

A Guide to the Village Preservation and Improvement Society, 1885-2023

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1885-2023

A Collection in Mary Riley Styles Public Library Record Group 4-8

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History

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

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Language

Materials in this collection are in English.

Repository

Falls Church History Room, Mary Riley Styles Public Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

There are no restrictions.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The Village Preservation and Improvement Society transferred their files to the Mary Riley Styles Public Library by resolution on January 2, 1980.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description...

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Related Material

Other record groups of interest are the Historical Commission (Record Group 1-3) and the Citizens for a Better City (Record Group 4-1)

History

The Society was founded in 1885 as the Village Improvement Society of Falls Church. It was one of hundreds of such societies around the country modeled after the famous Laurel Hill Association of Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

The Society's early objectives were to improve and ornament the streets of Falls Church by planting and cultivating trees, cleaning and repairing the sidewalks, and carrying out other acts to beautify and benefit the culture and prosperity of the village. The Society planted the street trees we see in historic photos, built the first sidewalks, and organized parades and the town-wide July 4th celebrations with baseball and ice cream socials. It helped to start the first library in Falls Church and initiated the first Arbor Day in Virginia (1892).

The Society was renamed in 1923 as the Falls Church Citizens Association and, after a few decades of intermittent activity, it was reestablished in 1965 as the Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS). In March 1973 it received Certification of Incorporation from the State Corporation Commission.

VPIS is still an active association. Their website is <https://www.vpis.org/>.

Scope and Content

Some of the records of the original Society from 1890-1918 are included in addition to the records from 1965 to the present. There are meeting minutes, membership records, with the bulk of the files concerning their projects and their rewards programs.

Arrangement

The early records of the Society were separated into Series 1. File names were retained as they were labeled. Occasionally a file was renamed to more accurately reflect the contents or split into two smaller files. Some loose papers were filed into appropriate folders. In the interests of efficiency files were arranged into series. Files are arranged chronologically or alphabetically, depending on the series.

The newsletter published by VPIS was named the *VPIS Newsletter* through August 1978; with the November 1978 issue it was changed to *The Village Way*.

There are also numerous video recordings and publications in the Falls Church Local History Room.

The files were arranged into the following series:

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- Series 3: Annual Reports
- Series 4: Presidents and Boards of Directors
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