings through the area, and the cost of the grade separation structures was considerable. The parkway made a deal with the Commonwealth: if the state agreed to eliminate all grade crossings, public and private, and to allow only limited access to the parkway over the entire section, the parkway would accept a limited right-of-way of only 400' to 500'. This reduced the price the state had to pay considerably, as unimproved land in the area was going for as much as $1,000 per acre in 1947.[158]

In 1961 Congress authorized the Secretary of the Interior to purchase or exchange lands or interests in lands contiguous with the parkway. Since that time, most of the parkway's land acquisition efforts have been devoted to acquiring residual tracts served by the deeded reserved private road crossings which have plagued the project since the early days.[159]

Until 1965, the rights-of-way provided by the states seemed generally adequate to protect the scenic features on either side of the road. For nearly the entire route, the "picture" was one of mountains and agricultural land, with mountain farms and historic places scattered along the way to add to the scene. But in the 1960s, lands adjacent to the parkway began to be subjected to uses that disrupted the carefully planned series of views. Industries sprang up in the valleys and ski resorts appeared in the mountains. Businesses developed to serve the needs of parkway visitors--motels, restaurants, service stations and private campgrounds. Because parkway regulations prohibited signs on the road for commercial ventures, it was in the interest of the businesses to be located in clear

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[157]Abbuehl interview, 28.

[158]Abbuehl interview, 28.

[159]Gary Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1984, BLRI Archives, 1.

view of the parkway, so that visitors might exit and patronize their establishments. Stanley Abbott warned that such services would inevitably be built along the road unless the parkway provided the full range of services through controlled concessions.

By the end of the twentieth century, the greatest threat to the scenic picture was residential development. In the vicinity of Roanoke and Asheville, especially, but increasingly in varied other locations, new subdivisions were being constructed in view of the motor road. New houses occupied old farm fields and forest glades as rural populations increased. Many of these were second homes.

To face the threat of development, a "Land Acquisition Plan" for the parkway was approved in August 1980. Federal land acquisition would be minimal, lands would be secured only to control hazardous private road access and road crossings, and to make minor boundary adjustments for management purposes. The primary responsibility for the preservation of scenic resources alongside the parkway would rest on neighboring communities and counties. Under new Interior Department policy enacted in 1982, the Land Acquisition Plan was renamed "Land Protection Plan." It specified the use of tools other than fee simple acquisition, such as easements and compensation for development rights. The plan admitted that it was not possible for the government to acquire sufficient land to protect the parkway and its rural landscape; the people of the surrounding counties would have to strive toward this goal themselves.[160]

PLANNING FOR CONSTRUCTION

> Your composition is one of fields and fences, lakes and streams, and hills and valleys, and your problem is that of placing your roadway in such a position as best to reveal them.
>
> --Stanley W. Abbott, 1958[161]

The actual design process for the parkway began once the topographic sheets showing the adopted route were received from the states. A preliminary center line meeting the minimal standards for grade and curvature was established on paper. This was generally done by the Bureau of Public Roads and closely reviewed by parkway landscape architects. Once the NPS and the BPR agreed on the tentative location, the landscape architect prepared development plans showing the motor road's final location and right-of-way requirements. This stage required considerable checking in the field. Once the

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[160]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1982, 13-14.

[161]Abbott interview, 3.

development plans were approved by the two agencies, BPR location survey crews staked out the center line and took cross sections to calculate quantities of excavation and fill required. The states meanwhile proceeded with land acquisition.[162]

BPR designers and NPS landscape architects continued to collaborate in the planning process as the contract plans were completed for each section or construction items. This was a convoluted process: on a typical section, a dozen engineers or more might be involved from the BPR in addition to the NPS landscape planners. The plans were then circulated for approval by both agencies before the contracts were advertised for bids. Over 130 contracts were let over the sixty years of construction.[163]

All construction was done on the basis of carefully crafted plans and drawings. Today, tens of thousands of measured drawings stored in the parkway's Engineering and Technical Services branch holdings reflect the innumerable hours parkway personnel spent at drafting tables (and later, computer workstations) to plan for all elements of the parkway, from major recreational parks down to the smallest sign. Describing this comprehensive design philosophy, Abbott explained, "All elements must compose, so as to please. Hence, to take examples of stone masonry, we find the same extraordinary attention to detail in a small masonry retaining wall designed to protect a roadside tree as we find in the triple-arched Linville River Bridge."[164]

After serving three years as Resident Landscape Architect, Abbott was designated Acting Superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the spring of 1937. The same budget appropriation provided for the appointment of Sam P. Weems, who was managing the parallel acquisition and development of recreation areas, as Assistant Superintendent in charge of the ranger service and additional administrative functions. Weems continued as project manager for the parkway's recreational areas.[165]

The National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads worked closely in all aspects of the design of the parkway. The parkway landscape architects collaborated with the BPR location engineers on the choice of a route, frequently consulted with them through the design stage, and made a final check of the plans before they were advertised. The

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[162]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 10.

[163]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 10; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 67-69.

[164]Cited in Abbuehl, "Fifty Years Under Construction," 5.

[165]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1937, 2-3.

landscape architects monitored the construction work in progress, and had to sign off on projects before they were accepted by the National Park Service.[166]

To hold down construction costs and maintain high standards of curvature and grade, the parkway was routed to avoid some of the most rugged terrain. In many places it dropped from the ridgeline to the middle slopes, and sometimes into stream valleys or other lowlands. Such design also made the road more interesting for the motorist. Abbott and other parkway planners had visited the Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park, a road that clings stubbornly to the crest of the mountains for most of its length, and found it rather monotonous. The Blue Ridge Parkway was designed to offer more varied views. Abbott suggested that there was a parallel with "the movie cameraman, who shoots his subjects from many angles to heighten the drama of his film." The parkway would likewise provide views from different vantage points. Continuing the analogy, he wrote "The sweeping view over the low country often holds the center of the stage, but seems to exit gracefully enough when the Parkway leaves the ridge for the more gentle slopes of the deeper forests."[167]

Flagging or marking the actual parkway route was handled by the Bureau of Public Roads in cooperation with the NPS parkway planning staff in Roanoke. The several miles south of Jarman Gap, a section now included in Shenandoah National Park, had already been marked before Abbott's arrival in December 1933. Flagging was generally complete as far south as James River by March 1934.[168] Additional flagging parties then started at Peaks of Otter and at Masons Knob south of Roanoke. On many sections, the selection of the route was governed by the location of gaps; however, in areas such as the section between Peaks of Otter and Adney Gap, which would bypass the city of Roanoke, several alternative lines were marked for study. Flagging for most of Virginia was completed by the end of 1934, though a final decision on some lines had not been reached.[169]

In North Carolina, flagging operations began in September 1934. It soon became apparent that the topographic conditions were considerably more difficult. The planners decided to attempt to keep to the ridge line crest where it was generally feasible as long as alignment, curvature and cost remained acceptable. Where it might be advantageous to depart from the crest in order to save costs or allow for better alignment, however, these

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[166]Abbuehl interview, 22-23.

[167]Stanley W. Abbott, "The Blue Ridge Parkway," in *The Regional Review* III (July 1939), 5.

[168]Stanley W. Abbott, "Blue Ridge Parkway: Historical Report to the Chief Architect, Branch of Plans and Design, for the Years 1934, 1935 and 1936, by the Resident Landscape Architect, Roanoke, Virginia, January 10, 1937," 6, BLRI Library.

[169]Abbott, "Blue Ridge Parkway: Historical Report;" and "Finding Aid: B.R.P. History," 6.

possibilities were studied. These alternate lines would ultimately allow for greater variety than a purely "skyline" route.[170]

Abbott was astute enough to realize the importance of good public relationships with the residents of the area through which the parkway would pass. This sensitivity to popular opinion reflected his earlier role as chief publicist for the Westchester County Park Commission. Beginning in November 1937, Abbott and his staff published a small mimeographed monthly publication, *The Parkway News*, reporting on the progress of the parkway. He later related that this effort was intended to be "frank and friendly in describing what a parkway is and why one ought to be built through the southern highlands." He intended the newsletter to be easily understood by the public, and sought to "tell our story in words of no more than two syllables." The newsletter was distributed by rangers or mailed to interested parties along the route of the parkway. Abbott reported that it was well received and aided in developing good relations between the parkway and its neighbors.[171]

In addition to the newsletter, the parkway staff presented slide shows to schools, churches, service clubs and other groups along the route, showing what was intended. At first, they had no pictures of mountain parkways, as no such parkways yet existed. After the first sections in North Carolina were completed, they were able to show slides of the type of road they were building. Public relations features like the newsletters and the slide programs did much to reduce the apprehension of parkway neighbors about the project.[172]

Construction Begins

Once the necessary land had been acquired, contracts were let for construction. The parkway was divided into 45 construction units ranging from 5.7 to 15.6 miles in length. Each unit was assigned a number. The first, or northernmost unit in Virginia, was Section 1-A, the next 1-B and so forth.[173] From the North Carolina line, units were numbered southward as 2-A, etc. For each segment, several construction contracts were generally awarded. The first would entail clearing the route, grubbing or removing stumps, provisions for drainage, and rough grading. Subsequent contracts covered final

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[170]"Finding Aid: B.R.P. History," 6-7.

[171]Abbott, "Parks and Parkways," 23; and Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1937, 7.

[172]Abbott interview, 26.

[173]Section 1-A, the nine miles between Jarman Gap and Rockfish Gap in Virginia, was transferred to Shenandoah National Park in 1961.

grading and the surfacing of the roadway. Large bridges and viaducts were generally contracted separately, but smaller bridges were often combined with grading contracts. Although Ickes initially obligated $16 million for construction costs for the project, the work did not get underway as quickly as he had hoped. To spur some action, in 1935 he reduced the amount to $4 million and advised the National Park Service that the funds would expire if they were not obligated by the end of the year. This proved a sufficient incentive, and the first contracts were awarded.[174]

Most of the contracts were carried out under the supervision of the Bureau of Public Roads. The BPR, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, oversaw major road projects in the national parks under terms of a 1926 agreement with the National Park Service, and consequently, was assigned responsibility for the actual construction of the parkway. In the early years, work on the parkway was overseen by BPR Division Engineers Harold J. Spelman, William M Austin, and W. I. Lee. BPR survey crews ran the lines for most the of the route, and project engineers oversaw each of the myriad construction contracts awarded for each section. Abbott praised the agency's work, asserting that it "breasted all manner of weather, snakes, chiggers, frostbite and whatever [and] was absolutely heroic and fully as romantic as any engineering work in the early railroad days." To attend to the work, the BPR relocated its district office from Luray, Virginia (where personnel were overseeing the construction of the Skyline Drive) to Roanoke in January 1934.[175]

Some work was done on a force account basis in the early years, instead of waiting for special appropriations and formal bid solicitations procedures. In these cases, the NPS paid contractors and hired workers directly out of the agency's general operating accounts. For instance, construction of the large, three-span bridge over the Linville River, a $260,000 structure, together with a nearby grade separation structure, was handled by force account so that the costs might be compared with contract work.[176] Most of the work was conducted by contractors under supervision of the BPR and its successor agencies.

Much of the early work was carried out by hand labor. On the first contract, men were paid thirty cents an hour and worked six-day weeks. Their tasks were often back-breaking, including digging stumps out of steep slopes, laying drainage tiles in mud, and

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[174]J. Carlisle Crouch, Acting Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Regional Director, Region One, 14 September 1953, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 41, Box 51, Folder 7.

[175]Stanley W. Abbott to Director, National Park Service, 11 September 1953. BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 41, Box 51, Folder 7; and "U.S. to Close Road Office," *Roanoke Times* (VA), 11 July 1965.

[176]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 7.

lifting 500-pound rocks with hand cranes. In at least one case, construction crews were held at bay by a farmer wielding a shotgun, who simply would not accept the notion of a new road cutting through his land. Leonard Hodge of Rockbridge, a member of the construction crew, stated the workers tried to reason with him. As it turned out, he agreed that the project was needed; his real concern was that the construction noise and activity would keep his chickens from laying. Finally, neighbors convinced him to allow the work to proceed.[177]

The landscape architects and engineers closely inspected the work as it progressed, both to provide that the work was done to plans and specifications and to insure that as little damage as possible was done to the landscape. Landscape protection was a major component of construction contracts. Trees were to be spared wherever possible, stream beds were to be protected from erosion, and rock outcroppings were to be spared from blasting damage. Raw cuts were flattened, rounded, and planted with native vegetation.

Another important item was the construction of secondary roads to combine or eliminate grade crossings, effectively limiting access to pleasure vehicles. Unfortunately, this policy was not strictly adhered to at first. In Virginia, the state frequently turned over land encumbered by grade access rights. As the work progressed, construction of secondary roads was combined with grading contracts or let as separate contracts.

Not everything went as planned. Virginia turned over a good deal of land encumbered with road-access easements, and continued doing so until Secretary Ickes refused to accept them.[178] Although the National Park Service would eventually cancel many of these through purchase or by providing alterative connecting roads, older sections of the parkway continue to be interrupted by numerous access roads.

Actual construction got underway in September 1935 with the award of the first contract, for Section 2-A extending 12.5 miles south from the Virginia-North Carolina state line to Cumberland Knob. The first dirt was turned on Pack Murphy's farm just south of the state line on 11 September. This contract was funded with Public Works Administration funds and included clearing, grading, crushed stone surfacing and drainage structures. The contractor, Nello L. Teer of Durham, North Carolina, assigned 100 men to the task. Work began in North Carolina because the state legislature, meeting early in the year, had passed the necessary laws to enable the state to satisfy the federal government as to the right-of-way. Virginia had not done so as of yet, and work there had to wait for its

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[177]"Workers Remember Parkway's Early Days," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), 11 September 1985; and BeMiller, "Building the Parkway," 35.

[178]Evison, "Finding a Route," 12.

legislature to meet in January 1936 to pass laws to empower the acquisition and condemnation of the necessary land. Virginia did have adequate laws to acquire land for highway purposes, but there was a question as to whether such land could be transferred to the federal government.[179]

Subsequent early construction included most of sections 2-B, 2-C, 2-D and 2-E, extending the parkway south from Low Gap. Work in Virginia began on 29 February 1936 on the section between Adney Gap and Pine Spur Gap, south of Roanoke, and on the segment between Jarman Gap and Rockfish Gap, just south of Shenandoah National Park. A discontiguous 17-mile section was constructed near Mount Mitchell in North Carolina. Several bridge contracts were awarded separately.[180]

The work progressed rapidly in the early years. By the end of 1937, 115 miles, or nearly a quarter of the route, had been graded under fifteen contracts totaling $6,818,400 in Public Works funds. The greater part of the completed grading constituted a fairly continuous route between Roanoke and Blowing Rock, North Carolina. Seven contracts for structures had been awarded, which would involve the construction of fifteen bridges and grade separation structures at a cost of $468,000. More contracts would have been awarded under the initial $4.5 million congressional appropriation, but North Carolina and Virginia had not been able to keep up with the right-of-way purchases.[181]

By 1938, land acquisition was proceeding on schedule in North Carolina, but in Virginia, failures to turn over the need tracts was delaying construction work. Circuit judges were failing to expedite condemnations, the state had an insufficient number of land acquisition agents, and the propensity of the state to grant "exorbitant" awards were all factors cited by Abbott as reasons for the slow progress. The change from a 200' wide right of way to an 800' wide combined purchase and scenic easement resulted in additional delays.[182]

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[179]"Work on Scenic Parkway Link to Begin Very Soon," *Alleghany Times* (Sparta, NC), 12 September 1935; "Parkway Started Monday Above Low Gap--Construction of Scenic--Giant Shovels Moving Dirt on 12-Mile Section in N.C.," *Mount Airy News* (NC), 19 September 1935; and Mike Hembree, "The High Road Riding the Blue Ridge," in *Journey Home,* Jimmy Cornelison, Reese Fant, Mike Hembree and Dot Robertson (Greenville, NC: Greenville News-Piedmont Co., 1988), 150.

[180]Abbott, "Blue Ridge Parkway, 20 January 1938," 4; and Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 10.

[181]Stanley W. Abbott, "Report of the Resident Landscape Architect," 1937, BLRI Archives, 9; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1938, 11; and Abbott, "Blue Ridge Parkway, 20 January 1938," 4.

[182]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1938, 3-4.

North Carolina laws provided for the entrance on lands for construction purposes even before the title was passed to the federal government, allowing for more rapid construction. Still, Abbott noted that barely a third of the 10,000 acres that had been acquired had been officially conveyed to the United States, and many property owners had yet to be paid for their land. The property owners felt they could still use their land, and much abuse resulted. The situation was even worse in Virginia, where the delays afforded time for property owners to cut their standing timber and over-graze and over-crop their arable lands.[183]

Abbott urged the acceleration of the land acquisition process in both states. He warned that land prices were rising along the reconnoitered lines of the parkway and that real estate development along the corridor was increasing. Citizens whose property was under consideration objected to the uncertainty of their ownership, and were abusing their lands in the meantime, hoping to make whatever they could before ownership was finally conveyed to the government. Ownership of the land would eliminate the construction delays and would be the "best insurance" that the entire parkway would be constructed.[184]

The parkway construction was sufficiently advanced by the spring of 1939 that a fifty-mile section of Roanoke was opened to public use on 1 April. No public ceremony was held to mark the occasion, but interest was considerable, as the public living in the vicinity of the parkway had been kept abreast of the progress. By the end of the first three-month period, about 31,000 cars had traveled over the section. Later in the year, the section between the state line and Blowing Rock was opened to traffic. By the end of the year, more than 290,000 visitors had been counted. The traffic was nearly equally divided over the Virginia and North Carolina sections. Eight out of ten cars bore Virginia or North Carolina license plates; Abbott attributed the preponderance of local motorists to the NPS's failure to publicize the completion of this initial section. Sunday afternoon drives were the most popular. Traffic was also allowed over the incomplete Section 2P between Asheville and Craggy Gardens, and 10,000 made this trip on a June Sunday during Asheville's Rhododendron Festival. This section was opened on a "travel at your own risk" basis. It crossed lands belonging to the Asheville City Watershed and was patrolled by watershed authorities. Travel was permitted only between 9 AM and 8 PM. Another partially complete ten miles between Buck Creek Gap and Mount Mitchell was also opened. These latter sections had crushed stone pavement but not the final surfacing. The pavement was done by "stage construction," and the Bureau of Public Roads found it

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[183]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1938, 4.

[184]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1938, 9.

desirable to turn traffic over such sections, as the traffic would compact the crushed stone, allowing the bituminous pavement to be applied later.[185]

The demonstrated popularity of the parkway led Abbott to urge the establishment of a sightseeing bus concession. Bus tours, he suggested, would increase public use and enjoyment and produce considerable revenue for the government. Such buses, he insisted, should be of the smaller touring car type as commonly employed in western parks, holding fourteen or fewer passengers. The Interior Department demurred for years, and it was not until 1948 that such a service began. In May, Smoky Mountains Tours began operating a sightseeing bus tour over the parkway between Roanoke and Asheville, using the passenger-car type buses that Abbott had recommended. The most popular service was a day trip from Asheville to Mount Mitchell State Park, where a new paved road extending nearly to the summit had just opened.[186]

In 1940, construction was in progress on over 300 miles of parkway. Grading and surfacing with crushed stone was completed on 65 miles, and additional contracts were awarded or carried over to make for a total of 170 parkway miles being graded that year. Other work included secondary road construction and the construction of bridges and other structures. The Linville River Bridge, the largest structure yet designed for the parkway, was completed this year at a cost of $276,693.87. Additional surfacing contracts were let for a number of sections which had already been graded. Some areas where surfacing had failed were retreated. In the spring, the remaining section between Roanoke and Deep Gap, near Blowing Rock, was opened to the public. This provided for a 140-mile continuous section, more than a quarter of the intended length.[187]

In 1943, Abbott complained that the relationship with the Public Roads Administration (the Depression-era successor to the Bureau of Public Roads) was becoming strained. He cited an increasing independence of the PRA in the planning process. For instance, on Section 1-M which bypassed Roanoke, he stated the PRA was insistent on providing a four-lane divided highway, something he claimed was "out of character, unnecessary as a practical matter, and tremendously costly." He suggested that the PRA intended for the

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[185]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 24; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 24-25; and "Partially Completed Parkway Sections Near Asheville Opened to Traffic," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* II (July 1939), 2.

[186]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 25; and Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1948, 2, 7.

[187]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 6-8, 22; and Earl A. Disque, Assistant Landscape Architect, Branch of Plans and Design, National Park Service, "Final Narrative Report to the Chief of Planning Concerning the Linville River Bridge, Project 2-J-3, Blue Ridge Parkway, North Carolina," n.d., BLRI Archives (deaccessioned files).

parkway section to become a segment of a circumferential beltway around the city. On the next section between Roanoke and Adney Gap, he reported that the PRA wanted to adopt a shorter, less scenic route than his office had designed in order to gain a $50,000 cost savings. The PRA was also calling for what Abbott termed an excessive amount of masonry guard wall, which he reported would exceed $1 million. The National Park Service continued to favor timber rail for most sections. In closing, Abbott urged the regional office to more closely monitor the PRA to protect the character of the parkway.[188]

National Park Service Administration

On 30 June 1936, Congress formally authorized the establishment of the "Blue Ridge Parkway." The act [Public Law 848, 7th Congress] officially placed the new parkway under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, though it dictated that the U.S. Forest Service was to work with the NPS on the development of recreational facilities on federal lands along the route.[189] A plan for the entire route was approved, with the exception of a few short sections which remained unresolved. Abbott was officially named Resident Landscape Architect and Acting Superintendent in March 1937.[190] He would continue in this role until called into service during World War II. Edward Abbuehl remained his key assistant.

In 1938, parkway staff were brought under Civil Service regulations. The parkway administration was reorganized the following year. A new Engineering Department was created under the supervision of parkway engineer O. A. Cozzani. The Landscape Department was expanded in 1940 with the appointment of Daniel W. Levandowsky as Assistant Agronomist.[191] The ranger force likewise expanded.

New Deal Programs

While most parkway construction was handled under contracts awarded to businesses, some was done by force account labor or by the Works Progress Administration, a

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[188]Abbott to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, 3 December 1943, 1-8, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 38, Box 1, Folder 5. In the end, the proposed four-lane section around Roanoke was reduced to the planned two lanes.

[189]"An Act to Provide for the Administration and Maintenance of the Blue Ridge Parkway, in the States of Virginia and North Carolina, by the Secretary of the Interior, and for Other Purposes," Public Law 848 [H.R. 12455], 74th Congress, 30 June 1936.

[190]Abbuehl, "Blue Ridge Parkway Early Chronology;" and "Finding Aid, B.R.P. History," 13.

[191]Lord, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 8.

Depression-era public works program. The purpose of the WPA was to put as many men to work as possible at the least expense, so hand labor was used extensively, even when power equipment might have been more efficient. WPA crews cleared brush, drilled rock (often with hand drills) for blasting, and performed all other sorts of manual labor. Pay was low--$55 a week was the national average--but the income was a godsend for many mountain families.[192] On 21 November 1941, a WPA project was initiated on parkway sections in Patrick, Floyd and Franklin counties, Virginia. The 46-man project crew was assigned to landscape work and the construction of a sewerage system for Rocky Knob Park. Over the course of the year, the workforce increased, and crews carried out landscape improvements over segments of the parkway in the three counties.[193]

Another New Deal public works program utilized by the parkway was the Emergency Relief Administration (ERA). ERA crews did landscape work and development at parkway recreational areas. They did not work directly on highway construction. ERA programs in 1941 included Project VA-8 at Galax, Virginia with 225 men, and Project NC-11, which was divided into three work areas: The Bluffs, with 254 men, Marion, with 206 men, and Asheville, with 105 men.[194]

The best known of all Depression-era public works programs was the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC was organized in the spring of 1933, the same year in which the parkway was conceived as a public works project, but it would be more than four years before the two programs began a long productive period of cooperation. Abbott asked for nine CCC camps for parkway work, but in the end only four were assigned to the task.[195] Abbott intended for the CCC to work mainly on landscape improvements, but suggested that "permanent" CCC camps might be able to replace various planned maintenance areas, allowing CCC employees to take over maintenance of certain parkway sections. A camp with 140 enrollees would be able to work continuously on maintenance alone. Still, planting plans and other landscape work would "take precedence" at the outset of the program. According to his estimates, one camp of

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[192]Jules Loh, "Back Then We Had the WPA," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), 23 June 1991.

[193]Stanley W. Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Monthly Report," November 1941, BLRI Archives.

[194]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 11.

[195]Stanley Abbott to Vint, 7 April 1937, in General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, 1933-38, BLRI Maintenance Division files; and Harley Jolley, "If You Seek Their Monument Look About You: The Civilian Conservation Corps and Its Work on the Blue Ridge Parkway," MSS, n.d., BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 38, Box 1, Folder 3.

150-200 men could do the required landscape work for one parkway construction section over the course of a year.[196]

CCC Camp NP-21 was established at The Bluffs (Doughton Park) in October 1937. Although hampered by a lack of supervisory personnel, the crews were assigned to the first landscape development on the parkway in the area around Cumberland Knob. This work entailed removal of debris and downed wood, slope grading and rounding, seeding shoulders and planting along the road, and improvement of fields and forest to the side. A second CCC camp, NP-14, was established at Rocky Knob a month later and was assigned to landscape development work. This included "fine grading," or slope grading and rounding, as well as construction of gutters, in addition to traditional landscape items such as roadside cleanup and the planting of trees, shrubs and ground covers along the road. The crews were also assigned to field and forest improvement work along the right of way.[197] In April 1939, a CCC camp at Kelso, Virginia, which had been involved in state forestry work, was transferred to Blue Ridge Parkway supervision and assigned to work concurrently on the Peaks of Otter recreational area and the Bedford County Park. Redesignated as Camp NP-15, its early work at Peaks of Otter involved fire hazard reduction and selective cutting for landscape effect. In 1941 it constructed the parkway utility area at James River.[198] A fourth CCC workforce, Camp NP-29, was assigned to the parkway in November 1940 and located at Pipers Gap, Virginia, just north of the North Carolina state line near Fisher Peak.[199] This camp utilized African American workers, who occasionally faced hostility from surrounding residents and from their own white management personnel. The camp performed landscape improvement work on the southernmost Virginia sections of the parkway.

Another important New Deal program that helped to shape the character of the parkway was the Resettlement Administration program. In 1934, the parkway submitted an application for funds from the National Emergency Council for the purchase of lands for recreational parks.[200] The states had agreed to purchase the necessary land for the right-of-way for the parkway, but the wayside parks were beyond the scope of the original agreement. A year later, the federal Resettlement Administration made funds available to purchase."submarginal lands" from impoverished landowners in order to move them to areas where they would have a better chance at improving their economic standing. The

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[196]Abbott to Vint, 7 April 1937.

[197]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 11-12.

[198]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 13.

[199]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 11.

[200]Lord, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 10.

lands would then be used for recreation or other projects for public use. Under this program, funds were made available for the purchase of the parkway's first five recreational parks or developments. Much of the land was purchased under the direction of project manager Sam Weems, who would succeed Abbott as parkway superintendent in 1948. Land for other recreational areas was transferred by the U.S. Forest Service. More on this significant relief program is detailed in the section on recreational parks.

The ERA programs shut down on 1 July 1941 when the funds expired. Faced with the loss of these valuable programs, the parkway staff began working with WPA district offices in Virginia and North Carolina to have some of the same work done through state WPA programs. The work would be planned and sponsored by the Park Service but carried out by the WPA. The WPA projects themselves would not last much longer; a year later, the parkway received word that North Carolina and Virginia operations would end in July 1942.[201]

The CCC program experienced a similar fate. In November, CCC Camp NP-14 at Rocky Knob shut down, and CCC Camp NP-29 at Galax closed the following May; personnel in the other camps were drastically reduced.[202] After brief service as a base for Civilian Public Service crews, these two camps were shut down in 1943. The remaining camp, NP-29 at Lyndhurst, Virginia, was shifted to Bedford, Virginia in 1944 and redesignated Camp NP-121. It was assigned to work at the Peaks of Otter recreational area. This effectively marked the end of public works projects on the parkway, though by this time the Bureau of Public Roads had been reclassified as a public works agency and renamed the "Public Roads Administration." By 1942, most roadway construction on the parkway was halted due to World War II. Most of the work for the duration of the war involved fire protection work or salvage of dead chestnut for tannic acid production.[203]

In his 1943 annual report, Abbott praised the work of the relief forces:

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[201]"Arrangements Being Completed for Landscaping and Park Development by W.P.A.," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* IV (September 1941), 1-2; C. M. Crutchfield, District Manager, Federal Works Agency, Works Progress Administration, District IV, Winston-Salem, NC to Abbott, 28 June 1942, National Archives, RG 79, National Park Service, Central Classified Files, Blue Ridge Parkway file; and A. M. Marye, District Director of Operations, Federal Works Agency, Works Progress Administration of Virginia, 7 July 1942, National Archives, RG 79, National Park Service, Central Classified Files, Blue Ridge Parkway file.

[202]"CCC Camp NP-14 Abandoned," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* IV (October-November 1941), 2; and "CCC Camp NP-29 Abandoned," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* V (April-July 1942), 2.

[203]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1944, 2.

> Major construction of the Parkway by contract has necessarily shown the marks of large scale road building in the modern manner. While better controlled than usual, the great earth moving machines have left a rough trail across the mountains, a wayside raveled with many threads to be caught up. It has been in this reknitting, in the healing over, and finishing that the emergency programs have made of a mountain highway a mountain parkway. Without such a follow up much would be lost in the Parkway's beauty, and much that makes it practical as well.[204]

War Delays the Parkway

Although much had been accomplished in the first six years of construction, the outbreak of World War II brought the work nearly to a halt. Even before hostilities began at Pearl Harbor, the threat of war had already been a matter of concern. In early 1941, the parkway staff were queried about the possible "defense value" of the parkway. Although Stanley Abbott insisted its "first value" was recreation, he admitted that in a national emergency it might provide a "relief route" for valley highways, and possibly serve as point of control for the various east-west highways which crossed the limited gaps in the mountains. As war clouds thickened, the pace of construction slowed. On 1 September 1941, a Presidential order impounded $4 million in construction funds already appropriated by Congress.[205]

At the outbreak of the war, a total of $20,359,916.67 had been spent on construction. Some 170 miles were open to travel, and another 160 miles were in some stage of construction, of which 123 miles had received a preliminary surfacing of crushed stone and were open to travel on a temporary basis. An estimated 965,000 visitors traveled over parts of the parkway in 1941.[206]

One of the first effects of the war was a reduction in the parkway speed limit to 40 miles per hour. Secretary Ickes ordered this move for all national parks and parkways as a means of saving rubber. In late spring 1942, the parkway closed 66 miles of the motor road for which no final surfacing had been applied, as maintenance costs for the these dead-end sections was higher than for paved segments. The 140-mile paved section

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[204]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1943, 9.

[205]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 1.

[206]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 1-2.

between Adney Gap in Virginia and Deep Gap in North Carolina remained open to travel.[207]

In the fall of 1942, all major construction on the parkway was halted. Whatever projects contractors could not finish were abandoned, and heavy equipment was moved out, often to war jobs. When construction was halted in November 1942, there were 171 miles of paved parkway, and another 162 miles graded, leaving 144 miles left to be started.[208]

World War II necessitated a drastic reduction in the National Park Service and Public Roads Administration staff assigned to Blue Ridge Parwkay. Between July 1942 and July 1943, the parkway administrative staff lost 15 of its 44 positions, a reduction of 34.1 percent. Five positions were terminated in April 1943 when the parkway's allotted positions were set at 29. Most of those leaving joined the armed forces and several took jobs with defense industries. The limited number of maintenance workers left behind did their best to keep the road and road-related facilities from deteriorating. In January 1944, Abbott was called into the army, temporarily depriving the parkway of its guiding figure. Sam P. Weems was appointed as acting parkway superintendent in his place, and Kenneth G. McCarter was designated resident landscape architect.[209]

Restrictions on critical materials effectively terminated work on the recreational areas, and the greatly-reduced CCC forces concentrated mostly on landscape development work. As materials for this work were likewise limited, and because of a wartime policy mandating only landscape work which would lead to an immediate reduction in maintenance costs, planting of trees and shrubs for scenic effects, vista clearing, and related programs were abandoned. Crews focused on slope work and erosion control. The agricultural lease program, which promised to reduce government expenditures on maintenance, was expanded.[210]

Most construction projects already underway were pushed to completion, but two grading projects, in the Great Craggies and on the Cherokee Indian Reservation, were shut down by the War Production Board for the duration. No new projects were authorized during

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[207]"40 M.P.H.," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* V, December 1941-January 1942; and "Availability of the Parkway to the Public in 1942," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* V, February-March 1942, 2.

[208]"Construction Stops Until Post-War," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* VI, December 1942-April 1943; and Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Director, National Park Service, to Byrd, 28 June 1946, National Archives, RG 79, Central Classified Files, National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway file.

[209]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1943, 18; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1944, 1, 16.

[210]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 9.

the war years. Maintenance likewise suffered, as road surfacing repairs and drainage clearing by the Public Roads Administration was canceled due to materials and labor shortages. In his 1942 annual report, Abbott expressed fears that large investments in the parkway were liable to damage from seasonal storms and washouts.[211]

While the work was halted, planning was not. Parkway officials used the wartime period to continue with plans and surveys, and the states of North Carolina and Virginia continued right-of-way acquisition.[212]

One critical effect of the war was the suspension of the New Deal public works programs. The loss of the CCC left the parkway ill-prepared for fire protection, as the enrollees had formed the backbone of the fire crews. To offset the loss during the war, the parkway ranger force organized fire-fighting crews from parkway neighbors and local high school and college students.[213] Landscape improvement work and development of parkway recreational areas was severely curtailed.

Visitation dropped by 58 percent in the first six months of 1942. Visitation by out-of-state travelers declined most dramatically, and much of the remaining use was of parkway recreational facilities and picnic grounds.[214] When Virginia imposed a ban on pleasure driving in May 1942, the parkway closed the Smart View and Rocky Knob recreational areas in that state. The ban was lifted in August 1943, and the parks were reopened, but visitation remained light due to gasoline and tire rationing.[215] In December 1942, the parkway began allowing loaded trucks to use the road in order to save tires and gasoline. Trucks were limited to a speed of 20 miles per hour, or 30 miles per hour if empty or carrying a light load. Truckers wishing to use the parkway had to show that gas or tires would be saved and pay a $5.00 fee for a four-month period in order to offset wear and tear on the parkway pavement, which was designed for light passenger vehicles. During the first six months of the program, about 90 trucks were issued permits to carry farm and

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[211]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1943, 1-2.

[212]"Construction Stops Until Post-War."

[213]Stanley W. Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," October 1942, BLRI Archives, 5.

[214]Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," October 1942, 2.

[215]"Pleasure in the Parks a Question," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* VI, December 1942-April 1943; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1943, 2; Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," August 1943, 2; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1945, 4.

forest products, and about $600 in fees was collected. By the conclusion of hostilities, nearly 550 permits had been approved.[216]

Although the war delayed construction of the parkway and disrupted the lives of many of its employees, it had one beneficial effect. Three camps of conscientious objectors were assigned to the parkway, and were able to carry on some of the work of the recently disbanded Civilian Conservation Corps. The Civilian Public Service (CPS) program allowed conscientious objectors to perform "public service to humanity" instead of serving in the military; the participants were received no wages and paid $35 a month to live in the camps. Three CPS camps, which were paid for and supported by historically pacifist churches, the Brethren, Mennonites, and Quakers, were located at former CCC camps near Waynesboro and Galax in Virginia and Marion in North Carolina. The CPS crews were trained in fire control but spent most of their time grading and seeding road slopes to prevent erosion or improving fields and pastures. Two of the camps were transferred from the parkway in May 1943. The Galax camp was sent to Sequoia National Park, and the Buck Creek Camp was transferred to the Great Smoky Mountains.[217]

High wartime prices for tanning extract wood led to numerous requests from the leather tanning industry for dead chestnut on parkway lands. In late 1942, the Interior Department authorized the sale of a large amount of dead chestnut on Flat Top Mountain in the Peaks of Otter as an experiment to collect data for purposes of future sales of other wood. In May 1943, the National Park Service, agreeing to a request by the War Production Board, authorized the Holston Land Company to construct temporary access roads to the parkway from their woodlots on Humpback Mountain. This marked the first time an exception was made to the policy of denying privileges for new access roads once land title was accepted from the states.[218] The Civilian Public Service camp at Bedford, Virginia, which was assigned to work at Peaks of Otter, was put to work harvesting some of the dead chestnut for the tannic acid program. The Bedford camp remained in operation until 1946,[219] and was the last of the major public works projects involved with the Blue Ridge Parkway.

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[216]"Parkway Opens to Trucks When Gas, Tires Saved: Permit and Fee Payment Required," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* VI, December 1942-April 1943; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1943, 13; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1945, 3.

[217]"Three Religious Camps Protect Parkway from Fire, from Weather," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* VI, December 1942-April 1943; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1943, 2; and BeMiller, "Building the Parkway," 36.

[218]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1943, 1.

[219]Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 100.

More exemptions for access roads to the parkway were granted to several North Carolina concerns in 1943 and 1944 to provide access to mica and feldspar mines for war production. The War Production Board was anxious to stimulate production of mica to replace foreign sources, which were either no longer available or greatly restricted. The Geological Survey investigated deposits north and south of Mount Mitchell, and in areas west of Asheville.[220] Some mica mines had operated in earlier years along the parkway corridor; these works are noted by two overlooks, Glassmine Falls ("Glass" being a shortening of isinglass, a common name for mica) at milepost 361.2, and Grassy Ridge Mine at milepost 436.8.

The agricultural leasing program was expanded during war time years, both to decrease maintenance demands, especially for roadside mowing, and to contribute to the nation's need for greater food production. The resumption of farming also added to the scenic effect, especially along the Virginia highlands section where the parkway crossed the greatest amount of agricultural land.[221]

At the end of the war, the parkway had a difficult time converting back to peacetime operations. Furloughed personnel returned slowly. Much of the equipment had been declared surplus and turned over to the military, leaving the parkway short of cars, trucks and maintenance equipment. Office space was inadequate, though this was solved in the fall of 1945 when the central offices relocated to a new building in Roanoke. The last of the public works projects, CPS Camp NP-121, closed in May 1946 and the parkway lost a valuable source of inexpensive labor.[222]

The permits that had been issued for commercial hauling over the parkway were canceled on 30 November 1945. The Forest Service contractors, dairy interests, and other parties protested but were reminded that the parkway had been constructed for pleasure travel. School buses were allowed to continue using the parkway for the remainder of the school year because state and county road maintenance had suffered.[223]

The parkway, like the country, had passed through one of the most difficult phases in its history. The end of war did not mean that the struggle was over; completion of the parkway entailed entirely new challenges.

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[220]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1944, 11-12; and H. E. Rothrock, Acting Chief, Naturalist Division, National Park Service, "Memorandum for Mr. Doerr," 1 July 1942, National Archives, Blue Ridge Parkway Catalog No. 7957, RG 7, Series 41.

[221]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1943, 2.

[222]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1946, 1, 3.

[223]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1946, 1.

Postwar Construction

With the end of hostilities, the parkway staff resumed planning for the completion of the parkway. Stanley Abbott returned as Resident Landscape Architect, but Sam Weems remained acting superintendent. Abbott would remain only three years under this arrangement. In 1949, he left the parkway to head a National Park Service team surveying the feasibility of a "Mississippi River Parkway." Weems was then formally appointed Blue Ridge Parkway superintendent.[224]

Deferred maintenance during the war had left portions of the parkway in severely deteriorated condition. Visitors often asked rangers, "Is this road this rough all the way?" Acting superintendent Weems lamented that the parkway pamphlets showed "ribbon smooth" surface, but the sections that had only been surfaced with crushed stone were in very poor condition. In places damage was even more severe due to rock slides and improper drainage. Even before new construction could resume, it would be necessary to devote considerable resources to restoring the damaged sections. Beginning in mid-summer, contracts were awarded for repaving the worst sections. The work progressed slowly.[225]

Even though the parkway had deteriorated, visitation increased rapidly with the lifting of gasoline and tire rationing. In the first quarter of 1946, visitation was 65.7 percent higher than the same period the previous year. Weems reported that even though the staff were "gratified" with the figures, they were reluctant to publicize the parkway while it was in such poor condition.[226]

Sizeable appropriations would be required for repairs and to push work on the parkway to completion. The 1944 Federal Aid Highway Act earmarked $10 million in postwar funds for national parkways, but the Blue Ridge Parkway would only receive a portion of that, the rest of the appropriation going to the Natchez Trace and other projects. The Blue Ridge Parkway staff wanted to use their appropriation for work which would open up as much of the parkway as possible to the public. Weems announced that the main priorities would be completion of the parkway link over the James River and sections around Roanoke, and the final work on a 5-mile section between Mount Mitchell and Craggy Gardens. Completion of the latter project would enable motorists to travel mostly by

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[224]Abbuehl, "Blue Ridge Parkway Early Chronology," 2.

[225]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1946, 2; and Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1946, 1.

[226]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1946, 2.

parkway from Roanoke to Asheville.[227] Other sections would be completed as funds became available.

In 1946, the parkway proposed establishing six to eight force account units to carry on the work that prior to the war had been done through the ERA and CCC programs. Such work fell into two general categories, landscape work and the construction of minor roads, trails, buildings, and utility systems in the recreational parks. The parkway requested an initial appropriation of $259,764 to start three such units in fiscal 1947 for projects at Peaks of Otter, Bluffs Park and Crabtree Meadows.[228] New construction had just resumed when President Truman issued an executive order halting Federal construction in August 1946. Two paving contracts in the process of being awarded had to be suspended, and other planned projects were put in abeyance. Work already underway continued, but the suspension disrupted hopes that the parkway would be completed soon.[229]

Completion of the parkway at as an early a date as possible remained the goal. The parkway submitted a three-year program to resume work on critical sections to the Public Roads Administration. Under it, a grading contract was issued for a five-mile section extending north from US 460 at Roanoke. Another contract was let for paving the section between Linville, North Carolina and Mount Mitchell. Bids were also advertised for repaving the southernmost 35 miles of parkway in Virginia, which had fallen into poor condition during the war. However, the bids received were too high, and the contract was readvertised. Bids were also invited for three new structures. Again, the results proved too high to be accepted, and the parkway recommended waiting for construction prices to level off.[230]

On 1 May 1946, the National Park Service assumed responsibility for maintenance for the 140-mile section between Adney Gap, Virginia, and Deep Gap, North Carolina from the Public Roads Administration. The PRA retained maintenance responsibilities on all other completed sections. The National Park Service organized maintenance crews to do its work from stations at Rocky Knob and The Bluffs. Because some of the roadway did not have a final surfacing, maintenance costs were high and the parkway requested additional funds for this work pending reconstruction and final surfacing on these segments. Over

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[227]C. B. Thornton, Jr., "Funds, Labor and Material Needed for Parkway Work," *Roanoke World-News* (VA), 25 March 1946.

[228]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1946, 2-3.

[229]Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1946, 2.

[230]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1946, 3-4.

the next few decades, the National Park Service took over maintenance of other completed sections. In July 1949, the Public Roads Administration relinquished control over sections 1-A through 1-G1, the first 61 miles between Jarman Gap and US 60.[231] Continued high prices and another presidential "no-construction" order in 1947 further constrained the work, and only one grading contract for a minor four-mile section, a 27-mile paving contract, and a 17-mile surface repair contract were awarded that year.[232]

The pace of construction increased in 1948. Five new contracts were awarded, including two grading projects, two paving projects, and a contract for the construction of a superstructure for a viaduct on Section 2-F near Blowing Rock. Bids were invited on another two projects, a paving contract for Section 1-M and construction of two grade separation structures on 2-E. The total cost of all work in various stages of construction, including carry-over projects, exceeded $3 million in June 1948. In July, the parkway assumed maintenance of sections 2-J through 2-M in North Carolina. Work on this 48-mile segment was carried out from the maintenance yard at Gillespie Gap. A year later, the parkway assumed maintenance for the 45 miles between Rockfish Gap and US 60 from the newly completed Montebello maintenance station. When the parkway took over the 42-mile section between James River and US 460 near Roanoke in 1952, the total mileage under maintenance by parkway forces reached 315 miles.[233]

President Truman signed the bill authorizing the exchange of lands between the Eastern Band of the Cherokee and the National Park Service in October 1949, making possible the construction of Section 2-Y northwest from Soco Gap. Construction also got underway on the 3.59-mile Heintooga Spur Road into the southeastern corner of Great Smoky Mountains National Park where it connected with the park's Round Bottom Road. The spur road was completed in 1951 at a cost of $278,460.42.[234]

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[231]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1946, 4; and Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1949, 3.

[232]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1947, 2-3.

[233]Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1948, 3, 5; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1950, 7; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1952, 5.

[234]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," October 1949, 2; J. Carlisle Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," September 1951, BLRI Archives, 1; and J. E. Obenschain, Highway Engineer, Bureau of Public Roads, "Final Construction Report, Project 2Y4-2Y5, Grading, Draining, Base and Surface Treatment, Wolf Laurel Gap to Black Camp Gap (Spur Road), Blue Ridge Parkway, Jackson, Haywood and Swain Counties, North Carolina," (Gatlinburg, TN: Bureau of Public Roads, Division 15, 19 March 1954), BLRI Archives, RG 12, Series 2, Box 22, Folder 62.

Dedication of The Parkway

In 1949, as the parkway segment between Mount Mitchell and Asheville neared completion, North Carolina and Asheville tourist interests proposed a dedication ceremony for the parkway. Superintendent Weems endorsed the proposal and asked the National Park Service's regional office to push ahead construction on that section so that a ceremony could be held the next year.[235]

In June 1950, a delegation consisting of Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman, National Park Service Director Newton B. Drury and Associate Director Arthur E. Demaray, Congressman Robert L. Doughton, Superintendent Weems and other officials visited the White House and asked President Harry S. Truman to speak at a ceremony marking the dedication of the parkway. The President accepted the invitation and planning for the event got underway. The occasion would mark the opening of the parkway from James River in Virginia to Asheville, North Carolina. This segment was substantially complete, and only four short bypasses over public highways would be required for through travel. The ceremonies were planned by the Blue Ridge Parkway Associated Chambers of Commerce, who chose Doughton Park as the site for the festivities.[236]

The dedication was set for August 12, but the outbreak of the Korean conflict forced the President to cancel his planned attendance. The Associated Chambers decided to postpone the dedication until the following June, though the continuation of hostilities forced a longer delay. Truman's term expired before the dedication could be held, and the committee decided to invite his successor, President Eisenhower. Senator Byrd extended the invitation in February 1954, asking him to attend a ceremony in the spring, but the President declined, citing a heavy schedule. The committee put off the ceremony for another year, allowing the President to choose the date.[237] As it turned out, no dedication would be held until the 1980s.

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[235]Sam Weems to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, 31 October 1949, BLRI Library, Blue Ridge Parkway History file.

[236]Sam P. Weems, "Supplement to 1950 Annual Report," 1950, BLRI Archives, 1; and Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," June 1950, 1.

[237]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1950, 1; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," March 1951, 1; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," March 1954, 2; Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1953, 1; and Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1954, 1.

Mission 66

By the mid-1950s, only about a third of the Blue Ridge Parkway had been completed and opened to travel. Much of the remaining work involved difficult construction in more rugged terrain than earlier sections. While work had resumed following World War II, meager appropriations limited the extension of the road. The impetus for the completion of most of the remaining sections was a multi-year National Park Service development program, Mission 66.

The Mission 66 program was announced in February 1955 by Conrad L. Wirth, who had succeeded Newton B. Drury as director of the National Park Service in 1951. Wirth had inherited a park system crippled by inadequate funding, indifferent maintenance and threatened natural and cultural resources. Seeing a need to attract the attention of Congress in order to secure assistance in upgrading and expanding park programs, he proposed a ten-year program which ostensibly would meet the demands visitors would place on the parks by the 50th anniversary of the National Park Service in 1966. This "comprehensive and integrated program of use and protection" was largely a response to the needs of the automotive tourist, and projects such as the completion of the Blue Ridge Parkway were given priority.[238]

In his memorandum to parks personnel announcing the program, Wirth set forth the underlying goals of the undertaking.

> The purpose of MISSION 66 is to make an intensive study of the problems of protection, public use, interpretation, development, staffing, legislation, financing, and all other phases of park operation, and to produce a comprehensive and integrated program of use and protection that is in harmony with the obligations of the National Park Service under the Act of 1916.[239]

The actual mission statement justified a new series of road construction projects, noting that:

> Construction is, of course, an important element in the program. Modern roads, well-planned trails, utilities, camp and picnic grounds, and many kinds of structures used for public use or administration, to meet the requirements if an expected 80,000,000 visitors in 1966, are necessary; but

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[238]Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 241-42.

[239]Wirth, *Parks, Politics and the People*, 241-42.

> they are simply one of the means by which "enjoyment-without-impairment" is to be provided.[240]

Blue Ridge Parkway supporters were of course enthusiastic about the potential for jump-starting the project under the impetus of Mission 66. Sam Weems greeted the announcement of the program as "a real opportunity for new thinking about old problems."[241]

In August 1956, the Park Service announced a set of priority projects to be carried out on the Blue Ridge Parkway under the Mission 66 program. These included the construction of Sections 2F1 near Blowing Rock, North Carolina, 2X between Balsam and Soco Gaps, and 2Y and 2Z, the southern terminal sections of the parkway. The State of North Carolina was pressed to turn over deeds for the remaining right-of-way so construction could get under way promptly. Once construction of these sections was completed, the National Park Service vowed to program the completion of the remaining sections, provided the state was able to turn over the necessary land.[242]

The pace of construction accelerated. In 1958, projects totaling $16 million were in progress, an all-time record for the parkway. In addition to work on the mainline parkway segments carried out under the program, the Heintooga Spur Road from Wolf Laurel Gap to Black Camp Gap was completed in 1956, along with an extension within Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Heintooga Overlook.[243]

Visitation passed the five million mark in 1956. To deal with the additional pressures from the increased visitor load, the parkway sought to expand its personnel. By 1962, a total of 156 permanent positions had been approved and budgeted.[244] This was a far cry from the days a few landscape architects huddled around Stanley Abbott's dining room table. With the new staff on board, the administrative structure of the parkway was reorganized. Maintenance activities were divided into four districts rather than eight, and

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[240]Reprinted in Roland Steinmetz, "Some Aspects of Mission 66," *Yosemite Nature Notes* XXXVI (September 1957), 85.

[241]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1956, 1.

[242]Eivind T. Scoyen, Acting Director, National Park Service, to Luther H. Hodges, Governor of North Carolina, 3 August 1956, BLRI Archives, R. Getty Browning Collection.

[243]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1956, 2; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1958, 6.

[244]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1957, 1; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 1.

the protection division was reorganized into six districts, with plans to reduce these to four.[245]

The U.S. Forest Service transferred the right-of-way over its lands for the remaining sections of the parkway inn 1957. The parkway received the right-of-way for the section between Wagon Road Gap and Beech Gap from the Pisgah National Forest, and surveys were made for the section between Robinson Gap and James River in the George Washington National Forest. In 1960, U.S. Forest Service transferred 1,443 acres from this forest for Section1-G.[246]

In addition to the roadway construction work, new buildings and facilities were built with Mission 66 funds. A new maintenance and office complex at Oteen, on the parkway just west of Asheville, opened in 1957. The property was transferred to the parkway by the Veterans Administration. Employee housing was another major priority. Plans were prepared in 1958 for 25 residences, mostly in pairs at maintenance areas but including three at Roanoke and four in Asheville. The houses were completed the following year.[247] All remain in use, though several have been converted to ranger offices.

Many of the remaining gaps on the parkway were closed during the program. In 1960, the 16-mile Virginia section between US 60 near Buena Vista and milepost 105 near Roanoke was opened following the completion of the James River Bridge. South of Roanoke, the 14.6-mile section between US 220 and Adney Gap opened later in the year. With the completion of these two sections, only the 15.6 miles bypassing Roanoke remained incomplete in Virginia. In North Carolina, the four miles through Julian Price Memorial Park opened in June. This completed the North Carolina segment between the state line and Asheville with the exception of a five-mile contested stretch around Grandfather Mountain. South of Asheville, the 12.6-mile segment between Balsam Gap and Soco Gap opened in the fall. Another 3.5-miles, between Wagon Road Gap and Mount Pisgah, was completed in 1962. In 1963, a 19.7-mile section between Beech Gap and Balsam Gap opened. This project made available a 60.7-mile segment between Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Mount Pisgah, the highest and one of the most

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[245]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1957, 11.

[246]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1957, 7; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1960, 5.

[247]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1957, 1; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1958, 6; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1959, 3.

dramatic sections of the parkway. Only 16.7 miles remained incomplete in North Carolina.[248]

In 1961, the federal government announced four new interstate highway crossings for Blue Ridge Parkway. There was some uncertainty about the location of two crossings. Interstate 64 between Staunton and Richmond was planned to cross Rockfish Gap, though Jarman Gap (then milepost 1 of the parkway) and Mills Gap, five miles south of Rockfish, were considered possibilities. Studies for Interstate 77 suggested crossings at either Pipers Gap or Low Gap near the state line. The parkway opposed the Low Gap location because of likely damage to scenic values at Cumberland Knob. In the end, I-64 was routed through Rockfish Gap, and I-77 passed near Fancy Gap, well to the northeast of the two preliminary locations. In the Asheville area, interstates 40 and 26 would cross beneath the parkway. The Bureau of Public Roads pledged to construct bridges to carry the parkway over the interstates. As a matter of policy, the parkway staff opposed providing interchanges between the interstate system and the parkway, though the road is easily accessible by state routes connecting to the interstates.[249]

At the request of the City of Roanoke, the National Park Service agreed to construct a 2.5-mile spur road between the parkway and the city's Mill Mountain Park, and to construct a campground along the road. A master plan for the project was approved in 1962. The city sought state help in acquiring the right-of-way, but had to purchase the campground site itself. In 1963, the city also offered to purchased lands for a scenic spur road up Yellow (Roanoke) Mountain. The National Park Service agreed and built the two roads, parking overlooks, the campground and a trail system.[250]

On 15 June 1965, a milestone was reached when the 15-mile section of the parkway around the city of Roanoke opened to travel, marking the completion of the 217 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia. Formal dedication ceremonies were held at the Roanoke River Bridge on 17 June, with National Park Service Associate Director A. Clark Stratton delivering the address.[251]

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[248]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1960, 3; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 3; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1963, 4.

[249]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1961, 6; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1963, 7.

[250]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 9; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1963, 7.

[251]"Blue Ridge Parkway Complete in Virginia," MSS, 1965, bound in Superintendent's Annual Reports, BLRI Library; and James M. Eden, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1966, BLRI Archives, 1.

Contracts for the final section around Asheville were awarded in 1965. Five major structures were included on this section, including a bridge over Interstate 26 to be constructed by the state. When this section was opened to the public late in 1966, all of the parkway had been constructed except for a problematic 7.7-mile section around Grandfather Mountain.[252]

Mission 66 has often been criticized for emphasizing development over protection of park values, but for the Blue Ridge Parkway, the program was vital toward completion of the unit as originally intended. More than 75 percent of the entire cost of the parkway was expended under the program. At its conclusion, only the short remaining link around Grandfather Mountain still awaited construction.[253]

25th Anniversary

An observance at Waterrock Knob on 18 August 1961 marked the 25th anniversary of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall was the principal speaker, and guests included Secretary of Commerce Luther Hodges, National Park Service Director Conrad Wirth, Regional Director Elbert Cox, Director Bowles of the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, along with other federal, state and local officials. Udall was taken on a helicopter tour of the parkway and the line for a proposed parkway extension to North Georgia.[254]

Section 1-A Transferred

The northernmost section of the parkway, extending from the southern border of Shenandoah National Park at Jarman Gap nine miles south to Rockfish Gap, had long been unofficially considered a part of Shenandoah National Park, as it provided the only access to Skyline Drive from the south. Shenandoah even located its fee collection station at Rockfish Gap, making the segment a de facto part of Skyline Drive. Under terms of an order of the Director of the National Park Service issued in June 1939, the section was administered by Shenandoah National Park, but construction and maintenance remained the responsibility of the parkway. In 1961, Congress formally transferred this section to Shenandoah.[255] Although this section is maintained differently

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[252]Eden, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1966, 5.

[253]Wirth, *Parks, Politics and the People*, 274.

[254]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1961, 1.

[255]Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 37; and Lord, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 9.

than the parkway, its origins as a segment of the Blue Ridge Parkway are evident in the design of overlooks, cattle underpasses, and other features.

Completing the Road--Nearly

By the 1960s, the only incomplete section of the parkway was the 7.7-mile section around Grandfather Mountain near Linville, North Carolina. The large quartzite mountain was the highest mountain in the Blue Ridge and a prominent landmark visible for miles around. The Interior Department had tried to acquire the area as early as 1917, long before the parkway was conceived, and in the 1940s, another unsuccessful attempt was made to acquire the area as a recreational area for the parkway.[256]

In the late 1930s, the state of North Carolina acquired 8 miles of right-of-way from the Linville Company, a family-owned corporation which controlled the mountain. Approximately 3 1/2 miles of road was constructed on this section south of US 221 at Beacon Heights. During this period, the National Park Service considered utilizing a portion of US 221, the old Yonahlossee Trail, north from Beacon Heights for the parkway route, but the plan was eventually dismissed, and the National Park Service determined the parkway should be routed higher on the mountain. World War II interrupted all construction on the parkway, and it was not until the Mission 66 program that attention was again devoted to the Grandfather Mountain segment.[257]

The "high route" contemplated by the National Park Service would require construction of a tunnel through Pilot Ridge at an elevation of nearly 4,000', and a segment over Rough Ridge just 1,300' below the mountain crest. On learning of the plans, Hugh Morton of the Linville Company voiced stringent opposition, claiming the proposed construction would destroy his mountain and pointing out that he had already transferred sufficient land to the state for construction to proceed on the "low line" route along the Yonahlossee Trail. The National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration refused to yield, and a stalemate ensued.[258]

North Carolina Governor Terry Sanford told Wirth that the state would proceed with the acquisition of the right-of-way desired by the National Park Service, but two weeks later he reversed himself. Since the state already owned the land for the lower level route, he did not feel there was legal authority to condemn property for the higher route.

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[256]Granville Liles, "Grandfather Mountain and the Blue Ridge Parkway," MSS, n.d., 1-3, BLRI Library, vertical files, Gillespie Gap file.

[257]Liles, "Grandfather Mountain," 3.

[258]Liles, "Grandfather Mountain," 3-4.

Testifying before the North Carolina Highway Commission in May 1962, Wirth declared that "rather than do an inferior job," he would prefer to see the parkway remain incomplete around Grandfather Mountain. The "high-line" route was, he stated, the only one that could meet National Park Service standards for scenic beauty. Morton disputed the claim, stating the lower route could be designed as one of the most attractive sections of the parkway. The term "low-line" was misleading anyway, as it would be the highest point along the first 350 miles of the parkway beginning in Virginia. Morton argued that the higher route would desecrate "the wild, wilderness aspects of Grandfather Mountain which is the main thing we have to offer our visitors." Morton had constructed a road to the summit to provide access to a "mile-high swinging bridge" and may have feared the high line route might have reduced the attraction of his development to potential visitors. North Carolina newspapers characterized the location problems as a personal issue between Wirth and Morton.[259]

In 1963, Governor Sanford appointed a committee to study possible alternative routes around Grandfather Mountain. In May, the committee recommended a middle or "compromise" route between the "high line" favored by the National Park Service and the US 221 parallel route urged by Morton but which had been rejected by the National Park Service. The state highway commission accepted the recommendation and Governor Sanford asked Secretary of the Interior Udall to concur. Udall, however, deferred judgement until NPS Director Wirth could study the location on the ground.[260]

In 1967 and 1968, National Park Service and Federal Highway Administration planners selected a mid-level or "compromise" route that seemed to satisfy Morton. In June 1968, North Carolina Governor Dan Moore told new NPS Director George Hartzog that the state would acquire the remaining right-of-way along this newly proposed line if the Park Service would pledge to begin the construction soon afterwards. Hartzog agreed, and on 22 October, Moore presented Hartzog with the deed at a ceremony held at the Grandfather Mountain visitor center. Before the year was out, construction was underway.[261]

For more than two decades, the Grandfather Mountain segment was the final "missing link" of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Visitors had to make a 14-mile detour around the

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[259]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 8; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1955, 1; "Park Service Director Holds Out for Carolina 'High Route' on Parkway," *Roanoke Times* (VA), 1 June 1962; and Bayliss interview, 56.

[260]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1963, 7; and Earl W. Batten, Acting Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, "Monthly Narrative Report," May 1963, BLRI Archives, 4.

[261]Liles, "Grandfather Mountain," 5.

mountain on US 221 before returning to the parkway. The continued feuding with Hugh Morton was the initial cause of the delay, but budget problems later ensued; in the early 1970s, the Nixon administration froze funding for the parkway, preventing any work. Another fifteen years would pass before motorists could enjoy a continuous journey over the parkway between Shenandoah and the Great Smoky Mountains.

50th Anniversary

On 11 September 1985, the parkway observed the 50th anniversary of the beginning of its construction. An estimated 7,500 people gathered at Cumberland Knob, near the spot where construction began. Former superintendents Sam Weems, Granville Liles and Joe Brown joined Superintendent Gary Everhardt and public officials for the observances. Speakers included Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., former Virginia Senator Harry F. Byrd, and governors Charles Robb of Virginia and James Martin of North Carolina. The American Society of Civil Engineers and the American Society of Landscape Architects presented plaques recognizing the parkway as a national achievement, and the U.S. Postal Service issued a limited-edition cachet. The Appalachian Consortium, comprised of institutions and public agencies in the Southern Highlands, sponsored at symposium at Appalachian State University in Boone to explore the impacts of the parkway on the region. Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall gave the keynote address at the symposium.[262] The celebration marked a milestone in the history of the project, but the parkway was still not complete. Construction of the final segment was, however, well underway.

