

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### National Trust for Historic Preservation – 11 Most Endangered Historic Places

As with last year, ICOMOS USA highlights the valuable role played by the '11 Most Endangered Historic Places' list prepared annually by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. While listing does not ensure protection of a site or guarantee funding, the designation has been a powerful tool for raising awareness and rallying resources to save threatened sites in every region of the country.

The list identifies parts of American history that are threatened by neglect, insufficient funds, inappropriate development or insensitive public policy. As in past years, the choices for 2002 range across the country, from Native American sacred sites in California and along the Missouri River to historic African American schools throughout the South. Their subjects vary just as widely, from the homes that make up our historic neighborhoods to a landmark industrial site.

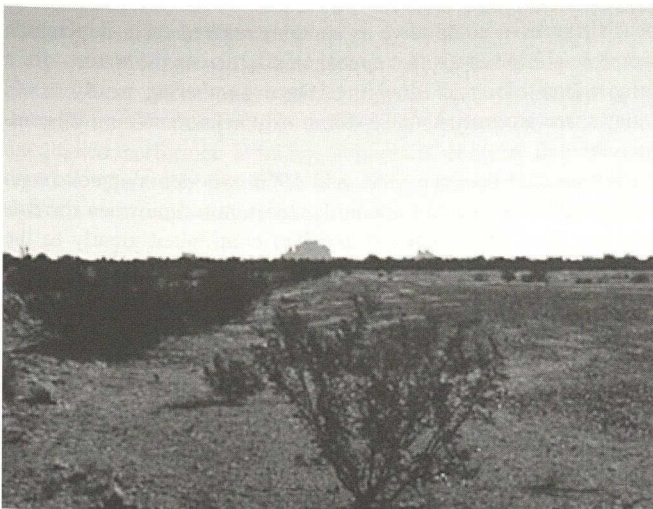
#### Kw'st'an Sacred Sites at Indian Pass, Imperial County, California

Filled with panoramic vistas, ancient trails, extensive archaeological sites and petroglyphs, this landscape could soon be defiled by a massive cyanide heap leach gold mine.

The Indian Pass site with its chips of black volcanic basalt and white quartz has been described as a giant prehistoric chessboard. The Quechan and other Colorado River tribes have continuously used the site for thousands of years for spiritual teaching and religious pilgrimages. The land is managed by the Federal Bureau of Land Management.

Glamis Gold, a corporation with mining operations in Nevada, California, Mexico and Honduras, wants to dig a 1600-acre gold mine at Indian Pass. The mine would have three huge open pits up to 880 feet deep and a cyanide heap leach pile as high as 300 feet. The ore is of such low grade that only one ounce of gold would be mined for every 422 tons of waste rock removed. During the Clinton Administration, former Interior Secretary Babbitt refused to issue a permit for the mine because it would irreparably harm the

Kw'st'an Sacred Sites at Indian Pass, Imperial County, California (Photo: Quechan Indian Tribe)



environment of the Quechan lands and the traditional values of the tribe. Now, however, the Bush Administration has reversed the ruling. Interior Secretary Norton has the authority to deny permission for the mine.

#### St. Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, D.C.

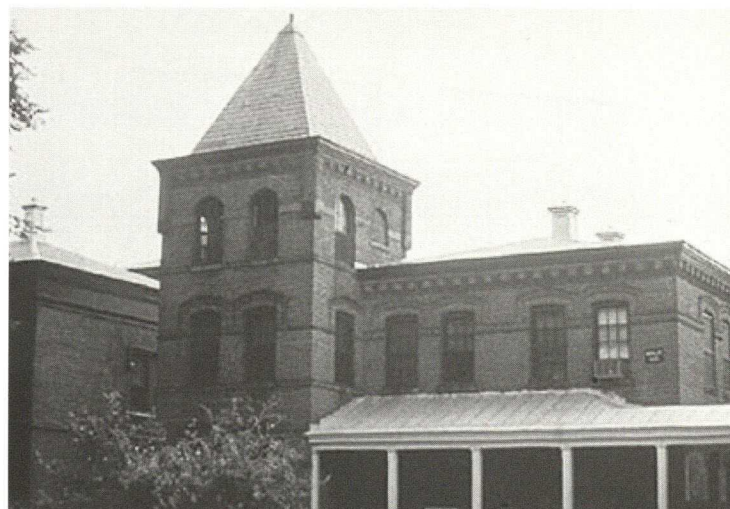
It may be the most famous mental hospital in America, but now St. Elizabeths Hospital, a sprawling 300-acre complex that dates back to the 1850s and has housed such illustrious residents as John Hinckley and the poet Ezra Pound, is also one of the most endangered. This National Historic Landmark, which at one time included a railroad, bakery, greenhouse and an impressive collection of Victorian and Colonial Revival buildings, is crumbling, and a shrinking patient population has left many historically significant structures vacant.

