Heritage Matters- January/February 2008

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Two New Parks Illustrate Nation’s Difficult Histories

Brian D. Joyner / National Park Service

In 2006 and 2007, two new national parks were added to the National Park System that illustrate the nation’s difficult histories: Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site in Colorado and the African Burial Ground National Monument in New York. Both sites highlight painful moments in the nation’s history as it relates to diverse communities in the U.S. and how those communities played a role in the preservation of the sites. As National Park Service Director Mary Bomar mentioned in her remarks at the dedication of Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, “The history of this great nation is not complete without an understanding and respect for the tragedies that affect our national consciousness.”

Dedicated as the 391st park unit on April 28, 2007, Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site in Colorado memorializes the site of the 1864 attack of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians by 700 United States soldiers. The attack at a village along the Sand Creek of primarily women and children resulted in over 150 Indian deaths. The event was viewed as unnecessary and excessive by many military officials and civilians, and was condemned by Congressional investigators as a massacre. The development of the Sand Creek Massacre site was a collaborative effort between NPS, the state of Colorado, and four local tribes, who worked to define the boundaries of the site. Oral traditions and archeological and documentary evidence did not always coincide, but an eventual compromise on a boundary was reached. The dedication ceremony was attended by descendants of massacre victims, federal, state, and local officials, as well as members of the related tribes and NPS officials.

Similarly, another site related to difficult aspects of the nation’s history became the 390th Park unit. The African Burial Ground National Monument became a national park in February 2006. Located in lower Manhattan, this site is the largest and oldest African cemetery in North America. An estimated 15,000 free and enslaved Africans were buried at the site during the 17th and 18th centuries. The burial ground had been covered beneath nearly 25 feet of infill before its accidental discovery with the excavation of a General Services Administration...
Two New Parks CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“The history of this great nation is not complete without an understanding and respect for the tragedies that affect our national consciousness.”

MARY BOMAR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DIRECTOR

building site in 1991. The discovery sparked a groundswell of grassroots efforts to memorialize the site. Archeological investigations resulted in new information about the lifeways of free and enslaved Africans in colonial New York. Anthropological research performed at Howard University revealed the impact of strenuous work regimes, malnourishment, and genetic background of those interred.

The African Burial Ground National Monument held its official dedication on October 5, 2007, attended by Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, actor Sidney Poitier, NPS officials, and members of the New York preservation community.

The inclusion of these sites in the National Park System is a part of the effort to increase the awareness of the role of various cultural groups in the shaping of our nation’s collective history. Sand Creek Massacre NHS superintendent Alden Miller summed it with: “We repeat difficult histories so that difficult histories will not be repeated.”


Paha Sapa: Ancestral Homeland of the Lakota

Rhonda Buell Schier / Mount Rushmore National Memorial

“Why is there a tipi here?” asked a visitor upon arrival to Mount Rushmore National Memorial. “These are two completely different stories…”

This comment signals an opportunity for National Park Service interpreters to engage visitors in the exploration of American history from multiple points of view. As people of wide-ranging diversity arrive at Mount Rushmore to discover our nation’s history, the rangers help them investigate the human experience from different perspectives with an appreciation for the contributions of the many cultures of our country. Indeed, why is there a tipi in the foreground of the giant sculpted portraits of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt?

The answer is in the towering granite cliffs of Rushmore Rock, in the forest of ponderosa pine, in the streams of Grizzly Gulch, along the rugged path in Starling Basin, and in the vivid blue sky that serves as the canopy to this “island in the plains.” This is the Paha Sapa—the hills of black—an area the Lakota have considered sacred for centuries, “the heart of all that is.” To the Lakota, the Black Hills are a part of Mother Earth and Father Sky from which all life comes and to whom all life returns. The oral histories tell of this kinship with nature. Nicholas Black Elk, the Oglala Lakota holy man said, “It is the story of all life that is holy and good to tell of us two-leggeds sharing with the four-leggeds and the wings of the air and all green things, for these are children of one another and their father is one spirit.”

