

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

A STUDY OF THE DIFFUSION OF CULTURE IN A  
RELATIVELY ISOLATED MOUNTAIN COUNTY

A DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
AND ANTHROPOLOGY

BY  
ELLEN ENGELMANN BLACK

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
MARCH, 1928

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                   | Page |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Preface                           | iii  |
| Chapter I                         |      |
| Introduction                      | 1    |
| Chapter II                        |      |
| Mechanical Means of Communication | 20   |
| Chapter III                       |      |
| Material Changes                  | 41   |
| Chapter IV                        |      |
| Ideological or Custom Changes     | 66   |
| Chapter V                         |      |
| Resistance to Change              | 84   |
| Chapter VI                        |      |
| Survivals in Folkways             | 94   |
| Chapter VII                       |      |
| Conclusion                        | 107  |
| Bibliography                      | 114  |
| Appendix                          | 118  |



## PREFACE

The diffusion of culture is in the broadest sense as old as culture itself. But how does this diffusion take place? What is its relation to the means of communication? Does ideological culture change as rapidly as material culture, and if not, what are the resistances to it? What are some of the survivals of the old culture as it existed before the introduction of modern influences? These are some of the questions which determined the lines of investigation for the present study.

The material which is presented was secured from various sources. The significant literature on the Appalachian Mountains which includes autobiographies, general surveys, accounts of personal experiences, reminiscences, novels and theoretical discussions, was examined for the purpose of seeing what it might contribute to an understanding of the general situation in the Southern Highlands and especially in western North Carolina from the point of view of cultural change. Second, a number of informal questionnaires were sent to various residents of the county, asking for specific data. The third and by far the most important source of material was that of direct contacts, including both formal and informal interviews, with the best informed and oldest inhabitants of the county. In

no instance was any difficulty encountered in securing data by this latter method except in so far as the accounts of the various individuals differed and this rarely happened. The fact that the writer was born and reared in the county and knew all of the old residents was of inestimable value for new contacts did not have to be made. In every case the coöperation on the part of the residents of the county was all that might be desired.

This study has suggested many problems for further investigation. Each portion of the present problem might be treated in much greater detail, while numerous special studies such as the diffusion of single inventions and the extent of their lag might be made. A variety of statistical studies such, for example, as the ages of marriage of the last three generations are possible. There is also a much greater wealth of survivals in folkways and in folklore which can be secured through patient research. Not merely the collection of such materials but the psychological interpretation of survivals would be involved. Finally such a relatively homogeneous group should form a profitable field for research in regard to the problems of social psychology.



A STUDY OF THE DIFFUSION OF CULTURE IN A  
RELATIVELY ISOLATED MOUNTAIN COUNTY

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

The county upon which this study is based is Swain County, North Carolina. As a distinct division of that state, it has existed only since 1871 at which time it was formed from parts of Jackson and Macon Counties. Its present boundaries, which include 353,920 acres, make it the second largest of the seventeen mountain counties of the state. Its geographical location may be most clearly explained in terms of its distance from the nearest cities and these distances indicate its relative physical isolation. Bryson City, its county seat and largest town, lies sixty-five miles southwest of Asheville by the railroad constructed in 1884. The distance by the comparatively new state highway, completed in 1935, is slightly greater, being seventy-one miles. Asheville itself is located in the mountain county of Buncombe while between Swain and Buncombe there are the two intervening mountain counties of Haywood and Jackson, which together form the eastern boundary of Swain. The southern boundary is formed by the Little Tennessee River while the counties lying to the south and west are the mountain counties Macon and Graham.



The northwest boundary is part of the line separating North Carolina and Tennessee. This latter boundary extends for fifty miles along the top of the main ridge of the Great Smoky Mountains. Although as "the crow flies", Knoxville, Tennessee is slightly nearer this relatively isolated county than is Asheville, North Carolina, the Great Smokies have formed a barrier which precluded any possibility of commercial intercourse until 1927 when a highway was completed, running from Bryson City and crossing the Great Smoky Mountains at Deal's Gap, fifty miles northwest of Bryson. At present a state highway is being constructed from Knoxville to join the North Carolina highway at this point but it will probably be at least a year before it is completed. The distance from Bryson City to Knoxville will then be one hundred and five miles. A second road which will cross the mountain range at Indian Gap is also under consideration. One hundred and ninety-seven miles to the south lies the city of Atlanta, Georgia, which has been connected with Swain County by a system of highways since 1926. Railroad transit, by way of Murphey, North Carolina, was established in 1896.<sup>1</sup>

This mountain county in the heart of the Great Smokies, so-named for the haze which continually shrouds

---

1. See Map I.

them, was part of a territory little known until after the Civil War and with no satisfactory connections with the world outside until the coming of the railroad. Markets were inaccessible both for buying and for selling. Industries were necessarily limited because of this remoteness. Living conditions were primitive. It is a well-known and oft-quoted fact that a forceful excuse for "moonshine" whiskey was that it was impossible to transport corn to market, while it might be converted into whiskey and so become a marketable product,<sup>1</sup> bringing in a few dollars where real money was scarce. In the early days, the marketing of the county was done by wagoning cross-country to Augusta, Georgia, to Charleston, South Carolina, and to Greenville, South Carolina, for not only was the Balsam Mountain Range which lay between this region and Asheville, North Carolina difficult to cross in those days but also Asheville, too, developed relatively late. A trip to any one of the trading centers required from two to three weeks one way. The neighborhood would bunch their products such as bacon, apples, and pelts and on the return of the wagons, a man would be glad to receive as his share a bushel of salt, a dollar's worth of coffee, a gallon of molasses, and

---

1. Kephart, Horace: Our Southern Highlanders, p. 154.



perhaps a few pounds of sugar. This was supposed to be a year's supply.

The difficulties of the first store-keepers can well be imagined. Mr. D. K. Collins who opened his first store in Bryson City in 1876 hauled his merchandise in a covered wagon drawn by mules from Maryville and Knoxville, Tennessee over a road running west from Bryson City (then Charleston) down the Tuckasegee and Little Tennessee Rivers, crossing the Smoky Mountains at a point about three miles east of the gap through which the latter river flows.

In those days, barter was a common form of exchange, the merchants taking in trade for their goods, grain, furs, and medicinal herbs. Among these latter were ginseng, goldenseal, snakeroot and "mandrake" or mayapple, all of which were then used extensively in patent medicines, while ginseng was shipped to China. Coon skins and ginseng had the same rank as they had in the days of Daniel Boone. Often long credits were given on anticipated crops, but this involved grave risks.<sup>1</sup> Although barter has died out in later years as economic conditions have improved, due largely to the lumbering development, it was common up to twenty-five years ago even in Bryson City, and more recently

---

1. Kephart, Horace, op. cit., p. 33.



in the back settlements while women still bring their butter, eggs, and chickens to trade for staples and the inevitable nickle's worth of candy and box of Bruton's snuff.

Thus it is evident that geographically, economically, and socially, Swain County has been until very recent times a county of relative isolation and that each form of isolation has tended to intensify the others.

## II

The Great Smoky Mountain Range is an archaic-based stone monolith sixty-five miles in length in which great beds of shells of ancient sea animals have been found. The Cherokee myths abound with stories of giant insects, birds and reptiles. In the matter of early human dwellers, there is only myth with the exception of a few mounds in Northern Georgia and Southern Kentucky.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest traditional knowledge we have of the habitation of the southern highlands has been handed down by the Cherokees. They say that before they conquered the country and settled in the valleys, the inhabitants were 'moon-eyed', that is, were unable to see during certain phases of the moon. During a period of blindness, the Creeks swept through the mountain passes, up the valleys, and annihilated the race. The

---

1. Mason, R. L.: The Lure of the Great Smokies, Ch. I, II.

Cherokees in turn conquered the Creeks, with great slaughter, which must have occurred at a very ancient date, for the country of their conquest and adoption is the seat of their religious legends and traditional romances. (1)

The definite history of the Cherokee begins with the year 1540, at which date we find them already established, where they were always afterward known, in the mountains of Carolina and Georgia. (2)

This was the year in which De Soto passed through this section in the course of his explorations.

These early Indians were the Otari, or Upland Cherokee, who had a national government with a capital at Echota on the Tennessee River.<sup>3</sup>

Even before the Revolution, white men were going into the mountains west of the Blue Ridge, exploring, hunting, and fishing. As they continued to invade the mountains, the hostility of the Cherokees became so pronounced that in 1776, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina agreed to send punitive forces into the Cherokee country.

In August, the North Carolina force, numbering 2,400 men under General Griffith Rutherford, crossed the Swannonoa Gap, and after following the present line of the railway to the French Broad, went out Hominy Creek and, following up the Richland, struck the first Indian town at Stekoa, the present site of Whittier. This town he burned and

- 
1. Zeigler and Grosscup: The Heart of the Alleghenies, p. 16.
  2. Mooney, James: Myths of the Cherokees. Nineth-enth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Part I, p. 23.
  3. Latshaw, Harry F.: Swain County, p. 1.



then destroyed all the Indian towns and crops on the Ocona Luffy, Tuckasegee, and the upper part of the Little Tennessee. This is the beginning of Swain County history for all these places are within the present boundaries of Swain. (1)

By the treaty of peace that was effected all the mountain land in western North Carolina remained in the hands of the Indians. Thus during the years of the Revolution, this section remained almost uninhabited by the whites. In the case of Avery vs. Walker (8 N. C. p. 117), it appears that Col. James Hubbard and Captain John Hill explored the unknown country around Bryson City, Swain County, shortly before April 22, 1795.

But soon settlers began coming into the mountains in increasing numbers and there were numerous skirmishes and treaties with the Indians which finally ended with the Removal Treaty of the Cherokees in 1835. Six forts were built as headquarters for the forces sent under General Winfield Scott to enforce the treaty, Fort Lindsay being located in Swain County, near the present site of the Almond High School. Many harrowing and unpleasant events occurred in connection with the removal and finally a thousand or more Cherokees were allowed to remain. Colonel William H. Thomas was placed in charge of them and bought for them some 50,000 acres of land on the Ocona Luffy River and

---

1. Latchaw, H. F.: Swain County, p. 1.



Soco Creek where their descendants remain to-day.<sup>1</sup>

### III

The ancestry of the mountaineers has been a frequently disputed point, some writers rather loosely asserting that criminals found refuge in the mountain fastnesses and that their descendants form the population to-day.

The truth is, the same people who occupied Virginia and the eastern part of the Carolinas, peopled the western mountains, English predominating, and in course of time there drifted down from Virginia large numbers of Scotch-Irish who, after the events of 1730, fled in such numbers to the New World, and good Scotch Highlanders, who came after 1745. (2)

Without doubt Scotch-Irish and pure English are the strongest elements in the mountain population, though the Highland people are not different from the Lowland Southerners in this respect. The Scotch-Irish strain is strongest in some mountain sections; the English in others. (3)

Also Lutheran Swiss and Germans who fled from the horrors of the wars of Louis XIV in the Palatinate drifted from

- 
1. Since the Cherokees are largely a segregated group, they will not be considered further except in the statistical tables. The most accurate account of the Eastern Band is found in the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Part I.
  2. Morley, Margaret: The Carolina Mountains, p. 144. The ancestry of the mountaineer is also discussed by R. L. Mason in The Lure of the Great Smokies, Chapter VI, in which he substantiates this.
  3. Campbell, John C.: The Southern Highlander and His Homeland, p. 71.

Pennsylvania into the mountains of Carolina while numbers of French Huguenots came up from Charleston, South Carolina. It seems fairly certain from family traditions and names, however, that Scotch-Irish predominated in this particular section. In their isolation, the various elements inter-married and became fused into a homogeneous group. The few foreigners who continued to drift in and the settlers from the surrounding southern states were of the same ancestry, negroes were few in number, and the Indians were segregated on a reservation so that this homogeneity has not yet been broken.

Among the pioneer families of Swain County who settled around Soco Creek and Ocona Luffy River, the scene of the first white settlement in Swain, about 1804 were James Conley, the very first settler, Robert Collins, Isaac Bradley, Abraham Anloe, John Beck, and John Kingus. In the Collins family there were thirteen children, twelve of whom lived to be grown, but one of the neighbors had a family of eighteen offspring. Other settlers followed. Deep Creek and Alarka Creek drew their quota and the names of these early pioneers are carried on by numerous descendants living on the banks of these same creeks to-day. There is a tradition that about 1808 in the Ocona Luffy settlement, Abraham Lincoln was born of Nancy Hanks in the home of Abraham Anloe and the Anloe family maintains that there



is an undeniable and convincing resemblance that can be observed between present members and the pictures of the martyr president.

These first pioneers moved into the new country on foot and on horseback with the scanty household goods on pack horses, though soon covered carts and wagons were also used. The equipment probably consisted of a rifle, an axe, a salt gourd, an iron kettle, a few well-worn quilts and blankets, a hunting-knife, an augur and perhaps a spinning wheel. Other necessities usually possessed were an oven with a lid, a skillet, a few pewter plates, spoons, and other dishes, hoes, a saw, a handmill to grind grain, the iron parts of plows, seed for field and vegetable crops, and a few fruit trees. The men and boys wore moccasins, short pantaloons and leather leggings with hunting shirts of dressed deerskin while their caps of mink or coon skin had the tails hanging behind as tassels. The women and girls wore deep sun bonnets, as a rule, and dresses of homespun material. They had little time for vanities though perhaps there was a "sugin" of bear-oil for the hair among the household supplies, to make it smooth and glossy. The first task of these pioneers was to build a log-cabin home in which no nails were used as they were unobtainable. The cracks between the logs were filled in with "chinks and



dobbins" while the chimney was usually built of stones, which were plentiful. Rough bedsteads, tables, benches, and three legged stools were constructed while pegs were driven into the walls to hold the various possessions.

Windows were few and unglazed. Arthur tells that

there is still standing in the Smoky Mountains a comfortable cabin of one large room, floored and ceiled on the inside, and rain and wind proof, in the construction of which not a single nail was used. This cabin was built in 1859 and is on the Mill Creek Fork of Noland Creek in Swain County. (1)

By 1871, there were enough people to justify the formation of Swain County from parts of Macon and Jackson Counties. The distance to the county seat of Macon at Franklin was another important factor in this. Colonel Thaddeus Dillard Bryson who had been born near Beta, in Jackson County was largely instrumental in the organization. In the first election, held in June, 1872, approximately three hundred and fifty votes were cast.

#### IV

The county seat occupies the ancient site of the Indian village of Younashqua or Big Bear<sup>2</sup> and there is a

- 
1. Arthur, John P.: Western North Carolina, p. 258.
  2. Zeigler and Grosscup: The Heart of the Alleghanies, p. 27.

spring on the outskirts of the town which is still called Yonah or Bear Spring. The tract of land of six hundred and forty acres on which Bryson City is located had been granted to Chief Big Bear and is known as the Big Bear tract.<sup>1</sup> The village was first named Charleston but later this was changed to Bryson City in honor of Colonel Bryson. The town is located on the banks of the Tuckasegee, the principal tributary of the Little Tennessee. The former is an Indian name signifying terrapin. D. K. Collins, one of the sons of Robert Collins built the first house in Bryson City and Epp Everett built the second. Both houses are still standing. A county courthouse was soon built. It was a frame building with the upper floor for a courtroom, and the lower one for a jail. This courthouse was also used as a church "house", a place for general public meetings and a school "house", until separate buildings could be built. Until after the coming of the railroad, the river was crossed by means of a dugout. If the dugout was on the opposite side of the river, one "hollered" until someone paddled it over. Probably in the latter part of 1884, a wooden bridge was constructed. In 1890, it was washed away by a flood and replaced by one of iron which was completed in 1892. In 1918, the present concrete

---

1. Dr. D. R. Bryson.



structure was erected.

In 1883, we have the following description:

Charleston, the county-seat of Swain .... is in the midst of a new country. The two most conspicuous buildings, standing directly opposite each other at one end of the village street, are the new and old courthouses. The former is a substantial brick structure. The old, frame court-house has its upper story used as a grand jury room, and its lower floor, as formerly, holds the jail. The dark interior of the 'cage' used for petty misdoers, can be seen under the front outside stairs, through a door with barred window. Along the main thoroughfare, and on the few side streets, are neat, white dwellings; well-stocked stores, where a man can buy anything from a needle to an axe; and two good village hotels. Like all communities, they have churches here.... The post-office is a good place, at the arrival of the mail-horse, to survey and count the male population of Charleston. In the middle of the day, you can sit on the counter in any of the stores and discuss politics or religion with the merchant, who, in his shirtsleeves, and perched on a pile of muslins and calicoes with his feet on a coal-oil barrel, smokes a pipe of home-cured tobacco, and keeps his eyes alternately on the ceiling and the road, as though expectant along the latter for the white or Indian customer. (1)

V

The population of the county can only be given as far back as the census of 1880, the first one after the formation of the county in 1871, but a steady growth is evident since that time.

---

1. Zeigler and Grosscup: The Heart of the Alleghanies, p. 142.

Table I

## General Population from 1880 to 1920

| Year | Swain County | Per cent of increase<br>since preceding census | Bryson City |
|------|--------------|--|-------------|
| 1880 | 3,784        | —  | —           |
| 1890 | 6,577        | 73.8   | —           |
| 1900 | 8,401        | 27.7   | 417         |
| 1910 | 10,403       | 23.8   | 612         |
| 1920 | 13,224       | 27.1   | 886         |

In 1884 the railroad reached Swain County and the population increased rapidly in the decade from 1880 to 1890, the impetus continuing well toward the close of the century. A slight decrease in the per cent of increase is noted from 1900 to 1910 when there was a noticeable amount of emigration to the cotton mills of the Piedmont section, but the good roads movement beginning about the latter part of 1914, the establishment of good schools, and the development of lumbering interests again caused an upward trend. The estimated population for the county in July, 1927 was 15,000 and for Bryson City 1,500.

The population other than native white is not large with the exception of the Indian element while the percentage of both the Negro and Indian groups is decreasing. The negroes are chiefly the descendants of the few slaves who



were brought into this section by the early settlers while a number drifted in immediately after the railroad was built.

Table II  
Population Other Than Native White

| Year | Negro | Indian | Foreign-Born White |
|------|-------|--------|--------------------|
| 1880 | 109   | 441    | —                  |
| 1890 | 225   | 700    | 29                 |
| 1900 | 174   | 875    | 13                 |
| 1910 | 165   | 812    | 9                  |
| 1920 | 115   | 864    | 22                 |

The striking fact about the foreign born whites is that with one or two exceptions they come from Canada or Northern Europe so that racially they offer no contrast to the general population.

Table III  
Place of Birth of Foreign Born in Swain County

| Year | Total | Canada | England | Germany | Italy | Wales | Ireland |
|------|-------|--------|---------|---------|-------|-------|---------|
| 1920 | 22    | 5      | 5       | 3       | —     | —     | 3       |
| 1910 | 9     | 3      | 2       | 1       | 1     | 1     | —       |
| 1900 | 13    | 4      | 4       | —       | —     | —     | 1       |
| 1890 | 29    | 19     | 4       | —       | —     | —     | 3       |
| 1880 | —     | —      | —       | —       | —     | —     | —       |

| Year | Total | Sweden | Denmark | Scotland | Syria | Other Countries |
|------|-------|--------|---------|----------|-------|-----------------|
| 1920 |       | 3      | -       | 1        | 1     | 1               |
| 1910 |       | -      | -       | -        | -     | 1               |
| 1900 |       | -      | 1       | -        | -     | 3               |
| 1890 |       | 2      | 1       | -        | -     | -               |

In regard to the distribution of the population by sex, the influence of the lumber mills can be seen in the rather large excess of males over females.

