

Brown Mountain Lights A-5

General Description

Continuing to ride on the parkway (see Segment A-3 for additional information), a gentle 7 mile descent followed by an 8 mile climb and another 5 mile descent will bring you to the Linville Falls area. From here you climb gently for 3 miles to the point where you leave the parkway. At this point you drop quickly from the Blue Ridge escarpment into the foothills, with a 15 mile downhill ride. Here you intersect with Route B, the Piedmont Spur, which turns south-eastward. Continuing along the route, you will ride in a valley for the remaining 10 miles of this segment.

Approximately 52 miles/84 kilometers.

Hazardous Areas

Tunnels on the parkway continue to present problems. Be sure to use your headlight.

Roadway Condition

The portion of the route along the parkway is excellent. The descent from the Blue Ridge escarpment is along a well constructed road which has paved shoulders of a rough surface type and periodic passing lanes. The remainder of the roads in this segment are also in good condition.

Services

Services are readily available just off the Parkway. Little Switzerland and Spruce Pine offer full services. Camping facilities are provided on the Parkway at Linville Falls, at several private campgrounds along the route, and at a National Forest Campground.

Points of Interest

- 1 Museum of North Carolina Minerals

This museum features the great variety of minerals found in North Carolina. A collection of 700 catalogued specimens is available for study.

- 2 Rockhounding

Numerous mines offer the rockhound a chance to "strike it rich". In this area you can hunt for moonstones, garnets, emeralds, aquamarine, quartz, uranium minerals, mica and several other lesser known gems.

- 3 Linville Caverns

About 100 years ago the mysterious appearance of fish swimming out of the mountains led explorers to follow a stream deep into Humpback Mountain where rooms whose ceilings "looked like the arch of some grand old cathedral" were discovered. During the Civil War, Linville Caverns served as a hiding place for deserters from both the Union and Confederate armies.

- 4 Linville Falls

The falls are reached by a foot trail near the Blue Ridge Parkway. Upper Falls cascade over a smooth 12 foot rock shelf, then the water plunges 90 feet at Lower Falls into a rock-encircled pool at the head of Linville Gorge.

- 5 Linville Gorge Wilderness Area

This is one of eastern America's most scenic and rugged gorges and is reputed to be the wildest and most treacherous area in the Blue Ridge. Plant life includes a large number of rare species. A nearby Parkway campground provides a convenient

base camp from which to explore the area. Primitive camping is also permitted along the trail into the gorge; a permit must be obtained from the district ranger's office.

- 6 Barkhouse Recreation Area

This is a picnic area, with no camping permitted. Water is available here.

