

WINTER 2025

FOCUS ON
PRESERVATION

Market Square, Roanoke, Va.



ROANOKE VALLEY PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Kegly Preservation Awards
14	Pints for Preservation Recap
15	Upcoming Events
16	Historic Roanoke Cards
17	Historic Preservation Reads
18	Historic Plaque Program

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

Kegley Preservation Awards

RVPF Annual Meeting and Awards Reception

The Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation celebrates the efforts of individuals, non-profit organizations, community groups, and educational institutions to promote the awareness and preservation of our historic, cultural, and natural resources in the Roanoke Valley.

Seven awards were presented Wednesday November 19 at the Foundation's annual meeting and Awards Reception at the recently restored Colony House Motor Lodge located at 3560 Franklin Road SW. The Foundation promotes the preservation and stewardship of historic, cultural, and natural resources in the Roanoke Valley through education and advocacy. "Celebrating the people, programs and projects that help to support our mission is a highlight of the Foundation's activities every year," explained Alison Blanton, Awards Committee co-chair.



Photo Credit: Whitney Leeson



Named in honor of George Kegley, a founding member of the Foundation and Awards Committee Chair for many years, the awards have been presented annually since 1999. We also honor the dedication of Margaret and Alice Roberts to preserving African American history with the presentation of The Roberts' Heritage Education Award this year. Additionally, we are particularly excited to present an award for the restoration of a property that was included on the Foundation's Endangered Sites List in 2023.

Blanton said that this year's list is notable in the high quality of restoration projects as well as the diverse and creative ways in which heritage education is made available to the public. Bricks and mortar projects range from the careful restoration of an early 19th century home in Fincastle to a mid-century Googie-style motel. The rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of an architecturally significant early-20th century home on Patterson Avenue is also recognized for its creative approach to the social and preservation challenges of this historic neighborhood with its grand houses. Believing strongly in the importance of education to help promote good stewardship of our heritage, the Foundation is also excited to recognize four varying and creative efforts by individuals, community organizations, and institutions to share the history of the Roanoke Valley. From expansive databases, memorial sculpture, thoroughly researched books, collections of community archives, and engaging scavenger hunts, these projects promote awareness of our history from early settlement and enslavement to mountain communities, and mid-century Roanoke.



Photo Credit: Whitney Leeson

Thank You to Kegley Preservation Awards Committee Members for their dedication to RVPF: Alison Blanton and Whitney Feldmann (Co-chairs); Anne Beckett, Judy Harrison, Rob Logan, Mike Kennedy, and Katie Gutshall.

Aspen Hill Award for Restoration

Located at the corner of East Main and North Hancock Streets, the Peck-Figgatt House, ca 1822 (also known as Aspen Hill) stands at a prominent corner in the Fincastle Historic District. Formerly deemed endangered by RVPF in 2023, it stood vacant and in disrepair. The neglected condition of this historical & architecturally significant house threatened not only the house, but also the historic character of the town.

Caroline and Donald Naysmith bought the home in 2024 and fully restored the historic property. In addition to making the house water-tight and repairing damage from vegetation and rodents, they made much-needed repairs to the exterior masonry, repaired and repainted the metal roof, restored all the historic wood windows, and repaired/repainted all exterior trim.

On the interior, the original floor plan was retained with minor upgrades to the kitchen and bathrooms. The historic interior plaster and wood trim was retained and repaired or replicated where it was missing or deteriorated beyond repair due to water damage. The heart-pine wood flooring has also been refinished throughout the house. The seven fireplaces with historic mantles remain intact, including the kitchen fireplace with its crane to suspend cooking pots over the fire. The dining room features a table seating for twelve, and the Breckenridge family's 150-year-old grand piano is located there too. The Naysmiths also replaced the home's heating and air-conditioning system. The separate kitchen building is now connected to the main house with a covered walkway, and the landscaping has been improved.



Photo Credit: Fincastle Herald



Photo Credit: Susan Bailey



Originally built ca. 1822 by John Peck, a large addition was constructed in 1839 by Captain Figgatt, a prominent local banker. The history of the Figgatt family & 19th century Botetourt County is well documented through Nanny Godwin Figgatt's collection of diaries, letters from her husband, & several family recipe books. Letters between Captain Figgatt and his wife during the Civil War and been chronicled in the play *Dear Nanny*.

