CRM

VOLUME 16 • NO. 6
1 9 9 3

Thematic Issue

Cultural Resources Management Information for Parks, Federal Agencies, Indian Tribes, States, Local Governments and the Private Sector

Cultural Resources from the Recent Past

Rebecca A. Shiffer

When the National Park Service published its 25th Anniversary Report on the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, *Held in Trust: Preserving America's Historic Places*, it put New York City's National Historic Landmark Chrysler Building on the cover. By that year, 1991, tens of thousands of buildings across the country were listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and nearly two thousand more had been designated National Historic Landmarks. Interestingly, NPS chose the Chrysler Building, a symbol of modernity and of "machine age" technology, to represent the historic buildings the nation holds in trust.

The report reviewed the evolution of federal historic preservation programs authorized and expanded by the 1966 act and developed in conjunction with state, local, tribal, public and private partners. Since an overwhelming majority of preservation efforts have been directed toward 18th- and 19th-century buildings, readers might have expected to see a building from an earlier period pictured on the cover. But everything about the Chrysler Building (1928-1930) proclaims its modernity: the tallest building in the world (albeit for only a few months); in the newest contemporary style, "Moderne"; clad in machine made or formed materials; and bearing the imagery of and paid for by an industrialist who had made his fortune from the defining innovation of the 20th century, the automobile.

Placing the Chrysler Building on the cover nudged readers' understanding of "historic" buildings forward in time. Inside, a section of the report outlined "Future Needs," including the need to "Broaden the nation's understanding of what is worth saving."[1] This thematic issue of *CRM* is a contribution toward meeting that need.

Cover of an advertising brochure for Dr. Walter H. Silge, Optometrist, Chicago, IL, 1936. Courtesy of Lake County (IL) Museum / Curt Teich Postcard Archives.

*(**Recent**—continued on page 3)*

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Cultural Resources

CRM

VOLUME 16 • NO. 6
ISSN 1068-4999

Published by the National Park Service to promote and maintain high standards for preserving and managing cultural resources.

Director
Roger G. Kennedy

Associate Director
Jerry L. Rogers

Editor
Ronald M. Greenberg

Production Manager
Karlota M. Koester

Guest Editor
Rebecca A. Shiffer

Advisors

Joan Bacharach
Museum Registrar, NPS

Randall J. Biallas
Historical Architect, NPS

John A. Burns
Architect, NPS

Harry A. Butowsky
Historian, NPS

Pratt Cassity
Acting Executive Director, National Alliance of Preservation Commissions

Muriel Crespi
Cultural Anthropologist, NPS

Craig W. Davis
Archeologist, NPS

Mark R. Edwards
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Maryland

Bruce W. Fry
Chief of Research Publications National Historic Sites Canadian Parks Service

John Hnedak
Architectural Historian, NPS

H. Ward Jandl
Architectural Historian, NPS

Roger E. Kelly
Archeologist, NPS

Ruthann Knudson
Archeologist, NPS

Antoinette J. Lee
Historian, NPS

John Poppeliers
International Liaison Officer for Cultural Resources, NPS

Brit Allan Storey
Historian, Bureau of Reclamation Federal Preservation Forum

Contributing Editors

Stephen A. Morris
Certified Local Governments (CLG) Coordinator, NPS

Bruce Craig
Cultural Resources Coordinator National Parks and Conservation Association

Consultants

Michael G. Schene
Historian, NPS

Kay D. Weeks
Technical Writer-Editor, NPS

Contents

Cultural Resources From the Recent Past 1
Rebecca A. Shiffer

The Significance of the Recent Past 4
Richard Longstreth

Collecting Today For Tomorrow 8
Thomas J. Schlereth

Maximum Collection Dynamics
A Tradition of Change at Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village 12
Mary Seelhorst

Postcards: The Pan-Document of the 20th Century 16
Katherine Hamilton-Smith

McWindow on the World 18
David G. Orr

Dilemmas of Caring for Recent Public Art 19
Dennis R. Montagna

Historic 20th-Century Building Products Database 21
Thomas C. Jester

Disappearing Ducks and Other Recent Relics 23
Beth L. Savage

Good Intentions Gone Awry? 26
Dwayne Jones and Gerron Hite

A Building With a Magnetic History 27
Michael F. Crowe

Preserving the Legacy of the Cold War 28
Amy Worden and Elizabeth Calvit

Recent Landmarks in Vancouver—The Post-1940s Inventory 31
Robert G. Lemon and Marco D'Agostini

Developing a Survey Methodology for Roadside Resources 33
Dwayne Jones

Where the Planner Meets the Road—The NPS Route 66 Study 34
John Conoboy

Historic Highway Preservation—Not A Dead End Street! 36
Brian A. Butko

Made for Motoring 40
Sara Amy Leach

A Museum for Gas, Food, Lodging, and a Duck 43
J. Lance Mallamo

Supplement

Historic Signs: Resources for Preservation 45
Michael J. Auer

Send articles, news items, and correspondence to the Editor, *CRM* (400), U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; (202-343-3395).

Cultural Resources from the Recent Past

(continued from page 1)

Over the last decade, professionals in the historic preservation field, museums, archives, universities and other organizations and agencies charged with studying, documenting, and preserving America's cultural artifacts, sites, structures and history have given increasing attention to the need to collect, catalog, document and preserve cultural resources from the recent past. This has proven to be a complex undertaking, because these objects, sites and buildings present new philosophical questions and physical preservation and conservation problems not dealt with in the past. In this issue of *CRM*, professionals from a variety of cultural resource fields address some of these problems, pose the questions facing themselves and their colleagues, and describe some current programs and projects to study, evaluate and preserve our more recent cultural resources.

Although it is impossible to precisely define the **recent past,** Richard Longstreth offers a definition that provides a reasonable context for the discussions in the following pages: "a period characterized by attitudes and practices that differ in some substantial way from those now current, but that remain within living memory of many people." At the present time, this certainly includes the mid-20th century, the 1930s-1960s. [2]

Chrysler Building, New York City. William Van Alen, architect; 1928-1930. Courtesy of Lake County (IL) Museum / Curt Teich Postcard Archives.

The essays by Richard Longstreth and Thomas Schlereth present a framework for thinking about the built environment, landscapes and material culture of the recent past and urge today's cultural resource professionals not to be timid about beginning this thinking now, rather than later. They stress the continuum of history, and remind us to look at "everyday" places and things, because this is the world that most of us inhabit.

Many institutions and individuals already consider the recent past. Mary Seelhorst outlines how the staff of the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village rethought that museum's mission, collections policies and interpretation programs over the last decade to include a greater focus on the recent past. Katherine Hamilton-Smith describes how a corporate decision to collect and preserve has left us the Curt Teich Postcard Archives, a unique record of 20th-century America and an invaluable research tool for a wide variety of cultural resource professionals. Archeologist David Orr, who collects and archives McDonald's ephemera, discusses how this corporate giant's disposable materials reflect our culture and ourselves.

While these three essays highlight important efforts to understand, preserve and interpret recent cultural resources, several other authors discuss aspects of the recent past that demand further study and evaluation. Dennis Montagna addresses unforeseen problems of some mid-20th-century materials and finishes used in the creation of public art that could, if unresolved in the long-run, threaten the works' physical and artistic integrity. Thomas Jester reports on an ongoing NPS effort to compile a database of 20th-century building products, their characteristics and known treatments, which will assist the preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of buildings and structures from the recent past.

All cultural resource professionals, regardless of their specific discipline, face the recurring dilemma that they cannot save **everything.** Judgments must be made, and, although it is impossible to totally exclude personal, cultural or institutional bias, those judgments must be based on criteria. Decisions about the historical significance of elements of the built environment and cultural landscapes are invariably based on the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the foundation of all federal and most state and local historic preservation programs.

Beth Savage's analysis of National Register listings that reflect recent significance identifies gaps in our knowledge about recent cultural resources and suggests avenues for further investigation. Dwayne Jones' and Gerron Hite's discussion of a historic rehabilitation project illustrates the potential consequences of those knowledge gaps and urges closer scrutiny of buildings not yet commonly accepted as historic. Michael Crowe's account of a simple, unprepossessing building that was recently a candidate for demolition and is now being nominated for National Historic Landmark status further reinforces the need for further scrutiny of the recent past.

Two pioneering cultural resource management projects, one American and the other Canadian, may provide

*(**Recent**—continued on page 11)*

The Significance of the Recent Past

Richard Longstreth

In 1978 the terminal at Dulles International Airport near Washington, DC (1958-62) was determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Among the reasons cited for the decision were the building's extraordinary design attributes, technological virtuosity, innovative program, and key place in the oeuvre of a great modernist architect, Eero

Dulles International Airport terminal, Loudoun County, VA. Eero Saarinen, 1958-62. Photo by the author, 1967.

Saarinen. The matter of **historical significance** was not directly addressed in the brief determination memorandum, but it can be argued that because Dulles was regarded as a work of great import in the United States and abroad at that time, no future change in thinking can eradicate the design's past record of distinction.[1]

Using the same argument, one could, of course, justify the listing of work that is brand new. Each year there are some buildings that receive international acclaim upon their completion, if not earlier. Why should they not be accorded instant "historic" status?

While such a practice might be tempting in some quarters, it would tell us nothing about the present that we do not already know. Indeed the practice would likely confuse matters by using **criticism** as a surrogate for **history,** the methods and purposes of which differ in fundamental ways. History is neither a science, devoid of all opinion content, nor a purely interpretative exercise, but a balance between the two. Analysis should be based upon as objective a viewpoint as possible, premised on factual evidence and on understanding that evidence within the context of its own time. Yet biases, discernible and otherwise, affect every stage of research, and interpretation is by its very nature a subjective undertaking. History is a continuum; it has no "end." Nevertheless, one cannot achieve a historical perspective of the present. Some passage of time is necessary to give that perspective clear focus so that, among other things, the salient factors contributing to the subject under examination can be identified and the subject itself can be considered with a sense of detachment.

The critic, on the other hand, is intentionally subjective, employing what can be a rather personal set of criteria to provoke thought and debate about a given phenomenon and how it relates to others amid the perceived melee of the present.

It is easy enough to distinguish between these two spheres; however, it is just as easy to intertwine them, and there has been a tradition of doing just that. Historians of modern architecture have seldom drawn a chronological demarcation between what was distinctly of the past and of the present, for the two were rightly considered inseparable parts of a whole. At the same time, an underlying aim of such scholarship often has been to bolster selected tendencies of the present as much as to understand achievements of the past on their own terms. This approach continued as a major historiographical thrust into the 1960s. Since then, a growing number of scholars has sought a less polemical view of analyzing the recent past; yet the appeal of defining historically significant tendencies in the making remains strong.

The conception of significance for the recent past is further shaped by the fact that for several generations, historiographic emphasis has generally been given to ideology, artistic expression, and a very limited range of technical innovations. As a result we know a great deal about the *neue Sachlichkeit* in Weimar Germany and the origins of metal-frame construction, but hardly a thing about the development of airport terminals or how air conditioning has affected architecture since the 1920s. Dozens of scholars have worked on Frank Lloyd Wright—and dozens more continue to do so—but scant attention has been paid to Rapp & Rapp or Victor Gruen. Patronage has not been given much attention, nor have popular forms of symbolism. The list could easily be expanded, but the point should be clear. Our knowledge of the 20th century is far narrower in scope than could be the case, and these limitations stem in part from longstanding ties between historians of modern architecture and contemporary architectural practice.

The perspective on the recent past we have inherited may make it easy to grant historic status to Dulles Airport 16 years after that facility opened; however, this attitude can be detrimental to considering a legacy that extends beyond a small number of recognized artistic masterworks. There are things all around us from the same period that are still instinctively viewed from a critical perspective. Most people perceive representative buildings from the recent past as part of the current world. Whether manifesting practices still admired or newly scorned, such work is often seen as expendable. Scant interest is generated toward its future as a document of our era.

If our perspective on much of the 20th century may be tinged with a connoisseur's prejudice toward what new things have value, so many preservation concerns have been shaped by an antiquarian bias toward things old. Well into the 1960s, efforts in the United States concentrated on protecting those portions of the past that predated the Civil War—in other words, on things that were at least 100 years old.

Given the context of its time, the 50-year provision for the National Register of Historic Places was a bold step.

Westwood Branch, Perpetual Savings Association, Los Angeles, CA. Edward Durrell Stone, 1962. Photo by the author, 1966.

With the Register's broad, inclusive criteria, the provision implied that many things erected during the second half of the 19th and the early-20th centuries were worthy of listing and thus challenged established views in both architectural history and preservation. By taking this step, the National Park Service enabled federal policy to assume an active role in fostering change. The 50-year provision carried with it the imperative not only to safeguard, but to learn more about, a past that most people had ignored.

A quarter century later, conditions have changed markedly, and the concern for broadening the nature of inquiry has gained a solid footing. During the 1960s, few people made a serious study of American architecture; today hundreds are so engaged. These individuals hail from a variety of disciplines, including urban and cultural history, folklife, and geography as well as architectural and art history and historic preservation. New areas of specialization such as landscape design and the decorative arts also have become well established. Commonplace patterns in the environment are given as serious and sophisticated scrutiny as artistic masterworks. Twentieth-century topics are at least as numerous as those focusing on the 18th or 19th centuries. Furthermore, work of the mid-20th century—the 1940s, 1950s, and even the 1960s—is coming under ever more careful examination, not for critique, but for historical analysis. Fifty years no longer seems like such a short time.

From an intellectual standpoint the changes that have occurred in this realm represent more a maturing of architectural history than a new outlook toward the past. Most other historical disciplines have long ceased to have a self-conscious nervousness about recent occurrences. Political historians need not defend studying events of the Eisenhower or Kennedy administrations. Military historians focus on the Korean or Vietnam wars just as they do earlier conflicts. An interpretative approach imbued with a sense of historicity is assumed. Exploring such realms is to a certain extent predicated on the demand for understanding phenomena beyond what contemporary chronicles can provide.

The demand for knowledge of our environment, not just the relics of a distant past, but the things we experience routinely, has grown at a rapid pace over the past few decades, and stands as an underlying cause of preservation's great success. There is an enormous groundswell at the grassroots level to protect environments that are a part of people's everyday lives—common places such as small-town commercial centers and neighborhoods of bungalows. Preservationists with first-hand experience at the local level know how positively people respond to the idea of heritage, of being able to pass down to future generations that which has been fashioned by previous ones. One of the things this sentiment embodies is a growing desire for continuity, not to the exclusion of change, but as a balancing force.

Probably the greatest cultural value of preservation is allowing people to live and work in a world that continually gives reminders of what has been accomplished in the past as well as what is being accomplished today. This viewpoint recognizes that the past has both spiritual and practical worth and that a disregard for the link constitutes a needless squandering of resources. When we exclude much of the 20th century from consideration, we are in effect creating an artificial separation between contemporary life and that of our forebears. The greater the gap, the less a sense of continuity there may be and the more the old stuff can seem foreign.

If maintaining a sense of continuity is a valid, indeed a vital, thing, the question remains: Where does one draw the line between past and present? The matter is an intricate one, for what we consider "old" can vary with the nature of the thing itself. No neat formulas exist; in fact, no neat demarcation line can be drawn. Any such distinction is arbitrary since history is a continuum. For this reason, certain preservation functions, particularly historic resource surveys, should cover all periods up to the present.

If we initially examine everything, there is still the need to prioritize for preservation purposes, and it is at this stage where the matter of historicity must be resolved. From an administrative standpoint, it has often been argued that some distinct time frame is needed. Rather than thinking about age in absolute terms, it can be more fruitful to concentrate on what a given work in that gray area of the recent past represents. If the representation is of ideas and practices—artistic, symbolic, functional, technical, social and/or cultural—that are clearly different from those in common use today, those differences can allow us to analyze the work as part of a historical phenomenon, rather than one that is still actively shaping the environment.

The matter of historicity is well illustrated by Shoppers' World in Framingham, MA (1948-51). The complex was among the first regional shopping malls, manifesting one of the most radical changes in architecture to have occurred during the 20th century, as well as perhaps the most profound reconfiguration of business centers ever to have occurred in so short a period of time. Twenty years earlier, commercial districts occupied the city center and a few densely developed nodes in outlying areas. Facilities were independently owned and operated. Each occupied most of its lot and fronted the sidewalk, adhering to an urban configuration that was centuries old in its basic structure. Comparing such precincts with Shoppers' World, it is hard to imagine more pro-

*(**Significance**—continued on page 6)*

*(**Significance**—continued from page 5)*

Shoppers' World, Framingham, MA. Ketchum, Gina & Sharp, 1948-1951. Photo by the author, 1988.

nounced differences in terms of location, form, appearance, and planning or business structure. There is also the matter of influence. As a pioneering example of the regional mall, Shoppers' World had an enormous impact on the postwar landscape. Furthermore, the complex has experienced little change—a remarkable fact since it is standard practice to remodel regional centers after about 15 to 20 years. The regional mall remains a contemporary phenomenon; however, the nature of the Framingham design is very different from current work. One should have no problem examining the complex from a historical perspective.

Although Shoppers' World possesses an unusual degree of significance, any attempt to preserve the complex would likely be hampered by a widespread prejudice against shopping centers generally. But it is easy to find subjective reasons for not valuing remnants of the past. Thousands of workers died in the course of Versailles' construction. Thomas Jefferson despised Williamsburg. Preservationists normally do not indulge in such forays, at least not in so overt a manner, unless a thing of the recent past is involved.

To avoid the pitfalls of emotion, it is well to remember that **age** unto itself should not be a very consequential factor in determining significance. The more ancient a thing, the more power it may possess to elicit positive emotional responses, but this factor is incidental to determining historical significance. Age may make things rarer and hence seem more imperative to save as individual relics. Seventeenth-century houses are far more scarce in the U.S. than are early-20th-century office buildings; however, that fact does not make the former group intrinsically more significant from a historical perspective.

Determining the **degree** of significance can have a great deal to do with the era and the place in which the thing in question was erected; all times may not be equal in a given location. What was built during, say, the 1960s in a Kansas town may or may not have been as consequential **for that community** as work done in Chicago for that city and indeed for the nation as a whole. The point is simply that age, unto itself, is not a qualitative yardstick.

The imperative to shed the age bias is the greater because so much of our heritage that is not very old is fast disappearing. Entire chapters that are of great importance to understanding the past are threatened, especially where the pressure for more intense development exists. Buildings simply may not remain long enough to become appreciated anew. As a result, one can no longer assume that the places created by our parents' or grandparents' generations are going to stand relatively undisturbed for a considerable length of time.

Many other forces contribute to change as well. Shifting programmatic needs may require major modifications to a building, but all too often such work needlessly disfigures the existing character of the fabric. Facilities may be updated for the sake of appearances as much as for pedagogical or economic reasons. Each generation carries with it the craving to recast things according to some current, transitory set of conventions—to update not on the basis of actual need, but for the sake of a presumed gain in status associated with newness.

Probably no realm of architecture from the recent past is more threatened with change than commercial buildings. Within the last decade or so, whole categories have become endangered species, including such once-basic staples as variety stores and movie houses. The landscape of Main Street might as well have been the victim of a pogrom in terms of mid-20th-century storefronts. Preservationists may be as much to blame as anyone in these instances, having frequently dismissed such work in their revitalization plans and condoned their execution in rehabilitation projects as if they were an inferior breed. Areas developed during the mid-20th century are often ignored in preservation efforts; consequently, many buildings exist, and are lost, in a world that preservationists do not see.

C. G. Murphy Co., Arlington, VA. James F. Hogan, 1948-49. Demolished, 1988. Photo by the author, 1970.

Then there are things that were never designed to last for long, such as those found along the road. Nostalgia for some of these things has soared in recent years, but scholarship has grown too, bringing with it the recognition that the automobile strip, no less than Main Street, has been one of the major forces in shaping the 20th-century landscape. The things that define the strip come and go, lasting sometimes only a few years, seldom more

Frozen Dairy Bar, U. S. Route 50, Fairfax County, VA. Mayhew W. Seis, 1950. Photo by Christopher Martin, 1990.

Levittown, PA, 1951-57; many alterations. Photo by the author, 1970.

than a few decades. On rare occasions, they are saved, even restored, by their owners; however, the preservation community has seldom provided leadership in this direction.

Use can pose problems in attempting to save such work. So can political and economic pressures. Not everything can be saved from the recent past any more than from any other period. But these problems are inherent to so much of preservation and are never sufficient reason to ignore work that is only a few decades old.

Oftentimes, too, what are presented as concrete and essential needs are in reality based upon abstract and malleable concepts. Preservation can rewrite the program. For example, the standard belief that retail facilities must be updated frequently in order to remain economically viable is undermined by evidence that, with the proper management and maintenance, such buildings need not be subject to much physical change. The neighborhood shopping centers built during the interwar decades in the Country Club District of Kansas City and still owned by their original developer are a good case in point. So too is the 1948 Nob Hill Business Center along what used to be U.S. Route 66 in Albuquerque, NM, which was recently restored and has become a magnet for revitalizing trade in the environs.

There are many such places. Most of them are still ignored by preservationists. Many of them are still disparaged. Take Levittown, PA. I was taken there in the early 1950s when it was under construction. The image remains vivid: as far as the eye could see lay raw earth, large machines moving it, and the beginnings of houses—thousands of houses. My parents said it was the undoing of civilization. Levittown and places like it were hated by everyone I knew.

