STRUCTURING THE INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE OF PUBLIC HISTORY PRACTICE AND SCHOLARSHIP

"Next Stop Freedom: Opening up public history practice in Canada"

Susan Ashley, York University

I am interested in how the field of public history is responding to and analyzing demands by minority cultures for inclusion in institutional knowledge production. Public history sites in Canada are increasingly turning to collaborations to produce exhibits or other media, or even to do planning of heritage sites and museums. There is considerable academic interest, and studies produced, of processes where indigenous groups initiate or collaborate in the production of knowledge about their cultures in heritage sites, museums and cultural centers of various forms. But there is little critical research on the representation of other minority groups in Canada, especially what we in Canada term "visible minorities." So I am researching how visible minority groups are engaging with public history in Canada, but not simply as outsiders being allowed in by white culture, but as active practitioners themselves: producers, subjects and users of historical knowledge. This paper will look at a particular case where African-Canadians joined a collaborative process with Canada's National Historic Sites, a part of Parks Canada Agency, to create an exhibition on Black history at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

Two factors contribute to the distinctiveness of my approach to the analysis of public history. The first is that I am not an historian but I still consider myself a Public Historian. I place myself as part of the original public history movement – as a worker in historic sites (an historical 'interpreter') whose underlying motivation was critical pedagogy and Canadian nationalism. Public history was a means of provocation, to instill in my community an awareness of our place in time and space, a sense of identity more specific than creeping Americanization, and a location and process for resistant behaviour. Since returning to academic life I have come to realize that what I was practicing was not the discipline of history, or history education, but an interdisciplinary field more like cultural studies or cultural sociology.

Cultural studies is a diverse field of study encompassing many different approaches, methods, and academic perspectives. Cultural studies concerns itself with the symbolic, expressive and meaning-making aspects of people's everyday lives. Hence, this field studies the meanings and uses people attribute to various cultural objects and practices. Cultural studies researchers often concentrate on how a particular meaning-making phenomenon (and in my case it is Public History) relates to socio/cultural/political matters of structure and agency: how different ways of producing and consuming cultural artifacts affect the meanings behind the product or 'text'. We are interested in the dynamics, negotiations and contestation of meaning-making processes that invoke ideology, nationality, ethnicity, gender, and class.

Thus, from a cultural studies perspective I ask, why do people in this instance need historical knowledge and how do historical questions contribute to social and cultural

understandings of ideology, nationality, ethnicity, gender, and class? Further, what happens when the so-called intended audience of historical knowledge is the primary producer, instead of only an audience that 'plays a role' in shaping the final product? And stemming from this, what happens to the public-ized history when there are competing needs for and versions of that history? My research questions reflect a desire to know about what happens to cultural meaning-making practices as conflicting segments of society wrestle with identity and belonging.

Also important to my research perspective is the understanding the 'public' nature of public history. What is different about my questions about culture here is the 'public-ness' of this meaning-making process. Through this 'public' act, people are trying to communicate to themselves, with each other, and with outsiders. Being placed on this public stage (by others) and wanting to display oneself on this public stage (by self) has implications.

My case study reveals my own reflexive practice as a public historian who is also a cultural studies academic, both of which involve an activist stance. Public history by its very nature is action research not pure objective historical research. Like ethnographers, public historians can be seen as self-reflexive and political in their orientation.

My paper will elaborate on these issues and perspectives in my study of the 'Next Stop Freedom' exhibition on the Underground Railroad. This was a federal government attempt to open up the narrative of nationhood to an aspect of Canadian history that had not received any significant treatment in museums and historic sites in Canada, and they chose to employ a more inclusive, collaborative planning method. This particular exhibit was researched, planned, co-produced and consumed by African-Canadians—voices previously silenced in the Canadian museum world. I looked at how this community, defined by racial affinity, chose to depict themselves in the public sphere in a museum setting. For the African Canadians on the committee, this offered a complex negotiation of a new 'public face' that showed Black scholarship and agency. But I found that the positioning of the cultural identity of African-Canadians that resulted was highly selective. I asked, what was the underlying purpose for which history was being engaged here? My paper explores why and how such a complex community of people could coalesce around a public performance that seems so essentialized and celebratory, and, how this public face of identity seemed different than the everyday historical reality of African-Canadian life. I describe and flag cultural issues that came to the fore when the institution, and the communities, tried to open up public history exhibition to a more collaborative processes.

The paper details the struggle involved in 'making' historical knowledge by this mixed group of scholars, then compares the collaborative team's intentions with how a diverse range of visitors responded to the exhibit. I employ a 'circuit of culture' methodology (Johnson, 1987) to examine the difficult conditions and negotiations around both the creation and the experiencing of the exhibition. This includes not only the curation/ production of the historical narrative including the place of the professional and non-professional historians on the team, but this mode of cultural analysis also takes into

consideration an analysis of the exhibition itself as a cultural 'text'; and the complex reception of the exhibition by visitors who bring their own meaning-making.

The paper discusses whether producers or users gained new ideas or insights about public history and collaborative practice, and questions whether the public-ness of exhibition media act to limit any hidden complexity of communities and identity into view. The paper also suggests that potential transformative engagement with historical narratives emerges from the *process* of the negotiations themselves, rather than in the content of final product.

"Everybody Should Be Able to Go Through This Experience": The Nevada Legislature Oral History Project and the Citizen Lawmaker
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In 2007, the Nevada Legislature launched an oral history project to capture the institutional memories of some of its former members. Closely managed by the legislature's professional staff, the project was conducted by an independent team under the direction of a public historian. Final products consisted of the publication of edited, indexed transcripts and the production of a documentary film. This case statement provides an overview of the process of designing and executing a public history project in a highly political and structured environment. The title of this case statement comes from an interview with a former Assembly Speaker who concentrated on the legislative experience as both a citizen's duty and an educational opportunity. His comment seems appropriate to a discussion of a public history project whose design and execution were both accomplished through an interactive process that actively and satisfactorily engaged all of the project's participants.

The project began with the appropriation of state funds, with little specific direction, to the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), the non-partisan staff of the legislative branch. The contours of the project were left to the discretion of staff members who first determined that the interviews would be limited to 17 former legislative leaders whose service spanned six decades. Originally planning to conduct the project in-house, the staff soon realized the scope of the project, especially with a legislative session imminent, and advertised for a contractor. After conducting a formal bid process, LCB chose a four-person team that featured a public historian with legislative oral history experience (the author of this case statement). The team also included a strategic communications consultant, a filmmaker who videotaped each of the 90-minute interviews, and a transcriptionist. These team-members were chosen for their respective skills, their depth of knowledge about Nevada politics, and their understanding of the legislative process. The consultant (Dale Erquiaga) and I were the decision-makers for the team; in this case statement, "we" means Mr. Erquiaga and me. I served as the liaison between the team and LCB; Mr. Erquiaga's company provided the administrative structure (such as insurance). His skills in strategic planning and organizational communication were particularly useful in writing the proposal, anticipating political and media reactions, and developing the documentary.

