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NPS 75th Anniversary Readings

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

Reflections on Historic Preservation and the National Park Service: The Early Years

Frederick L. Rath, Jr.

When Tom Vint, the chief landscape architect of the National Park Service, wrote an article about master plans for the American Planning and Civic Association in 1946, he quite properly started it by pinning down for all time the inventor of the term. It was Director Horace Marden Albright, at a meeting of Park Service superintendents in 1932, who explained the new approach that would guide the development of all parks and monuments; at the end he remarked laconically, "They are sort of a Master Plan." The term caught on immediately, for, as Vint said, "It is expressive, is short, and has worked." continued on page 3

Ford Mansion (Washington's headquarters, 1779-80), Morristown National Historical Park, NJ. Morristown became the first national historical park on March 2, 1933. Photo by Jim Holcomb, 1988. Inset shows the building as it appeared in the 1930s. The three dormer windows on the roof were removed during a later restoration because they were not appropriate to the structure's 1779-80 appearance. Photos courtesy Morristown NHP.

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We are pleased to present in our supplement to this issue of *CRM* articles written especially for this publication to mark two important events being celebrated this year–the 75th anniverary of the establishment of the National Park Service and the 25th anniversary of the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act. Fred Rath, former National Park Service historian, first director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and former deputy State Historic Preservation Officer for New York, tells the story of the early years and personalities of historic preservation in the National Park Service. Jim Glass, architectural historian, preservation consultant, and former HABS field supervisor discusses the impact of the National Historic Preservation Act on historic preservation in the Federal Government, the states and in the local communities. Together these authors have given *CRM* readers a unique account of the inception and growth of historic preservation programs in the United States.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 75 1916 - 1991

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICERS 25 NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES 1966–1991

Reflections on Historic Preservation and the National Park Service: The Early Years

(Continued from page 1)

The article has reminded me of the great formative years of the Service, especially in relation to what has come to be known as cultural resource management. And it has prompted me to supplement the necessarily brief review of those developments by Barry Mackintosh as well as the minibiographies offered in the new publication, *National Park Service: The First 75 Years*, published as part of the Service's 75th anniversary celebration.

The story revolves around Horace Marden Albright, the central figure in bringing history to the Service, but the roots of the movement and the many people who played significant roles throughout the years prior to the outbreak of World War II are worthy of further mention. The movement includes not only Park Service personnel but also men and women who lent their influence, their ideas, and their expertise to the Service to create one of the great systems for the preservation of a Nation's historic heritage. It has become a model internationally.

Chief Historian Edwin Bearss recently pointed out an interesting antecedent to the surge in the early 1930s that brought historians into the Service. John Batchelder, an enthusiastic military historian, arrived on the battlefield at Gettysburg shortly after the action ended. In the following year he was employed by the Gettysburg Battlefield Monument Association as its historian; he spent the rest of his life talking to veterans, collecting primary research material, and documenting troop movement maps. Batchelder's stress on research-in-depth, a principle also laid down in the 19th century by Francis Parkman, et al., became a tenet of later Park Service practice. As the century moved to a close, interest in the Civil War battlefields rose and in 1890 Chickamauga/Chattanooga and Antietam were authorized by Congress; Shiloh (1894), Gettysburg (1895), and Vicksburg (1899) followed.

They were forerunners of a rising interest in the past on another front. In the early years of the 20th century antiquarians and anthropologists alike found a leader in the movement to stop the destruction of the Indian ruins in the Southwest in Congressman John Lacey of Iowa. He was largely responsible for passage of the Antiquities Act of 1906, as well as the legislation creating Mesa Verde National Park. Horace Albright astutely noted later that Lacey "was far ahead of his time in demanding protection for prehistoric sites and artifacts in the public domain." The legislation introduced a new implement to protect historic sites on public lands–Presidential proclamation. One result was that the act setting up the Park Service in 1916 transferred to the new agency administrative responsibility for Mesa Verde and seven national monuments of historical and archeological interest.

When Horace Albright came to Washington from California in the summer of 1913 to serve as an assistant in the Department of the Interior, he followed the advice of Henry David Thoreau who "traveled much in the town of Concord." He traveled much in the District of Columbia and environs, and mostly to historic sites and places where the years had left their mark. It can be assumed too that he also was well aware of the three conferences, in 1911, 1912, and 1915, that called for the establishment of a bureau of national parks. In this he was joined by the man he would call for the rest of his life "Mr. Mather," Stephen Tyng Mather, Chicago industrialist and philanthropist, one of the great conservationists of his day.

In 1916, five years after the legislation to create the National Park Service was introduced in Congress, Albright, trained as a lawyer, worked with those re-framing the proposed legislation and seized upon wording proposed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to define the purpose of the Service: "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein." The two words, "historic objects," opened a door that Albright took into the future.