The house is designed in an adaptation of the Italian Villa style. The DHR survey record in 2006 described the house as follows: "The main block of this brick house is a side gable, 2-story structure that holds a one-story porch with turned posts, decorative brackets, sawn balustrade, and triglyphs in the frieze. A one-story porch is also found at the east side, with identical ornamentation. A gable ell lies on the east side, and a one-story addition is at the southwest corner. Polygonal bay windows are found at the south and west sides."

Caroline opined in an article in the *Fincastle Herald* that she would like to hear from the community about the home's future "the house is an integral part of Fincastle, and we would love to see it used in a way the town would enjoy." The property has been approved for use as a bed-and-breakfast.



Photo Credit: Susan Bailey

The Colony House Motor Lodge Award for Rehabilitation



Photo Credit: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Built in 1959, the Colony House Motor Lodge is an excellent example of a mid-twentieth century motel that reflected the changing national trends in travel and lodging made possible by increased automobile ownership during the prosperous post-war years. Designed as a simplified, local example of the popular Googie style used nationally in mid-twentieth century roadside architecture, the motel consists of functional rectangular blocks of guest rooms with exterior corridors accented by a folded-plate roof system, with a dominating geometric pattern intended to catch the eye of passing motorists. The concrete block and slab construction with a combination of natural concrete brick and plate-glass window walls also utilized recent innovations in building technologies and materials.



Photo Credit: The Colony House Motor Lodge and Southern Hospitality Magazine

Sited dramatically along a major arterial route with the natural backdrop of a wooded hillside, the motel was designed to appeal to passing travelers as it juxtaposed the modern conveniences of automobile travel with the allure of the great outdoors. Taking advantage of 450 feet of road frontage, the property continues to feature the original amenities of an office with porte-cochere and swimming pool, as well as prominent signage at its entrance, and ample parking for automobiles directly outside each motel room. As a rare surviving and intact example of this mid-twentieth century building type and style in Roanoke, the Colony House Motor Lodge was listed individually on the National Register in 2023.

After owning the property for almost 60 years, the Trent family sold it in 2018 to Farrell Properties LC. Utilizing the state and federal historic tax credits, the Farrells rehabilitated the property for continued use as a motel. The project team included John Fulton (architect), Glave & Holmes (interior design), Lionberger Construction Co. (contractor), and Hill Studio (preservation consultant). The \$8 million project retained and repaired the character-defining features of the mid-century motel, including the distinctive folded-plate roof, exterior corridors, plate-glass window walls, louvered screen doors, and room configurations with minimal changes to upgrade bathrooms and meet current code requirements. The project also retained and renovated the amenities of the office with porte-cochere, swimming pool with breeze-block screen walls, and historic signage.



Dana DeWitt & the Bent Mountain Center Award for Heritage Education



Photo Credit: Bent Mountain Center

Dana DeWitt and the Bent Mountain Center have organized and developed a "Bent Mountain History Room" at the center that contains 3-D objects, photos, and memorabilia pertaining to the history/heritage of the Bent Mountain community and adjacent areas (Copper Hill, etc.). The room is to be formally dedicated on Nov. 16th (having been postponed from an earlier date) and will be a permanent part of the community center.

The Bent Mountain Center, located at 11153 Bent Mountain Road, is a cultural organization in Bent Mountain that offers educational, recreational and social activities. They are housed in the former Bent Mountain Elementary School and hope to maintain the facility as a pillar of the Floyd, Franklin, Montgomery and Roanoke Counties.

Restoration Housing Award for Adaptive Reuse



Photo Credit: Restoration Housing

1729 Patterson Avenue is a Colonial Revival style home completed by 1916. The home was built for James M. McNelis. Mr. McNelis was the proprietor of a saloon in downtown Roanoke. Restoration Housing purchased the home that in recent years served groups from veterans to formerly incarcerated women. In 2025 the home, now restored with its original design and configuration intact, serves as housing for mothers with substance use disorder and their infants. In 2024, Restoration Housing acquired 1729 Patterson Avenue through an acquisition grant provided by Aetna Better Health of Virginia. Although the house was in relatively good condition, a complete renovation was needed to bring it up to code for this type of use. Completed in early 2025, the property is affordably leased to the newly established Twelve Foundation.

