

Fall 2008

Under the Dome - Fall 2008

McKissick Museum--University of South Carolina

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UNDER *the* DOME

Telling the Story of Southern Life

McKISSICK MUSEUM NEWSLETTER • FALL 2008

A Carolina Tradition

African-American Camp Meetings

An enduring Southern tradition is the focus of McKissick Museum's new fall exhibit. *This Far by Faith: Carolina Camp Meetings, An African-American Tradition* is a stirring visual presentation based on the extensive research and documentation of University art faculty member Minuette Floyd. It focuses on capturing the essence of this traditional religious setting and at the same time relates it to contemporary folk culture in both South Carolina and North Carolina. The exhibit combines a wide selection of Floyd's black and white photographs with supplementary video footage of camp meeting traditions throughout the region.

For generations, folks have come together once a year for fellowship and revival under the arbor at designated church campgrounds. While camp meetings are a dynamic part of both black and white religious tradition throughout the South, *This Far by Faith* showcases six black camp meetings with deep roots in their respective communities.

Historically, camp meetings were held annually at harvest time, although some took place throughout the summer months. Today, camp meetings may last one day or more than two weeks. They play a tremendous role in maintaining a sense of community identity and strengthening family connections.

Floyd is no stranger to this tradition. As a youngster, she went to camp meeting with her family. Upon returning to the tradition as an adult, she grew fascinated with the cultural vibrancy of these gatherings.

This exhibit illustrates Floyd's personal connection to the subject matter and contributes to her overall artistic vision. Her intimate connection to the camp meeting tradition also allows her to gain access that an outsider might not be afforded. From a folklife perspective, this intimacy is a crucial aspect of the project. The exhibit will not interpret the material through the cultural goggles of an outsider, but instead through the experience of a participant.

Floyd's passion for telling the story of the camp meeting in a visual format also fulfills her personal need as an educator to provide children with this important history. After all, it is the coming generation that will help to keep the tradition alive.

This Far by Faith: Carolina Camp Meetings, an African-American Tradition is on view at McKissick Aug. 9, 2008–March 14, 2009.



Top to bottom:
Motts Grove Campground, N.C.
St. Paul Campground, S.C.
Rev. Collins, St. Paul Campground, S.C.

CARRYING THE STATE: Presidential Politics in South Carolina

South Carolina has played an important role in presidential elections throughout American history. Standing firm on the issues they believe to be most vital, South Carolinians have played a major role in the selection of the country's most prominent figure. From being a member of the Democratic "Solid South" to changing political colors from blue to red, presidential hopefuls know this Southern state is an important stop on the campaign trail. Known as the "First in the South," South Carolina also holds the first presidential primary in the region, a distinction that brings a great deal of political attention to the state. Results from these primaries are often pivotal. In fact, since 1980, every Republican presidential candidate who has won the South Carolina Republican Primary has gone on to win his party's presidential nomination.

Originally started as a class project in the Museum Management Program's graduate course on exhibition development, *Carrying the State* looks at the history of presidential politics and campaigning in South Carolina, as well as current issues facing the state in this year's presidential election. The first section examines the overall history and explores presidential politics in areas such as nullification, Lincoln's election in 1860, the world wars, Strom Thurmond and the Dixiecrats, historical voting trends, and the rise of the media. The second half of *Carrying the State* focuses on the current presidential election, issues that are of concern to South Carolinians, the evolution of changing media outlets such as YouTube and online campaigning, and the platforms of each candidate.

Carrying the State opened in McKissick Museum's North Gallery on August 23 and offers an exciting look at South Carolina and its role in presidential elections. The museum is planning various events to coincide with this exhibit. For more information on these events, please check our Web site, www.cas.sc.edu/mcks, for the latest information.



Top: Strom Thurmond giving a speech on the radio

Bottom: Ronald Reagan and his wife at a rally at the Statehouse, Columbia, S.C., 1980

Grass Roots Effort



Kate Caiazza and Alec Madoff

McKissick Museum is part of a "Grass Roots" effort—an exhibit that opened at the Gibbes Museum of Art on Aug. 29, 2008. The exhibit *Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art* focuses upon the coiled basket tradition in both Africa and North America. McKissick Museum has partnered with the Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture at the College of Charleston and the Museum for African Art in New York on this project. *Grass Roots* is curated by Dale Rosengarten

from the College of Charleston and Enid Schildkrout from the Museum for African Art in New York. Exhibit staff worked with McKissick's Jill Koverman to prepare 30 baskets from the museum's collections for exhibition and travel. The exhibit will travel across the country and come to McKissick Museum in 2010.

