Pillar OF PRESERVATION

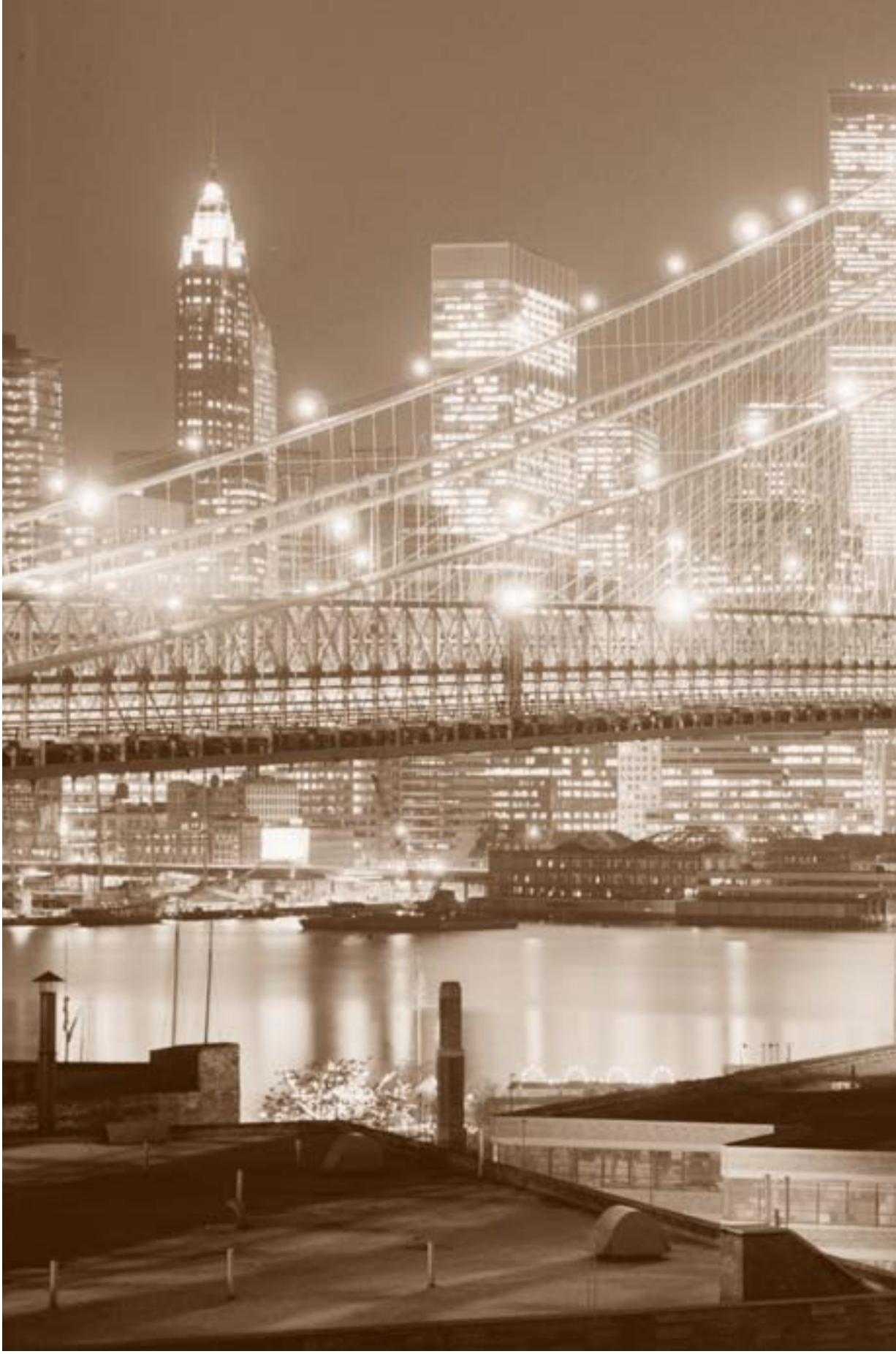
photographs by jack e. boucher and jet lowe

