

Kentucky Craft History and Education Association, Inc.

Interview with Philis Alvic

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Interview conducted by Greg Willihnganz

WILLIHNGANZ: Why don't you tell us a little bit; first, let's just take a walking tour of this amazing workshop.

ALVIC: Okay, of this amazing studio. Well, you know one dreams of one's ideal space. When we moved into the house originally my husband said, "Oh, the room we have for the studio isn't big enough," and I said, "Well, I didn't know an artist that ever thought their studio was big enough." "So why don't we live in it a while and decide what I wanted and needed." Well, when we thought of adding onto the house, my oldest son, that's a sculptor asked if he could build it. But we really didn't, you know, I said, "Yes" very readily. And then my husband said, "Well, are you sure?" And I said, "Well, everybody I knew that had built something talked about all the fights they had had with builders." And I said, "I have had a lot of experience fighting with this child and I might actually win one." But it worked out that we didn't really fight. We managed to cooperate and both put ideas into it so that it's this wonderful room with lots of light in it and gives me scope for creativity in many departments as a weaver. And also as a writer because it's very important when writing to be able to look out a window (laughter).

I work with yarn that's already spun and dyed. I don't have any personal relationships with small furry animals or that sort of thing and color is very, very important in my work. So I've always liked to have the yarn that I use out and visible. And I previously had the yarn in these laundry baskets up on shelves, but my son also built these storage units that go underneath the windows and still let me see everything. I may comment here that even though I have hundreds of pounds of yarn here, there is never enough. There is always that color I wished I had.

Moving on around the room I have three large looms that are up and functioning now. My thought was that depending on how I felt on a particular day, rotate from loom to loom but that doesn't seem to be the way I work (laughter). I kind of focus on one at a time and then finish up those projects and then go on to the next one. And the looms do slightly different things so that's the reason to have several of them. And two of them are now attached to computers. It's not as easy as pushing a button and I still use two arms and two legs in the weaving. It just helps with the pattern. But even that is after I (laughter) spend a lot of time programming in the pattern and things. I can also demonstrate if you like.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, why don't you?

ALVIC: If you like an example of a weaver in a loom, we can do that one too. This unit does make a little noise. Okay, that's the last row I row. Oh, okay. With weaving, there's a whole language that goes along with it. The weaving machine is a loom I throw a shuttle that has a bobbin in it with the yarn that I put across. The pattern is built up one row at a time and I do what is known as loom controlled weaving. In other words, this part of the loom which are the harnesses, bring up groups of threads and by doing different groups I can get these very intricate patterns. An interesting historical footnote that all of us weavers like to point out is the loom was actually some of the major thinking that went into computers. Particularly, the Jacquard loom and how it controlled threads. In fact, Jacquard cards that control a roll of weaving look

amazingly like those old punch cards that many of us will remember the computers used to work on. The computerit controls the order that the threads come up to form the pattern. Now this information doesn't get into the computer by magic. I put it in (laughter) you know in a rather laborious way. So I sometimes feel like what end am I spending my time at. But the other looms that I have had treadles underneath the loom that controlled rising the harnesses and I got very frustrated because I didn't have enough feet. And although I could get underneath and adjust little pegs to have several groups of threads come up at a time because I was getting more and more elaborate ideas for patterns I felt I was spending more time underneath the loom. So this way is definitely preferable and I still though use the large loom over there for my major panels because it actually is better equipment to do with that type of weaving than to use this computer. So I'm not using the computer to do what I had been doing previously faster or more efficiently. I'm doing what I did previously and then expanding into other areas.

The up and down threads on a loom that are threaded through heddles on harnesses, that's these threads, are called the "warp". The ones that go across are called the "weft". So this particular warp was put on the loom for a sample exchange group that I'm a member of. Each year this group of weavers called, "The Sixteen" exchanges samples usually around a certain pattern that we're all very creative with. This thread structure is called, "Crackle". We have one member in Australia, one in the Netherlands and a couple in Canada, so we're really an international group that we have fun in. So there is around twenty people in the group; so when the samples come, it's like these Christmas presents from all over the world with all of these wonderful patterns. And then they give detailed directions so we know how they came up with these particular patterns. The name "The Sixteen" comes from - we all do patterns that have sixteen harnesses.

Most weavers in the world are content with four and some very wonderful weavers use a loom that's really no more than a frame. A loom, this one has a lot of apparatus associated with it, but the basic function of the loom is to keep the warp threads at equal tension. And so for a tapestry loom, it can be very, very simple because it's how the weaver manipulates the threads that make the pattern, where with me it's the loom that does it. With this loom I step on pedals underneath that bring up groups of threads. This is a block weave so some of the threads are controlled just in groups.

With my weaving, the major pieces that are on the wall behind me, it's essentially how I control those blocks of threads that come up, that and create the different patterns. The closest thing to explaining the way I design is filling in squares on graph paper and then I can set up a square on the graph paper to correspond with the threads on the loom. And this particular loom will let me weave a very wide piece. One is limited by the width of the loom although there are clever ways that you can essentially weave double loom and open up things. Weavers are problem solvers. We like to figure out things (laughter) and work things out. We're very different from other people in the needle arts: knitter's even quilters. They tend to like to follow things that they already see, you know, follow other peoples patterns. A weaver never wants to do that (laughter). You look at other peoples patterns for ideas but we like to figure out things and put things together in our own way. Most weavers are not using weaving for a totally creative decorative end like I do. They make things. They make things that are

useful in the environment such as, rugs or clothing. Or well, think of the textiles you have in your house. At one time, they were all made by a weaver or sometimes even the woman of the house, if she was skilled enough to weave. So most of the weavers will do functional things, where I went to an art school. And mid way through I was in a weaving class and realized that weaving dealt more specifically with the things I was interested in, which was color and texture and a controlled form. As a painter I would always set up problems for myself to solve. And I always felt more comfortable in from painting-to-painting taking very small creative step that I wanted to keep certain things the same so that I would know what was causing something to happen. So that I could make it happen again. Well, weaving focused more on these particular interests. Now it took me a while to kind of realize that I wanted to devote the rest of my life to weaving rather than to painting, but I had sufficiently done that by the time I was out of school. And it helped that there was a scholarship available for a weaving student. (laughter) So I kind of took that scholarship and became a weaver mostly because I hadn't expected to get a full tuition scholarship. I even had partial ones before that and so the windfall of money that I had from the scholarship I bought a loom. Well when you have a loom, you're a weaver (laughter).

