



A WEEK IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS: The Record of a Happy Outing

HENRY W. SHOEMAKER

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About the author:

Henry Wharton Shoemaker (1880–1958) was a prominent American folklorist, historian, diplomat, writer, publisher, and conservationist. In 1924, he cofounded the Pennsylvania Folklore Society with Bishop J.H. Darlington, and he was its president from 1930 until 1957. From 1924 to 1932, he published a series of monographs for the society.

From inside the book:

THIS is a record of an eight-days' drive through one of the most picturesque and historic sections of Pennsylvania. It is written as a plea to "see Pennsylvania first." While the United States and foreign lands abound with interesting and romantic spots, right at our very doors, in the Keystone State, we have enough that is well worth seeing to keep travellers busily engaged for a lifetime. After one has become acquainted with his or her native state, then it is time to travel into other states or other lands. Travelling through inland Pennsylvania is attractive in many ways. The roads are, for the most part, splendid at least for horses and carriages, and any one wishing to admire scenery or study local history and traditions or to make check-lists of birds and wild flowers can find satisfaction in no other way. The hotels in the region visited in this Blue Mountain trip were above the average of excellence. The beds were good, everything clean, the fare was simple but good. The landlords were invariably polite, and this feature was put to a real test, as in almost every instance our party arrived at the inns an hour or two after the regular supper hour. We cooked our mid-day meals in the woods, being provided with a small outfit, which consisted principally of a "roaster," a gridiron-like appliance on four legs, obtained from D. T. Abercrombie, New York and useful in many ways, a coffee pot, a frying pan, some cheap knives and forks, wooden dishes and some George Washington, or instantaneous coffee. While we were armed with a permit to camp on the state lands, we probably did most of the cooking on private property. We used every precaution to extinguish the fires before leaving, and gathered up all papers and rubbish, so as to leave the grounds as neat as we found them. The prevalence of springs of clear, pure water all through these mountains, made camping a most delightful experience. The prices at the hotels where we stopped for the nights were very reasonable, the general charge being four dollars for supper, breakfast and lodging for two persons and driver and two meals each for pair of horses. We hired our team in Reading, where there are several good liveries. In order to fully enjoy the Blue Mountain country, a driver speaking Pennsylvania German is essential. This is a passport to the confidence and good will of the people, especially the older ones; which when gained, they are ready and anxious to answer questions of all kinds. The Pennsylvania "Dutchman" is shy by nature, and inclined to be suspicious of strangers when living in remote localities, but a word or two in his favorite tongue soon puts him at his ease, and he has a heart of gold. It is recommended that for reference the following books be taken on a drive into the Blue Ridge: D. C. Henning's "Tales of the Blue Mountains," Chester A. Reed's "Land Birds of America," Mrs. William Starr Dana's "How to Know the Wild Flowers," "Getting Acquainted with the Trees," by Horace McFarland, and a pocket map of Pennsylvania. We usually drove thirty miles a day, but on some occasions covered forty without any difficulty. It is hoped that others will enjoy this particularly charming drive.

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