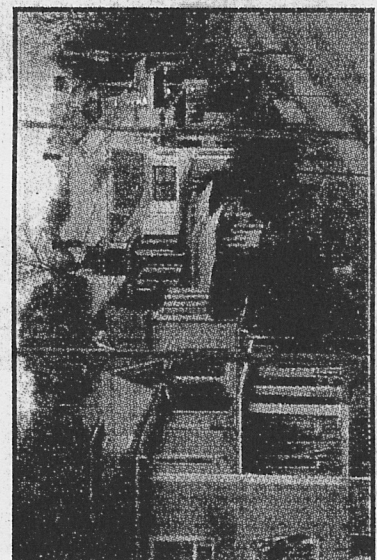


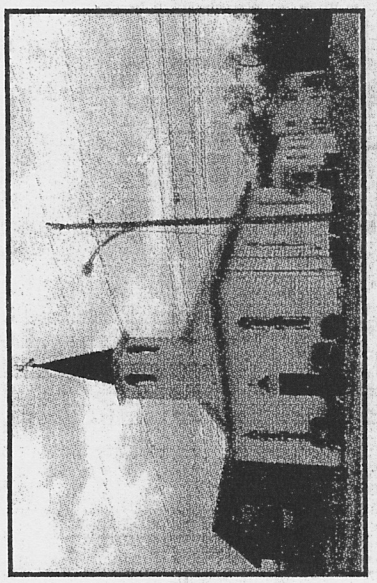
The Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation issues its list of sites and sights to save



The Belmont neighborhood in Southeast Roanoke is threatened by vacancies, high turnover among residents and absentee ownership.



The Pinkard Court cemetery is among several historic graveyards falling prey to development, abandonment and vandalism.



Members of Salem's First Baptist Church are trying to decide whether to restore the building or to build a new sanctuary.

'Most endangered'

Story by **MARY BISHOP** / Photos by **MATT GENTRY** / The Roanoke Times

SOME ARE HIDDEN under brush on the back roads. Some are familiar features of the Roanoke Valley landscape.

Some are abandoned buildings whose historical value is not immediately obvious.

All are endangered places in the eyes of the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation.

Its officers recently released a list of 11 significant places, buildings and natural features that, without help and attention, could disappear or be severely damaged in the coming years.

because they appear to be out of harm's way, are mired in government negotiations or are hopelessly overwhelmed by development. Others were bumped by what the foundation deemed more seriously threatened sites.

To get on the list, a site must possess historic, cultural or environmental value, be under an immediate threat and have the potential for being saved.

The latest list:

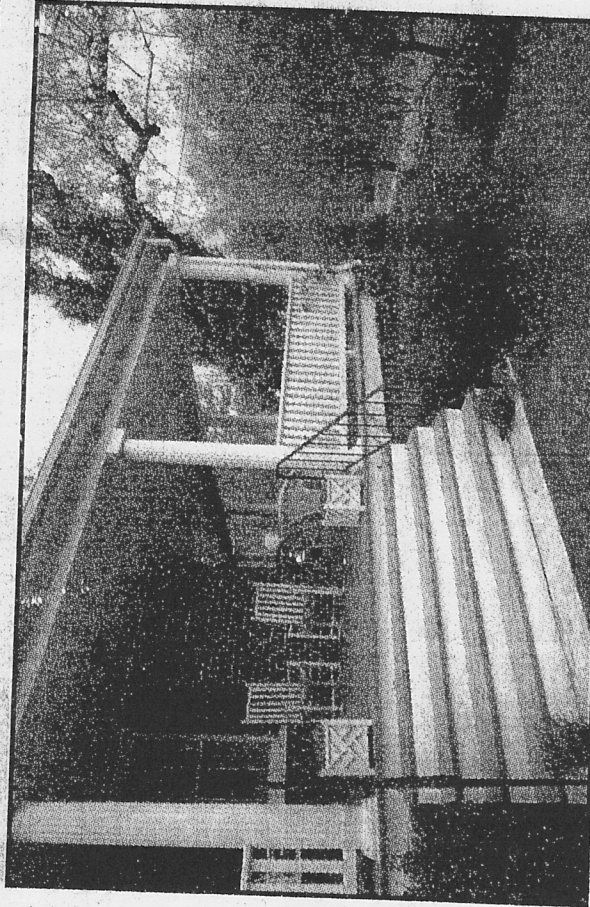
ELIZABETH CAMPUS, across Texas Street from the Salem Civic Center: Foundation leaders didn't put the controversial