Situated on a promontory where the Potomac and Anacostia rivers meet, the hospital has a storied past. It was used as an infirmary for wounded Civil War soldiers and played a critical role in the development of modern psychotherapy techniques. For more than a century, St. Elizabeths has been a symbol of hope and healing for people in need. It was the model for other mental facilities across the nation. With adequate funding and a comprehensive preservation plan, it can restore the health of one of Washington's most important historic neighborhoods.

The Center Building, the oldest building on the St. Elizabeths campus, was designed in the 1850s by Thomas U. Walter, the architect of the U.S. Capitol dome. In the 1870s and 1880s red brick Victorian buildings, a gatehouse, a common dining hall and housing for African-American patients were added. Approximately 20 years ago, the administration of the hospital was transferred to the D.C. Government. The trend toward mainstreaming later caused the in-patient population to fall to approximately 500, down from the nearly 6000 of the 1950s.

Many of the buildings are now vacant, with insufficient funds to support basic maintenance. Additionally, there is pressure to

St. Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, D.C., Holly Building (Photo: D.C. Preservation League)





Historic Bridges of Indiana—Carroll County (Photo: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana)



Chesapeake Bay Skipjack Fleet, Maryland (Photo: David W. Harp)

Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, Minnesota (Photo: [www.SavetheGuthrie.org](http://www.SavetheGuthrie.org))



develop the property and no plan for the adaptive re-use of the buildings. The Center Building has suffered serious water damage and brick erosion, and several Victorian buildings are in need of roofing and brick repairs.

An Urban Land Institute panel sponsored by the District of Columbia and the General Services Administration was recently convened to begin planning for St. Elizabeths. In addition, a creative, public-private partnership can help mitigate the threat to the hospital and potentially save the property through adaptive re-use. The former Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, which rebuilt Pennsylvania Avenue, is a model that could be followed.

## Historic Bridges of Indiana

From 1987 to 1999, poor planning and conflicting interests led to the loss of 62% of Indiana's metal bridges built between 1860 and 1930. While communities appreciate the historic value of their bridges, planners often recommend demolition before seeking local input. The end result: historic bridges are being torn down even though rehabilitation is generally cheaper than new construction.

Indiana contains hundreds of old bridges that are a testament to America's engineering and industrial past. More than 80 of Indiana's historic bridges are listed either in the Indiana State Register of Historic Places or the National Register. While appreciation for Indiana's covered bridges has increased, the destruction of other types of historic bridges has escalated at an alarming rate.

Most of the historic bridges are threatened by the drive by county governments to replace them with modern structures at the recommendation of consulting engineers. Replacement of historic bridges with new ones typically costs taxpayers much more than restoration, and it destroys landmarks that are an integral part of local communities throughout the State.

Indiana needs a bridge preservation plan that takes a comprehensive look at these endangered resources and sets clear priorities for preservation, with funding to allow for rehabilitation. Preservation advocates must be consulted as individual bridge projects are considered, to ensure that preservation and rehabilitation alternatives are fully explored.

## Chesapeake Bay Skipjack Fleet, Maryland

Every fall for more than a century, the towns of Maryland's Chesapeake Bay have come alive as captains readied their skipjacks – wooden sailing vessels that appear to skip across the water – for a long winter of oyster dredging. Once numbering nearly 1000, today there are only about a dozen skipjacks remaining in commercial use.

