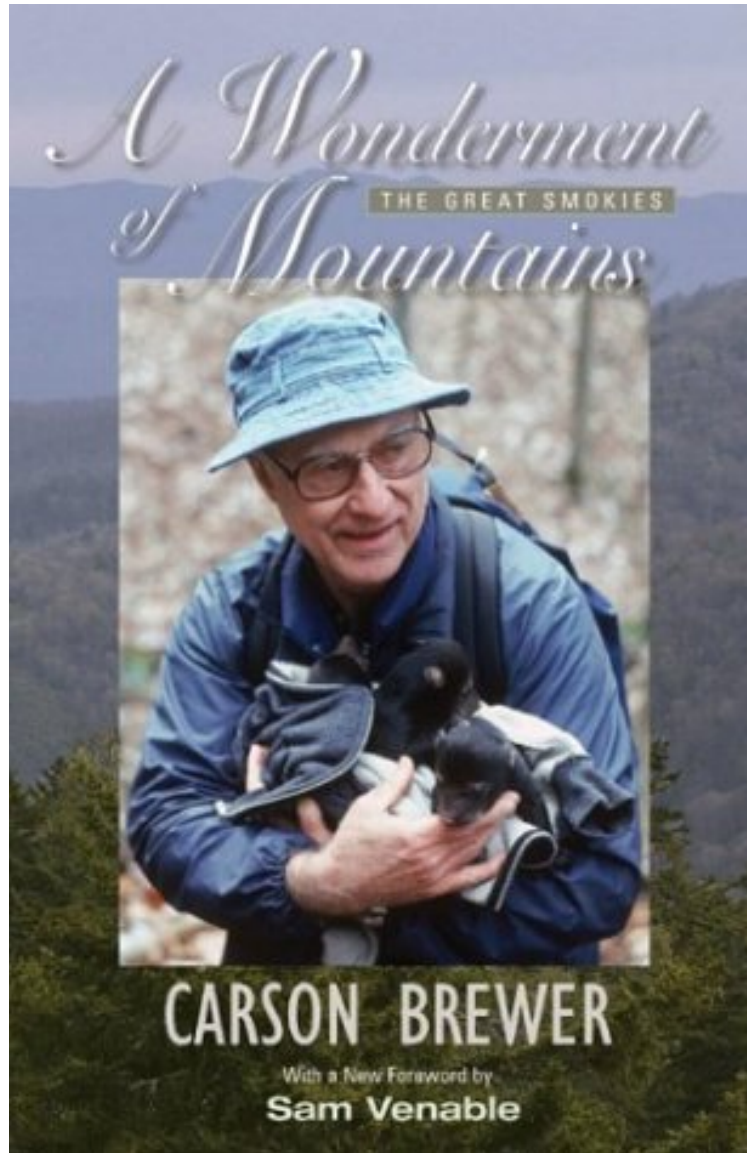


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A Wonderment of Mountains, the Great Smokies

Carson Brewer

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Carson Brewer : A Wonderment of Mountains, the Great Smokies before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Wonderment of Mountains, the Great Smokies:

Carson Brewer on ... "Mountain Places Snow was nice and crunchy underfoot. Not crunchy like peanuts or cornflakes. Rather, it was a silky, whispery crunchy. "Mountain Plants You can bury your nose deep in the cool violet bed and

smell the mix of life and death while pondering the unceasing cycle of each into the other. "Mountain People Lem Ownby.... has plowed oxen, mules, horses on the forty-four acre farm on Jakes Creek. But he has never owned or driven an automobile.

About the Author Carson Brewer was a reporter and columnist for more than forty years. His columns on conservation issues and on the Great Smoky Mountains earned him the E. J. Meeman Conservation Award (twice) from the Scripps-Howard Foundation, the Golden Press Card award from the Society of Professional Journalists (which also named a scholarship in his honor in 1984), and the inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award from the Knoxville Writers Guild. He died on January 15, 2003. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Carson Brewer on . . . Mountain Places Snow was nice and crunchy underfoot. Not crunchy like peanuts or cornflakes. Rather, it was a silky, whispery crunchy. Lots of feet headed for the Rainbow Falls icicle had packed it hard, but treaded boots had roughed up the snow enough to keep it from being slick. . . . We had decided the previous Saturday to walk the three miles up to Rainbow Falls to see the falls as a pillar of ice. This is a fairly rare occurrence, and I had missed it the few other times it has happened. And I figured I'd better not pass up this opportunity. After all, I'd hate to be run over by a tractor-trailer truck on one of its 70-mph lunges down an I-75 hill, without ever having seen the Rainbow Falls ice column. Mountain Plants A sweet white violet bloom is small and dainty, about the right size to hide behind a dime. It has two top petals that stick up like the ears of a miniature white rabbit. Two others stick down and out to either side, and these overlap the outer edges of the bottom petal. Delicate purple veins begin near the outer edge of the bottom petal and converge at its base, where there is a golden root the size of a pinhead. . . . You can bury your nose deep in the cool violet bed and smell the mix of life and death while pondering the unceasing cycle of each into the other. A nearby creek keeps singing over the old gray stones in its bed. A breeze tickles the little rabbit ears of the violet blooms. And it is time to walk some more. Mountain People Bent and blind and ninety-one years old, Lem Ownby lives alone beside the singing waters of Jakes Creek. Hes the last of his kind in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. . . . He has plowed oxen, mules, horses on the forty-four acre farm on Jakes Creek. But he has never owned or driven an automobile. He worked for Little River Lumber Company when it was harvesting the big trees of the vifgin forest of the mountains around him. But he has never held a job outside the Great Smokies. Lem has crossed only one state line, the one at the top of the mountain dividing Tennessee from North Carolina, going as far as Tow String Creek, still in the Great Smokies, "to buy a dog from a feller." He has never been farther from the Great Smokies than Knoxville. His wife was hospitalized there. He spent five weeks and one day in St. Mary's Medical Center when he had pneumonia ten years ago. he didn't like it, couldn't stand the water. Somebody finally had to bring him water from the mountain spring that's piped constantly to his back porch.