Completing the Road--Finally

The most difficult construction of the 7.7-mile "missing link" on Grandfather Mountain was in the vicinity of Linn Cove Branch, a tributary of Wilson Creek. The terrain was extremely steep and covered with large and precariously perched boulders. National Park Service and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) engineers determined that cutting a bench for the parkway through this section would endanger the stability of the boulders and cause major scars to the mountainside. As an alternative, FHWA Engineer R. B. Cocroft suggested that the highway might be elevated across the section on a viaduct following the slope's contours. National Park Service planners agreed that this would be the most feasible solution (a similar project at Mount Rainier National Park carried a roadway over the unstable rim of Stevens Canyon at several points), and the decision

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[262]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1985, 9-10; Charles Tucker, "Thousands Wish Parkway Happy 50th Birthday," *Bee* (Danville, VA), 12 September 1985; and Mike Hembree, "Udall Praises Blue Ridge Parkway as 50th Anniversary Begins," *News* (Greenville-Spartanburg, SC), 10 September 1985.

resulted in the construction of the most significant structure on the parkway, the Linn Cove Viaduct.[263]

The Linn Cove Viaduct, a segmental post-tension viaduct built using custom-cast interlocking sections, was built "from the top down," with construction progressing from completed sections of the viaduct itself rather than from the ground. It was completed in the fall of 1983. Over the next three years, contractors completed work on four remaining bridges in the Grandfather Mountain area, paved the roadway, and installed signs and striping. The parkway constructed the 12-mile Tanawha Trail through the area in conjunction with the road work.[264] This hiking trail itself is of engineering merit, using boardwalks and wood and steel bridges to carry foot traffic through the fragile terrain.

Fifty-two years of parkway construction came to an end in August 1987. The final work was Project 2G10-H11, a $1.7-million contract awarded to Brown Brothers Construction Company to pave the final 7.7 miles of road on the Grandfather Mountain segment between the Holloway Mountain Road and Beacon Heights. The final segment cost more than $24 million to construct, and utilized eleven bridges in addition to the viaduct.[265]

With all construction finally complete, the parkway sponsored a series of events under the overall title "Dedication '87." The governors of Virginia and North Carolina each appointed five members to a coordinating committee, and both states donated $25,000 for the events. The highlight of the celebration was the formal dedication ceremony held on 11 September 1987 at Grandfather Mountain. Following a three-hour delay occasioned by a bomb threat, officials cut the ribbon opening the "missing link." Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole, National Park Service Director William Penn Mott, and Regional Director Robert Baker participated in the program. A "Parade of Years on Wheels" was staged, in which cars from each year of the parkway's construction passed over the Linn Cove Viaduct, where the ribbon-cutting was held. Later, participants gathered at McCrae Meadows on Grandfather Mountain for the formal ceremony and a full day of activities, including traditional arts and crafts demonstrations and performances by musicians Doc Watson and Raymond Fairchild.[266]

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[263]Gary S. Jakovich, "Design and Construction of the Linn Cove Viaduct," MSS, n.d. (Arlington, VA: Eastern District Federal Bridge Design, Federal Highway Administration), 2.

[264]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1983, 7.

[265]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1987, 11; and "Parkway's Missing Link Opens Soon," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), 28 June 1987.

[266]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1987, 4; Marily Nixon, "After 52 Short Years, the Blue Ridge Parkway Takes a Bow," *The Courier*, November 1987, 12; and Elizabeth Hunter, "Parkway Completes 52-Year Journey," *Asheville Citizen & Times* (NC), 12 September 1987.

Protecting the Parkway

As sections of the parkway were completed, land values along the route began to increase. While the restricted right-of-way would not allow most neighboring landowners to connect their properties to the motor road itself, the parkway was quickly recognized as an asset. Being protected parkland, the parkway made an excellent neighbor. Many were drawn to the parkway corridor in order to be near this linear park. Others foresaw opportunities for commercial development. The very popularity of the parkway carried with it threats to its integrity.

Approximately 300 miles of the parkway passes through private land, meaning the majority of the scenic viewsheds beyond the right-of-way was subject to threats from development. The remaining 170 miles or so was routed through national forests, which offer a different sort of challenge through the possibility of logging clearcuts, logging road construction, mineral extraction, or other environmental damage. Protecting the scenic values of the parkway from development and other threats was, and remains, a major concern to parkway staff, local governments, tourism interests, and parkway users.

The numerous public and private access roads entering onto the parkway are largely responsible for off-parkway development. Parkway land managers have long sought to reduce the number of grade crossings. Over the years, many grade crossings have been eliminated either by abandonment, by combination with other secondary roads, or through construction of grade separation structures, but eliminating, or at least reducing the number of the remaining intersections continue to pose one of the greatest challenges to parkway managers.

Conscious of the significance of the parkway to their tourist economies, the states have enacted some legislation that helps preserve the parkway viewshed. In 1975, the State of North Carolina passed an ordinance prohibiting all junkyards and commercial signs within 660' of the boundaries of the Blue Ridge Parkway or any scenic easement administered by the parkway. Exceptions were made for signs advertising the sale on land on which the sign was located, and on-premises signs identifying businesses adjacent to the parkway. Existing signs were grandfathered in, but the state Department of Natural and Economic Resources was authorized to acquire, by purchase or condemnation, any junkyards or nonconforming signs within the zone.[267]

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[267]"A Bill to Be Entitled an Act to Provide for the Control and Regulation of Outdoor Advertising and Junkyards within the Vicinity of the Blue Ridge Parkway," North Carolina General Assembly, 1973 Session, House Bill 958, 28 March 1973; and Joe Brown, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1975, BLRI Archives, 18.

Following the construction of a massive condominium atop Beech Mountain near Linville in clear view of the parkway, North Carolina's legislature enacted a Mountain Ridge Protection Act in 1983. It prohibited construction of structures over 30' in height on ridge tops above 3,000'. Water towers, antennae, utility poles, church steeples and the like were exempted from the regulations.[268]

Much of the parkway passes through national forest land, which generally affords a measure of protection, as the U.S. Forest Service provided a "scenic zone" similar to scenic easements and controlled rights-of-way elsewhere on the parkway. Still, logging is sometimes visible from the parkway. A massive clearcut on the Pisgah National Forest below the Linn Cove Viaduct in summer 1988 outraged environmentalists and tourism-dependent business owners, who complained parkway visitors did not want to see scalped ridges. Faced with the criticism, Forest Service officials signed a pact with the National Park Service in 1989 giving parkway officials the right to review timber sales, logging road construction, and other projects that might affect the parkway's scenic values. The National Park Service has no veto power, but can comment and suggest modifications to proposed projects. Forest Service officials pledged to try to design clearcuts that would not be seen from the parkway, though in areas with expansive vistas, this has not always proved the case.[269] Still, the cooperation between the two agencies has helped preserve the scenic beauty along the parkway corridor.

Cutting of timber by property owners along the parkway has caused problems since the days of land acquisition. In numerous cases in the 1930s and 1940s, property owners removed timber once they understood their lands would be taken for the parkway right-of-way, or after the land was optioned but before payment was made. In such cases, the parkway staff could only hope to secure a restraining order to prohibit such practices. In more recent years, there have been incidents in which trees along the right-of-way have been removed without permission in order to open views to billboards or developments along the parkway. In 1995, the parkway was able to secure a major judgement from Gerald V. Morgan of Little Switzerland, who had removed at least 22 trees in order to open up the view to his Mountain View Motel. The parkway sued and was awarded the cost of replacing the trees, revegetating the land which had been disturbed, and for staff time devoted to the matter. The parkway successfully argued for a cost formula based on the tree's value as a landscape screen, not simply for the board feet of sawtimber and

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[268]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1984, Appendix F.

[269]"Pact to Protect Parkway," *Daily Independent* (Kannapolis, NC), 1 February 1989.

cords of pulpwood removed, the usual standards by which timber is valued. Publicity about the case will likely deter such actions by other property owners for some time.[270]

Scenic America, a national conservation organization dedicated to preserving the nation's countryside, listed the Blue Ridge Parkway as one of America's ten most endangered roads in 1992. The group listed air pollution and the concomitant loss of scenic vistas, and commercial and residential development within the parkway's viewshed as the major threats.[271] While these threats have been acknowledged, the parkway, with its limited resources and management planning limited to its right-of-way, has not always been in a position to respond with effective scenic resource protection techniques.

In 1996, the Asheville City Council granted a conservation easement on its 20,000-acre watershed to the Conservation Trust of North Carolina, a statewide not-for-profit land conservation group. The easement effectively protects one of the most scenic areas along the parkway while guarding the purity of the city's water supply.[272]

Another milestone that year came when North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt's Year of the Mountains Commission identified protecting the scenic values of the parkway as a major goal. The commission established a working group, the Preservers of the Parkway, to collect donations to buy critical tracts of land visible from the parkway. To set priorities under the program, parkway planners and volunteers began cataloguing and assessing views along the roadway in 1997.[273] This work was still in progress as this report was being prepared.

Such measures as have been taken are highly important in preserving the parkway and its incomparable setting. Still, the parkway faces some of its greatest challenges since the days of construction. The location of cellular phone and other communications towers along the parkway is a matter of current concern, as such structures would be highly visible intrusions on the cherished landscape. Signs located just off the parkway right-of-way are other discordant intrusions. The greatest threat remains adjacent commercial and residential development. Although the viewshed is largely intact through national forest

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[270]William Orr, Landscape Architect, Blue Ridge Parkway, "Cost Estimate for Damages Incurred from Clearing of Trees and Construction of Road on NPS Property," 9 February 1995. BLRI RPPS files, Parkway Landscape Architect's files.

[271]Sharon Kashkin and Gene Brothers, *Perceived Tourism Impacts and Attitudes Toward Land Use Controls in Communities Along the Blue Ridge Parkway* (Raleigh: North Carolina State University, Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management, November 1993), 2.

[272]"City Council Made Wise Decision," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), 6 July 1996.

[273]"Parkway Surveys to Save Best Scenery," *The Tennessean* (Nashville), 23 December 1997.

lands and in rugged terrain poorly suited for development, new developments, especially around Roanoke, Blowing Rock, and Asheville, are in many cases all too visible to parkway travelers. Parkway land managers are attempting to work with developers and local governments to reduce the impact of such development on the viewshed, but as the Southern Highlands continue to draw more residents, the long-term prospect of protecting the parkway's scenic values is unsettling at best.

Controversy over Tolls

As early as 1938, the Interior Department considered instituting a toll or fee for travel over the parkway. Stanley Abbott, who supported the charges, recommended establishing checking stations at strategic points. Because some traffic might seek to bypass the stations, windshield stickers would be issued, allowing rangers to detect those who had not paid the fee. Abbott favored the issuance of seasonal, rather than one-trip, permits. He predicted that revenue would be substantial and might offset the costs of maintenance and administration. However, he warned that the public and the press were "definitely opposed" to such a policy.[274]

In 1940, Abbott prepared a detailed plan for a fee collection system. Collection stations could not be realistically installed at the many entrance points and access roads, so the checking station system was proposed. Such stations would be erected at "critical points" along the parkway's length, such as at large bridges or other points where a bypass of the stations using free roads would prove inconvenient. He suggested 17 stations should be established at first, with another 18 to follow if circumstances warranted. Abbott also urged a uniform fee system for the parkway, Shenandoah's Skyline Drive, and the roads of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, as many visitors would see the roads as a 650-mile integrated system. Abbott proposed the issuance of daily passes for 25 cents and annual passes for one dollar.[275]

Despite public opposition, plans for fee collection went ahead, and in 1941 a fee collection system was devised. The announcement of the charges was accepted by Virginians, but North Carolina's governor registered a complaint with the Department of the Interior. Plans were being finalized in 1942 to institute the charges. The parkway announced that 25 cents would be charged for a daily pass, while a dollar would cover a yearly fee. Ten checking stations were installed, and the parkway was prepared to start

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[274]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1938, 25-26.

[275]Stanely Abbott, "General Proposal for Checking and Fee Collection System, Blue Ridge Parkway." BLRI RP&PS files.

collecting the fees when gas rationing on account of the war was put into effect, and the program was postponed indefinitely.[276]

Sam Weems, who as Assistant Superintendent was responsible for the ranger force, later related how close the parkway came to collecting the fees:

> I built these [entrance] stations and I had them all in place, and I had personnel signed up and I had even gone so far as to have them put into uniforms, when that telegram came [canceling the imposition of the fees.] And it came one afternoon, the afternoon before we were going to start collecting fees the following morning. My men were all ready in uniform. About 11 o'clock that night I had a telephone call from the Roanoke jail. "Mr. Weems, we have one of your rangers in jail for 'drunk and disorderly.'" I said, "Just a minute. You must be mistaken. I don't have any rangers like that." And he said, "Well, he has got a National Park Service uniform on." And I says, "I will be down there in a few minutes." I went down to the jail and here was one of my fee-collectors who, when he got fired just before he was to go on duty the next morning, went out and got drunk, wearing the uniform. That is how close we came to starting the fee-collecting system.[277]

The Interior Department issued another plan for fee collection in 1947, aiming to begin collecting the tolls the following spring. This resulted in another storm of complaints. Joining the states in protest was the Public Roads Administration. Division Engineer H. J. Spelman argued that Section 9 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act prohibited collection of tolls for roads built under it, and pointed out that this would include the Blue Ridge Parkway. NPS Director Newton Drury resisted, stating that the fees were not tolls, but were similar to automobile license fees collected by the states. Collection of the user fees was consistent with National Park Service policy dictating that users should assist in defraying the costs of administering its areas and thereby reducing the load on the general taxpayer. Drury also suggested that collection of fees would "promote appreciation" among parkway users, and provide an opportunity for parkway personnel to meet visitors and provide them with information. Despite these arguments, the Secretary of the Interior again deferred the collection of the fees.[278]

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[276]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 2; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," April 1942, 3; and "The User Will Pay," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* V (February-March 1942), 1.

[277]Weems interview, 77.

[278]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1947, 5; Sam P. Weems, "Supplement to 1947 Annual Report," 1947, BLRI Archives, 4-5; J. Carlisle Crouch, "Supplement to 1948 Annual Report,"

Plans to institute a fee collection system were not dead. In 1954 NPS Director Conrad Wirth announced that the parkway would begin collecting the fees. Sam Weems reported that following "an uneasy quiet of several weeks," North Carolinians exploded in opposition to the policy, submitting memorials, petitions, and editorials attacking the fees. The state highway commission and the Department of Conservation, the North Carolina Congressional delegation, chambers of commerce and tourist interests led by the Hugh Morton all denounced the proposal. J. Paul Leonard, Secretary of the North Carolina Fair Tax Association, commended Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr., for opposing the fees, remarking:

> It is absurd for a government which is taxing its subjects heavily to secure funds to help foreign governments to build highways and make other improvements of a permanent nature--even to the extent of providing the funds for vehicles to use on those highways-- to turn right around and propose penalizing its own citizens for using a scenic parkway built with their own tax money by converting it into a toll-road.[279]

In response to the protests, the fee collection proposal was dropped in April 1955. Instructions once more came for the parkway to begin collecting the fees on 1 January 1958, but the storm of opposition again induced the Interior Department to cancel the program.[280]

Blue Ridge Parkway Extension

Even before construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway got underway, there were calls to extend the route in both directions. In the fall of 1933, when the project was first being discussed, President Franklin Roosevelt stated he would like the road to "begin at the Canadian border in Vermont and sweep down through the Green Mountains, through the Berkshires and to the Blue Ridge."[281]

1948, BLRI Archives, 1; and Newton B. Drury, Director, National Park Service, "Letter from the National Park Service to the States of North Carolina and Virginia with Relation to Proposed Automobile Permit Fee for Travel on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 15 January 1948, BLRI Archives, RG 1, Series 28, Box 23, Folder 3.

[279]J. Paul Leonard, Secretary, North Carolina Fair Tax Association, to Ervin, 5 January 1955, BLRI Archives, RG 1, Series 28, Box 23, Folder 6.

[280]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1955, 1; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1958, 1; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," April 1951, 1; and Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," January 1955, 1.

[281]Byrd to Weems, 7 December 1953.

As early as the 1930s, an extension of the parkway to the Atlanta, Georgia area was under consideration. The general idea was that the extension would leave the parkway in the Tennessee Bald area southwest of Asheville, and terminate between Atlanta and Gainesville, Georgia. Along the way, it would traverse the scenic Sapphire country of northwest Georgia. Among the outstanding scenic features would be Whiteside Mountain, the highest granite cliff in the East, and numerous major waterfalls and cascades.[282]

A reconnaissance survey of the northern segment of the proposed route was conducted by location engineer E. W. Allfather of the Bureau of Public Roads in 1937. Beginning at Beech Gap near Tennessee Bald, the road would descend along Wolf Mountain down the Balsam chain to Tennessee Creek, which it would follow to its confluence with the Tuckasegee River. It would then run up the river valley and Panthertown Creek for eight miles before crossing under the Blue Ridge through a tunnel to reach the valley of Longs Branch, which it would descend to Lake Fairfield. From there, it would cross a low divide to Cashier, North Carolina, a total distance of about 31 miles. From this point, several alternate routes into North Georgia would be possible. An alternate would utilize the same line from Beech Gap to the Tuckasegee River, then follow the river for 25 miles to the outskirts of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.[283]

The concept of an extension of the parkway into Georgia reemerged periodically. In the spring of 1953, a field study was made for a location leading from Tennessee Bald towards Highlands, North Carolina and on to U.S. 23. This route would be directional toward Atlanta and should be considered an element of the Georgia extension.[284] No action was taken to follow up the study. Congressman Roy A. Taylor of Asheville, a member of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, introduced a bill (H.R. 6067) calling for a $35,000 appropriation to fund a survey of a proposed route. On 10 August 1961, Congress passed the act (Public Law 87-135, 87th Congress) directing the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads to survey a parkway extension running by Cashiers and Highlands, North Carolina, into Georgia. President Kennedy signed the bill into law two days later. Funds for the survey were requested in the 1963 fiscal year Interior appropriations bill but were not approved. However, the Congress

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[282]Abbott, "Report of the Resident Landscape Architect," 1937, 8; and "25 Years Old, Parkway is Ready for Bold New Step," *Asheville Citizen* (NC), 3 July 1961.

[283]E. W. Allfather, Bureau of Public Roads, "Report of Reconnaissance: Tennessee Bald-Tuckasegee River-Cashier Area," 30 July 1937, in General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, 1933-38, BLRI Maintenance Division files.

[284]Edward Abbuehl, "History of the BRP--addition," typed MSS, summer 1953, 1, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 41, Box 51, Folder 7.

authorized surveys from existing allocation, and these were carried out in the winter of 1962.[285]

Following completion of the surveys, a report was prepared on the proposed route. Because of his familiarity with the Blue Ridge Parkway, Abbuehl was selected as the landscape architect for the study; Dudley Bayliss, Chief of Parkways in the National Park Service Washington office, wrote the recommendations for scenic and recreational areas and discussed the economics of the route. The Bureau of Public Roads reviewed the report and handled the preliminary engineering recommendations. In June 1963, the report was presented to Congress. If the proposal was adopted, the new road would leave the existing parkway at Beech Gap and run generally southwest 190 miles to a connection with Interstate 75 north of Marietta, Georgia. The National Park Service called the route "both feasible and desirable." Almost half the land through which it would pass was within national forest ownership and much of the remainder was in the authorized boundaries of the Nantahala and Chattahoochee national forests. Public facilities along the parkway could easily be planned in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service. Potential scenic attractions along the route included Springer Mountain, the terminus of the Appalachian Trail; the USFS Cliffside Lake Recreation Area and Dry Falls near Highland, North Carolina; and Lake Burton, Georgia. The report recommended following earlier practices by having the states acquire the land, the federal government construct and administer the road, and private concessionaires operate lodges, restaurants and motor service facilities. The report estimated the cost of construction for the 190-mile extension at $72,778,000. Both Interior Secretary Stewart L. Udall and Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman endorsed the project. In 1966, a master plan field study was conducted with Forest Service officials to review the proposed route and the location of recreational and other areas along the parkway extension, and the Forest Service again approved the project.[286]

Bills to authorize the parkway extension were introduced into the 90th Congress, 1st Session, by Representatives Taylor of North Carolina, Davis and Landrum of Georgia, and Senator Sam Ervin of North Carolina. On 13 September 1967, Congress passed the bill, and the act (Public Law 90-555) was signed into law by President Johnson on 9 October. Detailed planning then got underway. In 1973, an Environmental Impact

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[285]National Park Service, Office of Environmental Planning and Design, Eastern Service Center, "Blue Ridge Parkway Extension Master Plan," 1968 (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1968), 1-2, BLRI Library.

[286]Bayliss interview, 45-47; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1961, 7; "The North Carolina-Georgia Extension of the Blue Ridge Parkway: A Report to the Congress of the United States" (Washington, DC: National Park Service, June 1963), 1-2; "25 Years Old;" and "Parkway Survey Bill Approved," *Asheville Citizen* (NC), 12 August 1961.

Statement was prepared for the project, incorporating a study of alternatives and economic data provided by the state of North Carolina.[287]

At a symposium held to mark the 50th anniversary of the Blue Ridge Parkway, former Secretary of the Interior Udall, a supporter of the project, stated that "environmentalists and developers stood together and wielded the sword that killed the project." The environmentalists feared the road would scar virgin land, while developers did not want to give up property.[288]

Even though Georgia had rejected the parkway extension, the idea was not laid to rest. In 1992, the South Carolina General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the extension of the parkway along yet another route, leaving the already constructed parkway at Beech Gap and running through the Toxaway Mountain country south to the Walhalla area and on to a junction with Interstate 85, the heavily traveled route between the South Carolina line and Atlanta. The new parkway would utilize existing highways for most of the distance. By using existing roads, the tremendous cost of new construction would be avoided. Still, even supporters of the proposal questioned whether it could be done. The director of the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation said the routes proposed for inclusion could not feasiblely be closed to commercial traffic. North Carolina officials, who were not consulted, stated that some of the North Carolina roads that would have to be used might be designated scenic byways, but did not feel that they could be turned over to the parkway. Such roads were needed for residents, not tourists, according to North Carolina district engineer Verlin Edwards.[289]

Another, unrelated proposal called for an "Allegheny Parkway" that would have paralleled the Blue Ridge Parkway to the west and facillitated a circle tour through the Southern Appalachians. The Allegheny Parkway would have run from Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in Virginia and West Virginia southwest along through the Allegheny Mountains to Cumberland Gap National Historical Park on the Virginia-Kentucky-Tennessee border. Although the 632-mile route was studied by the National Park Service, the Bureau of the Budget never allowed the report to be submitted to

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[287]"Authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to Accept Donations of Land for, and to Construct, Administer and Maintain an Extension of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the States of North Carolina and Georgia, and for Other Purposes," 90th Congress, 1st Session, Report No. 639, 13 September 1967; Granville B. Liles, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1973, BLRI Archives, 6; and NPS, "Blue Ridge Parkway Extension," 2.

[288]"Officials Say Parkway Will Not be Extended," *Herald* (Durham, NC), 11 September 1985.

[289]Ron Barnett, "South Carolina Blue Ridge Parkway Extension?" *Blue Ridge Country*, September/October 1992; and "South Carolina Wants Piece of Parkway," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), 27 July 1993.

Congress due to its projected $210 million cost. The National Park Service also produced a study for a "Cumberland Parkway" that would connect the Blue Ridge Parkway with the Foothills Parkway outside Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, the Allegheny Parkway, and Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky before dropping south back into Tennessee and a connection with the Natchez Trace Parkway. Although legislation was introduced to survey the route, it was never authorized.[290]

Parkway Headquarters

The first "field office" for the parkway was the dining table in Stanley Abbott's rented apartment in Roanoke. For two years, parkway planners gathered in his dining room, using the table as a drafting board and conference table. In January 1935, the Bureau of Public Roads relocated its field office from Luray, Virginia (where it had been overseeing the construction of the Skyline Drive) to Roanoke, where it occupied a suite in the Shenandoah National Life Insurance Building. The parkway then rented an adjacent suite as the parkway's first headquarters.[291]

In February 1968, the parkway administrative officer and his staff established offices in Asheville, North Carolina, from which to assist the Assistant Superintendent with the development and operations of the parkway in North Carolina.[292]

The Superintendent and the remaining central parkway offices moved from Roanoke to Asheville in January 1972 while planning was underway for the extension of the parkway into North Georgia. Asheville would have proved a more central location for the administration of the parkway had the extension been constructed. Relocation was also prompted by the assignment of the parkway to the new Southeast Region of the National Park Service. The new headquarters was located in leased space in the Northwestern National Bank Building (now the BB&T Building) on Pack Square in downtown Asheville. An office for the Virginia Unit Manager remained in Roanoke.[293]

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[290]Bayliss interview, 48-52.

[291]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 21.

[292]National Park Service, Denver Service Center, "Task Directive Package 362, Parkway Headquarters, Hemphill Knob, Advance and Project Planning, Blue Ridge Parkway, August 1990," 5, BLRI RP&PS Files, File D34, Buildings (Other than Concession & Historical).

[293]Granville Liles to Director, Southeast Region, 12 January 1973, 1, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 45, Box 60, Folder 2.

By the early 1980s, problems with the downtown Asheville headquarters space in the BB&T Building prompted studies for a permanent parkway headquarters facility. Space in the BB&T Building was costly and inadequate, and some functions (such as the library and storage facilities) had to be located off site. Parking for staff and government vehicles was an additional expense and free parking for visitors was difficult to find. Parkway staff spent considerable time in transit between downtown and the other facilities at Oteen, 7 miles away on the parkway. In 1981, a number of sites were evaluated for a new headquarters facility and Hemphill Bald on the southeastern outskirts of the city was selected as the most appropriate site. The tract, located at milepost 384, was easily accessible from interstates 40 and 240 and from U.S. 74, major access points for parkway visitors.[294] However, no funding was available for the purchase.

On 4 October 1985, Superintendent Gary Everhardt announced that the parkway planned to buy the tract at Hemphill Knob on the southeastern outskirts of Asheville for the construction of the parkway's first permanent headquarters. U.S. Representative Bill Herndon stated that $639,000 in unspent federal Land and Water Conservation Fund monies would be used to acquire the 81.66-acre parcel. In making the announcement, Everhardt said the parkway hoped the facility would include a visitor center in addition to the administrative offices. A Development Concept Plan for the new facilities was prepared in 1987.[295] Groundbreaking for the new headquarters took place on 15 July 1997. More than 200 people were in attendance to hear remarks by Congressman Charles Taylor, Asheville Mayor Russ Martin, Hugh Morton of Grandfather Mountain, and Superintendent Everhardt.[296] Work on the site was underway as this report was being completed.

Roanoke River Parkway

Just getting under construction as this history was being written, the Roanoke River Parkway was the most recent proposed roadway development project associated with the Blue Ridge Parkway. When completed, this "parkway off the parkway" would theoretically run just over two miles, but it would feature many of the elements which

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[294]NPS, "Task Directive Package 362," 3-5.

[295]Van Denton, "Parkway Offices to Get New Home," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), 5 October 1985; Sara L. Bingham, "Hendon: Parkway May Get Funds for New Office Site," *Times-News* (Hendersonville, NC), 5 October 1985; Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1986, 3; and Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1987, 17.

[296]"Groundbreaking Held for New Parkway Headquarters," *Parkway Milepost*, Fall-Winter 1996-97, 4.

characterize the Blue Ridge Parkway itself, including parking overlooks, a visitor center, and several impressive grade separation structures.

A scenic drive along the Roanoke River had been proposed as early as 1907, when consultants to the City of Roanoke urged the construction of a riverside parkway. The idea surfaced again in 1928 and again in 1965 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dammed the river below the gorge to create Smith Mountain Lake.[297] No action was taken on any of these proposals, but twenty years later, the project was again put forth, this time in conjunction with another development.

In 1984, directors of Roanoke's Mill Mountain Zoo began looking for an alternate site to develop a modern zoological park and chose a regional landfill east of the parkway as the most promising spot. The new facility would be called EXPLORE Park, and the zoo's board vigorously promoted the new development. At a meeting to discuss the project, parkway superintendent Gary Everhardt proposed a spur parkway from the Blue Ridge Parkway to the site. In 1985, the National Park Service agreed to conduct a feasibility study for a major spur extending from the Blue Ridge Parkway to Booker T. Washington National Monument, another NPS unit nearly 30 miles distant, but funding would have to come from other sources.[298]

Roanoke Electric Steel founder John Hancock convinced friends in the Virginia General Assembly to appropriate $250,000 to fund the study. In June 1985, Hancock was instrumental in organizing the River Foundation, a not-for-profit group which took on the zoo plan and coupled it with a proposal for an historical theme park using "living history" to interpret Virginia's role in American westward expansion. Former Roanoke city manager Bern Ewert was hired to run the project.[299]

Two years later, Congress authorized the construction of a ten-mile parkway to connect Explore Park to the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987 authorized the construction of ten miles of road of parkway standards along the Roanoke River downstream from Vinton, Virginia to the Hardy Ford area of Bedford and Franklin counties. The road would be considered a

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[297]Dwayne Yancey, "Scenic Route Nearer Reality," *Roanoke Times & World-News* (VA), 17 April 1989.

[298]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1985, 18; George Kegley, "River Drive Idea is Credited to Everhardt," *Roanoke Times & World News* (VA), 9 July 1985; and David Rosenthal, "Trible Asks National Park Service to Study Roanoke River Parkway," *Roanoke Times & World News* (VA), 4 December 1985.

[299]Yancey, "Scenic Route Nearer Reality."

federal project, an extension of the Blue Ridge Parkway. A Federal Highway Administration demonstration project, it was to be funded with $12 million in federal funds and $3 million from the state. Congress also authorized construction of a Blue Ridge Parkway visitor center in the Roanoke Valley and appropriated $450,000 for a site study, environmental impact statement, and initial planning. The FHWA, National Park Service, and Commonwealth of Virginia executed a Memorandum of Agreement for the combined parkway project on 3 February 1988. Under its terms, the NPS would be the lead agency for the development.[300]

In 1989, the National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration conducted a number of "scoping meetings" to solicit public input on alternative routes for the new parkway. Following the meetings, the consulting firm of Bellam-McGee of Vienna, Virginia, under contract to the NPS, assessed the environmental impacts of the alternatives.[301]

The project was hotly contested by residents of the Hardy Ford area, who organized into an association, Hardy Against the River Project. HARP spokesperson Charles Wills complained, "Helicopters have been circling since last summer so it's very, very discouraging. We've jumped up and down and raised holy cane and nothing ever came of it. It's as if we have a non-democracy down here." Residents of the area feared their land would be taken from them and that the parkway would adversely affect properties which were not appropriated. Project supporters countered that the parkway would not only provide a scenic drive along the river to the park, but also link the parkway and Roanoke with Smith Mountain Lake, a popular recreation destination. [302]

Hardy residents and others who feared their homes might be taken continued to protest against the project until Congressman Jim Olin of Roanoke reported the National Park Service had assured him it would try to find a route for the parkway which would not require the acquisition of any homes. Olin also announced that National Park Service planning for the project would be shifted from the Denver Service Center to the Blue

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[300]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1987, 16; "Scoping Meetings April 19 for Roanoke River Parkway," BLRI press release, 29 March 1989, BLRI Library, vertical files; and Yancey, "Scenic Route Nearer Reality."

[301]"Scoping Meetings."

[302]Yancey, "Scenic Route Nearer Reality;" Dwayne Yancey, "Parkway Routes Ruffle Residents; and Frustration Shows," *Roanoke Times & World-News* (VA), 20 April 1989.

Ridge Parkway. The project coordinator would report directly to Superintendent Everhardt.[303]

The project planning was reorganized over the summer, and Blue Ridge Parkway landscape architect Robert A. Hope became the project coordinator and lead planner. A project office was established at the Vinton War Memorial in August; it was initially staffed by Hope, Denver Service Center park planner Mary McMenimen, and office manager Earnestine "Pinky" Dayton.[304]

The Explore Park project became a focus of the district's state house campaign later in the year. Republican challenger Brad Marrs assailed the proposed park as a "pork-barrel project," a $6 million appropriation utilizing money that should have gone toward Richmond schools. He blasted Democratic incumbent Frank Hall for supporting the measure, calling the park a "gigantic theme park, similar to Kings Dominion," a project wholly unsuited for government funding. Hall countered that the project would help "jump start" the stagnant economy of the Roanoke Valley by attracting tourism dollars.[305]

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Roanoke River Parkway was released for public comment in June 1990. Prepared by the National Park Service in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration and the Virginia Department of Transportation, the 200-page document analyzed three alternative routes for the route. The proposed action was for a 9.1-mile road leading from the Blue Ridge Parkway at the Roanoke/Vinton city limits to Hardy Ford. An 11,000 square foot visitor center would be constructed on the north side of the river near the parkway's Roanoke River Bridge to provide orientation and interpretive programs for visitors. A parkway protection area of about 2,100 acres would be designated along the road. The estimated cost of the project was $102.8 million, of which $78.9 million would be required for parkway construction costs.[306]

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[303]Dwayne Yancey, "Protesters Vow Suit Over Road." *Roanoke Times & World-News* (VA), 22 April 1989.

[304]Dwayne Yancey, "River Parkway Routing Delayed," *Roanoke Times & World-News* (VA), 15 August 1989; Dwayne Yancey, "Hardy Alone in Battling Parkway," *Roanoke Times & World-News* (VA), 21 September 1989; and "Roanoke River Parkway Office Established in Vinton by NPS," BLRI press release, 24 August 1989, BLRI Library, vertical files, Roanoke River Parkway file.

[305]Dwayne Yancey, "Candidate Targets Explore," *Roanoke Times & World-News* (VA), 6 September 1989.

[306]"Draft Environmental Impact Statement Released to the Public," Roanoke River Parkway public information leaflet, 25 June 1990.

The parkway project was scaled back considerably in 1990. Instead of a 10-mile roadway leading from the Blue Ridge Parkway to the Hardy Ford area, the new parkway would be a 2.2-mile spur running only as far as what was now called "Virginia's Explore Park." The ambitious park project was likewise reduced in scope. Instead of planning the construction of a $27 million reproduction historic Blue Ridge town, planners concentrated on building smaller "activity areas," the first of which would be a reproduction farmhouse costing $238,000, and an Indian sweat lodge. Park officials conceded difficulties in raising money for the park project.[307]

One last hurdle was overcome late in 1991 when the Roanoke City Council agreed to allow the parkway to cross the Roanoke Valley Regional Landfill on the southeastern edge of the city. Construction would be allowed to begin once the landfill closed in 1993. Explore Park project engineer Richard Burrow told the council that Congress had appropriated the $15 million needed for construction of the parkway.[308]

Explore Park opened to the public in summer 1994, though two-thirds of the project remained unfinished. The Commonwealth of Virginia had invested $12 million in the project, mostly for the acquisition of the 1,300-acre site. Private donors added another $6 million in funds. The federal government was expected to spend a nearly equal amount, some $17 million, on the connecting Roanoke River Parkway, construction of which was scheduled to begin later in the year.[309]

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY: DESIGN ATTRIBUTES

The Roadway

The parkway is constructed for nearly its entire length as an undivided two-lane road, with the, northbound and southbound lanes separated only by a painted center stripe. Turn lanes are occasionally provided, chiefly at major interchanges or at entrances to recreational areas. At several locations, double lanes are separated by a central island; these sections were designed to accommodate visitor contact stations, none of which is extant. At the Peaks of Otter, double lanes are separated by a long island; this section too

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[307]Joel Turner, "Explore Officials Give Assurances," *Roanoke Times & World-News* (VA), 26 January 1990; and Dwayne Yancey, "Explore Simplifies Theme," *Roanoke Times & World-News* (VA), 28 November 1991.

[308]Joel Turner, "Explore to Receive Roanoke Support," *Roanoke Times & World-News* (VA), 8 December 1981.

[309]"Frontier Park Opens Off Blue Ridge Parkway," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), 2 July 1994.

was originally designed for a contact station, though it was never constructed.[310] In the 1940s and 1950s, the Bureau of Public Roads wanted to construct the parkway section around Roanoke as a 4-lane divided roadway that would also serve as a city bypass, but this modification was rejected by the National Park Service as incompatible with the purpose of the parkway.

At the onset of planning, the Bureau of Public Roads specified that the parkway would have a road prism with a 20' width pavement with widening for curves and 5' shoulders, a controlling grade of six percent compensated and eight percent maximum over distances not to exceed a quarter mile, minimum curves of 150' interior radius and 200' outside radius; and spiral transition on all curves over 1° 30'. Spiral curves of continually changing radius had been used on some park roads and parkways in the 1920s, but as these involved difficult computations, they had never been used on such a major scale. Over the course of time, the parkway restricted sharp curves to minimum cases, preferring heavier construction to keep to a higher standard of alignment.[311] All curves were widened and superelevated; transitions from tangents or straight sections are by spiral, a gradual increase of curvature until the desired radius is attained. Most of the roadway was designed for a 50 miles per hour design speed, though in many sections, grades and curves prevent most cars from attaining even the parkway speed limit of 45 mph.

The roadway has a compacted stone base and is surfaced for most of its length in modern asphalt, though some sections in Virginia have an older bituminous concrete pavement. The typical section is 21' wide and has 4.5' stabilized turf shoulders. Maximum roadway grades vary from 6-8 percent, and most curves have a minimum radius of 500', with an absolute minimum of 200'. Horizontal and vertical alignments were designed together to make motoring easier and to produce a more attractive roadway.[312]

Where the road was benched into slopes, the outer berms were often removed to trick the traveler into thinking the road was simply following contours. Removal of the outer edge materials also provided better vistas, room for parking overlooks, and material for fill areas.

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[310]For details of the proposed contact station, see Sam P. Weems to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, 3 October 1949, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 28, Box 35, Folder 3.

[311]Edward H. Abbuehl, "A Road Built for Pleasure," *Landscape Architecture*, July 1961, 233; Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 11; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 72.

[312]Robert Peccia & Associates, *Blue Ridge Parkway: Traffic Safety Study, North Carolina and Virginia*, draft ed. (Denver, CO: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, July 1989), 5.

Raised channelization structures or "triangles" are featured at most intersections. These are generally grassy median islands bordered by raised stone curbing. These structures are also used to delineate entrance points to many overlooks and parking areas, and to control traffic flow in roadside parks.

Telephone line crossings are generally buried beneath the roadway. Power line crossings are also buried wherever possible, though a number of high-voltage lines cross over the parkway, generally in inconspicuous locations. Gas lines and water lines cross under the road in the usual practice. Each of these crossings is governed by a special use permit issued by the parkway. At least sixteen 1,000-gallon underground tanks are located under the parkway at points on sections 2-D and 2-E, in the Asheville District, and on sections 1-V, 1-U and 1-W. The tanks were installed in the 1960s to refill pumpers engaged in fire suppression activities.[313] Billboards and other commercial signs are banned on the parkway right-of-way, though adjacent property owners are allowed to post small signs advertising the sale of land or farm produce.

One conspicuous characteristic of the roadway is the general absence of roadside edge striping. This helps the roadway blend with the landscape, in stark contrast to ordinary roads where highly visible striping reinforces the edge of the pavement. Although Federal Highway Administration studies have called for the use of edge striping as a safety provision, parkway planners have so far rejected its implementation, except at tunnel approaches, where short sections of edge striping help guide motorists into the portals.

Guard Walls and Parapets

Guard walls along highways are primarily designed to prevent vehicles from leaving the roadway and to indicate points of potential danger. On the Blue Ridge Parkway, dry stone and cement rubble masonry walls, stone-faced concrete core walls, and heavy timber rails are all employed in this capacity.

The type of guard rail or wall to provide for motorists' safety was for years an item of contention between the Bureau of Public Roads and parkway staff. The BPR favored masonry guard walls, such as those they had recently installed on Skyline Drive and in many other national parks. However, due to the great length of the Blue Ridge Parkway, the parkway staff favored a less expensive alternative. Suitable building stone for guard walls was not available on many sections of the parkway, and transporting the material would add to their already high cost. Construction of stone guard wall would also reduce

[313]Glenn T. Bean, "Monthly Narrative Report," June 1963, BLRI Archives, 4.

shoulder width in many places. Timber, on the other hand, was inexpensive due to a depleted market. The parkway staff urged adoption of a rustic sawn timber rail mounted on concrete posts, the plans for which had been approved by the Chief Architect of the National Park Service. Stone wall would be suitable where rock outcroppings made its use more harmonious, or where stone was easily available.[314]

In 1938, the parkway constructed a full scale model of the 6" x 8" timber rail they wished to employ. Parkway landscape architect Abbott suggested the concrete posts could be darkened with lamp black, a treatment which would allow them, along with the grey stained timbers, to harmonize with the existing stone guard wall, as well as with the snake fences and the weathered wooden buildings found along the road. The projected cost, about 90¢ a linear foot, was half the cost of stone guard wall, which then was costing $1.80 a foot. Maintenance costs would also be lower, and there would be no need to reduce the amount of shoulder width. Abbott wanted the rail used instead of stone work at all points along the parkway where parapet was required, with the exception of the tops of retaining walls and at certain overlooks where stone wall would be acceptable.[315]

The National Park Service and the Public Roads Administration (PRA) were unable to resolve the disagreement, and in late 1939 they reached a compromise under which stone wall parapet would be installed on the completed sections in North Carolina. Invitations for bids were issued that winter, but the prices asked for the work were considered too high, and the PRA made plans to proceed with construction under force account over the following summer.[316]

The PRA began constructing the stone parapet walls on North Carolina sections 2A, 2B and 2C in 1940. Abbott criticized the work on the basis of the character of the stone being used, the high cost of construction, and especially, "the inappropriateness of stone wall across open meadow lands." The stone masonry guard wall used by the PRA was criticized by Edward Abbuehl for technical reasons as well as aesthetics. Abbuehl felt the parkway shoulders were too narrow to adequately support the massive weight of the

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[314]Edward Abbuehl, "Memorandum for Mr. Vint," 20 December 1938, General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, Design and Construction Division, BLRI Maintenance Division files; Stanley Abbott, "Memorandum for Mr. Vint," 7 December 1938, General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, Design and Construction Division, BLRI Maintenance Division files; and Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 9.

[315]Abbott, "Memorandum for Mr. Vint," 7 December 1938.

[316]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 8.

walls. The parkway managers continued to hope that an alternative would be used and that the total amount of guard wall proposed by the PRA would be reduced.[317]

Following World War II, the National Park Service was able to convince the Public Roads Administration to allow the use of log and timber barriers. NPS Chief Landscape Architect Thomas Vint was pleased with the change, but he observed that a large amount of "unnecessary" guard wall had been built on the parkway and asked that it henceforth be employed only where absolutely required.[318] With the flattening and planting of slopes adjacent to the roadway, the amount of guard wall was much reduced from original proposals.

The first timber-and-concrete rails were constructed at Fox Hunters' Paradise south of Cumberland Knob in 1951. Some log guard walls were installed on sections 1-W, 2-A and 2-B, but these were replaced in 1953 by timber rail on concrete posts and by stone parapet walls. In 1955, contracts were let for extensive sections of pentachlorophenol-treated wooden rail on the sections between Rockfish Gap and Roanoke in Virginia and between Big Laurel Gap and Oteen in North Carolina.[319]

In 1938, Abbott and the Bureau of Public Roads recommended installing "cat eyes" or reflectorized buttons on timber guard rails flanking curves in order to facilitate night driving. Reflectors would have been placed on every post, or every other post at a 45° angle in relation to the road. The proposal was not adopted, though During the 1990s in the Plateau District unauthorized reflectors have been installed on some guard rails at the direction of the district ranger. In 1957, the parkway experimented with painting guard rails in the Peaks of Otter area with reflectorized paint. Acting Superintendent Howard Stricklin called the measure "a cheap and effective method of outlining curves and dangerous drop-offs."[320] This practice is no longer followed.

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[317]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 8; and Abbuehl, "History of the BPR--addition," 2.

[318]Thomas Vint, "Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region One," 13 February 1946, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 28, Box 35, Folder 2.

[319]Abbuehl, "Report on Blue Ridge Parkway Inspection by Chief of Design and Construction Thomas C. Vint and Associate Regional Director Edward S. Zimmer, October 7-13, 1951," 22 October 1951, BLRI Archives, RG 3, Series 16, Box 88, Folder 7, 3; Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1953, 2; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1955, 3; and Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 11.

[320]William M. Austin, Senior Highway Engineer, Bureau of Public Roads, and Stanley Abbott, "Memorandum for Messrs. Vint and Spelman," 15 October 1938, in General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, 1933-38, BLRI Maintenance Division files; Richard Morefield, Plateau District Ranger, Blue Ridge Parkway, interview by author, July 1996; and Howard B. Stricklin, "Monthly Narrative Report,"

While a variety of wall and rail types are used on the parkway, all share some common characteristics. The ends of the walls or rails are generally flared, both to reduce the chance of a head-on collision into the end of the structure, and to make the end more visible to the motorist. Gaps are usually provided at points to allow snow to be pushed off the pavement. Older walls and rails tend to be about 18" to 24" in height, though more recent ones are higher, sometimes high enough to interfere with views from the parkway drive. Construction of guard walls or parapet was generally let as separate contracts from grading or paving work, as the grading contracts were for relatively short sections, and a greater cost savings could be obtained through contracting for longer segments of roadside barriers.

Older guard walls were constructed of locally available stone. Unlike parapet walls in western parks or in the adjacent Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which often featured decorative crenelations, the stone walls used on the parkway are simple structures with flat tops, constructed of dressed stone bonded with cement. Typical examples can be seen on sections 2-A and 2-B, especially in the Devils Garden area between Cumberland Knob and Doughton Park. The most recent stone walls, employed around Grandfather Mountain and in a couple of other places on the Black Mountain District, are concrete core walls faced with stone.

The timber rail originally employed on the parkway was generally constructed of 10" square timbers mounted on concrete posts. A few of these remain in places on the parkway, and can be seen along the Roanoke Mountain (Yellow Mountain) Spur Road. At present, most of these rails are being replaced with heavier, 12" treated timbers mounted on timber posts. The rails are backed with steel to provide extra strength. End posts are canted into the earth to reduce impact on blunt ends.

Guard walls and parapets are not used at every curve or danger point along the parkway. In many cases, earth berms planted in grasses or wildflowers serve the same purpose, and have a much less artificial appearance. Steep embankment slopes which might have been a point of hazard have often been flattened, reducing their danger. In other cases, cleared recovery zones extending from the road margins offer a similar measure of safety. Parkway staff emphasize that no guard wall or rail is 100% effective at preventing injury in cases of collision, and tend to use the terms "guide wall" or "guide rail" instead.

In addition to the guard walls and parapets, which are essentially safety devices to prevent automobiles from veering off the roadway, the parkway employs a number of retaining walls to support the roadway on sidehill sections. Most of these are stone,

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December 1957, BLRI Archives, 2.

either laid as dry laid as rubble embankments or set up with cement mortar. Near the Linn Cove Viaduct on the slopes of Grandfather Mountain, there is a long stone-faced preformed concrete retaining wall carrying the parkway along a bench that is known to parkway personnel as the "Great Wall of China."

Ditches, Gutters and Paved Waterways

Construction of any road interrupts natural drainage features, but in the convoluted topography of mountain sections as traversed by the Blue Ridge Parkway, designing systems to drain away water was especially important. Drainage must be diverted away from or under roads, lest the surface be destroyed. However, concentrating such drainage increases the chances of erosion below, and the drainage systems must be designed to divert the water to streams or watercourses capable of handling the extra loads. Over the parkway's 469 miles, there are thousands of ditches, waterways and culverts to handle drainage.

The earliest waterways were either unlined ditches or stone-laid waterways. The latter complemented the use of stone in retaining walls, and were especially appropriate in areas adjacent to stone outcrops. In 1937, the Bureau of Public Roads proposed the use of bituminous paved gutters in the construction contract for Section 2-J. Abbott objected to this, asserting that the use of "gravel" would have a "ratty appearance." Where drainage features had to cross secondary roads, stone paved waterways would be required anyway, so introducing short sections of a second material would be undesirable. Abbott insisted that paved stone waterways offered "a more natural appearance" and were far more appropriate.[321]

In 1938, BPR District Engineer Harold Spelman recommended that the parkway employ sod gutters at various points along the parkway. The BPR reported success with this treatment in applications on the Natchez Trace Parkway, along the Colonial Parkway, and on parkways in the Washington, D.C. area. Spelman suggested that the parkway try using sod gutter on a stretch of about 2,000'. The expense would be quite nominal, as the gutter could be obtained for about 18 cents a square yard, or for next to nothing if the sod was obtained from the area of the work. Abbott endorsed the proposal, though he preferred the sod to be brought in from off site, and stipulated the sod should match the grass mixture used for seeding parkway shoulders.[322] Whether the experiment was

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[321]Stanley W. Abbott to Vint, 28 September 1937, in General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, 1933-38, BLRI Maintenance Division files.

[322]Harold J. Spelman to Austin, 7 October 1938, General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, 1933-38, BLRI Maintenance Division files; and Stanley Abbott to W. G. Carnes, Acting Chief of

carried out or not is not indicated in parkway records. Grassy waterways occur at various points along the parkway, though it is impossible to determine whether they were originally sodded or merely seeded.

Some ditches are paved with asphalt, and others, particularly older ditches, are lined with stone. Some of these divert water away from the shoulders; others channel it into concrete drop inlets leading to culverts or drainage pipes. As a cost savings measure, the use of asphalt waterways has increased in recent years, and can be seen in many sections south and west of Asheville where it was employed in recent rehabilitation projects.

Bridges and Grade Separation Structures

The most distinctive architectural features of the Blue Ridge Parkway are its outstanding collection of bridges, carrying the parkway over streams, and grade separation structures, which allow the parkway to travel over or under other roads, eliminating the need for at-grade crossings. Many of these 168 structures have a rustic stone appearance that blends well with the mountain landscape; others are modern steel and reinforced concrete structures.

Roughly half of the grade separation structures and a number of bridges are faced in native stone. Stone facing for bridges was a hallmark of the "rustic style" of architecture employed by the National Park Service, which dictated the use of materials which would enable structures to harmonize with their environments. Thomas C. Vint, the chief landscape architect of the National Park Service through the parkway's formulative years, was remembered by Abbuehl as a "timber and stone" man as far as architecture in the parks was concerned, and insisting on the use of stone facing for all but the most inconspicuous structures. Prewar prices for stone masonry were comparable to those for concrete in the area.[323]

Many of the early grade separation structures were stone-faced rigid frame arch structures. These bridges, introduced on New York's Westchester County parkway system, had been employed in great numbers in the national parks in the late 1920s and the 1930s. Bridges on the floor of Yosemite Valley, at Mount Rainier, on Glacier's Going-to-the-Sun Road, at Zion and other parks featured these rustic structures, using native stone facings so that they harmonized with their specific landscape settings. Rigid

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Planning, National Park Service, 12 October 1938, General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, 1933-38, BLRI Maintenance Division files.

[323]Edward Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," MSS, April 1980, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 41, Box 52, Folder 35, 3; and Abbuehl, "A Road Built for Pleasure," 237.

frame arch bridges on the Blue Ridge Parkway were constructed by erecting stone arch rings, abutments and spandrel walls, then pouring concrete on a network of steel reinforcing rods to form the internal frame. Compacted earth was then applied over the arch to bring the structure up to grade level, at which point the bridge was surfaced and parapet and wing walls were constructed. The stonework is not merely decorative, but serves as the form for the concrete frame. Such bridges appear to most visitors to be old-style stone arch bridges, but were actually state-of-the-art reinforced concrete structures. All but one of the overpasses, or grade separation structures carrying roadways over the parkway, are stone-faced arch structures, as such structures are particularly visible to visitors. Many underpasses, which bear the parkway over other roadways, are stone-arched structures as well, though other forms were commonly used.

The stone used in the construction of bridges, grade separation structures, and drainage structures was generally obtained from quarries located near the construction site. In addition to costing less than hauling in stone from a distance, this assured that the color and texture of stone closely matched nearby rock outcroppings. In some cases, stone for the structures was obtained from rock cuts created during the construction of the parkway. As the parkway traverses several distinct geological areas over its nearly 500-mile length, the type and appearance of the stone used in the work varies from location to location. The stones employed in the work are often massive and are always laid in broken ashlar patterns. The shape of the voussoirs or arch ring stones was dictated by the architectural drawings; full-size wooden templates were then made and the stones were cut to fit before they were erected.

Several different arch shapes were employed, the choice being dictated by the length of span and topographic conditions. Most were segmental arches, that is, a portion of a circle rising from straight sided abutment walls. The elliptical arch was occasionally used where there was sufficient horizontal clearance to carry the haunch of the arch all the way to the ground; most of these were located at points where the parkway intersected primary roads. Circular arches were employed for some narrower spans. With two exceptions, all of the structures are single spans; a double-span structure spans Virginia Highway 89 and the West Fork of Chestnut Creek at milepost 215.8, and the largest of the stone faced bridges crosses Linville River on three arches at milepost 316.5. A large number of the bridges are curved or skewed, that is, crossing a road or stream on a diagonal, so as not to interrupt the curvature of the roadway.

NPS Regional Landscape Architect V. R. Ludgate observed that variety in bridge design was desirable, especially on a road that required so many structures. He suggested that "varying site conditions, type and color of stonework, general size and extent of the structure and utilization of planting masses" would relieve monotony, but warned that "wherever possible simplicity should be the keynote of our design and that every effort

should be made to keep the structures subordinate to the parkway, rather than call attention to them individually by reason of their design."[324] Bridges on the parkway generally followed these principals.

The crossing of the Linville River was the largest bridge constructed on the parkway in the early years. Because it would cross a foot trail was well as the river, Vint order the intradii or undersides of the structure's three massive arches to be faced in stone. This is a unique treatment, as all other arched bridges have exposed concrete beneath the arch. Locally available Grandfather Mountain stone was used for the work. Because of the magnitude of the project, a decision was made to use force account labor rather than to let the bridge contract out for competitive bidding.[325]

After World War II, prices for masonry construction increased sharply and parkway planners began utilizing other materials for construction of most subsequent bridges. At the same time, new construction technologies became widely available. Some of these were employed on the remaining bridges. The new bridges fell into three basic categories: steel girder structures, prestressed concrete structures, and concrete box girder structures.

Of these, the steel girder spans are the simplest. Heavy steel girders, generally formed in an "I" or "H" configuration, are used to carry the roadway or deck. The girders may rest on concrete or steel abutments and piers. Steel girder structures include a number of bridges, grade separation structures, and viaducts. Some of these are disguised from the motorists view by the use of stone parapet walls and abutments, but others feature metal pipe rails and concrete abutments, revealing their modern construction. One of the bridges, Big Pine Creek Bridge #7 at milepost 225, is unique in that it features arched steel piers, the piers being attached to their bearing blocks with steel pin connections, allowing the bridge to flex from the base. Other steel girder bridges feature conventional expansion joints to allow for expansion and contraction of the structure. The longest and most distinctive of the structural steel bridges is the Roanoke River Bridge at milepost 114.7. The six-span bridge, more than a quarter-mile long, rests on reinforced concrete abutments and piers which carry it high above the Roanoke River Gorge. The

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[324]V. R. Ludgate, Regional Landscape Architect, National Park Service, "Memorandum for the Acting Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway," 25 October 1940, National Archives, RG 79, National Park Service, Central Classified Files, Blue Ridge Parkway files.

[325]Abbuebl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 3.

$721,637.50 bridge was completed in May 1965 by contractor McDowall & Wood, Inc. of nearby Salem, Virginia.[326]

Prestressed concrete girder structures are constructed of poured concrete girders with an internal network of reinforcing rods that are tensioned after the concrete is poured, providing greater lateral stability. The reinforcement is concealed within the concrete, but these bridges may be recognized by the massive concrete girders.

Many of the smallest bridges are simple concrete slab structures. These consist of a reinforced concrete slab supported by vertical abutments and rarely, piers. Most are single span structures crossing minor roads (such as private access or Forest Service roads) or small streams. Some feature plain concrete abutments; others pay tribute to the rustic style by featuring stone abutment walls, wing walls, or flat radiating stone voussoirs concealing the edge of the slab. Few of these bridges feature concrete parapet walls; in most cases, timber rail parapet is provided, and often the shoulder above the bridge is covered with earth and turf, often successfully hiding the structure from notice.

The largest of the prestressed concrete girder bridges is the 1,040' Harry Flood Byrd Memorial Bridge across the James River. The nine-span prestressed concrete girder structure was completed in 1960. The contractor cast the beams and deck slabs on the site; they were later lifted into place atop the piers. According to J. M. Farrar of the Portland Cement Association, the bridge was the first of the type to be constructed in Virginia and the longest such overland bridge. Lamp black was mixed with the concrete to give the bridge a grey cast to help it blend with the landscape and alleviate the need for painting. A unique feature is a pedestrian footbridge slung beneath the five northern spans; the suspended walk provides access to the restored segment of the James River and Kanawha Canal.[327]

Like the planning for the parkway itself, the design of the bridges was a collaborative effort between Bureau of Public Roads engineers and National Park Service landscape architects. The BPR offices in Arlington, Virginia prepared the structural designs for the various bridges, but the architectural plans, defining the exterior appearance of the structures, were usually completed by NPS landscape architects in Washington and

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[326]W. P. Wright, Resident Engineer, Bureau of Public Roads, "Final Construction Report, Blue Ridge Parkway Project 1M10, Six Span Structural Steel Bridge with Reinforced Concrete Abutments and Piers, Drainage, Grading and Surfacing of Approaches, and Other Work" (Roanoke, VA: Bureau of Public Roads, Region 15, 11 May 1970), BLRI Archives, RG 12, Series 2, Box 20, Folder 40.

[327]"Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge Dedicated by Senator Byrd," *The Commonwealth*, August 1960, 48.

Roanoke.[328] National Park Service policy stated that grade separation structures for state roads, including approaches, would be constructed by the federal government, but afterwards the rights-of-way, approaches and associated structures would be maintained by the states.[329]

To supervise the planning work for the numerous bridges that had to be built in the postwar years, Bureau of Public Roads architect Charles Grossman was transferred from the BPR's Gatlinburg, Tennessee office to the parkway staff at Roanoke. There, he prepared the architectural plans for most of the numerous stream crossings and grade separation structures built over the next fifteen years. Grossman and the other parkway staff felt that crossings of public roads deserved special treatment, and stone-faced reinforced concrete structures were employed for all except the most minor of crossings. Depending on site requirements, either circular, elliptical or semicircular-arched structures were used. The variety of stone encountered along the parkway is reflected in the structures, which utilize greenstone, schist, granite and limestone depending on their location. The use of native stone and careful landscaping helped the structures harmonize with their surroundings.[330]

The Mount Airy Granite Corporation at Mount Airy, North Carolina wanted the parkway to use its stone for some of the bridges in order to advertise its product. The company offered the stone free or at a very low price as an enticement. The stone had been used in many public buildings in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere to good purpose, but it lacked the color of the native stone of the Blue Ridge, and the parkway staff were, according to Abbuehl, "dead set against having anything to do with it." The staff established specifications which required that stone for the bridges come from within fifteen miles of the site, eliminating the Mount Airy granite and reinforcing the dictum that native stone would be used in construction.[331] Parkway planners were insistent that the bridges should not have a too "finished" appearance, but rather appeared to be rustic in design. Stonemason Robert Green, who worked on the Rockfish Gap underpass, was impressed at how the architects had planned for a rubble or rough finish for the stonework on the bridges, remarking that "Dressed masonry in the mountains was like putting a shiny new bureau in a stable for a food box."[332]

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[328]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 11.

[329]"Memorandum of Information and Instructions," 6.

[330]Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 2.

[331]Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 3.

[332]*Blue Ridge Parkway News* IV (April 1941), 2.

Most of the masonry work was done by skilled foreign-born masons under the expert supervision of David Vecillio, an Italian, or Joe Troitino, a Spaniard. Most of Vecillio's work was in Virginia, but Troitino's company built structures up and down the parkway. The parkway staff generally felt the stonework done by American firms for several structures did not compare to that of the foreign masons.[333]

As the parkway has few tangents or straight sections, most of the bridges are constructed on curves. Such bridge locations dictated careful treatment in design. To avoid the appearance of arches being bent outward to follow the curves, most of the older arch-style bridges located on curves were constructed with the arches on a tangent or plane, with the wingwalls following the curves. This simplified construction, reduced costs, and improved the appearance of the structures.[334]

Interchanges with roads at grade separation structures are provided by access ramps. Where a divided highway is crossed, two access ramps are provided. Access is provided only at major highway crossings; many minor roads crossed by the parkway are not accessible from it. There are likewise no interchanges with interstate highways, though signs direct traffic to interstates over connecting state and federal highways.

The stone-faced bridges and grade separation structures are much appreciated by parkway visitors and neighbors, but increasing traffic requirements have threatened several. In 1981, Blowing Rock residents waged an unsuccessful battle to preserve a stone-faced structure over US 321 during the widening of that highway. Residents were told by Federal Highway Administration officials that stone-faced construction was no longer possible, and the structure was replaced with a steel girder span. In 1996, plans were in progress for the possible replacement of the US 421 underpass at Deep Gap, North Carolina, though the parkway has the right to approve its design.[335]

Smaller than bridges, but no less important, are the numerous culverts that channel water underneath the parkway. These range in size from simple pipes to multi-span reinforced concrete box culverts. Most of the culverts are relatively unobtrusive, but where they might be seen by motorists, parkway planners ensured that they harmonized with the surrounding landscape. Many of the pipe culverts feature native stone head walls or tail walls; these are usually arched, but smaller pipes sometimes have stone lintels. The

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[333]Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 2.

[334]Edward Abbuehl, "Memorandum for the Regional Landscape Architect," 17 October 1940. National Archives, RG 79, Central Classified Files, Blue Ridge Parkway files.

[335]Jim Thompson, "421 Widening Will Alter, Not Destroy, Parkway Bridge," *Mountain Times* (Blowing Rock, NC), 26 January 1989.

culverts often incorporate stone-lined drop sinks at the head of the culvert to collect trash and debris that would otherwise clog the culverts. Culverts constructed in the postwar period rarely feature stone walls or lintels, but are of plain concrete construction. This change reflects the increasing cost of stone masonry construction.

