



### **Basketmaker and Pottery Maker**

Mrs. Lorena Langley, a member of the Koasati Tribe, was a source of inspiration to her people and to all of the people who came to know her. She and her family perpetuated the language and arts of her tribe and have shared those creative skills with the rest of the world.

Mrs. Langley was a pine needle, white oak, and cane splint basketmaker. These are skills she learned from people with whom she grew up with. She and her family raised these skills to the level of an art form. She was virtually the last known Koasati potter, and she was still producing the vessels that her family made to hold traditional sacred medicines, many of which could not be made or stored in metal containers. Few southeastern Native American tribes have retained so much of their cultural heritage as Mrs. Langley

and her family. Mrs. Langley not only maintained her own skills, but she also trained her children and grandchildren in the craft. Since very little of Native American culture has been well documented and recorded, many of the skills used by the various tribes have been lost as innovation and technology made those skills appear to be less important for survival. Mrs. Langley embraced her cultural heritage and attempted to share it with her family as well as with the rest of the world. Her efforts emphasized the social and cultural importance of those skills even as their survival benefits have decreased.

Mrs. Langley won awards for her crafts at national shows like Red Earth in Oklahoma City, the New Orleans Jazz Festival, the Southeastern Indian Celebration in Columbus, Georgia, and many others. Her basketry and ceramics are to be seen in both public and private collections from Maine to Louisiana. She demonstrated her skills for the National Park Service at Macon, Georgia, Jean Lafitte National Park, and for museums in Georgia, Mississippi, and Texas. She also participated in the Folk Arts Apprenticeship programs in both Louisiana and Texas. She and her family are now nationally known, and Mrs. Langley was inducted into the Louisiana Folklife Center's Hall of Master Folk Artists. Mrs. Langley died September 10, 2001.

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