The home has many Colonial characteristics, 8 over 1 double hung windows capped with splayed lintels and keystone, corner quoins, Corinthian columns, dentil molding, and an elaborately carved front entrance with pilasters, sidelights and a transom. It has many features that are more indicative of Craftsman style including a full front porch, wide eaves, and unpainted woodwork on the exterior. Inside, there is additional unpainted woodwork, a Gothic Revival stairway, and three distinctly different mantelpieces.

Roanoke Public Library Foundation Award for Heritage Education

The Roanoke Public Library Foundation, established in 1953, enables people to leave money, property, or other endowments to the Roanoke Public Libraries. The Roanoke Public Library Foundation has funded both the research and publishing of Nelson Harris' two books, "The Roanoke Valley in the 1940s" and "The Roanoke Valley in the 1950s" at considerable printing cost to provide reference works documenting the history of the Roanoke Valley. They have also committed funding for "The Roanoke Valley in the 1960s" currently in progress.

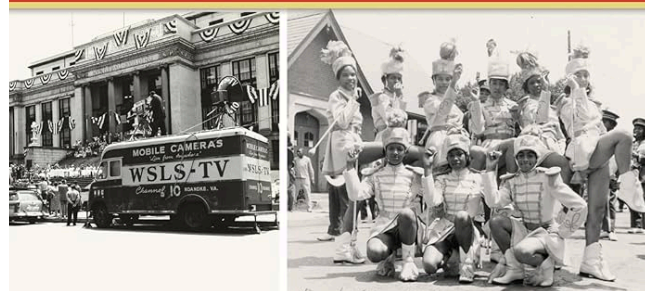
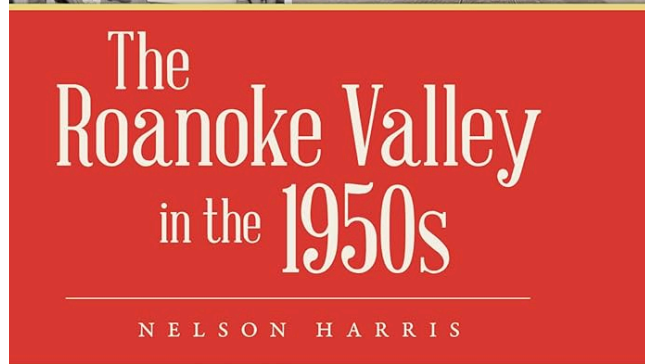
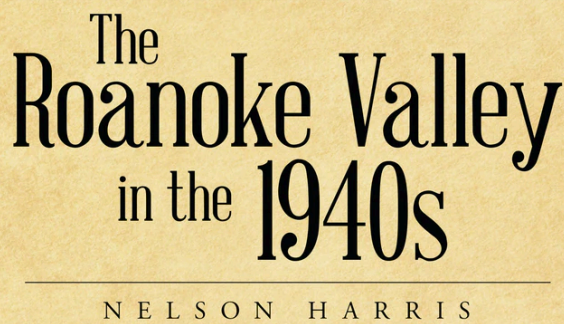
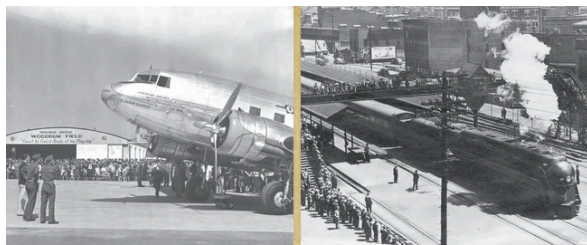
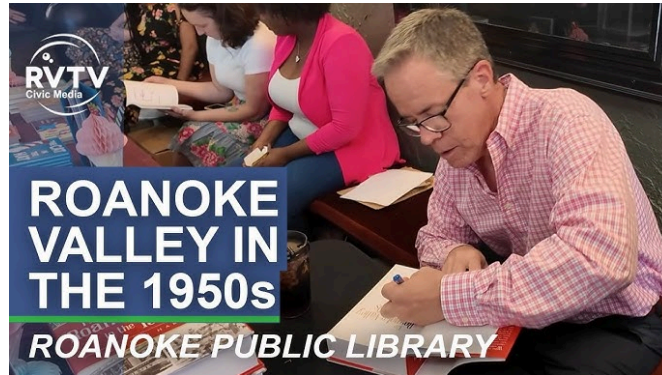
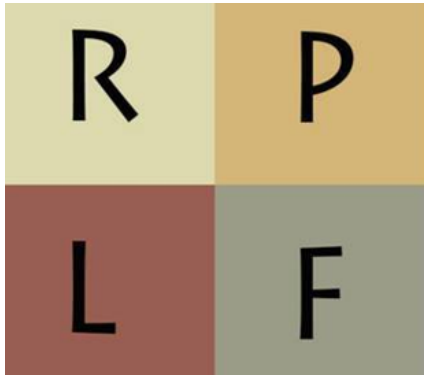


