The Past Is The Beginning Of The Future

O ver more than 200 years, the thriving community of Salem in the Roanoke Valley of Virginia has seen a lot of history. The Great Wagon Road gave way to an interstate highway; one-room schoolhouses evolved into modern facilities; charming Victorian neighborhoods. . . well, they remain charming Victorian neighborhoods.

The story of Salem's past is the story of us all-an American hometown carved from the wilderness when the nation was new; growing and changing through the years but retaining her own unique charm. Come take a closer look!

THE SALEM MUSEUM
801 East Main Street
Salem, Virginia 24153
www.salemmuseum.org

Salem Visitor Center
Inside The Salem Civic Center
1001 Roanoke Boulevard
Salem, Virginia 24153
1-888-VASALEM
www.visitsalemva.com
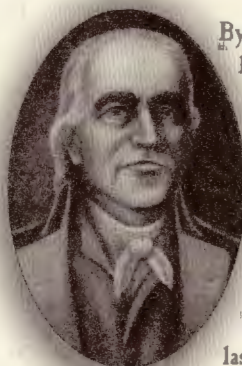
HISTORIC
SALEM
VIRGINIA

A HISTORIC WALK THROUGH TIME

Long before Europeans discovered the lush Roanoke Valley of Virginia, it was home to generations of Native Americans who hunted and farmed on the banks of the river. In 1671, explorers Batts and Fallam passed through the area and were "exceedingly civilly entertained" by the Totera or Tutelo tribe. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Totera Town of 1671 was on the site of today's Moyer Sports Complex.

By the mid 18th Century, the native peoples had been forced out of the area by hostile enemy tribes, and so the early settlers found a depopulated valley ready for settlement. Of these early residents, the best known was General Andrew Lewis, hero of the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774. Two years later, Lewis helped secure Virginia's independence by chasing from the Commonwealth her last British governor.

After Lewis' death, his heirs began selling off his vast land holdings. Speculator James Simpson purchased 31 acres from the estate and in 1802 laid out "a Town by the name of Salem" astride the Great Wagon Road (today's Main Street). Travelers heading west along the Great Road brought rapid prosperity.

Simpson's new town grew quickly, and the growth accelerated when Salem became the county seat of the new Roanoke County in 1838. In 1847, the arrival of the Virginia Collegiate Institute (now Roanoke College) made Salem a seat of higher education. The college was one of the few in the south to remain open throughout the Civil War.

The War between the States had a great impact on Salem, but fortunately the town avoided the devastation experienced by other communities. Only two actions brought the war to Salem. In December 1863 Union General Averell raided the town to cut the Confederate railroad lines. Six months later Confederate forces under John McCausland met retreating Union Forces at Hanging Rock, and won a small victory in the Valley's only battle.

Recovery after the war took several years, but then brought enormous changes to the town. A popular resort, Lake Spring Hotel, opened in 1876 and operated until a devastating fire in 1982. Public schools were formed in 1872. Electricity, water works, paved streets and telephone lines all brought Salem into the modern world. In the 1880's, a period of phenomenal growth—the

Great Land Boom—opened new neighborhoods and saw the town's population nearly double in ten years. Promotional literature marketed the town as "the Queen City" and the "Switzerland of the South." By the time the Boom fizzled out in the 1890's, Salem had changed forever.

In 1902 Salem celebrated her 100th Birthday with a parade, speeches, and a fairyland drama entitled "Enchantment." The carefree atmosphere of the following years—with costume parties, silent films, romance and elopements—ended abruptly when the United States entered the First World War. While the dough boys enlisted, folks on the home front rolled bandages and sold liberty bonds. Fifteen local boys paid the ultimate sacrifice in the first World War.

Progress returned in the 1920's with the change to a council-manager form of town government and a new emphasis on public works. The Depression of the 1930's cast a pall over the town, but the worst of the economic hardships was relieved by construction of the Veteran's Hospital near Salem.

Salem played a surprisingly active role in the Second World War. An Indiana Street garage housed German prisoners of war who worked for local farmers, and Roanoke College sponsored a pilot training program. The Salem Foundry machined castings used in the production of the atomic bomb. And 43 local men gave their lives for the nation.