Table IV  
Population by Sex

| Year | Male  | Female |
|------|-------|--------|
| 1880 | 1,912 | 1,872  |
| 1890 | 3,845 | 3,657  |
| 1900 | 4,899 | 4,551  |
| 1910 | 5,451 | 4,952  |
| 1920 | 7,007 | 6,217  |

In the matter of occupations, there is little diversity along lines of specialization. Lumbering and farming have formed the two chief occupations but the former has recently begun to decline in importance. Most men are still jacks-of-all-trade and even the interests of the professional men are varied. In the case of the men of professional train-



ing, there is a clustering at the county seat. Of the nine doctors in the county, the only ones who do not have their offices in Bryson City are those employed by the lumber companies. Both of the dentists of the county practice in Bryson City. The twelve lawyers without exception live there. The only ministers for whom the ministry alone furnishes a livelihood, without recourse to other occupations, live there also. With few exceptions in addition to the families of managers or owners of lumbering occupations, all the persons with college or university degrees are residents of Bryson City. In regard to educational status, it is estimated that not more than one hundred and fifty people in the county have more than a high school education, while according to the census report of 1920, thirteen and five-tenths per cent of the native white population over ten years of age is illiterate though this has decreased somewhat since that time. In regard to financial status, not more than seventy-five men have an annual income of two thousand dollars or more while it is estimated that at least fifty per cent of the wage earners receive less than one thousand dollars per year.

## VI

In regard to natural resources, Swain County has

timber, mineral, and water power wealth though the timber alone has been exploited to any extent. In 1884, the first lumbering operation was begun and it is significant that this was the year of the construction of the railroad. Since that time fourteen important operations have been established so that at the present time much of the available timber has been cut. The water power of the Little Tennessee, Nantahala, Fuckaseege, and Ocona Lufly Rivers is only beginning to be developed. The Topoca dam, one of the largest in the state in water power development, was begun in 1915 and finished in 1918 by the Aluminum Company of America, though the electric power which is generated is transported to Alcoa, Tennessee for use. With the exception of a small clay mine and a talc mine, both of which have been abandoned, the mineral wealth which consists chiefly of clay and copper remains practically untouched. During the last two years, however, an extensive copper deposit on Eagle Creek, in the southwest corner of the county, has been in process of development which it is hoped will more than replace the lumber companies in the economic life of the county. The farm land under cultivation forms only eight per cent of the total area of the county, for level land is almost at a minimum though the narrow valleys are both fertile and productive. Approximately



forty per cent of the county is still covered with virgin timber.

Perhaps the resource of most obvious importance is that of beautiful, natural scenery, linked with a cool salubrious climate and clear, pure water. The general elevation of the Smoky Mountains is over 4,500 feet while in Swain County there are twenty-two peaks, as listed by the North Carolina Geological and Economic Survey in 1917, which are over 5,000 feet in altitude, the highest being Clingman's Dome with an altitude of 6,680 feet, just thirty-one feet lower than Mt. Mitchell, near Asheville, North Carolina, which is the highest peak east of the Rocky Mountains. The region is widely advertised as the "Eden of the Hills" and travellers compare it favorably with both the Rockies and the Alps.

## CHAPTER II

## MECHANICAL MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

"In sociology, the essential characteristic of isolation is found in exclusion from communication."<sup>1</sup>

Hence it is pertinent to see whether the history of the county and the methods of diffusion can be traced in direct parallel with the changes in the means of communication. Although the region abounded in streams,<sup>2</sup> none of them were navigable for any distance so that when the earliest pioneers went into the wild and little known region of the Smoky Mountains, they followed the Indian trails, often worn knee-deep.

It is probable that buffaloes made the first roads over these mountains and the Indians, following where they led, made their trading paths by pursuing these highways. It is still more probable that the buffaloes instinctively sought the ways that were levellest and shortest between the best pastures, thus insuring a passage through the lowest gaps and to the richest lands. It is still said in the mountains that when the earliest settlers wanted to build a new road they drove a steer or 'cow-brute' to the lowest gap in sight and then drove it down on the side the road was to be located, the tracks made by it being followed and staked and the road located exactly on them. (3)

Deer trails were also followed in like manner.

Travel, either by foot or on horseback, was slow

- 
1. Park and Burgess: Introduction to the Science of Sociology, p. 228.
  2. See Map II.
  3. Arthur, J. P.: Western North Carolina, p. 229.



over these often perilous trails and neighbors lived far apart so that communication was both rare and difficult. But as the settlers increased, roads were built. The hunting trails of the Indians were used as the basis for many of the eight-foot roads and the construction was mostly by voluntary coöperative effort. When a new stretch of road was desired, the neighbors gathered and made a community project of it. Powder was scarce and there were few tools. Hence the easiest route was followed. Sometimes it lay along the top of the ridge where timber was scarce and the land fairly regular, and sometimes along the narrow creek bed. As it required a longer road to go by a gentle grade than by a steep climb, the steeper road was always built. These rude roads and paths had no bridges, so that the rocky creek beds had to be forded frequently, perhaps as often as twelve times in a mile. Stepping stones and precarious foot-logs aided the pedestrian. When a severe rainstorm occurred, such as are frequent in this section, the quiet streams quickly became raging torrents, effectually cutting off all means of communication, even between neighbors. Many homes lacked roads for the rough mountain wagons, while occasionally there was even no sled path. Provisions were carried in the saddlebags of the horsemen or in sacks by those afoot. Oxen, who do well to go ten miles in ten

hours were very frequently used to draw the wagons while nearly every family owned a rough wooden sled, likewise drawn by an ox. These sleds with two heavy wooden runners connected by cross pieces are still the only practical means of hauling on the steeper slopes though oxen are becoming a rare sight within the immediate limits of the growing town of Bryson City. The building of the rude roads did little to increase communication with the world beyond the mountains, though it did make for more contacts within "the inside world". Journeys made on foot or on horseback were still slow and tiresome, however, while the buying and marketing of produce continued to be difficult.

About 1870, a hack line was established between Asheville and Murphy. The hacks carried the mail and made the trip one way in three days and a half, with scheduled stops for meals and night. Mail was now regular and trips to Asheville became easier and hence somewhat more frequent though before the coming of the railroad, not more than one-fourth of the adults had been to Asheville.<sup>1</sup> Some of those had made the trip in a wagon drawn by oxen, a four day journey one way, while others had accomplished it in a buggy in two days when the roads were in good condition.

---

1. Mr. Tom Conley.



Later the weekly hack line was changed to a daily line though it soon failed financially. When the railroad finally reached Waynesville, hacks ran from various points to that terminus. Before this series of hacks had carried the mail, there had been men on horseback who bore it while barefooted runners had been used in Star Route days. Outside of the settlements, distances from the postoffices were so great that mail was rarely called for, and even more rarely received.

According to Wheeler's "History of North Carolina", the first wagon passed from North Carolina into Tennessee in 1795. It is very probable that General Winfield Scott had a military road constructed from his headquarters at Calhoun, Tennessee up to the junction of the Little Tennessee and Tuckasegee Rivers at what is now Almond,<sup>1</sup> but none of these early roads can be definitely accounted for. In 1854 a road to Tennessee was built by Joe Welsh under contract, the proceeds from the sale of state lands being used. There were toll gates every ten or fifteen miles, one of which was located in Swain County between Hazel Creek and Eagle Creek. It was maintained by "Bushwhacker" Kirkland who received the proceeds in return for maintaining the

---

1. Conflicting reports give Bushnell as the site of his headquarters.

road through his property. Such toll gates were discontinued probably thirty years ago, when county maintenance of such roads was secured. There were also ferries across the Little Tennessee which were private affairs and were not allowed nearer than three miles apart for the protection of the owners of them.<sup>1</sup> In 1848-1849 the legislature passed an act for the building of a turnpike road from Salisbury, North Carolina to the Georgia line. This road was completed to Murphy in 1856 and this western turnpike was an important factor in the settling of the country along its route. Between 1848 and 1862, many turnpike and plank road companies were chartered. In some cases old roads were merely improved while other new roads never materialized. Among those chartered during this period were the road up the Ocona Luffy, the road through Soco gap, and the road up the Tuckaseege and Watahala rivers.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of all this activity, there was no road built through the Great Smokies. In fact only one gap was considered even a possible route, the one now called Collins Gap. During the Civil War, Colonel Thomas with his Cherokee Indians and his men from East Tennessee did make a so-called road<sup>3</sup> and in January, 1864, General Robert E.

---

1. Mr. S. W. Black.

2. Arthur, John P.: Western North Carolina, p. 241.

3. Ibid., p. 49.



Vance dragged his dismantled cannon over the bare stones but since then the front wheels of a wagon are the only other type of vehicle that have passed over the precipitous and rock-ribbed road. Until the last two years, no other road has even been attempted over the great ridge and this original one has been abandoned for many years, save by horsemen and men on foot.

## II

A new era was brought about by the railroad in 1884. Up to that time not more than one-fourth of the population had ever seen a train.<sup>1</sup> Though there are still people in the county who have never seen a passenger train, there is probably no one who has not seen a logging train.<sup>2</sup> By the railroad, a way was opened to the world without. Mails became regular. New families moved in, in increasing numbers bringing new interests and new ideas. Contacts were brought about between the pioneer culture and the growing city of Asheville. Soon after 1884, John Everett went to Poughkeepsie, New York, to take a business course, while five years later Thaddeus Bryson went to Bingham Military Academy though it was not until 1892 that the

---

1. Mrs. Margaret Welsh.

2. Mr. J. E. Coburn.

Bryson boys began attending the University of North Carolina, the first college or university students from the county.

The railroad was a great achievement for it crossed Balsam Mountain at what was for many years the highest railroad point east of the Rockies, being 3,100 feet above sea level. Another ridge had to be tunneled. Deep valleys were spanned while always the winding rivers had to be followed. The terminus remained at Bryson City for two years and first a walnut tree and later a box car served as the station until one was built.<sup>1</sup> The next link was constructed as far as Jarrett's Station, now Nantahala, where it remained another two years. In the beginning there was a combination train, the engine burning wood. It took an entire day to make the trip to Asheville and "it made one trip a day, the Lord willing."<sup>2</sup> Fifteen years later it still took fifteen hours to make the trip of sixty-five miles. In 1927, this had been reduced to three hours. About the beginning of the century, the combination train was discontinued and two passenger trains composed of two coaches and one mail and baggage car ran each way daily. Within the last year, one coach has been taken off due to

- 
1. Mrs. Margaret Welsh.
  2. Dr. D. R. Bryson.



the increased travel by motor car and motor bus. During this period there has been a tremendous increase in freight, however, which has been estimated as probably fifty times as much as thirty years ago.<sup>1</sup> There was much litigation in connection with the construction of the railroad as the difficulties involved in penetrating the mountains led the contracting company to attempt to abandon the effort.

It was necessary that it should be built, though, before the timber industry could be developed.

It was not for passengers that the road had been built. There were lumber resources and perhaps mineral, that could not be developed without the means of transportation. And there was freight of a sundry kind for the flat and box cars that came once a day; big logs of hickory, pine and poplar, sacks of dried berries, coops of chickens, crates of eggs, and loads of sassafras, blood roots, and 'yar'--for the hills are full of medicinal roots and herbs which the mountain women and children gather and carry miles on their backs to market. (2)

With this branch of the Southern Railroad as a nucleus, a number of short, branch railroads have been built throughout the county to facilitate the development of the lumbering industry. One of the earliest of these was the Appalachian railroad which runs from Ela, about five miles east of Bryson City, up the Ocona Lufly River to Cherokee, the principal Indian town, and hence to Ravens-

---

1. Mrs. D. R. Bryson.

2. Bledsoe, M. L.: "The Hidden People of the Blue Ridge," p. 15.

ford and Smokeont which from 1905 up to the present time are flourishing lumbering sites. Other branch lines which have been constructed in the interest of the lumbering companies are the Carolina and Tennessee Southern, Alarka Valley, and Smoky Mountain which latter line has been discontinued since 1926. These railroads have as a result made Bryson City a small railroad center through which millions of feet of lumber are shipped each year. It is also a trading center for this reason.

A different type of result which also closely followed the railroad has already been briefly noted in the study of population. This was the important exodus to the cotton mills of the Piedmont sections of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. Agents for the mills were soon active among the ignorant mountaineers and many families were inveigled by glowing accounts of more money to leave their homes and go to the factories. Although the exodus reached its height in the decade from 1900 to 1910, the movement still continues. It is estimated that an average of twenty-five families has left the county each year for the past five years for this reason.<sup>1</sup>

Another immediate result of the introduction of the railroad was the establishment of a telegraph station, some

---

1. Mr. S. W. Black.



two years later.<sup>1</sup> Although the leisureliness of the small town is evident in the fact that the office is not open from eight in the evening until eight the next morning, the number of telegrams has increased rapidly. Western Union has doubled in the last five years, both in telegrams received and sent while business is heavier in the summer due to the tourists.<sup>2</sup>

### III

The telephone is a more recent acquisition. Prior to the establishment of a system in February, 1906 by R. L. Sandidge who had then recently come from Missouri, there had been a private line connecting the law office of Bryson and Black with the two homes for two or three years. The first system included twenty-eight telephones. By 1908, they had increased to sixty-nine, twenty-seven of which were residence telephones. A year later a long distance telephone was established in the Entella Hotel, the principal lodging house, while the switch board was not connected with long distance until 1911. At that time the long distance calls averaged about twenty dollars a month while in 1927 they had increased to approximately three hundred

- 
1. Mr. Harley Welsh.
  2. Mr. Ward, telegraph agent.

dollars per month. By 1914, there were one hundred and forty-five telephones listed, sixty-two of which were residence telephones. Probably fifteen or twenty of the total number were given under two different names, reducing the total number to one hundred and twenty-five or thirty. In 1927, there was a total of one hundred and forty-five telephones, eighty-two of which were residence telephones. Not more than twelve men who had business telephones had no residence telephone while in most of these cases the residence was so near that one telephone sufficed. The monthly rent increased from \$1.50 for private residences and \$2.00 for business telephones in 1906 to \$1.75 and \$2.50 respectively in 1920 and to \$2.50 and \$3.50 in 1927. Fifteen residences and places of business retain their original numbers which they received in 1906, but it has only been since the purchase of the Bryson City Telephone Company by the Western Carolina Telephone Company in 1927 that these numbers have been extensively used. Heretofore the name of the party desired was sufficient. Another custom, still maintained, is the voluntary closing of the telephone office each Sunday from nine-thirty until one so that "central" may attend church. Within the last fifteen years, the use of the individual telephones has increased ten times over while more recently the development of highways has cut down the toll for calls within the county from



\$100 to \$30 a month.<sup>1</sup>

## IV

It is since 1914, however, that the greatest advances have been made in mechanical means of communication. The first automobile was purchased in 1914, when five Ford cars were bought at the same time. The roads were still so poor that no one had considered buying a car up to that time. These five cars were bought by Alex Elmore, Bob Abbott, J. E. Co burn, A. M. Bennett, and W. W. Wheeler, none of whom were natives of the town. The significance of this fact is developed in the following chapter. As a result of this innovation, the automobile, a highway association, chiefly organized and encouraged by these automobile owners, was formed within six months time. Although in 1915, there were only sixteen good roads men in Swain County, bonds were issued so that within two years an excellent county system of graded roads was built. If the bond issue had been left to the vote of the people, it would have been rejected because of the taxes.<sup>2</sup> Immediately other automobiles were purchased, but their use was largely local

- 
1. Mrs. Carol Gibson, who has been with the telephone company since 1911.
  2. Mr. J. E. Co burn.

and for pleasure. In 1931, however, a state highway system was organized so that Bryson City is now connected with the adjoining county seats by hard surfaced roads.

The importance of the highways in practically every aspect of the county life can scarcely be overestimated. The rapid changes which are self-evident are coextensive with their development. Travel is increasing rapidly and is much facilitated. The three hour railroad journey to Asheville can be accomplished in less than two hours by automobile. It formerly required a day and a night to make the round trip to Robbinsville, a neighboring county seat. Now business trips there and back can easily be accomplished in the forenoon. There are four buses running both to and from Asheville each day, the popularity of which is amply illustrated by the decreasing travel on the railroad. Long motor trips are becoming more frequent while the old woman who, on being picked up by an automobile driver on Hazel Creek in the summer of 1927, said "It's the first time I ever rid in one of them thar things"<sup>1</sup> belonged to a very small and rapidly decreasing group.

The importance of the highway in the economic life is also noteworthy. The farmer may haul his produce to

---

1. Mr. J. E. Coburn.



market or sell it at his front door to passing travelers. The railroad is brought nearer to him for often the old road was so poor that hauling goods to the depot to be shipped was impracticable. Now the county farm agent has established co-operative poultry and hog shipping, and four receiving stations for cream to be sent to a near-by dairy. Lumber hauling of various kinds with the opportunities it offers for earning is greatly facilitated. The increasing numbers of tourists are bringing money into the county and local products such as Indian baskets have doubled in price in the last five years due to this and to the greater demand for them.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are brought from Asheville in one direction and from northern Georgia in another by the truck load while the wholesale grocery companies deliver the staples in like manner. The housewife no longer has to depend on her own garden or oven, for fresh bread is brought from Asheville by truck or from Spartanburg, South Carolina on the train. Though traveling salesmen have been coming into the county for forty years, they have increased in numbers since the good roads movement and they have wielded much influence. They have largely wrought the change from fireplace cooking to iron stoves while many a mountain home boasts its organ or enlarged crayon portraits.

Perhaps the greatest change observable in the past ten years is in women's dress<sup>1</sup> which has been largely produced by Sears, Roebuck and Company money orders after increased travel has shown how other people look. The mountain belle wears short skirts and silk stockings and perhaps vivid rouge, even when religious scruples prevent the bobbing of her hair. Spinning wheels stand idle and the bright colored shelves of dry goods supply the cloth which in an earlier day was designated as "that fotch on stuff".

The effect of modern means of communication is also remarkable in the case of the schools. The county superintendent in his worn Foud coupé can visit any school throughout his territory within a few hours while fifteen years ago, he did not see some of his buildings from one year's end to the next. In the more progressive districts consolidation is rapidly taking place and the country boys and girls are being given the advantages of the three high schools of the county. The number of college students has more than doubled. The coming of the automobile has increased the knowledge of the world outside the county remarkably. Even those who seldom leave it see cars bearing license

---

1. Mr. J. E. Coburn.



tags from distant states.

Then, too, the people in the county are getting to know one another. At a county singing convention last summer, there were representations from what were formerly the most isolated coves and valleys. Not a horse was to be seen. Everyone came in automobiles or trucks. The singer in overalls drove his own Ford. County school meets and teachers' meetings are growing more frequent also.

The good roads are of primary importance in the development of tourist trade. Since the construction of the highways an up-to-date tourist hotel of sixty rooms has been built which is comfortably filled throughout the summer months. The scenery, cool climate, and quiet surroundings are the chief attractions as sports have not been developed, while the proximity of the Indian Reservation is also of some importance. The summer visitors have had a marked influence in numerous other ways than those previously mentioned. Amusements have become more sophisticated. Dances and bridge games are now enjoyed. A picture show is supported. A golf club has recently been organized. The more progressive and cultured citizens drive to Asheville for an evening at the opera or theater or to a dance, all of which many of their neighbors still regard as "sinful".

As has been pointed out, remarkable advances along

many lines are being made throughout the county. The principal carriers of new ideas and new forms of culture into the county are three-fold: tourists, the college-bred younger generation, and the residents who come from sections outside the immediate mountains, either to settle permanently or only for a short while. These latter have come in slowly but steadily from the time of the first train. The tourists are a result of the recent good roads, while both trains and automobiles have been factors in the increase of college students. In noting the importance of these three groups who have been so responsible for the development and progress taking place, the place of the northern lumber companies which have been forces of greatest importance in the development of all means of communication and the attendant benefits, and to a much less extent the traveling salesmen, mail order catalogues, and other printed matter, must be included.

And yet, as one leaves the railroad or the highway and turns up some grass-grown wagon road, one finds that the twentieth century has had little apparent influence. According to Horace Kephart, one can go up any branch and still find conditions such as he described in "Our Southern Highlanders" as typical twenty years ago. Here communication is still difficult. The driving of cattle into the



mountains for summer pasturing is an event for strangers who have news of the world stop at the cabins along the way and gossip as they rest. But the automobile is pushing in even there. When someone asked one mountaineer father where his boys were, he replied:

"They're out building a road to get the new Ford home."<sup>1</sup> The story of 1914 with first its automobiles and then its good roads continues to be true.