More than a decade later, in 1967, I returned to Levittown. The physical evidence contradicted the stereotype, and subsequent probing revealed more. Levittown was intended for steelworkers and others who theretofore seldom had the chance to acquire such commodious dwellings. Levittown was planned—rather well planned. And Levittown's hugeness was an attribute. Among other things its scale allowed those qualities associated with middle-class suburbs during the early-20th century to be attained by a vastly larger share of the populace.

We cannot replicate Levittown today. We have not been able to do so for some time. The cost would be prohibitive. But we can learn many things from such places, and we must come to view them as non-renewable resources. If we continue to disregard so much that is all around us, we may waste far more than we preserve and bestow upon future generations the difficult task of deciphering the carcass.

[**Editor's Note:** The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission recently installed a historical marker in Levittown, in honor of the 40th anniversary of the June 1952, arrival of the first residents.]

---

[1] I use the term **historical significance** to include all aspects of a property, tangible and intangible, that might contribute to an understanding of that property in its historic context. The division of significance into separate "architectural" and "historical" categories, as has been standard in preservation practice for some time, arguably served a purpose a generation ago, but imposes an artificial barrier between physical things and the social, political, economic, and other forces through which they derive much of their meaning.

Richard Longstreth is associate professor of architectural history and director of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at The George Washington University. He is preparing a book on the decentralization of retail development in Los Angeles from 1920 to 1950.

This article is condensed from an article of the same title that originally appeared in the *APT Bulletin XXIII, The Journal of Preservation Technology*, Number 2, 1991; and is reprinted here with permission.

Collecting Today for Tomorrow

Thomas J. Schlereth

When the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History acquired the living room chair that actor Carroll O'Connor used in playing the role of Archie Bunker in the television series *All in the Family*, both the general public and museum professionals took particular notice. A major American museum had deliberately sought out an object of the contemporary culture for its historical collections. In so doing, the Smithsonian raised an important, and increasingly asked, question: Should we collect the contemporary?

Of course, in the past, American museums have collected the contemporary in various ways. We have every time we have deposited a collection of artifacts in the cornerstone of a new building, or filled a time capsule such as at the New York World's Fairs in 1939 and 1964, or launched a documentary photography project, whether it has been the work of the New Deal's Farm Security Administration (FSA) in the 1930s or of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) in the 1960s. We have collected for the future every time we have taped an oral history interview, be it Allan Nevins' first such recording of George McAnery, a promoter of the 1939 New York World's Fair, or George McDaniel's interviews with black sharecroppers in Prince Georges County, MD. We have engaged in contemporary collecting when we have consciously sought out Big John pork-and-beans cans and Clairol Herbal Essence shampoo bottles, as did the curators at Canada's National Museum of Man for their "Future History" collections and exhibitions in 1973-74.

The Sears Catalog documented nearly a century of consumer choices and trends until it was discontinued in 1992. Courtesy of Lake County (IL) Museum / Regional History Archives.

Scholars analyze the television as both a significant communication medium and a new form of leisure activity in the mid-20th century. Chicago Television Sales Corporation advertisement, 1950. Courtesy of Lake County (IL) Museum / Curt Teich Postcard Archives.

We do, indeed, collect the contemporary. In fact, I would propose, we deliberately do so far more frequently and extensively than we realize. Moreover, we have **always** done so. Should we? Some would say no. Their arguments either to stop ongoing collecting or to refrain from expanding its current province can be categorized under three main headings: limitations of space and time, lack of personnel and funds, and the complexity of selection and documentation.

The first two objections are real but not insurmountable and must be resolved within the context of an individual institution's priorities and interpretive objectives. I am not proposing that every museum collect the present. Many cannot and should not. Every American museum, however, should thoroughly reevaluate its institutional dedication to documenting the past, which includes the recent past.

I would like, therefore, to address what I consider the most nettlesome question confronting the collector of current historical materials—the complexity of selection and documentation of contemporary data. Those who would refrain from collecting the contemporary usually claim that we cannot make unbiased determinations about what future generations will regard as historically significant. Our cultural hubris, institutional ideologies, and personal values distort what and how we select. I concur; these biases have always influenced the data. Even those data collections regarded as possessing some limited type of "immaculate conception" (records management systems) are, in fact, historical evidence stained with the original sin of cultural bias.

Why should we historians, who have been trained in the historical method and its numerous techniques for ferreting out bias, distortion, and unrepresentativeness in

data, be reluctant to make an estimate of what may prove to be culturally significant about our own age and hence useful to our colleague of the future. Why leave the field to others—private collectors, antique promoters, collectible entrepreneurs? We cannot be content to wait and accept whatever objects or documents chance happens to place into our hands.

We should take an active, deliberate, analytical approach to the issue of selection and documentation. Sweden has such a system. Known as SAMDOK (an acronym for the Swedish word "samtidsdokumentation," same-time documentation), the system established a framework for the coordinated acquisition and documentation of contemporary objects among Sweden's museums. *Today for Tomorrow: Museum Documentation of Contemporary Society in Sweden by Acquisition of Objects*, a report published on SAMDOK, is a valuable primer for any historical agency staff intent on preparing a rational, implementable, 20th-century collection policy.

To be sure, the SAMDOK technique is but one approach among many to collecting the contemporary. Another research program, developed by American cultural geographers and folklife scholars, is attempting to index contemporary activities and artifacts. The long-range goal of the work of the Society for the North American Cultural Survey is to produce a comprehensive atlas of North American culture in sectors such as vernacular housing, ethnicity, crafts, religion, sports, arts, foodways and settlement patterns. The key is to have a strategy, a systematic rationale for selection. Historians working in the academy and the museum have a professional responsibility to our 21st-century colleagues to assist in the development of systematic rationales for collecting the contemporary. This obligation is threefold: a responsibility to the special data of the contemporary, to the innovative trends in current historiography, and to the challenge of contemporary historical interpretation.

Modern American culture thrives on, but rarely saves, disposable goods such as advertising and packaging. Atomic Fire Ball candy advertisement, 1955. Courtesy of Lake County (IL) Museum / Curt Teich Postcard Archives.

The Special Data of the Contemporary

Every age considers itself unique. We are no different. Yet in the composition and construction of some of our material culture we have produced some 20th-century artifacts that do possess special characteristics. We live, for instance, enveloped in plastic, celluloid, rubber, polyester, paper and synthetics of all shapes and sizes. Most of this modern material culture, what Mark Schiffer calls "the archaeology of us," has a planned obsolescence. Its physical existence is doomed at its very genesis unless someone saves it as the historical documentation of a society much taken with disposable goods. An experiment conducted in a material culture studies class illustrates this point.

Students kept track of every ephemeral object they used or encountered in the course of a day. The Glad bags of their 24-hour contemporary collecting spree not only pointed out that we are a civilization that produces an inordinate amount of waste but also that our prodigality leaves little compulsion to save any representative objects of our abundance for future historians. Why should we? Were not Dixie cups, Bic lighters, supermarket packaging, paper dresses and Kleenex specifically made to be thrown away? Perhaps one of the best future historical monuments to our throwaway society would be an assemblage of trash dumps, automobile graveyards, metropolitan waste incinerators, and country landfills. I make this proposal only half in jest, since one area that collectors of the 20th century must consider is junk. Archeologists, of course, wallow in past waste. We must come up with appropriate ways of documenting and interpreting its unprecedented extent in our own time. If we are at pains to catalog what people save, should we not also pay attention to the cultural and historical meaning of what they discard?

Much of 20th-century trash is advertising (some wags would say that the reverse is also true). Marshall McLuhan, however, reminds us that "historians and archeologists will one day discover that the ads of our times are the richest and most faithful daily reflections that any society ever made of its entire range of activities." To be sure, advertising is hardly unique to the 20th century, but its form and its function are special in modern life. Should we not make some concerted effort to document the omnipresent billboards, roadside signs and highway logos—what architect Robert Venturi considers to be the genuine American architecture of the commercial strip?

Mention of the roadside strip suggests another genre of modern material culture that we need to collect for the future: the artifacts of the internal combustion engine and its ancillary material culture. We must expand our examination of the extraordinary impact that the American automobile, an artifact particularly unique to the 20th century, has had on both our landscapes and on our lives. We need to think seriously about not just the autos—they are already being stored in car museums and collectors' garages—but the motels, gasoline stations, drive-in movies, fast-food franchises, and drive-ins of all types that our car culture has spawned.

In this century the internal combustion engine together with its material culture has assuredly been one factor in making us a leisure society. In this context, the collector of the contemporary must consider another category of special data: the artifacts of modern recreation. How many Americans own a tennis racquet, a bicycle, running shoes, golf clubs, bowling balls, hunting or fishing equipment, a stereo or a tape deck? We collect 19th-century toys and games for historical museums, why not Betavision video cassettes and Nintendo electronic games?

*(**Collecting**—continued on page 10)*

*(**Collecting**—continued from page 9)*

Communications and electronics constitute a large part of our leisure society and popular culture. Consider how pervasive is but one medium—photography and its attendant technology and progeny (film, television, videotape). These media demand systematic collection, documentation, and preservation—no small order, I know, but once again part of the challenge of collecting the contemporary. Perhaps this challenge can be met, in

Common household appliances, such as the 1956 Sunbeam Mixmaster blender, document the domestic activities of the recent past. Courtesy of Lake County (IL) Museum / Curt Teich Postcard Archives.

part, by an expanded and imaginative use of such communication and electronic technology as documentary photography, stereography and holography, videotape, and photogrammetry.

The challenge may also be met by the contemporary objects themselves. Plastics, for example, may prove to be the archeological shards of the future. Plastic objects appear to be so resistant to rust and rot that in David Macaulay's spoof of the 1922 discovery of King Tut's tomb, *The Motel of the Mysteries*, an archeologist of 4022 confronts a piece of polyvinyl chloride fern foliage that he labels "the plant that would not die." The durability of plastic artifacts, particularly if collected in the manufacturer's sequence, may provide future archeologists and curators with control techniques for establishing absolute chronologies. For example, Clorox liquid bleach bottles, which a company booklet has arranged by chronology and material, may be to 24th-century archeologists what 17th- and 18th-century English kaolin pipe stem fragments have been to current excavators of colonial sites along the East Coast.

Innovative Trends in Historiography

American social historians are doing some of the most innovative and challenging research in American historiography. Among the scholarly fields attempting to revitalize a professional and popular interest in American history, social history is currently rivaled only by material culture studies. Both these approaches include the contemporary in their definition of the historic, and I would urge anyone intrigued with the potential for and problems of contemporary collecting to read widely in these two fields. Social history has especially fostered a populism that, in turn, has nurtured an avid interest in the populace of the American past—women, the indigent, workers, racial minorities, immigrants, children, radicals, and the elderly.

In their populist history, social historians have investigated subjects that should also be of interest to the collector of the contemporary. For instance, might we not collect and interpret modern gynecological instruments as has Virginia Drachman in her study of such 19th-century artifacts? We lavish much time and effort documenting and preserving every log structure extant on the American landscape, yet pay little attention to the Insulbrick balloon-frame city house, the middle-class aluminum-sided suburban ranch, or the elderly retirement villages now springing up all about the country. Should we not be collecting the material culture of 20th-century immigrant groups, such as Puerto Ricans and Laotians, with the same fervor that we covet the arts and crafts of the 18th-century English and Germans?

Fortunately, an aggressive vernacularism has begun to infiltrate modern material culture studies. We now have a Vernacular Architecture Forum, a Vernacular Photography Workshop and all manner of research into the local and the regional, the typical and the commonplace, the average and the ordinary. What could be more commonplace than the vernacular burial marker? Will not most of us eventually have one? Students of 17th- and 18th-century markers earnestly rub and restore them, but why not collect the mortuary monuments of our own time? Is Forest Lawn Cemetery not as important to Los Angeles as the Old Granary Burying Ground is to Boston? Thousands of Americans now live in mobile homes or travel in campers, recreational vehicles and house vans, so shouldn't museums make plans to collect this vernacular material culture for future interpreters of 20th-century American life?

I also would recommend collecting the real estate brochures and new subdivision advertising packets that will be the delight of the vernacular architectural historians of the future. Following the lead of current social historians, we should be gathering promotional literature from an assortment of institutions—retirement communities, day care centers, condominium developers—that play an increasingly important role in our social mores. We should also secure dealer catalogs, retail brochures, scale drawings, models, display material and price lists from every local or regional manufacturer within a certain geographical radius of a historical museum or library. Since the national brands

Future social historians will study 20th-century foodways and family life. Marathon brand Dine/Out food cartons advertisement, early 1960s. Courtesy of Lake County (IL) Museum / Curt Teich Postcard Archives.

will probably be adequately collected by the national museums and historical libraries, I want to make a case for the local historical society consciously collecting the local vernacular. Someone should document the role that Friendly's ice cream has played in New England or Nathan's hot dogs in New York.

Contemporary Challenge of Historical Interpretation

Rising to the contemporary challenge of researching and presenting meaningful, relevant, historical interpretations is the final responsibility that I think the collector of the contemporary quite naturally assumes. Often collectors are drawn to contemporary cultural data because they have seen the enormous heuristic potential in making use of current historical evidence. The task of collecting 20th-century data is an exciting methodological adventure that entails working with totally new types of historical evidence in new contexts, engendering, I hope, new information and insight about life in the past and in the present. The approach requires collectors to be part cultural anthropologist, folklife expert, sociologist, industrial and commercial archeologist, and social psychologist, in addition to being a technological, social, and cultural historian. I find such interdisciplinary demands to be the very stuff of creative and engaging historical interpretation, whether it be done in an exhibit, an article, a walking tour, a book, a film or an outdoor living history farm.

At each stage of such multidisciplinary activity, the collector plays an active, influential and, to my mind, an extremely **historical** role. Now that the urgent task of collecting the very old is largely over (How many 17th-century press cupboards are still out there to be brought back into captivity?), the new frontier in institutional collection and conservation will be increasingly that of contemporary objects. Moreover, the current, and certainly the next, generation of records professionals will also have the fascinating challenge of formulating new techniques for reviewing what they should keep of what they collect. They will have to perfect sampling procedures, devise new data banks appropriate for the materials they will save and fashion new information retrieval systems so that researchers can gain access to the contemporary data they collected. Not only is there a heady challenge in this absorbing chase—what to collect, where to collect, how to collect—but there are also numerous opportunities for new modes and methods of historical interpretation given the realization that the contemporary is historical.

In addition to the reasons I have proposed, are there any others to bolster a final, closing argument in favor of collecting the contemporary? Let me submit a final one in the form of a famous quotation from a colonial American historian. "History," wrote Douglass G. Adair, "is a dialogue in the present with the past about the future." If we wish to participate fully in this engrossing conversation across time, I would submit we must acknowledge the contemporary and its historical records as having a voice in the discussion.

Thomas J. Schlereth is a professor of American Studies at the University of Notre Dame. A version of this article first appeared in *Museum News*, March/April 1982.

*(**Recent**—continued from page 3)*

models for future assessments of recent resources. The first, the Cold War Study, will identify, document and preserve the physical and literary relics of the Cold War. Amy Worden and Elizabeth Calvit describe this project, which is one component of the larger, aptly named Department of Defense Legacy Program. The second project, an inventory of post-1940 buildings in Vancouver, British Columbia, will likely lead to incentives for the preservation of recent landmarks. This project underscores the vital roles of public education, awareness and support in the success of preservation efforts.

Examination of cultural resources from the recent past may generate new methods of evaluation and preservation. Dwayne Jones suggests that new cultural resource survey methodologies are needed to record the unique features of and relationships among historic roadside resources. John Conoboy describes the in-progress NPS survey of historic Route 66, a 20th-century highway elevated to the status of cultural icon through popular literature, music, and media. Brian Butko explores the use of heritage parks and corridors, an innovative and evolving preservation tool, to preserve the landscapes and buildings associated with historic highways. Sara Amy Leach discusses the challenges of maintaining the integrity of parkways, designed landscapes for the automobile, while still accommodating contemporary traffic. And Lance Mallamo describes efforts to establish what may become the quintessential museum of the recent past, a museum of automobile culture.

Historical architect Mike Jackson offers a hypothesis of contemporary history that speaks to the passage of time in today's world: he posits "an inverse relationship between the rate of change and the time it takes for something to be considered historic. The faster the rate of change, the shorter the time it takes for something to be considered historic." [3] His theory succinctly sums up the urgency to consider the tangible remains of the recent past: At the close of the 20th century, our society and the built environment and objects it creates are changing faster than at any time in our history.

The essays gathered in this issue of *CRM* are presented to challenge readers' concepts of **historic** and to prompt deeper scrutiny of the recent cultural resources that surround everyone everyday. They are offered to provoke thought, generate discussion and encourage colleagues in cultural resource fields to explore resources from the recent past in even greater depth.

---

1 *Held in Trust: Preserving America's Historic Places*, National Park Service, 1991, p. 22.

2 "When The Past Becomes The Present," in Antoinette J. Lee, ed., *Past Meets Future: Saving America's Historic Environments* (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1992), p. 249.

3 "Preserving What's New," in *APT Bulletin XXIII, The Journal of Preservation Technology*, Number 2, 1991, p. 7.

Rebecca A. Shiffer is an architectural historian, Technical Assistance Branch, National Register Programs Division, Mid-Atlantic Region, National Park Service, Philadelphia. She is the president of the Society for Commercial Archeology and served as the guest editor of this issue of *CRM*.

Maximum Collection Dynamics

A Tradition of Change at Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village

Mary Seelhorst

Most people know designer Buckminster Fuller for his only commercial success—the Geodesic Dome. But the dome concept was built on years of design experimentation embodying his central principle of "More with Less." Fuller conceived the Dymaxion house ("***Dy***namic" + "***Max***imum" + "Tens***ion***") in 1926, and in 1946 produced the prototype for this inexpensive, easily transportable house that he hoped would alleviate the serious housing shortage following World War II. Made primarily of aluminum, the round, sectional house was designed to be constructed in aircraft factories converted from wartime production. Thus its efficiencies would be many fold: saving jobs; using existing production facilities; economizing materials, space, and money. Fuller was ahead of his time in his concern for economy of resources—whether fiscal, human, or natural. His desire to solve social problems with technology, while not a new or unique impulse, was clearly reflected in everything he designed.

Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion House prototype was recently acquired by the museum. The house, seen here as first erected in 1945, was manufactured by Beech Aircraft Corp. of Wichita, KS. Its compact aluminum pieces could be shipped in the returnable stainless steel cylinder at the left. Courtesy of Buckminster Fuller Institute.

Despite 30,000 unsolicited orders for the house, the company set up to produce the homes failed, primarily because of Fuller's insistence that the house was not ready for production and his reluctance to relinquish control of day-to-day operation of the company. Only two were ever produced—one erected in 1948 by the Graham family of Wichita, KS, and the second left unassembled as spare parts.

Fuller's Dymaxion House is the latest in a series of recent Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village acquisitions dating from the mid-to-late-20th century, including an Oscar Mayer Wienermobile from the 1950s, a 1969 tomato harvester, 1970s polyester leisure suits, a computer-controlled Hardinge chucking machine from the 1980s, and 1991 Reebok Pump shoes.

Collecting contemporary and recent materials has never been unusual for Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, yet over its 60-odd years the museum has gone through several policy shifts that have altered its public face and its collecting practice. Today the museum is experiencing a revitalization of 20th-century collecting, and is exploring new directions in mid- to late-20th-century interpretation.

How did the museum's mission evolve? How does the current staff shape the collection? And where does something as atypical as Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion House fit in?

History of a Collection

Henry Ford established the museum in 1929, consisting of an outdoor historic village and an indoor museum. His desire was to collect "a complete series of every article ever used or made in America from the days of the first settlers down to the present time." He very nearly did it too, using the very long arm of his 35,000 Ford dealers. Thousands of items poured in—churns, spinning wheels, plows, radio, and electrical equipment—sometimes by the boxcar load. The buildings Ford collected for his eclectic Greenfield Village were generally houses in which someone famous lived or did something significant, or houses representative of an industry or style of architecture he admired.

During his lifetime the museum and village reflected Ford's personal vision and whims, and much has been made of his somewhat eccentric beliefs about history and education: his famous "history is bunk" statement, his "learning by doing" theory, his poignant nostalgia for bygone days, his disdain for educated professionals, and his admiration for the self-made man.

Yet Ford showed surprising insight in his desire to collect common, everyday items regardless of their intrinsic value. He also collected many artifacts produced in his very recent past. "When we are through," Ford once said, "we shall have reproduced American life as lived; and that, I think, is the best way of preserving at least part of our history and tradition."

During his life the museum had been Henry Ford's personal vision; after his death it very nearly became his personal shrine. When Ford died in 1947, the collecting flood slowed to a trickle. And although he left no stipulations or restrictions on the collection, "what Mr. Ford

would have wanted" was, in effect, the unwritten rule. Yet even in those difficult years, a few contemporaneous and recent items were added to the collection. For instance, the millionth Bendix washing machine came off the assembly line and into the museum in 1947, as did a brand new Dayton bicycle.

In the 1950s, a new administration and staff took shape, including the beginnings of a professional curatorial staff. Between 1955 and 1975, the museum and village developed a reputation for its decorative arts collections and colonial craft demonstrations under the direction of Donald Shelley, who had joined the museum staff in 1952 as Fine Arts curator.

