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Summer 2006

Collecting Stories, Preserving Traditions: The Congaree Swamp Cultural History Project

Stephen Criswell, Ph.D.
Visiting Professor of English, Folklore,
and Native American Studies
University of South Carolina Lancaster

A few days before Thanksgiving in 2004, folklorist Lesley Williams, Susan Dugan, a Benedict College Mass Communications professor, and I were welcomed into the Hopkins home of Marie Adams to interview her father, ninety-two year old Ulysses Barber and his sister-in-law Lessie Rice. The three of us were finishing up a Benedict College project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities that focused on combining folklife fieldwork and service-learning activities. At the suggestion of our colleague and co-participant English professor Rhonda Grego, our project had begun to focus on traditions in Lower Richland County. We were introduced to Mr. (aka Professor) Barber and Ms. Rice through contacts that Rhonda and John Grego had made at Swampfest earlier that year. Mr. Barber and his sister-in-law talked with us for nearly two hours, sharing with us their experiences growing up near the Congaree Swamp. They spoke of box socials, hunting and fishing adventures, agricultural life in the early 20th century, home-remedies, and a host of other fascinating subjects. We left promising to return after the holidays to get down on tape another couple of hours of their life histories. Unfortunately, within a couple of weeks we received word that Ulysses Barber had passed away.

The passing of Mr. Barber serves as a reminder that every year communities lose important members, we folklorists call them “tradition-bearers,” who carry in

their memories and experiences a local history often not found in books. Their lives and the way they live them are part of a tradition stretching back decades, even centuries; and, in the best of circumstances, their children carry on some part of that tradition. Often, it is necessary for scholars, community leaders, and others who recognize the value of folkways to step in and try to help preserve these traditions. The Congaree Swamp Cultural History Project is attempting to document and help preserve the folklife and cultural traditions of the region in and around Congaree National Park. While the Swamp has long been recognized as an important resource for scholars of natural history, it is also home to a rich oral history and a wealth of cultural traditions, particularly among its African American residents, that are quickly being lost. Lesley Williams and I, along with Rhonda and John Grego, Susan Dugan, Dr. Gwenda Greene, and other student and community volunteers, have just finished our first year of this effort to document these traditions and this history. Our work has received support from the Friends of Congaree Swamp, the South Carolina Traditional Arts Network, the SC Arts Commission, the Humanities Council SC, and Congaree National Park.

Traditions continued on page 3

Prof. Stephen Criswell (right) at the Friends table during the 2006 Fort Motte Reunion.



President's Corner



Dr. John Grego

New Superintendent

The National Park Service recently announced that Columbia native Tracy Fehl Swartout has been named Superintendent of Congaree National Park; she will start effective September 28, 2006, replacing Martha Bogle, who transferred to Blue Ridge National Parkway September 19, 2005.

Ms. Swartout earned her Bachelor's degree in Environmental Geography from USC in 1995 and a Master's Degree in Natural Resource Management from the University of Waterloo (Toronto, Ontario) in 1997. She served 7 years with the National Park Service Office of the Comptroller in Herndon, VA, and has been the program lead for the Business Management Group the last two years. She has extensive experience assisting Park Service units with financial management.

Superintendent Swartout plans to appear at our October 22 Annual Meeting—be sure to make plans to meet her. And look for more information about her in our next newsletter.

Highway 601 Bridges

On June 3, 2006, SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC) announced a Proposed Decision on the Wetlands permit for the Highway 601 bridges. The SC Department of Transportation (SC DOT) proposes to replace the 4 bridges at the site, while leaving almost 2 miles of embankment in place, and filling additional wetlands. Friends of Congaree Swamp and the South Carolina Wildlife Federation, among others, have fought for over 2 years to request additional bridging over the floodplain.

SC DHEC's decision essentially agreed with SC DOT's modest efforts at mitigation—only 122.5

feet (representing 1% of the current embankment) of additional bridging will be built. In addition, two small culverts (5 feet in diameter) would be added for the dual purpose of flood relief and wildlife passage.

On the other hand, SC DHEC required the road embankment to be much steeper (45 degrees instead of 30 degrees) than SC DOT had requested in order to reduce wetlands impacts. The steeper slopes would require a much more heavily engineered embankment than SCDOT had anticipated.

In the end, the Notice left no one happy. SC DOT has appealed the decision, and Friends of Congaree Swamp, South Carolina Wildlife Federation, and Audubon SC have appealed the decision as well. We are grateful to Jimmy Chandler of South Carolina Environmental Law Project (SCELP) for assisting us in the appeals process.

