



Lisa L. Higgins, Special Section Editor

With this *Journal of Folklore and Education* special issue on the intersections between folklore and museum education, a cadre of professional folklorists came together to provide insight into their unique programs and roles directing state folk arts and folklife programs within or in partnership with university-based museums. As demonstrated with the establishment of the Folklore and Museums Section of the American Folklore Society in 2014, folklorists quite often work in—or in tandem with—the nonprofit, government, and university museum sectors. In the following case studies, readers will learn about the history of five public folklore-university museum partnerships, some three decades old and others just a few years old. Lead folklorists at each institution also outline projects framed by museum education and address the challenges and opportunities that arise as we position and reposition ourselves and programs in the 21st century.



Traditional Arts Indiana at Indiana University's Mathers Museum

by Jon Kay

A partnership between Indiana University Bloomington (IUB) and the [Indiana Arts Commission \(IAC\)](#), [Traditional Arts Indiana \(TAI\)](#) is Indiana's statewide, public folklore agency focused specifically on the folk arts and everyday culture in Indiana. A well-established site for the training of folklore graduate students for successful careers in public folklore and related fields, TAI works to identify, document, and present Indiana's traditional arts through collaborations with Indiana artists and cultural organizations.

Founded in 1998 as a research and outreach unit within IUB's [Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology](#), TAI has traveled the state researching the expressive lives of Hoosiers and forging partnerships with state agencies, nonprofits, community leaders, and artists. In 2007, the Indiana General Assembly recognized TAI as the official statewide folk and traditional arts service organization, helping to secure TAI's long-term relationship with the state.¹ This honor encouraged TAI to continue to work with underserved communities in Indiana through strategic documentation of traditional arts, innovative public programming, and exemplary interpretation of the state's folklife and traditional arts resources. Governor Mike Pence recognized the unique contributions made by TAI in 2013 when TAI received a biannual Governor's Arts Award.²

Also in 2013, folklorist Jason Baird Jackson took over as Director of the [Mathers Museum of World Cultures \(MMWC\)](#), helping infuse a folkloristic perspective into this already vibrant museum on the IUB campus.³ Two years later, aiming to strengthen TAI and to ensure its continued support within the university, TAI was moved under the auspices of the MMWC.⁴ Combined, these two successful programs have complemented both organizations' missions and activities. When TAI joined the MMWC, it helped the museum broaden its statewide reach, expand its traveling exhibit program, and increase its access to external funds. In addition, TAI benefited from the museum's strong infrastructure, professional staff, and institutional stability. Since combining forces, the TAI arm of the museum has hosted gatherings of traditional artists, presented public programs at the museum, and become a stronger partner with both the community and the IUB campus.

Key Projects and Intersections with Museum Education

TAI has long toured traveling exhibitions into non-museum settings. Using Indiana's interlibrary loan program, TAI loans exhibition panels to public libraries around the state through its Rotating Exhibit Network.⁵ Since 2005, this unique program has worked to share the stories of Indiana's traditional arts and artists with new audiences. From hoop-net makers and quilters to mariachi ensembles and bluegrass bands, the Rotating Exhibit Network has profiled the cultural traditions of our state and each year more than 300,000 Hoosiers are served by this free community resource.

While the Rotating Exhibit Network exhibitions reached large numbers, their format and venues were inappropriate for larger exhibitions. Becoming a unit within the MMWC created an opportunity for TAI director Jon Kay to curate two large exhibitions at the museum. *Willow Work: Viki Graber, Willow Basketmaker* explored the creative work of a fourth-generation basketmaker working in Indiana today and *Working Wood: Indiana's Oak-Rod Basket Tradition* traced the evolution and end

Small Traveling Banner Exhibits and the Museum Exhibition: A Comparison

Both *Willow Work* and *Working Wood* exhibits had had a small traveling version that toured to libraries through the TAI Rotating Exhibit Network, but presenting these traditional arts at a university-based museum allowed TAI to tell more in-depth stories about these two traditions. These were not better than their traveling counterparts, but rather both iterations worked in two different ways. Exhibitions in the Rotating Exhibit Network had to be small, quickly digestible, and easy to travel. The exhibits at the MMWC allowed us to present objects rather than just images and provide more detailed information and complex storylines. The traveling exhibit helped us reach an audience around the state, but the exhibitions at the MMWC helped us connect our work more directly with the university. Both *Willow Work* and *Working Wood* raised the visibility and perceived value of the traditional arts, by placing baskets in a gallery setting. One added bonus for artists is that museums acquire objects for their collection; in fact, the museum purchased several baskets from Viki Graber for their permanent collection, helping to strengthen the museum's collection of Indiana traditional arts. This also bolsters the relationship between artists and the museum

of a distinctive basketmaking tradition in southern Indiana. These two exhibition projects built on long-term TAI research and connected with global basketry research and exhibition projects also underway at the museum. Also, in the spring of 2016, TAI staff, along with Jon Kay's Laboratory in Public Folklore graduate class, researched and curated a large exhibition based on TAI's years of field research. The exhibition *Indiana Folk Arts: 200 Years of Tradition and Innovation* was endorsed by the Indiana Bicentennial Commission and featured the work of more than 45 traditional artists from throughout Indiana. The introductory panel describes the exhibit's focus this way:

For more than 200 years, Indiana has been home to a wide variety of folk arts. Through telling the stories of specific artists, this bicentennial exhibit highlights the important work of individuals in the continuation of traditional arts in our state. While some create art based on skills they learned from their family or in their community, others have reinvented established forms, taking them in new directions. From beadwork and blacksmithing to rug weaving and limestone carving, the artisans featured here represent a few of the many threads within the creative fabric of Indiana.

The exhibition opened in April 2016 to a large audience, and the festival-like opening, which included narrative stages, musical performances, hands-on demonstrations, and free root beer floats, served by the museum staff. Graduate students planned and presented the opening. The exhibition also had a 76-page, free companion catalogue.⁶ In addition to excerpts from the exhibition, the catalogue included essays about artists, portraits of the artists, as well as images of their artwork.

In February 2016, shortly after relocating TAI offices to the museum, TAI held our first major gathering of traditional artists. For years, we had hosted artist meet-ups, webinars, and workshops, but the 2016 Folk Art Summit was different. Seventeen artists from around the state attended the gathering, for which TAI paid them a stipend. At the gathering, each artist participated in workshops to improve their demonstrations and presentations, professional photographers created portraits for each of the artists, and museum staff assisted with photographing artwork and leading collection tours. Liaisons from the Indiana Arts Commission and Indiana State Parks led workshops on potential grants and upcoming projects.⁷ In addition, students from the Public Folklore Laboratory interviewed artists and created biographies for each. These materials were featured in the exhibition catalogue *Indiana Folk Arts*. Yet, perhaps the most important facet of the day's activities was the networking between artists that took place. This program, exhibition, and publication would not have

been possible if it had not been for TAI's new institutional home. Combining a statewide folk arts program with a campus-based museum proved to be a positive context for engaging with artists, training of graduate folklore students, and producing this bicentennial project.

At the museum, TAI hosts a steady stream of traditional artists on IUB's campus, creating a context where artists engage with both undergraduate and graduate classes, which is helping recruit and train the next generation of public folklorists. In the fall of 2015, Jon Kay taught a special course called *Work as Art: Occupational Folklife in the United States*. The course was offered as part of a campuswide program called *Themester*, which aims to encourage courses around specific interdisciplinary topics. From programs with gravestone carvers to class visits with first-responders the course blended undergraduate education with public folklore programming in a museum setting.⁸ Students also learned basic documentation, research, and presentational methods and gained a greater understanding of the work of a public folklore.



Rethinking the Role of Folklore and Museum Education

The synergy of combining a campus museum with a statewide public folklore agency is proving to be a robust catalyst for the research and presentation of the folk and traditional arts as well as for the support of undergraduate and graduate education. As arts and humanities programs are threatened by the massive restructuring that universities are facing in the U.S, public folklore and related outward facing arts and humanities programs are playing an important role in making our work relevant in the years following the Great Recession. Programs like TAI and the Mathers, as well as the other organizations featured in this essay series, help expose students to the work of folklorists and museum professionals and offer alternative career paths beyond the academy. Public folklore is not a secondary choice for many of today's folklore graduates, and our graduate training needs adapt to support applied and public work in the humanities.

So, what should students expect from a graduate program if they are going into public folklore? First, a grounding in the theories, history, and methods of our field—this should never be compromised. Second, students should receive relevant experience in public and applied work. Just as teaching assistantships help prepare students for a career as a professor, working with arts organizations and museums can prepare them for work in the public sector. Work experience can be gained in a variety of ways. At TAI, we often work with students through practicum courses, where they shepherd a project to completion, help plan and produce a public event, do fieldwork and develop an exhibition panel for the Rotating Exhibit Network, or some other relevant work. We also hire several students each year to work at TAI, assisting with day-to-day operations and public programs. TAI has also hired advanced students to do contract fieldwork. Recently, two students conducted fieldwork for TAI on the circus arts and traditions in Peru, Indiana. This research was the first leg in what we hope will be a component of a future Smithsonian Folklife Festival. In addition to graduate coursework, working helps students grapple with ideas and concepts through real-world situations. It is easy to

joust with straw men sitting in a seminar class but harder when scholars labor alongside individuals on community projects.

Students should also expect to compile, whether through a course or on their own, a portfolio that demonstrates their professional skills and experiences. This dossier should include fieldwork materials (sample fieldnotes, recordings, and photographs); examples of promotional materials for public events or exhibitions; or other resources relevant to the student's career trajectory). Like an academic curriculum vita, a thoughtful resume and portfolio help translate graduate experiences into a legible set of professional skills.



The merger of statewide folklore agencies based in university museums offers a proven training ground for public folklorists and museum professionals. While in some regards this emerged as a new model, folklorists have worked in museums for over a hundred years, and this recent turn may mark a rekindling of interest in public folklore and museum work.⁹ The professional skills and methods needed in both public folklore and museum practice should be foregrounded in our academic training. At IU, we offer hands-on courses through the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology in both public folklore and museums to provide professional skills along with a grounding in the theories and methods of our discipline.

Jon Kay is Director of Traditional Arts Indiana, Curator of Folklife and Cultural Heritage at Mathers Museum of World Cultures, and Professor of Practice at Indiana University's Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology.

