

The
CHARLOTTE MUSEUM
of HISTORY



WHERE HISTORY HAS A HOME

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African-American camp meetings focus of upcoming Charlotte Museum of History exhibit

A new photography exhibit detailing the cultural history of African-American camp meetings in the Carolinas will open July 24 at the Charlotte Museum of History.

The exhibit, *This Far by Faith: Carolina Camp Meetings, an African-American Tradition*, boasts more than 40 large black-and-white photographs by Dr. Minuette Floyd, an associate professor of art at the university, and is accompanied by text panels and video footage of camp meetings held in seven locations in the Carolinas.

This Far by Faith is a nationally traveling exhibition, organized by McKissick Museum, The University of South Carolina. It will remain on display through October 3, 2010.

Floyd says the weeklong African-American camp meetings, held annually from the mid-1800s to the present in designated campgrounds during harvest time (July through October), play an important role in maintaining a sense of cultural history and community identity and in strengthening family relationships.

“People travel many miles to the camps each year so that they can renew friendships and see family members and friends they haven’t seen in a long time. Sometimes, there will be four or five generations of family members present,” Floyd said. The camp meeting is an important part of the historical, cultural, social, and religious heritage of African Americans. I especially want children to understand that importance because they will be the future campground leaders.”

Floyd’s photos range in size from 11-by-14 inches to 16-by-20 inches and capture different aspects of the camp meeting, including the tents, structure and arbor; the food, games and activities; the preaching and music; and the gathering and reminiscing of people.

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Her camp photography was funded by grants from the National Endowment of the Arts and the South Carolina Arts Commission.

A grant by the South Carolina Humanities Council enabled McKissick staff to document camp meetings in South Carolina over the course of several years and to create the exhibit.

“McKissick has been working for several years with Floyd and other artists and scholars to document the unique setting of South Carolina camp meetings. With support from the South Carolina Humanities Council we were able to produce a film by Stan Woodward on five Lowcountry sites,” said Saddler Taylor, chief curator of folklife and research. “What is so remarkable about Floyd’s work is that it not only captures the traditions of these religious settings, but also relates them to a vibrant contemporary observance.”

Southerners, black and white, in the antebellum South would travel great distances to attend religious gatherings held at campgrounds and led by “circuit” preachers.

The Charlotte Museum of History is supported in part with a Basic Operating Grant from the Arts & Science Council, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Inc.

More

The Charlotte Museum of History is located at 3500 Shamrock Drive in Charlotte

Admission range \$3-\$6 general, members free

Hours: Tues-Sat 10-5, Sun 1-5 (*Closed Mondays*)

For more information please call (704) 568-1774, or visit our website at www.charlottemuseum.org