The museum's mission at that time was to "collect, preserve, and interpret" the American historical experience—in approximately that order of importance. At some point during this period museum staff established a collection policy specifying 1650–1950 as the date range for the collection, with interpretation concentrating on the 19th and early-20th centuries, the period of most rapid technological and stylistic change. Yet collecting, particularly in the decorative arts area, continued to emphasize pre-1850 materials. The large curatorial staff collected with the express purpose of "filling in gaps" in the already massive collection. Collecting, however, was based more on the interests and expertise of individual curators than on any overall policy or educational mission.

The Automobile in American Life exhibit. (Top) The Douglas Auto Drive-In Theatre sign from Kalamazoo, MI, invites visitors to see "Car Culture," an entertaining, 12-minute film produced especially for the exhibit. The car in the foreground is a 1949 Barris Customized Mercury. (Bottom) "The Evolution of the Automobile and Its Industry" is illustrated by a procession of cars on this multi-level, serpentine roadway, beginning with early bikes and carriages and ending with a 1981 Ford Escort and a 1983 Honda Accord. Courtesy of Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, Dearborn, MI.

The 1980s brought great changes beginning with the arrival of Harold Skramstad, Jr., as the museum's president. A 1981 collections policy statement, based on the museum's first self-study document, clearly linked the collection to a more specific museum mission:

[Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village is] principally devoted to exploring the interaction of technology and American culture during the period 1650 to 1950. This time span encompasses the period of American modernization, marking the transition from a traditional to a modern culture, a rural to an urban society and an agricultural to an industrialized economy. The primary emphasis of [the museum's] collections is upon the period 1800 to 1950, during which the modernization process came to fruition.

But translating that mission into action required an entirely different way of thinking about the significance of objects to a history museum. Although Henry Ford and his successors had believed in the educational mission of the museum, artifacts had always been curated from an internalist perspective, each piece documenting a step in the evolution of a given technology no matter whether that step was of major or minor significance. A curator could justify any accession other than an outright duplication—no technical or stylistic "gap" was too small to fill. And by working from collection to mission, rather than the other way around, major voids had been allowed to persist in many less curatorially popular collecting areas.

As education and interpretation came to equal collection and preservation as the museum's reason for being, a new way of thinking evolved based on the idea that the collection should be shaped to the mis sion rather than the other way around. Beginning in 1984, the responsibilities of a streamlined curatorial staff were reoriented around gen eral usage groupings (categories of life) rather than specific materials or technologies (categories of objects). The cutoff date for collecting and interpretation was dropped entirely, setting the stage for a revitalization of contemporary collecting and interpretation.

One risk associated with acquiring contemporary items is that at sometime in the future, certain pieces will no longer be considered desirable in light of the museum's mission—which today's staff assumes will continue to change to meet future needs. The museum's ongoing collection analysis program includes detailed inventories and cataloging, written statements about collection goals, and a well-defined deaccession policy, all of which help ensure that contemporary collecting meets the museum's mission while remaining relatively risk-proof.

If It Fits the Mission, Collect It.

Serendipitous offerings—the Dymaxion House, for instance—still play a large role in the museum's collect-

*(**Dynamics**—continued on page 14)*

(*Dynamics—continued from page 13*)

One of the items purchased "off the shelf" for the *Americans on Vacation* exhibit was the Barbie Travel Agent set. The product packaging is an important part of this accession. Courtesy of Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, Dearborn, MI.

ing, but today each curator has a specific collecting plan based on assessment of existing collections and a clear sense of the museum's mission. Systematic collecting programs, exhibit-driven collecting, and the acquisition of major, thematic collections have all helped round out the museum's mid- to late-20th-century resources.

Systematic collecting methods capture material as it is produced while it is readily available—and often free. A plan set in place in 1986 gathers direct-mail catalogs from major department stores and specialty stores, annual trade catalogs of selected companies that fall into the museum's major collection areas, advertising literature (including trade circulars distributed by mail or inserted in newspapers), and travel literature and memorabilia. Every couple of years curators appraise the accumulated material, looking for significant trends and identifying redundancies. Appropriate material is retained for the collection; the rest is disposed of. These materials document both an important marketing technique of the late-20th century and a wide variety of products that could not possibly be included in the museum's three-dimensional collections. In addition, many of the catalogs help document items produced for people with special needs or interests—handicapped, senior and youth markets, hobbyists, etc.

Another regular collecting program is the Holiday Memories photograph project in which visitors, members, and staff are encouraged to donate holiday photos, new or old, to be displayed throughout the holiday season at the museum and then accessioned. Each donor fills out a questionnaire about the photograph, allowing for much more complete information than usually accompanies serendipitous photographic gifts. About 50 photos a year dating from the 1930s to the present day are acquired in this manner.

In the last 10 years, a series of both temporary exhibits and more permanent "reinstallations" of the museum's major collections have gradually helped the staff come to terms with contemporary collecting and interpretation. One of the first to push mid-20th-century collecting was *Streamlining America*, opened in 1986. The exhibit examined the phenomenon of streamlined design from the 1930s through the 1950s, providing the research and rationale for bringing many collection areas up to date in that time period. Perhaps the most unusual acquisition method for that exhibit was the appropriation of a c. 1960 electric typewriter that was still in use at the museum.

The next major exhibit pushed the collecting envelope in new directions and also further toward the present day. *The Automobile in American Life* opened in 1987, a reinstallation of the museum's automobile exhibit. The accession of a 1983 Honda Accord—the first produced on an American assembly line—was a clear statement of the museum's new direction, and of forward thinking. With an expected life span of 20+ years, the Honda will qualify as a "classic" car before the exhibit is reinstalled. In fact, its boxy shape already looks old- fashioned compared to the rounded, aero look of the 1990s.

One goal of *The Automobile in American Life* was to show how the automobile had affected the landscape and social habits. To help accomplish this, the museum acquired such roadside architecture as a 1946 diner, a Texaco gas station designed in 1936 by Walter Dorwin Teague, a neon sign from a drive-in theater, a 1950 toll booth from the Merritt Parkway, and a 1937 tourist cabin contrasted with a recreation of a 1960s Holiday Inn room—complete with the "Sanitary for Your Protection" toilet seat strip.

After the very popular automobile exhibit opened, curators proposed an exhibit to provide the impetus for collecting leisure and entertainment artifacts, an increasingly important "category of life" that needed fleshing out. A major, thematic collection of travel literature, maps, and other items donated by AAA Michigan then inspired the specific topic. Americans on Vacation opened in 1990, reviewing changes in vacation habits over the 19th and 20th centuries. Its development also introduced some new collecting methods. The project team wrote off for free bumper stickers, decals, pennants and other material from popular vacation destinations. Requests also went out to museum visitors, members, and staff asking for specific items: luggage from the 1950s and 1960s, golf clubs, contemporary vacation clothing.

In addition to *Americans on Vacation*, two other temporary exhibits were inspired by major, thematic acquisitions. One exhibit selected items from a 300+ piece collection of furniture designed and manufactured by the influential Herman Miller Inc., documenting one company's design development from the late 1920s to the late 1980s. This well-rounded collection clearly documents changes in furniture style, function, and materials. Of similar storytelling value is the William Mitchell Collection, consisting of over 200 artifacts tracing the development and career of this famous GM automotive designer, from childhood drawings through concept cars and production models. *Power in Motion: The Automotive Design Career of Bill Mitchell* showed visitors the significance and impact of this innovative designer.

Some curators have purchased items right off the shelf for a variety of reasons. One example purchased for a recent exhibit is the "Garfield the Cat" car window toy, already difficult to find in the stores. Another is a selection of trendy youth clothing recently purchased on the recommendation of African-American Detroit schoolchildren who helped develop a small temporary exhibit called *"Damage" Dudes: What We Wear in '92*. What better

way to document the people of a particular time and place than to ask them to help? (For those over 30, "Damage" is a hip clothing label.) Purchasing new is also an especially important collecting strategy for preserving product packaging, which tends to be discarded by consumers. One current idea is to collect examples of recently trendy "environmentally correct" product packaging.

The museum's next major permanent installation, a 50,000 square foot exhibit on manufacturing and power production called *Made in America*, opened in December of 1992. Many of the more recent industrial items needed for this exhibit have been donated by their manufacturers or users—for instance, hydraulic robots manufactured by Cincinnati Milacron in 1980 and used on a Ford assembly line were donated by Ford Motor Company.

Restored to its 1930s appearance, the Mattox House is used as the basis for interpreting the importance of family, education, and religion to the Mattoxes, an African-American family from Georgia. Courtesy of Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, Dearborn, MI.

Even Greenfield Village has been touched by the 20th century. Although none of the historic buildings were originally constructed in the 20th century, the current museum staff believes in restoring buildings to the period that makes interpretive and programmatic sense. In 1990, research revealed that a building Henry Ford interpreted as an antebellum Georgia overseer's house was in fact built and owned by an African-American farm family in 1879. Today the Mattox house is installed as it was in the 1930s, complete with painted metal advertising signs patching the roof, and local newspapers covering the interior walls. This home, along with earlier slave quarters, are used to interpret the theme of family triumph over adversity. It is the Village's first foray (in the domestic arena) into actively interpreting something other than middle-to-upper class families.

Dymaxion and New Directions

All this collecting, however, has resulted in many examples of the typical, but few examples of the exceptional. Curatorial collecting plans have tended to emphasize typical, representative forms and functions concentrating on the middle rather than the extreme, a logical evolution of Ford's original plan. However, even collections of unique objects, like the Mitchell Collection, also document a story with major impact on industry and society. According to curator Michael Ettema, one of the architects of the museum's new mission statement, the museum needs to broaden its scope to include spectacular examples—not of everything—but of things that reflect people's resourcefulness and ingenuity. Things like the Dymaxion House.

The new mission statement, formally introduced in 1992, emphasizes a pro-active, heavily educational goal with an emphasis on inspiring ingenuity:

Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village provides unique educational experiences based on authentic objects, stories, and lives from America's traditions of ingenuity, resourcefulness, and innovation. Our purpose is to inspire people to learn from these traditions to help shape a better future.

While not radically different from the old statement, this mission opens the door for collecting examples of atypical, spectacular, or unique innovations.

The Dymaxion House was the first artifact acquired with the new mission in mind. Although it had little direct impact on Americans' lives, the house is in and of itself a landmark of technological evolution; it represents Fuller's way of thinking about solving the problems of humanity with technology. Intended for mass production but never mass produced, it exists as a solitary and unique statement about technological possibility.

Its potential as a teaching tool for inspiring active problem solving overcame many logistical and conceptual objections to its acquisition. The house was offered to the museum with a very short lead time, and acquired more on intuitive faith than specific plan. Considering that it was dogged instinct more than planning that kept Fuller on his mercurial career path to success, perhaps the museum's leap of faith into a new direction by acquiring the house is entirely appropriate.

The house now sits, disassembled, in storage behind the museum. Plans are in the works to provide the Dymaxion House a new location and interpretation by the spring of 1995, in time for the 100th anniversary of Buckminster Fuller's birth. And work continues on reshaping and rethinking the museum's collection policy.

The word Dymaxion, coined by Fuller from the words "Dynamic," "Maximum" and "Tension," is an apt word to apply to Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village. Ford once prefaced his goal for the museum with the phrase "when we are through." The new mission statement sends a clear signal that we will never be through; that the history we interpret will continue to meet the dynamic needs of the present; and that we will shape the collection to maximize educational opportunity. Tension, too, will always be a part of this process—the tension between preservation and education; between backward looking and forward thinking; between the past and the present. For the museum, as it was for Buckminster Fuller, the Dymaxion House is a positioning statement for the future.

Mary Seelhorst has worked with the collections of Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village in several capacities over the last five years, most recently as the curator and co-ordinator of the museum's exhibition *Possible Dreams:* Popular Mechanics *and America's Enthusiasm for Technology.*

Postcards

The Pan-Document of the 20th Century

Katherine Hamilton-Smith

The postcard was one of the earliest commercial uses of photography, and its potential as a visual document for 20th-century cultural studies is vast. Photography's rise in popularity after 1900 mirrored the concurrent growth and exponential changes in the North American built environment.

In America, the first picture postcards were the souvenir issues printed for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Since those flowery Victorian originals, millions of postcard images of every aspect of American life have been printed: from glossy, idealized views of courthouses, new Carnegie libraries, and bandstands to motels, highways, and ads for new products and conveniences. Cultural observer Lena Lencek wrote of the postcard:

Product of a phantasmagorical parade of taste and fashion, the postcard captures the evanescent and the immemorial, the quixotic and the comic, the revered and the commonplace as seen at a particular moment in history. Instant artifact, it is a time-pegged extract from the vertiginous flow of construction, destruction, and reconstruction that marks the shaping of the American landscape and, in particular, the American city. For this reason, perhaps, the picture postcard has emerged as a singularly important, though often overlooked, resource for...exploring the vanished and varnished strata of our urban [also suburban and rural] archeology.[1]

The principal importance of the postcard is as a document type. Its use for research has escalated in response to new trends in scholarship, such as the growing interest in the historiography of commercialism. Topics are now studied seriously by academics that had never before been considered—car culture and the automobile's impact on the built environment are among the clearest examples. Until recently, the automobile has been the subject of surprisingly little intellectual inquiry, despite its watershed importance. And for even mundane locations, postcards are often the only surviving images of certain buildings, park landscapes, shopping districts, and road systems. They serve an essentially documentary function. University of Chicago historian Neil Harris explains that "...they offer a comprehensive route into the evolution of national prejudices and tastes, as well as the recovery of local memories. Historians will draw on them increasingly in their studies of representation."

A 1955 advertising postcard for General Electric's Spacemaker range. Courtesy of Lake County (IL) Museum/Curt Teich Postcard Archives.

The largest publicly-held repository of postcards and related materials in the United States is located at the Lake County Museum in the north suburbs of Chicago. The Curt Teich Postcard Archives, acquired in "raw" form by the Museum in 1982, was the industrial archives of the Curt Teich Company of Chicago, which operated from 1898 through 1974 as the world's largest volume printer of view and advertising postcards. The company's archives was created through a policy of saving examples of every image they printed, and it totals over 4,000 linear feet of material.

Also saved were company records and the original production materials for each postcard image. These original materials, which date from 1926 to 1960, include: Curt Teich forms tracking production steps and orders; paper documents and correspondence with clients; photographic prints and negatives; artist's drawings, renderings, and other layout materials; and a wide variety of physical remnants—fragments of wallpaper, linoleum, textile

The Teich Archives contains approximately 100,000 job file envelopes. This job file envelope (rear center) for a 1939 advertising postcard for Phil's Restaurant in Elkins, WV, contains a watercolor layout of the final postcard, and original and retouched photographs. Courtesy of Lake County (IL) Museum/Curt Teich Postcard Archives.

swatches, pieces of tile, carpet—used to clarify design elements or colors in the finished postcards. Other materials and formats in the job files for each postcard include handcolored proofs, tissue and plastic overlays, Rubylith sheets, postcard folders, and extensively retouched photographs. These materials provide invaluable insights into the design and production steps and processes employed in printing postcards, and also detail interactions with clients and the evolution of printing technology in the mid-20th century.

Interior view of the Rhinebeck Diner, formerly located in Rhinebeck, NY. This is a 1946 photograph used in preparing a postcard. Courtesy of Lake County (IL) Museum/Curt Teich Postcard Archives.

The Teich Company printed views of towns and cities, events and people, as well as product and service advertising images from throughout the United States and Canada. The archives also contains a relatively small number of views of other areas, including Mexico, Central and South America, the South Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia, Europe, and China.

Since 1992, the archives has actively collected both postcards and postcard albums. This collecting program has already resulted in the acquisition of 15 albums, dating from 1899 to 1960, and approximately 6,000 postcards. Two major acquisitions are the Fort Sheridan (Lake County, IL) Collection of military postcards dating from ca. 1910 through World War II; and the 4,000 postcards printed by the V. O. Hammon Company, dating from ca. 1900 to the early 1920s. The V. O. Hammon collection consists principally of views and subjects related to cities and towns in Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, and other midwestern states.

The material in the Teich Archives is computer cataloged by subject, date, and location. Views may be searched in any of these categories. Boolean searches are also possible; for example, "all views of gas stations in the state of Nebraska." The six-year-long cataloging project, completed in January 1991, resulted in an automated database cross-referencing 360,000 images.

The original photographic and layout materials and physical remnants in each job file, securely identified as to date and provenance, are of extraordinary value. In the summer of 1992, a new cataloging initiative was undertaken to make this material, numbering approximately 100,000 files, accessible for research. A team of three is currently working to create an independent catalog for the file's contents. As of the end of February 1993, the team has examined approximately 18,000 files from 1926, 1927, the 1930s, and 1941. The final product of this project will be an information database of the materials in each job file. Researchers will be able to access this information by date and materials type. For example, a design historian's search in this database might be for "all samples of carpet in the 1940s" or "all examples of linoleum in the 1930s." An architectural historian's search might be for "all examples of vitrolite used on 1930s and 1940s storefronts." Importantly, these files are all dated and located, so that not only is this a significant collection of original materials, but it is enhanced by original photographs of the materials *in situ* and by materials descriptions. Plans call for inputting this information into a database sometime in late 1993.

The Teich Archives is used by a variety of scholars, institutions, companies, and individuals. Architects use vintage views of structures in restoration and planning projects; for example, Venturi Scott Brown and Associates (famous for the groundbreaking 1968 studio that produced *Learning From Las Vegas*) uses the Teich Archives in planning presentations to prospective clients. Architectural historians and preservation specialists also use the Teich Archives collections. Historic preservation planner Donna DeWeese used Teich Archives images of Covington, LA, in a presentation supporting the National Trust's Main Street Program to Covington city officials. Preservation planners in Kansas City trying to save portions of their sprawling general hospital complex used images from the Teich Archives to document the progression of its construction from 1908 through 1918. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency used Teich Archives Boolean search capabilities to find views of Carnegie libraries in the state of Illinois for a 1993 publication. Many branches of the National Park Service have used the Teich Archives, primarily for architectural and landscape preservation surveys. For example, the archives recently provided a series of views of the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials in Washington, DC, showing landscape changes every five years from the buildings' construction to the present.

It is not necessary to visit the archives to use its resources. About 95% of reference requests are handled by archives staff for researchers who may never visit the institution. A full reproduction service is available through which prints and transparencies as well as color laser copies may be requested. Fees for these services vary widely depending on use. For information about using the Teich Archives, call 708-526-8638 Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CST.

---

1 *Metropolis*, March 1988.

Katherine Hamilton-Smith has been the curator of the Curt Teich Postcard Archives since 1982. She is a board member and editor of the *Journal* of the Society for Commercial Archeology.

McWindow on the World

David G. Orr

McDonald's is not just a business but a window to our culture. After we are through laughing with or at Ronald McDonald, we had best take him seriously.[1]

Historical archeology has long been concerned with the most recent past and its technological environment. In its examination of literate societies it has been heavily indebted to a wide spectrum of sources: letters, wills, diaries, inventories, and demographic records of all kinds. Yet much of what modern culture produces does not survive the vagaries of time and circumstance. Ephemera, defined as those items of a perishable or fragile nature, are usually designed for a specific event or activity and are generally short-lived. Such things represent the most familiar, intimate, and commonplace elements of our culture, albeit the most banal, and are usually the first documents to be lost to future generations. Some scholars and institutions have long appreciated these simple truths and have advocated a procedure for museums and archives that they have called "collecting for the future."[2] Examples of such material include political propaganda of all forms, commercial advertising, pamphlets, disposable foodways material, sheet music, broadsides, trade literature of all types, transportation schedules, and programs. Others have argued that the collecting of contemporary objects, together with the testimony of their makers and users, may offer the most potential for material culture study.

In 1989, in concert with Stephen P.M. Howard of Essex Community College in Essex, MD, I staged an exhibit that was grounded in the above philosophy. We chose a major commercial giant, McDonald's, whose domination of American popular culture during the last two decades significantly influenced our everyday behavior. The exhibit contained almost 2,000 items connected with the development of McDonald's within a tightly defined cultural historical and anthropological matrix. We wrote a catalog for this exhibit, called *McZibit*, and distributed it as an insert in the student newspaper. The following summer the exhibit traveled to Seattle, WA, where it was displayed as part of the Circum-Pacific Prehistory Conference.

A ca. 1960 McDonald's drink cup. Courtesy of the author.

The exhibit relied upon a 15-year collecting regimen that produced thousands of items. Materials are still being collected and are stored at Essex Community College. They include placemats, food packaging, handout brochures, advertising broadsides, Happy Meals® (100% complete collection), toys, dolls, photographs, oral and video history tapes, and related literature. At the present time, the collection consists of over 3,500 items.

This McDonald's ephemera archive includes much foreign material from Europe, Latin America, and Asia. During the past summer the erection of the first McDonald's in Pompeii, Italy, was videotaped and the ephemera associated with this event archived. One item is a poster announcing a counter-demonstration organized by the MSI Party on the day of its grand opening, June 27, 1992. The Italian MSI Party represents an extremely conservative position on cultural and political change. They believed that the McDonald's in Pompeii would threaten traditional values and even religion.

A red and white "candy-stripe" McDonald's, ca. 1960. The arches were integrated into the building itself, and seating facilities for diners had not yet appeared. Burger sales were counted in the millions, not billions. Courtesy of the author.

