

CLARA McDANIEL  
Booneville, Kentucky  
9 July 1984  
Making A Basket

Mrs. McDaniel: I 78 and I be 79 the 22nd day of October.

Dr. Garrett: Where were you born?

Mrs. McDaniel: I was born on Buffalo Creek.

Dr. Garrett: Where on Buffalo?

Mrs. McDaniel: Steel Trap Forks.

Dr. Garrett: Who were your mother and dad?

Mrs. McDaniel: Charlie McIntosh and Nannie Belle Riley.

Dr. Garrett: Nannie Belle Riley, her maiden name was Riley.  
Who did you marry? Who was your husband?

Mrs. McDaniel: Everett McDaniel.

Dr. Garrett: When did you learn to make baskets?

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, my dad used to make em and I learned from him.

Dr. Garrett: How old were you then, you were a youngster, weren't you?

Mrs. McDaniel: About 12 or 13.

Dr. Garrett: 12 or 13. Why did you make baskets?

Mrs. McDaniel: I did?, nothing else to do.

Dr. Garrett: Did you use them all or did you sell them or what?

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, We never got nothin up there in them days.

Dr. Garrett: No, Buffalo wasn't in downtown Lexington, was it? Buffalo was a pretty isolated place when you were a little girl.

Mrs. McDaniel: In the backwoods.

Dr. Garrett: That was a far piece, yeh. How did you get into Booneville?

Mrs. McDaniel: Walked, ride horseback.

Dr. Garrett: You didn't come in often, did you?

Mrs. McDaniel: No, not often.

Dr. Garrett: So you didn't get very often, into town to visit or do anything like that.

Mrs. McDaniel: You know, people in them days stayed home pretty well.

Dr. Garrett: How did they live, Clora.

Mrs. McDaniel: Oh, about as good as they do now. They raised their corn and their vegetables and kept their calves, about a couple of calves and their hogs, raised their hogs and chickens. I lived pretty good. Can't tell much difference. Only money was scarce.

Dr. Garrett: Did you cook in those days, on a hearth or...

Mrs. McDaniel: Wood stove.

Dr. Garrett: Wood stove. On a lot of that farm there wasn't too much bottom land was there? It was hillside farming wasn't it?

Mrs. McDaniel: Farming?

Dr. Garrett: Yeh. What did you put in the garden in those days?

Mrs. McDaniel: Taters and cabbage and tomatoes and beans, you know, everything.

Dr. Garrett: Did you raise parsnips?

Mrs. McDaniel: Nope, I never did, some people did though, I never did care too much about em.

Dr. Garrett: Eatin kind of got thin about January and February, didn't it?

Mrs. McDaniel: Yep.

Dr. Garrett: You canned a lot, you dried a lot.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yep.

Dr. Garrett: What did you dry?

Mrs. McDaniel: Apples, beans.

Dr. Garrett: Did you dry pumpkins?

Mrs. McDaniel: Sometimes.

Dr. Garrett: How did you cook dried pumpkin?

Mrs. McDaniel: Just put it on the stove and cook it, and put water and salt and a little grease in it.

Dr. Garrett: I talked to some of the old timers up the river who were telling me that they raised parsnips and they would put dirt over them and then when the going got tough in the Spring they'd dig the parsnips out and eat them.

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, I guess you could <sup>Hole</sup> haul em up like haulin up potatoes.

Dr. Garrett: You <sup>Holed</sup> hold up a lot of stuff then?

Mrs. McDaniel: Cabbage and taters, apples.

Dr. Garrett: Everybody had a little orchard, didn't they?

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh. We had a good orchard, a biggin, a big orchard.

Dr. Garrett: You didn't have all sawed lumber in those days, did you. You mainly used a lot of split stuff, dried boards and all that sort of thing.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yep. Dad used to make boards to cover houses with.

Dr. Garrett: What kind of ~~tree~~ do you split these out of?

Mrs. McDaniel: Oh, about that many.

Dr. Garrett: About five or six inches.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: You raise your own pork. You didn't have a lot of beef did you? You were raised mainly on chicken and pork.

Mrs. McDaniel: Pork and chickens.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, Buffalo country in Owsley County is isolated county until just recently.

Mrs. McDaniel: Was you ever in Buffalo?

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, I've been up there quite a bit and we...

Mrs. McDaniel: Hit don't look now like it used to.

Dr. Garrett: No, there are no houses standing to identify anymore.

