

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND
REGIONAL COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT
IN THE UNITED STATES

An Abstract of a Project Report
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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This project paper in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in Geography is an expansion of a Special Report written while interning at the National Association of Regional Councils in Washington, D.C. (See Appendix 1.) The purpose of the project paper is to provide insight to the application of geographic research principles that takes place during the internship experience.

The paper provides a background discussion of legislation that effects historic preservation in the United States. It also describes the role of historic preservation and the benefits it may bring.

In order to establish a data base of regional council activities in historic preservation and to analyze their funding sources, a survey was sent to 48 state historic preservation officers inquiring about regional council involvement in historic preservation in their state. From the summary responses 15 regional councils were contacted by telephone in order to gain information about their specific program activities.

The initial involvement of many regional councils in historic preservation has been to prepare an inventory of historic properties and sites within a region and recommend ways of preserving them. These reports generally include guidelines for setting up local preservation programs, and information on preservation techniques and sources of financial and technical assistance. In addition, they give a history of the region and a guide to the architecture it has produced.

The economic factor is always in the forefront of any preservation project. The public generally sees preservation as a luxury. Those agencies who engage in implementation of preservation programs have the responsibility of convincing citizens and public officials of the benefits of preservation programs.

What is needed is a definite federal policy on historic preservation which encourages and supports regional council involvement. The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service is in the process of formulating a National Historic Preservation Policy Plan. This plan will serve as the basis for shaping the preservation program in the Department of the Interior and for making recommendations on the direction of preservation in the entire Federal Government.