Horace Albright was always quick to point out that Mr. Mather was a man with a deep respect for the past, an attitude that surely came from his distinguished ancestry: the first Mather came to New England in the 17th century. But he gave the historic preservation movement little support; he stressed natural conservation in the early years. Mr. Mather, Albright said, wanted the Service to be active *eventually* in the protection and administration of historic areas and structures.

When establishment of the Park Service was authorized on August 25, 1916, Albright decided to concentrate on the possibility of transferring custodianship of the military parks to the new agency and in the first annual report, written in the absence of his ailing boss, he posed the question. The idea lurked through the years and the patient Albright was able to get the Secretary of War to agree to the transfer in 1924. But there was no Congressional support until 1929; even then the House Military Affairs Committee failed to consider the measure.

By that time Horace Albright was second director of the Service; Mr. Mather's illness at the end of 1928 led to Albright's appointment on January 12, 1929. The new director immediately declared that his job would include going "rather heavily into the historical park field." In relatively quick succession he set up a Branch of Research and Education after naming an Educational Advisory Committee to advise on historical policy matters (1929); then, with vital assists from Congressman Louis Cramton, in 1930 obtained the legislation for the creation of George Washington Birthplace National Monument and Colonial National Monument. And on March 2, 1933, the first national historical park was set up in Morristown, New Jersey.

In the year after Albright became director three men whose thoughts and actions were to influence historic preservation greatly were hired. In 1930 Charles E. Peterson was hired as a landscape architect. In the years ahead he would become a restoration architect, architectural historian vital in the creation of a preservation philosophy and of professional preservation practices, and principal promulgator of the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1933. In July 1931 Elbert Cox was hired and stationed at Colonial, one of the first two field historians in the Service; and in

August Verne E. Chatelain became in effect the chief historian. Chatelain, a professor of American history who had served as the assistant director of the state historical society in Minnesota, came to the Service with a clear sense of the importance of the physical historic site. He soon had a vision, shared with Albright, of a system of parks and monuments that stressed the large patterns of the American story. By 1932 he was able to suggest to a conference of Service executives that no park or monument "should be entirely free of historical activities," a stunning idea for all those who thought of national parks only in terms of their scenic and scientific values. By April 1933 in a report to Assistant Director Arthur Demaray he was able to go further: "the sum total of the sites which we select should make it possible for us to tell a more or less complete story of American history." He is, I am happy to note, still alive and has seen his prediction come true.

In the same month and year Horace Albright moved toward the realization of his dream. On Sunday the ninth, on the return trip to Washington from the Rapidan camp bequeathed to the country by outgoing President Herbert Hoover, he and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a local history enthusiast who would lend a friendly ear to the Park Service until the end of his life, discussed placing all Federal sites and monuments in the Service. The President's quick acquiescence to Albright's proposals resulted in the executive order effective on August 10 that authorized the transfer. On the same day Arno B. Cammerer, longtime associate director and yet another enthusiast for preservation, became director; Horace Albright accepted a position in private industry that allowed him to remain active in conservation and preservation.

The great emergency relief programs set up in the first hundred days of the new presidency were immediately applied to the vastly expanded program of the Service. One result was that there came to the Service in the summer of 1933 a group of historians who would help to merge the interdisciplinary preservation program with the master plan concept at its center. One among them moved rapidly onto center stage. Ronald F. Lee was a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) historian at Shiloh in 1933-34; he then became one of Chatelain's assistants and worked on research projects connected with the drafting of the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which set up an Advisory Board and outlined a set of regulations and procedures to govern the enforcement of the act. There followed a position under Conrad Wirth, who was directing the activities of the ECW (Emergency Conservation Work), a part of the Civilian Conservation Corps; Lee became historian for the State Park Division, which led to his taking charge of a national program of research. In the summer of 1936 he returned to Washington, again under Chatelain, in the Branch of History. Chatelain, however, was having difficulties with Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, who throughout his long incumbency gave full support to the preservation cause but who was at best a difficult man to please. Chatelain's resignation in September 1936 was almost inevitable, but he left behind him an historic preservation program almost fully realized. Lee continued to serve in the Branch of History under acting assistant director Branch Spalding until May 1938 when Spalding decided that he preferred to go back to Fredericksburg National Military Park. Lee succeeded him and with great tact and diplomacy worked successfully with the "Old Curmudgeon" throughout his secretaryship. In the years prior to World War II Lee expanded and strengthened the historic preservation program. He also had significant help from the Advisory Board, which included such strong and influential characters as Fiske Kimball, Waldo G. Leland, Hermon C. Bumpus, and Indiana's Col. Richard Lieber, "the conscience of the early

Headquarters building, Mesa Verde National Park, AZ, constructed between 1920 - 1930. Photo courtesy Mesa Verde NP. (Watch for more on Mesa Verde's early architecture in a future CRM.)

board" and "a fierce advocate of unvarnished historic truth" according to Charles Hosmer.

