

National Park Service
Midwest Region

Harry S Truman Birthplace
Lamar, Missouri



Harry S Truman Birthplace Special Resource Study

Lamar, Missouri



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This report has been prepared to provide Congress and the public with information about the resources in the study area and how they relate to criteria for inclusion within the National Park System. Publication and transmittal of this report should not be considered an endorsement for a commitment by the National Park Service to seek or support either specific legislative authorization for the project or appropriation for its implementation.

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SUMMARY

Purpose of Study

The National Park Service (NPS) was tasked by Congress in Public Law 111-11 to evaluate if the Harry S Truman Birthplace in Lamar, Missouri meets criteria for addition to the national park system as an independent NPS unit, or as an addition to the existing Harry S Truman National Historic Site in Independence and Grandview, Missouri.

Historic Context

Harry S Truman, 33rd President of the United States, was born in Lamar, Missouri on May 8th, 1884 in the southwest bedroom of his parent's modest frame home. The young Harry S Truman lived at the home for 11 months before his family moved to the Kansas City area. The Historic Context examines the role of the Harry S Truman Birthplace in the life and accomplishments of the 33rd President, and explores the site in the context of other birthplaces and childhood homes of other significant individuals in American history.

Special Resource Study Process and Findings

The Special Resource Study evaluates the Harry S Truman Birthplace as a potential new unit of the national park system based on established criteria. To be recommended as a new unit, an area must be significant, suitable, feasible, and have a need for direct NPS management.

Significance Findings: For a cultural resource to meet significance criteria in a Special Resource Study, it must meet National Historic Landmark (NHL) criteria. Because birthplaces are only eligible as NHLs if no other representative sites for that person exist, and because the NHLs at the Harry S Truman National Historic Site (NHS) better represent the life and accomplishments of the 33rd President, the birthplace does not meet NHL criteria, and the significance criterion is not met.

Suitability Findings: Because the birthplace does not meet significance criteria, suitability was considered only briefly. For a property to be suitable, it must represent a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system, or is not comparably represented and protected by another entity. The Harry S Truman Birthplace is already comparably preserved and interpreted as a State Historic Site. Furthermore, the resources of the Harry S Truman NHS already represent the life and accomplishments of Harry S Truman in the national park system. The suitability criterion is not met.

Feasibility Findings: Because the Harry S Truman Birthplace does not meet the criteria for significance or suitability, feasibility was not considered.

Need for Direct NPS Management Findings: Because the Harry S Truman Birthplace does not meet the criteria for significance or suitability, the need for direct NPS management was not considered.

Special Resource Study Conclusion: NPS finds that the Harry S Truman Birthplace does not meet criteria for a unit of the national park system.

Boundary Adjustment Study

The Boundary Adjustment Study evaluates the Harry S Truman Birthplace as a potential addition to the Harry S Truman NHS in Independence and Grandview, Missouri. For an area to be appropriate for addition to an existing park, it must (1) protect significant resources or enhance opportunities for public enjoyment, (2) address operational and management issues of the existing park site, or (3) protect critical park resources. The added lands must also be feasible to administer, and there must be no other adequate alternatives for management and resource protection. Addition of the Harry S Truman Birthplace to the existing NHS does not meet any of the foregoing criteria, primarily because the resource is 120 miles distant from the NHS and already adequately protected by the State. NPS therefore finds that the site does not meet the criteria for addition to the Harry S Truman NHS.

Management Alternatives

Alternatives considered by this study were NPS Unit, Addition to Harry S Truman National Historic Site, and the No Action Alternative, which would mean continued State management. Because the Harry S Truman Birthplace does not meet the criteria for addition to the national park system or a Boundary Adjustment, the NPS finds that the No Action Alternative is the appropriate management alternative.

Conclusion

NPS finds that continued management by the State of Missouri DNR is the best option for preserving and interpreting the resources at the Harry S Truman Birthplace. The existing State plan for the site is grounded in public input and will enhance the already strong visitor experience and interpretation of the site. No federal actions are proposed.

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CHAPTER ONE: STUDY PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

In the National Park System General Authorities Act of 1970, Congress declared that areas comprising the national park system are “cumulative expressions of a single national heritage.”¹ Potential additions to the National Park System should therefore contribute in a unique way to a system that represents the superlative natural and cultural resources that characterize our heritage. Proposed additions to the National Park System must possess nationally significant resources, be suitable additions to the system, be feasible additions to the system, and require direct NPS management instead of protection by other public agencies or the private sector.

Before Congress decides to create a new park or add land to an existing park, it needs to know whether the area’s resources meet these established criteria for designation. The NPS was tasked by Congress in Public Law 111-11 to evaluate to evaluate if the Harry S Truman Birthplace in Lamar, Missouri meets criteria for addition to the national park system and document its findings in a Special Resource Study (SRS). In that law, the NPS was asked to study both the possibility of designating the Birthplace as an independent NPS unit, and the possibility of including the Birthplace in the existing Harry S Truman National Historic Site in Independence and Grandview, Missouri.

This study examines the history of the Harry S Truman Birthplace and its importance in the life of the nation’s 33rd President, as well as its context in the preservation of birthplaces nationally. Chapter Three: Special Resource Study analyses the significance, suitability, and feasibility of the birthplace site as an independent unit of the national park system. Chapter Four applies the criteria for Boundary Adjustments to the Harry S Truman Birthplace. Finally, the NPS was directed to determine the “the methods and means for the protection and interpretation of the birthplace site,” which is addressed in Chapter Five: Management Alternatives.

Study Limitations and Recommendations

Special Resource Studies serve as reference sources for members of Congress, the NPS, and other persons interested in the potential designation of an area as a new unit of the national park system. The reader should be aware that the recommendations or analysis contained in an SRS do not guarantee the future funding, support, or any subsequent action by Congress, the Department of the Interior, or the NPS.

Overview of the Study Area

The Harry S Truman Birthplace is located on the corner of East 11th Street and Truman Street in Lamar, Barton County, Missouri. The one-and-a-half story frame cottage on an 80 x 180 foot lot is operated by the State of Missouri’s Department of Natural Resources as the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site. The lot also contains a smokehouse, well, and reproduction outhouse, and has been planted with a period landscape. There are two stone monuments in the area behind the house: a granite slab, undated but presumably erected at the site’s 1959 dedication, with the presidential seal and inscriptions; and a smaller monument to Truman as America’s first Legionnaire president, erected by the American Legion in 1984.

¹ Formally known as “An Act To Improve The Administration of the National Park System by the Secretary of the Interior, and to Clarify the Authorities Applicable to the System, and for Other Purposes 1970 (84 Stat. 825)”

The home has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1969. The site has been administered by the State of Missouri as a historic site since 1959. The State also owns the parcel diagonally across the intersection where John Truman ran a mule trading business at the time of Harry’s birth, as well as several other parcels adjacent to those owned by the Trumans that are used for visitor contact, maintenance, or are intended for future site support activities.² (See Figure 8 on page 29)

The mission of the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site is to “preserve, restore, and interpret the nationally significant birthplace of Harry S Truman, 33rd President of the United States of America, and to interpret the John A. Truman family within the context of life in Lamar, Missouri during the late 19th century.”³

Lamar, a city of 4,500, is the county seat of Barton County, which borders Kansas in southwestern Missouri. It is approximately 120 miles from Kansas City, Missouri, to the north; 75 miles from Springfield, Missouri, to the southeast; and 155 miles from Tulsa, Oklahoma, to the southwest.

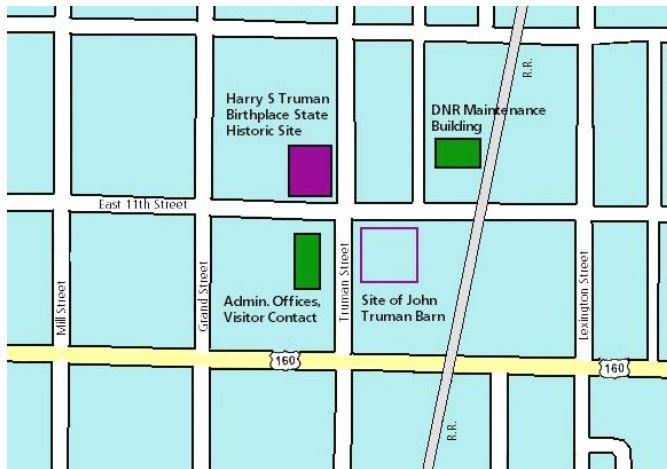


Figure 1: Location of the Birthplace in Lamar, Missouri.



Figure 2: Location of Lamar, Missouri.

² Missouri Department of Natural Resources, “Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site Conceptual Development Plan,” May 2002. For a description of the plan, see Chapter Five: Management Alternatives.

³ Missouri Department of Natural Resources, “Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site Cultural Resource Plan,” 2008.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORIC CONTEXT

“You must always keep in mind who you are and where you come from.”

Harry S Truman⁴

The 1969 nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the “Harry S Truman Birthplace Memorial Shrine” in Lamar, Missouri states that the house “stands as a tribute to Missouri’s only native-born who has to date become president of the United States.” The importance of Harry S Truman’s small-town and rural roots—and the importance of the state of Missouri—to the life and character of the 33rd president cannot be overstated. Born in a tiny six-room cottage in a very small town, and raised around numerous relatives on farms and in the town of Independence, Missouri, Truman was heir to a homespun tradition of “plain speaking,” a forthrightness and lack of guile characteristic of the heart of middle America. Even more than his small-town origins or his rural upbringing, it was Truman’s eleven-year stint running the family farm in Grandview, Missouri (now part of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site) that decisively shaped his character, and led to his lifelong identification as a “farmer from Missouri.”

This Historic Context essay examines the Truman Birthplace State Historic Site in Lamar, and Truman’s own written memories of the people and places of his childhood. This Historic Context also details his later associations with the birthplace site. The second part of the essay briefly sketches out historic sites and museums in Missouri where the Truman life is interpreted. Finally, the broader historical context for the interpretation of birthplaces and childhood homes is considered.

HARRY S TRUMAN BIRTHPLACE, LAMAR, MISSOURI

The Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site is a wood-frame, one-and-a-half story cottage in Lamar, Missouri, seat of Barton County, some 120 miles due south of Kansas City. Martha (Mattie) Young Truman and John Anderson Truman settled in Lamar as newlyweds in 1882, purchasing this house for \$685, and John set up business across the street as a horse and mule trader. The future president was born in the house on May 8, 1884.

