

Scenery—

An Undeveloped Source of Revenue for the Farmer

By T. D. GRAY

Extension Landscape Architect, West Virginia University



With the development of a system of good roads, West Virginia has become accessible to everyone who follows the "rubber-tire" trail. Hard-surfaced roads steadily push the frontier back and sections which were back-

woods, only a short time ago, are easily reached by automobile in a few hours today.

The Midland Trail, North-South Highway, Seneca Trail, and the North-western Turnpike are known far and wide and thousands of motorists follow them every day.

Hard-surfaced roads lead to, and pass through in many instances, some of the most alluring, fascinating, rugged, and ever-changing scenery that can be found East of the Rocky Mountains. One could not hope to find a more fascinating view than that of the New River Gorge, as seen from the Midland Trail, U. S. Route 60, or a more rugged and picturesque scene than this same gorge presents when viewed from the famous Hawk's Nest just to the North. Through this beautiful gorge the New River flows 800 feet below the crest along the highway, and 1,292 feet below Hawk's Nest still farther up the mountainside.

There is no more alluring spot to be found anywhere than that of the "Smoke Hole" in Pendleton county, midway between Petersburg and Franklin, just off of U. S. Route 220. Leaving the main highway and entering this area, for three or four miles, one cannot help but be fascinated by the charm of rugged peaks, roaring cataracts of the South Branch of the Potomac, babbling brooks, wooded mountainsides, and solitude broken only by the wind singing through the trees and the restless water of the mountain streams making playful music.

What a haven for those tired from worry and overwork!

Example in Other States

Search where you will, you will not find Nature grandeur more completely restful anywhere than in the scenery along the Seneca Trail, as it follows closely the backbone of the Alleghenies. To list all of the many and varied scenic attractions within the state of West Virginia would require pages of description, because most of it is clothed in natural beauty, when unspoiled and not mutilated by the sometimes careless hand of man.

Thousands of tourists are visiting West Virginia each summer in ever-in-

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creasing numbers. These tourists are a potential source of revenue to all parts of the state, and no one group has greater possibilities of gains from this source than the farmers of West Virginia. This fact is self-evident to any person who has visited Pennsylvania, New York and the New England states. Everywhere through the rural sections in these states, one sees farm homes with neat signs advertising "Chicken Dinners" or "Rooms for Tourists."

Roadside stands with vegetables and fruits in season from the farms are common on all thoroughfares throughout the Northeastern states. Some of the farmers

vegetables, or what not. Ugly untidy roadside markets are no more likely to attract trade than the ugly untidy country store.

The certified Mountain State tourist homes supervised by the Agricultural Extension Service of West Virginia University, serve to help the farmers reap their just share of income from the tourist crop, but they are not the only means that await the alert land-owner to obtain a return from his holdings. Farmers in some areas of the state have glimpsed the possibilities of tourist trade.

The Wilson farm along the Midland Trail near Huntington is an example of

ity in making the state attractive by keeping his home neat and well-painted and the out-buildings pleasing in appearance, through the use of paint or white-wash. He will thus help to make a good impression and induce the traveler to return.

Few people of the state seem to know or appreciate the fact that two national forests, the Shenandoah National Forest and the Monongahela National Forest largely in West Virginia. In this state, the Monongahela Forest includes about 250,000 acres and the Shenandoah about 50,000 acres.

