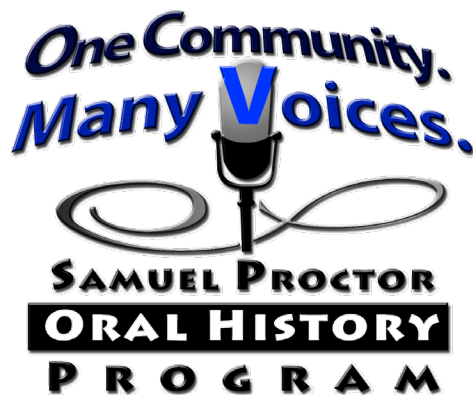


Leona Sanders Watts

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-056**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
September 21, 1972**



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CAT 056 Leona Sanders Watts
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols on September 21, 1972
8 minutes | 8 pages

Abstract: Leona Watts recalls her life living on the reservation in South Carolina and describes growing up with a big family and how that affected her parents' work. She also recalls her schoolteachers when she was a young girl. She then goes on to talk about her previous and current marriages and her children, who Watts believes have more opportunities now because they have a better-quality education, considering Watts dropped out early. She then discusses her relationship to her grandfather, Chief Blue, reflects on her joyful memories of birthday dinners at his house, and describes her grandmother's pottery as a lost tradition since she cannot create pottery herself and her children have no desire to learn it. She ends with a brief discussion of her church and the popular site of young people's parties at the abandoned schoolyard on the reservation.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; Chief Samuel Taylor Blue; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Communities; Family histories]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
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University of Florida

CAT 056

Interviewee: Leona Sanders Watts

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: September 21, 1972

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Rock Hill, South Carolina, Route 6, Box 260.

September 21. I'm visiting in the home of Mrs. Watts. She is the granddaughter of Chief Blue. They live in Red River out of the first house just beyond the railroad track. And this is the home they're buying themselves. Mrs. Watts, who were you before you married?

W: Sanders.

E: You were Sanders. And what was your given name?

W: Leona.

E: Leona. You lived with your father and mother down on the reservation and you had quite a number of brothers and sisters in that home, didn't you? How many were there?

W: Eleven.

E: Eleven children altogether. So, you had a big family. It was a real job for your mother to pack food for all that crowd of children, wasn't it? And your father too. Your father went to work when he was a very young boy and he was working, trying to support this family at that time. What was your father doing to earn a living?

W: Well, all I can ever remember is working in the cotton mill.

E: That's right. He worked in the mill and then he worked at the bleachery, and he's worked other places. I believe your father's retired now.

W: Yes, ma'am.

E: Then you went to school on the reservation. What teachers do you remember?

W: Well, I remember Ms. **Bruce**, Ms. Cornwall.

E: Mrs. Bruce and Mrs. Cornwall. Do you remember Mrs. **Hope**? Or was she after your—

W: Yes, ma'am, but she didn't teach me. I was a lower grade when she was teaching.

E: She taught the upper grades I believe. What did you do about your lunches when you went to school down there?

W: Well, we shared 'em most of the time, but they had hot lunches down at school too.

E: I believe Arzada Sanders cooked part-time down there, didn't she?

W: Yes, ma'am.

E: Then you went through the seventh grade at the—

W: Sixth.

E: Sixth grade. And then, when were you married?

W: In January 1952.

E: At that time how old were you?

W: Fifteen.

E: Fifteen. And your husband was how old?

W: Seventeen.

E: Seventeen. Then he had a job where?

W: In Cone's Cotton Mill in Pineville.

E: Cone Cotton Mill in Pineville. And you went there to live for a while. Then where did you live after that?

W: Well, we moved to Lancaster. Lived in Lancaster and then back to Rock Hill on the reservation.

E: Then when the lands were divided up, you got a share of the land because you were an Indian. How much land did you get and where was it located?

W: It was at about thirteen acres. It was out on Springdale Road.

E: Now, do you still own that land, or have you sold it?

W: No, ma'am. We sold it.

E: You sold it in order to buy your house here. Now, I believe you've been married three times. Who was your first husband?

W: Olin Mackie.

E: Ervine Mackie—

W: Olin—

E: Olin. Olin Mackie. Did you have any children by that marriage?

W: I have two.