What are the lessons of such a project? First, the disposable culture of today, a culture consisting of literally millions of images, places little value on the retention of such ephemeral products as cultural data. We consciously save only a fraction of what we have created. Second, these data are important in the analysis and interpretation of our culture. Archeologists constantly remind us that it is the everyday, the commonplace, the familiar objects that become significant in the definition of cultural history. Third, such materials in proper context enable us to critically evaluate ourselves. They are

*(**McWindow**—continued on page 22)*

Dilemmas of Caring for Recent Public Art

Dennis R. Montagna

The decades since the 1950s have witnessed a dramatic development of new and diverse forms of public art, rendered in an ever-increasing range of materials. Throughout the United States, recent works have expanded the realm of civic art far beyond the commemoration of heroes in stone and bronze that had been the mainstay of public art in years past. However, the growth of public art has also presented those who must care for these recent works with a growing collection of difficult conservation questions.

During the early-20th century, sculptors broadened the traditional media of bronze and stone to create new forms of sculpture in a wide range of materials that bespoke the modern age. By the 1950s, aluminum, various types of steel, and a wide range of the era's new plastics and paint systems all found their way into art museums and private collections. With the growth of government and private foundation encouragement of public art, in part through the advent of percent-for-art programs during the 1960s, these new sculptural forms and materials increasingly made their way into a public realm. Often, this was an outdoor realm in which construction materials that may have functioned well within a museum setting were subjected to much harsher environments.

Luis Jimenez, *Vaquero* (1980), reinforced acrylic urethane, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Courtesy of NMAA.

In some cases, artists explored sculptural applications of materials that were originally designed for industrial uses. Sculptor Luis Jimenez used a fiber reinforced acrylic urethane, developed for use in the construction of boat hulls and automobile bodies, to create his *Vaquero* (cast 1980, installed 1991), a multi-colored monumental statue of a bucking horse and rider on the steps of the National Museum of American Art (NMAA) in Washington, DC. The sculptor used an iron armature to provide internal structural support, but his efforts to protect the ironwork with a plastic coating have already proven unsuccessful. Moisture condensing inside the acrylic casting has caused deterioration of the armature and damage to the sculpture it supports. In addition, the work's coloration, created with pigments suspended within the acrylic urethane, is expected to fade with prolonged exposure to ultra-violet radiation.

At present, the NMAA's conservators are working with Jimenez to explore solutions to the sculpture's inherent problems—these include the possible replacement of the iron armature with one made from a less-reactive metal like stainless steel or titanium, and the use of ultraviolet absorbers suspended in a protective coating to control fading of work's colors. Jimenez and other sculptors are becoming more and more aware of the inherent shortcomings of some of the materials they use to fabricate their works, and are seeking collaborations with conservators and materials scientists in efforts to create works that will be both longer-lived and more maintainable.

But even modern materials that were designed to function well in outdoor applications have experienced problems. Weathering steel, known widely as Cor-Ten, was formulated during the 1950s to require no painting. With prolonged exposure in urban environments, a thin layer of adherent rust forms, reducing the corrosion rate to almost nothing. The rich, dark brown rusted surface was prized by architects and sculptors of the 1960s and 1970s, Picasso's untitled sculpture (1967) in Chicago's Daley Plaza being perhaps the best-known example of weathering steel sculpture. Unfortunately, in some cases, surface rust layers are not as achievable, and in others not as stable, as was hoped. In rural areas there tends to be not enough pollution to enable the rust layer to form, and the metal remains steely blue or mottled in color. In more polluted areas, where the patina does form, rain washing can destabilize the corrosion film resulting in runoff causing

*(**Dilemmas**—continued on page 20)*

*(**Dilemmas**—continued from page 19)*

rust staining of adjacent surfaces. Major challenges for curators of the sizable body of weathering steel outdoor sculpture seem to be twofold: how to more effectively achieve the patina in rural environments and how to stabilize it in more urban ones without changing its desired aesthetics.

In addition to the conservation problems of structures and surfaces, many recent works have moving parts that present conservation challenges. Kinetic sculptural works that combine movement with sculptural form often have bearings and other mechanical components that require periodic maintenance. Outside the National Air and Space Museum (NASM), also in Washington, DC, is *Delta Solar* (1976), a stainless steel work by Venezuelan sculptor Alejandro Otero that once moved easily with prevailing wind currents is now somewhat restricted, both by a build-up of oil and dirt in its joints and by disruptions to its alignment. *Delta Solar* received a conservation treatment in the early 1980s and, if funds are available, will receive another one soon. To preserve works like these, many collections managers have realized the importance of making mechanical repairs and instituting periodic maintenance programs that will preclude the need for future major interventions.

Alejandro Otero, *Delta Solar* (1976), stainless steel, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Courtesy of NASM.

Pablo Picasso, *Untitled* (1967), weathering steel, Daley Plaza, Chicago, IL. Photo by Michael W. Panhorst.

To be sure, some mid- to late-20th-century works were not intended to survive. In fact, ideas of fragility, temporal limits, and change of condition over time, are all aspects of the era's aesthetics. But if works of art placed in outdoor environments are to be permanent, those who create and commission them must take seriously their responsibility to the future generations who will be faced with the practical considerations of caring for them.

Proper planning of new outdoor sculpture pieces seems to offer the best hope for their preservation. Patrons of public art should require that the materials used in fabrication be able to withstand the vicissitudes of the environment. Moreover, these works should be maintainable; able to be cared for without an unreasonable commitment of personnel and financial resources. For example, kinetic works should be engineered to be maintained, with moving parts accessible for cleaning and lubrication. Designing proper drainage systems and the well-conceived attachments of component parts are key needs of all outdoor works.

A century ago, sculptors and architects established close working relationships with the engineers, foundrymen and masons who helped design the structural aspects of outdoor monuments. Developing similar relationships today—between artists, engineers, curators, conservators, and materials scientists—would minimize the inherent conservation problems of new civic art and provide real help to those who will be called upon to preserve the sculpture of the present for future generations.

Dennis R. Montagna is an architectural historian, Technical Assistance Branch, National Register Programs Division, Mid-Atlantic Region, National Park Service, Philadelphia. He frequently writes and lectures on the history and preservation of outdoor sculpture.

Historic 20th-Century Building Products Database

Thomas C. Jester

During the first half of the 20th century, many new building products were introduced in the United States. Some, such as Masonite and Formica, remain in use today. Others, like Zenitherm and Vitrolite, are no longer manufactured. Developed by American corporations, universities, and agencies of the federal government, these materials were, in some cases, updated versions of traditional products and, in others, completely new formulations. As increasing numbers of 20th-century buildings face restoration and rehabilitation, it will be critical to have a solid base of information about the building products and materials used to construct these buildings.

To facilitate the preservation of 20th-century buildings, the Preservation Assistance Division of the National Park Service (NPS) recently developed a database to catalog 20th-century building products and materials. The Historic 20th-Century Building Products Database will be used for several purposes. First, the database will provide a centralized location and format for cataloging information about building products from this period. This database will eventually be available as a resource for architects, historians, and other historic preservation professionals who may need information about a particular building product. Second, the database will be capable of providing information about appropriate preservation treatments and suitable substitute materials.

Industrial research done by the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company resulted in the plastic laminate, Micarta. *Architectural Forum,* **August 1937.**

As information is collected, some of the most ubiquitous products will be identified and selected for detailed study as part of a directory, which the NPS plans to publish next year. In addition to describing some of the most common building products, the directory will list research sources and techniques, including archives, periodicals, and organizations that offer information about 20th-century building products. Finally, the database will be used to stimulate further research on 20th-century buildings, products, and materials, and, ultimately, will be an important tool to improve the quality of restoration and rehabilitation work nationwide.

The database format is based on the 16 division building industry-accepted classification system, Masterformat. In use since 1963, the 16 division format was developed by the Construction Specification Institute (CSI) to standardize the organization of building product literature and project data. Masterformat was also adopted by *Sweet's Catalogue File* as the basis for its own comprehensive filing system, the Data Filing Format. The Data Filing Format is compatible with CSI's Masterformat, but includes expanded categories sub-filed within each of the 16 standard divisions. Using Masterformat as the basis for the Historic 20th-Century Building Products Database enables users familiar with the Sweet's format to easily understand the basic organization of the products database.

More than 15 database fields have been established to catalog information about each building product. The database entries will include information about a product's dates of production, appearance, manufacturing process, composition, and uses. Additionally, each entry will include the location of buildings where a material or product has been encountered, bibliographic references, relevant archival materials, and recognized product experts. Finally, where known, appropriate preservation treatments and compatible substitute materials will be included.

Research has been initiated to identify building products to be entered into the database. Perhaps the most valuable resource for this project are the Sweet's catalogues. First published in 1906, the Sweet's catalogues compile information about building materials in a single, organized reference book for architects and builders. As such, the early volumes of this publication serve as a veritable encyclopedia of modern building materials. Architectural and industry trade journals have also proven invaluable during the initial phase of research.

Several other resources will also be pursued. Archives specializing in architecture and the history of technology

*(**Database**—continued on page 22)*

(McWindow—continued from page 18)

part and parcel of a cultural landscape that has undergone radical transformations in the past half century. Finally, the specific message of the McDonald's assemblage of artifacts and documents speaks to not only the preparation and vending of fast food, but to the symbolic usage of a commercial iconography self-consciously developed by McDonald's replete with clowns, plastic milkshakes that change into robots, and burgercephalic policemen and mayors—a fantasy world carefully constructed to remind us of our own lives and our own values.

The Hamburgler® towers over a McDonald's playland provided to make the fast food establishment even more appealing to children. Photo by the author, 1977.

Anthropologically approached, the study of such ephemera leads to many a sobering truth about ourselves. Environmental concerns, community values, the family in American Life, ethnicity, feminism, etc., are all factors in the McDonald's documents. For it is the commonplace and ubiquitous forms which best define ourselves; in this sense we are no different than the past.

---

1 Marshall Fishwick, "Introduction," in "The World of Ronald McDonald," Marshall Fishwick, ed., *Journal of American Culture*, I:2, 1978, p. 345.

2 Thomas J. Schlereth, *Cultural History and Material Culture.* (UMI Research Press: Ann Arbor, MI, 1990), pp. 383-387.

Edith Mayo, "Connoisseurship of the Future," in F.E.H. Schroeder, ed., *Twentieth Century Popular Culture in Museums and Libraries*, (Bowling Green University Popular Press: Bowling Green, OH, 1981).

David G. Orr and Mark Ohno, "The Material Culture of Protest: A Case Study in Contemporary Collecting," in F.E.H. Schroeder, ed., *Twentieth Century Popular Culture in Museums and Libraries*, (Bowling Green University Popular Press: Bowling Green, OH, 1981).

David G. Orr is regional archeologist and chief of the Park Archeology, History and Curation Branch, Mid-Atlantic Region, National Park Service, Philadelphia.

(Database—continued from page 21)

Formica was first produced for architectural uses in the late 1920s. ***Architectural Forum*****, August 1940.**

will be identified and evaluated, as will product manufacturers that may have company archives. A survey of practicing historians, architects, and other preservation professionals will be undertaken this year; this survey should yield additional information about particular products and preservation projects.

The process of accumulating information about 20th-century building products will be ongoing. Historians will uncover information, and preservation projects will yield information as unusual products are encountered. For more information about the Historic 20th-Century Building Products Database, or to share information about specific products, contact Thomas Jester, Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127.

Thomas C. Jester is a preservation program specialist, Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, Washington, DC, and the project coordinator for the Historic 20th-Century Building Products Database.

Disappearing Ducks and Other Recent Relics

Beth L. Savage

Listing in the National Register of Historic Places is the nationwide vehicle for the recognition and documentation of properties associated with American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Approximately 875,000 significant building, sites, structures and objects constitute almost 61,000 listed historic properties. Since National Register listing is a primary tool for the preservation of our heritage, analyzing trends in these listings can serve as a barometer of the kinds of properties that are deemed worthy of preservation at a particular time.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 mandated expansion and maintenance of the National Register and inaugurated the federal historic preservation program. Early National Register listings were primarily nationally important properties that overwhelmingly represented significant aspects of the 19th century. The late 1970s saw a notable increase in the number of listed properties reflecting aspects of 20th-century significance; and, since the mid-1980s properties listed for important roles in the 20th century have outnumbered those listed for 18th- and 19th-century significance combined. While these statistics might not be surprising since the end of the 20th century is fast approaching and our ability to evaluate many 20th-century properties from a sufficient temporal distance and within a detached, scholarly historical perspective is evident, many prolific types of properties of the recent past (1930s, '40s, '50s, '60s) constitute only a minute percentage of National Register listings.

The Moulin Rouge Hotel, located in Las Vegas, NV, was listed in the National Register on December 22, 1992, for its exceptional significance as the city's first interracial entertainment facility, opened May 24, 1955. The hotel gained additional importance as the location of a meeting of local civil rights, business and political leaders on March 26, 1960, that led to the end of segregation of the "Strip" and the downtown. Photo by Don T. Walker, 1992.

When the 1966 act codified the National Register criteria and criteria exceptions, 50 years was judged to be the amount of time necessary to conduct an objective evaluation of a property's significance within its appropriate historical theme, timeframe and place—within its historic context. Adherence to this principle ensures that the National Register is a list of **historic** places and against the inclusion of properties only associated with contemporary values. However, because a clearly defined line between history and current events does not exist, less-than-50-year-old properties may be listed under criteria exception "g" if their exceptional significance or their integral importance to a historic district is demonstrated. "Exceptional significance" cannot be strictly defined, but, rather, depends upon the justification of two fundamental tenets—sufficient historical perspective and scholarly, comparative analysis.[1]

The 29 Diner in Fairfax, VA, is the most recently added of the five diners individually listed in the National Register. It was entered on October 29, 1992, for its outstanding importance as a well-preserved streamlined Moderne diner. Manufactured by the Mountain View Diner Company of Singac, NJ, and delivered to its site on July 20, 1947, the diner and its contemporary sign (slightly altered by the addition of "Tastee" in 1973) remain in operation on Lee Highway, a major transportation route to and from Washington, DC. Photo by Susan E. Smead, 1991.

The development of a sufficient historical perspective and comparative, contextual study has advanced the successful listing and preservation of a wide variety of less-than-50-year old properties such as those associated with Depression-era federal programs like the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps; World War II-related buildings, structures and vessels; examples of the International and Brutalist styles of architecture; facilities associated with pioneering scientific and technological achievements in space exploration; properties reflecting the 1960s Civil Rights movement; experimental forms of prefabricated housing; and resources associated with the development of roadside commerce. Approximately 3% of all National Register-listed properties have been recognized for their excep-

*(**Relics**—continued on page 24)*

(Relics—continued from page 23)

The 1953 McDonald's Drive-in Restaurant and Sign, located on Lakewood Boulevard in Downey, CA, was determined eligible for listing in the National Register on January 19, 1984, as an extremely rare example of its type. The sign, an important part of the property's historic corporate imagery, was threatened by a local ordinance shortly after it was determined eligible. The property is also a designated local landmark. Photo by Alan Hess, 1983.

tional significance under criteria exception "g" at the time of their listing. Of these, almost 40% are recognized for their outstanding significance in a local context.

Another basic consideration in the assessment of exceptional significance is the fragility or short life span of particular types of properties. This fragility may result from such factors as changing economic or social conditions, the ephemeral or obsolete nature of building materials or the processes by which they were manufactured, or environmental effects that may cause the destruction of integrity of a property or of an entire class of properties before 50 years have passed. For example, many types of commercial properties from the recent past are threatened with extinction by an increasingly accelerated rate of change, planned obsolescence and "progress." As once abundant properties such as early department stores, shopping centers, movie palaces and drive-in theaters, office buildings, restaurants and diners, gas stations, motels and prefabricated suburban housing have become increasingly scarce, it is essential to rise to the challenge of documenting and preserving surviving examples.

The case of two archetypical red and white "candy stripe with golden arches" McDonald's drive-in restaurants dramatically illustrates how the endangered status of entire classes of properties from the recent past may contribute to their being judged exceptionally significant. Both McDonald's restaurants have been recognized in the National Register for their exceptional significance in the areas of architecture and commerce as rare surviving representatives of this influential corporate building prototype, and for associations with innovations in the fast food industry.

The first, a 1953 example in Downey, CA, was determined eligible for listing in 1984 as the earliest remaining original McDonald's hamburger stand in the country. Following the opening of the first McDonald's franchise in Phoenix, AZ (now demolished), by a few weeks, the Downey drive-in was relatively unaltered and still being operated by its original owners at the time of its nomination. Although over 1,100 of this standardized type, designed by Stanley Clark Meston and his assistant Charles Fish, were built across the country from 1953 until their replacement with a new mansard type in 1968, the Downey restaurant was one of fewer than 40 extant "candy stripes" nationwide when it was determined eligible for National Register listing in 1984.

Only six years later, a 1964 example of the same prototype located in Cleveland, OH, was listed in the National Register in 1990. At the time of its listing, the number of extant examples of this type, including the one in Downey, had diminished to only five. Unfortunately, redevelopment pressure led to the dismantling and storage of the Cleveland McDonald's, and it was removed from the National Register in 1991. The fate of the Downey McDonald's is now also in question. As this issue of *CRM* went to press, the McDonald's Corporation announced the closing of the California restaurant, which offers no drive-through or indoor dining service, because it is "too small to modernize and is losing money." City officials and the Los Angeles Conservancy hope to save the building as a cultural icon. [2]

Designed by Fred Arnold and the architectural firm of Wittenberg, Deloney and Davidson, the Arkansas Power & Light Building in Little Rock was constructed between 1955 and 1959. This is an exceptionally notable, virtually unaltered local example of International style architecture and was listed in the National Register on September 14, 1992. Photo by Ken Story, 1992.

The current rarity of these once omnipresent properties does not endow them with added historicity, but rather, the importance of their historical prolificacy makes the evaluation, registration and preservation of surviving intact examples imperative. One threshold for evaluation of these endangered property types is scholarly evaluation. Professional organizations in the field, such as the Society for Commercial Archeology and the Society of Architectural Historians have accom-

plished much to advance the evaluation of the significance of properties from the recent past by encouraging and disseminating scholarship through conferences, symposia, and publications.[3]

However, we have yet to reach community-wide consensus on the seminal importance of building types of the recent past, such as gas stations, shopping centers, motels, drive-in theaters, Lustron homes and the like. The small number of properties representing the recent past listed in the National Register reflects this cultural ambivalence about these building types. Of the almost

The 1950 Norris and Harriet Coambs Lustron House (and its contributing garage), located in Chesterton, IN, was entered in the National Register on September 17, 1992, as an exceptionally pristine example of the mass-produced Lustron porcelain enameled steel house. Shown are the exterior (above) and an interior view of the bedroom vanity and closet (below) of what has been called the "all-metal dream house." Courtesy of the National Register of Historic Places.

61,000 properties entered in the National Register, only five diners, a couple shopping centers, a handful of tourist courts, and perhaps two dozen gas stations are individually listed. However, the National Register continues to receive inquiries about the potential significance of a variety of properties associated with the recent past.

Our changing concepts of what is significant and what is exceptional are influenced by myriad factors including advancing scholarship, real and perceived threats to historic properties, and general public perception.

The 3 V Tourist Court, located in St. Francisville, LA, was listed in the National Register on January 21, 1993, as one of only four known examples in the state of tourist courts, an important building type in evolution of the early motel industry. Built in 1938 and named after the three Vinci brothers who operated it, the 3 V Tourist Court was saved from demolition by its present owner who operates it for weekly rentals. Photo by Patricia Duncan, 1992.

Identification and evaluation are only the first steps, for without a preservation constituency and more favorable economic incentives for preservation, many more significant properties of the recent past will disappear, some without a trace. Twenty-seven years after the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, the national preservation program has accomplished much; however, in the case of evaluating, registering and preserving important properties of the recent past, we still have much to accomplish.

---

1 For detailed guidance regarding the National Register policy on the application of criteria exception "g," see Marcella Sherfy and W. Ray Luce, *National Register Bulletin #22, Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Last 50 Years*, National Park Service, 1990.

2 " McDonald's Milestone," *The Washington Post*, March 22, 1993, p. A-6.

3 The Society for Commercial Archeology (SCA) periodically publishes a selected bibliography of sources on the 20th-century commercial built environment and cultural landscapes, with particular emphasis on automobile-related cultural resources. The SCA's quarterly and biannual publications also report on these subjects. The *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (SAH) recently published articles on the historical development of McDonald's corporate architecture and the evolution of neighborhood and regional shopping centers. Both SCA and SAH have collaborated with the National Register on preservation workshops about cultural resources from the recent past.

Beth L. Savage is an architectural historian, National Register of Historic Places, Interagency Resources Division, National Park Service, Washington, DC. She is a board member of the Society for Commercial Archeology and the Lincoln Highway Association and is currently working on a National Register bulletin on road-related issues.

Good Intentions Gone Awry?

Dwayne Jones
Gerron Hite

King Ranch, Inc., initiated its first historic investment tax credit project in 1989 on a company-owned building in downtown Kingsville, TX. "The Raglands," as it is known locally, occupied a prominent corner in this typical small town commercial district. The district was economically weak and taking some of its last gasps as a retail and service center for the town of approximately 27,000. The downtown's poor economic status contributed to and was fortified by dilapidated and vacant buildings. An effort to establish a Main Street program in the 1980s failed to turn around the economic decline. When the King Ranch enterprise began this rehabilitation to house the King Ranch Saddle Shop, the community and the Texas Historical Commission applauded its commitment as the long-awaited catalyst to revive the commercial center.

