

miles, is typical of the numerous half-abandoned mining towns of the area. They are unincorporated and, with their unpaved streets and unpainted buildings, come into view like blighted spots on the land. They have all the inconveniences and few, if any, of the comforts of modern towns of equal size, and none of the advantages of the agricultural countryside. Small drab houses, most of them in need of repair, huddle close together along the deep valleys or stand uncertainly on the mountain sides. Most of them are of boom-time flimsiness, with one thickness of board in the walls that rest on slender, often tottering, posts, many are papered with newspapers and patched with cardboard to shut out draughts. Dark hills of coal tailings blotch the sides and bases of the larger hills. The numerous abandoned mines are marked by warped and disjointed frame tipples and entrances, weathered to a dull gray. Only the waters of Pond Creek, now littered with tin cans and other refuse, suggest the natural beauty that was destroyed by industrial development when it penetrated the formerly inaccessible places.

Since the middle 1920's the miners of the Pond Creek region, when not totally unemployed, have worked only part time. Some of the towns are slowly reviving on a new pattern. Mining, of necessity, is no longer the sole occupation. Odd jobs in lumbering, agriculture, road building, Government projects and construction, supplement the employment, mostly seasonal, that is still afforded by the mines. The groups of men clustered around a store or the local "joint" are part of the army of former miners. Life in the coal-mining towns is meager and hard. The customary diet of the miner and his family consists chiefly of beans—and more beans—corn bread made without milk, and "bulldog gravy," a mixture of flour, water, and a little grease. In the summer those fortunate enough to find a small patch may grow a few vegetables, but for the most part they grow pumpkins. There is little or no milk available even for the children. As a result diseases of malnutrition are common. Leisure is abundant and money scarce. Brawls and an occasional shooting, a bit of penny- and nickel-gambling, all of them usually enlivened with moonshine, are the recreation of the men.

US 119 at 7 *m.* begins its ascent from the valley into the mountains whose forested slopes and ridges constantly change in appearance. They are gray-green on a misty morning, a vivid green on a clear afternoon. The tender fernlike foliage of early spring, when each leaf, bud, and shoot is a delicate green, changes into the heavier, deeper-hued vegetation of summer. In the fall, the sun, which shines in many valleys for only a few hours, splashes the tree-clad mountains with light, intensifying the yellows, reds, oranges, browns, and dark greens.

One of the most impressive views on US 119 between Williamson, West Virginia, and Pikeville is at 17.2 *m.* From the top of the ridge the surrounding maze of ranges, deeply cut by narrow valleys and extending to the horizon, form a scene of wild, rugged beauty.

PIKEVILLE, 32.2 *m.* (680 alt., 3,376 pop.) (*see Tour 1*), is at the junction with US 23 (*see Tour 1*); between this point and Jenkins, US 119 and US 23 are united.