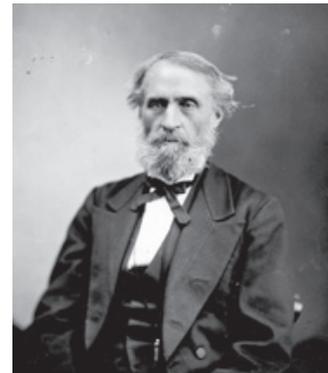


GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS

# Colloquy

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Clingmans Dome was named for North Carolina Senator Thomas Lanier Clingman (BIOGRAPHICAL DIRECTORY OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE)



Clingmans Dome, named for North Carolina Senator Thomas Lanier Clingman (THOMPSON BROTHERS DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION)

“Place names are more than mere words used to label points on a map. They are narratives that collectively chronicle the history of an area—be it a nation, county, or a small hollow in the Southern Appalachian Mountains.”

*Place Names of the Smokies*  
Allen R. Coggins

## Where Am I?

### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON SMOKY MOUNTAIN PLACE NAMES

The names of places were of no concern when there was little daily intercourse between Smoky Mountain communities. However, with the coming of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, it was soon clear that the area's many redundant and duplicate names would create a dilemma. Redundant names are several places with the same name. For example, at one time there were thirty-five Mill Creeks within the area that was to become the national park. Every community had a gristmill and often the stream on which it was located was called Mill Creek.

Duplicate names refer to places which have more than one name. This was particularly true along the state-line ridge where Tennesseans and North Carolinians referred to the same peaks by different names. The place we now call Mount Cammerer is a good example. Prior to the coming of the Park those

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Fire Tower on White Rock, now called Mount Cammerer  
(ALBERT "DUTCH" ROTH DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION)



Fontana Lake  
(ALBERT "DUTCH" ROTH DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION)

living in North Carolina saw that mountain as a pinnacle, or sharp peak, and called it Sharp Top. Tennesseans referred to it as White Rock because of a gray-colored band of stone near its crest. Had all the names within the Park stayed the same, giving directions and referencing specific places would have been a nightmare.

Two other factors also influenced the nomenclature of places within the new park. First, individuals who had been influential in its establishment deserved perpetual recognition. This meant naming or renaming specific mountain peaks, ridges, streams, or valleys in their honor. Unfortunately, federal policy prohibited the naming of topographic features for living individuals. This problem was partially resolved by the naming of overlooks, trails, roads, or other designated areas for these movers and shakers of the park movement. Morton Overlook, for example, was named for Benjamin Morton, former mayor of Knoxville and one-time chairman of the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association. Mount Squires was named posthumously for Senator Mark Squires, a former chairman of the North Carolina Park Commission. A single exception to this policy of naming places for deceased people only was Mount Kephart. Horace S. Kephart, author of *Our Southern Highlanders* and one of the most avid supporters of the park, was so honored before his death in 1931. [For more on Kephart and the naming of Mount Kephart, see Fall 2010 *Colloquy*, available at [www.lib.utk.edu/smokies/](http://www.lib.utk.edu/smokies/)]

#### Cades Cove not Cade's Cove

The act of deleting apostrophes from place names on maps (e.g., Clingmans Dome) dates back over a hundred years. One reason for this practice was that cartographers feared that such marks could be mistaken for topographic features or symbols. Their deletion also reduces the amount of printed type on maps.

The task of remedying the problems of redundant and duplicate names and the assignment of new names to features within the Park was given to independent nomenclature committees. Knowing such acts would have political implications, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names and the National Park Service appointed three representatives from each state to the committees. The first such committee was established in the 1930s and the second in the 1940s to complete the task.

Unfortunately, place name problems arose again each time the Park acquired new land. For example, in the 1940s, the Tennessee Valley Authority gave the Park 46,000 acres on the North Shore of the Fontana Dam reservoir. This land, which adjoined the Park, had been purchased by the Tennessee Valley Authority as part of the dam construction but was not flooded. Despite efforts to resolve place name issues, as late as 1999, over one hundred redundant and duplicate names remained in the Park.

