

# **Patrick County Oral History Project**

A Guide

by Thomas D. Perry

*“Patrick County citizens have as much as they might appear to lack: resourcefulness, a regard for the ironies and uncertainties of the life, a deep appreciation of the land and for family, dignity, playfulness, independence and evident suspicion of prescriptive notions for their lives and livelihoods. In Virginia’s political circles the county is known with good reason as the Free State of Patrick.”*

--- Frank Adams

*“Patrick County’s a way of life, a way of thinking. It’s independent...The land is the heart and soul of Patrick County. It’s etched into the consciousness of every native of Patrick County. It’s part of their waking up, and their day and their going back to bed. Their feeling for it, their love of it motivates them. Whether for greed, whether for a generous thought, it all goes back to the land. The shape of the county, the woods, the rivers, streams, it’s almost a mystical communication with it.”*

-- Ruth Jean Bolt

*“I just like the idea of leaving a little old time stuff behind.”*

– Cary Ayers

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## INTRODUCTION

*“It was the collection of a whole volume of life; the lives lived by Patrick Countians; it was memories, voices, dreams, stories, captured on the modern day miracle of tape.”*

**-- Nancy Lindsey**

Frank Adams describes Patrick County, Virginia, where “Appalachia meets Piedmont.” The purpose of this guide is to reawaken interest in a forgotten resource on Patrick County history. This guide gives the names of those interviewed along with information such as the interviewer and date of the interviews and whether transcriptions are available. The indexes for subject and name are included for the first time. I transcribed the subject indexes from 3x5 cards located in three boxes at Virginia Tech. Virginia Tech Reference Librarian Dorothy McCombs, whom I knew in college, transcribed from a previous guide compiled by Dorothy McCombs. Amy Elizabeth Snyder typed and combined both indexes for this guide. Special Thanks to Joyce Nester and John Jackson, Special Collections Librarians at Virginia Tech for their assistance during the chaos of construction at Virginia Tech.

One of those interviewed stated, “I wanted the children of Patrick County to know how we lived back then...if somebody doesn’t do something they’ll never know.” This explains why I took on this project because I was concerned that a great source of Patrick County history was forgotten and not easy to use in the best case. It gives us a remarkable snapshot of time in the early 1980s that I believe future generations will appreciate it if this material is used, but “if somebody doesn’t do something they’ll never know.” It is my hope an increased awareness of the contents of this collection will increase interest to finish the transcribing and digitalize the recordings for preservation in the future. At present, less than half of the tapes are transcribed.

## THE PATRICK COUNTY PROJECT

The Patrick County Oral History Project or its official title Patrick County: Continuity and Change in a Rural Community began in February 1979 at an informal discussion about doing oral history in Patrick County and evolved into the project between the Patrick County Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library and Reynolds Homestead's Continuing Education Center. The resulting 202 cassettes containing 102 interviews of over 300 hours partially transcribed reside in the Patrick County Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library and the Special Collections Department of the Carol M. Newman Library at Virginia Tech.

The project resulted in a film *Up and Down Those Roads* in 1982 directed and written by Elizabeth Fine with cinematography by Jerry Scheeler. Narrated by Carl Dehart, the documentary features Patrick Countians Ruth Jane Bolt, Jim Shelor, Lynn Foddrell, Posey Foddrell, John D. Hooker, Dorn Spangler, students at Meadows of Dan Elementary School and others. Slide programs and a guide to library materials were produced. This material resides in the Special Collections at Virginia Tech. A more detailed description of the holdings follows in this guide. Materials from the guide to this collection follow at the end of this document.

A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities sponsored by the Patrick County Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library and Virginia Tech through the Reynolds Homestead titled "The Free State of Patrick: The County and Its People" provided three years of funding "To engage Patrick County's adults in recording and preserving a history of the county. To increase community use of the humanities resources of the library and the Reynolds Homestead. To provide primary materials for future research."

The following individuals and their organizations were involved in the Patrick County Project.

