

Reflections



A Program of the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources



Georgia African American
Historic Preservation Network

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YOUR TOWN: A DESIGN WORKSHOP

March 2002

Your Town is a rural design workshop developed by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The program evolved as a leadership initiative for decision-makers to address design challenges in small towns and rural areas. From 1991-1993, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) and the faculty of landscape architecture at the State University of New York (SUNY) developed the prototype for workshop curriculum, including lectures, case studies, and group design exercises in a hypothetical small town. From this beginning, the prototype curriculum gradually evolved to design issues in actual rural communities. Shelly Mastran, a preservation consultant to NTHP, is the “mother” of Your Town, as she was involved in planning 32 workshops since the program began. In January 2002, NEA, NTHP, and Pratt Cassity of the Public Service and Outreach Office of the University of Georgia School of Environmental Design (UGA), sponsored Your Town in Plains, Sumter County. This was the second design workshop that focused on large African American rural communities. Sponsors for Your Town, Plains, included the Georgia Humanities Council, the National Park Service (NPS), the Plains Better Hometown Program, and the Black Heritage Council of Alabama. The collaboration of these partners provided funding for the program, and 33 participants from Georgia and Alabama were selected through a competitive application process to receive scholarships.

On the first day of the design workshop, participants arrived in Americus, site of the international headquarters for Habitat for Humanity. Each participant told a recent success story, while sponsors provided observation sheets and conference notebooks with critical design information. Dennis Ruth, Dean of the College of Architecture, Design, and Construction at Auburn University, discussed his work in the Rural Studio, a building program for

architectural students in Hale County, Alabama. The students, working with innovative materials and creative concepts, build family homes and implement community projects in this rural setting. Clive Rainey, director of Habitat for Humanity International’s 21st Century Challenge, presented their initiative that works with local affiliates to identify housing deficiencies in deteriorated neighborhoods, and replaces them with affordable units.

Former U.S. President James Earl “Jimmy” Carter provided the keynote lecture and historical context at Plains High School, his alma mater. He grew up in this rural town with a population of 720, located nine miles west of Americus, the Sumter County seat. When

Jimmy Carter was four years old, his family purchased a farm in Archery, an unincorporated community a few miles southwest of Plains. Community landmarks in Archery were the Seaboard Air Line Railroad stop, an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, and a small store. Approximately 25 African American families and



Your Town participants, trainers and staff gather for a photo with Jimmy Carter, 39th President of the United States of America, outside Plains High School. This historic school was restored through a collaboration with the Plains community, the National Park Service, and the One Georgia grant program. It is located in the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site in Plains, Georgia. Photo courtesy of the Public Service and Outreach Office, University of Georgia School of Environmental Design.



*Jimmy Carter shares highlights of his rural experiences from *An Hour Before Daylight*, his autobiography.*

two white families lived in Archery. Carter discussed his experiences growing up on the farm. With the exception of one white playmate, Carter grew up among African Americans. While he worked on the farm and played with his African American friends, Carter acknowledged that the community worshiped and were educated in “separate” churches and schools.

Johnson would never come to the back door of the Carter residence. When conversations were necessary with Earl Carter, Jimmy’s father, the men would meet by Johnson’s automobile or in the yard. In 1936, when Bishop Johnson died, Carter cited his funeral as “the most important event which ever occurred in Archery.”

Jack Clark was the African American supervisor who managed the all black staff on the Carter farm. Clark received monthly wages from Earl Carter, while other employees were day workers or sharecroppers. While Clark taught Jimmy Carter farm chores and how to handle the livestock, his wife, Rachel, influenced his values and spiritual growth. Carter’s mother, Lillian, was a registered nurse, and she frequently traveled to administer medical services to both the African American and white community in Archery and Plains. During these periods, young Carter stayed with the Clarks, who had no children. These frequent visits provided ample time for motherly nurturing and conversations with Rachel, while Earl Carter, Jack Clark, and other adult males were busy with farm operations.