"The Raglands" is a two-story red brick commercial building completed in 1909 as the headquarters for the Ragland Mercantile Company. Historically, handsome brick corbelling and an unusual hipped-roof corner tower made the building one of the town's most significant pieces of architecture. It is further significant as the work of an early Texas architect, Jules Leffland (1854-1924). Leffland, a Danish architect, emigrated to the United States and practiced in Texas from around 1890 to the height of his career around 1910. Few of his buildings remain and no others in Kingsville. The proposed rehabilitation in 1989 was to return to the Leffland design and adapt the interior for an upper-end retail store. In most respects this project is typical of the Tax Act initiatives we see on commercial buildings in small towns.

The Tax Act project proposed the removal of a 1950s facade and interior. Being less than 50 years old and a little ragged since the building was closed in 1979, the 1950s changes included a punched metal grillwork on the upper facade, glass storefront with polished plate glass doors to give the first floor a maximum appearance of transparency, interior escalator (reportedly the first in South Texas), stylized company logo, and interior casework and lighting fixtures. One contemporary reviewer of these alterations claimed that Raglands changed, "from a fusty purveyor of general merchandise to a fine department store and one of the most modern merchandising emporiums in South Texas." The changes clearly marked a shift in the company's image and merchandise. All of these alterations were given little attention in the Tax Act proposal. The project, however, did mention that the 1950-51 alterations were the work of a "friend of the family," noted architect and designer, Raymond Loewy (1893-1986).

Nighttime view of "The Raglands," c. mid-1950s, showing Raymond Lowey-designed facade, storefront, and first floor interior. Courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission.

*(**Intentions**—continued on page 27)*

"The Raglands" after the 1989 rehabilitation. Reconstruction of the corner tower (at right) and the first floor storefronts was based on pre-1950 historic photographs. Courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission.

A Building with a Magnetic History

Michael F. Crowe

The USGS Paleomagnetic Laboratory is a very small, unpretentious wood-frame building located in Menlo Park, CA. At first glance, it does not appear to be significant. Constructed as part of a military hospital complex during World War II, it is not particularly distinguished in terms of style or construction. In 1992, the building was scheduled for removal as part of a USGS expansion plan for the building complex. However, a scientist with some knowledge of the building's history believed that the building was too important to be lost.

Between 1959 and 1965, USGS scientists Allan Cox and Richard R. Doell and University of California, Berkeley, graduate student Brent Dalrymple conducted studies of the earth's electromagnetic fields in the building. Through scientific measurements and research, they developed a quantitative history, a chronology, of the earth's magnetic polarity reversals for the last 4+ million years. Their discoveries and the resulting chronology led directly to the confirmation of the theory of plate tectonics, which explains the geographical arrangement of the continents and the interaction of volcanoes and earthquakes as part of a continental system of earth movement. However, their work and the theory of plate tectonics was not universally accepted by the professional geological community until 1970.

The pioneering research conducted by the three scientists also played an important role in confirming the extra-terrestrial impact cause for the mass extinctions of species (dinosaurs) that occurred during the Cretaceous-Tertiary period. Thus, the research conducted at this laboratory has played a critical role in two great revolutions in the field of earth science in the 20th century.

The team of scientists specifically chose this building because its wood construction did not interfere with the magnetic measurements necessary to their research. A steel-frame building could have blocked the measurements or distorted the research model. The building itself is integrally linked to the research and the methodology for the theories.

USGS Paleomagnetic Laboratory, Menlo Park, CA. Photo by Louis S. Wall.

The full development of the scientists' theories and their professional acceptance caused an enormous change in the field of earth science, akin to the discovery of the theory of nuclear energy. Considering this, the USGS has canceled its plan to demolish the Paleomagnetic Laboratory and will nominate it to the National Register. Although the scientists' work at the laboratory and its impact is of relatively recent vintage, it is of such overwhelming historical significance that the laboratory has also been nominated for National Historic Landmark status as part of the *History of Geology Theme Study*. The Secretary of the Interior's Advisory Board will consider the nomination at its August 1993, meeting.

Michael F. Crowe is an architectural historian, Preservation Assistance Branch, Division of National Register Programs, Western Region, National Park Service, San Francisco.

*(**Intentions**—continued from page 26)*

Raymond Loewy is best known for his industrial designs, including the Studebaker Champion (1947), the Avanti (1962), streamline locomotives (1937), Coldspot refrigerator (1934), Lucky Strike cigarette pack (1940), and Pepsodent toothpaste packet (1945). His commercial accomplishments included the Neiman-Marcus trademark, the Lord & Taylor Suburban Apparel Shop in Manhasset, NY, and the L. Bamberger & Company building in Newark, NJ. He was particularly proud of and is remembered for his designs of the interior of NASA's Skylab from 1967-1972.

Lowey's name and association may have caught the attention of some, but was largely passed over in the early project review. Perhaps it was overshadowed by other interests, or simply understated as a significant change for the building, the business, and the community because of its recent date. Regardless, after the rehabilitation was completed and the building was formally reviewed for National Register listing, Lowey's name resurfaced.

A number of questions were revisited as we stopped to consider the impact of the project. Was this work of Loewy significant among his commercial designs or even Texas projects? We are aware of one other design, one of the King Ranch family houses (1947). Did we give enough attention or respect to the 1950s facade and building? Is it time to once again stop and reflect more deeply on the importance of recent architecture, before it is all destroyed through our own good intentions and preservation policies?

Dwayne Jones is a preservation planner and Gerron Hite is an architect with the Texas Historical Commission, Austin, TX.

Preserving the Legacy of the Cold War

Amy Worden
Elizabeth Calvit

The Iron Curtain. The Berlin Wall. The Red Scare. Bomb shelters. Ground zero. The Peace Corps. The MX Peacekeeper. The Korean War. The Cuban Missile Crisis. The Vietnam War. Star Wars. For more than two generations the Cold War held captive the American psyche, dominating not only foreign policy, but also affecting nearly every aspect of domestic policy from the labor movement to public education.

No longer was war limited to water, air, or land combat. No longer was military conflict isolated from the civilian population. The threat of nuclear holocaust was ubiquitous. And the result was a dramatically altered cultural landscape. Elaborate missile defense systems were constructed to defend metropolitan areas against a nuclear attack and the West became a vast nuclear arsenal, dotted with weapons storage facilities, test areas, and remote communication systems sites. The Cold War had no boundaries.

For the first time, war was waged on a different kind of battlefield, one that included a new type of military installation. Arguably the heart of the country's huge military industrial complex, the bases played a key role in the administration of defense policy. These were the laboratories for weapons technology development and the places where troops trained and millions of military families lived. These installations have child-care centers, schools, dependent housing, libraries, recreation centers, and churches, in addition to the structures necessary for the military to fulfill its mission.

Recognizing this vital chapter in American history, Congress established the Legacy Resource Management Program as part of its 1991 Department of Defense (DOD) Appropriations Act. The program is designed to integrate the natural and cultural resource programs of the military services and to set new standards of stewardship in partnership with other government agencies and private organizations. One of the nine Legacy objectives is to inventory, protect, and conserve the physical and literary property and relics of the Cold War on DOD-owned property both in the United States and abroad. Physical properties include missile silos, hangars, parade grounds, and laboratories. Literary properties include papers, drawings, reports, and photographs of the Cold War era. This farsighted legislation will have an enormous impact on more recent cultural resources located on the 25 million acres of land held by DOD.

The Cold War History Study began in September 1991 as an outgrowth of this legislation. The study is a partnership between the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO) and the National Park Service. Dr. Rebecca Cameron, a historian with the Center of Air Force History, is the task area manager for the project. CEHP Incorporated, a longtime contractor with NCSHPO, assists in several areas of the DOD Cold War History Study. The project's mission is to examine a broad range of Cold War-related programs and documents and several major Cold War historic sites. The final product will be a Report to Congress in September 1993. The report currently being drafted examines the issues of protecting recent history and suggests broad guidelines for the stewardship of historic properties, documents, and material culture.

The Cold War History Study has launched this effort by surveying existing historic documents, and studying key examples of Cold War military resources. It will formulate a context statement to provide a framework for future historic preservation projects. The Cold War team has conducted a survey of programs, materials, and historic preservation studies related to the Cold War. It brought together experts in the fields of Cold War history and cultural resource management to provide guidance on the future direction of the project. The goal is for the military to incorporate contemporary cultural resource planning into their general base management programs.

Many of the literary records important to Cold War history are already being preserved by private institutions and federal agencies. Preservation efforts have also extended to records of Eastern Bloc countries. These records include treaties, histories of military units, drawings and plans of installations, photographs of training exercises, maps, and electronic records. Two areas are of particular concern to the Cold War History Study. The first are records of the military contracting industry that remain in the hands of the contractors. The second area focuses on the hundreds of thousands of federal agency records that remain classified. These types of records will provide essential information for

Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan. Main street with its typical installation support buildings — worthy of documentation and, possibly, preservation. Photo by Elizabeth Calvit.

Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan. A product of the Cold War, this unique structure protects aircraft from the elements. More permanent structures shelter aircraft from typhoons. Photo by Elizabeth Calvit.

future Cold War historians. In Fall 1992, the Legacy Program sponsored two conferences to discuss issues involved in preserving such records.

There are a number of challenges in preserving Cold War physical resources. One of the most difficult issues for cultural resource managers is the preservation of material culture from the recent past. The Cold War is not yet 50 years old. Therefore, none of the sites or relics meet the National Register of Historic Places' "50 year" criterion. The National Register currently only considers contemporary resources of "exceptional importance." How then do we evaluate such a large collection of resources that does not meet this basic National Register criterion? Or, as some experts have suggested, should we begin to develop a new system of evaluation for more recent structures?

The Cold War produced a collection of non-traditional structures that included modular, mobile, and even inflatable construction. The team divided the types of structures constructed during the Cold War into three major categories: mission support buildings, mission support structures, and social support buildings. Mission support buildings include flight simulators, blast shelters, testing laboratories, maintenance facilities, weapon assembly facilities, and power generator plants. Mission support structures include bridges, missile silos, wind tunnels, launch pads, water towers, docking facilities, and aircraft taxiways. Finally, social support buildings include family housing, child-care centers, schools, hospitals, and post exchanges.

Many of these building types challenge current definitions of a "structure" and force historians to think about historic resources in a new way. The Alaska District of the Army Corps of Engineers produced a historic overview and inventory of the state's "White Alice" communication system, a series of transmitting and receiving antenna placed on the landscape of Alaska. The system allowed remote areas of Alaska to be in contact with each other, and it served as an early warning system for the continental United States. Currently, the Corps' New England District is working on an inventory of 36 Nike missile sites in that region under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP). In addition to the survey the Corps will produce a Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation of the most intact missile site.

Another challenge is to prevent, or at least minimize, the loss of historic and architectural integrity to these types of structures. Many military resources have been altered significantly since World War II, often to keep pace with rapidly changing technology. Only a handful of Cold War resources have been listed on the National Register or determined eligible for listing. Usually these resources are not included within the boundaries of military base historic districts or are labeled "noncontributing" structures. Cultural resource managers need to regularly update historic district maps, incorporating recent structures as they are determined eligible and design more sensitive approaches to maintenance, taking into account modern resources as well as traditional historic resources.

DOD's worldwide base closing program may threaten historic contexts. Even the smallest sites, a communications station for instance, were units planned with equipment storage and power facilities, radar towers, and dormitories. If bases are sold, private development could erase most, if not all, of the military legacy from the landscape, but it doesn't have to. Forward-thinking preservation planning could be part of the land transfer process. At the very least DOD should create an emergency historic resources reconnaissance team, dispatched to record sites before they are turned over to new owners.

*(**Cold War**—continued on page 30)*

Theater, Fort Wainwright, AK. Built in the 1950s, this theater illustrates a building type designed to improve quality of life on installations for military personnel and their families. Photo by Elizabeth Calvit.

Church, Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan. Most installations have a religious facility shared by many different denominations such as Protestant, Catholic, and Buddhist. Photo by Elizabeth Calvit.

*(**Cold War**—continued from page 29)*

Another serious issue facing many Cold War sites that are still in use is the tension between scientific research and preservation. This controversial subject was explored in depth in the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's 1991 study, *Balancing Historic Preservation Needs with the Operation of Highly Technical or Scientific Facilities*. The report analyzed the complex issues surrounding the protection of historic resources while allowing scientific research to move forward. It offered recommendations for policy, administrative, and educational initiatives that could be incorporated in DOD's future scientific and technological resource planning.

What is the most effective way to protect and manage resources with dual or multi-agency ownership? Many significant DOD Cold War sites are not located on DOD land. In some cases DOD resources on DOD land are managed by other agencies. Historically, DOD has forged complex relationships with other agencies, most notably the Department of Energy and NASA, to develop technology and test weapons systems. Who will be the guardian of these resources in the future?

DOD must also address serious environmental conflicts. Few Cold War sites have escaped contamination from hazardous waste and explosives. The difficult question for cultural resource managers is how to clean up decades of waste while preserving the integrity of a historic site. One example of an ongoing multi-disciplinary effort that could serve as a model in environmental, cultural, and natural resource management was initiated last year at Rocky Mountain Arsenal in Colorado. Environmental scientists, historic preservation specialists, engineers, and land management officials are working together to develop a safe and sensitive plan for the nation's first wildlife refuge on a Superfund site. The rehabilitation effort includes plans to develop interpretive programs covering the site's turbulent 30-year history as a chemical and biological weapons plant.

The Legacy Program will help DOD institute high-quality resource management agencywide. Currently cultural resource management plans vary widely from base to base. Some installations have active historic preservation officers and detailed cultural resource management plans. Others have no guardian of historic resources or a plan for their protection. One part of the Legacy initiative is aimed at standardizing cultural resource management within the military. To date, the Advisory Council has crafted at least 10 memoranda of agreement involving Cold War sites and developed programmatic agreements with the military to deal with the impact of base closings. The Advisory Council also drafted *Defense Department Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act: Section 202 (A)(6) Evaluation Report*. The report reviews existing DOD compliance with NHPA and related responsibilities through an examination of policies and programs.

The Cold War signaled the start of the world's most potentially destructive ideological battle. It would profoundly influence not only the political, but the economic, social, and cultural direction of U.S. policy for the next 45 years. The impact of the Cold War was felt on the global landscape from a new communications network linking continents for the first time and atomic testing programs that radically altered huge sections of the American West, to the small Nike missile silos tucked away in suburban backyards.

Too often we lose our cultural legacy before we recognize its importance. Fortunately, the Legacy Cold War initiative establishes the historical impact of an era some might argue is not yet over. It presents an unusual opportunity for the DOD to lead the effort to preserve contemporary material culture worldwide.

Amy Worden is an architectural historian and journalist. Elizabeth Calvit is an architectural historian and photographer with CEHP Incorporated, Washington, DC.

Recent Landmarks in Vancouver

The Post-1940s Inventory

Robert G. Lemon
Marco D'Agostini

Vancouver Public Library. Semmens and Simpson, 1956-57. Clad in a glass and aluminum curtain wall, the Library's innovative design includes wide column spacing to allow for flexibility and future expansion. Courtesy of Vancouver Public Library.

Vancouver, British Columbia, celebrated its centennial in 1986. At that time, a city-wide inventory was conducted of potential heritage resources; every building in the city was considered. As a result of the inventory, the city council adopted a list of over 2,200 buildings as the Vancouver Heritage Inventory (VHI). The VHI does not afford protection from demolition, but it does make available a range of planning and development incentives to aid in the conservation of listed buildings. These incentives, including zoning by-law relaxations, parking relaxations, permit fast-tracking, density bonus and transfer of density, have been instrumental in achieving the preservation, through legal designation, of about 52 properties since 1986.

Consistent with most communities in Canada that use the criteria of the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings, the VHI listing includes only buildings built before 1940. However, this limits potential heritage resources to those built in the city's first 54 years. The three-decade period after 1940 left the city a notable legacy of progressive, modern buildings, many of which are architectural and cultural landmarks.

In the post-World War II period, a prolific and influential community of young local and regional architects designed many notable buildings in Vancouver. They developed a distinct West Coast Regional Style, based on wooden post and beam construction, integrated interior and exterior spaces, and extensive use of landscaping for residential buildings. One of the best examples of West Coast Regional design is the Copp House (Sharp, Thompson, Berwick and Pratt, 1951), with long horizontal wings that integrate the building into the landscape of its sloping site. The Copp House received a Silver Massey Medal in 1952. The Massey Foundation, established by (then) Governor-General Vincent Massey, awarded medals for significant contributions to Canadian architecture. Massey Medals were awarded from 1951 to 1971 to the highest quality of architecture at a given time.

This youthful exuberance and experimentation is also evident in Vancouver's stock of post-war institutional and commercial buildings. British Columbia's architects built many distinctive buildings by adapting modern construction methods to local conditions.

The present Vancouver Public Library (Semmens and Simpson, 1956-57) is an excellent example of the modern aesthetic. A main feature of the building is the two-story floor-to-ceiling fenestration at the corner that invites people in to use the facility. The public library received a Massey Foundation Silver Medal in 1958. The building is currently at risk because the city plans to construct a new library that will be partially funded by proceeds from the sale of this building.

Some of these award-winning buildings from the 1950s and 1960s have already begun to disappear or, like the library, are threatened. In 1970, the Marwell Building, then just 20 years old, was demolished. Also by the Vancouver architectural firm of Semmens and Simpson, the building had the distinction of being the country's first recipient of a Gold Massey Medal. The late 1980s building boom saw the potential loss, through redevelopment, of several other notable buildings of this recent era, including the Customs House (C. B. K. Van Norman, 1950-54). An early work of modernism in Vancouver, it is a carefully composed design responding to

Copp House. Sharp, Thompson, Berwick and Pratt, 1951. Planting and landscaping define spaces in the open plan design, and local materials are used throughout the house, which is a premier example of Vancouver's West Coast Regional design. Photo by Marco D'Agostini.

(Vancouver—continued on page 32)

(Vancouver—continued from page 31)

an unusually shaped site. Both curtain wall sections and masonry cladding (local Haddington Island andesite) are used on the exterior.

The sale of the B. C. Hydro Building (Thompson, Berwick and Pratt, 1955-57) also raised concern for the future of an important post-war structure. Its distinctive lozenge shape, articulated cornice and mosaic tile decoration reflect a West Coast interpretation of the International Style. Yet there is no protection, nor development incentives available to these buildings because they are not listed on the VHI.

The Vancouver Heritage Advisory Committee, a Council-appointed body comprised of architects, heritage advocates, heritage consultants and lay people, set about to address the problems of protecting the recent past. The first task was to raise public awareness of the architecture of this period. In a young city, it is often hard to generate

B. C. Hydro Building. Thompson, Berwick and Pratt, 1955-57. The distinctive lozenge shaped building represents a West Coast interpretation of the International Style. Photo by Marco D'Agostini.

appreciation for turn-of-the-century buildings, let alone ones built a few decades ago. Clean lines and unadorned buildings elicit less nostalgia than Victorian gingerbread. The local design community had been watching and writing about the buildings of this period, but the public was generally unaware of the distinguished architecture in its midst. In 1986, the Architectural Institute of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University organized a symposium on Award Winning Vancouver Architecture that helped to set the scene for a thorough look at the recent past. For its Heritage Awards events in 1990, the Heritage Advisory Committee promoted the theme of "Our Recent Heritage" and held the awards ceremonies in the auditorium of the B. C. Hydro Building.

Then a steering committee, made up of local architects, architectural historians and members of the Heritage Advisory Committee who were familiar with modern architecture, was formed to look more closely at the buildings from the recent past. The steering committee determined that two decades is a period of sufficient historical perspective within which to gauge a building's heritage merit.

Later in 1990, the city council directed the planning staff to review buildings that were more than 20 years old, for the possibility of adding them to the VHI. The next step was to conduct an inventory of post-1940s buildings. The Heritage Advisory Committee received a grant from the Provincial Heritage Trust to conduct the study, which was coordinated by the Planning Department of the City of Vancouver and the School of Architecture at the University of British Columbia.

Initial research identified a group of about 220 buildings as having heritage value. The criteria for selection was the same as for older buildings already on the inventory, including the architectural, historical and social significance of the building. Vancouver uses a weighted numerical evaluation system that considers the architectural characteristics, historical value, and importance of context and setting. Considerable thought was given to stylistic periods and their classification, and the terms selected were Moderne, Late Modern, International Style, Expressionist and West Coast Regional.

For comparative evaluation, buildings were reviewed both by style and building type. The importance of a building's construction techniques or association with a noted designer were also considered. A numerical evaluation was determined and the preliminary results vetted by the steering committee and planning staff. Some adjustments were made, some buildings added (particularly residential buildings, which had not been identified previously), and some dropped. The revised listing of buildings included a priority group of about 100 landmarks.

At this stage in the Inventory, a brochure describing the "Recent Landmarks" initiative was prepared. It discusses not only the buildings of the period but also the importance of the modern movement and the recognition gained by many of these buildings. The brochure also proposes that Burrard Street, a major downtown street, be identified as an "architectural corridor" given the wide cross section of the city's architectural development evident in the 19 buildings either already on the VHI or in the Recent Landmarks group. The Customs House, Burrard Building, Vancouver Public Library and the B. C. Hydro Building are located within an eight-block area on this street. At this time only those buildings in the Burrard Street corridor that are included on the VHI are eligible for retention incentives.

