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SOUTH CAROLINA  
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Winter 1978 [v.4 no.1]



The Watery  
Dig

# The Watery Dig

## AMOCO project reaps fossil bonanza

Tens of thousands of years ago, fantastic animals roamed the coastal plain of South Carolina — great elephant-like beasts such as the mammoth, ten feet tall at the shoulder, and the somewhat smaller mastodon; ponderous ground sloths, beavers the size of present-day bears, herds of camels, horses, bison, and tapir. Still farther back in time the same coastal plain was ocean bottom, and in the waters above swam enormous whales and monstrous sharks reaching seventy feet in length. That teeming world with its terrifying denizens has now vanished, but its remains still lie in the rocks beneath our feet and below the waters of our rivers.

Those remains, the fossilized bones and teeth of ancient life forms, are keys to the door of the past, allowing us a glimpse of distant times. They are, therefore, an important part of our heritage. To salvage fossils from a rich area threatened with destruction, the Museum Commission, in cooperation with the Amoco Chemical Corporation and the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, recently sponsored an underwater recovery project in the Cooper River (Berkeley County).

Amoco Chemical planned to dredge a portion of the river to build a docking facility for its new plant now under construction. The area in question had earlier been surveyed by the Institute, which reported that it contained important deposits of fossils. When this fact came to the attention of Amoco, the company generously offered to fund a four-week project to save as much as possible from the endangered area.

Without Amoco's interest and financial

backing, the project could never have been attempted.

Specialized equipment and personnel were essential. A navy-surplus barge, borrowed from the Department of Wildlife and Marine Resources, served as the base of operations. Ralph Wilbanks of the IAA, an accomplished river diver, coordinated the dive team, consisting of hobby divers Susan Bridges, Kurt Grossman, Hugh Vonderkeith, James Reed, Jr., and Wesley Hall, and surface personnel Stephen Howard and Warren Allmon.

Conditions in the river challenged even experienced divers. Strong currents posed a continual problem, and at the thirty to forty-five foot depths at which the divers worked, visibility at the best of times rarely exceeded one foot. Grasping a powerful flashlight, a diver would grope along the sandy bottom until his fingers encountered something promising. All the fossils were brought to the surface by hand.

Despite the trying conditions, the harvest was astounding. Over two tons of fossils — almost 20,000 pieces in all — were recovered. Although much of the material consisted of unidentifiable fragments, there was a large number of impressive specimens. The most outstanding was the right half of the lower jaw of a mastodon with two teeth still in place. When discovered it created a sensation on the barge. Almost as exciting were three large fragments of mammoth tusk, one of which measured twenty-two inches long and weighted thirty-five pounds. Numerous teeth, vertebrae, and long bones of both elephant-like species were discovered, as well as similar evidence of the ground sloth, horse, bison, beaver, white-tailed deer, tapir, and a number of smaller species. In addition, there were abundant remains of marine animals such as whale, shark (eight varieties), catfish, and ray. The fact that remains of land and marine creatures were found in the same place is clear evidence that the coastal plain of

South Carolina has been both dry land and ocean bottom at different periods in the

