

Fall 2006

## Under the Dome - Fall 2006

McKissick Museum--University of South Carolina

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# UNDER *the* DOME

*Telling the Story of Southern Life*

McKISSICK MUSEUM NEWSLETTER • Fall 2006

## Talking with the Turners

More than 25 years ago, USC art department professor Randy Mack struck out across the South to pursue one of his scholarly passions — Southern traditional pottery. Mack traveled through both of the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Kentucky. Over 200 pieces of pottery later, he returned to South Carolina in a hard-pressed Volkswagen Rabbit. In addition to the pottery, Mack collected more than twenty hours of audio recordings and took several hundred black-and-white photographs and color slides. His journey is chronicled in the recently published book, *Talking with the Turners: Conversations with Southern Folk Potters* (2006, USC Press). Building upon this publication, the museum presents his research in this comprehensive exhibit featuring audio, images, and objects. The exhibit opens August 5 and will run through January 6, 2007.

A two-phase project, the “Talking with the Turners” exhibit will first present Southern traditional pottery in the context of Mack’s original research. What was happening in the late 1970s to the traditional pottery landscape? How did individual potters react to changes on a local level? Traditions were affected by social and economic changes, as well as shifts in individual artistic sensibilities. In addressing these questions, the exhibit will combine a large selection

of the pottery collected by Mack with several hours of intimate audio recordings and extensive photography.

Second, new field documentation beginning in 2006 will survey traditional potters currently working in South Carolina. What connection do they have to the pottery documented a quarter-century earlier? How have they adapted to continual change in the socio-economic environment and what, if any, expressive forms have remained a strong part of their repertoire?

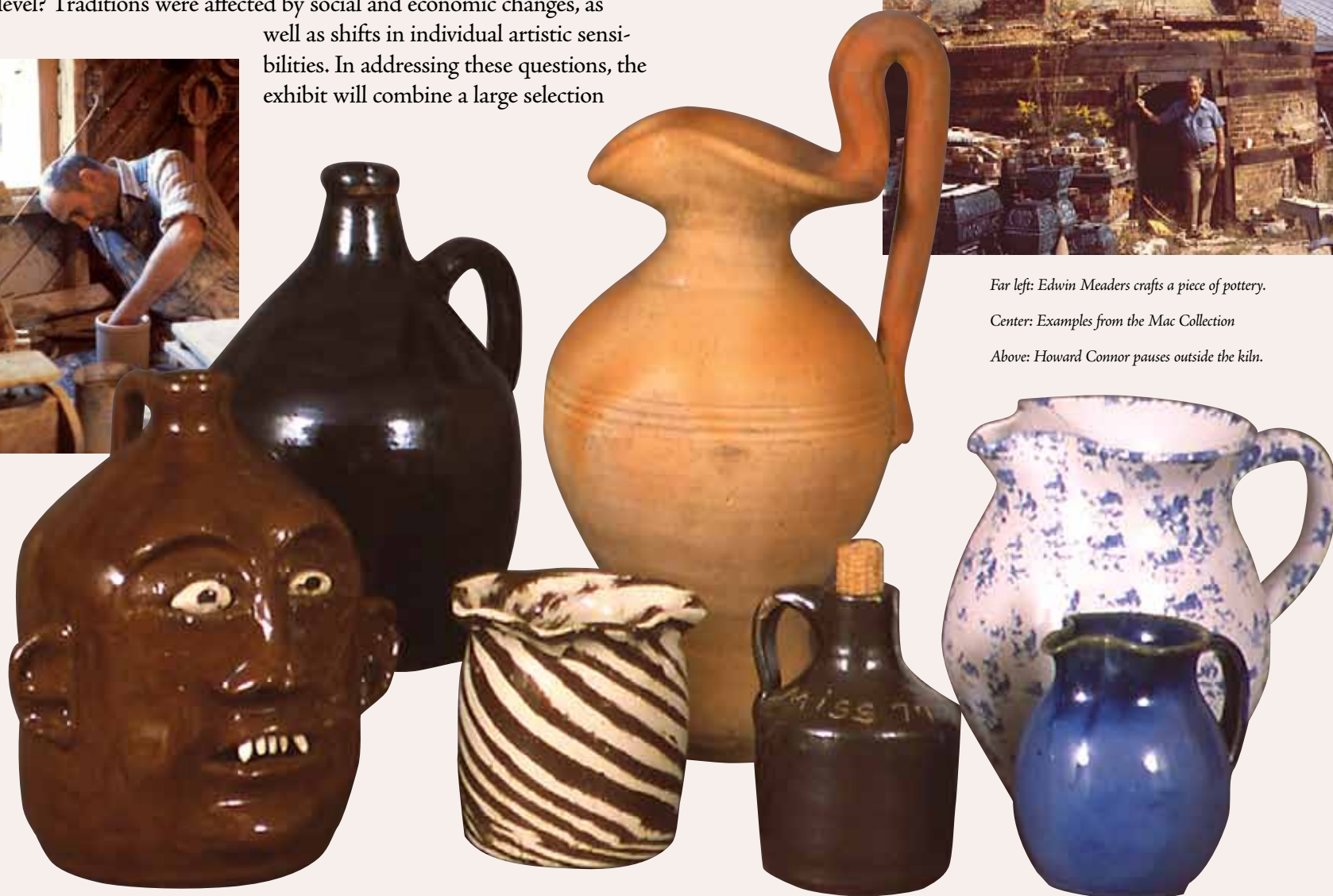
This field documentation will include 35mm and digital photography, audio interviews, and extensive digital video footage. A special emphasis will be placed on video documentation—a medium that is particularly lacking in the public record. All materials collected will be housed in the Folklife Resource Center and will eventually supplement the Digital Traditions online resource.



