

# Mountain Home National Cemetery

## *The Brownlow Monument*

**William Jennings Bryan**, three-time (1896, 1900, and 1908), unsuccessful Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States spoke in Johnson City in 1911. He came to Johnson City to raise money for a monument fund for Tennessee's recently deceased First District **Congressman Walter P. Brownlow**. The monument (an obelisk) was to be placed at the centerpiece of the original circle of graves at the National Cemetery at Mountain Home.

Bryan spoke at the Hippodrome (local assembly hall) on February 21, 1911. He arrived in Johnson City at 6:20 a.m. (that day) on the Southern train from Washington, D. C. and was immediately taken to the Pardue (later Windsor Hotel) for breakfast. A public reception was held for him at 8:00 a.m. in the parlors of the Pardue Hotel. At 9:00 a.m. he spoke to the school children and the public from the balcony of the hotel.

Mr. Bryan delivered the lecture at the Hippodrome at 9:45 a.m. Tickets for the lecture at the Hippodrome were fifty cents each. All tickets were for general admission seats only. The balcony was reserved entirely for the Negroes, whose seats were free. The title of Mr. Bryan's lecture was "*The Price of a Soul.*"

Colonel Brownlow (1851 – 1910) was the United States Congressman from Tennessee's First Congressional District from 1896 until his death in 1910 and the nephew of former Governor, W. P. "Parson" Brownlow. Prior to his becoming a Congressman, he had careers as a tinner, railroad locomotive engineer and newspaper editor. **During his 14 years in Congress, the appropriations he secured for his district (\$2,797,000) amounted to nearly twice as much as all the appropriations for the State of Tennessee in the previous 100 years (\$1,642,229).** Washington County, in his district, was the first county in the United States to receive rural free delivery of mail. He secured the National Soldiers' Home at Johnson City (\$2,100,000); post office buildings at Johnson City and Bristol; a federal court building and the Andrew Johnson National Cemetery at Greeneville and the fish hatcheries at Erwin. He founded the Appalachian Park movement<sup>1</sup> and inaugurated the national "good roads" movement that later became enacted as the Bureau of Public Roads, forerunner of the Federal Highway Administration.

*Authors – Ray Stahl; Updated sections added by Alan Bridwell*

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<sup>1</sup> The Appalachian Park proposed by Congressman Brownlow extended along the Blue Ridge Mountains from Front Royal, Virginia to Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Years later, two national parks were formed. The Shenandoah National Park in Virginia was established in 1935 and the Great Smoky Mountain National Park in Tennessee and North Carolina was created in 1926 and established in 1930.

# Hon. Wm. Jennings Bryan

will deliver his new lecture

## “THE PRICE OF A SOUL”

At the Hippodrome in this city at 9:45 o'clock next  
**Thursday Morning, February 16th.**

The distinguished American will arrive in the city at 6:20 on Thursday morning and will hold a reception at Hotel Pardue from 8 to 9 o'clock. At 9:15 he will address the school children from the balcony of the hotel, the lecture at the Hippodrome following at 9:45 and he will leave at 11 o'clock on a special train for Bristol. Tickets will go on sale at the City Drug Company's store at 9 o'clock Monday morning, February 13th.

**Admission: 50 Cents To All Parts Of The House. No Reserved Seats.**

Excursion rates have been secured upon all railroads and tickets can be secured by mail or telephone. The net proceeds will go to the

**Brownlow Monument Fund.**

Ad – Johnson City Comet, 1911



**Walter P. Brownlow Monument**  
Centerpiece of Mountain Home National Cemetery