Within eleven months, however, John and Mattie moved to a farm near Harrisonville, Missouri, to be nearer to their large extended families. The house remained a private residence until 1957, when it was purchased by the United Auto Workers (UAW) union, which then gave it to the state of Missouri as a gift. Members of the UAW and staff from Missouri Division of State Parks researched and restored the house to an 1880s appearance; most of the period furnishings (none original to the John Truman family) were donated by members of the community. It was dedicated on April 19, 1959, as a state historic site.⁵ Since 1999, the Missouri Division of State Parks has purchased several additional pieces of property adjacent or near the Birthplace, with the intention of creating a broader historic area. These include the corner lot (now empty) where John Truman conducted his mule-trading business.

⁴ Harry S. Truman, quoted in Merle Miller, *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry Truman* (NY: Putnam’s, 1974), 32. Full quote on page 9.

⁵ National Park Service, Harry S Truman Birthplace Special Resource Study *Newsletter*, April 2010, p. 1; Missouri State Parks, “Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site Interpretation Plan,” 2008, p. 3



Figure 2: Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site, Lamar, Missouri (February 2010).

Although there is little evidence that the adult Harry Truman held nostalgic feelings for his birthplace, he seems to have recognized its symbolic value. Politicians are traditionally, if somewhat strategically, nostalgic about their birthplaces, often returning there during election campaigns. Such a visit, obviously, reinforces the candidate's roots, his appreciation for simpler times and honest people. The visit reminds voters that the candidate was, in fact, born and raised somewhere, just like everybody else, and was not manufactured by political strategists. In fact, it seems that Truman did not return to his hometown until he was well into adulthood, specifically in 1934 during his successful run for the U.S. Senate.

Truman visited Lamar and his birth site again ten years later, on August 31, 1944, as he launched his campaign for vice president on the ticket with Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was running for the fourth and last time for president. However, there is no record of Truman returning to Lamar in 1948 during his own run for the presidency—a striking omission, given the famously crowded national schedule of “whistle-stops” that characterized his campaign.

Truman again visited Lamar on April 19, 1959, the day the birthplace was dedicated as a historic site and opened to the public. There is no indication in published sources that he visited there again before his death 13 years later.⁶

Truman's post-presidential years (from January 20, 1953 to his death on December 26, 1972) are well-documented, not least because of his own efforts: writing and publishing two volumes of memoirs, sitting for many retrospective interviews, approving the work of many (if not all) biographers, and, most importantly, creating his presidential library as a repository for his papers and published materials.

⁶*The Harry S. Truman Encyclopedia*, Richard S. Kirkendall, ed., Boston: G.K. Hall, 1989, 208.



Figure 3: Harry S. Truman at the birthplace on April 19, 1959.



Figure 4: Line to tour the birthplace at the dedication.

Truman seems to have jotted down his first written record of his childhood in 1952: 12-page, hand-written reminiscence, handed to journalist William Hillman as he was preparing a book, *Mr. President*. This reminiscence is apparently the source for his “first-memory” story, repeated often by later biographers: “My first memory is that of chasing a frog around the back yard in Cass County, Missouri. Grandmother Young watched the performance and thought it very funny that a two-year-old could slap his knees and laugh so loudly at a jumping frog.”⁷ In this reminiscence Truman chronicled the family’s move to Independence and their various homes, churches, and schools. But he made no mention of his Lamar birthplace.

Truman’s two volumes of memoirs do not begin, as one might expect, with his childhood. Rather, the first pages detail the tragic event that thrust him into the presidency, the death of Franklin Roosevelt in April 1945. Focusing primarily on his White House years, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman* is not an autobiography at all, in the sense of being a comprehensive, interpretive life story, a task he was clearly leaving to professional historians. It is not until Chapter Nine of the first volume that he chronicles his early years:

I hope to prevent the spread of further misinformation, and for that reason I digress at this point to write about myself. I do so without any introspective trimmings. . . . I was born in Lamar, Missouri, at four o’clock in the afternoon on May 8, 1884. When I was about a year old, the family moved to Cass County, Missouri, south of Harrisonville, where my father ran a farm and where my brother Vivian was born. . . . We had the whole 440 acres to play over and 160 acres west across the road for the same purpose. Some of my happiest and most pleasant recollections are of the years we spent on the Young farm when I was between the ages of three and six.⁸

Perhaps the most widely read “memoir” of Harry Truman is *Plain Speaking*, the “oral biography” by journalist Merle Miller, published in 1974. In a series of outspoken interviews with Miller, Truman held forth on matters great and small. He offered these thoughts on the importance of knowing where one came from:

⁷ William Hillman, *Mr. President: The First Publication from the Personal Diaries, Private Letters, Papers and Revealing Interviews of Harry S. Truman* (NY: Farrar Straus and Young, 1952), 155.

⁸ *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman* (Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1955-56) vol. 1, 112-13.

I wouldn't think much of a man that tried to deny the people and the town where he grew up. I've told you. You must always keep in mind who you are and where you come from. A man who can't do that at all times is in trouble where I'm concerned. I wouldn't have anything to do with him.⁹



Figure 5: Harry S Truman, c.1884.



Figure 6: Harry S Truman, 1897.

And, again, he recalled his early years with great fondness:

I had just about the happiest childhood that could ever be imagined. My brother Vivian and I and two or three of the neighborhood boys used to have a great time playing in the pasture south of the house out at Grandview. There was forty acres in bluegrass. . . . It was a wonderful place for small boys to enjoy themselves.¹⁰

Again, however, he made no mention in *Plain Speaking* of the town of Lamar or his birthplace.

The most extensive description of the Lamar birthplace in the Truman literature is found, in fact, not in Truman's own reminiscences, but in the Pulitzer-Prize-winning biography *Truman* by David McCullough. It's worth quoting from at length:

John Anderson Truman and Martha Ellen (Mattie) Young were married December 28, 1881. The couple's first home was in Lamar, a dusty, windblown market town and county seat, ninety miles due south [of the Young home near Grandview]. For \$685 John became the proud owner of a corner lot and a white frame house measuring all of 20 by 28 feet . . . It had six tiny rooms, no basement, no running water, and no plumbing. But it was new, snug, and sunny, with a casement window in the parlor on the southern side.

For another \$200, John bought a barn diagonally across the street and there he opened for business, his announcement in the Lamar *Democrat* reading as follows: 'Mules bought and sold. I

⁹Merle Miller. *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry Truman* (NY: Putnam's, 1974), 32.

¹⁰Ibid., 48.

will have for sale at the White Barn on Kentucky Avenue a lot of good mules. Anyone wanting teams will do well to call on J. A. Truman.’

A spinster sister, Mary Martha Truman, who came for an extended stay, considered Lamar the end of the world. The place made her miserable.

Their first child was stillborn. The second child, a boy, was born in a bedroom off the parlor so small there was barely space for the bed. The attending physician, Dr. W. L. Griffin, received a fee of \$15, and to celebrate the occasion the new father planted a seedling pine in the front yard. A story that John Truman also nailed a mule shoe over the front door for luck is apocryphal. The date was May 8, 1884.

Not for a month afterward, however, did Dr. Griffin bother to register the birth at the county clerk’s office up the street, and even then, the child was entered nameless. In a quandary over a middle name, Mattie and John were undecided whether to honor her father or his. In the end, they compromised with the letter S. It could be taken to stand for Solomon or Shipp, but actually stood for nothing. . . The baby’s first name was Harry, after Uncle Harrison. Harry S Truman it would be.

The child would have no memory of Lamar or the house where he was born, for shortly afterward John Truman sold out and moved everybody north again, to a farm near Harrisonville, only seven miles from the [Solomon] Young place [of Martha Truman’s father]. . . In 1887, John Truman moved back to the Young farm and John became Solomon’s partner.

Thus it was to be that Young homeplace where small Harry S. Truman made most of his earliest observations of the world, beginning at age three. . . a household of seldom less than fourteen or fifteen people spanning three generations, all under one roof.¹¹



Figure 7: Harry S Truman Birthplace, 1945. The porch was an addition after the Truman family's tenure there; it was removed in the restoration of the site in the late 1950s.

¹¹ David McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 36-38.

OTHER HARRY S TRUMAN HISTORIC SITES AND MUSEUMS

The National Park Service administers the Harry S Truman National Historic Site, which includes the Truman Home at 319 North Delaware Street in Independence (the president's home from the year of his marriage to Bess Wallace in 1919 until his death in 1972), as well as the Truman Farm Home, preserved along with five acres of the original 600-acre family farm, located 20 miles away in Grandview, Missouri. The National Historic Site also includes a Visitor Center in downtown Independence in a restored fire station, which has some small displays about the President.

Several additional Truman related properties in the Delaware Street neighborhood are also included in the National Historic Site, but are not open to the public: two homes (601 and 605 West Truman Road) built by George and Frank Wallace, the brothers of First Lady Bess Truman; and the Noland House at 216 North Delaware, home of the president's cousins Nellie and Ethel Noland. The National Historic Site is part of the Harry S Truman District National Historic Landmark, which was established with Truman's blessing in 1971, and expanded in November 2010. The Truman Farm Home in Grandview is also an NHL.

In addition, the 1886 Queen Anne-style home at 909 West Waldo Avenue in Independence where Truman lived as a boy (1896-1902) is now operated as a bed-and-breakfast, though it is not otherwise interpreted or open to the public for tours. In front of the home is an historical marker. Also in Independence are two other homes in which Truman once lived, 619 South Chrysler Street, and 902 North Liberty Street, which are privately owned. All three of these other childhood homes are outside the historic district, and have been modified extensively.¹²

In the 1990s, the City of Independence developed a Truman Historic Walking Trail—a “comprehensive trail comprised of 43 stops,” including “homes of Truman's friends, associates, and even two trees.”¹³ Each site on the trail, which includes National Park Service sites, the Truman Museum and Library, and the drugstore where young Harry worked, is marked by a descriptive plaque noting its significance. The Jackson County Historical Society preserves the office and courtroom where Truman presided beginning in 1922.

In addition to these sites, there is an extensive public presentation of the life and career of Harry Truman at the Truman Presidential Museum Library in Independence, operated by the National Archives and Records Administration. The creation of the library was Truman's single-minded focus upon leaving office in 1953; it opened to the public in 1957. The exhibition galleries of the Library complex were completely renovated in 2000-2001, and re-opened in December 2001, along with the rededication of the Library. Historian Benjamin Hufbauer, author of the only critical history of American presidential libraries and memorials, has written that the Library's new exhibition is “the best with any presidential library at the present time.”¹⁴ Also at the Library is the Truman gravesite, where Harry, Bess, and daughter Margaret Truman Daniels are buried.

¹² “Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings: Harry S Truman National Historic Site” from National Park Service, *The Presidents: From the Inauguration of George Washington to the Inauguration of Jimmy Carter* (United States Department of the Interior, 1977, revised edition).
http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/presidents/site34.htm (Accessed 8/13/2010).

