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from the neighborhood of the Moravians in North Carolina, and evidently descendants of Christopher Gist, who for a time lived on the banks of the Ohio. Benjamin Gist was one of the first just after 1777, and it was, perhaps, through him that he became acquainted with the War of 1777. Benjamin, was a member of the State of Franklin and one of the first to leave that state. Benjamin, and almost certainly, in the Battle of King's Mountain, in Sevier county.<sup>31</sup>

Are there descendants of the mythical person, where can there be any such, evidences of transmitted

Tennessee country who petitioned in 1783 for the State of Franklin. He was probably a son of his grandfather. The elder William Gist was one of the first to leave North Carolina in the early part of the 18th century. Benjamin Gist, who married Violetta Howard, sister of Christopher Gist; so that, Benjamin Gist, was a member of the State of Franklin. The names of four Gists appear in the year 1783.

## EARLY EXPLORERS IN THE GREAT SMOKIES\*

BY PAUL M. FINK

In this modern time, when we can see the name of the Great Smokies each day in the newspapers, when magazines are full of articles praising their scenic beauty and tourists by the thousands are flocking from every point of the compass to gain a first hand acquaintance with these mountains, it is a little hard to realize that it has been hardly a decade since this was a land almost wholly unknown, save where the lumberman was pushing his operations back into the virgin timber. Only a limited number of hardy spirits had climbed the high peaks and penetrated the deep valleys, and many were the spots that human eye had never looked upon. As late as 1920, if one had asked the average citizen of Knoxville, from whose hilltops the skyline of the Smokies can be seen silhouetted against the southern horizon, where Mount Le Conte, and Guyot, Clingman's Dome, and Thunderhead were located, the answer would more than likely have been, "I've never heard of them", and even his idea of the location of the Smoky Range itself would have been extremely hazy.

When the late Horace Kephart in 1904 sought a spot far from the life of the cities, where he could rebuild his shattered health, it was the utter lack of available information concerning these mountains that attracted him to them most strongly. His own words tell strikingly of the difficulty of finding what was hidden among the ranges. "When I prepared for my first sojourn in the Great Smokies, which form the master chain of the Appalachian System", he wrote, "I could find in no library a guide to the region. The most diligent research failed to discover so much as a magazine article written within this generation that described the land and its people. Nay, there was not even a novel or a story that showed intimate local knowledge. Had I been going to Teneriffe or Timbuctoo, the libraries would have furnished information aplenty, but about this housetop of eastern America they were strangely silent; it was terra incognita."<sup>1</sup>

\*Read before the East Tenn. Hist. Soc., Knoxville, May 6, 1932.

<sup>1</sup> Horace Kephart, *Our Southern Highlanders* (New York, 1922), 13

At first thought it is a little strange that such a condition could exist in a region so outstanding in its physical proportions, and so close to the thickly populated East Tennessee Valley, where the first white settlements in the state were planted, a century and a half ago. But when one gains a better personal acquaintance with the terrain, the realization grows that it was this same gigantic size, this same ruggedness, that so long repelled exploration and deterred those who otherwise would have penetrated its recesses. Roads of the very poorest, and no means of transportation worth mentioning from the outside, discouraged all save the most resolute.

The first men, of course, to visit the Smokies were the Cherokee Indians, who had long lived in their villages on the waters of the Oconaluftee, Tuckasegee, and Little Tennessee rivers, flowing past the feet of the mountains, and whose trails, for war or commerce, crossed over the heights of the range. The Tuckaleechee and Southeastern Trail crossed from Tuckaleechee Cove and Little River southeastwardly through Indian Gap and on to the Lower Cherokee settlements in South Carolina.<sup>2</sup> Skirting the southern boundary of the Smokies, along the Tuckasegee River, was the path later to be known as Rutherford's War Trace,<sup>3</sup> while a short route from the Valley Towns of the Cherokee to the villages of the Overhills was the Egwanulti Trail, passing through the gap of the same name—corrupted by white tongues to Ekaneetlee—past the lower end of Cades Cove on its way to the Little Tennessee.

