

# Interpreting the Cultural and Built Landscapes



## Interpreting Cultural Landscapes in the National Park System

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The concept of a "cultural landscape" recognizes the influence of human beliefs and actions over time on the natural landscape. In this country, the concept can be traced to the writings of Carl O Sauer, father of cultural geography, in the 1920s. Over a decade ago, the National Park Service adopted this concept to describe the vast and diverse landscape resources in the National Park System which have been, and continue to be, impacted by human activity.

Cultural landscapes in the System include designed landscapes associated with significant individuals, events, or structures. The

Sea chanteys sung during the "Festival of the Sea" at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park help recall life on board the historic vessels moored at Hyde Street Pier.  
Photo by Steve Danford

Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, Massachusetts is associated with the life and work of the preeminent landscape architect, his office, and his family. The grounds of the two acre estate he named "Fairsted" embody many of the same design principles Olmsted was famous for at a larger scale, such as those applied to Central Park in New York City and Franklin Park in Boston.

Cultural landscapes also include vernacular landscapes which reflect patterns of settlement over time and illustrate people's values and attitudes towards the land. Steamtown National Historic Site in Pennsylvania represents an urban industrial landscape associated with steam railroading along approximately thirty miles of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad's mainline. The 17,000 acre rural landscape of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve on Whidbey Island in Washington State represents a continuum of land use spanning over one hundred years. The landscape has been continually reshaped by its inhabitants, however, the early pattern of land use--the mix of farm, forest, village, and shoreline--is still present today.

The expansive Alaska parklands, such as the eight million acre Wrangell-St Elias National Park and Preserve, appear to many as wilderness when, in reality, the landscape has been impacted by human beings for thousands of years. These parklands include ethnographic landscapes where Native and non-Native residents are involved in a traditional use of the land for hunting, trapping, and gathering. In addition, many features of the landscape are imbued with spiritual and mythological associations.

Understanding the role of a particular individual or group of individuals in the design, use, and modification of a landscape, along with the spiritual affiliations with a landscape, is essential for comprehensive interpretation of a park's significance and its resources. Presently, our understanding of park landscapes is limited to a small body of research, primarily related to Cultural Landscape Reports and their historical antecedents, Historic Grounds Reports. As a result, the information available to interpreters regarding cultural landscapes in the System is insufficient.

The lack of research and information on landscapes can be attributed to the fact that they were not considered a cultural resource until recently. The recognition of landscapes as a cultural resource with value equal to archeological resources, structures, and objects only has evolved over the past decade. As a result, there is an imperative need to increase this recognition and to properly identify and interpret these complex and dynamic resources throughout the System.

In order to foster increased identification and interpretation of cultural landscapes, thematic contexts need to be developed at both national and individual park level through National Historic Landmark Theme Studies and park Historic Resource Studies, respectively. The later should provide an understanding of how park landscapes have evolved over time and identify the significant biotic and abiotic features which

represent that evolution and, therefore, should be preserved for future generations.

Fortunately, a number of initiatives are underway which will involve research on cultural landscapes and, in turn, provide interpreters with the necessary information to substantially increase the interpretation of these resources. These initiatives include a Cultural Landscape Inventory of all significant landscapes in the System. The inventory is scheduled to commence in Fiscal Year 1992 with funding included in the Department's budget. In addition, private organizations, such as the American Society of Landscape Architects, have been working with various Park Service cultural resource divisions to develop a strategy for, and pursuit of, a National Historic Landmark Theme Study of Landscape Architecture. Testimony recently was presented to the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands requesting funding to initiate the study in Fiscal Year 1992. Finally, as part of the current revision to the "Cultural Resources Management Guideline, NPS-28", the procedure for preparing Historic Resource Studies will be revised to ensure that the studies are conducted in a multi-disciplinary manner which addresses the context and significance of all park resources, including cultural landscapes. The information gained through these efforts will be available for integration in park interpretive programs.

Much of the information attained through additional research will pertain to the history of the development of the National Park System. In fulfilling the mandate of the 1916 Act creating the National Park Service to preserve a park's natural and cultural resources and provide for the public enjoyment of the same, the Service has had a major impact on the manipulation of the landscape. Historically, that impact may be most evident in the landscapes designed by Park Service landscape architects for visitor use, interpretation, and administration between 1916 and 1942. The design of those landscapes and the design philosophy which was incorporated, harmonizing development with the scenery and natural features of the park, is very significant in terms of the history of the park, the development of the System, and the impact on the field of landscape architecture. August 25 marks the 75th anniversary of the National Park Service and, in light of this significant event, the opportunity should be seized to utilize the research which exists and pursue additional examination of these landscapes in order to interpret the heritage of the Service as it is manifested in the landscape. This event provides an excellent occasion not only to celebrate the history of the System's development, but to promote the preservation of the cultural landscape resources which are illustrative of that history.

Interpreters have a great influence over how park resources are perceived by the public. As a result, interpretation can play an extremely significant role in fostering appreciation and preservation of our national cultural landscape resources. Through increasing the recognition and appreciation of these valuable resources, interpreters will assist in building a constituency for the preservation of cultural landscapes throughout the United States.

## The Place Names of History: Interpretation of Historic Sites in the National Park Service

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Independence Hall. Valley Forge. Fort Laramie. Ford's Theatre. Skagway. Gettysburg. Castillo de San Marcos. Ellis Island. These are the place names of history; names which are part of our collective consciousness; American symbols of valor, drama, courage, hope, and promise. They are the cornerstones of our heritage and the foundations of our memories. All these places are interpreted, protected, and managed by the National Park Service.

The National Park Service thus has a monumental task in taking care of the best historic resources America has to offer. Recently questions have been raised concerning the National Park Service's ability to properly interpret these historic sites. The questions focus on methods of interpreting the sites' importance and context and on the quality of history interpretation and interpreters. Stories of abuse abound: history interpretation as "entertainment," provided without context or meaning; "sanitized" presentations at military sites; living history as an attraction in and of itself.

There is also a feeling within the Park Service that historic sites are not considered to be the "crown jewels" of the Park Service. Small history parks are not considered challenging or exciting; thus the best qualified interpreters do not apply for available positions. In turn, history interpretation suffers from the same lack of self-esteem.

The evolution of history interpretation in the National Park Service followed that of natural interpretation. From the 1920s on, the Park Service's activities included formal interpretation. Many historical parks were added to the system in the 1930s, with the transfer of areas administered by the Department of War, and National Capital parks, consisting of parks in the Washington, DC, area. With the addition of historical areas to the system, the Park Service established training for historical interpreters, following the example of naturalist training.

Administratively, the Historic Sites Act of August 21, 1935, gave the Secretary of the Interior the power to establish historic sites, develop educational and interpretive programs at historic sites and to establish museums. History in the National Park Service became both commemorative and preservation-oriented.

In the 1930s, history interpretation and the management of cultural resources became an important aspect of the National Park Service's duties. Yet the primary focus remained on natural areas. Careers were made in the natural parks, not the cultural areas and most Park Service professionals were trained in natural sciences. New concern for history arose with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Aimed at slowing the destruction of historic sites by urban renewal and the growth of suburbs,

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\* The author acknowledges the use of Barry MacKintosh's 1986 "Interpretation in the National Park Service, A Historical Perspective," and Edwin C Bearss' December 1985 article "History research--Gettin a Quality but Cost-Effective Product," *CRM Bulletin*, VIII:6 (Dec, 1985).

the act provided for the National Register of Historic Places, to be maintained by the National Park Service, and for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. As history gained more importance, the National Park Service set standards for historical significance.

In spite of historical sites being a part of the Park Service's responsibility almost since the agency's establishment, and of history interpretation being developed along the same lines as naturalist interpretation, the fact remained that cultural areas continued to suffer in terms of staffing, money and prestige. The exception was in the Northeast, where historical sites by their sheer number, size, and perceived importance demanded time and attention.

Few historical sites can be fully understood or appreciated without some kind of interpretive aid. Natural sites may be enjoyed without the help of an interpreter; the same is rarely true in a cultural area. Explanation of an historical event, the people involved, and the event's significance within the whole of American history is needed for visitor understanding. The importance of the interpreter to a cultural area requires quality in performance, recruitment, and training. Consensus is that a shortage exists of good interpreters well grounded in the park's subject matter, who are able to communicate skillfully to visitors.

This situation was acknowledged in 1973 when a study of parks in the Pacific Northwest Region completed by Paul H Risk of the Department of Park and Recreation Resources, Michigan State University, outlined some of the complaints. These were: poor communications skills, poor morale, lack of employee understanding of National Park Service goals, insufficient training, recruitment and rehire of incompetent seasonals and inexperienced supervisors.

Interpretation in the early 1970s was considered to be at a low point in the Park Service's history. The trend continued into the early 1980s when much National Park Service interpretation was considered to be "entertainment." Park staffs did not include interpretation in management objectives, and programs were still bearing the brunt of budget and personnel cuts. Interpreters who spent years at one park developed strong subject knowledge and interpretive techniques. Strong interpretive programs resulted from years of dedicated research and writing. However, this advancement in subject knowledge was undermined with cuts in personnel.

Was there ever was a time when National Park Service visitors received high- quality interpretation? Veteran interpreters seem to think that the deterioration in quality is a recent trend, but the record indicates the continual undercutting due to budgets, or personnel, or lack of training has been present all along. It was not just a characteristic of the late 1970s and early 1980s. According to National Park Service Bureau Historian Barry MacKintosh, overall, the American public is receiving the same quality of historical interpretation it has expected and received for years. The program is probably no worse, despite current perceptions of deterioration.

There are several ways in which history interpretation can improve. Contemporary feeling of Park Service historians, curators, and other cultural resource specialists is that the agency needs to enter the mainstream of current professional history emphasis on material culture study. More can be done to utilize the National Park Service's museum collections. Additionally, ongoing research by both academic and Park Service historians has uncovered increasing amounts of data on ethnic, women's, and minority history. The non- utilization of this material dovetails with the problem of new history research as a whole not being incorporated into park themes and interpretive materials. Historic sites representing the contributions of women and minorities are few--a problem with origins in the process of designating new sites for inclusion in the National Park System.

Content knowledge at a cultural site is an absolute necessity; the interpreter must possess a working knowledge of the broad framework of American history so the park story may be placed into context. Interpreters with this knowledge avoid the pitfall of focusing on the site and its story at the expense of context and proper evaluation.

Another positive step has been the recent emphasis on developing park staff capability for research history. Historians once relegated to strictly operational or interpretation duties now participate in research, with the support and review of management. History is not stagnant. There has to be a continued review of historical facts pertaining to a park theme. This is why history research programs in parks need to grow and be refined.

Each park needs to have a resource collection composed of photographs, archival material, oral histories, rare and current books, and artifacts of material culture. A hope for the future held by many history interpreters lies in the regional interpretive skills training teams. Present interpretive training programs assume that interpreters will possess academic educations in "resource-oriented or park & recreation disciplines." The training serves to provide beginning, intermediate and advanced level training which is offered at different points in an interpreter's career. It is also hoped that the training will serve as refresher training to revitalize interpreter morale.

The place names of history are still in good hands. In spite of the myriad of problems facing National Park Service professionals in charge of protecting and interpreting the nation's cultural resources, there remains the spirit and expertise which has earned the agency its past laurels in carrying out its responsibilities. Independence Hall deserves no less.

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## **Democracy in Dirt: The Olmsted Landscape**

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The first visit is impossible to forget. Walls of black granite reflect everything at once: trees, flags, the older monuments remembered from childhood. You join in a conspiracy with hundreds of other people and nearly drown in this mirror of stone, all alone. In the decade since its dedication, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in

Washington has become one of America's most involving places. As an interpreter, I have thought a lot about Maya Lin and her tribute to those who died in war. Lin's design, exquisite in the landscape, is at once hopeful and hopelessly sorrowful. Changing times and the personal history of each visitor will forever dictate its meaning.

