

# Blue Ridge

**PARKWAY**

*Virginia and  
North Carolina*



# BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

Blue Ridge Parkway, high road through Virginia and North Carolina, designed especially for the leisurely tourist, represents a new conception in roads. It is not an express parkway of the type built about the big cities, but a quiet way through a distinctive part of the American scene—a road intended for gypsylike travel on the ride-awhile, stop-awhile basis.

You travel the Southern Highlands, a land of forested mountains, exquisite during the flower of spring, cool in the green summer, colorful in the red autumn. The stretches of woodland, the clustered mountains, and the views out to the lowlands are enlivened by the fields and pastures of highland farms, where split-rail fences, weathered cabins, and gray barns compose the "hill culture."

Not all is completed of this scenic parkway, the first of its kind to be developed by the Nation; but long portions are already paved and are enjoyed by thousands each year.

Among the national parks in the East are Shenandoah, in northern Virginia, and Great Smoky Mountains, in North Carolina and Tennessee. One of the purposes of the parkway is to connect these wilderness areas over a mountainous distance of nearly 500 miles. The parkway, about two-thirds completed, leads through an "elongated park" which protects a roadside of varied highland character. The roadway slopes are naturalistically planted in many places with rhododendron, azalea, white pine, and other native species. Parking overlooks to the side are convenient balconies. Along the parkway, at intervals, are recreation areas with picnic grounds, campgrounds, trailer sites, and hiking trails which lead to exhibits of unspoiled nature and to spots of native folklore.

*Peach Bottom Mountains from parkway (Mile 234)*



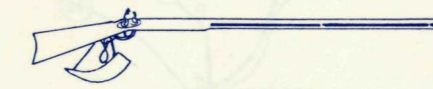
## The Southern Highlands

Blue Ridge Parkway traverses a section of the Southern Highlands, the region of the Appalachian Mountains south of the Mason-Dixon Line. These great eastern mountains, reaching from Maine to Georgia, are a broad ribbon of many parallel ranges connected by cross ranges and tumbled mountains and hills. From Shenandoah National Park for 355 miles the parkway follows the Blue Ridge Mountains, the eastern rampart, which form the water divide between the Atlantic and the Gulf; then it winds cross country through the Blacks, the Craggies, the Pisgahs, and the Balsams to the Great Smokies. It is a region of ancient, rugged mountains and deep, narrow coves and valleys. Superb scenery and an agreeable climate lure the vacation-minded.

The physiography of the Southern Highlands has directly shaped the history of its inhabitants, dictating where the Indian should live, and turning the tides of white immigration between its hills. The firstcomers settled in the valleys and became prosperous. Those arriving later took up progressively more isolated homesteads. They cut the trees and allowed the rich topsoil to run away and erosion to get a start. Thus was set in motion a process which made the land less fertile and the settlers ever poorer.

Blue Ridge Parkway "tells" the story of these fiercely independent people, a story still being written on the face of this land where crops hang on the hillside, split-rail fences zigzag the pasture boundary, and smoke comes from the chimney of a log cabin perched high on steep cut-over land. They brought their ballads with them and passed them from parent to child by word of mouth. Their instruments are the fiddle, the banjo, and the guitar which are used to accompany not only the songs but the folk dances. The crossroad country stores, which often include the post office, are the hub of community life during the week, while the rural churches become the center on Sunday. The recent consolidation of the public school system has all but eliminated the storied one-room school, but several are still in use along the parkway.

Improved roads, electric lines, and radios have changed the old way of life in the mountains, but centers have been established where the old handicrafts are taught and practiced and where the old arts flourish. These handicrafts are in great demand and are available at outlets along the parkway.



Signs carrying the squirrel gun and powder horn symbol are found along the parkway where there is a legend, old building, or place of scientific interest.



*Flame azalea*

## Seasons

The travel season on the parkway is from April 15 to October 31; the recreation areas open May 1.

**SPRING.** The Blue Ridge in spring is truly a botanical garden of Nature's own planting against the evergreens and hardwoods of the heavily forested mountains.

