RECREATING APPALACHIA:
CUMBERLAND GAP NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, 1922-1972

by

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ABSTRACT

Cumberland Gap National Historical Park (NHP) is situated at the intersection of three states—Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia—at the narrow pass in the mountains used by eighteenth-century pioneers travelling along the Wilderness Road. This dissertation examines the development of the park from 1922 to 1972 and reveals how the National Park Service sought to remake the Appalachian region by reshaping the landscape. Outsiders defined Appalachia as being socio-economically and culturally different from the rest of the country, which prompted reformers to focus their efforts on the area throughout the twentieth century. They sought to correct the socio-economic problems of Appalachia by restoring degraded physical environments and romanticizing the local culture, which made the NPS an important federal agent for land and social reform. Park planners conceived of Cumberland Gap NHP late in the New Deal (1933-1942) and developed a vision to recreate an eighteenth-century wilderness. The park came of age in the Great Society (1964-1969) when a new discourse emerged at the park that reflected post-World War II concerns of fighting a War on Poverty, creating wilderness areas, and preserving historic sites. Chronicling changing attitudes towards nature, history, and social policy at Cumberland Gap NHP will help us understand how the NPS sought to remake and modernize the Appalachian region.

This study utilizes ideas from cultural landscape studies to examine the park's changing physical landscape as part of the historical record. I juxtapose field observations with evidence found in government records, historic photographs, maps,

drawings, newspaper and magazine articles, oral histories, and archaeological data. I draw upon secondary literature in twentieth-century U.S. social history, environmental history, Appalachian studies, historic preservation, and public history to provide the necessary context for evaluating the primary source material.

This dissertation offers a critical framework for interpreting national park landscapes by examining the relationships between and among Cumberland Gap NHP's natural, historical, and recreational qualities and how they have changed over time. It is critical to understand these relationships, because they shape how a park looks, feels, and functions and often reveal larger cultural values embedded in a park's landscape.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Agricultural Adjustment Administration
AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
AGSLP	Appalachian Group to Save the Land and People
ARA	Area Redevelopment Administration
ARC	Appalachian Regional Commission
ARDA	Appalachian Regional Development Act
AWOL	Absent Without Leave
AV	Appalachian Volunteers
CAA	Community Action Agency
CAP	Community Action Program
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
CEA	Council of Economic Advisers
CGNHPA	Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Association
CRGIS	Cultural Resource Geographic Information Systems
CVEOC	Cumberland Valley Economic Opportunity Council
CWA	Civil Works Administration
DAR	Daughters of the American Revolution
ECW	Emergency Conservation Work
EOA	Economic Opportunity Act
FSA	Farm Security Administration
GED	General Educational Development

HABS	Historic American Buildings Survey
HAER	Historic American Engineering Record
HALS	Historic American Landscapes Survey
JCCC	Job Corps Conservation Center
LMU	Lincoln Memorial University
MVLA	Mount Vernon Ladies' Association
NCSP	National Conference on State Parks
NHP	National Historical Park
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NP	National Park
NPS	National Park Service
NRA	National Recreation Area
NRPB	National Resources Planning Board
NYA	National Youth Administration
NYC	Neighborhood Youth Corps
OEO	Office of Economic Opportunity
PARC	President's Appalachian Regional Commission
RA	Resettlement Administration
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SOCM	Save Our Cumberland Mountains
TVA	Tennessee Valley Administration
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFS	U.S. Forest Service

VISTA	Volunteers in Service to America
WPA	Works Progress Administration
YCC	Youth Conservation Corps
YCCC	Yellow Creek Concerned Citizens

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the creation and development of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park (NHP) from 1922 to 1972. The 20,500-acre park commemorates the early frontier period of American history and is situated at the narrow pass in the Cumberland Mountains that marks the intersection of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. The gap is an iconic feature that commemorates American progress yet lies in the middle of Appalachia, a region that has been defined as being behind the rest of the country, socio-economically and culturally. Twentieth-century liberal reformers focused their attention on Appalachia during two important periods—the New Deal (1933-1942) and the Great Society (1964-1969)—and sought to alleviate the socio-economic problems of Appalachia by restoring degraded physical environments and romanticizing the local culture. Congress established Cumberland Gap NHP in 1940, and park planners crafted a vision of Cumberland Gap NHP that would recreate the wilderness experienced by frontiersman Daniel Boone in 1769 when he explored the area. A new discourse emerged at the park by 1964 reflecting post-World War II concerns, including fighting a War on Poverty, protecting ecosystems, and preserving historic sites. Chronicling these changing attitudes towards nature, history, and social reform at Cumberland Gap NHP will help us understand how the National Park Service sought to remake and modernize the Appalachian region.

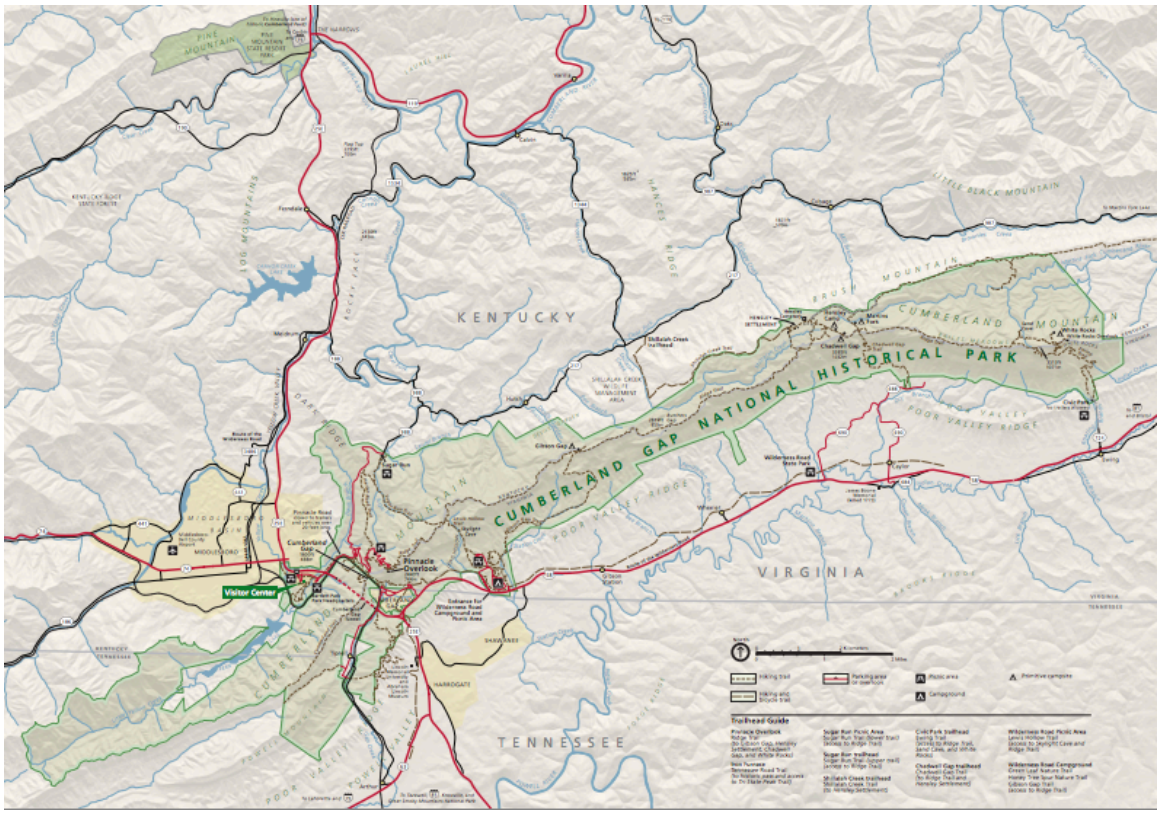

Figure 1. Map of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. Source: National Park Service.

Project Background and Overview

I became interested in studying NPS history when I worked for the agency as a cultural resource specialist. I found that most of my work involved researching agency actions since the government acquired property in the twentieth century rather than the actual historical period that the park commemorated. After some time, I realized that national parks are direct reflections of the societies that create them. Each generation leaves its mark on the landscape, shaping and reshaping it through decisions and actions that reflect the changing relationships between and among natural conservation, historic

preservation, and social reform. It takes detective work to peel back the layers and dissect how a park is created and developed. This process reveals how parks fit into larger historical issues and forces reflection upon how the NPS actively shapes these iconic landscapes today. These places are a vital part of American identity, and it is imperative that historians, the NPS, and the public take a greater interest in what particular cultural values Americans are imparting to future generations.

Cumberland Gap NHP is a useful case study because of its location in time and geography. Park planners began studying the area for a national park in 1937 during the New Deal (1933-1942) as part of a remarkable transformation of the NPS. During this period, the NPS became a truly national agency by expanding east of the Mississippi River and incorporating historic sites, battlefields, parkways, and recreational areas into an existing collection of mostly western, scenic parks. New Deal programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) provided the labor to accomplish this tremendous expansion.[1] The period between 1942 and 1963 was mostly a transitional period for Cumberland Gap NHP during which time state officials continued to acquire property and used funding from Mission 66, a national NPS campaign to upgrade facilities, to realize some of the New Deal plans for the park.[2] The NPS took a distinct turn in 1964 at

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1. Harlan Unrau and G. Frank Williss, *Administrative History: Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s* (Denver, CO: Denver Service Center, National Park Service, 1983), http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/unrau-williss/adhi3a.htm (accessed February 13, 2015).

2. Mission 66 was a postwar NPS initiative to expand visitor services for the agency's fiftieth anniversary. The ten-year program lasted from 1956 to 1966 and incorporated modernism in park architecture. Planners that worked throughout much of the New Deal designed and implemented the Mission 66 program, and in a sense, realized the New Deal vision that was cut short by World War II. Planning for Mission

the start of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society when Congress passed landmark legislation—including the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the Wilderness Act of 1964, and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966—that altered NPS management of parks like Cumberland Gap NHP through new policies and programs aimed at ending poverty, preserving wilderness areas, and expanding federal historic preservation initiatives.

While the New Deal and the Great Society serve as the major boundaries for this study, I adjust the timeline to look at the Progressive Era (1900-1932) and the Richard Nixon administration (1969-1974). Many ideas about conservation, historic preservation, and social reform that originated in the Progressive era came to fruition in the 1930s and influenced the development of Cumberland Gap NHP. In fact, the first conversations for a park at Cumberland Gap began at a logging conference in 1922.[3] Similarly, liberal reform did not end when Democratic President Johnson decided not to seek re-election in 1968. Congress passed most of the landmark environmental legislation during the Republican Nixon administration, including the National Environmental Policy Act in 1969, which some scholars have interpreted as a continuance of postwar liberalism.[4]

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66 began as early as 1945 and extended through 1972 as some Mission 66 projects continued under the initiative "Parkscape, U.S.A." See Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 1-15.

3. "Propose Mountain National Park," *Middlesboro (KY) Daily News,* May 31, 1922, p.1.

4. Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), ix; John Morton Blum, *Years of Discord: American Politics and Society, 1961-1974* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991),

Cumberland Gap is part of the Cumberland Plateau, the area that native Kentuckyian Harry Caudill wrote about in his book, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands: A Biography of a Depressed Area* (1962). Caudill's book, along with Michael Harrington's *The Other America* and Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society,* raised Appalachian poverty to American consciousness. Historian Susan Youngblood Ashmore asserts that by the time Johnson announced a war on poverty, the culture of poverty theory had taken root, and many understood destitution as something that could be handed down through the generations "like genetic material."[5] The region had served as the face for impoverishment and environmental degradation during the New Deal, a time when the whole country was suffering from an economic depression. Caudill's work in particular called attention to Appalachian economic hardships when the rest of the country was experiencing postwar affluence, raising questions about why the region was left behind. For many years, outsiders reduced the people living in the region to stereotypes of barefoot, gun toting, feuding hillbillies making illegal whiskey by the light of the moon.[6]

317; Gareth Davies, *From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 212.

5. Susan Youngblood Ashmore, "Introduction: Appalachian Kentucky and the War on Poverty," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 107*,* no. 3 (Summer 2009): 303. See also Harry Caudill, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands: A Biography of a Depressed Area* (1962; reprint, Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1963); Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (1962; reprint, New York: Penguin Books, 1984) and John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (1958; reprint, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

6. For selected works on Appalachian stereotypes, see Henry Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978); J. W. Williamson, *Hillbillyland: What the Movies Did to the Mountains and What the Mountains Did to the Movies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Dwight Billings, Gurney

Caudill refuted these stereotypes but painted a bleak picture of the realities faced by his neighbors. He blamed their destitute conditions on outside economic and political interests that exploited the land and the people and on local elites bent on maintaining their power.[7] Benevolent organizations and the federal government have repeatedly sent outsiders to the region to try to fix the perceived problems.[8] This study will demonstrate how the NPS, a regional outsider, has played a role in modernizing the region by purchasing submarginal lands, restoring natural areas, creating work programs, and romanticizing Appalachian culture.

Historiography

The development of Cumberland Gap NHP has never has been placed firmly within a larger historical context.[9] Historian and then-park superintendent William

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Norman, and Katherine Ledford, *Back Talk from Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001).

7. Caudill, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands,* 325-61.

8. David Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer: People, Power, and Planning in Appalachia,* rev. ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), xv-xxi.

9. In 2014, park historian Martha Wiley published a collection of photographs documenting the park's history aimed at popular audiences. She provides a minor, but thoughtful narrative to provide context for the photographs and give readers a sense of the park's history. She also presented a paper at the Ohio Valley History Conference in 2012 that she has graciously shared with me. This paper evaluates the creation of identity at Cumberland Gap NHP at the detriment of rural communities. She is in the process of submitting this paper to the *Kentucky Register.* The park still seeks a longer narrative that includes critical analysis of the park's creation and management that will be helpful to administrators. Martha Wiley, *Cumberland Gap National Historical Park,* Images of America Series (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014); Martha Wiley, "Hallowed by History: The Creation of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park" (paper presented at Ohio Valley History Conference, Johnson City, TN, October 12, 2012).

Luckett published a brief article in 1964 on the creation of the park. A year later, park historian Edward Tinney produced a longer administrative history that chronicled the early efforts for a national park in the area, the land acquisition process, and the very early years of park development.[10] Luckett and Tinney's works are consistent with early park histories that were usually undertaken by a park employee as a personal or professional interest. Historian Hal Rothman, who had extensive experience in writing park histories, observed that these early administrative histories often were written in a narrative fashion by someone too close to the subject to offer careful analysis.[11] In the 1970s, park personnel gained more duties and no longer had the time to research and write administrative histories, which were growing in length and complexity to meet management needs. Frequently, parks administrators turned to historians at Denver Service Center or regional offices to compile park histories, or contracted such projects to historians outside the agency. Rothman believed, however, that non-agency historians working on administrative histories held a disadvantage because they were less familiar with the resources and not as likely to fully understand project expectations.[12]

The NPS uses administrative histories to document the legislation that created parks and different management decisions over time, but some scholars see the value of contextualizing park histories within larger historical forces to understand how parks

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10. William Luckett, "Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (December 1964): 303-20; Edward Tinney, "History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park" (unpublished report for Cumberland Gap NHP and the National Park Service, 1965).

11. Hal Rothman, "A Past with a Purpose: Administrative Histories and the National Park Service," *Public Historian* 16, no.1 (Winter 1994): 59-60.

12. Ibid., 61.

embody and influence changing trends. Public historian Gilbert Backlund, for example, framed Stones River National Battlefield's Mission 66 program within national and global Cold War politics to argue that the park bolstered the nation and family against the threat of communism. Public historian and NPS consultant Anne Mitchell Whisnant told a multidimensional narrative of the creation and development of the Blue Ridge Parkway in her book *Super-Scenic Motorway*. Not only did she link the parkway to state politics but also to the Good Roads Movement and the Indian New Deal. NPS historian David Louter wrote about the development of roads in three national parks in Washington to show changing relationships between man and nature throughout the twentieth century. In *Windshield Wilderness* he demonstrated that park planners during the conservation era welcomed roads in parks, but wilderness advocates during the environmental movement defined wilderness areas as being roadless.[13] Environmental historian James Feldman also examined the relationship between man and nature and the implementation of the wilderness ideal at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in Wisconsin. He found that in the NPS's attempt to create "legible" landscapes, a bureaucratic condition in which managers simplify resource values so that policy can be broadly implemented, the agency segregated landscapes that divided natural and cultural resources, often creating one-dimensional landscapes, some without a past.[14]

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13. Gilbert Backlund, "Patriotism on the Battlefield: The National Park Service and Mission 66 at Stones River" (master's thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2005), 5; Anne Mitchell Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway: A Blue Ridge Parkway History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1-12; David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 3-10.

14. Feldman draws upon James Scott's theories on creating "legible" landscapes, but applies them to national parks. James Feldman, *A Storied Wilderness: Rewilding*

Historians Phoebe Cutler, Sara Gregg, Sarah Phillips, and Neil Maher provide important context for the New Deal period at Cumberland Gap NHP. Cutler's work on the public landscape of the New Deal includes an important chapter on parks in relation to developing recreational opportunities for `the health and vitality of those living in urban areas. Phillips put agricultural reform at the heart of New Deal policy, illuminating the government's commitment to farmers and conservation programs that targeted Appalachia. Gregg looked at the creation of a federal landscape in Appalachia during the New Deal. Using Shenandoah National Park and Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont as her case studies, she effectively tied conservation and social reform together but did not explain the role of historic preservation in crafting an Appalachian cultural identity that helped reinforce notions of progress and modernity. Finally, Neil Maher's work on the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) is instrumental in helping understand the transition from the Progressive Era natural conservation movement to the modern environmental movement, even though Cumberland Gap NHP did not have a CCC company at the park. Archaeologist Audrey Horning provided an excellent case study of a contemporary park, Shenandoah National Park, and the NPS's attitudes towards mountain families who were removed from its boundaries. She found that these communities were not as isolated as NPS employees believed.[15]

Apostle Islands (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 9-21; James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 2.

15. Phoebe Cutler, *The Public Landscape of the New Deal* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 90-105; Sarah Phillips, *This Land, This Nation: Conservation, Rural America, and the New Deal* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2; Sara Gregg, *Managing the Mountains: Land Use Planning, the New Deal, and the*

A small group of scholars have begun to examine the impact of the Great Society on national parks. These few have tended to focus their efforts on key individuals during the Great Society, specific pieces of legislation, or the impact of the modern environmental movement on park management. Kathy Mengak, a scholar in park, recreation, and leisure, recently published a biography of NPS Director George B. Hartzog Jr., who served under President Johnson. Her work provides some insight into how Hartzog's priorities fit within Johnson's vision for a great society. Hartzog expanded the system to include seventy-two new parks, promoted interpretive programming to serve urban areas, and hired more minorities to work in the agency.[16] He also witnessed the creation of important legislation that he and his staff would have to incorporate into national park policy, such as the Economic Opportunity Act, which (among many things) established Job Corps centers in nine national parks. Hartzog served on a special administrative support group that pushed for the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, although he was later reluctant to designate wilderness areas within national parks. He

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Creation of a Federal Landscape in Appalachia (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 1-8; Neil Maher, *Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Audrey Horning, *In the Shadow of Ragged Mountain: Historical Archaeology of Nicholson, Corbin, & Weakley Hollows* (Luray, VA: Shenandoah National Park Association, 2004), 5.

16. Kathy Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians: The Legacy of George B. Hartzog Jr.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012), 55, 129-131; Robert Cahn, "George B. Hartzog Jr., 1920 to Present," in *The National Park Service: The First 75 Years,* ed. William Sontag (Washington, DC: Eastern National Park & Monument Association, 1990), http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/sontag/hartzog.htm (accessed November 6, 2014); Louter, *Windshield Wilderness,* 125.

also proved to be an instrumental figure in supporting long-time NPS historian Ronald Lee in getting the National Historic Preservation Act through Congress in 1966.[17]

A few authors have begun to examine the impact of Great Society policy on individual parks. Environmental historians in particular have been most inclined to pick up on this thread. Historians David Louter, James Feldman, Jerry Frank, and Margaret Brown have examined the influence of the wilderness movement at North Cascades National Park, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Rocky Mountain National Park, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Still, fewer scholars have examined the implementation of Great Society economic and social policies at national parks. Paul Marion, a former Department of the Interior administrator, published a book on the creation and development of the Lowell National Historical Park, tying it to Johnson's Model Cities program that aimed at rejuvenating urban areas through historic preservation.[18] No park histories have covered the Economic Opportunity Act or the Job Corps program.[19] Cumberland Gap NHP offers a unique opportunity to examine the

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17. Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians,* 200-1, underplays Ronald Lee's role in her biography of Hartzog. See also Barry Mackintosh, *The National Historic Preservation Act and the National Park Service: A History* (Washington, DC: History Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, 1986), v, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002634945 (accessed December 4, 2014).

18. Louter, *Windshield Wilderness,* 105-63; Feldman, *A Storied Wilderness,* 149-224; Jerry Frank, *Making Rocky Mountain National Park: The Environmental History of An American Treasure* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2013), 72-82; Margaret Brown, *The Wild East: A Biography of the Great Smoky Mountains* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 219-27; Paul Marion, *Mill Power: The Origin and Impact of Lowell National Historical Park* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), xix.

19. This author did investigate the War on Poverty and the Economic Opportunity Act in a previous study on Catoctin Mountain Park, the location of the nation's first Job

implementation of the Wilderness Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and the Economic Opportunity Act all at one park.

Environmental historians and historic preservationists have provided useful context for understanding the natural and built environments in national parks. Historian Samuel Hays wrote foundational works for both the Progressive Era origins of natural conservation and postwar environmental politics that together give a broad overview of environmental politics in twentieth century America. NPS historian Richard West Sellars provided the first critical study of the agency's natural resource policies as they evolved from the creation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872 to the 1990s. Historian Thomas Robertson placed the grassroots environmental movement in an international context as he explored the growing anxiety over population growth and how groups of individuals viewed the movement according to their race, class, and gender.[20] Several books and articles address the history of the historic preservation movement, which in many ways parallels and intersects the natural conservation and environmental movements.[21] Among

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Corps center. Angela Sirna, "Special Resource Study on Human Conservation Programs at Catoctin Mountain Park" (unpublished report for Catoctin Mountain Park and National Park Service, 2014), 81-120.

20. Samuel Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (1959; reprint, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999); Samuel Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (1997; reprint, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); Thomas Robertson, *The Malthusian Moment: Global Population Growth and the Birth of American Environmentalism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 1-12.

21. Selected works include Charles Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949,* 2 vols. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981); Richard West Sellars, "A Very Large Array: Early Federal Historic

them, "To Preserve the Nation's Past: The Growth of Historic Preservation in the National Park Service During the 1930s," by NPS historians Harlan Unrau and Frank Willis has been particularly informative in this research.[22] They account for the legal mandates that transferred historic battlefields and monuments from the War Department and Forest Service to the NPS and the New Deal programs that underwrote new park development.

Scholars began putting Appalachia's socio-economic and cultural issues into historical perspective in the 1960s and 1970s with the hope of resolving some of the region's recurring problems, such as poverty, corrupt politics, and environmental degradation. This body of scholarship circles around itself, showing that Appalachia is not so different from other rural places in America but is still unique enough to warrant its own field of study. They have, however, written on a number of themes that contribute to the discussion of Cumberland Gap NHP, including issues of identity and stereotypes, absentee land ownership, resource exploitation, environmental degradation, poverty, labor struggles, political corruption, and resistance.[23]

Preservation—The Antiquities Act, Mesa Verde, and the National Park Service Act," *George Wright Forum* 25, no. 1 (2008): 65-120; James Glass, "Impacts of the National Historic Preservation Act: A 25th Anniversary Assessment," *CRM Supplement* 14, no. 4 (1991): 6-12; and John Sprinkle, *Crafting Preservation Criteria: The National Register of Historic Places and American Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

22. Harlan Unrau and G. Frank Williss, "To Preserve the Nation's Past: The Growth of Historic Preservation in the National Park Service During the 1930s," *Public Historian* 9, no. 2 (April 1987): 19-49.

23. Selected works include Shapiro, *Appalachia on our Mind;* Ronald Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Mountain South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982); Wilma Dunaway, *The First American Frontier: Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1700-1860* (Chapel

Historian Henry Shapiro's *Appalachia On Our Mind* made a lasting impression on Appalachian historiography through his analysis of nineteenth-century literature that demonstrates how outsiders constructed the very notion of Appalachia. Will Wallace Harney, a color writer, described the Cumberland Mountains and the people he encountered in 1869 as "a strange land and peculiar people," a sentiment that struck outsiders for many years.[24] So, too, did Berea College president William Goodell Frost's appraisal of mountain people as "our contemporary ancestors" in 1899.[25] This trope, which took firm hold in the twentieth century, played upon the sturdy, white pioneers who first laid groundwork for American institutions to reconcile the seeming backwardness and isolation of present mountain people. Missionaries and bureaucrats working in the region used these tropes and reinforced negative stereotypes to highlight the importance of their work. Historian David Whisnant found that missionaries and bureaucrats in the region operated within the same bureaucratic and capitalistic frameworks as those corporations who exploited the region's resources and people.[26]

Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Ronald Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside: Railroads, Deforestation, and Social Change in West Virginia, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Dwight Billings and Kathleen Blee, *The Road to Poverty: The Making of Wealth and Hardship in Appalachia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Mary Beth Pudup, Dwight Billings, and Altina Waller, *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Kevin O'Donnell and Helen Hollingsworth, eds., *Seekers of Scenery: Travel Writing from Southern Appalachia, 1840-1900* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004); and Melissa Walker, *All We Knew Was to Farm: Rural Women in the Upcountry South, 1919-1941* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2000).

24. Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind,* 3.

25. Pudup, Billings, and Waller, *Appalachia in the Making,* 2.

In 1980, political sociologist John Gaventa examined the political economy of the Clear Fork Valley in Tennessee, depicting the area as an internal colony due to absentee land owners taking away much of the region's wealth in coal and timber. He recounted how the American Association, a British held company, managed to acquire tens of thousands of acres of land in Claiborne County, Tennessee, and Bell County, Kentucky, for little cost in the late nineteenth century and then opened the area to industrial development. Wealth flowed out of the area, leaving the local population poor. Gaventa also showed that the coal and timber capitalists could maximize profits if the poor stayed poor and described how social and economic stratification kept lower classes from rebelling.[27] However, Gaventa did not account for the NPS's own move to acquire over 20,000 acres nearby, displacing the people living there, and its new political authority in regional development.

Many scholars have chronicled the impact of industrialization on the Appalachian region's environment, society, politics, and economy, but Ronald Eller questioned the notion of progress that came with it.[28] Industrialization turned mountaineers into miners and millhands.[29] Degradation of the land made farming nearly impossible. Politicians

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26. Ibid; Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind,* ix-xxi*;* Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer,* xv-xvi.

27. John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), v-xi.

28. Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 5-7. For other works on industrialization and social change in Appalachia, see Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside;* Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers;* Dunaway, *The First American Frontier;* Billings and Blee, *The Road to Poverty;* and Billings, Pudup, and Waller, *Appalachia in the Making.*

who brought government funding for improved roads watched as some of the region's brightest left in droves. The NPS has presented conflicting notions of progress at Cumberland Gap NHP since the park commemorates westward expansion but the agency has sought to restore the landscape back to an eighteenth-century wilderness, erasing the vestiges of modernization and progress in the process.

Other scholars have given Appalachians more agency, choosing instead to focus on traditions of resistance in the region. Stephen Fisher edited an anthology of essays describing collective action in Appalachia, including groups organizing near Cumberland Gap NHP to correct various land and social issues. Thomas Kiffmeyer's research on the efforts of Appalachian Volunteers to incite social change in eastern Kentucky during the War on Poverty also provides an interesting comparison to the park's activities in the 1960s and early 1970s.[30] Together, these two works counteract some of the assumptions perpetuated by scholars like Gaventa that mountaineers did not critique the power structures within which they lived and operated.

Public History Theory and Practice

This study is deeply rooted in public history scholarship but benefits the most from cultural landscape scholars who have opened a path to study the development of Cumberland Gap NHP over the past forty years. A cultural landscape is a particular place

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29. Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers,* xv-xxvi.

30. Stephen Fisher, *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 1-12; Thomas Kiffmeyer, *Reformers to Radicals: The Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 3, 7-15.

or region that encompasses natural features and species as well as human-constructed physical features. The study of cultural landscapes is inherently multi-disciplinary, drawing from cultural geography, history, archaeology, architecture, and ethnography. Practitioners often reside in historic preservation, community planning, and heritage development organizations. Cultural landscape scholars look at how landscapes change over time. They look for deeper cultural meanings in places that most people would find ordinary. Because they are interested in the relationship between man and nature and change over time, they emphasize holistic, systems approaches to managing landscapes.[31]

Since 1983, the NPS has recognized cultural landscapes as resources that need to be documented and managed. However, the NPS struggles to interpret these landscapes because they often encompass large geographic areas with many histories. Many in the NPS grapple to see the cultural qualities of natural landscapes and view cultural resource management and natural resource management as two separate enterprises.[32] This study will provide a critical framework to interpret Cumberland Gap NHP's park landscape in order to better understand the relationship of humans to nature and history. This framework may also be useful for other parks because it examines the relationships among and between natural conservation, historic preservation, and social reform.

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31. Selected works include Arnold Alanen and Robert Melnik, *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); J. B. Jackson, *The Necessity for Ruins, and Other Topics* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980); Richard Longstreth, *Cultural Landscapes Balancing Nature and Heritage in Preservation Practice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Ian McHarg, *Design with Nature* (1967; reprint, New York: J. Wiley, 1992); and Carl O. Sauer, *Land and Life: A Selection from the Writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer,* ed. John Leighly (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963).

32. Stephanie Toothman, "Cultural Resource Management in Natural Areas of the National Park System," *Public Historian* 9, no. 2 (April 1987): 64-76.

Research Questions and Methodology

The questions that drive this dissertation are very much rooted in public history theory and practice. Public historians Patricia West and Cathy Stanton have transformed my thinking about historic sites and national parks. West argued in her book *Domesticating History* that a house is fundamentally transformed when it becomes a house museum. A landscape also fundamentally changes when a group draws an arbitrary boundary and calls it a national park. In her study of Lowell National Historical Park, Stanton took an anthropological approach to studying the park by examining the federal employees' role in shaping the town's identity and heritage. This reflective examination is very much at the heart of public history pedagogy and practice.[33]

My central questions are: why was Cumberland Gap NHP created, and how did it develop from the New Deal to the Great Society? What was the original vision of park planners in the New Deal? Why did they want to recreate Daniel Boone's wilderness, and how did they expect to do so in a place that had been settled since Boone passed through? How did the agency and public attitudes towards roads in the park change over time, particularly attitudes concerning US 25E, which crossed over the gap, and the proposed Allegheny Parkway? Why did the NPS decide to route US 25E through a tunnel, and when was that decision made? How did the discourse about nature, history, and social reform in parks change during the Great Society, and what impact did that have on the

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33. Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), xi; Cathy Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), xiii-xvi; Rebecca Conard, "Public History as Reflective Practice: An Introduction," *Public Historian* 28, no.1 (Winter 2006): 9-13; David Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

park landscape? Why did the park preserve Hensley settlement, which was built during the twentieth century, and present it as a frontier village? Why was a Job Corps Conservation Center opened at the park? What is its legacy?

My questions about the park landscape extend beyond government boundaries to the surrounding region. Does the park mirror reform efforts aimed at modernizing the land and people in the surrounding area? What does this park reveal about larger regional issues in Appalachia, such as poverty, environmental degradation, and notions of progress? What did the NPS see as its role in solving regional issues? Are certain attitudes towards Appalachian identity, such as cultural romanticism, reflected in park development at Cumberland Gap NHP? Can we find physical evidence of these ideas in the park landscape? How did park planners reconcile competing visions about natural conservation, historic preservation, and social reform? How did this change over time?'

This dissertation will provide a critical framework for interpreting national park landscapes by examining the relationships between and among Cumberland Gap NHP's "natural," "historical," and "recreational" qualities and how various generations have constructed their meaning. It is vital to understand these relationships, because they shape how a park looks, feels, and functions and often reveal larger cultural values embedded in a park's landscape. Scholars tend to view these qualities as separate threads when in fact they are very much intertwined.

My methods for answering these questions are drawn from a body of cultural landscape literature that encourages multidisciplinary approaches to finding deeper cultural meanings in the landscape. This dissertation examines the park's evolving physical landscape as part of the historical record. I utilize methods from history,

architecture, cultural geography, ethnography, and environmental sciences to understand the relationship between the natural and built environments and how this relationship shifted over time. I juxtapose field observations with evidence found in government records, historic photographs, maps, drawings, newspaper and magazine articles, oral histories, and archaeological data.

The notion to set aside Cumberland Gap for public enjoyment came not from anti-modern sentiment, but from capitalists and local boosters responsible for modernizing the Appalachian region. Chapter One begins in the 1920s when conversations for a national park at Cumberland Gap first began and uncovers the progressive impulses that drove the park movement. Middle-class citizens in Middlesboro seized upon the idea of creating a national park at Cumberland Gap, influenced by national and regional trends in conservation, park development, and social reform. Their vision for a national park was unclear and their bid unsuccessful, but they laid important groundwork for future park development efforts during the 1930s.

The NPS became an important state agent during the New Deal to institute land and social reform throughout the country. Park development rose to an unprecedented rate during the New Deal due to government investment in public works projects designed to alleviate the desperate economic conditions wrought by the Great Depression. Chapter Two examines the nature of this expansion and how NPS planners reconciled competing visions between natural conservation, historic preservation, and social reform when creating new parks. The NPS's transition from western, scenic parks to eastern, historic sites, and the agency's newfound involvement in land and social

reform indicate why the agency was interested in creating a historical park at Cumberland Gap.

Cumberland Gap NHP benefited from New Deal park expansion when Congress designated the park in 1940. Although created too late to fully benefit from New Deal programs, park planners did craft a vision for the park that would have a lasting impression on the landscape. Chapter Three examines how park planners imagined Cumberland Gap as a link between eastern and western national park concepts and how they sought to recreate Daniel Boone's eighteenth-century wilderness in an area that had been industrialized. Their work at Cumberland Gap NHP fits within a larger New Deal agenda to uplift the Appalachian population, modernize the region, correct land abuse, and preserve national history.

An important transition occurred at Cumberland Gap NHP in the nineteen years that lapsed between congressional establishment of the park in 1940 and its formal dedication of the park in 1959. The last of the mountain residents left the park area, and the NPS expunged evidence of their occupation from the landscape as a first step in realizing the New Deal goal of recreating an eighteenth-century wilderness. Chapter Four chronicles the protracted land acquisition process that was concurrent with a larger demographic exodus from the region, followed by the NPS's use of Mission 66 funds to begin transforming park land into a pseudo-historic landscape with functional modern facilities.

The trajectory of Cumberland Gap NHP's development changed in 1964 with President Johnson's Great Society program when Cumberland Gap NHP became

involved in a War on Poverty amid the growing environmental and historic preservation movements. Chapter Five interrogates Johnson's set of domestic policies as they were implemented in the Appalachian region and by the NPS. It examines the implementation of the Economic Opportunity Act on the park-level through the park's short-lived Job Corps center. Chapter Six discusses the emergence of modern environmentalism and new concerns for historic preservation through debates over wilderness, road development, and expanded historic preservation programs. These discussions redirected NPS development efforts for the next several decades, prompting the park to manage a large portion of its land as wilderness while preserving Hensley Settlement, diverting US 25E through a tunnel, and restoring the saddle of the gap back to what the agency considered an eighteenth-century wilderness.

Visitors come to Cumberland Gap NHP to experience America's frontier wilderness, but have little idea of the roads, railroads, farms, houses, businesses, factories, and timber and coal operations established in the area in the wake of westward pioneers, the descendants of whom were subsequently removed to create the park. In recent years, NPS interpreters have designed and installed several waysides scattered throughout the park and a few exhibit panels inside the visitor center that touch upon these topics. For the most part, however, visitors are immersed in a recreated landscape that resembled the Appalachian frontier on the eve of westward expansion, but obscures debates about the legacies of modernization in Appalachia and the country as a whole. Just outside the park's boundaries lies an area targeted for reform by missionaries, boosters, and government bureaucrats who saw the land as submarginal and the people as poor, isolated, and behind the times. The history of Cumberland Gap NHP is not about

preserving a landscape impervious to change, but rather how the NPS and its supporters manipulated the landscape in an effort to remake Appalachia.

CHAPTER ONE

Roots for a National Park

Residents in Middlesboro, Kentucky, lighted upon an idea mentioned during the 1922 Appalachian Logging Congress in Cincinnati, Ohio, to create a national park in the Cumberland Mountains.[1] In their eyes, a national park would bring much-needed national recognition and tourist money to this developing area. They were not alone. Communities across the southern highlands clamored for a national park in their own backyards in the early twentieth century, but only a few were successful before the New Deal. Middlesboro park boosters did not rank among them, but they did lay the groundwork for New Deal initiatives by tapping into larger trends in natural resource conservation, historic preservation, and social reform—ideas that park planners would effectively implement in the next decade.

The very idea for a national park at Cumberland Gap was itself a product of an intense period of industrialization, begun in the late nineteenth century, which transformed the Appalachian landscape, political economy, and social structure. The South in general was undergoing an important transition in the years after Reconstruction as southerners grappled with race relations and rebuilding the southern economy.[2]

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1 "Propose Mountain National Park," *Middlesboro (KY) Daily News,* May 31, 1922, p.1.

2. There is a broad body of scholarship on the New South, but three selected works include C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (1951; reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 1-22; George Brown Tindall, *The*

Boosters in southern towns promoted the merits of their communities to entice businesses, railroads, factories, and even tourists to stabilize their local economies. Middlesboro businessmen were no exception as they sought reasons to bring people to their community, which was a company town established in the 1880s by a British corporation interested in developing the area's mineral and timber wealth as well as its tourism potential. Previous corporate efforts to establish Cumberland Gap as a tourist destination in the 1890s failed spectacularly, which prompted park boosters to seek a government solution in the 1920s.[3]

While not opposed to modernization or progress, a growing contingent of middle and upper class Americans grew disturbed and anxious over the country's rapid industrialization and its contributions to corrupt politics, urbanization, massive immigration, environmental degradation, and moral deprivation. They pushed for political, social, and environmental reform in a sweeping effort known as progressivism, which eventually gave birth to the national park system. Middlesboro boosters utilized a number of progressive ideas in their park advocacy, including advancements in conservation, historic preservation, and social reform.

Alexander Arthur and the American Association

A group of professors and students from Harvard University picked their way to Cumberland Gap in July 1875, setting up camp in the depression of Fort McCook, a Civil

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Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967) 1-32; Edward Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (1992; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), vii-x.

3. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South,* 59-60.

War installation. Some of the students were veterans of the bloody conflict that had ended just ten years earlier. The scarred landscape was just beginning to heal after the Union and Confederate armies had clear-cut the mountainsides to control the narrow pass. Camp Harvard, as it was known, was the first geology field school in the United States and ushered in a new era for both science and the Tri-State area.

Figure 2. "View of Camp Harvard." Photographed by Albert Roger Crandall, circa 1875. Source: Albert Crandall Collection, University of Kentucky Special Collections Research Center, Kentucky Digital Library.

After two summers, Camp Harvard participants had located twenty seams of coal, identified iron ore outcroppings, and mapped potential railroad lines. Their discoveries captured the attention of capitalists interested in developing the region. Some of the

participants went on to have influential careers, including Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, Director of the Kentucky Geological Survey, David Starr Jordan, a member of the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club, and Jesse Fewkes, a noted archaeologist.[4]

Like other parts of the New South, the Appalachian region underwent a profound transformation after the Civil War when railroads penetrated the rough terrain to extract coal, timber, iron, and other resources that were then transported to industrial centers in the Midwest or East Coast. Prior to the war, small, scattered "island communities" dotted the region.[5] Most families farmed, but sought additional income through timber, surplus livestock and produce, and other means. Social structure was based largely on familial ties and relied upon cooperation. However, the transition to industrialism altered the political, economic, and social structures of almost every community in the region. The average size of a mountain farm, for example, decreased from 187 acres in the 1880s to 76 acres in 1930, while towns and cities sprang up near coalfields and lumber camps.[6] Coal and timber operations absorbed farm labor into an industrial workforce, and when that was not enough, companies brought in immigrants from eastern and southern Europe.[7] Outside capitalists dominated local interests by purchasing large swaths of the

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4. David Earle, "When Science Came to the Wilderness, the Story of Camp Harvard," *Gateway: Journal of Bell County Historical Society* (Spring 2013): 7-13.

5. Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), xiii.

6. Ronald Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), xix.

7. Ken Fones-Wolfe and Ronald Lewis, eds., *Transnational West Virginia: Ethnic Communities and Economic Change, 1840-1940* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2002), xi, xvi-xvii.

region. Historian Ronald Eller argues that this modernization raised a new class-consciousness in the region that really did not exist before. He believes the rise of urbanization, corporate capitalism, centralization of political and economic power, and weakening of communities are the reasons behind Appalachia's paradox as "a rich land inhabited by poor people."[8]

A similar story occurred in the Cumberland Gap area, which was sparsely settled despite thousands of settlers passing through the gap in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. In the early 1880s, Scotsman Alexander Arthur came to the United States to work for the Scottish-Carolina Lumber Company, which held large timber properties near Knoxville, Tennessee. Encouraged by the success of Birmingham, Alabama, Arthur became interested in the coal and iron resources in the Cumberland Gap region when he visited in 1886.[9] Initially, he was interested in developing a railroad line to the area, but he soon developed a grand scheme to mine the local resources, build towns, and establish a health resort in the Cumberland Mountains. He began purchasing land in the area with help from five capitalists in New York and North Carolina. He quickly sought additional support from financiers in London. Together, Arthur and his financiers incorporated a British company—the American Association, Ltd.—that had over twenty million American dollars in British capital. Arthur and the Association deftly acquired 80,000 acres in Bell County, Kentucky, and Claiborne and Campbell counties in

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8. Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers,* xxv.

9. Ayers, in *Promise of the New South,* 59, notes that boosters all over the South were captivated by the success of Birmingham, Alabama, which grew from eight thousand people in 1880 to twenty-six thousand in 1890, as a result of national rail lines, natural resource wealth, and native capital.

Tennessee. Arthur founded the towns of Middlesborough in Kentucky and Harrogate in Tennessee, both named after British cities.[10] Middlesborough's sister city was situated in the British coalfields, while Harrogate was known as a resort town. The American Association gave the small village of Cumberland Gap a facelift by reconfiguring the town layout and giving British names to local streets.[11]

Middlesborough, Kentucky, emerged almost overnight, as businessmen rushed in to make it the "Magic City of the South." Between 1886 and 1889, the city grew to include sixteen operating industries, six banks, seven churches, a town hall, a public library, opera house, and a golf course. Middlesborough had a streetcar system and was served by the Knoxville, Cumberland Gap, and Louisville Railway, which connected with the Louisville and Nashville line. Arthur simultaneously embarked on a lavish plan to create a health resort for wealthy American and British tourists at Harrogate and built an elaborate seven hundred-room Four Seasons Hotel and sanitarium.[12]

Today, local guidebooks point out the quaint British names of the streets in Harrogate and Cumberland Gap as evidence of Arthur's grand vision for the area.[13] However, these guides obscure the fraught history of Arthur, the American Association,

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10. John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 47-52.

11. National Register of Historic Places, Cumberland Gap Historic District (Town), Cumberland Gap, Claiborne County, Tennessee, National Register #90000321 (May 1, 1989), http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/nrhp/text/90000321.pdf (accessed January 6, 2015).

12. Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness,* 56, 63.

13. For example, see Natalie Sweet, *Harrogate and Cumberland Gap,* Images of America Series (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014).

and the local population. John Gaventa observed that the Association was able to acquire nearly 80,000 acres primarily because it held an advantage over locals living in the area. It knew the value of the resources, and some locals sold their land voluntarily for a fraction of the value. For those who were not willing to sell their land, the American Association used coercive means. A common method was for the American Association to acquire the rights of a single heir on a piece of property left to several other heirs. The Association would go to court when the other heirs did not want to sell and ask for a judgment on whether the property could be fairly partitioned. The court would almost always rule that the property could not be divided and should be sold at public auction to the highest bidder. Gaventa noted one occurrence when the American Association bought at auction for two hundred dollars, a 2,000-acre tract granted to settlers in 1839.[14]

The American Association was able to maintain its economic and political power despite financial calamity. Middlesborough was well on its way to becoming the "Magic City of the South," as it called itself. Only sixty families resided along Yellow Creek in 1886 when a group of investors formed the Middlesborough Town Company to develop 5,500 acres in the valley. Just three years later, a city emerged with five thousand people. Middlesborough developed as a company town with residents dependent on the British owners. However, the American financial panic of 1893 caused Middlesborough to collapse. The town's banks failed, and the Middlesborough Town Company had to auction off its properties. The city changed its name to Middlesboro in 1894, when the post office began using that spelling. The American Association mortgaged 70,000 acres for $1.5 million to a New York bank, but soon declared bankruptcy on October 27, 1893.

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14. Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness,* 54-55.

A new American company was formed, the American Association, Inc., with most of the same British backers. The new company purchased the mortgaged land at a sheriff's auction for only $15,000.[15]

Gaventa theorized that the American Association was able to retain its power partially because of its dominance in economics and politics, but also because it wielded an ideological apparatus that made resistance difficult. First, people working to modernize the mountains held a "common purpose." Industrial solidarity replaced familial solidarity. The elite espoused the notion that through hard work the benefits of modernization would be available to everyone. The American Association distorted the benefits and blew them out of scale. The lavishness of the Four Seasons Hotel, for example, showed a life of luxury and leisure that was really unavailable to the non-elite. However, the elite gave them enough access to modern goods and services to make these amenities seem attainable and create a desire to leave the old life behind. This modern "progress" brought "civilization," with little thought given to the culture that was there before. In fact, aspects of local culture were degraded to make industrial order seem more attractive to the non-elite.[16] Color writers, for instance, characterized the native mountaineer as "wilder," "not attractive," "cadaverous looking," "idle," and "shiftless," and who consumed "bad food" and "moonshine whiskey," as a counterpoint to the healthful and positive qualities of Middlesboro. However, the elite also directly

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15. Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness,* 77-78; "About Us," City of Middlesboro, Kentucky, http://www.middlesborokentucky.net/Home.aspx (accessed November 12, 2014).

16. Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness,* 61-67.

appropriated aspects of local culture to impose their values. In one example, Gaventa found a pattern along Yellow Creek where places of work (such as coal mines) retained Appalachian names, but places of cultural development were replaced with foreign names.[17]

The emergence and entrenchment of the American Association on the landscape and in Cumberland Gap politics, economics, and society is important context for local efforts in establishing the national park. Middlesboro boosters in the 1920s lived in a company town, and had to act within power structures dictated by the company. They were equally invested in modernizing the region, but they used progressive trends to improve community life and business prospects, including seeking a national park for their backyard.

The Progressive Movement

The Progressive Movement, national in scope, emerged at the end of the nineteenth century when middle- and upper-class Americans became concerned over a variety of issues wrought by industrialization, such as corrupt politics, poor living and working conditions for industrial workers, the influx of immigrants, and environmental degradation, and called for reform. Their reactions, which historian Michael McGerr characterized as "a fierce discontent," were not anti-modern.[18] In fact, they used the bureaucratic structures and a faith in science, technology, and progress that were hallmarks of the new industrial order, to fix perceived social problems. Thomas Jackson

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17. Ibid., 65-66.

18. Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), xiii.

Lears departs from other historians who use economic drivers as a reason for this wave of reform to argue that in the aftermath of the Civil War a religious longing for a spiritual rebirth, consistent with Protestant beliefs, made modern America. Lears and McGerr believe that progressivism died with the violence of World War I, while other historians, like Morton Keller, maintain that progressivism continued through the 1920s, although it took on a darker tone as social and economic elites asserted their authority.[19] In his assessment of the impact of progressivism on public policy from 1900 to 1930, Keller wrote that reformers "created a dog that did not bark," meaning that they laid the institutional and political framework for creating change, but were unsuccessful in achieving their goals.[20] Their efforts proved critical in laying the groundwork for New Deal programs in the 1930s.[21]

Progressives planted the seeds for the park movement in the United States due to their involvement in natural resource conservation, social reform, and historic preservation. Different groups with various concerns, such as the problems of modern childhood, good roads, conservation, and labor conditions, all contributed ideas that had a lasting influence on park development. The large-scale destruction of forests prompted foresters, naturalists, and politicians to call for the conservation and protection of natural resources by designating state and national forests and parks. With increased leisure time

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19. Thomas Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 1, 4; McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent,* xvi; Morton Keller, *Regulating a New Society: Public Policy, and Social Change in America, 1900-1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 6.

20. Keller, *Regulating a New Society,* 179.

21. McGerr, *Fierce Discontent,* xvi.

and urbanization, progressives saw the need to create and build parks to provide structured spaces for the nation's youth to play.[22]

Urbanization and the influx of immigrants prompted native-born women to preserve historic houses as national shrines to create better citizens. Historian James Lindgren described their approach to preservation as "personalism," meaning that they viewed historic buildings as embodiments of home and family values.[23] During the Progressive Era, men gradually took over historic preservation efforts, applied scientific and business-minded expertise, and thereby professionalized and masculinized the movement. This shift, according to Lindgren, meant that there was a new bureaucratic elite to manage preservation efforts, and professional organizations formed to administer these changes.[24] One federal agency, the NPS, consolidated federal efforts to preserve, manage, and interpret historic sites in the early 1930s.

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22. Selected secondary literature on these topics include: Samuel Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (1959; reprint, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), 176; Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (1997; reprint, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 13; Abigail Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890-1960* (Duluth: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xviiii-xxi; Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 124.

23. James Lindgren, "'A New Departure in Historic, Patriotic Work': Personalism, Professionalism, and Conflicting Concepts of Material Culture in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Public Historian* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 42.

24. Ibid., 60.

The Conservation Movement

The closing of the frontier in 1890 caused anxiety as people realized that America's land and resources were limited, yet many timber companies, mine operators, and ranchers focused on maximizing profit and continued their enterprises as if land and resources were unlimited. A group of scientists, politicians, and technocrats sought ways to efficiently utilize natural resources in a new conservation movement. However, most conservationists did not believe that land should be completely removed from commercial production. Instead, according to historian Samuel Hays, "they envisioned a political system guided by the ideal of efficiency."[25] Technicians who knew the best way of achieving such efficiency would guide such a system.

Conservationists, led by forester Gifford Pinchot, naturalist John Muir, and President Theodore Roosevelt, were able to achieve some success at the federal level. In 1891, Congress approved the Forest Reserves Act that allowed the President to put aside public land for forest reserves, a step forward in protecting the nation's remaining stands of timber. Gifford Pinchot was appointed in 1897 as chief of the Division of Forestry in the Department of the Interior, which was renamed the U.S. Forest Service in 1905 and transferred to the Department of Agriculture. The USDA renamed forest reserves as national forests in 1907, and the reassignment from the Department of the Interior signified that national policy was to maintain national forests for commercial use rather than preservation.[26] While Roosevelt was president, Congress passed the Antiquities Act

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25. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency,* 3.

26. Harold Steen, "The Origins of the National Forest System," in *The Origins of the National Forest System: A Centennial Symposium*, ed. Harold Steen (Durham, NC:

in 1906, which gave the president the authority to set aside public lands of scientific or historic interest as national monuments. And in 1916, through the Organic Act, Congress created the National Park Service, mandating it to conserve natural and cultural resources unimpaired for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

Much of the conservationists' efforts were directed at regulating water development, grazing, and mines in the western United States. A debate arose between conservationists having a more utilitarian view towards natural resources and those trying to preserve them in places such as national parks. John Muir led an effort to leave much of the High Sierra Nevada Mountains as wilderness in his efforts for Yosemite National Park. In the Yosemite Valley, he imagined that the Merced River drainage could be lent to tourism development, while the Tuolomne River drainage be kept almost inaccessible except on foot or horseback. Tensions came to a head in the Hetch Hetchy Valley incident in which Congress voted in 1913 to dam the Tuolomne River as a water supply for the city of San Francisco. The Hetch Hetchy Valley incident was disconcerting to preservationists because it was located in a national park, but was susceptible to utilitarian development for public benefit. Muir and his colleagues realized that limited tourism development on large areas of natural land was preferable to more destructive uses, such as reservoirs. Richard West Sellars concluded that this preservation through development philosophy formed "an enduring, paradoxical theme in national park history."[27]

Forest History Society, 1992), http://www.foresthistory.org/Publications/Books/Origins_National_Forests/sec1.htm (accessed November 10, 2014).

Human Conservation

The conservation movement was pliable enough in the early years of the twentieth century to encompass a wide range of public problems beyond the natural environment. In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt made the link between the conservation of natural resources and the conservation of human health. In the next few years, conservation grew to include conservation of youth morals, conservation of children through the abolition of child labor, conservation of civic beauty, the elimination of waste in education and war, conservation of manhood, and even the conservation of the Anglo-Saxon race.[28] Hays indicates this elasticity helped the movement reach an almost religious fervor between 1908 and 1910, but also weakened its focus and limited its influence.[29] Despite the limiting effect on the larger conservation movement, a few ideas about the conservation of human resources developed during the Progressive Era did have an impact on park development later in the twentieth century, and national parks even became instruments for social reform. Park boosters and planners acted upon several of these ideas while advocating and planning for a national park at Cumberland Gap during the New Deal.

Progressive politicians and reformers extolled the virtue of hard work as key to developing individual character, demonstrating two different perspectives on the matter. First, the growing middle and upper class had more leisure time, which caused people like Theodore Roosevelt to worry that privileged men would become feminized.

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27. Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks,* 15.

28. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency,* 176; Rebecca Conard, "The National Conference on State Parks: Reflections on Organizational Genealogy," *George Wright Forum* 14*,* no. 4 (1997): 32-33.

29. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency,* 175.

Roosevelt, who exuded masculinity, perhaps embodied this best in his "strenuous life" philosophy in which he extolled the virtues of hard, physical work to improve moral, spiritual, mental, and physical character.[30] His philosophy melded well with the back-to-nature movement that began in the late decades of the nineteenth century, when Americans living in urban environments increasingly looked towards natural areas to fulfill their needs to commune with nature and balance their city lives.[31] Parks provided spaces where middle and upper class men and women could return to nature and practice the strenuous life through hiking, fishing, and camping. Second, the rise of industrial labor raised serious questions about worker conditions, which led to efforts to end child labor, institute a forty-hour workweek, provide workmen's compensation for injuries sustained in the workplace, and ensure safe workplace conditions. Progressives argued that favorable working conditions would create happy and secure employees who were the backbone of the nation's economy. Wisconsin legislator Thomas Mahon drew upon the conservation movement and asked: "If conservation of forests and water-powers and minerals, and conservation of property is good, why not tackle the question of the conservation of human life."[32] In the aftermath of the First World War, sociologist Carol

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30. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life (1899)" in *Letters and Speeches,* ed. Louis Auchincloss (New York: Library of America, 2004), 755-66; Bruce Fehn, "Theodore Roosevelt and American Masculinity," *OAH Magazine of History* 19, no. 2 (March 2005): 52-55; Arnaldo Testi, "The Gender of Reform Politics: Theodore Roosevelt and the Culture of Masculinity," *Journal of American History* 81, no. 4 (March 1995): 1520.

31. See Peter Schmitt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

32. Thomas Mahon, "Conserving Human Life," *La Follette's Weekly Magazine* 2 (June 1911): 7.

Aronovici suggested that organized leisure was essential to American democracy.[33] The desire for improving America's work force, protecting natural resources, and ensuring democracy would converge during the New Deal with work relief programs, notably the Civilian Conservation Corps.

At the turn of the twentieth century, middle-class Americans were busy constructing a new notion of the "modern childhood," which centered on a "carefree" child accompanied by his or her nonworking mother.[34] A group of professional men and women interested in child development were concerned about how children were spending their free time in addition to their school curriculum because they felt education in the classroom was not sufficient for character development. Rather, this group focused their efforts on organized play, parks, and summer camps aimed at mental, physical, and spiritual development and rejuvenation. These progressives underscored recreation as a measure of social reform critical to the conservation of human resources. They created a number of new spaces at the turn of the twentieth century that specifically catered to children's needs, such as playgrounds, summer camps, and children's rooms in libraries.[35] The Playground Association of America (later renamed the Playground and Recreation Association of America) was established in 1906, and its founders named President Roosevelt as honorary president and Jacob Riis, famous photographer of the urban poor,

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33. Carol Aronovici, "Organized Leisure as a Factor in Conservation," *American Journal of Sociology* 24, no. 4 (January 1919): 373-88.

34. Abigail Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890-1960* (Duluth: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xxi.

35. Ibid., xx-xxi.

as honorary vice president.[36] Chapters formed across the country to promote quality recreational programming in local communities. Private summer camps had begun to spring up in the countryside in the 1890s. Over the next several decades, benevolent and religious organizations started their own camps. Camp design changed from a loose collection of tents and buildings to purposefully designed landscapes that integrated nature and reflected the values of the organization. New Deal park planners took their cue from these Progressive efforts and incorporated notions of the modern childhood into park design.[37]

Land economists, a new professional group that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century, also puzzled over humans' relationship to the land. Political economist Richard T. Ely exerted an enormous influence with this group through the so-called Wisconsin School at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he was a university professor. His students pioneered the field of agricultural economics and subfields of land utilization and rural sociology. Many, including Henry C. Taylor, C. J. Galpin, and L. C. Gray, would go on to be influential federal employees in the United States Department of Agriculture. The theories they developed and tested in Wisconsin greatly shaped New Deal agricultural policy, including policy measures that aimed to uplift rural populations. They believed that land-use planning, which involved classifying land based upon production, could solve issues of natural resource conservation and raise the standard of living among rural populations. They categorized land as "submarginal" where

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36. "Playground Associations," *The Journal of Education* 66, no. 2 (July 4, 1907): 35.

37. Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness*, 1-39.

production was carried at an economic loss. They believed moving farm families from land determined to be submarginal to better farmland would increase their quality of life. Submarginal land then could be retired for park or forest use. This became an important policy-implementation strategy in the cutover areas of Appalachia during the New Deal.[38]

Historic Preservation Movement

Historic preservation as a movement emerged in the mid- to late-nineteenth century when elite women sought to create national shrines out of the historic homes of important American figures. Historian Patricia West noted that the historic house museum movement was politically motivated. The first nation-wide preservation organization, the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association (MVLA), under the leadership of Ann Pamela Cunningham, managed to purchase, restore, and preserve George Washington's home along the Potomac River in Virginia. West argued that the MVLA's efforts were meant to reconcile sectional conflict before and after the Civil War.[39] Their success inspired other women's groups to preserve historic homes across the country. West also cited the Concord Women's Club bid to preserve Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House in Concord, Massachusetts, as a museum where they defined and promoted

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38. Rupert Vance, "What of Submarginal Areas in Regional Planning?," *Social Forces* 12, no. 3 (March 1933): 315-16; Jess Gilbert and Ellen Baker, "Wisconsin Economists and New Deal Agricultural Policy: The Legacy of Progressive Professors," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 80, no. 4 (July 1997): 280-312; Robert J. Gough, "Richard T. Ely and the Development of the Wisconsin Cutover," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 75, no. 1 (1991): 2-38; C. J. Galpin, "The Human Side of Farm Economy," *Journal of Farm Economics* 2, no. 2 (April 1920): 101-9.

39. Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1999), 1-37.

citizenship and Americanism among the influx of immigrants coming to the United States. Like other house museum organizations at the time, Orchard House preservationists were shifting from the treatment of historic houses as shrines to installing period room exhibits, which enabled female preservationists to assert their role as curators of domestic ideals. West also found that the Orchard House was a focal point between suffragists and anti-suffragists to define women's roles in the twentieth-century.[40]

Men soon edged women out as historic preservation professionalized, a process already in motion as the Concord Women's Club organized the museum at Orchard House. Lindgren described this shift from personalism, in which women volunteers imparted their own views of family and home values in creating historic house museums, to professionalism dominated by men with an outlook towards incorporating architectural aesthetics, business strategies, and scientific inquiry and methods.[41] Historian Charles Hosmer illustrated one the first professional preservation projects in the United States when John D. Rockefeller hired a large professional staff of architects, historians, archaeologists, draftsmen, landscape architects, engineers, and curators in 1928 to restore the colonial capital of Williamsburg to what they believed was its eighteenth-century appearance. In 1929, using a different preservation strategy, Henry Ford created Greenfield Village, a collection of old American homes and other buildings that he had

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40. Ibid., 39-91.

41. Lindgren, "'A New Departure in Historic, Patriotic Work,'" 42.

moved from their original locations to reside next to one another for the purpose of showing Americans a past that was quickly disappearing.[42]

Local grassroots organizations dominated the preservation movement until about 1930, when the NPS became interested in preserving and interpreting historic sites. Previously the federal government had been only haphazardly involved in historic preservation. The War Department managed battlefield parks but cared little for interpreting them to visitors. The Antiquities Act of 1906 allowed the president to establish historic places as national monuments, but these monuments were often ignored because they came with no congressional appropriations, received very little protection, and were managed by various agencies.[43] Horace Albright sought to acquire the War Department's battlefields and other historic sites when he became NPS Director in 1929. The agency managed a handful of historic monuments and Mesa Verde National Park at that time. Under Albright's direction, the NPS established two new historical parks in the eastern United States—George Washington National Birthplace and Colonial National Monument—in an attempt to persuade Congress to transfer historic sites to the NPS from other agencies. The NPS gained valuable experience through these two projects, including building political support, negotiating land acquisition, financing preservation

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42. Charles Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949,* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), 1:31-32, 75-97.

43. Hal Rothman, *Preserving Different Pasts: The American National Monuments* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), xiii-xvi.

efforts, finding subject matter experts, and reconstructing buildings based on historical evidence. [44]

The National Park Movement

The country's first national park, Yellowstone, was established in 1872—forty-four years before Congress created the National Park Service in 1916. Congress saw a need for a federal agency to manage a haphazard collection of national parks and monuments collected over the previous several decades and scattered across the landscape, most of them located west of the Mississippi River.

The mythical "West" captured the American imagination in the nineteenth century, attracting eastern tourists who brought with them these notions, followed by an industry devoted to meeting their expectations.[45] In the aftermath of the Civil War, the West offered the nation a chance to renew itself in the wake of tragedy. Historian Alfred Runte asserted that the spectacular natural features in the West became important American monuments to rival man-made ones in Europe, a product of "cultural insecurity."[46] Historian Hal Rothman wrote that "When Americans paid homage to their national and nationalistic roots, they did not look to Independence Hall; they went West,

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44. Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age,* 1:478-509.

45. Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), v-viii; Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience,* 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 8-9; Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998), 10-28.

46. Runte, *National Parks,* 32.

like their forefathers, to find self and to create society, to build anew from the detritus of the old."[47] The national park movement emerged to highlight and protect some of the most iconic places in the American West. Contributing to Americans' notions about the West were artists like George Catlin, who in the 1830s wanted to chronicle native peoples before they disappeared. John Muir, an influential naturalist and writer, conjured images of the Sierra Mountains and Yosemite Valley with his essays and books. Both Catlin and Muir advocated protecting some of these iconic western places.

The national park movement took root in 1864 when Congress set aside a portion of the Yosemite Valley and a stand of giant sequoia trees for protection against tourists, concessioners, and souvenir stands that threatened the natural beauty. They were concerned that the unsullied landscape would suffer the same fate as eastern attractions like Niagara Falls, which was overwhelmed with gaudy tourist destinations. Congress turned the land over to the State of California, which managed it as a state park. After Congress re-established it as Yosemite National Park in 1890, John Muir and the Sierra Club lobbied to have the park transferred back to federal control, which finally occurred in 1906. Notable landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted wrote a report for to the Governor of California outlining the philosophy that should govern Yosemite's preservation, including the issues of concessions, development, scientific protection, and interpretation.[48]

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47. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains,* 15.

48. Lary Dilsaver, ed., *American's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Lanham, MD: Boston & Littlefield Publishers, 1994): 7-9; Mark Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 115-16.

The same corporations that connected American communities across the country also connected them to the country's most spectacular scenery. Railroad companies sought to capitalize on American curiosity about the American West and began packaging special rail lines and excursion experiences to popular western attractions that soon became America's first national parks. Tourist advocates and western boosters helped railroad companies by embracing the slogan "See America First" at the beginning of the twentieth century to encourage domestic tourism. The Northern Pacific Railroad was instrumental in persuading Congress to set aside 3,400-square miles for Yellowstone National Park in 1872, America's first national park. The Northern Pacific built its own rail line to the park and erected grand hotels for its guests' final destination. Other railroad companies followed suit. The Great Northern Railway promoted the creation of Glacier National Park in 1910. The Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railway successfully lobbied Congress for Grand Canyon National Park in 1919. These excursion trains catered to America's upper class and defined the national park experience for almost fifty years.[49]

Railroad service to national parks declined after World War I as middle-class Americans embraced the automobile and democratized the national park experience. Between 1914 and 1917, automobile production in the United States jumped from just over five hundred thousand to almost two million.[50] Historian Marguerite Shaffer found that the upper class began tiring of the rigid schedule and formality of train travel and

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49. Marguerite Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 40-92.

50. Ibid., 137.

began to embrace the freedom and intimacy of motoring. Automobiles also became increasingly cheaper and more affordable to middle-class families. Autocamping became a popular pastime as people took multi-day trips. Tourist facilities sprang up to meet motorists' needs, first rudimentary auto camps, then camping cottages, and finally modern motels and hotels.[51]

However, in order to make long distance trips, motorists needed a better road system. A diverse group of people from across the country came together to support national road improvement in an effort known as the Good Roads Movement. They worked to improve existing roads and extend the network to form a transcontinental system. They discussed federal aid and whether states or local municipalities should be responsible for construction. Local and state groups formed specifically devoted to improving roads. Organizations already established, such as the Grange or local chambers of commerce, incorporated road improvement into their broader agendas aimed at bettering the welfare of their members. The diversity of the movement meant that it was never entirely unified as participants disagreed over the location of major routes and which group should have the tax burden Embracing the nationalistic rhetoric of the Good Roads advocates, Congress passed the Federal Highway Act in 1921, which provided federal funding to improve roads and establish a connected system of interstate

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51. Ibid., 130-68; Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 3-5.

highways.[52] Similarly, the NPS utilized the rhetoric of Good Roads advocates, arguing that visitors could not experience the parks unless they had appropriate access to them.

The early-twentieth-century impulse to travel to western destinations was part of Americans' common desire to find an experience that Shaffer described as an "intense personal experience, an escape to liminal space where the self could be temporarily reimagined, an opportunity for physical, mental, and spiritual reinvigoration, a glimpse of the 'good life'—all the promises of consumer culture."[53] The tourism phenomenon was in itself a product and extension of the developing nation-state. Tourists took advantage of the new transcontinental railroads and a communication network that now connected the country. These technological advancements offered more leisure time and surplus cash to a growing middle class, who could conveniently visit sites of national importance. National tourism became a form of "geographic consumption," and visiting national parks became important to developing citizens and consumers. Nowhere else in the world could one see a place like the Grand Canyon. Tourist advocates and western boosters embraced the "See America First" campaign during this period, beckoning Americans to see the nation's wonders before traveling abroad.[54]

The United States needed an agency to answer and cultivate this growing impulse to visit western sites. Eighteen years separated the designation of the first national park,

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52. Howard Preston, *Dirt Roads to Dixie: Accessibility and Modernization in the South, 1885-1935* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 9-38; Shaffer, *See America First,* 137-40, 154, 160-61.

53. Shaffer, *See America First,* 3.

54. Ibid., 3-4, 30.

Yellowstone, and the second, Yosemite, in 1890.[55] Until 1916, the federal government found different measures to protect individual areas, including the Antiquities Act of 1906. Many of these efforts focused on individual cases of preservation influenced by congressional politics and public concern with no real thought of a unified system of parks. Wealthy Chicago businessman and avoid outdoorsman Stephen T. Mather saw a need for systematic management of national parks. His former classmate from University of California, Berkeley, Secretary of Interior Franklin Lane, invited Mather in 1915 to solve this issue as his assistant on park matters. Mather hired Horace Albright, a twenty-five-year-old Berkeley graduate, to become his top aide.[56] Together, Mather and Albright led a lobbying effort to create a new agency by carefully avoiding conflict with the U.S. Forest Service, which saw a system of national parks as competition for its national forest system. Mather and Albright distinguished between the utilitarian necessity of national forests and the recreational potential of preserving areas as national parks. On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the law known as the Organic Act creating the National Park Service. Secretary Lane appointed Mather as the agency's first director, and Albright served as assistant director until he became superintendent of Yellowstone in 1919.

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55. Congress actually established Mackinac Island in Michigan as a national park in 1875. However, the island was returned to the state twenty years later when Fort Mackinac was decommissioned and became Michigan's first state park; Barry Mackintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, 2005), 13-14, http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/shaping/part2.pdf (accessed November 13, 2014).

56. Ibid., 20-21.

The Organic Act gave Mather and all subsequent directors a contradictory set of mandates: "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."[57] Mather's and Albright's concerns were developing parks so that Americans might visit them, which meant constructing modern roads and facilities. However, they sought to do it in a manner that did not detract from the scenery. The U.S. Army administered Yellowstone and Yosemite before the establishment of the NPS and gave little consideration as to how tourist facilities fit with the natural surroundings. Mather and Albright had to unify the management of these once-independent entities and provide a vision for future park development.

Secretary Lane issued a statement in 1918 dictating that the new NPS should develop a policy that ensured landscape preservation and harmonization in all park development and use. Albright actually wrote the statement and incorporated his and Mather's ideas. That year Mather hired a "landscape engineer" marking the beginning of the landscape architects' ascendance to dominating park planning and design. The Landscape Division was created in 1927, an important step in consolidating the role and importance of aligning park stewardship and design.[58]

Over the next fifteen to twenty years, the NPS labored to create a cohesive landscape design that would be both appropriate to the landscape and attract visitors. The

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57. *National Park Service Act (Organic Act),* 64th Cong., 1st sess. (August 25, 1916), 39 Stat. 535, 16 U.S.C. 1.

58. McClelland, *Building the National Parks,* 4; Dilsaver, *America's National Park System,* 10.

agency had inherited a number of park buildings designed and constructed by the military or the tourist industry, and these did not blend with the landscape very well. NPS landscape architects drew upon the traditions of nineteenth-century English gardening, made popular in the United States by Andrew Jackson Downing, and the urban parks and parkways designed by Frederick Law Olmsted for the principles behind the design of rustic style buildings in natural surroundings (also known as "park rustic" or "parkitecture").[59]

The principles behind rustic park architecture include informality and naturalism. They emphasized the use of natural, native materials, indigenous craftsmanship, simple form and function, and appropriate scale and location in the natural setting to highlight the surroundings. Landscape architects also advocated for the reintroduction of native plants after construction to blur the lines between the natural and built environments. The desire to keep out exotics was codified by an NPS mandate in 1930 that prohibited their introduction. NPS landscape architects also designed new types of structures to fill park operation and visitor needs, such as entrance stations, administration buildings, comfort stations, community buildings, lookout towers, and museums.[60]

Roads also were a primary concern for Mather and early park administrators. Most national parks were located in isolated areas, and Mather, taking his cue from the Good Roads Movement, knew that adequate, modern roads were critical for visitation. Mather believed that the success of the agency in preserving the areas under its mandate

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59. McClelland, *Building the National Parks,* 3.

60. Ibid., 5.

rested on public support. NPS historian David Louter argued that parks were not refuges from automobiles, roads, and progress, but known because of them, although attitudes towards roads in parks changed later in the twentieth century.[61] NPS landscape architects and road engineers labored to place roads in locations that would allow for minimum intrusion but maximum scenic impact by carefully situating them in the terrain. In 1926, the NPS made an agreement to work with the Bureau of Public Roads in order to receive the latest in engineering and road design standards. It also began a relationship with landscape architects to ensure that the roads harmonized with the natural settings and ensured landscape preservation. NPS landscape architects and engineers from the Bureau of Public Roads developed specifications for guardrails, culverts, bridges, and overlooks that helped blend park roadways inconspicuously with the natural surroundings. Early park planners very much believed that roads and nature were not alien to one another. In fact, nature could be known through automobiles.[62]

The growing demand for park development led to the establishment of the Western Field Office where, between 1928 and 1933, Chief Landscape Architect Thomas Vint created a central design office. He filled his office with landscape architects and architects. Their clients were the superintendents of national parks. Vint institutionalized the park "master plan" as a way to ward off ad hoc development. The park master plan was both a process and product. First, park specialists gathered data for a base map highlighting natural and historic features. Then, landscape architects and architects

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61. David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 4.

62. Ibid; McClelland, *Building the National Parks,* 4.

planned visitor facilities and circulation routes taking into account all the natural and historic features. They developed the rule that a park should have a master plan before any development could occur.[63]

Despite being known as a conservation agency, the NPS had little understanding or interest in ecological integrity during its early administration. NPS historian Richard West Sellars indicated that Mather and Albright were more concerned with preservation through development and employed façadism, or preserving the aesthetics of nature, rather than maintaining ecological integrity. This prompted park administrators to do things like eliminate unpopular predators and introduce more popular species, like trout for fishing. Also, not all natural conservationists agreed with the NPS's belief that automobiles and roads could co-exist with natural surroundings. According to historian Paul Sutter, early founders of the wilderness movement could not agree on what exactly defined "wilderness," but agreed that it should mean an absence of cars and roads.[64]

By the close of the 1920s, the NPS was redirecting its focus from western scenic parks to establishing eastern historic sites to diversify the system and reach much of the nation's population. Through the Organic Act, the NPS was given responsibility for "historic conservation" when Congress established the agency and the Department of Interior transferred Mesa Verde National Park and seven national monuments of historical and archaeological interest to the agency's care. Between 1916 and 1928, the

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63. McClelland, *Building the National Parks,* 301-6.

64. Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks,* 69-82; Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (2002; reprint, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 3-18.

number of historical and archaeological areas in the national park system rose to sixteen. Then NPS Director Albright brought the agency firmly into the business of historic preservation in 1930 with the establishment of George Washington Birthplace National Monument and Colonial National Park. [65]

The NPS's interests in preserving eastern historic sites, preserving natural scenery, building modern roads, designing rustic park architecture, and incorporating natural principles in park landscape design not only informed park development during the New Deal, but laid the groundwork for its interest in Cumberland Gap. There, park planners had the opportunity to develop a historic site commemorating a natural feature that was also the location of a historic transportation route.

Progressive Era Park and Reform Efforts in Cumberland Gap

Local boosters and reformers in Cumberland Gap caught some of the reform fervor sweeping other parts of the country, raising their interest in creating parks, developing good roads, and educating mountain youth. In the 1920s they joined a regional movement to create a national park in the southern Appalachian Mountains while also spearheading separate but related park development initiatives to create a municipal park and a state park system. Park development efforts, however, were just one aspect of reform efforts on the Cumberland Gap landscape that varied from the

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65. Harlan Unrau and G. Frank Williss, "'To Preserve the Nation's Past': The Growth of Historic Preservation in the National Park Service During the 1930s," *Public Historian* 9, no. 2 (April 1987): 19-20. For an in-depth study of George Washington National Birthplace and its intersections with the history of commemoration and public memory, see Seth Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Slept: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008).

construction of modern roads to funding educational institutions for disadvantaged mountain youth.

The movement to create national parks in the West was followed shortly by similar efforts to create a natural park in the eastern United States, particularly in the southern Appalachian Mountains. There were definite obstacles in creating a large national park in this area, which had been long settled and was being developed by timber and coal companies. Land acquisition would be incredibly difficult because of the amount of land in private ownership. Nevertheless, travelers and health seekers from the Northeast came to the region to write about the scenery, its salubrious effects, and the interesting people that made the mountains their home. A group of citizens in Asheville, North Carolina, became concerned over the environmental degradation wrought by the timber and coal companies in the region and organized the Appalachian National Park Association in 1899. The organization was renamed the Appalachian National Forest Reserve Association to match efforts to create a forest reserve system in the region, but it disbanded in 1903. The American Forestry Association picked up the Appalachian Forest Reserve Association's work to establish an eastern forest reserve, eventually leading to the passage of the Weeks Act of 1911. This law provided for the protection of watersheds and opened the door for the U.S. Forest Service to establish forest reserves in the region. The USFS spent the next five years purchasing land for Pisgah, Nantahala, Chattahoochee, Cherokee, and Jefferson National Forests.[66]

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66. Margaret Brown, *The Wild East: A Biography of the Great Smoky Mountains* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 87-92; Susan Yarnell, *The Southern Appalachians: A History of Landscape* (Asheville, NC: Southern Research Station, U.S.

The Appalachian national park idea again gained traction when industrialists, businessmen, and locals saw the economic potential of the tourist trade and began building hotels and offering services. In the early 1920s, NPS Director Stephen Mather sold the economic value of a park in this region to major philanthropists to gain support. Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work appointed a Southern Appalachian National Park Commission in 1924 to look at approximately twenty sites for possible inclusion in the national park system. Upon the commission's recommendations, Congress passed legislation in 1926 creating Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee and North Carolina, Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, and Mammoth Cave in Kentucky.[67]

Among the sites considered by the commission was Cumberland Gap at the intersection of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. The idea for a national park at this location was first discussed at the 1922 Appalachian Logging Congress in Cincinnati, Ohio. The congress was an opportunity for hardwood manufacturers in the southern Appalachian region from West Virginia to Georgia to meet with machinists and dealers that sold to sawmill companies. Despite the commercial purposes of the conference, attendees at the Cincinnati meeting did discuss forest conservation and park advocacy. Large corporations supported the creation of government-owned forest reserves because the program lessened their tax burden on cutover lands and helped ensure future timber

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Forest Service, 1998), 24-28, http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/gtr/gtr_srs018.pdf (accessed November 12, 2014).

67. Brown, *The Wild East,* 87-92; Yarnell, *The Southern Appalachians,* 24-28.

supplies.[68] Chief Forester William B. Greeley gave remarks on the "Practical Ways and Means of Forest Conservation." He emphasized forest conservation as the most economical measure in ensuring future production and expressed his desire that cutover lands should not "pass into idleness."[69] In a session with the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, delegates discussed the possibility of a "national playground" in the vicinity of Fern Lake in the Cumberland Mountains or somewhere in the Blue Ridge.[70]

Middlesboro businessmen seized upon the national park idea immediately, reviving the vision of the American Association and Middlesboro founder Alexander Arthur to create a recreational destination in the Cumberland Gap region. One of Arthur's many enterprises was the Cumberland Gap Park Company, formed in 1891. The company commissioned the lavish Four Seasons Hotel and Sanitarium in Harrogate, Tennessee (which Arthur also founded), at a cost of $1.5 million, but the financial crisis of 1893 bankrupted the entire enterprise. The hotel was wrecked and sold for salvage in 1895, and the sanitarium burned in 1909.[71]

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68. Andrew Gennett, *Sound Wormy: Memoir of Andrew Gennett, Lumberman,* ed. Nicole Hayler (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007): 126, 130-31;Yarnell, *The Southern Appalachians,* 24.

69. "Appalachian Loggers Hold Congress," *Hardwood Record* 53*,* no.3 (May 22, 1922): 19-20.

70. "Propose Mountain National Park."

71. Cumberland Gap Park Company, *Cumberland Gap Park* (New York: De Vine Press, 1891), 8-11, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009596142 (accessed August 26, 2014); "Rites Planned Friday for Mrs. A. A. Arthur," *Middlesboro Daily News,* April 28, 1924, newspaper clipping found in Cumberland Gap NHP Archive, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 2. Hereafter, Cumberland Gap NHP Archive will be referred to as Park Archive.

The Cumberland Gap Park Company may have failed, but the ruined Four Seasons property became the home for a new educational enterprise founded to uplift the local population. University founders built Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) on the ruins of the old Four Seasons Hotel and Sanitarium to serve young whites of the Appalachian region. Major General Oliver Otis Howard founded the college in 1897 as a living memorial to the sixteenth president, who, in their last meeting together in 1863, had told Howard that something must be done for the people in the Appalachian Mountains that had remained loyal to the Union. Over thirty years later, Howard gathered financial support from outside the region for a college at Cumberland Gap. He and the other university founders played upon tropes prevalent in nineteenth century literature and reinforced by missionaries working in the region to argue that LMU was needed to uplift the local population, who were "pure American stock" that modernization had passed by.[72] The university targeted disadvantaged mountain youth and established a work-study program so that students could work their way through their education. Ironically, the living memorial to the Great Emancipator excluded African Americans, although multiracial education was legal in Tennessee at the time of the university's founding. University founders did not intend to discourage African American educational aspirations (Howard was the founder of Howard University after all), but they repeatedly assured donors that this school was for the descendants of loyal mountain whites, not a black school.[73] Despite these shortcomings, LMU served as a chief supporter for the

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72. Earl Hess, *Lincoln Memorial University and the Shaping of Appalachia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011), xiii.

73. Ibid., xiii-xvi.

national park project in the 1920s and 1930s, even selling 2,000 acres for the park, and remains an important partner today.[74]

Howard's LMU was not the first drive to uplift the local population during this period. Reverend A. A. Myers and his wife, Ellen, both Protestant missionaries, came to Cumberland Gap and established an elementary school in 1890 called the Harrow School. In fact, it was Myers who convinced Howard to establish LMU in the area.[75] The Myerses were part of a larger evangelical movement in the late-nineteenth century to "redeem mountain culture."[76] They thought that, since Appalachians had been bypassed by modernization, missionaries like themselves should save them from eternal damnation by introducing them to the Christian faith and integrate them into mainstream America. They brought their own assumptions of Appalachian life and what locals needed to do to improve their lives. LMU historian Earl Hess wrote, "They rarely took into account the views of the natives, unless those views coincided with their own, and they brought a zealotry to their work that brooked no opposition."[77] The missionary tradition in the Cumberland Gap area is important context for subsequent government reform initiatives because the missionaries' attitudes and activities along with exploitive private development in the area provided the "intellectual and political progeny" for state and

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74. The association between LMU and Cumberland Gap NHP is long. The following is an early newspaper article showing university support for the project. "L.M.U. Board Will Donate 2000 Acres for National Park," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 12, 1923, p.1

75. Ibid., 1.

76. Ibid., 13.

77. Ibid.

federal development throughout the twentieth century, which among many things, included development of national parks.[78]

Figure 3. Workers Constructing Object Lesson Road. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

Extending beyond education opportunities, reformers and government officials believed developing good roads in Appalachia would improve the isolation of the mountaineers in the Cumberland Gap area. In 1907, the Bureau of Public Roads selected Cumberland Gap for a macadamized road, called an object-lesson road, to demonstrate

78. David Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer: People, Power, and Planning in Appalachia,* rev. ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), xv.

how modern roads might be built in rural areas. Historian Christopher Wells indicates that the Object Lesson Road program was important in stimulating rural interest in the Good Roads Movement that pamphlets and publications could not. The Bureau of Public Roads completed the Object Lesson Road in fifteen months. The road was 12,300 feet long and 14 feet wide and traversed the saddle of the gap. It reduced the grade from 15 to 10%. The road cost $7,050 per mile and was funded by all three counties.[79]

Wells suggests that projects like Cumberland Gap's Object Lesson Road were important in bringing rural residents into the Good Roads Movement by shifting their thinking of roads as "theirs" to something belonging to the public realm, bought and paid for by the treasury, to be used for both local and nonlocal purposes.[80] In Appalachia, this meant shifting the burden of road building and maintenance away from rural volunteers to public funding and to tying local communities into regional and national networks to make the region more accessible and modern. Less than a decade after its construction, the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia built a road connecting the Object Lesson Road to the Dixie Highway, a route that stretched from Michigan to Florida, which brought tourists to see roadside attractions like Cumberland Gap and "Cudjo's Cave." In 1926, the American Association of State Highway Officials included the route through Cumberland Gap in its map of the U.S. Highway System and designated it as

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79. "A Macademized Road," *The Middlesborough (KY) News,* March 9, 1907, newspaper clipping, Park Archive, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 16; Edward Tinney, "A History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park" (unpublished report for Cumberland Gap NHP and the National Park Service, 1965), 24-25; Christopher Wells, "The Changing Nature of Country Roads: Farmers, Reformers, and the Shifting Use of Rural Space, 1880-1905," *Agricultural History* 80, no. 2 (2006): 154.

80. Wells, "The Changing Nature of Country Roads," 157.

U.S. Route 25 E, one of the few routes in eastern Kentucky at the time.[81] Up to this point, highways were named; the shift to numbering was an important element of creating a national system. Road building in this section of Appalachia continued to be an important economic driver and method for modernizing the region throughout the twentieth century.[82]

The novelty of visiting wayside attractions along the Dixie Highway combined with the historic preservation impulse among women's groups at the time likely prompted the North Carolina chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) to mark the "Boone Trail" through North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia beginning in 1911, culminating in the dedication of a pyramidal marker at the saddle of Cumberland Gap in 1915. Their work tied with other women's efforts in historic preservation by focusing on the accomplishments of Daniel Boone, a great man in American history who embodied patriotic values that Americans should imitate. DAR members, local residents, and Boone descendants picnicked at the gap on the day of the marker's dedication. A reporter noted the marker's proximity to LMU, "where the

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81. *Official Automobile Blue Book 1920* (New York: Automobile Blue Book Publishing, 1920), 3:849; Preston, *Dirt Roads to Dixie,* 128; U.S. Geological Survey, "United States System of Highways: Adopted for Uniform Marking by the American Association of State Highway Officials, November 11, 1926," map, 1926, University of North Texas at Arlington Library, http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth298433/ (accessed January 7, 2015); Rickie Longfellow, "Back in Time: Cumberland Gap," Federal Highways Administration, 2013, http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/back0204.cfm (accessed January 7, 2015); Preston, *Dirt Roads to Dixie,* 130.

82. Federal investment in Appalachian roads dominated conversations about modernizing the region throughout the twentieth century. See Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 14, 48-50, 181-87, 201-8, 231-32.

descendants of Daniel Boone can receive the best education. . . who were rich in ancestry, but poor in this world's good."[83] This comment indicates that the women in the DAR were not merely celebrating Daniel Boone's accomplishments, but creating a signpost to guide poor Appalachians whom they saw as Boone's contemporary ancestors, sharing the attitudes of color writers, missionaries, and industrialists. Perhaps they intended the placement of the marker in the saddle of the gap, the spot where Boone overcame a great natural obstacle, to become a symbol for poor Appalachians at nearby LMU and encourage them to overcome the obstacle of illiteracy and isolation.

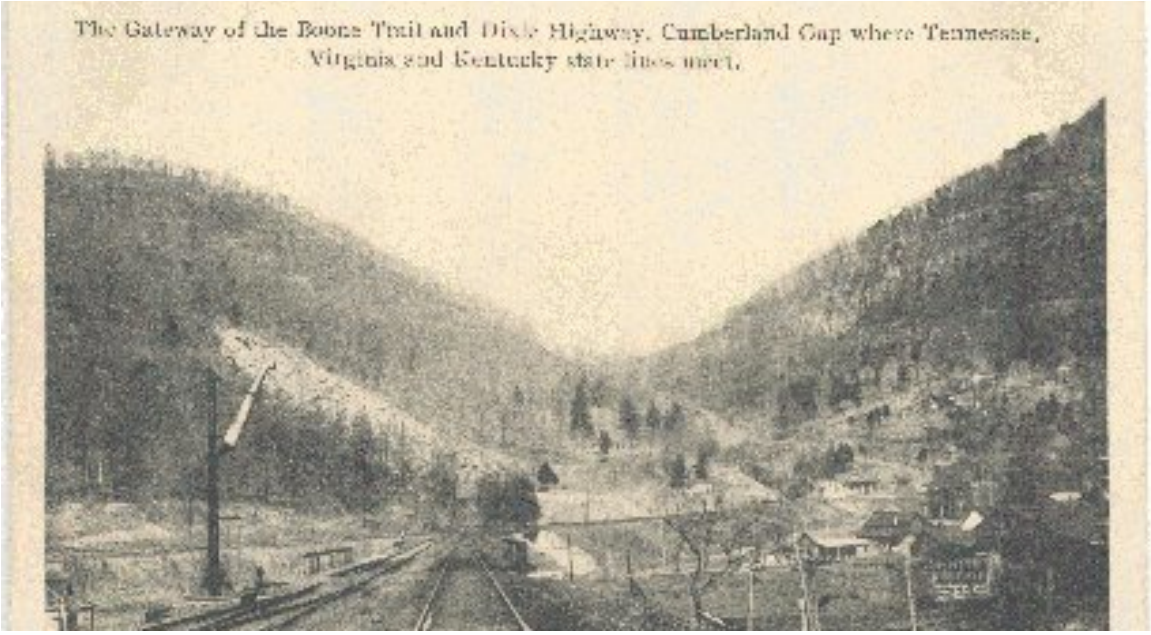

Figure 4. "The Gateway of the Boone Trail and Dixie Highway, Cumberland Gap where Tennessee, Virginia and Kentucky State Lines Meet." Postcard Postmarked 1917. Source: Postcard Collection, University of Kentucky Special Collections Research Center, Kentucky Digital Library.

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83. "Boone's Trail Now Well Marked: D.A.R. Unveil Monument at Cumberland Gap to Commemorate Honor to Famous Pioneer," *New York Times,* August 1, 1915, p.15.

Figure 5. Daniel Boone Marker, First Erected by DAR in 1915. Photographed by author in 2014.

The Middlesboro Kiwanis Club, inspired by the national park idea from the Appalachian Logging Congress, requested Kentucky Congressman John Robsion of Barbourville to take up the effort. Robsion agreed and began drafting a bill in June 1922. The Kiwanis organization, established in Detroit in 1915 as a group for networking among businessmen, later grew to include local community service efforts. It appears that the Middlesboro Kiwanis Club was interested in the national park project more for its economic potential than service to the community. Business in Middlesboro declined in 1922, when local coal companies decreased production. The next year, the Kiwanis Club deferred voting on a community service plan, citing their activities supporting the national park effort as a reason to not become involved in community service. They

indicated that they held several drives that year and did not think they could support community service activities financially.[84]

The location, Cumberland Gap, was evident to local supporters, although it was unclear what the focal point or purpose of the park would be. The delegates at the Appalachian Logging Congress referenced Fern Lake, an artificial body of water that held Middlebsoro's water supply. Another newspaper article called the project "Pinnacle Park," referencing the tall rock cliff overlooking the saddle of the gap. Others, courting the support of nearby Lincoln Memorial University, which owned land near the Pinnacle and Cudjo's Cave, said the park would be a living memorial to Abraham Lincoln. NPS historian Martha Wiley aptly pointed out that the country was experiencing a Lincoln Revival in the 1920s and that the Lincoln Memorial was constructed just the year before.[85]

Robsion introduced the bill for "Lincoln National Park" on February 12, 1923—Lincoln's birthday. The bill did not pass, and Robsion said he really only introduced it to raise the issue. He likely also wanted to thwart a competing bill for a High Knob Park in nearby Wise County, Virginia. The congressman and the Kiwanians continued to work on the park idea, and LMU trustees promised to donate 2,000 acres for the project.

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84. William Luckett, "Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (December 1964): 317; "Aids National Park Move," *Cincinnati Enquirer,* June 26, 1922, p.6; "Optimistic on Future Business in Middlesboro," *Middlesboro Daily News,* July 3, 1923, p.1; "No Action on Community Service," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 2, 1923, p.1.

85. "Robsion Behind Pinnacle Park," *Barbourville (KY) Mountain Advocate,* October 13, 1922, p.1; "The Proposed Lincoln National Park," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 9, 1923, p.2; Martha Wiley, "Hallowed By History: The Creation of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park" (paper presented at Ohio Valley History Conference, Johnson City, TN, October 12, 2012), 2.

Secretary of the Interior Work visited the area in May and took a very rough car ride up to the Pinnacle. At a dinner at the Cumberland Hotel in Middlesboro with one hundred Kiwanians, Work pledged his support to the park project and praised the "pure Americanism" of the region.[86] Robsion introduced another bill in December with few changes, which also did not pass.

The same month that Robsion's second attempt at Lincoln National Park failed, NPS Director Stephen Mather recommended in the agency's seventh annual report that a national park be located in the eastern United States. The year before, Secretary Work had created the Southern Appalachian Park Commission. Early in November 1924, Major Welch of the commission visited Cumberland Gap. He reported that the large number of mineral deposits in the area would make land acquisition impractical. The commission, which was touring potential sites for a park in the Appalachian region, soon recommended the establishment of Great Smoky Mountains, Shenandoah, and Mammoth Cave national parks. With a good measure of jealousy, Middlesboro park advocates accepted the news in 1926 that Congress had authorized those parks, but some felt their establishment meant hope for a national park at Cumberland Gap in the future.[87]

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86. "Kiwanis Club Enthusiastic in National Park Proposition," *Middlesboro Daily News*, February 15, 1923, p.4; "Loss of High Knob Park Blamed on Robinson," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 28, 1923, p.5; "L.M.U. Board Will Donate 2000 Acres for National Park," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 12, 1923, p.1; "Secretary Works Gets Thrills Driving Over Cumberland Gap," *Middlesboro Daily News*, May 15, 1923, p.6; "Dr. Work Promises Help in Getting National Park at Dinner Saturday Night," *Middlesboro Daily News,* May 5, 1923, p.1.

87. "Recommends Park in Eastern United States," *Middlesboro Daily News*, December 27, 1923, p.1; U.S. Department of Interior, United States Southern Appalachian National Park Commission, *Final Report of the Southern Appalachian National Park Commission to the Secretary of the Interior, June 30, 1931,* Henry Wilson

Not waiting on a national park, Middlesboro residents interested in providing immediate recreational opportunities for the town's youth met at the home of Mrs. D. J. Hinks on July 14, 1924 and formed a local chapter of the Playground Association of America. The group first leased and then purchased property from the American Association along Yellow Creek for a municipal park, named Bartlett-Rhodes Park. J. H. Bartlett, the American Association's president, donated money for the cause and arranged "reasonable leases." His successor, C. W. Rhodes, continued the company's cooperation with the group. The group dammed the creek for a swimming area to serve the local community.[88]

Also while Kiwanians in Middlesboro were focused on creating a national park at Cumberland Gap, the state park movement was gaining traction—offering a different opportunity for park development in the Cumberland Gap area. In 1921, the first meeting of what would become the National Conference on State Parks (NCSP) was held in Des Moines, Iowa, attended by delegates from twenty-five states. The NCSP was a platform for debating ideological as well as administrative issues of park development and brought together organizations such as the American Institute of Park Executives, the American Association of Landscape Architects, and the Playground and Recreation Association of America. NPS Director Stephen Mather supported the new organization and the creation of state park systems to alleviate pressure on the national park system. He saw state parks

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Temple (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931), 5, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001506545 (accessed November 12, 2014); "The Parks," *Middlesboro Daily News*, May 24, 1926, p.1.

88. "Tributes Paid City Officials for City's Park," *Middlesboro Daily News*, June 3, 1937, p.6.

as being more recreational in nature and more suitable to local interests. However, members of the NCSP did not appreciate the characterization of state parks as "second tier," nor did they wish to have the NPS impose its standards upon them.[89]

In October 1926, the state of Kentucky selected Pineville for the location of its very first state park, Cumberland State Park, later renamed Pine Mountain State Park.[90] Pineville is the county seat of Bell County, located just north of Middlesboro. Noting the influence of the recent NCSP meeting in Hot Springs, Arkansas, the *Middlesboro Daily News* explained that a few years prior, state parks were seen as a "luxury" in Kentucky, but were quickly becoming a "necessity" because of the rising popularity of automobile travel.[91] The proclamation of the site selection praised the "picturesque" qualities of the area with 2,000 acres of virgin timber abounding in "beauty, gorgeous and majestic."[92] The park boundary was located on the east side of Pine Mountain and the Clear Creek Valley, approximately ten miles northwest of Cumberland Gap. The Kentucky legislature appropriated $16,000 for immediate development, including the creation of a lake by damming Clear Creek.

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89. Conard, "The National Conference on State Parks," 28, 30.

90. *Middlesboro Daily News* reported the Commonwealth designating the site a park in October 1926, but secondary sources say that the park was established in 1924. A 1975 study on Pineville State Park uses the 1926 date. See "State Selects Pineville Site for Picturesque Park," *Middlesboro Daily News,* October 2, 1926, p. 12; Spindletop Research, Inc., "Pine Mountain State Resort Park, Pineville, Kentucky," (August 19, 1975), 1-2.

91. "America's State Parks," *Middlesboro Daily News,* June 21, 1926, p.1.

92. "State Selects Pineville Site for Picturesque Park," *Middlesboro Daily News,* October 2, 1926, p.12.

Figure 6. "Skyland Highway to Top of Pinnacle Mountain from the Saddle of Cumberland Gap. On Scenic U.S. 25E between Middlesboro, Kentucky and Cumberland Gap, Tenn." Source: Postcard Collection, University of Kentucky Special Collections Research Center, Kentucky Digital Library.

Even with Kentucky's first state park and a municipal park, the citizens of Middlesboro did not give up hope for a national park at Cumberland Gap. Congressman Robsion introduced a third bill in 1929, but repackaged it to focus on the area's Civil War history. The bill did not come to a vote. In the meantime, an enterprising businessman named J. L. Manring formed the Sky Land Company in 1928. His company leased lands from the American Association and built a toll road up to the Pinnacle, completed in 1929. It had further plans to build a "model filling station" in the saddle of the gap with a "sanitary lunch room" and souvenir shop. The company also wanted to build a tourist hotel on the ridge. Kentucky Governor Flem D. Sampson made an address at the road's

dedication praising the road that would bring millions to the area. The promotional literature for the Skyland Highway advertised "the historic Cumberland Gap" and its associations with Daniel Boone and the Wilderness Road. It also praised the Pinnacle's views and scenery, and how it contributed to the feeling of "the pioneer spirit."[93]

Conclusion

The history of Progressive Era efforts in natural resource conservation, historic preservation, and social reform is critical to understanding park development during the New Deal and the establishment of Cumberland Gap NHP in 1940. Rapid industrialization and urbanization at the end of the nineteenth century prompted reformers to advance numerous advocacy efforts, including the creation of a national park system, establishment of a national network of modern roads, improvement of working conditions, implementation of acceptable leisure time activities, and preservation of historic sites. Reformers and progressive politicians called for the federal government to formulate policy to address these concerns, which led to the creation of the NPS in 1916. In the next decade, NPS staff focused on developing a cohesive landscape design that incorporated naturalistic principles and scenic preservation through a new planning process. They pursued ways to make parks accessible to the American public, who sought authentic, American experiences, by developing roads and visitor

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93. Luckett, "Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," 317; Martha Wiley, *Cumberland Gap National Historical Park,* Images of America Series (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014), 56; "Skyland Highway Up Pinnacle Is Wonderful Road," *The Middlesboro (KY) Three States,* [1929], "New Skyland Highway Is Dedicated Today," *Middlesboro Daily News,* [1929], both newspaper clippings, Park Archive, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 18; *The Story of the Pinnacle* (Middlesboro, KY: Sky Land Company, [1929]), Park Archive, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 18.

facilities that maximized the scenic values of the park. By 1930, the NPS decided to expand its purview from western scenic parks to include eastern historic sites. In its transition, the NPS supported the formation of three scenic parks in Appalachia in 1926—Great Smoky Mountains, Shenandoah, and Mammoth Cave national parks—all of which exhibited spectacular scenery and natural features and possessed the necessary political and financial support to ensure passage by Congress.

Cumberland Gap businessmen caught the wave of park boosterism rippling around the Southern Appalachian Mountains during the 1920s and tried and failed to secure a national park for their community. The emergence and failure of the Cumberland Gap national park initiatives during this period is reflective of why other progressive efforts fell short. Boosters lacked a clear vision for the park, and did not possess the political and financial capital that made the national park efforts at Great Smoky Mountains, Shenandoah, and Mammoth Cave successful. Their efforts, however, established an important framework for future initiatives, particularly when the NPS became fully immersed in historic preservation and social reform activities in the next decade.

After Sky Land Company opened the road to Pinnacle in 1929, the country dived into a deep economic depression—pushing boosters' dreams for a national park at Cumberland Gap further away. As it turned out, however, the Great Depression provided an opportunity to reorder the Appalachian region and develop a federal landscape. An important piece of this landscape was Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. NPS park planners employed a number of progressive ideas in crafting their vision for the park.

CHAPTER TWO

New Deal for National Parks

The National Park Service experienced a profound transformation during the New Deal (1933-1942)—geographically, financially, professionally, and philosophically. The agency received an increase in federal funding and was tasked with putting thousands of unemployed Americans to work in conservation projects across the country. This growth prompted NPS administrators to double up planning efforts and create a design portfolio to be utilized at state and national parks across the country to maximize efficiency and ensure high standards in park design. Administrators also hired new types of employees, such as biologists and historians, to plan new types of parks. Landscape architects and other park planners incorporated ideas of human conservation into park development and design as the country struggled to pull itself out of the Great Depression. Park planners incorporated nature, history, and social reform in planning and developing state and national parks during this important period of park expansion, making the NPS an important agent in land and social reform during the New Deal. Advancements in park design during this period informed the creation and development of parks in years to come, particularly Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, which Congress created in 1940 at the end of the New Deal.

The nation experienced a sharp economic downturn after the stock market crash in October 1929, although farmers had struggled for several years before then. Banks closed and Americans lost their jobs, savings, and homes. This dire national crisis

weighed heavily on the mind of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as he travelled to Chicago to accept the Democratic presidential nomination in person, something no other nominee had done before. In his speech on July 2, 1932, Roosevelt pledged to his countrymen and himself a "new deal" for America. Historians refer to the New Deal program as the legislation, policies, and liberal philosophy that permeated the Roosevelt administration from 1933 to 1942. As part of his New Deal plan, he called for the employment of millions through public works programs, the reforestation of millions of acres of marginal land, and a national land policy.[1] Roosevelt's speech set the tone for New Deal legislation and the NPS's role in employing thousands to create hundreds of state and national parks, sometimes dislocating families in the process.

New Deal for Parks

The year 1933 was a watershed year for state and national parks. The NPS's status as a land managing agency was codified with Executive Orders 6166 and 6228, which transferred a number of battlefields and national monuments from the War Department and Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Interior, creating a unified national park system. Additionally, legislation Congress passed in Roosevelt's "First Hundred Days" gave the departments of Agriculture and the Interior large sums of federal funding to undertake public works projects, including the construction of entire state park systems and many national parks. This opportunity allowed the NPS to become

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1. Franklin Roosevelt, "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago," July 2, 1932, online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project,* http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=75174 (accessed August 21, 2014).

a truly national agency by expanding east of the Mississippi River, while also leading state and regional recreational planning initiatives. The Historic Sites Act of 1935 also put the NPS at the helm of a new federal historic preservation program.

NPS Director Horace Albright won a successful sixteen-year campaign to have all the War Department's military parks transferred to the NPS. After a meeting between Roosevelt and Albright in 1933, the president agreed to the reorganization of the national park system. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 6166 on June 10, 1933, which justified NPS reorganization as part of economic recovery and transferred the National Capital Parks System in Washington, D.C., to the NPS. Executive Order 6228, signed on July 28, 1933, transferred more than just the military parks from the War Department. On August 10, 1933, eleven military parks, two national parks, ten battlefield sites, ten national monuments, three miscellaneous memorials, and eleven national cemeteries were formally reassigned from the War Department to the Department of the Interior. The same order also transferred fifteen national monuments from the U.S. Forest Service to Interior. This reorganization nearly doubled the units administered by the NPS. The number of scenic areas slightly increased, while the number of historic sites—only a small contingent of the national park system before 1933—nearly quadrupled. Over the next six years the NPS continued to expand with the addition of seven natural areas, seventeen historic sites, and six recreation areas.[2]

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2. Harlan Unrau and G. Frank Williss, *Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s: Administrative History* (Denver, CO: Denver Service Center, National Park Service, 1983), under Chapter 2, http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/unrau-williss/adhi2c.htm (accessed November 13, 2014); Barry Mackintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System,* rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Harpers Ferry Center, National

Roosevelt's initial New Deal legislation, which aimed to put Americans to work immediately included projects in state and national parks. The Emergency Conservation Work Act of 1933 created the Civilian Conservation Corps, which employed young men in conservation projects administered by the departments of Agriculture and Interior. The NPS supervised 600 CCC camps—118 in national parks and 482 in state parks. The state park program in the NPS became so dominant that the emergency conservation program was transferred in 1936 from the Branch of Forestry to the Branch of Planning and State Cooperation under landscape architect Conrad Wirth. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration, Works Progress Administration, Public Works Administration, and Civil Works Administration also hired thousands of unemployed Americans to work in national and state parks.[3]

Fortunately, increased funding came with the expansion of the NPS during this period. According to NPS historians Harlan Unrau and G. Frank Williss, regular appropriations for national parks and monuments increased from $10,820,620 in 1933 to $26,959,977 in 1939. New Deal programs also underwrote the NPS's expansion and development during this period. From 1933 to 1937, NPS received $40,242,692 from the Public Works Administration; $24,274,091 from the Works Progress Administration;

Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, 2005), 28-45, http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/shaping/part2.pdf (accessed November 13, 2014); Denise Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 111.

3. Mackintosh, *The National Parks,* 46; Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 383; Unrau and Williss, *Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s,* under Chapter 3, http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/unrau-williss/adhi3.htm (accessed November 13, 2014).

$82,250,468 from the Civilian Conservation Corps; and $2,490,678 from the Civil Works Administration. Between 1933 and 1940, 40% of the agency's budget came from emergency funds.[4]

This rapid expansion and development of state and national parks allowed New Deal planners to experiment with park design. They developed new types of parks, including parkways and Recreational Demonstration Areas (RDAs). The RDA program aimed to retire submarginal land to create state and national forests and parks. Landscape architects also created the organized camp layout, which set the standards for modern summer camps. They used New Deal funds and work relief programs to design and construct park-to-park roadways called parkways. Parkways, such as the Blue Ridge Parkway, allowed visitors to travel not only through space, but also through time as travellers drove by historic sites that captured various scenes of the American past.[5]

The NPS hired new professionals to handle its new responsibilities in historic preservation, including historian "technicians," historical architects, and archaeologists. Many of the historians became adept administrators, coordinating various agency and Emergency Conservation Work programs across the country. According to Charles Hosmer, this group of young men "constituted a generation that would administer the growing chain of historic sites that would come into the National Park System over the

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4. Unrau and Williss, *Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s*; Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks,* 113.

5. McClelland, *Building the National Parks,* 327-454.

next three decades."[6] Beyond the NPS, some of the same men helped form the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949, and yet a few others drafted the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.Their efforts helped professionalize the fields of public history, historical archaeology, and historic preservation and set the NPS on the path of being the leader of the United States historic preservation program.[7]

Planning the New Federal Landscape

A concerted federal planning effort accompanied the New Deal public works program. Understanding the New Deal planning agenda helps us see individual projects, particularly parks, as part of a larger New Deal landscape, and how the NPS emerged as a leader in recreation planning.

As environmental historian Sara Gregg has explained, conservationists, agricultural economists, and sociologists working in land grant institutions during the Progressive Era shared common research interests in rural culture and land efficiency. This research spurred planning efforts for the improved economic and ecological uses of land, and identified problem areas like the Appalachian Mountains where planners found high rates of subsistence farming and land degradation. Gregg's survey of three decades of planning and reform efforts, from the 1910s to the 1930s, focusing on Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and the Green Mountains in Vermont, as her primary case

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6. Charles Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), 1:579.

7. Ibid., 1:586; Harlan Unrau and G. Frank Williss, "To Preserve the Nation's Past: The Growth of the National Park Service during the 1930s," *Public Historian* 9, no. 2 (April 1987): 26-28; Bernard Means, ed., *Shovel Ready: Archaeology and Roosevelt's New Deal for America* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013), 1, 7-11.

studies, found that land economists were interested in areas close to larger populations that had not integrated completely into broader agricultural, social, political, or economic trends. Sociologists were especially interested in these mountain communities because they seemed to be remnants of America's frontier past.[8]

Some of these researchers entered into public service and shaped federal land policy, which included three different avenues of conservation planning that established the framework for federal land management during the twentieth century. The first avenue existed with the NPS and the federal government's recognition that some sites should be held and preserved in the public domain for the enjoyment of all Americans. The second avenue was exemplified by the national forest system, in which the federal government recognized a utilitarian necessity for conserving large swaths of timberland. The third avenue was with government-sponsored research that focused on agricultural economics to help famers and the nation as a whole. The Appalachian Mountains became an eastern laboratory for land economists working on the problem of submarginal land. One of the solutions they proposed was "retiring" submarginal lands to create productive forests and parks to build recreational tourism in the region. National parks were an integral component in the New Deal federal landscape in providing conservation of natural and cultural resources, assisting in rural uplift and other modes of social reform, and bolstering a recreational tourism industry.[9]

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8. Sara Gregg, *Managing the Mountains: Land Use Planning, the New Deal, and the Creation of the Federal Landscape in Appalachia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 88-92.

9. Gregg, *Managing the Mountains,* 81-101.

Federal planners believed centralized planning was needed to help guide and coordinate projects among federal agencies. Charles Eliot II, a young planner with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, proposed a national planning organization to Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes in early 1933 to help coordinate public works projects with other government programs. In July, the Public Works Administration established the National Planning Board. This board had four tasks: planning and programming of public works; stimulation of city, state, and regional planning; coordination of federal planning activities; and research. The NPS was responsible for communicating with this entity, which became difficult as the National Planning Board metamorphosed numerous times during the decade. A year after its establishment, the board was renamed the National Resources Board, which ceased coordinating public works projects and became an advisory body to the president instead. In 1935, the National Resource Board was again renamed as the National Resources Committee when the Supreme Court declared the National Industrial Recovery Act unconstitutional.[10] Finally, in 1939, the board was renamed the National Resources Planning Board (NRPB). Agricultural economist and land-policy expert Marion Clawson estimated that, before the NRPB was abolished in 1943, it produced approximately 370 major reports on a range of topics that covered natural resources, industry, research,

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10. The National Industrial Recovery Act authorized the Public Works Administration.

transportation, population, housing, welfare, public works, city and regional planning, and war and postwar planning.[11]

The NPS provided reports on park and recreation issues to the NRPB and its predecessors. In 1934, the National Resources Board assigned the NPS to undertake a study of recreation land use in the United States. Former NPS Director Conrad Wirth recalled that his office put together this study on very short notice. However, it became the basis for later studies by providing an overall picture of recreational land use and related issues. In 1936, Congress passed the Park, Parkway, and Recreational-Area Study Act to continue state-federal cooperation in park development on a permanent basis.[12] The resulting study was instrumental in the development of the national park system and several state systems because few states had formulated long-range plans based on in-depth analysis of land utilization and recreation needs.[13] Each state was required to submit a report to the NPS, which was charged with compiling a comprehensive national report. The board assigned landscape architect Conrad Wirth, then overseeing the NPS's CCC projects, to administer and coordinate the study through the Branch of Recreational

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11. Marion Clawson, *New Deal Planning: The National Resources Planning Board* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 3-7.

12. Conrad Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 166, 172; National Park Service, *Recreational Land Use of the United States: Part IX of the Report on Land Planning* (Washington, DC: National Resources Board, 1938), http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/recreation_use/index.htm (accessed November 17, 2014); *Park, Parkway, and Recreational Study Act,* Public Law 770-1/2, 74th Cong., 2d sess. (June 23, 1936), 49 Stat. 1894; McClelland, *Building the National Parks,* 422.

13. National Park Service, *A Study of the Park and Recreation Problem of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1941), http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001506542 (accessed February 13, 2015).

Planning and State Cooperation. Wirth's staff in Washington, D.C., coordinated with regional offices whose field supervisors and representatives coordinated with various state and local agencies. They inventoried parks already in existence and identified potential areas that could meet existing needs; land that should be acquired for anticipated future needs; and "areas that should be conserved because of unusual scenic, historical, or educational value."[14] NPS staff complied a digest of relevant state laws pertaining to parks and recreation. By 1941, the NPS advocated a regional planning approach, saying that in the development of individual state plans "it became evident that certain problems could not be met adequately within the limits of State boundaries."[15] Each state had to account for nearby residents in adjacent states, and account for outstanding resources of national significance. Therefore, the NPS reasoned that regional studies would allow for better state and federal coordination.

In 1941, the NPS published a comprehensive report titled *The Park and Recreational Problem in the United States.* The authors argued that all elements of the nation's population needed recreation as part of their daily lives, especially those living in urban areas. They called for recreation areas, such as parks, play fields, and parkways within easy reach of major populations. They also recommended organized camps as inexpensive alternatives to private summer camps. The responsibility of developing and

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14. Quoted in Unrau and Williss, *Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s,* under Chapter 4, http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/unrau-williss/adhi4e.htm (accessed November 13, 2014).

15. Ibid.

managing these areas should not fall to one particular agency, but should be coordinated among federal, state, and local municipalities.[16]

The authors placed "areas or structures of historic, prehistoric, or scientific significance" on "the same plane with the scenic areas."[17] Public agencies were now considered responsible for preserving America's historic and archaeological sites and structures for the enlightenment and inspiration of her people as indicated by the Historic Sites Act of 1935. The 1941 report also prescribed new types of recreational development in national and state recreational systems, including parkways, trails, and routes of water travel, and another set of recommendations to enhance outdoor recreation activities, namely waysides, control of outdoor advertising, and roadside beautification.[18]

In addition to the "Park, Parkway, and Recreation Study," the NPS churned out landscape planning documents for scores of state and national parks during the New Deal. The decade of New Deal park expansion caused some significant changes for the agency's growing corpus of landscape architects. In 1933, the Landscape Division was renamed the Branch of Plans and Designs and was tasked with park master plans, building plans and working drawings, and estimates. Chief Landscape Architect Thomas Vint headed the new branch and moved his office from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., in 1934 where he oversaw both the Western and Eastern Divisions. Vint's move

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16. National Park Service, *A Study of the Park and Recreation Problem of the United States,* 122-32.

17. Ibid., 125.

18. Ibid., 125-27.

likely signaled his need to coordinate with administrators in Washington, D.C., but also so he could be closer to new park projects occurring in the East. The Branch of Plans and Design continued to churn out park master plans at a feverish pace, many for eastern parks. [19] In the process, NPS landscape architects and park specialists created a holistic approach to incorporating nature, history, and social reform in park development. The next three sections will explore how they were able to reconcile these different values.

Nature

The infusion of historic sites into the national park system in the 1930s was accompanied by noteworthy changes in wildlife management. The NPS experienced a rise and fall of scientific study in a little over a decade between 1929 and 1940, indicating that the shift in management philosophy from scenic preservation in the early part of the NPS's existence to protecting ecologic systems after World War II was not entirely linear. Biologist George Melendez Wright completed the first in-depth scientific study to support natural resource management during the summer of 1929. Born into a wealthy family and orphaned at a young age, Wright used his own money to fund a biological survey in the national parks after observing troubling wildlife issues as a naturalist assistant at Yosemite in 1927. Wright's 1929 biological survey inspired the NPS to institute a Wildlife Division, and Horace Albright named him chief of the new division in 1933.[20] Under his direction, wildlife biologists developed new perspectives on natural

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19. McClelland, *Building the National Parks,* 330.

20. Public Broadcasting Service, "George Melendez Wright (1904-1936)," WETA, Washington, DC, and the National Parks Film Project, 2009,

resources and provided new options for park management. Wildlife Division biologist Ben Thompson, for example, submitted a memorandum in 1934 to NPS Director Arno Cammerer asking that the NPS set aside supposedly "pristine" park areas for exclusive scientific study because at that point no "first or second class nature sanctuaries" existed in the entire system.[21] The wildlife biologists promoted ecological awareness and questioned the utilitarian and recreational tradition, which made them vulnerable to administrators who saw them as obstructionists. Wright was usually able to placate administrators, but the Wildlife Division lost his invaluable leadership in 1936 when Wright died in an automobile accident. In 1940, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes transferred NPS biologists to the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Biological Survey as part of compromise when Roosevelt rejected Ickes's proposal for a "Department of Conservation." According to Sellars, NPS administrators did not fight the transfer, indicating that the wildlife biologists' influence had diminished in the NPS.[22]

New Deal projects in state and national parks considerably altered natural resources through road and trail construction, new facilities, mosquito control, stream bank stabilization and flood control, and massive fire protection projects. Historian Neil Maher estimated that CCC projects alone altered more than 118 million acres, an area larger than the state of California.[23] Maher found that the CCC undertook approximately

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http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/people/nps/wright/ (accessed November 14, 2014); Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (1997; reprint, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 91.

21. Quoted in Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks,* 92.

22. Ibid., 146-47.

150 different types of conservation work projects. He charts their progression and argues that they reflected Roosevelt's conservation politics. Initially, CCC projects focused on reforestation and planted an estimated two billion trees. Subsequently, CCC camps were also set to work on fire-control projects. Severe drought conditions in the Dust Bowl area shifted work projects towards soil-erosion control, which was highly political. The CCC experimented with erosion-control techniques and consequently introduced invasive vegetation, including kudzu. After the Park, Parkway, and Recreational Study Act was passed, the CCC became heavily involved in outdoor recreation projects. RDAs are probably the most dramatic examples of landscape architects and work crews transforming not-particularly-scenic landscapes into forests and parks using principles of naturalistic design.[24]

The NPS professed that it had allowed parkland to reclaim itself, but in reality the process was very deliberate, particularly in areas that had been heavily changed by human use. Justin Reich argues that the NPS "scripted space" at Shenandoah National Park. Reich noted the influence of park booster and conservation critic Harlan Kelsey, who advocated restoring recently inhabited lands through Frederick Clements's forest succession model, back to the "climax community" that existed prior to human occupation.[25] Ideally, the land would be allowed to succeed on its own without human

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23. Neil Maher, *Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 44.

24. Ibid., 45-74; McClelland, *Building the National Parks,* 418.

25. Frederick Clements's forest succession model explained how disturbed forests returned to their natural state and eventually reach the stage of "climax community," a

intervention. However, Kelsey altered his views to allow the NPS to use landscape design and CCC labor to help Shenandoah's landscape "rewild," itself to maximize the scenic potential for park visitors' enjoyment and recreation.[26] As a result, according to Reed Engle, a cultural resource specialist at Shenandoah National Park, there is nothing "natural" about Shenandoah's landscape.[27]

NPS architect Albert Good, in *Park and Recreation Structures*, reinforced the NPS's tendency to promote natural, scenic beauty over ecological soundness. In the series' introduction, NPS Director Arno Cammerer wrote: "In any area in which the preservation of the beauty of Nature is a primary purpose, every proposed modification of the natural landscape, whether it be construction of a road or erection of a shelter, deserves to be most thoughtfully considered."[28] He noted the desire to preserve "the beauty of Nature," not the ecological conditions of nature. Further, he intimated that the NPS not only could shape nature, but that they could enhance it and make it even better.