In October 1992, the city council authorized the next step in the process, which is to seek public consultation.

(Vancouver—continued on page 44)

Developing a Survey Methodology for Roadside Resources

Dwayne Jones

State historic preservation offices are usually responsible for conducting or overseeing cultural resource surveys. Most of these surveys focus on 19th- or early-20th-century resources found in neighborhoods and central business districts. More recently, states have also identified and evaluated resources by type, such as industrial resources. A number of state offices are now turning their attention to 20th-century roadside architecture along early transportation routes and highways. The location and ephemeral nature of these resources require a different survey methodology and context for evaluation from more traditional fieldwork. The following three approaches may be helpful to a state historic preservation office or organization identifying roadside resources:

Linear approach. The most popular survey approach involves starting at an end point of a highway and continuing to the other designated end point. In the past few years, several state offices conducted identification projects using this methodology, including Nebraska's survey of the Lincoln Highway and Missouri's documentation of U.S. Route 66. Surveys following this approach usually are limited to a manageable geographic area such as a state. In some cases a smaller area may be appropriate, such as the U. S. Forest Service's survey along Route 66 in Arizona's Kaibab National Forest and adjoining counties. Surveys using this linear approach should begin with a review of maps, tour guides, and other primary material to understand the types of resources that may exist. Survey forms should also be fine-tuned to ensure documentation of a variety of structures, objects, buildings and sites.

There are several positive aspects of the linear approach. First, the availability of a sufficient amount of information to trace historic transportation routes supports this approach. Highway associations' records, state highway department maps, tourist brochures, and oral histories can provide excellent information. Second, the wide variety of resources—structures like bridges or original sections of roadbed; objects such as signs, road markers or dedication milestones; and buildings like tourist courts and service stations—helps to develop a more comprehensive history of the route. Finally, the abundance and variety of resources allow for comparisons between resources along a route. A ranking from highest to lowest priority can facilitate these comparisons and focus preservation efforts on the most significant examples.

Negative aspects of this time-consuming approach include the high cost of documenting routes across larger states. For example, work is just beginning on the Old Spanish Trail, a trans-continental highway, through Texas, which encompassed more than 900 miles of main lines and countless support lines. Unless priority rankings account for both architectural integrity and historical significance, resources that may be individually less significant can receive more attention than resources that are more significant in the larger picture of the route. Finally, routes often change their course over time, so that accurately dating and determining the significance of individual resources can prove difficult.

Thematic approach. The thematic approach is generally set in a smaller geographic area, like a city or county. The thematic relationship among resources rather than their association with a particular highway or transportation route provides a broader context, however. This methodology focuses on determining the theme, then setting boundaries and following principal thoroughfares within these boundaries. To identify resources related to the effect of the automobile on Beaumont, TX, you would locate an early city map and drive the streets and roads shown on the map, identifying all types of automobile-related resources. Following the fieldwork, resources would be evaluated in the context of Beaumont's historical development.

The positive aspects of this approach are numerous. Relatively inexpensive and quick because of the limited area, the identification work sometimes may be done with the assistance of trained community volunteers, making it even more cost effective. Since fewer resources are under consideration, this approach offers an opportunity to expand the scope of inquiry. Because some of the original owners and community leaders may still be accessible, oral histories can expand an understanding of the resources. Finally, this approach is more likely to uncover information available in local libraries or private collections that may facilitate more comprehensive documentation of the significance of the resources.

The negative aspects of the approach include its limitations in scope, which may hamper determinations of significance beyond the local level. By being limited to one community, such projects also may not generate much support if there is no interest in the local resources.

Resource-based approach. The resource-based approach looks at specific types of resources, such as tourist courts, drive-in theaters, or restaurants. The methodology focuses on identifying all examples of a single type in order to develop a conclusive list of types, age groupings, architectural or planning variations, and materials. This approach generally covers a larger geographic area, like a state or a region. This scale allows the significance of properties to be established based on their contributions to the development of a resource type. As with the other approaches, the survey form may need to be redesigned to adequately document these properties. Primary research material may be helpful in designing a form for the fieldwork.

Among the positive aspects of this approach is the establishment of a broad context for evaluation of resources. It also allows for more detailed analysis of the resources' physical characteristics, such as roof type, plan and interior features. Finally, this approach can direct preservation efforts toward significant examples of a resource type.

Negative aspects include the de-emphasis of local significance by ranking all resources in the survey area. Also, the scope of work involved in this approach can be costly and time consuming.

Dwayne Jones is a preservation planner with the Texas Historical Commission, Austin, TX, and a board member of the Society for Commercial Archeology.

Where the Planner Meets the Road

The NPS Route 66 Study

John Conoboy

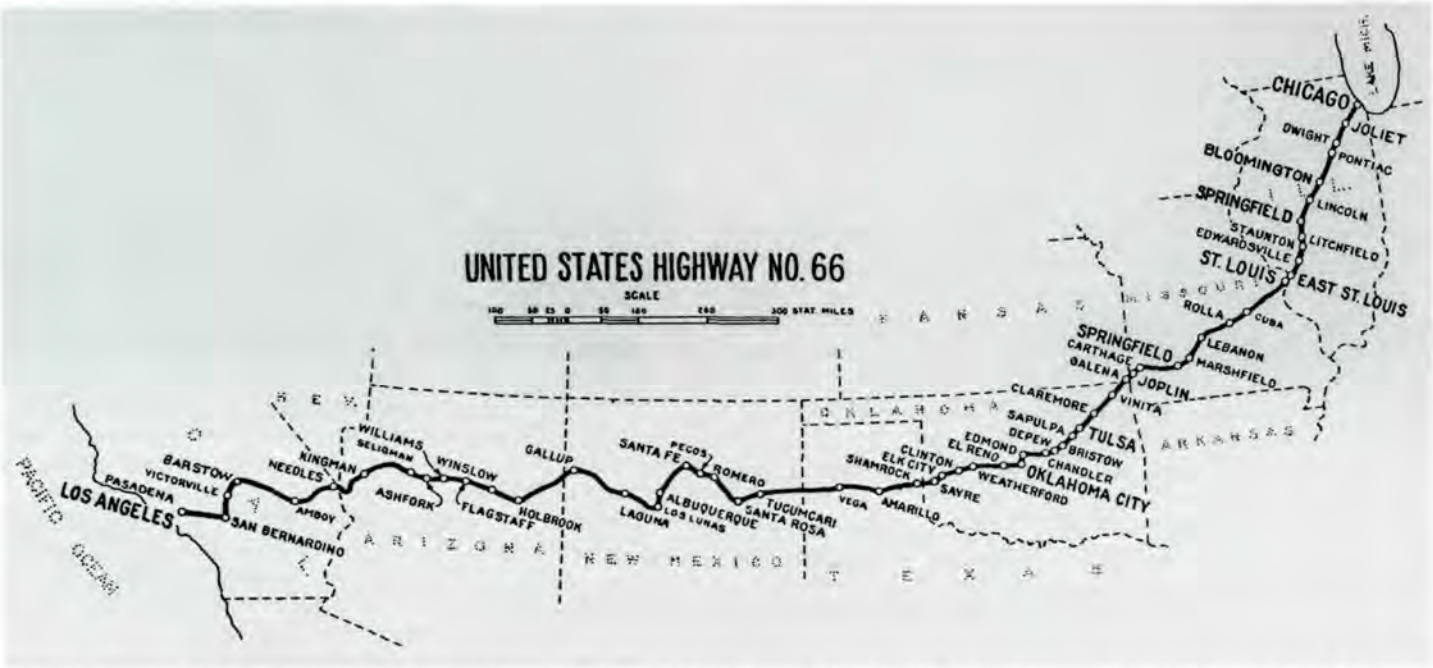
Many people think that Route 66, or more properly, U.S. Highway 66, is neat. And while the word "neat" is a little old-fashioned, it fits the nostalgic nature of Route 66. The popularity of Route 66 combines an enthusiasm for touring the backroads of America; a desire for renewed economic development and tourism; and interest in the history of the highway and preservation of remaining segments, buildings, and other features along the road. Route 66 associations have been formed in each of the eight states through which the road passed, and even in European countries. The 66th anniversary of Route 66 in 1992 focused world-wide media attention on the highway.

The increased use of the automobile and the desire for better roads culminated in 1926 with the designation of a proposed United States Highway System. Primarily due to the lobbying of entrepreneur Cyrus Avery, one notable variation from the east-west and north-south road system, U.S. Highway 66, swept southwest in a curving arc from Chicago to Tulsa, OK, Avery's home town, and then proceeded west to Los Angeles. Unlike the individualistic historic routes of the past, Route 66 was part of a national system, and the history of Route 66 cannot be separated from the history of that system. Its role as a prominent and popular representative of the system may be one of its most important attributes.

Route 66 was a major route of 20th-century American western migration, particularly in the period from 1940-1960. Like other highways, it became an economic lifeline to the communities it passed through, not only providing needed services to motorists, but opening new entrepreneurial opportunities. This economy of the roadside developed a characteristic highway culture—cafes, motor courts, service stations, tourist attractions, signs, and more. During the Depression, Route 66 achieved prominence as thousands sought escape from the Dust Bowl, gaining notoriety in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* as the "Mother Road." Perhaps more importantly, it provided jobs for those who remained, through the public works projects of the New Deal that resulted in the complete paving of the road by 1938. During World War II, it carried numerous caravans of soldiers and supplies, many enroute to military bases in the Southwest, but it also provided a route for thousands seeking defense industry jobs in the West. The road played a major role in tourism, both in opening up access to prominent tourist attractions, but also as a tourist "destination" in its own right with marketing of the pleasures of driving through the scenic countryside, improved tourist facilities, and new attractions created by roadside entrepreneurs.

Route 66 has come to represent the symbol of American highway culture to hundreds of thousands of motorists who traversed its path during its more than half-century of active use. Bobby Troup's song "Get your Kicks On Route 66," recorded by numerous singers from Nat King Cole to the Rolling Stones; the television series "Route 66"; the songs of Woody Guthrie; *The Grapes of Wrath;* and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* are now joined by recent works such as Michael Wallis' book *The Mother Road,* fixing the highway as an icon of the adventure of the open road.

Route 66 is not just a "historic" route. Although supplanted by interstate highways it continued to be a desig-



This 1931 Bureau of Public Roads map is the first national map to show Route 66 from Chicago to Los Angeles; it includes the original loop to Santa Fe, NM. Arthur Krim, "Mapping Route 66: A Cultural Cartography," in Jan Jennings, ed., *Roadside America: The Automobile in Design and Culture,* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1990).

Travelers are invited to "Be different. Sleep in a Wigwam" at Wigwam Village Number 6, constructed in 1950 along Route 66 in Holbrook, AZ. The complex is now operated by the second and third generations of the original owner's family. Each wigwam is a lodging room containing the original rustic furnishings. Photo by Rebecca A. Shiffer, 1991.

nated U.S. Highway until it was decommissioned in 1985. Remaining sections of the road continue as state, county, or local roads, often as frontage roads along the interstate, and are increasingly used by those seeking to relive the two-lane America experience the road represented—touring the road, eating in diners, staying in the old motor courts, and meeting and talking to the people along the highway. Business owners along the highway, whether continuing historic uses of historic structures or operating new businesses in new structures, identify as full participants in the Route 66 story.

The current interest in Route 66 is not an isolated phenomenon. Awareness of historic transportation corridors has been increasing in recent years. There are now 11 national historic trails designated under the National Trails System Act. A December 1992 conference in Natchitoches, LA, brought representatives from many countries together to discuss routes as varied as the Spanish/Mexican Caminos Reales in North America, the silk routes of Asia, and Route 66.

In 1990, Congress recognized the popular interest in the highway by passing the "Route 66 Study Act of 1990." The Act asked the National Park Service (NPS) to study Route 66, to evaluate the significance of the highway in U.S. history, and to identify options for preserving and interpreting significant features associated with the highway. The study, which will not be completed until 1994, is to be done in cooperation with representatives of associations interested in the preservation of Route 66, and other experts in history and popular culture, and will consider private sector preservation initiatives.

To evaluate the remaining resources of the road, the NPS study team traveled the length of the highway to see what remained and to talk to as many people as possible. While not an exhaustive survey of the resources of the highway, the trip provided an overview of the types of resources and the issues to be considered in developing alternatives for Congress.

It has been estimated that as much as 80% of the highway remains, although there is no complete inventory. At one extreme are sections extensively modified by road maintenance and/or reconstruction to modern highway standards. Elsewhere, sections of the road with original concrete and curbing are still in use. A unique section in Oklahoma has only a nine-foot wide concrete paved swath down the middle of the highway.

Such road segments offer considerable preservation challenges. Continued use will eventually damage the historic fabric, and if tourism increases, the road may no longer meet highway standards and thus will need repaving and perhaps widening. For the historic bridges along the highway the need to provide safe passage meeting highway standards can also conflict with preservation needs. Recently, Kansas' historic Rainbow Bridge on Route 66 was saved at the last minute from impending destruction, primarily due to action by the state Route 66 association.

Route 66's roadside cafes, curio shops, motor courts, service stations, roadside attractions, and other highway related structures and associated signs, seem to have the most fascination to the public. No complete inventory has been made of these properties but a recent survey by the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division identified 557 historic (pre-1956) properties just in that state. Most of these buildings are privately owned, and most of those in good condition are being used as businesses. Abandoned properties are deteriorating rapidly. When inquiring locally about one Oklahoma site, the NPS study team was informed that it had been bulldozed "last week."

Surveys of Route 66 must ultimately include significant road related properties that are not now considered "historic," but that represent the continuum of the highway's development. We need to look now at what might become the historic properties of the future. Properties such as historic farmhouses, barns, and other buildings that are not directly tied to the highway are not generally considered Route 66 resources. Frequently, however, these become the core of the only remaining historic cultural landscapes along the highway.

The scope of the resources, people, and issues along the approximately 2,400 miles of Route 66 points inextricably to the conclusion that no one agency or organization can effectively manage the visitor use and preservation needs of the road. The challenge for the NPS study team is to devise alternatives that clearly show how the diverse interests will be provided for and balanced. Ultimately, historic preservation agencies and organizations, economic development and tourism groups, highway departments, business owners, and others along the highway must develop a common vision for the future of Route 66, to ensure preservation of the road and its associated features.

John Conoboy is an outdoor recreation planner, Southwest Region, National Park Service, Santa Fe, and a member of the Route 66 Study Team. He is frequently found in cafes and coffee houses along old Route 66 in Albuquerque, NM.

Historic Highway Preservation

Not a Dead End Street!

Brian A. Butko

Like many other 20th-century resources, highways and the businesses along them are often forgotten, if not altogether dismissed, when preservation is being considered. Our society, which embraced Victorian architecture only 30 years ago, still finds little historical value in gas stations, motels, drive-in theaters, and especially the pavement that passes their doorsteps. We trivialize them for being only temporary works, while imagining that log cabins and breastworks were somehow imbued with a greater permanency by their creators. We mistakenly think they're too common to save, or even document, for we are surrounded by roads and roadside businesses.

The designation of automobile corridors as historic has become an increasingly common problem. At issue are two questions: "Is it worth saving?" and "How does it co-exist with continued economic vitality?" These are separate problems because even if a corridor is thought to be historic, its defacement is often justified by economic motives. Complicating matters more is the inherent dynamic state of highways. They were built for transportation and commerce. Their existence and that of "preservable" businesses along them came about through changes in business, economics, and technology. Preserving a roadscape actually changes its reason for being, but its temporary life only increases the urgency to save it.

A new program in Pennsylvania is being applied to two automobile corridors in an attempt to address these problems. This novel approach hopes to combine heritage tourism with economic development and use both to accomplish road and roadside preservation.

The Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program was established in 1989 and is administered by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the State Heritage Park Interagency Task Force (SHPITF), which is comprised of representatives of key state departments and agencies. The parks are meant to highlight particular regions where cultural, historic, and recreational resources exemplify the industrial traditions of the state. The industrial theme of the program cuts a wide swath, and includes not only typical categories such as steel and coal, but also agriculture and transportation. The road projects, of course, fall into the transportation category.

Five of the areas that benefit from the Program's financial and technical assistance include: 1) spinoff economic developments such as visitor lodging, retail opportunities and building rehabilitation; 2) interpretation of that region's history through educational programs for residents and visitors; 3) cultural conservation of heritage resources such as site preservation, encouraging folkways, and recording social histories; 4) coordination of natural and recreational resources such as state parks to draw visitors along the length of the corridor; and 5) regional pride, including intergovernmental and interagency cooperation, which also reinforces the other benefits.

The idea for a heritage park usually germinates with local individuals and organizations (such as historical societies and tourist promotion agencies) who form a steering committee to explore how the historical, cultural, natural, and recreational resources in their area might be enhanced and made more accessible for residents and visitors. If it's agreed that a heritage park would serve those needs, the first step toward designation is a feasibility study. Regions are assessed on the strength of their tangible and intangible heritage resources (which are inventoried) and the ability of local groups and government agencies to work in partnership toward their common goal.

If the feasibility study is approved by the DCA and the SHPITF, the region is designated a Heritage Park Planning Area, and a management action plan is undertaken to define a 10-year plan to recognize, implement, manage, and market the heritage park concept of that region. It builds upon the feasibility study to develop a much more detailed inventory, analysis, and set of strategies and recommendations. The approval of this plan leads to heritage park designation by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Funding of the above stages comes in part from the DCA. Matching funds may come from federal and/or local sources and must include a specified level of private funding. Heritage park designation carries the direct benefit of continued financial and technical assistance from the DCA and also possibly from other state agencies such as the Heritage Affairs Commission; the Departments of Commerce, Environmental Resources,

Built on a cliff near Bedford, PA, where motorists had stopped for years, the S.S. Grand View Ship Hotel opened in 1932 and remained popular for decades. Pictured here ca. 1940, its deck is loaded with authentic touches such as a captain's wheel and telescope. The Ship sits closed and battered today, but remains the Lincoln Highway's best-known landmark. Courtesy of the author.

Bert Koontz opened the Coffee Pot lunchstand/bar in the 1920s, shown here ca. 1940, next to his Atlantic gas station on the Lincoln Highway/Route 30 in Bedford, PA. The complex still stands, although only the gas station remains in use. Courtesy of the author.

Education, and Transportation; the Historical and Museum Commission; and the Council on the Arts.

In Pennsylvania, two nationally significant highways that cross the state are being considered for preservation programs—the National Road and the Lincoln Highway. Each road was used by both early wagon traffic and later auto transportation, though the National Road is better remembered for its 19th-century history; the Lincoln Highway for its automobile era.

The National Road, which cuts through the southwest corner of Pennsylvania passing through Uniontown and Washington, is now designated U.S. Route 40. The National Road has a much older story than the Lincoln Highway, for it was authorized by Congress in 1806 as a way to connect the East with the Midwest. It was the first road the government built, but also the last for over a century.

The Lincoln Highway, which crosses the length of the southern part of the state passing through Philadelphia, Gettysburg, and Pittsburgh, is now U.S. Route 30, though north of Philadelphia it is U.S. Route 1. The Lincoln Highway is a conglomeration of older trails (including the Lancaster Pike, the country's first macadam road), that was established in 1913 as the first cross-country automobile road. It was financed by auto-related businesses, rather than the government.

Both roads are currently under study as heritage parks, also known as "corridors" for their linear arrangement. A park along a corridor is not limited to the immediate road, but spreads out on each side of it, the width determined by resources and political boundaries, which vary with each local planning group. This is meant to include other resources, whether they're related to the road or not, because a road's heritage is inevitably tied to the surrounding area.

Alan Chace, the DCA's Western District supervisor for the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program, sits on the steering committee of both the National Road and Lincoln Highway projects. One of the major differences he sees between the state's two corridor projects is their length—the National Road project is about 90 miles long with dense resources, while the Lincoln Highway project is about 140 miles long with scattered concentrations of heritage resources. For the Lincoln Highway project, this makes it "harder to develop a strong organizational group than for the National Road because the resources are aligned in 'nodes', plus the shear length makes the project harder to coordinate."

As for conflicts between preservation and development, he says, "It's going to be a challenge as we develop specific projects such as adaptive reuse, where we try to preserve integrity while encouraging commercial or residential use. There may be some tradeoffs. That's why the management action planning phase is so important—first, it must offer a range of alternatives and mechanisms to carry them out, and then it recommends the creation of an organization that will ultimately manage the park. When the park is in place, it's that organization's responsibility to negotiate and deal with these issues in cooperation with key state agency partners."

Jerry Kuncio, historic preservation specialist at the Johnstown Regional Office of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), is on the steering committee of the National Road Corridor. His role is to make sure the built and cultural resources along the corridor are preserved. For those structures adaptively reused, he wants to make sure their integrity is being respected.

According to Kuncio, "The feasibility study focused on the romantic stage era, which began about 1811 and ended when the railroads reached western Pennsylvania, roughly 1852." The National Road also saw new life when the automobile came along, peaking roughly between 1920 and 1960. He comments, "The steering committee is committed to telling the full story of the road's decline and rebirth." Kuncio is excited about the project, predicting "it will become one of the premier

Howard Johnson's, on the National Road/Route 40 east of Uniontown, PA, shown in a ca. 1955 view, still retains its original sign and its trademark cupola on both the restaurant roof and the phone booth. Courtesy of the author.

examples of a corridor park in Pennsylvania." In fact, because they are so effective in "presenting and interpreting history, historic resources, and cultural landscapes," he sees corridor projects as "one of the preservation waves of the future."