## V

One of the most recent means of communication is the radio. Berlin Thomasson, the younger of the two dentists, built his own outfit in 1920 but it was not until a year and a half later that the first complete radio was bought.<sup>2</sup> Within the last three years, it is estimated that at least one hundred radios have been sold in the county. Although most of them are in the small towns, they are scattered throughout the county as a whole.<sup>3</sup> The men and boys of the town congregate around the most powerful instrument to hear the prize fight returns as eagerly as do their city

---

1. Mr. S. W. Black.

2. Dr. Berlin Thomasson.

3. Mr. Will Elmore, furniture dealer.

brothers. Good music is first heard by many in this way, and the effect is being felt to some extent in the type of phonograph records purchased.<sup>1</sup>

## VI

In regard to newspapers and magazines, estimates alone can be secured in most cases. The Asheville Citizen, which has been subscribed to for forty years or more, was the first regular paper.<sup>2</sup> In the beginning it was a weekly but it soon became a daily paper. At present there are approximately sixty-five subscribers in Bryson City while about twenty copies are dispersed along the rural routes running from that post office. Perhaps one hundred daily papers are purchased by the county as a whole. The Asheville Citizen now arrives in the middle of the forenoon though until a couple of years ago, it did not come until shortly after noon. Thus the time of its arrival seems almost symbolic of the place this mountain county occupies in its development. The other Asheville paper which is depended upon for news of the world is the Asheville Times but it is an evening paper with even fewer subscribers.

- 
1. Mrs. T. A. Case.
  2. Uncle Bill Cooper.



Both of these papers print local items from Swain County in the Sunday editions. Throughout the county, weekly newspapers are more common while farm papers are the most widely distributed though even the most popular of these is found in no more than thirty or forty farm homes. In Bryson City itself, church papers are taken regularly while the most popular magazines are probably the Pictorial Review, Ladies' Home Journal, Saturday Evening Post and The Farmer's Wife. Enterprising magazine agents are yearly increasing the number of newspapers and periodicals of a mediocre type. In regard to the more literary magazines, the subscribers, who are very few in number, are probably universally those families which have come into the county from beyond the mountains. This likewise applies to a large extent to books of the better sort though many sets of encyclopedias and lectures have been bought by poor and ignorant people who could not resist persuasive agents. In addition to all this, a weekly county newspaper has been published practically continuously since its establishment by Captain Lake between 1890 and 1900.<sup>1</sup> It has always been a weekly and has always cost a dollar a year. Local news items, advertisements, legal and school notices

---

1. Mr. Tom Conley.

make up the bulk of its four pages while its present subscribers number five hundred. In the majority of the homes in the county, the Bible, an almanac, and a mail order catalogue constitute the reading matter.



CHAPTER III  
MATERIAL CHANGES

In turning to the closely allied topic of material changes, one finds the greatest variety. Some of these changes have been briefly mentioned before, but they may be summarized here. In the case of transportation, lumber wagons and wooden sleds are being rapidly replaced by large trucks, trains by buses and automobiles while horseback riding is being reintroduced in Bryson City by the tourists. In this latter case, an old phase of the culture has attained a new valuation through the influence of "outsiders". The first truck was sold in 1916 and now there are approximately eighty-two in the county. Wagons furnished with boards laid across the sides for the children and with straight, split-bottomed chairs for the adults are becoming a rarity. Ford sales increased four hundred per cent from 1921 to 1925, the latter being the best year due to the fact that there was plenty of money in the county and to the abnormal conditions incident to the construction of the highways. Ford cars predominate while Chevrolet are second. Although the sale of cars has decreased, the amount of gasoline sold continues to increase, due principally to the tourist trade. The first cars were bought in Bryson City, where all the county agencies for automobiles are

still located, and from there they have spread throughout the county.

The development of logging houses and hotels in Bryson City has followed the development of transportation. Aunt Nell Baby began keeping the first boarders at the old Baby House fifty-two or -three years ago. The Cooper House was built eight or ten years later while the Galbraith House was not erected until after the construction of the railroad. Both of these rambling wooden structures are in full operation to-day, the Galbraith House being located near the railway station. In 1887 the Futella Hotel was built opposite the station and it was for forty years the official stopping place of the trains from Asheville for dinner and supper. About the time of the first good roads agitation, the Freeman House, a popular stopping-place for traveling salesmen in particular, was established while Frymont Inn, the first and only tourist hotel was formally opened in 1933. The only other hotel in the county worthy of mention, besides the club houses of the lumber camps, is the Teague Hotel in Whittier.

Material changes of importance have occurred not only in the matter of hotels but also in all other forms of business. The first bank in the county, the Bryson City Bank, was established in 1904 with a capital of five thousand dollars. In 1908, the deposits amounted to about



forty thousand dollars, three fifths of which were on checking accounts, the remainder being in savings. Prior to the establishment of this institution to serve the financial needs of the community, it had been necessary to do one's banking in Waynesville or Asheville. In 1927, the capital of this bank had increased to thirty thousand dollars while the deposits amounted to \$350,000.00. In 1913, the wealth of the county had increased to such an extent that the Citizen's Bank was established with a capital of five thousand, eight hundred dollars. In 1927, its capital had also increased to thirty thousand dollars while the deposits were approximately \$220,000.00. These are still the only banks in the county.

The value of farm crops has increased steadily.

Table V

Estimated Value of All Farm Crops

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1880        | \$ 73,527    |
| 1890        | 135,770      |
| 1900        | 263,209      |
| 1910        | 409,432      |
| 1920        | 667,956      |

The chief industry of the county, lumbering, has been

by far the greatest source of wealth since the beginning of the century.

Table VI  
Development of the Lumber Industry

| Year | Number of Establishments     | Capital   | Value of Products |
|------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1880 | —                            | —         | —                 |
| 1890 | 12                           | 85,625    | 85,226            |
| 1900 | 41                           | 83,081    | 156,990           |
| 1910 | No census report by counties |           |                   |
| 1920 | 22                           | 2,000,000 | 2,001,208         |

Since 1920, the capital invested has decreased approximately fifty per cent, due to the fact that a number of the timber boundaries have been cut out. Citizens of the county are hopeful that the newly opened copper mine and the new water power projects will more than take the place of this industry.

In connection with this has come the increase in the dry goods and grocery business. Within the last ten years, the amount of ready-to-wear goods sold has increased to seventy-five per cent more than the piece goods.<sup>1</sup> The Christmas sales of the Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company

1. Mr. Hall, merchant.



were \$1,750.00 in 1927, or double those for 1926. This, however, cannot all be attributed to the increased purchase of prepared foods for the growing popularity of this store is also a factor.

### III

Such business enterprises have called for various mechanical devices. The first typewriter was brought into the county in 1895. Now typewriters are found in every office, in the majority of the stores, and in a few private homes. The first adding machine was bought by the Bryson City Bank in 1910. At present there are ten or twelve in the county, half of which are in Bryson City while the remainder are owned by the lumber companies. Cash registers are scattered throughout the county, the first ones having been introduced about twenty years ago. All of these inventions were first introduced in Bryson City businesses which were controlled by residents who were not natives of the county.

In the valleys of the Tuckasegee, Ocona Luffy and Little Tennessee rivers there is fertile farming land and it was corn from these valleys that according to the award of the World's Fair at Chicago in 1892, had a higher per cent of protein than any other corn in the United States.

The owners of such farms have modern implements and practice scientific farming, which they learned at the State Agricultural College or through the efforts of the county farm agent. Reapers, mowers and horse rakes began to be used in small numbers about 1900 while the first Ford tractor west of Asheville was sold by the new and progressive Bryson City Motor Company in 1917. There are now nine such tractors in the county. Though they are necessarily scattered through the county on farms, they were all sold by the one company. Nearby the few well equipped farms, however, are the typical hillside ones where practically all the cultivation must be by hand. The plows have changed little from those of pioneer days, being the "bull-tongue" variety. They are made mainly of wood, with an iron shovel. Harrows may be made of wood throughout with locust teeth while sometimes the plowed ground is merely "drug" with an evergreen brush. A cradle is in common use on the hillside mountain farm. Only fifteen years ago it was not uncommon to see women waving aprons and sheets to separate the chaff from the grain as it was poured from basket to basket.<sup>1</sup> While Swain County was still a part of Macon County, it was the custom, on the larger farms,

---

1. Kephart, Horace: Our Southern Highlanders.



not to rely for help exclusively upon hired labor. In harvesting small grain crops the sickle was mostly used. When a crop was ripe the neighbors were notified and gathered in to reap and shock up the crop. The manner was for a dozen or more men to cut through the field, then hang their sickles over their shoulders and bind back. The boys gathered the sheaves together and the old men shocked them up. (1)

Although in general the women do not work in the fields as much as they formerly did, on all the small, hillside farms, the women and barefooted children help with the cultivation. It has often been noted that there is much justification for the statement that, "The women either sit idly on the porch or work in the fields."<sup>2</sup> Many children are still taken out of school each year to help with the planting and hoeing in the spring and with "fodderpulling" and "corn shucking" in the fall.

Fishing has also felt the force of mechanical changes. The small boys of the towns seldom use cane poles but have the most modern equipment and are wise in the lore of artificial flies. In the country, however, the boys and women patiently sit on the bank and hold poles which they have cut from a near-by cane patch and equipped with a line and hook as did their pioneer ancestors a century ago.

- 
1. Smith, C. D.: A Brief History of Macon County, North Carolina, p. 12.
  2. Mrs. S. W. Black.

## IV

The homes and their furnishings show a regular advance. The first cabins of hand-hewn logs had roofs of rough, home-made shingles while the cracks were daubed with clay, moss and bits of wood. Sometimes there was no floor and the chimney was built of rough stone. The first store in Bryson City was a frame building as were the early houses. The first house on Hazel Creek which had glass windows was built in 1895. Previously there had been wooden shutters, known colloquially as window shutters, to close square holes in the wall. The door meant the opening while it was closed by a door shutter though in rare instances the owner merely hung a blanket over the aperture.<sup>1</sup> In the country the log homes are rapidly being replaced by the cheaper box houses since the advent of saw mills. These newer houses may also consist of only one room, though such small ones are rare, but all of them have glass windows. In the more fertile valleys, large, comfortable frame homes are common with an occasional brick one but only the well-to-do farmers can afford either. As recently as twenty-five years ago, there were only three brick buildings in Swain County, all of which were located in Bryson City. From the county seat to the other small

---

1. Mr. J. E. Coburn.



towns and villages, bungalows have been diffused as the favorite form of dwelling. Some of them are frame buildings, others are frame and shingle, while cement blocks form a favorite material for them and also for business structures. In a few cases, native stone has been used to good effect. A newly organized Building and Loan Association encourages the building of homes. For the 2,515 families in the county in 1920, according to the census report, there were 2,475 dwellings. Apartment houses are unknown and the few apartments are either in private residences or over stores.

The first bathrooms in Swain County were installed in 1908 when the Bryson City reservoir was built. Now there are bathrooms in most of the houses in that town and many in other parts of the county. Whittier and the various lumber camps have water systems while a few of the farm homes have running water also. The electric light plant of Bryson City began operations about fifteen years ago and now electricity is as widespread as water systems except on the farms. But lamps and springs are still of primary importance in the many sections which lack electricity and water systems.

The changes in furnishings are at least as significant. Screened windows are fairly general in the towns and camps but in the country homes it is likely that a leafy branch

will be waved over the table to disperse the flies on hot summer days.<sup>1</sup> Washing was carried on in the following manner in the early days.

The water was 'het' and put in the tub and when the 'wimen' began to wash they would have what was known as battling sticks and they would apply the water and soap on the clothes and lay them on the eight-inch end of the trough and begin to battle. The old troughs have about all played out of fashion, as the galvanized tubs were brought in and have taken the day; still there is many a one used up to the present day. (2)

An old iron wash put down by the spring is a common sight. The only electric washing machines are in Bryson City, the first one having been bought about 1922. They have been sold not by the furniture dealers, but by demonstrators for they are still so new that their efficacy must be shown.

The kitchen has undergone many changes in some cases, few in others. Aluminum ware is increasing but its price is too high for many so that iron pots and kettles are still common. Probably every home now has some sort of cooking stove though some women maintain that they still prefer to cook on the fireplace.<sup>3</sup> A few coal oil stoves are used in Bryson City. Perhaps two women use them entirely, both of whom have come from larger places. The first electric

- 
1. A personal experience.
  2. History of Corporal Fess Whitaker, p. 13.
  3. Viny Parker, for example.



range was bought in 1915. There are now three or four, the additional ones having been purchased within the past year. Since the building of the new electric light plant for Bryson City, such electrical goods as irons and toasters have had a ready sale. Gas is unknown.

The most common churn is a stone jar equipped with a wooden lid and dasher. The jar of milk and cream sits on the hearth and is churned at whatever unusual hour it is deemed ready. Barrel churns from the mail order houses are replacing these to some extent while the first electric churn was bought about 1920.

Every old house in Bryson City, as well as all the country homes except the poorest, has its spring house for milk, butter, and the storing of canned fruits and vegetables. Ice was occasionally ordered from Asheville for a number of years prior to the establishment of the first local ice-plant in 1912. In 1922 a rival plant was established. Refrigerators are common in Bryson City and are becoming wide-spread over the county as trucks carry ice in all directions from that center. The first electric refrigerator of any sort was installed in Fryemont Inn two years ago but four or five others have been purchased within the last year, one of which is in Whittier. An important factor in the late introduction of this as of other electrically controlled machines is the fact that

the electric lighting system of Bryson City has only been thoroughly satisfactory for two years. The price of electric power is low so that it is scarcely a cause of retardation in the introduction of new machines.

Brooms have also had a progressive development. They are frequently home-made. A favorite type is made from a bundle of broomsedge and used for light work while a very heavy one is fashioned from a hickory pole which is split into many thin withes which are turned back, bound at the top and affixed to a handle. Small fields of broom corn are not rare and occasionally in the towns some native broom-maker will have his handiwork for sale. The first vacuum cleaner was purchased about 1920. There are now eight or ten, all of which were sold by agents, for they, too, must be demonstrated, and local dealers do not care to make an effort to sell them.

Kitchen cabinets are bought in considerable numbers. Although the majority are in Bryson City, they, too, are scattered over the county. When one is sold in a neighborhood, it is possible to sell several others for a demand is thus created.<sup>1</sup> Porcelain top tables have much the same distribution as the cabinets. In some cases they are not purchased because they are more expensive than plain, wooden

---

1. Mrs. T. A. Case, furniture clerk.



wooden ones.

Bedroom and living room suites are beginning to be bought by the well-to-do. Though many residents of Bryson City buy furniture of good quality, throughout the county as a whole the very cheapest articles are desired. The mountaineers have no knowledge of quality and hence desire the cheapest furniture available. Often they have had no opportunity to see or learn to value better goods, even when they could afford it. Beds are sold in large numbers, equipped with springs and mattresses for straw and shuck mattresses are disappearing. A few homespun coverlets are found in the oldest houses. Outside of the towns, most of the chairs are straight with "split" bottoms of white oak or hickory. Furniture dealers maintain that there is no sale of book-cases. This is due partly to lack of books and partly to the vogue in the newer houses in the towns for built-in book cases. There are practically no antiques of any value. Few rugs are sold, but Congoleum is growing in popularity. It is sold in the country also while rugs are practically restricted to the towns. Even homemade ones are lacking.

The majority of the homes are heated in winter by means of fireplaces. In the towns there are also coal grates and heaters while in Bryson City there are four furnaces. There are a few coal oil heaters in the county

seat but it is too difficult and too expensive for the country people to have either oil or coal heaters.

Musical instruments have undergone a marked change. At the singing conventions and in some of the very remote churches a tuning-fork is still used by the leader, invariably a man. Old fiddlers; contests are still held but they lack the glory of earlier years. Organs were introduced as early as 1888 while there was one in the western end of the county by 1894. A few of them are still sold, all out in the county, but many people now want to trade their old organs for phonographs. There was one square piano in Bryson City in the Collins living-room while upright pianos were beginning to be bought outside of Bryson City about twenty years ago. Most of the pianos are still bought in the town. Phonographs have apread much more rapidly since the introduction of the first one in Bryson City about 1912. They were relatively inexpensive, easy to secure and easy to play. The average price is between seventy-five and one hundred dollars while it is estimated that they are found in twenty-five per cent of the homes. In general a cheap class of records is desired. Some sacred music is popular but among the town people, dance records are generally bought. A few people want better records which is probably due to the effect of the radio.<sup>1</sup> This latest musical



addition, the radio, has already been discussed under means of communication.

## V

Foods also show the effect of material changes in the towns but in the outlying districts they are much less pronounced. In pioneer days, the families were of necessity self-sufficient with the exception of salt and perhaps a little coffee, tea, and sugar. Wild game was plentiful and fish abounded in the streams. Each cabin had its garden in which was raised cabbage, onions, potatoes and beans. There was almost always a little patch of tobacco which was carefully tended and cured for home consumption, principally for chewing by the men and for smoking in the clay pipes of the old women. Corn was the principal agricultural product and supplied both bread and whiskey. It was ground in the tiny tub-mills or in the water-mills with their large, revolving wheels which are still a common, picturesque sight. There were many wild berries. The first settlers planted fruit trees which were allowed to grow untended so that a poor quality of fruit was the result. Apples are still known in the mountains as "fruit". For

---

1. Mr. Will Elmore.

winter consumption, strings of apples, beans, pumpkin, herbs, and peppers were suspended from the walls and ceilings of the homes. Fruit and berries were also canned but without sugar so that they were rarely palatable. In the summer the diet was slightly varied, but in winter corn-bread was the staff of life. Since the game has largely disappeared, fat, salt pork is its usual accompaniment. Mrs. Dargan in her "Highland Annals" says,

The family diet during the greater part of the year was without surprise or adventure. Corn bread, coffee, fried meat, 'taters and 'lasses satisfied hunger, with no concessions to either infancy or age. Let me not forget pickled beans. That dish was a mainstay for babe and man. (1)

In addition many homes were surrounded by bee-gums, made of hollow logs with the rough coverings held in place by stones. The honey from these and the home-made sorghum were "long sweetenin'" for coffee while crude brown sugar and occasional white sugar were "short sweetenin'".

The early storekeepers when they were close enough to the scattered dwellings supplemented this meager diet, but often they were six to twelve miles distant. In the small towns and villages, canned foods and bakery bread have now come to be regarded as necessities but until within the last five or six years every good housekeeper in Bryson

---

1. P. 183.



City put up jars of fruits and vegetables each summer. Even bread is seldom baked at home for almost every general store, and they are nearly all general stores, carries it throughout the year while the county seat has supported a small bakery for the last four or five years. Meats have changed less rapidly perhaps, for the country people kill their own beef and butcher their own hogs. The markets are few in number and poorly stocked, the owners slaughtering their own meat, usually beef, sometimes pork and very rarely mutton.

Every little cross-roads store now has its cases of coco-cola and similar beverages and its boxes of chewing gum. Snuff and plug tobacco are also supplied so that the home-grown product is diminishing in importance.

## VI

The changes which have taken place in regard to clothing are obvious. The first settlers' wives and daughters wove the cloth and fashioned the family clothing by hand. They knit the stockings while the men were the family shoemakers, using ground hog shoe strings for example. Skins secured during the hunt were used in various ways such as for moccasins, leggings, shirts and caps. "Homespun jeans and linsey used to be the universal garb of the mountain

people."<sup>1</sup> Some of the grandmothers still knit stockings for the family but the spinning wheels stand idle and garments of skin are almost unknown. With the early storekeepers, cloth, shoes, coats, hats were brought in and the picturesque costumes of pioneer days were discarded. Most of the clothing was still made at home, however, from the manufactured cloth. With the entrance of the trains and lumber mills, overalls fast became the uniform of the men. By 1888 there were a few sewing machines in Bryson City and they are still sold throughout the county though this is largely through the efforts of agents rather than by voluntary purchase. Within the last two years, perhaps six electric sewing machines have been bought in Bryson City. Too far from a city to go shopping often, the mail order houses are resorted to. Many hundreds of dollars each year flow from the valleys and coves to the larger establishments and the result is often quite apparent at any county gathering. Within the last ten years the demand for ready-to-wear clothing has become so great throughout the county that Bryson City merchants carry a line of such goods and the county people come to do their shopping. More women's ready-to-wear goods is sold than men's for the latter wear

---

1. Kephart, Horace: Our Southern Highlanders, p. 231.



overalls so universally. Also the quality of goods is much better in the case of women. It is estimated that merchants sell seventy-five per cent more ready-to-wear than piece goods and sixty per cent more ready-to-wear in the case of women alone, which indicates to some extent the change from the home manufacture of clothing. People now tend to wait until they are ready to travel before buying clothing. Then they do not want to wait to make new garments.<sup>1</sup>

The more prosperous and sophisticated inhabitants of the county seat went to Asheville occasionally to shop, for many years, but the trip on the train was long and tiring. Now Asheville is only two hours distant by motor, so that it is a favorite shopping center for them as is Bryson City for the greater number of the residents of the county. The styles along the creeks are usually a year or so behind the times, but such is not the case in the towns and the lag is steadily decreasing.