In the summer of 1937 Elbert Cox, the park superintendent in Morristown who already had six years of experience in the Service and was successfully bringing to fruition the comprehensive interdisciplinary program, offered me what was known as a temporary-seasonal job. With no other job prospect in sight I stopped my graduate studies in American history at Harvard to test the waters of what I came to call roadside education. Three professors–Arthur Meier Schlesinger, Frederick Merk, and Paul Buck as well as author and critic, Bernard DeVoto–were involved in the decision. Schlesinger and his co-editor of a great social history series, Dixon Ryan Fox, were social historians keenly aware of the implications of the New Deal programs. Merk was a student of Frederick Jackson Turner, and he appreciated the potential for understanding American history that the Park Service might offer. Buck had written his master's thesis on the Service early in the 1920s. DeVoto was slated to go on the new Advisory Board to the Service. And, probably most important, fellow student Harold R. Shurtleff, an architect who was brushing up on his American history because he had become chief of research at Colonial Williamsburg and told us about the Service program and personnel at Yorktown and Jamestown.

In the next seven months as ranger-historian (i.e., as low man on the totem pole), I learned firsthand not only what was happening in setting up the interdisciplinary program; I met many of the principal characters who in addition to those mentioned above were active in an exciting cross-fertilization of ideas and practices. There was, for example, Herbert Kahler, principal assistant to Lee and a great stabilizing force who would eventually become chief historian; Melvin Weig, the historian who was my immediate boss, who daily taught me much; and the visiting "firemen," experts like Peterson, who were the pioneers in laying down the applications of their disciplines to cultural resource management, among them Tom Waterman in architecture; Jean ("Pinky") Harrington, a pioneer in making the profession of historical archeology a recognized branch of scholarly investigation; Ned Burns, who directed the Service museum laboratory and wrote the *Field Manual for Museums*, which laid out paths for interpretation to the public that are still followed today. I heard about and sometimes even briefly met other men and women who were important in the movement in the formative years. There was Louise du Pont Crowninshield, who became president of the Wakefield National Memorial Association and later helped a fine regional historian, Ed Small, in Salem; and still later was a founder of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, where she taught me to appreciate the role that interested and knowledgeable citizens could play in the development of the new combination of disciplines.

There was Arthur Demaray, who could always be depended on to give "continuity of support, . . . encouragement, and. . . vision of what might be done" on behalf of historic preservation in the Service, according to Ronald Lee. Charles Peterson later added his opinion that Demaray was a linchpin in the development of cultural resource management throughout his many years in the Service. There was John D. Rockefeller, Jr., friend of Horace Albright and generous contributor to many Service projects and through Colonial Williamsburg a key figure in the development of cultural resource management. There was Aubrey Neasham, a regional historian of distinction, who contributed on many fronts and left a lasting thought in the minds of all those involved in preservation activities by advocating in 1941 the setting up of a national, nonprofit, private organization that would be ready in the wake of World War II to give added strength to the movement now so strongly under way. There was, finally, George McAneny, distinguished New Yorker and preservationist, who with Horace Albright and Ronald Lee picked up Neasham's challenge in 1946; they became principals in the movement to create the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Obviously, it was a great cast of characters who learned to define and practice cultural resource management as a team, not as individuals. They laid the foundations for a Park Service with a well-rounded program for historic preservation that was truly national and ultimately international. □

Author's Note: Had it been possible, Professor Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., author of the great three-volume history of the historic preservation movement, would have been co-author of this article. But the deadline for submission and our schedules and other commitments made the collaboration impossible. So I turned to his volumes, as everyone dealing with historic preservation before 1950 must, and I wove my own observations and my own memories of the people who seemed important around his research. He and Marian Albright Schenck, Elbert Cox, Herbert Kahler, and Barry Mackintosh also checked the manuscript for factual error and I am grateful.

Frederick L. Rath, Jr., was historian at Fort Pulaski and Vicksburg, 1939-41, after his introduction to the National Park Service at Morristown. He then had four years in American Field Service and Army Intelligence, after which he became the historian at Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS. Nominated by the Service to be executive secretary of the new National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings in 1948, he became the first director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949. From 1956 on, he never lost his interest in the Service and Eastern National Park And Monument Association, of which he was a founding member. Since 1987 he has been involved with research, writing, lecturing, and dealing with his personal historic preservation collection of more than 50 years. Publication of a book with David Muench, *History on the Land*, tracing the major patterns and events in American history from the Bering Strait some 20,000 years ago to the last shot into space from Cape Canaveral solely through units of the National Park Service, is pending. Mr. Rath's honors include the Conservation Service Award of the U.S. Department of the Interior and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from the State University of New York. In 1989 he was awarded the National Trust for Historic Preservation's highest honor, the Louise Du Pont Crowninshield Award.

