



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Helen C. Rountree papers, 1969-1990

Adam Fielding and Mary Kenney

Digitization and preparation of these materials for online access
has been funded through generous support from the Arcadia Fund

2014 September

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	Helen C. Rountree papers
Date:	1969-1990
Identifier:	NAA.2005-22
Creator:	Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Extent:	27 Sound recordings (1/4" reels and cassettes) 2.4 Linear feet (4 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Helen C. Rountree is emeritus professor of anthropology at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. She studied the history of the Virginia Tribes from the 17th century to the 21st century and is considered a leading expert on Pocahontas. The Helen C. Rountree papers include field notes, correspondence, and sound recordings relating to her field work among the Pamunkey, Mattaponi, Nansemond, Rappahannock, Chickahominy, Monacan, as well as the area around Nottoway Reservation and Gingaskin Reservation.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

These papers were donated to the National Anthropological Archives by Helen C. Rountree in 2005.

Processing Information

The sound recordings were described by Mary Kenney in 2008.

Processed and encoded by Adam Fielding, 2014.

Preferred Citation

Helen C. Rountree Papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

Materials related to interview notes are restricted until June 2025.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical Note

Helen C. Rountree earned an A.B. in Sociology & Anthropology from the College of William and Mary, an M.A. in Anthropology from the University of Utah, and a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Wisconsin-

Milwaukee. She joined the faculty of Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia as an Instructor in 1968 and retired as a full Professor in 1999. Dr. Rountree worked initially with the Shoshone in Nevada, then began research on the Algonquian-speaking Native Americans of eastern Virginia, becoming an honorary member of the Nansemond and Upper Mattaponi tribes in Virginia. She is acknowledged as a leading researcher and writer on Virginia Indians from the 17th century to the present and is considered an expert on Pocahontas.

Scope and Contents

The Helen C Rountree papers contain correspondence, field notes, and sound recordings relating to her field work primarily among Virginian tribes including the Pamunkey, Mattaponi, Nansemond, Rappahannock, Chickahominy, Monacan, as well as the area around Nottoway Reservation and Gingaskin Reservation. Correspondents include Robert Y. Barham, Christian F. Feest, Samuel Proctor, C.G. Holland, Frank Porter, Marshall Becker, and Nancy Oestreich Lurie.

The sound recordings relate to Rountree's fieldwork and contain recordings of the Chickahominy Fall Festivals, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1978, 1981-1986 and a Chickahominy tribal meeting 1987; Nansemond Tribe Spring Festival, 1984, and Homecoming, 1988. Also included are recordings among the Pamunkey; Mattaponi; Shoshoni; Duck Valley Reservation, Nevada; meetings; public events, and some lectures by Helen Rountree and others. There is one unidentified sound cassette.

Arrangement

The collection contains: Correspondence, 1969-1985; Field notes, 1969-1988; Cook Books, 1981, 1983; Audio Ephemera, undated; Sound Recordings, 1969-1990.

Selected Bibliography

1973. Indian Land Loss in Virginia: A Prototype of U.S. Federal Indian Policy. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

1989. The Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture. Norman : University of Oklahoma Press.

1990. Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia Through Four Centuries. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

1993. Powhatan Foreign Relations, 1500-1722. Charlottesville : University Press of Virginia.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Algonquin (Algonkin)
- Chickahominy
- Folk songs, Shoshoni
- Indians of North America -- Great Basin
- Indians of North America -- Northeast
- Indians of North America -- Rites and ceremonies
- Indians of North America -- Virginia

Mattaponi
Nansemond
Pamunkey
Rappahannock
Shoshone
Upper Mattaponi

Cultures:

Algonquin (Algonkin)
Chickahominy
Indians of North America -- Great Basin
Indians of North America -- Northeast
Mattaponi
Nansemond
Pamunkey
Rappahannock
Shoshone
Upper Mattaponi

Types of Materials:

Correspondence
Field notes
Interviews
Sound recordings

Names:

Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe

Places:

Virginia

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence

Creator: Becker, Marshall Joseph
Sturtevant, William C.
Feest, Christian F.
Custalow, Curtis Jr.