Arriving in Kentucky was one of those things that kind of happened to me. I was following a husband who had a new job. He was employed by Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky and I found myself in the far western end of Kentucky trying to develop a career. Well this was not easy, you know. I had three small children at the time and trying to weave and things. But one of the things that I hit on because I couldn't do the normal career path that a lot of artists or weavers would have done because I was so far away from everything else. So I decided to, in effect, curate my own exhibitions. And one of the things that I did I thought, well, to try and engage people instead of talking about weaving and how clever I was, in that direction I thought people were more engaged through language. So I decided, well, I'll do a series of hangings around a piece of literature. I first thought of Shakespeare because doesn't everybody and then I thought, no, people's visual images for that would be in their own heads already. I wanted to put the visual images. So I wanted something famous that most people had heard of, but nobody had read lately or maybe at all, but they had heard of. So after surveying a lot of different pieces I decided on Sir Walter Scott's *Lady of the Lake*. And it was even set in Scotland so there were nice even textile illusions to that. And I did twenty of these hanging panels around Sir Walter Scott's *Lady of the Lake* poem that were keys to different passages in the poetry. And this did work very well. It was exhibited in lots and lots of places and so but after *Lady of the Lake*, I of course, I continued working.

My next series had to do with Mary Hambidge and the Rabun Weavers of Rabun Gap, Georgia. Mary Hambidge's place that she worked and lived in north Georgia is now an artist colony. Well through the benefit of a small grant from the Kentucky Arts Council I went to the Hambidge Center for a couple of weeks. I fell in love with the place in the mountains. It was wonderful! Well, the director said to me, "You know the woman that founded this place was a weaver." Well I said, "Well I thought there was something about that building with all the looms in it." You know, okay, joke. But he then said, "That there were a couple of trunks full of her weaving." Well my eyes lit up and scurried over to look at all of this. Well I came back to Kentucky and on a trip to

Lexington walked into the Humanities Council and said, "Will you give me money to go study a woman in Georgia?" And they said, "Well you know you have to write a grant and why would Kentuckians be interested in her" and a few questions like that. And I ended up going back there to study about her and her weaving. Well that led into then studying about the Appalachian Craft Revival and weavers in Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky (laughter) and the entire Southern Appalachian Region that finally culminated in a book.

This is one from the Mary Hambidge series and with my weaving, and I relate them a lot to a particular time and place. And I see something particular in the environment that I want to call other people's attention to. And so with Mary Hambidge's log cabin, it was set in the middle of this intense lushness of the north Georgia forest. So to try and get that intensity of greens and say you know, this is what she surrounded herself with. That was one of the things that I was going for and the again the rigidness of the house structure but then the variety of unpredictability of then things around it. I do weaving that, like I say, is controlled entirely by the loom. Where many people look at the weavings or look at pictures of them particularly and think I've used a tapestry technique where I've used a discontinuance weft which means a thread that doesn't go all the way across. And it allows for a lot of subtle manipulation of threads and colors and that's where you get the medieval tapestries with the intricate pictures. Well I'm limited to things at right angles (laughter) that I can get the illusion of curves by having small little steps up. Like in some of the other ones if again, if I have enough blocks to kind of make it look like it curves, but mostly with things at right angles so to bring in different feelings with the colors I use, with the textures of the different yarns to give a richness to the surface. With the piece on the end I've actually woven different strips that I've appliquéd or sewn on top. So I did the base weaving and then did the strips on top but the strips on top show. Really it's more obvious how I combine different groups of threads to make patterns especially when you can see a pattern like this where they are little stair steps going up and then those are combined to make a block around. But I originally started copying patterns from other needle arts, from cross stitch, from different embroidery, because they use graph paper to do designs too. But then I got so good at filling in little squares, that many times now I can't even tell whether they were ones I appropriated or was inspired by (laughter) someplace else or actually created myself. I used to buy graph paper, by the ream (laughter) and fill it up with you know hundreds of little designs. I now have a computer program that is the graph paper but instead I'm clicking on little boxes to fill in them instead of filling them in with a pen.

I have done a lot of work in my life and I will continue to do it now that I have this wonderful studio. Unfortunately my most current work is out in exhibition (laughter) so I can't show you the new direction that I'm going in. They have more to do with draped pieces of weaving. But I don't think I will totally give up these large panels again, because I don't think I've explored everything that I want to say with that type of weaving. So maybe someday they will even be the two thoughts combined. You know one doesn't exactly where one is going creatively (laughter).

WILLIHNGANZ: Tell us about these pieces over here.

ALVIC: Okay. Well there are some here that are from the *Lady of the Lake* series. Oh, with doing a series like *Lady of the Lake*, I wanted to, oh, let us say, I was not opposed to selling them. And so I decided well if I sell one, I'll make another one to go in its place. But of course it won't be the same one, so it was twenty hangs but I did thirty all told that were in the series. The way that I unified them as a group was they all had rust colored borders. My Mary Hambidge series has pastel colored borders. So you can kind of tell when you see things what series they belong to by what the borders are. I then did kind of one that centered on some of my international travels. And so they're in there too. But then in more recent years, I have gotten into more experimenting with different types of weave structures and doing things. And this hasn't evolved into an actual series yet because I still feel I'm finding my way with that so.

WILLIHNGANZ: Tell me about all the stuff up on top (laughter).

ALVIC: Oh, well up on top hmm. There's the basket from Rwanda. That was made by a company; its two sisters that have organized villages in Rwanda that are making their baskets. There are whole villages where the women make these baskets and the sisters design the designs on the outside and then they're made in these. They go from very, very small ones. They could be the sort used as a Christmas tree ornament to these very large ones. In fact, this fall I was in their place of business, and they had huge baskets that sat on the floor that I would have loved to have brought back with me, but couldn't figure out how to get it on the airplane (laughter). It has been a real success story for Rwanda. They went to Rwanda after the Genocide and they had grown up in exile and came back to the country. Their parents were from Rwanda, and wanted to do something to help the people there. So they started organizing women to make crafts and the sisters would then market it. I was asked by an agency that got money from the USAID, which is our foreign aid money, to go to East Africa and talk to several companies that would then come to the U.S. and try and sell their products through a trade show. I did end up going to the trade show in New York with these companies and they were from all over East Africa. Well, even at that trade show the real success was Janet and the baskets from Rwanda when they were approached by Macy's. And have had a long and very profitable relationship with Macy's selling their products. And when I was there in Rwanda, they moved from a well, (Rwanda was considered a fairly decent size shop, but in retrospect is very small compared to what they have now) into a major complex, where they have a building that is probably twice the size of my studio that they have just for shipping. And another building where they're training women and they were currently training sixty women when I was there to make the baskets. And essentially the women can then make a living for their families. And because so many of the men were killed even now they're villages that are still predominantly women even more than ten years after the Genocide. So it's a real economic benefit to the country.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, let's begin again here (laughter).