¹³ Brochure, “Truman Historic Walking Trail,” Independence Tourism Department.

¹⁴ Benjamin Hufbauer, “Reinventing the Presidential Library: The New Displays at the Truman Museum,” in *Presidential Temples: How Memorials and Libraries Shape Public Memory* (Lawrence KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 153.

BIRTHPLACES AND CHILDHOOD HOMES: THE HISTORIC CONTEXT

Birthplaces and childhood homes occupy a distinct corner of the universe of American historic sites, and play significant roles in the interpretation of national—especially presidential—history, as well as cultural and literary history. These places can illuminate the history of childhood, the arc of historical reputations over time, and the relation between memory as captured in nostalgic memoirs and autobiographies, and history as revealed in documents, material culture, and childhood space.

According to historian Seth Bruggeman, the commemoration of birthplaces is relatively recent, arising with the increasing popularity of “literary tourism” in the 17th century, with the word “birthplace,” in fact, not appearing in print until 1607. Although the commemoration of famous literary birthplaces eventually became a common practice in the United States, with historic sites for Mark Twain, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Willa Cather, and many others, the tradition began rather differently here, focusing instead on significant figures in the secular history of colonization and nation-making. Bruggeman calls attention to the commemoration of the somewhat mythical birthplace of Virginia Dare, in lore and legend the first white child born in the “New World.”

The connoted relationship between person and place itself connotes a larger narrative that, by merit of being associated with a birthplace—a point of origin—implies change over time, usually for the better, and always in a way that invokes the past. . . . The commemorative value of a birthplace . . . rests in its capacity to simultaneously signify a person, a place, and an intended story about the past that necessarily involves both.¹⁵

Several themes are commonly encountered in the interpretation of birthplaces and childhood homes:

- Childhood homes and birthplaces are presumed to be predictive, or at least anticipatory, of their subject’s later life and career.
- Birthplaces are considered so vital in the representation of a subject’s complete story that they are sometimes reconstructed.
- Interpretation at a birthplace or childhood home usually focuses on beginnings, which are usually (if not always) humble.
- Most birthplaces or childhood homes preserved as historic sites conform to certain domestic archetypes.
- Childhood homes are interpreted and understood as places of innocence.
- Childhood homes can be self-conscious legacies, crafted in certain ways by their subjects, their families, or their supporters.

1. Birthplaces and childhood homes are predictive.

Childhood homes are preserved and visited because, like other historic sites, they offer a kind of time travel, a way of revisiting a story whose end we already know. In visiting childhood homes, however, we carry with us a special kind of *knowingness*—we know who the man or woman became, and now we enter into their “pre-historic” space, looking for (and probably finding, if the interpretive staff has done its job) evidence that predicts or at least foreshadows the contours of their later life. The Missouri State Parks website on the Truman Birthplace notes: “Like Truman’s trademark country mannerisms and down-to-earth sensibility, the small home

¹⁵ Seth C. Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 14-15.

possesses an essence of Missouri hospitality that seems to welcome every visitor with open arms”—suggesting, at least, that the some of the famed personality traits of the future President find their architectural cognates in the home itself.¹⁶ The almost uncanny predictive capacity of birthplaces and childhood homes is asserted at many sites. For example, at the boyhood home of famed aviator Charles Lindbergh in Little Falls, Minnesota, a favorite story told by the staff (and a story that Lindbergh himself retold often in memoirs) is when a nine-year-old Charles leaned out an upstairs window and saw an airplane for the first time, looping high above the Mississippi River, providing an almost cinematic moment of foreshadowing.

2. Childhood homes are (sometimes) reconstructed.

The Truman Birthplace is a remarkably well-preserved building. With the exception of the furnishings (all reportedly from the 1880s period but none original to the Truman family’s time in the house) and of an extraneous front porch added some years after the Trumans’ tenure (since removed), there apparently has been little exterior or interior alteration.

The integrity of the building and its position on its original site are in contrast to many comparable birthplaces. It appears that birthplaces, even more so than later-childhood homes, have such an appeal as a genre that they are sometimes reconstructed from the ground up when fame—or hubris—overtakes them. The house at 28 East 20th Street in New York City where Theodore Roosevelt was born and where he lived until 1872 was demolished in 1916, four years after his defeat (running as the Bull Moose candidate) in the 1912 presidential election. After his premature death in 1919, his birthplace was reconstructed, and is today administered by the NPS as the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson directed a reconstruction of his birthplace and childhood home on his ranch in Texas for use as a guesthouse, this time, however, with indoor plumbing and air-conditioning. The house has the distinction of being the only presidential home reconstructed, refurbished, and interpreted by an incumbent president.

Sometimes the site itself is memorialized without benefit of the house. The cabin where the 15th president, James Buchanan, was born in 1791 was moved from its original site to a college nearby and was replaced on the site by a cenotaph. In Diamond, Missouri, the George Washington Carver “birth cabin” was destroyed by a tornado long ago, and the site is preserved and interpreted as part of an NPS site, the George Washington Carver National Monument.

The most famous log-cabin birthplace in American history—that of President Abraham Lincoln in Kentucky—disappeared long ago. But since 1911, a log cabin—now referred to as “symbolic”—has been enshrined in a classically styled temple at what is now the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park. Although no part of the cabin was ever associated with the Lincoln family, from the outset it served a “purpose as a national symbol to reinforce the Horatio Alger myth, and to commemorate the patriotic past.”¹⁷

3. Childhood homes are about beginnings.

The interpretive focus of most historic houses is on attainment, on their subject’s ultimate fame and success as a mature adult. Children, if present, play a supporting role, “footnotes,” in a sense, to the larger biographical narrative. But sites commemorated as birthplaces or childhood homes

¹⁶ <http://mostateparks.com/trumansite.htm> (Accessed on 8/12/2010).

¹⁷ Dwight P. Pitcaithley, “Abraham Lincoln’s Birthplace Cabin: The Making of an American Icon,” in *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape* (University Press of Florida, 2001), 240-55.

of a famous figure focus on the inchoate, on beginnings. Childhood as a distinct life stage moves to the forefront of interpretation.

At sites that are literal *birthplaces*—as opposed to later childhood homes—one possible interpretive theme for contemporary audiences, for whom home births are an extreme rarity, is historic maternity practices. Although this has not been identified as a theme for the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site in the Missouri State Parks Interpretation Plan (2008), it remains a possibility. Such a focus would shift attention away from the child and to mothers, midwives, or other assisting family members. At the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site—his birthplace in Brookline, Massachusetts—the focus of the interpretation is not on the future president or any of his famous siblings, but on Rose Kennedy, the long-lived matriarch of the family, and the donor of the home.¹⁸ Historian Seth Bruggeman goes so far as to identify motherhood as a theme that pervades all birthplace monuments: “Because birthplaces commemorate births, they cannot help but celebrate motherhood, even if implicitly.”¹⁹

4. Childhood homes conform to an archetype.

With remarkably few exceptions, the birthplace or childhood home preserved as a historic site hews to a familiar archetype. If not always the venerable log cabin, the model of the historic childhood home is more rural than urban, more modest than grand. They are freestanding and recognizably “house-like.” Looking at the birthplaces or childhood homes of Harry Truman, or Richard Nixon (Yorba Linda, California) or Bill Clinton (Hope, Arkansas), or Ronald Reagan (Dixon, Illinois) or Herbert Hoover (West Branch, Iowa), one could almost conclude that there is a generic “presidential boyhood home.”

A “modest frame house,” or the “one-room cabin”: these are the phrases one most often associates with this genre of historic site. This is true not only for individuals from America’s agrarian past, but also those from more recent times. President George W. Bush lived as a boy in a two-bedroom, one-bathroom, asbestos-shingled cottage in Odessa, Texas, built just after the war. It totals less than 800 square feet. Another of his boyhood homes, an equally modest house in Midland, Texas, was restored in 2006 and opened as a historic site.²⁰

Interpretive and promotional materials for such sites invariably make the “character connection,” drawing attention to the meritocratic meaning of the site. An Iowa tourism website promoting the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site states: “His life is a shining example to all Americans that regardless of where you start, the arrival to your final destination is determined by individual dedication to excellence, commitment to service, and achievement of personal potential.” The Missouri State Parks website on the Truman Birthplace also claims: “Even with the most humble of beginnings, true greatness shines through.”²¹

There are exceptions to the theme of rising to greatness from humble beginnings: Presidents Taft and Kennedy and Ford all grew up in large, comfortable surroundings, as did civil rights leader

¹⁸ John F. Kennedy National Historic Site, *General Management Plan Newsletter 1* (Spring 2009)

<http://www.nps.gov/jofi/parkmgmt/upload/Newsletter1-web.pdf> (Accessed on 8/12/2010).

¹⁹ Bruggeman, 15.

²⁰ Peter Kilborn, “A New Texas Tourism Lure: George Bush Slept Here,” *New York Times*, March 17, 2003; Elizabeth Olson and Christopher Mason, “Perils and Pleasures of a Walk Down Memory Lane,” *New York Times*, September 7, 2006.

²¹ <http://www.iowabeautiful.com/east-central-iowa-tourism/396-herbert-hoover-presidential-library-museum.html>; <http://www.mostateparks.com/trumansite/geninfo.htm> (Accessed on 8/12/2010).

Martin Luther King, Jr., who grew up in a substantial middle-class home, the son of a college-educated minister who was a prominent citizen of “Sweet Auburn,” the prosperous black neighborhood of Atlanta.

And it now seems inevitable that the “house-as-birthplace” model will become increasingly scarce. Jimmy Carter was the first U.S. president to have been born in a hospital (1924) rather than at home, so it is his simple boyhood home in Plains, Georgia serves as his domestic monument, Jimmy Carter National Historic Site. Apartment buildings, boarding houses, or hospitals—the literal birth sites of most 20th-century Americans—rarely receive landmark designation, at least not for their possible roles as crucibles of future greatness.

5. Childhood homes are places of innocence.

In childhood-home interpretation, there is a consistent trope about innocence. This is the place (we are told) where a person whose adult life would become dark, tragic, or at least complicated, lived a wholly anonymous life as an innocent, golden youth. There is often a kind of nostalgia, an elegiac sadness to these sites, as we bring to them our emotions and memories of the later lives of their subjects. One visits the quaint and charming Nixon boyhood home, for example, wondering how the innocence on display there can tell us anything about the future downfall of the man. Still, we attend to these sites armed with the assumption that our point of origin most critically defines and shapes our identity, believing that one might find there some kind of core truth, an authenticity.

