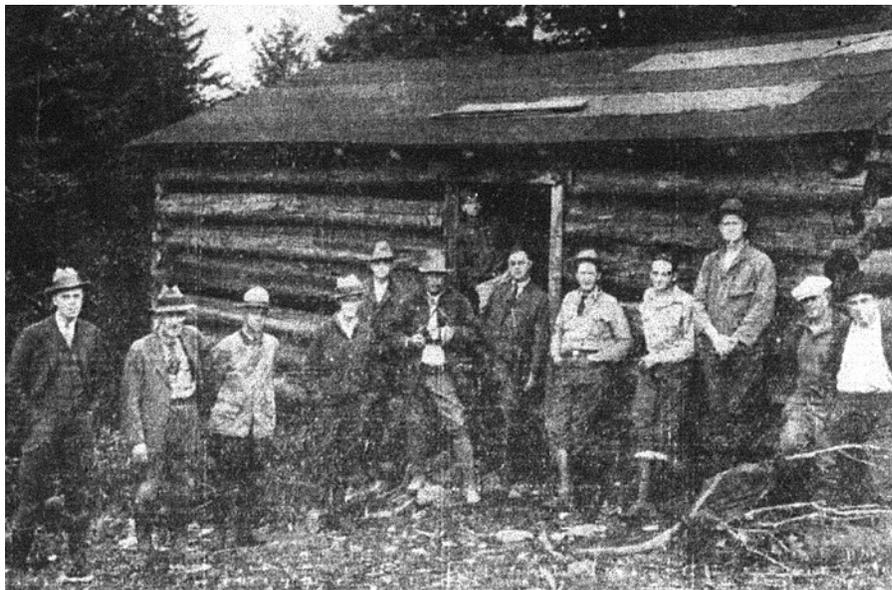


# GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS Colloquy

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"Park Heads Visit Smokies And Biltmore House." Harlan Kelsey, Roy Lyman Sexton, Arno Cammerer, and Horace Albright are pictured 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th from the left, inspecting a cabin on Andrews Bald. *Asheville Citizen*, October 13, 1930.

## "God Alone Can Make a National Park"

THE 1930 VISIT OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OFFICIALS TO THE SMOKIES

In his non-native broken English, the Japanese photographer George Masa wrote to his friend Margaret Gooch in October 1930 that during a recent excursion into the Great Smoky Mountains "we were on Andrews Bald we saw wonderful colors painted by nature's brush, there is no words to express it." The trip to which Masa refers was a tour taken by officials of the National Park Service to investigate the proposed Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The participants in the week-long series of events included Horace Albright, director of the National Park Service, Arno Cammerer, Assistant Director of the National Park Service, Harlan Kelsey, member of the Southern Appalachian National Park Commission, and Dr. Roy Lyman Sexton, a Washington, D.C. physician and national park enthusiast, as well as other local and state dignitaries.

The kickoff event on Monday, October 6, was a banquet at the Battery Park Hotel, the largest dinner ever held in Asheville. According to the *Asheville Citizen*, the evening's festivities included speeches by prominent individuals, particularly Masa's close friend, Horace Kephart. A preliminary notice of the event announced that "Horace Kephart, noted author of Western North



"Apples at Cherokee Orchard," October 29, 1958. From the Derris Slide Collection. See page 3.

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**GSM COLLOQUY**

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Carolina stories and books, will be an honored guest of the occasion. Mr. Kephart will speak briefly on his experiences and impressions in and on the Great Smoky Mountains. His love for these mountains is well known and his writings have been extensively read [sic], having gone far in creating nationwide interest in the park.”

The next morning the official party left from Asheville on their tour of the Smokies. They travelled to Waynesville and then on to Cataloochee where they inspected several proposed tourist campsites. The party later gathered at the terminal of the Suncrest Lumber Company railway in Maggie for lunch and then embarked on a 19-mile “scenic” rail tour which “afforded the park officials an excellent opportunity to view the destruction of the timberland by interests with no apparent program for reforestation.” The trip was nearly disrupted by a rail accident when their passenger car passed through an open switch causing the wheels to bump along the cross ties and forcing several occupants to jump for safety. At the end of the line, the party was rewarded by a specular view of the Smokies where, in the words of Masa, “we see Clingmans Dome to Mt. Guyot, entirely sweep of main divide.” At the end of the day, Albright declared, “I am profoundly impressed by the attractions which the park will offer to thousands of tourists and will say that the scenery far exceeds the pictures of the park lands that associates have given me.”

