

A Guide to the John W. Pearsall Papers 1917-1989 (bulk 1943-1979)

John W. Pearsall Papers 1917-1989 (bulk 1943-1979)
1917-1989 (bulk 1943-1979)

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History

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Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Accession number

40281

Language

English

Physical Characteristics

4 cubic feet.

Repository

Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Gift of John W. Pearsall, Richmond, Virginia, 13 January 2003.

Preferred Citation

John W. Pearsall Papers, 1917-1989 (bulk 1943-1979), Accession 40281, Personal papers collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Separated Printed Material

The following is a list of publications separated to the Library of Virginia's print collection :

- 1. A master plan for land use, schools, and recreation facilities : a report to the City Planning Commission, Richmond, Virginia [by] Ladislav Segoe and Associates [and] Master Plan Study Project Staff, Richmond City Planning Commission, 1951.
- 2. 1960-1964-1980 estimates and projections of dwelling units and population by traffic zones in the Richmond region, Richmond Regional Planning Commission, 1966.
- 3. Master plan of land use community facilities and trafficways, Planning Commission, City of Richmond, 1964.
- 4. Proposed major changes in zoning districts, Richmond City Planning Commission, 1961.
- 5. City of Richmond Virginia zoning districts, City Planning Commission and Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 1957.
- 6. 5000 days in Richmond : all-America city, City Manager's Office, Dept. of Research & Public Information, [1967?].
- 7. The redevelopment plan for the 17th Street redevelopment project, Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, 1961.
- 8. Report to the City Council by the Tax Study Commission, January 30, 1961, City of Richmond, 1961.
- 9. Regional inventory : the Richmond region : Richmond City, Henrico County, Chesterfield County : planning together for tomorrow, Richmond Regional Planning Commission, 1958.
- 10. Proposed revised zoning ordinance, Richmond, Virginia, Harland Bartholomew and Associates, 1957.
- 11. Program report on the proposed north wing, Virginia Museum, prepared for the Building Committee by David Warren Hardwicke and Partners, 1970.
- 12. The greater Richmond story, Richard J. Armitage Co., c1975.
- 13. Richmond expressway system : engineering report, Committee on Trafficways, Richmond, Virginia and Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendoff, 1966.
- 14. Open spaces in the Richmond region, 1960-80, Richmond Regional Planning and Economic Development Commission, 1960.
- 15. Proposed major changes in zoning districts, Richmond City Planning Commission, 1961.

Separated Archival Material

Three oversize maps/plats were separated to Oversize Folder 1, Section L, Cabinet 48, Drawer 11 (former 4/G/8/11).

Biographical/Historical Information

John W. Pearsall, a Richmond, Virginia, lawyer and businessman, took on a number of civic causes in the latter half of the 20th century, especially in the areas of historic preservation and urban renewal.

A 1935 graduate of Randolph-Macon College, Pearsall and his wife, Laila, became involved in a number of organizations in Richmond dedicated to history, preservation, commerce, and tourism. Mr. Pearsall was named the president of the Richmond Community Chest in 1955. He also served on the Chesterfield County Welfare Board, was an officer on the Sheltering Arms Hospital Board, and was appointed to the Richmond Metropolitan Authority in 1966.

Mrs. Pearsall was one of the founding members of Richmond-On-The-James, a group that sought to capitalize on Richmond's heritage tourism potential. The group merged with the Historic Richmond Foundation, an early sponsor of its efforts, in 1988. Mrs. Pearsall also served on the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. An outspoken opponent of urban renewal, Mr. Pearsall actively participated in the public debate

and decision making that helped steer city planning in Richmond. As a founding member of the Historic Richmond Foundation, Pearsall worked to raise awareness of the potential and value of historic preservation in areas such as Church Hill, Fulton, and Jackson Ward. Pearsall's positions often found him at odds with the Richmond City Council and, in 1955-1959; the two parties fought a legal battle over the so-called "Pearsall Block," parcels sought by the city for its proposed civic center. As a property owner in "blighted" areas of Richmond considered ripe for renewal, Pearsall defended himself in newspaper editorials after he was labeled a "slum lord."

In addition to the numerous preservation successes of the Historic Richmond Foundation, Pearsall was active in preventing the demolition of Old City Hall (1894) and fought to save the New Deal- era Lee Bridge.

