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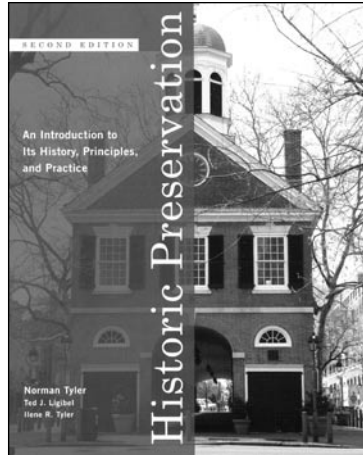
# **Preservation Education & Research**

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Norman Tyler, Ted J. Ligibel, and Ilene R. Tyler. ***Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice***, 2nd edition. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009, 375 pp., line drawings, black-and-white photographs, paper, \$29.95, ISBN 978-0-3937-3273-3.

Can any book go wrong by beginning with a pithy quote from John Ruskin, followed by references to Viollet-le-Duc, Jane Jacobs, and David Lowenthal? Surely not, given the emphasis most preservationists place on Ruskin and other seminal thinkers like him. With *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to its History, Principles, and Practice*, the search for a readable, non-jargonistic, elementary preservation textbook is over, or at least until the next edition of the book is needed to bring preservation's story up to date.

For years, educators have assembled packets of photocopied materials and, more recently, created electronic links to information on the history, philosophies, scope, and vigor of the environments in which historic preservation exerts its influence. This reasonably priced and mostly comprehensive title now makes available a basic source explaining historic preservation as both process and product. Because of the dynamic nature of preservation, no book is expected to be one-stop shopping; students still have to be exposed to essential primary materials and to sources that detail the changing patterns of preservation responses as new issues emerge or as old ones are understood in novel

ways. Thus, it appears that electronic compendiums of sources will continue to be an important teaching tool. But as a fundamental reader for neophytes, the second edition of *Historic Preservation* seems indispensable.

Amplly footnoted, indexed, and well illustrated with black-and-white-photographs and line drawings, the book is organized into chapters representing the predictable themes currently encompassed by the field of preservation in the United States: the history of the movement and its organization; prevailing architectural styles; legal basis for American preservation; research, identification, documentation, and protection of historic resources; economics, community planning, and cultural tourism; technology and treatments; and the currently in-vogue concerns of the recent past, collaborations with environmentalists, the green scene, and heritage areas. Many of the matters explored use brief case studies, a common and useful pedagogical approach. Wisely, the book's authors include a beginner's list of supplemental readings, as well as a section on organizations and agencies active in American preservation, an illustrated glossary of architectural terms, and a list of post-secondary degree programs in historic preservation. Understandably, this list is now out of date.

One laments certain deficiencies in the book, for instance, the building-centric approach to understanding heritage. Some subjects are not covered with the emphasis they deserve, such as how diverse cultures amplify the telling of America's preservation story and why vernacular expressions of place, which occupy much of the work undertaken in the name of historic preservation, are important. The book could also better portray how an understanding of landscape as evidence of human interaction rather than merely as gardens or settings for iconic buildings stretches our assessment of significance. Furthermore, a final chapter predicting where historic preservation appears headed in our country could have stimulated further thinking, more than the desultory acknowledgment of international perspectives on conservation in an increasingly global society.

Nevertheless, the authors of *Historic Preservation* and the book's editorial advisors accomplish what no others have to date. This is the intellectually accessible basic textbook—that Preservation 101 we all have been seeking. It is useful as a basic reader in the undergraduate classroom, serves as a quick reference for graduate students whose education demands more sophisticated reading, and provides information for professionals in foreign countries on how preservation is practiced in the United States. It can also be dipped into as needed by preservation volunteers who, after all, form the backbone of American preservation on a community level.

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