Wednesday featured a visit to the Cherokee Indian Fair. This trip was also nearly marred by accident when the car carrying Cammerer and two Bryson City men collided with another car on the mountain roads, sending the second car rolling down the bank to the edge of the Tuckaseegee River. None of the occupants were injured but both cars were wrecked. Cammerer transferred to another car and the entourage proceeded to the Fair. Finally arriving safely, the dignitaries enjoyed the exhibits and the crafts, even trying their skill at using blow guns. The highlight was an “Indian Ball game” between Paint Town and Bird Town. Both Albright and Cammerer expressed the opinion that “the reservation would be a great drawing card and one of the main places to be visited by the thousands of people who are expected to flock to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.”

Speeches praising the new national park were the feature of a picnic dinner in Bryson City the following day. The group had ridden horses up Deep Creek earlier in the

day. Impressed with the magnificent timber on Deep Creek, Albright declared that “it was like entering a cathedral.” Kelsey offered that the new national park will be a boon to Western North Carolina. He said, “God alone can make a national park. Man cannot.” Dr. Sexton added that from Bryson City he could see “the most inspiring valley and remarkable range of mountains in the distance. It was wonderful.” Kephart closed out the evening by giving a history of both De Soto’s 16th century travels through the Smokies and the Cherokee settlements on Governor’s Island near Bryson City.

Over the next two days, the group rode horses to Andrews Bald and then visited Smokemont and Indian Gap. Before heading back to Washington, both Sexton and Kelsey offered information about the upcoming park and some words of advice to the *Asheville Citizen* readership. “One of the most serious menaces North Carolinians will

face in the creation of the Smoky Park,” said Dr. Sexton, “is the establishing of gaudy colored filling stations and ‘hot dog’ stands along the approaches to the park area.” Several states where national parks are located had enacted legislation to avoid such eye-sores and he advised North Carolina to do the same.

Kelsey promised that all National Park concessions would be carefully vetted to insure that buildings are constructed according to guidelines and

that prices are fair. Intoxicants and firearms will be strictly prohibited and violators will be arrested. Rental cabins will be carefully monitored to ensure that no thefts occur. He anticipates that the creation of the national park will have the effect of making game animals more available outside the park area because the park will be a breeding ground for animals. Moreover, the animals will become more timid and used to people. Kelsey added that “I have seen as many as 30 bears gather around a hotel in a Western National park eating the morsels of food tendered them by the tourists.”

With those concluding remarks, the officials departed, leaving the local people to contemplate the opportunities and challenges a national park on their doorstep will bring.

### Do you know...

...where there are photos and films documenting the visit of the National Park officials in 1930? Both George Masa and Dr. Roy Lyman Sexton took photographs according to the published images and the newspaper accounts. Dr. Sexton filmed events also. If you know where any of the originals are located, please send us a message at [smokies@utk.edu](mailto:smokies@utk.edu). Thanks!

### Note on Sources:

Letter from George Masa to Margaret Gooch, October 14, 1930, Jim Casada Collection of Horace Kephart and George Masa, MS.3452. University of Tennessee Libraries, Special Collections, Knoxville.

*Asheville Citizen*, October 4-12, 1930.

## Travels in the Smokies:

ANNOUNCING THE DERRIS SLIDE COLLECTION

William Derris, avid amateur photographer and proprietor of the Derris Motel in Townsend, crisscrossed the Great Smoky Mountains by automobile, photographing the iconic locales. His images document seasonal landscapes, flora, wildlife, and the mountain people in Cades Cove, Wears Valley, Clingmans Dome, Little Greenbrier, Fontana, Chimney Tops, and other places in the Smokies from the mid-1940s to the late 1960s. Using these images, Derris created slide shows for the entertainment of his motel's numerous guests.



"Chimney Tops in Autumn" October 29, 1958.

Several years ago the UT Libraries received as a gift over 4000 Derris slides and several reels of 8mm film. Amber Halter, our practicum student, digitized and created records for 340 images from the collection that document some of the most significant places and vistas in the Smokies.

Derris photographed a series of images of the Walker Sisters, the family that remained living in Little Greenbrier well after the formation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Those Walker images will be included in the online collection.



"Margaret and Louisa Walker at their Log Cabin Home in the Smokies," June 6, 1956.

