

## Statewide Preservation Organizations and NHPA

Statewide preservation organizations have a history that is intertwined with that of the historic preservation movement. In 1889, the nation's first statewide—the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA)—began its work to save sites associated with Jamestown Island. More than 100 years later, almost every state is represented by a statewide preservation organization that works as a partner with federal, state, and local governments as well as local preservation organizations and individuals. The New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance is the most recent statewide, founded in 1995.

These private, non-profit organizations have grown in recent years to meet the expanding needs of preservationists at the state level. Almost two-thirds of the organizations now have a full- or part-time executive director. Today, 136 staff members work full time in statewide preservation organizations across the country. Total memberships exceed 55,000 for these groups.

The passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in 1966 was not an immediate catalyst for the growth of statewide preservation organizations. But as State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) were formed in the late 1960s and then developed mature programs in the 1970s and 1980s, many in the preservation community found a need for a private statewide component to support the work of the SHPOs and to help mobilize the local preservation constituency for statewide action.

In Virginia, the formation of the Preservation Alliance of Virginia in 1984 mirrors many of these national trends. While the APVA focused on property protection and restoration at its museum sites concentrated in the Richmond and Tidewater areas of the state, community-based preservation groups felt the need to develop a statewide consortium of organizations to serve as an information and advocacy network for preservation interests. In addition, the SHPO—at that time the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission—was strongly supportive of a statewide preservation network that would raise preservation's profile among state and local government leaders.

Formed by 44 local preservation organizations, the Preservation Alliance of Virginia has

grown to serve 150 member organizations ranging from Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Historic Richmond Foundation, and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association to the Leesburg Architectural Review Board, the Campbell County Historical Society, and the Franklin Main Street Office. These groups form the backbone of the statewide alliance and provide the grassroots support for legislative initiatives and programs.

The Preservation Alliance has three main program areas: advocacy, technical assistance/education, and networking. These efforts are similar to those of other statewide organizations. The National Alliance of Statewide Preservation Organizations (NASPO) produced a comprehensive description of possible activities and relationships for statewide organizations. They include:

- build awareness and market historic preservation
- lobby and advocate for historic preservation
- engage in real estate activities
- promote organizational and leadership development
- produce and disseminate publications
- serve as a clearinghouse for technical information
- host preservationists from across the state for shared activity
- administer and assist museum properties
- define and fulfill needs that are met by neither the public nor private sector
- provide contract services to state and local governments
- adapt national programs for state application
- provide resource development leadership
- encourage and coordinate affinity group development
- provide heritage education leadership
- develop written and visual resources
- stimulate, develop, and recognize volunteer involvement
- facilitate tourism development

### *The Unique Role of Statewides*

The growth of statewide preservation organizations points to the unique and important role these groups play in the national preservation movement. These groups often build strong relationships with both the government and private sectors and serve as a bridge for uniting organizations, agencies, and individuals with differing per-

spectives but similar needs. The work of the Preservation Alliance is illustrative on this point.

Through the years, the Preservation Alliance worked closely with the Virginia SHPO to support the federal preservation program and build a stronger state effort. In 1988-89, the Alliance was instrumental in supporting a gubernatorial study commission to examine Virginia's preservation program. The Governor's Commission to Study Historic Preservation put forth an extensive series of recommendations that led to the establishment of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, a statewide preservation revolving fund, a threatened properties grants program to mirror the federal grants-in-aid, and additional review of state-funded projects along the lines of Section 106 of NHPA. Most of this work was based on federal precedents and made for a much more visible state preservation effort.

With a strengthened state program, the Alliance moved to assist its local partners in building a stronger grassroots preservation network. Funding from the state humanities council was used to examine four Virginia cities in 1995 to consider the impact of preservation upon local decision-making. This study provided communities across Virginia with examples of ways to build public-private partnerships, effective techniques for local planning, and suggestions for useful local legislation. A follow-up conference focused on building communities through preservation efforts.

In addition, the Alliance worked throughout 1994 and 1995 to detail preservation's economic impact in Virginia. The resulting study, *Virginia's Economy and Historic Preservation: The Impact of Preservation on Jobs, Businesses and Community*, was released to critical acclaim and extensive media coverage. By combining work undertaken through the years by state government, the SHPO, local preservation groups, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Alliance was able to show the preservation's annual economic impact in Virginia can be measured in the billions of dollars. Preservation creates new businesses, provides good jobs at good wages, brings more tourists to the state than any other attraction, and helps build local property values.

As the Alliance examined these local programs and the economic benefits of rehabilitation, the organization found that grassroots preservationists needed state incentives to encourage preservation. The SHPO began work in 1995 on language for a state tax credit when member organizations of the Preservation Alliance called for new incentives. Concerns over revenue loss led the administration to leave the bill out of its legislative package, but the Alliance stepped into the gap. The organization's Legislative Counsel modified

the language and then secured the support of the House Majority Leader and Finance Committee Chairman as the Chief Patron. Virginia's two Senate Finance Chairmen—one Republican and one Democrat—also signed on as patrons, ensuring support at the highest levels of the General Assembly.