Its officers recently released a list of 11 significant places, buildings and natural features that, without help and attention, could disappear or be severely damaged in the coming years.

Two of the places — the Roanoke River and mountain "viewscapes" — were on the foundation's first "endangered sites" list two years ago.

Five places on the original list have been replaced — Stokes plantation house on Plantation Road, Burke cabin in Salem, Claytor Memorial Clinic in Gainsboro, Harris farmstead on U.S. 221 and the Norfolk and Western Railway office buildings.

The foundation said these places were removed from the list



Development, traffic and road-widening threaten both the Gale House (above), which was built around 1870, and the spring for which the Cave Spring community is named (below).



perennial for being saved.

The latest list:

ELIZABETH CAMPUS, across Texas Street from the Salem Civic Center: Foundation leaders didn't put the controversial 52-acre site on its list at first but decided to add it after Salem residents trying to preserve the land

learned of the list this week and appealed to the foundation. Foundation president Rusty Pritchett said the site meets the foundation's criteria and should have been on the list all along.

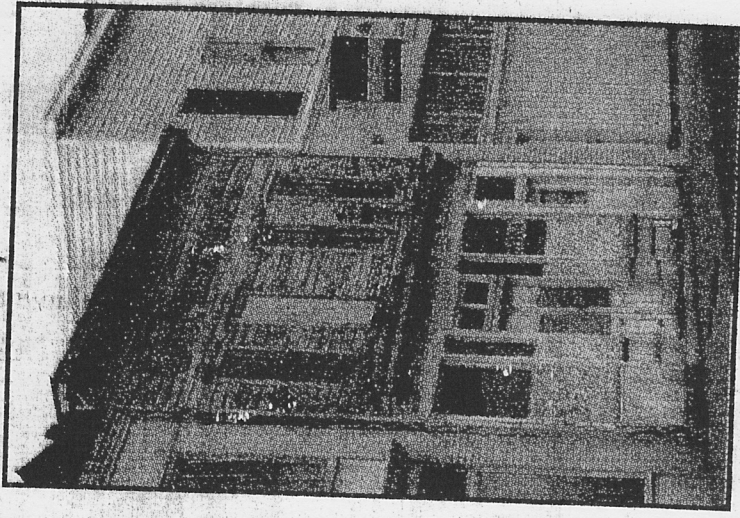
Retired physician Dr. Richard Fisher, a local historian, says it's the last undeveloped land of the 625 acres granted in 1765 to Gen.

Andrew Lewis, commander of frontier troops and Salem's most famous historical figure. Elizabeth College, a women's school, operated near the 52-acre site in the early years of this century, and a Lutheran orphanage and now a school have been nearby for many years. The Salem YMCA is the only building on the property that is currently the subject of fierce political debate.

The City of Salem bought the land in 1986 and wants to rezone about 25 acres for light industry and commercial use. Pending rezoning, Salem City Council has agreed to sell 4.8 acres for an assisted living center. Citizens have formed an organization to oppose development. The city proposes to leave 20 acres as green space or as a park and stormwater retention area.

MOSES STORE, North Jefferson Street and Gilmer Avenue in Roanoke's historic Gainsboro neighborhood. The two-story frame store was one of the last family-operated neighborhood groceries in Roanoke. A Lebanese family came to Roanoke in the late 19th century and operated the store and at least three others for many years. The store went out of business in the mid-1970s and is now owned by a bank trust.

LOEBL CLEANERS AND DYE WORKS, across



The storefront of the former Loebel Cleaners and Dye Works on West Salem Avenue is in danger of collapse.