In the days of home-spun cloth, dyes were also produced at home. The Indians likewise were wise in such lore for they dyed the splits for their baskets. Madde dyed red; walnut bark and roots dyed brown; copperas dyed yellow while burnt copperas dyed nearly red. The dye pot

---

1. Mr. Hall, merchant.

has vanished with the loom while even the Indians use diamond dyes to color their baskets of oak splits though walnut, yellow root and other roots are still used to produce the yellows and browns of the rarer cane baskets. The commercial dyes for basketry are generally considered to lack both the beauty and fastness of the more primitive process.

## VII

The early settlers were firm believers in their own remedies. Each home had its bottle of "balsam" for "kidney trouble". "Gall of the earth" was a cure-all for many complaints while "sang"<sup>1</sup> was an effective rejuvenator. Even the earlier doctors relied on herbs largely<sup>2</sup> while often the old women acted as physicians, nurses, and midwives. Shortly before the construction of the railroad, however, Dr. Scruggs and Dr. West, both of whom had had a certain amount of scientific training, settled in Bryson City. But, even yet, far back from the highways, ancient remedies and superstitions practices, though rapidly decreasing, are deemed efficacious. The number of physicians is still small, one for every fifteen hundred people, but medical attention is constantly improving. The lumber companies have aided in

- 
1. Ginseng.
  2. Dr. Mingus and John Millsaps both practiced thus before the Civil War.





the percentage of children under fifteen years of age is four per cent higher than for the state as a whole, the percentage of the population forty-five years of age and over is less than half that for North Carolina, being only 7 per cent.

In dentistry the changes are likewise remarkable. The pioneer "tooth-jumper" placed a square-cut nail at the base of the suspected tooth and gave the nail a mighty blow with a hammer. It is small wonder that the tooth jumped. His successor wielded, and still wields, a pair of home-made forceps while it is also maintained that tumscrews were used on occasion.<sup>1</sup> The county seat has two dentists who are kept busy by patients from the town and surrounding county. The first resident dentist opened his office in 1907 though for three or four years prior to that date there had been a dentist in the town during court week. State dental clinics are also held every three years for the treatment of school children. The attitude of the county people before dental care became generally possible is illustrated by the story of the man who did so much for his daughter that he even "had her teeth plugged with gold."<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Mr. J. E. Coburn.

2. Mr. J. E. Coburn.



## VIII

This list of material changes makes no pretense of being exhaustive, but it does indicate some of the more obvious lines along which marked changes are taking place or have already occurred. The county seat is the center of diffusion while the lines which radiate from it are those formed by the railroads and highways. In almost every instance, the introduction of some new element has been effected by a resident who is not a native of the county, by a member of the younger college trained group, or by the tourists. With the increase in communication, and hence in contacts of various kinds, there has been an increasing rate of change, but this rate has fluctuated to some extent. Immediately after the introduction of the railroad there was a period of rapid advance which decreased to some extent during the early years of the century, if the adoption of mechanical inventions is accepted as criteria, and then became even more rapid as the highways progressed. Further change is cumulative so that the larger the cultural base the greater the number of changes which may be expected to occur. As material traits approach more closely to ideological traits, or as they are more intimately bound up with the soil, they change less rapidly and less generally. The slow change in food, in contrast to clothing, is

an illustration of this point. Also no aspect of the material culture is more primitive than some of the agricultural methods, while rude dentistry has disappeared more rapidly than has folk-doctoring.

Geographical isolation, lack of communication and of social contacts have only been partial factors in the general retardation. The poverty of the mountaineer has been an important cause. Although ignorance of other ways of doing things was general, knowledge alone would have been insufficient. As opportunities for seeing new things have increased, the industrial development has supplied work, and consequently purchasing ability.

New inventions necessitate adjustments. The good roads followed the automobile. The early electrical appliances preceded the development of an efficient power plant. Such adjustments may be easily accomplished or they may be far-reaching in their results. It may be maintained that because this county has merely adopted inventions of others, it is barren of inventive ability. Actually, the period of time has been too short and the number of people affected too small to furnish a basis for any conclusions on this point. Also, while emphasizing this accumulation of new forms of material culture, it is quite as evident that the old forms are disappearing in large



numbers. This is only partially due to the death of the older people for the county is still too newly settled to have a large proportion of the very old. Replacement is rapidly taking place although a strange mixture of the more primitive and the more recent material culture<sup>1</sup> is characteristic of the present stage in general.

- 
1. Perhaps the following examples will suffice. In a one hour drive from Bryson City to Almond and return the following types of transportation were observed: a limousine, a Ford roadster, a mule-drawn buggy, an ox-drawn wagon, and a donkey-drawn sled.

One house may have both electricity and running water, while the house next door may have neither, or perhaps a single water spigot near the back door.

A few homes in Bryson City have electric refrigerators, others have the old variety, while still others continue to use a spring house for preserving food.

## CHAPTER IV

## IDEOLOGICAL OR CUSTOM CHANGES

It is a fairly well established fact that important ideological or custom changes take place more slowly than do mechanical or material changes, though every material change involves some sort of ideological change as well. The utility of the material changes is clearly demonstrable while simple, old customs have strong tenure.

Family organization in the mountain counties is still closely linked with the past in many aspects, but modern ideas and conditions are resulting in obvious changes. For purposes of comparison one may recall that

In the mountains may is lord, though he deigns to consult his wife about family matters and may tolerate a certain amount of shrewishness. He seldom meddles in the house. As for outdoor work, the woman does her share, dragging in with the help of the children dead timber from the hill-sides and taking a turn in the fields as well. At table the wife stands and serves, or if seated passes the dishes first to the men. (1)

She is known throughout the mountains as "the woman" or even as "the old woman".

Slowly is the man losing his patriarchal dominance as material and non-material changes affect him and his family. In general he no longer exercises so much author-

---

1. Calhoun, Arthur: A Social History of the American Family, vol. III, p. 18.



ity as formerly over his wife or over his children. It was quite customary not many years ago for the wife to have to secure his permission before selling her eggs or even before visiting a neighbor. But that time has passed though the true mountaineer still does not lower his dignity by tipping his hat to a woman. Though parents do not control their children as strictly as formerly, the opinion of the older generation is that they certainly should.<sup>1</sup> And yet in a household which has an automobile, an electric churn and washing machine and similar mechanical devices, the father and husband may not have lost his patriarchal dominance in corresponding ratio.

Mountain women are experiencing more freedom and are having more of a voice in the affairs of the household. They do not work as hard as in pioneer days for conditions no longer necessitate it but they still chop the wood to cook the dinner<sup>2</sup> and milk the cows, for milking, throughout the mountains, is regarded as woman's work. The attitude among the more prosperous farmers is such that their wives and daughters no longer work in the fields, but just outside the county seat, one may pass a hillside farm on any fine

---

1. Rev. J. M. Smiley.

2. My Bryson City neighbor uses a double bitted axe every day.

day in early summer and see the entire family hoeing corn on the perilous slope.

The children as has been intimated are less under the control of their parents. They are rarely punished in many of the more primitive homes, though "Spare the rod and spoil the child" has not yet gone entirely out of fashion as a guiding principle. Away from the beaten track, the children often seem as wild as little animals as they peer around the corner of the house at a passing stranger. The mountain boy has always been freer than his sister and has early assumed an attitude of masculine superiority. The girl, too, is being freed by means of increasing contacts but while she may dress according to the fashion, parental authority and local taboos still limit her social diversions to a great extent.

In general students of mountain life report that the families are happy ones and cares are few. Life is simple. The aged are held in great respect and the wrinkled, old women are stores of curious and interesting information. Yet as modern ideas and modern conditions are being disseminated, the old taboos are being broken. To some it seems that husbands and wives have more strife than formerly when there were fewer contacts and few interests.<sup>1</sup> Amuse-

---

1. Mrs. Margaret Weeks; Mrs. Caro Franks.



ments are taking parents as well as children away from the home.

Mountain families are notoriously large but they are decreasing in size.<sup>1</sup> The decrease is noticeable in the towns rather than in the county. The old attitude was to have just as many children as one had time to rear while one grandsire, himself the oldest of thirteen and the father of twelve, said "it looks as though a body ought to have eight or ten anyway."<sup>2</sup> The decrease that is evident has been ascribed to several causes. Marriages are occurring later, in general, as contacts and interests increase; the women are freer and are having a better time so that they do not wish to bother with many children; pioneer conditions when there was abundant land for all and a large family was a source of pride and profit have changed. There is some knowledge of birth control but it is not widespread<sup>3</sup> so that much importance can be attributed to the changed manner of living. Amusements are varied whereas in an earlier day there were few interests, little recreation, and sex desire was probably more to the fore.<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. 1925      Ratio of 30.8 births per 1,000 population.  
     1920      "      "    39.0      "      "      "      "  
     1915      "      "    36.7      "      "      "      "
2. Rev. John Smiley.  
 3. Dr. D. R. Bryson.  
 4. Dr. D. R. Bryson.

In Swain County family loyalty and ties of kinship have been strong. They, too, are becoming less binding as pioneer conditions recede and they remain dominant only in criminal cases and in political struggles. In this as in other changes in family organization such as the decrease in patriarchal authority and the increased freedom of the women and children,<sup>1</sup> the rate of change is slow while as one progresses farther and farther from the county seat, they all become less evident.

## II

Marriage is occurring later. It is now rather uncommon for the girl to be only fifteen or sixteen while the boy is seventeen or eighteen. The prevailing attitude throughout the county is probably reflected in the statement that "it wouldn't be out of place for a girl to wait until she was twenty if she had a good chance."<sup>2</sup> The boy might even be twenty-three to twenty-five. A young married woman of more than average education told the mother of three unmarried children of eighteen, twenty and twenty-two that it did not look as though she were going to have any grandchildren.<sup>3</sup> There are no satisfactory statistics in

- 
1. Dr. D. R. Bryson; Mr. J. E. Coburn.
  2. Rev. John Smiley.
  3. Mrs. George Tabor.



regard to marriage, but it is a matter of empirical judgment that there are more unmarried than formerly. The population has increased and also women may have other means of self-support such as teaching, clerking in stores, and office work of various sorts. Intermarriage among neighboring families has formerly been a common occurrence throughout the mountains. Lack of contacts was responsible for this so that it is scarcely an ideological change.

According to Horace Kephart in "Our Southern Highlanders", divorce is rare in the mountains due to a sort of tolerance on a broad plane. It is slowly increasing. From 1887 until 1906 there was an average of four divorces a year, while during the last decade there has been an average of about ten each year, but the population has also increased during that period. The legal causes of divorce in North Carolina are two, adultery and abandonment. As far as legal causes can be relied on, the former is much the more frequent of the two. Although the majority of the people consider a divorce a sort of disgrace, it does not restrain them. Practically all the divorces are among the poorer and least educated group.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Mr. S. W. Black.

## III

In education; changes have been more rapid and more marked, though many modern school buildings are still presided over by teachers who use antiquated methods of instruction. The first school in Swain County was established in 1872 although as early as 1850 there had been free schools in the portion of the county which formerly belonged to Macon County. That school attendance was not considered as important for the girls as for the boys is illustrated by the higher percentage of illiterate among the former in the census reports.<sup>1</sup> Now the inhabitants of the county as a whole not only desire education for their children, but also education close at hand. Hence the majority of the schools are still in charge of one teacher but they are scattered at frequent intervals throughout the county.<sup>2</sup> The better educated members of a few of the districts have seen the advantages to be derived from consolidation so that their children are transplanted by bus to the larger schools. In other districts, however, this change, starting about seven years ago, has yet to

- 
1. 1920--Illiterate males 21 years of age and over 19.3%; females 21.0%.
  2. 1927--Total number of schools: 61.  
Total number of one teacher schools: 43.



become important. The desire on the part of boys and girls to attend colleges or the state university is yearly gathering momentum. The changing attitude toward education is also seen in the way in which illiteracy is regarded. Through the efforts of the clubwomen and county school system, a great enthusiasm has recently been aroused for night schools and the majority of the county teachers are giving their time, without remuneration, to help alleviate this condition.

Another phase of education in which there has been a decided change in the larger schools is in the date of opening. A quarter of a century ago when children's labor in the fields seemed so necessary the schools opened in the middle of the summer and closed early in the new year before the planting season. A period of poor attendance in the fall when "fodder pulling" and "corn shucking" were at their height, was expected. Children had ceased being taken from the schools in the towns in order to help on the farms long before the school boards decided that it was possible to begin the session in August or perhaps even as late as the first Monday in September. Although the hours of the school day now conform to those elsewhere, the old idea fifty years ago was that a school day should be as long as a work day, that is from after breakfast until dark. Actually, it was never supported.

The speech of the mountaineer of Swain County contains many traces of eighteenth century expressions and is largely free from Negro influences. The effect of the schools and of contacts with educated people is apparent in the correction of some of the pronounced provincialisms but many still remain, particularly among the older people, for language is tenacious.

## IV

One important ideological change is in regard to community projects. In pioneer days, the neighbors gathered for road building, house raisings, log rollings, "rail maulings" and similar needs. As the county grew, this early spirit was almost entirely lost. The mountaineer while supremely loyal to family ties has not learned the lesson of coöperation. Only in the last few years has a change occurred. The people of the county seat, who have keenly felt their division according to denominational lines and secondarily according to political lines, have been slowly learning to coöperate in civic movements such as good roads programs or illiteracy campaigns.<sup>1</sup> The leaders have chiefly been the men and women who were not born and

---

1. County festivals, civic improvement campaigns, union church services are further examples.



reared in the county. Only very gradually have people, under these skillful leaders, been led to realize the advantages of such measures and to unite to bring about their realization. The independence and self-sufficiency which isolated mountain life engenders have had to be adjusted to the life of small towns. In the country districts, the church is still the gathering place and the focus of organization. Singing conventions and county school meets are the most evident results of increased means of communication and a county-wide coöperation. Needless to point out, this accessibility and spirit are both less fully developed as one goes farther back into the valleys and coves.

## V

The independence and hospitality of the people have both undergone marked changes. In regard to the former, the law is enforced more stringently than in many places elsewhere. The inalienable right to "tote" a gun is no longer stoutly supported. Property rights are gradually being recognized so that one does not pasture one's cattle or chop down trees at will though the idea of a pedestrian trespassing is unknown. In some cases property is posted, forbidding hunting, but this is not a usual procedure.

Parents send their children to school according to compulsory attendance laws, giving up their right to say whether or not the child shall have an education. The native mountaineer is still independent, still does not know what it means to be under the authority of another, but as the pioneer conditions which fostered this characteristic are disappearing, he is becoming less picturesque and less decided in this respect.

The notable hospitality of the people has lost its fervor in the more thickly populated sections. As strangers become less of a novelty, hospitality becomes less pressing. In all the towns and villages there are hotels or boarding houses where the stranger is entertained for a price comparable with those in much larger and more comfortable establishments. As one walks along a steep, rocky mountain road, branching off from the highway, however, one is still invited to stop and "set a spell" at each home or even to "take the night". Here where communication is difficult and life is monotonous, a chance visitor still meets with hospitable entertainment. Both the quality and the quantity of the food may be uncertain, but it is generously shared.

## VI

In the matter of amusements, many changes are taking



place in Bryson City and to a lesser extent in the lumbering camps. The amusements of mountain youth have always been restricted. Very religious parents forbid dancing and card playing in a firm manner. The quilting bees, house raisings, and shooting matches of an earlier day have disappeared and nothing has quite taken their place. Twenty-five years ago there were no opportunities for boys and girls to be thrown together except for courting and this was quickly followed by marriage.<sup>1</sup> Except for religious gatherings, there are still few opportunities for the young people of the country districts to associate. The schools are rapidly introducing baseball and basketball, but hunting and fishing offer the chief diversions for the boys while their sisters lack even these. A box or "poke" supper for some benefit is occasionally held. The girls prepare lunches in fancy boxes or in "pokes" for which the boys bid. The purchaser of each box then enjoys its contents in company with the young lady who prepared it. In those families where religious matters are not regarded quite so dogmatically, square dances sometimes occur. A fiddle and possibly a banjo furnish the music. "Play-parties"<sup>2</sup> are regarded somewhat more tolerantly.

---

1. Mr. J. E. Coburn.

2. Parties where games furnish the diversion.

In Bryson City and the even smaller towns, the influence of residents who have come from larger centers and of the tourists has been felt in this matter of amusements. Only within the last five years have dancing and bridge become permissible and even then only the children of the more prosperous and better educated "natives" enjoy these pastimes. Automobile riding, however, has become a county-wide pleasure. One other form of amusement afforded the young people which from its character is highly approved of, is parties for the young people's societies in the churches. The single picture show of the county is located in Bryson City. In general, all changes in amusements seem very slow, but it appears evident that the more dependent they are upon mechanical means, the more rapidly they become diffused.

The celebration of holidays is still largely a family affair. Those most generally observed are Christmas, Thanksgiving, the Fourth of July and Easter. The characteristic ways in which holidays are observed elsewhere are being adopted in the small towns but they are spreading slowly. When chicken fights were more popular, the important tournament of the year was held on Easter Sunday. The most widely observed holiday is Christmas. It is celebrated by social gatherings, dances, Sunday School



trees, which were introduced by residents coming from "outside", big dinners, and getting drunk. It is also a favorite day for marriages to take place. Horace Kephart describes an earlier day.

As a rule, the only holidays observed in the mountains, outside the towns, are Christmas and New Year's. Christmas is celebrated after the southern fashion.... The boys and men, having no firecrackers (which they would disdain, anyway), go about shooting revolvers and drinking to the limit of capacity or supply.... Christmas is a day of license, of general indulgence, it being tacitly assumed that punishment is remitted from any ordinary sins of the flesh that may be committed on that day. There is no church festivity, nor are Christmas trees ever set up. Few mountain children hang up their stockings, and many have never heard of Santa Claus. New Year's Day is celebrated with whatever effervescence remains from Christmas, and in the same manner. (1)

## VII

Another ideological change relates to moonshine. The name is deceptive for much of it is made during the day. As early as 1887, Zeigler and Grosscup in writing of their travels reported,

Blockading, or 'moonshining' as it is sometimes called, because the distiller works by the light of the moon, is not as prevalent in these mountains as is generally supposed: and, besides, it is growing less with every year. (2)

- 
1. Kephart, Horace: Our Southern Highlanders, p. 265.
  2. Zeigler and Grosscup: The Heart of the Alleghanies, p. 141.

The statement is just as accurate forty years later. It is true that in the early days of the county, a drink of moonshine before breakfast was often indulged in by old and young alike, but that custom has died away. Although the residents of Swain County are generally reported to be making less moonshine each year, the fact that a still was captured on an average of every five or six weeks during 1927 affords a basis for comparison. The modern product though often inferior to the "likker" of a former day through its adulteration with tobacco, buckeye or red devil lye, finds a ready sale. The process has been reduced from a period of about six weeks to two or three days.<sup>1</sup>

### VIII

Ideological changes in religion are perhaps least easily and clearly observed and occur most slowly. The use of pianos or individual communion services does not necessitate a corresponding modernity in doctrine. The mountaineer is noted for his staunch support of his particular denomination and for his ability to cite biblical quotations to prove any point in which he is interested. The Baptist church is the strongest throughout the county

---

1. Mr. J. E. Coburn.



with the Methodist second in numerical status while there is not a Catholic in the county. No Jew has remained in this area for any length of time. Protestantism is universal. The general opinion expressed is that the churches support all progressive measures. When it is recalled that denominational lines largely determine the social organization, and even one's physician and grocer, it is evident that this influence can be enormous. Revivals are slightly less frequent in the towns and as other emotional outlets are obtained, religious ecstasies become less violent. The dominance of the church in regard to amusements is lessening. Gradually a more highly educated ministry is being obtained where exhortation was formerly the chief attribute. In doctrine, fundamentalism still prevails.

