

BLACKSHEEP HANDSPINNERS GUILD NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1992



The Blacksheep Handspinners Guild meets 2nd Saturday of each month from 11-3 at the Varna Community Center on Rt 366. If your coming North on 13, take a left at the sign just past NYSEG and if your coming South on 13, take a right at the sign about 3 miles past Triphammer Mall at the Treeforms Furniture Store. If coming from Center Ithaca, the community center is about a mile past the vet school on the right.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Meeting will be from 11:00 to 3:00 on Saturday, April 11th at the Varna Community Center.

MARY KELLY:

TALKS ABOUT SPINNING IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND OTHER FORMS OF TEXTILE ART:

Mary Kelly, Art Professor at TOMPKINS COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE will share with the guild some of her unique experiences with spinners from all parts of the world. Ms. Kelly will include a slide show of her travels and discuss international viewpoints on the artworld's newest and perhaps most controversial art form...wearable art.

Ms. Kelly will be on sabbatical to continue her studies in textile art in the near future. She is the author of a book on European embroidery and has published articles dealing in textile art. (See *Threads*, June/July, 1987, Embroidery for the Goddess).

HATS REQUESTED:

Alison Lovejoy requests that all of you who made hats at the February meeting please bring them along to the April meeting so we can get a group picture taken.

Check out the current issue of *THREADS* magazine for another variation on the hatmaking theme. There is an article from a Pacific Northwest native who sells her felted hats at craft fairs throughout the US.

NOTES FROM SHELLY ON MARCH'S MEETING:

Another great meeting. First, old and new business was taken care of.

NAME TAGS: Ellie brought in a whole selection of nametag color plates to choose from. With so many choices, there is no way that a group like ours could decide on one, so we'll each pick our own. The cost will be \$5.00. Contact Ellie if you weren't at the meeting.

Those present decided not to renew **SHUTTLE, SPINDLE AND DYEPOD**.

REPORT ON THE RETREAT: Ellie tabulated the results of her post-retreat survey, and found that though everyone had a great time at the Watson Homestead, about half of those who attended thought the food was pretty awful. There's apparently no way around it. If we want to stay there, we have to partake of their dining hall fare. However, in discussion it turned out that at least three of those who found the food

well below par would still not hesitate to go there again. The other aspects of the homestead (olympic-sized pool, comfortable accommodations, comraderie, and the food we all brought along) more than compensated for the mediocrity of the meals. If we want to have the next retreat there, however, we'll need to start planning now, as the reservations for the facility fill up fast. Celia Radke, Kathy Halton and Shelly Marino formed a committee to coordinate the next retreat. They will check out other possible sites, such as Wells College, and report back to the Guild.

NEWS: Mary Kelly brought along her friend Lydia, a handspinner who came here from the Ukraine 15 months ago.

The Cherry Valley Guild want to rent our spinning video in preparation for a workshop they'll be holding with Mabel Ross.

Doris Brown lost a daughter recently. The Guild secretary will send a condolence card to Doris on behalf of BSHG.

Former member Erica Lynn has a new book coming out from Interweave Press on angora. It was suggested that we buy a copy and ask for Erica to autograph it for the Guild library. This will be discussed further at the June meeting.

Market Day will be held on Sunday, June 28 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Ithaca Farmer's Market. There was some discussion of the time because if we leave by 2 p.m. we would not be responsible for cleanup of the site. However, we decided that the extra hour was worth the extra effort. Booths will cost \$15 each, except for demonstration (i.e., non-sales) booths, which will be free. The Farmer's Market requires a \$200 deposit, which Nancy Wilson said we could cover.

Celia Radke passed out a signup list for the

various jobs associated with a successful Market Day. So far, Nancy Wilson will organize the guild table, Debbie Benzer, Marion Wikoff and Eleanor May will set up, Kathy Halton will work on cleanup, and Alison Lovejoy will be in charge of demonstrations, which so far include Valorie Rockney dyeing, Sharon Gombas weaving, Deb Miller and Ellie May felting, Kim Slack spinning, and Shelly Marino and Kathy Halton leading a beginner's corner. There's plenty of room for more volunteers since no one will be expected to "work" more than an hour or so without a break. Please call Celia (or anyone working in an area of interest to you) to volunteer.