Interpretation, like good design, is really a kind of mystical dance between people and places. Frederick Law Olmsted despised monuments for the most part, believing "the less anything that is seen appears to have been dressed up by human hands, the better." But Olmsted and Maya Lin, separated by more than a century, are kindred spirits. They have given us designs with a conscience, creations that are incomplete without the engagement of people. When we confront their work, we are bound to see more clearly who we are and where we are going.

As the father of American landscape architecture, Olmsted led his profession following the Civil War and founded a firm that was virtually without competition in terms of contracts and influence until World War II. What Edison did for our attitudes about electricity, Olmsted did for the landscape. His practice of design was an act of faith in the democratic process and his public spaces part of a grand experiment in social reform. People from all walks of life and every part of town would have a slice of culture and recreation close to home. Those who regarded land as a mere profitable commodity--something to be cut, cleared, and built upon--would be encouraged to appreciate the virtues and real necessity of harmony between man and nature to be accomplished through sensitive landscape design, planning and management.

Olmsted landscapes can be found in nearly every one of the United States: public parks and recreation areas, parkways, school and college campuses, institutional grounds, reservations, zoos and arboretums. His office created a prototype for the new suburban community and left an imprint on many private home grounds and estates. Olmsted went further in his thinking to include the preservation of open spaces, insisting that it was the duty of a democratic society to ensure that the "body of the people" have access to nature. His 1864 report on Yosemite was the first systematic justification for public protection of natural resources and resulted in the establishment of our national parks and forests.

Interpreting a man like Olmsted can be great fun. Everyone loves at least the idea of Central Park, his first career project. An early park proposal is exhibited in suburban Boston at the Frederick Law Olmsted NHS, as well as a great variety of other landscape plans and photographs from the site archives. Olmsted called for the design of "communicative" spaces, an attempt to help solve some of the nation's problems by translating "democracy into trees and dirt." Central Park, that microcosm of everything wonderful and frightful about New York City, is still pretty much what Olmsted had in mind and a splendid way to hook visitors on the merits of landscape architecture. But Central Park is a long way from Boston, and the question our interpreters often hear is "Where is your landscape?"

Slightly more than an acre of grounds surround the historic Olmsted home and office--insignificant compared to the sheer scope

and beauty of the firm's overall landscape legacy. Yet Olmsted's decision to live and practice on a modest suburban scale is important to interpretation since it provides a reference point for understanding ideas that encompass everything from urban planning to the expression of individual art and craft. Many of the same design ideas and principles celebrated in Central Park were later perfected and applied by Olmsted in miniature at home.

Fairsted, the name given the Olmsted estate in the 1880s, always appeared unkempt to some, but records show that a certain untidiness was cherished and carefully nurtured as a characteristic reflective of harmony with nature. "Less wildness and disorder I object to," instructed Olmsted. By the time the National Park Service acquired the property a century later, it had woefully deteriorated. Buildings and grounds were ravaged by time or redesigned and reconfigured to suit the tastes of various owners in the years following Olmsted's death in 1903. Plantings carefully composed in a "perfect maze of wild beauty" were overgrown and out-of-scale, diseased or damaged by storms. Colorful flowers grew along borders or in gardens where Olmsted had insisted on subtle shadings of green. A swimming pool and adjacent brick terrace filled what had been a pastoral lawn with its integral breadth of view. Interpreters were faced with using the saddest landscape imaginable to describe Olmsted's design skill and artistry. Rather than screening off the nasty phases of landscape restoration at Fairsted, the Park Service decided to make visitors a part of the thought process.



A photograph of the Olmsted house facade taken c 1894 is a favorite of interpreters, but many visitors are horrified by what they consider an eccentric and damaging use of vine. They imagine the owner of this "big shrub with windows" to be a recluse, or at best ambivalent about his surroundings. Is this any way to introduce a genius of landscape design? It is if we want to initiate this particular dance between people and place, getting visitors past their personal preferences and inside the mind of Olmsted. For him, dense and irregular planting was a sublime antithesis of the grid-like city. Its essence was mystery and inspired further exploration. If you see a thing clearly and entirely the first time, what is the sense of thinking about it further? Olmsted was vitally inter-

ested in getting people into his public parks at a time when cities were mushrooming in size. Many lived lives of drudgery hemmed in by straight lines, working in factories, and subject to endless commands. Olmsted's landscape offered a complete change of pace: wild, passionate and open to flights of fancy. You could never get enough of it, and that could only be good for business! At home, of course, freedom from form was strictly personal but no less valuable. Once visitors appreciate this small secret of the creeping vine, they are ready to make other adjustments in thinking. They can also more easily accept the decision of the Park Service to restore some of that same vine.

For Olmsted, natural rhythms had a humanizing influence as easily felt in Central Park as in the vast reaches of the Yosemite. His idea of soothing, harmonious scenery was mostly colored green. At Fairsted, separate and distinct environments were threaded together to form a single, cohesive landscape. There were layers upon layers and various shadings of green material but little in flower. Visitors who are partial to flowers and anxious about removal by the Park Service of non-historic gardens and tulip borders are offered the same analogy that Olmsted used to explain his preferences. He compared landscape spaces to rooms of a house. The den is designed to be stimulating and is often brightly colored with maybe a few posters and some games and toys. But sometimes we want to be left alone to dream, imagine or sort things through. The city was Olmsted's den, and the park contained his quiet, green places. Having both within close proximity gave him choices, one of the most excellent things about being human.

In 1984, Fairsted's swimming pool and terrace was removed and the meadow lawn restored with the aid of a computerized landscape inventory and various pieces of information including historic site plans, photographs, correspondence. Work was carried out during an especially wet winter, and it was a standing joke among staff that any visitor who made it from the parking lot to the museum across the pool's muddy remains would already know nearly everything about the status of Olmsted landscapes in America. Spacious meadows have been turned into ballfields and concert grounds, carriage roads are speedways, and wilderness rambles are convenient for fencing "hot" television sets. Contemporary society does not necessarily crave the picturesque lawn and parkway so popular in the last century. A lot of us like to swim, play ball and drive fast. At Fairsted, we are not looking for a single, correct response to issues of landscape use and preservation - just a response. The visitor who wades across one landscape is more likely to consider what time and man does to all landscapes and form an opinion.

When interpreters need to stretch their legs, Boston's version of Central Park is right around the corner. This five-mile "emerald necklace" of parks linking city to country offers us the opportunity to give visitors the bigger picture of Olmsted design after seeing the scaled-down home grounds. It is Fairsted, however, that offers the greater challenge. If you go in search of a single name on a monument only to discover many thousands of names and multiple reflections, the effect can be disorienting. Figuring out the intricacies of landscape architecture is like that. Finding a small place when you expect an astonishing one is like that. We are still looking for ways to engage people in the design of Fairsted and dis-

cover what it is about the Olmsted landscape that makes the dance worthwhile.

## Reflections on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

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Vietnam Veterans Memorial

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial has been one of the National Capital Region's most visited sites since it became a part of the National Park Service system in 1984. No matter what their personal views on the war, visitors feel a oneness with this memorial. Located near Lincoln Memorial on the Mall, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial presents a distinct contrast to the presidential memorials nearby. It requires visitor participation to be most effective. People touch, cry, take rubbings, and leave a part of themselves at it. The memorial honors the veterans of the war, not the war itself. It attempts to heal a collective emotional wound and reconcile a nation that was split by conflict.



The impetus for the memorial came from the veterans themselves. The divided feelings that Americans felt during the war was carried over into the postwar period. Many veterans felt ostracized by their country as though the nation wanted to turn its back on the tumultuous Vietnam years. The veterans were an unpleasant reminder of a divisive conflict. When America welcomed back the returning Iranian hostages with parades, keys-to-the-city and World Series tickets, the Vietnam veterans were offended. They reacted by demanding recognition for their contributions and their sacrifices. Jan C Scruggs, a former rifleman, organized the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc and won national recognition for a memorial.

The Fund began a campaign which eventually brought in nine million dollars in private contributions. Leaders of the Fund persuaded Congress to donate two acres of Constitution Gardens as the memorial site. In a contest to choose the design, four criteria were outlined that specified: 1) The memorial should harmonize with the existing landscape; 2) it would contain the names of all those killed or missing in action; 3) the memorial would be reflective and contemplative; and 4) it would make no political statement about the war.

Of the 1421 entries, the design chosen was by a young Yale University architecture student from Athens, Ohio, named Maya Ying Lin. Ms Lin tried to visualize how death and grief could be interpreted in a natural surrounding. As she looked upon the site she thought "about what death is, what a loss is. A sharp pain that lessens with time, but can never quite heal over. Take a knife and cut open the earth," she said, "and with time the grass would heal it."

Maya Lin designed an angled wall which emerges from and recedes into the earth. Made of polished black granite panels, the wall contains the names of 58,175 dead and missing, listed in the order of their loss. At the vertex, the angled center point of the wall, the names of the first to fall (1959) and last (1975) meet symbolically. From the approach near the Lincoln Memorial, a walkway descends along the west wall to the vertex before ascending along to the east wall. The height of the wall panels provides a quiet, contemplative environment by shielding visitors from nearby traffic noise. Being set in the earth, the memorial does not scar the landscape but becomes a part of it.

While visitors are able to identify individual names, they also see the names as a collective whole. Their reflections appear on the polished stone superimposed over the names of those lost. The monuments to Washington and Lincoln, who founded and strengthened our union, are reflected there as well. In one memorial all are unified in one reflection: veterans, visitors and history. Maya Lin consciously avoided flags, statues or inspiring inscriptions, preferring instead to let the memorial simply provide the setting for individual contemplation.

Though many agreed with Maya Lin's vision, others regarded it as too subtle, too abstract, and thus not a fit salute to veterans. The design was described as "a black gash of shame" and an insult to those who served in Vietnam. The conflict over the design mirrored the conflict over the war. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund agreed to compromise in 1982 by accepting the addition of a lifelike sculpture of young men at war by Frederick E Hart of Washington, DC. Hart's seven-foot tall bronze statue of "Three Servicemen" represents different ethnic groups. His soldiers wear and carry a compilation of service uniforms and ordnance. As if on patrol, they emerge from a wooded area. They face the wall's vertex as though contemplating the names of their fallen comrades. The Hart statue ties those who returned with the whole memorial.

A sixty-foot flagpole was placed at the entrance to the memorial where a post flag flies day and night. On the flagpole base are the names of the five branches of service with the following inscription: "This flag represents the service rendered to our country by the veterans of the Vietnam War. The flag affirms the principles of

freedom for which they fought and their pride in having served under difficult circumstances."

The Wall was dedicated in 1982. The Hart statue and the flagpole were joined with it in 1984. On Veterans Day, 1984, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund presented the memorial to the nation under the stewardship of the National Park Service.

In 1989 legislation was approved to include a tribute to "recognize and honor the women who served during the Vietnam War," a tribute presently in the design stage.

People make the Vietnam Veterans Memorial a living memorial. Each of the names on the wall is not only a casualty but a relative, a friend, or a comrade. Survivors come to the wall to reminisce and to heal painful memories. Families come to grieve and to remember. Many leave some token of themselves at the base of the wall. All pay homage. A number of volunteers donate their time and knowledge helping the rangers interpret the memorial and providing name rubbings and an understanding ear. Some visitors come to use the memorial for political protest, a use that is controlled by boundary limits and permits in order to prevent conflict with the apolitical nature of the site and visitors' contemplation.