## IX

Thus ideological changes are taking place along these and other lines, but they are taking place slowly. Asheville, sixty-five miles distant, is the principal center of diffusion, both of material and non-material culture in its varied aspects, for Bryson City which the latter in turn becomes for the county at large. Printed material affords few direct contacts in Bryson City and even fewer in the county because the circulation of both periodicals

and newspapers is quite limited as the estimates given in Chapter II indicate. The importance of the radio is increasing but it is so recent that it is difficult to determine its influence. Many of the changes observed are principally restricted to Bryson City and to a limited part of its population while others are felt throughout the county to a greater or less extent. The wide differences in educational, social and economic advantages are somewhat revealed by this. In every example cited, the ideological culture changes seem to have occurred more slowly than any associated mechanical ones. In general they are less widely diffused also and are much more dependent on direct contacts with other people.

Within the range of ideological culture the new ideas are less widespread than are the old. Community cooperation is less frequent than extreme family loyalty. Consolidated schools receive less general support than do the one-teacher ones of the immediate community. In the matter of inventions, the diffusion of the new elements corresponds perhaps more closely to that of the old but yet does not equal it in most cases. The Ford is not as widely diffused as is the wooden sled. The barrel churn is not found as frequently as is a stone jar with a dasher. The kitchen cabinet is not as widely diffused as is the cooking stove.



Though many factors are involved, one may generalize by saying that on the whole the newer inventions and ideas are less widely diffused than are the old.

Many custom changes occur unconsciously. The more welcome ones are those which are most closely linked with preceding mechanical changes, in which some definite advantage can be observed, or which necessitate the fewest changes in the existing culture. In instances where ideological changes, which might be expected, have not occurred, the rapidity with which new cultural elements have been introduced in a very short time, must be taken into consideration.

CHAPTER V  
RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Resistance to change is closely linked with the preceding chapter on ideological changes because the resistances seem more pronounced in regard to them than in regard to material changes, where the adaptations to be made and the advantages to be derived are more obvious. Also some customs are more rigid than others, due largely to the question of their ethical import. An invention seldom achieves the ethical sanction which is such a factor in various phases of family organization, for example, and hence the former may be the more easily changed. The slowness of ideological changes to take place is due to resistance, to the solidarity of old and established usages. Conservatism is a recognized trait of mountain peoples the world over. Various explanations of this factor, which is known by ethnologists as cultural inertia, have been set forth.<sup>1</sup> Cultural forms may persist because they have been found to have utility in that "they satisfy some individual or social want."<sup>2</sup> Also, "Cultural forms may persist apparently because it is easier to use an existing form

---

1. Ogburn, William F.: Social Change, Part III, passim.  
2. Ibid., p. 154.



than it is to create a new one."<sup>1</sup> A further factor is that known as "vested interests".

Among the chief factors which seem to determine the rate of social change, by influencing the incorporation or rejection of an innovation, is vested interest. This concept will be used both in the restricted sense of economic interests which resist changes that would affect adversely the advantage obtaining under the conditions held prior to the innovation, and also in reference to that less tangible vested interest bound up with the struggle to retain status, reputation and prestige. (2)

Tradition exercises a powerful sway. The old ways of doing and thinking have been tried and found more or less satisfactory whereas innovations are rather to be feared. Habit is a strong psychological factor in this connection. The lack of experience in making changes is also involved. In some instances there is a peculiar respect for authority whether it be that of an individual or an institution, either of which probably is strongly traditional in viewpoint. Closely linked with this is the idea of social pressure which leads to conformity to the standards of the group. In some instances this pressure appears to be from a lower social class upward; in others, from a higher social class downward. In certain cases, the educational system or the religious tenets may operate as

- 
1. Ogburn, William F.: Social Change, p. 159.
  2. Stern, Bernard J.: Social Factors in Medical Progress, p. 11.

factors in resistance to change. A very important cause may be that of poverty, of lack of actual capital for securing new equipment. This may further operate to increase the opposition to any innovation which may raise the existing taxes. Often ignorance is a primary cause. Sheer lack of knowledge must in fact be overcome to at least some extent before these other factors may operate. The importance of means of communication is directly linked with this.

The problem "is often further complicated by the personality and affiliations of the innovator."<sup>1</sup> Simmel's conception<sup>2</sup> of the rôle of the stranger in the community is of interest in this connection for it has been the stranger in a broad sense who has initiated most of the changes. He comes from without but he stays. His qualities of objectivity and freedom from convention are peculiarly significant here for he is not only able to see the need of change but also to introduce it. He lacks the fixity of those residents who simply never think a thing can be done in any other than the customary way.

- 
1. Stern, Bernard J.: Social Factors in Medical Progress, p. 18.
  2. Park and Burgess: Introduction to the Science of Society, pp. 322-327.



## II

All of these are by no means characteristic of every example of resistance to change but neither is a single factor a sufficient explanation for any specific case. There has been some opposition to every enterprise proposed along any line. In the case of civic improvements such as roads, paved streets and school measures, ignorance and fear of increased taxes have been largely operative. In many enterprises the fear on the part of a certain class of others coming in to supersede them in importance as leaders in the community has been dominant. This latter point of view is by no means uncommon among the educated and well-to-do class of mountain people.

## III

In politics, a peculiar shift occurred in 1898. At that time there was a change made in the state constitution requiring the literacy test for voting. Many Democrats became Republican through their fear that the Democrat party would deprive them of the privilege of voting. Since that occurrence, the Republicans have largely had control of the politics of the county although prior to that time, one had scarcely ever been elected to office.

In educational matters, conservatism has been particularly apparent. This opposition is not confined to the parents alone but in some cases the teachers also exercise a strong influence against progress. The reason for this latter point is due to ignorance, habit, and their own "vested interests". They think that if the school term is lengthened, they will either have to discontinue their teaching entirely or they will have to put forth considerable effort to raise their teaching certificates. Particularly in the one-teacher schools, they soon become one of the people; they promote all the children at the end of the term; and satisfaction is general. The local committees recommend them for reappointment so that the county superintendent can only weed them out slowly.<sup>1</sup> In regard to both teachers and parents, it is, in general, the less educated who oppose progressive school measures.

A great amount of opposition against compulsory education has been evinced at various times since its adoption in 1913. Does not compulsory education interfere with the inalienable right of man to determine what his children should do? Then, too, the mountain man does not

---

1. Mr. N. E. Wright, county school superintendent.



want his offspring to surpass him in knowledge. There are still many persons like old Mrs. Jenkins who said she never had any "larnin'" and she got along all right so that her grandchildren did not need any either.<sup>1</sup> Especially in the early days, the distances from school were often great also.

More recently, there has been pronounced opposition to consolidation. The frequently expressed opinion is simply that they "are agin it".<sup>2</sup> Back of that lies the sway of tradition and habit and ignorance. The schools have been in the neighborhood for so long. Also there is the feeling that their children are not sufficiently well-dressed to attend a school in town. When pupils come in from the country schools, they frequently have to be put back into a lower grade, but the parents want their children, no matter how poorly prepared, to be promoted regularly. They even claim that more progress was made in the old four-month term than is now made in six or eight months. Probably the most important reason is the increase in taxes, for the poverty of the mountaineer is great.

Whatever the type of opposition, it has been lessening during the last five or six years. In some instances, this has been due to the demonstration of the advantages of

1. Mrs. D. R. Bryson.
2. Mr. N. E. Wright.

better schools. The mountaineer has had to be shown.

## V

Since the churches in the county tend to be more conservative and more "fundamental" than those in most larger places, their influence can scarcely be overestimated. It is the power of the churches which is chiefly responsible for the attitude toward many amusements. In the spring and autumn revivals, dancing, card playing and the theater are favorite themes, particularly if the minister has had a very restricted education. Resistance to change in the matter of civic enterprises is largely due to the extreme loyalty to the churches and to the lines which have been established by them. Although coöperative programs are now being developed, each church must still have an adequate representation among the officers and committeemen if the enterprise is to be successful. Hymns are the favorite form of music: even the songs sung at the various school exercises are limited almost entirely to them.

## VI

The economic life of the county, as has been stated, has been closely linked with the development of the lumber



industry. The true mountaineer has no respect for a tree, feeling merely that the timber is there to be exploited and he is glad for the lumber operations that afford employment. The opposition in this realm is very recent, having been aroused in connection with the agitation in regard to the proposed Smoky Mountain Park, approximately two hundred thousand acres of which will lie in Swain County.<sup>1</sup> The lumber companies have opposed it because it will include large sections of fine timber which they can never exploit.<sup>2</sup> Their vested interests are attacked. There has been some opposition on the part of the native residents also because by the removal of this area from taxation, the tax burden of the county will have to be borne by a smaller number of people.

## VII

These are some of the more obvious cases of resistance to change, but deeply interwoven in the life of the people is a network of customs and mores which have persisted for generations in many cases and which exercise a conserving influence that defies estimation. All of the factors involved

- 
1. See Map III.
  2. In 1871, sixty per cent of Swain County was held in large blocks by speculators and lumbermen. From Forest Conditions in Western North Carolina, p. 37.

in resistance to change are exemplified in some fashion. Many of these folkways appear under the guise of survivals. Here, perhaps what is regarded as woman's work will suffice for purposes of illustration. The women in the mountains not only have all the household responsibilities which include the gardening, milking, carrying of water from the spring and often chopping wood and kindling, but they must often help in the fields all day also. This is only beginning to be questioned for the mores are strong and a woman is weak who cannot perform these strenuous tasks and bear her husband numerous children besides. When there was an effort to establish a small knitting mill in Bryson City, the girls who hoed on the hillsides at home considered it a lowering of their social status to come to town to work in the factory.

As idealogical changes occur more slowly than do mechanical changes, it is clear that resistances to change are more pronounced and are more powerful in regard to the former. According to W. H. R. Rivers,<sup>1</sup> material objects and processes are spread merely by contact when other features of the culture are not necessarily affected while "the social structure, the framework of society" is the

---

1. Selection in Park and Burgess: Introduction to the Science of Sociology, p. 746.



most fundamental of all the aspects of a culture and is "less easily changed except as the result of the intimate blending of peoples". The present data seem to corroborate this theory.

CHAPTER VI  
SURVIVALS IN FOLKWAYS

Probably no more interesting field of research can be found in the southern highland country with its wealth of possibilities than the survivals in folkways. Their persistence is a common phenomenon and here the lag often carries one back to eighteenth century customs. Geographical isolation formed what proved to be an almost insurmountable barrier for generations so that many folkways became deeply ingrained in the cultural pattern of this homogeneous group of people.

Physical isolation favors the sway of custom. In the 'valley closets' of mountain regions the old endures long after the plains and seaboard population have discarded it. (1)

These (survivals) are processes, customs, opinions and so forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and they thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture. (2)

In speaking of superstitions in his "Social Change", Ogburn notes that

whether these survivals be socially useful or not they certainly are not fossils, for they do function in the life of the folk. (3)

Forms of culture such as customs, beliefs, religions, survive because of a utility they possess in

- 
1. Ross, Edward A.: Social Psychology, p. 224.
  2. Tylor, Edward B.: Primitive Culture, p. 16.
  3. P. 153.



meeting psychological needs. (1)

Their valuation has been changed. (2)

## II

In examining the survivals in folkways as they are found throughout Swain County, one finds many of them falling into rather definite groups, suitable for classification. In the realm of agriculture, the moon is still regarded as a potent factor. For tall growth, plant in the light of the moon. Corn is the outstanding example. Flowers should be planted when the moon is full. Potatoes planted in the light of the moon run to vine instead of making tubers. Hence they must be planted in the dark of the moon, in February. Beans, pumpkins and watermelons should be planted when the sign is in the Arms. Herein lies the forte of the popular almanac. Although no explanation is offered, it is known that the planting of sage in the garden will bring bad luck.<sup>3</sup> According to Mrs. Dargan's version, secured from her mountain neighbor, one must not sow sage unless one wishes trouble, but one may either set it out in bunches or get a strange woman who is passing to

---

1. Page 154.

2. Page 153.

3. Uncle Abe Williams.

sow it. She is safe for she loses her trouble as soon as she crosses water.<sup>1</sup>

The moon plays an important function in other aspects of life besides agriculture. One must not roof a house with boards during the light of the moon, for if one does, the ends will certainly "cup up". Neither should one lay the worm of a rail fence in the light of the moon because it will not remain straight if one does.<sup>2</sup> If one kills hogs when the moon is increasing in size, the meat and lard will all fry away.<sup>3</sup> The state of the moon also portends the weather. A circle around the moon is a sign of a storm while the number of stars within the circle indicates the number of days before it will break. When the moon is hooked up so one can hang a powder horn on it, dry weather will follow. When it is tipped up so water will run out, it is known as a wet moon.

### III

The mountain minister would be scorned who had to depend on notes as he faced his congregation. Only in the more remote churches to the men and women sit decorously on

- 
1. Mrs. Olive Dargan: Highland Annals, p. 29.
  2. Judge T. D. Bryson.
  3. Ibid.



opposite sides of the church, but the practice has by no means been abandoned. Some of the members are still opposed to organs as "sinful". The male leader of the singing pitches the tune for the hymn, which men and women alike sing in a high-pitched, strongly accented treble, with a tuning-fork. Part singing is unknown. In the country churches, shouting and bodily contortions though they have lost some of their fervor, still persist. The baptisings in the cold mountain streams afterwards are events of interest and importance. Sabbath observance is rigorous.

#### IV

Those who are not restrained by religious scruples attend the occasional country dances. Someone who can call the figures is in great demand. The fiddlers rouse the dancers with their vigorous tunes and the gambol is on. In a slightly earlier period, the couple "clinched" and danced until exhaustion forced them to stop. Another amusement is that of chicken fighting. Game chickens were formerly raised to be fought, but the interest is decreasing. Similarly shooting for beef and for turkey were favorite sports up to thirty years ago, but they too have declined rapidly. In turkey shooting, one shoots at the head at forty yards distance, and at one hundred and seventy-five

yards or so, one shoots at the entire turkey. The one who hits the turkey wins it as the prize. Zeigler and Grosscup describe the shooting of beef as it took place at its height.

Shooting matches are frequent, in the valley of the western section. The prize is generally a beef. The time is in October, when the cattle, in sleek condition, are driven down from the mountain summits. Notice of the proposed match is communicated to the settlers; and, on the stated day, the adepts in the use of shooting-irons, assemble, with their cap and flintlock rifles at the place of contest.... Every beef makes five prizes. Sometimes there is a sixth prize, consisting of the privilege of cutting out the lead shot by the contestants into the tree forming the back-ground for the target. The value of the beef is divided into shilling shares, which are sold to purchasers and then shot off. The best shots take first choice and so on. Three judges preside. (1)

'Possum hunting is frequently indulged in. Deer hunting has died out due to the extinction of the species, but bear-hunting is still a sport. And then there are the wild hogs. The objects of prey are "razorbacks" that have been turned loose in the forests to breed and grow fat on acorns. Practically wild as they are, their hunting is not without danger.

## V

Courtship and weddings retain some of the old flavor.

- 
1. Zeigler and Grosscup: The Heart of the Alleghanies, p. 93.



"At thirteen, Evvie was 'talking to' Cleve Saunders."<sup>1</sup>

"Talking to" indicates courtship of a serious sort. These courtships are frequently brief as youth forms fairly slight barriers to matrimony. Weddings take place at home rather than in a church though the local justice of the peace is becoming increasingly popular. Such customs as the guests riding around the bride's home before entering have passed away. The attendants of the bride and groom, usually one for each, are known colloquially as "waiters". The customary feast at the home of the groom, following the ceremony, is known as the infare. Sometimes this is deferred until the second or third day, being preceded by a celebration at the home of the bride. Honeymoons are unknown outside of the towns and even there, they are rarely taken. The "shivaree"<sup>2</sup> is a recent innovation which has spread throughout this mountain region. Hence it possibly should not be included in this discussion. On the wedding night, the boys of the neighborhood collect cow-bells, horns, and almost anything that will make a noise and serenade the young couple. The bridegroom then invites them in and treats them.

---

1. Mrs. Olive Dargen: Highland Annals, p. 110.

2. French--charivari.

## VI

"Funeralizing" is another interesting, old mountain custom which though decreasing in practice is still a rite in remote districts. The term is used for funeral services preached some time after the death of the person. As long a period as ten years may elapse between the simple burial and the funeral sermon, but the expressions of grief are remarkably violent even then. There are various reasons for this deferred service. The mountaineers are a clannish people. Perhaps they wait until the return of a favorite preacher who may have converted or married the deceased. Again it may be due largely to whether or not it is a convenient time for the relatives to gather. In other cases, no sermon is preached until the husband or wife is laid alongside the first deceased years later. Frequently the funeral sermon is preached during a Baptist association, a revival, or an all day meeting.

## VII

Primitive or folk doctoring comes under the classification of survivals. Native products have been widely used.

---

Whiskey means more to us mountain folks than hit does to folks in town, whar thar's drug-stores and doctors. Let ary thing go wrong in the



fam'ly--fever, or snake bite, or somethin'--and we can't get a doctor up hyar less 'n three days: (1) and it costs scand'lous. The only medicines we-uns has is yerbs which customarily ain't no good 'thout a lectle grain o' whiskey. (2)

Herbs, some of whose properties were learned from the Indians, are also in great favor where used alone. Boneset tea, an extremely bitter concoction, is a remedy for colds and fever. Pennyroyal tea is also given for colds. Coughs are cured by teas of mullein and tame "cumfrey". "Shumake" (sumach) is good for an inflamed throat while a tea made from balm or black snakeroot is prescribed for fever. Then, there is pokeweed for "rheumatiz", spig-net for consumption, and rue for worms. Catnip tea will safeguard babies against colic while sage tea and alum is one of the numerous remedies for thrash.

The most popular and wide-spread cure for thrash is to have some one who has never seen his father blow in the baby's mouth. It is also said that if water is gathered in the mother's shoe and used to rinse out the baby's mouth, it will be cured. A less thoroughly authenticated cure is simply to take a live minnow from the spring and draw it through the child's mouth.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Highways have remedied this.
  2. Kephart, Horace: Our Southern Highlanders, p. 121.
  3. Mrs. Wilhide.

To cure shingles, kill a black cat, cut off the tail and rub the affected parts with it. Or cut off the head of a black chicken and rub the affected parts.<sup>1</sup>

To cure ringworm, put some grains of corn on the blade of an axe. Take a red, hot shovel and burn them until the juice runs out. Then rub this oil on the ringworm.<sup>2</sup>

To cure nosebleed, string red corn on a black horse-hair and tie around the child's throat.<sup>3</sup> If one can only remember, the repetition of the sixth verse of the sixteenth chapter of Ezekial will also produce the desired result.<sup>4</sup>

A particularly efficacious remedy for warts, so it is claimed, is to count the number of warts on one's hand and pick them until they bleed. Then take as many grains of corn as there are warts. Put some blood on each grain and feed the corn to a chicken. The warts will disappear. Another method is to pick a wart until it bleeds, put some of the blood on a dishrag and bury it under a rock. When the dishrag rots, the wart will disappear.<sup>5</sup> The boys

- 
1. Miss Jess Shank.
  2. Mrs. Wilhide.
  3. Judge T. E. Bryson.
  4. Mrs. Olive Dargan: Highland Annals, p. 28.
  5. Mrs. Wilhide.



often tie a knot in a string and bury it. When the string rots, the wart will disappear.<sup>1</sup> A fourth method is to have the wart conjured off.<sup>2</sup> It will disappear within seven days.

Wounds may be stanchd with dusty cobwebs and bound up in any sort of rag or perhaps "sut" (soot) and a rag will be used. Most of the doctoring such as this sounds highly improbable but it can be verified in any true mountain home. Practices that seem to oppose all the dictates of common sense are declared to be efficacious and the old women continue to brew their herb teas.