Mrs. McDaniel: No houses hardly and the fields is all growed up. Tended corn.

Dr. Garrett: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Mrs. McDaniel: I had three brothers and on sister. They was five of us all together.

Dr. Garrett: Where are they at, are they all still around?

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, I got one brother in Erlanger.

Dr. Garrett: Erlanger, what's his name?

Mrs. McDaniel: Steve McIntosh.

Dr. Garrett: Steve McIntosh is your brother.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, you may know him.

Dr. Garrett: Well, the name is familiar. I live in Ft. Thomas, not too far from Erlanger and I used to live right near Erlanger.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, I been in Ft. Thomas.

Unknown: He lives in Newport.

Mrs. McDaniel: I lived in Ft. Thomas. I lived in Cincinnati nine years.

Dr. Garrett: You did, no foolin. When was that Clara?

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, thats been a long time ago.

Dr. Garrett: A long time back, huh.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Unknown: Where did you live in Newport?

Dr. Garrett: He's a gunsmith in Newport.

*Dr. Garrett* Unknown: I work in Newport on Monmouth Street.

Dr. Garrett: I'm going to take a whole bunch of pictures of you here and I'll bring them down and show them to you one day. You got your loop right there, now hold it around so we can see this loop. That's fine, right there.

Mrs. McDaniel: Give me that wire hanging over there. That's my tying wire.

*Dr. Garrett* Unknown: Before we leave will you show us how you split those out of a log, do you have a log here? Can you show us how you split those out?

Dr. Garrett: How long ahead do you, do you want to split your logs when they are green? or when they....

Mrs. McDaniel: You have to split them when they green. When it gets seeds it don't do, its hard to do.

Dr. Garrett: How long does it take you to turn out one of these? A basket.

Mrs. McDaniel: You'd be surprised.

Dr. Garrett: About one day.

Mrs. McDaniel: I can make one a day if I got my hoops and my ribs made.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, you do those ahead.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, it takes about a half a day to make the hoops and the ribs. I can plait it in a day. But, I work to late at night until I go to bed and I can almost make one.

Dr. Garrett: Well, now, you dad taught you how to do this or your mother.

Mrs. McDaniel: My dad.

Dr. Garrett: Where did he learn it? Where did he learn how to do this? From his own folks?

Mrs. McDaniel: I don't know. I guess.

Dr. Garrett: Course, thats about the only way you had in those days to carry stuff, wasn't it.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, or just pick it up yourself.

Dr. Garrett: What woods do you prefer to use?

Mrs. McDaniel: White oak.

Dr. Garrett: White oak.

Mrs. McDaniel: We call em basket oak when I was little.

Dr. Garrett: You just go out in the woods and locate you a white oak.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, take some straights to make slats.

Dr. Garrett: That means you got to get out in the woods, doesn't it? Where they grow up without so many low limbs.

Mrs. McDaniel: I tell you, they are hard to find too. They won't all set. You can't use knots.

Dr. Garrett: If they've been in a windy area they probably are pretty well ~~scattered~~, aren't they?

*SHAKEN*

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Unknown: Did you cane that chair you're sitting in?

Mrs. McDaniel: No, ... did. My dad made this chair.

Unknown: You do that the same way.

Unknown: No, that's hickory bark.

Dr. Garrett: That's the under bark isn't it?

Unknown: That will last for years and years. That's the under bark.

Dr. Garrett: I would like for you to sometime show me how to split that out, cause I tried it and it was damned rough.

Mrs. McDaniel: You mean this?

Dr. Garrett: No, that as a chair bottom.

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, all you have to do is to pick you a pole when the saps up, now you have to take it off and dry it if the saps not up. Then you can just run you a knife down it just as wide as you want it, down the pole. It's easy when its up.

Unknown: You take it when the saps up.

Mrs. McDaniel: Its easy when the saps up.

Unknown: The saps up now.

Dr. Garrett: Maybe we'll take him up to Leland<sup>145</sup> and have him do one. This is fascinating. My boys, I got four boys, I want to know how things are done down in Owsley County where I was raised.

Mrs. McDaniel: Four boys.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, Pete's a gunsmith.

Mrs. McDaniel: He don't know what farmin is in country life.

Dr. Garrett: Well, he gardens a lot but not like they farm down here. No. Does the term grubbin hole mean anything to you Clara. Did you ever see or hear of a grubbin hole?

