

Curiosity Kit

Preservation of the Harada House

[Curiosity Kits](#) inspire exploration and learning of history through place. These multi-piece resources include articles that explore historic places and provide educational activities for life-long learners. This kit focuses on the preservation of the Harada House, the site of an important civil rights battle for immigrant rights and land ownership. It also contains stories about Japanese incarceration and historic preservation through collaboration.



Figure 1: Harada House in Riverside, California (Credit: Public domain, photo by MissionInn.Jim)

Acknowledgement: This curiosity kit was written by Maya Goldenberg and Marjorie Antonio, NCPE Interns at the Cultural Resources Office of Interpretation and Education, through a cooperative agreement with the National Council of Preservation Education. Additional editing by Nicole Martin, PhD, Cultural Resources Office of Interpretation and Education and funded by the National Council on Public History's cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.

Harada House Preservation through Collaboration

Thought Questions: Who participates in historical preservation? What counts as historical preservation?

The [Harada House](#) witnessed important moments of the 20th century fight for civil rights. It became a property on the National Register of Historical Places in 1977. But the house's preservation journey began long before and depended on collaboration between various groups.



Figure 2: Harada family photograph, circa 1928. Rear, left to right: Mine, Mary (Masa Atsu Harada's wife), Masa Atsu, Calvin (Masa Atsu and Mary's son), Sumi, Clark; front, left to right: Yoshizo, Ken, Harold, and Jukichi. (Credit: Courtesy of the Museum of Riverside)

Preserving through Tenacity

In 1916, the State of California sued Jukichi Harada for buying the house in the names of his American-born kids: Mine, Sumi, and Yoshizo. This kind of purchase was a common practice among Japanese immigrants, who could not legally own property in California. A 1913 state law called the Alien Land Law barred Californians without citizenship from buying land. Because citizenship laws discriminated against Asian Americans, California's Alien Land Law disproportionately targeted the group.

Entangled Inequalities: Japanese Incarceration and School Segregation

Different types of discrimination—racism, xenophobia, and more—rarely stand alone. Anti-Mexican and anti-Japanese sentiments overlapped in the Mendez and Munemitsu families’ story. Read about it [here](#).

Jukichi and his family won the landmark court case *The People of State of California vs. Jukichi Harada, Mine Harada, Sumi Harada, and Yoshizo Harada* in 1918 when the judge ruled in favor of the Harada children. The family was able to keep their home. Though the Alien Land Law remained after the Harada’s win,

their case was a turning point for Asian American rights for two reasons. First, it led the way for more cases challenging alien land laws throughout the U.S. The case also helped Japanese Americans preserve homeownership, a central part of the American dream. During the twentieth century, this was no easy feat. The Haradas worked hard to keep their house theirs—a space where they could celebrate holidays, grow their family, and continue creating memories.

Less than thirty years later, the Haradas’ home was again threatened. This time, the threat came in the form of [Japanese American Confinement](#). Harold Harada wrote on his parents’ wall, “EVACUATED ON MAY 23, 1942 SAT 7AM.” That day, U.S. troops forcibly removed the Harada family from their home and brought them to three different [incarceration](#) sites. Writing on the wall, Harold ensured that his family would not be forgotten. Their home, overseen by a family friend while the Haradas remained incarcerated, would remember the injustice they suffered.