Constructed between 1886 and 1956, wooden skipjacks with their brightly decorated trailboards represent a time when the natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay contributed greatly to the economy of not only Maryland but the whole Mid-Atlantic region. However, as the bay's oyster population plummeted, so did the skipjacks. Additionally, the high cost of maintaining a wooden boat has caused the fleet to disappear one by one.

The remaining fleet is severely deteriorated and threatened by the elements, deferred maintenance and the difficulty and expense of obtaining appropriate materials for repair and restoration. In 1988, 35 vessels remained; today, there are only about a dozen. At this rate, in just a few years, there will be none.

In 1999, as part of Save Maryland's Treasures millennium program, State Comptroller William Donald Schaefer chaired a task force that addressed hurdles to preservation of the State's historic resources. For the skipjacks, the group recommended financial assistance for maintenance, affordable liability and hull insurance, alternative but compatible uses for the commercial vessels, and greater access to oysters by encouraging the State Department of Natural Resources to allow the vessels to dredge with power on certain days. The task force also considered establishing an educational program that would encourage and teach traditional Bay-craft trades, as well as a program in which skipjacks are linked to State tourism.

## Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis

A theater that was about to take its final curtain call has received a temporary reprieve. Minneapolis' Guthrie Theater, a landmark of the recent past that played a pivotal role in the creation of the American regional theater movement, was scheduled for demolition until Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura made a surprise move. Ventura vetoed the \$24 million in State funds that the Guthrie Theater Company had expected to receive in order to build a new \$125 million three-stage complex along the riverfront in downtown Minneapolis. The Guthrie Theater, though, is still not out of the woods; an aggressive fundraising campaign by the company has already netted \$60 million for the new theater, almost half of the final goal.

The Guthrie is the creation of a visionary impresario, Tyrone Guthrie, who sought to escape the pressures of Broadway by establishing a professional repertory theater in the American heartland. Sleek and innovative and far ahead of its time, the Guthrie Theater has been the focal point of Minneapolis' cultural life for more than four decades. The theater, which opened in 1963, was designed by prominent Minnesota architect Ralph Rapson, a leading contributor to architecture's modern movement. The theater's innovative thrust stage and asymmetrical orientation literally set the stage for future theater design. For nearly 40 years, the Guthrie has been the home of the celebrated Guthrie Theater Company and has played host to a 'who's who' of visiting concert performers.

The Walker Art Center, which owns the Guthrie, intends to demolish the theater and replace it with a sculpture garden, if they can raise the required funds. Even in the face of Governor Ventura's recent veto, the Guthrie Theater Company is already well on its way to achieving their financial goals. In November 2001, the Minneapolis City Council approved a building permit that would allow the Guthrie to be razed.

In their bid to save the Guthrie, renowned architects, performers and local citizens have joined together to find alternatives to demolition. Because of the auditorium's superb acoustics and unequalled performer intimacy, supporters contend that the site could be adaptively re-used as a multi-use performing arts center and/or a recording studio/production space.

## Pompey's Pillar, Yellowstone County, Montana

On the south bank of the Yellowstone River in Montana, Pompey's Pillar, a sandstone butte that is approximately 100 feet tall, bears the only physical evidence of the remarkable 8000-mile expedition of Lewis and Clark. Here, William Clark ascended a rock, surveyed a limitless view and carved his name and the date: 25 July 1806.

At the request of President Thomas Jefferson, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set out on a journey to explore the unknown territory of the West and find a route to the Pacific. The pillar where William Clark carved his signature in sandstone sits on 473 acres owned by the Bureau of Land Management and is surrounded by farmland and pastures that have changed little in 200 years. The pillar also bears prehistoric inscriptions by Native Americans and holds great spiritual significance for many local tribes.

