



The Carolina Mountains

Margaret W. Morley

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In 1890, Margaret Morley, a well-known biologist, writer, and educator, visited the mountains of North Carolina. She was so enchanted by their pastoral beauty and charm that she spent over a decade exploring the region, recording scenes of everyday life in captivating photographs and delightful prose. Her documentation culminated in her book *The Carolina Mountains*, originally published in 1913.

The Carolina Mountains is a combination of travelogue, biological observation, history, and photography. Morley toured widely through areas of upstate South Carolina and Western North Carolina, traveling by train, horse and buggy, horseback, and on foot. Her skill with a camera, her background in botany, and her ability to befriend the tough, independent mountaineers helped her create one of the most descriptive and poetic accounts of the region.

Influenced by her Victorian sensibilities, Margaret Morley presents a unique historical perspective on the region. Her descriptions of the early settlers, early education in the mountains, local speech, the Biltmore Estate, Flat Rock, and the Great Smoky Mountains thoughtfully capture the essence of the area as she experienced it in the early twentieth century.

Even today, we can trace Margaret Morley's travels throughout the region, from Caesar's Head to Asheville, Tryon to Cashiers. Her detailed descriptions of Mount Mitchell and Roan Mountain still ring true. With very few exceptions, the detailed and accurate account of her journeys makes *The Carolina Mountains* a reliable guidebook nearly a century later.

Coinciding with a year-long celebration of Margaret Morley's photography ("The Carolina Mountains: Photography of Margaret Morley") at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh, Bright Mountain Books' 2006 Historical Images reprinting of *The Carolina Mountains* is enhanced with over 60 pages of Margaret Morley's photographs.

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