

November Found in The Archives

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FAIRFAX COUNTY

VIRGINIA

Found in The Archives no. 92 Circuit Court Clerk's Office Historic Records Center

Conservation Update



Happy November, and welcome to Found in the Archives, a publication of The Clerk of the Fairfax Circuit Court, 19th Judicial Circuit, who proudly serves The City of Fairfax & Fairfax County. In this month's edition of Found in the Archives, we will give an update on records the Historic Records Center has recently received back from conservation.

In January, the Historic Records Center received over \$22,000 from the Library of Virginia's Circuit Court Records Preservation Fund, which exists to assist in the conservation of Historic Court Records throughout Virginia. In June, archivists at the Historic Records Center sent off eight items in our collection to a specialty conservation lab to receive treatment and preservation: Deed Book C-5 (1882-1883); Deed Book W-6 (1907); Proceedings in Land Causes, Circuit Court, 1806-1832; Proceedings in Land Causes, County Court, 1796-1824; Land Tax Book 1875, Land Tax Book 1876-1877; City of Alexandria Annexation Map ; and Harrison Manly Pew Deed, 1774. These records were recently returned to us and look better than ever.

Perhaps the most notable of these records is our 1774 Harrison Manly Pew Deed. This Pew Deed is a legal deed filed with the Fairfax Court and is the purchase contract for a pew at Pohick Church in Mount Vernon. The Vestry of Pohick Church, which included prominent figures in both Fairfax and American history, were required to sign off on the sale of all pews in Fairfax County's Truro Parish. When looking closely at this document, one can see the original signatures of George Washington, George Mason, and other local, prominent men who were vestry members. This is one of two Pohick Church Pew Deeds here at the Historic Records Center where George Washington and George Mason both signed.

