Cultural Resources and Spanning the Public Interest Gap

CHRS staff are frequently asked to present ideas at Transportation Research Board meetings and other professional conferences catering to cultural resources. These presentations are typically given fanciful titles such as “Posters for the Public: Plenty of Possibilities for Popular Propagation of Project Perspectives” and “From Ruins to Relics: Many Ways of Reaching the Public.” But they all speak to the same issue. How do we bring the information gathered during historic or archaeological projects to the public in a meaningful and worthwhile way? Taking the often dry, technical data written in the jargon of the cultural resources practitioner and adapting this information to a product that is not only informative, but interesting, is not an easy task. Those who write the technical reports are seldom able to produce a document that will hold the attention of the public. Special expertise and experience is necessary to transform the technical data and span the public interest gap.

Nine illustrated histories, 8 wayside interpretive panels, 4 exhibit posters, and multiple exhibit panels, commemorative markers, brochures, video documentaries, portable exhibits, and animated slide presentations provide colorful proof that over the past 15 years CHRS, Inc. has become a leading developer of creative strategies and products intended to mitigate adverse impacts of Section 106 projects on cultural resources in the Mid-Atlantic region.

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Spanning the Public Interest Gap
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In an earlier era of cultural resource management, adverse impacts to cultural resources were typically mitigated through the preparation of exhaustive studies and recordation reports. Geared for limited audiences of specialists and scholars, these documents were welcome additions to a few libraries and archives, but they offered little benefit to residents of regions where the projects were located.

That has been changing in recent years, as project sponsors—with encouragement from State Historic Preservation Offices—have looked for ways to share the results of in-depth, project-related cultural resource investigations with a wider public.

For dozens of clients, this has meant tapping into CHRS’s expertise. We have a long history of working with local historians and cultural organizations to conceptualize optimal “general audience” products. Our researchers, writers, designers, reviewers, and editors have extensive experience in all aspects of turning concepts into engaging, informative, and attractive presentations. Some recent examples are highlighted on the following pages.

If you need to reach an audience with the results of a cultural resource investigation, CHRS is uniquely qualified to help you develop a strategy and create the product—or suite of products—that get you to your goal. As some of our clients can attest, you might even win a cultural resource mitigation award!

This wayside interpretive panel was one of several products prepared by CHRS, Inc. for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, District 4-0, and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, as mitigation for the effects of Valley View Business Park construction on the Dolph/Sunnyside Industrial District in Jessup, Pennsylvania.
Animated Slide Presentations

- Mining Data at Marshalls Creek: A Phase III Archaeological Investigation of Three Native American Chert Quarries in the Upper Delaware Valley
- Rediscovering the Dolph/Sunnyside Industrial District
- All About Expedience: A Phase III Archaeological Investigation of Two Quarry Sites in Eastern Pennsylvania’s Hardyston Jasper Prehistoric District Quarry Zone

Brochures

- Mining Data at Marshalls Creek: A Phase III Archaeological Investigation of Three Native American Chert Quarries in the Upper Delaware Valley
- Recovering a Record in the Riverside: The Shohola Flats Archaeological Site, Shohola Township, Pennsylvania (below)

Commemorative Markers

- Starrucca Historic District (top left)
- Central Norristown Historic District
- Higgenbotham Farm Archaeological Site

Exhibit Posters

- Recalling the Isaac Heintz Homestead
- The Pohopoco Creek Bridge on the Pennsylvania Turnpike: An Engineering Rarity in Parryville Borough, Carbon County, Pennsylvania, 1957-2008 (left)
- The Getz Family’s Sylvan View Dairy
More Recent CHRS Mitigation Products

Illustrated Histories

- Discovering Dunlap: An Archaeological Investigation of a Short-Lived Coal-and-Coke Company Town in Fayette County, Pennsylvania
- Harford in Hindsight: Vintage Views of a Rural Northeastern Pennsylvania Village in the Twentieth Century (left)
- Bringing the Bishop Farm Tenant House to Light: An Archaeological Investigation of a Mid-Nineteenth-Century Residential Site in Exeter Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania

Portable and Permanent Exhibits

- The Dolph/Sunnyside Industrial District
- Recovering a Record in the Riverside (Shohola Flats Archaeological Site; left)
- Remembering the Linvill-Brackbill-Kreider Farm