The open, grassy summits of the western half of the Smokies were well known to the Cherokee. Many of them bore names, and about them certain bits of folklore centered. Gregory Bald was *Tsistugi*, "the Rabbit Place", where dwelt the Little Rabbit, chief of their clan. Clingman's Dome was *Kurwahi*, "the Mulberry Place", and here the White Bear had his town-house. Nearby was *Atagahi*, the enchanted lake, where the sick and wounded birds and beasts sought refuge, and were miraculously made whole.<sup>4</sup> Alum Cave, too, was known to the Cherokee, its discovery being attributed to the famous chief Yonaguska, who in his youth tracked a bear to a den in its recesses.<sup>5</sup> The funereal balsam covered slopes of the eastern half of the range seemed to invoke a superstitious awe in the Indians, and these summits were seldom visited.

<sup>2</sup> William E. Meyer, "Indian Trails of the Southeast", in Bureau of American Ethnology, *Forty-second Annual Report* (Washington, 1928), 772.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 773.

<sup>4</sup> James Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee", in Bureau of American Ethnology, *Nineteenth Annual Report* (Washington, 1900), 473.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Lanman, *Letters from the Allegheny Mountains* (New York, 1849), 90.

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Just when the Smokies were first seen by white eyes is not clear. The claim has been advanced that De Soto, in 1540, penetrated to this region, but the evidence generally given has not been considered conclusive. However, shortly before his death and following some reasearch in the Library of Congress, Horace Kephart wrote thus: "It now seems likely that De Soto, in 1540, went up the Lufty, through Indian Gap and out through Tennessee. This was before the founding of Jamestown, and long before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock".<sup>6</sup> Unless Kephart's notes were complete on this point and are later uncovered by someone searching his papers, this interesting bit of data may be forever lost. Should it prove true, one already an admirer of the intrepid De Soto and his hardy band is forced to wonder at what marvelous means they must have employed in driving over Smoky's crests and down her defiles the herd of three hundred hogs which one narrator states accompanied the little army.

Following De Soto, there seems to be a period of some two centuries in which we find little record to indicate that these mountains themselves were visited by white man, though it is beyond question that these towering peaks were seen by the early visitors to the towns of the Overhill Cherokee on the Little Tennessee. James Needham and his companion, Gabriel Arthur, penetrated to the Overhill settlements in 1673, first Englishmen to enter the Tennessee Valley.<sup>7</sup> As their route southwestwardly from Virginia paralleled the ranges, it is beyond doubt but that they could see the Smokies on the horizon to their left. Some fifty years later, in 1725, Colonel George Chicken, as representative of the governor of South Carolina, visited the Cherokee, his route crossing the Unicoi Mountains, just west of the Smokies.<sup>8</sup> Sir Alexander Cuming travelled along the same path from Charleston in 1730,<sup>9</sup> as did the men of the expedition which in 1756 built the ill-fated Fort Loudoun on the Little Tennessee.<sup>10</sup>

In 1761 and 1762 Lieutenant Henry Timberlake, a young officer of the Virginia militia, spent some months in the Overhill villages, but like other visitors he made no reference to the high mountains so close, unless it be in his map, entitled "A Draught of the Cherokee Country, on the West Side of the Twenty-Four Mts". In this map

<sup>6</sup> Personal correspondence with author.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel C. Williams, *Early Travels in the Tennessee Country* (Johnson City, 1928), 21.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

he delineates the Chilhowie Mountains, naming them "Enemy Mountains", and outlines the course of what is now called Abrams Creek, draining Cades Cove and the western end of the Tennessee side of the Smokies.<sup>11</sup>

During many of these years white traders had been visiting and dwelling among the Cherokee, but seem to have left no accounts descriptive of the mountains themselves. It is sincerely to be regretted that the steps of William Bartram, naturalist and traveller, were not directed a few miles further east when he visited the country of the Cherokee in 1776, for the pen of this gifted writer would surely have given us a word picture of the early Smokies, a picture that would be most enlightening at this late date.

