MY ADVENTURES WITH THE SOUTH CAROLINA TRICENTENNIAL*

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The memory of the South Carolina Tricentennial, like beauty, is in the eyes of the beholder. To some it was a moment of fun and glory, leaving lasting achievements. To others it was a fiasco of astronomical proportions, a disaster unequaled in 300 years. It stumbled into history at midnight on June 30, 1971, a pathetic bundle of uncertainty. Was it or wasn't it a success? Those who were qualified to answer this question were too numbed by exhaustion and bewilderment, as well as overjoyed by relief, to probe the mystery. In the almost twelve years since the end, few have undertaken to speculate, much less articulate, on the answers, and I assure you that this paper does not presume to be definitive. It only claims, as the title says, to be an eye-witness account, the tales of my own Tricentennial adventures.

The General Assembly created the Tricentennial Commission in 1956 to plan an observance of the 300th anniversary of the landing at Charleston of a small group of English settlers from who South Carolina traces its beginnings. The original commission was not activated, but in March 1966 the Assembly amended the law and made provision for the appointment of a commission of twenty-six members. Funding came chiefly from appropriations from the General Assembly and grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the city and county governments of Charleston, Columbia, and Greenville.

In August 1966, the South Carolina Tricentennial Commission formally organized and began the search for an Executive Director. The following June it announced the election of James Miller Barnett of Georgia, a sophisticated and impressive person of vast intellect and administrative ability. He had received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University in

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government and social psychology, done graduate study at Massachuetts Institute of Technology in public administration, studied organ at Julliard, served in World War II as staff Secretary for General Lucius Clay and following the war, arranged for the entertainment of "VIPs" who visited United States headquarters in Europe. He reestablished the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festivals. After the war he worked with Frank Lloyd Wright in the finishing stages of the Guggenheim Museum. He was financially independent. The above description is filed in the records of the Tricentennial Commission. What it does not say is that Mr. Barnett had considerable difficulty at times relating himself to other members of the human race, possessed an eloquent vocabulary of profanity, and his explosions were more feared in Columbia than the army of General William Tecumseh Sherman. In spite of this, he could be, and usually was, a gracious person and was known to all the staff simply as "Mr. B." He endured unbelievable blame and riticism, some of which he deserved, but rumors and opinions the contrary, he was a man of integrity.

I am sure that the day Mr. B. arrived in Columbia, the whole town felt something like an electric charge. Setting up temporary headquarters in the old Columbia Hotel, he began scribbling off the first of his thousands of memos and ideas. One of the first major decisions concerned the exhibition center, or centers. The 1965 plan for the celebration envisioned one big center at Charleston. Its location was obvious, Albermarle Point on the Ashley. There in 1670 the landing and first settlement was made. By rare good fortune, the location had remained undeveloped and in its natural state, while Charleston by the twentieth century, practically surrounded it. This was possible because of the protection given by its latest owners, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph I. Waring, who began to dream in the 1930's that it would some day become a public shrine. Charleston, of course, would be the scene of the Tricentennial. Or would it? Public opinion throughout the state asked why the celebration should be confined to the founding of the state? Why not celebrate South Carolina's 300 years? Early in the fall of 1967 the Commission voted to establish three exhibition centers. The one in the low country would cover the first century, 1670-1770; the

midlands center would concentrate on 1770-1870; the up-country center would reflect South Carolina from 1870 to 1970.

Another early decision was the selection by Mr. B. of Col. Albert L. Betz as Deputy Director of the staff that eventually numbered around thirty. This did not count guides and other part-time employees. Col. Betz was a personal friend and former army colleague of Mr. B. He was the financial administrator of the Tricentennial. The "Colonel," as everybody called him, was a warm, alive human being, full of good humor and with a broad shoulder that soaked up many tears. He was no push-over, but he had a listening pair of ears and he knew how to explain complicated problems, our problems, to Mr. B. in plain English. Oh, how we loved the Colonel!

About the same time Mr. B. chose the Colonel, he picked Carl T. McClendon of Edgefield as Coordinator of Local Events. Carl had the equipment to do his job — patience, creativity, presistence, self-control, and a deep love for South Carolina history. The results of his labors in every county in the state will long out-live most of the spectacular features of the celebration.

Those who dismiss the Tricentennial as a disaster cannot be informed about the work of the seven state-wide committees, formed in 1967. Most of them built dreams greater than they could fulfill, but every one of them succeeded to a large degree in carrying out its aims. A fuller account of their accomplishments is given in Appendix B.

As 1967 came to a close, the program structure of the celebration was well on its way and the time had come for employing a full professional staff and acquiring adequate headquarters. A spacious nineteenth century mansion opposite the Governor's Mansion was available and the Commission occupied it in January, 1968. The mansion was known as the Boyleston House for its long-time owner who had cared for it with pride and surrounded it with two acres of gardens. The Colonel's office was in Mrs. Boyleston's former dining room. He told us, with a twinkle in his eye, that she was pleased that we were there. We asked him how he knew and he assured us that she checked about the house almost every afternoon around five-thirty. Mrs.

Boyleston, of course, had been dead for many years.

It was just before Mr. B. moved from the Columbia Hotel that I paid my first call on him. My husband and I were moving to Columbia and, like many lovers of South Carolina history, I felt I was exactly what the celebration was looking for. Mr. B.had other ideas. He received me politely, but firmly said he was not yet ready to employ anyone to work on research. Soon after he moved into the Boyleson House, I called on him again. Yes, he was going to have a research group, but no, he was not ready to put it together. I waited a while. One day I ran into Nancy Vance Ashmore at the South Caroliniana Library. She told me she was finishing work on a Master's Degree, that Mr. B. had employed her and Lucia Harrison to do research, and that they were to begin about the first of September. Now Lucia and Nancy Vance are just as brainy and energetic a pair as anybody could have found, and something more. Suddenly I understood something. They are the age of my daughter! Mr. B. wanted young and beautiful researchers. The nerve of him! I went back to the Boyleston House and applied for the third time. Unfortunately, I was still neither young nor beautiful so Mr. B. must have thrown in the towel to get rid of me. "O.K.," he said, "Monday, September second!"

