

The
Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest
NANTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST
North Carolina

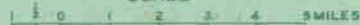


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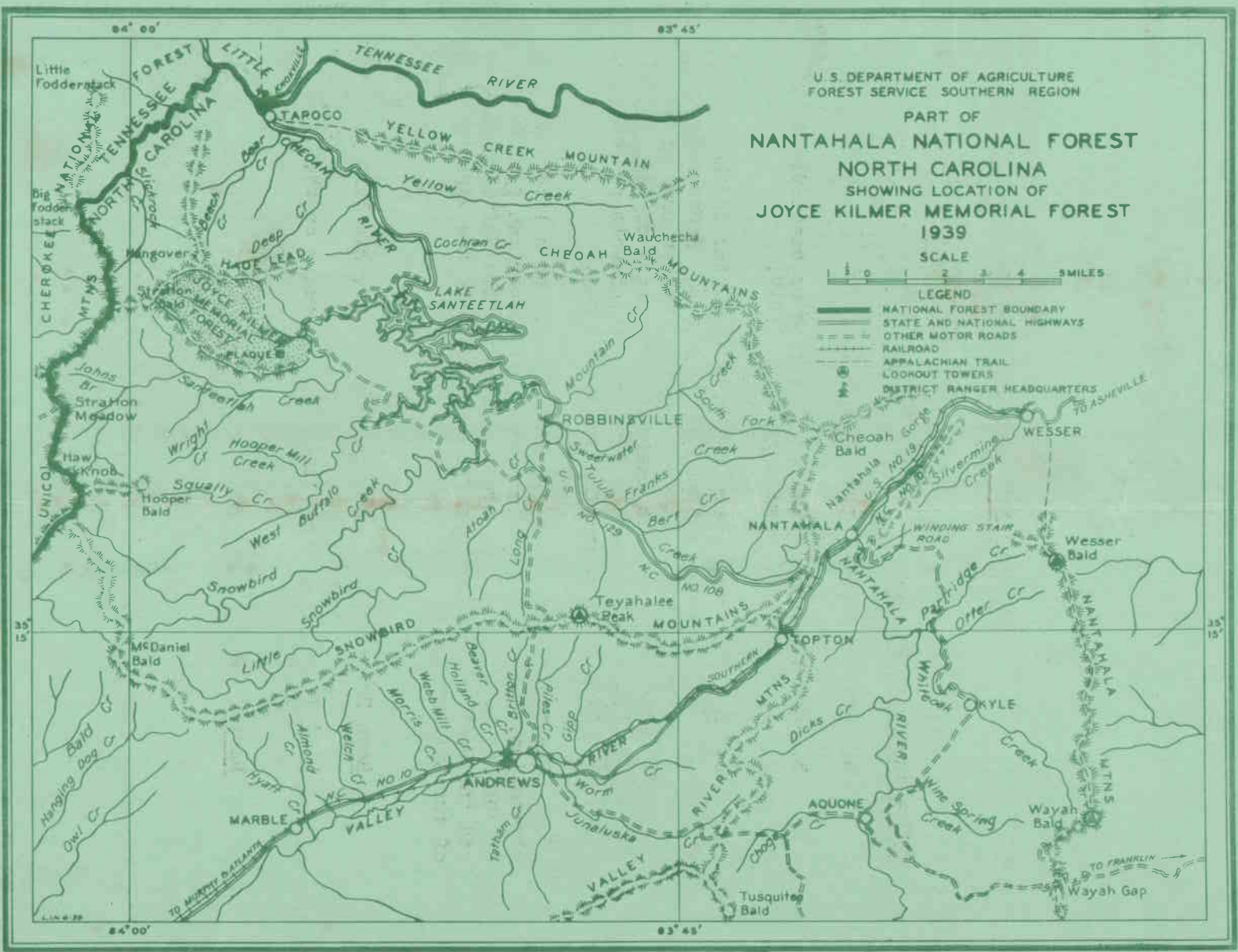
PART OF
NANTAHALA NATIONAL FOREST
NORTH CAROLINA
SHOWING LOCATION OF
JOYCE KILMER MEMORIAL FOREST
1939

