

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AT GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK INCLUDES SAVING BUILDINGS, CEMETERIES, ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES, MUSEUM ARTI-

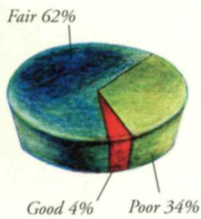


FACTS, AND ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS.

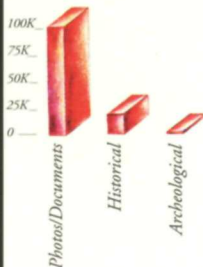
A SKILLED STAFF IS AT WORK IN THE PARK

PROTECTING THESE REMINDERS OF OUR

PAST FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.



Condition of historic buildings in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



Number of objects and other cultural resources preserved by Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

NATIONAL parks have traditionally been established to preserve spectacular natural features and essential natural processes. But a team of resource management specialists in Great Smoky Mountains National Park wages a behind-the-scenes battle *against* nature. Preservation carpenters, historians, archeologists, cultural landscape architects, curators, and archivists are striving daily to protect buildings, historic scenes, objects, and documents from being lost to natural decay. They work with other park rangers to accurately maintain sweeping historic landscapes in Cades Cove and Cataloochee. They battle wood-boring insects, rodents, non-native wild hogs, and other natural threats to the preservation of our history.

The value of cultural resources—buildings, landscapes, artifacts, archeological sites, documents—lies in their ability to provide connections between people and traditions. These connections are passed from one generation to another and often from one culture to another.

Cultural resources allow us to view our own world from a different, enhanced perspective.

The primary goal of historic preservationists is to minimize the loss or degradation of culturally significant material. The physical qualities of historic structures and objects are largely non-renewable. Once a building's historic fabric is lost, nothing can bring back its authenticity. Once archeological sites are disturbed, the complete stories they hold can never be pieced together.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES

The Park contains more than 100 historic buildings, including the finest and most complete collection of southern Appalachian log cabins, barns, and related outbuildings. Six churches, two schools, and four grist mills are preserved. Historic structures also include bridges, rock walls, tunnels, and fire towers. Most range in time from 1830s Euro-American settlement to the early twentieth century. Park administrative buildings and visitor use facilities are

Styles of log cabins in the Great Smokies



single pen



saddlebag



dog trot

THE ALL-TOO-COMMON PRACTICE OF WRITING ONE'S NAME ON HISTORIC BUILDINGS IS A MAJOR THREAT TO PRESERVATION.



The historic preservation crew fights a constant battle against the elements of wind, water, vandalism, and natural decay.



◀ Vandalism degrades the integrity of historic buildings and mars the beauty of their craftsmanship. Each time graffiti has to be removed, some of the building's original fabric is lost and part of our history turns to sawdust.

lovely stone and timber creations of the depression-era CCC program. Road structures like bridges and walls exhibit the National Park Service design philosophy of blending the natural and the human-built through the consistent use of rustic stone. The Park preservation crew works closely with other Park staff to ensure historic structures are stabilized and protected from deterioration.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

Cultural landscapes are settings we have created in the natural world. They express how we have modified the environment to meet human needs. The grounds around many of the historic buildings in Great Smoky Mountains National Park are considered historic scenes. If the surrounding scene is com-

promised by the addition of modern intrusions or the removal of natural or human-made features, the structure itself loses historic integrity.

Whole landscapes in historic districts like Cataloochee and Cades Cove must be preserved to define the cultural identity of the community. Cultural landscape architects document the historic character of these places. Resource management rangers use prescribed fire and reintroduce native grasses to restore the agricultural patchwork appearance of pre-Park Cades Cove.

Over 170 cemeteries have been documented, more than half in remote locations, inaccessible except by foot. Each speaks the passage of time, quietly telling stories of life as well as death.



Historic buildings set the stage for many special events, including homecomings, sorghum making, and the Mountain Life Festival.



Where practical, the historic preservation crew uses traditional tools and building techniques to maintain the Park's historic buildings.

NEARLY 100 KNOWN PARK ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES HAVE YET TO BE RESEARCHED.

MANY OTHERS MAY EXIST THAT HAVE NOT EVEN BEEN DISCOVERED YET.

What can you do to help?

› learn about and appreciate southern Appalachian culture

› refrain from writing or carving on structures

› notify a park ranger when you see vandalism taking place

› support preservation efforts of the Park, the Great Smoky Mountains Natural History Association, and the Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park

› share your personal knowledge of Smokies' history with a Park staff member.

Future generations will thank you.



◀ In addition to preserving historic buildings, the National Park Service is researching historic landscapes so that structures can be experienced in their historically correct settings.

PARK ARCHEOLOGY

Archeological resources are typically buried but may extend above ground; they are commonly associated with prehistoric peoples but may be products of more contemporary society, discovered in excavations in the Cataloochee Valley and elsewhere. Archeological resources can help us understand the spread of ideas over time and the development of settlements from place to place. In the Smokies, they consist of prehistoric and aboriginal sites that represent several southeastern cultural periods, as well as historic sites related to mountain culture and Park development.

While some 115 sites have been found within the Park boundary, the total remains unknown. A complete archeological survey is needed to document the

scope and significance of these resources. Some of these sites may reveal new information about the Cherokee and pre-Cherokee cultures. Others may shed light on more modern history.

ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnographic resources in Great Smoky Mountains National Park include an extensive oral history collection. These life histories comprise both audio and video recorded interviews of former residents, early Park employees, and former Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees. These reminders of our past are the products of a long-established program of collecting oral traditions. Still, there is a critical need for ethnographic research related to the Cherokee, as well as the African-American slave and free families who once resided here.



Volunteers and National Park Service staff conduct archeological work in the Cataloochee Valley.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PARK'S

HISTORICAL RESOURCES, CONTACT (865) 436-1200.

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Museum objects and archival materials manifest the breadth and diversity of human experience in these mountains. The Park's collection contains about 20,000 cultural artifacts and almost 900 linear feet of archival materials. While most of the objects, from spinning wheels to ax heads, are in environmentally controlled storage, some are exhibited at various locations throughout the Park. Items in storage may be used in future exhibits and, perhaps more importantly, may enlighten future scholars researching the history of the Smokies.

Photographs and documents contained in the Park archives comprise one of the most valuable collections of its type in the world. Archival materials include published works, documents, photographs, letters, journals, and myriad other items important to the Park's history. The collection is maintained by a curator and a librarian/archivist, and is used by Park staff, scholars, genealogists, and other researchers. Preservation of these items is crucial to the accurate interpretation of history and culture. The information

they hold is indispensable to the authentic restoration and maintenance of our historic landscapes and buildings.

The Park does not preserve historic resources simply because they are old. They must possess qualities of authenticity and integrity, but they must also provide a connection to a shared human experience significant to the compelling stories we keep and tell for future generations.

PRESERVATION EDUCATION

Education is another important component in preserving the history of the Smokies. Rangers regularly lead walks through historic areas to point out the significance of log cabins and other historic structures. Festivals and

special demonstrations are conducted throughout the year to celebrate history and help preserve traditional skills and lifeways. In addition, a wide array of books and pamphlets are published to provide in-depth educational materials for park visitors and the public. These services not only provide information and contribute to the enjoyment of historic resources, they also instill a positive, caring, preservation ethic.



The collection includes items like this basket made by the Walker Sisters.



Artifacts of life in the Smokies include quilts, tools, household utensils, and firearms.



Thousands of pamphlets, journals, photographs, and reports chronicle the history of the National Park.



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