Valle Crucis, North Carolina

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The scenic mountain area known as Valle Crucis has changed little since Susan Fenimore Cooper described it in 1889. Because of its long-time isolation, the present-day valley leaves a magical impression on the thousands of people who visit it each year. In this book, William Bake, one of the South's premier landscape photographers, has captured much of that magic with his perceptive full-color photographs. Because of his close family ties to the area, David Yates was able to gain access to many of the old families of the region who shared their stories and old photographs. Together the two have produced a tribute to a region with a rich heritage and stunning scenery. The book follows North Carolina's first designated Scenic Byway as it winds along the Watauga River valley through the Valle Crucis Historic District to the community of Banner Elk. There is a section about the famous Mast General Store, which was built in 1883 and remains the model for most of the area's rejuvenated general stores. It remains one of the oldest continuously operated general stores in the United States. Another section tells about the history of the Mast Farm Inn which the U.S. Department of the Interior describes as "one of the most complete and best preserved groups of nineteenth century farm buildings in western North Carolina." The New York Times described the bed-and-breakfast inn which occupies the old homestead as "about as close as you can get to the word homespun." The book then traces the evolution of the Valle Crucis Mission School and the Church of the Holy Cross. It also covers St. John's Church, the Inn at Taylor House, and the Valle Country Fair. With development quickly encroaching, the vistas and lifestyles of the valley may soon be irretrievable. Valle Crucis insures that these treasures will be preserved for future generations.

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