

# A Guide to the Elizabeth Miles Cooke Collection, 1959-1999, bulk 1968-1977

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A Collection in The Fairfax County Public Library MSS 06-41

## Title Statement

A Guide to the Elizabeth Miles Cooke Collection, 1959-1999, bulk 1968-1977

**Subtitle:** Elizabeth Miles Cooke Collection

**Collection:** MSS 06-41

## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid created by Ross Landis, July 14, 2024

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Descriptive Summary

### Record Group Number

MSS 06-41

### Language

English

### Abstract

The Elizabeth Miles Cooke Collection consists of 2.5 linear feet spanning the years 1959-1979, and consists of biographical material, research material, correspondence, official documents, maps, illustrations, and chapter drafts of Cooke's manuscript "The History of Old Georgetown Pike."

### Creator

Cooke, Elizabeth Miles (1908-1999)

### Extent

2.5 linear feet

### Repository

Fairfax County Public Library

## Administrative Information

### Access Restrictions

None

### Use Restrictions

Consult

### Acquisition Information

Documents from the estate of Elizabeth Miles Cooke.

### Processing Information

Carol Abrams, 2015

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## Preferred Citation

Virginia Room, Fairfax County Public Library. Elizabeth Miles Cooke Collection. Box #, Folder #.

# Adjunct Descriptive Data

## Separated Material

Photographs from this collection were removed and incorporated into The Photographic Archive of Fairfax County, Virginia - The General Collection (1981.001). Her photos included images of Swink's Mill and Evans Farm Inn.

## Related Material

[A hardbound copy of Cooke's \*The History of the Old Georgetown Pike\* \(1977\) is in the Virginia Room's reference collection \(975.529 C\).](#)

[The Rare Book Room has a copy of Cooke's columns about the history of Georgetown Pike that were published by \*The Providence Journal\* between January 21, 1972 and September 7, 1973 \(VRARE 975.529 C\).](#)

Note that although the items in the reference collection and Rare Book collection share a title, they have distinct content and years of publication. The Rare Book item was compiled by John K. Gott, who included additional material such as news clippings about Old Georgetown Pike dating from 1973 to 1975 and two newspaper obituaries of Elizabeth Miles Cooke's husband, Hereward Lester Cooke, a curator at the National Gallery of Art who died in 1973.

## Historical and Biographical Information

Elizabeth Miles "Betty" Cooke (1908-1999) co-authored with Mary Gardiner a 15-part series about the history of Georgetown Pike. These 15 stories were serialized in *The Providence Journal*, a McLean, Virginia newspaper, from January 21, 1972 to September 7, 1973.

Cooke then developed the material into her self-published 1977 book *The History of Old Georgetown Pike*, which she illustrated as well as researched and wrote. She donated the proceeds from the sale of the book to the Old Georgetown Pike and Potomac River Valley Association, a community group she helped form in 1969 to preserve the low-density, wooded character of Old Georgetown Pike in Great Falls and McLean. The book documents the history of the Virginia Potomac Valley from the late 18th century to the 1970s and covers six major community-led environmental/preservation efforts: Fort Marcy, Merrywood, the Burling Land, Great Falls Park, Cornell Farm, and Old Georgetown Pike.

Cooke's research and publications supported her successful advocacy for Georgetown Pike to be designated a Virginia Scenic and Historic Byway by the Virginia Department of Highways. When Georgetown Pike received this designation in 1974, it was the first scenic and historic byway named by the commonwealth. Cooke was involved in an earlier advocacy effort, also successful, to prevent development on the 320-acre tract of forested land across Georgetown Pike from her home. The acreage, then known as the Burling Tract, became the Scott's Run Nature Preserve after money was raised to buyout the developer in 1970. The Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Walter J. Hickel, pledged 50% of the purchase price from his contingency fund. The rest was raised by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Fairfax Park Authority, and individuals.

Cooke was active in numerous organizations including the Fairfax Historical Society, the historical societies of McLean and Great Falls, and the Old Georgetown Pike and Potomac River Valley Association. She was part of the Dranesville Environmental Force, which was concerned with watershed, drainage, and siltation-related issues caused by development in places such as Tysons Corner, Langley Oaks, and Potomac Overlook. Among her many interests, she was an artist in watercolor and painted landscapes.

The Fairfax County History Commission bestowed upon her a Distinguished Service Award in 1980 for her contribution to historic preservation in the county. She died at age 91, on May 8, 1999.

## Scope and Content

### Series 1: Personal Records, 1959-1999, Box 1

This series contains personal records relating to Elizabeth Miles Cooke including the program for her memorial ceremony; awards and citations she won; the 1961 deed when she and her husband purchased the Swinks Mill Miller's House in McLean; correspondence relating to advocacy efforts by the Old Georgetown Pike and Potomac River Valley Association and the Dranesville Environmental Force; newspaper clippings on

the movement to designate Old Georgetown Pike as a Virginia Scenic and Historic Byway, the 1966 comprehensive plan for the McLean Planning District; biographical data on various artists compiled in 1959 for an unknown project; and The Burling Case History (1971) by Sharon Francis, an unpublished manuscript for the Conservation Foundation.

