

Blacksburg Oral History Project RecordsMs.1985.005

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1982-1985



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

2020-08-12	Finding aid notes updated to new department standards. juliags
2021-10-01	Transcripts added as box 2; box 1 moved from top level to child. kad
2025-10-28	Zoe Brooks updated the finding aid notes and added the separate boxes and their contents from the collection to the finding aid.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1985.005

Unit Date

1982-1985

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Oral history project conducted by the University Libraries at Virginia Tech with residents of Blacksburg about the town's history. Collection consists of recorded interviews with eight citizens of in Blacksburg, Virginia. Transcripts for five of these interviews are currently available.

Creator

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. University Libraries

Extent

0.2 Cubic Feet 1 box

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

The collection was acquired by Special Collections and University Archives prior to 1985.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Francis Bell Letter was completed in October 2025.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Blacksburg Oral History Project Records, Ms1985-005, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical / Historical

This collection contains interviews with Blacksburg residents Cliff Busby, Georgia Croy, S.H. Kessinger, Lucy Lee Lancaster, George Litton, Howard Price, Carrie T. Sibold, and Ellison A. Smyth. Below is some brief biographical information about these interviewees.

Georgia Croy (1902-2000) was born and raised in Blacksburg, Virginia. She worked as a book keeper at a pharmacy for several years before she became a stenographer for Virginia Tech.

S.H. (Stanley) Kessinger (1899-1993) was born in Newport, Virginia. He moved to Blacksburg, Virginia, some time prior to 1930. He owned the Star Barber Shop on main street, where Kessinger also worked as a barber.

Lucy Lee Lancaster (1905-1989) was born and raised in Blacksburg, Virginia. She graduated was one of the first women to attend Virginia Tech and she was one of only four women who graduated from Virginia Tech in 1925. She later attended Columbia University Library School where she received a Master's degree in library science. She then worked as a librarian in the University Libraries at Virginia Tech.

George Litton (1910-1989) was born in Lee County, Virginia, where he grew up on a livestock farm. He graduated from Virginia Tech in 1931 with his bachelor's degree. At some point he also completed graduate work at Oklahoma State University. He later returned to Virginia where he worked for several years as a livestock agent. In 1940, returned to Virginia Tech, where Litton was appointed to the VPI animal husbandry faculty. He was later promoted to the head of the department of animal husbandry in 1952. He continued to live in Blacksburg until his death in 1989.

Howard Price (1909-1996) was born in Montgomery County, Virginia, where he lived nearly his entire life. He was a civil engineer at Virginia Tech for a number of years. Some time between 1940 and 1950, he became the assistant manager of a retail lumber company.

Carrie T. Sibold (1904-1990) was born in Montgomery County, Virginia. She was one of only four women to graduate from Virginia Tech in 1925. She was also one of the first five women to attend the university. After receiving her bachelor's, Sibold went on to become a stenographer for the Alumni Association. She lived in Blacksburg until her death in 1990.

Ellison A. Smyth (1903-1998) was born in Blacksburg, Montgomery County, Virginia, to his father, Ellison Smyth, who was a professor of biology and the dean at Virginia Tech. Smyth himself graduated from Virginia Tech in 1925 with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. He later went on to work for General Electric

in Schenectady, N.Y. Smyth later attended Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, and New College, Edinburgh, and later received his M.A. from Washington and Lee University. He then became a minister, which was his profession until he died in 1998.

External Sources:

1930, 1940, 1950, United States Federal Census.

<https://aspace.lib.vt.edu/agents/people/1041> (lucy lee)

U.S., World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947 for Stanley Huston Kessinger,

<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/2238/records/10616600>, accessed on October 28, 2025.

Stanley H. "Kitty" Kessinger entry, findagrave.com,

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Joseph P. Fontenot and Gary L. Minish, "George Washington Litton, 1910 to 1989: A brief biography,"

<https://www.asas.org/docs/default-source/midwest/mw2020/publications/litton.pdf>, accessed on October 28, 2025.