#### VIII

Superstitions are rife in this country. Dreams are portents of grave importance. To dream of muddy water is a sign of trouble. If one crosses muddy water, one will lose trouble. One may also recover from certain types of illness on crossing running water. Every step in one's stocking feet is a step in trouble while a child that never falls out of bed is sure to die. To forget something and go back for it is a sign of bad luck. Sneezing three times in succession is a sign of a death. The twelve

---

1. Fischer Black.  
2. Judge T. D. Bryson.

Ruling Days<sup>1</sup> contain important indications as to the future. "Sassafac" (sassafras) is never burned because to do so would cause a death or a very severe accident. If a dog howls at a certain time of the night, it is a sign of death. To sweep out-of-doors after dark or to sweep under a sick bed will surely bring bad luck. This list of miscellaneous superstitions does not pretend to be exhaustive but it does in some measure indicate the intimate way in which superstition invades every portion of the mountaineer's daily routine. These are transmitted orally and can only be maintained in their strength and vigor in a relatively isolated group.

## IX

Although belief in witchcraft is on the decline, traces still remain. On "Larky",<sup>2</sup> there are several families in which belief in witches is still a part of the folkways. In making bread, they used to heat the milk and drop in a piece of silver to take the witches out. Joe Barker is reported to have said that until the death of the old Upton woman between five and ten years ago, he

- 
1. The twelve days between New and Old Christmas, both of which have been observed in some sections of the mountains.
  2. Alarka Creek.



was unable to keep hogs because she bewitched them so that they ran away.<sup>1</sup> Deep Creek was another center for belief in witchcraft where there even came to be witch doctors. One such doctor it is said put up chicken bones and the first one who came under those bones was identified as the witch.<sup>2</sup> Such data is difficult to evaluate, but belief in witchcraft in pioneer days and lingering traces of it today can scarcely be negated.

## X

There are found many old women who smoke clay pipes, a survival probably brought over a century or two ago by their grandmothers and great-grandmothers from Ireland. The men usually chew tobacco while the younger women dip snuff, using a "toothbrush" made of a twig of birch whose end has been chewed into splinters. Even in the towns, "snuff-dipping", in private, is extensively indulged in by women native to the mountains.

## XI

Manners are also of great importance. In approach-

---

1. Mr. J. F. Coburn.  
2. Rev. John Smiley.

ing a cabin, one does not walk up to the door and knock but at some little distance a loud halloo is given to warn the occupants of one's approach. One speaks to all passers-by be they friends or strangers while the use of the given name in address is customary. Any visitor is always hospitably invited to remain for a meal, all day, or even over night. Illness is always an excuse for many and lengthy visits.

## XII

It is perhaps well to conclude this list of survivals with one of the most appealing sounds of the mountain country, that of the cow-bells. When cattle roamed at will on the hillsides, they could be located by these bells in the evening. Though they are now confined to pastures, the leader of the herd still wears a bell which can be heard as the cows are driven to and from the pasture each day.



## CHAPTER VII

## CONCLUSIONS

Now the question arises as to how far one may conservatively generalize from this body of factual data on Swain County. From comparisons with the relatively small amount of literature on the Southern Appalachian Mountains as a whole, which indicates the racial and cultural homogeneity of the people, it may be assumed that cultural changes and the processes by which diffusion takes place in any one county are fairly representative of what is taking place in other counties or of what may be expected to take place. The similar changes occurring in neighboring counties, such as Jackson, Clay, and Haywood substantiate this. In the particular, relatively isolated county being investigated, practically all the changes of significance have occurred within the last twenty-five years, most of them within ten years while a remarkable number have taken place within the brief space of five years. Hence a biological explanation would not only be inadequate but also absurd. The cultural aspects alone can be investigated in this case.

It is evident that the rôle of communication cannot be minimized. Communication has made possible the contacts which have resulted in the rapid cultural growth. In fact this growth appears to have taken place in a direct ratio

with improvements and advances in means of communication. The two most significant periods of change have been those following the introduction of the railroads and of the highways, between which a period of less importance, in a cultural sense, intervened. These two means of communication have been largely responsible for the immigration of new individuals or families who have introduced new ideas and new inventions. Physical isolation has been overcome and every phase of the people's lives has been affected directly or indirectly by the diffusion of culture from centers outside the mountain section. These changes have been dependent not only on the railroads and highways but also on the telegraph, telephone, newspapers and periodicals and more recently the radio. These mechanical elements have been determining factors in both the material and the non-material aspects of the culture and the changes which have occurred as a result have produced resistances of varying significance.

The most obvious changes for which the means of communication seem either directly or indirectly responsible have been those classified as a part of the material culture. They include changes in means of transportation, in wealth production, in food and clothing, in the construction and furnishing of homes, in the care of the sick and in fact,



in probably every phase of life that involves the use of any sort of mechanical device. These mechanical inventions have, in general, been readily accepted and diffused along the increasing lines of communication from Bryson City as the center throughout the county, but less readily and less quickly where communication is still difficult. Not all of them have diffused at the same rate, but as communication becomes easier the rate of diffusion increases. Disregarding other factors than the importance of communication, the phonograph has spread more rapidly than the piano, ready-to-wear clothing more rapidly than sewing machines. Although old forms disappear as they are replaced by newer ones, culture tends to be cumulative so that the present cultural base is much larger than it was even a decade or two ago. The introduction of the mechanical inventions has been principally due to the efforts of residents who were not native-born, to college-trained native young people, and to tourists. This implies that there must be not merely communication for culture to diffuse but that other factors are definitely involved. Knowledge of inventions, purchasing power, freedom from the bonds of tradition may be suggested. Furthermore, it seems relatively clear that the closer material culture approaches non-material culture the less readily it is adopted. New inventions necessitate

adjustments both of a mechanical sort and of an ideological nature. Such adjustments meet resistances of varying intensity which must be overcome before thorough diffusion of any culture trait may occur.

No important contribution to the stock of material culture has been made by residents of the county themselves. The process has been one of adoption and adaptation alone, but if one accepts the theory that inventions are largely due to the size of the existing cultural base, the period of time has been too short to draw any conclusions.

Ideational or custom changes have followed more slowly and have affected the life of the people in a less fundamental manner. They are diffused less widely and less thoroughly. The tenacity of custom precludes its downfall within a decade. Diffusion is more dependent on direct contacts of people than on mechanical change. Many ideas have become incorporated in the mores and so have acquired a significance and a value that inventions usually lack. The more remote the phase of life from material culture the more difficult it is to change. Within the period studied, changes in the non-material culture, such as in education, in family organization, and in amusements, have unquestionably begun to take place but they can scarcely be evaluated. They are linked with communication, with mechanical changes and with the influence of "outsiders".



Not only less tangible in the beginning, changes occur more slowly and in less pronounced fashion than in the case of mechanical inventions. The new ideas are less widely diffused than are the old. Community cooperation is less widespread than a spirit of independence, Christmas trees than shooting and drinking celebrations of December twenty-fifth. To draw more specific conclusions is perhaps unwarranted for the period of time involved has been too brief.

It has been recognized, that there are definite factors in opposition to all change, and particularly to ideational change. These resistances which have been discussed in some detail in Chapter V may be briefly summarized as utility, vested interests, tradition, habit, respect for authority, social pressure, poverty, ignorance, and the personality of the innovator. All of them have operated in the direction of resistance to change in some manner and at some time. They have been manifested not only by the more primitive portion of the population but also by the more advanced. The opposition connected with the various aspects of the school system, for example, includes most of them. Such resistances have been more powerful and more wide-spread than have those encountered in the diffusion of the automobile, for example. Churches have resisted change

where musical instruments have spread rapidly. The more ideological a change the more resistance it will encounter.

Survivals are numerous. As one progresses nearer to centers of many social contacts, however, they decrease both in numbers and in the weight attached to them for the more numerous the contacts, the more quickly are old customs replaced. Herbs are still used as remedies in the remote valleys, but the nearer one approaches to the county seat the more customary are patent medicines and the prescriptions of the local physicians. That it is not merely the survival but also its emotional accompaniment that is important is emphasized by Marett.

I would ask the folk-lorist, then, when he reports a piece of rustic custom, not to neglect the emotions that are hidden away behind the superficial sayings and doings, since the former belong not to the mere context and atmosphere, but to the very essence, of what he has to study. (1)

Survivals are observable in practically every phase of life, but a rapidly growing culture is scarcely fertile soil in which they may continue to flourish. That they are decreasing in potency is evident.

Thus, on the basis of the data examined, it may be assumed that these generalizations in regard to the diffusion of culture in the relatively isolated mountain county,

---

1. Marett, E. R.: Psychology and Folk-Lore, p. 20.



Swain County, North Carolina, are applicable not merely to this single area but to the Southern Appalachian Mountains as a whole. Furthermore it seems highly probable that they would be applicable in general to any comparable isolated section undergoing the process of a rapid diffusion of culture in the present period.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Altitudes in North Carolina. North Carolina Geological and Economic Survey, Bulletin 27, 1917.
- Arthur, John P.: Western North Carolina--A History from 1730 to 1913. Raleigh, N. C., Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1914.
- Ashe, Samuel A.: History of North Carolina, vol. II, ch. XXV-LXXIII. Raleigh, N. C., Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1925.
- Bledsoe, M. L.: Hidden People of the Blue Ridge. Travel, vol. 45 (15-18), 1922.
- Bradley, F. S., and Williamson, M. A.: Child Welfare in North Carolina. New York, National Child Labor Committee, 1918.
- Boyd, William K.: History of North Carolina, vol. II, ch. IV, XVII. Chicago, Lewis Publishing Company, 1919.
- Calhoun, Arthur W.: A Social History of the American Family. Excerpts from vol. I, II, III. Cleveland, The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1918.
- Campbell, John C.: The Southern Highlander and His Homeland. New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1921.
- Colton, Henry E.: Mountain Scenery, ch. XIV, XV. Raleigh, N. C., W. L. Pomeroy, 1859.
- Craddock, Charles Egbert: The Despot of Broomeledge Cove. Chicago, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1889.
- Dargan, Mrs. Olive Tilford: Highland Annals. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.
- Davis, Barnes and Others: Introduction to Sociology, Book II, Part I, ch. III. Chicago, D. C. Heath and Company, 1927..
- Duncan, H. G.: Southern Highlanders. Journal of Applied Sociology, vol. 10 (556-561), 1926.
- Forest Conditions in Western North Carolina. North Carolina Geological Survey, Bulletin 23, 1911.



- Fox, John Jr.: *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*. New York, Grosset and Dunlap, 1908.
- Furman, Lucy: *The Glass Window*. Boston, Atlantic Monthly Press, 1923.
- Furman, Lucy: *The Quare Women*. Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1925.
- Galpin, Charles J.: *Rural Life*. Ch. I, II, III, IV, VII. New York, The Century Company, 1923.
- Haney, William H.: *The Mountain People of Kentucky by a Kentucky Mountain Man*. Cincinnati, O., The R. Clarke Company, 1906.
- Harlow, A. F.: *Frontier People of the Appalachians*. Travel vol. 39 (11-14), 1922.
- Hartt, R. L.: *Mountaineers: Our Own Lost Tribes*. Century vol. 95 (395-404), 1918.
- Henderson, Archibald: *The Star of Empire--Phases of the Westward Movement in the Old Southwest*, ch. VII, VIII. Durham, N. C., Seeman Printery, 1919.
- Heyward, Du Rose: *Skylines and Horizons*. Skylines. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1924.
- Hunter, C. L.: *Sketches of Western North Carolina, Historical and Biographical*. Raleigh, N. C., The Raleigh News Steam Job Print, 1877.
- Kephart, Horace: *Our Southern Highlanders*. New York, Outing Publishing Company, 1913.
- Lanman, Charles: *Letters from the Alleghany Mountains*, ch. VII-XIX. New York, George P. Putnam, 1849.
- Latchaw, Harry F.: *Swain County--Historic, Social, Economic*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Lewis, Robert H.: *Culture and Ethnology*. New York, Douglas C. McMurtrie, 1917.
- Marrett, R. R.: *Psychology and Folk-Lore*, ch. I, V, VI. New York; The Macmillan Company, 1920.
- Mason, Robert L.: *The Lore of the Great Smokies*. New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927.

Miles, Mrs. Emma Bell: *The Spirit of the Mountains*. New York, J. Fott and Company, 1905.

Mooney, James: *Myths of the Cherokees*. Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Part I, 1897-1898.

Morley, Margaret T.: *The Carolina Mountains*. Chicago, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.

Mortality Statistics, 1908 to 1924. U. S. Bureau of the Census.

MacClintock, S. S.: *Kentucky Mountains and Their Feuds*. American Journal of Sociology, vol. 7 (1-22, 171-187) 1901.

North Carolina and its Resources. By State Board of Agriculture. Winston-Salem, N. C., M. I. and J. C. Stewart, 1926.

North Carolina State Board of Health. Bureau of Vital Statistics, 1914-1925.

North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction Reports, 1919 to 1925 1926.

North Carolina: *The Fifth State Today*. Raleigh, N. C., Department of Conservation and Development, 1928.

Osburn, William F.: *Social Change*. New York, B. W. Huebsch, 1922.

Olmstead, Stanley: *At Top of Tobin*. New York, The Dial Press, 1926.

Ross, Edward A.: *Social Psychology*. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1917.

Park, Robert E. and Burgess, Ernest W.: *An Introduction to the Science of Sociology*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1924.

Royce, C. G.: *The Cherokee Nation of Indians*. Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1883-1884.

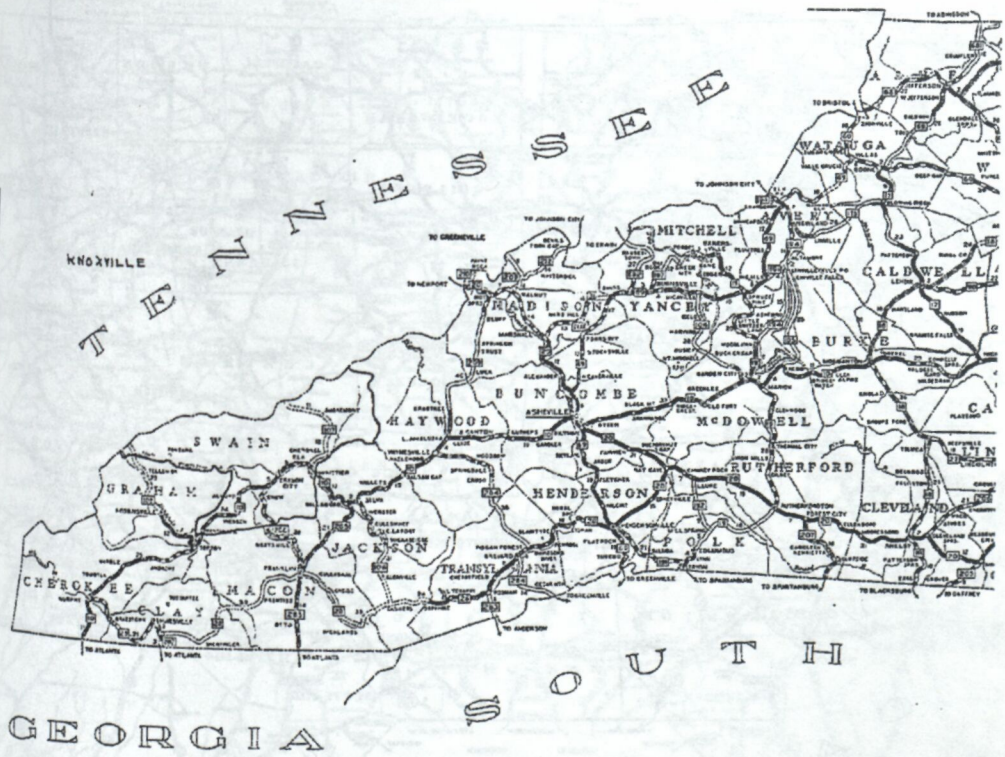
Semple, Ellen C.: *The Anglo-Saxons of the Kentucky Mountains -- A Study in Anthropogeography*. Geographical Journal, vol. 17 (588-621), 1910.



- Sherwood, H. F.: Our New Racial Drama--Southern Mountaineers in the Textile Industry. North American Review, vol. 216 (489-496), 1922.
- Smith, Dr. C. D.: A Brief History of Macon County, North Carolina. Franklin, N. C., The Franklin Press, 1921.
- Spaulding, Arthur W.: The Men of the Mountains. Nashville, Tenn., Southern Publishing Association of Seventh-Day Adventists, 1915.
- Steele, Glenn: Maternity and Infant Care in a Mountain County in Georgia. U. S. Children's Bureau Publication 130, 1923.
- Stern, Bernard J.: Social Factors in Medical Progress, ch. I. New York, Columbia University Press, 1927.
- Thwaites, R. G.: Early Western Travels 1748-1846, vol. 3. Cleveland, Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904.
- Tylor, Edward B.: Primitive Culture, ch. I-III. New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1899.
- U. S. Bureau of the Census: 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920.
- Whitaker, Fess: History of Corporal Fess Whitaker. Louisville, Ky., Standard Printing Company, 1918.
- Willey, Malcolm M. and Herskovits, Melville: Psychology and Culture. Psychological Bulletin 253-288, May, 1927.
- Wilson, Samuel T.: The Southern Mountaineers. New York, Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1914.
- Wissler, Clark: Man and Culture. New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1923.
- Zeigler, W. G. and Grosscup, Ben S.: The Heart of the Alleghanies or Western North Carolina. Raleigh, N. C., Alfred Williams and Company, 1883.







MAP  
**STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM  
 OF  
 NORTH CAROLINA**

SCALE  
 MILES



JULY 1927.

ATLANTA

# I N D I A N A



### LEGEND

- HARD SURFACE
- OIL TREATED
- TOP SOIL, SAND, CLAY & GRAVEL
- GRADED
- UNIMPROVED
- ROUTE NUMBERS
- COUNTY SEATS
- MILEAGE





Right turn at next crossroad



Left turn at next crossroad



Route Markers

CAUTIONARY SIGNS



Information regarding routes, detours, and road conditions may be secured by addressing Publicity Department, State Highway Commission, Box 1140, Raleigh. Enclose stamp if reply.

# Speed Limit on State Highways 45 Miles Per Hour

## STOP AT ALL GRADE CROSSINGS AS DESIGNATED BY STOP SIGNS

Don't park your car on a bridge or fill

The "A-B-C" of motoring—Always Be Careful

Don't forget to indicate by hand signal any change of course

See that the lights on your car are properly adjusted

Non-resident drivers of vehicles, properly registered under the laws of another State are exempt from registration for 60 days

Pedestrians using State Highways should walk on the left hand side of the road

Detour signs are placed for the convenience of the motoring public. It is a misdemeanor to break down a barricade and drive on new construction

### FOLLOW THE DETOUR

## REGISTRATION RATES

### RATES FOR AUTOMOBILES

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Twenty-five h.p. or less                | \$12.50 per year |
| Over 25 h.p. and not more than 30 h.p.  | 20.00 per year   |
| More than 30 h.p. and less than 35 h.p. | 30.00 per year   |
| More than 35 h.p. or more               | 40.00 per year   |

These vehicles used for the transportation of passengers for hire shall pay fifty per cent more than above rates. License fees shall be computed according to the N.A.A.C.C. schedule of rates for all motor vehicles equipped with internal combustion engines. On motor vehicles operated by means of electric power, the horsepower rating shall be computed according to the rating by the manufacturer of such vehicles.

