



Louise White

Interviewed by Dale Rosengarten

1. White hopes younger people will take up basketmaking (00:44)

L. White: See, hopefully some of the young people may think about it, when we be gone and to keep this type of work up. Because this work is strictly just in the low country, it ain't in ever part of the low country, just certain places.

D. Rosengarten: That's right.

L. White: And if this died away, that's it. This is going to be it.

D. Rosengarten: That's right.

L. White: And the young generation, it's so hard to get them interested in doing the baskets. This basket here is strictly in the low country and if the generations don't take it up and we're gone, then it's going to die away. But they will, they will sew baskets.

D. Rosengarten: Do you think so?

L. White: They will, the time will come, and they'll sew.

2. "Bone" - the tool used to make baskets (01:59)

D. Rosengarten: What is the tool made from?

L. White: Strictly from a spoon handle and some people use a nail, but the average people use and old spoon handle. They file it down, real sharp, and that's what they use to make, weave the baskets with. But when my time first began, the first thing we learned to sew baskets with was a nail. You mash a nail down to make it, file it down, and then sew with it. It took ten years to find that a spoon handle was a better needle and it do better work. See, it slides through the straw better, nice and smooth, see the average people use and old spoon handle.

D. Rosengarten: I know that people call it a “bone.”

L. White: Yeah.

D. Rosengarten: Has, do you know anyone who actually used a bone, an actual bone?

L. White: Well, right now off hand, I don't think I remember. I remember that my mother and them, she used to get old bones like you know, an old cow. Some, that's how they do you know, broke it and got it sharp. I remember my mother and some old folks they used to use a bone, strictly a bone from an animal or something you know. They call it a bone and now using the spoon handle, we still say a bone. But I remember mama and I used to get an old, some old cow or go to the woods and find old things probably we broke it off an old jaw or any other animal she'd find or a rock. Just leave it to her, she'd say, “I'll bring you a piece of bone and make you a nice nail bone.” And they sharpen them down real nice and make it real nice but they used to use real bone.

3. The best time to sell baskets (00:20)

D. Rosengarten: What's the best time for selling?

L. White: March, it begins picking up because the average tourist will be coming down to catch the early bloom of the flowers. March and April, April and May, that's when they're coming back into Charleston. That's when they're best selling.

D. Rosengarten: Right.

4. Why her basket stand is on a particular side of the highway (00:33)

D. Rosengarten: Do you feel that one side of the highway is better to be on than the other?

L. White: Yeah, this side here. The other hand side don't have a good stoop for the cars to park. For some reason, on the left hand the scoop is too deep, the right hand side is just right for cars.

D. Rosengarten: I've noticed it's true; most of the stands are on the right, north-going side.