Postwar growth was hastened by the arrival of an immense General Electric Plant and other industries. By 1960, Salem was the largest town in Virginia with a population of 16,058. At midnight on December 31, 1967, Virginia's largest town became her newest independent city as Salem separated from Roanoke County.

A generation later, Salem has one of the highest standards of living and one of the best school systems in the state. The city has grown remarkably, but maintains her old-fashioned, small town personality. The opening of the Salem Civic Center in 1967, Lewis-Gale Hospital in 1972, Memorial Stadium in 1995, and the Salem Visitor's Center in 1997 have contributed to making Salem a thriving, progressive community in the state of Virginia.
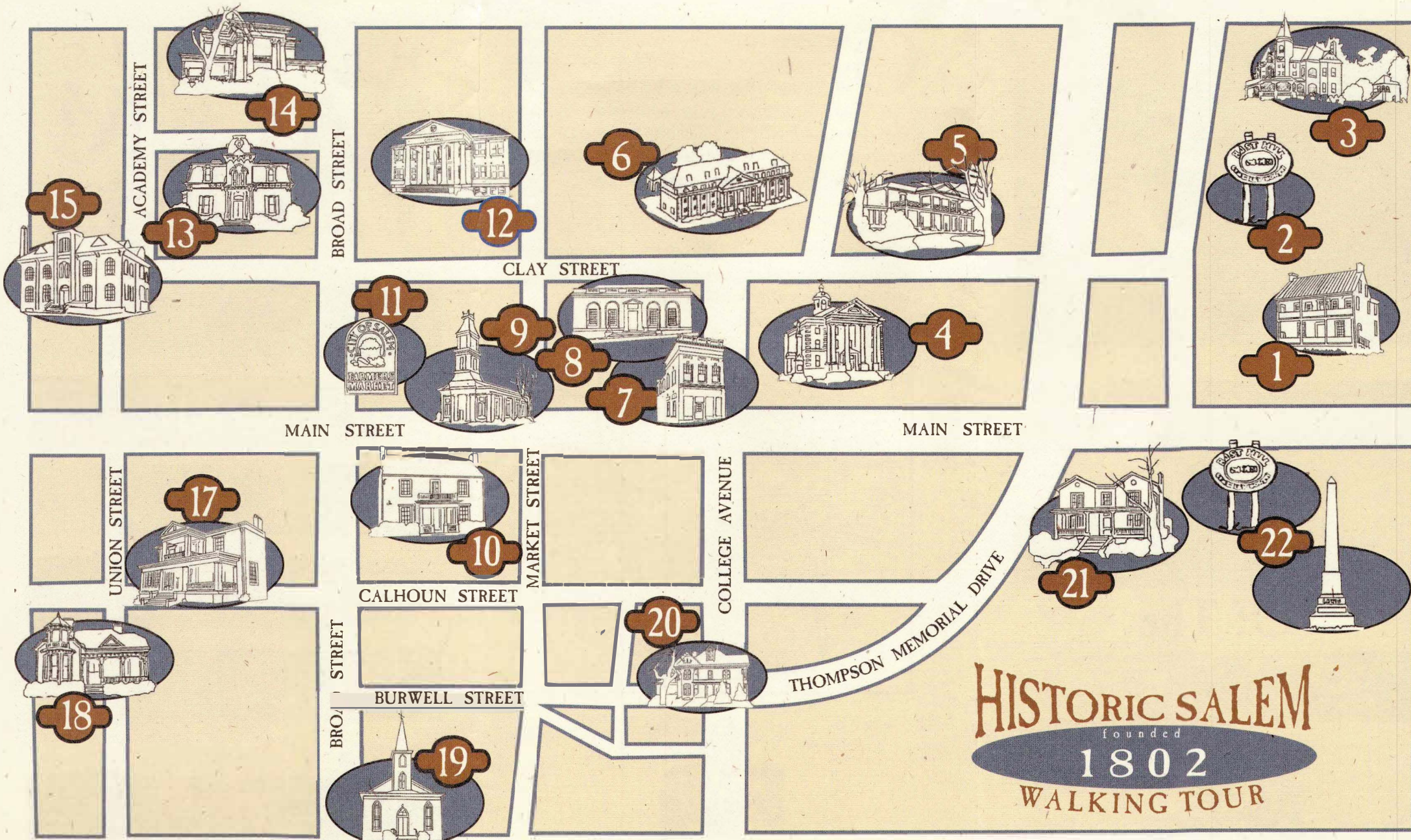
LAKESIDE
invites

