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T O U R 8 A : *From WILLIAMSBURG to HINSDALE, 25.7 m., State 143.*

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Via Chesterfield, Worthington, and Peru.

Rolled gravel roadbed; very steep at times; poor in winter.

STATE 143, bordered in June by masses of pink and white laurel, passes over high hills affording excellent views. Heavy growths of spruce and birch line both sides for long stretches. The valleys are narrow and the road descends and ascends steeply.

West of Williamsburg (alt. 494) on State 9 (*see Tour 8*), State 143 begins a hilly and winding climb.

CHESTERFIELD, 6.3 m. (town, alt. 1440, pop. 445, sett. about 1760, incorp. 1762), originally called New Hingham, was eventually named for the polished Earl of Chesterfield. Farming and cattle-raising have been the most prominent economic activities from the beginning, while the forests have always encouraged the lumber trade.

West of Chesterfield, State 143 drops about 600 feet in 2 miles.

At 8.6 m. is WEST CHESTERFIELD (alt. 795, Town of Chesterfield) on the East Branch of the Westfield River. A small lumber mill here is the only appreciable industry in the town.

Left from West Chesterfield on an improved road following the river is *Chesterfield Gorge*, 1 m., 1000 feet long and 30 feet deep. The long grooves in the walls were made by glacial action. In the gorge a gift shop, run by an old-time Yankee, has many odd labor-saving devices and machines invented and made by the owner.

West of West Chesterfield, the road climbs steadily.

At 12.8 m. is WORTHINGTON CORNERS (alt. 1500, Town of Worthington).

Left from Worthington Corners on State 112 is WORTHINGTON CENTER, 0.7 m. (town, alt. 1460, pop. 530, sett. 1764, incorp. 1768), a community engaged in dairy farming. In season the maple sugar industry provides an additional source of revenue.

At 2.7 m. on State 112 is the junction with a dirt road; left here 0.5 m. to *Indian Oven*, a natural formation in a large rock, said to have been used by the Indians for baking.

At 5.6 m. on State 112 is the village of SOUTH WORTHINGTON (town of Worthington). Left across the bridge here on a country road is the junction with another road at 0.2 m.; left here to the *Birthplace of the Rev. Russell H. Conwell* (*open*), 0.4 m., a red-painted farmhouse, maintained much as it was in the early days of the educator who founded Temple University in Philadelphia. The main part of the building dates back to about 1800; the veranda and kitchen are recent additions.

About 5.8 m. on State 112 is *South Worthington Cascade*, a gentle but beautiful falls with a 50-foot drop.

Northwest of Worthington Corners, State 143 passes between several beautiful estates as it rises to a higher level.

At 14.6 m. is the entrance to the *Worthington State Forest*, a 412-acre tract of natural woodland (*picnicking facilities*), with shaded walks and many points of scenic beauty.

WEST WORTHINGTON, 17 m. (alt. 1300, Town of Worthington). *West Worthington Falls*, 0.4 m. south on Huntington Rd. makes a 75-foot plunge down a tree-bordered gorge. In summer there is only a sparkling rivulet falling over bare rocks into the chasm, but in floodtime there is a roaring torrent.

PERU, 21 m. (town, alt. 2295, pop. 151, sett. 1767, incorp. 1771), the highest village in the State, is perched on the summit of the Green Mt. Range. First called Partridgefield, it was incorporated 1806 under its present name on the suggestion of the Rev. John Leland 'because,' he said, 'it is like the Peru of South America, a mountain town, and if no gold or silver mines are under her rocks, she favors hard money and begins with a P.'

In former days the poor of Peru were disposed of at auction. In 1807 'Abigail Thayer was bid off by Shadrach Pierce at 90 cents a week for victualizing'; she was auctioned for nearly 30 successive years. The last of the old-time 'Pooh-Bahs' of the hill towns of the Berkshires was Frank Creamer, a shrewd and entertaining public auctioneer. He was known as the 'Mayor' of Peru, holding all important town offices, while his wife held most of the minor ones.

Because of the condition of the roads, church services are held here only from May until November, and school opens in August and is closed from Christmas until March. A few families hold to an old New England custom of 'storing up for the winter,' and in the fall buy a whole winter's supply of groceries.

Self-sufficiency and the ability to solve their own problems are two characteristics held in high esteem by the townspeople. Back in 1799, Charles Ford moved into Peru with a horse and cart, a yoke of oxen, and one hog. Since the hog had to walk, it became footsore and caused much delay. A shoemaker by trade, Mr. Ford had leather and tools with him, so he sat down by the roadside, then and there made boots of sole leather for the hog, fastened them on, and neither he nor his traveling companion encountered further difficulty.

The most exciting day for Peru is the second of March, town-meeting day, the pivot around which the town revolves all year. All the townspeople, young and old, and even Peru voters living in other towns and cities during the winter, turn out for this event. At times the intensity of feeling almost creates a feud — though there has never been any serious disturbance — as the contest continues, not between the regular parties, Democrats and Republicans, but between those on one side in local affairs and those on the other.

State 143 continues west, and begins its ascent of a long hill through pleasant wooded country.

The *Ashmere Reservoir*, named by William Cullen Bryant, is passed at 23.2 m.

At 25.7 m. is HINSDALE (see *Tour 21*) at the junction with State 8 (see *Tour 21*).

T O U R 9 : From VERMONT STATE LINE (*Stamford*) to CONNECTICUT STATE LINE (*Salisbury*), 86 m. (Appalachian Foot Trail).

Via Clarksburg, North Adams, Adams, New Ashford, Cheshire, Dalton, Washington, Tyringham, Monterey, New Marlborough, Sheffield, Egremont, and Mt. Washington.

B. & M., B. & A., and N.Y., N.H. & H. R.R.'s service this area.

THE Massachusetts section of the *Appalachian Trail* runs north and south through Berkshire County from Vermont to Connecticut. Wild mountain scenery provides natural grandeur, thrilling beauty, and exciting climbs.

Leaving the Vermont border, the trail runs from its connection with the Long Trail of that State to Blackinton, and continues south over an abandoned trolley line beside State 2 (see *Tour 2*). Through North Adams and Adams the varied route passes over or near such picturesque points as *Jones's Nose* (alt. 3000), *Mount Greylock* (alt. 3505), the *Hopper* (alt. 1000), and *Bellows' Pipe* (alt. 2700).

In Cheshire the route joins with State 8 (see *Tour 21*), where a marker tells of the famous Cheshire Cheese, 1235 pounds in weight, sent in 1801 to President Jefferson.

The Trail runs through Dalton and there strikes the junction of State 8 (see *Tour 21*) and State 9 (see *Tour 8*). From here it continues across the Housatonic River, passes over the peak of *Warner Mountain* (alt. 1835), descends to the Pittsfield-Becket road, and enters Washington Town. A short distance farther south the trail ascends *Bald Top* (alt. 2200), and runs through the October Mountain State Forest. It skirts the north and east shores of *Finerty Lake* and passes by a steep climb over the summit of *Becket Mountain* (alt. 2200), to reach US 20, Jacob's Ladder Highway (see *Tour 4*). The slopes in this vicinity have been cleared to provide a ski trail for winter use.

On through the *Beartown State Forest* the Trail crosses a stream, with a swimming-pool (R), passes below the summit of *Mt. Wilcox*, and enters the *Swann State Forest*. From here the route runs in a southerly direction through continuous scenic splendor, traversing the towns of Great Barrington, Sheffield, and Egremont. It climbs *June Mountain* (alt. 1140),