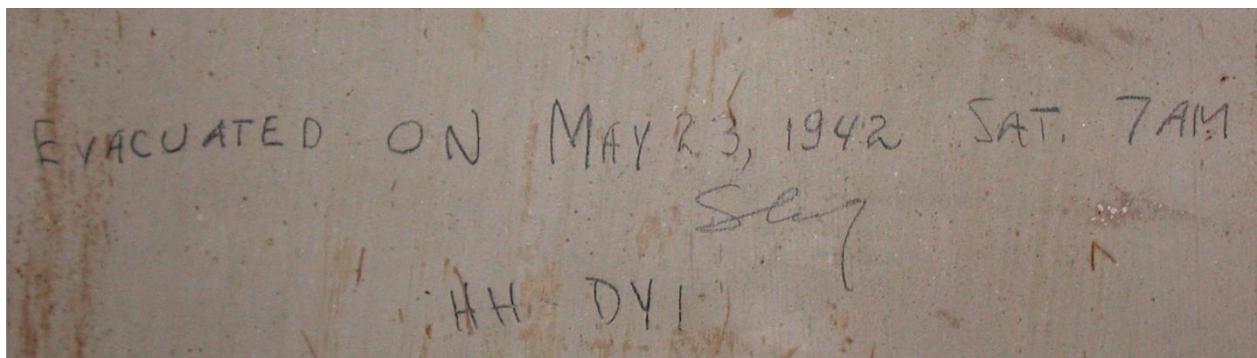


Figure 3: Harold Harada’s inscription on Harada House wall. (Credit: Courtesy of the Museum of Riverside)

Archiving and Nominating

Sumi Harada lived in the house until 1998. While there, she began a new stage in the home’s preservation journey: she archived its history. She maintained the Harada family records, photographs, and documents. These materials were helpful in securing local and national

recognition. Sumi worked with then-PhD student Mark Rawitsch to nominate the house for the National Register of Historical Places (NRHP). The Harada House successfully made it onto the list in 1977. In 1990, the house became a [National Historic Landmark](#) (NHL). Both programs, the NRHP and NHL, consider the house nationally significant because of its connection to *The People of the State of California v. Jukichi Harada*. At the time of the case, alien land laws existed throughout the U.S. The case was the first in the nation to challenge an alien land law.



Figure 4: Harold Harada at the Dedication of the Harada House. (Credit: Courtesy of the Museum of Riverside)

Collaboration with Cultural Institutions

Sumi reached out to cultural institutions. She began conversations with the Riverside Metropolitan Museum. Before passing, she considered donating the house to the museum. Her brother Harold inherited the house when Sumi died. He also wanted to donate their family home. Upon his death, Harold's heirs followed his and Sumi's wishes. The museum—now the Museum of Riverside—received the house in 2004. It began to inventory the Harada Family Collection and started working to preserve the house.

Cultural institutions like The Getty Foundation and the California Endowment of Humanities have provided grants to improve the condition of the house. Governmental institutions like the Riverside City Council, the Institute of Museum & Library Services, the State of California, and the National Park Service have also provided support. In 2020, the National Trust for Historic

Preservation added the Harada House to their “11 Most Endangered Historic Places” list. This list brings attention to historical sites needing resources to support historic preservation. It has the potential to direct more funds and help to the Harada House.

Community Involvement

Through a community fundraising campaign, the museum bought the home next door to the Harada House. It serves as an interpretative center for the site. The California Council for the Humanities and the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program also contributed funding.

The museum has repeatedly consulted community members about preserving the Harada House. In 2004, it held an event where Harada family members, the Riverside community, historians, and more set goals for the home as a historical site. Mark Rawitsch later helped found the Harada House Project Team, a community advisory group. It guides the museum’s preservation work.

Continued Family Ties

The Harada family was and remains instrumental in preserving their home. Harold’s daughter, Naomi, envisions the home continuing her grandfather’s legacy as a teacher. She hopes it will become “a symbol of civil rights” and a “place for education.” Riverside Museum curator of historical structures Lisa Masengale notes the privilege of working with family members like Naomi.

“It is truly a rare gift to have family members involved when you are working on developing a museum and interpretation about their own family.”

-Naomi Masengale

Conclusion

As of 2025, the Harada House is undergoing conservation projects. The Riverside Museum hopes to eventually open the landmark to the public. Getting to this point took the collaboration of Harada family members, individuals like Stebler and Rawitsch, cultural institutions, government institutions, and the Riverside Community. Historic preservation involves the work of many to be successful. But it takes the dedication of one to begin.