Scope and Content

This accession consists of correspondence, clippings, maps, minutes, architectural drawings, photographs, and ephemera. The collection was compiled by John W. and Laila Pearsall from the late 1940s through the 1980s and concerns issues of historic preservation, city planning, zoning, urban renewal, roadways, and tourism chiefly in Richmond, Virginia. Major issues and events documented in these materials include the proposed expressway system in Richmond, the civic center proposal in the "north core" area, the construction of the Richmond Coliseum, the Historic Richmond Foundation and its board of trustees, the preservation of Mayfield Cottage and the "Captain's House."

Largely through accumulating newspaper clippings, the Pearsalls documented the numerous changes taking place in the City of Richmond during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. In addition, they monitored similar issues, such as urban renewal, in other cities and on the national level. Many of Richmond's lost landmarks such as Broad Street Methodist Church, Beth Ahabah Synagogue on Eleventh Street between Marshall and Clay Streets, and the commercial and residential blocks demolished for construction of the Richmond Coliseum are noted in the collection. Also recounted is the construction of a number of Richmond's skyscrapers in the Financial District along Main and Cary Streets and the numerous proposals for the expressway and toll road system.

This collection was maintained by Mr. Pearsall using a subject-based number coding system (i.e. B2.0 = Planning), however, the filing was not consistently noted on the file folders and in some cases numbers were used without a corresponding subject heading. By and large, the filing arrangement has been maintained; however, the numbering system has not been utilized. Extant folder titles such as "Richmondiana" and "Miscellaneous Cultural" were retained by the processor.

The collection is arranged alphabetically by folder title. The extensive newspaper clippings have not all been copied for preservation purposes. For articles with full citations, it was decided to create a citation sheet giving the researcher the information needed to access microfilm or online copies of the Richmond Times Dispatch or The Richmond News Leader, the periodicals from which the majority of the articles were taken by the Pearsalls. The originals of these fully cited articles are retained in the collection for use. Clippings without full citations were copied and the originals discarded by the processor. Researchers interested in broad topics such as urban renewal and historic preservation may need to consult several subject folders for articles related to their given topic. For instance, clippings related to urban renewal can be found in the Planning, Expressway/Toll Road, and "Richmondiana" folders.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Contents List

