

SUMMER 2024

FOCUS ON
PRESERVATION

Market Square, Roanoke, Va.



ROANOKE VALLEY PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

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*Please send RVPF Newsletter submissions to
Whitney Leeson, wleeson@roanoke.edu.*

Claytor Clinic Historic Marker Unveiling

Memorializing Black History

On July 5th, the Claytor Memorial Clinic building in Gainsboro, a historic site known as one of Southwest Virginia's earliest Black family-owned medical clinics, received official recognition from the state with a new historical marker. Founded by Dr. John B. Claytor Sr. in 1948, in memory of his late wife Roberta Claytor, the clinic provided crucial healthcare services at a time of racial segregation.

The unveiling ceremony also underscored the challenges faced by the Claytor family during Roanoke's urban renewal period, which threatened their clinic and nearby properties with eminent domain. Despite legal battles, the Claytors prevailed, leading to legislative changes that curtailed localities' use of eminent domain. Jordan Bell, a Gainsboro historian, emphasized the community's responsibility to preserve and restore the clinic, noting its symbolic importance in revitalizing the entire Gainsboro area. Vice Mayor Joe Cobb echoed these sentiments, calling for city support in restoring the clinic as a focal point of community resurgence.

Despite this honor, the future of the clinic, closed since the 1990s, remains uncertain. Efforts by the Claytor family to secure funding for restoration, including a proposal to use federal pandemic relief money from Roanoke City Council, were ultimately unsuccessful. The city had intended to repurpose the site as part of a community hub for small business development and healthcare, but negotiations faltered.

The new marker, located in the cul-du-sac next to the clinic, marks the culmination of a year and a half of efforts led by Nelson Harris, former City of Roanoke mayor and local historian. Funds for the state marker were raised by the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation with proceeds from their annual Scavenger Hunt and Pub Crawl.

This marker is part of Roanoke's growing collection of historical markers, with a significant focus on acknowledging overlooked Black histories.



Text and Photo Credit: Megan Mizak

Wickets and Wine Update

Raising Funds to Help Restore Mountain View



Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation and Friends of Mountain View co-sponsored the Second Annual "Wickets and Wine" fundraiser on May 18th at Mountain View. In spite of predictions for bad weather, we had over 50 people attend with many of them dressed in period for the costume contest. In addition to playing croquet on the lawn, everyone enjoyed drinks and lunch on the porch, parlor games inside, tours of the house, a trivia contest, antique cars, and a great raffle prize. The Virginia Blend choral group serenaded attendees with popular songs from the period. This croquet event supports the renovations of the Fishburn Mansion at Mountain View. Everyone had a lot of fun and helped to raise more than \$5,000 towards much-needed repairs at this local landmark. Renovation plans for Mountain View are moving forward as part of the Mountain View Vision Plan project, funded by generous grants from the Katherine Nelson Fishburn Foundation and the Department of Historic Resources, and community support continues to grow.

Many Thanks to Our Wickets and Wine Sponsors

Lead Sponsors: **Gentry Locke Attorneys, Hill Studio, and Berglund Automotive Group**

Court Sponsors: **Spectrum Design, Cary Street Partners, Bill and Brenda Greene**

Event Sponsors: **Building Specialists, Inc. Black Dog Salvage, MKB Realtors, Freedom First, David Parr Esq., Davidson's, and Allegheny Partners.**

Donations: **Mountain Lake Resort, Grandin Theater, Crystal Spring Grocery, Gunther Hoytt, and Petal & Pail Flowers**



Text Credit: Alison Blanton
Photo Credit: Whitney Leeson



Genealogy of Slavery Research Project

Preservation “Pub” Talk Recap

Text and Photo Credit: Whitney Leeson and Roanoke College



Dr. Jesse Bucher, Associate Professor of History at Roanoke College, and two research students, Sydney Pennix and Jayde Mooney, spoke to a crowded room about their work on the Genealogy of Slavery Database. In celebration of “Juneteenth,” RVPF’s June 11 “pub” talk at Gainsboro Library featured a demonstration of the Genealogy of Slavery Database built by Dr. Bucher and his research team over the past three summers. It currently includes the names of over 2, 800 enslaved person who lived in what is now Roanoke County, Roanoke City, and Salem.

The research team culled information from handwritten historical records archived with the Roanoke County Circuit Court. Students used wills, birth/death registers, probate inventories, and other estate records in their research. The information had to be hand transcribed and catalogued before entering it into the new searchable database. Compiling a single entry can take hours as students triangulate information from the many sources in their research to provide the fullest picture possible of a person’s life.

The database tool, which is now viewable online through the Center for Studying the Structures of Race’s web site at Roanoke College, is about 75-80% complete.



