

Manager with the California State Park System, and the Bureau of Land Management to work out a way to preserve the historic mining town of Bodie, California. The story, which reads like the “Perils of Pauline,” involved federal, state, local and private owners, but shows that persistence and creativity pay off.

Finally, an article by Lou Ann Speulda, of the Region I Office of the Fish and Wildlife Service, describes an excellent example of creative cooperation among federal agencies in the story of the transfer of World War II Facilities at Midway NHL out of U.S. Navy management to that of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which will preserve both cultural and natural resources.

The articles as a whole provide an overview of many facets of the preservation of National

Historic Landmarks. Hopefully readers will find new inspiration and ideas in this issue. Thanks to all who contributed and congratulations on all the good work that NPS and its partners—federal, state, local and private—are doing towards the preservation of NHLs and all of the nation’s historic heritage.

—Susan Escherich, *National Park Service*

The editor wishes to thank the authors of articles and letters in this issue, and Antoinette J. Lee, Acting Chief, Preservation Initiatives Branch, and Bryan C. Green, NCSHPO Historian, for their editorial assistance.

Carol D. Shull

Expanding Participation and Support for the Designation of NHLs

To date, only 2,210 National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) have been officially designated by the Secretary of the Interior for their exceptional significance in illustrating the history of the United States, but many more nationally important places are worthy of designation. Because National Park Service (NPS) funding and staff for the National Historic Landmarks Survey are so small, nominations are generally prepared by others as part of organized theme studies or as single nominations that can be initiated by anyone. The NPS is trying in a variety of ways to expand participation by State Historic Preservation Officers, federal agencies, American Indian tribes, professional organizations, and the public.

Recently, the NPS reorganized to more closely align the NHL Survey with the National Register of Historic Places. A new *National Register Bulletin* on how to complete NHL nominations is being prepared and circulated for comment prior to publication. This bulletin will provide the first detailed published guidance on how to document national significance and prepare NHL nominations. The bulletin adopts the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form as the

established format for National Historic Landmark theme studies. The Multiple Property Submission format with its sections on historic context, property types, and evaluation criteria, methodology and bibliography is familiar to and much used by nominating authorities and the rest of the preservation community. The bulletin also describes how to prepare NHL nominations and how to amend National Register documentation for landmark designation.

Several years ago, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO) put forth “A Modest Proposal” concerning the NHL program. The proposal suggests that in preparing NHL theme studies, the NPS concentrate on the production of a national historic context for particular subjects, themes, or resource types; establish guidelines and criteria for determining national significance with long lasting usefulness; prepare only sample nominations as examples from the pool of known resources of national significance; and identify additional properties that would qualify. More nominations would then be prepared by others gradually over time. The proposal also urges that guidelines for the production of NHL documentation be revised to include all aspects of a property’s National

Register significance, not just the area of national significance. These principles will be incorporated into the new bulletin.

This year, the NPS is joining with the NCSHPO to initiate a model NHL theme study using this approach. Already, several theme studies underway are using the approach, such as the Earliest Americans and Archeology of the Underground Railroad theme studies, now being done in partnership with the Society for American Archaeology and the Society for Historical Archaeology.

In the upcoming model study, the first step will be for the NPS and the NCSHPO to solicit recommendations for priority topics that merit a national context study. This responds to a suggestion recently put forth by NCSHPO members that the NPS sponsor historic context studies to assist in cultural resource evaluations in some key subjects where a national context study would be especially useful. Once a topic for the model is selected the theme study in the Multiple Property Submission format and some sample nominations will be prepared under contract, the goal being to involve recognized scholars and cultural resource professionals with expertise in the subject to produce the best possible study and sample nominations. The theme study and sample nominations will be made available to SHPOs and others in the preservation partnership for use in evaluating and documenting similar resources both for NHL designation and the National Register, thus increasing the value, relevance, and usefulness of theme studies nationwide. SHPOs and others will be encouraged to prepare additional nominations for NHL designation and National Register listing and to use the context study to identify eligible properties that may be affected by federal projects, thus facilitating the Section 106 process.

