# A PAGE ABOUT THE AREA DEVOTED TO Information For Visitors

## Rugged Smokies Termed Vacationists Paradise

By BILL SHARPE

It is significant that "The Great Smokies" is the native term for this range. Sometimes "Mountains" is added, but it is superfluous; everyone knows what "Great Smokies" means.

"Great" is not a word which comes freely to the mountaineer, but it is uttered with ease when he talks about his home; it is both an unfamiliar and superlative adjective.

The Great Smokies comprise the greatest mountain mass east of the Black Hills of South Dakota, and their descriptive title comes both from their majesty and from the deep blue haze rising from valley and gorges, usually hovering about the peaks, a haze which is the despair of photographers except on a few days in the year.

They are formed in this wise: The Appalachians flow in a southwesterly direction until they reach the North Carolina-Virginia line. Then they inexplicably divide into two main divisions. Veering slightly to the east continues the Blue Ridge. Marching on southwesterly are the Great Smokies. Between them is a plateau, sometimes 30 miles in extent, but which is cross-ridged by offshoots from the main ridges in a confusion of valleys and mountains and shelves. At the Georgia-North Carolina border the two meandering systems are resolved again, leveling off in North Georgia into a series of hills.

While about 461,000 acres of the Great Smokies are embraced in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the term in general applies to much of the Tennessee-North Carolina border lying outside Park boundaries. For 36 miles, the ridge of the system is a series of peaks more than 5,000 feet high. Sixteen of the peaks are more than 6,000 feet in altitude.

Almost within walking distance of old and settled communities, large portions of the Great Smokies until 25 or 30 years ago were almost unknown, and even today, the mountains remain largely in an aboriginal state. A generation ago, agitation was begun to preserve the area as an outdoor playground for Americans—a movement which resulted in the creation of the National Park.

Development of the Park has been very slow, and few visitors have had an opportunity to see much of the motor roads which cross it. Most popular drive is over Highway 107 to Newfound Gap, where there is a parking area and other facilities; thence over a scenic ride to Clingman's Dome, soaring 6,642 feet above sea level. From the parking area here, it is a short walk to a look-out tower.

Hardier sightseers may take to the trails, of which 675 miles are open to riders or hikers. There are established camp grounds in the Park, and the Appalachian (Maine-to-Georgia) Trail traverses much of the area, providing lean-to shelters. Six hundred miles of trout stream—some of it very fine—are open to fishing under Park regulations.

Wilderness travelers should consult with Park rangers at Gatlinburg, Tennessee, or Smokemont, N. C., before venturing into primeval areas.

Even the casual motorist is likely to come upon game, especially the black bear. There are also some white-tailed deer, red fox, raccoon, bobcat and a host of small game. The Park lists 50 species of fur-bearing animals, 200 fowls, 34 reptiles, 36 amphibians, and 60 fishes as habitats of the territory.

Largest remnant of the eastern aboriginal forests, the Park is a botanists' paradise. Each year, hundreds of nature students, professional and amateur, penetrate into the wilderness of the Park to study floral features.

The area is a meeting place of plants, including flora characteristic of the South and of Canada. At least 130 native tree species have been identified, and in addition 18 exotics are of known occurrence. About 20 of the number are shrubs, but in this section they assume aborescent dimensions. The mountain laurel, for instance, frequently assumes three dimensions and one specimen has a buttress of 32 inces in diameter. Other giant trees are chestnut, red maple, buckeye, cherry, hemlock, spruce, yellow birch, tulip. The Park includes the most extensive forest of virgin red spruce and unspoiled hardwoods in the United States, and approximately 200,000 acres is in its original forested condition.

The more than 1200 kinds of flowering plants which are known to grow in the park include many species of shrubs; among these are such spectacular flowers as the rose-purple rhododendrons, white rhododendrons, flame azalea, mountain laurel, and sand myrtle. These reach their highest bloom in late spring and early summer. Altogether at least 3600 kinds of plants make their home here, thereby making this one of the richest floral areas in the temperate zone.

From early spring unti late fall, the Smokies present a kaleidoscope of color. The most brilliant presentation is in June when the purple rhododendron bursts into bloom. In May, June and July other rhododendron, flame azaleas and mountain laurel have their seasons.

Innumerable wild flowers carpet the hillsides and coves, some of them persisting beyond the ordinary "growing season" of the mountains.

After the summer tourist has fled, however, the Smokies put on one of their most spectacular displays—a display enjoyed most by autumnal hikers. In October the broad-leafed trees blaze into a riot of color, sending long fingers of color far up into the black and green forested evergreen peeks.

But it makes no difference—The Smokies remain truly "great" at any season they are visited.

### They Come Back For Seconds

Three squares a day at the sound of the ranch house bell is the order in Western North Carolina, where mountain air whets appetites. (Photo by John G. Hemmer).

## Removal Of Cherokees In 1838 Was 'Trail of Tears'

". . . Early in June . . . about five thousand persons were brought down to . . . Calhoun . . . and Chattanooga, where they were put upon steamers and transported down the Tennessee . . . to the farther side of the Mississippi, where the journey was continued by land to Indian Territory. This removal, in the hottest part of the year, was attended with so great sickness and mortality that by resolution of the Cherokee Council, Ross and the other Chiefs submitted to General Scott a proposition that the Cherokee be allowed to remove themselves in the fall, after the sickly season had ended. This was granted on condition that all should have started by the 20th of October, except the sick and aged who might not be able to move so rapidly. . . In this way the remainder, enrolled at about 13,000 . . . started on the long march overland late in the fall. . .

". . . In October, 1823, the long procession of exiles was set in motion . . . nearly all of the 13,000 went overland. Crossing to the Hiwassee at a ferry above Gunstocker Creek they proceeded down along the river, the sick, the old people, and the smaller children, with the blankets, cooking pots, and other belongings in wagons, the rest on foot or on horses. The number of wagons was 645.

"It was like the march of an army, regiment after regiment, the wagons in the center, the officers along the line, and the horsemen on the flanks and at the rear . . . The route lay . . . through McMinnville and on to Nashville, where the Cumberland was crossed. Then they went on to Hopkinsville, Kentucky, where the noted chief, White-path, in charge of a detachment, sickened and died. His people buried him by the roadside. . . Somewhere along that march of death—for the exiles died by tens and twenties every day of the journey—the devoted wife of John Ross sank down, leaving him to go on with the bitter pain of bereavement added to heartbreak at the ruin of his nation. The Ohio was crossed . . . and the army passed on through southern Illinois until the Mississippi was reached opposite Cape Girardeau, Missouri. It was now the middle of winter, with the river running full of ice . . . with hundreds of the sick and dying penned up in wagons or stretched out upon the ground with only a blanket overhead to keep out the January blast. The crossing was made . . . whence the march was on through Missouri to Indian territory. . . At last their destination was reached. They had started in October, 1838, and it was now March, 1839, the journey having occupied nearly six months of the hardest part of the year.

"It is difficult to arrive at any accurate statement of the number of Cherokee who died ... of the Removal. ... cial figures those ... under the direction ... over 1,600 on the ... proportionate ... those previously ... ably greater. ... the stockades and ... chiefly by reason of ... furnished, ... Hundr... died soon after the ... Indian territory. ... over 4,000 Cheroke... direct result of the ...

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