Endnotes

1. "IU's Traditional Arts Indiana program honored with resolution," <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/web/page/normal/5331.html>.
2. "Traditional Arts Indiana Receives 2013 Governor's Arts Award," <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news-archive/24486.html>.
3. Jackson, Jason Baird. 2015. "Interconnections: Folklore Studies and Anthropology at the Mathers Museum of World Cultures." *Practicing Anthropology*. 37.3: 20-23, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17730/0888-4552-37.3.20>; "IU's Mathers Museum of World Cultures Names Folklore Professor as New Director," <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news-archive/23745.html>.
4. "Traditional Arts Indiana Thriving in New Home at IU's Mathers Museum," <http://news.indiana.edu/releases/iu/2015/03/traditional-arts-indiana-mathers.shtml>.
5. For more about how the Rotating Exhibit Network works watch this webinar video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qwl-TPFp-VY>, accessed June 28, 2016.
6. *Indiana Folk Arts: 200 Years of Tradition and Innovation* (exhibition catalog), <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/handle/2022/20893>.
7. For more about the Folk Art Summit see this video, <https://youtu.be/uqjiBAs7k4Y>.
8. IU Bloomington's Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President produced a documentary about the Work as Art class, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UFG3Po4mx4>.
9. Dewhurst, C. Kurt. 2014. "Folklife and Museum Practice: An Intertwined History and Emerging Convergences," American Folklore Society 2011 Presidential Address. *Journal of American Folklore*. 127.505 (Summer): 247-263.

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<http://www.in.gov/arts>
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<https://folkethno.webhost.iu.edu/scripts/index.cfm>
<http://www.mathers.indiana.edu>



KENTUCKY Folklife PROGRAM

The Kentucky Folklife Program and the Kentucky Museum at Western Kentucky University

by Brent Björkman and Virginia Siegel

The [Kentucky Folklife Program](#) (KFP) was founded in 1989 as an interagency partnership between the [Kentucky Arts Council](#) and [Kentucky Historical Society](#). Since that time, KFP has been dedicated to the mission of identifying, documenting, and presenting the diverse traditional and cultural resources of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Among the organization's many achievements are countless oral history projects, traveling exhibits, and a hugely popular Kentucky Folklife Festival, which ran in Frankfort from 1997 to 2007. In 2012, KFP had the opportunity to transition to a new home within the [Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology](#) at Western Kentucky University (WKU) in Bowling Green, ushering in a new era in the life of the organization. This new home brought with it many new partnerships with other entities on campus and the community, but perhaps most critically provided hands-on experience for Folk Studies graduate students, while the students in turn could bring innovative ideas to KFP.

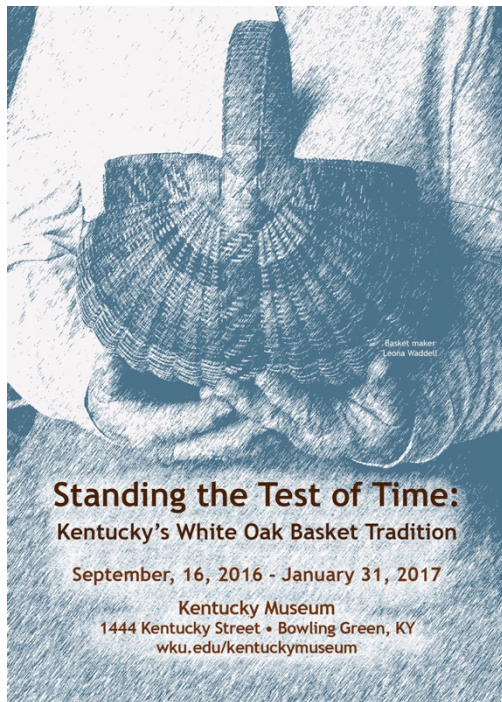
A recent example of this reciprocal collaboration includes a [traveling exhibit](#) on South central Kentucky's white oak basketmaking tradition, produced by KFP in 2014 and funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Using years of research by KFP staff, students in the Museum Preservation Procedures and Techniques class curated and designed panel content in collaborative small teams. Students also assist KFP in producing public events and projects ranging from narrative stages at regional community festivals to oral history projects for KFP's [Folklife Archives](#), housed in WKU's Library Special Collections.

In addition to partnerships with the Folk Studies Program and WKU's Library Special Collections, KFP has built a wonderful working relationship with the [Kentucky Museum](#), WKU's university museum with which KFP has planned several forthcoming exhibits and programming. The mission of the Kentucky Museum supports the academic and cultural goals of the University and "provides a quality educational experience for the campus community and the community at large by collecting, interpreting, preserving culture, history and art, and exploring their relevance in a global society." In 2015, Brent Björkman, KFP Director, also became Director of the Kentucky Museum, bringing with him an increasingly strong link between the institutions. KFP's work expands the ways the Kentucky Museum exhibits and highlights culture, with a shift from strictly historical approaches to the documentation and presentation of living communities. Two examples of programming in the works as KFP builds its intimate partnership with the Kentucky Museum are highlighted below.

Two Key Project Intersections with Museum Education

White Oak Basket Exhibition and Programs

In September 2016, the Kentucky Museum and KFP will showcase a collaborative indepth look at the state's well-recognized basketmaking traditions. The exhibition [Standing the Test of Time: Kentucky White Oak Basket Tradition](#) culminates over 25 years of KFP and folklorist-driven field documentation of and with central Kentucky basketmakers. Over the years, KFP has featured examples of this art form and developed enduring relationships with the tradition's practicing artists through programming at festivals and in local schools, as well as through the production of the [traveling exhibit](#) currently making its rounds to rural libraries. Interactions with basketmaking artists remains strong as KFP continues to document the annual [Kentucky Split Oak Basket Contest](#) each year at the Hart County Fair.



Exhibition poster, designed by Lynne Ferguson.

In the fall of 2016, the Museum and KFP will draw together KFP's historic documentation with exhibit planning assistance by the museum's curatorial, registrar, and preparatory team. Showcasing a contemporary and retrospective look at the history of the tradition, makers' techniques, and the nuanced basketmaking process itself, the exhibit boasts local buy-in of collectors who have agreed to loan baskets to help share this story with the public. These baskets will accompany those in the Kentucky Museum's archive, including the institution's collection of white oak baskets. Programming throughout the four-month exhibition will include a gathering of artists who will demonstrate during the opening weekend. The museum will also feature monthly talks by makers and scholars, and a hands-on "touch table" will allow visitors look closely at the baskets and their joinery.

Recently NEA announced that [Leona Waddell](#), one of our region's most venerated white oak basketmakers, is a 2016 recipient of the National Heritage Fellowship. Plans are under way to celebrate Waddell's accomplishments further as a nationally recognized traditional artist and to incorporate her award into the programming and the exhibition.

The Bosnia Oral History Project

One of KFP and the Kentucky Museum's more ambitious and timely projects, given local and national conversations on refugees, is an ongoing oral history project established with Bowling Green's substantial Bosnian population. From the mid- to late-1990s, Bowling Green was one of many relocation sites for refugees of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina that resulted from the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. Aided by the International Center of Kentucky in Bowling Green, some of the earliest families arrived in the mid-1990s. Those early families became critical in welcoming incoming families in the following years, many of them Bosniak, the predominately Muslim population of Bosnia. Many came with just a handful of possessions. Some lost everything, including loved ones. Today, roughly 10 percent of Bowling Green's population, approximately 6,000 individuals, is Bosnian American. Members of the Bosnian community include business owners, restaurateurs, prominent community leaders, and WKU students and alumni.

In the fall of 2015, shortly after his appointment as Director of the Kentucky Museum, Brent Björkman and KFP's Folklife Specialist Virginia Siegel convened a working group to plan a project that would center on the Bosnian community of Bowling Green. The year 2015 marked the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, in which many of our community lost family and friends, as well as the 20th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement that, although considered problematic in its implementation by many, ended the violence of the war in Bosnia. In addition to these two anniversaries, [WKU's Office of International Programs](#) announced that the academic year 2017-2018 would be the [International Year of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). WKU, the institutional home of the KFP, celebrates a different country each academic year, with exhibits, speakers, films, and other events open to the campus community and the general public. Concurrent with these momentous anniversaries, KFP began the Bosnia Oral History Project (the Bosnia Project). Initiated as a working group supported by the WKU Institute for Citizenship and Social Responsibility, it has evolved into



Brent Björkman conducting an interview with Azmir Husić.

Photo by Dzeldina Dzelil.



Nermin Peimanović shares a Bosnian-made fez purchased for his young son. The fez is worn with traditional clothing for musical performances and special events within the community.

Photo by Virginia Siegel.

an ongoing planning committee. From its inception, the committee has included members of the Bosnian American community along with KFP staff and faculty of the Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology.

Capitalizing on the Kentucky Museum's prominence and visibility within the larger Bowling Green community and KFP's expertise, the working group has developed short- and long-term goals. In all its efforts, the project aims to document the experiences and traditions of the Bosnian community. KFP's growing work with the Bosnian community, as well as recent statewide and national political rhetoric, reveal a broad lack of awareness of the traditions of our rich and vibrant immigrant and refugee populations in Kentucky. In response to such a need, the working group plans to establish an oral history project that will live for years to come.

In the short term, KFP will use its growing body of documentation to design and produce an exhibit on the cultural heritage and traditional art of the Bosnian community in Bowling Green. KFP will curate the exhibition at the Kentucky Museum for September 2017-January 2018 to coincide with WKU's International Year of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the exhibit will be mounted in the museum's feature gallery space. While the fieldwork is overseen primarily by KFP, the interpretation and design of the exhibit will be carried out in collaboration with the museum and Bosnia Project committee members. An overarching theme of the exhibit, determined through our collaborative working group, is the need to banish misconceptions of the Bosnian community, specifically misconceptions of Islam and the traditional practices of the Muslim faith. The art and material culture of the Bosnian community will be showcased; key works of art will include *sevdah* singing, dancing, clothing, crocheting, food traditions, and expressions of faith.

The exhibit will also contextualize the political upheavals and genocide that brought many Bosnians to our community and the importance of the survival of aesthetic traditions. It will examine the many similarities between the food, music, and landscape of Bosnia and Kentucky, which our Bosnian colleagues credit for making Bowling Green a desired destination for Bosnian refugees throughout the U.S..



Focus on Bosnian Foodways and Making Coffee

Senida Husić shares the process of making Bosnian coffee, which is brewed in a process similar to (yet distinct from) Turkish coffee. **Click on the image** (or visit the KFP [YouTube channel](#)) to hear her describe the importance of coffee to Bosnian daily life.



