

HISTORY AND HERITAGE IN PRESERVATION

by

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(Under the Direction of Mark Reinberger)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the evolution and relationship between history and historic preservation in the United States. Over the past 150 years, history has broadened in perspective and specialty, interpreting the past and reflecting key efforts of historic preservation.

Historiography reveals contemporary responses to past issues and the associated trends that influence historic preservation. While history has determined significance in federal, state and local legislation, the applications of preservation are more varied. Currently, history has a minor role in preservation practice; expressions of the past relate more closely to heritage. Heritage is a conceptual aspect of history based on identity and legacy that guides historic preservation today. This thesis considers historiography as well as historic significance and heritage in current historic preservation practice.

INDEX WORDS: History, Historic Preservation, Heritage, Significance, Historiography

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The role of history in historic preservation is complex; often evoking passionate emotion, critical thinking and various interpretations, but continually shaping the communities we inhabit today. The connection between history and historic preservation is seemingly obvious, but the relationship has not been examined in depth. While the academic discipline of history interprets the past, historic resources are conserved as evidence and symbols of the collective national narrative. History plays a role in historic preservation, but a variable and intricate one throughout the past in the United States. Contemporary preservation, however, increasingly functions to keep historic resources for architectural merit, economic potential and education. Is there any history left in historic preservation?

The initial concept of saving America's most valuable historic resources was based on European precedent but distinctly organized by grassroots citizens. The restoration theories of Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, John Ruskin and William Morris, although contrasting, guided the treatment of architectural materials until local interest groups formed to save important historic buildings. The foundation for this multidisciplinary movement has expanded in focus, resource types and methodology over the past one hundred and fifty years.

At the end of the nineteenth century, motives of patriotism and honor saved an exclusive number of national shrines before leaders such as William Sumner Appleton

extended historic preservation to include architectural appreciation.¹ Despite the selective attention once given only to sites such as Independence Hall and Mount Vernon, preservation grew to incorporate and value vernacular and alternative resources. Moreover, historic property considered significant today extends from interiors and objects to districts and corridors encompassing many different histories. Modern preservation now embraces not only buildings that are important to architecture and history, but also intangible cultural resources that impart a sense of heritage.

This thesis will examine the relationship between history and historic preservation in the United States. The role of history is examined from a chronological perspective, as historiography and then as a professional and legislative standard, as historic significance. History is also distinguished from and compared to heritage, and then considered in current preservation applications.

The scholarly discipline that strives to objectify the past guided, contributed and challenged the preservation movement. The traditional historic narrative justified nearly all early preservation efforts and has continually broadened in scope and prevailing viewpoints. The historiography of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries set the stage for an evolving view of historic interpretation and preservation application. Spanning the first patriotic efforts to the diverse applications presently used, history today holds an important but understated place in historic preservation.

Even with shifting values and interpretations of history, the past has diffused in contemporary preservation to balance many agendas. The business of historic preservation replaces history with a conceptual collective past, discussed more

¹ James M. Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England: Preservation, Progressivism, and the Remaking of Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

thoroughly as *heritage*. Heritage, as an extension and distortion of history, is defined in this thesis as the ideology attached to the past. This thesis will examine the changing role of history and explore the use of heritage in several preservation practices. A look at historic significance further explains the value judgments placed on the past.

The American understanding of the past changed throughout the nation's history, and these changes were readily incorporated into how preservationists discern value and importance. The standards for government designation and funding are contingent on the definition of "historic significance." The regard for professional guidelines supports historic preservation as a legitimate public policy, yet flexibility in determining what is (or is not) significant, reveals the evolving interpretations.

Today history can offer preservation an opportunity to better understand itself. History has influenced the theory and practice of historic preservation and directed the value judgments of significance and heritage. The multifaceted approaches preservation uses in designating and maintaining historic resources is a combination of individual and practical motivations, but history, nevertheless, has a part. Preservation includes professionals in urban planning, land-use, archaeology, museum studies, public policy, architecture, non-profit management and academia. History is an element that underlies many of these backgrounds and much of the work that preservation entails. Modern preservation has, to some extent, replaced the academic definition of history with the concept of heritage, yet intensified its use as a tourist commodity and economic development strategy. Though idealized in purpose, history can still offer preservation self-awareness and legacy, connecting our present communities with the past.

Chapter 2

HISTORIOGRAPHY

The American Heritage Dictionary defines historiography as the “principles, theories, or methodology of scholarly historical research and presentation.” The histories of history are an examination of the way in which historians interpreted and applied the past. In understanding the precedents and ideologies of academic history, the influences of history upon historic preservation can be revealed.

The parallel between historiography and historic preservation is not a linear chronology, but rather an undulating and sporadic comparison, likened to a dance. The lead male is history, while the woman is, appropriately, historic preservation. As the man and woman waltz over time, the pair completes the dance together, though each moves individually. Many steps are uniform and mutual, while at times the woman is dipped or solos on her own. This metaphor highlights the evolution of each discipline, yet emphasizes the delicate and fluid interaction between them.

Historical awareness in its present form began during the Renaissance.² The Renaissance, literally a rebirth of classical antiquity that focused on Greek and Roman texts, created a new culture connecting the past to the present. While written histories from the Middle Ages recorded previous administrative proceedings for kings or ministry officials, the medieval accounts focused only on archival research, producing elite

² David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 75, 391. Lowenthal points out that historical study began before the Renaissance “but not until the mid-fourteenth century, with Petrarch, did self-conscious concern about the rival merits of old and new become a dominant theme, first in Italy, then in France, and England.”

biographies.³ Under the inspiration of ancient historians such as Herodotus and Tacitus, the Renaissance inspired an original perspective on history, incorporating art, philosophy, architecture and humanities into articulations of the past. Niccolo Niccoli and Leonardo Bruni, two fifteenth century humanist authors, wrote of the similarities between the “ancients and moderns.”⁴ During this period, history in Europe advanced from a strict record of the past to a literary expression.⁵

Before the seventeenth-century, oral tradition translated the most common accounts of the past. As the influence of the printing press widened and literacy spread, history became a part of published literature. History expanded in content, accepted point of view and purpose even before being imported to colonial America.

Traditional American Narrative

By the time of the United States Centennial, Americans were writing political and military history based on Romantic era notions. Benson Lossing traveled to Revolutionary War sites recording historic events and popularizing the national myth, blending history and literature for the public. The revolutionary period provided a model history for America. The traditional American narrative became the singular history that lent unity, identity and legacy to the nation. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitutional Convention were recounted in political history; the heroic acts of citizen soldiers became memorialized in celebrations and monuments. The narrative linked admirable qualities and moral consciousness to the founding fathers and colonial events.

³ Ellen Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory: Writing America's Past 1880-1980* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

⁴ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 76-77.

⁵ George H. Callcott, *History in the United States: 1800-1860* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1980).

History written at this time originated in Virginia or New England and followed the growth of the nation from these exclusive locales, ignoring all other perspectives.⁶

The Civil War additionally demanded a unified view of American history after 1865. Celebrating the past intended to ease the bitter feelings of Reconstruction and reunite a divided country. The dominant history ignored the roots of partisan conflict and stressed revolutionary heroism and a cohesive nation bound together against England. The manipulation of history after the Civil War knowingly glossed over the painful portions with blind optimism. Because the war pitted American against American, these myopic interpretations were accepted and even desired.

The traditional American narrative influenced the first preservation efforts in the United States. The formation of historic preservation began in the nineteenth century and focused specifically on national symbols of the Revolutionary period, familiar to the historically aware public. The emotions attached to American history inspired fervent, religious-like patriotism as well as devotion to figures like George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson.

One of the earliest preservation endeavors in America involved local Philadelphians saving Independence Hall as the site of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.⁷ In 1813, demolition threatened the building and citizens argued for its overwhelming historic significance as well as the functional use of the space. Piecemeal restorations took place over the next two decades and the Assembly Room became a

⁶ Max Page and Randall Mason, *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 12. James W. Loewen also notes the widespread criticism of the traditional American narrative—history began in Boston, moved South, then West. Native American history was largely ignored until the twentieth century.

⁷ Charles B. Hosmer Jr., *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), 30.

museum.⁸ Independence Hall had no officially organized effort or lasting plan for preservation and is overlooked in the history of preservation. The Philadelphia landmark represented the birthplace of the nation and symbolized the democratic values that historians of the era recounted in their writing.

Despite this earlier localized effort to save an individual site, Mount Vernon was the benchmark start in the history of American historic preservation.⁹ Ann Pamela Cunningham led the cause to save the home of George Washington along the Potomac River and formally organized the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, delegating a leading woman from each state to organize local support. Cunningham appealed to the patriotic emotions of Americans throughout the South in newspaper editorials and letters. Mount Vernon was saved in 1857 through public fundraising and donations from wealthy supporters with the historic shrine becoming a house museum. The reverence for the first president helped to launch preservation as a worthy pursuit of historical association.

The history of preserving Mount Vernon has been extensively documented and scrutinized. The effort reflects the strong female leadership that defined the beginning of the movement as well as the elitism that still casts a shadow on historic preservation. The recognition of historic value in the plight to save Mount Vernon marked a level of cultural maturity in America and confirmed the established viewpoint of the national narrative.

⁸ Ibid, 31. John Haviland restored the interior woodwork of Constitution Hall in 1827 but two additions were demolished and the original steeple removed.

⁹ Ibid, 29-40. Early preservation efforts before Mount Vernon also included the Touro Synagogue, saved through individual donations in Newport, RI and the Hasbrouck House, saved by a court ruling. Private owners maintained Fort Ticonderoga and Monticello, and Nassau Hall at Princeton University was “retained” after a destructive fire, and then restored.

Similar to the efforts begun by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, local groups across the nation organized to rally around significant buildings threatened by progress or destruction. The successful model guided the organizational structure of other groups attempting to care for American history.¹⁰ The widespread interest in history also initiated local chapters of historical societies throughout each state.¹¹

The narrative of the United States developed from the need for a distinct national identity and soon combined with a scientific approach to history in the nineteenth century. History emerged as an established subject with inclusion in academic curriculum and the organization of local and professional groups. Traditional education, once limited to philosophy, science and mathematics, expanded to include history as a recognized social science. The Romantic notion of history was transformed into an objective study of the past.

Scientific History

The modern discipline of history developed in Germany in the late nineteenth century with theories attributed to Leopold von Ranke (1795- 1886). The objective theories of Ranke remain fundamental to modern history despite contentious philosophies that developed in the last one hundred fifty years. Ranke proposed an ideal of historical research using scientific and critical methods to evaluate sources. Through research

¹⁰ William Murtagh, *Keeping Time: the History and Theory of Preservation in America* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997), 28. Mount Vernon Ladies Association (MVLA) influenced the Ladies' Hermitage Association, but did not meet with the same level of success. The Robert E. Lee Memorial Association formed to save Stratford Hall Plantation, the birthplace of Robert E. Lee, while the MVLA also inspired the formation of the APVA and Valley Forge Association.

¹¹ Specialized groups also formed regional and national associations such as the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution, Colonial Dames, Sons of the Confederacy, etc.

denuded of theory or philosophy, he believed history would be *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, “exactly as it was.”¹²

Ranke’s scientific approach aimed to reveal the essential truths of the past and present unbiased history for further personal interpretation. Students of scientific history looked at the facts as an end in themselves, but like science, with the ability to reveal generalizations about the past. The scientific theory that Ranke imposed on history related to contemporary ideas explored by Charles Darwin and others. Scientific history borrowed terminology from biology as historians examined documents and tested meanings.¹³ The “evolution” of the past was inherent in facts and became apparent only after thorough, objective investigation. The philological emphasis on documentation and “abstention from moral judgment” allowed history to strive for objectivity while conveying the detailed information of previous events.¹⁴

American history developed from this prototype as many young historians traveled to Germany to learn. The intellectual community that thrived in German universities had no comparable counterpart in the United States and the cost of such education was significantly lower. Upon returning, historians exported the scientific history of Ranke and incorporated the philosophical naturalism and positivism applied by the natural sciences in the United States.¹⁵

Herbert B. Adams, a student of Ranke, was one of the first history professors appointed to an American university. Adams taught at Johns Hopkins University and

¹² Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), 63.

¹³ W. Stull Holt, *Historical Scholarship in the U.S. and Other Essays* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967).

¹⁴ Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹⁵ Iggers, *German Conception of History*.

was instrumental in establishing history as a professional discipline.¹⁶ He helped to found the first professional organization, the American Historical Association, in 1884 and worked to promote classroom instruction and the publication of scholarly writings. Academic history in the United States emulated Ranke, as schools adopted not only the German concepts of history, but also the seminar methods used in German classrooms.