When the colonies declared themselves independent of Great Britain, North Carolina was claiming jurisdiction over the western country, and was entering into treaties with the Indians for cessions of land. The Smokies, and much of the main chain along the state line, were called the Great Iron Mountains at that time, but the name was not so firmly fixed that it did not call for a more definite description, as appears in the treaty of July 20, 1777, where the bounds of the Indian hunting grounds were designated in part "from the mouth of Camp Creek a southeast course to the top of Great Iron Mountain, being the same which divides the hunting grounds of the Overhill Cherokee from the hunting grounds of the Middle Settlements".<sup>12</sup> This same name was used in the act of the North Carolina assembly of 1777, erecting Washington District into Washington county.<sup>13</sup> But in 1789, when North Carolina ceded its western lands to the Federal Government, to form the "Territory of the United States of America South of the River Ohio", a new term appears, for the boundary was described, in part, as "to the Painted Rock, on French Broad River; thence along the highest ridge of said mountain to the place where it is called the 'Great Iron' or 'Smoky Mountain', etc."<sup>14</sup> This is the first official use of the name *Smoky*, nor has my research revealed its earlier use elsewhere. When and by whom the name was coined does not appear, but it is certain that it owes its source to the same misty blue haze that also gave the name to the Blue Ridge lying to the eastward.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel C. Williams (ed.), *Memiors of Lieut. Henry Timberlake* (Johnson City, 1927).

<sup>12</sup> Charles C. Royce, "The Cherokee Nation of Indians", in Bureau of American Ethnology, *Fifth Annual Report* (Washington, D. C., 1887), 150.

<sup>13</sup> *State Records of N. C.*, XXVI, 141.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, XXV, 4.

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Various accounts in histories and elsewhere have stated that John Sevier crossed over the tops of the Smokies in his warfare against the Indians, but the evidence does not seem to bear this out. In telling of the 1781 campaign against the Erati, Edmund Kirke re- counts in abundant detail what purports to be the first ascent of Clingman's Dome by a white man. That there might be no mistake as to the peak meant, it is described as being "higher than any peak but one among the Appalachians".<sup>15</sup> From its summit Sevier's par- ty was able to "trace the courses of the Holston, the Watauga and his own Nolichucky, and nearer the silvery windings of the Ten- nessee as it rushed past the strongholds of the Chickamaugas".<sup>16</sup> Though such a range of vision is seldom granted ordinary eyes, the account might be accepted did Kirke not state that "the summit was carpeted with a deep, green sward sprinkled with heather and rhodo- dendron".<sup>17</sup> When one has visited the top of Clingman's Dome and rested in the dim twilight that filters through the dense tops of as thick a stand of balsam as Smoky can present, one comes to the conclusion that Kirke was romancing, and knew not whereof he spoke. Regarding the same campaign, Ramsey's account indicates that Sevier's forces crossed the Balsam Mountains at Balsam Gap and followed the course of the headwaters of the Tuckasegee River to the Indian towns, skirting the eastern boundaries of the Smokies rather than actually penetrating these mountains.<sup>18</sup>

For some decades following the Revolution the records of Smoky exploration are the records of various surveys, which, interesting enough in their own sphere, do not offer much detail of the moun- tains themselves. But in order that this account be as complete as may be, reference should be made to them.

When Tennessee was admitted into the Union as a state in 1796, its eastern border corresponded with the line of the territory ceded to the United States by North Carolina, and the boundary was described in the same terms. Commissioners were appointed im- mediately by both states to settle the exact location of the state line, but their labors ceased just as they reached the eastern end of the Smokies, the terminus of their survey being designated by a large marked stone set by the side of the Cataloochee Turnpike.<sup>19</sup> More than twenty years were to pass before the state line survey

<sup>15</sup> Edmund Kirke, *The Rear-Guard of the Revolution* (New York, 1887), 295.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>18</sup> J. M. G. Ramsey, *Annals of Tennessee* (Philadelphia, 1853), 269.

