

“Where I’m From” Film & Multimedia Contest

Monroe County, Kentucky · 2026
Winners Announced at Awards Ceremony: September 5, 2026

PRESENTED BY
Three for History

William B. Harlan Memorial
Library

Monroe County Historical &
Genealogical Society

Old Mulkey Meetinghouse
State Historic Site

A Monroe County storytelling initiative in conjunction with America’s 250th anniversary celebration

ABOUT THE CONTEST

Our Stories, Told by Us

As the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary of independence in 2026, Monroe County joins the national conversation with a local storytelling initiative. Presented by *Three for History* — the William B. Harlan Memorial Library, the Monroe County Historical and Genealogical Society, and Old Mulkey Meetinghouse State Historic Site — this contest invites residents, alumni, and friends of the county to create original films, documentaries, and multimedia pieces that celebrate, examine, and preserve our shared heritage.

Winning and selected entries will be screened at the September 5th awards event at **(LOCATION TBD)**, displayed on the Library’s digital archives, and preserved in the partner organizations’ historical collections.

“Where I’m From” is supported in part by a grant from the Kentucky Historical Society as part of Kentucky’s commemoration of America’s 250th anniversary.

ENTRY CATEGORIES



What Does “Where I’m From” Mean to You?

“Where I’m From” is more than a place — it’s the farms and businesses that have built this county, the Cumberland cutting through limestone hills, a road before there were roads. It’s the memory of a courthouse square on a Saturday, when coming to town was still an occasion. It’s flint struck from the earth and rolled across a dirt floor, the crack of marble on marble, Rolley-Hole. It’s the dairy barns gone quiet on the hillsides and the timber stands still standing, still giving. It’s the voices of people whose families have walked this ground for generations — and the newer voices still finding their place in it.

There is no single correct interpretation. These prompts are offered as inspiration — follow the one that calls to you, or chart your own course within the theme.

Land & Landscape

The karst hills, the Cumberland River tributaries, the farms and hollows that define this place.

A Life’s Work

Portrait of a farmer, craftsperson, preacher, teacher, coach, or tradesperson whose work embodies Monroe County.

Roots & Memory

Family stories, old photographs, recipes, the things passed down — and what we choose to carry forward.

Community Rituals

Homecomings, revivals, county fairs, holiday traditions, games, and the gatherings that bind us.

Change & Continuity

What’s stayed the same across 250 years — and what has transformed beyond recognition.

Leaving & Coming Back

The pull of home for those who left Monroe County, and what they found when they returned.

New Voices, Old Roots

Stories of newer residents who have found belonging in Monroe County.

Tompkinsville & Beyond

The county seat as center of gravity — courthouse square, Main Street, and the neighborhoods around it.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

How Entries Will Be Judged

Each entry is scored by a panel of three judges. Scores are averaged across the panel.

%	Criterion	Description
30%	Connection to Theme	Depth, authenticity, and thoughtfulness of engagement with 'Where I'm From' and Monroe County.
25%	Storytelling	Clarity, emotional resonance, narrative arc, and compelling presentation of subject matter.
25%	Craft & Execution	Technical quality, composition, and overall polish appropriate to the category.
20%	Originality	Fresh perspective, creative approach, and distinctive point of view on the subject.




Judging Panel

The panel will consist of 3–5 judges drawn from areas such as Kentucky film or journalism, South-Central Kentucky history, the Monroe County Arts Council, and other community and cultural organizations. Judges may not enter the contest.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Prizes & Honors

Awards will be given per division (Amateur and Professional) for each category where sufficient entries are received. Cash prizes are awarded per category and division; Honorable Mentions are non-cash (certificate). The committee may award a Best in Show Grand Prize at its discretion.

