A NEW DEAL FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION: THE IMPACT OF RELIEF FUNDING ON THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF PENNSYLVANIA, 1932-1941

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by
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ABSTRACT

As one of only a handful of states to have a government agency responsible for historic matters, Pennsylvania was well-positioned to benefit from funding made available through New Deal relief programs. New Deal labor and funding played a pivotal role during the formative years of the field of historic preservation, but its impact is often overlooked on both a regional and national level. Through analysis of the records of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, this dissertation explores the significance of historic preservation undertaken using New Deal relief funds and its relationship to the national urge to celebrate, remember, and commemorate history.

Recent scholarship has identified that historic sites are shaped by the ideals of the groups that rallied to preserve and interpret them. This study identifies how the Pennsylvania Historical Commission affected the development of the state’s cultural landscape using New Deal relief funds. Moreover, it explores the ways in which a legacy of political influence remains imprinted on state historical landmarks.

The effect New Deal funding had on heritage management systems in Pennsylvania can offer broad insights into the formation of the character of the cultural landscape of the United States and the development of the field of historic preservation. This research expands on previous findings and contributes additional evidence that the history of historic preservation needs to be revisited in order to reveal fully the political and cultural dynamics of preservation and commemoration.
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ABBREVIATIONS

AIA  American Institute of Architects
APVA  Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities
CCC  Civilian Conservation Corps
CWA  Civil Works Administration
DAR  Daughters of the American Revolution
FERA  Federal Emergency Relief Administration
GSA  General State Authority
HABS  Historic American Buildings Survey
HVAC  Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning
NPS  National Park Service
NYA  National Youth Administration
PHC  Pennsylvania Historical Commission
PWA  Public Works Administration
SPNEA  Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities
WPA  Works Progress Administration
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“One must first begin by not understanding many things!”
Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Idiot

Someone once told me to remember that the dissertation is the least significant, least important thing I would do throughout my career. This bluntly stated advice helped me to maintain a sense of proportion, but I would like to raise the fact that it was still a daunting task from start to finish. It would not have been possible to complete this dissertation without the help of many people.

First, I am grateful to my dissertation advisor, Dr. Anne Verplanck for her guidance and patient support throughout my coursework and the process of writing my dissertation. Her help and council, always generously given, made the completion of this project considerably less difficult. Many thanks go to Dr. Charles Kupfer whose unfailing encouragement, adventurous intellectual spirit, and good advice shepherded me through the entirety of my graduate studies. Dr. Michael Barton and Dr. Joseph J. Cecere also offered assistance and I am thankful for their time as well.

During the course of this project, I benefited from the financial support of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission through receipt of the Pennypacker Fellowship. This fellowship gave me the opportunity for full-time research and study in the Pennsylvania State Archives, The State Museum of Pennsylvania, and the State Historic Preservation Office, as well as at many of the Commission’s historic sites and museums.
throughout the Commonwealth. Staff at each of these institutions was exceedingly helpful prior
to, during, and after the completion of the fellowship.

Similarly, in early stages of this project, I emailed representatives from state and private
historic preservation outfits in all 50 states to gather information about the scope and reach of
New Deal preservation projects. Their warm, thoughtful replies and willingness to connect me
with others helped initiate this project, setting me off on the proper path, in the right direction.

At the onset of this research, I was enrolled in what could be seen as a modern-day New
Deal program, AmeriCorps VISTA. As a full-time VISTA volunteer engaged in national
service, I received a living stipend that hovered just slightly above the poverty line. It helped me
to identify with those scraping by during the depression era. Subsequently, I acknowledge the
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Chapter 1: A New Deal for Historic Preservation

Introduction

On historic site tours, I am not the type of visitor who smugly points out mistakes in period dress or anachronistic furniture styles. I do not offer corrections on chronological dates or ask unknowable questions to stump the volunteer tour guide. Instead, the way I choose to embarrass my friends and family at historic sites is to ask the docent or curator about the HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) and fire suppression systems. Even though modern building code includes fire suppression requirements, homes built in the 1700s did not have running water and even the wealthiest residents most certainly did not have sprinklers installed in their ornately decorated ceilings. Typically, I expect the tour guide to explain that there is no fire suppression system or air conditioning, but in some cases, I hear a response that takes me by surprise. For example, the State Capitol of New Jersey has sprinklers placed around a dome in one of the rotundas but they are barely detectable; painted with a delicate hand, the sprinklers match the carved plaster molding.

In 2009, the New Jersey State Museum hired me to help deepen their reach into the local community through engaging educational programming. While settling into my new job and new city, I visited an historic site called the William Trent House. The curator gave me an in-depth tour of the two-story brick building that was once the primary residence of the founder of Trenton. Walking between rooms, I asked a question about the heating and cooling system in the building. She laughed, noting that they no longer rely on lighting fires to keep the building warm, as the original owners would have, and not just because of the danger to school groups or
the building itself. Visible vents on the walls or floor would take away from the historic character of the space. To avoid this, the HVAC system was designed so that the ductwork for the heating system travels through the fireplaces, the curator added that this was typical of WPA restorations done in the 1930s. My face may have had an expression that said, “Oh, yes, of course, the WPA restorations,” but the truth is that I had no idea that the Works Progress Administration worked on historic sites during the New Deal.

A few weeks later, I visited Pennsbury Manor, the reconstructed home of William Penn. While talking to a curator there I learned that Pennsbury was also a “WPA site.” Was it possible that I had skipped over the page that discussed the influence of the New Deal programs in all of my historic preservation textbooks? After a number of fruitless internet searches and a few conversations with professors, colleagues, and anyone who would listen, it became more and more obvious to me that New Deal era historic preservation projects were largely a well-kept secret.

What follows is the result of my journey to learn more about this stepping-stone in the development of the field of historic preservation and to understand how it has affected the American cultural landscape. The purpose of this dissertation is to address a gap in the literature regarding the national program of New Deal preservation by analyzing how it unfolded in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Rather than focusing on the foundations of the National Park Service, Historic American Buildings Survey, or Historic Sites Act, my study of historic site restorations or reconstructions using relief funding during the New Deal shows that there is a more complex narrative surrounding the emergence of the field of historic preservation in America. Using documentary evidence, I will join the methods of cultural and administrative
history to demonstrate how political and social trends had a profound impact upon the management of cultural resources in Pennsylvania. Through the stories of seven historic sites operated by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, this dissertation provides a snapshot of how such an unprecedented surge in funding effected the Commission as well as the state’s cultural landscape.

Although not previously recognized as such, I argue that historic preservation projects undertaken using New Deal resources constitute the first federally-funded historic preservation initiative in America. The influence of this program of funding is as important to the development of the field as the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the creation of the National Park Service (NPS) both of which heretofore have received more scholarly attention than the New Deal era facet of historic preservation upon which my study focuses. When discussing the first half of the 20th century, preservation textbooks skip from Colonial Williamsburg (1926) to the formation of HABS (1933) and the NPS (1935) to the Historic Sites Act (1935), passing over New Deal relief funded preservation projects.¹ In this dissertation, I seek to prove that New Deal relief program funding played a pivotal role during the formative years of historic preservation. While the findings from this study will be useful to the academic

community, it can also aid the current generation of preservationists who are struggling with reduced budgets and are designing dynamic partnerships and considering strategies to allow them to continue their work.

Understanding the movement to preserve tangible evidence of Pennsylvania’s heritage in the 1930s will allow greater insight into the formation of the American cultural landscape at this time. While there has been limited research on how the urge to form a national identity in the 1930s was made manifest was through historic preservation projects, several studies have shown that preservation plays a central role in identity formation and it can be seen at both a state and national levels.² Notably, in the 1930s Pennsylvania was one of a few states to have a government agency responsible for historic matters. The Pennsylvania Historical Commission (PHC) was founded in 1913 and was mainly focused on an historic site marker program and writing publications relating to the historical treasures of the state. As a result of New Deal relief program funding, the PHC expanded its role as arbiter of historic resources for the state.

In this dissertation, I argue that it is during the New Deal era that the PHC came of age. Between 1929 and 1945, this state agency took on a greater role in preserving Pennsylvania’s heritage, most specifically through the acquisition and preservation of historic sites. To prove this assertion, I show that the increase in available funding during these years provided the opportunity for the state to hire supervisors, architects, contractors, and laborers to work on preservation projects thus training the next generation and allowing for the honing of

preservation practices. Additionally, it is here that the PHC developed their skills at securing Federal or State appropriations to fund historic preservation projects. This forged new relationships that created state-government infrastructure to support stewardship of the preserved sites once the New Deal programs ended. Next, I find evidence that the New Deal monies caused a shift towards a new model of accountability for preservation projects. Since these funds differ from the private donations used to carry out preservation work by voluntary organizations (i.e. Mount Vernon, Monticello, Colonial Williamsburg) the PHC navigated new territory in restoring sites that were of the people, by the people, and for the people. Lastly, evidence from the work completed at the Daniel Boone Homestead, Pennsbury Manor, and Old Economy Village shows how New Deal relief funding shaped the mission and vision of these particular historic sites.

Defining New Deal Historic Preservation

My research centers on sites of historic significance that were reconstructed or restored using federal funds tied into the New Deal relief programs, including the Civil Works Administration (CWA), Public Works Administration (PWA), National Youth Administration (NYA), and Works Progress Administration (WPA).3 My use of the term New Deal historic preservation refers only to federally funded relief work projects with the focus of completing work on a structure that has preexisting historic significance. These sites were preserved with public education and enjoyment in mind. This work manifested itself in direct restoration and

3 The Works Progress Administration was renamed the Work Projects Administration in 1939.
reconstruction as well as historical archeology, which was another field that benefitted greatly from opportunities during the New Deal.⁴

Some relief work projects on historic places lie outside of the scope of my study. I will not include work done on historic sites by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). In my research, I have found that the CCC was more focused on park creation than historic preservation even though there were cases where they had jurisdiction over historic structures or shrines located in a park or battlefield in which they were working.⁵ In this dissertation, I will employ terms such as historic preservation, restoration, and reconstruction. When I use this terminology, I refer to the accepted definitions used today with the understanding that the meanings of some of these words would have had different connotations during the 1930s, if they were in use at all.⁶

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Rather than providing a list of work that does not touch on the history of New Deal preservation, I will give an illustrative example of what I have encountered while looking for academic treatments of New Deal historic preservation. In a chapter titled, “What Do We Preserve and Why,” W. Brown Morton III discusses the philosophical underpinnings of American architectural preservation and its legacy. Included is a section with the heading “Great Depression-Era Preservation Programs,” that only treats the early days of the NPS, HABS, and the Historic Sites Act. Others, such as William Murtagh in *Keeping Time*, note the uptick in preservation activity on behalf of the government in very general terms. In a conclusion paragraph he states, “The boom-bust economic cataclysms of the late 1920s and early 1930s were to prove highly beneficial to preservation efforts, especially through the make-work programs of the depression. In retrospect, it almost seems that there was an historical flash fire of action and creativity in the private sector as well as in government.” These words are general enough to seem applicable to my study, yet they are actually referring to the work of the CCC as overseen by the National Park Service and the work of HABS.

Evidence of New Deal preservation projects can be found in the exhaustive historiographical study of the emergence of the field of historic preservation in America written by preservation historian Charles Hosmer. His three volumes of detailed research telling the national story of preservation-minded action are the foundational text for studying the history of

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the field. In *Preservation Comes of Age*, which treats the years between the founding of Colonial Williamsburg in 1926 and World War II, Hosmer discusses the work of the handful of state agencies existing at the time. Pennsylvania’s program is noted in some detail, including the use of relief funds for this work and introductions to the cast of characters are made. While Hosmer has painstakingly marked important features on the timeline of preservation, his work is largely uncritical thus leaving it up to others to investigate how preservation activities reveal American attitudes toward the built environment and national identity. As Irwin Richman states in a review of this work, Hosmer whetted the appetite for scholars to probe more deeply into the stories uncovered in this work. Preservation research that emerged after the publication of Hosmer’s work should delve into some of the lesser-known initiatives that he drew attention to, but one recognizes that a deeper, analytical study of the New Deal historic preservation projects is needed before the subject will receive broad recognition commensurate with its impact.

The Historic American Buildings Survey and the expansion of the National Park Service into historic preservation happened concurrently to New Deal relief funded preservation projects

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10 Michael Wallace, in a highly critical book review points out that Hosmer does not argue his thesis, he simply asserts it and proceeds as if it is a given. This critique gives further weight to Richman’s statement that this work simply whetted the appetite-- Hosmer supplied a list of topics for others to drill down into and analyze through a critical lens. Michael Wallace, “Review of Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949” by Charles B. Hosmer,” *Technology and Culture* 23, no. 4 (October 1, 1982): 686–91.

and therefore can lend insight to my study. These groups were getting started in 1933 and 1935, respectively, thereby operating in a similar cultural and political landscape and relying on the same funding structure as examples of New Deal funded preservation. Logically it follows that they faced many of the same trials and successes. Once again, with few exceptions, I have found that most research on the formation of the NPS or the work of HABS is written in a documentary style rather than a critical one. As in the case of Hosmer’s work, a timeline of events and cast of characters is helpful, but the bulk of this work fails to delve deeper into the actions of these groups to speculate why America was putting money and energy into preservation with such gusto at this time. Not only is the impetus to document and save historic sites important, the ways in which people found the time, money, and labor to complete these projects and develop infrastructure for historic preservation programs is equally important and needs to be given the academic attention it deserves.\footnote{Many scholars and authors have told the history of the founding of HABS and NPS. For HABS see Charles E. Peterson, “The Historic American Buildings Survey Continued,” \textit{Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians} 16, no. 3 (October 1, 1957): 29–31; Lisa Pfueller Davidson and Martin J. Perschler, “The Historic American Buildings Survey During the New Deal Era: Documenting ‘a Complete Resume of the Builders’ Art,’” \textit{CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship}.}

Despite the lack of inquiry relating directly to New Deal relief funded historic preservation, threads of research in related areas can help unpack the significance of this initiative. Historiographical and analytical studies of historic preservation, research that looks at

\footnote{For a comprehensive overview of the history of the NPS, especially in the 1930s, see Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Willis, \textit{Administrative History: Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s} (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1983) and Horace Albright, \textit{Origins of National Park Service Administration of Historic Sites} (National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1971).}
the implications of the New Deal programs tasked with cultural production such as the Federal Writers Project, as well as studies of national identity formation, when taken together constitute the body of previous research that informs my work. This scholarship develops the groundwork for analyzing preservation, federally sponsored cultural production, and the societal impact wrought by these activities.

**Preservation and Commemoration**

The economic disaster and resultant socio-cultural dislocation of the Great Depression brought about New Deal emergency relief programs designed to put people to work in worthwhile jobs that also helped the country get back on its feet. The Depression led to a crisis of confidence in American institutions, so it is not surprising that federal efforts addressed cultural as well as physical infrastructure. Roads were built, and bridges, too, but another way the New Deal programs put Americans to work was through the preservation of many of the historic sites we know today. What has yet to be explored is the following question: what effects did this particular niche of the large-scale experiment in government funding have on broader society?¹³

The federal government strengthened the American economy during times of hardship using preservation projects. In her reflective study of Canadian historic preservation, Shannon Ricketts notes that both the Colonial Williamsburg and National Park Service preservation

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projects occurring in the 1930s were examples to the Canadian government struggling with their own economic downturn and looking for a way to get their country back on its feet again. Her research found that the American model of putting trained and untrained citizens back to work on preservation projects created infrastructure that benefited local economically depressed areas for years to come.\textsuperscript{14} Similarly, Donald Swain noted that after 1933 almost all federal conservation activities, including those of the National Park Service, were used as agents of economic stimulus.\textsuperscript{15} Historians looking at New Deal era relief projects have found a strong relationship between bolstering the economy and historic preservation.

Previous studies have reported that emergency relief programs employed preservation-minded professionals in highly visible projects that brought preservation to the foreground of the American consciousness.\textsuperscript{16} A multilayered approach to mass media publicity brought New Deal conservation and preservation programs into the public’s awareness. Examples of New Deal preservation work served as tangible evidence of the importance of understanding and saving America’s treasures. Unrau and Williss, who studied the emergence of the National Park Service as an early actor in the field of historic preservation, assert that the National Historic


Preservation Act passed in the 1960s was made possible by depression-era successes in building up a program of national preservation. Public and political audiences noted the accomplishments of the New Deal era and this made it possible to acquire other historic sites through increases in funding and political support. Other scholars, such as Neil Maher, have argued that the highly visible projects undertaken at this time introduced the New Deal ethos to the American public in a grass-roots way. His study of the CCC proved that the American public was exposed to make-work projects in their own backyards through these programs. They saw their friends and families receiving support from the government and they saw their cities and towns being rejuvenated through this work. Maher asserts that these programs had an effect on national politics because it led Americans to support Roosevelt’s liberal policies. The historic preservation projects undertaken with New Deal funds were arguably more visible than the CCC work (although markedly less publicized). The historic sites that received funding in Pennsylvania were located in communities and were already recognized as historically significant to the region. These studies show that New Deal projects of differing types were, in effect, bringing the vision of the New Deal from Washington, DC, to Main Street America.

**Professionalization of Cultural Production**

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17 Unrau and Williss, "To Preserve the Nation's Past: The Growth of Historic Preservation in the National Park Service during the 1930s," 19.

Much research has looked at the ways in which cultural production under the auspices of New Deal programs often carried messages of citizenship, democracy, and nationalism.\(^\text{19}\) Jonathan Harris finds in his study of federally sponsored art programs that the Federal Writers Project mirrors the rhetoric of patriotism and nationalism that Roosevelt and New Deal supporters were employing at this time. This message permeated many New Deal sponsored areas of cultural production and even drove relief projects designed to document American identity and history. It promoted a set of American ideals that the New Deal Democrats wished the country to adopt.\(^\text{20}\) Historians such as Sara Butler argue that this message was one of bountiful and optimistic pride, pushing a can-do attitude for citizens to adopt. Others interpret this as the hegemonizing rhetoric of American Socialism.\(^\text{21}\)

Scholars may not agree on the effects of this message, but they do find it repeatedly within the paintings, sculptures, plays, speeches and written records originating from New Deal


programs. Through textual analysis of guidebooks for the states of California and Arizona written and researched by WPA workers, Andrew Gross revealed that the output of New Deal programs is a form of government propaganda that had the effect of transforming national loyalty and patriotism into a product for the consumption of the public at large. Gross finds an overt political agenda visible through the collective and progressive image of America put forth through the American Guide series produced by the Federal Writers Project. These findings tie in well with an analysis of historic house museums undertaken by Patricia West. In her examination of the historic house museum movement in America, she argues that historic sites are agents of American culture and politics. West, similar to Gross and others studying New Deal cultural production, find that contemporary issues from the time of preservation or interpretation are embedded in historic sites across the country. Together, these studies provide evidence that messages of patriotism and nationalism are found within cultural production during the New Deal era, a category in which I place the historic sites preserved using relief funds.

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24 Patricia West, Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America’s House Museums (Smithsonian Books, 1999), xii.
An increasing amount of literature has shown that New Deal funding had a far reach and was integral to the founding or development of academic disciplines and professional fields. For example, Edwin Lyon’s research demonstrates that many early scholarly surveys left out the important ways the field of archeology was affected by New Deal funding. In his work, Lyon finds, “New Deal Archeology was never effectively coordinated and managed as a national program.”

As was the case with the historic preservation projects at the heart of my study, relief-funded archeology projects were not tied up into a neat package like the Federal Arts Project or Federal Writer’s Project. These were not centralized into a specific bureau or project; rather, they were organized very differently than the projects that have received more academic attention. Paul Fagette, whose book *Digging for Dollars* was published in the same year as Lyon’s, also focused on the intersections of the New Deal and archeology. Fagette picks up where Lyon left off making the point that New Deal funding made possible the “institutional, professional, and interpretive maturation of the discipline.” These two works use case studies to take a deeper look at exactly how the field was shaped by the new source of funding. By providing funding, support and legitimacy to the practice, archeology was able to develop into a standalone field in academic and professional ways with aid from the New Deal programs. More recently, in 2013, a collection of essays investigating New Deal archeology across America was published. Of particular interest to my study, as the reader will see later, is an article by Janet Johnson, who tailors her research specifically to the work of the Pennsylvania Historical

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26 Fagette, *Digging for Dollar*, xvi.
Commission and their support of archeological work during the New Deal. Her research, although focused on archeological projects primarily, touches on the ways in which the Pennsylvania Historical Commission supported both archeological and historic preservation projects often at the same sites using New Deal funds.

Further support for the claim that New Deal projects brought about the maturation of academic disciplines and professional fields is evident in a pioneering study of New Deal public landscape architecture, design, and planning. Here, Phoebe Cutler finds that while the framework for the field of landscape architecture existed prior to the New Deal programs, this new source of funding spurred further development and set standards of practice that would be held in the field for years. Her analysis provides details about the significance and particular qualities of the playgrounds and park facilities created at this time, but what makes Cutler’s findings important to my research is that her historiographical study fills a gap in the literature of how the field of landscape architecture developed into what we know today.

Together these authors demonstrate that the labor, financial contributions, and political support of the New Deal era helped to transform the academic or professional fields they study. New Deal programs had a similar effect on professionalizing the field of historic preservation. John Fowler, in particular, emphasizes that the state of the field of historic preservation and its reliance on government funding and support evolved from the work of the federal government.

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during the early 20th century.\textsuperscript{29} The relief funded New Deal preservation projects at the heart of my study, although not mentioned specifically in the literature, played an integral role in defining the systems of preservation that we use today. Not only by training people to preserve physically historic structures but also by giving an example of a model of funding that has persisted to this day. James Lindgren made a key point in his study of the early preservation group the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. He notes that it is with the New Deal programs that the U.S. government “significantly, but at first tentatively” became a leading force in the preservation movement.\textsuperscript{30} He, like others, points to the HABS and the projects of the CCC, whereas I have found that nearly every agency of the New Deal was actively involved in historic preservation. In this field, it is accepted that prior to the creation of Williamsburg in the late 1920s, there was not a professional outlet for preservation-minded people.\textsuperscript{31} Although there were people around the country organizing to protect sites of importance, historic preservation was not a professionalized field during the New Deal era; in fact, one could not seek academic training in historic preservation until 1964, with the founding of the first graduate degree program at Columbia University. It is important to bear in mind that New Deal historic preservation projects gave interested people, and even those often consulted as authorities on


preservation, the opportunity to hone their skills and determine how historic preservation would be done in America. Archeologists, architects, and historians borrowed methods from each other’s fields and came together to work on preservation projects. Later, the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966 required each state to form an agency dedicated to historic preservation, which in turn required each state to hire historic preservation professionals to lead that work. Those who were most qualified for these positions had training and experience wrought from early attempts at historic preservation, such as those who did work with the New Deal projects, HABS, the NPS, and the CCC. The developmental trajectory of the field of historic preservation is similar to that of archeology and landscape architecture, which as research demonstrates also, used the New Deal landscape as their training ground.

The National Park Service was created in 1916 and was mostly in the business of protecting and supporting natural landmarks until it was reorganized in 1933. At this time, historic structures came into the NPS purview. Relief funding, notably through the CCC, helped the NPS develop during the New Deal era. Unrau and Williss comment on this evolution or redirection, and explain that the programs of the New Deal provided the Parks Service with not just money but personnel too. This pivotal change enabled the agency to become involved in preservation and interpretation of American historic landmarks.32

Another federally funded cultural resource management effort is the Historic American Buildings Survey program. HABS was created as a WPA project to document American cultural heritage. It put architects, draftspersons, and photographers back to work in ways that drew

32 Unrau and Williss, "To Preserve the Nation's Past," 25.
attention to America’s historic treasures. Although they preserved historic structures in an abstract way through drawings and photographs rather than in the physical sense, through this effort the federal government began to promote these sites to educate the public and this added to colonial revival fervor occurring on a national level. Annie Robinson argues that these efforts provided Americans the tools they needed to embrace and enjoy a useable American past during times of economic turmoil. Her argument, by extension, when taken to incorporate the activities of the New Deal historic preservation projects, would make plain that by seeing tangible examples of history being saved in their own neighborhoods, the public was made aware of the importance of preservation and America's past. Expanded opportunities afforded by New Deal relief funds did not just promote popular excitement for preservation—it also showed that there was a need for this type of work and led those who felt so motivated to get involved in the burgeoning field looking to save America’s architectural heritage.

**National Identity Formation**

Of immense importance to this study is the attention focused on creating a national identity that went on concurrently with New Deal preservation projects. The movement to preserve tangible elements of history fits into a larger conversation about America’s struggle to define its own cultural identity or style. The desire to form a distinctly American type of art, music, literature, and architecture was at its height in the interwar period. Researchers have

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studied the drive to find the often-elusive ‘Americanness’ of American culture through many different means. This is no easy task, since so much of the nation’s culture is syncretistic. But it has always been important for Americans to see that their culture is something more than a pastiche of others. Whether scholars use terms such as colonial revival, the search for a useable past, tradition, nationalism, patriotism or anti-modernism, this urge crops up in many different walks of American life. Of particular interest to this study are those that focus on the early 20th century. America was looking for roots, for its past, and looking for a way to establish its legitimacy in the ways that European countries had been able.

One way this enthusiasm has been expressed is through the Colonial Revival movement, which is evident in architecture and material culture produced in the early 1900s. Scholars note that with the resurgence in interest in the historical past, people were creating or manipulating the past in order to point to a time when things were better. An idealized view of the ways things once were was a coping mechanism that allowed citizens to live with the myth of a certain set of American core values that were being disrupted by immigration or economic upheaval. By surrounding themselves with revivalist imagery through architecture or objects, Americans were simultaneously embracing the modern (i.e. machine-made objects depicting George Washington)

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while glorifying the past.\textsuperscript{35} The emphasis on creating and reverting to a symbolic past was employed by New Deal programs and political discourse in order to draw the American citizenry together during the turmoil of the first quarter of the 1900s.\textsuperscript{36}

Tourism, which was becoming an increasingly popular pastime, was an important way that history and American identity was transmitted to the public. Theorists have contended that during the interwar period, tourism was seen as a ritual of citizenship or patriotism. This interpretation is in line with that of Shannon Ricketts, who explains that the federal government of Canada began to carry out a plan to create “a family of historic sites.”\textsuperscript{37} This development can also be seen occurring in the U.S. The American family of historic sites becomes the tourist destinations highlighted in the American Guide series as I mentioned earlier. These have been found to pin national, regional and local identities onto the map.\textsuperscript{38} By teaching Americans how to be tourists, what to see and where to go, New Deal programs such as the Federal Writers


\textsuperscript{38} As noted in Bold, \textit{The WPA Guides}, xiii.
Project that produced the American Guide Series cultivated a particular idealized image of American history and tradition.\(^{39}\)

In this same vein, Christine Bold uses the American Guide series to place cultural creation during the 1930s into the context of national identity formation. By viewing travel guides as part of the American movement to define its own distinct history and culture, Bold is able to consider how these guides shaped or represented individual, community, and national identities. While her study is not directly about historic preservation practices, the American Guide series uses historic sites to flavor the towns, cities, and states that are discussed. Her assertion that these guides contributed to building a new image of America seems to address what I believe occurred with the New Deal relief program funded historic sites as well. With the exception, that historic preservation physically altered the landscape whereas the American guides were only in the business of description.

**Conclusion**

There has been limited research on how the urge to form a national identity in the 1930s was made physically manifest was through historic preservation projects. Previous studies characterize the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg as “the principal event that helped to

\(^{39}\) Shaffer claims that tourism inadvertently helped to develop of a national culture right at the same time as things like industrialization, urbanization, immigration, began to challenge the idea of a collective or homogenized view of what America means or looks like. Marguerite Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Smithsonian Books, 2001), 4.
promote the colonial revival of the thirties.” While I agree that the work at Williamsburg brought about a paradigm shift that caused people to think about their past in a different way, I argue that relief-funded historic preservation was a project that engaged Americans (the workers and visitors to the sites) with their history on a national scale. The movement to codify a national identity and to value American heritage helped to garner support for historic preservation projects.

Historic structures serve as symbols, or, as sociologist Diane Barthel says, “Essential markers to the collective memory.” In this quote, both “essential markers” and “collective memory” are important to my study. Hosmer has called the period between Williamsburg and the founding of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949 as the “heroic phase” of American historic preservation. According to him, the depression era is the only moment when preservation matched the interests and goals of the American people. His words have a larger significance and can be applied to the full gamut of preservation activities occurring at this time. Funding and labor granted through New Deal work relief programs made possible the preservation of numerous historic landmarks across our nation that may not have been saved otherwise. Here, the synthesis of an increased interest in history and the availability of federal

40 Other preservation historians make this claim, but here I quote from Gebhard, “The American Colonial Revival in the 1930s,” 117.

41 Wilson, Re-Creating the American Past, 6

42 Barthel, “Getting in Touch with History,” 347

43 Hosmer, Preservation Comes of Age, 3.
funds for public works projects created the perfect environment for historic preservation projects to flourish.\textsuperscript{44} 

The following study provides a before-and-after analysis of the changes to the organization and operation of the PHC wrought by experiences during the New Deal. In the chapters that follow, I will use documentary evidence to explore the effects of New Deal funding on the evolution of cultural resource management in the state of Pennsylvania.

Chapter 2 will interrogate the ways in which we create, protect, and promote the country’s cultural heritage and show how that has evolved over the past two centuries in Pennsylvania. This will provide a broad survey of the ways in which individuals and groups organized to save historic sites prior to New Deal programs went into effect, with a specific focus on how preservation unfolded in the state of Pennsylvania.

In Chapter 3, I look at the role politics played in the development of New Deal historic preservation projects. Although the entire country received relief funding for historic preservation projects, the states that already had a governmental body dedicated to overseeing the historic concerns were in an advantageous position. While the PHC was not the only preservation presence in the state-- local groups and the NPS were active here too-- having a dedicated group of people in charge of the historic landscape made it easier to manage relationships with New Deal agencies and to take full advantage of funding programs. In Pennsylvania, the support of the legislature and political appointments to the Pennsylvania Historical Commission had an effect on the preservation of historic landmarks beginning in the

\textsuperscript{44} As Hosmer also noted, “[t]he most important developments in restoration thought came mainly during the 1930s, when money, labor, and professionals were available at one time.” Ibid, 955.
early 20th century. Indeed, politics and preservation operated side by side in Pennsylvania and functioning within the political framework of the state directly affected the work of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission.

Chapter 4 is an investigation of how the character of New Deal funding shaped the program of preservation and commemoration undertaken by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission using case studies of Pennsylvania’s historic landmarks as examples. The PHC applied for funding through many different New Deal programs, including the National Youth Administration and the General State Authority. For a project to qualify for funding through these programs it had to meet certain criteria. Due to these strictures, accepting New Deal relief funds through these programs left an indelible mark on the character of the sites preserved such as Daniel Boone’s Homestead, Pennsbury Manor, and Old Economy Village.

Next, Chapter 5 looks at how the increase in available funding provided the opportunity for the state to hire people to work on preservation projects. The status of the Commission as a state agency gave them the political capital to effectively advocate for trained practitioners to restore historic landmarks even when that broke with the restrictions of bureaucratic process. These circumstances allowed for the professional training of a new generation of preservationists. Additionally, relief program funding caused a shift towards a new model of accountability for the PHC. Under this funding scheme, sites being preserved using public funds were now scrutinized by many different groups--by historians and architects for historical accuracy, the state and federal government for construction timetables and annual reports, and the taxpaying public. Federal funds coupled with legislative support allowed the PHC to grow and to aid in developing professional standards for the field.
Lastly, Chapter 6 concludes with remarks that extend the findings of my study and applies them to bigger picture themes, addressing how New Deal historic preservation has affected the development of the field as it matured and moved forward.

This study of how the PHC was affected by the expansion of state government during the 1930s constitutes a starting place from which to understand how state programs evolved into the models we see around the country today. Although others have looked at the operation and motivation of private preservation groups, in this project, I seek to fill this gap in the scholarship by drawing attention to lesser-known but foundational historic preservation initiatives run by the public sector. Since New Deal funding affected historic site reconstructions and restorations across the country and in U.S. Territories, the effects this program of funding had in one state in particular can start a conversation that will encourage future scholars to consider how it affected America in a broader sense.