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term that refers to when a biological community becomes stable. Justin Reich, "Re-Creating Wilderness: Shaping Narratives and Landscapes in Shenandoah National Park," *Environmental History* 6, no.1 (January 2001): 104.

26. Environmental historian James Feldman uses the concept of "rewilding" in describing the series of human decisions and natural processes required to revert land with a long history of human occupation back to "wilderness." James Feldman, *A Storied Wilderness: Rewilding the Apostle Islands* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 9, 236n7.

27. Quoted in Reich, "Re-Creating Wilderness," 111.

28. Albert Good, *Park and Recreation Structures* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1938), 1:vii.

History

The NPS fully entered into the business of historic preservation during the New Deal. After the establishment of George Washington National Birthplace and Colonial National Monument in 1931, the NPS created a history branch, headed by Verne Chatelain, under the Division of Research and Education. Chatelain, a former history professor, had the important task of helping to reorient the NPS from its identity with western natural areas to the historical parks of the East. During his first year working for the agency, Chatelain was able to conceptualize the NPS's role in telling the history of the United States through its collection of historic sites.[29] But how to begin? Fortunately, New Deal programs provided the opportunity to undertake a national survey of historic sites, grow the ranks of historians in the NPS, and undertake archaeological excavations and historic preservation efforts on the federal level.

The NPS's young history division required a new kind of NPS employee who was trained in the historical profession and could do the necessary documentation and planning needed for the identification, preservation, restoration, and interpretation of historic sites. "Historical technicians," as NPS administrators called them, often worked in the field doing research and planning at historic sites in tandem with projects as they progressed. Chatelain found that university training was insufficient for preparing them to work in the field. They had to become "park service men," meaning they understood the language and culture of the agency and also knew how to interact with the public.[30] The

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29. Unrau and Williss, "'To Preserve the Nation's Past,'" 3, 22.

30. Charles Hosmer, "Verne E. Chatelain and the Development of the Branch of History of the National Park Service," *Public Historian* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 32-33.

competitive academic job market prompted many young historians to seek government work, which was expanding with New Deal programs. Chatelain believed he hired as many as five hundred historians for emergency work. "I was hiring PhDs a dime a dozen," Chatelain recalled.[31] The proliferation of university-trained historians in the federal government helped professionalize the historic preservation field.

The advancements of the NPS History Division during this period are important, according to public historian Denise Meringolo, because the agency began to mediate competing visions of the American past by reconciling popular and official forms of patriotic language. Meringolo charts the evolution of the public history profession in the NPS during this decade in *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History.* Collection, preservation, and commemoration were popular cultural trends during the Progressive Era, and people began to compete with claims of expertise and specialty. This competition led to a clash between official and vernacular cultural expressions. The NPS instituted a history program and hired historical technicians, who became some of the first public historians to mediate these expressions for the public. The programs they created guided site selection, designation, and interpretive programming that shaped the NPS for much of the twentieth century. They acquired traits that are now hallmarks of the public history profession, including, but not limited to the use of material culture as documentary evidence, the value of history as a public service, the ability to collaborate with other disciplines, skills for communicating

31. Quoted in ibid., 36.

and interpreting history for the public, administration of historic sites, and establishment of a broad professional network.[32]

The New Deal also developed another kind of preservation professional—the historical architect. Charles E. Peterson, Chief Architect of the NPS Eastern Branch of the Division of Plans and Design, imagined a six-month program to send one thousand unemployed architects, draftsmen, and photographers around the country to systematically measure, record, and photograph buildings that were quickly disappearing. FDR approved the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) on December 12, 1933. The HABS survey attempted to create a kind of album representing American architectural styles and building techniques from the smallest utilitarian structures to the most iconic and monumental. This reflects the documentary impulse of the era as exemplified by other New Deal projects, such as the Farm Security Administration's photo-documentation of rural life.[33]

The Works Progress Administration funded HABS but left the administration to the NPS. The agency organized HABS offices by districts, which were guided by architects and landscape architects such as Charles Peterson, John O'Neill, Thomas T. Waterman, and Thomas C. Vint in the Branch of Plans and Designs. The American Institute of Architects, which had long been interested in such a survey, helped the NPS set up thirty-nine districts across the country and find the staff for them. The regional organization of the survey was a conscious decision to help document larger regional

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32. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks,* xiii-xiv, 153-68.

33. Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age,* 1:548-62.

trends and assist in local preservation planning that was beginning to emerge during this period. The purpose of the survey was to document structures that were at high risk for demolition. This survey helped assign levels of significance before there was a National Register of Historic Places program. The HABS program continued from 1934 to 1941, when it went on a short hiatus during the war. The survey covered approximately seven thousand historic structures nationwide; about one-half were photographed and one-third were measured and drawn by the end of 1941.[34]

After World War II, the HABS program resumed its work and it remains one of the few New Deal programs to survive to this day. The NPS instituted additional heritage documentary programs, including the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS), and Cultural Resource Geographic Information System (CRGIS). Altogether, heritage documentation programs have recorded over 40,000 historic sites and structures, providing the baseline information for rehabilitation and restoration. The HABS program developed during the 1930s set the standard for documenting historic structures by advocating a systematic, scientific survey. It also played a substantial role in the professionalization of historic preservation as an interdisciplinary field, although tensions emerged between architects, who were

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34. See Lisa Pfueller Davidson and Martin J. Perschler, "The Historic American Buildings Survey: During the New Deal Era: Documenting 'a Complete Resume of the Builders' Art,'" *CRM Journal* 1 no. 1 (Fall 2003), http://www.nps.gov/CRMjournal/Fall2003/article1.html (accessed November 12, 2014); Historic American Building Survey, "American Place: The Historic American Buildings Survey at Seventy-five Years" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Interior, 2008), 13, https://archive.org/details/americanplacehis00hist (accessed November 12, 2014).

more concerned with design and construction, and those historians interested in site interpretation.[35]

Historical archaeology also professionalized during the New Deal because of the influx of public works funding. The WPA and CCC put thousands of men to work excavating sites all over the country. According to David Anderson, field and laboratory crews were so massive that they reached an unprecedented scale that has rarely been equaled in the time since. For the first time, feature assemblages received more attention than individual artifacts. This period trained a generation of archaeologists in managing large projects and provided research collections that occupied scholars in the 1940s and 1950s. A select group of archaeologists established the Society for American Archaeology in 1934. Other archaeologists would go on to start regional conferences and university archaeology programs. [36]

The reorganization of 1933 in which the NPS received a number of historic sites and battlefields revealed a need for a comprehensive federal historic preservation program. This was reinforced by the growing demands placed upon the NPS's new History Division (established in 1931 under the Branch of Research and Education) and the knowledge that many historic buildings were disappearing from the nation's

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35. Heritage Documentation Programs, "About Us," National Park Service (2012), http://www.nps.gov/hdp/about.htm (accessed November 15, 2014); Davidson and Perschler, "The Historic American Buildings Survey."

36. David Anderson, "A National Commitment," *Common Ground* 2, no.1 (Spring 1997), http://www.nps.gov/archeology/cg/vol2_num1/commit.htm (accessed November 15, 2015); Sissel Schroeder, "Culture, Time, and Practice: The Shifting Interpretive Potential of New Deal-Era Collections," in *Shovel Ready*, Means, ed., 166-67.

landscape, a realization brought to light by the HABS program. In 1935, Congress passed the Historic Sites Act, which some have called the "magna carta" for historic preservation.[37] The new law gave the Department of the Interior the power to undertake a national survey of historic sites, acquire such sites through purchase or gift, initiate a research program, and preserve sites of national historical importance through the activities of the NPS. More importantly, the law provided a general policy for the preservation of nationally significant historic sites, buildings, and objects, and put the NPS in a powerful position to influence historic preservation policy, historic site development, and interpretation on a nation-wide basis.[38]

New Deal work programs, notably the CCC and WPA, provided the manual labor for most of the historic preservation projects in state and national parks during this period. The CCC alone reportedly restored 3,980 historic structures. However, the CCC's contributions to historic preservation are frequently downplayed or ignored by CCC scholars because of their associations with natural conservation efforts.[39] This disconnect between the CCC and historic preservation is perhaps due to the terminology used during the period. Neil Maher notes that "the very notion of what constituted Corps conservation

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37. Unrau and Williss, "To Preserve the Nation's Past," 20, 36.

38. Ibid., 33-35; Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age,* 562-77.

39. One 1942 congressional report notes that 3,961 historic structures were restored; however, this report only takes into account work completed up to April 1941. See Legislative Reference Service, *Civilian Conservation Corps,* in Senate Documents 77th Cong., 2d sess., Miscellaneous (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942), 61-67. Other secondary source material indicates that the final number is 3,980. See pamphlet Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy, Inc., *History of the Civilian Conservation Corps—And its Lasting Legacy* (Edinburg, Virginia: Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy Inc., 2010).

was fluid during the New Deal years," which may explain why historic preservation was subsumed under conservation.[40] The CCC broadened its definition of "conservation" to include not only environmental improvements but also "historical conservation." These activities were often in conjunction with other environmental work or recreational development, which overshadowed the historic preservation work. For example, the CCC was involved in the preservation and restoration of Hopewell Village in Pennsylvania, including the reinforcement of the blast furnace, within the larger development of the French Creek Recreational Demonstration Area. The type of historic preservation work being undertaken was closely associated to other typical, environmental CCC activities. For example, two CCC companies were placed at Gettysburg, where, in addition to cleaning up the battlefield monuments, they engaged in landscaping, forestry work, and cutting cordwood for local needy families.[41] In CCC terms, corpsmen were simply landscaping and doing forestry work. In historic preservation terms, however, they were undertaking battlefield restoration. NPS historians were often assigned to CCC units to supervise projects. The CCC could not undertake work before the required documentation was acquired by historians or HABS architects.

For park planners, incorporating historic preservation into master plans was not the easiest transition, particularly in natural areas where they were trying to create the

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40. Maher, *Nature's New Deal,* 44.

41. Robert Fechner, *Annual Report of the Director of the Civilian Conservation Corps* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1938), 45; Joseph Speakman, *At Work in Penn's Woods: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Pennsylvania* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State Press, 2006), 150.

sense of wilderness. How could one simulate wilderness with clear evidence of man's inhabitation? However, they were able to make the intellectual leap by blending nature and history through the concept of the "Frontier Village." Albert Good explained this justification:

> There are those who will see no tie whatever between these presentations of the past and the wilderness preserve in public ownership. There are those who will challenge the appropriateness of a natural park of any and all structures not absolutely indispensable to human use of the park as a domain of Nature. Wherever the preserve is one of most exceptional scenic or scientific interest, their contention is well-grounded. But the wilderness preserve not scenically or otherwise than historically exceptional is a singularly appropriate setting for further "fourth-dimensional" exhibits even more typically American and more widely appealing and understandable to the American public than either Williamsburg or Greenfield Village. This fitting complement of the natural park backdrop is the community of the early American scene—The Frontier Village.[42]

Here, Good alludes to the major dilemma managers still face when balancing natural and cultural resource protection in park areas, but he articulates the New Deal-Era strategy for reconciling the two. First, New Deal park planners tended to focus on historic structures that communicated scenes of early American history where Euro-Americans conquered nature. For example, the NPS restored industrial sites like Catoctin and Hopewell Iron furnaces, Cable Mill at Great Smoky Mountains, and the C&O Canal.[43] Good called Cable Mill a "primitive industry," even though there were nearly seven gristmills in the

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42. Albert Good, *Park and Recreation Structures* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1938), 2:185.

43. Edmund Wehrle, *Catoctin Mountain Park: Historic Resource Study* (Thurmont, MD: Catoctin Mountain Park, 2000), under "Construction and Labor at Catoctin, Part I," http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/cato/hrs5b.htm (accessed November 13, 2014; Angela Sirna, "From Canal Boats to Canoes: The Transformation of the C&O Canal, 1938-1942" (master's thesis, West Virginia University, 2011), 25-60; Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age,* 1:659-64.

Cades Cove area when the NPS acquired the property, and this particular mill operated until the 1920s.[44] Historically, these sites were responsible for activities that progressive conservationists criticized for denuding natural resources. Park planners smoothed this conflict by reclaiming the land around these historic resources, naturalizing the scene. In the process, they washed layers of meaning from the site and created an illogical landscape. They further reinforced the agency's interest in scenic preservation by "naturalizing" history.

Second, historic sites were typically designated as day-use areas, as opposed to natural areas where "wilderness itself is the book … requiring only marginal notes."[45] NPS managers and planners felt that historic sites needed a much more structured experience to convey the ideals these places embodied as opposed to natural areas where the significance was supposed to be obvious to the visitor. NPS planners prescribed that waysides, museums, auto tours, and other educational mediums be implemented to guide the visitor experience. These features were also thought about in detail. For example, planners prescribed that waysides be constructed of appropriate materials and use a certain font to appropriately convey site significance. Museums were to be constructed in

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44. Good, *Park and Recreation Structures*, 2:185; Gloria Motter, "Cades Cove Cable Mill," Cades Cove Preservation Association, http://cadescovepreservationtn.homestead.com/cablemill.html (accessed November 15, 2012).

45. Good, *Park and Recreation Structures,* 2:171.

a style that best suited the environment and the topic to be interpreted. Auto tours, such as the one at Cades Cove, routed visitors deliberately to best guide their experience.[46]

Lastly, the NPS developed a formal policy on historical restorations in 1936, a sensitive subject up to that point, that declared it is "better to preserve than repair, better repair than restore, better restore than construct."[47] The new Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments took up the matter and made recommendations adopted by the NPS as policy. This policy advised that no work be undertaken without necessary baseline documentation and that decisions be made in accordance with the best scholarship. NPS historians spent a great deal of time determining a period of significance that these sites could be restored to. Additionally, the policy warned not to "gild the lily," or take artistic license during preservation efforts.[48] These ideas pervade the historic preservation field today.

Park planners also wanted to preserve or restore sites to a particular moment in time, a generally accepted preservation practice in the 1930s.[49] As Thomas Vint explained:

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46. Ibid., 2:169-96. For a cultural analysis of the tour road at Cades Cove, see Terence Young, "Virtue and Irony in a U.S. National Park," in *Theme Park Landscapes: Antecedents and Variations,* ed. Terence Young and Robert Riley (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 157-81.

47. Good, *Park and Recreation Structures,* 2:187.

48. Ibid., 2:187.

49. Ethan Carr, "The 'Noblest Landscape Problem': Thomas C. Vint and Landscape Preservation," in *Design with Culture: Claiming America's Landscape Heritage,* ed. Charles A. Birnbaum and Mary V. Hughes (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 166.

> National Parks fall into two groups, natural and historical. In one, the primary purpose is to preserve and protect one of the great works of nature—to let nature take its course; in the other, to preserve and protect the scene at one of the great moments of our national history—to stop the clock and hold the scene of the moment in history that makes the area important.[50]

Stopping the clock at any historical site holds a powerful appeal, but it poses considerable problems. Under this philosophy, preservationists, planners, and architects try to give singularity to a landscape that changed and developed over time. Freezing a site in time ignores other significant periods, and neglects the layering of the cultural landscape. Oftentimes, it is not a matter of stopping but rewinding the clock. This allowed the NPS to raze structures or additions that post-dated the period of significance.

The convergence of New Deal initiatives that involved history related activities, such as the HABS, the WPA Federal Writers' Project American Guide series, and the NPS History Program were part of a larger effort to identify an innate American culture across the landscape. The Great Depression roused a certain "cultural uncertainty" that the New Deal helped to assuage through economic and cultural regeneration.[51] This is perhaps why the HABS program looked at a range of buildings from the humblest of beginnings to statements of power with special interest in American ingenuity. The Historic Sites Act, according to Unrau and Williss, "represented a popular idea at a time of economic crisis when the nation needed a sense of its cultural heritage."[52]

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50. Thomas Vint, "National Park Service Master Plans," *Planning and Civic Comment* 12, no. 2 (April 1946): 21.

51. Marguerite Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 219. For more on the WPA American Guide series, read 202-20.

52. Unrau and Williss, "To Preserve the Nation's Past," 33.

Human Conservation

The New Deal made apparent, perhaps more than any other time, the potential of park development to achieve a measure of social reform. Park planners incorporated Progressive Era notions of human conservation in three important ways. First, New Deal relief programs put millions of people to work in state and national parks physically transforming the landscape and instilling life skills in the participants. Second, park recreation as a form of leisure was intended to rejuvenate the urban masses, build individual character, and promote nationalism and consumerism. Finally, park development transformed the lives of those whose land was acquired to create these places. Oftentimes, planners and government officials believed these people were living on submarginal land, and that the federal government's offer to purchase their land was their ticket out of rural poverty.

The immediate aim of New Deal programs was to put people to work as soon as possible. The NPS oversaw projects in both national and state parks in which labor was provided by relief workers, including the Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress Administration, Public Works Administration, and Civil Works Administration. CCC workers, many in their teens, filled unskilled labor jobs, while older WPA, PWA, or CWA workers were hired for skilled positions. New Deal architecture is now recognized for its superb craftsmanship and use of local materials, and those characteristics are indicative of the need for labor-intensive projects and the employment of local, skilled workers.[53] However, the purpose of these relief projects was not just to build things—but

53. McClelland, *Building the National Parks,* 340-42; Lisa Pfeuller Davidson and James A. Jacobs, "Civilian Conservation Corps Activities in the National Capital Region

to avoid waste by putting idle hands to work and giving unemployed Americans a paycheck to support themselves and help their self-esteem.

The CCC in particular sought to physically, mentally, and spiritually transform enrollees by putting young men to work in nature, teaching them valuable job skills, educating them how to be "citizen consumers," and instilling self-confidence.[54] The Department of Labor recruited young men aged sixteen to twenty-one years old for enrollment periods of six months. Men could remain in the corps up to two years. The Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior coordinated project work in state and national parks and forests across the country, engaging young men in a variety of different conservation tasks. Corpsmen lived in camps administered by the War Department and had to abide by military rules to ensure camp discipline and order. Corpsmen enjoyed three meals a day, received health examinations, and had access to the camp doctor. The average corpsmen only had an eighth-grade education, so CCC administrators scheduled educational and vocational classes in the evening if corpsmen wanted to improve reading or math skills, learn a new vocational skill, or pursue a hobby. The government paid corpsmen thirty dollars a month from which twenty-five dollars was immediately sent home to their families. Corpsmen gained confidence through

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of the National Park Service," HABS No. DC-858 (Washington, DC: Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, 2004), 10, http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/dc1020/ (accessed November 16, 2014).

54. Historian Lizabeth Cohen describes a "citizen consumer" ideal type of the 1930s and World War II periods that comingled American identity as both citizens and consumers. A citizen consumer during this time period "put the market power of the consumer to work politically, not only to save a capitalist American in the midst of the Great Depression, but also to safeguard the rights of individual consumers and the larger 'general good.'" Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: First Vintage Books, 2004), 8.

accomplishing taxing physical labor, completing projects, and improving their educational skills. They learned to be citizen consumers by contributing to their family's income, spending money in nearby communities, and often serving as the first tourists to consume these new parks, all while participating in a national effort to conserve natural and cultural resources for the betterment of the nation.[55] Additionally, according to Maher, the three million men who participated in the CCC from 1933 to 1942 became a new body politic in the environmental movement through their experience in conservation work.[56]

Relief workers at state and national parks transformed the landscape for the enjoyment of other Americans during a time of sharp economic crisis. Government officials were anxious to develop a widespread recreational program as rampant unemployment gave Americans more leisure time and less money. According to historian Kenneth Bindas, the government's "focus on getting Americans back to work went hand in hand with finding ways to direct and structure recreational activities," especially activities that promoted civic involvement.[57] In this sense, park development was a tool to encourage citizenship and quiet anxieties that American society was deteriorating. The expansion of state and national park systems and new types of parks introduced during this period are evidence of this effort. Park planners employed landscape design to guide

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55. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks,* 140-43.

56. Maher, *Nature's New Deal,* 77-114.

57. Kenneth Bindas, ed., *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Construction of the Virginia Kendall Reserve, 1933-1939* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2013), 84.

visitors through these sites so they could best experience nature and culture in a broader effort to encourage civic engagement and consumerism.

NPS landscape architects played a central role in establishing the vision for state and national parks developed during the New Deal and how visitors would experience these sites. They were tasked with producing a large quantity of park plans, designs, and drawings for projects managed by the NPS, which included a number of state parks, while also incorporating a set of design principles. These principles aimed at reconciling landscape preservation with recreational development, while also making nature and culture consumable for a mass audience.

In 1933, Chief Landscape Architect Thomas Vint's office, renamed the Branch of Plans and Design, was given full responsibility for developing plans, designs, and estimates for New Deal park projects.[58] In the years prior to the New Deal, Vint and his then-called Landscape Division worked to reconcile landscape preservation with recreational development in order to control the visitor experience while also protecting important park resources. Vint called this the "landscape problem." Vint strongly argued that the park landscape "needed to be controlled by a unified aesthetic conception (the master plan), which limited the development of roads and other facilities, enhanced a consistent sense of place, and protected scenery from encroachments."[59] Vint knew that if people did not visit parks, because of lack of accessibility, modernization, or appeal, the

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58. McClelland, *Building the National Parks,* 330.

59. Carr, "The 'Noblest Landscape Problem,'" in *Design with Culture,* ed. Birnbaum and Hughes, 162.

landscape would not be preserved. He also knew that if people were left without restraint in parks that they, too, would damage the landscape. He tried to strike a balance between the two by controlling the visitor experience through trails and facilities. Landscape architecture historian Ethan Carr believed Vint's master plans for parks "reflected an ideal of a sustainable society in which people got along with one another and their environment."[60] Vint and his team created the master plan, which was implemented service-wide in 1932. Master planning became an essential part of state and federal park development during the New Deal, and the Branch of Plans and Design managed to create a whole portfolio of park design that became an industry standard. Architect Albert Good's collected the best of these designs in a three volume series called *Park and Recreation Structures*.

Historian Linda McClelland asserts that Good's portfolio reflected the thinking behind the NPS's landscape design and serves as "a comprehensive index of national park principles and practices for naturalistic landscape design and rustic architecture."[61] His first volume, for example, addressed park administrative buildings. He described these structures as "seats of order," meaning that they were the primary locations that park officials could control the visitor experience in the parks.[62] It was acceptable to intrude upon nature only if the structures were built in harmony with the environment through use of native materials and construction techniques pioneered by frontiersmen. These structures were to take into account modern visitor needs, and some materials

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60. Ibid., 163.

61. McClelland, *Building the National Parks,* 429.

62. Good, *Park and Recreation Structures,* 1:5.

could be substituted if appropriate.[63] According to Good, architects should consider scale in relation to scenic features because visitors are there to see those and not man-made features. In his words:

> After all, every structure undertaking in a natural park is only a part of a whole. The individual building or facility must bow deferentially before the broad park plan, which is the major objective, never to be lost sight of. The park plan determines the size, character, location, and use of each and every structure. Collectively, these should be properly interrelated; at the same time they must be closely and logically related to the park plan to ensure its workability and harmony.[64]

Good underscores landscape architects' desire to instill rational order at national park sites by taking cues from the natural world to ensure that the natural and built environments blend together seamlessly.

In an effort to "conserve" the younger generation through outdoor recreation, NPS landscape architects designed the "organized camp" layout and set the standard in modern summer camps during this period. Volume III of Good's portfolio is devoted exclusively to organized camp design. Before the New Deal, benevolent or religious organizations operated private summer camps and used the camps as an extension of their year-round mission. Camping was only available to middle or upper class children. In the early-twentieth century a summer camp industry emerged to professionalize the field and set standards. The NPS entered into organized camping during the New Deal, and landscape architects set about incorporating modern facilities with naturalistic principles in the park rustic style using native materials and vegetation. Their most innovative contribution was the "unit plan," a decentralized arrangement of structures similar to the

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63. Ibid., 1:2-4.

64. Ibid., 1:6.

Federal Housing Administration's "neighborhood unit" being promoted at the time. The unit plan subdivided the camp into different age-based units through which children should pass, according to the new field of child study. These federally developed summer camps were then open to underprivileged youth. Organizations could lease camps with modern facilities from state or national parks without the burden of purchasing the land, building camp facilities, and buying all the equipment.[65]

Park planners found that automobiles were necessary modern intrusions for making parks usable by visitors, and sought to strike a balance between providing access and preserving landscape. Good's portfolio alluded to the dilemma of automobiles in parks.

> It should at once invite and deter, encouraging use while discouraging disabuse of the park by the public. It should be all things to all men, tempting the devotees of Nature and of the past, while warding off and detouring that bloc of the public primarily bent on a greater gasoline consumption—a kind of semaphore simultaneously reading 'stop' and 'go,' yet somehow avoiding all accidents to traffic and to temperament. Surely no easy accomplishment, perhaps unattainable![66]

This passage hints at a larger debate over whether vehicles should be allowed at all in parks. The Wilderness Society was founded during this period to put pressure on the federal government to preserve wild lands. Historian Paul Sutter profiled four of the organization's founders—Aldo Leopold, Robert Sterling Yard, Benton MacKaye, and Bob Marshall—in *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement*. Sutter effectively argues that these men found automobile

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65. Abigail Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth* (Duluth: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 29-32.

66. Good, *Park and Recreation Structures,* 1:9.

tourists to be the foremost threat to natural areas, even more so than cattle ranchers, miners, or lumber companies. His work shows that although these men had different notions of what defined "wilderness," they were united in their belief that such areas should remain roadless.[67] Good's passage indicates that landscape architects were trying to control road building in parks, but roads were still essential to park use and enjoyment.

Landscape architects developed a new type of park during this period to blend automobile use with landscape preservation—the parkway. This kind of a park was more than just a connector road between national parks; it was meant to manipulate historic and natural landscapes to project a larger American narrative.[68] Traveling along these parkways was more than just getting from one destination to another; it was a journey through American space and time to give travelers optimism for the country's future. As they did with all national parks, landscape architects made parkways work by blending natural and historical elements to achieve harmony in nature.

Another park type emerged during this period that deliberately mixed park development with land and social reform—the Recreational Demonstration Area. The RDA program was established as part of a larger federal effort to retire submarginal land to conserve natural resources and alleviate rural poverty. A number of parks and forests were carved out of submarginal land and developed by the USDA or NPS. During its

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67. Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (2002; reprint, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 5-7.

68. Ian Firth, "Blue Ridge Parkway: Road to the Modern," in *Design with Culture*, ed. Birnbaum and Hughes, 179-202. For an in-depth analysis of the Blue Ridge Parkway, see Anne Whisnant, *Super-Sonic Motorway: A Blue Ridge Parkway History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

brief existence, the Resettlement Administration, established in 1935 under the Federal Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, worked to resettle families living in areas deemed submarginal to better farms or homestead communities. The agency was authorized to administer projects that resettled low-income families from rural or urban areas, made loans to farmers, tenant farmers, or farm laborers to purchase land or equipment, and purchased land for development projects. In some cases, the WPA or CCC hired people who sold their homes for the RDA project to develop their former property into park or forestland. RDA's were supposed to be turned over to the states, but a few remained in federal hands, such as Catoctin Mountain Park in Maryland and Prince William Park in Virginia near Washington, D.C.[69] In cases such as Catoctin or Prince William, relief workers constructed organized camps within the RDA's specifically for underprivileged youth from urban areas. Camp Greentop at Catoctin, for example, was created for the Maryland League for Crippled Children, which has used the site since 1937 as a summer camp for children with disabilities.[70]

Other state and national park projects (not part of the RDA program) were undertaken with resettling local populations in mind, particularly in parts of Appalachia where federal and state officials believed the land was abused or inhospitable. Thousands of families, both willingly and unwillingly, left their homes and livelihoods during this

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69. Wehrle, *Catoctin Mountain Park,* under "The Fate of the Park," http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/cato/hrs6a.htm (accessed November 16, 2014); Patti Kuhn, Sarah Groesbeck, and the Louis Berger Group, Inc., *Prince William Forest Park: Administrative History* (Triangle, VA: National Park Service, 2014), 40.

70. Wehrle, *Catoctin Mountain Park,* under "Construction at Catoctin, Part II," http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/cato/hrs5b.htm (accessed November 16, 2015).

period because of the expanding park movement. Historian Sara Gregg illustrates how social reform accompanied federal land policy in Appalachia, reshaping both the regional landscape and the population that resided therein. At Shenandoah National Park, one of her two case studies, the federal government removed entire communities, with many families relocated to seven government-built homestead communities outside the park. However, many families refused to move and loudly criticized the whole New Deal subsistence community program. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) also removed thousands of families, many of whom similarly protested, from their homes and farms to create a system of hydroelectric dams that TVA believed would improve rural life throughout the Tennessee Valley.[71]

The dislocation of communities for park development during the New Deal left a complicated legacy. From an environmental perspective, acquiring worn out land for conservation and recreation made sense. However, scholars have demonstrated that the categorization of land as submarginal was affected by the biases and prejudices of land economists and program administrators.[72] In the case of Shenandoah National Park, where mountain families were portrayed negatively, historical archaeologist Audrey Horning found material culture evidence in three mountain hollows located within the park showing that these communities did not fit the stereotypes government officials had

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71. Gregg, *Managing the Mountains,* 92, 177; Michael McDonald and John Muldowny, *TVA and the Dispossessed: The Resettlement of Population in the Norris Dam Area* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982).

72. Robert Gough in his article on Richard T. Ely and land economists illustrated how Ely was biased against farmers who struggled on cutover land in Wisconsin. See Gough, "Richard T. Ely and the Development of the Wisconsin Cutover," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 75, no. 1 (Autumn 1991): 28-38.

projected on them during the 1930s.[73] Some dislocated people felt bitterness toward the NPS for many years, even generations.[74] On the other hand, some descendants saw the park project as beneficial for both their communities and their families. Historian Margaret Brown, for example, documented some locals who thrived in the tourist trade catering to park visitors at Great Smoky Mountains National Park.[75]

Conclusion

The New Deal radically transformed the landscape, and we can still see vestiges of its legacy today. State and national parks offer an interesting window to New Deal politics and ideas in natural resource conservation, historic preservation, and human conservation. Park planners and managers had to act quickly to coordinate the unprecedented amount of development that occurred. Through master planning, they created models with regional variations that allowed them to implement projects rapidly. They created a cohesive design that blended nature and history to meet visitor needs, and

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73. Audrey Horning, *In the Shadow of Ragged Mountain: Historical Archaeology of Nicholson, Corbin, and Weakley Hollows* (Luray, VA: Shenandoah National Park Association, 2004).

74. Notable works that cover the bitterness of displaced families towards the NPS during this period in Appalachia include Katrina Powell, *The Anguish of Displacement: The Politics of Literacy in the Letters of Mountain Families in Shenandoah National Park* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007); Durwood Dunn, *Cades Cove: The Life and Death of a Southern Appalachian Community, 1818-1837* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 241-54.

75. Brown, *The Wild East,* 194-96, indicates elite local landowners and the Cherokee benefited especially from the park tourism, because of the increase in land values in the Gatlinburg area and the tourist desire for Native American souvenirs.

used park development to effect a measure of social reform. However, they left some problems to be solved by future generations of park managers.

First, there are the issues in terminology. There was little consistency in how NPS professionals described natural areas. The terms "natural," "scenic," "landscape," "wilderness preservation," and "conservation" were used arbitrarily. Today, these words have more precise meanings for natural resource specialists. While managers might have been professing their desire to "preserve wilderness," they were really just interested in what Richard West Sellars called "façade management," which he described as "protecting and enhancing the scenic façade of nature for the public's enjoyment, but with scant scientific knowledge and little concern for biological consequences."[76] Nothing was really left "untouched," and landscape architects enthusiastically manipulated the environment to enhance its beauty with little concern for ecological integrity. Park managers also seemed to believe that they could preserve natural scenery in perpetuity, even though nature is a dynamic process. A small contingent of wildlife biologists tried to raise scientific concerns, but their influence diminished at the end of the 1930s.

The NPS history program made huge advancements in historic preservation during this period, thanks to New Deal funding, agency reorganization and reorientation, the influx of university-trained historians, and the Historic Sites Act of 1935. However, NPS park planners favored a historic preservation strategy to freeze sites in time. They removed historic features that they did not believe were significant to the story, making

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76. Sellars, *Preserving Nature in National Parks,* 4-5.

sites seem one-dimensional. They also focused on nostalgic sites that fit well with the natural landscape, especially favoring the "Frontier Village" concept. They removed more modern intrusions from historic sites to make them seem primitive. In the process, they stripped away many layers of the cultural landscape that gave a particular place its meanings. Historians now have to go back and piece together what has been lost.

Park recreation continues to be an important mechanism of social reform. Federal and state agencies have continued to create relief programs centered on natural and cultural resource conservation in parks, often modeled on New Deal programs. For example, the Job Corps was created as part of Johnson's Great Society. It was modeled after the CCC but adapted for post-war society. Some parks that had CCC camps also developed Job Corps Conservation Centers. The Job Corps program in national parks was short lived, but the federal government and nonprofit organizations have created a string of successor programs including the Youth Conservation Corps, AmeriCorps, and Student Conservation Association.[77] The NPS continues to use national parks as venues to reach at-risk populations, believing that national parks provide the best environment for social uplift.

New Deal park planners introduced a more holistic approach of integrating nature, history, and social reform in park development, although they had no exact formula for reconciling these values. Each park had natural and cultural features that made it a unique place prior to NPS interference. Park boosters and specialists also had certain values they were trying to project. Local, regional, and national politics certainly

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77. Maher, *Nature's New Deal,* 217.

influenced how parks developed, particularly site selection and land acquisition. Planners also had to account for existing cultural values and anticipate visitor needs. However, the models created during the New Deal provide a useful starting point to examine how parks developed and why they look the way they do. Cumberland Gap NHP inherited an important legacy when Congress created the park in 1940. Park planners formed a vision for the area based upon nearly a decade of experience that focused on recreating the pioneer landscape at a natural landmark nestled in an economically depressed region.

CHAPTER THREE

New Deal Vision for Cumberland Gap National Historical Park

On July 3, 1936, President Franklin Roosevelt spoke at the dedication of Shenandoah National Park, expounding to his audience how this park and others across the nation were instrumental in "preserving and developing our heritage of natural resources" and "conserving our priceless heritage of human values." He indicated that in recent years there had been a tragedy of waste in both land and people, which compelled him as president "to put our idle people to the task of ending the waste of our land." He praised the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees who made the mountain park useful for humanity. He concluded by dedicating the park to "this and succeeding generations of Americans for the recreation and the re-creation which they shall find there."[1] Roosevelt's speech points to a larger federal vision to recreate the Appalachian region through restoring degraded land, uplifting local populations, and providing recreational opportunities for the American population. Cumberland Gap NHP helped "re-create" this corner of Appalachia by preserving an important piece of American frontier history while also restoring the landscape in an area identified as being in need of reform. The park became a space where park planners and managers could present a model version of Appalachia.

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1. Franklin Roosevelt, "Address at the Dedication of Shenandoah National Park," online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project,* http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15316 (accessed December 4, 2014).

The National Park Service sent a survey team to Cumberland Gap to evaluate its potential as a national park after the passage of the Historic Sites Act in 1935, revitalizing the national park efforts of Middlesboro boosters once again. The survey team entered a region that was undergoing an important transformation in federal land and social reform. New Deal liberals and federal government bureaucrats sought to remedy the region's socio-economic issues through planning and reform programs. The NPS considered Cumberland Gap as part of these initiatives and recommended that Congress designate it a National Historical Park in recognition of its historical importance as well as its scenic qualities. Congress established the park in 1940, close to the end of almost a decade of national park expansion. Although the park could not fully benefit from New Deal programs like hundreds of other parks during this period, park planners and boosters did create a vision for the park that reconciled natural conservation, historic preservation, and social reform by centering their focus on recreating Daniel Boone's wilderness. They saw this park as a link to other NPS sites commemorating westward expansion, but in the context of the Great Depression this link also served as a metaphor connecting Americans, particularly Appalachians, to their frontier past.

Planning the Appalachian Federal Landscape

The Great Depression impacted every corner of the country, but it brought some of the socio-economic issues of the southern Appalachian Mountains into sharp focus. Approximately five million people lived in the region in 1933. By the end of 1934, 229,100 families in the region were on relief rolls—totaling one-fourth of the rural relief

cases in the United States.[2] The federal government commissioned studies and planning boards wrote reports about the problems in the region. Federal agencies and relief programs addressed the region's unemployment, stranded industrial workers and their families, and degradation of natural resources. Supported by government studies, most of these programs operated under the assumption that instituting a land-use program would alleviate most of these problems.

The National Resources Board commissioned a study of land utilization in the United States to help inform the board's report to President Roosevelt on "National Planning and Public Works in Relation to Natural Resources and Including Land Use and Water Sources," which it submitted on November 28, 1934. To prepare the section of the report pertaining to land utilization, the Land Planning Committee accumulated a large amount of data that it published in eleven separate parts. Part VI, "Maladjustments in Land Use in the United States," evaluated land use problems across the United States. Under the supervision of L. C. Gray, land economists in the Land Policy Section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the USDA's Bureau of Agricultural Economics compiled the data and took a regional approach in their analysis. They wrote that although individual property owners could take measures toward land conservation, the problems they encountered were so widespread they required public action.[3]

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2. Rexford Tugwell, "The Resettlement Administration and its Relation to the Appalachian Mountains," *Mountain Life and Work* 11, no. 3 (October 1935): 2.

3. Land Policy Section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, *Maladjustments in Land Use: Part VI of the Report on Land Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1935), iii, 1-2, https://archive.org/details/maladjustmentsin1935rich (accessed January 16, 2015).

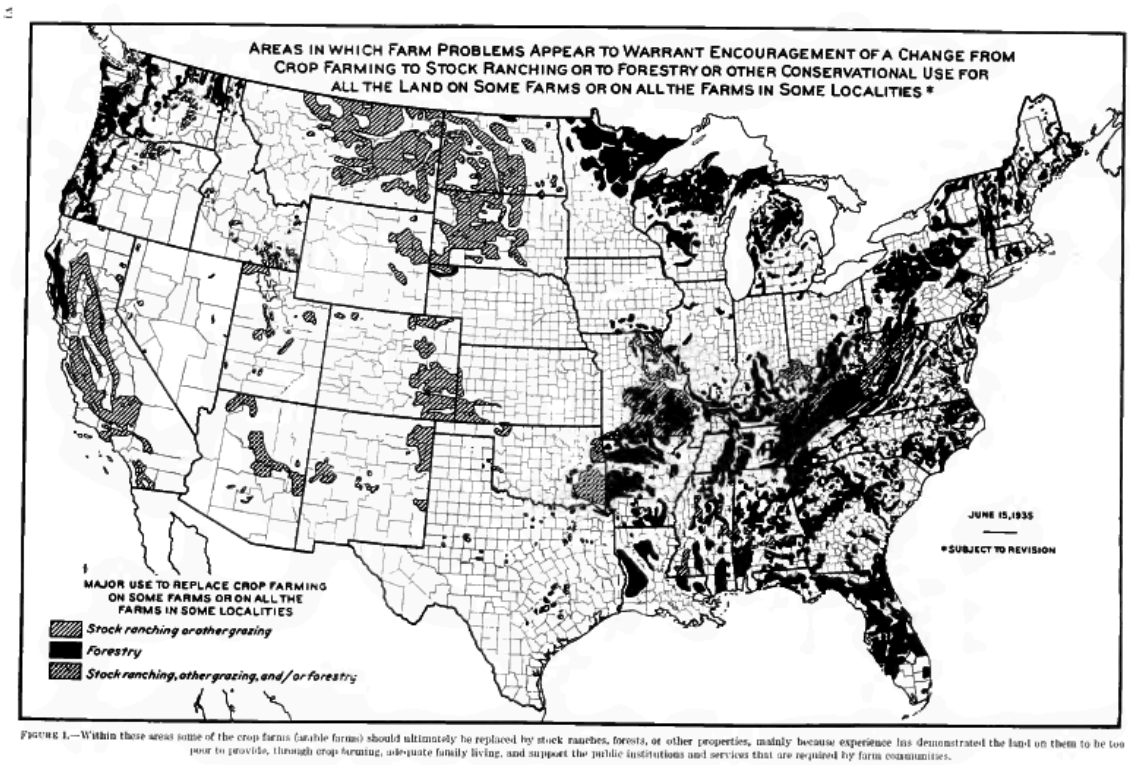

Figure 7. "Areas in Which Farm Problems Appear to Warrant a Change from Crop Farming to Stock Ranching or to Forestry or Other Conservation Use for All the Land on Some Farms or All the Farms in Some Localities." Land Policy Section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, *Maladjustments in Land Use: Part VI of the Report on Land Planning,* June 15, 1935, p. 6. This map shows that the AAA recommended the Cumberland Gap area for forestry or other conservation purposes. Source: Internet Archive.

The land economists found that the Southern Highland region in the Eastern U.S. was especially problematic and required major adjustments. Farms located in plateau regions, such as the Cumberland Plateau, were isolated and hard to access, had poor, stony soil, and had short growing seasons. Land economists thought that bringing public services to small plateau farms would be "wholly un-economic."[4] They were struck by

4. Ibid., 22.

the isolation of the entire region and made assumptions about how that seclusion shaped mountain culture. A report author wrote, "In the relative seclusion of the highlands pioneer conditions have been perpetuated to a surprising degree."[5] Their findings reinforced turn-of-the-century cultural assumptions that those living in the region were the contemporary ancestors of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century pioneers. Unlike other rural areas where families abandoned farms, they found that population had actually increased in eastern Kentucky, where the local populace had surpassed the agricultural land resources needed to support it. They found that in these submarginal areas the average income was between $364 and $391, and some families made do with less than $100 for the entire year. They characterized the standard of living as poor with many families living in "simple board shacks."[6] In a manner similar to turn-of-the-century color writers, industrialists, and missionaries, they described these families as abnormally large with poor diets that consisted mostly of cornbread, bacon, and molasses, and who were susceptible to typhoid fever and dysentery.

The land economists made a number of recommendations for modern and efficient land use. First, crop farming in the roughest areas should be withdrawn and converted to constructive use. Second, constructive management of forestland should be implemented. Third, farm units should be enlarged in the less rugged areas for greater pasture space per farm and provide enough land to sufficiently support family living. Finally, erosion control measures should be implemented in the better farming areas,

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5. Ibid., 21.

6. Ibid., 22.

where no increase in size was needed.[7] Southern Highland farms constituted over a quarter of all farms recommended for retirement. The land economists reflected: "Farm retirement here is not a matter of economic recovery nor of the regaining of prosperity; the people have never been prosperous."[8]

New Deal agencies sometimes overlapped in their functions, including those engaged in regional planning. Congress passed the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Act in 1933, which was a comprehensive planning effort for the entire Tennessee River Valley that extended six hundred miles from Kentucky to Alabama. The TVA covered parts of the southern highlands, and extended to the Virginia and Tennessee sides of Cumberland Gap. The TVA aimed to use technological innovation to tame the unpredictable Tennessee River through a series of hydroelectric dams that would provide low-cost electricity to rural populations. Government officials saw the land as unproductive, laid waste by years of forest clear-cutting and row-cropping farm practices that reduced precious topsoil. The TVA was a total-human, natural resource, and technological endeavor. The agency not only planned dam construction and hired thousands of workers, but also resettled hundreds of families, created entirely new communities, and developed parks and forests. The federal government, through the TVA and other agencies, built upon earlier attempts of missionaries and industrialists to "modernize the mountaineer" by improving access to transportation networks, education, and modern standards of living, and by harnessing the potential of natural resources to create jobs. The federal government, however, sought to rectify the problems of earlier

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7. Ibid., 7.

8. Ibid., 20.

efforts, which were often scattered, uneven, and single-purpose driven, by centralizing power and authority with the federal government. The TVA, like other agencies at the time, was responsible for comprehensive planning, incorporating the best of modern technology and imbuing planning with social reform to set an international model for future development.[9] Historian David Whisnant asserted that, "Within a decade, TVA became the national symbol of rational, humane, democratic planning and development."[10] However, the idealism of the TVA and its reputation soon waned as criticism mounted against the agency for failed resettlement efforts and for turning to coal-powered plants to meet increased energy demands, which in turn encouraged strip-mining in coal counties including those in eastern Kentucky.[11]

TVA did not directly impact the Cumberland Gap area, but it did influence Lee and Claiborne counties. TVA purchased thirty-eight square miles in Claiborne County, Tennessee. The construction of the Norris Dam and reservoir displaced county residents and also likely absorbed labor from the county during construction. TVA also established a Civilian Conservation Corps camp at Rose Hill in Lee County, Virginia, in 1934. This company undertook soil erosion projects to improve the drainage basin of Norris Dam. Additionally, the company erected a fire tower in the White Rocks vicinity within the proposed national park.[12]

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9. David Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer: People, Power, and Planning in Appalachia,* rev. ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 45.

10. Ibid., 43.

11. Ibid., 50.

In 1935, USDA land economists produced a second study of the economic and social issues of the Appalachian region in 1935. L. C. Gray and C. F. Clayton, both graduates of the University of Wisconsin-Madison land economics program, were the chief authors; Gray had overseen the Land Policy report for the National Resources Board. They acknowledged the diversity of the region but reemphasized that the basic problem "[grew] out of maladjustments in land use and the relation of population to the land."[13] The authors argued that a federal land use program was needed with cooperation from state agencies. They believed that once land was properly classified and options presented to a landowner, the landowner would act within his best economic interests. They also argued that socio-economic issues were directly related to the conditions of the land. Therefore, if land conditions improved so would social and economic conditions. They realized that this meant shifting mountain populations, particularly those farming mountain property or those workers "stranded" in the coalfields with no other means of survival besides relying on the boom and bust of the industry. One possible way that Gray and Clayton believed that conditions in Appalachia could be adjusted was to combine part-time farming with part-time work in forestry. Another possibility was to combine part-time mining with either part-time industrial work or farming. This was reflected in the Resettlement Administration's efforts to create sustainable communities

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12. Michael McDonald and John Muldowny, *TVA and the Dispossessed: The Resettlement of Population in the Norris Dam Area* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 277; "CCC-TVA Camp at Rose Hill," *Middlesboro (KY) Daily News,* April 24, 1934, p.1; Photograph of Fire Tower Built by TVA-5 Rose Hill, April 21, 1934, Park Archive, Martha Wiley Subject Files, Folder "CCC Rose Hill, VA."

13. U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Economic and Social Problems and Conditions of the Southern Appalachians,* (Washington, DC: Department of Agriculture, 1935), 2, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009791272 (accessed November 17, 2014).

that provided modern housing, enough land for subsistence, and access to part-time forestry or industrial work. Gray and Clayton also noted that robust communities (as opposed to Appalachians living in isolation) could support educational, religious, and recreational institutions for the benefit of the local population.[14]

In October 1935, Bruce Poundstone published an article in *Mountain Life and Work,* the quarterly publication of the Council on Southern Mountain Workers, which analyzed eastern Kentucky's land use problems in particular.[15] Since 1880, the number of farms in the region had increased while the size of the farms had decreased. Poundstone found the situation exacerbated by the number of family members returning to the farm as industrial employment fell due to the economic crisis. The rural population increased 25% in 1934 as a result.[16] He noted the dichotomies in living conditions between the western bluegrass region of the state and eastern counties, showing that eastern Kentucky farm dwellings were worth on average $370, while farmhouses in the western bluegrass region were valued at $2,100, a rate nearly six times higher.[17] Using the assumption that 25 acres of bottomland or decent upland was sufficient to support a farm family, Poundstone found that the region could support approximately thirty-five thousand farms. That number left a "surplus" of twenty thousand farm families. He recommended that the

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14. Ibid., 2, 5.

15. Bruce Poundstone, "Land-Use in Eastern Kentucky," *Mountain Life and Work* 11, no. 3 (October 1935): 11-15.

16. "Public Affairs for Mountains are Discussed," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 20, 1934, p.1.

17. Farm dwellings in the rest of the commonwealth averaged $660. Poundstone, "Land-Use in Eastern Kentucky," 12-13.

percentage of total farmland be reduced from 64 to 30%.[18] Poundstone recognized the population issue was a large one. People could be moved to better land in the same counties, but there would not be enough productive land for everyone. Outmigration might help alleviate some pressure. But he pointed out that relief programs in submarginal areas were pointless because they failed to solve the issue of poor land use. Instead, he favored land classification and local ordinances to promote best uses of land to ensure conservation of natural resources for years to come.[19]

In the same issue of *Mountain Life and Work,* Resettlement Administration Director Rexford Tugwell published an article about his new agency's role in retiring submarginal mountain land and resettling the families that lived there. Tugwell told readers that poor land was already on its way out of production in Appalachia. The federal government could help by purchasing submarginal land and either place families in special government-built communities or help them resettle on better land through loans and assistance. The Resettlement Administration was short-lived, however. Its projects were transferred to the USDA under the new Farm Security Administration (FSA) in 1937. The FSA focused more on rehabilitation in place rather than whole-scale relocation. It provided loans to tenants to become landowners as well as rehabilitation grants and loans to farm families so they could reduce debt, acquire healthcare, and join

18. Ibid., 13.

19. Ibid., 15-6.

cooperative enterprises. FSA employees also offered technical assistance to help with farm and household efficiency and land conservation.[20]

The Resettlement Administration did manage one resettlement project near Cumberland Gap before the agency was transferred to the USDA—the Kentucky Ridge Project. The Land Policy Section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), under the direction of L. C. Gray, originally initiated the project as part of its submarginal lands program, but the Resettlement Administration inherited the project along with the rest of the AAA's submarginal land program when the new agency was created in 1935. In 1934, a University of Kentucky professor of agriculture recommended four Kentucky counties—Knox, Clay, Leslie, and Bell—where most farmland was submarginal and 80 to 90% of families were on relief. Leaders in Knox County asked the USDA to purchase lands in the Stinking Creek watershed as a submarginal land project to convert into a state or national forest. Land acquisition agents began approaching residents, but many landowners were hesitant to sell. A 1934 survey of Knox County residents in the proposed area found 157 respondents unwilling to resettle, 93 willing to move within Knox County, and 381 willing to move anywhere.[21] Landowners in the Bell County

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20. Rexford Tugwell, "The Resettlement Administration and its Relation to the Appalachian Mountains," *Mountain Life and Work* 11, no. 3 (October 1935): 2-5; Sarah Phillips, *This Land, This Nation: Conservation, Rural America, and the New Deal* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 142-45.

21. Shelley Smith Mastran and Nan Lowerre, *Mountaineers and Rangers: A History of Forest Management in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, 1900-1981* under "Submarginal Farm Relocation Projects: Stinking Creek," (Washington, DC: Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, 1983), http://www.foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/region/8/history/chap3.aspx (accessed October 3, 2014).

portion of the proposed project acted more quickly, and the government acquired 14,000 acres near the state park. Knox County residents lost their chance to sell their property when the government reduced funds for the submarginal land program.

Most of the residents living in the Bell County project area did not benefit from the land sale, however. A 1936 survey showed all but one of the 115 families living in the purchase area were tenants and did not own the land. Only thirty families qualified for resettlement, and the report noted that it was hard to find good land in the area. The government agents evaluating families for resettlement were concerned with placing those that they deemed mentally, physically, and morally fit to farm, thereby injecting a new level of social reform into federal land policy. In the case of the Kentucky Ridge Project, those who did not qualify for rural resettlement were excluded because five were determined mentally deficient, fifteen physically incapable to farm, and twenty-five "morally unfit."[22] Program administrators determined that the remaining forty families were "stranded" industrial people with no agricultural skills. Forest Service historians Mastran and Lowerre point out an additional problem with the resettlement program. Land acquisition agents did not believe a self-sufficient farm or garden plot was a "real farm." Residents living within the project area were shuffled around in the bureaucracy and largely forgotten, particularly after the Resettlement Administration's projects were transferred to the FSA. The only resettlement community built in the Southern Appalachians was located in Laurel County, Kentucky. It was called the Sublimity Forest Community and intended for those displaced by the Daniel Boone National Forest. Sublimity was expensive to construct, and families could not find enough work to

22. Quoted in Ibid.

supplement their gardens. The average rate of occupancy was eighteen months. The USFS was reluctant to take on other resettlement projects when it realized the Sublimity community was unsustainable. The USFS, which managed the Kentucky Ridge project, allowed the families living within the resettlement project area to stay in their homes until 1938, when the project manager had to move remaining families off the land. By 1939, all but one family had resettled without government help. The project manager helped the remaining family through his own personal expense.[23]

The Kentucky Ridge Project soon became Kentucky Ridge State Forest, although for a few years in the late 1930s park boosters and NPS planners considered including it in the national park project at Cumberland Gap along with Pine Mountain State Park. Both areas were close to Cumberland Ford, a historic feature of the Wilderness Road, and the federal government put in a substantial amount of money through land acquisition and development by the Civilian Conservation Corps and other work programs. The NPS study team that evaluated Cumberland Gap for a national historical park drew upon Resettlement Administration data and its experiences at Kentucky Ridge to understand land use issues near Cumberland Gap.[24]

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23. Ibid.

24. K. C. McCarter, C. W. Porter, W. L. Savage, D. C. Hazlett, T. J. Nelson, and F. M. Mutchler, "Report on Proposed Park at Cumberland Gap," 1937, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 8, Shelf 3, Box 2932, Folder General Correspondence Part I CUGA May 1, 1935 to January 1, 1939. National Archives and Records Administration will hereafter be referred to as NARA, and indicates the repository in College Park, Maryland.

In 1938, the TVA with the support of other federal, state, and local agencies, produced a planning document focused on the recreational potential of what it referred to as the Southern Highlands. This report was completed at roughly the same time as the NPS's Park, Parkway, and Recreation Study. The two reports are indicative of the trend towards regional recreational planning during this period, and also provide examples of overlapping, if not competing, New Deal initiatives. The TVA's report provides a snapshot of what TVA recreational planners believed to be the role for the proposed Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. The authors argued that recreational development program could improve the local economies in a region where the spendable income was 60% below the national average.[25] The report divided the region into four provinces: Blue Ridge, Valley, Cumberland Plateau, and Cumberland Mountain. Cumberland Gap fell into the Cumberland Mountain Province. The authors noted that the best scenic and recreational areas fell in the Blue Ridge Province, where Great Smoky Mountains National Park was being developed at the time. In the authors' analysis the Cumberland Mountain Province did not hold superb views except at Cumberland Gap, where the NPS was considering creating a national park. The anticipated income generated in this area would not be as high as other areas because the planners envisioned most tourists visiting this area would be on their way to other locations.[26]

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25. Tennessee Valley Authority, *Recreational Development of the Southern Highlands Region: A Study of the Use and Control of Scenic and Recreational Resources* (Knoxville: Tennessee Valley Authority, 1938), viii, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001277907 (accessed November 17, 2014).

26. Ibid., 6.

New Deal agencies' planning reports provide both big picture and closer views of the Cumberland Gap area, its problems, and possible solutions. While the scope of these studies differed, they all concluded that poor land use was a major reason for poverty in the region and that conservation and recreational development could alleviate some its problems. These reports also reveal certain perceptions of the Appalachian people: that they were backwards and uneducated, did not use the land properly, and had more children than the resources could support.[27] The Resettlement Administration went so far as to remove people from submarginal land, but fell short in helping them reestablish themselves. The Cumberland Gap national park project fit well within this larger scheme of regional land and social reform by purchasing mountain lands, restoring the natural environment, removing the population within the project area, and creating new jobs to bolster the local economy.

Relief for Cumberland Gap

A number of federal relief programs put people to work in the Cumberland Gap area on a variety of public works project that had a lasting impact to the landscape and the population. Such programs included the Civil Works Administration, Works Progress Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, and National Youth Administration. Several of these projects focused on park development.

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27. Land Policy Section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, *Maladjustments in Land Use,* iii, 1-22; U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Economic and Social Problems and Conditions of the Southern Appalachians*, 2-5; Tennessee Valley Authority, *Recreational Development of the Southern Highlands Region,* viii, 6.

The short-lived Civil Works Administration (CWA), a targeted work-relief program designed to alleviate economic suffering during the unusually severe winter of 1933-1934, employed locals on a number of different conservation and public works projects. A local board selected area projects, and Howard Douglass of the Middlesboro Chamber of Commerce served as chairman. CWA workers labored briefly at Pine Mountain State Park, where the CCC with the technical guidance and oversight of the NPS was overhauling the park. CWA workers in Bell County also labored on a local flood control project, a construction project on Laurel Road, and the new Middlesboro Airport. The CWA in Bell County demobilized in March 1934, at which time the *Middlesboro Daily News* reported that CWA project work in the area totaled $116,365.[28]

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) undertook a variety of construction projects and community services in the local area. The airport, which began as a city project in 1932, was completed with WPA funds and dedicated on September 27, 1934. Mayhew, the Kentucky Ridge project manager, hired 266 men for creating the forest reserve in the Big Clear Creek Watershed and asked for an additional 800 workers. The *Middlesboro Daily News* printed a WPA Directory in May 1940 that included a range of community services. A job-training center taught unemployed workers new skills. A Housekeeping Aide Project sent housekeepers to the homes of the sick, elderly, and "maladjusted" to increase household efficiency, make homes more attractive, and give hope to those they served. Middlesboro had a WPA commodity office that distributed

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28. "Rights-of-Way Are Needed to Continue Work," *Middlesboro Daily News*, March 7, 1934, p.1; Plan for Pine Mountain Park Described," *Middlesboro Daily News,* March 15, 1934, p.1; "Local CWA Is Demobilized Here Today, 199 Are Paid," *Middlesboro Daily News*, March 31, 1934, p.1; "CWA, Direct Relief Totals Near $200,000," *Middlesboro Daily News,* April 18, 1934, p.1.

surplus farm goods to needy families and local schools for their lunch programs. The WPA also offered its own school lunch program in Middlesboro and operated a health office, which likely helped with public health services and sanitation. The WPA Matron Service in Middlesboro paid women to clean women's restrooms and girls' locker rooms. The WPA also funded an indexing project in Middlesboro where white-collar workers indexed newspapers or other historical records. The WPA Professional and Service Division operated a handicraft project, which employed seventeen women to make quilts and coats from scrap materials, as well as toys, rugs, and baskets. Their goods were distributed to needy families and school children. The WPA also built the Hutch School, just outside of present-day Cumberland Gap National Historical Park's boundaries.[29]

The WPA played an important role in developing local recreational amenities, including the Progressive Era Bartlett-Rhodes Park in Middlesboro, which soon became part of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. In Kentucky and across the United States, the WPA hired white-collar workers to develop cultural and recreational programs at local community recreation centers to fill leisure time (some forced from high unemployment). The Middlesboro WPA Recreation Center, one of two hundred similar centers in the commonwealth, oversaw activities at Bartlett-Rhodes Park, where WPA

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29. Ann Matheny, *The Magic City: Footnotes to the History of Middlesborough, Kentucky, and the Yellow Creek Valley* (Middlesboro, KY: Bell County Historical Society, 2003), 374; "10,0980 Acres Now Approved for Purchase," *Middlesboro Daily News,* April 9, 1936, p.4; "W.P.A. Directory," *Middlesboro Daily News,* May 22, 1940, p.8; Dorothea Argo, "What Housekeeping Aides Do," *Journal of American Nursing* 41, no. 7 (July 1941): 775; George Blakey, *Hard Times and the New Deal in Kentucky, 1929-1939* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 61-62; "Handicraft Project Gives Women Valuable Training," *Middlesboro Daily News,* May 22, 1940, p.8; George Goodman, "Hutch School, 1936," Goodman-Paxton Collection, University of Kentucky, http://kdl.kyvl.org/catalog/xt7nvx05xv47_216_18 (accessed October 3, 2014).

workers vastly improved the park's infrastructure.[30] The city had only made modest improvements to the park, investing $10,000. The WPA spent somewhere between $35,000 to $40,000.[31] WPA workers built a recreation hall, tennis courts, horseshoe courts, playground, roads, walkways, and a drive to Fern Lake. Robert Kincaid, editor of the Middlesboro Daily News and foremost national park supporter, praised the dedication of the park in 1937, saying it was "only a nucleus of a further park development, which should include the entire Cumberland Gap area."[32]

Figure 8. "Bath House and Outdoor Oven at Bartlett State Park in Middlesboro." Photographed by George Paxton in 1937. Source: Goodman-Paxton Photographic Collection, University of Kentucky Special Collections Research Center, Kentucky Digital Library.

