

**Roanoke Public Libraries  
Virginia Room  
WPA Records**

**Collection Description:** The WPA Records contains typescripts about historic topics in Roanoke and southwestern Virginia written 1936-1940 by employees of the Roanoke District of the Virginia Writers' Project, part of the of Works Progress Administration (WPA.)

**Repository:** Roanoke Public Libraries, Virginia Room

**Title:** WPA Records

**Physical Characteristics:** 1 (one) record carton; 33 bound volumes

**Arrangement:** This collection of typescripts, some photocopied and bound into book format and some original stored loose in folders, is arranged roughly into Virginia history, Southwestern Virginia history, and Roanoke county and city history. Photocopied and bound volumes of WPA typescripts, which are stored on the Virginia Room bookshelves, are listed in this finding aid and are also described in more detail in the library catalog. Unbound typescripts are stored in folders in one box. Sometimes a bound volume has some omissions that were found in the typescript versions. If the missing pages are found in the typescript pages, the box must be pulled out to consult the missing pages. Please note that the contents of each typescript or bound volume may contain information that could belong to more than one category. For example, there are biographical sketches about newspaper editors in historical newspaper listings and about clergy members in the listings of churches. Also, descriptions of historic buildings can appear in town histories, biographical sketches, and sites listed in driving tours.

**Creator:** Roanoke District of Virginia Writers' Project (Eudora Ramsey Richardson, State Supervisor), a part of the federal Works Progress Administration

**Reproduction Restrictions:** No known restrictions.

**Processor:** Don LaPlant, May 15, 2013. Discovery of additional materials led to reprocessing by Amy Vilelle, March 2015

**Biographical Note:**

The WPA Records were researched and written by writers employed by the Roanoke District of the Virginia Writers' Project (VWP) from 1936 to 1942. Created as a regional branch of the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) Federal Writers' Project, the VWP was charged with researching and writing about a wide range of topics including local history, politics, biography, geography, industry, commerce, cultural activities, and civic organizations and agencies. The state supervisor for the Virginia Writers' Project was noted author Eudora Ramsey Richardson. Over a dozen writers were involved in compiling the documents that comprise this collection. The majority of works in this collection are attributed to

only a handful of writers – Isaac M. Warren, Anne Lowry Worrell, Gertrude Blair, Iva J. Geary, Elizabeth South, Charlotte M. Temple, and Robert Wingfield – though additional writers are listed as writers or contributors to some documents.

**Scope and Content:**

The WPA Records consists primarily of typed manuscripts about historical topics of local interest written from 1936 to 1942. While the primary focus is on the city and county of Roanoke, several documents address historical topics specifically related to Botetourt, Floyd, Franklin, Henry, Montgomery, Patrick and Wythe counties, and others feature a broader focus on Southwest Virginia as a whole.

Some of the typed manuscripts were photocopied, bound, and cataloged with the books in the Virginia Room. Most typescripts that were made into books were discarded from the WPA Records collection, though a few with differing versions or very poor copies were retained.

Highlights of the collection include a monograph on duels fought in Virginia, listings of newspapers in Roanoke and 23 counties of southwestern Virginia, and many biographical sketches of both prominent and average citizens including pioneer women, “colored people,” and youth. While the collection is comprised almost exclusively of typed manuscripts, it also includes a scrapbook of newspaper clippings about Roanoke’s history.

