
Reviews

Homes and Homelands, virtual exhibition. (Washington D.C., National Park Service, 2024. Website.)

Virtual exhibitions can bring into conversation widely dispersed objects. The National Park Service's Homes and Homelands Virtual Exhibition, created by postdoctoral fellow Nicole Martin, brings together a broad range of objects from locations throughout the Pacific West to tell varied stories of diverse women.¹ From the Salish Sea to Sonoran Desert, and from Montana to the Northern Mariana Islands, readers discover the ways that African American, Asian, Indigenous, Latina, and white settler women made homes for themselves and their families.

The exhibit overview promises to tell stories of "extraordinary women" (see Introduction). While each tells a compelling story, it is the ordinariness of these women that stayed with me. Each was striving to build or protect their home(lands) and families. Each carefully selected woman's object represents a much larger group of women whose stories and material culture have not survived.

The exhibit opens with a jelly-making kettle from the Hanford site of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park in Washington State. This humble pot reveals generations of women's labor and loss of homelands, introducing themes explored throughout the exhibition. Nez Perce, Umatilla, Wanapum, and Yakama women gathered and stored local berries in hand-woven baskets. Around 1,900 white settlers like the Haynes family settled in the area, building homesteads on the Indigenous women's homelands. Their bustling agricultural center was in turn displaced by plutonium production facilities and a racially segregated government town. Mass-produced jelly in jars replaced the Haynes women's jelly-making and Native fruit-drying.

The exhibition is organized into four themes: loss, work, politics, and resistance. Readers can scroll through the entire exhibition, jump to a specific

1. <https://www.nps.gov/maps/stories/home-and-homelands-virtual-exhibition.html>

theme, or navigate the entries via an interactive map. Well-selected links take visitors to additional resources both within National Park Service webpages and beyond. Citations reference both primary sources and important secondary sources on each topic. While I might quibble with how some of the individual stories were organized by theme, each example is well constructed and together they argue compellingly that women built meaning in their ancestral or adopted homelands.

Home and Homelands introduces unfamiliar stories. We learn about a Latina dying of childbirth on an overland trail moving north rather than west, a Tsimshian woman homesteader on the U.S.-Canadian borderlands, an African-American homesteader near Los Angeles, and a female missionary who feels more at home in a Hawaiian royal daughter's traditional hale than in her American husband's western-style adobe house. Objects related to white settler women tell stories of displacement and longing for other homes rather than the self-sacrificing homemakers celebrated in popular memory.

Other objects tell stories not typically associated with western women. We learn about bohemian culture in Depression-Era San Francisco; the World War II Women's Overseas Shopping Service; Indigenous Chamorro women's wartime civilian incarceration in Saipan; and cultural persistence through kapa (bark cloth) making, language preservation, and oral tradition. Taken together, these object-based stories reveal the diversity of western women's experiences.

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Performing Chinatown: Hollywood, Tourism, and the Making of a Chinese American Community. By William Gow. (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2024. 274 pp.)

Performing Chinatown: Hollywood, Tourism, and the Making of a Chinese American Community is a community history that provides an insider's perspective on the relationship between Los Angeles Chinatown and Hollywood film production during the exclusion era. The book argues that, beginning in the 1890s, Chinese American elites used artistic and creative performances to reshape popular perceptions of their community, significantly contributing to the inclusion of Asian American communities—arguably more so than the rapid geopolitical changes during World War II.