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This is an article on Yancey County by Mrs. Charles Lyle of Celso. It appeared in the New York Times' May 25th issue. The Yancey Record would like to express our appreciation to Mrs. Lyle for annotations on our county, and we are sure the whole County echoes our sentiments. It is a welcome change from the criticism we received some months back in the Cosmopolitan magazine. Mrs. Lyles' article should go a long way toward altering the "Outsider's" opinion of the "Hillbilly".

BURNSVILLE, N. C. — In Yancey County, North Carolina, there is a mountain range named the Black Mountains, but known locally as The Black. And black it is! At times, it also is pink, white, blue or maybe just not there at all. But, always, there is somehow the black undertone, a somber, dull foundation to substantiate its name.

The Black Range is often referred to by visitors as Mount Mitchell because that one peak, the highest land point east of the Mississippi River, is so well known by name. Lesser-known peaks of the Black Range are Clingman's Peak (not to be confused with Clingman's Dome in the Smoky Mountains), Big Tom and Mount Craig (earlier called The Black Brothers), Balsam Cone, Cattail Peak, Potato Hill, Deer Foot Mountain, Winter Star Mountain, Gibbs Mountain, Horse Rock and Celso Knob. These, with lesser prominences, gaps between and craggy ridges extending down both sides, make up this mighty mountain range.

This magnificent panorama of lofty, craggy pinnacles, as seen from the Blue Ridge, where runs the parkway, or from Seven Mile Ridge, our vantage point, is awe inspiring indeed. To observe this magnificence in its many moods daily, even hourly, is a great privilege. Weather conditions govern its moods and the various shadings that bathe the whole with glory but, always, there is the undertone of basic black.

Folds of Mourning Crepe

The heavy growth of balsam and Frazier fir gave the range its name. It is blacker still when storm clouds gather and descend the sides like folds of mourning crepe. This can be an eerie time, a time of apprehension but beautiful nonetheless.

Then there is the velvety black of clear-cut silhouette against a starry winter sky when the world is still, a hushed and gentle time. It is in winter, too, that the leafless deciduous trees stand out bristly black against a background of freshly fallen snow, like a stubby growth of beard on the pale face of a wrinkled old man.

This is not the case when a sudden drop in temperature, together with moisture in the air, brings hoarfrost to the trees. Rime—frozen fog—then clings to every twig, and The Black is clear, dazzling white far down its sides. As the weather clears and grows colder, the fog lifts until only a great roll of white cloud hovers along the full length of the top.

This billowy fluff hangs there for hours as though loath to depart, then slowly dissipates. The air is crisp and the mountain sparkles with reflected sunlight from this mantle of white. Now the mountain is a white-shawled lady with black skirt.

There are, too, the days when the fog does not lift, nor does the day or night grow colder. It is then one lives in a solid gray world. The Black is hidden entirely and one wonders if the mountain is still there.

This grayness can last for days, to the point of becoming depressing, and this is the time for cozy, homey activities. Wood is heaped on the smoldering hearth, knitting is brought out, sewing is done and even a cake is popped into the oven without begrudging the time taken to do so.

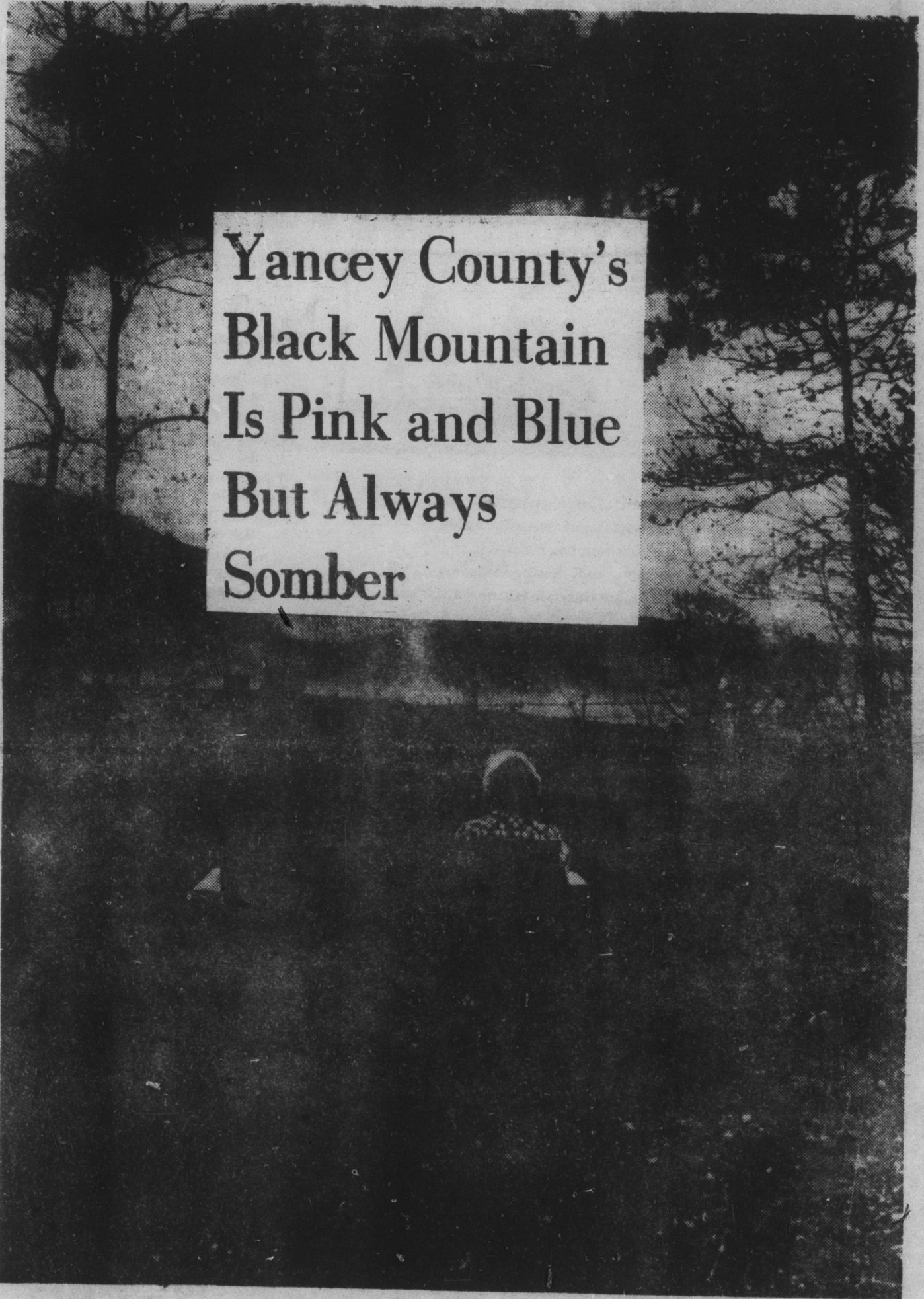
We miss The Black. We miss the beauty of a distant view. Finally, the desire for out-of-doors becomes too strong. A walk in the woods of Seven Mile Ridge brings the realization that lesser heights than The Black have their charm, too.