Months before I started working for the Tricentennial, the Commission had completed purchase of the Waring Plantation at Olde Towne and had decided that the Midlands Center would be a four-acre block opposite the Mills House in downtown Columbia. With HUD funds, this block had to be acquired lot by lot. Its central attraction was the historic 1822 Hampton-Preston house which was in an advanced stage of dilapidation. Just behind this house were several apartment buildings that were once dormitories and classrooms when the Hampton-Preston mansion housed a college. When the Tricentennial decided to puchase the block, all the property owners sold their holdings except Miss Annie Mary Timmons, who owned the apartment buildings. Her property was critical to the exhibition because it occupied the core of the block, but Miss Timmons refused to sell, not only at the appraised price, but at any price. The state, in behalf of the Commission, sued, won, and condemned the property for $325,000. But Miss Timmons appealed

and the case dragged through the Supreme Court. The Tricentennial record states: "This situation is one of the first in which right of condemnation was exercised by a state for the purpose of acquiring historical property." The land was finally acquired and the unsightly buildings demolished, but not until 1971. Many South Carolinians who followed the calamities of the exhibition buildings in Charleston and Greenville were not aware of the frustrations and disappointment that the Columbia Center endured because of the delay in acquiring the core of its exhibition block. By the spring of 1968, Greenville and Roper Mountain had won a lively contest with Spartanburg County for the up-country center. The mountain site was not only the more dramatic and preferable, but its acquisition was both speeded and eased by the enthusiastic involvement of a group of textile leaders. These envisioned a permanent textile museum in the exhibition building after the celebration closed.

On my first day of work, Mr. B. seated Lucia, Nancy Vance, and me in a circle before his desk and his instructions went something like this: "The success of our exhibition centers will depend on what they tell visitors about South Carolina. This calls for information on our past and present, accurately and in depth. We want to know about everything. That means a great volume of information. Ding tells me that several not too successful international exhibitions in recent times did not have the back-up of a strong research team. [I wondered who Ding was, but didn't dare to ask.] Now you are our team. I have studied your credentials and I believe you can do the job. The material we need is in our libraries, state archives, museums, interviews, and wherever you can find it. Now go and get it." He showed us a form we were to use that he called a "story-line." We were to fill as many pages as the amount and importance of the subject required. "Make xerox copies," he said, "File two in a basket in my secretary's office and keep two for your group file. If you are working, I'll know by your production. And by the way, I predict that each of you will learn enough to entitle you to a master's degree on South Carolina history by the time we open." On that point he was absolutely accurate. When I later compared what I knew about South Carolina before that day and what I knew two years later, I knew he was right. I

regret to add that nobody offered even one of us a degree.

We three hustled upstairs to an almost bare room, containing only three desks with chairs, three typewriters, and a file cabinet. We danced around with glee. Maybe Mr. B. didn't know it, but he had just tossed three rabbits into the briar patch! We agreed that Mr. B. had been broad enough on what he wanted, but he hadn't told us how to get started. After long discussion, we came through with an inspired idea. It had to be inspired because it guided us unfailingly to the end. We took the Dewey-Decimal subject heading lists and applied them to South Carolina. We made long lists of the obvious, gradually searching more and more for the obscure. We worked independently, but checked off each subject as we filed our reports. I can't say that we never disagreed with each other, but we never quarreled. Lucia and I both claimed the Revolution for our centers. Since we never settled which would get it, both of us included it. Beginning that first day we formed a strong loyalty to each other and a commitment to the Tricentennial that was never shaken even through the adversities that were before us.

While we were cranking up in the research department, we were aware of continuous activity in the two front rooms upstairs — the sound of typewriters, rattling of paper, shuffling boxes, and many feet there. Carl McClendon and his associates were preparing promotional information and loading his car to deliver to the local committees in all the counties. He also edited a newspaper to report what was going on in one county to stimulate its lagging neighbor. In the other front room Sharon Hagins' staff coordinated the programs and publications that were pouring from the statewide committees. Downstairs a steady stream of Commissioner, architects, engineers, representatives of state and federal agencies flowed through Mr. B.'s and the Colonel's offices. The basement buzzed with the Public Relations Department guided by John Wrisley. Racing for material for story-line after story-line, I had little time, however, to keep track of what everybody was doing. More and more the staff resembled the crew of a train that grew longer and longer, picking up speed. We hopped aboard, took hold, and rarely saw some of the crew.

I hadn't been working long when an old weakness caught up with me. It is probably a verifiable fact that I do not have one mechanical brain cell in my head. The xerox machine soon discovered me. When I crossed the threshold of the printing and supply room in the basement, that old machine knew I was coming. It all but never turned out a decent job for me. While Lucia and Nancy Vance whizzed out copies without a hitch, it usually did nothing at all for me. Woefully, I appealed to anybody in range to rescue me, but when all else failed, I went to the Colonel. After about my twenty-fifth trip, the Colonel took off his spectacles, laid down his pen and gave me an ultimatum. "Loulie, there is **nothing** wrong with that machine. It's you! From now on you are not to even touch it. Call somebody, anybody, when you are ready to print, but stay out of that room!"

The chief resources of our information were the South Caroliniana Library, the state archives, and the Columbia Museum. Several times we had to go to Charleston, but gradually Nancy Vance and I left Charleston to Lucia who aspired to an assignment there when the center opened. But on one trip to Charleston, Milby Burton, Director of the Charleston Museum, gave us his VIP tour, Anna Rutledge showed us many secrets of hidden alleys and gardens in the lower city, and Mrs. Waring served refreshments as we looked out the window at Marleboro Point. Mr. B. encouraged us to seek interviews for first-hand information even if we had to hit the road to get them. In Spartanburg, Sam Manning told me more about South Carolina Indians than I had ever read. At Walnut Grove Plantation on a gray winter afternoon Bucky Buchanan told me about "do-it-yourself" restoration while he served me coffee around a potbellied stove in the drovers' house. I learned about the American Revolution, what really happened, who did it, and why from Charles Lee, our state archivist, in a long, long interview. An engineer, with rolls of blueprints, showed me over Roper Mountain and a textile executive sold me his dream of a textile museum on that mountain. A number of times Mr. B. sent the three of us to represent him at Charleston and Columbia social functions. While these were working assignments, we enjoyed them and met many lovers of South

Carolina. Twice Mr. B. sent Lucia and me to the Gatlinburg Crafts Fair. All of us wanted to see hand-made baskets, needlework and weaving, metal crafts, furniture, and other woodwork. Mr. B. had us talk with the artisans and they were not only glad to sell but to demonstrate their skills in the exhibition buildings. This eventually proved too expensive, to our regret. Mr. B. said Ding preferred locally made items, both hand and machine wrought, to imported souvenirs. Every time Mr. B. needed backing for his claims he quoted "Ding," but he never explained who he was.