Those who will have wool for the afghans should turn it in as soon as possible. Join Debbie Benzer and Valorie Rockney on Saturday, March 28 at Debbie's house, where they will be indigo-dyeing the white yarn.

There will be three (yes, three) afghans this year. Two will be raffled off, and the third will be first prize in a raffle ticket-selling contest for guild members. The afghan will go to the member who personally sells the most tickets. This is not counting those sold on Market Day or at the Ithaca Festival. The winner would have to turn in the money on or before noon on Market Day to Celia or Nancy. There will be an additional prize or prizes for runners up.

We were happy to see that the Genesee Valley Handspinners Guild has listed "Field trip to Spinners Market Day" as their June activity. This year we will provide a hospitality area (including lunch) for them as well as from members of any other guilds that come by.

Demonstration Requests: Debbie Benzer brought in forms for the annual spin-in at the Farmer's Museum in Cooperstown, which will be held on August 9. Call Debbie for further information.

NRAP (Natural Resources Appreciation Program) is looking for volunteers to participate in a teaching program with 5th and 6th graders in early May. This is a quality program sponsored by 4-H, and is always well organized and a lot of fun. Please call Debbie Benzer if you can volunteer.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

The April program has been changed to take advantage of Mary Kelly's recent excursion to the Balkans. Her Fulbright scholarship took her to Bulgaria and Greece to study how Balkan women produce textiles.

Deb Miller contacted Karey Solomon, who will give a program on lace at our May meeting. Karey's forte is knitted lace, and she'll be accompanied by her daughter Janna, who does bobbin lace. Check next month's newsletter for details on what to bring.

In June we're all bringing our favorite books and magazines having to do with the fiber arts. We'll share around and decide which ones to purchase for the guild library.

Deb Miller contacted Shirley Brausky (hope this is spelled correctly), about the possibility of giving a workshop this year. Shirley is a Canadian with a Master of Handspinning degree. She's currently working on her Master of Handweaving degree as well. She is known for making knitted and felted fabric of mohair and wool, using special carding and spinning techniques. Deb found that Shirley would like to come in August and give a workshop on her special techniques. Since a lot of preparation is necessary, Deb will arrange with her to have material sent ahead of time so we can spin to specs ahead of time. The workshop will be limited to 15 people. Watch for details in the newsletter.

SHOW AND TELL: Deb Miller had her first quilt, which was absolutely stunning. It featured

applique, piecing, piping and exquisite quilting patterns.

Vernice Church passed around the yarns she spun at the retreat. One was a 4-colored Navajo ply made from merino top, the other an electric spun 2-ply of mohair, lambswool and angora.

Kathy Halton had several skeins of lovely, soft 2-ply from a covered corriedale fleece she purchased from guild member Dick Luce during the retreat weekend. Imagine getting the fleece washed and dyed already!

THE PROGRAM: This was definitely a hands-on program. Many hands went home dyed beautiful shades of blue and purple. Ah, those acid dyes sure do work on animal fiber ...and skin!

Deb Miller led the charge, weighing skeins of wool and dissolving appropriate amounts of dyes for each of three rainbow pots. Debbie Benzer then showed her "squeeze-bottle" method for dyeing fleece (see separate article). Everyone went home with bags of dripping, luscious rainbow skeins and locks.

Just for the record, the first pot of fleece was dyed with WF716 green, CK301 red, CK117 yellow and CK601 blue black. The second featured scarlet, 445 blue, dusty rose and chocolate brown. Thanks to Marion Wikoff for the dye notes.

Shelly Marino

(Thanks Shelly, the editor)

SPINNERS MARKET DAY

Sunday, June 28, 1992, from 10:00 to 3:00 P.M. at the Ithaca Farmers Market, 3rd street and Route 13, Ithaca NY. Many have already signed up for jobs but we still need more volunteers. If you are not going to be at the next meeting

please call Celia Radke, 749-2711 to volunteer for Market Day.

Those of you who still have yarn for the afghans, please bring it to the next meeting. We must have all the yarn by April 15 so that we have ample time to weave them.

We hope to be able to weave two natural colored afghans. One will be raffled off along with the knitted indigo afghan. The second woven afghan will be given to the person who sells the most raffle tickets.

Celia Radke



AFGHAN COMPETITION:

The winner will be based on personal ticket sales. Each participant will keep track of their own, personal sales and hand in the money with their name attached.

