

# A Guide to the Annandale, Virginia Collection, 1743-1993

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A Collection in The Fairfax County Public Library MSS 03-02

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Annandale, Virginia Collection, 1743-1993

**Subtitle:** Annandale, Virginia Collection

**Collection:** MSS 03-02

## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid created by Ross Landis, March 9, 2024

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## Descriptive Summary

### Record Group Number

MSS 03-02

### Language

English

### Abstract

The Annandale, Virginia Collection consists of .5 linear feet, spanning the years 1742-1993. It includes photocopied handwritten notes and letters, a photocopied navy commission from 1837, photographs, typewritten correspondence, a hand drawn plan of Oak Hill, a program for Annandale Day, and Annandale bumper stickers and a button. Subjects covered are: Annandale, Va, Oak Hill, and The Ravensworth Historical Marker Project

### Creator

Virginia Room staff

### Extent

.5 linear feet, 1 box

### Repository

Fairfax County Public Library

## Administrative Information

### Access Restrictions

None

### Use Restrictions

Consult repository for information.

## Acquisition Information

The Virginia Room staff artificially created this collection over a period of years. The Oak Hill correspondence came from the files of the Fairfax Historical Landmarks Preservation Commission. Mrs. Edward Howrey of Upperville, Va. discovered the 1743-1902 Oak Hill letters in the attic of Oak Hill. The originals are now located at the Virginia Historical Society. Dan Cragg compiled The Ravensworth Historical Marker research files. Chris Martin donated the 1953 Annandale Day Program in January 2019.

## Processing Information

Eric Anderson, Chris Barbuschak, 2015

EAD generated by Ross Landis, 2024

## Preferred Citation

Annandale, Virginia Collection, MSS 03-02, Virginia Room, Fairfax County Public Library

# Adjunct Descriptive Data

## Separated Material

None

# Historical and Biographical Information

The area now known as Annandale was home to an Indian village and trading post until 1685, when Col. William Fitzhugh purchased the 22,000 acre tract from the original grantee, John Matthews. He named the tract Ravensworth in honor of his family's ancestral home in Yorkshire. Fitzhugh brought in slaves and overseers to cultivate the land and also leased parcels of it to Huguenot refugees.

The Fitzhughs built three notable mansions in the area during 1790s: Oak Hill, Ossian Hall, and Ravensworth. William Fitzhugh built the Ravensworth mansion which later came into the possession of the Lee family. Robert E. Lee's mother died in Ravensworth and later Lee's wife and family temporarily sought refuge there during the Civil War. The house burned in 1926 due to an arsonist.

Nicholas Fitzhugh built Ossian Hall, which received many illustrious guests including George Washington and George Mason. Long abandoned and heavily damaged by vandals, the Annandale Fire Department burned the house in a controlled fire practice drill to make way for a new subdivision in 1957. Today, Ossian Hall is featured on the logo of the Annandale Fire Department.

Around 1790 Richard Fitzhugh built Oak Hill. Edward and Jane Howrey purchased the house in 1935 and had it restored. It is the only one of the three houses which survives to this day and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

With the completion of Little River Turnpike in 1811, a little white toll house was erected on the road in Annandale. The toll house served as a toll gate and polling place, where residents of the area later cast votes in favor of secession.

By 1830, the community's name changed to Annandale. The origin of the name is subject for debate. One theory is Annandale earned its name from a town in Scotland which is located along the Annan River. Another belief is the name comes from Scotland's Sir Robert de Brus, the "Earl of Annandale". Regardless of the name's source, the area officially became known as Annandale when the first "Annandale Post Office" opened in 1837.

The area saw Civil War action as the site of several skirmishes. The Union Army used the Annandale United Methodist Chapel as a temporary headquarters before dismantling it for firewood and winter quarters. Following the Civil War, the area remained fairly rural until the twentieth century when Fairfax County became a popular place to live for D.C. government employees. Starting in the late 1950s, developers bought the remainder of the Ravensworth property and subdivided it for new homes and shopping malls. The site of the Ravensworth mansion is now marked by a Historical Marker.

# Scope and Content

The Annandale, Virginia Collection consists of .5 linear feet, spanning the years 1742-1993. It includes photocopied handwritten notes and letters, a photocopied navy commission from 1837, photographs, typewritten correspondence, a hand drawn plan of Oak Hill, a program for Annandale Day, and Annandale bumper stickers and a button. Subjects covered are: Annandale, Va, Oak Hill, and The Ravensworth Historical Marker Project

### **Series 1: Oak Hill Correspondence, 1743-1902, Box 1**

This series contains correspondence between the Fairfax Historical Landmarks Preservation Commission, Berlage - Bernstein Builders (the company which developed the property around Oak Hill), and other interested parties. These letters include information about the restoration, preservation, and sale of Oak Hill. The file also contains a hand drawn map of the property. This series also contains photocopies of handwritten notes and letters which were discovered in the attic of Oak Hill. Subjects include personal correspondence, financial dealings, a court summons, and a commission appointing Andrew Fitzhugh to the rank of Master Commandant. The commission is dated 1837 and signed by Andrew Jackson.

### **Series 2: Ravensworth Research, 1993, Box 1**

This series contains papers relating to the Ravensworth Historical Marker Project including originally proposed marker text; sources cited in said text such as maps, diaries, and articles; subsequent revisions to the marker text and the final version; miscellaneous correspondence on marker project; news clippings on marker dedication; photos of marker; dedication ceremony guest list; transcript of Cragg's remarks at dedication; and a transcript of an interview with Douglas Dove, a Ravensworth resident in the 1920s.

### **Series 3, Memorabilia, N.D., Box 1**

This series contains a 1953 Annandale Day program, and two Annandale bumper stickers and a button. The bumper sticker and button simply reads "Annandale" and has a motif of a bird in a tree. The second bumper sticker reads "Rediscover Annandale, We Have A Lot In Store For You."

## **Index Terms**

Annandale (Va.) - History  
Battail, Sue  
Berlage, Bruce  
Berlage-Bernstein Builders, Inc.  
Cragg, Dan  
Dove, Douglas  
Fitzhugh family  
Fitzhugh, Andrew  
Fitzhugh, Mary  
Fitzhugh, William  
Lee family  
Oak Hill (Annandale, Va.)  
Ossian Hall (Annandale, Va.)  
Ravensworth (Va.) - History  
Saunders, Philip  
Watt family

## **Container List**

### **Series 1: Oak Hill Correspondence, 1743-1973**

#### **Box 1 Folder 1: Oak Hill Correspondence, 1967-1973**

#### **Box 1 Folder 2: Oak Hill, Papers Found in Attic, Letters to Mrs. Watts, Oak Hill (Photocopies) , 1743-1902**

### **Series 2: Ravensworth Research, 1993**

#### **Box 1 Folder 3: Ravensworth Historical Marker Project - Research and Notes [compiled by Dan Cragg], 1993**

### **Series 3: Memorabilia, Undated**

#### **Box 1 Folder 4: 2 Annandale Bumper Stickers, 1 button, Undated**

**Box 1 Folder 5: Annandale Day Program, sponsored by the Annandale  
Businessmen's Association, Saturday September 26, 1953, 1953**

Virginia Room, Fairfax County Public Library