Spring arrives late. By mid-May the leaves are out below 2,000 feet, unfolding at 3,000, and in bud at 4,000. The range in elevation lengthens the flowering period, and flowers fading at 2,000 feet will still be in bud at 4,000 feet. Shadblow, a lacy white, and dogwood are first to appear early in May. They are soon joined by the pink azalea. Shortly after mid-May the flame azalea lights up the forest; then for 3 weeks to a mid-June peak the purple rhododendron and mountain-laurel bloom.

**SUMMER.** Last of the major blooms is the white rhododendron in late June and early July. Wildflowers color the woods and fields. Conspicuous in July are shrubby St. Johnswort (a bright yellow), flowering raspberry, and the orange butterflyweed. Giant-hyssop, ironweed, clematis, and Joe-Pye-weed give brightness to August. Ripened rows of corn, buckwheat, cabbage, potatoes, and beans complement the scene.

The mountain summer is cool at night, warm in the sunny high noon.

**AUTUMN.** Goldenrod and asters trim the meadows. Autumn is a time of flaming colors. In late September, the sourgums turn a brilliant red, dogwoods a purple. By mid-October, fall color is at its magnificent best. The birch and the tuliptree are yellow, the sassafras orange, the sumac scarlet, the oak and hickory have a leathery sheen. Red maple, "Color King of the Southern Highlands," is ablaze everywhere. In early November, the leaves drop and color melts away.

The first sharp frosts come in late September, but there is usually Indian summer weather through October.

**WINTER.** When there is ice or snow on the road, the parkway may be closed for short periods. From Miles 64 to 105 and Miles 355 to 375, the road is closed with the first icing over, usually mid-November, until April 15.

## What To Do

**PICNICKING.** Picnic areas, ideal for the family group, include parking spaces, tables, fireplaces, drinking water, trash cans, and comfort stations. Firewood is sold by the parkway concessioner.

**CAMPING.** At Peaks of Otter and Rocky Knob in Virginia, and Doughton Park and Crabtree Meadows, in North Carolina, are trailer and camping areas. Here you will find tent platforms, fireplaces, trash cans, drinking water, and comfort stations. Bring your own camping supplies. Length of stay is limited to 30 days.

There are also many fine camping areas nearby in George Washington, Jefferson, and Pisgah National Forests. These have been indicated on the map by the United States Forest Service Recreation Area emblem.

*Note.* Water in picnic and camping areas is shut off with first freeze, generally mid-October.

**HIKING.** Trail systems have been developed in the recreation areas. Self-guiding trails start at Miles 8.8, 168, 272, and 308.3.

**PHOTOGRAPHY.** Here is a challenge for the amateur and an opportunity for the professional to capture the many and varied moods of the Blue Ridge. Don't forget your color camera.

**FISHING.** Rainbow and brook trout haunt many streams along the parkway. State licenses are required and State laws prevail, except that live and dead minnow, chub, or other bait fish may not be used.

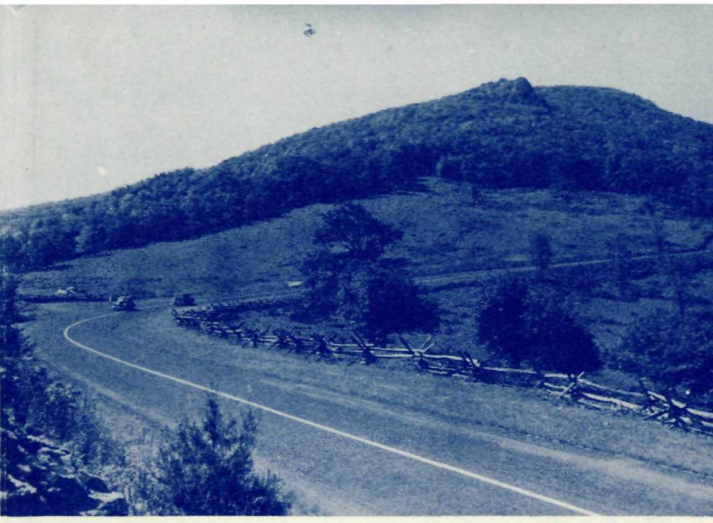
**HORSEBACK RIDING.** There are more than 20 miles of horse and carriage trails in Moses H. Cone Memorial Park. Horses and carriages may be hired in nearby Blowing Rock.

**GOLFING, SWIMMING, TENNIS.** Facilities for these types of sports are not available along the Blue Ridge Parkway, but can be found in the nearby mountain resorts.

