I'm very gratified to have been asked to speak to you tonight. There are two quite dissimilar reasons for my sense of satisfaction. One reason is the opportunity I'm given to talk about something I'm deeply interested in, which is the work of the Department of the Interior in the field of identification and preservation of this country's historical heritage. This part of my work makes a public administrator like a baseball player or an airplane pilot -- you know, people who get paid for doing what they would cheerfully do for nothing, they love it so.

The other is that the preparation of a speech for a group like your own, which is national, yet also regional and local, forces a public administrator to think of how his work looks from the regional and local viewpoint. This is highly desirable, and sometimes hard come by in the routine of our work.

For it is true that however much we try not to do so, we sometimes use "national" as a cover-up adjective, particularly when we regard ourselves as the final arbiter of what is or is not "national" in its significance.

Tonight I'll give you our side -- that is, I'll tell you something of the procedures for evaluation by the National Advisory Board and its Committees and the National Park Service.

But history is a pretty inexact sort of business, and its chroniclers don't always see eye to eye. You may, therefore, be of the same opinion still as to our errors, however much you may know of our decision-making procedures.

Every age has its errors in historical perspective. Herodotus himself was immediately criticized for inaccuracy and bias. Medieval church history is clouded by the partisan character of its period. Parson Weems' folklore long influenced our view of a national hero. Even the renowned Beveridge colored the development of a young nation with a materialistic tinge.

Distortions that detract from total perspective take various forms. For example, I'm not at all satisfied that the Civil War Centennial's observance is uniformly contributing to the kind of perspective of that fratricidal horror that we ought to have.
Seventy-five thousand people congregated at Bull Run a few weeks ago to observe the re-enactment of an isolated engagement -- at a cost that probably exceeds the annual budget of most organizations represented here. This is to go on until 1965, presumably.

Arnold Toynbee reduced his whole theory of history to the basic equation: How has this come out of that? Where does the re-enactment of Bull Run fit into a balanced perspective? Did we mark the centennial of the decade leading up to the Civil War? Was there a re-enactment of the debates that made for Missouri Compromise? How will we mark the struggle for national sanity that followed Lincoln's death?

Pageantry, I'm saying, has only one dimension -- the fleeting passage of an event without perspective of time, concept of space, or reality of life. By concentrating our time and effort on pageantry we may be contributing to the national entertainment, but we are not contributing significantly to history's purpose of explaining the present out of the course of the past.

So, having begun by criticizing a national symbolic immolation, let me diffidently suggest that a winnowing and thinning process is necessary to secure perspective. Toynbee, to return for a moment to that controversial figure, explains his preference of the field of Graeco-Roman history by saying it is not encumbered and obscured by a surfeit of information, and we can see the wood--thanks to a drastic thinning of the trees during the interregnum. Absent an interregnum, we must try to develop the sophistication needed to discriminate between the significant and the morass of heirlooms whose loss would diminish our understanding of the past not a whit.

Recently I spent a day at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia. That classic project has a dozen lessons for us. Some of the lessons I can only mention. The integration of a jewel of America's history in a major local effort for renewal of the decayed center of a metropolitan area, is a big story of its own.

Two things I saw in Philadelphia quite separate from the Park intrigued me. One was the technique of architectural photogrammetry, and the other the Historic American Buildings Survey.

Architectural photogrammetry is not new. It was going on in Europe shortly after the Civil War. But its application in the United States, I am told, is of rather recent origin.
Techniques of photogrammetry are being employed to make a permanent record of some of the features of Independence Hall and other buildings of the Historical Park. For instance, the ceiling was collapsing in Congress Hall in the chamber that served as the first home of the Senate of the United States. A team from Ohio State University (the center of this skill in the United States) made sets of stereoscopic photos, which permitted the architectural draftsmen to produce precise drawings of the intricate and delicate plaster design.

Architectural photogrammetry’s system for accurate and detailed drawings opens exciting vistas for the historian.

For example, architectural drawings of a church and steeple which would take a crew an entire summer, with scaffolds and all the paraphernalia such a structure would ordinarily require, can be accomplished with photogrammetry techniques for a portion of the cost. Stereoscopic pictures, with camera locations, angles and distances rigidly controlled, and a skilled technician to compute the measurements with the help of precise mechanical interpreters, tell more of a building’s detail than the most careful measurement by traditional methods.

Photogrammetry is also used in the National Park Service's Historic American Buildings Survey. In the days of WPA, as a project to give employment to the architects and related artisans akin to the more famed projects for artists and writers, it was decided to make detailed drawings of historic buildings, which would then be reproduced and made available to the public, for a very modest fee, through the Library of Congress.