Scope and Contents: Series 1 consists of Rountree's correspondence with a variety of individuals, ranging from the years 1969 - 1985. Notable correspondents include William C. Sturtevant and Curtis Custalow, Jr.

Box 1	Correspondence index
Box 1	Correspondence, 1969-1974
Box 1	Correspondence, 1975-1981
Box 1	Correspondence, 1982-1984
Box 2	Correspondence, 1985

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Series 2: Field Notes

Box 2	Field Notes, 1969-1973
Box 2	Field Notes, 1973-1982
Box 2	Field Notes, 1983-1985
Box 3	Field Notes, 1985 July-1986 March
Box 3	Field Notes, 1987 January-1988 December
Box 3	Field Notes, 1986 April-December
Box 4	Restricted Field Notes Notes: Restricted until 2025 June.

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Series 3: Cook Books

Box 3

Cook Books: A Book of Favorite Recipes: Compiled by Chickahominy Indian
Tribe Community, 1981, 1983

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Series 4: Sound Recordings

Scope and Contents: Series 4 consists of audio tapes related to Rountree's fieldwork and contain recordings of the Chickahominy Fall Festivals, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1978, 1981-1986 and a Chickahominy tribal meeting 1987. Recordings of the Nansemond Tribe Spring Festival, 1984 , and Homecoming, 1988, are included. Other tribes with recordings in this series are: the Pamunkey, Upper Mattaponi, Mattaponi. Also included are audio tapes recorded among the Western Shoshone, Duck Valley Reservation, Nevada. Recordings of meetings public events, and some lectures by Helen Rountree and others are included. There is one uncataloged, unidentified sound cassette.

The titles of the tapes [and content descriptions] have been transcribed from information on the tape boxes. The content of recordings has not been verified.

Names of the performers and co-creators are listed in the scope and contents notes for each sound recording and in the SIRIS item level records.

Box 3 Sound Recordings Ephemera, undated

Item 1 Shoshone Songs and Stories, Nevada, Summer, 1967
1 Sound tape reel (Some language transcription enclosed in tape box; 5 inch)
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Performer: Billie, Josie
 Adams, John
 Tau, May Howard
 Hall, Bessie
Culture: Shoshone
Topic: Shoshone -- Folk tales -- Songs
 Language and languages -- Documentation
 Folklore
 Songs

Item 2 Chickahominy Fall Festival, 1970
1 Reel (3 1/4 inch)
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Speaker: Forber, Jack
Topic: Festivals
 Language and languages -- Documentation
 Indians of North America -- Northeast
 Powwows -- Virginia
 Chickahominy Tribe -- Rites and ceremonies
Genre/Form: Speeches
Culture: Chickahominy

Item 3 Shoshone Songs and Stories, 1967 June
1 Sound tape reel (3 1/4 inch)
Performer: Hall, Bessie
 Adams, John
 Tau, May Howard
 Billie, Josie
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Genre/Form: Songs
Topic: Folklore

- | | |
|--------|---|
| | Language and languages -- Documentation
Shoshone -- Folk tales -- Songs
Culture: Shoshone |
| Item 4 | Field Notes, 1974
1 Reel (3 1/4 inch)
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Genre/Form: Field notes
Topic: Language and languages -- Documentation |
| Item 5 | Chickahominy Fall Festival, 1974
1 Reel (3 1/4 inch)
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Topic: Festivals
Chickahominy Tribe -- Rites and ceremonies
Powwows -- Virginia
Indians of North America -- Northeast
Culture: Chickahominy |
| Item 6 | Chickahominy Fall Festival, 1972 September 23
1 Reel (3 1/4 inch)
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Topic: Musical performances
Chickahominy Tribe -- Rites and ceremonies
Language and languages -- Documentation
Indians of North America -- Northeast
Powwows -- Virginia
Culture: Chickahominy |
| Item 7 | Chickahominy Fall Festival, 1978 September 23
1 Sound cassette (Duration: 45 minutes)
Audio: Rountree SR 7 side 1
Audio: Rountree SR 7 side 2
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Speaker: Forber, Jack
Topic: Powwows -- Virginia
Language and languages -- Documentation
Chickahominy Tribe -- Rites and ceremonies
Festivals
Culture: Chickahominy
Genre/Form: Speeches |
| Item 8 | Chickahominy Meeting, Archaeological Society of Virginia, 1978 October 14
2 Sound cassettes (Duration: 90 minutes)
Audio: Rountree SR 8A side 1
Audio: Rountree SR 8A side 2
Audio: Rountree SR 8B side 1
Audio: Rountree SR 8B side 2
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Topic: Archeological Society of Virginia
Indians of North America -- Northeast
Language and languages -- Documentation
Genre/Form: Speeches |