SCALE



LEGEND

- NATIONAL FOREST BOUNDARY
- STATE AND NATIONAL HIGHWAYS
- OTHER MOTOR ROADS
- RAILROAD
- APPALACHIAN TRAIL
- LOOKOUT TOWERS
- DISTRICT RANGER HEADQUARTERS



JOYCE KILMER MEMORIAL FOREST

WHO - was Joyce Kilmer?

- a. Poet, author of poem "Trees".
- b. World War hero, killed in action on battlefield in France. Enlisted April 23, 1917.
- c. New York newspaper man, brilliant star on the Sunday staff of the New York Times. Wrote news stories, interviews, and poems; was in some ways "a newspaper poet laureate", for many of his finest poems were written on assignments to cover events fresh in the news of the day.

The twelve line poem "Trees" made Kilmer's literary reputation, but he also was a capable newspaper man for years on the New York Times. He wrote the poem, "The White Ships and the Red", as a newspaper feature, covering the sinking of the Lusitania.

Born December 6, 1886 in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Died July 30, 1918 at the age of 31 years on the battlefield.

Buried in France at Bois Colas.

WHAT - is the Memorial Forest?

In the Nantahala National Forest of western North Carolina, a 3,800 acre tract of some of the most magnificent trees in eastern America, a forest of superlative beauty, has been set aside and called the Joyce Kilmer Forest, dedicated to the memory of the man who loved trees as few have ever loved them. The Memorial Forest is part of the Nantahala National Forest.

In the technical language of foresters, this forest is a virgin stand of Appalachian Hardwoods, cove type, with an average volume of 6,100 board feet per acre (8,500 board feet per acre in Poplar Cove), with individual trees of hemlock 70" in diameter (almost 6 feet through) and 130 feet tall; and yellow poplar (sometimes called tulip trees because of the shape of their flowers) which are 80" in diameter and 170 feet tall. A dense growth of rhododendron 6 to 12 feet high completes the understory.

Twenty miles of footpaths allow one to encircle the crest of the tract and come down through the middle. Between trails is virgin forest inhabited by deer, black bear, and wild boar.

The road to the Memorial Forest ends in a natural park-like opening where cars may be left and a half mile trail leads to the plaque through a cathedral-like stillness of forest beauty. A fine spring, sanitary facilities, and a rain shelter are located at the parking area.

WHEN - was the Memorial established?

The Memorial was dedicated on the 18th anniversary of the fatal day in France when Joyce Kilmer was killed in action in a war-torn forest called "Wood of the Burned Bridge".

Below is the wording on the bronze plaque set in a granite boulder, just where it was found in place at the foot of a huge hemlock tree:

JOYCE KILMER
MEMORIAL FOREST
DEDICATED JULY 30, 1936

Joyce Kilmer
165th Infantry, Rainbow
Division, Soldier and Poet.
Author of "Trees". Born in
New Brunswick, N. J., December
6, 1886, killed in action in
France, July 30, 1918.

This memorial was initiated
by Bozeman Bulger Post,
Veterans of Foreign Wars,
and was selected by the
U. S. Forest Service.

WHERE - is the Memorial located?

The Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest is located within the Nantahala National Forest in Graham County, western North Carolina. It lies just west of Santeetlah Lake, about eighteen miles northwest of Robbinsville.

The entire watershed of Little Santeetlah Creek forms the basin in which this magnificent forest grows. It rises on the east slope of the Unicoi Mountains, which form the State line between Tennessee and North Carolina. The bronze plaque is located in Poplar Cove, one of the branches of Little Santeetlah Creek.

Motor Log (speedometer readings)

Miles from Robbinsville, N. C.

