

A Guide to the Tanbark Industry in the Shenandoah Valley Oral History Collection, 1987, 1991 SdArch 0004

Tanbark industry in the Shenandoah Valley oral history collection

1987



Title Statement

A Guide to the Tanbark Industry in the Shenandoah Valley Oral History Collection, 1987, 1991 SdArch 0004

Author: JMU Libraries Cataloging staff

Edition Statement

The contents of this collection were initially described by JMU Libraries Cataloging staff in the 1990s through item-level bibliographic records that cataloged each individual interview by interviewee name and interview date.

In 2019, Special Collections staff developed new descriptive practices for oral history collections in order to implement more consistent, content standard compliant description across archival holdings. This shift in descriptive methods ended the practice of using bibliographic records to describe individual oral history interviews and instead moved to archival description structured in a finding aid to describe oral history collections and their component interviews.

To implement this shift in practice across existing oral history holdings, archivists compiled descriptive metadata from catalog records for each interview in this collection into the appropriate fields in this finding aid, and added required and value-added contextual information sourced from documentation in collection control files. Interview summaries from the MARC 520 field were moved into Scope and Content notes for each interview. Copies of previous catalog records used to compile the finding aid descriptive metadata are filed in the collection control file.

Publication Statement

Publisher: James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

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URL: <https://www.lib.jmu.edu/special/>



1991

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-10-18 07:01:51 -0400.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

SdArch 0004

Unit ID

/repositories/4/resources/592

Unit Date

1987

Unit Date

1991

Language

English

Abstract

This collection is comprised of a background paper on the tanbark industry and three oral history interviews recorded in 1987 and 1991 with individuals familiar with the tanbark industry in the central Shenandoah Valley. The 1987 interview was conducted jointly by Chris Bolgiano and John Coleman, and the subsequent two interviews were conducted in 1991 by Mia Barb as part of an oral history project internship.

source

Barb, Mia

Creator

Barb, Mia

source

Bolgiano, Chris

Creator

Bolgiano, Chris

Extent

0.25 cubic feet 4 folders; 4 audiocassettes

Repository

James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

Access to oral history interviews is governed by agreements with the narrators. All interviews in this collection are open for research without restriction. Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection. Please contact Special Collections staff at library-special@jmu.edu before visiting the James Madison University Special Collections Library to use this collection.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright interests for the interviews in this collection have been transferred to James Madison University Special Collections. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for determining copyright status and obtaining permissions for use rests solely with the user.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

1987 interview donated in ____ by Chris Bolgiano. 1991 interviews and background paper donated in 1991 by Mia Barb.

Processing Information

In 2008, Libraries' staff in the media resources department reformatted the contents of the original audio cassettes in this collection, using a Tascam CC-222MKII CD recorder / cassette combination deck to transfer digitized m4a and mp3 files onto MAM-A Gold Archival 700MB CD-Rs to serve as both access copies and preservation storage.

In 2018, the digital archivist in Special Collections completed a large-scale re-processing project to transfer reformatted born-digital files stored on gold CDs off of the physical media and into access and preservation storage environments on Libraries servers. As part of this project, the digital archivist also combined audio files when appropriate for interviews that were originally recorded across multiple pieces of physical media or on different sides of a single piece of media, and applied a new file naming convention constructed from the oral history collection identifier and a component unique identifier used to differentiate among interviews at the file level in the archival description. The archivist saved these newly combined interview files in .wav file format for preservation storage, and also created derivative access file copies in .mp3 file format.

In 2025, as part of an oral history redescription project, archivists corrected errors in file names for audio files in this collection to align with existing file naming conventions for digitized Special Collections materials, and to ensure that all component unique identifiers used within file names for digital surrogates matched the identifiers employed in the corresponding archival description.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item/interview], [date of item/interview], Tanbark Industry in the Shenandoah Valley Oral History Collection, SdArch 0004, Special Collections, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

Biographical / Historical

Two of the oral history interviews in this collection were conducted by Mia Barb, an undergraduate at JMU, who completed the project as part of an internship in Special Collections during 1991 that was jointly sponsored by Carrier Library Special Collections and the U.S. Forest Service. The interview with D.D. Wilkins recorded in 1987 was conducted jointly by Chris Bolgiano, head of Special Collections and freelance forestry writer, and John Coleman, an employee of the U.S. Forest Service. The 1987 interview was conducted in support of the research interests of Chris Bolgiano, who has published scholarship on forestry and the tanbark industry in Appalachia. That interview was assembled with the other two interviews conducted by Mia Barb in 1991 due to the topical focus on the tanbark industry to form a collection of three interviews.

Scope and Contents

This collection is comprised of a background paper and three audio recordings with corresponding transcripts of oral history interviews conducted in 1987 and 1991 with individuals familiar with the history of the tanbark industry in the central Shenandoah Valley.

The background paper explores topics related to the various processes used to produce leather, including references to the peeling, grinding, and extracting of bark to yield the tannin (tannic acid) used to tan animal skins and hides.

The interviews focus specifically on the mills, extract factories, and tanneries in the Shenandoah Valley, including the Timberville extract factory, and the Ziegler, Elkton, and Houck tanneries of Rockingham County, Virginia.

Related Materials

A paper authored by Chris Bolgiano was presented in 1999 at the Shenandoah Valley Regional Studies Seminar titled *Tanbark harvesting as an economic and environmental factor in Appalachia*, is available as part of the [Shenandoah Valley Regional Studies Seminar records, SC 0205] .

