

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Ida Duckworth Woods

COLLECTION: 4700.0515

IDENTIFICATION: Woman who made palmetto fans, palmetto placemats, and corn shuck dolls for the Acadian Handicraft Project.

INTERVIEWER: Pamela Rabalais and Yvonne Olivier

SERIES: Acadian Handicraft Project

INTERVIEW DATES: August 19, 1995

FOCUS DATES: 1940s – 1960s

ABSTRACT:

Tape 737, Side A

Mr. and Mrs. Lester Woods have lived in their house since 1930; Mrs. Lester Woods [Ida] was born May 3, 1911; Ida Woods and her mother worked for the Acadian Handicraft Project [AHP] making palmetto fans and corn shuck dolls; Miss [Louise] Olivier would pick up these items about once a month; Ida Woods and her mother began working for the AHP through their local home demonstration club; They worked for the AHP until Mrs. Staples, the home demonstration agent for their area, quit; Miss Olivier visited the Woods and had picnics in the bayou; The Woods cut their own palmetto for the fans and placemats; description of cutting the palmetto while they were “in the bud”; Ida Woods and her mother were taught to braid palmetto in the home demonstration club meetings; description of cutting and drying the palmetto; description of preparing the palmetto for braiding which included wetting the palmetto to make it pliable; Ida Woods’ daughter was not interested in helping with either the palmetto or the corn shuck dolls; description of using the corn silk to make the hair of the doll and the corn husks to form the rest of the doll; description of making the corn husk doll’s clothes entirely out of corn husks; the dolls were hand sewn; the corn husk dolls sold for a dollar each; Ida Woods and her mother copied the design of a doll to create the corn shuck doll, possibly got the pattern from the magazine, Progressive Farmer; described braiding palmettos to make placemats; Miss Olivier did not have size or color requirements for the palmetto placemats; Ida Woods and her mother did this work whenever they had a chance, there was not a specific time set aside for this work; Lester and Ida Woods detail the number of grandchildren they have; Once Mrs. Staples stopped working as the home demonstration agent Ida Woods stopped making the craft items; The new home demonstration agent was interested less in crafts and more in diet and nutrition; Mrs. Staples taught her Home Demonstration Club how to bottom chairs [woven chair bottoms]; description of the technique to weave chair bottoms; Ida Woods did not make much money working for the AHP, but it was fun and they had all the materials readily available; Ida Woods mother was from Natchitoches, Louisiana.

TAPES: 1 (T737)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 24 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 27 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: None

RESTRICTIONS: None