Maya Lin has referred to the memorial as "a moving composition, to be understood as we move into and out of it." The power of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial stems from the way in which people interact with it. The relatives, friends and buddies, the veterans, volunteers and other visitors become a part of what they see and so become more aware of the meaning of the memorial--the veterans' sacrifice. They develop an appreciation and understanding for this troubled period of our nation's history.

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## **Kennicott, Alaska: "No one has fancied the place up."\***

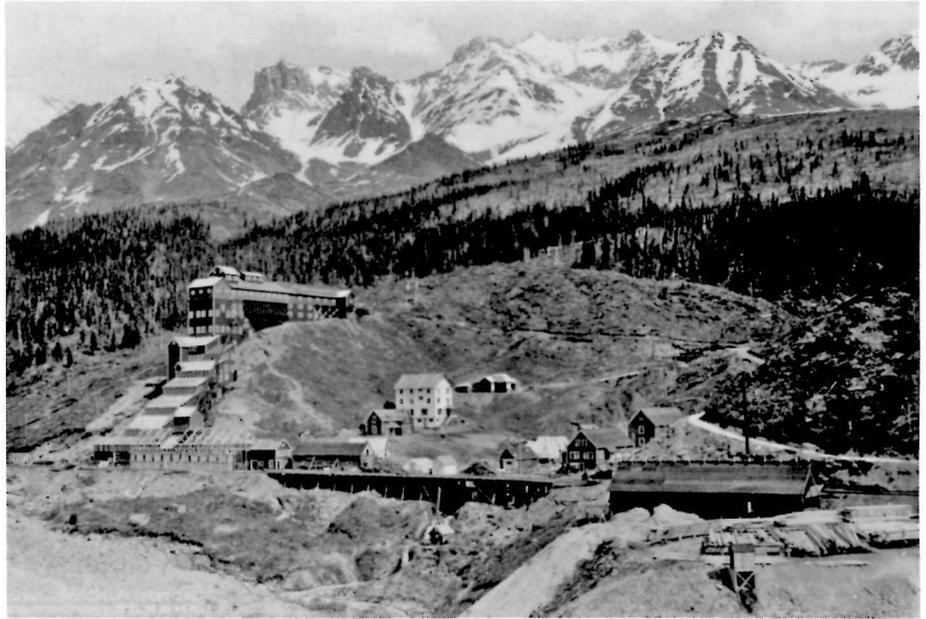
**Logan W Hovis,**  
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The historic mining center of Kennicott, Alaska, is located deep in the rugged Wrangell Mountains and entirely surrounded by the Wrangell-St Elias National Park and Preserve. Designated a National Historic Landmark, Kennicott poses special management and interpretive problems due to the size, complexity and condition of the site, its location on privately held lands, and the presence of a small but dynamic resident community. The problem facing the National Park Service is to find a way to participate in the preservation of this monument to Alaska's industrial heritage in such a way that preserves the qualities that make Kennicott unique.

First erected in 1906 and continually expanded until 1938, the massive industrial buildings of the Kennecott Copper Corporation

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\* The quote is from Joseph L. Sax, "Keeping Special Places Special: McCarthy-Kennicott and the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park; A Great Challenge, A Unique Opportunity," Option Paper prepared for the Wrangell Mountain Center and the McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum, 1990, p 9.



The concentrator building dominates an early view of Kennicott, circa 1910. Bonanza Ridge rises behind the camp and the gravel covered Kennicott Glacier is in the foreground. Photo courtesy of the Alaska Historical Society.

dominate the human landscape. The wooden concentrator building rises 14 stories above the workshops, bunkhouses and cottages of the main camp. Long since abandoned, Kennicott now stands as a monument to the perseverance and ingenuity of the prospectors and the mine developers who explored and developed the remote mountain fastness that was and is much of Alaska. Spectacular as the cultural landscape is, the mining camp is dwarfed by the natural landscape: the limestone spires of Castle Peak and Bonanza Ridge rise behind the mines; the Kennicott Glacier, three miles wide at the camp, flows down from 16,000 foot Mount Blackburn.\*

Eighty years ago, Kennicott was the center of an exceptionally rich copper mining operation: the concentrator, power plant and machine shops ran day and night to process the ore and support the five mines in the mountains above. The bunkhouses were home to workers from around the world; and the children of the managers held tea parties on the lawns of their parents' cottages. For many long time residents of Alaska, Kennicott was the initial reason for coming north. Work in the mines or the mill offered an opportunity to build a stake; it provided others with a place of refuge and work during the long winter nights. Until 1938, there was work to be had. Prior to the closure, the Kennecott mines were ranked eleventh among the world's great copper producers. The Alaska Syndicate which initially operated the mines realized nearly \$300 million and provided the financial strength to create the Kennecott Copper Corporation, one of

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\* The mining camp of Kennicott was named after the adjacent Kennicott Glacier named, in turn, for the northern explorer Robert Kennecott. A spelling error led to the Kennecott Mines Company and later to the Kennecott Copper Company. The name of the town has been spelled variously through the years. Present usage favors the original form honoring Robert Kennicott. In this article the town will be referred to as Kennicott while the mining company will be styled as Kennecott. See Donald J Orth, *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*, Geological Survey Professional Paper 567 (Washington, 1967), p 510.

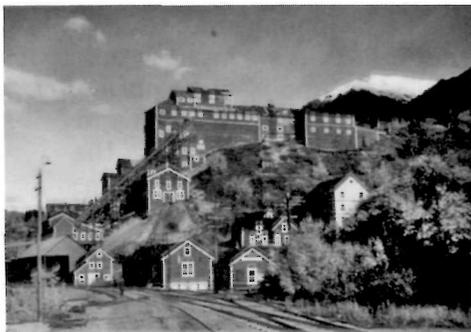


McCarthy was a thriving community situated near the toe of the Kennicott Glacier in 1916. Many forms of recreation prohibited in the controlled company town of Kennicott were available to the miners in McCarthy. Photo courtesy of the US Geological Survey.

the largest copper companies in the world.\*

The copper ores produced by Kennecott were shipped to Cordova and the coast along the Copper River and Northwestern Railway, a 196 mile long engineering marvel built solely to serve the mines. The railway shops were three miles to the south in McCarthy, a town that provided any number of services and amusements to the miners not readily available in the company town. Due to its location on the railway, McCarthy was also a thriving supply center for miners and others in the adjacent Chitina and Nizina river valleys. As long as the mines ran, the two communities thrived. Once the mines closed and the railway stopped running, Kennicott and McCarthy quietly turned into ghost towns.

The last train left Kennicott in November 1938. Machinery, company records, and household goods were left behind; much of it was simply too expensive to remove and there was a remote possibility the mines might reopen at a later date. The mines did not reopen. Instead, the entire community--workshops, bunkhouses, schools, hospital, offices and homes--was abandoned to the protection of the wilderness. Today, the camp, complete with the concentrator and its machinery, remains as a classic example of the mining and milling technologies of the early twentieth century. Kennicott is deservedly a National Historic Landmark. It provides a window into the past and an opportunity to discover the ways and means of the industrial past in the splendid isolation of the mountains.



The concentrator building in 1946, eight years after the last train pulled out. The buildings were freshly painted the year of the closure. Photo courtesy of Wrangell-St Elias National Park and Preserve Research Library.

Today, Kennicott and McCarthy are home to a few dozen hearty souls living literally beyond the end of the road. The gravel road running east from Chitina follows the road bed of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway until it ends on the west side of the Kennicott River. The one remaining bridge into McCarthy was destroyed by the 1964 earthquake. Since then, hand powered tram cars hung on cables across the river have been the only way in and out for most visitors unless they come by small plane. The relative isolation protects the remains of the past and encourages the continuation of an equally rare style of life that emerged in the late 1950s. One recent observer tried to capture the essence of life today in Kennicott and McCarthy:

*It is not easy to describe either the people ... or the way of life they lead. Neither fits any of the ordinary stereotypes. It is not a back-to-the-woods movement in any ordinary sense, and the people have no desire to live in primeval conditions or to subsist solely on their own labors. Yet they have no electric service, no telephones, no running water and no road access.*

*My first reaction was that this was at best a confused, and at worst a hypocritical, place. How is one to react to people who in 1990 build themselves little wooden "outies" instead of bathrooms, and then pull up a bottle of chardonnay at dinnertime? With each passing day, as I met and interviewed at length almost everyone in town, however, I came to quite a different conclusion. This was a group of very diverse people--from country Alaska "just plain folks,"*

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The significance of Kennecott in Alaska history is described in Melody Webb Grauman, "Kennecott: Alaskan Origins of a Copper Empire, 1900-1938," *Western Historical Quarterly* 9:2 (April 1978): 197-211; and Lone E Janson, *The Copper Spike* (Anchorage, 1975).

*to a 1960s dropout, a retired scientist, a strait-laced ultraconservative, a backcountry guide, a struggling small business couple trying to make a go of it, and a family who were living out an ecological theory to which they were committed. This seemingly incongruous mixture had one thing in common. They had all consciously selected McCarthy-Kennicott as a place they wanted to live. There were no old families, for no one had lived there before the mine was discovered, nor remained after it closed. Having come together, the residents had come to a consensus about the kind of living they wanted to do there.\**

The cultural landscape of the mining era is very much a part of the living community that has adopted the past of the place as its own and takes pride in it through a local historical museum and their daily lives. The physical evidence of the past is bound up in the life of the present. The people of Kennecott and many of those in McCarthy live in the houses built while the mines were in operation. The ever present relics of the mining past are an essential part of the culture of the present.

A visit to Kennicott is a rare, perhaps unique, experience. In the middle of a remote wilderness park you simply walk into the mining town and discover it much as it was. Kennicott is not another roadside attraction; no guides in period costumes are available to answer questions. Instead, visitors have the rare opportunity to discover the past on their own terms. Kennicott does not present a cleaned up and sanitized version of history. Instead, the visitor is met with a mute monument to a rough history in a rugged landscape.

Giving an honest voice to the past of Kennicott and McCarthy presents special management and interpretive problems to the Park Service. The communities are on private property entirely surrounded by park lands. Consequently, the Park Service is only one of several partners interested in the preservation of the site and the presentation of Kennicott to the world. The State of Alaska and its tourist industry, the historic preservation community, the present owners of the land, and the local communities are equally involved in defining and addressing the problems at hand.

It has been 62 years since the mines closed, and while many of the buildings are remarkably well preserved, the elements and increasing visitation are exacting a heavier toll in recent years. The joy of discovery, the sense of awe that is so central to a person's first visit to Kennecott is in danger of sliding over the hillside and onto the glacier. A way must be found to stabilize the major buildings without destroying the sense of discovery that presently dominates the experience.

Equally important, the residents of Kennicott and McCarthy have a strong desire to preserve the spirit of their hard found way of life at the same time they accept the inevitability of increasing numbers of visitors. By preserving Kennicott as a discovery site, an approach that argues for minimal intervention, much that defines the nature of life in Kennicott and McCarthy can be saved.

There is a paradox inherent in any effort to preserve and interpret Kennicott. The remains of the mine and the town of McCarthy con-

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\* Sax, "Keeping Special Places Special," pp 11-13.

stitute a rare and unusually well preserved landscape in and of themselves. Without any change, without any increase in visitation, the remains of the past are a benefit to the present inhabitants even though they will eventually be reclaimed by the land. The challenge faced by the Park Service and its partners in the preservation process is to stabilize the site and tell the story of mining in the Wrangells without destroying the very qualities that give Kennicott its special character: its rich collection of mining buildings and artifacts, the all too rare sense of isolation, and the joy of discovery that is already present in the living communities of Kennicott and McCarthy. These qualities need to be protected, not transformed into something that never was

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## Interpreting the Built Environment at the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

**Stephen A Haller**  
Curator of Historic Documents  
San Francisco Maritime NHP

As one walks west along the northern waterfront of San Francisco, and passes the remnants of the fishing fleet all but hidden by the commercial gaudiness of Fisherman's Wharf, a different sort of vista unfolds when coming abreast of the Hyde Street Pier. At this point, the industrialism and commercial use drops away and a shoreside environment begins that exudes the look, feel, and smell of the turn-of-the-century time when the United States was a great maritime power, and San Francisco the pre-eminent port on the Pacific shore of both the Americas. You have just entered the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.