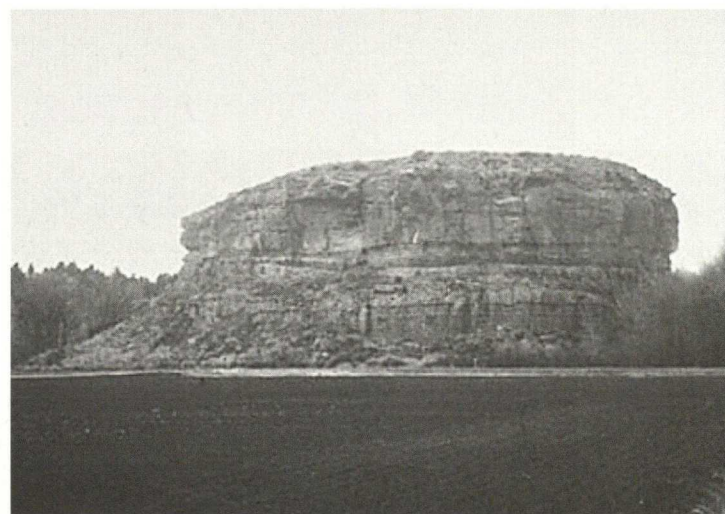
Soon, though, the landscape of this pristine and isolated National Historic Landmark may change forever. In the shadow of Pompey's Pillar, United Harvest Corporation, a grain exporting conglomerate, is planning to erect a 100-acre grain-loading trucking and railroad terminal with four looming 150-foot-tall grain elevators. Putting this massive industrial facility next to Pompey's Pillar would be like building a 15-storey factory complex next to the Grand Canyon. The visual impact of having these grain elevators immediately adjacent to the national Monument will alter the scenic vista. Dust, noise, and heavy traffic are all guaranteed to have a major detrimental impact on the serenity and historic character of the National Monument. Additionally, United Harvest began construction without securing the proper State permit or conducting a study to determine the impact of the grain facility on the surrounding areas. Visitors will no longer be able to experience the pillar as William Clark did almost 200 years ago.

The only way to mitigate serious impact to the integrity of Pompey's Pillar National Historic Landmark is to relocate the grain facility to another location. Local preservationists have proposed three alternative sites to United Harvest, but so far, negotiations regarding an alternative are at a stalemate.

## Missouri River Valley Cultural and Sacred Sites, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota

Crossing both Dakotas and Montana, the upper Missouri River basin has been called home by Native American tribes since the last ice age, 12,500 years ago. Filled with important archaeological sites and cultural resources, the 1515 square mile area includes ancestral villages, sacred sites, old homesteads and structures from the fur trading era. However, this land of great historic and spiritu-

Pompey's Pillar, Yellowstone County, Montana (Photo: Montana Preservation Alliance)





Missouri River Cultural and Sacred Sites (Photo: John Mitterholzer, National Trust)



Gold Dome Bank, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
(Photo: [www.JosephMills.com](http://www.JosephMills.com))

al significance is being destroyed by federal government reservoir and dam projects, which have altered water levels on the river, eroded the land and exposed the remains of tribal ancestors.

The area's cultural resources and sacred sites are routinely raided and looted. The fluctuating water levels of the lakes created by the Missouri River's six reservoir and dam projects constantly erode the shoreline, causing the loss of scores of archaeological sites, and even human remains, every year. Although the Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for overall management of the dams and reservoir, there is no comprehensive and co-ordinated management for the entire river basin.

The US Army Corps of Engineers continues to ignore federal laws that require the Corps to take responsibility for protecting these resources from damage. The tribes of the Missouri River Valley are asking the federal government to obey the law. The plan that governs management of the river, the Missouri River Master Water Control Plan, does not adequately address environmental and cultural resources. The plan must be expanded or supplemented by additional guidelines that would mandate compliance with all federal laws.

## Hackensack Water Works, Oradell, New Jersey

The Hackensack Water Works, a time capsule of 19th- and 20th-century technology that faithfully served the burgeoning population of Northern New Jersey for nearly a century, is threatened by a county proposal to demolish virtually all of this intact industrial complex in order to create an artificial 'ruin.'