*Picnicking at Cumberland Knob*



*The parkway emblem marks the entrances to the recreation areas where picnic grounds, drinking water, and comfort stations are provided.*



*The Rocks in Humpback Rocks Recreation Area (Mile 6)*



## Recreation Areas

**HUMPBACK ROCKS (800 acres).** "The Rocks" afford a sweeping view into Rockfish River Valley on the east, Shenandoah Valley on the west. Bed rock of the area is Catocin greenstone, formed from an ancient lava flow.

**PEAKS OF OTTER (4,000 acres).** From Sharp Top (El. 3,870), conspicuous landmark and the better known of the twin peaks (the other is Flat Top, El. 4,004), was taken the Virginia stone for the Washington Monument. The high valley sheltered by the peaks has long been known as a mountain retreat.

**SMART VIEW (500 acres).** "Smart" in the language of the mountaineer means especially good, and the Trail Cabin site is proof of one mountaineer's appreciation of a "smart" view. Center of the parkway's dogwood bloom in early May.

**ROCKY KNOB (4,000 acres).** The view from Rocky Knob, highland pastures, and Rock Castle Creek and Gorge make this an attractive area. White rhododendron blooms in early July.

**CUMBERLAND KNOB (1,000 acres).** Abundant here is the galax—glory ground cover of the Southern Appalachians. Its leaf is processed and widely used in floral decorations.

**DOUGHTON PARK (6,000 acres).** High rolling bluegrass pastures terminate in precipitous bluffs. Magnificent bloom of purple rhododendron in early June.

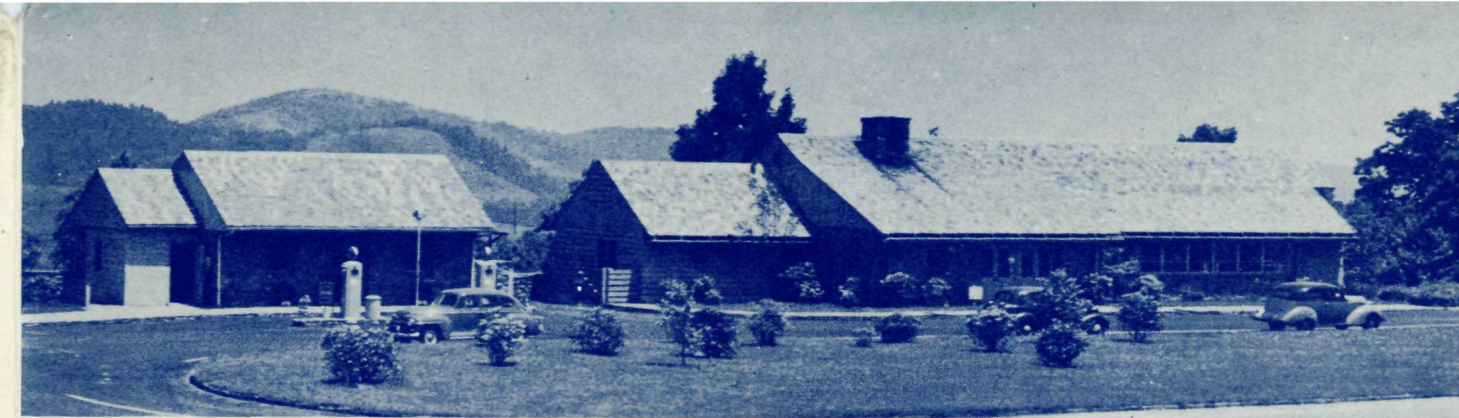
**MOSES H. CONE MEMORIAL PARK (3,600 acres).** This was the summer estate of Moses H. Cone, of Greensboro, N. C., the "Blue Denim King." Twenty miles of horse and carriage trails. Handicrafts demonstrated at Parkway Craft Center.

**JULIAN PRICE MEMORIAL PARK (4,000 acres).** Undeveloped. Fine trout streams.

**LINVILLE FALLS (500 acres).** Linville River twists and plunges 150 feet, 90 in sheer cascade, to form the falls, an outstanding scenic attraction donated by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Linville Gorge Wild Area, a part of Pisgah National Forest, adjoins this recreation area. The gorge is 12 miles long, nearly 2 across.