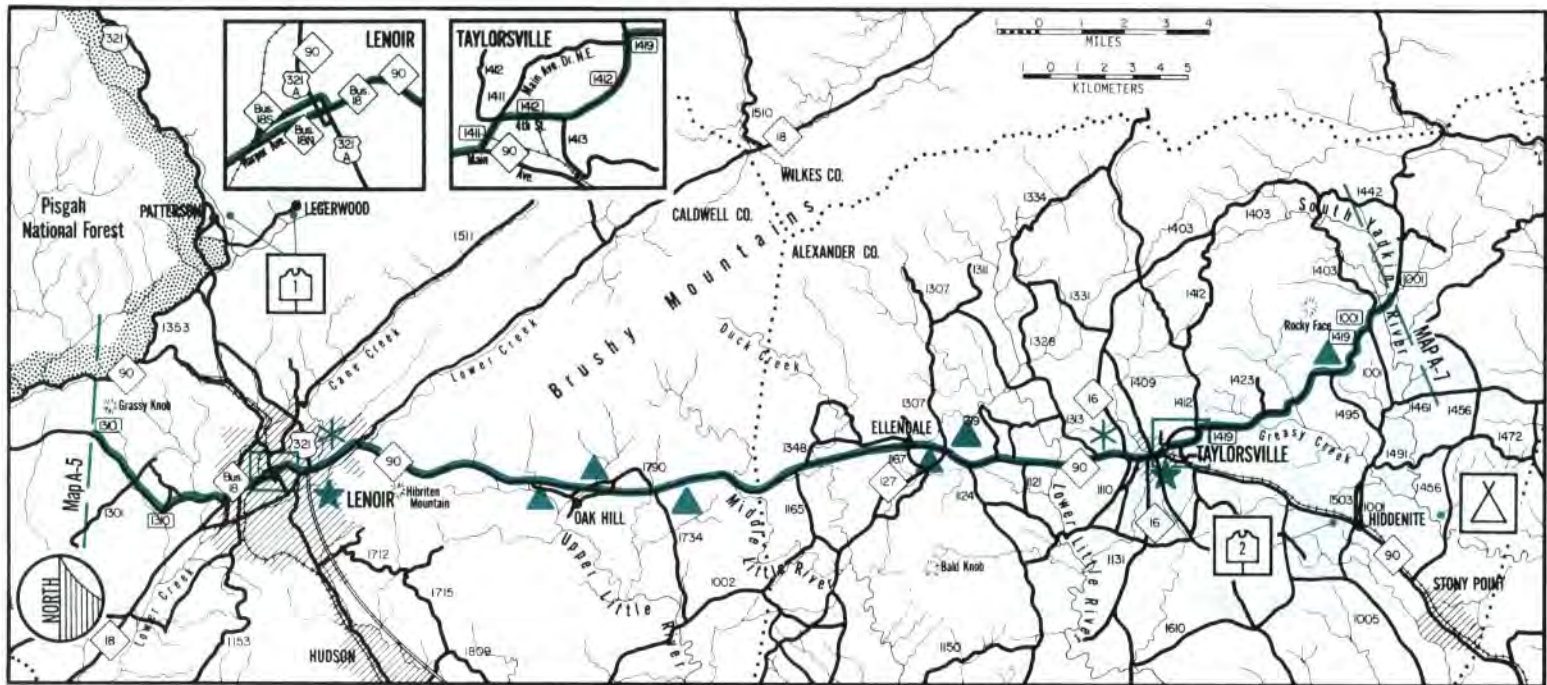
- 7 Brown Mountain Lights

The unsolved mystery of the Brown Mountain lights has intrigued scientists and historians for more than two centuries. The U.S. Geological Survey has conducted two studies to determine the cause of the lights. The first study, conducted in 1913, concluded that the lights were locomotive headlights from the Catawba Valley. However, in 1916, a great flood knocked out the railroad bridges preventing locomotive travel for several weeks. The lights continued to be observed during this time. The second survey report concluded that the lights are due to the spontaneous combustion of marsh gases. However, there are no marshy places on or near Brown Mountain. This same report ruled out that the lights are a reflection of mountain moonshine stills.

According to Cherokee Indian legends, these lights were sighted as far back as the year 1200, when a great battle was fought near Brown Mountain between the Cherokee and Catawba Indians. The legend explains that the lights are the spirits of Indian maidens who have continued to search through the centuries for their husbands and sweethearts who died in this battle.

- 8 Mortimer National Forest Recreation Area

Part of the Pisgah National Forest, this recreation area offers camping, fishing and hiking.



Carolina Emerald

A-6

General Description

Rolling hills and farmland characterize the terrain of this segment.

Approximately 36 miles/58 kilometers.

Roadway Condition

N.C. 90 between Lenoir and Taylorsville has a high quality pavement, the remainder of the roads in the segment are of a rougher pavement type but all are in good condition and well-maintained.

Hazardous Areas

Traffic in Lenoir is somewhat congested. N.C. 90 between Lenoir and Taylorsville has a moderate amount of truck traffic and a higher volume of automobile traffic than is desirable. 22 miles

Services

Numerous country stores offer needed services along the route. Lenoir and Taylorsville provide full services. Camping is available at a private campground near the route.

Points of Interest

1 Happy Valley

This fertile valley was once the home of the Saura Indians. Settled in the mid-1700's by the white man, the area contains several homes of interest, from different periods in its history. One of these, Fort Defiance, named for a frontier fort which previously stood on the site, is being restored as a museum of period history. It was built between 1788 and 1792 and belonged to General William Lenoir, a prominent leader in the Revolutionary War. Another home, Clover Hill, which was built in 1846, is an exceptional example of the Greek Revival Architecture of that period. Both of these homes are on the National Register of Historic Places.