Photo Credit: Nelson Harris

RVPF Annual Pub Crawl & History Scavenger Hunt Award for Heritage Education

The Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation's Annual Pub Crawl and History Scavenger Hunt is an event where participants learn more about Roanoke's historic landscape while helping the foundation raise money to further our mission of preserving the valley's most important architectural and cultural icons. Participants compete for prizes by completing a fun time travel themed scavenger hunt featuring questions about the people and places important to Roanoke's past. Over the last four years, the scavenger hunt has brought pub crawlers to Roanoke of the 1930s, 1970s, 1910s, and 1920s.

Each year, the event is thoughtfully planned and executed by Lynsey Allie and Megan Mizak, who work together to designate the decade, design the route, develop the trivia questions, recruit "time traveler" volunteers, and oversee marketing and promotion. Megan takes the lead in designing the event's signature "Book of Clues," which guides participants through the scavenger hunt and adds a distinctive creative touch. Together, their collaboration ensures that the Pub Crawl & History Scavenger Hunt continues to be a fun, educational, and memorable way to celebrate Roanoke's historic character.



Photo Credit: Whitney Leeson

Dr. Jesse Bucher and Authors & Architects Memorial Sculpture Award for Roberts Heritage Education

Dr. Jesse Bucher and his team of student researchers at Roanoke College's Center for Studying Structures of Race (CSSR) are recognized for their exceptional work in heritage education, preservation, and community awareness of enslaved persons in Salem and Roanoke County. Since its inception in 2019, the CSSR's effort under Dr. Bucher's leadership to develop the Genealogy of Slavery database has uncovered and documented the identities and lives of more than 6,000 enslaved individuals in Roanoke County, drawing from courthouse records and archival material. The project moves beyond numbers—it restores names, stories, and connections for people whose contributions were long hidden. As the database itself says, it is "an open-access database ... information about the history of enslavement in Roanoke County, Virginia from 1840 to 1865."

Simultaneously, the team's work has resulted in a tangible campus landmark: the "Authors & Architects" memorial sculpture installed at Roanoke College in April 2025, which honors 829 enslaved people with direct ties to the institution, and stands across from Fintel Library as a powerful symbol of inclusion, recognition, and historical truth.

Under Dr. Bucher's guidance, students engaged in intensive archival research—spending thousands of hours combing through mid-19th-century wills, tax records, estate inventories, and census schedules—to locate, identify, and record the lives of enslaved persons connected to the college and the region. Their work has expanded the narrative of the region's history and created a resource for descendants, scholars, and the community at large. This dual achievement—academic, archival scholarship paired with public memorialization—epitomizes the goals of the Kegley Awards: preserving heritage, advancing education, and deepening community awareness.



Photo Credit: Roanoke College

Pints for Preservation — Historic Trivia Hurrah



Photo Credit: Caleb Caudill

The Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation's Fifth Annual Preservation Pub Crawl and Trivia Contest was a tremendous success, with a great turnout and enthusiastic participation throughout the afternoon. This year's event embraced a lively 1920s theme, with participants visiting downtown venues, enjoying themed cocktails, and testing their knowledge of both Roanoke history and the Roaring Twenties.

