

Reluctantly, the Preserve members requested that the property be administered by an established state agency—the Wyoming Recreation Commission (WRC). In 1969, the legislature gave responsibility for the buildings to WRC and for the museum/interpretation function to the Archives, Museums and Historical Department (AMH). The ensuing jurisdictional confusion often led to embarrassing public arguments about the site's future.

Finally, in 1981, the responsibility for long-range planning and restoration was transferred to the Historic Preservation Division of the Wyoming Recreation Commission. This transfer gave the agency architectural control of the preservation process. Limited interpretation responsibilities fell to the division also. Gradually, interagency disagreements and feuds faded until ended by their merger into the Department of Commerce in the late 1980s.

In recent years, legislative support for South Pass City restoration and preservation and for programs and special events has been forthcoming. Regardless of the legislative reasons for not supporting both the purchase and the later operation of South Pass City in the early years, the historic site was saved from either commercialism or total decay through boldness and perseverance. As

Mrs. Wilkins said in retrospect, "It was about the proudest achievement of my life that we saved South Pass City."

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Rebecca Joseph

## Cranberry Bogs to Parks Ethnography and Women's History

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**W**hy are today's Iroquois and New England farm women critical to preserving the landscape of the Revolutionary War? Why is Cape Verdean women's knowledge of traditional production methods essential to accurately interpreting an early-20th-century cranberry bog on Cape Cod? What can African-American and white women tell us about the recent history of Saint Paul's Church and its surroundings in Mount Vemon, New York, that is not revealed in diocesan and other official records? How can Women's Rights National Historical Park increase visitation by women of color and their families?

These and other questions linking women in present-day communities with cultural resources in national parks in the Northeast are being

answered in recent ethnographic studies and related undertakings of the National Park Service's Applied Ethnography Program. By working with parks, neighboring communities, and other associated groups, the Applied Ethnography Program can ensure more inclusive, culturally informed protection and preservation of the resources required to fully appreciate our national heritage.

Ethnography offers both a conceptual basis for studying human groups and a methodology for studying one or more aspects of a living group's way of life from that group's perspective. Cultural anthropologists work from the premise that **culture** is a central, if not the most important, factor in human behavior. Cultural anthropologists practicing ethnography can identify and address the potential shortcomings of culture-bound frame-

works for documenting and interpreting the beliefs and meanings of diverse peoples' practices.

Ethnography demonstrates and describes the existence of alternative group realities. The practice of ethnography requires direct interactions, usually over a sustained period of time, between anthropologists, who may be cultural insiders (but usually are not) and diverse group members. Good ethnography is not haphazard, but requires professional training and experience.

The National Park Service (NPS) undertakes ethnographic studies in parks throughout the country to support and strengthen management efforts to preserve resources important to present-day American communities because of their close and multi-generational associations. NPS cultural anthropologists, along with academic colleagues and independent scholars, identify and document relationships between culturally-significant resources and traditionally-associated groups in close collaboration with members of those groups. Ethnography describes and explains socially-constructed meanings and traditional uses of NPS cultural resources, including historic structures, archeological sites, cultural landscapes, and museum objects.

Ethnography directly serves planning and operational needs at the field level. Park ethnographic studies provide baseline data for resource management, and cultural data used in National Register nominations for interpretive materials and programs. Equally, if not more important, ethnographic studies facilitate and enhance relationships between the National Park Service and park-associated groups. In many cases, these groups represent communities whose histories and associations with park cultural resources have been unknown or poorly understood by both the NPS and the general public due to these groups' historically limited power to participate in or influence decision making in the public sphere. Ethnography aids parks in recognizing and filling gaps stemming from race, class, ethnicity, gender, and/or sexual orientation-based prejudices.

Ethnography contributes to the identification, protection, and preservation of sites, structures, landscapes, and objects of particular significance to women. It can enhance all cultural resource management undertakings by recovering "lost" information from living women and introducing alternative perspectives from women of diverse cultural and class backgrounds. Ethnography also lays the groundwork for continuity between women today and their future descendants.

One of the principal ways ethnography strengthens resource management in national parks is by introducing into planning and opera-

tional decisionmaking previously unrecognized women's knowledge and roles in traditional activities. "Foregrounding" previously obscured information is often critical to designing and implementing effective protection, preservation, and public education strategies. Recent projects in the Northeast Field Area illustrate several important uses of ethnographic approaches and applications of ethnographic data that can be used elsewhere.

