

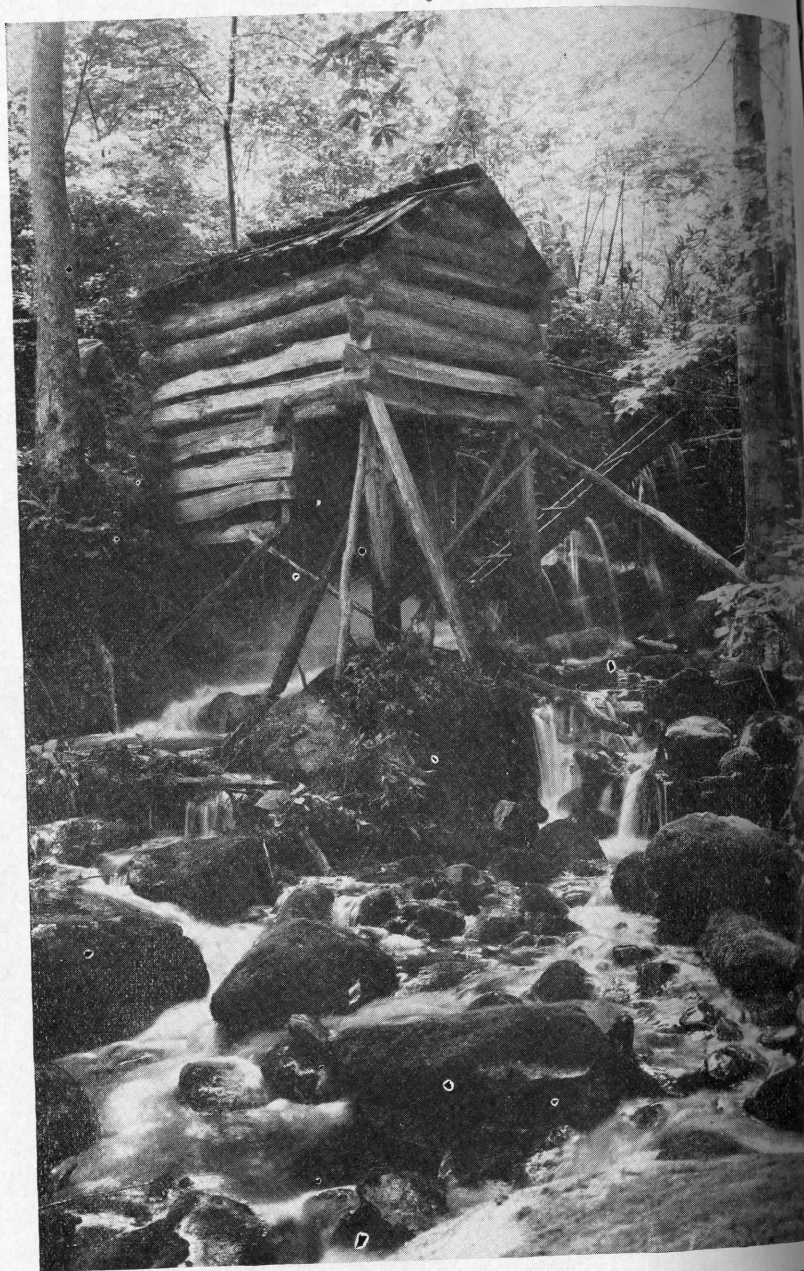
MAGNI FUMOSI CONSERVANDI SUNT

PART OF PAPER READ BEFORE ACADEMY OF SCIENCE BY
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The term "Great Smokies" is often applied to that part of the Appalachian System which extends along the eastern border of Tennessee from Virginia almost to the northern boundaries of Alabama and Georgia. It is more correctly applied to that splendid range of mountains that begins where the French Broad breaks through from North Carolina and that ends where the Little Tennessee cuts its way into our State. In this paper the term "Great Smokies" will be used in the latter sense. These peaks were called by the Cherokee Indians "Unicas" meaning "white" and may have reference to the snow caps of winter or to the great mass of gray mist that almost always floats over the highest summits. Our word "Unaka," sometimes applied to all the mountains of East Tennessee, is taken from the Cherokee word "Unicoi."

