

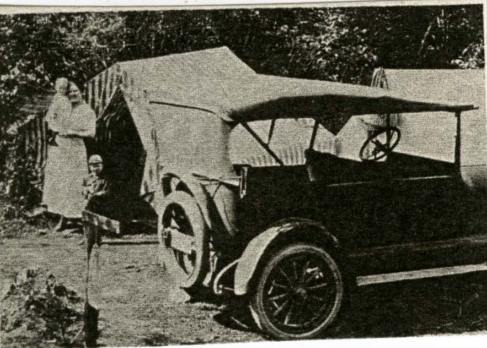
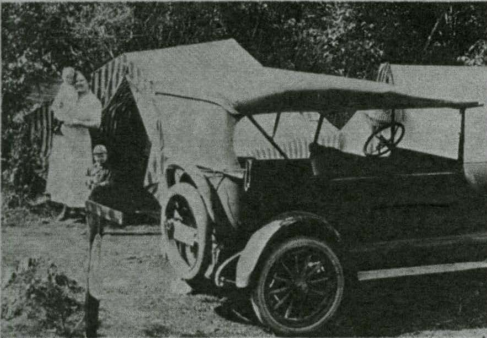




Street scene - Morehead, K

1940s

**From The Collection Of:  
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Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473**



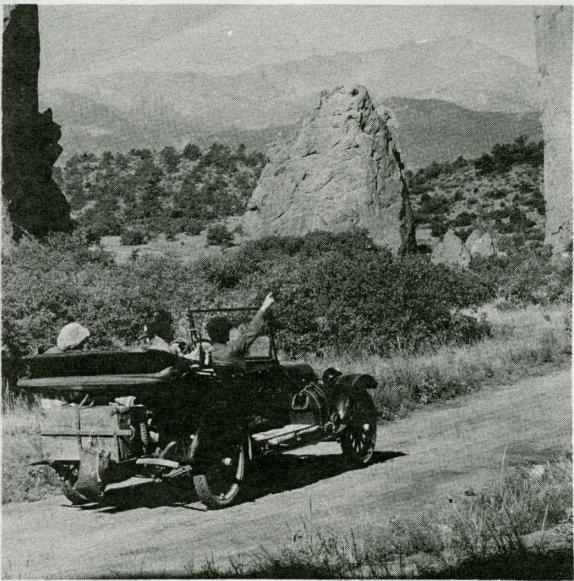






Forrest  
Casper

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There's a place in Colorado called the Garden of the Gods, and here are some visitors getting an eyeful of it in July, 1919. Automobile running boards are only a memory now, but look how useful they were. Selling point in those days was a securely-fastened spare tire to which you could tie your own trunk. Can you identify the make and model?

*Photo: U.S. Forest Service*



ROY + ELSIE Cornette

INDIAN

VILLAGE

MOTEL

S. KY.

Tourist  
Camp

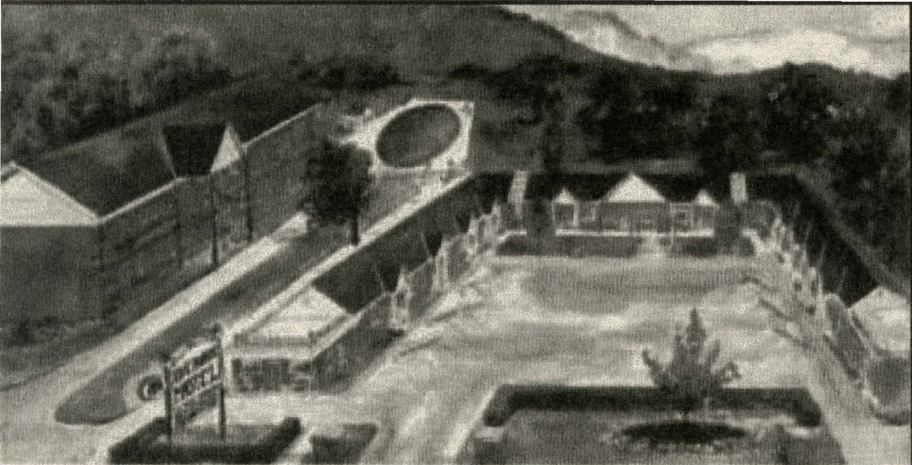
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WHERE THE BLUE GRASS ENDS  
AND THE HILLS BEGIN

## THE BRUCE MOTEL

HOME OF MOREHEAD  
STATE UNIVERSITY

"IN TOWN"  
MOREHEAD, KY.

LOCATED IN THE DANIEL BOONE NATIONAL FOREST, WHERE NATURE'S SCENERY IS AT ITS BEST



1950s + 60s

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Jackpot! Jackpot! There are 30 cars in this picture; how many and blessed with two spare tires easily accessible. This is quit parking lot for Oregon Caves in Siskiyou National Forest, Oregon. W

**CAMP**  
**Log CABINS**  
**CABINS**  
**BEER**  
**SINCLAIR**

**RESTAURANT**  
 Strictly Modern **CABINS**  
 The Mayflower  
 Tourist Camp

ENTRANCE DRIVE IN

MOONSHINE STILL MUSEUM

The Mayflower  
 GRAD  
**LOG CABINS**  
 Modern with BATH EAT

EAST		WEST	
ASHLAND, KY	60	LEXINGTON, KY	70
HURTINGTON, W VA	70	FRANKFORT, KY	75
CHARLESTON, W VA	75	LOUISVILLE, KY	80
LEAKINGTON, VA	80	NASHVILLE, TENN	85
WASHINGTON, D.C.	85	ST. LOUIS, MO	90

**CABINS**

III (8)

