To know Shenandoah National Park, to discover its secrets, take time to stop, look, listen, and explore. For adventure, leave your car at one of the overlooks or visitor-use areas, and hike or ride horseback along the trail. Between Skyline Drive and Shenandoah's boundaries are miles of ridges and valleys, hills and hollows, laced with sparkling streams and waterfalls. Trout lurk in shadowed pools, and wild gardens of rock, vines, shrubs, and wildflowers nestle only a short walk from the busy roadway.

Shenandoah National Park lies astride a spectacularly beautiful part of the Blue Ridge, which forms the eastern rampart of the Appalachian Range, from Pennsylvania to Georgia. The Shenandoah River, from which the park's name is derived, lies to the west, flowing northeastward between the Blue Ridge and the Allegheny Mountains. Masanutten, the 40-mile-long, straight-profiled mountain you see from many Skyline Drive overlooks, lies between the North and South Forks of the Shenandoah. To the east of the Blue Ridge is rolling Piedmont country.

From the mid-eighteenth century on into the 1900's the hollows, ridges, and slopes that now constitute the national park were the home of mountain people. These hardy folk eked out a marginal existence by growing corn, beans, cabbages, and apples; by raising chickens, hogs, and cows; and by producing from the bounty of the forest and the harvest of the fields. They sold various forest and field market commodities as tanbark, honey, moonshine, and furs. Thieves was a highly self-sufficient citizen. They developed their own techniques for smoking meats, rendering hogs, preserving vegetables and fruits for winter use, and making household furnishings and farm implements. They devised their own recreational pursuits, created their own music, and passed on their traditions from generation to generation.

During the first decades of this century many of the mountain people left this land, which had become steadily less productive, in search of easier life in the lowlands. The lumber companies had depleted the forests; most of the game was gone; the soil was worn out from misuse and much of it washed down the slopes; and cash was almost nonexistent. Today only a few old-timers retain the skills that enabled them to fashion finished products from the raw materials of the mountains, using only their hands and their homemade tools.

Choosing establishment of the park, cessation of timber-cutting operations, and relocation of the mountain people, nature rapidly began to heal the scars of man's long exploitation of the land. Vegetation soon masked the stone walls, and the landscape, even without the latency of American chestnut, has regained its primeval beauty.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of the American people. As one of our national symbols and one of America's outstanding parks, Shenandoah is a living reminder of the promise of wilderness. Here and there old apple trees bear blanched fruit, but the crop is harvested by black bears and white-tailed deer. Raccoons, opossums, skunks, squirrels, turkeys, and woodland songbirds again abound, and beavers have returned to the fringes of the park. On the other hand, animals that thrived in summer; some are available in spring and autumn. For a wintertime park adventure—rooms are available at Big Meadows Lodge while meals and other services may be obtained a mile away at the Wayside.

Another park concessioner, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (1718 N St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036), maintains six trail cabins for hikers. Advance reservations and keys must be obtained by mail from the club.

There are five campgrounds and seven picnic areas in the park. Big Meadows Campground is open all year. Advance reservations are accepted for the Dundo organized youth group campground.
MILE POINT OF INTEREST
0.0 Junction with U.S. 340, south of Front Royal (I-66 W Jct. 4 miles north).
0.6 North Entrance Station
2.8 Shenandoah Valley overlook. Across the valley is Signal Knob, Civil War communications post on Massanutten Mountain.
4.6 Dickey Ridge Visitor Center. Picnic area. Exhibits, programs, information. Literature, slides, map sales.
21.0 Hogback overlook. View Shenandoah River bends on clear days.
22.3 Matthews Arm Campground. Tent and trailer sites. Trailer sewage disposal stations. Hikes and campfire programs in summer. Trails Trace starts at amphitheater.
24.1 Elkwallow. June-October. Picnic area, lunch, campers' store, souvenirs, gasoline, ice, firewood.
32.4 Marys Rock Tunnel. through 660 feet of rock (13-foot clearance).
36.7 Pinnacles. Picnic area. Appalachian Trail junction.
39.1 Little Stony Man parking. Trail to sweeping view of Shenandoah Valley (1% miles round trip).
41.7 Skyland Lodge. April-October. Dining room, gift shop, riding horses. Stony Man Nature Trail parking. Trail to Millers Head (1.7 miles round trip).
42.6 Whitetop Canyon parking. Trail to falls (5 miles round trip).
44.5 Crescent Rock overlook. Best view of Hawksbill Mountain, highest in park. Trail to Betty's Rock (0.6 mile round trip).
45.6 Hawksbill Gap parking. Trains to 4,049-foot Hawksbill Mountain.
46.7 Upper Hawksbill parking. Trail to Hawksbill summit (2 miles round trip).
50.5 Dark Hollow Falls parking. Trail to falls (1% miles round trip).
51.0 Big Meadows. Byrd Visitor Center. Exhibits (on mountaineers), programs, information. Literature, slides, map sales. Hikes and campfire programs in summer. Open all year.
51.3 Wayside and entrance to Big Meadows area. Coffee shop, campers' store, gift shop, service station. Open all year.
[1 mi. off Big Meadows Lodge area, Facilities Drive available all year: Lodge (rooms only, in winter. Dining at nearby Wayside), campground, trailer sewage disposal station, Swamp Nature Trail. Additional facilities mid-May through October: Lodge dining room, gift shop. Showers, laundry, ice sales, firewood, riding horses. Campfire programs. Trail to Lewis Falls (2 miles round trip).
56.4 Bearfence Parking Area. Rock scramble (0.3 mile round trip; wear sturdy shoes).
57.6 Lewis Mountain. June-September. Cabins, campground with trailer sites, picnic area, firewood. Campfire programs.
62.9 South River Picnic Area. Trail to falls (2% miles round trip).
65.7 Swift Run Gap, U.S. 33 interchange. Entrance Station.
78.2 Rockytop overlook, Big Run watershed, wild canyon scenery, trails.
83.7 Dundo Group Campground; reserved for organized youth groups.
84.1 Falls Trail Parking.
104.6 South Entrance Station.
105.4 Rockfish Gap. U.S. 250 intersection, and I-64. 5 miles to Humpback Rocks Visitor Center (Blue Ridge Parkway).