### Advisory Committee

Betty M. Ragsdale, Director of the Blue Ridge Regional Library  
David D. Britt, Director of the Reynolds Homestead  
Douglas F. Perry, Librarian Patrick County Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library  
Ann H. Eastman, Assistant to Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Virginia Tech  
E. Scott Geller, Professor of Psychology at Virginia Tech  
Crandall Shifflett, Professor of History at Virginia Tech  
Jean H. Speer, Professor of Communication at Virginia Tech  
JoAnn Boles, Professor of Clothing, Textiles and Related Arts at Virginia Tech  
Roddy Moore, Director of the Blue Ridge Institute at Ferrum College  
Peter Hartman, Assistant Director of the Blue Ridge Institute at Ferrum College  
Mary R. Britt, Project Director

### Patrick County Advisory Committee

Lady Louise Clark, Chairman  
Joanne Alexander, Lawrence Bolt, David Britt, Doris Brown, Walter Clark, Anita Cox, Ann H. Eastman, Margaret D. Ericson, Lucille Garrett, Linda Hopkins, Arlene Keith, Mitty McCarthy, Dorothy McCombs, Phyllis Moore, Daisy Pendleton, Joan Pfeifer, James Plaster, John Reynolds, Clay Shelor, Glenna Shelor, Leslie Shelor, Dorothy Shough, Jean H. Speer, Lynn Terry, Joanne Thomas, Claudette Thompson, Donald Welsh, Betty M. Woodridge, Meadows of Dan Elementary School, Trinity Church of God.

Transcribers: Sara Mabe, Carol Jortner, Beth J. Newman, Dot R. Shough and Freda Belcher

#### Others Involved:

Elizabeth C. Fine, Folklorist at Virginia Tech  
Dorothy McCombs, Librarian at Virginia Tech  
Jean H. Speer, Senior Folklorist at Virginia Tech  
Betty M. Ragsdale, Blue Ridge Regional Library  
Margaret D. Ericson, Donald Welsh of the Patrick County Branch

#### Interviewers

Joanne Alexander, Doris Brown, Anita Cox, Margaret D. Ericson, Phyllis Moore, Daisy Pendleton, Joan Pfeifer, Leslie Shelor, Lynn Terry, Claudette Thompson, Walter E. Clark, Lucille Garrett, Linda Hopkins, Arlene Keith, Mitty McCarthy, James Plaster, John Reynolds and Joanne Thomas.

#### Lists of Groups interviewed

Hardin Reynolds Elementary School Students: Cheryl Bingman, Jeff Coleman, Greta Cooper, Kenneth Hairston, Ronnie Hopkins, Glen Joyce, Charles Murphy, Denise Penn, Eugene Reynolds, Billy Stone, Thomas Trent, Tammy Watkins.

Mary Horn Walker: Marie Goad, Edna Hazelwood, Goldier McAlexander, Gloria Bowman, Karen Walter, Ann Cassell, Millie Hubbard, Ruth Hill.

New Hope Church Quilters: Carol Chaney, Rosie Cannady, Nellie Foley, Esther Shough, Mozelle Rorrer, Lee Wilson, Mary Watson, Mary Bowder, Linda Lawless, Gladys Cannady.

Patrick County PEP Students: Nathan Biggs, Ann Blackard, Tommy Brammer, Lee Clark, Pinky Clark, Gary Corns, Margaret DeHart, Darren Diggs, Lisa Foley, Sharon Foley, Richard Garraputa, Sarah Hand, Wayne Hatcher, Mark Hopkins, Barry Brown, Barry Hutchens, Tammy Hutchens, Barry Knowles, Ryan Lankford, Jeff Love, Jason Martin, Joe Mills, Clary Shelor, Denise Stanley, Woody Walker, Barry Wood, Alfredo Santibanez.

Smith River Boys: Calvin Pendleton, J.A. Midkiff, Clarice Shelor, Jesse Shelor Cruise Howell.

Stuart Elementary School Sixth and Seventh Grade Students: Rene Kodenski, Leslie Goad, Elaine Bowman, Andy Shelton, Robbie Mitchell, Joey Lindsey, Mike Hiatt, Tracy Turman, David Hill, Michelle Spence.

Woolwine Elementary School Students: Nathan Biggs, Ann Blackburn, Tommy Brammer, Lee Clark, Pinky Clark, Gary Corns, Margaret Dehart, Darren Diggs, Lisa Foley, Sharon Foley, Richard Garraputa, Sarah Haud, Wayne Hatcher, Mark Hopkins, Barry Brown, Barry Hutchens, Tammy Hutchens, Barry Knowles, Ryan Lankford, Jeff Love, Jason Martin, Joe Mills, Clay Shelor, Denise Stanley, Woody Walker, Barry Wood, Alfredo Santibanez (Chilean Exchange Student).

