



**PORCH DOGS:**  
*Guarding Southern Culture*

My name is “Dog” and I spend my time on the porch. It’s hot here where I live so I keep cool there. I also watch and wait.

There was a time when people did almost everything on the porch: they visited one another; courted; ate all their summertime meals there; cleaned their guns and boots; shelled butterbeans; and listened to crickets while gazing at the star-filled sky. Now, they don’t spend much time with me napping in the afternoon sun. They prefer to stay inside those cold, air-conditioned houses and wrap themselves in blankets of isolation.

I remember when it was especially fun to curl up under the swinging hammock while my loyal friend sipped lemonade and ate cookies. I waited for crumbs to drop from careless hands and hoarded my treasure in the bury-hole out in the yard. Of course, nothing was better than when the hunter came home with fresh game. I’ll never forget all of those fascinating smells that swirled through the air like lost spirits looking for a home.

As I get older, I find that a good porch is hard to come by. Sometimes I make do with an abandoned house, or I roam to the cemetery, then I trot on towards town where I pause in front of a juke joint, and finally I go up to the big house to look for children to play with.

The other day, Nell stopped by for a chat. She told me she was preserving southern culture by photographing dogs and their porches. I don’t see how she fit all of us dogs inside that little box she held up to her eye, but I let her take my picture anyway, whatever that means. I sure hope she finds a way to let me stay out here on the porch with my people, because that’s where I belong.

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For exhibition, these color archival digital prints are 16X16” (image) and 20X24” (mat) printed on museum-quality paper.