45 While there are others, here, I am speaking of Lindgren’s work in Preserving Historic New England and Preserving the Old Dominion, which both look at private sector upper-class preservation during the Progressive era as well as Seth C. Bruggeman’s work in Here, George Washington Was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008).
Chapter 2: The Social Construction of Memory through the Built Environment

Introduction

“Historical consciousness and place consciousness are inextricably intertwined; we attach histories to places, and the environmental value we attach to a place comes largely through the memories and historical associations we have with it.”

David Glassberg, speaking here to the relationship Americans have with the sights and symbols imprinted upon the landscape, especially those constructed, preserved, and interpreted by their own hands. What this quote fails to address, however, is that not only do Americans shape their historical memory; they also contest the meaning of the past through commemorative actions. Historical narratives shift and change as we find new sources of information, or as contemporary culture reinterprets long understood accounts of America’s heritage. Yet creating and perpetuating a common history gives some Americans a sense of belonging and a sense of place.

Shared myths and symbols seek to bring us together as a country, and we reconstruct, debate, manipulate, and laud this historical and cultural memory to suit our needs.

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Prior to the American Revolution, a French immigrant and cultural observer, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur (1735 – 1813), wrote a series of letters describing observations of his new country.

Whence came all these people? They are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes... What, then, is the American, this new man? He is either an [sic] European or the descendant of an [sic] European; hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds... The Americans were once scattered all over Europe; here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared.48

De Crevecoeur notes that immigrants from England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Holland, Germany, and Sweden poured into America, creating a nation with citizens representing an amalgamation of many different cultures. How could a country with such a complex population find and express a shared history? To address de Crèvecoeur’s point, and the seemingly

contradictory idea that a country with such a diverse populace could have a common history, scholars argue that by emphasizing cultural and regional pluralism, the United States is able to and has been able to cultivate an identity that simultaneously exists as both united and diverse. This theory satisfies some, yet Michael Kammen among others do not believe that the United States has been able to form a common “civic or national faith” that exists beyond regional, ethnic, or class differences.⁴⁹

Adding to this conversation is John Bodnar, who finds that there is a stark difference between the “vernacular memory” brought about by the actions of local, grassroots, commemoration focused on regional or ethnic identity and “official memory,” centered on the commemorative actions organized by state and federal bodies. His claim is that a unified national memory diminishes the local contributions to the character of the nation for the purposes of creating a collective memory with which all Americans can identify.⁵⁰ Whether or not we agree on the specifics of national memory, it is necessary to recognize the ways in which energy and resources have been dedicated to constructing the contested landscape of memory in the United States.

⁴⁹ See Glassberg, “Public History and the Study of Memory,” 7–23, esp. 12. Glassberg gives an analytical synopsis of recent works that treat memory and commemoration practices. He describes Kammen’s work as portraying the politics of public historical representation as essentially consensual, embodying an underlying civic or national faith beneath ethnic and class divisions” but Kammen disagrees with this generalization. “If my book appears to tell an ‘essentially consensual’ story, then I have failed miserably to communicate my findings. Moreover, a great many of the memories and traditions that I discuss were not determined or shaped by any government establishment or social elite. They emerged from the interaction of social groups in a heterogeneous society.” In Michael Kammen, “Public History and the Uses of Memory,” The Public Historian 19, no. 2 (April 1, 1997): 51.

⁵⁰ See Bodnar, Remaking America.
The driving forces behind creating, protecting, and promoting the country’s cultural heritage in Pennsylvania has evolved over the past two centuries. What follows is a description that shows trends and milestones in the field of preservation and commemoration leading up to the 1930s on both national and local levels. My attempt here is to chart the development of the urge for commemoration in the United States, synthesizing national trends with those found locally in Pennsylvania. This chapter is broken up into three sections. The overarching goal is to provide enough of a broad outline of the development of historical consciousness as it emerged and evolved in the United States to situate Pennsylvania’s New Deal preservation projects at the heart of my study within what was then a growing field of historic preservation.

To understand the development of historical consciousness in Pennsylvania, one needs knowledge of how previous generations of Americans acted on the urge to celebrate or commemorate their history.

Preservation and Commemoration Impulse Begins: 1770s-1870s

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51 This is an immense undertaking, and I make no claim to have done so comprehensively. I have delimited this overview to focus only on national and local trends. Others have looked at international trends, most notably John Stubbs in *Architectural Conservation in Europe and the Americas* (New York, N.Y.: 2011) and *Time Honored: A Global View of Architectural Conservation: Parameters, Theory, & Evolution of an Ethos* (Hoboken N.J.: 2009).

When compared to today, in the late 1700s and early 1800s, the United States was largely seen as a country with a future rather than a past. The confluence of lacking the staunch historic record of European countries, having a polyglot population looking for a new start, and enduring the recent revolt against European monarchies, brought about a general lack of concern for the historical past. As one historian put it, these events “encouraged apathy, if not hostility towards history.” However, a few notable citizens such as Pierre Eugene Du Simitière (1736-84) and Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827) had collections of documents and artifacts relating to the early history of the United States that they made accessible to the public. Another group operating in this space was the American Philosophical Society, who in 1815 created a committee with the mission to collect documents to safeguard for use by researchers. In spite of these early efforts to preserve and commemorate the history of the United States, it was not until later that citizens began to record, collect, or venerate the legacy of the country on a large scale.

Because of its crucial role in the nation’s founding, Pennsylvania has always been at the forefront of historic preservation and commemoration. This did not happen overnight. As early as 1802 political leaders began to discuss the fate of the building where the founding fathers signed the Declaration of Independence. The structure, which was known then as the State

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53 Bluestone, _Buildings, Landscapes, and Memory_, 18.


House, was not yet celebrated for its historical connections. In 1812, when Pennsylvania’s capitol was officially moved to Harrisburg, the state of Pennsylvania gave Philadelphia permission to renovate the structure to serve as municipal offices. This decision shows that the property held value for the citizens of the Commonwealth, but historical value was not at the forefront of their minds. This attitude was slowly supplanted. For example, the name “Independence Hall” was not widely used until 1824. The change in name went along with a cultural shift that ultimately led to the shaping of the historic identity of the site. One example of this occurred in 1828, when plans to build a steeple to replace the clock tower were drawn. The clock tower, before this early step towards reconstruction, had been damaged and was missing for about 45 years. Although this process is not what we would now consider historic preservation, it was restoration of a building with an emerging historic identity. Three years later, the city contracted an architect to restore the building to its 1776 appearance and create an historic plaque. This restoration work marks the beginning of Independence Hall’s official life as a patriotic shrine to the founding of the nation.

Around 1820, interest in celebrating the nation’s history increased among citizens. Parades, pageants, historic markers, and myths were foundational steps towards defining this identity. Early efforts to collect evidence of the founding of our country and to identify the significance of the people and events that came before, laid the groundwork for the

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57 Ibid, 73.

58 Ibid, 76.
commemorative actions of future generations. As this reverence for the past was building, the found ing fathers were being laid to rest along with many veterans of the Revolutionary War. It was in this societal context that Congress invited the Marquis de Lafayette to visit the U.S. to draw attention to the upcoming 50th anniversary of the nation. His role in aiding George Washington and the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War served as a reminder to Americans of the great victories the country had won, and through this remembrance, his visit was meant to revive the patriotic “Spirit of 1776.”

During his thirteen-month visit, ritualistic public tributes to Lafayette drew coverage in newspapers and magazines. As Lafayette toured the country, he was welcomed in cities across the nation with commemorative celebrations such as parades and pageants. Events in his honor spurred the production of commemorative souvenirs with historic themes. These items and artwork created depicting scenes of Lafayette and other Revolutionary War heroes echoed the public’s admiration and support for the new socially constructed patriotic narratives.\footnote{Marc Miller, “Lafayette’s Farewell Tour and American Art,” in Idzerda, ed, \textit{Lafayette, Hero of Two Worlds: The Art and Pageantry of His Farewell Tour of America, 1824-1825: Essays} (Flushing, N.Y.: 1989), 145-146.}

Recounting the significance of this visit in the early 1930s, one scholar notes, “out of approximately four years, nine and one-half months, which Lafayette passed in America on his four visits, one hundred and fifty-four days were passed in Philadelphia.”\footnote{J. Bennett Nolan, “Lafayette in Pennsylvania,” \textit{Pennsylvania History} 1, no. 3 (July 1, 1934): 135–46.} Pennsylvania played a particular role in Lafayette’s life, and he was a favorite of Pennsylvanians. During his visit to America, he was invariably received with pomp and circumstance. This was especially true in
Philadelphia. It was during the planning for his visit, as mentioned earlier, that people began to refer to the Old State House as Independence Hall. Legends and legacies surrounding the experiences of brave American patriots were starting to grow. As the last living general of the Continental Army, historians contend that Lafayette’s insistence on visiting hallowed sites was a turning point in the way Americans perceived history. His visit led Americans to reconsider the way they expressed the urge for historical commemoration namely by shifting the paradigm to include veneration of buildings and landscapes rather than only people and objects.\textsuperscript{61}

Increased interest in the history of the nation raised questions about how objects and information relating to past events were being safeguarded in Pennsylvania. The same year that Lafayette toured the country, elite citizens, mostly from Philadelphia, noticed the lack of attention paid to the state’s heritage. Pivotal documents and objects relating to the history and founding of Pennsylvania were not being collected or protected, and this concern ultimately led to the founding of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The Historical Society amassed a collection of materials related to the history of the Commonwealth, which, for those who were granted access, encouraged and made possible scholarly research. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania was one of the earliest historical societies in the nation.\textsuperscript{62} Many significant objects and records such as account books from colonial merchants, the first draft of the United States Constitution, and important genealogical information have been preserved and promoted over the years as the Historical Society continues to fulfill this mission.

\textsuperscript{61} See Bluestone, \textit{Buildings, Landscapes, and Memory}, 24.

\textsuperscript{62} The Massachusetts Historical Society was founded in 1791 and New-York Historical Society in 1804.
Another event that figures prominently in the movement to commemorate the history of the state is the renaming of the Philadelphia squares in 1825. In the late eighteenth century, William Penn’s surveyor, Thomas Holme, included in his plan for the city five squares of open space within the grid. Originally named after geographic boundaries, Southeast Square, Northeast Square, Northwest Square, Southwest Square and Centre Square, these open public spaces were, in 1825, renamed by the city after men who made important contributions to America; Washington Square, Franklin Square, Logan Square, Rittenhouse Square. Centre Square became the site of City Hall. Although this is not a clear-cut case of preserving an historic structure or site, it is indicative of the shift towards a growing public regard for the historic figures who came before.  

Many scholars agree that the desire for a national historical narrative arose in response to an increased awareness of rapid social and economic change. Such was the impetus for the development of Fairmount Park in Philadelphia. In the midst of the burgeoning fervor for all things historical, the city of Philadelphia purchased land surrounding the Schuylkill River in order to protect the water supply from the environmental threats of increased population and pollution from people and industries. While it was not an act of intentional historic preservation, included on these properties were the homes of wealthy individuals and many remain as part of

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Fairmount Park. Although the first five acres of land were acquired in 1812, the movement towards forming a park “laid out and maintained for the health and enjoyment of the people forever” became the official mission and vision when the Fairmount Park Commission was created in 1855. As one historian astutely notes, “Fairmount Park is a patchwork of thoughts contributed for over two hundred years by wealthy merchants, politicians, lawyers, designers, and common citizens.”65 While Fairmount Park may not have initially been founded to preserve historic sites, those people involved with its genesis brought their own particular interests to their work. This influenced the formation of the park and determined its policy of preservation.

With a mixed collection of donated land and purchased land, the city owned a handful of grand homes and not-so-grand homes that were seemingly woven into the fabric of Fairmount Park by accident. Wealthy Philadelphians bequeathed large tracts of land to the city following the acquisition of the 45-acre plot of land surrounding the Schuylkill River, known as the Lemon Hill Estate in, 1855.66 To determine the best use for this newly acquired land, the Commission consulted well-known landscape architecture firms to submit proposals for the future of Fairmount Park and this had an impact on the historic emblems of the built environment that inhabited the property. Robert Morris Copeland and Frederick Law Olmsted both included the


66 Wealthy donors were noted not only for their generosity, but also for their patriotism in commission reports. "Second Annual Report of the Commissioners of Fairmount Park” 1870, page 13, Box 1, Folders 27-31, FP.2010.001, Reference Collection, Fairmount Park Historic Resource Archives.
imposing mansions that dotted the landscape’s rolling hills in their designs. At its core, the planning of Fairmount Park was an effort to protect the water supply and create a park. The architectural preservation that accompanied it was accidental at best, especially during the formative years of the park and it is not clear that the commissioners valued the structures themselves. For example, in 1868, the head of the park commission noted that the “ancient names” associated with the homes and not the structures themselves that held importance to park visitors. Rather than valuing architectural preservation, he offered to name a grove of trees after the former owners and knock down the buildings. Fairmount Park Commission’s collateral preservation saved a number of structures during the formative years of the park. According to historian Elizabeth Milroy, the scenic and elegant villas acquired by the Fairmount Park Commission such as Lemon Hill and Sedgeley changed the park to a “significant place of memory” although the conscious decision to enrich the site with historical homes and memorials did not occur until planning for the centennial celebration began in 1871.

The focus of this section has been about manifestations of the urge to commemorate historical events in Pennsylvania; however, it is important to note that around this time, George Washington’s country estate in Virginia, Mount Vernon, was saved from demolition. The work of the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association is heralded as one of the earliest historic preservation

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67 Fairmount Park Commission Minutes, June 20, 1868, p. 249 as quoted in Maria F. Ali, HABS PA, 51-PHILA, 696, 15-16.

successes and it tells us more about the general state of the field in the late 19th century. Indeed, when one reviews early historic preservation projects on a national scale, it is clear that the duty of preserving places of historical value was largely grassroots at first—the onus to save these sacred sites fell upon the shoulders of private citizens. Many preservationists, motivated largely by patriotism, wished to educate the growing immigrant population and future generations about the beginnings of the nation, of the nation they knew. This patriotic preservation resulted in the creation of historic house museums and tablets honoring pivotal events. During the second half of the 19th century, American citizens mobilized to save Mount Vernon, the Alamo, and other historic buildings with these motives pushing them forward.

In Pennsylvania, historic preservation shifted into the public arena with the proposed demolition of the Slate Roof House in Philadelphia, built in about 1687, at 2nd and Walnut Street. Notable figures such as William Penn, James Logan, and William Trent rented this property. Many individuals and organizations, including the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, knew the associational significance of this late seventeenth century structure. In the 1840s, members of the historical society attempted to purchase the house with the intent to safeguard the site and preserve its legacy. Unfortunately, the owners were not interested in selling at that time and did not change their minds until more than twenty years later. In 1864, the site was on the market again. Once the Historical Society of Pennsylvania learned that individuals who planned to raze the Slate Roof House had put in a bid on the structure, they took action with a bid of their own, hoping to stave off the destruction of the building. John Fanning Watson, an antiquarian and member of the historical society, was a vocal opponent against the destruction of this house. He
shared his feelings regarding the building in newspapers, and he made an early case for the importance of commemorating the founders of our country.69

Such a house should be rescued from its present forlorn neglect; it ought to be bought and consecrated to some lasting memorial of its former character, by restoring its bastions and salient angles, &c. …There is a moral influence in these measures that implies and effects much more in its influence on national action and feeling, than can reach the apprehension of superficial thinkers.70

Despite Watson’s patriotic sermonizing, the historical society was unable to raise the 30 thousand dollars needed to acquire the property and the Slate Roof House was demolished a few years later. Even though ultimately his campaign failed, his words influenced the movement towards commemoration and preservation with future preservationists invoking the loss of the Slate Roof House as an example of why we need to save significant landmarks.71


71 When it was known the Slate Roof House would be demolished, Philadelphia area antiquarians and collectors sought to create a lasting image of the site for future generations. For more on lamenting the loss of the Slate Roof House see Dann, “‘Governments, Individuals and Old Houses,’” 1, 6-7.
During the Civil War, patriotic groups around the country wanted to support the war effort and some did this by holding events to raise money in support of the United States Sanitary Commission and other similar groups that aided the Union soldiers participating in the war. Building on examples of successful Sanitary Fairs in other cities such as New York, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Boston, Philadelphia-based aid groups gathered to organize the Great Central Fair of 1864 in Logan Square, with the goal of encouraging citizens to contribute in whatever way they could to increase the quality of life for Union soldiers in the field. Logan Square (now Logan Circle) was packed with nearly one hundred different booths providing an entertaining day for those who chose to visit. Booths such as the “Relics and Curiosities,” the “William Penn Parlor,” and the “Pennsylvania Kitchen” (depicting domestic life of early German settlers), followed in line with larger trends promoting interest in the historical past. Juxtaposed with the machines and equipment representing technological advancement also on display at the fairs, these historically themed areas exhibited a wide-range of objects with notable lineage and let people get a glimpse of how things used to be. Associational objects such as presidential autographs, chairs, watches, cups, and spoons were featured along with the stories of the great men they once belonged to such as Penn, Franklin, Washington, Mason, and Dixon, and others.72

After the Civil War, attention to commemoration narrowed to focus on drawing together the fractured nation through the creation of a generic and simple narrative memory, which could be used universally by many groups for many purposes. One way this manifested was through increased concern over having intellectual control over history and preserving documents. In line with national trends, during the mid-1800s, interest in forming historical societies was increasing across Pennsylvania.\(^73\)

Numerous historical associations of varied sizes were established outside of Philadelphia in the nineteenth century. In Pittsburgh, the group that would eventually become known as the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania was formed on January 10, 1859. Energy for this work waned during the Civil War but ten years later and 200 miles east, a group of influential citizen came together to form a society “for the purpose of collecting and perpetuating the historical reminisces of Berks County.”\(^74\) Similarly, the Philadelphia-based Friends Historical Association formed in 1873 to preserve and promote the history and significance of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). In Central Pennsylvania, the residents of Cumberland County benefitted from the death of a local lawyer, James Hamilton Jr., who left money and property to


the town to create a library and historical association. The creation of these associations across the Commonwealth illustrates that an interest in understanding history was gaining traction even within smaller communities as the nation prepared to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Interest in forming historical societies flowered and continued to gain wide appeal moving forward. While it is true that these early historical societies were coming together in support of a national historical narrative, as one historian notes, this work was “effectively focused on local, state, and regional identities” as well.

Centennial Celebrations, Colonial Revival, and Cultural Heritage: 1870s-1906

Around the country, there were many events devoted to celebrating America’s 100th birthday, this during a time where the United States was focused on reuniting its populace after the Civil War. Philadelphia agreed to host a celebration of this milestone to be held in Fairmount Park and the planning of this event brought about a change in the Fairmount Park Commission’s priorities regarding preservation. Centennial planning began in 1871. A year prior, in a report discussing the projects at the park, the main engineer mentioned removing an “unsightly relic” which is emblematic of the general attitude regarding the structures without associational value.

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76 Henle, Preserving the Past, Making History, 1.
located in Fairmount Park.\textsuperscript{77} Acquiring land surrounding the Schuylkill River was the primary goal of the Fairmount Park Commission and in some cases, grand homes were acquired along with the land. These structures were valued for their association to great families of Philadelphia but were not seen as part of a planned historic preservation program.\textsuperscript{78} However, once planning for the Centennial began, reports show engineers and administrative staff discussing the idea of mansions being refit as restaurants to cater to the needs of the crowds anticipated to visit the fair. Adaptive reuse is a tactic that preservationists are familiar with today, and renovating the mansions in Fairmount to serve as restaurants can be viewed as an early but important shift in how the park commission conceived of the park and its resources. Therefore, centennial planning was the pivotal moment in which the administrators of Fairmount Park changed their approach to historic structures. It is during this time that Mount Pleasant, John Penn’s Solitude, and other older homes were woven into the fabric of the park and the celebration specifically for their historical value.\textsuperscript{79} Furthermore, shortly after the Centennial, the Letitia Penn House would be moved to Fairmount Park.\textsuperscript{80} This change in Fairmount Park Commission’s attitude towards

\textsuperscript{77} "Third Annual Report of the Commissioners of Fairmount Park," page 21, Box 2, Folders 1-9, FP.2010.001, Reference Collection, Fairmount Park Historic Resource Archives.

\textsuperscript{78} Refer to pages 35-37 of this dissertation for more about the founding of Fairmount Park.


the resources it oversaw occurred in relation to the Centennial celebration, but continued to remain a part of the park once the celebration was over.

Moreover, planning for the Centennial brought a fractured but healing nation together after the Civil War to organize the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration. A representative from each state served on a board to plan the festivities and coordinate fundraising efforts. This event put commemoration on the mind of the nearly 10 million people who attended as well as those who learned about it through various media outlets. The cookbooks, pamphlets, images, and newspaper articles had an extensive reach and engaged constituents across the United States. Officially named the International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures and Products of the Soil and Mine, included at the exposition were exhibitions relating to mining and metallurgy, manufacturing, education, science, art, machinery, agriculture, and horticulture.

Within these exhibits was evidence to detail the progress in various fields, but as with the Sanitary Fairs, Centennial exhibitions also paid homage to the way things used to be. For example, a reconstructed log cabin served as an example of how Americans lived during the American Revolution. Interpreters dressed in period clothing showed off handmade candles, spinning wheels, and carded wool to educate visitors and commemorate the heritage of the United States. 81 George Washington’s carriage, log cabins, period dress, candle making, and

81 For more about how the interpretations of these items and actions tell us more about contemporary society than genuine colonial history see Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth (New York: Vintage, 2002), 1-11 and 375-413.
spinning wheels were shown alongside documents and objects to draw attention to the founding of the country.  

Scholars characterize commemorative activities embracing the early history of the United States, such as those employed during the Centennial celebration in Philadelphia, as being part of the Colonial Revival movement. Evidence of this particular type of historical enthusiasm is found in architecture and material culture produced from the late 1800s onward. Reviving themes of a simpler time by directing attention to the American past is a way of displaying attitudes of both the past and the present. Scholars note that through the resurgence of interest in the historical past, people were creating or manipulating the past in order to point to a time when things were better. Indeed, a focus was placed on creating an impression of the days of yore, rather than holding fast to authentic reproduction of the realities of colonial life. An idealized view of the ways things used to be was a coping mechanism that allowed citizens to live with the myth of a certain set of American core values that were being disrupted by war, immigration, or economic upheaval. By surrounding themselves with revivalist imagery through architecture or objects, Americans were simultaneously embracing the modern through mass

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produced replicas while glorifying the past. The groups that were acting under the influence of the Progressive Era and Colonial Revival mindset sought to create sites that promoted a stable, nostalgic, consensus version of history as a reaction to the social instability of industrialization and immigration that was quickly changing the order of things.  

Much of the preservation and commemoration mentioned thus far occurred in the Philadelphia area. There are some clear reasons that there would have been a greater emphasis on preservation in and around Philadelphia at this time. With a focus on associational relationships to history rather than aesthetics, retelling the stories of distinguished white men, and preserving the homes of wealthy citizens, the eastern sites received more attention than the more rural ones in Western and Central Pennsylvania. It is during the late 1800s that the preservation and commemoration impulse gained popularity in Western Pennsylvania. One of the main influences was the patriotic fervor of a particular group, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). As other lineage-based heritage societies gained popularity at this same time, the national organization of the DAR was formed in 1891 to perpetuate the memory of

84 The meaning behind expression of revivalist tendencies are noted by Wilson, Re-Creating the American Past, 2-3, 9; Gebhard, “The American Colonial Revival in the 1930s,” 146; Davis, “The American Parkway as Colonial Revival Landscape,” 144; and Kammen, Mystic Chords of Memory.

85 While the Colonial Revival trend began in the late 19th century, Pennsylvania citizens continued to look back towards a mythic past for years to follow. Colonial Revival as it emerged in the late 1800s is depicted as a reaction to immigration, whereas Colonial Revival that emerged in the 1930s had a different flavor since it was reacting to a different set of social factors and carried out by a new generation.
those who helped America gain independence from England. One way the DAR set forth to achieve their mission was through the preservation of historical objects and sites. The Pennsylvania chapter of the DAR banded together to save multiple properties during the early years of the preservation movement in America. One of the more prominent sites saved in Pennsylvania by the DAR was the Fort Pitt Block House. Built in 1764, this site is known to be “the oldest authenticated structure in Western Pennsylvania,” and the DAR set out to safeguard this piece of American history for the generations to follow. In 1885, the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania attempted to buy the structure from the tenant, but she rejected the offer. Almost a decade later in the 1890s, members of the local chapter of DAR begin to speak with the homeowner to gain control over the site. They bought the structure and began preservation projects in 1894 to stabilize the octagonal brick building. The women active in the DAR during this time are closely aligned with other female-run preservation groups such as the Mount Vernon Ladies Association and the Ladies’ Hermitage Association. These well-organized and patriotic women’s groups raised awareness of the importance of preservation, found financial

86 Genealogy and lineage societies such as the DAR grew in popularity at this time. For more on the development of these groups see François Weil, *Family Trees: A History of Genealogy in America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), 105-119.


88 “Fort Pitt Block House” and Curator Emily Weaver, e-mail message to author, October 10, 2013.
support for their work, and kept alive the legacy of their ancestors through important historic sites around the country, usually through the domestic space found in historic houses.  

In the postbellum period, commemorating and celebrating anniversaries relating to the early days of the United States was at the forefront. Building stabilization and preventing destruction occurred in conjunction with celebrations but largely the activities were not place-based. Relics, objects, and documents with historical associations were displayed at events such as Sanitary Fairs and Centennial celebrations. Prior to the introduction of affordable automobiles, American’s valued history in a stand-alone context during this time, and historical relics were viewed in varying environments, usually divorced from the buildings wherein they were originally used.

**State and Federal Support for Preservation: 1906-1942**

Prior to 1900, historic preservation and commemoration projects received little support from the federal government. Control shifted to the public sector gradually over time, but never fully. However, the federal government started to conserve natural landscapes such as ruins in the southwest and significant battlefields. In 1906, Congress passed the first federal preservation legislation, known as the Antiquities Act. Signed into law by Theodore Roosevelt, the Antiquities Act was created with the ruins of the southwest in mind. When it was discovered that looters and explorers were destroying sites in the United States with cultural and historical value, congressional leaders agreed that it was necessary to draw up legislation to keep sites safe.

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89 For more on women using domestic spaces to convey historical messages see Marling, *George Washington Slept Here*, 53-84 and West, *Domesticating History*, especially chapters 1 and 2.
so that they could carry forth important stories of the country’s heritage to future generations. The Antiquities Act set the stage for government intervention and support for important sites in America. Yet, during the early 1900s the bulk of commemoration and preservation work was still carried out by privately funded groups.

Citizens continued to form societies dedicated to saving historic buildings and sites at this time; of particular importance is the creation of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA), centered in Boston. Founded by William Sumner Appleton in 1910, the SPNEA is credited with saving many historic homes in the New England area, but this group also created a model for preserving that influenced others. Even though the federal government was showing interest in preservation, it was slow, happening in fits and starts. The work of private citizens drove the movement forward. SPNEA was made up of wealthy, elite members of society, who sought to shape the past in order to educate current and future Americans. A mixture of a Progressive Era reform agenda and the various invocations of Colonial Revival trends drove their work. According to historian James Lindgren, “reformers initiated the drive purportedly to purify a political system tainted by immigrants, instill Yankee values in a heterogeneous population, and boost prosperity in the depressed 1890s.”

The SPNEA remade American memory by creating sites to reflect and promote their conception of history to future generations. The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities and Mount Vernon

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90 Lindgren notes these trends in *Preserving Historic New England*, 5-6.
Ladies Association were also active in the same sort of work, along with other similar groups around the country.91

While the SPNEA and these other private sector preservation and commemoration groups were undertaking such projects, in 1913, the General Assembly and Governor of Pennsylvania agreed to create a dedicated government agency concerned with heritage of the state. The Pennsylvania Historical Commission consisted of five citizens from around the Keystone State appointed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Instruction and charged with “the duty of marking and preserving the antiquities and historic landmarks of Pennsylvania.”92 The PHC appointees began “making familiar the too-long neglected historic importance of this great Commonwealth” and, in this regard, Pennsylvania was the first state with a dedicated state office concerned only with maintaining and preserving the historic importance of their state.93 The nationalistic sentiments expressed by the Commission were noted in the first report of the PHC, “History, like charity, should begin at home. It should not end there. There are many people who have visited the historic localities of Europe, but have never been to more interesting


93 Ibid, 6.
localities at their very doors.” The creation of the PHC was influenced by the previous preservation and commemorative efforts in the state and feedback from groups such as historical societies and associations. One such group, the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies formed in 1905 due to an outcry for a unified statewide body attuned to the historical needs of the Commonwealth. The many disparate historical groups around the state felt they lacked a linking organization to offer support and the “inspiration and assistance which comes from close cooperation.” This became an important part of the work of the Commission, which went on to aid local groups in their efforts to draw attention to buildings, military sites, monuments, and antiquities within the state of Pennsylvania.

In addition to the first steps of state government oversight in the field of preservation and commemoration, during these years, other preservation groups continued their work. A local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution acted in 1914 to purchase and preserve the first screw factory in the nation. This site, located in Centre County, Pennsylvania indicates an early turn towards valuing the industrial heritage of the state rather than just political and military leaders.

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94 Ibid, 11-12.


96 The Moshannon Chapter of the DAR owns, operates, and maintains this property.

97 For more on the evolution of public history interest in the industrial landscape see Carolyn L. Kitch, Pennsylvania in Public Memory: Reclaiming the Industrial Past (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012).
A few years later in 1919, after waging a campaign to raise funds, George Pond, the Dean of the School of Chemistry and Physics at Penn State University, purchased the John Priestley house in Northumberland. His intention was to save the structure from being demolished in the creation of a new railroad line. He felt strongly connected to John Priestley (1733-1804), the scientist responsible for discovering oxygen, and hoped to found a Priestley museum at the Priestley House to commemorate this scientific milestone and his broader accomplishments. Pond died before he had a chance to put his plan into action. The G.G. Pond Memorial Association owned the site and operated it as a museum, overseeing an early restoration in 1920 and construction of a fireproof annex to store and display instruments and personal effects of Priestley. This restoration was completed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of Priestley’s discovery of oxygen. These efforts by citizens created a varied, unconnected terrain of historical memory in Pennsylvania.

As we will learn in the following chapter, it was not until the 1930s that the PHC would begin to actively preserve and manage historic sites. However, in the years prior to the Great Depression, interested citizens saved from demolition and neglect some of the sites that would eventually be placed under their care. The Daniel Boone Homestead is one such example. Abandoned from 1919 until 1926, when Reverend Arthur Vossler, the rector at St. Michael’s Episcopal Church, Birdsboro, Pennsylvania, purchased the site to preserve and commemorate its historical significance. As noted in a local newspaper article, “This farm today is owned by Rev.

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and Mrs. Arthur Vossler, who are restoring it to its former usefulness.” These private citizens took action to save this tangible piece of the history of Daniel Boone in Pennsylvania, and would later turn it over to the PHC who would continue to bring it back to life using New Deal funds.

As we lead into the time when the Pennsylvania Historical Commission became the main presence of historic preservation in the state, it is important to note national trends in the field. During the 1920s, wealthy leaders of industry, such as John D. Rockefeller at Colonial Williamsburg and Henry Ford in Greenfield Village, used their enormous wealth to promote and financially support preservation and commemoration efforts. Both of these projects garnered much attention on a national level and raised public awareness about the cultural heritage of the United States. Pennsylvania philanthropist and founder of The Hershey Chocolate Company, Milton Hershey, joined in as well. In the area surrounding his industrial plants and factories, the town of Hershey, Pennsylvania developed with support from the company; the homes, local businesses, public works infrastructure, and churches were established to encourage community for employees. In addition, the Hersey Company encased an eighteenth century log cabin known as the Session House in glass in 1929 in an effort towards preserving and protecting it for future generations. This structure once served as a pastor’s study for the Derry Presbyterian Church and was has held value as an emblem of the historic roots of the area. “Mr. Hershey has very kindly agreed to enclose the historic study, session house, and academy, the oldest building in this entire section of the country, in a structure largely of class, that it may be easily seen by


passersby, and also preserved from further decay as a relic of the distant past.”¹⁰¹ This quote, which was written at the time the structure was encased or preserved, shows that the community valued the Sessions House and felt that Hershey heard their concern and shared in the interest in the historic past of his community. The Hershey Lumber Company fabricated the glass enclosure and noted engineer and architect D. Paul Witmer drew plans. A ventilation system allowed air to circulate while protecting the structure from the elements.¹⁰² This was not then and is not now a widely used technique to preserve architecture. The Sessions House stands today in its glass encasement as both an emblem of early religious history in central Pennsylvania as well as early preservation practices.

