



The Paternal Suit: Heirlooms from the F. Scott Hess Family Foundation

August 24 - October 6, 2012

This exhibition of art and artifacts selected from the F. Scott Hess family collection spans four hundred years of American culture and creativity. The work of these artists and craftsmen ranges from the most famous exemplars of their era to the unknown and unheralded. Some, such as Calvin Hoole and Naomi Washington, strove to create high art, while others, such as John Little or Silas Frame, produced a product or tool to be used in daily life. What unifies this disparate selection, is the tale they tell of F. Scott Hess's paternal ancestors and their struggles to carve out a life on the American continent.

In 2005, Hess founded the F. Scott Hess Family Foundation, dedicated to finding and recovering documents and artifacts of the artist's family lines. In this endeavor, director Hess has led the foundation to the frontiers of genealogical research and historical-object acquisition. Energized by a desire to reanimate the lives of past family members, Hess has relentlessly pursued his goals, amassing an unparalleled collection of ancestral artifacts in a period of only seven years. Psychologically driven by his own personal history of a missing father, Hess's genealogical research into his paternal heritage lead to the discovery of thousands of ancestors and family lines that extend back to the Roman Empire and the Emperor Augustus.

The American lines of the F. Scott Hess family certainly made their mark on this nation's history. From the earliest arrivals on the shores of New England to the wilderness of South Carolina and Georgia, to the crucial revolutionary Battle of King's Mountain, Hess's ancestors helped build the physical, intellectual, and mythological foundations of the American Republic. The lives of Hess's great-great-great grandfather, Senator Alfred Iverson, and his son, the like-named Brigadier General Alfred Iverson, played out during a critical stage in our union's survival, for they were in the thick of it, politically and militarily. Their tale encompasses the rise and fall not only of the Iverson family, but also of the Confederate South. Theirs is an epic story of corruption and decadence, of powerful ambitions gone awry, of monstrous miscalculations, and the destruction of all they believed in and fought to preserve. It is a tale of grandiose failures and the desperate struggle for redemption. They sound a note of caution to all of us, that the ramifications of our actions will reverberate down through the ages, and generations of our descendants will live with the decisions we make today.

Bella Menteur, Ph.D.

Curator of Historical and Cultural Artifacts for the F. Scott Hess Family Foundation



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*“The Paternal Suit is swollen by myth
and impossible to wear.” - F. Scott Hess*



“A study of one’s genealogy is never complete. With the marriage of each generation, the branches of the tree double, the stories multiply, the possibilities expand. Genealogy’s exploration of sex and death stretches back into the unknowable past and evokes an inscrutable future. It inevitably leads to the realization that, before very many years, you will join that list of ancestors.

Like slowing drivers at the scene of a fatal car accident, morbid fascination sits just under the surface of genealogical research, coupled with a sense of one’s mortality is also the question, How do I measure up to my forefathers? What mark will my life leave on this earth, and what will my descendants know of me?”

F. Scott Hess

Director, F. Scott Hess Family Foundation

*Above: General Alfred Iverson’s Cavalry Jacket, Hand-tailored in Rome, Georgia, 1864, wool, brass, gold trim.
Opposite page: Left image: William Baker’s Deacon’s Staff (hand with wagging finger), unknown craftsman, 1750s, wood and pigment, 76 ½ inches long. Center image: Major Samuel Lane at South River, Maryland, 1680, Calvin Lemuel Hoole, 1857, oil on canvas, 19 ¼ x 16 ½ inches. Right image: Set of “Curved Barrel” Dueling Pistols, Powder-horn, Faux Shot, and Lockbox, Harris & Heath Co., early 19th century. Box 9 x 22 x 3 inches.*

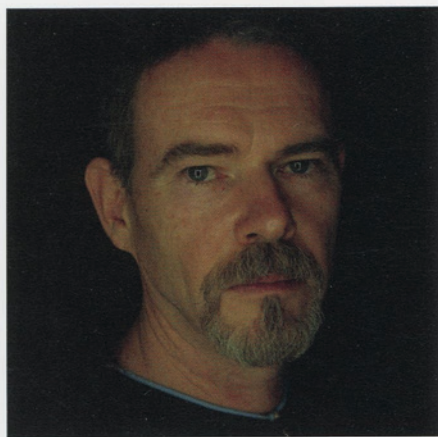
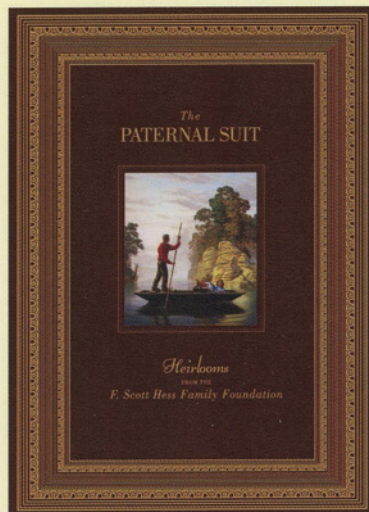
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F. Scott Hess, born 1955 in Baltimore, Maryland, began to draw intensely at the age of seven. He grew up in a small Wisconsin town and received a BS in Art from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Attracted by the dark tone, intense psychological content, and the level of technical skill displayed by artists in Prague and Vienna, Hess moved to the Austrian capital in 1978, attending the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. He learned Old Master painting techniques, studied paint chemistry, drew thousands of figure drawings from life, and completed a year-long course at the Anatomy Institute. In 1979 Hess had his first solo exhibition in Vienna, quickly followed

by exhibitions in Austria, Germany and France. In 1981, he received one of Austria's most prestigious awards for artists, the Theodor Koerner Award. In 1984, Hess moved to Los Angeles and in 1985 had his first solo exhibition in the US. Hess has exhibited in over one hundred group and solo exhibitions, including venues in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. In 1990, he received a Western States Art Federation award, and in 1991 a J. Paul Getty Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts Visual Arts Fellowship. F. Scott Hess is represented by Hirschl and Adler Modern in New York and Koplin Del Rio Gallery in Los Angeles. Living in L.A. with his wife and two daughters, Hess is currently on the MFA faculty at the Laguna College of Art and Design.

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