<sup>19</sup> *State of North Carolina vs State of Tennessee. Report of the U. S. Su- preme Court, October term, 1914, p. 6.*



was to pursue its course unto "the place where it is called Great Iron or Smoky Mountain".

During territorial days and a few years subsequently various treaties were entered into with the Cherokee Indians, ceding to the whites large tracts of land. In one of these, the Holston Treaty of July 2, 1791, negotiated by William Blount, the line bounding the Indian lands was to pass over the Smoky and Chilhowie mountains. However, all this line was not surveyed at the time, for Governor Blount's letter to the War Department, accompanying the report of the commission, says in part: "As the geography of the country cannot be known to you, there being no correct map of it, I think it necessary to inform you that the country to the east, or rather southeast of the Chilhowie mountains, through which the line reported upon, if continued beyond it, will pass, for fifty or sixty miles, is an entire bed, or ledge after ledge, of mountains. . . near which no settlements can be formed, hence, I conclude, it will not be essential to extend it".<sup>20</sup> From this description one is forced to the conclusion that this section of the Smokies had not yet been explored to any great extent, but that the extreme roughness of the region was well known.

There later came a demand that the line be actually surveyed, and Colonel Benjamin Hawkins was charged with this duty. His journal does not give any record of the survey beyond Southwest Point at the mouth of Clinch River, but a manuscript map in the Office of Indian Affairs plainly shows a line running a course S 76° E. from Southwest Point to the Great Iron Mountain, marked "Hawkins Line".<sup>21</sup> This line as marked was not in accordance with the exact terms of any treaty, and there has been revealed no authority for Colonel Hawkins' action in running it in this location, yet it received official notice to the extent that in the treaty concluded on October 2, 1798, a part of the Indian boundary was "continued along Chilhowie Mountain until it strikes Hawkins's line. Thence along said line to the Great Iron Mountain", etc.<sup>22</sup> Later, Return J. Meigs was appointed commissioner to see that such lines were surveyed. Whether Meigs' party succeeded in following the route outlined by Hawkins has long been a subject of bitter controversy, and more than one lawsuit, upon which the possession of thousands of acres of valuable timber land depended, has hinged on the precise location of Meigs' Post, the assumed end of Hawkins' Line on the

<sup>20</sup> *American State Paper, Indian Affairs* (Washington, 1832), I, 628-31.

<sup>21</sup> Officer of Indian Affairs, manuscript map No. 749.

<sup>22</sup> *U. S. Statutes at Large*, VII, 62.

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summit of the mountains, from which point Meigs pursued his own survey.

As time passed, it became necessary that the exact location of the boundary between Tennessee and North Carolina be determined beyond the point where the 1796 survey ceased, and legislation authorizing such a survey was passed in 1820.<sup>23</sup> The line was run and marked in 1821 by a commission composed of Alexander Smith, Isaac Allen, and Simeon Perry, representing Tennessee, and James Mebane, Montford Stokes, and Robert Love, for North Carolina. The act of the Tennessee legislature confirming their findings reads in part: "Begins at a stone set up on the North side of the Cataloochee turnpike road and marked on the east side 'N. C. 1821' and on the west side 'Ten. 1821,' running thence on a southwestwardly course to the Bald Rock, on the summit of the Great Iron or Smoky Mountain and continuing southwestwardly on the extreme height thereof to where it strikes Tennessee River, about seven miles above the old Indian town of Tallassee, crossing Porters Gap at the distance of 22 miles from the beginning, passing Meigs boundary line at thirty-one and a half miles, the Equonettly path at 53 miles and crossing Tennessee River at the distance of sixty-five miles from the beginning".<sup>24</sup> In this we find first mention of Bald Rock, now known as White Rock, Porters Gap, and the Equonettly (now Ekaneetlee) Path, prominent points on the Smoky skyline. The stone described at the Cataloochee turnpike is still in place.