The Husić Family's dinner table, dishes including *kupas* (cabbage stew) and *riza/pirijan* (chicken and rice). Foodways (including coffee making) will be featured as part of the exhibit and in demonstrations accompanying the exhibit.

Photos by Virginia Siegel.

With the support of grant funds, KFP hopes to complement the exhibit with live performances and demonstrations of Bosnian music, dancing, and food preparation, tentatively planned as a regularly scheduled monthly event throughout the exhibit's run. The artists and art forms presented will be determined by KFP and the Bosnia Project committee members based on the findings of their ethnographic fieldwork in the community. This will ensure that the artists and art forms presented are characteristic of and esteemed by the Bosnian community in the region.

While this exhibit will be important to our community, perhaps most important to our Bosnian colleagues and community is the long-term goal to establish and build an oral history collection. KFP aims to establish a permanent Bosnian archive in WKU's Library Special Collections, housed in the same building as the Kentucky Museum. The 2017 exhibit will ideally be a first project in a long working relationship between the Bosnian community, KFP, and the Kentucky Museum. Such an approach, even early in our research, reinforces the roles that both KFP and the museum want to serve in the community (and for KFP, throughout the state). Since its beginning, KFP has helped citizens realize that, whether a community has existed in Kentucky for 100 years or 10, each is an important, dynamic part of Kentucky's evolving cultural story. It is the hope that a partnership with the Kentucky Museum brings this kind of living vitality to the museum's programming as well.

In regard to long-term goals for the project, oral history collection is central. In the 1990s, certain factions in Bosnia sought to erase the existence and very memory of their neighbors. Projects like the Bosnia Project in Bowling Green, or [the Bosnia Memory Project](#) in St. Louis, based out of Fontbonne University (which has guided some of our practices), actively work in reverse—to document and digitally preserve the voices of those who survived. KFP’s approach is very much place-based. Our exhibit will not seek to tell the story of all Bosnians, or what it means to be Bosnian American throughout the U. S. Our exhibit shares the story of the Bosnian American people of Bowling Green and how this particular place has become home for a small portion of the Bosnian diaspora. There is a scholarly advantage to this strategy as well. By focusing on our community, we are not burdened with representing the entire diaspora and the diversity in religion, ethnicity, experiences, and opinions that entails. Because it is place-based, we can focus on local stories and experience. That is not to say we will work in isolation. In addition to Fontbonne University’s Bosnia Memory Project, we have sought the advice and opinions of scholars and members of the Bosnian community near and far and have found support from Bosnian leaders and organizations on the national level. While the focus of the exhibit will be local, the “good work” produced by the exhibit will stretch further, and through portable components of the exhibit, perhaps live on after the mounted exhibit has been taken down at the Kentucky Museum.

Engagement of Graduate Students in Public Folklore

To make the above highlighted programs and projects viable, KFP owes a great deal to the wonderful home WKU’s Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology has made for us at the university. KFP relies on the department and the graduate students. One of the most advantageous reasons for KFP’s move from its alignment as part of state government (as part of both the Kentucky Arts Council and Kentucky Historical Society) was to bring practical, real-world projects to the program so that graduate students could get public folklore experience while benefiting the small staff at KFP. Depending on the project, KFP relies on Folk Studies graduate students as frequent volunteers and collaborators to expand and sustain its programming. Projects not only provide hands-on experience but also serve as models that students can use as cultural programming templates to build and improve upon as they venture into their own professional careers.



Denis Hodzic shares a small crocheted flower, a sign of remembrance for the genocide that took place in Srebrenica, Bosnia, in 1995. The color and shape of the flower are significant. The number of petals represents the day the genocide began, July 11th. The colors symbolize both innocence and hope, while also representing women mourning in white as they surround a casket draped in green.

Photos by Brent Bjorkman.



WKU Folk Studies students help document Kentucky’s traditions through their classwork and by volunteering for the Kentucky Folklife Program.

Photo by Amanda Hardeman.



The Kentucky Folklife Program is fortunate to have a graduate assistantship position through the WKU Folk Studies Program. Graduate assistants are critical to KFP's operations. Lilli Tichinin, pictured here, was KFP's first graduate assistant after its move to WKU.

Photo by Brent Björkman.

Like our museum-based colleagues who have contributed to this series, the Kentucky Museum and KFP, along with our partner colleagues within the Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology, continue to be burdened with the financial woes and increasing budget cuts common to many universities. We are all asked to “do more with less” and producing collaborative projects that can be seen as both “sharing resources,” as well as strengthening folkloristic practice as it is realized in the context of dedicated museum exhibit production, is a great growing strength of our relationship. With WKU's tagline “A Leading American University with International Reach” as an increasing focus of the university, the exhibits highlighted above have been created with this goal in mind as well. In the case of the white oak basketmaking exhibit, we present the story of this traditional art form as both locally created but nationally and internationally known within the greater basketmaking and collecting community. The Bosnia Project, in a similar though perhaps inverted way, presents the traditional culture of a more newly arrived folk group to Kentucky that, though rooted in another country and part of a larger international diaspora, now calls Kentucky home.

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***Virginia Siegel** is a Folklife Specialist with the Kentucky Folklife Program. She received her MA in Folk Studies from Western Kentucky University and her BFA in Historic Preservation from Savannah College of Art and Design.*

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<https://kentuckyfolklife.org>

<http://artscouncil.ky.gov>

<http://history.ky.gov>

<http://wku.edu/fsa>

<https://kentuckyfolklife.org/resources-2/traveling-exhibit-panels>

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<http://www.wku.edu/kentuckymuseum>

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<http://www.mammothcavebasketmakers.com/WOBC2015/2016contest.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oF5ceW9t9W4>

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<https://www.fontbonne.edu/academics/departments/english-and-communication-department/bosnia-memory-project>



Michigan Traditional Arts Program at Michigan State University Museum and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs

by Marsha MacDowell and C. Kurt Dewhurst

The Michigan Traditional Arts Program (MTAP) is a partnership of the Michigan State University Museum and the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA) with a mission of developing and implementing programs "to advance cross-cultural understanding in a diverse society through the identification, documentation, preservation, and presentation of the traditional arts and cultural heritage of the state of Michigan."¹ This partnership is a symbiotic relationship benefitting from the structures, missions, and resources of the museum and the state arts council.

Focused research, education, exhibition and collection development activities related to traditional arts began in 1975 when Marsha MacDowell and C. Kurt Dewhurst approached the museum about serving as the institutional home of a project to survey historical folk arts in Michigan with the aim of developing an exhibition as part of the nation's Bicentennial celebration. These two researchers were keenly aware of several factors when approaching Michigan State University (MSU) and the museum as a home for this project: a) the university, as a land-grant educational institution, had a mission to address educational and research needs of the state's citizenry; b) the university's extension service was a network of professionals situated both on campus and in every county with strong connections to local individuals and institutions; and c) the museum had strong historical collections related to rural Midwest living and worldwide traditional cultural practices and a dedication to object-based and field research.

With support from a grant from the newly established Folk and Traditional Arts Program at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) as well as supplemental support from Michigan 4-H Youth Programs, the two researchers traveled the state for a year. They met with county extension personnel, folk arts collectors, and staff at local arts agencies, historical societies and museums throughout the state. These contacts led almost immediately to the discovery of rich, varied, and sometimes uniquely place-based historical arts, but more importantly this survey uncovered leads to scores of contemporary practitioners of traditional arts. Hence the exhibition of historical folk art mounted at MSU was quickly followed by another project to document contemporary Michigan folk artists with the goal of presenting an exhibition about them and their work. By the time the second exhibition was mounted, again with support from NEA, the university offered each of the team members a position to continue their work and the MSU Museum agreed to be the home for them and their work.

FOLKPATTERNS: Folklife and 4-H

In 1977, the museum joined with MSU Extension Service (MSUE) and 4-H Youth Development to create FOLKPATTERNS (a statewide cultural heritage education program for youth). Funded at the outset by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and subsequently by MSU 4-H Youth Programs (a division MSUE), the FOLKPATTERNS program reflected NEH's desire to facilitate humanities-based programming in previously "unlikely" settings, the desire of 4-H to expand their arts and culture offerings beyond performing arts and global education, and the museum's desire to create and deliver statewide educational programs that would focus on the traditions of families and communities.²

Both FOLKPATTERNS and a folklife extension position secured in the early 1980's endured, with support from MSUE and NEA, until the early 2010s when the State of Michigan faced economic downturn and the MSUE both lost substantial funding and was reorganized.³ Nonetheless, FOLKPATTERNS curriculum materials are still used in 4-H, museums, and school programs not only in Michigan but also in other states that adapted the program. It is also noteworthy that in Michigan youth are still able to enter and win awards for projects in FOLKPATTERNS categories at county fairs.⁴

(See a lesson plan adapted from FOLKPATTERNS for *Show-Me Traditions* on page 135 of this section.)



From its earliest years, the folklife programs at the MSU Museum also received project-specific grants from MCACA. Because other states were adding folklore positions to their council operations and expanding support for folklife programs, the folklife team at the museum approached MCACA with a proposal for the museum team to serve as the council's state folk arts program as a partner with MCACA and, rather than project-to-project funding, the MSU Museum be considered for operational program support for this specific activity. In 1986 the Michigan Traditional Arts Program (MTAP) partnership was launched and the folklife team of the MSU Museum and MCACA staff began to engage in many activities that have endured. Through this partnership the capacity for each institution to carry out its mission has been strengthened and, simultaneously, traditional artists and arts communities in Michigan have benefited from this collaboration.

In the early 1980s folklorists at the museum began what was to become the first of many joint research, festival, and exhibition projects with colleagues at the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and later with the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). In 2001, the museum became the first in the state to receive Smithsonian Affiliate status from the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, the world's largest museum and research complex, thereby giving the MSU Museum broader access to Smithsonian's cultural and scientific resources to use in scholarly engaged work. The application for this designation was based, in large part, on the shared interests of the Smithsonian and the museum in folklife and cultural heritage work.