For more information on the Harada House, please look at our [Harada House place page](#) and visit the [Museum of Riverside website](#).

Learning From Harada House Preservation

Have you ever wondered what the story is behind a home?

You could easily miss the Harada House. Behind its unassuming exterior lies an important story. Located in Riverside, California, the Harada House was the site of one of the earliest battles in the 20th century fight for civil rights.

Husband and wife Jukichi and Ken Harada were Issei, Japanese-born immigrants to the United States. Anti-Asian immigration laws made the couple ineligible for citizenship. Since their arrival in 1905, they ran the Washington Restaurant and Boarding House. They served American fare in a dining room decorated with portraits of American presidents. Ken and Jukichi were business owners, but California's Alien Land Law made it illegal for them to be homeowners. Like many Japanese immigrants, Ken and Jukichi bought a home on Lemon Street in Riverside, California by putting it in the name of their American-born children.

After the purchase, many of Harada's neighbors in a predominately white community led a campaign to remove them from their home, ending in a landmark court case. The family refused to give in to pressure. On December 17, 1918, the Riverside County Superior Court decided *The People of the State of California v. Jukichi Harada* in favor of the family.

Judge Craig upheld the Alien Land Law of 1913, reiterating that aliens ineligible for citizenship could not own land. He also ruled, though, that American-born children of aliens were entitled to all the constitutional guarantees of citizenship under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, including land ownership. This meant that the Harada children were the legal owners of the house on Lemon Street.

The purchase of the house is just a part of the story. While the Harada House is best known for the site of a civil rights battle for immigrant rights and land ownership, it is also a story of Japanese incarceration and historic preservation through collaboration.

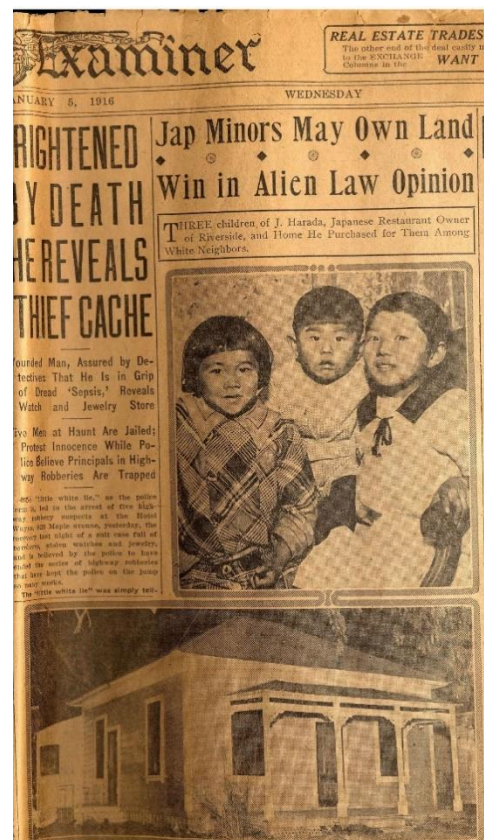


Figure 5: Newspaper clipping about the Harada court case. (Credit: Courtesy of Museum of Riverside)