*Far left: Edwin Meaders crafts a piece of pottery.*

*Center: Examples from the Mac Collection*

*Above: Howard Connor pauses outside the kiln.*



# The Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Awards

On May 3, McKissick Museum and the South Carolina Arts Commission proudly hosted the 2006 Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Awards. Established by the General Assembly in 1987, the awards recognize outstanding practitioners of the traditional arts in South Carolina.



Mac Arnold

## MAC ARNOLD, Blues Music

One of 13 children born and raised on a sharecroppers' farm in Pelzer, Arnold fell in love with blues music and moved to Chicago in 1966. Performing and recording with many of the greatest blues musicians of his time, Arnold was able to fully merge his Piedmont roots with the national blues scene. He provides one of the last links between South Carolina and the early Chicago blues scene.

## LENA ALLEN DAVIS, Shape-Note Music

Davis has been tireless in her efforts to maintain the rich shape-note tradition in South Carolina. Since 1997 she has devoted herself to organizing, teaching, managing, and promoting the Community Workshop Choir in Anderson County. Davis brings the tradition to both the religious and arts communities and is always eager to teach anyone interested in the music.



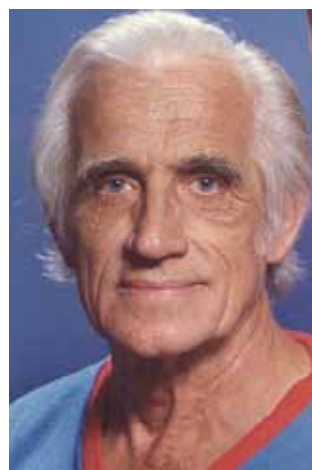
T.C. Foster

## T.C. FOSTER, Old Time Fiddle

Foster learned the ways of the fiddle at a very young age, listening to his father play on the front porch for hours on end. Foster loves to perform "how Pa would play it." His short bow style mirrors techniques of many other Piedmont fiddlers at the turn of the twentieth century. Foster has long influenced the sounds of the fiddle music in South Carolina and remains one of the last "old time" fiddlers.

**GUY AND TINA FAULK, Bluegrass Music Advocacy** For more than 25 years, the Faulks' Bluegrass Pickin' Parlor in rural Berkeley County has offered a Saturday night venue for those who enjoy listening, learning, and performing bluegrass music with traditional instruments. Whether at the outdoor jam sessions or the bluegrass stage performances, the community relationships built is as important as the music.

# A Sad Farewell



Gordon Brown

In January McKissick's staff said goodbye to a longtime friend and colleague. Gordon Brown, who served as the Museum's photographer for over 15 years, died on January 29. Gordon was a master with a 35 mm SRL, as well as the large format camera he used to capture the intricacies of museum objects for publications. His work appeared in numerous McKissick publications and national magazines including *Antiques* and *American Art*. Old fashioned and meticulous about his work, he insisted on developing all of his own black-

and-white work. He also looked forward to each semester and the prospect of teaching a new graduate student the art of good object photography. There are now museum directors, curators, and collections managers all over the United States who learned how to get the most out of a camera from Gordon.

In addition to being a master of his medium, Gordon also excelled at being a colleague and comrade around the office. A former wildlife officer, he advocated for a stronger emphasis on nature in both the art and science presentations. A voracious reader, he would leave photocopied passages from favorite books in staff mailboxes.

Gordon worked at the South Carolina Department of Wildlife and then transferred to the South Carolina Institute for Archaeology and Anthropology where he worked for 18 years before coming to McKissick. He is survived by his daughter, Shelley Williams, and a son, Matthew Brown. He is remembered by all of us who knew him.