A Ramble in the Fog

A ramble in heavy fog can be a delight. Sounds are hushed, the world is close and quiet. Fallen leaves are damp and soft underfoot, small creatures are surprised at their busy work.

The Black is temporarily forgotten, and joy is had from the beauty of nearby forest. But finally the grayness leaves, and The Black again stands out in all its magnificence. Again we can drink our fill of its splendid beauty.

All the fogs that envelop The Black are not the heavy winter types. Spring and summer bring their own delightful kind. Warm weather showers, or even quick thunderstorms, usually are followed by light-gray fluffy fogs that drift up from the warm earth and float around like gay little clouds at play. They cross the intervening valley to Seven Mile Ridge, drifting in, drifting out, then in and out again, like a graceful dancer swirling her filmy veil.



Yancey County's
Black Mountain
Is Pink and Blue
But Always
Somber

CAPRICIOUS—Weather conditions govern the many moods of North Carolina's Black Mountain range. The New York Times by GEORGE TAMES

Neither are all the rains that descend on The Black the stormy types. There is the blue of slowly gathering bad weather, when haze develops over a period of several days. The haze is blue-gray, growing heavier and heavier, gradually dimming the view of the black sides of the mountain. Finally, the humps of the slopes are gone and the rain descends in gray sheets.

There are many and varying types of storms, but the mountain knows how to smile, too. There is the deep blue of a light haze covering the entire range, seen as the sun sets on a clear day. The last rays of the sun cast a rosy glow just before it dips behind the peaks, and one stands and wonders whether to say blue, rose or purple.

Purple Wins

The purple wins, for the combination of blue haze and rosy glow give a distinct purple overtone for several minutes. Slowly, the rose tone fades and only a true deep blue is seen. Then all daylight fades and the range is a huge mass silhouetted against the darkening sky.

On clear evenings, the light never leaves entirely. All through the night, the massive mountain range stands like a black-attired sentinel against the lighter sky. Stars gleam overhead, then slowly drop, one by one, behind the massive uplift of land as the earth turns on its axis.

Now we realize how Winter Star Mountain acquired its name. During early winter, the Dog Star, Sirius,

gleams above this peak in the early hours before day-break. It twinkles and glows until the pink of coming day fades it from view.

Clear mornings often bring an even brighter pink, as the sun rises from behind the Blue Ridges, than the pink that comes with its setting. As day breaks, light from the rising sun casts a pink glow over the whole world and the mountainside reflects the tint.

Clear in the Brightness

The sun climbs higher, the direct rays finally touch the mountaintop and, as this clear light descends the mountainside, every tree and rocky prominence stands out clearly in the brightness. Sometimes it is so clear you feel you have only to reach out to be able to touch the mountainside.

Seven Mile Ridge lies between the Blue Ridge and the Black Range, and when the sun rises from behind the Blue Ridge on these clear mornings, the shadow of Seven Mile Ridge is clearly outlined against the side of the larger, higher Black. As the sun slowly climbs higher in the sky, this shadow descends the side of The Black.

The somber black of this formidable range of mountains is present even when the green of creeping spring lightens the mood. Beginning on the lower slopes, where South Toe River meanders, the warmth of spring works its way up the sides each week until the whole mountain has a faint greenish cast. But the basic black is still there, always. The mountain is well named.