

## Phillips, Jack



### *White Oak Basket Maker*

Jack Phillips, one of the few remaining basket weavers in northern Louisiana, was born February 22, 1922, and was reared in the black hills of Alabama. He grew up watching the Cherokee make baskets. Phillips is one-eighth Cherokee himself, but he was reared in the Anglo-Saxon culture. During the Great Depression, Phillips learned very quickly that poverty is, in many ways, a state of mind. As he said, "How can you be poor when you have everything you want?"

Jack spent his life as a trader and leather worker traveling throughout the South and Southeast. Jack served in the United States Air Force for twelve years. He became disabled and took up basket making. Mr. Phillips made some of the finest white oak baskets in the South. He was recognized throughout the South for his white oak baskets and old-time toys.

Mr. Phillips' first baskets were made by whittling the strips, but he talked an older man into teaching him to split strips for the baskets. Jack credited Fred Henderson for helping him perfect his craft. Mr. Phillips demonstrated his craft and told his stories at folk festivals. He was inducted into the Louisiana Folklife Center's Hall of Master Folk Artists in 1982.