As noted earlier, during the early twentieth century Americans considered the significance of their cultural legacy and manipulated or recreated the meaning of their historical past to meet contemporary needs. Agents of the New Deal era used history as well to provide relief during unpredictable times. During the late 1920s, affordable automobiles and increased leisure time spurred domestic travel and created a demand for places to travel to and things to see. This coupled with the “renewed earnestness” in searching the past during the Depression contributed to a more organized and professional preservation movement.¹⁰³ The rise in historical interest and the availability of federal funds for public works projects combined to create the perfect environment for historic preservation projects to flourish. As historian Charles

¹⁰¹ “Old Derry Church,” June 1929, Hershey Community Archives, 13.

¹⁰² For more information, see Susan E. Peters et al., National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Derry Session House and Enclosure, Hershey, PA. (2006).

¹⁰³ Hosmer, Preservation Comes of Age, 1-3.
Hosmer noted, “The most important developments in restoration thought came mainly during the 1930s, when money, labor, and professionals were available at one time.”

In the 1930s, a public that was trying to recover from the Great Depression looked for stability and safety in history or nostalgic myths. These provided a psychological stability, which countered the shakiness of economic conditions and served as assurance that the American experiment was built on strong foundations. In fact, many national preservation and commemoration milestones were established during this time of financial hardship. For example, the first official historic district is defined in 1931 in Charleston, South Carolina; others followed such as Vieux Carre, San Antonio, Winston-Salem, and the Georgetown area of Washington, D.C. Additionally, in 1935, with the passing of the Historic Sites Act, oversight of National Parks, monuments, military parks, cemeteries, memorials, and the capital parks fell under the aegis of the National Park Service. The Historic Sites Act is a particularly important milestone in the field of historic preservation because it marks a shift in control and leadership of the preservation movement in America. Although hinted at earlier in the Antiquities Act of 1906, the Historic Sites Act clearly stated that historic preservation and site stewardship is part of American national policy, in other words, preserving the nation’s history is an official responsibility of the government.

Between 1933 and 1935, the federal and state government started to become more deeply involved in historic preservation with the creation of New Deal programs. New Deal work relief and recovery programs funded projects that fit into a specific framework. All projects

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104 Ibid, 955.
undertaken by these New Deal programs had to occur on public property, had to be useful or worthwhile to both society and the worker, and the projects were not allowed to overlap with ordinary functions, meaning they should not displace a regular employee. Federal and state entities that held ownership over historic sites but did not have the money or the ability to complete the necessary work on the structures were now able to apply for funding and put their unemployed to work preserving historic sites and buildings.  

By 1935, the National Park Service had more and different types of sites to oversee and began to be directly involved with the care and maintenance of historic structures. The NPS made use of New Deal funds to carry out their goals. More specifically, during this time, the National Park Service created the Historic American Buildings Survey program. HABS put unemployed white-collar workers such as photographers and architects to work in order to create a comprehensive record of historic places in the United States. Relief-funded programs, such as the Federal Writers Project, the Historical Records Survey, and the Historic American Buildings Survey helped to usher in a new democratized history during the New Deal.

The 1930s were an important time for historic preservation and commemoration. The Historic Sites Act, coupled with the work of HABS, the National Park Service, and the New Deal historic preservation projects, show that preservation became a concern of the public sector during the 1930s. Contrary to what one might expect, the economic downturn of the Great Depression did not have a negative effect on the movement for cultural heritage preservation.

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Conclusion

Preservation and commemoration trends in Pennsylvania were widespread and multifaceted. Each site had its own story of being recognized or discovered and saved, and the process through which the buildings and sites were preserved, and the participants commemorated, differed widely. Use of the sites also differed over time, although most served as museums to teach visitors about the country’s past. The preceding section provides an outline of what some citizens did to express a feeling of national enthusiasm, but this is just a line of examples of how that feeling manifested. Groups acting in the Progressive Era influenced in part by Colonial Revival trends sought to create sites that promoted a stable, nostalgic, consensus version of history as a reaction to the social instability of industrialization and immigration that was quickly changing the American cultural landscape. Not all preservation or commemoration efforts targeted the general public but the trend moved in that direction after the turn of the century.

This overview also shows that American history and myth was self-made. The country created its own collective history through the retelling of stories, the creation of myths, symbols, art, songs, and historical shrines. It has been argued that when the federal and state government became involved in commemoration, elite professionals and content experts took on responsibility for the creation of this American story. It may be true that architects, legislators, and published authors have greater control over the shaping of the remembered American story,

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106 For more on the idea that American historical legacy is self-made consult Henry Steele Commager, The Search for a Usable Past, and Other Essays in Historiography (New York: Knopf, 1967), 13-22.
but average Americans, craftspeople, artists, storytellers held significant influence too. As we can see from this overview of historic preservation and commemoration activities, most early efforts were undertaken by local historical societies, churches, and chapters of patriotic heritage organizations raised subscriptions to support their goals. Moving into the early 1900s, the tone of preservation and commemoration was altered significantly when wealthy (Rockefeller at Colonial Williamsburg, Ford at Greenfield Village, Henry Francis du Pont and others who collected American antiques and folk art) and elite institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, opening its American Wing in 1924, became engaged in this pursuit. Later, federal and state intervention changed who controlled the writing of the story of America’s heritage and to what ends. All of these voices together have influenced the contested landscape of American memory.

107 See Barthel, “Getting in Touch with History,” 346 for more on how elites played a large role in shaping national identity. See Bodnar, Remaking America for discussion of the competing visions of “official” and “vernacular” commemoration.

Chapter 3: The Politics of Preservation

Introduction

Over the past thirty years, a growing body of literature has investigated how historic sites are shaped by the ideals of the groups that rallied to preserve and interpret them. In a study of how a particular Kentucky log cabin was misrepresented as President Lincoln’s birthplace in legend and lore, Dwight Pitcaithley makes an astute observation regarding the cultural meaning of preserved places. He notes, “Historic sites, particularly those that tend to idealize the past rather than preserve a place, reflect the collective memories of the commemorators much more than they present historical reality. They are products of contemporary time, quite distinct in form and meaning from the original place and time.” Pitcaithley’s statement underscores the idea that the sites and symbols of the American cultural landscape are laced with layers of meaning. An earlier examination of the same theme by Patricia West in *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of Historic House Museums* locates and identifies the ways in which the

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missions of particular historic house museums have been influenced by prevailing cultural and political attitudes at the time of commemoration. This politically shaped legacy can persist decades later through the choices made during restoration or reconstruction as well as interpretation. West finds evidence of this influence using the example of the often-cited preservation of George Washington’s home, Mount Vernon (1865) led by the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association. According to West, traces of larger sociopolitical movements are visible in the actions of the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association, specifically the influence of the female-centered cult of domesticity and hallmarks of the progressive movement. These women merged patriotism and domesticity to shroud the fact that they were political actors, which was not an appropriate role for women to play during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.\footnote{Women’s role in historic preservation is discussed further in West, Domesticating History, 162; Teehan, “The Intersection of Gender and Early American Historic Preservation: A Case Study of Ann Pamela Cunningham and Her Mount Vernon Preservation Effort.”; Barbara J Howe, “Women in the Nineteenth Century Preservation Movement”, in Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer B. Goodman, Restoring Women’s History Through Historic Preservation (JHU Press, 2003), 17-36.} West, Pitcaithley, and others in the field urge visitors and scholars to think critically about which sites have been preserved and to interrogate the process by which historic landmarks are commemorated or founded in order to consider what is preserved in these sites beyond their foundations and double-hung sash windows.

If it is true that the preservation of historic sites “are and always have been about politics,” as West claims, then it follows that a study of how particular sites are chosen, preserved, and interpreted would reveal details of the political environment in which they were
preserved. This claim that political context shapes the creation of historic sites corresponds with an evaluation made by Charles Hosmer in 1981. In his study of the development of the field of historic preservation, he surveyed work being done during the early twentieth century on a state level. Hosmer found that New York, Indiana, Illinois, California, and Pennsylvania all had state preservation programs and the activities of these groups tended to be capricious and changed according to shifts in the political landscape. Moreover, the character of the leadership in each state and the board of each particular preservation program played a large part in shaping which sites were saved and how the work was carried out. The state programs that Hosmer examined were not created equal; some were arms of the parks commission or run from the office of the state architect. Only Pennsylvania had a state agency distinctly tasked with historical concerns. A further example of lack of uniformity with how states administer historic preservation can be found in James Lindgren’s historiographical case study, Preserving the Old Dominion: Historic Preservation and Virginia Traditionalism. Here, Lindgren identifies the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA), which was formed in 1889 as the first statewide preservation group operating in the United States. However, Lindgren notes that while the figureheads of the APVA shined a spotlight on the value of historic preservation and linked its importance to the contemporary politics in the state, the APVA was a privately financed organization. The work of both Hosmer and Lindgren provide an entry point for

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112 Ibid, xii.
113 Hosmer, Preservation Comes of Age, 438.
114 James Lindgren, Preserving the Old Dominion, 11.
others to consider the influence of statewide agencies that relied on the support of the legislature and political appointments and the effect this had on the preservation of historic landmarks.

It is with these studies in mind that I analyze the political landscape of the New Deal and the creation of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission in order to expand existing knowledge about early systems of state-run preservation programs. Coordinated by the Commission and funded in part by the New Deal relief programs, I analyze the process through historic sites in Pennsylvania were restored between 1934 and 1942 to reveal evidence of how politics and preservation operated side by side. Through the records of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission and correspondence with New Deal program administrators who granted the funding for these projects, it is clear that the commemorative urge was manifested in relief programs. Historiographical scholarship from the last few decades has shown that historic preservation is not an unmediated form.\textsuperscript{115} By revealing the framework guiding the formation of historic sites as they were preserved, it becomes clear that politics greatly affected the work of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission.

The Pennsylvania Historical Commission operated as an umbrella organization charged with stitching together the work of regional and local groups into a broad state historic narrative and their position as a government agency was different from most of the early statewide preservation groups established in other areas of the country. I find that operating within the

political framework of the state directly affected the work of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission. As those who served on the Commission were political appointees, legislators set the Commission’s budget, and all historic sites were organized and approved by acts of the General Assembly, it was impossible for this body to avoid both socio-political as well as direct political influence. Ultimately, it was the relationships and skill sets developed by being a part of the state government structure that preadapted the Pennsylvania Historical Commission for applying for and supervising New Deal work relief programs geared towards historic preservation. This experience coupled with historic property acquisition, documentation, and research completed by the Commission between 1913 and 1933 led to successful use of New Deal funds for historic preservation projects in Pennsylvania.

The Origins of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission

Created in 1913, the PHC served the Commonwealth by drawing public and political attention to the heritage of the state. Pennsylvania was the first state in the early 1900s to establish a centralized agency of the government to offer direct political support to promote the historical legacy of the state. Local and regional engagement in preserving sites, such as the work of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and historical societies and associations was common. However, these groups were not responsible for attempting to create a well-rounded and representational view of an entire state. In this regard, Pennsylvania set an example that other states would follow. This sentiment is made clear in Simon Bronner’s thorough analysis of Henry Shoemaker (1880–1958), a folklorist and former chairman of the PHC. Bronner characterizes the
Commission as “a groundbreaking agency in the nation’s public history movement.”

Ultimately, the creation of the PHC included support for institutionalizing research, commemoration, and architectural conservation and this established history as a responsibility of the state government.

As Bronner notes, the Historical Commission was promoting public heritage at a time when it was rare for states to regularly appropriate money for historical concerns and unheard of to have a dedicated government agency charged with this work. Groundbreaking as it was, the creation of the PHC came about as the result of years of trials and errors. The perceived weaknesses of other regional groups with history as their focus, such as the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (1824) and the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies (1905) spurred the formation of a centralized body to connect and synthesize local and regional initiatives. Despite a title that implies a wide reach, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania was, in effect, a Philadelphia institution; it was headquartered in the city and the majority of the members were from the area as well. The formation of the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies in 1905 was a step towards creating a more geographically representative body to consider the heritage of the state. This group gathered delegates from regional historical societies across the Commonwealth in a central location, Harrisburg, to share techniques and information. Meetings of the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies facilitated discussions with representatives from a greater geographic area, creating a network that supported and fostered scholarship. These efforts at collaboration across the state and feedback from groups such as historical

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societies and associations making plain that they still felt they lacked a linking organization to offer support in the form of the “inspiration and assistance which comes from close cooperation” and this urged political leaders to form the PHC.\textsuperscript{117} The growing interest in commemoration and history made possible the creation of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission.\textsuperscript{118}

As the first state to establish an arm of the government tasked with historic concerns, Pennsylvania ushered in a new way of carrying out preservation and commemoration work. Hosmer found that “in the major state agencies charged with historical programs, the success or failure of each program varied with the interests and personalities of the civil servants and the boards who made policy regarding historic sites.”\textsuperscript{119} This theory is reflected in the appointments to Pennsylvania Historical Commission and the ensuing projects that they carried out.

Appointed by the Governor, over the years, the Pennsylvania Historical Commission consisted of citizens with relevant skills and interests, including professors, historians, genealogists, and

\textsuperscript{117} Fortenbaugh, “Fifty Years of Achievement in Pennsylvania History,” 267–77.


\textsuperscript{119} Although he speaks in generalities here, he must have been referencing Pennsylvania only with this comment because it was the only state with a state agency—the rest of the states he surveyed had groups that collaborated with the state to carry out preservation work or gave these projects to existing state agencies such as public works departments. Hosmer, \textit{Preservation Comes of Age}, 438.
archeologists, representing major geographic areas of the state. While commissioners were passionately knowledgeable in their areas of interest, most were not engaged in this work professionally. Indeed, many appointed to the PHC held respected positions in historical or archeological societies and had authored well-received books.\textsuperscript{120} Their political and professional connections were a valued addition that extended the reach of the Commission.

To carry out the work outlined in the legislative Act passed in 1913 that created the Historical Commission, Governor Tener chose five wealthy white men of prominent social standing: William Sproul, Hampton L. Carson, William H. Stevenson, George P. Donehoo, and W. U. Hensel who was succeeded by A. E. Sission to serve as commissioners.\textsuperscript{121} William Sproul, a Republican State Senator at the time (1897-1928) served as the first Chairman of the

\textsuperscript{120} Academic training was not required to serve on the Commission. The status of professional and amateur historians and their relationship to the field has varied documented notably in Peter Novick, \textit{That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession}, (Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1988).


\textsuperscript{121} See Appendix A for the complete text of the act. \textit{Laws of Pennsylvania}, 1913, pg. 1265-1266, Pennsylvania House of Representatives Archives.
Commission. This was not merely a political appointment; Sproul had a marked interest in all things historical as evidenced by his connections to the American Philosophical Society and the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies. Hampton L. Carson was a lawyer, former Attorney General of Pennsylvania (1903-1907), and later served as the president of the American Bar Association (1919-1921). Carson’s interest in history matched his engagement in the legal profession. He wrote books on both historical and legal topics and served in many roles at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, starting as recording secretary (1893-1903), becoming vice president (1903-1921), and then transitioning to the role of president from 1921 until his death in 1929.122 William H. Stevenson held the post of treasurer for the first Commission. Active in Pittsburgh social and political spheres, he served as City Councilman (1902-1909) and President of the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce (1913-1915). Notably, Stevenson was President of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania and a member of the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies’ committee on state legislation, which was charged with securing political support legislation for the advancement of historical research in Pennsylvania.123 His political shrewdness coupled with his passion for history was a boon for the Commission. George P. Donehoo, secretary of the first Commission, was a Presbyterian minister from western Pennsylvania with interests in archeology and ethnology. He wrote a number of books about Pennsylvania history and culture. He held a number of posts in the state government, including


director of the state library and museum, as well as chaplain of the House of Representatives and later the Senate. The fifth member, W. U. Hensel, a former State Attorney General (1891-1895), helped to found the Lancaster Historical Society and was the author of many books relating to Pennsylvania history. He died during his first term with the PHC in 1915 and was succeeded by former state Senator (1900-1909) and former Auditor General, A. E. Sission of Erie, Pennsylvania. These well-connected men were responsible for forging a place in the state government for historical concerns.

The PHC had members in addition to these five appointees. The bylaws name the Governor, Auditor General, and State Treasurer as Trustees in an ex officio capacity; however, these men were not active members of the Commission and did not attend regular meetings. Rather, the Auditor General and State Treasurer were contacted when specific financial needs arose. On the topic of staff, the bylaws stated that the PHC was allowed to hire a stenographer to be paid no more than one thousand dollars per year and a curator whose annual pay could not exceed twelve hundred dollars. Thomas L. Montgomery, director of the State Library and


125 For examples of his work, see “An Antislavery Remonstrance” and “A Reminiscence of Langdon Cheves” in Historical papers and addresses of the Lancaster County Historical Society, (Lancaster, PA., 1911).

126 The role of the Treasurer and Auditor General was noted in the Act, “This and all subsequent appropriations shall be paid by the State Treasurer upon the warrant of the Auditor General upon the presentation by the Commission of proper vouchers signed by its chairman and attested by its secretary.”

127 First Report of the Historical Commission of Pennsylvania in Records of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (RG13), Pennsylvania Historical Commission, Annual
State Museum, offered to be the curator of the Commission without a salary. Beyond his role as Curator of the Commission, Montgomery was active in many historical associations and societies. Over the years, he was the treasurer of the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies, a member of the Dauphin County Historical Society, and later became the librarian of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Although never serving on the Commission directly, he did much to support their work. The five appointed commissioners were uncompensated for their work, but they soon noted that since much of the "onerous and responsible work of the Commission has fallen upon the secretary," that particular position should be open to compensation if the appointee wishes.\footnote{128} The participatory level of the commissioners, staff, and ex officio members varied with the character of the Commission’s leadership and individual goals.

The PHC stated their duty to promote the many layers of influence that led to the growth and development of Pennsylvania. This sentiment is seen in statements such as this one, from the first annual report of the PHC, “All of the various peoples whose influence entered into the making of the American Nation had a part in the making of the history of ‘the Forks’ of the Ohio. Indian, French, English, Irish, Scotch, Scotch-Irish, German, Swiss — these peoples all had a part in the making of history at the union of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, where the Ohio is formed. Hence the monument at this site should appeal to all people.”\footnote{129} Extolling

\footnotesize{Reports, 1915-1934, 13.94, 6846, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 4. (Hereafter cited as \textit{First Report}.)}

\footnote{128}{Ibid, 16.}

\footnote{129}{Ibid, 19.}
the importance of understanding and calling attention to the various aspects of the historical narrative and shows a sophisticated understanding of the power of inclusion. In spite of this, by 21st century standards, the group was relatively myopic in its view of which details of history were important to emphasize. This predisposition is evident in the first annual report, in which the appointees note, "In its personnel the Commission represents distinctly the principal separate strains of race and religion which made up the composite citizenship of the Commonwealth-- the English Episcopalian, the English and Welsh Quaker and Baptist, the Scotch-Irish Presbyterian and the Pennsylvania German church and sect people." The membership of the Commission was by no means a reflection of the “composite citizenship” of the state. The Commission commemorated aspects of the Native American history of Pennsylvania, but beyond that, African Americans, Jewish people, and women of all ethnicities and races were underrepresented in the historical narrative formed during the early years of the Commission.

Availability of funds was an important factor that shaped the work of the PHC. As proposed to the General Assembly, $60,000 was earmarked for the work of the first Commission. In the Senate, this allotment was reduced to $40,000 and further reduced to $10,000 when it reached the Governor’s desk. Simply put, the Commission had proposed a

\[130\] Ibid, 12.

\[131\] For more on the presence of underrepresented groups in historical narrative, see Michael Kammen. ed, *The Past before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980) and Tyrrell, *Historians in Public*.

budget for the 2015 equivalent of nearly 1.5 million dollars to carry out their work but was instead granted only $239,000. Due to this drastic reduction in the amount of funding appropriated to the Commission, the appointees decided their first focus was to gain intellectual control over the efforts undertaken by local and state departments in the past through, "inquiry, report, and recommendation" while encouraging local historical societies and associations to make progress towards preserving and documenting landmarks.

According to the Commission, a survey of Pennsylvania's historic landmarks would attract the attention of citizens and scholars alike. The results of the survey would spur a greater understanding of what needed to be done which would guide the work of the Commission moving forward. Additionally, one result of receiving less capital than they had initially imagined was that the Commission took on a "help those who help themselves" attitude and supported the work of other organizations, in only rare cases monetarily. For example, the Enoch Brown Association organized a memorial marking the site of Fort McCord in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. They raised money through subscription and the citizens of the community donated $500 towards the goal of creating an “important shrine of pioneer days on the Pennsylvania frontier.” By matching the public’s contributions and supporting the efforts of the Enoch Brown Association, the commissioners hoped to demonstrate their willingness to support the independent work of other historical

133 *First Report*, RG13, Annual Reports, PSA, 4-6.

134 Ibid, 12.

135 Ibid, 9.

groups while taking into consideration their limited budget. The completed twenty-one-page survey of Pennsylvania’s landmarks, both those that were already known and commemorated with plaques or memorials and those that were not, illustrated to the commissioners themselves, the state government, and the Pennsylvania citizens the scope of work necessary to raise awareness about the role the Commonwealth played in forming the history of the nation.

The second Commission (1915-1919) expanded its role into the field of archeology while continuing their historic work. All of the founding members were reappointed by Governor Martin G. Brumbaugh. Realizing that they needed more capital to carry out their ambitious work, the members of the Commission asked the General Assembly for an appropriation of $15,000, but they were approved for only $12,500, a marginal increase from the $10,000 extended to them in the previous last term. After spending two years together in their new role, the second Commission wanted to make some changes to the by-laws and their scope of work. The Commissioners successfully petitioned the General Assembly to alter the by-laws to represent more accurately their vision for the program. As originally set out, the Commission was charged with marking historic sites as well as preserving or restoring public buildings of significance by itself or in partnership with local historical bodies. However, they added to the bylaws a provision expanding their reach to cover archeological concerns and, starting in 1917, the Commission was granted authority to "conduct investigations or [sic] historical or archeological matters relative to Pennsylvania and report the same for public information." 

137 Second Report, RG13, PSA, 8.

138 Ibid, 10.
This change reflects the particular interests of the members of the Commission. During the summer of 1916, the second Commission sent George Donehoo on an archaeological expedition representing the PHC. Donehoo, secretary to the Commission, had a great interest in Native Americans. He had written at least two books on Native American history and culture before 1916, and many followed in the years prior to his death in 1934. The report of the second Commission includes a forty-nine-page overview of the Susquehanna Archaeological Expedition by Warren K. Moorehead. Moorehead, who conducted the expedition, was a leading authority on Native American archeological surveys and a member of the United States Board of Indian Commissioners. As noted by the assistant state historian in a pamphlet written for the members of the General Assembly, “for many people the study of the Indians is the best approach by which to awaken interest in Pennsylvania history. For this reason Indian

139 From its inception, the PHC defined their history as beginning with Native Americans as opposed to starting timelines when colonists arrived in the Keystone State. This sentiment is expressed in a statement from the first annual report. “In order to rightly study the influences which have been at work in the making of the American Nation as it exists in fact, instead of in romantic historical poems of New England authors, one must go back to the early periods in the history of the State…The history of the Indian, in the region between the Delaware and the Ohio, during this early period, has been sadly neglected. Other states, with far less Indian history of national importance, have made much of what history they do have. In fact it may be stated that not a single state in the entire Nation has a more interesting, important and truly romantic Indian history than has Pennsylvania, and yet, there are very few monuments or markers, relating to this period, in the entire state. As a consequence the sites of historic Indian villages, trails and other places are fast sinking into oblivion.” The PHC compared themselves to other states who had a more robust understanding of their Native American history and made protecting evidence and educating the public about Indian history a priority of the PHC. First Report, RG13, PSA, 15.

140 George Patterson Donehoo, Carlisle and the Red Men of Other Days (Carlisle, Pa: 1911) and George Patterson Donehoo et al., The Real Indian of the Past and the Real Indian of the Present. (Evanston, Ill.: Issued by the Department of Work Among Indians, 1912).
archaeology does have a definite value for the program of the Historical Commission.”¹⁴¹ The items collected on the Susquehanna Archeological Expedition were given to the State Museum of Pennsylvania and Donehoo noted that the money provided by the Commission for his trip was the first funding ever given for the purposes of archeology by the State of Pennsylvania.¹⁴² The addition of archeological concerns to the scope of work conducted by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission influenced the projects they pursued until the seventh Commission under the leadership of Frank Melvin.

The other main activity undertaken by the second Commission was continuing to establish a robust historic marker program. Thirty-five historic markers were erected during the term of the second Commission. Prior to 1945, official historic markers produced with support from the PHC were an imposing bronze tablets in the shape of a 2.5-foot high and 2.5-foot wide keystone. The tablets were inset in large native stone boulders, weighing from four to eight tons. “One of the longest and most arduous tasks of the Secretary has been the search for stones of suitable shape and quality. They have been found on hills or mountains, in streams, or other nearby places, and with great difficult and toil brought to the location selected by means of heavy wood wagons, trucks, trailers, stump pullers, tractors, and the like.”¹⁴³ These massive boulders were not primarily designed as roadside attractions. More often, they were located near the exact location of an historical event or structure, typically further from the road. They were

¹⁴¹ Donald Kent, How the Pennsylvania Historical Commission Serves the People, (Harrisburg, Pa., 1942) n.pag.

¹⁴² Second Report, RG13, PSA, 140-150.

much different from the wayside markers we are familiar with today that cater to people in cars or walking along city streets.

Another important part of the process of marking an historic area was the dedication ceremony. Commemorative events celebrating the unveiling of these markers were spectacles brimming with overt patriotism, political undertones, and even a bit of pageantry. For example, in 1915, the Historical Commission collaborated with local groups in Delaware and Chester Counties to mark notable sections of the Brandywine Battlefield, the site of a pivotal Revolutionary war battle. According to one news article, five thousand Pennsylvanians flocked to the Birmingham Friends Meeting House for the dedication ceremony. Citizens “from all parts of the counties, farmers, businessmen, professional men, and their families” were welcomed at this event. In the early years of the Commission, dedication proceedings did not deviate much from a general format. As with many other events organized by the Commission and other historic groups to commemorate the unveiling of markers and monuments, the Brandywine dedication included addresses from prominent political figures, an invocation for prayer led by a local pastor, a reading of poetry, and lectures on relevant historical topics. The lectures and addresses were punctuated with the triumphant ringing of national anthems and other patriotic songs. Here, prominent political and military figures joined historical groups to celebrate the

144 See Glassberg, American Historical Pageantry. Although the events organized by the PHC at this particular event did not meet the qualifications of a historical pageant—there were no costumed reenactments or over-the-top parade floats as described by Glassberg in his study of pageantry—these events likely arose from the same desire to promote community cohesion though the actions of the past, in the face of social upheaval. Other dedications produced later in the Commission’s history did use pageantry to attract attention especially one held in 1931 that included people in Indian costumes dancing and other such costumed displays. See “William Penn Made Second Landing in ’32,” Chester Times, September 7, 1931.
markers and the legacy of the Battle of Brandywine. The president of the Delaware county Historical Society and the Chester County Historical Society, the Chairman of the PHC, the French ambassador to the United States, and a lieutenant colonel of the U.S. Army gave remarks. This well-attended event drew political and public support to historical commemoration work in Pennsylvania.

Indeed, the dedication ceremony was not just a platform for celebrating the tablets created in memory of the Battle of Brandywine; larger social and political issues were addressed as well. The chairman of the Historical Commission William Sproul, at the time a state senator and later Governor, opened his lecture by thanking the citizens for attending the event. “I am very much gratified that so many people have come out here on this broiling day to some other attraction than a Billy Sunday meeting, a base ball game or a circus.” He used this platform to generate support for the work of the Historical Commission but his speech was laced with larger political statements. At the time this speech was delivered in 1915, political and military conflicts in Europe were on the rise, and Sproul took a moment to urge President Wilson to remain neutral and keep the United States from becoming involved. His comments vividly tied past events that occurred on the battlefield they were commemorating which was a major American military loss to the British, with the present day looming threat of war. Additionally, as part of the proceedings, letters of regret were read from President Wilson and Governor Brumbaugh. The mere fact that the organizers of this event extended invitations to the President of the United States of America and the governor showed an understanding of public relations and these events encouraged political and public support for their goals. Speakers at dedication ceremonies led by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission promoted the significance of the
Commonwealth’s historical legacy and the importance of their work, while tying the past to contemporary political issues.\textsuperscript{145}

The second decade of the twentieth century was a tumultuous time for the Commission, the Commonwealth, and the world. World War I affected the third Commission’s ability to carry out their work. Many of the commissioners were engaged in war work on various committees for national defense. Even the Curator of the Commission, Thomas Montgomery, was active in war work, serving the U.S. Army as a Librarian.\textsuperscript{146} While the first two Commissions had the same slate of appointees, the third Commission (1919-1923) saw a slight change in the roster due to death and the acceptance of other professional opportunities. William Sproul, by then elected Governor, left his post as Chairman of the Commission. In spite of leaving the Commission, Governor Sproul continued to be active in commemorative activities, completing a privately funded restoration of the 1724 Courthouse in Chester, Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{147} William H. Stevenson succeeded him and the four founding members—Stevenson, Donehoo, Sisson, Carson—were joined by William Perrine, a Philadelphia area newspaper owner known for his historical articles written under a nom de plume, “Penn.”\textsuperscript{148} When Perrine died in 1921, Charlemagne Tower Jr., a professor in the Department of Archeology and Paleontology at the University of Pennsylvania,

\textsuperscript{145} “Historic Day at Birmingham,” \textit{Chester Times}, September 13, 1915; For a full account of the commemorative event and text from the historic markers see \textit{Second Report}, RG13, PSA 13-60. Sproul quote taken from transcription of speeches found in this source, pages 28-29.

\textsuperscript{146} \textit{Third Report}, RG13, PSA, 5.

\textsuperscript{147} “Cites Historic Marks Attached to Old City Hall,” \textit{Chester Times}, November 19, 1919 and \textit{Third Report}, RG13, PSA, 8.

\textsuperscript{148} “William Perrine Dead in 63d Year,” \textit{Editor & Publisher}, April 2, 1921.
succeeded him. Charlemagne Tower Jr. served the duration of this term. He later served as United States Minister to Austria-Hungary and as the United States ambassador to Russia and Germany. In addition, during this term the Curator for the Commission, Thomas Montgomery, was selected as head librarian at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 1921 and thusly transitioned from his role with the Commission. Despite these changes, the PHC moved forward towards achieving its goals.

As war work tapered off, the PHC continued their duties protecting and promoting the history of the Commonwealth. During this term, the third Commission exercised its right to acquire historic real estate, an important step towards the full actualization of the agency. The General Assembly assigned to the Commission custody of a nineteenth-century village located eighteen miles northwest of Pittsburgh. Founded and named Economy in 1824 by the Harmonites, a religious sect originally from Germany, the PHC and locals knew this cluster of buildings and green space as Old Economy. The Commission shared responsibility for preserving and maintaining the site with the Harmony Society Historical Association. In addition to Old Economy, the underground area designed to store gunpowder at Fort Augusta (1756) in Northumberland County was acquired, with stewardship of the site being controlled by the aptly named Fort Augusta chapter of the DAR.149 These early sites show how the Commission first viewed their relationship to historic properties. They had authority over these landmarks but smaller local groups were charged with upkeep and day-to-day operations.

149 Third Report, RG13, PSA, 6 and 214-219.
Confusion regarding the role of the Historical Commission in Pennsylvania intensified. Almost fifty percent of inquiries received by the Commission were addressed to the Pennsylvania Historical Society.\textsuperscript{150} Drawing distinctions among the work of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, and the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies was important in order to highlight the particular role of state government sponsored activities. The Commission’s curator, Thomas Montgomery, stressed the importance of having visible representatives of the agency involved with local and regional historical groups to define their contribution and offer assistance. He notes that he "deems it quite necessary that Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Organizations and Boards of Trade should know of the activities of the State along historical lines" and claims that he had not turned down an invitation to speak at an event since he began to serve on the Commission. Generally, he or the secretary, George Donehoo, attended these functions on behalf of the Commission, thus promoting and educating the historical constituencies about the particular role the Commission played within the state.\textsuperscript{151} These activities were an important part of building a reputation as credible and knowledgeable with legislators, ordinary citizens, and active historical groups.