ALVIC: Okay (laughter).

WILLIHNGANZ: And as I say, don't worry if you sneeze or if you need to yawn or whatever, we can cut anything out and will.

ALVIC: Yes, well, yes.

WILLIHNGANZ: I'm recently discreet about that.

ALVIC: Okay.

WILLIHNGANZ: My goal here (unintelligible).

ALVIC: Okay (laughter). The object is not to embarrass the people.

WILLIHNGANZ: That would be accurate. That would be accurate. So tell me about a little bit about your history as a crafts person in terms of you know.

ALVIC: Okay. Well I've alluded to a little before; again it's how far back you want to go. You know my parents had a good friend that was an artist, so I was around creative people when I was growing up. And she, you know, supposedly said to my mother when I was very young, "That girl has a good sense of color", which has always been one of my really strong suits. And so I grew up drawing. I grew up with crayons. I mean a new box of crayons was, you know, the signal of all that. I always loved the arts and so my parents being very child centered individuals, signed me up for classes at the Junior School of the Art Institute of Chicago. So I went to classes when I was very young and then continuously from age ten on. And when I was in high school I became a work-study person for the Junior School, which was really very nice. I covered tuition from my class by helping the teacher put out materials and clean up afterwards. And the woman, who assigned those particular things, liked me a lot, so she assigned me to high school classes. So, it was really like I was getting two classes for free every Saturday. And then I also did six week sessions during the summer. So I had a whole lot of art in my growing up years.

But then, because I'm the age that I am, there was Admiral Rickover. And Admiral Rickover told people my age that it was our duty to study math and science, because the Russians had put up sputnik and they were obviously winning something. So I had planned to go and study math in college. And one day my mother said to me who really never gave, you know, overt advice, you know, usually she would, said "I think you would be much happier going to the Art Institute and studying than studying math." It was like, oh, that was what I needed to hear and I said, "Mother, I think you're right." And so with all the arrogance of youth, I devoted one Sunday afternoon to either accumulating or doing the necessary entrance requirements to get in. Well, it was only when I was there with my fellow classmates, did I realize other students had spent months (laughter) compiling their portfolio. And I just kind of put it together. But then again, since I had grown up kind of in their Junior School, I couldn't conceive them not wanting me as a student.

Well, going to a professional art school is very different than going to a regular college, because you major in art, you minor in art and all of your electives are in art.

We did only the basic minimum requirements for the state of Illinois to get a degree. And it meant that once a week, I walked half a mile to the University of Chicago downtown center that had a contract with the Art Institute to fulfill this requirement. But again, being a child of my time, I had to have a job coming out of school. I knew I would have to be making some money. So again females my age you became nurses, or secretaries, or teachers, so being a teacher - so I took art education. Well art education at a professional art school is kind of different than art education at a regular college, because we had to have a "B" average to get into art education. So that meant we were the better students (laughter). And also one wonderful thing that worked definitely in my favor, was you didn't have to meet some of the requirements were, like a major in painting or a major in sculpture. So it allowed me to experiment more with the types of classes I took. And so I was predominantly a painting major, but they said take a craft and it was like, oh, I had taken sculpture and found out I didn't think three dimensionally very well. So I thought weaving that would (laughter) and I had grown up around textiles. My mother was a very accomplished seamstress and my father was in the cloth slipcover business. So I grew up in a household with textiles around all the time, so it seemed very natural. In a way, I had to overcome some of my own prejudices. As you know painting is a real art and a craft wasn't, but I thought well if I used the craft, I could make art.

And then there was also I really, really enjoyed the act of weaving. There is something about the rhythm that your body gets into. And so, was it all right to do something that wasn't enjoyed that much (laughter)? Well as I said earlier, getting a scholarship for my fourth year from the North Shore Weavers Guild was the thing that definitely decided me on being a weaver. And they had to go to the North Shore Weavers Guild and say, would they accept somebody in art education, because really I wasn't a weaving major, I was an art ed major. And they said, "Oh, yes (laughter), they would" because they thought, "Oh, she would go out and teach other people to weave." Well, I have done some teaching of weaving but mostly I've done weaving. So they at least got one good weaver out of it (laughter) and maybe I have inspired a few others along the way.

At one point I thought maybe I did want to go into college teaching of weaving, but by the time I got around to thinking of getting credentials, a master's degree and that sort of thing, most of the college jobs had been taken up by my contemporaries. And like I said, I wasn't too sad, because I really wanted to weave (laughter). But then trying to develop a career from far Western Kentucky had certain interesting ramifications in my life which has really led to a much fuller life. Trying to promote myself and my weaving without much capital to invest into it. I started writing about my work and found out I could get them published in weaving magazines with a couple of nice colored pictures of my work. It was like, "Oh, this is great!" So I became writing a lot about weaving and about techniques. And I do a very technical type of weaving, so I got things published. And then you know my husband calls it, "Being chatty." He says, "I'm very good at this." And I was talking to an editor and I had parlayed one article into three, because of the length for the magazine. And then I said, when I was sending in the final one, I said, "In fact my husband says I have enough ideas for a column." So on my fortieth birthday the editor called to discuss the name of my column (laughter). So it took the edge off of getting older (laughter).

WILLIHNGANZ: What did you call it?

ALVIC: 'Notes of a Pattern Weaver' (laughter), a nice literary illusion then. And so I wrote the column for a couple of years for that magazine and then they changed their focus. But another magazine, I was also writing for, was very happy to pick up the column. So it went on for another couple of years until that magazine ceased to exist. But all of a sudden I had writing credentials, so when I applied for a Humanities Grant, all of a sudden, I could list you know all of my magazine publications. Also living in Murray, Kentucky, because it's so isolated, that university provides a lot of things because they realize they're students that come from the local area have not been exposed to a lot. So most of these things were also free, which was nice. And I realized very early that it was better not to discriminate. If there was something happening, you just go. So the English department had a wonderful series of poets and writers that would come to talk. And they had nice little receptions afterwards, so I'd go and interact with the poets. I'd go to the foreign film society that showed lots of wonderful films. The Civic Music had regular concerts from acts that were happy to have a fill in day in Murray, Kentucky on Tuesday or Thursday, when they were doing major cities on the weekends. Of course, some of them had signed the contracts before they actually realized how hard it was to get to Murray (laughter). But so I was seeing people with you know many times international reputations. So there was a lot more going on there than one would have thought in the way of stimulation.