Mrs. McDaniel: I've grubbed a many of a day.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, you grubbed sometimes damn near chest high in front of you.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: Used to turn the old steep hills, used to have to on Buffalo, didn't you.

Mrs. McDaniel: Had to, in those days people had to work.

Dr. Garrett: It washed off pretty bad, in a hurry. What did you do for medical attention in those days, up on Buffalo?

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, they was doctors them days and I tell people used ole time remedies a whole lot, they made their own medicine.

Dr. Garrett: What kind of remedies did you use?

Mrs. McDaniel: Black root, they used black root. Yarrow root and different stuff.

Dr. Garrett: Ginseng was a money crop, wasn't it? That was one of your big money crops. You ever do any senging yourself?

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, I have went a time or two but I never did have no luck at it.

Dr. Garrett: Well, when your hogs got of age I guess you brought them down somewhere and took them to a factory and had them all cut up for you, huh?

Mrs. McDaniel: Hogs?, Well every fella cut his own meat.

Dr. Garrett: You mean you had a hog killin?

Mrs. McDaniel: They killed them and put them up for sale.

Dr. Garrett: You pretty good at that.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: I bet you are, you make a lot of cracklin?

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: Ain't nothing better than cracklin' bread, is there?

Mrs. McDaniel: It goes pretty good, don't it?

Dr. Garrett: I love it.

Mrs. McDaniel: I got a bad piece here to make this hoop of.

Dr. Garrett: When you all wanted corn meal did you have your own corn ground.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, had our own meal ground.

Dr. Garrett: Where did you go? Down on Bishops or somewhere.

Mrs. McDaniel: Down on Buffalo. Took it to a water mill.

Dr. Garrett: Where, where on Buffalo, I never heard of a water mill on Buffalo. Where was that?

Mrs. McDaniel: You never! It was down below Rocky Fork. We lived ...

Dr. Garrett: Did it have a dam and all that sort of stuff? Did they have a dam to run the water wheel?

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, yeh, yeh.

Dr. Garrett: Was he on the main Rocky Fork?

Mrs. McDaniel: He was down in lower Rocky Fork.

Dr. Garrett: I'll be darn, and he had a mill there where you could go and get stuff ground. I hadn't heard of that.

Mrs. McDaniel: There used to be one on Indian Creek, a steam mill, run by steam.

Dr. Garrett: That water mill, when was that operable? When did that run? I mean, in your lifetime?

Mrs. McDaniel: Oh yeh.

Dr. Garrett: I never heard of that.

Mrs. McDaniel: You never.

Dr. Garrett: No, never knew there was one on Buffalo. I knew that Hugh Bishop had one at the mouth of Buffalo.

Mrs. McDaniel: This was a way up on Buffalo.

Dr. Garrett: On Buffalo. Who run it?

Mrs. McDaniel: Billy Fields. And, a Duff run the one on Indian Creek. You know how we got there, we packed it on our back.

Dr. Garrett: You put it in a sack and tied half of it on one front and the other half on the back, balanced it on your shoulders.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, that's the way we carried it.

Dr. Garrett: Did you walk or ride the horse?

Mrs. McDaniel: Walked.

Dr. Garrett: That was a pretty good little walk, wasn't it?

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: Did you go across the B-Branch Hill or another route?



Mrs. McDaniel: No, this was a way up, it was a way up. Where I was raised the Steel Trap Fork head right up again the Tackery. Like we was right here and the Tackery was just across the hill and you go around a ridge a little piece and Indian Creek.

Dr. Garrett: I'll be darn. I did not know about either one of those mills.

Mrs. McDaniel. Well, they was right there. Me and Mac and Hodge would go to mill.

Dr. Garrett: Now, how did you come to get back to making baskets? You made them when you were a little girl but then gave it up and all of a sudden here now, when you are getting older, you are making them again. Why did you take them up again?

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, I didn't get nothing fer them then. You know what I got for the peck basket?

Dr. Garrett: No.

Mrs. McDaniel: A dollar.

Dr. Garrett: A dollar. That's a lot of work. That was a hard day, wasn't it?

Mrs. McDaniel: That was a lot of work for a dollar. Got about a dollar and a half for a big basket. They wasn't no money in it in them days. Now, theys money in it.

Dr. Garrett: Well, the ones I buy go to my boys and my daughters-in-law. They love these things and they use them all the time. Nobody is doing much to preserve the way these things were done. Now everything is done in factories, or done in Korea or Taiwan or somewhere. I would like to see somebody back here doing it. That warm cornmeal is one of the best tastes isn't it.