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EMMA DAVIS HOME 1955

From The Collection Of

Dr. Jack D. Ellis

552 W. Sun St.

Morehead, KY 40351

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19302, 302

TROCADERO NIGHT SPOT  
w. US 60, ROW 100

Later Homey for Down

TOURIST CAMP - CABINS



# THE PARK TOURIST INN

*A Beautiful Home In A Restful Spot*

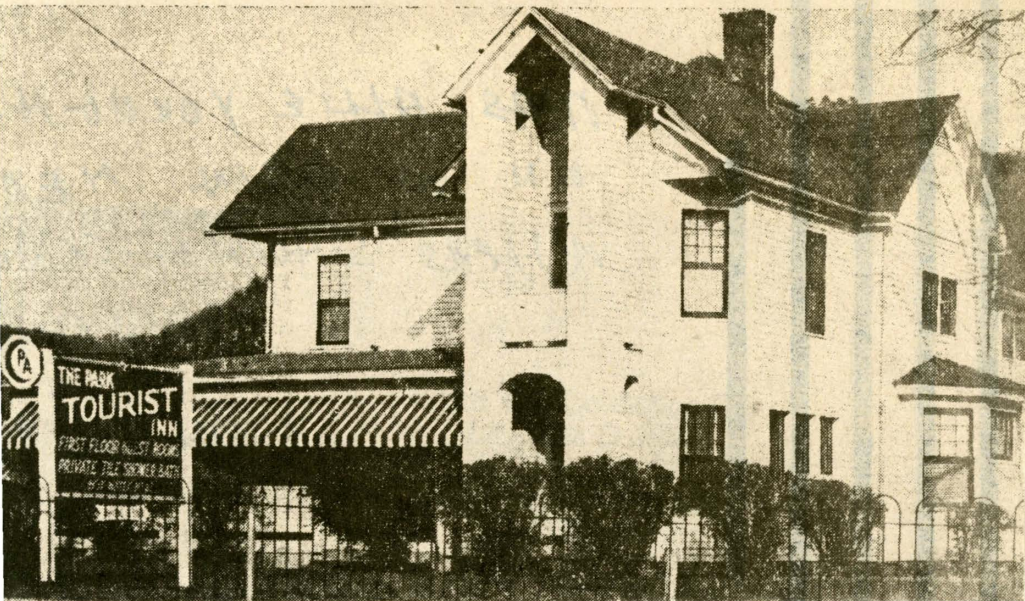


LOCATED ON WEST US 60  
THIS WAS ONCE THE HOME  
OF JUDGE ALLIE YOUNG'S  
WIDOW. LATER A  
TOURIST INN IN THE  
1950S

**From The Collection Of:  
Dr. Jack D. Ellis  
552 W. Sun St.  
Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473**

# THE PARK TOURIST INN

*A Beautiful Home In A Restful Spot*



THE PARK  
TOURIST  
INN

FIRST FLOOR REST ROOMS  
PRIVATE TEL. SHOWER BATHS  
HOT WATER HEAT

1935



# Dedic

ONCE THE HOME OF  
MRS ALLIE YOUNG -  
THIS MODERN TOURIST  
HOME ON MAIN ST  
WAS THE LATEST IN  
TOURIST HOMES.

1950 2

485

TRIST INN

Comfortable At

sqn



MAYFLOWER TOURIST  
CAMP 1930-1940s

From The Collection Of:

Dr. Jack D. Ellis

552 W. Sun St.

Morehead, KY 40351

606-784-7478





7-13  
THEN:

On West U.S. 60 (No N. Beau Ave.) WAS  
THE SANDY REST TOURIST CAMP WITH CABINS,  
ALSO STANDARD OIL SERVICE STATION AND  
FORD DEALERSHIP OWNED BY WOODIE HINTON

**From The Collection Of:**

**Dr. Jack D. Ellis**

**552 W. Sun St.**

**Morehead, KY 40351**

**606-784-7473**

C. 1920s

---

---

# ROSE TOURIST CAMP

Five Miles West Of Morehead on the Mid-  
land Trail. Gas Heated Cabins. Modern  
Equipment. Lunches.

---

---

---

“YOUR HOME  
ON THE ROAD”

---

---

---

We congratulate President Harvey A.  
Babb on his inauguration as President of  
the greatest educational institution in  
Eastern Kentucky.

---

---

---

Rowan Co News

April 30, 1936

From The Collection Of:  
Dr. Jack O. Ellis  
552 W. Sun St.  
Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473



## Stop With Us.

Brightest spot in Rowan county . . . Homelike treatment and real Kentucky hospitality . . . Everything to eat and drink . . . Supplies for man and car . . . Gas and Oils.

Whiskey, Wine, Brandy and Cold Beer  
Meals, Sandwiches or Lunch  
Candies, Cigars, Cigarettes, Tobaccos  
Tires, Gas and Oils

Clean, Modern  
Well Furnished

**CABINS** For **REST ROOMS**  
Tourists

### HOMELIKE TOURIST CAMP

MILLARD MOORE, Proprietor

2 1-2 Miles East of Morehead --- On the Midland Trail --- U. S. Route 60



MI

1934

From The Controller of:  
Dr. Jack D. Ellis  
552 W. Sun St.  
Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473

REST ROOMS

For Tourists

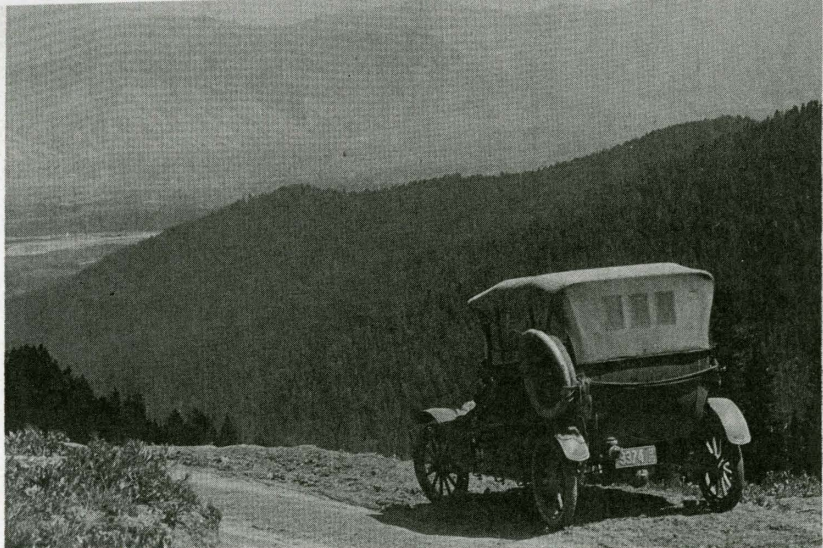
CABINS

Clean, Modern  
Well Furnished

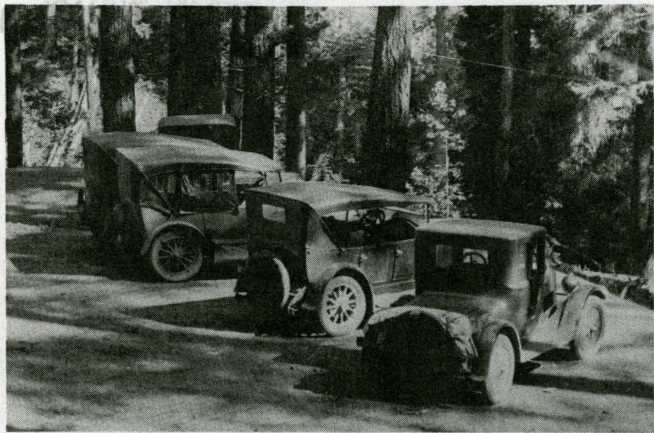
HOMELIKE TOURIST CAMP

BUILDING NO. 1

1.2 Miles East of Morehead - On the Midland (U.S. Route 25)



There is a natural law which insists that everything that goes up must come down. Here on the eastern crest of Teton Pass, Wyo., sits a 1919 model \_\_\_\_\_. Obviously, it has come up. It appears here to be considering that forthcoming 8,249 ft. drop in less than 25 miles. Driver, owner and photographer was a Mr. E. S. Shipp, honestly. History does not record whether he and the car made it safely down or not. But if he didn't, couldn't the accident be called a Shippwreck even if it happened on dry land? *Photo U.S. Forest Service*



