

A PAGE ABOUT THE AREA DEVOTED TO Information For Visitors

Bears Steal The Show Along Smoky Highways

There are 52 kinds of fur-bearing animals in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, but to the public Mr. and Mrs. Bear and cubs take precedence over them all.

It is not only because of their amazing size, or—in the case of cubs—of their antics, but because so many of them have fallen into the beguiling hands of the panhandler.

Even a red light or a stern cop can bring a car to the halt caused by appearance of the bear tribe along the overlook parking spots of the over-the-Smokies highway.

Almost pet-dog demure of the bears at times often unsuspecting into unwise as for the animal is never and its mood can switch in a moment from meek supplicant to a ferocious aggressor if it feels wronged.

Despite the numerous warning signs placed by the National Park to deter visitors from feeding or molesting the bears, this goes for naught with the result that increasing numbers of these favorite denizens of the Smokies quickly learn the arts of panhandling, standing erect in supplication or with paws placed against your car, anticipation written all over the rugged jaws.

Aside from the matter of law violation the real danger in bear feeding, the experts point out, comes largely from holding food in the hand as it is offered; or, in running out of food too quickly; or again, in parcelling it out in a stingy manner, which may lead Bruin to retaliate with a sturdy slap by a mighty paw, ringed with knife-like toenails.

The unrehearsed antics of one, two or even more cubs can be quite as amusing as a Walt Disney comic, plus the fact that no admission is charged. So tame do the youngsters appear that misguided visitors are sometimes tempted to pat or hug them, an action usually misinterpreted by a watchful mother who can make her displeasure known by startling throaty growls and a sudden lunge. The way in which unsuspecting sightseers take off would lead to the suggestion that the scouts for an Olympic track team might well hang around in the Great Smokies.

Indian Corn And Beans Grown With Old Tools

Oconaluftee village at Cherokee includes a community garden. There the Cherokee inhabitants plant Indian corn and Indian beans, squash and other vegetables which they contributed to civilization.

The implements used in the gardening are those used by the Cherokee in the 1700's, and the produce grown will be cooked over open fires and in clay and iron pots in the village.

As more and more research is done, the Cherokee Historical Association hopes to keep projecting village activities and life still farther back into time.

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It is believed that the mullet is the only fish which can be fried in its own fat.



BEARS ROAM THE SMOKIES, often ambling down to the highways to cadge food from venturesome visitors. Feeding the bears is dangerous, despite their seeming friendliness, and is forbidden by the Park Service.

Fishing Offers Many Varieties To Sportsmen

Seventy-five beautiful mountain lakes, most of them literally alive with scrappy game fish of a dozen different species, and hundreds of miles of rushing, tumbling woodland streams make Western North Carolina truly a promised land for the disciples of Izaak Walton.

The section is most famous for its trout fishing, the cold, crystal clear streams which cascade from its towering peaks providing the real habitat for rainbow, brown and brook (or speckled) trout. But the lakes, along with streams and rivers of a more lazy disposition, are correspondingly well stocked with large and small mouth bass, crappie, bream, and even the kingly muskellunge, a member of the pike family found nowhere else in the southeast.

For every fish taken from these waters, two or three are planted in its stead from the never-ending supply turned out by fish hatcheries in Western North Carolina. The Federal Government maintains a hatchery at the head of Davidson River to stock streams in the Pisgah Wildlife Management Areas, and another at Smokemont to provide fish for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

An outstanding fish hatchery operated by the state is the one at Balsam in Haywood County.

The season closes the end of this month in National Forest streams.

By The Code

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) — Who said telegraphy is a dying art! The High Springs school here has a special Railroad Telegraphy School. Of six graduates this year, one girl has been placed in a job with the Atlantic Coast Life railroad at Jasper, Fla. She is paid \$300 a month.

The other five students are waiting until they pass their 18th birthday when they, too, will be eligible for jobs. Paul Peters, school superintendent, said there are only two Railroad Telegraphy schools in the country.

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Homecomings And Annual Decoration Days Pioneer Traditions In This Area

On practically any Sunday during spring and summer Decoration Day is being observed somewhere in the mountains of Western North Carolina.

It is a solemn occasion on which members of a family decorate with flowers the graves in their private burying ground or members of a congregation decorate the mounds in the churchyard.

Thus do the mountain people "keep green" the memories of the departed, back to pioneer days, and assemble once a year to honor the departed members of their clans.

These decorations go all the way back to the early days when isolation often made it necessary to inter the dead without benefit of a burial service conducted by a minister. This was especially true during winter when trails were blocked by snow. Also during the winter months no flowers were in bloom and, if the graves were decorated at all, native evergreens were the only things available.

Therefore, in the spring or summer when the mountainsides were covered with native shrubs and wildflowers in bloom and cabin dooryards were gay with cultivated flowers, a date would be set for decorating the graves of those who had died during the past winter.

The date would be dependent upon availability of a preacher, for he would be expected to conduct a funeral service over each new grave that had been made since the previous summer.

Because churches in those days were few and often distant from the majority of settlers, difficulties of transportation made it advisable for nearly every family to establish a private cemetery on their own property.

An examination of the grave-stones in church cemeteries will usually reveal that the dates of death do not begin until after the turn of the century.

A definite Sunday, such as the second Sunday in June, the first Sunday in July, has long been established at each cemetery for the

annual memorial service. Year after year it is observed and distant members of the various families assemble on that date without the necessity of being notified in advance.

Decoration Day is preceded by a thorough cleaning of the burying ground on the day before. All weeds are removed and the earth above each grave is loosed to receive, on the morrow, the stems of multi-colored blossoms. Thrusting the stems deep into the loose earth seems to preserve them about as well as if they were placed in vessels of water.

Long before the time set for the service the throngs begin to assemble, bringing flowers by the armful or heaped in buckets or cartons. Every grave in the cemetery, no matter how ancient, is completely hidden by a mass of blossoms, white, yellow, pink, red, blue.

After all the graves have been heaped high the memorial service begins. As many as four or five ministers may participate. Each offers a prayer, and their talks are interspersed with the singing of the grand old hymns familiar throughout the mountain region.

Decoration Day is also an informal family reunion, for distant members of the clan may not see each other until the cemetery is again decorated the following year.

Twenty peaks in Western North Carolina highlands exceed 6,000 feet in height.

'Sherlock Holmes' Hideaway Stood Outside Tryon

William Gillette, actor and playwright and idol of the American stage during the last part of the last century when the theater was supreme, found a hideaway in Western North Carolina.

Near Tryon he had a comparatively large acreage and a lodge to which he came between tours. Never one to mingle with the public in private life, he liked seclusion and found it in his beloved mountains.

Known as a writer of plays in which he frequently appeared himself as well as an actor in the thriller type of dramas, he occupied a unique place in the theater.

Few people know that he spent some of the happiest hours of his life in his retreat near Tryon.

That was during the period when he was appearing as "Sherlock Holmes" and also in his famous role in "Secret Service".

Over 18,000,000 board feet of lumber is harvested annually in the Pisgah Division of the National Forest.

Wolfe Homestead Open To Public

The big white frame house at 48 Spruce Street, Asheville, home of the late Thomas Wolfe, is becoming a mecca for visitors. It was opened to the public as a memorial July 19, 1949, by the Thomas Wolfe Memorial Association.

The building has been restored as far as possible to the exact appearance of the days of the writer's youth. It is open weekdays from 10 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. and on Sunday from 2 to 6 p. m. It contains the furniture and furnishings of the days when it was operated as a boarding house by Wolfe's mother, who was Eliza Gant in "Look Homeward, Angel," Wolfe's first novel.

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