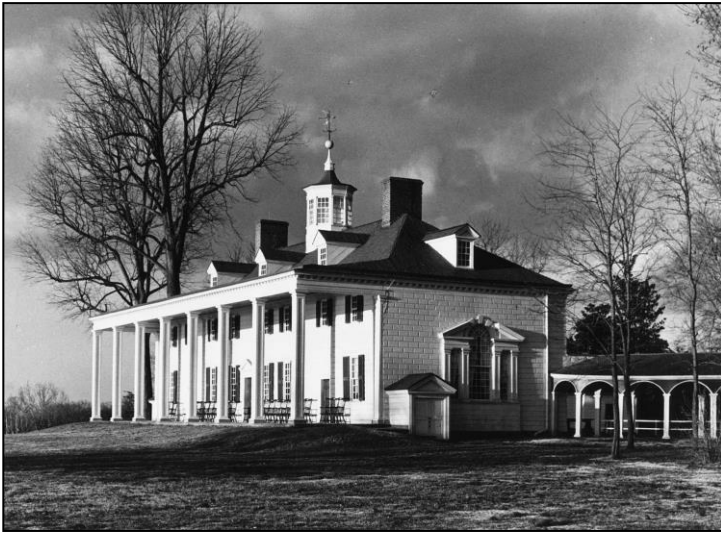


## A BRIEF SKETCH OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN AMERICA

**1816** - One of the earliest preservation efforts in the United States was to save Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from demolition in 1816. A number of historical associations made strong appeals and the city of Philadelphia purchased it for preservation.

**1853** - The Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union is generally considered the first preservation group organized in the United States. It was founded in 1853 to save the deteriorating Mount Vernon—George Washington's homestead.



1. Mount Vernon in Fairfax County, Virginia.

**Late 1800s** - The federal government showed interest in preservation in the late 1800s by protecting natural features such as Yellowstone National Park, established in 1872, and by beginning a program to acquire Civil War battlefield sites. In 1889, Congress designated the Casa Grande ruin in Arizona as the nation's first National Monument and appropriated \$2,000 to protect it, the first federal funding ever allocated for historic preservation.

**1889** - The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA), the oldest statewide preservation organization in the nation, was founded in 1889 with the

purpose of rescuing Jamestown Island from decay. The organization began to acquire and preserve properties of all kinds, and today, reorganized as Preservation Virginia, the organization has expanded its mission to include technical and advocacy assistance and expertise.

**1906** - The American Antiquities Act authorized the President of the United States to designate national monuments on land owned or controlled by the federal government. As the first U.S. law to provide general protection for many general kinds of cultural or natural resources, it established the first national historic preservation policy for the United States

**1916** - The National Park Service was established in 1916 within the U. S. Department of the Interior as the administrative agency for national parks. Today, it is the sponsoring agency for most federal preservation programs.

**1923** - Dr. William Goodwin relocated to Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1923 as rector of the local parish church. He recognized the historical importance of the town, which had been overlooked for a century, and began a campaign for the town's reconstruction. With the help of John D. Rockefeller, this became the first attempt anywhere to restore an entire town. Colonial Williamsburg today continues to attract tourists from around the world.

**1930s** - The first city to establish a historic district with any type of local regulatory control was Charleston, South Carolina. To counter a threat from outsiders, who were dismantling many of the beautiful Charleston houses, local citizens and planners established a local historic zoning ordinance in 1931. A local board of architectural review, which had authority to review exterior changes to buildings within the district and to issue certificates of appropriateness of such changes, was also established. The second historic district, the old French Quarter, was established in 1936 in New Orleans.



**2. Colonial Williamsburg in Williamsburg, Virginia.**

**1934** - The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) program was established in 1934 under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration as the first and only federal program to document historic buildings. The survey covered buildings and structures of all types from the smallest utilitarian structures to the largest and most monumental. The Department of the Interior's National Park Service provided administration and funding and also established rigorous documentation standards. As a result, the data compiled in the 1930s remain among the best historical records of early buildings and structures, many of which have been demolished. A companion program, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), was established in 1969 and emphasized technology and engineering, and has recorded projects such as canals, railroads, dams, and bridges.

**1949** - Preservation efforts in the U.S. historically followed two divergent roads – private efforts to save significant individual landmark buildings and federal government efforts to protect natural landscapes, features, and parks. These two strands finally began to come together through the establishment of a new quasi-public organization, the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

**1966** - In 1966, the National Trust for Historic Preservation published a report entitled *With Heritage So Rich*. This provocative and influential document illustrated what had been lost of American architectural heritage and proposed an expanded role for preservation supported by the federal government. These recommendations led to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, undoubtedly the most important historic preservation legislation ever passed by Congress. Among its many provisions, the Act established the National Register of Historic Places, encouraged the concept of locally regulated historic districts, authorized enabling legislation to fund preservation activities, encouraged the establishment of State Historic Preservation Offices, established an Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and defined how federal preservation programs would rely on the voluntary cooperation of owners of historic properties and not interfere with private ownership rights. In Virginia, the General Assembly created the Virginia Landmarks Register and established the Virginia Landmarks Commission, which today is the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.