Willis Wright worked on a distant Carter farm in Webster County. Wright rented the Carter land by paying a mutually agreed amount of cotton and peanuts, instead of the more prevalent “sharecropping” practice. In 1940, at a time when few African Americans owned the land they labored on, Wright convinced Earl Carter to sell him 215 acres of prime Carter land. When workers once staged a one-day work “strike,” Wright negotiated a pay raise for the workers with Earl Carter. Wright was the first African American to register to vote in Webster County. In his early political career as a Georgia state senator, Jimmy Carter, inspired by Wright, argued for the abolishment of literacy tests used exclusively to prohibit African Americans from registering to vote.

A paradox of intimacy yet separation characterizes the design evolution in Plains and nearby Archery. Today, the Plains Better Hometown Program has assisted with implementation of economic improvements in the town, including Windham Castings, a design studio for patio furniture, and a planned antique mall with collection suites depicting the 1930s and 1940s. Mom’s Kitchen is a popular Plains restaurant owned by Maggie Grimes, an African American entrepreneur.

Following the Jimmy Carter lecture, participants began design observations and received information from experts in planning, community organization, graphics and housing. Kippy Tate advocated for increased community participation in planning the built environment. Tate is the director of the Alabama Building Commission, and is one of 2,000 registered African American architects in the nation. Milton Raven, Sr., a retired educator and Sumter County native, shared his memories of the school built for African Americans by the AME church in Archery. While participants were treated to lunch hosted by Lebanon Baptist Church in Plains, Mark Robbins, director of design for NEA, presented a slide show highlighting cultural and landscape projects awarded through design competitions. Following these presentations, Jorge Atilas and Kwesi DeGraft-Hanson of UGA lectured on housing



A Georgia historical marker and three small cottages are remnants of the historic community known as Archery. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

As a boy, he remembered an African American community leader, Bishop William Decker Johnson of the AME church. Johnson was the spiritual leader of the Archery community. Johnson’s church responsibilities encompassed five states, and he founded a school for the community and operated an insurance company. The Carter family attended services at Bishop Johnson’s church at least once a year. In spite of prevailing Jim Crow segregation practices,



The downtown Plains historic storefronts. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque



Jimmy Carter grew up on this farm in Archery. His boyhood home and outbuildings are located in the National Historic Site. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

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The African American Lebanon Baptist Church was one of the historic sites participants visited during the Your Town workshop.

issues and graphics techniques. Teams spent the afternoon on design solution sessions, and evening activities culminated with dinner at the Boys and Girls Club, built by Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, and Habitat for Humanity. Craig Barton, an urban designer and professor at the University of Virginia, presented highlights from his book, *Sites of Memory*, and the



Penny Smith, manager of the Georgia Visitor Center in Plains, organized the Your Town graduation dinner, sponsored by Windham Castings and the Plains Better Hometown Program. She surprised the participants with a special visit by Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter.



J.A. Hud, Charlotte Frazier, Kaye Horton, Jeanne Cyriaque, and Donald Beall enjoyed the evening presentation at the Boys and Girls Club of Plains.

design of a museum and visitors center for the NPS National Voting Rights Historic Trail in Selma, Alabama.

John Jeffreys is a leadership development associate with the Fanning Institute of Leadership at UGA. His presentation on leadership focused on mastery of self, relationships with stakeholders, and action steps required to achieve meaningful collaboration. Linda Wilkes, Jeanne Cyriaque, and Stone Workman led a discussion on *Available Resources and Getting Assistance* through the Georgia Cities Foundation, the Historic Preservation

Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Susan Holmes and Jacqueline Bell presented the “Community in Unity” program, a successful partnership they implemented. Holmes is mayor of Monticello, a 200 year-old town one hour south of Atlanta. She is a member of the board of directors of The Georgia Trust and HPD’s Georgia National Register Review Board. Bell was the first African American female elected to the Monticello City Council, and is currently serving her third term. She serves on the Executive Board of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials (GABEO).

The Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN) coordinated two case studies on African American heritage tourism. James “Jack” Hadley, president of Jack Hadley’s Black History Memorabilia, Inc., discussed his preservation project, a *Step-On, Step-Off* tour of African American heritage in Thomasville. Hadley shared highlights from the tour and *African American Life on the Southern Hunting Plantation*, a book he co-authored with Dr. Titus Brown, professor of history, Florida A&M University. Charlotte Frazier, GAAHPN Steering Committee member, presented a case study of a preservation project to honor African American heritage in music. Frazier is spearheading documentation of the *Chitlin Circuit*, the name associated with artists and musicians who performed in the Jim Crow south. *Chitlin Circuit* artists used vaudeville, comedy, and blues to entertain African Americans in theatres or tent shows. Frazier traced the trail of these artists, noting native Georgians Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, Fletcher Henderson, and Thomas Dorsey, who were *Chitlin Circuit* performers. She discussed buildings that provided performance venues, including three African American theatres listed in the National Register of Historic Places: the Douglass Theatre, Macon, Bibb County (1974); the Morton Theatre, Athens, Clarke County (1979); and the Liberty Theatre, Columbus, Muscogee County (1984).

Your Town is an excellent training opportunity for leaders and preservationists to enhance their skills, develop collaborations, and design viable, rural communities. Contact Shelly Mastran at 703/734-1742 or shellmast@aol.com for further information about the next Your Town.



Teams shared their design skills during final presentations at Your Town.

CENTENNIAL FARMS AWARDS PROGRAM HONORS AFRICAN AMERICAN FARMS

Since 1992, the Georgia Centennial Farm Program has recognized historic family farms as critical resources to the state's agricultural heritage. The farms were honored at a special luncheon and awards ceremony held at the Georgia National Fair on October 5, 2001. The **Centennial Heritage Award** honors farms owned by members of the same family for 100 years or more and *are listed* in the National Register of Historic Places. Recipients of this award receive a bronze Georgia Centennial Farm plaque. Carranza Morgan's farm was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on February 26, 1998. Morgan received the Centennial Family Farm Award in 1995, and the listing in the National Register of Historic Places qualified his farm for a Centennial Heritage Award.

Carranza Morgan's farm is located on Old Dawson Road in Sumter County, approximately 7.5 miles from Americus. The farm includes a historic farmhouse, six historic outbuildings, and 117 acres of cultivated fields. Carranza Morgan is the grandson of



The smokehouse on the Morgan farm features a raised-seam, metal roof, and a log foundation. It was built circa 1890 and used until 1993.



Carranza Morgan adapted the historic cotton barn by adding shed roofs on each side to provide storage for a tractor and other farming equipment.

Photo by James R. Lockhart

Nathan Morgan, a former slave. After emancipation, Nathan Morgan purchased 202 acres for a family farm in 1886. He built a farmhouse for his family in 1890 with lumber hauled by a wagon from a nearby sawmill. The farmhouse is one-story with a central hall and ell-shaped wing. It has original weatherboard siding and a full-length front porch. Morgan willed the farm to his nine children upon his death in 1917. Nathan Morgan's children continued farming the land, producing cotton, corn, peanuts, and vegetables. Mules provided labor to plow the fields, and the Morgans raised livestock to feed their family. Following Nathan Morgan's death, his son, Milton was determined to keep the family farm intact. He purchased the land from his siblings in 1925 and sold 60 acres during his ownership, including one acre of land for the Mount Zion A.M.E.

Church, the family church located on the farmstead. Milton Morgan died in 1947. His son, Carranza, purchased the farm in 1952.

Carranza Morgan continues his family farming traditions, producing fruit, vegetables, and hay while raising cattle. During his ownership, Carranza replaced mule labor with tractors and added electricity and other improvements to the farmhouse. He maintained the historic landscape of the original farm with garden vegetable plots, fruit trees, pastures, and cultivated fields. Morgan maintains the historic outbuildings by adapting them to store modern equipment. He currently leases some of the farm to neighboring corn and peanut farmers. Carranza and his wife Mazie have raised four children on this farm. Carranza Morgan's farm was the first African American farm listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Georgia and the first to receive a Centennial Heritage Farm Award.

