

Spring / Summer 1991
Interpreting the Cultural and
Built Landscapes

Interpretation



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We all know cultural and built landscapes. They define our present and our past. They are expressions of our experience and knowledge. Cultural landscapes are imbued with our stories. In this issue of "Interpretation" such stories are told of a variety of national park landscapes chosen for their geographic distribution and diversity.

Understanding the concept of "cultural landscapes" through research on landscapes offers us the opportunity to understand their significance and the need to preserve them.

- The Frederick Law Olmstead National Historic Site pays tribute to a leader in designing landscapes with which people interact.
- The built environments of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial are testament to the effect of structures on our lives.
- The wealth of cultural remains in Kennicott, Alaska, demonstrate the great human efforts needed to both extract riches from the earth and to preserve these artifacts.
- Interpretation of the historic vessels that make up the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park provide an experience of our maritime heritage.
- Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve represents a plurality of cultures.
- Elements of our industrial heritage can be explored at Steamtown National Historic Site via railroad connections.
- Learning about the early exploration of Mesa Verde Historical Park adds to our fascination with this World Heritage Site.
- Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve provides protection to a continuum of interrelated natural and cultural features as the nation's first historical reserve.
- The Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor ties together 100 miles of history, providing an opportunity for recreation, education and the preservation of a cultural landscape.
- Mound City Group National Monument reflects the changes we can have on our cultural landscapes.
- Plum Orchard on Cumberland Island National Seashore is the grandest of the mansions once occupied by the Carnegie family and is managed as an historic district within an wilderness area.

We would like to personally thank all those authors in this bulletin who gave of their time and ideas to perpetuate the place of cultural and built environments in our lives.

Glenn Clark, Alaska Regional Chief of Interpretation
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Regional Information Survey

Alaska

The cultural landscapes of Alaska are numerous; ranging from the sites associated with exploration and fur trapping to the more subtle places of native lifeways. Interdisciplinary project investigations, incorporating cultural landscape as an integrating focus, are a tool to examine native heritage sites. The disciplines of ethnography, archeology, historic architecture, and wildlife biology are being used to examine the cultural landscapes of two abandoned winter reindeer herders' villages, "Ullugsaun" and "Kividluk" along the Chukchi Sea coast. Through the memory of Gideon Barr, whose personal history is representative of the experience of his people, the Inupiaq, investigators are recording invaluable information on traditional land use, place names, subsistence practices, travel routes, reindeer herding and wildlife history. This study is part of the Beringian Heritage program with Soviet and American collaborators, and will result in oral tapes and a videotape, useful as interpretive products from this effort. Other results will include HABS documentation, ethnohistory monographs and archeological base maps.

Western

Special funding sources, creative personnel management and a new look at an old legislative act are benefiting cultural resource interpretation in the Western Region.

Cabrillo, Coronado, Tumacacori, and other Quincentennial designated parks in the region will be sharing \$135,000 in FY91 for the development of Quincentennial theme programs and media.

The USS Arizona Memorial is planning for the 50th anniversary commemoration of the attack on Pearl Harbor. The workload and visitation at the memorial make it very difficult for park staff to execute this commemoration event on their own. A retired NPS employee, Jim Harpster, has stepped forward to go to the Memorial and coordinate the 50th commemoration as a volunteer-in-the parks. Jim and his wife are both working as VIPs at the Memorial.

Death Valley is using Title 16, USC 1a - 2(g), concerning living history and interpretive demonstrations, to charge interpretive fees at Scotty's Castle. 100% of the fees stay in the park for interpretive purposes. Rick Smith at the Western Region, FTS 484-3910 or (415) 744-3910 has details.

Pacific Northwest

As co-editor of this edition I would like to mention the enjoyment of working with Glenn Clark on this issue. Separated by great distance we were able to develop a mutual bonding of ideas to focus this issue. Here in the Pacific Northwest we are blessed with an abundance of landscapes and views. Mixed in with the grand scenes are the special cultural places that reflect our nation's western history. We are only too proud of the uniqueness of Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve, the portrayal of Fort Clatsop, Fort Vancouver, Fort Spokane, the excitement of Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park and the international story of the San Juan Islands National Historic Park. These are our cultural and built landscapes to preserve.

Rocky Mountain

The Regional Division of Interpretation is participating in a multi-agency planning project to expand the interpretive program for the Denver Arsenal. Working with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado State University, Metropolitan State University, and local school districts, the former site of mustard gas production during World War II and pesticide production after the war will open its gates to visitors wanting to see wildlife that has adapted to an urban environment.