Historic Salem

1 ***WILLIAM-BROWN HOUSE-STORE (c.1845)**
801 East Main Street. Built by William C. Williams, builder, merchant, hotel keeper, as residence/store/post office. In 1852 J.R.C. Brown Jr., purchased the house. Used as a fraternity house in the 1930's, later as apartments. William Watts donated the house to the Salem Historical Society, which moved it to the current site. The Salem Museum opened in June, 1992.

2 **EAST HILL CEMETERY NORTH (c.1868)**
Longwood Park. Two-acre lot, bought for $82.00, was the burying ground for the African American community of Roanoke County. Among prominent citizens buried here is the Rev. B. F. Fox, pastor of First Baptist and Shiloh Baptist Churches.

3 **Site of LONGWOOD MANSION (c.1904)**
Longwood Park. Thomas H. Cooper, industrialist, built the luxurious 18 room residence on this 11-acre tract in 1903. Heirs sold it to the Town of Salem in 1942. Used for meetings until fire destroyed it in 1968. The carriage house survived and has been converted to offices for the Chamber of Commerce.

4 ***OLD COURTHOUSE (c.1910)**
Main Street at College Avenue. Now West Hall of Roanoke College, this 1910 structure was built on the site of the first Roanoke County Courthouse (1841). The United Daughters of the Confederacy dedicated the Confederate Monument on the lawn in 1910. In 1980, with construction of a new county courthouse to the east, the college acquired the building, which now houses academic offices and classrooms.

5 **MONTEREY (c.1841)** 110 High Street
Originally owned by Powell H. Huff, Monterey was constructed with bricks handmade by slaves on premises. This Greek Revival Home features 12 rooms, two-story entrance hall, twelve-foot ceilings. Served as hotel around 1900, boarding summer guests. Now owned by Roanoke College.

6 ***ROANOKE COLLEGE (c.1847)**
North end of College Avenue. Originally established in 1842 as Virginia Institute in Augusta County, the College relocated in Salem five years later. Copies of Roanoke College Walking Tour are available from Admissions Office located in Roselawn, 226 High Street.

7 ***DOWNTOWN SALEM HISTORIC DISTRICT**
This 25-acre district contains the core of Salem's downtown area, including the original platted town laid out by James Simpson in 1802. As you walk along this part of Main Street, notice tops of buildings decorated with the original tin work so popular in the late 19th century. Many storefronts on Main Street are original.

8 ***1923 SALEM POST OFFICE**
301 Main Street. Constructed in a program that introduced great architecture to many towns, this was Salem's first federally owned postal building. Earlier post offices were located at various points along Main Street.

9 ***SALEM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (c.1851)**
Main Street at Market Street. The Presbyterian congregation outgrew its original church on Academy Street and erected this building, using slave labor, with bricks fired on premises. The structure incorporates numerous architectural designs from the popular antebellum handbooks of the time. The Deyerle family, known for several Roanoke Valley structures in the Greek revival style, are thought to be the designers.

10 **10. OLD POST HOUSE (c.1821)**
42 East Main Street. House first doubled as a residence for builder Jacob Stevens and his wife Sarah. Initially providing travelers with a mail drop, an exchange for fresh horses, and possibly overnight lodgings. It was later used as a private residence and tea house. St. Paul's Episcopal Church purchased it in 1952 and uses it for church purposes.

11 **FARMER'S MARKET (c.1992)** Main Street at Broad
A lavish example in Salem unofficially for many years, city market was only formally established in 1992. Open from 6:00am until dusk, Monday-Saturday, April through December.

