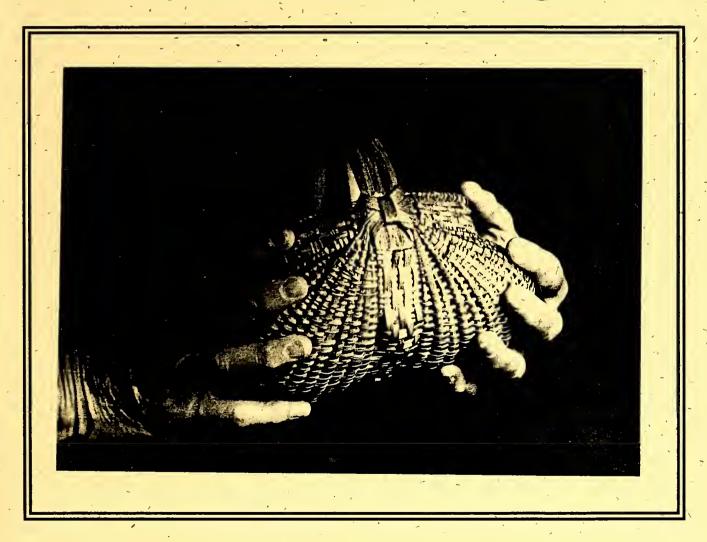
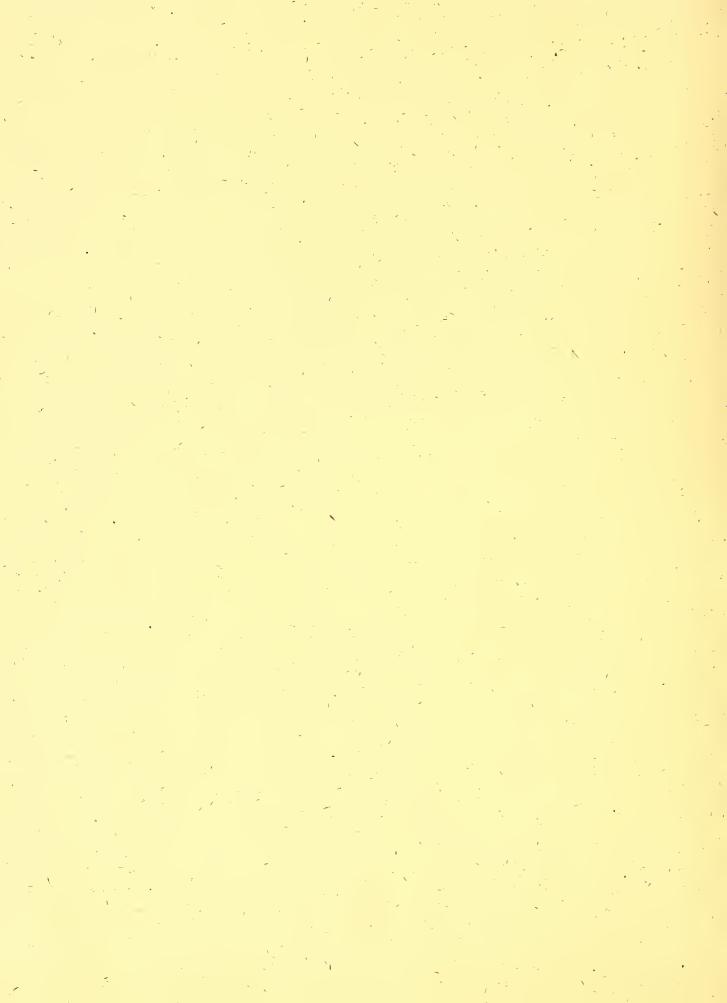
Teacher's Guide To

Over & Under, Around & Through



An Exhibit Created By The John C. Campbell Folk School



Teacher's Guide

To

Over & Under, Around & Through

An Exhibit Created By
The John C. Campbell Folk School
Brasstown, NC

The exhibit

Over & Under, Around & Through

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Introduction

One of the oldest human activities is the weaving of plant materials into containers. Light in weight, more flexible than breakable, baskets are important to the agricultural practices of many peoples, to food storage and preparation, to providing the means for transporting commodities to market. Baskets are tools for imposing order on the tasks of daily life.