Early in 1969 Mr. B. took Lucia, Nancy Vance, and me to Washington and New York. We needed contacts at the Smithsonian and the Library of Congress. In New York he scheduled meetings with the three firms who were to design the exhibits for the three centers. Ding had told him that a single firm could not give the different approaches we could get from three. As we arrived in Washington a surprise awaited us. There stood a handsome man, apparently looking for us. Mr. B. rushed forward and grasped his hand. "Ding!" he exclaimed, "Meet my research team." We fairly tumbled over ourselves to meet the man of mystery. He turned out to be Ewen C. Dingwall of Washington, General Consultant to the Commission, and professional consultant to large expositions throughout the country. Explaining little mysteries wasn't Mr. B.'s top talent.

Ding, it proved, was useful to us in Washington. He seemed to know everybody we needed to know. Later I was to have cause to be very thankful that he met us in Washington. He accompanied us to New York where we discovered he had suggested the three design firms. The meeting was held in the offices of Woods and Ramiriz, the Charleston designers. They led us to a room where the Charleston exhibits were spread before us in miniature. The giant metal figures, the early settlement themes, plans for individual exhibits. When the exposition building finally opened, the Woods and Ramiriz designs were almost exactly as we saw them that night. In an adjoining room the firm of Wimmershoff and Kisseloff had similarly laid out their scheme for exhibiting modern South Carolina products on a moving track. In spite of the adjustments imposed by changes in building plans, both of these design firms kept ahead. In fact,

Greenville exhibits were always ahead of those for the Charleston and Columbia centers.

Having looked at the plans for the first two firms, Mr. B. turned to Ron Beckman of Providence, Rhode Island, whose firm, Research and Design, was under contract not only to design the Columbia exhibits, but to coordinate those of all three centers. Beckman pulled out two or three shoe boxes containing several pasteboard objects. Since we did not recognize them, he explained that his firm was different from the other two. His people were sociologists who sought to interpret social and historical movements. "Now the Civil War, which falls in the Columbia exhibition period, proved to the world that war is totally out-dated," he pointed out. "Our firm is dedicated to getting rid of war and the Civil War can be used to convince people that we are right." He pointed to what he said was a model of a cannon. We all leaned over, squinted at it, and shook our heads. Mr. B. said he was worn out and wanted to go to his hotel. The only reaction I head on our way to the hotel was from Mr. B. to Mr. Dingwall, "Ding, who suggested Beckman to you?"

One afternoon in the spring of 1969 Mr. B. shut down the Tricentennial headquarters and told the staff that we were all to go to the State House where we were to see Buckminster Fuller in the flesh. The man had been blown to such proportions that we could scarcely believe we were to have such a privilege. But there, indeed, he was, surrounded by the Governor, the General Assembly, members of the Commission, and (I was told) everybody worth knowing in Columbia. Beside him was a huge pedestal, stood his model of the exhibition building for Greenville, his geodesic frame shaped like a cube standing on one corner. It was to be the big spectacle of the celebration, a building more important than the exhibits it held. I walked around the model, listening to the hundreds of awed exclamations with a vague feeling of frustration. Since my preference in architecture runs to the traditional, I assured myself that I wasn't qualified to appreciate this masterpiece. My situation was like the child in the story of the "Emperor's New Clothes."

What I didn't know was that I was not alone. There were

other bewildered people there. The Greenville textile group in that gathering saw the end of their dreams. Money spent for a custom-built metal and plastic show-piece could not pay for square footage adequate in size and strength to hold heavy textile machinery. The Commission had chosen to erect a smaller core building designed to carry exhibit items and people, but not much machinery. Thus, the breakdown in the textile museum plans occurred when the Commission adopted the Buckminster Fuller plans early in 1969 and not early in 1970 when the aluminum joints that were to have held the cube together could not carry the load.

About the same time the Buckminster Fuller design was unveiled, the plans for the Charleston pavilion were released. This time I had some audible company. There was an outraged protest from Beaufort to Caesar's Head. The architects had drawn a twentieth century version of the pyramids. Everybody wailed in concert, "What does Egypt have to do with South Carolina?" Shortly afterward, the plan was withdrawn as "too expensive" and the architects went back to their drawing boards. When they finished the next plans, the building had gone underground. The PR releases proclaimed, "Let's emphasize the forests and the sea, just as they were in 1670. The building should be inconspicuous." Well, anything was better than a pyramid!

At the Columbia location, demolition of shops and stores continued and preparations begun to restore the Hampton-Preston House. But what were we to do for an exhibition building? We couldn't just offer one restored house to tell the story of the nineteenth century. By this time the Commission was looking at its budget, aware that the Charleston and Greenville buildings were going to be very expensive. Ding had some advice. He had served as advisor for two international exhibitions that successfully used geodesic domes that looked like upside-down soup bowls. They were inexpensive, compared with the Charleston and Greenville buildings, provided almost 10,000 square feet of exhibit space each, and they could be taken down and used elsewhere later. By now Mr. B. was looking for something from a bargain basement. This was just the thing for Columbia. The order for two domes for early delivery

in 1970 was made. I didn't think they were beautiful, but I could overlook that since they were to be temporary. But I knew we would hear from all the genteel history-loving ladies of Columbia, and we did. "Those awful modernistic monstrosities on each side of the Hampton-Preston House! It's sheer desecration!" they wailed. But by now the Commission was growing tough hides and deaf ears; there was no way to please everybody.