If you can identify more than one make and model car in this parking area, don't do it. Or, if you must, be sure you're among friends. The scene is below the entrance to Oregon Caves in Siskiyou National Forest, Ore., and the picture was taken in 1923. Note the buttoned-on side curtains on third car from the right. Remember those? If you do, brother, you're over the hill. *Photo: U.S. Forest Service*





MAYFLOWER TOURIST CAMP located across from Shady Rest. Property now owned by Orear Caskey family.

**HOMELIKE TOURIST CAMP  
POPULAR RESORT OWNED  
BY A GENIAL HOST**

When you want a tasty bit to eat, or feel like that you could enjoy a good cold glass of beer, or a dram of good old Kentucky liquor there is one spot in Rowan county, that you can get just these very things. It is the Homelike Tourist Camp, located on the Midland Trail, two and one-half miles east of Morehead.

The Homelike Tourist Camp is operated by that genial good fellow, Millard Moore and his wife and sister, Miss Birtlee Moore. It is modernly equipped and has cabins for tourist, as well as restaurant accommodations and the best barbecue sandwiches in Eastern Kentucky.

Mr. Moore opened this camp in November, 1930, and its popularity has steadily grown. Having been prominently connected with the business life of the county in which he was born, Mr. Moore has scores of friends throughout this section. Previous to opening the Tourist Camp, he was engaged in the mercantile business on Christy Creek and also former Chevrolet dealer at Morehead. He is a staunch republican, precinct committeeman and a former member of the executive committee. Made the race for nomination for Sheriff in 1929 and was just a few votes short of victory. He is county patrolman and has served in this capacity for the past six years. A member of the Masons and Odd Fellows, and a perfect gentleman. Stop in and enjoy a visit with him.

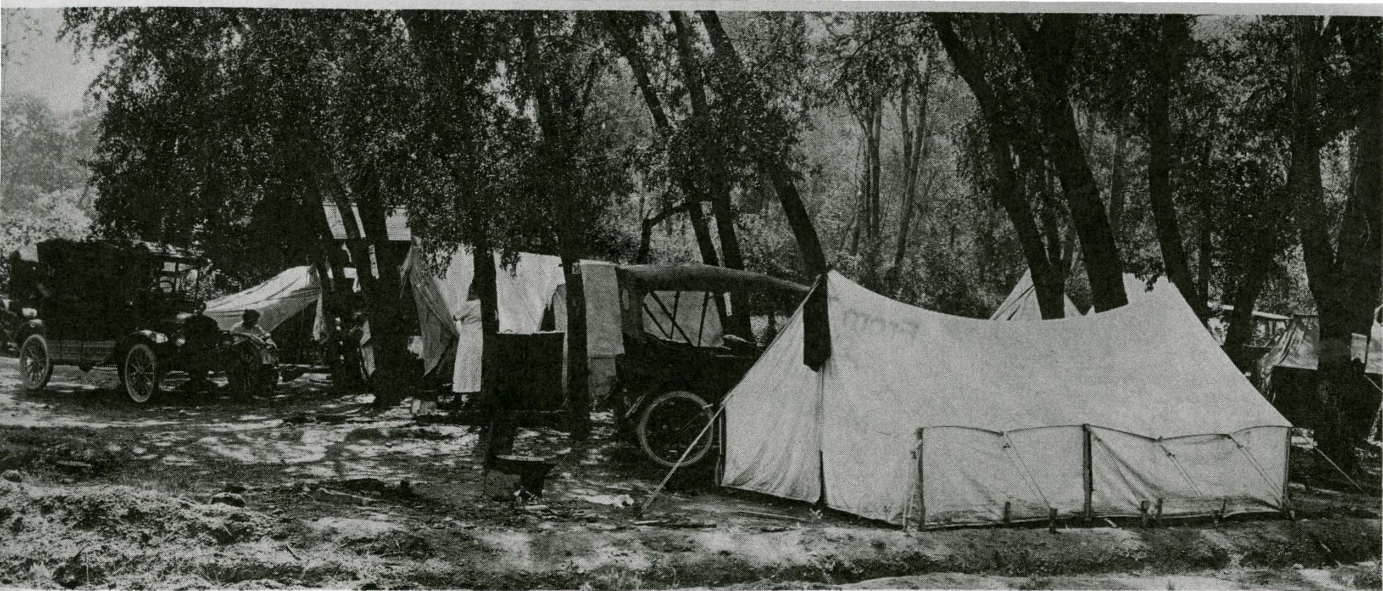
1924

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- 1.
- 2.
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- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

MOREHEAD  
US60  
EAST





There are at least 10 tents pitched here.



Prune Motel - W. Main St advertised  
"One Block from Restaurant,  
business and Theater District"

From The Collection Of:  
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552 W. Sun St.  
Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473



TOURIST CAMP

RESTAURANT  
Modern CABINS

Mayflower

RESTAURANT

BEER

HIGHWAY GRADE  
CABINS  
BATH EATS

ENTRANCE DRIVE IN

MOONSHINE

MURKIN ROAD KY.

U.S. 60



MAYFLOWER TOURIST CAMP ON MOREHEADS  
WEST MAIN ST. BUILT IN 1935, AND OWNED  
AND MAINTAINED BY CLELL AND SYLVIA  
BRUCE. PURCHASED IN 1947 BY O'REAR  
AND VELVA CASKEY IT IS STILL OWNED  
BY MRS CASKEY. TO DAY. (NOTICE THE  
"MOONSHINE STILL" ON THE RIGHT)

**From The Collection Of:  
Dr. Jack D. Ellis  
552 W. Sun St.  
Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473**



OLD KENTUCKY MOONSHINE STILL MUSEUM

The MAYFLOWER  
MOREHEAD, KY.

