

# COMMON Ground

P R E S E R V I N G   O U R   N A T I O N ' S   H E R I T A G E   S P R I N G   2 0 0 3



## **TENT OF MANY VOICES**

### **IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF LEWIS AND CLARK**

**PLUS AN ONLINE TRAVEL ITINERARY FROM THE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

*of the L... Bicentennial of the Lewis & Clark Expedition Bicentennial of the L...*





| BY FRAN P. MAINELLA |

**THIS ISSUE OF COMMON GROUND** marks a new beginning for this flagship cultural resources publication of the National Park Service. We are widening the magazine's focus beyond archeology and ethnography to offer a multidisciplinary look at all aspects of cultural resource management and historic preservation. We've added "Preserving Our Nation's Heritage" to the name to reflect this new scope. | **COMMON GROUND:**

**PRESERVING OUR NATION'S HERITAGE** will continue to provide readers with quality articles on initiatives, approaches, and projects—and the people behind them. Innovation, creativity, and collaboration will be celebrated and the highest standards of excellence encouraged. Published quarterly, the magazine will take a close-up view of preservation in the national parks, on other Federal lands, and in cities, States, and neighborhoods across the Nation. | **THIS INAUGURAL ISSUE** reports on the bicentennial celebration of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's Corps of Discovery. Hundreds of communities, States, nonprofits, tribes, and Federal agencies are participating in the four-year-long commemoration of the grand expedition charged by President Thomas Jefferson with discovering a water passage to the Pacific Northwest. Exemplifying a virtual seamless network of parks, sites all along the route will celebrate their connection to Lewis and Clark—and to each other.

**COMMON GROUND** will be joined this fall by the re-engineering of yet another popular National Park Service publication, *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship*. Evolving from the proud 25-year tradition of its namesake—*CRM* magazine—the journal will become an authoritative resource of professional, peer-reviewed articles offering the latest in research, thoughtful pieces on emerging issues, and reviews of exhibits, books, techniques, and technologies across the cultural resource disciplines. Both publications will be available on the National Park Service website. | **PLANS ARE** also underway for an online clearinghouse to share best practices and approaches as well as a new monthly digital newsletter on grant opportunities, new laws and policies, and other timely topics. See the back cover of this magazine for more information and an invitation to subscribe.

**THESE INITIATIVES** are part of our commitment to meet the high standards that Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton has set for

the Department of the Interior and for us all. The Secretary has made the "Four C's"—Consultation, Communication, and Cooperation, all in the service of Conservation—the cornerstone of her tenure. The changes come in response to suggestions solicited from our colleagues, partners, and other stakeholders nationwide on how we communicate with the heritage community. | **THOUGH THE CHANGES** have been a long time in coming, they couldn't have been more timely. On March 3, First Lady Laura Bush announced the President's "Preserve America" initiative in a speech to the National Association of Counties. Developed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation at the direction of the White House, a key part of the initiative is an executive order directing Federal agencies to develop partnerships to improve the preservation and protection of historic properties. | **IN ADDITION**, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has launched a national campaign to raise public awareness of preservation. A series of public service announcements, created in partnership with the Ad Council, is running in newspapers and being broadcast on television and radio. The Trust has also forged a partnership with HGTV to air programming on preservation projects. **IN HER REMARKS** on Preserve America, the First Lady underscored the importance of the initiative stating, "America is blessed with historic architecture, landscapes, and communities. Every one tells a story about the past and provides insight for the future. But to prepare for the future, we must remember our history."

**TODAY, OUR FUTURE** is full of challenges unthinkable before September 11, 2001. By remembering our history, we can find wisdom in the words that still reverberate through Independence Hall. We can find courage in the stories of the brave soldiers at Valley Forge. We can find inspiration in the lasting accomplishments of the Southwest's ancient cliff dwellers. We can find strength in the determination of American pioneers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and their guide, the young Shoshone mother Sacagawea. We can find resolve in the audacity that drove the Wright Brothers to defy gravity and to fly. By remembering our history, we can reaffirm our belief in the resilience of the American people. | **REMEMBERING** history has never been more important. Our work to preserve history has never been more necessary. We stand together, on this our common ground.

Fran P. Mainella is Director of the National Park Service.



## Contents

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

Highway History

# 12

### FEATURES

## 20 Tent of Many Voices: In the Footsteps of Lewis and Clark

On the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition, a traveling National Park Service exhibit retraces the route of the historic trek west. **BY JOSEPH FLANAGAN**

## 28 House of the Spirits

An award-winning archeological project, uncovering a pre-Columbian site on the shores of Virgin Islands National Park, inspires a writer to take part—and record the experience.

**BY PAMELA S. TURNER**

### DEPARTMENTS

*News closeup* 4  
*Trendline* 12  
*Grant spotlight* 18  
*Artifact* 42

**Above:** Highway dedication in Wisconsin in the late 1950s.  
**Cover:** On the National Mall with the Lewis and Clark exhibit.

DAVID ANDREWS/NPS



## Taking Stock of Our National Historic Landmarks

The most honored places from the nation's past—National Historic Landmarks—are preserved for their exceptional value as tangible elements of the American narrative. The National Park Service, which monitors these treasures, recently issued an update on their condition. The assessment concludes that most have kept their integrity and are well cared-for. Much-needed funding from the NPS-administered Save America's Treasures initiative and similar efforts have gone a long way to make this possible, a trend that will have to continue if our landmarks are to be preserved.

Ninety-five percent of the country's 2,342 NHLs are in good condition, up from 94 percent three years ago. Deterioration and development continue to be the main threats but, for the most part, the effort to save these places has been a success.

More than half of the landmarks are privately owned. State and local jurisdictions administer 22 percent, tribes less than 1 percent, and the Federal Government 13 percent. Over half are open to the public.

In monitoring NHLs, the National Park Service ranks them on a scale ranging from satisfactory to lost. Within that spectrum are "watched" (impending threat), "threatened" (imminent threat or severely damaged), and "emergency" (catastrophic damage requiring immediate action). Each year, the condition of some NHLs improves while others worsen. Today, 107 landmarks are considered threatened while 291 are on the watch list.

Overall, the number of threatened landmarks has dropped by 30 in the last two years. Many have been upgraded to watched status. Though the number in good condition rose by only 1 percent since the last update, this is considered positive because there had been virtually no upward movement in this category over the past twelve years.

The main threat to historic landmarks, regardless of who owns them or where they are located, is deterioration. In historic districts, demolition and inappropriate alterations are the prevalent threats. Battlefields and archeological sites suffer from development, agriculture, erosion, and looting.

One landmark has recently been lost and another will soon be gone. Resurrection Manor, a 17th century farmhouse in Maryland, was bulldozed for new development. A rocket engine test facility in Cleveland—designated an NHL as part of a National Park Service study on historic properties related to space exploration—is to be demolished to expand an airport.

Recent funding initiatives have brightened the future of our landmarks. Since 1999, Congress has provided \$30 million annually in Save America's Treasures grant matching funds. This money has benefitted, among others, the ancient cliff dwellings of Colorado's Mesa Verde National Park and Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater in Pennsylvania. The National Park Service's Challenge Cost Share grant program has also played a large role.

The National Park Service identifies potential NHLs, and works with those who own or manage them. It also collaborates with States, tribes, and nonprofit groups such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The agency provides preservation training, technical assistance, and consultation. The National Park Service also offers classroom-ready lesson plans and travel itineraries on the web that feature NHLs.

For more information about the NHL program, grants, or individual landmarks, visit [www.cr.nps.gov/nhl](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nhl).

RECENT FUNDING INITIATIVES HAVE BRIGHTENED THE FUTURE OF OUR LANDMARKS. SINCE 1999, SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES GRANTS HAVE SUPPLIED \$30 MILLION ANNUALLY IN MATCHING FUNDS.



B&O RAILROAD MUSEUM

## Damaged ▲

B&O RAILROAD MUSEUM, BALTIMORE, WHOSE ROOF COLLAPSED UNDER SNOW THIS WINTER

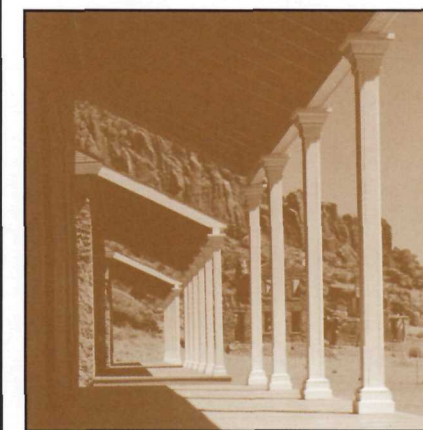
Number of landmarks removed from the threatened list in the last two years:

30

Number of landmarks still at risk:

107

## Condition Improving ▼



FORT DAVIS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

FORT DAVIS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, IN TEXAS, WHICH RECEIVED A SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES GRANT



OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPH OF OHIO'S JOHN PARKER HOUSE, A STOP ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD THAT IS BEING RESTORED



# Battle Worn

## Battlefield Study Looks at American Revolution, War of 1812

Few people passing through the gritty industrial setting of Chalmette, Louisiana, would guess they are at the site of the famous Battle of New Orleans. Ships glide past oil refineries and into a slip on the Mississippi River, their crews unaware they are docking at Andrew Jackson's headquarters. What has become of the places where early American history was decided? The National Park Service has spent the past three years looking for an answer, searching out battlefields and other properties associated with the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

Authorized by Congress in 1996, the research is an attempt to address the threat posed by development and explore ways in which these places can be preserved. In the case of the War of 1812, the study has provided much-needed information on an event that is little-commemorated. "It is indeed one of the forgotten wars," says National Park Service historian David Lowe.

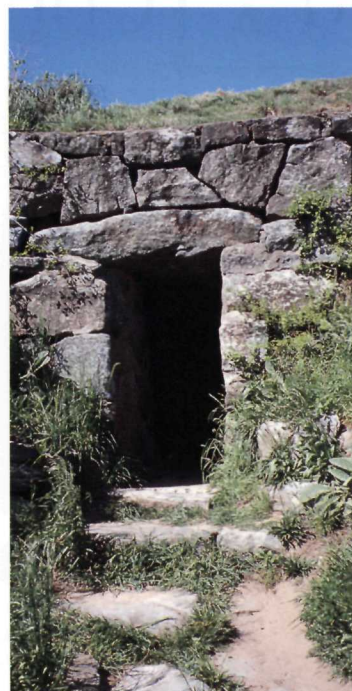
Members of the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program—and its Cultural Resources Geographic Information Systems Unit—form the team leading the study. Working with a list of 811 sites approved by a blue ribbon panel of scholars and other experts, the program's staff trained State and local preservation officials in the use of global positioning systems to survey their jurisdictions. Using hand-held GPS units, they looked for clues that might indicate a battlefield, encampment, or other site associated with the wars. Historic maps and other documents assured surveyors that site boundaries were sound. The study also documented local planning decisions.