Award	Amount	Notes
 Best in Show — Grand Prize	Up to \$300	Optional; awarded at committee discretion from reserve fund
 1st Place — Per Category/Division	Pro \$150 / Amateur \$100	Per category (Short Documentary, Photo Essay, Oral History)
 2nd Place — Per Category/Division	Pro \$100 / Amateur \$75	Per category (Short Documentary, Photo Essay, Oral History)

- Entries may be in English or include English subtitles if interviews are conducted in another language.
- All entries must be submitted in person at the William B. Harlan Memorial Library, Tompkinsville, Kentucky, by Saturday, August 1, 2026 by 12:00 p.m. Bring your flash drive, completed entry form, all signed consent forms, and all other required materials.
- Decisions of the judges are final. The sponsoring organizations reserve the right to adjust the award structure based on the number of submissions received.

SUPPORT & RESOURCES

We're Here to Help You Make It

We want great stories — not just polished production. These resources are available to all registered entrants:

Research Resources

The *Three for History* partner organizations — the William B. Harlan Memorial Library, the Monroe County Historical and Genealogical Society, and Old Mulkey Meetinghouse State Historic Site — each hold collections relevant to Monroe County history and are available as research resources for contest entrants. Holdings include historical photographs, newspapers (including the *Tompkinsville News* archives), genealogical records, documents, and artifacts. Contact each organization directly for information about their collections and hours of operation.

“Where I’m From” — Entrant Workshop (Optional)

Saturday, June 13, 2026, 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., at the William B. Harlan Memorial Library

On Saturday, June 13, *Three for History* will host a free introductory workshop at the Library covering oral history methods, including how to identify and approach a subject, basic interviewing and recording techniques, and how to obtain consent. Time will be set aside for questions. The workshop is open to the public and is optional. A printed guide covering best practices and consent forms will be available at the Library.

William B. Harlan Memorial Library

500 West 4th Street
Tompkinsville, KY 42167
270-487-5301
joel@wbhmlibrary.org
www.wbhmlibrary.org

Monroe County Historical & Genealogical Society

Genealogy Room
Monroe County Courthouse
(Upstairs)
200 North Main Street, Suite J
Tompkinsville, KY 42167
270-427-0333
*Open Wednesdays 9 a.m.–12 noon
(weather permitting)*
Museum: 200 N Magnolia ST
Tompkinsville, KY 42167
270-407-9446; 270-487-5113; 270-303-7042

Old Mulkey Meetinghouse State Historic Site

38 Old Mulkey Park Road
Tompkinsville, KY 42167
270-487-8481
sheila.rush@ky.gov

Questions? Contact *Three for History*: joel@wbhmlibrary.org

Three for History

“Where I’m From” — Film & Multimedia Contest

Entrant Guide · Monroe County, Kentucky · 2026

ABOUT THE CONTEST

What Is “Where I’m From”?

This contest invites residents, alumni, and friends of Monroe County to create original films, documentaries, photo essays, and oral history recordings that celebrate, examine, and preserve our shared heritage — as the United States marks its 250th anniversary of independence in 2026.

Winning and selected entries will be screened at the September 5 awards ceremony, displayed on the Library’s digital archives, and preserved in the partner organizations’ historical collections.

Presented by Three for History: William B. Harlan Memorial Library · Monroe County Historical & Genealogical Society · Old Mulkey Meetinghouse State Historic Site

Supported in part by: A grant from the Kentucky Historical Society as part of Kentucky’s commemoration of America’s 250th anniversary.

KEY DATES

Contest Calendar

Date	Event
June 1, 2026	Contest opens. Entry forms and consent forms available at the Library and wbhmlibrary.org .
June 13, 2026	Entrant Workshop — optional, free. 10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m., William B. Harlan Memorial Library.
August 1, 2026	Submissions due by 12:00 p.m. In-person delivery at the Library. Flash drive required.
August 1–21, 2026	Judging period. Finalists notified by August 24.
September 5, 2026	Awards ceremony. Oral History finalists present; Short Documentaries screened. Location TBA.

ENTRY CATEGORIES & DIVISIONS

Three Categories, Two Divisions

Choose one category. All work must be original and non-fictional. Each entrant (or team of up to 4) may submit one entry in one category only.

Short Documentary

- Video up to 10 minutes.
- A documentary film about a real person, place, tradition, or community in Monroe County.

