

Introduction to Folklife



Leona Watson (right) engages elder Miss Etta in an intense recollection of Virgin Islands community history at the Virgin Islands Festival on St. Croix.

TEACHER PREPARATION

View the first part of the videotape prior to showing it in class, and look up any unfamiliar terms (see Vocabulary in Appendix). Reading over the transcript of the narration (also in the Appendix) will help explain any confusing portions to students. Look over the photographs carefully and read the captions.

Prepare to spend some time with the Festival Program Book to familiarize yourself with the traditions presented at the Festival. Reading the introductory articles about the Virgin Islands and Senegal will give you a basic understanding of the folklife of these two culture areas. If you have received a copy of the booklets *Folklife and Fieldwork* and *American Folklife: A Commonwealth of Culture*, both written by the staff of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, read them for background as well. The resource list in Appendix C will aid you in locating further information if needed or desired.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After viewing the videotape and the photographs, engaging in discussion, and completing the suggested activities, students should be able to:

- give a simple definition of the terms “folklife” and “tradition”
- name several examples of folklife from the Virgin Islands and Senegal
- recognize one of the functions of a folklife festival (i.e., to introduce a large audience to the folklife of particular parts of the world)
- understand that everyone — even themselves — possesses folklife and a cultural heritage
- see themselves, their families and their communities as worthwhile subjects of folklife study

UNIT 1

LESSON ONE: WHAT IS FOLKLIFE?

STUDENT EXPLANATION

In this lesson, you will view the first segment of the videotape, which is an introduction to folklife using examples from the Virgin Islands and Senegal. After this, you will discuss the videotape. Then, your teacher will introduce an activity which will help you understand “folklife” and “traditions” better.

The videotape lasts about ten minutes. Its main purpose is to define the term “folklife” with examples from the United States Virgin Islands and the country of Senegal. These cultures were featured at the 1990 Festival of American Folklife, and many of the scenes used in the videotape were shot at the Festival. Other scenes were shot during “fieldwork” (work done by folklife researchers in preparation for the Festival) in the Virgin Islands and Senegal.

As you watch the videotape, think about the many types of folklife shown. Jot down some notes about the different kinds of folklife you notice and anything else that impresses you about the two cultures. Think about how the people in the videotape learned their skills, and how they pass these skills on to younger generations. Be prepared to discuss these things with your teacher and classmates.

If there are some terms that you do not understand, look them up in the Vocabulary located in Appendix A. If you have trouble understanding any of the persons speaking in the videotape, see the transcript of the narration (located in Appendix D).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name five examples of folklife you saw in the videotape. Which example was most interesting to you? Why?
2. How did the people in the videotape learn their skills? Do you

think they will pass them on to younger generations? Why or why not?

3. Did you notice any relationship between the folklife of the U.S. Virgin Islands and of Senegal? If so, explain this relationship. Discuss similarities as well as differences.

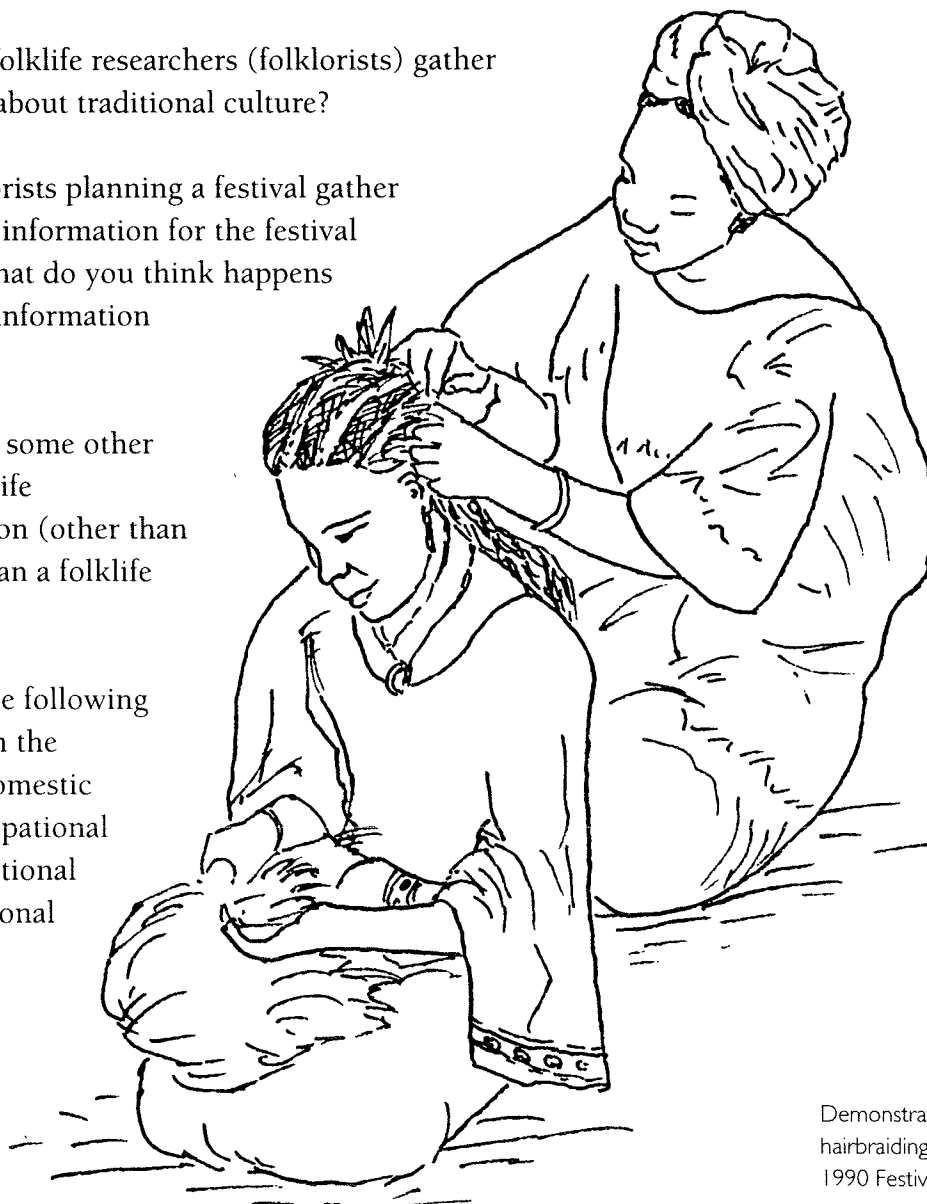
4. What do you think visitors to the Folklife Festival learned from the people from the U.S. Virgin Islands and Senegal? How did they learn these things? What do you think you could learn from visiting a folklife festival?

5. How do folklife researchers (folklorists) gather information about traditional culture?

6. Do folklorists planning a festival gather only enough information for the festival program? What do you think happens to any extra information gathered?

7. What are some other uses for folklife documentation (other than using it to plan a folklife festival)?

8. Define the following terms used in the videotape: domestic folklife, occupational folklife, traditional crafts, traditional celebration.



Demonstrations of Senegalese hairbraiding were presented at the 1990 Festival of American Folklife.

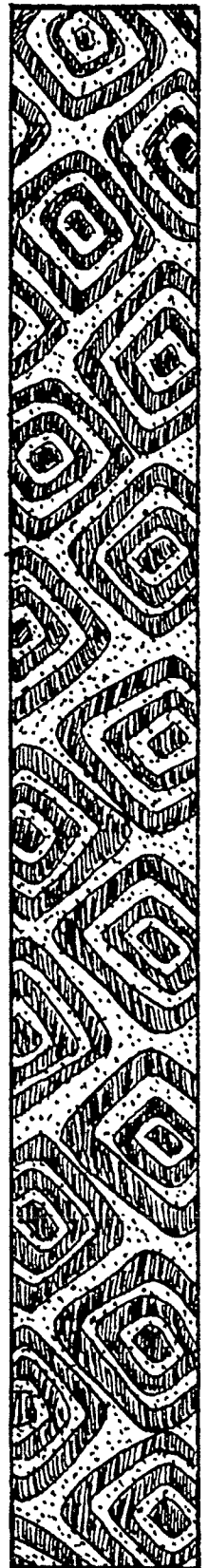
STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET #1

WHAT IS FOLKLIFE?