The field notes of William Davenport, surveyor for North Carolina in this 1821 survey, were discovered in 1910 by Edmund Jones, Jr., great-grandson of Davenport, in a secret drawer in an old sideboard in Davenport's old home in Caldwell county, North Carolina.<sup>25</sup> Mainly confined to the courses followed, still some of the notes are very illuminating. Every mile is marked on a tree, and we come to the conclusion that Davenport's ideas of spelling do not coincide with those of the present, for we find "burch", "balsom", and "beach". One tree he mentions is the "Mount China", a variety we cannot identify. The twenty mile tree was "at the top of an extreme high pinnacle in view of Severeville", which can be none other than Laurel Top. At the twenty-ninth mile he states at length: "The above corner is against the head of the west fork of Pigeon River near an old Indian Camp which is at a low gap at the head of Big Creek of Tennessee, and if there is ever a wagon

<sup>23</sup> *Acts of Tennessee*, 1820, Chap. 22.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 1821, p. 45, c. 35.

<sup>25</sup> Unpublished manuscript, copy in hands of author.



road through the Big Smokies mountain it must go through this gap". But then we find the courses marked out and marked "wrong" all the way back to the twenty-fifth mile, where he takes a new start in a different direction. The inference drawn from this is that at the "Jump-off" on Mount Kephart, Davenport missed his way, and instead of following the true divide, turned off along "the Boulevard" toward Le Conte. His gap for a road was in the low saddle just under Myrtle Point, and he only discovered his mistake when he reached its heights. Then as now, Smoky spread pitfalls for the travellers' feet.

When Charles Lanman made his tour of the southern states in 1848 he became very much interested in the Cherokee Indians, spending some weeks in the neighborhood of Quallah Town, the present Cherokee, as the guest of Colonel W. H. Thomas, the beloved *Wil-usdi* of the Indians.<sup>26</sup> While here he was led to make several excursions deep into the hills. To him the whole Smoky range appeared as one vast mountain, and to it he pays his respects, in part, thus:<sup>27</sup>

This mountain is the loftiest of a large brotherhood which lie crowded together between North Carolina and Tennessee. Its height cannot be less than five thousand feet above the level of the sea, for the road leading from its base to its summit is seven and a half miles long. The general character of the mountain is similar to that already given of other southern mountains, and all that I can say of its panorama is that I can conceive of nothing more grand and imposing. It gives birth to a pair of glorious streams, the Pigeon River of Tennessee and the Oconalufy of North Carolina, and derives its name from the circumstance that its summit is always enveloped, on account of its height, in a blue or smoky atmosphere.

During his stay Lanman visited Alum Cave, calling it "the chief attraction of Smoky Mountains", reached by a "pedestrian pilgrimage of about six miles up and down, very far up and ever so far down, and over everything in the way of rocks and ruined vegetation which Nature could possibly devise".<sup>28</sup> He describes the sharp, steep ridges nearby and the depths of Huggins Hell beneath in a closing paragraph:

<sup>26</sup> Chas. Lanman, *op. cit.*, 85.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

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To gaze upon the prospect at the sunset hour, when the mountains are tinged with a rosy hue and the immense hollow before me was filled with a purple atmosphere, and I could see the rocky ledge basking in the sunlight like a huge monster on the placid bosom of a lake, was to me one of the most remarkable and impressive scenes that I ever witnessed, and remember, too, that I looked upon this wonderful prospect from a framework of solid rock, composed of the stooping cliff. It was a glorious picture indeed, and would have amply repaid one for a pilgrimage from the remotest corner of the earth.