McKissick in New York

It has been an exciting year for McKissick's traveling exhibitions. This spring, we were fortunate to have the Tom Feelings exhibition *The Middle Passage: White Ships/Black Cargo* on display at the United Nations in New York City. This marks the first time that one of our exhibitions has been on display at such an institution.

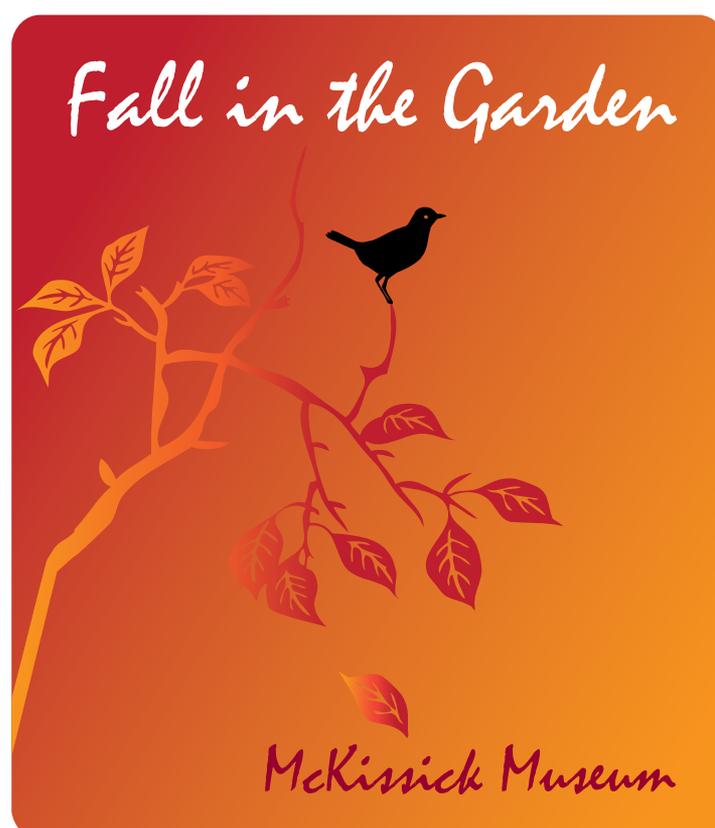
In other news, McKissick has finished a new traveling exhibitions catalog that will be sent to museums across the country later this year, providing detailed information on each of our traveling exhibitions. Included in this catalog is our newest traveling exhibition, *Barbecue Joints and the Good Folks Who Own Them*.

Fall in the Garden

McKissick Museum invites you to explore the wonder of nature at **Fall in the Garden**, a fund-raiser and reception. Located in the gardens of the Spring Valley home of Steven Ford and Alonso Cuellar, Fall in the Garden will be held on Friday, Oct. 10, 2008, from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. USC professor, naturalist, and McKissick Advisory Council member Dr. Rudy Mancke will present information sessions during the evening. He will discuss the nature found in and around this lovely Columbia garden. This garden features a variety of “rooms” and is enchanting at night.

After touring the garden, you can view and purchase art from Virginia Scotchie at the garden as well as enjoy seasonal food and drink. Fall in the Garden promises to be educational and entertaining. McKissick Museum’s Advisory Council hosts two galas each year to raise funds to support acquisitions and public programs. What better way of telling the story of community, culture, and the environment than a fall garden walk?

Tickets for Fall in the Garden are \$50 per person and must be purchased in advance. Please call 803-777-7251 to purchase tickets, or stop by the museum today!



IMPORTANT POTTERY DONATION



McKissick Lobby display featuring newly acquired pottery

A large collection of pottery from the J.B. Cole Pottery in Seagrove, N.C., was recently donated to the museum by Jean Kanes. The significance of the donation, a full dinnerware service for eight made by Nell Cole Graves, is more important than the sum of the individual pieces.