The Georgia Centennial Farm Program presents **Centennial Family Farm Awards** to farms owned by members of the same family for 100 years or more and are *not listed* in the National Register of Historic Places. The farmers received a **Georgia Centennial Farm Certificate of Honor** signed by the governor. The Dave Toomer Estate, Houston County, was one of the 2001 award recipients. Kahlid Toomer, an African American, owns this farm in Perry.

Dave Toomer was Kahlid's great grandfather. He purchased 200 acres of land in Houston County in 1900. By 1911, Dave Toomer and his wife, Dollie, paid for the land. Lewis Toomer, Kahlid's grandfather, inherited the estate in 1930, while he and his wife Ela raised eight children. Fred Toomer, one of their children, took the greatest interest in the family farm. Fred Toomer, Kahlid's father, farmed from childhood until he was 84 years old. When Fred Toomer died in 1993, Kahlid Toomer inherited the estate. Kahlid Toomer is one of 12 children raised on the Toomer farm. All 12 children completed high school, and four attended college.



The farmhouse on the Dave Toomer Estate.

While the farm once produced rice, the 75 acres currently produce harvest fruit, vegetables, soybeans, and peanuts. Grapevines, fig, pecan, and walnut trees, some 100 years old, still bear fruit on the family farm.

The final award category is the **Centennial Farm Award**. This category does *not* require continual family ownership, but the farm must be at least 100 years old and *listed* in the National Register of Historic Places. There were no recipients in this category for 2001. The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) administers the Georgia Centennial Farm Program. HPD works closely with the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation; the Georgia Department of Agriculture; the Georgia Forestry Commission; and the Georgia National Fairgrounds and Agricenter, to administer the award program. The Centennial Farm Committee is comprised of members from each of these organizations. Participants who qualify for a Centennial Farm Award are honored each year at the Georgia National Fair. Applications are accepted throughout the year with a deadline of March 1st for each award year.



For more information or an application, contact:
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DORCHESTER ACADEMY: KEEPING THE MEMORY ALIVE

*Ebony White
Historic Preservation Planner
Middle Flint Regional Development Center*

In the 18th century, General James Oglethorpe offered 280 white settlers and their 536 enslaved Africans 32,000 acres of land to settle in an area halfway between the Altamaha and Ogeechee Rivers in the Georgia coastal region. Due to this location, the area became known as Midway, Liberty County. The settlers' origins were Puritan communities in Dorchester, Massachusetts, and England, and they founded Midway Congregational Church. The church members included two signers of the Declaration of Independence, Button Gwinnett and Lyman Hall. Following the end of the Civil War, the Congregational Church's American Missionary Association (AMA) founded hundreds of schools for freedmen throughout the south. In 1871, William Golding, an African American, donated land for the establishment of a one-room school, the first school for black children in the area. By 1879, as the school enrollment grew, the community and the AMA raised \$1,100 to erect a new building. The school became known as Dorchester Academy, in memory of the original settlers.



The Dorchester Academy Boys' Dormitory was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 23, 1986. This Georgian Revival structure is a rare 20th century example of a rural educational institution built for African Americans by the American Missionary Association. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

During the next ten years, Dorchester Academy continued to grow, building on a core curriculum of basic education, agricultural and vocational training. By the close of the 19th century, the Dorchester Academy campus consisted of several wood-framed buildings, including an academic building, chapel, dining hall, grist mill, industrial arts building, and boys' and girls' dormitories. With this expansion, Dorchester Academy became an accredited boarding school. Twelve white instructors taught the students, managed by an all white AMA board. By the 1920s, many former African American students became faculty and board members, and an African American woman, Elizabeth B. Moore, was the principal who continued Dorchester's expansion until her death in 1932. That same year, a fire destroyed the boys' dormitory, and the AMA built the present brick building by 1934, dedicating it to her memory. In 1940, Liberty County opened a public high school for African Americans, and Dorchester Academy closed its doors. All wood-frame buildings were demolished, but the brick boys' dormitory remained. Thus, a new era began for Dorchester Academy, and its legend continued to live on.



Dorchester Alumni constructed this brick fountain on the campus.

