

in the early 1980s, but a recent summer program known as The Great Smokies Experience (maryvillecollege.edu/gse) has revitalized MC's connection to Tremont. The short hike to Spruce Flats Falls has long been a highlight of the environmental education program at Tremont.



Getting there:

Begin at the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont parking lot in front of the visitor center.

Walk up the paved road to the cabin area and take a left at the sign to Spruce Flats Falls. There are several trail intersections along the way, but signage to the falls is good. As the trail ascends, you can see Thunderhead Mountain on the right. The trail terminates at the multi-tiered Spruce Flats Falls. This short (2-mile roundtrip) but steep hike is picturesque and perfect if you only have a few hours.

Thunderhead Mountain

Margaret Henry was the first “Scholarship Secretary” (now known as a financial aid officer) at Maryville College, serving from 1903 until 1916. Like Dr. Shields, Henry was born in the Smokies and often took hikes and horseback rides to Thunderhead Mountain. Thunderhead boasts the highest elevation in Blount County at 5,527.’ Of the vista, Henry once said: “Nothing in all the world can compare with the vision of looking down upon the clouds from the sunny heights of Thunderhead.”¹

Options for the Thunderhead Mountain hike:

1. Begin at Laurel Creek Road, 4.5 miles from the Townsend Wye. Park at Lead Cove Trailhead on the left. Take Lead Cove Trail 1.8 miles to the intersection with Bote Mountain Trail and continue to the Appalachian Trail (at 4.7 miles from beginning). Take a left, and proceed to the three peaks. The first is “Rocky Top” (of UT legend), the second is “Rocky Top 2,” and the third has a small sign marking the Thunderhead Mountain summit.



2. Begin at the back of the Cades Cove Picnic Area. Take Anthony Creek Trail 3.5 miles to the intersection with Bote Mountain Trail. Turn right and proceed 1.6 miles to the intersection with the Appalachian Trail. Take a left, past “Rocky Top” and proceed to Thunderhead Mountain.

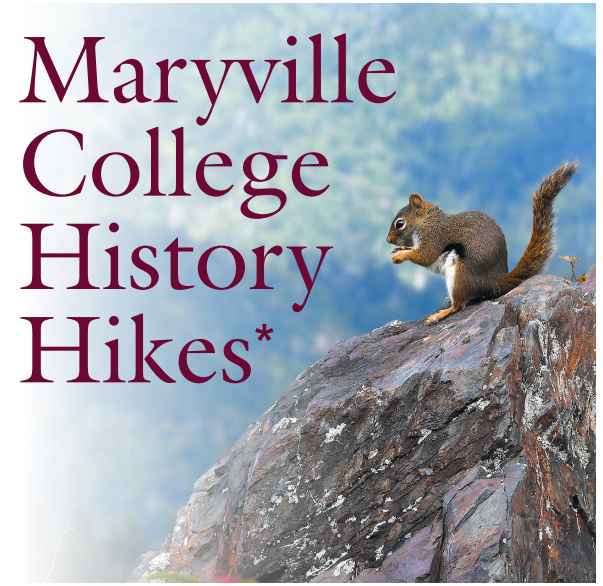


MARYVILLE COLLEGE

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Maryville College History Hikes*



“Somehow I felt...not only in this world, but of it.”¹

— MARGARET HENRY

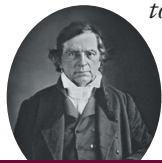
MARYVILLE COLLEGE is situated in one of the most beautiful areas in the world, on the edge of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP). Many of the park’s trails have special connection to Maryville College, a few of which are highlighted here. We encourage the Maryville College community to experience these trails and embody the MC lifestyle: Fit. Green. Happy.®

* Written by Dr. Drew Crain. Information about trails was obtained from: Great Smoky Mountains Association. 2012. Hiking Trails of the Smokies. 5th Edition. 581 pgs.

¹ Margaret Henry. Notes of 1912 Smokies Adventure. Maryville College Archives.