This is a "Historical Park" not a "Historic Site." Great events did not happen at this location, but rather, a relatively unspoiled section of the San Francisco waterfront became the location where a nationally-significant collection of artifacts, library materials, photographs--and ships--grew and prospered. As a park unit, it is special, because the mission extends beyond the resources contained within its boundaries to encompass the collection of information about a concept: the history of the trades, technologies and traditions of those who lived on or by the water and called at the Pacific Coast.

The most significant portion of this built environment floats up and down alongside a pier, and was designed to move from place to place carrying the cargoes of the world. The full-rigged ship *Balclutha*, the ferry *Eureka*, the schooner *C A Thayer*, steam schooner *Wapama*, and scow schooner *Alma*, the steam tugs *Hercules* and *Eppleton Hall* together comprise the largest collection by tonnage of historic sail and steam vessels in the world. All except the last are National Historic Landmarks. The large vessels are supplemented by a fleet of nearly eighty small craft. Adjacent to the pier, and part of the National Park, is Aquatic Park, developed in the 1930s as a public works program of President Franklin D Roosevelt's "New Deal." Its streamline-moderne bathhouse in the shape of an ocean liner, designed to serve bathers in the cove, has been adapted to serve as the main exhibits building of the Park. The surrealistic murals of underwater life that grace its interior



The ship *Balclutha* and schooner *C A Thayer* dominate the skyline at San Francisco's Hyde Street Pier. Between them lies the scow schooner *Alma*. On the far side of the pier is the ferry *Eureka*.

walls now form a fitting backdrop for the ship models, paintings, and artifacts that help to interpret maritime history to visitors. Further to the west, at Fort Mason, the austere exterior of a former US Army warehouse belies its inviting interior as major research center--the library, archives, and collections storage areas are located here. At a nearby pier, the liberty ship *Jeremiah O'Brien* is moored where scores of her class loaded troops and cargo for the Pacific theater in World War II.

The nation as a whole, and the San Francisco Bay Area in particular has a strong maritime heritage. By successfully interpreting our resources to the public, we reinforce a sense of identity with that heritage, and provide an educational and recreational opportunity for visitors and for local residents. Additionally, an authentic visual context is created for the future preservation of the urban waterfront, both within and beyond the Park's boundaries.

How does the Park meet the challenge of applying sound and creative technique to the interpretation of our unique resource? The NPS *Museum Handbook* defines interpretation as both research and presentation. At the library, primary and secondary source material supports research that is applied directly to interpretive presentations by staff, to publications related to our mission, and also by independent scholars and the public at large to further knowledge in the subject area as a whole.

One approach to interpreting a moveable resource is to move with it. For many years, *Alma* has been the Park's roving ambassador. Fully restored to sailing condition, and small enough to maneuver handily, she visits selected Bay Area ports of call to literally bring the Park to the people. This year, an ambitious schedule is envisaged which includes recreating a local trade route by carrying sacks of wheat grown at the East Bay Regional Park District's Ardenwood Historic Farm across San Francisco Bay to "market" in

the city. Also this year, after a prodigious amount of volunteer labor, the *Hercules* has begun to steam again under her own power. Fresh from a visit to the drydock, the steam-powered tugboat provides a dramatic opportunity for bringing the past to life before the eyes of the public. National television exposure was received when *Hercules* greeted the hospital ship *Mercy* upon her return from the Persian Gulf.

The presentation aspect of interpretation naturally comes into play more at the heavily used sites of the Park--the exhibits building, and particularly aboard the historic ships. The built environment is emphasized primarily through the broad themes of the vessel as a working entity, the skills needed for a safe passage, life aboard ship, and the cargoes carried and trades followed. Lively activity and visitor participation is encouraged.

Nautical skills are shared with visitors in boatbuilding classes, model-making sessions, knot-tying demonstrations, and sail-raising activity. A group of enthusiasts at the Small Craft Shop learn to bend planks to fit the complex curves of a yawl boat, while nearby on the *Thayer*, a staysail is unfurled and fills with the breeze as a dozen landlubbers pick up a halyard and heave together to the tune of "Blow the Man Down." The aroma of johnnycakes on a wood fire leads tourists to the galley where a costumed interpreter engages them in conversation about seaman's fare. Children huddle around the pot-bellied stove in the fisherman's forecabin and listen to a sea story as the schooner rises and falls on the swell and the moorings creak with the strain.

Perhaps the most complete exposure to a sailor's life is experienced by the participants in the Park's Environmental Living Program. School children spend 24 hours living the life of a sailor on the *Balclutha* or *Thayer*, immersed totally in learning nautical skills and practicing group problem-solving that requires their complete participation. By contracting with the Orange County (California) Marine Institute, the number of children reached each year by this popular program has multiplied by a factor of five.

On a more passive level, the displays in the exhibits building, and the interpretive signage throughout the ships continues to be regularly reviewed and updated as the situation warrants. On the ships, the long-range intention is to let the vessels speak for themselves, and make them appear as much as possible as they were in their working lives.

The relevance to the community of the Park's museum collection was abundantly highlighted at the recent Ferry Festival honoring the one-hundredth anniversary of the launching of the *Eureka*. Casual visitors, local maritime buffs, and corporate sponsors all were included in an effort to highlight the impact of ferries on the Bay Area transportation scene. The timing could not have been better, since the Loma Prieta Earthquake and the closure of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge had recently brought public transportation issues dramatically before the public eye, and ferryboat service was experiencing a modest resurgence. Over the next few years, the rest of the vessels in the fleet will also reach the century mark, providing other opportunities for high-profile celebrations.

The staff at San Francisco Maritime looks forward to the challenges inherent in preserving and interpreting the ships of the fleet in their second century. The vessels, and the museum collections of artifacts, archives and information is a resource that constantly inspires ways of bringing our message to the public--the importance of the nation's seafaring past to our own lives.

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## Cultural Interpretation in Louisiana

**P J Ryan**  
Interpretive Specialist  
Jean Lafitte NHP&P

The scene was the Isleño exhibit at the annual Louisiana Folklife Festival sponsored by Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve.

The question involved the identity of a strange folk object.

"What is it?" laughed wood carver Irvan Perez, holding up his latest creation.

"This is a 10,000 year old arrow, I suppose you could call it the symbol of the Isleño people!"

The object in question was an "arrow" made from a single piece of wood, head, shaft, and even feathers. This arrow was not shot from a bow, rather it was part of a weapon system predating the bow and arrow. The arrow shaft had a notch into which one hooked a string made of sinew or plant fiber. The other end of the string was attached to a short stick and the arrow was shot with a whipping motion which provided tremendous leverage and multiplied the strength of the human arm many times, driving the arrow with great force and accuracy as the Spanish were to find out.

The "10,000 year old arrow" was the principle weapon of the Guanches, the native people of the Canary Islands, a people who had to be conquered before the Spanish could use these islands as stepping stones to the New World--or what Columbus thought was the other side of Asia.

The courage and resourcefulness of the Guanches made a lasting impression on the Spanish, so much so, that the "10,000 year old arrow" still lives on in the tradition of the Canary Island Isleño of Louisiana.

"When we were kids, we use to hunt rabbits with the Isleños arrow. I always enjoy showing today's Isleño kids the arrow. They can't believe how accurate it is! They all want to make the arrow and the throwing stick, which is great! It's part of their culture!"

Duck decoys are also part of the Isleño culture and Irvan carves them too. However, you wouldn't want to put them in the water; you would probably put them in the Smithsonian or the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Mr Perez's wooden birds are no longer "decoys" but flowing sculptures, capturing the birds of Louisiana in wood the way Audubon had captured them in watercolors.

Perhaps the finest tribute to his skill came from an indignant conservationist who thought Mr Perez was trying to sell a stuffed American bald eagle; not realizing that every "feather" was lovingly carved from cypress!

Mr Perez stroked the fur of a muskrat pelt as he explained the rise and fall of the Louisiana fur trapping culture.

"The animals are still out there in the marsh" he smiled regretfully, "but the market isn't out there. Back in 1929, when a dollar was a dollar, you could get \$2.50 for a pelt like this, today you might get 89 cents for the same quality pelt, hardly pays your gas, let alone your time."

"But you can still sing, Irvan!", laughed another Isleños.

"That's right, I can still sing and I'm grateful for that!", he laughed.

Mr Perez could be called a cultural polymath and indeed he would sing later that day at the Louisiana Folk Life Festival. Still later that month, Mr Perez would sing at Carnegie Hall at the request of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for Irvan Perez is perhaps the leading American exponent of the "Decima", the ten stanza story songs of the Isleños.

The decima is a very old art form; the oldest telling the story of knights and ladies of medieval Spain, more recent ones tell of the joys and hardships of an Isleño shrimper in Louisiana or of the tribulations of the Canary Islanders under dictatorship of Francisco Franco.

"The decimas told the story of the peoples' lives; sometimes they were sad, sometimes they were funny, sometimes they made fun of someone who was very greedy and got his comeuppance! I suppose some of them could be called gossip set to music, but they were sort of the unwritten history of the Isleño people, I'm happy to keep them alive!"

"We Louisiana Isleño are not as famous as the Louisiana Cajuns", chuckled one Isleño, "But we taught the Cajuns a lot of things they take credit for! The Cajun Jambalaya is nothing more than Isleño Paella, but the Cajuns are good people and we won't charge them for it.

The Isleño, a Hispanic people, who arrived in Louisiana in the mid to late 18th century from the Canary Islands, are one of more than thirty distinct ethnic groups who make up the rich cultural mosaic of South Louisiana and who assist and are assisted by Jean Lafitte National Historical Park in the interpretation and presentation of their culture to the outside world.

Since the National Park Service cannot establish a separate park and visitor center for every cultural group of Louisiana, cooperative agreements are used as a tool to provide expertise and funding, and in some cases, staffing, for ethnic groups in the presentation of their culture. It is hoped that the skills of people like Irvan Perez will be passed down for the benefit of future generations of Americans.

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## On the Right Track

As the dust settles in the railyards, the visitors notice a large assortment of rusting hulks, shadows of once proud railroad cars and steam locomotives. The backdrop behind them provides a view of a row of mostly deserted buildings. Visitors look around, wondering



The D L & W Scranton yards in 1989, as the first yard shuttle approaches the visitor center area to begin the first tour of the "back" yards. This part of the yards looks very different today, and will look even more different in the future.

how much it will cost to recreate a bustling railyard and how they will benefit from the expense. One fellow voices the question out loud, choking from the dust, as he stands in the beating sun with a stream of sweat winding through the dust on his face. Everyone watches the ranger with anticipation, waiting to see how she will "get out of this one"!

