

News Release

NATIONAL
TRUST
FOR
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION®

*****EMBARGOED UNTIL 3:00 AM EST ON APRIL 28, 2009*****

Contact: Communications & Marketing, 202-588-6141, pr@nthp.org

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION NAMES DORCHESTER ACADEMY IN MIDWAY, GEORGIA, TO ITS 2009 LIST OF AMERICA'S 11 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES®

Washington, D.C. (April 28, 2009) – Today, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named **Dorchester Academy in Midway, Georgia**, to its 2009 list of **America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places®**. This annual list highlights important examples of the nation's architectural, cultural and natural heritage that are at risk of destruction or irreparable damage.

The story of Dorchester Academy, one of the earliest schools for African Americans in the state of Georgia and a National Historic Landmark, is forever linked to the cultural and political forces that shaped our nation's history. Founded in 1871 as a school for freed slaves, Dorchester started humbly in a one-room schoolhouse with a student body ranging in age from eight to 80. As the school grew, boarders joined day students, many of whom walked miles to fulfill their dream of learning how to read. In later years, the school played a pivotal role in voter-registration drives and as a center of activity for the civil rights movement. Today, the only remaining building on the Dorchester campus, a red brick, Greek Revival structure built in 1934 as a boys' dormitory, is deteriorating and structurally compromised. The community that is doing its best to nurture and sustain the academy since its earliest days does not have the financial resources to rescue the building.

"The Academy, now threatened by neglect and imminent structural failure, is a national landmark for its significant role in the civil rights movement, and has been an institute for education, community development and positive political and social change since its founding day," said former President Jimmy Carter.

According to Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, "The story of Dorchester Academy is not widely known, but it's a story that deserves to be told. In addition to its highly significant role as a school for generations of African-American students, Dorchester played a seminal role in the great social movements of our nation's history. We cannot afford to stand idly by and allow such a significant building to be lost."

Dorchester Academy was established by the American Missionary Association (AMA) at the urging of William A. Golding, a former slave who became a state legislator. By the 1920s, school enrollment fluctuated between 220 and 300 students, and by the 1930s, the school housed the Dorchester Cooperative Center store and credit union, which helped local residents buy homes and open businesses. When the Academy ceased operating as a school in 1940, the innovative spirit of the institution continued with the opening of a community center housed in the old boys' dormitory.

Dorchester Academy, Midway, Ga.— Founded in 1868 as a school for freed slaves, Dorchester Academy started humbly in a one-room schoolhouse and later gained prominence as a center for voter registration drives during the civil rights movement. The academy's last remaining building, a handsome 1934 Greek Revival dormitory, is deteriorating and structurally compromised.

Human Services Center, Yankton, S.D.— Founded in 1879 as the South Dakota Hospital for the Insane and once regarded as a model institution of its kind, this campus comprises a collection of neoclassical, Art Deco and Italianate buildings that have stood vacant for years. Despite the site's potential for innovative reuse and appropriate redevelopment, the State is moving forward with plans to demolish 11 historic buildings on the Yankton campus.

Lāna'i City, Hawai'i— One of Hawaii's eight main islands, Lāna'i, known as the "Pineapple Isle," has lush tropical beaches, breathtaking natural beauty, lavish resorts and one attraction none of the other islands can claim: an intact plantation town. Lāna'i City, built by pineapple baron James Dole in the 1920s, features plantation-style homes, a laundromat, jail, courthouse and police station, and is now threatened by a large-scale commercial development calling for the destruction or significant alteration of 15-20 historic buildings.

The Manhattan Project's Enola Gay Hangar, Wendover Airfield, Utah— The hangar that housed the Enola Gay, the B-29 Superfortress that dropped the world's first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945, is, along with other Manhattan Project sites, in a critical state of disrepair.

Memorial Bridge, Portsmouth, N.H. to Kittery, Maine— For more than 85 years, Memorial Bridge, the first major lift bridge in the eastern US, has been a sturdy and dramatic landmark, spanning the Piscataqua River and connecting two coastal towns steeped in history. But like so many others in the nation, the bridge has suffered from tight budgets and postponed maintenance. The states of Maine and New Hampshire have not yet agreed on a plan to save Memorial Bridge and are now considering their options, including its removal - a move that would be costly and in direct opposition to the desires of local residents in two communities.