Culture: Chickahominy

Item 9

Chickahominy Fall Festival, 1981
 2 Sound cassettes (Duration: 90 minutes; 60 minutes)
[Audio: Rountree SR 9A side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 9A side 2](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 9B side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 9B side 2](#)
 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
 Speaker: Custalow, Curtis Jr.
 Topic: Festivals
 Language and languages -- Documentation
 Indians of North America -- Northeast
 Chickahominy Tribe -- Rites and ceremonies
 Powwows -- Virginia
 Genre/Form: Speeches
 Culture: Chickahominy

Item 10

Chickahominy Fall Festival, 1982
 1 Sound cassette (Duration: 90 minutes)
[Audio: Rountree SR 10 side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 10 side 2](#)
 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
 Culture: Chickahominy
 Topic: Festivals
 Powwows -- Virginia
 Indians of North America -- Northeast
 Language and languages -- Documentation
 Chickahominy Tribe -- Rites and ceremonies

Item 11

David Smith Colloquium on Plecker, 1990 January 30
 1 Sound cassette (Duration: 120 minutes)
[Audio: Rountree SR 11 side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 11 side 2](#)
 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
 Speaker: Smith, David
 Names: Plecker, Walter Ashby, b. 1861
 Topic: Language and languages -- Documentation
 Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy
 Genre/Form: Speeches

Item 12

Helen C. Rountree Lecture to Anthropological Society of Washington, 1988
 October 18-19
 1 Sound cassette (Duration: 120 minutes)
[Audio: Rountree SR 12 side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 12 side 2](#)
 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
 Topic: Language and languages -- Documentation
 Anthropological Society of Washington
 Genre/Form: Speeches

Item 13

Indian Week Kick-off Ceremony, State Capital, 1988 September 19

- 1 Sound cassette (Duration: 35 minutes)
[Audio: Rountree SR 13](#)
 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
 Topic: Language and languages -- Documentation
 Genre/Form: Speeches
 Culture: Indians of North America
- Item 14 Nansemond Homecoming, 1988 September 11
 1 Sound cassette (Duration: 120 minutes)
[Audio: Rountree SR 14 side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 14 side 2](#)
 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
 Culture: Nansemond
 Topic: Indians of North America -- Northeast
 Language and languages -- Documentation
 Place: Nansemond County (VA).
- Item 15 Chickahominy Tribal Order Ad Hoc Committee on Indian History, 1987
 October 31
 2 Sound cassettes (Duration: 120 minutes)
[Audio: Rountree SR 15A side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 15A side 1 part 2](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 15A side 2 part 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 15A side 2 part 2](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 15B side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 15B side 2](#)
 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
 Topic: Chickahominy -- History
 Language and languages -- Documentation
 Indians of North America -- Northeast
 Genre/Form: Meetings
 Culture: Chickahominy
- Item 16 Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, 1987 April 4, 1987 April 11
 4 Sound cassettes (Duration: 120 minutes)
[Audio: Rountree SR 16A side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 16A side 2](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 16B side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 16B side 2](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 16C side 1 part 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 16C side 1 part 2](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 16C side 2 part 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 16C side 2 part 2](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 16D side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 16D side 2](#)
 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
 Topic: Virginia Council on Indians
 Williamsburg Conference
 Language and languages -- Documentation
 Genre/Form: Lectures
- Item 17 Interview with Pamunkey Chief William Miles, 1986 November 8