Every step of this project was a collaborative one. Legislative staff constructed the interview list in consultation with legislative leadership; we worked with LCB's attorneys to fine-tune the contract; I designed the interview questions, which were approved by

legislative staff; and the interviewed legislators reviewed the edited transcripts. Former legislators inquired about our backgrounds before agreeing to participate, and the 26-minute documentary was reviewed and revised by legislative staff from storyboard to final edit. The documentary was the idea of the team's filmmaker—it had not been requested in the bid documents—and her skills were invaluable in its production and also in making each videotaped interview visually appealing. Although current legislators were not directly involved in the project, everyone was conscious that their scrutiny of the final products would determine whether the project would continue to be funded. Consequently, LCB and the contracted team consciously strove not to privilege one political party over another; one legislative house over another; or one region of the state over another. The possibility of media negativity was deflected by careful attention to the budget; we were conscious that everything we did might attract the attention of the press.

This project exemplifies "shared authority" in action and illuminates its multi-dimensional contours. As Frisch first broached the concept, both the interviewers and the interviewees certainly shaped the outcome of this project.[1] Although staff insisted on approving a written list of questions, we shaped those questions to each interview at hand and willingly followed the interviewee into topics that had not been anticipated by the prepared questions. This divergence from the script was not protested because the staff representative had researched proper oral history procedures, illustrating that shared authority works in multiple directions. A passive client is not always the best client for a public historian.

Corbett and Miller incorporate Schön's concept of reflective practice and expand on the notion of shared inquiry, postulating that flexibility and mediation may be a public historian's most useful skills.[2] They were definitely crucial to the success of this project, which exceeded expectations. The initial goals of LCB and the sitting legislators centered on simply capturing stories about "the old days." I was interested in how these interviews might reveal the ways legislative culture is learned and transmitted in an institutional structure where the members frequently change. As a "site of concentrated cultural practice,"[3] the legislature operates under a written code of rules and an amorphous system of customary practices; legislative culture consists of symbols and practice that have meaning to demarcate who is part of the lawmaking process and who is not. It is easy to trace structural alterations over time; it is much more complicated to explicate the "causal

[1] Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990). I conducted 15 interviews, Mr. Erquiaga conducted two, and we shared one. One of the legislative interviews was extended to include an interview of a long-time legislative staff member. The official number of interviews was 17, but 18 were actually conducted.

[2] Katharine T. Corbett and Howard S. (Dick) Miller, "A Shared Inquiry into Shared Inquiry," *The Public Historian: A Journal of Public History* 28 (Winger 2006): 15-38. The ASU Public History Program emphasizes reflective practice, as explained by the late and much missed Noel Stowe in the article beginning on page 39. Donald Schön's *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1983) is required reading. Dr. Stowe was one of the finest teachers I have known, but I must admit (and he would agree) that many of the skills utilized in this project were learned through my previous employment as a paid advocate for special interests.

[3] William H. Sewell, Jr., "The Concepts of Culture(s)" in *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing After the Linguistic Turn*, ed. Gabrielle M. Spiegel (New York: Routledge, 2005), 91.

interactivity"[4] between institutional structure and human agency that moves a body of individuals through a process of collective decision-making marked by conflict and compromise. To reach that rather lofty goal, the interviews focused less on legislative facts, such as bill numbers, and more on remembering people, places, and events from Nevada's political and legislative history. I asked interviewees to bring photographs and political memorabilia, which triggered memories that the list of questions would never have unlocked, and the interviews revealed much more than anyone had anticipated.

We worked diligently to foster an atmosphere of trust with all parties throughout the project's lifespan. Some oral historians might balk at a client who insists on approving the interview questions or at allowing interviewees to review their transcripts (after I had edited them for readability), but these steps proved fruitful. One legislator was particularly grateful for this opportunity and noted a deep dissatisfaction with a different oral history project, explaining that the transcript editor's lack of knowledge about the legislative process resulted in a final document that did not adequately convey the interviewee's meaning.

LCB chose the date of the documentary's unveiling, and we were involved in providing its context. The film was a hit with both the narrators and current legislators, regardless of partisan or geographical affiliations, and was subsequently televised. The only negativity came from former legislators who had not been included, which raised additional issues. Overall, however, the major participants—the authorizing legislators, the interviewees, staff, and the entire team—were pleased with the project, which ended in September 2009. Both staff and legislators wanted to continue, but the state's current budget crisis likely precludes further appropriations to enable the kind of shared authority that proved so successful in this iteration.

"Reflective Practice and the Production of Corporate Memory"
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Public history scholarship is filled with examples of how historical information and analyses can be presented in numerous *settings* and to diverse *audiences*. The description of either or both of the italicized terms within a particular environment serves as the dominant activity in the literature on public history. The result is a conception of public history theory loosely defined by *who* applies the term and *where* they apply it. Far less attention is paid to questions of *how* public history practice transcends institutional, professional, demographic, and other boundaries to produce historical products that share common elements in their production, if not in their final characteristics. The following case study attempts to define public history practice as a flexible series of behaviors and interactions that shape both the production and utilization of historical analyses. The practice takes place within reflective conversation zones (RCZs), in which public historians engage diverse audiences and sources to help define questions that require some form of

[4] Ronald P. Formisano, "The Concept of Political Culture," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 31 (Winter 2001): 403.

historical understanding to be answered. The methods used to shape the question-framing process dictate the final outcomes, and ultimately the public historians' understanding of their practice.

The method of public history practice in the following case study is derived from the work of historians at Salt River Project (SRP), a public-private utility that has delivered water and power within the rapidly changing Phoenix metropolitan area in central Arizona for more than 100 years. SRP has employed historians since the mid-1970s in its Research Archives Division, with the directive to collect, preserve, and apply the corporate memory of SRP. The term corporate memory is complex, but its application within SRP encompasses the range of perceptions held by internal and external audiences regarding the history of the corporation and its relevance to current and future operations. The division fulfills its mission through a variety of business functions including: litigation support, environmental research, cultural resource management, policy analysis, and heritage education. Public history practice at SRP is carried out within an environment where historical analysts interact with other professionals to establish research agendas that provide information that assists SRP decision-makers in their activities.