The focus is divided between battlefields and properties with a connection to the wars, such as buildings, archeological sites, or landscapes. Though still preliminary, the findings are elucidating. "Fragmented" is probably the best word to describe the 220 battlefields analyzed. Cut up by modern land use, only about 16 percent survive intact. These, along with an additional 10 percent moderately compromised by development, have potential for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Of 518 associated properties, 46 percent retain enough integrity to be considered.

The National Park Service developed a database in which surveyors enter information directly. The database could be "something of a gold mine to researchers in the future," says Lowe.

Data from the surveys has allowed researchers to produce overlay maps. When the boundaries of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 sites are superimposed over the maps, it shows their current residential, industrial, or agricultural use—giving a picture of their integrity. This information helps local preservationists develop ways to protect them.

Based on information gathered in the surveys, recommendations will be made to the National Park Service and the Secretary of the Interior on how to preserve these vanishing landscapes of early America.



Opposite top: Old Fort Niagara in New York. Middle and bottom: Fort Griswold, from Revolution-era Connecticut. Below: Kentucky's Bourbon Iron Works furnace, reputed source of cannonballs for the Battle of New Orleans.

## TEACHING HISTORY GRANTS

Applications for \$100 million in Teaching American History grants are available this spring from the U.S. Department of Education. The funds support local programs that actively engage students in understanding American history. To get a grant, schools or school districts must work with a partner such as a college, museum, or park.

One of last year's grant recipients, receiving \$1 million over three years, is Weaving the Fabric of American History, a consortium of six school districts, five national parks, one state park, the College of William & Mary, and the Organization of American Historians.

This summer teachers from each district and park—as part of a three credit graduate course—will work together in the parks and at the college on lesson plans and other ways to bring history alive for students. Thanks to the OAH, they will also join in discussions with leading historians.

Direct questions about the Weaving the Fabric of American History project to Heather Huyck, the National Park Service's northeast regional chief historian at [Heather\\_Huyck@nps.gov](mailto:Heather_Huyck@nps.gov).

Grant details are on the U.S. Department of Education website at [www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/TAH/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/TAH/index.html).



# People of the Thick Fir Woods

## Research Traces Connection Between Tribes and Voyageurs National Park

The people of the thick fir woods, as they were known, lived for centuries along the chain of lakes in what is today Voyageurs National Park. The Chippewa's removal from their traditional land is, in many respects, the familiar story of westward expansion in the 19th century. But during short excursions into the forests around Minnesota's lake country, National Park Service archeologist Jeffrey Richner saw a different picture.

Though the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa were ostensibly moved to a reservation, many continued to practice their traditional way of life on park land well into the 20th century. As late as 1893, an Anglo canoeist noted the "Indian Wigwams" that he passed along the way. At about the same time, an agent with the Bureau of Indian Affairs observed that the reservation's log cabins were largely unoccupied.



For 16 years, Richner, park cultural resource specialist Mary Graves, and archeologists from the National Park Service's Midwest Archeological Center have assembled this lost history from a host of sources, synthesizing information gained through routine activity: site inventory, maintenance, campsite management, and so on. "No one piece tells a lot—just little snips here and there," says Richner. Mary Graves complemented the effort with exhaustive research into the historical record. The result earned a nomination for a recent John Cotter Award for Excellence in National Park Service Archeology.

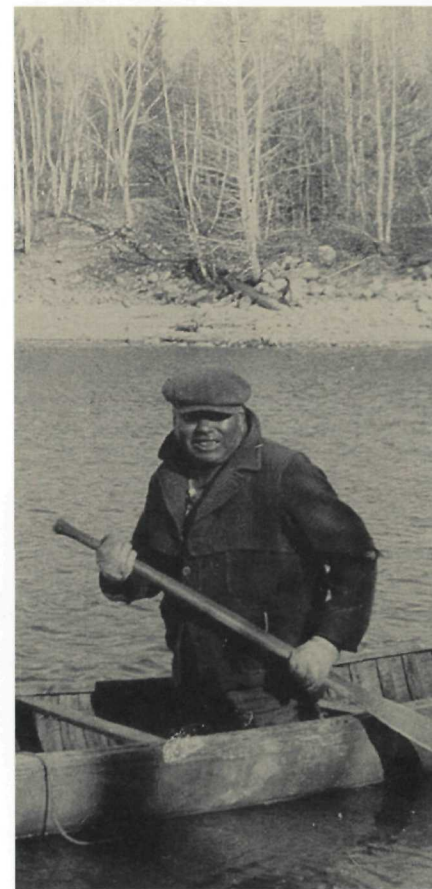
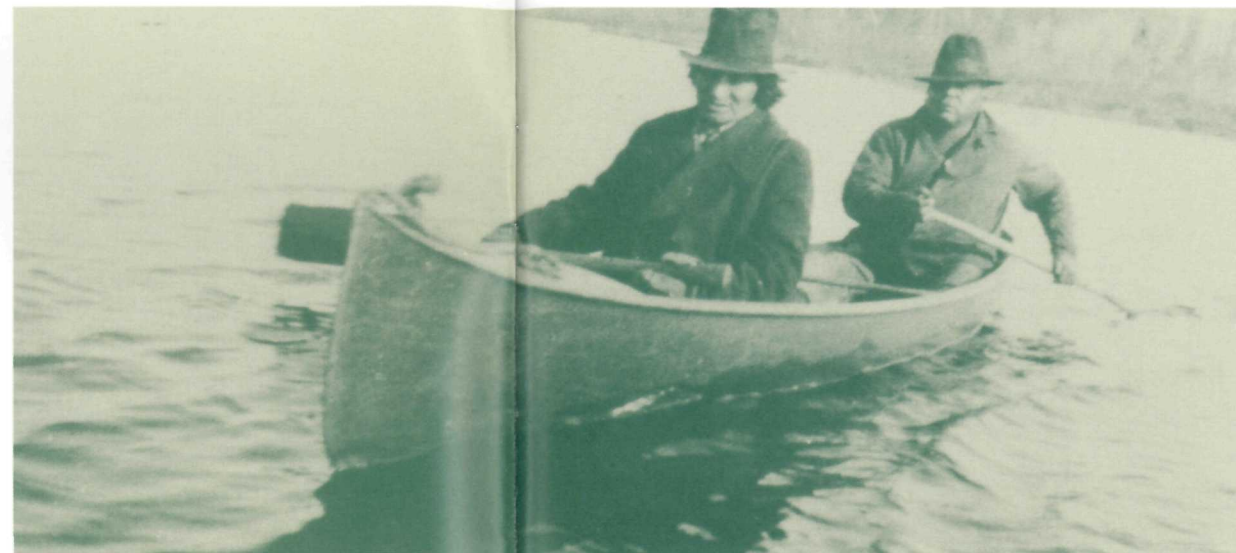
Interest in the region's fur, timber, and minerals prompted the Bois Forte's gradual dislocation. But in spite of increasing pressure many remained in the park until at least 1920, living in wigwams and log homes, fishing, hunting, and following their traditional practices.

Archeological sites within Voyageurs yielded evidence of the Bois Forte's presence—buttons, coins, dishware, and glass items. Structural remains are abundant, as are what appear to be grave sites.

Census records, newspaper accounts, oral histories, and photographs helped trace these Native Americans through time. An entry in the Rainy Lake Journal from 1895 gives an example: "The Indians have moved out of their log houses in the woods and reestablished themselves in bark wigwams on Sha Sha Point." Ernest Brown, a local taxidermist, describes the Indians' dancing, gathering wild rice, and making birch bark canoes.

Annuity payments—treaty compensation to the Bois Forte for the ceded land—show what Richner calls the "striking continuity" of the group through time. Records of homestead applications and off-reservation allotments clearly link individuals to tracts within the park.

The 1930s and 1940s saw an end to the Bois Forte's living in Voyageurs. Resort developers had discovered the lake country, and stresses on the environment made it difficult to grow rice, one of the tribes' staples. According to Richner, the subject remains rich with opportunities for future research.



Above, left, and right: Historic photographs of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. ALL PHOTOS VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

# Gathering Recollections

## National Park Service Collects Oral Histories of Tuskegee Crews

Though one of WWII's most stirring episodes, the story of the African American fighter group that defied the odds with a formidable combat record in the skies over Europe remains unknown to many. The Tuskegee Airmen experience was pivotal in the integration of African Americans into the armed forces and a long step in the progression toward civil rights.

In 1998, the National Park Service acquired Moton Field in Tuskegee, Alabama, where the pilots trained. Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site is in its formative stages. Its richest offering will no doubt come from the oral histories of people who were actually there, now in the works.

The project began in August 2000 with a nationwide search for former pilots, mechanics, parachute packers, and others. According to Todd Moyer, the National Park Service historian in charge, "We're trying to get the most complete story we can . . . It's incredibly rich."

The military assembled the first class of pilots in 1941, who emerged separate from their white counterparts to face a military establishment skeptical of their ability. However, the Tuskegee Airmen destroyed over 200 German aircraft and earned a multitude of decorations.

The National Park Service has solicited the help of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc.—a group of former flyers who can put researchers in touch with other Tuskegee personnel—which is critical. "This is literally a race against time," Moyer says. Of the 15,000 people with a connection to the Tuskegee Airmen, an estimated 2-3,000 are still alive. Many of the pilots came from other parts of the country (some grew up among New York's African American elite) and were not prepared for the kind of discrimination they faced.

The oral histories will be a major part of the park's interpretive program. Recordings and transcripts will be available to the public. For more on this story visit the National Park Service web feature, "Legends of Tuskegee," at [www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/tuskegee](http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/tuskegee).





ALL PHOTOS NPS NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS SURVEY

## Learning from History

### 100th Lesson Plan Commemorates Supreme Court Ruling on School Integration

Teaching with Historic Places, the National Park Service's award-winning education program, marked a significant milestone in February with the release of its 100th online lesson plan, "New Kent School and the George W. Watkins School: From Freedom of Choice to Integration," in observance of African American History Month.

The lesson features two Virginia schools that were the subject of the 1968 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia*. Coming 14 years after *Brown v. Board of Education* ruled that separate schools for blacks and whites were inherently unequal, the *Green* decision placed an affirmative duty on school boards to integrate schools. The lesson plan helps students explore the *Green* decision and introduces them to those responsible for integrating the public schools of New Kent County.

"The places of America's history are found in national parks and turn-of-the-century industrial districts, in battlefields and school houses—like these in New Kent County," explained National Park Service Director Fran Mainella in announcing the lesson plan. "Whether in a neighborhood or a national park, these places tell stories of struggle and success. They are part of a seamless system of tangible connections to our past. In a world where 'reality' is increasingly virtual, these places are real. They are authentic. They capture our imagination, which in the classroom can be the key to unlocking a student's interest."