Mrs. McDaniel: Pretty good.

Dr. Garrett: When its hot, just dip right into it and what did they take, one seventh. Did they take every seventh measure? the miller or something like that.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, they kept a little box and they took about a gallon of the bushel. That wasn't bad.

Dr. Garrett: No, then you had to carry it back home. You cut those basket oaks by any moon or do you have to cut them by a certain moon.

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, I used to get out and cut them all myself but anymore the boys always cuts them for me.

Dr. Garrett: You got boys Ti?, three boys.

Unknown: Three boys and a girl.

Dr. Garrett: How old are they?

Unknown: The oldest is about 22 and then 20 and 17 and 18.

Dr. Garrett: They live here or are they gone.

Unknown: One lives up at Paris.

Mrs. McDaniel: Two of them are married and one boy lives here.

Dr. Garrett: I bought so dang many of these baskets I wanted to see how they are made. I think we will have Cora on record here because I don't know of anybody else that does them.

Mrs. McDaniel: I'll tell you who does them but he won't do them, is Allison Baker. He is a good hand but he won't fool with them.

Dr. Garrett: He's getting old, is he.

Mrs. McDaniel: It takes patience to do this.

Dr. Garrett: You got one of them done there. It is pretty dog gone good the way you carve in that.

Mrs. McDaniel: That one ain't too good.

Dr. Garrett: Cora, was Buffalo a kind of rough creek.

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, we did some dirty jobs there, killings on Buffalo, against the law. About that way everywhere now.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, now you can get killed for nothing. Up there at least if someone kicked your dog, you killed him, but now you don't have to kick his dog, do you?

Mrs. McDaniel: Nope.

Dr. Garrett: It is really interesting to see how you handle that. A little bit of moonshine ever made up on Buffalo.

Mrs. McDaniel: Well yeh, I guess it still is.

Dr. Garrett: I didn't know anyone up there ever made any.

Mrs. McDaniel: You didn't, well yeh, they used to make it.

Dr. Garrett: And they did used to have some trouble up there. Now that's the first part of the county that was settled apparently, yeh. Fred Gabbard always told me that the first people up there were Abner and Baker, two different families. I think he said at that time there were three Cherokee families living there and maybe they killed them off so they wouldn't have anybody to bother them, then later on I used to know an Abner Baker so I guess they intermarried pretty much.

Mrs. McDaniel: Abner Baker, didn't he lease or rent up on

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Dr. Garrett: You knew my dad, George Garrett.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: You all had to come to Booneville almost to buy anything, didn't you.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: Now with the winter and the roads got worse, of course, the roads were not asphalt or concrete in those days. What were the roads like?

Mrs. McDaniel: Mud was over the tops of your shoes half the way to Booneville.

Dr. Garrett: Right down to the road bed wasn't it.

Mrs. McDaniel: Down the roads and through the creek, muddy hole, mud holes.

Dr. Garrett: And not any bridges.

Mrs. McDaniel: A lot of difference in now and them days.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, sure is. How did you keep warm in the winter. Did you have electric stove.

Mrs. McDaniel: No, had wood, burnt wood.

Dr. Garrett: You didn't have natural gas and city utilities up there then did you.

Mrs. McDaniel: Used coal oil light.

Dr. Garrett: Coal oil for light. Did you ever use candles?

Mrs. McDaniel: I don't think my family ever did but some people did.

Dr. Garrett: They made tallow candles. Did some of them use what is called a grease lamp in those days Cora?

Mrs. McDaniel: I don't know.

Dr. Garrett: Where they just lay a rag in some grease in a dish.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, I seen people do that.

Dr. Garrett: That's pretty smokey and pretty bad, wasn't it.

Mrs. McDaniel: That was a bad life wasn't it.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, I tried it just for fun. I don't think I would like to read by it.

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, you know, old people went to bed early, they didn't sit up half the night.

Dr. Garrett: Well you were tired, gosh, you were worn out by supper time, weren't you?

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh. Got up early.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, had to milk the cows and feed the chickens.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: Cut your firewood and

Mrs. McDaniel: Get ready to go to some field to work. Plant corn.

Dr. Garrett: A lot of big trees. How big were the trees in those days, Cora, when you were little. Six feet, eight feet.

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, what wasn't cut up was about that big I guess.

Dr. Garrett: Yeh, bigger.