- 0.0 - Leave Robbinsville going north on U. S. Route 129.
- 10.7 - Pass Santeetlah Dam on left.
- 11.8 - Turn left, crossing a bridge over Cheoah River.
- 17.0 - Enter Memorial area between rustic sign posts.
- 17.8 - Leave car at parking area. Follow footpath one-half mile to memorial plaque in Poplar Cove.

Miles from Tapoco, N. C.

- 0.0 - Leave Tapoco going south on U. S. Route 129.
- 7.6 - Turn right, crossing a bridge over Cheoah River.
- 12.8 - Enter Memorial area between rustic sign posts.
- 13.6 - Leave car at parking area. Follow footpath one-half mile to memorial plaque in Poplar Cove.

All roads are on a good grade and are being surfaced with crushed stone. A map, showing trails, is located at the rain shelter on the parking area. Trails are well marked with appropriate directional signs. Only hardy hikers are advised to make the climb to the highest points on the western edge of the tract, as it means a climb of 3,000 feet.

WHY - was the Memorial established?

The Bozeman Bulger Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, New York City, wished to create a fitting memorial to this outstanding soldier-poet and they thought nothing could be better than a lofty, cathedral-like stand of virgin timber with all the variety and beauty of an Appalachian forest.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent the following message to the dedication exercises:

"It is particularly fitting that a poet who will always be remembered for the tribute he embodies in 'Trees' should find this living monument.

"Thus his memory is forever honored and one of nature's masterpieces is set aside to be preserved for the enjoyment of generations yet unborn.

Franklin D. Roosevelt"

HOW - did the Memorial become established?

When the Memorial Committee of the Veterans of Foreign Wars was seeking a forest area that would be fitting to honor for all time the memory of Joyce Kilmer, the outstanding forest areas of the nation were considered. It is a tribute to the trees of the South that the magnificent tract of virgin timber in the green heart of the Nantahala National Forest was chosen to perpetuate the memory of this poet, who had a deep understanding of humanity and of nature.

The forest land formerly belonged to the Gennett Lumber Company of Asheville, North Carolina. This tract of choice timber was considered practically inaccessible by the lumbermen, so they sold it to the Government. When word was received that a nation-wide search was going on for a virgin forest as a tribute to Joyce Kilmer, the foresters who had cruised the Gennett tract suggested that Little Santeetlah drainage exceeded anything they had ever seen. Men from New York and Washington came down to check this unique forest and went back high in praise of it. The CCC boys worked at top speed to open up a temporary road into this wilderness for the dedication.

It rained a deluge the day of the event, but cleared for an hour at the appointed time of the exercises. Fifty men from New York, Washington, Atlanta, and elsewhere battled through the freshly graded muddy road to hear the song "Trees" echo through the memorial grove.

TREES

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast.

A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray.

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair.

Upon whose bosom snow hath lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

-- Joyce Kilmer

Some Facts About
Nantahala National Forest

1. Headquarters - Forest Supervisor, Franklin, N. C.
2. Ranger District Headquarters
 - Nantahala - Andrews, N. C.
 - Tusquitee - Murphy, N. C.
 - Wayah - Franklin, N. C.
3. Established - as a Purchase Unit in 1911 and as a Forest by Presidential Proclamation January 29, 1920.
4. Area - Gross: 1,349,000 acres. Net: 322,365 acres.
5. Counties - (1) Cherokee (2) Clay (3) Graham (4) Swain (5) Macon (6) Jackson (7) Transylvania.
6. Purpose of Forest - (1) Produce quality timber year after year (2) protect watersheds (3) put all forest resources to best possible use for the greatest number of people.
7. Improvements - 205 miles of road, 187 miles of trails, 288 miles of telephone lines, 8 fire towers, 7 picnic areas and camp grounds.
8. Population within Forest - 60,000.
9. Schools within Forest
 - 132 grade schools (6 are colored schools)
 - 14 high schools
 - 1 college (Western Carolina Teachers College at Cullowhee)