The design of the larger culverts merited the same level of attention as parkway bridges. Parkway landscape architects drew up detail sheets showing the final appearance of the culverts. In 1935, the parkway staff constructed scale models of single and double culverts to guide the construction. Although the original models could not be located, photographs of them survive in the parkway archives.[336]

Viaducts

A specialized type of bridge used in several locations along the parkway is the viaduct. These are elevated roadway sections that generally carry the parkway above dry ravines or across the shoulders of mountains where extensive and aesthetically unpleasing fill sections would otherwise be required. A couple of the structures classified on the parkway as viaducts are technically bridges in that they carry the road across streams, but their design is based on the design of other parkway viaducts.

The earliest of the viaducts was constructed in 1937 on the northern section of the parkway at milepost 35. The Rocky Mountain Viaduct, which bears the road across a deep ravine on the shoulder of its namesake mountain, is a steel girder structure supported by arched stone piers and stone-faced abutments, the only viaduct to feature this treatment. The choice of stone may have been dictated by the fact that the viaduct is visible from points further south as the parkway approaches Irish Gap. The stone piers may have proven too expensive to have been used on subsequent structures. The parapet walls are also stone, and in most cases fool the visitor into thinking the they are merely roadside guard walls. Most visitors never appreciate the beauty of this outstanding structure.

The Round Meadow Viaduct at milepost 179.4, technically a bridge carrying the parkway over Round Meadow Creek, was the next major viaduct constructed on the parkway. The underlying design is basically the same as that used on the Rocky Mountain Viaduct, but the piers and abutments are exposed concrete, and the stone parapet wall is replaced by steel pipe rails. The Laurel Fork Viaduct at milepost 248.9 shares this same design, though the abutment walls and parapet are stone.

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[336]Stanley Abbott, "Shenandoah-Great Smoky Mountains National Parkway, Report to the Chief Architect", April 1935, 1.

With the exception of the Linn Cove Viaduct, the other parkway viaducts are steel girder structures supported by steel piers. Two of these, the small Humpback Mountain and Big Laurel Mountain viaducts at mileposts 319.8 and 347.2 are short tangent structures bearing the parkway over dry ravines. Each of these have plain concrete parapet walls. The next group of viaducts to be constructed were steel girder structures supported by arched reinforced concrete piers.

Linn Cove Viaduct

The most dramatic structure on the parkway, the revolutionary Linn Cove Viaduct at milepost 304, carries the parkway along the shoulder of Grandfather Mountain. Under terms of the agreement between Hugh Morton and the National Park Service, a roadway location was chosen that would not be obtrusive and would not cause visible scarring. Because the slope of the mountain was unstable, and to preserve the extensive rock outcroppings and Linn Cove Creek, an elevated structure was selected. After considerable study, the Federal Highway Administration proposed an 8-span segmental post-tensioned box concrete girder viaduct 1,240' in length. The structure would keep to the 4,400' elevation contour by following an "S and one half" curve.[337] The structure was to be the most complex example of segmental bridge construction yet attempted in the United States. Segmental construction had been developed in Europe as a means of building bridges over water, where setting piers and footings was especially complicated. Segmental construction involved custom-casting giant sections of a structure, designed to interlock with the adjacent one, prior to erection.[338]

Having agreed to the concept, in 1977 the National Park Service obtained funding to begin design and engineering studies. The FHWA invited interested consultants to present proposals for the structure. A selection committee accepted the proposal submitted by Jean M. Muller of the joint venture of Barrett, Daffin and Figg/Europe Études, doing business in the United States as Figg and Muller Engineers, Inc. Muller proposed a structure of precast segments erected in the progressive placement method, building it "from the top down." Use of precast segments was ideal considering the severe weather of the mountain location. If an enclosed building for the casting were provided, the segments could be fabricated through the winter months. The progressive placement method would allow construction to proceed from a single point. This was

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[337]James M. Barker, Figg & Muller Engineers, Inc., *Design and Construction of the Linn Cove Viaduct* (McLean, VA: Federal Highway Administration, Office of Implementation, November 1985), 1-2.

[338]Jerry DeLaughter, "Blue Ridge Parkway: The Final Gap," *Wachovia* 71 (Fall 1984), 6.

necessary because the pier locations were not accessible; each pier would be installed from the viaduct itself as the work progressed.[339]

Environmental concerns about the fragile mountain habitat put stringent restrictions on the project. No access roads were permitted to the site other than the parkway route to the south pier. From there to the north end of the viaduct, construction had to be carried out from the deck as the work progressed. No trees other than those immediately below the viaduct could be cut. Foliage adjacent to the viaduct had to be protected by silt fences, and boulders were covered to prevent concrete, grout, or epoxy from staining them. Streams flowing beneath the structure were protected and closely measured against possible contamination. Two landscape architects from the National Park Service's Denver Service Center, Robert E. Schrefiler and Gary M. Johnson, were assigned to monitor all work to ensure that the environmental standards were met.[340]

The 153 box girder segments were roughly 8 1/2' long, 9' deep, and 37 1/2' wide, and weighed approximately 50 tons each. The post-tensioned box piers were cast in 30-ton segments match cast vertically. No two segments had the same dimensions, and only one was straight. The segments were erected on seven drilled microshaft piles; the drilling was the only construction which took place at ground level. The precast piers were then trucked to the cantilevered south end of the structure, then lowered into position with a stiffleg crane. The box girder deck segments were also trucked out to the edge, swung out, and attached to the free end with threaded bars, then stressed and epoxied. Color additives were used in the concrete mix to allow the segments to blend in with the adjacent rock outcroppings.[341]

The viaduct is unique for its complicated geometry. Its horizontal alignment includes spiral curves going into circular curves with radii as short as 250' and with curvature in two directions. Superelevation goes from 10 percent in one direction to 10 percent in the

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[339]Barker, *Design and Construction,* 2, Jakovich, "Design and Construction," 2.

[340]Barker, *Design and Construction,* 6; and Robert E. Schrefiler, Landscape Architect, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, "Bridge Closes Blue Ridge Gap," undated clipping from *The Courier* (journal of the National Park Service), BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 38, Box 5, Folder 13.

[341]Jean Muller, "The Linn Cove Viaduct," in Barry M. Buxton and Steven M Beatty, editors, *Blue Ridge Parkway: Agent of Transition: Proceedings of the Blue Ridge Parkway Golden Anniversary Conference* (Boone, NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1993), 73; and Philip M. Cauley, "Linn Cove Viaduct Receives Award of Excellence," *The Courier* (journal of the National Park Service), October 1983, 7.

opposite direction, making a full 180° transition and halfway back again in the length of the bridge.[342]

As the construction proceeded year round, the contractor, Jasper Construction Company of Minneapolis, took special precautions to deal with the severe winter weather characteristic of the high mountain site. A heating system was devised to heat the joints in order to ensure that the epoxy would cure. Insulated boxes with heat lamps were used to cure the top slab. This was the first time such a system was used in the United States. The company also built a special shed a mile south of the structure so that casting of segments could proceed during cold weather.[343]

Construction began in 1978 and the contractor placed the final segment in December 1982. In 1983, the curbing was cast, the abutments were completed, a waterproofing membrane and wearing surface were applied, and the guardrails were installed. A final inspection was made in November and the project was accepted. The viaduct was built at a total cost of $9,958,570.[344] The viaduct quickly attracted national acclaim. The American Society of Civil Engineers and the Prestressed Concrete Institute each gave it awards of excellence, and it also received a Federal Design Achievement Award.[345]

Relations between the parkway and Morton improved because of the compromise route. Superintendent Everhardt recognized Morton for his efforts to preserve Grandfather Mountain to ensure its long-term success as a visitor destination. Morton subsequently donated several parcels of land along the parkway boundaries in the area.[346]

Tunnels

Twenty-six tunnels carry the parkway through mountain spurs and ridges. Twenty-five of these are in North Carolina; only one, the Bluff Mountain Tunnel at milepost 53.1, is located in Virginia. The tunnels were often employed to reduce or eliminate the need for excessive landscape scarring that open cuts would entail, though in several cases they enabled the parkway to cross through ridges in the interest of maintaining the most

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[342]Figg and Muller Engineers, Inc., "Linn Cove Viaduct, Segmental Report No. 11" (Tallahassee, FL: Figg and Muller Engineers, Inc., 1982).

[343]Figg and Muller, "Linn Cove Viaduct, Segmental Report No. 11."

[344]Muller, "The Linn Cove Viaduct," 79; and Gary Everhardt, "Blue Ridge Parkway Report," attached to "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1983, BLRI Archives, 3.

[345]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1984, 5.

[346]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1984, Appendix E.

desirable route location. Some of the tunnels are built on a tangent, but most are curved to allow the roadways spiral transitional curves to continue uninterrupted.

All but three of the tunnels have a minimum height at the lowest clearance of 13', which accommodates most large recreational vehicles. The three tunnels with less clearance are all located on the section between Soco Gap and the parkway's Oconaluftee terminus. Lickstone Ridge Tunnel at milepost 458.8 has the lowest clearance, 11' 3"; Bunches Bald Tunnel at milepost 459.3 is 11' 8" tall, and Big Witch Tunnel at milepost 461.2 has a clearance of 11' 7".[347]

Most of the tunnels were constructed with drilling "Jumbos," which consisted of truck-mounted platforms equipped with water-cooled drills. The drills, as many as nine used together, would bore into the substrata, after which the Jumbo would be removed and blasting charges would be placed in the holes. After these were detonated, the broken material would be removed by loaders and hauled off by trucks, then the Jumbo would be removed. The blasting was done with dynamite, augmented in some later instances with fertilizer-type explosives.[348]

Most of the tunnels are lined with concrete or gunite, a pneumatic cement. Interior lining was first used in the Devils Courthouse Tunnel at milepost 422.1. Part of the tunnel had caved in during construction, and approximately one quarter of the structure was lined with concrete. Acting Superintendent Abbuehl reported that a noticeable improvement in lighting was observed on the lined section, a point he felt favored lining of other structures. Lining also reduced maintenance costs associated with leaking water and falling rock.[349]

Considerable difficulties were encountered by the contractor on Project 2Z5, the construction of three tunnels above the Oconaluftee River. A worker was killed during the construction of Tunnel No. 4 in the spring of 1957, and the contractor complained that conditions were even worse at Tunnel No. 3. The Bureau of Public Roads' tunnel expert

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[347]Robert Hope, Resident Landscape Architect, Blue Ridge Parkway to Mr. and Mrs. B. W. Collar, Milan, MI, 29 November 1988, BLRI RP&PS Files, File D46, Structures (Tunnels).

[348]For a typical example, see L. M. Middleton, Resident Project Engineer, Bureau of Public Roads, "Final Construction Report, Blue Ridge Parkway Project 2S2, Grading, Draining, 4 Tunnels with Conc. Lining, Crushed Aggregate Base, Bituminous Surface Treatment and Other Work" (Gatlinburg, TN: Bureau of Public Roads, Region 15, 7 August 1964.

[349]Edward H. Abbuehl, "Monthly Narrative Report," September 1941,BLRI Archives, 4; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 84.

agreed that the unsafe conditions negated the advantages of scar reduction, and a decision was made to "daylight" the cut.[350]

The framework for another tunnel in the same area collapsed several times. A BPR surveyor, Joe Todd, studied the problem one night, came up with an idea, built a tunnel model of balsa wood, and tested its strength with bags of sugar. He presented his idea and was "chewed out" for giving his plan to a contractor. But his solution worked, and he was given a job as tunnel inspector. Eventually, Todd became Division 15 Engineer for the BPR's Gatlinburg office--despite his ninth grade education. He would oversee much of the final work on the parkway.[351]

The stone masonry portals on most of the parkway tunnels were generally not part of the original construction, but were added later, mostly in the 1950s and 1960s. Portals had been under consideration as early as the 1930s. The parkway studied designs of portals used on tunnels in Yosemite National Park as early as 1937, but none of the early tunnels featured a stone portal.[352] Some were added in the 1950s after problems were encountered with breakdowns and ice falls at the tunnel openings. The National Park Service had had little experience with tunnel portals on its eastern roads. At Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the architectural stone of the portals was blended in successfully with the native rock, but on the parkway it was found easier to extend the tunnel linings ten to fifteen feet and then to face the lining with a masonry veneer. Most of the early tunnels were re-fitted with such portals, and the newer tunnels on the sections south and west of Asheville were designed to include them.[353] Most of the portal work was done by the Asheville firm of Troitino and Brown, which had also constructed many of the distinctive stone-faced bridges along the parkway.

Bicyclists have been frequent users of the parkway and can create safety hazards in the narrow tunnels where there is low visibility. To reduce the potential for accidents, in 1985 parkway resident landscape architect Bob Hope recommended modifying the roadway within each tunnel to provide for a 5' bike lane. The lane would be separated

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[350]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1957, 1.

[351]Hembree, "High Road," 154.

[352]Stanley Abbott to Thomas G. Heaton, Junior Landscape Architect, National Park Service, Branch of Plans and Design, 13 January 1937, in General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, 1933-37, BLRI Maintenance Division files.

[353]Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 2.

from the automobile lanes by an edge stripe embedded with reflectors.[354] This suggestion was apparently never implemented. The tunnel warning signs at the approaches have small placards with a bicycle warning symbol mounted below in order to remind motorists of the possible hazard. Still, the potential for accidents is great, as motorists frequently enter the dark tunnels from bright sunny conditions, and their eyes need time to adjust in order to see a cyclist. Compounding the problems, many vehicles do not turn on their lights in tunnels as required, and cyclists often have no bike lamps or required reflectors. Reflectors had been installed in all parkway tunnels in 1977.[355]

Buildings

By the 1930s the National Park Service had largely adopted a "rustic style" of architecture utilizing native materials and local building styles with the intent of man-made structures as inconspicuous as possible. In keeping with this tradition, Abbott recommended that parkway structures reflect the architecture of the region through which it passed. Abbott claimed that the structures designed for recreation areas and other developments were "an adaptation of the general forms, lines, and materials of the local sheds, barns, and dwellings" and maintained that local building types had adapted "remarkably well" for parkway purposes. Use of such local forms was a sort of preservation; they preserved a "backwoods feeling" that might otherwise disappear. Abbott promoted a "building code" under which concession as well as park structures had to adhere to the standard, with exceptions for interiors of baths and kitchens and other areas where sanitation concerns were paramount.[356]

Abbuehl similarly stated that the fundamental principles in the design of parkway structures were "simplicity, use of native materials, and a location to fit the landscape." Characteristic features of mountain buildings such as shake roofs, stone chimneys, porches and heavy timber construction were borrowed for modern parkway structures.[357] The "driftwood gray" color of the structures was specified in a 1940 memorandum from Abbott to all project and CCC camp superintendents. The color was to was to be applied as a creosote stain, Cabot's No. 347 or an equivalent. W. M. Overstreet, project superintendent for CCC Camp NP-15, noted that raw creosote when first applied had a

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[354]Robert Hope to Assistant Superintendent, Maintenance & Engineering, Blue Ridge Parkway, 7 February 1985, BLRI RP&PS files, D30, Signs file.

[355]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1977, 8.

[356]Abbott to Regional Director, 3 December 1943, 12.

[357]Abbuehl, "A Road Built for Pleasure," 237.

"horribly garish" appearance, but soon weathered to the desired gray color.[358] Several concession buildings along the parkway were covered with roofs of concrete shingles that have the general appearance of wooden shakes, but are fireproof. These shingles were prepared at Shenandoah National Park for the parkway.[359]

The interiors of public facilities were to reflect the general design scheme. In 1946, as concession facilities were being planned for Bluffs Park, Sam Weems commented on the intended interior design for the coffee shop:

> The interior of the building we visualize as being first "functional" but it is recommended that local feeling be striven for in the coffee shop, the fountain room and most surely in the gift shop. This might be accomplished through the use of bead jointed chestnut boards on certain wall surfaces, together with the characteristic soft gray and blue mountain colors on any plaster walls, and, of course, in the decorative fabrics of mountain looms in hangings, table decorations, etc. Mountain handicrafts should supply furniture and casual items for decorative interest. In the coffee room only it is contemplated to open the ceiling to the truss and roof framing, common practice in many native barns.[360]

In 1950, NPS Associate Director A. E. Demaray reaffirmed the principle that the parkway's structures should present a "general mountain flavor." Demary observed:

> We have no wish to ape the native structures exactly in our buildings but merely to use similar roof pitches and shapes, building material combinations, and other characteristics well known to all which make these buildings fit into the Blue Ridge Mountain country in a very satisfactory manner. It should be a relatively simple matter for a good designer to produce a combination of the right mass and materials to suggest the mountain type of architecture even with more modern materials than were generally used in these buildings. Cement shingles, wide siding, boards and battens, or combinations of wood and stone such

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[358]Stanley Abbott, "Memorandum for Project and Camp Superintendents," 16 April 1940, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 23; and W. M. Overstreet to O. M. Bullock, Regional Architect, 22 April 1940, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 23.

[359]Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," November 1947, 2.

[360]Sam P. Weems, "Analysis of Plans for Service Center Buildings, Blue Ridge Parkway, to be Provided by National Park Concessions, Inc.," 23 May 1946, BLRI Archives, RG 3, Series 16, Box 88, Folder 4.

> as have been used on several of the existing buildings, will continue to serve the purpose admirably.[361]

These precepts have held true to the present. The draft 1976 Master Plan for the Blue Ridge Parkway set forth an official "architectural theme" to guide construction of facilities:

> An architectural theme has been established on the Blue Ridge Parkway that uses native materials in building various parkway structures. The adoption of the pioneer style should be reflected in any new facilities, such as buildings, fences, bridges, walls, fountains, signs, and paved areas. Plant materials should be native to the area or should be of historical or cultural significance. Colors, in general, should be subdued, present a natural weathered appearance, and harmonize with the background colors of the forest and sky. Construction should be rugged and able to withstand the abuses of nature and man with minimum maintenance.[362]

Visitor Centers and Contact Stations

Because the parkway traverses a distance of nearly five hundred miles and parkway visitors generally travel over limited sections, no one visitor center can successfully serve the visiting public. In order to facilitate interpretation, the parkway has provided visitor centers and visitor contact stations at intervals along the parkway. Each of these attempts to tell the story of its particular section, encouraging visitors to stop at the next one for a new and different interpretive experience. Most of the centers have a small museum or educational displays, and all provide information desks and small publication sales counters. In addition to being interpretive facilities, the centers serve as contact stations where visitors in need can contact a parkway ranger, either directly or by requesting the center personnel to summon one. Most of the parkway visitor centers are open seasonally. Only the information desk at the Folk Art Center at Asheville is staffed year-round.

The initial development plans for facilities at Doughton Park did not envision a visitor center, though plans for the gasoline station, drawn up in 1946, included a room to be used as an "information center." This room, which could be used as an office for rangers, was to be designed to be a self-operating or, as Superintendent Weems termed it, a

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[361] A. E. Demaray to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, 8 December 1950, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 28, Box 35, Folder 6.

[362] NPS, "Task Directive Package 362," 6.

"cafeteria type" information center where visitors could select information materials if a ranger was not present. The room was constructed as part of the gasoline station and served this function for a number of years. Today, it is a small trinket shop operated by the concessionaire. Weems suggested installing a similar information center in the gas station at Peaks of Otter. Weems's proposal gave way to the construction of a permanent visitor center with Mission 66 funds in 1957.[363]

At Craggy Gardens, a small visitor contact station, designed by parkway architects Charles Grossman and George Skillman, was constructed in 1952. The wooden sided shed roof structure, with large windows providing expansive views in all directions, was subsequently converted into a comfort station, but the National Park Service changed it back to a visitor center in 1957.[364] The visitor center at Humpback Rocks, designed by the Roanoke architectural firm Brown and Shank, was constructed in 1955 just north of the mountain farm exhibit. The stone and timber structure opened on 19 May of the following year. It was destroyed in an Easter weekend fire in 1981. Investigators determined arson was the cause and two men were subsequently arrested. The center was rebuilt as an expanded facility and opened the following year.[365]

Following the completion of the Linn Cove Viaduct in 1983, the parkway awarded a $241,150 contract for a visitor contact station near the south end of the structure. The wood, stone and glass visitor contact station was completed in 1989; it houses a model of viaduct under construction. A trail from the building leads to the viaduct.[366]

In addition to the permanent visitor centers, in 1949, Superintendent Weems proposed the establishment of six visitor contact kiosks along the parkway, to be located at the parkway termini at Rockfish Gap and the Oconaluftee River, and at points on both sides of Roanoke and Asheville. These small kiosks would be passed by most parkway visitors, who could stop and ask questions. Most of these were apparently constructed; photographs show them as hastily-built structures with plywood walls. The first of these

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[363]Weems, "Analysis of Plans," 3; and Weems to Regional Director, 3 October 1949.

[364]Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," October 1950, 1; Larry J. Scott, "What Every Good Naturalist Should Know about Linville Falls & Crabtree Meadows," MSS, 1974, 6; and Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 5.

[365]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1955, 3; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1956, 5; Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1982, 11; and Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1981, 1.

[366]Everhardt, "Blue Ridge Parkway Report," 3, attached to "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1983; Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1988, 10, 13; and "Viaduct Visitors' Center," *Blowing Rocket* (Blowing Rock, NC), 1 September 1989, BLRI Library, vertical files, Gillespie Gap file.

to be constructed was the Rockfish Valley Contact Station, erected on Section 1-B just south of the de facto boundary with Shenandoah National Park. (Section 1-A had not yet been formally transferred to the park.) Plans for this structure, drawn up by the NPS regional office, were received in December 1950. NPS Associate Director Demaray criticized the small kiosk for its inappropriate design, stating it "had the appearance of the type of structure usually associated with metropolitan developments rather than mountain parkways such as the Blue Ridge." In particular, he objected to its use of aluminum framing and pullman-type windows, which coupled with its traditional stone base, made for a "very disagreeable compromise." Demaray favored earlier designs drawn up by the parkway staff, which were based in principle on the design of mountain spring houses. He ordered that a new design be submitted. Weems objected to making the changes, arguing that the buildings that mimicked traditional architecture were too expensive to maintain. The kiosk was built as planned. It was generally judged to be unimpressive. It was demolished when a car ran into it in the winter of 1962. A decision was reached not to replace it, as visitor information was available at the Humpback Rocks Visitor Center less than six miles south.[367] Another kiosk near the U.S. 460 Overpass just north of Roanoke was struck by a car in 1977 and was not replaced. The Oconaluftee kiosk was relocated to the Mount Pisgah campground. A third contact station was located at Adney Gap, 20 miles south of Roanoke. In North Carolina, contact kiosks were located at Deep Gap near Jeffress Park, at Oteen and Biltmore, both near Asheville, and at the parkway south terminus at Ravensford. The "Biltmore" kiosk, located on the parkway south of U.S. 25 near Asheville, was relocated to Rocky Knob in 1968 and now serves as that park's campground registration kiosk. All of the other structures have been removed.[368]

A "regional information center" was established at Rockfish Gap in 1984. Located in the Skyline Parkway Motor Court, the volunteer-staffed center provided visitors with directions, information on nearby services and accommodations, and points of interest off the parkway.[369]

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[367]Demaray to Regional Director, 8 December 1950; Sam P. Weems to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, 29 August 1950, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 28, Box 35, Folder 5; and G. Lee Sneddon, Chief Ranger and Chief Naturalist, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 15 February 1963, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 28, Folder 35, Folder 10.

[368]Weems to Regional Director, 3 October 1949; Sneddon to Superintendent, 15 February 1963; Kenneth R. Ashley, Chief Ranger, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 13 May 1968, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 28, Box 35, Folder 10; Granville Liles to Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 24 May 1968, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 28, Folder 35, Folder 10; and Lord, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 11. For photographs of the U.S. 460 Contact Station, see Chief, Conservation and Protection, National Park Service, to Director, National Park Service, 20 July 1956, attachments, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 28, Box 35, Folder 9.

[369]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1984, 4.

A number of planned parkway visitor centers were never constructed. Sites for centers were selected at both Doughton Park and Mount Pisgah, but no construction ever ensued. Visitor contact stations were also suggested for Pine Spur, the proposed "Americana Village" at Price Memorial Park, and the Roanoke area, but these were never approved.[370] Plans to remodel the Mabry Mill Coffee Shop into a visitor center fell through when the concessionaire failed to relocate the restaurant to Rocky Knob. A 1976 draft master plan for the parkway proposed the establishment of "information/visitor centers" at the two termini of the parkway, providing travel information for both the parkway and Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains national parks. Tours would be conducted from the centers, and visitors could make reservations for campgrounds and other facilities.[371] In 1980, North Carolina Governor James Hunt wrote the Secretary of the Interior to propose a "Mountain Experience Center" adjacent to the parkway at Asheville. The center would serve as a common visitor center for all recreational and cultural attractions in western North Carolina, including federal and state parks and preserves, national forests, and private attractions.[372] An extensive study was undertaken by the parkway, but the project was never authorized.

Overlooks

For many travelers, the distinguishing feature of the parkway is its impressively varied array of scenic overlooks. Many of these 264 scenic pull-offs provide stunning vistas and panoramas of the near and distant mountain scenery. Local residents initially referred to them as "balconies," as they were just that, a place from which to take in the view.[373] Other overlooks serve as parking areas to allow motorists to leave their cars to inspect an interesting resource or to take a stroll on one of the parkway trails. Overlook locations were carefully selected during the initial reconnaissance surveys.

Due to the denuded nature of much of the landscape at the time the parkway was being planned, the landscape architects who selected the locations could easily choose locations with dramatic views. Much of the land was in pasture or deforested, and it was simply a matter of walking along the staked center line and choosing points which offered the best views. The overlooks were then designed into the plans, and their construction was made a part of the construction contracts awarded for each section. When CCC or WPA labor

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[370]James Eden to Liles, 5 March 1968, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 28, Box 35, Folder 10.

[371]National Park Service, Denver Service Center, "Draft Master Plan, Blue Ridge Parkway" (Lakewood, CO: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, November 1976), 5.

[372]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1980, 8.

[373]Abbott interview, 16.

was available, the crews could be assigned to cut out objectionable trees that blocked the views or to plant grass in bays that could be mowed.[374]

Abbott was closely involved in the design of many of the early overlooks. William O. Hooper likened Abbott's work to that of an artist, though he worked with a landscape rather than with paints:

> He would leave the woods edge along either side so that it makes some kind of framed picture--this is something he used to talk about--or in other places he would see a tree growing up close to the parkway overlook and he would have somebody come along and take some notes on it as to what he wanted done here, and he would say "cut these limbs up to a height of 10 or 12 feet, because we want to have a canopy view here. We want to have the trees but they will be above the eye level so that we look under them." Another place maybe is open. All these things were to him something an artist must do.[375]

There are basically three types of overlook. The primary type is designed to offer visitors a chance to pull off the road and enjoy a picturesque vista of distant mountains or more intimate views into deep coves below. A second type features interesting cultural or natural resources, often interpreted by a gunboard sign or interpretive easel, and perhaps featuring access to a hiking trail. The third type is basically a parking area, generally located near a junction with a state or federal highway, allowing the visitor to pause while planning a trip over the parkway. These may or may not feature a vista. The overlooks also fall into three basic design classifications. The simplest is a paved road widening, merely a spot to pull off the side of the road. The second and most common type is the "eyelid" overlook, where the parking area is separated from the parkway by an island, usually grassed but sometimes wooded or featuring a few specimen trees or shrubs; a few are set off by stone flag islands or rumble strips. The third general type is a loop road that takes the visitor off the parkway. There are miscellaneous other types, including some that have the parking spaces oriented to direct views to a specific scene. Many of the overlooks are bordered by stone curbs and most feature paved sidewalks to reduce trampling. All of the overlooks are marked by signs along the parkway; these are designed to show the approaching visitor the side of the road on which the overlook is located.

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[374]William O.Hooper, "Oral History Tour, Humpback Rocks to Asheville," interview by Harvey Jolley and Bob Bruce, 17-19 November 1978, BLRI Library, vertical files, "History" file, 15-16.

[375]Hooper, "Oral History Tour," 17-18.

Trash cans were installed at all overlooks in 1941. In May 1949, park crews placed picnic tables at all overlooks between Rockfish Gap and U.S. 60, one to an overlook. This was considered an experiment, and use of the facilities was closely monitored. Prior to this time, the only picnic facilities were located in the recreational areas. This program was expanded in the 1980s and tables were installed at various other overlooks. As a rule, only one table was installed at carefully selected overlooks, and the locations for these were staked by the parkway landscape architect. Picnic tables were not located at overlooks near picnic areas, nor in the Roanoke Valley area where concerns were expressed about possible administrative problems.[376]

Vistas

Vistas are a key part of many overlooks, but they are also carefully located at hundreds of other points along the parkway. The vistas were shown on the Parkway Land Use Maps, or PLUMs, where they were depicted according to type and management guidelines. Edward Abbuehl, for years the principal landscape architect for the parkway, classified parkway vistas into three categories: open vistas, providing distant views; canopy vistas, with views framed by trees; and woods vistas, or views opening into the adjacent forest. Some of the vistas were opened up in the initial construction of the road; others were developed later. In all cases, they had to be carefully maintained.[377] Stanley Abbott had intended for the PLUMS to guide maintenance crews in keeping the vistas open, but over the years, the maps were used less and less. Bluffs District Maintenance Foreman Ray Shaw admitted: "We have kept certain views clear which were deemed a priority a generation back. Another generation of maintenance back. And we've continued that. We're probably maintaining 30% to 40% of the views *as per* the plans. Some places less and some sections maybe more."[378]

Maintaining the vistas has proved difficult. Level grass bays could easily be mowed, but mowers can not operate on steep slopes, so much hand labor is required to keep down the brush and to prevent trees from regenerating and blocking the views.[379] In many places, even where crews have kept bays clear on parkway land, adjoining lands that were once open have grown up in dense woods, blocking the views the parkway planners so carefully planned.

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[376]Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," May 1941, 7; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," May 1949, 3; and James R. Brotherton to Chief of Maintenance, Blue Ridge Parkway, 1 October 1980, BLRI RP&PS Files, File D46, Other structures.

[377]Abbuehl, "History of the BRP--addition," 3.

[378]Quoted in Robinson, "Managing Change," 78.

[379]Hooper, "Oral History Tour," 16.

The "canopy views," those beneath the trees, were carefully maintained through the 1940s and 1950s at great expense. Many of these have been lost. William Hooper later regretted that much of the work had been for naught: "The tragedy of it all is not maintaining it when it's first opened. Then you can do it with very little effort. One man can go in there with a brush axe once a year and knock down anything, but if you let it go 4 or 5 years, you've lost it."[380]

Much time and effort is still devoted to vista management. Vista clearing is labor-intensive, with most of the work done by hand. In 1982, Superintendent Everhardt reported that the parkway was studying controlled burning as a possible tool for vista maintenance, and some experimental prescribed burns were done in 1983 and 1984.[381] At present, some work is done by parkway maintenance forces, but larger vista clearing projects were awarded by contract in 1996. The locations of the vistas to be cleared were determined by the parkway landscape architect. District maintenance personnel marked the boundaries of the vista areas with painted nails driven into the roadway pavement. Instructions dictated that the edges of the wood line were to be staggered to produce "a varied and natural appearance." Ends of the vista were to be tapered to "prolong the view experience."[382] Following a bid process, the work was executed by private contractors with review by parkway staff.

Water Features

One of Abbott's early disappointments with the chosen route for the Blue Ridge Parkway was the lack of attractive water features along the way. There were few natural lakes in the mountains, and the occasional stream encountered was often muddy year-round on account of erosion from excessive logging or poor agricultural practice. To make up for the shortcomings, Abbott and the parkway staff planned to emphasize water features through the construction of attractive bridges, the placement of overlooks where visitors could have access to some of the better surviving streams, and the construction of hiking trails along rivers and creeks. Where features did not exist, they were occasionally created and developed as new sites. When plans for a recreational development at Licklog Gap in Virginia fell through on account of designation of much of the area for watershed protection, Abbott planned for the development of a "water feature park" along Otter Creek thirteen miles to the south. At the southern end of the new development, a

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[380]Quoted in Robinson, "Managing Change," 89.

[381]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1982, 12; and Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1983, 6.

[382]John A. Gentry, Chief of Maintenance, Blue Ridge Parkway, "Memorandum--Permanent Markers for the 1996 Vista Clearing Project," 3 April 1996, BLRI Maintenance Division files.

large masonry-faced dam was constructed to create a small lake which is today one of the more popular spots along the parkway. The large lake at Julian Price Memorial Park was impounded much later.

In various early master plans for the Tompkins Knob development (now E. B. Jeffress Memorial Park), a lake was proposed as the centerpiece of a large camping and picnic area. In 1951, National Park Service and parkway planners decided to drop the proposal because the land on which the development was planned had not been acquired, and because there were already two lakes at the new Moses H. Cone Memorial Park to the south. Plans to build a dam at the head of Yellowstone Falls and flood the Graveyard Fields at milepost 418 were likewise abandoned when the U.S. Forest Service objected.[383]

At milepost 162.4, the parkway reconstructed the dam from a nineteenth century-mill once operated by Jarmon Rakes. The mill was no longer extant, but the "overhung timber apron dam" was rebuilt to provide another scenic water feature that would also serve as a reservoir to hold water which could be used against forest fires.[384] A small stone-walled overlook and a gunboard sign interpret the site to parkway visitors.

At milepost 225.2, the old Hare Mill Pond was enlarged by replacing the original mill dam with a causeway carrying the parkway. The Glade Mill Pond at milepost 230 is a complete fabrication. There had been a small "tub" mill on Glade Creek near this location, but there had been no pond.[385] The small pond, bordered by a grassy swale, is now a popular picnic spot.

Signs

A wide variety of signs provide traffic, directional and interpretive information to parkway visitors. These range from "rustic" wooden signs and interpretive gunboards to modern reflectorized metal signs similar to those found on ordinary state and federal highways. The signs have changed over the years, but a number of older ones still represent the character of early parkway signs and markers.

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[383]Abbuehl, "Report on Blue Ridge Parkway Inspection," 1951, 3; Stanley Abbott, "Blue Ridge Parkway: Brief Description of the Recreation Areas Adjacent to the Parkwy, to Accompany the Master Plan Thereof, Drawn June 3, 1936," BLRI library, 8; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1946, 1; Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," June 1942, 7; H. E. Ochsner, Forest Supervisor, Pisgah National Forest, "Memorandum for the Regional Forester," 5 April 1938, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 10, 4; and Sam P. Weems to Carl G. Krueger, Forest Supervisor, Pisgah National Forest, 30 August 1946, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 3, 3.

[384]Firth, "Historic Resource Study," n.p.

[385]Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 109.

Plans for signs for traffic control and information were approved in 1938, and the first of these signs, manufactured by the Federal Prison Industries, were delivered the following spring. The PRA placed the signs on sections 1P to 1T and 2A to 2E, and temporary signs were installed in other locations. Large informational signs announcing the state of completion of the parkway were installed at intersections with major highways.[386] Special signs for parking overlooks and the recreational parks were subsequently constructed and installed by the CCC. The signs at the overlooks indicated their elevation and those of the principal peaks on the horizon.[387] Today, overlooks are marked by rectangular redwood signs with rounded corners, listing the name of the overlook and its elevation.

The first parkway mileposts were erected in 1941. Historic photographs show they were wooden hanging signs reminiscent of old tavern placards. The "lone pine" emblem, symbol of the parkway, was the prominent feature incised into the main chestnut placard. The cross arms indicated the distance to Shenandoah or Great Smoky Mountains national parks on the appropriate side. These large signs were placed only at the recreational areas or other major points of interest. In 1941, small "gas" signs were hung on the posts at areas with service stations. None of the old-style mileposts survives. Parkway crews began placing concrete milepost markers along the sides of the road in September 1947.[388]

In 1941 and 1942, the parkway began erecting "story signs" recounting tales, legends, and historical lore at points along the parkway. Abbott stressed that the signs would stress the "lived-in quality of the mountains" rather than political history. The first four were prepared for the Trail Cabin at Smart View, Mabry Mill, the Puckett Cabin, and the Brinegar Cabin. At the same time, the parkway began designing the signs for overlooks. Trail signs were also installed at The Cascades and Flat Rock trails, though the original signs are no longer extant.[389]

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[386]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 9; and Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 8-9.

[387]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 9; and Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 15.

[388]"And Now Our Story's Begun," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* IV (July-August 1941), 1; Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," April 1941, 6; and Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," September 1947, 4. The Natchez Trace Parkway continues to use the old-style sign type, with its "post rider" emblem replacing the lone pine, at all overlooks and recreational areas, though concrete markers are used to mark each mile point.

[389]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 16; Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," December 1941, 5; and Sam L. Huddleston, Project Landscape Architect, Blue Ridge Parkway, "Report to the Superintendent on the Program for 'Park Type Signs,'" 1 November

The early interpretive signs featured a pioneer squirrel rifle and powder horn as identifying markers, and were called "gunboards" by parkway staff. The signs were constructed of 2" thick California redwood boards mounted on locust posts. The gun, powder horn and lettering were all prepared with an electric router; the letters were subsequently painted with white lead paint. In 1959, someone noticed the squirrel rifle had been incorrectly designed without a ramrod. The design was corrected and future signs incorporated the ramrods.[390] The gunboard signs share a common color scheme, described by Abbott in 1947: "The rifle is painted Parkway blue, a color which we mix to simulate the deep blue of the mountains in the late evening. The powder horn and thong are just off-white or ivory color. The letters in the title are white. All of this is against our standard driftwood gray, a commercial stain made by Cabot."[391] Abbott noted that after the initial treatment with the driftwood stain, the signs were allowed to weather naturally. The gradual disappearance of the stain was concurrent with natural weathering and resulted in a pleasing silver-gray color.[392]

The rustic routed lettering used on most signs was designed in the parkway offices. Commenting on the type style in 1947, Abbott wrote, "We mean to attain a strong letter of simple character which would lend itself to routing and which would be in sympathy with the general character of our signs and their background."[393]

During the early 1940s the parkway sign shop also prepared three "Farm Demonstration" signs, nine "Park Closed" signs, and 225 "PLEASE LEAVE THE FLOWERS FOR OTHERS TO ENJOY" notices. These were all portable signs which could be moved to various locations as needed. They are no longer used. Fifteen view finders, bronze plates with directional cones to denote mountain peaks and other natural features, were ordered for various overlooks or trail locations. Examples can be seen today at Raven Rocks, Sharp Top Mountain, Flat Rock, Devils Courthouse and several other locations.[394]

1941, 1-3, BLRI RP&PS Files, File D66, 1983 Sign Inspection and Sign Inventory file.

[390]Sam P. Weems to D. J. Fair, Director of Highways, State Highway Commission of Kansas, 15 July 1946, BLRI RP&PS file D-6627, Interpretive Signs and Markers; Stanley Abbott to Allen Eaton, Phi Beta Phi School, Gatlinburg, TN, 6 August 1947, BLRI RP&PS file D-6627, Interpretive Signs and Markers; and Earl W. Batten, Acting Parkway Engineer, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Maintenance Supervisor Porter, Blue Ridge Parkway, 19 September 1956, BLRI RP&PS file D-6627, Interpretive Signs and Markers.

[391]Abbott to Eaton, 6 August 1947.

[393]Abbott to Eaton, 6 August 1947.

[393]Abbott to Eaton, 6 August 1947.

[394]Huddleston, "Report to the Superintendent," 4.

A formal parkway sign policy was promulgated by Superintendent Weems in 1948. The programming of signs became the responsibility of the Plans and Design Division, working in cooperation with the Engineering Division. All signs were subject to approval by the superintendent. Requisitions for new signs were to be addressed to the superintendent with information provided on the text, proposed location, proposed date of erection, and the justification of circumstances for its need. Prohibitive signs were to be kept to a minimum, and would be justified only where frequent violations of regulations had occurred and where parkway rangers were ineffective in preventing such violations. Efforts would be made to acquaint visitors with parkway regulations by posting brief regulation summaries on all parkway bulletin boards.[395]

By this point, parkway signs fell into two general categories. Traffic signs, for the control and direction of motor traffic, were usually metal. The other signs, used as interpretive devices or in developed areas away from the motor road, were usually of wood construction. Early traffic control signs were distinctive for the parkway and were designed to harmonize with the wood interpretive signs, but in the late 1940s the parkway was directed by the Bureau of Public Roads to adopt provisions of its manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The parkway reluctantly adopted the change, and began using common black and white metal traffic signs which had no character unique to the parkway.[396]

For the recreational parks, two classifications of signs were designed. General park signs included 79 different types, most of which directed visitors to comfort stations, sandwich shops, etc. Other general signs were traffic devices such as "one way" or "exit" for roads in the parks. These signs could be used in various parks. Blue Ridge Parkway-specific signs would include name and elevation markers and signs designating various features of the individual parks.[397]

Many signs were originally placed very close to the ground. While this was aesthetically pleasing, many of these signs became splattered with mud. Over the years, most were raised to conventional height. In 1953, the parkway began replacing wooden sign posts with concrete posts. Today, a variety of posts are used, though signs along the main

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[395]Sam P. Weems, "Blue Ridge Parkway Memorandum No. A-34," 28 October 1948, BLRI RP&PS file D-6627, Interpretive Signs and Markers.

[396]Edward Abbuehl to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 8 November 1949, BLRI RP&PS file D-6627, Interpretive Signs and Markers.

[397]Huddleston, "Report to the Superintendent," 2.

roadway are generally mounted on metal posts with break-away fittings for safety reasons.[398]

In the 1950s or 1960s, the parkway began to employ aluminum lift-top easels, featuring printed text, photographs, maps, and other materials at locations where it was determined the interpretive material was too complex for the gunboard signs.[399] In 1971, there were 26 such signs in place along the parkway. All have since been removed, though examples of the type can be seen in Mount Mitchell State Park adjacent to the parkway.

While nearly every overlook is marked with identification signs, parkway policy has limited the actual number of interpretive signs to salient points of interest. In 1941, before any signs had been installed, Abbott defined the parkway's sign policy, asserting:

> We are anxious to avoid over-marking and over-signing of the interpretational sort which would only dilute the interest of the tourist. It is our plan to select very carefully all things which are to be pointed out to the tourist from the point of view of traffic safety, providing pull-outs for parking areas, and the logic of telling a particular story at a particular point.[400]

Over the years, many communities and commercial establishments along the parkway have requested the erection of signs pointing to accommodations, restaurants, gas stations and tourist attractions. The parkway's early policy was to erect signs only for traffic control, directional information, and place names. At intersections, signs were placed indicating the name of the nearest town in each direction.[401] In the early 1950s, at the request of the North Carolina Travel Council, signs were placed at many indicating whether the services offered at the various communities, such as "accommodations," "summer resorts," or "motor service," without indicating specific business ventures. These have since been removed. Writing in 1957, Superintendent Weems offered reasons for its resistance:

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[398]Huddleston, "Report to the Superintendent," 3; and Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1953, 4.

[399]National Park Service, "A Master Plan for the Blue Ridge Parkway," draft edition, 1971, 59, BLRI Archives, deaccessioned materials.

[400]Stanley Abbott, "Memorandum for Ranger Dale," 27 May 1941, BLRI RP&PS file D-6627, Interpretive Signs & Markers.

[401]Sam P. Weems to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, 19 September 1946, BLRI RP&PS file 6667, Signs.

> Because the Parkway possesses all the characteristics of an elongated national park, placement of signs on it by implication indicates certification by the National Park Service of the product or facility advertised. Also, since we are a government agency, if we allow one business to advertise on the Parkway, then how do we deny similar privileges for other facilities located 10 miles, or even 20 miles from the Parkway? If a gas station or a restaurant is permitted a sign on the Parkway, then why shouldn't we grant similar rights to all stations and restaurants and to other kinds of business and industry as well?[402]

Advertising signs on private property adjacent to the parkway were a significant threat to the managed landscape. This problem was particularly acute in the Linville-Blowing Rock vicinity. To reduce the number of signs, the parkway worked out a cooperative plan with the North Carolina Park, Parkway and Forest Commission in 1957 under which the parkway would install bulletin boards and folder racks at principal visitor contact points. The racks would contain brochures prepared by the commission informing visitors of services along the parkway. The program was only partially successful, and Weems stated the sign problem remained serious.[403]

Many small communities requested the parkway staff to mark exits or access points to encourage motorists to visit their communities, but the parkway policy was to indicate only the nearest community with a post office. Such communities as were marked by directional signs often petitioned the parkway to add labels for accommodations, food, or other visitor services. The parkway objected to such designations, not wanting to clutter up its signs or advocate specific businesses. In the late 1950s, the parkway adopted directional signs which indicated the nearby town, its population, and its elevation. Superintendent Weems reasoned that by knowing a town's population, a visitor could easily figure out what services might be available from the population figure. Other signs might confuse the visitor. For instance, the parkway did not want to recommend that visitors stay in Glendale Springs, due to its poor facilities, and the resort at Little Switzerland did not want to provide meals for the transient public.[404] This policy endured

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[402]Sam P. Weems, "Report to North Carolina Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission Concerning the National Park Service Concessions Plan for North Carolina Sections of Blue Ridge Parkway," 15 February 1957, 7, BLRI Archives, RG 1, Series 28, Box 23, Folder 9.

[403]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1958, 2; and "Model Sign for Parkway is Exhibited," *Asheville Citizen* (NC), 15 October 1957.

[404]Edward Abbuehl to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 28 August 1957, BLRI RP&PS File D-6667, Signs; and Weems to Regional Director, Region One, 28 March 1957, BLRI RP&PS File 6667, Signs.

for a while; today, the directional signs only point out the exit for such communities; no population or elevation information is provided.

For general references to mileage, Roanoke and Asheville, the two largest cities, are used as reference points. North of Roanoke, mileage signs indicate the distance to Shenandoah National Park, and west of Asheville, the distance to Great Smoky Mountains National Park is used. Some signs also indicate the distance to the nearest parkway recreation area.

Many of the signs along the parkway remind visitors of the 45 mph speed limit. These are generally located on either side of an access point. Advisory speed signs are employed in many places, generally on curves, where the safe speed is less than the maximum speed limit. The advisory speed sign is classed as a special warning sign, rather than a regulatory sign, as the speed shown is not an enforceable speed limit. Slower mandatory speed limits are posted in some campgrounds, picnic areas, and congested areas, such as the parkway corridor through Craggy Gardens or Peaks of Otter.

A sign-making survey and inventory was conducted in 1973, indicating approximately 9,700 signs were in use on the parkway. Plans were made to bring all parkway signs into compliance with the NPS sign system plan.[405]

In the mid-1990s, state and local governments began petitioning the parkway to mark grade crossings with local road names in order to facilitate location of places under the "911" emergency response system. Some localities began erecting green metal road signs at intersections without securing permission from the parkway. In November 1995, the parkway's Resource Planning and Professional Services Division promulgated a new sign policy to address the issue. Under its terms, only signs manufactured at the parkway's sign shop at Vinton, Virginia would be allowed within the parkway right-of-way. Secondary road crossings would be marked by brown-and-white signs mounted vertically on existing sign posts. Existing signs of a non-conforming nature would be removed or replaced. The policy also authorized signs for significant natural and cultural resources, such as designated natural heritage area and biosphere reserves; directional signs to features and facilities on adjacent national forest lands; signs marking the entrances to Mount Mitchell State Park and Virginia's Explore Park; radio frequency signs for Traveler Information Service short-range AM transmitters; and signs for regional information centers.[406]

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[405]Liles, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1973, 5.

[406]Gary Everhardt, "Policy Memorandum No. 95-4 (M&E/RP&PS)," 21 November 1995. BLRI Division of RP&PS.

In 1984, the parkway began replacing some interpretive devices with Modulite panels. This fabrication process, designed the NPS Interpretive Design Center at Harpers Ferry, employs a process by which text and graphics are permeated into plastic. The parkway planned to replace the existing gunboards and lift-top easels with the new panels, estimating an annual cost savings of $50,00 in maintenance. Sixteen vertical information pillars constructed from the panels were erected at eleven sites. These displays, informally called "Pillars of Truth" by parkway personnel, feature parkway maps and information on essential services. Some also interpret natural and cultural resources along the road.[407] The parkway sign shop in Vinton manufactures most signs used on the parkway, including routed wooden signs and reflective "Scotchlite" signs used for travel information. Other signs are obtained from UNICOR (Federal Prison Industries). The parkway has its own alphabet or type font which it uses for routed signs; this is slightly different from the lettering style (Clarendon Bold) in the National Park Service sign manual.[408]

Fences and Walls

Visitors often comment on the miles of wood fencing bordering the parkway. Most of those visible along the roadside and in recreational areas are wood rail fences of several types. These reflect the sorts of fencing historically used by farmers on the adjoining land. Many have rails of the long-vanished American Chestnut, once one of the most common and useful trees in the Southern Highlands, but now nearly vanished from the landscape following the chestnut blight early in the century. Some of the fences follow historic fence lines, but many, especially those bordering the parkway motor road, were installed with the construction of the parkway. The variety of fencing is itself an interpretive display, showcasing the primary fence types once used in the region. The fences are occasionally discussed in park guides and on exhibit panels. More than any other element, the rustic wooden fences contribute to the Appalachian character of the parkway.

Abbott believed that the rail fences were an important part of the landscape "picture" the National Park Service was trying to maintain. He noted that many visitors from other parts of the country remarked on how they enjoyed seeing the worm and post-and-rail fences along the parkway. Abbott insisted that the parkway use traditional fence types in its work and asked adjacent property owners to follow the same practice so that "city folk

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[407]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1984, 9-10.

[408]Robert Hope to Cliff Kevill, Point Park, Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park, 10 August 1989, BLRI RP&PS files, File D66, Signs 1982-89.

may have an eyeful of their beauty."[409] Mile after mile of fence was built, relocated, or repaired, and the fences continue to make up an important part of the "picture," though unfortunately most of the original fencing once seen along the parkway has disappeared.

A variety of wooden rail fence types are represented on the parkway. The most common is the worm or snake fence, constructed of rails stacked on angles. Such fences are easily constructed (no posts have to be driven into the ground), but they take up considerable room due to their winding profile. Post-and-rail fences are also common. These consist of two posts driven into the ground parallel two one another, with three or four rails laid in between. Driving the posts into the ground was more labor intensive than laying up a worm fence, but fewer rails were required because the fence was straighter. Buck fences, sometimes called "Yankee fences," are present in several locations. These consist of two posts driven into the ground at angles to form an "X", the same form as a saw buck which lends the fence its name. A rail is laid into the "X" and the pattern is repeated. Construction of such fences is difficult, and few are found on the parkway. Picket and scantling fences appear at several places. Picket fences are constructed from identical sawn or split boards secured to upper and lower rails between fences. "Scantlings" or irregular boards are commonly used as well. Examples of such fences can be seen at the Puckett Cabin at milepost 189.9 and at the Brinegar Cabin in Doughton Park at milepost 238.5.

The parkway cut up much of the downed chestnut on its land and split it into rails to construct many miles of fence along the road, in the recreational areas, and bordering leased land. After a while, though, the chestnut became scarce. Parkway agronomist William Hooper described how this problem was addressed:

> [Because] we found ourselves in a real problem getting chestnut rails, we sometimes found a local farmer with rail fences in a field that bothered him. He would be practicing cultivation of corn, hay or something [and] this old crooked rail or straight rail occupying quite a bit of land and around the corner weeds and trees would be trying to regenerate and it was rather hard to keep clean. He was glad to trade us his rail fence to get the wire so we did what is called swapping.[410]

In the early days of the parkway, some property owners who had just sold their land to the state for its construction removed fence rails from their property before construction got underway. In the first issue of *The Blue Ridge Parkway News*, Abbott asked them to

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[409]"Fixing Fences," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* IV (April 1941), 2.

[410]Hooper, "Oral History Tour," 46.

stop this practice. "We would also like to point out that the old rail fences on some parts of the park land were paid for by the state and are Government property," he advised, "Together with the hedge-rows of trees and shrubs along them, these fences often are beautiful and provide cover and food for birds and other game. Some of the fences will be left in place as part of the picture to be seen from the drive. Others will be re-set along property lines. Please do not remove them from your former property, unless you are sure they do not belong to the Parkway land."[411]

During World War II, when barbed wire became scarce, some electric fences were used to enclose grazing lands, and agricultural lessees were encouraged to erect temporary fences that would serve until more desirable fences could be erected.[412]

In 1947, the parkway adopted a policy under which holders of agricultural leases became responsible for maintaining fences on the leases, with the parkway providing the materials. The parkway agronomist was directed to undertake a survey of fences on parkway lands, determining their location, type and condition, and noting any needed repairs. The maintenance division began stockpiling materials at the various maintenance yards for fence repairs. Maintenance staff were directed to salvage rail fences in wooded areas, replacing these with wire fences, and salvaging the rails for repairs. The parkway continued to try to purchase rails from farmers, or to trade wire for rails. Under the new policy, locust was specified for all new or replacement posts, as it was more rot-resistant than chestnut. All rails were to be treated with preservatives during any repair or replacement project. Finally, it was determined to reduce the overall amount of rail fence used on the parkway, placing emphasis on "focal points" where it would be used in scenically important areas.[413]

Still, the old fences were rapidly wearing out, and no new chestnut was available due to the ravages of the blight. In a January 1949 memorandum, parkway landscape architect Abbuehl admitted that many of the fences would have to be removed or replaced.

> The rail fences are a big attraction and in some places most essential to really complete the "mountain picture." I wish that we could have more

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[411]"Please Cooperate," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* I (November 1937), 2.

[412]A. E. Demaray, "Blue Ridge Parkway, Progress Report, Recreation and Service Areas," 19 August 1936, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 6; and Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1943, 8.

[413]Stanley Abbott, W. O. Hooper, O. A. Cozzani, Parkway Engineer, Wallace A. Johnson, Landscape Architect, and E. M. Dale, District Ranger, Blue Ridge Parkway, "Memorandum for the Superintendent," 23 May 1947, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 30, Box 36, Folder 2.

> but again the initial cost and up keep are very real problems. We have been eliminating many rail fences that could be spared . . . As time passes, there may be other rail fences that we cannot afford to replace, but we certainly can afford the luxury of some rail fences and I think those around our developed areas should have high priority for remaining with the necessary maintenance to keep them in order.[414]

By the 1950s, many more of the old fences needed replacement. The parkway found a supplier who agreed to deliver a limited number of rails for 25 cents each, but Acting Superintendent J. Carlisle Crouch lamented "It appears impossible to obtain many rails from any source." As an alternative, parkway landscape architects began studying how much rail fence could be eliminated while still maintaining the scenic value. By substituting wire, rails could be salvaged to replace deteriorated ones. In 1952, the parkway agronomist reported there were 11 miles of snake fence, 34 miles of post-and-rail fence, 70.2 miles of wire fence with 92,400 posts, and 18 miles of electric fence using 4,680 posts. Major repairs were needed, but the parkway had only 400-500 rails in storage, and no wire or posts. An estimated $4,257 per year was needed for materials alone, but no source for rails had been identified. A grove of ship mast locust was later planted at the Bluffs Maintenance Area to provide some wood for fence rails and posts, and some snake fences were converted to straight post-and-rail fences, which required fewer rails.[415]

By 1996, more than 85 percent of the fences shown on Parkway Land Use Maps had vanished. The lack of availability of chestnut posts and rails was a major factor. Such fences as are maintained frequently utilize machined or treated lumber, wire, or other non-traditional materials; one fence bordering the parkway at Roanoke is constructed of rubber strapping. Numerous agricultural lease holders along the parkway have failed to maintain fences required under terms of their special-use permits or letters of agreement, and reduced ranger staff have been unable to enforce these provisions.[416] The fences are a key element in establishing the character of the parkway, so maintaining the rail fences has become one of the most troublesome items for the parkway's administrators.

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[414]Edward Abbuehl, "Memorandum for the Superintendent," 24 January 1949, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 30, Box 36, Folder 3.

[415]Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1952, 3; Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," September 1952, 2; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," November 1952, 2; and Robinson, "Managing Change," 72-73.

[416]Bambi Teague to Chief, Division of Resource Planning and Professional Services, Blue Ridge Parkway, 19 April 1988, BLRI RP&PS Files, File D66, Resolution, Signs on BRP file, 2.

Stone fences, as Southern Highlanders call what are more commonly referred to as "stone walls," are located in several spots along the parkway. Most of these are remnants of historic stone fences, usually dry-laid with stones taken from adjoining fields. Not surprisingly, stone fences are generally located in rocky locations on adjacent farms. One of the best areas to see them is in the Humpback Rocks area at the northern end of the parkway. They ramble over Humpback Mountain and through the Greenstone area at the lower end of the park, and can be seen in the reconstructed "Mountain Farm" exhibit. Some of the stone fences are topped by wooden rails mounted on cross-braces; this combination is called a wall-and-rider fence, or a "boundary" fence. The "rider" was intended to discourage hogs, which were let run in the woods, from leaping over the lower stone fence. Some of the stone wall along the parkway was built by parkway forces or the public works programs. The greenstone fence in the barnyard at the "Mountain Farm" exhibit at Humpback Rocks was constructed as part of the interpretive recreation of the farm, and other historic walls at the site were repaired. A few miles further south at Reeds Gap, Civilian Public Service crews built some stone fences in the 1940s. Other examples of stone fences can be seen at many locations along the parkway, but rail fence is far more common.

Memorials

Unlike the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, which had been intended to be a commemorativel route from Washington, D.C. to Mount Vernon, lined with a few selectively placed memorials along the way, the Blue Ridge Parkway was always intended to be a rural scenic parkway, with emphasis placed on providing outstanding views and a quaint, though contrived, "picture" of Southern Highland culture. Significant people, places and events were to be interpreted through displays and other means such as gunboard signs, but commemorative memorials, in the form of either monuments and plaques or the renaming of parkway features, were discouraged, except when it was politically savvy to accommodate influential backers. Today, the motorists passes by a number of memorials, over a bridge named for an important supporter, and visits parks renamed for other supporters and benefactors.

A couple of markers already stood in gaps through which the parkway passed. At Gillespie Gap there was a marker placed by the North Carolina Historical Commission to note the passage of American troops through the gap on 29 September 1780 on their route to the Battle of Kings Mountain. The construction of the parkway made the previous marker location unsafe, and the monument was relocated in the 1950s to the new

Museum of North Carolina Minerals at the gap.[417] An old concrete monument to the side of the grade separation structure at Soco Gap marks the eastern boundary of the Qualla Indian Reservation.

The first renaming of a major feature was the 1951 redesignation of Bluffs Park, one of the five original recreation areas, as "Doughton Park," after North Carolina Congressman Robert L. "Muley Bob" Doughton, a strident supporter of the parkway whose family had owned land in the area. In 1953, R. Getty Browning, Chief Locating Engineer for the North Carolina State Highway and Public Works Commission, proposed the erection of a plaque to Congressman Doughton at the park. Dr. B. B. Dougherty, President of the Appalachian State Teachers College in Boone, also wrote in support in of the proposal. Superintendent Weems appreciated the sentiment, but asked if the naming of the park did not reflect a suitable memorial. National Park Service policy discouraged memorials in its scenic and scientific areas, but Weems thought it would be appropriate to provide an account of Doughton's career at one of the parkway's information centers. Weems suggested that a painting of Doughton could be placed in the coffee shop. Doughton's friends remained undaunted, and the marker was approved in the fall by the Park Service. Purchased by Doughton's friends, the monument consisted of a bronze plaque mounted on a granite boulder at the Wildcat Rocks parking area in Doughton Park. It was dedicated on 10 October 1953.[418] Later, it was incorporated into a stone-walled seating area at the overlook.

The parkway tried to discourage additional memorial markers and monuments, but requests were periodically submitted by interested individuals and groups. In 1954, M. A. Wright of Linville Falls, North Carolina, urged Superintendent Weems to erect a marker honoring John D. Rockefeller, Jr. for his purchase of the Linville Falls area for a recreational park. Weems wrote back that Rockefeller preferred that no marker be erected, and advised that the parkway whould honor his wish.[419]

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[417]Christopher Crittenden, Director, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, to Weems, 22 March 1955, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 3; and Sam Weems to Director, National Park Service, 4 March 1957, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 5.

[418]Sam P. Weems to Browning, 10 March 1953, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 1; Sam P. Weems to Dougherty, 14 July 1953, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 1; Sam P. Weems to Director, National Park Service, 23 September 1953, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 41, Box 52, Folder 39; Charles Parker, State News Bureau, North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, "R. L. Doughton to be Honored," October 1953, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 41, Box 52, Folder 39; and Earleen Pritchett, "Park Program to Pay Tribute to Doughton," *Asheville Citizen* (NC), 8 October 1953.

[419]Sam P. Weems to Wright, 12 April 1954, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Folder 34, Box 2.

Memorials were not limited to monuments and plaques or the redesignation of parks and structures. They extended to natural resources as well. The North Carolina Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) had 125,000 spruce trees planted in the Pisgah National Forest around Mount Hardy[420] south of Devils Courthouse as a "memorial forest" with one tree planted for each soldier from the state who served in the Confederate armies. In 1955 the Forest Service made arrangements to transfer this land to the parkway. The parkway agreed that the UDC could place a monument, to consist of a bronze plate on a natural stone, at a point along the parkway. Superintendent Weems suggested the monument be placed at the Devils Courthouse Overlook, where a sign would be placed pointing out the grove, but the Parkway Land Use Map shows that it was located at the Mount Hardy Overlook. The unveiling took place at ceremonies held at Beech Gap on 1 August 1956, so the monument was evidently shipped to the overlook later. Vandals pried the plaque loose in 1979. Superintendent Everhardt contacted the UDC to see if they were interested in replacing the marker.[421] The UDC showed no interest, and the stone was eventually hauled away. The forest remains, and today covers much of Mount Hardy.