Video Documentaries

- The Gravity: The Story of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company’s Gravity Railroad
- Silver Cinders: The Legacy of Coal and Coke in Southwestern Pennsylvania

Wayside Interpretive Panels

- Crossing the Mon at Point Marion: Two Eras, Two Methods; The Dillinger Family’s Point Marion Ferry, 1847-1931; The Point Marion Bridge Company’s Albert Gallatin Memorial Bridge, 1930-2008
- The Dolph/Sunnyside Industrial District
- Barryville’s D&H Canal Connection (left)
For the past five years, CHRS, Inc. preservationist **Christine Miller Cruiess** has been volunteering with the **Community Design Collaborative**. Beginning this past summer and continuing into the fall, she has served on a team completing a Preliminary Master Plan for the Rehabilitation of the Overbrook Presbyterian Church, in the National Register-listed Overbrook Farms Historic District in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Christine brings over ten years of preservation and conservation experience to the rehabilitation project. Her work focuses on regulatory issues as they pertain to the historic preservation of the church, as well as the completion of a conditions assessment of the property, which will be included as part of the Master Plan.

Recently CHRS, Inc. completed the **Pennsbury Manor Archaeological Mapping Project**, a detailed spatial model of the historic archaeological Pennsbury Manor Site in Falls Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. William Penn’s original estate at Pennsbury Manor is a featured public attraction, open to the general public year round, and sponsoring many educational events each year. Like most attractions open to the public, Pennsbury Manor is in constant need of maintenance and upkeep, activities that might impact archaeological resources. A large number of archaeological projects had been undertaken at the site, but many had occurred so far in the past that it was uncertain where this work had been done and what was found. The mapping project was devised to graphically provide this information in a manner that would allow maintenance activity to proceed while protecting potentially important archaeological deposits. This computer-generated spatial model encompassed all archaeological testing performed at Pennsbury Manor from the 1930s through the present. The model also provided overlays of relevant historic maps. The varying data sets allowed an in-depth understanding of the historical development of this State-run historic site and its past archaeological investigations that could never have been achieved before.

*The computer-generated spatial model produced by CHRS, Inc. encompasses all archaeological testing performed at Pennsbury Manor from the 1930s through the present.*
CHRS ARCHAEOLOGIST Justin McKissick has moved around quite a bit since first setting out from his hometown of Strattanville, Pennsylvania to pursue his undergraduate degree at Clarion University of Pennsylvania. When asked about the origins of his interest in the field of archaeology, Justin said, “To be honest, I was unaware it existed as an occupation.” But while studying biology at Clarion University he took an Introduction to Anthropology course and decided to minor in anthropology. During the summer of his sophomore year, Justin participated in a field school to earn credits toward his minor, and he “enjoyed the experience so much that I switched my degree and made biology a minor and anthropology my new major.” After receiving his B.A. in anthropology in 2006, Justin came to CHRS as a member of the field crew in the summer of 2007. At the beginning of the academic year, Justin left CHRS to pursue an M.A. in archaeology at Eastern New Mexico University. After finishing his coursework in the spring of 2008 (which included Section 106 training), Justin decided to return to the CHRS field crew while completing his M.A. thesis, entitled The Estimation of Irrigable Land for the Hohokam Canal Systems of the Salt River Valley, Arizona: A GIS Approach. Justin chose the topic because he was “interested in the Hohokam after taking a Prehistory of the Southwest course, because the Hohokam seem to have many Mesoamerican ties and they are a pretty different culture compared to the Mogollon and Anasazi, who resided in the same general region.” Justin took full advantage of the thesis-writing process, explaining that he was able to “get more involved with GIS and ArcGIS software. I think I would like to take some supplemental courses, like a soils class and geology. Mostly, I want to continue to learn.” Upon receiving his Master’s degree, Justin qualified to serve as a project manager on archaeological projects.
**PRESIDENT’S CORNER**

Historic adj. 1. Having importance in or influence on history. From O.Fr. historie, from L. historia “narrative,” from Gk. historia, from historein “inquire,” from histor “wise man, judge,” from PIE *wid-tor-, from base *weid- “to know,” lit. “to see.”