In traditional baskets are usually found natural materials native to the locality, shapes which reflect the purpose for which the baskets were to be used, and proportions that portend their anticipated loads.

In our times, many of the pre-industrial utilitarian functions of baskets have been transferred to other kinds of containers -- from combines, to tupperware, to hatchbacks -- but the age-old love affair between people and baskets continues. Faced with many other choices for something to put something in, most people who own and appreciate and make baskets do so because they find in them beauty, the texture of natural materials cunningly arranged, and a connection to the long past of our species. The touch of the human hand is essential to both the making and the appreciation of baskets.

Tradition did not bind basket makers aribtrarily, rather it connected them to function, practical use and a localized aesthetic that admired practicality and fitness of purpose. The basket makers of today, like those of several generations past in some places, are free to create their works in a variety of ways. Some hew to the line of tradition, placing a subtle personal stamp on received forms. Some dream up unexpected visions, experiment in surprising directions, and purposefully defy expectations of what a basket is. Sometimes the two orientations live within the same individual.

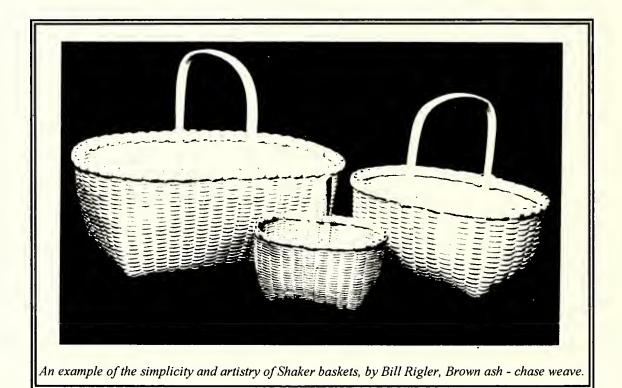
In the exhibit, Over, Under, Around and Through we have drawn together examples of four traditions of basketry. What strikes one about the older forms is their appropriateness to their places, their makers and themselves. They are balanced, proportioned, and harmonious, each in its own way. We can read into baskets what we will, and what we know of their makers informs our imaginative construction of meaning.

The quiet delicacy of a Shaker basket bespeaks an aspiration to heaven; the directness of an Appalachian white oak basket is part of a homestead, solidly on the earth; in their baskets, the Cherokees use river cane as a uniting symbol of nature, mankind and the spirit; African American seagrass baskets wind like the progress of a people from one coastal homeland to another in a spiral that leads upward as long as it is sewn tighly to what has gone before.

Jan Davidson, Director John C. Campbell Folk School

Getting Started

Gather examples of different kinds of baskets, ask students or other teachers if they would bring in and share their baskets with you and your class. See if anyone has a grandparent that has made baskets in their lifetime. Ask them to come in for a visit and share what they know. Put your gathered baskets on display. Most important, enjoy the baskets.



Glossary

Base. The bottom part of the basket. The word "base" generally

refers to a round bottom.

Base Spoke. Spoke used for only the base of the basket.

Base Stick. The warp material that composes the base.

Border. The top of a basket usually finished off in a woven, braided,

or wrapped technique.

Coil. An element or bundle of elements forming spiraling rows for

a stitched basket, i.e. a bunch of pine needles spiralling

together.

The material which constitutes the center of a coil in a coiled Core.

or stitched basket.

Green. Freshly cut plant material that is unseasoned.

The material used to sew or attach reinforcing pieces to the Lashing.

rim.

Plaiting. A weaving technique in which all elements perform the same

function in the weave. There is no distinction between warp

and weft.

Random weave. Just as its name implies, a random weave in made free hand

until the basket holds itself together. Bird nests are a form

of random weave basket.

Round. One complete row of plaiting, coiling or weaving on the

basket starting from the initial spoke.

Side spokes. The spokes added to the base spokes to form the sides of a

basket.

Spoke.

(Also called STAKES or WARP) The thicker element used in wicker work. We use the word "spoke" when referring to a round basket, and the word "stake" when referring to a

square basket.

Triple weave. Weaving with three weavers at the same time, starting with

the far left weaver, going over two spokes and under one.

