

SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL FEATURES OF
NORTHWESTERN ARKANSAS

June 22, 1928

The Director,
National Park Service,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Director:

In accordance with a memorandum accompanying your travel instructions of April 17, 1928, I made a trip through northwestern Arkansas, including the Ozark National Forest and Fayetteville, to see how the scenic resources of that part of the state compare with the Ouachita area.

On May 5 I talked with Mr. H. R. Koen, Supervisor of the Ozark National Forest, at Russellville, Arkansas. He kindly outlined a comprehensive trip to be covered in two days. He arranged with Mr. E. E. Vaughn, Assistant Engineer, Forest Service, to take me to Pilot Knob, over a forest development road, and then to Sand Gap, where we arranged to be met by a man from Russellville with a Ford car, who took me over the remainder of the trip.

The Pilot Mountain Lookout Tower is close to Pilot Knob. The elevation is about 2,350 feet, and offers an extensive view over a wooded country of rolling hills. This is one of the three highest points in the Ozark National Forest. The hills are more gently rolling than the Ouachita Mountains. Oaks, other hardwood and deciduous trees predominate, though there is some short-leaf pine. The Ozark National Forest has a total area of 300,000 acres. It is in the "land of the White Oak."

From Sand Gap we took the Jefferson Highway, (State route No. 7) parts of which have been recently relocated. One of the most distant views was obtained from "the Epperson place," on a ridge a few miles north of Sand Gap. There were other attractive views between that point and Jasper.

From Jasper we made a detour of 3 1/2 miles to Diamond Cave, one of the noted caves of Arkansas. It is visited by some 5,000 persons annually. The cave was discovered many years ago and has been badly smoked up by the use of pitch torches. The formations that were once white and sparkling are now of putty color. A few active formations are slowly regaining their white appearance, but most of them are dull and dingy looking. Some of the ceilings are very low and the floor is muddy, so the cave is seen only under difficulties. The formations are fairly numerous and varied, much better than Marvel Cave, but not as attractive as Fairy Cave, in Missouri..

Returning to Jasper, we continued to Harrison, which we reached after dark and where we spent the night.

The following morning, May 6, we continued on the Jefferson Highway, through Berryville, "The Switzerland of the Ozarks." No resemblance to the Alps or any other mountain range was apparent.

Eureka Springs is located in a steep valley and many of the streets are on steep grades. The curative power of the springs seems to be generally accepted and tourists are drawn from a wide circle, including Arkansas, Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. The season is from June 7 to September 10. The combined capacity of the several hotels and boarding houses is said to be from 3,000 to 5,000 guests.

From Eureka Springs we went to Fayetteville, where the University of Arkansas is located. The town is an attractive one and has many summer visitors. The Western Methodist Assembly is held there and has a capacity for perhaps 500 guests. There is also a boys' camp and a girls' camp located in Fayetteville.

The main road from Fayetteville to the Arkansas river passes through Winslow and Mountainburg. This portion of the road was rebuilt a few years ago and "the Winslow drive," as it is called, is widely known for its distant vistas and the beauty of the hilly country through which it passes.

When we reached Alma, the driver returned to Russellville (about 80 miles) and I took a bus to Fort Smith, 15 miles distant, where I got a train in the evening for Kansas City and Denver.

The distance covered was approximately as follows:

Russellville to Harrison, via Pilot Knob	110 miles
Harrison to Eureka Springs	52 "
Eureka Springs to Fayetteville	68 "
Fayetteville to Alma	52 "
Total	<hr/> 282 miles

Hot Springs is one of the chief tourist or resort centers in Arkansas. Other resorts, not visited, include Siloam Springs, Bella Vista and Mammoth Springs.

The following are a few photographs that I took in this region; also herewith are a few pamphlets descriptive of this part of the state and other material bearing on northwestern Arkansas.

The part of Arkansas covered on this trip was well wooded and offers pleasant summer automobile trips to the people of Arkansas and Missouri and draws a few visitors from a wider circle, but it is lacking in any spectacular scenery. Even the Ouachita Mountains are more rugged than any of the mountains in the northwestern part of the state visited on this

trip, but the country is somewhat more elevated and a little cooler in the summer months. There is certainly no more opportunity for a national park in this region than in the Ouachita Mountains, and it is hardly more scenic than the Shepherd of the Hills country.

Very truly yours

Roger W. Toll
Superintendent