- Visit the location in advance if possible. Background noise (air conditioners, traffic, TVs) can ruin a recording. Test your equipment.
- Explain the project to your subject beforehand so they know what to expect. Get consent signed before you begin.
- Bring water. A comfortable narrator talks longer.

During the Interview

- Start with easy, open-ended questions to help your subject relax: Where were you born? Tell me about growing up here.
- Let them talk. Resist the urge to fill silences — pauses often lead to the most important material.
- Listen actively and follow up. If they mention something interesting, ask them to say more. Don't stay rigidly on your question list.
- Don't talk over your narrator. Your voice can be edited out; theirs cannot. Keep affirmations quiet ("mm-hmm") or nonverbal.
- Ask "Is there anything else you'd like to say?" at the end. Some of the best material comes in the last few minutes.

Recording Tips

- Use a dedicated recorder or a phone with an external microphone if possible. Built-in phone microphones can work but vary by device.
- Position the microphone 6–12 inches from the narrator's mouth, not yours.
- Record indoors in a quiet room. Turn off fans, TVs, and air conditioners if possible. Close windows.
- Do a short test recording before you begin and play it back to check levels and background noise.
- Record at the highest quality your device allows.

Device	Recommended Setting
iPhone	Settings → Voice Memos → Audio Quality → Lossless. Submit as M4A.
Android	Use your phone's built-in Voice Recorder app. Most modern Android phones export M4A or WAV. Check your app settings for the highest quality option.
Dedicated recorder	Record in WAV at 44.1 kHz or higher. WAV is preferred for submission.
Not sure what you have?	Bring your device to the June 13 workshop or contact us at joel@wbhmlibrary.org and we'll help.

File Formats: A Quick Reference

Format	What It Is	Accepted?
WAV	Uncompressed audio. Largest file size, best quality. Standard for archival recording.	Preferred
M4A	Compressed audio (AAC). Default from iPhone Voice Memos. Good quality at smaller file sizes.	Yes
MP3	Compressed audio. Very common format. Lower quality than WAV or M4A, but acceptable if that is all your device produces.	Accepted if necessary — WAV or M4A strongly preferred
3GP / AMR	Older Android formats. Low quality, primarily designed for voice over slow connections.	No — convert before submitting
OGG	Open-source compressed audio. Uncommon on mobile devices.	No — convert before submitting

- Explain the project before recording begins. Tell your subject what the contest is, who presents it, and how the recording may be used.
- Give them the form to read before you begin. If they have questions, answer them honestly.
- Sign the form together before the interview or photo session begins — not after.
- Keep a copy for your records. Bring the original signed form with your submission.

One form per person. If your oral history features two people speaking, you need two signed consent forms. If your photo essay features multiple named individuals, each requires a signed form.

Photographing minors. If your subject is under 18, a parent or legal guardian must sign the consent form on their behalf.

Consent Forms Are Available

- At the William B. Harlan Memorial Library, 500 West 4th Street, Tompkinsville.
- Online at wbhmlibrary.org.
- At the June 13 Entrant Workshop.

SUBMISSION

What to Bring on August 1

All entries must be submitted in person at the William B. Harlan Memorial Library, 500 West 4th Street, Tompkinsville, by 12:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 1, 2026.

All Entries

- Flash drive (USB) with your entry file(s).
- Completed entry form.
- Signed consent form for every person featured in your entry.
- Brief written introduction: up to 150 words (Short Documentary or Oral History) or up to 300 words (Photo Essay). May be on the entry form or a separate sheet.

Photo Essay Entries — Additional Items Required

- Printed Word document with all photos inserted in sequence, each caption beneath its photo, and your introduction at the top. This is used by judges during the judging period.
- Mounted display board with photos, captions, and introduction printed and mounted — any size. This will be displayed at the September 5 awards event. Entrants keep their boards after the event.

Questions about submission? Contact joel@wbhmlibrary.org or call 270-487-5301.