Before the coming of European pioneers and settlers, these ancient mountains bore names preserved through the oral tradition. They related to the principal streams, trade routes, boundaries, navigation points, and sacred places. An example was Kuwahi or the Mulberry Place, from the Cherokee *Ku wa* (meaning mulberry) and *hi* (meaning location) where their mystical white bear made its home. The modern name is Clingmans Dome, named for North Carolina Senator Thomas Lanier Clingman.

The origin of some Smoky Mountain place names such as Chimney Tops is simple. The name describes two rock spires that look like chimneys. Others like Injun Creek are misleading. What appears at first to be

a derogatory term for a Native American (Indian) is actually in reference to a steam “engine” that derailed on a stream (formerly called Indian Creek) in the 1920s.

The origin of many other places names may never be known. A written Cherokee language did not exist until the 1820s. Hence, the meanings of many Native American place names have been lost or corrupted. Furthermore, there will always be arguments as to the origin of names like Fontana. Most people believe the name Fontana was created by the wife of the Montvale Lumber Company vice-president after the U.S. Postal Service requested a name for the village. She described the area as having flowering glens and waterfalls, leaping like fountains (fontana being the Italian word for fountain). Others say the name means “at the foot of the mountain” in some unknown Native American dialect. A third explanation is that it was named for a famous Italian naturalist, Felice Fontana, who visited there in the 1700s. Still others claim that the name is derived from Montana, a mineral rich state, in recognition to this area’s as yet untapped mineral resources.

The origin of still other names make no sense, some, perhaps, by design. Advalorem Branch, for example, is a rather insignificant stream located north of the confluence of the Tuckasegee and Little Tennessee River embayments of Fontana Lake. The term advalorem means a tax based on a percentage of assessed value. This name could have been chosen at random or might even have demonstrated a bit of levity on the part of one of the Nomenclature Committees.

By far, the most unusual name in the Smokies is Holy Butt, a peak located near Gatlinburg. A butt (as opposed to a butte) is a topographic feature described as an abrupt broken off end of a mountain, like the butt of a log. According to legend, an Aunt Lydia lived on a nearby stream called Holly Branch. Being a religious woman, she changed its name to Holy Branch. Later the adjacent peak (Holly Butt) was changed to Holy Butt.

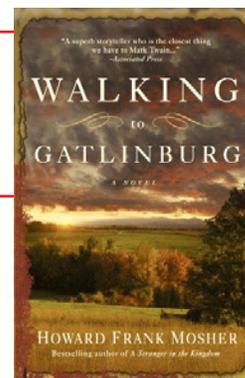
Behind each place name is a story derived from the geographical parameters and the historical events that have occurred in that location. In the case of the Smokies, added to that story is a decision from a board appointed by the federal government.

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Allen R. Coggins, author of *Place Names of the Smokies*, Great Smoky Mountains Natural History Association, 1999.

## New on the Smokies Bookshelf

Mosher, Howard Frank. *Walking to Gatlinburg*. Shaye Areheart Books (Imprint of The Crown Publishing Group), 2010. 332 p.



**W**alking to Gatlinburg is an epic tale of heroism, a love letter to the country’s lost wilderness, an exploration of the violence in the American character, an examination of the limits of pacifism, and a rumination on the conflict between religion and science. Mosher writes a gripping story filled with unforgettable characters—a slave killer, a child murderer, an unfrocked minister, a disbarred army doctor who practices vivisection, a dying gypsy and his pet elephant, a seductive slave girl, a pair of ghosts, and feuding Smoky Mountain clans.

Mosher’s story is of seventeen-year-old Morgan Kinneson and his brother Pilgrim who grew up on Kingdom Mountain, Vermont, with parents who are active in the underground railroad. Pilgrim left to join the Union army as a medic and has been missing since the battle at Gettysburg. When a slave he is responsible for smuggling into Canada is killed, Morgan feels a terrible sense of guilt. The men who killed the slave are now doing their best to track down and kill Morgan, setting into motion a journey to find his brother.