Understanding the magic of the actual places where history happened, in 1991 the staff of the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places began working with teachers to incorporate place-based learning into the classroom. The lessons are used to prepare students for field trips and, even more frequently, to help classes explore places they may never visit. "The value of using historic places to teach history, even though you're not there at the site, is that they help to bring history alive in a very, very, specific and unique context," said Jim Percoco, a teacher at West Springfield High School in Springfield, Virginia.

The lesson plans and the learning experiences they shape are tightly focused on places drawn exclusively from the more than 76,000 listings in the National Register of Historic Places. With the support of the New Kent County School Board, the two Virginia schools were designated National Historic Landmarks—and concurrently added to the National Register—by Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton on August 7, 2001.

Another trademark of the lessons is that they are designed to be organic. The Teaching with Historic Places program provides tools, guidance, and encouragement to national and State park interpreters, teachers, professors, preservationists, and others to write lesson plans based on local resources. Lessons are then edited and published online by National Register staff.

In the case of the New Kent County schools, an impressive array of partners came together to create the lesson plan. Three Ph.D. candidates at the College of William & Mary—Jody Allen, Brian Daugherty, and Sarah Trembanis—researched and wrote the lesson,

**Left and right:**  
George W.  
Watkins School,  
in New Kent  
County, Virginia.  
**Middle:** New  
Kent County  
School.

with assistance from Frances Davis, Na'Dana Smith, and Megan Walsh, members of the class of 2002 at New Kent High School. To fund the students' work, the College of William & Mary, the New Kent County School Board, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (a continuing partner), and the National Park Service jointly applied for a grant from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy's African-American Heritage Program.

The lesson plans rely on the historian's fundamental tool—primary sources. In "New Kent School and the George W. Watkins School: From Freedom of Choice to Integration," students are asked to analyze photographs from the school's yearbooks, a map of the county, excerpts from the 1968 decision, and interviews with key participants in the case, including Dr. Calvin Green, who brought the suit decided by the Supreme Court.

Lesson plans also suggest activities to help students apply what they have learned. In the New Kent County lesson plan, students are encouraged to conduct an interview with someone familiar with the debates over school desegregation, to research the history of their own school, compare it to what they have learned about the Virginia schools, and write from the perspective of someone who lived during those times.

Charles S. White, a Professor of Education at Boston University, introduces Teaching with Historic Places to his classes of aspiring teachers. "We want children to be active in their learning," he says. "We want them to construct their knowledge of history. One way to get them to do that is to get them to 'do history' the way that historians do, the way that we try to have kids 'do science' in the classroom the way that scientists do. Teaching with Historic Places allows us to do that."

All 100 Teaching with Historic Places lesson plans are available on the National Park Service website at [www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp).

**"We want children to be active in their learning. We want them to construct their knowledge of history. One way to get them to do that is to get them to 'do history' the way that historians do."**

**Charles S. White,  
Professor of  
Education, Boston  
University**



## CHALLENGING ROAD

## Recognizing History in Our Interstate Highway System

by Lynne  
Sebastian

**Not long ago I was asked to discuss interstate highways from the perspective of my experience as a former State Historic Preservation Officer. I'm not sure that the experience necessarily left me any more prepared to tackle this daunting issue than anyone else, but I will give it a try.**

I distinctly remember the day another preservation officer told me that her office was evaluating whether a power line was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. A long vista opened down which I had never considered going, and down which I definitely did not think I wanted to go. And I remember thinking to myself, "I sure hope I'm out of this job before we get to the point of evaluating freeways." And, as it turned out, I got my wish, but despite that, here I am, faced with the question.

This isn't actually the most difficult case I have had to deal with lately concerning a property from the recent past. That would be last year when I had to tell a client, an energy development company, that I thought that one of their natural gas pipelines might be eligible for the National Register and should be considered an historic property for the purposes of preservation law.

Interstates are part of a whole class of properties that I found very difficult to deal with when I was a preservation officer, and I still find them very difficult as a consultant. The category includes things like railroads and irrigation systems and power lines and pipelines. They are difficult to deal with because they are linear; they are functioning, engineered systems; they are not the kinds of properties that were envisioned when the National Register was created; and they are recent-past properties, which means that we have no body of experience to draw on when we begin to evaluate them.

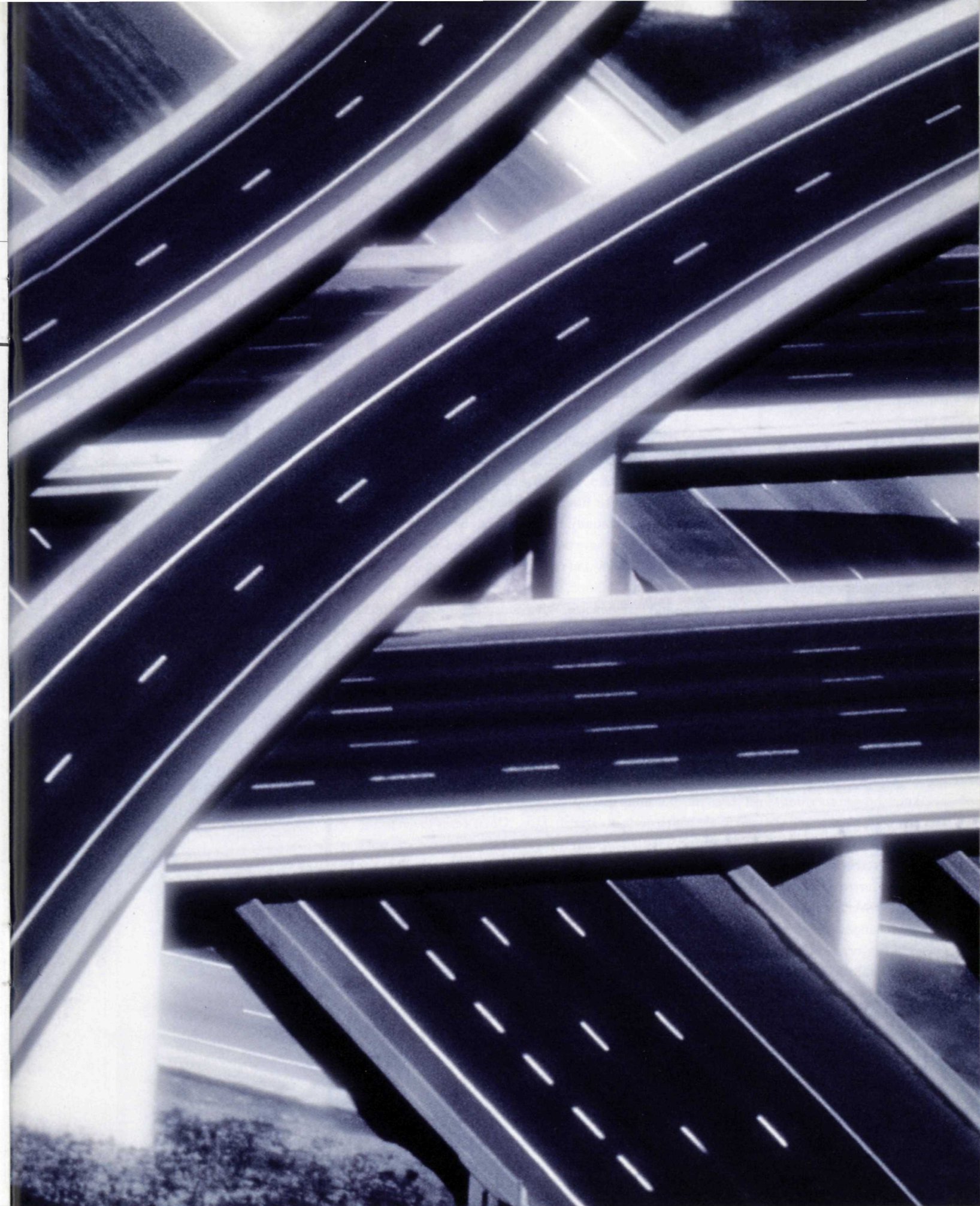
First of all, they are linear. Linear properties are difficult for a couple of reasons. For one thing they can be very long and mostly what you see in State Historic Preservation Offices is some tiny, project-specific window on them. When you are asked to make decisions or recommendations at this scale, it is kind of like the visually challenged men and the elephant. It is almost impossible to evaluate these properties—or the effects of publicly funded undertakings on them—absent a larger understanding of their context.

The other difficulty is a mechanical one. It is difficult to manage information about linear properties even if you have a sophisticated data management system, as we do in New Mexico—especially when that system was set up, as virtually all of them are, to manage point or polygon data for archeological sites, buildings, and districts. In general, the system just doesn't want to hear about a polygon that is 423 miles long and 20 feet wide.

The second problem is that these kinds of properties are living systems. They were designed and engineered to perform a specific function. In order for them to have continued performing that function long enough to become historic, they have to have been maintained and upgraded, they have to have evolved. Otherwise they would have turned into archeological sites and we know how to deal with those.

THE BAD NEWS  
IS THAT EVERY-  
ONE IS EQUALLY  
UNCERTAIN  
ABOUT HOW TO  
DEAL WITH THIS  
ISSUE. THE  
GOOD NEWS?  
WELL, I GUESS  
THE GOOD  
NEWS IS THAT  
YOU DON'T  
HAVE TO FEEL  
LONESOME ANY  
MORE.

COPYRIGHT DARYL BENSON/MASTERFILE





What does this mean in terms of evaluating their integrity as an historic resource? In northern New Mexico we have historic acequia systems—irrigation systems to most of you—that are 300 years old. They have been maintained by the same community over all that time, and they continue to perform their historic function of watering the crops and, incidentally, serving as a unifying force in the community. But the ditches have been dug and redug and realigned, the headgates and flumes have been replaced dozens of times, the diversion dams and takeouts have been washed away and replaced more times than anyone can remember. In some cases the ditches are still unlined, but in others they have been lined with concrete to decrease seepage and maintenance. What constitutes integrity with a property like this?

The third problem is that properties of this sort are not what anybody envisioned when the National Register was established. Let's face it: the National Register and the National Register process were set up to deal with mansions and monuments, battlefields and historic neighborhoods. Even archeological sites aren't a great fit to the National Register process; traditional cultural properties still less so. But interstate highways?

Consider, for example, the National Register's concern about boundaries. What are the boundaries of Interstate 10? I mentioned to a friend that I was going to Florida, but I didn't know how I was going to get there yet—meaning that I didn't know where I would be changing planes. And she said to me with a perfectly straight face, "Oh, it's easy to get to Florida. You just go down to the end of Wilmot here and turn left." And of course, she was quite correct; were I to follow her advice, several days and several States later I would, indeed, arrive in Florida. Are we going to assess the eligibility of I-10 as a whole, taking the Route 1, Maine-to-Key West model? Should we examine it on a State-by-State basis? Interchange by interchange?