When asked what I do, I say CHRS, Inc. provides Historic Preservation services. We seek to preserve that which is historic, that which has importance to our past. The next question that I often hear is, “How does one do that?” This question usually elicits a response about preservation law and the procedures that are followed to identify and evaluate historic properties. But the etymology of the word “history” provides the fundamental clue to our work. Like the Proto-Indo-European root of the word, one literally has “to see” the past. You must be able to recognize what has gone before, even when it is partially hidden beneath the veneer of change that time brings. To the Greeks, those who could “see,” were “wise men.” They recognized that “to see” well, you also needed to be wise enough to ask questions, to “inquire.” To be able to evaluate a historic property, you must ask the right questions—questions that relate to the integrity of the resource, its history, and its importance to understanding the past. In the world of Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources Management, it is not enough “to see” the past, or “inquire” as to the importance of a historic property. You must also be able—as the Romans saw—to provide a “narrative.” You must be able to provide a concise story that presents a clear enough argument to withstand the scrutiny of review personnel. The tasks of seeing, inquiring, and narrating are not easy and are not learned quickly. At CHRS, Inc. these tasks are a team effort. Our historians, architectural historians, archaeologists, graphic artists, and editors work together to collect information, evaluate the data, and provide the necessary high-quality narrative. Individuals come and go, but the team and the company’s philosophy of work maintain our ability to see the past, ask the appropriate questions, and present the information in a meaningful way. The next time I am asked what I do, I will say that I lead a team of highly qualified individuals who seek to help preserve elements of the past for the future. We’re a historic bunch.

**CONFERENCE NEWS**

In January of 2009, CHRS, Inc. President Kenneth J. Basalik, Ph.D., and preservationist Mary Alfson Tinsman attended the annual Transportation Research Board (TRB) conference in Washington, DC, where they presented at a poster session chaired by Mary Alfson Tinsman. • In March 2009, Director of Archaeology Thomas R. Lewis attended the Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference in Ocean City, Maryland. • CHRS, Inc. was one of the corporate sponsors of the statewide conference on Heritage in May 2009. This was a joint conference of PennDOT’s Byways to the Past X, and Preservation Pennsylvania’s Heritage Partnerships Conference XXXI held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. In attendance were Ken Basalik, preservationists Mary Alfson Tinsman, Christine Miller Cruiss and Lisa McConahy, and archaeologist Justin McKissick. • In July 2009, Ken Basalik and Mary Alfson Tinsman attended the ADC50 Committee on Historic and Archaeological Preservation in Transportation in Sheridan, Wyoming, at which Mary gave a presentation entitled Documenting Mid-Twentieth Century Resources Within Budget and On Time. • In October 2009, Mary Alfson Tinsman and Lisa McConahy were invited to present a poster entitled Historic Bridge Mitigation: Spanning the Public Interest Gap at the National Trust for Preservation’s annual meeting held in Nashville, Tennessee.
CHRS, Inc. provides Cultural Resources services for a variety of cell tower and telecommunication projects located throughout the country, including full and partial 620/621 services for both co-locations and raw land sites. The work includes limited background research, file searches at the appropriate SHPO, Effect and Adverse Effect Determinations and, if an area cannot be documented as previously disturbed, limited archaeological testing of the proposed tower sites. Each project requires coordination with the appropriate State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as well as an understanding of the guidelines and procedures appropriate in each state. In addition, CHRS, Inc. conducts balloon tests, where necessary, to determine the potential visual effects on specific historic resources. If required, a full range of specialized archaeological services are also available. Our extensive experience with this type of work allows us to provide prompt services, and recent work has extended into the following states:

- Delaware
- Florida
- Georgia
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Montana
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Virginia
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin

CHRS, Inc. is pleased to announce a need to update our email addresses! Mary Alfson Tinsman, preservationist, celebrated a spring 2008 wedding. Mary’s new email address is MTinsman@CHRSinc.com. Maria (DiNicola) Rossi, assistant editor, married in the winter of 2009, can now be contacted at MRossi@CHRSinc.com. Christine Miller Cruiess, preservationist/conservator, was married this past spring. Christine’s new email address is CCruiess@CHRSinc.com. Lisa McConahy, preservationist, is planning a summer 2010 wedding. Visit our website at www.chrsinc.com for the most up-to-date list of staff contact information.