Prior to 1850 all exploration in the Smokies had been haphazard and sporadic, the secondary results of the visits of traders, travellers, and surveyors engaged primarily in settling the exact location of boundary lines. But the next decade was to see the task done in a workmanlike manner, by men deeply interested, well qualified to seek out and to record their findings. Among these we find three outstanding men, whose names have been preserved by being affixed to three of the prominent peaks of the Smokies—General Thomas L. Clingman, soldier, scientist and statesman; Samuel B. Buckley, geologist and naturalist; and Arnold Henry Guyot, geographer extraordinary, whose researches in the eastern mountains were the first comprehensive scientific study of all this region.

The name of General Clingman is remembered more in connection with the Black Mountains than it is with the Smokies, for it was following the celebrated controversy between Clingman and Professor Elisha Mitchell regarding the relative heights of certain peaks in the Black Mountains that Professor Mitchell was killed, falling to his death over a cliff while exploring the peak that bears his name. But General Clingman was interested in the other Carolina Mountains as well, references to them cropping out all through his writings. He it was who made the first measurements of the mountain once known as Smoky Dome, now Clingman's Dome, and he also caused a path to be cut to the top of this mountain, by which means Guyot ascended on the back of the first horse to reach the summit.<sup>30</sup> It is evident that he must have made other explorations in the neighborhood of the same peak previously, for Guyot further states: "As to that highest group of the Great Smoky Mountain, however, I must remark that in the whole valley of the Tucksegee and Oconaltee

<sup>30</sup> Arnold Guyot, letter to the Asheville (N. C.) News, July 15, 1860.

luftee, I heard of but one name applied to the highest point, and it is that of Mount Clingman."<sup>31</sup>

S. B. Buckley's resumé of his own explorations in the Smokies,<sup>32</sup> is the first comprehensive account we have of these mountains, written from the viewpoint of the naturalist. It is evident that he made a number of trips, over a number of years, for when telling of certain explorations in company with Guyot in 1856, he refers to one particular trip made sixteen years previously,<sup>33</sup> during a period when he travelled extensively through the southern states, discovering twenty-four new species of plants and a new genus, which was named Buckleya.<sup>34</sup> Familiar all his life with mountain scenery, Buckley was deeply impressed with what the Smokies had to offer. He writes: "The scenery of the mountains, especially in the Smoky Range, abounds in precipices and deep chasms, surpassing anything we remember to have seen among the White Mountains of New Hampshire. . . . Such prospects pay the explorer for his toil, their remembrance is always sweet."<sup>35</sup>

Yet it was as a botanist that Buckley was most interested. The infinite variety and range of the Smoky flora and its wealth of brilliant blossoms called forth enthusiastic comment. "Here is a strange admixture of Northern and Southern species of plants", he wrote, "while there are quite a number which have been found in no other section of the world. In the months of May and June, when the Kalmia, Rhododendrons and Azalias are in bloom, these mountains and valleys present an array of floral beauty which is indigenous to no other section of the United States. The much vaunted Western plains, with their interminable sameness, are by no means as beautiful." The size of the trees astonished him. Of the balsam he says, "It attains a greater size than Pursh or Nuttall have given it in their works." He cites, too, a tulip eleven feet in diameter, a hemlock more than nineteen feet in girth, a chestnut as big as the tulip, and a white oak nearly seven feet through. These, with others, he calls "some of the largest trees in the United States east of the Mississippi River."<sup>36</sup>

But it is to Arnold Guyot that we owe most, from the standpoint of geographical knowledge, for his well-planned and exhaustive exploration of the Smokies. Forerunners of his had penetrated

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *American Journal of Science and Arts*, 2nd Series, XXVII (1859).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Appleton's Cyclopædia of American Biography* (New York, 1888), I, 439.

