



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

<b>Repository:</b>	National Anthropological Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Solomon McCombs Papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	NAA.1974.0401
<b>Date:</b>	1941-1974
<b>Extent:</b>	2 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	McCombs, Solomon, 1913-1980 (Creek)
<b>Language:</b>	English

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Literary property rights to unpublished material in the collection are still retained by Solomon McCombs.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

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## Biographical Note

### Chronology

<i>May 17, 1913</i>	Born West of Eufaula, Oklahoma
<i>1937-1937</i>	Student at Bacone College, Oklahoma
<i>1940-1941</i>	First participation in an Indian art exhibition, Oklahoma Indian Painting, Tulsa, Oklahoma
<i>1943</i>	Student at Tulsa Downtown College
<i>1943-1948</i>	Employed by Douglas Aircraft Company, Tulsa, Oklahoma, U.S. Corps of Engineers, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Clovis Air Force Base and Bureau of Reclamation, Nebraska
<i>1950-1956</i>	Employed by General Services Administration, Washington D.C.
<i>1954</i>	Asian and African Tour sponsored by U.S. Department of State.
<i>1956-1973</i>	Employed by U.S. Department of State, Washington D.C.
<i>1961</i>	Married Margarita Sauer
<i>1963</i>	President, American Indian and Eskimo Cultural Foundation, Washington D.C.
<i>1965</i>	Waite Phillips Special Indian Artists Award, Tulsa, Oklahoma
<i>1968</i>	Grand Award, Five Civilized Tribes Museum, Muskogee, Oklahoma
<i>1969</i>	Grand Award, Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma
<i>1970</i>	First Prize, International Platform Association, Washington D.C.
<i>1973</i>	Retired to Tulsa, Oklahoma on December 30, 1973
<i>1974</i>	Retrospective one-man show, Washington Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.
<i>1974</i>	Welcome back one-man show, Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma
<i>1976</i>	First Prize, Trail of Tears Exhibit, Tulsa Oklahoma

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## 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.

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## Container Listing

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

#### *1.16 Linear feet*

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.

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

Arranged chronologically. Undated letters at the end.

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*

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.

Arranged alphabetically within each subseries.

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*

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.

Arranged by type of material.

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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