The North Carolina Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) established another "memorial forest" on Forest Service land on a parkway right-of-way between Crabtree Meadows and Mount Mitchell. The parkway agreed to a marker being placed at the Black Mountains Overlook at milepost 342.2 in 1955. The marker was vandalized several times and is no longer at the overlook.[422] The DAR also placed a marker at the Boone's Trace Overlook, milepost 285.1, marking the crossing of the Wilderness Road. This small memorial, a bronze plaque on a boulder, is still intact.

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[420]Mount Hardy was given its name in 1858 by S. B. Buckley in honor of Dr. James F. E. Hardy, Asheville's sole physician during the Civil War; over the ensuing decades, trappers and woodsmen began calling it "Black Mountain" or "Black Knob." The original name was restored by the U.S. Board of Geographic Names in 1957. ("Peak Again Bears Name 'Mt. Hardy,'" *Asheville Citizen* (NC), 16 May 1957.)

[421]D. J. Morriss, Forest Supervisor, Pisgah National Forest, to Mrs. R. W. Barber, Sr., Waynesville, NC, 5 October 1955, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 5; Sam P. Weems to Connell, Landscape Architect, Blue Ridge Parkway, 12 October 1955, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 5; "Unveiling of Memorial Marker Honoring 125,000 N.C. Confederate Veterans," leaflet, 11 August 1956, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 5; Gary Everhardt to Catherine S. Richardson, President, Asheville Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy, 6 September 1979, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 15; and "An Evergreen Memorial," *Asheville Citizen* (NC), 25 October 1955.

[422]Mrs. Robert S. Hudgins, IV, State Regent, North Carolina Daughters of the American Revolution, to Brotherton, 10 July 1979, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 15.

In June 1961, Ernest Hunter of *The Charlotte Observer* wrote Superintendent Weems to ask that a portion of the parkway be named in recognition of Edwin B. Jeffress, who had just died. As chairman of the North Carolina State Highway Commission, Jeffress had worked tirelessly to persuade Secretary Ickes to route the parkway through North Carolina. Weems was saddened by the news of Jeffress's death, but felt the naming of any parkway segment for an individual would set a bad precedent. Instead, the parkway staff proposed a memorial park, which would be comprised of an area donated to the parkway as had been the case with the Cone and Price memorial parks. They suggested that Jeffress's friends consider purchasing the remaining land needed for the Tompkins Knob development between Doughton and Cone parks, an area long proposed in the master plans, but for which the land acquisition had never been completed. The extra land was never purchased, but in 1965 North Carolina Governor and Congressman Roy Taylor persuaded NPS Director George Hartzog to have the Cascades area, the only portion of the area which had been acquired, named for Jeffress.[423] The small park features a picnic area and a self-guided trail to a lovely series of waterfalls known as The Cascades. Planned concession facilities and a campground were never built.

A 1963 proposal came in from the "Gwyn Memorial Group" of Lenoir, North Carolina, which contacted U. S. Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr. to ask permission to erect a granite marker in honor of Rufus B. Gwyn, another supporter of the parkway. Senator Ervin relayed the request to the National Park Service, which responded that granite memorials were not appropriate on the parkway. If the memorial group wished to follow the established precedent and donate land for the development of recreational areas where more acreage was needed, NPS officials advised, the parkway would be most receptive. Weems suggested the Tompkins Knob area if the group wanted to donate land; if not, then he thought the group might approach the state about naming some nearby state road after Gwyn. In 1965, the Gwyn Memorial Group wrote Senator Ervin again, asking him to have the lake and campground in Julian Price Memorial Park renamed for Gwyn since Gwyn had once owned parts of Price Park and had tried to convince the parkway to acquire his "the Rhododendron Gardens," a gorge containing virgin forest and outstanding rhododendron and mountain laurel patches between Blowing Rock and Linville. The National Park Service was unable to grant the request, since the area had been given as a memorial to Price, and again encouraged the group to consider a land donation. The group persisted, and in October, Weems and parkway landscape architect Art Beyer met with their representatives. Still hoping to forestall the placement of a memorial stone, Weems urged them to have North Carolina 1159, the Holloway

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[423]Ernest B. Hunter, *The Charlotte Observer* (NC), to Weems, 3 June 1961; Stricklin to Ernest Hunter, 7 June 1961, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 7; Dan Moore to Hartzog, 28 July 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 8; and Sam P. Weems to Director, National Park Service, 4 August 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 8.

Mountain Road, renamed for Gwyn. Where this road crossed the parkway, a small memorial park enhanced by native plantings would be allowed. Weems suggested that it might include a two-car parking area off Holloway Mountain Road and a rustic sign. Beyer and parkway horticulturalist Pease designed a small park featuring a trail and plantings of laurel and rhododendron similar to those with which Gwyn had been associated. Parkway Superintendent James M. Eden reported the work was completed in July 1967; the sign at the small park was unveiled by Senator Ervin in August 1969.[424]

The City of Vinton, Virginia proposed naming the nearby section of the parkway between U.S. 220 and U.S. 460 the "Harry F. Byrd Memorial Drive" at its annual Dogwood Festival in 1966. The *Roanoke World-News* criticized the proposal as against Park Service policy, and suggested that Senator Byrd "was not one to wish to have his name plastered on every roadside." His instrumental role in the establishment of the parkway was eventually recognized when in 1985 the James River Bridge was renamed the "Harry Flood Byrd Memorial Bridge" in his honor and a monument installed at the adjacent James River Visitor Center.[425]

In 1970, Kenneth E. Crouch of Bedford, Virginia wrote NPS Director Hartzog, asking that a marker be placed on Apple Orchard Mountain to commemorate the late Gus Welch, a widely-admired Indian athlete, who had run a boys camp, Camp Kewanzee, on land later acquired by the parkway at milepost 78.4 near Sunset Field Overlook. Hartzog's office referred the matter to parkway superintendent Granville Liles, who wrote Crouch that he did not feel Welch's public service was directly associated with the parkway, and the matter would need further study. District Ranger Newton Sikes reported that Welch

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[424]Charles B. Pegram and Dennis S. Cook, Gwyn Memorial Group, Lenoir, NC, to Ervin, 30 July 1963, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 7; Jackson E. Price, Assistant Director, National Park Service, to Ervin, 30 September 1963, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 7; Sam P. Weems to Director, National Park Service, 5 September 1963, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 7; J. E. Jensen, Assistant Director, National Park Service, to Ervin, 6 April 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 8; Charles B. Pegram to Ervin, 5 August 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 8; John A. Reshoft, Acting Assistant Director, National Park Service, to Ervin, 17 August 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 8; Charles B. Pegram to Weems, 8 September 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 9; Sam P. Weems to Regional Director, Southeast Region, National Park Service, 21 October 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 7; Arthur Beyer to Pease, Horticulturalist, Blue Ridge Parkway, 26 October 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 10; James M. Eden to Pegram, 24 July 1967, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 10; Granville B. Liles to Pegram, 18 July 1969, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 12; and Robert Alt, Junior Landscape Architect, National Park Service, Region One, to Abbott, 13 June 1936, National Archives, Blue Ridge Parkway Catalog No. 7957, RG 7, Series 41, Box 56.

[425]"Honoring a Name," *Roanoke World-News* (VA), 21 November 1966; and Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1985, 9, 14.

had been an opponent of the parkway being located through the area, primarily because it would cut though Camp Kewanzee. On the other hand, he had fought successfully to save a magnificent 5½'-diameter tulip tree at milepost 82.3 by convincing the engineers to change the alignment. Sikes believed Welch seemed to merit some sort of commemorative monument, but questioned whether the parkway would be an appropriate location. Liles refused to authorize the marker and none was placed.[426]

Another memorial request came in the following year from T. E. Zimmerman of Buchanan, Virginia. Zimmerman wanted a memorial put up in honor of Bear Tolley, whom he called "the greatest bear hunter and mountain man this area has ever produced." He attested that almost all of Tolley's hunting had been done "within sight of the Parkway," and asked for a marker at Mills Gap Overlook, milepost 91.8, which looked out on Tolley's home on Purgatory Mountain. Superintendent Liles politely declined the request, stating "in this modern age of environmental sensitivity," Tolley's "prowess" might be misunderstood by visitors. The Park Service was charged, with conserving scenery and wildlife, so the marker was inappropriate. He pointed out that Tolley's story was told in the standard parkway handbook, the *Blue Ridge Parkway Guide* by William Lord.[427]

In 1982, Congress passed a bill authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to designate the "Roy A. Taylor Forest" in the Nantahala [now Pisgah] National Forest in Jackson County, in honor of the North Carolina Congressman, a longstanding supporter of the parkway and chairman of the subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, and to erect appropriate signs on the parkway. A suitable 39,000-acre grove was chosen in the Great Balsam Mountains. Forest Service landscape architect Richard Gueho inspected four locations along the parkway and recommended Cowee Overlook at milepost 430.7, but the Locust Gap Overlook at milepost 433.3 was selected. The area was dedicated in June 1984 by the North Carolina Park, Parkway and Forests Development Council in

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[426]Kenneth E. Crouch, Bedford, VA, to Hartzog, 5 March 1970, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 13; Edward A. Hummel, Acting Director, National Park Service, to Kenneth E. Crouch, 26 March 1970, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 13; Granville B. Liles to Kenneth E. Crouch, 30 April 1970, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 13; Newton Sikes, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 7 May 1970, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 13; and Granville Liles to Kenneth Crouch, 15 June 1970, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 13.

[427]T. E. Zimmerman to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 2 February 1971, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 14; and Granville Liles to Zimmerman, 9 February 1971, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 14.

cooperation with the parkway and the U.S. Forest Service.[428] A paved trail was constructed to a wooden pedestrian overlook and an exhibit on the forest.

In 1987, the North Carolina Division of Archives and History authorized a state historical marker at milepost 217.1 near Cumberland Knob to mark the spot where construction of the parkway began in September 1936. Original plans were to construct a small parking widening at the location, but these were dropped when the parkway natural resource management specialist warned the location was a known site of a threatened species, the Gray's lily (*Lilium grayi*). The marker was erected on the roadside in 1988.[429]

Handicraft Program

Abbott had always considered regional crafts an important part of Southern Highland culture and proposed promoting handicrafts by encouraging mountain people along the road to produce crafts that might be sold to visitors in various outlets along the road. With mixed success, the program was implemented and visitors can still view and purchase authentic mountain crafts in several outlets run by cooperating associations. Parkway gift shops run by concessionaires also offer "crafts" of dubious merit despite guidelines intended to discourage such practices.

In 1940, Roy Edgar Appleman, NPS Regional Supervisor of Historic Sites, and Thor Borresen, Assistant Historical Technician, filed a report delineating how the Blue Ridge Parkway might promote regional handicrafts. Seeking a consistent source of supply from genuine mountain craft workers, they visited the Allanstand Shop in Asheville, the principal outlet of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild. Allanstand Cottage Industries had been established in 1895 by Frances L. Goodrich, a social worker with the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, for the marketing of traditional mountain crafts. The shop dissolved in 1931 and its surplus stock was turned over to what was then called the Southern Mountain Handicraft Guild, organized in 1928 as a larger consortium of craft-producing centers. Appleman and Borresen found products there from several potteries and wood-working shops, along with textiles baskets, dolls and other work, but were critical of what they saw, stating a large portion was "not truly handiwork." They visited several other shops and potteries, and met with Allen Eaton, author of *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands* (1937). Eaton was interested in the

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[428]"A Bill to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to designate the 'Roy A. Taylor Forest' in the Nantahala National Forest, Jackson County, North Carolina," H.R. 4263, 97th Congress, First Session; Richard L. Gueho, Supervisory Landscape Architect, Nantahala National Forest, to Forest Supervisor, Nantahala National Forest, 23 June 1982, BLRI Library, RG 5, Series 27, Folder 34, Folder 16; and Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1983, 8.

[429]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1986, 2; and Teague to Chief, 19 April 1988.

plans to promote handicraft sales along the parkway and told the two planners that he already planned to approach the National Park Service about a concession contract for the sale of handicraft work at adjacent Shenandoah National Park.[430]

The report proposed that the parkway encourage artisans to locate shops along the route. This would have two advantages: visitor interest in the journey would be enhanced, and those engaged in handicraft work would have a ready outlet for their work, which would encourage the preservation of traditional arts. If guilds or other associations of artists and craft work producers were permitted to sell their members' work, then the parkway should make a special effort to promote the sale of crafts from the immediate region: Virginia crafts in Virginia, Carolina and Tennessee crafts on the southern sections. Appleman expressed the importance of preserving the handicrafts of the mountain people, observing: "This way of life has all but disappeared. To preserve some fragments of this cultural past will be rendering a service to posterity and will be just as truly historical preservation as to perpetuate physical remains in the forms of various structures."[431]

Abbott also wanted artisans from the region to produce items for sales at concession operations. At Mabry Mill, for instance, he intended for a local blacksmith to manufacture handicraft articles for sale in the various gift shops that were planned By providing places for the sale of these articles, he hoped to encourage the preservation of traditional skills.[432]

Instructions issued to parkway concessionaires in this period emphasized the parkway staff's interest in having parkway concessionaires market only handicrafts and products native to the Blue Ridge. In addition to discouraging the "ordinary run of five and ten cent store souvenirs," the instructions also prohibited "spurious or specious" articles sold "under the guise of handicraft fakery." The instructions urged operators to consider handling non-perishable agriculture produce from the area such as sorghum molasses, sourwood honey, preserves, chinquapins, and aromatic herbs. Potted native trees and plants would be also be popular, and might reduce the amount of visitor vandalism in the form of removing plants along the parkway. The report also urged concessionaires to utilize highland artisans who might practice their crafts in restored parkway structures and sell their wares at the various concessions outlets. Above all, it urged the

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[430]Roy Edgar Appleman and Thor Borresen, "Report on Preservation of Mountain Culture, Marking of Historic Sites, and Promotion of Handicraft, Blue Ridge Parkway," 10 October 1940, 8-10, BLRI Library; and Phil Noblitt, "The Blue Ridge Parkway and the Myth of the Pioneer," *Appalachian Journal*, Summer 1994, 400.

[431]Appleman and Borresen, "Preservation of Mountain Culture," 12.

[432]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 16.

concessionaires to work with handicraft guilds and local artists to provide the public with appropriate and worthwhile items that reflected the character of the mountain people.[433]

Following the donation of the Moses H. Cone estate at Blowing Rock, Superintendent Weems asked the Penland School of Handicrafts to operate Cone's mansion, Flat Top Manor, as a handicraft center. The school officials were enthusiastic about the proposal and, reorganized as the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild, Inc., entered into a contract to operate a "Parkway Craft Center" at the house. Weems was enthusiastic about the arrangement, which would not only help maintain the manor house, but provide what he estimated as "millions" of parkway visitors with an opportunity to learn about the variety and beauty of handicrafts produced in the region.[434]

In August, the guild began operating the craft center under a concession agreement with the parkway. The agreement authorized the guild to produce and sell handicraft articles, operate a museum of handicraft arts, and conduct demonstrations. Interest in the programs was attested to the first year by substantial sales and good attendance at programs. The Francis L. Goodrich Collection of handicrafts formed the nucleus of the museum.[435]

In order to showcase the crafts of the northwestern North Carolina counties, the parkway authorized the establishment of the Northwest Trading Post, a "country store" which offered mountain crafts and, for a while, produce, from this isolated region. After receiving a concessions contract in 1958, the not-for-profit board organized to operate the venture funded construction of the frame store on the parkway at milepost 258.6.[436] Today, the Northwest Trading Post continues to offer crafts produced in the seven-county area, along with regional foods such as chess pies and country ham biscuits. Some non-craft items are offered as souvenirs, but are labeled to distinguish them from the work of mountain artisans.

In 1961, all parkway concessionaires were cautioned to the keep the quality of their merchandise high, and advised to carry "authentic, meaningful" handicraft items associated with the Blue Ridge Parkway and the southern highlands region. The "less expensive souvenir items that many visitors want" were to kept separate if sales facilities

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[433]"Instructions to Park Operators, Blue Ridge Parkway, Regarding Merchandise Authorized for Sale in Gift Shops," n.d., BLRI Archives, RG 3, Series 14, Box 72, Folder 1.

[434]Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1951; Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1951, 3; and Sam P. Weems, "Superintendent's Monthly Report," May 1951, BLRI Archives, 2.

[435]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1952, 2.

[436]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1958, 4.

allowed. The parkway offered to work with the concessionaires to find adequate sources of authentic handicraft articles.[437]

The success of the parkway folk art center at Cone Manor led the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild to propose the establishment of an "Americana Village" on the grounds of the Cone estate. The chief proponent was Robert Gray, who became director of the Guild in 1961. Gray had been associated with Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, and thought a similar "village" development at Cone Park would enhance the guild's income.[438]

"Americana Village" would have been the largest visitor exhibit on the parkway. It would have encompassed a virtual town consisting of old country store, village church, and one-room schoolhouse, together with a working farm and two water-powered mills. A visitor center and amphitheater, to be located near the Cone Manor house, would handle the expected surge in visitation. Artisans and demonstrators would be lodged in multi-unit residences, and the Cone estate apple barn would become a workshop and warehouse for crafts produced on the site.[439]

The project was enthusiastically supported by the guild, and an advisory board, including Weems, former NPS Director Wirth, conservationist Michael Frome, and Mrs. Huber Hanes, wife of the underwear magnate, was formed to offer "business experience" to the guild. The Advisory Council on National Parks, Historic Sites and Monuments also endorsed the project.[440]

Planners eventually determined that the Cone estate was not suited for the ambitious development, and a new "development concept plan" shifted the location to adjacent Julian Price Memorial Park. By this point, the proposed project had escalated to $3.2 million. This came at a time when expanded funding from the Mission 66 program was coming to an end, and the parkway was being directed to plan for the extension of the motor road to a point near Atlanta, Georgia. The 1971 announcement of an "Appalachian Heritage Center" to be built at Asheville by local boosters spelled the death knell for the project. This latter project later evolved from another craft village into the present Folk

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[437]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1961, 3.

[438]Noblitt, "Myth of the Pioneer," 401.

[439]Arthur H. Beyer, Principal Landscape Architect; Charles E. McGloughlin, Architect; John M. Spurgeon, Concessions Management; and Arthur C. Allen, Interpretive Specialist, Blue Ridge Parkway, *Development Concept: Julian Price Memorial Park, Blue Ridge Parkway* (Asheville, NC: Blue Ridge Parkway, 1974), 1-30.

[440]Noblitt, "Myth of the Pioneer," 403.

Art Center, which became the focus for handicraft programs on the parkway. By 1974, the Americana Village proposal was quietly abandoned.[441]

In the late 1960s, the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild proposed the establishment of a major folk art center on the parkway at Asheville. The parkway agreed to the concept, and when it obtained some land at Oteen on the outskirts of Asheville from the Veterans Administration in 1969, it made the tract available for art center, though it insisted that it be funded privately. In 1976, the guild received a $1.5 million grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, along with several smaller grants from National Endowment for the Arts, private foundations, and the North Carolina Arts Council. The Park Service kicked in an additional $119,000 for planning costs. Some of the grants required matching funds, and the guild raised these from local industries and interested parties. A ground-breaking was held in June 1977 at a ceremony attended by Joan Mondale, the wife of Vice President Walter Mondale. Following its construction, the guild donated the structure to the parkway, which leased it back to the guild but agreed to maintain the grounds. The center was dedicated on 17 April 1980, again by Mrs. Mondale.[442]

The $2.2 million Folk Art Center was constructed of concrete faced in native stone and wood. It contains a museum and exhibition area, a large sales room, a reference library, and a small outlet for interpretive publications operated by the Eastern National Park & Monument Association. The 30,500-square foot building is surrounded by a 180-car parking area.[443]

RECREATION AREAS: OVERVIEW

> The Blue Ridge Parkway might more accurately be described as a park and parkway system. The concurrent development of parks to the side into which the tourists may withdraw from the traffic is no less important to its full functioning as a new type of tourist facility.[444]
>
> --Stanley W. Abbott, 21 April 1938

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[441]Noblitt, "Myth of the Pioneer," 404-405.

[442]Ralph V. Ellis, "Folk Art Center--A 12-Year Effort," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), 20 February 1980; and "It's Official! Folk Art Center Dedicated by Joan Mondale," *Highland Highlights* (Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild newsletter) XX, May 1980.

[443]"Folk Art Center of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild," Blue Ridge Parkway information leaflet, 1980, BLRI Library, vertical files, Folk Art Center file.

[444]Abbott, untitled MSS.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Blue Ridge Parkway is its elaborate system of integral recreational areas, which function as self-contained parks strung along the parkway, each with its own unique features making them destinations in themselves. Facilities in the parks range from picnic areas or coffee shops in the smaller areas to large parks featuring campgrounds, lodges, and extensive hiking trail systems.

The concept of recreational areas dates to the initial period of parkway planning. In his initial instructions setting forth the parkway project, Secretary of the Interior Ickes indicated that areas along the new road would be developed for recreational purposes. "The President has also suggested that the States take options running for a period of one year on such additional lands as may be indicated by the Office of National Parks, Buildings and Reservations as necessary for recreational purposes," Ickes advised, "Should these options be exercised Federal funds will be used for their purchase. It is hoped that much of this necessary land can be obtained through donation."[445]

In addition to providing for outdoor recreation, the parks would also function as service areas where motorists could obtain meals, purchase supplies for picnics, or refuel their automobiles. At parks at varying intervals along the parkway, concessionaires would offer meals in coffee shops or restaurants, sell supplies at small camp stores, and provide fuel from gasoline stations. These facilities were originally intended to be located every twenty to thirty miles along the road,[446] but pressure from businesses along the parkway corridor led to a change in policy where such services were only provided in areas remote from existing private businesses.

Abbott had become familiar with the concept of recreational areas while employed by the Westchester County Park Commission, as the suburban parkways constructed there had featured small parks and service areas along their routes. On the Blue Ridge Parkway, however, the parks were of a much greater scale, running to thousands of acres in size in some instances. During the early reconnaissance surveys for the parkway route, Abbott and Abbuehl identified many of the areas they wanted to include. Abbott later recounted how the areas were chosen:

> As we traveled through the mountains on general reconnaissance, favorite places came into our thinking and we might say to ourselves or out loud, "We ought to control this," or "A gem." Then we were guided, too, by

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[445]Public Works Administration, "Parkway and Stabilization Project," 15.

[446]Stanley W. Abbott, "Appalachian National Parkway from Shenandoah National Park to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Report on Recreation and Service Areas, Type and Scope of Development Proposed," MSS, 15 December 1934, BLRI Library.

> sense of need for rhythm or pattern--or a jewel on the string of beads occurring every so often, so there was a comprehensive plan--but not a rigid one. Our theory was a major park every sixty miles, and in between, two lesser day-use areas, as against night-use, or larger, more rounded development.[447]

Planning for the recreational park program got underway in the summer of 1934. On 13 June, Abbott wrote NPS Director Arno Cammerer, suggesting a variety of types of developed areas along the proposed parkway. Abbott proposed a number of schemes under a nomenclature system developed by the parkway staff. The greatest matter of concern was the use of the word "park." To Abbott, a park was "a large area set apart and maintained by the government as a place for public benefit and recreation," and the term could encompass most of the major developed areas such as Rocky Knob or Smart View. Others in the National Park Service worried the public would not see the distinction between a "Rocky Knob Park" as a unit of the parkway and a traditional national park, but Abbott countered that there were only five national parks east of the Mississippi, and the public thought of any sort of recreational area, whether city, county, state or national as a "park," so the term would not cause confusion.[448] The term "park" is still used today, though both "recreational area" and "development" are also commonly employed to describe the various areas. Abbott sometimes referred to them as "the beads on the string." Thomas C. Vint, long-time chief architect of the National Park Service, called them "bulges" because they were essentially widened areas occurring at intervals on the parkway's relatively narrow right-of-way.[449]

On 30 December 1934 and 28 August 1936, Secretary Ickes authorized the acquisition of land and the development of nineteen recreational areas along the parkway. Certain additional lands could be acquired for conservation purposes. Ickes also approved general policies for the development of tourist accommodations within the nineteen planned areas.[450]

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[447]Abbott interview, 35.

[448]Stanley W. Abbott, "Memorandum for the Director," 13 June 1934, National Archives, RG 79, Box 44, Folder 610-12, "Recreation Areas." By 1944, the term "park" had been used rather haphazardly; NPS Acting Chief Landscape Architect Dudley Bayliss complained that the parkway referred to different developments as "wayside parks," "areas," "recreation areas," "recreational parks," or just "parks." Dudley Bayliss, "Memorandum for the Director," 6 May 1944. National Archives, RG 79, Box 44, Folder 610-12, "Recreation Areas."

[449]Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 18.

[450]Stanley W. Abbott, "Blue Ridge Parkway, Recreation and Service Areas: Progress Report to the Secretary," 15 April 1938, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 10, 1.

For the acquisition of the first recreational areas, the parkway turned to another New Deal program, the Resettlement Administration. Under this program, if certain "submarginal" tracts had a better use for recreation than for farming, and if a certain percentage of the land was actually being farmed, then the government could purchase this land and devote it to recreational purposes. The parkway filed a report with the Resettlement Administration proposing about a half dozen areas, and Colonel Earp from the agency's Salem, Virginia office asked the parkway staff to accompany him on a tour of some of the tracts. Abbuehl and Earp struggled out to Rocky Knob, Smart View and Pine Spur (there being no roads or very poor ones at the time) and Abbuehl described the parkway's plans. At Rocky Knob, for instance, he recommended the purchase of 500 or 600 acres. In the summer of 1935, C. K. Simmers, right-of-way engineer for the National Park Service, asked Abbuehl, "Have you seen what those appraisers are doing out at Floyd?" Abbuehl and Abbott had no idea, so Simmers took them out to meet the appraiser.[451]

The appraiser turned out to be Sam P. Weems, an employee of the Federal Land Bank based out of Culpeper, Virginia. In 1934, he had been borrowed by the National Park Service to appraise home sites for resettling squatters in Shenandoah National Park, after which he returned to Baltimore. In the spring of 1935, Weems was told by the Federal Land Bank that the National Park Service would like to borrow him again to appraise lands for recreational parks along the "Appalachian National Parkway." Weems replied, "I never heard of it." He was told that few people had, as it existed only on paper at the time. Weems was interested in going back to Roanoke and took the assignment. Weems was given a book of sketch maps prepared by Earp and sent out into the field. He soon decided that the land Earp had told him to appraise was insufficient for the park requirements--more would be necessary for water supply and to develop campgrounds and picnic areas, etc. Weems took it upon himself to appraise as much land as he thought necessary. In the case of Rocky Knob, this was about 5,000 acres, as opposed to the 1,000 acres in his original instructions. Weems showed Abbott and Abbuehl the Rock Castle Gorge far below the parkway line, recommending its acquisition. The parkway planners were delighted, but all of them worried about how they convince the Resettlement Administration to purchase so much land.[452]

After Weems finished his appraisal work at Rocky Knob and Smart View, a smaller park fifteen miles north, he shifted his office from nearby Floyd, Virginia to Galax and began appraising lands for parkway recreational areas at Cumberland Knob and Fishers Peak. He then moved down to North Wilkesboro, North Carolina to begin work at The Bluffs,

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[451]Abbuehl interview, 18-19.

[452]Weems interview, 5, 7-10; and Abbuehl interview, 19-20.

now Doughton Park.[453] As was the case at Rocky Knob, he recommending acquiring much larger areas than had been originally proposed. In the end, the land was acquired.

Making a decision based on Weems' reports, in October 1935 the Resettlement Administration authorized $103,000 for land acquisition in Virginia and $81,000 for North Carolina. Before all of the options were obtained, the original time limit for the program expired and had to be extended. Afterwards, the deeds had to be research and abstracts prepared before the owners could be paid. This was very complicated, since as the government insisted on a full abstract dating back to the settlement at Jamestown in 1607, and called for surveys run along the slope of the ground rather than the more common and traditional horizontal surveys. Still, the land acquisition continued, and the first nineteen areas were featured in the March 1936 master plan for the parkway.[454]

After having done most of the appraisal work for the lands being considered for the recreational parks, Weems resigned from the Federal Land Bank and was appointed Project Manager for the parkway recreation areas in November 1935. He then began negotiating the remaining purchases, often based on appraisals he had made. Weems was able to acquire thousands of acres without resorting to condemnation, a fact about which he was rather proud, though he later recalled "it took a lot of little talking and petting of people's dogs and even at one time I had to pet Pat Murphy's billy goat that he kept as a pet at his house."[455]

Because Resettlement Funds did not cover the purchase of many desired areas, Acting National Park Service Director Demaray urged Ickes to allocate funds for the purchase of 12,000 acres to extend the program. He suggested that approximately $231,000 would be required for the expenditure. Another $136,000 would be required to purchase private lands in Forest Purchase Units. He also asked for the National Park Service to be authorized to negotiate with the U.S. Forest Service for partial development privileges on 6,500 acres of national forest land.[456]

The development of the recreational areas was based on elaborate master plans prepared by the parkway staff. These included landscape drawings for entrance roads and facilities and plans for structures such as shelters, maintenance areas, and concessionaire facilities.

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[453]Weems interview, 12.

[454]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 19.

[455]Weems interview, 14, 23,

[456]Demaray, "Progress Report," 3.

The first development work in the recreational parks was carried out with Works Progress Administration labor. The men were paid forty cents an hour at the onset. Later, Civilian Conservation Corps camps were assigned to help with the task. No work was done under conventional contracts until after World War II. The early planning for the parks was done by Weems, Abbott and Abbuehl.[457]

Weems told of instructing a WPA foreman that he wanted one of the areas, Cumberland Knob, cleaned up. The foreman asked why, and Weems replied, "I am going to make a park of it." He went to Richmond for several days, and when he returned, the area had indeed been cleaned up, but he was horrified to find all the trees had been whitewashed! The foreman was very proud, but Weems recalled that the NPS "had a hell of a time getting the whitewash off those trees."[458]

Despite the efforts devoted to the planning and creation of the parks, they initially figured only slightly in the greater parkway picture. In 1938, Abbott complained that undue attention was being devoted to the scenic road itself, stating that the acquisition of scenic lands and the development of wayside recreational areas was just as important. The recreational areas, he said, would serve several purposes. In addition to conserving large areas of natural scenery, they would provide for active recreation, as opposed to the passive recreation of motoring on the scenic road. Facilities would provide food, lodging, and motor service in isolated areas where such services could not be easily obtained. Finally, maintenance and administrative facilities would be located in a number of the areas. The more prominent agenda of completing the roadway itself, together with strong interest on the part of real estate developers in land along the parkway route, forced the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads to devote most of their attention to the actual construction of the road, delaying work on the subsequent recreation areas.[459]

The provision of service facilities and accommodations was vital to the parkway concept, however. Abbott believed many visitors would desire to stay overnight in cabins or small inns located along the parkway. Picnickers and campers would want to purchase supplies near the picnic grounds and campsites. Gasoline and service stations would be needed at regular intervals. If these were not constructed on the parkway itself, inevitably they would appear at road crossings not under parkway control. Abbott thought it best to

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[457]Weems interview, 24.

[458]Weems interview, 24-25.

[459]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1938, 2; and Stanley W. Abbott, "Appalachian National Parkway: Recreation and Service Areas," 1934, National Archives, Blue Ridge Parkway Catalog No. 7957, RG 7, Series 41, Box 56, 3.

discourage such "competition" except where such businesses were already established. If such facilities were to be built by the government and leased to local people, he suggested, charges of government interference with local business could be minimized. If attractively designed to fit their environs, the tourist facilities would enhance enjoyment of the parkway.[460]

On the basis of the parkway's general master plan, more detailed study of the proposed recreation areas was carried out, and several of the parks originally planned were eliminated from consideration. Work on the first four areas was already underway. Acquisition of the 11,650 acres they encompassed was made possible by RDP funds through the Resettlement Administration. The lands were being improved, and facilities were being constructed with labor and materials furnished by the Emergency Relief Administration. Abbott warned, however, that the construction of the larger park buildings was proving complex, as the work required skilled labor not available through the ERA.[461]

Ten of the contemplated areas lay within national forest land. The 30 June 1936 act that authorized the parkway required the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service to coordinate recreational development of their respective jurisdictions by mutual agreement. In most cases, the parkway proposed taking over large areas from the national forests for development purposes. The Forest Service was understandably cool to these proposals. USFS Acting Chief C. M. Granger wrote that planned parkway developments within forest boundaries should be confined to areas immediately adjacent to the parkway, and that areas not "intimately connected" with the parkway would be developed by the Forest Service. Still, the USFS worked with the parkway to acquire inholdings, or tracts of privately owned land located within the forests, for the developments. One of these was the 460-acre Hotel Mons tract at Peaks of Otter. The Forest Service transferred several thousand acres more in the Linville Gorge area, though this did not include the highly desired Linville Falls tract.[462]

In April 1938, Abbott arranged a meeting with William P. Kramer, the Assistant Regional Forester for the U.S. Forest Service, to discuss the further development of recreation areas on Forest Service land and the possibility of transferring to the parkway several recreational areas already operated by the Forest Service, such as Craggy Garden

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[460]Abbott, "The Appalachian National Parkway," 3.

[461]Abbott, "The Appalachian National Parkway," 1-3.

[462]"Blue Ridge Parkway: Statement for Management," Blue Ridge Parkway, February 1979, 5; and C. M. Granger, Acting Chief, U.S. Forest Service, to Cammerer, 27 May 1939, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 17.

and Bent Creek.[463] He also wanted to discuss policies concerning Forest Service lands bordering the parkway, and cooperation in ranger patrols and fire protection. Kramer still wanted the Forest Service to develop and administer any recreation areas located on national forest land, but Abbott and other National Park Service officials insisted that developments along the parkway should be under National Park Service control. The parkway, they argued, had been planned in a "large regional sense" with plans for recreational developments and services at regular intervals, and the parkway and the parks were considered interdependent. They pointed out that most of the proposed developments had park or recreation values largely or solely because of the parkway itself, and some of the proposed areas would have access only from the parkway. The Forest Service offered to develop some of the areas according to plans furnished by the National Park Service, but Abbott and the other NPS planners considered this an unsatisfactory arrangement.[464] A stalemate ensued, and some planned areas, like Craggy Gardens and Crabtree Falls, would not be turned over to the parkway for decades. A planned recreation area on Forest Service land at Pigeon River Falls (the Graveyard Fields) was never developed.

Also that month, Abbott filed a progress report on the recreation area program with Secretary Ickes. Work on the first four parks was nearing completion, but land acquisition for the remaining parks was progressing slowly. Some land had been transferred from the U.S. Forest Service, but other lands would have to be purchased. He asked Ickes to obtain funds for the program under Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act, which provided for the purchase of submarginal lands. He stated that 68,000 acres should be acquired under the program: 30,315 for the parks and 36,200 acres for scenic preservation areas. If the land was promptly acquired, it could be had for a reasonable cost. But Abbott cautioned that land prices were rising as the parkway project was extended, and delays would result in significantly higher costs to complete the program. Abbott also asked that the Interior Department request that seven CCC camps be assigned to the parkway to carry out the bulk of the development work.[465]

In October 1838, Abbott estimated that it would take $150,000 in each state to acquire the minimal land necessary for the parks, and that $300,000 could easily be expended in each

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[463]The Bent Creek area, between Asheville and Mount Pisgah, is now a Forest Service "Experimental Forest" which studies the effects of total harvesting, or "clearcuts."

[464]Stanley W. Abbott to Kramer, Assistant Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service, Washington, DC, 4 April 1938, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 10; and Stanley W. Abbott, "Report on Conference Regarding Blue Ridge Parkway in Relation to National Forest Areas," BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 10, 6-7.

[465]Abbott, "Blue Ridge Parkway, Recreation and Service Areas," 3-5.

state. In a report to Assistant Chief of Planning Dudley Bayliss, he stated the program would also round out the acquisition of "outstanding scenic features" along the parkway, which he called "the best possible insurance" toward the ultimate success of the project. The recreational parks were considered as separate from the acquisition of the right-of-way for the motor road, but were an integral part of the parkway project.[466]

For the construction of service stations and coffee shops, planners selected locations at which such services were not already available from private concerns along the parkway. Still, the initial plans called for service stations at roughly 20-mile intervals, and cabins or lodges for overnight accommodations every 60 miles or so. Maintenance areas would also be spaced roughly 60 miles apart, with main operating areas near Roanoke and Asheville.[467]

Not all the "bulges" were intended for development, some would be held for preservation of their natural resources. Abbott stated that these were intended as places where "the adventurous may withdraw from the Parkway traffic to tramp or fish in the unbroken forests." In March 1939, Abbuehl suggested that "scenic areas" on national forest land should be administered by the U.S. Forest Service with the provision that the parkway would be allowed to construct any trails which might be desirable. Timbering in these areas would be prohibited in order to protect their scenic values.[468]

To complement the services available at the recreational parks, Abbott proposed a series of "rest areas" at various overlooks in April 1939. Having enjoyed "lounge areas" on a visit to the World's Fair, Abbott thought similar services would be enjoyed by parkway visitors. He suggested providing certain overlooks with "comfortable furniture," meaning chairs with arms and backs and tables. Concessionaires would be urged to send boys with passenger cars fitted with refrigerators to sell cold drinks to visitors at these areas. These concessions, he suggested, might be arranged independently of the larger ones and thus provide employment for mountain people. To distinguish them from scenic overlooks, the developments would be signed as "rest areas."[469] Nothing evidently came of this proposal.

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[466]Stanley W. Abbott, "Proposed Buildings in Connection with Recreational Development on Portions of the Blue Ridge Parkway Underway or Completed in North Carolina," 15 October 1938, 3, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 11.

[467]Abbott, "Blue Ridge Parkway, Recreation and Service Areas," 5.

[468]Abbott, "The Blue Ridge Parkway," 5; and Edward H. Abbuehl, "Memorandum for Mr. Vint," 28 March 1939, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 15.

[469]Stanley W. Abbott, "Memorandum for Mr. Hall," 27 June 1939, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 17.

Cumberland Knob was largely completed in the late 1930s and was the first park opened to the public. Abbott reported heavy use from the start, accompanied by pressures to increase the parking areas and picnic grounds. To prevent over-development, he urged adoption of a policy that when a park was completed according to the Master Plan, a new park elsewhere on the parkway should be developed to allow for better distribution of visitor use, even if this meant additional development within the wider sections of the right-of-way itself.[470]

Once more areas opened, the parkway urged, though did not require, visitors to use the picnic areas instead of stopping along the road for their mid-day repasts. Not only did the picnic areas provide facilities such as tables and fireplaces, they made keeping the parkway clean much easier. Staff were assigned to clean the picnic areas and empty their trash cans, but picking up litter at random spots was a much more difficult task. A more serious concern was that picnickers at the random areas might build fires, and rangers had to be vigilant lest wildfires escape.[471]

Overcrowding in the picnic areas soon became a problem, especially at Cumberland Knob. Although it was the smallest of the parks, it frequently attracted crowds of 1200 to 1500 people on summer weekends, forcing the park warden to close the gates. The most intensive use was from church, school, and club groups. To accommodate them, the parkway made plans to provide "group size" facilities in all of the parks. These were ready at Smart View, Rocky Knob, Cumberland Knob and Bluffs Park by 1941. They included larger tables and were sited next to play fields including swings and see-saws and open areas for horseshoes and softball games. The parkway also purchased portable tables which were stored at maintenance yards and could be brought in on advance notice.[472]

Development of the recreational areas was hampered by inadequate funding for land acquisition and for the construction of concession buildings. Several of the proposed areas were on national forest land, where the funding problems could be resolved, but other desirable tracts were owned by private interests, forcing the parkway staff to repeatedly plead for funds to acquire property. In the case of concession structures, the

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[470]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 14.

[471]"Use the Picnic Areas," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* III (June 1940), 2; and Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," April 1946, 1.

[472]"Elbow Room--In the Picnic Areas," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* IV (July-August 1941), 2-3.

parkway staff sought to have the plans completed so that contracts could be awarded, with the costs being borne by the concessionaires.[473]

State laws mandating segregation of the races posed additional problems for parkway planners. In April 1939, following a meeting with NPS Director Demaray, Thomas Vint and W. J. Trent, Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior on Negro Affairs, the parkway adopted the following policy for the recreational areas.

> Gasoline, service and eating facilities along the parkway would be opened to blacks and whites alike with the following provisions:
>
> Gasoline and automobile service facilities would not be segregated.
>
> Sandwich shops, lunch counters, and sales areas would not be segregated.
>
> Where dining rooms were provided, separate areas would be maintained for blacks and whites. Dining terraces would provide for distinct areas with as little separation as possible.
>
> In the larger parks, separate picnic grounds, campgrounds, and cabin areas would be mandated.
>
> In the case of comfort stations, if only one was provided, both races might use it. However, separate toilets would be provided for blacks and whites. Urinals and wash basins would not be segregated.[474]

In 1940, Abbott clarified the policy in a memorandum. He stated that rangers should "show every courtesy" to black and white visitors alike, and to draw the least possible notice to the segregation of facilities. No signs were to be erected except on stall doors in comfort stations.[475]

The number of African Americans using parkway facilities was very low during the period segregation laws were in effect. In 1942, Abbott reported that African Americans constituted "one half of one percent" of total parkway visitation, with the majority making use of the recreational parks. Without providing further detail, he reported that

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[473]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 15-16.

[474]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 16.

[475]Stanley W. Abbott, "Memorandum for the Files," 28 June 1940, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 24.

one "incident" occurred when a group of blacks insisted on using a white area at The Bluffs in July 1941.[476]

Segregation issues persisted into the 1950s, especially where overnight accommodations were concerned. U.S. Representative Tuck of Virginia wrote NPS Director Wirth, stating that "The people of Virginia will not stand for integration in motels, and I hope that the National Park Service will no persist in any such program or practice." Wirth replied that the question of whether the parkway would provide overnight facilities had not yet been determined, but pointed out that government contracts were required by law to carry a nondiscriminatory clause.[477]

In May 1940, the Secretary of the Interior approved a policy regarding concessionaire operations in the recreational areas. Till this point, the parkway had maintained that day use facilities such as gasoline stations and coffee shops should be constructed only where such facilities were not available in adjacent towns or on public highways reasonably nearby. The Interior Department favored development of overnight lodgings by private enterprise outside the parkway boundaries with connections from public roads. However, certain recreational areas had been laid out to accommodate lodgings, including both inns and cabins. These were intended to be modest facilities. To encourage smaller investors to bid on various operations, the parkway provided for water and sewer connections, and in some cases, electrical connections, at the various points under consideration. Under the parkway general plan, the concession operations would be divided into seven groups, as follows.

1. Shenandoah National Park to James River
2. James River to US 220 near Roanoke
3. US 220 to US 58, near Meadows of Dan, Virginia
4. US 58 to the Virginia-North Carolina state line
5. State line to Blowing Rock, North Carolina
6. Blowing Rock to Asheville
7. Asheville to Great Smoky Mountains National Park.[478]

In the spring of 1940, invitations to bid were issued for the construction of three gasoline stations and coffee shops for the section between Roanoke and Boone. Although

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[476]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 27; and Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1941, 4.

[477]"Segregation Uncertain on Parkway" and "Race Issue Clouds Plans for Parkway," undated newspaper clippings, BLRI Archives, R. Getty Browning Collection.

[478]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 16.

considerable interest was expressed, no bids were received, and the parkway made plans to readvertise the contracts in the fall so that facilities might be ready for the 1941 season.[479]

Again, no bids were received, and the parkway was granted permission to deal directly with potential companies. Negotiations soon centered around the recently organized Mammoth Cave Company, which operated facilities in that park and several others. These reached fruition in 1941 and the company, reorganized as National Park Concessions, Inc. (NPCI), was authorized to develop and manage all concessions along the parkway with the exception of those at Peaks of Otter, where the Peaks of Otter, Inc. maintained and expanded its role. On 4 April 1944, NPCI was again granted the exclusive concessions contract for all facilities except those at Peaks of Otter. In 1958, the National Park Service awarded the Peaks of Otter Company a 20-year contract to construct and operate facilities on the parkway north of Roanoke. These included the Peaks of Otter Lodge and a lunch operation at Whetstone Ridge.[480]

Parkway policy dictated that concession employees would not be allowed to live at the facilities. It was expected that most employees would be local people who could go home at night, or who could find accommodations during the season at nearby houses or farms. Overnight accommodations for visitors, such as cabins and lodges, would be provided with housing for managers or caretakers only, though larger lodges might be allowed dormitory space for necessary employees. In 1943, Weems suggested that the gas stations should be operated on a 24-hour basis, so sleeping quarters were to be provided at or near the stations so that an attendant might be on call during off-peak hours.[481]

The policy of providing food, gas and lodging facilities on the parkway was criticized by what Weems called "a small but highly articulate element connected with the resort and tourist business in North Carolina." The complaints grew so prominent that the Interior Department convened a conference in Washington in 1949 to discuss the issue. The tourism interests demanded that signs be erected on the parkway indicating tourist facilities adjacent to or close to the road, a matter to which the parkway staff strenuously objected. Instead, the parkway urged the formation of an official tourism organization to

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[479]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 17.

[480]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 14; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 16; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1944, 9-10; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1958, 4-5.

[481]Sam P. Weems, "Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region One," 17 September 1943, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 25.

promote nearby attractions and accommodations. This proved acceptable, and the "Blue Ridge Parkway Associated Chambers of Commerce" was organized. This organization prepared a folder on accommodations, which the parkway pledged to help distribute.[482]

In July 1956, the National Park Service announced $4 million for the construction of additional concession facilities as part of the Mission 66 parks development program. Six months later, the Park Service gave details on the proposed new facilities. These would include:

- Replacement of the temporary sandwich shop at at Cumberland Knob with a permanent building.
- Expansion of the 24-room Bluffs Lodge at Doughton Park to 50 units, along with the construction of new dining facilities.
- Construction of gasoline stations and lunch-craft shops at Tompkins Knob Park, Linville Falls and Tennessee Knob.
- Replacement of the temporary lunch-craft shop at Crabtree Meadows with a permanent facility.
- Expansion of the 30-room Pisgah Inn to 75 units, and construction of new dining facilities and a gasoline station there.[483]

The concessions expansion program was denounced by the North Carolina tourist industry, which complained of "socialistic" competition by government-subsidized facilities. The attack was led by Hugh Morton, owner of Grandfather Mountain, who was simultaneously resisting the parkway's plans to construct one of the last remaining segments across the higher elevations of his mountain. Morton charged that the new concessions would "skim the cream off the business" of the tourist industry and set a precedent for even more government owned facilities. Rather than encouraging visitors to leave the parkway and patronize private hotels, motels and restaurants, Morton complained, the National Park Service was trying to discourage private enterprise.[484]

Business interests in North Carolina vehemently protested a July 1956 announcement that the National Park Service planned to allocate $4 million for the construction of additional concession facilities along the parkway. In February 1957, the North Carolina National Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission (NCNPPFDC) held a public

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[482]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1950, 1-2.

[483]North Carolina National Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission, "Report on the Question of Construction of Concession Facilities on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 1957, 2-3, BLRI Archives, RG 1, Series 28, Box 23, Folder 11.

[484]"Parkway Facilities Plans Criticized," *Asheville Citizen* (NC), 30 November 1956.

meeting at Waynesville where National Park Service officials discussed the proposed facilities and parkway concessions policies in general. Superintendent Weems had earlier outlined the National Park Service policy with regard to concessions. Private interests had always been expected to provide for needed accommodations and services along the parkway, but there remained areas where facilities were needed and not available, and the government intended to provide parkway visitors with "the necessities of life."[485] NPS officials insisted that none of the facilities would be constructed or operated with government funds. The North Carolina segment of the parkway would be divided into three contract segments, and a separate concessions contract would provide for the construction and operation of all concessions within each segment. They estimated that the capital outlay for the facilities would total approximately $2.3 million. The existing exclusive contract for concessions operations held by National Park Concessions, Inc., would be terminated when the new facilities were ready, though the company would be eligible to bid for the operation of facilities on one segment.[486]

In North Carolina, the National Park Service was proposing new facilities at Cumberland Knob, Doughton Park, Tompkins Knob, Linville Falls, Crabtree Meadows, Mount Pisgah, and Tennessee Bald. If constructed, these developments would provide concession facilities at roughly 30-mile intervals. This widely expanded program was denounced by the Boone, Blowing Rock, and Jackson County chambers of commerce, the Asheville Tourist Association, motel and hotel owners in the Gillespie Gap area, the North Carolina Motel Association, and several other business and civic groups and they demanded a public hearing on the matter. This was held on 21 May 1957. The Park Service was supported by the towns of Sparta and North Wilkesboro, by the Allegheny, Sparta and Brevard chambers of commerce, and by the North Carolina Parks, Parkway and Forests Development Commission (NCNPPFDC).[487]

Following public hearings into the matter, the NCNPPFDC endorsed the National Park Service's plans to develop its proposed facilities. In a report announcing the decision, chairman William Medford stated "It would be difficult to expect a modern automobile traveler to accept a 477 mile highway with no facilities along the highway for automobile service or for supplying him with food." Medford admitted that such facilities were often available in nearby communities, but stressed that the motorist's enjoyment of the

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[485]Minutes, Meeting of the North Carolina Park, Parkway and Forest Development Commission, Linville, NC, 23 August 1948, BLRI Archives, RG 3, Series 17, Box 101, Folder 1.

[486]North Carolina National Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission, "Report on the Question," 1-4.

[487]North Carolina National Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission, "Report on the Question," 3-5.

parkway would be impaired if he were forced to leave the route to seek out such services. Some travelers would not even make a trip over the parkway if such facilities were not available. To encourage the maximum use of the parkway and its enjoyment, the NCNPPFDC gave its support to the program.[488] Endorsement by the NCNPPFDC gave the parkway all the ammunition it needed. Opposition continued from the private sector, but the concessions plan was carried out, though the facilities at Tompkins Knob, Linville River, and Tennessee Bald were eventually dropped from the program.

The appropriate type of recreational facilities to be provided the various parks was debated through the 1930s and 1940s. In the parkway newsletter, Abbott noted that many picnickers urged the construction of playing fields so that they might work up a "will to eat." He promised that the parkway would keep the baseball players in mind. He also indicated the parks would provide facilities for horseshoe pitching, badminton, and other games. Such facilities would be provided free, though a nominal rental might be charged for use of badminton gear. He apologized that lakes and swimming pools had not yet been provided, but with all the attention that had to be devoted to water supplies and sewage, such facilities would have to wait.[489] In a 1943 letter to the Regional Director, Abbott claimed that his staff were generally opposed to playing fields, but believed they were necessary "as a conservation method." He pointed out that truckloads full of children were coming to picnic areas, then over-running the areas to play their games. By constructing playing fields, the groups would be diverted to areas designed for such use. The National Park Service informed the parkway administration that such recreational features were inconsistent with agency policy. By World War II they were dropped from plans.[490]

In 1941, CCC crews began construction of a group of cabins at Rocky Knob Park that Abbott envisioned as the first in a series of "rough-it" camps that would provide overnight accommodations for organized youth groups engaged in hiking a proposed trail paralleling the parkway.[491] The camps evidently never functioned in their planned role and were later converted to housekeeping cabins. None of the other camps were established.

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[488]North Carolina National Park, Parkway and Forests Development Commission, "Report on the Question," 4.

[489]*Blue Ridge Parkway News* II (August 1939), 2.

[490]Abbott to Regional Director, 3 December 1943, 11; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1947, 5.

[491]Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," March 1941, 2.

Some proposed recreational parks were never developed. A planned small park at Licklog, near milepost 49, was dropped due to problems with the establishment of watersheds for Lynchburg and Buena Vista. As an alternative, plans were made for developments at Norval Flats and along Otter Creek just north of the James River. Other recreational areas were planned for the Pigeon River Falls and Tennessee Bald areas southwest of Asheville,[492] but these were never implemented.

Two large areas not originally considered for recreational parks were offered to the parkway in 1948. The Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital, Inc. offered the to donate Cone's 3,600-acre mountain estate, Flat Top Manor, near Blowing Rock, North Carolina, for inclusion on the parkway. To the immediate south, the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company offered another 3,900 acres from the estate of its recently deceased president, Julian Price. The parkway immediately undertook studies for the possible development of the properties.[493]

Mount Mitchell State Park, adjacent to the parkway at milepost 474, is not officially a parkway recreational area, though it is considered an attraction much like the parkway developments. For years, the National Park Service tried to acquire the area for inclusion in the area. When this failed to materialize, the parkway cooperated with the State of North Carolina in providing for a single approach road from the parkway at Toe River Gap. In the late 1930s, North Carolina undertook major improvements to its first state park, including the construction of a lodge and visitor center, and was supported in its planning work by the parkway. The completion of a new paved road into the park in 1948 induced much additional travel over the parkway, which was the sole means of access to the park road.[494]

In 1960, the National Park Service granted Louis J. Yelanjian of Glendale Springs, North Carolina a five-year concessions contract to operate a coffee shop and gas station at Cherry Hill, twelve miles south of Doughton Park at milepost 257. Yelanjian donated two acres to the parkway for the construction of the facilities. The Shell Oil Company erected a station at the site in 1962. Yelanjian constructed a restaurant and operated it and the service station. Yelanjian was evidently disappointed in the year's proceeds. In 1963, he put the restaurant, gift shop, gas station, 90 acres and a 5-room house up for sale. A year later, Yelanjian approached the regional office about establishing a motel in conjunction with his other concessions. He was told to submit detailed information on

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[492]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 11.

[493]Crouch, "Supplement to 1948 Annual Report," 7.

[494]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 14-15; and Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1948, 7.

the proposed facilities, including plans for the structures, his proposed method of financing, an estimate of the gross receipts, and most importantly, the reason such a facility was needed. Yelanjian sold the property to National Park Concessions, Inc., which closed the facilities after a couple of years.[495]

In August 1961, the National Park Service granted National Park Concessions, Inc., a twenty-year extension of its concession contract to operate facilities and provide services in four national parks and on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Under terms of the contract, NPCI was obligated undertake $3 million in capital improvements of its facilities, this figure to be divided among the five units. The franchise fee was $2,500 per year plus ½ of 1 percent of gross receipts. Objecting to the contract award was the Blue Ridge Parkway Company, a western North Carolina company established to compete for the contract. Even though the company argued the government would receive $2 million more in revenues under its contract offer, NPS Director Wirth rejected the application, stating it was "in the public interest" for NPCI to serve the five park units. Congressman Roy Taylor (D-NC) asked Wirth to consider separating the Blue Ridge Parkway from the joint contract, but Wirth refused. The contract as awarded only obligated the company to construct a new restaurant at Crabtree Meadows and to enlarge Bluffs Lodge at Doughton Park to 50 units. The company was granted permission to discontinue its minor lunch counters at Smart View and Cumberland Knob at the end of the season. The Smart View facility was subsequently dismantled, and the Cumberland Knob operation was converted to a maintenance storage facility and picnic shelter.[496]

INDIVIDUAL RECREATION AREAS

Humpback Rocks

The first interpretive spot for southbound visitors, Humpback Rocks provides an introduction to the folk life of the Southern Highlands, albeit a contrived and romanticized one. Visitors are introduced to typical pioneer structures at a recreated homestead, allowing them to better understand other such structures located along the

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[495]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1960, 2; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 2; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," January 1963, 4; Bean, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1963, BLRI Archives, 3; and Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 55-56.

[496]"Parkway Concession Contract Approved," *Asheville Citizen* (NC), 12 August 1961; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1960, 2; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 2. Under terms of the contract, NPCI would pay $2,312,000 for franchise fees and property rentals over 20 years, plus the $2,500 annual fee and 1/2 of 1 percent of receipts. By contrast, the Blue Ridge Parkway Company offered $4,624,000 in fees, plus $6,200 annually and 3 1/8 percent of receipts. ("WNC Firm Seeks Contract for Parkway Concessions," *Asheville Citizen* (NC), 11 August 1961.)

parkway route south into North Carolina. A visitor center features exhibits on mountain culture, and provides general parkway information. Recreational opportunities are provided by a large picnic area and several trails, the most popular of which climbs to "The Rocks," a prominent outcrop that dominates the landscape, and on to the summit of Humpback Mountain. An interpretive trail at the Greenstone Overlook serves as a primer on the geology of the northern section. The area, averaging 2,300' in elevation, offered excellent views of the Virginia valleys and several fine waterfalls.

The Humpback Rocks area was one of the first areas planned as a recreational park along the parkway. When the first plans were prepared in 1934, the Blue Ridge Parkway had not been named, and the sheet identified the park as a feature of the "Appalachian National Parkway." Plans show the tract assembled from lands belonging to Mrs. Bernard McCrae and the Rockfish Valley Land Company, these making up the core of the recreational area, with additional lands forming a scenic buffer being acquired from the U.S. Forest Service.[497]

An accompanying report called for a "building group" consisting of a gasoline station, a small restaurant with an outdoor dining area, a store offering camping supplies, and rest rooms. Trails would be constructed for hiking, and bridle paths for horse riding. An abandoned cabin (probably the old William J. Carter farmhouse) would be used for temporary stables. A large picnic area would feature fireplaces, tables, and benches in separated groups.[498]

Abbott urged acquisition of this area in the 1936 Master Plan, describing it as "gentle sloping pasture land surrounded by fine forest on the slopes of Humpback Mountain immediately below 'The Rocks.'" The 1936 Master Plan proposed a service station, inn, cabins, a campground, a picnic area, and hiking trails,[499] though only the latter two would ever be provided. Development by the U.S. Forest Service of the Back Creek Recreational Area in the valley below Humpback Rocks probably discouraged the subsequent establishment of a campground at The Rocks.

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[497]"Appalachian National Parkway, Shenandoah-Great Smoky Mountains Section, Proposed Recreational-Service and Scenic Area, Humpback Rocks, Augusta Co., Virginia, Land Map," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-HR-AP-1016-A, December 1934, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-1; and "Topographic and Land Sketch, Humpback Rocks, Augusta Co., VA," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-HR-AP-1010, n.d., BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-1.

[498]Abbott, "Report on Recreation and Service Areas," n.p.

[499]Abbott, "Brief Description of the Recreation Areas," 1.

By 1941, the parkway had acquired only 217 acres in the area. The first development on this limited tract was the construction of a large parking area at Humpback Gap. This provided access to hiking trails to The Rocks and Humpback Mountain. Civilian Public Service employees constructed 1089 feet of stone rail-and-rider fence around the area in 1943. An original wall crossed the mountain just south of Humpback Gap, but the new section was built along the border of the area so that visitors might more easily inspect this interesting wall type.[500]

Detailed planning for this park began in 1941 and 1942 with the preparation of drawings for a picnic area, gas station and coffee shop. These facilities were originally slated for location in the meadow north of the present visitor center, but in February 1942, Abbott recommended they be constructed at what he called the "Greenstone" area, nearly opposite the Greenstone overlook at milepost 8. The parkway had been unable to acquire the meadow area from the Ryan heirs, but already controlled the Greenstone tract. It had a developable ridge top nearly comparable in size to Smart View Park, and was bordered by national forest and state lands which provided a protected buffer zone. This suggestion was accepted in general terms, and the Humpback Rocks picnic area was later constructed at this location, though most of the planned concession facilities were never constructed. The coffee shop was dropped in June 1956 on the recommendation of B. F. Dickson of the NPS Branch of Concessions Management, who urged locating the facility at Whetstone Ridge twenty miles further south on the parkway.[501]

After acquiring a portion of the "meadow" area across from Humpback Gap, the parkway established a "mountain farm exhibit" to interpret the life of Appalachian residents. The exhibit consisted of a number of relocated historic farm buildings scattered along the parkway, which, because of their remote locations, could not be made accessible to the public or easily protected. The farm group occupied the general site of the old Charlie Carter farm, but was not intended to be a reproduction of the site. This farmstead had

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[500]Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," February 1943, 2; Jean Haskell Speer, Frances H. Russell and Gibson Worsham, "Historic Structures Report, Wintergreen Tract" attached to *Cultural Landscape Inventory, Wintergreen Tract, Humpback Rocks* (Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1993), 8; and "Property Map, Humpback Rocks, Section 1B & 1C, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-HR-2050, 14 July 1941. BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-1.

[501]"General Development Plan, Humpback Rocks, Greenstone Section, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-HR-2051A, 29 May 1942, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-1; "Humpback Rocks Recreational Area, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-HR-2002-A, 1942, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-1; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 12; Stanley W. Abbott, "Memorandum for the Chief of Planning," 10 February 1942, 1-2, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 25; Stricklin, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1956, 3-4; and Edward H. Abbuehl, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," April 1942, BLRI Archives, 7.

been established by William J. Carter in 1867, and remained in the family until 1904. The Carter house was deemed impractical to preserve and was replaced with the ca. 1890 single-crib log William "Lawless Billy" Ramsey house, moved from below Robinson Gap. This structure was not placed on the spot of the old Carter house, but erected about 100 feet south in order to provide a better view of The Rocks. A chicken house, stable, and root cellar were relocated from the John C. Clark place about a mile north of Irish Gap at milepost 36.4. The springhouse came from Cash Hollow near milepost 29. The bear-proof hog pen is a reproduction built in 1953. Other recreated landscape features include several stone fences, an orchard, a vegetable garden, and a barn yard.[502]

A new visitor center, designed by the Roanoke architectural firm Brown and Shank, was constructed in 1955 just north of the mountain farm exhibit. It opened on 19 May of the following year. The visitor center was destroyed in a 1981 fire during Easter weekend. Two men were arrested and charged with setting the blaze. It was rebuilt as an expanded facility and opened the following year.[503] Today, it is the first contact station encountered by parkway visitors traveling from the northern terminus.

The planned picnic area two miles south was constructed at the same time, though the planned concessionaire facilities were not built. A second loop was added in 1962, adding another 35 units.[504] The picnic area features a short trail, the Catoctin Trail, leading to an overlook perched over the parkway.

The Mountain Farm exhibit opened as a self-guiding interpretive trail in 1956. It immediately became a favorite spot with parkway visitors. A printed guide to the area was prepared by the Eastern National Park and Monument Association.[505] Although the guide clearly states that the farmstead is a collection of relocated structures, most visitors toured the grounds on their own, probably believing they were visiting a restored, authentic mountain farm of the nineteenth century. The parkway assigned volunteers,

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[502]Charles S. Grossman, Architect, Blue Ridge Parkway, to C. Purcell McCue, Greenwood, VA, 23 June 1953, BLRI Library, Humpback Rocks file; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," May 1956, 2; F. A. Ketterson, Historian, Blue Ridge Parkway, National Register of Historic Places draft nomination, Humpback Rocks Pioneer Farm, 31 May 1973, BLRI Library, Blue Ridge Parkway History file; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," n.p.

