



## NPS Women Cartes de Visite Collection



Aileen Nusbaum

Mesa Verde National Park

HCWP, 1921-1939

- Born Mary Aileen O'Bryan on 1889 at Las Vegas, New Mexico.
- Attended Sorbonne art and dramatic schools in Paris.
- Married Alfred Baehrens, an noted musician.
- Their son Deric was born in 1913 in France.
- From 1914-1915, worked as a nurse at American Ambulance outside of Paris during WWI.
- Returned to New Mexico with Deric in 1915. It's unclear if she divorced Baehrens or he died.
- Married Jesse L. Nusbaum in 1920 and traveled across southern Utah by pack train as part of an archeological team led by Jesse.
- Helped him excavate a Basket Maker cave site.
- Moved to Mesa Verde National Park in June 1921 when Jesse was appointed superintendent.
- That first winter, they built their home and most of their furniture.
- Isolated at the park for 8 months due to weather, she had no contacts besides her husband and son.
- Was an "Honorary Custodian Without Pay" (HCWP) and a major force behind the design of many park structures.
- Provided medical assistance to the local community without compensation.
- Congress appropriating funding for the Aileen Nusbaum Hospital at Mesa Verde, built in 1926.
- Divorced Nusbaum in 1939.
- Acting director of the New Mexico Federal Writers Project from February-September 1939.
- Moved to Bath, England in 1969.
- Died in Bath, England on June 28, 1979 but is buried in Santa Fe, NM.

*This research was made possible in part by a grant from the National Park Foundation.*