The boys' dormitory of Dorchester Academy operated a credit union and farmers' cooperative in the 1940s, and provided temporary housing for soldiers' families from Fort Stewart during World War II. By 1948, the Dorchester Improvement Association was founded, and Claudius A. Turner became the first director. With assistance from the AMA, Turner led the expansion of the boys' dormitory into a full-fledged community center, adding an auditorium, offices, and clinic.

In 1961, the Marshall Field Foundation provided leadership training funding to the AMA Division of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries. At the core of this initiative was the need to educate the African American community on voting rights. Simultaneously, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was emerging as one of the nation's leading civil rights organizations. The two organizations developed a partnership, and implemented the Citizenship Education Program, staffed by Septima Clark, Dorothy Cotton, and Reverend Andrew Young. The partnership needed a training facility, and selected Dorchester Academy as the site for their work. By 1964, over 1,000 persons had received intensified training in basic adult literacy and citizenship. These leaders returned to their communities to teach others basic literacy requirements that were needed to ensure their ability to vote. Dr. King frequently attended graduation ceremonies at Dorchester, and the SCLC held retreats there, including a strategy session to plan the Birmingham Campaign.

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DORCHESTER ACADEMY: KEEPING THE MEMORY ALIVE

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A historical marker and iron gate provide an entrance from the street to the Dorchester Academy campus.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

Since the 1970s, Dorchester Academy has flourished as a community center, adding a swimming pool, softball field, and barbeque pavilion. The site also includes the African American Midway Congregational Church on the campus and a vernacular style house that was built for Claudius Turner after the academy closed. The Dorchester Improvement Association is considering an adaptive reuse proposal to rehab the vacant house into a visitors center. It will include a display space, video center, museum shop, and office space. The proposed design includes a new floor plan for the small cottage as well as a site plan, addressing issues such as landscaping, parking, and rehabilitation of the building. A kiosk design is proposed to alert the community and visitors to current and future activities. Exterior lighting will also be implemented throughout the building and campus. In this manner, the Dorchester Improvement Association will keep the memory of Dorchester Academy alive, while continuing its services to the community.



The Claudius Turner Visitors Center, will be used as a starting point for the tour of Elizabeth B. Moore Hall, the former Boys' Dormitory of Dorchester Academy. The center will include a video that depicts the history of Dorchester Academy, and display artifacts, photographs, records, books, and farming tools. A museum shop is planned to market African American historical memorabilia.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

CITY OF ATLANTA'S CHRS COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY

*Douglas Young, Historic Preservation Planner
Atlanta Urban Design Commission*

What do the following four places in Atlanta have in common?

- The 1940s and 1950s minimal cottage and ranch neighborhoods in south and west Atlanta.
- The international and modern style houses of Atlanta's leading architectural firms.
- The pre-World War II neighborhoods of Lakewood Heights and Reynoldstown.
- The remnants of one of Atlanta's first areas of Jewish settlement.

None of them is included in Atlanta's inventory of historic places.

What is the CHRS?

CHRS is an effort to identify, document and create a comprehensive inventory of the city of Atlanta's historic places: its neighborhoods, buildings, sites and structures. A comprehensive survey of the historic places in the city was last completed in the late 1980s by the Atlanta Urban Design Commission (AUDC). The inventory was compiled through the publication of *Atlanta's Lasting Landmarks* in 1987, adopted by the Atlanta City Council as the official inventory of potential, listed, or designated historic resources in the city. Since 1987, only neighborhood-oriented or project-specific surveys have been completed. In addition, a lot has changed since 1987.

Why do the survey and have an inventory?

AUDC needs information that is as accurate and comprehensive as possible. AUDC is a source of information about the city's history, buildings and neighborhoods. Maintaining and updating an inventory of historic properties is both a regulatory and policy requirement of the AUDC. The 2000 and 2001 Atlanta comprehensive development plans identify several historic resource or historic preservation issues that necessitate another comprehensive historic resource inventory.