Upcoming Events

Join RVPF for a

PRESERVATION PUB TALK

*“The History of Minor League
Baseball in Salem”*

Brian Hoffman, Sports Editor

*\$20 per person. Includes box seat, food, and non-
alcoholic beverages. Attendance limited to 25.
Reservations required. Stadium opens at 6:00.
Talk begins at 6:30. First pitch at 7:05.*

SALEM MEMORIAL BALLPARK

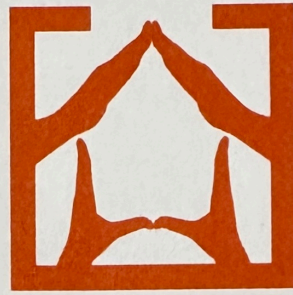
WEDNESDAY | SEPTEMBER 4 | 6:00 P.M.

**RSVP: 540-514-2833 OR
WLEESON@ROANOKE.EDU**



Upcoming Events

Please join us in supporting Restoration Housing's "Preserve Campaign." Keynote speaker is Asa Eslocker, landscape architect and Emmy award-winning documentary filmmaker. To purchase tickets contact Maribeth Mills at www.restorationhousing.org/preserve. Tickets purchased before August 22, 2024 are \$60/seat; after August 23, 2024, \$70/seat.



PRESERVE CAMPAIGN

Preserving History, Serving Community

Luncheon

Luncheon at the City Market Building's Charter Hall
Thursday, 19 September 2024 at 11:30 a.m.

Virtual Series

Virtual Series Available through all Online Platforms
19 September 2024 through 17 October 2024

Upcoming Events

Pints for Preservation Pub Crawl



Pints for Preservation Planning Committee met at Six and Sky in late July to discuss RVPF's upcoming fall fundraiser. The decade featured for this year's scavenger hunt will be the 1910s. Think Titanic, World War I, the Spanish Flu, Panama Canal, etc. It's the decade that brought us Henry Ford's Model T assembly line, Alexander Graham Bell's transcontinental telephone call, and Charlie Chaplain's debut as the Little Tramp.

Talk to your friends and get a team together for cocktails, historic trivia, and a conversation with time travelers you will meet on route. Watch our facebook posts and web site updates for more information regarding our 5th Annual Pub Crawl and Scavenge Hunt in downtown Roanoke.

Saturday, October 5 from 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Tickets purchased in advance are \$100 for a team of 4, \$50 for a team of 2, or \$30 for a single. Tickets purchased day of event are \$35.

Historic Roanoke Cards

Featuring Five Unique Photographs

Support RVPF and buy several packs of cards to give to family and friends this holiday season. Each pack of cards features five images of historic Roanoke landmarks courtesy of Roanoke Public Libraries, The Virginia Room. They are: **Campbell Avenue, Burrell Memorial Hospital, Hotel Roanoke Fire, Mountain View, and Jefferson Street.**

To purchase cards please contact wleeson@roanoke.edu.

One Pack of Cards sells for \$12.00

Two Packs of Cards sells for \$20.00

Three Packs of Cards sells for \$25.00

Mailing fee is \$2.50.



Photo Credit: Whitney Leeson and Roanoke Public Libraries, The Virginia Room

Historic Preservation Reads

The Economics of Reviving Urban Communities.

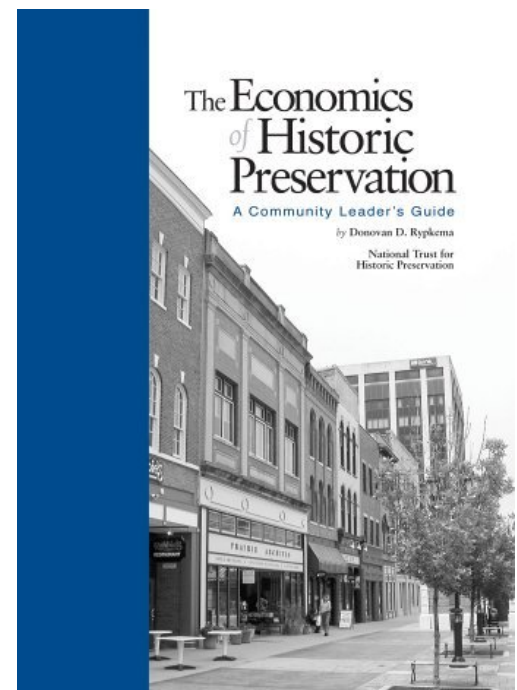
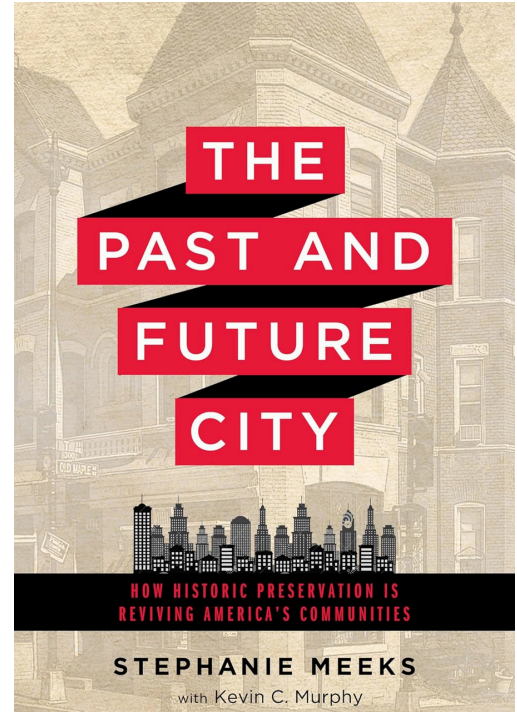
The Past and Future City: How Historic Preservation is Reviving America's Communities (2016) by **Stephanie Meeks** with **Kevin C. Murphy**

