

# MOUNTAIN PEOPLE

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

## MOUNTAIN PEOPLE

in Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Man has occupied these mountains since prehistoric times, but it is only within the past century that human activities have profoundly affected the natural course of events here. When the first white settlers reached the Great Smoky Mountains in the late 1700s they found themselves in the land of the Cherokee Indians. The tribe, one of the most culturally advanced on the continent, had permanent towns, cultivated croplands, and networks of trails leading to all parts of their territory. By the 1830s the Cherokees had adopted the ways of the whites to the extent of developing a written language, printing their own newspaper, and utilizing the white man's agriculture and architecture. Nevertheless most of them were forcibly removed in the 1830s. The few who remained are the ancestors of the Cherokees living near the park today.



Oconaluftee Pioneer Farmstead House

Whites began settling in these mountains in the late 1700s. At first, living was primitive, but by the 1900s there was little difference between the mountain people and their contemporaries living in rural areas beyond the mountains. Earlier settlers had lived off the land by hunting the animals, utilizing the timber for buildings and fences, and growing food and pasturing animals in the clearings. As the decades passed, many areas that had once been forest became fields and pastures. People farmed, attended church, and maintained community ties in a typically rural fashion.

The agricultural pattern of life in the Great Smoky Mountains changed with the arrival of lumbering in the early 1900s. Within twenty years, the largely self-sufficient economy of the people here was almost replaced, by dependence on manufactured items, store-bought food, and cash. At the same time, loggers were rapidly cutting the great primeval forests that remained on these mountains. Unless the course of events could be quickly changed, there would be little left of the region's special character.

Intervention came when Great Smoky Mountains National Park was established in 1934. The forest—at least the 20% that remained uncut within park boundaries—was

saved. The people—more than 6000 land-owners—left the park. Behind them there remained many farm buildings, mills and churches, some of which have since been maintained and utilized by the National Park Service to interpret Southern Appalachian culture. This folder is a guide to historical areas in the Great Smokies, including those where park personnel demonstrate some of the activities of mountain people in the "Living History" program.

A map (reverse) indicates the locations of the following historical areas . . .

**Pioneer Farmstead at Oconaluftee** offers visitors the opportunity to walk through a collection of Southern Appalachian farm buildings where, from May thru October, park personnel interpret the way of life of earlier years. Children will especially enjoy seeing the farm animals which are allowed to roam freely within the confines of the farmyard.

A self-guiding booklet, available at the farmstead, details the life of mountain farms and explains the uses to which various buildings and tools were put.



Tipton House, Cades Cove



Oliver House, Cades Cove

**Mingus Mill** is an excellent example of a gristmill powered by a water turbine. Open May thru October, it presents the flavor of milling, and provides an opportunity to learn how waterpower was harnessed for the production of cornmeal and flour. The miller will be glad to answer questions.

**Noah "Bud" Ogle Place**, located on the Cherokee Orchard Road 3 miles south of Gatlinburg via the Airport Road, is a typical pioneer structure. On a self-guiding nature trail through second-growth forest near the cabin, the story of the pioneers and the forest is interpreted in a short folder.

**Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail** begins just beyond the Noah "Bud" Ogle Place and takes you on a 5-mile winding drive through forest and past pioneer structures. The story of the forest and man's encounter with it are told in a self-guiding booklet available at the trail entrance. This road is open from mid-April thru mid-November.

**Cataloochee** is an area in the eastern section of the park which once supported a population of 1200 and contained several small settlements and some thriving farms. Today, only the churches, a school, and a few houses and barns remain. A paved road leads through part of the valley of Cataloochee Creek, but access to the area is only by a rough, winding unpaved road.

**Cades Cove** contains more pioneer structures than any other location in the park. Before the park was established, the area was extensively cultivated. Today, farming is still permitted there to help maintain the historical scene. Pastures, cattle, and hay combine with old buildings and open vistas to give the cove a pleasing rural aspect.

Exhibits explain the history of many structures, self-guiding trails interpret the natural scene, and park personnel demonstrate pioneer activities at the Cable Mill on a seasonal basis. Deer and turkey are found in the cove and woodchucks (groundhogs) are often seen near the road.



