National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory
1998

Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery
Great Smoky Mountains NP - Cades Cove Subdistrict
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Inventory Summary

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:

CLI General Information:

Purpose and Goals of the CLI

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the national park system, is one of the most ambitious initiatives of the National Park Service (NPS) Park Cultural Landscapes Program. The CLI is an evaluated inventory of all landscapes having historical significance that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources through a public planning process and in which the NPS has or plans to acquire any legal interest. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape’s location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into a national database. In addition, for landscapes that are not currently listed on the National Register and/or do not have adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures, assists the NPS in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2006), and Director’s Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two GPRA goals are associated with the CLI: bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (Goal 1a7) and increasing the number of CLI records that have complete, accurate, and reliable information (Goal 1b2B).

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries and archives and at NPS regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the site’s overall significance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features, and allows for an evaluation of the landscape’s overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape’s overall condition. The CLI also provides an illustrative site plan that indicates major features within the inventory unit. Unlike cultural landscape reports, the CLI does not provide management recommendations or
treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape.

**Inventory Unit Description:**

The Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery is a 1.4-acre component landscape located south of the Cades Cove Loop Road in Blount County, Tennessee. Access to the church and cemetery, sited on the crest of a hill, is by the historic approach located south of the loop road. The site features a church and cemetery bounded on the north by a picket fence. The cemetery is enclosed by cable-wire fencing. A pea gravel and dirt path provides pedestrian circulation around the cemetery and connects with a trail that accesses the site from the west. The original log church stood just to the rear of the present church and is marked by a rise of ground (Wilburn, Grossman, and Stupka 1938, 19).

The period of significance for the site begins in 1832, when a log meeting house was built. The title to the property was deeded to John Oliver and Peter Cable as agents for the Baptist Church in 1836 by William Tipton. The period of significance extends to 1942, to include the Park Development Era improvements.

The NPS decided to make Cades Cove an "Outdoor Museum of Mountain Culture," and the Primitive Baptist Church did appear on early (1942) Park Development Era maps of the sites to be "restored." Church members, however, obtained a Special Use Permit that allowed them to maintain the building and grounds until 1971. It is unknown what changes to the historic landscape were made during this time. Subsequently, the park assumed maintenance and preservation responsibilities for the site. The circulation system around the cemetery was rehabilitated in 1991 and does not reflect any historic configuration. It is not known if the palisade fence is an accurate representation of what was there during the historic period. The historic approach has remained intact.

The area surrounding the church and cemetery consists of hemlock, white pine, and tulip poplar, with a relatively open understory of occasional holly trees.
Site Plan

Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery Site Plan (1996; updated 2006)

Property Level and CLI Numbers

- **Inventory Unit Name:** Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery
- **Property Level:** Component Landscape
- **CLI Identification Number:** 550121
- **Parent Landscape:** 550078

Park Information

- **Park Name and Alpha Code:** Great Smoky Mountains NP - Cades Cove Subdistrict - GRSM
- **Park Organization Code:** 5470
- **Subunit/District Name Alpha Code:** Great Smoky Mountains NP - Cades Cove Subdistrict - GRSM
- **Park Administrative Unit:** Great Smoky Mountains National Park
CLI Hierarchy Description

The Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery lies within the Cades Cove Cultural Landscape, which encompasses 6,800 acres in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM) of eastern Tennessee. Twelve sites have been identified as component landscapes within the Cades Cove Cultural Landscape of GRSM: Cades Cove Valley Floor, John and Lucretia Oliver Homestead, Methodist Church and Cemetery, Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery, Missionary Baptist Church and Cemetery, Elijah Oliver Homestead, Cable Mill, Cable Cemetery, Henry Whitehead Homestead, Peter Cable and Dan Lawson Homestead, Tipton-Oliver Homestead, and the Carter Shields Homestead. The Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery is located .25 miles south of the Cades Cove Loop Road.
Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery
Great Smoky Mountains NP - Cades Cove Subdistrict

Cades Cove Cultural Landscape
**Concurrence Status**

**Inventory Status:** Complete

**Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:**
Lucy Lawliss, Cari Goetcheus and several interns conducted CLI fieldwork at Cades Cove during the summer of 1996. In 2000, the information was submitted to the park. In 2006, David Hasty, Beth Wheeler and Sara Fogelquist visited Cades Cove, updated the CLI data and submitted the inventories to the park and TN SHPO. With park and SHPO approval, the data will become certified in the on-line CLI database, and in PMDS under goals 1a7 and 1b2B.

