National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

NPS History Collection

NPS Women Cartes de Visite Collection



Martha B. Aikens. NPS History Collection photo.

Martha B. Aikens

Various

1972-c. 2007

- Born in 1949 in Picayune, Mississippi.
- Earned a B.A. in education from Alcorn A&M State University in 1971. Worked briefly as a social worker.
- In 1972, became NPS intake trainee, one of 11 minorities and women in the class of 53 people.
- Became the first full-time, permanent Black ranger at Everglades when she was hired as interpretive specialist.
- At Everglades, met with some staff resistance and white visitors would sometimes refuse to take her guided walks.
- In 1978, transferred as manager to Gateway National Recreation Area, supervising more than 160 employees.
- Completed DOI Manager Development Program.
- Spent 3 months in Tanzania teaching conservation education for NPS Office of International Affairs.
- In 1980, appointed as the first woman and first Black superintendent at Castillo de San Marcos and Fort Matanzas national monuments, becoming the second Black woman superintendent in the NPS.
- In 1983, transferred as an interpretive specialist to the Washington Office.
- Became first woman and first Black superintendent of the Mather Employee Development Center in 1988.
- In 1991, became the first woman superintendent of Independence National Historical Park.
- Organized and chaired the 1991 NPS Women's Conference.
- Received the DOI's Distinguished Service award in 2000.
- In 2002, became NPS chief of Servicewide training and development.
- Retired c. 2007.

This research was made possible in part by a grant from the National Park Foundation.