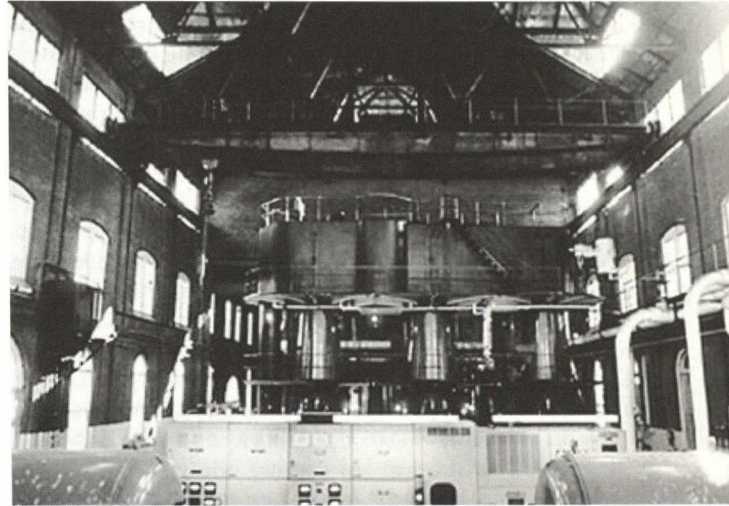
Built on a man-made island in the Hackensack River, the water works began in 1882 as a pumping station supplying a safe, clean water supply to much of Northern New Jersey. The machinery, intact and spanning a period over 100 years, documents key developments of the Industrial Revolution, particularly the evolution from steam to electricity. The plant is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the New Jersey Register of Historic Places, and is a National Trust's Save America's Treasures project.

The Hackensack Water Company closed the site in 1990, and it soon became the property of Bergen County. Following years of vacancy and minimal maintenance, in 2001 Bergen County requested permission from the State to demolish the vast majority of the Water Works complex, and to convert a few remaining fragments of the buildings into a proposed 'ruin.'

A State and national coalition of organizations has formed to advocate on behalf of the Water Works and to retain the complex with an appropriate adaptive re-use. A non-profit group, the Water Works Conservancy, has developed a preservation and restoration proposal that includes plans for a museum, education center, environmental center, Hackensack River research center and cultural wing. The future of this extraordinary site currently lies in the hands of the State of New Jersey, specifically the Department of Environmental Protection, which has the final authority to choose between a vision of this site as a ruin or as a living legacy to American technology ingenuity for future generations.

## Gold Dome Bank, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

For more than 40 years, Oklahoma City's Gold Dome Bank has been a shimmering vision of the future. Today, however, it is showing serious signs of neglect and lack of maintenance. One of the most recognizable sites in Oklahoma City, the 150-foot-dia-



Hackensack Water Works, Hackensack, New Jersey (Photo: Water Works Conservancy)



Rosenwald Schools, Columbia, Texas

Teardowns in Historic Neighborhoods, Bergen County, New Jersey (Photo: Adrian Scott Fine, National Trust)



ter dome was constructed in 1958, an early example of the geodesic dome patented by the futurist Buckminster Fuller. With its complex web of hexagons, the structure was designed to usher in a new age. Designed by a local architectural firm and located at a prominent intersection on historic Route 66 near the central business district, the building has always been used as a banking facility; since 1997 it has served as a branch office of Bank One.

Bank One, the current owner, has requested a permit to demolish the dome and replace it with a nondescript box-style building typical of suburban strip malls. The bank has stated that the dome needs \$1.7 million in repairs to bring it up to local building code standards. Supporters agree that the structure needs repairs, but claim that the damage is the result of deferred maintenance. The 'Citizens for the Golden Dome' group continues to stage weekly protests on site, raise funds for preservation, sponsors a website ([www.savethedome.net](http://www.savethedome.net)) and has obtained nearly 4000 signatures on a save-the-dome petition.

The immediate threat can be eliminated if Bank One and local preservationists work with potential buyers to ensure that sensitive adaptive use plans are considered. If the Gold Dome Bank is to survive it will need an owner who understands its unique value and commits the funds necessary to restore this illustrious structure.

## Rosenwald Schools, Southern US

In 1913, a millionaire Jewish high-school dropout named Julius Rosenwald teamed with Booker T. Washington, the country's pre-eminent African American educator, on an innovative program to improve education for blacks in the south. Over the next 20 years, the Rosenwald Fund used a pioneering system of matching grants to help construct more than 5300 school buildings in 15 Southern and South-western states. Today, these modest schools, all but forgotten, are disappearing fast.

