

For more information, call  
George Kegley, 366-4607  
[georgekegley@verizon.net](mailto:georgekegley@verizon.net)  
(photos are available)

## RVPF Announces Seven Endangered Sites for 2006

Greenfield slave cabin and a log kitchen in Botetourt County, the proposed inland port location at Elliston, the Rt. 122 corridor through Franklin and Bedford counties and four Roanoke sites have been placed on the 2006 Endangered Sites listing of the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation.

From its listings over the last decade, the preservation organization has recorded the status of 10 lost structures, 10 saved and more than a dozen significant sites still endangered.

Most of the sites are endangered because of a lack of adequate planning for commercial or residential growth, neglect or failure to find the best use of old structures.

The seven sites selected for the current listing:

- Route 220 corridor south of Roanoke
- The 400 block of Gilmer Avenue, NW
- A house at 806 Marshall Avenue, SW
- Landscape fabric, cobblestone streets, stone walls, Mill Mountain gatehouse
- The proposed railway inland port location at Elliston, Montgomery County
- Log structures at Greenfield Industrial Park, once the William Preston plantation
- The Rt. 122 corridor between Burnt Chimney and Rt. 24 in Bedford County

The Foundation selects endangered sites to raise public awareness of the continuing threat to valuable old structures, neighborhoods or undeveloped land from haphazard, unplanned development. The sites must have historic, cultural or environmental value. They must be under immediate threat and there must be a clear way to avoid it.

The Route 220 corridor south has been cluttered by heavy traffic while bulldozers carved out hillsides, first for the Slate Hill gash across from Tanglewood Mall, and later for a Home Depot store, negatively impacting a small neighborhood. Over the hill south, Clearbrook residents have gone to court, trying to block construction of a larger Wal-Mart, proposed across the highway from a school. An earlier zoning plan for a Clearbrook Village has been overturned and preservation of the once rural character of the community is endangered.

Four houses in the 400 block of Gilmer Avenue, once the homes of white residents and later occupied by prominent blacks, face an uncertain future. Famed civil rights lawyer, Oliver Hill, now nearing 100, lived there as a boy in the early 1920s. Dr. Edward Dudley, who lived in the next house west, was Roanoke's first black dentist and his son, Edward Jr. was ambassador to Liberia and later a judge on the New York State Supreme Court. Dr. J. H. Roberts, one of Roanoke's first black doctors, lived in the third house and his daughters are there today. Rufus Edwards, a Norfolk & Western Railway brakeman and a union officer, lived in the fourth house.

The house at 806 Marshall is part of the historic fabric of a block of mainly four-square frame homes, built between 1910 and 1919. Roanoke City acquired the house through a tax sale and soon announced that it possibly would be demolished. Later, another city spokesman said the building will not be demolished because it is physically secure and no threat to the health and wellbeing of neighbors. A contractor said 806 Marshall could be renovated for \$100,000.

(more)

1<sup>st</sup> add—endangered

The historic architectural landscape fabric of Roanoke and many other cities is slowly disappearing because of neglect and redevelopment. Among these features are old brick sidewalks, granite curbing, brick and cobblestone streets, iron lamp posts, metal and stone monuments and stone walls. An example of this vanishing fabric is the gatehouse on the old road up Mill Mountain, now closed as a private drive.

If Norfolk Southern Railway builds a proposed inland port for intermodal freight traffic off Rt. 460, near Elliston, it will bring a dramatic loss of natural beauty and historic character to the upper Roanoke Valley, just east of the Elliston Straightaway. Nearby residents oppose the structure because it will bring truck traffic and mar a valley with one of the most scenic and best preserved landscapes in this region. Opponents in the neighborhood say have learned that the port, now hill and valley farmland, will have 50 acres of asphalt, provide only a dozen or so jobs and bring 200 tractor-trailers down Rt. 460 each day. The railroad has said it also has looked at two alternate sites already developed. The Elliston site is across the highway from a Rowe Furniture plant.

On a hilltop behind industrial plants in Greenfield Industrial Park on Rt. 220 in Botetourt County stand a neglected slave quarters and kitchen, once part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century estate of Col. William Preston, a man known as “The Watchdog of the Frontier.” Greenfield, his old home, was destroyed by fire in the late 1950s. The slave quarters, a 1 1/2-story log, double-pen structure, had living space on both floors. The kitchen, with a brick chimney now covered with ivy, had living quarters in a loft. Both structures, built in the early 1800s, have exceptional historic integrity but their conditions worsen steadily. Restoration of the cabins is in the long-range plan for the industrial park but “it’s a matter of priorities and money...as soon as we possibly can afford them,” said Gerald Burgess, county administrator. If a proposed welcome center is built near Rt. 220, Burgess said the cabins might be moved there.

A large number of significant old houses, other buildings, archaeological sites and Booker T. Washington National Historical Monument located along an 18-mile section of Rt. 122 are increasingly threatened by uncontrolled growth, such as residential development and commercial sprawl. Many sites are undisturbed but the trend toward infill between them is a major concern. Increasingly heavy traffic will inevitably lead to a road-widening project which could incur heavy losses of historic resources. Much of the growth is concentrated in the West Lake area but new development and construction is occurring throughout the corridor.

Among the sites still endangered after listing in the past decade are Roanoke City recreation centers: Buena Vista, Mountain View, Villa Heights and a building in Washington Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginian Railway station, the Adams-Gleaves livery stable on South Jefferson Street, U.S. 220 north corridor in Botetourt County, the town of Fincastle, the green space around the Victory Stadium site and the Interstate 81 corridor.

Sites lost since they were listed are the Stokes house on Plantation Road, the Harris farmstead on U.S. 221 south, Central Manufacturing Co. turreted building next to the Coca-Cola plant, Brubaker house at Hanging Rock, Guildhall on Cove Road, Jefferson Street Baptist Church, Victory Stadium, the circa 1830 Kinzie barn at Troutville, White House Galleries on Franklin Road south, former Lonesome Dove bar on Salem Avenue and a board and batten house near the railroad in Salem.

Sites no longer endangered are the H&C Coffee sign, Shenandoah Hotel, N&W office buildings, Moses store on north Jefferson Street, Wiley house moved from a site near the Salem

post office, Grandin Theatre, Martin Luther King (First or Henry Street) bridge, NW, Ebony Club (formerly Strand Theatre) and the Brown-Preston-Cole house in West Salem.

The endangered sites were announced at the Foundation's annual meeting Wednesday night at Hollins University. Louis Malon, director of the 34 properties of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA), spoke on preservation issues facing the General Assembly and activities planned for the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007 of the founding of Jamestown..

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