In the summer of 1969 I told Mr. B. I wanted six weeks off for a trip to Europe with my family. Mr. B. said, "If you're going, this will be your only chance because we're getting into high gear this fall." I'm glad I didn't know just how high or I wouldn't have gone on a fishing trip as far as Lake Murray. In retrospect I see that I might as well have gone. We had a wonderful trip and on two days I had some unique experiences. They were made possible by two sealed letters that Mr. B. handed me when I left. He said he wanted me to go to the Bodleian Library at Oxford and the Public Record Office in London and look for any special information pertaining to the years just before and after the establishment of South Carolina. He told me to present the two letters and they would help me in getting into the collections and in finding the material.

Toward the end of the family's European journey we arrived at Oxford. With a notebook in my bag and one of Mr. B.'s letters, I approached a man at a desk in the Bodleian Library. He hastily scanned Mr. B.'s letter, then sprang into action. "This way, Madam," he said, holding open a very large door. He led me to the second floor where with many polite motions and even more words, he presented me to a gentleman who was obviously of some importance. He also read Mr. B.'s letter and then addressed me with such an elaborate welcome that I realized that for once in my life I was a celebrity. He led me to a long table, not a tiny carrel, and summoned two assistants, within minutes they began to unload a bewildering stack of manuscripts, books, maps, and pictures. And I had only one day, one day for research. I soon discovered what lay before me — the papers of John Locke, author of the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina. His political influence over South Carolina's beginning was probably greater than any one man.

Everything I turned to was fascinating. I copied as fast as I could. My family brought me lunch and I resumed copying. When it was time to go, I had filled my notebook with a great variety of facts. No wonder Mr. B. sent me there. But I was in a state of collapse. With many words of thanks, I departed, regretful that I didn't have more time or strength, but thankful that for once during the Tricentennial I was a celebrity even if I had to cross the ocean to earn it.

A few days later I knocked on the door of the Public Record Office in London, presented letter number two, and the same thing happened all over. My hosts showed me to another long table occupied by a diligent scholar squinting through a magnifying glass at a pile of parchment documents covered with (I learned later) Anglo Saxon. My hosts unapologetically made him shove over and make room for me. I was embarrassed. I was also genuinely distressed to find even more South Carolina materials at the "PRO" than at the Bodleian. When I finally departed, again exhausted, I wondered what in the world Mr. B. had written in those letters. He must have given the impression that I was the personal representative of the Librarian of Congress or of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or both. I never knew because neither letter was returned to me.

When I arrived back in Columbia late in August, headquarters was rocking over discovery by archeologists of a Kiawah ceremonial mound on the site chosen for the Charleston exhibition building. Judging by the anguished cries that reached that reached us from Charleston, we were about to destroy a treasure comparable to Independence Hall. A group of Charlestonians entered a suit against the Commission if the ground was disturbed. Nobody wanted to destory history; we were in the business of saving history. But the hard fact was that that one mound was the only place on the Olde Towne land that was high enough above the ground to sink a three-story building underground. Having ho other real options, the Commission held firm and the suit was withdrawn.

At the beginning of September 1969 the celebration preparations really went into high gear. The time had come to staff the three centers and the Commission employed their three direc-

tors: Jim Demos for Charleston, Vito Passemante for Greenville, and William Seale for Columbia. I met the first two but had no direct contact with either. About William Seale I could write a book. He looked like a college sophomore, but held a doctorate in American history. He was probably one of the more knowledgeable persons in the country on nineteenth century American history and culture. Artistic, intelligent, he was a walking authority on Victorian architecture and decorative arts. He probably had not been on South Carolina soil more than once or twice before, but he haunted the libraries until within weeks he knew about as much about the Hamptons as the Hamptons knew about themselves. He cultivated the Hampton descendants in Columbia and persuaded them to lend furniture and accessories. When he finished restoring and furnishing the Hampton-Preston House, it didn't look like a museum; it had that lived-in look of a family that had been gone five minutes. So much for the positive side of Dr. Seale. The other side was a temperament so conceited that he never considered anyone but himself. I think I admired and disliked William Seale in just about equal proportions. And he couldn't have totally disliked me. He autographed one of his books to me, "To Loulie. Colleague in a birthday that will be remembered. Affectionately, William."

Fortunately, William totally buried himself in the Hampton-Preston project and I had another load on my shoulders. Mr. B. called Lucia, Nancy Vance, and me around his desk for one of his famous no-nonsense conferences. Exactly one year had passed since we began our reseach and Mr. B. admitted our pile of story lines had far exceeded his hopes, both in depth and quantity. But Mr. B. was not one to praise at length; he always had more work to be done. At this meeting he told us that he was splitting up our team: Lucia would move to Charleston, Nancy Vance would move to Greenville; I would remain in Columbia. Each of us was to choose an assistant and work with her center to provide information and gather exhibit items for the design firms. The Charleston and Greenville designers were on schedule, but Ron Beckman had not sent in his exhibit themes and layouts for the domes. "Loulie," said Mr. B., "get on the phone or get on a plane, but make those people

produce." He then presented each of us three with a polaroid camera to send pictures of possible exhibit items to the designers.

Lucia found her assistant in Charleston and Nancy Vance hers in Greenville. Four women of assorted ages applied to me. I talked with all four and fortune was riding my shoulder. The day I chose Beverly Beckwith from Greenville was probably the best in my three Tricentennial years. She was smart, imaginative, and one of the hardest workers I was ever around. There was no slowing her down. She was never my assistant; we toiled side by side on equal ground. I think her first task was to rescue me from my second mechanical crisis, Mr. B.'s camera. Lucia and Nancy Vance brought in piles of pictures, but my camera wouldn't work. What broke my spirit was coming upon Lucia calmly taking hers apart, oiling it, adjusting and reloading it. Strangly, Bev could do the same thing with mine, so it became hers.

My urgent letters to Ron Beckman went unanswered. I called him and he said he had been very busy but would start on our exhibits soon. "Soon?" stormed Mr. B. "He signed our contract in January. Can you go to Providence tomorrow?" I said I could and I heard Mr. B. telling Ron on the phone that I was on my way.

