



Sue Middleton

*Interviewed by Dale Rosengarten*

**1. Men would help their wives make baskets (00:26)**

**D. Rosengarten:** When you were first learning to sew, were there any men sewing, at that time?

**S. Middleton:** Yes, a lot of men.

**D. Rosengarten:** There were. Are any of the still working at it?

**S. Middleton:** No.

**D. Rosengarten:** Mmm hmmm.

**S. Middleton:** They used to, like it was only husband and wife that used to do it at night.

**D. Rosengarten:** Mmm hmmm.

**S. Middleton:** So the husband would always help the wife, now they don't want to do it. (Laughs) Then some are like. "That' your work, y'all do it."

**D. Rosengarten:** Yeah.

**S. Middleton:** They don't want to do it anymore.

**2. Son is a weaver (00:17)**

**D. Rosengarten:** Does your son actively weave?

**S. Middleton:** No, he knows how to do it, but he don't do it.

**D. Rosengarten:** Uh huh.

**S. Middleton:** He learn his girlfriend how to do it.

**D. Rosengarten:** Uh huh. Is she doing it?

**S. Middleton:** Yeah.

**D. Rosengarten:** Uh huh. So is it your impression that more people are selling now than before?

**S. Middleton:** More than ever.

### **3. Drying materials for baskets (00:59)**

**D. Rosengarten:** At what time of year are the materials collected?

**S. Middleton:** In May, June, July, and August.

**D. Rosengarten:** Uh huh, and that's all of them, the palmetto as well?

**S. Middleton:** Mmm hmmm.

**D. Rosengarten:** What do you do once you've cut it or pulled it?

**S. Middleton:** I stow it in a barn.

**D. Rosengarten:** Uh huh.

**S. Middleton:** I dry it first,

**D. Rosengarten:** Yeah.

**S. Middleton:** then I stow it in a barn. The palmetto, I scrub the palmetto, place them in a plastic bag, and put them in the freezer.

**D. Rosengarten:** Uh huh.

**S. Middleton:** And it keep.

**D. Rosengarten:** So the palmetto, you're trying to keep green?

**S. Middleton:** Yes, keep them in the freezer and they stay green.

**D. Rosengarten:** And the grasses you dry outside?

**S. Middleton:** Outside.

**D. Rosengarten:** In the sun?

**S. Middleton:** In the sun.

**D. Rosengarten:** For about how many days?

**S. Middleton:** Oh, it don't take but two days.

**D. Rosengarten:** Uh huh.

**S. Middleton:** A fine one like this, two days

**D. Rosengarten:** Yeah.

**S. Middleton:** And the coarse grass takes a week.

**D. Rosengarten:** Yeah.

### **4. Inspiration for new basket form (00:32)**

**S. Middleton:** That's mine.

**D. Rosengarten:** That's yours?

**S. Middleton:** I did that.

**D. Rosengarten:** When did you start making that?

**S. Middleton:** About a year ago.

**D. Rosengarten:** Uh huh, how did you get that idea?

**S. Middleton:** From TV.

**D. Rosengarten:** Yeah?

**S. Middleton:** Yeah.

**D. Rosengarten:** So you just...?

**S. Middleton:** And that's what I came up with.

**D. Rosengarten:** Uh huh.

**S. Middleton:** So I just keep on doing it and everybody like it and I keep on doing it.

#### **5. How the cake basket got its name (00:21)**

**D. Rosengarten:** Why is it they call it a cake basket?

**S. Middleton:** Because that was, that's what they used to call it in the old days...

**D. Rosengarten:** Yeah.

**S. Middleton:** ...a cake basket, so everybody just started saying cake basket.

**D. Rosengarten:** Is it, did it look like, I mean is it in the shape of a cake or is it, did it actually hold a cake?

**S. Middleton:** Shaped like a cake.

**D. Rosengarten:** Shaped like a cake.

#### **6. Learning to make more complicated baskets (00:25)**

**D. Rosengarten:** What was the first basket that you shaped?

**S. Middleton:** It probably been a bread basket though, because that was the easiest thing to do.

**D. Rosengarten:** Uh huh, uh huh. And how long did it take before you learned to make the lid and the handles, and all?

**S. Middleton:** Oh, it probably was about seventeen years after I started making baskets before I could, it was probably seventeen years.

**D. Rosengarten :**Uh huh.

**7. Deciding what shape to make (00:38)**

**D. Rosengarten:** When you start a basket do you always know what shape it's going to be?

**S. Middleton:** Yes, I know exactly what I'm going to make when I start.

**D. Rosengarten:** How do you decide?

**S. Middleton:** Mmm, just feelings. I say, well I think I'm going to make a bread basket today.

**D. Rosengarten:** Uh huh.

**S. Middleton:** And I is going to make a bread basket or make a sewing basket. Make a sewing basket.

**D. Rosengarten:** Are you influenced by what, what you have already on the stand or what's selling and what's not selling?

**S. Middleton:** More or less, sort of what's selling.

**D. Rosengarten:** Uh huh.