



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Solomon McCombs papers, 1941-1974

Ioana Rates

Summer 1976

National Anthropological Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	Solomon McCombs papers
Date:	1941-1974
Identifier:	NAA.1974.0401
Creator:	McCombs, Solomon, 1913-1980
Extent:	2 Linear feet
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

When he retired in 1974 to Tulsa, Oklahoma, Solomon McCombs, Creek Indian artist, deposited those of his papers which he thought to be of interest to posterity in the National Anthropological Archives. More papers can expect to be added in the future. There are no accession numbers for the existing material.

Literary property rights to unpublished material in the collection are still retained by Solomon McCombs.

Processing Information

Finding aid by Ioana Rates, Summer 1976

Encoded by Zac Greenfield, February 2018

Preferred Citation

Solomon McCombs papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The Solomon McCombs Papers are open for research.

Access to the Solomon McCombs Papers requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical Note

Chronology

May 17, 1913

Born West of Eufaula, Oklahoma

1937-1937

Student at Bacone College, Oklahoma

1940-1941

First participation in an Indian art exhibition, Oklahoma Indian Painting, Tulsa, Oklahoma

1943	Student at Tulsa Downtown College
1943-1948	Employed by Douglas Aircraft Company, Tulsa, Oklahoma, U.S. Corps of Engineers, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Clovis Air Force Base and Bureau of Reclamation, Nebraska
1950-1956	Employed by General Services Administration, Washington D.C.
1954	Asian and African Tour sponsored by U.S. Department of State.
1956-1973	Employed by U.S. Department of State, Washington D.C.
1961	Married Margarita Sauer
1963	President, American Indian and Eskimo Cultural Foundation, Washington D.C.
1965	Waite Phillips Special Indian Artists Award, Tulsa, Oklahoma
1968	Grand Award, Five Civilized Tribes Museum, Muskogee, Oklahoma
1969	Grand Award, Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma
1970	First Prize, International Platform Association, Washington D.C.
1973	Retired to Tulsa, Oklahoma on December 30, 1973
1974	Retrospective one-man show, Washington Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.
1974	Welcome back one-man show, Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma
1976	First Prize, Trail of Tears Exhibit, Tulsa Oklahoma

Scope and Contents

Reflecting the professional activity of Solomon McCombs, Creek Indian artist, and promoter of his people's culture, these papers include correspondence, lectures, unpublished writings, photographs, and various other items collected by the artist.

The bulk of the correspondence consists of two categories of incoming letters pertaining to McCombs' artistic activities: 1) those referring to exhibitions, one-man shows, awards and prizes; 2) correspondence with fellow artists, such as Acee Bluee Eagle (maintained over a period of seven years, 1952-1958), Fred Beaver, Robert Mulky, and Joan Hill. Amply referred to, starting in 1948, are the annual exhibitions at the Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in which McCombs regularly participated. A substantial portion of the letters written during the 1954-1955 period refers to the artist's Asian and African tour, sponsored by the U.S. State Department and devoted to the presentation of the American Indian contribution to the development of the United States and its culture. Part of the correspondence related to his career as an illustrator, architectural draftsman, cartographer and audio-visual officer for the General Service Administration and the State Department. Some letters document his activities as a founder and President of American Indian and Eskimo Cultural Foundation. Included are also letters from prominent personalities, such as Hubert Humphrey and Richard Nixon.

The lectures on American Indian art, which are part of the collection, were presented on various occasions in the United States and abroad. One speech, which he entitled "My report to the Creeks," describes his experiences and observations abroad.

Among the subject files assembled by Solomon McCombs there is one on the Exhibitions at St. John's Church which contains material on the artist, his wife Margarita Sauer McCombs, and Anne T. Stinson who jointly exhibited there.

The photographs were taken at the Contemporary American Indian Art Exhibit sponsored by Arizona State University, the University of South Dakota and the University of Utah. Among the different items collected by S. McCombs, from stamps to all kinds of cards, there is a genealogy of the McIntosh family and a catalog list of an Exhibit of Oklahoma Indian Paintings during the 1940-1941 season in which are listed paintings by Solomon McCombs and Acee Blue Eagle.

There is very little on his private life or his career prior to coming to Washington D.C., and nothing on his childhood or education. Nor is there any reference made to his published works.

The National Anthropological Archives has a few of Solomon McCombs' works in its Collection of Traditional and Contemporary American Indian Art.

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence, 1941-1974 (bulk 1946-1973)

1.16 Linear feet

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically. Undated letters at the end.

Scope and Contents: Incoming and outgoing letters, some letters only referring to Solomon McCombs. The material relates to exhibitions at the Philbrook Art Museum, Five Civilized Tribes Museum, and Joslyn Memorial Art Museum. Included are letters to and from friends and artists, correspondence concerning his work for the U.S. Government and his Asian and African tour of 1954, and a few recognition letters from V.I.P.s.

Additonal material relating to the 1954 tour like receipts, bills, or calling cards may be found in the Miscellany file.

Box 1 Correspondence, 1941-1959

Box 2 Correspondence, 1960-1969

Box 3 Correspondence, 1970-1974

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Series 2: Lectures, unpublished writings, subject files, 1960-1973

0.42 Linear feet

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically within each subseries.

Scope and Contents: Typewritten lectures and speeches (some in spiral folders) mostly about American Indian art. Writings on the history and customs of the Creeks. Subject files as assembled originally by McCombs.

Box 4	Lectures
Box 4	Early history of the Creeks in Oklahoma
Box 4	Little Panther Foot
Box 4	They Believed it Strong
Box 4	The American Indian National Bank (Subject file)
Box 4	Exhibit St. John's Church (Subject file)
Box 4	Fashion Show - Vera Maxwell (Subject file)
Box 4	Five Civilized Tribes Museum (Subject file)

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Series 3: Miscellany

0.42 Linear feet

Arrangement: Arranged by type of material.

Scope and Contents: Photographs, picture postcards and Christmas greetings, formal cards, invitations, clippings from newspapers and magazines. Various materials collected by Solomon McCombs relating to his birth place and family history.

Box 5	Photographies
Box 5	Postcards, invitations
Box 5	Clippings
Box 5	Various material collected by S. McCombs
Box 5	Receipts, bills, etc. from the 1954 tour

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