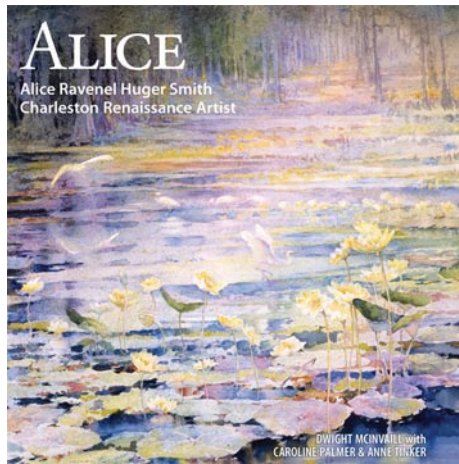


# A Book Review

*Alice: Alice Ravenel Huger Smith, Charleston Renaissance Artist*  
by Dwight McInvaill with Carolina Palmer & Anne Tinker  
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199 + pages  
over 200 illustrations  
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Hardcover  
11 1/2 x 11 1/4

*Alice* is available in hardcover for \$60.00 at the Middleton Place store, selected area bookstores and online at ([shop.middleton-place.org](http://shop.middleton-place.org)). Net proceeds benefit Middleton Place Foundation and its mission to inspire, educate, and enact positive change through an understanding of American history.



Cover of the book

*Alice: Alice Ravenel Huger Smith, Charleston Renaissance Artist* is a hardcover art book that vividly documents the life and work of one of the most celebrated (and pioneering) Charleston artists of the early 20th century. We hope you delight in Alice's beautiful artwork and fascinating story as much as we enjoyed producing this book!

Alice Ravenel Huger Smith (1876–1958) immortalized the beauty and history of the Carolina Lowcountry and helped propel the region into an important destination for cultural tourism. In a career of sixty years, she defied gender expectations and gained national acclaim.

*Alice* is a personal account of the artist's life and work that draws on unpublished papers, letters, and interviews, told from the perspective of Dwight McInvaill, a close family friend, and her family - Anne Tinker (Alice's great-niece) and Caroline Palmer (Alice's great-great-niece). It is enriched by over 200 illustrations of paintings, prints, sketches, and photographs, many shared for the first time. This hardcover volume about Alice Smith is both an important contribution to Southern art scholarship and a gorgeous addition to the bookshelves of art and history lovers.

For a list of upcoming events, view a calendar at (<https://aliceravenelhugersmith.com/events/>).

## Meet the Authors:

Dwight McInvaill directs the Georgetown County Library. His focus on innovation as a public librarian in South Carolina has been recognized by *The New York Times* and Carnegie Corporation. He was a member of the steering committee to found the Digital Public Library of America and served on the board of the Lowcountry Rice Culture Project. He has a master's degree in library science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and has given many lectures on Alice Smith, a mentor and friend to his parents.

Caroline Palmer is a communications, marketing, and human resources professional. A great-great-niece of Alice Smith, she has a BA in art history from Duke University and an MBA from Columbia Business School. She is a trustee of Middleton Place Foundation and lives with her husband and two daughters in Charleston, SC.

Anne Gaud Tinker is a retired international public health specialist. A great-niece of Alice Smith, she has graduate degrees from Georgetown and Johns Hopkins Universities. She is a trustee of Middleton Place Foundation, on the board of the Gibbes Museum of Art, and a member of the Historic Charleston Foundation's National Page 10 - Carolina Arts, May 2021

Advisory Council. She and her husband divide their time between South Carolina and Massachusetts.

## Related Exhibitions:

Through Jan. 10, 2022, the exhibition *Alice* will be on view at Middleton Place and the Edmondston-Alston House, including almost 40 works of Alice Smith's art featured in the book. Middleton Place is located at 4300 Ashley River Road, Charleston and the Edmondston-Alston House is located at 21 East Battery in downtown Charleston.

On view through Oct. 3, 2021, at the Gibbes Museum of Art, 135 Meeting Street, in downtown Charleston, will be *Japonisme in Charleston: Alice Smith and Her Circle* and a companion exhibition *Lasting Impressions: Japanese Prints from the Read-Simms Collection*.

