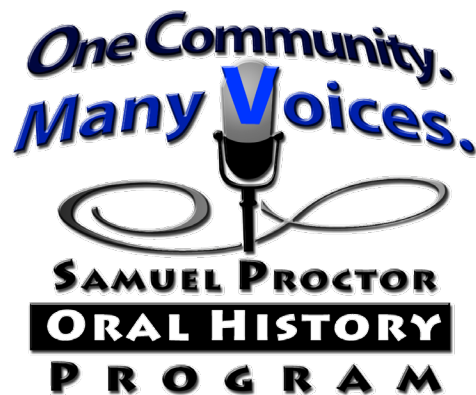


Cora Ethel Beck Warner

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-136**

Interview by:

**Edith Frances Canty Wade
October 21, 1975**



University of Florida • Samuel Proctor Oral History Program • Paul Ortiz, Director
P.O. Box 115215, 241 Pugh Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-5215
(352) 392-7168 www.clas.ufl.edu/history/oral

Samuel Proctor Oral History Program
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Program Director: Dr. Paul Ortiz

241 Pugh Hall
PO Box 115215
Gainesville, FL 32611
(352) 392-7168
<https://oral.history.ufl.edu>

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1 hour, 18 minutes | 38 pages

Abstract: Ethel Beck Warner lives in Ohio but grew up on the old Catawba reservation in Rock Hill. Her son was in the air force during the Vietnam War and is going to school to be a photographer, and her daughter is a stay-at-home mother of foster children. Beck Warner describes the story behind her meeting her husband and their elopement. Then, she describes the opportunities she had to travel as a young adult and then laughs about the tricks and pranks she pulled as a child with her friends. Beck Warner emphasizes the importance of sharing these stories with her children to help her remember what a special childhood she had. Then, she recalls her experience with her faith and the connection she had with her elders. Beck Warner discusses her experience as a Mormon more in-depth and how it shapes her worldview and political participation. She ends by discussing her experience at temple with her former schoolteacher after being away from the reservation for an extensive period of time as well as her joy visiting her parents.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Mormon Church; Oral biography]

ORAL HISTORY
PROGRAM
University of Florida

CAT 136

Interviewee: Cora Ethel Beck Warner

Interviewer: Edith Frances Canty Wade

Date of Interview: October 21, 1975

FW: This is Frances Wade. I live on Route 3, Box 304, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Today is October 21, 1975. I'm gathering oral history of the Catawba Indians for the University of Florida. Today I'm visiting in the home of Sally and Fletcher Beck, and I'm talking to their daughter who now lives in Ohio. Ethel, what is your full name?

CW: Cora Ethel Beck Warner.

FW: When is your birthday?

CW: October 14. I was born in 1924, which makes me fifty-one years old.

FW: Who were your parents, Ethel?

CW: Fletcher John Beck and Sally Rebecca Brown Beck.

FW: Are they Indian?

CW: My mother, she's Catawba, I would say about three-fourths. My father is about one-eighth Cherokee. His ancestors left Cherokee, North Carolina, I haven't traced that far back. I don't know just exactly when, but his forefathers left there—as I said I don't know what year—but his mother went back. My grandmother Lily Beck had married into the Catawba Tribe. She married my step-grandfather Joseph Sanders in 1910. But she had gone back to the reservation from Clayton, Georgia, where my father's grandparents had migrated to some years before that. That's where my step-grandfather, Joseph Sanders, met her. And she came down here.

FW: Now you are talking about your—

CW: My father.

FW: And he met her in Cherokee?

CW: Mmhm.

FW: Do you know what he was doing up there?

CW: Visiting friends, I presume, from what all I've been told by my parents and grandparents. He was visiting up there and he met my grandmother, my paternal grandmother, in Cherokee, and she came down here. They were married here in Rock Hill—Catawba. My father, whose father was Jess Warner back in Clayton, Georgia, had lived in Cherokee and gone to the reservation school there. He came down, I don't know, must've been around 1911 or [19]12 because he and my mother were married in 1914. He was baptized in 1912, that's on the church record so he must have come around, I'd say around 1911. Him and my mother were married 1914, December 24. This December will be their sixty-first wedding anniversary.