And as for the public's perception of questions about the National Register eligibility of these kinds of properties, I suspect that most of them, including many preservationists, would think that we had gone round the twist. When I told the folks at El Paso Natural Gas that their "1100" pipeline (which goes from El Paso to LA) might be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, well, if I'd still been the State Historic Preservation Officer, I probably would have found myself in the Governor's office in about an hour. Since El Paso was actually paying me to give them this unwelcome advice, I think they had a hard time deciding whether to fire me or not.

The fourth problem with these kinds of properties is that they are part of the history of the recent past, and we have neither the perspective that comes from the passage of time nor the experience of others in assessing similar properties. The bad news is that everyone

**ON I-40 NEAR GALLUP, NEW MEXICO, A STRANGE MIRAGE GREETSS TRAVELERS GOING WEST THROUGH THE BEAUTIFUL RED MESA VALLEY: AN ENTIRE CITY, CONTAINED UNDER ONE ROOF AND OFFERING ALL THE NECESSITIES AND FRILLS OF MODERN LIFE. THIS MARVEL IN THE DESERT IS MARKED BY AN ENORMOUS, MILLION-WATT ELECTRIC SIGN PROCLAIMING "GIANT TRUCK STOP!!"**

COPYRIGHT DARYL BENSON/MASTERFILE

is equally uncertain about how to deal with this issue. The good news? Well, I guess that the good news is that you don't have to feel lonesome any more.

So, what to do? Well, I do have some experience dealing with an historic highway: Route 66. But I was rereading the study we commissioned for Route 66, and it made me realize that this experience is not going to be as much help with the issue of interstates as I might wish. There are big differences between the two cases. Route 66 is not a living, functioning engineered system; it is the fossilized remnants of such a system, so the integrity issues are much easier to address.

And Route 66 is not even linear anymore. It now consists of a small number of discrete, boundable properties. And even the public perception issue is easy. Route 66 has pizzazz and nostalgia on its side, and it has Interstate 40 to do all the heavy lifting. It is easy for the public to love Route 66 in the abstract; if the same people who love it passionately today were still getting stuck behind an 18-wheeler going up Nine Mile Hill out of Albuquerque, most of them would be screaming to get rid of that old road and build a six-lane freeway, which is exactly what we have.

So, if Route 66 isn't a good model, what can I suggest? I think we have to deal with two critical issues, and we have to deal with those at the national level. Those issues are scale and integrity. The interstate highway system is unique. It is not only national in its level of significance, it is national in scale. There is nothing else I can think of that is like it. We have other property types and themes that are nationwide, but they are not part of a coherent, interconnected system, as are the interstates. The significance of the system as a whole is going to have to be addressed at a national level. And because of the living, functioning nature of the interstates, we are also going to have to resolve the issue of what constitutes historical integrity for such properties at a national scale. This isn't one of those places where we want to have 50 different standards. On the other hand, the properties that make up this national system exist at a local level and, in many cases, will derive their significance from the local impacts of the highway and from association with local events and people.

So my suggestion is that I think we have been too focused on what the interstates are, on their physical nature, their engineering, their construction methods. We need to step back from that and spend some time thinking about what they mean, about where they came from, what they did, and what they do. In other words, historical context.

I think we need a national context that examines questions like, "How did this change in how we move people and material around the nation come about and why? How did the development of this system change the nature of life in this country? How were the locations of the interstate routes chosen and why, and what influenced those choices? Were these existing historic corridors of travel?

"Who built this system? What construction challenges had to be dealt with? What breakthroughs in engineering and construction resulted?"

Just as fundamental are questions that speak to the heart of the historic preservation movement: "How do we capture the significance of interstate construction as a galvanizing force for preservationists? How do we acknowledge that the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 arose in part from the Federal highway legislation 10 years earlier? How do we illustrate the ties between the interstates and the urban renewal of the 1950s and 1960s—another bellwether for preservation?"





COPYRIGHT DARYL BENSON/MASTERFILE

And we need State or regional contexts examining questions like, “How did existing communities influence the choice of route? What were the impacts on the existing communities? What new communities were created? How did the growth of limited access highways influence the local economies? How did the way services are provided change? How were the interstates built? Who built them?”

Rereading the Route 66 study raised one important issue that I haven’t really heard addressed anywhere yet: What are the property types? The Route 66 context includes extant sections of the road itself, tourist courts and motels, gas stations, restaurants, curio shops and trading posts, and municipal roadside attractions. Most discussions of interstates treat these arteries as if they exist in a vacuum, but they don’t. Like Route 66 before them, they have fundamentally altered the nature of roadside businesses, creating their own roadside culture.

So in considering the significance of interstates, maybe we need to look not only at the roadbeds, the bridges, the changing fashions in interchanges, the signage, the safety features, the sound and visual impact mitigation features, but also at the landscaping and the rest areas, at the roadside culture that the interstates have created.

On I-40 near Gallup, New Mexico, a strange mirage greets travelers going west through the beautiful Red Mesa Valley: an entire city, contained under one roof and offering all the necessities and frills of modern life. This marvel in the desert is marked by an enormous, million-watt electric sign proclaiming “Giant Truck Stop!!” to the accompaniment of animated, electric, dancing figures. Though descriptive, the name of this outpost of consumerism derives from the oil company with which it is affiliated. Acres of parking, quality food, oceans of coffee, game room, pharmacy, laundry and shower facilities, Internet access, gifts, souvenirs, snacks, cinnamon rolls the size of soccer balls, actual soccer balls, a wide variety of clothing items, all this and much, much more can be found at the Giant Truck Stop. It is a world marked by social stratification—“Truckers Only” signs set some dining areas and other facilities apart—and one that did not exist, could not have existed prior to the interstate.

There can be no doubt that the interstate highway system has profoundly changed this country. Its historical significance is undeniable. Can this significance be captured, interpreted, and represented for future generations through the federally mandated processes for protecting and preserving historic places? Are the interstates a place? Or are they a process, like the Industrial Revolution or urbanization? Should we try to preserve parts of them? If so, what characteristics should those parts have? Should we think about preserving interstates at all? If we should, how do we think about that preservation process? To answer these questions, we need a much deeper understanding of the historical context within which this system was created and which the system has spawned.

**THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM HAS PROFOUNDLY CHANGED THIS COUNTRY . . . THE QUESTION IS: CAN THIS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE BE CAPTURED, INTERPRETED, AND REPRESENTED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS?**

**Lynne Sebastian, a former State Historic Preservation Officer for New Mexico, is Director of Historic Preservation Programs for the SRI Foundation in Albuquerque. She can be reached at [lsebastian@sri-foundation.org](mailto:lsebastian@sri-foundation.org). This article was adapted from a paper presented at the summer 2001 meeting of the Transportation Research Board Committee on Archaeology and Historic Preservation in Transportation.**



# HISTORY ON THE AIRWAVES

National Park Service, University of Montana Partner for Public Television



**Above, right:** National Park Service divers document the wreck of the ferry *Ellis Island*.

Anasazi ruins deep below the waters of Glen Canyon National Park, on the Arizona-Utah border. The remains of old frontier ranches at the bottom of the lake at Texas' Amistad National Recreation Area. Often spectacular, seldom seen, what lies beneath the waters of the national parks may soon air in America's living rooms, thanks to a grant from the National Park Service's National Center for Preservation Technology and Training.

Few viewers are probably aware that some of the most groundbreaking preservation work is being done underwater by the National Park Service. As divers from the agency's Submerged Resources Center descend on an assortment of shipwrecks and sites, filmmakers will document their work in a series of programs, to air initially on Montana Public Television, with potential nationwide distribution.

The link between the National Park Service and Montana Public Television owes a little to coincidence. MPT, an entity of Montana State University, happens to be near Yellowstone National Park. The university, with one of the country's most highly regarded media arts programs, has worked with the National Park Service on films about the Yellowstone ecosystem and the historic roads that wind through several parks in the Rockies. The idea for the underwater series was born while MPT was filming archeologists diving on the wreck of an 18th century British ship in Biscayne National Park in Florida.

The Submerged Resources Center's impressive record of research has produced a vast and largely untapped video archive. This footage will augment new film shot during the actual projects. So far, four episodes have been funded with the help of \$80,000 in NCPTT grants.

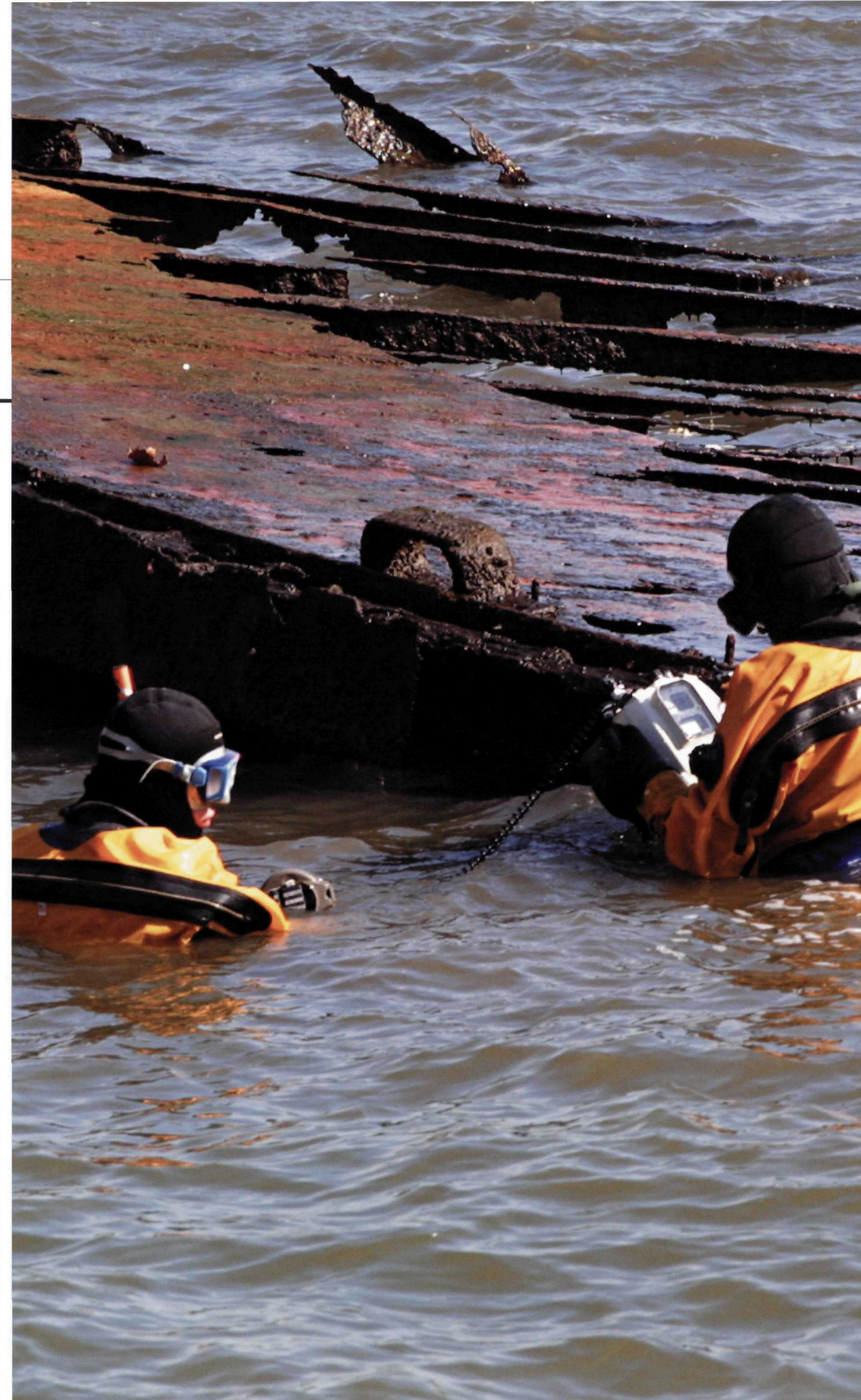
Two films are ready for broadcast on MPT. The first follows divers as they investigate wrecks in remote Dry Tortugas National Park off the Florida Keys—and features a guest dive by actor and amateur diver Gene Hackman. The second accompanies archeologists as they assess the wreck of the *Ellis Island*, which carried 12 million immigrants—more than any other vessel—to their new home in America. In use from 1904 to 1954, the *Ellis Island* sank at its slip in 1968 and has been on the bottom since.