## Testimonials:

“Renowned Charleston artist Alice Smith was a naturalist, photographer, teacher, author, and visual master who dedicated years to studying and depicting the Lowcountry, including laborers of West African descent and their contributions to the history of rice cultivation. This book brings Smith's creative journey to life and shows why she remains one of South Carolina's most beloved artists.”

– Jonathan Green, internationally acclaimed artist and Charleston's Ambassador of the Arts; considered one of the most important painters of the Southern experience.

“Writing a book is a labor of love. *Alice: Alice Ravenel Huger Smith, Charleston Renaissance Artist* is a testament to that tried and true statement. Dwight McInvaill, son of Alice Smith's close friend, Harry McInvaill, has had access to family recollections as well as a trove of correspondence, photographs, and sketches unavailable earlier. He has benefited greatly from his collaboration with Smith family members Anne Gaud Tinker and Caroline Palmer, who have overseen myriad details and added skillful polish to his manuscript. The book is a must-have for anyone interested in the art of the South.”

– Martha R. Severens, curator, Gibbes Museum of Art, 1976–1987, and Greenville County Museum of Art, 1992–2010; author of *Alice Ravenel Huger Smith: An Artist, a Place, and a Time* and *The Charleston Renaissance*.

“Dwight McInvaill presents new and illuminating information that provides greater clarity into Alice Smith's relationships, techniques, and subject matter during her long and illustrious career. His many revelations and observations explain why Smith's work is so appealing and why it endures. While we must always consider the lens through which each of us approaches her work, Smith's professional discipline, artistic skill, and undeniable love for the Gibbes Museum of Art secure her place as one of the most revered American artists from the South.”

– Angela D. Mack, executive director, Gibbes Museum of Art

## Alice the Trailblazer

By Anne Tinker

Unlike most women of her time, Alice became a nationally renowned artist and successful businesswoman despite little formal training. At the age of ten, her grandmother told her that she should become an artist to earn a living. Since men dominated the arts at the time, she sought out mentors such as Tonalist artist Birge Harrison, Japanese print collector (and distant cousin) Motte Alston Read, and author Owen Wister. These men contributed to her development as an artist and helped her establish connections for the marketing of her work. She went on to be a mentor for others, including many women artists.

As a leader in the cultural movement of the 1920's and 1930's in the Carolina Lowcountry, Alice collaborated closely with her artist friends Elizabeth O'Neill Verner, Leila Waring, and Anna Heyward Taylor.

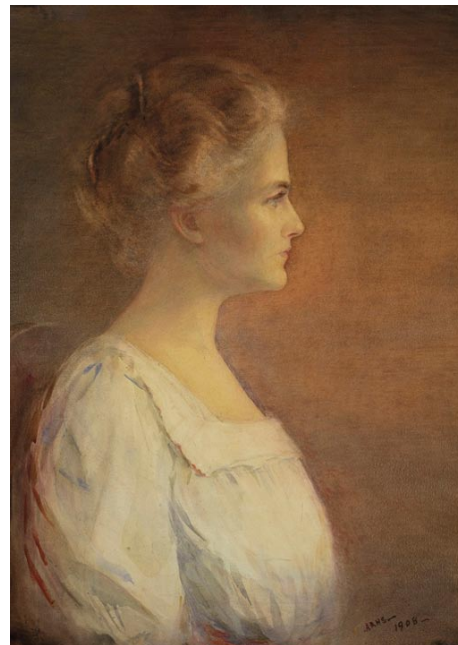
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Alice Smith at thirty-four years old, 1910. Collection of Dwight McInvaill

The four of them established art studios in close proximity to each other on Atlantic and Church Streets, and this Charleston Renaissance “artist colony” became a popular tourist destination.

Such collaborations helped women artists in the South gain recognition and advance their careers. However, at the time, these opportunities were only available to those who were white. In 1921 Alice joined together with other Southern artists to form the Southern States Art League, which had 1,000 active members, two-thirds of whom were women. The league's annual exhibitions offered women artists a unique opportunity to sell their work. Alice participated actively in the league's exhibitions throughout the South and funded a cash prize for the best watercolor each year. As another example of her collaborative approach, in 1923 Alice, with the assistance of artist Alfred Hutty, brought a group together to form the Charleston Etchers' Club, which had nine inaugural members, seven of whom were women. Etching was profitable, since each etched plate produced multiple prints



Self Portrait, c. 1908. Watercolor on paper, 28 x 20 inches. Collection of Anne Gaud Tinker.

which were popular with tourists.