Mrs. McDaniel: Now its growed up to the creeks.

Dr. Garrett: Of course, you didn't have any snakes up on Buffalo.

Mrs. McDaniel: Oh yeh we did.

Dr. Garrett: You did, did you have rattlesnakes?

Mrs. McDaniel: Rattlesnakes, copperheads.

Dr. Garrett: You mean you had all those bad snakes.

Mrs. McDaniel: Why don't you come in here.

Dr. Garrett: No, I'm sitting here where I can watch you and talk to you. I am making a recording.

Mrs. McDaniel: You wouldn't do that if you knowed exactly how to make it, you might try one and quit.

Dr. Garrett: Well, I am more interested in seeing you do it because you are an old timer, you are an original. You are not one of these people that went off to some college to learn how to make baskets. You are doing it the way you did it up on upper Buffalo which was an isolated region and that is what I am interested in.

Mrs. McDaniel: You know the prettier the hoops is, the prettier the basket is.

Dr. Garrett: That right.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: It makes your basket, huh?

Mrs. McDaniel: Now, this one has a loopy place in it and you know what I can do, I can put this right here and wipe it.

Dr. Garrett: Cora, your hands are interesting. I like to watch hands. The way you use your hands. How old are you?

Mrs. McDaniel: See, I cut off a lot.

Dr. Garrett: You still got eyesight and you are still able to do this type of work.

Mrs. McDaniel: I guess if I didn't do this they'd get so stiff I couldn't use them.

Dr. Garrett: That's right, so you want to keep using them. Who sharpens your knives? What do you sharpen them on? Got you a good rock there, huh.

Mrs. McDaniel: Now, I'm going to split me a basket piece and show you how I can do it.

Dr. Garrett: All righty, that is exactly what we want to see.

Unknown: Now you are still splitting that in the same direction you started out originally, aren't you?

Mrs. McDaniel: You have to split towards the bark all the time. The south side of this.

Dr. Garrett: Now what do you do, split towards the bark. The bark is on the outside.

Mrs. McDaniel: This is too wide now. I'll try it. It opens the first time, it is a big job splitting.

Unknown: Cora, do you sharpen your own knives?

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Unknown: I'm not much good at sharpening knives. I guess it takes lots of practice, I never have practiced.

Dr. Garrett: Now up to this point, you've gone out and you've taken a sapling and split it in the center and then you corded it and then we got some pictures of you out there taking off the sapwood and you are saving the sapwood to make your ribs and hoops. Now, do you use that same size tree for about everything.

Mrs. McDaniel: No, you can use them bigger than that. You can use them about that big, about that size is a fist full.

Dr. Garrett: About four or five inches.

Mrs. McDaniel: Now see, you start right in the middle of the piece.

Dr. Garrett: Now, you are splitting with the bark. Just as flat as the bark you are splitting just like right inside it, right. Just like splitting the inside bark off a hickory tree wouldn't it.

Mrs. McDaniel: You want to try splitting one. You got to hold them both just perfect, if this is too thick you bend it over this way, and let that one go.

Unknown: Can you straighten it up with your knife if you get it messed up. You can't, I thought you might be able to, kind of whittle it over or something.

Mrs. McDaniel: You could.

Dr. Garrett: How many pieces will you split that into, about three or four, that one you got, that little thin one there.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, if its a real good piece, I make about four slats out of it.

Dr. Garrett: They are not much thicker than a piece of paper are they, when you get through with them.

Mrs. McDaniel: No, they have to be thin or you can't work them in.

Unknown: You wouldn't want one much thicker than that.

Mrs. McDaniel: I split them as I go. If it gets dry then it breaks if it gets too dry.

Unknown: Now thats about it isn't it?

Mrs. McDaniel: No, split that again.

Dr. Garrett: It is going to be interesting to see. Cora, I'll send you pictures, copies of all these pictures I am making of you here. Now look how thin that one is going to be, see. Isn't that remarkable.

Unknown: I can't believe that.

Mrs. McDaniel: I'd like you to try it to see what you can do.

Dr. Garrett: We want to watch you first and get you on record and then we'll give it a shot.

Mrs. McDaniel: They comes some guy up here from \_\_\_\_\_, I mean he says, let me see if I can do that, I said yeh. I started it fer him and he got around about that fer and why, he said, I can't do that.

Dr. Garrett: The secret then is keeping it above the fork, you don't want to pull too much...

Mrs. McDaniel: You just supposed to hold them perfect.