Production costs for the new series are expected to be much lower than the average \$100,000-per-half-hour PBS show, given the partnering of National Park Service equipment and expertise with that of Montana Public Television. In-kind donations and existing footage are also expected to make the enterprise more economically viable.

The producers hope to connect with a national audience. Episodes will be available through American Public Television, a menu service that offers programming to local affiliates free of charge.

Future episodes will feature national parks in Arizona and Hawaii, focusing on a B-29 bomber that disappeared into Lake Mead in 1947 and work being done on the USS *Arizona*.

For more information on NCPTT grants, go to [www.ncptt.nps.gov](http://www.ncptt.nps.gov) and click on "About Us."



ALL PHOTOS NPS SUBMERGED RESOURCES UNIT





DAVID ANDREWS/NPS

The Shining Mountains. Height of Land. Curious plains, rivers, and inlets on a map that is instantly familiar yet strange in detail, a geography of conjecture and fancy. A bearded, casually dressed man from the Bureau of Land Management stood considering the image, which was illuminated on a large screen above him. Mike Cosby was speaking about “a very old and a very strong idea,” the existence of a water route that crossed America’s unknown interior and could deliver the traveler to the Pacific Ocean. He was talking about a time when the Nation, as it was known in 1803, stopped just beyond the Mississippi and disappeared into mystery. No one could guess what lay beyond. “Not only did [they] not know,” said Cosby, “There was no way to find out.”

## tent of many voices

in the footsteps of lewis and clark

by joseph flanagan

Opposite: The Lewis and Clark traveling exhibit on the National Mall in Washington, DC.



The man stood in a cavernous tent, just warm enough to be comfortable, with raw earth underfoot and a vague feeling of the frontier about it. Outside, in the shadow of the Washington Monument, people in muddy boots stepped around tent stakes, busily establishing semi-permanence, the peculiar limbo between here and gone that is the same in encampments the world over. This is among the first stops for Corps of Discovery II: 200 Years to the Future, the traveling exhibit that will spend three and a half years crossing the country in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Presented by the National Park Service with the help of a long list of Indian tribes and State, local, and Federal agencies, the exhibit will follow the original expedition's route from St. Louis to Fort Clatsop and back. Along the way it will not only educate, but stimulate discussion on such varied (and ultimately related) issues as identity, history, culture, science, and human relationships. This will all be done out of the back of an 18-wheeler. Emblazoned with images of the expedition's characters and scenery, the semi carries 80,000 pounds of exhibit equipment and six miles of wiring to operate a full suite of audiovisual capabilities. When Corps II arrives at historic Lewis and Clark stopovers across the country, it will sprout three large tents, two of which serve as an exhibit that tells the story of the trip, the other a 150-seat auditorium for films, live performances, and presentations.

Gerard Baker, who is superintendent of Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, is doing double duty as superintendent of Corps II. He is a member of the Mandan-Hidatsa tribe, whose ancestors met Lewis and Clark when they came through North Dakota. Baker says the concept of Corps II began to take shape as the 200-year anniversary of the historic trek approached. "We knew we had to do something special for the bicentennial," he says. "We knew we needed

to bring it to the public. So we decided on a traveling exhibit . . . The goals are not only to get to know the people and the politics behind the original Corps of Discovery, but to see what's happened since Lewis and Clark came through."

Corps II will coincide with local bicentennial events happening across the Nation over the next few years. The National Park Service has consulted closely with the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, a private nonprofit organization with 40 chapters around the United States, 30 of which are on the trail itself. "Local culture" is an integral part of the presentation, says National Park Service public information officer Jeff Olson. Societies, clubs, and Native American groups will all be invited to offer their knowledge, stories, and points of view. "I think that's the really special part," says Olson, "how local communities really have an ownership of the story." The local foundation chapters, he says, are "just immersed in Lewis and Clark."

Getting an appreciation for the breadth of the expedition, says Olson, can sometimes be challenging. There is a benefit to the more focused approach of individual communities, which can answer questions like what Lewis and Clark did in that particular place and with whom they interacted. "These [local chapters] really delve into that part," Olson says. Chief of logistics Carol McBryant, who

**"The goals are not only to get to know the people and the politics behind the original Corps of Discovery, but to see what's happened since Lewis and Clark came through."**

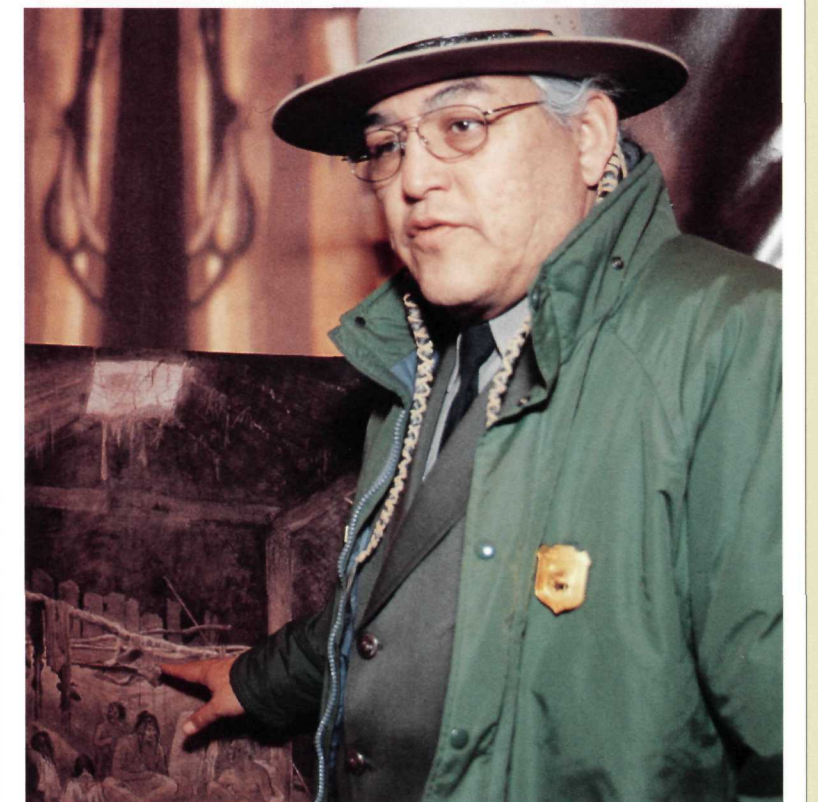
**Gerard Baker, Superintendent, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and Corps of Discovery II**



**Above:** Visitors take the audio tour inside the tent. **Right:** Superintendent Gerard Baker.

is traveling with Corps II, says the exhibit will "help spark the nation" as a supplement to bicentennial events planned across the country. "From here all the way out to Fort Clatsop they're excited about our arrival," she says.

In Washington, DC, Ranger J.P. McCarthy greeted visitors coming into the exhibit tent bundled up against the cold. Rangers from as far away as Mesa Verde National Park and Lincoln Home National Historic Site are spending six-month shifts with Corps II. As the original explorers did prior to heading west, the National Park Service staff is getting a feel for how everything is going to work. McCarthy hands out audio sets to visitors, who begin the self-guided



TOP AND ABOVE: JET LOWE/NPS/HAER





## ONLINE TRAVEL ITINERARY

### Touring Lewis and Clark Sites on the National Register of Historic Places

From St. Louis to Fort Clatsop and all the encampments between, Internet users can follow the trail of the original Corps of Discovery with "The Lewis and Clark Expedition," the latest in a series of National Park Service travel itineraries using properties on its National Register of Historic Places as a unifying theme.

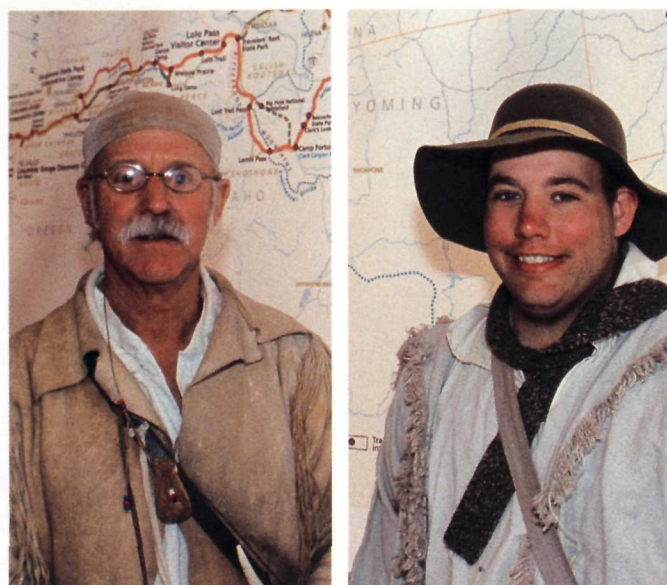
Timed to coincide with the expedition's bicentennial, the itinerary covers the breadth of the Lewis and Clark experience, combining an educational approach with encouragement to travel.