CAPTURED  
APRIL 1953

PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH









**RESTAURANT CABINS**

**BEER**

**RESTAURANT**

**RESTAURANT CABINS**  
Strictly Modern

*The Mayflower*  
**The Mayflower**  
Tourist Camp

**EAST**  
ASHLAND VA 60 MILES  
HUNTINGTON W VA 75 MILES  
CHARLESTON W VA 125 MILES  
LEWISBURG VA 135 MILES  
WASHINGTON DC 145 MILES

*The Mayflower* GRAB  
**LOG CABINS**  
Modern BATH EAT

**ENTER AND DRIVE IN**

**MOONSHINE STILL MUSEUM**

**CABINS**



Inez Maddy - 784-

MOREHEAD MAYFLOWER TOURIST CAMP  
AND COTTAGES - OPERATED BY MR. AND  
AND MRS LLELL BRUCE. 1935-1946.  
LOG CABINS - RESTAURANT - WOODSHINE STILL



Dr Jack D Ellis  
215 Knapp Ave  
Morehead, KY 40351

From The Collection Of:  
Dr. Jack D. Ellis  
552 W. Sun St.  
Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473



MAYFLOWER CAMP  
The Mayflower  
LOG CABINS

CABINS

RESTAURANT  
Strictly Modern CABINS  
The Mayflower  
Tourist Camp

EAST		
ASHLAND, KY.	60	LEXINGTON, KY.
HUNTINGTON, W.VA.	75	FRANKFORT, KY.
CHARLESTON, W.VA.	125	LOUISVILLE, KY.
LEXINGTON, VA.	310	RASHVILLE, TENN.
WASHINGTON, D.C.	465	ST. LOUIS, MO.

ENTRANCE DRIVE IN

MOONSHINE & STILL MUSEUM

CABINS

RESTAURANT  
BEER

The Mayflower GRAD  
LOG CABINS  
Modern with BATH EAT

SINCLAIR



MAYFLOWER TOURIST ~~HOME~~ CAMP

MOREHEAD KENTUCKY

© 1930 - 1950

 Jack Ellis  
552 W Sun St  
Morehead KY 40351-1564

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Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473



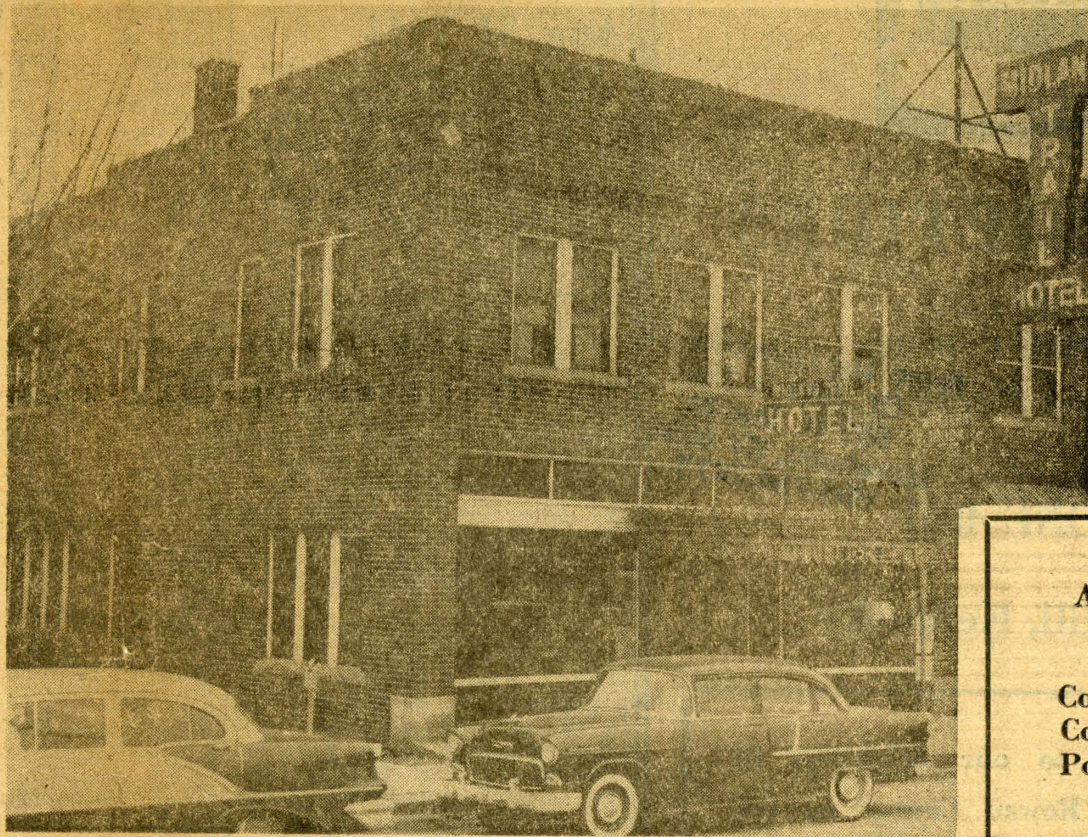




Bruce metal  
Main St  
Morehead  
(1960)

1960

From The Collection Of:  
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Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473



# MIDLAND TRAIL HOTEL

ON U. S. 60

MOREHEAD, KENTUCKY

**75  
AIRY ROOMS**

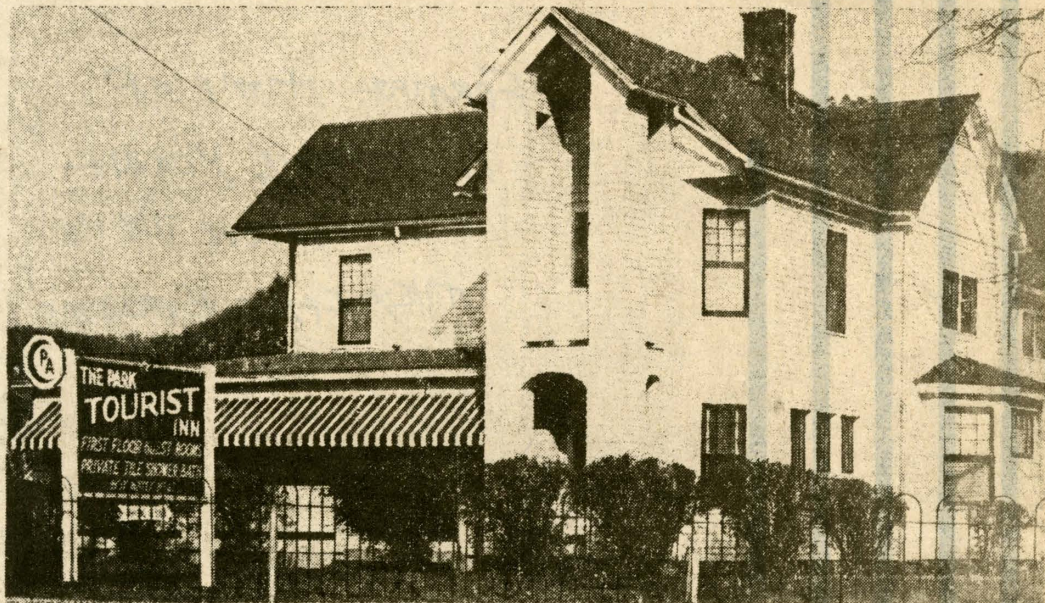
**Comfortable  
Convenient  
Popular Prices**

