

# African-American Tenant Farmer Photographs, Clarksville, Virginia

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c.1920-1930



## Title Statement

African-American Tenant Farmer Photographs, Clarksville, Virginia  
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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.

### **Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use**

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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