



Nathaniel Washington
Interviewed by Laurel Horton

1. Different parts of tree (00:40)

Washington: The bottom part of it, that's about as much as I can use, maybe if it's good and clear of knots, I can get two cuts off it like that, and the top cut I would have to make this, make these the top cut, because the higher the tree goes the [bicker (?)] it gets, it won't rip good, but from the bottom, up, the...

Horton: You get the more flexible ones from the bottom and the stiffer ones from the top?

Washington: Yeah, the stiffer ones on top, you can use the bottom for the stiffer ones too, but you mostly use the bottom one- bottom part of the tree for this-

2. Wetting the splits (00:34)

Washington: [At times (?)] I have to start with it good and dry, sometimes I have to wet it, but it's better to wet it, than to put your own [green (?)], as soon as I make it because it has tensions to do the same things to it [to wet it (?)], has a tension- see that's what this is, [if this was together I would put it on there, see the cracks are still out (?)], I had to put water on that oak, so I put it all the way down, usually when I put water on it, it dries, I have to put down-

3. Cutting the wood (01:08)

Washington: If you get the air wrong, if it lays around, you know the heat and the sap and wood gets on it and the first thing you know it's rotten, and you go to split it, it breaks, breaks up, your best bet is to split it or rip up. Split it up while it's green, and rip it up- split it while it's green, take all the [parts (?)] home and let it stand for about a day, maybe two days and it gets about half, what you got- what you call it [wilt (?)]. It's good then, some of it will rip and some of it isn't no matter what, but that's how I usually do mine.

Horton: What did you call it, wilt?

Washington: Yeah, half dry, half [wet [?]]- that's what we call it- wood, just how you put water and open the corn for the horses, and shuck it out to them, for a couple of days and come back and pick it up and put it in bundles, well because you have to let it [wilt [?]] and get dry, but you always try to get it before it rains. It's always raining, [unintelligible]. That's what half dry and half green- that's what it's called, [wilt [?]].

4. Steps in making baskets (00:49)

Washington: What I usually do if I'm going to make this basket here, I say I'll make up some of these, [unintelligible] up to here, I get some 4, 5, 6, 8; it's according to what I make, say I want to make a half dozen of them- make a dozen, I put bottoms on them one at a time, just throw them up there, and after I put the bottom in them I turn them up, bend them up, and run them up, on [both sides [?]], and then when I get ready to put this on, I put this on- so that's three, I do it three hour rate, but it's not going from one, if I'm going to make six of these I figure it's more easy for me to take it one step at a time.

5. Laying out the ribs (00:46)

Washington: But I lay out four: one, two, three, four, and I lay down four more, I plat this four to this- plat them [there [?]] to get them started, you see that, and then second I just lay down another eight; that would give you 16 then you got 32, alright, but in order- I learned this, to protect and save more oak, if you split this one seam, see you split that one seam and still you got 32, now you got 33 and every time you get to this split, you got odd, and it jumps from here to here.