Glossary (con't)

Twining. A weave in which two weavers wrap around each spoke as

they also twist around each other.

Upset. The transition of the base spokes from a horizontal to a

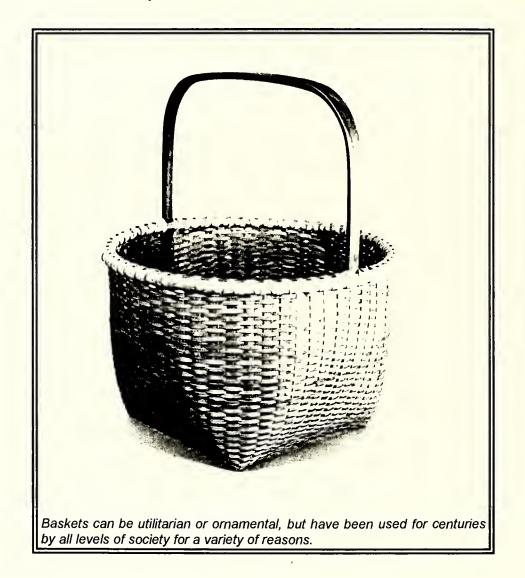
vertical position, or the place where the base is turned up to

start the sides.

Weaver. The elements that weave in and out of the spokes to create

the body of the basket.

Wickerwork. Basketry that uses round materials such as willow branches.



Lesson 1: Basketry as a folk tradition

Objective:

To introduce the concept of the oral transmission of folk knowledge.

Background:

The terms "folklore" and "folklife" refer to a wide range of artistic expressions belonging to a community of people. Each of us belongs to several communities--our family, neighborhood, ethnic group, church congregation, school, social club, labor union, etc.-- in which we informally learn stories, behaviors and skills. Folk music, crafts, practices, and beliefs are transmitted orally or by example in face-to-face situations in small groups or communities over a period of time. Folklore includes but is not limited to: jokes, riddles, stories and sermons, crafts, ways of cooking, farming and hunting, dancing, singing and playing musical instruments. Sometimes folklore can be very traditional, handed down over many generations; other forms are relatively new, and arise in response to specific historical events or social changes. Folklore and folk art are all around us in our everyday lives.

A member of a folk group learns orally, through the folk process, and seldom consults written lyrics, musical notation, or instructional books in pursuit of his or her art. Thus folk songs, crafts, recipes, and stories are never fixed; they are always changing, producing variations. Individual taste, abilities and memory produce new versions of songs, baskets, recipes or stories. The folk process is governed not just by the individual involved in passing on traditions, but also by the values and tastes of the community. This duel consideration makes folklore both dynamic and conservative.

Classroom Discussion

- 1. Are there things (recipes, holiday celebrations, craft skills, musical skills) that your family or people in your neighborhood have been doing in the same way for a long time?
 - 2. How did you learn how to do these things?
 - 3. Were there written instructions? Did they come from a book?

Early Baskets

Memories of Early Baskets of Appalachia by Beryl Omega Lumpkin

When I was a child growing up in upper East Tennessee, I never questioned the use of baskets in the daily life of the families around me . . . they just "were." Baskets were a matter of necessity and were seldom appreciated just for design or workmanship. The best baskets were baskets that were "sturdy" and could be "used" for some utilitarian purpose. The men on the farm made many of the "split" baskets used for a variety of purposes. Their hands were stronger for the cutting, stripping, and bending required for such baskets as oak and the larger willow ones. They also used the large baskets for everyday chores such as gathering from the garden. I recall grandaddy bringing in his prize winning tomatoes in a faded old split basket. Grandmother most often used her apron to gather up vegetables as she was walking about.

Large, flat, square-shaped, split baskets (which looked more like a basket top to me) were used to stack tobacco leaves on as they were cut and graded (placed in different categories according to quality). A little flat, closely-woven basket (when a dish pan was not available) was used to carry the corn and grain out to throw to the chickens running around the yard. One would pick up a handful of grain and toss it in a circle out to the chickens scratching about.

