

May 31, 1967

Mrs. Don Bulluck, Jr., President  
Junior Guild of Rocky Mount  
401 Charlotte Street  
Rocky Mount, North Carolina

Dear Mrs. Bulluck and Guild members:

We have just completed negotiations with Mrs. Lena Bulluck Davis of Rocky Mount for the purchase of one of her paintings to become a part of The Rocky Mount Arts & Crafts Center's permanent art collection. Mrs. Davis is a well-known primitive artist and her paintings of early scenes of Rocky Mount are much sought-after.

We hasten to share our great delight at the purchase with our friends in the Guild, for it was with funds given us by your group that we bought the painting! Efforts have been underway for over a year to acquire one of Mrs. Davis' paintings and we feel that it will quickly become one of the most popular pieces in our collection.

We are extremely indebted to the Guild for its interest in and support of The Arts Center's program - and particularly for making possible this very special acquisition. Come by and see it - and us whenever you can.

Cordially,

(Miss) Julia Jordan  
Executive Director

jj



May 31, 1967

Mrs. Lena B. Davis  
615 Buena Vista Avenue  
Rocky Mount, N. C.

Dear Mrs. Davis:

As we agreed in our telephone conversation today, enclosed is The Rocky Mount Arts & Crafts Center's check in the amount of \$200.00 for the purchase of your painting of the Church Picnic at Whitakers Mill.

You have made us very happy by agreeing to sell us this painting to become a part of our gallery's permanent collection. It will have very special meaning for us and all the people of Rocky Mount and we shall give it a spot of honor in our gallery, from whence it will be enjoyed by us all for years to come.

Again, our sincere thanks -- and do come and see us whenever you can.

Sincerely,

(Miss) Julia Jordan  
Executive Director

jj



# Davis tours nation 30 years ago

Compiled  
By LARRY GUPTON

(From the files of The Evening  
Telegram for the week ending July 13,  
1955.)

Rocky Mount's Arthur C. Davis  
visited homes throughout the country  
on July 4th when "everybody's Uncle  
Sam" appeared with emcee Dennis  
James on the CBS-TV human interest  
show, "On Your Account."

"Uncle Sam was seen by some 127  
stations in the U.S. plus Canada and  
Hawaii, as he related his story of a 20-  
year-old hobby that is an inspiration to  
every patriotic American. . . that of  
becoming the nation's grand old  
symbol, "Uncle Sam."

