

Letters

Readers may submit letters to the editor (see contact information on page 2). Letters must include the writer's name, address, and daytime telephone number for confirmation. Letters may be edited for publication, and not all letters will be published. If a letter pertains to an article or review, the editor may forward the letter to the author for reply.

The Warriors Project

A recent article (Winter 2005) discussed the contributions of Buffalo Soldiers. Unfortunately, I looked in vain for any mention of the contributions of 24th Infantry and 9th Cavalry troops in the protection and preservation of Sequoia and General Grant (Kings Canyon) National Park or Yosemite National Park in 1899, 1903, and 1904. These soldiers constructed what is considered to be the first museum in the National Park System—a nature trail/arboretum constructed by the 9th Cavalry in the Wawona area of Yosemite National Park in 1904—as well as the first trail to the top of Mt. Whitney, the highest mountain in the United States at that time, in Sequoia National Park in 1903.

These Buffalo Soldiers rode from the Presidio of San Francisco to the Sierra in 1899 and 1903, and the Ord Barracks of Monterey in 1904. In 1903, Troop I of the 9th Cavalry was led by Captain Charles Young, the third African American to graduate from West Point Military Academy, and the first African American superintendent of a national park (Sequoia National Park) in the summer of 1903. At the time of his death, Young was the highest ranking African American in the United States

Army, and the first African American to reach the rank of full colonel.

Many historians tend to look at the framework of the historical period for Buffalo Soldiers to mean 1866 to 1890 when the last Indian war ended. As someone who interprets the life of Buffalo Soldiers who served in Yosemite in 1903, I incorporate their role in the Indian wars as well as the Philippine-American War and their stewardship of national parks in California.

I recommend that Howard University students “look outside the box” and into the lives of some of these soldiers. In 1903, a 30-year veteran of the 9th Cavalry could tell stories about fighting Indians, fighting “insurrectos” in the Philippines, as well as possibly serving in China during the Boxer Rebellion prior to service in Yosemite or Sequoia. At what point would such a soldier no longer be considered a “Buffalo Soldier?” For quite a few Buffalo Soldiers, fighting in the Indian wars was a chapter in their life, but not the book. Many continued on with military life for decades.

The Buffalo Soldier history at the Presidio of San Francisco, Sequoia National Park, and Yosemite National Park is well documented, but deserves more research. I hope that the Howard University students and others will pursue this topic so that scholarship in this important aspect of the African American struggle for dignity is broadened and deepened.

Shelton Johnson
Park Ranger
Yosemite National Park

Response: My role in the National Park Service's Warriors Project was to provide technical support to the participants using geographic information systems, as was described in the *CRM Journal* article. As the title indicated, the article explored the use of technology in the documentation of cultural resources. It was not intended to provide a comprehensive history of the Buffalo Soldiers.

The National Park Service established the Warriors Project to provide undergraduate students an opportunity to inventory historic sites and examine cultural resources through new technologies. An important goal was to foster cooperation between the African American and American Indian communities in the hope of generating interest in continued study of the Buffalo Soldiers in both communities. The project leaders chose a specific time frame—ranging from 1866 to 1891—to reflect the greatest period of overlap between American Indian and African American participants, not to exclude any significant portion of the Buffalo Soldiers' contributions in the United States.

As a result of the partnership, the first phase of the Warriors Project may lead to additional work highlighting the lives and contributions of African Americans and American Indians. Additional work may include a more systematic survey of resources associated with Buffalo Soldiers, to assess threats to these resources, and to recognize them where they are protected.

As the project continues to grow, I hope that other students will participate in the project and address the full extent of the Buffalo Soldiers' legacy.

Deidre McCarthy
Cultural Resource GIS Facility
National Park Service

More on the Warriors Project

I have researched and written about Buffalo Soldiers for some time and am particularly curious about how we can consider United States citizens in regular regiments to be analogous to "native troops." I have been working on this subject for quite some time, and I have not encountered any indication that "The American military studied the colonial model used in the deployment of native troops against indigenous populations." I always thought that in the context of the Indian wars, native troops were other Indians, used as scouts or in individual companies added to regular regiments. Since you provided no documentation in your article, maybe you would not mind pointing me to the sources for this view of Buffalo Soldiers as analogous to "native troops."

Frank Schubert
Alexandria, Virginia

Response: This was an error. The reference should have been to "European troops" to reflect that the American military studied the colonial model, which deployed European troops (British, French, German, etc.) against native or indigenous populations.

Deidre McCarthy
Cultural Resource GIS Facility
National Park Service

A Note on Our Cover

Some readers are curious about the criteria used to select cover images for the *CRM Journal*. The *CRM Journal* is a prime opportunity to recognize heritage stewardship in all of its manifestations and to showcase the documentary treasures preserved in National Park Service and other photographic and archival collections. Cover images do not need to have a direct relationship to a particular essay, but

they do have to relate to themes addressed by one or more of the issue's contributors.

Image quality and other technical concerns play a role in narrowing the selection of worthy candidates. Chief among the criteria are an image's expressive power and its capacity for communicating the depth, variety, and humaneness of cultural resource stewardship in an ever-changing world. We hope that these images will prove their mettle as testaments of our efforts at all levels to preserve the nation's heritage for the benefit of current and future generations.

Martin Perschler
Photographic Collections Editor, *CRM Journal* and
Collections Manager, HABS/HAER/HALS/CRGIS
Program

Corrections to "Preserving Ranches"

The essay by Kat Vlahos, "Preserving Ranches: Not Only Possible, but Imperative" (Winter 2005) should have referred to "Historic Routt County!" instead of South Routt County. Additional information on Historic Routt County! can be found at P.O. Box 775717, Steamboat Springs, CO 80477, <http://www.historicrouttcounty.org>. In addition, "Barns, Etc." should replace Barn's Etc. The email address for Kat Vlahos should be ekaterine@stripe.colorado.edu.

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