

CADES COVE

Self-Guiding Auto Tour

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

NORTH CAROLINA — TENNESSEE



CADES COVE AUTO TOUR

Deep in the Great Smoky Mountains is this isolated valley of Cades Cove which contains a fine remnant of pioneer America. The National Park Service is perpetuating this scene so that you can turn back the pages of time for a little while and forget some of the cares and worries of our more "modern" age. At the same time we hope you gain an insight of the way the mountain people lived under extreme isolated conditions. Cut off from the outside world by the mountain barrier, this was a land of "make it yourself or do without."

Without farming, the Cove would return to woodland. To prevent this, the National Park Service has leased the land to private individuals and they live on the land and farm it under conditions specified in the permit. Please respect the fences, fields, and weathered old buildings that make Cades Cove unique among open-air museums for the American people to see and enjoy.

This eleven mile auto tour begins at the Orientation Shelter where exhibits and interpretive signs give you a brief description of the valley. Traffic is one way on a surfaced road that follows much of the original roadway with its natural grade and turns that the mountain people used. Fords across the streams have been retained as they were in the early days but have been surfaced with concrete aprons to make them passable when the creeks are high. The features and points of interest are numbered along the roadside to correspond to those in this booklet.

Published By

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

In Cooperation With

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR





Cades Cove Overlook at Beginning of Tour.



FIRST VIEW OF CADES COVE

This was an American frontier. To this valley in the early 19th century came the pioneer settlers. Isolated from the outside world, they became self-sufficient.

Sturdy log structures, their timbers hewed with a skill now lost, remain as memorials to a way of life. The fine frame buildings show a slow self-taught advance in construction methods.

Elsewhere the frontier passed on yielding to change and innovation, but here a pioneer culture has persisted, offering to future generations a "sense of the land from which their forefathers hewed their homes."

Cades Cove with its visible record of man's struggle with the wilderness is a valuable heritage of the American people.

THE GEOLOGY OF CADES COVE

The rocks that underlie all the area that can be seen from this point were deposited on the floors of ancient seas. Sandstones and shales, laid down about 600 million years ago, form the mountains. Limestones containing fossil sea shells that were buried 400 million years ago underlie the Cove floor. During the ancient upheaval of the earth's crust known as the Appalachian Revolution the older rocks of the mountains were moved northwestward over the younger limestones. Since then running water has been ceaselessly wearing the mountains away, removing several thousand feet of rock that once stood over the cove area.



OLD DWELLING SITE

About 100 families lived in Cades Cove at the time the park was established. To maintain open fields and preserve other features of this unusual pioneer community a number of farmers have been allowed to remain under special permits. Some of these leaseholders are descendants of early settlers; a few are members of families which have lived and worked in the Cove for more than a century.



CROOKED ARM FORD

Crossing streams with horse and wagon was difficult for the mountain people. Sometimes it was necessary to go up or down the stream looking for a shallow place to cross. Eventually a path was beaten to the best place and a ford or crossing was established. This stream is a branch of Abrams Creek.



Primitive Baptist Church.



PARKING AREA FOR JOHN OLIVER CABIN (.3 mile walk)

In 1818 John Oliver, a veteran of the War of 1812, made his way across the mountains into Cades Cove to become the first permanent white settler. Here, at the foot of the mountains and sheltered from prevailing winds, he built his home. The original homestead stood close to the present structure.



ROAD TO PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Turn left here for a one-half mile side trip to the Primitive Baptist Church. Return by the same road.

The early settlers in Cades Cove were a religious people. In 1827, shortly after the community was established, the Primitive Baptist Church was organized. The original log structure stood on the rise of ground just to the rear of the present church. This frame building was erected to replace the old log structure.

Much of the history of Cades Cove and its people is recorded on the grave markers in the churchyard. Many of the people lived and died without ever leaving the Cove.



METHODIST CHURCH

Four churches filled the religious needs of Cades Cove residents. Two were Methodist and two Baptist. This church, built in 1902, replaced an old log structure.