	<p>1 Sound cassette (Duration: 90 minutes) Audio: Rountree SR 17 side 1 Audio: Rountree SR 17 side 2 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944- Miles, Chief Williams Culture: Pamunkey Topic: Pamunkey Indians -- Interview Language and languages -- Documentation Genre/Form: Interviews</p>
Item 18	<p>Curtis Custalow Interview, 1986 November 18 1 Sound cassette (Duration: 120 minutes) Audio: Rountree SR 18 side 1 Audio: Rountree SR 18 side 2 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944- Speaker: Custalow, Curtis Jr. Genre/Form: Interviews Topic: Language and languages -- Documentation</p>
Item 19	<p>Chickahominy Fall Festival, 1986 October 4 1 Sound cassette (Duration: 90 minutes) Audio: Rountree SR 19 side 1 Audio: Rountree SR 19 side 2 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944- Culture: Chickahominy Topic: Indians of North America -- Northeast Powwows -- Virginia Chickahominy Tribe -- Rites and ceremonies Language and languages -- Documentation Festivals</p>
Item 20	<p>Nansemond Spring Festival, 1986 May 24 1 Sound cassette (Duration: 120 minutes) Audio: Rountree SR 20 side 1 Audio: Rountree SR 20 side 2 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944- Culture: Nansemond Topic: Nansemond -- Rituals and ceremonies Indians of North America -- Northeast Language and languages -- Documentation Festivals Place: Nansemond County (VA).</p>
Item 21	<p>Chickahominy Fall Festival, 1985 October 5 1 Sound cassette (Duration: 90 minutes) Audio: Rountree SR 21 side 1 Audio: Rountree SR 21 side 2 Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944- Topic: Language and languages -- Documentation Chickahominy Tribe -- Rites and ceremonies Festivals Chickahominy -- History Powwows -- Virginia</p>

Indians of North America -- Northeast

Item 22 Upper Mattaponi Tribe at King William Board of Supervisors, 1986 December 17
1 Sound cassette (Duration: 90 minutes)
[Audio: Rountree SR 22](#)
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Culture: Mattaponi
Topic: Mattaponi -- Meetings
Indians of North America -- Northeast
Language and languages -- Documentation
King William County Board of Supervisors
Place: King William County (Virginia) -- Place names
Genre/Form: Meetings

Item 23 Upper Mattaponi Officer Installation, 1983 December 17
1 Sound cassette
[Audio: Rountree SR 23](#)
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Culture: Mattaponi
Upper Mattaponi
Topic: Indians of North America -- Northeast
Language and languages -- Documentation
Genre/Form: Ritual (events)

Item 24 Chickahominy Fall Festival, 1984 October 6
1 Sound cassette (Duration: 60 minutes)
[Audio: Rountree SR 24 side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 24 side 2](#)
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Topic: Chickahominy Tribe -- Rites and ceremonies
Language and languages -- Documentation
Indians of North America -- Northeast
Powwows -- Virginia
Genre/Form: Ritual (events)
Culture: Chickahominy

Item 25 Chickahominy Fall Festival, 1983
1 Sound cassette (Duration: 90 Minutes)
[Audio: Rountree SR 25 side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 25 side 2](#)
Interviewee: Langston, Morton
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Culture: Pamunkey
Chickahominy
Topic: Indians of North America -- Northeast
Language and languages -- Documentation
Chickahominy Tribe -- Rites and ceremonies
Powwows -- Virginia
Genre/Form: Ritual (events)
Interviews

Item 26 Mattaponi Reservation Speech and Interview with Curtis Custalow, 1983 April
16
1 Sound cassette (Duration: 90 minutes)
[Audio: Rountree SR 26 side 1](#)
[Audio: Rountree SR 26 side 2](#)
Interviewee: Custalow, Curtis Jr.
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-
Genre/Form: Interviews
 Speeches
Culture: Mattaponi
Topic: Indians of North America -- Northeast
 Language and languages -- Documentation

Item 27 Unidentified, undated
Creator: Rountree, Helen C., 1944-

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