<sup>35</sup> *American Journal of Science and Arts*, 2nd Series, XXVII.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

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 uthern species of plants",  
 r which have been found  
 months of May and June,  
 zalias are in bloom, these  
 of floral beauty which is  
 United States. The much  
 nable sameness, are by no  
 trees astonished him. Of  
 ize than Pursh or Nuttall  
 oo, a tulip eleven feet in  
 feet in girth, a chestnut  
 seven feet through. These,  
 trees in the United States

e most, from the stand-  
 well-planned and exhaus-  
 ers of his had penetrated

Series, XXVII (1859).

y (New York, 1888), I, 439.  
 Series, XXVII.

the range in this spot and that, described its beauty of scenery and  
 diversity of flora and fauna, but it remained for this man of foreign  
 birth, an American by adoption, to penetrate these mountains, spend  
 months among them, measure their heights for the first time, and  
 have drawn under his own direction the first map we have showing  
 the range in detail.

Born in Szwitzerland in 1807, Guyot early showed evidences of  
 his genius, directing his efforts to the study of physical geography.  
 His attainments in that science brought wide recognition throughout  
 all Europe, and he was given the chair of Physical Georgraphy  
 and History at the University of Neuchatel, a position he held for  
 several years, until disturbed political conditions led him to leave  
 his native land and come to America, to join his old friend and co-  
 laborer Louis Agassiz.

Guyot's talents were immediately recognized in his adopted home,  
 and even before he gained command of the language he was lectur-  
 ing to various colleges and scientific bodies. In 1854 he was of-  
 fered the chair of Geology and Physical Geography at Princeton, a  
 post he held for the remainder of his life. Shortly after coming  
 to America he became intensely interested in the structure of the  
 Appalachian System, and during the fifties devoted a number of  
 summers to exploration among these mountains, his field work  
 bringing him to the mountain regions of North Carolina, where he  
 explored and mapped the Great Smokies.<sup>37</sup> From the  
 beginning of his acquaintance Guyot professed himself deeply in-  
 terested in the Smokies and of them he says: "By the general  
 altitude of both its peaks and its crest, by its perfect continuity,  
 its great roughness and difficulty of approach, it may be called the  
 master chain of the Appalachian System."<sup>38</sup>

It would not be amiss to quote here what further he has to say  
 concerning this "master chain":<sup>39</sup>

For over fifty miles it forms a high and almost imper-  
 vious barrier between Tennessee and the inside basins of  
 North Carolina. Only one tolerable road, or rather mule-  
 path, in this whole distance is found to cross from the  
 great valley of Tennessee into the interior basins of North  
 Carolina, and the road reaches its summit, the Road Gap,

<sup>37</sup> For references to Guyot's life see Leonard Chester Jones, "Arnold Henry  
 Guyot", in Faculty Papers of Union College, Union College *Bulletin*, XXIII, No.  
 2 (January 1930).

<sup>38</sup> Arnold Guyot, Unpublished manuscript memoir in the archives of the U.  
 S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

as it is called, at an elevation of not less than 5271 feet. It connects Sevierville, Tennessee, with Webster, Jackson County, North Carolina, through the valleys of Little Pigeon and Oona Luttee, the last of which is the main northern tributary of the Tuckasegee.

Between the gorges of the Big Pigeon and Road Gap the top of these ridges is unusually sharp and rocky, deeply indented and winding considerably, covered with a dense growth of laurels and high trees, which make travel over them extremely difficult and almost impracticable. Neither the white man or the Indian hunter venture into this wilderness. Several of the highest points in the Appalachian Region are found on the western side, although not on the chain itself—such as the triple mountain of Bullhead, 6613 feet—the group first ascended and named by Buckley, Mounts Guyot, Alexander and Henry, which is according to my measurement higher still, 6636 feet—both of which are very near the watershed but outside in Tennessee.

