

Creating a Presence of Applied Anthropology in the National Park Service: A SfAA Oral History Interview with Muriel “Miki” Crespi.

Shirley J. Fiske

Muriel Crespi, or Miki, as she preferred to be called, was the Chief Ethnographer of the National Park Service. She asked me to interview her for the SfAA oral history project, as she entered a period of relative remission in her battle with cancer; and she knew it was important to capture her story at that point in her life. We had known each other for over 20 years, ever since she came to Washington, DC, and were friends and colleagues; she saw me as a comrade in the struggle to introduce the human-centered approaches of anthropology to federal agencies. Miki’s rich experience and insights took three interview sessions, each about an hour, and she would tire towards the end. Miki loved her work and the challenges of working with the National Park Service, and continued working until her death on April 25, 2003. She received the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology’s Omer C. Stewart Award in 1992 and the AAA’s Solon T. Kimball Award for Public and Applied Anthropology in 1994.

Miki’s interview takes a chronological course, beginning with her graduate studies and fieldwork in Ecuador, her return to the U.S. and her odyssey to find what applied anthropology meant to her, and the right opportunity to apply it. Fortuitously, she came to Washington, D.C. to find an applied job and was hired by the National Park Service, which was looking to create a program in cultural anthropology.

With strong vision of the possible, and doggedness, Miki intuitively pursued building a new federal program – and create it out of “scratch.” She was gifted in many ways. Her goal was to introduce the Park Service staff and superintendents to the human side of resource management—the way she saw it was “healing the disconnect between resources and people” that was an ingrained historic artifact of the NPS’ primary mission to preserve the *natural* resources of national parks.

The story of how she did this is remarkably instructive. She realized that the first step was to codify mandates for ethnography and inclusiveness in Park policy and guidance documents and to educate park managers and interpreters. This takes a long time. She built these efforts around recently passed legislation (AIRFA, followed by ANILCA, NAGPRA, and other statutes) which required parks to deal with people; that is, consultation, subsistence lifestyles, and recognize traditionally associated peoples. “The language of the law has to be transformed into the context of a particular federal agency” she stated. Anthropologists have “special sensitivity to a segment of the American public that often is overlooked except in the most superficial way. They understand what it means to consult with people in a meaningful way.”

She built an internal AND external team. Her recollections show in detail how national anthropological associations can be effective in shaping and enabling new programs at specific points in their development in a) appropriations; and b) developing guidance and "regulations" that became Park policy.

She introduced critical concepts into policy and practice in the NPS. The goal was to recognize, include, acknowledge, and consult with contemporary people of all ethnicities and income levels—not just well-known historical figures, families. Concepts such as “traditionally associated peoples” and communities; and “ethnographic resources”—“those sites, structures, objects, those tangible resources that are traditionally valued by present-day people because they contributed to their history and or their life.” As Miki says, “It seemed to me a way to highlight the fact that people attach meaning to the sites, structures, objects, and landscapes and that it is the meaning that in a sense transforms those tangible resources into something of greater value for the viewers or the users.” These concepts which seem so well-accepted now were almost revolutionary in the early years. Her efforts helped bridge the gap between contemporary people and parks, and showed how people are connected to parks and attribute meaning to them. The ethnography program was dedicated to documenting and understanding the views of somewhat “invisible” groups to make a full picture of our past and current– landscapes, geographic features, historic and non-existing structures, and communities themselves.

Ultimately, she developed a cadre of dedicated regional and park ethnographers across the NPS who continue to carry the message, mission and objectives of applied anthropology forward, and to bring “people” into Parks’ everyday life.

These interviews were conducted by Shirley J. Fiske on a number of dates in late 2002 and early 2003. The transcripts which follow were edited for accuracy and readability by John van Willigen and Shirley J. Fiske.

**FISKE:** Miki, you were saying that for a long time you didn't really appreciate the full difference between academic and applied anthropology and this is context for talking about the [National] Park Service and [your] work with the Park Service.

**CRESPI:** Yes, the dichotomy between applied and academic anthropology [was] never significant to me until relatively recently. As a graduate student, I took a course in applied anthropology but it did not seem clearly differentiated from any other kind of anthropology. Perhaps it is because at the time I took these courses it was not necessarily perceived as a separate and well bounded sub-discipline. There were discussions of - as far as I can recall – Lauriston Sharp and, what is it, “Steel Axes for Stone Age Australians” ...

**FISKE:** Right, I remember that.

**CRESPI :** ... and there were discussions of Philleo Nash's work and discussions of some project oriented work.

**FISKE:** And there was even a little bit of acknowledgment of [the] Fox Project and Vicos, but it didn't seem fully separate and I agree ...

**CRESPI:** Right. Right.

**FISKE:** ... that it seem fully separate from academic.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. And it seemed as if all of the skills and tools and paradigms that we used to study community organization were also used to study change or inducing change or ...

**FISKE:** Social change.

**CRESPI:** So I did not perceive myself as an applied anthropologist or an academic anthropologist. The distinctions were never very meaningful to me. And they became a lot clearer when I began to do my dissertation research. And this was in Ecuador, I was working at a hacienda. Let me go back a little bit because one of the reasons that I became fascinated with the haciendas was because I was a student of Julian Steward and his book on the people of Puerto Rico was one of my, and still is, one of my all-time favorite books as a graduate student Columbia. I was not that fascinated exclusively with the study of tribal society or the study of seemingly remote society. I was not that taken with the intricacies of kinship systems although I can appreciate them, the fascination with them. I was most interested in complex societies and although not necessarily the US but Latin America was the place I wanted to work in. I didn't want to work at the top of the mountain or out in Amazonia and be isolated from other people and other communities. And Steward's work on the people of Puerto Rico which I ran into I guess my last year at Columbia before I went over to Illinois seemed to me to be the answer to the way to approach complex societies and maybe it was not fully successful but it was the first study that I had ever seen that attempted to deal with a system. He was looking at a whole variety of communities within the context of history and colonization and resource uses and oh, God, it was so exciting to me. And it blurred the lines even more between what could be academic and what could be applied.

**FISKE:** Right. Because the traditional societies that were studied were like Yanomamo and ...

**CRESPI:** Right.

**FISKE:** ... it was a clear distinction between that and contemporary society.

**CRESPI:** Right. And they were perceived as being for the purposes of study well bounded and relatively isolated whereas that approach would never have worked with [Eric] Wolf's work and

[Sidney] Mintz's work and Schiele and the whole group that was working in Puerto Rico with Steward. They needed to have a more expanded vision otherwise it just couldn't work. So it was that approach that motivated me to go to Ecuador and look at haciendas in Ecuador. And I was interested not in just the hacienda but in its relationship ... well, it happened to be a government-owned hacienda so it was its relationship to the government and to the local community. And while I was there Ecuador passed its agrarian reform law and so all kinds of long-term institutional arrangements were going to be undone. This was in response to the Alliance for Progress [initiated in 1961] in the Kennedy program to promote--I guess it was technically called Democracy but I think they were promoting a market orientation and totally undermining traditional relationships. And the Agrarian Reform Institute moved on to this hacienda that I was studying. And it truly amazed me to find that their entire focus was in economics - well, it shouldn't have amazed me but ...

**FISKE:** What was the Agrarian Reform Institute?

**CRESPI:** Instituto Reforma Agraria was an Ecuadorian government Institute that was organized in response to the Alliance for Progress and received funding from the US and it was devoted to reorganizing and undermining and changing the traditional hacienda system.

**FISKE:** They systematically went around to various haciendas and they redeveloped the relationships and divided up the land or ... ?

**CRESPI:** Yes. The federal government had expropriated the church properties at the turn of the century and haciendas in the federal hands were formerly church owned. And I think one of the reasons the government allowed me to come on to [this] hacienda, was because it knew it was slated for agrarian reform. The private haciendas that I visited said, go away, you're a Yankee spy, or CIA, or whatever. The [Instituto's] primary concern was, how do we increase productivity? How do we widen the roads? How do we get rid of the communist cells that are here? And there was a very active group of people dedicated to Carlos Marx and very interesting. But they were not very interested in social relationships and the fact that the traditional family structure was going to be destroyed when they changed the land tenure system. They were not interested in the fact that they would be creating new economic classes and reducing some people to perhaps even greater poverty and stimulating their exodus from the haciendas because they could no longer live with their families, none of this was in the least bit interesting to them. They had another mission and their mission was to show how this hacienda could be self supporting and become a cooperative. It surprised me that they didn't seem to have read the material on cooperatives and all of the information [chuckle] that had been coming out of Russia on the tragic results of their efforts to organize communes and cooperatives. And then there were visitors who kept coming by the hacienda and talking to the agrarian reform people

and nobody paid attention to me. Partly I think it's because I was a female and in Latin America and then what can I possibly know ...

**FISKE:** Right. And this was in the '60s or '70s? The '60s?

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** So, yeah, that was way before there was a movement of women in the role as independent producers of knowledge.

**CRESPI:** [chuckle] But the consequence in the end was that they developed these co-ops which were absolutely failures in almost every conceivable way. They did not do what they were supposed to do. The Indians were outraged that the co-ops were even being imposed on them, they didn't want co-ops. They marched on the hacienda and on the agrarian reform people threatening to kill them if they insisted on having the co-ops, [and] in the end the co-ops went out. Indians left the hacienda in droves because they couldn't be supported. The point is that the line between applied and academic anthropology became even more blurred to me as I realized I had critical information that would have contributed to greater success or at least it would have helped mitigate some of the problems in implementing this agrarian reform. And nobody was interested in it not necessarily because I was an academic anthropologist but because they just didn't see the value of having this kind of data. And I guess I don't see the point in having this sort of data if I cannot use it to solve problems.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** And I became less interested in the purely theoretical aspects of family organization, family structure, religious belief systems, and the like and more interested in how the data that we accumulate can be used to solve real world problems to some extent.

**FISKE:** Yeah, absolutely.

**CRESPI:** And I became also utterly convinced that if we don't look at the relationships between the community, the local communities and government institutions then we are never going to understand the community that we're focusing on because it is subject to manipulation [and] change from outside.

**FISKE:** Right. There's always gonna be other organizations whether it's government or corporations or bank or whatever, there's always gonna be other organizations that are gonna influence people now in this day and age in social change, so understanding that interaction becomes more valuable for understanding the way things worked—that is, the dynamic of the community or family.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. And I guess I also came to see, although I was incredibly judgmental about the Agrarian Reform Institute [chuckle] and incredibly judgmental and angry about the way the government was behaving in treating the Indians and I realized also that I needed to be a little bit less vocal [chuckle] about these feelings if I was ever going to convince or if I was ever going to communicate some valuable information to these agrarian reform guys. So I tried from time to time to control my temper and I guess I also realized that if I didn't understand what was driving them, if I didn't understand what was motivating the federal agency, and if I didn't understand the links to the US and the Alliance for Progress then it would be hopeless to try to understand what was happening down on the ground because it was all linked to international and globalization issues of that era.

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Here I make *no sense whatsoever*. Does not add to the interview. And Miki's comment back to me adds nothing. So I suggest deleting them.

**FISKE:** So that was the beginning of your awareness that there were some differences between academic and more applied work and that's why you realized you had to move more in that direction of applied ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** ... of understanding the interrelationship between institutions and people's lives?

**CRESPI:** I think so, although it still was a blurry line because whatever skills I had gained in academia that were essential to understanding the hacienda system were academic skills.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** But what I was beginning to realize was that the results of applying those skills, the information and insights that I was getting had value outside of academia and had pragmatic value that could be applied to solving real world problems. So I guess I saw applied anthropology as being a way to identify and offer up resolutions to problems rather than being some narrowly defined project where you're introducing technical change ... I guess I want to make a distinction here between programs and projects and I became interested in *the* program in a large expansive approach to creating change rather than interest in a particular narrowly defined project that would be part of the program.

**FISKE:** It almost sounds like you are talking about you're developing a bigger interest in national and policy-level things rather than a specific project on the ground in a particular individual community. Is that wrong to say that?

**CRESPI:** No-no, I think that's right. And I think this is what attracted me to the Park Service.

**FISKE:** Right.

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Again, my stumbling attempts to re-phrase her point adds nothing to the continuity of her thoughts. She's trying to make a point here, and I would simply let her continue without me interjecting me into it.

**CRESPI:** See, I had the opportunity to build a program.

**FISKE:** Absolutely, and not do projects.

**CRESPI:** And I guess my feeling about wanting to do that came from seeing what the Agrarian Reform Institute was doing up in the highlands and down in the lowlands and all over the country. And feeling that they needed someone with an anthropological perspective to help ground their plans in the reality of peasant life in towns and the like. I think they had a kind of project-oriented approach to what they were doing in that they would get to a particular hacienda and do their stuff at that hacienda and then move on to another hacienda. The bigger picture was somehow not there. I think this may have had to do with the problem of coordination with the UN. The UN was also involved here. But anyway, I was in a state of flux and the Ecuadorian experience was responsible for that.