For example, properties associated with Atlanta's and the United States' Civil Rights Movement are not well recognized by the general public, as was demonstrated in the discussion of the fate of the Rich's Department Store complex and the Peachtree-Broad Building. Much of Atlanta's industrial and rural past is slowly vanishing as more infill development and redevelopment occurs around the city. Pre-history, archaeological and Civil War sites are undocumented. Buildings, structures and neighborhoods that illustrate Atlanta's development after World War II and were less than 50 years old at the time of the last survey are now old enough to be considered. With the advent of geographic information systems, computer databases and interactive web-based applications, the ability to catalogue, document and distribute information about historic properties is greatly increased.

The survey would synthesize all efforts since 1987 and at the same time deal with the issues noted above. AUDC expects the entire survey to take about 3 ½ years to complete and will provide overall project management. To guide this effort, AUDC formed the Survey Advisory Committee (SAC) to help oversee

the survey. The current SAC consists of individuals from a variety of backgrounds, who have expertise in a wide range of historic preservation, planning and general design subjects.



First Congregational Church was founded in 1867 by freedmen and the American Missionary Association. The building was completed in 1908. First Congregational Church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 19, 1979. This historic African American church in downtown Atlanta was designated a landmark by the Atlanta Urban Design Commission on October 23, 1989. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

Since the convening of the SAC a year ago, the committee members and AUDC staff have focused on organizational and logistical issues, basic fact gathering, and consolidation of existing information. As part of this effort, a variety of readily available information sources have been electronically catalogued and mapped. In addition, we are trying to get the word out about the survey and developing contacts with neighborhoods, government agencies, professional associations, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups and related university departments. The information gathered during the survey will be available to the general public through on-line, government and non-profit sources and locations.

Get Involved!

Some of the best sources of information about the city's historic places are people like you: residents, property owners and neighborhood historians. Although a lot of information can be found in books, on maps, or by looking at buildings, equally as valuable is information from those who actually lived the history and used the buildings - information that might otherwise be left out. The blending of all this information greatly increases the likelihood that the survey will be comprehensive. In addition, historic preservation projects are always more helpful and useful if more people know about them and contribute to them. Some of the questions that you can help with include:

1. What is the **name and location** of the neighborhood, place, or building in the city?
2. What is the **neighborhood, place, or building known for**?
3. What **important people or events** are associated with the neighborhood, place, or building?
4. What **important landmarks** are in the neighborhood or place? (buildings, roads, intersections, cemeteries, parks, bridges, railroad tracks, creeks, forests, hills, etc.)

5. When was most of the **neighborhood or place built? By whom? For whom?**
6. What **important changes** have occurred in the neighborhood or place?
7. Do you know of any **old photographs, maps, or other documents** showing the neighborhood, place or building that could be shared with the AUDC staff? Are there **people or organizations that have information** about the neighborhood, area, or building that they would be willing to share?

Of special interest to the AUDC for including in the survey are places that have not been recognized before or that have significance beyond what is generally known. For example, there could be a building that is known for its architecture and design but not known for a significant event that happened there. Tell us about that event. Or, a neighborhood could be known for its 1920s and 1930s houses but not for the significant person that lived there or the trends in the city's history that it represents. Tell us about those people or that trend.

Contact Us!

To help, contact AUDC at 404/330-6200 (phone), 404/658-6734 (fax), or dyoung@ci.atlanta.ga.us.



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ABOUT GAAHPN



The Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN) was established in January 1989. It is composed of representatives from neighborhood organizations and preservation groups. GAAHPN was formed in response to a growing interest in preserving the cultural and ethnic diversity of Georgia's African American heritage. This interest has translated into a number of efforts which emphasize greater recognition of African American culture and contributions to Georgia's history. The Network meets regularly to plan and implement ways to develop programs that will foster heritage education, neighborhood revitalization, and support community and economic development.

The Network is an informal group of over 1,000 people who have an interest in preservation. Members are briefed on the status of current and planned projects and are encouraged to offer ideas, comments and suggestions. The meetings provide an opportunity to share and learn from the preservation experience of others and to receive technical information through workshops. Members receive a newsletter, *Reflections*, produced by the Network. Membership in the Network is free and open to all.

Reflections

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