

EXPLORING A COMMON PAST

TYPICAL STONE COTTAGE
(ACCOMMODATING 12 PERSONS)
PROPOSED FOR INDIAN GARDENS



*Interpreting Women's History in the
National Park Service*

1996

Cover:

Mary Colter Stone Cottage Drawing.
Grand Canyon National Park #16682

This booklet is the product of a joint effort between the National Park Service and the Organization of American Historians. Page Putnam Miller, Director of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, coordinated the effort. Others participating in the project were: Professor Gail Dubrow, Associate Professor of Urban Design and Planning at the University of Washington; Professor Sara Evans, Professor of History at the University of Minnesota; Danyelle A. Nelson, Historian at the City Point Unit of Petersburg National Battlefield; Dwight T. Pitcaithley, Chief Historian of the National Park Service; and Sandy Weber, Interpretive Specialist, National Park Service.

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Resource Guide Series

In the last three decades there has been a major transformation in the study of American history. The concern for a more accurate and comprehensive view of women is part of this new scholarship, which has dramatically changed the way we look at the past. The social history scholarship of the 1960s and 1970s made long-dominant patterns of historical inquiry inadequate and historians expanded the boundaries of their research to encompass not only great men and great events but also ordinary people and everyday life. So profound have been these changes that the 1993 committee of scholars charged with incorporating this recent research into a new National Park Service [NPS] thematic framework quickly concluded that the "new American history" could not be accommodated by appending new categories to the existing framework. What was required was no less than a reconceptualization of the framework—questioning old categories, acknowledging varieties of significance, and embracing the multiplicity and complexity of the human experience.

This booklet is the first in a series designed to assist historic site managers, historians and interpreters in the ongoing process of reviewing and evaluating interpretive programs and media and adjusting them in light of recent scholarship.

Partnerships in Interpreting Women's History

On May 31, 1995, the National Park Service hosted a small working meeting at Lowell National Historical Park to develop a vision for the role of the National Park Service in the research, identification, interpretation, and commemoration of the contributions and experiences of American women. This initiative built on conversations that began the previous summer at Bryn Mawr College during the first conference ever held on women and historic preservation. Equally important, however, in stimulating the meeting were the recommendations in the "Humanities In the Parks Report" (by the National Park System Advisory Board) and the conceptualization of history in the revision of the National Park Service's thematic framework.

Marie Rust, Field Director of the Northeast Region of the National Park Service and one of the key sponsors of the working meeting, expressed in her opening remarks a hope that specialists from academe and Park Service staff could form a "learning circle." The theme of partnerships that figured so prominently in the Humanities in the Parks report could, as Rust presented it, be an opportunity for NPS staff to "expand our learning, and to reciprocate by sharing with you some information about the Park Service so we can effectively move forward together." The goals of the meeting were to establish a shared understanding of what women's history is, to consider the current status of women's history in the national parks, to explore new ways for scholars of women's history and NPS staff to work together, to agree on a vision of the role of the National Park Service in the preservation, commemoration, and interpretation of the history of American women, and, finally, to create an action plan for achieving that vision.

The experiences of the group working on the women's history initiative in the NPS was similar to that of other groups seeking to incorporate recent scholarship into public history. The group at Lowell began by discussing where the NPS is today regarding the integration of women's history into its interpretive and preservation programs and then considered where the NPS should be going. Vivien Rose, the historian at Women's Rights National Historical

Park, presented a broad overview of how the National Park Service is currently dealing with women's history. She noted that some parks include women only as they were mothers, wives, or daughters of a great men, such as Abigail Adams or Mary Todd Lincoln. Other parks acknowledge women only if they were heroines whose accomplishments are widely recognized, such as Clara Barton. An increasing number of parks are beginning to insert women in what Rose referred to as "sidebars"—for example, women nurses at Civil War battlefield sites. Thus, Rose noted, even though the inclusion of women's history is indispensable to understanding the American experience, most parks have yet to achieve the full integration of women in their interpretive programs. Rose concluded by asserting that the whole landscape changes when women are included—indeed, the whole of history changes as more information is brought to light and there are more letters, more diaries, and more evidence for a more complete history.

With all federal agencies, including the National Park Service, facing reduced budgets and staff, the discussion of an action plan focused primarily on initiatives that would require only limited expenditures. The group identified many possibilities that ranged from the forming of relationships between parks and nearby colleges and universities to the development of resource guides. One concrete result of the meeting was an Organization of American Historians initiative in which three academic scholars and three National Park Service historians have developed this resource booklet for NPS units to assist the integration of women's history into their preservation and interpretive programs. This resource guide can be a beginning point for those seeking information on women's history and assistance in evaluating current interpretive programs. Another goal is to offer suggestions for how to look at properties with an eye for recognizing and incorporating women's pasts.