**CRABTREE MEADOWS (250 acres).** This area is named for the springtime beauty of the flowering crab. Beautiful Crabtree Falls is 40 minutes by trail from picnic area.

**CRAGGY GARDENS (700 acres).** Famous for its massed bloom of native purple rhododendron in mid-June.



*Bluffs coffee shop, Doughton Park*

## Accommodations

Lodging is available in Doughton Park at the Bluffs Lodge; in Rocky Knob at the housekeeping cabins. A coffee shop in Doughton Park, sandwich shop in Cumberland Knob, and gasoline stations at Rocky Knob, Doughton Park, Crabtree Meadows, and Peaks of Otter are other facilities provided by National Park Concessions, Inc., of Mammoth Cave, Ky. The summer address of the concessioner is P. O., Laurel Springs, N. C., for facilities in Doughton Park; and P. O., Meadows of Dan, Va., for facilities in Rocky Knob.

In Peaks of Otter a sightseeing bus service is available from the bus station to Sharp Top. Light lunch items are sold at the bus station. These services are provided by Peaks of Otter, Inc., Bedford, Va.

Rocky Knob housekeeping cabins and Cumberland Knob sandwich shop open June 1 through Labor Day; all other accommodations, May 1 through October 31.

## Mabry Mill

Mabry Mill (Mile 176.1), a mountain "industrial plant," served the needs of its rural community as late as 1935. Again in operation, the mill grinds meal the oldtime way which is packaged and sold by National Park Concessions, Inc.

## Parkway Craft Center

The Parkway Craft Center in Moses H. Cone Memorial Park is operated by Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild. Demonstrations of the old mountain crafts are given at the center, and fine handicraft articles are on exhibit and for sale. Season, May 15 through October 31.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

## Help Us Protect the Parkway

This is your parkway. We ask you to assist us in protecting it by:

Leaving the wildflowers for others to enjoy—it is unlawful to pick them.

Driving carefully. Maximum speed is 45 m. p. h. Report accidents to a park ranger. No commercial vehicles allowed.

Using receptacles at all parking and picnic areas for refuse. Please do not throw trash from your car.

Using the fireplaces in camping and picnic areas since FIRE is the arch enemy of the parkway. Burning matches and tobacco start fires too, so dispose of them safely.

Protecting all wildlife, since the parkway is a sanctuary.

## Fees

A trip fee of \$1 is charged for each automobile, house trailer, and motorcycle to use the parkway; annual fee, \$2. Permit must be shown to leave and reenter the parkway. During valid period of a 15-day permit, the cost thereof may be applied toward purchase of a similar annual permit. All fees are deposited as revenue in the United States Treasury and offset, in part, appropriations made for operating the parkway.

