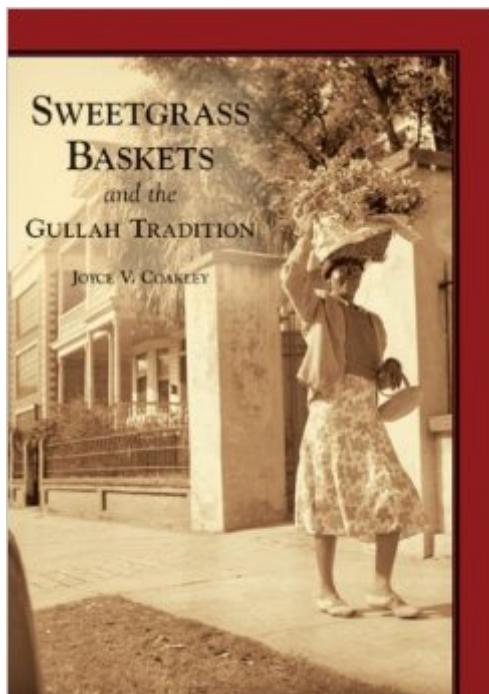


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# Sweetgrass Baskets And The Gullah Tradition (SC) (Images Of America)



## Synopsis

The ancient African art of sweetgrass basket making has been practiced for more than 300 years in the Christ Church Parish of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. Seen on the roadways of Charleston County and in museums and galleries worldwide, these unique handmade baskets are crafted from sweetgrass, bullrush, pine needles, and palm leaves. Traditionally, artisans use a piece of the rib bone of a cow and a pair of scissors as their only tools for construction. When English settlers founded Christ Church Parish in the late 1600s, they saw a place rich in natural beauty and ideal for harvesting rice, cotton, and indigo. Skilled agricultural laborers were needed, and consequently, South Carolina became the top importer of enslaved West Africans. Finding a landscape similar to their homeland, those who came kept many of their traditional practices. Today, the richness of the West African presence can be seen in Charleston's architecture, basketry, and ironworks.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Sweetgrass Baskets and the Gullah Tradition" may suffer from being misnamed (a faulty title) because it is much more of a sociological and anthropological investigation of Gullah culture than a close study of sweetgrass basketry itself. For that reason though I consider it a bargain. Anyone who visits the Charleston area and Mt. Pleasant (Rt. 17 or the Charleston Market) in particular will be pulled into the beauty of the sweetgrass baskets. This book takes you into the complex lives lead by those creating the baskets and those around them living in Mt. Pleasant in a particular time of the past, giving a well-rounded view of a disappearing culture. Still, you see the people through the eyes

of one of their own, not romanticized but as real flesh and blood people. I really appreciate what Joyce Coakley shared in these pages and I think you will too.

If you want to learn about Gullah culture, their history and their beautiful sweetgrass basket art work, get this book. It is very educational and has a wealth of pictures and information. Though a little "scrapebook" in layout, the content is so new and different that doesn't matter. Recommended as a very enjoyable history..

I really appreciate Joyce Coakley's very personal photo essay book on Gullah culture. Many authors of books like this just go to resource centers like historical libraries for photographs but you can tell by the names that many of these people are her own family members and people from her neighborhood. "Sweetgrass Baskets and the Gullah Tradition," goes right into the heart of a particular neighborhood where sweetgrass baskets flourish but also shows so many other facets of the Gullah culture you won't find anywhere else. Well done Ms. Coakley!! I highly recommend this book for those not only interested in sweetgrass basket history but those seeking a more indepth visual analysis of Gullah people.

I thought the book was going to focus on basketmaking, but it is more of an introductory (with a lot of nice photos) book on the Gullah people, traditions, foods, worklife, religion, family, etc. Check the chapter headings before buying to get a better of idea of the content.

This is a great book. Often when I'm reading, I want to see what I'm reading about. I'm trying to envision the people and the settings. This book structures the text around the photos. Gives the story so much more dimension and makes it easy to absorb the concepts and information.

We used this for a festival resource and many of the families attending spent quite a lot of time looking at this book and talking bout the baskets they had seen in their familiies or at neighbors' homes. It's a great resource.

Have not completed the book, at first glance enjoy the book and pictures. Short bit of history in a small compact book.

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