Many historians have noted that in the last three decades the field of women's history has been one of the most productive and innovative fields within the discipline. Linda Gordon, Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin, has written for the American Historical Association a booklet titled *U.S. Women's History*. She states that women's history "does not simply add women to the pictures we

already have of the past, like painting additional figures into the spaces of an already completed canvas." Instead, Gordon writes, women's history "requires repainting the earlier pictures, because some of what was previously on the canvas was inaccurate and more of it misleading." Eric Foner, Professor of History at Columbia University and a former President of the Organization of American Historians, has made a similar point, echoed frequently by participants in the National Park Service working meeting, that women's history has forced historians not simply to compensate for the previous neglect of one-half of the population, but to rethink some of their basic premises.

This resource guide has four sections: a brief review of women's history scholarship, including seven of the key themes; how to protect the built environment associated with women; ideas about assessing a park's interpretation of women's history; and a bibliography of key books in the field of women's history and cultural resource management.

Women's History Scholarship

The scholarship on the history of American women has been one of the richest and most prolific fields of inquiry in recent decades. Its findings offer the National Park Service an opportunity to develop a sweeping—and far more accurate—interpretive approach that will both dramatically enrich and enliven the interpretation of historic sites as well as provide new ways to identify future sites. The key themes of this scholarship bring into focus the dynamic relationships between public and private actions, between the formal realms of government, business, or military and the infrastructures of daily life and the basic social and economic structures that undergird them. In doing so these concepts also clarify the emergence of voluntary associations at the intersections of public and private life that have been critical to the expansion of democracy and the definition of active citizenship.

To clarify these implications, this section of the resource guide points to seven of the key themes in women's history scholarship with examples that illustrate their application to NPS sites. This is just the barest introduction, however, as the examples for each theme could be multiplied many times over.

Principal Themes in Women's History: an Applied Approach

1. Work: To understand women's daily lives, historians have set aside narrow definitions of work as paid labor, generally outside the home, and have looked closely at the full range of women's productive activities both inside and outside the home. This expanded definition of work has led to major reevaluations of the divisions of labor—between women and men, adults and children, master or mistress and servants or slaves—of changing definitions and technologies of housework, of informal economies based on barter and trade, and of the gendered expectations imbedded in the emergence of industrialism and urbanization.

Since very few women have been “ladies of leisure,” almost all the historic parks offer opportunities for interpreting women's work

experiences. Whether it is in an industrial setting, such as women's work in the textile mills of Lowell, or hotels at Yosemite National Park where women had major responsibilities, or a fort where women ran the kitchen and laundries, or homes in which wives, immigrant servant girls, or slave women performed the daily household tasks, the national parks have diverse opportunities for interpreting women's work experiences.

Many sites have unrealized potential for examining women's work and related themes such as the technology of housework and the changing role of the family. The conditions varied considerably, as did the technology available—from open fires to gigantic stoves, from spring houses to Bess Truman's "modern" red and green kitchen at the Harry S Truman National Historic Site. The National Park System also has various general stores—at Appomattox Courthouse National Historical Park, at Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, and at Salem Maritime National Historic Site, among others—where women bought supplies.

New dimensions of the past come into focus when the productive life of a household is examined. For example, at Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, where Van Buren spent his retirement years, the interpretive program discusses the Irish immigrant women whose work made life in the formal parlor possible. The staff does not interpret Van Buren in isolation from other social groups but rather stresses the theme of interdependence among those who shared that household space.

2. Family: Cultural definitions of womanhood and of appropriate female roles have generally centered on familial relationships—wife, mother, and daughter. As a result, the changing definition and structure of the family, both nuclear and extended, have been central concerns for historians of women, who examine household structure—for example, family size—as well as the relationship of families to society, such as looking at the family as a center of production or consumption. Whereas past histories focused on notable individuals and their families, historians now emphasize these individuals' relationships to other social groups in the household.

Scholars of the colonial family, such as John Demos, Professor of History at Yale University, posed such questions first to redefine the meaning of "family" itself, to consider the issues of family versus household, and to explore this historical reality. Historians further expanded these themes in studies of the slave family and the creation of African-American culture, which developed in spite of the constraints and cruelty of slavery. The family, of course, always exists in dynamic relationship to the rest of society. Motherhood raises questions about fatherhood, childhood socialization, education, and how society reproduces itself from generation to generation.