Alice guided and supported other artists throughout her life, such as her student and mentee Elizabeth O'Neill Verner. Another mentee was Alicia Rhett, who painted a portrait of Alice as a tribute to her beloved teacher. Alicia Rhett was an artist but known best for her role as India Wilkes in *Gone with the Wind* in 1939. Later in life, Alice continued to advise and support young artists, including sharing her house and giving watercolor lessons to her good friend Talulah McInvaill, whose son Dwight is the inspiration for this book on Alice.

## Renaissance Endeavors

Here's one tiny excerpt from the book on Charleston's little art community: “Tourism in Charleston began to expand during World War I when affluent visitors could not travel to Europe and instead looked to attractive stateside locals, and it became a booming local industry in the 1920s and 1930s. Tourist guides of the time indicate that an artist colony sprang into being in the neighborhood around Alice's studio. This confluence of creativity was all the



Caper-Huger Smith House: 69 Church Street from “The Dwelling Houses of Charleston”, c. 1917. Conté crayon and pencil on paperboard, 16 1/4 x 21 7/8 inches. Gibbes Museum of Art / Carolina Art Association, Charleston, SC.

more remarkable considering that Atlantic Street was only two small blocks long, from East Bay to Meeting Street. In the heart of the old historic district, the artists offered a unique experience to prospective buyers of Charleston art, helping to fuel a cultural renewal called the Charleston Renaissance. Their images brought national attention to the city and increased its growing popularity as a tourist destination.”

“A promotional booklet of 1930 advised visitors to proceed to Atlantic and Church Streets where one could find the studios of Alice Smith (8 Atlantic Street), Elizabeth O'Neill Verner (3 Atlantic Street), Anna Heyward Taylor (79 Church Street), and Leila Waring (2 Atlantic Street). The booklet encouraged tourists to visit the Charleston studios where they could buy artwork of this colorful and historic city to take home, and on one Sunday each month, be served tea by the artists. Each studio had its own type of tea, and people watching was a perk, according to a contemporary newspaper account, since visitors came from all over, even as far away as India and China. Visitors would go from house to house, where Charleston confections such as cheese straws, benne biscuits, and peach leather were served, and sometimes there was music at Alice's studio.”

Today, in that same area of downtown Charleston, now known as the French Quarter, you'll find from 50 to 60 art galleries, where art walks are held certain months of the year and on some streets, every month.

**Editor's Note:** The book, *Alice: Alice Ravenel Huger Smith, Charleston Renaissance Artist* gives us more than the story of Alice Smith as an artist, it shows us images of Charleston many have never seen, photographs of African Americans used to make drawing and paintings, images of the rice culture of the Lowcountry, and info on the early commercial gallery scene in Charleston and at the time, what it was like to be a woman artist in what was considered a man's world.

And, you can't say that any better than Charles Duell, Founder and President Emeritus of Middleton Place Foundation and cousin to Alice Smith who wrote the Foreword for this book: “This book gives us all that and more. We meet her artistic peers, feel her economic challenges, see the influences of her mentors, and observe her close relationship with her father in the context of what was happening in Charleston in the early twentieth century. And we cannot help but applaud her contributions to preserving Charleston and championing the Lowcountry.”

“The whole story, appropriately illustrated with some images never seen before, is not a curriculum vitae of Alice Smith, but rather offers an intimate view of the private side of a dynamic and accomplished woman. She will long be remembered as a gently fierce champion of greater Charleston whom the reader can embrace warmly thanks to McInvaill and his collaborators. It is, indeed, a stunning achievement.”

As a former photographer I find it interesting how Alice Smith shows how photography became a useful tool for artists to capture a moment in time and gave them something they could take back to their studios to recreate in a painting or drawing - there's nothing like a photo to help you remember something. Photography has kind of replaced sketching a scene and completing it later. Which in turn has made some artists good photographers.

Although this book is the size of a typical “Table Top” book, it offers much

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