I have read that in the early days of pioneering in the Appalachian mountains, baskets were commonly used for socks. These were square shaped baskets that easily slipped under the high beds. Sock baskets were not just for socks, but in the absence of drawers as we now use, baskets could be used for all small pieces of clothing and stacked up or placed under the bed. Baskets hung on walls and sat by the fireplace for kindling. They were in the smokehouse (my favorite place) where the corn was stripped from the cob and ground up, and they held utensils in the kitchen.

There was a very large basket I recall seeing around but never really knew what it was used for until later when I became interested in baskets and their use. This one was about three to four feet high and about two feet around. It was made of splits and mostly sat gathering odds and ends. I have discovered that this basket originally was used for gathering cotton. We do not have cotton in the Appalachian mountains, so it must have been inherited from another area and used for other farm purposes.

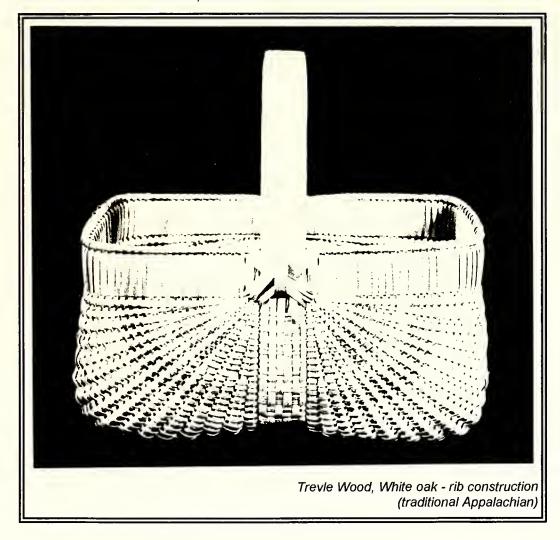
The large rectangle-shaped split baskets were sometimes reinforced with a piece of metal (tin or whatever was handy) through the bottom of the weave to make them stronger. This came in very handy when carrying potatoes, corn, tomatoes, and other heavy vegetables in from the garden.

Most people who lived in the mountain areas used whatever material was handy to weave baskets for their particular use. One of the strongest

Early Baskets (con't)

(besidesthe oak splits) was the willow made from creek willow or "black willow." The willow was used not only for baskets but for furniture, chairs, tables, even beds. It could be used naturally (with the bark on) or stripped to show its beautiful white wood. No other preparation was necessary except to soak it when it started drying out. Willow bark was mostly the color of honey and would retain that color for a very long time. The willow itself is very durable. The willow for the furniture was gathered early in the spring when the young shoots came up around the trees. They could be cut and easily bent to a usable shape. There are still many of these baskets and pieces of furniture around.

There were a few honeysuckle baskets about, mostly some sewing baskets and trinket baskets. These baskets were not very sturdy so were mostly "house baskets." Another possibility was that the farms and grazing land were kept cleared of brambles and vines so honeysuckle was not a favored vine for use. What the cows didn't eat, was cut down when the



Early Baskets (con't)

fields and fence lines were cleared. When it was used, it was boiled and stripped of its bark and sometimes dyed with black walnuts, which were in abundance. Since it was more important (in the East Tennessee mountain farmland area) to have basketsfor farm use, the house baskets must have been far down the list of preferred baskets to make.

One of my fond memories of early childhood is a small, rectangle-shaped willow basket, painted a very ugly green. Green paint must have been in abundance because many things were painted that ugly green and the basket must have been handy to paint at the same time. I can still feel it in my hands as I carried it to the "henhouse." I was supposed to gather eggs in it but I seldom did because I was afraid of the chickens when I opened the door. Consequently I came back with things like ground cherries, gooseberries, blackberries, and an occasional pretty rock. Grandmother never scolded me and continually sent me out for eggs. I don't know if it was to get rid of me or to give me an excuse for exploring the many wonderful field and woods treasures. For whatever reason, it worked.

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Lesson 2: Many people make baskets

Objectives:

- 1. To introduce the concept of the making and use of baskets in different cultural traditions.
- 2. To explore the relationship between cultural traditions and basketry.