The interpretive rangers and chief met with tribal elders to discuss the elders’ vision for education and interpretation at Mount Rushmore. In addition, the staff hosted tribal recreation leaders during their planning charrettes to find ways to encourage Lakota and other tribes to improve connections to their ancestral homeland. Through other interpretive programs, Mount Rushmore encourages the various ethnic groups that use the park to perform art and music, practice language skills, and present their histories. There is even an academic research center where teachers, historians, and scholars explore stories of heritage and ancestral memories through historic sites and historic documents.

Mount Rushmore is small compared to parks such as Yellowstone National Park and Glacier National Park, but within its boundaries is an ecosystem that sculptor Gutzon Borglum described as a “veritable garden of the Gods.”

The Lakota tipi near Mount Rushmore National Monument provides an opportunity for NPS rangers to discuss the Native American heritage associated with the area. Courtesy of Rhonda Schier.

Long before Borglum embossed the four presidents along the skyline, American history was already present among the people of the first nations. The indigenous people turned to the animals, plants and landscape for food, medicine, and spirituality, enabling them to sustain their cultures.

At Mount Rushmore, the stories of our nation’s diverse heritage are not just honored in granite, but in cultural memory and practices.

DID YOU KNOW? November is American Indian Heritage Month. (See more preservation-related commemorations and special events on page 11)

NPS INITIATIVES

HERITAGE MATTERS
Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits Help Rehabilitate Jackie Robinson Ballpark

Angela Shearer / National Park Service

The Jackie Robinson Ballpark, a.k.a. City Island Ballpark, is just one of the approximately 35,000 projects which have been successfully rehabilitated under the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program since its inception in the 1970s. Administered by the National Park Service, in partnership with State Historic Preservation Offices and the Internal Revenue Service, this program offers a 20% Federal tax credit toward the cost of rehabilitating historic, income-producing buildings. Rehabilitation projects certified for tax credits must follow the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, which allow a structure to return to a historic use or be adapted for a new contemporary use while preserving those portions or features that are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.

Reflecting the broad range of America’s cultural and ethnic diversity, the program includes buildings and structures of every period, size, style, and type. Rehabilitated properties include offices, schools, hospitals, theaters, houses, apartment buildings, hotels, churches, commercial buildings, farms, warehouses, and even ballparks.

Between May 2001 and April 2005, rehabilitation was undertaken to modernize the ballpark for continued use while maintaining the relatively small scale and unique open-ended feel of the facility. Prior to rehabilitation, the baseball field had remained in the same general configuration since it was laid out in 1919. However, the only remaining historic structure was the circa 1946 grandstand. The original segregated seating area for African Americans along the first base line had been removed from the site by 1980 and replaced with a non-historic, wood-frame maintenance building. Clubhouses for the home and visiting teams, and concrete bleachers, which lined the perimeter of the field, dated from the 1970s and 1980s.

During the rehabilitation, the existing grandstands were retained and repaired. Likewise, the clubhouses were repaired and concession areas and bathrooms were upgraded with new mechanical and electrical systems. Compatible ramps and railings were added or upgraded for accessibility throughout the park. The press box and dugouts were reconstructed to their original appearance. The maintenance building was demolished and replaced with a reconstruction of the 1946 segregated seating area. Although the level of reconstruction undertaken by Jackie Robinson Ballpark is never required in a rehabilitation tax credit project, if such work is undertaken, it must be based on historic documentation and must not create a false sense of historical development. The reconstructed segregated seating area adds an interpretive feature that helps to educate the public about Robinson’s remarkable achievement. With the financial assistance of the tax incentives program, the rehabilitation of the Jackie Robinson Ballpark ensures the continued enjoyment of one of America’s favorite pastimes while preserving a site that marks a milestone in American history.

For more information about the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program, visit http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/index.htm

The City Island Ballpark

Among the oldest surviving major league spring training sites in Florida, the City Island Ballpark is located on a small island in the Halifax River across from the business district of Daytona Beach. On March 17, 1946, Jackie Robinson became the first African American to play in a regularly scheduled professional baseball game that featured a major league team when Moses Fleetwood Walker played for the Toledo Blue Stockings in the 1880s. The ballpark was renamed Jackie Robinson Ballpark in the 1990s to honor the man who broke baseball’s color barrier. The park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 22, 1998, and is still used to host minor-league baseball clubs in the Florida State League.