## Administration

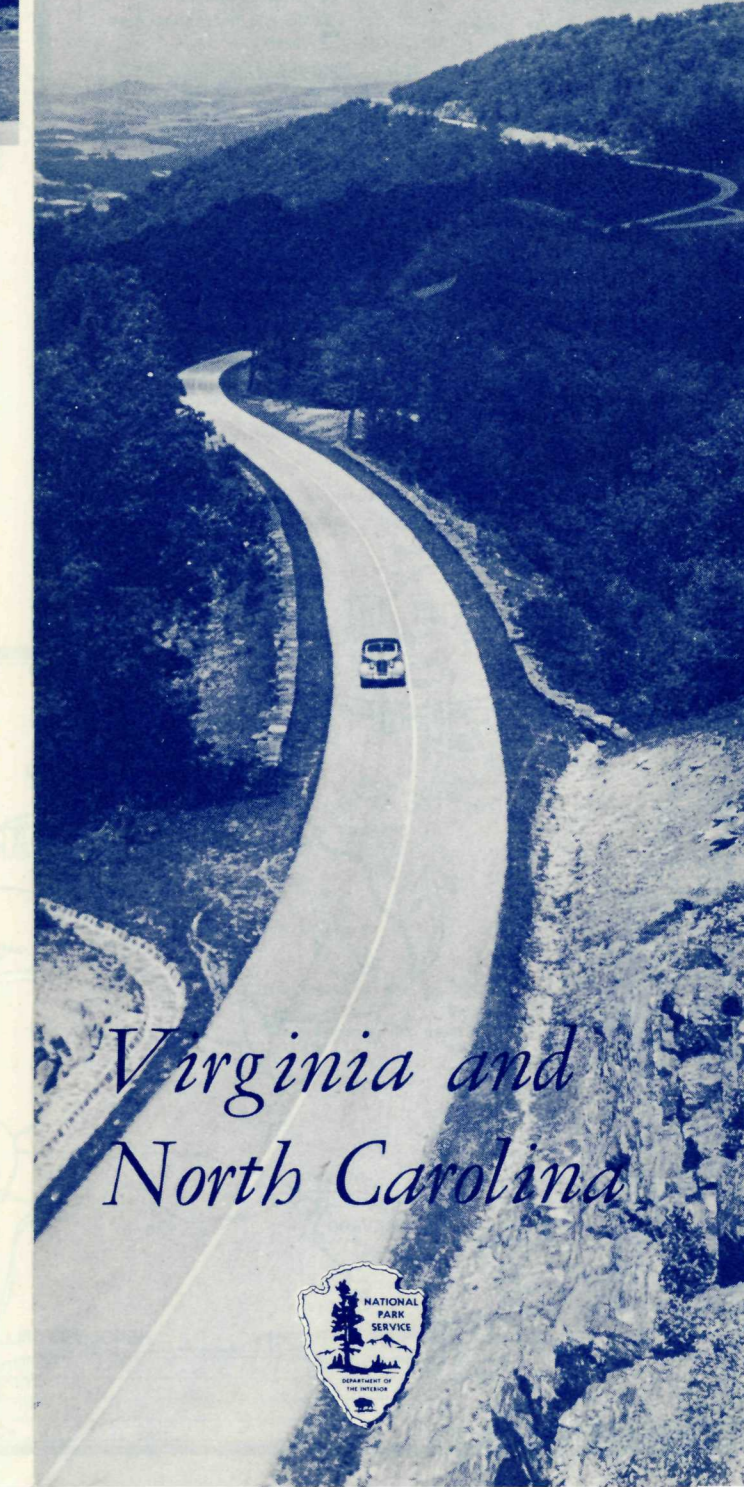
The Blue Ridge Parkway is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is P. O. Box 1710, Roanoke, Va., is in immediate charge.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
DOUGLAS MCKAY, Secretary  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
CONRAD L. WIRTH, Director

*COVER: Parkway through Devils Garden (Mile 235)*

# Blue Ridge PARKWAY



## Virginia and North Carolina



# BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

DEVELOPED AND ADMINISTERED BY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Paved  
 Crushed Stone  
 Proposed  
 State Highway  
 Points of special interest

Entrance Station  
 U.S.F.S. Recreation Area  
 Airport  
 Population of Cities & Towns  
 ○ Under 1,000  
 ● 5,000-10,000  
 ⊗ 1,000-5,000  
 ⊗ Over 10,000



**Craggy Pinnacle (Mile 365)**

MILE HIGH OVERLOOK, ON THE PARKWAY 4 MILES FROM SOCO GAP, AFFORDS SPECTACULAR VIEWS OF THE GREAT SMOKIES. PICNIC AREAS AND CAMPGROUNDS AT HEINTOOGA RIDGE, 6 MILES FARTHER IN GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK. PARK HEAD-QUARTERS, GATLINBURG, TENN.

**Milepost**  
355.4 Black Mountain Gap. N. C. 128 to Mount Mitchell State Park. Between 355 and 370, the parkway is in and out of Asheville Watershed. Regulations prohibit stopping or contaminating the watershed. Stand of virgin red spruce (Mile 355 to 360).

**Special Features**  
363.4 Craggy Gardens. Craggy Dome Parking Overlook, trail to Craggy Pinnacle (Mile 364.1). Pinnacle Gap Parking Overlook; Information Center; comfort station; heart of purple rhododendron "gardens," peak bloom mid-June (Mile 364.6). Road to picnic area, comfort station, trails (Mile 367.6).



**Grandfather Mountain from Flat Rock (Mile 308.3)**

Grandfather Mountain (El. 5,939) is one of the oldest in the world. The parkway winds in and out of Pisgah National Forest between Grandfather and the Great Smokies.