**Contents – a listing of the folders and bound volumes of the WPA Records:**

**Series I. Virginia Topics**

Duels Fought in Virginia and by Virginians in Other Places by Isaac M. Warren, 1938

Folder 1 - Complete typescript – annotated and more accurate typescript of similar bound volume

Duels Fought in Virginia and by Virginians in Other Places by Isaac M. Warren

V REF 394.8 W252d (WPA-3)

The Reconstruction Era by Isaac M. Warren

Folder 2 - Complete typescript

Folk Lore by Gertrude Blair, 1939/1940

Folder 3 - Complete typescript – more legible copy of WPA-36

Folk Lore by Gertrude Blair

V REF 133.12975 B575F (WPA-36)

Witchcraft in Virginia by Isaac M. Warren

V REF 133.43 W252w (WPA-9)

**Series II. Southwestern Virginia Topics**

Southwest Virginia Biographies by Isaac M. Warren

V REF 920.09755 W252s (WPA-1, Volumes 1 & 2)

Southwest Virginia Biographies by Isaac M. Warren

Folder 4 - Newspaper clipping found in typescript but not bound in WPA-1

Southwest Virginia Biographies by Anne Lowry Worrell

V REF 920.97557 W896s (WPA-2, Parts 1 & 2)

Southwest Virginia Biographies by Anne Lowry Worrell

Folder 5 - Selected pages poorly copied in WPA-2

Biographies of Southwestern Virginians by William Clay Sponaugle

V REF. 920 SP66B

Biographies of Southwestern Virginians by William Clay Sponaugle, 1940

Complete typescript in four folders

Folder 6 - Part One, Samuel Adams – Joseph Engleby

Folder 7 - Part One, Robley Evans – Steward Heironimus

Folder 8 - Part Two, Ewell Hess – Thomas Shannon

Folder 9 - Part Two, Campbell Slemph – William Yonce

Historical Sketches of Southwest Virginia Pioneer Women, 1750-1940 by Gertrude Blair

V REF 920 B57h (no WPA number)

Some Present Day Writers in Roanoke and Southwest Virginia by Isaac M. Warren, 1940

Folder 10 - Complete typescript

Brief Sketches of Early History, Old Homes, Churches, Schools, Natural Scenic Geography and Geology, Indians Massacres, etc.

Complete typescript in two folders

Folder 11 - Bland, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Roanoke, Rockbridge and Russell Co.

Bland County (Warren)

The Massacre of the Sluss Family

Newspapers of Bland County (Warren, 1937)

The Town of Fincastle (Iva J. Geary)

Fincastle – County and Town (Iva J. Geary)

The Town of Amsterdam (Mildred Ballard)

Greenfield (Lillie Smith)

Blue Ridge Springs Hotel (Isaac M. Warren, 1936)

Newspapers in Botetourt County (Isaac M. Warren, 1937)

History of Hollins College (Isaac M. Warren, 1937)

Craig County (Isaac M. Warren)

Rocky Mount, County Seat of Franklin (Iva J. Geary)

Newspapers in Franklin County (Isaac M. Warren, 1937)

Giles County (Isaac M. Warren)

Historical Sketch of Christiansburg, Va., Montgomery County (Iva J. Geary, 1937)

Points of Interest Near Elliston (Iva J. Geary)

The City of Radford (Iva J. Geary)

Roanoke County Schools (Isaac M. Warren)

Rockbridge County, Greenwood District (Isaac M. Warren, 1937)

Rockbridge County (Isaac M. Warren, 1938)

Russell County (Isaac M. Warren, 1937)

Newspapers in Russell County (Isaac M. Warren, 1937)

Russell County Schools Staff, 1936-1937

Folder 12 - Smythe, Tazewell, Washington and Wise Counties

Smyth County (Isaac M. Warren, 1937)

Newspapers in Smyth County (Isaac M. Warren, 1937)

Tazewell County (Isaac M. Warren, 1937)

Newspapers in Tazewell County (Isaac M. Warren, 1937)

Early Churches in Tazewell County (Isaac M. Warren)

The Bowen Family – Tazewell County, Virginia (Isaac M. Warren)

Witten Family (Isaac M. Warren)

Gillespie Family (Isaac M. Warren)

Harman Family – Tazewell County (Isaac M. Warren)

Newspapers in Washington County, Virginia (Isaac M. Warren, 1937)

The Old Exchange Bank of Abingdon, Virginia

Wise County (Isaac M. Warren)