[503]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1955, 3; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1956, 5; Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1982, 11; and Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1981, 1.

[504]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 3; and Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1954, 2.

[505]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1956, 5.

and later parkway staff, to the site to provide historical interpretation. While they do not assume character roles, they dress as mountain folk, attend to farm crops and chickens, and do a few mountain crafts. This interpretation has proven very popular with visitors.

Weems recommended a vast expansion of the park in 1960, urging the acquisition of 20,000 acres on the southeastern slopes of the mountain. Weems even sought to create opportunities for water sports through construction of a small lake. While the idea of a lake development went nowhere, plans were prepared for a campground and enlarged picnic area above the Greenstone development on a tract owned by W. R. Mattox. This, too, was never authorized. The parkway was still considering expanded facilities in 1964. Landscape Architect Arthur Beyer prepared new studies for a campground, and the parkway condemned a neighboring 365-acre tract owned by Admiral Parke Brady for the necessary land in 1972. The property had room for the development of a 180-unit campground, seasonal quarters and hiking trails, along with a good source of water.[506]

A 1967 plan for area showed a two-loop campground just north of the visitor center on the same side of the road. Earlier plans had shown proposed campground site in the Greenstone area later partially occupied by the picnic area. The proposal featured seven comfort stations, quarters for a campground ranger, an amphitheatre, and a pedestrian overlook reached by a short trail.[507] Despite the planning, the campground was never constructed. Facilities already existed at Otter Creek fifty miles to the south, and at Loft Mountain in Shenandoah National Park thirty miles north.

Humpback Rocks remains one of the most popular recreational areas on the parkway. Visitors get general parkway information from the visitor center, then wander through the Mountain Farm exhibit to explore a romanticized depiction of life in the Southern Highlands. The picnic area is rarely crowded, but is appreciated by many visitors. The park's trails are very popular. The Appalachian Trail runs through the area, providing a connection between Humpback Gap and the Humpback Rocks picnic area along with

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[506]"Land Proposed for Acquisition, Humpback Rocks, Sec. 1C, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-HR-2061-A, 15 March 1960, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-2; Sam P. Weems to Regional Director, Region One, 29 February 1960, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 27; Arthur H. Beyer, Supervisory Landscape Architect, Philadelphia Planning and Service Center, National Park Service, "Memorandum to Chief, Design and Construction," 11 December 1967, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 32; Edward A. Hummel, Assistant Director, National Park Service, to Byrd, 23 February 1973, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 42; and Hooper, "Oral History Tour," 36-37.

[507]"Humpback Rocks, VA Developed Area Plan, Part of the Master Plan, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-HR-2001-G, sheet 13A, December 1967, BLRI ETS files, Master Plans, Drawer 1A.

access to "The Rocks" and the summit of Humpback Mountain. The short Mountain Farm Trail is a self-guided interpretive trail through the reconstructed farmstead. Part of the old Howardsville Turnpike, chartered in 1848, can be followed in either direction from the Humpback Gap parking area. The .3-mile Catoctin Trail leads from the picnic area to a stone-walled pedestrian overlook with outstanding views. At nearby Greenstone Overlook, a .2-mile self-guiding trail provides an introduction to the geology of the northern section of the parkway. On summer weekends, the parking area at Humpback Gap is often completely full, attesting to the popularity of these trails.

Whetstone Ridge

The second parkway recreational area, Whetstone Ridge, was not a part of the original 1936 master plan. Facilities in the area were not even proposed until after World War II, by which time proposed developments at Norvall Flat and Lick Log Gap had been dropped from consideration. The facilities at Whetstone Ridge included a concessionaire coffee shop/craft shop, the Montebello parkway maintenance yard, and two parkway ranger residences. Recreation was limited to a U.S. Forest Service hiking trail accessible from the area. Plans for the Montebello maintenance area were finalized in 1948 by a private architectural firm in Roanoke working under a contract. The facility was completed the following year. The facility is responsible for maintenance of the 45-mile section between Rockfish Gap and US 60.[508]

Following the abandonment of development plans for Norvall Flats in 1949, the parkway proposed to develop recreational facilities at Whetstone Ridge. A plan prepared that year showed a picnic area where the present Montebello employee residences are located, a campground loop in Edsel Hollow behind the present restaurant, and a housekeeping cabin loop on the ridge side behind the restaurant. A trail along Whetstone Ridge would connect the campground and the picnic area. Other 1949 preliminary plans showed various possible locations for the restaurant and a gas station. The NPS regional office rejected the proposal, suggesting that the campground location in the "depressed topography" of the hollow would be less attractive to campers than some higher elevation location elsewhere along the parkway.[509]

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[508]Crouch, "Supplement to 1948 Annual Report," 4; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1950, 7.

[509]"Proposed Whetstone Ridge Development, Section 1-E, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-WR-2050, 1949, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-3; "Gas Station, Roads, Walks & Grading, Whetstone Ridge, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawings PKY-BR-WR-2050A, 3 sheets, 1949, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-3; and Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, to Director, National Park Service, 22 November 1949, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 4.

Although the campground and eventually the picnic area were eliminated from the proposal, the parkway continued planning for a small day-use development with a gas station and sandwich shop. Parkway landscape architect Abbuehl listed several advantages for the site. The parkway already controlled sufficient right-of-way for the two facilities, and additional lands for other structures could be acquired from the U.S. Forest Service, which owned half the ridge. Whetstone Ridge itself was an interesting natural feature, and utilities were readily available to the site. Abbuehl agreed that the site was unsuitable for camping, and recommended that if any expansion were needed, the additional facilities could be provided at Humpback Rocks.[510]

NPS Regional Director Thomas J. Allen did not feel the the Whetstone Ridge development proposal was up to National Park Service standards, stating "the area is second rate in scenic character in a section of the parkway which is first rate." There were no panoramic views to recommend the choice of location, and placement of visitor-use area across from parkway maintenance shops would be a disadvantage, as the noise from the parkway facilities would disturb users of the service station and restaurant. Allen was also concerned that a new Howard Johnson hotel and restaurant at Rockfish Gap, less than 30 miles north, might complain of competition from the new facilities. The planned work was accordingly postponed indefinitely. Superintendent Weems continued to press for the provision of facilities, noting that the parkway in this area passed through national forest land where there was virtually no opportunity for private development. Weems no longer urged construction of the campground or picnic area, however, believing a development consisting of gas station, restaurant, and maintenance area would be adequate. This concept was subsequently adopted. Grading for the coffee shop and gas station to be operated by the Virginia Peaks of Otter Company began in June 1954. The structures were designed by the company's architects, Johnson, Craven & Gibson of Charlottesville. The plans were virtually identical to those for the company's concessions at Otter Creek. The restaurant was of board-and-batten frame construction with a long integral shed porch across the front, a jerkinhead roof, and stone chimney. The smaller gas station was of similar design, again featuring a shed porch and stone chimney. Construction began in 1959 and the facilities opened the following May. The concession facilities were constructed along with the concession group at Otter Creek at a combined cost of $244,000.[511] The gas station was removed in 1983.

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[510]Edward H. Abbuehl to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 23 January 1950, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 4.

[511]Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 9 January 1950, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 4; Regional Director, Region One, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 7 February 1950, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 4; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," January 1950, 2-3; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1959, 2; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1960, 2; Sam P. Weems, "Blue Ridge Parkway

Norvall Flats

A broad and originally open area northwest of the parkway between mileposts 30 and 37 was proposed as one of the early recreation areas on the northernmost section of the parkway but eventually eliminated from consideration. The area had been cleared by the South River Lumber Company for a staging area for its timber operations. The company built the Irish Creek logging railway into the area between 1916 and 1919, which was later extended to Coffey Town in 1920-21 and to Spy Rock and Crab Tree Falls in 1932. The railway was still intact and in use when the parkway was being routed through the area. It was not taken until 1939, after the company had removed 100 million board feet of timber from its lands. Despite the logging activities, the company's lands were attractive to the parkway planners, especially for Crab Tree Falls, the various cataracts of which fell for 1,600', making it one of the highest falls east of the Rocky Mountains.[512]

In the 1936 Master Plan, Abbott proposed development of a minor recreational area at this location, featuring trails and possibly a secondary road along the abandoned Irish Creek railway to Rocky Mountain, about two miles distant, a service station, an inn, and a picnic area. The area averaged 3,250' in elevation and would offer views of farmlands to the east and woodlands to the west. It was a large open area, formerly a lumber camp for the South River Lumber Company which owned the forested slope below, though the parkway had acquired part of the flats where the development was proposed. In 1942, when it became clear that the Lick Log area could not be developed because of watershed restrictions, Abbott proposed a gas station, a coffee shop, picnic grounds and possibly a campground and overnight cabins for Norvall Flats. None of these were ever constructed. The area was dropped from consideration in March 1949. Sam Weems reported that although the Norvall Flats had been under consideration for years, it never "rang the bell" in the same way as other parkway recreation areas. As an alternative to Norvall Flats, parkway planners devoted their attention to the alternate development at Whetstone

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Recreation Areas," 25 April 1956, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 27; Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," June 1954, 2; Sam P. Weems to Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, National Park Service, 27 November 1957, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 14; Peter Viemeister, *The Peaks of Otter: Life and Times,* (Bedford, VA: Hamilton's, 1992), 216; and Johnson, Craven & Gibson, architects, Charlottesville, VA, "Concessions Buildings for Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawings PKY-BR-WR-2050A, sheets 2 and 4, 10 April 1959, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-4.

[512]Charles Steele, Treasurer, South River Lumber Company, Inc., Northumberland, PA, to David L. Hieb, Park Ranger, Blue Ridge Parkway, 4 August 1942. BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 44, Box 54, Folder 5. Crab Tree Falls is not *the* highest fall in the eastern states; that distinction is held by Ozone Falls in Tennessee.

Ridge. Superintendent Weems again proposed acquiring 4,000-5,000 acres in the vicinity in 1960, but no action was taken.[513]

Irish Creek

In the course of proposing a parkway location through the Shenandoah Valley to Natural Bridge, the parkway planners suggested a possible recreational development in the Irish Creek valley. A 1934 report called for the construction of a tea room, gas station, and camp store. Camping and picnic sites would be developed. No detailed plans were prepared, and with the rejection of the Natural Bridge route in 1936, the building projects were eliminated from the recreational development program.[514] A remnant of the old Irish Creek Railway has been restored on parkway left at milepost 34.8. A short trail allows visitors to walk over a short section of the old logging railway grade, crossing a small creek on a restored trestle. The site was acquired by the Park Service in 1941, and the interpretive trail was constructed in 1960.[515]

Natural Bridge

In 1934 and 1935, Abbott proposed routing the Blue Ridge Parkway down from the mountains in the Lick Log Area to Buena Vista and the Shenandoah Valley floor with the aim of including Virginia's famous Natural Bridge as a scenic area. The large natural stone bridge was one of the state's prominent natural landmarks, and had been visited by Thomas Jefferson and other early state leaders. By the 1930s, the bridge and the surrounding area had been developed for tourist purposes, and featured a 90-room frame hotel, a sandwich shop, and a golf course. In a 1934 proposal for parkway recreational parks, Abbott suggested the facilities would meet the requirements for a suitable public reservation. Secretary of the Interior Ickes endorsed the proposal in 1935, and the parkway staff made a presentation on the matter to Virginia Senator Harry Byrd. The concept of diverting the parkway into the valley was rejected in 1936 and Natural Bridge was never acquired by the federal government. It remains a private attraction.

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[513]Abbott, "Brief Description," 1; Stanley W. Abbott "Memorandum for the Chief of Planning," 25 February 1943, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 2, 2; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," March 1949, 2; Weems to Regional Director, 29 February 1960, 1; and Abbuehl to Superintendent, 23 January 1950.

[514]Demaray, "Progress Report," 1; and Abbott, "Report on Recreation and Service Areas," n.p.

[515]Firth, "Historic Resource Study," n.p.

Lick Log Gap

Abbott proposed this broad gap at 2,475' elevation, crossed by the Appalachian Trail, as a location for an inn, a service station and picnic area. A 1941 drawing for the development called for a picnic area, a campground, gas station and housekeeping cabins, along with a trail system climbing 2,900' Highco Mountain. The main body of the development would be located on parkway right at [Section 1-F, Sta. 607] across from Lick Log Spring.[516]

The land was located within the Jefferson (now George Washington) National Forest, however, and U.S. Forest Service officials were reluctant to agree to the development, stating that the land was located within the Lynchburg and Buena Vista watersheds. Citing the likelihood that the parkway would face difficulties in developing the area because of watershed restrictions, in March 1942 Abbott recommending abandoning plans for a development here in favor of a stream side "water park" along Otter Creek.[517]

Otter Creek

The Otter Creek recreational area was developed following the abandonment of early plans for a recreational park at Lick Log, eleven miles north. Described as an "elongated water feature park," it would take advantage of the clear stream along the parkway which offered a distinctive alternative to other areas already planned or being developed. Abbott called Otter Creek "one of the most attractive mountain streams along the Parkway," and claimed it was ideally suited for recreation. He proposed the development of picnicking and camping facilities along the stream, suggesting the stream might be dammed at one point to form a lake for recreational purposes. Abbott recommended the project as a segregated park for blacks in 1939, but in 1942 he reported there would be room for a sizeable development for whites as well. World War II delayed consideration of the proposal, and by the time development got underway, the policy of racial exclusion had been dropped.[518]

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[516]Abbott, "Brief Description," 2; and "Lick Log Recreational Area, Part of the Master Plan for the Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-LL-2002, sheet 1, 1 January 1941. BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-5.

[517]Abbott, "Report on Conference," 5; Abbott, "Memorandum for the Chief of Planning," 2; and Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," March 1942, 2.

[518]Abbott, "Progress Report, Development of Recreational Areas, Blue Ridge Parkway, for Mr. Vint," 3, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 16; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 12; Abbott, "Memorandum for the Chief of Planning," 3; Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1948, 6; and Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1942, 2.

In 1944, the parkway submitted the first preliminary plan for the area. It showed a lake with a picnic area, swimming beach, and bathhouse, the focus clearly being on active water sports. Just north of the lake would be the developed area with two picnic grounds and a coffee shop on the site of the old Nathaniel Sledd house. A 70-car parking area would accomodate users of the beach.[519]

Regional Landscape Architect Ralph W. Emerson returned the plan for revision, calling the bathing facilities "impractical, and possibly undesirable, as the attendant problems of bathhouse operation, protection for bathers, beach maintenance, and sewage disposal will hardly be justified by the extent of the bathing facilities that will be offered for public use." The parkway revised the master plan to omit the bathing facilities, though a shore front was left as a "play area" to reduce trampling at the proposed picnic area, which was never built either. Even this modification was not enough to suit Regional Director Thomas Allen, who ordered the lake and accompanying facilities omitted from the plans.[520]

In 1946, parkway officials pressed Allen to reconsider his decision. If the lake were to be omitted, it would be necessary to relocate the stream for a considerable distance, a difficult landscape proposition. Recreational use of the lake could always be limited, but relocating Otter Creek to a new course would result in as great a manipulation of the landscape as the construction of the lake. The officials also pointed out that a mill pond had once existed in the area, so providing a new lake would not introduce an entirely new landscape element, but reflect a sort of historical recreation.[521]

Because of the may place names using the word "otter," the parkway staff recommended calling the new development "Ottari Park" after the Cherokee word meaning mountain or

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[519]"Preliminary Entrance& Development--Area #1, Otter Creek, Section 1G, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-OC-2050, 1944. BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Otter Creek Rack #1.

[520]Ralph W. Emerson, Regional Landscape Architect, National Park Service, Region One, Richmond, VA, "Memorandum for the Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway," 9 May 1944, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 2; Sam P. Weems, "Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region One," 11 January 1945, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 2; and Thomas J. Allen, Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, "Memorandum for the Director," 27 January 1945, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 2.

[521]W. G. Carnes, Acting Chief of Planning, National Park Service, "Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region One," 18 January 1946, National Archives, RG 79, National Park Service, Central Classified Files, Blue Ridge Parkway files; and Sam P. Weems to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, 18 January 1946, National Archives, RG 79, National Park Service, Central Classified Files, Blue Ridge Parkway files.

high hill, but Regional Director Allen suggested thought such a name would be confusing, and the name "Otter Creek Recreational Area" was selected.[522]

A detailed plan for the development was drawn up in February 1952. It called for a gas station, camping and picnic areas, a trail system, and ultimately, a lodge for overnight accommodations, all located along the lake, which again appeared in the plans. The emphasis remained on the water features as scenic amenities, but no active lake side development was proposed. Somewhat ominously, the proposal stated "the relatively low elevation and wood gnats may be quite objectionable," hardly a selling point.[523] The trail was proposed to climb Bluff Mountain, then run along the ridge to Saltlog Gap around Silas Knob to Slaty Gap and return to the main development. By contrast, the present Otter Creek Trail follows the creek to the James River visitor center.

In 1955, new plans for the development were prepared which showed it relocated to about a mile above the lake. The sheet showed the campground, restaurant/gift shop, and gas station where they were ultimately built, though a rotary or traffic circle in the campground was later eliminated. An August 1956 development plan showed the picnic area located at [the double parking turnout above the developed area] at milepost 58. A revised master plan for the development later that year omitted the lodge, and the picnic grounds were dropped in favor of placing tables at the several streamside parking areas nearby. If picnicking use demanded, a large parking area could be adapted for that purpose. The gas station, lunch and craft shop, and campground remained in the plans.[524] All of them were subsequently constructed.

Plans for the service station and lunch room at Otter Creek, both to be operated by the Virginia Peaks of Otter Company, were prepared in 1959 by Johnson, Craven & Gibson, a Charlottesville firm. The restaurant was a board-and-batten frame buildings of modern lines that embodied some characteristics of Southern Appalachian design such as a long porch across the front, a jerkinhead or clipped gable roof, and a stone chimney. In the rear there was a stone patio with native plantings. It was essentially the same structure as constructed at Whetstone Ridge, though adapted to the site's topography. The gas station

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[522]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," April 1944, 1.

[523]"Otter Creek Development Plan, to accompany drawing PKY-BR-OC-2051B, February 1952. BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 5.

[524]"Coffee Shop, Gas Sta. & Camp. Area Develp., Otter Creek, Section 1-G, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-OC-2053, 7 November 1955, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Otter Creek Rack #1; "Otter Creek, VA, Developed Area & Utilities Plan, Part of the Master Plan, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-OC-2051-D, sheet 15, August 1956, BLRI ETS files, Master Plans, Drawer 1A; and Sam P. Weems to Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, National Park Service, 20 December 1956, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 13.

was smaller but featured a front shed porch and a stone chimney. The two facilities opened the following May. They were constructed along with the facilities at Whetstone Ridge at a combined cost of $244,000. The 65-unit National Park Service campground opened in June 1960, and a campfire circle or small amphitheatre was established in 1962.[525] A 1963 master plan for the area again called for developing a 35-unit picnic area at one of the parking overlooks along the Otter Creek. This was, however, never established, though picnic tables are provided at most of the numerous overlooks along the stream. Many also provide access to the Otter Creek trail system, though the trail receives only limited use.[526]

The Otter Creek Recreational Area has been little changed since construction was completed in 1962. The gas station was removed in 1983, but otherwise the park is essentially intact. The major features are the campground and the coffee shop. There are no interpretive features. The campground is the lowest altitude camping area on the parkway. This makes it a favorable spot in spring and fall, and it is the only camping area in Virginia kept open in the winter. The low elevation and stream side location make it somewhat less appealing during mid-summer due to higher temperatures than the mountain alternatives and the predicted substantial mosquito population. As in the other recreational areas, hiking trails are provided for visitors' use. The 3.5-mile Otter Creek trail extends from the campground to the James River Area; except for one brief climb, it follows the shore of the creek, an experience rarely attained on other parkway trails. The Otter Lake Loop Trail makes a .9-mile circuit around the lake, affording scenic views along the way.

James River

Just beyond Otter Lake, the parkway reaches its lowest elevation, 649' above sea level, in the valley of the James River, the principal watercourse of Virginia. A small day use development at this location allows visitors access to the river and two self-guided trails.

The focal point of the interpretation is a restored lock from the James River and Kanawha Canal, which operated from 1835 to 1880. In 1785, George Washington, still four years

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[525]Johnson, Craven & Gibson, architects, Charlottesville, VA, "Concessions Buildings for Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia Peaks of Otter Company," BLRI drawings PKY-BR-OC-8001, sheets 2-4, 22 July 1957, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-8; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1959, 2; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1960, 2-3; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," June 1962, 3; and Viemeister, *Peaks of Otter*, 216.

[526]Edward H. Abbuehl, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Blue Ridge Parkway, Design Analysis, Otter Creek, PKY-BR-OC-2051D," April 1963, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 26; and Bruce Bytner, District Ranger, Blue Ridge Parkway, interview by author, 23 July 1996.

from the presidency, proposed a waterway to connect the Virginia Tidewater region with the Ohio River to the west. Such a route would encourage trade and strengthen the economy of the Old Dominion. The "James River Company" was subsequently organized and prosecuted the work. Early work in the 1820s established a route around the falls at Richmond, but the major work on the route between Richmond and Buchanan did not get underway until after the James River and Kanawha Canal Company was established in the early 1830s. The 196.5-mile canal ran west from Maiden's Adventure Dam above Richmond to Buchanan, Virginia; a planned extension across the Alleghenies to a connection with the Kanawha River (a tributary of the Ohio) was never constructed. At Buchanan a connection was made with the North River Canal, which rose another ten miles to Lexington, Virginia. The total cost of the Richmond to Buchanan section was $8,259,184, more than the cost of New York's Erie Canal. It featured 98 locks, 23 dams, 12 aqueducts, 199 culverts, and 31 bridges. Lock No. 7 or Battery Creek Lock at the parkway crossing of James River was built in 1848 by Moses Snead. It had a 13' lift and was 100' long between gates. The company began work on a third section from Buchanan to Coventry in 1852, but this work was abandoned before completion.[527]

Although the parkway's location across the river was determined early on, plans for the development of the interpretive area date from the postwar era. Crossing the river would require a major bridge, and this work was delayed until funding became available under Mission 66. In April 1941, the U.S. Forest Service transferred fifteen acres to the parkway for the construction of one of the "60-mile" utility areas, and Civilian Public Service (conscientious objectors) crews from Camp NP-15 at Peaks of Otter began construction immediately.[528] Parkway records from this period do not mention any plans for visitor use facilities.

It was not until the 1950s that parkway staff began considering a small development at the river. In 1953, Abbuehl wrote the Virginia Highway Department urging preservation of the canal lock, and the following year Superintendent Weems wrote again, stating "The National Park Service desires this tract. . . so that the canal lock which is in excellent condition may be preserved as an historic exhibit." In December 1956, Weems wrote NPS Chief Architect Thomas Vint that "the crossing of the James River will be a

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[527]Glasco E. Marable, "The Kanawha Canal: Virginia's Dream of a Waterway to the West," *The Virginia Engineer*, Fall 1967, 10-11; "Data Summary: James River & Kanawha Canal," MSS, n.d. BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 44, Box 58, Folder 66; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," n.p.

[528]Abbott, "Monthly Report of the Resident Landscape Architect," April 1941, 3. Two buildings in the maintenance area burned on 31 August 1951, but the facilities were restored the following year. (Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 5; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1951, 4; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1952, 3.)

place of interest scenically, historically and geologically and we have provided a large parking area with a short self-guiding trail."[529]

In 1958, Superintendent Weems first proposed the general interpretive arrangement now implemented at the site. He stated that the parkway's plans envisioned "a foot bridge crossing the river from the parking area on the opposite shore, with a walk to the locks where the full story will be told. If possible, we would like to restore the locks and a section of the canal and run water into it from a nearby stream." In October, the parkway suggested that the James River Bridge, the plans for which were being finalized, be modified to include a suspended pedestrian bridge. Weems urged inclusion of the project as an extra work order, arguing cost of the structure would be far less if it was carried out in conjunction with the main bridge construction and by the same contractor.[530]

Plans for an interpretive shelter and the restoration of the canal lock were prepared by parkway architects Charles Grossman and George Skillman and were approved in 1960. The $17,470 contract for the visitor center was awarded in May 1961. The Park Service Museum Laboratory in Washington prepared seven exhibit panels interpreting the canal. The open-air visitor center opened in 1962, along with the Trail of Trees, a self-guiding nature trail. Interpreters staffed the visitor center during the day, and gave talks at the Otter Creek campground circle five nights a week. A push-button audio display provided information when the station staff were not present. The facility included restrooms and a "cubbyhole" for a parkway naturalist.[531] The land on which the visitor center was built was once part of an old farmstead owned by a family named Putt. The Putt Cabin, a small log structure, stood in front of the visitor center by a large black walnut until at least the 1960s.[532]

By June 1961, planning for the lock restoration was well underway, as reported by Assistant Superintendent Howard Stricklin:

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[529]Jean Haskell Speer and Frances H. Russell, *The James River and Kanawha Canal Lock Historic Resource Study* (Blacksburg, VA: Appalachian Studies Program, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1992), 42; and Weems to Chief, Eastern Office, 20 December 1956.

[530]Sam P. Weems to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, October 1958, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 32, Box 39, Folder 21; and Sam P. Weems to Chief, Eastern Office, 20 October 1958, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 32, Box 39, Folder 21.

[531]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1960, 4; Weems,"Superintendent's Annual Report," 1961, 4; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 3; and Abbuehl, "Master Plan. . . Otter Creek," April 1963, 2.

[532]Lewis B. McNease, Jr., Seasonal Historian, Blue Ridge Parkway, "More Information on the Land Near the Visitor Center," MSS, 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 44, Box 59, Folder 68.

> The lock itself is in pretty good condition, but needs gates. We propose this summer to make measured drawings of one at Lynchburg which will be used as a prototype. The old canal is to be restored from the lock back to our James River bridge and from the lock down to the James River. Battery Creek is to be dammed and diverted through the lock. Water from Battery Creek will back up to the C&O Railroad. A small dam near the outlet to the James River will be required to hold water in the canal.[533]

The old lock gates used as a prototypes had been dug up by the Glamorgan Pipe and Foundry Company of Lynchburg on its property in 1961. Iron parts were salvaged and used in the parkway restoration.[534] The parkway acquired the canal lock tract in 1963 and clearing of the site began in September. Park Naturalist Donald Robinson, Park Engineer Earl Batten, and Parkway Landscape Architect Bob Hope looked into the feasibility of using a ferry to transport visitors to the site instead of constructing a footbridge beneath the James River Bridge.[535] The footbridge concept was adopted instead, and the James River Bridge was adapted to accommodate it. Restoration of the canal lock was completed in 1965, and plans for new exhibit panels were submitted to the Eastern Museum Lab of the National Park Service.[536]

Work on the canal restoration was extended in 1966 and 1967. This phase of the project involved construction of connecting walks for visitors, flood control overflow shaping, diversion drains, landscaping and signs. Railings were installed along the sides of the canal lock to prevent visitors, especially children, from falling in and drowning.[537] The parkway acquired more land between the James River and the canal from William A. Putt in a 1973 transaction.[538] With the property in hand, the restoration of a second lock and a

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[533]Howard B. Stricklin to Acting Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, National Park Service, 8 June 1961, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 32, Box 40, Folder 32.

[534]J. D. Lawrence, Division Manager, Appalachian Power Company, to D. H. Robinson, Ranger-Naturalist, Blue Ridge Parkway, 5 April 1961, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 32, Box 40, Folder 31; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 5; and Stricklin, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1961, 2.

[535]Speer and Russell, *James River and Kanawha Canal Lock*, 42; and Bean, "Monthly Narrative Report," September 1963, 2.

[536]Eden, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1966, 3.

[537]Whanger to Chief, Design and Construction, Planning and Service Center, National Park Service, Philadelphia, PA, 27 October 1966, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 32, Box 40, Folder 38; and Edward H. Abbuehl to Regional Director, Southeast Region, National Park Service, 8 November 1966, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 32, Box 40, Folder 38.

[538]Liles, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1973, 11.

full section of the canal would be possible, but no funds have been appropriated for the work.

The visitor center and comfort station building was enclosed and a heating system was added in 1984. This allowed expanded visitor use through the cooler months and helped reduce vandalism, which had become a problem in the area.[539] A more considerable problem arose late in 1985, when severe flooding caused major damage in the area. The footbridge under the Harry Flood Byrd Memorial Bridge [renamed that year to honor the leading supporter of the parkway] was damaged, and the canal lock was badly disturbed when the river crested more then 40' over the canal. The lock gates were battered by large tree trunks and soaked in contaminated water and toxic chemicals. They were reconstructed in 1987 and 1988 by the NPS Williamsport Preservation Training Center at a cost of $61,898.[540]

The James River developed area includes the visitor center, a small picnic area, the restored canal section, and three hiking trails. The mile of canal within the parkway boundary includes two locks, of which only the Battery Creek Lock has been excavated and restored, and portions of an old culvert across Peters Creek. The hiking trails are all accessible from the visitor center. The .4-mile Trail of Trees is a self-guiding interpretive trail with small markers describing trees are common along the lower elevation sections of the parkway and interpreting the geology of the James River Water Gap. The Canal Lock Trail runs the same distance to the restored Battery Creek Lock. Many visitors enjoy the views from the walkway under the James River Bridge. The 3.5-mile Otter Creek Trail parallels the parkway and the creek as it runs to the Otter Creek Campground.

Peaks of Otter

The most popular recreation area on the Virginia section of the parkway, Peaks of Otter derives its name from the nearby summits that have attracted attention since the early years of the nation. The peaks may have taken their name from the Otter River to the east. Other accounts suggest a corruption of the Cherokee word "Ottari," meaning "mountain." Another possible source for the name may be the Otter Highlands of Scotland, from which some of the early settlers came. Whatever the origins of the name, the group of three peaks--Flat Top Mountain, Sharp Top Mountain and Harkening Hill--was a prominent frontier landmark and an early destination for tourists. For years, Sharp

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[539]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1984, 10; and Bytner interview.

[540]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1986, 2; Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1987, 9; and Brotherton to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 14 May 1987, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 44, Box 55, Folder 27.

Top Mountain was thought to be the highest peak in Virginia and drew many visitors hoping to climb to the Old Dominion's loftiest point. The narrow Mons Valley between the peaks was settled from early days and now cradles the present recreational park.[541]

The high peaks attracted attention in colonial times, appearing on a 1751 map prepared by Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson. The first land grant in the area was made in 1749, when Matthew Talbot and the Rev. John Bruskill received 20,000 acres, including the peaks. White settlers took up occupancy in the area by the close of the eighteenthcentury, and by the 1850s more than twenty families lived in the triangular valley between the peaks or on the adjacent mountain slopes. The settlers cleared much of the land, cultivating some and putting the rest into pasture. Photographs taken when the parkway was being planned show much open land and several orchards; some of the orchard trees remain near the present lodge and across from the picnic area.[542]

The settlers constructed a turnpike up Jennings Creek through the area and on to Bedford. Authorized by the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1772, it was used during the Revolution to haul lead for the Continental armies' muskets. Later, as visitors began to flock to the area, a road was constructed up Sharp Top Mountain. Visitors rode horses or in a hack to a point near the summit called the "tying place." A barn here provided feed and some shelter. From this point, a foot trail led on to the summit. Nicholas Cabell Horsley built another road to the top of Flat Top Mountain in the 1880s, hoping to draw off some of the visitors, but this proved an unsuccessful venture.[543] Of the numerous buildings constructed in the area, only two historic ones remain. In the area now covered by Abbott Lake stood the Rosser or Polly Woods cabin, which may have served as a guest house for Polly Wood's Ordinary, an early tavern. Polly Wood's Ordinary was the first of several hotels that operated in the area. Mary "Polly" Woods, the widow of Revolutionary veteran Jeremiah Woods, operated an "ordinary," a tavern offering

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[541]"Area Histories--Peaks of Otter," MSS, n.d, 4, BLRI Library; and "How the Peaks of Otter Got Their Name from Scotland," *Bedford Democrat* (VA), 29 July 1954. Sbarp Top Mountain at 3,862' is not even the highest of the Peaks of Otter; Flat Top Mountain at 4,004' is higher. For the record, the highest point in the state is 5,729' Mount Rogers in the southwest corner of the state.

[542]"Area Histories--Peaks of Otter," 1; and James J. Kirkwood, "A Preliminary Sketch of the History of the Virginia Peaks of Otter, Blue Ridge Parkway," MSS, August 1968, BLRI Library, vertical files, Peaks of Otter file, 2.

[543]Viemeister, *Peaks of Otter*, 47, 81; Kirkwood, "Preliminary Sketch," 2; and Bruce P. Gregory, Landscape Architect, Eastern Service Center, National Park Service, "Narrative Report for Peaks of Otter Developed Area, Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia, Plan Revision," Drawing Number Pky. BR-PO-2080-J, 9 August 1971, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 44. The "Virginia Stone" in the Washington Monument was inscribed "From Otter's summit, Virginia's loftiest peak, to crown a monument to Virginia's noblest son."

overnight lodging, from 1834 to 1844, at which time she was succeeded by her son-in-law, Nicholas Wilkerson. The log house now interpreted as "Polly Woods Ordinary" may have been the original cabin or a guest house from this early stand. This log structure was relocated to the picnic area when the lake was built. [544] On the slopes of Harkening Hill stood the ca. 1850s John T. Johnson farmstead, now an interpretive farm restored by the parkway.[545]

Benjamin Wilks (or Wilkes) and his son, Leyburn, operated another ordinary on their farm as early as 1851. Wilks was instrumental in organizing the Buchanan and Bedford Turnpike Company, which improved the old road across the mountains through the Peaks area and operated it as a toll road. In 1857, he acquired 2,700 acres in the area, including both Sharp Top and Flat Top mountains. That year, Leyburn Wilks built the first true hotel in the area, a ramshackle complex with room for fifty guests which he called the Otter Peaks Hotel. In 1858, he built a rock shelter on the Sharp Top summit, hoping to increase revenue from the tolls he charged for the mountain road. By 1859, Wilks' ventures had apparently driven Polly Woods' Ordinary out of business. The Otter Peaks Hotel burned in 1870 and was rebuilt, apparently by Leyburn Wilks' brother-in-law, Nicholas Horsley, the next owner of the property. In 1917, following more changes of ownership, it was acquired by Peaks of Otter, Inc., which built a larger hotel to the west of Horsley's structure, which was retained as an annex. The company named the new lodgings the "Hotel Mons." The proprietors later established a lunch room atop Sharp Top Mountain, adjacent to the old rock shelter. The present shelter on the summit was constructed about 1925, replacing the earlier facilities.[546]

A Blue Ridge Parkway recreational area at the Peaks was under consideration as early as 1934. A plan prepared that year showed a small recreational park centered on the Hotel Mons tract; Sharp Top and the other summits would remain in ownership of Peaks of Otter, Inc. and the U.S. Forest Service.[547]

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[544]"Area Histories--Peaks of Otter," 3; and Jean Haskell Speer, Frances H. Russell and Gibson Worsham, *The Johnson Farm at Peaks of Otter Historic Resource Study* (Blacksburg, VA: Appalachian Studies Program Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1990), 15.

[545]Kirkwood, "Preliminary Sketch," 2-3.

[546]"Area Histories--Peaks of Otter," 2; Viemeister, *Peaks of Otter,* 80, 97; Speer, Russell and Worsham, *Johnson Farm Historic Resource Study*, 22; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," n.p.

[547]"Shenandoah-Great Smoky Mountains National Parkway, Recreational-Scenic Development, Peaks of Otter, Bedford & Botetourt Counties, Virginia," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PO-AP-1013, 1 November 1934. BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-9.

Based on this plan, the Hotel Mons tract and some additional land was purchased by the federal government in the mid-1930s for the parkway. Under terms of the transaction, the Peaks of Otter Corporation, which had opposed the transfer, retained the right to collect tolls for travel over the Sharp Top Road and to operate a lunch room at the summit. In the 1936 Master Plan, Abbott proposed acquiring an additional 4,000 acres in the area, most of which was controlled by the U.S. Forest Service. He envisioned a major development featuring a 125-room lodge to replace the Hotel Mons, a service station, picnic grounds, camp grounds, and trails for hiking and horseback riding. He identified a marshy area between the peaks as "an ideal site for a small lake." In 1937, Abbott added to the proposal a 30-unit vacation cabin group, a coffee house, and a bath house and boat house with a luncheon counter to be constructed beside the proposed lake. The buildings alone, if built, would cost $138,000.[548]

A 1939 general development plan drawing shows the coffee shop and gas station would have been located on the general site of the present visitor center. The lodge would have been on the other side of the 35-acre lake from its present site, across present Virginia Highway 43 from the campground. The picnic area and aquatic center would have been on the present lodge site. The 22 overnight cabins were to have been built on the hillside behind the present visitor center.[549]

A Civilian Conservation Corps camp at Kelso, Virginia, was transferred from state forestry work to the Blue Ridge Parkway in 1934 and was assigned to work at Peaks of Otter along with the nearby Bedford County Park. Their work at first was largely limited to fire hazard reduction and selective cutting because the parkway could not obtain the funds to purchase several key tracts in the area. The camp later built a new road up Sharp Top Mountain and the U.S. Forest Service subsequently erected a fire lookout on the summit. It was removed after World War II.[550]

The land problems were largely resolved in 1941 when the U.S. Forest Service transferred 3,445 acres of land in the area to the parkway. Most of this land had been purchased for the Jefferson National Forest, but it also included the 858-acre Hotel Mons

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[548]Speer, Russell and Worsham, *Johnson Farm Historic Resource Study*, 24; Viemeister, *Peaks of Otter*, 195; Abbott, "Brief Description," 2; Stanley Abbott, "Proposed Buildings in Connection with Recreational Development on Portions of the Blue Ridge Parkway Underway or Completed in Virginia," 15 October 1938, 2, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 11; and Abbott, "Report on Recreation and Service Areas," n.p.

[549]"General Development Plan, Peaks of Otter Park, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PO-2003-B, 8 June 1939 BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-9.

[550]Viemeister, *Peaks of Otter*, 184-86; and Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 13.

tract which U.S. Forest Service purchased with Interior Department funds. Another 105.8 acres constituting the ca. 1852 Johnson Farm were transferred to the parkway in 1943.[551]

New negotiations were begun with Peaks of Otter, Inc., which sought preferential rights to operate concessions at the new park. In return for the concession rights and its sale of property, the company agreed to cease collecting tolls on the Sharp Top motor road. As an alternative, the parkway authorized the company to provide a bus service up the narrow road so that visitors might still be able to ride to the top of 3,875' peak. This would alleviate expected traffic congestion on the narrow mountain road.[552] The bus service, however, was delayed by World War II.

Construction of the parkway through the Peaks of Otter area began in 1939. At this point, the old Hotel Mons was dismantled and removed, along with the old Peaks school and meeting house. In 1941 and 1942, CCC forces rough graded a road and parking areas for the sightseeing bus terminal and began construction of a maintenance and utility area north of Harkening Hill. Peaks of Otter, Inc., purchased the isolated Johnson Farm from Callie Johnson Bryant in 1941 and transferred the property to the National Park Service for an interpretive site. The house was stabilized but not "restored" until the 1960s. In 1942, the Forest Service turned over another 480 acres of land, and in June 1943, an additional 474 acres.[553]

The parkway submitted a new master plan for the area in February 1943. It showed the proposed lake reduced to what Thomas Vint observed was "a mere watery shadow of its former self." When questioned about the change, Abbott replied that the parkway no longer proposed to provide bathing facilities. He expressed concerns that there might be a problem parking the bathers' cars, that the water supply might be insufficient to refresh the lake adequately for proper sanitation, and that the bathing facilities might be too conspicuous. Of even greater importance was the regional office's opposition to the concept of bathing facilities on the parkway. Accordingly, the plans showed the height of the dam reduced from 30' to 15', which would create a 17-acre lake instead of 35 acres as originally proposed. The lodge would occupy the site formerly planned for the aquatics

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[551]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 4; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1944, 5; and Speer, Russell and Worsham, *Johnson Farm Historic Resource Study*, 67.

[552]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 12.

[553]Viemeister, *Peaks of Otter*, 198; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 12; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1943, 3, 9; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1944, 5; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," n.p.

area.[554] The suspension of construction projects due to World War II prevented any work on the facilities at this time.

During World War II, Civilian Public Service enrollees replaced the CCC crews at Peaks of Otter. In 1944, the camp completed most work on the Sharp Top bus road and constructed fire trails up the east and southeast sides of the mountain, and another from Wilkerson Gap on the north side of Flat Top Mountain.[555]

A 1944 plan for the area showed the lake eliminated altogether, the lodge site relocated to the present campground site on the flank of Sharp Top Mountain, and the housekeeping cabins replaced by six "Tour-O-Tell" type units. The old "Polly Woods Ordinary" was to be converted to a concessionaire facility offering picnic supplies and a horseback rides. The campground would occupy what is now the lower loop of the picnic area.[556]

Peaks of Otter, Inc. believed its arrangement with the Park Service would allow it to operate all concessions at the Peaks of Otter, and wrote Superintendent Weems in 1946 to inquire about possible operations. Weems wrote back that their contract would only allow them to operate the Sharp Top Mountain bus service and terminal concession; the other facilities would be operated by National Park Concessions, Inc., which operated most other facilities on the parkway. The bus station was completed in June 1948. The small log structure provided a ticket office and waiting rooms, public comfort stations, and a dining terrace. The mountain road to the summit was widened to accommodate buses, and service to the top of the mountain began in 1949.[557]

Weems raised the proposal for a lake again in 1952. He complained that the "swampy area" had become a maintenance problem. The parkway was keeping it in pasture, but the area in the center was too marshy to support cattle and it was necessary to do a major cleanup every few years. During an inspection the previous summer, NPS Director A. E. Demaray had suggested there were too few lakes along the parkway and urged the lake at

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[554]Thomas C. Vint, "Memorandum for the Acting Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway," 23 February 1943, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 2; Stanley W. Abbott, "Memorandum for the Chief of Planning," 25 February 1943; and "Grounds Development, Peaks of Otter, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PO-2060, 28 January 1943, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-12.

[555]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," November 1944, 3.

[556]"Prelim. Park Entrance & Devel. Areas, Peaks of Otter, Section 1-K, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PO-2014-A, 5 April 1944, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-9.

[557]Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1946, 2; Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1948, 2, 4; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," June 1948, 2; and Viemeister, *Peaks of Otter,* 209.

Peaks of Otter be put back into the master plan for the area. Weems agreed that the lake would be an attractive feature and would solve the problems with the swamp. Construction of the lake would inundate two historic structures, the Jones Cabin, which people from Bedford maintained was Polly Woods Ordinary, and another structure which the National Park Service preferred to think of as the old inn. Either structure could be relocated to an adjacent site, and parkway historical architect Charles Grossman and naturalist William Lord were trying to ascertain which of the structures was the true ordinary. In February, they reported that they believed the Jones Cabin was the ordinary, though the other structure was eventually restored and interpreted as the stand.[558]

Weems also reported that plans to construct a housekeeping cabin complex above the gas station had been dropped, as the parkway preferred to keep all lodging on one site. The housekeeping cabin site would be reserved for development of a picnic area if the existing one along Little Stony Creek became inadequate. Weems also proposed the construction of an "information center" next to the gas station, which would be staffed by ranger personnel during the heavy visitation season. An amphitheatre was under consideration, but visitor loads did not yet warrant its construction.[559]

NPS Regional Historian James W. Holland visited the site in March to investigate the preservation of "Polly Woods Ordinary." He was skeptical about the lake proposal, believing it had been conceived merely as a "landscape device" to benefit the lodge and as a "maintenance measure" to keep down brush and briars. Neither was, to him, sufficient argument to warrant the sacrifice of the two historic buildings. He urged that the lake level be reduced to preserve the building site along with the old Bedford Road which he considered "an important part of the scene."[560] Holland's arguments fell on deaf ears.

The lodge site was confirmed on its present location in a 1951 development plan. The lodge was originally to have consisted of one large structure, but over the next several years plans were made to construct five 15-unit sections instead.[561] A 1956 master plan

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[558]Sam P. Weems to Regional Director, Region One, 30 January 1952, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 5; and Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1952, 2.

[559]Weems to Regional Director, 30 January 1952.

[560]James W. Holland, Regional Historian, Region One, National Park Service, "Comment--Drawing No. 2080C, Peaks of Otter, Blue Ridge Parkway," 1 April 1952, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 7.

[561]"Lodge and Coffee Shop Development, Peaks of Otter, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PO-2150, 4 October 1951, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-14; and "Lodge and Coffee Shop Development, Peaks of Otter, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PO-2150-A, 2 October

for the area showed an expanded picnic area, a new park, and a concession employee housing area across Virginia Highway 43 from the picnic area, and a major expansion of the lodging complex that would include a 22-unit building like the other lodge structures and 20 individual housekeeping cabins at the end of the parking area for lodge group.[562] Of these proposals, only the picnic area expansion was carried out.

The picnic area at the "Big Spring" on Little Stony Creek had been established during the days of U.S. Forest Service administration, but was limited in size. A new loop was designed in 1950 and put into use in 1955. The gas station on the side of the parkway was completed in 1951, and the shelter on the summit of Sharp Top Mountain was renovated. The 35-site Peaks of Otter Campground on the slopes of Sharp Top Mountain opened in 1955. The stone-faced visitor center, designed by Grossman and Skillman, was completed in 1957, and the maintenance area was expanded with the construction of a gas and oil building. The parkway's first amphitheatre was constructed behind the visitor center in 1960, and the Elk Run "ecology trail" opened in the early 1960s. A comfort station addition to the visitor center, designed by Smithey & Boynton of Roanoke, was added in the mid-1960s.[563]

In 1958, the concession operations were taken over by a new corporation, the Virginia Peaks of Otter Company (VPO), which was awarded a 20-year contract to operate all facilities north of Roanoke. The new firm, composed of Charlottesville, Virginia investors, took over the Sharp Top bus concession and lunch room from Peaks of Otter, Inc., and acquired the gas station concession from National Park Concessions, Inc. Plans for a new 75-room lodge were prepared in 1959 by the Charlottesville architectural firm of Johnson, Craven & Gibson, and construction was underway in 1962. The facility opened two years later. VPO was also authorized to build and operate restaurants and gas stations at Whetstone Ridge and Otter Creek. As of 1992 the company continued to operate all parkway concessions north of Roanoke.[564]

1957, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-14.

[562]"Peaks of Otter, VA Development Concept Plan, Part of the Master Plan, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PO-2080J-20F2, sheet 17, October 1956, BLRI ETS files, Master Plans, Drawer 1A.

[563]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1950, 4; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1955, 3; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1957, 4; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1960, 4; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 5; Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," May 1947, 4; Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 5; and "Additions to Peaks of Otter Visitor Center, Peaks of Otter, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PO-3059, 10 August 1964, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-19.

[564]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1959, 2; Speer, Russell and Worsham, *Johnson Farm Historic Resource Study*, 70; Viemeister, *Peaks of Otter,* 213-15; and Johnson, Craven & Gibson,

The parkway submitted a major revision to the master plan for the area in the summer of 1961. It proposed increasing the size of the campground to 125 units and adding another 50 units to the lodge, with the option of another 50 rooms. The Sharp Top Mountain Trail would be relocated away from the bus road, and another trail would be constructed to the Johnson Farm group. Residences would be constructed for the sub-district ranger, the ranger, and the maintenance supervisor, and a new 50,000-gallon water supply tank would be constructed to supply the campground extension. The plan also urged renewed consideration of the lake proposal. Under this scheme, the popular campground, often filled to capacity, was expanded to 75 sites in 1962. The other work was carried out over next several years.[565]

Construction of the lake finally got underway in 1964. The plans showed the lake's size as 22.98 acres, with a small island for scenic effect. This island was never created. The proposal to construct an artificial lake within the parkway boundaries generated significant controversy. One critic wrote National Park Service Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., complaining "We need artificial lakes in national parks about as much as I need silk bloomers." Superintendent Weems defended the project, stating that the parkway was classified as a recreational area and arguing that the lake fit in with the other developments including the lodge, restaurant, campground, and picnic area. Weems insisted that the "scenic lake" would create an "esthetic setting" for the other facilities. He admitted that the old marsh contained a number of wetland plants not commonly found along the parkway, but noted that the plans included relocating many of these to a suitable habitat.[566]

Prior to construction of the lake, the National Park Service and Virginia Military Institute conducted an archaeological survey at Peaks of Otter in July 1964. Digging in the area being prepared for the lakebed, the researchers discovered weapon points (lecroys),

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architects, Charlottesville, VA, "Peaks of Otter Motel Group, Virginia Peaks of Otter Co.," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PO-8001-A, 5 sheets, 25 August 1959, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-23.

[565]Howard B. Stricklin to Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, 12 July 1961, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 22; Abbuehl, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Blue Ridge Parkway, Design Analysis, Peaks of Otter, PKY-BR-PO-2080G," August 1961, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 24; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 3.

[566]"Lake Construction, Peaks of Otter, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PO-3058-A, 9 sheets, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-19; R. B. Fosberg to Hartzog, 24 July 1964, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 27; and Sam P. Weems to Associate Director, Resource Studies, National Park Service, 18 August 1964, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 27.

scrapers, and other artifacts that suggested the area had been seasonally occupied 8,000 years ago. The artifacts were retained for display at the visitor center.[567]

The building interpreted as "Polly Woods Ordinary" was relocated below the dam into the upper loop of the picnic area. Seasonal Naturalist Reeves and a man identified as a "former mail carrier" insisted the structure was probably the ordinary. The old "Jones Cabin," which every other historian thought was the authentic structure, was destroyed.[568]

Parkway staff discussed restoration of the Johnson Farm on Harkening Hill as a second interpretive site. In 1964, parkway landscape architect Robert Hope and chief naturalist Donald Robinson submitted a report calling for the renovation of the farmhouse, a project that would include replacement of the tin roof with wooden shakes and removal of the weatherboarding to expose the logs. They maintained that the project would return the farm to a turn-of-the-century appearance and estimated the cost of the work at $12,000. In November 1966, parkway staff met with Charles Grossman, former historic architect for the parkway, who recommended against removal of the hand-dressed poplar weatherboards. Mountain people, he insisted, lived "as graciously as they could in the circumstances," and improved their homes whenever they could; the house should not, he said, be significantly altered. Grossman's advice was rejected, and the weatherboards came off the during 1968 "restoration." Four years later, however, parkway historian F. A. Ketterson and interpretive specialist Robert Bruce concluded the work had been based on "unsound" judgement. They suggested that interpretation of the farm should focus on the 1930s, a period for which there was adequate historical information on the farm. Two years later, the farm was more accurately restored under the supervision of architect J. Askins. This work included replacement of the weatherboard siding and some additions that had been removed. When the project was completed in 1974, a living history interpretive program was initiated. The live-in practice ended in 1983, but seasonal interpreters and volunteers continue to carry out farm activities as demonstrations for visitors.[569]

A 1971 master plan for the area proposed expanding the Peaks of Otter Lodge to 100 units, some of which would be housekeeping cabins. The plan also called for the establishment of five miles of bridle paths and stables at the base of Flat Top Mountain, provision of another 45 units in the picnic area, and construction of five residences for employees. This proposal also included plans for the relocation of the "Polly Woods

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[567]Anne Frye, "Peaks of Otter 'Dig' Crew Excited Over Rare Findings," *News* (Lynchburg, VA), 17 July 1964.

[568]Bean, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1963, 3.

[569]Speer, Russell and Worsham, *Johnson Farm Historic Resource Study*, 71-77, 80.

Ordinary" across the parkway to the site of the old Mons Hotel. Projected cost for all the improvements was $1,015,100. Most of the ambitious plan was never approved; only two employee residences were subsequently constructed. The Peaks of Otter Lodge began operating year-round in 1973.[570]

In 1977, stabilization work was done on the Saunders Farm, an isolated single-pen log cabin with an accompanying meathouse. This cabin was apparently established in the mid-nineteenth century by an African American family that had a small subsistence farm. Outlying structures including a chicken coop and hoghouse were present when the parkway acquired the land, but have since deteriorated.[571] The farm has not been restored and is not interpreted, though it is apparently the only surviving site on the parkway linked to associations with African-American settlement.

Despite years of settlement and the numerous developed facilities, the Peaks of Otter remains one of the larger wild areas on the parkway. The extensive forest is predominantly second-growth mixed-hardwood with isolated pines and hemlocks. Mountain laurel and rhododendron are common on steep slopes and along the several minor streams in the area. Remnants of early trees and shrubs introduced by settlers, including apples, quince, and lilac, can be found in several locations.

Seven popular trails lead to various points in the recreation area. The Flat Top and Fallingwater Cascades trails were designated together as a continuous National Recreational Trail on 13 April 1982.[572] The Flat Top segment leads to the 4,004' summit of the highest peak in the area, rising 1600' from the parkway. The Fallingwater Cascades segment is a loop dropping 200' through rock outcrops and rhododendron thickets to a splendid cascade on Jennings Creek. The most popular trail is the Sharp Top Mountain Trail, which makes a steep climb to the 3,862' summit. Many visitors take the Sharp Top bus to the summit and hike down or vice versa. The 3.3-mile Harkening Hill Trail leads to the 3,372' top of the third peak. Although it does not offer the same wide open views as the other two summit trails, it passes through attractive woodlands; a spur leads to Balancing Rock. The Johnson Farm Trail leads to the restored farmstead with its living history demonstrations. The Elk Run Trail is a 0.6-mile self-guiding nature trail interpreting the flora and fauna of the area. Another easy one-mile loop trail encircles Abbott Lake.

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[570]Gregory, "Narrative Report," 1-12; and Viemeister, *Peaks of Otter*, 237.

[571]Firth, "Historic Resource Study," n.p.

[572]"Parkway Trail Given National Recognition," BLRI press release, 14 April 1983, BLRI RP&PS Lands Files, File D30, Fallingwater Cascades NRT.

Roanoke Mountain

At the request of the City of Roanoke, the Blue Ridge Parkway began planning and construction for a recreational area on two mountains overlooking the city. The "Roanoke Mountain" area consists of a spur loading leading over Mill Mountain to a connection with a local parkway, a campground located off the spur, and a one-way scenic loop road leading to the summit of Yellow Mountain.

The mill from which Mill Mountain takes its name was constructed in the eighteenth century at the "Crystal Spring" by Mark Evans, who was granted title to 87 acres including part of the mountain in 1748. Soldiers in the French and Indian War drew provisions from Evans' storehouse. Over the next century and a half, the mountain underwent numerous changes of ownership. By 1891, the Roanoke Gas and Water Company controlled the land. That year, the company built a carriage road to the summit. Rockledge Inn, a resort hotel, was constructed on the mountain and established a pattern of recreational use. Three successive observation towers were erected on the summit. In 1911, a corporation of local investors built an incline railway up the western face, which operated until 1930. By the early 1920s, the land was controlled by the Mill Mountain Corporation, which built a concrete toll road up the mountain in 1924. The incorporators tried to sell the mountain to the City of Roanoke in 1932 but were unsuccessful. Washington & Lee University gained the mountain in a foreclosure sale two years later and also tried to sell it to the city with a similar lack of results, and the mountain ended up in the possession of the First National Bank. In February 1941, 100 acres at the summit were purchased by J. B. and Grace P. Fishburn and donated to the city for recreational purposes.[573]

The Roanoke City Council immediately asked the Blue Ridge Parkway to consider construction of a spur road to the site. In 1945, National Park Service officials told the council that they would support the project, but the city would have to acquire the necessary right-of-way and pay for the construction of the road. The city interests continued to develop parts of the mountain: the Chamber of Commerce and the Roanoke Merchants' Association erected a huge electric star on the summit in 1949 and began publicizing Roanoke as the "Star City of the South." The parkway criticized the erection of the star, expressing fears it would interfere with radio communications handled by the parkway's transmitter on the mountain. Superintendent Weems called it "a perfect example of civic stupidity," and "an awful thing to happen to an innocent mountain!"

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[573]Jack M. Goodykoontz, "Mill Mountain, Past, Present and Future: A Talk Presented by Jack M. Goodykoontz to the Roanoke Kiwanis Club, July 21, 1965," MSS, 1965, 1-4, BLRI Library, vertical files, Roanoke Mountain file.

Another development took place in 1952, when local civic groups and the city established the Children's Zoo.[574]

On 30 August 1961, the parkway announced it would advertise the construction of Section 1-M around Roanoke as part of the Mission 66 program. The City and the Chamber of Commerce renewed their efforts to secure funds for the construction of the spur road and the accompanying developments. In February 1962, a delegation of city officials and Superintendent Weems went to Washington to discuss the spur road project with Senator Harry Byrd and NPS Director Conrad Wirth. In April, the project received conditional approval. The city secured assistance from the state, and with this aid purchased nearly 1,600 acres for the spur road, more land on Mill Mountain for park development, and nearby Yellow Mountain for a scenic tour road. In return, the Park Service pledged to construct the spur road and the scenic loop.[575]

Master plans for the Yellow Mountain and Mill Mountain roads were prepared by the parkway and submitted to the National Park Service for approval in March 1962. The original plan called for improvements to the city's Yellow Mountain Road, but the Roanoke City Council objected, stating the road could not be upgraded to handle the proposed traffic. The City Engineer located an alternate route back of or on the south side of Mill Mountain, and this was incorporated into a June revision to the plans. At the demand of the parkway, the city was forced to purchase a significantly larger amount of land for the project.[576]

The Design Analysis for the Master Plan depicted a 2.7-mile spur to the parkway right to Mill Mountain Park (the location of the zoo), where it would connect with a city road from Walnut Avenue. The campground would be located off the spur. A one-way loop road would climb to the 2,120' summit of Yellow Mountain where overlooks and hiking trails were to be provided. A series of horse trails would be constructed in conjunction with the two roads.[577]

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[574]Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1941, 1; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," June 1945, 1; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," November 1949, 2; and Goodykoontz, "Mill Mountain,"4.

[575]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1961, 1; and Goodykoontz, "Mill Mountain," 5-6.

[576]Sam P. Weems to Chief, Eastern Office, 18 June 1962 and 26 June 1962, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 10, Box 13, Folder 15.

[577]"Design Analysis, Yellow Mountain, Blue Ridge Parkway," June 1962. BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 10, Box 14, Folder 15.

The City of Roanoke hired Stanley Abbott, then in private practice, to prepare a comprehensive plan for the development of the Mill Mountain project. Abbott proposed improving the zoo, removing the electric star and radio towers from the summit, removing parking from the summit and landscaping the area, and building new facilities including a restaurant, a visitor center, a snack bar and gift shop, and a 60-unit motel. He also proposed reinstituting a tramway to the top.[578] The ambitious schemes generated much enthusiasm, but the funding for the work was not forthcoming, and the project was never begun.

Unlike the right-of-way for the parkway, the land for the Yellow Mountain scenic road was not turned over to the federal government. In 1963, the City of Roanoke leased it to the Park Service for 99 years. State funds purchased the right-of-way for the Mill Mountain Road, which was also turned over to the parkway for administration.[579] Construction of the 3.2-mile Yellow Mountain Loop Road began in February 1965, and the road was completed in December at a cost of $190,716.94.[580]

The 2.5-mile Mill Mountain Spur Road, along with the 109-unit campground, opened to the public on Memorial Day 1966. The nearby Yellow Mountain scenic loop was also complete, but the road was not opened until guardrail was installed several months later.[581] The scenic route is known today as the Roanoke Mountain loop road. On 25 June 1973, the City of Roanoke consummated a 99-year lease of four more parcels in the Roanoke Mountain area totaling 613.2 acres. The lease was mandated under a 1962 agreement between the city, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the National Park Service.[582]

Recreational facilities at the Roanoke Mountain units include the scenic loop road, the campground, and hiking and horse trails. The hiking trails meander through the area and extend beyond it on the parkway. The Chestnut Ridge Trail encircles the campground and leads to a scenic overlook. Part of this trail is accessible to the disabled. A short trail leads from the summit parking area on Roanoke [Yellow] Mountain to its actual highest

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[578]Goodykoontz, "Mill Mountain," 7-8.

[579]Bean, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1963, 4.

[580]W. P. Wright, Resident Engineer, Bureau of Public Roads, "Final Construction Report, Blue Ridge Parkway Project 41A1, Yellow Mountain Loop Road Grading, Draining, Aggregate Base, Surface Treatment and Other Work" (Arlington, VA: Bureau of Public Roads, Region 15, 4 April 1967), BLRI Archives, RG 12, Series 7, Box 24, Folder 108.

[581]Eden, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1966, 5.

[582]Liles, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1973, 12.

point. The Roanoke Valley Horse Trail parallels the parkway from north of Stewarts Knob Overlook at milepost 110.8 to U.S. 220 at milepost 121, though there is no crossing for the Roanoke River.

Masons Knob

Just prior to World War II, Roanoke County proposed to develop an area adjacent to the parkway route between mileposts 126 and 129 as a county park. The focus was 3,200' Masons Knob, a prominent small mountain to the left side of the right-of-way. The county did not develop the park, but Superintendent Weems thought it might be a suitable site for another parkway recreation area. In 1960, he recommended acquiring about 3,000 acres for the development.[583] The land was not acquired, but a large parkway overlook at the base of the knob offers a fine vista.

Poor Mountain-Bent Mountain Plateau

In February 1960, Weems proposed acquisition of a massive tract totaling 20,000 acres along the parkway right at milepost 136 northwest of Adney Gap. Weems called the land "an interesting combination of topography, the plateau averaging 2,600'-2,800' in elevation with Poor Mountain, 3,800', in the background." He expressed surprise that there had been little private development because the topography was so favorable, with good water supplies from Big Laurel and Bottom Creek. The tract was close to Roanoke, and he thought a park here would prove very popular.[584] Probably because of the immense scale of the project and limited use of the available facilities in the general area, the land was not acquired.