*All Modern  
Conveniences*



# THE PARK TOURIST INN

*A Beautiful Home In A Restful Spot*



**First Floor Rooms or Suites**  
**Private Tile Showers and Tubs**  
**Twin and Double Beds**  
**Ample Parking Facilities**

*It Is Always Quiet and Comfortable At*

## THE PARK TOURIST INN

TELEPHONE 485

East Main Street

Morehead, Kentucky



# Dedic

FORMER HOME OF  
MRS ALLIE YOUNG  
& DAUGHTER JANE  
THEY KENT BORDERS

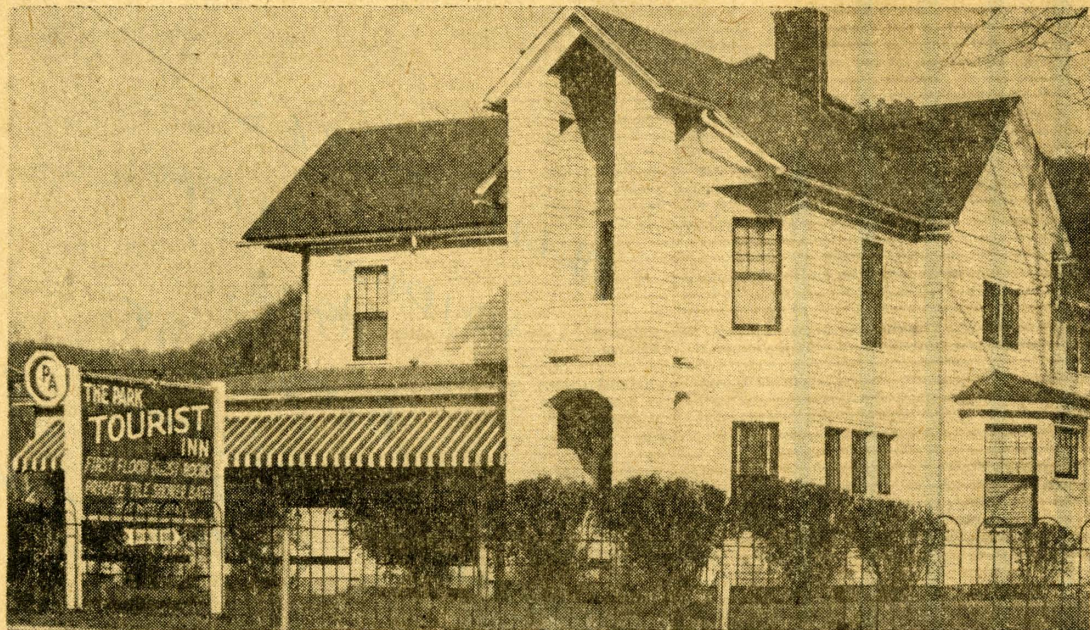
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Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473

The Civic, Se  
Youth Organ  
gress of Row



# THE PARK TOURIST INN

*A Beautiful Home In A Restful Spot*



**First Floor Rooms or Suites  
Private Tile Showers and Tubs  
Twin and Double Beds  
Ample Parking Facilities**

*It Is Always Quiet and Comfortable At*

## THE PARK TOURIST INN

TELEPHONE 485



# Dedica

ALLIE YOUNGS

WIDOW LIVED  
HERE

BEFORE IT  
BECAME

A  
TOWNSHIP

From The Collection Of:  
Dr. Jack D. Ellis  
552 W. Sun St.  
Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473

The Civic, Ser  
Youth Organiz  
gress of Rowa



# Morehead Memories (People and Places)

## Tourists, Tourist Camps and Tourism

By Jack D. Ellis

Morehead and Rowan County leaders are making a major effort to attract tourists to our community. There is even a Department of Tourism designed to entice visitors to our county.

However, since the Midland Trail (U.S. 60) came through our county in 1925, there have been local leaders in our community who recognized the economic value of tourism.

### Daniel Boone — first Kentucky tourist

The word "tourism" is a relatively new word in our language. It comes from the French word "tour," referring to a journey for "business, pleasure, or education, in which you return to your starting point."

Americans have always been an adventurous people, migrating west looking for new opportunity. But they could not be called tourists. However, I suppose Daniel Boone could be called one of Kentucky's earliest tourists. Because on his first trip into Kentucky, I'm sure he was "educated," had fun, increased his fur trade, and returned home. That would qualify him to be called a "tourist," even though he later settled here.

### Early settlers not tourists

In 1835, Washington Irving popularized the word "tour" in his book called *Tour on the Prairies*. It was an autobiographical narrative of his travels on the mid-western frontier. Although there were many settlers moving into Kentucky for the remainder of the 19th century, there were not many "tourists." Those traveling into Kentucky brought their own food, clothing, and shelter. Although those earliest travelers would sometimes knock on the door of a settler's cabin, and offer to buy food, or a place to spend the night, they had no effect upon the economy.

### Tourism began with cars and roads

By the 1920s and the invention and manufacturing of automobiles, there came a demand in this country for better cars and better roads. With the

"birth" of the touring car, and the building of concrete roads, Americans began to travel for education, fun, or business and then returned home. The Age of Tourism was born in America early in the 20th century, along with a new creation called a "tourist." Along with the tourist came the need for food, lodging, and automobile service. Thus, a new industry was born called "tourism."

### Tourist camps come to Rowan County

In the 1920s as better roads were built across America, it brought with it an American phenomena called Tourist Homes and Tourist Camps. (They were called camps because prior to that time people traveling camped beside the road in tents.) Those places of lodging appeared throughout America alongside the new highways. Therefore, tourism reached Morehead in 1925, with the construction of Midland Trail (U.S. 60). It was a concrete ribbon that eventually ran from the Atlantic to the Pacific and comes through the heart of Rowan County.