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Documenting the Pine Nut Harvest at Nellis Air Force Base

Terri McBride / Nevada State Historic Preservation Office

A unique joint project, created in conjunction with Nellis Air Force Base (AFB) outside of Las Vegas, tribal consultants from the region, and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (Nevada SHPO), produced the first Department of Defense (DOD)-State Historic Preservation Office collaborative multimedia work in the nation, the documentary “Gathering Devah: An Ancient Pine Nut Harvest Tradition.” With the financial and logistical support of Nellis AFB, Great Basin Native Americans were reunited with the Kawich Range in central Nevada for the first time in more than 60 years. This area has restricted access since acquisition of the land in the 1940s by Department of Defense for military training purposes.

In 1996, Nellis AFB developed a program to systematically consult with Native American representatives from 17 tribes on environmental and cultural issues. The tribal consultants had been requesting something like this documentary from Nellis AFB for several years. When funding was secured in 2005, the Nevada SHPO became involved in the project. In October 2005, Nellis AFB organized a trip for their Native American consultants to Kawich Range, located within the Nevada Test and Training Range, for a traditional pine nut harvest. The area has been under restricted access due to security and safety since 1941, and as a result, is virtually unchanged. This meant that for 40 years tribal groups had to conduct the traditional pine-nut harvest in surrounding ranges.

The Kawich Range harvest event was recorded and developed as a documentary, written in consultation with the Nevada SHPO staff. The video includes interviews with harvesters, discussions about cultural topics, the performance of traditional songs by Great Basin Native groups, and an outing to ancestral places with tribal youth. These places were identified through oral histories and historical accounts written by early ethnographers.

Pine nuts, from the Pinus monophylla tree, have been a winter staple for Great Basin people for centuries. The autumn pine-nut harvest is considered a joyous, socially bonding occasion. As renowned ethnographer Margaret Wheat wrote in Survival Arts of the Paiutes, “For the Indians of Nevada, pine nut time was the most important time of the year. Religion was combined with play, work with happiness.”

The pine-nut harvest cycle for the Great Basin Indians begins with a spring pine cone blessing in the pine groves, to ensure a productive growing season, followed by a late summer “scouting” visit to locate the best cones (which hold the nuts), and then the fall harvest, when another blessing takes place. Families look forward to the harvest outing as special time with each other, when dances, songs, and oral traditions related to the pine-nut harvest are passed down to younger people.

Native American consultants from the 17 neighboring tribes for Nellis AFB recognize the importance of continuing the traditional pine-nut harvest in the Great Basin and their role as stewards to the historic resources at the Nevada Test and Training Range. “Gathering Devah” was an opportunity for the Nellis AFB cultural resources staff, the Air Force, and tribes to document and preserve this ancient harvest tradition for future generations. The ethnographic documentary premiered in June 2007 in Las Vegas. The 30-minute documentary was produced by D&I Productions and will be available to Nevada school groups, tribes, libraries, museums, and other research outlets.

For more information about the documentary and the preservation efforts at the Nevada Test and Training Range, contact Terri McBride, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, 775/684-3445.

For more information about the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program, visit http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/index.htm

A camera crew records the first pine-nut harvest in 60 years on the Kawich Range for the Great Basin Indians. Courtesy of Terri McBride.
National Register Nominations
Caridad de la Vega / National Conference for State Historic Officers / Rustin Quaide / National Park Service

Pocahontas Island Historic District
The Pocahontas Island Historic District in Petersburg, Virginia, dates from the mid-18th century. Located on the north side of the Appomattox River, Pocahontas was a free African American commercial and residential community during the antebellum period. Descendants of the original free black community still reside in the district. Pocahontas Island Historic District contains an abundance of archeological sites dating from the island’s prehistoric period through the 20th century, and contains extant buildings from the antebellum period.

Pocahontas was platted in 1749 and established as a town in 1752. Shortly after, a bridge linking the island to the mainland was constructed. While most African Americans were enslaved during the antebellum period, there were free blacks in the South. In 1750, 310 free blacks lived in Petersburg, by 1860 there were 3,224. After Nat Turner’s slave rebellion in 1831, an already difficult environment became even more so, with free blacks forced to register with local authorities. Many of them flocked to Pocahontas for a measure of safety, prosperity, and independence. After the Civil War, more newly freed African Americans migrated to Pocahontas in large numbers, drawn by the existing black community and employment opportunities.

