

For Immediate Release  
October 25, 2008



Contact: Bruce Milhans  
(202) 606-8513  
bmilhans@achp.gov

*Preserving America's Heritage*

## **ACHP Announces Nationwide Grassroots Service Learning Effort**

**TULSA, Okla.** – The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) urges historic preservation organizations to create local service learning and/or community service opportunities for students and school systems across the United States in an effort to more widely share and increase public awareness of the benefits of historic preservation.

Working with the Corporation for National and Community Service and Heritage Education Services of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, the ACHP formally presented the concept at an educational session entitled “Involving Youth in Historic Preservation” at the 2008 National Trust for Historic Preservation annual conference on October 25, 2008.

To learn how service learning can benefit preservation organizations and local communities and understand how to create such opportunities with local schools, as well as to view information presented at the educational session, please see:

**[http://www.servicelearning.org/instant\\_info/historic\\_preservation/index.php](http://www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/historic_preservation/index.php)**

This site includes the four presentations made at the National Trust conference educational session on service learning.

Joining with the ACHP to explain and illustrate the effort through already existing programs were:

- service learning projects accomplished by Colonel Richardson High School students in Caroline County, Maryland, involving the colonial-era Linchester Mill site through its history since 1681, presented by ACHP expert member Jack Williams;
- Washington Senior High School Research History Teacher Paul LaRue’s case study of a Civil War graveyards research and restoration ongoing program and its impact on his students;
- Corporation for National and Community Service representative and Cherokee Nation Program Leader Donna Gourd discussing what service learning is and how it works with illustrations from projects accomplished with Cherokee Nation students; and,
- Libby O’Connell, Senior Vice President and Chief Historian, The History Channel, discussing the remarkable results obtained by many schools and students across the nation working with the organization’s comprehensive Save Our History educational programs.

### **Cherokee Nation, Oklahoma**

Students from Pryor High School and Locust Grove Public Schools partnered with the Saline Preservation Association and other community partners to help save one of the only extant 19th century Cherokee district courthouses in Oklahoma. The Saline Preservation Association is a local organization that was created to raise funds to restore and preserve the building and its grounds. Students helped educate and involve others in the importance of saving the Saline courthouse.

The Pryor school project focused on the academic areas of history, language arts, and technology. Students developed and refined skills in research, interviewing, writing, word processing, editing, and

video production. They produced both a book and a DVD which was distributed to a wider public.

The Locust Grove schools also focused on history and language arts but incorporated science and culture as well. Students studied the foliage of the site and produced a book identifying plants and trees by their scientific, Cherokee, and English names. In the process, all students were exposed to technology as they learned how to use ground penetrating radar equipment, and heard from a historian about the difference between established fact and legends that evolve from storytelling.

**Tribal Service Learning efforts:**

[http://servicelearning.org/instant\\_info/fact\\_sheets/tribal\\_facts/programs/](http://servicelearning.org/instant_info/fact_sheets/tribal_facts/programs/)

**Washington Court House, Ohio**

History students at Washington Senior High School in Washington Court House, Ohio, were studying the Civil War and tying the national saga to local participation to better understand that complicated event.

The students used resources, including the National Archives and Records Administration holdings and visits to local cemeteries in Washington Court House and nearby Bloomingburg, to research and document local veterans who are buried there. In the process, they learned much about the history of their area. They discovered that many of the Civil War veterans in their area were African Americans, and they brought many interesting stories about the people who had lived in and contributed to their local communities back into local history and living memory.

They also discovered that many graves were unmarked or the headstones had deteriorated badly over the years. They found out the Department of Veterans Affairs provides headstones for honorably discharged veterans at no cost. Using their research, they have ordered and installed more than 70 headstones.

The service learning effort has expanded to include a local Catholic cemetery, where students did similar research and restoration. They are learning about Irish immigrants who served in the Civil War and came to this region in Ohio as railroad laborers and founded the local Catholic community and formed another essential ingredient in the story of their towns and the history of America. These students and their teacher also created a model and process for students across the nation to follow to provide great community service and gain personal knowledge of their community's history.

**Hands-on history links:**

- To learn more about the details of the Civil War veterans project and how to emulate it in your community and school system, visit:  
[http://a614.g.akamai.net/7/614/2201/v001/aetn.download.akamai.com/2201/thc/soh/educators/nhpa/NARA\\_NHPA.pdf](http://a614.g.akamai.net/7/614/2201/v001/aetn.download.akamai.com/2201/thc/soh/educators/nhpa/NARA_NHPA.pdf)
- <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/115dayton/115dayton.htm>
- [http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/123camp\\_chase/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/123camp_chase/index.htm)

**Caroline County, Maryland**

The Friends of Linchester Mill is a local preservation group that formed to save a richly historic but little known mill dating to the American colonial period. In fact, historians say the mill was among the oldest—some even say it WAS the oldest—continuously operating free enterprise business in the nation when it finally closed in early 1970.

During the Revolutionary War, the mill produced wheat flour and cornmeal for George Washington's army while it wintered and trained at Valley Forge. Despite its significance, the site was mostly forgotten and the most recent (but still centuries old) mill on the site had fallen into disrepair. The Friends of Linchester Mill needed assistance in preserving, restoring, and interpreting this location that has been the site of series of grist mills since 1681. Members of the group approached Colonel Richardson High School in Caroline County, which is also home to the mill, to inquire whether it was possible to create a

service-learning project that would help students learn local and national history through the mill site, and provide essential volunteer help to preserve the mill. Maryland was the first state in the nation to require service learning in its schools, and working together the school and the Friends group created a program that helped toward preservation and awareness of the mill.

In year one, students worked on the mill itself. In year two, students worked on a handicapped-accessible interpretive trail that helps visitors understand what took place at the mill. The school's service learning coordinator noted that while the mill is in an area where the students have lived all their lives, many were unaware of its existence before the service learning effort. "Now we hear that kids are taking their parents to visit it," he said.

### **Los Angeles, California**

As communities change over time, residents are often not aware of the historic significance of many of the local buildings and landmarks.

One excellent way to engage students in learning more about their neighborhoods is to organize a project in which they explore the history of their local landmarks and share their information with the larger community. The Los Angeles Unified School District has certified a program entitled "Community Heritage Tour" in which students research important local landmarks and create pamphlets and other outreach efforts to share their findings with the community. The basis of this project was the History Channel's Save Our History Educator's Manual which provided the framework for this project through the "Neighborhoods in Time" Lesson Plan.

Students at Belmont High School in Los Angeles, working together with the preservation organization Las Angelitas del Pueblo, completed an outstanding project using the "Community Heritage Tour" concept in 2004. After researching the history of Los Angeles's Pico House, the students created a 10-minute video presentation, a brochure, a poster, and a special Web site about this landmark.

This building was once a luxury hotel commissioned by Pio Pico, the last Mexican governor of California. Today it is a National Historic Landmark. This project is just one example of how history can come to life for students through hands-on historic preservation projects.

**The History Channel's "Save Our History" nationwide preservation and education program:**  
<http://www.history.com/minisites/saveourhistory>

**ABOUT THE ACHP:** The ACHP, an independent federal agency, promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of the nation's historic resources (particularly through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act), and advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy. It also provides a forum for influencing federal activities, programs, and policies that impact historic properties.

–end–