The Derris Slide Collection ([digital.lib.utk.edu/derris](http://digital.lib.utk.edu/derris)) is the first collection to be brought to the Internet under a new digital library platform. The digital staff have been working to customize the new format. Once the customization is complete, older digital collections will be migrated to the new platform. After the migration is finished, later in 2015, the Smokies digital collections will have a whole new look and have the possibility for cross-searching. You can find all the digital collections at this address: [digital.lib.utk.edu](http://digital.lib.utk.edu).

"Little River" October 22, 1958



### New on the Smokies Bookshelf

Jenny Bennett. *The Twelve Streams of LeConte*. Anakeesta Books, 2014.

Jenny Bennett, author of the Smoky Mountain mystery, *Murder at the Jumpoff*, has a new romance novel that unfolds on the rugged slopes of Mount Le Conte, the majestic crown jewel of the Great Smoky Mountains. In *The Twelve Streams of LeConte*, Anne Woodrow is jilted on her honeymoon when her new husband falls in love with another woman. Anne begins the

process of emotional recovery through a series of strenuous climbs on Mount Le Conte, following the streams that drain its slopes. She is accompanied by three companions whose antics and comical repartee encourage the laughter that aids in her healing process. A relationship develops between Anne and one of her hiking companions but does not turn out the way she expects.

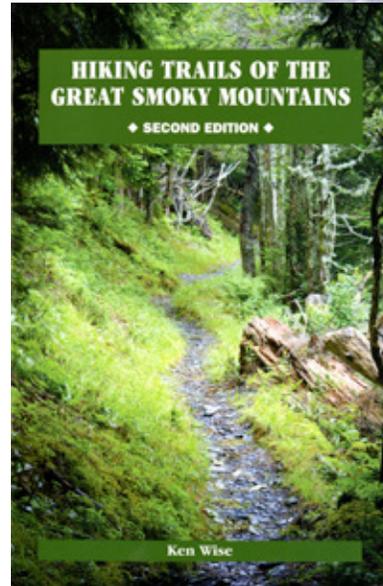
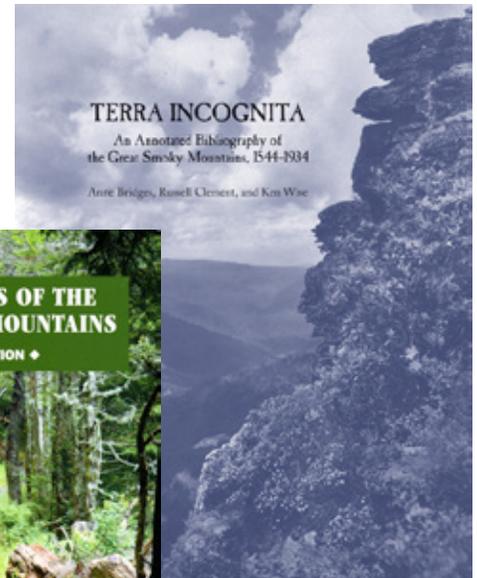
Bennett interweaves her story in an unconventional way with her own reading of John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. Bennett's story, like that of Buchan's, melds adventure tales with the mystery and remoteness of high mountains, and it speaks the language of people who engage the landscape rather than admire it from a distance. *The Twelve Streams of LeConte* is a captivating romance that will appeal to readers who appreciate an intimate view of the rugged wilderness of the Great Smoky Mountains.

## Want to Know More about the Smokies? Two New Books Will Guide You

*Terra Incognita: An Annotated Bibliography of the Great Smoky Mountains, 1544-1934* is the definitive source for information on writings about the Smokies in the pre-Park era. It traces the published material on the Smokies from the earliest map documenting the De Soto expedition in the 16th century to the essays promoting the national park. Sections include mountain life, the Cherokee, early exploration and travel, literature and much more. Each chapter includes an introductory essay. The bibliography represents many years of work by the editors Anne Bridges, Russell Clement, and Ken Wise.

The second edition of *Hiking Trails of the Great Smoky Mountains* is a truly comprehensive guide for both the experienced and novice hiker by seasoned outdoorsman Ken Wise. Each of the 125 trails in the Smokies is described in rich detail with driving and hiking distances, course information, and any pertinent historical anecdotes. This book will be the standard source for exploring the Smokies for years to come.

Wise and Bridges are co-directors of the Great Smoky Mountains Regional Project.



Both volumes are available from University of Tennessee Press:  
[utpress.org](http://utpress.org)



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