Now that was an experience! A young man from the firm met me in Boston. He said this was not the best time for me to come because this was "Peace Day" in Providence. I soon believed him. We crawled through the streets with fragments of a parade and hundreds of young people carrying peace banners. Every other electric pole bore a peace sign. We finally reached his office which didn't look much like an office. It looked like a large abandoned nineteenth century manufacturing plant. That, in fact, was what it was. We climbed the stairs through the empty building to the third floor. There, Ron Beckman and a third member of the firm came out to greet me, calling me by my first name. I did not discover at once that this was the entire team of employees. All three wore huge peace buttons. In the middle of at least 12,000 square feet of space on the third floor stood a dozen or so screens, dividing off what must have been

work spaces. They were furnished with tables and boxes. The men were so jubilant over the peace demonstrations that it was difficult to get them to talk South Carolina Tricentennial Exhibitions with me. Finally, Ron led me to one of his screen enclosures where he pointed to three or four shoe boxes that looked very familiar. "Look, Loulie," said Ron. "I need you to help Mr. B. understand our firm. We aren't ordinary exhibit designers. We are sociologists who seek to interpret and promote social movements." "Wait a minute, Ron," I said, "Have you forgotten that I was with Mr. B. in New York when you told him that?" "Yes, but he doesn't understand." I became annoyed and told Ron that he was the one who didn't understand. We were in the business of putting together a historical celebration. "But you can teach so much from history," he pled. "Of course, of course, but you are trying to run a campaign." To cool me off, the firm declared it a day and took me out to dinner. All three of the fellows were great fun and very dedicated to improving society. But I couldn't seem to fit them into the Tricentennial, and time was getting short. I got back to Columbia in time to catch Mr. B. before headquarters closed for the day. I started at the beginning and told Mr. B everything, every little detail. He kept protesting that nobody could believe that tale, but I knew he did. "One more time I'm going to talk with that rascal," he stormed. "Are you going to Providence?" I asked. "No, he's coming to Columbia — tomorrow!" Picking up the phone, he called Ron and told him to catch the same schedule the next day that I had just made. On my way home that afternoon I had some awesome premonitions.

To save time the next afternoon, I met Ron's plane. On the way into town I talked fast and pled with him "to get with it." Mr. B. was running out of patience. "He just doesn't understand," Ron kept saying. "I need to explain to him more fully."

At headquarters Mr. B. was waiting. When I saw the gleam in his eye, I said a prayer for Ron and fled upstairs. My prayer was too late. The Boyleston House literally trembled under the volley of Mr. B.'s rage. Ron backed out of the office and into the hall, but Mr. B. followed him with more profanity than I

had heard in a lifetime. The staffers, who had fled behind doors, peeped out cautiously. Using the back door, I hopped in my car and went home. Later, I called Ron's hotel room. A subdued voice answered and I told him I was sorry. He seemed surprised I would call.

The next morning Mr. B. sent for Bev and me. He told us that the Columbia Center no longer had an exhibit design firm. "Can you two design exhibits?" he asked. "Of course not," we answered. After watching what was in preparation for Charleston and Greenville, we knew that exhibit designing was a profession. We couldn't get by with posters made by amateurs. Besides, we had 20,000 square feet to fill. "All right, then get out of here and find help. Go anywhere, ask anybody, but be fast."

Bev and I conferred and decided that the nearest people who had done anything comparable to what we needed were the curators of the North Carolina State Museum in Raleigh. We called and they told us they would be glad to help all they could. We flew up the next day, prepared to spend two days and a night. At the museum our hosts offered us every courtesy and guided us through their permanent museum, a sort of labrymth that traced North Carolina history back to the time North and South Carolina were politically united. We were thrilled. Earlier in the year I had attended a crash course which told me that an exhibit should "deliver an experience, not diversion; be mind-expanding and confront the viewer with ideas." These North Carolina curators had done all this and much more. "How long did it take you to put this together?" we asked. "Three years, after we worked out the design. We worked very fast," they replied. Bev and I crumpled. "We have three months," we confessed. The curators did everything but weep. Our predicament filled them with anguish because they feared we did not realize how serious it was. They kept repeating, "You are in big trouble!" We went to our hotel for the night and decided that the next day we would divide up. Bev would to to the Southern Collection at Chapel Hill and I would go back to the museum to put together as many ideas as we could use. Bev was still asleep the next morning when I awoke, horribly depressed. I walked to the window and looked out. We must have been on about the

tenth floor. For the first and only time in my life I had a suicidal impulse. I remember thinking, "Just one jump and I can be out of it all." I opened the window on a sort of balcony to look down. I was curious to see where I would land. On the opposite side of the street was a building with its name in such big letters I could still read them: "N. C. Baptist Convention." "Horrors, not there! I can't disgrace my husband. He must have a hundred friends in that building," I laughed. The impulse left me and never returned. When Bev woke up, we admitted to each other that we had never before been in a place of responsibility where the stakes were so high and the time so short. That afternoon we returned to Columbia and told Mr. B. that we wanted to go the Library of Congress to hunt for South Carolina pictures. He said, "O.K." He would have said the same had we told him were were headed for China because about this time a crack had developed in the Charleston Exhibition building roof and everybody could talk of nothing else. Since the same engineering pricinples were being applied in Greenville, that building was also in danger.