**Concurrence Status:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Superintendent Concurrence:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:</td>
<td>09/22/2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Register Concurrence:</td>
<td>Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Concurrence Determination:</td>
<td>08/25/2006</td>
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</table>

**National Register Concurrence Narrative:**
Claudette Stager, of TN-SHPO, concurred on the potential eligibility of features addressed in the Cades Cove CLIs, with a couple of comments regarding post-1942 features and Mission 66. For the full text please see the Cades Cove Landscape CLI.

**Concurrence Graphic Information:**
Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSJSM)

From: Chief, Cultural Resource Division, Southeast Region

Subject: Cultural Landscape Inventory

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Voorhees Estate

Reply Due: 30 July 2004

We are pleased to transmit to GSJSM the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for the Voorhees Estate property. All prior park comments and suggestions have been included in this final document. The CLI is an evaluated list of landscape properties in the National Park System that are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NR) or contribute to an existing historic property, in order for the CLI to be certified and counted under goals 1a, 1b, and 1b2G in PMDS, the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office (TN-SHPO) needs to concur on the eligibility of the property for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and the Park Superintendent needs to concur on the condition assessment and management category provided within the inventory. Through prior communication, there is consensus with TN-SHPO on the eligibility of the Voorhees Estate for listing on the NR. For Park Superintendent approval, a signature page has been sent along with this CLI. It needs to be signed by the Superintendent and returned to the Regional Office for the final certification. If the condition assessment and management category are agreed upon, please sign the attached approval form and return to our office to the attention of David Nasty.

Enclosures
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE INVENTORY
CONDITION ASSESSMENT CONCURRENCE SHEET – 8 August 2006

Park Information
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park:</th>
<th>Great Smoky Mountains National Park</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District:</td>
<td>Cades Cove Subdistrict</td>
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<tr>
<td>State:</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counties:</td>
<td>Blount</td>
</tr>
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Cultural Landscape Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inventory Name</th>
<th>CLI Id #</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cades Cove Landscape</td>
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<td>Cades Cove Valley Floor</td>
<td>550118</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>John and Lucile Oliver Homestead</td>
<td>550113</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery</td>
<td>550121</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist Church and Cemetery</td>
<td>550120</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary Baptist Church and Cemetery</td>
<td>550122</td>
<td>Fair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elijah Oliver Homestead</td>
<td>550123</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cattle Mill</td>
<td>550100</td>
<td>Good</td>
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<td>Henry Willshead Homestead</td>
<td>550124</td>
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<td>Cable Cemetery</td>
<td>550205</td>
<td>Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Cubic and Dan Lawson Homestead</td>
<td>550125</td>
<td>Fair</td>
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<td>Tipton Oliver Homestead</td>
<td>550126</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter Shiders Homestead</td>
<td>550127</td>
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</table>

Cultural Landscape Management Category

Should Be Preserved and Maintained 1 August 2006

Park Superintendent Concurrence

Concur [ ]  Do Not Concur [ ]

[Signature]  9/1/2006

Superintendent Signature of Concurrence
We have reviewed the submitted documentation that identifies cultural landscape features at the Cades Cove Historic District in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. We concur with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory, with the exception of the comments below, and understand that these features have the potential to contribute to the existing National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Cades Cove Historic District.

Comments: We have some technical concerns that have more to do with National Register than the CLI. The CLI uses a period of significance up to 1942 in order to include the changes that occurred to Cades Cove when the park was established. This is an excellent idea and acknowledges the fact not only that the NPS had a major impact on Cades Cove, but that these changes now represent important early twentieth century ideas of historic preservation. The concerns are that there are instances when road patterns or buildings that were built after the 1942 period of significance are considered contributing to the landscape. Either the district period of significance should be extended to include these resources, criterion considerations should be noted, or the resources should be considered non-contributing. In addition, while Mission 66 is mentioned, there does not appear to be any assessment of that program’s impact on the cultural landscape. I am assuming it is just not being addressed at this time.

