

Hambone is Creole-Choctaw and his black folk art confirms it!

Hambone" is a self taught blend of Creole-Choctaw who grew up in the bayou country of Louisiana. Hambone's characters and stories depict the colorful and rich history of the Deep South. In viewing Hambone's paintings, art lovers cannot help but smile as they are taken back to their childhood memories of the life and people they love and cherish.

There is a level of mystery and an aura of intrigue to the name the artist has chosen for the signature on his paintings. He finds that it elicits a raised eyebrow or at the very least some level of curiosity. Here is an artist whose expressive style of painting scenes from the Old South can best be described as "folk art," a genre that is without pretension and representative of a way of life that is rapidly fading away. For many it has an evocative quality, bringing back a flood of memories. In Hambone's own words: "When you find your memory in one of my paintings, I will have done my job."



Hambone is the product of Creole and Choctaw cultures, raised in the Louisiana Bayou at a time when many of the values and traditions of both societies, including their arts, were still very much an integral part of life. But for Hambone, it was not until well into his mature years that he began to realize his natural talent for painting. Since that discovery, all of the images stored since childhood has poured out in his distinctive style that some compare to the late Grandma Moses. And like her, Hambone's painting style falls within the broad category of folk art.



CREOLE AND CHOCTAW CULTURES Most Americans instantly recognize highly spiced jambalaya, gumbo and the fast paced music called zydeco, as being Creole. In 1813, the British takeover of Nova Scotia caused a migration of French Acadians to Louisiana. Their French name "Acadien" ultimately became corrupted and the word Cajun emerged. As they later prospered, they imported African slaves to work their plantations. What emerged was a multi ethnic mix of Francophone and West African values, a culture that is today called Creole. Add to this the infusion of local Native-American traits, and a rich, beautiful society developed in the southern bayou country. Those who clung more specifically to their Acadian roots are today recognized as Cajun, while those of mixed heritage are Creole. Among the Native American tribes to inhabit the lower Mississippi, the Choctaw have a long history of interaction with the Creole. Often they intermarried into southern communities. Like the western Navajo, the Choctaw were able to blend outside values into their lifestyle without a loss of their own identity, keeping many of their traditions. Hambone's cultural heritage is a fusion of Creole-

Cajun and Choctaw, thus he walks with one foot in each culture, but his fondest memories are of the black Creole people with whom he spent so many happy days during his early childhood.

Hambone is among 100 award-winning, nationally acclaimed artists working and creating artwork in studios at the Arizona Fine Art EXPO. Outdoors is the spectacular 2-acre sculpture garden sponsored by Zuva Gallery exhibiting 25 large African stone sculptures. There are numerous whispering water fountains, life size bronzes, funky metal, clay, copper, and glass plus mosaic sculptures by the participating artists. Garden attractions are sponsored by Pathways Nursery and the Arizona Bridge Company. Attractions include; Koi waterfall pond, hummingbird and butterfly garden, ancient wall with 200 year old doors from the Palace of India, roses, birds, educational botanical cacti garden and putting green. This show began January 15th and continues everyday through March 29th, 2009. Meet Hambone any day of the week at the Arizona Fine Art EXPO where he enjoys sharing his childhood stories and collective fine art with visiting patrons. The event is located on the southwest corner of Scottsdale and Jomax Roads (26540 N. Scottsdale Rd., Scottsdale, 85255) just 5 miles south of Carefree and 5 miles north of Loop 101. The season pass is \$8 and \$7 for seniors and military. Children under 12 are free. Free Parking. Show hours run 10am to 6pm everyday. For more info visit our website www.ArizonaFineArtEXPO.com, or call 480-837-7163. Join us!

