



PRESERVE AMERICA PRESIDENTIAL AWARD WINNERS

2008

African Burial Ground Project: New York, New York

Discovery of the African Burial Ground on Manhattan reshaped contemporary understanding of American history regarding the role of slavery throughout North America. The site, dated to the end of the 17th century, revealed largely forgotten stories of enslaved and some free Africans in the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam -- today's New York City. By 1794 the burial ground held the remains of an estimated 20,000 people. The city grew around and over it, and it was lost. The General Services Administration encountered the site during excavation for a new federal building. After a series of challenges were successfully overcome, the uncovered human remains were respectfully reinterred, and the African Burial Ground became a National Monument that recalls and interprets the lives of these Africans and their important contributions to our nation.

The Corinth and Alcorn County Mississippi Heritage Tourism Initiative: Mississippi

Begun as an effort led by the Siege and Battle of Corinth Commission and its partners to preserve a single remnant of a Civil War battleground, this initiative grew into a comprehensive, multi-faceted heritage tourism effort. Included are motor tour packages, 20 miles of affiliated hiking and biking trails, public accommodations and arenas, educational displays, and improvement of a local unit of the Shiloh National Military Park including an interpretive center. Other achievements include preservation and interpretation of the 1857 Verandah House (a National Historic Landmark), revitalization of a historic downtown with the creation of a National Register Historic District, development of a local museum in a historic railroad depot, and preservation and interpretation of the African American story of the Corinth Contraband Camp that included formation of a local African American Historic Society.

Lower East Side Tenement Museum: New York, New York

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum protects and interprets the physical and historic legacy of American immigration on Manhattan's Lower East Side, a gateway to America. The museum is situated in a tenement apartment building that is a National Historic Landmark. From 1863 to 1935 this tenement sheltered an estimated 7,000 immigrants. The museum interprets their lives through five restored family apartments. Among last year's 130,000 visitors, 31,500 were K-12 students. Special museum programs directly serve and benefit contemporary immigrants and residents of the diverse local community. Educational offerings include interpreted neighborhood walking tours, free English classes for almost 1,000 students annually, and New York Book Club discussions on urban and immigrant experiences. The museum actively partners with community, preservation, and history organizations.

Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program: Texas

An innovative state program of the Texas Historical Commission, this project has fully restored 39 courthouses since its inception and is currently helping to restore 27 additional structures. This highly

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successful matching grant program has provided \$145 million to 64 counties for the preservation of county courthouses and helps revitalize communities, increase local pride, encourage heritage tourism, and support economic development. Courthouses are a focal point of the award-winning Texas Heritage Trails Program and are often the centerpiece of local historic districts and Main Street areas. Among the 254 Texas counties, at least 234 boast historic courthouses, with some dating to the mid-1800s. They include outstanding examples of Romanesque Revival, Italianate, Mission Revival, and adobe styles of architecture. So far, 117 have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places and another 90 are deemed eligible.

2007

USS *Midway* Museum: San Diego, California (Heritage Tourism)

The USS *Midway* Museum opened in 2004, after more than a decade of preparatory effort, to preserve the USS *Midway* and transform it into a naval aviation history museum. With a volunteer and docent force exceeding 300 people, some of whom are *Midway* veterans, the museum offers educational outreach to more than 25,000 elementary students annually. Already 2 million people have visited to see 40 exhibits and 21 restored aircraft, and events are hosted aboard more than 200 evenings a year. Of the annual gross revenues of \$12 million, about \$3 million is dedicated to preservation and additional restoration each year. The USS *Midway* Museum lists among key partners the U.S. Navy, Unified Port of San Diego, and the San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau. Many other community organizations are also involved.

Natchitoches-Cane River Region Heritage Tourism Initiative: Louisiana (Heritage Tourism)

The Natchitoches Main Street program and Cane River National Heritage Area are implementing a comprehensive heritage tourism plan to provide visitors with authentic historical experiences and residents with a better quality of life. Natchitoches was the first permanent European settlement in the Louisiana Purchase territory. The Cane River National Heritage Area preserves the history and living traditions of French, Spanish, African American, American Indian, and Creole cultures. The tourism effort successfully incorporates many diverse elements and initiatives. Since 1999, in the Natchitoches National Historic Landmark District alone, more than \$47 million in private funds and \$1 million in public funds have been invested for historic preservation and infrastructure improvements, and almost 80 new businesses opened within the district during that period. Local economic development, preservation, and tourism interests are collaborating with state and federal entities in the overall effort.