Sales at Market Day and Ithaca Festival booths will not be counted.

Winner will be the one with the greatest ticket sales for the afghan drawing. The money must be turned in by 12 noon on Market Day.

All participants (except the winner) will be eligible for a special prize drawing for their efforts.

Jean Currie & Vernice Church

THE RETREAT AT WATSON HOMESTEAD:

The editor caught up with the rest of the BSHG group on Saturday afternoon after they taken a swim in the pool and were about to have dinner with a roomful of teenagers from area church groups. The dining hall brought back memories of high school "baked lasagna and iceberg lettuce with carrot sticks" lunches which always

COMING EVENTS

GENESEE COUNTY MUSEUM:

'Spin In '92' to be held on May 17th (new date). Details later.

CAPITAL CONVERGENCE: July 23-26 1992. Information available in the library.

ONTARIO HANDSPINNING SEMINAR:

June 12, 13, 14, 1992. Wilfred Laurier Union. Waterloo Ontario. Information in Guild Library.

FIBER FOCUS II:

September 11-14, 1992 at Touchstone Center for Crafts, PO Box 2141 Uniontown PA 15401 (412-438-2811). Workshops include Feltmaking, Comprehensive Spinning, Color Interaction, Designing and Structure. A complete course description and registration information plus discount coupons will be available at the Guild library.

FARMERS MUSEUM SPECIAL EVENT:

August 9, Cooperstown NY. We are invited to come and spin for a day at a living museum of rural 1800 New York. Talk to Debbie Benzer for more information.

rolled around about mid-week. (A bargain in 1970 at .35). Not so now. My mid-life crisis temporarily subsided as I sat down to a planeload of buttered macaroni and vanilla pudding.

BSHG, known for their cuisine as well as their spinning art complained intermittently of heartburn the rest of the afternoon.

But the scene was quite different back at the cottage where the guild was housed. Everything was modern and clean. I found a table of guild members working at crafting jewelry from bits of cotton, wool, wire, felt, plastic and synthetic materials. There was a shelf at the window which slowly filled with earrings, pins, necklaces and (fishing lures??) Hey, maybe sell a few of these at the Farmer's Market in June!!

I hauled my old Ashford up the narrow steps to the main room upstairs. The place was filled with all types of spinning wheels. Lets just say Ghandi would have been considerably impressed.

The sun was blazing through the big windows that surrounded the room and the countryside was breathtaking in both beauty and bonechilling cold outside.

A flock of wild turkeys paid a visit during one point of the retreat.

I spent the afternoon spinning my own material, learning how to spin a boucle yarn from Ann Furman, watching Ellie spin on Vernice's electric spinner, and leaning over the sink while Deb Miller dyed plastic bags full of fleece. I browsed the tableful of delicacies contributed by the "happy campers" and watched again as Ellie attempted Navajo-plying.

Some of us visited a nearby sheep breeder known for prize-winning corriedale sheep. (I found the rocking chair in front of the wood stove the best part of the trip).

It would have been nice to get in some cross-country skiing or taken a quick hike, but despite the cold, the cottage afforded everyone time to spin, chat, laugh and have a relaxing time away from our daily routines.

DEBBIE BENZER'S RAINBOW DYEING TECHNIQUE:

Any type of fleece may be used for this, such as grease fleece, washed fleece, roving, top etc. Long staple is preferred if you want to Navajo ply and keep the colors separate.

I prepare the dye kettle using a large enamel preserving pot, any enamel pot will do, white ones are nice to keep track of the colors. Fill the kettle 1/4 full of water, add 3/4 cup of white vinegar, 1/8 cup Glauber's salt (or non-iodized table salt), for 8 oz. wool. Stir to dissolve the salt and add two to three squirts of liquid detergent if dyeing greased wool. Press the wool down with wooden spoon to moisten. There should only be enough water to wet wool thoroughly.

Sprinkle the selected colors of CIBA (or similar commercial dye) on sections of the fleece as desired and let simmer for 1/2 hour uncovered. As the dye bath simmers, the colors will blend and form the 'rainbow fleece'. Try to refrain from stirring the wool.

Let the wool cool until it can be handled, then wash and rinse in warm water.