Signature from SHPO
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE INVENTORY
CONDITION ASSESSMENT CONCURRENCE – 8 August 2006 (updated 27 August 2012)

Park Information
Park: Great Smoky Mountains National Park
District: Cades Cove Subdistrict
State: Tennessee
Counties: Blount

Cultural Landscape Condition

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<tr>
<th>Inventory Name</th>
<th>CLI Id #</th>
<th>Condition ('06)</th>
<th>Condition ('12)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cades Cove Landscape</td>
<td>550078</td>
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<td>Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cades Cove Valley Floor</td>
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<td>John and Lucretia Oliver Homestead</td>
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<td>Fair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery</td>
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<td>Fair</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Elijah Oliver Homestead</td>
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<td>Cable Mill</td>
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<td>Henry Whitehead Homestead</td>
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<td>Tipton Oliver Homestead</td>
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<td>Carter Shields Homestead</td>
<td>550127</td>
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<td>Good</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Cultural Landscape Management Category

Should Be Preserved and Maintained 27 August 2012

Park Superintendent Concurrence
Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery
Great Smoky Mountains NP - Cades Cove Subdistrict

Concur [Signature]  Do Not Concur
Superintendent  9/18/12

Condition reassessment signature from superintendent.

Geographic Information & Location Map

Inventory Unit Boundary Description:
The component landscape boundary encompasses approximately 1.4 acres (tract 05-105). The present landscape boundaries reflect what was mapped during the CLI site visit in July 1996 and may not reflect historic boundaries. Further investigation is needed to determine if the component landscape boundary needs to be enlarged.

State and County:
State: TN
County: Blount County

Size (Acres): 1.40

Boundary UTMS:

UTM Zone: 17
UTM Easting: 245,092
UTM Northing: 3,943,269
Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery
Great Smoky Mountains NP - Cades Cove Subdistrict

Location Map:

*Primitive Baptist church and cemetery location map*
Regional Context:

**Type of Context:** Cultural

**Description:**

The Primitive Baptist was the first church organized in the cove in 1827, and a log building served their needs until 1887. The cemetery is the oldest church burial place in Cades Cove. The early settlers, such as the Olivers, Gregorys, Shields, Anthonys, and others, are buried here. The congregation continued to maintain the building and grounds until 1971.
The site lies in the Smoky Mountains of eastern Tennessee within the Blue Ridge physiographic province. The present physiography of the Smokies is a result of several periods of faulting and uplift more than 200 million years ago, followed by weathering and erosion. The Smokies today
Great Smoky Mountains NP - Cades Cove Subdistrict

Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery are characterized by steep, forested ridges, rounded peaks, and deep valleys. Broader valleys are located in isolated pockets, known locally as coves. In the case of Cades Cove, older, overthrust Precambrian rocks have eroded to expose a "window" of limestone, creating an expanse of reasonably level ground surrounded by ridges.

**Type of Context:** Political

**Description:**
The site lies within the 2nd Congressional district of Tennessee.

**Management Unit:** Cades Cove Subdistrict

**Tract Numbers:** 05-105

**Management Information**

**General Management Information**

**Management Category:** Should be Preserved and Maintained

**Management Category Date:** 08/01/2006

**NPS Legal Interest:**

**Type of Interest:** Fee Simple

**Public Access:**

**Type of Access:** With Permission

**Adjacent Lands Information**

**Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?** Yes

**Adjacent Lands Description:**
The adjacent lands above the 2,000' contour elevation (the surrounding mountains) enclose the cove, contributing to the isolated feeling of the rural agricultural valley. Additionally, Parsons Branch Road, Cooper Road, and Rich Mountain Road (all of which extend beyond the 2,000' contour elevation and the park boundaries) were transportation routes integral to the livelihood of Cades Cove.
View of adjacent lands
National Register Information

Existing National Register Status

National Register Landscape Documentation:
Entered Inadequately Documented

National Register Explanatory Narrative:
The July 1977 National Register documentation focuses entirely on historic structures with no reference to the landscape. The Cades Cove Historic District boundary follows the 2,000' contour level. This boundary is ambiguous for it does not include the balds used by settlers for grazing animals, nor three major roads that provided access to the cove historically. The nomination was amended in November 1977, adding eleven prehistoric archaeological sites to the original documentation. The nomination should be amended to include the cultural landscape features addressed in this CLI.