The historical analysts at SRP define their theoretical approach for collecting, preserving, and applying SRP's corporate memory through the process of Reflection-In-Action. This methodology is characterized by an adapting form of reflection, which professionals use to interact both with their subject and their working environment using a combination of learned-experience and professionals skills. Reflection-in-Action is a collaborative process where the professional moves through stages of understanding, action, re-understanding, to arrive at a useable, practical deliverable that addresses a specific clients' needs. The methodology, as outlined and popularized by Donald Schön, is effective for explaining the process of reflection that many different professionals rely on to meld their formal training with the unique conditions of their practice environment. The theory is not as helpful for understanding the specific components and behaviors that professionals use to reframe questions, respond to client feedback, and shape deliverables. The attached model represents an attempt to better define the behaviors and norms that comprise the interaction in the RCZs and allow professionals to move from client-defined problems to collaboratively derived solutions through a series of interactions (*see attached model*) [not included in posted case statements].

The first RCZ is an interdisciplinary discussion where the corporate client gives the problem to the Research Archives' historical analysts. The norms that characterize the initial zone include resetting queries, comprehending situations, and discussing deliverables. A simple, but valuable tool that helps to reset the query is the analyst restating the problem back to client so both parties clearly understand the problem statement. Comprehending the situation includes an explicit conversation detailing the pertinent details of the problem that exist both inside and outside the company. Analysts asking questions of the client and proposing research agendas for the problem serve as effective devices for collective comprehension. The most important norm within this zone is the discussion detailing the deliverables. During this dialogue, it is imperative that the

analysts understand the timeframe and scope for the solution, the format for the final deliverables, and the solution's audiences.

In addition to the three norms for this RCZ it is important for the historical analysts to listen intently to the needs of the client. This is not the zone for the analysts to demonstrate their expertise in historic data. However, it is the zone for analysts to exhibit their listening and question-setting skills. An example of this initial zone within the Research Archives' responsibilities is a property site visit within the land use history process. The purpose of the site visit is for analysts, environmental scientists, and land agents to set the amount of information needed to responsibly understand the history of a specified piece of property. The research parameters are the result of a collaborative investigation, with each professional explaining the information needed to respond to the questions identified on the site visit.

The next RCZ is characterized by sustained and lively debates among the historical analysts as well as reflective conversations between the analysts and data sources. The main purpose of this zone is for the analysts to begin to find useful directions towards a practical solution. The norms that frame this zone are explicit reflective conversations, new discoveries, and comprehension. The key norm within this zone is the banter between analysts about the client's problem statement, possible research agendas, interpretation of historic and contemporary sources, and emerging arguments and theories. Useful techniques to set the banter between analysts are creating timelines, "SCOPEing" and "KUPing" the problem, and conceptualizing the solution.[5] New discoveries need to be identified clearly during this zone and placed within the professional dialogue. The third norm framing this zone is achieving comprehension of the problem and moving towards a useful solution. Effective tools for reaching comprehension are creating outlines, writing draft paragraphs, pulling together a presentation, and constructing flow charts or models of the emerging theories and arguments. An example of this zone within Research Archives' working processes is creating a timeline and conceptual model detailing how an external stimulus and internal reaction generated a new corporate policy.

The third zone entails interdisciplinary conversations between the Research Archives' historical analysts and corporate clients. The goals of this zone are to ground-truth the analysts findings and emerging arguments and theories, which are the foundation to any useful solution. The norms setting this zone are an exchange of ideas, sharing of drafts, and the opportunity to re-understand. During the exchange of ideas it is important that the historical analysts concisely explain their findings and theories and not overwhelm clients with superfluous information. Helpful tools to assist historical analysts with the exchange are preplanned contextual stories to avoid providing too much background and excerpts from sources that support the analysts' main points. The key norm in this zone is the sharing of drafts because it allows clients to interact with the emerging solution. Techniques to allow client interaction include budgeted time to review and comment on the draft and shareable formats that allow clients to literally apply their ideas to the draft.

[5] "SCOPEing" a problem means defining the Situation, Concerns, Options, Presumptions, and Exclusions. "KUPing" a problem means defining the Known, Unknowns, and Presumptions.

The third norm for this zone is for both analysts and clients to allow for re-understanding of the problem, discoveries, and arguments. Approaching this zone with a wide-open mindset for new discoveries and modified problem statement as well as an ability to capture new understandings are important tools for this norm to occur. An example of this zone within SRP's historical analysts' business functions is the sharing of a draft map that displays a variety of source material that reveals a watershed's water rights and the client changing the scope of the problem to include another watershed based on the analysts' initial findings.

The final RCZ is when the analysts provide the practical solution to the client. The norms for this zone include a discussion about the deliverables, a collection of the analysts and clients' process, and the acquisition of the solution and decision-making information into the corporate memory. During the discussion of deliverables, analysts need to provide a quick tour of the solution for the clients. Helpful tools for the discussion are a transmittal letter and an executive summary of the solution. The collection of the process from problem to solution is important so that future queries needing historical information can go smoother for analysts and clients. Techniques to help the collection include quality note taking, retention of important drafts, and post-process interviewing. The key norm is the acquisition of the solution and decision-making information into the corporate memory. This enables historical analysts and clients to use the solution and decision-making information for future problem-solving. Tools to facilitate acquisition and future use include proper indexing to capture the context of the process and important details from the solution and decision-making process.

The key components of SRP's historical analysts' methodology of Reflection-in-Action are encapsulated by the practice within the RCZs. These zones are the explicit conversations between historical analysts and a diverse set of clients, sources, and audiences. The behaviors and norms that frame these zones are not unique to public history practice, but instead are patterns of professional behavior that are used within diverse working environments and institutional settings. A central concern of SRPs historical analysts, and for most public history practitioners, is relevancy, both within their practice setting and through connections to broader communities. The practice of public history at SRP can help inform an understanding of historical production that is tied to a dynamic and evolving concept of corporate memory. The utilization of this concept by non-historians within a corporation hints at the broader uses for historical understanding in a variety of professional settings.

Heritage Parks and Public History Programmes in England and Wales: a critical review

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Introduction

Until relatively recently, Britain's important heritage of public parks had suffered from serious neglect. However, the wider significance of parks and open spaces has again been recognised and an attempt has been made to reverse the pattern of long-term decline at both a national and local level. A critical factor has been the availability of capital funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund which has secured the restoration of a number of important heritage parks. At the same time, there is an increasing emphasis on the need to develop heritage outreach projects which can maximise community involvement in the future maintenance of parks and provide a means of interpreting their history in a manner which is readily accessible to a wide public.