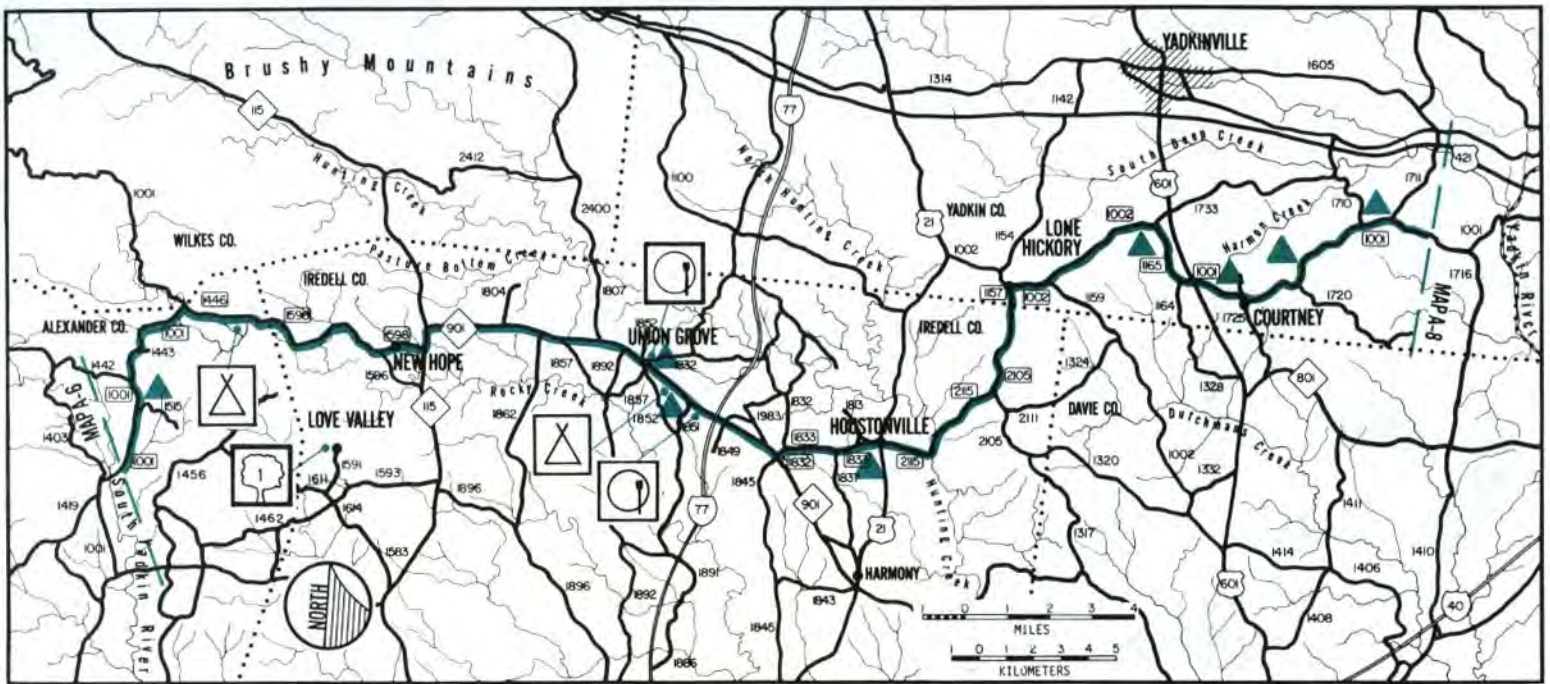
2 Hiddenite and the Emerald Valley Mines

North Carolina, "nature's sample case", contains a little of nearly all the precious stones and minerals, but not very much of any one. The state is, however, the only known source of hiddenite, an emerald green variety of spodumene.

Hiddenite and emerald were first found in the soil of this area in 1879, by a farmer plowing a field. W.E. Hidden, a mineralogist of note, who happened to be in the area, became interested as he had never seen a crystal of this kind. With the help of a few men, he did some prospecting and found more of this mineral in the ground. He bought the farm and two other tracts of land ad-

joining it and established the Emerald and Hiddenite Mining Company in 1881. Systematic mining was undertaken and proved profitable for many years. Other gems have also been found in the area, including beryl, emerald, quartz, pyrite, and tourmaline.