SC DHEC recently adopted a new appeals procedure. Rather than first appearing before an Administrative Law Court, we will participate in a Final Review before the full SC DHEC Board. Each party—SC DHEC, SC DOT, and SC Environmental Law Project—will have a half-hour to present arguments, with additional opportunities for rebuttals and closing statements.

The Final Review is scheduled for August 10, and it is entirely possible that the SC DHEC Board could make a recommendation that same day. Pending the outcome of the Final Review, additional steps in the appeals process could be pursued.

Though resource agencies (SC Department of Natural Resources, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service) have registered strong objections to SC DOT's plan throughout the process, they will not formally be participating in appeals process. Nevertheless, they have provided us with some of our strongest arguments against the wetlands permit, and we appreciate their continued interest and support.

Folklife fieldwork can be slow going, especially among a population justifiably suspicious of outsiders; and so, we have purposely moved slowly and cautiously, making sure to respect the privacy and dignity of our informants. However, our efforts have already proved fruitful. Through our interviews with local residents and our visits to such community festivals as Swampfest, the Good Hope Reunion, and the Fort Motte Community Festival, we have collected stories about maroon villages of escaped slaves in the Swamp, of hunting, fishing, and boating expeditions, of local baseball heroes, of the simple beauty of the “old way of life,” and of the evils of racism and terrorism of the KKK. We have also documented the unique cemetery markers of the local church graveyards, local yard art, and family reunion traditions; and we are desperately trying to find members of a basket-making family originally from the Hopkins area.

In the coming months, we’ll be interviewing more residents of Lower Richland and northern Calhoun and Orangeburg counties, returning to Good Hope reunion near St. Matthews, talking with Julian Adams—a descendent of Ned Adams, author of *Tales of the Congaree*—and we will continue to transcribe and digitize our documentation. Eventually, our research materials and copies of our photographs, videos, and interviews will be shared with the Park to help the staff create a display on the Swamp’s cultural heritage. And we have plans for curricular materials, academic articles, and other vehicles for sharing the history and culture of this unique region with others.

We would like to ask for assistance from readers of this newsletter. If you are a long-time resident of the region around the Swamp, if you know of long-time residents with stories to tell, if you know of artists, craftspeople, hunters, anglers, musicians, quilters, or others with skills, hobbies, or professions learned at the foot of elders, please contact me at criswese@gwm.sc.edu or at 803-313-7108.

We thank Friends of Congaree Swamp for their support and look forward to sharing the results of our project with you all.

Upcoming Field Trips & Events

Kingsnake Trail Extension Hike September 23, 2006 9 AM-3 PM

A couple years ago, Congaree National Park staff had considered several different proposals for trail extensions; though the trail project is currently in hiatus, Friends will explore one of the proposed trails on this hike.

The trail starts on the Kingsnake Trail and then follows an old logging road between Horseshoe Pond and Fishhook Slough. After that, the trail follows Frenchman’s Gut and Frenchman’s Pond before joining Oakridge Trail, which eventually meets with Kingsnake Trail. We may make adjustments to return to either Kingsnake Trail or Oakridge Trail sooner.

Highlights include good birding habitat, a large cypress Tree with an 8-foot knee in Moccasin Pond, the National Co-Champion Persimmon, and a large Cherrybark Oak off the Kingsnake Trail. We should see feral hogs, and will discuss Park research along the way.

Prepare for a long hike with off-trail stretches, though generally along a good grade. Be sure to wear long pants and a good pair of hiking boots, and bring water, insect repellent and food.

Contact John Grego at 777-5110 (W), 783-9270 (H), jrgrego@mindspring.com (H), grego@stat.sc.edu (W) if interested. Limited to first 20 participants.



(C) Rhonda Grego

Upcoming Field Trips & Events



(c) William Graff

Friends Annual Meeting Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve Sunday, October 22, 2006 2:00 PM — Dark

The Friends will hold its Annual Meeting at Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve on Sunday, October 22 from 2 PM until dark. The Congaree Bluffs Heritage Preserve, located in Calhoun County opposite Congaree National Park, comprises 201 acres and contains steep, undisturbed bluffs bordering the Congaree River. A well-maintained trail system allows the visitor to follow the river and explore steep ravines on the preserve. A viewing platform on the bluffs' edge provides a spectacular overlook of the Park. A registration form will be made available shortly.

Directions:

From U.S. Highway 601 in Calhoun County, turn west on S.C. Highway 419 and continue 2.5 miles to the railroad tracks in Fort Motte. After crossing the tracks, continue straight for 1 mile to Turkey Track Lane. Turn right on Turkey Track Lane (a dirt road) and follow it 0.95 miles. Then, turn left just before the "Pennyworth Homes" sign and continue 0.3 miles to the white house at the preserve.