Ideals of the nineteenth-century middle class family, for example, can be studied at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield, Illinois, where the household ornaments reflect the fashions of the day plus a concern for maintaining contemporary standards of good taste while on a limited budget. The Boott Mill at Lowell National Historical Park illustrates a nontraditional family living situation in which young girls lived in a boarding house run by the mill. Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, with its Quaker Meetinghouse, birthplace "cottage," and one room school may reveal more about nineteenth century Iowa farm families than about the man who left the area at age six.

3. Life Cycle: Women's history, in conjunction with recent scholarship on the history of the family, has also highlighted the importance of life cycle. Such a focus unearths a plethora of themes that illuminate otherwise static interpretations: childhood, adolescence, courtship and marriage, childbirth, motherhood, old age, death, or the bodily experiences of puberty and adolescence, menopause, and "women's" diseases. Interpretive themes might include the tasks and games of childhood, the communal experience of childbirth (or the more isolated one on the frontier or later in a hospital), courtship patterns, schooling, and childhood labor.

Many sites offer opportunities to develop life cycle themes. The nineteenth century farmhouses in Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, for example, provided the setting for nearly every major event, ritual, and celebration of their residents' lives. At the

Todd House, part of Independence National Historical Park, Dolley Todd adapted to life as a young wife and mother, then as a widow who began the ritual of courting again. A number of sites exhibit wedding presents, yet the interpretation often focuses on a description of the item and not the rituals of the wedding celebration. Pipe Spring National Monument, which commemorates the Mormon settlement of the southwest territories, was also a favorite Mormon honeymoon spot. Most historic houses offer an array of possibilities for interpreting diverse customs regarding birthing, child care, adolescence, and courtship, as well as aging and death.

4. Ideologies About Women: Many of the path-breaking studies in the new women's history have explored societal definitions of "true womanhood" or being a "good wife." Such ideas are manifested in the wordings found on gravestones, in nineteenth and twentieth century popular magazines, in fiction, poems, and letters, and in the designs of fashionable clothing. Ideals tend to be articulated by those with the greatest access to authoritative means of publication—sermons, advice books, magazines—and in positions of considerable social and economic power. The relationship of these ideals to reality is complex, as these powerful models may persist in spite of or because of a very different reality.

For example, the ideal of "separate spheres" for men and women in the nineteenth century shaped architecture, furnishings, fashions, and reform activities among middle class women. Society did not simply impose separate spheres on women; educated women of the middle class helped create this distinct space. The system of separate spheres also justified additional denigration of and discrimination against women who, because of racial, religious, class, or ethnic status, did not conform to its tenets. Black women, slave or free, and women factory workers who were paid extremely low wages were considered sexually suspect; and most poor women were judged by middle class standards to be inadequate mothers.

In the twentieth century, images in popular magazines, television, and film are reflected in national parks. For example, at Eisenhower National Historic Site in Pennsylvania, Mamie Eisenhower's bedroom was ornately decorated in pink, gold, and khaki—in direct

contrast with Dwight Eisenhower's bedroom with its severe furniture and red oriental rug. San Antonio Missions National Historical Park reflects Roman Catholic ideas about women, while Natchez National Historical Park in Mississippi interprets Southern womanhood, both slave and free.

5. Dynamics of Difference: The differences in women's experiences—rooted in race, class, ethnicity, region, religion, and so forth—are primary themes in the scholarship on women's history for any given period. On the one hand, such factors sharply shaped women's experiences, making it impossible to present any single narrative as "women's history." At the same time, women's historians have shown that with each of these categories—and the histories they evoke such as slavery, immigration, and religious conversion—women's experiences differed, often sharply, from those of men. Because women constitute a subset of virtually every other social group, their history is as complex as the histories of the American people.

In telling the story of any group, we can ask the simple questions: where were the women? what did they do? what ideas or ideals about women affected their lives? In telling the stories of women at any particular place or time we can ask how those stories were different from each other and whether we have noted and interpreted the lives of ALL the women who were there at the time. Scholars have also noted that the images and metaphors of gender infuse public discourse on all manner of issues, revealing important new dimensions of popular conceptions of power as well as ideals such as liberty. Even at historic places where no women were present, there are many untapped opportunities for exploring societal expectations of men and changing definitions of masculinity in American history. In such male-oriented settings, the language participants used can be interpreted, adding depth as well as historical accuracy.