It’s only a small step from this notion of the birthplace as a place of truth to the notion of seeking out a birthplace as a kind of spiritual quest. Set aside and preserved for all time and transformed into a memorial—and thus a reminder of our own lives and deaths—the birthplace of a historical figure is a sanctified place. It shares, at least in Judeo-Christian tradition, in the associations that we have with religious shrines, including the traditional site of Jesus’s birth in Bethlehem. As historian Seth Bruggeman has recently written:

Tourists travel to famous birthplaces because, not unlike pilgrims bound to holy shrines, they believe on some level that by coming into physical contact with the places or things associated with great people, we manage to somehow partake of that greatness.²²

In this context, it is instructive that the June 1969 National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the Truman Birthplace refers to it as a “State Historic Shrine” and a “Memorial Shrine.”

6. Childhood homes can be self-conscious legacies.

The interpretive direction at some childhood-home historic sites has been influenced by the distinguished subject himself. Charles Lindbergh, Richard Nixon, and Lyndon Johnson each actively assisted in the development of the historic interpretation at their respective boyhood places, shaping their legacies, “writing” their memories in space, structure, and material culture. Nixon and his supporters, in fact, built the Nixon Presidential Library literally around the birthplace, and Nixon himself recorded audio reminiscences that are played for visitors inside the house. In the 1960s, Charles Lindbergh became closely involved in the project to develop his boyhood home at the family farm in Minnesota into a historic site, visiting the site frequently, reading and commenting on documents about the new exhibits, and writing a lengthy reminiscence of life on the farm to guide the site interpretation, later published as *Boyhood on the*

²² Bruggeman, 18.

*Upper Mississippi.*²³ Harry Truman was similarly conscious of his legacy and of the needs for future historians and biographers, and penned a number of childhood reminiscences, which no doubt assisted historic site curators and exhibit developers over time. He was also very involved with his presidential library. But while Truman visited his Lamar birthplace on at least two ceremonial occasions during his political career and was present at the dedication in 1959, he did not take an active role—or any role, apparently—in its development as a historic site.

It appears that the number of new childhood home interpretive sites is increasing. In addition to the conventional assumptions about the importance (if not inevitability) of preserving sites associated with political figures, such as former president George W. Bush, mentioned above, there is now an increasing tendency to memorialize the childhood homes of popular culture celebrities. Among the more elaborate of these undertakings is the birthplace and girlhood home (until age four or so) of entertainer Judy Garland in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, which has been preserved as a museum and historic site since 2003.²⁴

There is some evidence that some small towns, suffering from depopulation and declining economic opportunities, are looking hopefully to developing heritage tourism sites, some of them focused on famous sons or daughters. The jockeying of two Texas towns, Odessa and Midland, alluded to above, for the distinction of being known as the “real” home town of former president George W. Bush is one such example. A similar story of competing presidential-origin stories has taken place in downstate Illinois. Two towns, Tampico and Dixon, both claim primacy as the “true” Ronald Reagan heritage site. The second-floor apartment in a commercial building in Tampico where the 40th president was actually born in 1911 is operated as a historic site. But the Reagan family—like many others of the time—changed locations frequently. They are known to have moved from that apartment to a house in Tampico within a few months of Ronald’s birth. In Dixon, where the family moved when Ronald was a boy, there are, in addition to an “official” boyhood home museum, four other Reagan family homes. As a *New York Times* reporter wrote in 2010:

The answer seems simple enough—Tampico was his birth town, and Dixon was where he lived from age 9—but in a way, the question looms larger: What is a home anyway? Tampico advocates say a birthplace is finite, while Dixon fans say his ‘formative years,’ making friends and working as a lifeguard, happened there. When Joan Johnson – volunteer coordinator of the Tampico birthplace museum—gets caught up in the Tampico-Dixon question, she said others calm her with a reminder: “This is Bethlehem. That is Nazareth.”²⁵

²³ Re-issued as *Lindbergh Looks Back: A Boyhood Reminiscence* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2002).

²⁴ <http://judynoplacelikehome.org/memories.html> (Accessed on 8/12/2010).

²⁵ Monica Davey, “Two Towns Claim Reagan as their Favorite Son,” *New York Times*, July 4, 2010.

CHAPTER THREE: SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY

The legislation directing the National Park Service to undertake the Harry S Truman Special Resource Study, Public Law 111-11, instructs the NPS to determine:

- (1) the suitability and feasibility of --
 - (A) adding the birthplace site to the Harry S Truman National Historic Site; or
 - (B) designating the birthplace site as a separate unit of the National Park System; and
- (2) the methods and means for the protection and interpretation of the birthplace site by the National Park Service, other Federal, State, or local government entities, or private or nonprofit organizations.

This chapter will address requirement (1)(B). When specifically authorized by an Act of Congress, the NPS is responsible for conducting studies of potential additions to the National Park System, and for transmitting the results of these studies to the Secretary of the Interior and Congress. These Special Resource Studies rely on the Criteria for Inclusion (Appendix B) to evaluate these potential new areas.²⁶ To be recommended as a potential new area, a proposed addition to the National Park System must meet the following criteria:

1. **Significance:** For cultural resources, significance is evaluated using the National Historic Landmark criteria. (Appendix C) Determinations of an area's national significance are made by NPS professionals in consultation with scholars, experts, and scientists.
2. **Suitability:** A property is considered suitable if it represents a resource type that is not currently represented in the park system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another agency or entity. Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the type, quality, quantity, combination of resources present, and opportunities for public enjoyment.
3. **Feasibility:** To be considered feasible, an area must be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of the resources and to accommodate public use. The area must have potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Other important feasibility factors include landownership, acquisition costs, current and potential use, access, level of local and general public support, and staff or development requirements.
4. **Need for Direct NPS Management:** Even if a resource meets the criteria of significance, suitability, and feasibility, it will not always be recommended that a resource be added to the park system. There are many excellent examples of important natural and cultural resources managed by other federal agencies, other levels of government, and private entities. Evaluation of management options must show that direct NPS management is clearly the superior alternative.

In this chapter, the Criteria for Inclusion are applied to the Harry S Truman Birthplace. Each criterion is evaluated in succession. If a criterion is not met, only a summary assessment will be given of subsequent criteria.

²⁶ This criteria is outlined in *NPS Management Policies 2006*, and draws its legal basis from Public Law 91-383 §8 as amended by §303 of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act (Public Law 105-391).

SIGNIFICANCE

The purpose of the significance evaluation is to determine whether or not the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site qualifies as “nationally significant” in terms of the established criteria for National Historic Landmark status. The guidelines state that national significance is

...ascribed to districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture and that possess a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association...²⁷

Nationally significant sites will meet one or more of six criteria:

- That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained; or
- That are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States; or
- That represent some great idea or ideal of the American people; or
- That embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction, or that represent a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- That are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture; or
- That have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have yielded, or which may reasonably be expected to yield, data affecting theories, concepts and ideas to a major degree.²⁸

The Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site in Lamar, Missouri does not clearly possess any of the foregoing criteria, with the possible exception of the second, since it might be considered a site that is “associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States.” The key word here, however, is “importantly.” As described in the Historic Context, Truman’s birthplace played a minor role in his life, even when compared only to sites associated with his childhood. The Truman Farm Home in Grandview (actually the Young family’s farm where he spent much of his childhood, and the place he worked as a young man) and his family’s homes in Independence clearly had a much greater hold on the adult Truman’s memories than did the small frame house in Lamar where he had been born but where he lived for less than eleven months (1884-85). There is little evidence that the Lamar house held special emotional meaning for him (in spite of his later symbolic use of the site as a backdrop for

²⁷ National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin 16A, “How to Complete a National Register Registration Form,” 1999. Appendix V.

http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/nrb16a_appendix_V.htm (Accessed on 8/12/2010)

²⁸ *Ibid.*

political announcements), and no evidence that Truman considered the house or the town of Lamar to be formative in any instrumental way. On the other hand, Truman did believe this to be true of the Grandview homeplace. This farmstead was designated an NHL in 1985 and was acquired as part of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site in 1993.²⁹

The National Park Service guidelines offer some further clarity on birthplaces:

Ordinarily, cemeteries, **birthplaces**, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings and properties that have achieved significance within the past fifty years are not eligible for designation.³⁰

An exception is offered if

A birthplace, grave or burial . . . is of a historical figure of transcendent national significance and **no other appropriate site, building, or structure directly associated with the productive life of that person exists.** . . .³¹

Significance (National Historic Landmark Criteria) Findings

In light of other sites that are more directly associated with Truman already designated as National Historic Landmarks, the Truman Birthplace does not rise to the level of national significance that is evidenced by properties of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site in Independence and Grandview, or by the Harry S Truman National Historic Landmark District in Independence. Though the Truman Birthplace appears to possess excellent physical integrity and seems to be reasonably accurate historically, the Truman-related sites in Grandview and Independence are more directly associated with the productive life of Truman, and are directly referenced by Truman himself as formative in his life. NPS finds that the Truman Birthplace would not qualify as a National Historic Landmark, and therefore does not meet the national significance criteria.

SUITABILITY

Because the Harry S Truman Birthplace does not meet the significance standard as defined by National Historic Landmark criteria, the suitability of the site will be considered in brief. In order for an area to be considered suitable, it must represent a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system, or is not protected for public enjoyment by other units of the federal government, tribal, state, or local governments, non-profit organizations, or private entities.

The Harry S Truman Birthplace is already protected by the State of Missouri and available for public enjoyment. The Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site includes the home where Truman was born, the parcel diagonally across the intersection from the home which once held John Truman's mule barn, a building to the south of the home used for office space and visitor contact, as well as a number of neighboring parcels intended for future site development by the

²⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Harry S Truman National Historic Site General Management Plan Revision* (June 1999) 7.

³⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register Bulletin 16A, "How to Complete a National Register Registration Form," Appendix V.

³¹ *Ibid.*

State. (See Chapter Five: Management Alternatives) The grounds include two monuments to Truman. The birthplace is open for free tours Wednesday through Sunday from 10am to 4pm, and from March through October, the site is also open Sundays from 12pm to 4pm. The grounds are accessible dawn to dusk.

As noted in the comparative analysis of National Historic Landmark criteria in the Significance assessment, there are NHLs directly related to Harry S Truman's life, personal development, and significant accomplishments already preserved in the National Park System at the Harry S Truman National Historic Site.

The following sites are those sites other than the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site where the life and accomplishments of President Truman are preserved and interpreted:

Harry S Truman National Historic Site, Independence and Grandview, Missouri

The Harry S Truman National Historic Site was established in 1982 and has at its core the Truman Home in Independence, MO where he lived at starting in 1919, the "Summer White House" during his presidency, and the home where he retired after his service to the country as president. The National Historic Site also includes three adjacent homes of Truman family members, and the home in Grandview where Truman lived while working on the family farm during the years before World War I. The National Historic Site also includes a visitor center for education and outreach in its mission of interpreting all aspects of Harry S Truman's life, career, and legacy.

Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, Independence, Missouri

The presidential library and museum of Harry S Truman was dedicated in 1957, and preserves papers, books, and other objects related to Truman's personal life and careers, particularly his government service. The library and museum are operated by the National Archives. Working with the non-profit Truman Institute, the library offers educational programs and facilitates research. The museum is open daily, year-round.

Harry S. Truman Little White House, Key West, Florida

Truman made 11 visits to the "Little White House" on a Key West Naval Base during his presidency. The building was renovated in 1949 for the Trumans, and the house today retains finishes and furnishings from that period. The Little White House is owned by the State of Florida through the Internal Improvement Trust and wholly funded and operated by The Key West Harry S Truman Foundation, Inc. The site is open for tours.

Other Sites Associated with Truman

Other sites that are strongly associated with Harry S Truman include the Blair House, where Truman was in residence during the renovation of the White House, which was also the site of an assassination attempt; and the White House, which is associated with all presidents.

Suitability Findings

Since the Harry S Truman Birthplace is already well preserved and interpreted by the State of Missouri, NPS finds that it is not a clearly suitable addition to the national park system. Additionally, it is similar in type, quality, and opportunities for public enjoyment to sites already protected by the NPS. The birthplace is a rarity in that there is only one birthplace for Harry S Truman, and is an important resource, but it does not provide substantially different interpretive and educational opportunities.

FEASIBILITY

Because the Harry S Truman Birthplace does not meet the significance standard as defined by National Historic Landmark criteria and would not be a suitable addition to the national park system, feasibility will not be evaluated. However, it bears mentioning that management of the site by the State of Missouri has proven feasible over the many years they have been stewards of the Harry S Truman Birthplace.

NEED FOR DIRECT NPS MANAGEMENT

Because the Harry S Truman Birthplace does not meet the significance standard as defined by National Historic Landmark criteria, nor is the site suitable for inclusion in the national park system, the site does not meet the criteria for direct management by the NPS as an independent unit of the national park system. As addressed above in Suitability, the site is currently managed well by the State of Missouri, so there is no need for NPS management.

There are many excellent examples of the successful management of important natural and cultural resources by other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals. Most notably, state park systems provide for protection of natural and cultural resources throughout the nation and offer outstanding recreational experiences. The current management of the site by the State of Missouri, Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Parks is more than adequate to the task of protecting and interpreting the resources at the Harry S Truman Birthplace. (See Chapter Five: Management Alternatives)

SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY CONCLUSION

Because the Harry S Truman Birthplace does not meet the significance and suitability criteria, NPS finds that it is not eligible for addition to the national park system.

CHAPTER FOUR: BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT STUDY

The legislation directing the National Park Service to undertake the Harry S Truman Special Resource Study, Public Law 111-11, instructs the NPS to determine:

- (1) the suitability and feasibility of --
 - (A) adding the birthplace site to the Harry S Truman National Historic Site; or
 - (B) designating the birthplace site as a separate unit of the National Park System; and
- (2) the methods and means for the protection and interpretation of the birthplace site by the National Park Service, other Federal, State, or local government entities, or private or nonprofit organizations.

This chapter will address requirement (1)(A). The process of determining the suitability and feasibility of adding an area to an existing National Park Service unit is called a Boundary Adjustment Study. The study will state the criteria for Boundary Adjustments; then review the Harry S Truman NHS enabling legislation, park purpose, resources, and values; and finally apply the criteria for Boundary Adjustments to the Harry S Truman Birthplace.

Criteria for Boundary Adjustments

The criteria for a Boundary Adjustment are found in *Management Policies* Section 3.5. (Appendix D) The proposed area must meet at least one of the following conditions:

1. Protect significant resources and values, or enhance opportunities for public enjoyment related to park purposes;
2. Address operational and management issues, such as the need for access or the need for boundaries to correspond to logical boundary delineations such as topographic or other natural features or roads; or
3. Otherwise protect park resources that are critical to fulfilling park purposes.

All recommendations for boundary changes must also meet **both** of the following two criteria:

- The added lands will be feasible to administer, considering their size, configuration, and ownership; costs; the views and impacts on local communities and surrounding jurisdictions; and other factors such as the presence of hazardous substances or exotic species.
- Other alternatives for management and resource protection are not adequate.

Harry S Truman National Historic Site: Enabling Legislation, Park Purposes, Resources, and Values

The enabling legislation for the Harry S Truman NHS, Public Law 98-32, was passed on May 23rd, 1983 and provided for the establishment of Harry S Truman NHS “in order to preserve and interpret for the inspiration and benefit of present and future generations the former home of Harry S Truman...219 North Delaware Street in the City of Independence...”³² The act has been amended twice, first for the addition of the Noland and Wallace homes in Independence (Public Law 101-105, October 2, 1989), and second for the acquisition of the Truman Farm Home in

³² 98th US Congress, Public Law 98-32, May 23rd, 1983.

Grandview (Public Law 103-184, December 14, 1993). Both amendments authorized the new acquisitions without any additional comments on park purpose.

Harry S Truman NHS's Long-Range Interpretive Plan defines the park's purpose as "to preserve and interpret President Truman's home and three related homes in Independence, Missouri, and the Truman Farm Home in Grandview, Missouri, including all related artifacts and to interpret Mr. Truman's life in both communities."³³

According to the General Management Plan Revision (1999), the significance of the Harry S Truman NHS is derived from his time as president, but the park's story extends from 1867–1982, covering years before Truman was born in order to include developments at the Independence and Grandview properties that would later shape his character. Including information from these earlier dates fits within the park's interpretive themes "so long as any interpretation of these times has a direct bearing on, and gives the visitor insight into, Harry Truman as a president of the United States."³⁴ The story also extends beyond park boundaries to include the communities of Independence and Grandview, both of which influenced Truman's character development and values.³⁵

The core resources of the park, reiterated in the park purpose and in its significance, are the Truman Home, the Noland Home, and the two Wallace cottages in Independence, and the Truman Farm Home in Grandview, approximately 20 miles away. The Harry S Truman District National Historic Landmark in Independence also helps to preserve the community that strongly influenced Truman through most of his life.

Finally, the park's mission statement offers the most comprehensive summary of the park's preservation and educational purpose:

The mission of Harry S Truman National Historic Site is to interpret the broad life experience of President Truman encompassed in the National Park Service resources in Independence and Grandview and to preserve those resources which tell his life story. The park seeks to educate present and future generations about Truman, his role as a citizen and his influence on history.³⁶

Applying the Criteria for Boundary Adjustments

As noted above, the Harry S Truman Birthplace would have to meet one of the first three criteria, and both of final requirements to be considered an adequate area for addition to the existing Harry S Truman NHS.

1. Protect significant resources and values, or enhance opportunities for public enjoyment related to park purposes

Of the first three criteria for a Boundary Adjustment, this is the most compelling one for considering the Birthplace. Though Chapter Three of this report, in the Significance Statement, found that the Harry S. Truman Birthplace does not rise to the National Historic Landmark level of significance, it is undeniably associated with the life of Harry S Truman

³³ National Park Service, Harry S Truman National Historic Site Long Range Interpretive Plan, November 2000, 4.

³⁴ National Park Service, Harry S Truman National Historic Site General Management Plan Revision, June 1999, 6.

³⁵ Ibid, 7.

³⁶ National Park Service, "Harry S Truman National Historic Site: Park Management." <http://www.nps.gov/hstr/parkmgmt/> (accessed September 21, 2010)

as the place of his birth, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.³⁷ Though the current State Historic Site in Lamar was the residence of his parents for several years and the location of his birth, it should be noted that Truman did not consider his Lamar birthplace to be influential in his own life, having no memory of his time there.³⁸ It seems unlikely that the birthplace would fill any interpretive gaps or yield any additional information for visitors of the Harry S Truman NHS. Therefore, acquiring the Birthplace as part of the NHS would not protect a significant park value.³⁹

The Harry S Truman Birthplace would offer no opportunity to enhance public enjoyment related to stated park purposes, which are defined geographically as being in Independence and Grandview, Missouri. While the Birthplace home itself appears to have undergone few changes considering its age, and the neighborhood setting has not changed drastically, the interior finishes and furnishings are period pieces or representations – nothing remains of the interior the Truman family knew during the home’s brief period of significance in the life of the 33rd President. As a crucible that represents Truman’s later character and accomplishments, the birthplace does not provide any significant new perspective when compared with existing Harry S Truman NHS resources. As an historic site currently administered by the State of Missouri, the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site does an excellent job of preserving the structure and period furnishings, and interpreting the home as both the birthplace of Truman and a typical middle class home of the late Victorian period in Missouri.

2. Address operational and management issues, such as the need for access or the need for boundaries to correspond to logical boundary delineations such as topographic or other natural features or roads

Because of its remote location relative to the core of the Harry S Truman NHS, the addition of the birthplace does not fulfill any boundary needs or correspond to logical boundary delineations. The addition of the birthplace does not address any current operational or management issues.⁴⁰

3. Otherwise protect park resources that are critical to fulfilling park purposes.

Again, because of its remote location, the addition of the Birthplace to Harry S Truman NHS would not protect any of the park’s resources.

Both of the following two criteria must be met for an area to be found suitable and feasible for addition to a park’s boundary:

The added lands will be feasible to administer, considering their size, configuration, and ownership; costs; the views and impacts on local communities and surrounding jurisdictions; and other factors such as the presence of hazardous substances or exotic species.

While the size and configuration of the Harry S Truman Birthplace site are adequate for administration, the distance from the Harry S Truman NHS is the biggest obstacle to feasibility. Lamar is approximately 120 miles from Independence. The management of the

³⁷ Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places can be listed for local, state, or national significance. For a property to be a National Historic Landmark, it must be of outstanding national significance. See Chapter Three.

³⁸ Historic Context.

³⁹ Conversation with Harry S Truman NHS management staff, September 20, 2010.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Birthplace over that distance would be difficult, and administrative support would be time consuming. The time and expense of travel for both personnel and maintenance equipment back and forth would be costly for both sites in terms of budget and efficiency. Personnel from Independence would have to deal with site managers regularly, especially with constant changes to maintenance and operations needs and practices, responding to conditions that are often difficult to evaluate at a distance. The transportation of equipment is a major issue, and equipment from Independence and Grandview would need to be brought back and forth by trailer initially.