Unknown: Even pressure too it looks like.

Dr. Garrett: Are you still splitting slats that far.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh. You have to scrape them after you get them on.

Dr. Garrett: Now that is about a thick as a sheet of paper. Look at that. See how its done. That the kicker right there isn't it.

Mrs. McDaniel: Its gettin dry. Now you just watch me.

Dr. Garrett: She is going to do a whole basket. She is going to show you how she does it.

Unknown: Cora, if people were trying to watch me, I wouldn't be able to do a thing.

Mrs. McDaniel: Theys been two or three women here wanting to make em and, Martha Batten for one and ...

Dr. Garrett: Cora, how many times you go around that.

Mrs. McDaniel: I go around five times on each side. Theres two, theres three.

Dr. Garrett: Does five times make it stronger?

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh. Now I come back around here and back over here.

Dr. Garrett: This the way your dad made them, Cora.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, the way my dad made them.

Dr. Garrett: You wrap it five times and then five times you loop it in there.

Mrs. McDaniel: It takes a good tempered knife too. Now this is the \_\_\_ for this, no I can go right down through here. Get in here in the shade and sit down.

Unknown: That is beautiful.

Mrs. McDaniel: Watch me put the ribs in, when I get it right.

Dr. Garrett: When she gets started here pretty soon, shaping up a basket. Pretty darn solid there.

Unknown: Now you wrapped that five times.

Mrs. McDaniel: Now I turn it around the other way five times and go the other way five times and then I come back over there two more times.

Unknown: Now when you go back over, you weave it in and out.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, and when they gets dry they get tighter. You can use it anyway while they are drying.

Unknown: Then you back over it twice and weave it in and out.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, that makes it look like it ... Then you measure your hoops and get the same size on each side. Theys a lot to it.

Unknown: Now at the end of the day if you got too many ribs split, do you put them in water overnight?

Mrs. McDaniel: I do and put the ribbing on top.

Dr. Garrett: Now the ribs you can split out of hardwood.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Unknown: Are they round.

Mrs. McDaniel: You can make them round. I always make them flat at the bottom. About three flat ribs.

*Peter* Unknown: You use the round ones on the side. YOU got some pretty sharp knives there, don't you.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, they have to be sharp or you couldn't do nothing.

Dr. Garrett: Now you got to keep them wet, don't you.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, they'll dry out. If they get dry you can put them in water. In five minutes they soften up and they change their color as they soften up.

Dr. Garrett: Can you use ribs, those ribs you are putting on now, can they be real dry.

Mrs. McDaniel: I never put them in water. They bend pretty good, the ribs is.

Dr. Garrett: You make a hole each time in that joint each time you stick that in.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, make a hole in that.

Dr. Garrett: That is why you wrap it so many times.

Mrs. McDaniel: Thats so you hide your ribs.

Dr. Garrett: How many of those ribs do you put in an average basket.



Mrs. McDaniel: Well about 34, 36, 15 or 18 ribs on a side.

Dr. Garrett: Just depends on your pattern and size of the basket.

Mrs. McDaniel: If you don't put plenty of ribs in it it don't look good.

Dr. Garrett: Gosh, you can almost sit on these baskets and they spring right back in shape don't they. Now, I am going to take some of these baskets as a wedding gift to a girl out in Oregon this Fall.

Mrs. McDaniel: They'll be a good gift, real nice gift.

Dr. Garrett: Everybody wants something that is made in Kentucky. Of course, being from Ousley County, that is what I ....

Unknown: Cora, do you have a basket you use, do you soak it like people say you are supposed to soak them every once in a while.

Mrs. McDaniel: After you get it made, naw, I see no reason to. Because they are made solid and plaited close together and I see no use in soaking it.

Dr. Garrett: Now how many you, you put all your ribs in before you start weaving.

Mrs. McDaniel: Naw, you just put three on each side, and you work your ribs in as you plait it. You couldn't get them all on top.

Dr. Garrett: Now you put three on each side.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, three on each side, even with the hoop and the base and as big as you want it.

Dr. Garrett: You have pretty powerful hands and fingers to do that Cora.

Mrs. McDaniel: Anybody had big fingers I guess they couldn't do it so good, could they.

Dr. Garrett: No, it wouldn't be fast. Boy, you are going to town.

Mrs. McDaniel: You can count that and see how many is in that one.

Dr. Garrett: I see, you put some flat ribs on the bottom.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, next to the hoop.

