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Mining Archival Texts for Ethnographic Data Relevant to a Section 106 Undertaking: A Primer on Ethnographic Work While Doing Background Research

Abstract

Ethnographic data must be addressed to meet compliance goals as part of the Section 106 process. In traditional academic anthropology, data are collected through fieldwork including participant observation; however this is not always possible in the course of compliance-based work. American Indian tribes are included in the process through formal consultation, and there is no substitute for tribal involvement. Thus, ethnographic research with Native people is critical, but archival research is an important complement and adds time depth. Valuable ethnographic data otherwise unobtainable can be identified from archival sources by applying National Register criteria, described in National Park Service Bulletin 38. These materials are primary sources preceding cultural resource legislation, not produced with cultural resource management in mind, but contain data that can help meet compliance goals. These illustrate the concerns, interests, and cultural continuity of tribes, whose presence is a primary reason cultural resource compliance work is undertaken.
