

## Landmark Plaque Types

**Mode of Fabrication:** Plaques are fabricated in several ways: metal casting, or metal photo processing.

- **Metal Casting:** Plaques fabricated in this method are usually made from either bronze, aluminum, or iron. All three must be cast in a foundry; however, not all foundries are alike. Depending on the equipment and casting process used by a foundry, the price of a cast plaque can vary greatly. Furthermore, there are advantages and disadvantages for each type of material. Aluminum, while typically priced in the middle range, looks less expensive and may corrode over time. Bronze, while the most expensive, looks more dignified and lasts longer.

- **Metal Processing:** Plaques processed onto metal, as opposed to plaques cast out of metal, are the least expensive. For the historical society considering this mode of fabrication, there are two choices, metal photo and screen processing. In the case of the former, text and photograph are embedded in photosensitized aluminum. In the case of the latter, text and photo are essentially painted onto the surface of the metal. Metal photo offers a number of advantages since it is the least expensive to produce and provides the clearest image reproduction, which is ideal if the historical society wishes to incorporate into the plaque an old fashioned-looking, tintype photo of a structure that once stood on a site. However, these plaques can be damaged if vandals use a sharp object, and they can only be reproduced in a limited number of colors (silver and black) when used outdoors.

- **Shape and Size:** Depending upon the type of plaque (cast metal, photo processed metal) desired, historical societies should be able to find a manufacturer able to provide a plaque of nearly any shape or size. Clearly, the price of the plaque depends to a great extent upon the size ordered. With respect to plaque shapes, while historical societies using processed metal usually are limited to a square or rectangular shape, in theory, no such limitations exist with respect to processed wood or cast metal. A number of mass-produced standard shapes, suitable for historic sites – squares, rectangles, ovals, and “colonials” – are available primarily through local sign shops. Finally, cast metal plaques can be made in virtually any shape since they are cast from reusable patterns. However, the more complex the shape, the more difficult to finish the edges of the plaque and, thus, the higher the price. While these steps may make the process of setting up the program seem quite complex, most plaque producers will be able to provide advice and assistance, hence greatly simplifying the decision-making process.



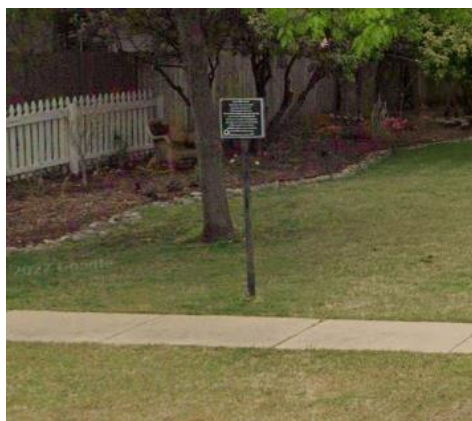
**Fort Worth:** Property owner pays for plaque



**Arlington:** Property owner pays for plaque



**San Antonio:** Historic plaques cost \$95. They are cast aluminum with raised silver letters on a dark grey background and approximately 7½ inches in diameter and ¼ inch thick.



**Frisco:** The markers measure 16"x14" and are made of cast aluminum with a black leatherette background. They are attached to posts set in cement usually located in front of the property to be marked. The markers are purchased by the property owner with the assistance and guidance of the Historic Sites Committee. Cost of the marker and post installed on your property is \$900. (This cost may change as foundry costs change.) The marker's owner is responsible for its safekeeping, maintenance and liability once it is installed. On some occasions, the Heritage Association will install a marker at its expense to designate a landmark not owned by any specific person. Suggestions for such landmarks are welcome.