In this paragraph Guyot particularly absolves himself from any possible criticism for having named a principal peak for himself, by ascribing both the first ascent and the naming of the mountain to S. B. Buckley, with whom he had been associated in exploration. The text sheds another interesting light on the fact that the wilds of Smoky may confuse even the most distinguished of its visitors, playing its jokes on Guyot just as it did on the 1821 state line surveying party. The triad of Mount Guyot, and its companion peaks are really not outside in Tennessee, as the geographer stated, but sit astride the state line. Professor Guyot's map and various references in his writings lead to the inference that he considered the state line as that divide lying between Big Creek and Cataluchee, following the Mount Sterling Ridge to Balsam Mountain northward along that to Tricorner Knob, an assumption which if correct would really place Mount Guyot and its companions wholly in Tennessee. Guyot's account continues:

Beyond the Road Gap, the chain of the Smoky mountains rises still higher, but the top of the ridge ceases to be so rugged and sharp, and will allow an easy path. One has been cut for my visit by the order of Mr. Clingman from the Road Gap to the highest peak. About six miles southwest of the Gap is the culminating point of the Smoky Mountains, Smoky Dome or Clingman's Mount, 6660 feet, which is thus only some 50 feet lower than the highest summit of the Black Mountains.



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From this point the chain gradually descends. The black verdure of the balsam firs which elsewhere crown the highest summits gives way to the green foliage of the Beeches and Oaks. After a short turn to the west it sends a long and powerful ridge, called the Forney Ridge, to the southwest, to the Little Tennessee. From the head of the Forney Ridge, the Big Stone Mt., 5614 feet, the main chain continues nearly due west, then curving gradually to the southwest, terminates near the deep cut of the Tennessee in the Great Bald, 4922 feet. All this portion of the Smoky Mountains from Forney Ridge is used by the Tennesseans for grazing cattle. Numerous paths, therefore, run up the western slopes, and along the dividing ridge. But the eastern slope is still a wilderness, little frequented. Here the Little Tennessee cuts that high chain by a deep, winding chasm, in which no room is left for a road on its immediate banks, the mountain nearby rising to 3000 feet above it and upwards, the point where it leaves the mountains being barely 900 feet above the level of the sea.

Much of Guyot's interest was centered in the ascertaining of the precise altitudes of the various mountains. He had neither the time nor the facilities necessary to run a line of levels to all these points, so he was forced to content himself with a barometric survey, a method that is always susceptible to much error. To guard against this, he enlisted the services of other interested persons as observers at his stationary instruments, while he, in the field, never relied upon a single reading, but took a series at each spot. The convenient and compact aneroid barometer was not in use in his day, only the much larger and more delicate mercurial instrument. To one who has pushed his way through the jungle-thick vegetation of the more remote parts of the Smokies, even in this late day when trails of a sort exist, there can be no more striking illustration of the zeal that actuated this great explorer than a mental picture of him, with but a single companion, struggling up the steep, trackless, laurel-tangled slopes of Smoky, burdened with supplies for a week or more, and handicapped still more by a bulky, fragile barometer, that must be most carefully protected from any rude contact that might wreck beyond repair its delicate mechanism. But though laboring under such difficulties, so painstaking was Guyot with his observations and subsequent calculations that the figures he cites for the various points in the Smokies seldom vary



as much as a score of feet from the latest altitudes announced by the United States Geological Survey.

Finding many of the peaks of the Smokies without a local name, or at least one which he could learn, Guyot assumed the explorer's prerogative and affixed to certain of them titles of his own choosing, the most of which, however, have failed to survive. For this reason, and because of the lack of other complete descriptive data, it was impossible until some three years ago to identify with any certainty all the points in Guyot's list of the peaks of the Smokies. But at that time, through the indefatigable efforts of Myron H. Avery, of Washington, an interested searcher for all facts regarding the southern mountains, the discovery of a map drawn under Guyot's direction by his nephew, E. Sandoz, hidden away in the archives of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, gave the key, and today the exact location of almost every item in Guyot's list has been positively settled.

With Guyot's labors the early exploration of the Smokies ceased. The Civil War intervened, and in Reconstruction days and afterward people were too busy with other more momentous affairs to pry into the secrets of these high hills. It has remained for the present generation to reveal its further beauties and attractions to the world at large.