A LITTLE ABOUT INDIGO: *I had several articles I'd collected from guild members and family on indigo dyeing and thought I'd contribute them since we seem to be doing alot with the dye lately.*

BLUE GOES FOR DOWN: How indigo dye came to Liberia - a folk tale.

In the long ago and far away when High God left the earth, he went to live in the sky. The sky was close to earth in those days, so close it rested on the hills and mountains and sagged into the valleys. Energetic women feared to beat their pestles too high lest they pierce the fabric of the sky just above their heads and poke the spirit of a departed elder. What calamity!

It was better, really better, that High God, after

being whacked a few times by busy women, left the spirits of the departed elders and went higher and farther from people. At least the low-lying sky was left to blanket man and shield him from the fierce sun. The people in their loneliness for God made sacrifices to the spirits of the ancestors and gave them messages to carry to God.

The sky did more for man in those days than to shade him and to house the spirits. Bits of sky could be eaten. This was different from other foods. Rice and palm oil fill the belly. Sky fills the heart. With a scrap of cloud inside him, a person can float and dream and find again the peaceful, joyous feelings that filled him before High God left the earth.

It was dangerous business, this eating of cloud. One had to come to cloud-food pure in thought and body. Even so, one could become cloud-drunk, sweetly drunk and unknowing. This is what happened to Asi, the seeress of Foya Kamara.

On a bright morning Asi came to the banks of the stream that flows past the town. She came with her girl child tied on her back under a pure white *lappa* of country cloth. On Asi's head was a raffia bag filled with rice which she must cook and eat on the sacred spot where an altar to the river spirit stood against a great silk-cotton tree. In her hands she held a hollow stick. In its hollow was the winking red eye of a lump of charcoal for lighting the sacred fire.

Asi walked calmly, her head high and straight as she neared the altar because one does not rush with unseemly haste to a sacred place. She collected sticks from the forest and lighted the fire between three rocks which held the sacred clay pot which was always left in the forest. After she had spread her *lappa* on the earth and made a cushion of leaves under it to soften the place for her child, she walked without clothes to the bank of the stream where she would rinse the pot and take water for cooking.

On sunny days strips of cloud came to lie down on the river. One could look down in to the deep pools and see the beautiful blue color of the sky lying there in the sacred wetness. Asi had eyes and heart that were hungry for color. To Asi, the blue of the pools was the most beautiful color in all the world. Asi looked back at the bank of the stream where her child was lying on the white *lappa*. The color of the white *lappa* seemed a dead and lifeless thing that had never known sun or cloud or sky.

"Perhaps" thought Asi, "if I eat enough sky, the blue will come to my skin from inside me. With luck, my hair will be thunder blue."

Asi shivered then because she knew that a seeress must not beg anything for herself at the holy pools; one must ask only for the entire people of the village. She had done a selfish, wicked thing just when she should have been most pure in her heart. Fear shook her body as she carried water for the rice toward the fire. What was done was done, the wicked thought had taken hold of her, she must beg forgiveness of the water spirit and think now of her sacred task.

When the pot of water had been set above the fire, Asi sat with her back against the great silk-cotton tree, waiting for the water to boil. "I will eat some sky now to make my heart lie down and be still," Asi told herself. Reaching up, she broke off a strip of sky as long as a plantain leaf and began to feed her lonely heart.

With the first swallow of sky, beautiful thoughts filled Asi. She felt herself within the roots of the trees far below her in the river-wet soil. The roots nuzzled the earth to drink the holy wetness the way a baby nuzzles a mother's breast to find milk.

Asi's own breast ached with the nuzzling of the roots because her spirit was there inside the sacred roots.

When the roots had drunk their fill and were ready to sleep, Asi's spirit rose and entered the body of a *veda* bird dancing in the air before her. The *veda* is a blue so bright it is a lovely hurting to the eyes. It dances in one spot in the air when it is ready to mate. It was from floundering in the the sky where the blue rubbed off on its body that the *veda* became this trembling, beautiful blue. Once again, the woman Asi became jealous of possessing this color, blue. She shook herself to try to rid her longing for color. Perhaps if she asked for the blue for all the people, not just for herself. Asi rose and added the rice to the water in the pot which had begun to boil. She was calmer now and not so afraid since she had decided to make a begging for blue to come down to all the people of Foya Kamara. She saw that her baby was asleep on the white *lappa*. Asi was free to eat just one more bit of sky while the rice cooled. She would then leave her begging for blue along with some rice on the altar and go home before the forest was dark.