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30. Blakey, *Hard Times and the New Deal in Kentucky,* 62.

31. One newspaper article said the WPA expended $35,000 while another the next day said $40,000. "Ceremony for Park Opening Held Today," *Middlesboro Daily News*, June 2, 1937, p.8; "Tributes Paid City Officials for City's Park," *Middlesboro Daily News,* June 3, 1937, p.6.

32. "Tributes Paid City Officials for City's Park."

The CCC was also busy developing recreational amenities at nearby Pine Mountain State Park, which was established as Kentucky's first state park in 1926 with the name Cumberland State Park. The park name changed during the 1930s to avoid confusion with nearby Cumberland Falls State Park, also a New Deal project. The CCC arrived at Pine Mountain State Park in 1933, the first year of the Emergency Conservation Work program. The NPS directed project work, which cost approximately $500,000 (including labor). CCC crews built a park road three hundred feet from the crest of the mountain. They also built cabin camps, a lodge, and a network of horse and hiking trails. The project utilized NPS design standards, employing the park rustic architectural style in the design of park facilities and using circulation patterns that would best serve visitors while fitting into the landscape and maximizing views of the mountains. Natural landscape design blended with modernism in a spectacular amphitheater, which CCC crews fashioned by digging out a hillside, constructing fieldstone seating, and building visitor facilities using rustic, log construction. The amphitheater holds the annual Mountain Laurel Festival, where spectators watch the governor crown a new queen among the laurel every spring. In June 1934, the National Conference on State Parks met at Pine Mountain State Park. The 167 delegates toured the CCC's accomplishments at the park and visited their camp.[33] Camp newspaper records indicate that the CCC remained a presence at Pine Mountain until 1941.[34]

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33. "Plan for Pine Mountain Park Described," *Middlesboro Daily News,* March 15, 1934, pp.1, 6; Blakey, *Hard Times and New Deal in Kentucky, 1929-1939,* 85; "State Park Programs Are Discussed," *Middlesboro Daily News,* June 7, 1934, p.1.

Figure 9. Pine Mountain State Park Contact Station. Photographed by author in 2014.

The 1935 Emergency Relief Appropriation Act created the National Youth Administration (NYA) and housed it within the WPA. The NYA program specifically aimed at providing work-study opportunities for needy youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. New Deal administrators found that as successful as the CCC was, it did not completely address the problem of jobless youth.[35] Eastern Kentucky not only had conservation issues, but high illiteracy rates as well, ranging between 19 and 31% in the

34. Lori O'Conner, "Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Newsletters," Kentucky History Center, Special Collections, http://kdl.kyvl.org/catalog/xt7x959c623m/guide (accessed October 3, 2014).

35. Blakey, *Hard Times and the New Deal in Kentucky*, 90.

southeastern counties according to the 1930s census.[36] The NYA helped youth stay in school by giving them part-time work. Unlike the CCC, the NYA admitted girls as well as boys, and participants lived at home instead of camps. In Bell County, the NYA recruited participants from families on relief. Participants helped complete beautification projects at county schools and playgrounds. They helped with the construction of two new schools at Fonde and Balkan, expanding educational opportunities to other Appalachian children.[37]

When work relief programs were insufficient, local residents received some direct aid to relieve the effects of the depression. Kentucky per capita income dropped from $371 in 1929, just above half the national average, to only $198 in 1933.[38] Relief administrators were primarily concerned about children not being fed or receiving proper nutrition because their parents did not have the cash or the small eastern Kentucky farms could not produce enough to sustain them. The *Middlesboro Daily News* reported in April 1934 that the Federal Emergency Relief Administration expended over $80,000 in direct aid for children's food programs. The Friends Society provided 27,493 lunches for 416 children and gave milk to 191 children. The Parent Teacher Association also provided 13,290 lunches.[39]

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36. Donald Boyd, "The Book Women of Kentucky: The WPA Pack Horse Library Project, 1936-1943," *Libraries & the Cultural Record* 42, no. 2 (2007): 112.

37. "N.Y.A. Projects in Bell County," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 19, 1936, p.3.

38. Blakey, *Hard Times and New Deal in Kentucky,* 14.

39. "CWA, Direct Relief Totals Near $200,000."

Farm families in Lee and Claiborne counties received assistance from the government in the form of loans and agricultural expertise. A group of four hundred Claiborne County farmers met in January 1936 to organize a formal farm program. They created permanent committees and discussed how they would cooperate with the Resettlement Administration, Soil Conservation Service, TVA, and Farm Credit Administration. The next month, the Resettlement Administration Rehabilitation Supervisor in Lee County, R. S. Banner, reported that there was support available for 150 families, which would provide loans to purchase livestock, seed, and equipment.[40] It is unclear how many farmers benefitted from these programs, but the organization of Claiborne County farmers indicates that they were interested in tapping into the myriad New Deal programs aimed at alleviating rural poverty and conserving land.

The *Middlesboro Daily News* mostly reported on relief programs in the Bell County area, but it provides a snapshot to how New Deal programs shaped the landscape around Cumberland Gap by constructing public works projects and benefited people by providing community services. The capital improvements projects focused on improving local infrastructure, combatting the area's isolation, and conserving land and natural resources. The community service projects aimed to alleviate rural poverty by providing job training, increasing household efficiencies, providing educational and vocational training opportunities, improving literacy, and extending health services. Public works funding and community service programming supported recreational development in the Cumberland area, from developing municipal parks like Bartlett-Rhodes Park and state

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40. "Claiborne County Farmers Plan Program for 1936," *Middlesboro Daily News,* January 15, 1936, p.6; "Rehabilitation Quota for 150 Families, Lee Co.," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 3, 1936, p.1.

parks like Pine Mountain State Park, because these projects helped meet larger New Deal goals of land conservation, combatting rural poverty, and providing opportunities for jobless youth. National park boosters were optimistic that these smaller initiatives would clear a path for a national park.

Hope for a Parkway

At the beginning of the New Deal and park expansion, Middlesboro boosters tried a different strategy for bringing tourists to the region by getting the eastern national park-to-park highway to pass through the Cumberland Gap. Two years after the establishment of Great Smoky Mountains, Shenandoah, and Mammoth Cave national parks in 1926, a group of Good Roads advocates began lobbying for an eastern national park-to-park highway, much like the one the NPS was developing for western national parks.[41] This modern highway, as proposed in 1931, would connect Washington, D.C. with all three eastern national parks and a number of historic sites including Mount Vernon and Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Memorial. The 1931 route ran through Cumberland Gap. However, plans for the parkway progressed slowly and support groups began to splinter as the depression wore on. Momentum turned when the National Industrial Recovery Act authorized the establishment of what would soon be known as

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41. As visitation increased in remote western national parks, the NPS, with the help of private, municipal, and civic groups, sought to create a route that connected all major western parks. The National Park-to-Park Highway Association formed in 1916 to support and promote the route. The NPS entered into an agreement with the Bureau of Public Roads to coordinate road building in what has been called a "Golden Age of park road development." Ann Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway: A Blue Ridge Parkway History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 24-25.

the Blue Ridge Parkway, which connected Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains national parks.[42]

Boosters at Cumberland Gap hoped to get in on the parkway action as progress for the Blue Ridge Parkway moved forward. In 1934, the local Middlesboro Kiwanis group passed a resolution supporting the park-to-park system that would connect three sites in Kentucky: Cumberland Gap, Pine Mountain State Park, and Cumberland Falls State Park.[43] They cited the need for good roads in the area and the thousands of jobs that such a road project would create. A statewide group formed the Kentucky Park-to-Park Highway Committee to lobby for federal funds. In 1935, the group wrote that up to that point most New Deal funding for Kentucky residents came from direct relief because there were few public works projects in the commonwealth. They believed the park-to-park highway would be a suitable public works project because 40 to 60% of the families in counties included in the proposed route were on relief. They also argued that many of these counties were isolated places "where primitive conditions prevail." They asserted that, "This road will relieve the isolation of backward agricultural methods and eventually the poverty in these counties."[44] This statement is direct evidence that some locals shared the belief with federal land economists and sociologists that many Appalachians were anti-modern and impoverished because of their isolation.

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42. Ibid., 29-31.

43. "Movement is on to Build Park Road," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 22, 1934, pp.1, 3.

44. "Road Group Will Ask Federal Appropriations," *Middlesboro Daily News,* March 18, 1935, p.2.

The park-to-park highway Kentucky extension would fall to the back burner as it became clear that the Blue Ridge Parkway would not extend to Kentucky anytime soon. However, during the same week the Kentucky Park-to-Park Highway Committee planned on seeking federal funds, *Middlesboro Daily News* editor Robert Kincaid published a passionate op-ed, "Cumberland Gap Should be Preserved as National Park."[45] His editorial prompted the NPS to bring the idea of a national park at Cumberland Gap back to the table. Suddenly, a stop along the parkway seemed like second prize. Even so, the idea of a parkway connecting Cumberland Gap to nearby national parks did not go away. Park planners and boosters held onto the idea for several decades as a way to link it to other sites and as a way to experience the Wilderness Road.

NPS Study Team at Cumberland Gap

Upon reviewing Robert Kincaid's editorials, the NPS Branch of Planning filed a short form for a proposed Cumberland Gap National Park or Lincoln National Park.[46] NPS staff members were likely familiar with the proposed project because of the agency's involvement in coordinating ECW projects at nearby Pine Mountain and Cumberland Falls state parks. The agency's interest in designating and preserving historic areas allowed park planners to see Cumberland Gap in a new light. National park efforts

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45. Robert Kincaid, "Cumberland Gap Should Be Preserved as National Park," *Middlesboro Daily News,* March 23, 1935, p.3.

46. National Park Service Branch of Planning, "Proposed National Parks and Monuments: Cumberland Gap National Park (Lincoln National Park)," [1935], NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 8, Shelf 3, Box 2932, Folder General Correspondence Part I CUGA May 1, 1935 to January 1, 1939.

in the 1920s, when the NPS was most interested in designating scenic national parks in the southern Appalachian Mountains, failed partly because the scenery at Cumberland Gap was insufficient to warrant national park status. New Deal park planners now became aware of another quality of Cumberland Gap that might warrant its inclusion into the system—historical significance.

In May 1935, a few months before the passage of the Historic Sites Act, NPS Historical Assistant J. Walter Coleman submitted a short report on the significance on Cumberland Gap.[47] Coleman's preliminary report, which declared Cumberland Gap an important route for emigrants and a strategic location during the Civil War, prompted a more in-depth study in 1937. Four NPS historians—George Palmer, John Cowan, Charles Porter, and Roy Appleman—were assigned a portion of the Wilderness Road based upon the geographic area they each covered for the Historic Sites Survey.[48] Dr. Charles Porter, then assistant historian for the new NPS Branch of Historic Sites and Buildings, wrote a longer report on the area's significance, which was later incorporated into a multidisciplinary study completed in 1937 that weighed the site's suitability for the national park system.[49]

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47. J. Walter Coleman, "Cumberland Gap," May 13, 1935, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 1, Box 1, Folder GPX-35-1.

48. Rob Roy MacGregor, "Historic Sites Survey: Cumberland Road," August 17, 1937, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 8, Shelf 3, Box 2932, Folder General Correspondence Part I CUGA May 1, 1935 to January 1, 1939.

49. Charles Porter, "Historical Report: Cumberland Gap Area," 1937, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 1, Box 1, Folder HRX-37-1.

In May 1937, the NPS sent a survey team of specialists to investigate the Cumberland Gap area, including K. C. McCarter (Regional Landscape Architect from the Regional Office in Richmond), D. C. Haxlett (Assistant Geologist from the District Office in Cincinnati), T. J. Nelson (Assistant Landscape Architect from Mammoth Cave National Park), Charles Porter, and F. M. Mutchler (Associate Wildlife Biologist). They initially met at Cumberland Falls State Park to investigate a proposed national park there. A few days later, they visited Middlesboro and the Cumberland Gap area. After parting ways, each wrote a report in his field of specialization. Collectively, they analyzed the area's history, landscape, wildlife, and geology, and the region's demographics. They considered whether the area should be designated, what that status would be, and what kind of development would be needed. They concluded that Cumberland Gap together with about twenty miles of the Wilderness Road from Cumberland Gap, Tennessee, to Pineville, Kentucky, was of "superlative, historical value" that should be included in a national historical park. They also recommended that the Pinnacle be included for its scenic and historical values; so too, the ridge of Cumberland Mountain extending to the northeast, including the scenic Devils Garden and the interesting geologic feature of Sand Cave; and, for their scenic value, Powell Mountain, the Doublings, Fern Lake and its watershed, and Mingo Mountain, to conserve the area from future logging, mining, or farming, which would diminish the Pinnacle's view shed. However, the survey team could not make a firm recommendation about whether the site should be designated a monument or a park because that decision depended on where the NPS determined the park boundary. If the NPS just acquired the gap and the Wilderness Road leading to Cumberland Ford, then it should be a national monument. If the NPS acquired more land,

including some of the area's unique geologic features, then it should be given national park or national historical park status.[50]

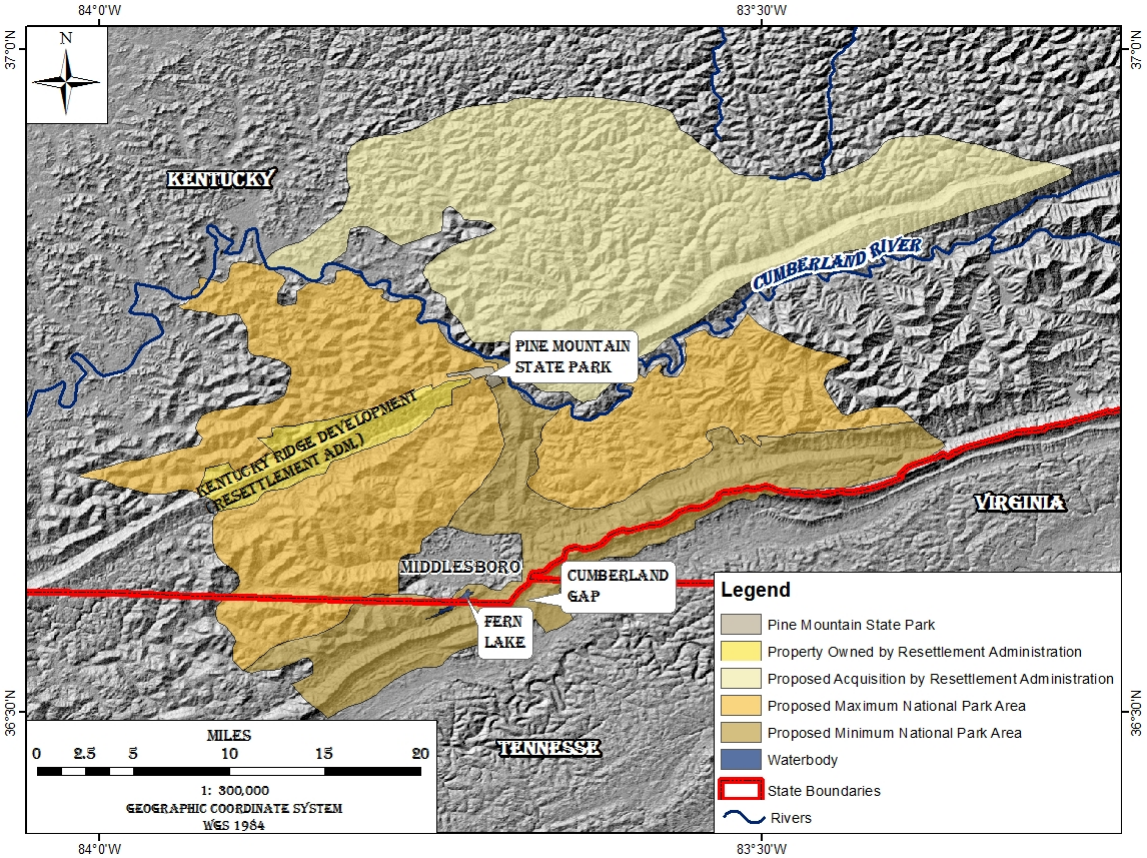

Figure 10. Recreated 1937 Proposed Park Boundary Map. This map shows proposed minimum and maximum boundaries for the national park and property owned by the Resettlement Administration. The original map, which was too large and deteriorated to scan, is located in McCarter, et al., "Report on Proposed Park at Cumberland Gap," at Cumberland Gap NHP Archive. Map by Anthony Sirna for author, 2015.

50. McCarter et al., "Report on Proposed Park at Cumberland Gap."

The Cumberland Gap national park project was not mentioned or suggested in earlier federal land use planning reports, but the 1937 study certainly drew upon the work of other federal agencies. The authors included a map of Kentucky showing "Land Use Problem Areas" produced by the Resettlement Administration in 1936, which clearly showed Cumberland Gap in an area recommended for forestland. The map was followed by a page-long description of the land-use problem in Kentucky, noting the poor agricultural conditions and high population. The authors drew upon the experiences of the Resettlement Administration at Kentucky Ridge, and included photographs from the area noting possible causes for land degradation, such as a portable saw without a spark arrester on Clear Creek and a pick and shovel coal mine. They further noted that the Cumberland Gap park project area was especially "problematic" because of land use and the poor standard of living among families.[51]

Vision for Cumberland Gap

Acting NPS Assistant Director Ronald Lee signed a memorandum on March 8, 1938, "Re: Proposed Cumberland Gap National Park," in which he concurred with the committee's recommendation that the Cumberland Gap area be given national status "to protect and preserve its historical scenic and recreational values."[52] Lee began working as a historian for the NPS in 1933 when he was attached to a CCC camp at Shiloh National

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51. Ibid.

52. Ronald Lee, memorandum, "Re: Proposed Cumberland Gap National Park," March 8, 1938, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 8, Shelf 3, Box 2932, Folder General Correspondence Part I CUGA May 1, 1935 to January 1, 1939.

Battlefield. He quickly became instrumental in the new NPS history program and succeeded Verne Chatelain as Chief Historian in 1938. His letter drew upon the NPS technicians' 1937 study, emphasizing the historical significance of Cumberland Gap and the Wilderness Road, but went a step further by placing the park in context with the national park system and offering thoughts how the site should be preserved.

Lee sketched a vision for the new park by proclaiming it "a necessary link" connecting the older Mid-Atlantic States with Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park, Meriwether Lewis National Monument, and Pioneer National Monument. Lee's idea of the park as a "link" reflects greater concern on the behalf of the NPS to tie together a larger national narrative of progress by stringing the historic sites in the East with those in the West.[53] The natural passageway of Cumberland Gap provided an excellent visual conception to this linkage. Lee continued, "it is of prime importance to include a number of the more important historic highways and mountain gaps which made the fertile vastness of our country accessible and laid the basis of our present greatness."[54] This remark alludes to a link of another kind. The park was also meant to be a link between mainstream Depression-era America and Daniel's Boone's American

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53. Hal K. Rothman and Barry Mackintosh indicate that Stephen Mather and Horace Albright's primary motive for expanding the NPS east of the Mississippi River was to reach eastern populations, which is certainly true. However, Lee's training as a historian reveals a deeper concern in creating thematic narratives based on place-based interpretation that began to emerge in the 1930s, and took on new importance with the Historic Sites Act of 1935. Hal K. Rothman, *Preserving Different Pasts: The American National Monuments* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 188-90, 197-98; Barry Mackintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System,* rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, 2005), 23, http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/shaping/part2.pdf (accessed November 17, 2014).

54. Lee, "Re: Proposed Cumberland Gap National Park."

frontier by protecting those natural and historic qualities that embodied progress, masculinity, ingenuity, and individualism. These qualities were opposite of land economists' perceptions of Appalachians as anti-modern and clannish. The new historical park would give Appalachians a sense of their frontier past and cultural heritage.

Lee highlighted the areas of the proposed park that best represented those values. The park area should encompass the historic Cumberland Ford; the section of Wilderness Road and Warrior's Path from the ford to and through Cumberland Gap; and the portion of mountains on either side, including the Pinnacle Drive and Overlook, Civil War fortifications, Soldiers Cave, and Saltpeter Cave. Anything more would be "impractical," indicating that land acquisition would be too costly for little scenic, historic, or recreational return. The gap should return to the primitive condition experienced by Daniel Boone. At the same time, he called for the eighteen-mile stretch of Wilderness Road from Cumberland Gap to Cumberland Ford to be developed as a "Parkway Drive." The banks on either side of the road should be "returned to natural landscape conditions simulating the wilderness of olden times from which the road received its picturesque name."[55] Lee believed it was possible to manipulate nature to give the appearance of wilderness, but in such a way that would be pleasing to visitors, as compared to the daunting wilderness actually faced by Boone and thousands of other emigrants traveling through the gap. Furthermore, they could enjoy this scenic and historic route through the convenience of their modern automobiles.

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55. Ibid.

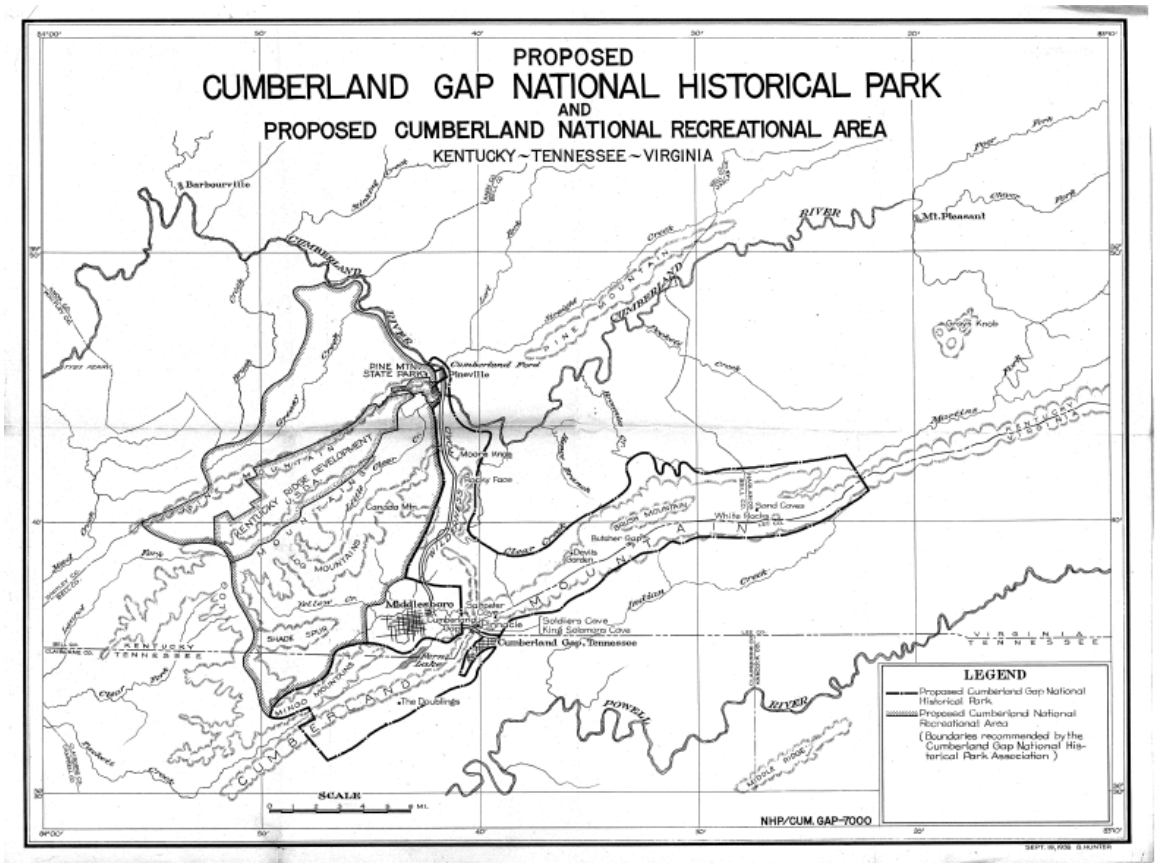

Figure 11. "Proposed Cumberland Gap National Historical Park and Proposed Cumberland National Recreational Area." Drawn by B. Hunter, September 19, 1938. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

Conrad Wirth of the NPS Branch of Lands and Planning held a public meeting with local businessmen and politicians on August 27, 1938, at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee, to discuss the proposed park. Led by Robert Kincaid, the group formed the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Association (CGHPA) at the meeting, because public support for the park was so widespread, and selected representatives from the three states that night. The boosters passed a resolution to

expand the proposed park boundaries to include 80,000 to 100,000 acres and create an adjacent National Recreational Area (NRA). The proposed NRA was to be located west of the Wilderness Road, between Pine Mountain and Cumberland Mountain, and include the Kentucky Ridge Development Project managed by the FSA and Pine Mountain State Park.[56]

At another meeting in Lexington, Kentucky, in October, the CGHPA further outlined how they envisioned this NRA to be used, including camping (vocational, overnight, and organized), hiking, and horse trails.[57] They also mentioned that it could be a "'pied-a-terre' for students of the National Historical Park." In this discussion, they talked about the "characteristics of the terrain," noting that the landscape made it possible "to secure isolation (or insulation) between possible group camps to serve different races."[58]

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56. Conrad Wirth to National Park Service Acting Director, memorandum, August 30, 1938, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 8, Shelf 3, Box 2932, Folder "General Correspondence Part I CUGA May 1, 1935 to January 1, 1939."

57. It is unclear what the boosters meant by "vocational" camping and how it differed from overnight or organized camping. However, it might indicate specialized camps for specific businesses to use for their employees as a form of welfare capitalism. Or it might indicate a kind of camping experience that promoted hands-on learning of trades, such as woodworking, which was promoted by progressive education reformers like John Dewey.

58. A. P. Bursley to National Park Service Regional Director, memorandum, "Meeting of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Association at Lexington, Kentucky, October 26, 1938," October 26, 1938, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 8, Shelf 3, Box 2932, Folder General Correspondence Part I CUGA May 1, 1935 to January 1, 1939.

It is apparent that boosters were quite intent on preserving the racial status quo in the local area. State and national parks were segregated during this period as administrators yielded to local customs. In the Cumberland Gap area, schools, churches, and businesses were segregated. The African American population was small in this area, but they were at a further disadvantage during the Great Depression when they could not access the same kinds of services as whites despite federal stipulations that New Deal programs be nondiscriminatory. In 1935, for example, a group of African Americans in Middlesboro asked the mayor and commissioners for their own recreational park within the city because they could not enjoy Bartlett-Rhodes Park that was so popular with whites.[59] Although park boosters did not intend to exclude African Americans from the park altogether, they sought ways to compartmentalize African Americans' experience.

Cumberland Gap park boosters, many of them local business owners, had the most to gain from increased tourism. They wanted Cumberland Gap NHP to be competitive with larger national parks in the southern Appalachian region. Interestingly enough, though, at least 12,000 acres of the land in the proposed park area was owned by the American Association, which held much power in the area. In his history of land ownership and power structures in the region, John Gaventa does not mention the impact of federally owned land in shaping power relations. Local elites may have seen the establishment of the NRA as a way to loosen the Association's grip on the region. The

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59. "Cooper Tract is Considered," *Middlesboro Daily News,* August 14, 1935, p.2.

timing would have been advantageous because most of the company's financiers were in Britain, and their country was already engulfed in World War II.[60]

Despite proposing such a large park area, boosters showed little concern for those living within the recommended boundaries. Also, landowners in the proposed area were noticeably absent from the public meetings.[61] Some boosters may have believed the land to be poor and its best use as a national park. The Middlebsoro Chamber of Commerce filed an application for the federal government to purchase 75,000 acres in Kentucky through the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1937.[62] According to the CGNHPA's minutes in March 1939, a group planned to travel to Washington, D.C. to lobby the federal government to purchase land they considered submarginal. If they made the trip, their efforts were unsuccessful. The NPS was adamant that the federal government would not purchase the land because the legislation specified that the land for the park must be donated. Conrad Wirth, in hearings before the House Public Lands Committee, said that

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60. Robert Kincaid, memorandum, "Re: Holdings of the American Association, Inc., Middlesboro, Ky., an English Syndicate, in the 50,000-acre area of the proposed Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," March 1941, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 28, Shelf 4, Box 2933, Folder General Correspondence II: January 1, 1939-December 1943.

61. Attendance records for the public meetings do not show names listed on property owner list. Attendance records included in "Meeting Notes," August 29, 1938, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 8, Shelf 3, Box 2932, Folder General Correspondence Part I CUGA May 1, 1935 to January 1, 1939; A. P. Bursley, "Meeting of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Association at Lexington, Kentucky, on October 26, 1938."

62. Minutes, Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, March 4, 1939, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 5, Folder 4.

his staff told the local boosters consistently "there was no ghost of a chance of getting this money from the Government."[63] He was very firm the land must be donated.

Wirth made an important distinction to the National Resources Planning Board, which was reviewing the project to make recommendations to President Roosevelt. In terms of acquisition, With explained, the historical park held first priority and was also less expensive because the boundary team made efforts to avoid active coal mines and, for the most part, there were no other mineral deposits. He noted that some improvements would have to be purchased or taken through condemnation, and spoke despairingly of "unsightly shacks, filling stations, tourist camps, hot dog stands, etc."[64] The proposed NRA did have major portions of mineralized land, which increased the land value even though it was low-grade coal. To offset higher land values, Wirth speculated that an arrangement like the one at the Kentucky Ridge Development Project might be negotiated to let landowners hold mineral rights for fifty to sixty years before the federal government took over. Wirth also mentioned that about 20% of the land could be acquired through tax delinquency. The NPS did not appear eager for the NRA at that time because planners thought land acquisition might be too difficult because of the number of landowners and the challenge of acquiring mineral rights for land that was not

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63. House of Representatives Committee on Public Lands, *Creating the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia: Hearings Before the Committee on Public Lands on H.R. 9394, April 16, 1940*. 76th Cong., 3rd sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1940), 14, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001313430 (accessed September 11, 2014).

64. Conrad Wirth to Charles Eliot, memorandum, December 19, 1939, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 28, Shelf 4, Box 2933, Folder General Correspondence II: January 1, 1939-December 1943.

as significant as the historical area. However, the NPS included the NRA in the original bill to appease local boosters.

In February 1939, Congressman Robsion and Senator Marvel M. Logan of Kentucky introduced the bills proposing Cumberland Gap National Historical Park and Cumberland Gap National Recreational Area, but the bills died in committee. Congressman John W. Flannagan of Virginia introduced a bill in April 1939, but it was rejected by the Office of Budget and the president's program. He submitted another bill, H.R. 9394, on April 15, 1940, which omitted the NRA. This bill called for a maximum boundary of 120,000 acres, but the Bureau of the Budget amended it to 50,000 acres upon the recommendation of the NRPB. A hearing was held on April 16, and the House of Representatives Committee on Public Lands supported its passage, which came a few weeks later. The Senate passed the bill on May 29. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the bill authorizing the park on June 11, 1940.[65]

After the bill passed, the NPS undertook a boundary study so that the three states could start land acquisition, which prompted the CGNHPA and NPS to haggle over the boundaries. The NPS decided to not include Pine Mountain State Park or the Kentucky Ridge Development Project because the NRPB had reduced the size of the park in the enabling legislation and excluded those areas. Also, the NPS believed that those areas

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65. House of Representatives Committee on Public Lands, *Creating the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia*; Edward Tinney, "History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park" (unpublished report for Cumberland Gap NHP and the National Park Service, 1965), 29-30.

held too few spectacular areas worthy of national park designation.[66] Despite the NPS's arguments, CGNHPA continually wanted to expand the park boundary except when it might encroach upon municipalities. Some Pineville politicians worried that the national park would overshadow the state park. The NPS and boosters also had to negotiate with businesses and landowners, including Sky Land Company, which owned the road and overlook at Pinnacle.[67]

Initially, each of the three states was reluctant to purchase property for the park project until the other states had done so. Consequently, Congress amended the act on May 26, 1943, to allow the three states to enter into a compact to purchase property and sign it over to the NPS. Kentucky Governor Keen Johnson, Virginia Governor Colgate G. Darden, and Tennessee Governor Prentice Cooper signed the pact on August 28, 1943, in a public display of cooperation. The 1943 pact stipulated that the three states needed to acquire a minimum 6,000 acres total in order for the park to be turned over to the NPS.[68] However, despite high ambitions for a large park rivaling the Great Smoky Mountains, it

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66. Howard Douglass to Conrad Wirth, letter, August 13, 1942, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 28, Shelf 4, Box 2933, Folder General Correspondence II: January 1, 1939-December 1943.

67. Robert W. Ludden to Conrad Wirth, memorandum, February 26, 1942, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 28, Shelf 4, Box 2933, Folder General Correspondence II: January 1, 1939-December 1943.

68. Conrad Wirth to National Park Service Region One Director, memorandum, August 25, 1943, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 28, Shelf 4, Box 2933, File General Correspondence II: January 1, 1939-December 1943; "Cumberland Park Pact is Approved," *Knoxville Journal,* August 29, 1943, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 28, Shelf 4, Box 2933, Folder General Correspondence II: January 1, 1939-December 1943.

took fifteen years for the three states to acquire the necessary acreage because of World War II and extensive condemnation proceedings.

It is clear that the NPS initially intended to utilize Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) labor to undertake park development. Thomas Vint, Chief of Planning, proposed in June 1939 that the CCC repair one-half mile of road to Pinnacle, restore sections of Wilderness Road, restore the approach to Cumberland Ford, and improve US 25E between Cumberland Gap and Pineville. The CCC also was to construct fifteen miles of foot trails to the Civil War fortifications, Sand Cave, White Rock, Devils Garden, Fern Lake, Mings Mountain, and other points of interest. Other planned CCC projects included constructing another eight miles of horse trails to Devils Garden and the Dwellings and building a museum and administrative building, four comfort stations, two contact stations, and four ranger stations. Finally, CCC enrollees were slated to obliterate the borrow pit scar at Cumberland Gap caused by road expansion; remove an abandoned hotel at the top of Pinnacle; install historic markers; and create parking lots at Pinnacle, the saddle of Cumberland Gap, and at the cave entrance near the gap.[69] However, Congress discontinued the CCC when World War II took priority, and so park development would have to wait until after the war.

The NPS envisioned blending history and nature together at Cumberland Gap NHP while still providing recreational opportunities for visitors. This approach reflected larger agency attitudes towards nature, history, and human conservation that drove New

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69. Thomas Vint to Ben Thompson, memorandum, June 2, 1939, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 8, Shelf 3, Box 2932, Folder General Correspondence Part I CUGA May 1, 1935- January 1, 1939.

Deal park development all across the country. These included an assumption that the natural environment should be enhanced and manipulated to please the visitor, and submarginal land should be reclaimed for conservation and public recreational purposes. When planning specifically for historic sites, landscape architects valued the concept of the "frontier village," or places where they might show man conquering nature. NPS planners were unsurprisingly drawn to Cumberland Gap, because it was a natural feature with strong historical significance. Park planners also loved the idea of "stopping the clock" at historic sites, because capturing a very specific moment in time held a very powerful appeal.[70] However, as former NPS Chief Historian Dwight T. Pitcaithley pointed out, NPS historians and park planners during the 1930s and 1940s had the habit of selecting a period of significance prior to conducting research—a flaw in conceptualizing their projects.[71] In the case of Cumberland Gap, they were interested in freezing the landscape to when Dr. Thomas Walker and Daniel Boone first passed through the gap. Therefore, they focused historical research and planning efforts on recreating eighteenth century "wilderness" in an area that European Americans had developed for nearly two hundred years. In the case of Cumberland Gap NHP, park planners sought to naturalize history by removing traces of development that occurred after the early 1800s. This reclaimed land then became part of the "historic scene," or nature became history.

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70. Ethan Carr, "The 'Noblest Landscape Problem:' Thomas C. Vint and Landscape Preservation," in *Design with Culture: Claiming America's Landscape Heritage*, edited Charles Birnbaum and Mary Hughes (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 166.

71. Dwight T. Pitcaithley, "Historic Sites: What Can Be Learned from Them?" *History Teacher* 20, no. 2 (February 1987): 209-10.

Conclusion

The approach NPS planners took at Cumberland Gap NHP seems contradictory by today's standards. They wanted to create the appearance of wilderness, but they were not concerned with ecological integrity. In fact, NPS biologist C. B. Taylor wrote a memorandum to the Acting Regional Director saying that park planners were not considering biology sufficiently in their plans for Cumberland Gap NHP.[72] Park planners also wanted to disregard land development after the Civil War, including mining, timbering, and farming activities, which were the legacy of Walker's and Boone's historic expeditions. Finally, they also wanted to build a parkway from Cumberland Gap to Cumberland Ford along the Wilderness Road to attract and guide visitors through the park, although they ridiculed the auto camps and hot dog stands that were already along this route. All the while, they were still communicating with park boosters who were interested in creating additional recreational opportunities for visitors likely to bring in tourist dollars to the region.

David Louter's *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* provides a useful comparison and necessary context for understanding how NPS planners wanted to present this "historic wilderness." In his case study of Mount Rainier, Louter demonstrates that park planners believed that nature could be

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72. C. B. Taylor to Acting National Park Service Regional Director, July 1, 1940, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 28, Shelf 4, Box 2933, Folder General Correspondence II: January 1, 1939-December 1943.

known through machines.[73] At Cumberland Gap, the proposed parkway along the Wilderness Road would also allow visitors to know history, as well, through their windshields. Even though US 25E traversed the gap, New Deal park planners never seriously discussed removing the road—only ensuring that it did not damage historic resources.[74] Park planners and boosters also valued the drive going up Pinnacle, operated by the Sky Land Company, because it provided excellent views of the surrounding area. NPS attitudes towards automobiles and nature at Cumberland Gap would become increasingly complex after World War II.

The NPS's discussion of Cumberland Gap NHP occurred in a place and time when the federal government was undertaking unprecedented land and social reform. Many local families relied on New Deal agencies for survival, foreshadowing the emergence of the welfare state. State and federal agencies partly blamed poor land use as the reason for rural poverty, so they turned to regional planning and human conservation programs to uplift local populations. They modeled conservation techniques in forest or park areas. In some cases, the government moved families by purchasing submarginal land, as with the Kentucky Ridge Development Project. Cumberland Gap NHP planners

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73. David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 11.

74. Mark Woods's essay on the rehabilitation of Cumberland Gap said restoring the appearance of the gap and the Wilderness Road was part of the enabling legislation, but there is little indication that park planners intended on completely removing US 25E. Ronald Lee's memo did show concern about the immediate impact on historic resources in the area from road expansion and tourism development, but did not suggest removing or tunneling the road. Vint's memorandum on CCC work also suggests developing the road in this area to serve a proposed Wilderness Road parkway that would connect the gap to Cumberland Ford. Mark Woods, "An Appalachian Tale: Restoring Boone's Wilderness Road," *CRM Journal* 5 (2002): 20-22; Lee, "Re: Proposed Cumberland Gap National Park"; Vint to Thompson, memorandum.

were aware of these activities. The 1937 report on the proposed park includes a map showing the region being one of the poorest land-use areas in Kentucky. They considered for a time absorbing both Pine Mountain State Park, a large CCC project, and Kentucky Ridge Development Project, a resettlement project, into the larger Cumberland Gap national park project, but did not protest when the NRPB removed these areas from the park bill.

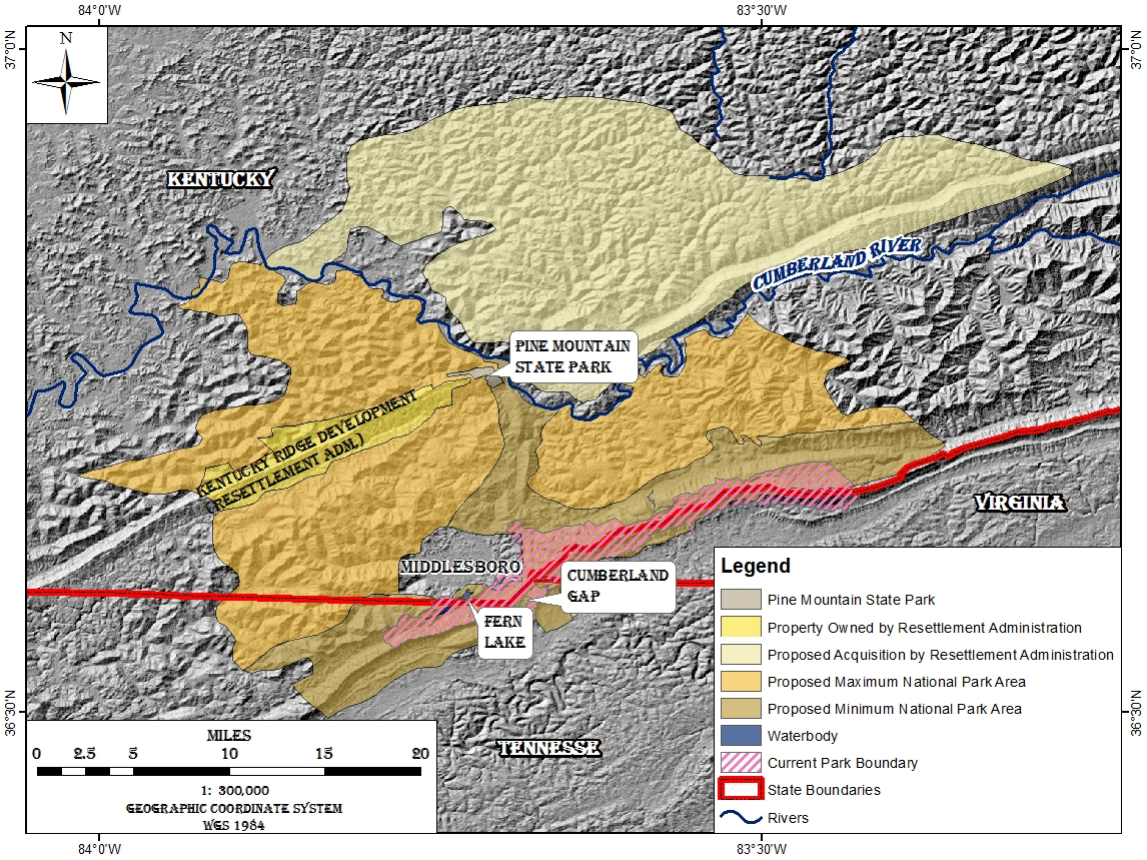

Figure 12. 1937 Proposed Boundary Map with Current Park Boundary Overlay. Map by Anthony Sirna for author, 2015.

The NPS gave only brief consideration to the people living in the proposed park area, reflecting a general reluctance of the NPS to get involved in rural resettlement efforts and the decline of such federal programs in the face of harsh criticism toward the end of the New Deal. Remarks by Acting NPS Director Arthur Demaray made, in 1939, reflect the agency's general attitude toward the local population:

> No definite information is available on what would be involved in the way of moving families now living on the land. However, it is estimated that there are approximately 100 families now living within the proposed area. If administratively desirable, it could be arranged for these people to remain for the balance of their lives, otherwise they should be moved to more productive land. The standard of living for these people, for the most part, is extremely low and they eke out a meager existence by attempting to farm an acre or two of unproductive land.[75]

The law that created Cumberland Gap NHP placed the responsibility of acquiring the lands directly in the hands of the states, which in turn placed that power in the hands of local elites. The process of removal would play out during the war and postwar years.

World War II halted park development across the country, ending a decade of unprecedented growth and effectively postponing Cumberland Gap NHP's completion. Despite its late start, Cumberland Gap NHP benefited from the NPS's unprecedented expansion during the New Deal, in experience and landscape approach if not funds and manpower. Park planners drew upon lessons learned in the field to craft a vision for Cumberland Gap NHP that blended nature and history together in a depressed region eager for economic opportunity. During the war, a small group of dedicated boosters worked behind the scenes acquiring land for the park as young men were called to serve

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75. Arthur Demaray to Harold Smith, letter, June 8, 1939, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11,Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 28, Shelf 4, Box 2933, Folder General Correspondence II: January 1, 1939-December 1943.

overseas and families left to find work in coal mines and factories. The vision sketched by park planners and boosters during the New Deal guided Cumberland Gap NHP until the war was over and the next big wave of park development occurred.

CHAPTER FOUR

Park in Transition

The United States was at war when the governors representing Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia stood at the top of the Tri-State Peak late in August 1943. With the sounds of cars buzzing along US 25E in the gap below, the three governors signed a compact agreeing to purchase the land for Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. Congress had approved an amendment to the park legislation earlier in the summer, on May 26, to ensure that all three states would work toward purchasing the park property at the same time, rather than wait until the others had done their share. The amendment provided that the three states purchase a minimum of 6,000 acres out of approximately 20,000 acres authorized for land acquisition. The NPS would not accept anything less before formally establishing the park.[1] The pact was more than just an agreement to purchase land; it was an important next step in recreating the Appalachian landscape by carving boundaries, removing the local population, building modern visitors facilities, and beginning the process of rewilding Cumberland Gap. The process, however, was by no means linear or without obstacles.

State officials were optimistic that land acquisition could be completed in a short time and the people of the Tri-State area could have their national park, but it took them

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1. "Cumberland Park Pact is Approved," *Knoxville Journal,* August 29, 1943, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, Proposed National Parks, Stack 150, Row 34, Compartment 28, Shelf 4, Box 2933, Folder General Correspondence II: January 1, 1939-December 1943.

nearly fifteen years. One reporter in 1954 said the purchase of 250 separate tracts for the project moved as fast as a "paralytic turtle."[2] Land acquisition was hampered by the availability of state funds, extensive condemnation proceedings, and conflicts with local businesses and municipalities whose property fell within the proposed park boundaries. Additionally, with the country at war, federal resources diverted away from the NPS, and New Deal relief efforts terminated, the Tri-State area was left with responsibility for addressing unemployment and related social needs. World War II helped ease the economic situation a good deal when local men and women went to serve overseas and others moved to industrial or urban areas for war work. But those who lived in the proposed park area and left temporarily to serve their country would return to a community in transition. They would not be able to return to their former homes, at least not for very long.

Cumberland Gap NHP was in transition between 1943 and 1963, when the last residents left the park. The last leases, with the exception of three lifetime leases, ended in 1957. The NPS took possession of the land in 1955, on the eve of a second period of accelerated NPS park development, called Mission 66, following the funding famine caused by World War II. NPS staff reviewed the plans developed for Cumberland Gap NHP during the New Deal and considered how to implement them through the new Mission 66 program. Finally, the NPS was able to fulfill some of those original intentions. The new park was dedicated in 1959. By 1963, as the remaining park

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2. Joe Creason, "Cumberland Gap—Almost," *Louisville Courier-Journal Magazine,* November 28, 1954, newspaper clipping, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 8.

inholders were leaving, the agency itself was on the verge of transitioning into a new era of environmentalism, social reform, and historic preservation.

Land Acquisition

The three governors each appointed representatives for establishing park boundaries and purchasing land in their respective states. The Tennessee Department of Conservation handled boundaries for land acquisition of approximately 2,000 acres in Tennessee with the help of Robert Kincaid. The Kentucky National Park Commission, a special state agency, took up acquisition of nearly 10,000 acres for Cumberland Gap NHP as it had for Mammoth Cave National Park in western Kentucky. Tom Fugate, Congressman of Virginia, was appointed by the Governor of Virginia to take care of the state's acquisition of nearly 8,000 acres for the park project.[3]

Robert Kincaid, a graduate of LMU and long-time editor of the *Middlesboro Daily News*, played an important role in the land acquisition process. He was an ardent supporter of the park and a key individual in making it a reality. Kincaid grew up on a hardscrabble farm in northwest Georgia and decided he preferred writing to agriculture. He worked his way through school at LMU by setting type in the campus print shop and graduated in 1915. He worked the university until he took a leave of absence to serve in World War I. He achieved his dream of running a newspaper when he became editor of the *Middlesboro Daily News* in 1922. Kincaid had a deep interest in the area's history

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3. "Minutes of Meeting held in Middlesboro, Kentucky, August 12, to discuss boundaries of Proposed Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," August 12, 1942, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 2.

and published *The Wilderness Road,* which became well known, in 1947.[4] He used his position at the newspaper to write articles in support of the project, and he also helped organize the Cumberland Gap NHP Association. The CGNHPA elected him as the organization's first president in 1938. One year earlier, he had become vice president of LMU, and he served as university president from 1947 to 1958.[5] Kincaid's position as journalist and influential position as university official certainly helped make the park a reality. The governor recognized Kincaid's value by appointing him to the Kentucky National Park Commission.

The state of Tennessee had by far the easiest share of land acquisition, and had acquired 90% of the needed 2,076 acres in the state by 1945. While it appears that the Tennessee Department of Conservation worked on boundary issues, NPS historian Tinney indicated that the state legislature created a special agency to acquire the lands through State Senate Bill No. 757. However, most of the Tennessee land was in the hands of only two owners: LMU and American Association, Inc., and LMU was a willing seller. Additionally, the Tennessee portion of the park was primarily underdeveloped woodlands that had not been commercialized. The state expended only $75,000, a price much lower than that paid by the states of Kentucky and Virginia paid.[6]

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4. Robert Kincaid, *The Wilderness Road* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1947).

5. Earl Hess, *Lincoln Memorial University and the Shaping of Appalachia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011), 196-200.

6. Edward Tinney, "History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park" (unpublished report for Cumberland Gap NHP and the National Park Service, 1965), 36-37.

LMU readily sold its portion of 2,000 acres with the exception of Cudjo's Cave, located near the saddle of the gap along US 25E. LMU tour operators had installed electric lights in the cave in 1934 and made other improvements, namely, tunneling a connection between the Soldiers Cave and Solomon's Cave sections. The cave was not only a tourist attraction (with a souvenir shop across the highway), but was the water source for the university and the towns of Cumberland Gap, Tiprell, and Harrogate. The NPS agreed to a special deed reservation that allowed LMU to control the cave, including its water rights, openings, trails, and tourist operations, if LMU operated the cave in accordance with NPS Regulations. Cudjo's Cave remained a source of tension between the NPS and university for a number of years. Eventually, LMU transferred its operations to the NPS in 1992, although LMU still retains water rights.[7] The NPS now calls it Gap Cave.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky established the Kentucky National Park Commission in 1928 to purchase land for Mammoth Cave National Park in the western part of the state near Bowling Green. The commission tested its powers to condemn land during this project, removing approximately six hundred families from the proposed area. The NPS accepted the lands and formally established the park in 1941.[8] Most the land

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7. Robert Kincaid to T. B. Fugate, telegram, January 20, 1942, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 4; Tinney, "History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," 37; National Park Service, "Gap Cave—A Primer," n.d., http://www.nps.gov/cuga/naturescience/upload/cave-handout2.pdf (accessed September 29, 2014).

8. National Register of Historic Places, Mammoth Cave National Park Historic Resource Study Multi-Property Nomination, Edmonson County, Kentucky, National Register #64500237, (October 1, 1990), http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NRHP/Text/64500237.pdf (accessed October 1, 2014).

had been purchased for Mammoth Cave by the time Congress established Cumberland Gap NHP in 1940, prompting the Governor Simeon Willis to redirect the commission's activities to focus on the new park. By 1943, several of the commissioners interested in the Mammoth Cave project had resigned to open seats for those involved in Cumberland Gap NHP.[9]

Howard Douglass, long-time Secretary-Treasurer and Executive Manager of the Middlesboro Chamber of Commerce, took the lead in purchasing property for the Commonwealth of Kentucky on behalf of the Kentucky National Park Commission. He met property owners, arranged for appraisals, and negotiated price. If an agreement could not be reached, he asked the State Attorney General to file a condemnation suit. As negotiations with local business and the municipality became contentions, some Middlesboro residents accused Douglass of profiting from his position because he received a stipend from the commission to cover his salary.[10] Douglass even took on some of the acquisition for the Commonwealth of Virginia when Tom Fugate left for Congress in 1949. In a 1963 interview, Douglass said that another reason for him taking over land acquisition duties in Virginia was because Fugate felt that an outsider might do a better job, indicating that Fugate's personal relationships with landowners made acquisition difficult.[11]

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9. Tinney, "History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," 39.

10. Robert Kincaid, "Robert Kincaid Explains Facts Back of Park Controversy," [*Middlesboro (KY) Daily News*], January 9, 1947, newspaper clipping, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 8.

11. Tinney, "History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," 36.

Thomas Fugate was born in Tazewell, Tennessee, and was living in Virginia when Congress approved the park bill. He had attended the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and LMU. He lived for a time in Harrogate, before moving to Rose Hill, Virginia, in 1921. He had a mercantile business and hardware store while also pursuing some agricultural endeavors. His political career began in 1928, when he was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates. He grew in local prominence and became president of the Peoples Bank of Ewing in 1935, director of the Tennessee-Virginia Farm Bureau in 1936, and President of Ewing Live Stock Company in 1937. He served on the Virginia Board of Public Welfare from 1937 to 1947. He was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1944 and the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1945. He was elected to the Eighty-first and Eighty-second Congresses in the House of Representatives (January 3, 1949 to January 3, 1953).[12] He remained active throughout the park project, although he conceded the task of land acquisition to Douglass.

Land acquisition in Virginia lagged behind Tennessee and Kentucky. Upon taking over Fugate's duties, Douglass found that land acquisition in Virginia had stalled as appraisers tried to sort through land titles. In a lament to Thomas Allen, Douglass wrote:

> I have been helping in the purchase of land over in Virginia since Tom Fugate went to Congress. I have never seen land titles in such a mess. The proverbial "Chinese Puzzle" has nothing on this. Judge Cridlin, who is doing the abstracting said "If you want to find good titles why don't you buy good land?" Maybe he has something there.[13]

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12. U.S. Congress, "Fugate, Thomas Bacon (1899-1980), House of Representatives," Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=F000399 (accessed June 27, 2014).

13. Howard Douglas to Thomas Allen, letter, April 4, 1949, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 7.

By 1950, Tennessee had finished its acquisition and Kentucky was awaiting judgments on three tracts involving less than 100 acres. Virginia, on the other hand, had 32 tracts left to acquire—a sum of over 1,000 acres.[14] Tinney discovered that the Commonwealth of Virginia acquired 54 of the 118 tracts in Virginia through condemnation.[15] Douglass found many landowners reluctant to sell for a variety of reasons, including long association with the land and a belief that there was commercial value in the timber or minerals. A number of properties in Virginia were particularly difficult to acquire, such as the Colson, Bailey, Rose, and O'Dell tracts. The Colsons were prominent farmers in the Powell Valley along Highway 58, and Douglass and the NPS had to negotiate special agreements for water access for the Colsons' livestock at a point on Station Creek. The Bailey and Rose tracts included coal deposits.[16]

Ann Estep, a longtime resident of Cumberland Gap, recalled that Mr. O'Dell was particularly aggrieved about the state taking his home and gas station located on the Virginia side of the town of Cumberland Gap. Douglass valued the property somewhere between $15,000 and $25,000, but O'Dell valued the property at $30,000. The court awarded him $32,000, but Douglass negotiated a deal that gave O'Dell $25,000 and the right to stay in his home until 1957. Before the agreement was finalized, however,

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14. Howard Douglass to Howard Kellam, letter, July 12, 1950, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 4.

15. Tinney, "History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," 38.

16. Thomas Fugate to Howard Douglass, letter, December 9, 1950, and Howard Douglass to Sidney Kellam, letter, July 12, 1950, both Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 4; Thomas Allen to Howard Douglass, letter, February 10, 1950, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 7.

O'Dell changed his mind and his lawyer filed a motion that challenged the validity of the court proceedings. That motion raised the prospect of stalling 38 other tracts undergoing condemnation proceedings. Douglass, therefore, began negotiating with O'Dell and, in 1953, they settled on a new purchase price of $31,000. The family moved to London, Kentucky, but some remained bitter for decades.[17]

The last tract acquired in Virginia came from the Bailey family, on March 6, 1951, although, as reported by Tinney, no one from the Bailey family claimed any of the purchase money. Howard Douglass submitted all the deeds for the Virginia area to Conrad Wirth in May 1952, bringing the Virginia land acquisition program to a close. It took two more years for the federal government to approve the deeds, which had an estimated value of $225,000.[18]

Kentucky had the largest amount of land to acquire and endured the biggest obstacles because of dubious land titles and the number of enterprises it had to purchase. Douglass had to identify and locate landowners for a number of small tracts located along the north side of Cumberland Mountain. For one small piece of property he had to secure 107 signatures. Douglass's ability to find landowners and suitable surveyors was further complicated by the war. One of the first enterprises the Kentucky National Park Commission had to acquire was the Sky Land Company's drive up to the Pinnacle.

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17. Martha Wiley, Interview with Ann Estep, March 3, 2009, transcribed by Jason Ireland, February 2012, 24, Park Archive, Oral History Collection; Howard Douglass to Sidney Kellam, July 7, 1951, Howard Douglass to Conrad Wirth, October 28, 1952, and Raymond Long to Howard Douglass, August 12, 1953, all letters, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 4.

18. Tinney, "History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," 38; Thomas Fugate to Howard Douglass, letter, May 26, 1952, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 4.

Douglass managed to acquire the road and the company's 280.76 acres for $52,537. However, the Sky Land Company had a lease agreement with the American Association, Inc. for a small slice of the road that traversed the saddle of the Cumberland Gap. The sixty-eight year lease had an annual rent of $1,395.78. The American Association agreed to sell the property for ten dollars an acre, but with an additional $20,000 for revenue lost with the terminated lease.[19]

Douglass encountered issues with the city of Middlesboro when the NPS decided to extend park boundaries into the city, which violated the original park bill. They city had been accommodating up to that point, even transferring Bartlett-Rhodes Park for the national park project. However, the NPS decided it needed the city to close portions of 10th and 8th Streets, one end of Old Clydesdale Avenue, and two access roads leading to the Schneider Packing Plant. The city passed an ordinance that exempted these areas from the city limits (except 10th Street), but some residents were very upset at the loss of tax revenue.[20]

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19. Tinney, "History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," 41.