We extend a sincere thank you to our generous sponsors — Brown & Edwards, Balzer & Associates,

Brian Wishneff & Associates, and David Parr, Esq. — whose support helped make the evening possible. We are also deeply appreciative of the hospitality shown by our participating locations: Corned Beef & Co., Billy's, Well Hung Vineyard, and 202 Social House. Each establishment generously provided designated gathering space for participants and contributed to the fun atmosphere of the evening.

A special thank you goes to 202 Social House for allowing the Foundation to gather in their speakeasy space for the final trivia question and tie-breaker round. The competition was fierce, with three teams ultimately tying for first place before a winner was determined. Congratulations to the winning team led by Mike Kennedy, with teammates Mandi Givens, Caleb Caudill, Nancy Helms, and Whitney Leeson.

Each stop along the crawl featured a specialty 1920s-themed drink and trivia questions connected to the era. One crowd favorite was "The Crash," a blue-colored gin cocktail served at 202 Social House. Participants could also earn bonus points by arriving dressed in 1920s attire, and many embraced the spirit of the evening with impressive vintage-inspired fashion.

Trivia throughout the night highlighted fascinating moments from Roanoke history, including questions about Roanoke native John Payne, star of *Miracle on 34th Street*, who as a young man won the contest to name the Patrick Henry Hotel; the American Theatre building on Jefferson Street becoming the first building in Roanoke to feature air conditioning in 1928; and Roanoke native and civil rights attorney Oliver Hill appearing in Oscar Micheaux's 1927 film *The House Behind the Cedars*, which was filmed in Roanoke.

The Foundation appreciates everyone who participated, volunteered, sponsored, and supported this year's event. The evening was a wonderful celebration of local history and historic preservation.

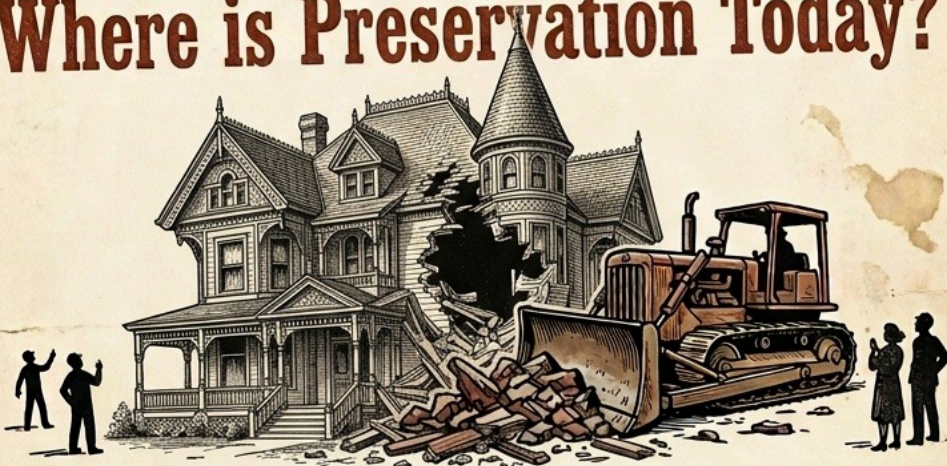
Upcoming Events

Concerned about demolitions in Cave Spring, Salem, and elsewhere?...

Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation (RVPF)

WRECKING BALLS & BULLDOZERS

Where is Preservation Today?



Join the **RVPF** for an informal conversation about the state of preservation today as historic buildings from the White House to Cave Spring and South Roanoke are being demolished. What is causing this trend and what can we do to stop it?

Location: Fork in the Alley, 2123 Crystal Spring Avenue SW
Date and Time: Wednesday March 18th @ 5:30

Appetizers will be provided.