The "Great Smokies" then constitute a part of the boundary between North Carolina and Tennessee. And the path along which this imaginary line runs is oftentimes so narrow that a single step to the right or to the left will mark a change from one state to the other. In few places that I have been is there much territory to war over; for the tiptop is usually so plain that "the way-faring man though a fool need not err therein." But tenuous as this line is, it marks differences other than mere state boundaries. I refer especially to a difference in weather conditions. One can stand on top of the ridges between the two states and to his right may be seen valleys and hills stretching out in the smiling sunshine; while to his left great billows of blinding mist roll ceaselessly up the mountain side and vanish into nothingness before the astonished eyes of the beholder. For one whole day on our trip to Clingmans Dome, we saw scarcely a feature of our beloved State, while North Carolina stretched away to endless distances. A slight change in the meteorological conditions and the situation would have been reversed.

Just here it may be stated that the tops of the Smokies do not form a real watershed, although they constitute the most massive mountain range in Eastern North America. For the dividing line between the waters of the Gulf and those of the Atlantic, one must go some twenty to fifty miles to the east where the Blue Ridge and Black Mountains rear their less lofty heads. Old as the Gray Smokies are, hard as the semi-metamorphic rocks that compose them, and lofty as their summits tower—still the French Broad, the Big Pigeon, and the Little Tennessee have found it easier to chisel their channels through them than to fight their way past the Blue Ridge and on into the Atlantic. It is in some of the



PRIMITIVE WATERMILL ON JAKE'S CREEK OF LITTLE RIVER, ON THE PROPERTY
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gorges that men like Mitchell and Clingman and LeConte and Guyot and Safford and Gattinger have found scenery and studies unsurpassed by any mountains of the world. Summer after summer and year after year they came back to these slopes, not only to study geological formations but to feast their eyes on the beauties that are to be found everywhere.

And speaking of beauty, all observers agree that our own Great Smokies have a splendor all their own. Their slopes are not barren as is the case with most of the Rockies nor are their loftiest peaks covered with unchanging snow and ice. In the west you find form and coloring, but in the east you find both form and color combined with life—life of the trees and of the flowers, life of rain and rushing streams, life of wild animals and men. Some Tennesseans go to the Scotch Highlands to find beauty, and come back raving about the meads and mountains that Walter Scott made famous. But I have stood on Ben Venue and looked across Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine to the Scotch Highlands with all their witchery of color and form, but I missed the grandeur of peaks more than twice as high, of endless ranges stretching as far as eye can see, of mighty forests that have been in existence for millions of years. Those very Scotch Highlands, denuded of timber and washed by wintry rains thunder a warning to all Tennesseans against the neglect of the forests we now have. Nor are the Alps so beautiful as our own mountains. I have stood on Mount Rigi and looked around the country made famous by Schiller's *Tell* and far away to the Black Forest on the north, the Bernese Oberlands on the west and the Tyrolese ranges on the east; but there is a coldness to their summits, a barrenness to their slopes, and a sharpness to their outlines that make these same Alps suffer much in comparison with the Smokies. And when you realize that the Alps are toothless infants compared with the aged monarchs of the Smokies, we say to the tourists of the South and of America "See Europe if you will, but by all means do not overlook the wonders of the southern Appalachians."

When you look with prophetic vision into the future, you can see one or two things—The Great Smokies saved for this generation and for all generations, or the Great Smokies barren and denuded, an everlasting curse to the short-sighted policy of the leaders of today. Grand old Cato of the Roman Republic used to finish all his speeches, no matter what the subject before the Senate, with that famous dictum: "*Karthago delenda est*," which is, being interpreted, "Carthage must be destroyed." In the State of Tennessee we now need some Senator who will continuously shout this message into our sluggish ears: "*Magni Fumosi Conscrucandi Sunt*."