Natural Tunnel – Wise County (Isaac M. Warren)

Appalachia – Wise County (Isaac M. Warren)

Newspapers in Wise County

[Comers Rock Lookout – Wythe County] (partial)

History of Newspapers Published in 23 Counties of Southwest Virginia by Isaac M. Warren

V REF 071.55 W252h (WPA-5)

History of Newspapers Published in 23 Counties of Southwest Virginia by Isaac M. Warren, 1937/1938

Folder 13 - Selected pages missing from WPA-5

Roanoke, Franklin County, Henry County Along U.S. Highway 220 by Gertrude Blair, 1937

Folder 14 - Complete typescript

Roanoke

Boones Mill

Gogginsville

Rocky Mount

Fieldale

Hordsville

Martinsville

Bellview

Beaver Creek

Patrick Henry's Old Estate

Interesting Items Found in Court House at Rocky Mount, Virginia by Gertrude Blair, 1937

Folder 15 - Complete typescript

Patrick Henry's Famous Beef Case

"An Unexpected Wedding Guest" – about Patrick Hix and Polly Early

An Account of the Burial Service of George Washington from the Ulster County [NY]  
Gazette, January 4, 1800

Rocky Mount's Big Blaze

Old Washington Iron Furnace

Historic Homes and Churches of Botetourt and Montgomery Counties by Gertrude Blair

Folder 16 - Complete typescript

Historic Homes and Churches of Wytheville, Virginia by Gertrude Blair, 1940

Folder 17 - Complete typescript

Brief History of Floyd County by Gertrude Blair, 1937

Folder 18 - Complete typescript

Brief History of Patrick County by Gertrude Blair, 1937

Folder 19 - Complete typescript

The Appalachian Trail and Guide to Paths through the Blue Ridge by Iva J. Geary and Isaac M. Warren

Folder 20 - Complete typescript

Travel Tours Out of Roanoke Through Southwest Virginia by Isaac M. Warren

V REF 917.557 W252t (WPA-6)

**Series III. Roanoke County and Roanoke City Topics**

History of Roanoke County

Folder 21 - Complete typescript

Indian Settlements in Roanoke County

The Original Turnpike from Salem to Seven Mile Ford (Mildred Ballard)

Springs (Janet Detwiler)

Blue Ridge Springs Hotel (Isaac M. Warren, 1936)

Mountain Peaks Near Roanoke City (Iva J. Geary)

Caverns in the Roanoke Area (Iva J. Geary)

Flora and Fauna in Southwest Virginia (Dwight W. Luck, 1936)

Orchards (Janet Detwiler)

Minerals (Janet Detwiler)

The Wild Life of Roanoke County (Iva. J. Geary)

Roanoke County Schools (Isaac M. Warren)

Newspapers Published in Roanoke County (Isaac M. Warren, 1937)

Veteran's Hospital (Lillie Smith)

History of Vinton, Virginia (Lillie Smith, 1936)

History of Roanoke County by Charlotte M. Temple

V REF 975.5972 T247h (WPA-42, Parts 1 & 2)

Historic and Famous Springs [of Roanoke County] by Robert Wingfield

V REF 975.5792 W727r (WPA-18)

Social Customs of the Early Settlers in the Roanoke Valley by Gertrude Blair

V REF 975.5792 B575s (WPA-16)

Roanoke County, Early Settlers by Anne L. Worrell

V REF 920.9755792 W896e (WPA-10)

The Government and Courts of Roanoke County by Annie L. Worrell, 1942

Folder 22 - Complete typescript

Roanoke County – Officers, Court Items, Public Buildings

V REF 975.5792 W896r (WPA-11)

Roanoke County Communities by Robert F. Wingfield, 1942

Folder 23 – Complete typescript

Ballyhack, Bennett Springs, Bonsack, Glenvar, Starkey, Williamson Road

History of Fort Lewis, Roanoke County by Elizabeth South

V REF 975.5792 So87h (WPA-17)