Bates Fork Field Trip Sunday, November 12, 2006 2:00-5:00

Friends of Congaree will host a hike on Sunday, 12 November, 2006, to see the new acquisition to Congaree National Park – the 2395-acre Bates Fork Tract. Located on the east side of US 601, Bates Fork is a peninsula surrounded by the Wateree River on the east and the Congaree on the west. Bates Fork features several small natural ponds, an oxbow lake fittingly called Horseshoe Lake, and is best known for a large natural sand ridge that juts up above the floodplain called Sampson Island. Although Bates Fork has no old growth forest and there are several large recent clearcuts, we will still see some nice second-growth forest and have an opportunity to see some swamp fauna – especially birds, maybe a few mammals and perhaps a snake or two. We will also visit Sampson Island, a really unique piece of floodplain geology.

This will be an easy hike (I promise) of about 3.5 miles, all on the existing dirt road system. A canteen of water or other liquid refreshment is recommended, as well as binoculars and camera if you prefer. The bugs should be dormant by then but a small bit of repellent might be handy “just in case.”

To sign-up contact John Cely at 803-782-7450, jecely@sc.rr.com.



Share your newsletter with a friend!

Events in Review

Dawn Chorus Walk at Congaree National Park

20 May 2006

Sponsored by Friends of Congaree Swamp

Robin Carter

This was the second annual Dawn Chorus walk at Congaree National Park. Thirty-one participants started at the after-hours parking lot and walked into the floodplain for about a mile. When we got back to the picnic area near the Visitor Center volunteers from Friends of Congaree Swamp had cooked a wonderful breakfast of shrimp and grits, biscuits, scones, and salmon strata for us. Rain was threatening during the entire walk, but held off until we were all under the picnic shelter enjoying breakfast. It was a wonderful dawn in the park!

The information from our walk was reported to the "International Dawn Chorus Day (ICDC)" which is an organization that encourages dawn chorus events around the world (but mostly in Europe). In northern Europe the birds start really early (say 3:30 AM or earlier), since dawn in May is so early.

Species List:

Mourning Dove	Brown-headed Nuthatch
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Carolina Wren
Barred Owl	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Whip-poor-will	Eastern Bluebird
Red-headed Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Northern Parula
Downy Woodpecker	Yellow-throated Warbler
Hairy Woodpecker	Pine Warbler
Pileated Woodpecker	Prothonotary Warbler
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Swainson's Warbler
Acadian Flycatcher	Kentucky Warbler
Great Crested Flycatcher	Hooded Warbler
White-eyed Vireo	Summer Tanager
Yellow-throated Vireo	Northern Cardinal
Red-eyed Vireo	Blue Grosbeak
Purple Martin	Indigo Bunting
Tufted Titmouse	Brown-headed Cowbird
White-breasted Nuthatch	



(c) Vickie Swank



(c) Vickie Swank

Congaree National Park 2006 Butterfly Count

Sunshine is a great thing when it comes to searching for butterflies! On Saturday June 10th we had plenty of sunshine for the Congaree Butterfly Count, a one-day census of butterfly species viewed within a 15-mile diameter circle, which included the national park. Sun was a welcome factor especially after the past two years when the counts were conducted during overcast and even rainy conditions.

Unfortunately it may have been the lack of moisture from a drought-ridden Spring that contributed to relatively low numbers of butterflies being observed on what were otherwise good conditions—a bright and sunny day. There were also limited nectar sources (blooming flowers) for butterflies to feed on, further reducing the numbers of butterflies observed.

Twenty volunteers split up into two groups to search the most easily accessible and likely trail locations for spotting butterflies. Groups searched the sunny park entrance road, after-hours parking lot and field, the burned forest along the bluff, the maintenance yard, the service road/Sims trail, Wise Lake field, portions of the boardwalk trail, and Bates Old River/601 boat launch area. Additionally, Dennis Forsythe,

a long-time contributor to the Congaree butterfly count, drove state route 601 from St Matthews towards the park to add numerous roadside sightings to the final count tally. Oh the wisdom of butterflying from an air-conditioned car!

Even with the heat in the mid-90s, volunteers remained enthusiastic and shared skill levels to identify butterflies. Overall the numbers and diversity were lower than expected. Three hundred and sixty-three butterflies were seen, representing thirty different species. There were surprises; only 4 snout butterflies observed all day! There were great collective identifications; identifying the differences in the spot patterns of Southern and Creole Pearly-Eyes. And there were mysteries; did we see Spring or Summer Azure species? Uncertainty led us to report the generalized “two Azure species”.

The park is grateful to all the volunteers that contributed to this year’s count. We look forward to you and others being involved with this project again in the future.