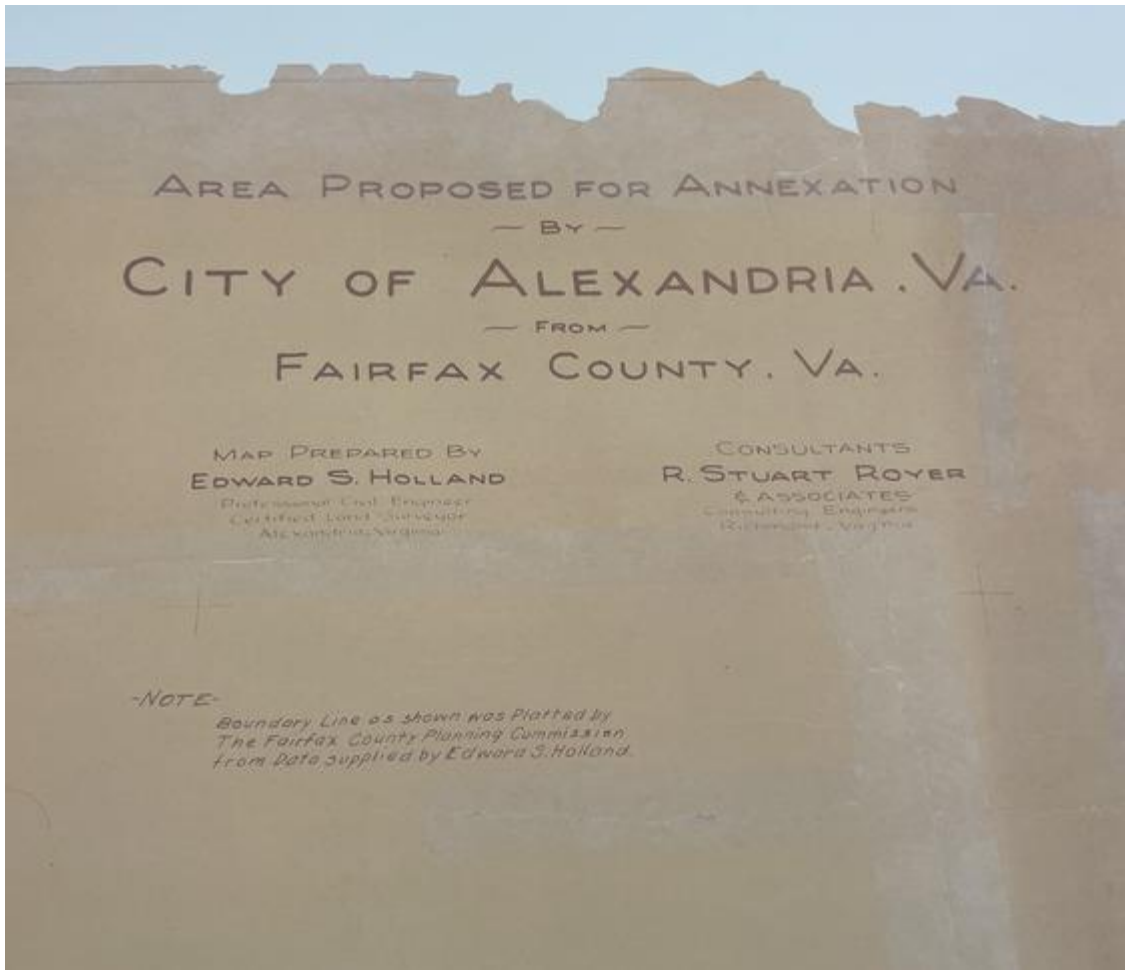
Harrison Manly Pew Deed, 1774



Signatures on Harrison Manly Pew Deed, 1774

It is also significant that we received back our City of Alexandria Annexation Map.

This map from the 1950s shows the area of Fairfax County where the City of Alexandria was proposing to Annex. Before being conserved this four-foot-long map was extremely fragile and chipped, making it very difficult for researchers to use. Staff at the Historic Records Center were also unable to digitize the document due to its size. Now, the original of the map has been repaired and treated, and we have not only received digital images of the map in its entirety, but also a facsimile was made, so researchers can still view a full, physical version of the map without risking further damage to the repaired original.



Alexandria Annexation Map



Alexandria Annexation Map

Our Land Tax records are particularly useful for researchers looking into historic homes and properties. Since Land Tax books after 1820 contain separate values for the acreage of land and the structures on the property being taxed, they are some of the only records that can verify a construction date on a historic home in Fairfax County. If a property was taxed as only land with no structures on it in one year, but had a value listed for a structure the following year, it is reasonable to believe that year was the construction date of a building or home on the property. It is also common for the structure value to be quite low, and then jump up to a much higher value, indicating there could have been simply a barn or storage shed at first, and then a house built after. Usually there is a note indicating the reason for a tax adjustment, being a building added, improvements made, or a fire. These tax books are used quite frequently by our researchers and are some of the most fragile and worn records in our collections, as seen in the images below.

TABLE OF TRACTS OF LAND FOR THE YEAR 1876

County of Fairfax, Virginia

(Continuation of the previous annual with Taxes based on 50 Cents on every \$100 value assessed)

1876

No.	Name of Owner	No. of Acres	Value of Land	Value of Improvements	Total Value	Taxes	Assessment	Taxes		Total
								Land	Improvements	
1	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
2	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
3	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
4	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
5	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
6	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
7	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
8	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
9	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
10	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
11	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
12	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
13	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
14	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
15	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
16	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
17	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
18	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
19	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
20	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
21	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
22	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
23	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
24	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
25	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
26	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
27	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
28	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
29	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
30	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
31	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
32	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
33	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
34	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
35	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
36	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
37	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
38	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
39	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	
40	Andrews, George W.	100	10000	1000	11000	100	10000	1000	11000	