The site offers a wealth of background plus an interactive route to the Pacific tied to 33 National Register properties that Lewis and Clark actually visited. Tracing the Corps' path, users can click on places such as Traveler's Rest in Montana, Lemhi Pass in Idaho, or Chinook Point in Washington. A visit to any of these stops on the trail yields color photos, an explanation of how the site fits into the story, and practical information for visitors.

"The Lewis and Clark Expedition" links to local and regional web sites too. Integral to the user-friendly itinerary is a series of essays ("Preparing for the Journey," "Scientific Encounters," and "The Trail Today") that cover aspects of the expedition.

To create the website, the National Register collaborated with Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers.

For more information on the National Register and to view the complete series of National Register travel itineraries, go to [www.cr.nps.gov/nr](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr).



**Above:** Exhibit staff in period dress. **Opposite:** Baker with the semi that carries Corps II.

tour, and comments that the exhibit "brings the flavor of a national park to people who don't have one."

The inner surfaces of the exhibit tent have images on them, a densely colorful storyboard where one image blends into the next as visitors follow the narrated expedition from St. Louis up the Missouri and into unknown territory. Paintings by Karl Bodmer and George Catlin are prominently displayed, as is a large map at the tent's entrance depicting the route and the geography and which so far appears to be one of the exhibit's biggest attractions.

The larger tent, the Tent of Many Voices, is the venue for presentations, films, and performances. Inside is a stage behind which hangs a large screen for films, video, and slide shows. Objects can also be projected and viewed from all perspectives. A 30-ton HVAC system mounted in the semi provides heat and air conditioning.

This is where scores of Federal agencies explain their stewardship of the public lands along the trail, introducing visitors to the natural world encountered by Lewis and Clark, the grasslands, forests, and waterways. The BLM's Native Seed Program will discuss attempts to



MAP: NPS HARPERS FERRY CENTER. LEFT AND ABOVE: JET LOWE/NPS/HAER

## "I think that's the really special part—how local communities have an ownership of the story."

**Jeff Olson, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and Corps of Discovery II**

restore some of the plants that Lewis and Clark saw. Agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Geological Survey will discuss subjects like the explorers' attempts to map the geography and identify the flora and fauna, as well as modern watershed development and the repercussions brought about by damming the rivers. Musicians will play the music of the time. Taxonomists and mammologists will talk about the animals of the interior, doctors about whether Lewis was a suicide or murder victim. American Indians will tell their stories not only from an historical perspective, but taking in the future as well. Mike Cosby—the BLM representative who spoke on the mystery of what lay beyond the Mississippi in 1803—was offering a presentation called "Reality Check at Lemhi Pass," a comparison of what Lewis and Clark thought they would find with what they actually did. This was to be followed by a showing of Ken Burns' documentary on the explorers.

That is just a small sampling of what visitors can experience in the tent along Corps II's route. Six hours of programming is scheduled every day. Jeff Olson says it is

broken down into three components: the American Indian perspective, the Federal government's preservation role, and the culture of the place where the exhibit happens to be at the moment. Olson mentions the Swedes in the Dakotas, and German immigrants who came to the plains. "Whatever community we're in, we're looking for the local culture, and bringing people [who represent it] on stage as presenters."

Corps II will also be stopping at inner city schools. Baker says the exhibit will "take the story to those students who may never have an opportunity to see those rivers and mountains that Lewis and Clark saw."

"A primary component," Baker says, "is the Indian communities." He spent three years talking to tribes along the route, who at first were skeptical. McBryant says that many view the Lewis and Clark expedition as "the beginning of the end of their culture." Adds Baker, "We're still the Government in the eyes of a lot of Indian people. And many still don't trust the Government." But the plan was for the tribes to tell their stories unadorned. "Some of it is hurtful," says McBryant. "Some of it is hard . . . [But] that voice has always been a part of the





planning.” Once they understood that they would have a voice, however, most tribes agreed to participate.

As Corps II rolls westward, presentations in the Tent of Many Voices will be videotaped, as will original Lewis and Clark campsites. Oral histories are being conducted along the way and added to the visual record. This material is sent to the Peter Kiewit Institute of the University of Nebraska, a National Park Service partner. The institute is building an educational website as a companion to Corps II, which features a database of images, videos, and maps.

Teachers can use the material as a supplement in lessons. Tribal elders who come to the Tent of Many Voices will be interviewed and filmed, with the footage given to the tribes to pass on to future generations.

All of Corps II’s components come together to express the complex chain of events that followed the expedition and how we evolved as a Nation afterward. The central theme—of ramifications far beyond 19th century geography and politics and well into the realms of culture, science, and the natural world—ultimately brings the focus to the human element. Says Olson, “You can’t be involved in this very long before you start to ask yourself, ‘Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?’ People who knew little more than that Lewis and Clark were explorers . . . see where [they] fit in.”

During the planning stages, Baker says he decided that more than anything else he was interested in inciting curiosity. “What I want people to take with them is a whole boatload of questions,” he says. As far as the effects of the exploration are concerned, “We’re just touching the tip of the iceberg [regarding] culture and history and nature.”

Carol McBryant expands on the human significance of the trek, explaining that the expedition was made up of people of many cultures—Anglo, French, German, Indian, and African American—who lived, worked, and endured hardship together. “The choices they made on any given day shaped our Nation,” she says. This is particularly important for young people to understand. “Especially with kids—the choices they make in their relationships with each other and about the earth will shape what the future will be like.”

**“You can’t be involved in this very long before you start to ask yourself, ‘Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?’ People who knew little more than that Lewis and Clark were explorers . . . see where [they] fit in.”**

**Jeff Olson, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and Corps of Discovery II**

**Top left: Corps II Superintendent Baker with Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton. Top right: A performance in the Tent of Many Voices. Right: Baker with image of Hidatsa dancer emblazoned on exhibit tent.**



RIGHT: JET LOWE/NPS/HAER. ABOVE: TAMI HELEMAN/DOI



2002  
AWARD WINNER

JOHN COTTER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ARCHEOLOGY

# HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS

## UNCOVERING A PRE-COLUMBIAN TEMPLE ON A CARIBBEAN BEACH

**MOST EXCAVATION SITES** are not much to look at, and archeologist Ken Wild's is no exception. Just an L-shaped hole, crisscrossed with stakes and string, barricaded to protect the public and keep the wild donkeys out. But within the hole there lies a mass of articulated pre-Columbian materials just a few feet away from a postcard-perfect crescent of pure white sand that fades into the turquoise and cobalt of the Caribbean Sea. The workers scrubbing artifacts, screening dirt, and excavating objects are not exclusively archeologists, graduate students, and community volunteers but also visitors, like me, who arrive on a daily basis for a languid day at the beach and seize the chance to excavate history instead of sand castles.

BY PAMELA S. TURNER





**Caribbean archeology?** Most of us imagine a drowned galleon's treasure, the spare change that fell from Spain's pockets on the way home. But right on one of the most popular beaches of Virgin Islands National Park, Wild—the park archeologist—found something far rarer: a pre-Columbian Taino ceremonial area that fits the description of a church or temple area. The Taino were the first Americans to meet Columbus, and the first to find that encounter catastrophic.

"This is the first time we've recognized a Taino ceremonial area in the Caribbean—described by the Spanish as their temple or church," says Wild, who points out that the site on Cinnamon Bay is not only regionally but internationally significant. "Many of the offerings were shellfish, which preserved well in the archeological record. Their particular articulation, context, and deposition have made it just that much easier to discern that these were most probably offerings."

EXCAVATING THROUGH HIS BEACHFRONT METER OF TAINO HISTORY, WILD DISCOVERED UNUSUALLY DISCRETE LAYERS OF ARTIFACT ASSEMBLAGES. BY PURE LUCK, PLANTERS IN THE EARLY 18TH CENTURY BUILT A ROAD RIGHT OVER THE SITE, PROTECTING IT FOR NEARLY 300 YEARS FROM THE DISTURBANCES OF TREE ROOTS, ANIMALS, AND MAN.

#### HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS

"All their kings . . . have a house . . . in which there is nothing other than images of wood, carved in relief, that they call zemis," wrote Christopher Columbus in 1496. "Nor in that house is work done for any other purpose or service than for these zemis, with a certain ceremony and prayer, which they go there to make, as we go to church. In this house they have a well-carved table . . . on which there are some powders they put on the head of the aforesaid zemis, making a certain ceremony; afterward they inhale this powder with a forked tube they put into the nose."

Most of what we know about the Taino comes from early Spanish visitors, including Columbus and his son Ferdinand. Columbus made his first landfall on a Bahamian beach in front of a Taino village. He called them "very gentle." When asked by the Spanish who they were, they replied "Taino," which means "good" or "noble," possibly to distinguish themselves from the fiercer Island-Caribs who occupied the Lesser Antilles. (For many years, the Taino were referred to as "Arawaks" because their language is in the Arawakan family, but true Arawaks live on the South American mainland.) Taino served Columbus as guides and interpreters; six became the first Americans to visit Europe. Unfortunately, the attentions of Spain would bring the Taino nothing but disaster.

The Cinnamon Bay site was first identified nearly 80 years ago, but a 1995 storm prompted the excavation. "From some testing in 1992, we knew it was a very important site," says Wild. "But after Hurricane Marilyn we lost our buffer zone." The excavation was begun in July 1998 in an effort to recover as much data as possible before the site is lost to the Caribbean Sea.



NPS

**Above:** Ken Wild, archeologist at Virgin Islands National Park. **Opposite:** Caribbean shoreline where the sites are located, with one of the oldest standing structures in the Virgin Islands—dating back to possibly the 1680s—which today houses the archeology lab and museum. **Previous page:** Taino vessel as it was found.



KEN WILD/NPS





ABOVE AND RIGHT: KEN WILD/NPS



Until Wild's investigation, little research had been done on the pre-Columbian residents of the northern Virgin Islands who were there just before European contact. Although Taino inhabited the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, and the Leeward Islands, most information on them (documentary and archeological) came from Hispaniola and Puerto Rico. The culture of the Virgin Islands, called Eastern Taino, was believed to have a lower level of cultural development.

By the 15th century, the Classic Taino culture of Hispaniola and Puerto Rico had developed into a complex society with large villages of 1,000 to 2,000 people governed by a cacique (chief). The Taino raised crops of cassava, maize, and sweet potatoes using mound farming. They fished, harvested shellfish, and ate manatees, reptiles, and dogs.

Families lived in round thatched huts and slept in woven cotton hammocks. Dugout canoes—some large enough to carry a hundred people—were used to travel between the islands.