Learning Goals of Activity

Guiding Question

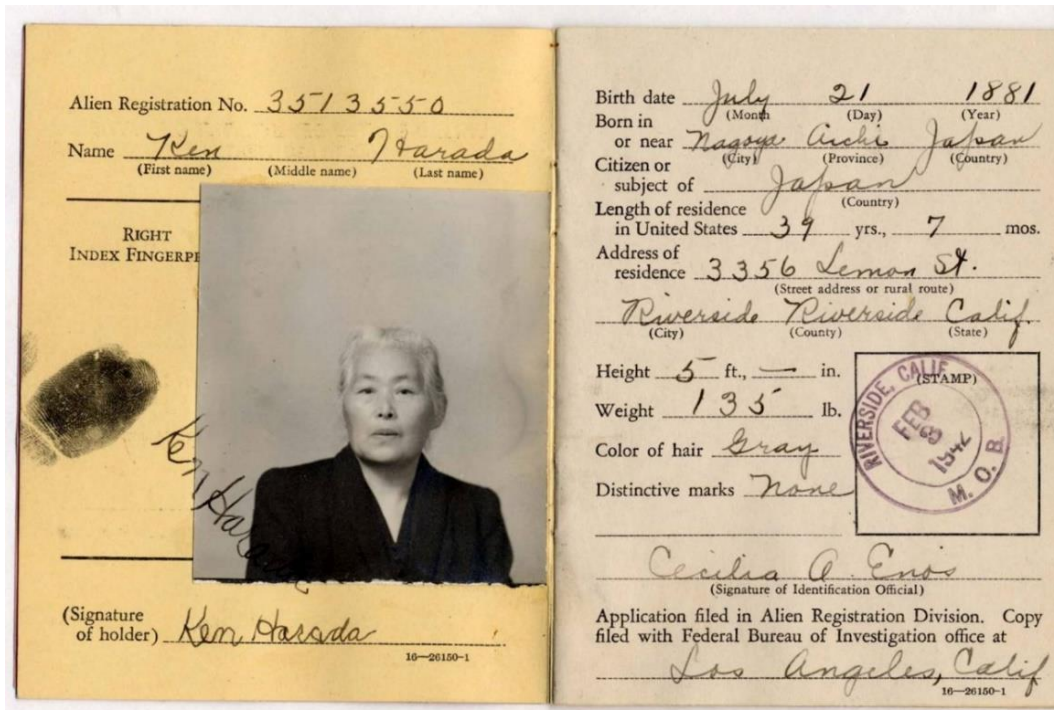
How can community members and organizations work together for historic preservation?

1. Define place and preservation.
2. Research local sites that have historic significance in your community.
3. Identify strategies community members and organizations use for historic preservation.
4. Use creative avenues to share and present the stories of historic places.

Interested in learning more about the history of the Harada House? Check out [Harada House \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#) for more on the Harada's immigration story to contesting immigration laws.

Inquiry Questions

The Harada House holds both the history of an important civil rights case and the story of how it was preserved as a historic place. **What can we learn from a place?** And what are the steps we can take to preserve such a place and tell its story?



Alien Registration No. 3573550

Name Ken Harada
(First name) (Middle name) (Last name)

RIGHT INDEX FINGERPRINT

Birth date July 21 1881
(Month) (Day) (Year)

Born in Nagoya Aichi Japan
(City) (Province) (Country)

Citizen or subject of Japan
(Country)

Length of residence in United States 39 yrs., 7 mos.

Address of residence 3356 Lemon St.
(Street address or rural route)
Riverside Riverside Calif.
(City) (County) (State)

Height 5 ft., — in.

Weight 135 lb.

Color of hair Gray

Distinctive marks None

(Signature of holder) Ken Harada

10-26150-1

Cecilia A. Enos
(Signature of Identification Official)

Application filed in Alien Registration Division. Copy filed with Federal Bureau of Investigation office at Los Angeles, Calif.

10-26150-1

Stamp: RIVERSIDE, CALIF. FEB 1946 M. O. B.

Figure 6: Ken Harada's Alien Registration Card (Credit: Courtesy of Museum of Riverside)

Activity One: Learning History through Place

What is place? Think about a place that is important to you. What comes to mind? The address and the cross-street? How the building looks, or the memories you've made there? Place is more than a point on a map. A sense of place refers to distinct collection of qualities and characteristics – visual, cultural, natural, and social – to create meaning and value to a location.

Some places are recognized for their importance to our country's history. Historic places exist throughout the United States. Some of these places, like [Angel Island](#) in California or ['Iolani Palace](#) in Hawai'i, are well-known. Many more, like the Harada House, can go unnoticed, but their stories are important to remember and preserve for the future.