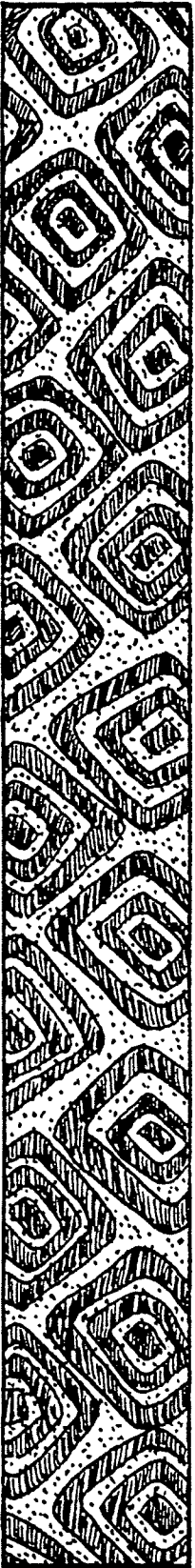
In this activity, you will explore different types of folklife seen in the videotape. This exploration will help you identify the “folklife” in your own life.

Follow these steps:

1. Based on viewing the videotape, explain folklife in your own words. Share your explanation with the class. Compare it to the definition included in the vocabulary section in the appendix.
2.
 - a. Write down as many examples of folklife from the videotape as you can. Use the written form of the narration, and/or view the tape again to refresh your memory. Be specific. Mention details as well as you can. Instead of just listing “foods” or “crafts,” for instance, list particular types of foods or crafts.
 - b. Organize your list into large categories. Use headings such as “music,” “foods,” “crafts” and list every example you found in these broader categories. Add more examples from your own experience. For instance, if someone in your family makes fish nets or goes fishing, list the type of nets they make or fishing they do. If you learned a story from someone in your family or school, list this. If you have ever danced in a Carnival troupe, list this as well. Ask your teacher, parents, grandparents, classmates, and other friends and acquaintances to help you add examples to your list.
3. Using your list of examples, design your own folklife festival. If your list is very long, you may wish to choose only a certain number

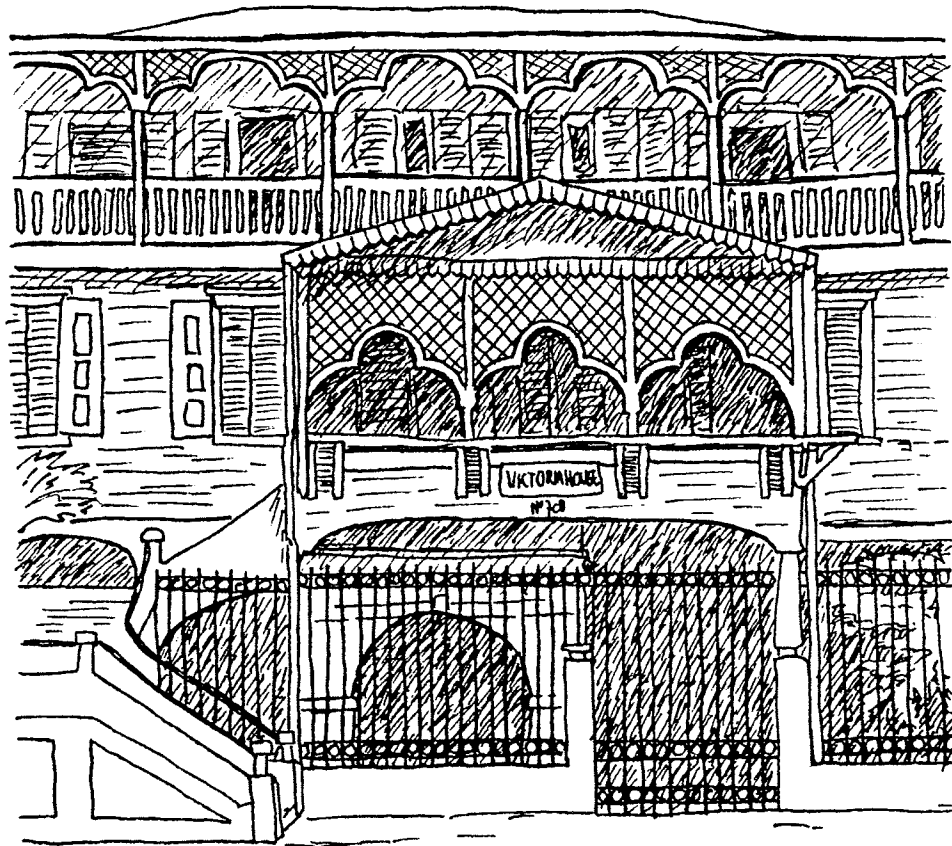


UNIT 1



of examples to highlight — however, choose at least one example from each of your categories. Think about the following: Would all of the musicians at your festival perform on a stage? How often? Would the craftspeople have booths? How would they demonstrate and display their crafts? What would be the best way for the audience to see and/or participate in other folklife activities (dance, foods, storytelling, occupational and domestic skills, etc.)?

4. Draw a diagram or map of your festival space. You may also wish to create a schedule of events at your festival. (For ideas, see the festival site map and schedule of events in the tan section of the Festival of American Folklife program book. Your teacher has a copy of this book.) Share your ideas with your teacher and classmates, and discuss the different spaces you've designed.



Gingerbread decoration on Victoria House on Strand Street in Frederiksted, St. Croix.

LESSON TWO:

FOLKLIFE IN PHOTOGRAPHS

In this lesson, you will use the set of photographs included in the kit to further explore the meaning of folklife.

STUDENT EXPLANATION

This set of photographs shows different types of folklife in the Virgin Islands and in Senegal. Captions on the back of the photos tell more about what is in the pictures. Look carefully at the photographs and read the captions. Take notes on what you see in the photographs. Be ready to discuss the photographs with the class.

Here is a list of the photographs

1. Special Events: *Carnival on St. Thomas*
2. Special Events: *Carnival at the Folklife Festival*
3. Special Events: *Lambe in Senegal*
4. Special Events: *Lambe at the Folklife Festival*
5. Music/Special Events: *Scratch band*
6. Music/Special Events: *Toucouleur women's music*
7. Domestic Folklife: *Fish stew in Senegal*
8. Domestic Folklife: *Cooking in the Virgin Islands*
9. Crafts: *Basketmaking in the Virgin Islands*
10. Crafts: *Basketmaking in Senegal*
11. Costume: *Head ties in Senegal*
12. Costume: *Head ties in the Virgin Islands*
13. Commerce/Trade/Products: *Market in Senegal*
14. Commerce/Trade/Products: *Market in the Virgin Islands*

UNIT 1

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: GENERAL

1. Did the photographs help clarify some of the examples of folklife that you saw in the videotape? What can photographs tell us that a videotape can't, and vice versa?
2. Compare your list of examples from the videotape with the examples you see in the photographs.
3. Would you add anything to your definition of folklife after studying the photographs?
4. Do the photographs remind you of anything in your own neighborhood or community?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: RELATED PHOTOS

These questions compare groups of the photographs for a more focused study of the photographs.

1. Compare the photographs of the basketmakers from the Virgin Islands and the basketmakers from Senegal. What materials do they use? Where do they get their materials? How do they learn to make baskets? Do they use their weaving skills to make other items?
2. Compare the photographs of the markets in the Virgin Islands and in Senegal. What types of things are sold at each? How are the items for sale displayed? Who are the buyers?