OLD HYATT LANE

Old Hyatt Lane (left) extended across the Cove from north to south and connected with the present road to Townsend over Rich Mountain.



OLD ROAD TO TOWNSEND

This winding gravelled mountain road follows the same route over Tater Ridge, Cades Cove Mountain through Rich Mountain Gap and into Tuckaleechee Cove and the present city of Townsend that the pioneers travelled. If you have the pioneer spirit, this makes a nice scenic side trip. Distance is 12 miles to Townsend.



MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

At one time 114 members were enrolled here. This church, built in 1894 on Hyatt Hill, was moved to its present location in 1916.



FORD ACROSS TATER BRANCH

This small stream begins on Tater Ridge and flows across the Cove into Abrams Creek. "Tater" is short for potato which is easier to say and has been left with us as a place name.



PERMITTEE QUARTERS

People living here maintain the pastoral scene of Cades Cove under a special use permit issued by the National Park Service. They are required to maintain the fences, buildings, and land according to the permit.



SCENIC VIEW PARKING AREA

This parking area has been provided for the fine view of the crestline of the Smokies. The Appalachian Trail extending from Maine to Georgia follows the skyline through the park most of which is above 5,000 feet elevation.



WILD LIFE

Wild turkey and whitetail deer are among the natural residents of Cades Cove, and visitors should be on the alert for an occasional glimpse of them. Evening and early morning are times when they have been observed most frequently. Look for them in open fields as well as along woodland margins. Except for Cades Cove, these animals are rare or absent throughout most of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Like all wild life, turkey and deer are given full protection here. They are a part of the wilderness which national parks have saved for this and future generations.



Methodist Church.



Whitetail Buck.



COOPER ROAD

Cooper Road (right) was the pioneer route to Maryville and Chilhowee. At first a trail then later a homespun highway, it traversed Arbutus and Stony ridges through the gaps and out to the flats where travel was easier. During rainy weather travel over this route was difficult if not impossible.



SKYLINE VIEW

Looking across the Cove to the horizon we again see the crestline of the Smokies. Thunderhead Mountain is the highest and most prominent peak in the distant skyline. It is often obscured by clouds on warm summer afternoons, hence its name.



ABRAMS CREEK

Abrams Creek drains the Cove and was named after Old Abram, Cherokee Chief of the Chilhowee. It has been said that Abram's wife was called Kate by the whites and that through the years Kate's Cove Became Cades Cove.



ABRAMS FALLS

Abrams Falls Parking Area (right .3 mile). One of the finest waterfalls in the park is Abrams Falls. Reached only by trail, it is a five-mile round trip from this parking area. Turn right for Elijah Oliver Place.



Skyline View.



ELIJAH OLIVER PLACE

One half mile by trail from here is the Elijah Oliver homestead. "Leige," as he was called by all that knew him, was the deacon and clerk of the Primitive Baptist Church (post number 5) for thirty-seven years. Many church meetings were held in his home during the winter months. He and his wife were ordained deacon and deaconess in this old home. It was a place of welcome and hospitality for preachers and teachers and all good people.



TURN RIGHT HERE TO JOHN P. CABLE OPEN AIR MUSEUM



JOHN P. CABLE OPEN AIR MUSEUM GROUP (Walk Clockwise Around Historic Buildings)

BLACKSMITH SHOP. This building was erected in 1957 to take the place of a blacksmith shop which stood near this spot many years ago. It is similar to the typical blacksmith shop of that period. The blacksmith's neighbors, as well as people from miles around, came to him to have their tools mended and their horses shod. He improvised a wide variety of articles, including such items as door hinges which were made from worn horseshoes and other reclaimed iron objects.

The entire Cable Mill area is enclosed with a "snake rail" fence made from split chestnut logs. The fence at the Becky Cable House is known as a "split picket" fence.

CADES COVE



Cades Cove Auto Tour



ELIJAH OLIVER PLACE.

in water, they were the most economical and practical material for milldams.

Across Mill Creek you can see a canal which brings water from the larger Forge Creek, about a half-mile away, to assure an adequate supply of water at all times. Return the way you came.