Bev and I took off to Washington. Just before we left, Lucia asked me if we would stop by the Smithsonian and ask someone in the agriculture department about lending her some eighteenth century tools. Thanks to Ding, the Smithsonian had already been helpful. Little did Bev and I dream what good fortune Lucia's request would bring us. For some reason, we decided to go to the Smithsonian first. The director of the agriculture department was very kind, took the address of the Charleston center, and said he would ship the tools. Then he asked us what we were doing in the Tricentennial. Bev and I were under heavy strain and we must have been carried away. We told him we were three months from the opening of our center, had no exhibit plans, and little to exhibit. The man's mouth flew open in amazement. He couldn't believe us at first, but our emotional condition seemed to convince him. He talked with us like the North Carolina people had done. Finally, when we went to the elevator, he got on with us. On the way down, he said, "I know somebody who may help you. When you get off on the main floor, sit down on a bench near the door and wait for a man I will send to you." We were in too much trouble to turn down

any offer of help and in a few minutes a man came and sat down beside us. He asked us many questions for we had a story that was hard to believe. I remember that he began to wring his hands. After we had convinced him, he said, "There is a man in the Exhibit Design Department here who occasionally moonlights. I will talk with him and you call him at this number about eleven o'clock tomorrow morning." We thanked him and left the Smithsonian for our hotel. The next morning we went to the Library of Congress to look for pictures. We had wonderful luck and left orders for copies of many South Carolina pictures we had previously been unable to find. Bev stayed on to search further when eleven o'clock came. I dialed the number and reached a man named John Brown who was expecting my call. For the next two hours I stood in that phone booth telling our story and answering his questions. Gradually, he not only seemed to believe me, but to build up sympathy for our dilemma. Besides, the job should be profitable because our design budget for both domes was $100,000. I told him everything. This must provide themes, labels, exhibit cases, all kins of fabrications. We had ten weeks before opening date. The conversation finally ended with an understanding that he would give me an answer when I called his apartment from the airport late that afternoon.

Bev and I went to the airport in a more hopeful spirit than we had felt for weeks. But alas, when I tried to call John Brown's apartment, his phone was out of order. What to do? We decided that Bev would go back to the hotel and wait until the Smithsonian opened the next morning and contact him there. I would get back to Columbia and break the news to Mr. B.

The next morning I told Mr. B.'s secretary that I was to be the first to see him no matter who was on his schedule. Of all the people Mr. B. wanted to see that morning, I was probably on the bottom of the list, but I didn't have to wait. The exhibit buildings in Charleston and Greenville were giving him a headache on four sides. I began humbly. "Mr. B., Bev and I are ready to turn in our resignations for what we have done." Mr. B. snapped back, "Cut the nonsense and start talking." I reeled out the whole story, ending by telling of our inability to learn if

Mr. Brown could take on our job. Mr. B. began to relax and when I finished, he said, "That's just fine; you've saved me a lot of trouble. When will we hear from Bev?" At almost that moment the phone rang — Bev in Washington. Mr. B. listened briefly and then turned to me. "Loulie, can you work with a black man?" "A what?" "Bev says she has seen Mr. Brown and he is a black man. He thought you had found that out and then wouldn't call him last night." I was surprised, but still sold on Mr. Brown. So was Bev. Integration wasn't all that new to us. Mr. Brown had told Bev he thought he could take our job if he and Mr. B. could reach agreements. Mr. B. returned to the phone. "Come on home, Bev. Tell Mr. Brown I have to be in Washington in a couple of days and I'll see him then." I danced out of Mr. B.'s office, my head bumping the ceiling.

When Bev returned, we were so sure that the designer we had hired would see us through that we turned our energies to the lagging task of gathering exhibit items. Making use of lists we had made of available items during the research period, we had already made broad plans for the two domes. One would tell about the famous people and big events of South Carolina in the nineteenth century; the other would tell about the everyday people on the land. By the first of January, we had acquired only one exhibit item, but it was a gem — a dark red water-marked taffeta gown of Angelica Singleton Van Buren, hand-made in Paris and in mint condition. It was so precious that we stored it in the records center building of State Archives. With the design problem off our minds, we dashed about like a pair of squirrels gathering treasurers and storing them all over Columbia: a wagon and farm tools, pens that had signed the Secession Ordinance, an early Columbia fire truck, a Confederate uniform, Revolutionary swords, precious old china, quilts, kitchen utensils, hand loom, tombstone rubbings, pictures from everywhere, a delicate scale model of the State House, framed land grants, a doll house, etc.

We had a big advantage over Lucia. Attics and barns still held an abundance of nineteenth century relics, but eighteenth century items were scarce. To make it more difficult, Woods and Ramiriz sent Lucia a centimeter ruler and a list of items like: Francis Marion's tooth-pick, samples from Eliza Lucas

Pinckney's indigo vats, a miniature of Lord Campbell (last colonial governor), a piece of one of the original palmetto trees used by General William Moultrie. The ruler was to insure that items would fit precisely in the designers' tiny velvet-lined cases. Problems like that didn't bother Bev and me.

John Brown? He and Mr. B. signed their contract and a few days later I heard somebody bragging that Mr. B. had employed the Smithsonian's head exhibit designer. That was news to Bev and me, but we just nodded at each other and grinned. John Brown did, in fact, hold that position. John (we soon dropped the Brown) deluged Bev and me with the kind of blueprints that Charleston and Columbia had had for months. He kept the phone buzzing with questions we had to answer on the spot or get out and find. We sent him reams of factual data from the story lines.

The day the domes arrived, folded up on two block-long trucks, I was so excited I ran out in the street to signal traffic out of their way. Mr. B. went after me and took me by the arm to get me to safety. The frames and vinyl skin were in place within a week and we were ready to move in. Three weeks until "D-Day," April 18, John Brown had directed a Columbia firm in making the largest props and exhibit holders, but more of them were fabricated in the Smithsonian's shops (that extend for a block under the Washington Mall). These items, along with many cases the Smithsonian loaned to us arrived in a fleet of trucks. Twelve members of the Smithsonian's exhibit staff accompanied John to Columbia for the final assembling. As fast as the cases, stands, props, signs, stairs, models went up, Bev and I hauled in our collections. Even William Seale gave us a hand. Twice he took away some of our treasures for "Seale Manor," formerly know as the Hampton-Preston House. One was a damask tablecloth, custom-woven for Millwood, the country home of the Hamptons that Sherman burned. The other was a set of four large pastel portaits of the J. Marion Sims family. I had gone to Lancaster myself in a Commission station wagon for them. But by the time we moved in, we had plenty of items although we added and rotated as long as we were on exhibition. John Brown had enlarged and framed the mountain of pictures we had sent him and when we saw them,

knew better than ever what a professional exhibit-maker could do.

April first arrived. It was raining in Charleston and just three days until opening. Builders were still frantically trying to prop up the exhibit pavillion and set up a ceremonial stand for VIPs. Road crews shoveled mud from the driveways. With an incomplete exhibit building, a full opening would be delayed a month. Greenville moved its opening date from May 1 to July 4. When the Commission met in Charleston for the ceremonies, Mr. B. announced that Columbia would open on schedule, April 18. The papers reported that the Commission broke into spontaneous applause.