**FISKE:** Oh, I think not only you but I think that all of the social sciences and anthropology - this is my opinion - were kind of in a state of flux at that time in the '50s, '60s, particularly '60s and '70s, early '70s.

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** My first applied anthropology course when I was in graduate school was in that era [early 70s], [and it] was a course that we had to design ourselves. There were two or three of us that were interested in it [applied anthropology] and we had to actually do a reading course with the professor and actually come up with a curriculum and what we were gonna do ourselves. So it was so new that most university's departments were still struggling with it.

**CRESPI:** I think the Vicos project had a larger vision than some of the other ones too because it took almost an entire valley, an entire hacienda. [Vicos tried] to do a great many things and I think exercised a fair amount of control over what it was able to do because it was a sort of private undertaking although I guess there was cooperation with the Peruvian government. . .

But Steward I think is a funny guy to refer to as someone who was instrumental in my interest in applied anthropology because Steward himself was not a great proponent of applied anthropology [both chuckling]. But I don't see how his approach to dealing with ecology or a system could not lead one to begin to look at these real-world problems and the connections between definite components of the universe that have some mutual effect. So like it or not, Julian [both chuckling], you were my inspiration here. I don't think he liked it too much ... [chuckle]

**FISKE:** Right, it was probably a little frightening at the time.

**CRESPI:** Okay, so then I felt that the agrarian reformers or anybody else—unless they understood the dynamics of the present-day system—they would not be effective in making changes. They were in fact not effective in making change but I don't think anyone dared say so. It was interesting, it was, the way they worked with the communists was just fascinating. They just bought them out and they were really ready [chuckle], everyone had their hands out for help. It was an interesting time, it was absolutely fascinating and my own experience with the communists and not very pleasant. I was very fortunate that the communist leaders were in jail at the time I arrived at the hacienda and I didn't realize how fortunate I was until they were released.

**FISKE:** Why what happened?

**CRESPI:** Oh, apparently they were quite convinced that I worked for the CIA and that I was somehow involved with this Alliance for Progress and that I was up to no good. The two major guys when they were released threatened to come kill me. This was very unsettling. I lived at the hacienda house for the most part. I'd sleep out some with the peasantry from time to time when things were going on at their houses but I was very unnerved and this wasn't the sort of place you could easily walk away from because it was miles from anywhere ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ...and the night that something was supposed to happen to me there. This was a traditional hacienda and some of the Indian people were always assigned to the hacienda house to cook and clean and help around the house and they were always my buddies [chuckle] and offered to come sleep outside of my room that night.

**FISKE:** They knew that something was gonna happen to you.

**CRESPI:** That this guy was going to come and beat me up.

**FISKE:** This is one of the communists?

**CRESPI:** Yeah. And then he was putting the word out that I ...

**FISKE:** You were up to no good, you were probably a CIA, and that you ... you know, there may have to be some bodily harm and they just to take care of the poor, you know ...

**CRESPI:** Right. *Senorita* Miki, yes, I guess, *pobrecita*, yes [chuckle]

**FISKE:** Oh, that's a real danger ...

**CRESPI:** I was scared as hell. [chuckle]

**FISKE:** Yeah, that's a real danger in that ...

**CRESPI:** [chuckle] I didn't believe this could be happening, it was just so melodramatic and reminded me of some old films about plantation systems where the trusty retainers would come and sleep outside the home of the master and take care of them and protect them from people who were threatening uprisings. But sure enough, he didn't come. My friend Amadeo did not come but this whole family slept outside of my room on a mattress.

**FISKE:** Oh, that's cool. That probably made a big difference.

**CRESPI:** Yeah, It did. You know, I just didn't believe that this could possibly happen, it seemed so melodramatic and it was interesting.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** That was not an aspect of applied anthropology that I really would like [chuckle].

**FISKE:** No. But it was an aspect of those times, I guess ...

**CRESPI:** Yes.

**FISKE:** ... and the fact that the agrarian reform was undergoing if you were an anthropologist in Zimbabwe now, any place that's undergoing social change it'd be awful.

**CRESPI:** Yes. Well, when I left Ecuador I guess I became more and more interested in doing something that was not quite so academic although I didn't really know what that would be. I wasn't sure of what it was or well, obviously I had to finish the dissertation first ...

**FISKE:** That was the first stepping stone, finish the dissertation and that would give you some time to think about it or put your thoughts together or was the dissertation just a traditional ... well, not to be judgmental but just a traditional dissertation that you had worked on, got the data in order. Mine certainly was and I got my conclusions done and it was on complex societies, mine was and yours was, I guess ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** ... and ... but I didn't have a clear direction after I got my Ph.D.

**CRESPI:** No, and at the time, my marriage was also sort of crumbling and so there were a lot of things going on in my life at that time and I moved to New York. I had been living in Princeton with my husband and started to work at Hunter College, I was still working on my dissertation, teaching a course on the Pacific [Fiske chuckling] God, it was such a nightmare [chuckle] And

then going home at night and sort of trying to rearrange my head and so I would be thinking about Ecuador and Latin America. I guess we all go through that.

**FISKE:** Oh, yeah. Well, you have to teach things that are sometimes outside of what you're most immediately in tune with and what your expertise is in so it was just kind of a mismatch but you needed the experience and the money probably, right?

**CRESPI:** Oh, absolutely. I needed to pay the rent. Yes. So again, I taught there for a while.

**FISKE:** Did you teach anything in Latin America?

**CRESPI:** No, but I finally was able to teach courses that could include something on Latin America, hallelujah. But never an entire course. I did teach courses on peasantry and so I ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** I got it in, I did. I had an opportunity to learn about other parts of the world. Then I left Hunter and then I went to Wisconsin for a while.

**FISKE:** Well, wait a minute you had more before you ended up Washington? Okay, after Wisconsin you were in Illinois, weren't you? Didn't you go back to Illinois at some time?

**CRESPI:** No. I went to Rhode Island.

**FISKE:** Oh, all right.

**CRESPI:** And that's right I was at Brown.

**FISKE:** That's right.

**CRESPI:** I was at Brown. I was a Brownie and I had a post-doctoral fellowship. I decided I was really tired of Latin America, I was just tired of a lot of stuff that was going on there and it was very unpleasant to be there. I took some time off. I had activated the Fulbright so I went back to Ecuador and found myself the Yankee imperialist again teaching at Catholic University and every other day there was police there with teargas because students were rioting. It was really interesting and most of the students who went there were students of relatively wealthy families many of whom owned haciendas out in the countryside and who all argued that they had this great compassion for Indians and for the peasantry. Most of whom they knew because they worked as servants in Quito's homes. I mean the students knew of the peasantry and of the Indians because they were their servants or they knew them when they went out to visit their haciendas. But once again, Carlos Marx and Mao Tse-tung and various other people were their heroes and they wondered why I was there. But they all came to my classes. It was an interesting experience.

**FISKE:** It sounds like you had the elite or the well educated kids there who professed to be communists that really knew very little about what life was like in the haciendas or in the *campo*, or in the countryside in any way and then they treated you with a little disdain and questioning.

**CRESPI:** Right, it was. But it was interesting for me to be that close to the urban ... I don't know how elite, the really elite left to go to school elsewhere but these were upper-middle class, children of landowners and interested in the politics of revolution, in the rhetoric of revolution but did not really have any grasp of what the problems in the countryside were.

**FISKE:** And did they want to know what life in the countryside was?

**CRESPI:** There was not a great deal of interest. They were very suspicious of anything I had to say because they thought I was a plant and it was very difficult to teach between struggling with my Spanish and ...

**FISKE:** Why would they think you were a plant if you were trying to foment or foster understanding of poor powerless or what social relationships were in the countryside. I still don't understand why that they would think you were a CIA plant?

**CRESPI:** Well, this was the 1960s [and] they did just finish [Project] Camelot in Argentina or Chile, and the Alliance for Progress was not trusted because it was evident that it had been very disruptive to the countryside. The Peace Corps was not trusted because the Peace Corps was also viewed as an arm of the CIA and Yankee imperialists, and so here I was, this *gringa* representing this powerful nation.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** And so I was immediately suspect and it really didn't matter what I had to say though, it was irrelevant. I was a Yankee, I was categorized as the evil person and they came to class so I guess there was something that some of them were getting out of it but I'm never sure of what it was that they were getting.

**FISKE:** So you did a Fulbright down there, right?

**CRESPI:** Right. Then I returned to Brown and decided that I was more interested in America.

**FISKE:** So, yeah, that sort of shifted your interests to the domestic.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. And I wanted to understand more about the country in which I lived and I became interested in urban society but found that I really missed working in the rural area. I missed being able to walk down the road and see people outdoors, see people sitting in front of their *chozas*, in front of their houses grinding whatever and harvesting and having a family life

outside of their homes. I found it very difficult to deal with brick buildings that did not reveal very much of their occupants.

**FISKE:** That's absolutely true.

**CRESPI:** And it was very frustrating to me, of course, this is a major difference between working in a rural and in an urban area. In rural areas life is outdoors. And you get to learn about the community a lot faster than in an urban setting and I found it took me a long time to feel comfortable there. And then I was interested in factory workers and this was my urban version of the hacienda [chuckle] and I struggled to find a factory that would let me in to study the lives of the factory workers. I couldn't. I could've lied. I know people who have lied and got in and worked in a factory as a factory worker but I was not comfortable doing that. So I dropped that. And it was Portuguese people from the Azores that I was interested in working with. And Brown had a great deal of interest in the Azorean ...

**FISKE:** And there is a good Portuguese community out near there at least in the fishing towns like Gloucester.

**CRESPI:** Right. And even in Providence they were just a few blocks from where I lived.

**FISKE:** Yes, that's right. Exactly.

**CRESPI:** Fox Point is a Portuguese community. So I decided that I would go to one of the United Way organizations that taught people American citizenship and I would work there and help them with their citizenship and that's how I would gain. So I did that and some of the factories had classes in citizenship so I was able to get into some of the factories and teach citizenship and it was really most enjoyable and I managed to learn some of the misperceptions that people have of the American system. Some of them [are] just the wording in the kinds of questions they have to answer when they take their citizenship test such as, questions about the Union. Well, it was Abraham Lincoln that they were supposed to answer but these factory workers had a different notion of what unions were all about and consistently on the first go-around they screwed up their questions of that ...

**FISKE:** What did they put down?

**CRESPI:** ... for forming the Union. [both chuckling]

**FISKE:** I can understand that. They would put down Jimmy Hoffa.

**CRESPI:** Right. On the factory unions ... jewelry factory unions. But I managed to meet a number of very nice families. And the families would come over, father, mother, and then they'd bring over [others]. It's serial migration and they ultimately bring over their elderly parents so

that the parents could stay home and take care of the little ones and everybody would go out to work and children would then leave school when they got to be sixteen and go to work in the factories and while I was working there I was able to write up some projects for this United Way organization which they never followed through on but it gave me some opportunity to write up some projects that would help people learn about their citizenship testing and features of American society in ways that might be more meaningful to them. And then I went on to some work for one of the educational institutes there. And then I decided I had enough of that. I wanted something bigger. I had more of fellowship time left but when I was finished with the fellowship I decided I needed to do something different with my life and the notion of going to Washington. I, of course, was thinking of [US]AID because Latin America was still important to me.

**FISKE:** It was still a focal point and a powerful attraction and driver for you ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** Yeah, definitely, you had a lot to contribute.

**CRESPI:** So I visited a friend in Washington and decided right then that I was moving as soon as the semester ended at Brown and I could get out.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** And I decided to go without a job, with not much of a bank account, a great deal of trepidation, and a leaking old Fiat [chuckle] and got an apartment. I arranged for the apartment before I came and came into Washington.

**FISKE:** Wow, that's decisive.

**CRESPI:** Yes.

**FISKE:** And this whole time, let me just back up a little bit now. During the process of, say, Wisconsin and from then on in to Brown had you formed a concept of applied anthropology was there any turning point in your thinking about it or your formulation of it or was it just pretty much still a kind of a concept that you didn't differentiate too much from academic anthropology?

**CRESPI:** Yeah ...

**FISKE:** It was still there.

**CRESPI:** It was there.

**FISKE:** You tried the urban, you tried the ethnic groups in urban areas and trying to articulate as best you could at that time with each of these groups.

**CRESPI:** And I referred to myself as a cultural anthropologist and never called myself an applied anthropologist until I came to Washington. I was just a cultural anthropologist interested in Latin America.

**FISKE:** But you always continued to work for academia then so you would've thought of yourself as a cultural anthropologist before an applied, wouldn't you?

**CRESPI:** I did not. I worked in an academic setting but I don't think I perceived of myself as an academic anthropologist.

**FISKE:** Okay, sure.

**CRESPI:** The distinction was not that sharp for me, was not that critical in my definition of who I was until I started to work for the Park Service.

**FISKE:** and you had established yourself here [in Washington] and at that time didn't know anything about the Park Service?