In 2006 the museum was administratively realigned from the MSU Office of the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies to the MSU University Outreach and Engagement, a unit of the Office of the Provost. This change reflected the recognition that the museum's role in not only furthering the teaching and research activities of campus-based faculty and students but also in using its resources to foster unique scholarly based collaborations with communities outside the university. Consistent with the core principles of University Outreach and Engagement, the MSU Museum staff

“seeks to become more embedded in the communities with which we work, to stress asset-based solutions, to strive to build long-term community capacity, and to create and strengthen collaborative networks.”⁵ Today the museum reaches broad and diverse audiences through strong, varied, and accessible collections, field- and collections-based research, public service and education programs, traveling exhibits, and innovative partnerships that respond to needs and issues not only of campus faculty, staff, and students but also of communities around the world. The museum-based team of individuals whose work as researchers, curators, and educators is centered in the investigation, collection, and presentation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage has been core to this body of activities. MCACA yearly support for the MTAP has been key to sustaining activities that focus on Michigan and connecting these activities with work being done nationally and globally.⁶

Key Project Intersections with Museum Education

Either directly or indirectly, the basic partnership of the MSU Museum and the MCACA has provided a foundation for the creation of many other partnerships in which a traditional arts focus has been core. Some have been temporary or short-term and some have lasted for years. We would like to speak here about two that illustrate different types of partnerships that have had intersections in different ways between the Museum and MCACA.

QUILT INDEX

Example ONE: [The Quilt Index](#) is a digital humanities research and education project of the MSU Museum and Matrix: The Center for Digital Humanities and Social Sciences and is headquartered at the museum.

The first survey of historical folk art done in 1974 by researchers in the nascent folklife program at the museum identified quilt history as a potential research endeavor. A Michigan Quilt Project, begun in 1983 and directed by a folklorist at the museum, followed a model used in one research project on focused on folk pottery in Michigan but also was being deployed by documentation projects in other states that were focusing on quilts. Typically led by quilt or folklife specialists, the quilt documentation projects usually involved engaging citizen scholars who volunteered to staff documentation days at local partner agencies such as community centers, museums, libraries, or churches. Local citizens brought in quilts they made or owned to be measured, photographed, and described on standard forms and, where possible, the stories of the makers and/or the quilt were recorded. In many states, including Michigan, the documentation and often the eventual fabrication of an exhibition and production of an accompanying publication was assisted by grants from NEA and state arts agencies. As of 2016, this ongoing project in Michigan has documented over 10,000 quilts and the accumulated documentation (oral histories, photographs, and the inventory forms) are housed at the MSU Museum and have served as the focal point for exhibitions, festival programs, applications to the Michigan Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program (TAAP), publications, and more in-depth research on certain heretofore under-researched aspects of quilt history in the state, most notably quilting within Native American, African American, and Upper Peninsula communities.

By the 1990s, those massive grassroots research efforts had already generated tens of thousands of documentation records about quilts and quilt artists in the United States. In the mid-1990s a group affiliated with these projects began to discuss the need to preserve records that had no institutional home and to make accessible all the records for education and research. The idea of a digital resource was hatched and MSU (through the museum and Matrix: The Center for Digital Humanities and Social Sciences), in affiliation with what was at that time called the Alliance for American Quilts, secured

grants from NEH and the Institute for Museum and Library Services that underwrote the research and implementation of a digital repository. The records of the Michigan Quilt Project and the MSU Museum's collection of quilts were key to beta testing all aspects of this major digital humanities research and education project.

By 2010, Quilt Index activities had expanded to include all documentation projects whether conducted by region or topic or focused on one aspect of quilt data, such as stories. Today, the Quilt Index is an open-access, digital repository of thousands of images, stories, and information about quilts and their makers drawn from hundreds of public and private collections around the world. Museum-based folklorists and arts agencies, including MCACA, have been instrumental in these activities that have focused not only on documenting and preserving knowledge about this aspect of traditional arts, but also on making this accumulated data accessible and facilitating engagement with the data for research and education. This work has also paved the way for the creation of other projects focused on thematic material culture that engage grassroots citizen scholarship and result in digital repositories of data that fosters more research and education.⁷



Example TWO: [The Great Lakes Folk Festival](#)

One of the most significant partnership projects that evolved from the collaboration of MSU Museum and MCACA is an annual folklife festival. In 1983, the museum produced its first series of outdoor showcase of Michigan's folk traditions at the annual 4-H Exploration Days in East Lansing followed two years later by the Michigan Whosestory? Festival that featured over 75 musicians, storytellers, and crafts demonstrators. Then, as part of Michigan's 1987 sesquicentennial celebration of statehood, the museum's folklife staff worked closely with state cultural agencies and the Smithsonian Institution to document and present Michigan's cultural traditions at the Festival of American Folklife in June of that year. Over 1,000,000 festival visitors were exposed to the state's diverse regional, ethnic, and occupational heritage and the media coverage, both nationally and within the state, brought the contributions of these artists to audiences of unprecedented sizes and scope. With financial support from MCACA and the Kellogg Foundation and tremendous in-kind support from the university, museum-based folklorists restaged the festival program, renamed the Festival of Michigan Folklife, in August on the MSU campus in East Lansing. It became an annual event and, over its 12-year history, provided a platform for presentation of over 1,400 Michigan traditional artists—the vast majority of whom had never been presented by any other arts organization in the state. The presentation of artists followed the “museum without walls” model initiated by the Smithsonian in that it combined community-based research and planning with traditional theater presentation and exhibition techniques in an outdoor setting with the important element of first-person presentation of stories, music, food, dance, and art.

In 1999, the museum began a new three-year partnership, this time with the City of East Lansing and the National Council for Traditional Arts (NCTA) to produce the National Folk Festival. NCTA took primary responsibility for coordinating music programming, East Lansing provided infrastructure and marketing support, and the museum was responsible for researching and presenting all the non-music traditional arts programming. In 2002, when the National Folk Festival moved to a new venue, the museum and the City of East Lansing continued to produce a festival, now renamed the Great Lakes Folk Festival. This event, which has benefitted from nearly annual grants from NEA and MCACA, continues to be the museum's (and the university's) largest annual cultural heritage research, exhibition, and education project and draws on the expertise of curators, special events

managers, collection managers, educators, communication managers, and administrative staff of the museum as well as a strong roster of research associates and community volunteers.

In a 2010 study of the educational impact of the festival, researchers found that “The event creates a strong bridge between the campus and the city, has been instrumental in fostering and sustaining ties between on-campus units and programs and off-campus constituencies, and represents complex and collaborative efforts of state, local, and national arts and cultural organizations working with civic, religious, social, educational, media, and business partners. The festival is viewed by the East Lansing as a critical ingredient in stabilizing and building an economically viable downtown that serves not only a university student and faculty clientele but is also equally attractive to a multi- interest, multi-aged and multi-ethnic community. The festival is valued as symbolic of the commitment of East Lansing to foster a quality of life that attracts and retains a diverse workforce and citizenry.”⁸

As of 2016, this event continues to be an anchor MTAP activity. It remains a major showcase for Michiganders whose skills and knowledge have contributed to the richness of the state’s cultural heritage but whose contributions are rarely showcased outside their local or immediate settings or communities. Reflecting best international practices of the role of museums in society, the festival creatively helps sustain and foster understanding of cultural heritage and supports lifelong learning and community engagement.

Rethinking the Role of Folklore and Museum Education

The addition of staff whose focus has been on traditional tangible and intangible cultural heritage has had significant and lasting impacts on the museum. Coincidentally, this same period has been one of tremendous changes in the international museum profession. Museums are no longer viewed as simply repositories of collections, they are understood to be educational centers and expected to be more responsive to the multiple audiences they seek to serve. The historical notion of authoritative curatorial voices has been contested and museums are now expected to facilitate multiple voices in the creation and interpretation of



MSU Quilt Exhibition program.

Photo by Pearl Yee Wong.

collections; in the formation, execution, and evaluation of programs and exhibitions; and in the myriad ways in which museums can use their collections, facilities, and staff expertise to address local, state, national, and global issues. Museum practice has been shaped by a broader, increasing societal expectation that cultural and educational institutions share their authority and use their power and resources for the common good. Principles such as reciprocity, mutuality, transparency, and representation have become central to the assessment of a successful community-engaged museum.⁹

The sustained, deep work of folklorists at the museum within and with communities that historically had not been connected with the museum has substantially broadened the diversity and engagement

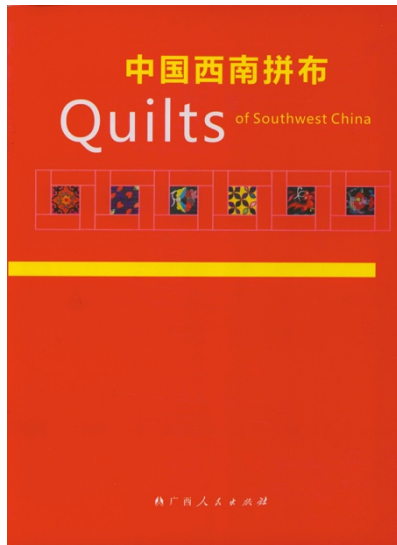
Here is a sample of a few projects over the last 30 years of our partnership between folklorists MSU:

- [Michigan Native American Arts Initiative](#) was a MCACA-sponsored, two-year survey of the needs of Native American artists in the state. The survey and report mapped out a series of strategic actions that would help individual artists and strengthen particular arts.
- [Our Daily Work/Our Daily Lives](#) focuses on the cultural traditions of workers, workplaces as contexts for the expression of workers' culture, and the diversity of historical and artistic presentations of workers' lives. Led by a folklorist and a labor historian/educator, the program explores and presents worker experience culture through exhibitions, lectures, performances, discussions, demonstrations, and other activities. It has also developed a solid and growing collection of workers' art.
- [Quilts from Southwest China](#) partners the museum with museums in China and the U.S. on staff exchanges, fieldwork, exhibition, and training projects; these activities were an outgrowth of work by the Chinese Folklore Society and the American Folklore Society (AFS) to increase bi-national interaction around shared interests. One recent outcome is the *Quilts from Southwest China*, a bilingual traveling exhibition and accompanying publication.
- [Folk Arts in Education: A Resource Handbook II](#) was produced by two museum-based folklorists who collaborated with individuals across the U.S. who were working with place-based and folklore education programs to compile an extensive resource book, funded by NEA, that provides sample lesson plans and descriptions of a variety of folklife in education projects conducted in many formal and informal learning environments.
- The museum's Michigan Traditional Arts Research Collections, built through the museum's folklife activities since 1974, is a treasure-trove of materials that chronicle the state's cultural traditions. One way the museum is making these materials more widely accessible is through the [National Folklife Archive Initiative](#) supported by funding from NEH to AFS. Through the initiative, users will not only be able to more readily access the Michigan materials but they also will be able to compare and contrast them with documentation from other states.

of individuals in what the museum collected, how materials were collected, the exhibitions and programs that have been developed, the audiences who have participated in museum activities, and the communities that have supported the activities through volunteerism and donations of funds and collections. It is not insignificant that the museum now has major collections and endowments for Latino, African American, and LGBTQ activities given by members of those communities.