Political change affected state preservation efforts, especially when considering financial appropriations, which shifted based on availability of funds and the favorable opinion of the governor and legislators. However, the activity of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission

\textsuperscript{150} The Pennsylvania Historical Commission was mistaken for the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Historical Association, or the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies. Public confusion between these organizations is recognized in the pamphlet “Pennsylvania in History,” Edward R. Barnsley Papers, MG439, folder 1, box 1, PSA, 9.

\textsuperscript{151} Third Report, RG13, PSA, 10.
seems to contradict this claim, especially during the early years. In Pennsylvania, a governor could not serve more than one consecutive 4 year term, which might bolster Hosmer’s findings that the fabric and character of the PHC “shifted in the political winds,” but upon deeper inspection, we see this is not true for the first three appointed Commissions. Despite changes in ruling party, of the five Pennsylvanians who served each Commission, four were reappointed to their post throughout the first twelve years. Modifications to the membership were only necessary in the case of death and or promotion to higher political offices until Governor Pinchot significantly altered the status quo during his second administration (1931-1935). He broke with convention to appoint a new slate of members to the fourth Commission. From this moment forward, the membership of the PHC changed drastically every four years, making it difficult to maintain programmatic continuity. As time went by, the Commissions still showed tumultuous change between Governors but the practice of leaving one or two members of the former administration’s appointees in place was upheld. One such example was Frances Dorrance, Director of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, she was appointed to the fifth Commission in 1927 and served the state in this role for 30 years. By leaving at least one Commission member in place, a corporate memory coalesced and the development of stable, continuous programming was possible.

The aforementioned fourth Commission (1923-1927) consisted of Henry W. Shoemaker, Albert Cook Myers, Mrs. Francis Black, E. Maclay Gearhart, and Henry D. Paxson. The

\footnote{Dorrance was not appointed to the sixth Commission but she attended meetings of the Commission and made reports regarding archeology projects. See Roy F. Nichols, \textit{the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; a History} (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania, Historical and Museum Commission, 1967), 12.}
Chairman, Henry W. Shoemaker, was a newspaperman turned historian and conservationist, known also for his later roles as the Commonwealth’s first state folklorist. He brought boundless energy to his post and took the position quite seriously. At times, Shoemaker felt that the other commissioners were not doing their part. He once wrote to a friend, “the Commission is merely a bunch of people with official titles” whereas he would have preferred a group of people who had matching time and passion for the work at hand.\(^{153}\) Albert Cook Myers, who served as the secretary to this Commission, was a widely respected William Penn historian, holding many positions in historical circles. He was the President of the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies, and Chairman Shoemaker revered his work as secretary of the Valley Forge Park Commission, where Myers showed he was intent on the "prevention of the exploitation and commercialization of that most hallowed shrine of American history.”\(^{154}\) Others on the Commission were Mrs. Frank B. Black, President of the Society of Farm Women; E. Maclay Gearhart, Reverend at the Lutheran Memorial Church in Erie; and Henry D. Paxson, an officer of the Swedish Colonial Society and the Bucks County Historical Society.

The fourth Commission was markedly different due to the new slate of appointees. Further changes affected its operations as well. The Commission was repositioned under the newly formed Department of Public Instruction that also oversaw the state’s education programs. The fourth Commission was appropriated little more than $26,000 to carry out four years of work. Chairman Shoemaker strongly noted his disappointment in the annual report, saying, “in


entering upon its new duties and considering how it might meet the obligations of the Act of its founding, the present Commission has ever been impressed with the utter inadequacy of the State appropriation for anything approaching the proper conduct of such a department in keeping with the traditions and importance of the great and rich Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.” The scope of work expected of the Commission could not be completed with the amount of funding they were granted. The pressure to carry out tasks and support other historical bodies in the state led this Commission to raise $28,000 of their own funds to support the work, such as installing new historic markers and overseeing properties assigned to the Commission.

Although the appointees were all avocational historians, the fourth Commission’s reports are the first to include terms such as “historical accuracy,” and an emphasis on conforming more closely to professional standards is also seen through the prominence of fact checking historic markers during this term. The report refers to the work of the "old Commission" in several places and it is clear that the new group in office was trying to prove their worth and value in comparison to what the Commission did in the past. The shift towards accuracy parallels national trends of professionalization, which began to affect many fields at this time.

The membership of the fifth Commission (1927-1931) shifted greatly during these years. Shoemaker was welcomed back as Chairman until he resigned to become the United States Minister to Bulgaria. A. Boyd Hamilton, editor of the Harrisburg Telegraph, succeeded

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156 Ibid, 9.
157 Ibid, 11.
Shoemaker as chairman. Hamilton held many state and local political positions and was a prominent member of the Historical Society of Dauphin County.\textsuperscript{158} New in her appointment to the Commission, Frances Dorrance was a leader in the promotion of archeology and history in the Commonwealth. As secretary, she showed a commitment to the efforts of Commission as well as to historical and archeological communities beyond, serving as an officer of the Pennsylvania Historical Association, Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies, and Society for Pennsylvania Archeology. When E. Maclay Gearhart resigned, William H. Stevenson was reappointed to the Commission, serving until his death, with Robert M. Ewing succeeded him.\textsuperscript{159} Later, Edgar Fahs Smith resigned and John Baer Stoudt succeeded him. This Commission was the first to appoint a female Chairman, Mrs. Frank B. Black, who took over for A. Boyd Hamilton upon his resignation. The support staff changed as well. The Curator to the Commission was the director of the State Library and Museum, Frederic A. Godcharles, and Hiram H. Shenk filled the role of executive secretary. The work of this Commission engaged in similar activities as the former incarnations, such as placing historic markers, but their work also included some new initiatives. Frances Dorrance, who chaired the committee on Archaeology and helped to oversee six large projects across the Commonwealth, revived the Commission’s focus on archaeological work.\textsuperscript{160} In addition, they carried out an “Old Burial Ground Survey”

\textsuperscript{158} Biographical note, A. Boyd Hamilton Collection, MG 730, the Historical Society of Dauphin County, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.


\textsuperscript{160} Fifth Report, RG 13, PSA, 7-8 and 15-16.
and saw the acquisition of the Conrad Weiser Park, which included historically significant buildings in Berks County, Pennsylvania.

As we see here, the work of the first five Commissions emphasized the importance of battlegrounds, military forts, and the stories of early Americans mainly through an historic marker program. Each Commission reviewed existing tablets and, in partnership with local historical groups, placed new ones around the Commonwealth. Historic markers, plaques, and other memorial items were found across the state, but the PHC sought to create a unified system of commemorating these sites and later put a great emphasis on fact-checking existing markers. This work was widely known among the major historical associations in the state and easily recognized by the public who passed the markers during their daily routines. Chairman Henry W. Shoemaker saw the historic markers as a way to increase appreciation and awareness of the local contributions of Pennsylvanians and to help citizens and visitors draw connections between local and national historical narratives. Creating a robust sense of regional pride would be one way to protect other historic areas from industrial encroachment, which is an interesting concept considering the industrial heritage of the state.\footnote{For more on the tone and vision of Shoemaker’s PHC chairmanship, see Bronner, \textit{Popularizing Pennsylvania}, 43.} The historic marker program was such a prominent part of their work that over a decade later, noted in a report by S. K. Stevens to the Pennsylvania Historical Association, the Commission had been pejoratively nicknamed as the “Marker Commission.” His defense of the program that follows reveals the philosophical underpinnings of the PHC during the time. In his opinion, historical markers serve “as a tangible reminder of the past and is much more worthwhile in arousing interest and directing attention to
the importance of the particular episode or event than a vacant field or an empty space.” He clarifies his point by emphasizing the role of historic markers as purveyors of object lessons to the public: “In other words, for educational purposes or for the benefit of tourists, it is much more satisfactory to be able to point to a definite marker as indicating the location of a point of historical interest than it would be to point out in a vague and general way that ‘such and such’ event occurred at ‘such and such’ a place.”162 By calling attention to the history of the Commonwealth in such a public way, the Commission was recognized for their contribution to the historic landscape. In spite of varying levels of support from the legislature, marking historic places and working with other historical groups to do so was a part of the Commission’s work over the years and persists into the twenty-first century.163

Overview of the New Deal

The Great Depression, beginning in 1929 and ending around the time of World War II, had a shattering effect on the United States and its citizens. Nevertheless, as massive as this impact was, it did not lead to a fundamental reorganization, or a revolution. This is one of the most important aspects of the Great Depression – the fact that for all its traumatic power, the


163 By 1939, it was against the Commission’s policy to provide financial aid to the creation of historic markers yet later in the 1940s it was within their purview again. New York had similar issues with funding instability. See “State Historic Markers,” accessed May 2, 2014, https://www.nysm.nysed.gov/services-marker/srymarker.html. See also Willoughby M. Babcock, “The Problem of Historic Markers and Monuments in Minnesota,” Minnesota History 11, no. 1 (March 1, 1930): 25–35. This is a lecture given at a local history conference to teach how to carry out the process of getting an historic marker, in a state without a centralized historical agency. He specifically mentions the work of the PHC on page 27.
American system came through with public and private institutions intact. The iconic crash of the stock market on October 24, 1929, heralded years of massive unemployment. Besides implementing some emergency measures of his own, such as expanded federal infrastructure spending, support for the Farm Board, and establishment of the Reconstruction Finance Commission, President Herbert Hoover chose to stay hopeful and optimistic in his public addresses, assuring his constituencies that the economic downturn would correct itself as it had in the past. Churches and other private organizations opened meal centers or soup kitchens to serve the families affected by the depression. However, the numbers of unemployed, homeless, and hungry were too large, requiring a reimagined role for public relief. A change in approach was necessary to solve this problem.¹⁶⁴

In November of 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected in a landslide as President of the United States. By the time he assumed office in 1933, 18 million Americans were jobless and all citizens felt the effects of this economic depression. Roosevelt acted with speed and confidence. Without a moment to waste, he got to work, and spoke frankly with the American public through fireside chats about his plan to make things better. “These are the lines of attack. I shall presently urge upon a new Congress, in special session, detailed measures for their

fulfillment, and I shall seek the immediate assistance of several States.”

During his fabled first one hundred days in office, he rallied both Democrats and Republicans to pass bills into law that would ameliorate the issues facing the country, focusing on relief, recovery, and reform. “I am prepared under my constitutional duty to recommend the measures that a stricken nation in the midst of a stricken world may require. These measures, or such other measures as the Congress may build out of its experience and wisdom, I shall seek, within my constitutional authority, to bring to speedy adoption.” These stabilizing initiatives were described as “must legislation” because solving the economic and social issues facing the nation was of utmost importance during the time of crisis.

Combatting the Depression turned out to be a thorny task. Several economic markers improved during his first term, but soon, there was a second downturn, which some called the Second Depression. However, Roosevelt never showed any lack of faith that his methods and solutions would work, and his confidence caught on with a heretofore doubting public. By 1940, tensions in Europe and Asia saw the United States economy moving into a preparedness phase, with massive spending on military output. Resultant jobs and output were significant, even as Americans’ intentions turned from their domestic situation to crises abroad.

Throughout Roosevelt’s three terms in office, he supported legislation that created programs designed to put an end to the massive unemployment and give people the opportunity to earn a living. The first of such programs was the Civilian Conservation Corps, created on

165 Franklin Roosevelt, “First Inaugural Address,” March 4, 1933.

166 Ibid.
March 31, 1933. In the nine years that it operated, the CCC provided opportunities for young men with a focus on environmental conservation, reforestation, road construction, and developing infrastructure for national parks. Another program, the Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA) was passed by Congress in May 1933. It granted money to states to bolster employment and support projects that would put people back to work. Money from the FERA was distributed directly in some cases but funds were also available through matching grants, where the states were responsible for contributing three dollars for every dollar of federal money. These funds were restricted to use by public agencies, which shaped the distribution and the programs that were offered to help the unemployed and needy. In addition, the Civil Works Administration was a short-term relief program that operated under the umbrella of the FERA. Through the CWA, four million Americas were given the opportunity to work to help support them during a particularly harsh winter of 1933 to 1934. The next relief program, the Public Works Administration, funded projects that allowed private construction companies to hire workers on the open market, rather than from relief rolls. PWA programs made possible both small and large-scale infrastructure projects, such as the construction of public buildings, highways, bridges, and dams for water and power. Referred to often as “alphabet agencies” due to their acronymic titles, these programs during the New Deal sought relief for Americans in need, through economic recovery, and reform of American capitalism.

The government’s efforts at administering relief were altered after some time passed and the effectiveness of the programs was accessed. One such change came in April of 1935. With the passing of the Emergency Relief Appropriations Act, Congress allocated five billion dollars to work relief administered through a new program called the Works Progress Administration.
The WPA would go on to put over eight million Americans back to work in a multitude of different jobs. The skilled and unskilled positions varied from infrastructure projects such as building roads and public buildings to painting murals and organizing dramatic performances. One program created under the aegis of the WPA was the National Youth Administration. The NYA was modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps. Here, young people from varying backgrounds were given the opportunity to augment their family’s income in a communal camp setting. They completed supervised tasks, mainly labor projects, designed to give them job skills. While these programs were created and carried out at the federal level, they had a great effect on the structures of state government, which was also struggling to administer aid to their citizens.

**State Cooperation with National New Deal Programs**

The New Deal policies and programs described in the previous section did much to improve the quality of life for many Americans. Alphabet agencies employed and supported families across the nation, and helped Americans to see their federal government as involved in trying to improve their lives. This was a major change in perspective, since for most of American history, Washington, D.C. was considered far away and of minimal importance at the level of the individual citizen. In carrying out their mission, these relief programs drastically changed the federal government’s role in how it related to state politics and governance systems. As the state with the second largest population, Pennsylvania had one of America’s largest
responsibilities for relief. In fact, by 1932, close to two million people were unemployed and in receipt of direct state benefits. Republican Governor Gifford Pinchot took measures to reduce the effect of the economic depression, but it was difficult since he did not have support from the state legislature. However, in 1935, George H. Earle III was elected as Governor of Pennsylvania. Governor Earle was not afraid to ride the coattails of the president into office; supporting FDR figured prominently in his campaign, explaining to voters that, “the country has been saved by the Roosevelt program,” and that if elected, he planned to “use the New Deal as a model and reproduce its image in Pennsylvania.” Once in office, he did as he promised, taking a similar tack to eliminate unemployment and poverty. As a result, the group of programs created in the state at this time earned the nickname, “Pennsylvania's Little New Deal.”

Governor Earle brought New Deal progressive politics to Pennsylvania and aggressively solicited funding to support these programs. The millions of dollars he acquired for the Commonwealth influenced the scope and reach of the relief programs available to Pennsylvanians. Even though he was successful on many fronts, Republicans controlled the

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state Senate. In his first years of service, political infighting made it difficult to pass the legislation Earle proposed, stymieing his efforts to bring about all the changes he and his party desired. Pennsylvania, however, was not the only state to have difficulty enacting New Deal style programs. Political disagreements occurred in other areas as well. For example, Georgia had a staunchly anti-New Deal governor, and Florida and Louisiana had issues similar to those that Earle faced in Pennsylvania. Despite the setbacks, Earle was able to pass a great deal of legislation carrying forth the spirit and administration of the New Deal programs to the Keystone State.

Relief programs created during this time, on both the federal and state level, ushered in a new way of providing aid to those in need. In 1932, Pennsylvania lawmakers approved the formation of the State Emergency Relief Board and charged it to organize a comprehensive program for the expenditure of relief funds. The money could be used for both direct and work relief and the State Emergency Relief Board moved immediately. By way of this program, funds could be administered through existing poor boards and private agencies or directly to those in need but the funds were distributed by the state, which was, at the time, in the control of the Republican Party. In 1935, when the Works Progress Administration was established, it provided states across the nation with access to a new source of relief programming. Following


New York, Pennsylvania had the country’s largest WPA program. The WPA is chiefly important because the earlier relief programs, even those that were federally sponsored such as the FERA and CWA, were administered by the state. Conversely, under the WPA, the federal government was responsible for all employment costs. Even though the state or sponsoring party was responsible for the cost of materials and supervision, with the creation of the WPA, the federal government had assumed responsibility for the bulk of relief programs in America.

Consequences from the change in administration of relief programming affected the political landscape in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania, as mentioned earlier, was staunchly republican. Control of state funding and opportunities to disperse political patronage had been a benefit of this position of power. Once the WPA was initiated, the tables were turned. Since this new relief program was to be administered and controlled by the federal government as it operated within Pennsylvania, “at each level, there was the opportunity for political patronage—and Pennsylvania was the patronage state par excellence.”\textsuperscript{171} Starting at the top, administrators of the WPA who made over $5,000 dollars a year were appointed directly by President Roosevelt with approval from the United States Senate. Records show that in these situations, the president would discuss the appointment with the state's senators before making a recommendation, and one suspects that he heard Democrat’s voices louder than those of Republicans.\textsuperscript{172} Once in a position to distribute administrative positions across the state, Democrats appointed Democrats to supervisory positions in the Works Progress Administration and weighty Republicans pushed

\begin{footnotes}
\item[171] Cohen and Filippelli, \textit{Times of Sorrow \& Hope}, 20.
\end{footnotes}
for investigation. Yet, it was not the laborers pulled from the relief rolls that were hired for political reasons; rather, it was the local administrators who benefited from patronage. Due to the size and scope of the WPA in the Keystone State, this agency required about three thousand administrators to carry out the program, which is more than in any other state and even more than were employed in the Washington headquarters.

This shift in power brought about by relief funding had effects on how the state government operated in Pennsylvania. Scholars contend that the influx of relief money during the New Deal era fundamentally changed the relationship between federal and state governments. Looking specifically at the way it unfolded in Pennsylvania, Pricilla Clement notes that between 1935 and 1940 the WPA shifted the political and financial underpinnings of the Keystone State. This funding provided a new source of political power to the struggling Democratic Party in Pennsylvania but it also caused legislators and citizens across the nation to rethink whether the federal government or state government were responsible for relief.

Relief through Historic Preservation

The economic upheaval of the Depression brought about many societal changes, including a shift in the focus of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission towards historic site

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173 These antics were not specific to Pennsylvania. Similar patronage systems existed in Minnesota. On how various states, including Minnesota, Florida, Tennessee, and Nebraska reacted to the New Deal see Sternsher, ed., *Hope Restored.*


stewardship. Prior to the 1930s, the PHC did not place much energy into acquiring historic sites. Yet, during the Depression, the agency became concerned with historic properties in earnest. The sites appropriated by the legislature were cared for and operated through partnerships with other regional historical groups such as the Daughters of the American Revolution and historical societies. Opposition of historic site stewardship persisted into the 1930s led by certain members serving on the Commission and these outcries were related to the financial burden this work would place on the Commission’s already limited budget. Ross Pier Wright, in particular, who served from 1931 through 1945, was of the opinion that the primary concern of the Commission should be research. He considered generating new historical scholarship of greater importance than sinking the Commission’s resources into caring for sites such as Old Economy Village, which as an historic house museum with exhibits, needed more staff and care than other properties that were essentially parks with an historic structure for people to view from the outside. However, in spite of the Commission’s hesitance, Pennsylvania citizens and organizations that owned sites of historic interest began to feel the burden of stewardship themselves, especially after the Great Depression began. Looking to pass along buildings and in some cases extensive tracts of land to someone who could safeguard them, citizens contacted their local political representatives, who were able to craft legislation requesting approval from the General Assembly to accept these sites on behalf of the PHC.

In a report to the Pennsylvania Historical Association in 1937, S.K. Stevens announced, “the Pennsylvania Historical Commission offices are humming with activity these days.”

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When the Great Depression hit, the fifth Commission had oversight over only three properties: Conrad Weiser Memorial Park in Berks County, Old Economy Village in Beaver County and Fort Augusta in Northumberland County. Although owned by the state, local historical groups, Conrad Weiser Park Association, the Harmony Society Historical Association, and Northumberland County Historical Society respectively, maintained these sites, which satisfied those on the Commission who did not feel it was their responsibility to look after historic structures.

It is important to note that the process by which the state acquired historic buildings and areas was not directly within the control of the Commission. The Commission did not have the budget to purchase sites of interest to fulfill a strategic statewide vision. Rather, they took what was offered. Legislative authorization was needed for the state to accept properties presented to them. Oftentimes prominent citizens and politicians had interests in securing historic places in their districts and their political influence pushed through the legislation. In a retrospective interview decades later, former historian to the Commission, S.K. Stevens said, "in a crazy sort of way it worked out rather well. The Commission did not get any really undesirable properties."\(^{177}\) Through happenstance, Pennsylvania was fortunate to acquire desirable sites that illustrated both local and national historical significance.

During the sixth Commission, serving from 1931 to 1934, the General Assembly continued to acquire sites of historic importance. Under the new leadership, James N. Rule held two prominent roles at once. Concurrently, he served as the Chairman of the PHC and the

\(^{177}\) Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, 438.
Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction. Mrs. Frank B. Black, Frances Dorrance, and Albert Cook Myers were reappointed. Albert Cook Myers returned to the Commission as Secretary. Ross Pier Wright and Charles Henry Moon were newly appointed members. Ross Pier Wright, a banker from Erie, was greatly interested in history and archeology. He served on the Commission for 14 years, and was critical to linking relationships among the Pennsylvania Historical Association, the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies, and the Commission.\textsuperscript{178} Charles Henry Moon was a surveyor in Bucks County, as well as history minded member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).\textsuperscript{179} Moon was instrumental in facilitating the work done at Pennsbury Manor. By the end of their term, the Commission oversaw Old Economy, Fort Augusta, Conrad Weiser Homestead, Drake Oil Well, Cornwall Iron Furnace, John Morton Birthplace, and Pennsbury Manor.

It was under the leadership of the sixth Commission that the state of Pennsylvania took its first steps towards figuring out how New Deal relief funds could be used to support historic preservation activities, but the seventh Commission perfected this process. Early on, the Commission continued to emphasize their role as solely a support structure for the regional historic groups charged with the daily operation of the sites the state owned. On April 19, 1933, executive secretary Hiram H. Shenk sent a letter to Charles Davis, a member of the Committee on Property of the Conrad Weiser Memorial Park Association. Shenk writes, "Arrangements are


\textsuperscript{179} Moon Family Business Papers (Accession 840, No. 10), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware.
now being made all over Pennsylvania on State-owned property to have people who are securing money from unemployed relief to assist in labor of different kinds. Will you please get in touch with the Berks County Organization for Relief and find out what can be done along this line.”

Davis had been unrelenting in his letters to the Commission detailing the amount of work that needed to be done on the site; none of the work he argued for was related to the historic integrity of the property. Rather, his plans focused on developing a pleasing, park-like atmosphere surrounding an historic structure. Work such as grading the land, paving the entrance road, marking and paving paths, was exactly the type of projects relief programs such as the Civil Works Administration were looking for in order to quickly create jobs for unemployed Pennsylvanians. Although the reply from Davis is missing from the records, one can assume that his attempts to move the project forward himself with the Berks County Organization for Relief did not work out. Just short of a year later, Myrtle Keeny, acting Executive Secretary to the Commission wrote to Davis,

"The Commission is in favor of a CWA project at Conrad Weiser Park. I am enclosing an application blank on which a rough draft of the proposed work can be drawn up. Will you get in touch with the local CWA office and see just what can be done. You spoke of having the buildings painted. Perhaps you could also have the Tarvia applied to the pathways under the project if the Commission purchased it. I would suggest that you get an estimate on the amount of Tarvia needed and the cost. I had hoped that Doctor Rule would send someone down to

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180 Hiram Shenk to Charles Davis, April 19, 1933, RG13, series 13-0824, carton 8, folder 2, PSA.
get the work started but I believe now you will have to make the first step in getting the work underway. The local CWA office will help you draw up the specifications for the job and I feel sure the application will be approved by this Department." 181

This correspondence shows that the Commission was supportive of the local groups overseeing their properties seeking creative funding sources to get work done in the absence of state-appropriated funds. Giving examples of suitable projects, passing along required forms, and offering to mold the rough draft to the specifications of the relief agency were all ways the Commission could offer guidance towards the goal of receiving this type of funding. The sixth Commission was itself concerned about its resources and was unable to complete these projects for each individual site, especially a site that was more park than historic landmark. On March 6, 1934, Keeny expressed this sentiment to Davis in his request for the Commission to provide architectural and landscape surveys to complete the application process, explaining that Chairman Rule had made it clear that “due to the great amount of work in the Department it will not be possible for him to send a member of his staff to the Park to make a survey preliminary to beginning a CWA project."182 Correspondence between the Commission and Davis of the Conrad Weiser Park illustrates the harsh realities of trying to arrange a grant through the early days of the New Deal programs. Here we see that the sixth Commission did not have the capacity to carry out the work necessary to apply for multiple relief-funded grants. Rumors and

181 Myrtle R. Keeny to Charles Davis, February 6, 1934, RG13, series 13-0824, carton 8, folder 2, PSA.

182 Keeny to Davis, March 6, 1934, RG13, series 13-0824, carton 8, folder 2, PSA.
newspaper articles were promoting the idea that these programs were not well organized and even after putting the time into writing applications, projects stagnated waiting for approval through state or federal government channels. Applications for public relief funds, in this case through the CWA, required cooperation with other agencies and a significant amount of administrative work such as coordinating construction cost budgets, detailed project specifications, and architectural drawings to get approval. Ultimately, instead of relief funds, improvements at Conrad Weiser Park were completed using state appropriations, the cooperation of the County Commissioners of Berks County, private donations, and income from an endowment specific to the property.\textsuperscript{183}

Even though the application for starting a relief project at the Conrad Weiser site was fruitless, the Commission, through committees and affiliated historical groups overseeing the day-to-day operations of their sites, continued to submit applications for relief work projects in other areas of the Keystone State. New Deal funded historic preservation in Pennsylvania began during the winter of 1933-1934 with a Civil Works Administration project to grade and prepare the landscape at Pennsbury Manor for construction. Since the CWA was a temporary measure to provide relief assistance during one particularly difficult winter, the Commission understood that this funding was not going to be a permanent way to support multiple projects. However, the 6,000 dollars received in total by the Commission through this CWA project whetted their appetite. In meeting minutes, the members of the Commission strategized to figure out how they

\textsuperscript{183} Major gifts were made by Hon. Charles Weiss from Lebanon PA, Mr. Bert Gerst from Buffalo, NY, and Mr. Leroy Valentine. The general public, Lutheran churches, historical societies, and the Independent Order of Red Men also donated to the project. “Improvements at Conrad Weiser Park”, nd, RG13, series 13-0824, carton 8, folder 3, PSA.
could use relief programs for other infrastructure projects, such as putting in a dike at one of the historic areas under their jurisdiction, Pennsbury Manor. 184

Many other projects were proposed to federal and state relief agencies in Pennsylvania covering historic preservation and archeology. Historic preservation projects undertaken using New Deal funds are unique and were not organized under one central organizing body. Taking into consideration the nuances of preservation work, these projects fit into two discrete categories; the physical labor and preservation work. The physical labor required, such as grading land and laying foundations, matches the description of a public works project, while the intellectual labor involved in the research to prepare for preservation work more closely aligns these projects with cultural production programs, like the Federal Writer’s Project or Historic Records Surveys. The Public Works Administration, Civil Works Administration, National Youth Administration, and the Works Progress Administration extended funding to historic preservation in Pennsylvania. On one hand, this meant that there were many opportunities for the Commission to find support for their projects, yet it also meant they had to collaborate with many different agencies to apply for funds. This was an onerous process, much less direct than many of the other cultural work programs (such as the Federal Theatre Project or Writer’s Project) that were funded through only one specific New Deal agency. To receive support from these funding sources, projects needed sponsors to supervise the work and financial backing to cover the cost of materials. Therefore, many of these projects were conducted under the

184 Journal of a Meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, April 13, 1934, RG13, series 13-0816 carton 1, folder 3, PSA. (Cited hereafter as PHC Minutes.)
sponsorship of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission with local historical societies and
archeology groups acting in support roles.

Due to the early work of historically minded groups including the historical Commission,
the state of Pennsylvania was not ignorant of the historic treasures standing on its soil. The
information held by the PHC and the awareness it had of historically relevant sites that needed to
be stabilized or preserved made it easier to attract relief money to their cause when the time
came. Private preservation groups attempting to procure federal money to do preservation work
encountered bureaucratic processes and restrictions with which they were not used to dealing.
For example, the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities took advice from the
North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, whose secretary-treasurer explained
that the administrative work required to obtain federal funds for preservation projects-- the
reports, forms, and paperwork-- was not worth the amount of funding provided. This statement
is curious because the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities was born of a
state historical commission that should have been attuned to the particularities of working with
government funding processes. Pennsylvania, on the other hand, was prepared for the processes
necessary to get at the funding because it had civil servants on staff and experience navigating
the layers of government oversight.185

Changes to the political environment affected the Commission in many ways during its
seventh term. First, the election of 1934 unseated many Republicans and upset the political

185 The complaints levied by the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities
occurred close to the end of New Deal programs in 1941 and are noted in Hosmer, Preservation
Comes of Age, 222.
balance in the General Assembly. This, coupled with the importance of quickly passing legislation to curtail the suffering of Pennsylvania citizens, delayed the appointments to the Historical Commission. The new slate of commissioners was not officially approved until 1936, instead of during the 1935 session.\textsuperscript{186} Additionally, the tone and interests of the PHC changed with the addition of a new class of appointed commissioners; this was the first time the Commission was made up of more people interested in preservation and historical research than archaeology.\textsuperscript{187} Under the seventh Commission (1935-1939), led by Frank Melvin, a lawyer and former president of the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies, the PHC first begins to restore and reconstruct historic sites and to consider them as a valuable part of the state’s tourism operations. Melvin lead the team, and the reappointed Ross Pier Wright and Henry W. Shoemaker worked alongside of Genealogist Miss M. Atherton Leach; Bruce A. Hunt, President of the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies; and Paul W. Gates, professor of history at Bucknell University.\textsuperscript{188}

\textsuperscript{186} Even though the PHC was not appointed until a year later, I maintain the dates as they do in their documents for terms of service.

\textsuperscript{187} Ibid, 441.

\textsuperscript{188} “Miss May A. Leach: A Leader in Genealogical and Historical Groups Dies, 89,” \textit{New York Times}, October 8, 1945.


Not only did the seventh Commission acquire the Daniel Boone Homestead, Governor Printz Park, John Morton Birthplace, and the Flagship Niagara, it began to supervise multiple large-scale preservation, restoration, and reconstruction projects at once using New Deal funds. Melvin felt that the Commission’s previous focus on archeology was not helping them fulfill the mission of the PHC as he interpreted it, and certainly was not encouraging increased appropriations from the General Assembly. To Melvin, recasting historic landmarks as tourist destinations was the proper way to gain the support of the citizens and legislature, which in turn would lead to appropriations of funds sufficient to allow the Commission to carry out their work. The initiative of the Commission to begin displaying markers on metal posts along the highways, in partnership with the Department of Highways, is one way this new mode of thinking was manifested. A distinct shift from the historic markers embedded into boulders that the earlier Commissions were producing, this plan shows the effect that auto-tourism had on the Keystone State and that the Commission had its finger on the pulse of that change.\(^{189}\) The first aluminum markers were installed in the mid-1940s, but the idea emerged under Melvin’s leadership in 1935.

State appropriations increased markedly during this term. For the 1937-1939 biennium, the legislature allotted $55,000 for the Commission’s general budget and $140,000 for organizing commemorative events for the important state anniversaries with national

\(^{189}\) June 17, 1935, PHC minutes.