**CRESPI:** Right.

**FISKE:** But you were applying, trying to find jobs?

**CRESPI:** I was trying to find jobs. I was looking around, I didn't know. I guess I wanted to explore the options here and, of course, I came at a rather bad time. I came in 1981 and ...

**FISKE:** Ronald Reagan

**CRESPI:** Exactly. And the start of downsizing and ...

**FISKE:** Trickle down economics.

**CRESPI:** Right. And the dissing of federal workers and so I guess one of the very first things I did was reach out to WAPA, the Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists.

**FISKE:** How did you find out about them? How did you first hear?

**CRESPI:** How did I first hear?

**FISKE:** Did I tell you? No [chuckle].

**CRESPI:** No, I didn't ... didn't meet you then ... I didn't know you then. I might have heard about it from one of the earlier meetings in Washington and then one of the AAA meetings in

Washington. There may have been something going on and then I don't remember how I heard about it but that might've been the way and then I just find my way there ...

**FISKE:** To WAPA?

**CRESPI:** It was a critical link to the anthropological community because here I was for the first time in my professional life without a connection to a university, without a connection to a professional base and so it was critically important that I become affiliated with my cohort within an organization or a framework.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** And it was great. I was able to meet the anthropological community in Washington and made friends, met you ...

**FISKE:** Yeah, I think that's how we met, isn't it?

**CRESPI:** Yeah. Yeah.

**FISKE:** It was a great way to meet people. But anyway right now let's focus now how you got hooked up with the Park Service.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. And people in WAPA were very gracious and encouraging and I got a contract. Rob [Robert] Werge was really terrific. I had a contract with Rob Werge to do something, writing up a case study.

**FISKE:** What was he doing?

**CRESPI:** Well, he was at [the Department of] Agriculture. Both he and Charlotte Miller were there. And Rob was working in the training program. He wanted a case study on agrarian reform in Latin America which I was very happy to write out. And then somehow ...

**FISKE:** Perfect. Perfect.

**CRESPI:** I also did some lectures at the Foreign Service Institute on Ecuador and agrarian reform and alike. And then I cast around. I made lots of exploratory trips to various agencies to people that I knew or met and then sort of scouted out what was out there and there wasn't very much.

**FISKE:** No, not at all.

**CRESPI:** It was really pathetic and frightening and it was very difficult for me to sustain my enthusiasm for being in Washington because my bank account was being diminished. I was a

self supporting single person. I had to, on the one hand, smile and visit people and promote myself to them as someone worthwhile to employ and yet, also worry about what would happen in the next month or the month after, so it was a very trying time.

**FISKE:** And the cost of living into D.C. was quite, quite high.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. And I realized, also, what a lot of wonderful anthropologists there were in the Washington area and how competitive the market was. And there were so many people who had applied experience in ways that I never had and I had never worked for AID. Oh, yes I did have one small contract I'd forgotten, in Ecuador when I looked at economic development issues in various communities but I did not have the sort of track record that most of the Washington area applied anthropologists could bring. Not at all. And so I did small jobs and worried a lot and visited a lot and smiled a lot. And then someone drew my attention to the National Park Service. And they had an ad seeking someone who could develop programs and who had worked with native Americans. I interpreted native Americans as being native peoples of Latin America [chuckle] although they were interested in American Indian, native Americans but the job seemed interesting. It was to develop a program and this was a real inspiration for me because that's what I wanted to do rather than finite projects that did not result in some major institutional or even minor institutional changes. I wanted to develop a program that was broad in scope and had longevity and so I decided to apply for this.

**FISKE:** And about this time, correct me if I am wrong but I got a call from Doug [Douglas H.] Scovill was it before you were working there. Wasn't he casting around and trying to find candidates. I just didn't make the connection at the time either for myself or for you that that would be the place to go but it sounded interesting and I didn't see the possibilities. I guess that you did, you saw the possibilities.

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** I think at the time he was looking for an IPA [Intergovernmental Personnel Act]. That was before they decided to do an actual hire for this and I don't think it was to develop a program, I think that was later he may have developed that concept when they advertised it.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. It was in 1981 ...

**FISKE:** Yeah. We worked in '80. Anyways, when you saw the job it was a fully fledged ...

**CRESPI:** It was a full federal FTE [full time equivalent] and they were permanent ...

**FISKE:** ... they were ... they were competitive and it was a 190 which was anthropology ...  
[Editor: The U. S. Office of Personnel Management has established qualification standards.  
Standard 190 is "general anthropology.]

**CRESPI:** It was cultural ... it was anthropology.

**FISKE:** Right, and that must've been one of the earliest 190s that I can remember to this day  
[and] is probably one of the only 190s in the Washington area.

**CRESPI:** Oh, but it is and the National Park Service is unique in this respect, its anthropologists  
are called anthropologists rather than social science analysts or community planners.

**FISKE:** Right. I did have that also, I was a 190 in NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
Administration].

**CRESPI:** Uh-huh.

**FISKE:** And I think when I left that was the last unless they'd done it in the regions ... in the  
NMFS [National Marine Fisheries Service].

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** We should go back ... I knew this would happen when we started talking about our joint  
history [both chuckling]. But anyway, so you did get a job, it was cultural anthropology job and  
it was to develop a whole program, a wide [national] program.

**CRESPI:** A whole program. Right. And before I go into that further I want to give some of the  
context for this because introducing the program and attempting to maintain it has proved to be  
enormously complicated, challenging, frustrating, and disappointing in some respects. I think the  
small successes - or sometimes I think they're pretty big but other times I think they're pretty  
small - but they required considerable investment of time and energy, negotiation internally  
within the National Park Service, building alliances externally with people who were outside the  
agency and a great deal of persistence. And I think if people inside the agency and people  
outside the agency want to fully understand the agency dynamics they need to know a little bit  
more about what went in to building the program, the context for it. I should also point out that I  
worked for the Park side of the National Park Service. This is, like other federal agencies, a  
complicated agency and it has two different faces. The National Park Service actually consists  
of national parks, almost four hundred of them, but it has another division that's sometimes  
called the external program or the partnership program that works with states and local  
government and that's not the part that I worked with. That's the part that deals with the National  
Register and National Landmarks and they have a different set of staff and a different mission

and different budgets. [New NPS staff] will gain from being better informed about the agency, will be able to do more productive work that will be mutually beneficial to themselves and to the agency if they have this background and because the agency is such a large one there are actually few people in the agency who really know how the program was started. And I think it would be helpful to them should they hear these tapes, to also have a better understanding of why and when and how the program was started and it would help in collaboration among different programs and different people ...

**FISKE:** Absolutely.

**CRESPI:** ... if this information is made more available. So, let me say something then about the context. This Park Service is an old-line agency established by Congress in 1916 as one of the agencies within the Department of the Interior, one of the many land managing agencies. Its mission was legislatively defined as conserving the natural resources and conserving historical objects which may be big like houses and whole farms that they would refer to as objects and preserving these objects and resources - which we now call them - so they can be enjoyed in ways that will leave them unimpaired for future generations. So this is really a sort of traditionally tri-partite division of protecting natural resources, protecting historical, including archaeological resources, and providing for the enjoyment of visitors. Now, the ideological basis for agency action flows from this mission statement as it does for other agencies. And it's expressed in various facets of the agency operations, in funding, in budget allocations, in demographics, in hiring practices, in that most of the people that are hired are people who will work on these aspects of the agency: natural resources, history, archaeology, and visitor services. It's expressed in governance documents and in our policies and procedures. It's expressed in the chain of command, in the distribution of decision making responsibilities ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... and stretch it ... throughout this there runs this division. Budget is separate, natural resources has its budget ...

**FISKE:** Yeah, that's right, it does.

**CRESPI:** ... cultural resources or what we used to call historical objects has its, visitor services has its budget.

**FISKE:** And then there is a separate one, isn't it, for operation and maintenance ...

**CRESPI:** Right.

**FISKE:** ... O&M budget?

**CRESPI:** Right.

**FISKE:** So, there's all these different budgets and you got to understand that ...

**CRESPI:** And typically the boundaries between these divisions are hard and fast and all of the incumbents in these divisions whether it is natural resources or cultural resources vigorously defend and protect their budgets, their space, their FTE, their access to decision makers and will not allow or will try not to allow any competitors into the arena.

**FISKE:** A part of organizational culture here.

**CRESPI:** And the chain of command is relatively inflexible although there were - I think as in other agencies - informal sort of parallel chains of command and structures through which people communicate informally up and down the hierarchy. So that depending upon where you are in the decision making process you can sometimes reach the director without going through necessarily the five steps that you have to go through and the memos that you have to write and phone calls. So, the person at the top of the hierarchy is the director of the National Park Service and he, except for this year when it is a she ...

**FISKE:** That's right, Fran [Frances P.] Mainella.

**CRESPI:** Yeah, Fran, has a deputy director and they have authority over regional directors and superintendents of parks. And the rest of us are adjuncts and consultants to this chain of authority. Now, I was hired in late 1981 to introduce a program of cultural anthropology. Why? Whatever made this agency that focuses on tangible resources, calculable resources, become interested in human beings?

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** Well, NPS has hundreds of historians in its employ, hundreds of natural resource specialists of various kinds, a little over a hundred archeologists ...

**FISKE:** Is that all?

**CRESPI:** In ... in the ...

**FISKE:** Well, in the Parks ... yeah, the others are contractors I guess ...

**CRESPI:** And a number of architects, not as many as they would like. And when I was hired there was one cultural anthropologist or ethno-historian, Larry [Lawrence F.] Van Horn. One, one, one.

**FISKE:** I remember him, I know him.

**CRESPI:** Cultural anthropology was not, and I'm sorry to say is still not acknowledged as a social science in the National Park Service. There is a division of social science that excludes anthropology formally, deliberately, persistently.

**FISKE:** Wow!

**CRESPI:** This has to do with the whole history of sociologists working with NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] which was part of the Natural Resource Division and so there is a lot of history behind it. But we cannot use that term for ourselves although I do anyway but officially we are not social scientists in the National Park Service, quite incredible.

**FISKE:** Where is that Division of Social Sciences, just for my own information?

**CRESPI:** It's in Natural Resources.

**FISKE:** Oh.

**CRESPI:** Mike Soukop, Eric [Meckler].

**FISKE:** And who do they have there? They have sociologists ...

**CRESPI:** They do [have] sociologists.

**FISKE:** They do visitors surveys?

**CRESPI:** Yeah, and political scientists, that's primarily it. Lots of statistical stuff, lots of visitors surveys.

**FISKE:** Okay, so back then why was this particular area or division interested in having an ethnographer, an anthropologist, a cultural anthropologist? How did the Park Service get to that point?

**CRESPI:** Well, something wonderful happened in 1978 and around then ...

**FISKE:** Three years previously something happened, now that was speed of light activity?

**CRESPI:** Yes, it took that long. What happened was because the guy who eventually hired me, Doug Scovill, because of his own career agendas he changed the title of his program - he was the Washington office manager for the National Park Service National Park Archaeology program - he changed that to the National Park Anthropology Program and then he changed his title from the National Park Service chief archeologist to the National Park Service chief anthropologist. This opened the door to hiring a cultural anthropologist, opened the door slightly.

**FISKE:** Yeah. Right.

**CRESPI:** The major wedge was the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Well, you know that we have to justify whenever you initiate some new effort, whenever you start a new program there are a great deal of justifications that one has to go through to do it, right [chuckle], to convince the higher-level decision makers that this is a necessary change and expenditure.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** So, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 told the federal agencies that they were responsible for working - I'm paraphrasing here - for consulting with American Indians about their religious sites, about their religious resources, consulting with American Indians about access to religious resources that had been incorporated into parks or into the BLM [Bureau of Land Management] or into the Forest Service so they were instructed to do that. Well, the American Indian people were very disappointed in the Act and [Stewart L.] Udall called it a toothless Act because it did not go as far as they wanted to. From my perspective within the agency it was a major turning point in a great deal of things. So, that Act lead people to think ... or my boss to think, well, maybe you could use it to justify hiring someone who knows how to work with contemporary living people ...

**FISKE:** I see. Right.

**CRESPI:** ... because the Park Service, as you know, focuses on dead people ...

**FISKE:** Right. Right.

**CRESPI:** ... archaeologically dead, historically dead ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... on getting rid of people who may seem to impair the resources.

**FISKE:** Well, their main mission has always been - if I'm not wrong - but it's always been the natural resources first, the cultural resources second and they were already dead before this like you said.

**CRESPI:** Right.

**FISKE:** Or at least they were thought of dead.

**CRESPI:** Right, and if you're dead that's fine.

**FISKE:** It's easier.

**CRESPI:** I mean it's easier, it's much easier.

**FISKE:** So they wanted somebody who could work with living people and it was kind of a goal of this individual and who saw that Act enabling him to do this in some way ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah, it was a way to justify it.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** And then he also threw NEPA into the argument which, you know, was, what? ten years earlier in 1969 but NEPA had been pretty much spoken for by the sociologists. But now, American Indians had not been important to the National Park Service except for their archaeological resources but the Indian people themselves were not really very significant. Oh, here and there, there was some outreach to them in the Southwest and elsewhere but in terms of working collaboratively with American Indians, in terms of trying to identify their concerns for the resources, none of this ever happened because they were living people. You know, you had to be dead ...

