

AMY C. EVANS :: ARTIST'S STATEMENT :: SALTVILLE STORIES

My great-grandmother, Mary Melinda Moore, grew up in the Sand Mountain area of Northeast Alabama at the foot of the Appalachians. In 1894, she married Joseph Pleasant Browder, and had four children: Isaac Jacob, John Lemuel, Eula Mae, and my grandmother, Alla Grace. I never met my great-grandmother, but I have a photograph of her that was taken sometime in the 1950s, not long before she died. Her grey hair is done up in a bun, and she's wearing a calico dress that's pinned with a cameo. My mother tells me that she made wonderful chicken and dumplings and liked to bake teacakes.

One fateful day, my dear friend Ronni Lundy called to tell me about a group of women up in Virginia, just like my great-grandmother, whose stories are part of a collection of community recipes called the *Saltville Centennial Cookbook*, a collection of memories and recipes that was published in 1996. Ronni didn't know my great-grandmother, of course, but she does know my paintings.

For years now, my paintings have been portraits of women, their stories and personalities illustrated through collections of objects. But the women are strangers from another era, and their stories are told in my imagination.

As soon as my copy of the *Saltville Centennial Cookbook* arrived, I saw what Ronni saw: titles of my paintings on every page, little vignettes that would inspire images. From the names—Iona, Bertha, Thelma, and Gertrude—to the wonderful recipes and endearing remembrances offered by family and friends, the women of Saltville came to life. So I painted their portraits.

The next thing on my easel might be just a painting of cameos and teacakes.

Amy C. Evans
Houston, TX
2015

www.amycevans.com

* * *

Many thanks to the families of Saltville, Virginia, who shared their stories and inspired these paintings. And to Janice Orr, director of the Museum of the Middle Appalachians, who understood my intentions and gave permission for me to reference and use

excerpts from the *Saltville Centennial Cookbook*. Lastly, a heartfelt thanks to Ronni Lundy for thinking of me as she turned each page.

EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 "Saltville Stories," Biscuit Love - Nashville, TN
- "Saltville Stories," Buxton Hall Barbecue - Asheville, NC
- 2015 "Saltville Stories," The Harvest Table Restaurant - Meadowview, VA

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

- 2016 "Art & Pie: A Workshop with Ashley Capps, Tara Jensen & Jessica Rosenkoetter," Buxton Hall Barbecue - Asheville, NC
- 2015 "Saltville Stories," Appalachian Food Summit - Abingdon, VA
- "Saltville Stories," The Harvest Table – Meadowview, VA

INTERVIEWS

- 2015 "Amy Cameron Evans, Artist" - Edacious: Food Talk for Gluttons Podcast
- "J. Q. Dickenson Salt Works & Amy C. Evans, Artist" - Tennessee Farm Table Podcast

PRESS

- 2017 Lundy, Ronni. "The Art of the Saltville Centennial Cookbook" – *Southern Cultures*, Fall 2017, Online.

AWARDS

- 2015 Appalachian Food Summit's Artist in Residence - Abingdon, VA