There are other considerations that do not in themselves make the addition of the Birthplace site infeasible, but are very resource intensive. The need to do a Historic Structures Report, Cultural Landscape Report, amended interpretive plan, and other evaluations would require time and resources. The cost of acquiring new equipment and constructing a facilities maintenance building at the birthplace would also be a factor.⁴¹ Taken with the issue of distance, the cost in both time and budget allocation for a questionable benefit to the park as it exists today makes the administration of the Birthplace by the Harry S Truman NHS infeasible.

A recent example of the hurdles involved in bringing a new satellite site online is the Truman Farm Home in Grandview, approximately 20 miles away from the core of the Harry S Truman NHS in Independence. Since the Truman Farm Home in Grandview was acquired by the NPS in December 1993, and tours of the Farm Home began in 1996. Administrative, programming, technical, and historic reports for the new site took years to complete. Currently, ranger-led tours are only offered from Memorial Day through Labor Day on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The grounds are open dawn to dusk. There is no constant NPS presence at the site, and visitorship has not been strong. In August 2009, 214 people took tours of the Truman Farm Home.⁴² During that same month, the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site had 947 visitors.⁴³

The community impact would be mixed, and potentially be a net negative impact. While the presence of the National Park Service may bring additional tourists, the days and hours the site would be open for tours would likely be reduced, if not closed completely while inventories were completed, structural assessments made, and maintenance performed. The surrounding community also currently benefits from outreach to schools, which would likely be discontinued during that time. The state currently has a Conceptual Development Plan (CDP), which was created with public input and seems to have strong public support.⁴⁴ The CDP calls for the reconstruction of John Truman's mule barn and a school building for visitor contact. It is likely that neither of the two would be constructed under NPS management because of exacting standards for reconstruction.⁴⁵

Other alternatives for management and resource protection are not adequate.

As previously mentioned, the site is already well managed and protected by the State of Missouri as the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site. The site is open for tours

⁴¹ While the State of Missouri has a nearby maintenance building used for the Truman Birthplace, it is also used to serve two other nearby state parks, so would be unlikely to be turned over to NPS use in this scenario.

⁴² Conversation with Harry S Truman NHS management staff, September 20, 2010.

⁴³ Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site documents.

⁴⁴ See Appendix E: Public Scoping Comment Analysis.

⁴⁵ National Park Service, Management Policies 2006, Section 5.3.5.4.4, p.72.

year-round, Wednesday through Sunday from 10am to 4pm, and from March through October, the site is also open Sundays from 12pm to 4pm. The grounds are accessible dawn to dusk. State operations at the Birthplace are more than adequate.

Conclusion

Because the Harry S Truman Birthplace site does not meet any of the criteria for a potential Boundary Adjustment, addition of the Birthplace to the Harry S Truman NHS would be neither suitable nor feasible. The National Park Service finds that the Birthplace would not be appropriate for addition to the Harry S Truman NHS.

CHAPTER FIVE: MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

The legislation directing the National Park Service to undertake the Harry S Truman Special Resource Study, Public Law 111-11, instructs the NPS to determine:

- (1) the suitability and feasibility of --
 - (A) adding the birthplace site to the Harry S Truman National Historic Site; or
 - (B) designating the birthplace site as a separate unit of the National Park System; and
- (2) the methods and means for the protection and interpretation of the birthplace site by the National Park Service, other Federal, State, or local government entities, or private or nonprofit organizations.

This chapter will address requirement (2). In a Special Resource Study, potential methods and means for protection and interpretation of a resource are addressed in management alternatives. Alternatives can identify possible managers other than the NPS, partnership opportunities. In consultation with other federal agencies, State and local governments, and the general public, the NPS analyzed two action and one No Action alternatives.

In this study, the basis for Alternatives A and B have already been considered in previous chapters. The study also analyses a third alternative, in which no new action would be taken.

Alternative A: New NPS Unit

The first alternative, a new NPS Unit, would not be a reasonable alternative since the Harry S Truman Birthplace does not meet the standard that the property be nationally significant under National Historic Landmark criteria, or the suitability criteria. (See Chapter Three: Special Resource Study)

Alternative B: Addition to Harry S Truman National Historic Site

The second alternative, adding the birthplace to the existing Harry S Truman NHS, was found not to meet the criteria for a boundary adjustment, and thus would not be a reasonable alternative to consider. (See Chapter Four: Boundary Adjustment Study)

Alternative C: No New Action

The No New Action alternative would result in continued management of the Harry S Truman Birthplace by the State of Missouri's Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of State Parks. The site has been owned and operated as a historic site by the State since 1959. Current management was found in a 2008 plan to operate at or exceed Missouri DNR standards.⁴⁶ The site is open for tours year-round, Wednesday through Sunday from 10am to 4pm, and from March through October, the site is also open Sundays from 12pm to 4pm. The grounds are accessible dawn to dusk.

In 1997, the State began the process of updating the site's Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) which establishes acquisition and development goals for the site. After assembling a study team and conducting public meetings, the updated CDP was approved in May 2002. This document provides a look at the likely actions the State will take in their continued management in the No New Action Alternative.

⁴⁶ Missouri Department of Natural Resources, "Harry S Truman Birthplace Operations Plan," 2008.

The CDP establishes development goals “to enhance public enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of the site.” In brief, they are to

- preserve, restore, rehabilitate or reconstruct historic buildings...
- protect, preserve, acquire and exhibit collections...
- provide visitor orientation, research, and interpretation facilities...
- provide a coherent and aesthetically pleasing vehicular and pedestrian circulation system...
- provide administrative operational, and maintenance support facilities to protect, secure, and maintain the resources of this site...⁴⁷

With the participation of the City of Lamar, acquisition of lots for new facilities, street improvements, and other progress has been made. A new maintenance facility serving Harry S Truman State Historic Site and two other state parks was constructed and accessibility improved at the site.

The two major objectives of the plan yet to be implemented are the development of a contact station/office in a reconstruction of the Franklin School that was south of the birthplace at the time of Truman’s birth and the construction of a livery/mule barn on the lot where John Truman’s business once stood (pending documentary research and archaeology). It is unclear what the timeline will be for these projects.

The current fiscal situation of state parks across America has become more tenuous in recent years as tax revenues have fallen. This is especially true for Missouri’s State Parks, where 75 percent of the operation funding for parks comes from the Parks and Soils Sales Tax, and the remainder comes from user fees.⁴⁸ This has put a strain on the ability of the Division of State Parks to undertake capital projects. Though these new projects at the Harry S Truman State Historic Site may not be implemented for some time, current preservation and interpretation of the resources is more than adequate to the task of long term protection and public enjoyment.

Alternative Considered But Dismissed: Affiliated Area

Because the Harry S Truman Birthplace does not meet the significance criteria, it cannot be considered a potential affiliated area. (See Appendix B)

For methods and means for strengthening existing protection and interpretation at Harry S Truman State Historic Site, see Appendix F.

⁴⁷ Missouri Department of Natural Resources, “Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site Conceptual Development Plan,” 2002.

⁴⁸ National Trust for Historic Preservation, “America’s 11 Most Endangered Places 2010: America’s State Parks and State Owned Historic Sites: Missouri,” 2010.

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES 

HARRY S TRUMAN BIRTHPLACE STATE HISTORIC SITE

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

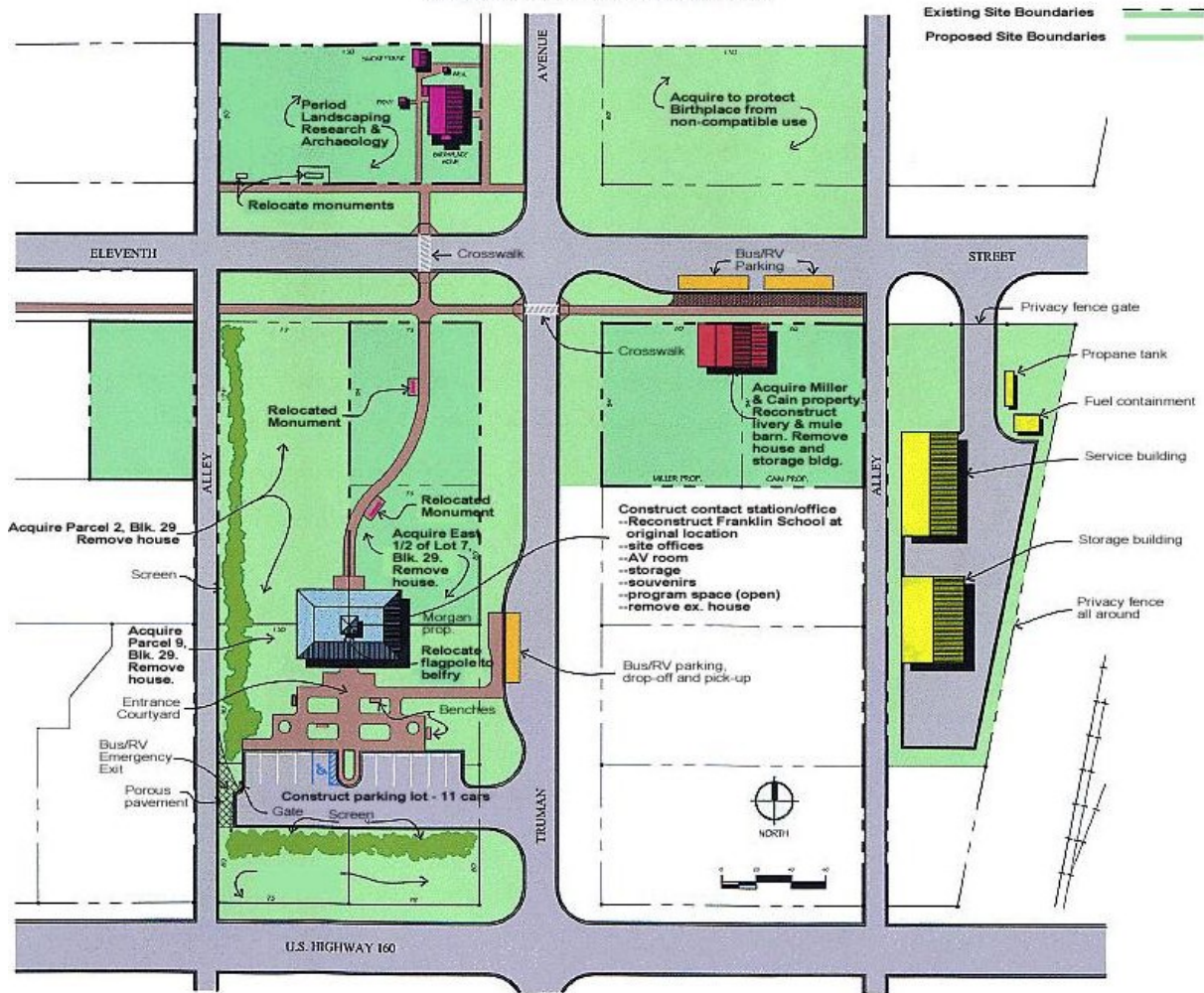


Figure 8: Plans for the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site from the Conceptual Development Plan, 2002.