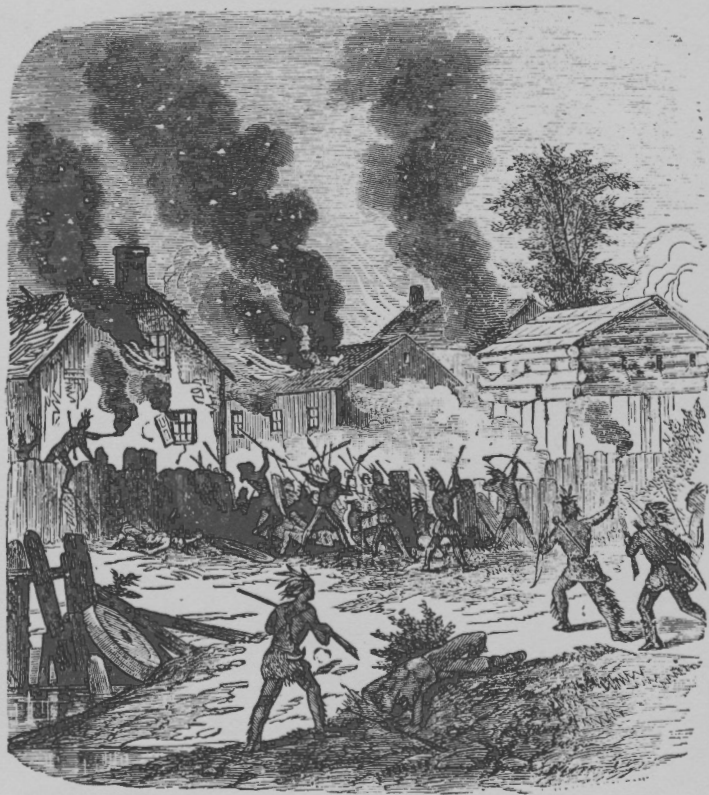


earth's history. The land animals probably date back 8,000 to 10,000 years, whereas most of the marine animals lived tens of millions of years ago.

The age of these fossils is, however, an educated guess, for they were found not in layers of rock, the different levels of which would give clues to their antiquity, but on the bottom of a river, which in the process of cutting through sedimentary deposits containing fossils mixed the remains and carried them to different locations.

The benefits of the Amoco project have been many: experience in the techniques of fossil salvage, increased knowledge of the richness of fossil deposits in the Cooper River, a large quantity of specimens with research value, and prime exhibit material for the state museum. The project also demonstrated that the state and the private sector can cooperate effectively to preserve elements of our heritage threatened by development. On this score a special note of recognition and thanks is due to Robert Kratsas, environmental supervisor for Amoco, whose enthusiastic cooperation and assistance overcame many difficulties.

## The Weberites



Cherokee raids in Saxe Gotha township and the Dutch Fork area terrified peaceful Swiss and German farmers about 1760. Frontier turbulence also had its impact on the Weberites, a heretical and bizarre religious sect. The leader, one Jacob Weber, was considered to be God; John George Smithpeter took the part of Jesus; and a Negro named Dauber filled in as the Holy Ghost. For several years the movement caused no trouble, but as Back Country society disintegrated under the impact of Indian attacks, the Weberites, crazed by fear, became homicidal. Reverend Christian Theus, a Presbyterian minister to the Swiss and Germans in Saxe Gotha, barely escaped with his life on the occasion of a visit to a Weberite meeting where the good divine gave some offense.

Eventually the Weberites turned to self-destruction. Dauber, the Holy Ghost, was the first to go, the members reporting "that he was neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm." He was thrown into a pit and suffocated under a cover of mattresses. Next, Smithpeter, the cult Jesus, was accused by Weber of being Satan in disguise. The group beat its fists upon Smithpeter until he fell, then trampled on his neck until he expired.

Colonial authorities in Charleston halted the mania by bringing Weber to the noose in April 1761. This remarkable episode in the history of our state is revealed in detail in Richard Maxwell Brown's *The South Carolina Regulators*.

## Leo Twiggs to exhibit

Dr. Leo F. Twiggs, professor of art at South Carolina State College and member of the South Carolina Museum Commission, has begun a series of exhibitions of his unique batik paintings which will culminate in a show at The Studio Museum in New York City, January 15 through March 1, 1978. The initial exhibition took place at the Winthrop Gallery of Art in October. Another, sponsored by the Anderson County Arts Council, will be at Anderson Junior College from February 1 through February 20. The New York showing will consist of thirty-five works spanning the period 1970-1977.

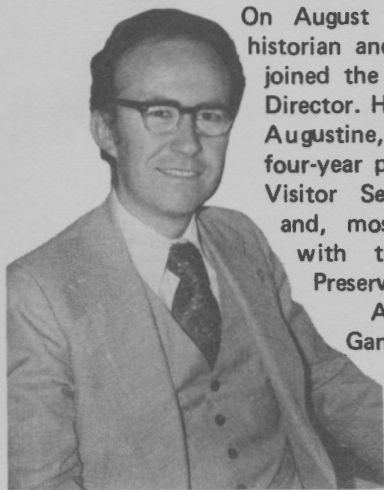
Dr. Twiggs, a native of South Carolina, took degrees from Claflin College and New York University before becoming the first Black student to receive a doctorate in art from the University of Georgia. In 1969 he was named an Outstanding Young Man of America for his work in teaching art to Black disadvantaged students. His batik paintings have been widely exhibited and have won numerous awards.

