

The Augusta Chronicle

Exhibit focuses on black caddies

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What about the caddies?

Christine Miller-Betts hopes that the African American Golf Exhibition at the Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History will help shine light on the contributions black caddies have made to golf.

"This gives people a chance to see a part of history that very few people know about," said Miller-Betts, the museum's executive director. "It's such a fascinating story, and you don't hear it often."

As she did research on the role of black caddies and their impact on golf, she came across several interesting facts, she said, but was most fascinated by the impact of black caddies in Augusta, specifically during the Masters Tournament.

"African-American caddies were the only caddies that could support the golfers that played in the Masters Tournament for many years," she said. "When people came here to play, they had to use the caddies that were already here."

At the time, all of the caddies at the Augusta National were black. Golfers who played in the Masters Tournament weren't allowed to bring their own caddies until 1983.

The museum's exhibition, which opened Monday, features memorabilia from black caddies, including those who have worked the Masters, and amateur black golfers. The exhibition will also feature works by Samuel Barnes, a local artist whose focus is on golf.

The museum's historian, Corey Rogers, said that he hopes the exhibit will encourage people to learn more about blacks' impact on golf.

"Often, we overlook the historical and cultural importance that caddies have had over the years here in Augusta," he said. "To me, it's important to highlight their contributions and for the community to take notice of it."

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