History of Fort Lewis, Roanoke County by Elizabeth South, 1937

Folder 24 - Selected page – blueprint found in WPA-17

History of Roanoke County, The Town of Salem by Charlotte Temple

V REF 975.5793 T243h (WPA-20)

History of Salem, Virginia by Elizabeth South, 1937

Folder 25 - Complete typescript

History of Roanoke County and Roanoke City by Gertrude Blair

V REF 975.597 B575h (WPA-38)

The Story of Roanoke by Isaac M. Warren, 1941

Different version of WPA-40

Folders 26-27 - Complete in two folders

The Story of Roanoke by Isaac M. Warren

V REF 975.57791 W252s (WPA-40)

The Story of Roanoke by Isaac M. Warren

Folder 28 - Selected pages missing or poorly copied in WPA-40



The Story of Roanoke by Alice Constance Moore

V REF 975.597 F31s

Roanoke, Capital of the Mountain Empire by Gertrude Blair

V REF 975.5791 B575r (WPA-12)

Roanoke, Capital of the Mountain Empire by Gertrude Blair, 1940

Folder 29 - Complete – clearer copy of WPA-12

Roanoke's Boom History by Robert F. Wingfield, 1942

Folder 30 - Complete typescript

Mill Mountain by William Clay Sponaugle

Folder 31- Complete typescript

Government of Roanoke by Alice Constance Moore, 1939

Folder 32 - Complete typescript

Roanoke City Government

V REF 975.597 R531 (WPA-27)

Newspapers of Roanoke by Isaac M. Warren and Mildred Ballard, 1937

Folder 33 - Complete typescript

The Folk of Roanoke by Gertrude Blair

V REF 920.09755 B575F (WPA-22)

Our Colored People by Isaac M. Warren

V REF 975.5791 W252oc (WPA-26)

Our Colored People by Isaac M. Warren, 1940

Folder 34 - Selected pages – better copies of some pages in WPA-26

Captain Thomas J. Chapman in the War Between the States by Robert F. Wingfield, 1942

Folder 35 - Complete typescript

Youth Studies by Gertrude Blair

V REF 920.09755 B575y(WPA-23)

The Schools of Roanoke by Anne L. Worrell, 1940

Folder 36 - Complete typescript

Churches of Roanoke by Alice Constance Moore, 1940

Folder 37 - Complete

Some Churches of Roanoke, Virginia by Gertrude Blair

V REF 975.5792 So52 (WPA-37, Vol. 1, Parts 1 & 2, and Vol. 2)

Some Churches of Roanoke, Virginia by Gertrude Blair

Folder 38 - Selected pages missing in WPA-37

Roanoke City Churches by Isaac M. Warren

V REF 975.5791 W252r39 (WPA-44)

Roanoke City Churches

Folder 39 - Selected pages missing in WPA-44

The Protective Agencies of Roanoke by Anne L. Worrell

V REF 975.5791 W896pa40 (WPA-28)

The Protective Agencies of Roanoke

Folder 40 - Selected pages - map and pages missing in WPA-28

A Brief History of Roanoke Industries

Folder 41 – Complete typescript

Brief History of Roanoke and Salem Banks from 1880 to 1937 (Isaac M. Warren, 1936)

S. H. Heironimus and Company (Jack Willis)

Telephone (Janet Detwiler)

History of the Roanoke Street Railways (Iva J. Geary)

Roanoke Chamber of Commerce (Lillie Smith)

Interstate and Interurban Buses of Roanoke (Iva J. Geary)

Appalachian Electric Power Company (Lillie Smith)

History of the Norfolk and Western Railway Company (Mildred Ballard)

Early Opera Houses in Roanoke (Mildred Ballard)

Early Theaters in Roanoke (Mildred Ballard)