Batik is a process of dyeing designs on cloth. There are two basic methods. One, the less common, is to cover with wax the areas not to be dyed, to dip the fabric into the dye, and, after allowing it to dry, to remove the wax before applying another pattern. The other is to allow the wax to remain and to add subsequent layers between dippings. Either way it is a painstaking and time-consuming technique, and the result is usually a patterned wall-hanging.

Dr. Twiggs has developed his own method, unique in the control of the medium he achieves. By dipping only portions of the fabric at a time, he is able to restrict the "crackle effect" to certain parts of the surface, whereas in traditional batik the crackle effect covers the whole surface. He has also adapted batik to the painting process; some of the dyes he applies with sticks, bamboo brushes, and felt-tip markers. These adaptations allow him to produce images, which are then fastened to hardboard and framed.



## Deputy Director named



On August 5 Dr. Overton G. Ganong, historian and historic site administrator, joined the Commission staff as Deputy Director. He comes to Columbia from St. Augustine, Florida, where over a four-year period he held the positions of Visitor Services Supervisor, Historian, and, most recently, Acting Director with the Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board.

A native of Tennessee, Dr. Ganong has spent most of his life in the Sunshine State. He was graduated from the University of Tampa in 1965 and received the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in

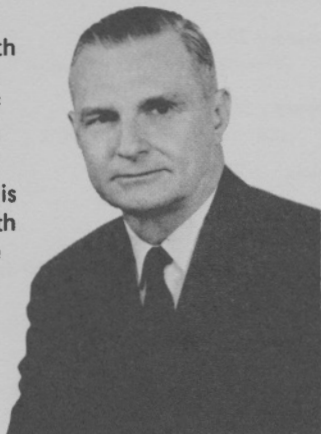
history from the University of Florida in 1966 and 1972 respectively. After three years as a graduate teaching assistant and interim assistant professor at Florida, he began his career in the field of history museum work. He has published in *El Escribano*, the journal of the St. Augustine Historical Society, and in the *Catholic Historical Review*. He has also presented papers at a number of professional meetings.

As deputy director Dr. Ganong will act as the principal liaison between the Commission and other state agencies and will be responsible for physical facilities, publications, and personnel. He will share responsibility for collection development, budget preparation and management, and planning.

Dr. Ganong is married and has two children. His outside interests include travel, nature study, baking, and music.

## New Commissioner appointed

The newest face on the South Carolina Museum Commission belongs to David B. Verner of Charleston. Born and reared in South Carolina's oldest city, Mr. Verner traveled up country for his degree at the University of South Carolina, then ventured into the frigid North to take a degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration.



All his life a banker, Mr. Verner worked for the Chemical Bank in New York City, the Federal Reserve Bank in Richmond, and the North Carolina National Bank before returning to his native city. At the time of his retirement on December 31, 1975, he was the senior officer in charge of the Charleston Office of South Carolina National Bank (SCN).

Mr. Verner is married to the former Elizabeth Neil of Columbia. They have two daughters, Mrs. Louis Y. Dawson III and Mrs. Edward M. Seabrook, both of Charleston.

We welcome Mr. Verner to the Commission and look forward to working with him on many exciting projects.

## Dugout canoe raised



A dugout canoe, left unfinished about 150 years ago, probably because a crack developed in its hull, was recently raised from a mudbank in the Waccamaw River by underwater archeologists from the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology. The recovery of the unusual vessel was partially funded by the South Carolina Museum Commission, and the craft has now become part of the Commission's ever-growing historical collection.

The canoe was discovered last fall projecting from an old rice field levee at the confluence of Outland Creek and the Waccamaw River. The owner of the property, Mrs. Carolyn S. Hunter of Marion, graciously gave permission to the IAA to salvage the vessel.