12 **CITY HALL (c.1912)** 114 Broad Street
Constructed in Jeffersonian Revival Style, the building served as Salem High School for over 20 years until fire caused it to close for renovations. It reopened and served as Broad Street Elementary School from 1934-1976. Converted into City Hall in 1983.

13 ***EVANS WEBBER HOUSE (c.1882)** 213 Broad Street
A lavish example of Second French Empire architecture, the house, built by John Evans, still boasts its original carved wood cornices, brackets, eaves and 13-foot ceilings. Note the windows made of cast iron.

14 **RICE HOUSE (c.1867)** 233 Broad Street
Built by Salem attorney D. B. Strouse, the house did not originally feature the massive Corinthian columns. The owner renovated the original long thin, one-story porch after seeing a porch similar to this one on a trip north in early 1900's. The house still has a fireplace in every room, including six bedrooms, and original wrought iron fence.

Walkers may proceed along alley between the Evans Webber and Rice houses, a typical nineteenth century passageway for townspeople on horseback or foot.

15 ***ACADEMY STREET SCHOOL (c.1890, 1895)**
121 Academy Street. These two buildings, of Italian style of Flemish Bond construction, served students for a better part of a century, until 1977. The initial structure on the right, was used for lower grades; second school was added for upper level students. Buildings are now condominiums.

16 **UNION STREET (c.1802)**
In the early 1800's, headquarters of Roanoke Navigation Company, on the southwest corner of Main and Union, which sent shipments of cargo on a canal running down Union Street to the Roanoke River. In 1859, the railroad eliminated the need of the canal. During the Civil War, Northern troops marched down Union Street toward the rail depot to destroy tracks, creating, according to newspaper accounts, "a lively spectacle. There were wagons, carriages, carts, omnibuses, horsemen, footmen, citizens, students, running pell-mell hollowing Yankees."

17 **NEW CASTLE (c.1820, 1853)** 12 Union Street
Early Republic brick building at rear of house, one of the oldest structures in Salem, originally used as a residence but became slave quarters when larger house was constructed. New Castle was later converted into a factory that produced chewing tobacco. After World War II, Mrs. Howard Butts founded the private North Cross school here. It currently houses Olde Salem Furnishings.

18 **QUEEN ANNE HOUSE (c.1888)** 103 Union Street
southwest corner of Union and Calhoun Streets. Rare example of its type in the area, the home was built when trends moved away from simple Colonial architecture to the more flowery and creative style. Note the fan-crafted decorations and many spindles on the porch and cupola over the front bay window.

19 **THE WATER STREET COMMUNITY (est.1868)**
South Broad Street. South Broad Street was once known as Water Street, the site of Salem's premier African-American community. In 1868, former slaves bought lots in this area from their former owner's estate, establishing the neighborhood. First Baptist Church (c.1867) remains the pioneer church of Salem's black community. Carver School at Broad and 4th was the African-American school from 1940 to 1966.

20 **OAKEY-DUVAL HOUSE (c.1880)**
206 East Calhoun Street. Built by W. D. F. Duval, hotel proprietor, this Victorian era home has served both as private residence and business location in Salem for many years. This house hosts seven fireplaces and floors of white oak.

21 ***OLD MANSE (c.1847)** 530 East Main Street
Built by John Day, local blacksmith, this building was later sold to Salem Presbyterian Church, which used it as a home for their ministers until 1939. Since then, it has been a private residence and bed-and-breakfast.

22 **EAST HILL CEMETERY (c.1869)** East Main Street
After older burial grounds in Salem became too crowded, thirty stockholders in Roanoke Cemetery Company purchased these ten acres from the estate of Nathaniel Burwell. General Andrew Lewis' body was moved to East Hill in 1897 from an overgrown family graveyard. Confederate soldiers who died in the Civil War battles and hospitals in and around Salem are buried here as well.

* On the National Register of Historic Places.

HISTORIC SALEM
founded
1802
WALKING TOUR

Walk Through Salem's History