



Identifying America's Historic Resources

By Mary Baird, WHRC Committee Member

The National Register of Historic Places was authorized in 1966 under the National Historic Preservation Act. Along with the National Park Services, the National Register coordinates and supports public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places provides a formal recognition of a property's historical, architectural, or archeological significance based on national standards used by every state. Currently, more than 96,000 properties are listed in the National Register and almost every county in the United States has at least one location listed in the National Register.

Do you have a house, land, or building that you believe is worthy of preservation? The house or building must be at least 50 years old and look much the same as it did in the past.

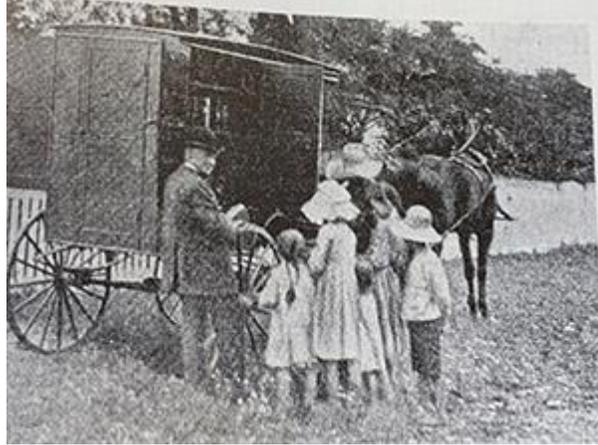
Begin the nomination process by contacting your state's Historic Preservation Office. They will provide the research materials and necessary forms to help with the process. If the property is on federal or tribal land, the process will need to start with the Federal Preservation Office or Tribal Preservation Office. Nominations can be submitted by property owners, historical societies, preservation organizations, governmental agencies, or other individuals or groups.

Proposed nominations are reviewed by your state's Historic Preservation Office and the state's National Review Board. The length of review time varies, but it will take a minimum of 90 days. Following initial review at the state level, the forms are submitted by the state to the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., for final review and listing.

Book Wagons and Beyond

By Hope Royer, WHRC Committee Chairman

The earliest women's clubs, from 1847 to 1889, were developed around prevailing interests of art, history, literature, and travel. Many became known by name as reading and study clubs. Among the earliest were the Ladies Reading Club of Junction City, Kansas; the Woman's Club and Library Association of Cairo, Illinois; the Reading Club of Durango, Colorado; and the Ladies Literary Club of Salt Lake City. Self-improvement appeared to be an underlying theme and a good starting point for women eager to reach out. Recognition of the need for education for themselves and their communities helped propel a keen interest in providing library services to their communities and beyond. Eager to ensure that even isolated areas had access to literature, clubwomen prepared travelling book collections, or book wagons, and sent them by rail and horse, and later by car, to areas beyond their communities.



Arrangements for the use of books varied from state to state. In most cases the borrower paid for transportation; however, in Missouri and New York, the state paid the transportation costs. Colorado, Oregon, South Carolina, and Tennessee were among states where the railroads and stage coach companies transported the books free of charge. In Utah, the traveling libraries were transported by rail and coach at one-half rate. Other than in Missouri and Maine, there was no fee charged for the use of books.

By 1904, 11 years after the earliest traveling libraries, there were 4,655 traveling libraries with 340,951 books in 34 states where GFWC Federations existed. Books were brought to rural neighborhoods, mining camps, ranches, granges, and mountain districts. Of the 4,655 known traveling libraries, 1,016 were owned and controlled by State Federations and GFWC clubs.



International Past President Sadie Orr Dunbar (1938-1941) is pictured (left) with a bookmobile provided by the New Hampshire Federation. With Mrs. Dunbar is Mrs. Frederick B. Preston (center), president of the New Hampshire Federation, and Mrs. LaFell Dickinson, GFWC Second Vice President.

By the turn of the century, 18 state library commissions had been secured primarily through the influence of clubwomen, and clubs had established 474 free public libraries. Clubwomen themselves often served as librarians and fundraisers. The establishment of such community libraries became one of the fastest growing areas of club activities. In 1933, the American Library Association credited GFWC with establishing 75 percent of public libraries.

GFWC clubs have continued their strong history of founding, maintaining, and promoting libraries well into the 21st century. Support of public libraries and public school libraries was the focus of GFWC's Libraries 2000 project. Initiated in 1997, the project raised more than \$13.5 million in donations.