This contribution will review the current practice of public history in relation to a number of internationally important heritage parks, including the Derby Arboretum (1840), Birkenhead Park (1847), and Saltwell Park, Gateshead (1876). All of these parks have recently been the recipients of substantial grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other sources in order to carry out major restoration programmes. In each case, new capital investment had been accompanied by the development of education outreach work, often within the context of a public history initiative. They therefore provide a framework for analysing the practice of public history in terms of the objectives of funding bodies (in particular, the Heritage Lottery Fund and local authorities) and the role of advisory agencies (including English Heritage, Learning through Landscapes, and the Field Studies Council). The individual case studies also provide a means of analysing the role of public historians, as well as staff from the public and private sector, in planning and delivering heritage education programmes for local schools and the wider community. The main objective is to examine the practice and methodology of public history in heritage parks in terms of the priorities of funding agencies and local councils, popular perceptions of the past, the involvement of members of the local community as potential end users, and the specific role of public historians.

The National Context

After decades of relative neglect, the important heritage of public parks has again been recognised at both a national and local level. Pressure from the grass roots for the implementation of a restoration programme, in particular from the Garden History Society and the Victorian Society, played a critical role, but central government has increasingly set the context for formulating overall policy with an agenda influenced by a number of agencies such as English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund and CABE Space. Local authorities are now mandated to develop an appropriate strategy for the restoration, regeneration and maintenance of green space as a key community resource. At a national level, heritage education is seen as an important component of any future strategy for

heritage parks. According to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, there is a continuing need for investment in historic urban parks and gardens because of their 'immense value as an educational resource', and English Heritage has been assigned a leading role in promoting the historic environment 'as a resource for use within the school curriculum'. Although the primary objective of the Parks for People programme implemented by the Heritage Lottery Fund has been to secure 'the regeneration, conservation and increased enjoyment of public parks', a subsidiary purpose has been 'to increase opportunities for learning about heritage' and all applicants are now expected to include a community outreach and heritage education component in their bids for funding.

In reality, the extent of education outreach work and public history relating to historic parks remains relatively limited. At the Derby Arboretum, the park manager has developed a good range of resources for both formal and informal learners, but the Grove Street Lodge (the main history resource centre) remains under-used primarily because of staffing constraints. The 'explorers' events' at Saltwell Park offer a series of excellent educational packages for primary school children, including one which is explicitly history-based, but a centrally-imposed charging scheme undoubtedly discourages the involvement of schools outside the local authority. At Birkenhead Park, over 7,000 pupils from 36 schools have attended a range of history-based visits, trails and workshops since the start of a dedicated education outreach project (It's My Park) in April 2007. In Bristol, a grant from the City Council led to the creation of a 'Park Detectives' programme designed to link schools with their local parks and to encourage a critical evaluation of how they had evolved over time; the Royal Parks in London have been actively involved in developing formal education programmes; and the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority has run a number of heritage education programmes. But in the majority of cases, as at Beaumont Leys Lodge and the Forest Recreation Ground (on the edge of Sherwood Forest), the emphasis primarily has been on the production of materials, including pictures and maps, for use in both schools and libraries. In the case of Markfield Park in Haringey, the emphasis is not on learning, but more about 'children having a good day out'. Although there is increasing recognition of the need to develop public history programmes which enable schools to use their local parks on a regular basis, they still remain an exception and the emphasis is often on the science curriculum, including ecology and the environment, rather than history itself.

Competing Priorities?

An underlying problem which continues to constrain the development of public history programmes for heritage parks is that funding agencies and local authorities are seldom concerned with maintaining the integrity of history. The Parks for People programme operated by the Heritage Lottery Fund is intended to increase the enjoyment of public parks with investment targeted in a manner which guarantees that 'communities get the most of what parks have to offer', and only 20 per cent of the projects evaluated in a recent report actually involved public history programmes or education outreach visits to schools or colleges. As far as English Heritage is concerned, its overall role is to enhance a sense of place and identity, including pride and ownership in the historic environment, while its Outreach Department was explicitly created to address social exclusion issues. Other agencies, such as the Field Studies Council, inevitably have a clearly defined agenda which

does not necessarily attach any significant weight to public history. The Schools in the Park Project (initiated in September 2008) 'wants to support as many schools as possible', but the primary objective is to create teaching resources for greenspace managers, linked primarily to the science curriculum. Similarly, Learning through Landscapes is committed to helping schools to make the most of outdoor space through getting in touch with the natural world: although it has produced three history-based publications, the intention is to enable young children to imagine the past through story-telling.

The problem of competing priorities is even more significant in the case of local authorities, whose primary concern is to reinforce the importance of civic pride and to locate heritage parks within their respective tourist strategies. These are important objectives in their own right, particularly if the restoration of Victorian parks can also contribute to wider regeneration and social exclusion agendas, but they can also generate tensions between local councillors and public historians. The intention in Birkenhead Park, following its extensive restoration programme, is to maximise the use of the available facilities including the new Visitor Pavilion, while the success of Saltwell Park in winning an award as one of Britain's Best Parks in 2005 was celebrated as confirmation that both visitors and residents of Gateshead had 'a beautiful place to meet and relax in the heart of the borough'. Within such a context, where there is an explicit emphasis on the tourist potential of heritage parks because they are 'great for family days out and attractions', local authorities are seldom interested in exploring the reality of the historical record, particularly where this might confirm a legacy of poor or indifferent management, unsuitable plans for redevelopment, or an overriding concern to maintain public order.

Public and Professional Perceptions

Perhaps inevitably, local people who use heritage parks on a regular basis or live within their immediate catchment area have a great deal of pride in their public park. They are often a source of high quality oral testimony which is an invaluable component of any public history and they represent a critical end user group. But they can also have a very clear view about the history of their park. Saltwell Park, for example, is 'steeped in history', and local residents continue to emphasize that the provision of clean drinking water in the late-nineteenth century demonstrated a public concern for the health of the people. The Derby Arboretum (known locally as the 'Arbo') is celebrated as England's 'First Public Park', where the Recreation Ground provided a place for 'exercise and recreation in the fresh air', although the Friends of Birkenhead Park also claim that their park (designed by Joseph Paxton and laid out by Edward Kemp) was (and remains) the world's first public park in the sense that its development was authorized by an Act of Parliament (Birkenhead's Second Improvement Act of 1843); it required the use of considerable public funds (estimated at over £103,000 at contemporary prices); and it was designed explicitly and solely for public use.