And there was also Emily Wilson. I would not be alive today if it was not for Emily (laughter). She had such a profound influence on my life when I was living in Murray and still continues to today. Rarely, I think in this life do we meet somebody where our minds just seem to be running in the same sort of track. I often feel sorry for other people that are around Emily and I, when we are together, because we talk in such shorthand. (laughter) And because we know how the other person will think and react to something. Well Emily also made sure that within a month of living in the state of Kentucky that I was a member of the Kentucky Guild and of Artists and Craftsman. When I moved in it was February first and I started asking if anybody knew anybody with a loom or that was a weaver. Well Emily's name was mentioned to me and I called her up and we perhaps talked for an hour or so the first conversation. And she said, "Well, have you thought of joining the Kentucky Guild." And I said, "Oh, yes, I had even gotten the papers for it, but it was past the deadline for submitting for the jury that was to take place in March." And she said, "Don't worry about that (laughter)." And so I didn't know who I had encountered at that point. But Emily fixed it up so that the deadline was waived and it could be waived because the jury was in Murray. So all I had to do was take over my things to the art building, where the jury was meeting. Well, Emily in the ways that she worked, also within the next few months, had me on the Standards Committee (laughter) for the Kentucky Guild.

And she also, over the years, has filled in considerable history of the Guild, because she was one of those early, early founding members. I also learned of the influence of Clara Eagle that was the head of the Art Department at Murray that made it into the best Art Department in the state of Kentucky, reputation that has lived on for many years (laughter) after the passing of Clara. And Clara in fact, told Emily that she

was going to be active in the Guild (laughter) that was the way Clara ran her department. Emily is a weaver and a water-colorist primarily. And a lot of our views on art are amazingly similar even though we came from very, very different backgrounds. She grew up in Henderson, Kentucky. I grew up in Chicago, Illinois (laughter). She went to Newcomb College at Tulane and then to Louisiana State for her master's degree. I have a bachelor's in art education from the Art Institute of Chicago. But like I say, we think in very, very similar ways even though our backgrounds are very different. And Emily was married to Alfred Wolfson who is head of the Biology Department at Murray State. And it used to bother him that in the visual field that we couldn't have a set of verifiable standards that we could tell other people. It was like Emily and I knew what they were, because we knew them visually. And most artists are very, very bad at talking about even their own work, because they don't make that leap from the visual world into the world of speech. And most of the people in the society have a very poor knowledge of the visual world, so we often feel like well; we can hardly talk to each other, let alone to anybody else. So when you meet somebody that you know understands where you are, it's really quite wonderful and reassuring and you know really rare and I was fortunate enough to have done that.

WILLIHNGANZ: Now what year did you actually join the Guild?

ALVIC: Oh, well that's easy because I came to Kentucky in February 1, 1976. And so I was a Guild member in '76.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, they actually started in '60 or '61 yeah.

ALVIC: Sixty well, it's pinning down the actual years; there were several kind of starting points. There was the starting of the train.

WILLIHNGANZ: Right.

ALVIC: And Emily was very involved in the train and logistics for the train and it moving around also, putting together an exhibition that was on the train. I don't know whether she told you about the clever panels that they had designed to display the art work.

WILLIHNGANZ: I don't believe she did.

ALVIC: Oh, well it was clever (laughter). They wrote to famous artists around the country and asked for the loan of the piece and they wrote to my teacher. So Emily felt that was another connection that we had. Else Regensteiner who was my teacher at the Art Institute loaned them a piece, because they didn't have money to buy pieces, so that it traveled around. And then the train, they also had crafts people to demonstrate. It as part of the art experience and it became harder and harder to schedule places for the train to go, because the railroads were cutting back. And it was because one of the early founders husband worked for the L & N (laughter) that they were able to do this at all. And they had been funded by the state government, the

Department of Commerce and they were going to pull the funding because the train wasn't going to go anymore. So they said, "Well, let us try and start a fair to see if we can generate some money to keep the organization going." And so this is part of what I got from Emily, was that history and she was the president at the time they put together the first fair. And so she worked very closely with Rick Bellando in getting that to be a reality. And Emily had some kind of family crisis and actually didn't make it to the first fair, but went to many subsequent fairs after that.

WILLIHNGANZ: Now that would have been in the sixties (unintelligible).

ALVIC: Yeah, in the late sixties.

WILLIHNGANZ: Were they still doing the train when you joined the Guild?

ALVIC: No, the train was long gone so and they had the fair, the fair was well established by the time I joined.

WILLIHNGANZ: Were they doing one fair a year or two?

ALVIC: They were doing by the time I came in '76, they were doing two fairs a year. And it was out at the Indian Fort and you know it was quite a production by then. They had the cute little tents with the kind of circus canopies on them and so it had a nice unified look. It was in this nicely wooded area. It was definitely an event to come to. And those were in the days before, you know, every collection of half-a-dozen houses had their own crafts fair. They were not that prevalent and the Guild had quite a reputation then for the high standards and so there were large crowds with it. And from Emily I got it was very important that the Guild was a Guild for the whole state. Now of course Emily was coming from far Western Kentucky, but that was for the whole state especially too. That the Guild from its very inception took in traditional crafts-people working within a tradition as well as, the college trained art student crafts person. Well and artist, unlike a lot of the crafts organizations, Kentucky was for artists and craftsman. So there has always been this nice mix of, we don't separate out crafts, you know, we consider the creative visual arts together.

And there was always this mixing and helping of people that came out of very rural backgrounds in Kentucky, to help them market their products. So the Guild did a lot in education and a lot in providing markets for people, a lot in working with crafts people to help them market their products. A lot in fact through the standards committee when somebody was rejected it didn't mean they were told to go away and never come back. We told them go away and do these things, you know, with a little bit more attention, then may-be next time you'll get in. And so there was definitely the history of people in the Guild that had tried many times to get in and had finally succeeded in bringing their work up to that quality both in design and in craftsmanship, because we rated them in those two categories. And sometimes it was saying, well you've submitted a range of products; we think this particular product shows the most potential. Work on doing this one in more depth then, with different varieties and we think that will be a better product for you.