A very great man, unassuming but brilliant and dedicated, started this project, and still heads it -- Charles E. Peterson, FAIA, and supervising architect, Historic Structures, for the Eastern Office of Design and Construction, National Park Service, Philadelphia. In those days of quick decision and quick action, Mr. Peterson proposed the project on a Sunday afternoon in November, 1933. Within two weeks the proposal had been adopted by Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, and within six weeks field work started.

The Historic American Buildings Survey is a joint undertaking of the National Park Service, the American Institute of Architects, and the Library of Congress, to enhance the cultural life of the nation by a comprehensive archive of historic architecture, similar to those already existing in Europe.
One interesting feature of this truly unbureaucratic undertaking is its summer program for students, which began in 1950. Students from participating schools of architecture have done some really marvellous work, and are responsible for us getting more for less money in HABS than in any government program I know of. And the architects of the future have the opportunity to participate directly in the conservation of our architectural legacy.

Ever since as a college student I was exposed to Henry Adams' Mont St. Michel and Chartres, I've known that art and architecture can be history—that theology, philosophy, mysticism, politics, sociology, economics, romance, and literature can be found in the architecture of a period. Architecture, Adams summarized, is an expression of energy.

So the HABS contemplates measuring and recording the complete field of early American architecture from the earliest aboriginal structures to the latest buildings of the Greek Revival period (and perhaps later). It covers all types, from the smallest utilitarian structures to the largest -- barns, bridges, mills, jails, fences, markers. A complete picture of the culture of the time is to be catalogued.

Without really knowing whether it is so or not, I think that working historians such as you could profit by a good knowledge of what the Historic American Buildings Survey is doing. Most of you know, I imagine, of the Catalog which the Library of Congress issues of the Measured Drawings and Photographs of the Survey, and the price list which accompanies it. The Library tells me that this is one of its most active sections.

If you haven't seen some of the examples of the application of photogrammetry to this project, and inferentially to some of your projects, I invite you to look into it. The Cadastral Surveyors of the federal or state governments in your state capitals will be able to show you the tools of this emerging profession, as applied to their fields of endeavor.

This year, photo-data books were completed on Engine 15 Firehouse, Montgomery Block, the U. S. Branch Mint of 1874, and a cast-iron Bank Building, which survived the Fire, all here in San Francisco. A duplicate record of the HABS treatment covering the Governor's Mansion in Sacramento was recently presented to Governor and Mrs. Brown in appreciation of their assistance in its preparation.
All this is important, it seems to me, because right now freeways and real estate developments are swallowing up our land at an accelerating pace, and they cannot always be turned aside from our historic places -- whether those historic places have or haven't achieved the magic designation of "national".

Right here in California such a struggle is taking place in Sacramento. Whether the Embarcadero Area of that city ought to be a central jewel in an urban renewal project like Philadelphia's Independence Hall, or Boston's Minute Man Historic Site, or as envisaged in David Rockefeller's Downtown Lower Manhattan Association's plans to include the federal shrines in New York, is beside the point of this talk.

The point is that the B. F. Hastings Building and the Big Four House, if they are torn down, may one day have to be rebuilt. We should prepare for that day.

Colonial Williamsburg is no less historic for not having the very original buildings. Historical anachronisms don't detract from the main purpose of an Independence National Historical Park. Ben Franklin's rental houses were long gone when the Second Bank of the United States was built.

What we can't protect in physical being, we can protect in spirit. The Historic American Buildings Survey shows us how we can catch the historic places for the files before the bull-dozer comes.

Some of you have as a goal for projects in your state and region, treatment similar to that accorded Independence Hall and other major cooperative projects in urban centers. Or you may seek to have status like one of our National Memorials, such as the home of Edison at Morristown, New Jersey, Hyde Park, New York, Lee Mansion in Arlington, Virginia, or Gettysburg, Shiloh, or Antietam Battlefields in Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Maryland.

I hope I've indicated by now that this is not the only answer. But a flood of requests comes in to the Department and it includes some odd ones.

It was Ogden Nash, as I recall, who said that one man's Mede is another man's Persian. So it is that one Congressman's Uncle Sam is another Congressman's imposter. A lot of Congressional time and attention has gone into the task of trying to determine which real human was the model for Uncle Sam. A bill has passed the House to
recognize the late "Uncle" Samuel Wilson of Troy, New York. He sold meat to the Government and branded the carcasses with a "U.S." stamp, thus leading an irreverent soldiery to interpret the brand as his own personal monogram.

A separate faction is plumping in behalf of the late Samuel Wilson of Merriam, Indiana. National Park Service historians contend, without convincing either camp, that the entire subject lies in the realm of folklore.