Impacts of the National Historic Preservation Act: A 25th Anniversary Assessment

James A. Glass

Twenty-five years ago this fall, the 89th Congress passed Public Law 89-665, the National Historic Preservation Act. On October 15, 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the act, which set into motion a national program to promote historic preservation in the United States to an extent far beyond that of any previous Federal legislation. During the next quarter-century, the National Historic Preservation Act transformed the ways in which the Federal government, the states, local communities, and the preservation movement at large approach historic preservation.

The Trust believes . . . in the educational value of historic sites and buildings, and views them as a means of public instruction and patriotic inspiration.[8]

– Statement of Purpose of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1964

Impacts on the Federal Government

One of the chief objectives of the preservationists who sought passage of the Historic Preservation Act [1] was to stop the destruction of historic buildings and important archeological sites by the Federal government itself. Section 106 of the 1966 legislation required all Federal agencies to afford the new Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on any undertaking that the agencies financed or licensed prior to approving funds or licenses and to take into account the effect of such undertakings on any properties listed in the National Register.

In 1966, the only Federal agency or bureau that possessed a historic preservation program or regularly considered historic preservation or archeology in its policies was the National Park Service. The situation changed rapidly during the next ten years. The Advisory Council's authority to compel agencies to submit projects for Section 106 review was established almost immediately, with successful reviews of a federally-financed highway project in Las Trampas, New Mexico in 1967; an urban renewal project involving the Beale Street historic district in Memphis, Tennessee, also in 1967; a proposed heating and cooling tower that would have impinged on the character of the Georgetown historic district in Washington, D.C., in 1968; and a proposed elevated expressway ramp along the edge of the famed Vieux Carre district in New Orleans, in 1969.

Although the Council's comments on each project were only advisory, in each case, the Federal agency involved agreed to modify project plans to reduce substantially the adverse effect on the historic district affected. Slowly, the multitude of agencies engaged in construction or development projects began to submit project plans to the Council.

The protective provision of the Historic Preservation Act was greatly strengthened by parallel pieces of legislation that the environmental movement persuaded Congress to pass in the late 1960s. In 1966, at the same time that the preservation act was being considered, opponents of the destructive effects of Federal highway construction on parks, recreation areas, wildlife refuges, and historic sites inserted a protective provision in the act creating the Department of Transportation. Section 4(f) of the act required the new department to investigate all feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of such properties and to undertake "all possible planning to minimize harm" to the properties. The 4(f) mandate forced the Federal highway program to meet a more stringent standard than Section 106, and contributed strongly to restraining the destruction of historic properties and archeological sites by highway projects.

Concern over the destruction of the human environment peaked in Congress with the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970. The act required Federal agencies to prepare environmental impact statements or assessments for any project that they financed or licensed that might have an effect on the natural or cultural environments. The administration of President Richard M. Nixon subsequently developed its own environmental program, and advocates of historic preservation at the National Park Service and the Advisory Council were able to persuade the President's staff to include historic preservation in the Nixon environmental package.

The Advisory Council was designated by the new Council on Environmental Quality to review Federal environmental impact statements to assure that effects on historic properties and archeological sites had been considered. In May 1971, President Nixon signed Executive Order 11593, which required all Federal agencies to survey lands and buildings that they owned or controlled and to nominate historic properties or significant archeological sites to the National Register. The order also required agencies to submit projects for Section 106 review by the Advisory Council that affected properties eligible for the National Register, as well as those affecting properties already listed in the Register. The extension of protection to eligible properties significantly broadened the scope of Section 106 and the potency of the Advisory Council's reviews.

Faced with the additional mandates of the executive order, the principal land-holding and grant-making Federal agencies slowly began to incorporate historic preservation considerations into their procedures. Through aggressive "missionary work" by the National Park Service and the Advisory Council, departments and bureaus appointed

historic preservation officers and hired professional staff to carry out the directives of the order.

The scope of compliance with Section 106 expanded beyond the agencies that had aroused the opposition of preservationists before 1966–the Department of Transportation, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and General Services Administration–to include the Department of Defense; Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; U.S. Forest Service; Department of Commerce; and the several large land-holding bureaus in the Interior Department, including the National Park Service itself.

The Advisory Council issued procedures and regulations that guided agencies in complying with Section 106. By the late 1970s, a host of independent Federal agencies, such as the Interstate Commerce Commission, Tennessee Valley Authority, Veterans Administration, and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, had begun to comply with the regulations. Many larger agencies, such as the Departments of Defense and Transportation, issued their own procedures and regulations for abiding by the requirements of Executive Order 11593 and new amendments to the Historic Preservation Act, approved in 1980. The 1980 amendments incorporated into the act most of the provisions of the executive order.

The "high water mark" of regulating Federal undertakings that affected historic properties and archeological sites was reached during the administration of President Jimmy Carter in the late 1970s. After 1980, a popular backlash against Federal regulations, symbolized by the election and re-election of President Ronald Reagan, forced the Advisory Council to streamline its regulations. Domestic Federal agencies saw their budgets for historic preservation compliance cut. Only a few agencies had money to spend on historic preservation or archeology.