With the Guild, the education meant not only for the members, but the Guild has always felt they were educating an audience too. They were educating the future consumers. So the fairs would go on Friday, so that school groups could be bussed in to have an experience at the fair. Some of the teachers did an excellent job of preparing those students for the fair and that the students would come with lists of questions to ask people (laughter) And so that they would really get an in-depth feeling. Part of the fairs have always been, I was talking, about demonstrating crafts. When somebody can see that I put in my thread one row at a time, that they can see that it takes me a long time to do it. Although I'll tell you, the most often asked question of craftspeople is, "How long did it take you to do that?". Now it's a question that most crafts people feel rather insulted. You could go you don't go to other people with a skill and ask them how long they spent doing it. I always felt like they wanted to figure out an hourly wage for me. But then I thought, oh, just treat it like a politician encounters a question. Just because they ask a question, doesn't mean you have to answer it. That, look at it as an opportunity to talk, And so I really interpreted that question not that people wanted to be insulting, but they wanted to interact with me, and that was a question that popped into their mind. In fact, they might even be interested in the answer, but that didn't mean I had to answer it. So I would talk to them about the nature of weaving, about how I had to thread each of these little threads through here one-at-a-time using one of these hooks, and then they had to go through here one-at-a-time in a particular pattern. And the hours I had spent at my loom before I ever throw a shuttle. And so I was interacting and educating them about my craft. Well, potters and woodworkers, and glass blowers go through very intricate steps within their craft too and if people can see it happen, they feel more a part of the process.

It's my feeling that people buy crafts because they want a connection with the person making an item. You can go to Wal-Mart and buy things cheaper, and maybe more functional, but we have a very, very active crafts movement in this country, a growing one. Well, we don't compete on price. We compete on quality, on the artistry of what we do, and on this connection we provide with the maker and the consumer. That when people spend as much as they would spend for a craft item, they want to talk about it (laughter). When people come into their house, they say, "Oh, you have a new hanging". It's like, "Yes, and you know this wonderful artist that has been you know been weaving for over forty years made this". And it becomes the story in the way they relate to the item. So demonstrating at fairs is far more than entertainment. It is really educating the public as to what they're buying. The fact that they could interact with the craftspeople, and ask them questions, that it provides another dimension to that experience. And for a lot of people in a state like Kentucky, they might have been more exposed to hand-crafted items through some sort of family connection than they would in other places. But very few people have any idea how the things that surround them in life actually get made. My own field of textiles, we come into contact with many, many different kinds of textiles throughout an average day. And people know so little about how it happens.

WILLIHNGANZ: You know this is all, you are a good educator. This is all wonderful information for me because as a videographer I do a lot of talking to people and asking exactly the same, "How long does it take to make that?" And it's like I don't

know how long it took me. It took me days, weeks, months, years I mean it could be years. It goes on forever, you know, it's day and night. I don't keep track. I mean you know I was working on it 8 o'clock last night on my thing. Shirley said, "You still at work?" I said, "Yeah, I'm still at work". And you know you don't just stop what you're doing and just get lost in your work.

ALVIC: Well and the thing is to tell people about the process. Well yes, I have to videotape a lot so I can extract out the story and condense it down into, you know, the short time span that everybody has these days.

WILLIHNGANZ: That's exactly right.

ALVIC: You know, its like, how can I get to the main point of it? Well, it takes a lot especially when I'm not writing the lines for these people.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh, you're so right about that (laughter).

ALVIC: Laughter - Well you can tell I've known a few people with the video thing. By the way, I need to give you one of our flyers. My husband and I are the committee for the One World Film Society for Lexington.

WILLIHNGANZ: Good for you.

ALVIC: And we just have our list of films out or maybe I'll just e-mail you the flyers so that way you can.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, a hard copy. I'd like that too.

ALVIC: Okay, so we were really heavy on documentaries this year and we managed to get a few feature films in there too.

WILLIHNGANZ: Good.

ALVIC: The object of One World, is One World is to promote understanding diversities so we try and (laughter) hit a lot of bases there with things. And the founder of it is pretty much for new things rather than historical ones. And this is our tenth year so we've been, you know, making our own history in this film series. They happen in February and end of March and we have thirteen films we're showing this year.

WILLIHNGANZ: That's terrific!

ALVIC: Yeah, and raise money we actually pay screening rights (laughter).

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow!

ALVIC: Hey (laughter). I met a filmmaker coming off the plane in Dares Salaam.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow!

ALVIC: So I'm telling you about our film society in Lexington, Kentucky. Oh, but this is another thing, if we're going to my life, that I refer to the writing that came out of the weaving. Well I wrote a book on historical weaving centers in Appalachia, the *Appalachian Craft Revival*. And that tied into many of the settlement schools and I can go and talk about that for a long, long time. Which to do background for my book, I started going to the Appalachian Studies Conferences and so I regularly present Appalachian Studies Conferences. But in 1994, I did my first international consulting trip. And I was supposed to be a technical adviser on weaving to Peru. I was supposed to teach the Peruvians to weave faster, according to the guy that I was down there to help. Well I went around and talked to a lot of people and visited a lot of people and my conclusion was that they should weave slower, which really upset him. By slower, I meant that they should pay more attention to quality, and they had the technical ability to do the quality. People were just telling them to do it faster as a way of producing more. And I said, "No, slower, better quality and let's work on the marketing and then selling that." So I went during that trip there from being a technical weaving adviser to putting on a different hat and I became an adviser for product development and marketing. Well, I not only had my life as a craftsperson that informed me on how to do that, but I also had this study in the Appalachian Mountains, because the settlement school people that were trying to educate children dealing with some health problems and provide a little cash money. (laughter) To people at so early date thought, "Well, we love the crafts, we'd buy the baskets and the weaving, maybe some of our friends would like". Well, how do we take known skills, turn them into products, and then market them? They were the same problems that Peru was dealing with in the end of the twentieth century; the Appalachian people had dealt with at the early part of the century. So it was like, oh, let's hope we have a few more tools (laughter) currently to bring to bear on how to sell things. Well that was the first of the consulting trips.

Since then, I've gone on a dozen of them. I've been to various parts of the world. This last fall I spent a month in Tanzania, coming back through Nairobi, through Kenya on my way back home, and seen some people that I knew previously in Kenya. So I've had this wonderful international experience too and helping people deal with product development and marketing, how to tell their stories to relate to the consumer. And I can go in and talk to them as a crafts-person and so it's been a tremendous experience for me. Oh, also earlier I mentioned Armenia, that's the country that I have been to the most. I've done four different projects in Armenia.

WILLIHNGANZ: What group sponsors you to do these trips to Africa?

ALVIC: Okay. Well most of them were done through the International Executive Service Corps. So technically, I'm a volunteer, but all of the expenses are covered with that, which means, the flight, the hotel, the per diem. It's one of the agencies that's funded by U.S. Foreign Aid. Unfortunately with a different focus in the government, that sector has been going down, so this last trip that I did was actually through the United Nations. The money came from there. It was the U.N.H.C.R. which is the committee on

refugee relief. And it was dealing with an area of Tanzania where a lot of refugees had come from Burundi and was working with the women to help them, again provide an income doing crafts work of some sort. And I was to design products in them, there to make them.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, it's wonderful work I really appreciate your newsletters which are fun to read and fascinating. Gosh! It's a whole other world.