Throughout the two-month session, local preservation organizations—part of the Alliance's statewide legislative network—were kept informed of the bill's progress through a fax network and followed with calls and letters to key members of the legislature. The SHPO secured the Governor's support for the bill and worked with key members of the General Assembly to gain their endorsement and explain the technical merits of the bill. In the end, with a partnership of the statewide organization, the SHPO, and local preservation organizations, the bill passed unanimously in both houses and was signed by the Governor. Beginning in 1997, property owners of historic buildings in Virginia—both residential and commercial—can benefit from a tax credit for rehabilitation that begins at 10 percent and climbs to 25 percent by the year 2000.

#### *Linkages and Support*

This case study demonstrates the varied work of statewide preservation organizations and the impact of one group. Many other statewides have similar success stories to report. This work is often about building critical linkages between key players at the state and local level and finding ways to support grassroots preservation. For instance:

- The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation spearheaded efforts to respond to flooding in central and southwest Georgia in 1995, providing assistance as small communities sought to rebuild their communities.
- The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation organizes one of the nation's most effective "preservation lobbying days" each year at the state legislature, bringing hundreds of preservationists together to talk with their legislators.
- The Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana operates one of the most sophisticated and successful statewide programs in the country, with programs that range from identifying endangered properties to supporting the creation of local preservation groups.
- Preservation Maryland supports preservation work through a grants program that provides key funds to important projects.
- Preservation North Carolina is actively involved in the preservation of an entire mill village that was donated to the organization as

a result of the work of organization's highly successful revolving fund.

- Historic Massachusetts played a key role in a legislative study commission that has highlighted preservation needs and the roles of the government and private sectors.
- Utah Heritage Foundation has an active revolving fund that protects threatened historic buildings in communities across the state.
- Preservation Pennsylvania sponsored the publication of *Save Our Land, Save Our Towns* by Pulitzer Prize winner Thomas Hylton that is serving as the catalyst for a call for statewide planning.
- The Michigan Historic Preservation Network is an active partner in a heritage tourism program to promote historic sites.

These organizations, and the other statewide preservation groups across the country, have worked to transform communities. At the base of much of this work is the legislative underpinning of the NHPA. By building on the NHPA's survey, registration, review, and education programs, the nation's statewide preservation organizations have become an important partner in today's preservation movement.

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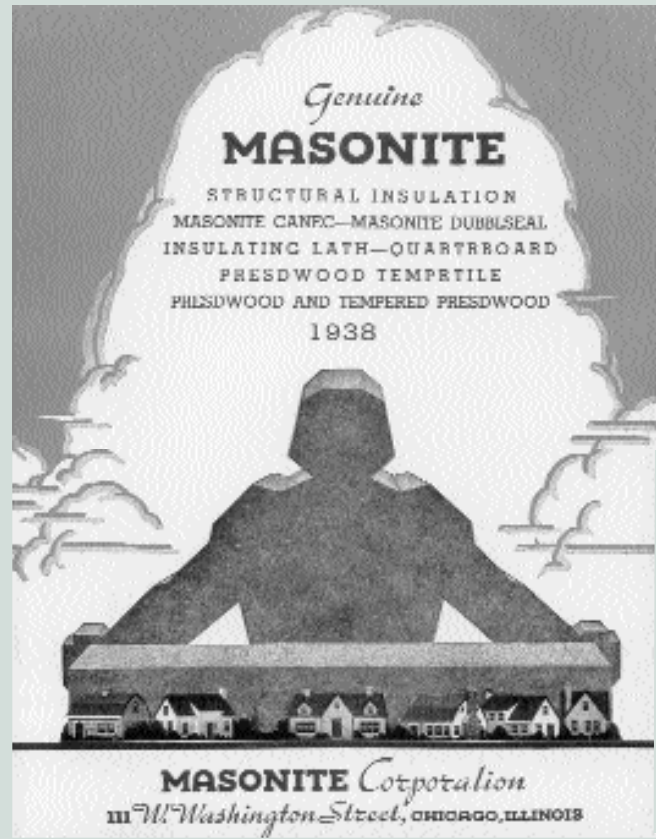
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*Throughout our history, great engineering projects have marked the centuries as guideposts to continued growth and progress. Othmar H. Ammann, a Swiss emigrant and engineer, designed several of the famous 20th-century suspension bridges linking the island of Manhattan to the northeast, including the 1931 George Washington Bridge. A shortfall of construction funds and an interest in modernism may have played a role in the decision not to clad the towers in stone as originally envisioned by Ammann. In 1990, HABS/HAER recorded the bridge as part of project to document Ammann's engineering designs. Photo by Jet Lowe for HABS/HAER.*



The 1941 *Cement & Concrete Reference Book* provided valuable technical literature on building materials for architects and engineers. Such publications help document 20th-century construction practices when preserving buildings and structures from this century. Courtesy Richard Cheek.



This 1938 *Masonite Catalogue* from the Masonite Corporation provided specifications for Masonite sheathing, lath, interior finish board, and roof insulation. Trade publications, like this catalogue, are important in documenting and preserving historic properties from the recent past. Courtesy Richard Longstreth.



The *Queen City Pool* in Tuscaloosa, AL, was constructed as a *Civil Works Administration/Works Project Administration* relief project of the *Depresssion* era. These programs provided critical relief assistance to the community, while providing the city and surrounding area with vital recreational facilities. Listed in the *National Register of Historic Places*, the *Art Moderne* pool was designed by architect *Don Buel Schuyler*, a former apprentice to *Frank Lloyd Wright*. Photo by *Gene A. Ford* for the *Alabama State Historic Preservation Office*.