Existing NRIS Information:

Name in National Register: Cades Cove Historic District
NRIS Number: 77000111
Other Names: 40Btv15;40Btv16;40Btv17;40Btv18;40Btv21;40Btv22;40Btv29;40Btv30;40Btv31;40Btv32;40Btv34
Primary Certification: Listed In The National Register
Primary Certification Date: 07/13/1977
Other Certifications and Date: Additional Documentation - 11/30/1977

National Register Eligibility

National Register Concurrence: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
Contributing/Individual: Contributing
National Register Classification: District
Significance Level: State
Significance Criteria: A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history
Significance Criteria: C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values
Significance Criteria: D - Has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history
Criteria Considerations: A -- A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance
**Criteria Considerations:**

D -- A cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events

**Period of Significance:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Historic Context Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
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<th>Other Facet</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
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<th>Subtheme</th>
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<th>Historic Context Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th>Facet</th>
<th>Other Facet</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AD 1818 - 1900</td>
<td>Creating Social Institutions and Movements</td>
<td>Ways of Life</td>
<td>Farming Communities</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>AD 1900 - 1933</td>
<td>Transforming the Environment</td>
<td>Conservation of Natural Resources</td>
<td>The Conservation Movement Matures 1908-1941</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>AD 1933 - 1942</td>
<td>Expressing Cultural Values</td>
<td>Landscape Architecture</td>
<td>The 1930's: Era Of Public Works</td>
<td>None</td>
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</table>
Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Agriculture

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Area of Significance Category: Archeology

Area of Significance Subcategory: Prehistoric

Area of Significance Category: Entertainment - Recreation

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Area of Significance Category: Exploration - Settlement

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Statement of Significance:

Cades Cove is significant under Criterion A as a resource related to the early settlement and ongoing evolution of a southern Appalachian farming community, and as a resource related to early conservation efforts east of the Mississippi River. It is significant under Criterion C as an example of the vernacular architecture of the Upland South and for the NPS Park Development Era interpretation of the Cades Cove "pioneer" culture. It is significant under Criterion D as a site likely to yield information important to the knowledge of the prehistory or history of the community. The period of significance is 1818-1942.

Cades Cove epitomizes the delayed settlement pattern that occurred in more mountainous areas of the Appalachian chain and eastern seaboard. Two factors--geography and a large presence of native peoples--delayed white settlement of the Great Smoky Mountains until the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Prior to the coming of the Euro-American settler, the Cherokees were the dominant tribe in the central and southern Appalachians. Practicing subsistence agriculture and hunting, they maintained fields of corn, squash, and beans near their riverside villages in eastern Tennessee, north Georgia, and the western Carolinas. Three sites have been located in Cades Cove. Through successive treaties, beginning in 1761, the Cherokees lost more and more of their territory, until the Calhoun Treaty of 1819 reset the boundary of East Tennessee, opening the area to white settlement.

One of the earliest symbols of community in a typical cove settlement was the establishment of churches. In the Smokies, the Baptist and Methodist denominations predominated. Given the small
congregations and the emphasis on preaching and singing, simple one-room buildings were the norm. The main exterior embellishment was a belfry or steeple. The ringing of the church bell summoned the neighborhood to services and also tolled upon the death of a neighbor.

On June 16, 1827, a small congregation established the "Cades Cove Arm of the Wear's Cove Church." Complete independence came on June 29, 1829, when the Cades Cove Baptist Church finally became a separate entity. The Baptists constructed a log meeting house in 1832. Up until this time, they met in the school house or in private homes, occasionally holding services at night. In 1836, William Tipton deeded to John Oliver and Peter Cable a tract of land including a half acre "where the Baptist meeting house now stands." The cemetery associated with the Primitive Baptist Church is the oldest of the church burial places in Cades Cove. The early settlers, such as the Olivers, Cables, Gregorys, and Shieldses, are buried here.