Primitive Baptist Church, Cades Cove



Boiling sorghum molasses

A winding 11-mile road takes you through the cove at a leisurely pace and a self-guiding auto tour booklet interprets the various cabins, houses, churches, and the Cable Mill area. The tour road is excellent for bicycling and those who decide not to go the whole distance may shortcut across the cove floor by using Sparks or Hyatt Lanes.

## HISTORY WHERE YOU FIND IT

The historical structures and areas maintained and interpreted by the National Park Service survive many others now being reclaimed by nature throughout the park. Look closely when you are hiking. Hidden in the woods are old sunken roadbeds, railroad grades, stone walls, chimneys, and even a few decaying buildings. Growing around cabin sites are some of the flowers and trees brought here by settlers who wanted to make life a little brighter and more liveable. Daffodils, rambling roses, boxwoods, yuccas, walnut and apple trees still survive in the remote valleys as living reminders of past generations. Where once there were fields and gardens, second-growth forest now covers the land, but watch for old trees—many of them were left for a purpose. Large old oaks among youthful yellow-poplars or pines may have once shaded a house or barn, or served as a boundary tree. Cemeteries—about 135 of them can still be

located—mark the final resting places of mountain people. Seasons pass and the marks of man disappear under autumn leaves or hide behind spring growth. Discovery becomes more difficult, but there is still evidence of history on the land.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

**Publications** about the mountain people are sold at the Sugarlands, Cades Cove, and Oconaluftee visitor centers.

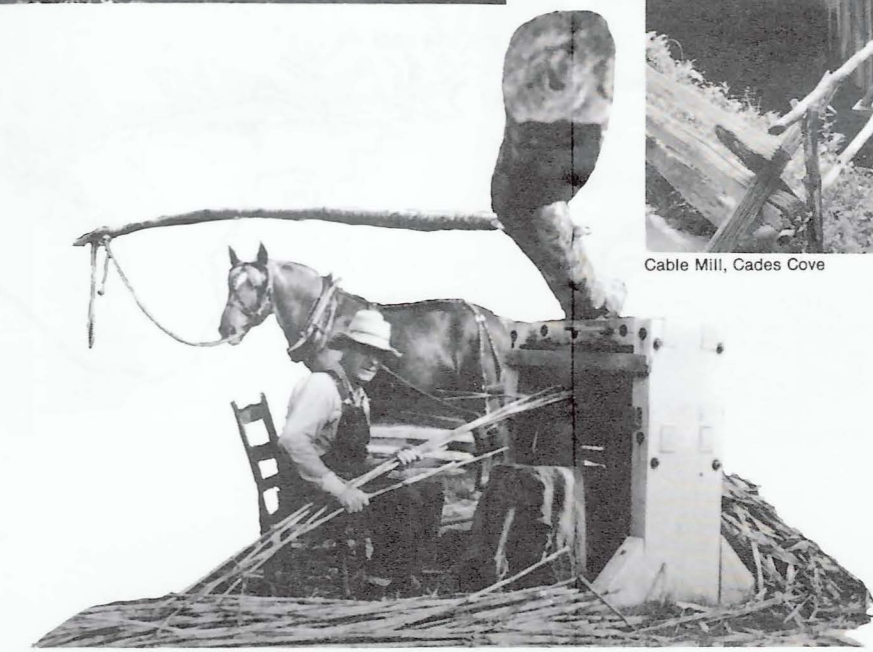
**Interpretive Programs** provide introductions to local history. Schedules of these programs are posted on campground and visitor center bulletin boards, and are listed in the park newspaper.

### For your safety

- stay away from millwheels and machinery
- enjoy the farm animals at a distance
- stay on trails
- closely control your children



Cable Mill, Cades Cove



Squeezing sorghum cane to make molasses

### Administration

Great Smoky Mountains National Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The Superintendent's address is Gatlinburg, TN 37738.

This folder is published by the Great Smoky Mountains Natural History Association, a nonprofit organization cooperating with the National Park Service in the interpretive programs of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The association offers at nominal cost publications intended to develop a broad public understanding of park geology, biology, history and related subjects.