Programmatic activities (some short-term, others enduring) created by folklorists affiliated with MTAP bear testimony to the impacts the individuals and the activities have had on the museum and on the state arts agency. MTAP initiatives have regularly engaged in work that targets communities whose traditions and histories were under-researched, were under-represented in general by museums, and had historically been disconnected from state arts agency-led programs. Traditional arts projects have helped to build connections among and between artists, communities, the museum, and MCACA. They resulted in digital and physical collections (of objects and documentation), exhibitions, publications, festival programs, educational events, curriculum materials, and new and revised arts-policies. They also led to the creation of new partnerships with other organizations inside and outside Michigan whose missions were focused, partially or wholly, on traditional arts. It is also not insignificant that groups historically disconnected to mainstream museums are now seeking partnerships with the museum.

Survey and exploratory research done for one project or activity has often paved the way for deeper, expanded work on traditions pertaining to particular cultures, communities, genres, or regions



as well as collaborations with new partners. As but one example, the initial folk arts survey in 1974 identified quilting as warranting further investigation, including the inventorying of quilts and quilt stories through the Michigan Quilt Project. Subsequent studies have focused on fundraising quilts, quilting in the Upper Peninsula, Hmong American story cloths and *paj ntaub*, quilts and human rights, quilts and health, and African American quilting in the state. These studies resulted in exhibitions, publications, and festival programs but they also laid the groundwork for connecting in-state research with additional research in other states and countries. Research on Native American quilting in Michigan led to a partnership with the NMAI to investigate quilting in Native communities across the U.S. and resulted in *To Honor and Comfort: Native Quilting Traditions*, an exhibition that opened in NYC then traveled across the U.S. accompanied by a publication and educational materials.¹⁰ The museum developed what is now the world's largest collection of quilts by indigenous artists and subsequently developed a version of the exhibition that travelled to tribal museums.

In summary, MTAP has fostered connectivity with individuals and organizations within Michigan, colleagues within the university and other state folk arts programs, and individuals and organizations. The net result has been a sustained program of robust activities that have had many outcomes and benefits for many.

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MSU Quilt Exhibition.

Photo by Pearl Yee Wong.

URLS

www.quiltindex.org

www.greatlakesfolkfest.net

<http://minativearts.net>

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www.folkartsineducation.org

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Missouri Folk Arts Program

Missouri Folk Arts Program at the University of Missouri's Museum of Art and Archaeology in Partnership with the Missouri Arts Council

by Lisa L. Higgins

A Brief Missouri Folk Arts Program History

In 1981, the University of Missouri's flagship campus in Columbia established Missouri's robust Cultural Heritage Center with initial leadership from a steering committee and, starting in 1982, headed by folklorist Howard Wight Marshall, a professor in the Department of Art History and Archaeology. Over the years, Center staff included notable folklorists like Barry Bergey, C. Ray Brassieur, Amy Skillman, and Dana Everts-Boehm. Marshall and staff moved into the Center's permanent home at the University's Conley House, an historic property originally owned by a University founding family, in 1986. Center staff and affiliated faculty approached Missouri's rich culture and heritage across academic disciplines with projects in rural sociology, vernacular architecture, cultural geography, historic preservation, archaeology, and folklore, among others. The Center sought "to encourage and foster research in Missouri's cultural heritage with outreach activities and public programs such as exhibits, performances, published materials, and oral history" around the state. Traveling exhibits, based in extensive field research, documented Missouri's occupational folklife, family farms, cultural symbols, and immigrant experiences. Within the Conley House, the Center produced occasional public performances and mounted smaller exhibitions, as well as built a lending library and extensive [collection of fieldwork materials](#). Sadly, in 1993, the Center was decommissioned due to budget cuts following an economic downturn.

Leaders at the University's [Museum of Art and Archaeology](#) (Museum), in partnership with the state arts council, lobbied to sustain two of the Center's public folk arts projects: the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program (TAAP) founded in 1985 and a touring program with an active artist roster, performance fee subsidies, and marketing and promotion assistance. Retaining two dedicated staff members, Dana Everts-Boehm and Julie Youmans, the Museum adopted the newly named [Missouri Folk Arts Program](#) (MFAP) under the auspices of the Museum. Many Center objects, assets, and some documentation were dispersed to appropriate repositories and stewards, as the Museum largely assumed an administrative role. The [Missouri Arts Council](#) (MAC) provided operating support via grants, and MFAP staff continued to seek and receive funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for the apprenticeship program. MAC then invested in a Folk Arts Project Grant pilot project, co-managed with MFAP staff and successfully instituted within five years alongside fine arts, festival, and media disciplines, and the performing traditions program was phased out. With the advent of the NEA's Folk and Traditional Arts Infrastructure Initiative in 1997, MAC designated MFAP as its affiliated program to fulfill the state arts agency's goals and objectives within the unique discipline and constituency.

After nearly a decade's work to found and sustain MFAP through its transition, staff moved on to new opportunities, and Lisa L. Higgins and Deborah A. Bailey, Director and Folk Arts Specialist, respectively, joined MFAP staff in fiscal year 2000. Higgins credits her previous work with MFAP as a graduate student, and her work with a regional arts organization, as foundational training. Bailey brought years of expertise as an ethnographer, contract folklorist, and qualitative researcher. Both are currently in their 17th years, still coordinating TAAP, the state arts council's folk arts grants, and now a community scholars project. The Museum staff has supported the folk arts program steadfastly



An Evening of Ozark Storytelling with Marideth Sisco



Noted for her folksy, relaxed, over the garden fence stage presence, the fourth-generation Ozarks native is host of the popular public radio series, "These Ozarks Hills," as well as the lead singer in "Blackberry Winter Band," the group featured in the Oscar-nominated film "Winter's Bone."



MFAP invited master storyteller Marideth Sisco to perform in conjunction with the Museum's special exhibition *14 Rural Absurdities*, a collection of woodcuts depicting hyperbolic local legends by Missouri artist Tom Huck.

Courtesy Museum of Art and Archaeology.

In this image from *Work is Art and Art is Work*, master luthier Bernard Allen of Naylor, Missouri smooths his handmade violin.

Photo by Rita A. Reed.



since 1993—through three permanent directors, two interim directors, and three fiscal managers. The current director and fiscal manager have proved to be particularly supportive of MFAP and its sustainability in the public sector.

As we approach 25 years, the partnership has proven a good fit, although still, MFAP neither collects nor exhibits objects within the walls of the Museum. As an entity of the Museum, the MFAP bridges more than "town/gown" engagement. MFAP staff and its projects provide measurable outreach beyond the Museum's galleries, university campus, City of Columbia, and central Missouri. Periodically, MFAP has supported Museum programming with ancillary public performances and gallery talks from traditional artists and folklorists whose work aligns with a special exhibition or project.

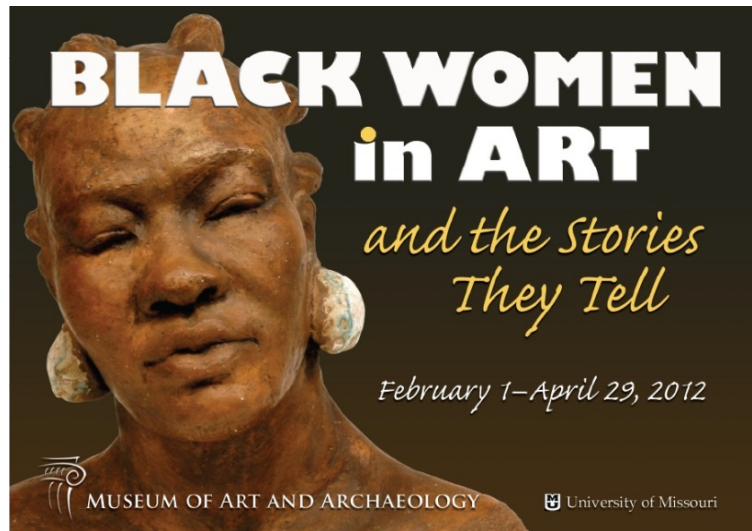
Likewise, MFAP has benefited from Museum staff expertise when curating traveling exhibitions, like [*Work is Art and Art is Work*](#), which toured to nine Missouri communities featuring the work of six traditional luthiers. MFAP contracted with professionals at ExhibitsUSA to design, build, and tour *Work is Art*. Still, Museum staff, particularly preparators, shared invaluable guidance and expertise throughout the process.

Recent events have aligned MFAP and the Museum programming more closely. In the fall of 2013, the University relocated the Museum out of historic Pickard Hall and into a vacant campus property two miles north of campus. In this "new" space, MFAP staff offices are mere seconds, rather than minutes, away from Museum colleagues, storage, preparators' shop, and the galleries themselves. With closer proximity, Museum and MFAP staffs find ourselves collaborating more often, especially with Museum education staff. In 2014 and 2015, for instance, MFAP

participated alongside the Museum and other cultural entities for *Smithsonian Magazine's* annual Museum Day Live! Folk Arts Specialist Deborah Bailey coordinated traditional artist demonstrations and hands-on activities with a rug weaver one year and an Ioway regalia bead and ribbon worker the next, both previous TAAP participants. MFAP and Museum staff continue to expand collaborative programming, including regular performances in the Museum galleries.

A Project's Intersections with Museum Education

In 2011-2012, the planets and stars aligned to create the first project fully co-coordinated by the Museum and MFAP. In the middle stages of planning an upcoming exhibition for Black History month, then European and American Art Curator Mary Pixley and Fiscal Manager Carol Geisler discovered a strong connection between the exhibition's focus—Black women and narrative art—and MFAP programming. As fiscal manager, Geisler processes all payments and contracts for the Museum, including those for TAAP. She communicates often with master artists about contracts, travel vouchers, and payments. Those artists know Geisler almost as well as they do MFAP staff. Thus, Geisler was very familiar with master storyteller Gladys Caines Coggsell of Frankford, Missouri (near Hannibal). Geisler even visited Hannibal to attend a Coggsell performance in her role as artist in residence at the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum. While Pixley considered works for the exhibition, eventually titled *Black Women and the Stories They Tell*, Geisler approached MFAP staff to consider booking Coggsell in support of the exhibition. Geisler recognized that Coggsell embodied the exhibition's theme and goals. With the agreement of all parties, and enthusiastic approval of Museum Director Alex W. Barker, we planned the project's components: the exhibition, a public performance, and a school residency.