CONCLUSION

Special Resource Study Conclusions

This congressionally authorized Special Resource Study concludes that the Harry S Truman Birthplace does not meet the criteria for significance or suitability, and thus feasibility, and need for direct NPS management were not considered.

Boundary Adjustment Study Conclusions

The Boundary Adjustment Study concludes that the Harry S Truman Birthplace does not meet established criteria for addition to the Harry S Truman National Historic Site in Independence and Grandview, Missouri.

It is worth noting that in public comments about the Harry S Truman Birthplace gathered for this study, members of the public familiar with the State of Missouri's CDP were in support of its major provisions, and expressed a desire for NPS involvement so that they might be implemented at a faster pace than the State has taken to date. (Appendix E) Because of stringent NPS guidelines for reconstruction and generalized representations of historic structures, the major outstanding provisions of the CDP would likely not be recommended by the NPS in either Alternative A or B had if either of these alternative were reasonable.

NPS finds that continued management by the State of Missouri is the most appropriate action. No federal actions are proposed.

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Figure 1: NPS.

Figure 2: NPS.

Figure 3: Harry S Truman Library and Museum, 59-1668-08.

Figure 4: Harry S Truman Library and Museum, 59-1668-25.

Figure 5: Harry S Truman Library and Museum, 62-95.

Figure 6: Harry S Truman Library and Museum, 62-412.

Figure 7: Photograph by Alfred Eisenstaedt for Life Magazine.

Figure 8: Missouri Department of Natural Resources, “Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site Conceptual Development Plan,” 2002.

APPENDIX A: Harry S Truman Birthplace Special Resource Study Legislation

Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009
PUBLIC LAW 111-11—MAR. 30, 2009

SEC. 7207. HARRY S TRUMAN BIRTHPLACE, MISSOURI.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) shall conduct a special resource study of the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site (referred to in this section as the “birthplace site”) in Lamar, Missouri, to determine—

(1) the suitability and feasibility of—

(A) adding the birthplace site to the Harry S Truman National Historic Site; or

(B) designating the birthplace site as a separate unit of the National Park System;

and

(2) the methods and means for the protection and interpretation of the birthplace site by the National Park Service, other Federal, State, or local government entities, or private or nonprofit organizations.

(b) **STUDY REQUIREMENTS.**—The Secretary shall conduct the study required under subsection (a) in accordance with section 8(c) of Public Law 91-383 (16 U.S.C. 1a-5(c)).

(c) **REPORT.**—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this section, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report containing—

(1) the results of the study conducted under subsection (a); and

(2) any recommendations of the Secretary with respect to the birthplace site.

APPENDIX B: National Park Service Management Policies 2006: 1.3 Criteria for Inclusion

Congress declared in the National Park System General Authorities Act of 1970 that areas comprising the national park system are cumulative expressions of a single national heritage. Potential additions to the national park system should therefore contribute in their own special way to a system that fully represents the broad spectrum of natural and cultural resources that characterize our nation. The National Park Service is responsible for conducting professional studies of potential additions to the national park system when specifically authorized by an act of Congress, and for making recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, the President, and Congress. Several laws outline criteria for units of the national park system and for additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and the National Trails System.

To receive a favorable recommendation from the Service, a proposed addition to the national park system must (1) possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources, (2) be a suitable addition to the system, (3) be a feasible addition to the system, and (4) require direct NPS management instead of protection by other public agencies or the private sector. These criteria are designed to ensure that the national park system includes only the most outstanding examples of the nation's natural and cultural resources. These criteria also recognize that there are other management alternatives for preserving the nation's outstanding resources.

1.3.1 National Significance

NPS professionals, in consultation with subject-matter experts, scholars, and scientists, will determine whether a resource is nationally significant. An area will be considered nationally significant if it meets all of the following criteria:

- It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
- It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.
- It offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study.
- It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

National significance for cultural resources will be evaluated by applying the National Historic Landmarks criteria contained in 36 CFR Part 65 (*Code of Federal Regulations*).

1.3.2 Suitability

An area is considered suitable for addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector.

Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the potential addition to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values. The comparative analysis also addresses rarity of the resources, interpretive and educational potential, and similar resources already protected in the national park system or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the

proposed new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection or visitor use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas.

1.3.3 Feasibility

To be feasible as a new unit of the national park system, an area must be (1) of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment (taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries), and (2) capable of efficient administration by the Service at a reasonable cost.

In evaluating feasibility, the Service considers a variety of factors for a study area, such as the following:

- size
- boundary configurations
- current and potential uses of the study area and surrounding lands
- landownership patterns
- public enjoyment potential
- costs associated with acquisition, development, restoration, and operation
- access
- current and potential threats to the resources
- existing degradation of resources
- staffing requirements
- local planning and zoning
- the level of local and general public support (including landowners)
- the economic/socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system

The feasibility evaluation also considers the ability of the National Park Service to undertake new management responsibilities in light of current and projected availability of funding and personnel.

An overall evaluation of feasibility will be made after taking into account all of the above factors. However, evaluations may sometimes identify concerns or conditions, rather than simply reach a yes or no conclusion. For example, some new areas may be feasible additions to the national park system only if landowners are willing to sell, or the boundary encompasses specific areas necessary for visitor access, or state or local governments will provide appropriate assurances that adjacent land uses will remain compatible with the study area's resources and values.

1.3.4 Direct NPS Management

There are many excellent examples of the successful management of important natural and cultural resources by other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals. The National Park Service applauds these accomplishments and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities and by other federal agencies. Unless direct NPS management of a studied area is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the Service will recommend that one or more of these other entities assume a lead management role, and that the area not receive national park system status.

Studies will evaluate an appropriate range of management alternatives and will identify which alternative or combination of alternatives would, in the professional judgment of the Director, be

most effective and efficient in protecting significant resources and providing opportunities for appropriate public enjoyment. Alternatives for NPS management will not be developed for study areas that fail to meet any one of the four criteria for inclusion listed in section 1.3.

In cases where a study area's resources meet criteria for national significance but do not meet other criteria for inclusion in the national park system, the Service may instead recommend an alternative status, such as "affiliated area." To be eligible for affiliated area status, the area's resources must (1) meet the same standards for significance and suitability that apply to units of the national park system; (2) require some special recognition or technical assistance beyond what is available through existing NPS programs; (3) be managed in accordance with the policies and standards that apply to units of the national park system; and (4) be assured of sustained resource protection, as documented in a formal agreement between the Service and the nonfederal management entity. Designation as a "heritage area" is another option that may be recommended. Heritage areas have a nationally important, distinctive assemblage of resources that is best managed for conservation, recreation, education, and continued use through partnerships among public and private entities at the local or regional level. Either of these two alternatives (and others as well) would recognize an area's importance to the nation without requiring or implying management by the National Park Service.

APPENDIX C: NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CRITERIA

36 CFR § 65.4 National Historic Landmark criteria.

The criteria applied to evaluate properties for possible designation as National Historic Landmarks or possible determination of eligibility for National Historic Landmark designation are listed below. These criteria shall be used by NPS in the preparation, review and evaluation of National Historic Landmark studies. They shall be used by the Advisory Board in reviewing National Historic Landmark studies and preparing recommendations to the Secretary. Properties shall be designated National Historic Landmarks only if they are nationally significant. Although assessments of national significance should reflect both public perceptions and professional judgments, the evaluations of properties being considered for landmark designation are undertaken by professionals, including historians, architectural historians, archeologists and anthropologists familiar with the broad range of the nation's resources and historical themes. The criteria applied by these specialists to potential landmarks do not define significance nor set a rigid standard for quality. Rather, the criteria establish the qualitative framework in which a comparative professional analysis of national significance can occur. The final decision on whether a property possesses national significance is made by the Secretary on the basis of documentation including the comments and recommendations of the public who participate in the designation process.

(a) Specific Criteria of National Significance: The quality of national significance is ascribed to districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture and that possess a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:

- (1) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained; or
- (2) That are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States; or
- (3) That represent some great idea or ideal of the American people; or
- (4) That embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction, or that represent a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (5) That are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture; or
- (6) That have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large

areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have yielded, or which may reasonably be expected to yield, data affecting theories, concepts and ideas to a major degree.

(b) Ordinarily, cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years are not eligible for designation. Such properties, however, will qualify if they fall within the following categories:

- (1) A religious property deriving its primary national significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- (2) A building or structure removed from its original location but which is nationally significant primarily for its architectural merit, or for association with persons or events of transcendent importance in the nation's history and the association consequential; or
- (3) A site of a building or structure no longer standing but the person or event associated with it is of transcendent importance in the nation's history and the association consequential; or
- (4) A birthplace, grave or burial if it is of a historical figure of transcendent national significance and no other appropriate site, building or structure directly associated with the productive life of that person exists; or
- (5) A cemetery that derives its primary national significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, or from an exceptionally distinctive design or from an exceptionally significant event; or
- (6) A reconstructed building or ensemble of buildings of extraordinary national significance when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other buildings or structures with the same association have survived; or
- (7) A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own national historical significance; or
- (8) A property achieving national significance within the past 50 years if it is of extraordinary national importance.

APPENDIX D: National Park Service Management Policies 2006: 3.5 Boundary Adjustments

The boundary of a national park may be modified only as authorized by law. For many parks, such statutory authority is included in the enabling legislation or subsequent legislation that specifically authorizes a boundary revision. Where park-specific authority is not available, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended, provides an additional but limited authority to adjust boundaries.

The act provides for boundary adjustments that essentially fall into three distinct categories: (1) technical revisions; (2) minor revisions based upon statutorily defined criteria; and (3) revisions to include adjacent real property acquired by donation, purchased with donated funds, transferred from any other federal agency, or obtained by exchange. Adjacent real property is considered to be land located contiguous to but outside the boundary of a national park system unit.

As part of the planning process, the Park Service will identify and evaluate boundary adjustments that may be necessary or desirable for carrying out the purposes of the park unit. Boundary adjustments may be recommended to

- protect significant resources and values, or to enhance opportunities for public enjoyment related to park purposes;
- address operational and management issues, such as the need for access or the need for boundaries to correspond to logical boundary delineations such as topographic or other natural features or roads; or
- otherwise protect park resources that are critical to fulfilling park purposes.

