

## Griffith, Andy <sup>[1]</sup>

### Andy Griffith

by Don Cusic, Professor of Music, Belmont University, 2010

Reprinted with permission from the [North Carolina Music Hall of Fame](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, 2010. Updated by the Government & Heritage Library, 2012.

See also: [Andy Griffith Show](#) <sup>[3]</sup>



**Andy Griffith. Image courtesy of the North Carolina June 1, 1926-July 3, 2012**[Digital Collections, UNC Libraries.](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

[Andy Griffith](#) <sup>[5]</sup> is one of the most beloved actors in American entertainment; although “The Andy Griffith Show” stopped production in 1967, the show remains on the air as a favorite of each succeeding generation.

Andy Griffith was born in [Mount Airy](#) <sup>[6]</sup>, North Carolina on June 1, 1926. He began acting in high school plays and learned to play the trombone. After high school he enrolled at the [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#) <sup>[7]</sup> intending to become a preacher, but changed his major to music and graduated in 1949. During the next several years, Griffith taught English at Goldsboro High School in Goldsboro, North Carolina.

Andy Griffith began to write and hone his comic skills- —“[What It Was, Was Football](#)” <sup>[8]</sup> was released as a single on Colonial Records in 1953, then picked up by [Capitol](#) <sup>[9]</sup>. It became a huge hit, reaching number 9 on the [Billboard Hot 100](#) <sup>[10]</sup> chart in 1954.

In 1955 Griffith starred in a one hour TV play called “[No Time For Sergeants](#)” <sup>[11]</sup> on “[The United States Steel Hour](#)” <sup>[12]</sup>. His big break as a dramatic actor came when he starred in the 1957 film “[A Face in the Crowd](#)” <sup>[13]</sup>, directed by [Elia Kazan](#) <sup>[14]</sup>. Griffith starred in several Broadway plays, including “[No Time For Sergeants](#)” <sup>[15]</sup> and “[Destry Rides Again](#)” <sup>[15]</sup>.

In 1960 he played a county sheriff in the Danny Thomas sit-com, [Make Room for Daddy](#) <sup>[16]</sup>,” which led to his starring role as Sheriff Andy Taylor on “[The Andy Griffith Show](#)” <sup>[17]</sup> which aired on [CBS](#) <sup>[18]</sup>.

In the show, set in Mayberry, a fictional town modeled after Griffith’s home town of Mt. Airy. Andy played a widower with a young son named Opie, played by [Ron Howard](#) <sup>[19]</sup>. Co-starring in the show as Deputy Barney Fife was [Don Knotts](#) <sup>[20]</sup>. Others who starred on the show included [Frances Bavier](#) <sup>[21]</sup> as Aunt Bee, [George Lindsey](#) <sup>[22]</sup> as “Goober” and [Jim Nabors](#) <sup>[23]</sup> as “Gomer.”



Andy Griffith. Image courtesy of the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame. <sup>[2]</sup>The show was an immediate hit and Andy Griffith worked as a writer on each of the scripts, although he never received writing credit.

In 1967, Griffith quit the show, and started his own production company Andy Griffith Enterprises <sup>[24]</sup> in 1972. After starring in several unsuccessful television pilots he struck gold as country lawyer Ben Matlock in the hit legal drama "Matlock <sup>[25]</sup>" which aired from 1986 until 1995.

A talented actor, Andy Griffith appeared in feature films and on a number of television shows, including Playhouse 90 <sup>[26]</sup>, "Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C." <sup>[27]</sup>, "The Mod Squad" <sup>[28]</sup>, "Hawaii Five-O" <sup>[29]</sup>, "The Doris Day Show" <sup>[30]</sup>, "Here's Lucy" <sup>[31]</sup>, "The Bionic Woman" <sup>[32]</sup>, "Fantasy Island" <sup>[33]</sup>, and even "Dawson's Creek" <sup>[34]</sup>.

A talented singer, Andy Griffith recorded "I Love to Tell the Story: 25 Timeless Hymns" for Sparrow Records <sup>[35]</sup> in 1996; which went on to sell over a million copies.

In a recent interview he was quoted as saying, "During all the years of the old Griffith show I tried to talk them into filming in North Carolina, but they said, 'Why? They already think you're in North Carolina anyway.'"

He passed away <sup>[36]</sup> at his home in Dare County <sup>[37]</sup> on July 3, 2012.

#### **Additional Resources:**

PBS Newshour. "From Mayberry to Matlock: Andy Griffith Remembered for Iconic Role."  
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/from-mayberry-to-matlock-andy-griffith...> <sup>[38]</sup> (accessed May 5, 2016) -  
<https://player.pbs.org/viralplayer/2253197720/> <sup>[39]</sup>

North Carolina legend Andy Griffith dies at 86, News & Observer:  
<https://www.charlotteobserver.com/entertainment/article9081806.html> <sup>[36]</sup>

Biography: <https://www.biography.com/actors/andy-griffith> <sup>[5]</sup>

Andy Griffith Museum: <http://www.andygriffithmuseum.com/> <sup>[40]</sup>

Andy Griffith, IMDB: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0341431/> <sup>[41]</sup>

Photograph, Museum of History Collections: <http://collections.ncdcr.gov> <sup>[42]</sup>

Museum of Broadcast Communications: <https://www.museum.tv/> <sup>[43]</sup>

Andy Griffith Show 1960s, Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/details/dmabb43210> <sup>[44]</sup>

1983 NC Award in Fine Arts, North Carolina Digital Collections: <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/north-carolina-awards-1984/32...> <sup>[45]</sup>

#### **Image Credit:**

Andy Griffith. Image courtesy of the North Carolina Digital Collections, UNC Libraries. Available from [https://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/dig\\_nccpa/id/2339/rec/67](https://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/dig_nccpa/id/2339/rec/67) <sup>[4]</sup> (accessed June 13, 2013).

Andy Griffith. Image courtesy of the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame. Available from [https://northcarolinamusichalloffame.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/andy-griffith-hall-of-fame-inductee\\_fit.jpg](https://northcarolinamusichalloffame.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/andy-griffith-hall-of-fame-inductee_fit.jpg) <sup>[46]</sup> (accessed July 3, 2012).

#### **Subjects:**

100 North Carolina Icons <sup>[47]</sup>

21st Century (2001-present) <sup>[48]</sup>

Biographies <sup>[49]</sup>

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[Musicians](#) <sup>[51]</sup>

[N.C. Industrial Revolution \(1900-1929\)](#) <sup>[52]</sup>

[Post War 20th Century \(1946-2000\)](#) <sup>[53]</sup>

[World War II \(1941-1945\)](#) <sup>[54]</sup>

**Authors:**

[Cusic, Don](#) <sup>[55]</sup>

**Origin - location:**

[Dare County](#) <sup>[56]</sup>

[Surry County](#) <sup>[57]</sup>

**From:**

[North Carolina Music Hall of Fame.](#) <sup>[58]</sup>

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