Present Theaters in Roanoke (Mildred Ballard)

Industry and Commerce in Roanoke by Anne L. Worrell, 1941

Folder 42 - Complete typescript with general history and some specific companies

Recreational and Cultural Agencies of Roanoke by Anne L. Worrell, 1941

Folder 43 - Complete typescript about parks, fairs, theaters, and clubs

Clubs, Societies and Organizations of Roanoke, 1936

Folder 44 - Complete typescript

Fraternal Orders listing (Jack Willis)

The Boy Scout Organization of Roanoke (Iva J. Geary)

YWCA (Mildred Ballard)

Garden Clubs of Roanoke City (Iva J. Geary)

Israel Friedlander Lodge No. 877, B'nai B'rith (Lillie Smith)

Young Men's Christian Association (Jack Willis)

The Shenandoah Club (Lillie Smith)

Elks (B.P.O.E) (Lillie Smith)

Century Club (Isaac M. Warren)

Woman's Club of Roanoke (Iva J. Geary)

Music in Roanoke (Mildred Ballard)

Roanoke Auditorium by Isaac M. Warren

Folder 45 - Complete typescript

Roanoke History Scrapbook

Folder 46 - Scrapbook containing newspaper articles about Roanoke history, 1922- 1934; 1959

**All 33 Bound Volumes Listed by WPA Number**

WPA-1 Southwest Virginia Biographies, Vol. 1 & 2 (Warren)

V REF 920.09755 W252s [2 vol]

WPA-2 Southwest Virginia Biographies, Parts 1 & 2 (Worrell)

V REF 920.97557 W896s [2 vol]

WPA-5 History of Newspapers Published in 23 Counties of Southwest Virginia (Warren)

V REF 071.55 W252h

WPA-6 Travel Tours Out of Roanoke Through Southwest Virginia (Warren)

V REF 917.557 W252t

WPA-9 Witchcraft in Virginia (Warren)

V REF 133.43 W252w

WPA-10 Roanoke County – Early Settlers (Worrell)

V REF 920.9755792 W896e

WPA-11 Roanoke County – Officers, Court Items, Public Buildings

V REF 975.5792 W896r

WPA-12 Roanoke, Capital of the Mountain Empire (Blair)

V REF 975.5791 B575r

WPA-16 Social Customs of the Early Settles in the Roanoke Valley (Blair)

V REF 975.5792 B575s

WPA-17 History of Fort Lewis, Roanoke County (South)

V REF 975.5792 So87h

WPA-18 Historic and Famous Springs (Wingfield)

V REF 975.5792 W727r

WPA-20 History of Roanoke County, The Town of Salem (Temple)

V REF 975.5793 T243h

WPA-22 The Folk of Roanoke (Blair)  
V REF 920.09755 B575F

WPA-23 Youth Studies (Blair)  
V REF 920.09755 B575y

WPA-26 Our Colored People (Warren)  
V REF 975.5791 W252oc

WPA-27 Roanoke City Government  
V REF 975.597 R531

WPA-28 The Protective Agencies of Roanoke (Worrell)  
V REF 975.5791 W896pa

WPA-36 Folk Lore (Blair)  
V REF 133.12975 B575F

WPA-37 Some Churches of Roanoke, Volume 1, Parts 1 & 2, and Volume 2  
V REF 975.5792 So52 [3 vol]

WPA-38 History of Roanoke County and Roanoke City (Blair)  
V REF 975.597 B575h

WPA-40 Story of Roanoke (Warren)  
V REF 975.5791 W252s

[no WPA #] The Story of Roanoke (Federal Writers' Project, Virginia) (Moore)  
[version of WPA-40] V REF 975.597 F31s

WPA-42 History of Roanoke County (Temple), Parts 1 & 2  
V REF 975.5972 T247h [2 vol]