FW: You remember everything Ethel. I'm not good on dates. Who are your grandparents on you mother's side?

CW: John William Brown and Rachel **Wise** George. My grandpa John Brown, his father was John William Brown, Sr. His mother was Margaret George. My maternal great-grandmother was Emily Cobb, and my maternal grandfather was Taylor George.

FW: That means that they're really close kin to me once again, because those people, those names, are real familiar to me. There was something I wanted to ask you.

Oh, about your father's father, was he Indian or White?

CW: White.

FW: How many children do you have, Ethel?

CW: Two.

FW: What are their names, and how old are they?

CW: Oliver Dale, he was born June 12, 1944, when I was twenty years old.

FW: Do you want to tell me more about him before you tell me about your other child?

CW: Well, he was born, as I said the twelfth of June, 1944. His father was in the service, and I had stayed with him out in Kansas, Camp Phillips Army Base. I went out in July of 1943, and I stayed with him 'til October of [19]43. I got pregnant with my first child then and I came home and stayed with my parents.

FW: You're talkin' 'bout **Daddy** on the reservation

CW: Uh huh. He was born in York County Hospital. Then we left here when he was two years old. His father got out of service, and we went back to Ohio, and he attended the new Philadelphia school. Went to kindergarten and graduated in 1962 from Philadelphia High School. Went four years to Kent State University. First, he started out—this was his first year, you don't have to decide definitely on your major until junior year, I think, and he went four years to Kent State. And he switched and changed his mind from when he first entered, he was majoring in Psychology, and he just went four years, and it took longer than that for his major. Five years, I think, to get a degree in that. And when his four years was up, when he completed the scholarship, he went into the Air Force the following January, after he had finished the scholarship in June of [19]66. He went into the Air Force and got into intelligence work. His basic training was in San Antonio, Texas. Actually, he didn't have much basic because he was being interviewed

for—he applied, he'd only been there two or three weeks, and this was in the heart of the Vietnam War, and he wrote to me, and he told me that he was being screened for what he was best suited for. That if he got the job that he had applied for, he knew it would make me happy because he'd never see action in Vietnam. So actually, the first year that he was in service, he was in the States and only saw twenty-six weeks of training. He was sittin' around waitin' for security clearances. After he got his first security clearance, he spent thirteen weeks in Biloxi, Mississippi taking his training. Then when that was over, he had to have a second security clearance. Same thing, he told me, as the President of the United States had, he said it was the highest security clearance you could have: "**CRYPTO.**" And then, after that come through, he took thirteen weeks of training in Goodfellow Air Force Base. That was in some place in Texas... I can't remember the town, but it was at Goodfellow Air Force Base, anyway. He'd come home for Christmas after he'd completed his training and then he was sent overseas to Crete. He spent eighteen months there and at that time he went there, he was active in the Mormon Church, which he is a member of. He served as counselor to the French President in Crete, while he was there. He toured Greece, Crete, Italy, Switzerland, Austria. He got slides and when he come home, he had around 8,000 slides. They were really beautiful, the different countries that he visited. He came home on leave when he completed his eighteen months there and they assigned him to Italy. He done the same type of work there that he'd done in Crete. You know how they are after spending so much training these boys for this type of work, they was after him to re-enlist. So,

he told 'em that if they would send him back to Crete, where he had friends, that he would enlist for a year. That's what he done, he enlisted for a year. Then he come home after his year was up and he went to Athens University for a quarter. At the present time, he's holding down two jobs tryin' to get money to go back to get a degree. The photography bug bit while he was over there so he's back home now. Our Bishop wants him to go to Brigham Young University, so he says it'll be either there or Ohio State that he'll go you. That brings him up to this present time.

FW: I failed to ask you to give me your address, would you do that now?

CW: 429 Brighton Street NE, Philadelphia, Ohio.

FW: We sorta explained how you got up here in the first place, so let's go on to your other child.