The beef stamped with the "U.S." mark leads me to tell you of the letter I received protesting Park Service plans to buy a certain block and raze its buildings as a part of a Historical Park project. He explained as follows:

"Of course there are some buildings in the block that the owners are just waiting to sell their buildings to the Government. We are not in this position as we have a nice going business and are supplying Peanut Butter to the Government for the Veterans Administration and the Army."

This gives you an idea of the weighty difficulties we encounter in preserving a record of the onward march of history, while simultaneously taking care for the marching of our Army. An army marches on its stomach, so we cannot ignore the importance of peanut butter.

Let me hurriedly add that I realize there is nothing funny about this to the peanut butter man or his employees.

I suppose there also was seriousness in the proposal to build a "God of Liberty" statue here in San Francisco.

The lady who made the straight-faced suggestion said that in the Statue of Liberty we have a Goddess of Liberty on the East Coast in New York Harbor. To balance the sculpture we should give the West Coast a God of Liberty in San Francisco. The lady offered the further suggestion that it would be nice if the Federal Government could make arrangements for the god and goddess to get together from time to time.

This is not the only instance of apprehension over the isolated social life of the Statue of Liberty. From a separate source the Department received a suggestion that we transplant the huge statue of Vulcan, which looks over Birmingham, Alabama, to Bedloe's Island so the Statue of Liberty could have a husband.
Emma Lazarus' inspiring inscription on the statue says "Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me" and obviously some of our citizens are interpreting it to mean: "Send me a man!"

To return to serious matters, I want you to know that the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service want to work hand-in-hand with you in the preservation of the heritage of our nation. There won't be as many new areas under federal operation as you might like -- nor as I might like -- for this kind of recognition requires Congressional authorization and Congressional appropriation.

But it is worth noting that almost two out of three of our 180 National Park Service areas are set aside for their history values.

The big task is yours, and in carrying it out I hope we can be helpful to you, with the techniques we've developed, and with our sympathetic cooperation.

Congress has given us, in the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the duty to make a survey "of historic and archeologic sites, buildings and objects for the purpose of determining which possess exceptional value as commemorating or illustrating the history of the United States."

We carry out this mandate in part through our Registry of National Historic Landmarks. Registry, however, does not make the recognized sites units of the National Park System.

We also, as an adjunct of our Historic American Buildings Survey, conduct an inventory of significant buildings.

As to the former, the Registry of Landmarks, we've rather arbitrarily divided American history into twenty-two periods or themes, dating from the earliest Indians to the development of the United States as a World Power.

The Survey staff studies sites in each theme, preparing an inventory by theme.

The inventory is screened by a Consulting Committee, which presents a tentative list of sites to the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments. The National Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior the sites the Board feels have exceptional value in telling the story of the United States. The Secretary makes the final approval or disapproval.
These general ground rules are used in evaluating historic sites and buildings:

Sites or structures where things happened that made an outstanding contribution to, and are closely identified with, or best represent, the broad cultural, political, economic, military or social history of America, and from which the visitor may grasp the larger patterns of the American heritage.

Buildings or locations involved importantly with the lives of outstanding historic persons, or linked significantly with an important event which best represents a great idea or ideal of Americans.

Structures important for their architecture, and archeological sites which have produced major scientific knowledge.

The findings of the Consulting Committee and Advisory Board occasionally cause anguish among the supporters of a site or building which fails to win its way into the registry. The Department has in the past given such cases another scrutiny, and will do so in future cases. In these instances the community and State historical groups can be extremely helpful to the evaluation boards.

The Park Service, as I've said, does not administer or operate the landmarks, or give them any financial help beyond a certificate and a plaque.

The Historic American Buildings Inventory really is a project of the Committee on Preservation of Historic Buildings of the American Institute of Architects. Through this medium, a much broader base can be given the HABS than is possible through its direct efforts.

The Historic American Buildings Inventory Sheets, after appropriate screening for compliance with the AIA standards, are distributed to the Library of Congress, the AIA Library, the National Park Service, the National Trust, and to local depositories as designated by AIA Chapter Preservation Officers. They are sometimes collected for publication for specific areas, and two fine examples are the Historic California series on San Juan Bautista -- Monterey -- Carmel -- and on Sonoma -- Benicia.
Admittedly, I've emphasized programs which are probably no more significant than the projects and works each of you carry out in your own states and regions. I've done this because, discovering some of these exciting developments myself for the first time, I've assumed that they might be new or of interest to some of you. If I'm wrong, I apologize for imposing on your time.

In any event, I've loved the opportunity to review with you some of the programs in which the Department of the Interior has a role.

I hope some of it is useful, but useful or not, it's a lot of fun.