Today several mines in the area are open to the public for prospecting. Many precious gems have been taken from these mines and are on display in museums throughout the world. The largest single uncult emerald crystal in North America, a 1,438 carat gem, was found in this area in 1969. In 1970, the "Carolina Emerald," now owned by Tiffany and Company was found here. When cut to 13 14 carats, this stone, valued at \$100,000 became the largest and finest cut emerald on this continent.



Bushy Mountains

A-8

Points of Interest



1 Love Valley

This is a re-creation of an old western town complete with wooden sidewalks and local "cowboys."

General Description

Gently rolling hills change gradually to steeper climbs as you begin to skirt the Brushy Mountains in the western part of this segment. After a few miles of such terrain, the hills diminish and you find yourself riding along a level ridge. A few gentle hills complete the segment.

Approximately 42 miles/68 kilometers.

Roadway Condition

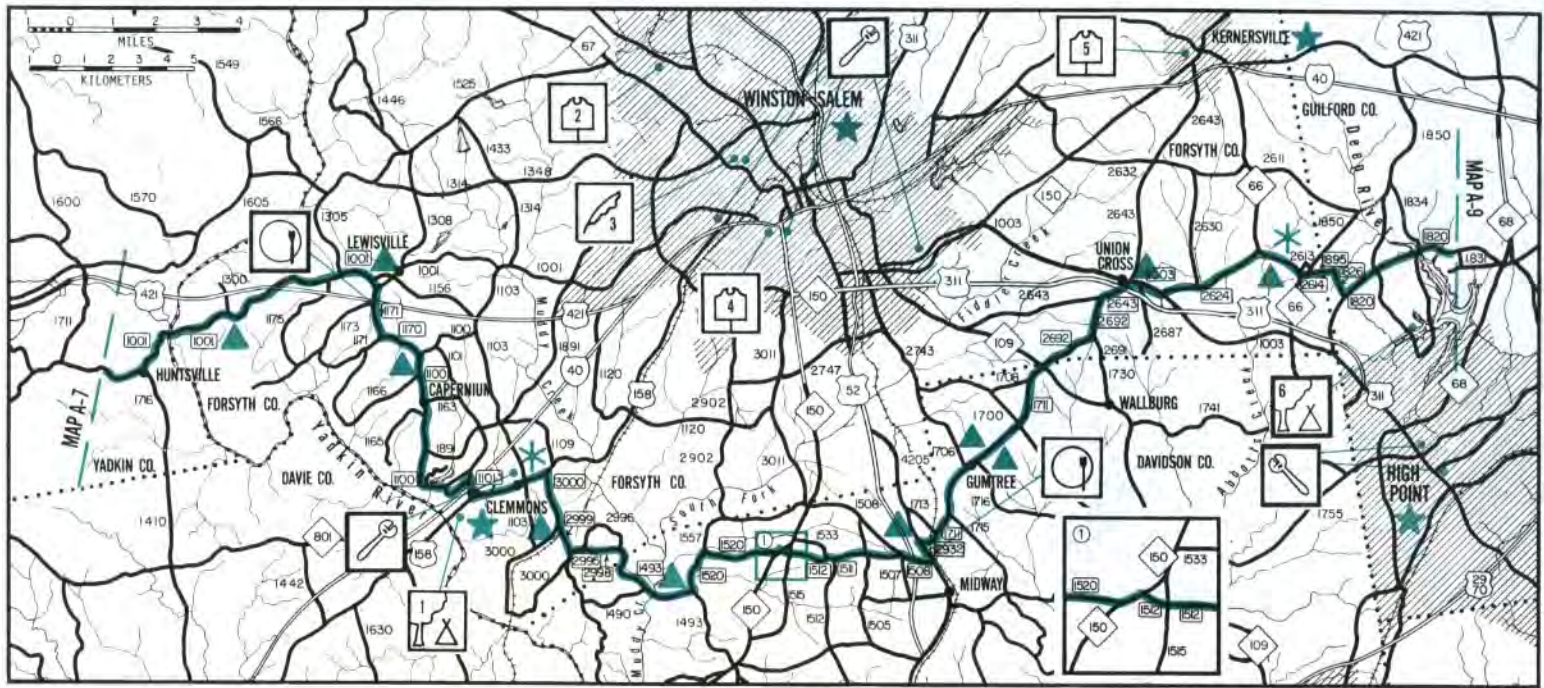
Most of the roads in this segment have a roughly-paved surface but are in very good condition and are well-maintained.