Pine Spur

On the Virginia Plateau south of Roanoke, a prominent spur breaks from the main ridge to the east, offering a wide open view of the Piedmont region. Pine Spur, as this right-angle ridge is called, is a wooded ridge deriving its name from numerous Virginia pine and white pine trees which form dense stands along its length. Largely on account of the excellent views afforded by the site, Pine Spur was one of the first areas acquired and developed as a recreational and scenic area by the parkway.

One of the five original roadside parks, Pine Spur recreational area is today abandoned and has largely been reclaimed by the woods. For years, however, it was intended to be

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[583]Weems to Regional Director, 29 February 1960, 1.

[584]Weems to Regional Director, 29 February 1960, 2.

one of the principal developments along the parkway. Beginning in February 1937, nearly 1,000 acres of land in the area was acquired by the Resettlement Administration for the park. In the 1936 master plan, Abbott proposed reforesting what was then a largely denuded area in native pines and providing facilities including a service station, small lodge, a woodland picnic area, a campground, and hiking trails.[585] Only the picnic area and a few trails were ever built.

A 1937 plan for the area shows an ambitious development with a picnic area, campground with loops for tents and trailers, a "future cabin area," and the lodge at the point of the escarpment. Trails would extend along and below the rim and along the sides of the west fork of Rich Run Creek. The service station would be located at the park entrance. A 1940 sheet shows the project scaled back to a picnic area with coffee shop and gas station, along with recreational facilities consisting of a ball field, see-saw, and swings. The plans showed the site could be expanded to include camping areas and cabins, making Pine Spur a major park with overnight facilities.[586]

This small picnic area and park was constructed for use by African Americans under the segregation of facilities policy in 1940 and 1941. ERA crews constructed an entrance road and a picnic area loop, established twenty-five picnic sites with tables and fireplaces, and built a playing field, a play ground, and several miles of trail. A sandwich shop was planned for the development, and Abbott hoped an African American concessionaire might be found to operate it. Although the area was nearly completed by the end of the year, it was not opened due to limited parkway travel on account of wartime gas rationing and because the roads could not be surfaced on account of wartime restrictions on the use of critical materials.[587] The trailer camp area was later scaled back because the regional office felt that they could not substantiate a need for trailer camps for African Americans.

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[585]Sam P. Weems to Abbott, 6 January 1938, National Archives, Blue Ridge Parkway Catalog No. 7957, RG 7, Series 41, Recreation Areas; Abbott, "Brief Description," 3; and Abbott, "Report on Recreation and Service Areas," n.p.

[586]"Trail System, Pine Spur Park, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PS-2002, 29 January 1937, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-27; and "Negro Area Development, Pine Spur Park, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PS-2050, 4 October 1940, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-A-27.

[587]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 12; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 12; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," January 1941, 4; Abbott, "Memorandum for the Files, 28 June 1940;" and Abbuehl, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," April 1942, 7.

Cabins would better serve their needs, officials stated, though if the need for trailer camps was to arise, they could be accommodated near the cabin area.[588]

Following the war, Weems tried to secure authorization to complete the development. He urged the provision of water and sewerage facilities and the construction of a sandwich shop similar to that under consideration for nearby Smart View Park. He felt the area would ultimately be open to white visitors, as he believed there would not be enough black visitors to justify its operation for their sake alone.[589] Within a few years, the racial segregation policy was abandoned, and the area was never completed.

The land acquisition problems were partially ameleriorated in 1957 when the parkway was able to use Water Rights Acquisition funds to purchase the adjacent Lancaster Farm tract with a donation from the Eastern National Park and Monument Association. The adjacent Nichols tract was optioned in 1958. Since the new lands would permit more extensive development, Weems proposed reactivating the area, moving a gas station and lunch room planned for Smart View to the park, increasing the size of the abandoned picnic area, constructing a campground on a narrow wooded ridge, and possibly providing a lodge. He pointed out that while Pine Spur was the same distance from Roanoke as the Peaks of Otter, no comparable facilities were located on this section of the parkway.[590]

In 1961, Weems again urged the National Park Service to authorize construction of a campground and concession facilities at Pine Spur. He reported that development plans had been completed and the facilities could be built in time to open in 1964. The facilities were not authorized, but a minor maintenance area was constructed at the park in 1962 at a cost of $20,000.[591] Like the rest of the park, this facility has been essentially abandoned as well.

Though the area had never been opened to the public and such developments as had been established had been removed or allowed to languish, the concept of a Pine Spur park

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[588]Fred T. Johnson, Acting Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, "Memorandum for the Acting Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway," 30 October 1940, National Archives, RG 79, National Park Service, Central Classified Files, Blue Ridge Parkway files.

[589]Sam P. Weems, "Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region One," 18 March 1946, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 2.

[590]Sam P. Weems to Chief, Eastern Office, 8 October 1958. BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 16.

[591]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1961, 2; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 3.

continued to be discussed. In February 1965, the Eastern Office of Design and Construction submitted yet another master plan for the area. It called for a gas station and coffee shop with a camp store to be located in one of the buildings, a 120-unit campground with separate loops for trailers and tent campers and a campfire circle at milepost 142.3, reconstruction of the picnic grounds at milepost 144.1 to provide 70 units, and two residences for administrative staff at the submaintenance area. Hiking and nature trails would connect the various facilities and lead to pedestrian overlooks. Water would come from two existing wells, and a sewage disposal field would be constructed for the picnic area and a separate one for the other facilities. Some government land at the bottom and side of the ridge would have to be traded for ridge top lands in private ownership in order to improve the potential for trail and vista development and to provide a buffer around the campground. In 1968, Superintendent James Eden proposed adding a visitor information facility, similar to the one at James River, to the development plans for the area.[592] Again, nothing came of the proposal.

Following the closure of the development, the area was adapted to serve as an Environmental Study Area. The Pine Spur ESA was dedicated in 1972 but only remained in use a short while.[593] Today, the Pine Spur area remains abandoned. The entrance to the park has been blocked, and the forest has largely reclaimed all the developments. The only visible traces of the picnic area are a few stone curbs nestled among the poison ivy, some stonework marking the site of fireplaces, and the rotting remains of two outhouses. The nearby submaintenance yard is only occasionally used for equipment storage and as a drop-off point for transfer of materials.

The Haycocks

On parkway left at milepost 160.5, two rounded knobs of just over 3,000' elevation suggest the appearance of old-time haystacks. In the early 1930s, two mountains were still cloaked in timber, standing in sharp contrast to the surrounding region of agricultural land. In a 1935 memorandum to NPS Associate Director Demaray, Abbott

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[592]John D. Tarter, Landscape Architect, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, National Park Service, "Master Plan, Road to the Future of Blue Ridge Parkway, Development Analysis, Pine Spur Developed Area, PKY-BR-PS-2004-D," February 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 28; "Pine Spur, VA Developed Areas & Utilities Plan, Part of the Master Plan, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-PS-2004-D, sheet 18, 27 April 1964, BLRI ETS files, Master Plans, Drawer 1A; and Eden to Liles, 5 March 1968.

[593]Liles to Director, Southeast Region, 12 January 1973; and Liles, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1973, 6.

recommended acquisition of 2500 acres around the mountains "for their scenic values, and as an area of pathless woods for tramping."[594] The tract was not acquired.

Laurel Swamp

At Rock Castle Gap, the parkway cuts through the head of Laurel Swamp, a marshy thicket of mountain laurel and rhododendron. Abbott wanted to acquire the swamp to preserve it not only as a scenic feature at the side of the parkway, but as a place where parkway visitors could park and take a walk through the wetland. In 1935 NPS planner C. K. Simmers investigated the area and recommended acquiring 150 acres around the swamp to protect it for scenic purposes. Purchase of the wetland was authorized in 1936 as part of the right-of-way acquisition program, but the proposed trails were never constructed.[595]

Smart View

Smart View Park was another one of the original five recreation areas developed along the parkway. It epitomizes the mountain character of the region with a old log cabin, a varied collection of wooden fences, and rustic-style comfort stations and shelter. The park takes its name because it offers "a right smart view" of the Virginia Piedmont to the east. The small park was developed as a day-use area, though at times both an inn and a campground were proposed.

In 1935, Abbott described the park as "one of the more attractive areas adjacent to the Parkway, typical of the escarpment country south of Roanoke; an attractive meadow land with views off the escarpment framed by low hills on either side." He also noted that it was equipped with "an excellent supply of water which will make for excellent picnicking." Abbott reported that the area had what he considered "perhaps the finest stand of flowering white and pink dogwood within Parkway lands." The 1936 parkway master plan called for a service station, inn and picnic grounds.[596]

Land acquisition for the park got underway in 1937 and by the end of the year the original park tract of 556.48 acres had been secured using Resettlement Administration

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[594]Abbott, "Report on Recreation and Service Areas," n.p.; and C. K. Simmers, "Memorandum for Mr. Demaray," 27 February 1935, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 1.

[595]Abbott, "Report on Recreation and Service Areas," n.p.; Simmers, "Memorandum for Mr. Demaray;" and Demaray, "Progress Report," 1.

[596]Abbott, "Brief Description," 3-4; and Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 14.

funds. Development began in 1938 with the construction of the water system. The picnic area, located on the site of an abandoned farmstead, was completed the following year by ERA crews. Noting that the surrounding countryside was a prosperous farming area, Abbott recommended the concession buildings at the park be constructed of whitewashed timber and stone and have the appearance of a small farm group. The gasoline station would be designed to appear as a spring house.[597] These recommendations were not adopted.

Most work on the picnic grounds, including paving of roads and construction of comfort stations, was completed by the summer of 1940. Drawings were prepared that year for a gasoline station and a sandwich shop. A small pond was constructed for scenic effect in 1941, and playing fields were provided for active recreation. In 1956 Superintendent Weems proposed a campground "to complete the development," but this, too, was not authorized.[598]

The park opened in the fall of 1940 and was immediately popular. Development work continued, including construction of an entrance road and parking for the coffee shop and gas station, completion of the water and sewage systems, and the construction of a playing field and the trail system. Construction of a minor utility area from which the park would be maintained was completed in December 1941.[599] The extensive Smart View trail system was largely constructed during World War II by conscientious objectors under the Civilian Public Service program. The trails meander through the adjacent woods, along the escarpment, and into the valley of Rennet Bag Creek.[600]

Under the parkway's policy for racial segregation, blacks were to be allowed to use the area until the Pine Spur development was completed. They were to be provided separate facilities within the comfort stations, and gas and food at the sandwich shop were to be

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[597]Weems to Abbott, 6 January 1938, *op cit.*; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1938, 10; Stanley W. Abbott to Bayliss, 1 November 1938, BLRI Archives, RG 3, Series 16, Box 88, Folder 1; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 120.

[598]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 14; Abbott, "Monthly Report of the Resident Landscape Architect," April 1941, 7; and Weems, "Blue Ridge Parkway Recreation Areas," 2.

[599]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 12-13; and Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," December 1941, 3.

[600]Stanley W. Abbott, "Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service," 9 September 1942, National Archives, RG 79, Central Classified Files, National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway file. The creek takes its name from its location between two projecting ridges. Hunters used the valley as a "bag" or pocket in which to drive game. Over the course of years, it became known as "Running Bag Creek," then "Runnet Bag," and eventually "Rennet Bag." (Stanley W. Abbott to Harold J. Neale, Landscape Engineer, Virginia Department of Highways, 28 June 1941, BLRI Archives.)

available to them. Rangers would designate where blacks would be allowed to picnic on the grounds.[601] If this policy was ever enforced, such restrictions ended soon after World War II when the segregated facilities policy was abandoned.

One of the more popular features at the park is the old W. J. Trail Cabin, a small single-pen log structure on the edge of the escarpment with a splendid view of the valley below. The 1880s cabin had been converted to a barn when the land was acquired for the parkway, and planners allowed it to "melt down" into the landscape. In 1942, walks, seats, fences and an interpretive sign were constructed around the cabin, but no work was done on the structure itself. By 1947, the structure was nearly completely deteriorated, and a decision was reached to reconstruct it. Under the direction of parkway historic architect Charles Grossman, the original logs were used as patterns in order that an exact duplicate of the structure could be erected.[602]

Due to its remote location, the Smart View Park is rarely crowded, but visitors enjoy picnicking on the shady grounds, visiting the Trail cabin, and hiking on the trails. The 2.6-mile Smart View Loop Trail winds around the park, offering fine views off the escarpment into the Virginia Piedmont. Most of the trail passes through old hardwood forests, but it also traverses open meadows. Around the entrance to the park, it passes through the rail fences by means of traditional stiles. These fences are the park's most distinctive feature, and photographing them is a popular pastime.

Lunch service at the park was discontinued in 1962 and the facility was dismantled.[603] The gasoline station has also been removed. The park is otherwise basically unchanged, though a rustic log picnic shelter has been constructed in recent years.

Rocky Knob

The principal recreational area on the southern Virginia section of the parkway, Rocky Knob was one of the five original parks planned and completed on the parkway. Rocky Knob itself rises from the Virginia plateau as a virtually independent mountain, offering splendid views east into the Rock Castle Gorge 2,000' below and west towards prominent Buffalo Mountain. The parkway was routed near the crest to take in the expansive vistas. Much of the land is in pasture, but forests occupy the crest and the deep gorge of Rock

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[601]Abbott, "Memorandum for the Files."

[602]Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," July 1942, 6; and Charles C. Grossman to Resident Landscape Architect, Blue Ridge Parkway, 5 June 1947, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 46, Box 61, Folder 5.

[603]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 2.

Castle Creek. The 1936 master plan for the parkway recommended construction of a lodge, a service station, a lake, a campground and hiking trails through the area. Only some of these facilities were eventually constructed.[604]

The Resettlement Administration began purchasing land for the park in 1937. This had originally been planned as a small unit. In 1935, parkway landscape architect Edward Abbuehl recommended the acquisition of only 500 to 600 acres. But the Resettlement Administration's agent, Sam Weems, at the time unknown to the parkway staff, had other ideas. He convinced the parkway staff that the Rock Castle Gorge and some other "pretty good" tracts should be included in the park, ultimately recommending the park's size be increased to more than 4,000 acres. By January 1938, more than 3,500 acres had been acquired using Resettlement Administration funds. Planning for the facilities was already underway.[605]

Work on this area was proceeding by the mid-1930s but was hampered by labor shortages. By the end of 1937, the picnic area, an Adirondack style log trail shelter near the summit of the knob, and ten miles of trail had been constructed. In 1938 and 1939, ERA crews had nearly completed the original 16-unit campground and the water system and had graded for the maintenance area and two of the buildings when the State of Virginia failed to gain ownership over a key tract. This resulted in a six-month delay, during which time the crews were transferred to the Smart View development. A Civilian Conservation Corps camp was established at Rocky Knob in November 1937, but its work was largely confined to landscape work on the parkway proper.[606]

In 1940, the parkway planted an orchard of Chinese chestnuts at Rocky Knob. The blight-resistant trees were planted at 3,200' elevation in the hopes they might later be planted at higher elevations. The CCC camp at Rocky Knob was to tend the trees as a propagation nursery. As the trees began to bear, the parkway intended to distribute the chestnuts to farmers along the parkway who wished to start chestnut orchards. The exotic species was introduced to make up in part for the lost American chestnut, once the most useful tree throughout much of the Blue Ridge region.[607] Today, the trees have grown to maturity. They occupy the knoll where the present campground was constructed in 1962.

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[604]Abbott, "Brief Description," 4.

[605]Weems to Abbott, 6 January 1938, *op cit*; Abbuehl interview, 18-20; and Weems interview, 5.

[606]Abbott, "Report of the Resident Landscape Architect," 1937, 12; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 13-14; and Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," June 1941, 7.

[607]"The Ghosts of the Forest are Coming to Life?," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* III (June 1940), 1.

In 1941, the campground was completed and work was advanced on the water and sewage disposal systems. CCC and ERA forces concentrated on the construction of the maintenance and utility group in the park boundary. Playing fields and a playground with swings, horseshoe courts and see-saws were provided for children's recreation. The extensive park trail system was largely complete by summer 1941.[608]

In 1940 Abbott reported that studies would be made for providing picnic and camping areas for African Americans. In the meantime, the park watchman would indicate where African Americans would be allowed to picnic. The gas station and food services were to be available to all users. Topography for the "future negro area" was obtained in 1942, but the facilities were never developed.[609]

The parkway was provided with a special CCC appropriation to construct the first of a planned series of "trail lodges" along the parkway, near the Rocky Knob development. The lodge complex, designed by parkway landscape architect Kenneth C. McCarter, would include two large and three small cabins with a combined capacity of 68, a recreational building, and a wash house, along with the necessary water and sewer facilities. Work on the area was rushed toward completion in the summer of 1941, as the parkway thought the facilities might be used to house conscientious objectors assigned to the park.[610]

The lodge complex was intended for use as a "rough it" camp for Boy Scouts and other youth groups. Since facilities for special groups were generally excluded from national park units by official policy, this was considered an experiment. If successful, more such lodges would be constructed along the parkway.[611] In December 1941, Abbott expounded on its purpose and proposed use:

> As we visualize it this unit built with special CCC funds will serve a purpose differing from that of any recreational facility so far developed in the National Park System. . . . Our plans for administering the use of this area propose that it be made available to such groups as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire groups, youth hostels and hiking clubs, upon application

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[608]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 14; Abbott,"Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 13; and Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," July 1941, 7.

[609]Abbott, "Memorandum for the Files," 28 June 1940; and Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," January 1942, 6.

[610]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 13; Abbott, "Monthly Report of the Resident Landscape Architect," July 1941, 7; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," 123.

[611]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 21.

> to the Superintendent of the Parkway in Roanoke. . . . [N]o special service is to be expected; rather that the group is on its own to devise its own comforts--hence "rough-it" camp as we would call it. The Service will provide built-in bunks, toilets, showers, benches, picnic type table, and fireplace. We might provide straw with which to full the ordinary type of bed tick, and we will maintain a pile of uncut dead timber, but the wood necessary for cooking and hot water in the showers must be cut by the camp occupants. . . .
>
> In an immediately opposite field it is planned to develop a joint use campfire circle, rally field, horse shoe courts, archery range, and a swimming hole. A tie-in with the existing trail system of Rocky Knob Park can be readily accomplished where nature hikes should be encouraged and some interpretational signs placed.[612]

Abbott hoped the Rocky Knob cabin group would be the first of a chain of such facilities along the parkway, perhaps spaced hiking distance apart. He suggested that the other developments would be of a smaller scale, stating, "we are sure that the 'chickens' would be smaller in scale than the hen, but if the idea is likely to be evolved in the future we should keep it in mind during the operation of this first unit."[613]

The parkway also planned for a conventional lodge and coffee shop at the park. In the summer of 1942, park crews constructed a sewerage system for the development, which would be located at what is now the Ridge Overlook.[614]

At the outbreak of World War II, the park was essentially complete except for planned concessionaire facilities. A planned picnic area for African Americans was postponed while studies were made to determine its necessity; soon after the cessation of hostilities, the segregation policy was dropped, and this facility was never constructed.[615]

Plans for a gas station were prepared in 1948. Construction soon followed, and the frame structure (now the Rocky Knob information station) was completed in September 1949. The "Rough-It Cabins," having never been occupied for their intended use, were

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[612]Stanley W. Abbott to Regional Director, Region One, 5 December 1941, National Archives, RG 79, Box 44, Folder 601-12, "Recreational Areas."

[613]Abbott to Regional Director, 5 December 1941.

[614]Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," August 1942, 4.

[615]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 13.

remodeled for use as family housekeeping units and were made available to the public through National Park Concessions, Inc. in July 1950. New buildings were added to the maintenance area the following year.[616]

Maintaining the pastoral appearance of the park was a major concern of parkway planners. Sheep were pastured in the meadows at the park for many years. In 1948, Abbuehl reported that there were problems keeping the sheep confined due to the breakdown of numerous fences. Although he urged that the fences be repaired to maintain the "pastoral picture,"[617] the sheep were eventually removed. At present, some cattle are pastured in the area under agricultural leases.

Interpretive panels were installed along the trail between the Saddle Overlook and the Rocky Knob trail shelter in August 1952.[618] The trail interpreted the formation of soils in the forest. The panels have since been removed, and the trail receives only moderate use.

In 1959, Superintendent Weems submitted a new master plan for Rocky Knob calling for construction of a new campground near the maintenance area. He reported that "an unsatisfactory situation" had arisen at the old facility adjacent to the picnic area. Campers were having to pass through the picnic area to reach their sites, while picnickers were overflowing into the camping area. The two uses needed to be separated, and this would warrant establishing a new and greatly expanded camping area. The proposal was approved and the 110-unit campground loop on a knoll to the north was opened in 1962. The old 21-site campground was converted to picnic use, adding another 56 units to the picnic grounds. The campground registration kiosk was the former visitor contact kiosk at milepost 389, which was moved to Rocky Knob in 1968.[619]

A new master plan for the area was prepared in April 1965. It revived the proposal for a 48-unit lodge (with an option to double it in size), and called for obliterating the housekeeping cabins or turning them over to the concessionaire for employee housing

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[616]Crouch, "Supplement to 1948 Annual Report," 2; Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1947, 1; Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," November 1951, 2; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1950, 1; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," September 1949, 3; and Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1950, 3.

[617]Edward H. Abbuehl, "Memorandum for the Superintendent," 25 August 1948, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 30, Box 36, Folder 2.

[618]Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1952, 3.

[619]Sam P. Weems to Chief, Eastern Office, 27 August 1959, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 20; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1961, 4; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 3; and Ashley to Superintendent, 13 May 1968.

and storage. The cabins were described as "beyond repair." The plan also called for the construction of an additional permanent employee residence, quarters for five seasonal personnel and the elimination of inholdings in Rock Castle Gorge through purchase.[620] None of the recommendations was adopted. The cabins were subsequently rehabilitated and remain in use.

In December, Superintendent James M. Eden proposed moving the concession operations from Mabry Mill to Rocky Knob to alleviate congestion at the popular mill. G. B. Hanson, President and General Manager of National Park Concessions, Inc., protested, urging the parkway to expand parking at the mill. He doubted that operations at Rocky Knob would be as profitable.[621] Nothing changed.

In 1978, parkway superintendent Gary Everhardt notified National Park Concessions, Inc. that it was to cease operating the gas station at Rocky Knob. Everhardt explained that commercial service stations were now available both four miles north at Tuggle Gap and eight miles south at Meadows of Dan. These stations not only provided more services and longer hours, but provided them to the motorist at a lower cost. The parkway converted the building to a visitor contact station.[622]

Rocky Knob Park remains popular with visitors. The campground is the only such facility between Roanoke Mountain and Doughton Park and receives considerable use in the summer season. The picnic area, located in a shady grove far below the parkway, is rarely crowded. Most visitors confine their visits to taking in the marvelous views from the numerous overlooks or a visit to the information station.

The park has an extensive trail system. The longest is the 10.8-mile Rock Castle Gorge Trail, designated a National Recreational Trail in 1984.[623] It showcases the varied landscape of Rocky Knob Park, from the 3,572' to the gorge of Rock Castle Creek 1,872' below. Part of the trail between Rock Castle Creek and Grassy Knoll is designated as the Hardwood Cove Nature Trail; along its course, numbered posts correspond to a printed leaflet available at the trailhead and identify 28 native trees and vines. At Grassy Knoll is

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[620]John D. Tarter, Landscape Architect, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, National Park Service, "Master Plan, Road to the Future of Blue Ridge Parkway, Development Analysis, Rocky Knob Development Area, PKY-BR-RK-2010-E," April 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 29.

[621]G. B. Hanson, President and General Manager, National Park Concessions, Inc., to Eden, 28 February 1968, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 33.

[622]Gary Everhardt to Hanson, 23 October 1978, BLRI Archives, RG 3, Series 16, Box 88, Folder 19.

[623]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1983, 8.

a connection with the 1.6-mile Back Ridge Trail, which crosses the parkway and follows Black Ridge to the visitor contact station. A one-mile loop trail circles the picnic area, offering an easy stroll through an old hardwood forest.

Mabry Mill

The most popular attraction along the parkway, as well as the most photographed, is Mabry Mill at milepost 76. The picturesque wooden mill is visited by nearly 3 million people each year. On Sunday afternoons during the peak of the fall color season in October, more than 10,000 people visit the mill.[624] Most wander around the mill grounds, few realizing that the historic landscape has been heavily manipulated for scenic and sentimental effect. Quite a few marvel at the collection of mountain industrial artifacts, not realizing that most are unrelated to the site. Many stop in the adjoining coffee shop for buckwheat pancakes, not knowing the flour was ground at a electric-powered mill far off the parkway. Although many visitors motoring by the site probably believe the picturesque mill dates from the nineteenth century, it is actually an early twentieth century structure.

Edwin Boston Mabry (1869-1936), a native of nearby Patrick County, moved to the Meadows of Dan area in 1899, farming for a while before his mechanical bent led him to construct a mill. To attain the money he would need to establish the operation, he worked for a while as a blacksmith at a coal mine in West Virginia.[625]

Mabry Mill contains a grist mill, a sawmill, and a woodworking shop, all powered by a 14' overshot wheel. The main water source, Laurel Fork Creek, was barely adequate to power the mill, hence the multiple flumes from different sources. Power from the water wheel is transmitted to a small inner face gear of rack and pinion design. The grist mill has a single set of 36" diameter stones, and the sawmill is a small rotary structure. Due to the constricted layout of the mill building, it was difficult to load logs onto the carriage, and long logs could not be used. Mabry designed the woodworking shop mainly for the construction of wagons. His blacksmith shop turned out metal parts. The sawmill is not operated today.[626] Research by parkway seasonal historian Lewis McNeace, Jr. indicates

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[624]Barry M. Buxton, "Historic Resource Study, Mabry Mill," (Asheville, NC: Blue Ridge Parkway, April 1989), 116.

[625]Brenda Casper, "Mabry Mill: Today and Yesterday" (Asheville, NC: Eastern National Park & Monument Association, 1977), 1; and "Area Histories--Mabry Mill," MSS, n.d., BLRI Library, vertical files, Mabry Mill file, 5.

[626]Donald W. Martin, "The Mabry Mill," *Old Mill News* (Journal of the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills) 1 (October 1972), 12.

the grist mill was probably built in 1908, the blacksmith shop in 1910, the sawmill section in 1915, and woodworking shop in 1916. Mabry's land was nearly level, and the stream on the site, Laurel Fork Creek, did not provide sufficient force for the milling operations. Mabry was forced to construct an extensive series of flumes and races to convey water from nearby hollows and branches, all feeding into one main race which led to the overshot wheel. Between 1905 and 1914, he purchased five additional tracts to acquire access to more water. Still, the supply was inadequate during dry weather. To solve this problem, he constructed a log dam across one of the streams, creating a reservoir which stored water from rains and spring thaws. Around 1915, Mabry built a two-story frame house adjacent to the mill, using lumber produced at the mill. Mr. Mabry's wife, Lizzie, often ran the gristmill while he attended to the sawmill or blacksmith and woodworking shops. By about 1930, Mr. Mabry was an invalid and unable to maintain the flume network. To continue operations, he installed an 8 h.p. kerosene engine to drive the two grist mills.[627]

On Mabry's death in 1936, the mill continued to be operated by his widow. At this point, Abbott and Abbuehl were planning the route of the parkway through the area and they wanted to acquire the mill and preserve it as a cultural exhibit. Despite their intent, the state highway department almost razed the mill as it cleared away buildings on the parkway right-of-way. Parkway ranger Mac Dale drove by as the wrecking crew entered the mill. Dale called Weems (then project manager for the recreational parks) and Weems secured an order halting the state from demolishing the mill.[628]

NPS historical technician Thor Borresen visited the mill in 1940, and reported that he was "a little disappointed" in what he found. The mill was not particularly old, certainly not of the same age as the log cabins and other structures the parkway was planning to interpret. However, the structure was well-weathered and appeared much older. Borresen found the three separate roof-lines attractive, and believed its location only 60' from the parkway would make it a popular site. Still, Borresen thought it significant only in that it reflected "a man's ingenuity in creating machinery necessary to sustain life in

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[627]Lewis McNease, Jr., Seasonal Historian, Blue Ridge Parkway, "Ed and Lizzie Mabry--History," MSS, 3 September 1967, 1-2, BLRI Library, vertical files, Mabry Mill file; Casper, "Mabry Mill," 2- 3; and Kenneth C. McCarter, Landscape Architect, Blue Ridge Parkway, "Restoration of Mabry Mill, Section 1-T near Pinnacles of Dan, Virginia, Blue Ridge Parkway," 1942, 1, BLRI Library.

[628]William G. Lord, "Mabry Mill: The History of a Twice Saved Beauty on the Parkway," *Blue Ridge Country*, November/December 1991, 18-19.

those mountains," and in that the use of the same machinery had continued until very recent times.[629]

Borresen was more attached to Mabry's house, which the miller had constructed from lumber he had prepared himself at the mill. Unfortunately, the structure was located in an area adjacent to the mill that the parkway planned to allocate for parking. Borresen urged the parkway staff to reconsider and locate the parking across the parkway from the mill, providing pedestrian access through a planned culvert or drainage structure which would serve as an outlet for the proposed mill pond. Borresen also urged the acquisition of an old log barn at the site.[630]

In 1940, NPS Junior Landscape Architect E. A. Disque prepared a set of measured drawings of the mill for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), a National Park Service public works program. Photographs of the structure were also taken by R. J. Hall and included with the documentation. The drawings and photographs were used to guide the restoration of the mill.[631] Later, parkway landscape architect Kenneth G. McCarter prepared more HABS drawings showing the mill and its machinery.

Despite Borresen's recommendation, the Mabry House was razed in April 1942. The mill was restored that year, a mill pond was excavated, and the flumes were reconstructed. Crews from CCC Camp NP-29 worked under McCarter's supervision, completing the project in September. A. Newton Hylton, a local water wheel maker who had helped Mabry construct his wheels, supervised the reconstruction of the wheel. He was assisted by C. A. Goad, who had worked on much of the original mill construction. In November 1944, the parkway made plans to turn over operation of the mill to National Park Concessions, Inc., allowing the mill to grind and sell corn at the site. The company began operating the mill in June 1953, selling meal in two-pound souvenir sacks. The acting superintendent reported the sales were so successbul, visitor demand exceeded supply. The deteriorated wooden flumes were replaced in 1954 and again in the 1970s and the mid-1980s. The National Park Service has since made other changes at the site. The old log dam at the reservoir was replaced with a cement one, and the mill was fitted

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[629]Thor Borresen, "Report on Mountain Culture and Handicraft, Blue Ridge Parkway," 7 October 1940, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 46, Box 61, Folder 4, 2-3.

[630]Stanley W. Abbott, "Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region One," 10 October 1941, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 46, Box 61, Folder 4.

[631]Kenneth B. Simmons, Acting Regional Landscape Architect, "Memorandum for the Acting Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway," 5 August 1940, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 26, Box 34, Folder 2.

with a clutch which allows the mill to stop grinding without having to shut off the water supply.[632]

The log Matthews Cabin was relocated to the mill area from Carroll County and reconstructed on the site of the Mabry house in 1956 and 1957. It housed a display of Simon Scot's tannery equipment and doubled for a while as a visitor information center. A cane mill or sorghum press, a mint still, a lumber drying rack, and a bark mill from Rocky Knob were installed on the grounds later in 1957. Mabry's blacksmith shop was relocated to a point nearer the mill in order to facilitate interpretation.[633]

A concessionaire coffee and craft sales shop was completed in May 1956, when all public use facilities were removed from the exhibit area. In the early 1960s, apple butter and sorghum making demonstrations at the mill in the fall months became so popular that huge traffic jams resulted, and on one occasion cars were parked along the parkway for three miles in both directions; others had to be waved away.[634]

In an effort to address the problems of parking and overcrowding, a 1965 general development plan for the area proposed relocating the concession operations away from the Mabry Mill complex and establishing a new concession operation at Grassy Knoll in Rocky Knob Park.[635] Garner B. Hanson, the President and General Manager of National Park Concessions, Inc., objected to the proposed change, stating that the restaurant was the only concession it operated along the parkway that paid its own way.[636]

The concessioner urged the parkway to develop additional parking and "traffic flow roads" to meet peak visitor use. The company was operating the mill, and he stressed this

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[632]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1954, 5; Casper, "Mabry Mill," 8; Buxton, "Historic Resource Study, Mabry Mill," 122; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," April 1942, 3; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1942, 3; Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," September 1942, 4; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," November 1944, 2; Weems "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1955, 2; Carlisle Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," June 1953, 2; and McCarter, 1, 8.

[633]Stricklin, "Monthly Narrative Report," January 1957, 2; Stricklin, "Monthly Narrative Report," June 1957, 2; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," April 1957, 2; and Noblitt, "Myth of the Pioneer," 395.

[634]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1956, 3; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," May 1956, 2; and Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," October 1963, 3.

[635]John D. Tarter, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, National Park Service, "Master Plan, Road to the Future of Blue Ridge Parkway, Development Analysis, Mabry Mill Developed Area, PKY-BR-1T-2068-A," April 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 29.

[636]G. B. Hanson to Liles, 2 March 1970, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 39.

was a valuable interpretive feature for the site, one neglected by the National Park Service itself. Hanson argued that even the handicraft items sold at the gift shop were "interpretive" aids as well as desirable items to many parkway visitors. Despite Hanson's objections, parkway superintendent James Eden sought approval from the Southeast Regional Office for a new development plan which would dictate the relocation of the facilities. Due to the strenuous objections of the concessionaire, it was not approved.[637]

Traffic continued to be heavy, especially during the popular fall season. In 1973, two auxiliary parking areas were established east of the parkway behind the interpretive area. Chemical toilets were also added. By the mid-1980s, these had proven inadequate for visitors' needs, and the parkway constructed a new 24'x26' comfort station.[638]

For years, visitors were able to purchase cornmeal ground and bagged at the mill. In 1989, the parkway became concerned over a mouse infestation at the mill and terminated the sale of products produced on-site. The mill and the adjacent concessionaire gift shop still sell cornmeal and buckwheat flour in bags featuring illustrations of Mabry Mill, but the products are ground off-site by a private company.[639]

While Mabry Mill remains the most popular attraction on the parkway, its integrity as an historic site is, at best, questionable. In an essay on the parkway's effect on local people, Kimberley Burnette put it bluntly: "Mabry Mill has been changed to fit the Blue Ridge Parkway's vision of Appalachia." By replacing the historic Mabry House with the Matthews cabin, she claimed the parkway was supporting an old stereotype, that mountain people lived in log cabins well into the 1930s. In the parkway's 1989 historic structures report for Mabry Mill, Barry Buxton stated that while the buildings on the site were historic, they represented "a contemporary creation by the National Park Service . . . a countryside museum which is antithetical to NPS defined strategies for preservation of cultural resources."[640]

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[637]Hanson to Eden, 28 February 1968; and James M. Eden to Regional Director, Southeast Region, National Park Service, 7 March 1968, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 33.

[638]Gary Everhardt, "Memorandum for the Files," 28 July 1986, BLRI RP&PS Files, File D34, Buildings--Comfort Station at Mabry Mill file.

[639]Richard G. Wyatt, Concessions Specialist, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Chief, Division of Resource Planning and Professional Services, Blue Ridge Parkway, 18 May 1989, BLRI Cultural Resources Specialist's files; and Allen Hess, Cultural Resources Specialist, Blue Ridge Parkway, interview by the author, July 1996.

[640]Buxton, "Historic Resource Study, Mabry Mill," 119-20, 123-24.

Pinnacles of Dan

The Pinnacles of Dan are two steep mountain peaks nearly surrounded by the 1,000' deep Dan River gorge, a mile southeast of the parkway in Patrick County, Virginia. The peaks were long a popular destination for recreational pursuits. The larger of the two is a conical spire rising more than 1,125' from the base of the gorge. An Englishman once described this massive spire, taller than the Empire State Building, as "a hell of a hill in a hell of a hole." At the initial parkway planning meeting held at Baltimore in February 1934, Kyle Weeks of Floyd County, Virginia, urged the parkway be routed through the area, which he stated was "possibly the most outstanding scenic spot in the eastern part of the United States." R. E. Cox of the American Society of Civil Engineers suggested the parkway cross the narrow gorge of the Dan River just above the Pinnacles. This would require a 1,000' suspension bridge at an elevation of 750' above the river, making it the highest bridge in the nation. Virginia already had the famous Natural Bridge, he noted, so why not construct the most impressive man-made bridge imaginable as another attraction for the parkway?[641]

When the City of Danville, Virginia proposed a hydroelectric development in the gorge in 1934, concerned citizens asked the Secretary of the Interior to consider transferring the area to the parkway as a recreational park. That December, Abbott proposed acquiring the area, as no other region along the parkway featured such "outstanding scenic character." He proposed a major park entailing construction of a lodge, tourist cabins, a campground, bridle trails with stables, a picnic area and a gas station. Secretary Ickes authorized NPS Associate Director Demaray to take up the matter with Senator Carter Glass and Congressman Burch of Virginia and the Public Works Administration engineer assigned to the undertaking, but he was unable to forestall the hydroelectric project. A subsequent investigation revealed that the two planned dams, the construction road and the mile-long aqueduct/tunnel would cause extensive scarring and greatly reduce the recreational value of the area. Some doubts were expressed as to whether or not there would be sufficient water for hydro-electric generation, but the power interests prevailed and the Talbott and Townes dams and associated facilities were constructed.[642]

Construction of the power plant got underway in the spring of 1936. The parkway planning staff were assigned to work with the Public Works Administration Power Division in its effort to preserve as much of the landscape around the works as was possible for scenic interest. In August, NPS Acting Director Demaray informed Ickes

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[641]Public Works Administration, "Parkway and Stabilization Project," 17-21, 26

[642]Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 18; Abbott, "Report on Recreation and Service Areas," n.p; and Thomas C. Vint, "Memorandum to Mr. Abbott," 31 December 1934, in "Blue Ridge Parkway, Reports of the Chief Landscape Architect," BLRI Library.

that because of the power plant construction, the area had been eliminated from the recreational development program. Ickes still approved an appropriation of $92,000 for the preservation of scenic features surrounding the plant in November, and parkway planners continued to hope the area would be made available to the public. Development of the site by the National Park Service was never undertaken, however.[643]

Groundhog Mountain

The Groundhog Mountain development is a small day-use area at milepost 189. It consists of a small picnic area with a log lookout tower now used as an observation tower and is located on the crest of the wind-swept hill. An interesting collection of wooden fences of several different types (snake, post-and-rail, buck and picket) is a memorable feature.

Civilian Public Service enrollees from Camp NP-39 began erecting the rail fences at the picnic area in April 1939. The saddle-notched log fire lookout at the site was constructed by the Virginia State Forest Service in summer 1942 under the supervision of parkway landscape architect Kenneth McCarter. It now serves as an observation tower and is popular with parkway visitors. More fences were later relocated to or put up at the site as a display. An historic photograph in the parkway archives shows an extensive series of chestnut "snake" fences around the site; today, much of this original fencing has been replaced by buck fence, picket fence, and post-and-rail fence, allowing visitors to see several different types interpreted in one location.[644]

Puckett Cabin

An interpretive display outside a small single-pen log cabin at milepost 189.9 tells the poignant story of Mrs. Orleana (variously spelled Orelena or Arlene) Hawks Puckett, who died in 1939 at the age of 102. According to residents of the neighborhood, "Aunt Orleana" had been a midwife for the surrounding area and had assisted in the delivery of more than 1,000 children, traveling over rough country roads to be in attendance until she was far advanced in years. Mrs. Puckett had repeatedly given birth herself to 24 children,

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[643]Demaray, "Progress Report," 1; and Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1937, 16. As it turned out, the water supply proved inadequate for generation of sufficient power to meet Danville's needs. (Abbuehl, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 18).

[644]Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," April 1939, 3; Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," August 1942, 5; and Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," September 1942, 5.

none of which survived infancy.[645] Puckett's cabin was acquired for the parkway in 1938. Inspecting the small structure in 1940, National Park Service historical technician Thor Borresen reported that it was in "an excellent location" just to the side of the parkway and should be preserved and interpreted for parkway visitors. The cabin was in good condition, with only one bottom log needing replacement. The stone chimney and fireplace would need considerable work if they were to be used.[646]

Borresen and NPS regional supervisor of historic sites Roy Edgar Appleman conducted research on the cabin, determining it to have been constructed around 1865 by Orleana's husband, John Puckett. While they agreed the structure was a good representative of the one-room log cabin once common to the mountains, they suggested the human story of Mrs. Puckett was far more interesting.[647] Today, the cabin is presented as the midwife's home, though more recent research indicates she probably did not live in the cabin, but in a larger house that stood on the site of the present interpretive garden. The existing cabin was moved to the site by Mrs. Puckett's husband John for her sister-in-law, Aunt Betty Puckett.[648]

Grading around the site and placement of crushed stone and curbing in the parking area were completed in July 1942, and a wooden "gunboard" interpretive sign was installed in August.[649] Rail fences bordering the site and an interpretive garden where buckwheat and broom corn are grown add to the rustic charm of the structure. The cabin's location just to the side of the road makes it a popular feature.

Fisher Peak

Towering beside the parkway near Galax, Virginia, 3,589' Fisher Peak was long considered for a parkway recreational area. The peak was a traditional destination for outings by area citizens, until the City of Galax, concerned about its municipal watershed, closed off access to the area. For more than sixty years, parkway planners and area

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[645]Borresen, "Report on Mountain Culture and Handicraft," 3; Appleman and Borresen, "Preservation of Mountain Culture," 3; and Helen Barranger, "Along the Parkway: Aunt Orleana Puckett Cabin Exhibit Near Fancy Gap, Va.," *Blue Ridge Country*, January/February 1952, 12.

[646]Borresen, "Report on Mountain Culture and Handicraft," 3; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," n.p.

[647]Borresen, "Report on Mountain Culture and Handicraft," 3; and Appleman and Borresen, "Preservation of Mountain Culture," 3.

[648]Firth, "Historic Resource Study," n.p.

[649]Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," July 1942, 6; and Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," August 1942, 4.

citizens considered plans to turn the steeply pitched mountain and its adjacent slopes into a recreational park, but land acquisition problems always held up the plans. Today, the mountain tract, the highest point on the Virginia-North Carolina border, is the focus of planning for a traditional music center.[650]

Abbott called Fisher Peak "the most outstanding mountain in the Galax region." He observed that it featured an excellent stand of timber and remained "almost entirely a wilderness area." The Appalachian Trail crossed over the top of the mountain, though it has since been relocated forty miles to the east through the Jefferson National Forest. In 1935, Abbott recommended acquiring the area and protecting it as a wilderness area, limiting development to a five-mile spur road to the base of the peak and a wilderness campsite at some pine springs near the summit. A year later he had a change of heart. In the 1936 master plan for the parkway, Abbott proposed developed facilities including an inn, a service station, a lake in one of the coves, a campground, a picnic area, and a network of hiking trails. Two years later, he suggested that separate facilities for blacks and whites should be constructed at the park. In 1939, he reported on plans to develop the north end of the area for African Americans and to devote the remote southern section to developments for whites; both areas would include bathing beaches along the lake.[651]

Some of the land in the proposed recreational area was purchased through efforts of the citizens of nearby Galax, Virginia. In July 1941 the townspeople made arrangements to purchase the 850-acre Caldwell tract, the key parcel in the development plans. In October, a Galax citizen offered another 400 acres. The National Park Service did not consider this to be an adequate amount of land, however, and in April 1943 the parkway began studying other areas in the region for development as a potential recreation area.[652]

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[650]Woodrow Golding, "Opinions Expressed About Fisher's Peak," *The Gazette* (Galax, VA), 20 February 1989; and "Fisher Peak: Study of Alternatives," National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1988, 4, BLRI, RP&PS files.

[651]Stanley W. Abbott to Vint, 17 May 1935, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 3; Abbott, "Brief Description," 5; Abbott, "Progress Report, Development of Recreational Areas" 4; Stanley W. Abbott, "Memorandum for Mr. Vint," 7 April 1939, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 15; and Edward H. Abbuehl, "Report on New Areas Proposed for Recreation Parks Adjacent to Blue Ridge Parkway," 1936, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 5. Commenting on the 1940 Parkway Master Plan, which described the segregated facilities, NPS Acting Chief of Planning W. G. Carnes warned that plans to place the African-American picnicking and bathing facilities upstream from the white facilities might result in the "self imposed exclusion of many white users;" he suggested that the locations for the two facilities might be switched. (W. G. Carnes, "Memorandum for the Acting Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway," 10 June 1940, National Archives, RG 79, National Park Service, Central Classified Files, Blue Ridge Parkway files.)

[652]Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1941, 3; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," October 1941, 3; and Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," April 1943, 2.

Planning for the area as a recreational park continued through at least the 1960s. A 1962 plan for the development showed a 34.95-acre "Fisher Lake" would be created by damming a branch of Chestnut Creek. A campground and a picnic area would be located alongside the lake, and hiking trails would extend to the summit, to Rich Mountain, and along Flint Ridge. The recreational facilities were never established. By the 1980s planners believed the development of commercial campgrounds and other visitor services on nearby private lands had eliminated the need for the such facilities at Fishers Peak.[653]

No further planning for the Fisher Peak area was done until 1986, when the Southwestern Virginia Economic Development Commission (SVEDC) suggested that the Park Service should revise plans for the area in order to stimulate tourist spending in the region. At the same time, parkway managers were working with the National Council for the Traditional Arts to establish a folk music center to preserve and interpret the native music of the southern Appalachians. The National Park Service had considered constructing this area at Rocky Knob, where the needed land was already in federal ownership, but the SVEDC began promoting the Fisher Peak area for the facility. The Commission convinced Virginia Sixth District Congressman Frederick C. Boucher to support the project. In 1987 he was able to secure $25,000 for the Park Service to conduct a feasibility study for an Appalachian folk music center at Fisher Peak. A companion study on economic benefits of the center was prepared by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.[654]

Both studies asserted that the 1,016 acres owned by the City of Galax would have to be made available, for the music center proposal to be feasible. The city council agreed, but insisted that the development should not adversely affect the Chestnut Creek watershed, and that the folk music center would complement, rather than compete with, the popular Old Fiddler's Convention held annually in the town.[655]

Scoping meetings were held in the area in 1988 to give interested residents, state and local officials, and members of the music community an opportunity to comment. Participants generally agreed that the National Park Service should take care to interpret the history of traditional Blue Ridge music and provide opportunities for visitors to hear it through demonstrations and small presentations. The experience could be enhanced

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[653]"Fisher Peak Developed Areas Plan, Part of the Master Plan, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-FP-2002-E, sheet 20, 4 April 1962, BLRI ETS files, Master Plans, Drawer 1A; and "Fisher Peak: Study of Alternatives," 3.

[654]"Fisher Peak: Study of Alternatives," 3; and Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1987, 17.

[655]"Fisher Peak: Study of Alternatives," 3.

through the demonstration of the construction of musical instruments, the sale of books and recordings, and exhibits. Many of those present stressed the need to explain that Appalachian music was diverse, that it played an important role in mountain culture, and that it had made invaluable contributions to mainstream American music. A lesser topic of concern was environmental protection; some speakers spoke in favor of protecting the East Fork of Chestnut Creek, while others wanted expanded recreational development.[656]

Later that year, the National Park Service's Denver Service Center issued a "Study of Alternatives" developments at Fisher Peak, listing four separate options. Alternative A primarily focused on scenic protection, aimed at protecting the pastoral views of the approximately 200 acres of the Fisher Peak basin visible from the parkway. Tools used to protect the scenic views could include cooperative agreements with the City of Galax, local land use zoning, or acquisition of scenic easements. Hiking trails could be developed by the state or county; National Park Service involvement would be limited to providing trailhead parking for several cars and a comfort station within the parkway right-of-way. This alternative represented the lowest cost, lowest impact plan for the area.[657]

Alternative B called for the establishment of a picnic area and an "informal music grounds" where visitors could interact with musicians. Musical activities, including impromptu presentations and occasional dance demonstrations would be encouraged. The picnic and performance areas would be dispersed in order to accommodate several simultaneous events. The developed site would encompass about 30 acres under federal ownership, and would include parking for 100 cars and overflow parking for 100 more. Scenic, watershed and recreational protection or planning for the remainder of the area would be accomplished through cooperative agreements with state and local governments, or through donation of easements to the federal government. Hiking trails could be extended through a tract as large as 1,600 acres.[658]

The third alternative coupled a Blue Ridge Music Interpretive Center with a "Fisher Peak Natural Area." Under this plan, the entire study area would become a unit of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The picnic area proposed in the previous alternative would be enlarged to include a visitor center which would provide general information on the southern Virginia section of the parkway and provide interpretation of mountain music and culture. Scheduled music and dance programs would be held in a 300-seat amphitheater or 100-seat audiovisual room, as well as in the picnic area. Hiking trails, some of which might

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[656] "Fisher Peak: Study of Alternatives," 9.

[657] "Fisher Peak: Study of Alternatives," 6.

[658] "Fisher Peak: Study of Alternatives," 8.

be self-guiding interpretive trails, would be constructed throughout the entire area. The National Park Service would have to acquire at least 50 acres in fee simple, and easements or other protective interests for about 2,300 acres. The City of Galax would have to donate its watershed under this arrangement.[659]

Alternative D, the most extensive proposal, called for the establishment of a "Blue Ridge Music Performance Center and Fisher Peak Recreational Area." This would entail all the facilities under alternative C, as well as a performance hall and large amphitheater. The facility might include studio space for periodic radio broadcasting and archives and collections space for the preservation and study of music resources. In addition to the hiking trails described in the previous alternatives, a shuttle bus would take visitors to the summit of Fisher Peak, where an observation tower would provide views of the Piedmont and the Blue Ridge.[660]

In 1992, an exhibit plan for the area was prepared by the Park Service's Harpers Ferry Center. It called fourteen "wayside" exhibits to be located along an interpretive trail, along with a pullout on the entrance road where Fisher Peak itself would be interpreted.[661] As of 1998, planning for the facilities at Fisher Peak was nearing completion, but no construction had begun.

Cumberland Knob

Cumberland Knob, the first of the parkway recreational areas to be completed, is a small park located on its namesake mount just south of the Virginia line. This day-use park features a picnic area, a trail system, and a visitor contact station located in a former sandwich shop, the oldest concessionaire structure on the parkway. The park has always been one of the most popular areas on the parkway, and on Sunday afternoons in the summer season, the picnic grounds are often filled to capacity.

Abbott hailed Cumberland Knob as "a fine vantage point overlooking the Piedmont country of North Carolina with an outstanding view of Fisher Peak framing the left." In 1934, he suggesting routing the parkway to its west in order to keep down construction costs. Access would be provided by building a one-way loop road around the knob and establishing a minor developed area featuring a tea room, a gas station, overlooks and a

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[659]"Fisher Peak: Study of Alternatives," 10.

[660]"Fisher Peak: Study of Alternatives," 12.

[661]Teresa Vazquez de Vado, Wayside Exhibit Planner, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, "Blue Ridge Parkway Fisher Peak Music Center: Wayside Exhibit Proposal," June 1992, 1-4, BLRI RP&PS Files, File D6215.

picnic area. In the 1936 master plan, the tea room was dropped and a small inn was added to the proposal. Another plan for the area called for damming a small stream in the park to create a lake for swimming. Work got underway in April 1936, and by mid-July, the development was well underway. Two miles of trail had been established, five miles of stream had been improved, fire hazard reduction was in progress, and land had been limed and seeded. A total of 106 men were working on the park; of these, 48 were local land utilization clients, 43 were from local relief rolls, 5 were local owner operators or trucks, and 9 were supervisory staff.[662]

The development of the small park was largely complete by the end of 1937. By this point, the picnic area, three parking areas and overlooks, water system, 4.1 miles of trail and a stone and log trail shelter had been completed. Only the central sandwich shop and picnic shelter, the central building of the park, remained incomplete. A minor maintenance area and some additional trails were constructed in 1938-39. The park immediately became a popular attraction. Visitation in 1937, before the facilities were even complete, totaled 600 per month.[663] Within the next few years, the park became the most heavily visited area on the parkway.

Construction of the concession building in the picnic grounds began in 1940 and was completed the following year. The structure, built of stone and logs in an adaptation of traditional Appalachian style construction, consisted of a combined sandwich shop, picnic shelter, and comfort station. The parkway's oldest concessionaire, National Park Concessions, Inc., began operating it in May 1942.[664]

Under the parkway's segregated-use policy then in effect, black visitors were allowed to use the park, but they were provided with separate facilities. These consisted of five-unit picnic area located below the parking area, and separate stalls in the comfort station.[665] The park facilities were integrated after World War II when the exclusionary policy was dropped.

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[662]Abbott, "Report on Recreation and Service Areas," n.p.; Abbott, "Brief Description," 5; and O. G. Taylor, Deputy Chief Engineer, NPS, "Memorandum for the Assistant Director, Branch of Planning and State Cooperation," 23 July 1936, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 5, 1-2, 4.

[663]Abbott, "Report of the Resident Landscape Architect," 1937, 12; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 14; and Weems to Abbott, 6 January 1938.

[664]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 14; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 13; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 13; and Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1943, 12.

[665]Abbott, "Memorandum for the Files," 28 June 1940.

Cumberland Knob proved so popular that within a decade, pressures arose to expand the facilities. On occasions, there were requests to accommodate groups of more than 1,000 people for picnics and other events. By the 1940s, it became necessary to close the gates each weekend to prevent overcrowding in the area.[666] By the 1950s, the overcrowding at the park was significantly reduced, though Sunday afternoons remained popular with church and family groups. Because of declining sales, National Park Concessions, Inc. was allowed to discontinue food service at the end of the 1962 season. The facility was converted to a maintenance storage area and picnic shelter; later it was renovated to serve as a visitor contact station.[667]

In September 1945, Superintendent Weems complained that "disorderly behavior" had become a major problem in the park and along the section of parkway in the vicinity. The trouble-makers were not through travelers, but rather residents from the surrounding area. To deal with the problem, Weems planned to ask for the appointment of a warden to serve at each of the developed areas. In the meantime, rangers cited all those who were apprehended at the park in violation of rules and regulations, bringing them before the U.S. Commissioner. Weems hoped word of the fines would help discourage further incidents.[668]

Exhibit panels at the entrance to the picnic area inform visitors that construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway began near this point in 1935 and that Cumberland Knob Park is the oldest of the parkway recreational areas. This park remains a popular attraction. The heaviest-used facilities are the picnic area and the visitor contact station, but the trail system is also appreciated. Two hiking trails emanate from the contact station. The half-mile Cumberland Knob Trail rises through the picnic area to the 2,885' summit where the historic chestnut timber and stone trail shelter is located. The strenuous Gully Creek Trail is a two-mile loop which drops to follow a mountain stream along which are located several small cascades. At nearby Fox Hunters Paradise parking area, a paved trail leads approximately 100' to a stone-walled pedestrian overlook; old maps show this trail once extended further out along High Piney Spur, where fox hunters would gather around bonfires at night, listening to their hounds engaged in the chase far below.

Bull Head Mountain

Between Cumberland Knob and Doughton Park, the parkway crosses a chain of hills including Green Mountain, the head of the Devils Garden, and Air Bellows Gap. The

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[666]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1946, 5.

[667]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 2.

[668]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," September 1945, 3-4.

high ridge country with its splendid views down steep valleys offers some of the finest scenery on the section. In 1935 Stanley Abbott recommended acquiring all of the mountains and lead ridges in this area, including the whole of Bull Head Mountain, not for development, but to protect it for its scenic values.[669] The land was not acquired. Despite the ruggedness of the terrain, the area is beginning to show the effects of timber harvesting and rural development.

Doughton Park

The pastoral landscape of Doughton Park is one of the most memorable features on the Blue Ridge Parkway. This high mountain meadow park features broad open fields punctuated by forested groves, terminating in a 1,000' cliff that gave the area its original name, The Bluffs. Elevations range from about 500' at the outlet of Basin Creek to more than 4,000' near Bluffs Lodge. Most of the park is forested, but it is the wide open grassy meadows which most visitors remember. The parkway's route through the area is one of the most dramatic sections, passing by marvelous views at Air Bellows Gap and Alligator Back, sweeping around a sharp curve at the vertiginous Ice Cliffs, then traversing across the wide open meadowland. Cultural resources include the restored Brinegar Cabin, the remote Caudill Cabin in Basin Cove, an old trail shelter on the summit of Bluff Mountain, and especially memorable, miles of post-and-rail chestnut fences bordering the roads.

In 1934, Abbott proposed acquiring 4,000 acres in the area for a major parkway development that would include a lodge, a lake in Basin Cove, a gasoline station, a campground, picnic areas, bridle trails with stables, and a golf course. He also suggested the establishment of a "rhododendron show-place," noting that these native Carolina evergreens, normally forest plants, had established themselves in some of the meadows where the produced "a remarkable bloom."[670]

Land acquisition for the new park, one of the five original parkway recreational areas, was carried out by the Resettlement Administration. In 1937, some 5,410.3 acres was acquired through condemnation proceedings. Doughton Park was the largest area acquired under this public works program, and remains the largest recreational area on the North Carolina section of the parkway.[671]

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[669]Abbott to Vint, 17 May 1935.

[670]Abbott, "Report on Recreation and Service Areas," n.p.

[671]Weems to Abbott, 6 January 1938.

In 1937, Abbott enhanced the original proposal with a coffee shop, a cabin group consisting of 30 units, a wash house and laundry, a gift shop and a stable. The total cost of the buildings alone would come to $127,000. Two years later, Assistant Superintendent Weems proposed "lake and beach developments" and a swimming pool.[672] Development work in the area was seriously delayed by the inaccessibility of the remote park. Once the parkway was completed into the area in the summer of 1937, rapid progress was made. A crew of 200 Works Progress Administration laborers constructed two picnic grounds, parking areas, the road to the proposed lodge, and several miles of hiking and horse trails.[673]

The work continued in 1938-39 with the construction of a concrete water supply dam, a pipe line distribution system and 80,000 gallon tank, road systems in the picnic grounds and two camping areas for trailers and tent campers, fencing of pastures and the water shed, and grading for a maintenance area. In September 1937, Civilian Conservation Corps Camp NP-21 was moved into the area, though its work focused on landscape work along the parkway. Land acquisition continued with the purchase of three small tracts adjacent to the picnic grounds for a sewage dispersal field. The "meadows" picnic area opened in the summer of 1939, though the water system was not yet complete. Drinking water was finally available in the fall of 1940.[674]

The design of a comfort station for the "meadows" picnic area was a difficult task. The vegetation was only four to six feet high, and any facility would be conspicuous. Parkway architect Charles Grossman came up with a novel solution. As Abbuehl later recalled:

> [I]t was decided to take the bull by the horns, and instead of trying to hide it, let it be seen and it was accordingly given a location in the wide open meadow just above the picnic area. Charley came up with the salt box design, the sloping split shingle roof matching the sloping hill side of the meadow and a front porch was placed on the lower side overlooking the rhododendron thicket that hid the picnic area. It was no longer a little

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[672]Abbott, "Brief Description," 5-6; Abbott, "Proposed Buildings . . . North Carolina," 2; and Sam P. Weems, "Memorandum for Inspector Nostrand," 4 December 1939, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 21.

[673]Abbott, "Report of the Resident Landscape Architect," 1937, 12; and Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 13.

[674]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1939, 14; *Blue Ridge Parkway News* II (August 1939), 2; and "Water, Water, But It's Drinking Water at Smart View and Bluffs Park," *Blue Ridge Parkway News* III (September 1940), 2.

> outhouse that had to be screened but rather a typical mountain building with its weathered gray siding and roof that just seems to blend into the landscape and belong there![675]

As with the other early recreational parks, facilities were originally segregated. Blacks and whites could both use the "woods" picnic area behind the present coffee shop, but only whites were allowed to use the picnic area in the meadows. An "incident" was reported in July 1941 when a group of African Americans from Winston-Salem insisted on using the white picnic area, though parkway records offer no details.[676]

Additional work at the park was carried out by ERA, CCC, and CPS forces in 1941 after the parkway was surfaced through the area. Comfort stations were installed, more fences were erected, and the parkway maintenance area was constructed. The crews also completed most work on the separate trailer and tent campgrounds, as well as stables for the rangers' horses. In February, the National Park Service gave approval for stocking the park with whitetail deer. In March, Wilkes County dropped the Grassy Gap Road from the state system giving the parkway full control over this six-mile road within the park boundary.[677]

The old Martin and Caroline Joines Brinegar cabin at the north end of the park was restored for interpretive purposes. This two-room weatherboarded log cabin was constructed about 1886, and was occupied by Mrs. Brinegar when the park land was acquired. Brinegar was offered a life tenure to allow her to continue living in the cabin, but she was uncomfortable with the construction activity and retreated down the mountain to live out her life with relatives. The restoration project began in 1941 with the preparation of measured drawings for the Historic American Buildings Survey. The actual restoration the structure was carried out by Works Progress Administration forces under the supervision of parkway landscape architect Kenneth McCarter. Crews began work on the parking area at the site in December. A notable feature are the stone walls bordering it; unlike the heavy parapet walls built along the parkway, they use small flat stones reflecting the construction of the cabin's chimneys. A granary and a springhouse,

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[675]Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 6-7.

[676]Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1941, 4; and Abbott, "Memorandum for the Files," 2.