E: And who were they?

W: Wendell and Cheryl.

E: Wendell and Cheryl. Are they both married?

W: No, ma'am. The boy. Wendel.

E: Wendell is married. Then your second marriage, who did you marry this time?

W: Howard **Norman**.

E: Howard Norman. You had children from this marriage?

W: I had two.

E: And what are their names?

W: Carol and Francine.

E: Carol and Francine?

W: Francine.

E: Francine. Are they married?

W: No, ma'am.

E: They're not. And your third marriage, you married—

W: Sam Watts.

E: Sam Watts. And you do not have any children by this marriage?

W: No, ma'am.

E: Now, your boy is working, I believe, and married and this is your little grandbaby here in the home. Where is your son working?

W: He works at the bleachery.

E: And do you consider this a good job for him there?

W: Yes, ma'am.

E: Does he hope to be able to buy a home sometimes soon?

W: Yes, ma'am. They trying to get one **by me**.

E: Well, every person likes to get out by themselves. I know how that is. Then your other children are in school. You have one at junior high. Who's the one at junior high?

W: Cheryl.

E: Cheryl. And you have two at Rosewood. Now who are those?

W: Carol and Francine.

E: Those two are at Rosewood. Do you think your children are getting a better chance at education than you had?

W: Yes, ma'am.

E: Well, do you think there's a better chance for them to earn money and have jobs?

W: Yes, ma'am.

E: So, you think the future is brighter for them now?

W: I think so.

E: Are you proud to be an Indian?

W: Yes, ma'am.

E: Do you think you have a history and a heritage you're proud of?

W: Yes, ma'am, I do.

E: Now, I know you're proud of Chief Blue and his—all the family connections and that. Chief Blue had many gatherings at his home. Do you remember the times that you would go to his home for birthday celebrations?

W: Well, I don't remember too much about it, but I remember when we would all go down there—all his kids and grandkids—and have a big gathering on Sundays and have **Carol's** birthday dinners down there.

E: Everyone would take birthday dinner?

W: Yes, ma'am.

E: Did he know you were coming or was that a surprise?

W: Yes, ma'am, he knew.

E: He was looking forward—

W: We'd give him a birthday dinner there every year.

E: Every year. That's very amusing. Did you ever see his wife, your grandmother, make pottery?

W: Yes, ma'am. I've seen her.

E: Have you ever tried to make any pottery yourself?

W: No, ma'am.

E: Now, your mother used to make pottery. Does she make any now?

W: No, ma'am.

E: What old people have you ever seen that did make pottery?

W: Rachel Brown and Arzada, **Vivian** Blue.

E: And Jessie **Dars** been making—well, do you think they ever will go back to making pottery?

W: I don't think so.

E: Are the young people interested in it?

W: They don't seem like they are.

E: Could your children make pottery if you give them a piece of clay now?

W: No, I know they couldn't.

E: You know they couldn't. But if you had some clay, you could make pottery, couldn't you?

W: No, ma'am, I couldn't.

E: You couldn't? [Laughter] Well, it's doubtful if you'd be able to sell it. Do you remember the prices they used to get for that pottery years ago?

W: No, ma'am. I sure don't.

E: Your husband is working now, I believe. What kind of a job does he have?

W: He does plumbing work. He works in Charlotte.

E: He comes home every evening.

W: Yes, ma'am.

E: Now, where do you go to church? Do you go on the reservation or is that your—

W: Down on the reservation.

E: And do your children go to church there too?

W: Yes, ma'am.

E: And do any of the Indians go to the church in town—the Mormon church in town, in Rock Hill?

W: Yes, ma'am.

E: So, you really have two churches here now. Did you remember, I'm sure, your grandfather's funeral at the old church? And where is he buried? Is it—it's in the new cemetery—

W: He's buried down there in the new cemetery.

E: And his wife is too?

W: Yes, ma'am.

E: Do you ever have any parties or celebrations down on the reservation for the young people? With the schoolhouses empty, were they used for parties and things for young people?

W: I think they do but I've never been down there. I haven't.

E: You haven't been, but haven't your children been down there some?

W: I think Cheryl's went down there a couple times.

E: Well, you have the land, and you have the opportunity. I think maybe you'll enjoy that sometime.

[End of interview]

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