

# South Caroliniana Library Report of Acquisitions

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## Photographs, 1955-1958, Taken by Francis Marion Kirk

South Caroliniana Library

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**One hundred fourteen photographs and negatives**, circa 1955–1958 and undated, of family places and events and schools in South Carolina, were taken by Francis Marion Kirk (1905–1972.) Kirk worked for the South Carolina Department of Education during the pivotal period of the 1950s and 1960s leading up to desegregation of the public schools and oversaw African American schools. The photographs of schools may have been taken for the State Educational Finance Commission, to help facilitate its mission to physically improve segregated facilities. The Commission was founded in 1951 in response to the *Briggs v. Elliott* case (1950–1952). The Equalization School Program administered by the Commission approached school facilities with a “separate but equal” vision. New African American schools were constructed using modern school design, materials, and architecture. Most of the program’s construction and renovation projects for segregated schools designated for African American citizens of the state were completed by 1959, and a few white schools were constructed in the 1960s. The Commission was absorbed by the Department of Education in 1966.

The photographs are snapshots and include the following schools: Battery Park, Bethlehem, Black River, Bloomingvale, Birch Creek, Cades (white and colored), Cane Branch, Cane Branch (Sandy Bay Road), Cedar Swamp, Central, Cypress Drain, Dorsey Town, Earles, Hewitt Branch, Jerusalem, King, Kingstree Elementary, Kingstree High, Lane, Lane (colored), Macedonia, Marion, Muddy Creek, Oak Grove, Piney Grove, Retreat, Roper, Snow Hill, Spring Grove, St. James, St. John’s, St. Lawrence, St. Mark’s, St. Mark’s (Bartells,) St. Mary, St. Paul, Warsaw, and Wee Tee.

Francis Marion Kirk was the son of Harriet Marion Mitchell (1867–1957) and Richard Singleton Kirk, M.D. (1866–1928) of Berkeley County. He was married to Videau Beckwith (1904–1987), and they had two children, Videau Marion Kirk (1936–2020) and Francis Marion Kirk, Jr. (1938–2022). The family photographs include houses, children, and dogs. Of note are photographs of Fairey House, possibly in Murrells Inlet. **Gift of ViVi Kirk Simons.**



Top : Cedar Swamp, 1955; Dorsey Town, 1955



Bottom: Snow Hill, 1955; Kingstree Elementary, 1956