In spite of the receding popular enthusiasm for regulations such as those of Section 106, consideration for historic properties and archeological sites has continued to take hold in the Federal bureaucracy. Today, over 20 agencies or bureaus have adopted internal procedures or regulations for historic preservation. Many now have professional staffs who coordinate their compliance efforts. The State Historic Preservation Officers (see following section), who now perform most of the compliance work connected with Section 106, review approximately 100,000 cases each year.[2]

Impacts on the States

In 1966, few states possessed historic preservation programs. A handful of state historical societies, such as Wisconsin and Minnesota; historical commissions such as Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Texas; and departments of archives and history, such as North and South Carolina, had acquired historic sites, begun state inventories of historic places, or started historical marker programs. However, no State afforded protection to historic properties from the effects of state-financed projects, and very few states with preservation programs provided grants for preserving properties that were not state-owned. Most states did not sponsor archeological activities or protect archeological sites from disturbance or destruction.

In 1966, the National Park Service had envisioned the National Historic Preservation Act as a "pump-priming" mechanism. Under Section 101 of the act, matching grants would be made to the states and territories to assist in the identification, registration, and preservation of historic properties and important archeological sites. Given the prospect of receiving half of the cost of conducting historic preservation programs, the states would be stimulated to appoint liaison officials, hire staffs, and appropriate state funds. The cost of carrying out the new emphasis in the act on preservation of properties of state and local importance would be shared by the Federal and state governments. Decisions would be made primarily at the state level.

> ***The new preservation must look beyond the individual building and individual lankmark and concern itself with the historic and architecturally valued areas and districts which contain a special meaning for the community.[9]***
>
> ***- Findings of the Rains Committee, 1966***

Within a year after passage of the 1966 legislation, all 50 states had appointed state liaison (later historic preservation) officers to head their historic preservation programs. Despite anemic Federal appropriations during the first three years after 1966, the states retained their interest in the preservation act. In 1969, the state preservation officers formed a national organization, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, to lobby Congress for funds and to share common concerns. After the first sizeable appropriation of $4.5 million was distributed to the states in 1971, the effects of the new national preservation program became rapidly apparent in nearly every state.

The National Park Service, designated by the legislation as the Federal Government's agent in the national program, set standards and procedures for the state programs and apportioned the funds appropriated by Congress among the states. In order to meet Park Service standards and qualify for matching funds, each State either expanded the staff of its existing historical agency or added a preservation staff to a non-historical liaison agency. Gradually, as the 1970s passed, each state acquired a professional staff qualified to administer the National Historic Preservation Act.

One of the greatest impacts of the act in the states during the 1970s was a shift in emphasis within each state program away from the individual historic landmark or shrine to historic districts and other broadened environmental concepts of heritage. Another dramatic change in emphasis occurred as the Park Service stressed previously ignored architectural and aesthetic values in historic preservation. Every state hired architectural historians to meet Park Service staffing standards, and survey and registration efforts in each state came to be dominated by evaluations for architectural significance and aesthetic merits. (By late 1990, 78% of the listings in the National Register of Historic Places included

architecture as an area of significance and 81% of all listings claimed significance in architecture or engineering.)

The National Register itself became a valuable marketing tool within each state for historic preservation. Largely through the nominations made by the states, the Register grew from an initial listing of 800 National Historic Landmarks to a listing in 1991 of over 57,000 historic districts, buildings, structures, objects, and archeological sites. [3] The effect of so many listings has been to implant an awareness of local heritage and a sense of pride concerning local historic properties in thousands of communities across the United States.

The substantial increase during the 1970s of Federal matching funds for the acquisition or development (preservation) of historic properties, from approximately $2.7 million in fiscal year 1971 to approximately $28.3 million in fiscal years 1979 and 1980, spurred the rescue of hundreds of important properties. [4] Exacting standards set by the Park Service for the projects set examples for the appropriate treatment of historic buildings. After 1980, the Reagan Administration and Congress halted grant money for acquisition and development projects,[5] and tax incentives for the rehabilitation of income-producing historic buildings took over much of the role of stimulating the preservation of important properties.

Although not assigned a role in the protective Section 106 provision by the National Historic Preservation Act, the State Historic Preservation Officers found themselves quickly given a crucial part in protection. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation relied on the states to review Federal projects affecting historic properties and participate in the resolution of each case, together with the Federal agency involved and the Council. The States' defacto role was given legislative sanction by the 1980 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act. The importance of the State Historic Preservation Officers in making Section 106 effective steadily increased during the 1980s, as the Reagan Administration pressured the Advisory Council to delegate much of its review authority to the state officers.

A far-reaching result of the states' participation in Section 106 compliance was the establishment of an archeological program in every state. In order to assess the effects of Federal projects on significant archeological sites, each State had to hire qualified archeologists to ascertain whether significant sites were affected and to recommend mitigation measures in cases where important sites would be adversely affected. Without the requirements of Section 106 review, it is doubtful that many states would have expanded their staffs much beyond the historic preservation disciplines. The field of American archeology, therefore, owes much of its increased influence within each State to the National Historic Preservation Act.