Differences in African American women's experiences are evident when one compares Boston's African American National Historic Site, where women were active in the abolitionist movement, with Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site in Virginia which reflects the life of business-oriented progressive woman. In the grand

houses within the National Park Service, the upstairs/downstairs themes reveal the divergent lives of the women of different classes who lived and worked there. The dynamics of difference are also reflected in the experiences of Native American women at Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site in Arizona, where Navajo and Anglo women interacted, and Pecos National Historical Park in New Mexico, where Pueblo Indians encountered Spanish missionaries.

6. Public Life: American political institutions were initially founded on the assumption that women—like children, slaves, and the insane—were not “fitted” for participation in public life. Women’s close association with domesticity, however, has meant only that they followed different paths into public life, not that women were excluded from the public domain. Indeed, by exploring the interactions of public and private spheres, the study of women’s history has revealed new dimensions of “political” life.

Beginning in the revolutionary era, women pioneered the formation of voluntary associations, laying the basis for that layer of “civil society” that is critical to the maintenance of an active democratic citizenry. Nineteenth century American politics proceeded along two different lines: electoral politics, not only exclusively male but also infused with images and rhetoric about manhood as the source of political allegiances that crossed class lines; and the politics of “influence,” primarily female and located in voluntary associations that became the seed bed for the social justice dimensions of progressive reform. The movements for women’s rights are part of the larger drama of American democracy in which numerous groups have broadened the definition of citizen and redefined the terrain of politics. Women’s participation in politics, however, has also taken many other forms. Through voluntary associations women have reshaped civic life, creating benevolent associations, missionary societies, reform and social service institutions—hospitals, orphanages, settlement houses— inventing professions such as social work, and feminizing others such as teaching. The community infrastructures that resulted broadened the arenas of civic action and civic education considerably, and over time they expanded accepted views of societal responsibility and the role of government.

Some of the examples of national parks that interpret the theme of women’s public contributions are Women’s Rights National Historical Park, site of the 1848 Women’s Rights Convention, and Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site in Washington, D.C., which was the home of the National Council of Negro Women. Still many other sites offer opportunities to discuss women’s public roles. For example, Clara Barton identified and marked 12,000 Union graves at what is now Andersonville National Historic Site in Georgia. At Ellis Island, the Daughters of the American Revolution provided supplies for immigrants detained on the island, and the National Council of Jewish Women found homes for unaccompanied women and girls. Women who lived in many of the houses located in national parks worked at settlement houses, participated in temperance organizations, were members of suffrage organizations or the League of Women Voters, and provided leadership to reform and philanthropic organizations.

7. Education: Until the late twentieth century, society has considered formal education less important for women than for men, and in many instances women have been denied access to institutions. Yet women have always been providers of education. In the colonial era, where literacy as well as vocational training were familial responsibilities, women taught their children and other young people in their households. Young girls learned basic household skills—food preparation, needlework, spinning, gardening, etc.—by taking on these tasks at an early age. In the revolutionary era, the debate about “woman’s place” in the new republic and the need for an educated citizenry led to a new emphasis on formal education for women in the middle and upper classes. To be “Republican mothers” capable of raising virtuous citizens, women claimed the importance of education for themselves.

Through the nineteenth century, women’s struggle for education took on many dramatic dimensions, ranging from the secret, and illegal, education of some slave women to the growth of female academies and colleges and the gradual feminization of the teaching profession. The rise of public education created an enormous demand for teachers that was increasingly filled by drawing on the skills of women, thus enlarging their “sphere” and opening

opportunities for travel and independence outside of marriage.

Opportunities to interpret women's contributions in the field of education are present at many parks. Homestead National Monument of America includes Freeman School, a one room school, which both illustrates the expansion of education and the feminization of the teaching profession. The Oaks, the home of Booker T. and Margaret Murray Washington, at Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site in Alabama, focuses on coeducational intellectual and vocational training reflecting women's leadership role. The influence of individual teachers can be seen at Jimmy Carter National Historic Site, which includes Plains High School where Miss Julia L. Coleman taught Carter. Her influence on the future president was so significant that Carter referred to her in his inaugural address.

Protecting Elements of the Built Environment and Cultural Landscape Associated with Women's History

Untapped opportunities remain for interpreting women's history at existing units of the National Park Service, since many places were acquired at a time when the activities and accomplishments of men defined what was significant about American history. New scholarship in women's history provides a foundation for recent efforts to develop a more accurate and complete picture of women's lives at historic properties. Yet this reevaluation of established sites needs to be combined with new efforts to identify and protect elements of the built environment and cultural landscape that are associated with female-specific historical experiences and activities. Cultural resources associated with women need to be fully incorporated into the preservation and interpretive plans of specific parks.