Once super fund cleanup of toxic wastes is completed, more areas of the Arsenal will be opened to the public for viewing bald eagles, mule deer, coyotes, etc. The proposed interpretive program calls for leaving vestiges of the chemical weapons plant as landmarks and as a reminder of how we poison the environment. The new visitor center will even provide a disposal site for household toxic wastes. The Arsenal will be an interesting blend of the human-built and natural environments, one exemplified by a popular photograph of grazing mule deer with Denver's skyscrapers behind them and the Rocky Mountains beyond.

Midwest

The cultural and interpretive landscape of the Midwest Regional Office has undergone changes of glacial proportions with the transfer of Interpretive Specialist Tom Danton to Saguaro National Monument's Chief of Interpretation. For nearly seven years, Tom produced *Sharing* an informal newsletter covering a broad range of interpretive topics. Whether on his favorite topic of Enos Mills' contributions to interpretation, review of a new publication or how to keep exhibit panels clean, more than 300 issues of *Sharing* provoked thinking. For his efforts with *Sharing*, Tom received the fourth Sequoia Award given by the WASO Office of Interpretation. Congratulations Tom and may you continue to inspire interpreters for years to come!

The Midwest's cultural landscapes vary greatly from prehistoric Indian mounds to Presidential homes, from battlefields to quiet country schools, from a prairie homestead to industrial canals. Some, like lighthouses, still stand proud and tall, others are almost lost in nature's regrowth. Each offers challenges to preserve and to interpret.

Southwest

Planning is underway for an interagency visitor near Grants, NM, which will provide orientation to resources on nearby Federal lands and to the American Indian communities of Acoma, Zuni, Laguna, and Ramah Navaho.

In consultation with each tribe their languages will be drawn upon to provide insight into their rich cultures and perception of the universe, and demonstrate the continuing vitality of their life. From the Zuni, for example comes a prayer at sunrises:

*Now this day,
My sun father,
Now that you have come out standing to
your sacred place,
That from which we draw the water of life,
Prayer meal,
Here I give to you.
Your long life,
Your old age,
Your waters,
Your seeds,
Your power,
Your strong spirit,
All these to me may you grant.*

Service Center Report

North Atlantic

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor is an imposing title for an impressive project. Established by Act of Congress in 1986 as the first bi-state National Valley in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

The Corridor was the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution and represents the first extensive industrial use of water power in the United States.

The Division of Interpretation has been providing technical assistance. For the first time this summer uniformed interpreters will conduct programs. An interpretive prospectus is being planned through Harpers Ferry Center and a Chief of Interpretation is being recruited.

Management of the Corridor is shared by twenty local governments, two state governments and many private land owners and is coordinated through a citizen's commission. A National Park Service Executive Director works with the commission in coordinating NPS assistance.

Southeast

"Protecting the Past, Managing the Present, Investing in the Future." The Southeast Region is working diligently to revisit the NPS purpose and to review the priorities set for management of SER units. Excellence in interpretation is one of the three cornerstones (resource management, interpretation/education, human resource development) identified as primary goals for the management of SER units. In the coming months, regional and field staffs will be working to map out the way these goals will be achieved and the NPS mission furthered. The intention is to derive a consensus about what is needed for NPS to continue and/or attain leadership in education, visitor accommodation, partnerships, resource stewardship and global conservation. Interpreters in the Southeast Region will be in a strong position to help see that the goals are met.

Mid-Atlantic

At Steamtown NHS, visitors notice a large assortment of rusting hulks-- shadows of once proud railroad cars and steam locomotives. Also visible are weeds, rotting wood, falling-down shanties, and dust billowing around like a desert. Rather than ignoring what could be an embarrassing picture, the park exposes it, discusses the work needed and improvements underway.

STEAs interpretive philosophy is not complex. Interpreters try to instill a spirit of adventure into visitors, many of whom return each year or so to compare differences. The steam era is gone, the need for yards has disappeared, steam whistles echoing through the nearby hills are still. However, the story of STEA is a "microcosm" of the whole industry--its structure, development, trade, impact, and role in the communities it served. STEA's story could be made in "Anytown, USA," with changes in the types of freight hauled to other parts of the country.

National Capital

The National Capital Region is continuing its Seminar Series of training opportunities for interpreters. In April and May, field trips visited sites focused on the interpretation of slavery. This was a follow up to the lecture series and workshop given last fall. In Maryland, Virginia, and other areas on the Eastern Seaboard, slavery was a pervasive part of American history and culture for 200 years before the Civil War. In Washington we recognize the contributions of slaves in building much of the city including work on the Capitol and White House.