Scholars, including Adams, adopted scientific history in the nineteenth century to develop the distinctly American narrative. As history became a mainstream discipline, nationalism immediately began motivating historic scholarship. When the connection with England was severed after the Revolutionary War, the United States looked to represent its new power and establish a national identity.¹⁷ By the Centennial, the written accounts of the founding fathers, or “great white men,” reflected the optimism of the centralized government and formed the basis for nineteenth century patriotism, historic preservation and eventually historical research.

Historic writing in the nineteenth century produced extensive multi-volume histories on a single subject by a single author.¹⁸ The origins of the nation became the sole topic of many comprehensive publications. For researchers, history was primarily American history, synthesized objectively in large complete works.¹⁹ It was not until the twentieth century that specialized monographs emerged as the most common scholarly writing. Traditional scientific history proliferated until sweeping societal changes called for a new historical perspective.

¹⁶ Holt, *Historical Scholarship*. Adams was one of only eleven university professors teaching history in the United States in 1901.

¹⁷ Bert James Loewenburg, *American History in American Thought* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972).

¹⁸ Holt, *Historical Scholarship*. Douglas Southall Freeman and Louis Gottschalk continued the tradition of multivolume comprehensive histories into the twentieth century with biographies on Robert E. Lee and Lafayette, respectively.

¹⁹ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*. General trends in historiography show a diminishing interest in classic antiquity.

New History

The theories of Ranke became the basis for later developments in historiography at the turn of the century. Industrialization and urbanization produced radical changes in historic thought, as modern society needed an innovative way of viewing the past.²⁰ New History, as it was termed, developed in the first twenty years of the twentieth century as a paradigm to critique traditional history and address present concerns. The emergence of economic, cultural and social relevance in history broadened the themes of the American narrative, shifting intellectual history into specializations and establishing relevant context.²¹ The field also became more professionalized as universities hired more history professors and additional organizations and journals were formed.

The Industrial Revolution prompted change not only in historiography but in all aspects of American life. A transformation from a simple rural existence to crowded urban conditions ensued with factory production and the development of the railroad. The Progressive reform movement responded to these rapid changes and growth with political reforms. Social and economic factors influenced historians' view of history as an evolution to modern society. As one recent scholar noted, the emerging view of history "shaped prevailing notions of where historians had been and where they should be going; it also reflected the ways in which contemporary politics and society were helping to set an agenda for American history."²² Progressivism expanded the singular national narrative to a history that included the masses. The shift from traditional "great white

²⁰ Paul Philippot, "Historic Preservation: Philosophy, Criteria, Guidelines, I" in *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 1996), 268.

²¹ Eric Foner, *The New American History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

²² Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory*.

man” history to a more complex view of influences and themes distinguished New History from “old” history and reinforced the existing political climate.

New History aligned with the Populist political movement and emphasized progress and dominant imperialism as motivating factors in the development of the United States.²³ The Populist platform advocated reform at a time when agricultural life was changing to mass production. The politics of progressives used history as a measure of comparison with the current period to advocate their agenda. Meanwhile, the Interstate Commerce Act and trust-busting legislation tried to counteract the inflated power of the railroads and manufacturing interests. History began focusing on labor and industry as well as the worker experience, interweaving economic and social ideas.

Immigration and accessibility motivated a change in historiography. Between 1901 and 1920, almost 15 million new immigrants came to America.²⁴ The opportunities in industry and the spread of new transportation all necessitated a need for identity in America, while the changing character of urban cities and rural farms made immigrants conscious of economic and social differences.²⁵ The history of individual immigrants diversified the national narrative yet bolstered the symbolism of opportunity in America. The advancements in technology and transportation increased the mobility of nearly every person throughout the country. Americans and new immigrants could see more of the country by train and later automobile, necessitating a new history to explain a more inclusive national character.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Federation for American Immigration Reform (www.fairus.org) Statistics for 1901-1910 peaked at 8,795,386 and in 1911-1920, 5,735,811 immigrants arrived in the United States.

²⁵ Thomas Bender, *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

In 1900, progressive historians attempted to explain contemporary society by looking beyond political history to social and economic influences in the past.²⁶ E.R.A. Seligman was a mentor to Charles Beard, the noted economic historian, and identified the historic framework that influenced modern industrialization. Seligman published a 1902 account that served as a blueprint for Beard's monograph on economic history.²⁷ Charles Beard wrote An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States (1913) asserting economics as one of the powerful forces behind early American politics. This new type of focus was revolutionary in theory, for the objectivism of scientific history neglected to analyze internal themes such as economics.

In 1912, James Harvey Robinson, a professor at Columbia University, published the essay collection The New History that critically assessed traditional historic research. A call for change in the way historians wrote history was monumental at the time and a direct result of industrialization. Robinson urged historians to use other social sciences as tools in understanding the past, marking the first push for interdisciplinary studies. Robinson and The New History still represent the synthesis of early twentieth century history with economic and social conditions.

Frederick Jackson Turner published material focused on the importance of the American frontier, asserting that history went beyond "political and constitutional developments."²⁸ He adapted economic themes of New History and scrutinized a specific aspect of United States history, the western frontier. Turner's books, including The Frontier in American History (1920) and The Rise of the New West (1906),

²⁶ James Davidson and Mark Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, Second edition. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982). Carl Becker, Frederick Jackson Turner, and Arthur Schlesinger were all prominent historians.

²⁷ Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory*.

²⁸ Davidson and Lytle, *After the Fact*.

celebrated the West and professed his “frontier thesis” as a major historical influence. Though his work excluded Native Americans and blacks, the epic narrative was central to the concepts of New History. Turner not only posited that the American frontier was a democratizing force but also made a case for research-based social history.²⁹

The rapid changes that took place at the turn of the twentieth century, including industrialization, urbanization and immigration expanded the scope of historic research and offered new themes beyond the traditional narrative. The chief contribution to New History scholarship was the monograph, a detailed account of an era or context within history. Frederick Jackson Turner and Charles Beard as well as Carl Becker were all noted for their monographs when originally published. With expanded social and economic themes, monographs produced by and for historians focused on singular aspects of United States history.

Along with the specialized monographs of history, this period saw the specialization of historic preservation in directions other than the narrative history of the founding fathers. In 1910, William Sumner Appleton created the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA), which preserved buildings of architectural importance as well as historic significance. The private organization spearheaded by Appleton accepted donations of money, photographs, archival material and even historic architecture. Appleton was instrumental in not only organizing and fundraising for preservation efforts but also documenting and restoring archetypal buildings throughout New England.³⁰ SPNEA saved the Boardman house, a well-

²⁹ Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory*.

³⁰ Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England*, 148. SPNEA documented the Norton House as an example of early domestic Connecticut architecture and also restored the Abraham Browne House in 1919.

preserved and unique architectural example in Saugus, Massachusetts in 1913.³¹ The value of the Boardman house and others extended beyond associative history to style and craftsmanship.

The context of historic preservation opened interpretation to sources beyond historic symbolism, broadening significance to include buildings of aesthetic and architectural distinction. By transcending age value, construction type and detail, preservation recognized the influences of culture and architecture as part of the historic meaning. The national narrative that focused on popular shrines soon included resources reflecting aspects of the average worker. New History, Progressive reforms and even the Arts and Crafts movement allowed historic preservation to expand, uniting areas of history, architecture and culture. SPNEA also preserved some of the more notable buildings in Boston to incite civic pride in new immigrants. The restoration of the Paul Revere house, “situated as it is in the very heart of the North End and surrounded by a foreign born population” meant to inspire. The shrine “will serve as a daily lesson to the youth...ideals of loyalty (and) simplicity.”³²

The restoration of Williamsburg, another meaningful point of reference in historic preservation, allowed the public to rediscover and recreate colonial America. Through the support and funding of John D. Rockefeller and the organization of W.A.R. Goodwin, the colonial capital of Virginia was restored in its entirety beginning in 1926.³³ This extensive restoration project created the first outdoor museum in the United States and represented the exhaustive efforts historic preservation was able to accomplish.

³¹ Hosmer, *Presence of the Past*, 244. “Unfortunately, Americans have yet to realize fully the architectural value of the antiquities saved by the ever-watchful Appleton.”

³² Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England*, 39.

³³ Charles B. Hosmer Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust 1926-1949* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1981).

During the restoration phase, archaeology located the sites of buildings and research informed historians of the architecture and lives of Williamsburg residents. The thorough documentation of the restoration committee set an academic standard and produced exacting replicas from the colonial period, over half of the buildings completely reconstructed.³⁴ The history of Williamsburg included every aspect of daily eighteenth century life in the Virginia capitol, as the comprehensive historic context covered a citywide scale. Williamsburg, displayed in homes, shops, the Governor's Palace and the Capitol offered a complete picture of a single period. The total reconstruction of an intricate eighteenth century society reflected the economic and social themes New History was asserting. The Williamsburg restoration, like Mount Vernon, reveals as much about the standpoint of historiography during the time of preservation, as the history of the resource itself.

The economic depression in the 1930s additionally transformed the view of history, as struggling Americans looked for a past to understand the desolate conditions of the country. History betrayed and disoriented those coping with unemployment who remembered the successes of the previous decade. The escapism in popular culture played to feelings of nostalgia as Americans longed for simpler and idyllic times. Though historic thought and theory continued to develop, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's social agendas took center stage.

The New Deal incorporated historians into work projects to offset rampant unemployment. In 1935, the Historic American Building Survey (HABS), created to

³⁴ Carl R. Lounsbury, "Beaux-Arts Ideals and Colonial Reality: The Reconstruction of Williamsburg's Capitol, 1928-34" in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 49, No. 4, December 1990, 373-89. However, architects rebuilt the 1707-05 capitol with symmetrical five-bay elevations facing east and west, despite archaeological evidence suggesting otherwise.

employ out of work architects and historians, began documenting historic buildings throughout the country. HABS produced measured architectural drawings, black and white photography and written historic research for each building documented. The New Deal program united the idea of historical documentation with the built environment, supporting the connection of history to historic preservation. This federal program is central to historic preservation and remains the standard documentation process for historic resources.

The Historical Division of the Farm Security Administration, another New Deal program, employed photographers to capture the plight of farmers and small businesses in America. The photography not only contributed to the historical record but also raised support for federal aid programs.³⁵ The New Deal established social programs to help the United States recover from economic depression, but also prioritized history as a valuable sociological field. The photographs and narratives of everyday Americans underscored the nostalgia for earlier uncomplicated days.

During the 1930s, the preservation movement also began aligning with environmental conservation. The integration of natural and cultural resources at national parks put together a complete recreational experience, composed of scenery, history and modern amenities. The National Park Service adopted government regulations to manage historic buildings along with natural resources. The park development era coincided with New Deal programs and employed the Civilian Conservation Corps to construct park headquarters, roadways and new national park facilities throughout the country. In 1933, the War Department also transferred all historic military sites to the National Park

³⁵ Barbara Shubinski, "The Mechanics of Nostalgia" in *Preservation of What for Whom?*, ed. Michael Tomlan (Ithaca, New York: National Council for Preservation Education, 1999), 61-72.

Service for administration. The merging of history with modern facilities and natural scenery, allowed the NPS to interpret local and unique resources and specialized aspects of American history.

The acceptable specializations within academic history further widened in the 1930s to include localized topics. Southern history was the expertise of C. Vann Woodward, who published extensive writings on the region.³⁶ The emphasis on sectional conflict, slavery and inequality served to categorize the area and glorify the Lost Cause and ruin of Reconstruction. Regionalism in the United States permeated the field of history, particularly the South, and added valuable scholarship.

New History offered a pluralistic alternative to the traditional narrative, emphasizing more subtle influences to context and evolution. As industrialization fueled rapid change in modern society, the complexities of history intensified and historic preservation became a process of interpretation. Soon the Second World War refocused scholarship and exploited history for different meanings.

Nationalism

In the period of World War II and its aftermath, history identified with expanding capitalism as democracy and public consensus renewed the national narrative. Historians attempted to find a usable past to counter the disillusionment of the war and replace conflict with commonality. The self-conscious perspective following the war grouped all Americans into a common experience. By ignoring class differences, the United States

³⁶ Woodward published *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* and *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction* in 1951. He taught at Johns Hopkins University and Yale University and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his edition of *Mary Chestnut's Civil War* (published 1981, awarded 1982).

redefined itself without social or ideological conflict. This consensus history made broad generalizations, bolstered by the war, to assert an exceptional American character and strong position in international policies.

The impacts of the war reoriented and homogenized history to counteract the growing fear of Communism. The escalating hostilities between the United States and Soviet Union necessitated a history of domestic stability.³⁷ The view of American exceptionalism in history explained the affluence and strength of the country and unified the nation with a cohesive past.³⁸ International foreign policy, combined with current prosperity, reasserted the national narrative in America.