Places

we., Roanoke. The foundation says Loebel's is one of the oldest frame commercial buildings in the city. Before it closed in 1981, Loebel's enjoyed a national reputation for cleaning and dyeing exotic materials. Napkins and tablecloths from the White House; gowns from New York designers, carpets from other countries and draperies from West Virginia's Greenbrier resort were dyed there. The yellow storefront is in danger of collapse.

CENTRAL MANUFACTURING CO., 127 Centre Ave. N.W., Roanoke. The small Queen Anne-style building, once offices for a major manufacturer of building materials, survived the destruction of dozens of homes and businesses when the nearby Coca-Cola bottling plant expanded in the 1980s. Robert H. "Bob" Angell, a leading entrepreneur of early Roanoke, established the company in 1892. In its last years, the tiny office building was a real estate office and a used-car dealership. It is now abandoned.

CAVE SPRING AND THE GALE HOME, Cave Spring Lane and Old Cave Spring Road, Roanoke County. Foundation leaders say development, traffic and road-widening threaten both the spring for which the Cave Spring community is named and the nearby Gale House.

The spring was a favorite camping and meeting spot for farmers bringing goods to the valley from Bent Mountain and nearby counties. The brick Gale home, across from the spring, was built around 1870 by Dr. Joseph A. Gale, one of the founders of Lewis-Gale Hospital. A nearby tract has been chosen as the possible site of a new county high school.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, SALEM. Sa-

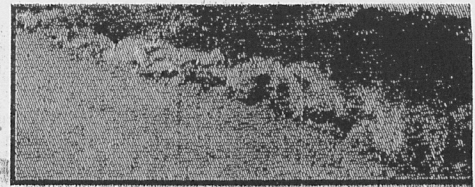
lem's oldest black church, built in 1867 by newly freed black families, features a belfry and two bells, a balcony supported by hanging braces and the original tinted glass windows. Church members are trying to decide whether to build a new sanctuary or restore its old building at 224 S. Broad St. Foundation leaders hope the church does both and saves what the foundation regards as an architecturally significant wooden church.

The church's pastor, the Rev. James A. Braxton, said the congregation wants to preserve the old building and is looking for ways to do that as well as build a new sanctuary.

HOWBERT HOUSE, Salem Turnpike and Peters Creek Road, Roanoke. Though demolition of the log house, dating to the late 1700s, was averted early last month, the foundation says it's not a certainty the clapboard-covered house will be restored. Historians believe it to be the oldest structure in Roanoke. The preservation foundation, along with the Edgewood-Summit Hills-Morwanda neighborhood, state preservationists, city planners, the property owner and others have been working to stabilize the building until restoration is assured.

OLD CEMETERIES throughout the valley. The foundation says burial places of early settlers are being threatened by development, abandonment and vandalism. "Many historic graveyards are threatened, in part," the foundation says, "because they defy our modern definition of cemeteries." Instead of formal burial grounds with fences and well-tended graves, many of the cemeteries are open plots tangled with weeds and new forest growth.

Among the cemeteries the foundation considers endangered are those of the families of Elijah McClanahan, William Fleming, the Richardson-



The foundation says that the Roanoke River's "ecology and the environment seem to be neglected."