Beginning in 1991, Washington, DC, celebrates its bicentennial as the Federal City. As authorized by the US Constitution, the city site was selected in 1791 by George Washington and the city was laid out the same year by Pierre L'Enfant. The White House was begun the following year. National Capital Parks - Central, President's Park and other parks in the Region are planning a number of bicentennial events to interpret the historic founding of a new capital in a new nation.

Denver

Natchez, MS, served as the symbolic capitol of the slave-based cotton economy of the mid-nineteenth century. The town, state, and the NPS are working together to preserve and interpret historic architecture, districts, and landscapes that contribute to the town's national significance.

The present GMP and interpretive planning efforts call for the NPS to establish cooperative agreements with government entities and private individuals and to provide technical assistance for preservation and interpretation of sites within a larger preservation district.

Melrose, a unit of the Natchez NHP, allows visitors to experience a magnificent antebellum cotton planter's estate. Representing one of more than 60 large estates in Natchez, Melrose has retained much of its original furnishings, structures, and landscape. Interpretation will attempt to show how a wealthy cotton planter lived, and how this wealth depended on the slave-labor system on the large plantations.

Harpers Ferry

Cultural landscapes abound in publications, museum exhibits, wayside exhibits, film, and historic furnishings produced by HFC.

Publications use historic photos and artist renderings. Photos illustrate cultural landscapes literally; renderings show how the landscape might have appeared at a specific time.

Models in museum exhibits show how a cultural landscape changes. The Service's most recent example is at Ellis Island. At Gettysburg, a Civil War camp exhibit brings the outdoors indoors by depicting how soldiers spent time in the field.

Meade's Headquarters, recreated by the Center's historic furnishings team, uses a scrim (a theatrical device) to show visitors how the room may have looked when occupied by the General and his staff.

Wayside exhibits help visitors visualize a cultural landscape, such as a scene in Philadelphia or a Civil War battlefield from where they stand.

Film can help make the visitor feel part of an event that occurred years before.

A Moment With Mike

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At the Regional Chiefs of Interpretation meeting in March, the group "revisited" *The Interpretive Challenge* (1988). Since five of today's Regional Chiefs are new to their positions since the *IC* was created, we all felt the need to look back, evaluate where the *IC* has and has not succeeded, and decide how the *IC* relates to today and the future for NPS Interpretation.

Through structured exercises, the group went through the five challenges piece by piece and assessed what has been accomplished. In general, the group agreed that a lot has been accomplished as a result of the *IC*. Some of things would have been done with or without the *IC*, but many were accomplished as a result of the plan, and it gave focus to all of the accomplishments.

Given five choices at the end of the session which ranged from setting aside the *IC* altogether to pushing ahead on all items in the *IC*, the group consensus was to keep the *IC* and pick specific items to focus on for this year and next. Here are my predictions for those items in terms of each of the five challenges:

Professional Excellence--The professionalization of the ranger workforce and its affect on NPS Interpretation will affect interpreters for several years. Read the insert in this issue of *Interpretation* for background. Upgrading of basic interpretive field services in terms of programs and people will be a high priority in the 1993 budget request to Congress--the Directorate and Congress are very interested in this.

Evaluation--Increased need to show the positive results of interpretation will come from several directions--NPS management itself, the Office of Management and Budget, and Congress. A variety of evaluation packages like the recent focus group techniques package will have to be developed. More information about park visitors through programs like the Visitor Services Project will be needed to plan both personal and non-personal interpretive programs.

Education--Perhaps the biggest challenge of all will be in the education mission of the NPS. Parks will continue to increase their roles as classrooms to students and teachers. Classrooms will seek more and more park resource-based education materials. Again, the 1993 budget process will help define how we can meet the NPS education challenge with increased programs and education professionals.

Program Integration (Partnerships)--We will continue to be challenged in how to best manage our existing and new partnerships. The Volunteer-in-Parks programs will continue to grow. NPS Cooperating Associations are critical to serving the growing needs of visitors in obtaining printed and audiovisual educational materials. The National Park Foundation will increasingly help find outside funding for NPS interpretive, educational, volunteer, and employee development programs.

(Interpretive) Media--Interpretive planning at park, regional, and service center levels will evolve to be more efficient, to better integrate personal and non-personal interpretive services, and to consider interpretive themes and objectives from the ground level. New technologies will change our abilities to convey messages to park visitors and students. I would ask each of you to revisit *The Interpretive Challenge* as well. Copies are still around your park somewhere--the parchment cover is brown with five Sequoia cones on the cover. I even have some extra copies if you need them. Make your own predictions for each challenge and let me hear from you.