The Museum's graphic designer featured the painted terracotta bust *Maudelle* in the exhibition's marketing materials.

Courtesy Museum of Art and Archaeology.

For the exhibition, each work linked to the theme of storytelling and its tradition within families and communities, from one generation to the next, foregrounding the experiences of Black women. In the fall, Pixley winnowed the exhibit down to 15 works by internationally acclaimed artists like Romare Bearden, Carrie Mae Weems, Elizabeth Catlett, and Faith Ringgold as well as Columbia artists Byron Smith and Wilma King, a University of Missouri custodian and professor, respectively. As Pixley wrote in the docent guide:

The stories can be quite complicated, especially when artists explore the complexity of the black identity as it relates to white American culture, black American culture, and the African legacies found in the United States. Some images are racially charged as the artist confronts stereotypes and prejudices that resulted in the placement of black women at the very bottom of the hierarchy of race, class, and gender (Internal document, 2012).

Works included lithographs, photographs, charcoal, linocut, oil paintings, watercolor, and painted terracotta. Pixley chose to break from curatorial convention with text labels, expanding them to convey the women and their stories as fully as possible. For instance, the label for Beulah Ecton Woodard's *Maudelle* examined the life not only of the African American female clay artist—the first to show in the Los Angeles County Museum—but also the life of the subject, accomplished dancer and model Maudelle Bass Weston.



Curate an exhibit using family folklore with the *Show-Me Traditions* lesson plan excerpt at the end of this article.

As Mary Pixley selected the exhibition's works and researched their overt and embedded stories, MFAP Director Lisa Higgins consulted Museum Educator Cathy Callaway to map out an arts education grant proposal to MAC to support a school residency with Gladys Coggsell. MFAP has produced educational projects for schoolchildren for decades, and in 2004, with an NEA Infrastructure grant, MFAP introduced a pilot [Folk Arts School Residency Project](#) to train traditional artists for school residencies. MFAP then consulted with Folk Arts in Education Specialist Susan Eleuterio and residency artists to develop a curriculum guide specific to Missouri, its traditions, traditional artists, and the integration of local knowledge into the curriculum. Three traditional arts residency artists, including Coggsell, field tested the guide in three rural Missouri schools. Coggsell continued to participate in the residency project when MFAP received an arts education grant from the Dana Foundation to train ten more teaching artists. Also, the MFAP published a curriculum, [Show-Me Traditions: An Educator's Guide to Teaching Folk Arts and Folk Life in Missouri Schools](#) that won the AFS Dorothy Howard Prize. Coggsell was well-prepared to lead school residencies in Columbia to accompany *Black Women in Art and the Stories They Tell*. MAC awarded the Museum a mid-year arts education grant to support the residencies, which was matched by MFAP, the Museum, and the College of Arts and Science.

Like Geisler, Mary Pixley was enamored with Gladys Coggsell and her performances. When Coggsell accepted our offer to develop programming in conjunction with the exhibition, she insisted that she meet with the curator to become familiar with the works and the stories they told. Pixley and Coggsell spent substantive time together in Museum storage, where they both relished in the works. Ultimately, three works resonated with Coggsell: *Tillie*, a 1932 oil on panel painting by Ste. Genevieve Colony artist Aimee Schweig; Harlem-raised Faith Ringgold's 1996 lithograph *The Sunflower Quilting Bee at Arles*; and *Sharecropper*, a linocut made by Modernist Elizabeth Catlett in 1958. Furnished with research, Coggsell returned to her home in Frankford to study the works and their social and historical contexts and craft oral stories that animated the figures illustrated in these three works.

Simultaneously, project staff coordinated the artist-in-residence component to bring Coggswell and her apprentice Angela J. Williams to West Boulevard Elementary and Lee Expressive Arts Elementary, both in central Columbia, where they spent three hours a day at each school for one week. MFAP provided copies of *Show Me Traditions* to lead teachers Ann Mehr at Lee and Jonette Ford at West, and they pre-taught sections on folk tales and oral traditions. Identifying which schools to participate had been both obvious and unexpected. The Museum and Lee, at that time mere blocks apart, have long been paired through the City of Columbia's Partners in Education project. Lee promotes learning across the curriculum through the arts. "Junior Docents" regularly crafted narratives for designated works in the galleries. During the residency, Coggswell worked with three grades, and at the culmination of her residency, she performed during an all-school assembly.



Gladys Coggswell performs a story about sharecropping based on an Elizabeth Catlett linocut at Pickard Hall.

Photo by Alex W. Barker.



[Click on the photo](#) to see Coggswell tell a family story passed down from her Uncle Pete in response to Elizabeth Catlett's *Sharecropper*.

Video courtesy Boden Lyon.

By happenstance, Lisa Higgins met West 5th-grade teacher Jonette Ford. Higgins learned that every spring Ford taught her students via a "mini-museum" in which they selected topics, then researched, created, wrote, and produced works in their own galleries in the school's hallway. For instance, one of the first mini-museums focused on women's history, illustrated through hand-stitched quilts. Ford and Denise Parker, also a 5th-grade teacher, were invited to participate in the residency to connect the West "mini-museum" with the Museum. The residency also connected curricula in social studies, writing, reading, and language (communication arts) to Black Culture Month, of significant importance to educators, students, and parents at this high-minority school. At the culmination of Coggswell's one-week residency, West 5th-graders presented stories and poetry that they had crafted.

That same week, Coggswell opened the exhibition with a special performance in Pickard Hall. There, to a diverse crowd in the packed lecture hall, she shared three narratives, inspired by her selected works of art and grounded in oral tradition and social history. The entire audience responded with a standing ovation.



Lee Elementary student Dinesh Baldwin shares a tall tale at the Junior Storyteller event in Pickard Hall.

Photo by Alex W. Barker.

Two weeks later, Coggswell’s “junior storytellers” from Lee Elementary and West performed in the same auditorium, to another full house with a slightly different and equally diverse audience who also responded with standing ovations.

Like all best laid proposals, small details in the residency morphed as the project was implemented, but the overall quality, outcomes, and participation were better than expected. Everyone at the Museum and MFAP pitched in: the Museum’s fiscal officer delivered exhibit and performance posters to the J. W. Blind Boone Community Center and Second Baptist Church advertising public events; the Museum fabricators built Coggswell a box to elevate her height at the podium; teachers in nonparticipating classes at both schools pitched in with logistics and helping hands; City of Columbia Parks and Recreation provided a handicap accessible bus to shuttle audience members from Second Baptist Church to the Museum for the exhibit opening; and the University’s Educational Technology Specialist video recorded performances.

However, it was the West and Lee students who shone. West 5th-grade teachers integrated the exhibit, the residency, and the topic into the very fiber of their curriculum and onto the walls of their school. All students created narrative poetry and short stories based on research about the subjects of the three exhibit works also selected by Coggswell. The target group performed these stories during the residency’s school assembly and then onstage at the Junior Storytellers event.

As this amazing, intensive project concluded, teachers from Lee and West used the [Louisiana Voices Oral Presentation Rubric](#) to assess learning. Additionally, students from both schools self-assessed their performances at assemblies or the Junior Storytellers event. Both resulted in above averages scores in three categories: awareness of audience, strength of material, and delivery. However, notable outcomes from the project must also include that the children were energized by new things over the course of the residency. Lee students could, and regularly did, walk to the Museum, just blocks from their school, but West students on the whole had never visited. Alex Barker, Museum Director, found funds to shuttle every West student (not just 5th grade) to Pickard Hall for docent-led tours of the exhibition. Other notable firsts included performing in front of an audience and meeting “probably the best storyteller [I’ve] ever seen,” as one West student noted as Coggswell departed on the last day of the residency.



In its “mini-museum,” West’s 5th-grade class wrote narratives about each member of Faith Ringgold’s *The Sunflower Quilting Bee at Arles*.

Photos by Lisa L. Higgins.

Rethinking the Role of Folklore and Museum Education

The AFS [Working Group on Folklore and Museums Policy](#) notes that folklorists help engender “community engagement” in museum programs. In addition to increasing engagement in communities across the state through partnership and outreach, opportunities for MFAP staff to engage new audiences at the Museum continue to increase. When Gladys Cogswell and her junior storytellers performed, many children and local citizens entered Pickard Hall for the first time, not only to enjoy public performances but also to connect them with the special exhibition in the galleries. Now at Mizzou North, MFAP can coordinate performances, demonstrations, and workshops in the galleries, shared classroom space, and shaded gazebos on the grounds. In 2016 alone, MFAP coordinated an African American gospel concert, a “Little Dixie” region fiddle concert, and an educational program on luthiery with current apprenticeship teams from Columbia, St. Louis, and rural Monroe County. Each event brought new visitors to the Museum and introduced Museum stalwarts to Missouri’s folk and traditional arts. Museum and MFAP staff coordinates these events, from booking artists, providing cultural interpretation, and paying artists to marketing the event, setting up chairs, and providing security in the galleries.

In addition to fulltime Museum and MFAP staff, these programs also rely on the assistance of new professionals in Folklore—our graduate interns and assistants who work for course credit and stipends. Since 1993, MFAP has hosted 16 graduate student interns, 15 from the Department of English, home to the Folklore, Oral Tradition, and Culture Studies Program (Mizzou Folklore). With leadership from professors Elaine J. Lawless and Sw. Anand Prahlad, the [internship](#) has added a layer of education to folklore studies that bridges the academic and public folklore sectors, a result that more realistically reflects the multivalence of positions in the field. MFAP’s second graduate intern Lisa Higgins became MFAP’s second director, a testament perhaps to the strength of both the academic program and the public sector opportunity.

Our colleagues in the AFS Folklore and Museums section enumerated four “intersections between museum practice and folklore studies that occurred in the 20th century” (2015: 8). “[L]inking folklore

and museum graduate training” was the first on the list. While the University of Missouri’s graduate training in Folklore through the MFAP internship is not a course in Museum Studies, some training in the latter field transfers to graduate students through assigned readings and hands-on programming that intersects with museum practices of representation, programming for the public, and creating content that engages learners of all ages. Entering MFAP interns are assigned a range of readings in public folklore’s history, practice, and evolution. Students are encouraged to read, for instance, Patricia Hall and Charlie Seemann’s *Folklife and Museums: Selected Readings*.¹ Since 2010, MFAP has also been able to offer a graduate assistantship to students who have completed the internship thanks to the support of, first, the College of Arts and Science and now the Museum.