**FISKE:** That's true.

**CRESPI:** ... and white ...

**FISKE:** Yeah. I do remember touring, going through Canyon de Chelly and there were Navajo living there but at the time they were little - this is like 1982 and I think I went with Joan Wiebel [-Orlando] from anthropology - but at the time there was very little interaction with the native American community there although they acted as guides for when you want, say, horseback riding, ride a horse through the canyon ...

**CRESPI:** Which I'm sure you did ... [chuckle]

**FISKE:** Which we did, yes, [chuckle] but there was ... I noticed that there was very little other interaction or interpretation that worked with them. And I'm sure that's probably changed now.

**CRESPI:** Oh, yes. Canyon de Chelly has had one Indian superintendent after another and interpreters. But that was Navajo land also, not Park Service land, you know, we manage it but it's tribal land...

**FISKE:** Oh, I see. The management remained ... the title remained in trust as the reservation.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. But Indians themselves were not very interesting, it's their products and their resources that were of interest. But a lot of things changed that, it was only 1978 AIRFA but then it was 1981 ANILCA the Alaskan National Interest Lands Conservation Act that also drew attention to living people. Now, that was a sea change in National Park Service thinking because ANILCA gave to native people what no piece of Park legislation had ever done before ...

**FISKE:** And ANILCA was Park legislation?

**CRESPI:** Yes ... oh yeah, what was it, ten parks were established under ANILCA...

**FISKE:** Okay. A major in Alaska, I never thought it was Park legislation, I always thought of it as native ... well, as native Alaskan ... Alaskan native legislation.

**CRESPI:** ANILCA is Alaskan National Interest Lands Conservation Act ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... and ANCSA ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... that's the one I think you're thinking of, the Alaskan Native ...

**FISKE:** Claims Settlement Act.

**CRESPI:** That's the one that established the ...

**FISKE:** Corporations.

**CRESPI:** Corporations. Yeah. ANILCA came a little later.

**FISKE:** Okay. But these were the two major legislative authorities and NEPA that made the Park Service ready to look at living people, include that as part of their mission?

**CRESPI:** Reluctantly. Incredibly reluctantly. Absolutely reluctantly. It took years. But it was the basis for hiring me ...

**FISKE:** Okay.

**CRESPI:** ... so okay, so it took years [chuckle].

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** Uh, and you know, if you don't have this information in front of you then I think it becomes difficult especially if you're an outsider who tends to see these agencies as monolithic and unchanging. It's difficult to appreciate the dynamic aspects of agency culture and the fact that you could creatively manipulate it to get what you want.

**FISKE:** Right. Yeah.

**CRESPI:** And the guy I worked for was a master manipulator, Doug. I mean it's amazing, he's a man who has a business school bachelor's degree and was able to create a very extensive national archaeology program and becomes chief archaeologist and then chief anthropologist.

**FISKE:** [chuckle] And now superintendent at Mojave.

**CRESPI:** Well, he is now retired.

**FISKE:** Yeah, that is amazing and it is true that from the outside a lot of times it does not look like there is change in bureaucracies but that there is. They are very dynamic and it may take a long time but you can make them move in certain directions.

**CRESPI:** Yes, it was fascinating watching this man work and also fascinating and appalling to be manipulated by him because I was not exempt from his manipulations.

**FISKE:** Machinations, yeah.

**CRESPI:** Yes, he hired me to develop a program and I was so naive I never asked will I have money, will I have funds, will I have staff and the answers to all of this was no .

**FISKE:** Yeah. That was the beginning but I can understand. [both chuckling] I mean in retrospect these are the questions we would always like to have answered in the affirmative but ...

**CRESPI:** Right. Right. Well, I didn't even realize I should ask these kinds of questions ...

**FISKE:** Yeah. Right.

**CRESPI:** ... of course, I can do this, yeah ...

**FISKE:** '80 and '81 and we're talking just stepping into a new job not even created yet ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** ... a new job just newly created for a new program. Now you know the questions to ask though. [chuckle]

**CRESPI:** Right. Right. And now I know what not to answer also ...

**FISKE:** Yeah, don't say yes .

**CRESPI:** [Laughter]

**FISKE:** Anthropologists nowadays have the benefit of these fifteen, twenty years of people like yourself and other people ...

**CRESPI:** Right. Right.

**FISKE:** ... and me that have gone through these and now know the questions to ask.

**CRESPI:** Right.

**FISKE:** That's part of the advisor's wisdom ...

**CRESPI:** Exactly.

**FISKE:** ... the questions that are on the outline, but okay so ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah. Yeah.

**FISKE:** ... okay, so you were talking about the agency.

**CRESPI:** Yes. So, it took nearly ten years before I could actually speak of having a program and it was not until the 1988 management policies were published that we had a program, a real program even though it didn't have any funds. It was institutionalized as a program.

**FISKE:** I didn't realize that it took that long. I just seemed like it was like instantaneous but time goes past quickly.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. Well, there were many things that needed to be overcome. One, the notion that human beings were uninteresting unless they were dead, unless they were visitors, unless they were doing something that needed to be controlled, unless they were impairing the resources and we had to send the rangers after them, unless they were whites, people were just not that interesting. Remember also, decision making even though NEPA was telling us and earlier legislation was saying, you know, go to the *Federal Register* and involve the public in what you're doing, agencies were still very cautious about going outside the agency for information and suggestions and consultation. People - at least it's my perception - that the greatest trust that any decision maker had was in his own people, was in people within the agency.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** So here we had a law like AIRFA saying, you know, consult with Indians and NEPA telling us to consult with the public and this is very difficult to do.

**FISKE:** Yeah, it's probably ...

**CRESPI:** It meant a sea-change in decision making strategies. It meant that the federal staff had to relinquish some of their control over the decisions and the outcomes and this was very

frightening because, well, the public does not always know the issues involved in making the decisions.

**FISKE:** Yeah. Absolutely.

**CRSPEI:** So, we had to overcome antagonism towards human beings. We had to overcome the disconnect between resources and people. These resources, whether they're archaeological resources or natural or historical objects tended to be viewed as disengaged from the humans who worshiped them or manufactured them or valued them as part of their past and their identity and the connection had to be made to the human dimensions of resources. We also had to overcome the notion that anthropology is archaeology. And when I [was] first introduced to people, one of the earliest questions was, well, where did you dig? you know, just assuming that if I am an anthropologist it means that I am an archeologist and in the federal government, you know, this tends to be the way anthropologists are labeled, as archeologists, you know, thanks to the very active archeologists who worked on the River Basin Surveys and who worked on legislation so that archaeology became a critical component of cultural resource preservation.

**FISKE:** Right. Yeah.

**CRSPEI:** And cultural anthropologists are just poohed out there and that's my major complaint so [chuckle] ... so okay.

**FISKE:** I know you're an activist.

**CRSPEI:** Right. Right. Right. So, and then in our governance documents and in our policies there was no mention of communities. If you look at the 1978 management policies even American Indians are mentioned three times and the reference is to selling crafts and displaying stuff. Ten years later there were about thirty-five references to them.

[Pause, Interview resumed on September 21<sup>st</sup>]

**FISKE:** And the last time when we were talking I remember that you had arrived in Washington and had just gotten a job with the Park Service and there were several things that you wanted to talk about from there.

**CRSPEI:** Right. Now, I think I had reviewed briefly the structure of the National Park Service, the milieu in which my job existed and had noted some of the traditional perspectives of the Park Service with regard to human beings, the living people, had mentioned that the focus of the Park Service tended to be, where cultural resources were concerned, tended to be on the past, on historical figures and archaeological cultures but contemporary living peoples and their recent past were not of significance to the Park Service. Only if people were visitors were they

important but the ways of life of other people were not deemed significant although it's true that since NEPA, National Environmental Policy Act of '69 and the call for public involvement and for public hearings people were expected to play a more prominent role in the decision making for the Park Service and all federal agencies.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** And that meant that the federal agencies needed to revise their own perspectives on decision making and I think we may have mentioned that the Park Service, like other federal agencies, was accustomed to getting advice from within the agency rather than from people outside the agency and had the greatest confidence in their own people who understood constraints and the legal apparatus. So seeking input from other people--from the public... while they did this because obviously it was the law and it was important in many ways, and they were interested in hearing what people had to say--- it nevertheless made functionaries, it created new demands on them, new perspectives, new ways of thinking about the decision making process because they no longer controlled this exclusively.

**FISKE:** Right. And NEPA had been passed shortly before you got there. In other words, it was '72 when it passed but 70 what? ...

**CRESPI:** I thought it was '69 ...

**FISKE:** ... '69, well, at any rate it takes a long time for rules to get in place and I think agencies were generally still struggling with how to manage with this new mandate which included people so I can see why the Park Service was still focused in other directions.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. And the whole notion of social impact assessment that grew out of the regulations for the law was relatively new; and that had led to the creating social science positions in the Park Service and I think social science in a lot of other federal agencies, or bureaus within Interior and hiring sociologists to get that work done---to do social impact assessment.

**FISKE:** From social impact assessment bureau, I think you mentioned that before, is this outside of D.C.?

**CRESPI:** Well, no, social science was created as a subdivision in the Park Service of the Natural Resources component. I don't know why but that's the way it was and they were responsible for working with the planners on doing social impact assessments. And I guess it became important also in Alaska when the Alaskan parks were established about ten years later.

**FISKE:** Well, at any rate you were not in social science?

**CRESPI:** No. And anthropology is not considered part of social science. It is not considered ...

**FISKE:** economic? ...

**CRESPI:** ... it's not history either. We are completely excluded. The social science program consists of sociologists, there are one or two political scientists, and economists ...

**FISKE:** That's right. You talked about this, they do mainly visitors surveys and visitors satisfaction ...

**CRESPI:** Right. And we are marginal, considered marginal to that. But while they addressed people and visitors surveys looked at people, it's not the anthropological approach to trying to grasp the human dimensions of the resources we manage and the resources we value and why they are valued. It's a statistical approach and survey research on what visitors want to see and what they actually see and where they come from and how long they stay and what they buy and features of that sort. And social impact assessments are no longer being done ... I guess for many years they haven't been done in the Park Service. Anyway dealing with human beings created a lot of problems and one way to deal with them was not to deal with it. So, in any event there were a lot of obstacles to introducing the notion that contemporary human beings have something valuable to offer the Park Service particularly when they are the people whose heritage resources are being interpreted by the Park Service to the public.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** So, the first group of people that became important and which justified my hiring were American Indian people because there was this spate of legislation telling agencies to pay attention, listen to them. And I think we already mentioned something about AIRFA, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act?

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** Okay. But even working with American Indians was not an easy task for many reasons. But generally, what I perceived as being the steps that I needed to take included the following and I'll just go through them quickly.

**FISKE:** Okay.

**CRESPI:** And one is, creating a team of people within the National Park Service hierarchy who were supportive or could be supportive of what I was trying to do and since I was viewed as so marginal to the real Park Service mission [chuckle] it was imperative that I get the support from people in the chain of command above me because without their support as you know nothing can be accomplished in a federal agency. You must have the commitment from higher levels in

the bureaucracy and it took about ten years for that to happen. And one of the things that I did would be to try to draw attention to what I was doing by sending copies of my trip reports up the hierarchy, up the ladder.

[Pause]

**CRESPI:** The associate who worked there, Jerry Rogers, was a historian and totally committed to history as a process for learning the truth and there was ... okay, there was no point in arguing [chuckle] about that. But he became interested in what I was doing and what my perceptions were and he actually read my trip reports and made comments on them ...

**FISKE:** Wow.

**CRESPI:** ... sent them back to me and I was delighted with that because it meant that further down the road as things evolved he conceivably would be supportive of me.

**FISKE:** That's great stuff.

**CRESPI:** And he was very interested in American Indians and there was no program in the Park Service that paid attention to them except this little fledgling ethnography program so Jerry was very taken with that and it took many years for him to act on his interest or to get him to act on those interests [chuckle]. In fact, it took about ten years before anything was ...

**FISKE:** He wasn't then a political appointment, he was a career ...

**CRESPI:** No, a career ...

**FISKE:** ... a career so he was around ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** And he was a deputy?

**CRESPI:** Associate director who came under the deputy ...

**FISKE:** Okay.

**CRESPI:** There were a number of associate directors and he was the associate director for cultural resources and someone whom I came to rely on for major support, as somebody who could, you know, once he understood what the program was about, once he could get his mouth around the word ethnography, he was the one who would carry the message to his colleagues and to higher levels of authority. And ultimately Jerry worked with me and my boss and with his own deputy and met with SfAA and AAA and WAPA members to take the steps that would bring

the program to the attention of Congress and ultimately to reach a point where we had viability in the budget process but I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

**FISKE:** He was part of the team, right?

**CRESPI:** He was crucial to the team. I could do nothing unless I had Jerry's support and approval because he was the one who passed the first line in the budget process. He was the one who had the greatest visibility in the cultural resources program, he was the one who stood for all of us, who represented us to the Park Service and to external constituents so getting his support was crucial.

