



Marie Manigault

Interviewed by Dale Rosengarten

1. Great-grandmother passed down her basketmaking skills (01:40)

D. Rosengarten: Who taught you?

M. Manigault: My great-grandmother.

D. Rosengarten: Your great-grandmother, how old was she at the time?

M. Manigault: She was about 30-something years old because she died at forty-five or something.

D. Rosengarten: Did you, were you living with her at that time?

M. Manigault: Yes, mmm hmm.

D. Rosengarten: Were your sisters or brothers also learning at the same time?

M. Manigault: Well my sister Louise, she learned and I had a cousin live with us. She was real old, about thirty five and she taught us mostly, you know about weaving the baskets because most of the time my great-grandmother, she had to go out and work and stuff like that. But she helped a whole lot too.

D. Rosengarten: Yeah, yeah. So she sewed baskets all her life?

M. Manigault: Mmm hmm

D. Rosengarten: And your mother and you grandmother, were they also weavers?

M. Manigault: Yes, they do. My grandmother, very seldom she weaves but she knows how to. But she never was a lady that really likes to do...it. But she don't feel like it. It'd take her many times but she could weave it. My mother just started, she knows how but she used to work and she just recently went in about seven years ago, to sit down and weave it.

D. Rosengarten: Really? So she took it up seriously in her older age? And they both also learned from your great-grandmother?

M. Manigault: Right. Because it's handed down from generation to generation

2. Great-grandmother's basket styles (00:23)

D. Rosengarten: What kind of baskets what she sewing, back them?

M. Manigault: At that time all I could remember is, was the bread baskets and the drink trays that you put the glasses in, and coaster sets and, and like the pocketbooks.

D. Rosengarten: Is that the pocketbook that they call the missionary pocketbook?

M. Manigault: Right.

3. Teaching her children (00:33)

D. Rosengarten: Have you taught anyone to make baskets in your time?

M. Manigault: Yes, my daughters.

D. Rosengarten: All two?

M. Manigault: All two, and then the boys could do it but they wouldn't...you know they learned but they don't do anything. My husband made (laughs) a basket that was a rice holder about five years ago and he sold it.

D. Rosengarten: Really?

M. Manigault: That was for sale and he hasn't made one since.

D. Rosengarten: He learned when he was a boy?

M. Manigault: Yeah.

D. Rosengarten: From whom?

M. Manigault: His mother.

D. Rosengarten: From his mother.

M. Manigault: Mmm hmm.

D. Rosengarten: And he hadn't practiced it at all, just picked it up?

M. Manigault: Picked it up, mmm hmm.

4. Men used to make the most baskets (00:45)

D. Rosengarten: I've heard that in the old days, it was the men who made baskets, for instance the fanners.

M. Manigault: The fanners, mmm hmm.

D. Rosengarten: Is this true?

M. Manigault: Mmm hmm, mmm hmm, the men.

D. Rosengarten: And then when did the women take over?

M. Manigault: Well the women were taking over at the same time, mostly when the men started making fans but the women never go into making something that lager you see.

D. Rosengarten: I see

M. Manigault: And um, and they had cut that out, making the fan out, no one used to make it after the men cropped it. You know they don't want to do it anymore then the first that I saw someone bringing it back in, is Mary Jane Manigault.

D. Rosengarten: Yeah, she's famous for her fanners.

M. Manigault: Yes, she was the first one.

5. Dangers of gathering materials (01:12)

M. Manigault: When you go out there on someone else's property you've got to be very careful, because if they've got a posted note for trespassing, you can't go on there. And sometimes we take a chance to sneak and go on there and the next thing you know, you hear guns shooting and you have to run for your life. And um, that day I could never forget that and I kept saying, I said, "Lord, I think I'd rather buy mine." (Laughs) And the next thing I know I'm surrounded by snakes but thank God. I said, "Lord if you help me out of this one I promise not to come back." And from that day to now, I don't care how much materials cost, I'd rather buy it. And I could understand that when those men go out there to gather stuff, I know what they have to go through. And they charge you so much and you don't get much for your money but when I look at what they have to go through, I think it's worth every penny.

D. Rosengarten: Yeah, How long ago did that happen?

M. Manigault: That happened about, I'd say about ten years ago. This happened up there on Sippert...

D. Rosengarten: And someone shot up over your heads?

M. Manigault: Yes, because we're not supposed to be up there.

6. Where to get basket materials (00:22)

D. Rosengarten: The men who buy, who pull the grass for you, where do they get it from?

M. Manigault: Well they got to all different sites, Savannah Highway; some of them go all the way to Florida, all the way to Florida. And some people, some men, have the OK to go on Seabrook Island...

D. Rosengarten: Yeah.

M. Manigault: They get a pass to go on there.

7. Palmetto and pine needle (00:48)

M. Manigault: The palm is just; I think that's the...and the pine needles are the easiest things to get. Because I could go right down to the beach right there and I could get that, it's just easy. And the pine needles, sometimes you grow that in your own yard. Because you know, it's long because the length of it and it's sharp pine and long needle pine. So most of the time now we go down to there, to Kiawah and go in those wood, they have the real long leaf pine...

D. Rosengarten: Right.

M. Manigault: ...and we usually like get a tree or something, and plant it in your yard and it'll grow. So you don't have to go that far. So the palmetto and the pine needles are no problem at all.

D. Rosengarten: No problem.