This gift significantly enhances the traditional ceramics collection in many ways. For the first time McKissick has a complete dinnerware set from a Southern pottery. In addition, it increases the number of works from the long-standing J.B. Cole Pottery, and specifically those made by Nell Cole Graves. The works also nicely complement others made at the A.R. Cole Pottery and by other members of the Cole family.

This was the prized “fine china”—not Wedgwood—which Kanes used for more than forty years. Jean started the set in 1961 when she purchased the plates, tumblers, bowls, and mugs at the North Carolina pottery. She wanted to set her table with hand-crafted pottery, and Seagrove wasn’t a far drive from her home in Chapel Hill. Visiting the potteries, often with her children, Jean got to know the potters,

including Nell, who she describes as “an elegant lady, even with her hands covered in clay.” Deep friendships grew out of these experiences.

The matte white glaze Graves used occasionally allows the local clay to show through at the rim and was unique to the J.B. Cole Pottery. Today, Linda Shelton Potts, niece of Nell Cole Graves, continues to turn the familiar forms made at Potts Pottery. She has a similar white glaze that is purposefully distinguished from the original by its high gloss. Her work is now the Kanes’ “good china.”

Jean has passed her love of traditional Southern pottery along to her children. Her son received dinnerware made by Ben Owen III from her at his wedding. Her daughter also uses N.C. handmade pottery in her home. Today more than 100 potters operate within a 10-mile radius of Seagrove and the old Cole pottery, a testament to the continuing appreciation of handmade craft in our high-tech world. A selection of pieces from the Kanes donation is currently on view at the museum with other recent pottery acquisitions.

New Academic Initiative Begins



Lana Burgess

In August McKissick welcomed a new staff member. **Lana Burgess** joined the curatorial staff as head of the museum's new College of Arts and Sciences faculty initiative. Designed to enhance faculty use of a full range of McKissick resources for their classes, this program will emphasize getting students engaged in learning about the history, culture, and traditions of the South through museum-based research and presentation projects. Coupled with this expansion of McKissick's role as a University learning laboratory will be a new focus on expanding the Museum Management Program.

Burgess comes to McKissick with a strong academic and curatorial background. She has just completed her Ph.D. in Art History at Florida State University, where she also coordinated their museum studies program. Previously she served as a senior curator at the Montgomery Museum of Art in Alabama. No stranger to Columbia and the University, she received her master's degree in art history at USC in 1994.

Events

Join us for refreshments and special tours of the exhibit *Carrying the State: Presidential Politics in South Carolina* on Friday, Sept. 26, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Don't miss **Fall in the Garden**, a museum fund-raiser in the Spring Valley garden of Steven Ford and Alonso Cuellar, October 10 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$50, and reservations are required. Call 803-777-7251 for more information.

Exhibitions

Natural Curiosity: *USC and the Evolution of Scientific Inquiry into the Natural World*
Ongoing

This Far by Faith:
Carolina Camp Meetings, An African-American Tradition
Aug. 9, 2008–March 14, 2009

Carrying the State:
Presidential Politics in South Carolina
Aug. 23, 2008–Jan. 24, 2009

The Life and Times of Congressman Robert Smalls
Feb. 7–April 4, 2009

Spring for Art!
McKissick Museum Annual Fund-raiser Exhibition
March 27–May 9, 2009

By the Sea ... The Beautiful Sea
May 23–Aug. 15, 2009

USC Asian Arts Festival:
Works by Hsiu-Hsia (Rose) Chiu
April 18–Aug. 1, 2009



College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208

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Telling the Story of Southern Life ... Community, Culture, and the Environment



The McKissick Museum is located at the head of the University of South Carolina's historic Horseshoe in the heart of campus. All exhibitions are free and open to the public.

Gallery hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The museum is open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays. McKissick is closed on Sundays. Metered parking is available on all adjacent streets and in the lower level of Pendleton Street Garage.

A number of volunteer opportunities are available at the McKissick Museum. Call 803-777-7251 for information on membership, tours, programs, and exhibits. Visit us on the Internet at www.cas.sc.edu/mcks.

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