In the early 19th century, a division took place in American Baptist churches, over issues including the support of missionaries, the establishment of seminaries, and temperance societies. In East Tennessee, this happened between 1825-1845, reaching a climax in 1837-38. Thirteen members of the Cades Cove Baptist Church, including the pastor, broke away over their support for foreign missions. In 1839, these thirteen promptly formed the Missionary Baptist Church. The older church assumed the name "Primitive Baptist Church" on May 15, 1841. The total number of active members was never large in the Primitive Baptist Church, although membership greatly increased in proportion to the total population after the Civil War and was always far greater than that of any other denomination in the cove. A more modern frame building was constructed on the site in 1887 to replace the older log structure.

The impetus for a national park in the Eastern United States at a similar scale to the large western national parks began between 1910-1920 by local groups in both North Carolina and Tennessee. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park was authorized in 1926, and established for development in 1934, to protect the woodlands, headwaters, and various forms of natural resources in the southern Appalachians. In 1927, the Tennessee General Assembly appropriated $1.5 million for buying park lands and gave the newly created Park Commission the power to seize farms within the proposed park boundaries by right of eminent domain. Land for the park, including Cades Cove, was acquired via condemnation proceedings between 1928-1936. At this time, a policy to preserve and interpret the mountain culture resources gradually developed, with the idea of establishing an outdoor folk museum in the cove.

The Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery was the only church included in early (1942) Park Development Era maps of the sites to be included in the cultural exhibits. The Primitive Baptist Church is a plain, front-gable frame church with an open-sided, pyramidal-roofed belfry and stone pier foundation. It was listed as a contributing building in the 1977 National Register nomination, along with the cistern house. A number of historical landscape features still exist at the site, including a cistern house, stone monument, cemetery and cemetery headstones, approach road, and biotic remnants.

As part of the Park Development Era, park planners manipulated the historic scene in order to showcase preserved "pioneer" agricultural landscapes and vernacular architecture. The Primitive
Baptist Church and Cemetery, the oldest documented established church in Cades Cove, reflects NPS design philosophy during the New Deal, when architects, landscape architects, historians, and engineers created a unified aesthetic conception (the master plan) of the site to preserve cultural as well as natural resources.

**Chronology & Physical History**

**Cultural Landscape Type and Use**

**Cultural Landscape Type:** Vernacular

**Current and Historic Use/Function:**

- **Primary Historic Function:** Religious Structure (church)
- **Primary Current Use:** Recreation/Culture-Other

**Other Use/Function**

- **Cemetery:** Both Current And Historic
- **Religion-Other:** Both Current And Historic

**Current and Historic Names:**

- **Name**
  - Cades Cove Arm of the Wear's Cove Church: Historic
  - Cades Cove Baptist Church: Historic
  - Primitive Baptist Church: Both Current And Historic

**Chronology:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Annotation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AD 1832</td>
<td>Built</td>
<td>The Baptists constructed a log meeting house on the site in 1832 and received title to the land in 1836.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD 1887</td>
<td>Built</td>
<td>In 1887, a frame building was erected to replace the older log church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD 1926 - 1936</td>
<td>Land Transfer</td>
<td>In 1926, legislation authorizing the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was passed by Congress. The land for the park, including Cades Cove, was acquired between 1928-1936.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD 1937 - 1971</td>
<td>Maintained</td>
<td>The Primitive Baptists obtained a Special Use Permit to maintain the building and cemetery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD 1971 - 2006</td>
<td>Preserved</td>
<td>When the Special Use Permit ended in 1971, the park assumed maintenance and preservation responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD 1979 - 1988</td>
<td>Rehabilitated</td>
<td>From 1979-1988, repairs were made to the building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD 1991</td>
<td>Rehabilitated</td>
<td>In 1991, the cemetery paths were rehabilitated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Physical History:

(1827-1926) Early Settlement and Later Development

On June 16, 1827, a small congregation established the "Cades Cove Arm of the Wear's Cove Church." In addition to John and Lucretia Oliver, the other members were James Oliver, James and Emily Johnson, Christopher Winters, Edward James, and John Lacy. Complete independence came on June 29, 1829, when the Cades Cove Baptist Church became a separate entity (Dunn 1988, 103).