20. Ibid., 42.

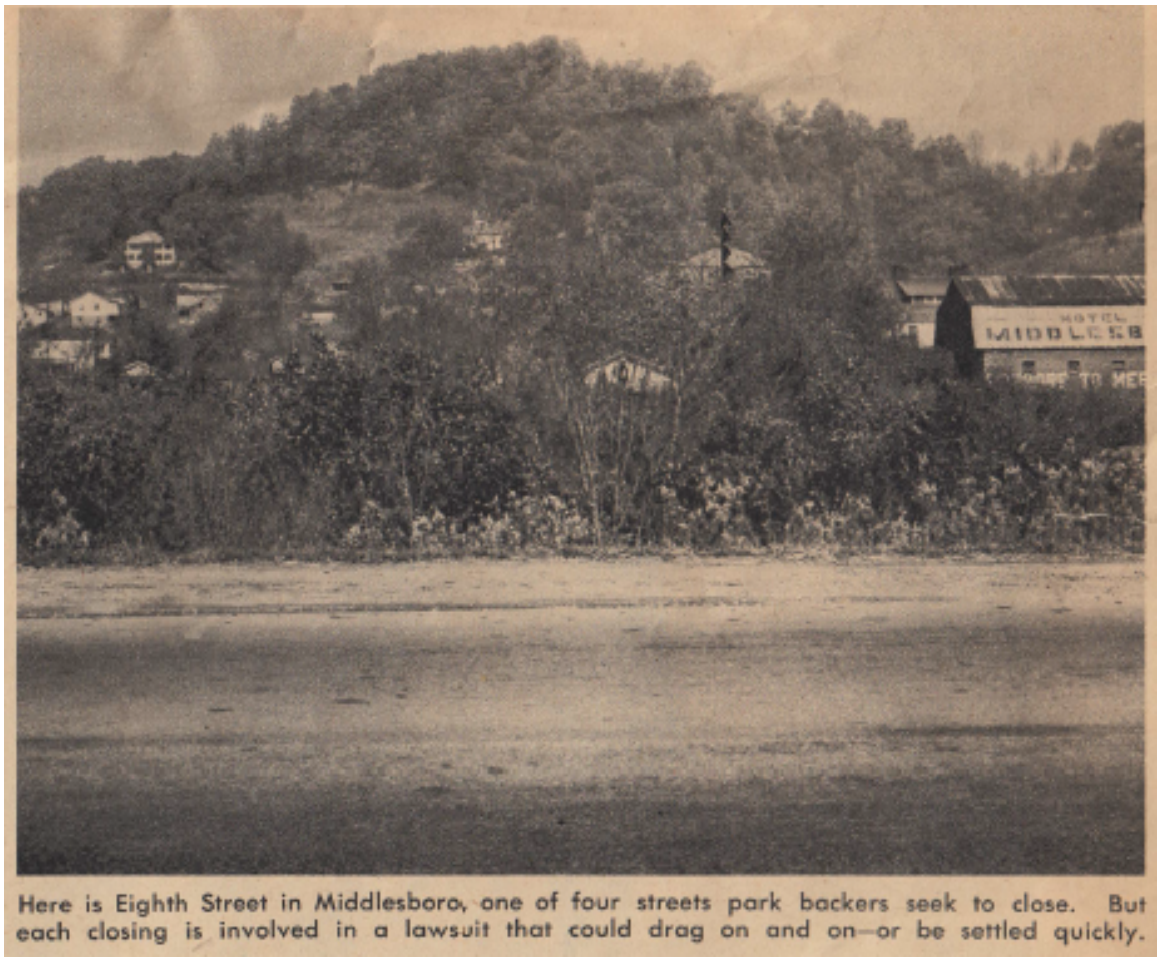

Figure 13. "Here is Eighth Street in Middlesboro, One of Four Streets Park Backers Seek to Close." Photograph published in article by Joe Creason, "Cumberland Gap Park—Almost," *Louisville Courier-Journal Magazine,* November 28, 1954. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

Issues with the city worsened as the Schneider Packing Plant controversy erupted. The meat packing facility was located in an old brewery made obsolete with the county's decision to go dry years before. The plant had been damaged by fire in 1941, and Schneider rebuilt despite being located within the minimum area of the proposed park boundary. Schneider preferred this location because of a nearby water source. He threatened to leave Middlebsoro entirely when the commission approached him about

selling, even though the commission offered to build him a new facility. He said he would need to be compensated for time lost and the new advantage given to his competitors for being temporarily out of business.[21] Harsh editorials appeared in the newspapers in 1946 and 1947 with each side attacking one another. The mayor called Douglass an "eager beaver" for trying to acquire the Schneider plant without thinking about the city's loss of tax revenue.[22] Other editorials accused Douglass of chicanery and profiting from the park project. The mayor sent a committee to talk to the Secretary of the Interior about keeping the packing plant, but accomplished little. The Chamber of Commerce created a special commission to investigate the controversy and asked Robert Kincaid to write a statement. Kincaid revealed that the group of individuals who visited Washington was not the full committee originally appointed by the mayor. Kincaid himself was supposed to go, but never received notice of the meeting. He reminded residents that the commission was in desperate need of the property because it was within the minimum acreage required for the park. The whole park project might fall through if the commission could not acquire this tract. In exasperation, he concluded: "It is time for the people of Middlesboro to wake up if they want a national park."[23] The Schneider controversy divided the city and threatened the entire national park project.

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21. Ibid., 43; "Schneider Packing Plant May Leave Middlesboro if Park Takes Property," [*Middlesboro Daily News*], June 13, 1946, newspaper clipping, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 8.

22. "C of C Head Castigated by Middlesboro Mayor," *Knoxville Journal,* November 12, 1946, newspaper clipping, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 8.

23. "Park Mission Reports on Washington Trip," [*Middlesboro Daily* News], December 24, 1946, and Robert Kincaid, "Robert Kincaid Explains Facts Back of Park

The court dismissed the condemnation suit against the Schneider plant on May 19, 1948, because the commission lacked the funds to pay the compensation awarded in the suit. However, the Department of the Interior understood that the case was dismissed with the knowledge that the property might be acquired in the future. The Schneider plant remained in the park as an inholding for many years.[24] Land acquisition was able to continue despite not having this key property. Tensions between Schneider and NPS, however, smoldered for years.

Figure 14. Cumberland Mountain Hotel and Cottages, circa 1950s. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

Controversy," [*Middlesboro Daily News*], January 9, 1947, both newspaper clippings, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 8.

24. Thomas Allen to Howard Douglass, letter, February 1, 1949, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 7.

Other businesses did not wish to sell to the Kentucky National Park Commission. The commission undertook condemnation proceedings against Fred Seale, the owner of Cumberland Mountain Hotel and Cottages, who leased land from the American Association. The court awarded him and the American Association $140,000, but the commission was able to negotiate a price of $100,000 to be paid to Seale and the Association with a lease that ended January 1, 1957.[25]

Karl Nelson Harris also owned a tourist operation—Harris Courts—and did not wish to sell. Harris, however, was chairman of the Purchasing Committee for Cumberland Gap NHP for the Kentucky National Park Commission. His property was left out of the original survey, but the commission decided that the park area would not be complete without it and NPS Director Newton Drury concurred. Harris continued to improve his residence on the property despite land negotiations. The commission actually began condemnation proceedings against Harris before the two parties reached an agreement of $60,000, making it one of the commission's more sizable purchases. The commission also agreed to allow Karl Nelson Jr. to remain on the property rent-free for ten years. In 1951, Nelson requested that the commission either purchase the remaining time on his lease or grant him a lifetime lease.[26] The commission initially supported his

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25. Howard Douglass to Kit Elswick, letter, February 16, 1949, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 7.

26. "Is Not Your Position A Little Embarrassing, Col. Watt?," [*Middlesboro Daily News*], July 20, 1944, newspaper clipping, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 8; "Minutes of the Meeting of the Kentucky National Park Commission Held at the Kentucky Hotel, In Louisville, Kentucky, on Thursday October 7, 1943," October 7, 1943, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Kentucky National Park Commission," October 25, 1946, and "Minutes of the Meeting of the Kentucky National Park Commission," March

request, but then decided to defer to the NPS. The NPS granted very few life leases in the Cumberland Gap NHP area, and Harris's request was denied.

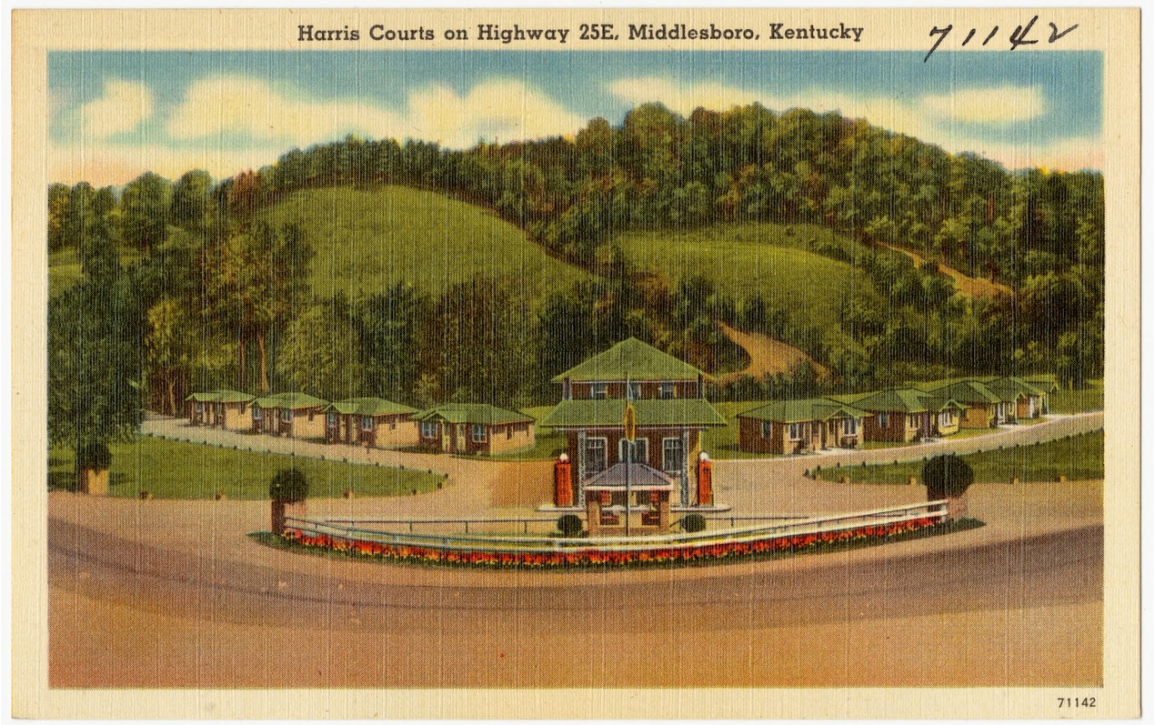

Figure 15. "Harris Courts on Highway 25E, Middlesboro, Kentucky," Postcard Published by W.M. Cline Company, circa 1930-1945. Source: Digital Commonwealth.

The Kentucky National Park Commission did not evict families from their residences right away because of the uncertainty about when the land might actually be transferred.[27] Former owners could rent their homes until the land was transferred to the

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25, 1951, all Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 4, Folder 2; Howard Douglass to Charles Richey, letter, May 10, 1946, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 3.

federal government.[28] The commission used income from rentals and from selling buildings to augment the land acquisition fund.[29] The commission also collected tolls on Skyland Road up to the Pinnacle, which added to the acquisition fund.[30] Some residents, like Henry Hamblin, simply moved their houses. Hamblin lived near the iron furnace in the town of Cumberland Gap. His neighbors helped him move his four-room frame house to the south part of town on Tipprel Road.[31]

The Kentucky National Park Commission's land acquisition program was costly. The commonwealth spent nearly $750,000 to acquire over 10,000 acres for the park project.[32] In other words, it cost Kentucky ten times the amount that Tennessee paid for five times the land. Altogether, the three states expended $1,050,000.

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27. Newton Drury to Howard Douglass, letter, December 20, 1943, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 3.

28. See Rent Account-Kentucky National Park Commission Financial Statements, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 9.

29. See Surplus Properties Account-Kentucky National Park Commission Financial Statements, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folders 11 and 12.

30. See Pinnacle Account-Kentucky National Park Commission Financial Statements, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 10.

31. Rebecca Vial, "Cumberland Gap, Tennessee: Building Community Identity Along the Wilderness Road, 1880-1929" (master's thesis, University of Tennessee, 1991), 78.

32. Howard Douglass to Howard Kellam, letter, July 12, 1950, Park Archive, Record Group 1, Box 1, Folder 4.

Perceptions of Folk Around Cumberland Gap

Although the Great Depression was over, outsiders still looked upon the people living in the Cumberland Gap area as poor people living on poor land, just waiting for opportunity. Local boosters and land acquisition agents may have used these perceptions to justify the park project. In 1943, Leo Borah, a writer for the popular magazine, *National Geographic,* visited Cumberland Gap and wrote a piece on those living in the area. He centered his narrative on a newlywed couple from Detroit whom he accompanied as they visited the young husband's family home in Tennessee. The author showed an admiration for these people who conquered the wilderness and their ingenuity. In his attempts to show them as ordinary Americans and quiet the hillbilly stereotype, he still portrayed them as being "other," living in a region behind the rest of the country. His article does not mention any of those families living in the proposed national park or the Cumberland Gap project. However, his description of the land matches that of New Deal land reformers and perhaps those involved in land acquisition.

> The farm of the big family man on the Kentucky side of the Gap was rough, rocky timberland, almost worthless for farming. On better farms we found better conditions, more prosperous people. These folks reflect their surroundings. As the land goes up in elevation, it goes down in fertility and its tillers go with it.[33]

Borah admired these mountain folk and wrote that, "The 'hillbillies' are just normal, likable, honest Americans. Considering their lack of advantages, their centuries of isolation, the poor quality of the soil many of them till, I marvel at their successes in

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33. Leo Borah, "Home Folk around Historic Cumberland Gap," *National Geographic* 84, no.6 (December 1943): 749.

life."[34] Borah implied that the Cumberland Gap people were upstanding Americans just waiting for an opportunity.

Borah indicates an outmigration from the area has already been set in motion by the war. In fact, over three million people left Appalachia between 1940 and 1970 to seek economic opportunities in the Midwest, making it one of the nation's largest internal migrations.[35] Despite the flood of people leaving the region, Borah also noticed the folk's strong sense of place in Cumberland Gap. The young newlyweds, for example, chose to visit the husband's family in Tennessee during their honeymoon. He also described an exchange with a woman whose son was in the military. The soldier son wrote home to his mother who had the burden of taking care of the family farm herself: "'Hang on to everything, mama, cause I'll be back to take care of it.'"[36] The stress of soldiering made the memories of home even more appealing.

There was a renewed effort among Middlesboro's local elite to establish the park after World War II. The Middlesboro Chamber of Commerce organized bus rides to build support. A local man dressed up as Daniel Boone, and Betty Hayes, who worked for a local bank, dressed up as Rebecca Boone. With other park supporters, they rode a bus to Washington, D.C. The group stopped at towns along Highway 58 in Virginia to talk with locals about the park project. They met with their representatives in Congress,

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34. Ibid., 768.

35. Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 20.

36. Borah, "Home Folk around Historic Cumberland Gap," 758.

encouraging the establishment of the park.[37] Hayes recalled that Middlesboro townspeople showed enthusiastic support for the park. She herself believed the national park was necessary because it would draw people to Middlesboro when the town needed ways to grow. She indicated that the mountain did not offer much to the town besides being a national park. People could move to Harrogate, Tennessee, but they were unlikely to move onto the mountain. "We got so much land and that's all," she remembered thinking at the time.[38] Hayes was not alone in her thinking. At the 1959 annual meeting, the Middlesboro Chamber of Commerce claimed to have raised nearly a million dollars for the new park.[39]

Harry Hoe, president of the Chamber of Commerce and a decorated World War II veteran, knew Howard Douglass and other park boosters well. He used his service record to help build support for the park effort in both the local area and in the U.S. Congress. He recalled that veterans' groups were popular at that time and his status as a combat veteran helped him raise support.[40] He also was closely associated with Virginia Huff, Douglass's secretary and later secretary at the park. In fact, Hoe, Douglass, and Huff all

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37. Martha Wiley, Interview with Betty Hayes, May 12, 2009, transcript, 1-2, Park Archive, Oral History Collection.

38. The transcript of Betty Hayes's interview is not clear in this portion, but this seems to be the best summation within the context of the interview. Ibid., 11.

39. "33rd Annual Meeting of Middlesboro Chamber of Commerce," 1959, Park Archive, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 12.

40. Martha Wiley, Interview with Harry Hoe, February 2, 2009, transcribed by Kelly King Riggs (December 2009) and Thomas Mackie III (January 2010), 20, Park Archive, Oral History Collection.

lived on the same street. In an oral history interview, Hoe made a distinction between Douglass and landowners, recalling the Hensley family in particular.

> God, they were special mountaineer folks that lived up on that out of the way. I don't know if they shot at [Douglass] or not. [Laughter] Felt he was a revenuer or something but Howard he was real active in church, Presbyterian, and the Chamber, and the city. He knew a lot about history and art, antiques. And he (had) class on how to get things done in a classy way. You could tell he wasn't some local jocal. It don't make no difference. It did to him. He had class.[41]

In this statement, Hoe recalled Douglass as being more worldly and having more class than park residents, the Hensleys in particular, which might sum up park boosters' attitudes toward park residents in general.

Betty Hayes, Harry Hoe, and Virginia Huff remembered hard feelings from some of the families, even those who believed they were treated fairly. Huff thought most people were amenable to selling their land, but a few individuals did pose problems. One man threatened to tear his house and property apart, but the park later hired him and he changed his attitude. One woman lived on a remote lane with only one neighbor. Her neighbor sold without issue, but she would not sell. The Kentucky National Park Commission thus condemned her land and evicted her from her home.[42] Despite these stories, Hayes claimed she never knew of any "underhandedness."[43] Huff and Hoe indicated that land acquisition was fair and remembered how much Douglass and other boosters worked to make the park a reality.[44]

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41. Ibid., 24-25.

42. Martha Wiley, Interview with Virginia Huff, December 4, 2008, transcribed by Thomas Mackie (2010), 6-7, Park Archive, Oral History Collection.

43. Wiley, Interview with Betty Hayes, 11.

Huff, Hoe, and Hayes empathized with those that lost their homes, conceding it was a difficult experience for some. In contrast to those displaced by the park, however, they had mostly positive memories of the park's establishment. Hoe reminisced over how the entire town of Middlesboro turned out for the park dedication and how proud they were of the park. Huff took great satisfaction watching the park grow from an idea into a reality. She worked as the superintendent's secretary at Cumberland Gap NHP for forty years, and was responsible for training most managers. Betty Hayes simply stated: "We had to have the land, we had to have the park."[45] They felt that displacement was necessary for the greater good of having the park in the area.

The park boosters' persistence paid off. The park was established in 1955, and the Middlesboro Chamber of Commerce organized an elaborate dedication ceremony for July 4, 1959, with President Eisenhower congressmen and governors from all three states among the invited guests. Eisenhower, who cancelled at the last minute, sent Vice-President Richard Nixon to take his place. Dedication activities included a parade, homecoming box supper, and homecoming jamboree.[46]

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44. Wiley, Interview with Harry Hoe, 23-24; Wiley, Interview with Virginia Huff, 5-6.

45. Wiley, Interview with Harry Hoe, 28; Martha Wiley, Interview with Virginia Huff, December 4, 2008, transcribed by Brittany Schroll (2012), 23; Wiley, Interview with Betty Hayes, 11.

46. "33rd Annual Meeting of Middlesboro Chamber of Commerce."

Figure 16. Vice-President Nixon Waves to Crowds during Parade in Downtown Middlesboro for Cumberland Gap NHP's Dedication on July 3, 1959. Source: *Knoxville News Sentinel.*

Park Residents

Archaeologists reviewing Cumberland Gap NHP's archaeological resources in 2005 noted that although most of the known sites in the park are historic, including a number of home sites, "little is known about the historic occupation of the area outside of the military occupation."[47] In the nearly ten years since their investigation, knowledge of

47. Todd Ahlman Gail Guymon, and Nicholas Herrman, *Archaeological Overview and Assessment of the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Archaeological Laboratory, 2005), 76.

the people that lived in the park area is still hard to come by.[48] Historian Michel Rolph Trouillot, in his treatise on power and the production of history, suggests that "silences" in the creation of sources, development of archives, formation of narratives, and selection of narratives into a body of history, reveal how power is used to inform our understanding of history. History then, according to Trouillot, "is a particular bundle of silences, the result of a unique process, and the operation required to deconstruct these silences will vary accordingly."[49] Historians have begun to deconstruct these silences on human occupation and removal at Cumberland Gap NHP by gathering the histories of a few families that lived on the mountain during the time of acquisition. Oral histories, land records, photographs, material culture, and other historical records provide a window into the realities of mountain life and help us understand what the coming of the park meant to them.

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48. A better understanding of the people living in the park area may be ascertained from the tract files in the park's land records. This resource likely contains a substantial amount of data that needs to be extrapolated and analyzed thoroughly, which went beyond the scope of this particular study.

49. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995), 26-27.

Figure 17. "Unknown Family." Earl Parlmer, photographer, wrote this caption: "The identity of the family pictured here is not remembered, but they lived near Chadwell Gap and the man in the picture is the same as the man running likker under a cliff below Tom Jeff's Cabin." Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

The Hensley family has received much attention from the NPS, scholars, and the public since the NPS decided nearly fifty years ago to restore what was left of their community, even though its preservation was not part of the park's enabling legislation.[50]

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50. William Cox, *Hensley Settlement: A Mountain Community* (Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National, 2005); John Rehder, "Hensley, Kentucky: A Twentieth-Century Pioneer Folk Settlement," *Material Cultural* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 107-130; Jean

The Hensley Settlement is unique because of its size, isolation, and primitive qualities, despite being established early in the twentieth century. Cultural geographer John Rehder believed that Hensley Settlement is significant because it documents three important elements of settlement geography, including effective settlement, initial occupancy, and traditional log construction. Rehder argued that, "In the Hensley Settlement, we have a documented case for an entire folk community steeped in folk practices and material cultural artifacts dating from the point of initial settlement. Indeed it is a rare privilege to witness in situ first effective settlement and initial occupancy in a settlement succession."[51] Hensley also showcases one of the last periods of Appalachian log construction. While the Hensley experience may not be entirely representative of other families living in the proposed park area, it suggests what others may have experienced when the park purchased their land. In any case, the Hensley's association with the land is comparatively well documented.

Sherman Hensley took up residence on the 500-acre tract in 1903. The land, known as Hensley Flats, is located at the top of Cumberland Mountain at the headwaters of Martins Fork and Shillalah Creek in Bell County, Kentucky. The land remained primarily a woodland tract owned by C. and R. M. Bales until just a few years prior to Sherman Hensley's arrival. A lessee had begun to clear the mountain plateau for grazing, and it was improved with a few log buildings. Sherman's father-in-law, Burton Hensley, Sr., purchased the property in May 1903 and divided it among his sixteen principle heirs.

Haskell, Alison Blanton, and Edward Speer, "Hensley Settlement Cultural Landscape Report (Draft)," (Johnson City: East Tennessee State University Center for Appalachian Studies and Research Services, 2003).

51. Rehder, "Hensley, Kentucky," 125.

Sherman purchased an additional 38.2 acres to combine with his wife's share of 21 acres. Other relatives and friends soon joined his family when they moved to the flats. The Hensleys settled in the eastern part, while the Gibbons family occupied the western side. Over the years, the two families intermarried. In 1912, the families built a one-room school that also served as the church and community center. The settlement peaked in the 1930s with 160 occupants.[52]

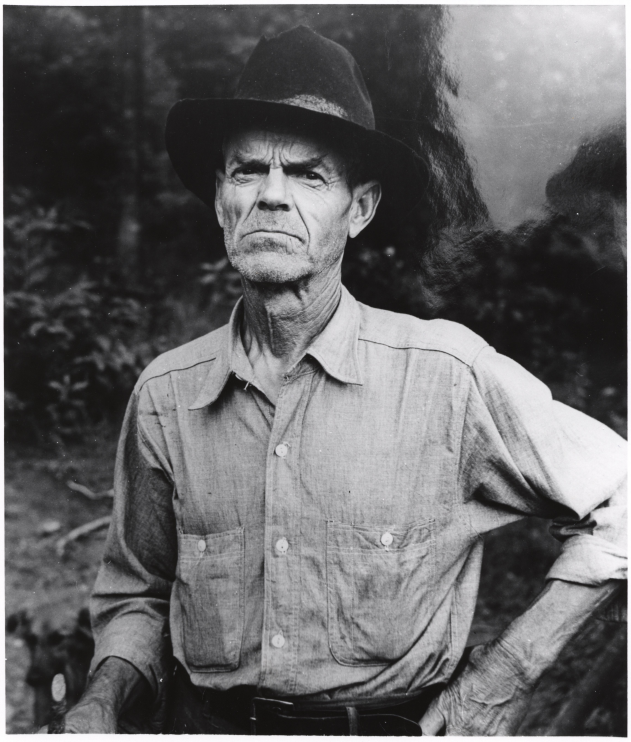

Figure 18. Sherman Hensley. Photographed by Earl Palmer, 1951. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

52. Ibid., 110-11.

Figure 19. Willie Gibbons Farm. Photographed by Earl Palmer, October 17, 1965. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

The Hensley and Gibbons families constructed all their buildings by hand using log construction. Rehder noted that the buildings constructed in the settlement during the Great Depression were far better than so-called "Depression Houses," a type of house found throughout the South during the 1930s built by desperate people using crude methods. The Hensley and Gibbons families used the knowledge of log building handed down from previous generations. They sustained themselves by planting corn, beans, potatoes, and fruit trees, and raising cattle, hogs, chickens, and sheep. Two water mills, a

sorghum cane mill, and a blacksmith shop were located in the community. They sold extra produce and moonshine to raise cash for purchase goods in the neighboring towns. The settlement remained without electricity, plumbing, mechanized vehicles, or a suitable road from 1903 to 1951, the period during which it functioned as a mountain community.[53]

Figure 20. Interior of Willie Gibbons Barn. Photographed by Earl Palmer. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

53. Ibid., 111, 125-26.

The Hensley family had already started to move off their isolated mountain plateau by the time the Kentucky National Park Commission offered to purchase their land. Sherman Hensley recalled that the people who moved first did not own any land. Many Hensley men had found good paying jobs in local mines, which was more lucrative than farming. Their mining jobs also kept them from being drafted into the armed services during the war. Park Hensley was called up by the U.S. Army and passed his physical, but the government deferred him about eight times because his job operating machinery in a coalmine was considered essential war work.[54] Only Elijah Gibbons served in the military during the war and fought in the European theater.

Figure 21. Lige and Anna Scott Hensley. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

54. Hobart Cawood, Interview with Sherman Hensley, Mrs. Willie Gibbons, and Lige Gibbons, March 25, 1960, transcript number 1, 13, and Robert Munck, Park Hensley Oral History, tape number 44, transcript, August 3, 1970, 10, both Park Archive, Oral History Collection.

Lige Hensley was the last of Sherman Hensley's children to leave the mountain in the late 1940s. Apparently, he could not get a schoolteacher for the four remaining school age children in the settlement. Education was important to the settlement families, and they took great pains to have their children educated. They built a one-room school that children attended through the eighth grade, and Sherman Hensley hauled the textbooks up the mountain by mule. When Lige and his family left, by 1949, Sherman, then a widower, lived alone on the isolated plateau.[55]

Sherman Hensley was determined to remain on the plateau even after his family left, but his isolation only lasted two years. He sold his land to the Kentucky National Park Commission in 1951 and purchased property in Virginia. Sherman recalled mixed feelings as he and his neighbors sold their land for the park. Some were happy to sell their land and get off the mountain, while others did not want to.[56] He recalled that they all received a fair price and they eventually left. Nearly ten years after leaving the mountain, Sherman indicated the park was a bit of a blessing:

> Well, I'll say this, in a way I guess that my honest opinion that it is good that they sold their land to the park because it was owned by a few individuals and they'd kindly cleared up the best of the land, you know like people commonly do and it was getting worn a right smart and probably they could do better to buy somewhere else. It was unhandy up there anyway. I think the people made a pretty fair deal in selling.[57]

Sherman realized that the mountain land was giving out. After moving off the mountain, he lived for twenty-eight more years. He died in 1979 at age ninety-eight in nearby

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55. Ibid.

56. Cawood, Interview with Sherman Hensley, Mrs. Willie Gibbons, and Lige Gibbons, 13.

57. Ibid., 14.

Caylor, Virginia.[58] He is now buried in the family cemetery at Hensley Settlement, the last of his kin to be interred there. Every year Hensley descendants have a reunion at the settlement.

Other residents living in the proposed park area likely shared a number of experiences with those living at Hensley Settlement, especially during the 1930s and 1940s. First, the land provided sustenance during the worst of the Great Depression. Second, World War II took a number of the young adults away from the family home place, and not all would return to this part of Appalachia. The war and subsequent revitalization of the economy finished a good deal of what New Deal reformers started. Both removed people from submarginal land. The establishment of Cumberland Gap NHP removed the remaining residents in the proposed park area.

The Beason family offers another vignette of mountain life at the time of acquisition. David "Press" Beason and his wife Martha raised twelve children in the home they owned along the Davis Branch, near the Sugar Run area of the park. Press died in 1933, leaving Martha a widow. Martha remained on the land after her husband's death. The Beason children attended the Dark Ridge School with the other neighbor families—the Campbells, Wilsons, and Ingrams. The school remained open until sometime in the 1950s.[59] The families made a living farming, carpentry, and occasional jobs in town. Some of the older children had already left home when the Kentucky National Park Commission appraised the property. Daughter Rachel was living with her

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58. Rehder, "Hensley, Kentucky," 111.

59. Martha Wiley, Interview with Jean Ausmus, February 4, 2010, transcribed by Pam Lewis, May 2011, 6, Park Archive, Oral History Collection.

husband, Michael Miracle, in Detroit. Woodrow Beason was serving in the navy. Estil Beason was in the army and stationed in Italy. The Kentucky National Park Commission carried out condemnation proceedings, probably because their were so many non-resident heirs, and, on November 21, 1944, the court awarded the family $2,083 for a 57.88-acre tract of land, house, smokehouse, two chicken houses, corn crib, barn and fruit trees. Howard Douglass assured Martha she could stay in her home through the winter until the federal government took over the land.[60] Martha eventually moved closer to Middlesboro. Park Ranger Brittony Beason, Martha's great-granddaughter, now works at the park as an interpretive ranger. Her family still visits the home site, which is now marked with a wayside.[61]

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60. See "Beason, Martha, et.al. Tract #27," in Park Lands Files.

61. In fact, the Beason family showed up at the park to visit the homestead site during one of the author's research trips.

Figure 22. Wayside Commemorating Beason Home Place. Photographed by author in 2014.

Park historian Martha Wiley, who has been working diligently to recover the voices of dislocated residents, believes that the creation of Cumberland Gap NHP was detrimental to rural identity. In conversations with Beason descendants, she found a feeling that their land, on which they had lived, worked, and paid taxes, had been "taken" with no tangible benefit to them. They indicated that Martha Beason and her children felt powerless to negotiate for more from land acquisition agents. Interestingly, this animosity seems to be directed at the federal government rather than Howard Douglass or other

state representatives who were actually responsible for purchasing land for the park. However, four generations removed, Ranger Brittony Beason feels no bitterness towards the park. Wiley believes that while her predecessors felt more kinship to the land as a part of their identity, Ranger Beason now feels part of a larger park community.[62]

While other residents likely had shared experiences with the Hensleys, Gibbons, and Beasons, there were also differences. For example, no other settlements in the park area had as dense a population as Hensley Settlement. Furthermore, some homes, particularly those closer to town, may have been frame or brick construction with utilities, such as the O'Dell house in the town of Cumberland Gap. Archaeological investigations and additional historical research should provide a better picture of the pre-park residents' housing and material culture.

Mission 66 at Cumberland Gap NHP

In the wake of World War II, which brought a surge of visitors into national parks, the NPS began a second period of accelerated park development beginning in the mid-1950s. Mission 66 was a ten-year capital improvement program to modernize the national park system in time for the agency's fiftieth anniversary. As land acquisition came to a close at Cumberland Gap, park planners used Mission 66 funds to create a new master plan for the park. They incorporated many of the ideas from New Deal plans, including building modern facilities, constructing trails, restoring sections of Wilderness

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62. Martha Wiley, "Hallowed by History: The Creation of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park" (paper presented at Ohio Valley History Conference, Johnson City, TN, October 12, 2012), 11-13.

Road, and removing traces of human occupation to recreate an eighteenth-century landscape.

Mission 66 not only was important for modernizing the national park system, but it was an important transition point in NPS management as the NPS received criticism for overdeveloping national parks.[63] Americans overwhelmed national parks after the war as rationing and travel restrictions ended. Yellowstone, for example, experienced 1,000,000 visitors in 1948, doubling the previous all-time high record of 500,000 in 1940. During the war, visitation at Yellowstone fell to a mere 86,000 in 1944. There were not enough rangers to supervise the crowds, and park infrastructures proved to be insufficient. The NPS found itself unable to protect park resources against visitors. Newton Drury, NPS Director during the 1940s, was preservation-minded and did not mind the war-time hiatus in park development. However, public criticism of the agency rose as visitor services fell and editorialists went so far as to opine that national parks should close.[64]

Conrad Wirth inherited these issues when he became NPS Director in 1951, and he set about devising a program to restart national park development. By then, President Eisenhower was in office and was looking more favorably on public works programs to stimulate the economy as the armed forces demobilized. In 1953, Wirth proposed a ten-year capital campaign to modernize and expand the national park system. Congress agreed to the request in 1956 and provided $700,000,000 through a ten-year program of increased annual appropriations. The Mission 66 program aimed at hiring more staff,

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63. Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (1997; reprint, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 203.

64. Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 4, 6.

improving park interpretation, constructing modern facilities, and upgrading existing infrastructure. Mission 66 architects Conrad Wirth and Thomas Vint recommitted to the landscape design that the NPS had implemented so well during the New Deal. However, although NPS landscape architects still aimed to put visitors in contact with primary park values without resource degradation, they abandoned park rustic architecture and experimented with new structural forms, modern materials, and machine construction for sturdy, low-maintenance structures.[65]

The Department of Interior officially established Cumberland Gap NHP on September 14, 1955, shortly before the initiative began. Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay signed the acceptance of deeds, totaling 20,232 acres in Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee.[66] Appropriations for the park rose from $193,990 total in 1956, the first year of Mission 66, to $765,236, for construction projects alone, in 1959.[67] Mission 66 park planners found that although Cumberland Gap NHP was new to the system, it was not new to human use. US 25E was a modern road that crossed Cumberland Gap, with gas stations, cigarette stores, tourist shops, hotels, and restaurants strung along the way.

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65. Ibid., 10; Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 463-64.

66. National Park Service, "Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Annual Report, 1956 Fiscal Year," NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, General Records, Administrative Files, Stack 570, Row 80, Compartment 2, Shelf 4, Box 75, Folder A26 CUGA Part 2.

67. National Park Service, "Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Annual Report, 1956 Fiscal Year," 1956, and Carl Stoddard, "Annual Report, 1959 Fiscal Year," July 24, 1959, both NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, General Records, Administrative Files, Entry P-11, Stack 570, Row 80, Compartment 2, Shelf 4, Box 75, Folder A26 CUGA Part 2.

These did not meld with park landscape design principles. Mission 66 planners lamented that, "Development of the park area prior to 1955 had been without primary park values." They had the difficult task of reorienting the area to its national park status by removing such intrusions and creating facilities that let visitors know they were in a national park.[68]

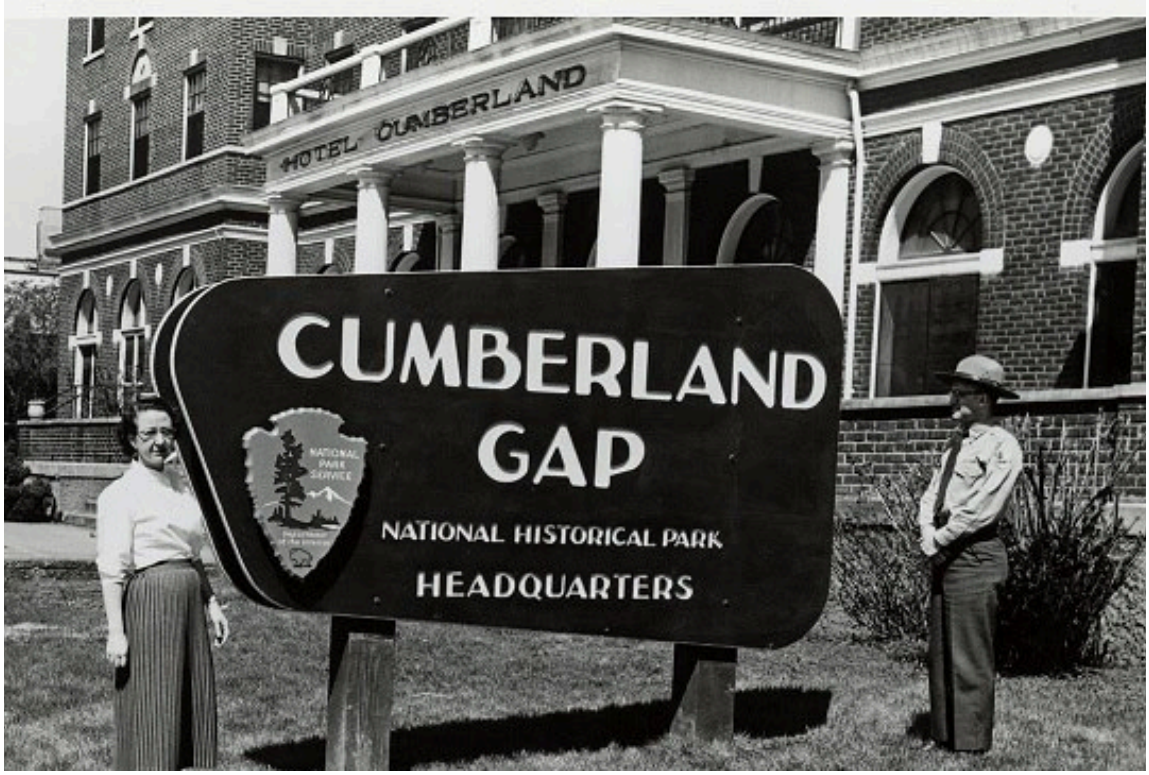

Figure 23. Virginia Huff and Park Employee (possibly Superintendent Guy), at first Cumberland Gap NHP Headquarters, Then Located at Hotel Cumberland in Middlesboro, 1955. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

68. National Park Service, "Mission 66 for Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," n.d., Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 5, Box 5, Folder 7.

The NPS's first step was to hire permanent staff and open an office in the area. Millard Dean Guy entered duty as the park's first superintendent in June 1955, and was later joined by Virginia Huff as his secretary along with a maintenance worker, historian, engineer, and clerk stenographer. The first park headquarters was located at the Cumberland Hotel in Middlesboro.[69] Although the staff was small and the office temporary, Cumberland Gap finally had a federal presence in the area representing the interests of the park, the agency, and the federal government.

During that first year, the new staff worked to establish boundaries, met with local communities, began a few small-scale construction projects, and removed remaining buildings and lessees in the park. Staff surveyed twenty-six buildings.[70] The NPS sold six and identified thirteen others to be razed. They took no action on seven buildings, all of them located on disputed lands. There were still lessees using six residences, one service station, one service station-cafe, Harris Courts, and Cumberland Mountain Hotel and Cottages. Three lessees held lifetime leases, while all others expired on January 31, 1957. The NPS intended to retain only the O'Dell house in Cumberland Gap, for park use after the O'Dell family vacated the property in 1957.[71] The spacious brick house was located close to the town of Cumberland Gap and could be easily converted to park use without disturbing the park scene.

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69. Ibid.

70. Tinney, "History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, 49, wrote that there were as many as fifty-three buildings on park property at the time of acquisition, valued about $40,000.

71. NPS, "Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Annual Report, 1956 Fiscal Year."

Figure 24. O'Dell House. Photographed by author in 2014.

The removal of the last remaining families and businesses was an important step in simulating Cumberland Gap's pioneer past. New Deal park planners had identified the park's period of significance as the mid-eighteenth century to the early-nineteenth century without researching and analyzing the area's whole history, although they were aware of the Civil War forts near the Pinnacle and interested in preserving them. The NPS reasoned it had to remove evidence of human occupation from the park landscape so that visitors could envision themselves as pioneers. Archaeologist Audrey Horning described a similar attempt in selective memory at Shenandoah National Park when the CCC razed home sites and reforested the Blue Ridge to create a mythical landscape that "celebrates the nation's capacity to reform through civilizing the uncivilized mountaineer, through ushering a landscape back to its 'natural' state—a state decreed and

defined by society."[72] Reclamation efforts at Cumberland Gap NHP differed from Shenandoah because park planners were trying to simulate wilderness at a specific moment in time, the eighteenth century.

Park construction ramped up in 1957 when the NPS made improvements to the Pinnacle area, which had been initially developed by the Sky Land Company in 1929. NPS contractors developed parking and constructed the overlook, trail, and comfort station. The NPS began improving roads and constructing trails. The agency sold buildings at Harris Courts to the highest bidder. Also in 1957, the NPS removed the old CCC fire tower near White Rocks, which previously had been used by the Virginia Department of Forestry. The park still remained closed to visitors, but Mission 66 planners began developing a prospectus for the park's interpretation.[73]

Mission 66 planners maintained the New Deal vision of balancing natural and cultural values to create a pioneer wilderness, but realized there were other stories to tell at Cumberland Gap besides pioneer history, indicating a transition from a 1930s preservation philosophy to one that included several periods of significance.[74] Park historians and administrators now sought to reconcile the park's Civil War forts and

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72. Audrey Horning, "Of Saints and Sinners: Mythic Landscapes of the Old and New South," in *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape,"* ed. Paul Shackel (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 23.

73. Millard D. Guy, "Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Annual Report, 1956 Fiscal Year," NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, General Records, Administrative Files, Stack 570, Row 80, Compartment 2, Shelf 4, Box 75, Folder A26 CUGA Part 2.

74. National Park Service, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park: Mission 66 Edition," October 1961, Park Archives, Series 2, Subseries 1, Box 1, Folder 9.

Hensley Settlement with the pioneer landscape they were in charge of creating. Mission 66 thus broadened the park's story to include other themes, including the "pre-pioneer, Civil War, and industrial boom" periods.[75] Departing from the New Deal plans, Mission 66 planners included Hensley Settlement among the park's primary historical values. Despite being a twentieth-century community, Hensley Settlement had all the characteristics of being a pioneer settlement.

The NPS increased Cumberland Gap NHP's appropriations in 1959 to prepare for the park's dedication. That year, the NPS constructed a new entrance sign to the Skyland Road, a new bridge over US 25E, and a brand new visitor center.[76] The new visitor center was located on US 25E, about half a mile east of Middlesboro. Park planners intended the visitor center to be the starting point for most tourists. Visitors entered a spacious lobby where they could be greeted by a uniformed ranger. From there, they could go to an auditorium with a capacity for one hundred people where the park showed an introductory film and walk through museum exhibits that interpreted the park's significant human history as well as its natural history.[77]

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75. National Park Service, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," November 1963, Park Archives, Series 2, Subseries 1, Box 1, Folder 9.

76. Stoddard, "Annual Report, 1959 Fiscal Year."

77. National Park Service, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," November 1963.

Figure 25. Dedication of Cumberland Gap NHP Visitor Center, July 4, 1959. Source: *Knoxville News Sentinel.*

Mission 66 planners recognized that most of the park's visitors would see Cumberland Gap NHP from their vehicles and their experience would be primarily self-guided. In 1959, for example, 20,433 vehicles with 88,240 visitors drove to the Pinnacle. From the visitor center, visitors could drive four miles up to the top of the Pinnacle. Within half a mile of leaving the visitor center, they could get their first glimpse of a portion of the historic Wilderness Road. The road then took them to the saddle of the gap. Visitors could park there and hike up to the Tri-State Peak where there was an orientation shelter. Returning back to their vehicles, they could continue on their journey up to the

Pinnacle. They could take in some of the Civil War sites along the way and have a picnic lunch at the top.[78]

Figure 26. Mission 66 Shelter at the Pinnacle Overlook Area. Photographed by author in 2014.

However, planners noted opportunities when visitors could leave their cars behind, such as the Ridge Trail that led to remote areas of the park. The park built a new campground along Route 58 in Virginia called Wilderness Campground to accommodate an outdoor recreation program. Wilderness Campground had 166 campsites with three comfort stations, tables, grills, and trash disposal. Adjacent to the campground, the NPS

78. Stoddard, "Annual Report, 1959 Fiscal Year"; National Park Service, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," November 1963.

constructed a fifty-unit picnic area, also with a comfort station, tables, grills, and trash disposal. Visitors could take in campfire programs at a new 250-seat amphitheater.[79]

With the sudden influx of vehicles at national parks across the country and Cumberland Gap NHP, park planners began to consider alternatives for traffic control at the point where US 25E crossed the saddle of Cumberland Gap. This coincided with the beginning of an important transition from the conservation era to the environmental era. Up until the 1950s, the highway was seen as compatible with the park. However, by 1957 park planners began considering tunneling US 25E. Their intention was to restore the saddle back to its eighteenth-century historical appearance, not to restore the environment. At a planning conference two years later, they also considered building a roof-life structure over the highway instead of a tunnel.[80] This conversation, however, would take a dramatic turn in the 1960s when the park's master plan was open to public comment and road building became part of a concerted effort to improve the regional economy.

Park staff noticed a high rate of unemployment in the area when they first began working at the park. This created a good labor pool for temporary labor, but it came with a high turnover rate. In 1963, the park received funding through a new Accelerated Public Works program, funded by the Area Redevelopment Administration. Cumberland Gap

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79. National Park Service, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park."

80. E. T. Scoyen, memorandum, "Reconstruction of U.S. 25-E, Cumberland Gap," November 27, 1957, and Millard Guy, memorandum, "Planning Conference," March 20, 1959, both NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, General Records, Administrative Files, 1949-1971, Stack 570, Row 80, Compartment 21, Shelf 3, Box 91, Folder D18 CUGA Part 2 Planning Program, 1955-1961.

NHP received $20,000, or sixty-eight man months, for trail improvements on the Virginia side of the park. With this funding, the program hired one hundred men from Bell and Harlan counties in Kentucky, Lee County in Virginia, and Claiborne County in Tennessee during 1963 and 1964.[81] Given widespread unemployment in the area, however, the Accelerated Works Program soon gave way to a larger, more expansive poverty work program—the Job Corps.

Conclusion

From 1943 to 1963, both the park and the region saw a fundamental transition that was both a realization of New Deal dreams and the beginning of an important turning point. For Cumberland Gap NHP, in the long and ongoing process of recreating the Appalachian landscape, this period meant the partial fulfillment of New Deal park planning ideas as the NPS entered a new era of park development and management amidst the growing environmental movement. NPS officials successfully shepherded park boosters through the slow process of land acquisition. Once the land was acquired and the park officially placed in federal hands, new NPS staff began scrubbing the landscape to create a sense of a pioneer wilderness. They also fulfilled other New Deal plans of developing a modern park infrastructure to guide visitors through this landscape, including a new visitor center, tour road, overlook area, roadside markers, and comfort

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81. National Park Service, "Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Annual Report, 1956 Fiscal Year"; Office of the Secretary of Interior, "Interior Department Announces $8, 719,000 Job-Creating Accelerated Public Works Projects in Twenty-Four States," (August 12, 1963), Fish and Wildlife Service News Release Database, http://www.fws.gov/news/Historic/NewsReleases/1963/19630812b.pdf (accessed September 30, 2014); Tinney, "History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," 62.

stations. They imagined most visitors would experience this pioneer wilderness through their vehicles, but they also began creating opportunities for other outdoor recreation activities. By the late 1950s, the NPS began reconsidering highway traffic in the saddle of the gap, still largely unaware that a new debate that would occur in the next decade as the environmental movement gained momentum. NPS employees also noticed that poverty did not whither away after World War II, at least in this part of Appalachia. The park would soon be called to play an active role in postwar social and economic reform. While the rest of the country seemed to enjoy postwar prosperity, poverty stubbornly remained in this corner of Appalachia.

This period also saw a fundamental reordering of the area's political, economic, and social structures, due in part to the war and the creation of the park. While land acquisition accomplished some of the original New Deal vision for land and social reform by removing people from submarginal land, the local elites in charge of land acquisition were concerned with the goal of establishing the park, not what happened to the people who lived there. For local elites, the Cumberland Gap park project was an opportunity to reorder the economic and political power structure, particularly by purchasing American Association land, although, as it turned out, the American Association would still hold a good deal of its land and power. While the majority of those displaced did not resist purchase efforts, those who did tended to be those with some economic and political power. Some, of course, were happy to leave their mountain residences, while others felt they had little choice. In the end, however, land acquisition did not effect a new economic order; unemployment in the area remained high.

CHAPTER FIVE

The War on Poverty and the Gap Job Corps Conservation Center

Six months after the shocking assassination of President John F. Kennedy, his successor, President Lyndon B. Johnson, spoke at the University of Michigan's graduation and laid out his legislative program to help the United States become a "Great Society" in which all Americans had access to the country's abundance and liberty. Civil rights legislation and his War on Poverty were the twin pillars for his 1964 presidential election campaign and subsequent administration. The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), created in 1964 when Congress authorized the Economic Opportunity Act, organized the War on Poverty's efforts through the Job Corps, Head Start (a pre-school program for disadvantaged children), VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America, the domestic counterpart of Kennedy's Peace Corps), and the Community Action Program (CAP). As part of the new federal initiative, the National Park Service instituted projects to spur regional economic growth and job-training programs. The NPS and OEO selected Cumberland Gap National Historical Park for a new Job Corps Conservation Center (JCCC), since Appalachia was one of the most economically depressed areas of the country and a key front in the War on Poverty.

The impact of Great Society social policy programs on national parks has not, however, been a subject studied by academics and National Park Service historians so far. Now that key Great Society programs and policies have celebrated their fiftieth anniversaries, it is a good time to explore the connections between them. The NPS at

Cumberland Gap NHP was an essential agent of economic development and social policy during Johnson's Great Society by administering a Job Corps Conservation Center as part of the president's War on Poverty and regional economic development initiatives. While the Job Corps administered the center there, park administrators were also engaged in conversations about using the park as a catalyst for spurring tourism in the Tri-State area.

Historians writing about the NPS indicate that the period 1964-1972 was an important chapter in the agency's history. The national park system expanded in both the number of units and acres managed. Social movements and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prompted NPS leadership to open the doors to women and minorities. An important transition in NPS leadership occurred when Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall selected George Hartzog to succeed Conrad Wirth as the agency's director in 1964. During Hartzog's nine-year tenure, the national park system grew by seventy-two units and 2.7 million acres, when only approximately fifty-five units had been added since the end of the New Deal nearly thirty years before.[1] These new units included new types of parks to meet the nation's demand for recreational opportunities and environmental protection—national trails and seashores, urban recreation areas, and performance arts facilities—that brought with them new, complex management issues, public criticism of agency policies, and the challenges of complying with a wave of new environmental

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1. Barry Mackintosh indicates that the system added 68 new units during Hartzog's directorate, while Kathy Mengak (Hartzog's biographer) believes there are 72 units created during his tenure. Barry Mackinstosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System,* rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, 2005), 65, http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/shaping/part2.pdf (accessed November 17, 2014); Kathy Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians: The Legacy of George B. Hartzog Jr.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012), ii.

legislation. The NPS also reasserted its dominant role in federal historic preservation with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in 1966. The agency also invested efforts to implement social reform and economic development at national parks after Congress created the OEO. Despite these important changes, scholarship is limited on this period of NPS history, and such scholarship that does exist tends to focus more on environmental legislation than on social policy.

The wave of environmental legislation that occurred during this period has meant that historians writing about changes in environmental policy have contributed the most to discussions about the Great Society and national parks. Margaret Brown, James Feldman, and Jerry Frank, for instance, have each explored the modern environmental movement and changes in natural resource management at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, and Rocky Mountain National Park, respectively.[2] NPS historian Richard West Sellars takes a broader scope and chronicles the national impact of the modern environmental movement from the agency standpoint.[3] These historians do an excellent job of placing this period in the broader context of agency history, but they do not consider the impact of Great Society social policies on the national or park level. Likewise, Lary Dilsaver's collection of important NPS documents from the period 1964-1969, which he calls the "The Ecological Revolution," diminishes

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2. Margaret Brown, *The Wild East: A Biography of the Great Smoky Mountains* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 219-27; James Feldman, *A Storied Wilderness: Rewilding Apostle Islands* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 149-224; Jerry Frank, *Making Rocky Mountain National Park: The Environmental History of an American Treasure* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2013), 72-82.

3. Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (1997; reprint, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 204-81.

the importance of the social reform programs in the national parks during this same period, such as the Job Corps, VISTA, and college-work study.[4] Infusing social reform history into these narratives will create a more nuanced history of national parks during this period.

A few historians have ventured into discussions of the impact of social policy on the NPS during the Great Society, but none has fully engaged in the implications of the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA). Kathy Mengak and Polly Welts Kaufman discuss the entrance of women and minorities into the agency under Hartzog after Congress passed the Civil Rights Act in 1964.[5] Paul Marion's recently published administrative history of Lowell National Historical Park briefly discusses the genesis of the park through planning funded by Johnson's Model Cities program, an urban aid program that encouraged cities to experiment with antipoverty programs and alternative models of local government.[6] His discussion of the Model Cities program hopefully will inspire further scholarly inquiry about the implications of reform policy on urban parks. However, historians have not, for the most part, engaged in critical discussions about the impact of the EOA on national parks. Initiating such a conversation can be accomplished by looking at the Job Corps program managed by the OEO, since there were nine Job

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4. Lary Dilsaver, "The Ecological Revolution, 1964-1969," in *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), 269-369.

5. Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians,* 61-92; Polly Welts Kaufman, *National Parks and the Woman's Voice: A History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 130-33.

6. Paul Marion, *Mill Power: The Origin and Impact of Lowell National Historical Park* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 19-22.

Corps centers in national parks.[7] Doing so may give us a better understanding of the role national parks played in striving toward regional and national goals in social reform.

The War on Poverty and Cumberland Gap

Educated Americans and policy-makers became more aware of the extent of poverty in the U.S. after World War II, which was a marked contrast to the postwar prosperity that most Americans enjoyed. Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith, in *The Affluent Society* (1958), found that public infrastructure, including schools, roads, public buildings, and parks, was poor despite this unprecedented affluence. He encouraged liberals to stimulate the economy through government spending on public works projects.[8] Poverty activist Michael Harrington believed that Galbraith was too dismissive of the plight of the poor in America based upon his own documentation of poverty's prevalence in the United States in *The Other America: Poverty in the United*

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7. Two NPS park administrative histories from the 1980s mention Job Corps programs at their sites. Barbara Blumberg gives the briefest mention in her history of Statue of Liberty National Monument on the short-lived Liberty Park Job Corps Center. Barbara Kirkconnell spends more time discussing the Catoctin Job Corps Conservation Center in her administrative history of the park. This author expanded upon Kirkconnell's work in a special resource study to integrate new research and present a more critical analysis of Catoctin's Job Corps program. See Barbara Blumberg, *Celebrating the Immigrant: An Administrative History of the Statue of Liberty National Monument, 1952-1982* (Boston, MA: Division of Cultural Resources, Northeast Regional Office, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, 1985), 110, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002508235 (accessed January 26, 2015); Barbara Kirkconnell, *Catoctin Mountain Park: An Administrative History* (Thurmont, MD: Catoctin Mountain Park and National Park Service, February 1988), 126-34; Angela Sirna, "Special Resource Study on Human Conservation Programs at Catoctin Mountain Park" (unpublished report for Catoctin Mountain Park and National Park Service, 2014), 81-122.

8. Irwin Unger, *The Best of Intentions: The Triumphs and Failures of the Great Society Under Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 32.

States (1962). Harrington saw clusters of disadvantaged people with similar social and psychological characteristics and believed they existed in a "culture of poverty."[9] Harrington and other activist intellectuals believed the existence of poor people who constituted an "other America" was embarrassing to the national conscience, and encouraged U.S. citizens to act by bringing impoverished people back into mainstream society.[10]

In the wave of poverty literature published in the 1950s and 1960s, several authors identified Appalachia as being a problem region. Harrington was one, and he furthered assumptions propagated by earlier reformers in the twentieth century who saw Appalachia and its people as a being a place and population removed from mainstream America.[11] Kentucky lawyer Harry Caudill gave a more sweeping exposé of poverty in the region in *Night Comes to the Cumberlands: A Biography of a Depressed Area* (1962). He chronicled the dire circumstances of eastern Kentucky and attributed these seemingly hopeless conditions to outside interests who controlled the land and the people, keeping them in poverty. Caudill argued that with government intervention, education, and new employment opportunities, Appalachians could pull themselves out of poverty.[12]

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9. Ibid., 65-66; Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (1962; reprint, New York: Touchstone, 1997), 165.

10. Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 101.

11. Ibid., 2.

12. Harry Caudill, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands: A Biography of a Depressed Area* (1962; reprint, Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1963), 365-92.

Cumberland Gap National Historical Park (NHP) was in a region that struggled economically in the 1950s and 1960s while much of the rest of the country prospered. In the 1950s, one-third of Kentucky's population left to search for better opportunities, leaving behind a population suffering from unemployment, low income, and poor education.[13] After the war, coal and manufacturing production leveled off in the region, and advancements in mechanized mining put many coal miners out of work. Appalachian unemployment rates were about twice the national average in the 1950s. In 1960, average annual per capita income in Appalachia was $1,400, one-third lower than the national average. In Kentucky, that average was only $841. One-third of Appalachian families lived below the national poverty line of $3,000 set by the president's Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) for families of all sizes. Policy-makers also believed that low per capita income was a symptom of the region's poor education system. While New Deal liberals had seen social welfare programs as temporary measures, public assistance—particularly disability benefits and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)—became a permanent necessity for those in Appalachia who had lost hope of ever finding a job. As more and more people grew dependent upon such a system, public assistance programs became susceptible to political corruption. Outsiders and regional advocates saw the region's failures in the free market as an embarrassment to the nation, especially because the U.S. saw itself as a leader in developing third world countries as an antidote to the spread of communism. Government bureaucrats and political leaders sought solutions to the region's poverty, relying upon their undying faith in science and

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13. Clyde McCoy and James Brown, "Appalachian Migration to Midwestern Cities," in *The Invisible Minority: Urban Appalachians*, ed. William Philliber and Clyde McCoy (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1981), 35.

technology and the bureaucratic capacity of the federal government to engineer social change.[14]

Alarmed by the desperate economic situation described by Caudill in *Night Comes to the Cumberlands,* the NPS commissioned its own study for Cumberland Gap NHP, *A Profile and Economic Analysis of Four Cumberland Gap Counties.* The NPS wanted economic profiles for the counties affected by the national park, even including Harlan County in Kentucky, which is barely in the national park. The agency also wanted to know the impact of the national park on the local economy to help direct future legislative activities and long-term planning for the park. Economists found a situation similar to the rest of the region. Population in the four counties had declined 27.1% between 1950 and 1960, and another 8.3% just between 1960 and 1965. Net outmigration exceeded 43% between 1950 and 1960. While the average of functionally illiterate people in the United States made up 8.4% of the population in 1960, the figure for the Cumberland Gap area was 27%. People in the area had only completed a median of 7.6 years of schooling compared to the national median of 10.6 years.[15] Median family income for area residents in 1960 was $2,405, less than half of the national median of $5,657. Agricultural land use in the area fell 16.7% between 1954 and 1964. The timber industry also declined 41% during the same period. The number of mining firms

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14. Eller, *Uneven Ground,* 28-52. For more on the poverty threshold, see Gordon M. Fisher, "The Development and History of the Poverty Thresholds," *Social Security Bulletin* 55, no. 4 (December 1992), http://www.ssa.gov/history/fisheronpoverty.html (accessed February 9, 2015).

