

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: NORTH DAKOTA'S STATE HISTORIC SITES
REGISTRY: STATE-LEVEL APPROVAL AUTHORITY
OVER ALTERATION AND DEMOLITION

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This thesis is an analysis and administrative case study regarding the North Dakota State Historic Sites Registry and its accompanying preservation statutes as preservation tools. These statutes provide state-level approval authority over governmental actions to alter or demolish properties listed in the State Registry. Preservation laws are important but equally important are the implementation of those laws, cooperation, and good communication to achieve successful preservation projects.

The thesis explores the State Registry's historical development, amendments to its legislation, and its application to the preservation of the 1883 Stutsman County courthouse. It describes the struggles from 1983 through 1985, of the

preservation-minded members of the Jamestown community to save the state's oldest courthouse, and illustrates the role of North Dakota's preservation statutes. Preservation conflicts often pit one set of community values against one another. The conflict over the preservation of the courthouse leads to litigation and legislation. The preservation activities are followed from the listing of the 1883 courthouse in the national and state registers through success in the North Dakota Supreme Court. The thesis documents the legislative amendments prior to, during, and following the preservation of the courthouse, places the amendments within the context of the courthouse preservation effort. This study finds that North Dakota's State Registry statutes are outstanding as a state tool in their protection of state register properties. A table offers a comparison between the statutes of North Dakota and those of other states and territories. Finally, this study reflects on the case history and offers recommendations for improving State Registry statutes, procedures, and requirements in order to make it a more effective preservation tool.