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American Society of Animal Science, <https://www.asas.org/docs/default-source/midwest/mw2020/publications/litton.pdf>, accessed on October 28, 2025.

Howard Price, United States Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014,

<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/3693/records/49968906>, accessed on October 28, 2025.

Carrie T. Sibold entry, findagrave.com, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42095477/carrie-sibold>, accessed on October 28, 2025.

Ellison A. Smyth, United States Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014,

<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/3693/records/58552059>, accessed on October 28, 2025.

Ellison Adger Smyth in the Virginia, U.S., Death Records, 1912-2014,

<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/9278/records/5182704>, accessed on October 28, 2025.

Rev Ellison Adger Smyth, findagrave.com, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/131602948/ellison_adger-smyth, accessed on October 28, 2025.

Scope and Contents

Collection contains taped interviews conducted by the University Libraries of Virginia Tech with the following Blacksburg residents: Cliff Busby, Georgia Croy, S.H. Kessinger, Lucy Lee Lancaster, George Litton, Howard Price, Carrie T. Sibold, and Ellison A. Smyth. Transcripts are currently available for Georgia Croy, Lucy Lee Lancaster, Howard Price, Cliff Busby, and George Litton.

Related Materials

Special Collections also houses the papers of the Croy family of Blacksburg, Virginia, including correspondence addressed to Georgia Croy. Please visit at <https://aspace.lib.vt.edu/repositories/2/resources/2152> for the finding aid. Also see family photographs of the Croy family in the digital-only collection online.

Keywords

Local/Regional History and Appalachian South

Oral histories (literary works)

Montgomery County (Va.)

Blacksburg (Va.)

Women -- History

Rights Statement for Archival Description

The guide to the Blacksburg Oral History Project Records by Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, is licensed under a CC0 (<https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/public-domain/cc0/>).

Description of Subordinate Components

Cassettes**Unit Date** 1982-1985**box** 1**Dr. Ellison A. Smyth Interview****Unit Date** 1982**item** 1 (box)**Container** 1 (item)**Ellison Smyth Interview, Segments 1 and 2****Unit Date** 1984**item** 1 (box)**Container** 2 (item)**Ellison Smyth Interview, Segment 3****Unit Date** 1984**item** 1 (box)**Container** 3 (item)**Georgia Croy Interview, Segments 1 and 2****Unit Date** 1984**item** 1 (box)**Container** 4 (item)**Georgia Croy Interview, Segment 3****item** 1 (box)**Container** 5 (item)**Lucy Lee Lancaster Interview, Segment 1****Unit Date** 1984**item** 1 (box)**Container** 6 (item)**Lucy Lee Lancaster Interview, Segment 2****item** 1 (box)**Container** 7 (item)**S.H. Kessinger Interview, Segments 1 and 2****Unit Date** 1984**item** 1 (box)**Container** 8 (item)**Carrie Sibold and Howard Price Interviewed by Dan Pezzoni****Unit Date** 1984**item** 1 (box)**Container** 9 (item)**Carrie Sibold's Rendition of "Suwannee River" with Cob Organ****item** 1 (box)**Container** 10 (item)

Howard Price Interviewed by Alicia J Read

Unit Date 1985

item 1 (box)

Container 11 (item)

Cliff Busby Interview

item 1 (box)

Container 12 (item)

George Litton Interview

item 1 (box)

Container 13 (item)

Transcripts

Unit Date 1984-1985

box 2

Scope and Contents

As of October 2021 transcripts are available for Lucy Lancaster, Cliff Busbee, Georgia Croy, George Litton, and Howard Price.

Georgia Croy Interview Transcript

Unit Date 1984

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Lucy Lee Lancaster Interview Transcript

Unit Date 1984

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Howard Price Interview Transcript

Unit Date 1985

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Cliff Busby Interview Transcript

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

George Litton Interview Transcript

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 5 (folder)