15. John Eilert, *An Economic Profile and Impact Analysis of Four Cumberland Gap Counties* (Memphis, TN: Memphis State University Bureau of Business and Economic Research and Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, June 1968), 1.

increased 15%, but employment fell 58.8% between 1954 and 1963.[16] Retail industry in the Cumberland Gap area was much smaller than the rest of the country, and retail employees earned incomes well below the poverty line.[17] This report painted a bleak picture for NPS officials about the regional economy, and prompted them to think about how park planning could help the region.

Policy-makers began planning initiatives within the region during the 1950s, but Senator John F. Kennedy's experience campaigning in West Virginia made solving Appalachian poverty a presidential concern. Once in office, President Kennedy appointed a task force on area redevelopment, which recommended the Area Redevelopment Act. Passed by Congress in 1961, this law created a new agency, the Area Redevelopment Administration (ARA), to help economically distressed areas by issuing low interest loans to businesses, making grants to local communities to build public facilities to attract industries, and creating work-training programs. This approach focused on economic development by providing a variety of incentives to businesses with the hope that they would create jobs for the area's unemployed.[18]

One such job-training program funded by the ARA that benefited both the unemployed in the Cumberland Gap area and Cumberland Gap NHP was the Accelerated Public Works Program. There had been few unemployment programs that benefited the area's jobless until 1963. Bell County had a small, but popular, unemployment program that put jobless fathers to work on public works projects, informally referred to as the

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16. Ibid., 2.

17. Ibid., 3.

18. Ibid., 59.

"Happy Pappy" program by the media.[19] In 1963, the ARA provided $20,000 (the equivalent of sixty-eight man months) to Cumberland Gap NHP for trail improvements on the Virginia side of the park.[20] Between 1963 and 1964, the program hired one hundred men from Bell and Harlan counties in Kentucky, Lee County in Virginia, and Claiborne County in Tennessee to work on projects in the park.[21] Their work at Cumberland Gap NHP was short-lived, but it demonstrated the park's potential as a job-training ground.

The ARA issued a report in 1964 on economic development for Bell County that further demonstrated the park's suitability for programs that could stimulate the local economy. The report, undertaken by William P. Rock and Associates, asserted that coal was no longer the answer to economic sustainability and that the county should turn towards light industry and tourism. Tourism, the authors wrote, was in its infancy, and Middlesboro, the county's largest city and gateway to Cumberland Gap NHP, should build a prestige hotel to draw visitors. The NPS, with an estimated appropriation of $100,000, could restore Hensley Settlement and also build a road to Hensley that would extend to Sand Cave at the east end of the park. Rock and Associates believed that such a

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19. "122 Jobless Dads Work," *Middlesboro Daily News,* April 16, 1964, p.1; "Appalachia's Jobless Reluctant to Move Even to Find Good Job," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 7, 1967, p.1.

20. Office of the Secretary of the Interior, "Interior Department Announces $8, 719,000 Job-Creating Accelerated Public Works Projects in Twenty-Four States," (August 12, 1963), Fish and Wildlife Service News Release Database, http://www.fws.gov/news/Historic/NewsReleases/1963/19630812b.pdf (accessed September 30, 2014).

21. Edward Tinney, "History of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park" (unpublished report for Cumberland Gap NHP and the National Park Service, 1965), 62.

heritage site and recreational destination would entice visitors to spend an additional day (and additional money) in Bell County.[22]

In addition to proposing the ARA, Kennedy also formed the President's Appalachian Regional Commission (PARC), a federal-state committee, at the behest of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., who had campaigned with the Senator in West Virginia during the 1960 primary.[23] Committee members had applied their experience from rebuilding Japan and Germany after World War II to the issue of how to gather government resources to develop basic infrastructure in the region to encourage economic development. Federal policy-makers saw public works projects, such as highways and projects in Appalachian national parks, as a way to grow the regional economy. However, Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 cast doubt on whether these development programs would be implemented. The PARC, unsure of its fate, finalized its report in February 1964.[24]

President Johnson fulfilled Kennedy's promise to return to Appalachia and made a Poverty Tour in April 1964, using the PARC as a springboard for his own War on Poverty legislation. President Johnson and his wife, Lady Bird, confronted mountain poverty in Inez, Kentucky, located in Martin County, about 150 miles away from Cumberland Gap NHP. In Inez, they observed the community's denuded hillsides, poor

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22. "ARA Says Future Based on Industry," *Middlesboro Daily News,* September 14, 1964, p.1.

23. The PARC was a predecessor of the permanent Appalachian Regional Commission authorized by the 1965 Appalachian Regional Development Act.

24. Eller, *Uneven Ground,* 52, 59, 72-77.

housing, and rough roads. The president met with the Council of Appalachian Governors[25] to build support for his Economic Opportunity bill.[26] The governors present were more interested in an Appalachian-specific bill than Johnson's War on Poverty legislation, and finally the president agreed to support the Appalachian Regional Development bill. A few days after the trip, members of the Ad Hoc Senate Subcommittee on Appalachia submitted the bill to Congress.[27] While the Appalachian Regional Development bill made its way through Congress, the Johnson White House focused again on the Economic Opportunity bill.

The cornerstone of the War on Poverty, the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act was signed into law on August 20, 1964, with an underlying ideology of individualist, opportunity-focused liberalism that was intended to remedy shortcomings of the New Deal by equalizing life chances for diverse populations. New Deal programs had fallen short—the argument went—because lawmakers had concentrated on temporary relief of the recently unemployed but did not address those poor people who could not take advantage of programs due to life circumstances, such as illiteracy or racial

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25. Governors William Barron of West Virginia, Edward Breathitt of Kentucky, John Millard Tawes of Maryland, Carl Sanders of Georgia, Terry Sanford of North Carolina, Frank Clement of Tennessee, and Albertis Harrison of Virginia. Only Governors George Wallace of Alabama and William Scranton of Pennsylvania did not attend the meeting.

26. Eller, 81.

27. Ibid., 80-87; House Committee on Public Works, *Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965: Hearings before the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Appalachian Regional Development of the Committee on Public Works on H.R. 4 and S. 3 on February 4, 5, and 6, 1965,* 89th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1965), 1, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001313430 (accessed November 23, 2014).

discrimination. The OEO, under the direction of Sargent Shriver, architect of the popular Peace Corps program, devised a suite of programs that emphasized self-help, including federal college work-study, the Job Corps, Community Action, VISTA, and a Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC), a program designed to keep sixteen to twenty-one year olds in school by providing part-time work).[28]

Six months later, West Virginia Senator Jennings Randolph managed to shepherd the Appalachian Regional Development bill into law, which Johnson signed on March 9, 1965.[29] The new law created the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), a partnership of federal, state, and local governments interested in economic development. While the OEO provided for human resource development, the ARC focused more on developing regional infrastructure. Historian Ronald Eller called the EOA and Appalachian Regional Development Act (ARDA) watershed laws that established the foundation for government-sponsored intervention in the Appalachian Region for the next several decades.[30] Cumberland Gap NHP played a role in the resulting economic development and job training, and the impact in Bell, Claiborne, Lee, and Harlan counties near Cumberland Gap NHP was swift.

The new antipoverty legislation brought a host of programs to the counties surrounding Cumberland Gap NHP. In 1965, nearly 4,000 residents in Claiborne County

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28. Allen Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984), 170-77.

29. House Committee, *Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965,* 1; Eller, *Uneven Ground,* 80-87.

30. Eller, *Uneven Ground,* 87.

enrolled in the new food stamps program.[31] Bell, Lee, and Claiborne counties all started Head Start programs in 1965.[32] Lincoln Memorial University received federal funds for a new college work-study program, signaling the end of the school's traditional work program.[33] Lee County formed an NYC program and hired 412 local youth in July 1965 for various projects, including cleaning school buses, working on highways, undertaking clerical assignments, staffing a tourist booth, working on a flood control project, and helping janitors. Participants were paid $1.25 an hour, ten cents more than the minimum wage, and could work up to 32 hours a week.[34] VISTA workers arrived in Bell County in 1965 to help with community projects.[35] Middlesboro also opened a Social Security office to serve Bell, Harlan, and Lee counties in anticipation of the increased workload that would come with passage of the Medicare Act, which provided government-

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31. "4,000 Trade Free Food for Food Stamps," January 7, 1965, *Middlesboro Daily News,* p.1.

32. "Claiborne County is Planning for 198 in Head Start," *Middlesboro Daily News,* April 13, 1965, p.1; "Head Start Work Underway by Bell, Claiborne Counties," *Middlesboro Daily News,* May 19, 1965, p.1; "Lee County Awaits Funds for Projects," *Middlesboro Daily News,* June 6, 1965, p.1.

33. "LMU Gets $7,088 for Work Study," *Middlesboro Daily News,* July 15, 1965, p.1; Hess, *Lincoln Memorial University and the Shaping of Appalachia,* 210.

34. "412 in Lee Youth Corps," *Middlesboro Daily News,* July 21, 1965, p.1. The federal minimum wage increased to $1.25 in September 1965. Wage and Hour Division, "History of Changes to the Minimum Wage Law," U.S. Department of Labor, http://www.dol.gov/whd/minwage/coverage.htm (accessed January 26, 2014).

35. "VISTA Set to Begin Bell Work," *Middlesboro Daily News,* September 2, 1965, p.1.

supported health care to the elderly.[36] These programs demonstrated the variety of opportunities available under the Great Society and targeted mostly youth and their families, whom administrators considered to be among the most vulnerable groups.

The Community Action Program, administered by the OEO to help disadvantaged groups to take full advantage of government programs, took root in the Tri-State area beginning in 1965 when organizers formed "community action agencies" (CAAs), including the Bell County Development Association (BCDA) and Claiborne County Community Action Agency. The OEO distributed funds to these CAAs, which were supposed to help improve public services and provide an institutional mechanism for giving the poor a voice in local governance.[37] Some counties hired professionals to run local, nonprofit CAAs. Others converted existing economic development boards into nonprofit CAAs or created new, multi-county agencies to organize constituents and administer programs in large rural areas. In Bell County, a few citizens formed the BCDA in January 1965 to seek OEO funds. William Slusher, Superintendent of Bell County Schools, served as president. The BCDA proposed four projects: early-childhood education for underprivileged pre-school age children, a work training program, recreation and physical fitness activities for youth, and an adult education program.[38] To facilitate implementation of these projects, BCDA formed a Community Action

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36. "Social Security to Open Office in Middlesboro," *Middlesboro Daily News,* August 6, 1965, p.1.

37. Eller, *Uneven Ground,* 99.

38. "Development Group Seeks OEO Funds for County," *Middlesboro Daily News,* January 7, 1965, p.1.

Committee in February 1965, which produced a Community Action Plan in March 1965.[39] Jack Jenkins, a city councilman and insurance agent, was selected as chairman; also serving on the board was Maurice K. Henry, who published the *Middlesboro Daily News* and wielded considerable influence in the area.[40] The quick formation of a CAA in Bell County attests to the eagerness of local residents to acquire OEO funds, but also raises questions about the motives of local elites serving on the board.

County-level CAAs soon gave way to regional CAAs in Appalachia as local power brokers welcomed CAAs and OEO funding with the knowledge that they could control how funds were administered.[41] For example, local business people and elected officials formed the Cumberland Valley Economic Opportunity Council (CVEOC) to pool resources, seek funds, and administer projects in the coal-producing region of eastern Kentucky that included Knox, Bell, Harlan, Clay, Jackson, Rockcastle, Whitley, and Laurel counties.[42] The council administered approximately three million dollars in federal funding to the area between 1965 and 1967.[43] Eller points out that CAAs had different approaches for organizing and administering OEO funds. Some were grassroots

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39. "Bell County Development Meeting Set," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 24, 1965, p.1; "Community Action Plan Formulated," *Middlesboro Daily News,* March 23, 1965, p.1.

40. "Bert Combs Heads Hospital Change," *The Whitesburg (KY) Mountain Eagle,* December 15, 1966, p.1.

41. Eller, *Uneven Ground,* 105-7.

42. Ibid., 141, refers to this organization as the "Cumberland Valley Community Action Agency."

43. "Area Council Waits for 'Calm' Meeting," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 17, 1967, p.1; "Area Antipoverty Council Dumped by Federal Officials," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 23, 1967, p.1.

organizations that aimed to confront local bureaucracies. Others were little more than modified economic development councils.[44] The CVEOC fell into the second category.

Policy-makers, local business owners, and residents believed road building to be a major boon to Cumberland Gap's economy, and this became a primary avenue for public spending. Federal and state road agencies proposed two major projects relating to the Cumberland Gap area and the park.[45] The first project was the Allegheny Parkway, a proposed 632-mile national parkway winding through the Appalachian Mountains from Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in West Virginia to Cumberland Gap NHP. The NPS and Bureau of Public Roads had submitted a report to Congress recommending the route in 1964.[46] The second road project came a year later when the new ARC approved a job to improve the 13.1-mile highway corridor (US 119 and 25E) between Pineville and Middlesboro.[47] This corridor followed the Wilderness Road, which park planners had suggested become a parkway back in the late 1930s. Cumberland Gap NHP administrators lobbied for both projects in the hope of bringing more visitors to the park,

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44. Eller, *Uneven Ground,* 141.

45. "Cumberland Gap Future Depends on Location of Two Major Roadways," *Middlesboro Daily News,* September 13, 1965, newspaper clipping, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 74, Shelf 4, Box 29, Folder K42 Cumberland Gap Publications and Publicity.

46. National Park Service and Bureau of Public Roads, *The Allegheny Parkway: A Report to the Congress of the United States, February 28, 1964* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1964), 1, https://archive.org/details/alleghenyparkway00nati (accessed October 28, 2014).

47. "ARC Approved U.S. 119-25E Corridor," *Middlesboro Daily News,* July 14, 1965, p.1.

modernizing the region's transportation networks, and infusing new dollars into the local economy.[48]

The pervasiveness of poverty politics in the Cumberland Gap area is essential context for understanding Cumberland Gap NHP during this time. The NPS utilized the same two-pronged approach favored by regional and national policy-makers for combatting poverty, which included increased public spending and new job training programs. Road building was one prong of the NPS's effort to stimulate and modernize the Appalachian region—the second was job training through a new program called the Job Corps.

Cumberland Gap Job Corps

The Job Corps program provided an opportunity for national parks to modernize park facilities while also providing job training for the nation's underserved youth. The NPS operated nine Job Corps centers between 1965 and 1969[49] at different parks, six of which were located in parks in the Appalachian region, including Cumberland Gap NHP.[50] The Gap JCCC was an important economic development project in the local area

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48. "Cumberland Gap Future Depends on Location of Two Major Roadways."

49. The nine centers were located at Catoctin Mountain Park, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Statue of Liberty National Monument (known as Liberty Park), Acadia National Park, Cape Cod National Seashore (known as Wellfleet), Mammoth Cave National Park (known as Great Onyx), Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Great Smoky Mountains actually had two centers, one called Tremont and the other Oconaluftee.

50. The other Appalachian centers are Great Onyx JCCC, Oconaluftee and Tremont JCCCs, Harpers Ferry JCCC, and Catoctin JCCC. Technically, Catoctin lies just

because it created jobs and construction projects and brought in over a hundred young men who could spend their money in local businesses. But the purpose of the Job Corps was more than just stimulating local economies. The Economic Opportunity Act stipulated that the program prepare young men and women for the "responsibilities of citizenship" and increase their employability.[51] Administrators decided to accomplish this mission by training enrollees holistically and used parks as outdoor laboratories for building job and life skills. As one center stated, their objective was to "create a desire [among corpsmen] to become happy, useful, self-supporting citizens. . . [through] an integrated work, education, and recreation program."[52] However, the NPS and the OEO had a steep learning curve as they hastily selected, constructed, and opened these centers.

The NPS was not fully prepared to coordinate a Job Corps program when President Johnson announced his intentions of fighting a War on Poverty, but the agency quickly made the program its priority as the Economic Opportunity bill made its way through Congress. "The Job Corps, part of the Poverty Program, is the immediate concern of the National Park Service," stressed Associate Director A. C. Statton in an agency memo addressed to all NPS regional directors and chiefs in May 1964.[53] NPS

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a few miles outside the ARC's definition of Appalachian counties, but the geography and the park's history make it Appalachian in character.

51. *Economic Opportunity Act,* Public Law 88-452, 88th Cong., 2d sess. (August 20, 1964).

52. National Park Service and Office of Economic Opportunity, "Catoctin Job Corps Conservation Center Manual,"[1965], Catoctin Mountain Park Archive; Angela Sirna, Phone Interview with Delmar Robinson, January 22, 2015, author's notes.

53. A. C. Stratton to all National Park Service Regional Directors and Chiefs, memorandum, "Planning the War on Poverty," May 13, 1964, NARA, Record Group 79,

employees scrambled to identify suitable locations for Job Corps centers. Conveniently, NPS employees had already completed some of the preliminary work a few years prior when Senator Hubert Humphrey tried to pass a Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) bill in 1959. That bill had passed the Senate, but the House did not take up the measure.[54] Still, the NPS was hopeful that Congress would create an YCC program, and toward that end the agency prepared camp data in 1963. Not surprisingly, many of the proposed YCC sites were former CCC camps. After the EOA became law, the NPS and OEO selected a number of former CCC camps to be reestablished for the Job Corps. OEO criteria for the first Job Corps centers were that they had to be located on federal lands, be activated by October 1, 1964, and accommodate up to one hundred people.[55] The first center, located at Catoctin Mountain Park in Maryland, home to the Camp David presidential retreat, opened in January 1965 at the site of a former CCC camp. The establishment of nine NPS Job Corps Centers between 1965 and 1969 put the NPS at the forefront of the Job Corps program in its formative years.

Early in program planning, the OEO and NPS selected Cumberland Gap NHP as a site for a Job Corps Conservation Center, but some NPS administrators were neither entirely clear on the agency's mandate nor receptive to the program. On September 3, 1964, Kentucky Representative Eugene Siler announced that Cumberland Gap NHP

Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 73, Shelf 7, Box 6, Folder D22 Memorandum May 1964 to June 1965.

54. CCC Legacy, "CCC Brief History," CCC Legacy, http://www.ccclegacy.org/CCC_Brief_History.html (accessed April 13, 2014).

55. Stratton, "Planning the War on Poverty."

would receive a one-hundred-man youth camp to be placed within the area that was formerly Bartlett-Rhodes Park, a Progressive-era municipal park that Middlesboro had deeded to the federal government in the 1940s to become part of the national park. NPS Southeast Regional Director Charles Marshall remarked to the media, "Our primary purpose is to get the kids up in their physical or mental deficiencies without being a burden on the community."[56] He continued, "As soon as we can get him up to the minimum draft standards he will be turned over to his local draft board." While the Job Corps program was concerned with increasing the educational knowledge and vocational skills of enrollees to make them productive members of society, including the possibility of graduates entering the armed forces, it was not an expressed intent to get them ready for conscription. Rather, Marshall's remarks were a personal assumption that he made as tensions between the U.S. and Vietnam escalated.[57] William Luckett, Cumberland Gap NHP's superintendent, seemed less than sure that the project would happen: "At this time I am not the least bit expectant. I don't believe it until I see the official word."[58] According to one Job Corps employee, Luckett did not support the program and tried to delay the center's opening. The NPS noticed his reluctance and pressured Luckett to

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56. "Officials Wait of Green Light to Start Bartlett Park Work," *Middlesboro Daily News,* November 17, 1964, p.1.

57. President Johnson put forward the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which Congress passed in August 1964. This gave Johnson the authority to wage war in Vietnam without making a formal declaration.

58. "Officials Wait of Green Light to Start Bartlett Park Work."

retire at the end of 1965.[59] Notwithstanding Luckett's lukewarm comments, the OEO and NPS officially selected Cumberland Gap NHP for a Job Corps Conservation Center on November 10, 1964.[60] Although it was not the first NPS site chosen for the Job Corps program, it would be in the first wave of conservation centers to open the next year.

The OEO and the NPS classified the center at Cumberland Gap NHP as a conservation center, which meant it was located on federal land where training was centered on conservation projects and only open to male participants. There were three types of Job Corps centers in the first years of the program: conservation, urban men's, and urban women's centers. Job Corps administrators modeled conservation centers after the 1930's CCC program by placing a large number of men to work in remote areas on a variety of conservation projects requiring few skills while also providing educational and job training opportunities. The OEO and one of the conservation agencies—the NPS, U.S. Forest Service, or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—jointly operated the conservation centers. Urban centers were obviously situated in highly populated areas and had different types of work projects. As the Job Corps program matured, some conservation centers began sending graduates to urban centers for further training, because such centers offered courses that required more education or skills such as business

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59. Delmar Robinson, dictated tape, [March 23, 2010], transcript, 7, personal collection of Charles Riebe, Job Corps History Project; Sirna, Phone Interview with Delmar Robinson; Harold Danz, *Historic Listings of National Park Service Officials* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1991), under "Superintendents of National Park Service Areas: Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/tolson/histlist7c.htm (accessed October 23, 2014).

60. "Conservation Center History, FY 1965 to 1966, Cumberland Gap Job Corps Conservation Center, Middlesboro Kentucky, Volume I," [1966], Bell County Public Library, Middlesboro, KY, Job Corps File.

administration. Women's initial exclusion from the program ended when Congresswoman Edith Green from Oregon advocated the inclusion of young women during the 1964 hearings for the Economic Opportunity bill. OEO Director Sargent Shriver agreed to open a small number of facilities for women, but none of these centers were conservation-oriented. Administrators assumed that conservation work was not suitable for young women, because they required hard labor outdoors.[61] Instead, Job Corps staff trained women enrollees for subordinate, sometimes low-paying jobs in the clerical, retail, beauty, food preparation, child care, health, recreation, education, and art sectors. Job Corps staff also exposed women enrollees to various homemaking activities through center life, such as cooking, sewing, and laundry.[62] The division between male and female urban centers and between urban and conservation centers meant that enrollee experiences varied widely depending on the type of center.

Initially, Shriver and Udall disagreed on the name of and the philosophy behind conservation centers. Shriver preferred to call them rural centers, while Udall was very vocal in maintaining the word conservation, even threatening to go to the president.[63] Udall wanted to be clear that the priority of the program was large-scale conservation projects. He later recalled,

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61. Christopher Weeks, *Job Corps: Dollars and Dropouts* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), 90-92.

62. Jill Quadagno and Catherine Fobes, "The Welfare State and the Cultural Reproduction of Gender: Making Good Girls and Boys in the Job Corps," *Social Problems* 42, no. 2 (May 1995): 175-77.

63. Joe B. Frantz, Interview I with Stewart L. Udall, April 18, 1969, transcript, 22-23, LBJ Library, http://www.lbjlibrary.net/assets/documents/archives/oral_histories/udall/UDALL01.pdf (accessed November 26, 2014).

> These urban kids and ghetto kids and deprived kids, there's no better experience for any man than to get in the out-of-doors and get acquainted with how you do things with your hands. You have a feeling you're building things. All you have to do is go and see these kids and the pride they'd take and there's something visible there they've done—build a wall or cleaned out a forest or whatever it is.[64]

Udall's remarks emphasize experiential learning and the importance of being in nature, while Shriver wanted the Job Corps to focus more on basic education. He selected Otis Singletary, a historian then serving as chancellor of the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, as the Job Corps' first director because of Singletary's experience in observing different university systems, which could help implement the president's vision that centers would operate along similar lines as college campuses. President Johnson thought of Job Corps centers as "new educational institutions, comparable in innovation to the land-grant colleges."[65] Udall, on the other hand, believed that the conservation centers would be far too expensive to operate if the purpose was just teaching basic reading and math skills. The disagreement over the purpose of the Job Corps conservation program was the beginning of a contentious and often confusing relationship between the OEO and conservation agencies, which extended to conservation center operations within national parks. Park superintendents, for example, believed they had ultimate authority over center staff, while center directors (who were OEO employees) believed they had final say over center activities, which at times impacted park operations.[66]

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64. Ibid., 23.

65. Quoted in Weeks, *Job Corps,* 83.

66. Angela Sirna, Phone Interview with Clyde A. Maxey, January 21, 2014, author's notes; Robinson, dictated tape, 7.

After OEO approved a Job Corps center at Cumberland Gap in November 1964, the NPS quickly set to work physically transforming the area that was once Bartlett-Rhodes Park into a center for learning, living, and working. The NPS had closed the densely wooded park to the public sometime in the 1950s. Between January and June 1965, contractors constructed Job Corps facilities in the former municipal park area. The center covered four acres and included an administrative office building, three dormitories that could each hold thirty-four people, a mess hall, an education building, a supply building, a dispensary, and a building that served as a lounge. The NPS and OEO also built a basketball court and playing fields for football and other sports. A year later, the NPS and OEO funded a Butler-type gymnasium, meaning a pre-engineered steel building made popular by the Butler Manufacturing Company, when they realized that Job Corps enrollees needed an indoor recreation space, particularly during the winter months.[67] Altogether, the complex had a capacity for approximately one hundred enrollees plus staff.[68] The OEO contracted with outside companies to construct the center rather than have the enrollees construct the facilities, as had been the practice of the CCC. The buildings were modern, pre-fabricated buildings that incorporated postwar building technologies and reflected the need for haste.[69] However, they soon became maintenance

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67. "Job Corps Buildings Contracted," *Middlesboro Daily News,* May 4, 1966, newspaper clipping, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 74, Shelf 4, Box 29, Folder K42 Cumberland Gap Publications and Publicity.

68. "Gap Center," brochure, n.d., NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 74, Box 11, Folder General File "The Gap."

nightmares with leaky roofs and poor insulation. Job Corps enrollees contributed to these spaces by decorating their dorm rooms. A group of corpsmen even developed an obstacle course using the woods and play fields.[70] Today, all of the center buildings are gone with the exception of the dining hall, maintenance buildings, and gymnasium.

Figure 27. "Clearing Begins at Bartlett Park, Brush Burned." Photographed in spring 1965. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

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69. There was a housing crisis in America after World War II. The need for housing and the relative ease of financing spawned a revolution in the housing industry. Construction companies utilized World War II systems technology to produce cheap and easy-to-assemble buildings.

70. *The Corpsman Chronicle,* April 11, 1966, 7, Bell County Public Library, Job Corps Folder; press release with drawing by David Christian found in NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 74, Shelf 4, Box 29, Folder K42 Cumberland Gap Publications and Publicity.

Figure 28. “Even in Mud, Work Goes On as Center Grows.” Photographed in spring 1965. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

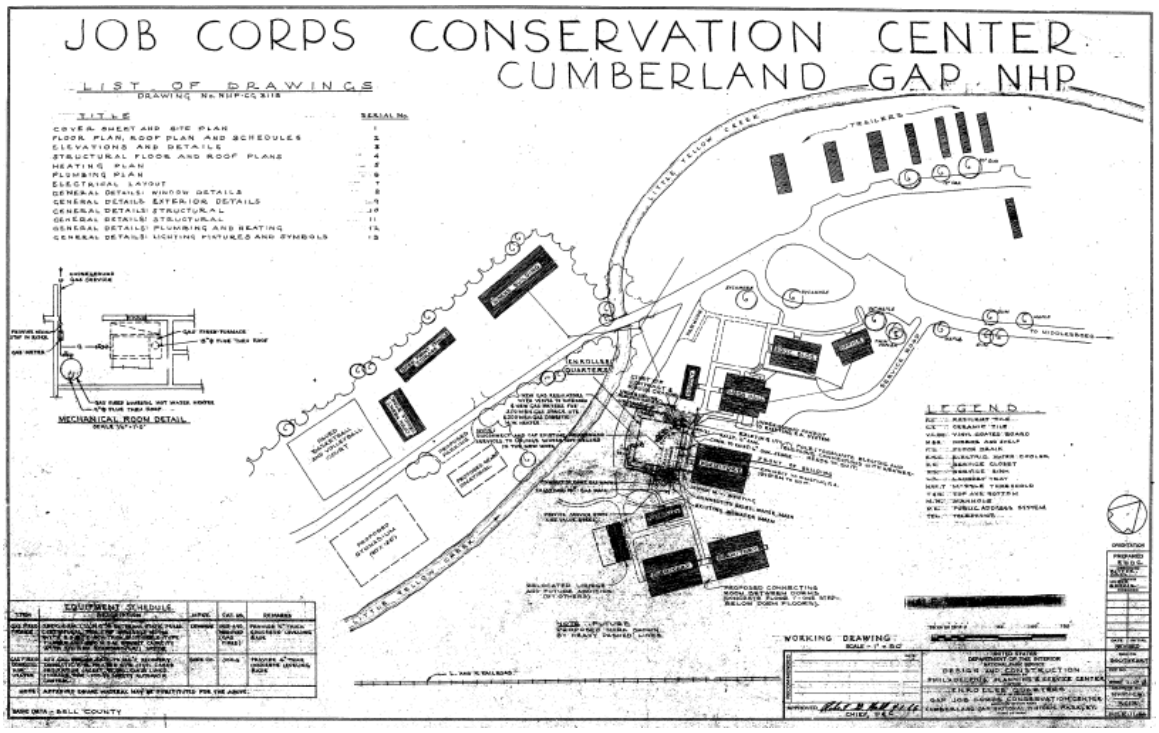

Figure 29. Job Corps Conservation Center, Cumberland Gap NHP. Drawing by National Park Service Philadelphia Planning & Service Center, February 11, 1966. Source: National Park Service Denver Service Center.

Figure 30. Aerial View of Gap JCCC. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

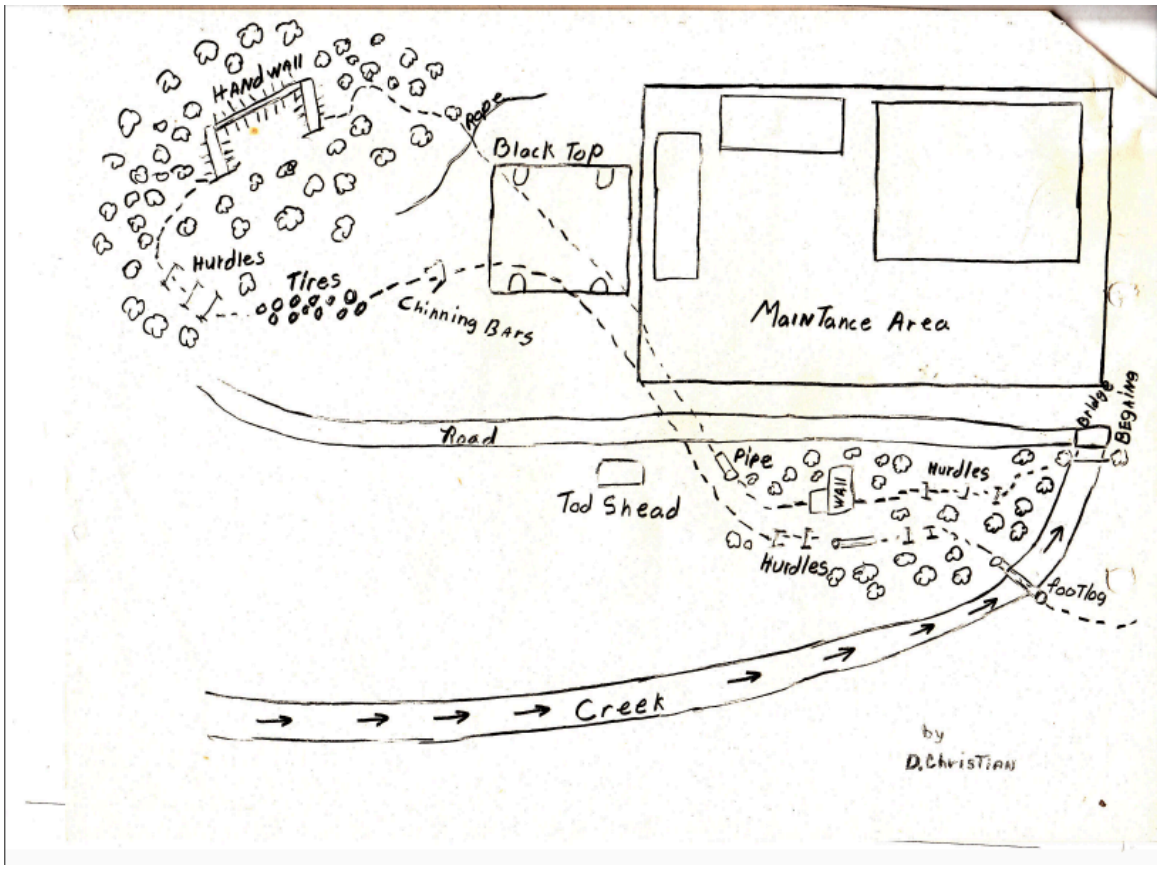

Figure 31. Gap JCCC Obstacle Course. Drawn by Corpsman David Christian of West Virginia in April 1966. Source: National Archives and Records Administration.

Although the OEO hired Job Corps employees for conservation centers in national parks, the NPS encouraged its own employees to apply for center director positions because they understood the agency's mission and culture. The Job Corps turned out to be a valuable opportunity for NPS staff to rise quickly up the career ladder. For example, in early February 1965, the OEO named James F. Batman, a former chief ranger at Badlands National Monument, as the center director for the Gap Job Corps

Center, a position nearly equivalent to the park superintendent.[71] Batman hired staff between March and June, including nearly a dozen local people (see Appendix B), and some fellow NPS colleagues.

Batman hired Delmar Robinson as his administrative assistant in February 1965, and Robinson's recollections of his time at the Gap JCCC (and later Oconaluftee's JCCC at Great Smoky Mountains National Park) provide valuable insight into race relations within the center itself and between the center and adjacent communities in the wake of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. While the Job Corps was similar to the CCC in many ways, the Job Corps was integrated, while the CCC was segregated; and Job Corps administrators realized early on that they needed employees to reflect the diversity of their enrollees. Furthermore, the Job Corps provided an important opportunity for minorities to enter and rise through the ranks of the NPS, which had remained predominantly white and male up to that point.[72]

Recruiting diverse employees to work with disadvantaged youth in the South was not an easy task. Robinson, an African American born in Biloxi, Mississippi, in 1937, had decided in 1953 that he was going to leave the South because of the oppressive system of racial segregation. He explained, "My father and our family have always owned property in Biloxi, and I just thought that it was wrong to be second-class citizens when you were paying the same amount of property taxes as everyone else." Robinson

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71. Lawrence Cook to Regional Job Corps Coordinators, memorandum, "Weekly Notes Concerning Poverty Program," July 2, 1964, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 73, Shelf 7, Box 6, Folder D22 Memorandum May 1964 to June 1965.

72. Mengak, *Reshaping the National Parks and their Guardians*, 76-77.

left Biloxi for California and joined the U.S. Air Force. He earned a degree in accounting and finance and found a position in the financial division of the NPS Western Regional Office in San Francisco after leaving the military. In mid-1964, Robinson began reconsidering his exodus from the South. Civil rights events in the region were drawing him back. Sitting in church one day, Robinson listened as his minister spoke about Moses before he entered the Promised Land. Moses had sent out scouts, and two returned, saying that there were giants but that they would slay the giants. To Robinson, the segregation system was the giant defect of the South, and his conscience was telling him to go back and vanquish it.[73]

Despite Robinson's willingness to return to the South, racism derailed his first effort to return to the area. Charlie Riebe, an acquaintance and engineer in the San Francisco office, had told Robinson about the new Job Corps program. The Job Corps hired Riebe as the first director of the new Great Onyx center at Mammoth Cave, and Riebe wanted Robinson to come along as his administrative assistant. However, local park management did not want an African American in this position, and Riebe reluctantly referred Robinson to James Batman, the new center director of the Gap JCCC. Batman hired Robinson as his administrative assistant, and Robinson served in this position for two years.[74]

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73. Worth Long, "Oral History with Mr. Delmar P. Robinson, August 26, 1999, transcript, 5, 6, University of Southern Mississippi Library, Community Bridges Oral History Project, http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm/ref/collection/coh/id/8971 (accessed October 23, 2014); see also ibid., 6.

74. The Job Corps changed Robinson's job title to "administrative officer" in June 1967. Joseph Kulesza, "Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report," June 12, 1967, NARA, Record Group 79, General Files, Administrative Files, Stack 570, Row 80,

Robinson overcame the obstacle of discrimination in hiring, but the color of his skin made finding suitable housing difficult. Title II of the 1964 Civil Rights Act had only recently been passed when Robinson arrived at the Middlesboro Motor Hotel in February 1965, and he recalled feeling eyes on him when he walked in, perhaps meaning that he might have been one of the first African Americans to stay there.[75] The federal public accommodations law was in effect, but the city was still a few months away from establishing its own local ordinance to bring the municipality into compliance.[76] Robinson had no trouble during his stay at the hotel, but he had great difficulty finding housing for himself, his wife, and two young sons despite assurances from the Middlesboro Chamber of Commerce executive director. Whenever Robinson met with a realtor in person, the house in question had already been rented. When he inquired about the same unit over the phone, it was available. It was clear to Robinson that his skin color was prohibiting him from finding housing. It took him nearly five months to find a place to live. As he was establishing himself in the community, Middlesboro Mayor Chester Wolf asked Robinson to join the city's civil rights commission to codify federal and state laws in city ordinances. Robinson recalled few problems with the integration of public facilities but detected a strong economic undercurrent in which white city leaders were

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Compartment 2, Shelf 6, Box 86, Folder A2615 January 1, 1966 to December 31, 1967 Part 1.

75. Robinson, dictated tape, 5.

76. "Public Accommodations Ordinance is Approved," *Middlesboro Daily News,* December 22, 1965, newspaper clipping, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 74, Shelf 4, Box 29, Folder K42 Cumberland Gap Publications and Publicity.

interested in keeping blacks in certain types of jobs, excluding them from the area's manufacturing jobs.[77]

OEO administrators became aware that some local communities would not be supportive of Job Corps centers with enrollees of different races and tried to pay attention to local sentiments before opening a center. Catoctin JCCC personnel recalled soon after the center opened that community members counted the number of African American and Hispanic enrollees as they arrived at the center to make sure they did not outnumber white enrollees.[78] With Catoctin's experience as a guide, an inspector at Cumberland Gap NHP who was evaluating the center right before it opened in June 1965 noted racial attitudes in the local Middlesboro community. He indicated that integration of schools was relatively recent and noted that although most religious organizations and businesses were accepting of African Americans, there were still places where African Americans were not welcome:

> Housing and most other facilities in Middlesboro have been integrated for years and school integration will be completed when a new high school opens this year. Several ministers were contacted and gave assurances that all corpsmen will be welcome . . . Similar favorable reports were made by town councilmen, the Chamber of Commerce Secretary-Manager and other businessmen . . . Only the owners of a "ratty looking" pool hall and barber shop have indicated that they do not welcome Negro customers. Barbering will be handled at the center.[79]

Robinson would have likely disagreed with the investigator over the matter of housing, but the center opened with little trouble from the community.

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77. Long, "Oral History with Mr. Delmar P. Robinson," 6-7.

78. Sirna, Phone Interview with Maxey; Angela Sirna, Phone Interview with Lamar Marchese, January 15, 2014, author's notes.

79. W. G. Holman, "Cumberland Gap, Kentucky Conservation Center Readiness Inspection Report," June 16, 1965, Bell County Public Library, Job Corps File.

Figure 32. Job Corps Staff Training at Camp Arrowood near Franklin, North Carolina, about March 15, 1965. Gap JCCC Center Director Jim Batman is eighth from the left, kneeling on the bottom row. Administrative Assistant Delmar Robinson is third from left in the third row standing. Identified by Charles Riebe, eleventh from the left in the second row standing. Courtesy of Charles Riebe.

Figure 33. Gap JCCC Staff. Photographed in 1965. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

While construction of the Gap JCCC was underway, the new Job Corps staff, under the direction of James Batman, prepared for the center opening. OEO and NPS personnel trained some of the new employees at a U.S. Forest Service Job Corps facility in North Carolina called Arrowood. Job Corps staff established a temporary office in the visitor center in March, but Robinson soon found them space at the old National Guard Armory Building on 30th Street in Middlesboro. In June, Job Corps staff settled into the

new center, and 900 local people came to an open house on June 12 and 13.[80] Job Corps administrators used the open house as a public relations opportunity to educate the public on the center's mission. Attendance at the event indicates a good measure of local curiosity, if not support, for the new center.[81]

Robinson recalls that the center was "a melting pot" of young men from various backgrounds: Appalachian whites, Puerto Ricans, Hispanics, and African Americans.[82] The first group of forty-one Job Corps enrollees arrived at the Gap JCCC on June 22. These young men came from the southern United States and Appalachia, mostly Oklahoma and West Virginia. Others continued to arrive in the coming weeks (see Appendix C).[83] Like Robinson, Wilma Johnson Rose (then Wilma Johnson), a secretary at the center from 1965 to 1969, also remembers a diverse mix of races and ethnicities among the corpsmen, who hailed from all different parts of the country. Robinson had hired her as a clerk-typist in mid-May in a special temporary appointment to help with corpsmen intake as they arrived. Wilma, a resident of nearby Harrogate, Tennessee, had just turned eighteen years old and graduated from high school, making her the same age as most of the corpsmen. She interviewed them when they arrived to find out their next of kin and to fill out their payroll information. She remembers that there were only a few "bad apples" among the corpsmen and indicated that there were only isolated occurrences

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80. "Job Corps Photo Album," n.d., Park Archive, Series 7, Subseries 1, Box 2, Folder 1.

81. Martha Wiley, Phone Interview with Wilma Johnson Rose, January 21, 2015, audio, Park Archive, Oral History Collection. This tape has not been transcribed.

82. Sirna, Phone Interview with Delmar Robinson.

83. "Job Corps Photo Album."

of violence, drinking, and girl trouble among them.[84] Robinson recalls that there was an initial shock when corpsmen arrived. Some had never seen an African American boy before, while others had never seen a cow. It did not take long for the shock to wear off, and corpsmen got along fine.[85]

Figure 34. "Finally—the Corpsmen." First Job Corps enrollees at the Gap JCCC, June 1965. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

84. Wiley, Phone Interview with Wilma Johnson Rose.

85. Sirna, Phone Interview with Delmar Robinson.

Perhaps Robinson's memory over the quickness of enrollee acclimation was tied to later groups, because over half of the enrollees sent to the Gap JCCC left during the first year of the center's operation. The Gap JCCC processed 261 men between June 22, 1965, and June 30, 1966. Only 107 remained enrolled in the center on June 30, 1966. Administrators terminated 154 for a variety of reasons. Twenty-six received punitive discharges for disciplinary reasons, such as going AWOL (Absent Without Leave) for thirty days or more or being underage. Job Corps administrators gave two enrollees medical discharges. Seventy-two enrollees resigned due to personal reasons, including homesickness, marriage, family issues, lack of recreational facilities, and general dissatisfaction with the program. Forty-four transferred to urban centers, while one young man entered the armed forces, five graduated, and four graduated with jobs. None left to pursue further education.[86]

When planning the program, Job Corps administrators felt they could meet and even surpass the success of the CCC program, which had effectively employed over two million men and constructed hundreds of state and national parks in the course of a decade. Job Corps administrators used the CCC model by hiring young men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one years old. Like the CCC, the Job Corps provided them with housing, meals, clothing, and medical care. Corpsmen received thirty dollars a month, and the Job Corps set aside an additional fifty dollars a month, which corpsmen received upon leaving the program.[87] It is no coincidence that the OEO and NPS selected

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86. "Gap Job Corps Report," 1966, 16, Bell County Public Library, Job Corps File.

sites of former CCC camps for Job Corps centers. The OEO and NPS literally built the JCCC at Catoctin Mountain Park on the foundations of the park's old CCC camp, and the first enrollees appropriated a CCC symbol of an arrow pointing up a ladder, symbolizing upward mobility, which corpsmen also used at the Gap JCCC. Both administrators and corpsmen embedded optimism for the program by appropriating elements of the CCC in the Job Corps program's organization, architecture, and symbols.

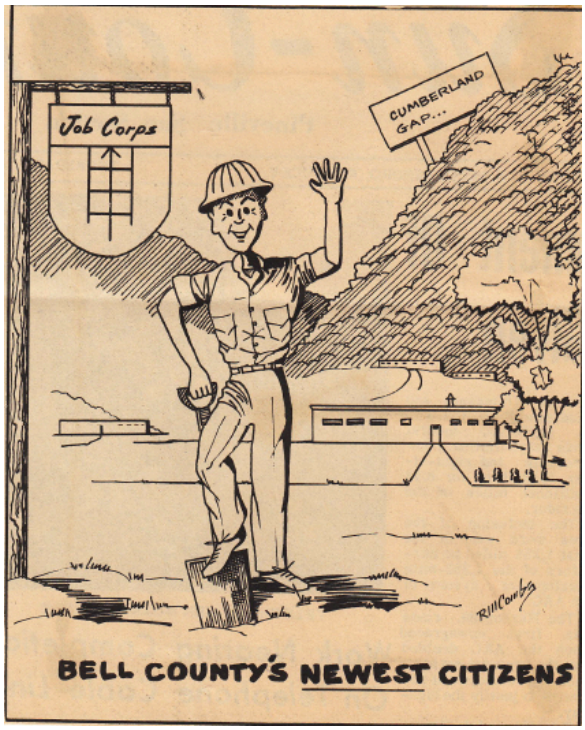

Figure 35. "Bell County's Newest Cititzens." Newspaper cartoon published in *Pineville Sun-Cumberland Courier*, July 15, 1965. Source: National Archives and Records Administration.

87. Catoctin Mountain Park, "Job Corps," National Park Service, http://www.nps.gov/cato/historyculture/jobcorps.htm (accessed October 30, 2014).

However, the realities of Job Corps Center management soon tempered the confidence of Job Corps administrators that their program would surpass the CCC. As the first center, the Catoctin JCCC experienced most of the problems first, including high dropout rates, staffing issues, education challenges, and disciplinary problems. Because of its proximity to Washington, D.C., politicians, bureaucrats, and news media frequently used the center as a measuring stick for the rest of the program. The Catoctin JCCC experienced a 40% drop-out rate within the first six months. It faced staffing shortages and frequent staff turnover, particularly in education positions. Jack Wheat, Catoctin's second center director, complained that those screening enrollee applications were doing a poor job by recommending men he considered undesirable for the Job Corps conservation program:

> We have worked with and helped retardates, defective delinquents, homosexuals, schizophrenics, paranoids, and many others with psychotic disorders. We have seen our drop-out rate go down from 45 per cent to 25 per cent, but we realize this is due only to the use of more sophisticated approaches in handling and caring for the new Enrollees.[88]

Wheat's statement raises an important question about who administrators considered to be a worthy enrollee. Wheat excluded those with learning disabilities, mental health problems, and homosexual tendencies. He believed if the caliber of recruits selected by screeners was better, which he interpreted as those young men with a better capacity or willingness to learn and work, the recruits would have better success in the program. He conceded that better orientation practices on behalf of the centers would also help retain

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88. Jack Wheat to Jack Deinema, memorandum, "Caliber of Enrollees and Poor Judgment on Part of Screeners and Enrollee Selection Division," April 7, 1966, Catoctin Mountain Park Archive, Folder Job Corps January to June 1966 Reading File.

enrollees. However, his statement also hints that program managers lowered the drop-out rate by screening out "deviants" at the intake point.

Although OEO administrators frequently drew parallels between the new program and the CCC, they cautioned Job Corps staff to expect major differences in the types of men that would attend their centers. The OEO characterized the CCC as primarily an employment program and the Job Corps a training program.[89] Although this characterization ignores the CCC education program, the average CCC recruit in 1937 had an eighth-grade education, meaning that although destitute, many of the CCC men were otherwise employable in a normal job market.[90] OEO administrators realized this was not the case with Job Corps recruits. They expected these men to come from families deeply entrenched in poverty, growing up in conditions not easily remedied or bridged to create a path to "mainstream America." Job Corps administrators anticipated that many would be high school dropouts, some with less than a grade school education. In fact, a Job Corps survey taken after the program became operational revealed that 95% of conservation center enrollees had a sixth grade education, but the number of formal school years was not indicative of actual education skills. Only 13% of entering corpsmen scored higher than a sixth grade equivalent on a standardized test.[91] John

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89. Luis Gastellum to George Hartzog, memorandum, "Outline of Items to Cover in Coordinators Meeting," January 25, 1965, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 73, Shelf 7, Box 1, Folder A40 Conferences and Meetings.

90. John Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1967), under Chapter 8, http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/ccc/salmond/chap8.htm (accessed February 22, 2015).

Aubuchon, a CCC alumnus and superintendent at Mammoth Cave National Park when the Great Onyx JCCC was established, recalled, "When I first went into the CCC program, I had worked—I was employable. I spoke and read English and there was no question about my being able to work if I could merely find a job someplace."[92] Aubuchon remembered visiting the center's kitchen during an early inspection. The cook had sent a young enrollee to the back to open up five or six cans of vegetables. When the inspection team returned a little while later, they found that the same young man had opened seven or eight cans trying to find the vegetable the cook had asked for. The cans did not have a picture label, and the young man could not read.

> With good intentions, now, he was doing what he was told, but he couldn't do a job because he couldn't even read the label because of—and there was no picture because there was no label, so that's when you realize that you've got a long, long way to go to make him employable.[93]

The survey statistics and Aubuchon's anecdote indicate that Job Corps recruits would require different strategies than their CCC predecessors, including substantial education training to improve their employability.

Job Corps administrators were shocked that any enrollee would want to leave the bright opportunities of the Job Corps for what they considered a negative home environment. But boys left for a variety of reasons, much like their CCC predecessors

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91. "Corpsmen Gains Study—Initial Report," n.d., 2, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 73, Shelf 7, Box 8, Folder Corpsmen Gains.

92. "Oral History Interview John A. Aubuchon Reel #172 Side One," June 1980, transcript, 15, Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service Oral History Collection.

93. "Oral history Interview John A. Aubuchon Reel #172 Side One," 17.

had. Some did not like the work or location. Others were lonely and homesick. Gap JCCC administrators found that enrollees' expectations of the program were far different from the reality.[94] William Whalen,[95] center counselor for Catoctin JCCC, wrote to boys' parents imploring them to encourage their children to stay in the Job Corps, often patronizing them and saying that the Job Corps was their child's "last chance."[96] The culture of poverty theory began to fracture. Liberals had believed they could solve poverty by removing impoverished people from their material environment and giving them the resources to succeed. However, that line of thought neglected the powerful pull of family, culture, kinship, and community that caused some to leave a rejuvenating place like a national park to return to a home that might be a negative environment.

For those enrollees who did choose to remain at Gap JCCC, their purpose at Cumberland Gap NHP was to "maintain and revamp the scenic and historical setting" of the park. In the first six months, Job Corps work projects focused on building and maintaining foot trails and truck roads, firefighting, brush clearing, establishing the Wilderness Road Campground, and restoring Hensley Settlement. They also developed

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94. Luis Gastellum to Job Corps Conservation Center Coordinator, memorandum, "Activation of Centers at Mammoth Cave and Cumberland Gap," June 28, 1965, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 74, Shelf 1, Box 11, Folder General File "The Gap" September 1964 to December 1965.

95. The Job Corps was a major catalyst for Whalen's federal career. He began as a Job Corps counselor in 1964 and rose to NPS Director in 1977, a position he held until 1980. "Directors of the National Park Service," National Park Service, http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/hisnps/NPSHistory/directors.htm (accessed February 22, 2015).

96. William Whalen to Mr. and Mrs. Felix Rivera, letter, June 10, 1966, Catoctin Mountain Park Archive, Folder Job Corps January to June 1966 Reading File.

the Wilderness Road Trail, beginning near the old foundry and ending at the saddle of the gap, a mile and a half away. They widened the trail to four feet, installed metal culverts, constructed rock retaining walls and fieldstone steps, and diverted the trail around a rockslide. Corpsmen also straightened and improved the mile-long Sand Cave Trail, and they cleared and drained the mile-long Tri-State Peak Trail and the half-mile trail to Civil War-era Fort Lyons and Fort McCook. They removed brush and cleared out the fortifications as well.[97] The cumulative impact of the corpsmen's work at Cumberland Gap NHP over the center's existence continued the NPS's efforts to modernize the park landscape by manipulating the natural environment, shaping the visitors' experience of the park through trails and facilities, and preserving historic features.

The NPS and Job Corps intended Hensley Settlement to occupy center enrollees for as long as five years and to serve as a learning laboratory while helping the park save an important chapter of Appalachian history.[98] Job Corps enrollees began restoring the one hundred-acre site, including sixteen buildings. First, they had to build a work road from Cubage (an unincorporated Kentucky town on the north side of Cumberland Mountain) up the Kentucky side of the mountain to the remote settlement. Enrollees then

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97. *The Corpsmen Chronicle: First Anniversary Edition,* 1966, Park Archive, Series 7, Subseries 1, Box 2, Folder 6; "Job Corps Photo Album."

98. Marion, *Mill Power,* 19-75, describes a similar approach in Lowell, Massachusetts, during this time when community leaders and educators began envisioning the historic mill area as a learning laboratory for local students, many of whom were falling behind national standards. Through funds from Johnson's Model Cities Program, local leaders were able to undertake planning for Lowell National Historical Park with the vision that the park would be an open-air museum and learning laboratory beneficial to both visitors and local residents. They share an attitude that the park is the city and the city is the park.

established a spike camp (a temporary work camp) because it took two and a half hours to reach the site even with the work road. In July and August 1966, they stabilized the Willie Gibbons farmstead, including the granary, outhouse, and springhouse. They constructed paling fences (fences with wooden pickets nailed onto two horizontal stringers), cleared fields, and planted apple trees at the Willie Gibbons and Lige Gibbons farms. They managed to stabilize all the structures by December 1967 and then completed restoration work on the Cupp Cabin at Martins Fork, another homestead separate from but near to Hensley. Up to twenty men worked at Hensley at a time, developing carpentry, concrete, plastering, landscaping, equipment operation, and survey skills.[99] The Hensley project was more than a work project; it truly was a learning laboratory. The center hired Sherman Hensley to work with corpsmen both in vocational training and in educating the corpsmen on the history of Hensley Settlement.[100] The center also hired Jess Gibbons, another former resident of Hensley Settlement, to help the corpsmen with the restoration work because of his first-hand knowledge of the site and its building construction methods. Perhaps the connection between history and the corpsmen's work inspired them to think of themselves as modern pioneers. A corpsmen reporter in the first year anniversary of *The Corpsmen Chronicle,* the center newspaper,

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99. "Job Corps Photo Album"; *The Corpsmen Chronicle: First Anniversary Edition*; "Monthly Narrative Reports," February to September 1966, Park Archive, Series 7, Subseries 1, Box 2, Folder 5; "Monthly Narrative Reports," June 1966 to July 1967, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, General Files, Administrative Files, Stack 570, Row 80, Compartment 2, Shelf 6, Box 86, Folder A2615 January 1, 1966 to December 31 1967 Part 1.

100. Wiley, Phone Interview with Wilma Johnson Rose; Sirna, Phone Interview with Delmar Robinson.

wrote, "Today, the coonskin caps worn by Daniel Boone and his men around Cumberland Gap have been replaced by the Silver 'hard-hats' of Job Corpsmen."[101] Comparing corpsmen to Daniel Boone is reminiscent of how outside groups described contemporary Appalachians as descendants of eighteenth-century pioneers, perhaps in an attempt to give corpsmen inspiration to better themselves through education and hard work.

Figure 36. "Ready for Restoration—Corpsman William Smith of Fayetteville, W. Va., Moves Large Stones Next to an Old Chimney at the Gap Job Corps Conservation Center Work Camp at Hensley Settlement." Photograph published in *Middlesboro Daily News,* January 13, 1966. Source: National Archives and Records Administration.

101. *The Corpsmen Chronicle: First Anniversary Edition.*

Figure 37. Jess Gibbons with Corpsmen at Hensley Settlement. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

Figure 38. "Caretaker's Residence Hensley Settlement." Photographed in May 1969. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP.

Through other projects at the center and throughout the park, Job Corps enrollees acquired additional on-the-job training in auto mechanics, sign-making, welding, construction, masonry, and heavy equipment operation. Projects included demolishing old buildings, constructing picnic tables and camp stoves, building bridges in the Sugar

Run picnic area and on Lewis Hollow Trail, clearing the view-shed at Tri-State Peak Shelter, installing a drainage field in front of the Visitor Center, constructing a paint storage building and an open storage building for park maintenance, building three park staff residences, completing the entrance and registration building for Wilderness Campground, constructing a museum storage building, and crafting cannon carriages for placement at Civil War-era Fort McCook.[102] With these many and diverse projects, Cumberland Gap NHP received much needed park maintenance while corpsmen received on-the-job training.

Figure 39. "Steps to Fort McCook."
Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

102. "Job Corps Photo Album"; *The Corpsmen Chronicle: First Anniversary Edition*; "Monthly Narrative Reports," February to September 1966, Park Archive, Series 7, Subseries 1, Box 2, Folder 5; "Monthly Narrative Reports," June 1966 to July 1967, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, General Files, Administrative Files, Stack 570, Row 80, Compartment 2, Shelf 6, Box 86, Folder A2615 January 1, 1966 to December 31 1967 Part 1; "Around the Gap," *Gap Gazette,* February 1969, 14, Bell County Library, Job Corps File.

Figure 40. "Foundations for Artifacts Building." Photographed in May 1969. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

Gap JCCC work projects extended beyond park boundaries to build positive relationships between corpsmen and local communities through service projects. The Gap JCCC's Community Relations Council met once a month to discuss how corpsmen could participate in community projects and affairs. Gap corpsmen painted the Middlesboro Boys Club, repaired playground equipment, and built new dugouts, a press box, chain-link fence, and drainage lines for the Middlesboro Little League Ball Park. They built playground equipment for the Ferndale Community Center and the South 20th Street Playground in Middlesboro. In Ewing, Virginia, they undertook an ambitious project in which they acquired bulldozer training as they built a road, parking area, and pavilion site for a new community park. Corpsmen also had a Thanksgiving food drive for local

families. In response, a number of local women helped corpsmen in a reading program.[103] The influence of the Gap JCCC extended beyond park boundaries, and corpsmen received some support from community members who came to volunteer at the park.