Keywords

Tanning -- Virginia -- Rockingham County

Tanning -- Shenandoah River Valley (Va. and W. Va.)

Bark peeling -- Environmental aspects

Bark -- Harvesting

Bark peeling -- Economic aspects

Bark -- Virginia -- Rockingham County

Leather industry and trade -- Virginia -- Rockingham County

Tanneries -- Shenandoah River Valley (Va. and W. Va.)
Tanneries -- Virginia -- Rockingham County
Industries -- Virginia -- Rockingham County
Tanners -- Virginia -- Rockingham County
oral histories (literary works)
Barb, Mia
Bolgiano, Chris

Existence and Location of Copies

A bound volume that comprises copies of the transcripts of each interview in this collection as well as a copy of the project background paper and any related materials is cataloged as a monograph and is available as part of the Libraries' circulating collection under the title, *Tanbark industry : part of an oral history project on the tanbark industry in the Shenandoah Valley*.

Description of Subordinate Components

Background paper and photographs

Unit ID SA0004-01

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/18252

Unit Date 1991

Mixed Materials [1000898332] 1 (box)

Container SA0004-01 (folder)

Scope and Contents

13-leaf monograph describes the tanning industry in the United States and in particular the Shenandoah Valley. Both general information about the industry and specifics about the tanbark process are included. The various processes used to produce leather are described, including references to the peeling, grinding and extracting of bark to yield the tannin (tannic acid) which was used to tan animals skins and hides. References are made to American tanneries in general; specific information is supplied about bark mills, extract factories and tanneries in the Valley--including the Timberville extract (ooze) factory, and the Ziegler, Elkton and Houck tanneries of Rockingham County, Virginia. Transcription summary and letters are related to an interview with Mrs. Lettie Albrite and niece (Ms. Turner-Ritchie) conducted by Mia Barb, at Camelot Nursing Home, Harrisonburg, Va. on March 29, 1991. Refers to Mrs. Albrite's reminiscences of the bark extracting factory at Timberville, Va.; mentions Gen. John Roller, owner. Full transcription and tape of this interview are unavailable.

D. D. Wilkins interviewed by John Coleman and Chris Bolgiano

Unit ID SA0004-04

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/18262

Unit Date 1987 September 25

Creator Bolgiano, Chris

Creator Coleman, John

Conditions Governing Use

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Scope and Contents

This interview records the reminiscences of Mr. Wilkins' (D.D. "Hun") days as a bark peeler of chestnut oak and hemlock in the Alleghenny mountains of West Virginia, especially in and around Lost River (also Stump's Run, Moorefield, Lost City and Trout Run). Mentions chestnut blight; blizzard of April 27, 1928. Mentions the Maryland-W. Va. Lumber Co., Natrick Lumber Co. and Williamsport, Md. Tannery. Reminiscences about conditions in the camps

Transcript and supporting documents

Unit ID SA0004-04

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/18263

Unit Date 1987 September 25

Mixed Materials [1000898332] 1 (box)

Container SA0004-04 (folder)

Digital access copies

Unit ID SA0004-04

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/32426

Mixed Materials SA0004-SET-001 (network storage)

Container SA0004-04 (Digital-Materials)

Conditions Governing Use

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Leecy Yankey interviewed by Mia Barb

Unit ID SA0004-02

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/18253

Unit Date 1991 February 26

Creator Barb, Mia

Scope and Contents

This interview records the reminiscences of Mr. Yankey's days as a bark peeler of chestnut oak and hemlock in the Allegheny mountains in areas around Petersburg, Moorefield, Franklin, Cheat Mt., Cass, and Lost City, W. Va. Describes the process of peeling and transporting the bark. Mentions social life and medical care in camps. Refers to paper mill strike in Davis; work in the Timberville, Va. Peach Cannery. Recorded at the home of Mr. Leecy Yankey of Bergton, Va. on Feb. 26, 1991.

Digital access copies

Unit ID SA0004-02

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/32422

Mixed Materials SA0004-SET-001 (network storage)

Container SA0004-02 (Digital-Materials)

Transcript and supporting documents

Unit ID SA0004-02

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/18254

Mixed Materials [1000898332] 1 (box)

Container SA0004-02 (folder)

Kale Barb interviewed by Mia Barb

Unit ID SA0004-03

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/18258

Unit Date 1991 March 09

Creator Barb, Mia

Access Conditions

Oral history is open for research.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests have been transferred to Carrier Library.

Scope and Contents

This interview records the reminiscences of Mr. Barb's days as a bark peeler of black, red and white oak in the Allegheny mountains region of Rockingham County, Va., in particular Little Turley Mt. Describes the

process of peeling and transporting bark including detailed information on how draft animals (horses and mules) were used. Mentions social life, etc. in the camps. Worked for Neff Lumber Mills at Skidmore Fork Lumber Camp, etc. Recorded at the home of Mr. Kale Barb of Fairway Hills, Harrisonburg, Va. on March 9, 1991

Digital access copies

Unit ID SA0004-03

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/32425

Mixed Materials SA0004-SET-001 (network storage)

Container SA0004-03 (Digital-Materials)

Transcript and supporting documents

Unit ID SA0004-03

Unit ID /repositories/4/archival_objects/18259

Unit Date 1991 March 09

Mixed Materials [1000898332] 1 (box)

Container SA0004-03 (folder)