For more on how American tourism changed as a result of the automobile see Sears, *Sacred Places* and Shaffer, *See America First.*
significance. In support of this increase Melvin notes in his report that, “the wisdom of the last session of that body in appropriating the greatly increased sum of $55,000 for the biennial use of the Historical Commission has made possible a most remarkable expansion of the series of that body.” The increase in funding allowed the Commission to hire a fulltime professional historian to increase historical research and publications. Yet, the commissioners were worried about their budget despite the increase of state appropriations and the influx of federal and state relief money. While filling out the applications for WPA projects it was in the front of their minds that the PHC needed to provide supplies and supervision. "Friend Moon asked that the Pennsbury Committee be assured of $800 in order that the WPA project at Pennsbury for moving the farm house and protecting the waterfront can be submitted to the Federal authorities." It was not worth the work of gathering the details necessary to fill out the application if the financial backing was not there. After some discussion about how they could creatively find the money, it was proposed that $500 be taken from an allocated amount for archeological supervision, and $300 dollars for the printing of the sixth Commission's annual report-- that is, if the Friends of Pennsbury, an advisory group from Bucks County, could not cover the $800 dollars themselves. This is an example of using creativity to stretch the budget to meet their goals and leaning on strategic partnerships in order to supplement what was lacking in the general appropriation.

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191 *Pennsylvania Notes*, RG13, 13-0816, Volume II, Number 1, Carton 1, Folder 1, PSA.

192 October 28, 1935, PHC Minutes.
The conscientious preplanning of the Commission was not without its flaws. At the June 8, 1936, meeting of the Commission, a letter from Charles Henry Moon requested $1,200 owed for six months of work on WPA project #2349 at Pennsbury Manor. Unfortunately, this money was not put aside in advance, as we saw with the Pennsbury project noted earlier. Since a review of the Commission meeting minutes did not reveal any indication that they would be responsible for such a charge, "it was unanimously resolved to advise Mr. Moon that this Commission regrets that it can assume no responsibility with regard to helping him collect the sum claimed." While the exact details of this situation are unclear from available records, what we can surmise from this experience is that this particular project slipped through unnoticed and unaccounted for in the midst of chaotic environment wrought by the increase of activity undertaken by the PHC. Keeping multiple projects operating smoothly was difficult for the Commission, but despite minor administrative issues such as this one, their program of preservation moved forward with success.

Indeed, it was necessary for the Commission to have funds available to carry out the full body of preservation work supported by New Deal relief programs. To this end, Chairman Melvin recognized the importance of fostering and maintaining a healthy relationship with the bodies of the state government. By providing regular reports, the activities of the historical commission could be shared with government officials, including the legislators who approved funding appropriations. The first five Commissions published and disseminated reports noting in detail the work that they had done during their tenure. The sixth Commission however, diverted

193 June 8, 1936, PHC Minutes.
funds from their annual report budget to see to the restoration work undertaken with New Deal funds. When the seventh Commission was nearing the end of its term, they produced a report on work from 1931 to 1934 published in 1937. Melvin’s sophisticated understanding of politics led him to insist that the Commission produce a credible report giving a full view of the activities of the since 1931. With the drastic changes to the make-up of the legislature as a result of the 1934 election, it was advantageous to make known that the Commission was active and the work done was important to the state. Melvin noted in a Commission meeting that “If it be lacking in comprehensiveness and appeal, it will seem that the Commission is not functioning properly, and will constitute a handicap when appropriations are requested.” After the elections of November 1936, Melvin requested that letters be sent to all of the incoming members of the General Assembly outlining the activities and accomplishments of the Commission, inviting their support. Producing information directly targeting those who approve the budget encouraged enthusiasm for the work of the historical Commission among the political elite.

By the end of the 1930s, the issue of historic site stewardship became relevant once again but under Melvin, it was received differently than it had been by previous Commissions. In the fall of 1938, the Commission began to grapple with questions of how to run the sites they were nearly finished restoring. Would the Commission charge admission to gain revenue or would the state subsidize the cost of running these landmarks? Should they create publications relating to the history of the sites for visitors, including brochures and larger pamphlets? Would the landmarks be primarily for entertainment and tourism or would they also serve historians as

194 June 8 1936, PHC Minutes.
research centers? It is clear that the commissioners and the civil servants employed by the Commission knew of other historic tourism sites across the nation and this undoubtedly influenced the way they viewed their work. For example, in 1938, interpretive signage was created for Cornwall Iron Furnace in Berks County. These signs were designed “to indicate to the visiting public the workings of the furnace” and to engage visitors with the site. In addition, a caretaker, Mr. Patton, lived on site and Shoemaker noted, “Mr. Patton would indeed be a real asset to the Commission on this property as he had actually worked in the Furnace before it was discontinued.” The Commission planned to use Patton’s knowledge not only to expand the historical understanding and interpretation of the Cornwall Furnace, but also to have him serve as a guide for visitors. Additionally, the Commission started to produce brochures and pamphlets for school-aged children that explained the significance of Pennsylvania’s historic sites and to include “legends and myths of historic nature.” These brochures extolled the merits of visiting the sites operated by the Commission and experiencing history firsthand.

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196 The records of the PHC include references to Wakefield and Williamsburg, Donald Cadzow to Dr. J.N. Rule, May 10, 1933, RG13, series 13-0822 carton 6, folder 6, PSA and February 19, 1937, PHC Minutes (one of many Williamsburg references) respectively. Commissioners likely were aware of Independence Hall and other sites too but there is no documentary evidence of that.

197 October 31, 1938, PHC Minutes.

198 Jan 6, 1939, PHC Minutes.

199 July 15, 1940, PHC Minutes.
interpretive materials were intended to educate visitors about historic properties such as Cornwall and here we see clearly the effects of the relationship between the PHC and the Department of Public Instruction. Touted as an “outstanding monument to the development of the American iron industry,” Cornwall was a landmark that promoted the industrial heritage of the state and through informative signage, tours, and pamphlets the site was “advertised to the public as a historic shrine.”\textsuperscript{200} The addition of Mr. Patton as a guide along with promotional materials developed at Cornwall illustrate the ways in which the Commission began to devise long-term stewardship and interpretive plans in cooperation with the Department of Public Instruction for the sites under their control.\textsuperscript{201} Despite fears that industrial development was encroaching on historic sites and or natural landscapes (an example is the creation of Fairmont Park) Pennsylvania was actively preserving and interpreting sites of industrial heritage.

While the General Assembly was willing to acquire sites of historic significance and to support preservation work by appropriating matching funds for New Deal relief-work projects, when it came to the long-term care and keeping of these landmarks, there was much less political enthusiasm. During 1941 session of the General Assembly, bills seeking funds for maintaining historic sites were introduced and held favor in both houses of the government. However,

\textsuperscript{200} \textit{Pennsylvania Notes}, RG13, 13-0816, Volume II, Number 1, Carton 1, Folder 1, PSA.

\textsuperscript{201} For an in-depth study of changes over time in the interpretation of industrial heritage sites in Pennsylvania, see chapter 1 in Kitch, \textit{Pennsylvania in Public Memory}. Especially pertinent is her claim that the Pennsylvania Historical Commission was unsure of how to handle the industrial heritage of the state, unless the site was active prior to the industrial revolution. On Pages 21-23, Kitch draws attention to the fact that in an annual report published prior to the 1920s, the Commission had planned to place historic markers at 114 sites, and only five had ties to industrial heritage, all of which were dated back to the American Revolution.
Governor James vetoed all but two, one to acquire Pottsgrove Manor, in Berks County and the other to acquire the Robert Fulton home in Lancaster County. The Historical Commission had responsibility for these sites without additional funds to carry out the necessary work.\textsuperscript{202} Fortunately, most of the historical archeology and restoration at Commission owned sites was finished as the economy stabilized and the United States entered into WWII. Overall, Commission-sponsored relief projects provided needy Pennsylvanians with a way to make a living through historic preservation. The final products-- historic sites and parks designed for entertainment and education-- drew widespread public attention to the history of the state and the importance of historic preservation. The interest generated by these projects has endured for years and provided a firm foundation for future preservation action by the state.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Historic sites in Pennsylvania preserve the stories of those who came before us, not only the historical actors in the distant past but also those in the more recent past who were charged with commemorating these landmarks. By studying the experiences of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission as it evolved between 1913 and 1942, a narrative of politics and human drama is revealed.

As a group of politically appointed avocational historians and archeologists, the Pennsylvania Historical Commission set out to be inclusive and exhaustive in their commemoration of the history of the Commonwealth. While historic markers, archeological

\textsuperscript{202} S. K. Stevens, “News and Comment,” \textit{Pennsylvania History} 8, no. 4 (October 1, 1941): 327.
expeditions, and dedication ceremonies drew public and political attention to the work of the PHC and historical places, limited funding affected the reach of the PHC and shaped their work, making partnerships with other historical agencies a necessity. An important aspect of the success of the Commission was their collaborative nature. Skills and resources from various local and regional groups when combined allowed all parties to achieve more.

From its inception, politics affected the Commission in many ways, most notably through budget appropriations, which rarely met the needs of the Commission. However, during the New Deal era, the PHC enjoyed a heightened level of political support for its work. Contributions to relief, recovery, and reform wrought by the New Deal were emphasized and supported by Governor Earle in Pennsylvania. This effort on his part helped to put the Pennsylvania Historical Commission in a favorable position to receive major grants to carry out historic preservation projects with the help of out of work citizens. Relief programs introduced by both the state and federal government during the New Deal extended the budget of the PHC, allowing it to finance and carry out preservation projects that would not have otherwise been feasible. The Civil Works Administration, Public Works Administration, National Youth Administration, and Works Progress Administration supported projects supervised by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission in locations across the state. The early work of the Commission mapping important historic sites coupled with their knowledge of operating within the framework of government bureaucracy, preadapted the Commission for successfully applying for and carrying out New Deal supported historic preservation programs.

Many legislators saw the historical work of the Commission as a way to draw attention to their districts and welcomed projects that would ultimately bolster tourism income.
Additionally, New Deal relief funded preservation projects increased political capital for legislators by creating opportunities for work in their districts. The Commission, especially during the 1930s, understood the benefits of political relationships and targeted legislators directly with information about the programmatic successes of the PHC. However, during the lead up to WWII when relief funds were tapering off, the general assembly's enthusiasm for acquiring and providing funds to sustain historic sites waned.

The work completed by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission between 1913 and 1942 established the organizational framework that led to the acquisition and preservation of many of the historic sites that dot the landscape of the Keystone State. Simon Bronner, writing about the development and effects of state sponsored folklore in Pennsylvania says, “The ways that this heritage became defined for ensuing generations, and the manner in which government became involved in the management of regional folklore, history, and environment, deserve attention in the ongoing discussion of American identity.” 203 The historic landscape of Pennsylvania was greatly altered by the first 30 years of the Commission especially through the program of preservation supported by New Deal relief funding. The specific effects this funding had on Commission owned properties requires greater attention.

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Chapter 4: The Shaping of Pennsylvania’s Historic Sites during the New Deal Era

Introduction

The historical, cultural, and political messages promoted by historic sites do not have a static or linear history. As David Lowenthal observes, “The tangible past is in continual flux, altering, aging, renewing, and always interacting with the present.”\(^{204}\) Alternatively, the interpretation of an historic site is an intangible expression of the past in that guided tours, programs, and furniture arrangements can be revisited and updated without affecting the structure of a building. However, aspects of the process for carrying out historic preservation such as meeting specific requirements to qualify for funding can create lasting alterations to the mission and vision of particular historic sites. New Deal relief funding was laden with a particular set of values and the hallmarks of this cultural and political moment have been embedded within the fabric of some of the landmarks preserved by the Commission. Additionally, the bureaucratic idiosyncrasies common to state sponsored work was not conducive to preservation projects and pressed the Commission to make decisions that affected the tangible fabric historic landmarks.

The PHC learned many lessons during the New Deal era. As citizens and local organizations, such as historical societies and churches, donated historic sites to the Commonwealth, the members of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, in consultation with

\(^{204}\)David Lowenthal, \textit{The Past Is a Foreign Country} (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 248.
the legislature, devised a plan to care for and promote the sites’ worth. Although the
administration of the PHC was not able to choose the sites they received, they were able to
influence how the sites were preserved, and this laid the framework for how they would be
interpreted by future generations. The professional backgrounds and personal interests of the
various commissioners helped to shape the processes by which many of the sites we know today
were restored. Between 1913 and 1935, the Commission consisted of members who placed a
great emphasis on the prehistoric past through archeology. The leadings of the commissioners
and the decision to hire an archeologist before an historian illustrate this bias. Archeological
concerns had a significant influence on the work of the Commission. Preservation work done in
Pennsylvania during the New Deal was unduly influenced by operating within this environment.
Since the Commission placed an emphasis on archeology from its inception in 1913, historical
archeology was a natural outgrowth of the mission of the PHC whereas it was still uncommon in
the burgeoning field of preservation. Other noted early examples of historic archeology such as
Colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown, Wakefield, and the discovery of the remains of Thoreau’s
cabin at Walden Pond primarily used archeological techniques to find the foundations of
buildings in order to rebuild structures that were no long extant.205 Alternatively, the
Commission was a forerunner in the use of archeological techniques to not only search for the
footprint of historic structures, but also to collect artifacts and gain a deeper understanding of life

205 For more on archeology at Jamestown see Benjamin Pykles, “A New Archaeology in the New
Deal: The Rise of Historical Archaeology in the 1930s,” SAA Archaeological Record 11, no. 3
Williamsburg,” Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 97, no. 1 (February 14,
1953): 44–50. Thoreau’s cabin, see Linebaugh, The Man Who Found Thoreau. Wakefield see
Bruggeman, Here, George Washington Was Born.
at the sites. The role of the PHC as a centralized agency tasked with carrying out both types of work encouraged the sharing of ideas. The overlapping of these two discrete disciplines and processes was a natural result of operating within this environment and was an early example of employing historical archeology in the United States.

Another way historic sites were shaped is seen in the example of the preservation of the Daniel Boone Homestead. The PHC applied for relief funds to restore the Daniel Boone Homestead, through the National Youth Administration, which had a defined focus and only funded projects with a particular scope. These parameters affected the future of the Daniel Boone Homestead. A version of the Civilian Conservation Corps targeting young people, the NYA required their projects to serve the youth between ages 16 and 25. Young people worked and lived onsite, and through this experience the NYA relieved parents of the burden of supporting a child by providing food and housing and imparted marketable job experience. The NYA project at the Daniel Boone Homestead was intended to benefit the youth after their work was finished, too. As the steward of the Daniel Boone Homestead, the PHC applied for funding through the NYA and embraced the way this funding affected the mission and vision of the site.

In addition to the example of the Daniel Boone Homestead, restrictions written into the state constitution limited the amount of funding the state could receive for public works projects, and this affected the process of preservation. Constitutional constraints led to the passing of an act in 1935 creating the General State Authority (GSA), a governmental body that oversaw and regulated public works projects undertaken using the distinct source of funding made possible by

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206 Collections of material unearthed from Pennsbury are held in the archeology collection of the State Museum of Pennsylvania.
New Deal programs. To qualify for these funds, a project had to satisfy specific criteria: work completed using money funneled through the General State Authority needed to be on state property and had to serve the public. Pennsburry Manor and Old Economy Village, properties owned by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission were funded through the General State Authority and it affected their growth and development as historic sites.

This administrative history of sites restored and interpreted during the New Deal era reveals the ways in which the version of the past encountered at tourist destinations across Pennsylvania are marked with the fingerprints of different agencies tasked with commemoration and preservation. Through the details of the preservation and commemoration undertaken by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission during the New Deal, we see that our heritage is in some ways an illusion of our own making.

The Administration of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission

The Pennsylvania Historical Commission and its staff became a visible force in cultivating state and federal government awareness of its responsibility for preserving cultural heritage. That is not to say that the path towards preservation as we know it today was a direct route. During its first twenty years, the Commission carried out an historic marker program, but did not concern itself with historic site acquisition; members were staunchly against the prohibitive expenses that maintaining and running an historic site would bring upon the agency. Instead, archeology caught the Commission’s sustained interest.

207 Hosmer, Presence of the Past, 439.
From its inception in 1913, the members of the PHC let their own personal leadings direct the course of the work taken on by the Commission. Even though the original bylaws placed a greater emphasis on historic concerns, members of the PHC had their own agendas. The second Commission (1915-1919) expanded its role into the field of archeology led by the interest and opportunities of George P. Donehoo, a former Presbyterian minister from Western Pennsylvania. During the summer of 1916, the second Commission approved the release of funds to send Donehoo on an archaeological expedition representing the PHC. Donehoo, secretary to the Commission, had a great interest in Native Americans. He had written at least two books on Native American history and culture before 1916, and he continued this research until his death in 1934. The report of the second Commission includes a forty-nine-page overview of the Susquehanna Archaeological Expedition, to which Donehoo contributed. Following this experience, the Commission petitioned the General Assembly to alter its bylaws to represent more accurately the activities and interests of the Commission. The changes to the bylaws expanded the reach of the PHC to cover archeological concerns, and starting in 1917, they were granted authority to "conduct investigations or [sic] historical or archeological matters relative to Pennsylvania and report the same for public information." Archeological concerns became an integral part of the scope of work conducted by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission and influenced the projects they pursued until the late 1930s.

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208 See Donehoo, *Carlisle and the Red Men of Other Days* and Donehoo et al., *The Real Indian of the Past and the Real Indian of the Present.*

Another member of the Commission, Frances Dorrance, who went on to serve in this capacity for nearly 30 years, was a beacon of unwavering support for archeological research in the state. As the president of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology and director of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, Dorrance was well qualified to pick up where Donehoo left off and continue to advocate for archeological projects. Her involvement with a study of the state of the field of Native American research carried out by the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society in 1924 led her to her position as vice-chairman of the PHC. The American Anthropological Association and the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies supported this survey. Henry Shoemaker, an active member of the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies and chairman of the PHC, backed this project with enthusiasm. During this research, Dorrance learned of large rocks in the Susquehanna River covered in Petroglyphs, or Native American carved drawings, that were in danger of being lost to posterity due to a proposed dam to be built downriver, which would raise water levels. Dorrance sought to have an archeological commission formed as a state agency but she was unsuccessful. Rather, after the state legislature heard the concerns, they appointed Dorrance to the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, and appropriated $10,000 towards saving and studying these artifacts.\textsuperscript{210} Since the legislature turned the preservation of petroglyphs into a statewide project under the aegis of the PHC, this provided an opportunity to hire their first employee, Donald A. Cadzow to oversee the archeological work required.\textsuperscript{211}

\textsuperscript{210} Nichols, \textit{The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission}, 12.

\textsuperscript{211} Donald A. Cadzow, \textit{Archaeological Studies of the Susquehannock Indians of Pennsylvania} (Harrisburg : 1936), 5-6.
Originally engaged as an advisor on the project, Cadzow came highly recommended from the Heye Foundation, which operated the Museum of the American Indian in New York City. He worked on expeditions and archeological excavations for the Museum of the American Indian from 1916 until 1927. His reputation and experience leading excavations across the country and in Canada made him a highly sought after researcher in the field. Cadzow’s status as the first paid civil servant appointed by the PHC is telling. This position, created by a one-time legislative appropriation, proves only that the PHC placed the highest priority on this one initiative. However, the PHC retained Cadzow on staff in a position created for him as state archaeologist and anthropologist.212 Despite their historic marker program that required research and coordination, the Pennsylvania Historical Commission would not hire an historian until 1937.213 This is an example of how archeological projects and fieldwork was a higher priority than historical matters during the early years of the PHC.

The Pennsylvania Historical Commission’s strong interest in archeology helped to shape the character of the historic preservation projects they became involved with during the 1930s. Newly available relief project funds advanced the preservation of historic sites in Pennsylvania, and interwove the practices of historic archeology into this work. As with historic preservation,

212 Cadzow is noted as the “state archaeologist” in most records and newspaper articles but in the few publications printed by the state he is titled “state anthropologist” and sometimes “state anthropologist and archeologist.” He is referred to as “State Anthropologist” in May 13, 1938, PHC Minutes, as “Dr. Donald A Cadzow, Anthropologist” in January 26, 1938, PHC Minutes, and as “Archaeologist of the Commission” in Nov 12, 1936, PHC Minutes. In finding aids at the State Archives of Pennsylvania, he is listed by many titles, including “Staff Archaeologist and Anthropologist.”

213 Nichols, The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 18
the failure of economic markets and resulting massive unemployment managed to increase productivity for the field of archeology. Both preservation and archeology were favored by the New Deal agencies because the projects were “shovel ready,” meaning that the work provided the opportunity for unskilled and semi-skilled laborers to take part with relatively little training. The PHC oversaw many archeological programs supported by New Deal funds, with Cadzow organizing and coordinating the projects. The meeting minutes of the PHC note,

Mr. Cadzow reported that projects for seven counties, covering historical and archeological work, are in the hands of the State Emergency Relief Board for approval. If these projects are passed, the archeological work will have to be supervised by the Historical Commission. The cost to the Commission will be approximately $1,500, while the Federal government will spend approximately $150,000.214

This report shows the extent to which relief programs extended the capability of the PHC. For only a $1,500 investment, the state would receive 100 times that much progress towards their historical and archeological research goals.215 Cadzow oversaw the process of applying for these grants, so it comes as no great surprise that they pertain to archeology, his primary professional focus. However, it is important to recognize that the projects are for “historical and archeological work.” Although his focus was archeology, the PHC was also carrying out history-based projects at the same time.

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214 June 17, 1935, PHC Minutes.

215 Ibid.
Historical research and archeology were combined in Pennsylvania for the first time during the New Deal era for the purpose of historic preservation. This interdisciplinary approach emphasized collaboration among architects, engineers, archeologists, and historians. The community of professions who had the skills to perform historic preservation work was very small during the Depression years and included wealthy amateurs, historians, architects, and archeologists. Formal instruction in preservation was not available at any university until the 1960s. Consequently, during the New Deal era, all available preservationists were self-trained or learned skills through mentorship. Similarly, historical archaeology has its disciplinary roots in the historic preservation movement of the United States, specifically the New Deal-sponsored projects of the 1930s. One of the earliest cited examples is the work completed at Jamestown, Virginia, directed by J.C. Harrington, known as the founding father of historical archeology. The newly formed National Park Service oversaw this project and relied on the labor of citizens affected by the Depression. At this site, Harrington notes that there was a "three foot rule" that kept the archeologists from nearing the more modern foundations, which makes plain that although archeologists and historians worked together on these sites, there was still a division of labor, not a full partnership. Later, Roland W. Robbins, known for his work locating Thoreau’s cabin at Walden Pond, was also involved in the early years of historical

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216 The first graduate degree program in Historic Preservation was founded in 1964 at Columbia University.


218 Ibid, 39.
archeology. Like Harrington, his work placed more emphasis on finding the foundations of old structures rather than sifting artifacts. Historical archeology projects primarily motivated by restoration or reconstruction often overlooked the careful and minute work that characterizes modern anthropological or archeological inquiry. This attitude would change as the field matured, but during the formative years with preservation in the forefront, historical archeology projects focused less attention on locating associated objects and artifacts, and directed nearly all energy towards revealing the remains of historic structures. Robbins, Harrington, and those who completed work for the PHC during this time belong to a class of transitional actors in the development of the field of historical archeology. They stood between the enthusiastic avocational practitioners and the degreed academicians who would eventually take over the field. The transitional space that these men occupied laid the groundwork for the field of historic archeology.

The practice of historical archeology has become a staple in the field of preservation, but during the New Deal era these techniques were emerging—joining historic research and archeological fieldwork was innovative. In her work looking at the roots of historical archeology during the New Deal era, Janet Johnson avers that although archeology went hand in hand with preservation projects undertaken by the PHC, there is no proof that historical research was conducted prior to the excavations, specifically noting the work at Pennsbury Manor. While

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220 Ibid, 49.

221 Johnson, “Historical Archeology’s ‘New Deal’ in Pennsylvania,” 34-36.
an organized effort, synthesizing scholarly research and archeology did not begin until further into the process of preserving Pennsbury, it did happen at this site. Before the PHC was the official steward of the property, Cadzow was given permission by the private owners to do some, “preliminary archeological testing of the area” to get a feel for what had survived under the ruins of buildings constructed after Penn’s house had been razed.222 This is an example of archeology conducted without the benefit of historical research. Notably, the thrust of the endeavor was not to rebuild William Penn’s country manor at that point. The Commission knew that the only parts of the historic landmark they could restore with any accuracy were the garden wall and the old farmhouse that sat on top of the foundations of Penn’s home.223 As the idea of reconstruction entered the picture, the PHC undertook “complete archeological investigations” of the property.

The effort to reconstruct George Washington’s birthplace, known as Wakefield, from scant historical and archeological evidence, was taken into account by the PHC during the initial work at Pennsbury.224 In 1933 during the first archeological surveys at Pennsbury, Cadzow sent photographs and a report to chairman of the Commission, Dr. Rule, to show the progress at the site. Cadzow writes, “One corner of the house foundation has been found and a tile floor

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223 Ibid 145.

224 Donald Cadzow to Dr. J.N. Rule, May 10, 1933, RG13, series 13-0822 carton 6, folder 6, PSA.

partially exposed. We have much more to restore with here than they had at Wakefield.” This statement shows that the PHC was cognizant and sensitive to the idea that material and contextual authenticity, as bolstered by archeology and historical documentation, were intrinsic to the success of their project. Recognizing but discounting the Pennsbury project, an early outlier in the data set, helps historians build the case that later work sponsored by the PHC specifically the Frontier Forts and Trails Survey carried out by the WPA was the first organized attempt to combine historical research and archeology.\textsuperscript{225} Even though the Frontier Forts and Trails Survey was a more exhaustive and deliberate synthesis of historical research and archeological fieldwork, it does not make it less remarkable that the PHC was mixing archeology and preservation at a time before it was widely accepted as a typical part of this type of work.\textsuperscript{226}

In addition to carrying out an historical marker program, archeological interest took center stage for the Commission during its early years. Many of the members were staunch supporters of archeological work and the alteration of the bylaws to expand the reach of the PHC exhibits this priority. Interest in the prehistoric past led to allocating some of their limited resources to archeological projects, hiring a state archeologist, and allowed Pennsylvania to merge archeological processes with the emerging field of historic preservation. Indeed, evidence culled from archeological surveys bolstered the historic marker program and furthered the mission of the PHC to raise awareness of Pennsylvania’s contribution to American history.

\textsuperscript{225} Johnson, “Historical Archeology’s ‘New Deal’ in Pennsylvania,” 34-36.

\textsuperscript{226} Ibid, 35-36.
**Daniel Boone Homestead and the National Youth Administration**

In the late 1930s, a group of young people gathered fifty miles west of Philadelphia to cut down chestnut trees located on the property surrounding the Berks County home where Daniel Boone, famed frontiersman, was born. In partnership with the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, an offshoot of the Works Progress Administration called the National Youth Administration organized and carried out a program of work at the Daniel Boone Homestead. Modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps, the NYA gave young adults from varying backgrounds the opportunity to augment their family’s income in a communal camp setting by completing supervised tasks, mainly labor projects, designed to provide valuable job skills. Among these skills, they were taught how to build a stake and rider fence to surround the Boone Homestead, and as one report noted, they did this “in the same manner as Abraham Lincoln.”  

In this case, the opportunity to earn income coupled with the mythological influence of historic figures such as Boone and Lincoln helped young people who were struggling to start their lives during a tumultuous economic time.

Seventy years later, youth driven work continued on the site of the homestead. Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Conservation Corps, in 2008, a crew of young people was dispatched to the Daniel Boone Homestead where they learned job skills such as carpentry, plumbing, and masonry through hands-on projects at the historic site. James A. Lewars,

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227 As quoted in “Ceremonies Incident to the Dedication to the Youth of America of the Wayside Shelter at the Daniel Boone Homestead,” pg 10-11, 1941, RG13, series 13-0823, carton 7, folder 5, PSA.
administrator of the Daniel Boone Homestead at the time, stated that help from young people working at this site over the past twenty years has been instrumental in preserving the nearly thirty buildings and seven miles of fencing on the property. However, the work completed with help from the NYA proves that this has been going on for far longer than twenty years. By painting and maintaining an historic barn and restoring the fences made in the 1930s by an earlier generation of Pennsylvania youth, the legacy of the Daniel Boone Homestead as an historic site dedicated to benefitting the youth of America continues to be carried out. When did the Daniel Boone Homestead take up the mission to support Pennsylvania’s young people and how did it become woven into the fabric of the site?

On November 1, 1938, two thousand people gathered in Birdsboro, Pennsylvania, on a 150-acre lot of land dotted with dilapidated buildings and overgrown brush. This property, recently acquired by the state of Pennsylvania, was recognized by the PHC as a site that could communicate the impact of Daniel Boone in the Keystone State, but could also serve a dual purpose in supporting the youth of America. Historians, teachers, and businessmen joined local families to witness the dedication ceremony led by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission at the old Boone farm. Local youth scouting groups worked together to raise the American flag at the beginning of the ceremony. Grabbing the rope and pulling together in time, they ran the flag up a hand-hewn pole made by NYA youth who gathered the timber from the Boone property and created a tall, sturdy staff to support the weight of the flag. The Daniel Boone Homestead, as

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228 For details about work completed at the Boone Homestead see newspaper article, “Improving Old Buildings, Improving Themselves: Dripping Sweat and Raising Blisters, Young Adults Make Money, Learn Skills and Gain Confidence on Public Lands such as the Daniel Boone Homestead in Exeter Township,” *Reading Eagle*, August 22, 2008.
envisioned by the PHC, was, from its inception, designed to serve the youth of Pennsylvania and to celebrate the legacy of a valued American hero, whose traits of self-determination were relevant as the country muddled through a devastating economic collapse. As one of many prominent speakers at the ceremony stated, “this will be a living memorial not only to a leader who blazed new trails into the West, but it is also a tribute to those qualities of self-reliance, courage, perseverance, ingenuity, hard work and love of freedom, which we like to associate with our ideas of a good American.”

The tone of proud national remembrance found throughout the ceremony buoyed hopes that the pioneer spirit of Boone could be conveyed to the youth and once again serve the United States.

Through the dedication exercises of this ceremony, we see that the youth of America was at the heart of this undertaking in both word and deed. Not only did attendees hear about how visiting and working to fix up the historic property would benefit young people, they heard from young people directly. Governor Earle’s son, George H. Earl IV, and the son of National Commissioner of the Boy Scouts of America, Daniel Carter Beard, both gave addresses to the crowd. At this ceremony, the Commission made clear to those gathered on the site that day that the Daniel Boone Homestead was to be used as an area “where youth could go and live for weeks amid surroundings so rich in historical lore and where they could absorb some of that same pioneer spirit which characterized the exploits of Daniel Boone.”

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229 As quoted in event program “Ceremonies Incident to the Dedication to the Youth of America of the Wayside Shelter at the Daniel Boone Homestead,” pg 12, 1941, RG13, series 13-0823, carton 7, folder 5, PSA.

exuberantly conflates the impact of mythic historic figures with the social development of the youth. The restoration project at the Daniel Boone Homestead in the years following was undertaken in order to commemorate an historic figure, create an educational space for the youth of America, and to give National Youth Administration workers practical experience and training that they could bring to future careers.

At its height, 327,000 high school and college aged boys and girls earned between six and forty dollars a month working with the National Youth Administration.\textsuperscript{231} It was common for families struggling with poverty to urge their children, especially sons, to leave school to take on paid work. However, it was not easy for an inexperienced young person to enter the job market. Most of the NYA enrollees came from families who were on relief rolls and by signing up, young people were given the opportunity to learn trades that would help them find jobs in the future.\textsuperscript{232} The intent behind the original program as laid out by the National Youth Administration was to engage the youth in the practice of rotational learning. Rather than attempting to create highly skilled laborers during a term with the NYA, the enrollees were instead exposed to a varied group of tasks, which would in turn help them to discern their aptitudes for different trades.\textsuperscript{233} In an address given by the state youth administrator, Walter Cowing explains the benefits of the programs offered by the NYA, stating that, by “employing young people at several jobs, rotating them from one to another over a period of time, thus

\textsuperscript{231} Betty Grimes Lindley and Ernest Kidder Lindley, \textit{A New Deal for Youth; the Story of the National Youth Administration} (New York: The Viking press, 1938), 4.

\textsuperscript{232} Ibid, 17-18.

\textsuperscript{233} Ibid, 65.
enabling them to get a round work experience and a chance to discover for themselves the job they are most interested in and which job they are most capable of performing” the state of Pennsylvania was enriching their lives.\textsuperscript{234} As this statement expresses, the projects underwritten by the NYA were required to be useful work that provided skills and familiarity with working in a routine and must impart a “genuine benefit to the youth of the community.”\textsuperscript{235} One contemporary described the difficulties finding work in bleak terms. “For years, to most of them, a job has been a fabulous unreality.”\textsuperscript{236} The NYA gave them supervised work experience and the part time schedule allowed the young adults to continue attending school while earning money.

