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**State Museum Celebrates Women’s History Month by Opening an
Addie Sims Virtual Exhibit**

Opening reception to unveil virtual exhibit to be held on Saturday, March 15

COLUMBIA, S.C., Thursday, March 6, 2014 – The South Carolina State Museum is celebrating Women’s History month by opening a virtual exhibit, *The Art and Life of Addie Sims: A Look into Her World*, which features works of art by South Carolina Civil War-era artist, Addie Sims. The unveiling of the new virtual exhibit will take place during a public opening reception from 3 – 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 15 at the State Museum.

The virtual exhibit is comprised of original paintings by Sims, which tells the story of her struggles to pursue a career in art despite the social barriers and the intervention of the Civil War. The exhibit also features two portraits of family members painted in Charleston in the 1820s.

To celebrate the launch of the virtual exhibit, the museum will host an opening reception on Saturday, March 15. This reception is a one-time opportunity for guests to see Sims’s original paintings on display. After the reception, the museum will place the paintings in storage for conservation and preservation. In addition, there will be a special talk by her relative, Rev. Tommy Sims, on her life and work, followed by the unveiling of the new virtual exhibit that is accessible through the museum’s website. Guests will be able to speak to some of Sims’s relatives who will be onsite.

“Women artists were rare for that time, so that makes this art important, especially for South Carolina,” said JoAnn Zeise, curator of history, S.C. State Museum. “Her story is also intriguing because she passionately wanted to be an artist rather than follow the traditional path for antebellum Southern women. I am excited to introduce the world to the great talent of this previously unknown artist.”

Sims’s paintings portray real-life slaves on her father’s plantations and are portraits of actual relatives. These portraits are personal and are not caricatures or idealized versions of black life so often portrayed by white artists of this period. The artwork depicts such scenes from her native Union

County as a beautiful brook in “Nott’s Branch,” her grandfather in “Portrait of William Sims (‘Grandpa Billy’)” and an old-growth forest in “Forest Scene with Broken Trees.”

Sarah Adeline “Addie” Sims was born in 1828 in present-day Union County and grew up wanting to be an artist, an unusual occupation for a woman at that time. Studying both at Limestone Springs Female Academy (now Limestone University) and under the Bounetheau’s at Mrs. DuPre’s Seminary in Charleston, Addie mostly painted landscapes and portraits. She also carved small figures and cameos from a local rock called soapstone.

The State Museum would like to thank Sims’s descendents, who graciously donated pieces of her original artwork to the museum, which will hopefully inspire the public and researchers to delve into her life and the life on her plantation.

The opening reception is included with museum general admission or membership. The virtual exhibit will be accessible starting March 15 and will be available 24/7 and will be free of charge at scmuseum.org/exhibits.

About the South Carolina State Museum: *On Oct. 29, 1988, the South Carolina State Museum opened its doors, bringing to the citizens of the Palmetto State the newest, and one of the finest, state museums in America. The Museum has four large floors devoted to the disciplines of art, history, natural history and science/technology. It houses both long-term exhibits and five changing exhibit galleries. For more information about the museum, visit scmuseum.org or follow @SCStateMuseum on Twitter.*

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Photo Outline:

A painting by South Carolina Civil War-era artist, Sarah Adeline “Addie” Sims, titled “Mary Elmore Sims Standing in a Field Holding Wildflowers,” c. 1847, is one of several paintings featured in the South Carolina State Museum’s virtual exhibit, *The Art and Life of Addie Sims: A Look into Her World*, which will go live March 15 at scmuseum.org/exhibits.