It brought many travelers through Rowan County and inspired many local visionaries to see the value of tourism. Almost immediately some of these local visionaries began to construct tourist homes and tourist camps beside this ribbon of concrete called the Midland Trail. Since there was no zoning restrictions in those days, anyone living along a highway could just put up a sign and they were in the tourist home business.

The tourist camps were more complex and included gas stations in the front, a restaurant inside the office, and small individual cabins at the rear. Tourist Camps were the motels of their day. (The word "motel" had not yet entered our language.)

Tourist homes were private residents with a sign indicating rooms were available to rent on a nightly basis. They were similar to today's bed and breakfast without the breakfast. There were many private tourist homes along U.S. 60 in Rowan

County.

### Shady Rest early Morehead Tourist Camp

The Shady Rest, located on W. Main and N. Blair Avenue in Morehead, was both a Tourist Home and a Tourist Camp. (It was on the site of the present Dairy Mart Convenient Store.) The service station sold gasoline, tires, batteries, and spare auto parts.

Woodie Hinton, local visionary and newspaper columnist, built the Shady Rest in the 1920s. In the early 1930s, Mike Flood, who was one of the original partners in the famous Eagles Nest Restaurant, sold his share to J.M. Clayton, and bought the Shady Rest.

He operated it as a service station, restaurant, and tourist home. It also included separate cabins, and was both a tourist camp and tourist home.

After Mike Flood went to work at the Post Office, he sold the Shady Rest to Chester Caskey, who operated it until the 1950s. Beginning Jan. 15, 1952, Mr. and Mrs. W.L. Keith and Leonard Davis leased the restaurant where the old restaurant and gas station used to be. They ran that restaurant until

August 1970, when the business closed. However, from 1952 - 1957, the restaurant was open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (The first retail business in Morehead to offer such service.) The Dairy Mart on W. Main Street is presently located on the site of the Old Shady Rest (wasn't that the name of the hotel in the old TV show *Petticoat Junction*?). Morehead's Shady Rest was in business 50 years before that TV show, and remains a Morehead Memory.

### Morehead's Mayflower

Soon tourist homes and tourist camps became quite a competitive business in Rowan County. There needed to be some "special attraction" to cause tourist to want to stop. Directly across the street from Morehead's Shady Rest was the Mayflower Tourist Camp.

The Mayflower was a neat, well-maintained log cabin containing a restaurant with a large dance hall. Also there were gas pumps and a grease pit outside for automobile service. A special attraction designed to get people to stop was a moonshine still. Although it had been captured by revenueurs and rendered useless by punching thousands of holes in its copper snake

Cabins and Moonshine Still." Who could resist passing through Kentucky without sleeping in a log cabin, or seeing a moonshine still? (Two things closely connected to Kentucky's stereotype.)

This writer's best childhood friend, Meredith Mynhier, was the step-son of Clell Bruce. Meredith grew up in the living quarters behind the business. It was family operated, and he helped by washing dishes and cleaning cabins. Having spent the night with him many times and helping him with his chores, I knew it was hard work.

During WWII, Clell Bruce had to be away working in defense plants and on Sept. 18, 1945, sold the Mayflower to Earl Maddox. Later owners of the Mayflower were Jack West and Alfred Caskey.

### Mr. and Mrs. O'Rear Caskey purchase the Mayflower

In 1947, the Mayflower was purchased by O'Rear and Velma Caskey. From 1947-1969, it was both a tourist camp and taxi stand. (They operated six taxis.) After the death of Mr. Caskey, Velma closed the tourist camp.

Velma still owns the property on W. Main Street, which over the years has been a doughnut shop, dry cleaner, photo shop, and taxi business. Today, her son Ron, has his classic car business on the property. Even though it burned down once, it has been restored to excellent condition and remains a Morehead Memory.

### Morehead camp opened

Another early entrepreneur who saw a future in the touring trade in Rowan County was James Archie Williams. In 1935 when Mr. Williams, from Morgan County, married May Waggoner, from Carter County, they formed a lifetime partnership in the tourist camp business. Shortly after their marriage they opened a tourist camp and restaurant on U.S. 60 in Farmers. After five years they sold their business Farmers and purchased property on U.S. 60, 1 1/2 miles east of Morehead. It was there they opened the Morehead (Tourist) Camp. The Camp contained a restaurant, gas pumps, and 12 separate rental cabins. Each unit contained a bathroom, potbellied stove with coal heat, bed and dresser.

Shortly after opening in 1941, Archie added a second floor above the restaurant for family living quarters. There they

specialty was fried chicken, she was the one who fried the chicken. After Archie would go out into the country and buy the chickens alive, it was her job to kill them. But she also had to clean out their entrails and pick

the feathers off, singe the remaining tiny feathers, and cut them up before they could be fried. She would prepare a dozen chickens at one time. Next, she would soak them in boiling water, partially fry them in lard in a big black iron skillet. After that she would next refrigerate them until they were ordered. Then, she would re-fry them in that big black iron skillet as ordered by the customers. (No wonder she can't eat fried chicken today.)

### Morehead camp owner specialized in Democrats

May laughingly said another of her specialities was "Democrats." Long active in the state and county Democrat Party, she has served as county chairman, and on many political committees. Following the death of her beloved Archie, she closed the Morehead Camp. Although she still owns the land (the buildings have been torn down), the Morehead Camp remains a Morehead Memory to many.

### Homelike Tourist Camp opened in 1930

In 1930 Morehead's Millard Moore was another local visionary who saw a future in tourism. That was the year Mr. Moore, his wife, and sister, Miss Bertilee Moore, opened the "Homelike Tourist Camp." It was located on U.S. 60, 2 1/2 miles east of Morehead. Mr. and Mrs. Moore were previously in the mercantile business on Christy Creek, and were the parents of three children: Hilda, Gladys, and Wilbur, all now deceased.

In 1925, Mr. Moore moved to Morehead and purchased a Chevrolet dealership. He also became involved in politics and ran an unsuccessful campaign for sheriff in 1929. Following his defeat, he sold his auto dealership, as he recognized the future of tourism in Rowan County. Therefore in November 1930, he opened his Tourist Camp in Rowan County. (Mr. Moore also owned a Tourist Camp in Wisconsin.) The new Midland Trail Highway was less than five years old and the future looked bright for the tourist trade. The new tourist camp was advertised as the "Brightest spot in

### Other early tourist camps

Among other tourist camps in Rowan County during that era was "Joe's Place" on east U.S. 60 (across the highway from the entrance to the University Golf Course.) Joe specialized in hot dogs and barbecue sandwiches. In an attempt to attract families to stop he constructed a small home-made children's play ground with swings, merry-go-round and sliding board. Also there were picnic tables. Joe closed it during WWII.