The Baptists constructed a log meeting house in 1832. Up until this time, they met in the school house or in private homes, occasionally holding services at night. In 1836, William Tipton deeded to John Oliver and Peter Cable a tract of land including a half acre "where the Baptist meeting house now stands" (Dunn 1988, 112). The cemetery associated with the Primitive Baptist Church is the oldest of the church burial places in Cades Cove. The early settlers, such as the Olivers, Cables, Gregorys, and Shieldses, are buried here.

After an interim during which visiting preachers officiated, Johnson Adams became pastor in 1833. In the early 19th century, a division took place in American Baptist churches, over issues including the support of missionaries, the establishment of seminaries, and temperance societies. In East Tennessee, this happened between 1825-1845, reaching a climax in 1837-38. Thirteen members of the Cades Cove Baptist Church, including Johnson Adams, broke away over issues including their support of foreign missions. In May 1839, the ousted members promptly formed the Missionary Baptist Church. The older church assumed the name "Primitive Baptist Church" on May 15, 1841 (Dunn 1988, 113).

Various members of the church acted as moderator, or pastor, from 1845 until the Civil War, including John Chambers and John Oliver. Absalom Abbott was ordained minister May 17, 1856. After the Civil War, Jackson B. J. Brinkey was chosen pastor on October 28, 1871, and continued in this capacity throughout the remainder of the century. William H. Oliver was ordained minister on August 27, 1882, and served in this capacity until his death in 1940 (Dunn 1988, 108).

During the Civil War, the Primitive Baptist Church did not hold services. They explained in the church book that "we was union people and the Rebels was too strong here in Cades Cove." They resumed services in June 1865. The total number of active members was never large in the Primitive Baptist Church, although membership greatly increased in proportion to the total population after the Civil War and was always far greater than that of any other denomination in the cove. A more modern frame building was constructed on the site in 1887 to replace the older log structure.

Although small in membership throughout the nineteenth century, this oldest established church in Cades Cove continued to dominate the social and cultural mores of the community. The larger community accepted this control because it came from a broadly-based group consensus within the church and was not dictated by one individual. The Baptists had the added advantage of appealing to religious values and associations already held by the larger
community, whether or not they were members of the church.

A late 1920s photograph of a funeral at the site shows a somewhat barren cemetery landscape without grass. Burials were an important community event in Cades Cove. In later years there was an annual program of grave decoration in May in which all the church congregations would go from church to church to hear preaching, sing hymns, decorate graves with flowers, and eat a large meal on the grounds of the Primitive Baptist Church (Shields 1977, 44).

![Late 1920s view of a funeral at the Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery](image)

**Figure 1. Late 1920s view of a funeral at the Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery**

(1927-present) Great Smoky Mountains National Park

The impetus for a national park in the Eastern United States at a similar scale to the large western national parks began between 1910-1920 by local groups in both North Carolina and Tennessee. Through numerous regenerations of federal legislation, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was established in 1926 to protect the woodlands, headwaters, and various forms of natural resources in the southern Appalachians. In 1927, the Tennessee General Assembly appropriated $1.5 million for buying park lands and gave the newly created Park Commission the power to seize farms within the proposed park boundaries by right of eminent domain. Land for the park, including Cades Cove, was acquired via condemnation proceedings between 1928-1936. At this time, a policy to preserve and interpret the mountain culture resources gradually developed, with the idea of establishing an outdoor folk museum in the cove (Lix 1958, 82). The Primitive Baptist Church was included in early (1942 and 1946) Park Development Era maps of the sites to be included in the cultural exhibits. The Primitive
Baptists were unwilling to disband, however, and maintained their membership into the 1960s. The congregation secured the right to maintain the church building and cemetery, which they did by Special Use Permit until 1971.