# MOUNTAIN PEOPLE

A guide to the places where they lived, worked and worshipped in Great Smoky Mountains National Park

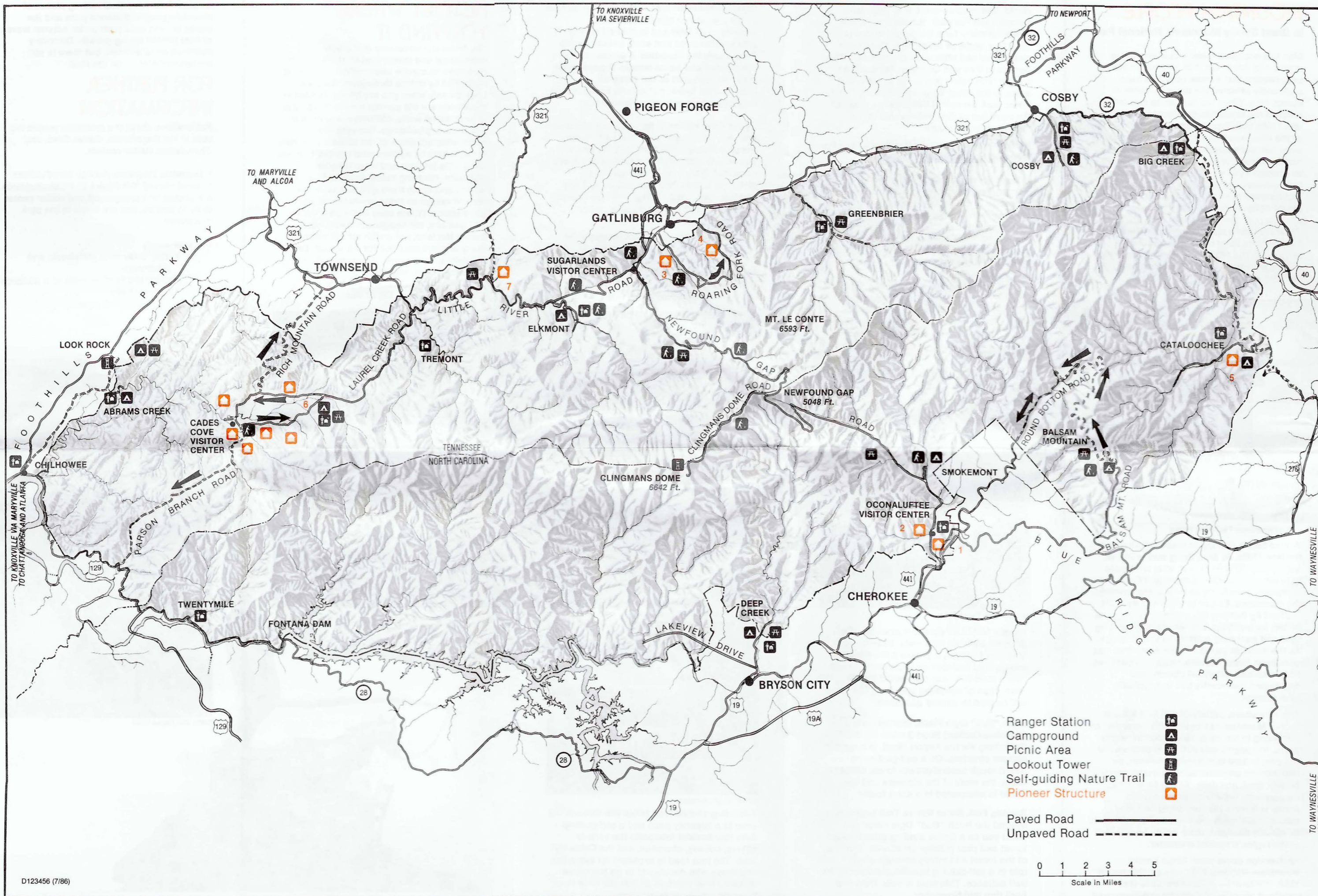
## Living History Programs







Reenacted aspects of pioneer life are presented seasonally at these locations:


- 1) Pioneer Farmstead
- 2) Mingus Mill
- 6) Cades Cove (Cable Mill area)

## Historic buildings maintained by the National Park Service:

- 1) Pioneer Farmstead
- 2) Mingus Mill
- 3) Noah "Bud" Ogle Place Self Guiding Trail
- 4) Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail
- 5) Cataloochee
- 6) Cades Cove
- 7) Little Greenbrier School



Ranger Station   
 Campground   
 Picnic Area   
 Lookout Tower   
 Self-guiding Nature Trail   
 Pioneer Structure 

Paved Road   
 Unpaved Road 