If the acquisition will be made using appropriated funds, and it is not merely a technical boundary revision, the criteria set forth by Congress at 16 USC 4601-9(c) (2) must be met. All recommendations for boundary changes must meet the following two criteria:

- The added lands will be feasible to administer considering their size, configuration, and ownership; costs; the views of and impacts on local communities and surrounding jurisdictions; and other factors such as the presence of hazardous substances or exotic species.
- Other alternatives for management and resource protection are not adequate.

These criteria apply conversely to recommendations for the deletion of lands from the authorized boundaries of a park unit. For example, before recommending the deletion of land from a park boundary, a finding would have to be made that the land did not include a significant resource, value, or opportunity for public enjoyment related to the purposes of the park. Full consideration should be given to current and future park needs before a recommendation is made to delete lands from the authorized boundaries of a park unit. Actions consisting solely of deletions of land from existing park boundaries would require an act of Congress.

**APPENDIX E: Public Comment Report for Harry S Truman Birthplace
Special Resource Study
Public Scoping Newsletter 1 Response and Public Meeting on April 21st, 2010**

Public comment is an important part of the Special Resource Study process, providing an opportunity for NPS to understand resources and communities around them in new ways. The earliest phase of public input for a project is called public scoping, and seeks to draw out concerns or additional information the public may want to contribute before specific plans are created for public review. The National Park Service sent newsletters describing the SRS process with a postage-paid comment card to approximately 100 recipients, sent press releases to dozens of news outlets, and invited the public to a meeting on April 21st, 2010 to hear about the SRS process and gather public comment.

In addition to questions to help the NPS better understand public concerns and expectations generally, we also wanted to know what people thought of the existing plan for the site, created by the Missouri State Parks. The State of Missouri had held three public meetings in 1997 and 1998 during the formation of their Conceptual Development Plan (CDP), which was finalized in May of 2002. The plan is still in the process of implementation, as funds are available, and remains in its early stages.

In requesting public input, we asked the following questions:

1. What kinds of experiences do you want to have at the Harry S Truman Birthplace? What do you think would need to be done at the site, if anything, to facilitate these expectations?
2. Are you familiar with the State of Missouri's Conceptual Development Plan for the Harry S Truman Birthplace? If so, what are your thoughts on its goals and progress?
3. Which organizations do you think should be involved in preserving and interpreted in the Harry S Truman Birthplace? What should they do?
4. Do you have any other ideas or comments you would like to share with us?

We received fourteen comments in total, one made via the online form and thirteen by mailing in the response card sent out with the Harry S Truman Birthplace Special Resource Study Newsletter. There were also approximately 25 people at the public meeting held on April 21st at the Thiebaud Auditorium in Lamar, many of whom participated in a question and answer discussion during which the NPS posed the prompts above.

With a relative paucity of responses from the public, it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusions about public opinion broadly. However, the comments submitted do reflect the opinions of those who have an interest in the study, and their comments shed light on the topics the NPS wanted more information about. This information will be summarized below in topic paragraphs: **Support, Experience and Expectations for the Site, The Conceptual Development Plan, Organizational Involvement, and Other Suggestions.**

Support: Overall, commenters were supportive of NPS involvement at the Harry S Truman Birthplace, though few commenters made suggestions as to what the involvement should be. One stated that it should become “fully a part of the NPS”, another wrote simply “National Park Service. Run it!” One commenter expressed a lack of support for the site, noting that there were already several Truman sites in Missouri. Perhaps even more tellingly, that same commenter

suggested that “it would make more sense for the State of MO to add [it] as a State Park and maintain this location,” evidently not realizing it is already a State-run site open to the public.

Experience and Expectations for the Site: Question 1 sought to learn more about what experiences people wanted to have visiting the Birthplace, and what their expectations for the site are. Many responses echoed the current interpretive mission of the site: highlighting Truman’s humble beginning and a typical home of the late nineteenth century. One commenter wrote that they would like to see “historical artifacts from Truman’s time in Lamar and during the era of his Presidency,” as well as museum displays of photos and videos. Several commenters referenced the construction of a mule barn on the former John Truman livery property, outlined in the CDP. One commenter wrote that it would expand capacity at the site, and another had a suggestion for a new interpretive direction: “I believe that the mule barn reconstruction would be essential. The mule is Missouri’s state animal. I think the Truman birthplace would be an excellent place to showcase this animal and its importance in our national past.”

The Conceptual Development Plan: Question 2 queried the public on their familiarity with the State of Missouri’s CDP and its goals. Many of the commenters were familiar with it, and supportive of the goals, which were characterized by an expansion in the size of the site, the construction of a mule barn on the former John Truman livery property, and the construction of a representation of the Franklin school on its former location for park operations and visitor contact. Many commenters felt the process of CDP implementation was “woefully behind schedule in becoming a reality.” Several commenters advocated for the involvement of the “National Park Service for completion of [the] Conceptual Development Plan if Missouri State Parks cannot do it.” One commenter said of the State “They have operated this to the best they can with the budget they have been given... The way I see it is the Federal government would see to it that the projects will be completed.”

Organizational Involvement: Question 3 asked what organizations should be involved in the preservation and interpretation of the Birthplace. One commenter put it simply “Any organization that will appropriate the money to finish the project [i.e. the Conceptual Development Plan]” No one stated that they were unhappy with the current day to day operation or interpretation at the site, and several commended the State’s stewardship. A common comment was that the NPS should be involved because they would bring more resources to bear in the improvement of the site; more than one commenter asserted that the NPS should complete the existing Conceptual Development Plan. No commenters explicitly advocated that the State of Missouri should continue to run the site, but with one exception this can hardly be seen as a vote of no confidence; as discussed above, many commenters, especially at the public meeting, were happy with the current management of the site despite their frustration about the pace of progress on the CDP. Other commenters suggested that the Barton County Historical Society, Rotary Club, Lamar Downtown Association, and the City of Lamar be involved, though in what capacity was not specified. No one suggested the formation of any new organizations.

Other Suggestions: Several commenters made other suggestions that could be useful for the State of Missouri and for other groups interested in the interpretation and promotion of the Birthplace. One commenter suggested that signs along the highways approaching Lamar be made bigger and more readable. Another would like to see the Birthplace be made more wheelchair accessible. A commenter suggested that a day tour of four Truman sites (the Birthplace, homes in Grandview and Independence, and the Library) would be an interesting tourism offering.

Finally, the location of those who commented on the study is also worth consideration. Those who responded with written comments, when they identified their location, were exclusively from Lamar. Twelve of the fourteen comment cards returned were from residents of Lamar, and two did not provide addresses. Of the attendees that signed in at the public meeting, two were from Barton County towns other than Lamar, and one was from neighboring Dade County. Though publicity of the project has been centered on Lamar, newsletters were sent for public posting to surrounding areas and to potentially interested parties throughout Missouri. Additionally, newsletters with comment cards were made available for public distribution to visitors at the Harry S Truman National Historic Site and at the Truman Library and Archives in Independence. The lack of geographic diversity in responses could indicate a lack of strong interest in the study outside the immediate area of the Harry S Truman Birthplace.

APPENDIX F: Methods and Means for Strengthening Existing Protection and Interpretation

The legislation directing the National Park Service to undertake the Harry S Truman Special Resource Study, Public Law 111-11, instructs the NPS to determine:

“ (1) the suitability and feasibility of --
 (A) adding the birthplace site to the Harry S Truman National Historic Site; or
 (B) designating the birthplace site as a separate unit of the National Park System; and
(2) the methods and means for the protection and interpretation of the birthplace site by the National Park Service, other Federal, State, or local government entities, or private or nonprofit organizations.”

This Appendix will address requirement (2). The suitability and feasibility of National Park Service protection and interpretation through direct management of the Birthplace has been addressed elsewhere in this Study. The continued protection and interpretation by the State of Missouri under their current management has been described in Chapter X: Management Alternatives under the No Action Alternative.

The following options are offered for consideration: the creation of a non-profit “friends” group or informal volunteer association to support historic site programs; a closer relationship between the Birthplace and the Harry S Truman NHS and Truman Library and Archives; and exploration of grant opportunities.

The creation of a “Friends” organization for the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site

If there is sufficient public interest in supporting the preservation and interpretation of Harry S Truman’s story in Lamar, the organization of a group to support the site, or Friends group, might be an effective way to harness local enthusiasm for the site, provide supporting programs and fundraising,

Applications for grants open to non-profits could be submitted through the Friends organization. Incorporation as a Friends group also allows donors to take tax deductions, and provides some liability protection. Forming and sustaining an effective non-profit Friends organization takes time, dedicated people, a good relationship with the primary organization (in this case, the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site) and a moderate amount of paperwork.

Formal incorporation as the first action of such an organization may be premature, and it may be prudent to test the waters first with informal events such as sponsoring lectures, community activities, or “work parties” on a seasonal basis to help with projects related to the Birthplace. Several people expressed in their SRS Scoping comments that already existing local organizations such should be involved, and perhaps their participation could be enlisted in sponsoring events.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ See Appendix E.

A closer relationship between the Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site, Harry S Truman NHS, and the Truman Library and Archives

To date, there has been little, if any, communication between with Harry S Truman Birthplace State Historic Site and either of the Federal institutions charged with preserving and interpreting the story of Truman's life and accomplishments. Even a simple arrangement of posting brochures and events listing could encourage more cross-visitorship. Currently, the Birthplace is not listed on the Truman Library's otherwise comprehensive online list of "Truman Homes," an omission that could be easily corrected.⁵⁰

Increased mention could be made of Truman's Lamar origins in Harry S Truman NHS interpretation, and would be consistent with Themes 2 and 5 in the NPS's Long Range Interpretive Plan for the site. Truman's earliest days in Lamar touches on Theme 2 "a common citizen who lacked visions of grandeur, yet still rose to the nation's highest level of power, without that power changing him," but perhaps has the most resonance with Theme 5 "Mr. Truman's upbringing by his parents and grandparents, based on the philosophies of their generations, exerted a great deal of influence over his behavior and beliefs. However, Mr. Truman had the ability to separate his duties as president and what was good for the nation from some of his late 19th-century views."

In public comment, there was a suggestion that there be a tour offering that includes the Truman sites in Independence and Lamar. Advertising special events like this beyond the local papers (with the Kansas City Tourism website, for example) may draw more visitors. Possible inclusion with wider programs like Road Scholar (formerly Elderhostel) which has organized, multi-day trips in the Kansas City area and elsewhere in Missouri, could also be beneficial.

Grants

There are a number of grants in aid or technical assistance available to museums and historic sites through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Many of these grants are available for program development, research, and collections, though some may be identified that can be put towards capital projects. Pursuing grant funding more aggressively can lead to more robust interpretive programs.

⁵⁰ <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/places/homes.htm>

