

The Advisory Board should at appropriate occasions recommend to the State Parks and Recreation Commission the employment of competent trained historians to prepare detailed accurate studies for each of the historic sites now under its jurisdiction or for each of which it contemplates purchasing or marking.

Studies of such sites should follow a prescribed form but should incorporate so far as possible original documents, photographic reproductions of originals (photostat, microfilm, or microcopy), typescripts (certified, if possible), testimony, or depositions, in so far as such are attainable through reasonable expenditure of time and money. Full texts or skillfully synopsisized or paraphrased passages of significant parts of books, articles, newspaper accounts, or original documents not available for complete duplication should be secured. So far as it is feasible, the reports shall be syntheses giving the historical evidence in extenso and on occasion accompanied by a brief analysis of the larger report.

The original or first copy of the report shall be filed by the State Parks and Recreation Commission. Other copies might be filed with the Advisory Board, the Secretary of State, the State Library, and other agencies and institutions which might have a legitimate official or professional vested interest in the report.

The first draft of the report upon any site should be submitted to other historians or scholars in pertinent kindred fields who have exceptional familiarity with the subject concerned. Criticisms, corrections, or exceptions made by critics should, if not accepted and if the critic wishes, be incorporated as a minority report which should be a part of the final report which is filed, as noted above.

The final report should be accepted by the proper sub-committee of the Advisory Board which should recommend official acceptance to the Advisory Board, which in turn should report to the Commission.

The employment of historians or other scholars should, in the main, follow the pattern employed by the National Park Service and such publications as the Encyclopaedia Britannica, namely upon a contract basis for each study.

Scholars eligible for contracts to make studies should be placed upon a panel scrutinized by a sub-committee of the Advisory Board.

So far as possible, reports filed with the Commission should be altered, amended, or even replaced as the official reports, if new research changes in pertinent detail the reports on file.

Title to content of a report (in the sense of a copyright privilege) should rest with the state under the administration of the Commission. The right of authorship in the sense of safeguards against plagiarism should remain with the author. Releases to competent, responsible scholars who might wish to use the reports in research should be generous but according to clear and reasonably flexible rules which should be stated in the contract between the Commission and the author. So far as it is legal, feasible, and reasonable, the author should be favored if material released is to be published to serve scholarly or even commercial ends.

FACTORS PROMPTING THE PROGRAM TO SECURE HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS  
FOR HISTORIC SITES UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF  
THE STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

An historical study serves for an historical site the same function as a legal abstract serves in case of the title to real property.

Since an historical site enjoys, because of this fact, a value considerably above the intrinsic worth of the site as real estate, the state should be as greatly concerned in the validity of the historical value (in money as well as intellectual integrity) as it is in the validity of the legal title.

Since public money and public authority are involved in the holding, custody, and acquisition of an historical site, the state is as entitled to an accurate accounting for the historical validity as for the regularity of the business transaction concerned.

Since gross inaccuracy in historical description of an historical site constitutes deception of the public, in the minds of those likely to enjoy historical sites possibly regarded as more serious than material fraud, precautionary measures to assure authentic presentations are indispensable.

References to errors in the literature relating to historic sites are nowise intended to reflect upon the soundness of researches made to date. There has been no plan to secure annotated studies or abstracts of pertinent documentary sources to be prepared according to established form and placed on file as official records.

Whereas the historical studies filed with the Commission may prove to be incorrect or possibly even completely erroneous, so are legal abstracts subject to error or complete invalidity. If legal titles on public property are found to be faulty, the abstracts are likely to be corrected or amended by proper legal or equitable procedures. Faulty historical studies should be corrected or replaced through proper scholarly procedures.

At the rate which can be paid by the state, it will be very difficult to secure the services of high-ranking historians or scholars in kindred fields. This problem will merely parallel the difficulty of recruiting top talent for any public service. Competent personnel should be available to undertake the necessary studies.