ALVIC: Laughter. Well, it is. It's so hard to imagine and people you know often ask me well, how do I feel about it? How do I like, you know? Well, one just has different standards that one goes by. When one is in these places that. The important thing is the interaction with the people. When I go on these trips I have an experience that no tourist could have, because I'm working directly with people, that make things that understand about crafts. So we have a meeting of minds there that makes for an opening up of people that you wouldn't have without real connections some way into it. One instance that I was just called to recently, was that in Dares Salaam I had some contact names and in fact, this one man, he was so busy and he was seeing me in the early evening because that was the only time he could fit me into his schedule, but he thought it was important that he talk to me. And he was in the business of marketing Tanzanian crafts and he said, "Oh, you'll want to go to the museum, the National Museum over the weekend, because the women's groups from Catholic churches all over Tanzania are having a major exhibition and sale, where they set up little booths, crafts their variety, on the grounds of this museum." So I said, "Wonderful" and I went there and I started talking to the women. And then at the place I was staying, one of the women over dinner said, because she was an academic from Australia, and she was saying, "Well, I have a free day tomorrow, where should I go?" And I said, "Go to the National Museum." I said, "In fact, I'll come with you because (laughter) I'd really like to go back again." So I was back there a second day and I saw a woman that I had seen previously. And she was along the coast of Tanzania to the south of where we were in Dares Salaam. And I was talking to her and at one point she said, "Well, where are you from in the United States?" And I said, "Oh, I'm from Lexington, Kentucky." And I started to explain and she said, "Oh, I know where that is." I thought you do? (laughter). And said, "Oh, yes, she said, I spent a year in Cincinnati." It's like she said, "Oh, I was at," and she named a Catholic retreat center that's on the edge of Cincinnati that I had actually been to (laughter). Its like, okay, small world. (laughter). Well, you know she was working with this group of Catholic women and I was telling her little things, about they made wonderful baskets. And I said, "Well all you'd have to do to make this more attractive for an international market is to put heavier looking handles on them." I said, "Those might be the traditional handles, and they might do well to carry anything that one would put in that basket, but they don't look sturdy." I said, "A lot of crafts, you're dealing with people's perceptions." So you put on a little heavier handle and it looks sturdier. So (laughter) you know sometimes, some of the things that I say I feel like, you know, this is not, you know, fantastic advice. But its different eyes looking at things, and sometimes a person from outside can see little ways to point people; also, the fact that I have a better handle on the American consumer (laughter).

WILLIHNGANZ: Tell me some more of the Guild history (unintelligible).

ALVIC: Okay, yeah, okay. Guild history, well Guild history really when we get into history, it's how far back do you go because there's always something before what you know. Well, one of the important steps in the history is the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild. Where earlier I referred to the crafts activities in Appalachia, that when different centers throughout the mountains were involved in selling, they realized they had common problems. Well, a man by the name of John C. Campbell got people working in the mountains to come together once a year to what he called, "The Conference of Southern Mountain Workers." And this became eventually the Counsel of the Southern Mountains that went through the early seventies. But back in the early part of the twentieth century, one of the things that they would talk about in their meetings and had experts in to help them with, was marketing crafts. Well they finally decided, well maybe, they needed their own organization. They finally got it together in 1930 and founded The Southern Highland Handicraft Guild. And they have their Standards and things that they did. Their first fair was in 1948 on the grounds of the Phi Beta Phi School in Gatlinburg. Okay, they took in the Appalachian counties as defined by John C. Campbell in his book, *The Southern Mountaineer and His Homeland*. So well, that took in about a third of Kentucky, the eastern mountain third. Well so there were a lot of Kentuckians that were members of Southern Highlands, so when the ideas to start a state organization came, there were already people that were members of the Southern Highland Guild that became some of the pillars of the Kentucky Guild. And those were people centered around Berea College, because Berea College was one of the founders of the Southern Highland Guild. And several of the other institutions in the mountains were crafts-people that were. So one of the pillars of the Kentucky Guild was Rudy Osolnik, who taught woodworking and managed the woodworking craft at Berea College. And so he knew how the Southern Highlands had been running things. So they had models for doing certain things, like running the fair. So even though the Kentucky Guild was, like I say again for all of Kentucky, they had the model of Southern Highlands before them.

And from looking at it, a lot of individual state organizations came into being in those early to mid sixties. Kentucky was one of the first of them. Now the oldest state organization is a Guild of New Hampshire Craftsman and that started in the early thirties, so they were really one of the oldest ones, but Southern Highlands does precede them. And there had been earlier crafts organizations, but that had been in the Art and Craft Movement type, the Ruskin and Morris coming out of England sort. And many of those were people doing good works to help the indigent (laughter) and promoting crafts that way. And so the idea that actual craft producers and sellers were having organizations was really the Southern Highlands. In New Hampshire, were that and then, like I say, these different state organizations started happening in the sixties. And that was also because in the sixties, lots of things happened, but you're beginning to have the influence of a lot more people. The baby boomers are, you know, that we hear so much, they're going into colleges, so colleges are expanding. Colleges are expanding the amounts of things that they teach. So all of a sudden, departments are becoming much larger and can offer variety and that's when many of the craft areas got

instituted into higher education. Well when you have people teaching crafts, you also having people with craft skills that want to do something with it.

Well, you can teach it or you have a craft. You can produce things, so all of a sudden you've got people making a lot more stuff. Its like, how can we sell it? And so these became real questions and the Guild was positioned to answer these. Well, you can stay here in Kentucky. You don't have to move some place else. You don't have to go to one of those big cities to set up a studio. Stay here where you can have a much more economical life style and produce your crafts and sell it to people in those cities. You know, we'll set up the networks to do that. And so that's when it's usually referred to a Studio Crafts Movement kind of ballooned and took off.

WILLIHNGANZ: Were there other parts of the Guild, were there other craft organizations that were specific to Kentucky or was the craft again pretty much it?

ALVIC: No, the Guild was really the bringing out of crafts people. Now for the eastern third, they had been eligible to join Southern Highlands. So and Southern Highlands became centered in North Carolina, but it always was managed and drew people from without the mountain counties. But there hadn't been things for the rest of Kentucky. And exhibiting crafts have always been a problem that many art galleries are reluctant to show craft, considering it a lower art form. Well those of us in crafts, of course, don't consider it that. In fact, we're very good on the art/craft controversy thing; spent a lot of time in younger years talking about that. But it's one of those phases anybody that's dedicating their life to craft has to go through (laughter). And so there are also within the crafts world there's a variety of different types of crafts, for Kentucky, production crafts have been very important. You would turn out multiples of something and sell it. Now the fact that you're doing many mugs or bowls, they've been touched by the artist's hands. That there was a lot of skill in artistry that went into designing the first one, because chances are, there were many before they got to that one that say, okay, this is the one I'm going to reproduce. And so then developing those skills it takes to do a production craft. You know dealing with those questions of, do you hire people to do part of the process to help you? Do you become a manager, that is essentially having other people produce your designs?