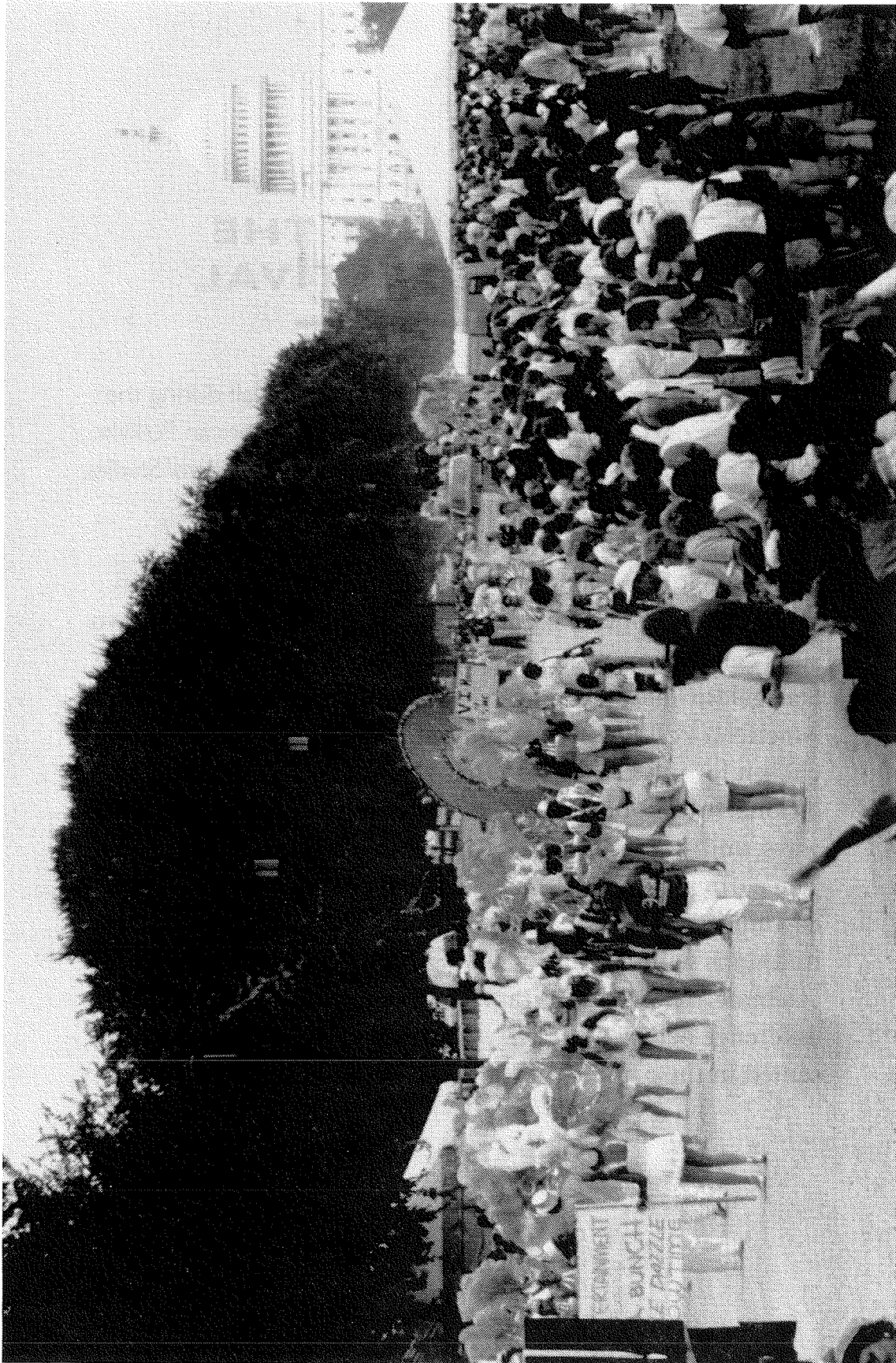
1. Special Events: *Carnival on St. Thomas*

CARNIVAL ON ST. THOMAS

A troupe of masqueraders parade down the street in the St. Thomas Carnival. *(Photo by Myron Jackson)*

Carnival is the season when everybody comes together as one. People return home to the Virgin Islands for Carnival from hundreds and even thousands of miles away to celebrate with family and friends. For months prior to the event, people join carnival troupes to participate in the parade. They begin to select themes for their floats and design costumes. The Mocko Jumbies will also be thinking of new ideas for their outfits. Parade participants avidly compete for prizes.

The traditional music of Carnival evolved from masquerading traditions of the past. In the masquerade, musicians accompanied paraders, who wore disguises representing characters. Today, brass instruments have been added to the “scratch” bands which provide the distinctive sound and rhythm for masqueraders dancing in parades at Carnival.



