



Judson Madden

*Interviewed by Laurel Horton*

**1. Grew up in Anderson, carved flowers (00:32)**

**Madden:** I grew up in Anderson uh....

**Horton:** In town?

**Madden:** Uh, no, I was out in the country, and we used to go to town, that's been 50-60 years ago, in a wagon and I'd have to stay with the mules and Daddy would tell me "Whittle one, one day" and says "When you get this good we'll tie the mules, you can go with me," I never got that good, but I worked on it two or three months, hard.

**Horton:** You were carving what?

**Madden:** Flowers, but uh, I never got that good so I had to stay with the mules every time I went to town, you know.

**2. Getting the wood (00:59)**

**Horton:** Can you get the wood anytime of the year, or do you have to get it-?

**Madden:** Oh yeah, yeah, we got about 400 trees, not big trees; I don't let them get big but when they get about that size, <shows size with his hands>about five inches or four I cut them down, let them new shoots, you know, it's a lot easier on my hands. See what it does to them? <He shows Horton his hands.>

**Horton:** Ooh, um-hum, well uh, it doesn't have- the sap doesn't have to be up in the tree? Can you get- cut during winter?

**Madden:** No, it can be up or down. When the sap's down it dries out quicker so you can start whittling quicker. When its up- well there's a certain amount that stays up anyway- there is enough syrup that stays in the wood to keep the curl when you curl it, it dries, and it's going to stay there unless it gets wet.

**Horton:** Uh-huh.

**Madden:** That's why I use sugar maple, but uh, there are so many people that don't know the sugar maple.

**Horton:** Uh-huh.

**Madden:** See, it's a five point prong leaf, you know, a five point leaf.

### **3. Other types of wood to use (00:48)**

**Horton:** Other wood doesn't work as well as sugar maple does? What does it do?

**Madden:** Other wood?

**Horton:** Uh-huh.

**Madden:** Well it won't hold its curl. See the syrup in the sap, when it dries, it dries hard, ok, if you don't get it wet, it will spade just like that, because that syrup has dried, or that sugar or whatever you call that is in there.

**Horton:** After you cut down the tree, how long do you have to let it dry before you can carve it?

**Madden:** Oh, when the wood- way out there, when it's dry enough- when you take the bark off of it you feel of it- when you first take it off it is sticky- alright when it quits being sticky it's dry enough.

### **4. Carving roosters, squirrels (00:21)**

**Horton:** How did you start doing the roosters?

**Madden:** Oh, the roosters, I saw one one day, and I said "Golly," well now, roosters we done them way back when I was a boy, the roosters. The squirrels, I thought it up, that's mine, the squirrels are. It's nobody else's.

**Horton:** Uh-huh, yeah.

### **5. Types of flowers (01:11)**

**Madden:** But see, I carve the hyacinth, the carnation, and I have carved a rose but it's hard to get the wood for a rose because it's got those little pin knots in it, and you can't have that and cut a big petal.

**Horton:** Pin knots?

**Madden:** Little pin knots, where a limb has come out.

**Horton:** Ok, so what do you call this flower that you...Is it just a regular flower?

**Madden:** That's a zinnia.

**Horton:** A zinnia?

**Madden:** You know what a zinnia...I can do the carnation, the zinnia, hyacinths; hyacinths are the ones I learned to cut and I cut them for years. People thought that they were so pretty but you can't use them in flower arrangement so that's why I went to a different- different flower.

**Horton:** Um-hum, why can't you use them?

**Madden:** They are tall.

**Horton:** They're tall, um-hum.

**Madden:** They're tall, them things curl down all the way around, all the way down.

**Horton:** So like a fountain, it looks like a fountain going up.

**Madden:** Uh-huh yeah, yeah a Christmas tree or something.

**Horton:** Uh-huh.

## **6. Some specifics on carving (00:33)**

**Horton:** Did you ever try to show anybody how to do it?

**Madden:** I tried to show everybody that wants to see, but it's an art by wrist, and till you get that [max [?]], you can't cut a flower, cause it won't do right, uh, you do all that curving really by your wrist, and when you start with a little petal you cut it fine, cross grain all the way down. You don't go right down with the grain, you barely cross it.