**FISKE:** So as associate director, that really means he was the director of cultural resources, it's just that he was associate director of something else but he was the top guy in that ...

**CRESPI:** In cultural resources.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** And he managed a great many programs and had a lot of interest in what he was doing and was very interested in parks which was very nice. [He] was a hiker. He enjoyed visiting parks. He enjoyed some measure of hands-on relationships with people in parks.

**FISKE:** Yeah, that can vary with the different associate directors so ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah. And he was crucial. Finally after a number of years he was crucial in giving us permission to reallocate some of the funds under his control.

**FISKE:** Yeah. Wow.

**CRESPI:** In order for that to happen, of course, there were many other steps and one was, institutionalizing a concern for contemporary living people and ethnography in the government's documents and these came up for periodic review. When I first got to the Park Service there was a guideline that was being reviewed and worked on for a number of years and that was the first opportunity to put in language about ethnography and cultural anthropology into the cultural resources guideline and this is a major document that parks are supposed to refer to, to guide them in decision making about history, archaeology, cultural landscapes, and for the first time ethnography.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** Several years later an even more important document came up for revision and this was 1988 so it was like seven years after I was there. National Park Service management policies came up for revision and this was ... God, so exciting This would be the first time ever that we

would be able to get something about cultural anthropology into this major document. Now this document ...

**FISKE:** That is ... that's great.

**CRSPEI:** ... this is the document ... that's policy so it is above the guidelines, it consists of general statements about what the National Park Service is supposed to do in order to implement the legal framework, in order to implement executive orders and other directives that came from the White House. So I was able to get language in there and so people will pay attention to contemporary living people and we will do ethnography and all the critical words got in there ...

**FISKE:** That's incredible.

**CRSPEI:** ... so I could then use that to justify anything we did to the rest of the National Park Service because of once it was in the policy statement. And, of course, the policies are reviewed by the director and dozens of high muckety-mucks and goes to the solicitor's office and gets reviewed by all of the attorneys so it's a substantial document.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRSPEI:** And for the first time there was a language about community groups traditionally associated people [with] ethnographic resources. In the 1978 policies there was no mention of any human beings except for Indians. Three times Indians were mentioned and it all had to do with selling arts and crafts in the stores.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRSPEI:** Never ... nothing ... there was nothing about consultation and this is '78, this is eight years after NEPA, nothing about consultation of tribes, nothing about working collaboratively, nothing. So there were like three mentions of tribes in '78. In the 1988 document there were about thirty-five mentions of tribal people, community groups and all of the words that we needed got in there.

**FISKE:** Was this a major uphill struggle where you have to go to hundreds of meetings and write a lot of background justification or was the Park Service pretty ready to accept this at that point? I mean the management policy had come up for review but that's not a guarantee that somebody is going to be able to get input into it and to affect the end policy.

**CRSPEI:** We have an Office of Policy and the Office of Policy is not responsible for the program areas, it's responsible for insuring that the procedures are correct, that the policy accurately reflects legislation and they don't write our stuff. Each program area, history writes its part, natural resources writes its part, but it all flows through the Policy Office. So the head of

the Policy Office, Carol Aten who is an attorney was very supportive of what I was trying to do, as was Jerry Rogers.

**FISKE:** Well, that's great.

**CRESPI:** And there was, some discussion with history and with archaeology but archaeology was part of the program, the office that I was in, so I expected support from them and my boss was also the boss of Park archaeology and he was very supportive. So that go-around was relatively easy compared to 1988. Also by that time, I mean compared to the more recent. The 1988 was rather relatively smooth compared to what we went through with the recent revision [of] policies.

**FISKE:** O-oh.

**CRESPI:** But at that time in 1988 there were a number of anthropologists who wrote in supporting letters like [Richard W.] Rich Stoffle, [Robert T.] Bob Trotter, [Herbert H.] Hal Vreeland, a number of anthropologists came forward and very unambiguously supported the inclusion of ethnography in the policies and that was so important to me. SFAA, Benita Howell wrote supportive language and some of it I was also able to get incorporated into the planning chapter. That was a real high for me.

**FISKE:** Yeah. I can see why.

**CRESPI:** I was able to get language into the chapter on interpretation and there was a lot of negotiation with people who were in charge of their own chapters.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** And but it was working, it was very exciting. It was a very positive time for program building. It was really great.

**FISKE:** That's great.

**CRESPI:** So, the right words got in. The internal team was being formed. So anthropology was being legitimized, legitimized in that policy document and we are responsible. The agencies got their policy say they are supposed to do ...

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** Okay, so an identity was being created for anthropology. It was being institutionalized and legitimized. It was also getting more visibility in that in 1987 I did a *Cultural Resources Bulletin*. The Park Service has a lot of publications, some of them are geared to natural resources and some of them geared to cultural and we have, it's called a Bulletin, was sort of a magazine

for cultural resources which we call the *CRM Bulletin*. And the guy who was the editor, Ron [Ronald M] Greenberg, bless his heart, was very supportive, he was part of the team [chuckle] and he encouraged me to put a bulletin together for ethnography which I did and that was fun. It was also a hell of a lot of work because I had to write something that the director would be putting his name to. I wrote something that Jerry Rogers put his name to. I wrote something that I put my name to [both chuckling]. And then manage to get a number of anthropologists outside to submit articles.

**FISKE:** Yeah, that was in '88 ...

**CRESPI:** '87 ...

**FISKE:** ... '87.

**CRESPI:** And I gave several copies to [Theodore E.] Ted Downing who was then president of SfAA and so SfAA became involved because Ted Downing wrote a letter to the director of the National Park Service extolling the publication and extolling the virtues of cultural anthropology. Okay, so Ted said that he would put the resources ...

**FISKE:** The human resources ...

**CRESPI:** ... of SfAA at the disposal of this fledgling program. And a few years later that indeed came to pass. So let's spend a minute or two on the external team ...

**FISKE:** Okay.

**CRESPI:** ... not the internal group ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... starting with Jerry [L.] Rogers and his assistant who ran the budget for cultural resources and my immediate boss, Doug Scovill, and me and then there were people like Ron Greenberg who helped us. Well, once the language was in place, once we were getting visibility and, you know, the government's documents were in place or language was in place there it was time to move outward and develop a constituency outside of the agency. Hal Vreeland came by to see me one day. Hal had just left his position at NIH because his program was wiped out by Reagan.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** This was the urban anthropology program and Eliot Liebow [was heading it]. And Hal had been working with Eliot ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... and Hal I guess felt it was time for him to leave the agency so he retired. And he was, you know, a great guy and he was casting around for a cause, for something that would occupy his time, use his energy and expertise and he came by and visited me and I told him and he was very taken with our struggles and with the possibility of joining as a constituent to assist.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** And so Ted was no longer president of SfAA, Erve Chambers was president of SfAA. I had spoken to Erve and Erve agreed that SfAA would take this on ...

**FISKE:** Uhmhm, I ... I remember that.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. So Hal became the SfAA congressional liaison or some such thing.

**FISKE:** [chuckle] That's right.

**CRESPI:** At the same time Roy Rappaport became president of AAA ...

**FISKE:** Right. Right.

**CRESPI:** ... and Gene Sterud was an archeologist of broad vision [chuckle] was the executive director and Judith Lisansky was the government af ...

**FISKE:** Relations . . . or governmental affairs office...

**CRESPI:** But ... and someone by the name of Lisa ... oh, what was Lisa's last name ... [editor:]  
Lisa Jacobson.]

**FISKE:** Oh, I remember her too

**CRESPI:** Yeah, lovely, lovely young lady ...

**FISKE:** Yes.

**CRESPI:** ... She is still here, anyway,

**FISKE:** Lisa ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** ... worked with Judith.

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Yes, it was Lisa Jacobsen.

**CRESPI:** Now Skip Rappaport was very interested in helping, he became interested in applied anthropology but cultural anthropologists needed to get more involved. So first Hal made the runs of Congress familiarizing himself with representatives who [were interested or sat on the Parks Subcommittee] and then someone made a very important move. She was separate from Hal, separate from that group and that was Katie Moran. Katie was working for [Congressman] Jim Porter at the time and Katie ... and Jim Porter's wife was taking courses in anthropology.

**FISKE:** Yeah. Yeah, I remember that.

**CRESPI:** ... and she knew Katie. And one day I got a phone call from Katie saying, Hi, give me "some language." [chuckle] They were working on the Appropriations Bill, give me some language and, of course, I was stunned and speechless, I had no language to give her but she generated a whole line of thinking and action and Jim Porter, Congressman from Illinois became a critical player. I credit his team. Jim is wonderful. And one day he called me and I almost fell out my seat because congressmen don't call staffers. They call their own staffers but of course, I was very polite and gave him as much information.

**FISKE:** Of course ...

**CRESPI:** Yes, as he asked for and, of course, I always reported on these conversations to Jerry Rogers because ...

**FISKE:** ... it was important.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. And Jerry was very supportive of being responsive to congressional people who called and asked for information. I, of course, could not initiate contacts with them and that is an absolute no-no, you cannot as you know lobby for own program.

**FISKE:** Yes. Right.

**CRESPI:** So I was as circumspect as possible, of course, and so Katie Moran became our person on the Hill and Jim Porter became our man on the Hill. He did a lot of work for us. He was great.

**FISKE:** So he put a line, he asked for some appropriations for the program, essentially? And that was the first time that it got a line item or he put languages in an appropriation's bill or was it ...

**CRESPI:** Well, it was a little more complex. He sent letters. Hal Vreeland was the first one up on the Hill and Hal gave testimony. It was sort of mind blowing to the congressmen who were there and they were not as supportive as we had hoped they would be.

**FISKE:** It was testimony to whom, do you remember?

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Actually a technical Hill staffer term for 'give me a sentence or two that I can use in legislation; in this case the Interior appropriation bill.]

**CRESPI:** It was the Natural Resources and Parks. I think they changed their name since then.

**FISKE:** On the House side or the Senate?

**CRESPI:** Yeah. [House] And there were some people there who were not very responsive but Hal persevered. He left copies of his statement and he distributed copies of his statement and I, of course, Hal had asked me to review the statements to make sure that, you know, they were consistent with what in fact was the case in the National Park Service. And, of course, they were our constituents and so I was as responsive as possible. And then Hal also went to the archaeologists, the SAA [Society for American Archaeology] and asked them for their assistance and they said no, essentially “what’s-in-it-for-us” was their response so he couldn't rely on the archaeologists for help. He went to National Parks and Conservation Association and they said no, they were not going to assist us and they never have [chuckle].

**FISKE:** That's interesting.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. And then he hooked up with AAA ...

**FISKE:** Right. Okay.

**CRESPI:** ... with Judith Lisansky and Lisa ...

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** ... and then he expanded his own group to include Charlie Cheney so that happened a little later on.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** At one point they also contacted ... God, what's her name? She was just retiring from the Hill and she'd worked there for years and years and years and years and years. The most active people were Hal Vreeland, Judith Lisansky, Lisa [Jacobson], and Charlie [Charles] Cheney. And Katie Moran up on the Hill. It was a wonderful group. They were really marvelous, they were so committed and so motivated. It was a wonderful, wonderful time. So in 1990 or 1991 they worked the Hill as did Katie and Jim Porter who wrote letters to his colleagues encouraging them to vote as he suggested so he really came through for us in a big way.

**FISKE:** He is no longer here, is he?

**CRESPI:** No, no.

**FISKE:** But it sounds like he was very instrumental.

**CRESPI:** Absolutely. And to think that they have maybe one tiny little park in Illinois not even a place that has anything significant.

**FISKE:** Must be ... was on the Park subcommittee or ... I know he was on Appropriations.

**CRESPI:** He was on Appropriations but he was also on the Natural Resources ...

**FISKE:** I guess was the Park subcommittee ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah, and didn't know why ...

**FISKE:** Well, they cover more things than just national parks so it could be a number of things but then his wife had that connection with anthropology too which was just great, yeah [both chuckling]. She was taken classes at AU [American University].

**CRESPI:** Yeah, that's where she met Katie, yeah. So, it was just Katherine ...

**FISKE:** was her employer.

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** That's right.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. Yeah. I guess she was working for some conservation organization after a while ... I don't know but it was such a wonderful time. So we finally got an appropriation, a very, very small one but before then I had to arrange meetings between Jerry Rogers and people from SfAA and AAA so that they had an opportunity to speak directly to him. He had the opportunity to give them his wisdom of many years of politicking and negotiating and he was wonderful. He was a real master also at making things happen, he understood how to do that and enjoyed doing it so this was exciting to him too. And even though the first appropriation was teeny Jerry said that it is often more difficult to go from zero to one dollar than it is to go from ...