Prior to the site’s official acquisition, the PHC passed a motion giving full authority to Donald Cadzow, staff archeologist, in order to negotiate a plan of action with the National Youth Administration with the intention to “properly restore the Boone property and make plans to turn it into a national shrine for the youth of America.”\textsuperscript{237} The initial idea was that the NYA could get to work on the immediate improvements necessary to make the property ready for the public with a particular focus on the grounds rather than the historic buildings, which would require a

\textsuperscript{234} “What the N.Y.A. Is and Is Not and What It Has Already Accomplished in Pennsylvania,” RG13, series 13-0823, carton 7, folder 10, PSA.

\textsuperscript{235} Lindley, \textit{A New Deal for Youth}, 23.

\textsuperscript{236} Ibid, 20.

\textsuperscript{237} October 15, 1937, PHC Minutes.
greater level planning and a level of funding that was not available at the time.\textsuperscript{238} By January, Cadzow reported to the Commission that Walter Cowing, state director for the NYA, was preparing a long-range plan. NYA administrators visited the site, drew up plans for developing the landscape, and the work was slated to begin in February or March.\textsuperscript{239} Shortly thereafter, a Daniel Boone Advisory Committee was formed by the PHC, consisting of individuals with a defined interest in the project that had skills to aid in the transition of the Boone’s overgrown farm into a shrine for the nation’s youth.\textsuperscript{240}

The funding from the NYA plus appropriations from the state legislature made possible the preservation of the Daniel Boone Homestead and the surrounding property. As was the case with other New Deal programs, the sponsoring organization was required to provide funding to cover materials. However, the struggling PHC was having difficulties getting the money that was necessary. In January of 1939, Cadzow reported that the NYA was engaged in projects to improve the site despite the lack of aid coming from the Commission. New Deal funding that had been approved and expected was held up in Washington. The Commission agreed that the development of the Daniel Boone Homestead into an historic site relied on the support of the New Deal funding streams. The Commission’s own budget was insufficient to carry out the landscaping and restoration work necessary. As stated in the meeting minutes, the PHC felt strongly that, “the success of this program is dependent upon the Public Works Administration

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\textsuperscript{238} “Cooperation with the National Youth Administration,” January 11, 1938, RG13, series 13-0816, carton 1, folder 3, PSA.
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\textsuperscript{239} January 26, 1938, PHC Minutes.
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\textsuperscript{240} May 13, 1938, PHC Minutes.
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appropriation at Washington and that at the present time no one is in position to answer categorically what the U.S. Congress will decide to do concerning it.”

Dealing with the instability of New Deal funding streams and the lack of state funding plagued the process of preservation at the Daniel Boone Homestead.

Being aware of the instability of the funding available to them, the Daniel Boone Homestead Advisory Committee had to prioritize and balance the project to meet its objective. After a lengthy discussion, the committee suggested that work proceed in order of importance in case the funding was to be taken away or run out prematurely. The first thing on their list was to restore the homestead and the barn, which illustrates that the leadership of the project gave preservation precedence over landscaping and park facility development and trusted the NYA to complete the infrastructure work.

Although the PHC allowed this New Deal relief funding to change the mission and vision of the Daniel Boone Homestead, the PHC recognized that preservation required skills that the National Youth Administration could not provide. Over 100 National Youth Administration workers carried out closely supervised projects to turn what was essentially an abandoned farm into an “historic shrine.” Preliminary work at the site, such as grading the landscape, building roads, clearing rock, and constructing fences, was also undertaken using New Deal funds aided

241 January 6, 1939, PHC Minutes.

242 “Minutes of the Meeting of the Daniel Boone Homestead Committee,” RG13, series 13-0824, carton 8, PSA.

in part by the National Youth Administration. With 150 acres, trees needed to be cleared to create paths and campgrounds, dams had to be built, and roads laid. This infrastructure work was completed with the help of the National Youth Administration workers, but the Commission had to provide a certain amount of its own funding to cover the cost of materials and to pay on site supervisors.

The PHC differentiated between the projects that could be carried out by unskilled youth laborers, and the preservation work that needed to be done by experienced professionals. In 1941, noted architect G. Edwin Brumbaugh was unofficially selected to review plans relating to restoration and landscape development work.\textsuperscript{244} By hiring an architect with experience with historic preservation work, the PHC made plain that the park creation and infrastructure work underway from 1938 until 1941 was seen as markedly different than the type of skilled labor needed to care for and update the parts of the property with historic and associational value. Due to the intricacies of working with both state and federal government agencies, it was not until October 1941, that Brumbaugh was officially hired on the project as lead architect.\textsuperscript{245}

Brumbaugh, who had experience working with the PHC on other restoration projects, oversaw the preservation work at the Daniel Boone Homestead. Landscape architect Markley Stevenson joined him. Both of these men directed the National Youth Administration workers to excavate a lake, install picnic tables, establish campgrounds, and complete other general tasks relating to landscape beautification such as eliminating poison ivy and planting trees. However,

\textsuperscript{244} May 16, 1941, PHC Minutes.

\textsuperscript{245} October 6, 1941, PHC Minutes.
when it came time to get to work on the actual restoration of the homestead, the Daniel Boone Homestead Advisory Committee decided to bring in two restoration specialists, Brumbaugh and Stevenson to do the detailed work and kept on hand only a few of the qualified boys from the National Youth Administration to help.

The NYA worked on a joint project with Brumbaugh to create a colonial revival building to meet the needs of young visitors to the site while exposing the NYA workers to historic preservation and archeological processes. More specifically, Brumbaugh enlisted the boys to build a structure, essentially two log cabins joined together with a dining hall, known as the Wayside Shelter. The NYA workers cut down logs from the property, and “following the original methods of log construction,” each log had to be notched and held in place using wooden pegs and then mortar was applied in between the logs. This building was intended as a place to house the National Youth Administration workers as they lived on site and in the future as overnight facilities for scouts and other organized youth groups visiting the homestead. The Wayside Shelter was constructed mimicking the technique used to build the original Boone Homestead and this was based on archeological findings as well as historic evidence. This project mixed the infrastructure work that the New Deal agencies were used to implementing and overseeing with historical inquiry. It gave the youth experience with historic building techniques, and they learned about archeological processes.

As United States involvement in WWII stimulated the economy and made New Deal recovery programs less necessary, most relief agencies were phased out. National Youth

246 “Ceremonies Incident to the Dedication to the Youth of America of the Wayside Shelter at the Daniel Boone Homestead,” pg 12, 1941, RG13, series 13-0823, carton 7, folder 5, PSA.
Administration assistance was pulled from the site on June 5, 1942 even though work was not completed on the Homestead. That winter, the Commission spent $200 to purchase, from the federal government, the bunks that were constructed for the NYA in the Wayside Shelter in order to continue their mission to cater to the youth.\textsuperscript{247} The remaining work was finished using a combination of state funds appropriated directly for the site and money in the Pennsylvania Historical Commission’s budget earmarked for the project. NYA involvement at the Daniel Boone Homestead was a creative and mutually beneficial arrangement used to complete preservation on an historic landmark.

The Daniel Boone Homestead was restored through a partnership with a relief agency, the National Youth Administration, and this funding left an indelible mark on the development of the site that remains to this day. The rhetoric used at the dedication to describe the site and the PHC and NYA’s shared vision of having the site be a shrine to the youth, built by the hands of the youth, to benefit the youth, setting the tone for the character of the Daniel Boone Homestead both in theory and in practice. The Wayside Shelter and camping facilities were specifically added during the planning stages in order to satisfy the needs of the NYA youth workers, as well as the future use of the site by organized youth groups and scouting programs. Difficulties in securing funds to carry out and complete the project as planned plagued the Daniel Boone Homestead but the Daniel Boone Homestead Advisory Committee and PHC placed a priority on getting the restoration completed in a responsible way that would not draw censure from professional and academic critics. The work paid for by New Deal funding trained the

\textsuperscript{247} December 11, 1942, PHC Minutes.
youth onsite and was predominately related to park creation and infrastructure projects, although they were also exposed to the process of preservation and witnessed historical archeology taking place as well. The Daniel Boone Homestead continues to appeal to organized youth groups notably through an annual event called the Patriots Day Youth Encampment, which at its peak has drawn over three thousand young people to the property each June.\textsuperscript{248} The PHC creatively matched its needs with a source of funding that had a specific character. The NYA mission to serve the youth is a part of the Daniel Boone Homestead that continues to be seen on of the cultural landscape in the state of Pennsylvania.

**The Impact of General State Authority Funding**

During the early part of the twentieth century, there was a strong need for updating major state institutions and renovating the infrastructure central to the operation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Struggles with deferred maintenance projects over the years came to a tipping point when leaders determined that the minimum amount of capital needed to repair and modernize state infrastructure would be nearly 65 million dollars. These figures worried the administration, but a solution eluded state employees and political leaders until the creation of the Public Works Administration and other federally funded relief programs in the 1930s. Governor Earle was instrumental in appealing to the federal government for assistance, which resulted in a grant for 45 percent of the money needed to carry out proposed infrastructure projects with the stipulation that the state would cover the other 55 percent, much of which was

\textsuperscript{248} Jim Lewars former site administrator of the Daniel Boone Homestead, e-mail message to author, August 13, 2014.
ultimately furnished by the Public Works Administration. However much of a panacea New Deal funding appeared at first, Pennsylvania was unable to accept these funds due to limitations put forth in the state constitution. The wording of the constitution restricted the amount of money the state could borrow to one million dollars. While New Deal programs made federal grant money available to states in order to complete construction projects designed to generate jobs and update the state's infrastructure, the Commonwealth was unable to take advantage of this desperately needed funding.

To bypass this particular constitutional restriction, the legislature created a quasi-state corporation known as the General State Authority. The GSA had the ability to accept grants and loans provided by New Deal programs and distribute them to projects across the state. After overcoming some early legal complications, the executive director of the GSA, Colonel A.S. Janeway, explained to lawmakers the challenges he faced in this pioneering role: “There was no State department in existence that simulated the functions of this emergency-born instrumentality of government. . . . New trails had to be blazed; and foreign fields to be reconnoitered and explored.” With Janeway at the helm, the GSA learned the peculiarities of federal funding streams and matched them with the needs of the state of Pennsylvania. By 1945, the GSA

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249 General State Authority of Pennsylvania, Activities and Accomplishments of the General State Authority, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, September 3, 1935 to December 31, 1938. (Harrisburg, 1939), 5. (Hereafter cited as Activities and Accomplishments.)

250 The GSA was at first considered unconstitutional by the state supreme court until it was revisited and the decision was reversed. “The Pennsylvania State Authority Act,” University of Pennsylvania Law Review and American Law Register 85 (1937-1936): 518.

251 Janeway as quoted in Activities and Accomplishments, 7.
facilitated 80 projects with a total construction cost of nearly 65 million dollars, funding that would have been otherwise out of the reach of the state due to limits of the constitution.252

In the act passed in 1935 creating the GSA, the legislature approved a list of the specific types of projects that qualify to be undertaken by the GSA. It states that the GSA is created for the purpose of constructing, improving, maintaining, and operating sewers, sewer systems, and sewage treatment works for State institutions of every kind and character (heretofore or hereafter constructed), public buildings for the use of the Commonwealth, State arsenals, armories, and military reserves, State airports and landing fields, State institutions of every kind and character (heretofore or hereafter constructed), additions and improvements to land grant colleges, State highways, and bridges, tunnels, and traffic circles on State highways, swimming pools, and lakes on State land, and dams and improvements to river embankments.253

Simply put, the GSA was able to divert funding to infrastructure projects such as constructing sewers, roads, and bridges and to creating or modernizing state buildings. On August 3, 1937, the first application for a GSA sponsored project in Pennsylvania was approved.254

As part of a New Deal program, another main objective of the federal government in offering these large lump sums of capital was to reenergize the private sector during a time of


253 Activities and Accomplishments, 2.

254 Ibid, 3.
economic struggle. To complete the large-scale building projects underwritten with these funds, the GSA sought and hired contractors and laborers, which in turn benefited Pennsylvania’s workers. A government report promoting the efforts of the GSA states that by December 31, 1938, the GSA had created “12,348,659-3/4 man-hours” of work and paid associated laborers over 11 million dollars, with 2.5 million going to workers who were taken off of the relief rolls once they found employment through projects facilitated through the GSA. These funds helped to modernize state facilities while creating worthwhile opportunities for unemployed citizens to make a living.

To qualify for the New Deal relief funding diverted through the General State Authority, projects had to meet specific criteria. The work supported by the GSA had to be completed on state owned property and the operation of the site had to have a central focus on serving the public. Typical projects included state office buildings, prisons, schools, military sites, and mental hospitals. Historic preservation projects were not a clear focus of the GSA. The two preservation projects that were funded, Pennsbury Manor and Old Economy Village, were given a fraction of the money that more typical infrastructure projects were allotted.

The PHC struggled to attain these funds as state officials considered the projects to be outliers or not necessary to the livelihood of the populace in the same way that more traditional infrastructure projects such as road paving was viewed. These projects did fit under the purview of the GSA since they were owned by the state and were designed to serve the public through education and recreation. Historian Charles Hosmer describes the great effort put forward by the

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255 Ibid, 6.
PHC to qualify their projects for this funding in his history of historic preservation. He writes of the reconstruction project, which would resurrect William Penn’s home on the Delaware River, saying, "the problem was convincing the Superintendent of Public Instruction that Pennsbury was a potential 'public institution' while it appeared to be a pile of rubble on the shore of the Delaware River." The work at Pennsbury, including archeological surveys and historical research had already been underway but in order to translate the aforementioned “pile of rubble” into an historic site, the property needed among other things, proper drainage, roads, and wells drilled, which fit the description of the work of the GSA even though it was for historic preservation purposes. Under chairman Frank W. Melvin, the PHC placed an emphasis on history as tourism and thusly preservation as a form of economic development. Ultimately Melvin’s idea that historic sites could pay for themselves if done correctly, coupled with the awareness of the success of Colonial Williamsburg bolstered his arguments for categorizing a shrine to William Penn as a site of public instruction and this work as falling under the purview of the GSA.

Although it may have been initially difficult to convince state administrators that historic preservation projects were worthy of this type of funding, monies were expended to build and stabilize two sites of historic significance, Pennsbury Manor, and Old Economy Village. The GSA’s acceptance of preservation projects was likely due to political connections and

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257 Detailed applications filed with New Deal agencies and the General State Authority outlines the work undertaken at Pennsbury. These can be found in R. Brognard Okie’s Architectural papers, MG303, box 3, folder 1, PSA.
relationships forged by the PHC. It is important to note that there was significant overlap between the board of the GSA and the board of the PHC. Both the PHC bylaws and the GSA named the governor, auditor general, and state treasurer as trustees who served in an ex officio capacity. Although these high-level government employees did not attend PHC meetings on a regular basis, it is likely that their direct involvement and awareness of both the funding needs of the Commission and the granting capability of the GSA connected the two agencies together and matched the funding stream with the project seeking funding.

Timetables enforced by the GSA were not ideal for preservation projects that required research and often took longer to complete. The speed the GSA required affected how preservation work was planned, structured, and carried out. According to the executive director of the GSA, “the whole program had to be moved forward with unexampled speed, because of time limitations set up in the Federal Government grant offers.” Haste is not a friend to historic preservation projects or any large-scale building project. Grant deadlines and time limits imposed by the federal government compelled all GSA building projects to comply with a predetermined general timetable that did not take into account the particular scope of work at each site. A memo distributed by the GSA to solicit bids from contractors to carry out the projects that were approved explains the stipulations:

This $65,000,000 building program of the General State Authority, as you know, is being built in cooperation with the Federal Government under PWA. In order that the

\[258\] Activities and Accomplishments, 45.

\[259\] Activities and Accomplishments, A.
money may be spent within the time set up by federal law, it is necessary that these jobs be expedited to the fullest extent as PWA sets a date upon which they figure the job must be completed and if the job is not completed by that date, the Federal Government will not pay any grant or any work after the date they set for completion.\textsuperscript{260}

Meeting the demands of the federal government grant stipulations created an atmosphere of urgency. The PHC felt this urgency in earnest when working on their project at Pennsbury within the limitations set by the GSA. The plans for the Pennsbury reconstruction were required to be approved quickly or the Commission would not qualify for funding through the General State Authority. Archeological findings and historical documentation had to be interpreted and woven together into an architectural plan for the reconstruction of Pennsbury Manor, and the oppressive deadlines that the PHC had to abide by put the scholarly integrity of the final product at risk.\textsuperscript{261} The fact that historic preservation projects were not a perfect fit with the policies of the GSA is evident in statements made by the GSA. According to the Executive Director of the GSA, Colonel A.S. Janeway, "It was our policy to erect buildings of simple and durable design, of low-cost construction and upkeep, and to harmonize them with the type of architecture that characterized the companion units with which these new structures were to be grouped."\textsuperscript{262} Although this statement applied to most GSA work completed throughout Pennsylvania for

\textsuperscript{260} Ibid, 37.

\textsuperscript{261} Hosmer, \textit{Preservation Comes of Age}, 447-448.

hospitals, college campuses, and prisons, it did not apply to the work done on Pennsbury Manor or Old Economy Village.

The timetables under which the GSA had to operate in order to satisfy the federal granting regulations was not the only way working through this agency affected the preservation efforts of the PHC. Another area where the PHC had to advocate for special treatment was during the process of hiring the contractors and architects to complete the preservation work at Pennsbury and Old Economy Village. The general contractors who were invited to submit bids for GSA sponsored work were required to “possess experience and background in the particular line for which they were chosen; and that they had designed and supervised the construction of building units similar to the highly technical assignments for which they were to be engaged.”263 However, in the 1930s there were few leading authorities on historic preservation. Within the 80 projects approved and carried out by the GSA, many contractors were awarded bids to complete work for more than one GSA site. By contrast, the unique work at Pennsbury and Old Economy Village required the specialized touch of professionals who were willing to take into account the methods of preservation. The publicly announced bids for the work at Pennsbury Manor attracted applicants from 16 different firms from New Jersey and across Pennsylvania. In a letter to the lead architect for the project, R. Brognard Okie, an administrator of the GSA makes plain the known desires of the PHC to hire skilled contractors to carry out their project. Following a list of the firms who put in a bid, he states, “several of them, who I personally know, have no

\[263\] *Activities and Accomplishments*, 8.
experience in restoration construction work.\footnote{264} Here we see that the contractors who were located using the typical GSA procedure were noted by the GSA as being insufficient for the work necessary at Pennsbury Manor. These details show that the protocol of the GSA needed to be flexible to complete preservation work and that the PHC had to advocate strongly for the specificities of preservation. In the end, Pittsburgh area general contractor O. H. Martin was awarded the contract to complete the necessary work at Old Economy Village and the firm of Sessinghaus & Ostergaard from Erie, Pennsylvania, was granted the contract to undertake the work needed at Pennsbury. Neither O.H. Martin nor Sessinghaus & Ostergaard were hired for any other contracts given out by the GSA.\footnote{265} The particular skills of these firms did not match the needs of other GSA projects because historic preservation was a rare undertaking through this program of funding.

Similarly, the PHC had some input into which architects were used on their projects despite the strictures of the GSA. Old Economy Village was the second largest of the historic restoration projects undertaken during the 1930s in Pennsylvania. In 1916, the state gained responsibility for Old Economy Village, a utopian community located in Beaver County, Pennsylvania, which was founded in 1826. In October of 1935, a New Deal relief funded project to restore the buildings and grounds of Old Economy was submitted, but because of the sizable amount of money required to complete the work, it was funneled through the General State Authority. In the minutes of the PHC meetings, we can see an example of how the PHC

\footnote{264}{Alfons Treo to Okie, Feb 18, 1938, MG303, carton 3, folder 2, PSA.}

\footnote{265}{Activities and Accomplishments, 61.}
navigated the channels to make the highly structured GSA protocol fit with their needs to be sensitive to the historic nature of their sites. Pittsburgh Architect W. Ward Williams drew up a New Deal relief funded project relating to the restoration of Old Economy Village. W. Ward Williams was the architect of several public buildings, including churches and a school, as well as apartment buildings in the Pittsburgh area.\textsuperscript{266} His work may have been appropriate for other General State Authority building plans to be undertaken using New Deal funds, but the Commission wanted a specialist to do this work. The PHC rejected Williams's project as proposed for the official reason that the “Administrative Code” must be followed concerning soliciting federal support for restoration projects, but from the discussion that followed one could draw the conclusion that the more pressing issue was that Williams did not have enough experience with historical restoration work. Later in the same meeting, the Commission decided to contact the Historical Committee of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the American Institute of Architects to see if they would be willing to consult on this project.\textsuperscript{267} Ultimately, noted Pittsburgh architectural historian Charles Morse Stotz carried out the restoration project at Old Economy Village. Along with his professional duties as an architect, in his spare time Stotz had researched the historical landscape of Western Pennsylvania with a focus on extant buildings. His historical interests and architectural experience made him a prime candidate for the work at


\textsuperscript{267} October 28, 1935, PHC Minutes.
Old Economy Village. The process of accepting bids open to the public followed by the GSA was unsuitable for the highly specialized restoration work that the PHC projects required.

A similar exception from typical protocol occurred when choosing the architect for Pennsbury Manor. R. Brognard Okie was approached unofficially by the PHC to consult on the plan, but approval through the GSA was challenging. Okie turned down the first request by the PHC because he did not want to be at the mercy of a lengthy bureaucratic bidding process. In a letter addressing these concerns, Chairman Melvin writes, “Let me put my finger upon what I conceive to be the heart of your misunderstanding. Under all ordinary circumstances, the State must, and does, require competitive bidding on all State work. Under exceptional circumstances, a strong presentment may be made by such a Commission as ours by recommending a particular person or firm as being the only one, or the logical one, capable of undertaking a given contract. This Commission may not waive, or modify, any Statute.” Here, Melvin expresses that the PHC was given the latitude to choose the architect and break with ordinary rules of the GSA. Okie did not need to compete for his position as architect because this work was exceptional and required a specific skill set.

Preservation, in this case, was operating within the strictures of a program of funding that curtailed the specific types of considerations that need to be made when working with the highly detailed and time-consuming work of restoration or reconstruction. Although there was not a set

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269 Frank Melvin to R. Brognard Okie, June 9, 1936, RG13, series 13-0816 carton 1, folder 3, PSA.
of codified restoration procedures or a textbook for administrators or builders to refer to, the PHC made it possible for preservation to be carefully carried out when the granting agency’s protocol requires publicly announced invitation for bids, and an insistence on choosing the “lowest responsible bid.” By working closely with the leaders of state agencies and relying on political connections, the PHC was able to complete historic preservation work within the strictures of the GSA and professional standards of the time.

The GSA was created to bypass borrowing restrictions in the Pennsylvania constitution and it successfully drew in over 65 million dollars to help update the state’s infrastructure. GSA sponsored projects undertaken using New Deal funds were widespread, occurring in all but one of Pennsylvania’s sixty-seven counties. The grants and loans for public works projects provided by these New Deal programs was Pennsylvania’s only hope to catch up with deferred maintenance on schools, correctional facilities, mental hospitals, and other state owned buildings that provided services to the citizens of the Commonwealth. Historic preservation projects were in some ways similar to other public infrastructure projects that were approved at the time, but their specific needs made the projects differ greatly. The PHC and the GSA shared high-level political connections and these relationships made it possible to bend the rules relating to bids on contractors, architects, and restoration quality materials. The experience of working through the GSA made the PHC move faster than they preferred in order to meet strict deadlines enforced by

270 Activities and Accomplishments, 13.

271 Ibid, H.
federal grants. These restrictions shaped the process of preservation at Pennsbury Manor and Old Economy Village.

**Conclusion**

The personal interests of the members of the PHC led their work away from the recent past to favor projects related to finding about more about prehistoric Pennsylvania. Archaeological fieldwork was easier to carry out with the small appropriations given to the PHC in its early years. The findings of their excavations across the state led to a greater awareness of the relatively unknown and under-researched prehistoric and Native American past. The experience gained by the PHC with carrying out a strong statewide archeological program affected how they approached historic preservation projects that came to their attention during the 1930s. The only salaried staff person engaged by the PHC, Donald Cadzow, was a trained archeologist and he oversaw the process by which the PHC applied for New Deal relief funding for both archeological and preservation projects. Although the approach of historical archeology was gaining popularity at other historic sites, it was a short leap for the PHC to merge these two practices as it had been carrying out both types of projects since 1917. The interests, experience, and energy of the members appointed to the PHC helped to shape the process of preservation at the historic sites owned by the state.

One such site, the Daniel Boone Homestead, stands as a specific example of how the PHC affected the cultural landscape of Pennsylvania. The General Assembly accepted responsibility for the property and transferred management to the PHC in 1938, a time when appropriations to the PHC were barely enough to carry out their required duties. By forming a
partnership with the National Youth Administration, a New Deal relief agency, the state of Pennsylvania was able to stabilize and ultimately restore the Daniel Boone Homestead, creating a park facility as well. This money came with restrictions that left a lasting effect on the mission and vision of the site. The work had to impart marketable job skills to young people. Through this source of funding, the site has been imprinted with a legacy to help the youth of America that still carries on to this day. Without the intervention of both the PHC and the NYA, the Daniel Boone Homestead would likely have remained a dilapidated farmhouse surrounded by overgrown brush and would not have developed its identity as a national shrine to the youth of America.

Another way in which relief funding altered the fate of historic sites can be seen at Pennsbury Manor and Old Economy Village, both of which received funding for preservation work through a quasi-governmental body called the General State Authority. The GSA was created to facilitate borrowing and accepting grants through the United States government to complete much needed infrastructure work on state owned properties. As both Pennsbury Manor and Old Economy Village were owned by the state, the work needed to restore them was folded into the purview of the GSA, which paid for the work with relief monies. The timetables, bureaucratic bidding process, and red tape affected the process by which preservation took place. The GSA was not created with an eye for the delicate processes of historic preservation. Rather, the GSA was created first and then the PHC worked hard to wedge preservation projects into the scaffolding set up by the GSA for more traditional infrastructure projects. A state hospital that needed updating would require a markedly different process than a scholarly reconstruction of an historic site. The strictures put in place sped up the process by which these projects occurred and
the work assumed a character that it likely would not have had if it had been completed by a private investor, such as John Rockefeller at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, or Henry Ford at Greenfield Village in Michigan. The GSA and relief funded systems placed limits on how the PHC executed these preservation projects during the New Deal, but the Commission was a strong agency that had the capacity and political connections to advocate for special authorizations, such as hiring contractors and architects who specialized in colonial restoration work rather than accepting the lowest responsible bid put forth.

Personalities, funding stream requirements, and bureaucratic limitations put on historic sites owned and operated by the PHC during the New Deal had a visible and lasting effect. By investigating the growth and development of these sites, one can see traces of the political and social moment in which they were preserved. The particular way the New Deal presented in Pennsylvania is another element we need to recognize in order to have a full understanding of the development of the cultural landscape in Pennsylvania.
Chapter 5: New Deal, New Model of Accountability

**Introduction**

Historic preservation is an interdisciplinary field that brings together architects, conservators, lawyers, historians, curators, archeologists, and others to pursue the shared goal of protecting significant buildings. Professionals such as these may have a common goal but still the field does not have a standardized common language to define and discuss its practices. Growing in influence since in the 1940s, the work of UNESCO, (1946) ICOMOS (1965), and other similar legislation such as the National Historic Preservation Act (1966) has created a structure to connect professionals and guide the field as it moves forward.

The meaning of authenticity as it relates to historic preservation work has evolved and continues to evolve as we learn new ways to interpret available evidence. Although early antiquarians and avocational historians prided themselves on basing their work on documents and records, in the 1930s, authenticity became a buzzword, and its meaning shifted towards a more professionalized model.\(^{272}\) In addition, scholarship suggests that during times of crisis or upheaval, people are more skeptical about what is authentic and real. This is clearly seen during the New Deal era.\(^{273}\) It was at this same time that the PHC began to stress accuracy and authenticity in their preservation work. Commissioners were cognizant of the idea that material

\(^{272}\) On antiquarians, see Verplanck, “Making History,” 396.

and contextual authenticity, as bolstered by archeology and historical documentation, were intrinsic to the success of their projects. This model was in operation at other sites that the PHC sought to emulate, such as Williamsburg. As the field of historic preservation matured and professionalized under the weight of these cultural conditions, a new meaning of authenticity and accuracy emerged and took on a greater role in the philosophical underpinnings of preservation work.

Historic preservation sponsored by the federal government using New Deal funds was never coordinated or managed as a unified national program. Yet it provided the first opportunity that many states had to revive buildings with historic significance and open them to the public. In the place between local historical societies and the National Park Service, preservation activity matured exponentially. The New Deal’s expansion of the role of government and an increase in available funding provided the PHC with the opportunity to hire historians, archeologists, and architects. These positions gave cultural workers the room to experiment and to get hands-on experience in the field of restoration and reconstruction. Preservation and historical archeology was, during the 1930s, an emerging field and the success and failures of this early work helped future preservationists amass an informal list of best practices. For preservation projects across the country, the availability of resources dictated the amount of access to professional support to guide the work at each site. New Deal funding coupled with state appropriations allowed the PHC to seek skilled practitioners to undertake their preservation projects. The architects hired by the PHC, Charles M. Stotz, G. Edwin Brumbaugh, R. Brognard Okie, and Howard Chapelle, were early leaders in the field, and came highly recommended for preservation work. The PHC went to great lengths to instill a sense of
historical accuracy in their sites, which were ultimately designed to educate the public about the heritage of the state.

Moreover, relief program funding caused a shift towards a new model of accountability for the PHC. Under this funding scheme, sites being preserved using public funds were now scrutinized by many different groups—by historians and architects for historical accuracy, the state and federal government for construction timetables and annual reports, and the taxpaying public for making responsible use of their money. The Pennsbury Manor reconstruction was singled out and received negative attention from multiple stakeholder groups. Despite the best efforts of the PHC towards achieving an accurate and educational rendition of William Penn’s country home, the backlash resulting from the Pennsbury Manor project had lasting effects on the trajectory of preservation on a national level. In the article, “Authenticities Past and Present,” David Lowenthal states, “[W]e cannot simply select one measure of value and ditch the rest; instead, we must weigh them anew for each case. What we find authentic depends not only on what and where but who is doing the work, who is paying for it, how long it is meant to last, and how it is marketed.”

His words speak to the fluidity of the meaning of the term authenticity and illustrate the many dimensions of the criticism leveled at historic preservation projects.

Authenticity

Between 1880 and 1940, a tension between imitation and authenticity surfaced in American culture. According to historian Miles Orvell, a cultural shift took place in the early twentieth century that turned many Americans away from machine-made replicas and sent them searching for genuine and authentic furniture, architecture, and art. In addition, Alfred Hayworth Jones discusses the idea of the search for a useable past during the tumultuous 1930s, which in his opinion, led to an obsession with accuracy during the period. He states, “If they turned to the past as a guide to the present, then the landmarks must be accurate and reliable or the lessons would be misleading. Hence meticulous attention to authenticity became a canon of the decade.” The change in behavior that Orvell and Jones describe was seen in other areas of life. Scholars and critics have used terms such as colonial revival, traditionalism, nationalism, patriotism, and anti-modernism to describe its manifestation. No matter its name, there was a turn towards the authentic that affected American culture during the New Deal era and preservation work completed by the PHC actively participated in this new value system.

Strict adherence to what we understand as authenticity today was not a main focus of preservationists until the mid-twentieth century. Through the work of the PHC, we see that it

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278 Addressed in many sources but specifically mentioned in Lowenthal, “Authenticities Past and Present,” where he states, “Not until the mid-20th century, in most of the arts, did improving the
was still a concern of those working on restoration projects in the 1930s. Even though it may not have been the top concern for the visiting public in the 1930s, a particular class of architects, historians, and archeologists scrutinized the restoration of sites for authenticity and the fear that their work would be criticized as inauthentic is clearly manifested in the actions of the PHC. For example, concerning a supporting project at Pennsbury Manor, Donald Cadzow reports that “under the supervision of experts on old furniture,” National Youth Administration workers have been studying seventeenth-century furniture styles to prepare a plan for furnishing Pennsbury Manor. The Commission recommended that the NYA supervisors solicit feedback from knowledgeable sources including the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Colonial Dames of America, and similar organizations allowing them to “criticize and approve these plans so as to avoid any questions in the future regarding authenticity.” The sentiment expressed here is an illustration of how the PHC internalized the concept of authenticity and accuracy in their work. Amidst the flourish of standardization and professionalization in many fields during the mid-1930s, much thought went into defining best practices and scrutinizing the field for making mistakes that would destroy or mar historic landmarks. Despite the fact that the terms

past give way to archeological exactitude, a scholarly purism that deplored tampering with what was original.”