The NPS already works in partnership with SHPOs and others in a variety of additional ways aimed at increasing NHL designations. It has been a standard practice to ask for SHPOs and subject-area experts to recommend properties for NHL designation when theme studies are conducted. In the past year, the NPS has contracted with state historic preservation offices in Delaware, Indiana, Iowa, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin to prepare 13 nominations in the Underground Railroad theme study. Another is being done

at the expense of the state, and two more by private groups. NHL nominations for a variety of other properties are being underwritten by private non-profit organizations, property owners, and even an architectural firm in charge of the restoration of one building. In Connecticut, the SHPO and the American Institute of Architects chapter have cosponsored NHL nominations. The Texas and the New York SHPOs are also sponsoring nominations in 1997.

The active NHL theme studies, several of which have been mandated by Congress, are all partnership endeavors. The Newberry Library in Chicago is in charge of the Labor theme study. The theme study on large dams funded by the Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation is being coordinated by the Public Works Historical Association working with top notch scholars. Archeological theme studies like those on the Contact Period in the Northeast, the Village Sites of the Middle Missouri, the Earliest Americans, and Archeology of the Underground Railroad, have been or are being carried out in cooperation with a wide variety of partners. The Society for American Archaeology has been a long-time partner in all of the theme studies for archeological resources, and it has a standing committee to review all NHL nominations that include archeological resources.

The NPS wants to strengthen its ties with other professional organizations such as the Society of Architectural Historians and the Organization of American Historians and with colleges and universities and to assure that the results of studies are more widely available. The University of Oklahoma Press has published the Contact in the Northeast theme study as a book. Their interest and cooperation make historic contact one of the most widely available NHL theme studies. Some of the individual NHL nominations

*Graham Cave
NHL, Montgomery
County, MO. This
was the first site
showing the devel-
opment of Eastern
Archaic cultures
within the Paleo-
Indian time range.
Its artifacts date
from 8000 BC.
Courtesy NPS.*



Pinehurst Country Club in Pinehurst NHL, Pinehurst, NC. This NHL was designated in June, 1996. Photo by Paul Barton.



in that study have been published in professional journals. Plans are being made for a published guide to NHLs. The goal is to get NHL documentation and information on these very important properties published to make it available to scholars and the general public as well as to the preservation community. This will enhance the relevance of the program and encourage the preservation of important resources by bringing their values to the attention of the public.

In an exciting new approach, University of Washington professor, Dr. Gail Dubrow, has developed a proposal on her own initiative and is seeking funding from a variety of sources for the University of Washington to carry out a theme study to identify historic places reflecting the contributions of Japanese Americans. Dr. Dubrow and her students would do much of the work in cooperation with a number of partners. The NPS welcomes proposals for studies on other topics where the sponsor would contribute support or take the lead in finding the money to make them possible.

Right now, only about 25 new NHLs are designated each year. The biggest challenges for the NHL Survey are to make the designation process more accessible, find additional sources of funding and support for studies, and assure that theme studies and nominations meet high standards of scholarship and result in the designation of only clearly nationally-significant properties with high integrity. Distinguishing which properties are truly of national significance is sometimes difficult, especially if a theme study has not or cannot be conducted because of funding limitations. Advocates of designation for a particular property

may be frustrated when the NPS responds that the documentation does not support a claim of national significance. SHPOs deal with similar challenges when they are approached by those who seek National Register listing for properties that may not have significance or integrity. The task is made more difficult because theme studies have not been conducted in most subjects.

The NPS urges those interested in preparing NHL nominations to consult the

NPS staff in the NHL Survey in Washington or the NPS regional offices assigned to the NHL program. These individuals can provide information on whether relevant theme studies have been conducted or are underway, identify properties that have previously been considered for or already designated as NHLs to which the property should be compared, and provide preliminary evaluations. The National Register Information System is another source of information. National Register documentation for listed resources should be reviewed to avoid duplication of effort. Early consultation with the NPS staff for information and preliminary evaluations will help avoid frustrations later on in the process.

Sometimes it is necessary to ask scholars with expertise in a subject area for assistance in evaluating the national significance of properties whose importance is not clear. If a property is not eligible for NHL designation, supporters are urged to seek National Register listing if it appears to be of state or local importance and is not already registered.

The NPS is committed to expanding participation in the NHL program and to making NHL theme studies and NHL documentation widely available for a variety of uses. This must be done while assuring that NHL designation is reserved for only those cultural resources that clearly are of exceptional value in illustrating the history of the nation.

Carol D. Shull is Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places and Chief of the National Historic Landmarks Survey.