

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS Colloquy

Fall 2015
Volume 16 • Number 2



Robinson's Drugstore, 1925. Dayton, Tennessee. W. C. Robinson Collection of Scopes Trial Photographs. MS. 1091. University of Tennessee Special Collections.

“A Striking Opportunity”: The Scopes Monkey Trial and the Smokies

On the morning of July 9, 1925, while the principal players gathered in Dayton, Tennessee for what would become known as the Scopes Monkey Trial, the executive committee of the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association convened at the City National Bank in Knoxville to discuss a proposal to invite the attorneys, news correspondents, and dignitaries attending the trial for a visit to the Great Smoky Mountains. A reporter for the *Nashville Banner* had earlier advised that the anticipated publicity of the trial afforded Tennessee a “striking opportunity” to bring the story of its remarkable industrial advance and wonderful natural resources to the attention of the outer world. The reporter estimated that “correspondents to the number of one hundred and fifty have gathered in this little mountain city. They are men and women trained to observe closely and think clearly; and they write with authority. Their aggregate audience runs into scores of millions.” This would be the largest gathering of news correspondents ever in a southern town for any event except a presidential political convention.



Postcards from the Great Smoky Mountains, a new digital collection (see back page)

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS COLLOQUY is a newsletter published by the University of Tennessee Libraries. © 2015

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ABOVE, LEFT: John Thomas Scopes (left) with his father, 1925. W. C. Robinson Collection of Scopes Trial Photographs. MS. 1091. University of Tennessee Special Collections. RIGHT: Postcard of Appalachian Club, Elkmont. From forthcoming Postcards from the Great Smoky Mountains, phase two. Ridley Willis Postcard Collection. University of Tennessee Special Collections.



The Club House, Appalachian Club, Elkmont, Tenn.

The trial began on Friday, July 10. By Monday morning, the Conservation Association had convened again, passing a resolution asking that the Mayor of Knoxville, Ben Morton, “issue a formal invitation to the newspaper correspondents, magazine writers, prominent attorneys, and others, who are now conducting the evolution trial at Dayton, Tennessee to visit the Great Smoky Mountains.” The agenda behind the invitation was that of enjoining influential national opinion makers to help generate public and political support for the proposed park in the Smokies.

John R. Neal, a Knoxville attorney representing the defendant, John Thomas Scopes, believed that visit plans were contingent on the consent of the presiding judge. “The big thing is to get Judge Raulston to go along. If he will declare a recess next Saturday, there will be no trouble in getting as many men to go with us as there are automobiles to carry them.” Colonel David Chapman, vice chairman of the Conservation Association and the driving force behind the Smoky visit idea, offered that he had “talked to Judge

John T. Raulston and W. J. Bryan Jr. and thru them have extended an invitation to attorneys and newspaper men there; both seemed favorable to the suggestion.” However, Chapman further admitted that “if a recess is impossible we will try to arrange a party at the close of the trial.” On Friday, July 17, a group headed by Chapman drove to Dayton to follow up with personal invitations for a visit to Knoxville and the proposed park area over the weekend. Upon his arrival in Dayton, Chapman went to Robinson’s Drug Store and requested permission to put up a large sign and several photographs promoting the natural beauty of the Smokies.

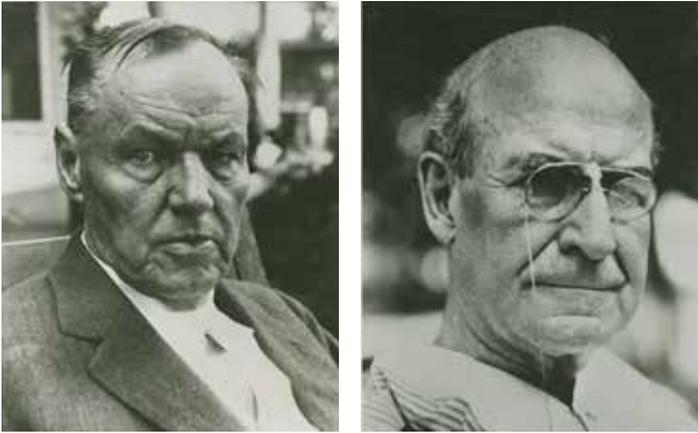
Early Saturday morning twenty newspapermen and defendant Scopes boarded a train for Knoxville, arriving in time for a luncheon at the Hotel Farragut before continuing on to Elkmont in the Smokies. Clarence Darrow and Dudley Field Malone, the leading counsel for the defense, did not join the traveling party, citing the necessity of assembling evidence preparatory for the reconvening of the trial on Monday. However, both expressed a desire to visit after the conclusion of the trial. William Jennings Bryan, attorney for the prosecution, declined to leave Dayton until the trial was over, but likewise planned to visit afterward. Neal, who was instrumental in establishing contact between the Conservation Association and the attorneys, broke a blood vessel in his eye and could not travel.

After lunch, the Dayton party proceeded by automobile to Gatlinburg and then to the Appalachian Club in Elkmont for the night. The next morning at 8:00 a special train ferried the group to Townsend where they transferred to automobiles for a trip into Cades Cove. Horses were waiting in Cades Cove for those wanting to climb to Gregory Bald. That evening, the party returned to Dayton by train.