In fact, popular perceptions, which are often informative and invaluable in relation to the recent past, are sometime deeply flawed in relation to the more distant historical record. The Derby Arboretum may have offered space for 'pleasure' (particularly once the Recreation Ground was subsequently purchased in 1845), but its essential role was as a

'living museum' which provided 'instruction to visitors'. There was no public financial support from Derby's ratepayers until 1881 and its subscribers remained opposed to experiments designed to promote free access. What is popularly regarded as a 'small admission charge' of 6d per day in the 1840s actually represented a sum of money well beyond the reach of Derby's working class (its equivalent today, based on average earnings, would be £19.22). In reality, for five days of the week, the ordinary people of Derby were in practice simply excluded from the Arboretum.

In the case of Birkenhead Park there is similar disjuncture between general perceptions of the incidence of crime and petty vandalism in the past and evidence which can be extracted from extant archival records. In a survey carried out by the Friends of Birkenhead Park in 2004, almost 30 per cent of the respondents highlighted their concern over the absence of effective security measures and the growing problem of antisocial behaviour (including cottaging, alcohol and drug abuse, joy-riding and vandalism). In comparison with the earlier history of the Park, it was generally felt that there had been a serious erosion of behavioural standards with a concomitant rise in crime. Contrary to popular opinion, however, the Park has never been an area of rural tranquillity which simply provided 'delightful pleasure grounds and promenades' for the 'poorer classes': even before its official opening in April 1847, it had become a site of antisocial behaviour and some of the acts of vandalism which were carried out in the late-1840s and early-1850s were clearly of a serious and malicious nature. In fact, the early attempts in Victorian Britain to provide urban green space (whether in the form of arboreta with their selective charging system or 'free' parks, as in Birkenhead, Liverpool and Manchester) often became sites of conflict between middle-class values and working-class demands for enjoyment and fun; access to 'public' space was often controlled and contested; and vandalism and petty-crime were a common occurrence.

The Role of the Public Historian

Academic research by public historians can often create tensions with funding agencies, municipal authorities, and the general public, by unearthing new archival material or by advocating a reinterpretation of received opinion. To this extent, the task of the public historian is not only multi-faceted, but it also requires developing a strategy which maintains the integrity of historical research without jeopardizing the engagement of external agencies or undermining the commitment of members of the local community. Academic research by public historians can provide an interface with wider debates about the nature and significance of heritage, but it can also be seen as an essential contribution to the design and implementation of curriculum-based learning and an important ingredient in the reassessment of popular understanding of local history. On the one hand, heritage education outreach programmes, particularly when they are based on major urban parks, need to incorporate the work of public historians because academic research can enhance the value of education packages, whether designed for primary or secondary schoolchildren, in terms of curriculum requirements and discipline-specific skill acquisition. By providing access to new material and by locating our understanding of heritage parks within the framework of current historiography, public historians can maintain the integrity of history while simultaneously enhancing the ability of pupils to

understand the motives behind the creation of public parks and the complex range of factors which have determined their subsequent development. On the other hand, by working within a wider community context, public historians can appreciate the significance of local pride in heritage parks and understand the way in which contemporary attitudes have been moulded by individual experience and a collective past. But community involvement also provides an opportunity for reassessing popular perceptions; for generating a more nuanced view of the history or particular parks; and for enabling local people to locate the development of their park within a wider cultural, economic, political and social context. It is important that public history continues to 'challenge stereotypes and assumptions', while promoting a greater degree of local participation particularly by schoolchildren and community residents. It also needs to maintain the integrity of history, irrespective of institutional and funding constraints or the strength of popular perceptions and existing interpretations.

"Swimming Upstream?: Public Historians on Private Hydroelectric Projects"
Heather Lee Miller, PhD, Historical Research Associates, Inc.

For what purpose is history being engaged or applied? and For whom is history being engaged or applied?
In the complicated world of hydroelectric projects licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), stakeholders hold a wide range of interests. Environmentalists, operators, ratepayers, Indians, private landowners, public officials, archaeologists, and historic preservationists create a cacophony of voices, each advocating, often acrimoniously, their own agenda, mandate, or pet project. Into this melee venture many kinds of consultants; for public historians, the ground is both treacherous and rewarding. Not only do hydroelectric projects comprise a stunning array of engineering marvels, spectacular landscapes, and significant historical structures but social history—indeed *public* history—is also writ large on the landscape of a hydroelectric project, providing fascinating fodder for historical research, writing, analysis, and interpretation and education projects.

Historical Research Associates (HRA) has a long history of assisting private hydroelectric companies comply with the requirements of their FERC licenses, specifically their federally mandated responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, during the relicensing process, and compliance with a programmatic agreement (PA) once the license is implemented. Here, I will discuss briefly Puget Sound Energy's (PSE) Baker River hydroelectric project in Washington State. Public historians such as myself, working as subcontractors to private companies like PSE, help cultural resources managers of "federal undertakings" (in this case, FERC-licensed hydroelectric projects) manage cultural resources under their purview. More important, perhaps, we strive to help private corporations strike a balance among the concerns of various stakeholders while keeping sight of the importance of preserving historic resources for the enjoyment and understanding of future generations.

The Baker Hydroelectric Project encompasses significant historic resources, both related and unrelated to power production. It is composed of two major dams that impound water for power production, but perhaps surprisingly, its most important historic resources are structures related to the seemingly unrelated histories of fish-passage technology and the cement industry. So, how does a private company, whose main goals are to provide energy to ratepayers and maintain their bottom line, deal with the fact that it's legally responsible not only for avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating adverse effects to historic resources on its property but also for implementing other license articles, such as providing environmental controls for fish or other endangered species, creating recreational opportunities for visitors, and so on? What are the incentives to PSE and other such companies to protect historic resources, when doing so is expensive and causes delays and hardship for operators and engineers whose main concern is efficient power generation? And what of the competing interests whose voices advocate for bettering fish passage, preserving the remnants of once-vibrant industries, or promoting recreational usage of scenic wonders? Within this tricky landscape, HRA's historians, architectural historians, and historical archaeologists, and archaeologists not only help PSE comply with its legal responsibilities but also create meaningful works of public history in a number of ways: consultants facilitate dialogue through participation in cultural resources working groups and public meetings; they undertake large-scale research projects, assisting companies in cataloging and reviewing corporate archives and writing reports and book-length manuscripts based on the materials they unearth; they inventory, evaluate, and record extant historic structures and cultural landscapes and assist historical archaeologists in locating and evaluating the remains of deteriorated homesteads, water features, and industrial sites; they photodocument historical features using archivally stable methods; they write management plans and maintenance guidelines for historic districts and resources; and they design and draft text for informational brochures and signs for public areas, such as visitors' centers and trails, among many other services.