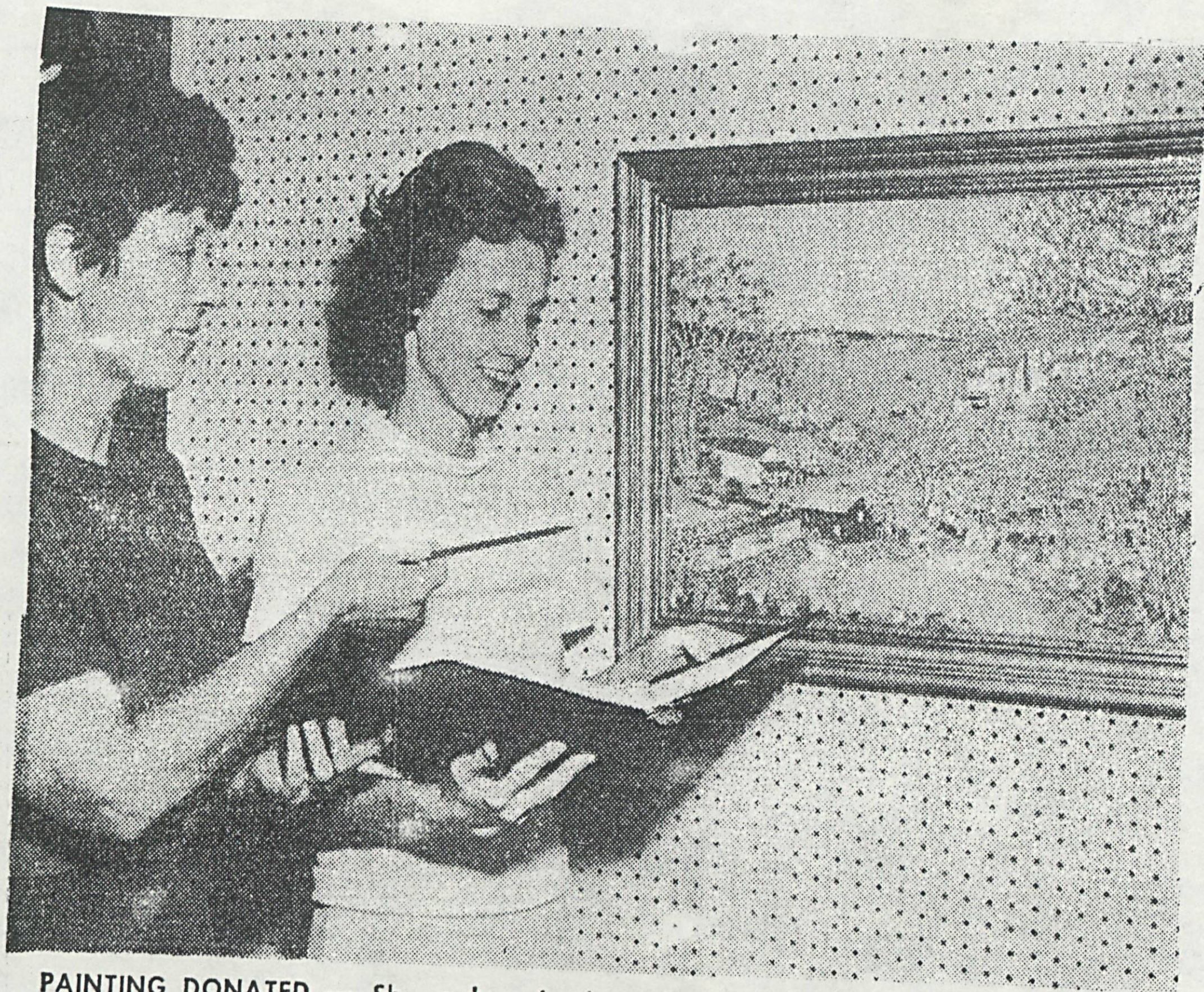
The former post office worker, who  
after 27 years of flawless service with  
the government agency, was forced to  
retire at 70, runs a fifty-acre tract of  
land with his vigorous 76 years, and  
receives buoyant thrills from being  
able to continue a wonderful life in  
America on his farm and playing

"Uncle Sam." Davis an affable,  
vigorous American citizen who has  
been devoted throughout his useful life  
to family, love of God, and devotion to  
work.

A father of six children and a  
grandfather six times, "Uncle Sam"  
represented to all who met him in New  
York an integral part of what has  
made this country great. An honorary  
member of the Lions Club, Davis  
attends their conventions in his  
familiar red, white, and blue attire. He  
has marched in parades in North  
Carolina, traveled to Chicago, New  
York and represented the state of  
North Carolina in the presidential  
inaugural of Harry Truman in the  
nation's capital.

Wearing his stimulating costume  
during his television appearance,  
Davis won \$300 from "On Your Ac-  
count" quiz master Dennis James,  
which he will use to perpetuate his  
"Uncle Sam" hobby.

The costume he wears today was a  
76th birthday present from the Lions  
Club for the willing service he has  
rendered them during his six-year  
honorary membership. His first  
costume was made 25 years ago by  
friends in Rocky Mount from old flags,  
some blue material and a top hat that  
had been worn by great grandpa Davis  
during Grover Cleveland's ad-  
ministration.



**PAINTING DONATED** — Shown here is the painting done by Mrs. Lena Bulluck Davis which was recently donated to the Arts Center here by the Junior Guild. At the left is Mrs. V. L. Thorp, Jr., director of the Hines Gallery of the Rocky Mount Arts Center. At the right is Mrs. Raymond Doyle, cultural interests chairman of the Rocky Mount Junior Guild. (Tele-gram Photo by Killebrew)

## Painting Is Given Arts Center

The Hines Gallery of the Rocky Mount Arts and Crafts Center recently acquired, through

the generosity of the Rocky Mount Junior Guild, a painting by Mrs. Lena Bulluck Davis of Rocky Mount to become a part of its permanent collection.

Done in oil on masonite, the painting was completed in 1951 and it titled, "Sunday Picnic At Whitakers Mill Pond."