## USING MATERIALS AT VIRGINIA TECH

The materials of the Patrick County Project are available in the Special Collections Department of the Carol M. Newman Library at Virginia Tech. Six Volumes of Transcriptions from the tapes are available at Virginia Tech along with the Patrick County Branch, Martinsville Branch and Bassett Historical Center of the Blue Ridge Regional Library

**Please note to listen to the tapes you must order the collection from storage, which takes at least two days to arrive in the Special Collections Department. Listening to reel-to-reel tapes is not possible at present, but equipment to listen to the cassettes is available in Blacksburg. Please contact Special Collections about requesting at [specref@vt.edu](mailto:specref@vt.edu) or (540) 231-6308**

### Internet Links

Link to Virginia Tech's Online Library Catalog (Addison)

<http://addison.lib.vt.edu/english/filter.vtls-basic.html>

Listing of material

[Patrick County Project oral history collection, 1980-1982 \[manuscript\].](#)

Link to Special Collections at Virginia Tech

<http://spec.lib.vt.edu/>

Location and Hours of Special Collections at Virginia Tech

<http://spec.lib.vt.edu/specgen.html#infl>

Other information for visitors to Special Collections

<http://spec.lib.vt.edu/visitors.html>

### Other materials at Virginia Tech relating to the oral history project

F232 P3 P37 1983

The Patrick County Project oral history collection: in the Special Collections Division, University Libraries, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: A Guide.

Compiled by Dorothy McCombs. (Also available at the Patrick County Branch, Martinsville Branch and the Bassett Historical Center of the Blue Ridge Regional Library)

F226 M36

The Appalachian region of Virginia: A Guide to library materials.

Compiled by Dorothy McCombs. (Also available at the Patrick County Branch and the Bassett Historical Center of the Blue Ridge Regional Library)

Adams, Frank. The Reynolds Homestead Learning Center: Educational Options for its Future, 1978.

Example of the listing from the Virginia On Line Catalog (Addison).

<b>CALL NO</b>	<a href="#">Ms83-007</a>
<b>MAIN TITLE</b>	<a href="#">Patrick County Project oral history collection, 1980-1982 [manuscript].</a>
<b>PUBLISHER</b>	
<b>FORMAT</b>	manuscript

	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>COPY</b>	<b>UNITS</b>
<a href="#">▶1.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	TO BE RESHELVE	1	BOX 1
<a href="#">▶2.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	Due 04Sep05	1	BOX 2
<a href="#">▶3.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	TO BE RESHELVE	1	BOX 13
<a href="#">▶4.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	Due 04Sep05	1	BOX 13A
<a href="#">▶5.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	TO BE RESHELVE	1	BOX 13B
<a href="#">▶6.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	TO BE RESHELVE	1	BOX 14
	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>COPY</b>	<b>UNITS</b>
<a href="#">▶7.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	TO BE RESHELVE	1	BOX 14A
<a href="#">▶8.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	Due 04Sep05	1	BOX 14B
<a href="#">▶9.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	TO BE RESHELVE	1	BOX 15
<a href="#">▶10.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	Due 04Sep05	1	BOX 18B
<a href="#">▶11.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	Due 04Sep05	1	BOX 19
<a href="#">▶12.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	Due 04Sep05	1	BOX 20
<a href="#">▶13.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	Due 04Sep05	1	BOX 22
<a href="#">▶14.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	TO BE RESHELVE	1	BOX 23
<a href="#">▶15.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	TO BE RESHELVE	1	BOX 24
	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>COPY</b>	<b>UNITS</b>
<a href="#">▶16.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	Due 04Sep05	1	BOX 25
<a href="#">▶17.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	Due 04Sep05	1	BOX 26
<a href="#">▶18.</a>	STORAGE/SPEC	Due 04Sep05	1	BOX 27