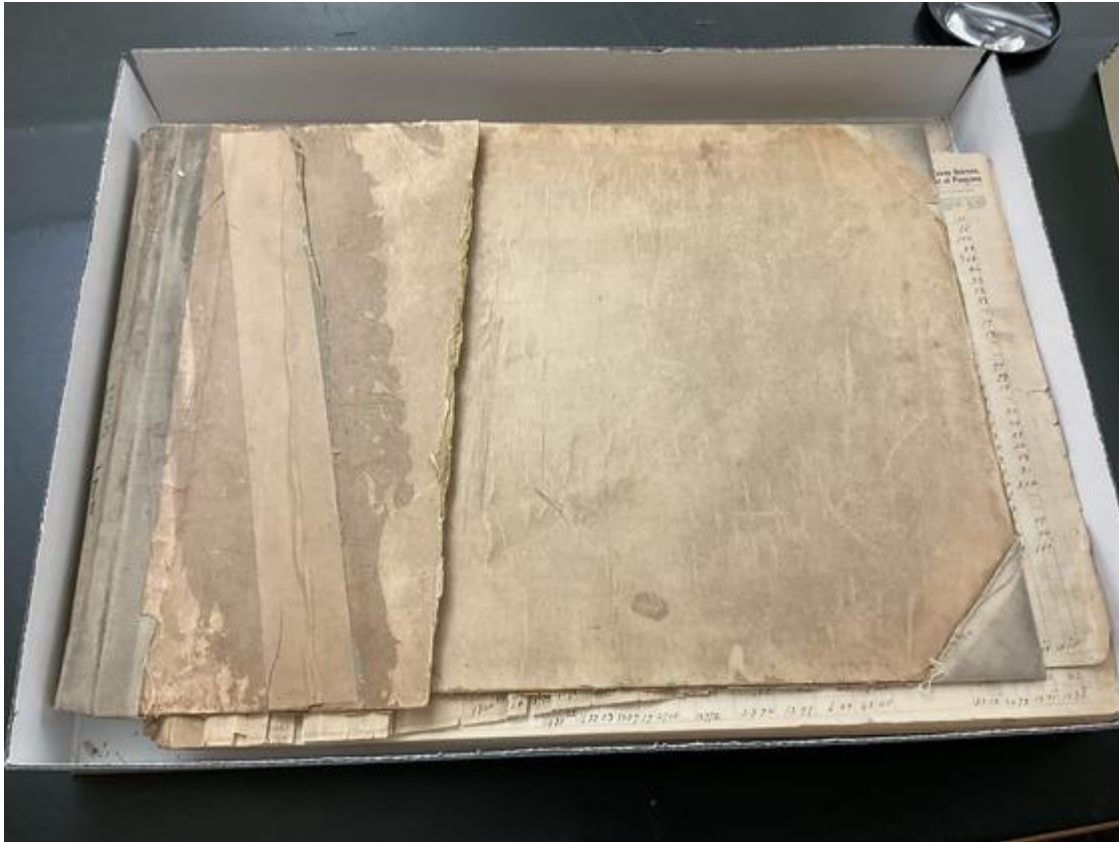
Fairfax County 1876 Land Tax Book



Fairfax County 1876 Land Tax Book

The image shows an open, aged page from a tax book. The page is yellowed and has some staining. At the top, there is a header that reads "TABLE OF LAND PARCELS IN THE COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA, FOR THE YEAR 1876". Below the header, there is a table with several columns. The columns are labeled "NAME", "ACRES", "TAX", and "REMARKS". The table contains many rows of data, including names of landowners and their respective land parcels. The text is handwritten and somewhat difficult to read due to the age of the document.

Fairfax County 1903 Land Tax Book



Cover of Fairfax County 1903 Land Tax Book

Each of these documents received highly specialized treatment, including removal of pages from original bindings, physical and chemical cleaning of each page, removal of any tapes and adhesives, and deacidification of pages with a neutralizing spray. When necessary, tears were repaired using wheat paste and archival safe tissue paper. After cleaning and repair, each page was digitized and then encapsulated in mylar sleeves. This process allows for safe usage of the documents by in-person researchers, but also makes them more accessible by giving us high quality digital images. When conservation is finished, each document is returned with a cover sheet that specifies the services performed. While many of our historic records have been conserved, countless documents at the Historic Records Center are still in need of repair. The Clerk's Office updates our five-year preservation plan regularly, methodically identifying records in need of conservation and reimaging.