

Fall 2004

Under the Dome - Fall 2004

McKissick Museum--University of South Carolina

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UNDER *the* DOME

McKISSICK MUSEUM NEWSLETTER • Fall 2004



Rev. De Laine
at the pulpit
Clarendon County, SC
Photograph, 1940s
Courtesy of the
De Laine Family



Summerton Graded
(white elementary school)
Summerton, SC
Photograph, 1940s
Courtesy of South Carolina
State Archives



Plaintiffs who filed a law
suit to end segregated
schools, Clarendon County,
S.C., 1949

Courage

In the years following the Second World War Clarendon County, South Carolina seemed the last place for a major movement toward American civil rights to begin. Most of the African American citizens were sharecroppers working land owned by others. They were without education, influence, or money. It was here, however, that the stand against “separate but equal” education and the inequities it fostered began. The courage of these people eventually led to the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*.

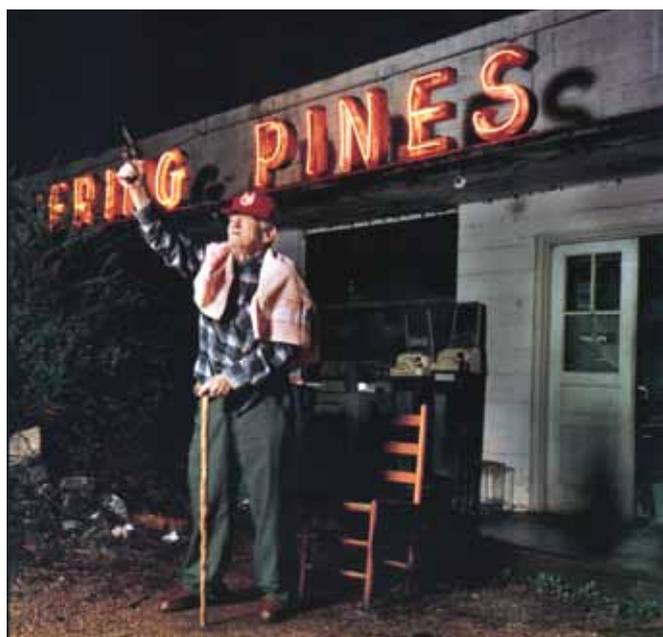
McKissick Museum will focus on South Carolina’s connection to this significant event with an exhibition that is scheduled to open on September 5 and run until the end of February 2005. “Courage: The Carolina Story that Changed America” will tell the story of Reverend Joseph A. De Laine, who led the fight against segregated schools in Clarendon County. His efforts in the 1950s spearheaded the first legal case to be filed, *Briggs v. Elliot*. The Levine Museum of the New South in Charlotte organized the exhibition, which is on view there until August. It features objects from the De Laine family and a large

number of photos and other documents from the period. “I am happy that we were able to partner with the Levine and bring this important exhibit to campus,” said Museum Director Lynn Robertson. “It is a well crafted and powerful experience.”

The exhibition is designed to help visitors envision the physical conditions of the period as well as the social and legal restrictions. “I think it will be a great tool for teachers to get their students to see what they have today compared to what their parents or grandparents had growing up,” said Jason Shaiman, curator of temporary and traveling exhibitions.

The Institute for Southern Studies and the African American Studies Program will be presenting a series of programs in conjunction with the exhibition. These and other events are part of the yearlong commemoration of the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. the Board of Education* on the USC campus. Please call the museum for information on events or to schedule group tours.

Whispering Pines



Blume Triplett opened *Whispering Pines* in 1949, and lived in the old roadhouse after it closed to the public in the 1970s.



Whispering Pines became a sort of living museum, documenting the life and times of its owner, Blume Triplett.

McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina will showcase the photography of Birney Imes in the exhibit, “Whispering Pines,” May 2 - August 1, 2004.

Imes, best known for his images of Mississippi Delta juke joints, spent years documenting an old roadhouse, “Whispering Pines,” in Columbus, Mississippi.