William Appleman Williams supplied a renewed criticism of historical theory at this time.³⁹ He published The Tragedy of American Diplomacy in 1959 and The Contours of American History in 1966 that looked at diplomatic history and the expansiveness of foreign policy. Richard Hofstadter's Age of Reform published in 1955 addressed the unified consensus of post-World War II society and synthesized the economic writings of Charles Beard. Historians of the era explored capitalism and reform as historic themes and allied conservative politics with the progressive concepts of New History.⁴⁰

Progress was a central idea in most scholarly writings, but a lapse in the amount of published material also marked the era.⁴¹ As soldiers returned to college following the war, efforts were made to underscore history as useful and intriguing. Footnotes

³⁷ Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory*.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ David W. Noble, *The End of American History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 122.

⁴⁰ Historian Reinhold Niebuhr emphasized the influence of religion in his early work, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932) while later describing Marxism and capitalism in *The Irony of American History* (1952).

⁴¹ John Higham, *Professional Scholarship in American History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 212.

disappeared from some journals and researchers published textbooks with wide distribution.⁴² Historic scholarship was renewed in the following years with the acceptance of new social history in the 1960s and broadened academic pursuits.

Professional historians took advantage of technology after World War II and introduced early computers to calculate quantitative data in historic records.⁴³ Though progressive historians like Charles Beard, James Robinson and Frederick Jackson Turner suggested social science-related research at the turn of the century, technology finally caught up in the post-war economic boom. Comparative studies used in journal articles included census reports and statistics. The quantitative research exposed patterns of twentieth-century urbanization and information on contemporary growth problems.

The years following World War II focused more generally on the future rather than the past. The tranquility and successes of the 1950s brought back a consensus history concentrating on the national narrative but eclipsed by a unified focus on the future. The construction of housing subdivisions, federal highways and new businesses had a tremendous influence on the American landscape and history aligned itself with the sudden increase in national pride.

Historic preservation was not a prominent concern during this period of escalating growth, but the establishment of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) in 1949 confirmed the need for managing efforts on a national scale. The organization of the federal historic preservation advocacy group indicated the popular interest in saving historic buildings despite prevalent new construction. The National Trust was formed to promote historic preservation where the federal government could not, by providing

⁴² Holt, *Historical Scholarship*.

⁴³ Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Post Modern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1997).

stewardship to additional properties, advocating legislation and collaborating with local and regional preservation endeavors.

The immediate threats of urban renewal, combined with the social and political climate of the era, set the stage for major policy changes in 1966. The consensus narrative dictated the formation of the NTHP to organize national efforts, while changing concepts of history alluded to the next big step in preservation. Both academic history and historic preservation were transformed with the cultural revolution of the following decade.

Social History

The 1960s proved to be an “intellectual watershed in American historical writing.”⁴⁴ History experienced an overhaul with the political and social upheaval of the decade. The Civil Rights movement, feminism, inequality and controversial foreign policy required a decidedly different look at the past. New Social History, the expression used, incorporated contemporary ideology and developing social and anthropological theories to expand the traditional narrative. Once a singular national story had sufficed for retelling the past, but now minority and vernacular accounts were given equal emphasis. The unparalleled expression of equality in the 1960s motivated politics, social change, popular culture and historical theory.

Social History identified conflict and consensus as prevalent themes in American history. Louis Hartz, a political theorist and historian at Harvard University, published *The Liberal Tradition in America* in 1955 taking the leftist view and Daniel Boorstin

⁴⁴ Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory*.

wrote The Genius of American Politics in 1953.⁴⁵ Historians synthesized the tumultuous present as a culmination of divergent ideas throughout American history. Many scholarly journals printed articles concerning inequality as well as issues of social mobility. Conflict and repression became mainstays of historic scholarship, while history became yet another political platform of the decade.

The Civil Rights movement brought the history of black America to the foreground when civil liberties for minorities passed both houses of Congress. The social changes between black and white Americans pervaded academic study as well as popular culture. The historic consciousness of slavery generated ethnic research, and prominent allusions to black history were repeated in the speeches of Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders.⁴⁶ The acceptance of minority and vernacular perspectives greatly affected how history was written and interpreted. Historians not only had more challenging issues to explicate but also a wider academic audience. Studies of black history, women's history, and local history were soon recognized subjects. Particularly, the Civil Rights movement prompted the preservation of many sites significant to black Americans. African-American history was deemed a unique heritage, worthy of study.⁴⁷

History, traditionally persuaded by politics or economics, received influence from other social sciences in the 1960s. The emergence of American Studies and Public History in universities took place throughout the United States as history enveloped new theories and integrated cultural ideology. David M. Potter wrote about the American

⁴⁵ Higham, *Professional Scholarship*, 224.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 258. John Blassingame studied the communal life of slaves while Herbert Gutman researched the structure of the black family. Lawrence Levine also published a history of Afro-American folk music and folktales.

⁴⁷ Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 148. In 1943, legislation was introduced to recognize the birthplace of George Washington Carver, but most African-American sites were not identified until the 1960s. The NPS rejected the opportunity to interpret or manage the Frederick Douglass house in 1949.

character and incorporated prevailing anthropological theories.⁴⁸ The prominent overlaps with Marxism and architectural Modernism influenced the study of history and revealed academic similarities. The emphasis on community and folk life integrated elements of sociology and psychology into historic consciousness.⁴⁹ The National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities began in 1964, expanded cultural values from national shrines and archaeology sites to performance art and installations.⁵⁰

The intellectual and political watershed of Social History influenced major changes in historic preservation. A committee under the auspices of the United States Conference of Mayors studied the conditions and threats to historic resources and published *With Heritage So Rich* in 1966. This report initiated the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the crucial legislation that established historic preservation as public policy. Urban renewal, as well as the integration of social sciences, emphasized the need to protect cultural resources with federal legislation. The NHPA established the National Register, dictated Section 106 review and tax incentive programs and extended the protection of National Historic Landmarks. This legislation changed the influence and arguably the direction of historic preservation. The NHPA also established history as a recognized part of the preservation movement.

⁴⁸ Higham, *Professional Scholarship*, 224. David M. Potter published *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character*.

⁴⁹ Thomas King, Patricia Parker Hickman and Gary Berg, *Anthropology in Historic Preservation: Caring for Culture's Clutter* (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 19.

⁵⁰ Michael Kammen, *In the Past Lane: Historical Perspectives on American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Conclusion

The historiography of the United States shows the evolution of historic thought and the professionalization of the discipline. Like the ever-changing present tense, Americans used history to explain the past in different ways at different times, often influenced by the political and social atmosphere and in turn influencing historic preservation. The Romantic and patriotic narrative of the Centennial era defined the traditional view of history and initiated the historic preservation movement in the United States. The scientific history of Leopold von Ranke made the study of history objective and legitimate, while New History and Social History added perspective and depth by challenging established viewpoints and interpretations.

The increasing complexity within the academic field provided themes that were more specialized with a variety of points of view. The trend of historic scholarship moved to recount more vernacular and “ordinary” stories while interpreting issues of progress and conflict. Though political and social agendas changed, history signaled a professional and legitimate discipline that responded to present concerns.

The development of historical thought in the United States guided the narrative history that preservation deemed significant. Historic preservation mirrored the fluctuations of historic theory and, like history, expanded its application to other disciplines, including architecture, while later gaining legislative power. The sites preserved by local groups progressed from national shrines like Mount Vernon to unique examples of New England architecture. The complete restoration of Williamsburg broadened the scope of preservation and later entire areas threatened by urban renewal

signaled an impetus for policy change. The history of preservation illustrates the way scholars conveyed history but also the most important changes in American history.

Historiography offers a distinct look at how American society, historic preservation and even historic interpretation have changed. Historians recognize that studying the past helps explain the present, offering “practical guidance” to the human condition.⁵¹ The connection to the past recognized in the Renaissance, though dramatically altered, is still studied and used as a way of understanding the present. The modern world continually refines cultural values and by extension, history, to understand historic significance.

⁵¹ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (London: Pearson Education Ltd., 2002).

Chapter 3

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Defining significance is a basic way to establish importance within historic preservation and place value on a historic resource. Significance is usually assigned within an established historic context and used as a qualifier to dictate a large part of historic preservation. The value judgments that define historic significance have changed with historiography and interpretation over the years, yet provide a benchmark for protection, management and funding. Buildings, landscapes and objects typically contribute to broad patterns of history or obtain significance through architectural merit and are usually the result of a consensus conclusion. While the importance of history is widely accepted, the definition of historic significance is continually modified and debated.

Federal classification

The 1906 Antiquities Act and the 1935 Historic Sites Act dictated early federal preservation until legislation in 1966 greatly expanded public policy by establishing national standards. The current guidelines determining the practice of preservation and the parameters of historic significance are part of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).⁵² The Secretary of Interior's Standards spell out specific guidelines for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction, detailing and ultimately

⁵² (Public Law 89-665; 16 U.S.C. 470) Enacted by United States Congress October 15, 1966 and amended numerous times.

prioritizing treatments. These legal definitions reveal the standards of historic preservation in the United States and provide a constant for measuring the changing value of significance.

The National Historic Landmark (NHL) program, run by the National Park Service, designates historic properties of “exceptional national significance.” The 1935 Historic Sites Act set up the program to inventory properties for inclusion in the National Park system and to identify historically significant private property.⁵³ Prior to the 1966 Act, the NHL was the single federal designation available to historic buildings, limiting the significance to only traditional American history.

Development of the NHL program as a means of recognition and preservation was indicative of the way Americans thought in the twentieth century. The Depression and New Deal provided an impetus for the Historic Sites Act but also guided the valuation process and determined factors of significance. Preservation efforts saved the traditionally important historic places of political, military and business leaders. The Historic Sites Survey recognized Harper’s Ferry in West Virginia, Fort Raleigh in North Carolina and Hopewell Iron Furnace in Pennsylvania among the first national landmarks, each becoming a national park site.⁵⁴ Civil War battlefields, major plantations and architectural exemplars were also preserved within the existing parameters of significance. The focus of federal historic preservation on the national narrative and themes in New History continued until the 1960s social revolution and its change in

⁵³ Barry Mackintosh, “The Historic Sites Survey and National Historic Landmarks Program” (Washington DC: National Park Service, 1985), Unpublished. The Historic Sites Survey was the official inventory process that identified national landmarks. This survey built upon the previous 1906 Antiquities Act.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

historiography. The National Historic Landmarks program, though reflective of the times, maintained the same methodology.

The NHL program applies basic criteria to resources of national importance and nominates sites recognized through theme studies. Professionals research specialized aspects of American history and identify significant resources. The first thematic studies used chronological periods to nominate a representative sample of landmarks.⁵⁵ Recent examples of NHL theme studies include American Aviation Heritage, American Civil Rights, Maritime Heritage, the Underground Railroad, World War II, and Racial Desegregation in Public Education.⁵⁶ Congress mandates a number of theme studies, which raises the question of whether political agendas fuel historic research. The NPS website mentions however, that public input guides identification. These theme studies provide context to determine relative importance, identifying portions of the built environment that represent pieces of the larger historical picture. The specialized themes of New History embraced during the passage of the Historic Sites Act influenced the theme study methodology as the accepted way to establish historic contexts.

The NHL program uses criteria to evaluate a property and attach meaning within the historic context of a theme study. The National Historic Landmarks criteria are remarkably broad in interpretation but limited to the scope of the national narrative.

The quality of national significance is ascribed to districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, technology and culture; and that possess a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid, 10.

⁵⁶ (www.cr.nps.gov/nhl)

⁵⁷ The NHL website states that properties are “of exceptional significance” and that few merit this exclusive designation. The excerpt pertains to the general quality of significance, with numbered criteria additionally listed.

The conditions outlined in the six NHL criteria echo the more familiar National Register criteria, but also include properties “that represent some great idea or ideal of the American people.”⁵⁸ This specific NHL criterion shows how vague the definitions must be to span all theme studies and incorporate all historic contexts. Following the application of criteria (known as the nomination process), the Advisory Board then hears recommendations and decides whether to grant approval. Properties approved by the Advisory Board are designated National Historic Landmarks and monitored by the National Park Service.⁵⁹

National Historic Landmarks represent extraordinary historic places but only include resources of *national* significance. A solution to the limited scope of the NHL program was the National Register. The 1966 NHPA included framework that elaborated on previous preservation measures and created entirely new protective programs, including the National Register. Trends in academic history also necessitated that sites of state and local value obtain designation.