## Listing of Boxes at Virginia Tech

- Box 1           Cassette Tapes  
Box 1 Ayers - J. Myron Clark  
Box 2 Clark, L.- Culler C.  
Box 3 East G. - Hall D.  
Box 5 Hopkins B. – Houchins M.  
Box 6 Howell R. – Mayo Mountain Singers  
Box 7 Mitchell – Pendleton
- Box 2           Cassette Tapes  
Box 4 Hall P. – Hooker J.  
Box 8 Penn B. – Roberson W.  
Box 9 Shelor B. – Slate S.  
Box 10 Spangler C. – Terry N.  
Box 11 Thomas J. – Weaver N.  
Box 12 Williams D. – Worley L.
- Box 13           Reel to Reel Tapes  
Ruth Jean Bolt – Elder Bennie Clifton.
- Box 13a          Reel to Reel Tapes  
Fred Clifton – Oscar Harris.
- Box 13b          Reel to Reel Tapes  
E. McAlexander – Houchins.
- Box 14a          Reel to Reel Tapes  
Bertie Shelor – M. Thompson.
- Box 14b          Reel to Reel Tapes  
Trinity – Lucy T. Worley
- Box 15  
120 Folders from interviews including: Biographical Data Sheets, Tape Logs, Releases, and Field Notes for participants.
- Box 16           Six Volumes of Transcripts of one-half of the interviews
- Box 17           Subject Index A – E  
(Please note these indexes are on 3x5 cards and have been transcribed in this guide).
- Box 17a          Subject Index F – Q
- Box 17b          Subject Index R – Z
- Box 18a          Patrick County Project Posters and two copies of the film.

Box 18b (Box 10)

C. L. Spangler and N. R. Terry reel to reel tapes  
Slide programs with audiotapes that include the following:  
Hard Times by John Reynolds.  
Making a Living in Early Patrick County by John Reynolds.  
Community Life by Mary Britt.  
Growing Up in Patrick County by Crandall Shifflett.  
Leaving A Little Old Time Stuff Behind by Jean Speer.

Photos: Subjects include Clark Brothers Store, Patrick County Courthouse, Patrick Springs Hotel, Civil War Veterans Reunions, Claudette Thompson interviewing Fred Clifton, John Reynolds, Jean Speer, Mary Britt, Elizabeth Fine, Buddy Pendleton, Margaret Donelion, Foddrell Family, Cary Ayers and David Britt.

Slides: Subject include John and Novella Handy, Arlene Keith, Addie Wood, Karen Thompson, Vesta Community Potluck Dinner, Mrs. Turner "Jarring the Comb," Dancing Sam and Fred Clifton, Jim Shelor and daughters, Ammon Sears and Carl Dehart, Coy Yeatts, Phipps Bourne (Woodworking and Blacksmithing at Mabry Mill), The Foddrells (Turner, Allie, Posey, Jeannie and Lynn), Programs at the Reynolds Homestead, Turner, Lynn and Marvin Foddrell playing music, Cap Ayers making music, Lady Louise Clark, Ivan Weddle and Rufus Wood making music, George Wood, Fair and displays at various events such as the Vesta Fourth of July Celebration, Group photo (James Love, Mitty McCarthy, Lucille Garrett, Daisy Pendleton, Linda Hopkins, Joanne Alexander, Anita Cox, Joan Pfeifer, Leslie Shelor), Multiple photos of moonshiners and Patrick County Project Van Stops in 1981.

Box 19

Grant proposals to National Endowment for the Humanities.  
Final narrative report to NEH dated February 28, 1983.  
Publicity materials such as newspaper clippings.

Box 20

Patrick County General Materials including photos, biographical sheets that include genealogy, releases, field notes and tape logs for each interview.

Box 22

Files with the following topics: Administration, Budget, Costs, Advisory Committee, Bibliography, Bibliography Orders, Complimentary Bibliography, Chairman Supplemental Grant, Film, Film Brochure, Correspondence, Evaluation, Financial Records, Impact Posters, Interim Narratives Reports, General.

Box 23            Correspondence

Box 24

Files with the following topics: NEH Quarterly Report, Recipes, Questionnaires (program, history alive, folk life program, community life, impact series, making a living), Summer Folk life Series, Summer Folk life Series Final Report, Releases, NEH Final Report, Public Programs (October 2 1980, Victorian Christmas, 1980-81, Winter-Spring 80-81, evaluation, Patrick County Fair, East Tennessee State University, Miscellaneous, crafts, historical society, Appalachian Book and Record Shop, Virginia

Box 24 (continued)

Library Association), Film (correspondence, script, distribution, credit debate, brochure), Filming Meadows of Dan releases, Enterprise Indexing, Impact Series, Folklore (films, books, conference, Gooseberry Vine), Film Evaluation (Stuart, Meadows of Dan, Homestead), Film Correspondence, Impact Series (future programs, public programs, programs), Film-Edgerton brochure, Interview Subjects (correspondence, fair), Impact Series (scripts, conclusions, correspondence, Hard Times, Making a Living, Growing Up in Patrick County, Community Life), Content Analysis, Interviewers-Notes, Tapes and Transcripts.