What authority does the historian exercise in the inquiry process vis-à-vis the agency held by client, collaborator, partner, governing body, and/or audience?
In the case of PSE, HRA's historians exercise a good deal of authority in the inquiry process once a project is agreed upon and budgeted for, but the parameters are most often set by the Historic Properties Management Plan, Maintenance Guidelines, and project schedules that most hydroelectric facilities work under. Because private companies are beholden to the articles of their FERC licenses, which address many competing goals and responsibilities (for example, environmental laws, water flow requirements, and the need to keep rates reasonable), they do not, one might say, address their cultural needs out of a sense of largesse or because they are interested (although many employees of these companies are) in educating the public about the past. Most work done on the cultural resources managed by PSE, for example, happens because maintenance or scheduled upgrades, renovations, and so on trigger review under the terms of the company's FERC license. In other words, the company's need for *compliance* under their license is the primary reason why historians are hired to assist company managers understand, evaluate, and publicize their resources.

How does the historian negotiate the uncertainties that attend the process of inquiry?
In the best-case scenario (which is the case with PSE but not some of my other hydroelectric clients), the company has a well-thought-out program and schedule for the project (over a period of time, for example five or ten years) that the historian can then use to map what kinds of projects will require assessment. Having a schedule and a clear sense of what the operator intends to do at the project (and the budget allowed for that work) help the historian figure out what kinds of reports need to be done to assist the company in complying. For example, PSE might be planning to do a major overhaul on the turbines in a historic dam. HRA might then write a report that documents the character-defining features of the dam, evaluates the extent of the adverse effect on the historic property, suggests alternatives at the engineering planning stage to minimize any adverse effect that the change might cause, and makes recommendations about the kinds of mitigation that might be appropriate in that situation if the adverse effect cannot be avoided or minimized. The cultural resources advisory group (CRAG; comprising stakeholders—usually signatories to the PA) then discusses and, hopefully, comes to consensus regarding the appropriate course of action. As the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO; who sits on the CRAG), says, "make the punishment fit the crime." Once consultation with the SHPO takes place and agreement is reached on the effect and appropriate mitigation, HRA might then complete a mitigation report (for example, a Historic American Engineering Record report on the dam) or assist the company in completing some creative form of mitigation (for example, gathering documents for a documentary, conducting oral histories, or writing content for interpretive signs to be placed in a prominent public place to educate the public, once the changes are made).

Uncertainties can also arise: the client and SHPO may not agree on what needs to be done, projects get put on hold or changed completely due to variables completely unrelated to the historic resources, and budgets or staff disappear (e.g., we are working with a county utility that just "reassigned" a project manager/cultural resources coordinator who was sympathetic and proactive as regarded the utility's historic resources and the less sympathetic operator indefinitely shelved a draft report that HRA submitted in the fall, meaning that we cannot proceed with some $40,000 worth of work that we had planned to complete this year). Public historians, many of whom are consultants, whether individuals or employees of small, medium, or large firms, must learn how to anticipate and roll with these kinds of changes. Diversification in the type of jobs we pursue and contract helps ameliorate some of these unknowns.

What theoretical frameworks and/or interdisciplinary methods inform inquiry or interpretation?
When working on cultural resources on a hydroelectric project, historians need to have an open mind when it comes to documentation and sources. In a recent example, where we were trying to understand the ruins of an early twentieth-century Portland cement factory that stands on the Baker project property, we gathered a wide variety of sources, such as primary and secondary articles about concrete production, Sanborn maps, blueprints, purchase orders, articles of incorporation and property documents, and so on, to understand how concrete flowed around the plant. Working with a dearth of primary documentation specific to the plant itself, we also asked onsite engineers what they

thought certain structures might have functioned as to help develop our arguments about the exact functions (and therefore the significance) of the buildings. We then created a flow map on the historic Sanborn and wrote an associated narrative that explains how the Washington Portland Cement Company probably functioned (at least in 1913) and what that might mean for the extant ruins on PSE's property today. We recognize that our narrative is only as good as our sources, but we feel confident that we did the most thorough research and analysis possible.

What authority does the historian exercise in constructing the interpretation?
In the case of Baker and other hydroelectric facilities, consulting historians are given a good deal of authority. Although many hydro operators are reluctant to do more than the bare minimum as concerns their historic resources, our hydro clients recognize the benefit in hiring experts to provide research and writing expertise, as well as in guiding them through the various stages of the Section 106 process. Although we understand, of course, that our clients don't always want to hear that the resources they manage are historically significant—and will therefore cost time and money to manage—we feel that we provide a service in helping them comply with the law. By providing an objective expert perspective rooted in our knowledge of the regulations with which they must comply and based on solid historical research and analysis, we feel we can always be honest with our clients about their responsibilities to historic properties that they manage. That's not to say that dealing with private clients is without its frustrations, however!

What role does the client, collaborator, partner, governing body, and/or audience play in shaping the end product?
The client and HRA's associate historians work together to create a reasonable scope of work and budget in response to requirements of the PA and FERC license. The process and limited audience for the reports that that process generates (e.g., hydro operators, State Historic Preservation Officers, FERC regulators, local historical societies, and to a lesser extent, the public) shapes the end product and results in a relatively repetitive set of deliverables, including inventory and evaluation reports (and state inventory forms), historic properties management plans (HPMPs), maintenance guidelines, mitigation plans, and mitigation reports, such Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) reports or what we often refer to as "HABS-lite" (which is the same report not submitted to the Library of Congress); historic structures reports; and interpretive and educational works (signs, brochures, and so on).

And, most important, how does the historian maintain the integrity of history?
I believe that historians bring to the table a very specific skill set, which always includes paying close attention to sources, historic context, and the importance of creating a meaningful yet truthful (with the requisite small "t") narrative about the past while also serving our clients' need to operate their project and generate power at a reasonable rate. We hopefully maintain the "integrity of history" by always following basic tenets of the historian's craft while also recognizing the resource limitations we (and our clients) work under. Ultimately, although some employees of private energy corporations view the historic resources in their midst as expensive and time-consuming nuisances, public historians are often able to convince engineers and operators not only of the importance of

being proactive and creative when addressing their regulatory obligations but also to generate genuine interest and concern for those resources. When this happens, public history in the private realm has achieved its greatest success.

"Divergent Audiences – History and Health for Practitioners and Publics"
Manon Parry, National Library of Medicine

The National Library of Medicine (NLM), is the world's largest medical library. Part of the federal government, the library is housed on the campus of the National Institutes of Health and is located on the outskirts of Washington, DC. Target audiences include medical librarians, scientists and physicians, undergraduate and high school students, and the general public. The NLM's Exhibition Program develops gallery, online and traveling exhibitions about the social and cultural history of science, medicine, and technology. These projects showcase textual, film, and image holdings from the library's collections, but also include a wide array of artifacts borrowed from museums around the world. Although grounded in the strengths of the collection then, exhibitions are not wholly dependent upon library materials, affording great variation in possible topics. The goal is to raise awareness of the library's collections, encourage young people to pursue careers in the health sciences, engage audiences as diverse as scientists and healthcare professionals working on the campus of the National Institutes of Health, school groups, and the general public, and to contribute to consumer health by informing patrons of health information and resources. This context and mission offer both opportunities and challenges for the practice of public history, not least the difficulty of drawing upon the history of medicine as a tool to engage visitors in current health issues.