279 January 6, 1939, PHC Minutes.

280 For more on the shift towards professionalization see Novick, That Noble Dream; and Bruce Sinclair, “Local History and National Culture: Notions on Engineering Professionalism in America,” Technology and Culture 27, no. 4 (October 1, 1986): 683–693.

For recent works that address the topic see Tyrrell, Historians in Public; Townsend, History’s Babel.
accuracy and authenticity have been in use related to these types of projects for as long as people have felt the urge for preservation work, one needs to attempt to locate the varied definitions of authenticity. Have the meanings of these words stayed static as the field developed? Moreover, how does one achieve accuracy or authenticity through preservation?

The meaning of authenticity is fluid and changeable; authenticity of the 1930s would barely recognize authenticity of 2014. The definition can differ from person to person, yet authenticity is often cited as an integral part of visitor experiences. Many visitors to historic sites seek accuracy and authenticity, and appreciate places that have been validated as important and worthy of preservation. The qualities that constitute an authentic or accurate restoration have shifted over time and continue to evolve. Two theorists during the 19th century had a great influence on the field of preservation both during the New Deal era and to this day. Eugene-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879) and John Ruskin (1819-1900), held philosophies of historic preservation that differed widely. The principles argued by Viollet-le-Duc and Ruskin became the doctrine upon which modern historic preservation practices were built. It is true that...


For similar work relating to archeology, see Linebaugh, *The Man Who Found Thoreau*, 98-168; Kehoe, *Assembling the Past.*

these two men were writing in Europe (France and England, respectively) and both had experience with a larger scope of history, since it was mainly medieval structures on their mind. Although the American historical landscape did not have such ancient structures, the philosophies of these men influence how we care for our landmarks.

Viollet-le-Duc embraced a style of preservation that empowered architects to make educated guesses in order to fill in the blanks that arise during the process of restoring an historic building. Simply put, Viollet-le-Duc proposed seamless restorations, mixing the original historic fabric with new materials in order to bring it back to its former glory, although he made it clear that the final project “may never have existed at any particular time.” His projects revealed a more nostalgic side of commemorative preservation work that enhanced the original structure and made it emblematic of the time it was built or the aesthetic of the period. According to him, the process of preservation included “a series of maneuvers that must be modified every day by a constant observation of the effects that occur.” In that statement, Viollet-le-Duc expressed his view that preservation is not a straightforward process and even the best-laid plans need to be flexible once work begins. The leaders of the early preservation movement in the United States, the Society of the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Colonial Williamsburg, and the architects engaged by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, shared this same philosophy, placing an emphasis on on-site interpretation rather than strict adherence to documentary evidence.

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282 As quoted in Murtagh, *Keeping Time*, 2.

On the other hand, John Ruskin, an art and architecture critic and contemporary of Viollet-le-Duc, felt that all restoration was a fallacy and was dishonest to the intentions of the original architects, to visitors, and to the historical record. Instead of restoration work, Ruskin favored stabilizing existing buildings as they stood and investing in conservation plans, the consistent care and keeping of historic properties so that they never reached the state of neglect that often prompts large-scale restorations. Prioritizing the protection of old buildings is necessary in Ruskin’s view as he believed that our cultural memory is defined by architecture as visual landmarks of the past, living memories. Restoration, to Ruskin, is “the most total destruction which a building can suffer: a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered; a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed.” This hands-off approach protected the historic fabric of architectural remains but it differs from the sensual experience of inhabiting a fully restored historical moment that Viollet-le-Duc favored.

Ruskin’s staunch anti-restorationist principles can be seen in the field in more current trends such as the work done in Philadelphia to commemorate Benjamin Franklin’s home and the President’s House. In both cases, the historic structures had previously been razed. With a desire to commemorate the activities that occurred in these structures but without enough documentary evidence to support a full reconstruction of these sites, a middle ground was found. In the late 1970s, architects Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and John Rauch introduced a

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286 Ibid, 184.
creative alternative to the National Park Service’s plan to reconstruct Franklin’s home as a museum. Rather than guessing at the dimensions and layout of Franklin’s home, Venturi, Scott Brown, and Rauch created a freestanding white frame of a house and this abstracted outline of a non-extant building is known as a ghost structure. They left archaeological evidence of Franklin’s home exposed but protected to present visitors with a real and authentic view of what survives of the building. They etched quotes from Franklin’s letters describing his home into the slate slabs within the ghost structure to provide even more evidence but without building a recreated home. This technique gives visitors a more accurate idea of the process of architectural history and challenges them to be creative in thinking about historic site construction and stewardship.

The architects who worked on reviving the President’s House, located on Independence Mall, took a similar approach. Eschewing the idea of creating a facsimile, what was created at the site of the President’s House is an abstracted interpretation of how the structure would have looked. Instead of the white frame outline as employed at the Franklin house, here, the architects fabricated a brick outline of the building including abstract window frames and fireplaces. Without substantial evidence to recreate the building in a responsible manner, architects proposed a conceptual plan incorporating known facts, and placing an emphasis on showing the archeological site underneath for added authenticity.\(^\text{287}\) Presenting to the public the available evidence allows each visitor to reimagine the site for him or herself. This method does not result in people having a common conception of history, but it does not inflict a particular

interpretation or vision of historic memory. This approach is Ruskinesque in that it requires the further preservation of the ruins of an historic site and does not create a fabricated version of history to be passed off as real.

Early leaders of the preservation movement were amateurs, wealthy private citizens, and well-meaning members of communities who were more concerned with associational history and shrine-making than architectural heritage. However, ideas of was responsible for preservation, who carried it out, and the professional guidelines governing that work changed with the increase in large-scale preservation projects such as Colonial Williamsburg and Greenfield Village, and the increased role the National Park Service played in the field. Between the 1920s and late 1930s, there was a shift towards professionalization and developing a national program of historic preservation. By the mid-1930s, the body of preservation-related knowledge across the country had increased. The National Park Service hired a slate of historians, architects, and archeologists to complete preservation work; Colonial Williamsburg was open and operating; and there were now resources for local preservation groups to turn to for advice.

An evolving understanding of authenticity and accuracy is a part of the maturation of the field of historic preservation. As one urban planner claims, “All things are historic- all have existed previously, all have been connected with some events and persons, and so all have a historic meaning. We must choose what we should keep.”[288] It is the choice of which sites to save that becomes central to the historic preservation conversation. When one approaches an historic site with a palimpsest of additions, which does one choose to remove and which do we

save? Do we keep an early 19th century addition on a 1700s structure if that is how it looked when President so-and-so lived there? Do we leave all changes to the fabric of the site in place and interpret the updates as the evolution of architecture over the life of the structure? These questions show alternative ways to view the preservation of historic landmarks and illustrate the evolution of thought that has occurred in the field. In Pennsylvania during the New Deal era, architects were the leaders of preservation projects (with oversight by the PHC and federal agencies), and they had a large effect on how preservation work was completed. If, as the quote says, we must choose what we must keep, the state of Pennsylvania was choosing, but the architects ultimately determined which parts of the historic sites to demolish and which parts were worthy of being preserved.

**Architects**

In the mid-1920s, when planning to transform Williamsburg, Virginia, into the recreated city of Colonial Williamsburg, W.A.R. Goodwin observed that although contractors, historians, archeologists, material culture experts, draftspersons, landscape architects, and engineers were available to complete the project, it was nearly impossible to find one person with the right mix of experience necessary to bring a colonial city back to life. Most of those with enthusiasm for this type of work were knowledgeable about a piece of the puzzle, but individuals who had synthetic knowledge of these skills had not emerged yet and these skills certainly had not been bundled together and disseminated through training programs, academic or otherwise. As the
demand for preservation projects increased, "new professions, new organizational procedures, and a whole new philosophy of restoration would have to be created."\textsuperscript{289}

The decade following the initiation of work at Colonial Williamsburg would prove to be a boon for the development of the field of preservation. As there were not professionals who did the total work of overseeing historic preservation projects on a regular basis during earlier decades, projects such as Colonial Williamsburg, those carried out by the National Park Service, and the historic preservation work undertaken using New Deal funds gave historians, architects, archeologists, and others the opportunity to conduct full-time work on preservation. Hosmer notes that the National Park Service was the “principal employer of the professionals who dedicated their careers to historic preservation,” but he also calls attention to three state programs that provided employment opportunities for restoration or interpretation, among them, Pennsylvania. Here Hosmer only notes the formation of the position of State Historian in 1937, overlooking the importance of the opportunities for architects, archeologists, and contractors that were able to field-test preservation techniques through the roles that opened as a result of New Deal funding.\textsuperscript{290}

Generally speaking, the resources available for each particular preservation project dictated the level of professional advice sought to carry out the work. The National Park Service came up with scholarly guidelines to govern their work on preservation projects but groups and individuals with tight budgets did not have the luxury to hire experts to follow expensive and

\textsuperscript{289} Hosmer, \textit{Preservation Comes of Age}, 31.

\textsuperscript{290} Ibid, 871.
time-consuming preservation practices. Furthermore, the informal guidelines for preservation work that had been worked out were not transmitted easily, since professional organizations for advice and networking were scarce. Essentially, the engineers, architects, historians, and archeologists on staff at the National Park Service, and the handful of other learned practitioners were, unfortunately, talking mainly to themselves.\textsuperscript{291} In contrast, large-scale projects such as Colonial Williamsburg and the programs in Pennsylvania solicited input from many different types of experts.\textsuperscript{292} Pennsylvania sought architects and historians with skills and experience with restorations, in a period where it was unusual to find people with this particular training and inclination. In 1928, one critic responding to Henry Ford’s work at Greenfield Village noted, “None of the great work of restoration which has been going on for many years has been done by specialists. Every bit of it has been done by workmen from the factories.”\textsuperscript{293} The Commission did not want to perpetuate this type of program. The mixed composition of the field during the New Deal era is evident when viewing the backgrounds of those who served on the Commission, but also by those hired at the behest of the Commission to complete preservation projects. They formed committees that approached professional organizations for recommendations to locate qualified candidates with not only enthusiasm for historic preservation, but also the skills and experience to bring to life their vision for the historic landscape of Pennsylvania. Architects and historians with experience or a deep interest in conserving historic buildings assumed leadership

\textsuperscript{291} Ibid, 1040.

\textsuperscript{292} Ibid, 896-897.

\textsuperscript{293} Samuel Crowther as quoted in Hosmer, \textit{Preservation Comes of Age}, 86.
roles on these interdisciplinary projects and brought to their work skills from a mix of other related fields. The people hired by the State of Pennsylvania to oversee this work would dominate the field of preservation after the New Deal; the experience and training received through these projects influenced their careers.

Charles M. Stotz, G. Edwin Brumbaugh, R. Brognard Okie, and Howard Chapelle were some of the few who had built reputations as architectural historians during the 1930s. These men preferred using reclaimed building materials to blend into the original fabric of the structures on which they worked. The result was seamless restoration work characteristic of the time, as attempting to disguise new building materials with the old was common practice in the field until the 1970s.²⁹⁴ However, it is clear that their zeal for bringing to fruition their vision for these sites led them to disagree with the way publicly funded work was carried out. In one example, the restoration of the Brig Niagara, issues with finding the materials necessary to complete preservation work quickly surfaced. It proved difficult to locate rare items, nearly impossible to find three different companies producing the same rare item as required to prepare the bidding quotes required for state approval. After hearing the frustrations of the architect involved in the project, Donald Cadzow wrote a letter to the state administrator in an attempt to relax the rules. He says, “In view of the fact that Property and Supplies is not set-up for a ship rebuilding program, we find that almost everything needed in the reconstruction of this vessel is not on schedule, and it is necessary for us to purchase materials especially timber and lumber not kiln dried wherever available. This also applies to the other materials and equipment necessary

for reconstruction. We would appreciate it very much if your department would give us full cooperation in the approval of purchases for the above so that the work on the Flagship will not be delayed." The bureaucratic difficulties faced by the architects and contractors working on these restoration projects was substantial. As with all building projects undertaken by the state, the leaders of these projects had to collect three bids for all purchases that cost over a certain amount of money, including paint, lumber, hardware, nails, and other items, some of which had to be specially made to match the historic character of the sites they were working on. Despite the challenges, this particular experience with publicly funded preservation work helped to field-test methods and to explore other models of funding to be used for preservation projects. The following architects emerged as transitional actors in the development of the field of historic preservation as a result of their experiences working on New Deal funded projects for the Pennsylvania Historical Commission.

Charles M. Stotz

Charles M. Stotz (1899-1985) was a prominent architect and proponent of historic preservation in Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania. With a B.A. and M.A. in architecture from Cornell University, Stotz was well prepared to join his brother and father in the family architectural firm. Under his father’s direction, his early work focused mainly on institutional

\[\text{\footnotesize 295 Cadzow to Mr. Vincent J. Schneider, RG13, series 13-0823, carton 7, PSA.}\]

and municipal building. His concentration on historic architecture began before he graduated from Cornell; his masters thesis explored the historic architecture of central New York and a term paper deftly mixed historic research with building practices to delve into the presence of Greek revival architecture in central New York.\(^\text{297}\) His department, especially his advisor in the program, must have supported this work even though it was an unusual focus at the time.

Moving forward, gaining experience with both building and designing at his father’s firm, he also followed his passion for the construction techniques of early America. Along with his professional duties as an architect, Stotz researched the historical landscape of western Pennsylvania, with an emphasis on extant buildings, to write *The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania* in 1936. Later, as chairman of the Western Pennsylvania Architectural Survey (1932-1935) and the Historic American Buildings Survey, Western Pennsylvania section (1934-1937), Stotz solidified his reputation for having not only an enthusiasm for historic architecture but also a strong knowledge base.\(^\text{298}\) He further developed his credentials by serving on committees in the Pittsburgh area relating to preservation work, which allowed him to gain


experience and create a network in the field before he ever completed a preservation project himself.299

When considering a restoration of Old Economy Village, an eighteenth-century utopian community located in Beaver County, the PHC contacted the Pittsburgh Chapter of the American Institute of Architects to see if they would be willing to consult on this project. The PHC asked for a recommendation of an architect with the skills necessary to take on this type of detail-oriented work.300 Stotz’s historical interests and architectural experience made him a prime candidate for the work at Old Economy Village.301

The Pennsylvania Historical Commission engaged Stotz to complete work on Old Economy Village in Beaver County. This was his first opportunity to put his academic knowledge into practice. The task of restoring Old Economy was completed over the course of thirty years because of a lack of lump sum funding, but nonetheless it launched him into the preservation realm. Stotz’s firm was exhaustive in their work at Old Economy. They produced reports and drew up plans and specification for multiple stages of restoration at Old Economy because it was understood that the New Deal funding was finicky and unreliable. There was much work to be done but it had to be approved piece by piece. Stotz said, “Allocations of


300 October 28, 1935, PHC Minutes.

301 Branton, “Charles Stotz, Restorer of Western Pennsylvania Architecture,” C.
restoration funds were made sporadically and in adequate amounts. Bits and pieces of the total program had to be selected and completed at random through twenty-eight separate contracts.”

After this initial project at Old Economy Village, Stotz went on to complete preservation work on many military forts, consulting on 30 projects, which led to his reputation as an expert on eighteenth century forts. Throughout his career, he was a consultant on projects that extended beyond the region, including sites in New York, Utah, Virginia, Florida, and Georgia. Stotz focused heavily on historic research and archeological findings in order to inform his restoration work and the foundation of his training came from experience working with the PHC during the New Deal.

G. Edwin Brumbaugh

G. Edwin Brumbaugh (1890-1983) was a restoration architect who received a B.S. in Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1913. After gaining experience in the field at other firms, Brumbaugh struck out on his own in 1916, concentrating mostly on residential home design in the colonial revival style. Although Brumbaugh began his career making alterations or restoring private homes in the Philadelphia area, his desire to become involved in historical restoration projects emerged prior to the Depression. He had a particular interest in


303 Charles Morse Stotz Papers, 1901-1975, series II, box 8-14, Library & Archives Division, Senator John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh, PA.

304 Stotz Papers, series II, box 13-14.

305 Stotz Papers, series II, box 9, folder 5, 6,7.; Stotz Papers, series II, box 23, folder 1.
Pennsylvania German architecture, so when there were talks of the PHC acquiring the Ephrata Cloister in Lancaster County Brumbaugh was eager to offer his services to the Keystone State. In 1929, his father, then Governor Martin Brumbaugh, asked the Pennsylvania Historical Commission if his son could lead the restoration of Ephrata Cloister if it became a state-run project.\footnote{306} This interest in historical architecture would become the focus of his career as it progressed.

For Brumbaugh, the Great Depression served as a turning point and altered the trajectory of his career. While he had studied historic architecture in order to create the residential colonial revival work that he was known for, he had not thought of working exclusively on pure restoration as feasible until the economic downturn began and federal funds became available to support this type of work.\footnote{307} Although Brumbaugh was not associated with a particular historic preservation organization besides the PHC, his vast knowledge of historic architecture and traditional building techniques was acquired through extensive research and careful study of architectural precedents, and the conscientious manner in which he undertook his restoration projects established him as a well-respected authority in the still-developing field.\footnote{308} To that end, Brumbaugh claimed that one should preserve in place every possible bit of old construction. When replacement parts of the structure were required, Brumbaugh would use historic materials

\footnote{306}{See “Milton, PA., July 27, 1929,” RG13, PHC Minutes, 1924-1945, folder 1, PSA. (Due to legal issues, the state did not acquire Ephrata until the 1940s but did they hire Brumbaugh at that time.)}

\footnote{307}{Rose, Architecture as a Portrait of Circumstance, 17.}

\footnote{308}{Ibid, 3.}
where possible or he would produce accurate reproductions using historic tools and building techniques. This method contrasts with how the field operates today, which places an emphasis on being transparent about the level of infill, and clearly demarcating the original fabric of the structure. As a result of his meticulous work, in some of his restorations modern historians have been confused as to which parts of his buildings are original and which are reproductions.\(^{309}\)

Collaborating with the New Deal agencies was difficult for Brumbaugh to reconcile with completing preservation work that met his exacting standards. In a letter to the state historian, Steve K. Stevens, Brumbaugh expressed his concerns with a restoration project he was overseeing at Pottsgrove Manor, “Having had some experience with W.P.A. restoration efforts, I am much opposed to anything of this sort. The men on the rolls are never selected for capacity. The direction and planning is seldom expert, and the destruction of important evidence seems unavoidable. At Pottsgrove [Manor], where conditions were ideal as to selection of men from the available supply, the results were most disappointing. Fortunately, all the W.P.A. force did was rough work. If we had reached the interior or the fine points of exterior finish before the work stopped by default, I think the battle would have really started.”\(^{310}\) Brumbaugh had high standards for the work he was responsible for at each historic site, and although he recognized the need for federal funding and unskilled labor to complete projects, he did not see this model of funding as ideal. Brumbaugh completed multiple PHC sponsored historic preservation projects

\(^{309}\) Ibid, 10-11.

\(^{310}\) Ibid, 24.
such as Daniel Boone’s Homestead, the aforementioned Pottsgrove Manor, and the Ephrata Cloister.

He continued to work in the field after his experience with New Deal preservation projects and became a nationally recognized authority in historic preservation. He went on to contribute to the restoration of Valley Forge National Park and worked on other Pennsylvania area landmarks such as Fort Mifflin, Stenton, Old Swedes Church, and Head House Square.\(^{311}\)

He was invited to give lectures on the process of historic preservation to teach budding professionals at the Seminars in American Culture at Cooperstown in 1949.\(^{312}\) While some preservationists focused on the creation of an historic atmosphere rather than conforming to building practices that would have been appropriate during the time they were trying to evoke, Brumbaugh was one of the few conscientious architects for whom sentimentality and visitor experience were less important than realism and accuracy.

R. Brognard Okie

Richardson Brognard Okie (1875-1945) was an architect known for designing colonial revival style homes and completing restorations of historic properties. He studied mechanical engineering at Haverford College and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in architecture. Okie started his career and shortly thereafter became a partner at the firm of Duhring, Okie, and Ziegler. Duhring, Okie, and Ziegler specialized in colonial revival

\(^{311}\) Treese, *Valley Forge*, 137-154.

\(^{312}\) Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, 950.
vernacular architecture, which in many cases required renovating and modernizing historic homes for private patrons as well designing new homes in the colonial style. They favored the English Cotswold and Pennsylvania farmhouse styles and created romantic visions of the past. In many examples of his restoration work, it was common for Okie to edit the original fabric of the building in order to enhance the colonial charm, while also integrating modern conveniences into the design. One critic described his work, “His houses emphasized this homespun appeal, achieving a functionalism joined with picturesqueness, which is in a sense true architectural design.”

He remained a partner at Duhring, Okie, and Ziegler until 1918, when he began his own firm. Once he began taking on his own accounts, Okie continued working in the colonial revival style but merged his understanding of early American domestic architecture with completing full restorations and reconstruction of publicly focused Pennsylvania colonial era buildings. He restored churches around and designed the reconstruction of colonial Philadelphia’s High Street, which included more than twenty buildings for the Sesquicentennial International Exposition in 1926.

When the PHC needed to find a qualified architect with experience in colonial era reconstruction projects for their plans at Pennsbury Manor, Okie was a clear choice. As stated after his death, “Those in charge of the Williamsburg restoration recommended Brognard Okie as architect for this restoration. This was confirmed by the Philadelphia [American Institute of Architects] chapter. Acting contrary to established State procedure to use the cheapest materials,

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Brognard Okie used in the reconstruction bricks, ironwork and other materials found in the ruins as models and examples and had all materials in the building authentic, which became an excellent restoration, vying with Williamsburg itself in accuracy and charm. This quote tells a story about the tone of the Pennsbury reconstruction, and embodies Okie’s restoration philosophy. Following in the footsteps of Colonial Williamsburg, the site was designed to recreate the experience of visiting a manor house in the eighteenth century. Okie used his experience in renovating and restoring historic private homes to aid in creating a believable replica that incorporated materials from the 1700s to bolster the authenticity of the site. Accuracy and authenticity at the reconstructed Pennsbury meant building a physical and intellectual pastiche—not only synthesizing modern materials with those from the eighteenth century, but also balancing available historic documentation and construction techniques found at houses of similar stature built at the same time with visually pleasing layouts that would engage visitors. After this experience, he continued working in historic preservation. Most notably, he was engaged for the restoration of the Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia, where he followed a similar tack, emphasizing visitor experience of the past through a reconstructed romantic version of the past over historical accuracy.

Howard Chapelle

Maritime scholar Howard I. Chapelle (1901-1975) had a well-rounded career as a naval architect, curator, and historian. He began his career as a marine building apprentice in 1919 and

314 Ibid, 33.
went on to gain experience working alongside shipbuilders in the North East. In 1936, the year after publishing *The History of American Sailing Ships*, he served as the Regional Director of the New England region in a WPA project called the Historic American Merchant Marine Survey.\textsuperscript{315} This project was similar in design to the Historic American Buildings Survey in that it employed out of work marine architects to collect documentary evidence of watercraft of varying sizes including detailed drawings of their architecture and artifacts. At the time, Chapelle was one of only a few interested in the historic architecture of vessels and his research was innovative and new. As he said, “I had no competition. When I started exploring the field I discovered that I was all alone.”\textsuperscript{316} He recognized marine vessels as documents of history, and the fact that many were disappearing across the country led him to attempt to save as much as he could through documentation or physical preservation.\textsuperscript{317}

Chapelle’s first preservation experience was on the *Philadelphia*, a revolutionary war era watercraft that was recovered from Lake Champlain and preserved in 1935.\textsuperscript{318} He also worked on restoring the U.S.S. *Constellation*.\textsuperscript{319} Due to his reputation as the foremost marine historian


\textsuperscript{317} Ibid, 84.


with historic preservation experience, the Pennsylvania Historical Commission approached Chapelle to take on the task of restoring the Brig *Niagara*, located in Lake Erie. He led the advisory committee for the restoration of the Brig *Niagara* and suggested that the Pennsylvania Historical Commission contact a few maritime-minded experts of high esteem, including Eric J. Steinlein, the national director of the Historic American Merchant Marine Survey, the primary architect of the project. Chapelle was not impressed with the work that was done in 1913 to restore the ship. In a three-page letter to the staff historian of the Commission, he outlined a set of glaring errors made through the “amateur work of the first restorers” some of which, as he states, would “agonize a marine archeologist.” His statement shows that he and likely the other proto-preservationists working in the late 30s viewed themselves as set apart from amateurs—as preservation or restoration professionals in a field that has not yet professionalized.\(^\text{320}\) Although he lacked a formal academic education in the context of the 1930s, he was at the top of the field.

On June 1, 1940, a $29,000 WPA project was approved to restore the Flagship. Chapelle and Steinlein worked together to draw up plans for both the outside and the interior of the ship and Steinlein carried them out. The records relating to this site offer a glimpse into how the WPA projects found laborers qualified to do preservation work—the short answer is they did not. Steinlein mentioned in a letter that he had to fire a number of relief workers because they did not have the skills necessary to complete the highly detailed finishing work. However, the supervisors from the relief rolls were noted as being competent and had the skills necessary to

\(^{320}\) Howard I Chapelle to Donald Kent, August 14, 1939, RG13, series 13-0828 carton 12, folder 24, PSA.
supervise the work.\textsuperscript{321} These sorts of complaints were common among the preservation projects but in many cases, the unskilled workers were able to carry out the work as planned with proper training.

The Pennsylvania Historical Commission sought the most notable marine scholar and perhaps the only person in America who was studying historic boat building practices with experience in restoration in order to make sure their project was accurate. However, Chapelle’s reputation has been challenged in the years following his death. A reflexive study of Chapelle’s highly regarded book, \textit{The History of the American Sailing Ships}, reveals many flaws in his research.\textsuperscript{322} The absence of academic attention paid to this topic allowed for avocational researchers like Chapelle to make a name for themselves in the field. However, one weakness in his work is that although he spent time in archives and libraries, he did not adequately document his historical research. In \textit{The History of American Sailing Ships}, for example, there are no citations; he made assertions based on educated guess rather than documented reality; and included editorial additions by redrawing original plans of early American ships without making any note of that in his text. Despite his impressive reputation, when a modern eye interrogates his research it leaves a lot to be desired. The same can be said for the preservation practices he employed on the Brig \textit{Niagara}. In 1980, William A. Baker, a naval architect, wrote an historic structures report of the \textit{Niagara} and was highly critical of Chapelle’s choices. Baker noted that

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\textsuperscript{321} Eric Steinlein to Donald Cadzow, April 21, 1941, RG13, series 13-0823, carton 7, PSA.

Chapelle did not follow available evidence and altered the vessel’s design to match what he wanted them to look like rather than how they once appeared.323

After his preservation work was complete, Chapelle went on to serve as Curator in the Division of Transportation at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of History and Technology and later as Senior Historian at the same institution. Much of the biographical and academic works that describe Chapelle’s career do not mention the work he did directly to preserve historic vessels.324 This circumstance illustrates that either he did not draw attention to his connection to these early preservation projects or later researchers did not deem it an important part of his career. Regardless, when viewed in context of the 1930s, the Pennsylvania Historical Commission sought the most experienced and well-known authorities to carry out their preservation work.

The experience wrought from organizing and carrying out New Deal era preservation projects, as noted by historian Mike Wallace, influenced and helped determine the character of later preservation programs, including those on a national level. He states, “The experience left its mark on the veterans of the 1930s—people who would form the cadre of postwar preservation


324 For example, “A Howard Chapelle Chronology” by JoAnn King, a timeline written for an article in Wooden Boat magazine by a PhD student writing a dissertation on Chapelle leaves out his consulting on preservation work. Spectre, “The Legacy of Howard Chapelle: The Study of the Maritime Past, the Preservation of the Maritime Present,” 86. Nor does his biography attached to his personal papers at the Smithsonian Institution Archives mention this work. Howard I. Chapelle Papers, 1969-1975, RU7228, Smithsonian Institution Archives, http://siarchives.si.edu/collections/siris_arc_217385.
programs.325 During this transitional time, early practitioners had to be flexible, open to continuing revelation, and able to network with the handful of others engaged in this work to share their techniques and experiences. Operating without much opportunity to share experiences or further develop standardized best practices, the choices made during these years differed markedly from the choices a preservation professional would make today, almost 80 years later. In some circumstances, the day-to-day progress on these sites had lasting effects on preservation practices for better or for worse, as can be seen in the case study of Pennsbury Manor.

Pennsbury Manor Reconstruction Controversy

“Dream or nightmare, correct or inaccurate, it is likely to be a much-visited memorial to William Penn for many decades.”326 No, this is not a quote one will find on a brochure for Pennsbury Manor, but it was a reaction voiced by architect Carl C. Zeigler at the time of its reconstruction in the mid-1930s. Supported by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission and paid for using federal relief funds, the Pennsbury reconstruction had prominent and powerful detractors. Personal disagreements sparked and exacerbated the size of the controversy.327

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325 Wallace, Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory, 185


The conflict that erupted in reaction to the Pennsbury project questioned the accuracy of the recreation and the allocation of taxpayer money as a source of funding for what they saw as a disingenuous effort. Many preservation projects during the early formation of the field considered inspiration and association with early figures to be of greater worth than precise historical accuracy. During the 1930s, sites such as Williamsburg and Greenfield Village placed an emphasis on providing visitors with an immersive experience where they could live history with the sights and sounds of earlier times. This was valued, in some cases, over scholarly accuracy and was an accepted practice. In spite of this prevailing trend, the PHC went to great lengths to create an accurate and authentic replica of Penn’s house. Historical archeology, documentary research, and architectural studies of sites of similar age all contributed to an amassing of evidence in order to resurrect Pennsbury. However, in the end, not everyone was satisfied. This site in particular was singled out and made an example of at a time when preservation practices were being considered on a national level for the first time in history. The vocal reaction against the Pennsbury reconstruction was heard by the National Park Service and had a hand in shaping the country’s conception of appropriate preservation practices. One historian reflects, “It is interesting to note that a $250,000 project had so much impact on preservation in this country.”

William Penn (1644-1718) was born and died in England but had a profound effect on colonial America. As students of Pennsylvania history know, to repay a debt owed to Penn’s

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father, a successful admiral in naval wars against the Dutch, the King of England granted a charter for over 45,000 square miles of land south of New Jersey and north of Maryland in 1681. This act made Penn the proprietor of what became the present-day Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He lived in Philadelphia and owned a country home on 8,000 acres of land, which was erected on the banks of the Delaware River in Bucks County, twenty-five miles north of Philadelphia. This site, known as Pennsbury Manor, was reconstructed in the 1930s in an effort to preserve his legacy.

Pennsbury Manor is the only historic site in America relating directly to William Penn and his influence on American history but the site has a secondary level of importance. The National Register of Historic Places lists Pennsbury as having ties to seventeenth century history as well as for serving as an example of twentieth century preservation practices. The two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Penn’s arrival in America in 1933 was a motivating factor in the acquisition of the parcel of land where Pennsbury Manor once stood.