BARN. This is an excellent example of the old cantilever-type barn, showing framing typical of many such structures in the Cove. Large haylofts were required to store forage for cattle during the winter months. Note the wooden door hinges.

FLUME. The elevated trough carrying water is the flume. The water which powers the mill is channeled by this chute to the top of the mill wheel. The wider trough upstream is the millrace. The structures with wooden bars placed where the race narrows into the flume is called a "chunk rack." Its purpose is to filter the debris from the water.

JOHN P. CABLE MILL. This is the only grist mill left in the Park using an overshot wheel. It was first built by John P. Cable, restored in 1936 and again in 1951.

The mill is operated April 15 to late October as a demonstration by the Great Smoky Mountains Natural History Association. The ground corn meal is sold in the nearby Becky Cable House.

SMOKEHOUSE (Meat House). This is a typical smokehouse in which the meat was salted, cured, and hung. After animals had been butchered, the meat was placed on the shelves along the sides of the building and covered with salt; later, after it was cured, the meat was hung from the poles which span the interior.

BECKY CABLE HOUSE. This was the first frame house in the Cove, built by John P. Cable for his daughter, Becky. Upon completion of this building a general store operated here for many years. Most of the goods were brought from Maryville, 26 miles away, using yoke oxen. The unique construction of this building necessitated a round-about entrance to each room by way of the porch. Note the winding stairway inside. Becky Cable lived here until her death at the age of 96.

SHAKES. Shakes were hand split or rived with a frow for the roof of the building. Straight grained white oak was preferred although other woods were used. The shakes would last for several years and give good protection from the weather. All the buildings in this group have shake roofs.

By walking a short distance alongside the millrace you will come to the floodgate and milldam.

FLOODGATE. The floodgate serves to control the amount of water which flows into the millrace.

MILL CREEK DAM. This dam was built to bring water from Mill Creek through the millrace, to the overshot wheel at the mill. Because hemlock logs are very durable when submerged



ABRAMS FALLS.



SHAKE MAKING.



SORGHUM CANE GRINDING.

The store is operated (April 15 - late October) by the Great Smoky Mountains Natural History Association. Books, pamphlets, postcards, slides, other informational material, and meal ground at the nearby mill are sold here.

CORNCRIB. This is one of the finest corncrubs in the park. On either side are the gear sheds in which wagons, sleds, and various tools and equipment were stored. (Restored in 1937.)

DRIVE-THROUGH BARN. This drive-through log barn was brought here from Cataloochee in 1957. It was erected here to replace a similar barn which stood near this spot at one time.

SORGHUM MILL. Sorghum was grown by the pioneers for fodder, grain, and sirup. This mill operates week-ends from mid-September to mid-October when the sorghum is ripe. The rollers squeeze the juice from the sorghum cane which is boiled down in pans to a thick sirup on the furnace nearby. The mill is one horsepower. A small patch of sorghum cane grows nearby inside the rail fence.



SIDE TRIP

The road to the right leads to the Henry Whitehead Cabin (0.7 mile).



HENRY WHITEHEAD CABIN

Here are the two extremes in cabin construction. The small one to the rear is low and squat, with a large stone chimney at one end, rough-hewn logs with saddle-notched corners. The home was built by David Shields for his sister who was a widow. Later she married Henry Whitehead who, with the help of his two oldest girls, built the new home in 1895-1896. One of these girls, Nancy Ann, later became the wife of John Oliver, great-grandson of the first white man (John Oliver) to establish a permanent home in the Cove. Nancy Ann and her sister cut and sawed the white pine logs, planed the joists, and molded the bricks by hand.

**TURN AROUND HERE AND RETRACE YOUR ROUTE
TO THE SURFACED ROAD TO CONTINUE THE TOUR.**



Becky Cable House.



HENRY WHITEHEAD CABIN.