A final contribution of the national program in each state sprang from the ambitious technical publication effort mounted by the Park Service nearly from the beginning. Particularly sweeping in its impact has been the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, first issued by the Service in 1976 as a basis for reviewing tax incentive rehabilitation projects and since re-issued and revised repeatedly. The Standards has become the fundamental philosophical guide to rehabilitating historic buildings for not only state staffs, but developers, contractors, local historic preservation commissions, and Federal agencies complying with Section 106 review. Since 1976, the Park Service has also issued a steady flow of manuals, briefs, and reports on building materials, preservation techniques, architectural surveys, archeological surveys and investigations, and other topics related to the professional conduct of historic preservation and archeology. These publications have helped to establish the National Park Service and the State Preservation Officers, who distribute them, as sources for authoritative technical information within the preservation movement.

> ***[The] sense of purpose [in this country], of national identity and destiny, is nourished by symbols from our past, reminders of our unique experiences and goals. The conservation of those symbols and their integration into our daily lives, is a vital national interest . . .*** [10]
>
> ***– "The National Historic Preservation Program Today," a report prepared by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in 1976***

After 25 years of Federal financial assistance to the states, much of the Park Service's objectives in 1966 have been realized. Every state now conducts a historic preservation program. The state programs have spread concern for properties of state and local importance throughout the nation. Preservation values have been nourished in local communities and implanted in the regional offices of many Federal agencies. Inspired by the example of the Federal legislation, many states have created parallel state laws that create state registers for historic properties and important archeological sites, protect historic properties from state-financed projects, or make available state grants for preservation projects. Although Federal financial assistance has diminished considerably since 1980, it is likely that the states will continue to promote historic preservation and archeology.

Impacts on Local Communities

Much of the agitation that existed in 1966 for new historic preservation legislation came from local communities. It was in cities and towns across the nation that cherished historic landmarks and neighborhoods were being destroyed by federally- sponsored programs and by the unrestrained destruction of city centers by American commerce and industry.

The new national preservation program provided financial incentives for the preservation of important historic properties and a legal mechanism in Section 106 that could be used by local preservationists to assure that municipal projects financed with Federal funds took historic properties into account. As state historic preservation programs were

organized, local preservationists saw to it that local landmarks and historic districts were nominated and listed in the National Register. Registered properties could qualify for matching grants to assist preservation efforts.

After the Tax Reform Act of 1976 provided Federal income tax incentives for the rehabilitation of registered properties, local preservationists and new converts to historic preservation, local developers and business investors, nominated additional historic properties to the Register. A boom in the rehabilitation of income-producing historic buildings occurred after the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 afforded generous tax credits for rehabilitation of National Register properties. In communities across the United States since 1977, major landmarks and downtown historic districts have come to life through some 14,000 rehabilitations fostered by tax deductions or credits.[6]

In 1966, a handful of large cities in the nation regulated alterations and demolitions of local historic properties and districts. The national preservation program indirectly fostered the adoption of additional local preservation ordinances and designation of local historic properties by stimulating greater awareness of preservation values at the local level. The awareness came as the new state programs provided matching grants to communities and publicized preservation through publications and technical assistance.

Matching grants to the National Trust for Historic Preservation under authority of the National Historic Preservation Act made possible a program in which the Trust promoted local ordinances. Through workshops, staff visits to towns and cities considering local legislation, and published guidelines, the Trust aided many communities during the 1970s in creating historic district and landmark commissions and boards. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation advanced the concept of local protection through distribution of a 1972 booklet on state preservation legislation, including state authorization of local preservation ordinances.

The 1980 amendments to the Historic Preservation Act authorized the National Park Service and the states to stimulate directly the creation of local historic preservation ordinances and designations. The certified local government provision of the amendments authorized local governments to participate in the registration and Section 106 aspects of the national program and offered matching grants to assist localities in establishing a local preservation system of protection. Since 1981, 632 communities across the nation have become certified local governments.[7]

Whether through matching grants to municipal governments for preservation projects, tax incentives to local developers, or matching funds to local governments for regulating threats to historic properties, the national program has affected considerably the nature and degree of historic preservation at the local level.

The preservation of [the Nation's] irreplaceable heritage is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for the future generations of Americans.[11]

–Amended preamble to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1980

Impacts on the Historic Preservation Movement

Since 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act has exerted great influence on the historic preservation movement in general. The act has influenced what is preserved, how it is preserved, why it is preserved, and who preserves it.

The chief advocates for the 1966 legislation–the blue- ribbon Rains Committee, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the National Park Service–all agreed that a "new preservation" was needed in the United States. While most American preservationists in the mid-1960s still devoted their energies to preserving single historic landmarks, times were changing. In urban areas particularly, interest was growing steadily in preserving whole districts, not just single, isolated buildings.