William and Mary Hosmer House
Located in Auburn, New York, the William and Mary Hosmer House is a two-story, vernacular Greek Revival-style house, and was home to Reverend Hosmer during his career as an abolitionist, editor of the Northern Christian Advocate, and participant in the local Underground Railroad network in Auburn. Hosmer was minister of the Waterloo Methodist Episcopal Church from 1842-1863, and later became editor of the Northern Christian Advocate. Because his radical abolitionist views conflicted with the policies of the Methodist General Conference, he left that newspaper to start his own publication, the Northern Independent, which he published from 1864-65.

Hosmer wrote several texts against slavery. His reform principles extended beyond abolitionism to include the temperance movement and women’s education. The house was listed as part of the Freedom Trail, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Central New York. Multiple Property Submission.

Located in Auburn, New York, this two-story Greek Revival House belonged to abolitionist and editor William Hosmer. Courtesy of N. Todd.

Rev. J. Edward Nash, Sr. House
The Rev. J. Edward Nash Sr., House was the residence of Buffalo’s most prominent African American leader, Rev. J. Edward Nash, Sr., during the first half of the 20th century. Courtesy of C. Ross.

Rev. Nash was a community leader and civil rights activist who helped establish local offices of the Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He started the Buffalo Urban League to assist African American families arriving from the South, in their transition to city life in the North. From 1925-1957, he resided in this “two-decker” Queen Anne house located in a traditionally African American neighborhood.

For more information about the National Register visit http://www.nps.gov/
Celebrating Diversity: Arlington and Jamestown at 400

May 2007

In Arlington, a new community project asks residents, “How has the current ‘face’ of Virginia and Arlington changed since the settlement of Jamestown by the English 400 years ago?”

After much deliberation on how best to locally commemorate the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, Arlington established the Arlington Committee on Jamestown. The mission of the project is to record for future generations oral history interviews of Arlington residents, to share their history and memories, and to encourage residents to explore and enrich future generations. The Arlington Heritage Alliance, a local non-profit historic preservation advocacy group, also participated as a consultant to the project and provided volunteers to conduct oral history interviews, most of whom are professionals in the field of history and historic preservation.

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The interviews have become part of the permanent collection of the Virginia Room at the Arlington County Public Library, the central repository for the county’s historical resources.

Interview excerpts and audio files of some of the interviews are already available online, with more being added as they become available. Visit their website at <http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/libraries/sites/heritage.aspx> for more information and upcoming events.

The diversity of people in Arlington, Virginia was highlighted in oral histories and other documentation projects for the 400th anniversary of the settlement of Jamestown. Courtesy of Arlington County Public Library.

A troubled past...

The National Grand Temple has seen hard times before. Built in 1913, it was the first of three buildings erected by the Mosaic Templars. Two more structures were added on the same block—the Annex, built in 1918, and the State Temple, built in 1921, both provided additional office space for the growing organization. Unfortunately, like many businesses during the Great Depression, the Mosaic Templars were forced out of business. The original plan was to restore the Mosaic Templars of America National Grand Temple at the corner of West Ninth and Broadway Streets in downtown Little Rock. Subsequent to the fire, the Department of Arkansas Heritage developed a plan for a new structure almost twice the size of the original building, with expanded state-of-the-art exhibit space and educational facilities for school groups.

Rising Out of the Ashes: The Mosaic Templars Cultural Center Continues Despite Devastating Fire

A fire destroyed the historic Mosaic Templars of America National Grand Temple in Little Rock, Arkansas, on March 27, 2005. This building was to house the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center (MTCC), a museum of the Department of Arkansas Heritage. The center is dedicated to telling the story of the African American experience in Arkansas. MTCC’s name is taken from the Mosaic Templars of America, an African American fraternal organization founded in Little Rock in 1888. While the fire destroyed the original building, it did not deter the development of the museum. The staff is working on exhibits, creating educational materials including loan boxes and lesson plans, and preserving Arkansas’s African American past through an ever-growing collection of artifacts while a new museum building is being constructed.