2. Special Events: *Carnival at the Folklife Festival*

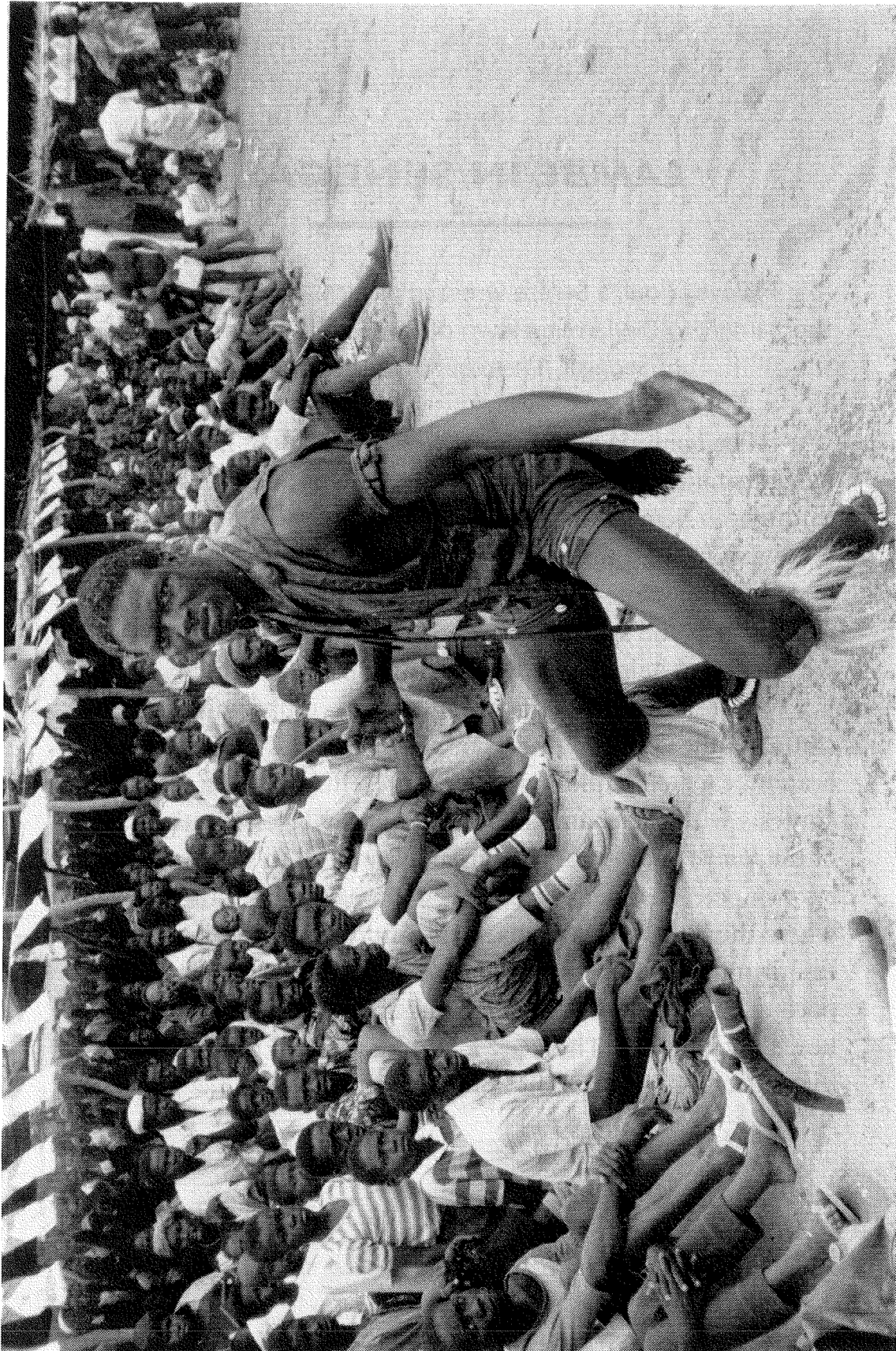
UNIT 2

CARNIVAL AT THE FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL

Carnival troupes parade down the National Mall during the restaging of Carnival at the 1990 Festival of American Folklife.
(Photo courtesy of Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies,
Smithsonian Institution)

What happens when a traditional celebration is presented away from its home setting, at a folklife festival? Two such celebrations, the U.S. Virgin Islands Carnival and the Senegalese *lambe*, were re-created at the 1990 Festival of American Folklife in Washington, D.C. These events were chosen for presentation so that visitors could learn how traditional arts — music, dance, costume-making, games, foodways, and storytelling — combine in a folklife celebration. The participants, like these Carnival performers, brought the costumes, musical instruments, and other elements of their traditions with them to Washington, D.C., to show how they celebrate. These photographs will help you understand the difference between the ways Carnival and the *lambe* are presented in their home settings, and at the Festival.

2. Special Events: *Carnival at the Folklife Festival*



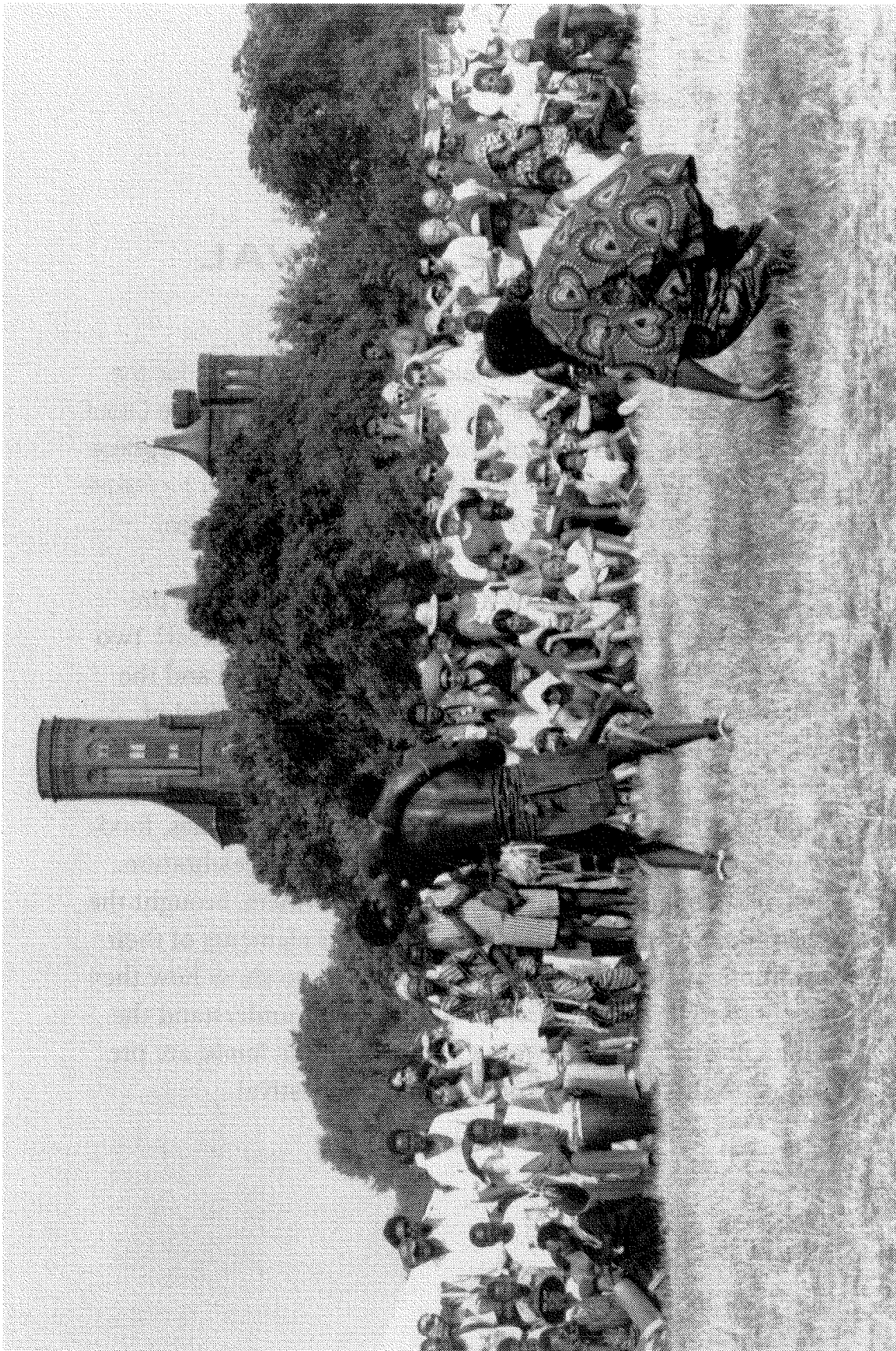
3. Special Events: Lambe in Senegal

LAMBE IN SENEGAL

M'Baye Diouf, a Serere wrestler, participates at a *lambe* tournament in the farming town of Samba Dia in the Sine region of Senegal. (Photo by A. Lamine Drame)

The *lambe* is a traditional wrestling match. *Lambe* tournaments take place each year in rural towns and cities throughout Senegal in the months of January and February following harvest time. To win, each wrestler tries his best to force his opponent off balance and onto the ground. A *serignou mbeur* is the specialist who acts as a spiritual coach to the wrestlers and helps them win the match.

In farming areas, the wrestlers grow crops and raise cattle at other times of the year, but during the harvest celebration, each champion wrestler represents his town in *lambe* contests with the champions from other villages. On the day of the *lambe* people come from miles around to see the fighters compete. Before a match, wrestlers parade into the space where the fight will take place surrounded by their supporters, drummers, singers, and dancers. Wrestlers and their supporters make up songs which boast about their strength and how they will win. These are a lot like some of the rap songs that African-American DJs compose.



4. Special Events: *Lambe at the Folklife Festival*

UNIT 2

LAMBE AT THE FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL

At the *lambe* tournament held on the National Mall for the 1990 Senegal Program, participants Sidy Sary and M'Baye Diouf wrestle while a member of Washington, D.C.'s local Senegalese community serves as referee. (*Photo courtesy of Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies, Smithsonian Institution*)

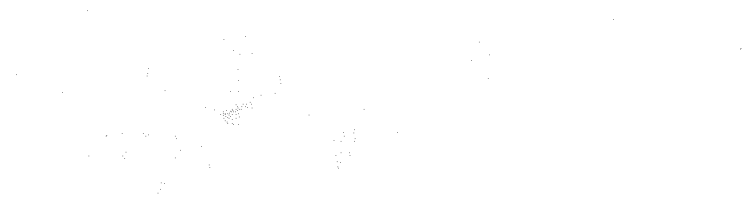
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4. Special Events: Lambe at the Folklife Festival



5. Music/Special Events: *Scratch Band*

UNIT 2



SCRATCH BAND

A scratch band performs traditional quelbé music. From left to right the instruments are: squash (scratch), guitar, claves, “ass pipe” and ukelele. *(Photo courtesy Von Scholten Collection, Enid Baa Public Library and Archives, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands)*

Scratch bands are called “scratch” because of the squash gourd which is scraped for percussion. As musician Sylvester “Blinky” McIntosh, Sr., explained, some musicians make their instruments, others grow them. Some of the other instruments played by the band are made from recycled materials, such as the bass instrument called the “ass pipe” and the triangle, also called the steel. Scratch bands are best known for traditional quelbé and quadrille music, but today they also play popular tunes from the Caribbean and from the mainland.