### **Series 2: History of Old Georgetown Pike, 1972-1978, Boxes 2-3**

This series contains material relating to Elizabeth Miles Cooke's 1977 manuscript, History of Old Georgetown Pike, including chapter drafts, research notes, newspaper clippings, a bibliography, maps, printing and publication notes, and illustrations. The illustrations of houses along Old Georgetown Pike were original artwork created and signed by Elizabeth Miles Cooke.

## **Index Terms**

Burling Tract  
Cooke, Elizabeth Miles (1908-1999)  
Cooke, Hereward Lester  
Dranesville Environmental Force  
"The History of Old Georgetown Pike"  
Northern Neck Grants  
Old Georgetown Pike and Potomac River Valley Association  
Scott's Run Nature Preserve  
Swinks Mill Millers House  
Virginia Scenic and Historic Byway

## **Container List**

### **Series 1: Personal Records, 1959-1999**

**Box 1 Folder 1: Correspondence and Papers - Biographical Material, 1961-1999**

**Box 1 Folder 2: Correspondence and Papers - Awards and Citations, 1977-1980**

**Box 1 Folder 3: Correspondence and Papers - Deed, Swinks Mill Millers House, 1961**

**Box 1 Folder 4: Correspondence and Papers - Correspondence, Georgetown Pike, 1970-79**

**Box 1 Folder 5: Correspondence and Papers - Dranesville Environmental Task Force. Georgetown Pike. Correspondence, 1977**

**Box 1 Folder 6: Correspondence and Papers - Dranesville Environmental Task Force. Georgetown Pike. Correspondence, 1978**

**Box 1 Folder 7: Correspondence and Papers - Swinks Mill Development. Correspondence, 1979**

**Box 1 Folder 8: Correspondence and Papers - Comprehensive Plan, McLean Planning District, with notes, 1966**

**Box 1 Folder 9: Correspondence and Papers - Biographical Data on Various Artists, 1959**

**Box 1 Folder 10: Correspondence and Papers - "The Burling Case History" by Sharon Francis, 1971**

## **Series 2: History of Old Georgetown Pike, 1972-1978**

- Box 2 Folder 1: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Ch. I: Origins, 1972**
- Box 2 Folder 2: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Ch. II: Sugarland Rolling Road and the Ordinaries, 1972**
- Box 2 Folder 3: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Ch. III: Chain Bridge and the Turnpike Era, 1972**
- Box 2 Folder 4: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Ch. IV: Thomas Lee's Grant (1716-1976), 1972-1975**
- Box 2 Folder 5: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Ch. V: The Lee Grant-Langley, 1966, 1972**
- Box 2 Folder 6: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Ch. VI: The Turberville Grant (1724-1976), 1972, 1975**
- Box 2 Folder 7: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Ch. VII: The Mills, 1972**
- Box 2 Folder 8: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Ch. VIII: Scenic Roads, 1971-1973**
- Box 2 Folder 9: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Ch. IX: Towlston Grange, 1966-1967, 1972**
- Box 2 Folder 10: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Ch. XI: Civil War, 1972**
- Box 2 Folder 11: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Ch. XII: "Whose woods are these...", undated**
- Box 2 Folder 12: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Bibliography and Notes, undated**
- Box 2 Folder 13: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Maps, 1977**
- Box 2 Folder 14: History of Old Georgetown Pike (1977): Manuscript - Printing and Publication Notes, 1976-1978**
- Box 3: P. 20: Fig. 2. The Sugarlands Rowling Road, undated**
- Box 3: P. 31a: "Merrywood", 1976**
- Box 3: P. 34: "Langley Fork", 1976**
- Box 3: P. 46a: Fig. 6. Division of the Estate of Richard Jackson, 1835**
- Box 3: P. 46b: "The Dower House", 1976**
- Box 3: P. 47a: "The Old Jackson House", 1976**
- Box 3: P. 48: "The Shotwell House", 1976**
- Box 3: P. 49: "Drovers Rest" (Unfinished sketch of Drovers Rest on verso)**

**Box 3: P. 49: Drovers Rest (Unfinished sketch of Drovers Rest on verso), 1976**

**Box 3: P. 60: Fig. 7. Division of the Estate of John Jackson, 1835**

**Box 3: P. 61: "Cornwell Farm" (Unfinished sketch of the Langley Ordinary" on verso), 1976**

**Box 3: P. 62: "Gunnells Run" (Unfinished sketch of Mark Island Light, Penobscot Bay, Aug. 12, 1975 on verso), 1975-1976**

**Box 3: P. 63a: "Hidden Springs Farm", 1976**

**Box 3: P. 63b: "Four Stairs", 1976**

**Box 3: P. 64: "Hickory Vale, The Follin Farm", 1976**