### RATES FOR MOTOR TRUCKS EQUIPPED WITH PNEUMATIC TIRES

| Capacity                                    | License fee per year |
|---|----------------------|
| One-half ton and under one ton              | \$ 15.00             |
| One ton and under one and one-half tons     | 25.00                |
| One and one-half tons and under two tons    | 35.00                |
| Two tons and under two and one-half tons    | 45.00                |
| Two and one-half tons and under three tons  | 55.00                |
| Three and one-half tons and under four tons | 65.00                |
| Four tons and under five tons               | 75.00                |

### RATES FOR MOTOR TRUCKS FULLY OR PARTIALLY EQUIPPED WITH SOLID TIRES

| Capacity                                 | License fee per year |
|--|----------------------|
| One-half ton and under one ton           | \$ 20.00             |
| One ton and under one and one-half tons  | 30.00                |
| One and one-half tons and under two tons | 40.00                |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Two tons and under two and one-half tons     | \$ 85.00 |
| Two and one-half tons and under three tons   | 95.00    |
| Three tons and under three and one-half tons | 105.00   |
| Three and one-half tons and under four tons  | 115.00   |
| Four tons and under five tons                | 125.00   |

### RATES FOR TRAILERS AND SEMI-TRAILERS

For each ton of carrying capacity: \$ 15.00

### RATES FOR TRUCK TRACTORS AND ROAD TRACTORS

Tractors with pulling capacity of two and one-half tons or less: \$ 25.00

Tractors with pulling capacity of more than two and one-half tons: \$ 50.00

### RATES FOR BICYCLES

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Twenty-five h.p. or less                | \$ 10.00 |
| Over 25 h.p. and not more than 30 h.p.  | 20.00    |
| More than 30 h.p. and less than 35 h.p. | 30.00    |
| Thirty-five h.p. or more                | 40.00    |

The above fees shall apply to automatic bicycles having a maximum carrying capacity of more than one hundred lbs. For each additional passenger carrying capacity an additional fee of two dollars (\$2.00) per year shall be added.

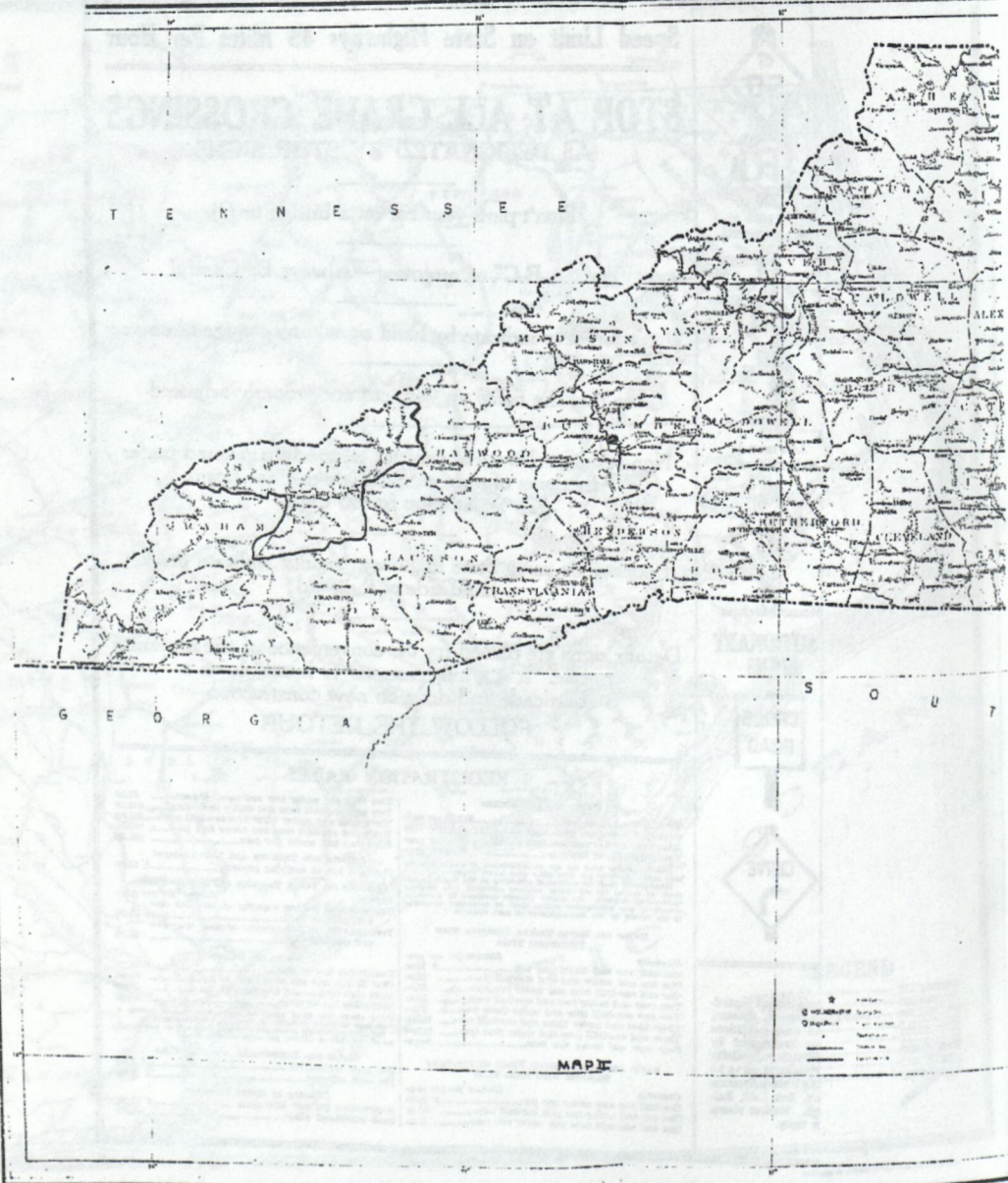
### RATES FOR MOTORCYCLES AND SIDE CARS

|                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| For each motorcycle | \$ 2.00 |
| For each side car   | 2.00    |

### DEALERS IN MOTOR VEHICLES

|                                  |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Registration fee and first plate | \$ 25.00 |
| Each additional plate            | 1.00     |

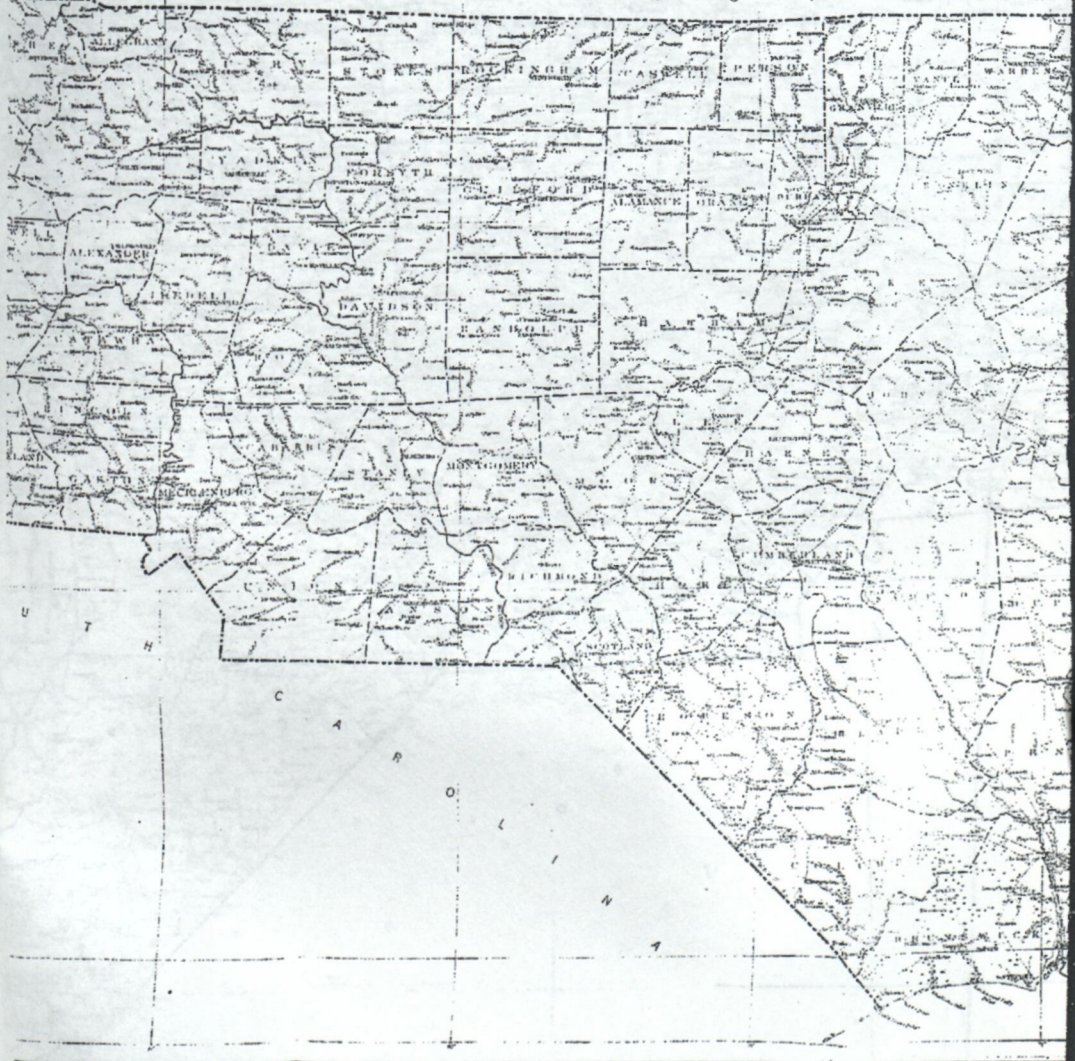
OF THE INTERIOR  
GICAL SURVEY



C. H. Beckwith, Chief Geographer  
A. F. Hahn, Commissioner



V I R G I N I A



Scale 1:500,000  
Published by the U.S. Geological Survey  
Washington, D.C.



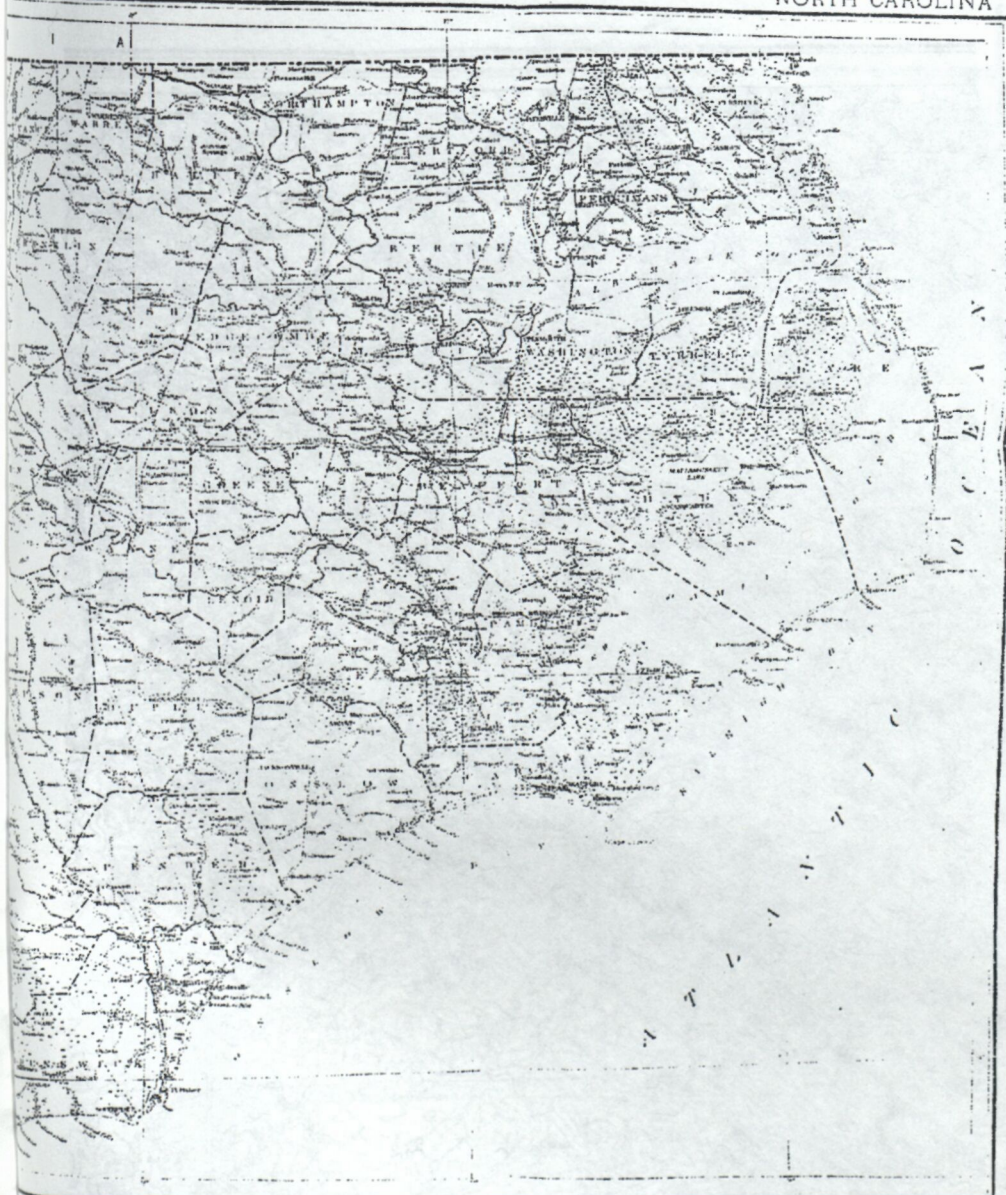
V I R G I N I A



Scale 1:500,000  
Published by the U.S. Geological Survey  
Washington, D.C.