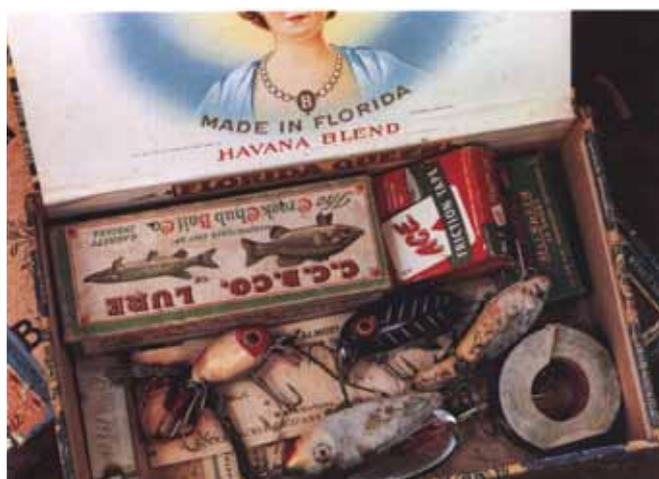
The photographs are taken from a book of the same name, which was published in 1994. The images form a visual essay about the life and history of the restaurant’s owner, Blume Triplett, in a combination of still-life arrangements of personal artifacts and shots of Triplett by himself or with friends and patrons.

McKissick Museum’s exhibit will feature approximately 50 of Imes’ photographs, which range in size from 17 x 21 inches to 35 x 40 inches.

The photography for “Whispering Pines” began in the mid 1970s when Imes was a young man and had just started his career. The exhibition has been called a “mystical vision” of vintage Southern life.

Imes is the editor for the *Columbus Dispatch* in Columbus, Mississippi. His work has inspired artists in other arenas. Singer-songwriter Lucinda Williams, an Imes fan, used one of his images for an album cover and wrote a song about one of the photographs from his book, *Juke Joints*.

For more information, contact McKissick Museum at 803-777-7251.



After Blume Triplett’s death, Birney Imes arranged objects from *Whispering Pines* in cigar boxes he found there, forming evocative still-life arrangements—which he then photographed beautifully.

From the Director



Dear Museum Friends,

The next months promise to be challenging ones for McKissick Museum. With the University Visitor Center joining us in the former McKissick Library building, the museum will be reorganizing its exhibition space. An exciting new development will be the move of the natural science gallery to the third floor to create a study and presentation center on southern environment. We have requested major funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Service (IMLS) to install a state-of-the-art examination of our regional landscape and the interdependence of man and land. This new research and programming impetus will nicely compliment our focus on regional folk life and material culture.

Along with the reorganization of exhibition spaces, the McKissick Advisory Council has undertaken to improve and refurbish the second floor lobby as the central museum orientation area. There will be displays of objects from the permanent collection and information on the history and activities of the museum. Funding from the IMLS also supports the creation of this area to better explain the mission of the museum and enhance visitation.

Though the completion of both of these projects is months away, we have a full schedule of summer and fall exhibitions. Come see us on USC’s Horseshoe to enjoy these offerings!

