Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

Historic homes, buildings, and structures can be hard to maintain and a challenge to determine historical accuracy when making changes. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties outline Standards and Guidelines for working with historic buildings. The Standards and Guidelines help with tough decision making, and are used by federal agencies in historic preservation projects. State and local governments use the Standards and Guidelines in reviewing projects and with design choices. The Standards and Guidelines are divided into four approaches to the treatment of historic buildings that each have their own section of specific Standards and Guidelines. Preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction are all different ways to change or maintain a historic property. The different treatments are there to give ideas about what is needed in the project, and how to best decide what to do. The choice of approach is based on the use of the structure, historic significance, and condition.

Preservation concentrates on keeping the structure as it is, and maintaining and repairing it in the form it is in now.

Rehabilitation retains the historic character of the structure while needing to alter it due to changing uses.

Restoration interprets a structure from one period of its history, and removes evidence of other periods.

Reconstruction rebuilds parts of the structure that are no longer there.

Anyone with an interest in historic structures and preservation can look at the Standards and Guidelines and get an idea about how to go about preserving, restoring, rehabilitating, or reconstructing historic homes, buildings, and structures. The main focus for all four treatments is to retain the historic integrity and importance of the structure for future generations to enjoy. The resources are very useful and easy to find online at www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm, making it easier for historic homeowners understand and renovate their homes.

Here at James A. Garfield National Historic Site, we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the restoration of the home. Check out upcoming Garfield Telegraphs in 2018 to learn about the process of restoring our site!
George Washington: When is his birthday?

George Washington was born in Virginia in February 1732. However, at the time of Washington’s birth, Britain and her colonies used the Julian calendar, not the Gregorian calendar we currently use. The British Empire adopted the new calendar in 1752; as a result, Washington’s birthday was changed to the current date we recognize; February 22, instead of the Julian calendar date; February 11.

The Gregorian calendar was introduced by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 as a reform of the Julian calendar (proposed by Julius Caesar in 46 BCE). The reform was used to align the Christian holidays and the equinoxes; in particular to calculate the correct date of Easter. It was calculated that over the centuries since the Julian calendar was implemented, there was an error of around 10 days.

The reform was first adopted in the Catholic Church and Papal States. The calendar spread from the Papal States and churches to governments and countries. Phillip II of Spain was the first ruler to adopt the change, which led to Spain, Portugal, and part of Italy adopting the new calendar. The last European county to adopt the Gregorian calendar was Greece in 1923.

For more information about James A. Garfield NHS: www.nps.gov/jaga

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President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s second inauguration took place on a rainy, cold January 20th, 1937. This was the first time the inauguration took place in January. (loc.gov)