Species observed:

Pipevine Swallowtail-1	Cloudless Sulphur-9	Common Buckeye-95	Horace’s Duskywing-27
Zebra Swallowtail-11	Sleepy Orange-6	Red-spotted Purple-1	Common Checkered Skipper-8
Black Swallowtail-2	Gray Hairstreak-5	Hackberry Emperor-6	Zarucco Duskywing-10
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail-5 (including 1 dark phase female)	Azure species –2	Tawny Emperor-1	Fiery Skipper-12
	American Snout-4	Southern Pearly-eye-4	Dun Skipper-13
Spicebush Swallowtail-2	Variiegated Fritillary-91	Creole Pearly-eye-2	Lace-winged Roadside Skipper-1
Cabbage White-2	Pearl Crescent-28	Little Wood Satyr-1	Ocala Skipper-2
Orange Sulphur –5	American Lady-6	Monarch-1	

Update on Waters Classification

Waters Reclassified in Congaree National Park

On May 31, 2006, a reach of Cedar Creek within Congaree National Park was reclassified as the first Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW) in South Carolina. At the same time, all other waters within the park (west of the Norfolk Southern railroad) were reclassified as Outstanding Resource Waters. Though many coastal and mountain waters are classified as ORW, this represented the first successful ORW designation for waters in the Midlands.

This process began in 2005, when the National Park Service requested the S.C. Dept. of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) to evaluate changing the classification of waters within Congaree National Park from Freshwaters (FW) to Outstanding Resource Waters and to consider classifying a portion of Cedar Creek as Outstanding National Resource Waters.

Following DHEC's internal evaluation, public participation began with DHEC's Notice of Drafting, published August 26, 2005 in the *State Register*. The Notice announced DHEC's intention to revise Regulation 61-69 to reclassify streams within the boundary of Congaree National Park. DHEC invited stakeholders to attend a September 14, 2005 meeting at which the proposed reclassification was explained and discussed. Friends of Congaree Swamp and the South Carolina Wildlife Federation submitted statements of support to DHEC in September 2005 during the public comment period which followed the Notice of Drafting.

In November 2005, the S.C. Board of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC's governing board) authorized DHEC staff to proceed with a Notice of Proposed Regulation, published November 25, 2005 in the *State Register*. This phase of the process included a Staff Information Forum on January 4, 2006, at which Friends of Congaree Swamp and the S.C. Wildlife Federation spoke in support of the proposed regulation.

The S.C. Board of Health and Environmental Control conducted a public hearing February 9, 2006 about the proposed regulation. Again, Friends of Congaree Swamp and the S.C. Wildlife Federation spoke in support of the proposed reclassification of waters.

Immediately following the public hearing, the Board unanimously approved a motion "to find for the need and reasonableness of the proposed regulation and approve it for submission to the legislature for review."

The proposed regulation was submitted February 21 to the S.C. General Assembly for review. In the S.C. House of Representatives, the regulation was referred to the Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee. After favorably considering the proposed regulation, the Committee introduced a Joint Resolution (H.4858) in the House of Representatives on March 21 to approve DHEC's regulation to reclassify waters within Congaree National Park. After approving this resolution April 6 and April 7, the House transmitted the Joint Resolution to the S.C. Senate.

After favorable consideration by the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, the Joint Resolution was approved May 18 and May 23 by the full Senate.

The final step was gubernatorial approval. The waters within Congaree National Park were reclassified when Gov. Mark Sanford signed the Joint Resolution on May 31.

This reclassification does not apply to waters in the 2395-acre Bates Fork tract (east of US Highway 601) because the reclassification process began before the National Park Service purchased this tract. Also, though its status attracted attention from municipal and industrial stakeholders throughout the process, the Congaree River is unaffected; it remains classified as Freshwaters.



Post Office Box 7746
Columbia, SC 29202-7746

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**Advocates for Congaree National Park
and its unique environment.**

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Yes, I would like to support conservation of Congaree Swamp for future generations. Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of \$ _____. Please make your check payable to Friends of Congaree Swamp.

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Mailing Address: _____
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I would like to work on the following committee(s):

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_____ Research _____ Other: _____

In addition to my membership, I would like to give \$ _____ as a donation to Friends of Congaree Swamp:

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Please provide contact information so we can inform the person or family:

Name: _____

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

I would like to order the following items (proceeds benefit FCS projects): \$ _____ enclosed.

_____ copies of the beautifully detailed **"Map of Congaree National Park and Vicinity"** @ \$12.95 each/plus \$3.50 s/h

_____ copies of **"Images of Congaree Swamp,"** a 64-page, full color, photographic book of the park @ \$10 each/plus \$2.50 s/h

Thank You For Supporting Friends of Congaree Swamp!

Friends of Congaree Swamp, PO Box 7746, Columbia, SC 29202-7746

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