At the same time in Columbia, nurserymen laid live turf and blooming flowers around the domes and mansion. William Seale had picked the prettiest available girls in Columbia for guides and trained them for their duties. From our offices in the respective domes, Bev and I handed out our custom-woven and custom-made uniforms and all of us preened ourselves before the Hampton-Preston mirrors. John Brown had built us a barn and barnyard in the West Dome. I located two live sheep, whom the guides named Lamb Chop and Ruby Begonia, a rooster and two hens. These ordinary farm animals drew bigger crowds than our model of the Washington Monument, designed by South Carolinian, Robert Mills.

Two days before opening a long distance call came for William Seale. I was the only staffer available so I took the message. It went like this, in a Boston accent: "This is Captain [name I've forgotten]. Tell Dr. Seale that my lieutenant and I will arrive from Philadelphia and land our hot air balloon on the Mills grounds at precisely 11 a.m. on the eighteenth. Tell him we have the guns and the Yankee uniforms." Somehow I hadn't heard of this feature, but I recovered enough to tell him sternly, "O.K., but no matches. The last Yankees who came through here burned the place down." He had a ready reply: "Absolutely, Madam! No matches!"

On the eighteenth the sun came out, our little parade of Victorian carriages and ladies riding side-saddle stopped in front of the gleaming domes and mansion to cut a ribbon across

the door. Down came a Civil War balloon amid ten thousand cheers and Bev and I tearfully hugged each other and admitted it was worth it.

A. WHAT WERE THE PROBLEMS OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA TRICENTENNIAL?

The celebration received an enormous amount of negative reaction. At the risk of over-simplification, here is my list of the five major reasons that brought so much condemnation.

1) The South Carolina Legislature created the Tricentennial Commission in 1956, but discussed it off and on for ten years before voting to provide funding in 1966. This did not allow enough time to make all the preparations the celebration required. Two or three years more would have helped much.

2) When people are disappointed, they look for a person or persons to blame. Usually, more than one person and more than one reason are responsible. Because they could not know the full situation, many South Carolinians laid blame on wrong causes or persons. "A twenty-one member commission guided the South Carolina Tricentennial, and an executive director and deputy director headed the staff. Powers of decision resided largely with the commission. Though the commission members were representative, dedicated and able people, procedure was slow and sometimes caused serious stalls as the commission struggled to make up its collective mind." Ewen C. Dingwall in *Final Report of the South Carolina Tricentennial*, p. 22.

3) The decision to have three major exhibition centers instead of one over-extended the Commission's financial and personnel resources. Between 1967 and 1971 the strain to put three centers together was almost overwhelming. In the long run, however, three centers left more permanent contributions than one could have done.

4) Buckminster Fuller designed the geodesic plan used in the exhibit buildings and Synergetics fabricated them. All three centers used the same basic principle. The domes in Columbia gave no trouble because they had been proven in previous expositions and they upheld lightweight vinyl roofs. The "Tetron" was suggested for Greenville by several South Carolina architectural advisors. Dr. Fuller made the design, but it called for a building so spectacular and so expensive that it drained the funds that could have provided a much larger and more functional building with more permanent usefulness. Dr. Fuller and the engineers failed to pre-test the designs for Charleston and Greenville for weight-bearing. When the Charleston roof cracked, exhaustive tests were made and the plan was pronounced "never any good" and could never be safe. When Thomas Lawton, Chairman of the Commission, tried to contact Dr. Fuller, he was told, "Dr. Fuller is not concerned with problems." How fortunate it was that Dr. Fuller did not design St. Peter's of Westminster Abby! The Commission sued the fabricators and designers and won $900,000 settlment in September 1970, but payment was contingent on tearing down and re-building. This was too late; the celebration was half over.

5) Dwindling funds cut the square footage and reduced features planned for all three centers. This situation was caused by:

a) Cost of rush construction due to late beginnings, changes in design, faulty engineering plans
b) Late purchase of the four-acre block in Columbia
c) Litigation for the core of the Columbia block and suits against builders, designers, engineers, and suppliers for Charleston and Greenville
d) Late change of exhibit design firm for the Columbia center

In addition to the five major problems of the Tricentennial, it is my personal opinion that the celebration was almost clobbered to pieces by its friends, that is, those who sincerely wanted it to succeed. Here are some:

1) Over-pressure by special interest groups—archeologists, the textile industry, Indian lovers, people with things to sell, usually South Carolina products.

2) A merciless, instead of a supportive press. Reporters toiled untiringly to find anything unfavorable, or scandalous, while ignoring worthwhile efforts that developed daily.

3) **Serious difficulties caused by the temperaments of several key administrators and Commissioners.** The difficulties resulted in inexcusably poor communications and almost no effort to build good working relationships with colleagues, both employees and volunteers.

4) **Volunteers by the hundreds.** Some wanted jobs, but most, motivated by patriotism or community spirit, just wanted to help. They usually arrived at Commission headquarters bursting with enthusiasm for ideas that ranged from excellent to awful. But they were nearly always persistent and vocal.

B. STATEWIDE, WHAT DID THE SOUTH CAROLINA TRICENTENNIAL DO?

Did the Tricentennial achieve anything positive during the celebration year? Have there been continuing accomplishments? Following are some limited summaries, gathered from my memory, records, and publicity. They make no claim for completeness.

During the celebration, seven state committees, directed by the Tricentennial staff, conducted numerous activities:

1) **Performing Arts:** state ballet performed in 6 cities, all-state band and orchestra made an ETV tape and recording; 8 nationally recognized South Carolinians, such as Carrol Glenn List, Richard Cass, performed in concerts with 7 symphony orchestras; 10 performances by professional entertainers, including N. Orleans Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Lawrence Welk, Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, 240 local music, dance and drama preformances in South Carolina towns and cities; "Porgy and Bess" by Charleston Symphony Association.