The National Register, a key component of the NHPA legislation, is the comprehensive inventory of national, state and local historic resources deemed significant. Also administered by the National Park Service, the National Register lists designated historic properties, but does not offer complete protection from alterations,

⁵⁸The most up-to-date text for all NHL criteria is listed on the National Park Service website. (www.cr.nps.gov/nhl)

⁵⁹ The National Park Service offers technical assistance and information to NHL owners. The Effects of Listing state, “Under Federal law, owners of private property listed in the National Register are free to maintain, manage, or dispose of their property as they choose provided that there is no Federal involvement. Owners have no obligation to open their properties to the public, to restore them or even to maintain them, if they choose not to do so.” All NHL properties are also listed in the National Register.

development, or demolition.⁶⁰ Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act however, orders all federal agencies to consider potential impacts to National Register properties and review alternatives when planning projects using federal money.⁶¹

To be included on the National Register, a property is evaluated and judged for its representation as a part of history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture.⁶² This process places nominations within the context of history, creating an objective category for designation. Each National Register property must have standard documentation and follow a nomination process similar to the NHL program.⁶³

The criteria to evaluate properties are divided into four areas. Entries must be associated with either a broad pattern of history, the life of a significant historical figure, a distinctive, artistic or representational method of construction, or have the potential to yield archaeological information.⁶⁴ Properties must also have a sufficient level of integrity, defined by location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Through the evaluation of eligibility and nomination of properties to the National Register, the assessment of significance is complete.

The National Register greatly expanded the definition of significance used prior to 1966. The first properties listed included those of unquestionable importance in states and localities across America, many identified through related social history research.

⁶⁰ Listing on the National Register does not protect properties unless a federal project is involved. Private owners of National Register properties can make changes without consequence, including demolition. De-listing can occur if a property loses integrity.

⁶¹ Section 106 (NHPA) review requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions before proceeding with projects. Properties on or eligible for the National Register initiate the 106 review process which involves determining “adverse effects” and consulting with the SHPO and ACHP.

⁶² “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation” *National Register Bulletin*, National Park Service, revision 1998.

⁶³ National Register nominations may be completed by anyone but must meet qualifications of the State Historic Preservation Office and approval of a state review board before the National Park Service concurs. The documentation of a National Register property must include black and white photography as well as the completed nomination form. NHLs make up only 3% of the National Register.

⁶⁴ “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation” *National Register Bulletin*.

The 1966 listings included the first historic district in Charleston, South Carolina (already locally designated) as well as Tuskegee Institute in Alabama for its association with African-American education. The National Park Service also administratively listed all cultural resources within national parks in 1966, often without documentation.

Despite the addition of state and local resources, the Register primarily began by nominating high style residences of national heroes and important places related to political events. Drayton Hall, outside of Charleston, South Carolina was listed for regional significance in 1966 and illustrated the importance of both history and architectural merit as criteria in determining significance. Other sites initially added to the National Register include the Woodrow Wilson House in Washington, DC, Bunker Hill Monument in Boston and Chesterwood in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, the studio of Daniel Chester French, the sculptor of the Abraham Lincoln statue in the Lincoln Memorial on the Mall. The acceptance of new historic perspectives over time increased the types of resources and diversity of National Register listings, though detractors still point to elitism and selectivity in the listing process.⁶⁵

The value of historic significance expanded relatively soon after passage of the NHPA, as evidenced by the listing of Manaznar, the Japanese internment camp used during World War II. Manaznar was added to the National Register in 1976. The designation of this “concentration camp” indicated the importance of saving even regrettable portions of American wartime history. The inclusion of the Lower East Side district in New York City in 2000 also impressed critics as a symbolic end to the

⁶⁵ Michael Tomlan, ed., *Preservation of What for Whom?*, 38. The National Register is still criticized for a bias toward high-style architecture.

architectural elitism of the Register.⁶⁶ This listing was championed for its affiliation with common housing stock and the immigrant experience. The widening range of resource types and historic contexts broadens the acceptable definition of significance used today. New historic districts further expand the range of significance in individual communities, but the designation process remains the same.

Each state review board meets at least annually to approve eligible properties and has an advisory role in determining the suitable bounds of significance. Much like the criteria for National Historic Landmarks, the National Register criteria define significance as a standard of value. The criteria are a threshold for designation, yet applied by professional preservationists.⁶⁷ Though history is agreed upon academically and publicly, significance describes the worth of a resource within the parameters of association. The meaning of significance is synonymous with importance, which implies the use of present day values imposed on the past.⁶⁸

This value judgment guides treatment, management and funding. Once the period of significance or historic context is defined, all physical changes to a building should adhere to certain guidelines if any preservation work begins. Publicly owned National Register properties are expected to meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards, though private owners are not legally beholden.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Page and Mason, *Giving Preservation a History*, 4.

⁶⁷ The consensus agreement on terminology helped to pass the NHPA and codify the definition of historic significance. Though preservation is an established policy, many still point out the subjective nature involved in determining value. Today over 76,000 resources are listed on the National Register. (www.cr.nps.gov/nr)

⁶⁸ Howard L. Green, "The Social Construction of Historical Significance" in *Preservation of What, For Whom?*, 86.

⁶⁹ Private owners can apply for tax credits, which require adherence to the Secretary of Interior's Standards. Any other changes do not need approval but technical advice is always suggested.

An example of overarching historic significance explicates the restoration treatment at Montpelier, the home of James Madison, Jr. in Virginia. The current restoration of the Georgian mansion to its 1820s appearance will remove over half of the physical additions, including 100 years of DuPont family history. Built by James Madison Sr. in 1760 and altered numerous times by his son, the DuPont family doubled the size of the residence in the twentieth century and remained there for over eighty years. Evaluating the significance of the DuPont family history or the overall construction phases of the building may have rendered a different treatment solution. This instance demonstrates the difficult values involved in preservation, specifically focusing on one, albeit overwhelmingly important, portion of history.

The Montpelier Foundation, along with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Park Service, and the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office signed a memorandum of agreement signaling the consensus approval of the project to *restore* and not *preserve* the mansion. The historic significance, as expressed by the NHPA and restoration, is interpreted at Montpelier to focus solely on the association with James Madison, Jr. The significance of such an important figure to American history determined the treatment of the historic building and its subsequent interpretation. The significance of Montpelier also helped secure restoration funding, including a grant from the Save America's Treasures program.

All federal and most state funding incentives for historic preservation use National Register terminology to define qualification. Tax credits for rehabilitation projects are available to properties on or eligible for listing. Despite the amendments to economic incentives in 1980 and again in 1996, the requirements are still defined by the

National Historic Preservation Act. Preservation projects must follow the Secretary of Interior's Standards and meet other financial qualifications to be eligible for tax credits.⁷⁰ Despite the extent of the rehabilitation or adaptive use, the primary qualification for tax credit fitness is significance (eligibility for the National Register). This incentive drives investment and has helped to preserved over 32,000 historic buildings since 1976.⁷¹

The history of preservation has emphasized the progression of federal legislation as the key feature of consensus.⁷² The definition of significance and the codification of criteria utilized by the National Historic Landmarks program and the National Register provide a true index of the agreement and acceptance of important historic resources. Like the trends of heritage to be discussed in Chapter 4, the tendency to preserve vernacular resources, the recent past and increasingly intangible history is evident in the expansion of federal preservation measures.

The pattern of listings on the NHL and National Register mirrors the changes in historiography yet also shows the increasing complexity of defining historic significance in preservation. As New History and social history allowed alternate and contextual perspectives, historic preservation enacted legislation and included vernacular and local resources in nominations. While historic narratives became more complex, the National Register recognized more and different types of resources and evolved designations to integrate new contexts and histories. The growth of the National Historic Landmark program and the National Register support the appeal of historic preservation in the public eye and the multifarious view of historic significance at the federal level.

⁷⁰ The project budget must be greater than 20% of the adjusted basis. There are 10% and 20% tax credits available for rehabilitation projects and income-producing adaptive reuse.

⁷¹ (www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax) Private investment since 1976 amounts to over \$33 billion.

⁷² Page and Mason, *Giving Preservation a History*, 7.

State and Local classification

The states took on a large role in historic preservation after 1966 with responsibilities extending to the National Register nomination process, delegation of federal tax incentives, certification of local governments and technical support. As the states became the pivotal preservation players, localized preservation used various solutions in handling new dilemmas. The delegation of national programs to individual states completed the historic preservation circle—beginning with local grassroots interest, gaining increased federal support and returning to state and local management. Professionals at the state level today handle much of the decision-making in preservation.⁷³

The National Register is the modern standard that guides many private preservation initiatives. The criteria for nomination of eligible properties and definitions of integrity are repeated in mission statements of non-profit organizations and local preservation zoning ordinances. Local historic district boundaries regularly match National Register district limits and states often administratively list National Register properties on state registers. This overlap highlights the influence of the Register in standardizing historic preservation, significance criteria and designation processes. The centrality of the definition of historic significance on the federal, state and local level stabilizes the use and meaning of the term.⁷⁴

⁷³ Elizabeth Lyon and Richard Cloues, “The Cultural and Historical Mosaic and the Concept of Significance” in *Preservation of What for Whom?*

⁷⁴ King et al., *Anthropology in Historic Preservation*, 96.

Significant consequences

Many issues surrounding historic significance persist, and discussions prompted a professional symposium in March 1997. The conference and later published papers, entitled “Preservation of What, for Whom? A Critical Look at Historical Significance” took place at Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland.⁷⁵ This symposium of preservationists and professionals in related fields examined the role of significance in determining and managing cultural resources.

The papers, published two years later, reveal the varied yet urgent concerns of those working in all aspects of historic preservation. The topics of responsibility and the consensus backing historic significance threaded through many presentations. Who is responsible for deciding significance, the preservation professional or the local community? Does consensus support weaken as significance expands to incorporate a vast number of resources and new interpretations of importance? How is significance conveyed in our modern “sound-byte” society?

The discussion provided a healthy professional debate but also prompted underlying questions about the changing culture and the future of preservation. These questions subtly hint at the diminishing role of history as the primary value important in saving historic resources. As more and more priorities are considered, preservation must balance the value of history in determining significance. The standards used as bases of designation and management have increased in scope, taking on new meanings to explain

⁷⁵ Tomlan, ed., *Preservation of What for Whom?* March 20-22, 1997 organized by the National Park Service, National Council for Preservation Education and Goucher College. The sessions covered Significance and Taste, Significance, Silent Criteria, and Public Policy, Communicating Significance, Who Defines Significance, Different Views from Different Disciplines, and Concepts, Criteria, and Change.

the past. Defining historic significance requires continual flexibility in the professional realm but in the end, responds to public interest and the present meanings attached to the past.

As Elizabeth Lyon and Richard Cloues point out in their symposium paper, “every place is important to someone and some places are important to everyone.”⁷⁶ The choices made in the nominating process ultimately decide the meaning and value of history and heritage, through the applied legislative terms. Significance guides many aspects of application, therefore close examination must be kept on the use (and misuse) of preservation vocabulary.

Historic significance is a tenet of preservation, despite the variations or evolution in terminology. History has shaped the definition of significance and been incorporated into the legislative record. No matter what the listing or register, significance is an important determining factor in eligibility and nomination that guides Section 106 review, treatment, interpretation and funding. This threshold substantiates the policies of preservation, but significance remain a contextual value judgment. The resulting consensus between professional preservationists and local communities defines historic significance and substantiates the motivation behind saving historic places.

⁷⁶ Lyon and Cloues, in *Preservation of What for Whom?*

Chapter 4

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

In David Lowenthal's Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History, the distinction between history and heritage is examined at length. As he differentiates the two, he explains:

In domesticating the past, we enlist it for present causes. Legends of origin and endurance, of victory or calamity, project the present back, the past forward; they align us with forebears whose virtues we share and whose vices we shun. We are apt to call such communion history, but it is actually heritage. The distinction is vital. History explores and explains pasts grown ever more opaque over time; heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes.⁷⁷

As history explains the past, heritage for Lowenthal describes a connection to the past that is intuitive and faith-based. The distinction between history and heritage marks not only a discrepancy in how the past is used but also gives insight into historic preservation. The definitions of history and heritage are continually debated by scholars and overlap in meaning and scope. Distinguishing the difference between the two reveals the impacts of heritage and the reduced influence of history in current preservation practice.

History is understood as the factual past and heritage the surrounding belief or sense of the past. The influence of heritage extends beyond history and tradition to form a "cult oriented to the past" with individual meanings attached to buildings, artifacts and

⁷⁷ David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), xi.

even events.⁷⁸ The need to study history provides a reference point for the exaggerated differences of heritage. While history is needed to connect and learn from the past, heritage is needed to belong to and identify with the past. The past remains unchanged in both situations, but the extrapolations vary.