Two years ago, a small group decided to ascend LeConte from Gatlinburg. The goddess of fortune smiled upon us and the day was ideal. Up through deep cool valleys and past thick growths

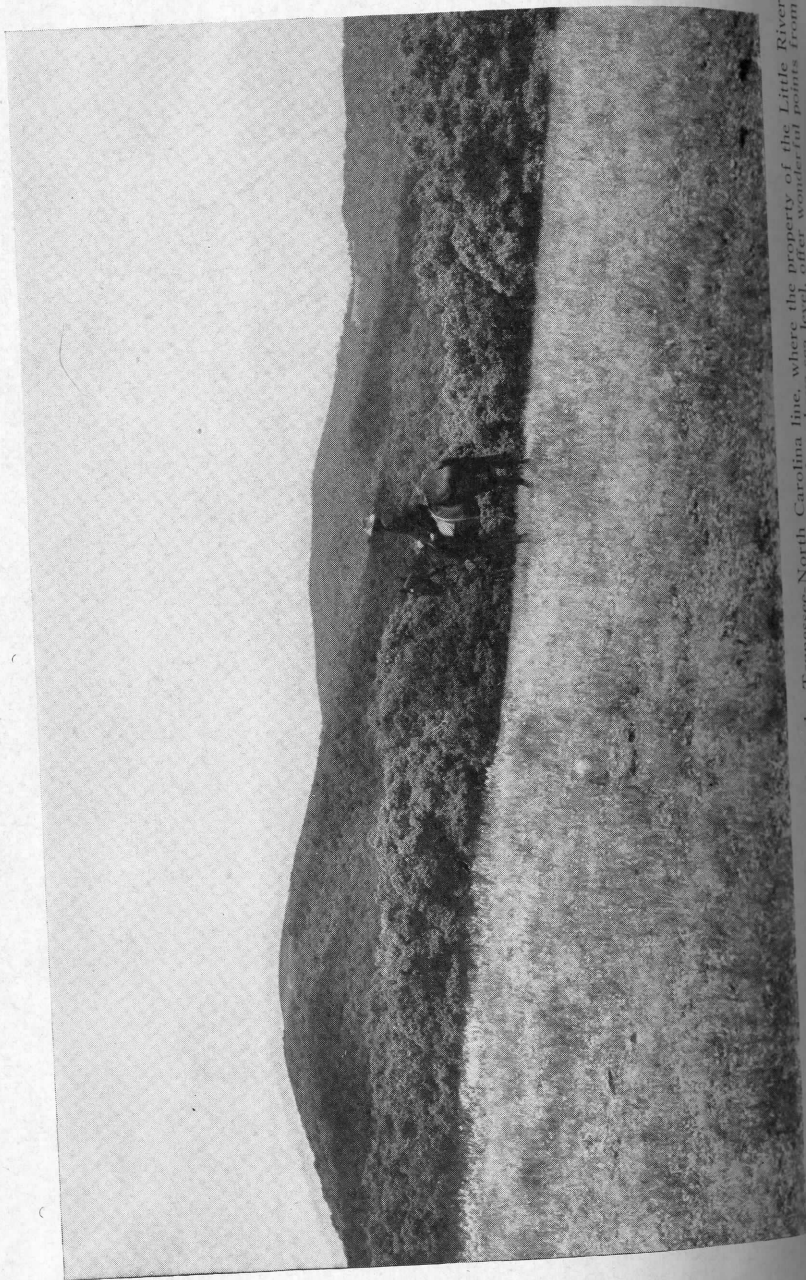
of undergrowth and of evergreen thickets we found our way to the top about two o'clock on an early September afternoon. Our labor was not in vain. The panorama lying at our feet and stretching to the distant horizon in all directions was grander than any sight I have ever seen. All my life I have been looking for an ideal mountain view—the kind that you see in your dreams and fondly believe is to be found on every mountain top. The Rockies, the Alps, the Lake Country of England, the Scotch Highlands, the Apennines in Italy, and even Mt. Mitchell in the Black Mountain Range—there had always been a doubt, a reservation as to the perfection of the view. But that day, like Archimedes of old, I felt like rushing down the LeConte and shouting to the world "Eureka, Eureka." For there are no if's and an's in the view from LeConte. Words seem so poor and inadequate to tell you of this view. In every direction there were coves and valleys and peaks and ranges piled one behind the other in endless profusion. To the east and northeast were the summits of the Blue Ridge and the Black Mountains, softened by the blue diaphanous haze. Old Mitchell could easily be made out more than fifty miles away. To the south were the Smokies and the Unakas lengthening out toward Walden Ridge and Lookout in Georgia and Alabama. To the north and west were the mountain ranges that faded into lowlands toward Knoxville, Morristown, and Athens; and also the Cumberland Mountains, stretching into Kentucky and the Virginias. All around mountains and mountains and more mountains, as if Mother Earth in some sportive mood decided to make a playground here for her children which should not have its superior on this planet. So green and waving were the slopes that they reminded me of great billows that rolled their green crests right up to the foot of LeConte in every direction. Such a scene one never forgets, but about one day in seven one has a chance like ours.