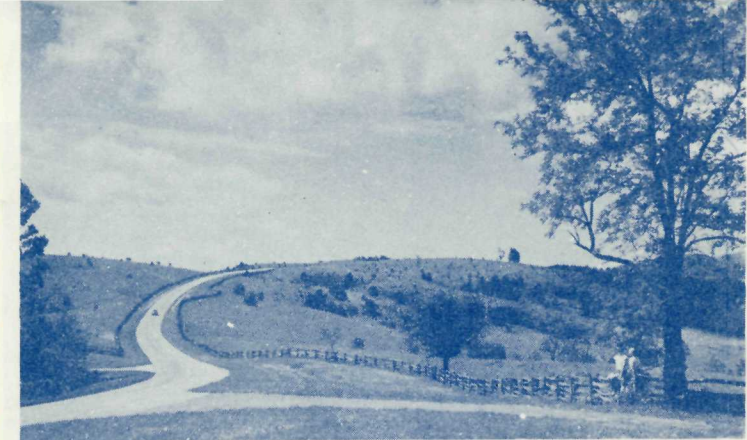
**Milepost**  
305.1 Beacon Heights Parking Area. 10-minute trail to "Heights."  
308.3 Flat Rock. Self-guiding trail to superb view.  
317.5 Linville Falls. Reached via U. S. 221 and N. C. 105—1.6 miles. Trails to pedestrian overlooks of falls and gorge; comfort station.  
320.7 Chestoa. View from vertical cliff of Humpback Mountain.  
331 Museum of North Carolina Minerals.  
339.5 Crabtree Meadows. Picnic, camping, and trailer areas; comfort station; gas station. Trail to 60-foot Crabtree Falls.



**Moses H. Cone Memorial Park**

The parkway traverses western North Carolina's resort area. Near Blowing Rock are the Moses H. Cone and Julian Price properties which have been donated as memorial parks in Blue Ridge Parkway.

**Milepost**  
264.4 The Lump Parking Overlook. Sweeping view of forested foothills.  
272 Cascades Parking Overlook. Comfort station. Self-guiding trail to cascades tumbling several hundred feet.  
292.7 Moses H. Cone Memorial Park. Horse and carriage trails; fishing. Parkway Craft Center.  
294.7 Julian Price Memorial Park. Undeveloped.



**Highland pastures, Doughton Park**

The State line marks the transition between the open rolling plateau region in Virginia and the more sharply defined, higher, and sparsely settled mountain country of North Carolina, where sweeping views, framed by finger ridges, reach toward the Piedmont.

**Milepost**  
217.5 Cumberland Knob. Picnic area; trails; comfort stations; sandwich shop.  
218.6 Fox Hunters Paradise. 10-minute trail to Paradise where old-time hunters listened to their hounds.  
238.5 Doughton Park. Camping area (Mile 239.3). Trailer area to (Mile 239.4). Coffee shop, gas station, picnic area, Bluffs Lodge, Wildcat Rocks (Mile 241.1).



**Mabry Mill (Mile 176.1)**

Dead chestnut trees, still standing like ghosts, give mute evidence to the fate of a once magnificent and valuable forest. Until killed by the blight, the use of its bark, fruit, and wood served as an important basis of the mountain economy. The split-rail fences and mountain-home groups illustrate its wide domestic use.

**Milepost**  
166 Rocky Knob. Self-guiding trail from Saddle Parking Overlook (Mile 168). Gas station; picnic, camping, and trailer areas; comfort stations; trails (Mile 169). Rocky Knob housekeeping cabins (Mile 174).  
176.1 Mabry Mill. Grist mill in operation. Sandwich shop; gift shop.  
188.8 Groundhog Mountain Overlook. Examples of chestnut rail fences—snake, post and rail, and buck.



**Chestnut rail fences (Mile 149)**

Parkway headquarters are in Roanoke, southwest Virginia's largest city. The 140-mile section south from Adney Gap is the oldest and most complete portion of the parkway. It generally follows the crest of the Blue Ridge and traverses a region predominantly rural. The Blue Ridge here is a high rolling plateau which breaks in a sharp escarpment toward the east and lower Piedmont.