Bote Mountain and Schoolhouse Gap trails

To promote mission work, education and commerce, Maryville College Founder Isaac Anderson wanted to link the Hazel Creek copper mining area in North Carolina with the Maryville area. A plan was begun in the 1830s for the North Carolinians to build a road to Spence Field and for Anderson to build a road from Spence Field to the Tuckaleechee Cove area in Townsend. Whereas the North Carolina road was never completed, today two popular GSMNP trails, Bote Mountain and Schoolhouse Gap, are remnants of Isaac Anderson's vision.



ANDERSON

To determine the best route, Anderson consulted the native Cherokee. They identified two options and then took a vote on which one should be built. As the Cherokee language does not have a "V," the winning route was called the "Bote" Mountain Trail. The neighboring ridge that lost the vote is called "Defeat Ridge." Overseeing the trail's construction, Anderson paid the native Americans in calico cloth for one day of work.



Options for the Bote Mountain Trail hike:

1. Begin at Laurel Creek Road, 4.5 miles from the Townsend Wye. Park at Lead Cove Trailhead on the left. Take Lead Cove Trail to the intersection with Bote Mountain Trail and continue to Spence Field. A wonderful half-day hike is Lead Cove Trail to Spence Field and back. This is a steep route to Spence Field, and the round trip is 9.4 miles.

2. Begin off Laurel Creek Road, 3.5 miles from the Townsend Wye at Schoolhouse Gap parking area on the right. Cross the road and walk back to the trailhead. The trail goes up to an intersection with Appalachian Trail near Spence Field. The 14-mile trip up and back is a full day adventure.

Options for the Schoolhouse Gap hike:

1. Begin at the Townsend Wye. Hike Chestnut Top Trail 4.3 miles to the intersection with Schoolhouse Gap Trail. Continue 2.0 miles to the intersection with Laurel Creek Road. If you have a pick-up car parked here you can drive back to the Townsend Wye; if not, you can hike Laurel Creek Road 3.9 miles back to the Wye.
2. Begin at the Schoolhouse Gap trailhead, on the right of Laurel Creek Road, 3.9 miles



from the Townsend Wye. From Laurel Creek Road, hike 1.1 miles to the intersection with Turkeypen Ridge Trail and continue straight on Schoolhouse Gap Trail until you reach a narrow, fenced manway on the left. Take this to Whiteoak Sink, a valley with a beautiful waterfall that was home to as many as 10 families. This is a beautiful and easy 4-mile round-trip hike. While there is no schoolhouse on this wide trail, it was once a route for children to travel to school in Townsend.

Gregory Bald

Dr. A. Randolph Shields was professor and chair of Biology at MC from 1962 until 1978. He was born in Cades Cove in 1913 and lived in the community until he was 13. Shields developed a love for all things natural as a result of his experiences in the cove, including herding cattle in the summers on Gregory Bald. A graduate of Maryville College (1934) and the University of Tennessee, Shields taught at Emory & Henry College, Roanoke College and UT before returning to Maryville. Alumni of that era still speak of memorable hikes to Gregory Bald led by Shields.

Getting there:

Drive to the back of Cades Cove Loop Road and take Forge Creek/Parson's Branch Road at the Cable Mill area. Proceed 2.2 miles and park at the dead-end just past the Parson's Branch Road turn off. Hike 5.75 miles (with a 2,200-foot elevation increase) to Gregory Bald. This strenuous 11.5 mile round-trip is a delightful day hike, and the bald at the top is an idyllic place to have a picnic. From this meadow, you can see Cades Cove and Fontana Reservoir.



Spruce Flats Falls

From 1969 until 1979, Maryville College operated, in cooperation with the GSMNP, the Maryville College Environmental Education Center. Dr. A. Randolph Shields, the College's chair of Biology, served as the director of the environmental education center from 1974 until 1977. The College's direct involvement in Tremont ended