Figure 41. "Corpsmen Doing Repair Work on the Playground Equipment which They Built out of Old Used Pipe as a Community Project for a Playground in Middlesboro." Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

Corpsmen toiled both on work projects and in the classroom. They switched between work projects and classes to acquire basic levels of education. Many enrollees were high school dropouts and lacked basic skills. JCCC education instructors helped them improve their reading and math. Corpsmen could also take a driver's education

103. "Job Corps Photo Album"; *The Corpsmen Chronicle: First Anniversary Edition*; "Around the Gap."

course in addition to specific vocational training. A center counselor helped enrollees adjust to center life and provided career advice similar to a high school guidance counseling, although there were no real job placement services.[104]

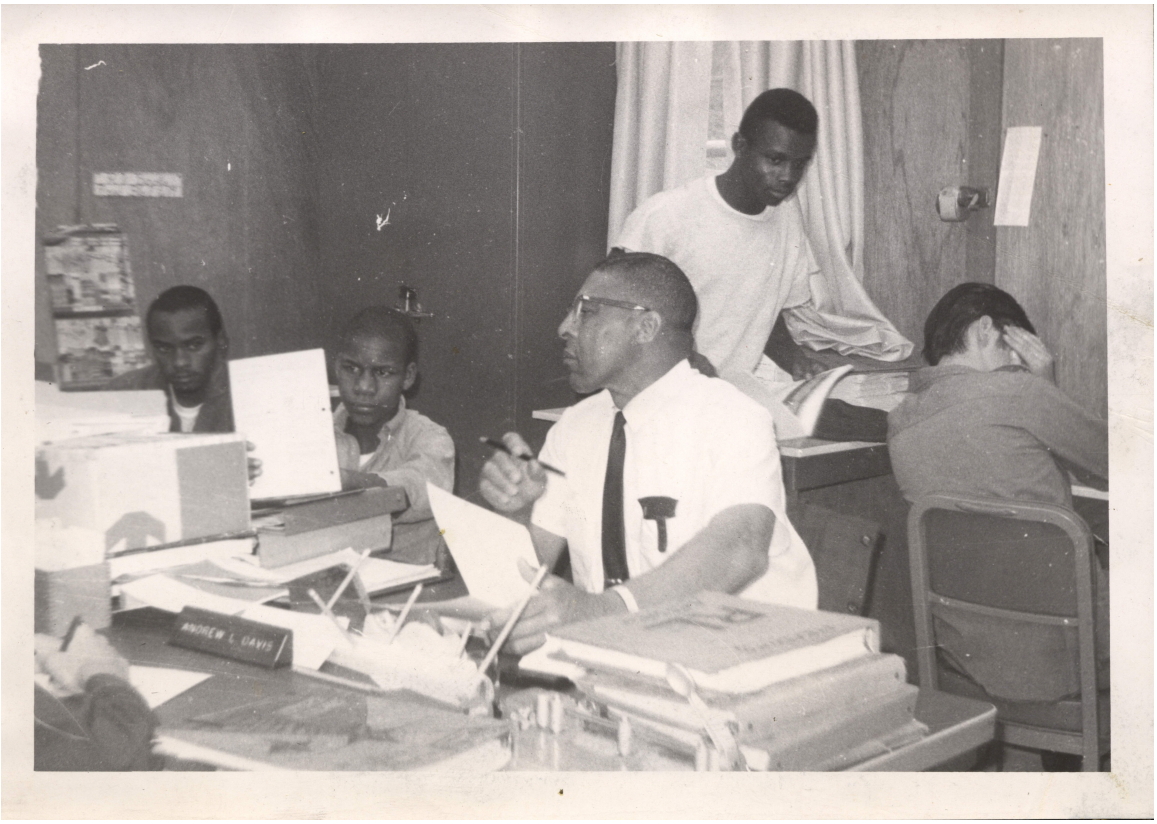

Figure 42. "Graded Reading Class." Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

A small number of VISTA and federal work-study students from Lincoln Memorial University served as additional instructors and sometimes mentors for

104. *The Corpsmen Chronicle: First Anniversary Edition;* "Gap Gazette," May 1969, Park Archive, Series 7, Box 2, Folder 10.

corpsmen, helping them in the classroom and in center life and by serving as intermediaries between corpsmen and staff. The VISTA program put boots on the ground in the War on Poverty, and college-age adults, working for low pay, were sent to Job Corps centers to confront issues of poverty head on. The camp newsletter explained the VISTA program to the enrollees this way:

> VISTA training brings first-hand knowledge of the poor. "In this job, sincerity of conviction, sensitivity in dealing with people whose values and habits are different from ones [*sic*] own, the willingness to participate whole heartedly in a new way of life, the ability to translate ones [*sic*] ideas and aspirations into someone else's language—these are the qualities the job demands."[105]

Ideally, these workers used the knowledge they gained from working with corpsmen in future endeavors. LMU expanded its partnership with the park by sending students to work at the park as a way to help pay for their education and earn job experience. The VISTA and federal work-study experience shows that national parks were not only a learning laboratory for corpsmen but for college students and volunteers as well.

VISTAs and Job Corps staff organized numerous recreational activities to keep corpsmen busy and help them develop social and leadership skills. They placed heavy emphasis on sports, such as basketball, football, and softball. The Gap JCCC travelled to other centers to play in tournaments, which helped build team spirit among the players and pride in the center, while also allowing corpsmen to socialize with other young men and women from other centers. Administrators worked with Job Corps women's centers, schools, and other organizations to host dances for corpsmen and young ladies as well.[106]

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105. Victor Valerino, "What is a VISTA," *The Corpsmen Chronicle: First Anniversary Edition*.

Figure 43. "Basketball Team Ready for Action." Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

Administrators took corpsmen on field trips to parks and attractions all around the region, but unfortunately, one of these trips turned tragic. On the way back from a fair in Knoxville, Tennessee, on September 17, 1966, a tractor-trailer struck the bus carrying twenty-one corpsmen, killing six of them.[107] Wilma Johnson Rose recalls getting a phone

106. "Life in the Cumberlands," *Gap Gazette,* May 1969, 5, Park Archive, Series 2, Box 2, Folder 10.

107. "Job Corps Death Toll Now at Six," *Middlesboro Daily News*, September 20, 1966, newspaper clipping, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative

call at three in the morning so that administrators could contact the next of kin.[108] This unfortunate accident is a reminder that for some corpsmen, the Job Corps was truly life-altering, and not always in a positive way.

Another unfortunate event affected the entire center and relationships with local communities. Despite positive efforts, community relations with Middlesboro strained almost to a breaking point one night in January 1967.[109] Two men in a white Cadillac fired shots into a crowd of about fifty corpsmen and local residents in Middlesboro, wounding Parker Owens, Jr., a nineteen-year old corpsman from Wazoo City, Mississippi, in the abdomen.[110] Robinson recalled that the corpsmen were upset when the police arrived but did not arrest anyone for the shooting. In either frustration or retaliation they broke some windows on their way back to the bus that took them back to the center. The corpsmen went on strike and the NPS had to bring in rangers from different national

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Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 74, Shelf 4, Box 29, Folder K42 Cumberland Gap Publications and Publicity.

108. Wiley, Phone Interview with Wilma Johnson Rose.

109. A previous shooting incident occurred involving a Job Corps participant in June 1966, when Tony McNew of Middlesboro shot corpsmen Armadeo Otero in the leg. Otero was treated and released. McNew was charged for public drunkenness and malicious wounding. Delmar Robinson has no recollection of this incident but recalls the Parker Owens shooting very clearly. "Job Corps Youth Shot in Leg Here," *Middlesboro Daily News,* June 13, 1966, newspaper clipping, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 74, Shelf 4, Box 29, Folder K42 Cumberland Gap Publications and Publicity; Sirna, Phone Interview with Delmar Robinson.

110. "Job Corpsman Hit by Sniper Bullet, Suspects Sought," *Middlesboro Daily News,* January 16, 1967, newspaper clipping, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 74, Shelf 4, Box 29, Folder K42 Cumberland Gap Publications and Publicity.

parks to contain the situation. The center returned to its usual routine after about three days with no further incidents. Both Robinson and Batman left the center later that year for other positions, although the Owens incident was not part of their decisions to leave the Gap JCCC.[111]

James Batman and Richard Maeder, who replaced Batman as center director in 1967, were able to improve the center's retention, graduation, and placement numbers over the course of three years. In 1969, a few months before the center closed, a Job Corps survey of the young men who had passed through the Gap JCCC showed that 59% had jobs, were in school, or were taking further training. Sixty-six of 500 mailed surveys were returned as undeliverable. Of the 434 who apparently received the survey, 166 men responded, or about 26%. Sixty-eight reported that they were unemployed, while ninety-eight indicated that they were productively engaged. Of these ninety-eight, nineteen Job Corps alumni had joined the armed services, six remained in the Job Corps, five were in school, and 68 had jobs. The average salary for those working was between $1.64 and $1.88 an hour, higher than the minimum wage of $1.30.[112] Statistically, the Gap JCCC seemed to have had a positive impact on its graduates.

Job Corps staff, however, looked beyond statistics to focus on the whole person, meaning corpsmen's physical, mental, and emotional health along with education and job skills, and their attention to these aspects likely helped change many corpsmen's lives.

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111. Robinson, dictated tape, 12; Sirna, Phone Interview with Delmar Robinson.

112. "Survey Results Announced," *Gap Gazette,* April 1969, 3, Bell County Public Library, Job Corps File; Wage and Hour Division, "History of Changes to Minimum Wage Law."

During physical examinations, staff found that some enrollees needed dental work, eye care, or speech therapy. Staff members said that when these problems were corrected, corpsmen's confidence rose exponentially, and some suddenly overcame what were previously considered learning disabilities. For example, John T. Smith arrived at the Gap JCCC from Oklahoma in June 1965 with severe speech disabilities. Smith had been two years behind in school when he decided to drop out at the age of sixteen. He had worked several different jobs, including delivering newspapers, until he heard about the Job Corps program. He wanted business training, so he was transferred from the Gap to Rodman Job Corps Center located in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Within two weeks, he began speech therapy sessions at St. Luke's Hospital. He made significant progress and left Rodman in early 1967 with the hope of attending community college. Smith returned to Cumberland Gap NHP many years later, in 2002, still with a speech impediment, and spoke to park staff about his experiences, indicating that his time in the Job Corps was meaningful for him.[113]

At least one corpsman was able to use the educational resources provided at the Gap JCCC to earn his General Education Diploma (GED) and enter college. Bradley Briscoe had dropped out of high school in Long Island, New York, when he was a sophomore. A counselor convinced him to join the Job Corps, and he first went to the Liberty Park Job Corps Center in New Jersey, where he stayed away from education

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113. John T. Smith returned to Cumberland Gap NHP in 2002 and spoke to park staff about his experiences. File notes say that he still retained a severe speech impediment but was very patient in repeating himself. Carol Burkhart, "Notes on John T. Smith," August 27, 2002, Park Archive, Series 7, Box 2, Folder 9; "'JTS' and the Job Corps," *Rodman Currents* 2, no. 2 (January 13, 1967), Park Archive, Series 7, Box 2, Folder 9.

programs as much as he could. He transferred to the Gap JCCC after seven months, in February 1968, after the OEO closed the Liberty Park center because of lack of funds.[114] While at the Gap JCCC, he improved his reading and math skills to the high-school level. He worked as the editor of the *Gap Gazette,* the corpsmen-run center newspaper, and enjoyed art, softball, bowling, and archery. In November of that year, he passed his GED exam and was accepted into Campbellsville College, a Baptist institution in Campbellsville, Kentucky. He originally wanted to study business administration but later decided to pursue elementary education because of his experiences in the Job Corps program. He wanted to help other disadvantaged young men.[115] While it is unknown how Briscoe fared at Campbellsville College, it appears that the Gap JCCC was helpful in adjusting his attitude and provided the support he needed to further his education.

Economists also found that the Gap JCCC was an important economic booster for the Tri-State area. The NPS alone spent $160,000 in 1967 for park operation and maintenance, most of which went into the local economy. The Job Corps center helped even more. The OEO and NPS employed 125 people and paid them a total of $360,000 in 1967, most of which also went to the local economy. For every one million dollars the NPS and visitors expended, $600,000 resulted in personal income.[116] The same was true

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114. The Liberty Job Corps Center opened early in 1967, but the OEO closed the center in 1968 along with sixteen others by June 30 of that year due to lack of funds. Blumberg, *Celebrating the Immigrant,* 10.

115. "Gap Corpsman Goes to College," *Gap Gazette,* December 1968, 5, 17, Bell County Public Library, Job Corps File.

116. Eilert, *An Economic Profile and Impact Analysis of Four Cumberland Gap Counties*, 5-6.

for federal highway expenditures. Economists believed that the recently passed federal highway program for developing Appalachia would help matters considerably and that the region would be on equal footing with the rest of the country by 1977. The Allegheny Parkway in particular was expected to bring much needed tourist dollars to the region.[117] The corpsmen's efforts to modernize and maintain the park landscape took on new importance as NPS administrators planned for increased visitation after the completion of the road system.

Decline of the War on Poverty and Closing the Gap JCCC

Between 1966 and 1968, Johnson and his administration suffered irreparable political and economic damage due to the escalating war in Vietnam and resulting unrest in the United States. The number of troops in Vietnam rose from 185,000 in December 1965 to 375,000 the next year, spawning an anti-war protest movement. The war abroad and the federal government's spending on Great Society programs at home caused significant inflation, making Johnson reluctant to ask Congress to raise taxes to pay for these programs. Racial unrest, urban riots, and protests also damaged the reputation of the president and his Great Society programs. Moderate Americans, concerned about racial unrest and anti-war protests, moved further to the right, while liberal intellectuals and student activists abandoned Johnson to form the New Left. Johnson eventually did get Congress to raise taxes in 1968, but by then he had decided not to seek reelection and became a lame duck president.[118] The OEO and its programs consequently suffered.

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117. Ibid., 11-16.

Conservatives and liberals both harshly criticized the OEO and its projects, including the Job Corps program, for various reasons, reflecting larger issues with Johnson's domestic policies. Conservatives complained that OEO staff were unprofessional, running a political program that was not truly serving the interests of the poor.[119] Conservative politicians and media seized upon the Job Corps program when centers experienced a high dropout rate, which they interpreted as evidence of OEO failure and waste. Republican U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, who had lost the presidential election in 1964, criticized the program's high operation costs, as much as $8,000 an enrollee, and charged that the expenditure only supplied the young men in the conservation centers with "sun tans and an appreciation for outdoor living [that] clearly won't help them find jobs."[120] Goldwater personally believed that the poor deserved their fate and that welfare was unnecessary.[121] On the other end of the political spectrum, New Left liberals, black nationalists involved in the Civil Rights Movement, and Vietnam anti-war activists attacked the liberal individualist tradition and called for broader entitlement rights, particularly a guaranteed income for the poor. They also thought it hypocritical

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118. Unger, *The Best of Intentions,* 200, 203, 22, 284.

119. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America,* 171.

120. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America,* 238; Barry Goldwater and John Tower, "Minority Views," in *Economic Opportunity Act of 1964: Report, together with Minority and Individual Views, to Accompany S. 2642, July 21, 1964,* Senate Committee on Land and Public Welfare, 88th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1964), 74, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009881992 (accessed February 22, 2015).

121. Patterson, *America's Struggle Against Poverty in the Twentieth Century*, 141.

that the United States was fighting a war abroad when it was failing to provide adequately for its own people at home.[122]

Growing opposition to the War on Poverty not only shaped national politics, but local politics as well. A flash-point that stirred antagonists to the War on Poverty on both the national and community level was the controversial Community Action Program and its call for "maximum feasible participation." This required community groups using federal money to improve public services to include poor residents in the program's administration in order to help direct where the funds were spent. Local elite became concerned when CAP organizers began educating the poor about their rights for fear they would lose control over the funds coming to their communities. Such tensions occurred in Appalachian communities where young, college-age volunteers with either VISTA or Appalachian Volunteers (AV), a non-profit group associated with the Council on Southern Mountains, came to organize the poor, sometimes using confrontational, militant tactics learned from the civil rights and anti-war movements.[123]

Residents in Bell and Harlan counties adjacent to Cumberland Gap NHP became embroiled in such a confrontation. In 1967, community organizers and local residents in eastern Kentucky disrupted CVEOC meetings. They were upset with the Board of

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122. Gareth Davies, *From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 120-24.

123. Eller, *Uneven Ground,* 170-71, places this grassroots collective movement on the same plane as the Civil Rights, Native American, Poor People's, and Women's movements gaining momentum during this time. The Appalachian movement borrowed from these contributions and political philosophies to challenge the idea of regional "otherness" and the process of development.

Directors for firing CVEOC director James Kendrick and his assistant, David Lollis, without sufficient cause, and for not complying with federal regulations requiring adequate representation of the poor on the committee. Harlan County residents also complained of political control and paternalism exhibited by the Board of Directors. OEO staff in Washington, D.C., called a planning meeting with the Board of Directors in February 1967. Only seven of forty-two board members showed up to face the 800 protestors who had assembled. Subsequently, the OEO dismantled the CVEOC in favor of county-level CAAs that might be more responsive to the needs of the poor.[124] Although the dissolution of the CVEOC did not impact the park directly, its demise is important to understanding poverty politics in the local region because local elites became increasingly weary of outside agitators.

Republican presidential candidate Richard Nixon narrowly defeated Hubert Humphrey to win a close presidential election in 1968. Nonetheless, his victory put Johnson's Great Society programs in uncertainty. Once in office, Nixon proposed decentralizing power and decision-making, a dramatic reversal from Great Society liberal thought, which distrusted state agencies and endorsed community action as a means to forge a stronger federal-local government relationship. However, Congress remained in Democratic control and could overrule the president's agenda. Despite Nixon's reform efforts, a number of Great Society programs survived and even increased as more people

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124. Ibid., 145; "OEO-UAC Break Seen in Meeting," *Middlesboro Daily News,* January 16, 1967, p.1; "Kendrick is Suspended as Anti-Poverty Chief," *Middlesboro Daily News,* January 27, 1967, p.1; "Directors Won't Attend Meeting Called by OEO," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 13, 1967, p.1; "OEO Officials Planning Council Decision Soon," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 14, 1967, p.1; "Area Anti-Poverty Council Dumped by Federal Officials," *Middlesboro Daily News,* February 23, 1967, p.1.

became eligible, Congress found a program favorable, or Nixon somehow approved it. The food stamp program is one example.[125] But this is not to say that Great Society programs remained as they had originally been conceived by the Johnson administration.

One of the ways Nixon reformed the antipoverty programs was by closing a number of Job Corps Conservation Centers, including the Gap JCCC, much to the disappointment of center staff and corpsmen. The decision came quickly, and when administrators announced in May 1969 that the center was closing in June, a number of corpsmen expressed concern that they would have to leave before finishing their education and training. Editors of the *Gap Gazette* encouraged corpsmen to graduate if they felt they could hold a job or otherwise to talk to a counselor about transferring to another center. "Above all," they wrote, "DON'T give up hope."[126] Center Director Ingram wrote a final message to corpsmen:

> You have taught me some of the most important lessons in life. Your respect for me and my position has brought about greater humility on my part than I have ever known. You have proven to me that there is no place for second class citizens in America. The ground is level and we all stand in the same place. You have shown me that there is no such thing as anyone being all "bad" or all "good." There is some of each in all of us.[127]

The closing of the center gave him the opportunity to express to the corpsmen how his experience working with them was transformative, humbling, instructive, and greatly positive.

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125. Unger, *The Best of Intentions,* 302, 344-45.

126. *Gap Gazette,* May 1969, 2, Park Archive, Series 7, Subseries 1, Box 2, Folder 10.

127. Bill Ingram, "Message from the Director," *Gap Gazette,* May 1969, 6, Park Archive, Series 7, Subseries 1, Box 2, Folder 10.

Although Nixon closed the Gap JCCC and fifty-eight other conservation centers in 1969, he did not end the Job Corps program. Three Job Corps centers located in national parks remained in operation at Harpers Ferry, Great Onyx at Mammoth Cave, and Oconaluftee in the Great Smoky Mountains. However, Nixon did change the Job Corps program's direction by authorizing the establishment of thirty additional inner-city centers. As a result, job training shifted from conservation to industrial training and placement. Nixon also transferred management responsibility from the OEO to the Department of Labor. The USFS eventually took over management of the few remaining centers at NPS sites. [128]

Although the Gap JCCC only operated for four years, the experiences of staff and corpsmen there provided important lessons necessary for the success of subsequent programs.[129] For Job Corps staff, their experience in the program often gave them a boost up the career ladder. Delmar Robinson served as Center Director at Oconaluftee for twenty-five years. Wilma Johnson Rose, whom Robinson had initially hired as a special appointment GS-2 clerk-typist, soon gained a permanent position and was promoted to secretary to the Center Director by the time the Gap JCCC closed. After three interviews in Washington in May 1969, she eventually settled on a secretarial position at Rock Creek Park. She spent fifteen years with the NPS, including time at the new Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts and in contracting in the Washington Office, then four years working for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and

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128. "News Release from Department of Labor: Plans Announced for Closing of Centers," *Gap Gazette,* May 1969, 21, Park Archive, Series 7, Subseries 1, Box 2, Folder 10.

129. Sirna, Phone Interview with Delmar Robinson.

another fourteen years with the Army. She retired as GM-14 Deputy Director of Contracting at Fort Huachuca. She says that her experience in the Job Corps really prepared her for government contracting work.[130] Her ascension from a GS-2 to a GM-14 also demonstrates how Job Corps experience led to greater opportunities for women in federal service after passage of the Equal Opportunity Act in 1972.

Conclusion

Despite the relatively short tenure of the Gap JCCC, the program left a visible imprint on the park landscape. Traces of center life can be seen in the Bartlett-Rhodes area of the park, although the corpsmen and staff living quarters are no longer present. The current park headquarters building encloses the Job Corps dining hall.[131] The wide lawn in front of the headquarters office and the large parking lot below stand empty of the dormitories and educational and administrative buildings that used to be there. Down the hill and near the creek, picnic shelters are situated close to where mobile homes were parked for staff residences. The NPS still uses a portion of the center's circulation pattern, including the entrance road, the half-circular drive that once serviced the staff trailers, the lower parking lot, and the bridge over Yellow Creek leading to the maintenance buildings, gymnasium, and recreational areas. NPS staff still use the open and closed storage maintenance buildings constructed by corpsmen. The gymnasium is still there but is currently used for storage, not basketball games. The adjacent black top

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130. Wiley, Phone Interview with Wilma Johnson Rose.

131. Martha Wiley, Interview with Virginia Huff, December 4, 2008, transcribed by Thomas Mackie (2010), 19, Park Archive, Oral History Collection.

area is still extant, which the NPS also uses for storing maintenance equipment and supplies. Remnants of the playing fields are still visible, but a portion has been dedicated to wetland reclamation. The NPS continues to use the cluster of buildings along the access road, including a museum storage facility and ranger station. Park staff have reused and adapted the remaining fabric of the Job Corps Center, making it a vital part of park operations today. The fabric provides a tangible link between Johnson's poverty warriors and today's federal employees.

Today's park visitors also enjoy the fruits of the corpsmen's hard work, although there are not any interpretive signs indicating their contributions to the park. Corpsmen played a crucial role in preserving Hensley Settlement, where they rehabilitated sixteen buildings. They also rehabilitated Thomas Jefferson Cupp's cabin near Martin's Fork for hikers to use as an overnight shelter.[132] Corpsmen helped finish Wilderness Campground (a Mission 66 project) and constructed the Sugar Run Picnic Area. They rehabilitated Civil War-era Fort McCook, including the stone steps visitors climb to peer into the earthworks. Corpsmen also helped stabilize the iron furnace near the town of Cumberland Gap. They completed scores of small projects around the park, and maintained many miles of trails. Corpsmen played a critical role in modernizing the park landscape during the 1960s, work that goes mostly unrecognized by visitors and staff.

The legacy of Johnson's War on Poverty also remains in the Cumberland Gap area today. Citizens still take advantage of programs such as Head Start, Medicare, and

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132. "Shelter," *Middlesboro Daily News,* August 24, 1967, newspaper clipping, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 74, Shelf 4, Box 29, Folder K42 Cumberland Gap Publications and Publicity File.

food stamps. VISTA and college-work study still provide opportunities in the region for college-age young adults. One of the lasting legacies of the effort to bring poor Appalachians into mainstream America, according to Eller, was a new regional consciousness that challenged assumptions about the otherness of Appalachia and the concept of progress. Former poverty warriors and professionals stayed in the region to concentrate on political organizing, healthcare delivery, environmental protection, cultural heritage preservation, and social justice issues. Along with other rights movements, the Appalachian movement emerged to preserve mountain culture and protect those living in the area, people whose rights are at times threatened by outside corporations, such as those affected by strip mining or other environmental degradation.[133] National parks in Appalachia, particularly Cumberland Gap NHP, became spaces for the Appalachian movement to shape the region in terms of balancing economic development with environmental protection and cultural heritage preservation, improving quality of life, and challenging notions and meanings of progress.

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133. Eller, *Uneven Ground,* 170-74, 194-95.

CHAPTER SIX

Recreating Boone's Wilderness

On September 9, 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act, which immediately protected over nine million acres of federal land. This piece of legislation was a hard-won victory by wilderness preservationists who sought a system of large expanses of natural areas, roadless or otherwise undeveloped, to be managed by the federal government. Advocates based this new system in an ideal of nature without the traces of human intervention. Indeed, Section 2c of the law defined wilderness "as an area where earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." The new law instructed the National Park Service and other federal land-management agencies to evaluate all roadless areas with more than 5,000 acres for possible wilderness designation and to make recommendations to the president.[1] One of its units that the NPS had to evaluate was Cumberland Gap National Historical Park despite its national *historical* park designation for Cumberland Gap's significance to American history. Wilderness designation also put the park at odds with regional economic development efforts to build roadways to and through the park. During the park's wilderness evaluation, the NPS held a series of hearings in 1967 to allow public comment, which brought to the surface tensions between wilderness

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1. *The Wilderness Act,* Public Law 88-577, 88th Cong., 2d sess. (September 3, 1964); Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (2002; reprint, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 7; James Feldman, *A Storied Wilderness: Rewilding the Apostle Islands* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 14.

advocates, NPS management, and local boosters. But from these meetings, a new discourse emerged that prompted NPS managers to contemplate how to implement this new wilderness ideal at a historical park, which meant reconsidering wilderness as a natural area absent of human intervention (rather than just natural-looking or roadless), limiting impact of road development, and presenting a version of mountain culture that was compatible with this wilderness ideal through preservation and interpretation of Hensley Settlement.

Part of the conflict that arose at the wilderness hearings stemmed from the park's role in regional economic development, particularly in eastern Kentucky, a region that was a persistently economically depressed. The same month that Johnson signed the Wilderness Act, the Office of Economic Opportunity and NPS identified Cumberland Gap NHP as a site for a Job Corps Conservation Center. The center brought money into the local economy. The NPS also favored major road projects supported by the new Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), established by Congress in 1965 to modernize the region and decrease its isolation by building roads and nurturing the growing tourism industry. NPS staff were interested in two particular road projects that they believed would increase park visitation: the Allegheny Parkway proposed by the NPS and the federal Bureau of Public Roads in 1964 to connect Cumberland Gap NHP with Harpers Ferry NHP in West Virginia, and the ARC-approved upgrade of a thirteen-mile section of US 25E between Pineville and Middlesboro. Wilderness advocates' desire

to limit park development seemed in direct contradiction to regional and national efforts to modernize the region through road construction.[2]

The two opposing groups—wilderness advocates and local boosters—came together, ironically, over the park's proposal to preserve Hensley Settlement, introducing yet another dynamic to the discourse. Two years after wilderness advocates succeeded with the Wilderness Act, historic preservationists similarly achieved a legislative victory in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, which placed the NPS firmly in charge of an expanded federal historic preservation program. National and regional administrators encouraged parks to take the lead in implementing new historic preservation policies, prompting sites like Cumberland Gap NHP to expand their preservation and interpretation activities. Though the park was established to preserve and present a landscape that depicted America's frontier wilderness, NPS administrators used Job Corps labor to preserve parts of Hensley Settlement, a twentieth-century community, beginning in 1965.[3] Paradoxically, Hensley Settlement's primitiveness and

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2. John Eilert, *An Economic Profile and Impact Analysis of Four Cumberland Gap Counties* (Memphis, TN: Memphis State University Bureau of Business and Economic Research and Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, June 1968), 5-6; National Park Service and Bureau of Public Roads, *The Allegheny Parkway: A Report to the Congress of the United States, February 28, 1964* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1964), 1, https://archive.org/details/alleghenyparkway00nati (accessed October 28, 2014); "Cumberland Gap Future Depends on Location of Two Major Roadways," *Middlesboro Daily News,* September 13, 1965, newspaper clipping, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-148, Administrative Records of the Job Corps Center Program, 1962-1969, Stack 570, Row C, Compartment 74, Shelf 4, Box 29, Folder K42 Cumberland Gap Publications and Publicity; "ARC Approved U.S. 119-25E Corridor," *Middlesboro Daily News,* July 14, 1965, p.1.

3. "ARA Says Future Based on Industry," *Middlesboro Daily News,* September 14, 1964, p.1; *The Corpsmen Chronicle: First Anniversary Edition,* 1966, Park Archive, Series 7, Subseries 1, Box 2, Folder 6; Kentucky Section of Sierra Club and Wilderness

isolation were qualities that color writers, industrialists, missionaries, land economists, and sociologists saw as a handicap to Appalachian economic development and modernization, but the NPS and wilderness advocates identified these qualities as significant and worthy of preservation and interpretation. The Hensley project significantly advanced NPS involvement in cultural heritage development in Appalachia. It also provided a site for staff to craft an image of mountain culture that was consistent with the modern wilderness ideal being considered for other parts of the park.

The Modern Environmental Movement and the Wilderness Ideal

The Wilderness Act was but one aspect of a larger movement that raised Americans' consciousness about environmental issues and sought government protection of wilderness through legislation. The modern environmental movement has diverse roots and goals, ranging from resource conservation to social justice and wilderness preservation. The movement's ability to connect ordinary citizens with postwar concerns like pollution, public health, overpopulation, and social justice created a viable and energetic political constituency. Grassroots activists and scientists encouraged Congress to pass environmental legislation to set aside wilderness areas and to protect air, water, and wildlife. They also pressured federal land management agencies to incorporate science into their management procedures. Activists criticized the NPS for altering ecosystems (communities of living organisms) within parks by introducing popular exotic species (e.g., fish for recreational fishing) and eradicating predators (e.g., gray wolves at

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Society, "A Joint Hearing Announcement," May 24, 1967, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 1.

Yellowstone National Park) and encouraged the agency to incorporate more ecologically informed practices.[4] The modern environmental movement at large and the wilderness movement in particular impelled an important shift from scenic preservation to science-based management in national parks, which, in turn, altered resource management practices at places like Cumberland Gap NHP.

A number of important postwar changes in U.S. society and culture shaped the modern environmental movement. After World War II, Americans moved to the suburbs en masse thanks to a combination of factors: a housing shortage, new technologies in building construction and transportation, federal housing subsidies, massive federal investment in a new system of interstate highways, and a population boom.[5] Initially, U.S. citizens and policy-makers interpreted the rise of suburbs as widespread access to the American dream of homeownership, but some observers noticed the negative toll these projects took on the environment. Contractors constructed buildings in environmentally sensitive areas and used machinery that caused erosion. Suburban homes increasingly used septic tanks, which sometimes failed, increasing the possibility of groundwater contamination. Builders also turned to easier-to-construct, but less-energy

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4. Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993), 6-8; Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (1997; reprint, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 213-14; Lary Dilsaver, ed., *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), 197-99.

5. Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 230-45; Delores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003), 131-53.

efficient, home-types, like the ranch house.[6] Ecologist Rachel Carson shocked readers in her best-selling book, *Silent Spring* (1962), about the causal relationship between the increasing use of pesticides and the decline of bird species. Carson also raised questions about the harmful effects of chemicals on human health, driving home the fact that public health and the environment are interrelated. She advised readers that science and technology are susceptible to corruption when applied to developing consumer products, such as the chemicals used to spray farm fields producing food that ended up on dining room tables.[7] Through Carson's efforts and those of many others, ordinary Americans became concerned about man-made threats to the environment, including pollution, atomic energy, extinction of species, and loss of wilderness.[8]

U.S. concerns about global population growth also shaped environmental discourse during the 1960s. The global population reached three billion in 1960 and was increasing at an unprecedented rate. In *The Population Bomb* (1968), ecologist and demographer Paul Ehrlich pessimistically warned that humans would soon exceed Earth's carrying capacity, meaning that the human population would exceed the resources needed to sustain it, eliciting public fears of poverty and war—at home and abroad.[9]

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6. Adam Rome, *Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1-3.

7. Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring,* 6-8, 43, 84-86; Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (1962; reprint, New York: Mariner Books, 2002), 6-8, 15-16.

8. Samuel Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 3-4.

9. Thomas Robertson, *The Malthusian Moment: Global Population Growth and the Birth of American Environmentalism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 4-23, 226-27. Robertson identifies this brief concern for population growth as the

These anxieties were reflected in how environmental advocates spoke about and lobbied for park areas. Oftentimes advocates expressed their concerns in letter-writing campaigns, a 1960s-style, direct-action tactic.[10]

Environmental activism became a galvanizing force for grassroots organizations in Appalachia who believed that restoring the region's degraded landscape was essential to its future and the health of its people, since extractive industries like coal mining often threatened the public health of poor communities that had little political power. Lawyer and writer Harry Caudill argued, in 1962, that Appalachian poverty was tied to land degradation. Families were no longer able to sustain themselves on the land either because the land was worn out from over farming or from negative environmental practices of corporate industries. He asserted that the future of the region rested partly in restoring its ecology, and national parks were perceived as sites where such restoration could occur. Using Malthusian rhetoric, Caudill wrote,

> Population experts expect that by the year 2000 the number of Americans will have doubled. When this occurs uncrowded recreation and vacation areas will be priceless. Millions of people will yearn for green and pleasant areas in which to

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"Malthusian Moment." Malthusianism is derived from the theories of nineteenth-century English pastor, Thomas Malthus, who advocated for population control to improve people's quality of life. In the 1960s and 1970s, a group of environmentalists linked population growth to environmental degradation, which became a popular idea as the global population reached three billion. However, a number of factors in the late 1970s led to the decline of Malthusian environmentalism. First, the global birthrate decreased, and new technologies in food production increased food supplies. Second, the federal government lent strong support to birth control programs at home and abroad and passed an expansive package of environmental legislation. Additionally, the public focus on poverty waned after the 1960s. After the shattering of the liberal consensus in the 1960s due to failures in domestic and foreign policies, the public became weary of government intervention. It also tired of Malthusian pessimism and all the seemingly endless domestic and international crises.

10. Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, 45.

> find escape from the anxieties and tensions of competitive and crowded living. Already the super-metropolis has crept to the edge of the Southern mountains, some four hundred miles from the rim of the plateau. The present generation of Americans owes the next a positive duty to preserve Southern highlands and to bequeath them in a useful and beneficial condition.[11]

He implied that Appalachia should become the recreational mecca for the super-metropolises, which also would allow the region to retain its unique character. Parks like Cumberland Gap NHP would be a critical resource to meet the growing demand for outdoor recreation while helping to restore the region's ecology and preserve its cultural heritage.

For communities near Cumberland Gap NHP, environmental degradation by industries threatened their very existence. Grassroots activists formed organizations to collectively resist companies responsible for land deterioration, primarily surface mining (also called strip mining).[12] For example, eastern Kentucky residents concerned about strip mining formed the Appalachian Group to Save the Land and People (AGSLP) in 1965. This group sometimes used militant tactics to stop strip mining, including meeting bulldozers with hunting rifles, but also mobilized organized protests and sought action through the courts.[13] Residents in Claiborne County, Tennessee, one of the counties that

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11. Harry Caudill, *Night Comes to the Cumberlands: A Biography of a Depressed Area* (1962; reprint, Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1963), 376.

12. Surface mining, also known as strip mining or mountaintop removal, is different from deep-pit mining because it removes the soil, vegetation, and rocks (called overburden) for easier access to the coal underneath. Coal companies favor this method, because it is cheaper and safer than pit mining. Opponents argue even after reclamation efforts, strip mining destroys mountain topography, reduces biodiversity, and pollutes groundwater.

13. Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 145.

form Cumberland Gap NHP, also took legal action to protect themselves and their land. Coal companies strip-mined land owned by the American Association, the British company that owned land near the small community of Buffalo in Claiborne County. The strip mine activities caused mud and debris to slide down into the little valley where the community lay sometime around 1970, damaging personal property and roads and polluting waterways. Residents sought legal action by appealing to the Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Conservation and challenging the mining company's permit under the provisions of the Tennessee State Surface Mining law of 1972. Their appeal failed.[14] However, Buffalo residents were not alone in their frustrations with coal companies and absentee landowners. Residents in five Tennessee coal counties (Campbell, Scott, Claiborne, Anderson, and Morgan) organized a regional campaign called Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM) in 1972. Three years later, the group successfully obstructed AMAX, Inc., the nation's third-largest coal company, from strip mining 20,000 acres near Fall Creek Falls State Park by appealing to state water pollution regulators who denied AMAX the necessary discharge permit. SOCM blocked other mining permits and was also effective in achieving mineral and severance taxes for poor coalfield counties and a state Surface Rights Law that required surface owner consent prior to strip mining. However, SOCM was unsuccessful in its original mission to attain a federal band on strip mining. The group voted against supporting the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act in 1977, because the law legitimized the industry

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14. John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 227-51.

instead of ending the practice.[15] Despite grassroots activism, strip mining continues to be a major environmental concern.

Home-grown industries also caused environmental degradation close to Cumberland Gap NHP. Citizens in Yellow Creek Valley, adjacent to the park, became aware in the late 1960s that a Middlesboro tannery was contaminating their soil when the company started using new technology that worsened creek conditions. Individuals had issued complaints against the company for as long as the tannery had been in operation, since the late nineteenth century. In the late 1960s, individual grievances gave way to collective resistance as citizens adapted tactics from the larger environmental movement and were spurred by new federal regulations, particularly the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969. In 1976, however, residents declared the creek dead. Four years later a small group formed the Yellow Creek Concerned Citizens (YCCC) organization, which grew to four hundred members in a year. In 1983, the YCCC filed a $31 million class action lawsuit against the City of Middlesboro for failing to enforce a sewer ordinance that would restrict the waste the tannery was sending to the municipal sewage treatment plant. Two years later, the U.S. Justice Department, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Commonwealth of Kentucky, City of Middlesboro, and YCCC settled the suit with a consent decree, which set limits for discharges into the creek and established

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15. SOCM changed its name in 2008 to "Statewide Organization for Organized Empowerment" to reflect the organization's decision to broaden its mission to include broad social justice efforts in the state. For more on SOCM, see Bill Allen, "Save Our Cumberland Mountains: Growth and Change in a Grassroots Organization," in *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change,* ed. Stephen Fisher (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1993), 85-99; "SOCM History," Statewide Organization for Community Empowerment, http://www.socm.org/index.cfm/m/8/fuseAction/contentpage.main/detailID/13 (accessed February 23, 2015).

deadlines for the city and tannery to upgrade their facilities.[16] Local groups like the YCCC could look to the NPS at Cumberland Gap NHP as a model for good land use and even as an ally in promoting regional environmental issues.[17]

The tendency of the American public to link environmental concerns to consumerism during the 1960s meant that wilderness advocates had to abandon the anti-modern critique of consumer society that was the foundation of the modern wilderness movement. The views of U.S. citizens on wilderness had changed significantly since the nation's early settlement, when pioneers feared the wilderness and sought to civilize the landscape. As the nation-state emerged and industry and modernization transformed the landscape, a few Americans began to see the appeal of conserving wild spaces. In 1935, a group of men formed the Wilderness Society, an organization dedicated to the "modern wilderness idea," in which the federal government would set aside roadless or

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16. Sherry Cable, "From Fussin' to Organizing: Individual and Collective Resistance at Yellow Creek," in *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change,* 69-84. For more on the YCCC, see also Will Nixon, "The Death and Life of Yellow Creek: In the Mountains and Hollows of Kentucky Coal Country, One Group of Citizens Learns What it Takes to Protect Their Lives and Their Land," *E-Environmental Magazine,* September-October 1993, 38-44.

17. The awareness raised by YCCC about the health of Yellow Creek provided important groundwork for a joint effort between the NPS and City of Middlesboro in 1998 to use a provision of the Surface Mining Act to successfully petition against a strip mine permit that would impact the Yellow Creek watershed and impair the Pinnacle's view shed. Congress passed the Fern Lake Conservation and Recreation Act in 2001 that expanded the park boundary and authorized the NPS to purchase the 4,500-acre watershed area (with assistance from the National Parks Conservation Association and Trust for Public Land), thereby protecting Middlesboro's water source and protecting park view sheds. George Wuerthner, "High Stakes: The Legacy of Mining," *National Parks Magazine*, July-August 1998, 24; Don Barger, "Regional Report: Southeast," *National Parks Magazine*, July-August 1998, 20; "Fern Lake Land Acquisition," National Park Service, http://www.nps.gov/cuga/learn/management/fern-lake-land-acquisition.htm (accessed February 24, 2015); *Fern Lake Conservation and Recreation Act of 2001,* U.S. Code Title 16, Chapter 1, Subchapter XXVIII, 268a§.

undeveloped areas that would be collectively managed as a wilderness system. These founders—including forester and regional planner Benton MacKaye, forester and wildlife expert Aldo Leopold, Chief Forester for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Bob Marshall, and journalist Robert Sterling Yard—were all concerned with the negative impact of emerging consumer trends, particularly automobiles, on the nation's parks and forests. They valued primitiveness and isolation as a way to escape society, but the intrusion of vehicles and crowds ruined this experience. However, wilderness advocates in the 1960s had to give up this consumerist critique in order to convert the growing public enthusiasm for outdoor recreation and environmental protection into political support for a national wilderness system, which they achieved with the Wilderness Act in 1964. In doing so, they developed an ideal more closely associated to consumer society that valued wild nature without human imprints.[18]

National parks provided spaces where natural areas could remain protected from the burgeoning human population, but the public was becoming more aware that these places continued to be threatened by expanding road development, urban sprawl, resource extraction, and even the federal government itself. NPS historian Richard West Sellars pointed out that although the NPS was the only federal agency with a specific mandate to preserve natural conditions on public lands, it did not take a leadership role in the environmental movement and, in fact, seemed reluctant to incorporate ecology into its management practices. Sellars asserted that NPS managers had to be "awakened" from traditional scenic preservation policies by outside critics.[19] This awakening occurred in

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18. Sutter, *Driven Wild,* 7; Feldman, *A Storied Wilderness,* 11.

1963, at the height of the Mission 66 program, when the Special Board on Wildlife Management to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior and the National Academy of Sciences released respective reports on wildlife management and science in national parks. The Special Board on Wildlife Management's report, commonly referred to as the Leopold Report, named after chairman and principal author A. Starker Leopold, son of Aldo Leopold, examined the immediate and long-term issues of wildlife management in national parks. Calling on national parks "to preserve, or where necessary to recreate, the ecologic scene as viewed by the first European visitors" the Leopold Report caused tension within the agency by recommending that the NPS recognize the diverse and complex biological communities it must protect, employ various management strategies to protect these communities, and base all management programs on scientific research.[20] The National Academy of Sciences report was more detailed in its recommendations to incorporate ecological understanding into NPS management and more damning in its belief that the NPS did not support scientific research.[21]

These reports formed a major turning point as NPS management shifted from being primarily based on preserving scenery to being based primarily on science. Hartzog's notes indicate that answering public criticisms of overdevelopment during Mission 66 was one of his top priorities at the end of 1964, but it took him two years to send a memorandum to all field offices instructing them to implement the Leopold

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19. Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks,* 213-14.

20. Dilsaver, *America's National Park System,* 250.

21. Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks,* 215.

Report's recommendations on wildlife management.[22] Congress prodded the NPS to increase its protection of natural areas under a new array of federal environmental regulations: the Wilderness Act (1964), Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (1965), Endangered Species Act (1966 and 1969), Air Quality Act (1967), Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968), National Trail Systems Act (1968), National Environmental Policy Act (1969), Clean Air Act (1970), and Water Pollution Control Act (1972).[23] These laws required the NPS to hold higher standards in managing ecosystems, protecting endangered species, and ensuring clean air and water within the park system, while also opening agency decisions to public comment.

These reports and new regulations changed national park landscapes and the agency's power structure, which had previously favored landscape architects and now favored natural resource experts. NPS construction of visitor facilities, roads, and trails would continue but with new layers of environmental review by state and federal agencies open to public comment and scrutiny. Second, the complexities of incorporating ecologically informed management practices into landscape preservation prompted NPS administrators to create what historian James Feldman refers to as "legible landscapes." So, for example, NPS Director Hartzog and Secretary of the Interior Udall decided to separate parks into three different management categories—natural, historical, and

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22. Stanley Abbott, Daniel Beard, Ronald Lee, James Myers, and Raymond Freeman to George Hartzog, memorandum, "Program to Follow Mission 66," November 16, 1964, Harpers Ferry Center, Hartzog Collection, Folder Project B 1964; George Hartzog to all National Park Service Field Offices, memorandum, "Implementation of the Leopold Committee Report, 'Wildlife Management in the National Parks,'" November 22, 1967, Harpers Ferry Center, Hartzog Collection, Black Book One.

23. Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians,* 1-2.

recreational—each with its own manual and long-range objectives.[24] This was essentially a bureaucratic device to simplify land management by reducing a landscape to its primary values in order to apply broad policy.[25] It was quite a change from New Deal park development, when park planners utilized a more holistic approach, integrating the management of natural, historical, and recreational aspects of parks. The shift to more focused management policies did not necessarily simplify management practices; as Feldman demonstrates, with the designation of new wilderness areas these new management categories were often at odds with each other. While popular ideas about wilderness held that human intervention degrades wilderness areas, hardly any natural area in this country has not been affected by humans. So when a national park was categorized as a "natural" resource park, park managers were left with the dubious task of scrubbing the landscape of any sign of human occupation to achieve this ideal, a goal that worried historians interested in preserving human history as well as urbanites and suburbanites who sought recreational outlets.

Wilderness Movement at Cumberland Gap NHP

While Cumberland Gap NHP was engaged in developing its first full master plan in the mid-1960s, a plan based on a 1956 Mission 66 prospectus, park managers had to reassess resource management policies in light of the emerging environmental

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24. Dilsaver, *America's National Park System,* 272.

25. Feldman, *A Storied Wilderness,* 12-13. Feldman borrows upon James Scott's concept of "legibility," a bureaucratic tactic to arrange and simplify society for efficient state management (i.e., standardization of weights and measures). See James Scott *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 2.

movement.[26] Like other federal land-management agencies, the NPS had to evaluate all natural, roadless areas over 5,000 acres in size after President Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law in 1964.[27] Outgoing NPS Director Conrad Wirth, the man behind the agency's Mission 66 program, called this legislation redundant, because the NPS already managed roadless areas. However, the act added a legal element preventing further development, which made careful evaluation imperative.[28] Park staff at Cumberland Gap NHP, too, had to evaluate the park's natural areas, even though it was a historical park, for possible inclusion in the new wilderness system. Consequently, in 1967, the NPS studied 15,470 acres at Cumberland Gap NHP and proposed a single wilderness area unit totaling 8,980 acres (5,590 in Virginia and 3,390 in Kentucky), just less than half of the total park.[29] This study sparked controversy between wilderness advocates and local boosters, who held opposing views of the best way to manage park resources.

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26. E. T. Scoyen to National Park Service Region One Director, memorandum, "Approval of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Prospectus," November 26, 1956, NARA, Record Group 79, Entry P-11, General Files, Administrative Files, Stack 570, Row 80, Compartment 21, Shelf 3, Box 91, Folder D18 Part Two Planning Program of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, 1955-1961.

27. *The Wilderness Act.*

28. Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians,* 129.

29. John Preston, *Complete and Unedited Transcript of Wilderness Hearing on Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Ewing, Virginia, June 9, 1967*, (Middlesboro, KY: Cumberland Gap NHP and National Park Service, 1967), 8; National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, *Final Environmental Statement: Proposed Wilderness Classification Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia,* (Middlesboro, KY: Cumberland Gap NHP and National Park Service, 1973), 1, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 7, Box 8, Folder 10.

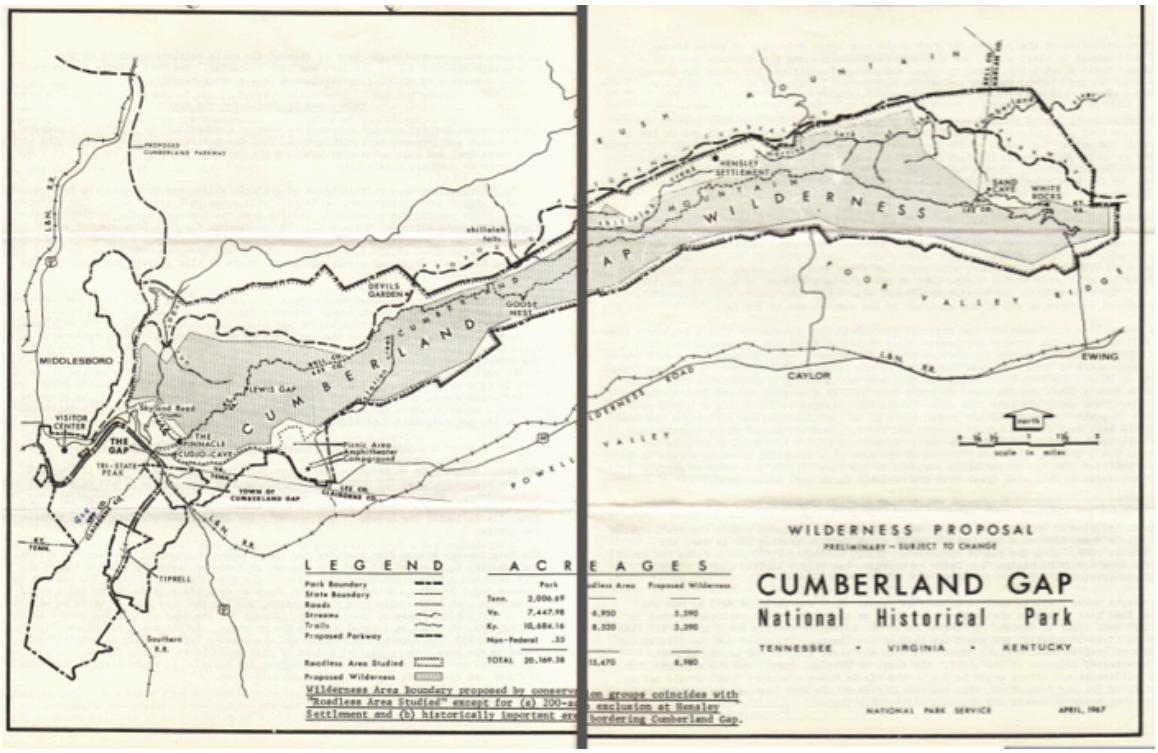

Figure 44. “Wilderness Proposal: Cumberland Gap National Historical Park.” Created by National Park Service in April 1967. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

As part of the wilderness designation process, the NPS held public meetings in Middlesboro, Kentucky, and Ewing, Virginia, in June 1967, to answer questions about the study and invite public comment from both the public at large and local citizens. NPS representatives were surprised to receive criticism from wilderness advocates, who believed the NPS did not go far enough with its proposal to create an 8,980-acre wilderness area. Wilderness advocates also spoke out against road development in and near the park, which was at odds with regional economic development goals for the area. Leading the environmentalists’ cause, the Wilderness Society and a local chapter of the Sierra Club called upon the NPS to set aside a larger wilderness area and limit road

development in and near the park to protect the park's natural resources and primitive qualities.[30]

The NPS had proposed a wilderness area much smaller than the potential area to allow for the construction of the proposed Allegheny Parkway, a ridge-top road that would begin in Harpers Ferry NHP, West Virginia, and end at Cumberland Gap NHP with the goal of providing outdoor recreational opportunities for residents living in eastern cities. The Kentucky Section of the Sierra Club, the National Parks Association, and the Wilderness Society immediately called for a single wilderness area totaling 15,250 acres, exempting only Hensley Settlement. The wilderness advocates were not concerned that most of the natural area at the park was second-growth forest with a long history of human use. They strongly opposed the Allegheny Parkway saying, "It would destroy the sense of wildness and remoteness for the entire mountain crest." However, trying to balance wilderness preservation with regional economic development, the coalition of environmental groups also offered an alternative:

> Instead of being routed through the Park at a high elevation, the Allegheny Parkway should be placed down off Cumberland Mountain at a point before it enters the Park and be led through the valley just north of the Park until it reaches Kentucky State Highway 988. From there it could pass through the Park on a route paralleling Kentucky 988 to its termination near the Visitor Center. Such a route would leave unviolated the highland area of the Park. At the same time, it

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30. Kentucky Section of Sierra Club and Wilderness Society, "A Joint Hearing Announcement"; John Preston, *Complete and Unedited Transcript of Wilderness Hearing on Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Middlesboro, Kentucky, June 8, 1967* (Middlesboro, KY: Cumberland Gap NHP and National Park Service, 1967), 53-63; Preston, *Complete and Unedited Transcript of Wilderness Hearing on Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Ewing, Virginia, June 9, 1967*, 65-70.

> would provide Middlesboro and the neighboring communities the maximum benefit of the tourist travel generated by the Park and the Parkway.[31]

This compromise rested on preserving the crest of Cumberland Mountain within the park from road development, but not prohibiting the Allegheny Parkway altogether to encourage local tourism.

There was some confusion among wilderness advocates about the Allegheny Parkway's proposed location in Cumberland Gap NHP and whether or not it would run along the ridge of Cumberland Mountain in Cumberland Gap NHP. The 1964 proposal for the Allegheny Parkway described the location of the parkway as coming from the east along the ridge top of Stone Mountain, which adjoins Cumberland Mountain without much topographical distinction. The proposed parkway would then continue along the ridge of Cumberland Mountain for nineteen additional miles before meeting the eastern boundary of Cumberland Gap NHP. At that point, the parkway would take drivers near White Rocks (a significant geologic formation that offers spectacular views of Powell Valley) and Sand Cave (a unique cave formed from eroded sandstone) before descending the north face of Cumberland Mountain. The rest of the parkway would lie in the valley at the foot of the mountain just outside of the park boundary.[32] Some wilderness advocates nonetheless believed that the parkway would run the entire length of the park on the mountain crest, which fueled their opposition to the proposed Allegheny Parkway.

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31. Kentucky Section of Sierra Club and Wilderness Society, "A Joint Hearing Announcement."

32. National Park Service and Bureau of Public Roads, *The Allegheny Parkway,* 26.

Many people from across the country answered the joint announcement published by the three environmental organizations and wrote letters endorsing their proposal. Their letters reveal anxiety towards road-building, the disappearance of open space in an increasingly urban society, and the desire for outdoor recreation amenities. The National Parks Association criticized the federal government's road-building program in eastern Kentucky as a panacea for the depressed region, indicating that the number of planned roadways for the Cumberland Gap area was excessive.[33] Letter-writer Herman Benson, President of Machine Fabricators' Service Company in New York City, agreed: "We are reaching the stage in society where we have more and more roads and fewer places to go."[34] Some strongly believed that wilderness could not be experienced in a motor vehicle, a marked departure from NPS landscape architectural philosophy. Philip J. Adler of East Carolina College wrote, "It seems to us that it is not the proper function of the Park Service to provide unlimited access to motorized tourists through Park areas, solely because some or even many of the tourists will not attempt to walk with the legs God gave them."[35] These letters marked a breakpoint from the 1930s, when the public had embraced road building in parks.

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33. Anthony Wayne Smith, William J. Hart, and National Parks Association, "A Wilderness Plan for Cumberland Gap National Historical Park and the Surrounding Region," June 8, 1967, 7-12, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 1.

34. Herman Benson to Hearing Officer, letter, June 4, 1967, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 1.

35. Phillip Adler to Hearing Officer, letter, June 9, 1967, Park Archive, Series 2 Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 1.

Public criticism of the Allegheny Parkway plan prompted the NPS to send a team to restudy a portion of the proposed parkway near the park. In 1969 the study team looked at the proposed "valley" route in the vicinity of Cumberland Gap NHP; the current and proposed access to Hensley Settlement; the current and proposed access to Sand Cave and White Rocks, including a road proposed from Ewing, Virginia; and Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) deed reservations. LMU had sold about 2,000 acres of land for the park but held water and cave rights in this area. The team unanimously endorsed the original "crest-top" 1964 proposal for an Allegheny Parkway. Seemingly tone-deaf to the wilderness advocates' arguments, they essentially summed up the 1964 reasoning for this location: that it would create a parkway of national significance with unparalleled views and access to historic sites and recreational areas, would not interfere with proposed wilderness areas, and would provide much needed access to White Rocks and Sand Cave, which were only accessible by foot. The parkway would extend the northern boundary of the park through additional land acquisition and create a buffer zone between the parkway and park.[36] The parkway was left in both the master plan and the final wilderness recommendation. However, three years later, no steps toward realizing this project had yet been taken.[37]

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36. National Park Service, "Report on a Field Study Conducted in and Near Cumberland Gap During the Period March 31 through April 4, 1969," May 20, 1969, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 5, Box 5, Folder 8.

37. National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, *Final Environmental Statement,* 2; National Park Service, "Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Master Plan Preliminary Draft," (Middlesboro, KY: Cumberland Gap NHP and National Park Service, 1972), 18, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 1, Box 1, Folder 11.

The preliminary park master plan drawings showed two other parkways terminating at Cumberland Gap NHP, but they received little to no discussion during the hearings because they would not actually be located in the park. The proposed Cumberland Parkway would connect the park with Mammoth Cave National Park to the west, while the Foothills Parkway would connect Cumberland Gap NHP with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to the south. These two parkways, combined with the Allegheny Parkway, would have had a major impact on the park and region. Wilderness advocates did not talk about these two parkways specifically, likely because they were located at a distance far enough away from the proposed wilderness area. However, they recognized that cumulatively this "maze of concrete strips" threatened the "human refuge" of Cumberland Gap NHP.[38] State and federal agencies built portions of these roads in the 1960s and 1970s, but neither connects with Cumberland Gap NHP today.[39] While public criticism of parkways may have been the reason these roads have never been completed, it is more likely that funding and state politics thwarted plans.

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38. Smith, Hart, and National Parks Association, "A Wilderness Plan for Cumberland Gap National Historical Park"; National Park Service, "Wilderness Recommendation Cumberland Gap National Historical Park—Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee," (Middlesboro, KY: Cumberland Gap NHP and National Park Service, September 1972), 18, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 7, Box 8, Folder 10.

39. The Cumberland Parkway, now known as the Nunn Parkway after Kentucky Governor Louie Nunn (1967-1970), begins at an interchange on I-65 near Park City, Kentucky (near Mammoth Cave National Park), and ends at US 27 near Somerset, Kentucky. The NPS constructed a portion of Foothills Parkway using Mission 66 funds in the 1960s, but the route is limited to the eastern portion of Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee. More research is needed on both parkways. See "Governor Louie B. Nunn," Kentucky Transportation Center at University of Kentucky, http://www.ktc.uky.edu/about/kentucky-transportation-hall-of-fame/gov-louie-b-nunn/ (accessed February 10, 2015); Brown, *The Wild East,* 208.