Between 1826 and 1920, there were many attempts by local groups to draw attention to the site and to pressure the state to buy the land outright from the owners with little success. However, in 1928, the sand and gravel business that owned the site, the Warner Company, were open to moving forward with commemorating Penn’s life. A local Quaker serving as a member

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330 National Register of Historic Places, Pennsbury Manor, Morrisville, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, 69000154.

of the PHC, Charles Henry Moon, proposed a cursory archeological survey of the land known to have been owned by Penn to search for artifacts and structural evidence of Pennsbury Manor. This survey completed by Moon, Donald Cadzow, and volunteer workers was successful in locating much of the original foundation and this information convinced the Warner Company to donate nearly ten acres of Penn’s original homestead to the Pennsylvania Historical Commission in 1932.332 The Warner Company set forth a stipulation in the terms of the deed mandating that if the land was not used as a public heritage site it would be returned to the company. Even though a full restoration of Penn’s home was not the main driving force behind the effort to commemorate William Penn on the property at this point, it certainly was an idea that had support from an early time by leaders of the project.333

Albert Cook Meyers, a William Penn scholar, had compiled research on Pennsbury Manor. There was not a single known contemporary image of Pennsbury Manor until 1934 when Meyers unearthed a simple sketch of the Manor house from a 1735 map of the area.334 Combining this sketch with descriptions of the mansion as well as correspondence written by Penn laying out how he wanted his home to be constructed, Meyers worked with the state architect to design a prototype for the reconstruction. The final product did not satisfy Meyers or the PHC because the plans did not hold true to historical evidence. Dissatisfied by the work that resulted from his collaboration with the state architect who was not trained in preservation work,


Meyers decided to abandon the project. He chose to take his batch of research material relating to Penn and Pennsbury with him, which meant the PHC would have to start over and gather their own resources relating to the property.\footnote{Ibid 5-6.} The dissolution of this relationship between the PHC and Albert Cook Meyers was not ideal and would come back to haunt them later in the project.

Early setbacks did not stop the PHC from conducting their own research using a new funding model and employing innovative preservation techniques such as historical archeology to move forward with the Pennsbury project. Shortly after the state gained rights to the land, the PHC began a series of comprehensive archeological surveys led by Cadzow. These projects lasted for four years and were funded by the Civil Works Administration and the Works Progress Administration, with additional laborers brought in from the Bucks County Relief Bureau.\footnote{Cavicchi, “People Involved with Pennsbury Reconstruction,” 1-12.} The archeological work done at Pennsbury was some of the earliest historical archeology undertaken in America and revealed structural evidence that had not been known.

In the conceptual phase of the Pennsbury project, the PHC sought advice from the leaders of the Colonial Williamsburg restoration. Williamsburg was not only successful with the public but was also seen as a leader in the field, and the members of the PHC wanted to learn as much as they could from the planners of Williamsburg before entering into their own reconstruction project.\footnote{Reinberger and McLean, “Pensbury Manor: Reconstruction and Reality,” 266.} Reactions to the project illustrate this bias, “Pennsbury Manor now stands in all its original dignity, restored as was Williamsburg, Va., from the scanty remains of foundation walls...
and scraps of pavement.” 338 This quote shows that accuracy and authenticity was conflated with Williamsburg and by extension to those who worked on Williamsburg.339 Craftsmen who were engaged in work at Williamsburg were solicited for similar work at Pennsbury because they were seen as authorities in the field and because the scope of the project, a “colonial” restoration, required similar skills.340 In 1935, William Graves Perry sums up his vision for Williamsburg, “Only through architecture could the picture be recreated.”341 Perry relates that the picture of history needed to be “based upon research, and faithful to fact,” however, to him, creating an immersive historical experience where visitors could learn and be inspired was also necessary to the process. This ethos is also present at Pennsbury Manor although it does not match with current practice in the field in the twenty-first century. When situated within the context of the 1930s, an accepted practice was to place an emphasis on creating a full-body experiential historic atmosphere and this was in some cases valued over scholarly accuracy.

Even though the reconstruction project at Pennsbury had yet to define a source of funding, an architect with a background in colonial revival building and historic restoration, R. Brognard Okie, was selected to prepare a strategic plan for the reconstruction of the manor


340 Colonial is used as a blanket term to refer to a broad swatch of historic time, which included a diversity of architectural styles. Pennsbury was built in the late 1600s and many of Williamsburg’s significant buildings date closer to the 1780s. However, since the field was just beginning, the lack of trained and specialized professionals made an architect familiar with colonial building from Williamsburg projects an expert in early colonial building as well.

341 Hosmer, Preservation Comes of Age, 954-955, as cited in Cavicchi, 35.
house. Rather than choosing a state architect with little relevant experience, the PHC consulted with the Philadelphia chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and they highly recommended Okie for the project. His knowledge of Pennsylvania colonial architecture and artisanship was unparalleled in the field. The Commission valued these skills and made sure that the General State Authority hired the best candidate for the job to ensure accuracy and legitimacy for their project. Though Okie did not have the benefit of using Albert Cook Meyer’s research findings, he quickly began his own investigation into the history of the site and its construction.

The Commission’s insistence on being as accurate as possible carried over to the work of the general contractor hired for the project. Instead of choosing an unskilled local firm, Okie and the PHC sought restoration experience. Although the contract was open to the bidding process, Okie hand-selected a firm based in Erie, Pennsylvania, Sessinghaus and Ostergaard, and asked them to submit a bid. They had worked with Okie on other projects related to restoration but were not eager to take on a project at such a distance from Erie. They raised the prices of their work ensuring that they would not be the lowest bid and they would not be chosen for the work. Much to their chagrin, Sessinghaus and Ostergaard came in at the lowest responsible price and were awarded the job.

When faced with the decision of choosing firms to work on the

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342 Ibid, 42. The march towards professionalization occurred between the late 1800s and mid 1900s including architecture, history, archeology, and engineering as cited earlier in this work, see footnote 275. Many of these groups formed professional bodies such as the AIA that dictated standards and best practices and had respected reputations.

343 Ibid, 51.
reconstruction the Pennsylvania Historical Commission found experience with preservation work to be a necessity to complete an accurate end product.

On March 21, 1938, between three and four hundred people attended a dedication ceremony at Pennsbury Manor to commemorate the laying of the manor house’s cornerstone. On the same day, the American Institute of Architects held their annual meeting where several prominent members denounced the efforts at Pennsbury. The resolution adopted by the members of the AIA at the convention was subsequently published in the May issue of The Octagon, the professional journal of the AIA. It read:

Whereas: The popular interest in architecture of Colonial America, coupled with a natural hero-worship of the prominent figures of our past history, sometimes includes the reconstruction of early American buildings without sufficient insistence on historical certainty; and

Whereas, such reconstruction may not only deceive the public, but render impossible careful examination of the remains and later correct rebuilding; and

Whereas, the use of Federal funds for relief purposes facilitates hasty or ill-advised undertaking of this nature, therefore,

be it resolved, that the American Institute of Architecture [sic] believes in the part of wisdom to devote relief funds to the preservation, repair and restoration of existing historic buildings rather than to the reconstruction of such as have in large part or wholly disappeared.³⁴⁴

This statement put forward by the national body of the AIA is in conflict with the actions of the Philadelphia chapter of the AIA who knew of the project and recommended Okie for the job. The national AIA did not name Pennsbury specifically in their resolution but rather set new policy based on what they observed at this site.

Despite this attempted blow to the morale of the project leaders, work continued at the site over the course of the next few months. That fall, the manor house was built and work began on the interior. In the winter, the out buildings on site such as the smoke house and bake and brew were completed. By the spring, the manor house was finished. Paint schemes were selected, and then applied to the interior walls. The buildings were finished in July of 1939, but work on the grounds and plans for furnishing the site continued until the following year when the site officially opened its doors to the public.

The controversy surrounding the reconstruction began with Albert Cook Meyers’ refusal to continue to work on the project after his initial rejection. His denunciation of the project was the first intimation of the criticism to follow. Historians Reinberger and Mclean argue that two disgruntled people who were formerly involved with the project or had personal problems with Okie stirred up the controversy through newspaper articles and by reaching out in a loud way to prominent preservationists in order to bring censure to the project. Those responsible for stoking the fire were Albert Cook Myers and Okie’s former partner, Carl C. Zeigler.345 Personal politics initially led to the controversy.

Pennsbury was scrutinized from the moment its cornerstone was laid. Federal funds were also being used on recreation projects across the country, including parks, zoos, and playgrounds. On some of the projects similar controversies emerged. Professional landscape architects criticized members of the state park movement because they were not being consulted on the federally funded relief work projects. This is analogous to the ruthless denunciation of the project by the American Institute of Architects. Even though the PHC consulted with the AIA, prior historic preservation projects were carried out directly by AIA architects in private practice. During the 1930s, New Deal funded projects expanded the field and offered a new model for preservation activity. It seemed to create a turf war.

The American Institute of Architects opposed the construction of Pennsbury because members had firsthand knowledge of extant and thereby more authentic or genuine historic sites in Pennsylvania that could have been preserved in a responsible way using the federal funding given to rebuild Pennsbury. The arguments made against the Pennsbury Manor restoration were strengthened or bolstered by the fact that the work was done using New Deal funds. Would a panel of architects who had experience with historic preservation have approved the plans submitted by the PHC? What we do know is that administrators of the PWA, none of whom was familiar with historic preservation work, approved the plans. The outrage shifted to the source of funding because that is one way this site differed from the others undertaken at the same time in the United States with a similar romantic park-building education focus. The expenditure of

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taxpayer money transforms preservation work into an issue for the public to hash out in a way from which the privately funded Williamsburg restorations were exempt. Pennsbury was an easy target for those looking to make an example of this work during a time when the field of preservation was maturing.

The controversy surrounding the reconstruction of William Penn’s home caused such a stir in the field that it reached the National Park Service and led them to rethink their own philosophy of conservation and to be more discriminating when approving historic preservation proposals. Since the untrained eye of PWA administrators approved the plans for Pennsbury, the National Park Service was brought in on all future historic preservation projects as an advisory group to give input and make suggestions. Additionally, as a result of all the backlash and commotion, Pennsbury Manor was the last federally funded reconstruction project in the United States. Concurrently, the PHC had another reconstruction project in motion for another site when the waters started to get choppy. A site called Printzoff or Governor Printz Park in Essington, Pennsylvania, was being developed in preparation for an anniversary of Swedish settlement in America. The remains of the log-cabin home of Johan Björnsson Printz, the governor of New Sweden, were unearthed by a relief funded archeology project and the PHC wanted to rebuild this structure. A project update as reported to the Commission shows promise, “The plans for development of Printz Park have been completed and only a small crew of WPA workers are being retained on the site for maintenance. Mr. Cadzow reported that a grant of $20,000 for the restoration of “Printzoff” has been approved by the General State Authority and

348 Hosmer, Preservation Comes of Age, 1010.
has been submitted to Washington for approval by the Public Works Administration. Mr. Okie
has been selected as architect. Plans for the work have been approved by Dr. Amandus Johnson
and have been sent to an expert, Dr. Erik Lundberg, Antikvarie Lindingo, Stockholm, Sweden,
for approval.**349** Despite the advanced planning undertaken by the PHC for this project, this
restoration never occurred due to the events that transpired at Pennsbury Manor. The General
State Authority gave its approval for the funds but it was overruled by the NPS, who rejected this
restoration.**350**

The controversy over the Pennsbury reconstruction was linked to the evolution of a
greater consciousness for accuracy and authenticity. This turn towards professionalism and
creating field standards, when taken alongside the increased awareness of the number
deteriorating historic buildings fueled the backlash against the Pennsbury project.

The vitriolic criticisms of this particular example of historic preservation were magnified by the
use of public funds to finance the work. Albert Cook Meyers lamented that Pennsbury was “To
be paid for by our long suffering tax payers...” even though it was not an historically accurate
site for the public to visit and from which to learn.**351**

**Conclusion**

**349** October 31, 1938, PHC Minutes.

**350** Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, 450. “Arthur Demaray of the National Park Service,
still angry over the Pennsbury subsidy, quickly killed any hope of another reconstruction in
Pennsylvania with federal funds.”

**351** Albert Cook Meyers as quoted in Cavicchi, “The Recreated Pennsbury Manor,” 82.
The New Deal was the first time in United States history that there was widespread access to public funds to employ many professionals to practice historic preservation on a large scale. Although New Deal projects lacked the professional standards that we now take for granted, the efforts of these early practitioners addressed a critical gap in the preservation of historic architecture and local history. During the few years of the New Deal era, more historic sites were saved and more data were collected about history through archeological, historical, and architectural investigations than ever before. Relief funded programs increased the need for trained professionals to meet the escalating desires for preservation activity and the amount of activity that occurred across the nation at this time is unparalleled. The sites preserved during the New Deal were training grounds for professionals, where field procedures were tested, established, repeated, and refined. Although a coherent methodology was not a product of the New Deal preservation projects, communication between interested professionals increased at this time. The professional frameworks that undergird preservation evolved considerably between 1920 and the end of the New Deal era due to the increase is visible projects and the greater amount of architects specializing in this work.

At the outset of the New Deal era, the field of historic preservation was developing. New Deal monies caused a shift towards a new model of accountability for preservation projects. Since these funds differed from the private donations used to carry out preservation work by voluntary organizations (i.e. Mount Vernon, Monticello, Colonial Williamsburg) the PHC navigated new territory in restoring sites that were of the people, by the people, and for the people. When taxpayer money is expended, preservation becomes an issue for the public to hash out in a way from which the privately funded Williamsburg restorations were exempt. The
architects hired completed seamless restorations characteristic of the time and balanced their zeal for idealistic restoration with the restrictions inherent in bureaucratic systems. The PHC oversaw many historic preservation projects during the New Deal era and by field-testing methods, a set of values emerged. The legacy of New Deal historic preservation is larger than its effect on professionalization—it also transformed the built environment and supported the development of historic sites that remain a real presence in the lives of Pennsylvanians.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

Introduction

New Deal-funded historic preservation is an important but generally overlooked milestone in the development of the field of historic preservation in the United States. My research expands understanding of the depth and breadth of the influence of New Deal historic preservation, showing how the preservation of many sites had a tangible and lasting effect on the nation’s built environment. The cultural landscape of the Keystone State was transformed by New Deal funding which made possible the restoration of pivotal landmarks and the rebirth of sites that had nearly been lost to history. More specifically, the influx of funds and labor provided by New Deal relief programs affected the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, changing its scope of work away from archeological concerns and leading the Commission in a new direction towards historic site stewardship.

Broadly speaking, time, place, and politics positioned New Deal funding to serve as a nationwide stimulus for historic preservation projects. Charles Hosmer claims that historic preservation came of age during the interwar period. I broaden his analysis to identify New Deal funding as a discrete element located at the heart of the maturation of the field of historic preservation. Knowing that preservation on this large a scale had never been conducted in the United States prior to the 1930s, the effects of New Deal funding on the cultural landscape of the nation is a formative moment. Thus, this study sought to explore the centrality of historic preservation undertaken using New Deal relief funds and its relationship with the emerging national urge to celebrate, remember, and commemorate history.
By examining New Deal funding as a pivotal moment in the evolution of the PHC, this dissertation highlights several key points about how the urge to commemorate historical memory manifested in Pennsylvania. Indeed, the ways in which we create, protect, and promote the country’s cultural heritage has evolved over the past two centuries. In Pennsylvania and elsewhere in the nation, preservation and commemoration projects have been widespread and multifaceted, beginning with nostalgic versions of consensus history carried out by volunteers, moving to projects overseen by wealthy donors and elite institutions, followed by government intervention in the 1930s.

This research offers further proof that historic sites are shaped by the ideals of the groups that rallied to preserve and interpret them. By interrogating the process by which historic landmarks are commemorated, that is to say, how particular sites are chosen, preserved, and interpreted, we can reveal evidence of the political environment in which they were preserved. As explained in Chapter 3, a major finding from this research relates to the effects that the support of the legislature and political appointments to the Pennsylvania Historical Commission had on the preservation of historic landmarks beginning in the early twentieth century. Here, politics and preservation operated side by side. Functioning within the political framework of the state directly affected the work of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission. Indeed the political relationships and skill sets developed by being a part of the state government structure preadapted the Pennsylvania Historical Commission for applying for and supervising New Deal work relief programs geared towards historic preservation. States without an historic commission or similar body were not as prepared to work with and manage funding streams that came bound up in bureaucratic red tape.
Additionally, this dissertation demonstrates that a politically shaped legacy can remain imprinted on historic landmarks. As I have argued in Chapter 4, personalities, funding stream requirements, and bureaucratic limitations put on historic sites owned and operated by the PHC during the New Deal had a visible and lasting effect. Examples of the Daniel Boone Homestead, Pennsbury Manor, and Old Economy Village show that decisions were made to comply with or qualify for New Deal funding. Fortunately, the PHC had the capacity and political connections to advocate for the special authorizations it needed to carry out preservation work within the framework of state and federal funding systems. Decisions made during the process shaped the interpretation of the sites and remain as active parts of the identity of these historic landmarks.

An essential takeaway from Chapter 5 is that relief-funded preservation projects increased the need for trained professionals to meet the needs of escalating preservation activity. Due to its position as a state agency, the PHC had the capacity to seek out the most qualified people to work on their sites. Preparation, political capital, and experience navigating bureaucratic systems strategically placed the PHC in a position to put New Deal funds to use carrying out their mission and vision. The sites preserved during the New Deal were training grounds for the early leaders in the field who were able to field test, establish, repeat, and refine preservation practices.

Finally, accountability structures shifted as a result of New Deal funding and this had lasting effects on the field of preservation. Although the PHC went to great lengths to achieve accuracy and authenticity at their sites, the meaning of that term has changed over time. As a result of this new source of funding, sites being preserved using public funds were scrutinized by many different groups—historians and architects for historical accuracy, the state and federal
government for construction timetables and annual reports, and the taxpaying public. This new type of accountability and scrutiny challenged the PHC to pursue high levels of historical accuracy. Some of the techniques used would not be deemed as appropriate today; however, the opportunity for trial and error made possible during the New Deal era affected the growth and formation of the field of historic preservation.

**Limitations of Study**

To illustrate the larger effects that New Deal funding had on historic preservation in the United States, this project is a case study purposefully delimited to focus on the maturation of the PHC. While it is helpful that the PHC kept exhaustive records to document their preservation work, consulting these records as the primary source base limits the voices that contribute to our overall understanding of historic preservation during the 1930s. This study demonstrates conclusively that the PHC was shaped by its experiences with New Deal funding. Of course, the scope of the dissertation is necessarily constrained by availability of source material.

Although some of the silences can be filled with details culled from newspaper articles, we lack oral histories of the architects and New Deal workers themselves describing their experiences with the preservation projects for which they were employed. Without these voices, the resulting story, nevertheless extremely worthwhile, remains a highly moderated administrative or political history that does not fully capture the nuances of the work done and how it affected multiple stakeholder groups. Notwithstanding these limitations, this study suggests that politics and preservation were inexorably linked in Pennsylvania during the early
part of the twentieth century in ways that have not been fully considered. That gap in the record is now filled and documented.

**Areas for Further Research**

The contribution of New Deal funding to historic preservation was not unique to Pennsylvania. However, Pennsylvania is a compelling case study because it was the first state to have a government agency tasked with organizing a statewide program for preserving and drawing attention to historic landmarks. Thereby, the Keystone State had the necessary scaffolding in place and an organized awareness of the historic landmarks within its borders. The existence of a state agency dedicated to historic concerns helped Pennsylvania exploit New Deal funds for historic preservation and I argue it strategically prepared both the commissioners and staff to coordinate these projects with an eye towards navigating the strictures of bureaucracy. Yet, much remains to be done in exploring the full impact of New Deal historic preservation in Pennsylvania and beyond.

Other sites in Pennsylvania were preserved using New Deal funds but were not organized or carried out by the PHC. Further research might investigate the differences between PHC-led projects and those funded using New Deal resources but undertaken by other state agencies, municipalities, or the National Park Service. Comparative studies of relief funded preservation and commemoration work would help grow our understanding of the theory and practice that emerged from this work and how it influenced the field.

In some instances, municipalities and other state agencies did not place as much importance on accuracy and authenticity. For example, the Pennsylvania Department of Forests
and Waters was given responsibility for the Morton Homestead, a site that was then believed to have been the home of John Morton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The Department of Forests and Waters oversaw the process of dismantling and rebuilding a seventeenth-century log structure as well as landscaping the surrounding property. During construction and in hindsight, the preservation of the Morton Homestead has been met with harsh criticism. S. Kendrick Lichty (1900-1962), the architect in charge of the project, was not a specialist in log building construction. He had been designing homes and schools prior to his appointment with the Department of Forests and Waters. Fiske Kimball, the director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, a renowned architect and historian, looked over the plans before the project began. With one glance at the plans, it was clear to Kimball that Lichty intended to ignore evidence from early photographs showing the original design of the windows as well as the pitch of the roof. He was going to alter the foundation and dismantle the log construction. After viewing the plans, Fiske said disappointedly that the revisionist project was similar to, “giving a new sole, heel and upper, to Cinderella’s slipper.” Additionally, in 1947 architect G. Edwin Brumbaugh, wrote a four-page report to comment on Lichty’s work calling it “an illustration of the irreparable loss which can occur from the restoration of important historical

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sites by make-work bureaus.” The Morton Homestead is one example of how New Deal funding supported irresponsible restorations of historic landmarks. Under the direction of the Department of Forests and Waters, it appears the priority here was to create a pleasing park rather than to uphold the historic integrity of the structure.

Local municipalities in Pennsylvania undertook their own small-scale preservation projects. One such structure, the Vernon House in Germantown, Philadelphia was granted WPA funds for preservation. This site received $8,000 and the majority of the workers were from relief rolls. Another site, now known as the Dickson Tavern in Erie, Pennsylvania, was restored using New Deal relief funds carried out through a partnership between the city and the county historical society. The scope of work on these preservation projects was modest, usually costing less than $10,000, and the standards for accuracy and authenticity varied. Further research may reveal differences in motivation on the local level verses the state level of the PHC.

Aside from the work of the PHC, Department of Forests and Waters, and smaller municipal programs, the National Park Service was also active in Pennsylvania. The NPS began work on the restoration of the Hopewell Iron Furnace in 1938. Hopewell, located in both Berks and Chester counties was restored by the NPS using a mix of NPS appropriations as well as relief program assistance. The National Park Services announced, “It is the ultimate hope of the federal government to restore the entire village as nearly as possible to the exact status which


it occupied at the height of its activity.” 357 Was the National Park Service experience working with relief agency funding and labor different or similar? Comparing the PHC and the NPS struggles with New Deal relief funding and labor is worth exploring. Did the NPS, a federal agency, take a different approach to maximizing New Deal assistance? Were the two groups in communication?

It should be noted that this analysis has purposely ignored privately funded projects. Even without considering them, there was a tremendous amount of preservation going on in Pennsylvania during the New Deal era. Exploring the differences in methods and priorities among these assorted projects occurring in Pennsylvania could produce interesting findings that may expand our understanding of how preservation developed into a professional field.

If we widen the scope a bit, it is also worth looking at how other states took advantage of these federal funds to preserve their historic landmarks. Most other states did not have the benefit of a central state agency with staff support to apply for and manage multiple historic preservation projects. Future research might explore how New Deal preservation unfolded in other states. For example, in lieu of state agency support, the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library applied for and was granted a substantial amount of support from New Deal relief programs to carry out a restoration of the William Trent House, located in Trenton, New Jersey. The board took on the responsibility of restoring the house to its “original colonial appearance” as stipulated by the deed agreement and made informal plans to use it as a branch of the

library. Did those in charge of this project prioritize authenticity and accuracy as the PHC did? Furthermore, since local groups acted as agents of municipalities to organize and apply for New Deal funding, who was it that carried out the preservation of other New Deal sites such as the Grover Cleveland birthplace in Essex County, New Jersey? Tracing how other states used relief funding to undertake preservation and commemoration projects can give us a larger idea of the application of these funds and how the resulting work contributed to our current understanding of historic preservation.

Here, I argue that the legacy of New Deal historic preservation should be viewed as fundamentally important to Pennsylvania’s identity. Nevertheless, this is only one part of a much larger story. The geographic parameters of New Deal preservation across the nation remain undiscovered. The story of how this funding changed the fabric of historic sites, increased the public awareness of history, and shaped cultural resource management in Pennsylvania, asks us to consider how it affected other states. Regardless of the missing details of individual experiences on a state by state level, the fact that money was available and used for historic preservation tells us that on a broader scale, this work was pivotal to the construction of a national historic narrative and critical to our evolving understanding of how Americans interact with their past.

Conclusion

358 Jan 18, 1930, Meeting Minutes, Free Public Library Board of Trustees, The Trent House, Trentoniana Collection, Trenton Free Public Library, Trenton, New Jersey.
The present study recasts the influence of New Deal funding on the development of the field of historic preservation. My work increases understanding of the evolution and professionalization of the field of historic preservation, the maturation of the PHC, and the uses of New Deal funding. Furthermore, my findings contribute additional evidence that suggests our knowledge of the history of historic preservation needs to be revisited in order to interrogate the political and cultural dynamics of preservation and commemoration.

The expanded role of government, the influence of mass culture, and an emphasis on populism characterizes the ethos of the New Deal era and with regard to historic preservation, these changes were not benign. The funding and labor extended to Pennsylvania during the New Deal created a new approach for completing historic preservation projects. New Deal support ushered in a shift from the wealthy elite (Williamsburg, Greenfield Village, SPNEA etc.) towards government holding the responsibility for preservation, as illustrated by the maturation of the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania Historic Commission at this time. New Deal funding, as seen through the case study of Pennsylvania, brought about a new organizational model for completing historic preservation, which may well have been a prototype for the mandate put forth by the National Historic Preservation Act (1966), which required all states to form a state office for historic preservation. The model of the 1960s looks similar to what the PHC started decades earlier in the 1930s—creating a central body to provide different levels of support to landmarks, and linking local historical and archeological groups. New Deal relief funds made it possible for the Pennsylvania Historic Commission to mature and to develop the infrastructure to support preservation and historic site stewardship once state and federal funding ceased.
Additionally, this research suggests that historic preservation during this time changed the public’s perception of history. New Deal Funds supported projects across the country that established historic sites as destinations for the public to experience what some might argue is a symbolic past as a way to draw the American citizenry together during the turmoil of the first quarter of the 1900s. Citizens of the United States were struggling to define a common or national identity during and leading up to the 1930s, and New Deal sponsored preservation projects were a part of that movement. As the federal and state government directed money toward research, reconstruction, and interpretation, public awareness of historic sites reached a new level of intensity and altered the ways in which both citizens and administrators conceptualized preservation and historic sites. The cultural landscape of Pennsylvania was drastically reshaped during the 1930s, building a new image of the legacy of the state.

Public interest in history and ease of travel empowered the Commission to take on tasks that united the state’s fragmented local or regional stories with national historic narratives. The Commission used New Deal funding to preserve tangible elements of the past for people to visit and from which to learn. Automobile tourism became democratized at this time expanding the audience of people driving by historic markers and visiting historic sites and these activities in themselves became a patriotic ritual. While the elite and wealthy were collecting antiques and historic relics, interest began to shift from objects to places during the 1930s and New Deal historic preservation projects are positive proof of this change. While maintaining historic properties was not a new phenomenon, those developed by the PHC were preserved and planned for public use as centers of education and entertainment. Even though at its core New Deal funding came from the federal government, preservation projects were conceived of by the states
and therefore they exhibit deep local and regional ties. However, the sites preserved at this time were used by the PHC as tools to emphasize the impact of Pennsylvania in the national narrative of history. Recasting sites as educational, patriotic, tourist destinations complicated long-held understandings of the tangible elements of the past.

New Deal funding revolutionized historic preservation as well as our understanding of the historical legacy of Pennsylvania and the nation. Reflecting on his work, an early preservationist G. Edwin Brumbaugh once stated, “Buildings, observed in sequence, and explained, are the story of America” 359 During the New Deal, the Pennsylvania Historical Commission used federal funds to preserve and interpret many of the buildings that make up the cultural landscape of the state. Within the walls of these buildings, the PHC preserved the history of our nation and made it possible to convey that information to the generations that followed.

Appendix

To the Governor of Pennsylvania, and the General Assembly:

The Pennsylvania Historical Commission, appointed pursuant to the Act of Assembly, approved July 25, 1913 (No. 777), entitled, "An Act providing for the establishment of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission; denning its powers and duties; and making an appropriation for its work."

Respectfully Reports: The Act of the Legislature under which we were appointed, and defining our duties, is as follows:

AN ACT

Providing for the establishment of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission—defining its powers and duties; and making an appropriation for its work.

Section 1. Be it enacted, &c, That within sixty days after the passage of this act the Governor shall appoint five citizens of this Commonwealth who shall constitute the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, which commission shall be a body corporate under its title aforesaid, and shall be charged with the duty of marking and preserving the antiquities and historical landmarks of Pennsylvania.

Section 2. Two of the members of said commission shall be appointed for two years, and three members for four years, and each thereafter shall be appointed for a term of four years. They
shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be allowed their actual expenses while engaged upon the business of the commission.

Section 3. The commission shall organize immediately after its appointment, by the election of one of its members as chairman, another as secretary, and another as treasurer; and it may adopt such rules of organization and procedure as it may deem necessary, and determine the terms and duties of its officers and employees. The commission may, when necessity demands it, appoint a clerk, who shall be a stenographer, at a salary not to exceed one thousand dollars per annum, and a curator at a salary not to exceed twelve hundred dollars per annum.

Section 4. The Pennsylvania Historical Commission may, upon its own initiative or upon the petition of municipalities or historical societies, mark by proper monuments, tablets, or markers, places or buildings, within this Commonwealth, where historical events have transpired, and may arrange for the care and maintenance of such markers or monuments. It may also undertake, within the means at its command, the preservation or restoration of ancient or historic public buildings, military works, or monuments connected with the history of Pennsylvania; and to this end it may contract with cities, boroughs, and townships, for and on behalf of the Commonwealth, or with historical societies or other associations, with proper bond or security, for the maintenance of such buildings, works, and monuments as a consideration for assistance in their erection, restoration, preservation, or marking by said commission.
Section 5. The Pennsylvania Historical Commission may receive, for and on behalf of the Commonwealth, gifts or bequests of relics or other articles of historical interest, which shall be deposited by it in the State Museum; and the said commission may accept for the Commonwealth gifts and bequests of money or securities for the endowment of its work, in accordance with the instructions of the donors; and it shall, in conjunction with the Governor, Auditor General, and State Treasurer, who shall together with the members of the said commission constitute a body of trustees for the care of such funds, invest the same in the bonds of this Commonwealth or of any political division thereof, the interest and income from which may be used by said commission for its purposes under this act, or applied to such uses in line therewith as may be specified by the respective donors of any of said funds.

Section 6. A suitable room in the Capitol or in the State Library Building shall be provided for the said commission by the Board of Public Grounds and Buildings, in which the office of the commission shall be kept.

Section 7. The sum of forty thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, for the two fiscal years beginning June first, one thousand nine hundred thirteen; and this and all subsequent appropriations shall be paid by the State Treasurer, upon the warrant of the Auditor General, upon the presentation by the commission of proper vouchers signed by its chairman and attested by its secretary.
Approved — The 25th day of July, A. D. 1913, in the sum of $10,000. I withhold my approval from the remainder of said appropriation because of insufficient State revenue.

John K. Tener.
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Education

Penn State University, American Studies, PhD 2015, MA 2008

Exam Fields: American studies theory and methods; interdisciplinary women’s history; public history
Dissertation: A New Deal For Historic Preservation: The Impact of Relief Funding on the Cultural Landscape of Pennsylvania, 1932-1941
Masters Thesis: All’s Fair in Love and War: Images of Marriage and Pacifism in Susan Ertz Novels

Stony Brook University, History and Women’s Studies, BA 2006

Senior Theses: Sayville, NY: Demographic Study of a Town on the Great South Bay
Best-selling Stereotypes: Gender Representation in Children’s Picture Books

Professional Experience

Director
Arch Street Quaker Meeting House, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting March 2013-Present
• Oversees all aspects of the operation, maintenance, and interpretation of a National Historic Landmark
• Coordinates, markets, and rents the facility to individuals and groups
• Monitors financial management including maintaining a budget, fundraising, and financial reporting
• Fosters and maintains relationships with the local community and other stakeholder groups
• Manages a team of two paid staff members and over 20 volunteer tour guides
• Curates and implements policy for the care and conservation of temporary, permanent, and traveling exhibits

Research Analyst
Pennsylvania House of Representatives Archives, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania January 2012-March 2013
• Processed accessions: arranged, described, and preserved records for public access
• Performed in-depth genealogical and legislative research requests
• Created, edited and administered web content for the public
• Researched and wrote biographies for Members and former Members of the House of Representatives
• Completed, transcribed oral history research and compiled questions for oral history interviews

Selected Conference Papers and Presentations

The Clocks of Peter Hill: Production and Consumption in a Quaker Community, 1780-1820, Conference of Quaker Historians and Archivists. 2014