She smiles proudly, and confidently responds with her answer. *As you can tell, we were almost too late to save this rolling stock from being sold off as scrap metal, the fate of most steam era dinosaurs no longer riding the rails.*

*The development of transportation in this country is a story as vast as the nation, as diverse as the types of terrain it had to cross, and as complicated and intricate as a lace pattern. We stand here, looking at the remains of a defunct railroad, to study the significance, demise, and rebirth of the railroad industry and its evolving impact on the evolution of other industries and the nation itself.*

*The Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad symbolizes the past, present and future of most railroads throughout the country. Though a small railroad in the big picture, it was an integral part of the history of this region. Its story is similar to many stories nationwide, and taking a close look at it can provide a window into the story of the industry no matter where you live in the country. The people who worked on it, the jobs the people held in the communities nearby, and those who depended on the freight and access to the communities it served represent us, our ancestors, and our children of tomorrow. Let us take a closer look.*

Thus begins a dialogue between the visitors and the park staff.

Lackawanna Valley's local US congressman Joseph M McDade and former National Park Service Director William Penn Mott were the key players in establishing the park. The old DL&W railyards were to become a mall parking lot and the rolling stock collection of a

bankrupt not-for-profit private foundation was in jeopardy. McDade and Mott had a vision. They saw a vital piece of American history missing in our National Park collection of sites and the opportunity to tell a significant story. Congress was convinced, and the mission was begun in October of 1986, with the establishment of Public Law 99-591, the "Steamtown National Historic Site Act of 1986".

Taking an inventory of this region, we see an area that offered a significant amount of the available anthracite coal, the location of the first American iron rail industry, and the highest density per square mile of railroad trackage within the nation. We see the heyday, as well as the demise, of railroads. Once bustling communities became almost silent when their main industries disappeared.

Now, the same industries that created the initial development are beginning to provide the same economic opportunity to the communities they created, but in a very different way. These same industries are providing an opportunity to tell the story of the proud and bustling past, attracting visitors from every state and territory in the union as well as from many foreign countries. Yes, rail enthusiasts and visitors from other countries are arriving in Scranton.

Communities that developed and operated independently of each other, structured by the mines they developed around, are beginning to talk and work together, for the first time in many cases. Through this dialogue, a partnership has been developed within the valley, with the public and private organizations forming the "Lackawanna Heritage Valley." The goals of the partnership are clear, and the task is a big one. They are defining interim goals at the current time, and the game plans are being developed. The revitalization of the area has begun.

Another sign of progress revolves around how the region spreads the word to the public. The local Visitor and Convention Bureau has begun to market with other small V&CBs, pooling their money and resources to carry "the word" further and in nicer packaging. Their success has contributed to the large increase in visitation the attractions have experienced in the last three years. Using Steamtown's figures as an example, in 1988, our first season, we had around 26,000 visitors. Last season, 1990, we had almost 125,000 visitors.

The dreams of a good solid future for this region are beginning to take shape at the same pace as the park development. By the time the park is completed, 1994, The Lackawanna Valley will be a major tourism destination. The offerings are many, the opportunities diverse, as the beautiful mountains surrounding the valley encompass the perfect opportunity to study a cultural and built ecosystem within one small valley.

The park is the skeleton of the plan, providing the rail link to the offerings, expertise and assistance to those that request it, and energy to help get things running. Father Panuska, the President of the University of Scranton, described the area perfectly. He leaned back in his chair and quietly began. "The Lackawanna Valley reminds me of a pot of water on the stove that is just about ready to boil, the signs are indicating it is ready to begin."

The steam era is gone, the railroad industry's need for the yards disappeared, the proud steam whistles that once echoed through

the valley are still. But wait, there are rumblings of thundering power, the sound of one lone whistle calling out for an answer, coal cinders hiding in my hair, and a few people in engineer's caps calling out a friendly greeting. Ghosts and silhouettes are beginning to take form, and some of the rolling stock is standing proudly in their original rail line colors. I must go now, as I just heard a conductor calling out to me,

"All Aboard"...

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## A Century of Curiosity

**Art Hutchinson**  
Park Ranger  
Mesa Verde National Park

Two separate and far different events transpired a century ago. Thousands of miles separated the sounds of a family of ranchers from Mancos, Colorado, digging among the ruins of an ancient civilization and the harbor noise of a ship docking in New York. The personalities involved in these two seemingly unrelated events would soon be brought together later that summer in what is now Mesa Verde National Park. The efforts and explorations of the two parties would forever change the nature of archeology in the United States.

One hundred years later, travelers in ever increasing numbers visit the Four Corners area of Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico to experience the ruins of the Anasazi prehistoric civilization. Today's travelers are captivated, as were early explorers, by the astonishing archeological remains in the American Southwest.

The story began on May 26, 1891. A young Swedish gentleman, Gustaf Nordenskiold, disembarked from the SS *Waesland* in New York City. Well trained in chemistry and mineralogy, and son of a noted explorer, he was traveling abroad to see the many sights and wonders of the "new world".

Meanwhile, in Mancos, Colorado, the Wetherill family had been attempting to raise cattle in a small picturesque river valley at the base of the snow capped La Plata mountains. Their interest in cattle ranching was losing ground in favor of other pursuits. In particular, Richard Wetherill developed an obsession for the cultural remains of a vanished civilization. His drive was similar in many ways to the gold fever that drove thousands of miners to look incessantly for hidden wealth. The Wetherills had discovered their own "gold" in the remains of many abandoned villages hidden in the cliffs and canyons of the Mesa Verde.

Gustaf Nordenskiold's mission was less complex. He simply wanted to travel and see the world. During the rail journey west, he learned of the abandoned homes of the cliff dwellers near Mancos, Colorado. When the narrow gauge locomotive reached the nearby town of Durango, his future travel plans were changed forever.

Gustaf enlisted the help of the Wetherill brothers, who offered to guide him to the cliff dwellings of the Mesa Verde. With them he ventured far into the area's numerous canyons. The great culture that once inhabited this land quickly captivated Mr. Nordenskiold. Excavations proceeded immediately and Gustaf introduced his able guides to the basics of scientific research and responsible record



"Square Tower House," the most notable and best preserved prehistoric cliff dwellings and other works of early man in the United States. Photo by Fred E Mang, Jr.

keeping. He also wired home to Sweden for a camera and was the first to capture on film the now famed cliff dwellings of Cliff Palace and Spruce Tree House.

His visit soon attracted the attention of the locals when he decided to take a collection of artifacts back to his native Sweden. It seems that a foreigner taking "American" relics was cause for alarm. Nordenskiöld was only briefly detained by the judicial courts in Durango. The legal proceedings were quickly dropped when it was determined that current United States statutes did not prohibit such activities.\*

The story has both a tragic and a positive ending. Mr Nordenskiöld returned to Sweden and in 1892 and wrote a monumental archeological book about the wonders of the cliff dwellers.\*\* Unfortunately he died three years later of tuberculosis at the early age of 26. The Wetherills, on the other hand, continued to pursue their quest for antiquities and made notable discoveries in nearby Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. Eventually they lost their Mancos Valley ranch, and

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\* Many historians and archeologists speculate that it was the notoriety and publicity that Nordenskiöld attracted that helped lead to the preservation of the ruins of Mesa Verde and the passage of the 1906 Antiquities Act. Many of the cliff dwellings that he photographed were made into a National Park in 1906. In 1978 Mesa Verde was further bestowed the honor of becoming a World Heritage site. Mesa Verde hosted the First International Congress on Cultural Parks in 1984. Historians and archeologists speculate that it was the notoriety and publicity that Nordenskiöld attracted that helped lead to the preservation of the ruins of Mesa Verde.

\*\*Nordenskiöld, Gustaf, *The Cliff Dwellers of the Mesa Verde-Southwestern Colorado: Their Pottery and Implements*. Translated by D Lloyd Morgan. Chicago, 1892; reprint: New York, 1973; Glorieta, NM, 1979; Mesa Verde Museum Association, Inc, 1990.

Richard Wetherill died a violent death near the abandoned ruins of the Anasazi at Chaco Canyon, New Mexico.

Today, well over 600,000 tourists, from all corners of the earth, make a journey to see the same ruins that captured Gustaf's attention so long ago. Automobiles have replaced horses and paved roadways have covered old wagon ruts. Yet, for most, the feelings of discovery remain unchanged. Park rangers at Mesa Verde still see the wonder in the eyes of countless visitors as they look over the cliffs for the first time and see the ancient cities below.

Perhaps the numerous visits to Mesa Verde can be compared to a pilgrimage to a sacred place. Many return again and again. Some come just to look, and others to try to glean more about the past history of fellow humans.

As interpreters of culture, we must realize that people travel to cultural sites for a variety of reasons. However, it seems that there is an underlying desire by many to see and physically touch what was built long before our time. These brief contacts with an ancient culture provide a bond with the past that can not be obtained by reading books and watching movies. The simple act of touching ancient walls is a powerful experience.

Here at Mesa Verde National Park, it is easy to determine that people built these ancient walls. Those with an observant eye can see the ax marks, which hint of ancient painstaking efforts to provide shelter. Visitors can still walk into the ruins and feel the changes in the air. The same smells of the forest and sounds of the surrounding canyons were certainly felt by others long ago.

It is much more difficult, however, for the visitors to grasp what the daily life of the prehistoric people was really like. Despite a century of research, many unanswered questions remain, and many may never be found. The study of the human past is an inexact science. Much of what people thought and did has been lost in time. Yet, unanswered questions are good, as they allow each visitor to reflect and ponder on their own.

Naturally, most visitors want to know some of the facts that have been learned from a century of archeology. Indeed, a great deal about the material culture of the Anasazi is well known. The interpretive program at Mesa Verde is designed to provide as much individual attention to these and other questions as possible. Questions are many, and a few occasionally border on the silly. Usually there is a serious query behind the facade. Searching out the real reason for the strange question and answering in a thought provoking way is one of the biggest challenges to all new cultural interpreters. For example, one of the earliest visitor questions continues to be asked. "Why did these people build so far from the highway?" What a wonderful opportunity to lead the visitor into aspects of geography, geology, natural resources, and human ecology!

Out of necessity, a cultural interpreter must be both a traditional naturalist and a cultural awareness counselor. We have long realized here at Mesa Verde that in order to "explain" a prehistoric culture, archeological interpreters need to have a curiosity about the human species and the cultural landscape that they called home. Our seasonal interpreters typically have at least twelve semester hours in some aspect of anthropology and many are pursuing advanced

degrees in the field. This training helps us illustrate to the visitor what daily life may have been like at least 700 years ago. Apparently the anthropological approach is working, as we receive a large number of favorable comments each season.

Archeological tourism is rapidly growing in the American Southwest. Many are truly captivated by their "discovery" of the ruins and want to stay longer and visit other archeological sites in the area. Naturally this expansion in tourism is good for the local economy. The increases in visitation also means that the demands for effective interpretation also grows. The next century will undoubtedly produce new discoveries about the past and place new demands on how we interpret the archeological record to future visitors.

In many ways Gustaf Nordenskiold and the Wetherill brothers would be amazed at the changes in the past 100 years. Perhaps they would be shocked at the number of people who are now attracted to the ruins. Most likely, however, they would find that people, like themselves, are intrigued by the human past. How fortunate we are that the thrill of discovery remains contagious, and curiosity persists despite the passage of time.

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## Perry's What?

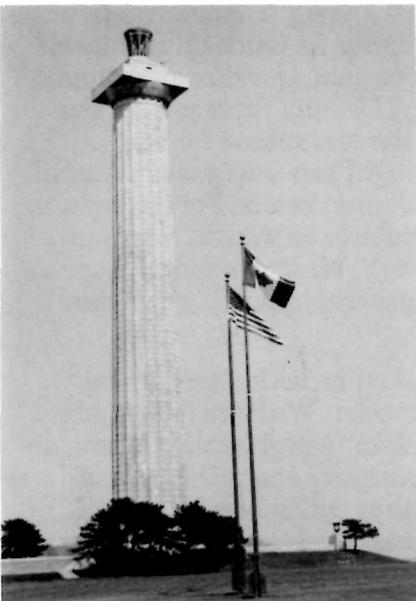
**Gerry Altoff**  
Chief of Interpretation  
Perry's Victory and  
International Peace  
Memorial

It certainly is not unusual for National Park Service employees to experience an identity crisis. Heard over and over at conferences and training sessions are comments to the effect that, "Visitors have no idea my site is a National Park." Obviously such a problem is a matter of degree, but regardless of magnitude, the dilemma poses a fascinating and exciting challenge to interpreters, and as often as not, an equivalent frustration.