Using state-of-the-art architectural plans initially drawn by professors at Washington's Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, Rosenwald schools ranged from one to many rooms. Traditionally, the buildings held a special place in the community because schools and churches were the only places where blacks could meet in the rural South before desegregation.

The schoolhouses were originally owned by the individual school systems, but when schools were integrated, those constructed under the Rosenwald Fund were often closed. Many of the Rosenwald schools were destroyed, while others were simply abandoned. Most of the remaining schools are now 75 to 85 years old and are often located in rural areas with insufficient funds for upkeep. Although there are historic records regarding the schools, there is limited information about their current status and a network to save them.

As a first step, the Rosenwald schools surveys need to be inventoried. In addition, examples of adaptive use of the schools should be shared with communities and stronger activist networks created.

## Teardowns in Historic Neighborhoods, Nationwide

Across the nation, a teardown epidemic is wiping out historic neighborhoods one house at a time. As older homes are demolished and replaced with dramatically larger, out-of-scale new structures, the historic character of the existing neighborhood is

lost. Neighborhood liveability is diminished as trees are removed, backyards are eliminated, and sunlight is blocked by towering new structures built up to the property lines. Community economic and social diversity is reduced as new mansions replace affordable homes. House by house, neighborhoods are losing a part of their historic fabric and much of their character.

The teardown trend is spreading like wildfire through historic urban and close-in suburban neighborhoods across the nation. Attractive, convenient and stable historic neighborhoods are in great demand, but the availability of large homes in these areas is sometimes limited. As a result, many homebuyers are purchasing smaller houses and replacing them with much larger structures that are not compatible with the historic character of the neighborhood. The challenge is to manage new investment so that it respects the character and distinctiveness that made these neighborhoods so desirable in the first place.

The National Trust has documented more than 100 communities in 20 States that are experiencing significant numbers of teardowns, and that number is climbing fast. From 1995 to 2000, the number of demolitions increased 45% in Bergen County, NJ. Just outside of downtown Dallas, Texas, more than 1000 historic early 20th-century houses have been purchased, bulldozed and sent to the dump. In Denver, Colorado, some 200 houses were demolished last year. In Ocean City, NJ, entire neighborhood blocks have been lost as the result of more than 300 recent demolitions. In the Chicago suburb of Winnetka, a rare pre-Civil War house was levelled. In Rancho Mirage, California, a museum-quality, 5000 square-foot home designed in 1962 by famed architect Richard Neutra was demolished without warning. Even the work of Frank Lloyd Wright is at risk. In the close-in Chicago suburb of Bannockburn, a spacious house designed by Wright in 1956 was purchased last year by an owner who planned to demolish it, but due to public outcry sold it to a preservation-minded buyer.

Neighborhood groups are clamoring for protection as homes are demolished in record numbers. First and most importantly, residents must develop a vision for the future – including where and how to accommodate growth and change – and then put in place mechanisms to ensure that their vision is not compromised. Communities can use a variety of planning and preservation tools to implement their vision and tame teardowns. Several of these tools aim to protect existing structures, in part by requiring the review of proposed demolitions and by limiting the scale of new construction. Other tools are designed to guide sensitive additions to existing homes and to ensure that new construction fits in with a neighborhood's historic character, rather than damaging it.

In neighborhoods where teardowns have already reached a crisis point, it may be necessary to provide a 'cooling-off' period, through a temporary moratorium on demolition, which can prevent the loss of significant structures and allow time to develop alternatives. Communities can also manage teardowns through designating historic districts, establishing conservation districts, and zoning overlays, in addition to negotiating voluntary easements to ensure that the architectural character is permanently protected. Education and historic real-estate programs can be a way to inform realtors and new residents about the history of older neighborhoods and provide guidance in rehabilitating historic houses and building compatible additions. Financial incentives and technical assistance, such as tax abatements and low-interest loans and referrals to qualified contractors, help residents acquire and rehabilitate historic houses.