Little information is available about changes that took place to the landscape during the period when the building and grounds were maintained by the congregation, but the cemetery was fenced in 1939 (Trout 1991, 3). The Special Use Permit was cancelled in 1971, at which time maintenance and preservation became park functions. It is not known if the current paling fence (installation date unknown) is an accurate representation of what was there during the historic period. Photographs of the site taken in 1937 show a post-and-wire fence with a picket gate on the northwest side of the church; no fence can be discerned from the front view (Figures 6-7). Additionally, the cemetery does not appear to have supported grass during the historic period (Figure 5). In 1991, the circulation system around the cemetery was rehabilitated in an effort to keep visitors off the graves and also as the best means of preventing erosion at the site. This rehabilitation is not based on any historic configuration. The historic approach has not been altered.

A Special Use Permit can be issued to hold religious services in the building, and burials are still allowed for holders of plots within the enclosed area of the cemetery.

The area surrounding the open space of the church and cemetery is a forest of hemlock, white pine, and tulip poplar. The understory is relatively open with occasional holly trees. It appears from historic photographs that a tree canopy existed around the church prior to NPS acquisition.
Figure 2. 1937 view from the southwest of Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery

Figure 3. 1937 view from the north of Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery
Figure 4. Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery in 2000.
Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:
The following is a list of landscape characteristics and features that contribute to the cultural landscape. Further research is warranted.

Landscape Characteristic:

Buildings And Structures
The Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery features a rectangular, front-gable frame church and a front-gable frame cistern house. The cemetery, located south of the church, contains the gravesites of many early Cades Cove settlers. The cemetery headstones are aligned in an east-west direction and are mostly commercial markers. The church was rehabilitated from 1979-1988. The cemetery was rehabilitated in 1991.

Character-defining Features:

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Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

*Primitive Baptist Church*

*Primitive Baptist Church Cistern House*
Circulation

Presently, visitors are brought to the site by a historic approach road south of the loop road. A pea gravel path inside the paling fence directs visitors along the east façade of the church and continues around the cemetery, connecting with a trail that accesses the site from the west. In 1991, the circulation system was rehabilitated to keep visitors off the graves and reduce erosion at the site and bears no resemblance to any historic configuration. The cable-wire fencing was added at this time.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:
Primitive Baptist Church approach road

Circulation system within the cemetery
Small Scale Features

A monument with a stone pier is located east of the church, adjacent to the path leading to the cemetery from the visitor parking lot.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

![Primitive Baptist Church Monument](image)

Topography

The settlement patterns at this site were strongly influenced by the topography of the cove, featuring farmsteads and churches close to the surrounding hillsides, leaving the interior for cultivation. The siting of churches on hilltops is typical of the Cades Cove landscape.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:
Vegetation

The vegetation pattern of forested ascending slopes surrounding the open space of the church and cemetery has been retained. It appears from historic photographs that grass did not grow in the cemetery as well as it does today. The vegetation of the Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery is a contributing feature of the historic landscape.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:
Vegetation patterns at the Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery
Condition

Condition Assessment and Impacts

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Impacts

- **Type of Impact:** Release To Succession
  - **External or Internal:** Internal
  - **Impact Description:** Release to succession has increased the amount of forest on the valley floor and hillsides, resulting in less extensive views across the cove.

- **Type of Impact:** Visitation
  - **External or Internal:** Internal
  - **Impact Description:** In 1991, the circulation system was rehabilitated to keep visitors off the graves and reduce erosion at the site. Cable-wire fencing was added around a portion of the gravesites at this time, with more circling the pathway between 2000 and 2006. The pea gravel pathway and fencing protect much of the cemetery from visitor traffic, but they also negatively impact views and spatial organization.

- **Type of Impact:** Vandalism/Theft/Arson
  - **External or Internal:** Internal
  - **Impact Description:** Graffiti

Treatment
**Treatment**

**Approved Treatment Document Explanatory Narrative:**
GRSM contracted with John Milner and Associates to complete a Cultural Landscape Report for Cades Cove. A 100% draft was submitted in 2004, and it is expected to be completed and approved in FY 2007. The suggested treatment alternative is rehabilitation.

**Bibliography and Supplemental Information**

**Bibliography**

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**Supplemental Information**

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