Photo Credit: Evie Stone

Historic Roanoke Cards

Featuring Five Unique Photographs

Support RVPF and buy several packs of cards to give to family and friends throughout the year. 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

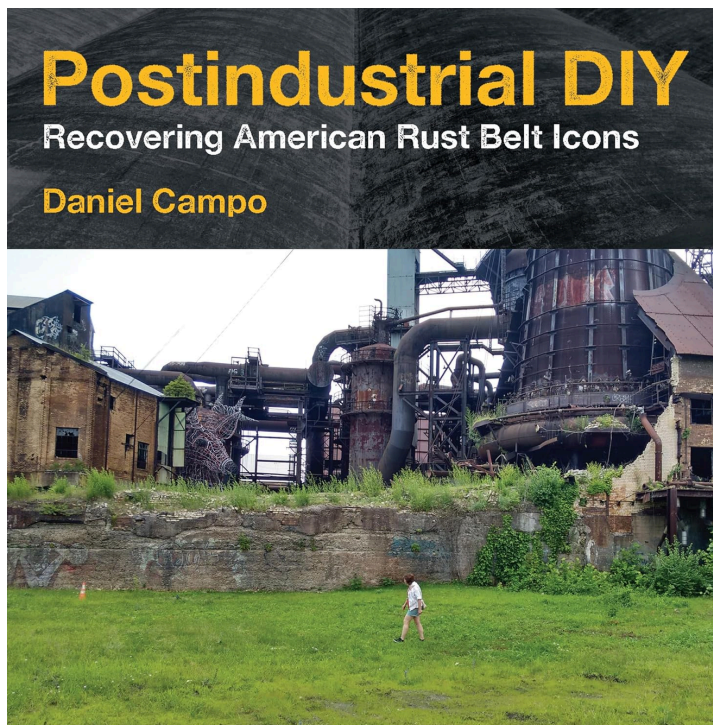
Recovering Landmarks

Postindustrial DIY: Recovering American Rust Belt Icons (2024) by **Daniel Campo**

WINNER, 2025 CENTER FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOOK PRIZE

Chronicles grassroots efforts to recover, rebuild, and enjoy architecturally iconic but economically obsolete places in the American Rust Belt.

A pioneering Detroit automobile factory. A legendary iron mill at the edge of Pittsburgh. A campus of concrete grain elevators in Buffalo. Two monumental train stations, one in Buffalo, the other in Detroit. These once-noble sites have since fallen from their towering grace. As local elected leaders did everything they could to destroy what was left of these places, citizens saw beauty and utility in these industrial ruins and felt compelled to act. *Postindustrial DIY* tells their stories.



The culmination of more than a dozen years of on-the-ground investigation, ethnography, and historical analysis, author and urbanist Daniel Campo immerses the reader in this postindustrial landscape, weaving the perspectives of dozens of DIY protagonists as well as architects, planners, and preservationists. Working without capital, expertise, and sometimes permission in a milieu dominated by powerful political and economic interests, these do-it-yourself actors are driven by passion and a sense of civic duty rather than by profit or political expediency. They have craftily remade these sites into collective preservation projects and democratic grounds for arts and culture, environmental engagement, regional celebrations, itinerant play, and in-the-moment constructions. Their projects are generating excitement about the prospect of Rust Belt life, even as they often remain invisible to the uninformed passerby and fall short of professional preservation or environmental reclamation standards.

Demonstrating that there is no such thing as a site that is “too far gone” to save or reuse, *Postindustrial DIY* is rich with case studies that demonstrate how great architecture is not simply for the elites or the wealthy. The citizen preservationists and urbanists described in this book offer looser, more playful, and often more publicly satisfying alternatives to the development practices that have transformed iconic sites into expensive real estate or a clean slate for the next profitable endeavor. Transcending the disciplinary boundaries of architecture, historic preservation, city planning, and landscape architecture, *Postindustrial DIY* suggests new ways to engage, adapt, and preserve architecturally compelling sites and bottom-up strategies for Rust Belt revival.

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 \$400 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 wleeson@roanoke.edu

"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

Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation Board of Directors

Officers

- Bob Clement, President
- David Parr, Vice President
- Frederick Gusler, Treasurer
- Whitney Leeson, Secretary

Members

- Jordan Bell, Alison Blanton, Ariel Clark, Lynsey Crantz-Allie, Whitney Feldmann, Katherine Gutshall, Judith Harrison, Mike Kennedy, Megan Mizak, Eric Monday, Virginia Savage, Evelyn Slone, and Angela Stiefbold