[677]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 13; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1941, 4, 6; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," March 1941, 5; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," November 1941, 5; Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," November 1941, 4; and Abbuehl, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," September 1941, 5.

both frame structures, are original dependencies; the Brinegar's barn was removed to make way for the parkway drive.[678]

The grounds around the cabin were treated as an interpretive landscape, not as an historic restoration. A flax crop was grown (Brinegar had one to provide linen for her loom), there was a small vegetable garden, and the grounds were fenced for grazing around the cabin. An old apple orchard was not maintained. The cattle were eventually withdrawn as the fences were difficult to maintain. Today, the area around the cabin is carefully mown, giving the site a "parklike atmosphere" that is attractive but historically inaccurate.[679]

The Master Plan for Bluffs Park called for additional developments in the Basin Creek area below the high mountain meadows. Abbott reported in 1940 that the parkway staff did not consider the work to be a pressing concern, and the lowland facilities were not constructed.[680]

In 1948, Bluffs District Ranger Anthony E. Stark conducted a study regarding facilities for the use of horseback parties at the park. In the early days of planning, the park staff had expected considerable use by equestrians, but this activity proved to be a minor attraction. Still, Stark thought such use should be encouraged, and an overnight camp site was provided for the use of the parties. Rangers in the park were keeping three trails cleared for the use of horses, and equestrians could also use the old Grassy Gap Road. In conclusion, he recommended that use by horseback parties be closely monitored before more developments were provided for them. Use of most of the park trails by horses ended in the 1970s; today, they are allowed only on the Grassy Gap Fire Road.[681]

One of the most striking features of the park to most visitors is the long series of post-and-rail fences. Most of these were installed by the WPA in 1941 and 1942. Over the years, the fences proved increasingly expensive to maintain; about 30,000' of rail fence

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[678]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 13; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," December 1941, 3; Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," October 1941, 5; Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 1; Abbuehl, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," May 1942, 8; and Eric C. Swanson, HABS draftsman, "Historic Structure Report: Architectural Data Section for the Brinegar Cabin, Milepost 238.5, Blue Ridge Parkway, Wilkes County, North Carolina," revised edition, July 1988, BLRI RP&PS Division, Cultural Resources Specialist's files.

[679]Robinson, "Managing Change," 51-52.

[680]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1940, 15.

[681]Anthony E. Stark, "Memorandum for the Superintendent," 28 August 1948, BLRI Archives, RG 7, Series 41, Box 57, Folder 26; and Robinson, "Managing Change," 103.

was rehabilitated or replaced in 1985 at a cost of $277,000.[682] Today, many are in poor condition.

Another memorable feature is the remote Caudill Cabin, located in Basin Cove 2,500' below the Wildcat Rocks Overlook. Martin Caudill built the cabin in 1890 and raised a large family there. It was abandoned about 1918, two years after a catastrophic landslide devastated much of Basin Cove. The cabin was acquired by the National Park Service in 1938. It is surrounded on three sides by the steep mountains enclosing the cove. Abbott stated that "It is doubtful if a similar example of a pioneer cabin exists which so dramatically illustrates the extreme isolation of the mountain folk." He also observed with irony that, with the construction of the overlook, it became visible to thousands of people. He proposed a trail from the overlook down the steep hillside, but this was never built. Restoration work on the structure was completed in 1947.[683] The only access to the isolated habitation is from the Basin Creek Trail off the Grassy Gap Fire Road, a long walk for any visitor.

Concession facilities were notably lacking in Doughton Park until the postwar years. It was not until 1948 that construction began on a gasoline station and coffee shop. National Park Concessions, Inc., which would operate the facilities, advised the parkway in the planning process. Doughton Park would also feature the first of three inns to be built on the parkway, replacing the cabin group originally contemplated. The 1940s was a transitional period, when tourist accommodations began shifting from cabins and motor courts to motels. The National Park Service Washington office drew up preliminary plans for the lodge, combining several cabins together into a complex that looked, according to Abbuehl, "like a two story army barracks." Abbott was shocked by the drawings, and asked permission for the Roanoke office to refine the plans. North Carolina architect Paul Hayes and parkway architect Charles Grossman drew up new plans for the lodge in 1941. They separated the structure shown in the Washington proposal with a patio and bent the two sections in the middle to conform to the contours. The lower floor on the upper level was eliminated to help the structure fit in with the natural slope.[684]

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[682]Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," December 1941, 3; and Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1985, 16.

[683]Stanley W. Abbott, "Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region One," 10 October 1946, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 46, Box 61, Folder 5; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," n.p.

[684]Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1948, 1; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," April 1948, 3; and Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 5.

The gas station, also designed by Charles Grossman, was completed in May 1949 and opened on the 28th, just in time for the summer season. The first unit of Bluffs Lodge opened on 1 September. This provided the first overnight lodging for visitors, other than campgrounds, on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Parkway superintendent Weems predicted the opening of the lodge would make the park more popular with visitors and lead to increased use. Two employee residences at the maintenance area were completed that summer.[685]

In August 1950, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission notified the parkway that it was considering the establishment of a wildlife refuge area in the vicinity of Doughton Park. Frank Barick of the commission told Superintendent Weems the commission hoped to stock wildlife at Doughton Park as part of the project. Weems and Barick met in December to work out a memorandum of agreement concerning cooperation in the endeavor, and the state was given permission to stock 31 deer at Doughton Park. The deer were shipped by truck from Wisconsin. After a slow start, the herd grew to considerable size, and today deer are commonly seen throughout the park.[686]

New shops and a fire equipment building were completed in the maintenance area in 1951, when the campground roads were rerouted to provide direct access to the sites. The Fodderstack Trail was adapted as a self-guiding nature trail in May 1953; in contrast to most others on the parkway, which utilized fixed interpretive signs, this trail utilized mimeographed guides to explain its features.[687]

In the early 1950s, Bluffs Park was renamed "Doughton Park" in honor of retired Congressman and long-time parkway supporter Robert L. Doughton, a native of the region whose family once owned much of the land taken for the area. On 10 October 1953, a bronze memorial mounted on a large boulder set between stone masonry walls, with benches at the Wildcat Rocks parking area above, was unveiled by NPS Director Conrad Wirth. Congressman Doughton was too ill to leave his car, but afterwards wrote to express his thanks.[688]

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[685]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1950, 1; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," May 1949, 3; Crouch, "Supplement to 1948 Annual Report," 5; and Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 5.

[686]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1950, 1; and Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," December 1950, 1, 3.

[687]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1951, 2; and Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," May 1953, 2.

[688]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," October 1953, 1; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1954, 1.

A one-year special use permit was awarded in 1957 to the Chatham Manufacturing Company of Elkin, North Carolina to provide weaving demonstrations at the Brinegar Cabin. The demonstrations were intended to replicate the work done by Carolina Brinegar and other Southern Highland women at the beginning of the century. The company was allowed to sell textile crafts approved in advance by parkway officials; these sales were intended to defray the cost of the operations. At the end of the year, the special use permit was changed to a five-year concessions contract. Chatham installed a 150 year-old four poster loom at the cabin, supposedly similar to that used by Caroline Brinegar. Three costumed "hostesses" showed visitors through the cabin and produced handwoven rugs for sale. These were so popular that orders far exceeded the output of the loom. In 1962, craft items such as handmade dolls, pottery, honeysuckle and split-wood baskets, and wooden bowls were added. These items were produced off-site by craft artists from Valhalla and for the Penland School.

The "ridge road" in the meadow picnic area was extended in 1957 to a point near the edge of the bluffs, and more picnic sites were installed along the route. Superintendent Weems thought that the enlarged area would better enable the park to deal with crowding, a problem which was becoming particularly problematic on weekends. Maintenance crews constructed a campfire circle on a knoll in the tent campground in 1961.[689]

At a meeting in Washington in July 1958, parkway and National Park Service officials agreed to relocate the coffee shop to the lodge group and convert the old dining facility into a visitor center. The gas station would also be relocated to reduce traffic congestion. NPS Director Wirth asked the parkway to investigate the possibility of a second entrance to the lodge area from the parkway, but the locations proved inferior to the existing entrance road. Parkway resident landscape architect Abbuehl inspected the coffee shop and decided it could be converted to a visitor center, but recommended construction of a new facility across the parkway at the crest of the meadows northeast of the gas station and coffee shop. Abbuehl thought the cost of converting the coffee shop would be nearly as high as the cost of a new building and that the results would be less satisfactory. He felt strongly that a roadside lunch room should be maintained at the coffee shop location, as locating all dining facilities at the lodge site would encourage congestion. He conceded that the area around the gas station and coffee shop was overcrowded, but maintained that closing the adjacent picnic area, providing an additional parking area east of the structures, and relocating full-service dining to the lodge area would supply

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[689]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1957, 4; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1961, 4.

adequate traffic arrangements. The gas station was to be relocated about 400' to the southwest.[690]

Abbuehl reported that the old "woods" picnic area behind the coffee shop was slated for abandonment. He thought it would be a good place for an amphitheater or campfire circle, but Director Wirth was opposed to the location. Despite these plans, the picnic area remained open for another decade or so.[691] Today, the area is being reclaimed by the forest.

A 1960 plan for Doughton Park called for expanding the lodge by fifty units, constructing a dining room with a 150-seat capacity, and establishing a visitor center on the grassy knoll north of and across the parkway from the coffee ship. The parkway proposed to use the new visitor center to interpret "the story of the Blue Ridge Parkway, with short sequences on its significance and place in the National Park System, its human history, natural history, geology and geography." The visitor center would also function as an office and work space for interpretive and protection rangers on the district.[692] In his 1961 annual report, Superintendent Weems continued to push for the enlargement of the lodge and construction of a dining room near the lodge. The coffee shop could not be enlarged due to topographical restrictions, and the area was overcrowded. Weems also wanted the service station relocated to reduce crowding around the coffee shop. National Park Concessions, Inc. submitted preliminary plans for the dining room and an expansion of the lodge in 1966, but the National Park Service rejected them as incompatible with the architectural theme of the existing structures.[693] In the end, all of the suggested changes--the new lodge units, relocating the dining room and the gasoline station, and construction of a new visitor center--were rejected, and the facilities today are much as they were when they were completed in the 1950s.

In 1969, parkway chief ranger Kenneth R. Ashley urged Superintendent Liles to have the backcountry area of Doughton Park designated as a wilderness area under terms of the

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[690]Edward H. Abbuehl to Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, National Park Service, 5 November 1959, BLRI Archives, RG5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 20; and Robert S. Budz, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Blue Ridge Parkway, Design Analysis, Doughton Park, PKY-BR-DP-2078C," January 1963, 1-3, BLRI Arcbives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 25.

[691]Abbuehl to Chief, Eastern Office, 5 November 1959, *op cit*; and Budz, 3.

[692]LeRoy D. Skillman, Landscape Architect, Blue Ridge Parkway, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Blue Ridge Parkway, Design Analysis, Doughton Park, PKY-BR-DP-3036, General Development Plan," 16 June 1960, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 21.

[693]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1961, 2; and Eden, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1966, 7.

Wilderness Act. He argued that the area was nearly unique in the eastern states, and met the act's criteria as a roadless area exceeding 5,000 acres. Liles replied that he checked with the regional office and was told that the parkway was not to propose Doughton Park for wilderness protection. He understood that this edict came directly from NPS Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., and the matter was closed.[694]

After thirteen years operating the concessions at the Brinegar Cabin, the Chatham Manufacturing Company terminated its contract in 1970. The company claimed it could not break even without selling some imported and domestic souvenirs, neither of which were permitted under parkway regulations. In 1971, Hazel Mathis and Grace Laffoon, who had worked at the cabin for Chatham, took over the concession and continued to conduct demonstrations and sales at the cabin until their permit expired in 1986. They chose not to renew the concession because they too felt they could not make a profit by selling only genuine craft articles as required under the Park Service contract.[695]

From the late 1970s until 1983, parkway staff and volunteers provided weekend interpretation at the site. Sometimes wearing period dress, the staff and volunteers demonstrated the "mountain way of life" by maintaining an interpretive garden and conducting traditional chores around the cabin. The activities were curtailed in 1983, because parkway staff felt the programs were not very effective and insufficient staff and volunteers were available. Since then, interpretation has been sporadic, though the garden is again planted.

A major restoration of the cabin took place in 1975. This involved extensive repairs to the foundation, which had been damaged by inadequate drainage, repointing of the chimneys, and replacement of decayed weatherboarding on the cabin and the granary. Unfortunately, cement mortar, rather than the historic clay mortar, was used for the chimney work.

Parkway historian Andy Kardos tried to convince the parkway to acquire the Elbert Crouse property adjacent to the campground in 1979. The property included a small log house and outbuildings dating from the early 1800s and showing progressive modifications through the 1920s. Kardos asserted that since it was on its original location and the site had been little altered, this would rank with the Johnson Farm at Peaks of Otter as a rare opportunity to properly interpret an historic farm. The farmstead had

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[694]Kenneth R. Ashley, Chief Ranger, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 12 November 1969, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 39; and Granville B. Liles to Ashley, 14 November 1969, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 39.

[695]Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1988, 6.

"absolute historic integrity," Kardos maintained, and would be an excellent site for visitor contact and interpretation.[696] Despite these recommendations, the property was not acquired.

Today, the Doughton Park area remains one of the most dramatic landscapes along the entire parkway, but it has changed considerably since the early days of the park's establishment. Nancy Kepner Robinson, in her 1993 thesis for the University of Georgia, described changes in the area:

> One's first impression in driving through Doughton Park is that the original intent of preserving the wide, open, upland pastures has been successful . . . . Upon closer examination of the aerial photos and the PLUMs, however, it becomes apparent that many roadside areas have grown in considerably. Also upland pastures in many places have taken on a parklike, pastoral character reminiscent of rural English landscapes, with individual, specimen trees growing in locations not indicated on the PLUMs.[697]

Today the cabin is locked except for certain in the main season weekends when ranger personnel and volunteers open it for a few hours in the afternoon. The cabin contains a mix of old and quaint but historically inappropriate furnishings. According to the historic resources study, the grounds are "maintained to resemble a golf course or a city park, and are not at all historically accurate."[698]

Most park visitors confine their activities to a meal at the coffee shop or an overnight stay at Bluffs Lodge, but the park offers more than thirty miles of hiking trails, the most extensive system on the parkway. The 7.5-mile Bluff Mountain Trail runs from the Brinegar Cabin to the Basin Cove Overlook, passing through the midst of the meadows and providing a connection from the campground to the concessions and picnic areas. The 4.4-mile Cedar Ridge Trail drops more than 2,000' in elevation from the Brinegar Cabin to the Grassy Gap Fire Road. The 6.5-mile fire road, a former county road, is the only parkway trail outside of the Roanoke Valley open to use by horse riders; it extends from the parkway at milepost 243.9 to Longbottom Road, North Carolina 1728/1730. The park's single backcountry campsite is located along this trail. The fire road provides

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[696]Andy Kardos, Historian, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 4 September 1979, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 46, Box 63, Folder 34.

[697]Robinson, "Managing Change," 57.

[698]Robinson, "Managing Change," 127; and Barry M. Buxton, "Brinegar Cabin Historic Resource Study," (Ashville, NC: Blue Ridge Parkway, June 1988), 12.

access to the Basin Creek Trail, which runs 3.3 miles to the remote Caudill Cabin and to the Bluff Ridge Primitive Trail, which climbs 2.8 miles to the historic timber and stone trail shelter and a connection with the Bluff Mountain Trail. From the Wildcat Rocks Parking Area above Bluffs Lodge, a short trail climbs to a stone-walled overlook peering down to the Caudill Cabin 2,000' below. The Fodder Stack Mountain Trail leads from the same parking area to small knoll. From Basin Cove Overlook, the 5-mile Flat Rock Ridge Trail drops to Basin Cove Creek on the Grassy Gap Fire Road and a connection with the Cedar Ridge Trail.

Rattlesnake Mountain

One of the highest points between Doughton Park and Grandfather Mountain, Rattlesnake Mountain at milepost 254 was recommended for acquisition by Stanley Abbott in 1935. Although the mountain was then in what he called "a deplorable state of denudation," he thought it and the surrounding terrain should be acquired, reforested and maintained as a scenic preserve.[699] This area was never purchased.

The Lump

This high rounded knob in Wilkes County offers panoramic views north to The Bluffs and south as far as Grandfather Mountain. The parkway was routed along its base so that motorists might leave their cars, hike to the top, and take in the view. In 1934, Abbott proposed constructing a picnic area, tea room, and gasoline station at The Lump. A trail system would connect with Gilam Gap to the south, where a campground and cabin sites would be located. National Park Service locating engineer C. K. Simmers urged the acquisition of 100 acres at the Lump in a 1935 report.[700] The grassy knob was acquired, but no facilities were constructed other than a parking overlook and a "leg-stretcher" trail to the summit. A gunboard at the site tells the poignant tale of Joe Dula, executed for a murder in the valley below.

Gilam Gap

This broad gap is a grassy meadow, sloping gently toward the north and dropping away from the ridge rapidly to the south. In 1934 Abbott proposed constructing a campground and tourist cabins at the gap, which would be connected by foot trails to "The Lump," where other facilities would be located. In 1935, Abbuehl and a Mr. Wise from the U.S.

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[699]Abbott to Vint, 17 May 193.

[700]Abbott, "Report on Recreation and Service Areas," n.p.; and Simmers, "Memorandum for Mr. Demaray."

Forest Service visited the area and discussed transferring the needed land to the parkway. In 1936 Simmers recommended purchasing 100 acres at Gilam Gap for a small development and for scenic preservation. Later in the year, Demaray reported that purchase of the area had been authorized as part of the right-of-way acquisition program.[701] The facilities, however, were never constructed.

E. B. Jeffress Park

Originally known as Tompkins Knob, this small park thirty miles south of Doughton Park provides trail access to The Cascades, a lovely waterfall on Falls Creek. The knob was the feature that originally attracted the parkway planners' attention. Abbott wanted to acquire 4100 acres in the vicinity, and in the 1936 master plan he suggested that the summit could be reached by either a trail or a spur road. An extensive development was proposed for the park, including an inn, service station, overlook, picnic area and hiking trails. In 1939, Assistant Superintendent Weems wanted to establish a "lake and lake development" at Tompkins Knob.[702]

Work at the site began in 1941 with the construction of a hiking trail along The Cascades. The trail included stone-walled overlooks from which visitors could view the falls. A comfort station at the Cascades parking area was constructed in 1954 and the sewage system was enlarged. Interpretive signs were installed along the trail, making it part of the parkway's self-guiding interpretive trail system. A 1952 development plan again proposed the construction of a campground, a gas station, and a lunch and gift shop, but the area remained a day-use park with minimal facilities. The plans for the lake had been dropped the previous year.[703]

Weems described the parkway's long term objectives for the Tompkins Knob area in 1964. Although the area had long been planned for a major visitor development, not all of the necessary land had been acquired. If the remaining tracts could be obtained, the parkway hoped to develop an expanded picnic area and a campground, a gas station and a

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[701]Abbott, "Report on Recreation and Service Areas," n.p.; Abbott, "Shenandoah-Great Smoky Mountains National Parkway, Report to the Chief Architect," 1; Simmers, "Memorandum for Mr. Demaray;" and Demaray, "Progress Report," 1.

[702]Simmers, "Memorandum for Mr. Demaray;" Abbott, "Brief Description," 6; and Weems, "Memorandum for Inspector Nostran."

[703]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 13; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1954, 4; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," May 1954, 3; Weems, "Blue Ridge Parkway Recreation Areas," 2; "Tompkins Knob, NC Developed Areas & Utilities Plan, Part of the Master Plan, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-TK-2001-C, sheet 26, July 1952, BLRI ETS files, Master Plans, Drawer 1A; and Abbuehl, "Report on Blue Ridge Parkway Inspection, 1951," *op cit.*, 3.

concessionaire lunch room and craft shop. The lodge or inn originally proposed was no longer contemplated.[704]

In June 1961, Ernest Hunter of *The Charlotte Observer*, wrote Weems asking that some section of the parkway be named after Edwin B. Jeffress of Greensboro, who had died two weeks previously. Jeffress, the editor of the *Greensboro Daily News* and a former mayor of the city and state legislator, had chaired the North Carolina Highway Commission during the parkway's formulative years in the 1930s, working tirelessly to have the parkway routed through the state.[705]

Assistant Superintendent Howard Stricklin expressed sorrow at Jeffress' death, but reported that Superintendent Weems, then recovering from eye surgery, thought the naming of a portion of parkway as a memorial would set a bad precedent. If it were to be done, Weems remonstrated, there would be no end of it, and the parkway would become "series of memorials." Instead, they suggested that Jeffress' friends might consider donating land for a memorial park in the manner in which the Cone and Price memorial parks were established. They suggested purchasing the remaining lands needed for the completion of the Tompkins Knob development. The parkway had been unsuccessful in acquiring the land, and Jeffress' friends might be convinced to buy it. In a note on a copy of the letter sent to NPS Director Conrad Wirth, Stricklin suggested that developing the Tompkins Knob area would help alleviate overcrowding at the nearby Moses H. Cone and Julian Price parks, but the land acquisition would have to be pushed to completion.[706]

Jeffress' friends donated no land, and continued the campaign to have a memorial established on the parkway. In July 1964, North Carolina Governor Dan Moore wrote NPS Director Hartzog urging that a portion of the parkway or some major facility along the route be renamed. Weems conceded that Jeffress' efforts on behalf of the parkway and Park Service deserved recognition and suggested that Hartzog consider giving the name to the development at Tompkins Knob. Weems added that the parkway no longer proposed to develop concession facilities at the park due to the availability of visitor services at Boone, Blowing Rock, and Jefferson, along with the new Cherry Hill Restaurant nearby on the parkway and recreational facilities at Cone and Price parks. He

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[704]Weems to James T. Broyhill, House of Representatives, 11 December 1964, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 27.

[705]Ernest Hunter to Weems, 3 June 1961.

[706]Howard B. Stricklin to Ernest Hunter, 7 June 1961, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 27, Box 34, Folder 7.

stressed "We are not proposing the naming of a second-rate development for Mr. Jeffress," but admitted that further development of the area was a low priority.[707]

North Carolina Congressman Roy Taylor endorsed the proposal, and in August the National Park Service announced that the Tompkins Knob park would be named for Jeffress. The parkway already owned about 487 acres in the area, and the proposed land acquisition would bring the total to about 1,000 acres. Weems stated that once the desired land was acquired, a 150-plus site campground and a service station would be built. More trails would be established, as well, and an overlook would be planned on the summit of Tompkins Knob. He predicted that Jeffress Park would be complete in about two years.[708]

A new Development Concept Plan for the park was completed in 1970, restoring some of the concession facilities to the proposal. With the new land acquisition, the parkway proposed a "major recreation area" to consist of a 150-site campground to be located on the side of a new 9-acre lake, a concessions area with snack bar, camp store, gas station, and combination shower house and laundry for camper use. A new 100-site picnic area would be established at the base of Tompkins Knob, and the existing picnic area at the Cascades Trailhead would be obliterated. Trails would be constructed between the Cascades and Tompkins Knob parking areas, to the summit of Tompkins Knob, and to the Elk Mountain Overlook at milepost 274.4. The estimated cost for all the developments was $1,054,000. This "major recreation area" was never authorized. Parkway concessions specialist John M. Spurgeon objected to the provision of food and gasoline services, arguing these were available at other nearby locations on and off the parkway.[709] In the end, none of the development work was carried out with the exception of a .6-mile connector trail between the Cascades and Tompkins Knob parking areas.

Jeffress Park has two historic log structures that are frequently visited by parkway travelers. One structure is interpreted as the Cool Springs Baptist Church. In 1947, Squire Emmett Phillips told parkway historical architect Charles Grossman that he had attended services in the building "in the year of the surrender" (1865). Other old-time

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[707]Moore to Hartzog, 28 July 1965; and Weems to Director, National Park Service, 4 August 1965.

[708]"Memorial on Parkway is Planned," *Journal* (Winston-Salem, NC), 26 August 1965; "Blue Ridge Parkway Scenic Area to be Named for E. B. Jeffress," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 27 August 1965; and Joe Knox, "Parkway Area Named as Jeffress Memorial," *Greensboro Daily News* (NC), 26 August 1965.

[709]"Design Analysis, E. B. Jeffress Park Development Concept Plan, Blue Ridge Parkway, Drawing No. 601-40004," 27 November 1970; and John M. Spurgeon to Beyer, 16 October 1970, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 41.

residents of the area deny the structure was ever used as a church, or even for camp meetings. By the time the parkway acquired the property in the 1930s, the half-dovetail notched structure was used as a barn. The reconstruction in the late 1930s or 1940s replaced the original rib-pole roof (shown in old photographs at the parkway's Sandy Flats Maintenance Area) with one of wooden shakes. The structure originally stood at the site of the present Tompkins Knob overlook. It was moved to its present location at the time of its reconstruction.[710]

The adjacent Jesse Brown Cabin originally stood half a mile up the hollow from its present location. It was moved to the present site in 1905 to be closer to a good spring. The half-dovetail notched log structure has been reconstructed twice by the parkway. Doris Church, who grew up in the cabin and was living there when it was acquired by the parkway in 1937, stated the structure is now smaller than it once was.[711] Below the cabin is a small log springhouse of unchinked saddle-notched logs.

Both the Brown Cabin and the "church" are considered "discovery sites." Parkway visitors may enter and inspect the two structures, but they are unfurnished and interpretation is limited to a gunboard sign. Their chief purpose is to serve as scenic reminders of the cultural heritage of the southern highlands. Visitors also enjoy the self-guided trail to The Cascades and lunches in the park's small picnic area. Few visitors pay much attention to Tompkins Knob, which was to have the centerpiece of the park.

Moses H. Cone Memorial Park

Moses H. Cone Memorial Park is somewhat of an anomaly on the Blue Ridge Parkway. While the parkway generally interprets the vernacular culture and scenic landscapes of the Southern Highlands, this recreational area is comprised of a sophisticated mountain estate established by a wealthy industrialist. The central feature, Flat Top Manor, is an imposing Beaux-Arts mansion that dominates a large park characterized by lakes established for scenic effects, an extensive carriage road system, remnants of once-considerable orchards, and a manipulated landscape of gardens, specimen trees, and naturalistic plantings.

Moses Herman Cone, born in Jonesboro, Tennessee in 1857, started his career as a traveling salesman or "drummer" for his father's wholesale grocery business, but made a

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[710]Grossman to Resident Landscape Architect, 5 June 1947, *op cit.*; Helen Keber, "Jeffress Park Research," MSS, 1987, 1-3, BLRI Library, vertical files, Gillespie Gap file; and Firth, "Historic Resource Study," n.p.

[711]Keber, "Jeffress Park Research," 3-4.

fortune in the textile business by the time he reached the age of thirty-five. With his brother Caesar, he established the Cone Export Company. The Cones operated three mills in Greensboro, North Carolina and quickly became the most important producers and marketers of denim cloth. By the early twentieth century, Moses Cone was known as the "Denim King" of North Carolina.[712]

In the late 1880s, Moses Cone and his wife, Bertha Lindau Cone, decided to build a country manor house as a seasonal retreat. They picked a location in the vicinity of Blowing Rock, North Carolina, which was already a popular summering area for other wealthy families. In 1893, they began acquiring more than 3,500 acres centered on Flat Top and Rich mountains just west of the community. The tract included expanses of rolling farmland and several patches of virgin timber. Much of the land was purchased from subsistence farmers, who were subsequently invited to remain as estate employees. The Cones first contacted renowned New York architect Stanford White for the design of their country house, but White declined the commission, refusing to construct a house that would cost any less than $100,000. They then engaged Orlo Epps, a Washington, D.C architect who had designed Cone's Proximity Mills and other significant structures in Greensboro. Epps designed a 23-room frame house in the Beaux-Arts style, with many characteristics borrowed from Southern colonial architecture. "Flat Top Manor" was constructed in 1899 and 1900. Much of the material had to be hauled by oxen from the railhead at Lenoir, 25 miles southwest. Greensboro contractor J. M. Wolfe simultaneously constructed most of the 25-mile estate carriage road system. In addition to the carriage roads, the Cones had numerous foot trails built around the estate. Many of these were planted with borders of rhododendron and other native plants. Much of the land was fenced to provide sanctuary for a herd of whitetail deer imported from Pennsylvania. Two lakes and several ponds were constructed and stocked with bass and trout. Cone's friend Gifford Pinchot, later the first head of the U.S. Forest Service, advised him on the planting of many groves of white pine, hemlock, sugar maple and rhododendron, accenting the estate's surviving forest glades.[713]

Flat Top Manor was never the Cones' primary residence. They occupied it for much of the year between April and November. Moses Cone laid out four apple orchards with

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[712]Surber & Barber Architects, Inc., *Moses H. Cone Manor House Historic Structure Report, Moses H. Cone Memorial Park, Blue Ridge Parkway, North Carolina* (Atlanta, GA: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 20 February 1996), 10.

[713]Surber & Barber, *Moses H. Cone Manor House*, 16-20; Barry M. Buxton, "Historic Resource Study and Historic Structure Report, Moses H. Cone Memorial Park, Blue Ridge Parkway" (Asheville, NC: Blue Ridge Parkway, November 1987), 1-2; "Tourists Enjoy Famed Estate," *The Charlotte Observer* (NC), 6 June 1971; and "Moses H. Cone Memorial Park," Blue Ridge Parkway information leaflet, June 1969, BLRI Library, vertical files, Moses H. Cone Memorial Park file.

32,000 trees, as well as vegetable gardens. Bertha Cone established a dairy operation in 1919. The Cones also raised sheep, hogs and chickens, as they intended for the estate to be a self-sufficient operation. Recreational opportunities on the estate included a bowling alley, a croquet field, tennis courts, boating on Bass Lake, and the carriage roads. An observation tower on the summit of Flat Top Mountain offered long range views. The Cones befriended many of the mountain families in the area and provided houses and a school at Sandy Flats for their tenants. Notably, the Cones opened the gates of their estate to anyone who wished to enjoy its scenic attractions, establishing it as a favored recreational area long before the Blue Ridge Parkway was proposed.[714]

Moses Cone died in Baltimore in December 1908. He was buried on the shoulder of Flat Top Mountain. Bertha Cone managed the estate for nearly forty years more until her death in 1947. During this time, parkway construction approached the estate, and engineers began investigating the possibility of extending the parkway through it. Mrs. Cone was disturbed by the engineers and their surveys, and implored Interior Secretary Ickes to have the road routed away from her estate. The parkway designers did not want another route, but intentionally delayed construction of the section until after her death. Following her demise, the Cone heirs offered the property to the state for use as a state park. The North Carolina Parks Commission wanted new parks, but only those which could be located near urban areas populated by potential users, and turned down the bequest. The estate was then offered to the National Park Service as a recreational park for the Blue Ridge Parkway. Superintendent Weems, landscape architects Abbott and Abbuehl, and Regional Director Thomas J. Allen inspected the estate and recommended accepting it for a parkway recreation area. A master plan showing the proposed development was prepared by the parkway staff. At first, there was some consideration of making the manor house the summer headquarters for the superintendent and the assistant chief ranger for North Carolina, but this idea was not pursued.[715]

Under terms of Moses Cone's will, Bertha Cone was granted an indenture or life estate in the property. Following her death, his entire fortune was to go to create a Moses Cone Memorial Hospital, which was to be built in Greensboro. The estate at Blowing Rock was to be maintained for the public for recreational pursuits and the hospital corporation was directed to provide $10,000 annually to maintain the property. Following Mrs. Cone's death, the hospital board decided it was not in their best interests to attempt to

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[714]Surber & Barber, *Moses H. Cone Manor House*, 14-15; Lawrence H. Hirsch, "Moses Cone Memorial Park Beauty Spot for America's Great Tourist Audience," *Greensboro Daily News* (NC), 22 April 1951; and Buxton, "Historic Resource Study, Moses H. Cone Memorial Park," 4-5.

[715]Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1948, 4-5; Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1947, 1-2; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," April 1948, 1; and Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 18-19.

maintain the estate, as this would be a continuing drain on the hospital resources. The $10,000 would not begin to cover the costs of maintaining and administering the property. Having come to this conclusion, the hospital board secured a declaratory judgement from the North Carolina Supreme Court allowing them to transfer the estate to the federal government to become a unit of the Blue Ridge Parkway.[716]

The deed for the estate was recorded in January 1950. The Trustees of Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital placed three conditions in the transfer. First, the tract was to be known as Moses H. Cone Memorial Park. Second, the road to the cemetery where Mr. and Mrs. Cone were buried should be kept open for family relatives and friends. The National Park Service readily agreed to these first two conditions. The third condition required that at least $10,000 should be spent on maintenance and improvements each year. Superintendent Weems told the trustees this was unacceptable, because the parkway might some year have a budget shortfall that would not allow the $10,000 obligation to be met. If this part of agreement could not be upheld, the tract would revert to the trustees after the parkway had spent considerable money on improvements and development. Seeking a compromise, Weems urged the trustees to bequeath the annual $10,000 from their investments in Cone Mills. The board accepted the proposal, and gave the parkway the first annual $10,000 check for maintenance and construction. This became an annual donation for maintenance and upkeep. The National Park Service assumed maintenance and protection on 23 January 1950. Boundary and regulatory signs were installed and a park warden was assigned to the estate. The National Park Service evicted the tenants and removed all but five of the fifty-seven buildings on the estate. The farm operations and orchards were not maintained.[717]

In 1951, the North Carolina Garden Club expressed interest in sponsoring an herb garden at the park, and the North Carolina Resource-Use Education Commission proposed establishing a "National History and Conservation Laboratory" to train counselors and naturalists for camp and community recreation programs. The parkway rejected both of these proposals, but Superintendent Weems had another idea. That spring, he urged the Penland School of Handicrafts to operate Flat Top Manor as a handicraft center. The school officials were enthusiastic about the proposal, and, reorganized as the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild, Inc., they entered into a contract to operate a "Parkway Craft Center" at the house. The park report hailed the decision as "an ideal solution to the problem of what to do with the Cone Manor House," and suggested that "millions" of

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[716]"Tourists Enjoy Famed Estate."

[717]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," January 1950, 2; Liles, Blue Ridge Parkway book draft, 20; and Surber & Barber, *Moses H. Cone Manor House*, 19, 40.

parkway visitors would have an opportunity to learn about the variety and beauty of handicrafts produced in the region.[718]

In August, the guild began operating the craft center at Flat Top Manor. The concession agreement authorized the guild to produce and sell handicraft articles, operate a museum of handicraft arts, and conduct demonstrations. Interest in the programs was attested to the first year by substantial sales and good attendance at programs. The Francis L. Goodrich Collection of handicrafts formed the nucleus of the museum.[719]

Numerous improvements were made to the estate in the early years of parkway administration. Parkway crews began the restoration of Trout Lake in spring 1951. The 16-acre lake was filled in 1952, restoring this scenic feature of the park. The wooden observation tower on Flat Top Mountain, which had deteriorated by the early 1950s, was replaced in 1954 with a steel structure. Construction of the parkway through Cone Park got underway in 1955 and the three-mile segment was completed two years later. A "folklore nature trail" was constructed in 1955. It focused on plants used by mountain people as medicinal herbs or in their craft items.[720]

A concession permit was granted to the L. M. Tate Stables of nearby Blowing Rock in June 1952 to rent carriages and saddle horses and offer riding and horsemanship lessons on park lands.[721] The status of the permit is somewhat unclear at present, though the company continues to operate on park lands.

In 1961, the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce announced that it wanted the parkway to develop a winter sports program at Cone Memorial Park featuring ice skating, bobsled runs, and skiing. Superintendent Weems warned the chamber that operations could probably not be provided without sacrificing scenic values, and that an appropriation for the project was not likely to be approved. He stated that the parkway had no objections to winter use for informal sports, as long as parkway funds would not be required to maintain roads, clear parking spaces, or to provide any services.[722]

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[718]Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1951; Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1951, 3; and Weems, "Superintendent's Monthly Report," May 1951, 2.

[719]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1952, 2.

[720]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1951, 2; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1952, 3; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1955, 2, 4; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1957, 3; and Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1953, 2.

[721]Lord, "History of the Blue Ridge Parkway," 12.

[722]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1961, 2.

To help support programs at Flat Top Manor, the parkway tried to have civic and business leaders in Blowing Rock establish a cooperating association called "Friends of Moses Cone." Assistant Superintendent Art Allen proposed the organization of the group at a meeting in Blowing Rock in January 1986. Local citizens seemed ready to support the concept, but the parkway let the matter drop, and began pursuing the establishment of a separate "Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway" organization.[723]

Moses Cone Memorial Park is a popular destination for parkway visitors, and is heavily used by tourists from nearby Blowing Rock. The craft center at the manor house is the major draw, but visitors also enjoy walking or horseback riding on the carriage roads, or hiking on the park's trail system.

The ten park carriage roads were constructed between 1899 and 1905. Designed for leisurely carriage driving, the Cones made the roads made available to the public for walking or riding; automobiles have never been permitted to use the roads. Cone chose the locations of the roads himself. All were earthen roads except for the main entrance road from Sandy Flats to Flat Top Manor, which had a macadam surface. Bridges were masonry faced structures and generally of modest size, though a large bridge over the Blowing Rock--Boone Road (now U.S. 421) was replaced by the Park Service with a modern underpass. Native trees and shrubs, mostly ordered from Harlan Kelsey's nursery at Linville, North Carolina, were planted along the roadsides.[724]

In the late 1960s, parkway superintendent Granville Liles proposed improving the Rich Mountain Carriage Road into a self-guided automobile nature trail. In 1969, parkway crews applied a new stone surfacing and made arrangements to convert the road to one-way traffic by constructing a short return loop. He expected the road, the cost of which he estimated at $10,341.50, to open in summer 1970. Exhibits would be installed along the road that would be open during daylight hours only. Liles also proposed having a concessionaire offer carriage rides from Flat Top Manor down to Bass Lake. The auto nature proposal was greeted with stringent objections from horsemen in the Boone and Blowing Rock area, who wanted the road preserved for their use. In October, opponents submitted a petition against the project. The matter had been dropped by the end of the

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[723]"Parkway Officials to Meet with Community Leaders on 16th," *Blowing Rocket* (Blowing Rock, NC), 10 January 1986.

[724]Firth, "Historic Resource Study," n.p.

year.[725] The parkway was likewise unsuccessful in finding a concessioner to offer the carriage rides to Bass Lake.

Today, visitors can access the carriage roads from three locations: the front of Flat Top Manor, a parking area at Trout Lake, and a parking area at Bass Lake on the outskirts of Blowing Rock. The latter area includes facilities to unload horse trailers. Horses are permitted on all of the roads except for the circuit road around Bass Lake itself. The main users of the system, however, are hikers. Two of the roads climb to mountain summits, to the top of Flat Top Mountain with its observation tower, and to the heights of Rich Mountain, the highest point in the park. Other trails connect the manor house with Bass Lake far below, or wander through other parts of the estate. One trail forms a "maze" by winding and doubling back on itself. All of the trails are interconnected; because they were laid out for carriage travel, the roads are gently graded, allowing for leisurely travel by horse riders or hikers.

To the side of the manor house is a hiking trail laid out by the Cones. The "Figure Eight" trail makes a one-half mile double loop through a lush rhododendron grove overshadowed by specimen trees. Mounted labels along this self-guided nature trail tell the story of the Cone's development of the estate landscape. The Cones used this trail daily for their morning walks.[726]

Julian Price Memorial Park

Immediately to the south of Moses H. Cone Memorial Park is the second of the large recreational areas added to the Blue Ridge Parkway by donation in the early 1950s. While Cone Park was intended to preserve the cultural resources of an historic estate, Julian Price Memorial Park, the former country retreat of an insurance magnate, has been developed with a focus on outdoor recreation.

The large park, centered around Boone Fork, a lovely stream, is one of the most popular areas on the Blue Ridge Parkway. It features the largest water feature on the parkway, Price Lake, and large expanses of second growth forest. The tract on which the park is

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[725]Granville B. Liles to Benjamin Cone, Greensboro, NC, 18 December 1968, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 35; Granville B. Liles to Cone, 10 October 1969, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 36; Granville B. Liles to Dr. J. W. Stines, Blowing Rock, NC, 27 October 1969, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 36; and Chief Ranger, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 3 November 1969, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 37.

[726]Leonard M. Atkins, *Hiking the Blue Ridge: A Guide to the Trails of the Blue Ridge Parkway* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 125.

located was heavily logged from 1912 to 1930. Its magnificent virgin forest producing a tremendous quantity of lumber for lumber baron William S. Whiting.[727]

Julian Price, born in Meherrin, Virginia in 1867, was educated in public schools and began his business career as a telegraph operator for the Southern Railway. He later became an insurance agent with the Greensboro Life Insurance Company, rising to head of the firm when it merged with the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company. Following the merger, he became vice president and agency manager of the Jefferson Standard, and in 1919 he was elected president of the firm. Under his direction, the company extended its operations across most of the country, but it concentrated on the economic development of the South, making loans to homes, churches and schools as well as businesses and industry. Price became chairman of the company a few months before his death in 1946.[728]

In the late 1930s and 1940s, Price began assembling a large parcel of land near Blowing Rock in Watauga County, North Carolina. Seven families continued to live on the property, raising cattle, sheep, hogs and tobacco for the financier. He stocked its five miles of streams with trout and began to build a dam across Boone Fork to establish a 350-acre fishing lake. Price was killed in an automobile accident while traveling to the property on 25 October 1946. He intended the tract to become a mountain retreat for company employees following his death, but the company and his children conveyed it to the National Park Service for a parkway recreation area instead.[729]

The property was offered to the parkway as a recreational park in February 1948. In August, the directors of Jefferson Standard made the donation contingent on government assurances that it would complete the large lake Mr. Price had begun. The Secretary of the Interior subsequently accepted the deed to the property, which the parkway named the "Julian Price Memorial Park." While the Attorney General still had to work to resolve

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[727]Ashton Chapman, "One-Time Estates are Popular Areas," *Journal* (Winston-Salem, NC), 17 September 1961. Boone Fork takes its name from Jesse Boone, a nephew of Daniel Boone, who erected a log cabin and farmed along the creek.

[728]James F. Fox, "Fedoras, Brains and Canes: The Era of Julian Price," *The Jeffersonian*, March 1982, 8-11.

[729]"Julian Price--'Dynamo'," *The Jeffersonian*, March 1982, 13; "About Julian Price and Price Memorial Park," n.d., BLRI Library, vertical files, Julian Price Memorial Park file; and Arthur H. Beyer, Charles E. McGloughlin, John M. Spurgeon and Arthur C. Allen, "Julian Price Memorial Park Developed Area Plan Narrative," n.d. (1974), BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 43.

some points in the title, the area was opened to public use. The title was not cleared until June 1952.[730]

As agreed, the National Park Service completed the lake Price had begun, though it was reduced in scale from 350 acres as originally planned to 47 acres. Work on the 4.5-mile section of the parkway through Price Park began in 1957. The old Johns River Road through the park area was gated and restricted to official government use. Another minor road, the old Foscoe Road, was abandoned.[731]

The first campground loop, 35 units adjacent to Price Lake, was competed in 1959 and opened in 1960. Superintendent Weems soon reported that the camping area was "used almost to death." In 1961 work got underway to enlarge it to 107 units. A 300-seat amphitheatre was constructed in 1963. The log cabin seasonal ranger residence at the campground was purchased as a kit for $17,600, and erected in 1987 and 1988.[732]

A 1974 "Development Concept Plan" for the park proposed an ambitious "Americana Village" of typical mountain structures including residences, one or more churches, a blacksmith and other mountain industries such as three mills and a tannery, a school, and a "mountain farm" replete with gardens, fields, orchards and animals. Craft demonstrations would be conducted throughout the area by artisans living in the houses or apartments constructed for the apprentices and seasonal personnel. The $3.3 million facility, which would be located on the Johns River Road, would help train craftsmen in traditional Southern Highland crafts, and crafts would be available for visitors to purchase. The village was intended to "intensify public appreciation and understanding of the national heritage" and interpret the history of the Appalachian Mountain region.[733] Although a great deal of planning went into the effort, the ambitious project was never realized.

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[730]Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1948, 4-5; Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1948, 2; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1948, 2; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," June 1952, 1; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1950, 5; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1960, 3.

[731]Beyer et al., "Julian Price Memorial Park," 2; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1957, 3.

[732]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1959, 3; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1961, 4; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 3; Bean, "Monthly Narrative Report," June 1963, 3; and Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1987, 10.

[733]Beyer et al, *Development Concept*, 1, 5, 8-13, 17, 30.

Price Lake is the chief scenic feature of the park. The 47-acre lake is used for recreational purposes, including fishing and non-motorized boating. As with all parkway waters, swimming is prohibited. The much smaller Sims Pond, also adjacent to the parkway, is another scenic water feature used for recreation. Both of the bodies of water are easily accessible from adjacent parking overlooks and from trails along their sides.

Price Park Campground remains one of the most popular on the parkway. Sites in the original loop adjacent to Price Lake are in such high demand that use is restricted to overnight stays. Even the hillside sites across the parkway are often filled on summer weekends. A 500-seat amphitheatre is used for interpretive programs. The 100-site Price Park Picnic Area along Boone Fork also receives considerable use in the summer and fall seasons.

Three hiking trails allow visitors to gain an intimate look at the fine mountain scenery. The Julian Price Lake Trail encircles Price Lake, offering views across the lake and passing by beaver dams and marshes. The Boone Fork Trail, a rugged five-mile loop, follows a wild mountain stream for much of its length. The Mountains-to-Sea Trail utilizes a portion of this trail. The 2.5-mile Green Knob Trail is a more leisurely walk through the park's woodlands. The Tanawha Trail connecting Grandfather Mountain and Price Park terminates in the area.

Grandfather Mountain

The highest point in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Grandfather Mountain is one of the most prominent features along the Blue Ridge Parkway, which passes around its middle slopes between mileposts 300 and 305. The 5,837' mountain is thought by geologists to be one of the oldest in North America. The Cherokee called the isolated peak "Tanawha," meaning "fabulous eagle" or "hawk." French botanist André Michaux visited the mountain in 1794 and collected a number of plants for the French royal gardens. Michaux ascended the peak and pronounced it the highest mountain in the United States.[734] He was wrong, but the prominent mountain is the highest point for miles around.

In 1935, NPS Associate Director Demaray was pressured to obtain an 18,000-acre tract around the mountain. Parkway landscape architect Abbuehl reported that many considered it "the most outstanding mountain between the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks." The U.S. Forest Service had made concerted efforts to acquire the mountain but had met with no success, but Abbuehl thought the National Park

[734]"Eight Historical Markers are Proposed for Parkway," *Asheville Times* (NC), 15 February 1956.

Service might be able to purchase it by stressing potential recreational values, rather than the commercial value of the timber, which motivated the Forest Service's interest. Abbuehl also recommended acquiring the "Rhododendron Gardens," a 500-acre tract on the north side of the mountain containing two tracts of virgin timber. Rufus L. Gwynn of Lenoir, North Carolina had been developing the tract for a summer colony, but lack of funds had discouraged his work. Abbuehl thought it would make a fine recreational area, especially if it could accompany the Grandfather Mountain tract.[735] Abbott and other parkway planners wished to avoid scarring the slopes of Grandfather Mountain during construction of the motor road. At first, the parkway was planned to follow the route of the old Yonahlossee Trail (now US 221) in order not to scar the mountain with a new roadway cut. By 1939, the State of North Carolina had acquired a right-of-way averaging 1,000' centered on the old road.[736]

In February 1945, conservationist Harlan P. Kelsey obtained from the Linville Company an option to purchase several thousand acres of land along sections 2-H and 2-J, including Grandfather Mountain, for transfer to the parkway. Kelsey traveled to Washington and met with NPS Director Newton B. Drury, who authorized the parkway to accept the donation of a minimum of 5,555 acres of the Linville Company's holdings on Grandfather Mountain for a parkway recreational area. Drury and the parkway staff told Kelsey that he should also try to acquire the Linville Falls tract further south for the parkway. Kelsey formed a group, the Grandfather Mountain Association, to raise funds for the project. He urged an enlargement of the authorized boundary to include the approaches and flanks of the mountain and the entire Linville Gorge. Kelsey also proposed establishing a "national arboretum"on Boone Fork on the north flank of the mountain, which would consist of plants native to the southern Appalachians. The National Park Service refused to endorse the arboretum as part of the Blue Ridge Parkway, but told Kelsey there was no objection to its development as a separate area adjacent to the parkway.[737]

The state refused to get involved in the project due to its decision to devote all possible park funds to the state park system. Kelsey's option on the property expired in March 1947, and Hugh Morton, president of the Linville Company, refused to renew it, stating

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[735]Simmers, "Memorandum for Mr. Demaray;" and Abbuehl, "Report on New Areas," 2.

[736]Stanley W. Abbott to Gwynn, Lenoir, NC, 16 February 1939, in "Blue Ridge Parkway Routing and Correspondence Reports, 1933 *ff*," BLRI Library.

[737]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1945, 2; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1946, 2; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1945, 2; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," December 1945, 2; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1946, 2; and Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," December 1946, 3.

the Park Service should concentrate on completing the Blue Ridge Parkway. Morton announced that his company was planning to develop camping facilities on the mountain and log part of the timber. Kelsey withdrew from active participation in the project in 1948. The newly created North Carolina Park, Parkway and Forest Development Commission took over the project and agreed to try to acquire the funds to acquire the mountain.[738]

In August 1948, Morton stated the mountain was not for sale at any price, and the parkway advised R. Getty Browning of the North Carolina Highway Commission to proceed with the acquisition of a right-of-way through the Linville Company's holdings.

Linville Falls

Twelve miles south of Grandfather Mountain, the Blue Ridge Parkway crosses the Linville River just above Linville Falls, which forms the centerpiece of a popular recreational area consisting of a visitor center, campground and picnic area, and an extensive trail system. The river, one of four that cut through the mountain barrier, drops for a total of 150' over the two falls. The upper falls are a double cascade divided by a rock fin; the taller lower falls drops 90' through a narrow cleft. Below the falls, the river enters the Linville Gorge, dropping another 2,000' over the next twelve miles. The area is of considerable interest to geologists, as numerous different layers of rock are exposed in the river cut. Due to folding and movement of crustal plates eons ago, some younger rocks overlay much older formations. At the falls themselves, a layer of cranberry gneiss sits atop rocks half a billion years younger.

The falls and gorge take their name from Thomas and William Linville, killed in the area by the Cherokee in 1766 while the two were on an extended hunting trip. The Indians considered the Linvilles to be unlawfully intruding on their lands. The Cherokee were ultimately driven out of the area by Col. Waightstill Avery in 1777. For a long while, the area was considered a "no man's land," unclaimed by any county government. In 1833 Joseph and William Erwin received grants for large tracts including the falls and nearby Table Rock, Hawksbill and Gingercake mountains. The land was largely unfit for farming, but cattle were grazed on it through the summer.[739] Over the ensuing years, the tract changed hands several times. In 1890, the Morganton Land and Improvement

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[738]Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1948, 5; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," January 1947, 1; and Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," March 1947, 1.

[739]Gus Wiencke, Seasonal Ranger, Blue Ridge Parkway, "Trivia Notebook: Linville Falls," MSS, 1980, BLRI Library, vertical files, Gillespie Gap file; and Emma Franklin, "A Brief History of Linville Falls," MSS, 1978, 1, BLRI Library, vertical files, Gillespie Gap file.

Company purchased the property with the intent of developing it. The company ran into financial troubles, however, and liquidated in 1897. Fritz W. Hossfeld of Morganton acquired the company's land in 1919. Hossfeld, ostensibly a notorious gambler, gained control over the area by paying roughly fifty cents an acre. He opened the falls tract to tourists, charging them ten cents for a visit.[740]

Most of the area in the recreational park had been logged prior to its acquisition by the National Park Service. The Ritter Lumber Company did most of the logging, constructing a narrow gauge railway from the present campground site to its mill at Pineola. The Linville Gorge between present Lake James and Chimney View, and the lands surrounding the Erwins View Trail were largely untouched, however.[741]

Parkway officials expressed an interest in acquiring the Linville Falls area as early as 1938. In March of that year, parkway staff and North Carolina Highway Department officials agreed to collaborate in an investigation of the current ownership and to determine the probable costs of acquisition of the area.[742] No action was taken at this time.

The U.S. Forest Service subsequently acquired the Linville Gorge along the river below the Hossfeld property for the Pisgah National Forest. The 1,500' deep chasm was the deepest canyon in the eastern United States and was set aside in 1951 as the first designated Wilderness Area in the east. Because Hossfeld wanted $150,000 for the falls tract, the U.S. Forest Service was unable to secure this highly desired section. Abbott wanted the tract to be purchased, and proposed construction of a spur road from the parkway along the Linville River to the falls if the land could be secured. The Forest Service, however, objected to the principle of another federal agency entering into land purchases in a proposed Forest Service purchase unit. Abbott countered by pointing out that the falls area had a higher value for scenic and recreational purposes than for soil and water conservation, which was the primary justification for Forest Service land acquisition At a conference in 1938, the parkway urged the Forest Service to continue to administer and develop the Linville Gorge area, but announced plans to pursue

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[740]Franklin, "A Brief History of Linville Falls," 2-3; Scott, "What Every Good Naturalist Should Know," 12-13; and Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1950, 5.

[741]Wiencke, "Trivia Notebook," 1.

[742]"Report on Conference at North Wilkesboro, March 29, 1938, Attended by Messrs. R. Getty Browning and J. P. Dodge of North Carolina Highway Department and Messrs. Stanley W. Abbott, Edward H. Abbuehl and Sam P. Weems, representing the National Park Service," in "Right-of-Way, North Carolina," in "Early Right-of-Way Reports and Correspondence, Design Construction Division," BLRI Library.

acquisition of the falls tract and a right-of-way for the development of a parkway recreational area.[743]

In 1948, parkway resident landscape architect Abbuehl inspected a possible connection from the parkway to the falls area. He recommended a route leaving the parkway opposite the Linville River Bridge parking area. It would follow the old Dellinger Road for a short distance, then make a double crossing of the Linville River before picking up another old road to North Carolina Highway 183. Crossing the state road, the connector would then cross the river again before reaching an open area, suitable for a parking lot, a quarter of a mile above the falls. Abbuehl predicted the scenic qualities of the road would be "superb." It would afford good views of the river, avoid scarring of the valley's steep slopes, and provide an attractive approach to the falls. Although three bridges would be required, Abbuehl noted that they only had to span the river and not the entire valley, as was the case with the massive parkway bridge over the gorge. North Carolina 183 could be relocated to pass beneath the final river bridge. He admitted that the 1½ miles of road would be "on the expensive side," but insisted that providing access to the falls and gorge justified the cost. He claimed the improvements would "round out the Grandfather Mountain area, balancing the Cone-Price development on the other side."[744]

The property had not yet been acquired, however. Following Hossfeld's death in 1949, the land passed to his sister, Giulia Hossfeld Luginbuhl of Des Moines, Iowa. The U.S. Forest Service began negotiations with her attorneys to acquire the property for transfer to the parkway. Because of the falls and the original stand of timber, the tract was highly desirable for both lumbering and recreational development.[745] Local residents feared the property would be sold to the highest bidder, which would likely be a logging firm.[746]

The parkway had no funds for land acquisition, however, and prospects for purchase seemed bleak. In March 1951, former NPS Director Horace Albright asked his friend, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to consider purchasing the tract, estimating its cost at about $75,000. Rockefeller wrote back that if the site was indeed outstanding and important for conservation purposes, he would be willing to provide half the money required if the rest

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[743]Abbott, "Report on Conference," 4-5; and Bob Satterwhite, "North Carolina's Linville Gorge," *Blue Ridge Outdoors*, January 1994, 15.

[744]Abbuehl, "Memorandum for the Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway," 13 December 1948, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 3.

[745]Scott, "What Every Good Naturalist Should Know," 5.

[746]Franklin, "A Brief History of Linville Falls," 2.

could be raised from other sources. He stated he wanted to match funds that others had raised, rather than having them asked to match money he had agreed to give.[747]

After talking with Superintendent Weems, Albright wrote again in October, stating that Weems had told him the best price he get in the way of an option was $100,000, and that he did not know where to raise the other half, even if "Albright's friend" was willing to raise the match by $12,500. Albright reported he had told Weems he did not feel his "friend" would be willing to undertake the whole project. Rockefeller, however, cabled back, authorizing Albright to inform Weems that he would be willing to pay the entire $100,000 to close the option.[748] Albright immediately contacted Weems, telling him to go ahead with securing the option but instructing him to try to obtain a lower price. On the 25th, Weems replied that he had been unsuccessful in scaling down the figure, but Albright told him to try again.[749] With the assurance of the Rockefeller donation, Weems traveled to Des Moines to confer with Luginbuhl's attorneys. He obtained a 90-day option on the falls tract for $95,000.[750] The acquisition included the falls area and 1,100 acres of adjacent woods and gorge.[751]

Weems wrote Rockefeller in February 1952, thanking him for the donation and stating the National Park Service planned to construct a connecting road from the parkway to a large parking area near the river. He assured Rockefeller that the developments would not intrude on the beauty of the falls, and that access would be provided by foot trails to "fine vantage points." The work would take some years to execute, but in the meantime, visitors would be able to use the existing facilities, though the parkway planned an extensive clean-up before the area would be opened in May.[752]

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[747]John D. Rockefeller, Jr., New York, to Albright, New York, 2 April 1951,in Joseph W. Ernst, ed., *Worthwhile Places: Correspondence of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and Horace M. Albright*, (New York: Fordham University Press for Rockefeller Archive Center, 1991), 273-4.

[748]Albright to Rockefeller, 9 October 1951, in Ernst, *Worthwhile Places*, 276-8; and Rockefeller to Albright (telegram), 19 October 1951, in Ernst, *Worthwhile Places*, 278-9.

[749]Albright to Janet Warfield, Rockefeller's personal secretary, 25 October 1951, in Ernst, *Worthwhile Places*, 179-80.

[750]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," October 1951, 2; and Albright to Rockefeller, 5 November 1951, in Ernst, *Worthwhile Places*, 280-1.

[751]Albright to Rockefeller, 21 December 1951, in Ernst, *Worthwhile Places*, 284-5; and "U.S. Parkway Gains Scenic Falls Area," *New York Times*, 13 January 1952.

[752]Weems to Rockefeller, 11 February 1952, Pocantico Hills, New York, Rockefeller Archives Center, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Linville Falls file.

Following the announcement of the purchase, Rockefeller was deluged with letters of thanks from people living near the falls. E. R. Echerd of Linville Falls wrote the *Avery County News* to express his appreciation, adding that the residents would be willing to repay the kindness should the need arise:

> . . . should he, through his magnanimous generosity, ever reduce his vast fortune to a point of need we do declare and affirm that will furnish you free board and lodging until you recuperate to a few shekels. "Dinner is ready, John. Fetch your chair and sit!"[753]

The parkway retained the falls area for development, but transferred the largely inaccessible area below to the U.S. Forest Service for inclusion in the Linville Gorge wilderness. In February, the parkway turned over right-of-way requirements for the spur road to the state and submitted a master plan for the area to the National Park Service Washington office. This proposed construction of the spur road to a parking area just above the falls, and establishing a camping area and picnic area along its length. A combination gas station and sandwich shop would be included in the development.[754]

The National Park Service began construction of facilities at Linville Falls in June 1952. The trail system was relocated and new pedestrian overlooks were completed in 1953 and 1954. A comfort station was completed in May 1955. The area was still inaccessible from the parkway, though visitors could use the old parking area off North Carolina Highway 105. The parkway had more or less decided on the connecting road route recommended by Abbuehl in 1948, but was unable to get the state to acquire the key Dellinger tract between the parkway and the falls. As an alternative, NPS Assistant Director Wirth recommended that the parkway study a route along the west side of the Linville River. This alignment was interrupted by numerous cliff lines and would be difficult and expensive to construct. The spur road was constructed after Dellinger agreed to sell his farm while retaining a life tenure.[755]

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[753]E. R. Echerd, Linville Falls, NC, to *Avery County News*, n.d. (1952), attached to Echerd to Rockefeller, 19 January 1952, Pocantico Hills, New York, Rockefeller Archives Center, Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Linville Falls file.

[754]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1952, 4; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," February 1952, 1; and Weems to Regional Director, Region One, 26 February 1952, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 5.

[755]Scott, "What Every Good Naturalist Should Know," 13; Wiencke, "Trivia Notebook," 1; Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1953, 2; Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," May 1955, 3; Abbuehl, "Memorandum for the Superintendent," 13 December 1948, *op cit*; Edward H. Abbuehl and Arthur H. Beyer to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 11 May 1959, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 18; and Abbuehl, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of the Blue Ridge Parkway,

The service station and lunchroom for the area discussed in 1959 were not constructed. A self-guided nature trail was built that year and other existing trails were improved. The campground was constructed in 1963-65 on the former Harlen Clark farm. A new visitor contact station with comfort stations and an interpretive sales outlet were constructed in 1984 and the parking area was expanded. In 1981, the Linville Falls (Erwins View) Trail was designated a National Recreational Trail. The trail shelter on this trail was reconstructed by the B.R.I.D.G.E. Group, consisting of youthful offenders aged 18-24, in 1987.[756]

Linville Falls is one of the most popular areas along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Thousands of visitors enjoy seeing the two falls each year. The picnic area receives considerable use and the campground is often full in the summer and on weekends in the spring and fall. The principal trail to the overlooks of the falls is one of the most heavily used along the parkway. The adjacent Linville Gorge is seen by far fewer visitors, as access to the area is provided only by steep hiking trails or rough roads to a couple of points on the rim. In 1970, the North Carolina Highway Commission proposed to construct a 4-mile paved road from the Linville Falls community to Wiseman View overlooking the gorge, but conservationists objected. Today only a gravel road leads to the overlook.[757]

Several hiking trails provide access to overlooks of the falls and other nearby attractions. The Erwins View Trail leads from the visitor center along the west side of the river to overlooks of the Upper and Lower Falls and the Linville Gorge. The Plunge Basin Trail on the eastern bank meanders to another overlook of the Lower Falls, and a spur descends to their base. The .3-mile Duggars Creek Trail wanders into its own gorge. From the picnic area on the parkway, a short "leg stretcher" trail takes visitors beneath the massive three-span Linville River Bridge, the largest stone-faced span on the parkway.

Crabtree Meadows

While not one of the original recreation areas developed along the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Crabtree Meadows area at milepost 339.5 was identified early on as a desirable area

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Design Analysis, Linville Falls, PKY-BR-LF-2055J," June 1961, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 18.

[756]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1954, 4; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1959, 2-3; James R. Brotherton, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1982, BLRI Archives, 11; Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1984, 10; Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1987, 10; and Wink Hastings, Chief, Planning and Federal Programs Division, Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, to Everhardt, 3 June 1991, BLRI RP&PS Lands Files, File D30, Linville Falls Trail.

