



Elbert Brown

1. Basket use (03:27)

Interviewed by Tom Cowan

<Video opens with a close up of Elbert Brown weaving a basket>

E. Brown: Back then, they used cotton. Th-they was doin' big farmin' in this country. And farm was used. I used t-to tie the World War I. I've made about a hundred. *<laughs>* And so people was farmin' and raisin' cotton. Back in-I remember back in-back in the fourties, I, uh, I met him-I met him there. Got two or three years had to be down there. See this here was a-a lost art and-and they wanted to teach somebody, some of the younger folks this-this work. They called it a lost art. They paid me, uh, forty dollars a day to go down and demonstrate this work and-and uh, and [paid all] expenses.

<Camera shows fish trap basket>

T. Cowan: Mr. Brown-

E. Brown: I had an uncle, made baskets. But it ain't [the quality] that he come make fish baskets.

<Camera shows Elbert Brown again>

But he couldn't make these kind that I make. He could make a fish basket. But my uncle, he-he can make any kind of basket. He-my uncle could make any kind of basket. I see him take a white oak make it as good as you can, see he able to...Made a suitcase, that had a lock and key on it *<laughs>*. [????] by, had the lock and key. He could make anything. He could make anything out of [????] [set of rope]. And I learnt how to-learnt to make baskets. He [felt] kind of bad [sellin' them to kin], making them like you make them.

There is a certain kind, in the woods, that it works. All-all the-all the white oak wont work. You got to learn the kind to get 'cause work *<laughs>*. You learn how to get that out the woods. I-I don't use much of it. I don't use much white oak. I used be riding along the road woods having wood I can tell what works. And it helps save them. [????]grow, they don't grow anywhere. Don't grow anywhere. But down in the low part

of the state, ain't no white down around Columbia. Ain't no-ain't no white grow down there. Now this here is a [????]. [????] feels finish, I could finish this, but this here is pencil dry. This white is dry. A little damp, d-d-d-damp [sure] could work. It wont work if it's dry. You have to dampness to work it. Don't take it long to get it...you make thin strips of it and put'em in the water and let'em stand there fifteen or twenty minutes and they're ready to work.