The trial ended on July 21. For two weeks the little town of Dayton had harbored a dozen international celebrities in a hospitable informality possible in a small southern town. Two

BELOW, LEFT: James Neal, 1925. W. C. Robinson Collection of Scopes Trial Photographs. MS. 1091. University of Tennessee Special Collections. RIGHT: David Chapman. Great Smoky Mountains National Park Archives.





ABOVE, LEFT: Clarence Darrow, 1925. W. C. Robinson Collection of Scopes Trial Photographs. MS. 1091. University of Tennessee Special Collections.
 RIGHT: William Jennings Bryan, 1925. W. C. Robinson Collection of Scopes Trial Photographs. MS. 1091. University of Tennessee Special Collections.

days later, Darrow traveled to Knoxville and on Thursday evening delivered a lecture on Tolstoy at the Lyric Theater. On the morning of July 24, accompanied by several newspaper reporters from Canada and the northern states, Darrow left for Elkmont as guest of the Conservation Association for a few days' rest and to view the scenery of the proposed national park. Bryan was making plans to arrive later in Knoxville, deliver formal addresses to local groups, then depart for Elkmont on the following Tuesday or Wednesday as guest of the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce.

On Sunday, July 26, Darrow, in the company of Neal, Scopes, Chapman, and a group of reporters, rode mules and

horses two hours along the spine of the main Smoky divide to Gregory Bald. After taking in the views from Gregory, Darrow remarked, "I have seen the Alps and other famous European mountains. I have seen all the great mountains of America. But never before have I gazed upon such an exquisite view as these Smoky ranges. By all means the Smokies should be converted into a national park. There is a certain charm about these mountains hard to express. Their rugged simplicity casts a spell over one. In my short stay I learned to love them. Anything that can be done to preserve for all time their beauty and charm would be a meritorious act. I hope I may have the pleasure to again see them." Darrow's wife, Ruby, in a letter to Chapman later expressed her sentiments on the beauty of the Smoky Mountains and wishing her host "to know that we will remember that holiday as one of the happiest mountain vacations to be found."

That evening on the return trip through Townsend, Darrow received word that Bryan had died while taking a nap in his room in Dayton. While newspapers all over the country carried the story of Bryan's death, many also included reports of the natural beauty their correspondents had recently seen in the Great Smoky Mountains.

Sources:

Minutes of the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association, July 1925. In private hands.

Knoxville Journal issues for July 12, 15, 25, 28, 1925.

Knoxville News Sentinel July 14, 1925.

Letter from Ruby Darrow to David Chapman, GSMNP Archive.

NEW DIGITAL COLLECTION

"A Book of Adventure"—The Handbooks of the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club

"A Book of Adventure" is how the 1967 president, O. K. (Sarge) Sergeant, described the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club handbook. Founded in 1924 and still very active today, the Club is arguably the oldest of its kind in the Southern Appalachians. Its founders include names synonymous with the early 20th-century history of the Smokies, Jim Thompson, Albert "Dutch" Roth, Carlos Campbell, and Paul Adams. As well as organizing hikes, Club members promoted the area as a national park, encouraged responsible hiking etiquette, and built and measured many of the trails in the Smokies, including sections of the Appalachian Trail. The handbooks document the hikes and other activities of the Club and provide hiking tips and a list of members, illustrated with photographs of past events and hikes.

In addition to the handbooks, the Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Collection includes eighty-eight photographs from the early years of the club donated to the University of Tennessee Libraries by Laura E. and Ella Luttrell. Most of the hikers in the photographs are unidentified. If you recognize anyone, please contact us.

The digital collection of handbooks and photographs will "go live" before the end of the year: digital.lib.utk.edu/hikingclub.

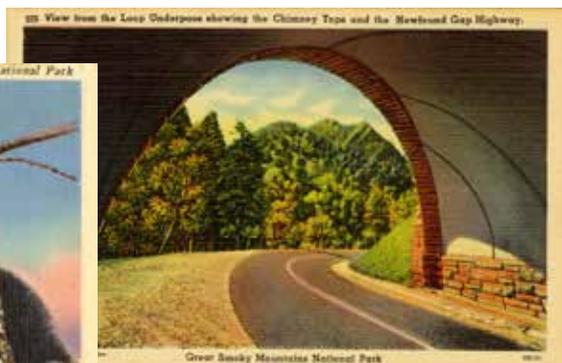
INSET: Cover of 1932 Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Handbook.
 PHOTO: Smoky Mountains Hiking Club, circa 1930. From Smoky Mountains Hiking Club Records, 1926-1969. MS.0423. University of Tennessee Special Collections.



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NEW DIGITAL COLLECTION

“Dear Sister”—Postcards from the Great Smoky Mountains

From the early- to the mid-20th century, visitors to the Great Smoky Mountains shared their experiences with friends and family by sending postcards. While ownership of a sophisticated camera might be beyond the reach of the average person, a postcard, which could be purchased and mailed for a few cents, was accessible to everyone. Some postcards were never mailed while others contain personal messages from the sender, capturing an intimate moment in time.

Postcards from the Great Smoky Mountains contains accordion-style souvenir folders as well as the fronts and backs of individual postcards. Several prominent photographers, including Jim Thompson and Walter Cline, are represented in the collection. The images document significant landmarks, geographic features, and man-made improvements such as roads complete with vintage automobiles.

In the coming months, this collection will expand substantially with the inclusion of approximately 1200 additional postcards, thanks to the generous gift of donor Ridley Willis. View the postcards at digital.lib.utk.edu/postcards.