Ann Safley, also a historic preservation specialist for the PHMC at Johnstown, is on the Lincoln Highway Corridor's steering committee. She describes her role as "making sure sufficient historic resources are there—if there are enough of them and, if so, if it's possible to interpret them." She also sees the potential for conflict between preservation and development, such as near Chambersburg, where officials would rather see the road widened than preserved. Still, Safley finds little reason to

*(**Highway**—continued on page 38)*

(Highway—continued from page 37)

worry: "These projects aim to involve as many people as possible so that potential problems like that can be worked out."

Safley says that the PHMC is very receptive to automobile-era resources as long as they meet the criteria set down by the National Park Service for National Register nomination. When asked about resources that are equally threatened but aren't 50 years old, she replies that "it depends on the significance of the resource. These are some of the questions we can help the steering committee with when special cases arise."

Mary Means & Associates, Inc, a Virginia-based planning firm, was selected to do the feasibility studies for both the National Road and Lincoln Highway heritage park projects. Mary Means is best known for her pioneering efforts in developing the national Main Street program, probably the first large-scale attempt to combine commercial development with preservation.

Means says that one of the most difficult problems with programs like these is the challenge of sorting the different layers of tangible resources. "There are many different eras and types represented along the road, and there is relatively rapid change. It is quite difficult for the non-historian or untrained eye to sort out the different periods in its evolution. Understanding it is a huge task to deal with, and if it can be dealt with, it's perhaps even more difficult to organize any kind of constituency."

The impetus for many rural communities, says Means, is tourism. "Most small towns are searching for their next economic life, and the potential of tourism is something they can understand." Means continues, "One of the hardest sells in rural areas is the need for zoning, scenic protection ordinances and other land-use controls. Landowners don't want to hear about restrictive proposals, but the possibility of tourism can get them to the table, and then we can talk about other needs. In that respect, Pennsylvania is ahead of other states, in that representatives of different state agencies sit together on the State Heritage Parks Interagency Task Force. They're often in conflict, but at least they talk."

Carol Ann Perovshek, an associate at Mary Means, identifies some of the possibilities to help reduce conflict and achieve greater cooperation: "First, involving the community and its leaders in creating better land use plans to guide future decisions and development; second, involving private non-profit organizations to work with communities to employ voluntary and donative approaches to protecting special properties that government regulation alone may not be able to protect fully. For example, scenic easements can preserve the character of a linear area by further restricting the amount of construction within a certain distance from a road."

Another associate, Randall Mason, says the firm is guided by two basic questions in the feasibility stage: 1) Are tangible resources present? and 2) Do the local representatives have the ability and desire to cooperate? "Both are equally important in deciding if a heritage park is appropriate because there must be interpretable resources that people can visit, and continued success is dependent on solid partnerships."

Both points face obstacles. The resources disappear every day: 19th-century remains are deteriorating rapidly, and 20th-century places are not viewed as historic enough to stop the bulldozers. Continual road improvements also take their toll as road widenings and reroutings destroy the oldest pavement and its structures. Once a heritage park is in place, there are hopefully strong lines of communication between the various governmental agencies, but while the parks go through their multi-year incubation, progress continues to take its toll on historic resources.

The second point, cooperation, is dependent on the commitment of various groups along the way. Some counties put little value on these projects, either not realizing the potential benefits or not believing them. Somerset County, for example, has a 25-mile stretch of the Lincoln Highway, but it cuts across the strip-mined northern edge of the county, far from the county seat and the agriculture on which the county's historical society focuses. It is also sparsely populated, producing few people in a position to change things locally. There are no "famous" resources here, only miles of strip-mined land and many less-recognizable resources.

In cases like these, Mary Means sees the possibilities but also the problems: "These places have been bypassed by the economy of today. Like all buildings we've been able to preserve, we have to find appropriate new roles, new uses. But it isn't easy for structures that were not built for the ages in areas where the economy is marginal."

Two stone pillars mark the entrance to the Jenner Pines auto camp in Jennerstown, PA, an important survivor of the Lincoln Highway's heyday. Photo by Rebecca A. Shiffer, 1990.

In 1926, the Jenner Pines complex included a gas station, restaurant, and some crude cabins peeking through the trees. Courtesy of the author.

One of the small towns along Somerset County's stretch of the Lincoln Highway is Jennerstown. Just west of town two stone pillars mark the entrance to an early auto camp; its office building and some later-built tourist cabins also remain. The complex is a rare remnant of the era when camps were built for tourists who pitched their own tent. The era was short, peaking between 1920 and 1925, between the time when travelers would camp anywhere along the road, and when tourist cabins sprang up. The site is safe for now, recently purchased by an elderly neighbor who wants to "fix up the cabins someday." Perhaps it's good that the job will probably never be finished, but there are other threats; among them, "For Sale" signs sprouting in nearby fields. Yet no one recognizes the significance, or delicacy, of this important site.

This is true in many communities, according to Joanne Zeigler, director of the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor project in Pennsylvania. After a year and a half guiding the five-county project through the feasibility study stage, she says "The main problem is getting people to visualize and recognize the advantages of such projects. We want more than just historical societies involved, but other interests often don't see the big picture. A bed-and- breakfast operator might only think of his structure as a hotel and not as an historic resource."

Trying to get the whole business community interested and cooperating is frustrating: "They often don't see the value of historic resources or the connection to their interests—they only want things that are brand new." Even county representatives often don't attend the heritage park meetings, finding little benefit to their area in the project. Speaking of where she lives and works, Zeigler adds: "In Bedford County we have a strong sense of the value of our resources, but we're less respectful of planning processes. Our participants want more than talk and get turned off by the slow pace of study and discussion."

Marjorie Daniels, the coordinator of the National Road Heritage Park Project, says "it's always a long education process to show communities the value of preservation." A major concern is how people will react to the preservation of 20th-century resources. Even Daniels admits that she "and others on the project did not concentrate as much on this century, but on the more obvious pre-railroad days of the road." She says this is typical because "the road is better known for its early history, but it should not be a problem because one of the goals of the heritage parks program is education."

Luckily, stagecoach- and automobile-era resources along Pennsylvania's National Road have survived modern development relatively well. A 1986 study commissioned by PHMC found abundant resources of 50 years and older along the 80 surveyed miles of road—for example, there were two toll houses and 37 hotels from the 19th century, and nine cabin camps and 54 auto service stations/garages from the 20th. The National Road project is one step beyond the Lincoln Highway project—its feasibility study has been approved and they are now working on their management action plan to define such areas as operation, maintenance, and publicity.

Serious studies of automobile-era roads are a recent phenomenon. Among them are Thomas Schlereth's *U.S. 40: A Roadscape of the American Experience* and Thomas and Geraldine Vale's *U.S. 40 Today: Thirty Years of Landscape Change in America* (an update of a similar 1953 book by George Stewart). The Lincoln Highway is examined in Drake Hokansen's *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America*. And of course, Route 66 is now receiving lots of editorial space.

Elk Park, located near the Pennsylvania-Maryland border on the National Road/Route 40, is typical of the roadside camps that served motorists in the teens and twenties. The owners hoped to sell food and gasoline to those taking advantage of the free camp space. Courtesy of the author.

Various roadside businesses are examined by Chester Liebs in *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, and numerous books concentrate on particular roadside companies or building-types. Even modern business strips, rarely thought of as historic, are examined by Richard Horwitz in *The Strip: An American Place*. And a national organization, the Society for Commercial Archeology, founded in 1977, promotes the study, documentation, and preservation of the commercial built environment and cultural landscapes, such as roadsides and highways.

Why are highways and roadside resources worth saving? An important era of sociology, architecture, and history is disappearing before our eyes, and usually with our approval. Automobile-generated culture is often ignored because it still surrounds us, but much of it has changed or disappeared in the century since the automobile's invention. Twenty years is an eternity in both road design and styles of business architecture and signage.

What will it take to increase preservation? Certainly Pennsylvania's heritage parks program is a major step in saving roadside culture. Since a few of us can't do all the saving, the best way to preserve these places is to make lots of people want to preserve them. By showing others the cultural and economic value of preservation, folks will stand up and defend their local gas station or diner, instead of watching, or wanting, it bulldozed. The business world's inherent mission to constantly update, and our need for improved roads, are the main reasons why roads and roadside businesses need to be documented and preserved.

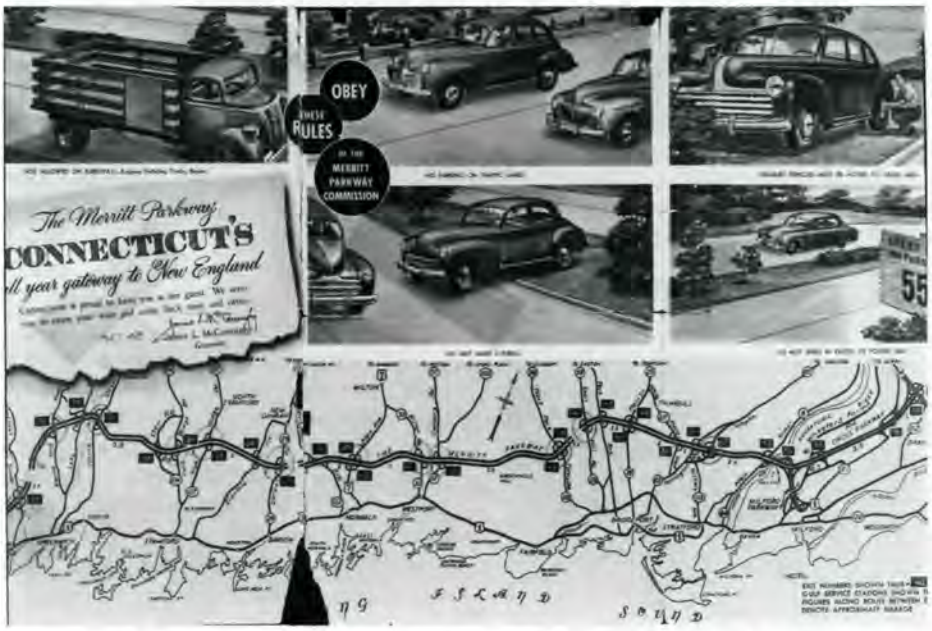
Brian A. Butko is editorial assistant of *Pittsburgh History*, the journal of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, where he has also been a researcher for the industrial-themed Historic Sites Survey of the Monongahela Valley. He sits on the boards of the Society for Commercial Archeology and the Lincoln Highway Association, and the steering committees for the Lincoln Highway and the National Road (Pennsylvania) Heritage Park projects.

Made for Motoring

Sara Amy Leach

By the end of the first quarter of the 20th century, Americans were reveling in the lately-affordable automobile, which they used to escape into the fast-disappearing countryside for pleasure driving and safe, suburban living—both vestiges of 19th-century leisure pastimes. By 1940, New York City led the nation in automobile registrations, with the District of Columbia ninth. This enthusiasm for speed and long-distance travel prompted the necessity for solid bridges, good roads, and frequent auto-service facilities. Into the gap between pre-1900 carriage-road design and post-World War II high-speed freeways falls the deliberately naturalistic parkway.

Through the 1920s, parkways were interchangeably called "boulevards" and "highways." The design and planning communities generally defined parkways as "an attenuated park with a road through it." By the 1930s, distinctions among road types became clearer as Congress, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Public Roads (today's Federal Highway Administration) issued various legislation and design recommendations. Parkways remain defined by the characteristics that legally differentiate them from highways: bans on commercial traffic, unsightly roadside blight, access rights, and at-grade intersections, while assuring variable-width medians, native scenery, a generous right-of-way, and interchanges that are few and far between.



The Merritt Parkway: Connecticut's All-Year Gateway to New England brochure, 1947. Collection of George L. Larned.

During summer 1992, the HABS/HAER Division of the National Park Service, had the fortuitous opportunity to record two premiere yet disparate parkways. The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, a unit of the National Capital Region, NPS, and the Connecticut-built and managed Merritt Parkway were constructed as part of the respective spidery networks of scenic, metropolitan motorways in Washington, DC, and New York-Connecticut. Both built in the first half of the 20th century, they are a study in contrasts. The recording projects both serve one of HABS/HAER's goals: to help establish documentation standards for parkways and park roads alike, as designed sites composed of roads, bridges, buildings, landscapes, and the vistas among them. These projects encompass the conventional documentation methods of measured drawings, written history, and large-format photography—although the multidisciplinary scope and technical aspects of these two undertakings are expanded beyond the usual.

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway (RC&PP), legislated in 1913 but not completed until 1936, was the first of five major parkways and several minor ones in Greater Washington. A conservation and beautification project aimed at reclaiming the "sylvan" Rock Creek valley, it was modeled after New York's Bronx River Parkway, the first of its kind. Capital city residents crossed Rock Creek valley via earlier bridges, but not until the suburbs stretched far northwest into Maryland was a connector between downtown and these outlying areas essential. The creek was the guiding element, though access roads and buffer zones were simplified over the years: there are only eight major crossings and a handful of subtle entries and exits today.

By the time it was completed, RC&PP was considered a major commuter artery, and in 1937 one-way rush-hour traffic patterns were established on it. Because its development overlaps the transition from carriage drive to motorway, RC&PP is cited as "the missing link" in parkway design. To date, the greatest intrusion has been at the southern end, where mid-20th-century freeway ramps clutter the road, egress ramps are treacherously brief, acceleration lanes are non-existent, and the flanking vegetation appears more weedlike than not.

In contrast, the Merritt Parkway is a central link in a much longer arterial "express through-route" that begins in New York City and continues across the Housatonic River as the Wilber Cross Parkway. This road system was designed to ease congestion on the Boston Post Road/U.S. Route 1, and in doing so transformed Fairfield County, CT, from farmland to bedroom suburb. Upon completion in 1947, the Merritt resembled more a gently winding boulevard than a parkway, with its neat plantings, grassy medians with turnarounds, and rhythmic sequence of stylish bridges. It has 21 interchanges and 72 bridges in all; a 300' right-of-way was intended to provide space to construct a second pair of lanes as traffic increased, but that has never happened.

Today, the Merritt suffers from a gradual decline toward freeway status with the installation of a mish-mash of guardwall barriers and diverse signage. Its median has shrunk, while the flanking trees have grown up untended, to obscure the outstanding bridge details and enclose the motorists' route in a tunnel-like shroud of vegetation. Like RC&PP, higher traveling speeds, and abrupt egress and acceleration routes hinder safe driving. The Merritt, unique in the country for its Art Moderne and Art Deco bridges, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.

Bridges distinguish each parkway for different reasons. On RC&PP the topographical change from river drive to amphitheater-like ravine and the historic need to cross the valley meant that bridges were built over a longer span of time, in a variety of styles and construction techniques. The oldest, Connecticut Avenue (Taft) Bridge, 1897-1907, was cited as the largest concrete bridge in the world when it was completed; and the Q Street (Dumbarton) Bridge, a masonry arch designed by Glenn Brown in 1914-15, is the most exuberant, with an American theme captured in sculpted Indian heads and bison statuary. The much-used foot and bike paths along the parkway feature pedestrian bridges, most built in the 1930s.

Aerial view of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and crossing bridges, 1991. Photo by Jack E. Boucher, HABS.

In comparison, George Dunkelberger (1891-1960), architect with the Connecticut Highway Department's Bureau of Engineering and Construction, designed every bridge, service station, and toll plaza for the Merritt Parkway. His inspiration was eclectic, including French Renaissance Revival and Gothic, but most notable are the dozens of Art Moderne and Art Deco bridges with exaggerated pylons, intricate graffito, and metal detailing. All built between 1935-40, most are arches of concrete, also cleverly employed to form bas relief and three-dimensional sculptural elements. Especially whimsical are the Merwins Lane Bridge (Fairfield, CT) with its spider-and-butterfly railing, and the Main Street Bridge (Trumbull, CT), whose abutments are decorated with large floral metal cutouts. There are only a handful of typical parkway bridges—rustic stone-faced spans—and the best is the Guinea Road crossing (Stamford, CT). Upon completion, the parkway bridges were seen in their entirety, with little overgrowth to hide the artistic details. Only a few bridges have been lost over the years, and rehabilitation is now underway on many others.

Though by definition parkways are devoid of commercial buildings, requisite automobile service stations were made quaint and tolerable by Colonial Revival and rustic styling. Three pairs of service areas were built along the Merritt in 1940-41, familiar brick structures with gabled slate-clad roofs and clocks snuggled into eyebrow dormers. Although RC&PP did not have its own facilities, several were constructed near entries and exits. Among them is a ca. 1932 rustic service station built of dark ashlar at Virginia Avenue that resembles something the NPS itself might have built.

Preservation of parkways presents an unusual challenge. Although most parkways just now qualify as technically "historic" based on the "50-year" guideline, a half-century or more of wear and tear and changes in automotive activity threatens their existence; uncontrolled plant growth has also diminished their beauty and integrity. But the single greatest impact has been their adaptation to modern Federal Highway Safety Standards (23 U.S.C. 402; 23 CFR 1230) to assure the safety of motorists.

For example, according to the NPS *Park Road Standards* (1984), design of urban parkways that serve a high volume of both park and non-park traffic, such as RC&PP, "...must consider traffic safety and protect and enhance the landscape, aesthetic, environmental and cultural characteristics and values which significantly distinguish [them] from expressways." Road design is based on predicted motorist volume and speed, and the type of vehicles driven. The NPS guidelines issue few rigid rules, but areas of recommendation include vertical and horizontal alignment, sight distance, number of lanes/shoulder width, and the "sensitive" appearance and placement of guardrail.

With the HABS/HAER recording projects, two governmental jurisdictions have taken steps toward preservation by planning ahead. HAER's documentation of the Merritt Parkway was sponsored by the Federal Highway

*(**Motoring**—continued on page 42)*

*(**Motoring**—continued from page 41)*

Administration and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDot), with the enthusiastic support of Commissioner of Transportation Emil Frankel. Similarly, the NPS Park Roads and Bridges Program of the Engineering and Safety Services Division funded HABS's two-year documentation of RC&PP in the nation's capital. Each administrative entity will use the historical findings, photographs, and drawings to thoughtfully rehabilitate and/or restore as much of their parkway's original appearance as possible.

RC&PP was selected for this study because of its uncontested historic status, manageable size of 2.5 miles, and proximity to the HABS/HAER Washington office, and because it is slated for rehabilitation beginning in 1996. ConnDot sought more historical information before preparing a preservation plan for the Merritt Parkway; and application was recently made for its inclusion in Connecticut's Scenic Highway Program.

For each parkway, three traditional HABS/HAER products were generated: hefty written histories of the overall parkway and individual reports for each bridge or building; hundreds of contemporary and historic large-format black-and-white photographs; and drawings as determined by the purpose of the recording. Rather than hand-measure bridges at either site, HABS/HAER delineated the elevations as "poster" sheets that show the physical similarities among them, and the relationship of the motorist to the surroundings—laterally, vertically, and sequentially. A set of 50 sheets were made for Rock Creek, including large-scale site plans showing 2' contour lines, and overlay sheets showing tree lines and labeled vegetation. For the Merritt, 21 sheets reflect the collective importance of the bridges rather than the landscape, as depicted by eight "poster sheets" of them, and additional sheets depicting the fantastic details that can only be observed up close.

Detail of Main Street Bridge wingwall, constructed 1940, Merritt Parkway, Trumbull, CT. Photo by Jet Lowe, HAER.

Abundant drawings—some of unrealized designs—proved essential to chronicling the parkways' design history from cut and fill to rustic signs. Equally plentiful historic photographs reveal before-and-after appearances, the construction process, and the newly completed sites. Discussion and debate surrounding the development of each parkway is told through official correspondence, newspaper articles, technical reports, oral interviews, and more. Unfortunately, comprehensive landscape plans proved as elusive as long-term maintenance of parkway vegetation, the inadvertent neglect that has altered overall vertical and horizontal spatial relationships. For the Merritt, however, one source of information is the extensive inventories of the plantings purchased—birch, white pine, mountain laurel—and the stretch of roadside to which they were delivered, indicating where each species was planted. Of special note, early photographs reveal an open clarity of the roadscape: the whiteness of the original concrete road and neat, grassy landscape render a lighter composition than does the dark asphalt surface and encroaching treeline of today.

As preservation becomes an issue for the Merritt and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkways, some changes are inevitable and clear, others are not. Beauty versus safety is a particular challenge with egress and acceleration/deceleration lanes, shoulders, median widths, and barriers, particularly where the parkway's right-of-way and road path are largely unalterable. Regaining control over the landscape itself is a matter of practicality and maintenance. Mature trees and volunteer growth such as the invasive hemlock obscure bridge details, overlooks, and vistas; other plantings are sacrificed as medians shrink, or are decimated by winter road saltings. Modern construction since the 1950s—shopping centers, interchange clutter, and monumental cultural facilities—has infiltrated some of the woodsy parkway buffers; these are more permanent threats. Like the dilemma of many parks, it is the popularity and overuse of these two important parkways that threatens them today. But through research and documentation of their assets and failures, there is hope that they may be restored to beautiful, safe, and well-tended landscapes.

Sara Amy Leach, an architectural historian, has been with HABS/HAER since 1988, where she has worked on documenting the historic L'Enfant/McMillan Plan of Washington and the local parkways.