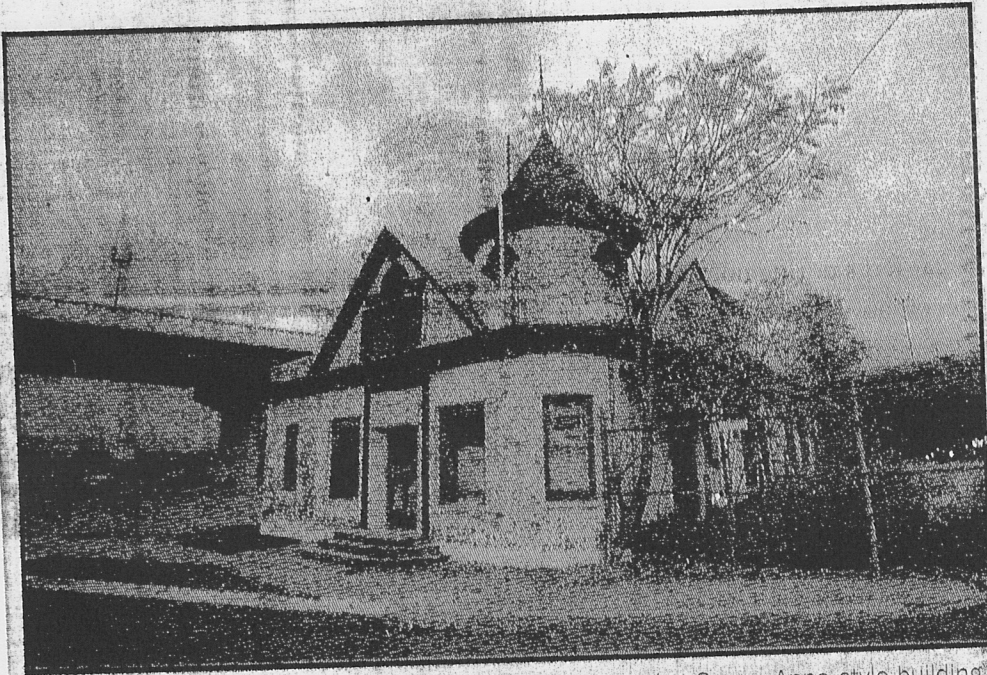
Harshbergers, the Gish-Muses, and the communities of Gladetown, Mount Moriah Baptist Church and Pinkard Court.

BELMONT NEIGHBORHOOD in Southeast Roanoke. The foundation says the homes and commercial buildings of Belmont, one of Roanoke's oldest working-class neighborhoods and the Southeast section closest to downtown, is testament to the city's earliest railroad workers. But vacancies, high turnover among residents and absentee ownership have contributed to poor maintenance and the decrepit condition of many homes. "Those old beauties are irreplaceable," the foundation says.

MOUNTAIN "VIEWSCAPES." The foundation lists American Electric Power's proposed high-voltage power line from West Virginia, the clear-cutting of timber, the construction of cellular telephone towers and the prospect of an Interstate 73 bisecting the valley as among the threats to mountain vistas. "With extra effort, construction can be planned for minimal disturbance of the mountains and indeed of all outdoors," the foundation stated. "Towers can be placed at lower elevations and less obtrusive routes can be selected for power lines and interstate highways."

THE ROANOKE RIVER. The foundation warned that the river is under attack from three sources — construction of a sewer line from Salem to the sewage treatment plant in Southeast Roanoke, loss of trees and introduction

The Moses store in the historic Gainsboro district was one of the last family-operated neighborhood groceries in Roanoke.



The former offices of Central Manufacturing Co., a charming Queen Anne-style building is now abandoned.

of broken stone called "riprap" along river banks for flood reduction, and trash cluttering the river and its banks.

Although the sewer line and flood reduction are needed, the foundation said, "ecology and the environment seem to be neglected. What is needed is more citizen concern and a widespread movement to clean up the river. Retaining existing trees and planting more will slow the runoff and keep the water temperature lower for fishing, in addition to the obvious scenic values of a tree-lined stream."

Until last week, the Shenandoah Hotel at Williamson Road and Campbell Avenue in Roanoke was the foundation's choice as the most endangered historic building in the valley. Center in the Square, an arts and cultural organi-

zation, announced last week it will buy and renovate the hotel as a theater library and dormitories for actors at nearby Mill Mountain Theatre. Pritchett, the foundation president, removed the hotel from the list.

When people come to the Roanoke Valley from great distances, they want to see the old, real Roanoke, not just subdivisions and commercial developments like those everywhere, Pritchett said of the places being highlighted by the foundation this year.

The list, he said, covers a few of the old buildings, neighborhoods and examples of natural beauty that are pure Roanoke Valley.

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