Public concern over the proliferation of planned roads near and in Cumberland Gap NHP pushed park planners to seek a tunnel option for US 25E, the highway that traverses the historic Cumberland Gap but lies outside the areas proposed as wilderness. Since the park's establishment, planners had been concerned about the highway's impact on historic resources in the saddle of the gap, the very place where people had been streaming across the Appalachians for centuries. In the 1950s, when officials at the Bureau of Public Roads suggested widening the road to four lanes in order to improve safety and accommodate the growing number of vehicles using the route, park managers began looking for an alternative solution. At that time, their concern was for the gap's historical integrity, a concern very different than the later view expressed by environmentalists that the park should be free of vehicles. A 1959 NPS report indicated that the agency even considered building a "rooflike structure" over US 25E, although it is unclear how such a structure would protect the saddle's integrity or improve the historical scene. But the NPS and Bureau of Public Roads also began contemplating relocating the highway or tunneling it through the gap to restore the saddle back to its eighteenth-century appearance, and, by 1964, favored this option. However, public sentiment to keep vehicles out of parks definitely pushed the NPS to seek funding for the tunnel in the 1970s to minimize automobile intrusion on the historical scene by diverting cars underground. The park's preliminary master plan, published in 1972, included

relocating US 25E through a tunnel.[40] The ARC believed the tunnel project had merit, but warned the NPS that it would have to contribute funds to make the tunnel a reality.[41]

Historian David Louter uncovered a similar dilemma in balancing NPS road development with wilderness proposals in his case study of North Cascades National Park, established in 1968 in Washington. He asserted that the debate about roads in national parks only became more complex as the definition of wilderness evolved. The concept of wilderness changed from "scenic" early in the agency's history to "roadless" in the 1930s. By the 1960s, however, wilderness indicated "ecological reserves," meaning special natural areas set aside for scientific study. He noted that the change came with the "nation's waning love affair with the automobile" on the one hand and, on the other, increased ecological awareness among the general population.[42] At North Cascades, the NPS developed a park complex consisting of a national park with northern and southern units bifurcated by State Highway 20 with two national recreational areas (NRAs) serving as "wilderness thresholds." Much of the national park area was wilderness. As the NPS still sought ways to make parks accessible, NRAs were viewed as buffer zones between wilderness and non-park areas where "traditional" park development could still occur. State Highway 20, which opened in 1972, was located within one of these wilderness thresholds. However, environmentalists still criticized the

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40. National Park Service, "Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Master Plan Preliminary Draft," 2.

41. Joe Fleming to Cumberland Gap NHP Superintendent, letter, June 20, 1967, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 1.

42. David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Park* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 107.

NPS for selectively applying wilderness policies to certain areas of the park and not others in order to develop visitor amenities and roads.[43] NPS staff at Cumberland Gap NHP encountered a similar situation with road proposals. Wilderness advocates criticized the NPS for selectively choosing certain areas within the park to manage as wilderness while reserving other areas for future park development, particularly for the Allegheny Parkway's proposed route.

Some of the letters that poured into Cumberland Gap NHP headquarters reveal a larger concern about the role of wilderness in a global context, including Malthusian anxiety over population increase. Walter Ford, an attorney in Delaware, wrote that his family of six were "avid campers" and enjoyed the system of national parks and wilderness areas. With no apparent awareness of the irony, he then went on to link his idea of parks to his fears of global population growth: "With the population explosion besetting us on all sides, there is more need than ever for man to set aside and preserve increasing acreage for park and recreational purposes. Man simply has to have elbow room in order to maintain his sanity."[44] J. Ives Townsend of Richmond, Virginia, also wrote that the time was "now-or-never" to designate wilderness areas because of the "rapidly expanding population."[45] These letter-writers saw wilderness reserves within

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43. Ibid., 106-63.

44. Walter Ford to Hearing Officer, letter, June 6, 1967, Park Archive, Series 2 Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 1.

45. J. Ives Townsend to Hearing Officer, letter, July 5, 1967, Park Archive, Series 2 Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 3.

national parks like Cumberland Gap NHP to be valuable refuges from the growing population.

Local park boosters supported the entirety of the NPS Master Plan, which seemed to promise both jobs and economic growth, and appeared annoyed that outsiders could potentially trump the voices of those who would be most intimately affected by changes in or around the park. Park boosters in Virginia, where most of the proposed wilderness area was located, were particularly adamant that the NPS stick to its proposed plan to develop the eastern part of the park in the White Rocks and Sand Cave vicinity, since most of the park facilities were located near Middlesboro and the town of Cumberland Gap. Former congressman Thomas Fugate and the Thomas Walker Civitan Club of Ewing, Virginia, were the most vocal in their desire to bring visitors to the eastern portion of the park via a road from Ewing to the White Rocks area, then along the crest of the mountain to Hensley Settlement, and then connect with the Skyland Road at the Pinnacle. Designating this land as wilderness would destroy their plans for the area.[46]

Kentucky and Tennessee park boosters did not necessarily oppose wilderness designation altogether, but they opposed suggestions to expand the designated area. The *Middlesboro Daily News* published editorials supporting the NPS and lashing out at wilderness advocates:

> Now suddenly out of the quietness of the unknown a new voice has been raised—a so-called spokesman for the Wilderness Society. Until recent months this voice

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46. Preston, *Complete and Unedited Transcript of Wilderness Hearing on Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Ewing, Virginia, June 9, 1967,* 70-74; "Virginians Unite on Park Proposal," *Middlesboro Daily News,* June 10, 1967, newspaper clipping, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 10; "Lee Board Opposed to Wilderness," *Middlesboro Daily News,* May 9, 1967, p.1.

> has never been heard, attended a Cumberland Gap work session or hearings going back to 1923. Now this new voice has arrived to tell the people in Middlesboro, Bell County, Lee County and Claiborne County that they should get the park to modify their Wilderness plan from 8980 acres to 16,000 out of the 20,169.[47]

Another editorial in the *Middlesboro Daily News,* continued,

> We resent do-gooders suddenly appearing here to tell the National Park Service and local and area people we must dance to their tune. Where were these do-gooders since 1923? What hearing have they ever appeared at in Frankfort, Richmond, Nashville and Washington in behalf of the Cumberland Gap National Park? Where have they been since the three states—Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia—turned the state [acquired] lands over to the federal government in 1955? Where have they been since the formal Park dedication in 1959?
>
> What Cumberland Gap boosters and folks don't need at this point is a professional lobbyist coining *[sic]* local and area people with his self-centered motives.[48]

The editor clearly had a long view of the community's involvement in Cumberland Gap NHP's creation and development over the years and did not take kindly to outside opinion on what the editor clearly believed were local affairs.

Knowledge of area politics also helps to shed some light on the editor's passionate reaction against the environmentalists. Community action programs, funded with grants from the Office of Economic Opportunity, began to form in 1965 to improve public services and bring poor residents into the mainstream. While local power brokers maintained control over some community action agencies, activists organized other CAAs that educated the poor on their rights and organized them to improve local conditions. Since a number of community organizers were non-local, college-age

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47. "The Future of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," *Middlesboro Daily News,* May 26, 1967, p.9, newspaper clipping, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 10.

48. "Cumberland Gap Wilderness Hearing," *Middlesboro Daily News,* June 7, 1967, p.5, newspaper clipping, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 10.

students working through Volunteers In Service to America or Appalachian Volunteers, their activities heightened local sensitivities toward outsiders. Some of these organizations fought against local power structures, making many local elites suspicious of "outside agitators." The reaction to the Wilderness Society in the Middlesboro newspaper therefore reflects general attitudes of those who held the reins of power locally and were the most likely to profit from park development. While the authors of the editorials were not identified, Helen Kincaid Henry, daughter of Robert Kincaid, was the paper's president.[49] She was married to Maurice Henry, the paper's publisher, who wielded considerable influence in the area, including serving on the county's community action committee, which was formed to bring federal funds to the area. The Henrys were certainly aware of the editorials and may have written the editorials themselves. Additionally, at the Middlesboro hearing held on June 8, 1967, a statement from Maurice Henry was presented supporting the NPS's plan. Another influential community leader, Dr. D. H. Livesay, president of nearby LMU, also objected to any plan that would prevent development in the park because he believed that park development was essential to strengthening the local economy.[50] However, LMU still held water and cave rights on the 1,900-acre tract it sold to the park, which provided further motivation for LMU not to

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49. The two other editors listed for the publication were Rex L. Bailey and Bill Martin, although it seems likely that Helen or Maurice wrote these pieces.

50. "In Cumberland Gap National Park Expand Wilderness, Modern Daniel Boones Urge," *The Louisville Courier Journal,* June 10, 1967, newspaper clipping, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 10; "'Wilderness' Idea Sound, but Not for 'Gap,'" *The Lexington Herald,* June 11, 1967, newspaper clipping, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 10.

support an expanded wilderness area that might extinguish its rights.[51] Both the Henrys and LMU had vested interests in opposing additional wilderness designation.

Local boosters had other reasons to fear the establishment of additional wilderness areas at Cumberland Gap NHP. David Walls representing the Harlan Chapter of the AGSLP, an organization that believed challenging local power structures was essential to fighting strip mining in eastern Kentucky, also spoke at the hearing held in Middlesboro on June 8, 1967. Walls supported the NPS's proposal, and his chapter believed the establishment of a wilderness area at Cumberland Gap NHP would be "an excellent first step in preserving the lovely land of our county." He did not comment on the Wilderness Society's proposal, adding only that, "We don't have any fancy comments to make about the designs of the park, we just like our mountains and creeks the way they are, and want them to stay that way."[52] His statement indicates that grassroots environmental groups in Appalachia looked toward the park as being a leader in environmental reform and a potential ally in future endeavors.

By 1970, the NPS had created wilderness areas only at Craters of the Moon in Idaho and the Petrified Forest in Arizona.[53] The NPS was slow to designate wilderness areas within the system, and Cumberland Gap NHP was no exception. After the park's

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51. National Park Service, "Report on a Field Study Conducted in and Near Cumberland Gap During the Period March 31 through April 4, 1969"; National Park Service, "Wilderness Recommendation for Cumberland Gap National Historical Park—Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee," 16.

52. Preston, *Complete and Unedited Transcript of Wilderness Hearing on Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Middlesboro, Kentucky, June 8, 1967*, 112.

53. Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians,* 131.

wilderness hearings and additional studies, the NPS recommended to President Nixon in 1972 that 6,375 acres be designated as wilderness and an additional 3,810 be reserved as potential wilderness.[54] Congress never formally designated the proposed areas at Cumberland Gap NHP as wilderness, but the NPS managed them as a wilderness subzone nevertheless. In actual practice, the park maintains the area's primitiveness according to wilderness management policies by not building permanent or temporary roads or trails and by prohibiting the use of motorized equipment. In 1978, the NPS recommended increasing the wilderness area to 12,191 acres and decreasing the potential wilderness area to 1,900. Although Congress has never designated any part of Cumberland Gap NHP as a wilderness area, the NPS considers the park to be a model for good land ethics in eastern Kentucky.[55]

Historic Preservation Movement

Urban issues also wrought changes in how the nation managed its built heritage during the Great Society, prompting activists, city officials, and federal employees to seek federal protection for historic buildings and sites. Suburban expansion drew resources away from city centers in the 1950s and 1960s, causing many of them to decay and turn into slums. Developers then purchased large swaths of these areas for urban renewal, which often meant wide-scale demolition of buildings and removal of the local population. Grassroots organizer, writer, and urban planning critic Jane Jacobs lamented

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54. National Park Service, "Wilderness Recommendation for Cumberland Gap National Historical Park—Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee," 1.

55. National Park Service, "Cumberland Gap National Historical Park Master Plan GPX-79-1," May 1979, 2, Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 1, Box 3, Folder 6.

wholesale neighborhood destruction in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* published in 1961, in which she advocated for the preservation of old buildings by introducing mixed primary uses into historic neighborhoods.[56] She praised the heterogeneity and diversity of neighborhoods and argued that urban policies should keep city life dynamic and vibrant. At the same time, grassroots historic preservation organizations emerged to protect local landmarks and neighborhoods. Historic preservationists began advancing the need for more comprehensive federal legislation to protect the nation's historic fabric.[57]

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a national nonprofit organization established in 1949 to aid grassroots preservation, held a seminar at Colonial Williamsburg in 1963, which resulted in a call for a national inventory of historic sites and new mechanisms for their protection. The Presidential Task Force on the Preservation of Natural Beauty, convened by Johnson to preserve the country's beauty, adopted these recommendations and added the idea of federal loans and matching grants to state and local governments and tax incentives to help cover preservation expenses. President Johnson approved these recommendations in November 1964, and the task force included them in its 1965 report.[58] That same year, the United States Conference of

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56. Jane Jacobs, *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961; reprint, New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 3-28.

57. Barry Mackintosh, *The National Historic Preservation Act and the National Park Service* (Washington, DC: History Division, National Park Service, 1986), v, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002634945 (accessed December 4, 2014).

58. Ibid., v-vii; President's Task Force on the Preservation of Natural Beauty, *Report of the President's Task Force on the—Preservation of Natural Beauty*

Mayors undertook a study of the nation's historic resources. Albert Rains, a former chair of the House Subcommittee on Housing, led the special study and travelled to Europe to compare historic preservation practices at home and abroad. The Rains Committee released *With Heritage So Rich* in January 1966, which called for a unified approach to preserving historic places through a national register that listed all properties significant on the local, state, and/or national level according to specified criteria.[59]

The recommendations of the National Trust, the President's Task Force on the Preservation of Natural Beauty, and the Rains Committee all placed the administration of a national register of historic sites under the purview of the National Park Service through new federal legislation. In fact, NPS Regional Director Ronald Lee played an integral role in shaping this legislation. Lee, who had played a pivotal role in shaping the Historic Sites Act of 1935 as an NPS historian, served as secretary of the National Trust, and organized the 1963 seminar. Lee worked with Secretary of the Interior Udall and NPS Director Hartzog to ensure the passage of such legislation. Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, which gave the NPS the responsibility of managing the new National Register for Historic Places. The NHPA also created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation with the Director of the NPS as the Executive Director, ensuring the NPS's dominant role in the new preservation program.[60] Adding to the agency's

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(Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1965), 21, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002174161 (accessed February 11, 2015).

59. Albert Rains, *With Heritage So Rich* (New York: Random House, 1966), 208-11.

60. Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians,* 200-2; Mackintosh, *The National Historic Preservation Act and the National Park Service*, viii.

responsibility, President Nixon signed Executive Order 11593 in 1971 that mandated all federal agencies to identify, evaluate, and nominate all federally owned historic properties eligible for the National Register. This provision was incorporated as Section 110 of the NHPA in 1980, which further required federal agencies to undertake a special review process for any project or licensing that might impact historic sites listed on or eligible for the National Register on federal land. The NHPA not only marked an important turning point for historic preservation, but for the NPS as well. The law significantly expanded the agency's responsibilities for guiding the preservation of the nation's built environment, but also shifted the burden to the states through new State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO).[61] If the NPS was to be a leader for preservation efforts on the local and state levels, it needed to reevaluate its own management policies to make sure parks were setting a good example, which is perhaps why the agency created a separate management manual for historical parks.

Despite the creation of separate management manuals for different types of parks, the NPS recognized that natural resource issues would occur in historical areas and vice versa. The historical areas handbook, as revised in 1968, emphasized that historic sites with extensive land and water resources, like Cumberland Gap NHP, still had the obligation to preserve the ecosystems within these landscapes. The manual authors realized that this could be confusing and wrote, "This is not to imply, however, that all

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61. John Sprinkle, Jr., *Crafting Preservation Criteria: The National Register of Historic Places and American Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 196-99.

natural environments in historical areas should be treated precisely like natural areas."[62] Parks should instead take care to manage the landscape in a manner that helps visitors understand the historic scene. The General Authorities Act of 1970 made these separate handbooks mute, however, because legislators felt that all units of the national park system should be subjected to the same applicable laws.[63] Despite the reversal, the dividing lines between the management categories did not fade away, making it difficult for park planners and managers to reconcile natural and cultural resource management issues. [64] Oftentimes they simply segregated landscapes based upon primary resource values in an attempt to make landscapes more legible, further dividing nature and culture in national park landscapes.

Preserving Hensley Settlement

Curiously, in the same breath that they clamored for additional wilderness areas, some environmental advocates also supported the preservation of Hensley Settlement during the 1967 wilderness hearings.[65] Job Corps restoration work was well underway by

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62. National Park Service, "Compilation of the Administrative Policies for the Historical Areas of the National Park System," (August 16, 1968), 26, Harpers Ferry Center, Hartzog Collection.

63. Dilsaver, *America's National Park System,* 373.

64. Stephanie Toothman, "Cultural Resource Management in Natural Areas of the National Park System," *Public Historian* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 66.

65. Smith, Hart, and National Parks Association, "A Wilderness Plan for Cumberland Gap National Historical Park"; Roger Hansen to Hearing Officer, letter, July 10, 1967, and Ronald Klimko to Hearing Officer, letter, [July 1967], both Park Archive, Series 2, Subseries 7, Box 6, Folder 1.

the hearings. The park's legislation did not include preservation of the settlement, but by the 1960s it had become a symbol of pioneer life in Appalachia, even though it was a twentieth-century construction, prompting the NPS to call it "America's Last Pioneer Settlement" (see fig. 36). Letter-writer Ronald Klimko used the restoration of Hensley Settlement as a reason for a stronger wilderness proposal because the primitive qualities of the site would only be enhanced by wilderness designation. He wrote, "It certainly is the wilderness character of the Hensley Settlement's surrounding area which lends real meaning to the quiet [remoteness] of this early Appalachian settlement, and the importance of retaining this character [ensures] real value to the restoration."[66] In the case of Hensley Settlement, the wilderness ideal and preserving traces of human occupation were not mutually exclusive, because the settlement derived its significance from its primitive qualities.

Figure 45. Wooden Fences, Not Roads, Guide Visitors Around Hensley Settlement. Photographed by author in 2014.

66. Klimko to Hearing Officer.

Figure 46. Lige Gibbons Restored Farmstead. Photographed by author in 2014.

Hensley Settlement fit the bill of a “frontier village,” a preservation concept favored by New Deal landscape architects. The NPS had completed a similar historic preservation project at Cades Cove in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Cades Cove was similar to Hensley in that park planners found it remote and picturesque in its mountain setting. As many as 600 people lived there in 1928, but many residents left unwillingly when the Park Commission purchased their lands for the park. The commission razed many homes as families left, including homes with electricity and indoor plumbing. However, park planners decided to retain a number of log homes, a

mill, a few churches, and a school. Their decision to preserve log homes emphasized the primitiveness and isolation of the area and created a romanticized pioneer community that was very much at odds with the community's more prosperous history. Hensley was similar to Cades Cove in its remoteness and the number of log structures it featured. Unlike Cades Cove, though, Hensley was truly primitive, with no electricity or running water. Also, most of its residents had left the community by the time the NPS took ownership of the land; it had been vacated for nearly a decade. Another major difference is that the NPS included a tour road through Cades Cove in its 1941 master plan for the Great Smoky Mountains NP (constructed sometime before the early 1950s), which NPS planners did not do at Hensley.[67] The NPS built only a temporary work road for Hensley Settlement restoration activities, a project much different than a tour road designed for heavy use by visitors. The agency likely took into account wilderness advocates' criticism of roads in parks that gained wider public support in its decision to not build a tour road at Hensley.

NPS managers and historians were interested in taking the frontier village concept at Hensley Settlement a step further by turning it into a working farm. According to NPS historian Barry Mackintosh, living history became a popular preservation device and

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67. Durwood Dunn, *Cades Cove: The Life and Death of a Southern Appalachian Community, 1818-1937* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 251; Margaret Brown, *The Wild East: A Biography of the Great Smoky Mountains* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 203-5; Terence Young, "Virtue and Irony in a National Park," in *Theme Park Landscapes: Antecedents and Variations* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 157-81; Terence Young, "False, Cheap and Degraded: When History, Economy and Environment Collided at Cades Cove, Great Smoky Mountains National Park," *Journal of Historical Geography* 32, no. 1 (January 2006): 169-89.

interpretive strategy at historic sites during the mid-1960s. NPS historian Robert Utley recalled NPS Director Hartzog going off script during a House committee hearing in 1965, vowing not to have "another dead and embalmed historical area."[68] That same year, Marion Clawson, then Director of the Land Use and Management Program of Resources for the Future, Inc., published an article in *Agricultural History* calling for a system of twenty-five to fifty historical farms to portray different elements of U.S. agricultural history throughout different regions of the country. Clawson emphasized that each farm should be operating, "a living farm and living home."[69] Families should live and work there, as much as reasonably possible. Visitors could then come and view the operations but be kept out of the way of farm operations. Clawson also envisioned that this system should be a federal program supported by local interests. Udall and Hartzog supported the proposal, and the NPS history division began implementing living history at a small number of sites, including George Washington National Birthplace, Lincoln Boyhood National Monument, and Booker T. Washington Monument. Regions were encouraged to use interpreters in period dress. Living history programs spread across the NPS, and by 1974, 114 units were engaged in living history in some form.[70]

Park and Job Corps administrators at Cumberland Gap NHP identified the preservation of Hensley Settlement as a long-term work project for corpsmen in 1965. As

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68. Quoted in Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, DC: History Division, National Park Service, 1986), 56, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002651863 (accessed October 31, 2014).

69. Marion Clawson, "Living Historical Farms: A Proposal for Action," *Agricultural History* 39, no.2 (April 1965): 110-11.

70. Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service,* 57-61.

discussed in Chapter Five, the corpsmen did not restore all the buildings in the settlement, but instead focused on a select number of farmsteads. As the corpsmen worked, NPS staff began thinking about making Hensley into an operating historical farm, although on a much smaller scale than the original settlement. In 1967, park historian Lloyd Abelson and Job Corps engineer Glenn Justice developed a historical base map for the site. Abelson also wrote a special report on the concept of "living farms" as it related to Hensley Settlement.[71] The corpsmen restored Bert Hensley's cabin but also outfitted it with modern conveniences to be used by an interpreter living full-time there. Corpsmen cleared some of the fields, but the NPS left the land primarily as pasture instead of planting crops. They planted a number of apple trees and installed some paling fences. To move the living history program forward, the park hired a farmer, farm demonstrator, and a foreman in 1968 to prepare an interpretive farm demonstration program to begin in the spring of 1969.[72]

The NPS began operating a living history program at Hensley Settlement centered on the preserved farmsteads. With Cades Cove, this program put the NPS at the forefront of developing cultural heritage tourism through preservation and interpretation by catering to a romanticized notion of frontier life in Appalachia. Patterned after the successful Foxfire project, in which Appalachian youth worked on their writing skills as

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71. Joseph Kulesza, "Superintendent's Narrative Report," January 1967, NARA, Record Group 79, General Files, Administrative Files, Stack 570, Row 80, Compartment 2, Shelf 6, Box 86, Folder A2615.

72. Joseph Kulesza to National Park Service Southeast Region Director, memorandum, "Living Historical Interpretation Reports," September 20, 1968, Park Archive, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 9.

they learned about local culture through oral history interviews[73] NPS interpreters conducted extensive oral histories with Sherman Hensley and other family members in the late-1960s and early-1970s.[74] These interviews mostly focused on folk culture, covering topics such as food, medicine, tools, farming, construction methods, livestock, and education, so NPS interpreters could present mountain life as fully and authentically as possible.

Figure 47. Park Volunteer Greets Park Visitors for a Living History Presentation. Photographed by author in 2014.

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73. These oral histories were featured in a bestselling book series edited by Eliot Wiggington, the first of which appeared in 1972. See Eliot Wiggington, *Foxfire,* vol.1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Books, 1972). Thad Sitton provided insight on the series impact on the oral history field in "The Descendants of 'Foxfire,'" *Oral History Review* 6 (1978): 20-23.

74. Kulesza, "Living Historical Interpretation Reports."

Chief Interpreter Bernard Goodman noted in the park's 1971 interpretive prospectus that the settlement's architecture was not nationally significant but represented mountain culture well, thereby making it deserving of preservation and a place of interpretation for the public. The prospectus dictated that interpreters should utilize the major "tangible" elements of the settlement, including the structures, fields, cemetery, and farm demonstration activities. Additionally, interpreters needed to consider the "intangible" values to better the public's understanding:

> There is the need to develop a feeling of the Settlement's remoteness and isolation; to develop the idea of the self-sufficiency and self-reliance of the occupants of the Settlement; to show the character and nature of the mountain man who on the one hand was making moonshine and on the other carrying on a devout religious life; to characterize family life with its interrelationship of size of family, work distribution, and recreation.

The intangibles described in the prospectus fit well with contemporary wilderness values of primitiveness and isolation, particularly the emphasis on remoteness, self-sufficiency, nature, spirituality, hard work, and recreation. By emphasizing these values and managing the surrounding area as wilderness, the NPS conjured a past of Hensley Settlement that was compatible with both Daniel Boone's eighteenth-century wilderness and America's present need for wild areas. In fact, the interpretive prospectus recommended that interpreters explain to visitors "that ever since the first settlements in this country, man has always, for whatever reason, sought to disassociate himself from the mainstream of an increasing urbanized way of life." Such a statement rang true for many wilderness advocates.[75]

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75. Bernard Goodman, "Interpretive Prospectus for Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," (unpublished report for Cumberland Gap NHP and National Park Service, 1971), B-4, Park Archive, Series 8, Box 10, Folder 10.

The NPS's interest in folk culture and living history occurred at the same time as native Appalachians, scholars, and activists embraced regional culture, and several colleges established centers for Appalachian studies. Some in the region recognized the possibility of cultural heritage tourism as a way of building an alternative regional economy that would provide jobs for local residents while also preserving cultural traditions. The NPS was at the cutting edge of these efforts but was interested in providing an authoritative voice in interpreting mountain culture in contrast to other community-based grassroots projects. Early NPS interpretation of the site focused heavily on demonstration activities, such as corn shucking, basketry, or soap making, which could easily lead visitors to confuse Hensley Settlement as a frontier village rather than a twentieth-century community.[76] Furthermore, these demonstrations diverted attention away from larger historical problems, such as poverty, absentee landownership, and land use in the region, which had shaped Appalachian life in the region during the twentieth century. NPS interpreters wanted to include anecdotes from oral history interviews to lend "authentic" voices to the story but used only carefully selected and curated clips. "They should not all be earth-shaking or deep-thinking anymore than they all should be humorous or frivolous," Goodman directed.[77] Through these various interpretive devices, the NPS could control its message and present its version of an Appalachian mountain culture that emphasized isolation and subsistence living over poverty and disenfranchisement.

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76. Ibid.; Eller, *Uneven Ground,* 170-73.

77. Goodman, "Interpretive Prospectus for Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," B-7.

Conclusion

By 1964, postwar society's concern for overpopulation, the environment, historic places, and poverty brought a new discourse that changed the physical environment at Cumberland Gap NHP. The OEO established a JCCC at Cumberland Gap as federal dollars flowed into the region to undertake projects around the park, adding another layer to the park's cultural landscape. The park was in the process of devising a new master plan when the Wilderness Act of 1964 required the park to evaluate its natural areas and hold a series of wilderness hearings in 1967, eventually leading the park to decide to manage a significant portion of the park area as wilderness. These hearings unleashed passionate feelings from both wilderness advocates and local park boosters. Led by the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society, public sentiment shifted from support for additional parkways toward designating more wilderness areas. NPS administrators and planners at Cumberland Gap felt increasing pressure to remove roads from parks, first by relocating US 25E through a tunnel under the gap, which was completed in 1996. Local park boosters would go so far as to support the park's proposed plan to set aside a moderate wilderness area but reasserted their desire for further park development and recreational amenities, just as they had during the park's creation. Their reaction against "outsiders" reflects tensions throughout eastern Kentucky between the local power elite and environmental activists. At the same time, both wilderness advocates and local boosters could support restoring Hensley Settlement as a "frontier village," albeit for different reasons. This allowed the NPS to be an authoritative voice in developing cultural heritage tourism and projecting its idea of an Appalachian cultural identity that fit the park landscape.

Approved by Congress in 1973 by Public Law 93-87 and costing upwards of 265 million dollars, the Cumberland Gap Tunnel took several decades to become a reality and is one of the NPS's greatest engineering achievements. The tunnel opened in 1996 with much pageantry, including historical reenactors walking through the tunnel followed by Boy Scout Troup No. 544, representing the park's past and future visitors. Local boosters supported the tunnel project because it brought jobs and visitors to the area and improved road safety (residents had called the route over the gap "Massacre Mountain" because of all the automobile-related deaths there). Ann Estep, a longtime resident of Cumberland Gap, recalled being scared of going through the tunnel for the first time, but she soon grew accustomed to it. Harry Hoe, longtime resident of Middlesboro and active member of the Chamber of Commerce, believes the tunnel has been a positive influence for Middlesboro. The *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* credits the tunnel for solidifying Middlesboro's status as a regional and commercial hub because it made it easier for tractor trailers to travel through the gap.[78]

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78. Mark Woods, "An Appalachian Tale: Restoring Boone's Wilderness Road," *CRM Journal* 25, no. 5 (2002): 20; Martha Wiley, *Cumberland Gap National Historical Park,* Images of America Series (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014), 119; Martha Wiley, Interview with Ann Estep, March 3, 2009, transcribed by Jason Ireland, 16-18, Park Archive, Oral History Collection; Martha Wiley, Interview with Harry Hoe, February 2, 2009, transcribed by Kelly Ring-Riggs and Thomas Mackie, 17, Park Archive, Oral History Collection; *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, s.v. "Middlesborough."

Figure 48. Long Hunter Reenactors at Cumberland Gap Tunnel Dedication. Photographed by Raymond Welch in October 1996. Courtesy of Cumberland Gap NHP Archive.

Figure 49. Restored Section of Wilderness Road. This used to be the location of US 25E. Photographed by author in 2014.

Figure 50. Sign Alerting Visitors that they are Now Standing in the Saddle of Cumberland Gap. Photographed by author in 2014.

Five years after the tunnel opened, contractors removed the old asphalt of US 25E, another step in recreating Daniel Boone's wilderness at the saddle of Cumberland Gap by removing modern, man-made intrusions. This disappointed a few residents who were nervous about losing an alternative route to get to the other side of Cumberland Mountain should anything happen in the tunnel. Disregarding local fears, contractors proceeded to re-grade the former highway contours, plant vegetation, and restore Wilderness Road to an appearance that the NPS hoped would be recognizable to Daniel

Boone. It took nearly sixty years, but in 2003 the NPS finally achieved New Deal planners' vision to restore the gap back to its eighteenth-century appearance.[79] The space-age technology used to devise the tunnel, however, was beyond anything those planners could have possibly imagined. But it took more than technology to make the tunnel happen. The changing attitudes of the 1960s, as voiced by the public during the 1967 wilderness hearings, pushed the NPS towards the tunnel option. Today, the tunnel reminds us that modernization of the Appalachian region continues, with the NPS as a full participant in economic development, land use, and cultural heritage tourism. The park not only shapes how visitors perceive Appalachia, its land, and its people but also incorporates its own notions of American progress.

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79. Woods, "An Appalachian Tale," 20; Martha Wiley, Interview with Betty Hayes, transcription, May 12, 2009, 8, Park Archive, Oral History Collection; Martha Wiley, Interview with Janice Miracle, April 2009, 9-10, Park Archive, Oral History Collection.

CONCLUSION

Outsiders—color writers, industrialists, missionaries, bureaucrats, and activists—have all played a role in shaping mainstream conceptions about Appalachia since the late nineteenth century. They have described the land as largely inhospitable and the people living there as isolated from modern life. Some even went so far as to call the local people "our contemporary ancestors" to present a picture of a homogenous population with direct ties to white, European-American ancestors—a picture that both romanticized and ridiculed local culture. Many of these outsiders offered solutions to the region's problems with ideas ranging from developing the land's rich mineral and timber resources, to spreading Christian salvation among the population, to building roads and other modern infrastructure, to establishing parks and forests. The National Park Service (NPS) has also been an important outside agent in modernizing the region through its involvement at Cumberland Gap National Historical Park (NHP), by purchasing submarginal land, restoring the degraded environment, creating work programs, and romanticizing local culture. As discussions on the best ways to improve the region changed throughout the twentieth century, so too did Cumberland Gap NHP's landscape.

Although the park primarily commemorates European-American westward expansion in the late-eighteenth century, and presents the agency's conception of a pre-modern American landscape, the idea of creating a park at Cumberland Gap itself is modern in origin. The American Association, a British company largely responsible for industrializing the Tri-State area in the late-nineteenth century, tried and failed to

establish a private resort park at Cumberland Gap in the 1890s. Several decades later, in 1922, timber company owners and sawmill operators explored the idea of a national park or forest in the Cumberland Gap vicinity. It may seem like a historical irony that the same people responsible for cutting the virgin timber in the Appalachian region were also responsible for helping to preserve Cumberland Gap's natural and cultural resources, but their response was in line with the nation's growing progressive movement and a concern with conserving the nation's resources.

Middlesboro boosters, moved by a progressive impulse sweeping the country and an interest in developing the area's tourism potential, seized upon the idea from the 1922 Appalachian Logging Congress to create a national park at Cumberland Gap. Local park initiatives were part of a diverse, uncoordinated effort to modernize the area, such as the establishment of Lincoln Memorial University to educate poor mountain whites and the construction of Object Lesson Road through the saddle of the gap to improve local transportation. Middlesboro boosters worked with Congressman John Robsion to establish a national park at Cumberland Gap, but they faced strong competition from dozens of other Appalachian communities that were lobbying for the first eastern national park to be located in their own backyards. Although the legislative bills submitted throughout the 1920s were ultimately unsuccessful because boosters lacked the necessary political influence and a clear vision, their efforts laid the groundwork for future efforts by tapping into progressive trends in natural, historic, and human conservation. Their efforts also succeeded in establishing Bartlett-Rhodes Park, a municipal park for Middlesboro residents, and Pine Mountain State Park, Kentucky's first state park.

However, it would take an agency like the NPS and a crisis like the Great Depression to make a national park at Cumberland Gap a reality.

The Great Depression was an especially formative time for the NPS because New Deal programs provided funding to expand the agency to all corners of the country, develop new types of parks, and hire different kinds of professionals. Administrators were interested in expanding the system east of the Mississippi River to reach the majority of the country's population. They also became fully engaged in the enterprise of preserving historic sites and hired university trained historians to assist in developing park master plans. The NPS also became the leading agency in recreational planning and was charged with overseeing hundreds of state park projects in addition to the agency's new undertakings. The sudden influx of planning projects prompted NPS landscape architects to develop a design portfolio of park structures with regional variations to standardize park planning. All these efforts helped the relatively young agency (only seventeen years old at the beginning of the New Deal) mature and positioned the NPS to become an important agent for land and social reform at places like Cumberland Gap.

During the New Deal, land economists and sociologists involved in federal planning efforts found the Appalachian region to be a problem area due to the amount of submarginal agricultural land and the number of families that needed economic relief. A common belief that the federal government should take a more active role in providing for the nation's general welfare led them to a solution that made sense both environmentally and economically: transition submarginal land to forest or park use and resettle farm families on better land. The Resettlement Administration, created in 1935, put this idea into action at a number of places, including Kentucky Ridge near Pine

Mountain State Park in Bell County, Kentucky. Ultimately, Kentucky Ridge and other resettlement projects were unsuccessful, and by the end of the New Deal the federal government had moved away from resettlement projects. However, when Cumberland Gap NHP was established in 1940, there is evidence that NPS planners and field staff were wedded to the view that the land in the proposed park area was submarginal and that the inhabitants would be better off if they moved. NPS technicians studying the area in 1937 commented that the people and land were poor and used Resettlement Administration data and illustrations to demonstrate these points. Even though local park boosters unsuccessfully sought assistance from the Farm Security Administration, which had funds for submarginal land projects, the NPS and local boosters still thought the land was worth more as a park than as farmland, which influenced land acquisition activities in the 1940s and 1950s.

New Deal relief programs put unemployed people to work on park projects in the Cumberland Gap area. Some of these programs mixed social policy with economic programs. The CCC is a notable example. Administrators realized that having as many as two hundred young men at each camp was an important opportunity to open new doors to them for education and training in work skills, for building confidence and self-esteem, and for instilling conservation awareness. It is clear from early plans that NPS landscape architects intended to use CCC labor to build park facilities at Cumberland Gap. So from the park's creation, park planners realized the social reform potential of the site.

Using the information provided in the 1937 study, NPS planners created a vision for Cumberland Gap that guided the park's development for years to come and demonstrated what they thought the park's role in modernizing the region should be. NPS

historians found the gap's direct association with the history of westward expansion, through the Wilderness Road, to be worthy of preservation and interpretation. NPS landscape architects, in particular, were drawn to Cumberland Gap because of the landscape design possibilities for blending history and nature together at a site that demonstrated man conquering the wilderness. They envisioned recreating the wilderness Daniel Boone experienced as he travelled along the Wilderness Road by restoring the natural environment and removing traces of human occupation. They also imagined the best way for visitors to experience the Wilderness Road would be along a new modern parkway that followed the route of the historic road, allowing visitors to experience nature and history from the convenience of their vehicles. The park would play an important role in the area by restoring the natural landscape, preserving pioneer history, easing economic issues through job creation, providing new recreation opportunities for visitors, and building modern park roads and facilities. Although World War II ended most New Deal programs and halted park development plans, these ideas remained viable for years to come.

Local optimism was high in 1940, when Congress established the park, but making the park a physical reality was not fast or easy. It took local representatives from each of the three states fifteen years to acquire the necessary land for the park. In the meantime, World War II helped ease the economic situation when local men and women went to serve overseas and others moved to industrial or urban areas for war work. By 1955, outmigration and state-level land acquisition efforts had accomplished much of the land and social reform goals set by New Deal planners. Submarginal land had been

retired from agricultural use, and residents within the park boundaries had moved elsewhere.

The NPS formally accepted the deeds for Cumberland Gap NHP in 1955 and began shaping the land into a national park using another massive infusion of federal funds for Mission 66, a ten-year accelerated park development program. In its first step to recreate Boone's wilderness, NPS employees razed vacated buildings, thus erasing a layer of modern human occupation from the landscape so that visitors could imagine themselves as pioneers making their way through the wilderness. At the same time, the NPS wanted visitors to enjoy modern facilities, at the lowest cost. Thus, when designing new structures, NPS architects abandoned the agency's favored park rustic design for cheaper postwar construction materials and technology that required less maintenance. Mission 66 was the major impetus in orienting Cumberland Gap to its new national park status, but it also caused an adverse reaction among environmentally minded park supporters, which raised questions about future park development efforts.

The idea of using Cumberland Gap NHP as a tool for administering social policy was renewed in 1964 when President Johnson declared a War on Poverty, one of the twin pillars of his domestic Great Society program. As was the case in the first half of the twentieth century, government bureaucrats and reformers once again focused their efforts on Appalachia to solve the region's persistent poverty issues. State and local politicians encouraged the federal government to pass legislation aimed at developing the region through new job training programs and public works investment. Both of these goals came together in the further development of Cumberland Gap NHP.

The Job Corps program, authorized by the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act, was modeled after the New Deal CCC program, although adapted to meet goals of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. At Cumberland Gap JCCC, Job Corps staff used the entire park as a learning laboratory for moving corpsmen out of a culture of poverty. They focused on improving the whole person through education, job training, recreation, counseling, and socialization with corpsmen from all over the country. Job Corps activities also had a major impact on the park landscape. Corpsmen built and maintained trails, constructed park facilities, and restored Hensley Settlement. Although the Gap JCCC closed in 1969 along with nearly sixty other conservation centers, during its short duration corpsmen made improvements in the park that staff and visitors still enjoy today. The lessons learned at early centers like Cumberland Gap also provided vital feedback used to improve the entire Job Corps program, which still exists today.

While NPS administrators were working with politicians and the local power structure to use the park as an economic engine for the Tri-State area, a new constituency of environmental advocates criticized the park for destroying resources through development, raising new questions about Cumberland Gap NHP's role in the region. The 1964 Wilderness Act, a major victory for the growing modern environmental movement, required the park to evaluate all its roadless, natural areas for possible inclusion in a new federal wilderness system. Caught between wilderness advocates, concerned with preserving natural areas absent of human intrusions, and local boosters, who wanted to keep the park open to future development, the NPS began to shift its own priorities. The NPS settled on a modest wilderness area (approximately 6,000 acres), but the adverse reaction from wilderness advocates to road construction in and near the park

prompted the agency to postpone action on the Allegheny Parkway and also to seek a new solution for US 25E, the modern road that traversed the Cumberland Gap. The wilderness discussions ultimately pushed NPS administrators to tunnel vehicle traffic under the gap. The tunnel, completed in 1996, allowed the NPS to restore the saddle to approximate its eighteenth-century appearance, while also making the Tri-State area economically viable with a state-of-the-art highway tunnel.

The NPS used historic preservation as another strategy to modernize the region. New Deal historians had focused exclusively on Cumberland Gap's pioneer and Civil War history, but historians working during Mission 66 were interested in expanding the stories told at the park. Park staff were particularly intrigued by Hensley Settlement, a twentieth-century community that nonetheless possessed characteristics of a pioneer settlement—located on a mountain plateau without roads, running water, or electricity, and buildings that were built by hand using log construction. The NPS used Job Corps labor to reconstruct a number of the remaining farmsteads and included the settlement in the park's draft master plan, which was reviewed during the wilderness hearings. Surprisingly, both wilderness advocates and local boosters came together to support the Hensley Settlement project. Isolated, primitive settlements, once considered by outsiders as obstacles to the region's growth, were now perceived by environmentalists, local boosters, and the NPS as assets that warranted preservation and interpretation. Environmentalists believed that wilderness designation would only enhance these qualities, and local boosters hoped that the preserved settlement would attract visitors to the area. Hensley Settlement fit perfectly into a new concept of cultural heritage tourism as a form of economic development supported by a nascent Appalachian movement

comprised of natives, scholars, and activists interested in preserving the region's folk culture. Further bolstered by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which put the NPS at the helm of a national historic preservation program, the NPS stayed at the forefront of cultural heritage tourism in the region by restoring the settlement's buildings, commissioning folk studies (including an extensive oral history project), preserving cultural folkways, and undertaking living history demonstrations by operating a historical farm at the settlement. These activities, however, presented an idealized view of mountain culture that emphasized self-sufficiency, cooperation, and ingenuity, rather than disenfranchisement and poverty.

The Wilderness Act and National Historical Preservation Act were major victories in achieving additional protection for natural and cultural resources within national parks, but from these laws came an unintended consequence of creating segregated landscapes within national parks like Cumberland Gap NHP. These laws required new policies that the NPS applied broadly to parklands. In so doing, the NPS attempted to make landscapes "legible" by emphasizing one resource over another for more efficient management. The Wilderness Act rested on the ideal of preserving natural areas completely absent of human intervention. This posed, and continues to pose, significant problems at historical parks like Cumberland Gap NHP, where there is a long history of human activity. Conversely, at historic sites, administrators often had, and still have, a difficult time conveying how humans historically interacted with their surrounding environment because the focus is on preserving structures, rather than the whole landscape. At Cumberland Gap NHP, these policies have allowed the NPS to zone different areas of the park for specific uses based on primary resource values, wilderness or historical, which in

turn elevates certain stories over others and prevents the park from presenting a more layered landscape.

The completion of the Cumberland Gap Tunnel in 1996, followed by the restoration of the gap just a few years later, was a major cause of celebration for the NPS. It took the agency nearly thirty years to restore the saddle of the gap back to what it considered its eighteenth-century appearance, a major accomplishment in both engineering and historic preservation. Dr. Thomas Clark, Kentucky State Historian, observed at the 2002 Wilderness Road and Cumberland Gap dedication, that the "tunnel represents the modern age of America. . . [juxtaposed], in graphic contrast, [with] a primitive trail that was the path of American civilization itself."[1] Dr. Clark wisely recognized the park's importance in modernizing the region. However, his remark is indicative of the potential perils of interpreting Cumberland Gap's history and landscape using a linear narrative that emphasizes American history driven by notions of progress. Such a narrative obscures the region's fraught past as outsiders, including the NPS, have tried to modernize the region with varying degrees of success. But this common pitfall also offers new opportunities for public engagement. If the NPS so chooses, it can use the park's varied history to introduce a more nuanced interpretation of the park's history, which includes the agency's own role in modernizing the region, to present a landscape with multiple historical layers. Furthermore, by recognizing that history is not a finished narrative, NPS staff could better engage constituents in future initiatives through a greater understanding of the park's present role in land and social policy in the Tri-State.

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1. Thomas D. Clark, "Dedication of the Wilderness Road and Cumberland Gap, October 19, 2002, Cumberland Gap National Historical Park," video recording transcribed by Charles Reed Mitchell, *Knox Countian* 14, no.3 (Fall 2002): 7.

EPILOGUE

There are several ways of getting to Middlesboro, Kentucky, either traveling west from Virginia, north from Tennessee, or south from northern Kentucky. On my first visit to the park, I came from the east through Virginia along US 58, following the general route that pioneers traveled along the Wilderness Road in the late-eighteenth century. It was a scenic valley drive, and I could see the mountain ridge rise on my right. I passed the small town of Cumberland Gap and was soon engulfed in the Cumberland Gap Tunnel. I surfaced in Kentucky in the town of Middlesboro. The Cumberland Gap Tunnel may be the only part of the park that visitors see as they drive to other destinations. For those wishing to learn more about the park, all they have to do is make a left turn after the tunnel and stop at the park's visitor center.

The visitor venter first opened in 1959, when the park was formally dedicated. Its proximity to the city of Middlesboro is testament to the tenacity of Middlesboro boosters who campaigned for a national park. The original Mission 66 structure has been expanded over the years. Visitors may stop there to speak with a ranger and become oriented to the park resources, sign up for a guided tour, visit the park's museum, and visit the Southern Highland Craft Guild Store, where they may purchase products made by Appalachian artisans.[1]

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1. The Southern Highland Guild was established in 1929 by college-educated middle-class women associated with Appalachian settlement schools, who sought to cultivate commerce for regional crafts by mediating taste and quality. Guild leaders believed that selling Southern handicraft to urban consumers would both preserve rural traditions and improve the maker's life. The NPS became interested in opening guild

Leaving the visitor center, I drove to the Pinnacle, passing a restored section of the Wilderness Road. I drove up the road originally built by the Sky Land Company in 1929. As the road winds up the mountain, I see old road traces, evidence of local transportation networks used before the park. Visitors can stop at a series of Civil War forts along the way, marking the gap's strategic importance during the conflict. At Fort McCook, I parked my car in a lot that once held the Harvard Geology School camp, which first documented the area's rich resources and opened the area to industrialization. I climbed the steps built by the Job Corps and peered into the restored fort with a cannon carriage constructed by corpsmen. Back in my car, I finished my ascent to the overlook, improved as a Mission 66 project in accordance with recommendations by New Deal planners. I enjoyed a beautiful panorama of Powell Valley, Poverty Ridge, farms, small towns, and Lincoln Memorial University south of the park. Waysides help visitors appreciate the terrain and the passageway that Native Americans and pioneers used to travel. I wonder how Poverty Ridge got its name.

Having made my way back down the Pinnacle drive, I stopped at the Dr. Thomas Walker parking area, named after an early white explorer. There, I left my vehicle behind to walk to the saddle of the gap, just as wilderness advocates had intended. I started up a wide trail marked "Object Lesson Road." A wayside informs visitors that the trail once was a demonstration road built by the federal government in 1908 to improve transportation in this isolated region. Further up the path, I see a restored section of the

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stores in Appalachian national parks during the 1930s to thwart the proliferation of chintzy souvenir shops. Decades later, a store opened at Cumberland Gap NHP. For more on the Southern Highland Guild and national parks, see Jane Becker, *Selling Tradition: Appalachia and the Construction of an American Folk, 1930-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 73-93, 203-5.

Wilderness Road, which also leads to the saddle. The path is quiet—aside from the wind, woodland animals, and occasional hiker. Evidence of new growth reclaiming the former US 25 roadway appears in various patches along the way. At last I arrive at a quiet, narrow, largely unassuming spot with a sign that tells me I am standing in the Cumberland Gap. Despite having seen historical photographs, I have difficulty imagining the gas station once located at this very spot. The restoration of the gap is that dramatic.

A trail veers off up the hill. I take a few steps and see a marker, installed in 1915 by the Daughters of the American Revolution, commemorating Daniel Boone and the Wilderness Road. This trail leads to Tri-State Peak where the three states meet. At this very spot, the governors of the three states entered into a pact in 1943 to acquire the land for the national park. Descending back to the saddle, visitors can continue their journey down the Wilderness Road to the Virginia entrance, where there is a parking lot and visitor contact center. Just down the hill from the parking lot sits the O'Dell house, once home to the O'Dell family, who unwillingly sold their land for the park.

Tours for Gap Cave meet here in this parking lot. Park Rangers take small groups up the Wilderness Road to the mouth of the cave and lead them through the cave chambers by flashlight. The NPS has removed the electric lighting installed by Lincoln Memorial University when it owned the cave. Individuals on the Gap Cave tour for the first time likely would have no idea that once a highway ran along the same route as the path leading to the cave. However, locals remember "Massacre Mountain" quite clearly because the old road was quite dangerous and memories of driving it are still strong. Local historian Natalie Sweet told me she used to "count crosses" on that road as a little girl. Locals might also remember when the cave was operated by LMU, with a store

across the highway where people could purchase tour tickets. They had to dodge traffic to reach the cave entrance.

Returning back to the visitor center, visitors can hop into an NPS van and ride up to Hensley Settlement for a guided tour. Other than the hardy government-owned vans, there is no vehicle access to mountain plateau. Two horsemen were on the trail the day I rode up the bumpy, steep mountain road, reminding our group of the Hensleys' primary mode of transportation. Once on the mountain plateau, we stepped out into an open clearing. Following the fence line, we made our way on foot around several homesteads originally preserved by the Job Corps. Hensley reminds me a lot of Cades Cove, but without the tour road, vehicles, and constant stream of visitors. The NPS no longer operates the historic settlement as a working farm. We stopped at the cemetery to see where Sherman Hensley and his relatives sleep in peace. We entered the reconstructed one-room schoolhouse that was the center of community life and doubled as a church on the weekends. On our last stop of the tour, we visited with a volunteer who was dressed in period clothing, cooking over an open fire. She talked with us about mountain life and gave a brief tour of "her" restored cabin with period furnishings. Once our group left, she could go back to the modernized Bert Hensley cabin where she was staying with her daughter during their time as volunteers living at the settlement full-time.

If a visitor wanted to, she could leave the Hensley Settlement on foot and head in either direction along the Ridge Trail. This trail takes visitors through the park's wilderness areas and to far-flung sites like White Rocks or Sand Cave. These places are still inaccessible to vehicles thanks to the persistence of wilderness advocates during the 1960s. However, if a visitor ventured down to the White Rocks trailhead, in Ewing,

Virginia, he would come to the Thomas Walker Civic Park, built by local boosters who endorsed the NPS's original proposal and opposed expanding the proposed wilderness area. They hoped the NPS would build a road from Ewing to White Rocks and establish a campground in the area. However, the civic park is evidence that their campaign was only marginally successful.[2]

Returning to the visitor center from Hensley Settlement by van, I noticed the Hutch School, built by the WPA outside of park boundaries, a tangible reminder of the New Deal's impact on the local area. Entering park boundaries again, we passed Sugar Run Picnic Area, another Job Corps project. We drove along Dark Ridge, where there is a small pull off with a wayside about the Beasons and other families living in the area before the park. The thick vegetation obscured any remnants of the farmstead from the roadway. Going around a hilly curve, I noticed foundations on a hillside and later learned that this was the site of the Cumberland Mountain Hotel and Cottages, which predated the park. Archaeological evidence of former homesteads and industries are scattered throughout the park, but their stories are largely unknown to visitors and park staff.

Park headquarters is located in the former Bartlett-Rhodes Park area and Job Corps Center site. I reached the park office after leaving the visitor center and driving

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2. According to the park's General Management Plan, the fifteen-acre park has been recently renovated and is "donated/leased" to the park under a fifty-year agreement. A plaque on the park pavilion says it was built by the Major George Gibson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1968. The civic park area was donated to the government for public use by the Thomas Walker Civic Club, which advocated for more park development in the Ewing vicinity. These efforts were also endorsed by the Lee County Board of Supervisors and former congressman Tom Fugate. National Park Service, *Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement: Cumberland Gap National Historical Park* (Middlesboro, KY: Cumberland Gap NHP and National Park Service, 2010), 54.

down old Brewery Road, past the site of the hotly contested Schneider Packing Plant, now gone. The Bartlett-Rhodes area is an interesting part of the park landscape because it has layers of human conservation efforts from the Progressive Era up through Johnson's Great Society. Not much of the original Progressive Era municipal park remains, but observers can still see remnants of the dam that created the pool during the 1920s. None of the WPA structures are extant, but the route of the WPA road still runs through the area to Fern Lake. Reminders of the Job Corps Center remain today in the area's circulation pattern, gymnasium, maintenance structures, and a portion of the original play field.

The former WPA road leads to the edge of Fern Lake, originally established in the 1890s as Middlesboro's water supply and is now protected by the park. The NPS and City of Middlesboro successfully fought a mining permit to strip mine an area adjacent to the park in 1998 that threatened both the water supply and the park's view shed. Three years later, Congress passed the Fern Lake Conservation and Recreation Act that expanded the park boundary to include the 4,500-acre watershed. The joint effort to protect Fern Lake built upon the groundwork laid by the Yellow Creek Concerned Citizens group in the 1970s and 1980s who raised awareness about the health of Yellow Creek and succeeded in forcing the entities responsible for polluting the creek (the City of Middlesboro and a local tannery) to restore the waterway. The Fern Lake Conservation and Recreation Act ensures that the watershed will be protected for generations to come.

In order to take in the full impact of the park in the region, it is necessary to leave Cumberland Gap NHP and explore the nearby communities. A short ride into downtown Middlesboro will take visitors by the former American Association office, now a

historical museum, and the Chamber of Commerce still located in the "Coal House" where Howard Douglass carried out land acquisition for Kentucky and Virginia. A drive north on US 25E towards Pineville will take visitors to both Kentucky Ridge State Forest and Pine Mountain State Park. There, visitors can see the work of the CCC and contemplate the size of Cumberland Gap NHP had the government decided to include these areas.

Returning in the opposite direction and going back through Cumberland Gap Tunnel, visitors may explore the small towns of Cumberland Gap and Harrogate. Cumberland Gap is not as vibrant as it used to be because of the rerouting of the highway. British street names still transverse the town, a reminder of Alexander Arthur's influence in the 1890s. Visitors may walk LMU's campus and see the last remnants of the Four Seasons Hotel and Sanitarium. LMU itself played an integral role in both educating local mountain youth and helping create the park. Heading east, travellers can visit the small Virginia towns of Rose Hill, Ewing, and Jonesville, and observe the agricultural traditions of Lee County. Heading south into Claiborne County, Tennessee, towards Knoxville, travellers will soon stumble upon TVA projects, further reminders of the grand New Deal schemes for land and social reform.

National parks may be taken at their face value, but if one digs deeper to expose multiple layers of the landscape, one might develop new ideas about American history and culture. Our feelings towards national parks and the values we hold in them may also divulge a lot about ourselves and how we internalize those meanings. The next time you visit a national park, consider putting yourself squarely in the landscape and reflect on what that landscape means to you. Think about the images that are being presented and

the stories that may remain hidden from view. Ask yourself why they are being obscured and how might we tell those stories to the next generation of visitors.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INITIAL GAP JCCC STAFF (1965)

Name	Position	Previous Employer
James F. Batman	Camp Director	Badlands NM
Charles H. Orr	Dep. Director of Education	Scott Co. Superintendent
T.B. Taylor	Office Services Supervisor	Kentucky Military Dept.
Ethel H. Clore	Occupational Health Nurse	Bell Co. Health Dept.
Bill G. Ingram	Counselor	Roane Co. Board of Ed
Vernon L. O'Dell	Training Instructor	Jefferson Co. Board of Ed
Emory K. Worley	Training Instructor	Alvin Junior College
Norman Hunley	Head Cook	Restaurant owner in Harrogate
Georgia Jefferson	Clerk-Typist	Harrogate, TN
Delmar P. Robinson	Administrative Assistant	NPS Western Regional Office
Edwin F. Benton	Deputy Director Work Program	Cape Hatteras National Seashore
Sam P. Lacy	Enrollee Work Supervisor	Vicksburg NMP
Glen F. Justice	Civil Engineer	Middlesboro, KY
Robert Wakefield	Enrollee Work Supervisor	Cumberland Gap NHP
Eugene Miracle	Enrollee Work Supervisor	Middlesboro Service Station
James R. Pace	Enrollee Work Supervisor	Farmer from Rose Hill, VA
James V. Murray	Resident Worker	Abraham Lincoln Birthplace
Clyde J. McKiney	Resident Worker	Cumberland Gap NHP
James T. Hill	Cook	Butcher in Barboursville, KY
Clyde Rains	Resident Worker	Cumberland Gap NHP
Willie Gilbert	Cook	Appalachian Regional Hospital
Curtis Chandler	Resident Worker	Middlesboro Auto Body Shop
Carl Webb	Resident Worker	Middlesboro Florist
Roy Monhollen	Resident Worker	Louisville and Jefferson Co. Children's Home
Andrew L. Davis	Training Instructor	Claiborne Co. Board of Ed
Wilma Johnson	Clerk-Typist	Harrogate, TN

Source: "Job Corps Photo Album," n.d., Park Archive, Series 7, Subseries 1, Box 2, Folder 1.

APPENDIX B: FIRST ENROLLEES AT GAP JCCC (JUNE 1965)

Walter Day, Oklahoma City, OK	Ernest Alvarex, Houston, TX
Ronnie Blankenship, Harrisville, WV	John Boone, Houston, TX
Jones Brown, Oklahoma City, OK	David Christian, Caretta, WV
Billy Collins, Avondale, WV	Ronny Conley, Lawton, OK
Paul Cooper, Jonesboro, AR	Leonard Parsons, Bokshe, OK
Travis Cooper, Alderson, WV	Edgar Preston, Oklahoma City, OK
Jerry Crittenden, Broken Arrow, OK	Quinteon Queton, Anadarko, OK
Raymundo Flores, El Paso, TX	Roger L. Rowe, Genoa, WV
Dennis Folsom, Tulas, OK	Harlan Smith, Winona, WV
Amos L. Glasper, Little Rock, AS	James Smith, Duncansville, AL
Thomas Governor, Rhodell, WV	John Smith, Tulsa, OK
Shelly Gray, Montgomery, AL	William Smith, Fayettesville, WV
James Stewart, Burton, WV	Laurence Taylor, Reedsville, WV
Robert Scott, Elm Grove, WV	Alonzo Thomas, Boyles, MS
Ronald Taylor, Atlanta, GA	Donald Van Scyoc, Proctor, WV
Olen Vandevender, Job, WV	Roy Walker, Atlanta, GA
Thomas Walker, Woodward, OK	Freddie Howard, Van Buren, AR
Roy Icon, Frairs Point, MS	Larry Jordon, Tulsa, OK
Clifton Keys, Vicksburg, MS	James Love, Dallas, TX
Tommy McKinney, Moore, OK	Wilson McClain, Bennettsville, SC
Tommy Murray, AR	

Source: "Job Corps Photo Album," n.d., Park Archive, Series 7, Subseries 1, Box 2, Folder 1.