Lynn Robertson
Executive Director
McKissick Museum

Brothers On A Journey

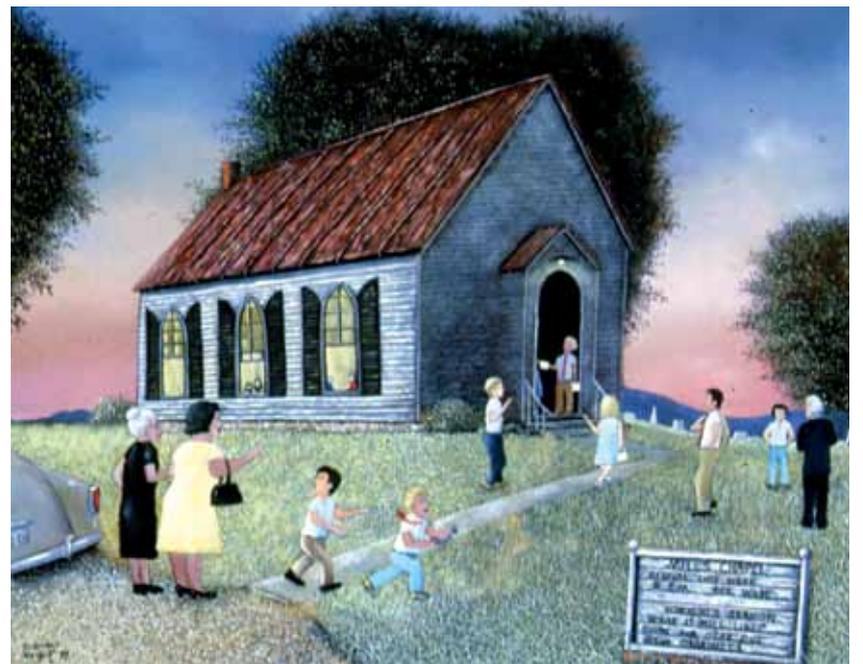
Paintings by Eldridge Bagley and William Clarke

Eldridge Bagley and William Clarke grew up in neighboring rural counties in south-central Virginia. In middle age they discovered each other and their shared membership in an artistic brotherhood that exists beyond race, blood kinship, and time. They have journeyed beyond youth and through much of midlife on a common creative venture. Only in the 1990s did their parallel paths cross, when they encountered each other's art through a shared friendship with collector Julia J. Norrell. Deeply rooted to the land and the communities of their parents and grandparents, Bagley and Clarke continue to live in the places where they were born.

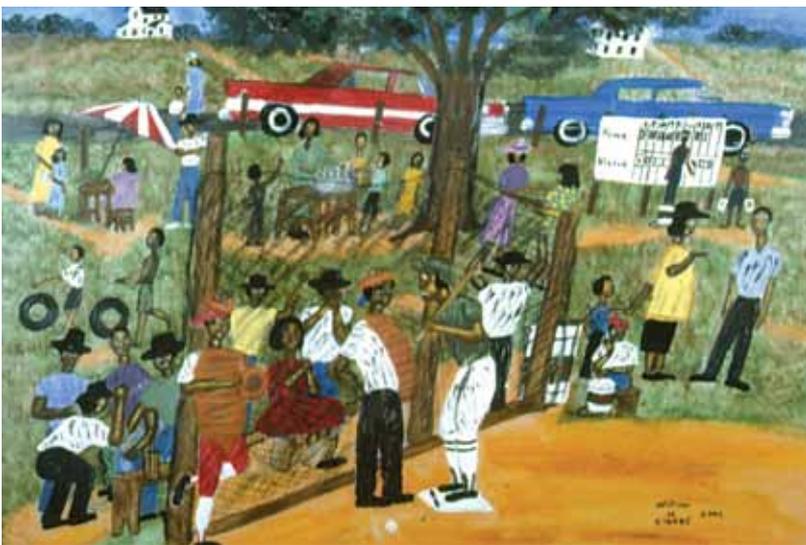
As these artists journeyed through more than five decades, their part of the South, the rhythms and pace of rural life, has been subtly transformed. Eldridge Bagley recalls that in his youth farming was the dominant way of making a living. Clarke agrees: "We took tobacco for granted. Now there's not a tobacco warehouse in Blackstone." When Clarke and Bagley depict farmers and other workers in their paintings, they are depicting a lifestyle they lived. Through their art, we share thoughts and feelings about the human family enduring through time, and a deep sense of continuity between the past and present.



Eldridge Bagley, *May Bounty* 1999, collection of McKissick Museum, gift of Ralph E. Martin



William Clarke, *Baseball Game* 2000, collection of Julia J. Norrell.



Eldridge Bagley, *Revival* 1979, collection of McKissick Museum, gift of Ralph E. Martin.