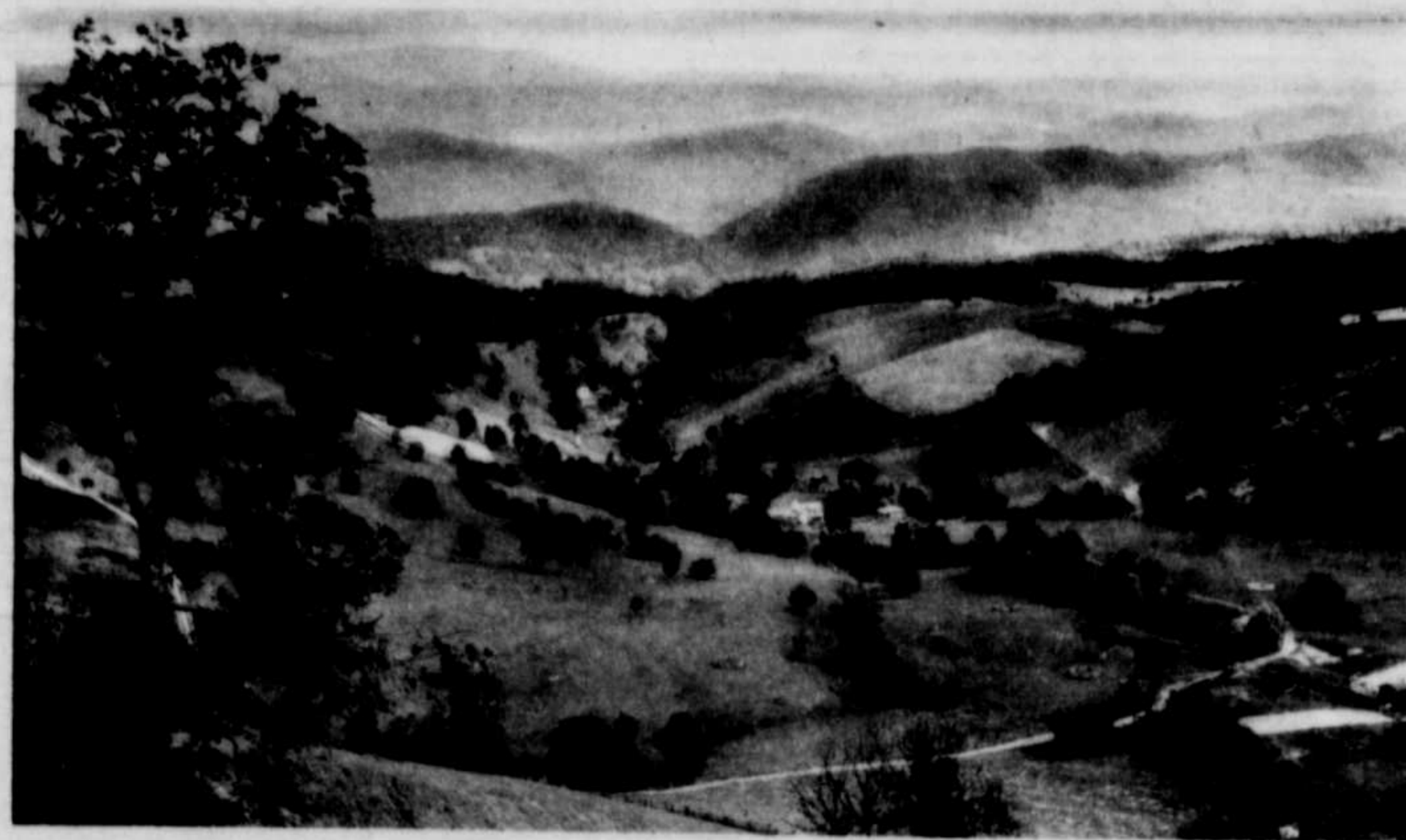
These forest areas have real potential value to West Virginia farmers as lures to the tourists. They are now being developed and advertised to the public for recreational purposes. Some persons seem to have the idea that because they are forest areas they are to be used for forestry purposes only. This is decidedly not the case, because the Forest Service has a definite principle of developing its forest areas so that they will return the maximum benefits to the people.

If areas in the forest are more valuable for recreation than for the production of forest products, such areas are set aside principally for recreational purposes. Foresters who have visited every national forest in the East, state that the Monongahela National Forest is the equal in scenic attractiveness of any forest East of the Rocky Mountains. The development of these forests for recreation will attract thousands of tourists. Indeed, no one who has not seen these areas can appreciate the real charm and beauty that lie within their confines.

Good Yearly Crop Assured

Scenery is one crop not restricted to any form of production control program and of which there is no danger of having an over-production, even though a good crop each year is virtually certain. Likewise, the demand is not affected by a bountiful supply, and those who avail themselves of the opportunity to capitalize on the beauty that is all around them are practically assured of a brisk demand and a ready market at good prices.

Every road leading into the state brings new buyers who are eager to see and enjoy West Virginia's unsurpassed scenic attractions. The potential value of the state's yearly offering of Natural beauties is not surpassed by that of any other agricultural enterprise, and all country folk will not only adjust their activities so as to share in the return afforded, but will make a constructive effort to further enhance this great natural resource of the state.



Looking North toward the mouth of Seneca and Roaring Plains, Monongahela National Forest, W. Va. (Photo by U. S. Forest Service).

in these states sell practically all of the surplus they produce in this manner. Some farmers in West Virginia have begun to capitalize on this source of revenue, but it is, as yet, virtually untapped.

Many farms in West Virginia are too rough or too steep for economical farming operations. These rough farms, however, have good locations for small cabins or cottages that can be rented to tourists at a good profit. The tourist is glad to find a place of this kind and is willing to pay a fair and just price for the use of the cabin and services he obtains.

Remunerative Crop

That the tourist crop is a remunerative one to other states is shown in a study of reports from those states that are catering to and advertising for tourists. Pennsylvania estimates the cash value of tourists at \$185,000,000 per year, and yet no one thinks of Pennsylvania particularly as a tourist state, as one does of California and Florida. New England and Canada report that the tourists' trade is their largest single cash crop. It is reported that the Shenandoah Valley derives \$15,000,000 annually from its tourist crop. Every other section or state catering to tourists reports large revenues from this source.

For the farmer to derive his full return from scenery as a source of revenue, it is necessary that he set his trap and lure with attractive bait. Neat signs should be displayed that advertise what he has to sell whether this be rooms for tourists, chicken dinners, fresh fruits and

a farm that has been turned into a tourist camp. Small cottages here and there dot the edge of the woods. Running water and a place to cook is provided at each cottage. These cottages are in use continuously throughout the Summer months. Many persons and families remain for weeks.

In the South Branch Valley cottages and summer camps are springing up along the South Branch of the Potomac river. These cottages and camps are owned mostly by farmers and rented during the Summer months to the ever increasing army of tourists. A group of farmers have purchased 9½ acres near Seneca Rocks, Pendleton county, and developed a tourist camp site for those who come to see that magnificent outcropping of white Medina sandstone that rises 900 feet perpendicularly from the water's edge. These rocks are reached from State Route 5, leading off U. S. Route 220 just North of Franklin.

Help to Make State Attractive

Not only should the farmer expect a return from the tourist crop, but he should also assume a definite responsibility.

Tourists bring many thousands of dollars into West Virginia every year, and will bring and spend more if encouraged to do so.

