

A Short History of Sky Meadows State Park

In 1713 Captain James Ball purchased from Lord Fairfax a 7,883-acre tract that lay on the east side of the Blue Ridge south of Ashby Gap. When Captain Ball died in 1754, his property was divided among his daughter and five grandsons. James Ball received 1,000 acres on which the present Sky Meadows State Park visitor center is located.

John Edmonds, who had been a captain during the American Revolution, purchased James Ball's land in 1780. John's son, George Edmonds, was given 250 acres of his father's land in 1798. He moved to the property with his wife and probably built the log house and the frame section of what is now the visitor center.

Issac Settle, a merchant, tavern keeper and a postmaster in nearby Paris, Va., purchased from George Edmonds in 1810 a 171-acre tract that included the site of the house. Isaac built the stone section of what is now the visitor center and gave it to his son Abner as a wedding present in 1835. A typical middle class farmer of his time, he named the house *Mount Bleak*, possibly because the building stands exposed on a windy hilltop.

Abner Settle sold the farm after the Civil War to Thomas and Emily Glascock. They sold the property two years later to George M. Slater, who had been a member of Mosby's Rangers. Slater became acquainted with the area as Mosby's Rangers were active around Ashby Gap during the war. Slater and his son owned the farm

until 1928. The land changed hands several times during the following decades.

In 1966 a housing development was planned and the property was divided into 50-acre lots. This scenic area was saved through the actions of Paul Mellon. Virginia State Parks received the 1,132-acre farm as a gift from Mellon in 1975. After building facilities to accommodate the public, the Commonwealth opened Sky Meadows State Park in 1983.

A 248-acre corridor containing three miles of the Appalachian Trail between the park and U.S. Route 50 was added in 1987.

An additional 462-acre section of the park opened in 1991. This parcel also was a gift from Mellon. The Virginia Outdoor Foundation was active in the acquisition process. The farm contains a parcel of land that was purchased from Lord Fairfax by George Washington. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the land had been farmed by a series of local families.

For both today and the future, visitors on foot and horseback can enjoy this scenic historic area.

Frequent Visitors Save Money

Annual passes for parking offer the frequent visitor greater savings and are honored at all Virginia State Parks. Stop by the park office for details.

Virginia State Parks Reservation Center

To receive more information on Virginia State Parks or to make a cabin or campsite reservation, call **1-800-933-PARK** (or in the Richmond calling area 225-3867).

Join Us in the Parks – DCR's Volunteer Program

DCR offers diverse opportunities for volunteers in most state parks and natural areas throughout the state. Inquire at the park office for details.



Sky Meadows State Park Guide

Paris, Virginia

Virginia State Parks provide "A Natural Legacy" of outdoor activities and programs. They are an important part of DCR's efforts to promote a strong conservation ethic. These efforts ensure that the best of Virginia's natural resources will be protected and available for future generations.



Department of Conservation & Recreation
CONSERVING VIRGINIA'S NATURAL & RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

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Jim Gilmore, Governor

Welcome to Sky Meadows State Park. Generations of farming these hills make for an incredible blend of pasture and woodlands. Even from miles away, it's easy to see how Sky Meadows got its name. As you enter the gate, you are taking a trip into Virginia's history, and the Mt. Bleak house has been here to stand sentry over it all for more than 150 years. Today the grounds of the main house offer picnicking and serve as a take-off point for the park's trails, primitive campground and access to the Appalachian Trail. To make your visit safer and more pleasant, we ask you to observe the following regulations:

 The public use or display of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.

 The possession or use of firearms is prohibited.

 The park is open for day use from 8 a.m. to dusk daily.

 Help preserve your park. Please don't cut or mar any plants or trees. Collecting animal or plant life is allowed only for scientific purposes by permit from the Richmond headquarters.

 Hiking trails are for pedestrians only. Bicycles are permitted only on regular park roads. No motorized vehicles are allowed on state park trails.

 Pets are permitted in all state parks but must be kept in an enclosed area or on a leash, not to exceed six feet. There is a fee per pet/night.

 Twelve primitive hike-in campsites accommodate up to six persons each. No reservations are taken. Nonpotable water and pit toilets are available. Fire rings are provided. Only dead wood on the ground can be collected for firewood. Campground quiet hours begin at 10 p.m.

