

Robert Ariail



“Editorial Cartoons”

March 7 - 30, 2013

Opening Reception March 7, 5 - 8pm

Winner of the 2012 Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Governor's Award for the Arts for Individual Artist

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University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC, Features Exhibit on Early Freed Slaves

The University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC, is presenting the exhibit *Dawn of Freedom: The Freedmen's Town of Mitchelville*, on view at the McKissick Museum through June 1, 2013.

The exhibition explores the transition from slavery to freedom for slaves who escaped to Hilton Head Island, SC, following the battle at Port Royal during the Civil War. It focuses on Mitchelville, a town on the northeastern end of the island. Gen. Ormsby M. Mitchel, who oversaw the town's creation, wanted its residents to transition into freedom through economic and political autonomy. Its residents voted, had mandatory education for children, owned homes, shopped in local stores, and took the first steps toward full citizenship. Although the town no longer exists, Hilton Head Island community members are currently creating a park on the site to educate the public about the first self-governing town of freedmen in America.



the Civil War. Their story is important because it not only highlights one example of former slaves seizing freedom on their own and working to define that freedom, but it also examines issues that are at the heart of who we are as Americans, such as citizenship, freedom, the role of government, just to name a few.

McKissick Museum Curator of Exhibitions Dr. Edward Puchner says, “The story of Mitchelville gives us a chance to witness African Americans overcoming the legacy of slavery from the earliest days of the Civil War to its final days, demonstrating how individual ex-slaves defined their new freedom on their own terms. Dawn of Freedom proclaims the early achievements of African Americans to organize into a community and each become self-supporting, successful citizens – all within a temporary, experimental and very fragile setting.”

Additional programs for *Dawn of Freedom* include a Gallery Lecture for students presented by Mitchelville historian Emory Campbell on May 5 and a lecture “The Story of Sea Island Cotton” by Dr. Richard Porcher, Emeritus Professor of Botany, from The Citadel on Apr. 4.

The exhibition is sponsored by The Mitchelville Preservation Project, The Slave Relic Museum, and WFMV 95.3

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The premise for *Dawn of Freedom* began as a research project for then public history graduate student JoAnn Zeise. Zeise, now Curator of History at the South Carolina State Museum said, “I grew up on Hilton Head Island but had never learned the important history of the area and about the great number of formerly enslaved people who had escaped bondage to start their own community during

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