NORTH CAROLINA





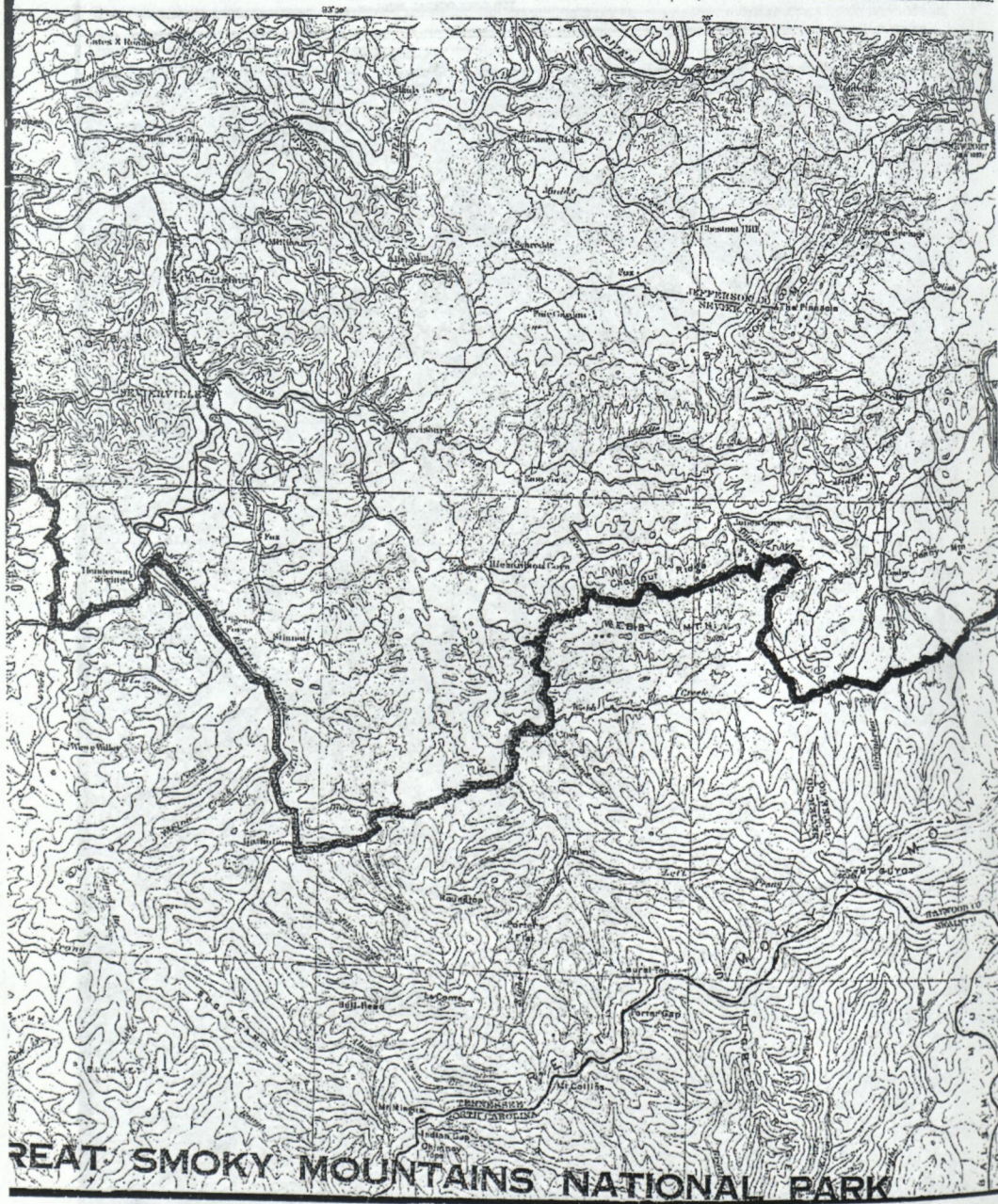




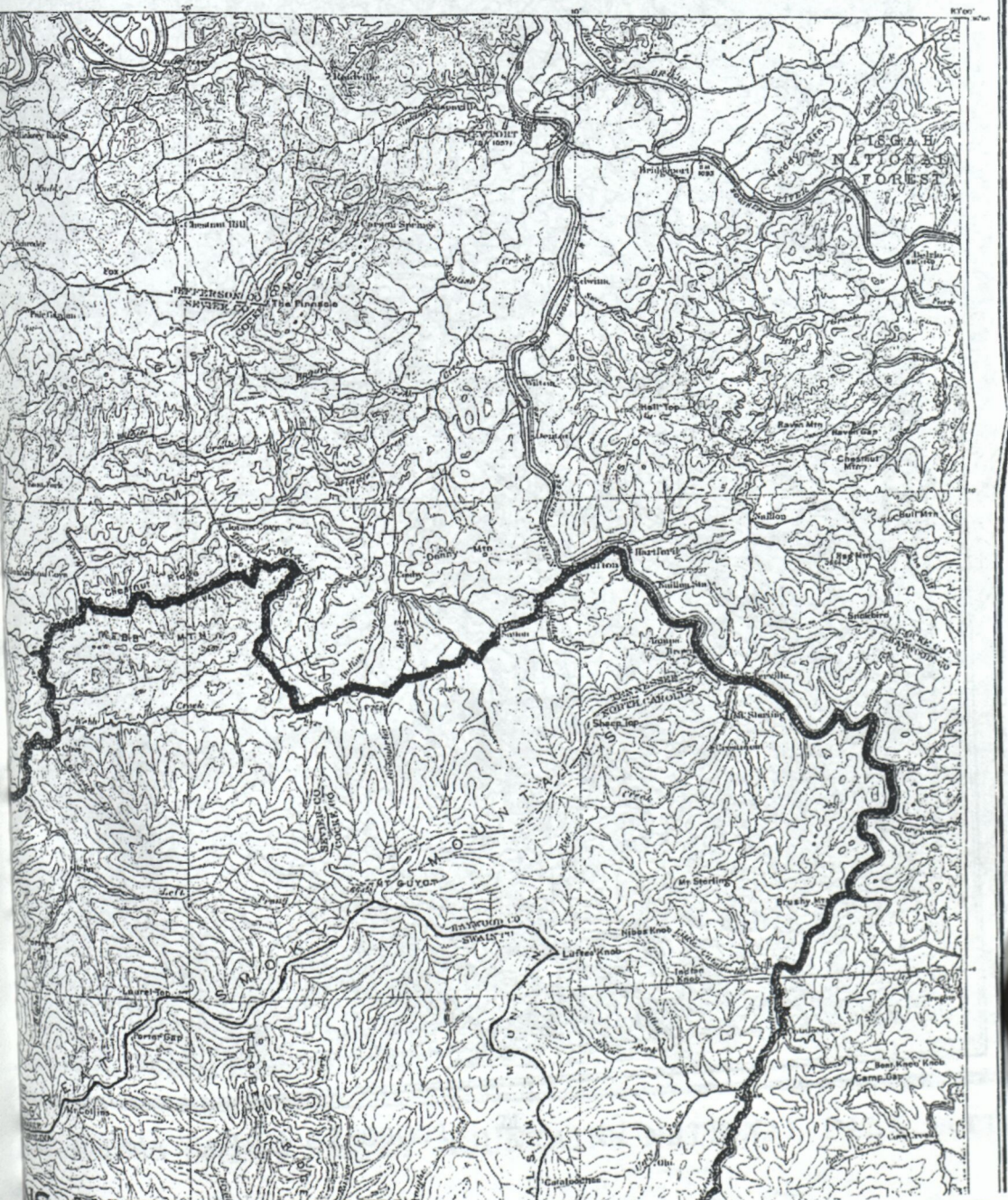




DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

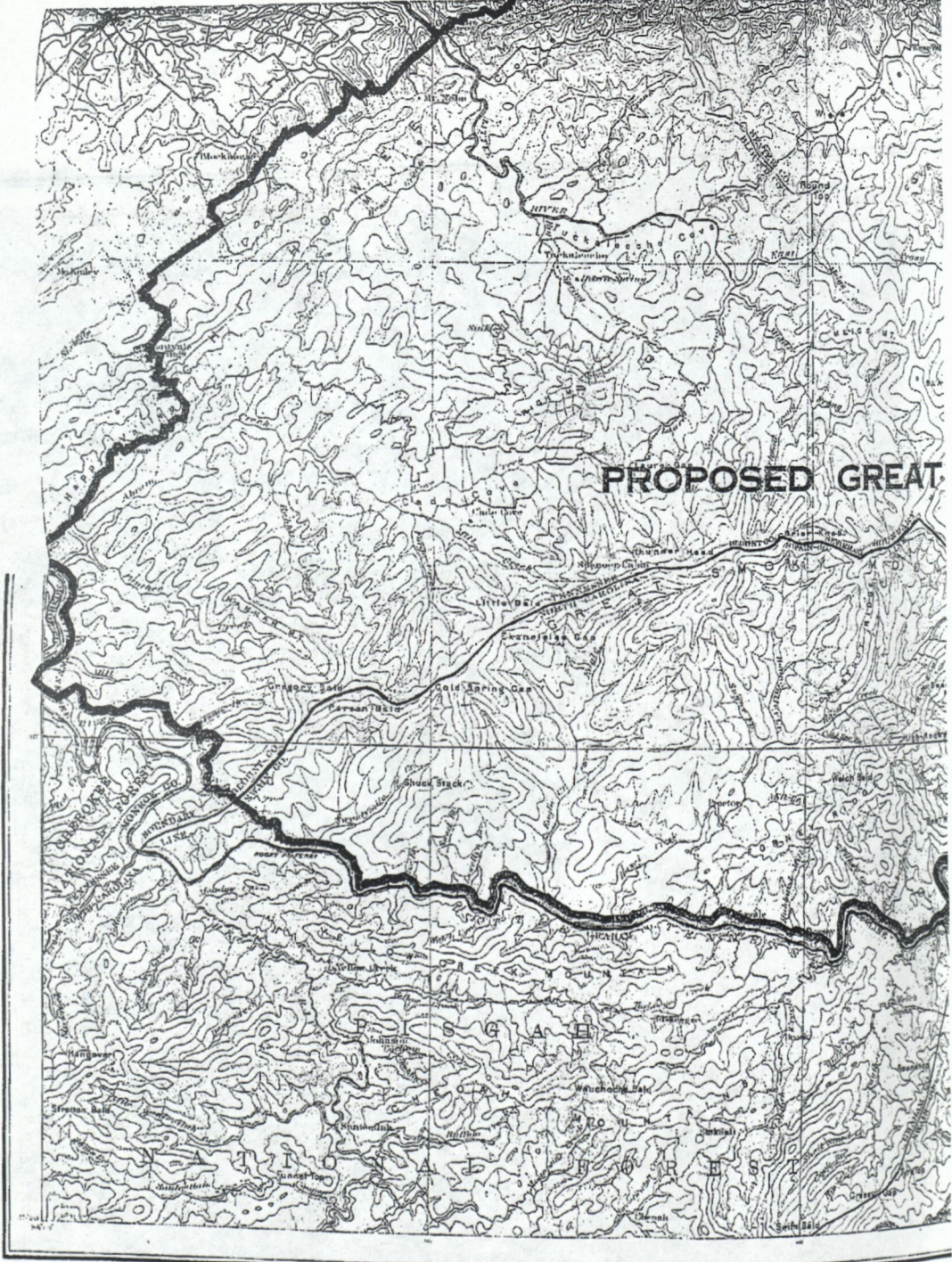






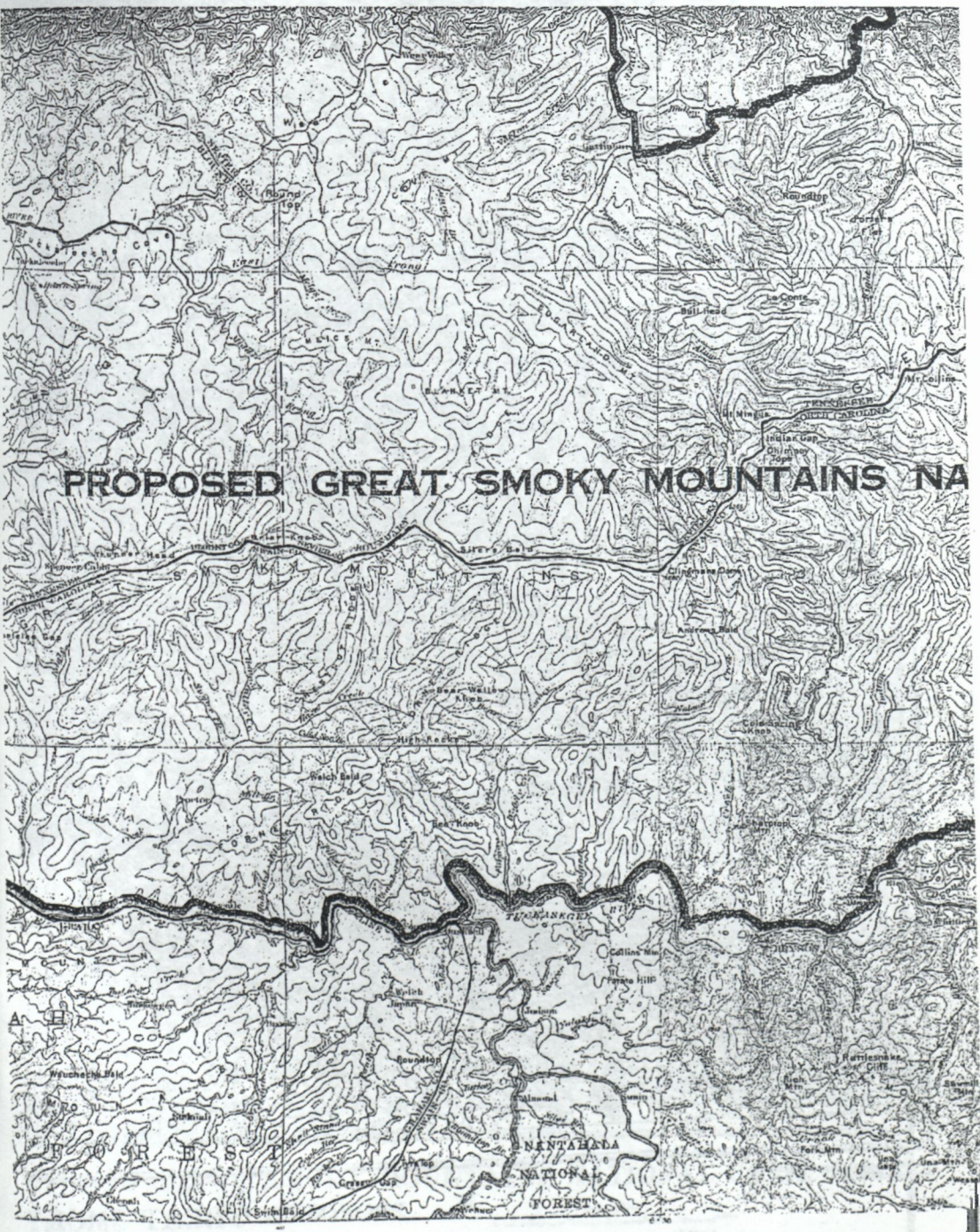
GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK





From U. S. Geological Survey topographic maps  
Surveyed in 1889-1905

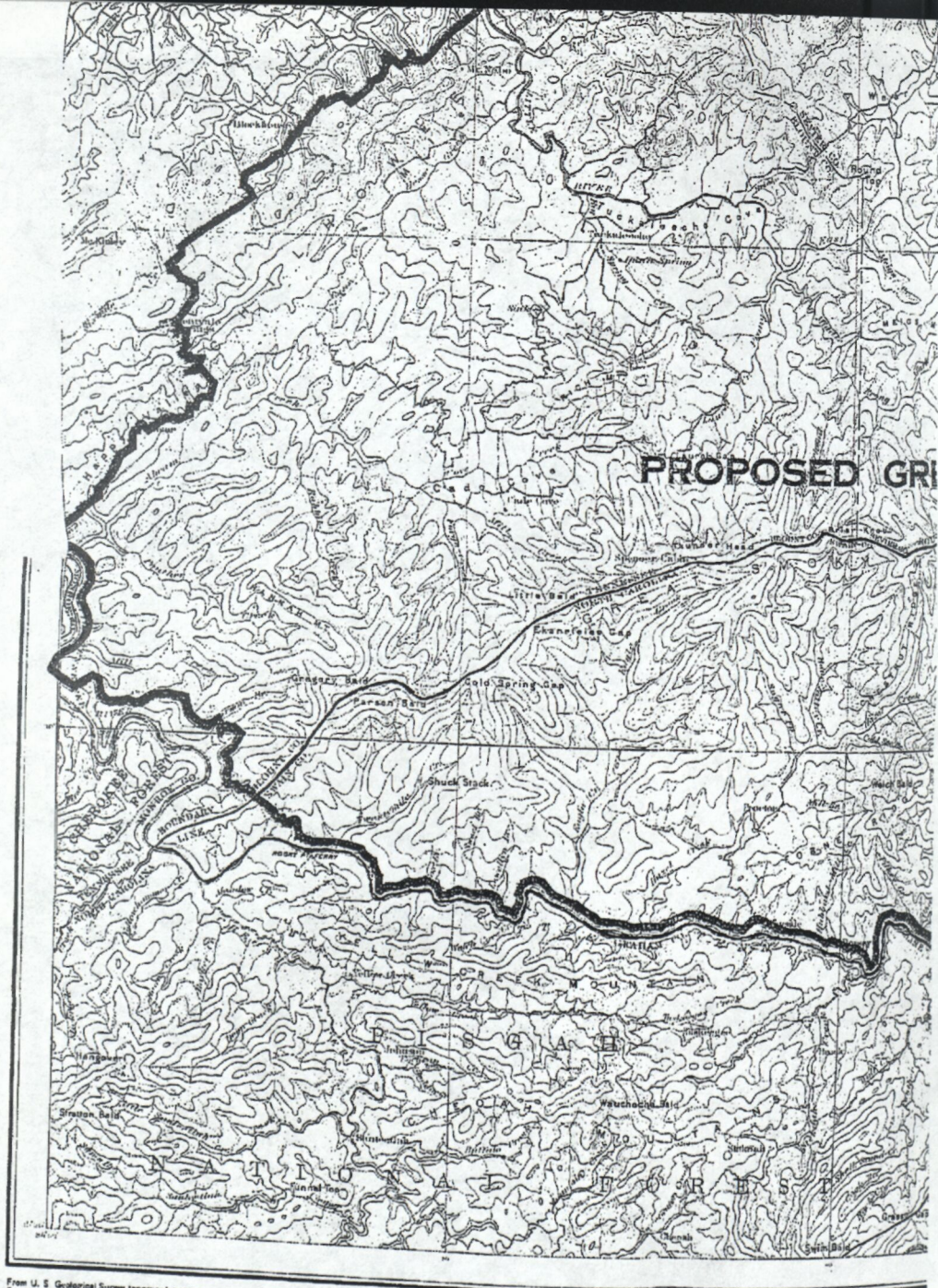




PROPOSED GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK, NORTH

Scale 1:50,000  
 U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
 WASHINGTON, D. C.

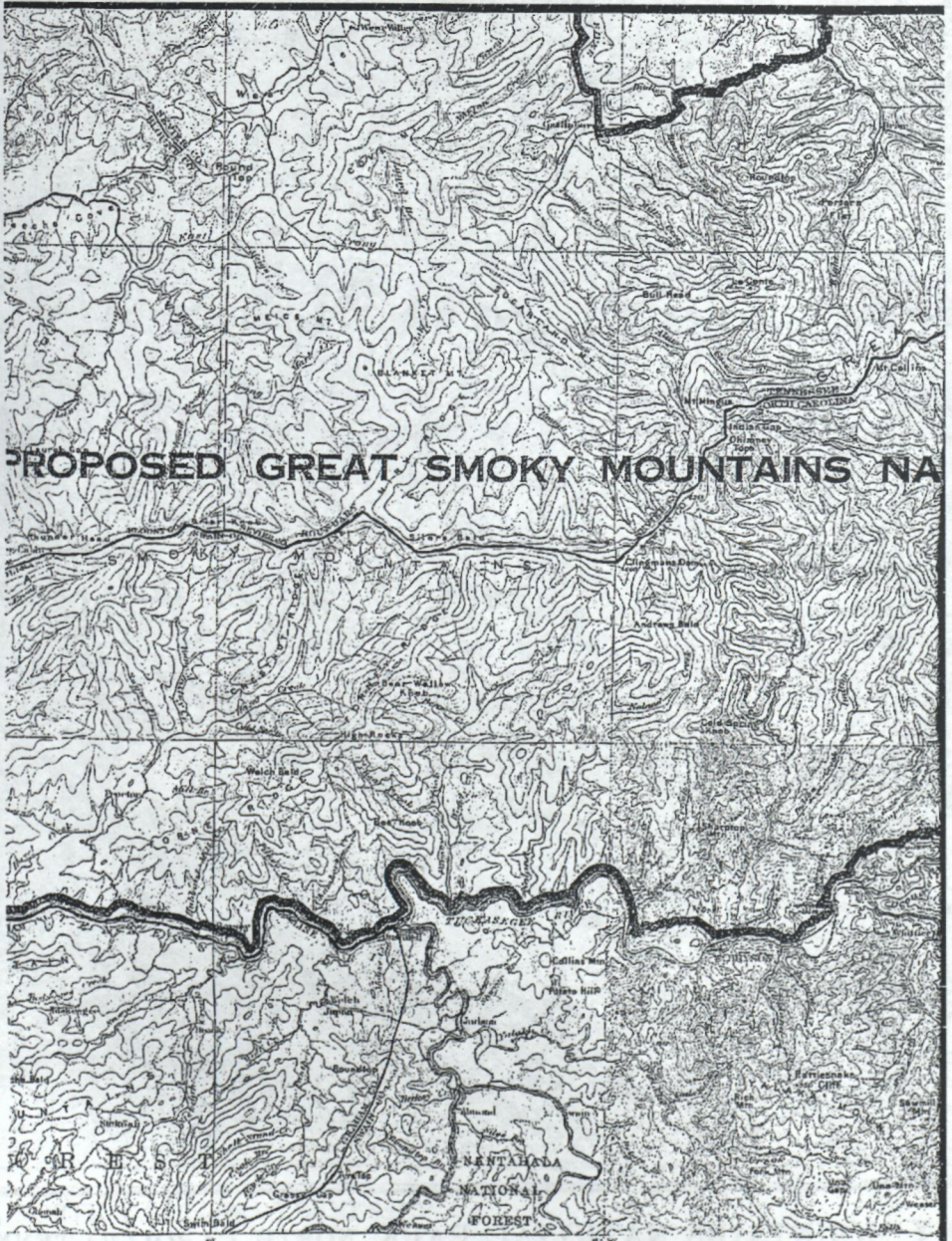




From U. S. Geological Survey topographic maps  
 Surveyed in 1885-1905

III PROPOSED GREAT SMOKY

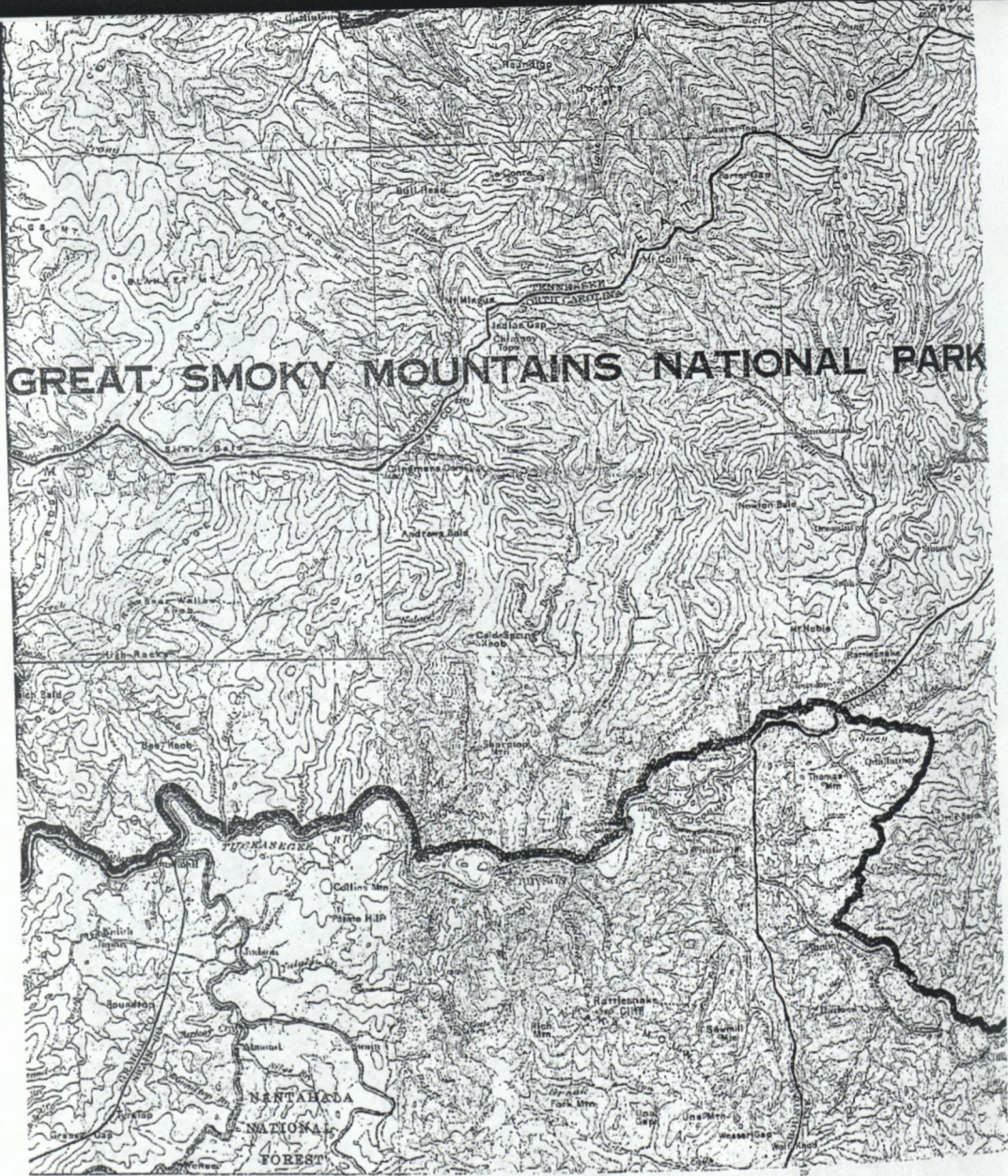




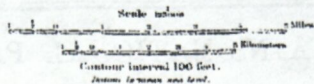
PROPOSED GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK, NORTH CAROLINA

Scale 1:50,000  
 Contour interval 100 feet  
 Datum: to nearest one foot.





**SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK, NORTH CAROLINA-TENNESS**







Printed 1956

6, NORTH CAROLINA-TENNESSEE