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, that's a whole issue that I've explored in some of the other interviews because you look at things like Louisville Stoneware and you know they're halfway between a standard china manufacturer and a craft person and there is some tread-to-fine line there and it's a tricky call where you decide to put your art.

ALVIC: Yeah, well and I've known many people that have gone back and forth across the line (laughter). You know, people that have large production things, that says, well no, I want to do more of my own stuff. It's like the bread and butter is all that I'm, it was just supposed to be bread and butter, it wasn't supposed to be my whole life. But in a way it became too successful (laughter). And so now, you know, do I let that go, or do I set it up as a separate entity and let it go its own way. So like I said, I have had many friends that have dealt with those questions in different ways throughout their lives. But I also think it's given that this is Kentucky and that many people come out of

the tradition of making things, that there are people that made things for use in their daily lives. And I think this is a human tendency, because way back in prehistoric archeology you see evidences of man decorating items for daily life and work. So to me it's something that's built into humans. Well, so you made baskets to collect eggs in (laughter) from your chickens, okay, well all of a sudden you realize that other people want that basket and don't know how to make baskets. So you go into basket making. Well, you don't have a background as an artist. You just have that background from the craft. You know how to look at a tree and decide whether that's going to make good splints for your basket. You know the tradition has taught you how to prepare those materials to make that basket. You know, do you stick with the tradition of making the basket or do you put some of your own personal creativity in and make slightly different shapes? And then as we all do, if we're selling things, you sell one of them and think well I had better make more of that shape (laughter) that you kind of go with what's been selling. So there is the development of the traditional crafts and I choose the baskets particularly, because that is one that has found quite a market through the tradition. And there is a real history of Kentucky basket-makers particularly centered around the Mammoth Cave area, because there were tourists that bought baskets there. So there was a reason to continue on, people making them, and so there's quite a tradition of basket-makers there that have for generations made baskets.

WILLIHNGANZ: So it's the Guild what did basically was legitimize the marketing function and give them clear coaching training, etcetera.

ALVIC: Well traditions will not survive unless there is a real reason to. You know there's a few hobbyists that might be interested and take it up, but the surest way for a tradition of making things to survive, is to have a market is to sell them. And so with my international consulting, I try and look at what interesting techniques people are doing and use those techniques in products, that I think might have a wider market, as a way of keeping it alive rather than it just becoming a dilettante's exercise. (laughter) Or like we do with the ancient Peruvians, we try and reconstruct how it's done from the piece itself. Well it's much better. It remains a continuance tradition, so that people that have learned from their parents or their grandparents. Often times crafts skips a generation, well within the contemporary spirits, like it's our grandmothers that we learn things from rather than our mothers (laughter).

WILLIHNGANZ: Different generations of different needs and whatnot. You know the most fascinating basket that I encountered recently, I was looking through one of the books on crafts that I had been perusing and they had a one use basket, you pull a piece of bark off a tree, you throw this together, you can eat berries in it, you throw it away when you're done. And I just thought I had never thought of a disposable basket.

ALVIC: Well see, you haven't traveled in some parts of the world that I have.

WILLIHNGANZ: I say that's true.

ALVIC: With disposable plates, we think of paper plates. A lot of places, it's a banana leaf. It's another type of leaf that becomes your plate and then you throw it away, you know, it's a disposable. It's a far better disposable because it's organic and well, you know, decompose nicely in the soil than our paper or these Styrofoam plates that will live you know for eons. That yeah, for a lot of people that have materials, the idea of making a container.

WILLIHNGANZ: With as fascinating as this has been.

ALVIC: Oh, yeah, I know you're going to have to go.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well I've got about fifteen minutes here maybe a half hour.

ALVIC: Oh, okay, well I want to flip through some of those pictures so you can have an idea of.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay.

ALVIC: If you want to put in some historic things some that we mentioned.

WILLIHNGANZ: Sure, okay.

ALVIC: It's just that oh see that big basket that's on that black thing, actually the black thing is up. This one because talking about feeding into an Appalachian stereo type. The guys on the boat with the guns, yeah mountain men, early weaving at Berea College, very early twentieth century that they were organizing community women to be weavers. This is one of the first and longest managers of the weaving Anna Ernberg really expanded under her direction and here is Anna.

WILLIHNGANZ: Now this is all at Berea?

ALVIC: At Berea and then she built the log cabin that's now the craft sales place in Berea.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay.

ALVIC: That was for the weaving and for the sales of it and she went and raised all the money for that. And this was where the weaving is now in the log house behind that big craft sales one. They still do weaving in it, you can walk in, but they don't have nearly these many looms, but gives you an idea of the craft. Oh this is when it was first built I think this was at the dedication in 1917, and these were open porches then and she had a residence for herself. She lived upstairs. Okay, oh this is, I love this! It's a still!

WILLIHNGANZ: Ah good, another Kentucky craft.

ALVIC: Yeah, yeah. And they had a group at Berea called Mountain Weaver Boys and that was one of their craft sales and so those are the Mountain Weaver Boys. That was another manager your early pictures some of these aren't in. Oh and this is the Ernberg loom. She designed a small loom and they made the loom at the College in woodworking and sold it. She got a five dollar royalty, but she didn't charge the royalty to any weaving center that bought it. Oh and this was a weaving supervisor that was there for a long time too. But weaving was really one of the biggest of their craft areas and these were some of the things they produced. And did I ever give you any of my little booklets?

WILLIHNGANZ: I don't think you did.

ALVIC: Well, we can do that because that's the cover of one of my books. This is interesting. This is Berea College booth at the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow!

ALVIC: Yeah. Oh, I just love the history stuff, okay.

WILLIHNGANZ: Terrific!

ALVIC: So I have pictures from all over but let's see what this other Berea thing is. Oh, that's early Churchill weavers.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh wow! Yeah, that's where I'm headed.

ALVIC: Yeah, well (laughter) you'll see that they built something on the front of it but that's still there. Oh, yeah this is Penland okay. My husband did the labels so sometimes they're. This is Churchill.

WILLIHNGANZ: For somebody who works in threads, you're pretty handy with the computer (laughter).