**FISKE:** Yes, it is.

**CRESPI:** ... one million to two million.

**FISKE:** It is.

**CRESPI:** So that first great ...

**FISKE:** It started at 250,000 or something or what was it?

**CRESPI:** Maybe it was not even that.

**FISKE:** but it was around that range, about 200,000 ...

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Katherine Porter was Jim Porter's wife.

**CRESPI:** Yes. That's right.

**FISKE:** That's a big step.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. And then, of course, the year before Jerry had reallocated some of the cultural resource funds so that we could start hiring people.

**FISKE:** That's right, to get a head start.

**CRESPI:** Yes, so we were able to do that in the Southwest. We were able to hire two people, one in the Southwest and one in the Pacific Northwest, well, what used to be in the Seattle office. So we had people there on term positions, for three-year positions and two-year positions because we could not use the Park Service Cultural Resources money to hire permanent people. That money was for projects and people were very, very careful about watching how everyone else spent that money.

**FISKE:** Oh, I bet. Yeah.

**CRESPI:** So we called them projects. And then in the second year we got a slightly higher appropriation and Gene Sterud went to Congress and he gave verbal testimony and, of course, other people sent in testimony.

**FISKE:** Oh, that's great.

**CRESPI:** It was wonderful. Yes, the two associations [SfAA and AAA] and the WAPA [Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists] members really came through. And so I was the link between the external team and internal team.

**FISKE:** Right. That's a very critical link.

**CRESPI:** That's how it happened. It was wonderful, lots of ins and outs and stories about these things.

**FISKE:** I know that's a whole set of stories.

**CRESPI:** Yeah, that's another [chuckle] bunch of tapes but for now suffice it to say that the two associations took important steps to create the funding for this program and they did it when it was timely. The language went into the policy and, of course, that was used to justify everything, oh, it was sort of fun... you know, Congress would send us inquiries [chuckle] and Katie Moran would help [chuckle] ...

**FISKE:** Probably came directly from Katie ...

**CRESPI:** That's true.

**FISKE:** Behind every congressional staffer there is always agency help.

**CRESPI:** [chuckle] And then I would get to advertise [chuckle] it was really fun. And then Hal and his group and Judith and her group went to all the Congress people who had anything to say on the Appropriations and they handed them color-coded flyers and one color for AAA and one color for SfAA so the two were able to maintain their separate identity.

**FISKE:** Yes, right.

**CRESPI:** Yeah, it was wonderful and so this went on for about three years ...

**FISKE:** Oh, that's great.

**CRESPI:** and so the program was established as a line item in the budget which meant that our big budget office became aware of us ...

**FISKE:** Absolutely, they have to when there's a line item ...

**CRESPI:** Right.

**FISKE:** They have to track it.

**CRESPI:** Right. And then ... you know, OMB became aware because OMB reviewed ...

**FISKE:** Now, a lot of times that's where trouble begins. Did OMB have any problems with ...

**CRESPI:** The Office of Management and Budget ...

**FISKE:** The Office of Management and Budget, which is part of the president's ... a little closer to the president's steering wheel than a lot of the agencies so would they have any ...

**CRESPI:** Um....

**FISKE:** Did they ever come back and say, this we're not going to allow, the expenditure of these funds or we don't approve of this and ...

**CRESPI:** Justifications had to be written.

**FISKE:** But they accepted them finally? Which is remarkable a lot of time they nix things so somebody ...I'd be curious what was going on at those levels too but whatever it was it was good. It was good for the program.

**CRESPI:** And our budget office was supportive because that's meant an increase ...

**FISKE:** That's all ... that's critical.

**CRESPI:** Right, that's an increase for the parks.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** So, what did we do with that money? Well, we were able to shift the people in the regional office from being term-appointees to be permanent.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** So one of our major concerns, of course, was to build the field offices, their capacity. And so we were able to get permanent people, permanent positions in the Southwest, in the Seattle office, in the Rocky Mountain region office and eventually in the Northeast office ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... Southeast came more recently when we ran out of money, we had to find pennies here and there ...

**FISKE:** Yeah. Right.

**CRESPI:** Now, the Alaskan office preferred to go their own way so they didn't want our money.

**FISKE:** So they found their own money ...

**CRESPI:** ... they found their own money.

**FISKE:** Ah.

**CRESPI:** Yes, lots of dollars and there. There were three anthropologists, three cultural anthropologists in the Alaskan regional office and several of the parks have cultural anthropologists ...

**FISKE:** Yeah. Whew, terrific

**CRESPI:** ... in Alaska. Yes. Yes.

**FISKE:** Why did they embrace it so enthusiastically?

**CRESPI:** Well, because of part of ANILCA, part of the law that created the parks in Alaska says that we have to pay attention to subsistence and also specify that subsistence is more than hunting and fishing, that it refers to a way of life. And so the parks and BLM and ... yeah, I guess BLM in particular too, not in particular but BLM and the Park Service are also enjoined to

look at the ways of life associated with subsistence and so there are some people there who were sympathetic to cultural anthropologists.

**FISKE:** Yeah, that's ... yeah.

**CRESPI:** So they have an extensive staff and they have research money. Of course, they never have enough but ...

**FISKE:** No.

**CRESPI:** ... the rest of us down here look at them and drool at the huge budget ...

**FISKE:** And where do they get it from? Just they ... they voluntarily allocate it from their own regional budget?

**CRESPI:** They get some of it, I think, through the science program and their regional budget includes money for subsistence related studies.

**FISKE:** I see. Right.

**CRESPI:** And they have ANILCA to thank for that and also the policy that says, there shall be studies done to determine, you know, how people use park resources. [short pause] And along the way we also introduced a number of concepts that have become part of our vocabulary like the term "traditionally associated peoples." I was very concerned about introducing because when I first got there it was apparent that in dealing with NEPA and public hearings and dealing with history, the ordinary people whose resources were incorporated into parks were not being sought after for the stories that they could tell us about park resources. You know, the Park Service does a very fine job in interviewing families of former presidents and generals and ...

**FISKE:** Absolutely, right.

**CRESPI:** ... the movers and shakers ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... but the people who were not perceived as movers and shakers, the people who lived at the plantations, the sharecroppers were never approached partly because their resources often were no longer there and we were interpreting things, we were interpreting material resources and so the resources weren't there. The people who may have been associated with them were not very important and they weren't people who were either sought after when we had public involvement proceedings. And the people who tended to go to those hearings where new parks would be planned or old parks would be planned ...

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I am pretty sure she said or meant "were."

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... people who tended to go to that **w-ere** the archaeologists and historians, the architects, people who had some expertise and interest in historic preservation.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** But most workaday people did not go to those hearings, they didn't know the language of the law, they didn't know the language of the agency, they didn't know what to say or how to say it and I was ... I don't know, anthropologically I was obviously very concerned about reaching out to these people and also the park neighbors. You know, the guys like in the Martin Luther King area who used to sit on their porches in their shirt sleeves and played dominoes or cards or whatever. They didn't go to the meetings.

**FISKE:** Yeah. Right.

**CRESPI:** So I decided we needed to identify this group of people that the Park Service has to pay attention to and that they were not just *the* public, they were not ordinary people. I mean they were ordinary people but they had special information and special concerns and so I came up with this phrase, traditionally associated peoples to highlight those people who had a long-term association with the park resources and who we needed to seek out and who were not only American Indians ...

**FISKE:** Okay.

**CRESPI:** Yeah ... American Indians even though it was a long time before the Park Service consulted with American Indians the way many people felt they should consult with them, it was easier to recognize that American Indians were a special group out there and there is a spate of legislation that told the agencies - not just the Park Service - to pay attention to them ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... but there wasn't similar language that said, pay attention to the ordinary white folks whose lands became incorporated into parks or the Hispanic Americans or African Americans. And you know that when budgets are constrained in staff, time, and limited people try to do as much as the law tells them to do and they don't often have time to go beyond that. And they count themselves lucky to be able to do what the legislation tells them to do. So ...

**FISKE:** So this concept then it flowered ...

**CRESPI:** it finally ... yeah.

**FISKE:** ... it flourished or it took root.

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I added the dashes to clarify what she said/meant

**CRESPI:** Yeah. Now, the planners were not very happy about that. And one of the big arguments that we had in when we advised management policies in 2000 was that this represented special interest groups, this is what some people said-- that they represented special interest groups-- and the National Park Service like any other agency cannot work with special interest groups, that it's ... if we're doing public outreach we have to work with all people and yada, yada, yada. And there was a lot of hassle and I really wanted SfAA and AAA to be there and support me. Unfortunately that didn't happen. But ...

**FISKE:** Okay.

**CRESPI:** ... for whatever reason ... but ...

**FISKE:** So there was some resistance to this whole concept ...

**CRESPI:** Yes.

**FISKE:** ... and this support from the professional groups didn't arrive, wasn't integral in this situation?

**CRESPI:** Yeah. So there was a lot of arguing and a lot of back and forth and a lot of negotiation and a lot of anguish.

**FISKE:** Oh yeah.

**CRESPI:** Well, finally we settled on the fact that we would define the concept in the policies. Now, policies are not supposed to have definitions but an allowance was made for the concept of traditionally associated people so that would quiet this particular group of people who was resistant to it and so it's in the policies that traditionally associated people are this particular kind of group of people who had an association with the park resources before the park was created.

**FISKE:** Right. This seems to make a lot of sense to me as an anthropologist and as an outsider too.

**CRESPI:** So we built that boundary that we had to before the park was established and the association had to be one in which people saw the resources as critical to their identification as a people, critical in their ethnic history and it had to have existed for at least two generations. And that created another hassle, who-ow, two generations is not very long, it needs to be like ten generations back to Kennewick man. . .

**FISKE:** Oh, dear.

**CRESPI:** . . . almost but anyway we prevailed and it's part of the policy.

**FISKE:** Now, what is the Park Service required to do with respect to traditionally associated people? What was the end result?

**CRESPI:** Well, we have to identify them.

**FISKE:** Okay.

**CRESPI:** We have to consult them when their resources and their interests are at stake. Now again, everyone recognizes that we have to do this with American Indians ...

**FISKE:** Sure. Uh-huh.

**CRESPI:** ... it's with the other people ...

**FISKE:** sure.

**CRESPI:** ... that the problem arises because we often cannot find them. They've moved away, they're dispersed, they're not politically mobilized ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... so it's still an issue but it is part of the policy and so there [chuckle] ...

**FISKE:** Very good. Yeah. You got it in there. That is not a small task at all.

**CRESPI:** And then there's just one other concept that I want to refer to and then ...

**FISKE:** Absolutely.

**CRESPI:** ... and that's the notion of ethnographic resources which also caused all kinds of dissatisfaction and argument and finally it's over. But the Park Service deals with resources, with the concept of resources and I'm in the program called Cultural Resources and most of those resources are stuff like tangible ...

**FISKE:** Buildings, urns ...

**CRESPI:** ... buildings, sites, objects, and landscapes and these are resources that were more or less defined in the National Historic Preservation Act and these resources were treated as separate from the people ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... it has tended to be that way, separate from the people who created them or who used them and who valued them because they relate to some earlier time in their lives ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... and so they're disengaged from the human context. So, between Doug and I we came up with this concept called ethnographic resources and ethnographic resources are those sites, structures, objects, those tangible resources that are traditionally valued by present-day people because they contributed to their history and or their life. So the ... an archaeological resource to which ... Mesa Verde to which the Hopi traveled to and where they pray is not just an archaeological resource, we call it an ethnographic resource because ...

**FISKE:** I see. Right.

**CRESPI:** ... present-day people value it in special ways and the park needs to have their attention drawn to that human dimension. So I argued for this, even having to argue with some of the anthropologists that we had hired who felt that an archaeological resource was an archaeological resource.

[Pause]

**CRESPI:** Okay, I don't want to belabor the point about ethnographic resources but it seemed as if we needed to come up with a concept that would be compatible with the Park Service thinking about resources so that we can also talk about resources and so maybe it was a little forced but it seemed to me a way to highlight the fact that people attach meaning to the sites, structures, objects, and landscapes and that it is the meaning that in a sense transforms those tangible resources into something of greater value for the viewers or the users.

**FISKE:** It makes a lot of sense to us anyway.

**CRESPI:** Oh [chuckle] Right. So we argued that we have to develop an inventory of these resources so that we could be like everybody else in the Park Service that inventories their resources and we needed a database. For a number of years there was antagonism to this because there were some people who felt that we had enough databases [chuckle] and we didn't need anymore and what were we doing with them aside from counting the widgets, the stuff, the number of sites ...

**FISKE:** This was fairly recently, wasn't it? I mean in the last ten years or less ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah. So, for a long time there was antagonism to having yet another database but recently within the last few years it has been felt that if you don't have database, a computerized database, you know, you are not competitive.