The painting depicts a scene in early Rocky Mount history, which makes it a very appropriate addition to the Gallery during Rocky Mount's Centennial year.

The painting has been exhibited in the North Carolina Annual Artists Competition in Raleigh and in a showing by 30 North Carolina Painters at the Ruth Shaw Studio in New York City.

Mrs. Davis is a well-known primitive artist. Her work has been displayed in the High Museum of Atlanta and in other places throughout the Southeast.

She is a long-time resident of Rocky Mount and it is with pride that the Hines Gallery now displays one of her earliest paintings.

The Rocky Mount Arts and Crafts Center is sponsored by

the City of Rocky Mount Recreation Department and is open week days from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 until 5 p.m.



fragments of her early memories of places and occasions, woven together into little tapestries of beauty, along with many ideas from her ever active imagination, and woven--or painted--with deep affection and beauty.

### Catalogue of Paintings

(All paintings are in oil.)

1. A Baby Goes Home
2. Easter Monday
3. Recollections of my Childhood
4. Red Cabin Pond
5. Mother's Old Home (N. C. Artists Annual, 1948)
6. Fickickers' Retreat
7. The Home of Aunt Matilda
8. A Sunday in Spring
9. Waiting for the Mail Man ("Progressive Farmer Cover)
10. Shad Time in Carolina (Southeastern Artists Annual, Atlanta, 1959
11. My Old Home (N. C. Artists Annual, 1947)
12. The Road to Hunter Hill
13. The Winding Road
14. All Nature Says 'Tis Spring (N. C. Artists Annual, 1951)
15. The Trespasser (N. C. Artists Annual, 1950)
16. Sunset on Little Creek
17. Rocky Mount at the Turn of the Century

One-Man Show at the North Carolina State Art Gallery, 1951

Mrs. Davis has sometimes lent her paintings for exhibition in various places and for various occasions in her home town, Rocky Mount.

Art Center Hours: (Tuesday thru Saturday)

10 - 12; 1:00 - 5:00

Sunday: 3 to 5 P.M.

Closed on Mondays



Rocky Mount Arts Center  
P O Box 1180 Rocky Mount, NC 27802  
Tel: 252-972-1163 Fax: 252-972-1563

June 14, 2002

Jane Rohr  
P O Box 32  
Battleboro, NC 27809

Dear Mrs. Rohr,

As a follow up to our recent conversation, this letter will expand on details and requests for the proposed Lena Bullock Davis Retrospective to be held November 9-December 29. The Arts Center is very pleased to be able to present a retrospective of the Rocky Mount native who is considered to be the "Grandma Moses" of North Carolina. The retrospective, joining the ranks of other exhibition venues such as the High Museum, Atlanta; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh; Coach House Gallery, New York; Leach Museum, Norfolk; and other venues throughout Eastern North Carolina, will increase the exposure of the Davis' untrained works during a time of great attention toward folk art.

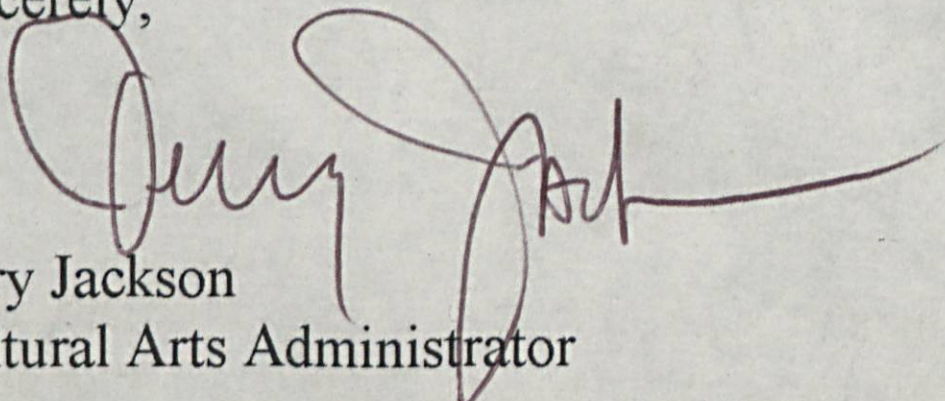
The Arts Center, now in its 45<sup>th</sup> year, is currently in the planning phase of a new \$12 million facility that will house visual and performing arts as well as the Rocky Mount Children's Museum. Exhibitions such as the Davis Retrospective will set standards for future Arts Center exhibitions and programming and will aid in the pursuit of accreditation for museum status.