ALVIC: It's become (laughter). The Churchill loom and I'm re-photographing photographs in not what you call ideal conditions. It's kind of point and hold your breath. And even in the archives at Berea, they let me photograph my own instead of paying them to do it.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow! That's great!

ALVIC: Oh, like my husband says, I'm good at the chatty stuff.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow! Lucky you (unintelligible) the Louisville paper to try and get some pictures for the senator they wanted twenty dollars a picture. I thought I can't do that.

ALVIC: This is Mrs. Churchill, Mr. & Mrs. Churchill a little bit better focused you know this is before digital cameras so I couldn't, you know, I just had to take them and hope.

WILLIHNGANZ: Sure.

ALVIC: And this is from a magazine article about them. This is Churchill again. Let's see I think I saw. Now these aren't all the photographs I have, but these are the things that are digitized. Okay, this is Allen Eaton; he's kind of the guru of the Appalachian Crafts Movement. He wrote a book called the *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands*. It was published in 1937. It was about all of these centers, these crafts centers. And everybody loved him. Well anyway, this is our pictures taken at the John C. Campbell Center in Brasstown, North Carolina, but what's significant about these is now starting, now their photographs taken by Doris Ulmann who is a famous photographer. And when Eaton was going to do this book, he was working at that time for the Russell Sage Foundation and Ulmann said, "I want to take the photographs for your book." And he said, "Wonderful, but Russell Sage can't afford to pay your fee." And she said, "I'll do it for free." And he said, "Wonderful, but I don't think we can afford to publish them." She says, "I'll help cover the cost." Okay, she took some wonderful pictures. Okay, this is it! This is Francis Goodrich she was one of the earliest people in the mountains to do crafts. She was a self-financed Presbyterian missionary. Louise Pitman, one of the early presidents of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild. This is Olive Dame Campbell, John C. Campbell's wife. He was long dead by that time. This is John Jacob Niles of music fame.

WILLIHNGANZ: Okay, I don't know. I'm not familiar with the name but.

ALVIC: Okay. I'm going to educate you a little bit on the folk craft and.

WILLIHNGANZ: Unintelligible.

ALVIC: He, John Jacob Niles, is noted mostly in folk music, but as a young man, he worked as an assistant with Doris Ulmann when she was doing this photographing and he was carrying her equipment. And so this is Campbell again. Helen Dingman was professor at Berea College. She kept the Southern Highlands Guild afloat with some creative bookkeeping. This is Brasstown Carvers, the wooden things that they did. Yes, fun isn't it. Mary Hambidge loved Greece, and so this is a recreation of some early Greek things that a friend of hers was involved with. But this is the Hambidge Center in the early weavers and this is Mary Hambidge not paying attention. Oh, and this is Mary Hambidge in her later years in the mountains. The weavers, they were young girls from the mountain area. This is Mary Hambidge and because they were young girls and she had them living on the property and so this was a retired school teacher from Kentucky that she had as kind of a house mother. That was Truman's yacht. She did the fabrics for Truman's yacht.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow!

ALVIC: Yeah. Okay, but anyway I've got a variety of other, you know, there are historical pictures if you want to put in a few just to give. And well maybe my book is better for looking at that. There are some early pictures of that first guild fair in 1948.

WILLIHNGANZ: Oh, yeah, yeah good point.

ALVIC: So might the well, there were you know, an earlier fair and.

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah. You know I don't know yet where were going honestly with this documentary.

ALVIC: Well and the thing is since I just wrote the bylaws for, you know, we're starting a separate organization here.

WILLIHNGANZ: Right.

ALVIC: And I just wrote the bylaws for them and we're working on getting this organization going. We're thinking now that the important thing is to video-tape people before we have any more of them dying off. We've had one die off in this project already before we got to her. Okay, so to videotape as many people, in fact, they were talking about either trying to get people that are in other states that fit into the story, to get them here or to get you there. Anyway so there's been talk about that. Okay. With this first grant we're going towards the emphasis on Appalachia, so it's how it's fed into helping the people in Appalachia. But we're thinking, and we now have, a person that has experience working with the public schools that has written things already for teachers in public schools on the arts in Kentucky.

WILLIHNGANZ: This is Judy Sizemore.

ALVIC: Yeah, Judy. And so she's thinking well, we'll do the Appalachia one for this grant and then we'll do another grant for the rest of Kentucky. Well so then it would be important to get more information on those basketmakers that are down near the caves. I have a friend who has a master's degree in folklore, that she and her husband have a company making basket supplies. And they have befriended all these old time basketmakers in the area.

WILLIHNGANZ: Wow!

ALVIC: And they situated down there in Scott County, (correction: Scottsville/Allen County) particularly to be near them. So that it's a story when the point I was getting to, although, is that it's not going to be a story that can be told in one shot that there might be several stories.

WILLIHNGANZ: Well that's fine we just have to clearly define each one so that we know what we're making in order to make that coherent.

ALVIC: Exactly.

WILLIHNGANZ: Sorry.

ALVIC: And to have resources that can be pulled from many different places you know when one is concentrating on a particular one.

WILLIHNGANZ: Right.

ALVIC: So at some point it's getting you together with Judy. And again if we get you money to fulfill what the money says you're supposed to do (laughter).

WILLIHNGANZ: Yeah, yeah that going to be the trick because we don't really know what we're going to do (laughter) until after we know we're going to do it and we can't do that until we have the money.

ALVIC: Yeah.

WILLIHNGANZ: But we'll just work that out.

ALVIC: I was trying to find some of the, you know, when you go looking for something. And some of these places had a better photographic archive than others.

WILLIHNGANZ: I'm sure.

ALVIC: And some of them like the one in Gatlinburg they've been adding to it. Oh, I don't know that you got, I'm still not finding, perseverance. There is a website, I'll send you the information on this, okay, that have been collecting things, the story of the craft the people, collection that has a little narrative. Okay, this says Craft Revival Carvers, okay, so a little bit on Brasstown Carvers. Anyway, they're working on this in North Carolina and it's a friend of mine that's doing it. Oh, these are different carvers, that they, okay, it has the different craft areas of course, weaving that I'm interested in. It has all these pictures that you can then look at, that they've been doing and they got a grant through the libraries in North Carolina to do this. And a year ago, I talked to the one who is doing this about expanding to the other Appalachian states and she was definitely talking to people in Kentucky. And I just, when I got involved with this history project contacted her and I said, "Okay, what have you done about expanding?" And she says, "My boss at the library is retiring so he won't sign off on anything now. You know, he's waiting for the new boss." And so she hasn't been able to write any grants but to me, to hook in with, to what they're doing and you know and she obviously has done a lot with collecting the old.