**FISKE:** And how can you track it?

**CRESPI:** That's right. So and we now have people working on an ethnographic resource inventory.

**FISKE:** And these are cultural anthropologists, right?

**CRESPI:** These are cultural anthropologists who are now looking for money so that they can hire someone to do the inventory database data entry which my God, you know, is a whole other kind of thing.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** Nobody has time for this nor do we in ethnography have the money but we're right in there with everyone else talking about our computerized database and doing Powerpoint presentations on it so there. [both chuckling]

**FISKE:** We have arrived, so there.

**CRESPI:** Right. And other people are talking about ethnographic resources they may feel uncertain about what the hell it is ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... but they are recognizing that there are these things out there that people have a lot of feelings about and that maybe they need to know what those feelings are ...

**FISKE:** Yeah, or what all the dimensions of these objects or sites ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah, and landscapes and ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... because the landscape people tend to look at the structures on the surface at the natural resources but they don't tend to get information about who uses the resources, who used the resources, who planted, who collected, who built the houses. You know, this project that I had been doing at Cane River in Louisiana also made me aware of a whole category of resources that nobody pays attention to, baptismal sites, for example, along the riverside which were absolutely unmarked. [Editor: This refers to the Cane River National Historic Park]

**FISKE:** Uh-huh.

**CRESPI:** There's nothing permanent about baptismal sites, it's behind all the churches that are set along the riverside and the baptismal site is out there in the river and it doesn't have a permanent mark.

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She said this with emphasis; so maybe could we add an exclamation point? "So there!"

**FISKE:** But these would be used again and again year after year by the same church on the river but they just of course, they knew where it was ...

**CRESPI:** Exactly.

**FISKE:** ... but they didn't have a marking.

**CRESPI:** Right. And the riverbed changes a little bit so maybe you wouldn't ... you might lose your footing in the place that you were there the year before but so you would seek another place that may be higher or whatever.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** And these are important places for people, it's where they underwent the religious conversion and ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... or we have other places ... again, I'm thinking of Cane River ... of sites, of structures, not sites, excuse me... structures that are no longer there. I've been calling them ghost structures and maybe it's not the best word but I don't know what else to call them but places that used to support, again, churches or people's houses ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... termites have attacked them and they've been demolished and the wood has been taken away and used for other things. Unless you lived in that house or knew someone who lived in that house, unless you went to that church you would never know. One would not know that it existed, yet, these are often place markers for people.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** When I was at the plantation in Cane River and I would ask someone for directions, well, they would tell me, you go down near Ms. Lizzy's house and you turn left. But Ms. Lizzy's house hasn't been there for twenty-five years, yet, these are sort of conceptual markers for people who used to live there and it's important that we know about this. So the ethnographic resource has, you know, is tangible.

**FISKE:** That's very important.

**CRESPI:** ... it's been happening, the new concepts, the new staff, the new arguments and maybe I should just say one word about ... I'm finishing here with the term ethnography. I don't know if I had indicated why it's called ethnography?

**FISKE:** Let's go over it again ... no, I don't think you did.

**CRESPI:** It has to do with the fact that anthropology is a term that has been sort of taken over by archaeology in that most people in the federal government are familiar with archaeologists as anthropologists and it was important in giving visibility to this program to also distinguish it from archaeology and so it seemed reasonable to introduce a new lexical item, ethnography ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... even though it's not always easy to say [chuckle]. I decided so what, it's better to have a new word and not have to keep explaining that we're different from archaeologists.

**FISKE:** Right. Right.

**CRESPI:** And so the term ethnography and ethnographer seemed to be very classic anthropological terms which we could use in a slightly different way and so rather than calling the program Cultural Anthropology not Archaeology but Cultural Anthropology it became known as Ethnography, the Ethnography Program.

**FISKE:** Right. That's something that crept up on me over the years and, I know you talked to me in great depth about it ...

**CRESPI:** *Ad nauseam.*

**FISKE:** ... we talk a lot about archaeology and anthropology but it's good to just step back and ... and make that point, you know, when we live with it ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** ... So it's good that you make that point.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. So, and it was a new program and so I thought, well this would separate it from what went on before. A lot of the archaeologists objected to it strenuously as they objected to having even a cultural anthropology program because they felt that they too are anthropologists and there was no reason to ...

**FISKE:** Well now, why didn't you call it Cultural Anthropology?

**CRESPI:** Because of the term anthropology ...

**FISKE:** Anthropology, yeah ...

**CRESPI:** ... which kept triggering this other association with archaeology.

**FISKE:** ... even with the cultural modifier.

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** And this gives it a whole other identity, a whole new word for Park Service ... park rangers to bandy about.

**CRESPI:** Right. [chuckle] So, at some point we ... you know, I periodically still use the word cultural anthropology but the program in our budget office, the program in our budget is referred to as ethnography.

**FISKE:** Right. Yeah. And so how many are we going to talk in the future about the dimensions of the program overall or the people working on it.

{Pause}

**CRESPI:** Okay, we were going to say something today about the larger program in the National Park Service and I want to give you some idea of how many of us there are and what they do primarily in the field. I think I've already spoken about what I did with regard to policy and program building. There are six lead ethnographers who we call regional ethnographers and their task is to take the lead on building a program in the regions in which they are located. That means in Alaska, the Pacific West, the Inter-Mountain regional office, which is the largest region that we have running from the border with Canada to the border with Mexico, and then until just recently they had two ethnographers there which made complete sense and they decided they only needed one.

**FISKE:** Oh.

**CRESPI:** And I had argued with them and argued with them but I lost the battle.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** And I had been audacious enough to say, well, give the money back to me [both chuckling] ...

**FISKE:** And did you win that battle?

**CRESPI:** No. I didn't think I would but I felt I needed to say something to them about how my office struggled to get that money for them ...

**FISKE:** Absolutely.

**CRESPI:** ... and it is committed to ethnography and that's what Congress said. It is to hire an ethnographer and the feeling, of course, in this decentralized organization and as you know how it is from being with NOAA each region says, hey, we can do what we want with our money, it's our money, you transferred it to us so ...

**FISKE:** Yeah, I do.

**CRESPI:** ... disgustingly enough this huge region now only has one regional ethnographer who cannot possibly handle everything that needs to be handled. Of course, the one nice thing is that the person who had occupied the position in Santa Fe is now with the Sand Creek Massacre Battlefield site.

**FISKE:** Permanent transfer or ...

**CRESPI:** I don't think so. You know there is a tradition in the National Park Service for superintendents to compete for the position of superintendent ...

**FISKE:** Yes. Yeah.

**CRESPI:** ... and for there to be a lot of management experience that goes into the competitors ... that the competitors bring to the struggle ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... and Alexa [Roberts] has not been a manager, she's been a cultural anthropologist but she has been wonderful in working with all the disputing parties and Lord knows, there have been, every party has been a disputant in trying to get the land for the Sand Creek Massacre site, in negotiating with landowners. I guess it's one of the conservancy groups to get the land, in negotiating with the tribes as well. So Alexa Roberts has been marvelous in that but she also isn't an old-line manager ...

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** ... superintendent so we don't know what's going to happen once the park is fully established. They've only recently gotten the bulk of the land and it may be yet another year before they get the rest of the land and get all the agreements signed and it's an incredible complex situation where the land is being purchased by a third party, it will be put into trust for the tribe so while it will be trust land the tribe expects the Park Service to manage it.

**FISKE:** Oh, okay.

**CRESPI:** So, there will be negotiations among all of these parties forever and ever.

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Alexa Roberts is currently Superintendent, Sand Creek Massacre NHS.

Might be nice if we could update the current positions of all the original regional ethnographers...

**FISKE:** So, it's going to become Indian land then ...

**CRESPI:** It will become Indian land because it is trust land but the legislation says it shall be a park managed by the National Park Service. But it will entail a lot of discussion and negotiation with the tribes the Arapaho, the Cheyenne, Northern Cheyenne, Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho. So Alexa has been very busy negotiating among some of these parties and doing a wonderful job and using all of her anthropological and personal skills to get people to talk to each other and come to some sort of agreement about what they are doing and the price of the land. So it's been quite an operation for her.

**FISKE:** How long has she been working on this?

**CRESPI:** It's been about a year and a half. Well, she had been part of the project. You know, before a new park is established we do what is called a special resource study.

**FISKE:** Right. Sure.

**CRESPI:** And ordinarily they have been history studies but happily in this - this is one of the few cases ... oh, well, there have been a few others - but this is one of the cases in which they agreed that there should be an anthropological component particularly oral history. So Alexa had been working with the tribes to collect oral histories because there had been an issue about exactly where the massacre site was and sort of worked that out. And what a lot of us are very happy about is that the Park Service is willing to call this a massacre site. Well, it was indeed a massacre.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** But there have been other situations in which some of us also thought there was a massacre and the Park Service was very uncomfortable about using that word.

**FISKE:** Right. Yeah. So this one is a very well known one and definitely it fits the definition.

**CRESPI:** Right. So Alexa's position has not been filled so that leaves only one person in the Inter-Mountain region ...

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRESPI:** It's pretty awful. So, there is one person also in the Southeast, in Atlanta, Tony [J. Anthony] Paredes, and one person in the Northeast in the Boston office and that's Chuck [Charles] Smythe who came to us from the Smithsonian. He had been at the Smithsonian in NAGPRA program, and one person in the Midwest, that's Mike [Michael J.] Evans. And one regional person. He also has staff, Michelle Watson.

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Tony continued to serve in his retirement (from academia), until he retired from the NPS in xyz. He died in 2013.

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Chuck served as the Northeast Regional Ethnographer until 2013 (or late 2012), when he retired and moved to Alaska to work with the SeaAlaska Corporation. (with Rosita Whorl)

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Michael Evans serves as the [Midwest regional ethnographer currently.] ?

**FISKE:** Okay.

**CRESPI:** So, each of those regions, Alaska, the Pacific West, Inter-Mountain region, the Southeast, the Northeast, the Midwest have one person who is the lead and is supposed to be working with park superintendents to come up with scopes of work for projects for which all the parks will compete. There's the 60,000 dollars that each region gets from us but that's supposed to go for special projects. There is additional money for which they can compete.

**FISKE:** So they come up with scopes of work for projects working with the superintendent then they have to compete nationally for the funding for those ...

**CRESPI:** Within their region ...

**FISKE:** They compete within the region for the funding for those and those could compete with historian's projects or other types of social science projects ...

**CRESPI:** And then there is another pot of money which is also supposed to support ethnography, the routine studies and ethnography has to compete with history, archaeology, and cultural.

**FISKE:** But not visitor studies?

**CRESPI:** No. And that has been extraordinarily difficult up until recently when some regions didn't have ethnographers so there was no one there to enter into the competition and support ethnography for getting some of this money. But so it's a little better now that there are ethnographers in all the regions.

**FISKE:** Definitely.

**CRESPI:** There were also some ethnographers in the parks, well, let me finish with the regions. In the regional office the regional ethnographer is responsible for developing scopes of work and for contracting. They themselves rarely do the research ...

**FISKE:** Except in Alexa's case when she was doing oral histories?

**CRESPI:** Yeah, that was a special project.

**FISKE:** Right. So they oversee the work or the contracts of other anthropologist or other people?

**CRESPI:** Right, outside anthropologists. They may also be responsible for the consultations that are involved with NAGPRA decisions, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and decisions and issues that have to do with repatriation.

**FISKE:** I found that that is a very typical situation for anthropologists working for the federal government that you often oversee the work of other people, at least in my work that was the case. You don't get necessarily to do it yourself, you're a manager of the contract for research.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. So, on the one hand it gives you a broad view of what's going on and you get to guide the research that's being done. You're not out there in the field getting the hands-on experience which we have all come to value so much ...

**FISKE:** That's right.

**CRESPI:** ... and that part is painful.

**FISKE:** Uh-huh, disappointing sometimes.

**CRESPI:** Yeah. So, most people tried to find ways to get out there and do something. Anyway, it took me about fifteen years before [chuckle] I was able to that.

**FISKE:** How did you end up getting out and actually getting a chunk of time to do some research work?

**CRESPI:** My position description was redefined ...

**FISKE:** And you ...

**CRESPI:** ... and then that didn't really mean anything because we had a change of administration.

**FISKE:** You renegotiated how your position was defined.

**CRESPI:** Yeah, and it had a research component to it. And I went through a research grade ...

**FISKE:** Wow.

**CRESPI:** ... evaluation process which is run by the people in Natural Resources, they are in charge of that. Anyway, I was found qualified [chuckle] ...

**FISKE:** Yeah, thank God. [chuckle]

**CRESPI:** ... and I had been watching the developments at this particular park ever since people spoke about it, this is Cane River [National Historic Park] in Louisiana and it was just so ... conjured up my experiences while working at the hacienda in Ecuador, this is a plantation park and so while the plantation and hacienda not identical structurally there were enough similarities to really arouse my interest and curiosity. And I just said, I'm gonna do this and they did accept that. So much of what I did, you know, I would go out there for a week and come back and do

twenty other things and then while I was out there in the morning I'd be on e-mail trying to take care of the other stuff in the office. I mean it was ridiculous.