The section that follows offers some suggestions for enhancing the protection of cultural resources associated with women's history within existing parks and historic sites.

- Review primary sources and scholarly literature for their potential to illuminate not only the women's history associated with particular properties, but also for the details they may reveal about the ways women created, modified, and used the built environment and cultural landscape in the past. (The bibliography and women's history scholarship sections of this resource booklet could assist in this review.)
- Assess whether existing plans for managing cultural resources extend adequate protection to cultural resources associated with women's lives at historic properties.
- Evaluate the possibility of redrawing the boundaries of historic properties or entering into cooperative agreements with property owners at their periphery to enhance opportunities for interpreting women's history. An example of this would be homes near battlefields that served as field hospitals.

- Survey existing cultural resources that were devalued at a time when women's history was poorly understood to reconsider whether a new emphasis could be placed on protecting and interpreting sites associated with women.

- Reassess opportunities for protecting vernacular elements of the built environment or cultural landscape that have the power to illuminate gender differences in the division of labor or other aspects of daily life/common social experience.

Scholarship in women's history offers the reminder that the male-specific historical activities from which women were barred—such as electoral office and military service—have been valued more highly than female-specific ones. Yet these social biases need not be reinforced by the preservation, management, and interpretive decisions now being made at historic properties. Reevaluating women's contributions to history can become a goal when defining both the period of significance and major themes that will guide the interpretive plan and in setting a target date for the restoration of historic properties, particularly historic houses.

For example, at one historic house where both the husband and wife were significant figures in state politics, albeit in gender-segregated spheres, the husband's date of death was used to frame the period of significance for the historic property, despite the fact that his widow continued to live there for nearly two decades more. As a result, rooms the wife remodeled after her husband's death were declared outside the period of significance and converted for use as visitors' service areas. In other historic house museums, service areas such as attics and basements that have untapped potential for interpreting women's work and the history of domestic labor similarly have been appropriated for use as staff offices and storage. The new call for bringing women's history into the interpretive program suggests a need to reexamine gender biases embedded in the values that informed past decisions related to the protection of historic properties.

To date, women's history mostly has been presented at historic house museums. This is true not only of the national parks but of the work of the State Historic Preservation Offices. For both national parks and SHPOs, the larger project remains: namely, to widen the sphere for interpreting women's history beyond the home to fully recognize women's contributions in public realms, such as paid labor and community activity. Preservation planners, responsible for surveying and inventorying historic properties, can help to protect the built environment and cultural landscape associated with women's history by regularly consulting with specialists in women's history when designing surveys, whether they are defined by geographic area or theme, and by conducting surveys specifically designed to identify a wide range of property types significant in the history of women. Beyond the ubiquitous historic houses and women's club buildings now found on the national register, such surveys would add midwives' gardens, factories, organizational headquarters, schools, and the sites of strikes and public speeches. Women's participation in and promotion of the performing arts, as at Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts, are another field of activities seldom documented.

Assessing a Park's Interpretation of Women's History

Some Questions to Consider:

As American historians expand their exploration of the American past, so must National Park Service historians and interpreters continually examine interpretive programs and products in light of new scholarship. The following list of questions is intended to serve as a starting point for evaluating how history is interpreted in the National Park Service and exploring ways to enhance that interpretation in parks where women were represented historically. The desired outcome of the answers to these questions is not to force women's history into current interpretive programs but rather to ensure that women who did participate in the site's history are given an interpretive voice.

1. Examine the park's planning documents, such as the General Management Plan, Statement for Management, and Statement for Interpretation, for the park's interpretive focus and themes. Are these themes gender specific? For example, the primary theme at Fort Necessity National Battlefield is George Washington's role at the battle of Fort Necessity. That of Petersburg National Battlefield, on the other hand, is to interpret the siege of Petersburg, a much broader topic. Yet both of these battlefield sites, without disturbing their current thematic emphasis, may enlarge their regional and social interpretations so as to integrate women into the park story. Or, in another example, can the park broaden its educational emphasis from the actual politics at Independence Hall to the society—including women—that made the events in that building possible?