Miami Marine Stadium, Virginia Key, Fla.— Completed in 1963, Miami Marine Stadium is both a South Florida landmark and an icon of modern design. Built entirely of poured concrete and featuring a dramatically cantilevered folded-plate roof, the stadium is a sentimental favorite of many Miami residents. After sustaining damage during Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the stadium, a prime target for developers, closed and has since suffered from years of deterioration, vandalism and neglect.

Mount Taylor, near Grants, N.M.— Located in the southwestern corner of New Mexico's San Mateo Mountains, midway between Albuquerque and Gallup, Mount Taylor, with an elevation of nearly 12,000 feet, is startlingly beautiful and a sacred place for as many as 30 Native American tribes. Currently, the mountain is under threat from exploration and proposals for uranium mining, which, if allowed to proceed, would have a devastating impact on this cherished historic place.

Unity Temple, Oak Park, Ill.— Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple, designed for a Unitarian congregation in Oak Park, is widely acknowledged as a masterpiece of 20th-century architecture.

During the 1940s, the school was the site of African-American voter registrations. At the height of the civil rights movement, Dorchester Academy hosted Citizen Education Workshops sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to train grassroots leaders from all over the South and send these leaders home to instruct their neighbors about their legal rights and responsibilities. Later, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Ralph Abernathy and Dr. Joseph Lowery spent time at the Academy preparing for the Birmingham march, and Dr. King also wrote and practiced portions of his "I Have a Dream," speech at Dorchester Academy.

While some repair and stabilization work has been completed through the combined efforts of community donations and a \$50,000 grant from the State, damage to the dormitory still extends from the roof to the basement and is compromising the structural support beams and foundation.

The cost of completely restoring the building has been estimated at \$1-1.5 million. The vision of the Dorchester Improvement Association is to complete this task and create a world-class museum and community facility.

The 2009 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places was made possible, in part, by a grant from History™. Local preservation groups across the nation submitted nominations for this year's list; the nomination for Dorchester Academy was submitted by the Liberty County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The public is invited to learn more about what they can do to support these and hundreds of other endangered sites, experience first-hand accounts of these places, and share stories and photos of their own at www.PreservationNation.org/11Most.

To download high resolution images of this year's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places, visit <http://press.nationaltrust.org/>

The 2009 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places (in alphabetical order):

Ames Shovel Shops, *Easton, Mass.*— In southeastern Massachusetts, the Ames Shovel Shops complex, an intact 19th-century industrial village that resembles a picture-perfect New England college campus, is threatened by a plan to demolish several of the site's historic buildings and radically alter others to pave the way for new mixed-use development.

Cast-Iron Architecture of *Galveston, Texas*— The assemblage of late-19th-century Greek Revival and Italianate buildings with elaborate cast-iron storefronts in Galveston's 12-block Strand/Mechanic National Historic Landmark District is one of the largest collections of historic commercial buildings in the country. Unfortunately, the widespread flooding caused by Hurricane Ike in September 2008 caused extensive damage, leaving the district fighting to survive.

Century Plaza Hotel, *Los Angeles, Calif.*— Opened in 1966, the 19-story curved hotel, designed by renowned architect Minoru Yamasaki, who would later design New York's World Trade Center twin towers, has been a prominent Los Angeles landmark for more than four decades. Despite a \$36 million facelift just over a year ago, the hotel's new owners now intend to raze the building and replace it with two 600-foot, "environmentally sensitive" towers.

Completed in 1908, the cubist, flat-roofed structure is also one of the earliest public buildings to feature exposed concrete, one of Wright's signature design elements. Years of water infiltration have compromised the structure, prompting a multi-million-dollar rescue effort that the current congregation cannot afford.

America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places has identified more than 200 threatened one-of-a-kind historic treasures since 1988. Whether these sites are urban districts or rural landscapes, Native American landmarks or 20th-century sports arenas, entire communities or single buildings, the list spotlights historic places across America that are threatened by neglect, insufficient funds, inappropriate development or insensitive public policy. The designation has been a powerful tool for raising awareness and rallying resources to save endangered sites from every region of the country. At times, that attention has garnered public support to quickly rescue a treasured landmark; while in other instances, it has been the impetus of a long battle to save an important piece of our history. Learn more at www.PreservationNation.org/11Most.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (www.PreservationNation.org) is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history – and the important moments of everyday life – took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, nine regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America's stories.

###