# Telling Our Story: 30th Anniversary of McKissick Museum

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the creation of McKissick Museum. To celebrate, McKissick is hosting an exhibition from September 2 to December 9, charting the accomplishments of the institution. The museum was established in 1976 by President William Patterson, on the recommendation of a panel of University faculty and senior administrators, and charged with not only preserving the diverse and valuable collections at the University but also serving as a community resource. Over these many years it has grown to be one of the most recognized general university museums in the Southeast. Its reputation for excellence in the area of regional folklife and material culture studies is known nationally.

The exhibition will highlight additions to the object and archival collections, important research projects, past exhibitions, teaching, and public service. It will look at how the museum evolved into an important center for the study and collecting of traditional Southern culture and everyday life. From exhibits on face jugs to films on stew making and CDs of Afro-American music, McKissick has branched out to record and interpret the many facets of Southern traditions and our contemporary take on them. This exhibition will offer up a sampling of the very best of the past. Plan to attend and relive your favorite exhibit, festival, or workshop.



Elizabeth O'Neill Verner's "The Giant Oak, Middleton Place" hangs in the USC President's House.

## Verner Added to Collections

McKissick Museum has received the donation of a major work by noted South Carolina artist Elizabeth O'Neill Verner. Ora Lee Dantzler donated "A View of the Charleston Skyline from Mt. Pleasant," a pastel on panel created by the artist in 1964. The work was purchased directly from the artist that year by Mrs. Dantzler and her late husband, Marion Dantzler, who served as director of purchasing at the University for many years. Verner selected the work personally for the Dantzlors, and it was presented to the University in his honor.

The painting is a wonderful complement to Verner's "The Giant Oak, Middleton Place," which the museum purchased in 1991. Verner (1883–1979) was a prolific artist, teacher, writer, and preservationist. She attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts between 1903 and 1906. She was one of the founding members of the Charleston

Society of Etchers, along with Alice Ravenel Huger Smith and Alfred Hutty. After the death of her husband in 1925, Verner used her talents as an artist and teacher to support her family. The subject matter for the majority of her work is drawn from the people and architecture of Charleston and the surrounding low country. She worked primarily with prints and pastels.

This work illustrates Verner's mature style and deft manipulation of the pastel medium. It is likely that she sketched this view from a section of Mount Pleasant that is now called Old Towne, just over Shem Creek along the Cooper River. "A View of the Charleston Skyline from Mt. Pleasant" hangs in the President's House on campus, where Dr. and Mrs. Sorensen and many visitors to the University enjoy the work.

## An Enthusiastic Welcome

McKissick welcomes Jill Koverman as the new curator of collections. She replaces Karen Swager, who left the museum in summer 2005 for the North Carolina mountains. Jill came to the museum from The Historic Charleston Foundation where she supervised the collections. No stranger to McKissick, she served as head of educational services before going to Charleston. Knowledgeable about Southern crafts and especially pottery, Jill was the project director on the exhibit and research project "I Made this Jar: The Life and Works of the Enslaved African American Potter, Dave." It was through her pioneering research that life dates and a surname were ascertained for this famous craftsman. She also organized a popular exhibition of Southern face wares for McKissick. Her expertise in regional arts and crafts as well as her leadership role in state museum organizations will be a substantial asset for McKissick.

## Fool For Art!



On March 31, more than 150 guests attended the museum's annual fundraiser. The revelers gathered to celebrate the museum, and enjoy and purchase art to benefit the collections and programming activities. This was one of the most successful fundraising events to date. Many thanks to all who participated—our sponsors, artists, those who bought art, and especially to the Special Events Committee chaired by Steven Ford, who transformed the second floor into a section of the Vieux Carre. Information on the upcoming 2007 event will be out at the end of this year.

# Leaving Our Mark: The Impact of Student Life at the University of South Carolina



McKissick Library, mid-20th century

Since 1805, when the South Carolina College held its first classes, students have played a vital role in the development of campus life. During this time, students have been instrumental in the growth of religious life, student government, sports, and Greek organizations. From August through December 2006, visitors will be able to view the work of sixteen graduate students in the Museum Management Program who organized this exhibition dedicated to the diversity and history of student life at the University of South Carolina.

## Exhibitions

*The Essence of Nature: The Art of Harry Hansen*  
Through July 22

*Strength in Reserve: Armed Forces Radio in South Carolina*  
June 20—July 29

*The 521 All-Stars, A Championship Story of Baseball and Community*  
Through August 12

*Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Awards*  
Through August 26

*Talking with the Turners: Southern Traditional Pottery*  
August 5—January 6, 2007

*Leaving Our Mark: The Impact of Student Life at USC*  
August 19 —December 9

*Telling Our Story: 30 years at McKissick Museum*  
September 2—December 9

*Baruch Silver Gallery*  
Permanent display, First Floor

*Gem and Mineral Library*  
Permanent display, Second Floor



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 11a.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](http://www.cas.sc.edu/mcks).

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