And as we stood there looking at those mighty forests, I could hear the whistle of a logging train. That brought me back to earth and to some practical reflections. Of course I realized that hardwood floors and interiors and durable furniture demand the best of our forests. But it is the destructive methods which are being used which make me hate the sound of a logging train. Like an invading army the timber forces move on. Saws and axes and spiked poles are their weapons of attack. Giant trees stand helpless before their onslaughts and they spare neither old nor young, strong or weak, valuable or worthless. And when they are gone, the hillsides look like the battlefields of the Old Country—where life and beauty and joy once reigned is now a mass of rotting trunks and limbs, an easy prey to the first fire that breaks out in the underbrush. And after the fire—death and desolation. And to think there were at my feet several hundred thousands of acres of timber, the largest body of hardwood trees extant on the earth, and that this little engine was sounding

the tocsin of war which would wipe it all out for a period of a hundred years if not forever—and I wondered if there were enough strong hearted men in Tennessee to rise up and say, "By the Eternal, this shall not happen." "This glorious inheritance, bequeathed to us through millions of years, shall not be squandered in less than fifty years; the generations to come shall not rise up and curse us for our shortsightedness and neglect. This growth of hardwoods, the first of its kind, the greatest of its kind, and the last of its kind shall not fall a prey to the destroyer but shall be saved as a National Park or at least as a forest reserve, to grow on other millions of years, if such time shall be permitted man on earth." The National Park Commission, the Governor of this State and his advisors and public spirited men should unite in setting this section apart for the people of Tennessee, their heirs and assigns forever and forever. It would not mean less hardwood, but more; it would not be a liability but a rich asset to the State. Who are going to be the volunteers in the boasted Volunteer State to join hands in this work and carry through to a finish the plans that have already been formulated? To such a task we may well dedicate ourselves, our earthly goods, and all our sacred powers. This area saved to all future time would be a monument more lasting than bronze or marble, more glorious than the splendid pile of pyramids. "*Magni Fumosi conservandi sunt.*"

The Tennessee Academy of Science is pledged to save the Great Smokies because of their value to science in this State. The geologist finds here some of the oldest and most interesting formations in America; the botanist will tell of its abundant and varied supply of flowers and trees within a small area; the zoologist revels here in his study of birds and mammals that are found nowhere else south of the Canadian border; the meteorologist bears witness to the tremendous influence that the Smokies exercise on weather conditions; even the philologist can find treasures here of words and expressions that were current in Shakespeare's time; and the sociologist points out that in these mountain homes are found peoples pure in Anglo-Saxon blood as the famous 99 44/100 brand.

And so we feel justified in asserting that the Great Smokies from a Naturalist's viewpoint are worthy of all the study they have had in the past and deserve a hundred fold more attention in the future. Greece has its Olympus and there dwell the gods of ancient Hellas. Rome had its Alban Hill and the distant Apennines; the Swiss have the Alps and the Germans their Harz Mountains and the Black Forest; England boasts of her lake country and Scotland her far-famed Highlands; but the State of Tennessee can proudly lift her head among them all and exclaim with pride and confidence, "We have our Great Smokies now and expect to invite the whole world to see them in their undimmed glory and beauty." "*Magni Fumosi conservandi sunt.*"



... Tennessee, North Carolina line, where the property of the Little River
... after wood ... points from