In few areas is this quandary more apparent, or perplexing, than at Perry's Victory & International Peace Memorial; except that here the crisis extends to interpretation! The Park's primary resource is a 352 foot granite memorial column resting on 25 acres of landscaped grounds. An elevator takes visitors to an observation deck 317 feet above Lake Erie, offering a panoramic and spectacular view of the lake's western basin. On a clear day the coastlines of Ohio, Michigan, and Ontario are visible, plus the entire archipelago of 22 islands. The view is what attracts visitors to Perry's Victory. At Grand Canyon, Yosemite, or Glacier, such might be an acceptable premise, but for areas like the Washington Monument, Statue of Liberty, and Perry's Victory, it equates to an entirely different set of problems and challenges.

Perry's Victory, not unexpectedly, experiences characteristic vexations. Located on a resort island where the emphasis is recreation, the local Chamber of Commerce encourages island visitors to enjoy a mini-vacation to Put-in-Bay. Included on the grand island tour are a National Park, a fish hatchery, two caves, and a winery, not necessarily in that order.

Most challenging of all, visitors to the park encounter no physical resource relating to the principal interpretive themes, and those themes are paradoxical in nature. The Park's primary areas of in-



terpretive emphasis are the Battle of Lake Erie and the military campaigns of the War of 1812 in the Old Northwest. Included also, apropos during these times, is international peace; the monument is the only international peace memorial in the system. But no fort, no battlefield, no ship, no historic building of the period graces the site, nothing except a patch of water eight miles away and the largest Greek doric column in the world, an amazing structure unrecognized for the abstract concept it represents.

Perry's Victory's disposition is analogous to that of Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. Visitors flock to JNEM to ascend the arch for the view. Yet upon entering the facility visitors are amazed by the complex underneath, not least of which includes the Museum of Westward Expansion, an arresting interpretive instrument for expatiating JNEM's themes. However, at Perry's Victory the only visitor facility is an 18' by 24' Butler building erected in 1971 as a temporary structure; exhibits are cursory and of necessity produced in-park. Tactlessly obtrusive, the contact station was almost immediately spray painted with the somewhat appropriate phrase, "Why obscure beauty?" A photo of the building, complete with sprayed epithet, was featured in the high school yearbook. Small, unsightly, and cramped, most visitors simply bypass the "tuna can".

Of course one cannot miss the imposing stateliness of the monument, by far the most prominent landmark on the 3 ½ mile long by 1 ½ mile wide island and a point to which island visitors naturally gravitate. Nonetheless, available interior space is limited, exhibits and signing only clutter the small visitor area and detract from the structure's pristine character.

Personal programs are another means to disseminate the interpretive message. At first glance the monument rotunda and lower elevator landing appear to be an ideal program location. Considerable experimentation has revealed that the confined space, constant flow of long lines of visitors, and the variable acoustics obviate effective opportunities. The memorial plazas and landscaped grounds are also ostensibly suitable, but the distractions are absurdly numerous. A state highway passes directly in front of the monument, and Lake Erie forms the northern and southern boundaries; where the monument stands the island is only 150 yards across. Additionally, the island's lone public swimming beach is contiguous to the monument grounds. Gasoline powered rental golf carts (of which there are nearly 250 on the island), rental mopeds, historic motorized vehicles of all types, regular cars, horse carriages, rental bicycles by the hundreds, fixed and rotary wing aircraft (the monument verges on the island airport landing pattern), jet skis, and literally hundreds of power boats, including incredibly noisy muscle boats, all add to the clamor.

The problems are many and obvious. The pressing question is how best to impart the Park's themes with minimal resources in the prevailing circumstances with attendant distractions?

Part of the NPS mandate prescribes that visitors be provided the opportunity to experience a safe and enjoyable visit. To provide an enjoyable visit it is incumbent upon management to enable visitors, within certain parameters, to fulfill the purpose of their journey. Visitors travel to Perry's Victory to enjoy the view, hence the bulk of manpower resources are necessarily channelled into

facilities operations, a function that absorbs a minimum of 80%, and often 100% of seasonal I&RM staff time.

During summer months four individuals are requisite to staff the monument to fulfill daily operational requirements and insure visitor safety, and one person mans the visitor contact station. One positive aspect of monument operations is that every visitor who rides the elevator personally encounters at least one uniformed ranger. However, during a 58 second ride the interpretive themes, general orientation information, plus three obligatory safety features must be communicated. Each of the Park's 175,000 annual visitors receives the message, but obviously not in depth. A fee collector greets visitors at the lower elevator landing, and one or two interpreters--whose primary function on the open air deck is visitor safety, thus leaving little time for lengthy contacts--normally patrol the observation deck.

Little staff time remains for personal interpretive programs, necessitating effective utilization of available opportunities. Which, or how many of the numerous methods and techniques, given the circumstances, should be attempted? In commonality with many day use parks, visitors to Perry's Victory are often in a hurry, attempting to achieve the maximum in a brief time.

Two tried and true methods, plus one somewhat controversial one, comprise the personal program staple. Four days a week twenty to thirty minute interpretive talks are presented hourly. Visitor flow, patterns, and priorities all directly affect attendance, and interpreters often spend an inordinate amount of time gathering and holding an audience prior to a program. Evening slide programs are presented three nights a week, not without considerable difficulty. An open air setting on the memorial's lower plaza, having to transport A/V equipment to and from the site for each program, and hauling a large wooden screen from the monument basement all translate into a logistical nightmare. Plagued by low attendance despite strong advertisement, audiences are drawn mostly from overnight boaters at the village docks, and from a state park campground. Islanders seldom attend unless programs incorporate local flavor. With a questionable cost/benefit ratio, evening programs are cut first during a fiscal crunch.

While both regular interpretive talks and evening programs are conditionally effective, the most successful program at Perry's Victory is costumed interpretation. Since initiated in 1981 this expedient, not surprisingly, has statistically proven the most popular program with visitors, but it is also perceived by this park as the most productive means of conferring the park's interpretive themes. Space does not permit delving into the pros and cons of costumed interpretation's efficacy or methodology, needless to say there is some disagreement. Nevertheless, a number of arguable tenets support its implementation at Perry's Victory.

Naturally a colorful uniform is an oddity and a curiosity, especially in a totally unexpected pseudo-recreational setting. Admittedly a gimmick, it still provides a focal point for visitors, a direct association with park themes, provocation for questions, and a ready solution to a major problem--instant audience. The most significant factor advocating costumed interpretation at Perry's Victory is that all three primary themes can be interpreted via this single vehicle.

The firing of historic weapons is one of the more controversial aspects of costumed interpretation. At Perry's Victory the weapons firing ingredient is neither the goal nor the program culmination. Most visitors will tend to sit through a program to see a weapon fired. Accordingly, the interpreter has a captive audience, resulting in an ideal interpretive opportunity. In one sense it is a quid pro quo; if a visitor will listen to the interpretive message, a gratuitous weapons firing will ensue. Immediately following the weapon discharge, at the point visitors are most attentive, is when the most important theme is expounded. The weapon firing is a grabber. The groundwork has been laid and the mood properly set by annotating the horrors of war, and there can be no more effective means of emphasizing the need for peace than by relating the utter waste of armed conflict. Stressed at this point is the lasting peace achieved as a result of the Treaty of Ghent utilizing available symbols of that peace: the memorial, the Canadian and American flags flying at equal height, and the Park's proximity to the longest undefended border in the world. Stressed also is the fact that the monument, as a peace memorial, is more significant than a battle monument ever could be. It works!

Over the years Perry's Victory has conducted the normal program experimentation with varied results. Until such time as new facilities are constructed and the interpretive themes can be exploited by other methods, it will be necessary to work within the framework of available resources, not a unique situation.

As with most parks, Perry's Victory has singular distinctions and singular problems. Visitors asking if the water tower is open, or if they can go up in the lighthouse, clearly illustrates the Park suffers an identity crisis, one yet to be resolved. Despite program evolution, a solution to the interpretive crisis is equally elusive, a crisis partially resulting from the Park's oxymoron title: Perry's Victory & International Peace Memorial.

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## **A Landscape with a View**

**Gretchen Luxenberg**  
Staff Historian  
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Pacific Northwest Region

There has been much discussion recently of non-traditional areas in the National Park System and the role of partnerships as a means of preserving our historic resources. Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve in Washington State is one such area. Located at the western edge of the continental United States, on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound and approximately sixty miles northwest of Seattle, the Reserve was established in 1978 as the nation's first historical reserve. It was set aside by Congress to preserve and protect a rural community that reflects centuries of use and occupation by humans in one of this country's last regions to be impacted by western expansion. The Reserve is a landscape of heritage, a rich mosaic of interrelated natural and cultural features and patterns. In this regard, Ebey's Landing is a textbook example of what the NPS recognizes as a cultural landscape. Historic archeological sites, place names, buildings and patterns of settlement, circulation, land use, and vegetation all remain today with such a high degree of integrity that the "story" of this area can be "read" in the land itself. These pieces of the past are interlaced with a



Ebey's Prairie, the "heart" of the reserve and the area first settled by Anglo-Americans, slopes gently down to a dramatic sweep of coastal beach and bluff.

vital modern rural community, creating a continuum of history that is rare in this age of rampant and often unchecked growth.

The "story" of the Reserve is more than one of early habitation and use by Native Americans, exploration and settlement of the island by Euro-Americans, and the establishment of a self-sufficient, agrarian society. It is the story of the NPS becoming a party in a new type of park unit, one dependent upon cooperative ventures between the public and private sector. These non-traditional park areas bring federal, state, and local government agencies together in order to achieve similar goals and objectives. At Ebey's Landing, this translated into an inter-local agreement between the NPS, Washington State Parks, Island County government, and the town of Coupeville, Washington, to define roles and responsibilities for the development, protection, maintenance, and interpretation of the Reserve. The NPS did not follow its traditional route and purchase land, build a visitor center, and hire a superintendent and uniformed personnel to lead scheduled interpretive walks through the 17,400 acres. Rather, all parties agreed that the federal presence in the Reserve should be minimal. Virtually no land would be purchased (thereby keeping it on the local tax rolls and allowing the community to continue their familiar way of life), no personnel would be stationed there, boundaries would not be marked, and ultimately the management of the Reserve would be undertaken by a group of individuals representing the various local, state and federal agencies involved. This management direction was not an exercise in economic development for a depressed community, but a special partnership between governmental entities concerned for the preservation and protection of a significant piece of Pacific Northwest history while at the same time providing room for managed growth, development, and change in a healthy rural community.

After 13 years of NPS project managers and superintendents overseeing planning and development work at the Reserve, the NPS

officially passed management and administration responsibilities to a formal Trust Board. This group of nine individuals, primarily volunteers, collectively make decisions affecting the health and welfare of the Reserve. The NPS is still involved with land acquisition (purchase of scenic easements and development rights) and interpretive wayside facilities that are sensitively developed so as not to adversely impact the dynamic community that continues to function in this special place.