Together or separately, history and heritage allow the audience to make sense of the present. While history translates the past, heritage conforms it to personalized expectations and beliefs. Heritage is based on the factual evidence of history but is idealized to suit the present situation and individual audience. Despite the associative value of history, heritage more accurately defines historic preservation today.

History

The scholar Michael Kammen states that in the present we seek to look forward and forecast the future only to inevitably look back and discover the past.⁷⁹ History is the reputable study of earlier periods, an accepted academic discipline to understand the past for itself and how it relates to contemporary society. The events, people and associations of the past, often seen chronologically, connect as a complex set of truths that historians interpret and relay to audiences. As it has evolved, historiography has consistently focused on using the past as a lesson for the present and future.

History has been standardized within the public educational system as an intellectual pursuit focused on past events. The scholarly evolution of history has incorporated new interpretations within the established parameters of social science. As interest in history has waxed and waned and new complexities are identified,

⁷⁸ Rudy J. Koshar, "On Cults and Cultists" in *Giving Preservation a History*, 45.

⁷⁹ Kammen, *In the Past Lane*, 164.

historiography illustrates the changes in the dominant narrative. The academic associations of history, as well as the objective approach to interpretation attach the study of the past to a fixed and factual definition.

Historic awareness brings attention to the objective roots of scientific history and asserts the authenticity of the past. The knowledge of prior times is translated from primary documents and material culture to a recognizable narrative, comprehended by the present.⁸⁰ This methodology can only strive for impartial results, for inevitably the present tense changes and different meanings are associated with the past.

The degree of interpretation blurs the differences between history and heritage. The noble aim of historians continues to be making the past accessible to modern audiences, while remaining straightforward and honest to the facts.⁸¹ By asserting objectivity, the value judgments of history are minimized in interpretation. Viewing history as completely objective is oversimplified, but the distinction helps clarify history in relation to heritage. The inherent subjectivity of history is rooted in interpretation and memory that extend into heritage.

Historic memory is a genre that has sparked recent popularity among historians. Memory within history is the personal, mental connection to the past, though the psychological aspects of memory are extensive. The storytelling that history entails borrows from reminiscence and records, derived from human memory.⁸² The recollections of the mind keep the past alive and recall experiences and emotions that help interpret the world today. As powerful as memory can be, the mind is selective,

⁸⁰ Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*, 102.

⁸¹ Novick, *That Noble Dream*.

⁸² Janice Hume, "Press, Published History and the Regional Lore Shaping the Public Memory of a Revolutionary War Heroine" in *Journalism History*, Volume 30, Number 4, January 1, 2005.

forgetful and short-termed. With each new experience, memory is changed and reinterpreted. Though memory is not a credible document or artifact, it has undeniable influence in connecting the present with the past and understanding history as a valuable subject. Historic memory is a conscious examination of the human connection to the past and is a prevalent topic in current historical theory.⁸³

The collective memory shapes the broader trends and values of historiography and relates closely to the consensus motivating historic preservation and defining historic significance. Large, diverse groups take shared experience and personal memory to form an agreement about history. Numerous and varied memories of a collective group create a communal perspective of the past, often agreeing more on emotion than factual details. The line between history and heritage is yet again blurred, but a consensus signifies an agreement on the most important aspects (and places) of the past. This unified viewpoint uses collective memory to explain past events and their meaning.

As historians research and publish accounts, history is the interpreted past. Interpretation eventually digresses into heritage as factual accounts are used for individual meanings. The definition of history and heritage continually overlap when used in the present tense to describe the past. However, as the past is distorted by personal memory or compromised by a group consensus, heritage is defined.

⁸³ Kamman, *In the Past Lane*, 199. Lowenthal's discussion of nostalgia in *The Past is a Foreign Country* also addresses memory.

Heritage

Heritage is the mythology that links the present day with the truths of history, establishing a legacy and identity within the context of historic people and events.⁸⁴ Though history has always included some mythology, heritage better articulates this idea when contrasted with the objective goals and academic definition of history. The influence of heritage in the United States mirrors the historiographical trends of Chapter 2 and creates a unique set of issues discussed in detail below. As heritage applies to the modern worldview, the practice of historic preservation becomes a vehicle for relating present resources to the values of a collective past.

David Lowenthal's Possessed by the Past dissects the purposes, practices, motives and meanings of heritage. The definition of heritage Lowenthal describes is, "a self-conscious creed...whose praise suffuses public discourse."⁸⁵ He adds that heritage "is everywhere... popular... the heir of tradition."⁸⁶ "Heritage undermines historical truth with twisted myth... both to know the past and to bend it to our own uses."⁸⁷ Lowenthal explains countless modern perversions of heritage, but succinctly stresses the faith that differentiates it from history.

The heritage rubric embraces "all and none of history," taking the knowledge of the past and applying cultural values that are fluid and self-supporting.⁸⁸ Heritage is, at times, synonymous with collective history yet also represents exaggerated sentimentalizing of the past. Heritage involves nostalgia, explained by Lowenthal as the

⁸⁴ Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*, 1-30.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 1.

⁸⁶ Lowenthal, "The Heritage Crusade and Its Contradictions" in *Giving Preservation a History*, 22. The essay is a review and extension of *Possessed by the Past*.

⁸⁷ Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*, xi.

⁸⁸ Kammen, *In the Past Lane*, 219.

primal longing or “looking back” to history. However, he notes, “Nostalgia has become strictly a state of mind.”⁸⁹ Whatever the myth or longing, heritage recognizes identity and legacy as unavoidable human instincts that utilize and connect to the past.

Heritage is justified and nurtured by the desire to identify. The emotional need for belonging and individuality drive many to scrutinize the past looking for answers. Common traits such as language, folk culture, values, tastes and landscape unite communities with a singular heritage. These commonalities offer recognition to a larger group and a sense of well-being to an individual. Shared heritage is a cultural phenomenon, giving identity to communities on a family, ethnic, racial, national and even global level.

National heritage unifies countries with similar politics, a shared history and a common language. The morals and ethics inherent in political, social and cultural systems establish a national identity based on the same commonalities as heritage. A national identity unites a country with heritage, using collective values to support a collective past. Americans during the Centennial era identified with George Washington, Benjamin Franklin or Revolutionary soldiers. The patriotism, loyalty and allegiance to the United States provided momentum for centennial commemorations, other cultural expressions and, notably, historic preservation. Heritage celebrates and creates the identity of the collective group.

Heritage also creates legacy. A motivation for embracing heritage derives from the psychological need to find a place in society and establish a legacy.⁹⁰ Legacy enhances identity by promoting inheritance and continuity throughout history. The origin

⁸⁹ Lowenthal, *Past is a Foreign Country*, 4-13.

⁹⁰ Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*, 31-87.

and roots of family and by extension, community and country are vital in continuing and comprehending history. Lowenthal describes the importance of “being first” as well as lineage and kinship in creating legacy and defining heritage.⁹¹ The inheritance passed along over time connects individuals with a larger sense of continuity in history.

Close family bonds (the most personal legacy) translate into national legacy when citizens and countries use the same vocabulary. The familial legacy is transposed onto the Fatherland, or to members of a brotherhood. Daughters of the Confederacy, a historical society of descendants of Civil War soldiers, commemorate the legacy and heritage of the Old South. As the beliefs in history form a connected and continuous pattern, legacy acts to affirm identity in the present. This heritage, strengthened by identity and legacy, is the ideological history that explains contemporary perspectives and actions.⁹²

Heritage Developments

The trends found in historiography apply to the uses of heritage throughout the United States. The academic discipline that once focused on the political elite shifted to a more populist narrative; meanwhile heritage, too, became increasingly vernacular. The former emphasis on ancient civilizations in research and conservation shifted attention to the recent past; a parallel now found in historic preservation.⁹³ In addition to the shift from old to new, material objects, once thought to be exclusive, tangible links to the past, now share value with intangible ideas and images.⁹⁴ Heritage, additionally defined by

⁹¹ Ibid, 192.

⁹² Max Page and Randall Mason, “Introduction” in *Giving Preservation a History*.

⁹³ Rebecca Shiffer, CRM On-line Bulletin, *Preserving the Recent Past*. Vol.18, No.8, 1995.

⁹⁴ Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*.

international treaties, is used to describe an increasing variety of cultural resources.⁹⁵ These trends echo the evolving preservation philosophy discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5.

The popularity of vernacular architecture, folkways and neighborhood pride demonstrate a shift in heritage today. The once-selective preservation of national shrines expanded to include places important to local communities and minorities. The progressive nationalism of the early twentieth century augmented secularism, while industrialization emphasized the ordinary worker. Social history in the 1960s combined individual histories with an expanded version of heritage to emphasize family, racial and gender identities. All of these developments were reflected in the National Register listings as well as preservation practice in the twentieth century.

Heritage identifies the common experience and localities that drive historic preservation. The vernacular trend manifests itself not only in the preservation of one-room schoolhouses and the conservation of agricultural landscapes, but in community events. Athens, Georgia's own local preservation advocacy group is aptly titled, Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation. Participation in restoration projects, fundraising and awareness education increase community involvement and illustrate the most frequent forms of historic preservation.

The recent past, the focus of current historic research, proliferates within architectural heritage, especially historic preservation. While history theoretically spans from the origins of humanity to yesterday, the passage of time previously explained

⁹⁵ Federico Mayor, *Memory of the Future* (India: UNESCO Publishing, 1996), 96. The World Heritage Convention defined cultural heritage in 1972 as "monuments, groups of buildings, or sites". (whc.unesco.org) However, for the purpose of this thesis, heritage is defined as a conceptual or ideological history.

historic significance. Though early interests in classic antiquity changed with the American Centennial, Industrial Revolution and political demands of the twentieth century, the attention on the recent past is a relatively new phenomenon. The appreciation for the recent past derived from the quickening pace of development after World War II as the shift of historic research into specialized fields became the subject of reflection and preservation efforts. Unappreciated and threatened cultural resources were rapidly disappearing, which contributed to the impetus for recent past preservation.

The recent past is a prominent topic in contemporary historic preservation.⁹⁶ As early as 1979, the National Register recognized the historic significance of the Art Deco commercial district in South Beach, Miami, Florida. By 1990, an international organization formed specifically to conserve modern architecture. DOCOMOMO, an acronym for Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement, supports the preservation and history of Modern architecture worldwide.⁹⁷ In the mid-1990s, the National Park Service published a compilation of material on the recent past and organized a conference on the subject.⁹⁸

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) also recognizes the importance of the recent past and modern architecture. The addition of Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House in December 2003 to National Trust ownership illustrates the recent public acclaim that contemporary architecture is receiving in historic preservation. However, many other resources are threatened because the public has not generally

⁹⁶ Recent Past Initiative (www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/recentpast)

⁹⁷ DOCOMOMO publishes books as well as a scholarly journal and holds biannual conferences internationally. (www.docomomo.com)

⁹⁸ Shiffer, *Preserving the Recent Past*. A thematic issue of the CRM Bulletin on the recent past was issued in 1993 (Vol. 6, no. 3). The conference, *Preserving the Recent Past*, was held in Chicago in March 1995 and another CRM Bulletin followed shortly (see source).

recognized their importance. The National Trust for Historic Preservation also added Two Columbus Circle in New York City to the annual list of the Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places in 2004. This controversial modern icon built in 1965 by Edward Durell Stone is not protected by the New York City preservation ordinance and has an uncertain future.⁹⁹

The emphasis on the recent past demonstrates the changes of history and heritage in historic preservation. The historic significance once bestowed with the passage of time has developed into significance that meets other requirements of cultural association (architectural merit, adaptable use, educational potential, etc.) within a particular heritage. The shortened relative timeframe for historic significance, as evidenced by interest in the recent past, reveals the lessening cultural importance of time. In the preservation of the recent past, history is still important but is overshadowed by the more imperative architectural or associative heritage of the resource.

Another pervasive trend in heritage is the increasing regard for intangible cultural ideas and resources. Preservation is traditionally acknowledged in the United States as a movement to save old buildings or cultural landscapes, though the scope of tangible resource types has widened over time.¹⁰⁰ The current preservation trend in the United States and internationally expands the meaning of history to a more inclusive set of cultural values.

⁹⁹ “What Should We Do with 2 Columbus Circle?” in *Preservation*, NTHP, November/December 2004.