Fortunately, there are programs and organizations designed to preserve these sites and ensure that their contributions to American history are recognized. Most sites will not be recognized at a national level. Yet the steps taken in the case of the Harada House are a useful model for those who want to preserve places in their community.

Illustrating Places

Take a moment to think about places in your community. **Draw, sketch, or illustrate a place or places that are meaningful to you.** They can be places you see every day, or places that you have visited or want to travel to. How can you show the sense of place? You can use paper, a canvas, or digital art to create your work.

Consider the Following Questions

1. What places are meaningful to you? What makes this place significant to you?
2. Where are the gathering spaces in your community? Do these places in your community have lots of history?
3. Are there special events in your community that happen annually? Where do they occur?
4. Who or what makes your community special?

Reflect

1. How do the places help others learn about your community?
2. Are there any stories you associate with these places? What do you want to learn more about?

Activity Two: Community-Based Historical Preservation

Preserving the Harada House was – and is – an effort made by many. There are different institutions, community groups, and individuals who all played a part in safeguarding this history. How are they all connected?

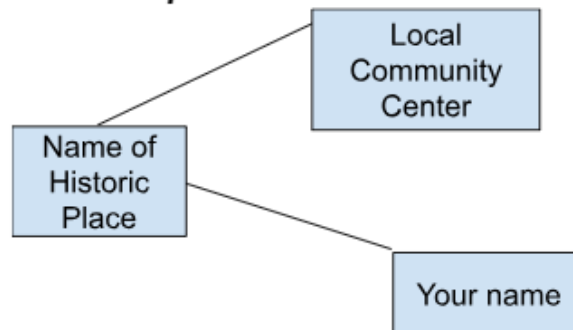
Learn more about the Harada House’s ground-up preservation efforts here, [Curiosity Kit: Harada House Preservation through Collaboration](#).

Reflect: What did you learn from the Harada House’s preservation journey?

Web of Community Connections

Imagine you want to help preserve the history of a significant historic place in your community. Who do you want to be part of the process? **Draw, illustrate, or sketch a web of connections in your community.** Start with the place you want to preserve and then draw a branch out to represent you.

For example:



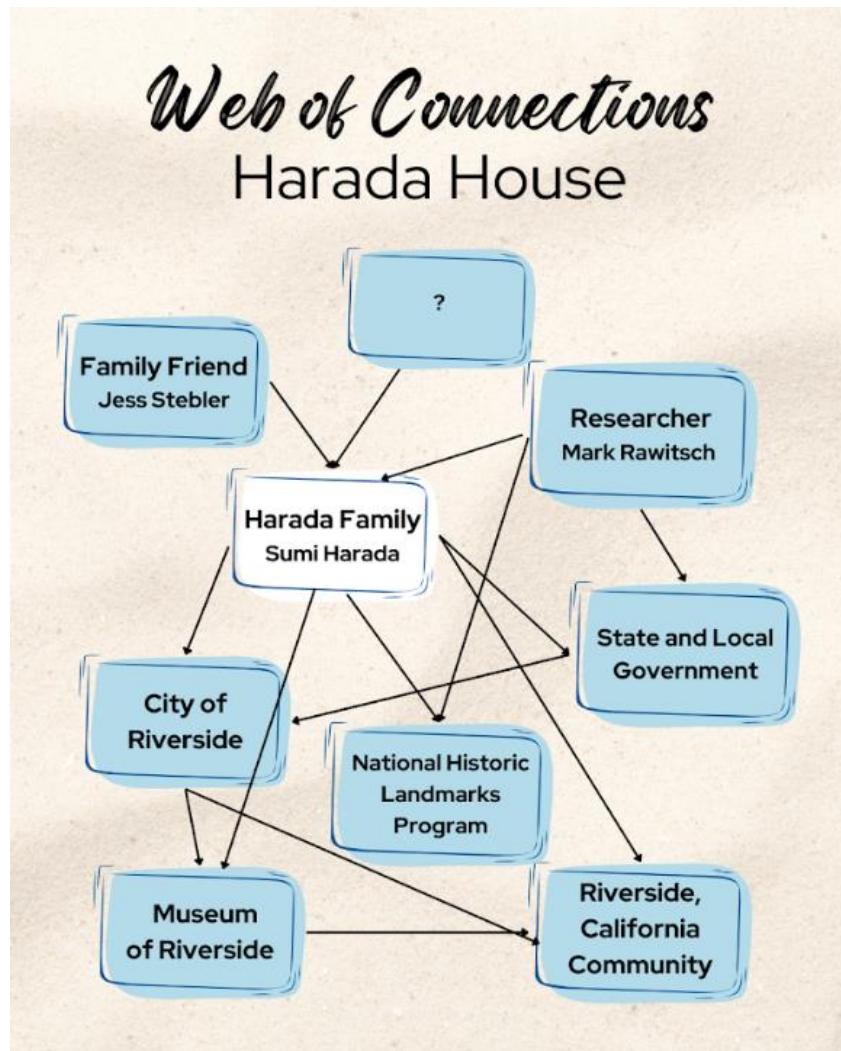


Figure 7: Sample of the web of connections activity. There are a lot of people involved in preserving and maintaining the Harada House. What do all of these connections tell you about the preservation efforts? Are there others who are not represented in this web?

Consider the Following

1. Who are you involving in the preservation process? Are these people close to the any significant events or happenings in your community? What are some reasons why people are invested or want to take care of a place?
2. How are communities and families considered and consulted in the preservation process?
3. What are some shared motivations that you and others may have in preserving this place? What is the greater goal you are working on together?
4. Are there any difficulties you anticipate in this preservation journey?

Activity Three: Sharing Histories through Education and Interpretation

The Museum of Riverside (formerly Riverside Metropolitan Museum) and the Riverside community played an important role in caring for the history of the Harada family and the Harada House. They consulted community members in the preservation process, held meetings and events to plan for the future of the house, and hosted tours for the public.

What are ways we can present and share histories? Consider the places where you learn about stories. Are these found in books? In conversations between friends and loved ones? How about in schools or museums?

Getting the Word Out: Interpretation and Outreach

Imagine that you want to spread the word about the historic place you want to preserve. You are in charge of making sure people know about the place and why it is important to remember its history and care for building. How are you going to share these histories?

Plan an outreach event or effort to get the word out about your historic place. From grassroots flyering, social media campaigns, to guided tours – write down your ideas below.