RULES

Copyright, Music & AI

Copyright & Third-Party Content

You are responsible for all content in your entry. The following rules apply:

- **Original content:** All visual and audio content must be original work captured by the entrant.
- **Archival materials:** Historical photographs, footage, and documents may be included with proper attribution and within fair use guidelines.

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OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

1. ENTRANT INFORMATION

Each entry may be submitted by an individual or a team of up to 4 people. One person must serve as the primary contact.

Primary Entrant Name

Mailing Address

City / State / ZIP

Phone Number

Email Address

Connection to Monroe County (e.g., current resident, former resident, family ties)

Additional Team Members (if applicable — up to 3; maximum 4 people per team including primary entrant)

2. ENTRY CATEGORY

Select one category for your entry.

- Short Documentary — Up to 10 minutes, video (MP4, H.264, minimum 1080p, stereo audio)
- Photo Essay — 6–8 original photographs (TIFF preferred, JPEG accepted), printed judging document, and mounted display board
- Oral History — Up to 45 minutes, audio only (WAV preferred or M4A)

3. COMPETITION DIVISION

Division is self-reported. Select one.

- Amateur — I do not work or have not worked professionally in film, photography, or audio production.
- Professional — I work or have worked professionally in film, photography, or audio production.

4. STORY PROMPT / THEME

8. AI TOOL DISCLOSURE

AI-generated images, video, or audio are not permitted. Other uses of AI tools (research assistance, transcription, noise reduction, etc.) are permitted but must be disclosed below.

- I/we did not use any AI tools in creating this entry.
- I/we used AI tools as described below.

If AI tools were used, describe how:

9. SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Confirm that all required materials are included with this submission.

- Completed Entry Form (this document)
- Signed Consent Form(s) for every person featured
- Flash drive with entry file(s)
- (Photo Essay only) Printed judging document — photos in order with captions and introduction
- (Photo Essay only) Mounted display board with photos, captions, and introduction

10. ENTRANT AGREEMENT & CERTIFICATION

By signing below, I/we certify that:

- This entry is my/our original, non-fictional work, created specifically for this contest.
- Previously submitted or published work has not been included.
- All individuals featured in this entry have provided written consent via a signed Consent & Release Form.
- All music, footage, images, and other third-party content is original, licensed, or used within fair use guidelines. I/we assume sole responsibility for copyright compliance.
- I/we retain copyright to this work and grant the William B. Harlan Memorial Library, the Monroe County Historical and Genealogical Society, and Old Mulkey Meetinghouse State Historic Site a non-exclusive license to screen, exhibit, and archive this entry.
- All information provided on this form is accurate and complete.

Primary Entrant Signature & Date

Signature

Date

Print Name

11. IF PRIMARY ENTRANT IS UNDER AGE 18 — PARENT OR GUARDIAN SIGNATURE REQUIRED

A minor cannot be held legally responsible for the representations and agreements in this form. If the primary entrant is under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian must sign below to authorize the submission and accept responsibility on the minor's behalf.

- The primary entrant is 18 years of age or older. No parent or guardian signature is needed.

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CONSENT & RELEASE FORM

This form must be completed and signed by every person who appears, speaks, or is otherwise featured in a “Where I’m From” contest entry. A separate form is required for each featured individual. Completed forms must be submitted to the William B. Harlan Memorial Library along with the entry by Saturday, August 1, 2026 at 12:00 PM noon.

PART 1: ENTRANT / FILMMAKER INFORMATION

Primary Entrant / Filmmaker / Interviewer Name

Phone Number

Email Address

Brief description of the entry (title or subject):

PART 2: FEATURED INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION

Full Name of Person Being Featured (Include Maiden Name if Appropriate)

Mailing Address

City / State / ZIP

Phone Number

Email Address (if available)

Relationship to Monroe County (e.g., lifelong resident, alumnus, former resident):

PART 3: DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPATION

Briefly describe how this individual appears or participates in the entry.

- On-camera interview subject
 - Audio interview subject (voice only; no video)
 - Photographed subject
 - Person referenced or depicted using historical / archival materials (describe below)
-