



*Archival and Manuscript Collections Finding Aid*

**ACCESSION No.:** HRHS- 68

**COLLECTION TITLE:** Rockingham Turkey Festival Collection

**DATES:** 1939

**SIZE:** 1 (one) folder

**DONORS:** Rose M. Lambert (2001). Larry Bowers (2004)

**PROCESSED:** Processed 07/09/2013 by K. Craun and L. Adams

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:**

In September 1939 the first ever Turkey Festival was held in Harrisonburg, VA. The two day event took place on Monday, September 4, 1939 and Tuesday, September 5, 1939. The festival was designed “to pay homage to Lord Rockingham II, the big American bird emblematic of the county and [the] city’s five million dollar poultry industry.” It was hoped that the Turkey Festival would become an annual event that would earn Harrisonburg and Rockingham County nationwide attention.

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce secretary Russell L. Shultz originally proposed the idea for the Turkey Festival in January 1939. The membership of the Chamber of Commerce adopted the idea and went forth making plans.

According to the festival program printed in the Saturday, September 2, 1939 edition of the Daily News Record both days of the festival were packed full of events from 8 am Monday morning through late Tuesday evening. Events included a turkey exhibit hall, band concerts, a Turkey Institute, turkey stunts, tours of Rockingham County turkey ranches, historic point tours, tours of Natural Wonders, a turkey throw, a baseball game, the Queen’s coronation ceremony and special reception, Turkeyrama pageant, turkey roasting demonstrations, flights on the Goodyear blimp, two parades, a tournament, street entertainment, a turkey race, open air chorus, and two dances. (Information obtained from blog: Massanutten Musings: 1939 Turkey Festival)

**SCOPE AND CONTENT:**

Copies of newspaper clippings, images, brochure and a souvenir program for the world’s first Turkey Festival, invitation to reception for the Queen of the Rockingham Turkey Festival held September 1939 in Harrisonburg. (See articles in HRHS-68 admin file for details.)

**COLLECTION INVENTORY:**

Brochure of Turkey Festival, September 4-5, 1939

Invitation to Reception, September 5, 1939

Souvenir program of festival, September 4-5, 1939

Coronation of the Queen of the Rockingham Turkey Festival, Madison College,  
September 4, 1939

Copies of newspaper clippings from three newspapers, Richmond Times-Dispatch, DNR,  
Washington Post:

Richmond Times-Dispatch "Rockingham Talks Turkey in Gay Festival Honoring Bird"  
by Ben Hardy

DNR "Coronation Very Colorful"

DNR: "Turkey Feathers"

DNR: "Festival Queen and Her Maids of Honor"

DNR "Turkey Fete Draws Throng; Parade Today"

DNR: "Queen Rockingham's Coronation Stately Event of Rare Beauty; Senator Byrd  
Places Crown" by J.M. McNeill

Washington Post: "'Queen Rockingham' First Turkey Fete at Harrisonburg

DNR: Turkey Festival Program

DNR: "Reception to Queen is Most Charming Event"

DNR: "40,000 View Grandest of All Parades"

**ARRANGEMENT:**

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