Folk Heritage Awards

McKissick Museum and the South Carolina Arts Commission hosted the 2004 Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Awards held at the State House on Wednesday, April 21, and followed by a reception at the museum. The award, established by the legislature in 1987, recognizes outstanding practitioners of traditional arts in South Carolina. The event also gave the public a last opportunity to see the museum's exhibit, "Considerable Grace: Fifteen Years of the Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Awards."

The recipients of the 2004 Folk Heritage Award are Ted Brackett, Willie Dereef, Evelyn George, Gale McKinley, and Dr. Larry Klein.

Ted Brackett, master fiddler, was born in 1915. His father played an old time claw hammer banjo and Ted's uncle played fiddle. By the time he was 12 years old, he and his brothers were playing at house parties and barn dances all over the Upstate. Ted and his younger brother, Leonard, played regularly until the early 1990s.

Willie Dereef, master boat builder, was born on Pawley's Island in the early 1920s. As a young child, he learned traditional boat-building skills from his uncle. Today he is the last known boat builder in Georgetown County and is committed to passing this craft to younger generations.

Evelyn George, born in 1914, learned the tradition of Catawba pottery from an elder. Since then Ms. George has not only earned the status of master potter from her peers at the Catawba Nation, but works with all aspects of cultural life on the Catawba Indian Reservation.

Gale McKinley is a fourth generation split-oak basket maker. Split-oak baskets were once essential tools in everyday life for the majority of South Carolina families. Today, there are very few individuals practicing this tradition. However, Gale has taught her son the tradition and states that he "has basket making in his blood."

Larry Klein, advocate for bluegrass music, has been host of the S.C. Educational Radio program "The Bluegrass Sound" since 1989. His dedication to music is evident to all who know him. The late bluegrass legend Pappy Sherrill once said, "He is a walking encyclopedia on who's who in bluegrass and old time country music. I know of no one who can come close to his knowledge of this traditional South Carolina music."

Exhibitions

Whispering Pines: Photographs by Birney Imes
Through August 1, 2004

Southern Graphics Council Exhibition
Through July 25, 2004

Bagley/Clark
August 15, 2004 through January 2005

"Courage: The Carolina Story that Changed America"
September 5, 2004 through February 2005

Activities

Eldridge Bagley and William Clark Reception
September 16, 2004—5:30 to 7 p. m.
Free and open to the public.

*Traditional Craft Workshop Series:
Native American Beadwork*
September 11 & 18, 2004—1 to 5 p. m. (two-day workshop)
Pre-registration and fee charged. Call 803-777-7251 for more information or to register by phone.

Traditional Craft Workshop Series

Native American Beadwork with Will Goins

A two-day workshop designed for beginners, this class will address the historical, cultural and economic importance of beadwork and design in Native American culture. After making their own bead loom, participants will learn several stitching patterns. Although this type of beadwork is intricate and time-consuming, all workshop attendees should be able to finish a bracelet.

Will Goins is a master craftsman whose beadwork is inspired by ancient traditions characteristic of the Southern Iroquois people and reflects the rich flora of their world—flowers, berries, wild greens, forests, and especially the sacred pine tree. Traditionally, beadwork was a way of celebrating the Creator, conveying tribal identity, recording history, and expressing sacred agreements.

Dr. Goins demonstrates at numerous universities and schools throughout the southeast to promote his Cherokee heritage and culture as well as Native American history. He credits his skills to his aunt, Corrie Sisney, a master beadworker (1893–1987) who imparted her skills to three generations of tribal members.

This workshop is funded through the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Classes will be held on September 11 and 18 from 1–5 p. m. The fee of \$85 includes individual instruction, all materials, refreshments, the creation of the bead loom and completed project. Class size is limited to 12. The deadline for registration is September 3.

Please call the Curator of Educational Services, Alice Bouknight, at 803-777-7251 for more information or to register by phone.



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University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208

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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. Tuesday through Friday. The museum is open from 11am to 3pm on Saturdays. McKissick is closed on Mondays and Saturdays. 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.cla.sc.edu/mcks/index.html.

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