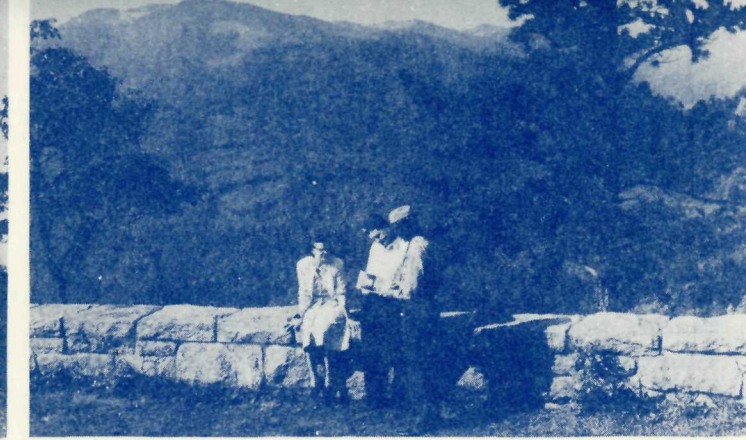
**Milepost**  
144 Devil's Backbone Parking Overlook. Fine view over valley farms.  
154.5 Smart View. Picnic area; trails; comfort stations. Picturesque trail cabin.



**Peaks of Otter**

From its lowest point at the James River, the parkway climbs 3,300 feet in 13 miles to its highest point in Virginia at Apple Orchard Mountain (El. 3,950), Milepost 76.6. This section, the most rugged and scenic in Virginia, traverses Jefferson National Forest.

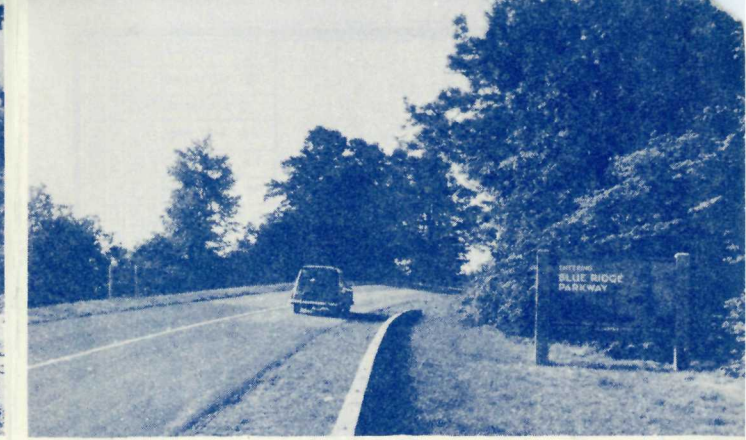
**Milepost**  
71 Petites Gap. United States Forest Service road to Cave Mountain Lake (7 miles). Swimming, picnicking, camping.  
74.7 Thunder Ridge Parking Area. 1-minute walk to superb view of Arnolds Valley.  
84 Peaks of Otter. Gas station; bus trips to Sharp Top; sandwiches and drinks; picnic, camping, and trailer areas; comfort station (Mile 86).  
87



**20-Minute Cliff Overlook (Mile 19)**

North of the James River, the parkway winds through large sections of George Washington National Forest. There are distant views to the fertile "bread basket of the Confederacy" in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. This scenic route is very spectacular where it crosses the high cliff sections of Humpback Mountain.

**Milepost**  
10.7 Ravens Roost Parking Overlook. Torry Mountain and Shenandoah Valley to the west.  
16 Va. 814 to Sherando Lake (4.5 miles), a United States Forest Service recreation area. Swimming, picnicking, camping.  
19 20-minute Cliff Overlook. Note "hanging" fields on the mountain-sides.



**Rockfish Gap (Mile 0)**

Skyline Drive, which traverses the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Shenandoah National Park, connects with the Blue Ridge Parkway at Rockfish Gap. Mileposts are located along the parkway for each mile.

**Milepost**  
5 Humpback Rocks. Information Center and comfort station, pioneer mountain-homestead exhibit (Mile 5.8). Picnic area, comfort station (Mile 8.4). Self-guiding trail through woods leads from Greenstone Parking Overlook (Mile 8.8); stone fences are remnants of "hog-walls" built in early 1800's to control wanderings of half-wild hogs that foraged for acorns and chestnuts.