6. Music/Special Events: *Toucouleur* women's music

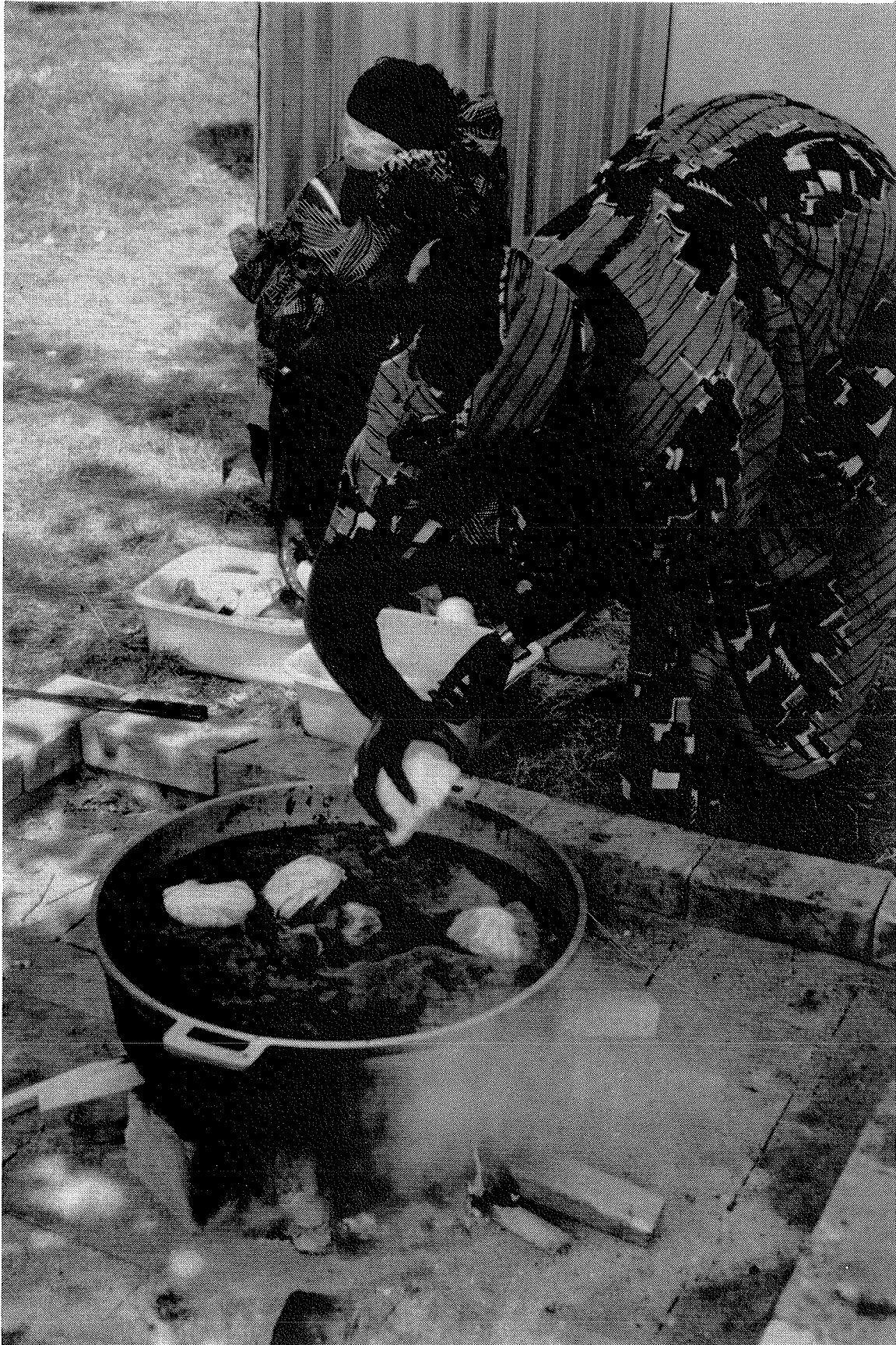
UNIT 2

TOUCOULEUR WOMEN'S MUSIC

At the 1990 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife Amayel M'Baye, Boudy Seck, Fily Sock, and Souadou Seck sing to the rhythm of gourds which they hold in their hands. Cire Yene Demba Doro Ba (on the left) plays a Toucouleur stringed instrument called a *hoddu*. (Photo by Rick Vargas)

The type of music which the women sing is called *yela*. Dried and emptied gourds like the ones they use as musical instruments are also sometimes used as containers to hold milk and other beverages. This music from the Toucouleur ethnic group is part of a larger tradition of praise singing which has a long history throughout Senegal. Praise songs were sung in the past to honor rulers, heroes, and ancestors and to encourage men going off to war. Some praise songs tell the stories of a person's great deeds and noble character, other songs list the names of many generations of a person's family. In Senegal today traditional singers perform at many occasions — from weddings to political rallies — and can be heard on the national radio station.

Only certain families had the right to become praise singers to the courts of the Toucouleur kings. These *griot* families passed down their skills from one generation to the next.



7. Domestic Folklife: *Fish stew in Senegal*

FISH STEW IN SENEGAL

Anta Diop and Maimouna N'Diaye prepare a typical Senegalese midday meal of fish stew with rice (*thiebou-dienne*) over an open fire at the 1990 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife.

(Photo by B. Honzik)

Senegal has a wide variety of foods and the people of Senegal have many ways to prepare them. Although some traditional foods may vary from region to region and from ethnic group to ethnic group, many foodways traditions such as *thiebou-dienne* and *yassa* (chicken stew with onions and lemon) are enjoyed throughout the country. Rice and a sauce combining fish, meat, or chicken with vegetables are the basis for many dishes. One popular vegetable is okra, which is native to Africa. Senegalese cooks add special seasonings such as tamarind preserve, dried fish and conch to give their meals a flavor that is uniquely Senegalese. People from Senegal who live in the United States, like Anta Diop, often send for these seasonings from home.



8. Domestic Folklife: *Cooking in the Virgin Islands*

COOKING IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Evarista Santiago grates a cassava root to prepare the dough for Puerto Rican turnovers called *empanadillas*. (Photo by Rick Vargas)

Virgin Islands cooking uses herbs, vegetables, and fruits both native to the Caribbean and brought to the islands by colonizers from Europe, Asia, and Africa. Basic food staples like cassava and sweet potatoes are originally from the Americas, while plantains and bananas were first brought by the Spanish from the Canary Islands located off the west coast of Africa. Traditional dishes included beef, lamb, pork and chicken — meat from animals introduced by the Europeans. However, local fish are equally important in Virgin Islands cooking. Native and imported fruits such as mango, guava, tamarind, and soursop flavor favorite drinks. Coconut is often used for holiday treats.

Cooking traditions are as diverse as the ingredients. Hundreds of years ago, traditions came from Africa and Europe. Today, it is more likely that new traditions come from other islands in the Caribbean or from the U.S. mainland.