When Asi awoke, her head throbbed and she knew she had been drunk with sky. The forest no longer smelled sweet. No birds sang. In her nostrils was the stench of burned rice. She had spoiled the sacrifice she had come to make. The sun was low in the sky. Fear ate at Asi when she turned her aching head to look to her child. The baby had rolled off the *lappa* and was lying face down on the earth. Something strange about the *lappa* caught Asi's eye. There was a blue patch of color in the center where the baby had wet. One small patch of deep blue in the dead expanse of white. Asi did not stop to finger the *lappa*. She rose to her feet as quickly as she could get her joints together and ran to her baby. When she turned the child over, no breath came from its mouth.

Asi's baby was dead. This was the punishment for bringing selfish thoughts to that holy place. In a frenzy of grief Asi ran to the fire, now dead ashes, and loosened her hair to receive the grime of the ashes as is the custom of women

in mourning. Tears streamed down her face streaking the ashes she had piled on her head. Asi clutched her child to her, then wrapped the lifeless body in the *lappa* which was her own skirt. Her body rocked forward and back as she wailed and wept.

Finally, Asi felt the life and the grief going out of her. She fainted there at the base of the silk-cotton tree. And while she was in faint, the water spirit spoke to her, telling her about the blue spot on the white *lappa*. It was indigo, the spirit told her, and came from the leaves she had plucked to cushion her child. In order for the blue to stay, there must be urine and salt and ashes with indigo. It was necessary for the baby's spirit to leave its body, otherwise, Asi would not have added the salt of her tears and the ashes of her grief. The blue Asi had desired above all else would not have stayed on the earth.

Before Asi awakened from this trance, the spirit cautioned her that now since the color blue had come to earth to stay, it was a sacred duty to guard the indigo and that only women too old to bear children should handle the indigo pots. Asi was to carry her new knowledge back to Foya Kamara and instruct the old women there how to make the blue juice live happily in the cloth for all the people. Only after that would Asi conceive again and the spirit of her child, just dead, return to live in her hut.

When the people of Foya Kamara awoke the next morning, they saw that the sky no longer rested on the hills or sagged to the roofs of the houses. High God, after having let women have the secret of blue for their clothes, pulled the sky up higher where no one could reach up to break off a piece for food. People look on the blue of fine cloth and have less need for a near sky, even though in their hearts they will always remain lonely for God.

BACTERIAL INDIGO GIVES THE BLUES TO INDUSTRIAL CHEMISTS:

When we buy a pair of jeans, we don't generally summon visions of 19th-century indigo plantations, much less of the turn-of-the-century German chemists who essentially consigned such plantations to the past. But the fact is that until the day those little-remembered chemists learned how to synthesize indigo molecules on an industrial scale, the only source for the blue dyestuff used in denim and other cotton clothing, had been natural indigo. With that success, the chemist sealed the fate of entire plantations and helped to usher in the era of industrial chemistry, which was to put out of business biological sources of dyes, flavorings, and many other key chemicals.

Judging from one of the presentations at the Chemical Congress, biology may soon be making a comeback. By genetically modifying bacteria, genetic engineers may succeed in snatching preeminence in indigo making from industrial chemists and giving it back to biology. Indigo could become one of the first chemically synthesized products to be replaced by a biotechnology process.

The nasty ingredients that go into the nearly century-old chemical process of making indigo, sodium cyanide and formaldehyde, to name two of them, provide a major incentive for coming up with an alternative. An early hint that bacteria might offer a kinder, gentler route to indigo came in 1983 from other researchers who were studying a gene that enables the bacterium to break down hydrocarbons. When they inserted the gene which codes from the enzyme naphthalene dioxygenase, into the common bacterium *Escherichia coli* to probe its activity, they serendipitously discovered that the genetically engineered bugs could turn the amino acid tryptophan into indigo.

Genencor International of Rochester, New York is now trying to pin down the conditions (such as temperature, acidity, and tryptophan supply) under the which the bugs churn out indigo most efficiently without also producing biocidal

chemicals, thereby committing biochemical suicide. If the process works, the blue-blood bugs should have their work cut out for them as long as people like their old blue-jeans.