¹⁰⁰ “Tangible cultural resources include, but are not limited to, sites, structures, districts, landscapes, objects, and historic documents associated with or representative of peoples, cultures, and human activities and events, either in the present or in the past. Tangibles also include plants, animals, and other natural resources culturally defined as food, manufacturing, and ceremonial items; and naturally occurring or designated physical features, such as caves, mountain peaks, forest clearings, dance grounds, village sites, and trails, regarded as the sacred homes of deities, spirits, ancestors, and/or places of worship and ceremony.” The NPS defines intangible resources as “cultural features including family life, myth, folklore, ideology, folk song, and folk dance...renewable and transmitted from generation to generation.” (www.nps.gov/dsc/dsgncnstr/gpsd/ch4.html)

Heritage is the commonplace preservation term that has gained international acceptance in legislation and treaties. Not to be confused with the working definition of heritage in this thesis, *heritage* represents tangible or intangible resources that have collective value. The range of *heritage* values including age, historic association and architecture has expanded to types of tradition, folkways, language, customs and rituals considered significant internationally.

The globalization of preservation joins decidedly different theories of conservation yet defines heritage as an international legacy. Historic preservation in the United States derives from Western concepts of historic value, while many Eastern countries treasure different traditions and expressions of continuity or process. These complexities in culture defy characterization and, increasingly, all types of cultural resources are included in *heritage* conservation. Global preservation incorporates all concepts of heritage using general terminology.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the World Heritage Convention in 1972 concerning cultural *heritage* and defining the phrase on a global level. The international organization, a part of the United Nations, began a List of World Heritage Sites of both cultural and natural value that deserved protection. This World Heritage List (WHL) inventories sites of universal value that are irreplaceable, including 788 listed sites.¹⁰¹ The WHL today includes among the most recent additions, the Royal Exhibition Buildings and Carlton Gardens in Australia, the Ilulissat Icefjord in Denmark, petroglyphs within the archaeological landscape of Tamgaly in Kazakhstan, and Bam and its cultural landscape in the Islamic

¹⁰¹ (whc.unesco.org) The World Heritage List includes 611 cultural sites, 154 natural sites and 23 mixed sites.

Republic of Iran,¹⁰² revealing the variety of resources contributing to global cultural *heritage*. Moreover, the Burra Charter passed by the Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and updated in 1999 addresses the significance of intangible cultural resources.¹⁰³

Heritage Misuse

Heritage may be internationally accepted but is admittedly vague, incorporating historical fact into an adaptable belief system that is constantly redefined. Lowenthal outlines many problems arising from the misuse of heritage in Possessed by the Past. He posits that heritage, used for validation in conflict, can breed antagonism, prejudice and chauvinism.¹⁰⁴ Faith-based history can be manipulated, much like religion, to justify political or social agendas among competing groups, while heritage can also fall prey to commercial debasement. Whether distorted for elitist concerns or pitted against other histories, heritage is the ideology intertwined with history.¹⁰⁵

The objectivity of history checks the excesses of heritage in modern society but the distinction is not simple.

The exemplary history that critics contrast with the defects of heritage is the authentic actual past, rather than historians' descriptions of that past. But the actual past is beyond retrieval: all we have left are much-eroded traces and partial records filtered through diverse eyes and minds. Historical accounts are riddled with most of the same defects that critics think peculiar to heritage.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² (whc.unesco.org) New Inscribed Properties by the World Heritage Committee 29th Session.

¹⁰³ (www.icomos.org/australia/burra) Full text of charter available on ICOMOS Australia website.

¹⁰⁴ Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*, 100.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 249-250.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 107.

Just as all faith is based on some truth and felt with emotional connection and identity, historians' interpreted history is the root of heritage in today's world.¹⁰⁷ Together, the past can be true, accessible and experienced by audiences in any era. Historiography reveals periods of both praise for progress and alternative times of nostalgia.¹⁰⁸ Heritage also follows these trends as collective values shape the dominant narrative. However, the facts of history regulate the extent of interpretation, linking heritage to history once more.

Heritage was the center of controversy in the recent political debate concerning the South Carolina state capitol and the Confederate battle flag. The southern history advocated by conflicting groups demonstrates the prevalence and power of heritage today. The distinction between it and history is emphasized by the ideologies of each opposing side and the ensuing debate.

During the Centennial commemoration of the Civil War, the Confederate battle flag, commonly called the "rebel flag" was placed atop the capitol dome in Columbia, South Carolina. The flag recalls the actual pattern used on the battlefield during the Civil War by regiments of the Confederate States of America (CSA) army. The flag was historically used to identify troops and guide tactical maneuvers, though only a few states used this particular battle flag design.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, the flag represented the "nation" of allied confederate states, arousing patriotism and pride.

Heritage usurped meaning from the factual history of the flag, once used as a color banner and battlefield symbol. The iconography now represents such faith, emotion and ideology that the symbolism transcends the flag itself. The righteous claims of the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*.

¹⁰⁹ K. Michael Prince, *Rally 'Round the Flag Boys!: South Carolina and the Confederate Flag* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 9.

opposing sides illustrate the misuses of heritage described by Lowenthal. To white Southerners the flag stands for the Lost Cause, heroism, the Old South and even the indignity of the war. To blacks in South Carolina, the flag represents a history of slavery, oppression, violence and human degradation. A coalition of African-Americans backed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and led by Reverend Joseph Darby believed, “(the) flag represents more than just old-fashioned racist attitudes. It...has come to represent a lack of respect, a feeling of second-class status.”¹¹⁰ The views were strongly held and so opposed that heritage itself had two different meanings. Besides the contradictory views of heritage, the flag gained additional symbolism for its location on the capitol dome, reflecting the ideals of the South Carolina state government.

The legislative battle originated in 1987 when the NAACP protested the flying of the flag, then heated up again in 1993 when Alabama removed the same flag from its own capitol.¹¹¹ Legal arguments focused on the placement of the flag on the dome. The two factions asserted the values of flag in the context of the governmental representation, which heightened partisan politics. The protests escalated until the issue reached the state legislature in 2000 as the Heritage Act. In July 2000, after a contested debate, the flag was removed from the South Carolina state dome and relocated to the adjacent Confederate Soldiers Monument.

The heritage associated with the Confederate battle flag clearly demonstrates the ideology and not the factual history of the flag. The South Carolina political controversy revealed the exaggerated meanings heritage could derive from related historic fact. The

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 104.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 141.

flag's history became an emblem of heritage atop the state capitol dome, the factual historic use and living memory of the Civil War all but departed. The Confederate flag as a symbol of heritage was manipulated to individual views, became a point of contention, and dramatically illustrates the power of heritage in today's society.

The use of history may be amplified or exploited by heritage, but the conviction to truth can also unify individuals or groups. Appreciation of heritage can make the lessons of history a positive motivation for cooperation, diversity and ultimately historic preservation. Heritage, practiced in classrooms, historic sites and communities throughout the United States is the most profuse kind of history used by preservationists. The terms history and heritage are used interchangeably in common parlance, but distinguishing the subtle difference between the two, reveals the impacts of heritage and the lessening influence of history in current preservation practice. Discrepancy between the definitions can be vague, but preservation today is heritage preservation.

Chapter 5

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The practice of historic preservation reflects trends in historiography, heritage and historic significance but covers a wide set of functions and applications. Historic preservation extends beyond academic history to include other specialties and disciplines today. The restoration industry deals in construction vocabulary, while local government officials (with various backgrounds) handle regulations for historic districts and zoning overlays. Rehabilitation plans are developed in the offices of investors, tax credit accountants and developers. Educators and budgets guide the interpretation of sites managed by federal, state and private entities. Moreover, in every facet of preservation, politics plays a major role.

The sections included in this chapter discuss the place of history in historic preservation theory and current methodology. Though redefined and manipulated, the connection to history in preservation is subtly present. The theoretical precedent for historic preservation in nineteenth century Europe illuminates the values central to restoration that guided the conservation of historic monuments.¹¹² The later preservation narrative by Charles B. Hosmer, Jr. reflects the influence of American historic scholarship in explaining the history of preservation in the United States. Today preservation extends from theory and scholarship to a wide range of practices. Though

¹¹² Antoinette Lee, ed., *Past Meets Future: Saving American's Historic Environments* (Washington DC: Preservation Press, 1992), 2.

many other disciplines carry out the function of historic preservation; interpretation, education and tourism are examined as most relevant.

Preservation Theory

The intersection and overlap of history and historic preservation occurs at several points in the history of the movement, including earlier conservation accomplished in France and England. The United States imported European ideas of history as well as preservation theory during the nineteenth century. This philosophical precedent played a fundamental role in the establishment of American historic preservation policy. Although the early stages of preservation in the United States began with local initiative, the theories of Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, John Ruskin and William Morris influenced a range of preservation practice. Their philosophies of restoration provide competing viewpoints over preservation methods, with history as an essential motive.

Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), a trained architect, conserved Gothic churches and ancient buildings throughout France in the mid-nineteenth century. Best known for his innovative restoration technique, Viollet-le-Duc often removed Romanesque alterations and recreated “original” Gothic architectural features. At the Romanesque church of La Madeleine of Vezelay, his first and most influential project, he rebuilt Gothic nave vaults and worked on the exterior, entrances and sculptural reliefs. Viollet-le-Duc secularized the church as a symbolic “product of the community,” while additionally expressing the significance of the church as a historic monument.¹¹³ He worked throughout France restoring Notre-Dame Cathedral and Sainte-Chapelle in Paris,

¹¹³ Kevin Murphy, Memory and Modernity (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000).

Saint-Nazaire and the walls at Carcassonne, and churches in Amiens, Reims and Chartres.

Viollet-le-Duc's theory and practice set a precedent for restoration not seen before in history. He was a proponent of survey and documentation and advocated graphic illustrations and written descriptions of buildings before restoration work began.¹¹⁴ Viollet-le-Duc rebuilt cathedrals as they "originally should have been" underscoring the inherent value judgment in his projects.¹¹⁵ The cathedrals deserving preservation embodied history distinguishable to the French government, specifically a heritage of strong nationalism. Viollet-le-Duc's architectural theory manipulated history to the modernity of the restoration, accelerating the historic value of the representation over the authenticity of other layers of building materials. The "awareness of history" called for a new way of interacting with tangible remains.¹¹⁶ Viollet-le-Duc recreated history, believing that restoration best revealed the true historic value of the monument.

His approach to stylistic restoration destroyed historic fabric but recreated a "condition of completeness."¹¹⁷ The treatment of features and other architectural fabric prioritized a singular historic period as worthy of preservation and sparked reaction in Europe, particularly England. Viollet-le-Duc is discredited today for his idealized restoration work but was preeminently influential in conserving architecture for its historic value.

¹¹⁴ Jukka Jokilehto, *History of Architectural Conservation* (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999).

¹¹⁵ Norman Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice* (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 2000).

¹¹⁶ Murphy, *Memory and Modernity*.

¹¹⁷ Jokilehto, *History of Architectural Conservation*. Viollet-le-Duc acknowledged that his work gave a "condition of completeness" that may have never previously existed.

In reaction and contrast to Viollet-le-Duc as well as G. G. Scott, John Ruskin (1819-1900) wrote extensively on conservation in England and recommended conservation of buildings with multiple alterations and architectural periods kept intact. Ruskin was an essayist and art historian who valued history as the most important factor dictating conservation. He was especially sensitive to the authenticity and historic continuity of the building, preserving each period of change.

Ruskin articulated the significance of historic buildings and the value of conservation in his published works.¹¹⁸ The Seven Lamps of Architecture, published in 1849, describes Ruskin's thoughts on historic architecture, "the difference lying in the actual construction and uncommon characteristics that attach meaning."¹¹⁹ The Lamp of Memory, originally titled the Lamp of History, noted that architecture held a "key to the importance of the past".¹²⁰ Seven Lamps is a classic reference in conservation theory and defines the principles of quality Ruskin valued with major accents on historicity.¹²¹ Ruskin viewed history, or the patina signifying historical significance, as the "essential element of the object" with "the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, or its gold...(but) in its age."¹²²

William Morris used Ruskin as a foundation for his own analogous theory guiding preservation. He formed the Society of the Preservation of Ancient Buildings in 1877 to speak out against the restoration theory practiced by Viollet-le-Duc. Morris articulated the "living spirit" in buildings that came from not only "past manners" but the continuity

¹¹⁸ Philip Davis, ed. *Selected Writings: John Ruskin* (London: Orion Publishing Group, 1995). John Ruskin wrote multiple volumes of *Modern Painters* and *The Stones of Venice* as well as *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *Praeterita*.

¹¹⁹ Jokilehto, *History of Architectural Conservation*.

¹²⁰ Stefan Tshcudi-Madsen, *Restoration and Anti-Restoration* (Oslo-Bergen-Tromso: The Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities, 1976).

¹²¹ Jokilehto, *History of Architectural Conservation*.

¹²² Davis, *Selected Writings*.

of the past.¹²³ Both Ruskin and Morris viewed preservation as a scholarly application of documenting history. Their conservation used scientific methodology and respected all alterations and periods, despite varying degrees of historic significance.