The young man’s journey ends in the isolated confines of the Great Smoky Mountains, the final appropriate setting within which the storyline can be resolved, yet where Morgan realizes that some conflicts can perhaps never be resolved and his youthful idealism may have to be abandoned.

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NON-FICTION Carvell, Clarence. *Great Smoky Mountains National Park: Things to See and Remember*. Passage Creek Pub: Xlibris Corp, 2010.

Hargan, Jim. *The Photographer’s Guide to the Great Smoky Mountains: Where to Find Perfect Shots and How to Take Them*. Countryman Press, 2011.

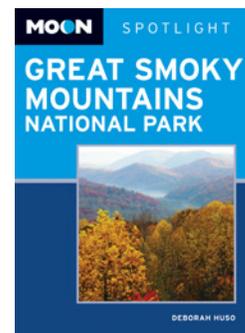
Huso, Deborah. *Moon Handbooks: Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountains*. Avalon Travel, 2010.

Huso, Deborah. *Moon Spotlight Great Smoky Mountains National Park*. Avalon Travel Pub., 2011.

Kirk, Don and Greg Ward. *The Ultimate Fly-fishing Guide to the Smoky Mountains*. Menasha Ridge press, 2011.

Lix, Courtney. *Frequently Asked Questions about Smoky Mountain Black Bears*. Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2010.

Stanley, Summer L. *Gatlinburg*. Channel Lake, Inc., 2010. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. *continued...*



## Smokies Bookshelf, continued

**FICTION** Caroll, Robin. *Fear No Evil*. B & H Publishing Group, 2010.

DePree, Traci. *Into the Wilderness*. Guideposts, 2010.

Johnson, Sharleen. *Smoky Mountain Murder*. CreateSpace, 2010.

Ledford, Deborah J. *Snare*. Second Wind Publishing, 2010.

Magendie, Kathryn. *Sweetie*. BelleBooks, 2010.

Stepp, Lin. *For Six Good Reasons: A Smoky Mountain Novel*. Canterbury House Publishing, 2011.

Thackston, Lawrence. *The Devil's Courthouse*. PublishAmerica, 2010.

Whitworth, Bill. *Butterfly Girl: A Mystery Novel*. Alexander Books, 2010.

**JUVENILE** Marsh, Carole. *The Mystery in the Smoky Mountains*. Gallopade International, 2010.

**MAPS** Cades Cove/Elkmont, *Great Smoky Mountains National Park Trails Illustrated Map*. National Geographic, 2010.

*Clingmans Dome/Cataloochee, Great Smoky Mountains National Park Trails Illustrated Map*. National Geographic, 2010.

**MEDIA** *Old-Time Smoky Mountain Music: 34 Historic Songs, Ballads, and Instrumentals Recorded in the Great Smoky Mountains by "Song Catcher" Joseph S. Hall*. Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2010 (1939). Format: Compact disc.



## News from the Smokies Project

The Great Smoky Mountain Regional Project recently received a grant from the Aslan Foundation to expand the online content of the Great Smoky Mountains Regional Collection. The grant project will include the forthcoming Elgin Kintner panoramic photographs and the William Derris photograph and video collection as well as the initiation of an online Great Smoky Mountains bibliography.

Visit our redesigned website at [www.lib.utk.edu/smokies](http://www.lib.utk.edu/smokies). Click on the Horace Kephart link to see a video of a recent program entitled "Librarian, Writer, Outdoorsman, Smokies Proponent: Who Is Horace Kephart?" The website features upcoming events as well as links to Smokies organizations and collections, including digital images. Back issues of the *Colloquy* can be found at this website also. If you have an event you would like us to highlight on our website, please email the details to [smokies@utk.edu](mailto:smokies@utk.edu).



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