PINE-OAK SELF - GUIDING NATURE TRAIL

Throughout the Southern Appalachian Mountains there are thousands of acres of forests dominated by a mixture of pines and oaks. However, the axe and fires have played such havoc with these woodlands that mature trees are now a rarity. Here, because a former owner, "Uncle Andy" Shields, would not permit the cutting of the biggest trees, some large specimens have survived. Now that this is a part of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, forest protection is assured for all

time. Here, as in all National Parks, a superlative segment of the American scene is preserved for the enjoyment of this and future generations. Use the self-guiding leaflet to learn more about what you see along this short trail.



PRIVATE QUARTERS

The people living here farm the land by special use permit issued by the National Park Service.



WHISTLING BRANCH FORD

Whistling Branch Ford was another easy place to cross for the pioneers. Present day place names were handed down by the mountain people and for the most part were descriptive. The term "branch" was applied to small streams.



CADES BRANCH FORD

A branch of Abrams Creek which drains the valley and empties into the Little Tennessee River at Chilhowee.



THE OLD HYATT LANE

The Old Hyatt Lane (left), crossed the valley and connected with the old road to Townsend. During the rainy season, it was almost impossible to travel over this route except by foot or horseback.



PETER CABLE PLACE

This, one of the oldest cabins in the Cove, illustrates exceptionally fine workmanship. Peter Cable, the 3rd oldest settler, is said to have taken three years to complete the original building. A smokehouse and granary are standing nearby. Most of the Cove's honey is produced here. Bees furnished the main source of sweetening for the mountain folk. (Restored in 1937.)



PERMITTEE QUARTERS (Right)

This residence is occupied by one of the four families that farm the land in Cades Cove by special permission from the National Park Service. Except for a small garden,



TIPTON OLIVER PLACE.

no "row" crops are permitted. Haying and grazing are the principle agricultural activities in the Cove today.



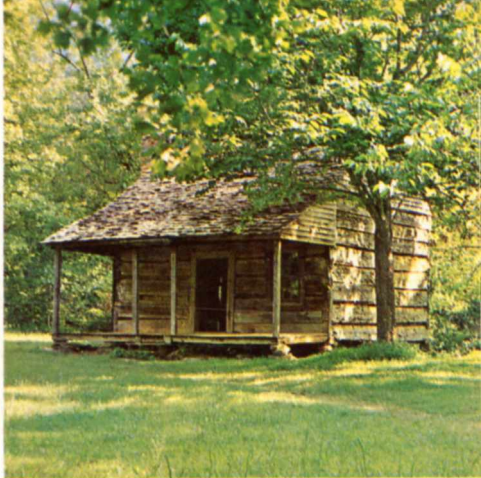
TIPTON OLIVER PLACE

This house was built by Jackie Stevenson for Col. J. W. H. Tipton, a descendant of early Cades Cove pioneers. Tipton was a colonel in the war with Mexico. Nearby stands a blacksmith shop, smokehouse, springhouse and apiary; across the road is the barn and corncrib.



FORD ACROSS OLIVER BRANCH

Oliver was a common family name in the Cove, and dates back to 1818 when John Oliver, veteran of the War of 1812, settled here to farm the land.



CARTER SHIELDS CABIN.



FORD ACROSS BUNTING BRANCH

Each stream had its crossing or ford in the Cove. The names have lasted down through the years and serve to locate specifically a geographic place.



VIEW OF CADES COVE MOUNTAIN

This fine view of the lower end of the cove and surrounding mountains clearly shows the mountain barrier that prevented the people of Cades Cove from having close communications with the outside world. Travel outside was difficult and arduous. Many people remained in the Cove all their lifetime.



FARMSTEAD LANE

This narrow lane between the rock piles and trees led to a site once occupied as a farmstead.



FORD ACROSS LEAD MINE BRANCH

Apparently this name is incorrectly used because no lead deposits have ever been found in the Cove. Some iron had been mined from the mountains in the area and a forge operated for some time near Becky Cable House.



CARTER SHIELDS CABIN

Nestled in this delightful setting, the Carter Shields cabin again shows excellent craftsmanship in its construction. Space requirements for the mountain people were meager compared to present day standards. Their possessions were few but essential to their well being.