Although the Exhibition Program team is free to set historical questions almost entirely in response to the needs of the audience, unencumbered by the limits of the institution's collections, the goal to educate the general public whilst simultaneously engaging the medical community frames the development of each project. This apparent tension has proved productive, however, enriching the exhibition content with the social and cultural history of medicine and preventing a slide towards a narrower focus solely on health education. Potential audiences, for instance, might expect to find exhibitions that celebrate accomplishments, as found in a standard science museum where the emphasis is on discoveries, technologies, and the inventive minds behind them. This approach is increasingly common in history museums too, where devices such as prosthetic limbs, surgical tools or medical remedies are laid out chronological order to illustrate a narrative of medical progress (especially in exhibitions funded by manufacturers or pharmaceutical companies, for example). However, the Exhibition Program has chosen instead to build projects around our understanding of audience interests or learning opportunities, rather than trends in medicine. Recent projects, for example, have explored the experiences of women physicians and their impact on the medical profession and health care, the histories of anatomical illustration and forensic medicine, and global health and human rights. Work is currently underway on the next major exhibition on health and healing among Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

While important medical breakthroughs that can capture the public's interest are still included in these projects, the main emphasis is placed instead on wider issues relating to the practice of scientific research, access to health information and medical care, and the social and environmental factors that shape the health of us as individuals. Historians of medicine have been very supportive of this effort to move beyond triumphant storylines to tell more complex accounts of the history of patients and their practitioners. Each new exhibition expands potential audiences, from minority communities to overseas online visitors, beyond science-oriented youth to others interested in the wide variety of subjects that intersect with health and well-being.

Scientists and physicians who recognize that such an approach can draw in a broad visitorship have also responded enthusiastically, although others have been more reluctant to move away from the more traditional strategies. Some stakeholders have insisted that such elements be included alongside other approaches, meaning that the old and the new have to be integrated into the finished project. Satisfying such expectations takes up additional space, but can help to gradually smooth the way for less conventional storylines and exhibition topics.

Exhibitions that re-evaluate an established history or include the perspective of people previously left out (such as the patient perspective in medical narratives) may be especially appealing to visitors, particularly if the topic has contemporary relevance. It is also important to realize that so-called "controversial" topics are not automatically off-limits. Providing multiple perspectives on contested issues, letting exhibition subjects speak for themselves, and providing a forum for discussion or feedback on the issues raised are all useful strategies when presenting challenging subject matter. Avoiding such topics, or ignoring recent scholarship that revisits traditional interpretations, may prove far more damaging to the credibility of the institution in the long run. At a government institution responsible for reaching all publics, (particularly one so closely allied with government-funded health research and the production of medical knowledge), such efforts are especially important.

"Isle Royale National Park: History, Historic Preservation, and Land Management on Contested Terrain"
Philip V. Scarpino, Indiana University/Purdue University, Indianapolis

Isle Royale National Park, which is located in the Northwestern Corner of Lake Superior, was created by Congress in 1931 and dedicated in 1946. Isle Royale is represented by multiple stories – over time one narrative emerged dominant over others – and that process itself has a history. A major goal of my work for the National Park Service became tracing the historical process whereby the wilderness narrative became privileged over all others and how that has in turn impacted land management and cultural resource management on the Island.

The paper will draw upon a three-year project undertaken by the author to assess the significance of the cultural resources on Isle Royale National Park, completed under contract with the National Park Service. Research included considerable field work, as well

as primary research in the Isle Royale National Park archive in Houghton, Michigan, and several oral history interviews.

The Park's goal was to generate an independent scholarly assessment as part of a planning process that includes contentious issues related to life leases and special use permits, as well as the disposition of surviving cultural resources in a park with a wilderness mission.

Background:

There are places on the Isle Royale that have been discontinuously occupied by people for thousands of years. Ojibwe hunted on the Island and fished surrounding waters. They also extracted small amounts of nearly pure copper. Starting in the 1830s, Americans began commercial fishing in the waters surrounding Isle Royale, and with some interruptions in the 19th century, a viable commercial fishery persisted until the lamprey invasion hit the western end of Lake Superior in the 1950s. Copper miners came and went in three waves (1843-1855, 1873-1881, AND 1889-1993).

Starting in the late 19th century, increasing numbers of Americans traveled to Isle Royale for recreation and enjoyment. Clever entrepreneurs transformed isolation from a liability into an asset, as they built resorts that allowed increasing numbers of people to visit the island to enjoy themselves. During the 1910s and 1920s, there were four higher end resorts on Isle Royale and several other more rustic operations catering to tourists during the summer season. On the heels of the tourists came an increasing number of summer residents, so that by the 1910s Isle Royale had significant concentrations of population in the harbors and inlets around the periphery of the Island. Recreational visitors and summer residents formed a constituency for uses of the Island that were not compatible with extractive industries like logging and mining or crowding of the type that occurred on Mackinaw Island.

During the first third of the twentieth century actual or potential resource exploitation, including large-scale harvesting of pulp wood, presented a threat to the qualities that recreationists and wilderness advocates prized about Isle Royale. In the early 1920s, summer residents organized themselves into the Citizens Committee of Isle Royale to oppose such threats. The Citizens Committee dispatched a request that the Island be designated a state game and timber reserve to the Director of the Michigan Conservation Department who forwarded their request to Albert Stoll, outdoor editor of the Detroit News.

Making common cause with Albert Stoll gained the Citizens Committee an influential advocate and spokesperson, but in the process the Committee lost control of the movement to save "their" island from development and exploitation. They also lost control of the opportunity to define and shape the narrative about the meaning of Isle Royale.

By 1923, Stoll was actively boosting Isle Royale as a National Park, and in 1924 , he organized a tour of Isle Royale that brought key people to the Island, including Stephen Mather, first Director of the National Park Service; Secretary of the Interior, Hubert Work;

and, Sierra Club President, Francis Farquhar. Mather became a believer, and he used his influence to support the idea of a National Park on Isle Royale. Stoll and Mather, Work and Farquhar became important players not only in persuading Congress to authorize creation of Isle Royale National Park in 1931 but also in defining the public story of Isle Royale as a single-theme narrative emphasizing wilderness.