The History Channel-Save Our History: Nationwide (Private Preservation)

The History Channel established Save Our History (SOH) in 2003 as a national strategic philanthropy initiative to support community historic preservation efforts, promote heritage tourism, and enhance history education. Through the SOH grant program, history organizations collaborate with public school students, teachers, and local officials to support local preservation and education. In its first three years, SOH received grant applications from every state and Washington, D.C. Out of more than 1,500 applications, 82 grants were awarded ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000. SOH enhances history education and historic preservation instruction locally and nationwide by providing teachers with resources to encourage and engage students. This includes an SOH educator's manual, teacher awards, student scholarships, and teacher training. The History Channel promotes heritage tourism through its programming and through an innovative partnership with the city of New York.

Downtown St. Louis Revitalization: Missouri
(Private Preservation)

Two private companies saw an opportunity and took a risk resulting in the preservation and revitalization of an irreplaceable historic part of downtown St. Louis that had fallen into decay. LoftWorks, Inc. and Pyramid Properties invested in four structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places that had long been empty, under foreclosure, and/or threatened with demolition in what was considered a failed market. According to St. Louis city planners, the common wisdom was that the downtown needed to be torn down, so that new business could come in. Instead, the success of these privately led and funded projects spurred interest in developing historic industrial and commercial buildings in the city's core. The results are a new urban residential space, renewed civic pride, and assistance in creating tremendous economic vitality in a previously depressed Downtown.

2006

Mission San Luis: Tallahassee, Florida
(Heritage Tourism)

Located in present-day Tallahassee, Mission San Luis was the western capital of Spanish Florida and one of more than 100 Spanish missions established across North Florida during the 16th and 17th centuries. A National Historic Landmark, Mission San Luis burned to the ground in 1704 but has risen from the ashes as a 60-acre archaeological park, a window to the forgotten past. As a result of more than two decades of exhaustive archaeological effort and historical research involving original mission documents, the state of Florida and many essential private and public partners have recreated the former colonial Spanish capital. Today Mission San Luis is the primary source of year-round education about Spanish colonization, Apalachee Indians, and the missions of the southeastern United States. It serves as a unique cultural resource and economic engine for the region and the state.

Maryland Heritage Areas Program: Maryland
(Heritage Tourism)

Created in 1996, the Maryland Heritage Areas Program (MHAP) seeks to protect and enhance Maryland's historical, cultural, and natural resources. By recognizing heritage tourism as a key economic development strategy, the Maryland program encourages local preservation and tourism efforts and offers a connecting framework through the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. MHAP also emphasizes the importance of the tangible results of investment in heritage area development projects, rather than viewing the heritage area planning process as an end in itself. Since the program's inception nine years ago, there are 10 Certified Heritage Areas representing 18 counties and 62 municipalities, with three more areas pursuing certification. Each county in Maryland now includes a heritage area within its borders.

Tauck World Discovery Yellowstone Guest-Volunteer Program:
Yellowstone National Park –Wyoming, Montana, Idaho
(Private Preservation)

In 2003, Tauck World Discovery, an 80-year old escorted tour company, launched the Yellowstone Guest-Volunteer Program at the world's first national park, Yellowstone. The program allows park visitors to donate about two hours of their labor to a variety of park rehabilitation and preservation projects. Although the adverse impact of three million annual visitors presents problems for natural and historic resources, the Guest-Volunteer Program provides many ways for visitors to be part of the solution. To date, nearly 10,000 volunteer hours of labor valued at more than \$160,000 have been donated

to help preserve and protect park assets. In the process, Guest Volunteers have developed a greater understanding of and appreciation for the beauty and history of Yellowstone.

“Explore the Highway with Hampton, Save-A-Landmark™” Program: United States
(Private Preservation)

The Save-A-Landmark™ program of Hampton Hotels is dedicated to encouraging the preservation and appreciation of America’s landmarks. The initiative identifies and assists in the rehabilitation of iconic roadside attractions across the nation, including the World’s Largest Santa Claus in Alaska, Jesse Owens Memorial Park in Alabama, the Blue Whale in Oklahoma, the Gingerbread Castle in New Jersey, and La Plaza Park in California. Hampton Hotels is committed to preserving landmarks in the communities it serves and encourages travel to these special regional heritage sites. Local Hampton Inn employees help generate interest in the sites through their interaction with hotel guests. In just five years, Hampton has invested \$2 million toward the preservation of 25 uniquely American roadside landmarks. Their goal is to help restore a landmark in every state by 2010.