MCCAULEY BRANCH FORD

McCauley Branch Ford is another creek named for one of the early settlers of the Cove. It flows into Cove Creek formed by the junction of Green Creek and Rowans Creek and thence into Abrams Creek finally reaching the Little Tennessee River.



PANORAMIC VIEW

From this parking area, Rich Mountain dominates the scene. Rich Mountain Fire Tower is to the right on the skyline. In the park, there are two fire seasons. The first begins in February when the leaves on the forest floor dry out quickly while the trees are bare. The second begins late in September when the leaves begin to fall adding fuel to the forest floor. During the fire seasons the lookouts throughout the park are manned to protect the forests from wildfire.



ROAD TO CAMP GROUND AND RANGER STATION (Right .1 mile)



RIDING STABLES

A saddle horse concession operates here during the summer for saddle trips over the many trails in Cades Cove.



ROAD TO CADES COVE PICNIC AREA



JUNCTION WITH CADES COVE ROAD

You have now completed the Cades Cove self-guiding loop road. We hope you have enjoyed your trip and learned something about the pioneer way of life as it existed for more than 100 years here in Cades Cove.

A HISTORY OF CADES COVE

In the 18th and early in the 19th Century many people in Scotland, Ireland, England, and Germany became dissatisfied with conditions as they existed and left their native lands. Most of them came to America, seeking freedom from heavy tax burdens; others because their land was worn out; still others for adventure to fulfill a lifelong dream of wealth and riches in a new country. Many came with only the personal belongings they could carry. Some had to work for their passage aboard ship to get here. By 1800 the lands along the Atlantic Coast had been claimed and were thickly settled. For the new arrivals it meant moving west into the frontier to find a place to settle. The bottom lands were occupied first because they provided large flat areas that could be farmed. With more arrivals and descendants, areas farther upstream were conquered and claimed from nature to provide new homes and farms. Elsewhere the frontier moved steadily west yielding to change and desires but here in the mountains, which formed a natural barrier, the settlers stayed for several generations perpetuating a pioneer culture they had learned from their forefathers.

Land once cleared for farming or by logging is rapidly returning to a thickly forested condition that greeted the pioneers. The visible reminders of the former use of this land and its forests are gradually disappearing. Old abandoned fields, moldering cabins, barns, and grist mills have been altered and changed by time and encroaching forests. Cades Cove is one exception to this situation. Farmers are permitted, under special conditions prescribed by the National Park Service, to lease and farm the land as it had been in days gone by. Thus the pastoral scene of the Cove is being maintained as it has been for several generations. Many pioneer structures have been rehabilitated and are being used as open air museums to perpetuate the pioneer culture of the mountain people. Here, survived a manner of living which has all but disappeared elsewhere in the United States, the mountain pioneer way of life. It was a land of do without if you couldn't make it yourself. Today, Cades Cove with its fields, pastures, old mills, log cabins, barns and other structures, represent a mountain pioneer community now being preserved as part of our historic past for this and future generations to enjoy.

More than 2,000 acres is being farmed by a few families who have paid fees for the special-use permits issued to them. Several of them live on the farms they work. These people have no connection with the Cove as an exhibit of pioneer culture, but most of them are direct descendants of families who lived here for several generations.

The first settlers arrived over an old Indian trace leading from the West Prong of the Little Pigeon River at Wear's first settlement, up Walden and Cove Creeks, Wear Cove, Brickey Valley to Tuckaleechee Cove, then across Rich Mountain Gap into Cades Cove, and was later used by early traders and white settlers.

The first land grant in Cades Cove was one of 5,000 acres made by North Carolina to Hugh Dunlap in 1794. The original grant was mislaid and the record of it lost from the state land office. Dunlap later petitioned Tennessee for a re-issue and obtained a new grant in 1809. Dunlap did not reside in the Cove, but he was able to get this grant. Although the region was not legally open for entry until the Cherokee Indian treaty of 1819, a few white people had been living here among the Indians before that time. The first white settler was John Oliver who established his residence in 1818.