A full color catalog will accompany the exhibition; Biruta Erdmann, Art History Professor Emeritus, East Carolina University, is the essayist for the publication. Erdmann, with a lifetime of studying art history, is ecstatic about Davis' works. She feels that the works are even stronger than those by Grandma Moses. The catalog will be for sale to the general public. In addition, it will be sent to North Carolina museums and arts facilities as an educational tool. Special events will also be a part of the exhibition. Due to the historical subject matter of the paintings, local historical organizations will be involved in programming, identifying subject matter and landmarks that remain in the community. An opening reception, lecture, dinner and educational programs for youth will round out the exhibition schedule.

I trust that this brief overview expresses our intent with the exhibition. Detailed information is included concerning the logistics of the exhibition. Thank you for taking part in this important exhibition by sharing information about Mrs. Davis; we are most appreciative of the loan of paintings.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to call me at 252-972-1164.

Sincerely,



Jerry Jackson  
Cultural Arts Administrator



## Margaret Lena Bullock Davis: A Retrospective (working title only)

### Exhibition Timeline

Photographing and cataloging all work	June 24-July 12
Catalog text compiled	July 19
Catalog to printer	August 1
Catalog released	October 12
Pick-up of works	October 21-25
All work in house	October 28-31
Exhibition Dates	November 9-December 29

### Cataloging and Photographing work

Ronald L. Sowers Photography, Rocky Mount, NC, will photograph all works. Appointments to photograph works on site or at photo studio can be arranged. All photography is the responsibility of the Arts Center and become the property of the Center. All images will be used for catalog and publicity purposes. Jerry Jackson, Cultural Arts Administrator, will catalogue all works or exhibit materials. A condition report will be filed for each work on loan and will be used for insurance purposes.

### Catalog

A full-color, 24 page, 8.5"x 8.5" finished size catalog will be printed by Theo Davis and Sons, Inc. 300 copies are scheduled for printing. All costs are the responsibility of the Rocky Mount Arts Center. Catalogs will be provided, free of charge, for immediate (children and grandchildren) Davis family members.

### Insurance

All works or objects for exhibit will be fully insured with a door to door policy.

### Loan sources, paintings and biographical information

Betsy Foster, Haworth, New Jersey  
Florence Holder, Raleigh, North Carolina  
Jane Rohr, Battleboro, New Jersey  
Alice Murphy  
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh North Carolina  
Stonewall Manor, Rocky Mount, North Carolina  
Rocky Mount Arts Center, Rocky Mount, North Carolina  
Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount, North Carolina  
Private collections

All exhibited works and works published in catalog will be identified with a loan source unless otherwise requested.

### Special Events and Programming

November 8 Celebration Dinner and lecture by Biruta Erdmann, catalog essayist  
November 9 Public opening reception, 6-8 pm  
TBA Senior Citizen/historical identification program  
TBA Historical Preservation identification program  
November 16 *Sensational Saturday*, youth program designed around Davis exhibition  
As requested School tours and lectures  
All programming will be planned and designed by Arts Center staff.



### **Packing and Transportation**

- • • All packing and transportation is the sole responsibility of the Arts Center unless other arrangements are made with loan source.

### **Publicity**

All publicity is the responsibility of the Arts Center. Every effort will be made to receive coverage throughout the state through newspapers, magazines, art publications, radio, and television. Target magazines are *Southern Living*, *Our State*, and *Metro*. A live broadcast with WITN, a local affiliate, will be requested.

### **Biographical**

Any biographical information regarding Mrs. Davis and her paintings will be extremely helpful to the completion of the exhibition and catalog.

### **Additional Venue**

The Cameron Art Museum in Wilmington, NC has shown interest in the Davis exhibition and is considering the possibility of including it in their schedule. The museum, formally known as St. John's, recently opened a new \$12 million facility. The focus of the museum is North Carolina artists with an emphasis on Claude Howell and Minnie Evans. Additional information on this venue is forthcoming.