To remove the canoe proved a more difficult undertaking than originally expected. Not only was the craft still attached to its parent log, but the log still bore a formidable system of roots. Fortunately, there was plenty of able and willing help. The IAA team, consisting of Alan Albright, Ralph Wilbanks, and Newell Wright, was joined by hobby divers Jack Williamson, Jimmy Clarken, Charlie Whitaker, and Jim Reed. On one opportune day, our neighboring state of North Carolina sent aid in the persons of Gordon Watts, the state's underwater archeologist, and Richard Lawrence, his assistant.

The first step was to dig the fourteen-foot, ~~six-and-a-half-ton~~ mass out of the sticky mud. Here Bobby Dingle of Garden City lent a valuable helping hand — and boat. Once freed, the canoe was lashed to fourteen empty fifty-five-gallon oil drums and towed twelve miles down river to a dock near the Rice Museum in Georgetown, where a Papco Construction Company crane hoisted it out of the water.

A unique and valuable find, the canoe immediately presented a serious problem. Long-submerged organic materials deteriorate rapidly when removed from the water, and measures had to be taken at once to keep the dugout from drying out too fast. Since the Commission did not have the proper facilities to conserve it, the canoe was lent to the Rice Museum. Albright and Wilbanks designed and built a fiberglass-covered shed to shield it from the scorching sun, and Jim Fitch, director of the museum, arranged to have it regularly doused with water. These steps proved sufficient to minimize the checking of the wood.

Although early dugouts are by no means rare, it is quite uncommon to find one in an incomplete state. This unfinished canoe, abandoned by its builders, can teach us much about the techniques used in its construction and can help us draw in our minds a picture of transportation on Low Country rivers and creeks during the heyday of rice culture.

Someday the Waccamaw dugout will highlight an exhibit hall in the State museum. In the meantime, you can see this fascinating relic of a bygone age at the Rice Museum in Georgetown.

# Museum happenings around the state

Designed to keep readers in touch with museum activities statewide, the Museum Happenings column is a regular feature of our newsletter. In it we print information on special events, exhibits, and programs sent to us by museums and museum-related institutions in our state. All such institutions are invited to send information for possible inclusion in the newsletter. For the spring issue, to appear next March, we will need your schedules for April, May, and June by February 15.

## Historic Beaufort Foundation

Beaufort

March 16-18

Tours of Homes and Gardens. Visitors can select one or more tours of antebellum houses, gardens, and sites.

House and Garden Walking Tour, March 16, 2 p.m. (Tickets \$6.00)

Candlelight Walking Tour, March 17, 7 p.m. (Tickets \$6.00)

An Island Tour of Homes, March 18, 10 a.m. (Tickets \$7.00)

## Blue Ridge Numismatic Association Museum

Camden

February 1-

Exhibit of United States National Bank Notes

The BRNAM exhibits coins, medals, paper currency, and other items relating to the fiscal history of the South. Open Monday-Friday, 9 to 12 a.m., 1 to 5 p.m. Free admission.

## Broadcast Museum

Charleston

The story of communication "From Tom-Tom to Telstar." Antique radios and TV's, experiments and demonstrations to explain the discoveries and developments of broadcasting—past, present, and future. Located at 80 Alexander Street. Open 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Monday-Friday. Adults \$1, children 50¢. School tours free by special arrangement.

## Charles Towne Landing 1670

Charleston

December 26-30

Thirteenth Month. Special activities for children.

December-February

Winter Film Series. For copy of schedule write to the Landing at 1500 Old Town Road, Charleston 29407.

## Gibbes Art Gallery

Charleston

February 14-21

Gala reopening upon completion of 1.2 million dollar building program.

Week of festivities including concerts, films, lecture, and others is being planned for the opening.

February 14-March 26

Alice Ravenel Huger Smith Retrospective. An exhibition in honor of Miss Alice Ravenel Huger Smith from private and public collections. Watercolors, drawings, woodcuts, and art artifacts.

February 14-March 26

The Artist Collects. From the private collection of Jasper Johns. Works by deKooning, Twombly, Rauschenberg, Stella, Dine, Warhol, etc.