Interpretation is one of the Trust Board's most important responsibilities. In their new role as "superintendent" of the Reserve, the Board reviews wayside exhibits planned for the area and actively comments on what is appropriate for interpretive panels. While taking an active position now, the Board has not always been involved in interpretation issues and, for the most part, inherited a program that has been in flux at the Reserve for over a decade. Prior to establishment of the Trust Board, the NPS followed tradition by planning to install waysides at every opportunity to interpret a myriad of themes. This resulted in the identification of more than thirty sites at the Reserve. Viewing platforms, wayside interpretive points, exhibits with panels, signs, and other interpretive facilities were proposed. Despite the NPS' intentions of having a minimal presence, planning proceeded for these sites, resulting in a hefty wayside exhibit plan. But the Reserve being a nontraditional area made people begin to think about interpretation in a less traditional way. It was just a matter of time before the community voiced their displeasure at the number of sites proposed, and the visual "litter" these NPS improvements would create. Resulting negotiations between NPS staff and the local community led to the decision to reduce the number of panels and site the remaining ones in only the most critical and suitable locations. This low-key approach to interpretation was accepted at Ebey's Landing, not only because 95 percent of the lands within the Reserve were to remain in private hands, but because this rural community is not a stagnant area frozen in time. The information on the interpretive panels also changed. Now, themes such as the national historical reserve concept and the use of scenic easements as a means of protecting the cultural landscape are being incorporated into the interpretation program, introducing the visitor to ways of preserving these unique park areas.

The local residents envisioned all along a place where the public could come and learn about Pacific Northwest history in a **self-guided** manner. No NPS or Trust Board staff would be stationed at the Reserve. To orient visitors both the NPS and the Trust Board have produced brochures explaining the Reserve concept, its history, and available activities. Future interpretive plans reinforce the Board's desire to keep Ebey's Landing a self-guided experience. An automobile/bicycle tour route will be developed to direct visitors to established wayside exhibits as well as to local and state facilities, beaches, and scenic view areas. The Board hopes to develop a Reserve-wide system of hiking trails, in the tradition of the interconnected walking paths which cross privately-owned lands in the English countryside. Plans are also in place to work with the local schools to improve awareness of the Reserve and its resources, as some of these individuals undoubtedly will become future stewards of this landscape heritage.

Perhaps the greatest challenge of interpreting Ebey's Landing NHR is getting the casual visitor to understand that the Reserve is more than just a beautiful rural landscape of historic buildings, rolling farmlands and a picturesque little town alongside the water's edge. By spending some time exploring and learning about the historic legacy the landscape holds, one begins to "see" the historic patterns of settlement, circulation, land-use, and vegetation that comprise this important cultural landscape. The more people understand, the more they will appreciate what has been left behind; the more people appreciate what remains, the more this landscape will be protected and preserved for future generations, which is the ultimate goal of all the parties in this special partnership.

## Beyond the Boundaries: National Heritage Corridor Interpretation

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One of the newer additions to the National Park System, the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor is a hundred mile linear cultural park between Chicago and Peru, Illinois. On August 24, 1984, President Reagan signed legislation (PL 98-398) establishing the region as the nation's first National Heritage Corridor. Two conditions set this area apart from traditional parks: minimal Federal investment in the region and no acquisition of land. Emphasis has been placed upon public/private partnership in Corridor preservation, development, and interpretive activities.

The label "National Heritage Corridor" introduced a new National Park Service preservation concept. The "National" designation implies that the area has national significance. "Heritage" refers to the legacy of the valley's natural and man-made environment. And "Corridor" relates to the hundred mile Illinois and DesPlaines river valleys with the Corridor's width ranging up to six miles. This affiliated area is a product of many efforts to preserve this nationally significant but often overlooked area of northeastern Illinois and to conserve and interpret an important segment of midwestern United States history.

Nature provided the area at the southwest corner of Lake Michigan with an ideal route for trade and communication. Meltwaters from retreating glaciers about 20,000 years ago carved the existing river valleys, leaving a low saddle between the Chicago River flowing into Lake Michigan and the DesPlaines, headwaters of the Illinois River. Native Americans used this waterway, with the "Chicago Portage," to carry on their commerce. As the first Europeans to the area, the French recognized the significance of the watercourse: as a means of commerce and communication to hold their western empire.

To make this waterway more useable, the Americans developed the I&M Canal. Built between 1836-1848, it became an important link in a great inland water route between New York and New Orleans. Once opened, the canal spurred settlement as well as commercial



French voyageur explains his lifestyle to local school children at the Isle a la Cache Museum.



The restored Gaylord Building, adjacent to the I & M Canal, houses a Corridor visitor center, a gallery of the Illinois State Museum, and a restaurant.

and industrial development in Illinois, thus opening the way for Chicago to become a great transportation hub.

The Heritage Corridor encompasses a large segment of the state's industrial heartland. Yet much of the landscape is rural or wooded, and significant portions of it are in public ownership as state and local parks, trails, or wildlife preserves. There are, in addition, more than two hundred historic sites and districts and hundreds of archeological sites. The canal, owned by the Illinois Department of Conservation, is the dominant historic element of the Corridor. It is the physical feature which connects the Corridor communities and gives them a sense of cultural community. It also links the diverse archeological, natural, historic and recreation resources.

PL 98-398 created a 19-member Commission to serve as the catalyst behind a predominantly state and local effort to preserve, protect and interpret the historical and natural resources of the corridor. Furthermore, the Secretary of the Interior was directed to assist the Commission in developing the interpretive program for the Corridor.

A primary goal of the National Heritage Corridor is to interpret and to preserve the rich natural and human history of the region. With this in mind and in conformity with the enabling legislation, one of the earliest steps taken was to designate official Corridor visitor information centers. Today, there are eight such facilities, operated by six different agencies, spread throughout the Corridor to explain the history and story not only of the individual sites but also thematically from early geologic times through the present day.

A second step involved establishing regular communications among the Corridor interpreters. Until about 1986, there existed no broad approach to resource protection and interpretation within the Corridor. Each site focused on its own resources with very lit-

tle, if any, communication among the staffs regardless of their proximity to each other. To improve rapport among themselves, site interpreters took the first step of exchanging brochures in an effort to inform the public of the numerous resources and activities within the region. A further step entailed becoming acquainted with each other's sites, resources and programs. For the past few years, interpreters (including volunteers, historical society staffs, museum curators, and city park managers) have been meeting formally at least quarterly, rotating the venues throughout the Corridor.

Further signs of increased awareness, understanding, and communication readily emerged. In September, 1988, the I&M Canal NHC Commission and the Illinois Department of Conservation co-hosted the first National Conference on Historic Canals for managers, administrators, interpreters and canal friends. While the conference was the brainchild of the Superintendent of the I&M Canal State Trail, both the Commission and the local state park staffs shared in all phases of this event, from planning through execution. This successful symposium promoted the Corridor and some of its major resources nationwide.

Shortly after this conference, the focus turned to planning for the National Association for Interpretation Region V Workshop, which the Corridor interpreters, as a group, had volunteered to host. Despite their different backgrounds and work experiences, this event brought the interpreters closer to thinking of themselves as more than their respective agency employees. They were, in fact, part of the larger entity: the I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor. Much of the initial skepticism some of them had held about the Corridor, its purposes and about the Federal presence, was fading.

As a group, the interpreters have actively participated in the planning and development of a Corridor Travelers Information Radio System with four transmitters, a Corridor Wayside Exhibit Plan, which resulted in 46 site specific interpretive panels, a three-county Centennial Trail, and a Corridor orientation/information film. Currently, the interpreters are helping plan interpretive exhibits for the Corridor Commission's new offices and assisting some of the smaller sites with individual interpretive plans. Sounds like the making of a competent Interpretive Skills Team, doesn't it? Yes, in a few short years, the Corridor interpreters have gone from barely knowing each other to working together on projects beneficial to their individual sites in particular and to the Corridor in general.

Development of a Corridor Interpretive Plan has been a third step toward achieving the goal of interpreting the region's history. While the interpreters, individually and as a group, played a considerable role in the document's formulation, the project was contracted to an outside firm. This Plan was envisioned as a guide to site managers and interpreters throughout the Corridor, regardless of organizational entity. The legislative act, as a whole, and the 1981 NPS study it references, served as a basis for preparing the Interpretive Plan.

To be sure, the Plan is imperfect and not everyone "bought into it;" yet it is a credible product from which to initiate enhanced and expanded interpretive efforts at Corridor sites. The recognition that it is imperfect and needs to be improved is a sign that the interpreters view it as having value. The document identifies nine

primary interpretive themes which range from the region's geologic history through canal development and subsequent commerce/industry to recreational development. Another section assesses the interpretive program at each site and identifies needs. Since each site possesses a copy of the Plan, it is a major Corridor Commission goal for the various interpretive programs and activities to follow and to relate to these defined and approved themes. Needless to say, some sites, for varying reasons, have adopted and used this plan more than others.

Finally, Corridor-sponsored training opportunities have enabled site employees to enhance their interpretive skills and abilities. Drawing upon NPS and state personnel, and even the more skilled Corridor interpreters, the Corridor Commission has offered, among others, workshops dealing with museum collections, handicapped accessibility, visitor center operations, and visitor safety.

Six-plus years after the legislation establishing the Corridor, interpretive activities still focus principally on the individual sites and their respective resources. There is, however, a much greater awareness and acceptance of the Corridor concept as a means of preserving, protecting and interpreting the region's numerous resources. The number and variety of interpretive programs throughout the Corridor keep increasing. For example, the Forest Preserve District of Will County is preparing to interpret iron-making at the site of one of the nation's first Bessemer Steel Mills in Joliet. Also, the Illinois Department of Conservation is conducting a study to improve and expand its interpretive efforts along the I&M Canal.

What happens after the ten-year life span of the Corridor Commission expires in 1994 is anyone's guess. Regardless of the outcome, there has been a change in perceptions, and processes have been set in motion which will continue the interaction that is taking place. The Corridor interpreters intend to remain actively involved as a group introducing and communicating the Corridor story and resources to the public.

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## **Managing and Interpreting the Cultural Landscape at Mound City Group National Monument**

**Reed Johnson**  
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Mound City Group NM

In the Eastern Woodlands of North America, approximately 2000 years ago, a prehistoric culture left its imprint upon the landscape. From 200 BC to 500 AD the Hopewell Indians constructed a vast and extensive system of earthworks. Conical and pyramidal shaped burial mounds; miles-long pairs of parallel walls; and geometric earthwork complexes encompassing areas twenty acres and larger characterize this extinct culture. Excavations of these mounds and earthworks have revealed a lifestyle involving complex mortuary rituals and a high level of artistic development. With a long-distance trading system to obtain the rare materials used to produce grave offerings and sacred objects, the Hopewell remain one of the most impressive and little understood prehistoric cultures of the New World.

In what is now Ross County, Ohio, the Hopewell constructed a series of 23 burial mounds surrounded by a three foot high earthen enclosure wall, beginning the first chapter in a long history of landscape management at Mound City Group National Monument.

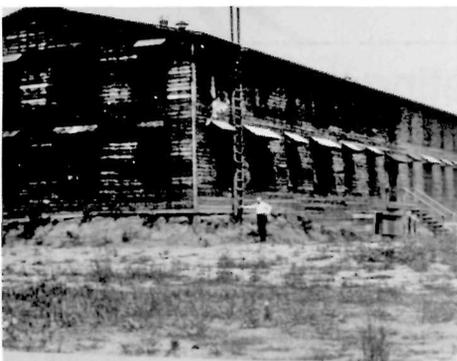
By the time of Euro-American exploration and settlement of the Ohio River Valley at the turn of the 18th century, the Hopewell culture had been extinct for a thousand years. All that remained were the earthworks, slowly disappearing from the effects of weather and abandonment.