[757]"Linville Gorge Hassle is Senseless Squabble," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), 7 May 1970.

for a campground development and other facilities. The series of open meadows (which were far more open in the 1930s than at present) would be easy to develop, in contrast to the more rugged terrain farther south. In addition, Murphy (also known as Crabtree) Falls, the tallest single waterfall along the parkway route, was a fine scenic feature that would interest campers and other parkway visitors.

This mountain fastness was long used by Indians for hunting and a trade route across the mountains, though they probably never occupied the area in permanent villages. The first white settler was Will Silverstein, who came to the region from Philadelphia before the Revolutionary War to escape persecution as a German Jew, changing his name to Silver to draw less attention to his heritage. A hunter and trapper, Silver claimed a broad area on both sides of the Black Mountains including Mount Mitchell and Crabtree Meadows. Other homesteaders soon moved onto his claims, including the Shuffords, Goods, and Suttles. All built modest cabins and lived largely off the land. Members of the last three families still occupied their cabins when the parkway was established, but the Silver place (in the meadows off the tent loop in the present campground) was owned by the Murphys. Crabtree Falls was originally called "Murphy Falls" after this family.[758]

Logging in the area was begun in 1863, by Samuel Good, who cut out the timber with a six-foot crosscut saw and hauled it to his small sawmill at Armstrong. Poplar logs were cut for the homesteads; the other timber was cut to open up clearings for plantings and pasture. The early settlers constructed a road from the meadows down to the South Toe community, and present North Carolina Highway 80 was an early wagon road crossing nearby. Later, a logging railway was constructed through Buck Creek Gap with a spur leading off towards Crabtree Falls; the longer part of the present loop trail follows part of this grade.[759]

Some of the loggers brought their families and built cabins in the vicinity, and a small community coalesced around the meadows. Frank Shuttles built a grist mill, and Sam Williams established a chair and woodworking shop; there was also a blacksmith shop, a store, and a commissary. The Baptist church doubled as a schoolhouse but was accidently burnt by men clearing nearby fields. Logging continued until the 1930s; by this time, much of the land had been acquired by the U.S. Forest Service as part of the Pisgah National Forest, though the private properties remained inholdings.[760]

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[758]Margaret Thompson, "Research on the Early History of Crabtree Meadows," MSS, 1974, 1-3, BLRI Library.

[759]Thompson, "Crabtree Meadows," 3-5.

[760]Thompson, "Crabtree Meadows," 5-7.

Abbott called for acquiring 1,000 acres at "Crabtree Creek" from the U.S. Forest Service in the 1936 parkway master plan, describing the area as "an attractive grassy meadow with a good water supply available, located in the midst of very rugged country." He proposed an inn, a service station, a campground and a picnic area for the development. The Forest Service also had ideas about developing the area. In 1938, H. E. Ochsner, Forest Supervisor of the Pisgah National Forest, suggested to his chief the development of picnic areas in the Three Knobs area or along Seven Mile Creek, the conversion of old logging roads into bridle or hiking trails, and the establishment of a campground. His most ambitious ideas were for building dams across Crabtree Creek below the falls and constructing cabins for a summer colony to be operated by a concessionaire, with emphasis on active recreation including tennis, soft ball, archery and horseback riding.[761] None of these plans were ever pursued by the Forest Service, which undertook no development of the area.

Construction of the parkway through the area preceded the establishment of the recreational park by several years. By January 1937, work was underway on grading contracts. Selective cutting in the area was done by Civilian Public Service Camp NP-19 at Buck Creek Gap. Much of this involved cutting dead chestnut in the campground area. Most of the wood was stacked but never used; some of the wood can still be seen along the loop trail.[762]

In 1941, the U.S. Forest Service agreed to transfer 160 acres of the Pisgah National Forest to the parkway for development of a small recreational area. This acreage included Crabtree Falls and a small adjacent area. Development work began in 1941 and 1942 with the grading of entrance and picnic area roads, construction of trails, and installation of picnic facilities. The work was carried out by crews from the Civilian Public Service camp. A proposed swimming pool was eliminated from the plans in August 1942. CPS completed most work on the picnic area and trail system in 1943. This picnic area was not the present one, but rather what is now the upper tent loop in the campground. The parkway opened the area for public use in the spring of 1948, though visitation was light in early years.[763]

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[761]Abbott, "Brief Description," 7; and Ochsner, "Memorandum for the Regional Forester," 2.

[762]Scott, "What Every Good Naturalist Should Know," 1.

[763]Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1941, 14; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1942, 13; Abbott, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1943, 9; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1942, 2; Crouch, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1948, 7; Abbuehl, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," September 1941, 5; and Scott, "What Every Good Naturalist Should Know," 3.

The concessionaire gas station was completed by force account labor in June 1950, and the first comfort station in the [old] picnic area a month later. A small sandwich shop near the gas station predated the present coffee shop; the current board-and-batten veneered concrete block structure was constructed in 1965.[764]

The National Park Service acquired the remaining land in the recreational area from the Forest Service in 1952 after the USFS had completed logging the larger trees from the area. A small sawmill located near the junction of the Crabtree Falls and campground loop trails had been removed by this time. With the additional land, the National Park Service expanded the facilities. Two new loops were constructed for camping, a parking area was constructed at the Crabtree Falls trailhead, trails were improved and expanded, and rail fences were moved to border the campground road. The campground opened in 1954 or 1955. It proved popular immediately and in 1958 the parkway had to institute a two-week limit on camping there. A temporary campground amphitheatre was constructed in 1958, but was replaced five years later with the present 300-seat facility. When a new 82-site picnic grounds across the parkway and to the south of the main development opened in 1960, the old picnic area became another camping loop, expanding the campground from 35 to 72 units. The money for the new picnic area project came from funds originally allocated for construction of a visitor center at Doughton Park, a project which had been suspended by the National Park Service.[765]

Today, the Crabtree Meadows area is appreciated by parkway visitors, though the facilities are rarely crowded. Most of those who visit the park merely stop by the coffee shop for a snack or to browse the souvenirs. The campground is rarely crowded except on peak weekends, and the picnic area receives little use due to the large number of attractive spots elsewhere on this section of the parkway. Recreation is limited to the Crabtree Falls Trail. The 2.6-mile trail makes a scenic loop from the campground to the 60' waterfall. It descends from a parking area at the campground entrance through an oak-hickory forest with a rhododendron understory. Many springs and wet areas with profusions of ferns and wildflowers border the step and rocky trail.

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[764]Scott, "What Every Good Naturalist Should Know," 3-4; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," June 1950, 3; Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1950, 3; and "Concessionaire-Owned Buildings, Blue Ridge Parkway," attached to Earl W. Batten, Acting Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Regional Director, Southeast Region, National Park Service, 25 April 1968, BLRI Archives, RG 3, Series 16, Box 88, Folder 11.

[765]Scott, "What Every Good Naturalist Should Know," 2-5; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1962, 3; Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1963, 4; Sam P. Weems to Chief, Eastern Office, 31 July 1958, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 17; and John S. Cabot, Acting Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction to Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, 17 September 1958, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 17.

Mount Mitchell

Mount Mitchell, at 6,684' the highest peak in the eastern United States, stands to the side of the parkway near milepost 355. It is one of the most popular destinations for visitors on the Blue Ridge Parkway, though it is managed as a North Carolina state park and not as a parkway recreational area. For years, however, the National Park Service wanted to acquire the mountain, either as a wayside park for the parkway or as an individual park unit.

Interest in the mountain dates back more than a century before the parkway was established. Tourists seeking respite from the summer heat and infectious diseases of the low country sought out the Black Mountains, of which Mount Mitchell is a part, as early as the 1830s. By the 1850s crude provisions for lodging had been established on the mountain's flanks. Originally known as "Black Dome," the mountain was renamed after Dr. Elisha Mitchell, a minister, scientist, and professor at the University of North Carolina, who fell to his death on 27 June 1857 while trying to determine the peak's elevation. Once surveys by Arnold Guyot confirmed the mountain was indeed the highest point east of the Mississippi River, more tourists began to seek out the mountain. Although a "turnpike" to the summit was proposed as early as 1858, only rough foot trails provided access for the next half-century.[766]

In 1911, lumbermen C. A. Dickey and J. C. Campbell acquired the timber rights on the mountain and subsequently constructed a logging railway from the town of Black Mountain to a point at 5,800' elevation. The novel "mile-high" Mount Mitchell Railroad used nine switchbacks to make the climb; curves were very sharp, including one at 96 degrees. A 42-ton Class B Climax gear-driven locomotive switched trains back and forth as they made their climb up the switchbacks. By putting several hundred men and 700 tons of dynamite on the job, the railway was completed in only two years. It was opened on 22 July 1913; Governor Locke Craig, who was in attendance, announced "This is the beginning of magnificent things." Two hundred men were soon at work logging the Black Mountains. Spruce and fir trees from 4" to 8" in diameter were cut and shipped as pulpwood to the Champion Fiber Company at Canton; larger trees were sawn at the Dickey and Campbell mill at Black Mountain.[767]

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[766]S. Kent Schwartzkopf, *A History of Mt. Mitchell and the Black Mountains: Exploration, Development and Preservation* (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History/North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation, 1985), 35-38, 46, 61-64, 75-77.

[767]Mead Parce, *Twice-Told True Tales of the Blue Ridge & Great Smokies* (Hendersonville, NC: Harmon Den Press, 1995), 1-6; and Jeff Lovelace, *Mount Mitchell: Its Railroad & Toll Road* (Johnson City, TN: The Overmountain Press, 1992), 3-4, 6-9.

On 17 September 1913, Dickey and Campbell sold out to two Williamsport, Pennsylvania lumbermen, Allen Perley and his son-in-law, William Crockett. Perley and Crockett extended the railway even higher. By 1914, a total of 21 miles had been constructed to a point at 5,800' elevation, only eight-tenths of a mile from the summit and the lower limit of the spruce-fir zone. A second locomotive was put into service, and before long, the lumbermen were approached by tourists who wanted to ride along. After experimenting with some organized tours, Perley and Crockett began offering passenger service late in 1913. People could now ride to within a mile of the summit. To promote the service, Perley and Crockett hired Col. Sandford H. Cohen as general passenger agent. Cohen began promoting the trip as a grand adventure, neglecting to point out that travelers would pass through an utterly devastated country laid waste by the logging operations. The logging damage, erosion, windfalls, and fires set off by the locomotives created a public outcry. In 1915 North Carolina governor Locke Craig led a successful fight to protect the crown of the mountain as North Carolina's first state park, calling Mount Mitchell "something we should all be proud of and endeavor to exploit as much as possible."[768]

Perley and Crockett suspended rail passenger service in 1919 so they could harvest the remainder of the timber. By 1921, they had removed all the timber from their vast 9,000 acre holdings. Remembering the thousands of visitors who had paid to ride the railway to the top, Perley's son, Fred, and C. A. Dickey, one of the original builders of the railway, combined to form the Mount Mitchell Development Company. They tore up the rails and constructed a toll road on the old roadbed in 1922. Three years later, a group from Yancey County constructed another toll road from Pensacola to Stepps Gap, then along the ridge of the Black Mountains to Mount Mitchell.[769]

In the 1936 master plan, Abbott suggested the parkway might acquire Mount Mitchell as a potential parkway recreational area, but since the area was already protected as North Carolina's first state park, no action was taken towards transferring it to the federal government. At the time, the Civilian Conservation Corps was developing facilities for the state park. These included a wooden refreshment stand and rest room complex just below the summit, which now served as the park's visitor center, and an extensive trail system.[770]

Acquisition of the state park was raised again in 1938 by NPS Regional Landscape Architect V. R. Ludgate, who felt the fact that the mountain was the highest in the east

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[768]Parce, *Twice Told True Tales,* 1-6; and Lovelace, *Mount Mitchell,* 4, 12-15, 39.

[769]Parce, *Twice Told True Tales,* 7; and Schwartzkopf, *A History of Mt. Mitchell*, 99-101.

[770]Abbott, "Brief Description," 7; and Schwartzkopf, *A History of Mt. Mitchell*, 104.

and easily accessible from the parkway merited federal ownership. Ludgate was concerned that "if this park remains under state control, there is always the possibility of its being adversely exploited to obtain the maximum monetary income." If the park were to be administered as a parkway recreational area, the federal government could exercise greater restraint on developments, restricting public use facilities to nearby points that would not detract from the "primitive character which seems so essential at Mount Mitchell."[771] The matter was not pursued.

Upon the completion of the Blue Ridge Parkway segment between North Carolina Highway 80 and Black Mountain Gap, the state bought out the old toll road section between the parkway and the state park, providing motorists with free access to the lofty summit. The old toll roads soon became economically infeasible to maintain, and all but a few stalwart hikers traveled to the mountain via the parkway.[772]

In 1944, Col. D. W. Adams of Old Fort, North Carolina approached Senator John Reynolds and Congressman Robert L. Doughton to urge them to sponsor legislation to transfer Mount Mitchell State Park and the surrounding Mount Mitchell Game Preserve to the National Park Service for administration, again as a unit of the Blue Ridge Parkway. While Reynolds and Doughton expressed interest in the proposal, the bill was never introduced.[773]

In August 1945, the North Carolina State Highway and Public Works Commission announced that it would contract for an improved state road from the parkway to the top of Mount Mitchell. Parkway Superintendent Weems had long tried to interest the state in such a connection, and greeted the news with acclaim. The five-mile road (now North Carolina Highway 128) opened to public travel in October 1947.[774] The state then embarked on a series of improvements to the park. In 1948, a picnic area and a small tent campground were established. During the 1950s a $240,000 capital improvement program funded construction of a restaurant and lounge building, a small museum, and an expanded parking area. The present stone-faced concrete observation tower, the third such structure to be located on the mountain, opened in 1960.[775]

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[771]V. R. Ludgate to Abbott, 21 May 1938, in General Correspondence, Bureau of Public Roads, 1933-38, BLRI Maintenance Division files.

[772]Schwartzkopf, *A History of Mt. Mitchell*, 105.

[773]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1944, 2.

[774]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," September 1945, 2; and Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," October 1947, 4.

[775]Schwartzkopf, *A History of Mt. Mitchell*, 105-06.

On 20 August 1963, the *Asheville Citizen-Times* reported that Governor Terry Sanford had committed the state to build a road from Mount Mitchell to Mount Celo, the site of a proposed ski resort. The parkway staff was alarmed at the prospect of non-conforming uses of the parkway involved in the construction, maintenance, and operation of the area, as all traffic to Mount Mitchell continued to travel over the parkway, there being no service road to the state park.[776] The resort was never established, but parkway officials would continue to be concerned about the lack of a separate access road.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, new proposals to establish a national park centered on Mount Mitchell gained considerable support. Congressman Roy A. Taylor introduced an amendment to a bill which authorized the National Park Service to conduct studies for the new unit. The National Park Service, which had recently designated Mount Mitchell as a National Natural Landmark, recommended a 240,000-acre park surrounding the peak, but Yancey County residents protested against the plan. In 1978 the North Carolina legislature proclaimed it was "unalterably opposed" to giving up the state's first park. In light of the opposition, the Interior Department dropped Mount Mitchell from its park study program in March 1979.[777]

Buncombe County and Black Mountain officials petitioned the state in 1966 for a new road from U.S. Highway 70 to the old toll road and to extend it to a connection with North Carolina 128 at Black Mountain Gap. There, the road would pass under the parkway to provide a direct connection to Mount Mitchell from the Swannanoa-Black Mountain area. Some residents opposed the road, expressing concerns about commercial development in the mountains, but economic factors evidently halted the project. In 1982, the Black Mountain Chamber of Commerce proposed reconstructing the Mount Mitchell Railroad over the old roadbed. They were stymied by the refusal of the Mountain Retreat Association (Montreat) to allow construction in its watershed, and by the Park Service's estimates for the costs of a tunnel under the parkway right-of-way.[778]

While it never became a unit of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Mount Mitchell remains one of the principal attractions along the scenic route and accounts for a considerable amount of parkway traffic, especially between Asheville and the state park. The parkway continues to provide the only vehicular access to North Carolina 128, the park entrance road, and the mountain's lofty profile dominates views from several parkway overlooks.

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[776]Bean, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1963, 3.

[777]Schwartzkopf, *A History of Mt. Mitchell*, 109-10.

[778]Lovelace, *Mount Mitchell*, 48-50.

Craggy Gardens

The open heath balds of the Great Craggy Mountains were a popular attraction to nineteenth-century tourists, especially in June when the rhododendron were in bloom. The magnificent flower displays gave the area the name "Craggy Gardens." The origin of the balds is unclear; natural forces such as lightning-caused fires may have been responsible, or the balds may have been cleared by man for pasturing livestock during the summer season. Grazing was widespread in the Great Craggies until the 1920s. To protect the Asheville and Woodfin watersheds in 1920, grazing, camping, and picnicking in the area were forbidden, and tourist interest was largely discouraged. The Asheville Watershed Authority even dynamited a large natural rock shelter nearby to prevent its use by campers.[779]

In the early 1930s, the Asheville Chamber of Commerce and the city's Optimist Club made arrangements to open the area for day use. These organizations were instrumental in having a Civilian Conservation Corps camp established at Dillingham at the foot of the Craggies, and the CCC crews constructed the "Scenic Elk Mountain Highway" (now North Carolina Highway 694) to Ivy Gap, less than a mile away. A trail led from the terminus to Craggy Pinnacle and across the saddle to Craggy Dome. Both of these summits were largely controlled by the U.S. Forest Service as part of the Pisgah National Forest. The road was opened in 1935 in time for Asheville's Rhododendron Festival.[780]

The CCC camp, working for the Forest Service, also constructed the large trail shelter on the Craggy Gardens trail in 1938 at a cost of $1,665. The Forest Service established a picnic area about a half-mile off the parkway with parking capacity for 350 cars and hiking trails into the popular rhododendron thickets. Over 25,000 people visited the area that year.[781]

The original routing plans for the Blue Ridge Parkway called for it to pass through the Black Mountains, but the route was changed to take it through the Craggies and afford visitors the opportunity of seeing the unique floral displays and rugged mountain scenery. The 1936 master plan recommended acquiring 1,000 acres in the area from the Forest Service and the construction of an inn, a service station and a picnic area.[782] In 1938, Forest Service officials indicated they wanted to continue development of the Craggy

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[779]"Craggy Gardens Trail Shelter," undated MSS, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 38, Box I, Folder 14; and Sue Jennings, "Interpretive Guide for Craggy Gardens, North Carolina," MSS, BLRI Library, 5.

[780]"Craggy Gardens Trail Shelter;" and Jennings, "Interpretive Guide," 5.

[781]"Craggy Gardens Trail Shelter;" and Ochsner, "Memorandum for the Regional Forester," 3.

[782]Abbott, "Brief Description," 7.

Gardens area as part of the Pisgah National Forest. The parkway staff agreed, stating that the NPS might offer cooperation in field study of plans for the area, but preferring to participate in planning for the picnic area at Bee Tree Gap.[783]

The National Park Service ultimately acquired 160 acres in the Craggy Gardens area from the Forest Service in October 1950. Two years later it constructed a small visitor contact station designed by parkway architects Charles Grossman and George Skillman, and built a self-guiding nature trail on Craggy Knob. In 1955, it converted the visitor contact station into a comfort station, but changed it back to a visitor center in 1957. Parkway crews built a connecting trail to the Craggy Knob Trail from the visitor center, which also provided access to the USFS Douglas Falls (Carter Creek Falls) Trail. This trail led to a 17-acre preserve in the Pisgah National Forest including the falls and a stand of virgin hemlock. In 1959 the parkway constructed the trail from the Craggy Dome parking area to the Pinnacle. The first Craggy Knob trail was closed in the early 1970s and replaced with the present Craggy Gardens Trail. The Mountains-to-Sea Trail was extended from Asheville to the Craggy Gardens Picnic Area in 1987 and through the rest of the area in the early 1990s.[784]

In 1968, the Asheville City Council asked the National Park Service to enter into a cooperative agreement under which the National Park Service would construct a road south from the parkway at Bee Tree Gap to the city's Bee Tree Reservoir, part of a 5,000-acre secondary watershed it had retired from use as a water supply source five years earlier. The National Park Service would construct new camping and picnic areas at the reservoir to supplement small facilities already established by the city. The city would transfer the necessary land for the road and the development to the National Park Service. In 1970, the National Park Service completed a "design analysis" for the area. It recommended against construction of the proposed road, suggesting that the area be set aside for backcountry camping instead. The plan also called for construction of a new interpretive shelter at the Craggy Dome overlook, construction of two residences for seasonal employees near the picnic area or Bee Tree Gap, and a new parking area opposite the entrance to the picnic grounds. This parking area would serve an 11-mile trail system to be located in the Bee Tree watershed, providing parking for day users and backcountry campers. The costs for implementing the entire plan were estimated at $192,000. The City of Asheville rejected the planned hiking trail network and

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[783]Abbott, "Report on Conference," 3.

[784]Crouch, "Monthly Narrative Report," October 1950, 1; Scott, "What Every Good Naturalist Should Know," 6; and Abbuehl, "Architecture on the Blue Ridge Parkway," 5. Carter Falls was renamed "Douglas Falls" following a visit by Supreme Court Associate Justice William O. Douglas in September 1962. (Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," September 1962, 1.)

backcountry camping provisions, however, and none of the proposed development ensued.[785]

The 700-acre recreational area includes the small visitor contact station and several parking overlooks, a picnic area and trail system. The area is one of the most popular stops on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The rhododendron displays attract large numbers of visitors in June. Later in the summer, many visitors return to pick blueberries, and in the fall, even larger numbers come to view the fabulous fall colors. Winter storms often cloak the gnarled trees and shrubs in ice, producing a different sort of beauty. Many of the visitors amble over the area's trail systems, notably on the Craggy Garden and Craggy Pinnacle trails; other trails lead to Douglas Falls and Snowball Mountain. The Craggy Gardens area has been designated a North Carolina Natural Heritage Area and has been recommended as a National Natural Landmark.[786]

Unfortunately, such popularity has its price. In October 1988, the National Park Service Cooperative Unit at the University of Georgia monitored visitor activities at Craggy Pinnacle, observing an average of 518 visitors a day on the official and non-official trails. Due to the limited amount of official viewing area at the summit, many of the visitors clambered on rock crops which were habitat for fragile rare plants, sixteen of which are listed by the State of North Carolina as endangered. Some constitute a relic subalpine community from the last glacial period; others are endemic to the Southern Appalachians. The surveyors recorded an average of 40 person-hours on the outcrops over the summer, rising to 80 person-hours during the peak fall color season.[787] In response to the study, parkway resource management staff oversaw measures to reduce the impact on the plant community. These included closing unofficial trails on Craggy Pinnacle (including a popular one rising from the visitor center parking lot), placing signs warning of fines for unauthorized travel, constructing a stone-walled overlook in 1991 to restrict crowds on the Pinnacle, and developing a program to educate visitors about the consequences of

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[785]"Design Analysis, Craggy Gardens Developed Area, Drawing No. PKY-BR-CG-2050-E, Blue Ridge Parkway," July 1970, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 43; Phin. Horton, III, City Manager, City of Asheville, to Liles, 2 September 1970, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 11, Folder 40; and "Watershed Plan Squelched," *Asheville Times* (NC), 28 August 1970.

[786]"Craggy Gardens," Blue Ridge Parkway information leaflet, February 1991. A 1954 development plan for the area shows a hiking trail from Graybeard Mountain Overlook to the summit of Craggy Dome, but this trail apparently no longer exists. ("Craggy Gardens, NC Developed Areas & Utilities Plan, Part of the Master Plan, Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-CG-2050-D, sheet 31, May 1954. BLRI ETS files, Master Plans, Drawer 1A.)

[787]Bart R. Johnson, "Visitor Use at Craggy Pinnacle, Blue Ridge Parkway: Its Impacts on Rare Plants and Implications for Site Management" (Athens, GA: National Park Service Cooperative Unit Technical Report #54, University of Georgia, April 1989), 2-7.

trampling. Resource management staff have attempted to replant some of the threatened plants with mixed success.[788]

Immediately north and northeast of the Craggy Gardens area is the "Craggy Mountain Scenic Area," a 1,000-acre scenic area centered around Douglas Falls and managed by the U.S. Forest Service as an administrative unit of the Pisgah National Forest. The November 1994 management plan for the Pisgah Forest designates 1,800 acres in the vicinity as a "special interest area" and recommends designation as the "Craggy Mountain Wilderness."[789] Action by Congress will be necessary, but the North Carolina delegation has shown little interest in supporting the proposal.

Bent Creek

In the 1930s, the U.S. Forest Service began developing a small recreation area at Bent Creek, on the southwest outskirts of Asheville where North Carolina Highway 191 intersected the proposed parkway route. The area had a small picnic ground by 1938. Plans were being made for a small lake and associated campground. At a conference with USFS officials in 1938, parkway planners agreed to participate in collaborative studies for the development, but recommended that the Forest Service continue administration of the area. National Park Service involvement would be confined to the construction of an access road from the planned parkway interchange with Highway 191.[790] The Forest Service later dammed Bent Creek and established the Lake Powhatan Campground. The area appears on parkway strip maps, but no signs on the road direct visitors to the development, which is easily accessible from the parkway access road.

Mount Pisgah

Mount Pisgah is the most emphatic feature of the skyline in the Asheville area; the sharply rounded summit (5,721') is visible from miles away. The lushly forested peak and the surrounding area was rich in game.[791] The Cherokee called it "Elseetoss," but the early settlers called it "Mount Pisgah" after the mountain from which Moses first saw the

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[788]Scott, "What Every Good Naturalist Should Know," 6; and Lisa Jameson, BLRI Resource Management Ranger, interview by the author, 13 July 1996.

[789]Paul Bradley, District Ranger, Appalachian Ranger District, Pisgah National Forest, interview by the author, 27 March 1997.

[790]Abbott, "Report on Conference," 3; and Ochsner, "Memorandum for the Regional Forester," 3.

[791]"Historical Sketches of Mount Pisgah," undated MSS, BLRI Library, vertical files, Mount Pisgah folder.

Promised Land.[792] Until 1797, the land was owned by the state of North Carolina as part of its unreserved domain. That year, a tract totaling more than 250,000 acres was purchased by David Allison. Over the next century, the land was parceled out, but little development took place.[793]

In the 1830s the summit of Mount Pisgah and some adjoining lands were owned by Thomas Lanier Clingman, later a state legislator, U.S. Congressman and Senator, and Confederate general. In 1897, Clingman sold the land to George Washington Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt, the youngest grandson of railway magnate "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt, began acquiring land for his "Pisgah Forest" estate in 1895. Vanderbilt would soon build one of the grandest of American houses, Biltmore, on the outskirts of Asheville. The mountainous land was largely devoted to timber production. In 1891 Vanderbilt engaged Pennsylvanian Gifford Pinchot, who had studied forestry in Europe, to manage the operations. Pinchot was succeeded in 1898 by Dr. Carl Schenck of the University of Darmstadt, who established the first forestry school in the nation on the Vanderbilt property where he promoted "scientific forestry," a principle that held that substantial proceeds from timber sales should be devoted to replanting, fire protection, and forest improvement. Although Schenck's school garnered considerable acclaim and its graduates went on to senior positions with the U.S. Forest Service and commercial timber companies, it could not compete with forestry schools later established by large universities, and closed its doors in 1914.[794]

Vanderbilt, an avid outdoorsman, constructed a poplar log hunting lodge on the shoulders of Mount Pisgah in 1898. The "Buck Springs Lodge" had four bedrooms and detached

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[792]There is considerable debate about who actually gave the mountain its name. One holds that a Rev. James Hall, a soldier in General Griffith Rutherford's 1776 expedition against the Cherokee, gave it the name as he recognized the lush French Broad River valley at the mountain's feet as another promised land. Another preacher, the Reverend George Newton who founded Newton Academy at Asheville in the late 18th Century, is also credited with the naming of the peak. At any rate, the name does not appear in records until 1808, when Haywood County was split off from Buncombe County, and the boundary line referred to "Mount Pisgah." ("Historical Sketches of Mount Pisgah").

[793]Larry L. Freeman, "A Chronological History of Mount Pisgah Area, Lands and Developed Area," undated MSS, 1-2, BLRI Library, Vertical Files, Mount Pisgah file.

[794]"Historical Sketches of Mount Pisgah," 1-2; and Freeman, "Chronological History," 1-2. For a definitive account, see Carl Alwin Schenck, *Birth of Forestry in America: Biltmore Forest School, 1893-1913*, originally published in 1955 as *The Biltmore Story: Recollections of the Beginning of Forestry in the United States*. (Santa Cruz, CA: Forest History Society, 1974). The U.S. Forest Service later reconstructed the Biltmore Forestry School as part of the "Cradle of Forestry in America," seen from the parkway at milepost 411.

structures housing two suites and a kitchen/dining room complex.[795] To get to the lodge, he had a rough wagon road constructed to Buck Springs Gap, which was the genesis of the Shut-In Trail, which today runs 16 miles from Asheville to Mount Pisgah. Following Vanderbilt's death in 1917, his widow sold 80,248 acres of the land to the National Forest Reservation Commission, which purchased it under the authority of the 1911 Weeks Act, legislation which enabled USFS to purchase lands for watershed protection. The land became the nucleus of the Pisgah National Forest, the first national forest in North Carolina.[796]

George Farrington Weston and his wife, Mary Wheeler Weston, established the Pisgah National Forest Inn on a site adjacent to the present Pisgah Inn in 1919. The English-born Weston had been Vanderbilt's farm superintendent from 1895 to 1903. After the US Forest Service purchased the Mount Pisgah area from the Vanderbilt estate, Weston obtained a 30-year lease and a concession permit for the lodgings. Weston drew up the plans and supervised the construction for the log and board-and-batten frame inn, which opened for the 1920 season. Visitors came up a narrow mountain road from Chandler (now North Carolina Highway 151), which was open to ascending traffic in the morning and downhill traffic in the afternoon.[797]

The inn was located on a shelf of Mount Pisgah at 5120' elevation, affording a splendid view down into the Davidson River valley. In addition to the inn itself, the Westons constructed four overnight cabins. Mrs. Weston established a wildflower garden with nearly 300 of flowers and shrubs, many of which were rare species, on the property.[798] The inn drew many visitors, most of them of wealthy vacationers drawn to Western North Carolina for its scenery or the touted salubrious effects of the mountain climate.[799]

The Westons sold out in 1937 to H. H. Nash and Harold Moon. Nash had been affiliated with hotels in Pinehurst, North Carolina, New York City, and Washington, D.C. Moon had managed hotels in New York and Stanford, Connecticut. A decline in business during World War II led the pair to sell their interests to Marine Hess and Bess Cameron in 1948. Seven years later, the inn was sold to Long Islanders Leslie G. and Leda D. Kirschner who operated the inn under a Forest Service permit until 1962. Although the

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[795]"Historical Sketches of Mount Pisgah," 2-3.

[796]"Historical Sketches of Mount Pisgah," 2; and Schenck, *Birth of Forestry*, 207-208.

[797]"Old Pisgah Inn," undated MSS, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 38, Box 1, Folder 14.

[798]Page Press, "Pisgah National Forest Inn," MSS, 27 April 1982, 1-3. BLRI Library, Vertical Files, Mount Pisgah file.

[799]Press, "Pisgah National Forest Inn," 4.

Kirschners renovated the inn, when the Blue Ridge Parkway acquired the land from the Forest Service, they determined to have the structure substantially rehabilitated or replaced at a cost of no less than $250,000. The improved facilities, which would include a dining room, gift shop, a service station and at least fifteen additional rooms, was to be completed by 1967. If the Kirschners agreed, they would be granted a concession contract continuing their operation through 1982.[800]

As parkway officials began planning for the extension of the road through the Mount Pisgah area, they did not originally contemplate acquiring land for a recreation area. Instead, they recommended that the Forest Service continue development and administration. They wanted to participate in collaborative planning for the area, but believed their role should be limited to providing access roads.[801] The parkway contacted the Forest Service in 1946 concerning possible developments at Mount Pisgah, even though the parkway would not be constructed through the area for many years. Superintendent Weems suggested a coffee shop and a gas station, with picnicking and camping north of the road. A parking area would be provided for those wishing to climb the mountain, which would remain in Forest Service ownership. A 1952 preliminary development plan called for the gas station, a picnic area, improved camping facilities, and replacement of the Pisgah Inn with a modern building. One of seven projected parkway visitor information centers would be located in the development. The state would be requested to acquire the Vanderbilt Lodge, but no decision had yet been made concerning its ultimate use or disposition.[802]

As the parkway was not yet extended into the area, the situation remained unchanged for more than a decade. In 1959, Weems urged the NPS Eastern Office of Design and Construction to approve a preliminary development for the area. The Kirschners, he stated, were concerned that they had no knowledge of what to expect from the transfer of the area to the parkway. They had little capital, he reported, but if they were to be allowed to continue operations, they would want to negotiate a concession contract for the operation. Development room was limited, and any new operation would probably have to be located on the site of the present inn, either as a totally new facility, or one replaced over time. Weems indicated there would be no room for camping facilities; these would be provided at Tennessee Bald, sixteen miles to the southwest.[803]

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[800]Press, "Pisgah National Forest Inn," 4-5.

[801]Abbott, "Report on Conference," 4.

[802]Weems to Krueger, 30 August 1946; and "Development Plan, Mount Pisgah," June 1952, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 9.

[803]Sam P. Weems to Chief, Eastern Office, 27 January 1959. BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 18.

At this point, the parkway again proposed establishment of a visitor center at Mount Pisgah. The theme, "Appalachian Forests," would focus on forest types, plant succession, and the establishment of the first national forest. The NPS Eastern Office of Design and Construction asked that the visitor center be dropped from the plans, however, as it was not certain that Mount Pisgah was the most appropriate spot for such a facility. The parkway removed the visitor center from the plans but retained the parking overlook at which it would have been located, since it offered a fine view of Mount Pisgah and could be used later if a decision was reached to build the facility.[804] This parking area was constructed and is now the "no-name" overlook at Mount Pisgah.

In 1960, the state of North Carolina acquired the 471-acre Vanderbilt Buck Springs tract for $143,488. The parkway informed the state that it had no use for the buildings. A year later, NPS Director Wirth indicated he would like to have a special study prepared with a view toward preserving at least the main lodge for an exhibit on the historic use of the area. Parkway Assistant Superintendent Howard Stricklin protested that the sixty-year-old building would be difficult to maintain. He added that the park naturalist was opposed to using the lodge as a visitor center, as he wanted all the visitor centers located along the parkway motor road, believing visitors would not stop in if they had to travel any distance from the main road. Stricklin also believed the lodge could not easily be adapted without either diminishing its original charm or sacrificing its functionality as a visitor center. Stricklin reported the state had been instructed to remove the building, though the foundations were to be preserved in case the parkway wanted to use them to make a terrace for an overlook. Wirth reluctantly agreed to the demolition, though he directed that the foundations be removed as well. The parkway subsequently constructed a spur road up to a point near the ruins; the parking area provided access to trailheads for Mount Pisgah and the lodge site.[805]

In 1962 the Kirschners associated themselves with backers in Waynesville and Hazelwood to form Pisgah Inn, Inc. The National Park Service granted a concession

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[804]Dick Sutton, Acting Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, National Park Service, to Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, 2 March 1959, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 18; and Weems to Chief, Eastern Office, 9 March 1959, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 18.

[805]Weems, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1960, 5; Dudley Bayliss to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, 28 June 1961, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 22; Howard B. Stricklin to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, 5 July 1961, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 22; Howard B. Stricklin to Chief, Eastern Office of Design and Construction, National Park Service, 19 October 1960, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 21; and John A. Reshoft to Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, 20 September 1961, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 24.

contract allowing the old inn to continue in operation while new facilities were being constructed. Once the first new building with 26 units was completed in 1965, the Park Service stipulated the old inn could only be used for employee housing or overflow from the new units. In 1968, an order was issued limiting use of the old inn for employee housing only.[806] Ultimately, the deterioration of the structure resulted in an order for its demolition.

The Pisgah service station and camp store opened on 18 July 1965. The main buildings for the inn, containing a dining room, grill, gift shop, and four lodging units, opened on 1 May 1966. The concessionaire began operating the campground in 1984.[807]

The campground had been developed by the Forest Service in the 1930s and was called the "Frying Pan Gap Camping Area." In 1938, parkway officials considered asking for it to be relocated to the vicinity of the Mount Pisgah parking area, arguing that the capacity was too limited and the site itself had scenic value. It then had room for about 100 people, but Forest Service officials thought it could be enlarged to accommodate 250. Additional loops were ultimately added by the parkway, providing a total of 120 sites, and a small amphitheatre was constructed. The small registration kiosk located at the campground was constructed by the CCC camp at Oconaluftee in Great Smoky Mountains National Park in the 1930s, and was relocated from that park to Mount Pisgah in 1968.[808]

By 1986, the condition of the old Pisgah Inn had so deteriorated that the National Park Service was forced to address its fate. In September, as part of the environmental review mandated by the National Historic Preservation Act, the parkway proposed five alternative courses of action. Four of these involved some rehabilitation work, ranging from stabilization of the building for simple preservation to a total rehabilitation to permit it to be operated as a hotel. These options ranged in estimated cost from $140,264 for stabilization only, which would not permit any public use, to $392,000 for a total rehabilitation. Stabilizing the very deteriorated east wing of the structure would add another $42,000 to the total. The fifth and least expensive option called for the demolition of the structure.. Despite a campaign by state preservationists, Superintendent Everhardt authorized the demolition of the structure in October. In an accompanying

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[806]Press, "Pisgah National Forest Inn," 4-6; and Eden, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1966, 7.

[807]Eden, "Acting Superintendent's Annual Report," 1966, 7; and Everhardt, "Superintendent's Annual Report," 1987, 3.

[808]Abbott, "Report on Conference," 3-4; Ochsner, "Memorandum for the Regional Forester," 4; and Liles to Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains, 24 May 1968.

report, the National Park Service asserted that in addition to the high cost of a proposed rehabilitation, some 70-80 percent of the structure's historic fabric would have to be replaced. As the building had been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the structure was recorded prior to its demolition the following year.[809]

The Mount Pisgah recreational area is the most popular attraction on the parkway south of Asheville. Visitors enjoy camping or staying overnight in the lodge, taking a meal in the dining room or adjacent coffee shop. The emphasis of the park is on outdoor recreation. Six hiking trails pass through or emanate from the recreational park, some across U.S. Forest Service land. The Mount Pisgah Trail runs 1.6 miles from the Mount Pisgah parking area to the 5,721' summit, and is one of the most popular along the parkway. The Buck Spring Trail passes by the site of the old Vanderbilt hunting lodge; part of the trail is marked as a self-guiding nature trail. A moderate, 1.1-mile trail from the Buck Springs Overlook, an extension drops 6.2 miles from the Pisgah Inn to U.S. 276. The Pilot Rock and Laurel Mountain trails are spurs off the Buck Springs Trail dropping to the Yellow Gap Road 1,700' below. A 1-mile trail connects the trailheads with the Pisgah Inn and the Mount Pisgah campground. A U.S. Forest Service fire tower, offering splendid views from the summit of 5,450' Frying Pan Mountain, is the culmination of a hike along the 2.1-mile Frying Pan Mountain Trail. The longest is the 17-mile Shut-In Trail, which follows the general route of the old Vanderbilt wagon road to Mount Pisgah from the USFS Bent Creek Recreational Area on the outskirts of Asheville.[810]

Pigeon River Falls

The Graveyard Fields area on parkway right at milepost 418.8 is one of the most dramatic landscapes on the lower end of the parkway. The open valley below hosts a scrub forest only now recovering from "the Big Fire" of November 1925. Two waterfalls are located below the parkway: Yellowstone Falls, which tumbles down a chasm of Rocky Bluff, and the smaller Upper (or Second) Falls, a slight cascade. The name "Graveyard Fields" is derived from mounds marking stumps left after a massive "blow-down" or windstorm which devastated the original forest. The mounds, which had the appearance of raised

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[809]Everhardt to William S. Price, Jr., Director, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 3 September 1986, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 46, Box 63, Folder 47; and Everhardt to Regional Director, Southeast Region, National Park Service, 23 October 1986, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 46, Box 63, Folder 47.

[810]"Mount Pisgah Area Trails," Blue Ridge Parkway information leaflet, n.d.; and Western Carolina Botanical Club, "Buck Springs Trail: A Botanical Tour," Blue Ridge Parkway information leaflet, 1991.

graves, were destroyed by the great fire, which burned everything in the area down to the bedrock.

Abbott envisioned a mountain lake development here on the headwaters of the Pigeon River. A dam 90' high just above Yellowstone Falls would impound a lake nearly 4,000' long at an elevation of 5,000', flooding the Graveyard Fields. Abbott thought this would make for a fine recreation area and proposed a lodge, a service station, a campground and a picnic area. In 1938, the Forest Service agreed to a smaller development, with a lake of only ten to fifteen acres, a picnic area and a campground. The parkway prepared a master plan for the area in June 1942, but no development was authorized during the war. Following the conclusion of hostilities, a new master plan was prepared and transmitted it to the Forest Service in 1946.[811] Superintendent Weems again suggested that the area provided an ideal location for a major recreational development that would include picnic grounds, camping facilities, food concessions, and a gas station. Asserting that the area would attract both overnight visitors and long term campers, Weems touted the site's attractions, observing, "A mountain stream over 5,000 feet high is of course unusual and, coupled with the possibilities for a lake development, makes it particularly desirable.".[812]

The Forest Service rejected the proposal, however, and no development took place. Today, the Graveyard Fields overlook provides access to hiking trails through the largely open landscape along the Yellowstone River with its two waterfalls. The area also serves as an access point to Graveyard Ridge Trail, which leads into the Shining Rock wilderness adjoining the area to the north. Because of the popularity of the area for hiking and unregulated backcountry camping, the parking overlook is often filled to capacity, and cars are frequently parked along the parkway shoulders through this section for a considerable distance.

Devils Courthouse

Looming over the parkway at milepost 422.4 is the Devils Courthouse, a rocky exposed dome standing in sharp profile against the escarpment. The Cherokee held that the rocky prominence was the dancing grounds of their legendary giant, Tsul-ka-lu, called "Judaculla" by the whites. Whatever name the Cherokee themselves gave the formation

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[811]Abbott, "Brief Description," 8; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1946, 1; Abbott, "Resident Landscape Architect's Monthly Report," June 1942, 7; and Ochsner, "Memorandum for the Regional Forester," 4.

[812]Weems to Krueger, 30 August 1946, 3.

has unfortunately been lost. The name "Devils Courthouse" was given by white settlers. The Devil supposedly held court in a cave-like chamber inside the mountain.[813]

George W. Vanderbilt, who later owned the promontory, had a trail constructed from Frying Pan Gap at Mount Pisgah south to Devils Courthouse in 1904. For many years, the exposed rocky mountain spur was a popular destination for picnics. Construction of the trail is said to have "marked the beginning of 'mountaineering for pleasure and recreation' in the area."[814]

In 1938, Forest Service officials proposed construction of a large parking area and a hiking trail to the top of the rock, which they termed "one of the most outstanding lookouts on the [Pisgah National] Forest." If an adequate water supply could be determined, they also thought a concession building should be provided.[815] The Blue Ridge Parkway subsequently acquired the rocky point, but development was limited to the construction of the parking area and improvements to the trail. A hiking trail leads to a rock-walled overlook on the summit, from which views of several states may be obtained in clear weather. The trail is one of the most popular on the parkway, and the parking area is often filled to capacity on a fine summer day.

Tennessee Bald

This 5,560' mountain is located at the junction of the Pisgah and Balsam mountain ranges, and marks the southernmost point on the Blue Ridge Parkway. At this point, the parkway bends to the northwest towards its terminus at Great Smoky Mountains National Park. In the 1930s, when the parkway was being planned, the mountain was largely bald. Yoday it is cloaked in a semi-boreal forest of spruce and fraser fir, though the latter has been ravaged by the balsam wooly adelgid.

The 1936 parkway master plan called for an inn, a service station, and a picnic area in the meadow between the bald and Black Mountain. The Forest Service endorsed the establishment of a picnic area in 1938. The parkway submitted a master plan for a scaled-down development to the Forest Service in 1946. At this time, only day use facilities were proposed, consisting of a coffee shop, a gas station, a picnic area and trails;

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[813]H. C. Wilburn, "Massive Plateau Joins Two Mountain Ranges," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), 3 February 1952.

[814]"Eight Parkway Historical Markers Proposed; List is Announced," *The Charlotte Observer* (NC), 17 February 1956; and Hiram C. Wilburn, Waynesville, NC, to Weems, 20 January 1956, BLRI RP&PS file D-6627, Interpretive Signs and Markers.

[815]Ochsner, "Memorandum for the Regional Forester," 5.

the entrance to the development would come from the Blue Ridge Parkway Georgia extension, then under serious consideration. The NPS regional office, however, objected to parts of the plan, pointing out that trails were located in the watershed for the water supply, and that the proposed coffee shop was too far from the parkway. The area was eventually acquired by the parkway; a test well was driven for a water supply in 1961, but facilities were never developed.[816] When the Blue Ridge Parkway extension concept was finally dropped, all planning for developments at Tennessee Bald was abandoned.

Richland Balsam

The Blue Ridge Parkway reaches its highest elevation, 6,053', on the shoulder of "Richland Mountain of the Balsams." When the parkway was being planned, the mountain was in a sad state, the timber having all been cut. Abbott saw great potential in the area as a recreational park once it had been cleaned up and reforested. In the 1936 master plan, he proposed a development including a lodge, a service station, a campground and a picnic area.[817] As with many other proposed developments along the parkway, however, no construction ever took place. A 1.4-mile self-guiding nature trail was established in 1961. It climbed from the Haywood-Jackson Overlook to Richland Balsam Mountain's 6,292' summit. A proposed observation tower on the summit was never constructed.[818]

Balsam Gap

At milepost 443.1 is Balsam Gap, the dividing point between the Great Balsam and Plott Balsam mountains. The 3,370' gap was crossed by a 2,400-man frontier army under General Griffith Rutherford in 1776 as they waged a scorched-earth campaign against the Cherokee villages during the American Revolution. The gap was also the home to Tom Collins, a frontiersman best remembered for the drink which bears his name.[819] At a

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[816]Abbott, "Brief Description," 8; Abbott, "Monthly Narrative Report," August 1946, 1; Stricklin, "Monthly Narrative Report," September 1961, 2; Ochsner, "Memorandum for the Regional Forester," 5; Weems to Krueger, 30 August 1946, 1-2; Edward S. Zimmer to Weems, 11 August 1952, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 9; "Tennessee Bald Development Plan, to accompany drawing No. PKY-BR-TB-2050B," June 1952, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 9, Folder 9; and "Roads and Trails Map, Tennessee Bald, Part of the Master Plan for Blue Ridge Parkway," BLRI drawing PKY-BR-TB-2050, 1942, BLRI ETS files, Cabinet 3, Rack 3-B-4D.

[817]Abbott, "Brief Description," 9.

[818]Weems, "Monthly Narrative Report," November 1961, 2.

[819]John Parris, "Parkway Winds Through Lands of Legends," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), 28 May 1989. The original "Tom Collins" consisted of a jigger of corn whiskey, sweetened spring water, and a dash of liquid made from elderberry squeezings.

conference with Park Service officials at Roanoke in April 1938, U.S. Forest Service officials proposed developing a picnic area at Balsam Gap, the low point in the between the Balsam and Plott Balsam ranges at the intersection of the parkway and the Waynesville-Sylva road. The site would have a 15 car capacity and sites to accommodate 75 people.[820] It was never established. Today, the gap contains a parkway maintenance yard and sub-district ranger station.

Plott Balsam/Waterrock Knob

The southernmost proposed park would also have been the largest. In 1935, National Park Service location engineer C. K. Simmers proposed designation of a protected area of no less than 24,000 acres of the Plott Balsam Mountains, a cross-range perpendicular to the Balsam Mountains proper. The area was then being studied by the North Carolina state parks division for acquisition as an addition to Great Smoky Mountains National Park,[821] but most of the land was never secured.

Waterrock Knob, the high point in the area, was long known as "Amos Plott Balsam Mountain" after an early settler whose grandfather Johannes Plott had emigrated from Germany in 1750 with a pack of hunting hounds. The family line that moved to the Carolina mountains developed the dogs into the Plott Bear Hounds, specially bred for bear hunting. Other mountains in the chain were named for additional members of the family--there is an Enos Plott Mountain and a Brother Plott--but Amos was considered the "master hunter" of the area. The various mountains were named by geologist Arnold Guyot during the course of his explorations in 1858.[822]

Plans for a shelter at the overlook were prepared in the 1960s, and the project was put out to bid in 1966; the structure was completed the following spring. Exhibits at the area were prepared by the National Park Service Eastern Museum Laboratory and installed in June 1967.[823] Late in 1996, work was underway to enclose the shelter as a visitor contact station.

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[820]Abbott, "Report on Conference," 2; and Ochsner, "Memorandum for the Regional Forester," 3.

[821]Simmers, "Memorandum for Mr. Demaray."

[822]John Parris, "Balsam Gap Given Name of Bear Dog," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), undated clipping; and John Parris, "WNC Mountain Ranges Form Massive Cross," *Asheville Citizen-Times* (NC), 27 July 1952, BLRI Library, vertical files, Blue Ridge Parkway history file.

[823]Charles S. Marshall, Assistant Regional Director, Southeast Region, to Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, 23 January 1966, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 32, Box 43, Folder 77; and Ernest G. Whanger, Assistant Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway, to Chief, Eastern Museum Laboratory, National Park Service, 16 August 1967, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 32, Box 43, Folder 77.

From the parking area, a half-mile trail leads to the summit of Waterrock Knob at an elevation of 6,300'. Short trails lead from the summit to various overlooks of the Waterrrock (an exposed rock face to the southeast) and the parkway in both directions. The Waterrock Konb trail attains the highest elevation of any parkway trail.

Soco Gap

The low point between the Great Balsam and Plott Balsam ranges, 4,340' Soco Gap at milepost 455.5, was once considered for a parkway recreation area development. The name "Soco" is a corruption of the Cherokee word "Sa-gwa-hi," meaning "One Place." Whites changed the name first to "So-cah" and then "Soco." The Cherokee, however, only applied the name to the creek which drained the south side of the divide at this point; the gap itself they called "A-ha-lu-na," meaning "ambushed," or "U-ni-ha-lu-na," meaning "where they watched." The Cherokee traditionally kept sentries here to watch for enemies coming down from the north. The "Great Road," an old Indian trail, ran through the gap. Today, this route is followed by U.S. Highway 19 which connects Maggie Valley and Cherokee.[824]

According to Cherokee legend, the gap was the scene of a great victory over a war party of Shawnee. The Cherokee, being forewarned by their sentries, lay in wait at the gap, and overpowered the Shawnee party, killing all but one. After their custom, they cut off the ears of this survivor and sent him home to his people to tell them of the news. Soco Gap was also supposedly the place where the Cherokee met with Tecumseh in 1812, declining to join his war against the white settlers.[825] In later years, the gap marked the eastern corner of the Qualla Reservation of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee. Today, it marks the junction of Haywood, Swain and Jackson counties, North Carolina.

As the parkway construction approached Soco Gap in the late 1950s, the parkway staff proposed establishing a visitor center at the gap to interpret the story of the Eastern Cherokee. This proposal was rejected in 1959 when the National Park Service determined to locate a visitor center for the lower part of the parkway at Mount Pisgah.[826] This facility was never constructed and there remains no visitor contact station west of Asheville, though the Waterrock Knob shelter was being adapted to serve as one in 1996.

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[824]H. C. Wilburn, "Soco Gap Has Played Important Role in Indian History," *Waynesville Mountaineer* (NC), 31 August 1950.

[825]Wilburn, "Soco Gap," *op cit.*

[826]Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service, to Director, National Park Service, 18 February 1959, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 18.

Aside from a parking area, parkway facilites at Soco Gap consist of a small submaintenance area and the historic Davey Farm complex. "Mountain Dew Farm" was established by Jim Davey, one of the principals of the Davey Tree Company, a prominent tree surgery firm. In 1935 Davey acquired a square mile of land at Soco Gap and built a mountain farm centered on a large two-story chestnut log house. Davey was fascinated by the mountain scenery, but being a man of conservative bent, was appalled by Roosevelt's New Deal program of public works projects. He intended Mountain Dew Farm to be a self-sufficient operation, in contrast to the heavily subsidized government programs of the day.[827]

The Davey farm buildings were constructed by local craftsman. The main lodge, a guest house, a "bachelor dormitory," a barn and a meat-house for storing wild game were constructed of chestnut logs and lumber. The log "Sunset Cabin," now known as the Browning Cabin after North Carolina highway engineer R. Getty Browning, who leased it in later years, was constructed on a hillside above the main complex. Mountain Dew Farm was run as a self-sufficient operation, with livestock turned out in the surrounding fields. The Davey Tree Company had a sawmill operation nearby.[828] Jim Davey suffered a heart attack in the early 1940s and moved to Fletcher, North Carolina, though he continued to visit Soco Gap during the summers. The property was acquired by the National Park Service in 1951.[829] The parkway retained all of the buildings except for the livestock barn and an adjoining concrete silo.

The parkway originally planned to use the Davey complex as the administrative center for the parkway sections between Wagon Road Gap and Soco Gap. A park ranger was assigned to live in the guest house in 1955. A small maintenance yard was established some time afterwards. Over the ensuing years, the farm was utilized as VIP quarters. NPS employees sometimes honeymooned there, and retired NPS officials would occasionally stay at "Soco House," as the main lodge came to be called. These practices ended in 1979 after Bob Poole, Washington correspondent for the Media General News Service published an account of National Park Service facilities available only to politicians and VIPs. In response, parkway superintendent Everhardt issued a policy memorandum limiting use of Soco House to official meetings and training activities. The house was reclassified from a residence to a "multipurpose training center."[830] In recent

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[827]Rick Palmer, HABS draftsman, "Historic Structure Report, Davey Farm" (Asheville, NC: Blue Ridge Parkway, December 1988), 1.

[828]Palmer, "Historic Structure Report, Davey Farm," 1-2.

[829]Palmer, "Historic Structure Report, Davey Farm," 4; and Barry M. Buxton, "Historic Resource Study, Davey Farm" (Asheville, NC: Blue Ridge Parkway, February 1990), 58.

[830]Buxton, "Historic Resource Study, Davey Farm," 58, 76-79.

years, the property has been only occasionally for parkway meetings, training functions, and conferences by various groups. Aside from a parking area located in the gap, there are no public facilities.

Soco Bald

With the opening of the lowermost section of the Blue Ridge Parkway between Soco Gap and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 1959, parkway planners proposed the development of a recreation area at the Soco Bald-Lickstone Ridge-Wolf Laurel area at the junction of the Heintooga Spur Road and the parkway. They justified the establishment of the park on the grounds that no facilities had been planned for the 75-mile stretch between Tennessee Bald and the Great Smokies. The National Park Service approached the Eastern Band of the Cherokee, on whose land the development would be located, to solicit their support for the project. When the Cherokee turned over the right-of-way for the parkway through the area, the National Park Service promised to establish no commercial concessions on the Cherokee land, but the tribe had long expressed an interest in developing the area once the parkway was constructed. The National Park Service pointed out that the area was accessible only from the parkway, and that regulations would forbid the tribe, or any concessionaire they might license, to advertise any such development on the parkway.[831]

The 1959 proposal called for the tribe to transfer title to 134 acres in the area to the parkway. In return, the National Park Service would design the development, construct access roads to the area, permit utilities to cross the parkway in order to serve the area, and allow signs similar to other parkway concessions to be erected on the parkway. It might also construct a campground in the area. For its part, the tribe would be allowed to enter into a concessions contract which would allow them to construct and operate gas, food, lodging and other facilities.[832]

In December, a meeting was held in Washington between representatives of the National Park Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to discuss the proposed development. BIA Assistant Commissioner Ervin J. Utz warned that the Cherokee would probably be unwilling to transfer the land in fee simple and suggested that the National Park Service consider a fifty-year lease with the same stipulations. He also pointed out that legislative action would be required to authorize any permanent transfer of tribal lands. Finally, he warned that the Cherokee would probably hold out for 10 percent of

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[831]National Park Service, "Proposed Soco Bald Recreation Area, Blue Ridge Parkway, Mile 458," March 1959, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 4.

[832]National Park Service, "Proposed Soco Bald Recreation Area."

any concession revenues, rather than the 1 or 2 percent return the National Park Service usually stipulated for concessions. NPS officials would not immediately commit to any of the proposed changes.[833]

In 1960, the National Park Service submitted a formal proposal for a "mile high recreational area" at Soco Bald to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Under terms of the proposal, the Cherokee would transfer the 134 acres to the National Park Service for the development, which would include concession facilities, a campground, and an interpretive center to tell the dramatic story of the Eastern Cherokee. The National Park Service would in turn prepare a master plan for the area; design and construct roads, parking areas, trails, water and sewerage lines, and other needed facilities; and erect information signs similar to those provided for parkway concessionaires. Buildings would be constructed by the tribe or their representative. The Cherokee would reserve the right to approve any concessions contracts for visitor services, and would receive all concessions fees paid under the contracts. The tribe envisioned developments consisting of a modern 50 to 75-room motel, a restaurant, craft and gift shops and a gasoline station. The motel and restaurant would be located at Lickstone Ridge, the gas station at Wolf Laurel Gap, the museum at Mollie Gap (on the Heintooga Spur Road), and the campground at Soco Bald. Speaking for the executive committee of the Eastern Band, principal chief Osley Saunooke indicated that the tribe would prefer to trade the 134-acre tract for 322 acres of bottom land at Ravensford in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. They would accept no restrictions on the use of this latter property as they intended to develop it for tourist attractions. Both Weems and Great Smoky Mountains superintendent Fred J. Overly objected to the proposal, as the Ravensford tract was important scenically and they believed it should be controlled strictly for that purpose.[834]

In October 1964, the Cherokee Tribal Council approved a resolution authorizing new chief Jarrett B. Blythe to negotiate a long-term lease of the Soco Bald tract to the National Park Service. Blythe, however, opposed the lease of the land and vetoed the

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[833]Sam P. Weems to Regional Director, Region One, 21 December 1959, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 4.

[834]Conrad L. Wirth to Glenn L. Emmons, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, 24 February 1960, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 5; Harry E. Buchanan to Saunooke, and Darrell Fleming, Superintendent, Cherokee Indian Agency, Cherokee, NC, 15 January 1960, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 5; Sam P. Weems to Buchanan, 22 January 1960, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 5; and Sam P. Weems and Fred J. Overly, Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, to Regional Director, Region One, 26 July 1960, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 6.

resolution on 7 December. In March 1965, the council upheld the veto, effectively killing the project.[835]

The proposal resurfaced in 1968 when Walter S. Jackson, the new principal chief, contacted Harry Buchanan to indicate he would be willing to reconsider the lease. Buchanan in turn contacted parkway superintendent Granville Liles, who agreed a development in the area was desirable. He indicated the development would be evaluated in the preparation of a future master plan.[836] The development of a visitor center at Soco Bald was still envisioned as late as the early 1970s. A draft 1971 master plan for the parkway called for this facility to be operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.[837]

A new proposal for a development in the area was submitted to the tribe by private developer Jerry R. Brock in 1983. Brock proposed constructing facilities including a 300-unit campground, motel, gas station, gift shop, vacation cabins, and summer homes. A manufacturer of prefabricated log homes, Brock planned on using such structures for the development. While the proposed development would not be located on parkway land, Superintendent Everhardt expressed reservations, chiefly because primary access would be from the parkway, and the public would probably perceive the development as a National Park Service sanctioned project. The Cherokee tribal council approved the $7 million contract in February 1983, but Charles Ensley, an opponent of the project, filed a protest blocking the development. Ensley, who was seeking to preserve tribal hunting grounds in the area, circulated a petition inopposition, in effect blocking the council's approval. Ensley's protest only caused a delay, and in March, Brock wrote Everhardt, asking for permission to transport construction equipment over the parkway to the site, and for a special use permit to allow maintenance and service vehicles to use the parkway. He also asked to construct two entrances to the project from the Heintooga Spur Road. Everhardt denied the requests, stating that commercial access would violate the principal that the parkway was closed to commercial vehicles. Brock would have to use the unpaved Indian service road from U.S. 19. The project then ran into another hurdle, when the office of realty in the Cherokee Indian Agency rejected the proposal.[838]

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[835]Don Y. Jensen, Superintendent, Cherokee Indian Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, to Blythe, 23 March 1965, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 9.

[836]Walter S. Jackson, Principal Chief, Eastern Band of the Cherokee, to Buchanan, 21 November 1968, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 9; Harry E. Buchanan to Liles, 27 November 1968, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 9; and Granville B. Liles to Buchanan, 4 December 1968, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 9.

[837]NPS, "A Master Plan for the Blue Ridge Parkway," 1971, 50.

[838]"Cherokee Protestor Stalls Resort Lease," *Asheville Times* (NC), 9 February 1983; J. R. Brock, Director, Eagle Marketing Company, Gasburg, VA, to Everhardt, 21 March 1983; Everhardt to Brock, 5

The area remains undeveloped, though a private campground has been established off the Heintooga Spur Road at Mollie Gap.

Ocanaluftee River

The 1971 master plan for the Blue Ridge Parkway suggested that a "joint orientation facility" be constructed at the Oconaluftee River terminus of the Blue Ridge Parkway to provide interpretation for the parkway and the adjacent Great Smoky Mountains National Park.[839] This structure was never authorized. Interpretation for the parkway at the site consists of a sign at the location of the former kiosk. Great Smoky Mountains operates its North Carolina visitor center two miles to the north on US 441.

May 1983, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 10; and P. K. Ferree, Chairman, The Cherokees, Inc., to James McClure Clarke, U.S. House of Representatives, 14 June 1983, BLRI Archives, RG 5, Series 13, Box 17, Folder 10.

[839]NPS, "A Master Plan for the Blue Ridge Parkway," 1971, 50.

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ADDENDUM TO:
BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY
Blue Ridge Parkway
Between Shenandoah National Park & Great Smoky Mountains
Asheville vicinity
Buncombe County
North Carolina

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