



Maggie Manigault

Interviewed by Dale Rosengarten

1. Other people who sew (00:45)

D. Rosengarten: Do you know Ms. Irene Foreman?

M. Manigault: Mmm hmm

D. Rosengarten: She makes hats.

M. Manigault: She makes hats and pocketbooks all. (Whistles)

D. Rosengarten: Missionary bags.

M. Manigault: All kinds.

D. Rosengarten: In rows, maybe five strands across.

M. Manigault: Yes, you've got to, you've got to make them in small rows. I have a sister-in-law who made flowers, we call her Rosa Manigault. She would come in there and make this, that's all she'd make to carry along with her flowers. She'd make the pocketbook, she'd make the man-hat, she'd make the woman-hat, and then she'd go to the five and ten store and she'd buy the flowers and then she'd decorate.

D. Rosengarten: How beautiful.

M. Manigault: Mmm hmm, and that's all she do now coming from here to Easter.

2. A plastic cord that used to be used in basketmaking (00:52)

D. Rosengarten: Tell again what, about this colored cord because that's a very unusual thing, I've never seen that.

M. Manigault: Well it's something like a plastic, when you're done stripping them from some the side of a form of a palmetto. And you could get all colors, you could get the blue, could get the green, you get the white, you get the yellow, you get the pink, you get the red, you can get any kind of cord that you want to, to make baskets.

You can have that kind of cord. And we'd use it with every border around it three rows in, see they're all like that, it lasts a long time now.

D. Rosengarten: Did you find it difficult to sew with that?

M. Manigault: Not to me.

D. Rosengarten: And why did it go out, why did they stop using it?

M. Manigault: I don't know. I don't know why.

D. Rosengarten: And you used it for all kinds of baskets?

M. Manigault: Any kind of basket.

3. "Bones" (01:09)

M. Manigault: Come on down generation, come on down generation, and come on down generation, to make them. Some take a tin or metal nail and smash it to make a bone or an old spoon that you don't need, broken up to make a bone. But the majority back then time, when I first learned to sew baskets, they would kill a hog and they'd take it from the hoof and then they split it...split away at the hoof and then sharpen that down and make a bone like that.

D. Rosengarten: Do you think that's where the name came from, why they call it a bone?

M. Manigault: That's what I say; because that's how they used to make them with the ribs of the hoof, that's why we call it a bone, see.

D. Rosengarten: Right, and that's what the old people used to use?

M. Manigault: They used to make in they're time, my grandmother and all of them at that time. That's what they used in their time, but from generation to generation they'd take an old nail and file it down to make a bone. And then take a spoon, and old spoon that they wanted and broke the handle off and take the handle and file it down and make a bone.

D. Rosengarten: When you were learning, did you ever use the actual bone?

M. Manigault: Yes, the old one, the red...

D. Rosengarten: So you did actually used it...

M. Manigault: Mmm hmm.

4. Grandfather made oak baskets (00:27)

D. Rosengarten: When your granddaddy was making the fanners out of oak, was he also sewing with rush? Was he using rush as well?

M. Manigault: No.

D. Rosengarten: No, he made oak baskets.

M. Manigault: Oak baskets, natural oak baskets.

D. Rosengarten: So it sounds a little to me like the men made oak baskets and the women made the sweetgrass baskets.

M. Manigault: That's right, that's right.

D. Rosengarten: Is that so?

M. Manigault: Natural oak baskets.

5. Pine knots as decoration (00:32)

D. Rosengarten: At that time were they putting, were they tying the French knots on the top...with the pine?

M. Manigault: Yes ma'am

D. Rosengarten: That goes way back?

M. Manigault: Mmm hmm, yes ma'am. Yes they did that then.

D. Rosengarten: And, and were they doing that when you first started to make baskets?

M. Manigault: Hmm?

D. Rosengarten: Did they use the pine knot?

M. Manigault: They used the pine know but I didn't learn how to use that until I could weave a good bit, until I learned to use that pine knot.

D. Rosengarten: Did you put pine in the, in the row?

M. Manigault: Mmm hmm.

6. Putting young children in baskets to sleep (01:23)

D. Rosengarten: Do you remember any baskets being used to put the children to sleep in? Now I don't mean the ones that you see now, I mean in the old days.

M. Manigault: Weaving baskets?

D. Rosengarten: Yeah.

M. Manigault: Yeah, yeah, people talk, people talk about them. But I never, I never made them. But I believe I could make them because I could make one on the road at the stand, because I've made an oblong one and we call it an oval basket. I had to make an oblong one for a neighbor for one of his cats to have kittens in. (Laughs) Yeah, you think I'm joking? But I made that basket for her, and that basket, that basket was about that long and about that wide, and about that high. And he did want the handle on it, the side handle, made for your hand. And I had to make them and she asked me if I could line the basket. And I said, "Bring the material and I might could try." To see if I could learn and she bring some material in, and she bring me a good big needle, and I learned on that basket for her to have, for her cat to have kittens in.

D. Rosengarten: Really? Oh my goodness.

M. Manigault: I don't believe, I don't believe it's hard to make now.

D. Rosengarten: Have you ever lined a basket before?

M. Manigault: Mmm mmm

D. Rosengarten: That was the only time...

M. Manigault: That was it; I thought I could do it.