Key Concepts:

- Appalachian white oak baskets are woven from natural materials.
 Their designs reflect their functional uses in Anglo-American mountain communities.
- 2. Shaker baskets are also woven from natural materials. Their designs reflect the religious concepts of simplicity, order and sturdiness essential to the Shaker belief system.
- 3. African American seagrass baskets are coiled with natural materials indigenous to the coastal South. Their design and construction reflects the knowledge and skills of the African slaves who worked on the rice plantations.
- 4. Cherokee baskets are woven from natural materials that are often dyed. Their designs reflect Cherokee mythology and are often very intricate. The Cherokee created a double walled basket, that when woven very tightly, could be used to carry water.

Activities that can be led at the exhibit or led with basket examples in the classroom:

Discussion Questions --

- 1. What is similar and what is different about the baskets?
- 2. What materials are used to make the baskets and where are those materials found?
- 3. What would happen if the materials were less available? (Teacher might want to introduce concepts of dwindling resources and ecological conservation.)

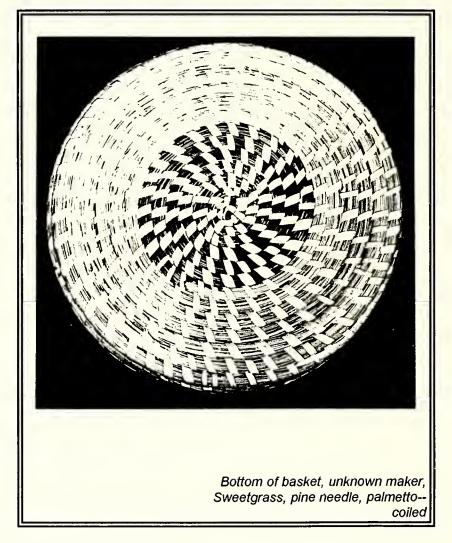
Lesson 2 (con't)

- How were these baskets used? What kinds of things were kept or carried in them?
 - -gathering and transporting food -laundry

 - -sewing supplies -cheesemaking

 - -household storage
 - -fishing
- How do you think baskets were designed differently for these different uses?

(Note: Teacher can help students to relate form and function.)



Lesson 3: Making baskets from paper and yarn

Objectives:

1. To provide students with an introduction to the materials and techniques of basketmaking.

Activities:

Equipment and tools needed:

- Bucket or pan (like a plastic dish pan)
- Towel
- Knife
- Awl or knitting needle...
- Tapestry needle
- Tape measure
- Scissors

If you do not have these tools, use a pair of scissors and forget the rest.

Just because you do not have all of these tools, do not be discouraged. Basketmakers before you did not have them either - they just used what they did have. That and a little imagination goes a long way.

What tools do you have or what tools can you use to improvise?

Try making your own tools - a stick trimmed down makes a good awl.

Preparation of materials for use

Cane- All you need to do with cane (river cane or bamboo) is soak it for

about five minutes. If you want it colored, dye it in vegetable dye

then cut it in the lengths you want.

Cardboard- Use cardboard boxes that are not too thick. Open up box

and cut strips. To decorate cardboard, you can use any and all...paint, crayon, felt-tip markers, see what you can find to use. How about house paint? Use the printing on the box

as part of your design.

Plastic packing strips, yarn, rope, jute, old clothes...

A blue jean basket can be made out of old jeans. Anything that you can wrap around your finger three times, you can use to make a basket.

Lesson 3 (con't)

Old socks, tape, newspapers, plastic wrap...

What else can be used? Look around your environment, remember, three times around your finger and you are on your way to creating your one of a kind basket.

Honeysuckle for basketry...

Gathering your honeysuckle vines - Honeysuckle vines grow wild throughout the South. If you know where some honeysuckle grows, you can use it for basketry. The best vines for basket making are very small, long vines of the same size. To make handles, the larger vines are stronger. Also, for large baskets, you can use the thicker vines.

After you gather your honeysuckle, the leaves should be stripped off and the vines wound into a "hank" or bundle and boiled in water for one to three hours. With a scrubby, like the ones you use to wash your dishes, rub off the bark. Hold one end and pull down with your other hand (the one that has the scrubby in it), then rinse the vine in clean water to remove any remaining bark.

<u>Using and storing the vines</u>. The vines may be used right away or put away for later use. Be sure that the vines are completely dry before storing them. Do not store in a plastic bag. They can not breathe and will mildew. You can use sandpaper to smooth the vines before you start weaving. Honeysuckle can also be dyed.