American Red Cross, Chesterfield Chapter 1969-1970

Box 1

Folder 1

City Planning- Clippings ca. 1941-1976

Box 1

Folder 2

City Planning- Clippings ca. 1941-1976

Box 1

Folder 3

City Planning- Clippings ca. 1941-1976

Box 1

Folder 4

City Planning- Clippings ca. 1941-1976

Box 1

Folder 5

City Planning- Commentaries 1958-1961

Box 1

Folder 6

City Planning- General 1956-1967

Box 1

Folder 7

City Planning- Main Place, Dallas, TX 1964

Box 1

Folder 8

Correspondence, General 1943-1989

Box 2

Folder 1

Expressway/Toll Road- Acts of Assembly ca. 1966

Box 2

Folder 2

Expressway/Toll Road- Clippings ca. 1966-1968

Box 2

Folder 3

Expressway/Toll Road- Clippings ca. 1966-1968

Box 2

Folder 4

Expressway/Toll Road- Clippings ca. 1966-1968

Box 2

Folder 5

Expressway/Toll Road- Clippings ca. 1966-1968

Box 2

Folder 6

Expressway/Toll Road- Clippings ca. 1966-1968

Box 2

Folder 7

Expressway/Toll Road- Correspondence 1966-1973

Box 3

Folder 1

Expressway/Toll Road- Committees and Civic Groups ca. 1966

Box 3

Folder 2

Expressway/Toll Road- Financial Estimates ca. 1966

Box 3

Folder 3

Expressway/Toll Road- Maps ca. 1966

Box 3

Folder 4

Expressway/Toll Road- Mailing Lists ca. 1967

Box 3

Folder 5

Expressway/Toll Road- Position Papers ca. 1967

Box 3

Folder 6

Expressway/Toll Road- Miscellaneous ca. 1966-1972

Box 3

Folder 7

Falls of the James Committee 1984

Box 3

Folder 8

First and Merchants Bank Ironfronts [1100-1200 E. Main St.] 1971

Box 3

Folder 9

Franklin Street Committee 1974

Box 3

Folder 10

Gillies Creek Relocation ca. 1972

Box 3

Folder 11

Historic Richmond- Clippings 1962-1970

Box 3

Folder 12

Historic Richmond Foundation- Annual Report 1976-1977

Box 3

Folder 13

Historic Richmond Foundation- Board of Trustees 1965-1974

Box 3

Folder 14

Historic Richmond Foundation- Board of Trustees 1976-1978

Box 4

Folder 1

Historic Richmond Foundation- Board of Trustees- Executive Committee 1964-1971

Box 4

Folder 2

Historic Richmond Foundation- Board of Trustees- Executive Committee 1976-1979

Box 4

Folder 3

Historic Richmond Foundation- Board of Trustees- Finance Committee 1974-1977

Box 4

Folder 4

Historic Richmond Foundation- Board of Trustees- Planning Committee 1975-1979

Box 4

Folder 5

Historic Richmond Foundation- Board of Trustees- Property Committee 1978-1979

Box 4

Folder 6

Historic Richmond Foundation- By-Laws 1960-1977

Box 4

Folder 7

Historic Richmond Foundation- Correspondence 191965-1981

Box 4

Folder 8

Historic Richmond Foundation- Junior Board of Trustees 1973-1978

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Folder 9

Historic Richmond Foundation- Positions and Policies ca. 1973-1980

Box 5

Folder 1

Historic Richmond Foundation- Reports 1968-1979

Box 5

Folder 2

Historic Richmond Foundation- Miscellaneous ca.1975-1984

Box 5

Folder 3

Land Use and Zoning Report, Henrico County, Va. 1957

Box 5

Folder 4

Main-to-James Development 1970-1971

Box 5

Folder 5

Maps, General ca.1960-1975

Box 5

Folder 6

Mayfield Cottage 1969-1988

Box 5

Folder 7

Scope and Content

See also Oversize Folder 1.

Miscellaneous Cultural ca.1960-1980

Box 5

Folder 8

Miscellaneous Cultural- Clippings 1955-1971

Box 5

Folder 9

Richmond On The James- Baltimore Research ca.1981

Box 6

Folder 1

Richmond On The James- Board and Committees 1980-1982

Box 6

Folder 2

Richmond On The James- By-Laws 1980

Box 6

Folder 3

Richmond On The James- Clippings 1977-1981

Box 6

Folder 4

Richmond On The James- Conferences 1980

Box 6

Folder 5

Richmond On The James- Correspondence 1980-1985

Box 6

Folder 6

Richmond On The James- Goals and Purpose ca.1980

Box 6

Folder 7

Richmond On The James- Historic Richmond Foundation Merger 1988

Box 6

Folder 8

Richmond On The James- Richmond Register 1980-1981

Box 6

Folder 9

Richmond On The James- Richmond Showcase ca.1981

Box 6

Folder 10

Richmond On The James- Tours and Publicity 1980-1985

Box 6

Folder 11

Richmond On The James- Tourism Studies 1980-1981

Box 7

Folder 1

Richmond On The James- Miscellaneous ca.1980

Box 7

Folder 2

Richmond Scenic James Council 1970

Box 7

Folder 3

"Richmondiana"- Clippings ca.1940-1980

Box 7

Folder 4

"Richmondiana"- Clippings ca.1940-1980

Box 7

Folder 5

"Richmondiana"- Clippings ca.1940-1980

Box 7

Folder 6

"Richmondiana"- Clippings ca.1940-1980

Box 7

Folder 7

Tredegar Iron Works 1980-1985

Box 8

Folder 1

Unidentified- Clippings ca.1973-1980

Box 8

Folder 2

Unidentified- Clippings ca.1973-1980

Box 8

Folder 3

White-Taylor House (1839)[2717 E. Grace St.] n.d.

Box 8

Folder 4

Woodward House ["Captain's House," 3017 Williamsburg Ave.] 1973-1974

Box 8

Folder 5

Scope and Content

See also Oversize Folder 1.

Woodward House ["Captain's House," 3017 Williamsburg Ave.] 1973-1974

Box 8

Folder 6

Miscellaneous ca1917-1984

Box 8

Folder 7

Oversize materials, ca. 1969-1974

Oversize Folder 1 (folder)

Physical Location Section L, Cabinet 48, Drawer 11 (former 4/G/8/11)

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