Dr. Garrett: You put one on top and the rest go below. When you were making these as a kid, did you always water the hoop, did you always have the water to water the hoop or did you just do that without water.

Mrs. McDaniel: I have to do this to hold them together.

Dr. Garrett: But when you were young did you always have water to do that with.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh.

Dr. Garrett: You are using an awl to punch the holes in that binder between the two hoops and then push your rib right into that. Now, when you stick that hole in there, you just put it anywhere, you don't have to fit it in in any special way.

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, you are supposed to put them kind of even, you know, with the, in between the two hoops.

Dr. Garrett: So, you put two around each hoop, one about each hoop and two below. So, that is beginning to shape up like a basket now.

Mrs. McDaniel: Well, it don't look much till you get it just about plaited and then about that time you get it all plaited you can have your ribs all even because you can pull them through a little just so you don't pull them up to let the ends stick out.

Dr. Garrett: Ever cut yourself?

Mrs. McDaniel: I reckon anybody can get experience at anything. You could do that. You could look at one to see how its made.

Unknown: Yeh, I am going to try it, like to try it anyway.

Mrs. McDaniel: I don't know how many he has bought from me, he bought a whole big gob of them, little bitty ones. I don't know how many he has bought from me. Even little tiny ones. It takes about as long to make one of them as it does a big one. It does, you can't get done. You put your hole back in there far enough so you won't pull your ribs out in plaitin them. You put it in there solid and they stay solid. One more on the other side and then I can plait it.

Dr. Garrett: One more on the other side and then you can go to plaiting. How long did it take you to fix that many ribs, Cora.

Mrs. McDaniel: To make them. I made them this morning, most of em.

Unknown: You split them out just like you do the ...

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, and then trim em down. You can split very little.

Mrs. McDaniel: Measure your ribs and on each side, this is long, make them the same thing.

Dr. Garrett: Now if I was making a basket, I would have put all the ribs in first and I would have had a hell of a time, wouldn't I?

Mrs. McDaniel: You would never a got it done if you had. He wouldn't a made no basket, would he?

Dr. Garrett: Ever make one out of willow?

Mrs. McDaniel: No, I never did try. They got the awfulest gob of them over there at that place where they buy, willow baskets. I wouldn't give a dime a piece fer em. They ain't tight and they is made in the awfulest shape.

Dr. Garrett: Ever make them out of anything but white oak? Can you do it with hickory?

Mrs. McDaniel: You could make the ribs out of hickory if you could find a piece to split good.

Dr. Garrett: Now when you get these ribs in you start weaving it. Will you stick those other ribs in the same way you do these.

Mrs. McDaniel: Yeh, well you put them in the way you plait it. You couldn't get no more in here. It's a slow job I'm a tellin you, it's a slow tedious job. You got to stay with it or you don't get nothing done.

Dr. Garrett: Can you get out of practice with it. Do you ever get out of practice and let your hands get too soft.

Mrs. McDaniel: They get sore and tired and I quit. I get up and hang around the place a little while and then come back again.

Dr. Garrett: Its an art knowing where to put that, its for sure.

Mrs. McDaniel: Now that looks like a basket.

Dr. Garrett: Now thats the frame of the basket.

Mrs. McDaniel: Why don't you pile them out of the house and straighten them up back out there and take pictures of em and then .....

Dr. Garrett: Now we want to watch you do this. Would you get enough out of that one log to make a basket or will you have to split more.

Mrs. McDaniel: I'll make four or five out of that log. Now heres how I start this, I'll stick it right back under that tie, just so the end of it won't show and around that way.

Mrs. McDaniel: You can hide all of the ties on the slats. Over one and under one.

Dr. Garrett: How far will you go before you put in another rib?

Mrs. McDaniel: Put them in on each side and then you put in some ribs. You put two with this one, one with this one, one by that one.

Dr. Garrett: How long is that, about four feet? This piece you are weaving, is that about four feet?

Mrs. McDaniel: Thats about four feet, don't you imagine? You can use them any size. Now, either one of you could do that. Now you twist that around the top, I think that makes it pretty.

Dr. Garrett: Your father taught you how to do this. Look how fast that woman goes. Now when that stops, how do you start it again.

Mrs. McDaniel: I just lap it over about two ribs. Start the next one on top of that one. The main idea is keep your ribs straight as you go along.

Dr. Garrett: It would still be strong but it wouldn't look as good, I guess.