Box 25

Files with the following topics: Press Clippings, Public Information, Press Releases, Promotional Materials, Public Program and Press Conference on October 2 1980, Publicity Correspondence, Press Kit, Memoranda, Library Orders, Library Materials, Mailing List, Advisory Committee Minutes, Mountain Passages, NEH Reports, Personnel, Memorandum of Understanding, Pictures of NEH Visit (Martin Sullivan), Posters, Printouts, Public Programs General, Reference Materials, Reynolds Homestead, PCP Summer 1980, Summer Folk life Series, Staff Meeting Minutes, Staff Meetings of February 13 1981, Staff Meeting of October 2 1981.

Box 26

Miscellaneous Papers

Box 27

Materials relating to the Citizens Committee For Public Libraries.

## **Using Materials in the Patrick County Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library**

The Patrick County Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library contains cassette copies of all the interviews along with two copies of the six volume transcriptions.

Link to Patrick County Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library

[http://www.brri.lib.va.us/location\\_patrick.html](http://www.brri.lib.va.us/location_patrick.html)

Link to Library Catalog of Blue Ridge Regional Library

<http://www.brri.lib.va.us/catalog.htm>

### Contact Information

116 W. Blue Ridge Street  
P.O. Box 787  
Stuart, Virginia 24171-0787  
Phone:(276) 694-3352  
Fax:(276) 694-6744  
E-mail: patcolib@yahoo.com  
[\(map\)](#)

### Hours:

10 AM - 6 PM Monday & Wednesday  
10 AM - 8 PM Tuesday & Thursday  
10 AM - 2 PM Friday & Saturday


A Cassette player is available at the Patrick County Branch for patrons wishing to listen to the tapes.

Materials from the catalog of the Blue Ridge Regional Library.

1. [e](#) [The Appalachian region of Virginia: a guide to library materials / compiled by Dorothy F. McCombs. Title \(1981\)](#) 


**Locations:**

Patrick	Reference VA Coll.	R VA COLL 016.9755 M	<b>Available</b>
Bassett	Reference	R 016 M	<b>Available</b>
Historical Center	Reference Virginia	R VA COLL 016.9755 M	<b>Non-Checkout</b>
Historical Center	Reference Virginia	R VA COLL 016.9755 M	<b>Non-Checkout</b>


2. [e](#) [A guide to materials for the Patrick County Project in the University Libraries: a select list of library materials on subjects of interest to the Project, either specific to Patrick County, or other appropriate titles from the literature of local or regional studies / compiled by Dorothy McCombs. Title \(1981\)](#) 

**Locations:**

Patrick	Adult Non-Fiction	016.9755	<b>Available</b>
Patrick	Reference VA Coll.	R VA COLL 016.9755 M	<b>Available</b>
Historical Center	Reference Virginia	R VA COLL 016.9755M	<b>Non-Checkout</b>

3. [e](#) [Patrick County: continuity and change in a rural community, a proposal submitted to the Library Humanities Program, Division of Public Programs, National Endowment for the Humanities, / by the Blue Ridge Regional Library ... and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Title \(1980\)](#) 

<b>Location:</b> Patrick	Reference	R 975.569B	<b>Available</b>
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4. [e](#) [Patrick County: continuity and change in a rural community: oral history transcripts / Patrick County Project. Title \(1982\)](#) 

**Locations:**

Historical Center	Reference Virginia	R VA COLL 975.569 P	<b>Non-Checkout</b>
Historical Center	Reference Virginia	R VA COLL 975.569 P	<b>Non-Checkout</b>
Historical Center	Reference Virginia	R VA COLL 975.569 P	<b>Non-Checkout</b>
Historical Center	Reference Virginia	R VA COLL 975.569 P	<b>Non-Checkout</b>
Historical Center	Reference Virginia	R VA COLL 975.569 P	<b>Non-Checkout</b>
Historical Center	Reference Virginia	R VA COLL 975.569 P	<b>Non-Checkout</b>

5.  [The Patrick County Project Oral History Collection: in the Special Collections Division, University Libraries, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: a guide / compiled by Dorothy McCombs. Title \(1983\) !\[\]\(8c6ce7139abaf965e82cfcdd29561d57\_img.jpg\)](#)

**Locations:**

Martinsville	Reference VA Coll.	R VA COLL 975.569 P	<b>Available</b>
Patrick	Reference	R 975.569P	<b>Available</b>