Materials gathered free of charge...how, when, where

Cattails -	Use the leaves, found in watery areas such as ponds and streams, and collect in late summer and fall. Cut leaf at base, picking only the green ones because the dry ones are
	too brittle.

Grapevine	-	Grapevine is used for handles for the most part. You can
		find the vines growing up and around trees. They can be
		collected any time of year. Leave the tendrils on for a
		different effect.

Virginia Creeper -	Use the runners, green or dry with soaking. collected anytime.	These can be
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Lesson 3 (con't)

Yucca - Use the leaves (whole or split). They require extensive soaking, gather in late spring and early summer. Pull the leaves from the base.

Sea Grasses & Sweetgrasses - Best used right after you gather them. You will find them along roadsides, near water, and fields, and in your own yard. Try anything you find, experience each material on a trial and error basis.

Can you think of any plant material you could use to make a basket? Remember, if you can wrap it around your finger three times, you can weave and make a basket out of it.

Caution: Do not use <u>poison ivy</u> under any circumstances. Be sure you can identify it before you begin gathering the vines.

Recycled Materials

But I don't have anything with which to make a basket!!

What can I use to make a basket?

- *Plastic shipping tape
- *Rope
- *Cord
- *Paper anything you've got, all the way from fancy wrapping paper to newspaper
- *Wire
- *Yarn
- *Ribbon
- *Old Belts
- *Ties
- *Cloth

Get the idea?! Yes! Anything that's fairly long, flexible and free. If you can wrap it around your finger three times without it breaking, you can make a basket out of it.

On Your Own

NOW, use your imagination...

Basket-making stuff. . . WHEN YOU DON'T THINK YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE

Poster board

Wire...any kind, telephone, copper, etc.

Plastic bags

Inner tubes

Fabric

Paper pulp

Paper strips, of any sort

Scrap paper

Art craft roll paper

Wall paper

Newspaper

Magazines

Tape, shipping

Plastic packing tape

String

Ribbon

Aluminum foil

Rags

Jeans

Twine

Jute

Corn shucks

Lace

Netting

Flat paper reed

...And just about anything else you can find.

Try anything that is flexible and fun to work with...

Basketry Techniques

You only need to learn one basket weaving technique to make baskets as diverse in size and shape as you can see anywhere. It's a relatively simple technique that lends itself to endless variation.

You can alter a basket's size and shape while you weave or you can change the number and length of reeds used as spokes. You can also alternate the weaver with round, half round, and flat reed to change the appearance of the basket.

You can make baskets with just one size of round reeds, but three sizes are recommended. A bundle of thick round reeds for spokes, a bundle of thinner round reeds for basic weavers, and (for variety), a second weaver bundle of flat reeds. Each bundle contains long lengths, which you cut to the right size. To soften the reeds so they will be flexible when weaving, soak them in water for five to 15 minutes. Soaking time depends on the dryness and thickness of the reeds. If the reeds dry out and begin to splinter while you are weaving, place the basket-to-be in water until the reeds become pliant again. Soaking takes about 10 minutes.

The short spoke should be half the length of the long spokes, nine inches long. Lash the spokes together, spread them an equal distance from one another so the weaving will develop symmetrically. Weave over and under the spokes. When you reach the end of the first weaver, just add on a new weaver on top of the one you just finished, behind a spoke, on the inside. When the base is the desired width, pull the weaver you are using tight and bend the spokes to form a basket shape. Add more spokes now, if necessary, and weave to the desired height. The best woven basket will have a base that pops up in the center so the basket rests on its bottom outside edge. You achieve this by pressing the base into a dome shape while weaving by keeping the spokes spaced as evenly apart as possible, and by keeping the weavers perpendicular to the spokes. Complete weaving by intertwining the spokes to secure the top edge and to form a border.

To form a border, pick any two spokes, one in your left hand and one in your right. Weave the left spoke behind the right one and push it down into the woven body of the basket. Do this all around the rim until you have just one spoke standing up. Take the last spoke and crossing behind the spoke to its right, tuck it into the woven body of the basket.