At its most basic, historic preservation is about keeping old places alive, in active use, and relevant to the needs of communities today. As cities across America experience a remarkable renaissance, and more and more young, diverse families choose to live, work, and play in historic neighborhoods, the promise and potential of using our older and historic buildings to revitalize our cities is stronger than ever.

In *The Past and Future City*, Stephanie Meeks, the president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, describes in detail, and with unique empirical research, the many ways that saving and restoring historic fabric can help a city create thriving neighborhoods, good jobs, and a vibrant economy. She explains the critical importance of preservation for all our communities, the ways the historic preservation field has evolved to embrace the challenges of the twenty-first century, and the innovative work being done in the preservation space now.

The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide (1994) by **Donovan D. Rypkema**

Since it was first published in 1994, *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide* has become an essential reference for any preservationist faced with convincing government officials, developers, property owners, business and community leaders, or his or her own neighbors that preservation strategies can make good economic sense. Author Donovan D. Rypkema—real estate consultant and nationally known speaker and writer—makes his case with 100 "arguments" on the economic benefits of historic preservation, each backed up by one or more quotes from a study, paper, publication, speech, or report. Count on Rypkema to be entertaining, provocative, and convincing as he describes and demonstrates how strategies that include preservation help communities make cost-effective use of resources, create jobs, provide affordable housing, revive downtowns, build tourism, attract new businesses and workers, and more.



Have You Heard About Our Plaque Program?

Bringing "History to the Streets"

Historic homes and buildings in the Roanoke Valley can now be recognized under a Historic Plaque Program administered by RVPF. The program not only brings 'history to the street' for those passing by your home or building, but also brands them as desirable locations for potential home buyers, tenants, and business owners to live, work, and/or invest in. Installing a plaque on your home or building helps others understand its historical significance in our community. Several sites already have plaques including Fire Station No. 1, the Virginia Museum of Transportation (Norfolk & Western Freight Station), the Municipal Building, owners of historic homes, and most recently, Restoration LLC in commemoration of their recent restoration of historic Villa Heights located in NW Roanoke.

Plaques are 10" x 7" cast bronze ovals with brown pebbled backgrounds forged by Paul W. Zimmerman Foundries (responsible for casting most National Register of Historic Places plaques across the country). The cost per plaque is \$375 and includes research for the text to be used on the plaque (the building's historic name, brief description, and construction date), the plaque's production, shipping, regulatory approvals from the city, and installation.

For additional information, visit <http://www.roanokepreservation.org/historic-plaque-program/> or email angela.stiefbold@gmail.com

"It has been said that, at it's best, preservation engages the past in a conversation with the present over a mutual concern for the future."

William Murtagh

First "keeper" of the National Register of Historic Places



The Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation (RVPF) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization established in 1988 to preserve the historic, natural, and cultural resources of the Roanoke Valley (City of Roanoke, City of Salem, Town of Vinton, Roanoke County, Botetourt County, and Franklin County, Virginia). It was founded as - and continues to be - a grassroots, volunteer-driven organization. Since its inception, the RVPF has been active in a variety of preservation efforts. Consistent involvement and advocacy has resulted in increased public awareness and successful preservation projects. Although the Foundation's focus is on the past, its major accomplishments are the result of planning for the future.

"THE FUTURE" OF PRESERVATION

We partner with community groups to bring promote local history - Gainsboro History Walk

We advocate for preservation of important buildings - The Claytor Clinic (currently on the Endangered Sites List)

We give tours of Roanoke to share local history and preservation

We partner with RideSolutions for History By Bike Tours - Vinton Tweed Ride

We install plaques on historic buildings - formerly endangered, Villa Heights has been saved and renovated

We create and install community signs to commemorate and celebrate local history - Evans Mill & Crystal Spring



P.O. Box 1366, Roanoke, VA 24007
www.roanokepreservation.org

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