There was also growing interest among opinion leaders at the National Trust and Park Service in aesthetic and architectural values in historic preservation. When the National Park Service organized an Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) in 1967 to carry out its archeological and preservation mandates, architects and architectural historians were appointed to head the office itself and several key divisions and sections. The OAHP vigorously promoted a "New Preservation," which stressed historic districts, architectural and aesthetic values, and adaptation of historic buildings to new, economical, and compatible uses.

The "pump-priming" mechanism of matching grants to the States proved to be a reliable means of inculcating the New Preservation emphases in existing state staff people and inducing State Historic Preservation Officers to hire architects and architectural historians for new professional positions. The State staffs formed a historic preservation "cadre" who taught lay people in each State about the National Register, architectural significance, and historic districts.

As a result, buildings that local preservationists would have sought to preserve before 1966 because of their association with famous events or people were now singled out for retention because of their outstanding architectural designs or their association with famous architects. In addition, nominating historic districts to the National Register became the focus of the energies of many local preservationists, rather than seeking to gain public recognition exclusively for single landmarks, as had been the rule before 1966.

The National Historic Preservation Act also influenced decisions on what to preserve through the matching grants that it authorized for the National Trust. Matching Federal grants to the private national preservation organization rose from $300,000 in fiscal year 1970 to a high point of $5.4 million in fiscal year 1979. The Federal money made possible an array of educational and technical assistance programs at the Trust. Between 1969 and 1980, the Trust emphasized broadened environmental preservation concepts to its growing membership and to potential beneficiaries of such concepts.

Two of the Trust's most popular and successful efforts at educating the public about the values of the New Preservation were the Main Street demonstration project and the neighborhood conservation program. Main Street showed the merchants of commercial districts in small towns that the restoration of older commercial buildings could serve as a catalyst for revitalizing their businesses. The neighborhood conservation project arose during the 1970s in response to a substantial movement of young people back to live in the centers of the nation's cities. Old neighborhoods and historic districts often overlapped, and the Trust pointed out ways in which historic preservation could contribute to the rebirth of older residential areas.

The 1966 national preservation program also influenced American preservationists in how to preserve. From the beginnings of the American preservation movement, the preferred method of saving historic buildings had been to convert them into museums. In 1966 nearly every major city and many small towns boasted at least one house museum furnished in period antiques and dedicated to the memory of a distinguished local citizen. On a larger scale, a handful of museum villages, mainly in the eastern United States, sought to present life in a certain place as it had been lived at a particular point in the past.

The 1960s saw a slow revival of interest in living in old residential sections of cities. Georgetown in Washington, DC, Society Hill in Philadelphia, and College Hill in Providence all demonstrated that historic districts could be preserved by retaining their residential function. Environmentally-minded leaders of the preservation movement in 1966 found this phenomenon more practical than establishing museums in every landmark. They also found the experience of walking through a district inhabited by contemporary residents to be more satisfying than walking through a museum village peopled by guides.

The concept of "adaptive use" offered a "living" solution to the problem of preserving buildings or districts that were no longer suited to their original purpose, such as factories, warehouses, post offices, and stores. The national preservation program set up after 1966 stressed residential districts and adaptive use of historic buildings as part of the "New Preservation." During the 1970s workshops and conferences sponsored by the National Trust and the National Park Service explained how to "recycle" old buildings and conserve old neighborhoods. After 1976, the Tax Reform Act of that year and the 1981 Economic Recovery Tax Act furnished tax incentives for rehabilitating countless income-producing historic buildings in adaptive, living, and profitable uses.

The post-1966 preservation program also influenced why preservationists preserved. Under the old preservation program of the Park Service, the mandate of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 had been to preserve national landmarks for the "inspiration and benefit" of the American people. Historic buildings were valued chiefly for the patriotism and belief in American ideals that they engendered among visitors.

The living residential district and adaptive use preservation strategies promoted by the new national program marked a shift during the 1970s and 1980s away from inspirational and educational values toward pragmatic rationales. In an effort to broaden the appeal of historic preservation to the American public, the Park Service, Advisory Council, State Historic Preservation Officers, and National Trust stressed the contribution that rehabilitation of historic buildings could make to urban or small town revitalization. Preservation leaders praised the adaptive use of historic buildings as an energy- conservation measure and the rehabilitation of residential historic districts as a successful technique for neighborhood conservation.

The final major effect of the National Historic Preservation Act on the preservation movement involved the identity of those who preserved. In 1966, most preservationists were members of local or state historical societies, volunteers, and devotees of local history. During the 1970s, thanks to the funds funneled to the states, the number of professional preservationists increased substantially. The states and many Federal agencies hired professional architects, architectural historians, archeologists, and historians to meet the dictates of the Historic Preservation Act.