9. Crafts: *Basketmaking in the Virgin Islands*

BASKETMAKING IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

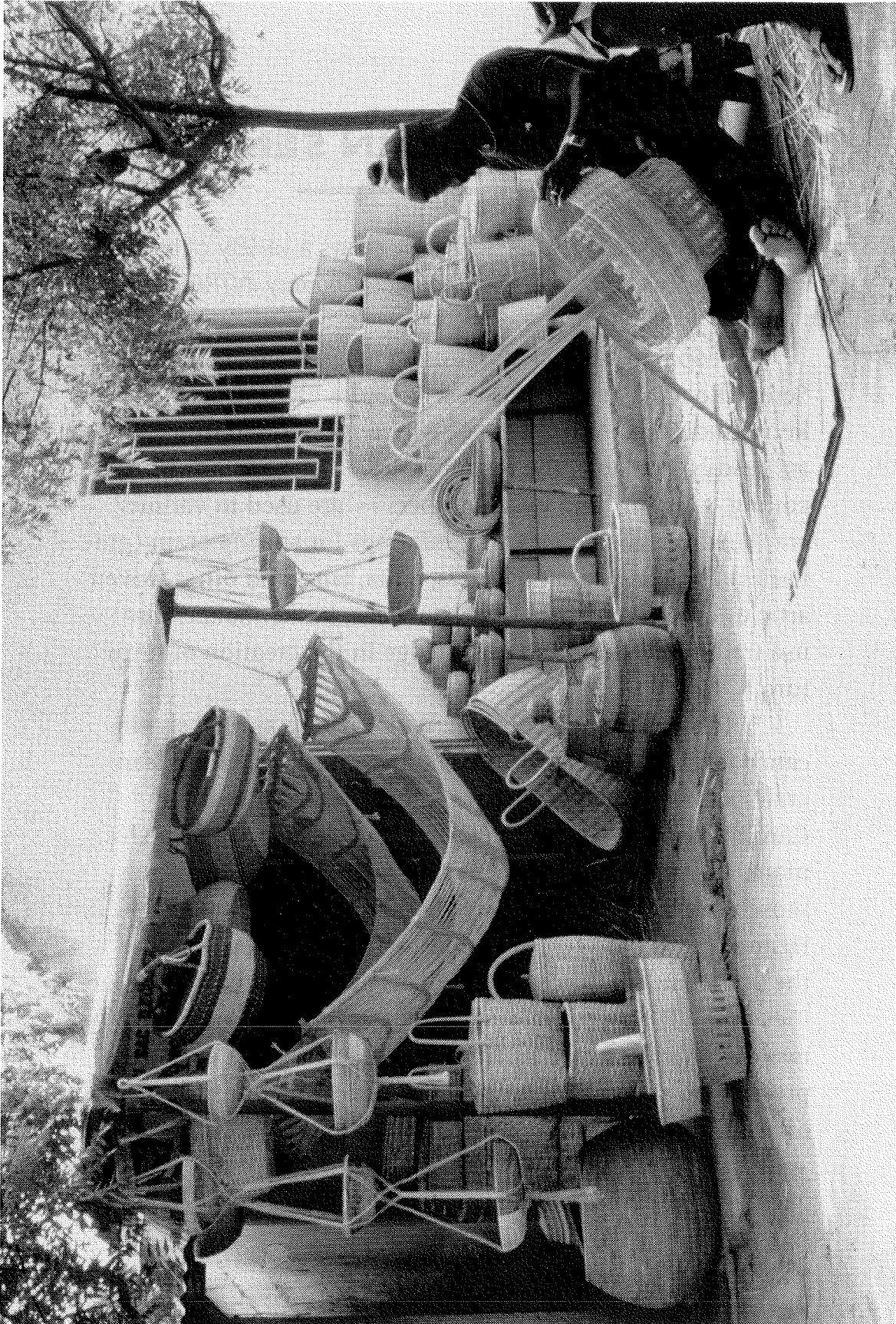
Mrs. Felicia Caines weaves a St. John market basket with hoopvine collected in the forest of St. John. (*Photo by Betz Robb*)

Plants native to the Caribbean characterize the basketry, brooms, and hats made in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The traditional St. John market basket, the melon, and the Tortola basket are all made with local hoop vine. According to basketmakers from St. John, when this vine is collected “in the dark of the moon,” it is guaranteed to be worm- and termite-free.

Basketmakers use the pliable whist reed for small baskets, trays, and other domestic items. Women from Frenchtown on St. Thomas continue to make straw hats and baskets with plaited grass, usually brought from St. Barts, the island from which their ancestors emigrated.

An African-style broom is made from the fan-shaped leaf of the tyre palm. For this type of broom, tyre palm bundles are tied together around a stick that serves as a handle. With the same leaf, on the other hand, a French-style broom is fashioned by weaving strips made from the tyre palm stem.

Traditionally, basketmaking enjoyed great social prestige. But materials have become increasingly more difficult to obtain because of changes in land ownership, clearing of forests for homes and for commercial developments, and restricted access to National Park lands.



10. Crafts *Basketmaking in Senegal*

BASKETMAKING IN SENEGAL

A basketmaker in Dakar, Senegal, displays a variety of basket styles for sale in a local market. (*Photo courtesy INTRASAHÉL*)

People make baskets throughout Senegal. The Wolof, Serer, Diola, Balante, and Bassari peoples all have strong basketry traditions. In rural areas, where grasses and other fibers are readily available, the technologies of basketmaking — coiling, weaving, and twining fibers — are used in various combinations for houses and buildings for storing grain (granaries) as well as for containers, mats, fans, and other woven articles of everyday use. In urban areas, basketmakers also use traditional skills and knowledge in the creation of furniture.

The baskets made by the Wolof have a special significance for African Americans. Traditional African American craftspersons in the Sea Islands along the coast of the Carolinas and in Georgia make coiled baskets using a technique and materials — in this case sea grass — similar to those used by Wolof and Serer basketmakers in Senegal. Historic links between the traditions of the Senegalese and the Sea Islanders (known as Gullah) are suggested by similarities in the forms, techniques, and uses of these baskets in the two communities, and by historical records pointing to the presence of substantial numbers of Africans from the region of Senegal who were brought to the Carolinas.



11. Costume: *Head ties in Senegal*

HEAD TIES IN SENEGAL

Women and children at a festive event in Senegal wear a variety of head ties and hair styles. (*Photograph by INTRASAHÉL*)

Women in Senegal wear head ties as a part of formal dress and because Muslim tradition requires that married women cover their heads in the company of men who are outside their immediate family. Head ties also offer protection from the hot sun. The ways that head ties are wrapped, like the hair styles that they cover, varied in former times according to the ethnic group a woman belonged to, her age, and personal style. Nowadays, head ties and hair styles are still an important part of a Senegalese woman's personal adornment, but, especially in large cities like Dakar, there is more choice both in personal style and in the decision whether or not to wear a head tie.

The three older women in the photograph above are dressed traditionally for a special occasion. They all wear head ties, as is expected for women of their age group. The woman second from the left wears a traditional Wolof wig adorned with gold baubles. Note the hair styles of the young woman whose back is turned to the camera and those of the little girls to her right.

In Senegal cleanliness, good grooming, personal carriage, and attention paid to detail in personal adornment are often linked to moral values, such as *faida* — Wolof for “self-respect” — and *set*, which means physical cleanliness, moral integrity, and purity of heart.



12. Costume: Head ties in the Virgin Islands

HEAD TIES IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Quadrille dancers at the 1990 Festival of American Folklife wear costumes including head ties. *(Photo courtesy of Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies, Smithsonian Institution)*

Virgin Islands women today wear head ties for special occasions like Carnival, food fairs, and other festivals. In older times, head ties were part of women's everyday wear. In the Virgin Islands and at the 1990 Festival of American Folklife, the Heritage Dancers of St. Croix wore head ties to dance quadrille, bringing a West African element to a European dance tradition.

