

JEFF MCKISSACK  
1902-1980

The Orange Show is the work of one man, Jeff McKissack, who for 26 years dedicated his life to the creation of this monument to the orange. It is considered by artists and historians to be one of the finest examples of folk art in the United States.

McKissack, who was 52 years old when he began his work, crated and trucked oranges through Florida, Georgia and Alabama in his early years. Later he settled in Houston and worked for the Postal Service until he retired to work full time on his dream.

McKissack worked alone, with his own hands, spelling out in the Orange Show his personal philosophy of hard work in creating what he called a "health show." He believed the orange was the perfect food and gave the body perfect energy. He incorporated his ideas in a book "How You Can Live 100 Years - and Still Be Spry," something he planned to do himself.

McKissack was a gentle man, brawny and tough from his daily physical labor. His sparkling blue eyes communicated his imaginative ideas to everyone who talked to him. After he opened The Orange Show in May, 1979, he conducted tours for all visitors, but a few weeks before his death in January, 1980, he told a friend, "It's all over for me." His life was the creation of The Orange Show and when it was completed his life was finished - short of the 100 years he had set for himself.