The two tax acts of 1976 and 1981 brought large numbers of developers and investors into the preservation movement for the first time. The listing of residential sections of cities as National Register historic districts and the Trust's neighborhood conservation program helped expand the movement to include residents of old neighborhoods and proponents of the heritage of ethnic and minority groups. The Main Street program converted small town business people into preservationists.

Throughout the past 25 years, the 1966 legislation and the program and other initiatives that it has spawned has contributed substantially to a diversification of values and backgrounds in the American preservation movement.

Some who know little about modern historic preservation sometimes refer to it as an elitist occupation. There was a time when this criticism was probably apt, but it is long past. Historic preservation is now an occupation for everyone. The whole Nation can celebrate the restoration of the Statue of Liberty, and the residents of a low-income neighborhood can enjoy the rehabilitation of their valued historic homes. An Indian tribe can use Section 106 of [the Historic Preservation Act] to protect its sacred remains and lands, and a civil engineering organization can use the National Register to commemorate the great works of its members.[12]

–"Twenty Years of the National Historic Preservation Act," the 1986 annual report of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Notes

1. For an account of the impulses, political forces, and personalities that contributed to passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, see James A. Glass, *The Beginnings of a New National Historic Preservation Program, 1957 to 1969* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1990), pp. 3-21.

2. The estimate of 100,000 cases was supplied by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

3. The 800 and 57,000 figures were supplied by the National Register Branch, Interagency Resources Division, National Park Service.

4. These approximate figures are based on an estimate by the Preservation Assistance Division, Washington office, National Park Service, that about 60% of the total grant funds distributed to the States between 1971 and 1981 was spent on acquisition and development grants.

5. An exception to the lack of acquisition and development grants during the 1980s occurred in 1983, when the Emergency Jobs Act provided funds for preservation grants on a one-time basis.

6. Information supplied by the Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service.

7. This represents the total of certified local governments as of January, 1991, based on information supplied by the Interagency Resources Division, Washington office, National Park Service.

8. From "The Purpose of the National Trust," in *Annual Report July 1, 1963 – June 30, 1964. National Trust for Historic Preservation* (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1964), p. 26.

9. *With Heritage So Rich: A Report of a Special Committee on Historic Preservation Under the Auspices of the United States Conference of Mayors With a Grant from the Ford Foundation* (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 207.

10. From Introduction to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, "The National Historic Preservation Program Today" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 1.

11. 16 USC 470, As Amended, Section 1 (b) (4).

12. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, *Twenty Years of the National Historic Preservation Act: Report to the President and the Congress of the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1986), p. 57. □

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NPS 75th Anniversary Readings

The 75th anniversary of the National Park Service is a good time for employees and others interested in the bureau to learn more about its history–its origins, its evolution, and some of its key people over the years. The following books will help them do so.

General

Everhart, William C. *The National Park Service*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983. 197 p. A former leader of NPS interpretation covers the highlights of the bureau's history and focuses on some of the key issues facing it and the parks.

Foresta, Ronald A. *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*. Washington: Resources for the Future, 1985. 382 p. A geographer analyzes the NPS as a bureaucracy and traces the forces shaping the evolution of the park system.

Hosmer, Charles B., Jr. *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981. 2 v., 1,291 p. Part Three of this broad survey (pages 469-806) recounts the major role of the NPS and its historical staff in the historic preservation movement.

Ise, John. *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961. 701 p. An older but still useful account focusing primarily on the natural parks.

Mackintosh, Barry. *The National Parks: Shaping the System*. Washington: National Park Service, 1991. 128 p. The NPS bureau historian discusses significant developments and trends in the growth of the park system. Chronological tables list all park additions through 1990.

Sontag, William H., ed. *National Park Service: The First 75 Years*. Philadelphia: Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1990. 64 p. A concise history of the bureau interspersed with biographical sketches of 36 key park employees and supporters from the 19th century to the present.

Biographical Accounts

Albright, Horace M., and Robert Cahn. *The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913-33*. Salt Lake City: Howe Brothers, 1985. 340 p. Albright recalls his key role in launching the bureau, his years as superintendent of Yellowstone (1919-29), and his term as director (1929-33).

Hartzog, George B., Jr. *Battling for the National Parks*. Mt. Kisco, N.Y.: Moyer Bell, 1988. 284 p. Hartzog's account of his colorful NPS career, including his service as Jefferson National Expansion Memorial superintendent (1959-62) and director (1964-72).

Shankland, Robert. Steve Mather of the National Parks. 3d ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976. 346 p. A lively biography of the charismatic founder and first director (1917-29).

Swain, Donald C. *Wilderness Defender: Horace M. Albright and Conservation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970. 347 p. A scholarly biography focusing on Albright's Park Service career and evaluating his role in the conservation movement.

Wirth, Conrad L. *Parks, Politics, and the People*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980. 397 p. Wirth's autobiography covers his service as NPS planner and administrator beginning in 1931 and culminating in his term as director (1951-1964).

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