

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: WOMEN VOLUNTEERS IN
HISTORIC PRESERVATION:
FOUR VIRGINIA CASE STUDIES,
1966 TO 1996

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This thesis undertakes an examination and documentation of the contributions made to historic preservation by women who volunteer for preservation organizations in Virginia. Case studies of four organizations document these contributions between 1966 and 1996, each focusing on a specific element of preservation activities.

The thesis is organized in six chapters. The first chapter examines the body of knowledge available to present an overview of the evolution of volunteerism in America, the traits and motivations of women who volunteer, and more specifically, highlights of the history of the role of women who volunteer in historic preservation.

The second through the fifth chapters present the four case studies. These organizations and the focus of each are: Gunston Hall, fund raising; Historic Richmond

Foundation, organization and development; Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc., revolving fund; and Preservation Alliance of Virginia, statewide advocacy.

The sixth chapter summarizes the contributions made to the case study organizations by female volunteers and the functions they performed. A profile of the common traits and motivations of the women is provided, and a final section identifies issues that can affect women's future involvement in historic preservation.

Methods used to research this topic included surveys of national literature, examinations of publications, records, documents pertaining to the four case study organizations, and oral interviews with people who have volunteered or been associated with these organizations. The conclusion of the thesis is that many of the accomplishments made by preservation organizations studied can be attributed to the work of the women who have volunteered their time and talents.