**FISKE:** It was very hard to segregate the time out for actually devote to pure research ...

**CRESPI:** Right.

**FISKE:** ... there were always the demands of your job just kept calling you back or you would have to ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah, and not only the demands, the feeling that I needed to respond to them because you know there are demands on all of us and some people seem to be successful in turning a cold shoulder to them and it troubled me to do that. I felt that, you know, I had to be here and there and everywhere and what I used in order to even write up the bloody project was my time, you know, my leave time, my weekends, because I wouldn't be left to get the work done while I was in the office.

**FISKE:** Oh no. Oh, of course not. I mean I can remember the time I had even ten minutes before somebody walked in or needed something done or a decision or something. But what did you end up ... what was the product that you ended up with? Well, how did you describe it to people? Was it an ethnography or was it oral histories or was ... and it supported the development of the park in such and such a way ...

**CRESPI:** Right. It was a planning oriented ethnographic study that was supposed to have been a rapid ethnographic assessment.

**FISKE:** Uh-huh.

**CRESPI:** But unfortunately, I could not get a team together. The team that I was supposed to work with was from this - not to be mentioned - a local university ...

**FISKE:** Okay [chuckle].

**CRESPI:** ... and they didn't have a clue as to what this was and they weren't interested. They really were interested in getting some money and ... well, I shouldn't go on but it was ... I was the team. And it was very aggravating and I, to this day I'm trying to finish up the project and this is like four years later. It's essentially written, I need to get maps done and photographs inserted and take care of some of the logistics and it will be out. You know, I kept going back a week here, a week there. I had meetings with the planners and in reading through the general management plan which is what the planners were responsible for I could recognize some of my words there and some of my thoughts and suggestions so [sighs] although I felt that I was not having the impact that I really wanted I was satisfied that I was having some impact.

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I don't know if Miki ever finished this project. ...?

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** And the Park Service is such a history-oriented agency that it is incredibly difficult to overcome the biases in that direction, even though it is agreed that contemporary people are important and we need to hear from them.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** People still are pulled in the direction of history.

**FISKE:** Yeah, you see it all over the parks in their signage and it's only even recently that they began to branch out and I'm sure that that's in part due to your concerted efforts and efforts of other folks that care about cultural things and traditionally associated people.

**CRESPI:** Well, you know, I was glad that I drew their attention to the issue of slavery, to slavery as an issue which the people I interviewed did not want discussed. Well, of course, we had a plantation here how were we not going to discuss slavery? So I drove the operation. The white owners - and they still live there - with whom I spoke ...

**FISKE:** They live in the house?

**CRESPI:** They have the big house and they have about two thousand acres, they gave us, donated part of it, the slave quarters and operational center ...

**FISKE:** Did they want it to be a park? Did the family that owns it ...

**CRESPI:** Yes, they decided they wanted it to be a park. This was a family that has a very great sense of its importance in the local area and the owners' daughter and nephew have no children. I don't know whether they thought about this as being their legacy to the future.

**FISKE:** What about the legacy of the slaves that worked there, is that going to be part of the interpretative ...

**CRESPI:** Well, I hope so. That's what my work was all about ...

**FISKE:** Especially if those slave quarters were not there you would expect the names as best as they could be recalled and the families and what they're doing now and what their life was like and all of these things.

**CRESPI:** So I have that, to the extent that I was able to get it. I guess that I probably put in a little over a month and a half there and then went back to review the documents with some of the people who used to live in a slave, mustn't call them slave quarters because this really made

them angry, they were just the quarters. People I interview today lived in the quarters as day laborers and they didn't want us to call them slave quarters.

**FISKE:** Were you able to reach any of the families that were slave families during the antebellum days?

**CRSPEI:** Well, I reached one family ... several generations of one family who they think were descended from a slave family. They had no discussion, no memories, and no recollection of stories that people would tell them. In fact, they were very concerned about being supportive of the landowners which I can understand because the landowners were still very much there and although the lives of the people who are day laborers are no longer affected by the plantation owners I think that they may have the feeling.

[Pause]

**FISKE:** If you had any final comments on the relationship to applied anthropology, I think, to bring it back to where we started at the beginning that would be useful.

**CRSPEI:** Well, I guess one perspective that I have come away with or perhaps I've always had is that one of the most important public faces of cultural anthropology is in the federal government. This is where, whether it is in Congress where the impact may be more subtle than you would like but it's still there or it's in the executive branch, in the federal agencies, anthropology is responsible for transforming or converting the general policies into actual action items, into policies that the federal agencies, the bureaucrats, the - alright, I didn't really mean to use that word - the civil servants, the executive branch can actually do things. You cannot take a law and just implement it on the basis of the language in the law.

**FISKE:** Yeah.

**CRSPEI:** That language has to be transformed into language and concepts and actions that makes sense within the context of a particular agency. And it's in that arena that anthropologists have a great deal to offer because they bring it to policy making and regulation making special sensitivity to a segment of the American public that often is overlooked except in the most superficial way. They understand what it means to consult with people in a meaningful way. They understand the effects of different venues on people's willingness to talk whether you're meeting with them in the workplace or in the supermarket or in a laundromat or whether you're meeting with them in a federal office they understand that the venue is one of the many factors that affects people's responsiveness to agency issues. And depending upon the agency the policies and programs can have worldwide impact and certainly at least domestic impact. The anthropologists working in these agencies also design, execute, and monitor research which

obviously brings in information that was, and perspectives that were not there in the agency before. And having anthropologists within the agency means that these findings don't just sit on the shelf. It's so important to have these anthropologists in the agency and have allies outside the agency so that the research findings are implemented or they are more likely to be implemented if someone in the agency is tracking them and if someone outside of the agency is periodically calling and monitoring what happened with their research. And I think all too often people in academia, independent contractors who do the research just turn in their project and leave. I don't think they follow up. I don't think they see that as part of what it would be useful for them to do.

**FISKE:** Not at all, it sounds like they are not doing their job but that isn't part of their job. Their job is to do the research and just turn over the findings and so that's what de facto happens in most cases I think ...

**CRESPI:** Yeah.

**FISKE:** ... as well unless you have a huge Boeing-style contract where you're looking for the next handout and you want to monitor what's happened in the last case. But, generally speaking in social science research I don't think they try to follow up and ensure the stuff was utilized.

**CRESPI:** And yet, there is no reason why they shouldn't. There is no reason why they cannot make a phone call to the superintendent and say, Hey, how is this going? There is no reason why they should not. There is no reason why the contacting officers' technical representative ... the person that's monitoring this should be arranging for the contractor to make presentations at the park and reaching out somehow to the superintendent or to park staff even if it's just to let them know that here is an individual who has invested their professional time and training in developing this research project. You know sometimes that happens but sometimes it doesn't. And I hope to go to [chuckle] Louisiana some time later. I guess it's going to be the beginning of winter by the time I get out there to meet with the park staff and review my findings with them ...

**FISKE:** Oh, good.

**CRESPI:** Yeah, because I think people also don't quite understand what ethnography is ...

**FISKE:** Oh, no, no.

**CRESPI:** Is it some kind of history?... because we do have history involved in it anyway. For all of these reasons it is cultural anthropology in the federal government is that arm of anthropology that is reaching out to a very wide audience and our colleagues in academia. I think I would like for them to realize that we are operating in a sphere that they don't penetrate and that we can

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She's saying that sometimes people think it's history.

expand the meaning, the understanding, the value of anthropology in arenas that they don't get into.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** And so I think it's important for us to have more viable partnerships instead of what seems to happen these days which is a sort of denigration of applied anthropology in many academic settings. I wish to come up with new language like public anthropology for projects which applied anthropologists have been doing for years and years, they just called that applied anthropology and perhaps in some ways they should've said public anthropology. But I guess I see public anthropology as that aspect of applied anthropology in which we work with the community. The work that Barbara [R.] Johnston did for EPA was very much in many ways public anthropology because she helped promote community based research and community based involvement with EPA decisions. The work that your former agency did or the agency you were formerly with [chuckle] with fishermen is another kind of public anthropology because your work was trying to mobilize and assist fishing communities whose lives are being affected by NOAA. So, this is something that we have been doing for a long time and I just wish that our colleagues in academia would be more welcoming to us and be more understanding of the fact that we are their representatives in the federal agencies and ...

**FISKE:** And it would be useful for them to work more closely with us. Any additional thoughts? And you started off with applied anthropology and your desire to wanting to go gradually move into an area where you could have some effect, make a difference and part of your disappointment with your dissertation and with your subsequent research in Rhode Island and other places was that you didn't feel like it had been used or that it wasn't been useful and it seems like you can say with some certainty that now you have been spending the last twenty years or fifteen or how long was it?

**CRESPI:** Twenty ...

**FISKE:** ... twenty years on working in an area where anthropology is being used and that was in fact a hallmark, not only a successful transition but that that is a very important aspect of applied anthropology. Its usefulness, not just a kind of a comment on contemporary culture but the fact that the information can be used for building better relationships with traditionally associated people or indigenous people or whoever. Any other comments that you want to make in closing?

**CRESPI:** Well, one broad one and one narrow one. Broadly speaking I wish that graduate students in anthropology and undergraduate students in anthropology would come away with a broader vision of what the system is all about that they're dealing with instead of focusing on a particular community or a particular part of an agency or a particular peoples instead of focusing

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on them exclusively to see them as part of an incredibly complex system in which people are responding...the local community or their peoples are responding to a multitude of stimuli and that it is incumbent on the anthropologists to appreciate the varieties of stimuli that people necessarily must respond to and not be as judgmental about them as perhaps we tend to be. But I don't think we could successfully deal with federal governments or international agencies or multilateral whatever agencies if we define them as the enemies and the bad guys and the people we work with as the good guys and the ones who are worthy of our interest. I think [sighs] we still tend to do that to the detriment of anthropology and obviously if we are ever going to work in applied anthropology it behooves us to move away from that sort of judgmental stand at least for the purposes of research and write-up and analysis and take a broader look at the system within which people are struggling to exist. I don't think that we have to like what we see. I don't think that we as individuals have to accept the injustices and inequities as certainly not as rightful. But I think if we want to fully understand the people who are affected by these injustices, we need to understand what drives those decision makers.

**FISKE:** Right. Right.

**CRESPI:** Anyway, I think we need to get more informed by the workings of government and international organizations. In a more pragmatic sense I guess that it would be extremely helpful if our organizations, the SfAA and AAA would institute a speakers bureau the way they had some time ago so that applied anthropologists can come out of their own little niche and interact with the exciting students and faculty in the universities. I think this would be enormously beneficial to both the anthropologists and the graduate students and faculty. And it surely would not take a huge investment of time and money. Some complications to this partly because people working in government don't have the same control over their time as people in academia who know when Christmas falls and other holidays come but I think it so worthwhile to try to increase the interaction between us. I know that there is a mentor program, at least NAPA has a mentor program.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** And that's really great. But I think it would also be useful to have us going out to universities.

**FISKE:** Right.

**CRESPI:** And then, of course, there are summer programs in which there are internships, they don't pay a hell of a lot of money but there are internships. And every once in a while we have interns for the academic year and so it might be worthwhile for students to check into those and the faculty to check into those on behalf of their students.

[Pause]

**CRESPI:** This might be redundant but I actually don't think it could be said often enough [chuckle] that I think effective applied cultural anthropology requires us to bring all of our expertise, all our training, all our knowledge and skills to bear on the agency in which we are operating. And by that I mean that we need to analyze the social and political aspects of the agency we need to understand its decision making processes, its values, and its ideology in order to understand how best to influence it. So, in this regard we need to approach the agency that employs us with the skills of the traditional holistic anthropologist so that we are identifying those areas that we can have an impact on so that we have a better grasp of the formal and informal hierarchy because it's often through the informal hierarchy that we are able to make our thoughts known and introduce innovations. Ultimately they will get into the formal hierarchy, become institutionalized if we work through the informal system frequently enough. So I just wanted to make the point that we have to treat the agency almost as if it was the community that we are studying and be as rigorous in our analysis and description of that agency so that we can better find our way around it. That was all I wanted to add.

#### Further Resources

The National Park Service prepared *Legacy, Muriel "Miki" Crespi, National Park Service Chief Ethnographer, Her Professional Contributions to the National Park Service*. This document provides a detailed review of many of her accomplishments in the NPS.

<http://www.nps.gov/ethnography/legacy.pdf>

The winter 2004 issue of *Practicing Anthropology* ( 26:1) edited by Gretchen Schafft is also relevant. It is entitled "A Life in the Practice of Anthropology: Muriel Crespi and the Development of the Ethnography Program in the National Parks" and includes a number of articles written by her work associates. Among Muriel's publications is her "Ethnography and the NPS: A Growing Partnership" which appears in *CRM Bulletin* 10 (1):1-4 (1987).