The exhibits, educational programs, and collections of the MTCC focus on all aspects of life for African Americans in Arkansas, with emphasis on business, politics, and the arts. The exhibits highlight fraternal organizations as well as small businesses and entrepreneurs in Little Rock and throughout the state. No museum of African American history and culture would be complete without a discussion of the struggle for civil rights. MTCC focuses on the struggle for integration in Arkansas before and after the Little Rock Central High School Crisis of 1957. The exhibits shed light on other lesser-known aspects of the Civil Rights Movement in Arkansas, as well.

The educational component of the museum plan is critical to the mission of MTCC. Education Director, Kyla McDaniel, developed lesson plans and outreach programs for students, teachers, and the general public based on her experience as a classroom teacher. These lesson plans and other materials fill a gap in the teaching of Arkansas history in grades K-12. All educational materials developed by the Education staff meet the Arkansas Department of Education Curriculum Frameworks and Standards. While the museum’s collection is rapidly growing, it is still relatively small and in need of donations. The museum is interested in acquiring photographs, manuscripts, ephemera, and three-dimensional objects.

The Mosaic Templars Cultural Center is scheduled to open to the public in mid-2008.

For more information about the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center, visit the website www.mosaictemplarscenter.com or call MtCC at 501-683-3593.
Colorado’s Lincoln Hills Resort and Historic Winks Lodge

Cheryl Armstrong / James P. Beckwourth Mountain Club

To recreate was enjoying the long, cool, summer seasons, numbering as many as 5,000 people on the weekends. One of reasons for the volume of visitors was Winks Lodge.

Throughout its 82-year history, Winks Lodge had become a summer “salon”; luminaries such as Harlem band leaders Duke Ellington and Count Basie. A haven for local and national intellectuals, Winks Lodge also became a summer “salon”; luminaries such as Harlem Renaissance writer Zora Neale Hurston and others gave private readings at the lodge.

Winks Lodge: a cultural hotspot

Many famous African American entertainers and musicians from the 1930s through the 1950s visited the Lincoln Hills resort. According to several accounts, Winks Lodge guests included singer Lena Horne, and band leaders Duke Ellington and Count Basie. A haven for local and national intellectuals, Winks Lodge also became a summer “salon”; luminaries such as Harlem Renaissance writer Zora Neale Hurston and others gave private readings at the lodge.

The original resort extended over 100 acres. By the 1950s, a burgeoning African American middle class in need of places to recreate was enjoying the long, cool, summer seasons, numbering as many as 5,000 people on the weekends. One of reasons for the volume of visitors was Winks Lodge.

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For more information about the club and Winks Lodge, visit http://www.beckwourthmountainclub.org or call 303-831-0564. For information about the Colorado Historical Society’s State Historical Fund (SHF) http://www.coloradohistory.org or contact Laurie Dunklee, SHF Public Relations Specialist, at 303-866-2049.

Conferences and Events

Conferences

August 2008

AAAM Annual Conference 2008: Reflect, Reinvest, Revitalize!
August 27–30 2008 / Chicago, Illinois

The Association of African American Museums (AAAM) will hold its 2008 Annual Conference August 27–30, 2008, in Chicago, Illinois. This year’s theme “Reflect, Reinvest, Revitalize,” will focus on watershed exhibitions featuring prominent curatorial practices, successful development campaigns that reinvest in the growth of an organization, and programs that revitalize professionalism in all manner of museum operations.

For more information and access to the proposal form, visit www.blackmuseums.org/prodev/2008_call_for_proposals.htm.

September 2008

2008 AASLH Annual Meeting
September 9–12, 2008 / Rochester, New York

The National Trust for Historic Preservation will host its National Preservation Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma, October 21–25, 2008. This year’s theme is Preservation in Progress. The Trust will have a broad range of proposals that include culture, subject matter, and geographic diversity.

For information on early registration, visit the Trust’s Conference website at www.nthpconference.org/information/.

October 2008

National Trust’s National Preservation Conference
October 21–25, 2008 / Tulsa, Oklahoma

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Preservation-related Commemorations

African American Heritage Month / February
Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month / May
Historic Preservation Month / May
Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month / September 15–October 15
American Indian Heritage Month / November
Heritage Matters

News of the Nation’s Diverse Cultural Heritage

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Arlington and Jamestown at 400
The Mosaic Templars Cultural Center Rebuilt
Lincoln Hills Resort and Historic Winks Lodge

About Heritage Matters

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