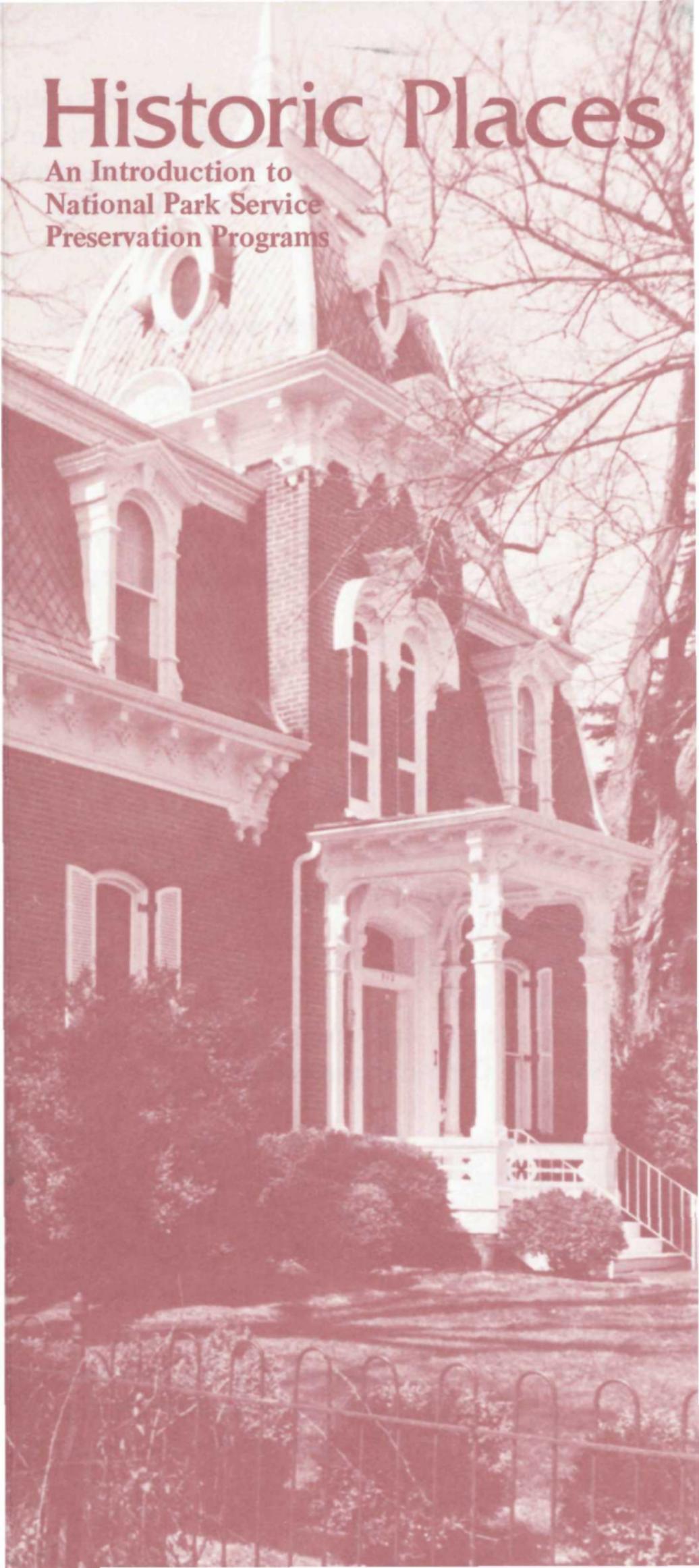


# Historic Places

An Introduction to  
National Park Service  
Preservation Programs



The National Register of Historic Places, maintained by the National Park Service in cooperation with the States, is a comprehensive national inventory of properties significant in the history of the Nation, States, regions, and localities and worthy of preservation. National Register properties, as they are collectively known, fall into one of the following three categories:

#### Historical areas of the National Park System

- possess *national significance*;
- are usually *established pursuant to congressional action*;
- are *administered by the National Park Service*;
- are automatically entered in the National Register upon establishment (if not previously entered);
- are variously titled:
  - National Historic Site
  - National Historical Park
  - National Monument
  - National Military Park
  - National Battlefield
  - National Battlefield Park
  - National Battlefield Site
  - National Memorial
  - National Memorial Park
  - National Park(plus certain individual properties in the National Capital Parks system).

National Historic Site is the label now most often applied to historical areas of relatively limited scope. National Historical Park identifies larger or more diverse areas.

#### National Historic Landmarks

- possess *national significance*;
- are *designated by the Secretary of the Interior* upon the recommendation of his Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments;
- remain in existing public or private ownership* outside the National Park System;
- are automatically entered in the National Register upon designation (if not previously entered).

Less than a dozen nonfederally owned National Historic Sites so designated by the Secretary of the Interior prior to initiation of the National Historic Landmark Program are practically equivalent to National Historic Landmarks.

Some units of the National Park System, e.g., Boston National Historical Park, include National Historic Landmarks as components not under National Park Service administration.

#### Other historic properties

- possess *regional, State, or local significance*;
- are *nominated to the National Register by the States* (or Federal agencies) having jurisdiction;
- remain in existing public or private ownership*;
- are entered in the National Register following review and approval by the National Park Service.

Properties in this category, which receive no official Federal title (e.g., National Historic Site or National Historic Landmark), comprise by far the largest number of National Register entries.

Many such properties exist in the natural and recreational areas of the National Park System.

All National Register properties receive the protection against destruction or impairment from federally assisted or licensed undertakings provided by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Nonfederally owned National Register properties may, in addition, qualify to benefit from Federal preservation grants-in-aid under this Act.

The National Park Service preservation programs just outlined offer both recognition and assistance to a variety of historic properties. For those seeking preservation help, additional guidance in selecting and pursuing a course of action follows.

**The National Register of Historic Places** is a common denominator in Federal historic preservation programs. It is the list most often used to verify the significance of any historic property for purposes of public recognition, funding, and protection. Entry of a property on the National Register insures review by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation of any Federal projects affecting it and offers the possibility of Federal/State financial aid.

Few historic places possess the national significance to merit National Historic Landmark designation, and even fewer meet the additional criteria for inclusion in the National Park System. However, many places deserve entry in the National Register for their regional, State, or local significance. A State Historic Preservation Officer evaluates and nominates properties to the National Register and directs the grants-in-aid program in each State. Regardless of its significance or the kind of recognition sought, a property should normally be presented first to the State Historic Preservation Officer for evaluation.

**The National Historic Landmark Program** gives added recognition to places significant in the history of the entire Nation. A plaque and certificate are presented when the owner of a Landmark agrees to its proper care. Landmark designation establishes a site's national significance but does not presently insure greater

protection or financial assistance than is afforded National Register properties of less-than-national significance.

Potential Landmarks are identified by the Historic Sites Survey of the National Park Service to represent major themes in American history and are evaluated with other properties associated with the same themes. Properties may be proposed for consideration to the Director, National Park Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

**Historical areas of the National Park System** are normally established as a result of congressional action. When appropriate legislation is introduced, and as funds and priorities permit, the National Park Service studies a proposed addition to the System to evaluate its national significance and suitability for Service administration. These studies and resulting recommendations are considered by Congress in acting on the proposal.

The criteria applied in evaluating proposed historical areas of the System are highly restrictive, and only properties of the greatest significance, integrity, and potential for public appreciation are favorably considered. Additionally, in view of its heavy obligations for existing holdings, the Service can seldom advocate the acquisition of any new area unless there is clearly no alternative for its preservation.

1975  
Division of History  
National Park Service  
United States Department of the Interior

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