celebrating four decades of the national historic preservation act

"I was dismayed to learn from reading this report that almost half of the 12,000 structures listed in the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Park Service have already been destroyed," writes Lady Bird Johnson in the foreword to *With Heritage So Rich,* the call to arms published in tandem with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Urban renewal seemed unstoppable in the early '60s. Pennsylvania Avenue, deemed dowdy by President Kennedy during his inaugural parade, was slated for a makeover by modernist architects. "The champions of modern architecture seldom missed an opportunity to ridicule the past," historian Richard Longstreth wrote in these pages a few years ago, reassessing the era. "Buildings and cities created since the rise of industrialization were charged with having nearly ruined the planet. The legacy of one's parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents was not only visually meaningless and degenerate, but socially and spiritually repressive as well." Against this tide, a generation rose up, giving birth to a populist movement. Here, *Common Ground* salutes what was saved, and what was lost. **Right: The National Archives, along Pennsylvania Avenue.**

FAR LEFT AND BELOW JET LOWE/NPS/HAER, LEFT BELOW JACK E. BOUCHER/NPS/HAER

The National Historic Preservation Act—embracing the full breadth of sites integral to the nation's story—reflects a dynamic vision of the past and the ingredients that make it matter. Above: Local effort saved Alabama's Sloss Furnace from demolition in the 1970s; now a national historic landmark, the ruin offers a rare glimpse of the steel industry in the South. Historian Alex Lichtenstein shared his impressions in the summer 1994 issue of *Federal Archeology,* this magazine's predecessor: "Gary Kulik, who was a consulting historian on Sloss for the Historic American Engineering Record, has suggested that the furnace company's failure to adopt modern technology can in large part be attributed to the ample supply of cheap black labor." Left: Scrap metal outside an abandoned recycling shed in the copper town of Anaconda, Montana. "The richest hill on earth," Anaconda was the dream of Marcus Daly, whose company once dominated the state's press and politics, employing most of Montana's wage earners by the time he died in 1900. The town was a hotbed of unionism—the most working class conscious in the state—until the changes of the late 20th century spelled the end for the company and many others like it. Much of the town has been commemorated in the National Register of Historic Places. Right: Symbols of the land of plenty, grain elevators in Illinois.



JET LOWE/NPS/HAER

Above: The Brooklyn Bridge. **Rising behind, the World Trade Center before the tragedy of September 11, 2001.**

Far left: The Hardaway-Nelson House, built in 1840. **Home of noted southern author Augusta Evans Wilson, the structure is an example of Alabama's Creole architecture.** **Above left: Antietam, in rural Maryland.** **The place is best known as a deadly killing field during the Civil War, but barns like this attest to a longstanding agricultural history and parallel narratives of immigration and architecture.** **Above right: Historic advertising in a western town.**

LEFT AND ABOVE JACK E. BOUCHER/NPS/HABS, RIGHT JET LOWE/NPS/HAER

THIS SPREAD: JET LOWE/NPS/HAER

Above left: The last windmill factory in the United States, still standing on the plains of Nebraska. The Kregel Company ran from 1879 until World War II, when rationing ground operations to a halt. Above right: Engine of the Saturn One rocket on a test stand. Several stands are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Right: The Colgate Palmolive Company, in Jersey City, New Jersey, just before the wrecking ball swung in 1988. A nation "can lose the memories of what it was, and thereby lose the sense of what it is," wrote Sidney Hyman in the era that yielded the National Historic Preservation Act, mirroring a concern that postwar prosperity was running roughshod over the country's heritage.


Colgate

THIS SPREAD JACK E. BOUCHER/NPS/HABS

Left: Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, built in 1937. A summer home for a Pittsburgh millionaire, it has been called the most famous modern house in the world, preserved today as a national historic landmark. Fallingwater still retains the furnishings that Wright designed. Above left: Puerto Rico's Castillo de San Felipe del Morro. Built by the Spanish in the late 16th century, today it is a national park, recognized by the United Nations as a world heritage site. Above right: The Congressional Cemetery. The final resting place of many historical figures, it started out as plots at Washington, DC's Christ Church in 1816. The cemetery, whose cenotaphs are shown here, has been called "our unknown shrine of Americana."