

# *Historic Preservation in New Jersey*



# *Save America's Treasures*

**T**oo many of the historic sites, monuments, artifacts and documents that tell America's story are deteriorating and in danger of being lost forever. These treasures urgently require conservation and preservation to survive into the next millennium. To focus public attention on the importance of our national heritage and the need to save our treasures at risk, the White House Millennium Council teamed with the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1998 to establish Save America's Treasures.

Save America's Treasures is a national effort to protect "America's threatened cultural treasures, including historic structures, collections, works of art, maps and journals that document and illuminate the history and culture of the United States." Established by Executive Order in February 1998, Save America's Treasures was originally founded as the centerpiece of the White House National Millennium Commemoration and as a public-private partnership that included the White House, the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Dedicated to the preservation and celebration of America's priceless historic legacy, Save America's Treasures works to recognize and rescue the enduring symbols of American tradition that define us as a nation.

The Federal Save America's Treasures program is one of the largest and most successful grant programs for the protection of our nation's endangered and irreplaceable cultural heritage. Grants are available for preservation and/or conservation work on nationally significant intellectual and cultural artifacts and historic structures and sites. Intellectual and cultural artifacts include artifacts, collections, documents, sculpture, and works of art. Historic structures and sites include historic districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects.

Grants are awarded to Federal, state, local, and tribal government entities, and non-profit organizations through a competitive matching-grant program, administered by the National Park Service in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.



## *About the Trust*

The New Jersey Historic Trust was created by law in 1967 to preserve New Jersey's historic resources across the state.

## *The Mission of the Historic Trust*

The Mission of the Trust is to advance historic preservation in New Jersey for the benefit of future generations through education, stewardship and financial investment programs that save our heritage and strengthen our communities.

The Historic Trust seeks to achieve its mission by serving as:

- A leading voice for preservation at the state level.
- A catalyst for preservation and community revitalization activities.
- A full partner in state policy development.
- A technical and financial resource for the stewardship of historic properties.

## *The Challenge*

The Trust has accomplished much since its creation forty years ago. Millions of dollars have been invested and hundreds of buildings having been restored. But, in New Jersey, there are many additional historic preservation needs to be addressed. The preservation and revitalization of historic neighborhoods and communities have become as important as the preservation of individual sites. Sprawl development and demolition in urban areas are now the major forces eroding New Jersey's historic buildings, sites and countryside.

In 2006, to begin addressing these challenges, the Historic Trust set for itself the following goals:

- Establish stable sources of funding to support activities that contribute directly to the preservation and use of New Jersey's heritage resources.
- Increase visibility for heritage preservation and its ability to contribute to the vitality of New Jersey's economy and communities.
- Support effective collaboration among all state-level preservation related endeavors to maximize the public benefits from these efforts.

The Trust intends to advance historic preservation in New Jersey, through historic preservation sensitive state policies, funding programs, and education initiatives.

# *Estey and Vail Houses*

## *Historic Speedwell*

### *Morristown, Morris County*

*\$50,000 (2007)*

**H**istoric Speedwell is known as the birth place of the telegraph. Samuel F. B. Morse conducted the first successful demonstration of the electromagnetic telegraph at the Factory Building in Speedwell in 1838. Stephen Vail, owner of the factory and ironworks had provided financial support and a workshop to Morse, a friend of Vail's son Alfred. The Stephen Vail Homestead probably dates from the first quarter of the nineteenth century, although no precise date of construction has been determined. Vail became a part owner in the iron works in 1807 and eventually became the sole proprietor of this very successful enterprise. The Vail family lived in the house from the 1820s through the 1950s. The house was completely renovated by Stephen Vail during the 1840s.

The Estey House dates to the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The house was rebuilt after a devastating fire in 1786. Captain Moses Estey was a chair maker and veteran of the Revolution. The Georgian-style house was modeled after the Ford Mansion in Morristown. The house was moved in 1968 from downtown Morristown after being threatened by demolition as part of an urban renewal project.

Historic Speedwell was organized in 1966 as a non-profit educational historic site. The site consists of eight buildings, five original to the site and three moved to the site. Speedwell is a National Historic Landmark and a Save America's Treasure site.

The grant will help fund the preparation of a historic structure report for the Vail Homestead and the preparation of a preservation plan for the Moses Estey House.



# *Hereford Inlet Light Station*

North Wildwood, Cape May County

\$120,000 (2006)

**T**he Hereford Lighthouse (1874) is one of six known lighthouses commissioned by the U.S. Treasury's Light House Board. It was built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers between 1872 and 1875. Three of the six known lighthouses have been demolished and one unsympathetically altered. The Hereford Lighthouse retains the most architectural integrity of the two remaining. The Hereford Lighthouse followed standardized plans developed for residential lighthouses by Paul J. Petz of the U.S. Light House Board. The lighthouse is open 350 days per year and over the last thirty-six months attracted over 120,000 visitors.