The "Trocadero" was located at the entrance of Cincinnati Branch and U.S. 60 west. It was a well known night spot during the time Rowan county was wet. But when the county voted dry it went out of business. Also another Tourist Camp was the "Mountain View" camp in Farmers. One of the owners was Mort May, former sheriff of Rowan County. All of these tourist camps remain a Morehead Memory.

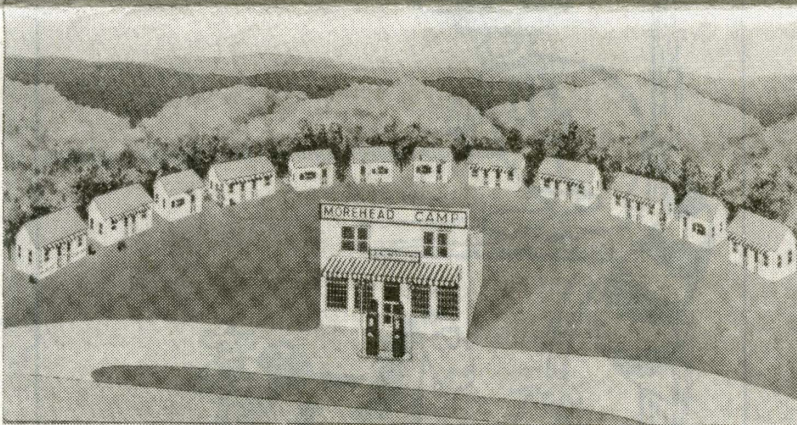
Looking at the tourist trade through the telescope of time you immediately recognize the importance of U.S. 60 crossing our county. It brought opportunity and prosperity as people began crossing our county. Alert local entrepreneurs saw "gold in them thar cars," and worked hard to "mine" their share. Thus forming the foundation for today's gigantic tourism efforts in Rowan County.



### About the author

Dr. Jack D. Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.





This is an artist's sketch of the Morehead Tourist Camp located 1 and 1/2 miles east of Morehead. It specialized in fried chicken.

sands of holes in its copper cooking tank and condensing pipes, it looked very real.

There were eight small individual log cabins for guests. The Mayflower served meals, and with the large dance hall in the rear of the restaurant, was a popular local night spot for Moreheadians to go for food and dancing. (But if you went into the dance hall area there was a 5 cent cover charge.)

The Mayflower opened in 1935 and was owned and operated by visionaries Clell and Sylvia Bruce. It was quite a successful business, because it was well advertised on road signs east and west of Morehead, "Log

living quarters. There they reared their children, Candy, Jim, and Sharon. (All now live away from Morehead, but return often.)

**Specialty was fried chicken**  
 Archie advertised on road signs east and west of Morehead as the "Morehead Camp: Home cooked food, specializing in fried chicken and steak." They also served country ham, home-made yeast rolls, and home-baked pies. The food was delicious and it was a popular eating place for many Moreheadians. (This writer, and his wife, Janis, during their dating years, used to eat there on special occasions.) It was also a place where many Moreheadians would eat for their Sunday dinners.

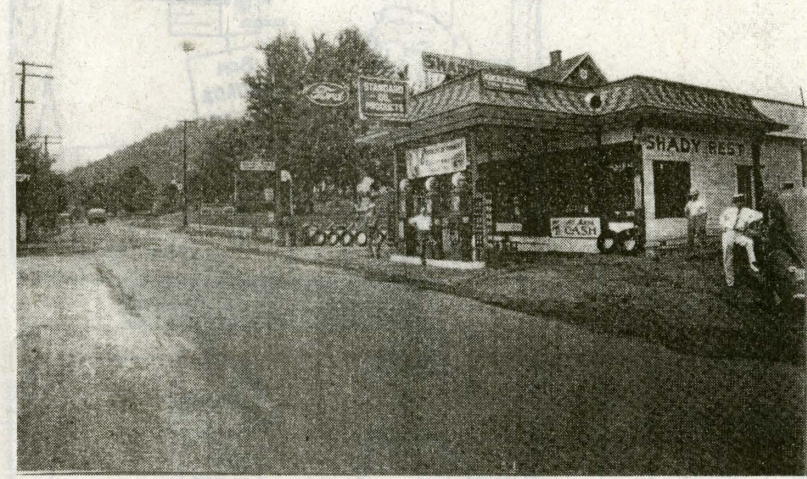
In talking with the genial May Williams in her retirement home on Knapp Avenue, she says that "she cannot eat fried chicken to this day." Since their

tied as the "Brightest spot in Rowan County" and emphasized home-like treatment and real Kentucky hospitality. Since Rowan County was a wet county then, everything to eat or drink was available. That included: whiskey, wine, brandy and cold beer. Also available were complete meals, sandwiches, candies, cigars, cigarettes, tobacco, tires, gas and oil. All supplies were available for both the tourist and his car. The Home-like Tourist Camp offered state-of-the-art, clean, modern, well-furnished cabins, as well as "the best barbecue in Eastern Kentucky."

The business closed long before Mr. Moore's death in 1972, and the buildings have all been torn down. However, Mr. Moore's grandchildren still own some of the site of the Homelike Tourist Home, which remains a Morehead Memory.



The Mayflower Tourist Camp on Morehead's West Main Street was built in 1935 and was owned and managed by Clell and Sylvia Bruce. Purchased in 1947 by O'Rear and Velta Caskey, it is still owned by Mrs. Caskey. (Notice the "Moonshine Still" on the right.)



Morehead's Shady Rest Tourist Camp, Service Station and Ford Dealership was located on West Main Street and North Blair Avenue in 1936. Owner Woodie Hinton stands at right.



## Local Trivia

## Early History

■ In Olive Hill, the tour group inquired the best route to take to Morehead. They were advised to take the route via Soldier because the road through Upper Tygart was not open at that time.

# History

## About the Author



Dr. Jack Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

## Morehead Memories:

## People & Places

### *Early Midland trail motorists*

By JACK ELLIS  
Special to The Morehead News

*"A highway shall be there...and a way." (Isaiah 35:8)*

This is the time of the year that birds are singing, the sun is shining, and spring is in the air. It is the time of the year that we as restless Americans begin to think, not just of love (as the poet has written), but of hitting the open road. Planning a vacation is an annual rite of spring for many Americans.

