



Guarding the Past

Save America's Treasures

Coincident with its responsibility to preserve and restore natural resources is the Department's responsibility to preserve and restore cultural resources that belong to the American people. The Save America's Treasures program provides matching grants to public-private partnerships to preserve America's treasures and increase opportunities for learning. Administered by the National Park Service, grants are awarded for curation and restoration of properties, artifacts and collections of educational value that are of national significance and in immediate need of protection. Through this program, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Archives, and other agencies will initiate projects to restore national treasures such as the Star Spangled Banner and the Sewell-Belmont House in Washington, D.C..

In 1999, all agencies funded through the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill will submit projects costing between \$100,000 and \$3.0 million to the Park Service. NPS will coordinate a national competition to be judged by a blue-ribbon panel of multidisciplinary experts. The national significance of the project, urgency of need, and educational value will be criteria for project selection.

The 2000 budget request includes \$30.0 million to continue this program to address the extensive need for curation, protection, and preservation of artifacts and properties nationwide. These ves-

tiges are all that is left of America's and ancient peoples rich and glorious past. In preserving these artifacts, the Nation can appreciate and use the lessons of the past to reawaken the spirit of our forefathers. The start of the 21st century and the 150th anniversary of the Department of the Interior is an appropriate time to take stock of these national treasures and ensure through proper stewardship that future generations have access to them.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Founded in 1870 by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Allen University in South Carolina represents the culmination of a dream of Daniel Alexander Payne. Payne lived from 1811-1883, and was an advocate of Black education in the United States. The institution, named in honor of Bishop Richard Allen, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded primarily to provide an educated clergy for the Church and to provide an opportunity for higher education that was widely denied to African-Americans in the post-Reconstruction era.

The Allen University Historic District was officially entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. Arnett Hall, the oldest building on campus, was constructed in 1881 (pictured on the following page). Through the Historic Preservation initiative, Interior provides grants for preservation of historic structures at historically black



colleges and universities. Allen University has received \$980,000 in matching grants in 1998 and 1999 to repair and preserve Arnett Hall.

For 2000, the Department proposes to almost double funding for grants to HBCUs for badly needed

repairs to historic buildings. The request of \$15.0 million reflects an increase of \$6.6 million over the 1999 funding level. In 2000, the grants will be allocated among the 12 HBCUs identified in the Omnibus Parks and Land Management Act of 1996. Structures located on the campuses of these HBCUs include many buildings of great historical significance whose condition and stability continue to deteriorate. The allocation of funding in 2000 will be based on in-depth, on-site condition assessments that will be used to prioritize repairs needed and work to be performed.

Digital Library

The National Park Service is custodian of an irreplaceable collection of cultural and historical material, such as the diaries of Martin Luther King, Jr.; Revolutionary War correspondence between the founding fathers and King George III of England; and the laboratory notebooks of Thomas Edison. The budget includes \$5.0 million for Park Service participation in the Administration's America's Treasures Online Program, an initiative to develop a national digital library of records of American achievements in history and arts and sciences. The NPS anticipates that the funds will allow digitization of 500,000 objects. The request also includes \$3.5 million in additional funds for other cultural resource programs.