The nineteenth century pitted restoration against conservation within the developing historical consciousness in Europe. The scrape versus anti-scrape dilemma between the philosophies of Viollet-le-Duc and Ruskin underlie architectural history, conservation theory and historic preservation today. The present Secretary of Interior's Standards follow the sensitive conservation principles of Ruskin and Morris, while period restorations like Williamsburg and Montpelier recreate the complete snapshot of history that Viollet-le-Duc pursued.

The current practice of preservation utilizes these opposing theories and their inherent value of history to sort out technical problems and interpretative and educational issues. The United States preservation philosophy is presently inclined toward an anti-scrape methodology, with most advice and treatment saving not only all architectural periods, but all historic narratives associated with the property. The philosophies of Viollet-le-Duc, Ruskin and Morris contribute essential parts to American preservation, which is composed of an increasingly complex set of influences. The distinctive history and character of the United States has also shaped historic preservation.

History of Historic Preservation

The history of historic preservation in the United States has not examined the role of history in the evolution of the movement. The published accounts of preservation

¹²³ William Morris, "Manifesto of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings" in *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, 319-321.

history are usually self-assessing but inclined to follow the chronology beginning at Mount Vernon. Some scholars find fault in the “overwhelmingly linear narrative of preservation’s history, a sense that today’s ideas are the logical and positive culmination of the development of earlier years.”¹²⁴ Similar to history, the prevailing theories and attitudes of historic preservation shift with contemporary times and are not necessarily collective. So too, has the role of history fluctuated with past preservation efforts.

The history of historic preservation covered by Charles Hosmer Jr. is a chronology of the major characters and events in the United States preservation movement up to 1949.¹²⁵ His first book and later two-volume set remains the only comprehensive text focused on preservation; however, the perspective ignores accompanying historiography and social contexts. Hosmer admittedly writes about the “people who have saved...buildings for posterity,” not the already well-documented buildings themselves.¹²⁶ However, his books contain little discourse on social or economic influences of the past but rather illustrate the process of preservation through key groups and individuals. Hosmer clarifies the extent of his historical coverage but because the books are so expansive, they are by necessity selective.¹²⁷

Hosmer filled a scholarly void with the Presence of the Past and Preservation Comes of Age Volume I and II. While his books have become the standard history on the preservation movement in the United States, they represent the historic values of an earlier period. The nationalistic perspective and glorification of exceptional individual

¹²⁴ Page and Mason, “Introduction” in *Giving Preservation a History*, 7.

¹²⁵ Hosmer, *Presence of the Past* and *Preservation Comes of Age*. Hosmer published his first book in 1965 and later added to his chronology in 1981 with a two-volume set.

¹²⁶ Hosmer, *Presence of the Past*, 21.

¹²⁷ Charles Hosmer’s introduction to *Presence of the Past* notes the exclusion of Native American and archaeological sites as well as European influences.

efforts denote Hosmer's era and his writing style. Studied in the present, the volumes by Hosmer are equally as historic as the national shrines he describes. In this context, the books offer a clear picture of how preservation has changed in the past thirty years. The published history of historic preservation, still primarily covered by Hosmer, recounts the traditional American narrative that motivated the movement.

Historic Sites

Historic preservation preserves the tangible places of the past; making historic sites the most common interface the public has with history. Interpretation functions to connect the community with the past and the preserved building or landscape, just as historians endeavor to do with scholarly publications. Historic sites also unite educational aims with marketable tourism, as discussed in sections below. While historiography reveals the changing view of history in the United States, interpretation at historic sites elucidates this further.

Interpretation plays the role of active historian at historic sites. It is “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”¹²⁸ Interpretation is a dynamic process or experience that tells the history of the site that is preserved.

¹²⁸ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 8.

The development of interpretation at historic sites highlights the changes and reactions of historiography discussed in Chapter 2¹²⁹ Interpretation is the proverbial “front line” for history, bringing facts from the past to the attention of the present day visitor. Through the interpretative process, an expressive connection analogous with heritage is used to make programs informative and entertaining.

Pressure to combine education and entertainment, or “edutainment” is a common issue at historic sites. Interpretative devices meant to grab the public’s attention regularly supersede the historian’s demand for accuracy. Guides often avoid negative or controversial facts, but when held to precise accounts, leave visitors uninterested or disconnected.¹³⁰ As a result, tours and exhibits must be engaging, frequently at the expense of history. The interpretive challenge becomes balancing these agendas.¹³¹ Understanding the importance of historic sites requires complex and meaningful interpretation. The objective facts of history, integrated with heritage, allow interpretation to reach each visitor on a personal level.

The first sites open for interpretation in the United States were historic house museums. The early preservation of shrines and nationally recognized buildings needed little explanation, as they were familiar to most visitors and tourists.¹³² When New and Social History began exploring other narratives, additional sites were interpreted and new perspectives added to exhibits, tours and interpretive programs. House museums soon

¹²⁹ The interpretive programs at sites such as Mount Vernon and Williamsburg have changed dramatically over time, but the variation in *type* of interpreted historic sites more closely reflects the evolution discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

¹³⁰ James W. Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: The New Press, 1999).

¹³¹ Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 27.

¹³² William T. Alderson and Shirley Payne Low, *Interpretation of Historic Sites* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1976).

interpreted not only the “big house” but the outbuildings, associated landscape and even archaeological resources.

Historic resources are not limited, however, to house museums or even buildings. The National Park Service, local communities and private foundations preserve Heritage Areas (also called Heritage Corridors) that represent the newest type of resource in cultural management today. Large landscapes that cover extensive geographic regions, multiple resources and traditional land use patterns were identified beginning in 1984 and number over twenty areas today. Heritage areas span natural and cultural resources but conserve and interpret historic sites on a regional scale. The use of *heritage* to describe this complex resource type conveys the adaptable meaning of history, in this case over large composite landscapes.

The responsibility of interpretation to connect history and visitors at historic sites depends largely on historic preservation. Visiting a property or site associated with the past allows the visitor to experience history in a manner that cannot be conveyed in books or pictures. The tangible link of a historic place fosters an appreciation of heritage that inspires future stewardship and potentially the future of historic preservation.

Heritage Education

The introduction of heritage education to compliment classroom history has increased the interest and influence of historic preservation. In the nineteenth century history taught names and dates, people and places, national leaders and key events.¹³³ As late as 1925, the American Legion suggested that schools should teach history to

¹³³ Alderson and Low, *Interpretation of Historic Sites*.

“inspire the children with patriotism.”¹³⁴ This type of classroom history followed the dominant national narrative and over time integrated new contexts and themes of historiography.

The traditional history curriculum originally introduced heritage education to augment and emphasize local history, using heritage as an acceptable extension of history. Programs highlighting historic sites and preservation education were introduced to the classroom soon after the passage of the 1966 NHPA. This initiative to connect students with community-based activities brought heritage education into classrooms across the United States. The connection of national history to local history made heritage education an obvious link between academia and historic preservation.

Heritage education as an extension of classroom history, bridges the gap between the personal interactions of a family or community and the experience of visiting a historic site (discussed above). In interviews conducted for The Presence of the Past, Americans responded that history museums were as trustworthy as family members in recounting history.¹³⁵ This response emphasizes the importance of learning history from different places, at home, in the classroom and at local sites. Students of heritage education make personal connections to the places they live through interpretation and education programs, extending history to heritage and gaining a better understanding of the past. When assessing their own neighborhood and considering historic significance, the likelihood of developing an appreciation for cultural resources is heightened.

¹³⁴ James Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: The New Press, 1999).

¹³⁵ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 244-247. (appendix 2)

Nationwide programs also educate schoolchildren about historic preservation. The National Park Service administers Teaching with Historic Places (TwHP) to interpret National Register properties and address preservation issues. This instructional series offers lesson plans, curriculum guidance, professional development publications and training courses related to National Register sites.¹³⁶ Teaching with Historic Places offers a direct link from classroom history to designated historic sites, using historic preservation as an effective teaching tool and facilitating interaction between the student and teacher. Lesson plans for sites, such as the Savannah Historic District in Georgia, include

- Student Objectives
- History Readings
- Downloadable Maps and Images from the Internet
- Inquiry and Analysis questions for the classroom
- Supplemental Resources¹³⁷

The experience and information available at participating National Register sites enhances traditional instruction and student learning. The success of this program is a key element in keeping a strong connection between history and historic preservation.

Americans recognize the value of learning from the past but the educational system includes broader goals, other than history. Heritage helps to reunite the educational goals of history with modern communities and historic sites. The addition of historic preservation to classrooms and related field trips ensures the proliferation of history as well as the legacy of saving cultural resources.

¹³⁶ Teaching with Historic Places, National Park Service (www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/index)

¹³⁷ (www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/83savannah/83savannah)

Consumable history

Besides formal and informal education, popular culture contributes to, and often surpasses in influence, the history understood by most Americans. Literature, art, music, and film inundate society more than academic history and often exaggerate, misrepresent, and even contradict information from historical scholarship. The influence of popular culture, not guided by academic standards, helps to foster preconceived or false notions of history. Historians, filmmakers, artists and writers debate authenticity when historic facts are portrayed in popular culture. The accounts in movies, books and art, however, play an important role in connecting to and interesting the public in history. The event or place expressed in popular culture can provoke additional learning, tourism or even preservation.

Perhaps “one of the most significant preservation battles to come along” pitting popular culture against historic preservation was the proposal for Disney’s America in 1994.¹³⁸ The Walt Disney Company, already a household name, proposed building a major theme park dedicated to American history in Prince William County, Virginia. The controversy over the plan involved historic preservationists, historians, developers, attorneys, environmentalists, the National Trust and a very vocal coalition of citizens. Combining recent historic scholarship with a renowned commercial theme park entity seemed a surefire success for Disney but was vehemently opposed.

Disney looked to capitalize on the previous accomplishments of Disneyland, Disney World, and (briefly) Euro-Disney. The theme parks and associated retail

¹³⁸ Richard Moe and Carter Wilkie, *Changing Places: Rebuilding Community in the Age of Sprawl* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1997). Piedmont Virginia was included on the 1994 list of endangered places published each year by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

establishments were popular and had proven extremely profitable. The company that began with animation expanded to include action movies, television shows, hotels and even outlet stores. Disney had become an institution, making money on merchandising with every American vacation. The proposed site of Disney's America, thirty-five miles west of Washington DC, could draw upon the annual 35 million day trippers and established tourism industry of the nation's capitol.¹³⁹

Though the economic success of Disney's America seemed certain, the interpretation of history through a commercial interest worried many professional historians. The Disney agenda suggested an honest version of the past but the portrayal of unsettling portions of history was immediately discussed. The reputation of Disney to sugarcoat issues for children was put under attack.

While the issue of how Disney would retell history bounced around academic circles, preservationists became concerned with the location of the park. The Washington DC area provided a well-established tourist market, but the Manassas National Battlefield, only five miles away, made Disney a threat to cultural resources. The question of placing a history theme park amidst actual historic sites forced economic potential to face off with historic preservation. Preservationists knowingly understood the value of heritage tourism but also fought for the protection of historic resources in the entire region that would be impacted. The synthetic confronted the authentic, emotions flared and strong opposition to Disney ensued. The debate drew national attention as well as the interests of senators and congressmen, causing Disney ultimately to withdraw the proposal.

¹³⁹ Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 164.

The conflict is a poignant example of not only current historic preservation concerns, but how history is ‘consumed’ in the United States today. History depicted in books, movies, art and even theme parks can range in purpose and quality but nevertheless influences how Americans view the past. The interpretations of history, by Walt Disney or an academic historian, affect the places that are preserved.

Heritage Tourism

Despite the outcome of the Disney’s America preservation battle, history is a commodity that has proven economic success throughout the United States. Incentives for historic preservation are increasingly financial, based on adaptive reuse, downtown redevelopment and especially, tourism. Heritage tourism unites history with the second largest business industry in the United States, directly linking resources from the past with market demands and public interest.¹⁴⁰ Capitalizing on cultural resources and the character of localities, heritage tourism is one of the most popular and economically successful means of historic preservation.

The interest in touring historic sites is long-standing. For centuries, students and wealthy individuals took grand tours of European antiquities. Even mentioned by Viollet-le-Duc during his nineteenth century restorations, historic churches were destinations for scholarly travelers and architectural connoisseurs.¹⁴¹ Once recognized, history became instrumental in promoting tourism.

¹⁴⁰ Travel Industry Association, *Tourism Works for America*, Twelfth Annual Edition, 2003.

¹⁴¹ Murphy, *Memory and Modernity*.