In the last 16 years of graduate education, students have assisted MFAP staff with two traveling exhibitions, as well as the residencies for *Black Women and the Stories They Tell*. Two graduate interns initiated archival research and curated an online digital exhibit, [Master Artists; Master Teachers](#), on our website, in honor of our most prolific TAAP master artists. In that exhibit, artist profiles include biographies, quotations, images, and audio clips. Most recently, graduate assistant Jackson Medel developed a portable exhibition on freestanding, full-color banners to share the TAAP story with text and images. Medel was recently quoted in [College Magazine’s Guide to the Folklore Major](#): “One of the most important experiences I’ve had...has been my internship and subsequent assistantship with the Missouri Folk Arts Program.”

As a state folk arts program based in a museum on a university campus, however, we, too, have challenges to address in the 21st century academy as it shifts and alters. At the University, for instance, the retirement or death of senior faculty members has unsettled the Folklore, Oral Tradition, and Culture Studies Program in the Department of English, where major Folklore scholars have been on staff since 1895. MFAP stands ready, as always, to adapt to change, the constant we know as folklorists. We envision partnering with Digital Storytelling and Museum Studies professors to identify student interns and assistants. We also intend to research funding for paid internships for students in Folklore and Culture Studies programs outside Missouri, especially as we contemplate long-range plans to collect and exhibit works by folk and traditional artists on campus and beyond.

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URLS

<http://shsmo.org/manuscripts/columbia/4053.pdf>

<https://maa.missouri.edu>

<http://mofolkarts.missouri.edu>

<http://mofolkarts.missouri.edu/exhibits/workart/index.shtml>

<http://mofolkarts.missouri.edu/docs/pubs/Mag047.pdf>

<http://mofolkarts.missouri.edu/docs/showme.pdf>

Gladys Coggs well performance video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Is7yXEX3A14>

http://www.louisianavoices.org/unit3/edu_unit3_rubric_for_oral.html

https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/afsnet.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/Folklore_and_Museum_Policy_a.pdf

<http://mofolkarts.missouri.edu/docs/pubs/Mag054.pdf>

<http://mofolkarts.missouri.edu/exhibits/artists.shtml>

<http://www.collegemagazine.com/cms-guide-folklore-major>

Endnote

1. Hall, Patricia and Charlie Seemann, eds. 1987. *Folklife and Museums: Selected Readings*. Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History.

Learning Application: Show-Me Traditions: A Family Folklore Lesson Plan

Lesson Plan #1: Family Folklore Checklist and Display

Necessary Materials

Pencils, family folklore checklist, paper

Time Needed

Three class sessions (45 minutes each)

One class period (1/2 to explain directions, 1/2 to write story): one class period to read stories; one class period to display exhibits

Directions

Step 1: Hand out Family Folklore Checklist and review with students to make sure they understand categories. You might bring in a few samples from your own family (photographs, keepsakes, etc.)

Step 2: Students should complete the checklist at home, select one object, and interview a family member about it.

Step 3: In class (or as homework), ask students to write a story about the object from the Family Folklore Checklist. Writing Prompt: This object is important or special to my family because ...

Step 4: Consider hosting an exhibit of objects and photographs from student's homes. Their stories can be displayed alongside objects and photographs, students may revise and shorten the stories into exhibit labels, or students may give oral presentations of their objects and stories to an audience of peers or families.

Objectives:

- To introduce students to specific examples of folk culture in everyday life
- To help students identify examples of folk culture from their own lives
- To use folk culture to develop a story and written report

Outcomes:

- Students will research examples of folk culture from home using the Family Folklore Checklist
- Students will create a story or an exhibit about one example of family folk culture
- Students will present their story/ exhibit to the class

SHOW-ME STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

Show-Me Standards Social Studies Goals 5, 6, and 7

- the major elements of geographical study and analysis (such as location, place, movement, regions) and their relationships to changes in society and environment
- relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions
- the use of tools of social science inquiry (such as surveys, statistics, maps, documents)

Show-Me Standards Communication Arts Goals 1,4, and 7

- writing formally (such as reports, narratives, essays) and informally (such as outlines, notes)
- identifying and evaluating relationships between language and culture

Show-Me Standards Fine Arts Goals 4,5

- interrelationships of visual and performing arts and the relationships of the arts to other disciplines
- visual and performing arts in historical and cultural contexts

Family Folklore Checklist

Adapted from 4-H FOLKPATTERNS
Michigan State University Extension, Michigan State University Museum

Directions

Use this list at home for clues to your family folklore. Ask your family to help you locate some of these objects. How many can you find? Put a check beside each one you find. Ask for the story behind one of these objects. Then write a short story about the object you found. Ask if you can bring the object to school. If you can't, draw a picture of it or take a photograph of it and bring that with your story.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Awards and trophies | <input type="checkbox"/> Home movies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> Keepsakes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Books or toys | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper clippings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collections | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational tools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Costumes or clothing | <input type="checkbox"/> Quilts, knitting, embroidery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family photographs | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious books/objects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family recipes | <input type="checkbox"/> School mementos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family stories | <input type="checkbox"/> Scrapbooks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Games | <input type="checkbox"/> Songs, music, instruments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greeting cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Souvenirs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handmade objects | <input type="checkbox"/> Wedding announcements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday objects | |



**University of South
Carolina's McKissick
Museum, the Folklife
Resource Center, and the
South Carolina Arts
Commission—A Partnership**

by Saddler Taylor

McKissick Museum

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Since its creation in 1976, [McKissick Museum](#) has been a champion of the folklife and traditional arts of the South. Originally charged with housing varied collections related to the University of South Carolina, early museum staff members like George Terry realized the traditional arts were an important part of the regional story that should be showcased.

In 1982, Terry became the second director of McKissick Museum. He initially joined the staff as curator of history just after the museum opened, while still completing his doctorate in Southern history. Terry believed in the power of objects to convey historical concepts and events in a way that all people could understand. During his 15 years at McKissick, Terry was responsible for guiding the museum in its mission to collect, preserve, exhibit, and celebrate the traditional arts of South Carolina and the South. He established the museum's folklife program, secured notable objects for the collections, produced important exhibitions, and through constant advocacy, encouraged traditional artists and art forms to flourish. He successfully built McKissick into one of the largest university museums in the Southeast—one with an international reputation for excellence in scholarship and education.

Established in 1985, the [Folklife Resource Center](#) (FRC) at McKissick Museum focuses on documenting the traditional culture of the South. The preservation and dissemination of this material are key aspects of the FRC mission. Over the past 30 years, through the support of state and federal grants from South Carolina Humanities, the South Carolina Arts Commission (SCAC), the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the FRC completed several important documentation projects, including sweetgrass and split-oak basketry, alkaline-glaze stoneware, quilting, African American celebrations, and a variety of foodways traditions.

McKissick Museum has enjoyed remarkable stability in its leadership. The museum has only seen two directors since Terry, and while they both consider the museum's solid foundation a springboard for continued work in the field, they share different perspectives and approaches to the subject of folklife in museums. Lynn Robertson (director 1991-2010) remembers the idea of establishing a university museum was proposed to President William Patterson in 1976 by a committee put together to consider what should go into the McKissick building, which had been recently vacated by the university library. Patterson felt USC needed a place where the public could freely come to learn

about the university and its contributions to the community—a sort of public “window” into the history of and community value of the school. Because of building limitations and the desire to display the extensive collections, the only places for changing exhibitions were half the history gallery (second floor south) and the art gallery (first floor south). As curator of the history area, George Terry had an academic interest in public history and material culture studies, and Roberston had an interest in 20th-century craft. Those two interests, coupled with the fact that Roberston had the only exhibition experience on staff, brought the two together to plan and install the first exhibitions based on the collections.

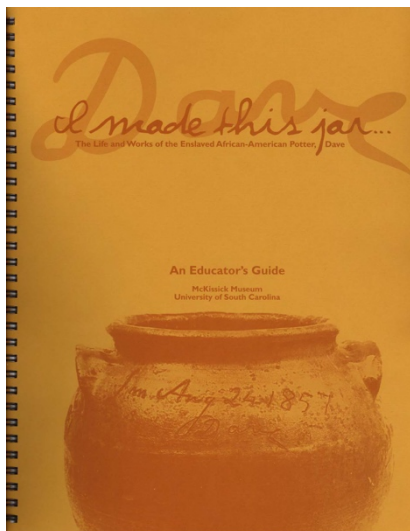
Many objects that came to the museum in the historical collections were uncatalogued and unresearched. The pottery created conversations between the curatorial staff about to how to display them. Terry knew a little of their historical importance, and he initiated detailed research. With his dissertation on the Lowcountry, he also knew the plantation history of sweetgrass baskets. Robertson thought they made good-looking exhibitions and could connect with more contemporary craft trends. There was a lot of funding available for undergraduate assistantships, and Terry hired four or five students to go through probate records to document the mention of baskets and pottery. The early staff soon realized that folk art collecting and exhibitions told an important historical story that was missing in the region. A real turning point came when McKissick put together the project *Southern Make*, which included a survey of traditional arts in the South. While a broad sampling with fairly basic interpretation, it really was the spark that ignited growth in the program. McKissick soon began to form relationships with private collectors and other regional museums.

One of McKissick’s first grant proposals to NEA involved sweetgrass basket research and exhibition development. Securing that grant, which allowed staff to work with fieldworker and scholar Dale Rosengarten, pushed the staff toward a more comprehensive view of the field—one of folklife, not just folk art. In addition, McKissick had support from people throughout the state who had similar interests, scholars like historian Charles Joyner and anthropologist Leland Ferguson.

In 2003, the FRC initiated a project to digitize all the materials housed in the archive, a process that would involve the digital transfer of thousands of prints, slides, manuscripts, video, and audio recordings. A few years into the project, the museum launched [Digital Traditions](#), the web portal providing online access to some of the material housed in the FRC archive. In addition to digitally transferring decades-worth of materials, this project provided an important learning environment for dozens of undergraduate and graduate students from a wide variety of disciplines.