Ethnographic studies have uncovered essential information about women's paid and unpaid labor. For instance, farm families that lease acreage from Minute Man National Historical Park assist the Park in preserving historic resources, especially the open agricultural landscape associated with the beginning of the American Revolution. A traditional use study of contemporary farming showed that within farm families, "the farmer" is perceived as a male role. The greater visibility of men in the fields and the tendency for men, rather than women, to represent farm interests in public contexts (such as interactions with Park Service and local officials) communicates this view to the larger community. The ethnographic data reveals a more complex reality. Along with men's farming skills, profitable farm stands and good financial management—largely female domains—are critical to the economic viability of the few farms remaining in the now upscale suburbs of Boston where the Minute Man National Historical Park is located (Parish 1996). By understanding the gendered division of labor within farm families, the park can better preserve the cultural landscape in an informed, cost-effective manner while supporting the local farmers who carry on the area's agricultural traditions which supports the park's mission.

In order to prepare its nomination of the Pamet cranberry bog to the National Register of Historic Places, Cape Cod National Seashore needed to evaluate the site and its structures as a traditional cultural property associated with Cape Verdean communities in southeastern Massachusetts. From the early 20th century until the 1960s, Cape Verdean immigrants comprised most of the cranberry industry's manual labor force. Cape Verdean ethnic identity remains closely connected with this experience today. In addition to preparing the National Register nomination, an ethnographic assessment revealed information about women's traditional work that can inform planned restoration of the bog to active production and be used in education programs. For example, community members identified an unusual implement in the park's collection as a woman's harvesting tool (Pires-Hester 1994).

Living women with personal knowledge of commercial cranberry work maintain a strong interest in preserving the Pamet Bog. While a small number of Cape Verdean women became bog owners, several generations of poor immigrant women and girls weeded the bogs, picked and screened berries, and counted and marked the filled crates as paid laborers. Newer immigrant women of color, mainly Latinas, have succeeded previous groups as screeners, indicating persistence of a historically gendered and racialized division of labor, despite technological advances in commercial cranberry cultivation.

The extensive archival records for Saint Paul's Church in Mount Vernon, New York, provide detailed documentation of the site's 20th-century history within the Episcopal Diocese. They reveal relatively little about its roles within the changing community since its 1805 completion and consecration. An ethnographic overview and assessment identifying traditionally associated groups and the resources they value amassed baseline data while starting to address the most apparent information gaps. Interviews with African-American and white community members demonstrated that women's extensive volunteer work provided a strong thread of continuity at the site before and after its transfer to the National Park Service in 1980, as does women's participation in activities associated with major life passages—such as weddings held at St. Paul's and caring for family graves within its still active cemetery. They also indicate diverse experiences within and between the two groups that can assist the Park in developing a more active and effective adult outreach in Mount Vernon and neighboring communities.

Sensitive to domestic population demographics, many national park managers are seeking to attract a broader range of visitors to their sites. In a landmark study of African Americans and national parks, Dr. Helán Page, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and past President of the Association of Black Anthropologists, cites Women's Rights National Historical Park as a "gem," one of the parks "operating with practices that entail more inclusive preservation objectives, new interpretive strategies, and strong commitment to minority hiring and minority outreach" (1966a: 9). Using ethnography for an internal needs assessment, Page recommends further developing interpretation of the interwoven relationships between the people, events, and products of the suffrage and abolitionist movements. Increases in regional and national visits by blacks could be also achieved by introducing program-

ming that includes African-American women critical of the Women's Movement (1996b).

Ethnographic studies can place relationships between communities and park resources within larger cultural contexts at varying levels of analysis ranging from local to global. The projects described in this article were undertaken by applied cultural anthropologists—female and male, cultural "insiders" and "outsiders"—in partnership with community members, park staff, and other disciplinary specialists.

Reading history is not the same as standing on the ground or performing traditional activities at the appropriate location in the proper manner. There is an emotional connection with the places where your ancestors, relatives, and community once stood and continue to value today. Well done and properly used, ethnography greatly increases the likelihood that women's histories and the resources associated with them will be preserved for, and cherished by, future generations.

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