#### Preparing for rough roads ahead

This is an account of an adventurous group of automobile enthusiasts who made an unbelievable journey from Washington, D.C. to the Pacific Ocean of California. It took three months from Washington to California; a distance of almost 3,000 miles. Then they immediately turned around and came back to Washington over the same 3,000 miles. The

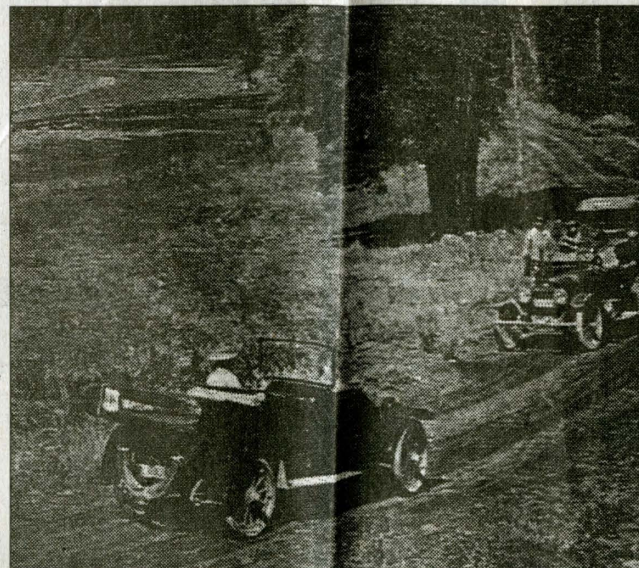
growing up, each spring we would get out the old road atlas, mark our route on the map and begin to collect literature about the most scenic routes and places to visit.

Even before that time while I was in school at Vanderbilt in Nashville, Tennessee, my wife Janis got a job at the National Automobile Association office. Her job was routing people who would write and ask for the most direct point or the scenic route from their home to where they wanted to visit. She would send them a road map with their route marked in red and scenic spots to visit along the way. Now we get the information on the Internet and set our G.P.S. (global positioning system) and it directs us to our destination.

Today, this writer would like to take you on a "wild and crazy" motorcar tour across America in 1916. But more specifically, a tour through Kentucky and Rowan County along



The adventuresome motorcade across America on the Midland Trail highway camped at night wherever they were when darkness came. They provided their own "accommodations."



Heavy traffic was when you met another car on the old Midland Trail.

# The Midland Trail





caravan averaged about 30 miles per day. They traveled over some unbelievable, almost impassable roads. There were very few gas stations or garages. They carried their own tents and camping gear and camped all along the way. They had hand powered winches and cables for pulling cars out of mud. They also had their own mechanics and carried their own spare parts. It is not certain but their tires must have been solid rubber or they would never have completed the trip. But nevertheless, they traveled a route that covered wagons could never have crossed as well, and also pioneered a more direct motorcar route to California. Columbus discovered America in an attempt to find the shortest route to India. But this early motorcar caravan wanted the shortest route from coast to coast.

Many years ago when this writer's children were all at home

(Thanks to MSU retired Professor Allan Lake who provided this writer with a unique book that shows how fortunate Morehead was to be located on the old Midland Trail.) It also shows the almost unbelievable road conditions that existed in 1916.

**The Midland Trail: The Shortest Route From Coast to Coast**, published in 1916 by the Midland Trail Association, is a complete daily logbook of a small group of early automobile enthusiasts as they followed the shortest passable motorcar road from coast to coast. This logbook also included much interesting information about the roads, scenery and communities along that route.

#### **Crossing into Kentucky**

That small motorcar caravan tour group left Washington, D.C. in the early spring of 1916, following the Midland Trail westward across



**This Essex, Buick or Reo carried six passengers on the scenic narrow Midland Trail highway, 1916.**

Virginia and West Virginia. They entered Kentucky on a toll bridge across the Big Sandy River (toll 15 cents). They pointed out that some of the roads in Boyd County were paved with brick. But they soon left the brick and hit steep hills, winding dirt roads, a few rickety bridges, and many shallow streams to ford.

In Grayson they inquired at the Commercial Bank about the best road to Olive Hill. They were advised that the next stretch of road was generally smooth but had many winding curves and "chuck holes." Carter County was in the process of building a macadam road from border to border which would eliminate the worst road conditions on the Midland Trail. (A "macadam road" was a road consisting of finely ground stone on a well-drained roadbed using a bituminous binder.)

#### **Moving through Olive Hill and Morehead**

In Olive Hill, the tour group inquired the

best route to take to Morehead. They were advised to take the route via Soldier because the road through Upper Tygart was not open at that time. The group reported, "Olive Hill was a great 'Center of Industry' in refractory materials and quarrying limestone, demonstrating great natural resources of the county that had been held back for many years from development."

The motorcar caravan then crossed Garvin Ridge and headed down Triplett Creek into Morehead. There they reported: The Swift Garage was on the left side of the road through Morehead. (However, Mr. Swift did not stay in the garage business very long. He did not see much future in motorcars, and later established the Morehead Lumber Company, that was in business for over 50 years.)

#### **Early tourists impressed with Morehead**

This tourist diary written almost 100 years ago then paid Morehead one of the greatest compliments

## Compiled for the **National Midland Trail Association**

**A Complete Log of the Trans-Continental Highway With Much Interesting Information Regarding Communities and Scenery**

that could be paid any community when it said: "Morehead is one of the places where the modern spirit of the hills best manifests itself in the enterprise and industry of the inhabitants." It continues by saying, "Timbering and quarrying of freestone and bluestone are the principle industries, and Morehead has the distinction of having one of the largest motion picture projector factories in the world." (A tribute to local genius Ed Maggard.) But it is interesting to note what was left out of the logbook, because it did not even mention the Morehead Normal School. That is especially ironic when after 90 plus years, one sees little stone, a few timber businesses and no motion picture factory. Of course, the Morehead Normal School evolved into our mighty Morehead State University, which dominates the small city.

The Midland Trail Tour book does say that Rowan County is fast becoming converted to believe in the value of good roads, and "one day in the not too dis-

tant future the whole county will become a network of splendid pikes."

#### **Tour group continues into the sunset**

The cavalcade of motorcars continued west on the old dusty, muddy Midland Trail into Bluestone and Farmers where they crossed a toll bridge across the Licking River at a cost of 25 cents per car. From there the cars motored on to Mt. Sterling, Winchester and Lexington where they visited the Midland Trail Automobile Club at 1304 Fayette Bank Building beside the courthouse. Evidently, there was a National Midland Trail Auto Club and Lexington was a member. From there they moved on to Frankfort and Louisville and on into the sunset toward California. Then they turned around and headed back to Washington, D.C. The round trip required a total of about six months. However, it established the shortest automobile route from coast to coast...The Midland Trail.

### **Give That Special Person a Book About Local History & Heroes by Jack D. Ellis**

**Kentucky Memories: Reflections of Rowan County.** 450 pp; 200 photographs

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