A Museum for Gas, Food, Lodging, and a Duck

J. Lance Mallamo

The automobile transformed America from a pedestrian to a vehicular society, ultimately changing not only the appearance of cities and rural areas, but also the lifestyle and values of virtually all Americans. On Long Island, NY, this phenomena occurred with unusual intensity, and it is here that a large number of innovative "firsts" associated with the evolution of the automobile's environment took place.

Once an agrarian backwater isolated from the mainland by water, Long Island became the playground and residence of choice for wealthy New York families seeking a periodic respite from urban life in the early-20th century. Prominent Long Islanders were among the first Americans to own motorcars and the pursuit of motoring and racing were among the earliest competitive sports established here. The first roadway constructed exclusively for automobiles was the privately-owned Long Island Motor Parkway, a 50-mile "Modern Appian Way" built in 1909 by millionaire sportsman William K. Vanderbilt.

Less than two decades later, master builder Robert Moses began constructing the Long Island State Parkway system, a series of 11 interconnected limited access highways linking the City of New York with the various state parks constructed in the region. After World War II, these highways easily accommodated the thousands of young families who moved to Long Island to take advantage of affordable housing in new middle class communities such as Levittown. Between 1940 and 1970, Long Island found itself a virtual laboratory in the evolving concept of American suburban architecture and the creation of the highway "strip."

The BIG DUCK, an eastern Long Island, NY, landmark prior to the 1987 move that rescued it from demolition. Photo by Richard C. Martin, Suffolk County (NY) Historic Services.

Recognizing that the preservation of structures and artifacts associated with the early motor history of Long Island is crucial to the thorough understanding of the region's heritage, the Suffolk County Department of Parks, Division of Cultural and Historic Services, recently proposed the creation of a Museum of Roadside Culture to be developed on eastern Long Island over the next two decades. The concept for the proposed museum evolved from the county's rescue of Long Island's famous BIG DUCK from the threat of demolition in 1987. The county acquired the BIG DUCK through a negotiated donation and relocated it to nearby parkland when the former duck ranch on which it stood was slated for a major housing/commercial development.

Long considered an unofficial landmark of the region, an evaluation of the BIG DUCK revealed that the whimsical structure, built as a small poultry salesroom in 1931, actually played a momentous role in recent American architecture. Although decried by author Peter Blake in his 1964 book *God's Own Junkyard*, defenders of the BIG DUCK included architects Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, who argued the validity of "Duck" architecture as an alternative to an otherwise bleak American landscape. Architectural theorist James Wines further championed the BIG DUCK as an example of "form follows fantasy," intensifying the architectural debate on the merits of roadside architecture that ultimately supported the concept of Postmodernism.

Initially, it was presumed that a government agency's goal of preserving the BIG DUCK and other structures and artifacts associated with Long Island's motor history would be met with skepticism by a cynical public. However, the duck's moving day drew thousands of cheering spectators who lined the four mile route to its new home. Unexpectedly, the duck became front page news in metropolitan New York newspapers and the national media for months afterward.

Reactions to the concept of an outdoor museum of roadside architecture have been extremely positive and Suffolk County has secured donations of funds, artifacts and services toward the establishment of the museum. The New York State Council on the Arts provided grant support for the necessary environmental planning studies to identify the permanent museum site. The latest contributor to the museum effort is super-model Christie Brinkley, who solicits public support for the project as the voice of the BIG DUCK from a 24-hour radio transmitter established at the site. In May 1993, the restored BIG DUCK reopened to the public as an exhibit and museum retail facility highlighting roadside architecture.

As one of the nation's earliest suburban areas, Long Island's real estate is now a prime target for redevelopment, threatening many early structures and artifacts of the motor age. The plan for the new museum envisions relocating from 10 to 15 threatened structures and associ-

*(**Duck**—continued on page 44)*

(Duck—continued from page 43)

ated artifacts to the site. However, the concept does not seek to establish a museum "village" or to sever the historical context of a resource in its original setting. Rather, the plan espouses an open air setting that allocates sufficient land area for each structure to establish a spatial relationship similar to its original, with partial isolation from surrounding exhibits. Building types documented to have played a significant role in Long Island's motor

A banner around the BIG DUCK's neck urges passing motorists to support efforts to preserve it. Photo by Richard C. Martin, Suffolk County (NY) Historic Services.

heritage, such as diners, gas stations, tourist cabins and roadside rests have been identified, and will be considered for preservation. Only significant resources threatened with demolition, abandonment or neglect will be considered for relocation to the museum.

Collecting for the proposed museum has begun. The collections will focus on artifacts associated with the period 1905-1975, reflecting automobile use and suburban growth from the turn of the century to the Arab oil embargo. Recent acquisitions include early enameled highway signs, street lighting, diner menus, road maps and photographs.

Funding for the proposed roadside culture museum over the next two decades is projected to be provided by the historic preservation capital program of Suffolk County and by the Friends for Long Island's Heritage, a private organization that supports the county's museums and historic sites. Cost estimates and necessary museum planning documents and feasibility studies are nearing completion and will be considered by the Suffolk County Executive and Legislature. It is expected that this museum will enhance the economic impact of Long Island's tourist industry and focus national attention on Long Island's unusual heritage. For further information on the proposed museum, please contact the Suffolk County Department of Parks, Division of Cultural and Historic Services at 516-854-4070.

J. Lance Mallamo serves as the official Suffolk County (NY) historian and as the Director of Historic Services for the Suffolk County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation.

(Vancouver—continued from page 32)

A series of focused meetings will be held with the owners of these buildings, the architectural community and the general public to discuss the Recent Landmarks initiative. This process is currently ongoing. Any objections from owners will be included in a report to the city council who will make the final decision on which buildings will be added to the VHI.

It is anticipated that most of the 100 high priority Recent Landmarks will be added to the Vancouver Heritage Inventory in the coming months. This will allow the VHI, a record of the city's architectural history, to reflect in a comprehensive way the city's heritage. Without this period of design, we would be left with the

West Coast Transmission Building. Rhone and Iredale with Bogue Babicki, Engineer, 1968-69. One of the first buildings in the world to employ suspension bridge techniques for structural support: a central concrete service core serves as the main structural support; the floors are suspended by thin, continuous steel cables hung from the core. The design also allows for a column-free parking garage and open plaza areas at the building's base. Photo by Marco D'Agosinti.

very old and the very new and nothing in-between. For Vancouver, the in-between is a very rich three-decade period of architectural design—our Recent Landmarks.

Robert G. Lemon, MAIBC, is the senior planner, Heritage and Urban Design, for the City of Vancouver. He also serves on the board of directors of the Association for Preservation Technology International. Marco D'Agostini is the heritage planning assistant for the City of Vancouver.

Historic Signs: Resources for Preservation

Michael J. Auer

Until relatively recently, historic signs were largely ignored—left to deteriorate through neglect. When they were noticed, the attention was often unfavorable: sign ordinances typically required owners to remove old signs when the building changed hands, when the sign needed repair, or when the "grace" period ended. But attitudes have begun to change. Increasingly, historic signs are gaining respect as cultural resources worthy of study and preservation.

The Society for Commercial Archeology and other national preservation organizations promote the preservation of historic signs. Signs are also finding local advocates in neighborhoods throughout the country. Towns and cities are modifying restrictive sign ordinances. State and local preservation groups are funding surveys of painted wall signs. Porcelain enamel and neon signs are finding their way into museums. Books, exhibits, posters, articles and graduate theses on historic signs are appearing. Further demonstrating the mounting interest in signs, several states requested that the National Park Service publish a preservation brief on the subject. As a result, *Preservation Brief 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs* appeared in 1991.

Painted Bull Durham tobacco signs covered walls all over the country in the late 19th and early-20th centuries. This one survives in Collinsville, IL. Photo by Jack Boucher, 1986, HABS.

Yet preservation briefs are ... **brief.** They are also written for a general audience and are meant to stay in print for years. Thus, they cannot offer detailed information on organizations, associations, and other sources of assistance. This supplement attempts to give readers of *CRM* access to more timely information on historic signs.

Organizations

The Enamelist Society
P.O. Box 310
Newport, KY 41072
606-291-3800

The Society promotes the use of decorative and artistic enameling; publishes *Glass on Metal*, a color magazine/newsletter six times a year; and sponsors conventions, workshops and international exhibitions.

National Alliance of Preservation Commissions
Hall of States
444 North Capitol St., NW
Suite 332
Washington, DC 20001
202-624-5465

This national organization provides a number of services to preservation commissions, including a clearinghouse of information on signage in historic districts.

National Electric Sign Association (NESA)
801 N. Fairfax St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-836-4012

A professional association founded in 1944, NESA promotes the interests of the on-premise sign industry; sponsors conventions and trade shows; produces reports and other publications; hosts seminars and workshops; and provides consulting services to the industry.

National Main Street Center
National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-673-4219

The Center promotes the revival of historic downtown business districts. It provides technical assistance; sponsors programs and conferences; and issues books, pamphlets, videotapes, and slide shows and other media.

Porcelain Enamel Institute
1101 Connecticut Ave., NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
202-857-1134

Founded in 1930, the Institute is the trade association for porcelain enamel plants and suppliers of porcelain enameling materials and equipment. It offers trade workshops; holds trade shows and an annual industry meeting; answers technical questions about product performance and the capabilities of its members; and periodically commissions special studies.

Scenic America
21 Dupont Circle, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-833-4300

Scenic America operates a clearinghouse on billboard control and aesthetic regulation, the National Center for Sign Control. It also issues a newsletter and holds workshops and conferences on sign control.

Society for Commercial Archeology (SCA)
c/o Room 5010
National Museum of American History
Washington, DC 20560
202-882-5424

SCA is a national organization that promotes the study, documentation and preservation of the artifacts and structures, signs and symbols of 20th-century commercial built environment and cultural landscapes, including transportation and recreation facilities, roadside development, and components of the traditional business district. SCA publishes the *SCA News* (quarterly) and the *SCA Journal* (biannually) and other special publications.

*(**Signs**—continued on page 46)*

(*Signs—continued from page 45*)

Society of Environmental Graphic Designers (SEGD)
47 Third St.
Cambridge, MA 02141
617-577-8225

SEGD serves the burgeoning environmental graphic design profession. It offers publications, including professional and industry directories; hosts conferences; maintains a classification system to standardize sign types, materials and technical specifications; and renders other technical assistance. Its educational foundation sponsors a student grant program and is assembling a National Archive for Environmental Graphic Design.

Society of Gilders
P.O. Box 50179
Washington, DC 20091

Founded to foster traditional gilding skills, techniques and knowledge and to promote interest in gilding, the Society sponsors exhibits, lectures, demonstrations, workshops and classes. It publishes *The Gilder's Tip*, a professional newsletter, and maintains *The Society of Gilders Member Register*.

Museums

American Advertising Museum
9 N.W. Second Ave.
Portland, OR 97209
503-226-0000

The museum houses an extensive collection of American advertising and business artifacts and a library that includes films and videos. A permanent exhibit on outdoor advertising features classic neon signs and a set of Burma Shave signs.

The Billboard Museum of America
P.O. Box 660
Times Square Station
New York, NY 10108
212-580-2592

The museum is dedicated to the preservation, history and display of Times Square's electric signs, as well as examples of outdoor advertising from across the country. The museum is still seeking space for its first exhibition.

Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village
Dearborn, MI 48121
800-338-0125

Signs that played a crucial role in creating the American "car culture" figure prominently in its permanent exhibit, *The Automobile in American Life*, Burma Shave signs, a McDonald's sign from the 1960s, a Holiday Inn "great" sign and other electric signs, as well as painted metal and neon signs.

Museum of Neon Art (MONA)
Citywalk
Universal City, CA 91608
213-617-0274

The museum exhibits, documents and preserves works of neon, electric and kinetic art. Its standing collection of large-scale vintage neon signs and electric devices represents every decade in the history of neon. The museum offers introductory courses in neon design and techniques and sponsors nighttime bus tours of notable neon and electric signs, marquees and contemporary fine art.

Retaining Historic Signs

Historic signs can contribute to the character of buildings and districts. They can also be valued in themselves, quite apart from the buildings to which they may be attached. However, any program to preserve historic signs must recognize the challenges they present. These challenges are not for the most part technical. Sign preservation is more likely to involve aesthetic concerns and to generate community debate. Added to these concerns are several community goals that often appear to conflict: retaining diverse elements from the past, encouraging artistic expression in new signs, zoning for aesthetic concerns, and reconciling business requirements with preservation.

Preserving historic signs is not always easy. But the intrinsic merit of many signs, as well as their contribution to the overall character of a place, make the effort worthwhile.

Retain historic signs whenever possible, particularly when they are:

- associated with historic figures, events or places.
- significant as evidence of the history of the product, business or service advertised.
- significant as reflecting the history of the building or the development of the historic district. A sign may be the only indicator of a building's historic use.
- characteristic of a specific historic period, such as gold leaf on glass, neon, or stainless steel lettering.
- integral to the building's design or physical fabric, as when a sign is part of a storefront made of carrara glass or enamel panels, or when the name of the historic firm or the date are rendered in stone, metal or tile. In such cases, removal can harm the integrity of a historic property's design, or cause significant damage to its materials.
- outstanding examples of the signmaker's art, whether because of their excellent craftsmanship, use of materials, or design.
- local landmarks, that is, signs recognized as popular focal points in a community.
- elements important in defining the character of a district, such as marquees in a theater district.

—From *Preservation Brief 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs*

Neon Museum of Philadelphia
c/o 860 N. 26 St.
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Not a museum in Philadelphia, but a museum all over Philadelphia. The museum restores neon signs in danger of being lost; then places them on long-term loans in diners, bars, restaurants, and other appropriate establishments throughout the city. The signs remain in a commercial environment, retaining an integrity of setting that could not be matched in a traditional museum. For a list of "exhibits," contact the museum.

Archives, Collections, and Other Research Materials

Curt Teich Postcard Archives
Lake County Museum
Lakewood Forest Preserve
Wauconda, IL 60084
708-526-8638

This is the industrial archives of the Curt Teich Company of Chicago, which operated from 1898 through 1974 as the world's largest printer of postcards. The company saved examples of every image printed. A computer database holds over 360,000 image records indexed by location, date and subject. The collection covers all 50 states, all Canadian Provinces, and some foreign countries. The museum encourages research inquiries by telephone and mail, and provides a photographic reproduction service.

Detroit Publishing Co.

Another major postcard publisher during the late-19th and early-20th centuries, its collection of photographs is divided into two parts. Approximately 10,000 views of cities and towns east of the Mississippi are housed at the *Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division*. The collection has been transferred to videodisc, and can be searched by location and topic. *The Colorado History Museum Library* holds approximately 8000 views taken west of the Mississippi.

Library of Congress
Prints and Photographs Division
First and Independence Avenues, SE
Washington, DC 20540
202-707-5836

Colorado History Museum Library
Colorado Historical Society
1300 Broadway
Denver, Colorado 80203-2137
303-866-4600

Outdoor Advertising Association of America Archives
Fairleigh Dickinson University
Florham-Madison Campus Library
Madison, NJ 07940
201-593-8532; Fax: 201-593-8525

This is the official repository of the Outdoor Advertising Association of America records, an enormous reference collection on the outdoor advertising industry, including signs of all types as well as posters. The collection comprises over 50,000 slides dating from 1942, 10,000 photographs, and more than one million images in over 3,000 monographs and exhibit catalogs from the 19th century to the present.

This hanging pig is delightful, even without its neon. Holes show where tubing was attached. It has been a local landmark in Baltimore's Fells Point neighborhood for over 50 years. Photo by Michael J. Auer, 1992.

Publications and Videotapes

Periodicals

Periodicals published by professional organizations are listed under **Organizations,** above.

Identity
ST Publications Inc.
407 Gilbert Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45202
513-421-2050

Published four times a year "for specifiers and customers of sign and corporate graphics." Occasional features on repair and re-use of historic signs. Sponsors an annual "Sign User Conference."

Sign Business
National Business Media
1008 Depot Hill Office Park
Suite 104
Broomfield, CO 80020
303-469-0424

Magazine for the commercial sign business. Occasional pieces on historic signs and techniques, especially historic neon in the western United States and Canada.

SignCraft
P.O. Box 06031
Ft. Myers, FL 33906
813-939-4644

Published six times a year since 1980 "for the commercial sign shop."

Signs of the Times
ST Publications Inc.
407 Gilbert Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45202
800-925-1110

"The industry journal since 1906." Appears monthly except semi-monthly in November. Occasional "cover stories" on gold-leaf, porcelain enamel and other items related to historic signs; regular column on neon techniques.

Books

Old photographs of city streets offer a great deal of information on historic signs. The following collections reproduce hundreds of photographs: ***Chicago at the Turn of the Century in Photographs; Main Street, U.S.A. in Early Photographs (ca. 1890-1915); Old New York in Early Photographs (1853-1901); Old Boston In Early Photographs (1850-1918); Old Brooklyn in Early Photographs, 1865-1929; Old Philadelphia in Early Photographs (1839-1914); Old Washington, D.C. in Early Photographs (1846-1932); San Francisco in the 1850s.*** Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.

Atkinson, Frank H. ***Atkinson Sign Painting.*** Cincinnati: ST Publications, 1983. (Orig. published, 1909). Reproduces 75 complete alphabets and 96 Art Nouveau/Art Deco designs.

Fraser, James. ***The American Billboard: 100 Years.*** New York: H.N. Abrams, 1991. Surveys the history of billboards in America, including wartime posters and classic advertising campaigns. 166 illustrations, including 150 color plates.

The Gilder's Manual. Washington, DC: The Society of Gilders, 1991. (Reprint of ***The Gilder's Manual; A Practical Guide to Gilding in All its Branches.*** New York: Excelsior Publishing House, 1876). Manual of historic gilding practices and techniques.

LeBlanc, Raymond. ***Gold Leaf Techniques.*** Rev. by Arthur O. Sarti and Kent H. Smith. Cincinnati: ST Publications, 1986. Details basic procedures for goldleafing window signs, wood, and glue-chipped glass.

Liebs, Chester. ***Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture.*** Boston: Little, Brown and

*(**Signs**—continued on page 48)*

(*Signs—continued from page 47*)

Company/ New York Graphics Society, 1985. Landmark study of roadside architecture.

Martin, H.C. ***1000 Practical Show Card Layouts.*** Cincinnati: ST Publications, 1984. Reprints 1928 edition of historic show card designs.

Mitchell, Robert. ***The Art of Glue-Chipped Glass Signs.*** Rev. by Rick Glawson. Cincinnati: ST Publications. Techniques, materials and procedures for adapting the process of making glue-chipped glass signs.

Stage, William. ***Ghost Signs: Brick Wall Signs in America.*** Cincinnati: ST Publications, 1989. Excellent study of brick wall signs and the people who painted them. Superbly illustrated, with an informative and witty text.

Stern, Rudi. ***The New Let There Be Neon.*** New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1988. (Orig. published in 1979 as ***Let There Be Neon***). Traces the history and uses of neon; excellent illustrations, particularly of neon "spectaculars"—the large signs that made Times Square and, later, Las Vegas, famous throughout the world.

Pamphlets/ Booklets

Auer, Michael J. ***Preservation Brief 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs.*** Discusses historic sign practices, sign regulation, repair and reuse. Order from Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325. GPO stock number: 024-005-01086-6; $1.00 per copy. (25% discount available for orders of 100 or more sent to the same address.)

National Main Street Center. ***Main Street Guidelines: Signs for Main Street.*** Washington, DC; National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1987. Well-illustrated guidelines for signs in historic business districts. Booklet: $10; booklet and accompanying slide/tape presentation of 122 slides: $50. Contact: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036; 202-673-4219.

Phillips, Peter H. "Sign Controls for Historic Signs." ***PAS Memo,*** November 1988. Offers a balanced approach to sign controls that incorporates sign preservation. ***PAS Memo*** is a monthly publication of the Planning Advisory Service, a subscription research service of the American Planning Association, 1313 E. 60th St., Chicago, IL 60637; 312-955-9100.

Videotapes

Neon, An Electric Memoir. A film by Ken Ketter and Rudy Buttignol, written by John Frizzell with Jackie Burroughs. Traces development of neon in North American art, architecture and commerce. 25 minutes. Available from ST Publications, Book Division, 407 Gilbert Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45202; 800-925-1110.

State/Local Initiatives on Historic Signs

Neon in Nevada

In 1989 the Nevada Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology surveyed neon throughout the state. The project also led to an traveling exhibit entitled ***Neon Nights,*** a beautifully illustrated booklet accompanying the exhibit, and a publicity poster.

The Division undertook the project because of the historic role neon has played in the state's gaming industry. By celebrating distinctive neon signs and other elements of buildings, the Division hoped to foster an appreciation for these resources, and thus to promote their preservation. Elements of the survey inventory and conclusions are currently being integrated into the revised ***Nevada Comprehensive Preservation Plan*** (3rd ed., forthcoming 1993 est.).

Assistance Needed

The National Alliance of Preservation Commissions is requesting information on historic sign surveys conducted or planned by local governments. Write to: National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, Hall of States, 444 North Capitol St., NW, Suite 332, Washington, DC 20001, or contact Pratt Cassity, Executive Director, at 404-542-4731.

Printed on recycled paper

Michael J. Auer, Ph.D., is a preservation program specialist, Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, Washington, DC.

CRM

VOLUME 16 • NO. 6

Cultural Resources
Washington, DC

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Cultural Resources
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE $300

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Postage & Fees Paid
U. S. Department of the Interior
G-83