The Taino also constructed petroglyph-decorated plazas and ball courts. Their game—which was both recreational and ceremonial—involved hitting a rubber ball with any part of

the body except the hands or feet. In matrilineal Taino society, women played as well as men.

Taino pottery was decorated with incised lines or with elaborate animal or human-animal forms. Zemís (spirits of gods or ancestors) were made of wood, bone, shell, coral, cotton, or stone. Some were carved in an unusual “three-pointer” shape. Zemís, considered to have great power, were placed in special temples (caneyis).

The Taino also crafted elaborate ceremonial stools (duhos) from wood or stone. When Columbus visited a Cuban cacique, he was seated on a gold-decorated duho—no doubt to his great delight.

#### TIDY LAYERS TELL A STORY

“If they had been allowed a few centuries of reprieve from Spanish rule they might well have . . . developed the kind of commercial linkage with civilized peoples of Middle America that . . . would have made it possible for them to acquire writing, statehood, and other elements of the mainland civilizations, as their fellow islanders, the British and the Japanese, had already done in Europe and Asia,” wrote Irving

WILD BELIEVES THE UNUSUALLY NEAT, SEQUENTIAL LAYERS OF POTTERY, SHELLFISH, AND ANIMAL REMAINS REPRESENT THE ACCUMULATION OF CENTURIES OF OFFERINGS.

**Above left:** Fragments of offering vessels helped map Caribbean natives' religious development. **Above right:** Archeology lab and museum.

## The Caribbean's Human Currents

Six thousand years ago, groups of semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers—known as the Casimiroids—were the first humans to settle the islands of the Caribbean. Most scholars believe that they originated in the Yucatan, but migrants may also have traveled from North America via Florida or the Bahamas or from South America via the Lesser Antilles. Around 2000 BC a second wave of hunter-gatherers, the Ortoiroids, island-hopped from the Orinoco River Valley in present-day Venezuela through the Lesser Antilles, Hispaniola, and central Cuba.

In 500 BC the Saladoids, an agricultural, pottery-making people, migrated from the Orinoco to the Caribbean. In 600-800 AD yet another South American group, the Ostionoids, traced essentially the same path. The Ostionoids brought new pottery styles and the ceremonial ball court tradition, eventually evolving into the Taino culture of 1200-1500 AD.

From 1200 to 1500 AD, South American Caribs moved north through the Lesser Antilles. Island-Caribs were known as a warlike people who cannibalized male war captives and kidnapped females; Taino may have abandoned some of their eastern set-

tlements (like St. John) due to Island-Carib depredations. The Island-Caribs put up a fierce resistance to European colonization until they were finally subdued in the late 18th century.

For many years, the Taino were considered extinct, wiped out by disease, forced labor, and outright slaughter. Yet Spanish-Taino intermarriage was common; in a 1514 census, 40 percent of married Spaniards had an indigenous wife.

In 1970, a Taino Tribal Council was established in the mountains of Puerto Rico. “In our past, the island people popularly believed the political propaganda that we as a people became totally extinct,” writes tribal leader Pedro Guanikeyu Torres. “This may have been due to the political disintegration of our past Taino government and culture. Today we have a 500-year-old mestizo Taino heritage.”

Torres is supported by a 1998-1999 University of Puerto Rico study that found Indo-American DNA in half the Puerto Ricans they sampled. Was it Taino DNA? We may know in the future for certain, but for now it seems likely that some islanders have Taino ancestry.





Rouse, a leading authority on the Taino. But history took a different route, leaving sites like this to tell the Taino story.

Excavating through his beachfront meter of Taino history, Wild discovered unusually discrete layers of artifact assemblages. By pure luck, planters in the early 18th century built a road right over the site, protecting it for nearly 300 years from the disturbances of tree roots, animals, and man. “The way the material culture fell into distinct categories was really strange,” says Wild. “Most of the time, ceramic styles show gradual shifts. But remarkably, out of hundreds of pottery shards not a single shard attributable to a particular pottery style was found mixed with a different style.”

The explanation, Wild realized, could be found in the writings of Frey Bartolome de Las Casas, who arrived in Hispaniola in 1502. “We found that in the season when they gathered the harvest of the fields they had sown and cultivated . . . they put this portion of first fruits of the crops in the great house of the lords and caciques, which they called caney, and they offered and dedicated it to the zemi,” wrote Las Casas. “All the things offered in this way were left either until they rotted . . . or until they spoiled, and thus they were consumed.”

Wild believes the unusually neat, sequential layers of pottery, shellfish, and animal remains represent the accumulation of centuries of offerings. The caney that Wild uncovered had been in continuous use for almost 600 years. The artifacts proved that the Virgin Island Taino were more culturally advanced than previously believed, firmly within the Classic Taino tradition. The excavation also provided a tantalizing glimpse into Taino society as it became increasingly complex and dominated by the elite.

This change can be traced through the clay zemi figures that once decorated the caney’s ceremonial offering pots. Some of the reconstructed pots had round holes punched in the bottom, a practice that for some Native American groups symbolizes the release of the soul. Many of the clay adornos have bat/human forms, a common motif in Taino art. “They think the dead wander at night and eat the

THE EXCAVATION ALSO PROVIDED A TANTALIZING GLIMPSE INTO TAINO SOCIETY AS IT BECAME INCREASINGLY COMPLEX AND DOMINATED BY THE ELITE.

**Left:** Remains of Taino pottery.



fruit of the guannaba [guava],” wrote Spanish historian Pietro Martire d’Anghiera. Because bats flew at night and ate guava, they were believed to be the spirits of ancestors. Wild shows me a small ceramic zemi with round empty eyes, a jutting chin, and curious saucer-shaped nostrils—a “bat nose.” “This figure is probably an ancestor,” explains Wild. “It was found approximately mid-level, probably made around 1200 AD.” The zemi represents access to the ancestors’ spirit world.

Wild picks up two other clay figures. “In the next level, we found this face with a bat nose and a chief’s headdress. We know from the Spaniards that only Taino caciques wore headdresses. The iconography is changing; it seems to suggest that now the Taino are worshipping not just ancestors, but the cacique’s ancestors. Ancestors are being used to legitimize the power and status of the cacique. In one of the last layers, we found this figure with a chief’s headdress, but no bat nose. As Taino society became more hierarchical, the chief had greater status. Perhaps he could expect to be worshipped more directly. An important shift in Taino society may be reflected in these zemi figures.”

“They believed these zemis gave them water and wind and sun when they had need of them, and likewise children and other things they wanted to have,” wrote Las Casas. Caciques and shamans (behiques) would enter the caney to communicate with the zemis. The ceremony involved ritual purification using special vomiting sticks, often beautifully carved from manatee ribs. As Columbus noted, the cacique and behique would inhale a hallucinogen, cohoba, through a forked tube held to the nose. Through the cohoba ceremony, the cacique and the behique were able to enter the supernatural realm of the zemis. “These soothsayers make people believe,” wrote d’Anghiera. “Indeed they enjoy great authority among them, for the zemis themselves speak to them and predict future matters to them. And if any sick man gets well, they persuade him that he has achieved this by the grace of the zemi.”

**ARCHEOLOGIST FOR A DAY**

As Wild explains the significance of the material culture, curious tourists wander by. “What are you digging for?” asks a woman toting a beach bag. Wild patiently directs her to a nearby information board, and encourages her to volunteer. I ask Wild if the constant parade of visitors is annoying. “Oh, no,” says Wild, who as a National Park Service archeologist has worked on Civil War, Revolutionary War, and pioneer sites—as well as underwater shipwrecks and Spanish fortresses. “It’s sad when the community can’t get involved, when nobody knows what you’re doing. By involving the public in the investigation like this you get a chance to engender a positive effect on a lot of people, and inspire them to preserve their heritage.”

Since the excavation began in 1998, an average of 1,000 volunteers a year donated between 12,000 and 14,000 hours to the project. After a short



training session, volunteers (children need an adult along) are set to work washing artifacts and screening dirt. Long-term volunteers carefully excavate artifacts. As Wild spoke, my three children scrubbed ancient offerings of shells and parrotfish bones. Children volunteers at Cinnamon Bay have found stone tools, shell beads, clay zemis, and carved teeth. A man and his son found a gold disk in the “fine” screen, probably an eye inlay for a carved wooden statue.

A variety of groups from the mainland come to participate—like seniors, Boy and Girl Scout troops, and students from high schools and graduate field programs. One high school class raised money to come. Once a week the site hosted a local school group’s participation after an orientation in the classroom.

On site, the volunteers are rotated on a schedule to each work station, manned by either a student intern, park ranger, or experienced local volunteer. This allows them to grasp all aspects of field investigation including the laboratory work.

AN AVERAGE  
OF 1,000  
VOLUNTEERS  
A YEAR  
DONATED  
BETWEEN  
12,000 AND  
14,000  
HOURS TO  
THE PROJECT.

**Left: Designs visible in carefully exposed Taino vessels. Opposite: Anthropologist Anna Lawson volunteers her time on the excavation.**

LEFT AND RIGHT: KEN WILD/NPS







Almost all schools in the region participated in the investigation, as does the local college. For you archeologists out there, this only required four hours a week away from scientific endeavors and responsibilities, but the rewards were immeasurable in community support—and work accomplished.

“We couldn’t do it without these volunteers,” says Wild, “and it would not have been possible without the park’s friends organization.” Archeology in partnership with a friends group is a win-win proposition. Through the friends organization it’s possible to raise funds for a specific need such as archeology. And by making the research public, you help the friends group help the park by raising resource awareness. This enhances the group’s ability with funding because the public participation inevitably leads to increased membership.

Partnering with the friends group allowed for a greater involvement by the community and local businesses too. The partnerships provided the funds for a college intern program with student stipends. “A lot of funding comes from donations—from volunteers and universities like Syracuse and Southern Maine,” says Wild.

The St. John community (population 4,500) has responded enthusiastically. Local students organize fundraisers; a jewelry shop makes silver and bronze zemi jewelry and donates all of the sales. The Friends of the Virgin Island National Park recently raised \$40,000 to house and hopefully display Taino and plantation-era artifacts.

Thanks to local business donations this program continued past the initial first year’s funding, and now, four years later, it continues today. These partnerships also made it possible to house the students and project scientists on this very expensive island, through donations to the friends by local campgrounds. As it turned out the campgrounds benefitted, as the students provided lecture programs for their visitors. The lectures in turn brought in many more volunteers and ensured that students were well acquainted with the research. Many times when funds were low a number of interns signed on as volunteers.

One of the primary success stories was on-site community involvement. The volunteers made it possible to continue educational programs when intern numbers were low. One very talented volunteer guide, Linda Palmer Smith, was a primary organizer, recruiter, advertiser, and artist for the site presentations. As a comic strip writer, artist, and playwright, she made sure that the tours were both educational and

VOLUNTEERS ARE ROTATED ON A SCHEDULE TO EACH WORK STATION, MANNED BY EITHER A STUDENT INTERN, PARK RANGER, OR EXPERIENCED LOCAL VOLUNTEER. THIS ALLOWS THEM TO GRASP ALL ASPECTS OF FIELD INVESTIGATION INCLUDING THE LABORATORY WORK.

