

African-American Tenant Farmer Photographs, Clarksville, Virginia

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c.1920-1930



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2009.110

Unit Date

c.1920-1930

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection contains six black and white photographs of a tenant farm in Clarksville, Virginia.

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The African-American Tenant Farmer Photographs, Clarksville, Virginia, were purchased by Special Collections in 2009.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the African-American Tenant Farmer Photographs, Clarksville, Virginia, commenced and was completed in August 2009.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], African-American Tenant Farmer Photographs, Clarksville, Virginia, Ms2009-110, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Historical Note

Tenant farming was common after the abolition of slavery. Agriculture in many parts of the United States had been built upon the work of enslaved people. Once enslaving people was no longer legal, landowners had to find another method to farm their land. At the same time, former enslaved people needed homes and jobs. Tenant farming was the solution chosen by many landowners and former enslaved people. A landowner would rent a portion of their land to a tenant for a price that was, many times, half of the crop or a significant amount of money. Farming was unpredictable and this type of arrangement often proved problematic for tenant farmers if their crops failed.

Scope and Content

These photographs depict the conditions of a tenant farmer known as Aaron working a piece of land on the John T. Lewis, Jr., estate in Clarksville, Virginia. These photographs, taken around 1930, show the conditions in which tenant farmers lived and worked during the Great Depression. President Franklin D. Roosevelt attempted to improve the conditions of farmers around the country with his New Deal legislation, making parity payments to landowners who were then expected to share these payments with their tenants; however, some of these landowners took the opportunity to keep the money for themselves. By the late 1930s, nearly forty per cent of all farmers were tenant farmers.

Keywords

African Americans -- History
Local/Regional History and Appalachian South
Farm tenancy -- Virginia
Sharecropping -- United States -- Virginia

Existence and Location of Copies

This collection has been digitized and is available online.

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged chronologically.

Description of Subordinate Components

Photographs

Unit Date c.1920-1930

folder 1