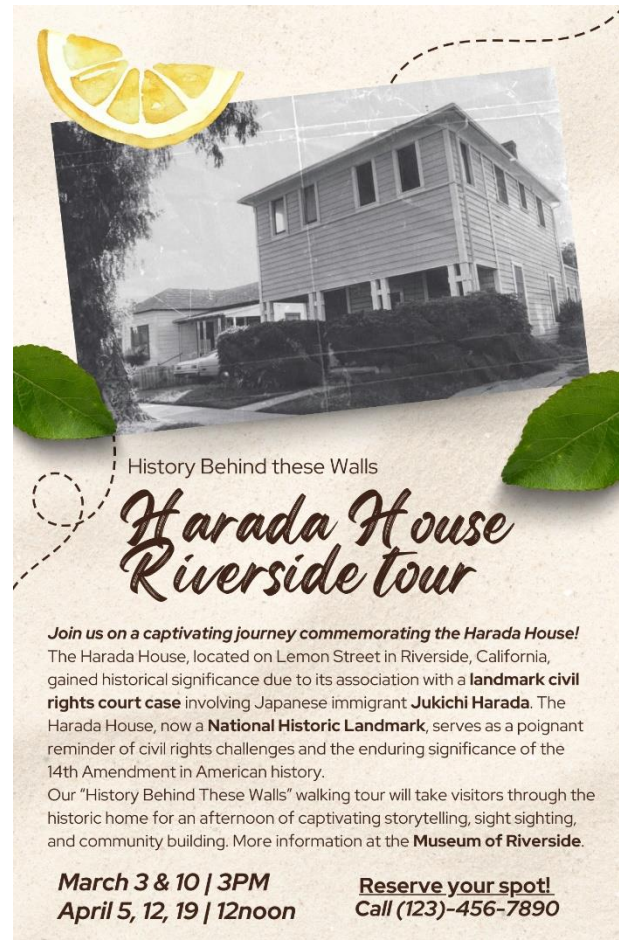


Figure 8: This is an example of what a student flyer could look like for a public program. Mock-up flyer of an interpretative and education program for a historic place, like the Harada House. Guided tours are popular programs for historic places. This is not an actual flyer or representation of an event at the historic place.

Mock Flyer Transcription

Note that this is not an actual flyer or representation of an event at the historic place.

“Join us on a captivating journey commemorating the Harada House! The Harada House, located on Lemon Street in Riverside, California, gained historical significance due to its association with a landmark civil rights court case involving Japanese immigrant Jukichi Harada. The Harada House, now a National Historic Landmark, serves as a poignant reminder of civil rights challenges and the enduring significance of the 14th Amendment in American history. Our “History Behind These Walls” walking tour will take visitors through the historic home for an afternoon of captivating storytelling, sight sighting, and community building. More information at the Museum of Riverside.”

Consider the Following

1. What about the history of the place will you emphasize?
2. What is an engaging way to bring attention to the historic place?
3. Who do you want to work with to plan this event or program?
4. Where will you host the event?
5. Who will you invite? Who is your audience?
6. Are there any activities for your audience to do? What will they do at this event or program?
7. Will this be a one-time event or is it recurring? Will there be a long-term way for people to engage in this site?

Preservation Resources

If you believe that your local community may contain a site of historical significance, take action! If not for two citizens, Sumi Harada and Mark Rawitsch, the story of the Harada family could have been forgotten. The rules, regulations, and applications can make historic preservation seem daunting. There are technical assistance, grants, and programs available at the local, state, and federal level. These can provide many avenues for recognizing and protecting a historic place. As no two places are the same, there are many preservation strategies that might work best for your property.

The National Register of Historic Places (www.nps.gov/nr) is the nation’s official list of historic places considered worthy of preservation. State Historic Preservation Offices (www.ncshpo.org), Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (www.nathpo.org), and local historic preservation organizations may also maintain official lists of historic places. Sites of exceptional national significance can be nominated for designation as a National Historic Landmark (www.nps.gov/nhl), but a site is much more likely to gain protection through a local preservation organization.

Many community initiatives to preserve and promote historic sites are already in place. You may want to check if your site lies within a National Heritage Area (www.nps.gov/heritageareas), a Certified Local Government (www.nps.gov/clg) partnership, or a National Main Street Program (<https://savingplaces.org/>).

Researching the historic places in your neighborhood can bring you closer to your community and your past. Listen to your local elders and consider recording their oral histories. If you have family collections of objects and documents that could serve other historical researchers, you might preserve or donate those collections for future generations. Learn how to care for them or donate them to an archive or museum using some of the links below.

Preservation Links

[Historic Preservation \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#) Historic preservation is a conversation with our past about our future. Learn more from NPS' preservation resources!

[Technical Preservation Services \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#) Technical Preservation Services develops historic preservation standards and guidance on preserving and rehabilitating historic buildings.

[@SavingPlaces | National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) The National Trust for Historic Preservation works to save America's historic sites; tell the full American story; build stronger communities; and invest in preservation's future.

[PreserveNet](#) PreserveNet has a comprehensive database of regularly updated internet resources, a list of degree programs in historic preservation, and a jobs board.

[National Alliance of Preservation Commissions](#) NAPC provides technical support and manages an information network to help local commissions accomplish their preservation objectives.

What You Can Do

With these tools at your disposal, learn about your neighborhood and its history. Understand its past in the context of our national story. Make meaningful connections with your community and help preserve the heritage of all Americans.