**Below:** Students, ever-present at the site, ranged in age from first grade to college. **Opposite:** Student involvement often led to original discoveries.



ABOVE AND LEFT: KEN WILD/NPS

entertaining. In 1999, she wrote a play that incorporated the Taino beliefs and culture, which was presented to a packed house every Saturday night for four months. All 65 cast and production members, of course, were volunteers. Working with the volunteers, visiting project scientists—like the zooarcheologist Irv Quitmyer of the Florida Museum of Natural History and ceramic specialist Emily Lundberg—found that they could accomplish so much more.





KEN WILD/NPS

Academic involvement played a major role. "Syracuse University helped to excavate plantation-era buildings—also eroding on the beachfront," says Wild. He believes they have found in one eroding structure perhaps the first physical evidence of a significant chapter in Caribbean history—the St. John slave revolt of 1733. The research may shed some light on the 200-year gap in St. John history between the disappearance of the Taino in the 15th century and the arrival of Danish colonists in 1718. Many materials recovered by Doug Armstrong of Syracuse suggest that other Europeans had probably settled this stretch of beach before the Danes laid claim.

In some areas the historic era is interlaced with prehistoric remains. When Columbus sailed through the Virgin Islands in 1493, his only recorded contact with local inhabitants was on St. Croix; it is unclear whether they were Taino or Island-Carib. The Taino may have already abandoned St. John, possibly because of Island-Carib attacks. Preliminary analysis may well provide at least a theory of what happened to the St. John Taino. Artifact study in the lab may take the Cinnamon Bay Taino site back to 600 AD.

#### THE ZEMIS' PROPHECY

With the coming of the Spanish, the Taino were forced to work on encomiendas (estates)—ranching, farming, and mining gold. The hard work, poor diet, and exposure to European diseases quickly took their toll. At the time of Columbus' first voyage, the Taino population of Hispaniola alone numbered in the hundreds of thousands. By 1509—a mere 17 years later—only 60,000 remained. In 1542, native communities were declared free by the Spanish crown. There were only 60 Taino left on Puerto Rico to celebrate what they had taken blissfully for granted a half-century earlier.

According to legend, the zemis had warned the Taino of their fate. "The zemis [prophe- sies] that not many years would go by before a people covered with clothes would reach the island, and they would end all those rites and ceremonies . . . and would kill all their children or deprive them of freedom," wrote d'Anghiera. "When truly they saw the Spaniards . . . they resolved that they were the people of the prophecy. And they were not mistaken . . . not even a memory is now left of the zemis, who have been transported to Spain so that we might be acquainted with their mockery and the devil's deceptions."

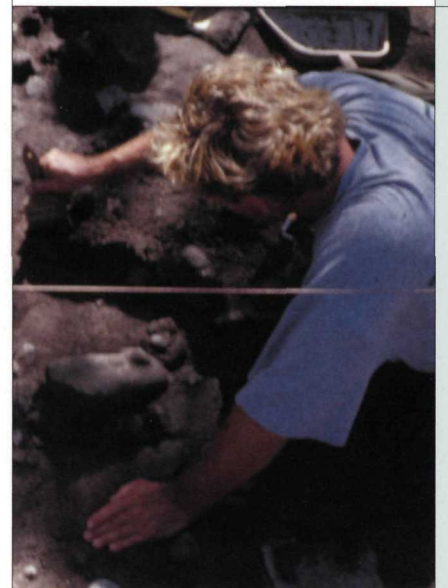
More than a memory has surfaced on the beach at Cinnamon Bay, as the zemis return to tell the story of the Taino.

Pamela S. Turner is a freelance writer in Orinda, CA. Contact her at pstrst@pacbell.net. Ken Wild can be reached at ken\_wild@nps.gov.

#### ON THE WEB

For more information about the Friends of the Virgin Islands National Park—and volun- teering—see their website at [www.friendsvinp.org](http://www.friendsvinp.org). The site also has information about the project, lesson plans for elementary and middle school teachers on the prehistory of the Virgin Islands, and sales items that fund the archeological research.

AT THE TIME OF COLUMBUS' FIRST VOYAGE, THE TAINO POPULATION OF HISPANIOLA ALONE NUMBERED IN THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS. [BY 1542] THERE WERE ONLY 60 TAINO LEFT.



NPS

**Opposite:** Detail of Taino artifact.  
**Above:** Archeologist Ken Wild at work.



## THE BUCKS STOP HERE



KHALED BASSIM/NPS

**THEY CARRY THE LABEL** of a long-defunct haberdashery in downtown Washington, DC, a glimpse of a time long gone. Yet one can imagine a young clerk at Raleigh's on F Street looking up to find himself face-to-face with none other than Harry S Truman looking for a pair of his signature shoes. | **THESE AND MANY OTHER ARTIFACTS** from the former president's life are part of a new online exhibit—"The Buck Stops Here: Harry S Truman, American Visionary"—produced by the National Park Service's Museum Management Program. Personal items and political memorabilia from the Harry S Truman National Historic Site in Independence, Missouri, provide much of the site's visual content. All are part of the collection kept today at the Truman house. | **THE SITE'S UNDERLYING STRUCTURE** is a narrative of Truman's formative years, family experiences, and political career. Each section is generously illustrated with museum items that bring

the period to life. In the section on the presidency, viewers see campaign buttons from the time and "Harry Truman Soap" handed out to voters. Original wardrobes, children's toys, and items from Bess Truman's kitchen are also displayed. | **THE HOUSE ON 219 DELAWARE**, preserved as it was when the Trumans lived there, is now accessible to millions thanks to a virtual tour. The kitchen, study, parlor, and other rooms can be viewed in panorama with the drag of a mouse on the computer. | **ALL OF THE OBJECTS** can be enlarged and viewed in detail. Photographs from the Harry S Truman Library will also be included in the web exhibit, which will be online at [www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/hstr](http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/hstr). The feature goes live on April 27. Appearing on the same date will be a lesson plan for teachers produced by the National Park Service's Teaching With Historic Places program.

## SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

Gale A. Norton

## DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Fran P. Mainella

## ACTING ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCES

de Teel Patterson Tiller

## ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCES

John Robbins

## EDITORIAL ADVISORS

John Robbins, Assistant Director,  
Cultural Resources, National Park Service  
Randall J. Biallas, AIA, Honorary ASLA,  
Chief Historical Architect, National Park Service

E. Blaine Cliver, Manager,  
HABS/HAER/HALS/CRGIS, National Park Service

Kirk Cordell, Executive Director,  
National Center for Preservation Technology  
and Training, National Park Service

David W. Look, AIA, FAPT, Chief, Cultural Resources  
Team, Pacific West Region, National Park Service

Francis P. McManamon, Ph.D., Chief Archeologist,  
National Park Service, Departmental Consulting  
Archeologist, U.S. Department of the Interior

H. Bryan Mitchell, Manager, Heritage  
Preservation Services, National Park Service

Darwina L. Neal, FASLA, Chief,  
Cultural Resource Preservation Services,  
National Capital Region, National Park Service

Sharon C. Park, FAIA, Chief, Technical  
Preservation Services, National Park Service

Dwight T. Pitcaithley, Ph.D.,  
Chief Historian, National Park Service

Carol D. Shull, Keeper, National Register  
of Historic Places and Chief, National Historic  
Landmarks Survey, National Park Service

**Common Ground: Preserving Our Nation's Heritage** spring 2003 / volume 8, number 1

**Published by the National Park Service for the Heritage Community**

**Formerly Common Ground: Archeology and Ethnography in the Public Interest**

Statements of fact and views do not necessarily reflect an opinion or an endorsement by the editors or the National Park Service.

Common Ground is published quarterly. To read the magazine online, subscribe, or update your subscription, visit [www.cr.nps.gov/CommonGround](http://www.cr.nps.gov/CommonGround). To contact the editorial staff write to Editor, Common Ground, 1849 C Street, NW (2251), Washington, DC 20240, or call (202) 354-2100, fax (202) 371-5102, or e-mail ([NPS\\_CommonGround@nps.gov](mailto:NPS_CommonGround@nps.gov)).

## PUBLISHER

Sue Waldron

## EDITOR AND DESIGNER

David Andrews

## ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Joseph Flanagan

ISSN 1087-9889







NPS/NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS SURVEY

**"Whether in a neighborhood or a national park, these places tell stories of struggle and success. They are part of a seamless system of tangible connections to our past . . . They capture our imagination, which in the classroom, can be the key to unlocking a student's interest."**

**National Park Service Director Fran Mainella**

Announcing "New Kent School and the George W. Watkins School: From Freedom of Choice to Integration," the 100th lesson plan from Teaching with Historic Places

page **10**

# IN THIS ISSUE



VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK

page **8** **"The Chippewa's removal from their traditional land is, in many respects, the familiar story of westward expansion in the 19th century. But during short excursions into the forests around Minnesota's lake country, National Park Service archeologist Jeffrey Richner saw a different picture."**

## ON THE WEB

**LINKS TO THE PAST** [www.cr.nps.gov](http://www.cr.nps.gov)

Website of the National Park Service National Center for Cultural Resources

Links to the Past offers a wealth of material for a broad audience. Featured in this issue:

"New Kent School and the George W. Watkins School: From Freedom of Choice to Integration," the 100th lesson plan from Teaching with Historic Places . . . page 10 . . . [www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp)

"The Lewis and Clark Expedition," the newest travel itinerary from the National Register of Historic Places . . . page 24 . . . [www.cr.nps.gov/nr/](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/)

"The Buck Stops Here: Harry S Truman, American Visionary," a web feature on the collections of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site . . . page 42 . . . [www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/hstr](http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/hstr)

*CRM*, sister publication of *Common Ground*, will re-appear this fall as *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship*, a biannual peer-reviewed periodical. Check the National Park Service website at [www.cr.nps.gov/CRMJournal](http://www.cr.nps.gov/CRMJournal) for more information.

**SUBSCRIBING TO COMMON GROUND**

**It's Free. It's Easy.**

If you have an email address, go to [www.cr.nps.gov/CommonGround](http://www.cr.nps.gov/CommonGround). Click on "update your subscription."

If you already get it, you **must** re-subscribe.

By mail write to Common Ground, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW (2251), Washington, DC 20240-001, fax (202) 371-5102.

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Center for Cultural Resources  
1849 C Street NW (2251)  
Washington, DC 20240-0001



First Class Mail  
Postage and Fees Paid  
USD-I-NPS Permit No. G-83