In the United States, monuments, battlefields and house museums dominated early preservation efforts, reflecting the public interest in national history and making sites popular tourist destinations. House museums were well-established cultural conventions before Mount Vernon, but its subsequent preservation in 1857 drew reverent visitors from across the country.¹⁴² The religious-like adoration surrounding Centennial sites fashioned tourism as an American pilgrimage.

The Industrial Revolution increased mobility and changed the outlook of tourism in the United States, accounting for doubled attendance figures at historic house museums from 1905 to 1926.¹⁴³ The diverse and populist new tourist of the twentieth century visited sites such as Williamsburg to experience history, combining education and travel. Tourism continued guiding the direction of historic preservation after World War I as the automobile made sites more accessible. The National Park Service established car-friendly touring routes that highlighted historic sites and natural scenery. Park facilities appealed to the new motor-tourist, and visitation at National Historic Sites and Monuments increased.

The post-World War II economic boom gave Americans even more wealth and opportunity to travel. The National Park Service instituted a ten-year program (1956-1966) termed Mission 66 to prepare specifically for the expected tourist peak during the Bicentennial. A resurgence in visitation occurred at Civil War battlefields during the 1960s centennial, marking the renewed interest in history-based tourism. By this time, heritage tourism developed to specialize in promoting local historic sites as part of family vacations and leisurely travel.

¹⁴² West, *Domesticating History*, 2.

¹⁴³ Hosmer, *Presence of the Past*, 293.

The steady increase in tourism and the decline of downtown commercial districts inspired many small towns to incorporate historic preservation into economic revitalization plans. Local communities throughout America used preservation as a tool for redevelopment and an impetus for heritage tourism beginning in the 1970s. The National Trust for Historic Preservation created the Main Street program, which became one of the most successful economic preservation strategies and bolstered heritage tourism. The program continues to target downtown historic commercial districts and offers technical support for tax credit rehabilitation projects, business assistance, advocacy and historic preservation.¹⁴⁴

The financial incentives of heritage tourism extend well beyond visitation to historic sites and commercial downtowns. Heritage tourists are statistically more affluent, better educated, and older than the average American, providing the most desirable demographic and characteristic spending habits.¹⁴⁵ Travelers spend money at local hotels, restaurants, shops and recreation areas beyond historic sites, bringing revenue to all aspects of the local community. Historical association can make a destination lucrative, while other amenities capitalize on the typical patterns of tourists.

Heritage tourism is one of the most prolific applications of historic preservation and one of the most financially successful. While economic revitalization includes aspects other than preservation, tourism has benefited from the marketable past, particularly the myth of history, or heritage. Historic preservation connects history and tourism to local economies and reflects the complex motivations for saving places of the past.

¹⁴⁴ Main Street Program: Revitalizing Your Commercial District, NTHP (www.mainstreet.org)

¹⁴⁵ Travel Industry Association, *Tourism Works for America*, Twelfth Annual Edition, 2003.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

Historic preservation in the United States began as an expression of the traditional American narrative and evolved into a tool for social and land-use reform, economic gain and history education. History has played an important role in preservation, though not a consistent one over the past 150 years. While this thesis examines the influence and application of historic narratives, heritage and historic significance, there are many other persuasive influences in historic preservation.

The theoretical precedent guiding preservation in the United States began in Europe with the expression of historic awareness and the conservation philosophies of the nineteenth century. The scrape versus anti-scrape debate shaping historic preservation is based on the importance of history that Viollet-le-Duc and John Ruskin attempted to preserve. Conserving historic monuments was an extension of history to monumental architecture and tangible remains.

The study and appreciation of the past that began in the Renaissance was expressed in nineteenth century restorations, using different methodologies to convey history. The European precedent of conservation theory and historic awareness united to guide the practice of historic preservation. This precedent along with the ensuing historiography and the narrative of the United States combined with a distinctive American culture to form the national historic preservation movement. The relationship

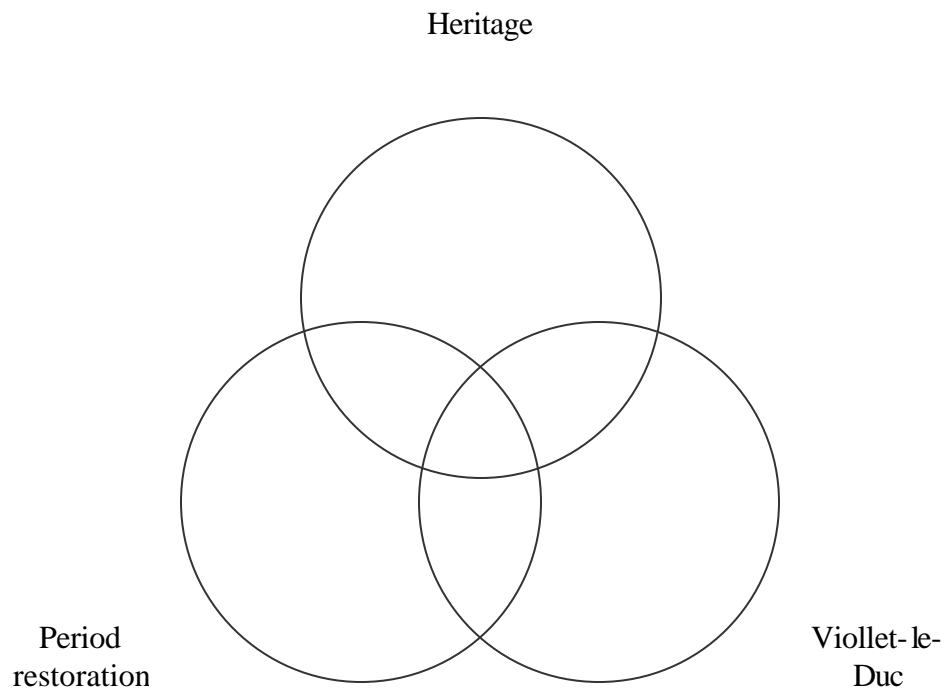
between history and historic preservation has evolved, revealing the prevalence of heritage and the connection to history in preservation today.

The origins of preservation in the United States grew from the Romantic era historic narrative and the celebrations of the Centennial. This dominant history incorporated the concept of heritage and utilized the conservation theory of Viollet-le-Duc. National shrines such as Mount Vernon and Independence Hall memorialized the ideals and history of America, often seen as inseparable. The earliest American preservation efforts restored houses to a single period of historic significance, similar to the scrape methodology of nineteenth century France. The restorations of Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, literally scraped down the layers of the past, providing the “completeness” of a historic moment. Supported by the government, Viollet-le-Duc restored cathedrals based on a national consensus, using heritage to promote French nationalism. In America, house museums were symbolically restored because “George Washington slept here,” portraying the significance of colonial history as well as the identity and legacy of heritage.

The comprehensive restoration of Williamsburg, an entire town returned to a “typical day” in the eighteenth century capitol of Virginia, further correlates to Viollet-le-Duc’s view of history and heritage preservation. John D. Rockefeller recreated Colonial Williamsburg as a picturesque town of the planter elite, frozen in time as an American myth. Though important as a large-scale and unique project, preservation rarely practices this type of treatment or biased interpretation today. The heritage practiced by Viollet-le-Duc motivated early period house museums as well as the restoration of Williamsburg but glorified a fictional history. The similarities between scrape conservation theory and

the traditional American narrative converge as an expression of heritage in historic preservation.

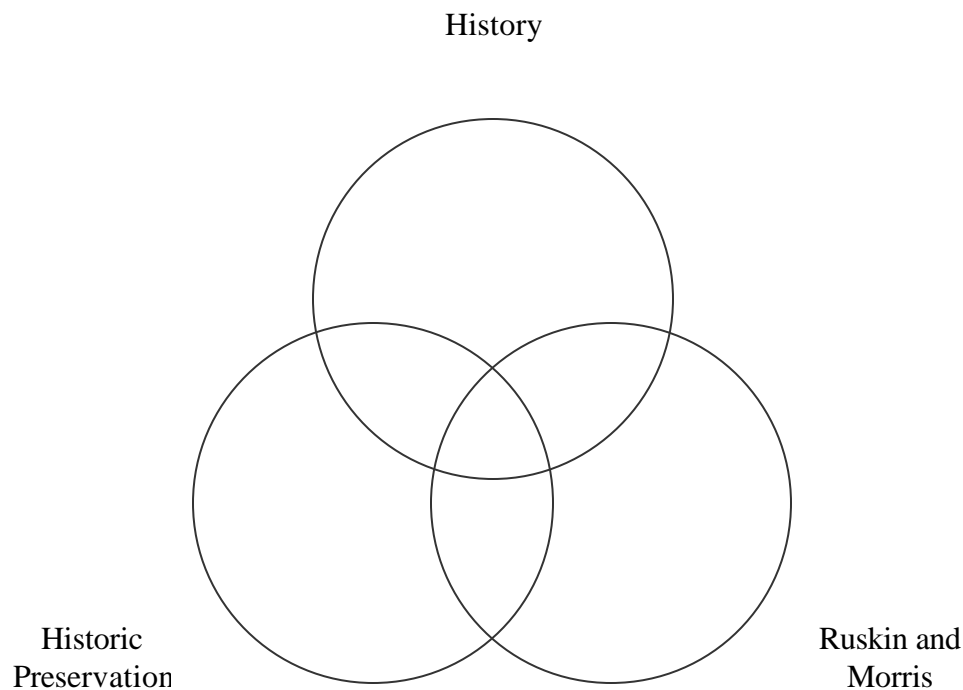
Figure 1: Heritage Venn diagram



The philosophy guiding most current preservation aligns with the anti-scrape model of John Ruskin and William Morris as well as scientific and twentieth century historiography. The conservation theories of Ruskin and Morris defined a more insightful understanding of historic significance in conserving monuments of the nineteenth century. The preservation of each layer of architectural fabric parallels the similar recognition of all individual historic narratives. Just as Gothic and Romanesque details were saved, so too were accounts in twentieth century historiography. The importance of the masses in the Industrial Revolution and the minority in the 1960s social revolution reflected the same ideology that Ruskin and Morris applied to buildings. Both use the broadest range of historic significance in preserving and interpreting each variable aspect of the past.

The preservation of every architectural period in a building also conveys the objective goal of scientific history to see the past “exactly as it was.” Understanding a building as a historic document, allows each architectural detail to be expressed as a fact, a method preservationists use regularly to “read” evolution and significance. Historic preservation employs each architectural layer and narrative voice to interpret the authenticity of the past and reflect the collective values of history. The anti-scrape conservation theory and history align with the more prevalent practices of historic preservation today and reflect the ever-present role of history in the movement.

Figure 2: History Venn diagram



Historic preservation utilizes both history and heritage in varying degrees to preserve cultural resources. While historiography, interpretation and conservation theory reflect aspects of preservation practice, no one conclusion is absolute. The parallels discussed above compare theoretical precedents, historiography, and history and heritage but also simplify the meanings to illustrate the impact on historic preservation. The role of history and by extension, heritage is linked to these precedents, but many modern incentives distort the connection of preservation to the past.

Interpretation and tourism use history when applying preservation to modern circumstances but also have educational and financial motives. Heritage, traded in

historic site interpretation, tourism and disseminated in classrooms uses a myth of history as a selling point. The connection to the past is bought, sold, and retold in a marketable format to lure the public interest.¹⁴⁶ Though classrooms and sites still interpret and connect with academic history, the use of heritage extends the relationship to related social and community concerns. Heritage tourism further expands the influences in preservation by incorporating market economics, often manipulating history to produce income. The “business” of historic preservation becomes a tool for revitalization and education. Financial incentives for historic preservation lessen the motivation of history while capitalizing on the popularity of heritage in places across America.

Despite the variety of influences that contend with history, historic preservation is defined as “the dynamic and deliberate process through which we decide what to keep from the present for the future.”¹⁴⁷ This definition excludes the mention of history, heritage or the past but explains the premise of valuing historic significance in preservation. No matter what the connection is between history and historic preservation, the historiography evolution will continue as our modern values change and significance is redefined.

The places that convey history use the ideologies of heritage and the objective goals of history in interpretation. The consensus created by heritage defines the significance of historic association, while preservation strives to authentically save and represent the past. Each application of preservation also reveals influences that lessen the prominence of factual history, but strengthen the strong emotional value of time and

¹⁴⁶ Diane Barthel, *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historical Identity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

¹⁴⁷ Author’s lecture notes. Mary Washington College, W. Brown Morton III, August 1996. Also mentioned in Michelle Boorstein, “Novel Views Slipping into Preservation Debate” *Washington Post*, May 16, 2004, C5.

place. As the role of history fluctuates within the complete preservation picture, heritage assumes the role of connecting the present with the past.

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