Thanks Marie Bryhan

VERMONT WEAVER USES INDIGO TO WEAVE STORIES: *From the Burlington Free Press:*

Elizabeth Billings goes into her laundry room and pulls an electric blanket off a plastic garbage can and removes the lid. The can is filled with pitch blue indigo dye that gives off a marshy smell. Billings puts on rubber gloves and dips skeins of thread into the inky vat.

"This blue is as old as the sky," Billings says, and pulls the threads out. They come out a mossy green, but they turn blue as the dye oxidizes.

The artist practices the Japanese art of ikat dyeing and weaving. An ancient form of tie-dyeing, ikat requires that parts of the yarn be tied so that they will not pick up the color. The Japanese have used the dyeing and weaving technique for centuries to create kimono cloth and blankets. Billings has updated ikat, using it for less practical but equally striking purposes.

Billings has shaken up the strict patterns of ikat weaving, to create dramatic painterly wall hangings. They resemble deep, shifting water, as the patterns change from one end of the hanging to the other. The weavings seem to ripple as you look at them.

Billings first learned to weave at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. She went on to take a five-week course at Marshfield School of Weaving where she now teaches ikat.

She later apprenticed with ikat weavers in Japan. At the Cranbrook Institute in Michigan,

she began experimenting with ikat and used her first urine indigo dye bath. Urine helps stabilize the fickle dye, which also needs to be kept warm, thus the electric blanket.

She was later inspired on a trip to Mexico where she saw weavings depicting folk-tales, legends and religious events.

Billings uses the same technique in her ikat weavings. Weavings, like stories, have beginnings, middles and end, Billings says.

**CONDENSED FROM: AFRICAN TEXTILES,
by John Picton and John Maek, Harper &
row, NY 1989.**

By far the most extensively used non-industrial dye in Africa is indigo. It is obtained from several plants of the genus *Indigofera*, which are both wild and cultivated, and from *Lonchocarpus cyanescens*, the indigo vine or Yoruba wild indigo which is regarded by Yoruba dyers as giving the more permanent dye.

Fresh green leaves of whichever indigo plant is available are pounded in a mortar and the pulp moulded into balls. These are allowed to dry in the sun for two or three days during which time fermentation begins.

Wood ash is moulded into balls with water from a dye pot in which the dye itself has been exhausted and these balls are piled up on top of green wood in a kiln. The kiln is then fired for ten or twelve hours and left to cool until the third day. The ashes are molded into balls and allowed to dry in the sun. Ash balls and indigo balls surplus to the dyer's own needs can be sold in the market.

Some of the ash balls are broken and placed upon a sieve. Water is added, which drips through to the pot below taking the potash with it. As the water filters through it is scooped out via a hole in the side and moved to a dye pot.

Dyeing is always carried out in the shade and the dye pots are kept covered. Fifty indigo balls produce a good blue and a hundred and fifty a really intense color. The indigo balls are broken up and placed in a dye pot, and ash water is poured over them until the pot is full. The contents of the pot will be stirred from time to time during the next three days and then dyeing commences. The dye itself is cold.

The yarn or cloth which is to be dyed is immersed for two minutes or so and then lifted out, dripping, onto a board which drains back into the dye pot. It will be dipped like this three or four times and then put to dry in the sun. This will be repeated until the desired color is produced. For the best quality of color, fresh dye will be used for each series of dippings. The objects dyed are always allowed to drip dry and are never wrung out. When first removed from the dye pot, the color of the article is green but this soon deepens to blue. As the liquid in the pot is soaked up, it is topped up with ash water. Eventually all the dye is absorbed and the water which remains is used for moulding the ash balls.

Cloth which has been dyed is finished by beating with wooden mallets over a piece of tree trunk or some other rounded wooden object. As the cloth is invariably overloaded with dye the beating produces a metallic sheen. This will be lost as soon as it is washed.

The indigo-dyers in a community are usually women, as among the Yoruba, although in some areas, such as Hausaland, the indigo-dyers are men. The Hausa city of Kano was famous for its dye pits in the mid-nineteenth century when it was estimated that it had some two thousand of them. Elsewhere in West Africa, people particularly famous for their indigo-dyeing are the Baule of the Ivory Coast and the Soninke or Sarakole of Senegal.

Thanks Valorie Rockney