Decide how many inches tall and how many inches wide you would like the basket to be. No matter what size you choose, you will need an even number of long spokes plus one additional spoke about half as long as the others. This shorter spoke gives you an odd number of total spokes which is necessary to produce an alternating weave.

Each long spoke must cross the entire diameter of the basket's base and travel up opposite sides to the top. So the larger the basket is, the longer its spokes must be. Also, the bigger the basket, the more spokes you need to give it

Basketry Techniques (con't)

stability. If you think the base feels weak, add more spokes by inserting a new spoke on both sides of each original spoke, just slide them between the weavers.

First Basket

You need four long spokes and one short spoke for the finished basket to measure three inches tall, four inches wide. To compute length of each long spoke, double the proposed height, add the width, then add eight inches more for a border at the top. Each long spoke will be 18 inches for this basket.

When you have completed your first basket, you will probably be ready to weave another. For a basket six inches in diameter and 13 inches tall, cut fourteen 40 inch spokes and one 20 inch spoke from number 5 round reeds. Use one number 2 round reed for the first weaver, continue weaving with 1/4 inch flat reed.

A Simple Wicker Basket

Follow these steps:

- 1. Take 10 spokes
- 2. Take 5 in each hand
- 3. Make an "X" with them
- Wrap your weaver over the top spokes and under the bottom spokes. Do this about four or five times
- 5. Now with the same weaver, start Japanese weave. Japanese weave is over 2 under 1.
- 6. Separate spokes from one another so they radiate from the center like spokes on a wheel
- 7. Complete the base about 3 inches in diameter
- 8. Remember to shape it like a saucer
- 9. End the weaver by pinching it with pliers and pushing it down into the weaver next to the initial spoke
- 10. Now to start the sides or up stokes as it is called, do the same Japanese weave but pull on your weavers pushing up the spokes as you weave. This comes with practice so do not get disappointed too quickly.
- 11. To finish off the rim, simply take 2 spokes left behind right and pull down, then pick up the next spoke one in the left hand, one in the right and continue all the way around your rim, or top of your basket
- 12. With this basic basket you can do different weavers. Remember, you can do this with anything that is round.

See what you can do on your own.

Be kind to yourself, take your time and enjoy your weaving.

Plaited Baskets

Plain Weave...Plaiting

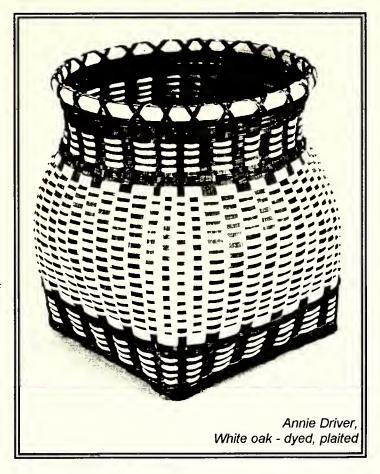
Traditionally, plaiting refers to the interlacing of three or more strands of materials. This technique is also call braiding. Basket makers today use the word plaiting more loosely to describe the plain weave (over one and under one), the twill weave, and other patterns. Like any form of weaving, with baskets, the woven structure is formed by two elements - the spokes (warp) and the weavers (weft). In most plaited baskets, the two elements look just the same. Plaiting is an easy technique to learn if you start with one of the simple baskets in this manual.

Today's basket makers are not only continuing to weave the traditional forms in familiar basketry materials...reed, cane, splint, willow, and grapevine, but are also experimenting with a variety of natural materials plus industrial materials such as paper bags, strips of film, and even needlepoint canvas. Basket weaving can be very intricate and sophisticated, as you see in the skillful and imaginative work of baskets you see out and about. Plaiting a basket is usually quicker than weaving wicker or twined baskets, or making coiled baskets. Plaiting is also the most fragile form of basket making.

Instructions For Plaited Baskets

Tools: Foam core board, straight pins, scissors, yardstick, paper clips, cellophane tape, thick white glue.

Note: If weaving material has a right and wrong side, set up the base with the right side of the material down.



Plaited Baskets (con't)

Using the following materials and directions, you can make your own ribbon basket.

Size:

5 inch square base with 3 inch sides.