February 14-March 19

Selections from the Robert Marks Collection (Photographs)

February 14-April 16

Recent Acquisitions. A survey of recent print acquisitions from the Living Artists' Fund.

February 14-25

Scholastic Art Awards. Low Country students' award works.

March 14-April 9

Shadows. A series of figurative etchings by Jane Winer, Assistant Professor of Art, U.S.C.-Aiken.

## Historic Charleston Foundation

Charleston

March 16-April 10

Festival of Houses. Seven different walking tours of more than 80 private historic dwellings and gardens. For brochure write to the Foundation at 51 Meeting Street, Charleston 29401.

## Columbia Museum of Art

Columbia

December 11-January 29

The Private Collection of Jasper Johns (Inter-Museum Program).

January

Springs Mills Annual Juried Exhibit

February 5-March 19

Currier & Ives from the Esmark Collection

Sculpture Selections from the Hirshhorn Museum (Inter-Museum Program).

March 19-26

Wildlife Art/Photography Contest

March 26-April 23

29th Annual Juried AGC Spring Show

February-March

Museum Concert Series

February 26, 3 p.m. Soprano (Roberta Connolly)

March 12, 3 p.m. Mime (T. Daniel)

January-March

Special Evening Concerts with John Kenneth Adams

January 12, 8 p.m. Music of Chopin

February 9, 8 p.m. Music of Debussy

March 9, 8 p.m. Music of Stravinsky

## University of South Carolina Museums and Archives

McKissick Library

Columbia

January 23-March 3

Electron Microscope Exhibit

January 30-February 24

National Sculpture Exhibit

March 3-23

Lafaye/Teed Exhibit

March 6

Southeastern Pottery Exhibit

March 7-30

John D. Davis Ceramics

## Greenville County Museum of Art

Greenville

December 1-January 22

Hirshhorn Sculptures and Drawings. Sculptures and accompanying drawings by such masters as Auguste Rodin, Henry Moore, David Smith, Alexander Calder.

February 1-March 31

Andrew Wyeth in Southern Collections. Temperas and watercolors by the recognized patriarch of American art. Included are such major works as *Open and Closed*, *Under Cover*, *Bull Run*, and *Winter, 1946*. Reception: February 1, 7:30 p.m.

February 8-March 5

Springs Mills Traveling Exhibition: Southern Opening. Juried competition comprised of works in all media by artists from the Carolinas. Reception: February 8 at 7:30 p.m.

**Museum of York County**  
Rock Hill

January 6-29

Gallery Exhibition, Ben Reynders. Oils and acrylics by a Dutch-born artist living and teaching in the Rock Hill area.

February 4-26

Gallery Exhibition, Charlotte Handweaver's Guild. Includes traditionally woven pieces, contemporary, off-loom, on loom, knotted and wrapped wall hangings and structures as well as some mixed media fiber pieces.

March 4-26

Gallery Exhibition, Dina Mohle. Versatile and well-known S.C. artist and teacher whose work will include batik, egg tempera, oil, acrylic, and watercolor.

**Winthrop Gallery of Art**  
Rock Hill

Jan. 2-29

South Carolina State Art Collection (Gallery of Art).

Low Country Photographs (Intimate Gallery).

Feb. 1-28

South Carolina Architecture, 1670-1970 (Gallery of Art).

Susan Davis/Paintings and Drawings (Intimate Gallery).

**GIBBES ART GALLERY TO REOPEN**

The Gibbes Art Gallery in Charleston plans to reopen its doors to the public on February 14, 1978. The Gallery has been closed since July of 1977 due to an extensive construction and renovation program costing 1.2 million dollars. This program, which has been financed by private donors, the City of Charleston, and the County of Charleston, began in July of 1976. It encompasses an 18,000 square-foot new wing and the restoration of the old building to its original opulence.

The Gibbes Art Gallery is located at 135 Meeting Street and, after February 14, will be open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m. There is no admission charge but a standard contribution is requested from the public.

# MUSEUM NEWS

South Carolina  
Museum Commission  
P. O. Box 11296  
Columbia, S. C. 29211

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