WPA-44 Roanoke City Churches (Warren)  
V REF 975.5791 W252r

- [no WPA #] Duels Fought in Virginia and by Virginians in Other Places (Warren)  
V REF 394.8 W252d
- [no WPA #] Historical Sketches of Southwest Virginia Pioneer Women, 1750-1940  
V REF 920 B57h
- [no WPA #] Biographies of Southwestern Virginia (Sponaugle)  
V REF. 920 SP66B [2 vol]

**All 46 Folders Listed by Number**

- Folder 1 Duels Fought in Virginia and by Virginians in Other Places (complete)
- Folder 2 The Reconstruction Era (complete)
- Folder 3 Folk Lore (complete)
- Folder 4 Southwest Virginia Biographies (Warren) (selected)
- Folder 5 Southwest Virginia Biographies (Worrell) (selected)
- Folder 6 Biographies of Southwestern Virginians, Part 1, Adams – Engleby (complete)
- Folder 7 Biographies of Southwestern Virginians, Part 1, Evans – Heironimus (complete)
- Folder 8 Biographies of Southwestern Virginians,, Part 2, Hess – Shannon (complete)
- Folder 9 Biographies of Southwestern Virginians, Part 2, Slemph – Yonce (complete)

- Folder 10      Some Present Day Writers in Roanoke and Southwest Virginia (complete)
- Folder 11      Brief Sketches of Early History, Old Homes, Churches, Schools, Natural Scenic...  
Bland, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Roanoke, etc (complete)
- Folder 12      Brief Sketches of Early History, Old Homes, Churches, Schools, Natural Scenic...  
Smythe, Tazewell, Washington and Wise Counties (complete)
- Folder 13      History of Newspapers Published in 23 Counties of Southwest Virginia (selected)
- Folder 14      Roanoke, Franklin County, Henry County Along U.S. Highway 220 (complete)
- Folder 15      Interesting Items Found in Court House at Rocky Mount, Virginia (complete)
- Folder 16      Historic Homes and Churches of Botetourt and Montgomery Counties (complete)
- Folder 17      Historic Homes and Churches of Wytheville, Virginia (complete)
- Folder 18      Brief History of Floyd County (complete)
- Folder 19      Brief History of Patrick County (complete)
- Folder 20      The Appalachian Trail and Guide to Paths through the Blue Ridge (complete)

- Folder 21 History of Roanoke County (complete)
- Folder 22 The Government and Courts of Roanoke County (complete)
- Folder 23 Roanoke County Communities: Ballyhack, Bennett Springs, etc (complete)
- Folder 24 History of Fort Lewis, Roanoke County (selected)
- Folder 25 History of Salem, Virginia (complete)
- Folder 26-27 The Story of Roanoke (Different version of WPA-40) (complete)
- Folder 28 The Story of Roanoke (selected)
- Folder 29 Roanoke, Capital of the Mountain Empire (complete)
- Folder 30 Roanoke's Boom History (complete)
- Folder 31 Mill Mountain (complete)
- Folder 32 Government of Roanoke (complete)
- Folder 33 Newspapers of Roanoke (complete)
- Folder 34 Our Colored People (selected)



- Folder 35      Captain Thomas J. Chapman in the War Between the States (complete)
  
- Folder 36      The Schools of Roanoke (complete)
  
- Folder 37      Churches of Roanoke (complete)
  
- Folder 38      Some Churches of Roanoke, Virginia (selected)
  
- Folder 39      Roanoke City Churches (selected)
  
- Folder 40      The Protective Agencies of Roanoke (selected)
  
- Folder 41      A Brief History of Roanoke Industries (complete)
  
- Folder 42      Industry and Commerce in Roanoke (complete)
  
- Folder 43      Recreational and Cultural Agencies of Roanoke (complete)
  
- Folder 44      Clubs, Societies and Organizations of Roanoke (complete)
  
- Folder 45      Roanoke Auditorium (complete)
  
- Folder 46      Roanoke History Scrapbook (complete)

