

PREFACE

Museums have played vital roles in interpreting park resources and themes to the public. Like museums elsewhere, park museums are defined largely by the work of curators. Curators gather and care for collections of objects, record and study them, and use them in exhibits and other interpretive media. In the national parks work of this kind went on for years before any staff member received the title of curator, and many people with other titles—superintendents, rangers, naturalists, historians, archeologists, and clerical and custodial workers—still do such work. Conservators, museum registrars, exhibit designers, preparators, and technicians regularly collaborate with curators as different sorts of museum specialists. They are all part of curatorship to the extent that they help acquire, take care of, or use museum specimens. They have created much of the history in the pages that follow.

Arthur C. Allen conceived and initiated this study while chief of the Division of Museum Services at the National Park Service's Harpers Ferry Center. He hoped that a more complete picture of how curatorial work had developed in the Park Service might clarify long-standing problems his division faced. Ten months, he thought, should suffice for someone familiar with the background of the museum program to search out and compile a trustworthy digest of the facts. A purchase order dated August 3, 1978, outlined the project's proposed scope and provided for incidental expenses the research might entail. This writer promptly began work, but the sources proved much more voluminous and scattered than anticipated. Although the study gathered material Allen found useful, research and writing were far from complete when he transferred from the museum program to the Blue Ridge Parkway in 1983. Chief Curator Ann Hitchcock, who inherited the curatorial problems in acute form upon her appointment in 1980, encouraged continuation of the project.

It became apparent early that a review limited to curatorial matters in a narrow sense would fail to place them adequately in context. The curatorial imperatives had been so closely interwoven into the whole fabric of museum work in the parks that they resisted proper analysis in isolation. Consequently, this study first traces growth of the museum program as a whole. The first five chapters chronicle museum development in the national parks from the earliest park museums to 1982. The sixth chapter examines the distinctive development of furnished historic structure museums in the parks. The last three chapters focus more sharply on the curatorial aspects of park museums: the collections, their management, and their care.

The National Park Service History Collection in the Harpers Ferry Center Library was the principal source of data used in this study. What usefulness the resulting document has owes much to those responsible for the collection: David H. Wallace as the initiator, Richard W. Russell as its first curator, Ruthanne Heriot as special collection librarian, and David Nathanson as chief of HFC's Branch of Library, Archives, and Graphics Research. Nathanson's knowledge of the collection and its organization and his sustained professional helpfulness toward its use were reflected in the effective cooperation received from his staff, especially library technician Nancy Lee Potts and secretaries Beverley Foltz and Susan Myers.

Richard Russell made an additional important contribution by giving the writer access to diaries of his father, Carl P. Russell, and letters between his father and mother concerning day-to-day developments during critical formative periods of the Park Service museum program. These manuscripts valuably supplemented the carefully preserved and organized Carl Parcher Russell Papers in the archives of the Washington State University Library at Pullman. The writer acknowledges effective assistance from the chief of the library's Manuscripts-Archives Division in consulting this collection also.

Chief Curator Ann Hitchcock supported work on the study in numerous ways. She permitted continued use of office facilities, opened Curatorial Services Division files, reviewed drafts, and made many constructive suggestions. Members of her staff, especially Anthony M. Knapp, were also supportive. Art Allen and Thomas Vaughan took active interest in the project as long as they remained at Harpers Ferry and continued to review chapter drafts and provide helpful comments after moving to new responsibilities. In the division's Harpers Ferry unit all the staff curators including Richard Borges, Gordon Gay, Anne Jordan, Diana Pardue, and Suzanne Schell as well as museum specialist Donald Cumberland supplied needed data or offered leads in answer to the writer's frequent questions. In later stages John Hunter helped surmount technical difficulties. Staff curator Kathleen Triggs Byrne helped especially in accessing National Catalog and clearinghouse details. Carolyn Moler, unit secretary, provided essential assistance both informational and technical, and her well-kept files were an important source of data. Clerk-typists Doris Basch and Anna Petry ably supplemented her technical help.

Harpers Ferry Center staff members aided the project on numerous occasions. Personnel officer Shirley H. Caniford and her staff, including Marilyn Longerbeam and Carolyn West, filled in employment dates for several significant museum workers whose records were incomplete in other sources. The personnel staff also supplied information on classification standards for Park Service museum positions. Sarah M. Olson, chief of the Division of Historic Furnishings, and David Wallace helpfully reviewed the

chapter on furnished historic structure museums and opened the Vera Craig files. John Demer as chief, Division of Conservation, provided access to his division's files while conservators Gregory Byrne, Thomas Carter, Toby Raphael, Daniel Riss, Barclay Rogers, and Ronald Sheetz filled information gaps for the final chapter. Dan Riss also helped locate references in the division library and called items of potential relevance to the writer's attention. Exhibits specialist Olin Nave verified some needed data. HFC kindly granted permission to consult the transcript of an interview of Dr. and Mrs. Jean C. Harrington by Charles B. Hosmer, Jr.

Among present and former field staff who took pains to answer queries and supply information, the writer is especially grateful to regional curator Jonathan W. Bayless; collections manager Barbara L. Beroza, Yosemite National Park; supervisory museum curator Allen S. Bohnert, Southeast Archeological Center; museum curator Susan J. Buchel, Nez Perce National Historical Park; park naturalist Richard Burns, Sequoia National Park; Robert C. Heyder, superintendent of Mesa Verde National Park; Louise Hinchliffe, Grand Canyon National Park's librarian; Richard Howard, chief of interpretation and resource management, and John M. Andresen, ranger, at Casa Grande Ruins National Monument; museum specialist Kathleen L. Manscill, Great Smoky Mountains National Park; supervisory park ranger Betty McSwain, Pipestone National Monument; Betty C. Monkman, associate curator; at the White House; Franklin G. Smith, superintendent of Chamizal National Memorial; Jack Smith of Mesa Verde National Park; Roy W. Weaver, superintendent of Nez Perce National Historical Park; regional curator Pamela B. West, and Peter S. White, University of North Carolina.

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Dorothy L. Lewis not only reviewed critically the study in all stages of the draft but also endured without complaint the demands on disposable time made by the project through more than a decade.