Head ties are tied in different ways to identify the woman as single, available or married. If the tie ends in two points, the lady is married. If the tie ends in four points, she is saying, "I'm willing, I'm available, and I will accept anything that comes my way."



13. Commerce/Trade/Products: *Market in Senegal*

UNIT 2

MARKET IN SENEGAL

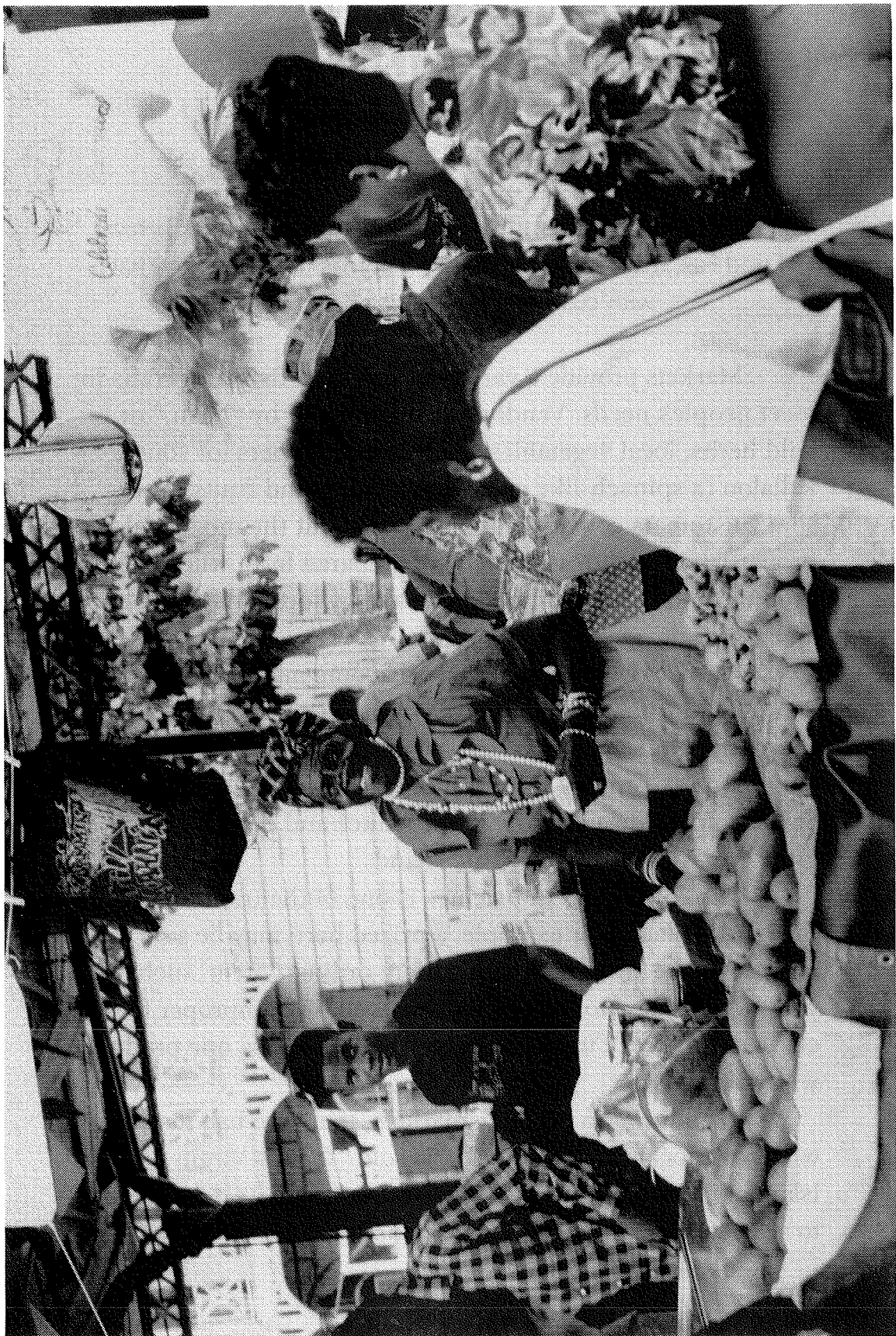
Foods eaten every day are available in this traditional marketplace on the outskirts of the capital city of Dakar.

(Photo courtesy of INTRASAHÉL)

Situated on the shores of the well-traveled Atlantic Ocean and also at the southwestern end of ancient trans-Saharan trade routes, Senegal's marketplaces have long been magnets for trade goods from all over the world as well as from within the country itself. Market vendors sell the ingredients for a wide variety of traditional meals prepared at home, household goods and textiles manufactured in factories in Senegal and abroad, as well as traditional crafts created in the workshops of blacksmiths, weavers, cloth dyers, and basketmakers.

The Senegalese market is crowded — a virtual kaleidoscope of colors, voices, aromas, and textures. In the cities, the market is open each day of the week. Country markets travel from village to village in the same region, rotating on a regular weekly basis. Market stalls generally open at sun-up and carry on business until the last rays of the sun disappear. The market is a meeting place, where news of the day is spread by word of mouth and greetings are exchanged. Public declarations are made in which everything and everyone is subject to commentary.

Negotiation skills and the arts of market display are developed at an early age, as young people both buy and sell with older relatives. They learn quickly that the first price offered opens the bargaining but rarely concludes the sale. They also discover that market stalls where the goods are arranged attractively may sell more. Senegalese street vendors who have emigrated to other parts of the world have found these skills are useful in cities outside Senegal like New York and Paris.



14. Commerce/Trade/Products: *Market in the Virgin Islands*

MARKET IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Here at the St. Thomas marketplace during the 1990 Carnival Food Fair, market woman Sandy Thomas takes time to chat with customers. (*Photo by Betz Robb*)

Markets provide a variety of produce, fish, and crafts to meet people's needs. Vendors sit surrounded by "bush," or wild herbs, local vegetables, such as hot peppers for souse, kallaloo (a spinach-like green), and yams, and fruits in season. Customers consult with vendors about the medicinal properties of bush teas, which are prepared from wild herbs. Brooms, hats, mats, and baskets made by local craftspeople are also sold.

Farmers from the countryside come mainly on Saturday mornings, when most Virgin Islanders do their shopping. On St. Thomas, the Northside Frenchies, descendants of 19th-century French immigrants from the island of St. Barts, provide a great deal of produce and culinary herbs grown on the north side of the island.

The "marriage" of produce is one of the traditions of the marketplace. For example, a prized herb may be sold together as a "marriage" with a more ordinary item, such as a yam, which may not be selling very well. It is improper for a customer to break up a "marriage" and purchase one product without the other.

In addition to produce markets, there are fish markets, where the local catch of the day is sold. Today's Virgin Islanders may go directly to a known fisherman's docked boat to select and buy their favorite seafood.