The current matching grant will help fund interior restoration, improvements to systems and fire suppression, and reconstruction of some exterior elements. Previous grants have helped fund architectural research and design, preparation of construction documents, and restoration of the roof and chimneys.



# *Hoff-Vannatta Farm*

## Harmony, Warren County

\$50,000 (2006)

**T**he Hoff-Vannatta site is a remarkably intact farmstead that dates from the late eighteenth through nineteenth centuries. Outbuildings constructed throughout the nineteenth century surround the rough-cut stone farmhouse. The property was purchased in 2001 using Green Acres funding and is included in the Warren County Trail Project. The fields surrounding the historic property are leased for farming. The community is negotiating a long-term lease for the property to stabilize, preserve and adaptively use and interpret the farm site.

The current Trust grant will help fund the preparation of a Historic Structure Report for the farmhouse, outbuildings and site. A previous Trust grant helped to identify structural needs of the house and barn, which are being addressed by repair work that county funding is supporting.



*Before Restoration*

# *Paterson Great Falls Hydroelectric Plant*

## Paterson, Essex County

\$50,000 (2007)

**T**he power plant is part of a long history of harnessing the power of the Passaic River, an exercise that began in 1792. The power plant is a prominent historic resource of the historic park still in its original, industrial use. The building is a contributing element to the Great Falls Historic Landmark District, deemed of national significance. The building is in poor condition, predominantly from maintenance focused on the machinery and extreme environmental conditions.

This grant will assist the preparation of a preservation plan and interpretive plan. The utility plans to make the building accessible for the public and interpret the plant as part of the Paterson Falls State Park.



# *Pathways to Freedom Tour*

## Lawnside, Camden, Cherry Hill, Camden County

\$30,000 (2007)

**T**he grant will help fund the research, preparation and marketing of a themed audio tour on Camden County sites that are associated with the story of the Underground Railroad in New Jersey. The tour materials will be available as pod casts for downloading from the South Jersey Tourism Corporation website.

Three of the sites (the Peter Mott House, Macedonia AME Church and Croft Farm) are Underground Railroad stations. Mount Peace Cemetery, established 1902, is the first regional non-sectarian black burial ground in Camden County and resting place to many African American War veterans, including a Civil War Medal of Honor recipient. Haddonfield, founded with a strong Quaker citizenship, historically guaranteed a strong, public abolitionist attitude in the county. Together, the five sites tell a compelling story of Camden County's role in helping runaway slaves to freedom and providing a safe environment for those freed blacks who chose to settle in the region.





# *Princeton Nurseries*

## Kingston, Middlesex County

\$50,000 (2007)

**T**he Princeton Nurseries site is significant for its association and contribution to the history of commercial horticulture in the United States. Princeton Nurseries was once the largest commercial nursery in the United States. At its peak it occupied 1,000 acres and employed 300 people. The nursery was established in 1913 by William Flemer, Sr. but relocated in 1995 to Allentown, New Jersey. Over 214 acres of the former nursery are in the public domain, owned either by South Brunswick or the State of New Jersey.

The heart of the nursery contains the former sales and administration building, a former blacksmith shop, two large cold storage buildings, a propagation house, and several greenhouses. Additionally, the district contains former farm fields, numerous horticultural areas, former worker's housing, and former Flemer family dwellings. The former sales and administration building along with the former blacksmith shop currently serve as the headquarters and education building for the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park and is in good condition. Other buildings throughout the nursery range from poor to good condition. Many of the landscape features are becoming overgrown and compromised by invasive vegetation.

The grant will help fund the preparation of a cultural landscape report that will guide restoration of the site.



***Woodrow Wilson Hall,***  
***Monmouth University***  
**West Long Branch, Monmouth County**  
**\$750,000 (2004) and \$50,000 (2007)**

**W**oodrow Wilson Hall is a National Historic Landmark, recognized for its architectural, social and cultural significance. Retaining much of its original historic fabric, the Beaux-Arts mansion was originally known as Shadow Lawn. It was designed by the office of Philadelphia architect Horace Trumbauer and was primarily the responsibility of Julian Abele, the country's first classically trained African American architect. Owner Hubert Parson, president of the F.W. Woolworth Company, became deeply in debt as a result of the extravagant building and decoration and sold his assets in the 1930s. Monmouth College acquired the property in 1956 from the Borough of West Long Branch, and the mansion is now the centerpiece of a 155-acre campus.

The current grant will help fund the preparation of construction documents for the long-awaited repair of the portico. Previous Trust grants have funded the restoration of roof surfaces, decorative rooftop terraces and balustrades, conservation of the historic theater's decorative murals and finishes, and the preparation of a multi-volume historic structure report that is guiding preservation efforts.