With the arrival of settlers, the transition from a forest environment was rapid. By the early 1800s, the areas adjacent to the mounds were being cleared for agricultural use and by 1832 the entire site was under cultivation as part of a large farm estate. The natural destruction of weather was accelerated by the plow.

As settlement took place, the mounds and other Hopewell earthworks were the subject of much curiosity and speculation concerning their origins. The Native Americans present at that time (primarily the Shawnee) took no responsibility for the mounds nor did they claim any ancestral link to the mound builders. Opinions about the age and significance of the mounds abounded and were attributed to everyone from the Incas of Peru to the Lost Tribes of Israel.

In 1846, Ephraim G Squier, a local newspaper editor, and Dr Edwin H Davis, a local physician, began the first excavations and mapping of the site, naming the area Mound City because of the large concentration of human burials and mounds within a single location. These fledgling archeologists recovered a large assortment of burial offerings and associated artifacts and added another chapter to the record of human impact upon the cultural scene.

While scholarly interest in the Hopewell was keen, it did not interfere with more pragmatic pursuits and the repeated cycle of plowing and harvesting continued throughout the 19th century.



Mound City Group showing barracks on top of a leveled mound and the cut made for a roadway.

In 1919, the land containing Mound City was sold to the Federal Government for the construction of a World War I Army training facility, Camp Sherman. To say that Camp Sherman had an effect upon the cultural landscape would be putting it mildly. Roadways and a rail line were cut through the earthen containment walls, water and sewer pipes were tunneled through the mounds, and buildings were constructed upon leveled mounds.

While destruction of the mounds was extensive, there were positive results from Camp Sherman.

The Hopewell constructed their mounds on top of shallow, subsurface burial pits containing the human remains and associated artifacts. While some damage to the archeological strata was inevitable, many of the underlying graves were spared from destruction and with the purchase of Mound City by the War Department, the land containing the mounds was now under the ownership of the US Government. This would prove to be the significant first step towards preservation of the cultural resource.

By 1920, World War I and the need for Camp Sherman was over. The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society secured permission

from the War Department to explore and excavate the archeological remains of Mound City. Amidst the barracks and buildings of Camp Sherman, William Mills and Henry Shetrone directed and conducted excavations of the site from 1920 to 1922, noting and recording the locations of burials and recovering large numbers of artifacts.

Through the efforts of Mr Mills and the local support of the town of Chillicothe, Mound City Group National Monument was established by Presidential Proclamation in 1923. The site was administered by the Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society under license from the War Department. The Society cleared the area of buildings and debris and reconstruction of the mounds began in 1925.



The excavation of Mound #7 in 1921 with the barracks of Camp Sherman in the background.

Perhaps typical of the times, Mound City Group was managed and used as a recreational facility. A picnic shelter, boat landing, and comfort station were constructed and an observation platform built upon the largest mound. The first attempt at interpreting the site was not until 1942, when the site manager placed a small display of his personal artifact collection in the picnic shelter.

In 1945, legislation proposing the transferral of Mound City ownership to the state was proposed and met with stiff local opposition. As a result, administration of the site transferred to the National Park Service in 1946.

In 1954, the NPS Mission 66 Prospectus recommended transfer of the site to the State of Ohio, the feeling being that the site was of questionable national significance due to its long history of cultural resource disturbance and the lack of efforts to interpret the area to the public.

Fortunately, the decision was made to continue NPS management with the proviso that henceforth the cultural significance of the site would be interpreted and recreational use phased out. From that point on, major changes in the management and interpretation of the cultural landscape took place.

In 1960, a visitor center was constructed to house a museum and to provide interpretation of the site and the Hopewell culture. In

1965, the Mica Grave wayside exhibit, showing an interior view to one of the mounds was completed. The content and construction of several other mounds were being explained and interpreted through signs and audio stations. Archeological explorations were conducted throughout this period to determine the exact locations of the mounds and burials.

With the removal of the observation platform and steps from the Death Mask mound and the demolition of the picnic shelter and other recreational facilities in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the transition from recreation to cultural preservation and interpretation was nearing completion.

During the period from 1923 until the early 1970s, the landscape of Mound City Group National Monument was maintained in a turfgrass cover. The grass was intensively cultivated, fertilized and mowed, broken only by a handful of trees scattered around the monument grounds.



The mound area and visitor center in 1974, showing the landscape and mowing practices of the day.

Park management realized the need to lessen the impact upon the cultural scene by outside sources. Mound City Group shared boundaries with a state prison, VA Hospital, and a heavily used state highway.

Through a combination of tree transplanting and natural succession, a vegetative buffer grew between the monument and its neighbors. The primary intent was to present the interpretive scene with as little modern intrusions as possible. This included allowing a corner portion of the earthen containment wall to overgrow, giving an appearance similar to what Squier and Davis would have encountered in 1846. The rest of the wall, the mounds, and the immediate periphery continued to be maintained in a closely mowed turfgrass cover.

As the 1990s began, the appearance of the mounds and how the cultural scene was being presented and interpreted to the public was reevaluated. From an interpretive standpoint, what would be the most likely appearance of the mounds 2000 years ago?

Given the technology of the Hopewell, removing large trees would have been, at best, a difficult task. During the time of the Hopewell, numerous small areas of open grasslands were common in central Ohio. Other areas of light vegetation would have existed from lightning fires. Covered with stands of native long stem grasses, these "pocket prairies" would have presented ideal spots for the construction of earthworks. During the periods between burials and when the earthworks were not under active use, the native long stem grasses would gradually return. The Hopewell could have controlled this growth through the use of fire, which also serves to keep out other vegetative types.

It seems highly unlikely that the Hopewell maintained the manicured appearance evident in the 1980s. Following a severe drought in 1988, the turf grasses were virtually destroyed and weeds were rapidly taking their place. A decision had to be made whether or not to completely reseed and continue with the management practices of the past.

With this in mind, a project to replace the turfgrasses with a stand of typical native long stem grasses (Little bluestem, Switchgrass, Indian grass) has been implemented. While maintaining mowed corridors of turfgrass to provide access to all interpretive exhibits, the adjacent areas of mounds and enclosure wall are being allowed to grow. As the plan evolves, seeding with the long stem grasses will take place with the eventual goal of establishing a uniform stand of grass representative of the prehistoric scene.

As this plan is implemented, care is being taken to provide a comprehensive program of interpretation about the project to park visitors and neighbors.

Through the use of site bulletins, press releases, and messages incorporated into our guided interpretive tours, visitors were able to understand and support our efforts. Indeed, we have received only positive comments about the project and attribute this to the effective use of interpretation.

Visitors have stated that they are now able to relate to and feel a part of the historic scene. As one local resident and frequent visitor said, "I always thought of a golf course when I came here. Everything seemed so sterile!"

Staff interpreters have pointed out that the change in vegetative appearance makes it easier to separate visitors from the 20th century, reducing the visual intrusions of our modern culture and increasing the abundance and diversity of wildlife.

For the future at Mound City Group, this approach to management and interpretation of the cultural landscape will continue to evolve. In 1990, the Hopeton Earthworks, a separate site containing the remains of a large geometrical earthworks complex, was added to the monument. Under constant agricultural use for the past century, the Hopeton site was seeded with long stem grasses to

prevent erosion, minimize maintenance and present an aesthetically pleasing appearance.

A proposal to acquire three additional Hopewell sites to create a Hopewell Culture National Historical Park is gaining momentum. All of the proposed sites are under agricultural use and will present the challenge of how to present the cultural landscape for interpretation. Reconstruction, following the criteria of NPS-28 Cultural Resource Management Guidelines is just one of the possibilities to be considered.

Whatever decisions are made, a lesson has been learned from that long ago Mission 66 Prospectus: interpretation and the cultural landscape cannot be separated without serious consequences for both.

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## **The Gem of Cumberland Island National Seashore**

**Michael D Maslona**  
Park Ranger  
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Seashore

Thomas Carnegie, brother of Andrew and partner in the steel industry, came to Cumberland Island in 1881 with his wife Lucy. They purchased almost 4000 acres at the south end of the island, and eventually owned ninety percent of the island. Dungeness, completed in 1884, was the first Carnegie mansion to be built on Cumberland Island. This was also the site of a mansion of the same name, built by General Nathanael Greene, a revolutionary war hero, and his wife Katy. Between 1886 and 1901 three other mansions were built for Tom's and Lucy's grown children. Located eight miles north of Dungeness and perhaps the grandest of the mansions was Plum Orchard. Nestled quietly, but boldly in the wilderness, it stands where an orchard of plum trees was planted in 1795. Although the plum trees are gone, the name lives on. Plum Orchard Mansion was built for George Carnegie and his wife Margaret in 1898. East and west wing additions were added between 1902 and 1907 to accommodate popular forms of recreation and provide supportive services. The main structure contains four large rooms downstairs, a gallery, grand entry hall, library and dining room, as well as a kitchen and butlers pantry. The east wing addition contains an indoor artesian-fed swimming pool and a squash court, while the west wing contains a gun and game room. Upstairs are six bedrooms, two dressing rooms, and six main baths with steam-heated towel racks, porcelain wash stands and enamel tubs. A brass dinner bell with inscription "rings in joyous remembrance" greets the visitor in the entrance hall.

In the rear of the house, the servants wing contains two kitchens, four bedrooms, and two baths. In addition to the mansion, several supportive buildings were located nearby. These included a carriage house, stables, separate servants quarters, an electricians complex for maintaining the generating plant, a chicken house, laundry house, dairy barn, poultry house, vegetable and kitchen gardens, fruit trees and a water tower. Out back was an artesian fed duck pond bordered by lotus plants and bamboo, and an outdoor tennis court. Mail and groceries from the mainland were shipped to Dungeness, sorted, and then delivered by carriage to Plum.

George died in 1921. His widow, Margaret, later married the Count de Perigny and moved to France. She removed and sold all the furniture. For the next twenty years, George's younger sister Nancy Carnegie, and her husband Dr Marius Johnston from Kentucky made Plum their frequently visited home. On many evenings the family would gather around the fireplace and talk of the days adventures-- hunting, fishing, horseback riding or visiting relatives on the island.



Front view, Plum Orchard Mansion, Cumberland Island NS

In the late 1950s when the island was threatened to be exploited for development, part of the Carnegie family contacted Members of Congress and talk had begun of the idea of adding Cumberland Island to the National Park System.

In 1971, the mansion with twelve surrounding acres and \$50,000 was donated by the Johnston family to the National Park Foundation, which purchased much of the island for the National Park Service. It was held in trust until Cumberland Island became National Seashore October 23, 1972, when the National Park Foundation conveyed Plum Orchard to the National Park Service. In 1982, 8840 acres surrounding Plum Orchard was designated as wilderness. Today Plum Orchard is maintained as a 24 acre historic district within a wilderness area.

Over the last ten years major renovation was done on the exterior of Plum Orchard mansion to restore it to its former glory. Cumberland Island Historic Foundation, a private non-profit organization is assisting with preservation efforts for the structure.

With these efforts, Plum Orchard Mansion exists today as it did towards the end of the century. Weekly interpretive tours offers visitors an isolated getaway from everyday existence--a place to ponder, reflect, and dream.

**About this Issue**

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*Interpretation* is a combined effort of the Washington Division of Interpretation and the Regional Chiefs of Interpretation. The publication is edited and designed by the staff of the Interpretive Design Center at Harpers Ferry:

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**Editor's Note**

Your editors respectfully solicit the contribution of articles from the readers for forthcoming issues of *Interpretation*. If you wish to submit an article for consideration, please contact one of the Contributing Editors identified under the subject issue.

In order to make *Interpretation* more truly a forum for the exchange of ideas among interpreters, we will include a selection of responses to articles in the form of Letters to the Editors. Please submit all letters to:

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