Materials:

6 1/2 yards of 1 inch grossgrain ribbon, acrylic spray finish

Directions:

- 1. Cut ten 13-inch ribbon spokes, three-21 inch ribbon weavers, and two-21 inch ribbon bands for the lip of the basket. Pin the ribbons to posterboard and then spray the ribbons with acrylic spray. Allow them to dry. Unpin the ribbons, turn them to the other side, re-pin them, spray them and allow them to dry. Then remove them from the posterboard.
- 2. To make the base, work on a foam core board, using straight pins to anchor 5 vertical 13-inch spokes. Use 5 of the other 13-inch spokes, weaving them horizontally with the vertical spokes using an over and under pattern. The woven section should be situated in the middle of the horizontal and vertical spokes. Glue this section in place and secure it with paper clips until it dries.
- 3. Make row 1 of the basket sides using a 21-inch weaver. Begin at the middle spoke on one of the sides of the base by glueing one end of the ribbon in place and securing it with a paper clip until it dries. Weave the ribbon in an over and under pattern around the entire basket, pulling as you go to force the basket into a three dimensional shape. Overlap the ends of the weavers and glue them into place, securing them with a paper clip until they dry.
- 4. Make rows 2 and 3 by repeating step 3 with the remaining weavers.
- 5. When the glue is dry, remove all the paper clips. Fold each spoke either forward or backward over the top edge of basket. Depending on its natural curve, glue the ribbon ends and secure them with paper clips. Trim off the excess ribbon.
- 6. To form the lip of the basket, apply glue to the wrong side of one 21-inch ribbon band. Beginning at the corner of the top row of the basket, glue the band around inside edge. Glue the other 21-inch ribbon around the outside edge of basket. Paper clip the ribbon until it dries.

The Real Easy Brown Bag Basket

Following are the directions for making the real easy brown bag basket.

Directions:

- 1. Take one brown bag, cut it in strips from the top to the bottom of the bag, leaving the base of the bag intact.
- 2. Cut strips from another bag, laying the bag flat and cutting across the bag for them. Decorate the strips.
- 3. Using paste glue, start weaving with the strips you decorated, over one under one, gluing as you go. Do this once around only, then start your next row of weaving. In other words, you will only be going around once with each strip you use.

Helpful hints -- when you cut your spokes from the top of bag to the bottom, trim a little away on each side of each strip to leave space for your weavers. You can leave them hanging or cut them off.

Use your imagination on this one, the crazier the better. Lots of color also makes the basket more fun and personal to the maker.

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The Over & Under, Around & Through Teacher's Guide was written primarily by Veronica Ludlow, a Tennessee fibre artist with additions by Beryl Omega Lumpkin and SAF staff members Barbara Lau and Barbara Benisch. The Guide was designed and laid out by Frances Bishop. For more information on baskets, write to Veronica Ludlow, Box 28, Heiskell, TN 37754.

The **Southern Arts Federation Folk Arts Program** develops and implements projects and programs to support and encourage the traditional folk arts of the South. Folk arts are defined as community-based arts passed on through families or groups that share the same ethnic heritage, language, occupation, religion or geographic area. The folk arts are learned through tradition -- by word of mouth and customary example.

The **Folk Arts Traveling Exhibits Program** provides high quality, low security folklife and folk arts exhibits to small and mid-sized museums, libraries, local arts agencies and other venues at a reasonable cost. The program utilizes exhibits that have been created by southern museums but have not traveled from their home venue.

The **Southern Arts Federation** (SAF), founded in 1975, is a nonprofit, regional arts agency dedicated to providing leadership and support to affect positive change in the arts throughout the South. Composed of seven major departments -- Arts Education, Folk Arts, Jazz, Performing Arts, Visual and Media Arts, Southern Arts Exchange/Special Projects, and Information Services -- the organization works in partnership with the state arts agencies of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee; and is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, foundation and corporate sponsors, and contributions from member states. Arts Education, Multiculturalism, Indigenous Southern Arts, and Underserved Communities are SAF's four major priorities.



SOUTHERN ARTS FEDERATION

181 14th Street, Suite 400 Atlanta, GA 30309 Phone: 404-874-7244 FAX: 404-873-2148