In 1821 William Tipton acquired 640 acres which had been granted to William Crowson by North Carolina in 1796. Subsequently, he owned over 3,000 acres in the Cove and on the surrounding mountain sides.

Other settlers soon began to arrive. Dunlap, Crowson, Smith, Oliver, Tipton, Cable and Foute, were but a few of the names prominent in the local history. The entire area was cleared of its forest and planted in crops, pastures, and orchards. Some of these pioneers became so dissatisfied from being hemmed in by the surrounding mountains that they joined in a general migration into Georgia in the early 1830's when the Indian lands there became available to white people. The vacated home-

sites in the Cove were soon reoccupied by families who came across the mountains from North Carolina.

In common with other Southern Appalachian communities, Cades Cove was isolated by the ruggedness of the surrounding mountains and distance. Three days were required by horseback to the nearest settlement (Maryville) and return. A pioneer way of life characterized by self-sufficiency prevailed for three or four generations as a result of the extreme isolation.

Agriculture was the main occupation of the people and corn was the chief crop. In 1825 corn was worth only 6¼ cents per bushel. Since it was unprofitable to haul grain over the poor mountain roads, it was fed to livestock which could then be driven to the distant markets. Much of the land was put in grass for pasture and hay. Spence Field, Thunderhead Peak, Gregory Bald and other "grassy balds" on the crest of the Smokies were used as pastures for livestock during the late spring and summer. Cattle herding was a profession followed by a number of residents in Cades Cove.

Schools were built and held in the Cove from 1825 until 1934. The first church to be organized was the Primitive Baptist, built in 1827 on the site of the present church building which replaced it. The Cades Cove Methodist Church was built in 1830. Two other churches of the same denominations were established at later dates.

Even though the Great Smoky Mountains were originally called the Great Iron Mountains, very little iron ore is found in this range. However, even small amounts of useable iron ore were valuable in isolated areas. Daniel D. Foute bought land in Cades Cove during the 1820's for the purpose of establishing forges. He was forced to sell much of his land but still owned more than 20,000 acres in the Cove and vicinity at the time of his death. One of his forges was built about 1826 on Forge Creek near the John P. Cable Mill.

Foremost on the meager list of items in the mountain people's restricted diet was corn meal. Prepared in various ways it was literally indispensable, and mills for grinding corn were essential. Where there was enough water to operate them large mills developed, such as the John P. Cable Mill, and large communities were established around them.

Although the people living in Cades Cove were extremely isolated in that they did little or no traveling out of the area they were not without contact with the outside world. As early as 1832 a mail route was established from Sevierville to Wear Cove, Tuckaleechee Cove, Millers Cove, Cades Cove, Carsons Iron Works, and Chilhowee. The round trip was made once each week. Soon thereafter deliveries were increased to twice a week with carriers meeting at Tuckaleechee, near Townsend, Tennessee. Other communication with the outside world came about through visits to the stores in Maryville and elsewhere. The circuit preachers and tradesmen, school teachers, and the livestock drives across the mountains also brought news. Later on, lumbering brought the people into closer touch with outside communities, and around 1920 the development of automobile roads started the complete breakdown of the barriers that had imposed for a long time the isolated pioneer conditions of the mountain people.

PIONEER MUSEUM AND FARMSTEAD

On the North Carolina side of the park on U. S. 441, you may visit another open air museum telling the story of the pioneers in Great Smoky Mountains. The buildings, representing the finest examples of their types, are arranged so you can see them conveniently. The museum explains the rugged self-sufficient way of life by means of artifacts, illustrations, and text.

THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

This booklet is published by the Great Smoky Mountains Natural History Association, a non-profit society organized to cooperate with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in furthering the enjoyment of the millions who visit the park.

NATURALIST PROGRAM

Illustrated talks, guided nature walks, museum exhibits, and self-guiding nature trails are features of the Naturalist Program in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. All of these activities are offered without charge and you are cordially invited to attend them. You may obtain a program at any Visitor Center, Ranger Station or by writing to: Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Gatlinburg, Tennessee 37738.

