

Historic Lower Manhattan



To many people Lower Manhattan means financial district, where the large buildings are designed to facilitate the exchange of money. The buildings, streets and open spaces, however, recall events that gave birth to a nation and have helped shape the destiny of western civilization.

Places such as St. Paul's Chapel and Federal Hall National Memorial exemplify a number of sites which have been awarded special status by the Federal Government. The sites appearing in this guide are included in the following programs which have given them public recognition and helped to assure their survival.

National Park Service

Since its inauguration in 1916, the National Park Service has been dedicated to the preservation and management of our country's unique national, historical and recreational areas. The first national park in the world—Yellowstone—has been followed by the addition of over 300 sites in the 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. National Park areas near and in Manhattan are: Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site, Fire Island National Seashore, Gateway National Recreation Area, Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, Hamilton Grange National Memorial, and General Grant National Memorial.

National Historic Landmarks

National Park Service historians study and evaluate historic properties throughout the country. Acting upon their findings the Secretary of the Interior may declare the properties eligible for designation as National Historic Landmarks. The owner of such a property is offered a certificate and bronze plaque designating it a National Historic Landmark. In return he agrees to preserve those significant historical values for which it was singled out.

The National Register of Historic Places

Historic properties recognized as nationally significant, either by their inclusion in the National Park System or by designation as National Historic Landmarks, are placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic properties of state and local as well as national importance may be nominated to the National Register by the States and territories and by Federal agencies. Non-Federal properties on the National Register may be considered for Federal historic preservation grants-in-aid. Federally assisted or licensed undertakings that may affect properties on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register are subject to review.

Heritage Trail

The Heritage Trail has been established by the Mayor's Office of Lower Manhattan Development. It is an easily walkable route along which buildings, open spaces and monuments represent key events in the economic, social and political growth of New York City and the nation. Stops are identified by markers which present a brief history of the historic site.

National Parks are staffed by Park Rangers who can provide information to facilitate your visit to Lower Manhattan. The National Park Sites contain exhibits, displays and audio/visual programs and are open year round seven days a week. For information please call the phone numbers listed inside.

Do not allow your visit to be spoiled by an accident. Efforts are made to provide for your safety but there may be hazards which require your alertness and vigilance. Exercise common sense and caution.

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As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