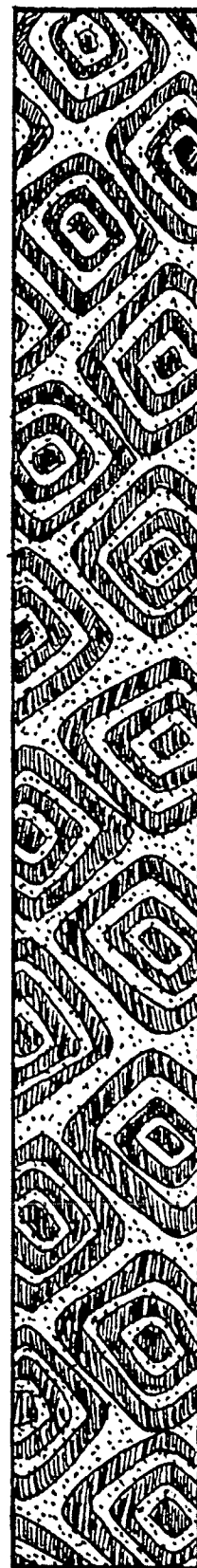
STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET #2

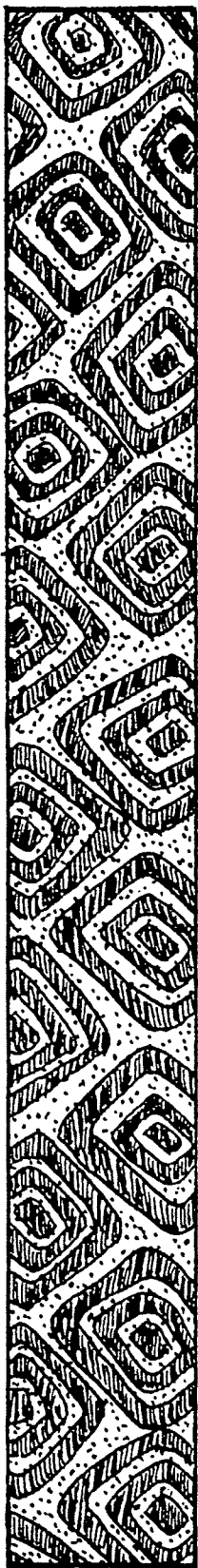
COSTUME IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS AND SENEGAL: THE HEAD TIE

In the videotape, you saw people from both Senegal and the Virgin Islands wearing “head ties” (sections of bright-colored material tied around women’s heads). Look closely at the photographs showing head ties in both cultures, and read the information provided by the captions. Then see how many more examples of head ties you can find in the other photographs.

Think about the following:

- Why are head ties worn in both cultures? Are they worn every day, or for special occasions?
- Judging from the photographs, what are some of the different ways to tie the head ties?
- Do the head ties match the rest of the women’s costumes? Why do you think this is important?
- Why are some women wearing head ties in the photographs and some aren’t?
- Head ties are worn in the Virgin Islands nowadays only for special occasions. They used to be worn as everyday dress. What changes in the culture do you think caused head ties to become a special occasion adornment instead of everyday dress?





Do the following:

- Take a piece of material or a scarf (you can either bring one from home, or your teacher can provide one.) Try to tie a head tie on yourself. How did you do? Have a classmate try to tie a head tie on you, and try to tie one on him or her.

If you grew up learning to tie and wear a head tie, chances are you had no problem. You may even know how to tie a head tie several different ways.

If you never tied a head tie before, chances are you had a big problem!

- Find someone who is an expert at tying head ties — maybe your teacher, mother, aunt, neighbor, or grandmother. Have this person give you a “lesson” in tying head ties. While you are learning, ask the “expert” some questions:
 - Where did you learn to do this?
 - How often do you wear head ties? Why?
 - Are there different ways to tie a head tie, and do they mean different things?
- Share your new skill and the information you gather with your classmates! Compare head ties — how many variations are there? Do any of them look like the ones in the photographs?

LESSON THREE:

FOLKLIFE IN YOUR WORLD

The purpose of this lesson is to explore the “folklife” in your own life. Everyone’s life is special and unique, and folklife is a big part of this specialness and uniqueness.

Collecting information firsthand from people by interviewing them is an important way that folklorists learn about culture. An interview is a way of obtaining information by asking questions and writing down or tape recording answers. You can use this technique to gather information in your own family or community. You will find that this method of learning about culture is exciting and rewarding, and very different from “just reading about it” in books!

The activity sheet, “Folklife in Your World” will guide you through an exercise collecting more information about an example of folklife in your own experience. Your teacher may assign the first two steps in class and the interview as homework. Before you start your interview, your teacher will lead you in a discussion using the questions below. The teacher will go around the class and ask each student what his or her example will be, and who he or she will interview. If you are having a difficult time deciding on a topic, other students may be able to suggest ideas. Your teacher will review the six questions you plan to ask before you do the interview and will suggest improvements if necessary. The booklet, *Folklife and Fieldwork*, included in the kit, will also help guide you in this activity.

1. What do the following terms mean: interview, observation, log, transcript, survey, documentation, and fieldwork?

STUDENT EXPLANATION

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

UNIT 1

2. How do you think you should begin an interview with a person?
3. Is it better to use a tape recorder or to take written notes? Why?
4. Why is it important to take a photograph of a person you are interviewing, if you are able to?
5. Why do you need the permission of the person you are interviewing?
6. How do you think you should finish an interview?



Glass painting by Senegalese artist
Modou Fall.

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET #3

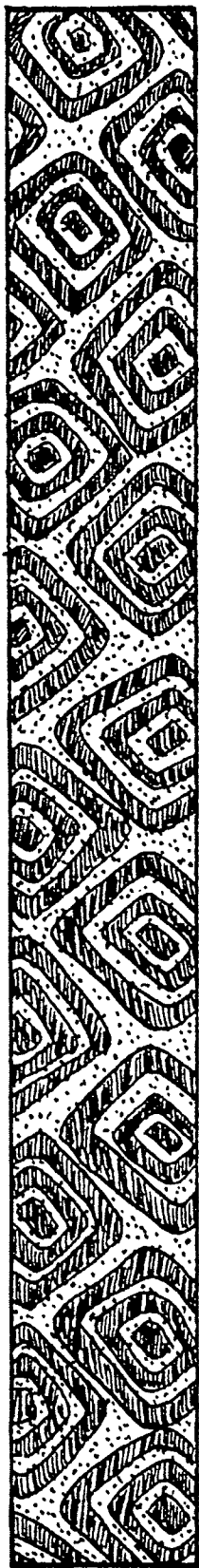
FOLKLIFE IN YOUR WORLD

1. Review the examples of folklife from your own experience that you listed in step 2.b. of the “What is Folklife?” activity. See if you can add any more examples of folklife from your own life. Did you learn to fish, cook, gather herbs or work with wood from a family member? Can you tell an old story or sing a calypso song? Did an older relative or friend teach you how to play marbles or spin a top? Does your family do anything special on holidays? List as many examples as you can think of.
2. Choose one example of folklife from your own life. Describe it in detail. Where did you learn the skill? How long did it take you to learn it? When do you practice your craft/ sing your song/ cook and eat your special food/ etc.? Share this item of folklife with your class. If possible, bring to class an example of something you made using your folklife skill (a basket, a bunch of dried herbs, a cake), sing to the class one of your songs or tell a story, or teach the rest of the class to play your traditional game. Or, you may choose to bring photographs of your family celebrating a special holiday that you can explain to the class.
3. Using this example of folklife from your own experience, think of one or more people who helped you learn about this tradition. Choose one of these people to interview.

Here are some helpful suggestions on how to conduct this interview:

- Prepare at least six questions to ask the person you are going to interview. Give the person enough time to answer each question thoroughly before you go on to the next. If you have a tape





recorder, use it, but only if the person to be interviewed agrees to be recorded. If the person has any photographs or objects that relate to your topic, ask to see them and have the person explain them for you. If you have a camera, ask if you can take some photographs. You may take portraits of the person, or photographs of the person doing something related to the item of folklife, like making a basket or cooking.

4. When you have finished your interview, organize your notes, photographs, tapes and whatever else you have gathered. "Log" (make a list of the information covered in) your audio tapes.* Label your drawings or photographs. Make a chart that compares your survey information.
5. Take all of your organized information and write a 100-word summary of your interview. If you took a photograph, or if you have another picture to illustrate your interview (you may draw one, find one in a magazine, or use one of the photographs in the kit, for instance) put it together with your summary to create a complete idea of the tradition you researched. Show your summary to your classmates and find out if they understand the tradition from your explanation.
6. Make a bulletin board or scrapbook of the traditions collected by the class.

*A format for logging tapes is suggested on page 30 of a booklet your teacher has called *Folklife and Fieldwork*, published by the Library of Congress' American Folklife Center.