

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Lorita Racca

COLLECTION: 4700.0509

IDENTIFICATION: Lorita Racca hand-made rugs and blankets with a spinning wheel and loom.

INTERVIEWERS: Pamela Rabalais and Yvonne Olivier

SERIES: Acadian Handicraft Project

INTERVIEW DATE: August 19, 1995

FOCUS DATES: 1935-1950

ABSTRACT:

Tape 731, Side A

Ms. Racca identifies herself; she identifies her son in a picture; discusses her son being beside her loom when she was weaving; identifies others in a picture; talks of visiting her son's grave; continues to identify people in photos; she talks about her six children; Racca quit weaving when her last child was born; she says many others quit right after her; Racca says she quit because she had one still birth and two miscarriages; Miss Olivier was the woman Racca wove for and describes her as a sweet lady; talks about a picture of her in a buggy with an order she had finished; discusses picking cotton and how she would encourage the children; Racca talks about where they built a house; discusses when she started weaving and how her grandmother wove; talks about her father; talks about her family and how she was the only one to weave; Racca says she was a weaver because they were poor; she made rag rugs and used her godmother's loom; discusses what her children do for a living; talks about her arthritis and cutting the grass; talks about going to the opening of an exhibit at the New Orleans Museum of Art and how they gave her a spinning wheel when they found out she did not have one anymore; Miss Olivier would come to pick up the blankets and rugs; Racca would get material from a first cousin who picked up trash for the city; talks about dying colors; she got paid three dollars a blanket and fifty cents a rug; she sold some later for eight dollars a blanket then her daughter sold some more even later for one hundred, twenty-five dollars a blanket.

Tape 731, Side B

Racca says they asked her to cut the ribbon at the opening of the exhibit in New Orleans; she went to Shreveport with Miss Olivier to demonstrate weaving; she recognizes her work in the capital in Baton Rouge; she was laughed at behind her back because she was inexperienced when she first started so she went to her godmother's house and taught herself; she then brought the loom to her house and continued to practice; Racca begins describing the process; talks about her grandmother making clothes; describes having to give directions to Miss Olivier in Shreveport; talks about the granddaughter of one of the people she worked with; the granddaughter was

disowned because she had an illegitimate child; Racca went to Alexandria once with Miss Olivier and another woman to demonstrate weaving; describes Miss Olivier as a patient person; Racca bought a home and a car when she got enough money; she worked as a waitress when she stopped weaving; she learned to write her name so she could sign her checks; talks about her daughter turning down a scholarship to college to go to work; talks about her oldest granddaughter; Racca says she worked hard and suffered but is being rewarded now.

TAPES: 1 (T731)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 22 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 57 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: None

RESTRICTIONS: None