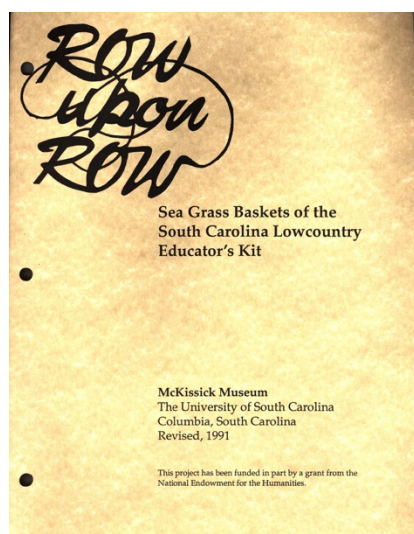
With each exhibition idea, the staff had to think through their intellectual and philosophical points of view. By the time Terry became director, the museum had established that major efforts would go toward an exploration of regional folklife. By the time the NEA Folk and Traditional Arts Program approached McKissick with a proposal to house the state folk arts program, McKissick had developed a successful process of original research, academic





collaboration, curatorial expertise, and fieldwork. Gary Stanton came on board as the first professional folklorist and made the staff more critical of what and how they worked. He also introduced professional fieldwork standards.

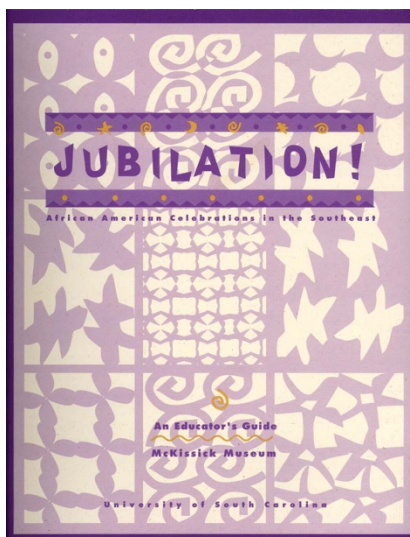
Some of the groundbreaking programs completed in the first decade included *Carolina Folk: The Cradle of a Southern Tradition*, *Row Upon Row: Sea Grass Baskets of the South Carolina Lowcountry*, the *Quilt History Project*, *Stout Hearts: Traditional Oak Basketmakers of the South Carolina Upcountry*, the *Sweetgrass Basket Conference*, *Crossroads of Clay: The Southern Alkaline-Glazed Tradition*, *Jubilation! African American Celebrations in the Southeast*, and the establishment of the Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Award. Many of these projects, like *Row Upon Row*, *Jubilation!* and *Crossroads of Clay* were on topics with which most people were only vaguely aware. They were well researched and “academic” yet still had an ability to instill appreciation for the state’s diverse traditions.



Many of these groundbreaking projects also included an ambitious effort to reach the K-12 demographic. Working closely with education specialists, McKissick created several educator kits that packaged the exhibition material in a way that was relevant to K-12 educators and students throughout the state. *Row Upon Row*, *Stout Hearts*, and *Jubilation* were three projects that specifically targeted elementary students through this medium. Combining images, artifacts, audio, video, and excellent guides, the goal was to present these traditional art forms and expressive traditions to students in an engaging and relatable way.

A Project’s Intersections with Museum Education

A cathartic change occurred while Bess Lomax Hawes was head of the NEA Folk and Traditional Arts Program. In the mid-1990s, Congress ruled that the NEA needed to retain more control over programmatic content and that all funding for programs that used government dollars could only be passed to the respective state’s arts organization. The NEA could no longer directly fund the program at McKissick Museum, even as a state university. Hawes came down to visit with Robertson to discuss the news. However, Robertson and Hawes met with senior staff at the SCAC. The foundation for what has become a long-term partnership was established. While the state folklorist position moved to the Arts Commission, McKissick Museum maintained a folklife position and would remain the physical location of the folklife archive.



McKissick Museum and the SCAC have since collaborated on several key projects that build on the overall public programming efforts at both institutions. Since 1987, [the Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Award](#) has been administered jointly and in partnership with the South Carolina General Assembly. The Folk Heritage

Award recognizes and celebrates lifetime achievement in traditional arts and advocacy. As the state's highest award for traditional artists, the program is an example of arts organizations working closely with state government to facilitate programs highlighting community-based traditions.

The [Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Initiative](#) (TAAI) was developed in the mid-1990s and has been a major program component at both institutions. Pairing a master artist with a willing apprentice, the program has seen a variety of traditional artists come through the program, from blues musicians to split-oak basketmakers. All the fieldwork generated during programs like the Folk Heritage Award and TAAI is housed in the FRC at McKissick Museum.

Rethinking the Role of Folklore and Museum Education

Jane Przybysz (director 2011-present) also has a deep and appreciative perspective on McKissick's journey. She applauds McKissick's early leadership for undertaking pioneering studies of forms of expressive culture that—until the last quarter of the 20th century—had not been deemed of sufficient significance to warrant serious academic study. McKissick undertook seminal research, exhibitions, and publications on a variety of key topics and this is the work for which McKissick is best known, and which served as the basis for building its material culture and the FRC's archival collections.



While folklore as an academic discipline has moved beyond romanticizing the mostly rural cultural practices perceived as disappearing, shifting its focus to the study of how community life and values are expressed through a wide variety of living traditions, the field continues to focus largely on the living traditions of peoples who often have been marginalized by seismic technological, economic, social, cultural, and political changes. What responsibility do museums have for not only documenting and celebrating the persistence of particular folklife activities in their communities but also for probing and intervening in the changing contexts that make such activities increasingly irrelevant or relevant to the lives and health of the people and communities they seek to serve? In the case of McKissick, which historically has aimed to “tell the story of southern life...community, culture and the environment,” Przybysz wonders if there a case to be made for McKissick working to *shape* that story or tell – not just the *story* – but competing *stories* about how we got to where we are as southerners and where we want to go next?

Louis Armstrong once said, “All music is folk music. I ain’t never heard a horse sing a song.” In doing so, he raised the larger question of how and why some people’s music gets called “folk” and other people’s music gets called “popular” or “classical.” What assumptions underpin these categorizations and to what effect? How much of what we now call folk music was the popular music before the advent of radio? How much of what we now call classical music was once the folk music of European elites? Over the past two decades, Przybysz has observed a resurgence of interest in materials-based forms of knowledge typically associated with folk and traditional arts among contemporary artists. Artists seeking to draw public attention to the natural world in urban environments learned to knit to “bomb” (wrap hand-knitted fabrics around) tree trunks and limbs in urban spaces. Then, there was Susan Phillips who won the prestigious Turner Prize for contemporary art in 2010 with a sound installation featuring herself singing different versions of a traditional sea shanty, “Lowlands Away.” And Theaster Gates, a Chicago-based, African American artist trained as a traditional Japanese potter

and urban designer who in 2012 created ceramic “soul wares” to re-ritualize the sharing of meals in a historically Black neighborhood.

These contemporary artists and many others like them have re-engaged so-called “traditional” art forms to reconceive and reconstitute community experiences in public spaces. Are they so different from the folk artists and advocates McKissick Museum and the SCAC collaborate to recognize as recipients of the Folk Heritage Award? Or do they simply operate in different art world contexts on a different scale? Przybysz is emphatic that for folklife research, collections, exhibitions, and publications to be meaningful to 21st-century audiences, especially the undergraduate population that is McKissick’s primary target audience, we must reframe folklife and traditional arts in a way that resonates with people beyond the niche groups of scholars, curators, and collectors who have been the museum’s main stakeholders. The two frameworks she finds most compelling at this historical juncture are those associated with the still emerging notions of social entrepreneurship and art as social practice. The idea that a business can generate earned revenue *and* do good in the community strikes her as an especially salient way of thinking about both the future of museums in an era of declining public and private support, as well as the economic role that many so-called folk art practices played and continue to play in the lives of individuals and communities. Similarly, the idea that there is growing demand for art forms whose meaning and significance is located as much in *processes* of community engagement as it is in any final *product*, seems particularly relevant to understanding the role culture might play in constituting and re-constituting societies and civil life.

While fully acknowledging the importance of the foundation built by the dedicated and talented museum staff over the past 30 years, the folklife program at McKissick is firmly focused on the future. In 2012, McKissick dedicated a major gallery space to folklife and traditional arts programming. The *Diverse Voices* gallery is the first such dedicated space at McKissick and provides an excellent venue to showcase the traditional arts of the South. In 2013, McKissick strengthened its relationship with the SCAC with the establishment of a grant-funded joint position, essentially becoming the home of the state folklorist once again. This increased staffing provides the capacity to plan and implement comprehensive and relevant public programming, as well as expand established joint programs like the TAAI and the Folk Heritage Award. Through digital technology, the FRC will continue to explore web-based resources like *Digital Traditions* and social media in efforts to engage as wide an audience as possible. Collaborations will continue to be important—with academic departments across the USC system, off-campus organizations like South Carolina Educational Television, and other community-based groups.

As a teaching institution, the museum provides educational opportunities for students in the classroom and practical experience through independent studies, internships, and graduate assistantships. Many programs, exhibitions, and collections-based projects generated by the FRC are the direct result of student involvement. Through this work, McKissick Museum will continue to foster dialogue about the traditional arts of the region, their role, and the importance they play in communities throughout the South.

Saddler Taylor is Chief Curator of Folklife and Fieldwork at McKissick Museum, Manager of the Folklife Resource Center, and Instructor in the University of South Carolina’s Honors College. He received his MA in Folk Studies from Western Kentucky University.

URLS <http://artsandsciences.sc.edu/mckissickmuseum/mckissick-museum>
<http://artsandsciences.sc.edu/mckissickmuseum/folklife-resource-center>
www.digitaltraditions.net
<http://www.southcarolinaarts.com/folkheritage>
<http://www.southcarolinaarts.com/grants/artists/folklifeapprentice.shtml>

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Newcomers and Belonging

***Journal of Folklore and Education* Volume 4 (2017)**

The theme for the 2017 *Journal of Folklore and Education* issue is dedicated to exploring how the field of Folklore offers tools, strategies, and resources to help educators understand how culture influences ways of learning, creates and strengthens communities, and expresses itself in neighborhoods and schools. Research-based writing that evaluates or assesses programs that use Folk Arts in Education tools and practice are also welcome. These research articles may intersect with the theme of “Newcomers,” but all submissions will be considered for publication if they have a research component.

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