2. What is the tone of the park's exhibits, brochures, etc? Are women on the periphery of the story, if included at all? Or are women fully integrated? In other words, if one takes the "women's history" part out of the park's interpretation, is it still a complete story? If one or two women are discussed, does the park consider women's history "covered?" Is March the only time women's history is mentioned in the park? Are significant women treated as the exception, such as Clara Barton at Antietam or Phoebe Yates Pember at Richmond?

Does the park recognize that it is not just interpreting one single event, but the society that participated in it, the culture that made the event possible/probable? Even traditional “male” sites, such as military and political sites, can broaden their perspective so as to incorporate women’s history by interpreting the women who were also involved in or affected by the ideas or events interpreted at the park.

For example, battlefield sites could go beyond campaign studies to interpret the history of societies at war by including items such as letters men wrote from the battlefield to wives or mothers at home and the letters men received in return, the experiences of civilians in the area, or the aftermath of battle, and how it affected people in the area and wives back home. This approach expands the context of the battle, enhances the human dimension, and provides the visitor with a clearer sense of motivation on the part of the participants.

At locations of military encampments, such as Valley Forge National Historical Park or Morristown National Historical Park, parks can discuss the civilian women in the area as well as those who followed the army. Did local women contribute their support to the army or withhold it? Why?

3. Physical reminders of the past are powerful interpretive tools. What is in the park’s museum, curatorial collection, and archives? Does the scope of collections include women-related artifacts? Does the park make an effort to acquire items used or owned by women? For example, at the Wick House in Morristown National Historical Park a spinning wheel provides the opportunity to discuss women’s contributions to their homes, to their economy, and to the Revolutionary War. The “Silent Witness Doll” at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, left behind in the McLean family parlor, reminds visitors of the Civil War’s impact on civilians, including children.

4. What is in the park’s library? How much recent scholarship does it contain? Are park interpreters and historians encouraged to attend conferences, pursue new research, and so on in the area of women’s history? How does the park train new interpreters, both permanent and temporary, about women’s issues in history?

5. Look at the park’s educational programs, including “Junior Ranger” programs—how do they include and talk about women? What impressions do they leave children with? Is there a conscious effort made to impress upon children the contributions both sexes have made to history?

6. If the park has living history programs, are there female interpreters participating? Is it being done as accurately as possible? What roles are portrayed—do they help to illuminate the park’s themes and assist visitors to understand the full range of women’s impact on, involvement in, and reaction to the events and concepts associated with park resources?

If there are demonstrations, such as spinning or bread making, does the interpreter adequately portray the importance of women’s work to her family, the economy, and so on? Is there any discussion of how women’s contributions have changed over time?

7. Does the park sponsor any special events to commemorate women’s activities or contributions?

8. If the site has been established because of its association with a “great man,” how are his family and household discussed? Are there any references to his wife—her influence, role, contributions, etc.? From the beginning of its video presentation, the John Marshall House in Richmond, Virginia, establishes Polly Marshall as the primary influence on her more famous husband throughout their married life.

Does the park examine its central character’s relations with his children, family, etc.? How did they shape or influence him? What do relationships within the home indicate about society at that time? What about the people “behind the scenes”—servants and/or slaves? What were their positions in the household?

9. Language, whether in exhibits, site bulletins, or personal interpretation, is extremely important. Although subtle, the use of gender specific terms such as “men,” “he,” and so on in park literature carries a strong message.

10. Is every effort made to research women at the park? Just because most women did not leave written records does not indicate they did not do anything or that historic evidence does not exist. Are efforts made to research "the women behind the men?" Does the park look at records (census records, archeological evidence, etc.) to try to discover as much as possible about otherwise silent participants?

When talking about certain subjects, such as political history, how are those unable to participate mentioned? Is there discussion about the society, for example, how and why women were excluded from the process at this time? Did all women agree with this? If not, how did they demonstrate their displeasure? For example, women were excluded from the political activity at Independence Hall; still, those with the opportunity, such as Abigail Adams, supported or disapproved of their husbands' viewpoints. Women could demonstrate their support in other ways—their presence, their influence, by contributing money, spying, etc. And what about those even further removed from such endeavors—working class women, African American women, and so on?

11. What publications dealing with women's history does the park sell?

12. Does the park have contact with academic and other "outside" historians so that it is up to date with the latest scholarship, information, trends, and so on? Does the park continue to question and revise its established story as more evidence, and new interpretations of evidence, emerge? Does the park consider fully any possible biases in historic accounts and examine eyewitness accounts, which are often male, carefully for a hidden agenda?

13. If visitors ask what were women doing here/were there women here? are interpreters prepared with a knowledgeable answer?

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