2) **Visual Arts:** Gibbes, Columbia, Greenville Art Museums assembled exhibits of South Carolina paintings, sculptures, maps, periodically interchanged and viewed by 200,000 visitors; 119 museum representatives from 12 states attended arts conference; over 50 elementary and secondary schools made Tricentennial art exhibits for county celebrations.

3) **Creative Writing:** Three statewide workshops on fiction and poetry were held; a fourth, for high school students, offered instruction and criticism on fiction, drama, poetry, and writing for television. A poetry conference for English and elementary teachers attracted 100 participants; committee-sponsored publication of "A Tricentennial Anthology of South Carolina Literature," and "New Writing in South Carolina." Eighty per cent of writers for second volume had attended the workshops and were previously unpublished. A literary festival attracted college students and professors from 44 Colleges and 10 states; prizes were offered school children for short stories, light verse, one-act plays.

4) **Scholarly Activities:** History-writing workshops encouraged research and writing history. The committee coordinated research and publication of historical records, documents. The Tricentennial sponsored, and in some instances, published 26 books and booklets, sponsored 8 new editions of significant out-of-print works. The committee's emphasis on writing produced a flood of independently sponsored histories of banks, churches, towns, counties, and biographies of South Carolinians. The symposium of scholars brought 317 persons from South Carolina, 27 from other states, and 6 from foreign countries.

5) **Schools Participation:** Thirty-two educators developed Tricentennial planning aids, and "Idea Book," flexible to each school's needs. Beginning in 1969, 500,000 teachers and pupils participated, 80 percent of public schools, 45 percent of private. To help pupils invite out-of-state relatives and friends to visit South Carolina in 1970, "Cousins-by-the-Dozens" distributed 100,000 sets of Tricentennial stationery. Response from other states required employment of an extra staff member. Schools sponsored beautification, "search-the-attic," Tricentennial-Day-at-School, exhibits, books for the library, plays, time capsules, South Carolina quiz contests, concerts, video tapes, original songs, etc.

Twenty-three state and private South Carolina colleges participated with literary conferences, historical drams, term papers and articles in college journals, symposiums, lectures, convocations, concerts, art exhibits, a course in South Carolina history.

6) **Sports:** Inauguration of $100,000 International Colonial Cup Steeplechase at Camden with 22 jumpers, 9 from abroad; 34 yachts ran the Lords Proprietors' Cup Race from Ft. Lauderdale to Charleston; Sailing Regatta on Lake Murray with 150 boats from 5 states; 250-mile Olympic development bicycle race with 100 cyclists; golf tournaments, long-distance running; squash, swimming, handball, boxing, gymnastics, and track championship contests.

7) **Religious Activities:** Interdenominational "Festivals of Faith" gathered 5,000 in Charleston, 3,000 in Greenville; historic church buildings were restored, old cemeteries and stones repaired; fragile records and documents were repaired and copied; religious artifacts were displayed; church histories were written (100 in Lexington County alone); "Religious Heritage Day," "Under the Brush Arbor," "300 Years of Sacred Music Traidition" at Westminster, Greenville; Hussite Bell Ringers at St. John's Lutheran, Charleston; outdoor drama at Bullock's Creek, York County; sermons on the church's role in South Carolina; tour guides of historic churches and other religious sites; scripts of skits for church groups to perform; 1,000 church groups distributed 500,000 copies of "Good News for Modern Man," popular title for "Today's English Version of the New Testament;" Easter Sunrise Service at Charles Towne Landing.

C. AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, WHAT DID THE SOUTH CAROLINA TRICENTENNIAL DO?

During the Tricentennial, every county participated and financed its own celebration. Charleston County alone raised $230,000 for its activities. Each county chose a week of celebration. Encouraged and guided by the Commission's Coordinator of Local Events, the county committees planned and produced a variety of activities too long to list here. Following is a summary of the most popular projects:

Structures listed in National Register of Historic Places	75
Historic markers erected	63
Museums developed	26
Historical societies and commissions organized	8
Parks and mini-parks created	15
Re-enactments given, with 17,900 reviewers	6
County pageants and plays	36
Newspapers issuing Tricentennial edtions	32
Counties publishing promotional brochures of their activities	29
Towns holding Tricentennial parades, with 450,000 spectators	32
Art shows in 37 counties	57
County-sponsored publications, completed during celebration year	81
(Commission-sponsored publications completed during year; more since)	45
Homes toured	over 500

D. TRICENTENNIAL MISCELLANEA

Southern Railroad ran its full scale replica of **"The Best Friend,"** South Carolina's first train, over the state and loaned its smaller replica to the Columbia center for exhibit.

Travel editors and writers from 12 national magazines toured South Carolina in a group. Many articles and features followed in their publications.

South Carolina Educational Television featured a 32-week series of half-hour programs on South Carolina history and 26 other programs about the celebration. Twelve national and 13 regional TV programs also were given.

Over 1,000 **family reunions** were held.

United States Post Office Department issued a 6-cent **South Carolina commemorative stamp** and Carew Rice cut the design for the First Day of Issue **cachet**.

Business and industry throughout the state combined many sales promotions with the Tricentennial themes.

Auto license tages for 1970 read

SOUTH CAROLINA
S C OOOOO
1670 300 Years 1970

Very Important Persons who came to South Carolina during the celebration included ambassadors to the United States from France, Germany, Canada, Barbadoes, Ireland, Spain, and the Netherlands. They represented ethnic immigrants who settled the state. Descendents of the Lords Proprietors presided over formal openings, banquets, receptions, and balls.

FINAL NOTE

Nobody knows precisely how many South Carolinians took part in the Tricentennial. It is safe to say that, to some degree, far more than a majority participated. Can anyone believe that the influence of such an effort could disappear in ten years? A generation? Ever?

The Tricentennial provided a showcase of South Carolina achievement out of which still lingers a spirit of self-awareness and pride. Better knowledge of its past has given the state a new historical sensitivity. The evidences are tangible: extensive preservation efforts, activities of historical organizations and institutions, and a tremendous acceleration of historical writing. Even the three centers survive in a park commemorating the first settlement at Charleston; an emerging state historical museum at Columbia; and a developing science center at Greenville.

Troubles we had, and unrelenting criticism, but Bev and I still say, "It was worth it!"