2005

Restoration of The Mount: Lenox, Massachusetts
(Heritage Tourism)

The Mount, the country estate of renowned author Edith Wharton, fell into such disrepair that it became an eyesore and embarrassment to the local community. Edith Wharton Restoration, Inc., gave it new life by forming creative partnerships and raising \$11.4 million for its restoration. In 2002, the estate reopened as a meticulously restored villa. Visitation has increased more than three-fold, and the economic impact has been substantial on the immediate and surrounding areas.

Texas Heritage Trails Program: Texas
(Heritage Tourism)

The Texas Heritage Trails Program markets 10 heritage-themed automobile tours as corridors and destinations for regional tourism. It also provides training and financial assistance to local communities for historic site development and conservation. As a result of this highly replicable Texas Historical Commission initiative, all 254 Texas counties are receiving heritage tourism assistance, and communities that once competed for visitors are now combining efforts to increase overall tourism. Participating sites have experienced an average annual visitation increase of 20 percent.

Bolduc Historic Properties Operational Enhancement: Sainte Genevieve, Missouri
(Private Preservation)

Bolduc Historic Properties maintains three houses in a French Colonial settlement along the Mississippi River that document and interpret the French experience in North America. Among them is the circa-1785 Bolduc House Museum, a National Historic Landmark in the care of the Colonial Dames of America. It has been restored and furnished with rare French furnishings, some original to the house. The 10-year restoration of all three structures and associated properties, including vegetable and decorative gardens, was completed in August 2004.

Isaiah Davenport House Museum: Savannah, Georgia
(Private Preservation)

The restoration of the 1820s-era Isaiah Davenport House Museum has been cited as the initial project that spurred Savannah's preservation ethic, saving the 1733 city plan and hundreds of structures now encompassed in a National Historic Landmark District. In 2000, after successful private fund-raising efforts, a three-year, three-phase restoration project of the Davenport House began. The museum is now operationally self-funded through innovative revenue sources, including the annual Savannah Garden Exposition. Tourism today produces \$1 billion annually for the city.

2004

Lackawanna Heritage Valley: Pennsylvania
(Heritage Tourism)

The Lackawanna Heritage Valley project, begun in 1991 in northeastern Pennsylvania, tells the story of the men and women attracted by the valley's wealth of coal. In the process of supplying energy to the nation and world, they built lives, families, communities, and a rich heritage. The Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority and its partners are bringing into sharper focus the significant cultural and natural resources of the Lackawanna Valley. More than \$42 million has already been invested in the region, resulting in tourism that has generated more than \$400 million for the local economy. The project has stimulated environmental renewal, contributed greatly to education, and created a visitor center, greenways, trails, festivals, projects, volunteer programs, and museums.

Blue Ridge Heritage Initiative: Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia
(Heritage Tourism)

The Blue Ridge Heritage Initiative promotes four groups of heritage tourism trails: Blue Ridge Music; Cherokee Heritage; Craft Heritage; and Farms, Gardens, and Countryside. Beautifully detailed guidebooks for driving tours help visitors explore important cultural stories, places, and traditions of the southern mountains. Increasing numbers of heritage tourists eager for authentic experiences are being attracted to the region. A collaborative effort of such diverse groups as the North Carolina Arts Council, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and Hand Made in America, this Initiative demonstrates how private, local, community, state, regional, and national organizations can build, revitalize, and redefine an area from the bluegrass roots up.

The Beaumont Hotel: Ouray, Colorado
(Private Preservation)

The Beaumont Hotel in Ouray, Colorado, sat abandoned for 34 years despite its 1973 listing on the National Register of Historic Places and its prominent place in the Ouray National Historic District. The Beaumont was built in the 1880s, when Ouray was one of the richest silver and gold mining areas in the western United States, and it served as a showplace and centerpiece of community life. Demolition of the Beaumont Hotel was a strong possibility until Dan and Mary King purchased the deteriorated structure in 1998. Mr. and Mrs. King recognized the value to their community of this irreplaceable economic and cultural resource, and after extensive study and planning they began a \$6 million restoration. The Beaumont reopened for business in December 2003, with two restaurants and six commercial spaces, in addition to guest rooms.

Historic Raven Natural Resource Learning Center: Kootenai National Forest, Montana
(Private Preservation)

The Historic Raven Natural Resource Learning Center began its history in 1906 as the Raven Ranger Station. In the days of horse and mule transportation, it supported the newly created U.S. Forest Service as a supply station for the southern end of the 2.5 million acre Kootenai National Forest. Communities for a Great Northwest and Provider Pals teamed with almost 30 other partners, including the Forest Service, local communities, individuals, major foundations, schools, and businesses, to preserve this historic place. The partnership has created an educational program at the Historic Raven Natural Resource Learning Center that brings students and instructors from cities across the nation to learn about natural and cultural resources at the historic site.