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## *Historic Preservation— An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice*

Historic preservation is not a new concept to American historians and history enthusiasts. Since the nineteenth century, individuals and private organizations have been preserving sites and buildings deemed significant to the nation's past. These efforts continued at the national level during the early twentieth century with the passage of the Antiquities Act (1906) and the establishment of the National Parks Service (1916). However, with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, the historic preservation movement shifted to greater public awareness on national and local levels. A movement that started as an effort to preserve sites where famous people lived, or battles took place grew, and continues to grow, into an undertaking to protect the unique built environments of individual neighborhoods, and the histories that created them. This year will mark the fiftieth anniversary of this landmark legislation. For local history sites who wish to know more about the history of historic preservation, logistics of preservation laws, current debates and trends in the field, and how to get involved, Norman Tyler's textbook, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice*, is a great resource.

Tyler's book begins with a theoretical introduction about preservation and its importance to preserving historical accounts and memory in addition to buildings. He then provides a detailed section on the history of historic preservation. His discussion of the development and motives of the field provide insight to the current goals of the movement. For example, preservationists have shifted from saving buildings as museum pieces to

designating historic districts that represent a cultural heritage, yet allow the neighborhood to grow within its historical setting. Tyler describes the roles of federal, state, and local powers, and how they communicate to each other.

His next chapter describes common architectural styles found in most North American cities. This chapter also discusses the new design approaches architects are creating to contextualize new buildings within historic neighborhoods. While this chapter leaves out some building type and style classifications, the author acknowledges the shortcomings and provides a list of books for further reading on the subject. Tyler also offers an architectural glossary in the back of the book to assist with the style descriptions.

The next several chapters address the legal basis for preservation, and the designations of historic properties and districts. This section provides case studies of instances where legal action needed to be taken to protect the integrity of a historically designated property and on what grounds these laws stood. Tyler then breaks down the process to nominate a property to the National Register of Historic Places or establish a historic district ordinance. While the author cannot cover everything entailed with these very detailed nomination procedures, he describes the steps in direct language and provides examples and methods to obtaining these goals. This is a great resource of information if a local historical society or city government would like to investigate how to get their cultural resources recognized on a national level.

It should come to no surprise that people from several backgrounds and fields of study interact with historic preservation on a daily basis: local governments, state institutions, private developers, visitor bureaus, and historic sites. The last group of chapters address these diverse interests in historic preservation. First, Tyler examines preservation's economic and planning benefits: existing infrastructure, lower construction costs, and tax benefits. A chapter is also provided

on developing a city preservation plan to revive and sustain a thriving local downtown economy. With recent focuses on environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient technologies, modifications to historic buildings have been developed to create better sustainability. A chapter on environmental sustainability and conservation provides examples of these modifications. It also explores how historic preservation preserves the natural environment, in addition to the built environment through the Trust for Public Lands. Lastly, the author addresses the importance of preservation to the tourism industry. According to Tyler, historic sites should seek to offer "heritage interpretation", which gives tourists local cultural experiences in a history setting.

Overall, Tyler's textbook, *Historic Preservation*, gives a wide overview of the dynamic and growing field. The author provides case studies, guides to follow, and discussions on the current state of preservation. It serves as a good starting point for a novice preservationist or a reference guide to a professional. Where the text is lacking or brief, additional resources are available for further study listed throughout the book and in a supplementary reading list. This will definitely jump start your historic preservation plans and get you thinking about how to involve your local community in protecting your cultural environment.

Tyler, Norman, et al. *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice*. New York: Norton, 2007.7 ■