During the 1960s and 1970s, with the advent of Mission 66, the ecology-based environmental movement, and passage of the federal Wilderness Act (1964) and Environmental Policy Act (1969) and the Eastern Wilderness Act (1975) the mission and management of Isle Royale National Park continued to evolve.

In 1967 the National Park Service proposed a wilderness plan for Isle Royale that left out about 14,000 acres, including high-use areas that contained most of the surviving cultural resources on the Island and the two in tact recreational communities on the far east and far west ends. Environmentalists and wilderness advocates loudly at the single public hearing held by the National Park Service in Houghton, Michigan. President Gerald Ford signed legislation designating nearly all of Isle Royale as wilderness on October 20, 1976. President Ford's signature represented a victory for environmentalists and wilderness advocates who had waged a decade-long struggle with the National Park Service over the location and extent of wilderness on the Island. In the end, about ninety nine percent of Isle Royale earned wilderness designation

The Problem and the Assignment:

In the process of creating Isle Royale National Park many summer residents and some fishermen received life leases to property and cabins that they had formerly owned. The National Park Service later extended life leases to the children of the original lease holders who were alive at the time of the Park's establishment. The Park pursued a policy in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s of burning buildings not covered by life leases. Other buildings and docks deteriorated and disintegrated so that by the end of the 20th century far fewer resources survived on the Island than had existed when the Congress established the park in 1931.

By the early 21st Century, many of the life lease holders, who were the children of the original owners, had either died or had become quite elderly. The Park began to look ahead to taking over these properties. The remaining fishing and recreational families, organized into the Isle Royale Friends and Families Association (IRFFA), sought ways to retain a presence on the Island and access to their cabins and boat docks, which in some cases had been part of their family histories for nearly 100 years.

One of the things that IRFFA did was to establish contact with the National Trust for Historic Preservation's regional office in Chicago. Interest on the part of the National Trust, was one of the reasons that prompted the Park to seek proposals for an historic context study by an independent scholar. The purpose of the context study was to establish the historical significance of surviving cultural resources on Isle Royale National Park.

History at Work:

Public history is frequently problem driven and interdisciplinary; in this case, the most significant and challenging problem became creating a historic context that would allow the Park Service to assess the significance of surviving cultural resources on Isle Royale. A historic context is the framework within which one uses research-based evidence ranging from archival materials to images to field assessment to establish the case for the significance of cultural resources. On the one hand, establishing historic context as a basis for understanding is something that historians do on a regular basis. On the other hand, creating a historic context is a specific exercise required by the National Register of Historic Places for explaining the significance of properties nominated to the National Register.

Historic contexts represent history at work – the application of history to understanding the significance of surviving cultural resources. An effective historic context should answer the basic question: What gives these "things from the past" value in the present?

A historic context must also explain how the resources in question meet one or more the National Register's four criteria and assess integrity. Integrity links the character-defining physical qualities of cultural resources to the case for their significance based on one or more of the four National Register Criteria. Assessing and explaining integrity ties history directly to material culture, which is another distinguishing characteristic of the work of many public historians.

Creating a historic context that provided a framework for understanding the significance of surviving cultural resources on Isle Royale required interdisciplinary research aimed at understanding the interplay between human and natural history on the Island over time. Present-day literature almost always portrays Isle Royale as a pristine wilderness. Wolves and moose frequently serve as icons of the wildness that characterizes the Island. Yet, both the moose and wolves are exotic species on Isle Royale, which creates an interesting interplay between history and science in defining the meaning of that place.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to assess the significance of the cultural resources on Isle Royale or to plan for their preservation and continuing use without carefully defining the historical relationship between wildness and cultural resources on the Island. The idea of wilderness has played such a central role in Isle Royale's narrative that it has become almost synonymous with the meaning of that place. Reconnecting the narrative threads in the history of Isle Royale demonstrated that on Isle Royale wilderness and the cultural remnants of past and present use are part of an intertwined story.

In many ways managing land to return it to wilderness and preserving cultural resources in a way that respects and protects their significance and integrity are flip sides of the same coin. Preserving wilderness and preserving cultural resources begins with the same questions: What is it that we wish to preserve? Why preserve? What gives remnants of the past value in the present? What constitutes integrity? Who gets to decide?

Public history problems and projects often originate with someone else or grow out of interdisciplinary or collaborative discussion. That was certainly the case with the historic context assessing the surviving cultural resources on Isle Royale. The Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service issued the request for proposals, and the Regional Historian negotiated and wrote the "Task Agreement."

While most of the funding came from the National Park Service, the National Trust's Midwest Regional office also put money into the project.   While IRFFA did not contribute money, the organization's officers maintained active liaison with the Park officials and the Trust. IRFFA also provided "boat time," lodging, information, and insight. All of the parties held an organizational meeting at National Trusts' Midwest office in Chicago.

Despite the efforts at collaboration, the National Park Service, represented by the Midwest Regional Office and the Headquarters of Isle Royale National Park, was the client for this project. The historian retained control over the interpretation and conclusions, but as is often the case with the work of public historians, control over how the product gets used rests with the client.

While collaboration played a role, this project also grew out of a long-running and fundamental disagreement over management and use of the cultural resources on Isle Royale National Park. Collaboration was often a veneer covering significant differences over the significance and meaning and the long-term preservation and management of the surviving cultural resources on the Island. The depths of those differences, and the passion with which parties embraced their positions made it important for the historian to strike a balance between cordiality, respect, and collaboration and scholarly independence. It was important to understand and appreciate the perspectives of the interests involved without becoming party to any of them.

Audience also presented challenges. Each of the parties involved represented an element of the audience for this study. The best that IRFFA and the National Trust could expect from the final context would be information or interpretation that would strengthen their case for preserving the surviving cultural resources on the Island. Even so, the historic preservation-related goals supported by IRFFA and the Trust over lapped but were not synonymous.

The most immediate and important element of the audience for this context was representatives of the National Park Service in the Omaha Regional Office and the Headquarters of Isle Royale National Park, with some overlapping interest among supervisors and cultural resources managers in other Great Lakes National Park sites such as Apostle Islands and Voyager.

In terms of resource management issues on Isle Royale, the audience shrank to a single person – the Supervisor of Isle Royale National Park. Given the organization of National Park Service, Park supervisors have considerable authority and autonomy in interpreting and administering the laws and policies that govern land use and resource management in the national parks.

Much of the work of public historians ultimately falls into the category of “Gray Literature” -- unpublished, usually not subject to peer assessment, not part of the professional “conversation” among historians, and limited in its ability to add to what we know. One of the benefits of this working group is that it provides an opportunity to bring Gray Literature into a professional discussion.