Hazardous Areas

This is a very rural area in which you encounter little traffic and virtually no hazards.

Services

Numerous country stores furnish needed services. There are no full service towns in this segment. Camping is available at two private campgrounds in the Union Grove area.



Wachovia Tract A-8

General Description

Gently rolling hills are characteristic of the terrain in this segment, as you travel past old family farms and through newer rural housing developments.

Approximately 48 miles/77 kilometers.

Roadway Condition

The roads in this segment are generally good and are well-maintained, but have a roughly paved surface.

Hazardous Areas

The roads in the vicinity of Clemmons are congested. 2 miles. N.C. 66 near the Forsyth/Guilford county line has a high volume of traffic, including significant amounts of truck traffic. 1.1 miles.

Services

Numerous country stores provide needed services. Clemmons, Winston-Salem and High Point offer full services, including bicycle shops. Overnight camping facilities are provided at Tanglewood Park and Oak Hollow Park.

Points of Interest

- 1 Tanglewood Park

Formerly a private estate, the 1,117 acre park offers camping, motel accommodations, picnicking, horseback riding, swimming, fishing, and other recreational facilities. An historic church, built in 1809, an arboretum and rose garden, and a deer park are also within its boundaries.

- 2 Bethabara

Early in 1753 Moravians from Pennsylvania purchased a tract of nearly 100,000 acres of land in "the three forks of Muddy Creek." They called it Wachau (in English, Wachovia) which means meadow-stream. Later that same year fifteen men, carefully chosen for their particular skills—minister, warden, physician, baker, tailor, shoemaker, tanner, gardner, three farmers, and two carpenters—left Pennsylvania to settle the Carolina wilderness. They set about to build a town, which they named Bethabara, "House of Passage." By 1756 the town had become a center of commercial activity.

In 1766, the Moravians founded their central town, Salem, and by 1772 when the essential buildings there were completed, most of the industries and residents of Bethabara moved to the new town, leaving Bethabara a small, quiet community.

On the site of this first Moravian settlement are several restored homes and buildings and a museum showing artifacts of the old town.

- 3 Reynolda House

Formerly the home of the founder of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, this was the center of a self-sustaining village and farm. In 1965 it was opened to the public and dedicated to the advancement of education and the arts. Of note are the extensive collection of American paintings and the elegant furnish-

ings from many countries and periods, which are displayed throughout the house.

- 4 Old Salem

Designated as a national historic landmark, Old Salem is the preservation of an entire town, which was formed in 1766 by Moravians. The industrious nature of these people is evident in the style and quality of their dwellings and in their everyday lives, as re-created in the setting of Old Salem.

Although many of the restored buildings are privately owned, seven are open to the public. Of particular interest are Salem Tavern, which still serves meals, and Winkler Bakery, where early baking methods are demonstrated and baked goods are sold.

Also in the historic area is the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts which displays the interior furnishings typical of various sections of the South during the time from the first settlements in Virginia through the first decades of the new independent nation. Fifteen period rooms, rebuilt from southern homes, reflect the tastes, way of life, styles, craftsmanship and technology of the years 1600-1820.

- 5 Korner's Folly

Built in 1880, this unusual house of 22 rooms has seven different levels. Originally the home of artist Julie Korner, many interesting and innovative features were incorporated into its design. The house changed and grew with the Korner family, and in 1897 the top floor was converted into a theater—the first "little theater" in the United States. The house is open on the second Sunday of the month, April through October, from 1 to 5 p.m.

- 6 Oak Hollow Park

This large park offers camping, picnicking and boat rentals.