CW: Cheryl Ann, she was born two years and two weeks to the day from the time he was born. When Dale was just a little past one year old, his father was sent to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Come there in July or August—I can't remember now—of 1945. I got pregnant in September with my second child. She followed two years behind her brother, after we went back to Ohio to school. She didn't graduate from high school. She got married when she was eighteen years old, and they have three children. Billy is ten, Bobby will be eight in May, and the middle one is a girl. She was just eight last January. They now operate a foster home for retarded children. They've done that now for a year ago, since last August. Like her brother, she's very active in the Mormon Church. My son-in-law, he works at the school for the mentally retarded, that's how they—

FW: What is his name?

CW: William Arthur Baumgartner, and my oldest grandchild is named after him. Their second child is Cheryl Ann, and the baby is Robert Dale. Between their church activities and running this foster home for the retarded, they're kept quite busy. She's the president—they have set up a primary and release society that they have down there. We live thirty miles from the ward, and she's over the primary down there. She's also a visiting teacher for our church. My son-in-law is in the superintendency of the Sunday School, and also a home teacher, and he's over at the temple project. He sets up the programs. They always have a bunch that are preparing to go to the temple. He is in charge of the speakers that come. They have their meeting the first month in every Sunday when there's no sacrament. And he's in charge of getting all the speakers that comes to speak to the members that are preparing to go to the temple.

FW: I grew up with Ethel, and there's so many things I want to ask. I know that I won't have time to do it. I'd like to just take days and talk to her because she remembers so many things and we had so many good times together. Ethel, we talked about your children, now, who did you marry? Would you tell me how you met your husband?

CW: In 1935, my Uncle Early, my mother's brother that's now dead, he went up to New Philadelphia to a restored Indian village that had been a Christian area back 'round 1772 through 1776. At this Indian village, it was the first Christian village in that area. Out of the west of the Alleghenies. It had the first school and the first church west of the Alleghenies and it's now a historical park. My Uncle Early

went there with his family in 1935 for the first time. My oldest brother, Samuel John Beck, went with him the first summer they went up there, that was in 1935. They returned every summer to work there at the park and made pottery. In 1941, I went with 'em.

FW: Who let them know that that place was there and that they could go and spend the summer, Ethel?

CW: I really do not know, Frances. I never did hear Uncle Early say, but I suspect that—you remember Mr. Speck?

FW: Yes.

CW: He come down and recorded the Catawba language. Well, you know, at the same time Uncle Early was going to Ohio, the Gordons was going over in the Poconos in Pennsylvania. Irvin and Liza and Gladys and I think Aunt Edith went up there once.

FW: Who was Mr. Tyler.

CW: He was the one that was over the park at first, when Uncle Early first started going up there. When I went up there in 1941, a man by the name of George **Batick** was in charge of the park. I don't know, and I won't say this to be the truth, but I suspect that Mr. Speck had connections with helping him to find out about this historical park that Uncle Early went to. And after the Gordons went over to the Poconos in Pennsylvania. After they quit going over there, you know, Kirk and Kurt Sanders and Sara Lee. Did you know that?

FW: Yes. They went to the Poconos.

CW: They went up there. The same place that Irving Gordon had gone to. And I can't say for sure, but from what I know of Mr. Speck's interest in the Catawbas. I know he was from Pennsylvania.

FW: Do you remember him?

CW: Mmhm, in this book that was published on the Catawbas in [19]66. Do you have a copy of that?

FW: I don't have a copy, no.

CW: Well, I've read part of it. This Summers woman that wrote the book. Her name was Douglas Summers, I think. I thought it was a man until I bought the book. But her name was Jane, she was a minister's wife from Rock Hill. In that book, she refers—she done a good job on that book because she done lot of research and it's one of the best books on the Catawbas. When Dale was in Kent State, he brought quite a few books home on the Catawbas, and I read quite a few books—not complete books on 'em, but books with portions about 'em. And this book that she done is real good. But she refers to him. He's written several books. Did you know that?

FW: Yes.

CW: In her book, she gives her references as to where she got her information from.

FW: Well, I've seen one I just don't have one of my own.

CW: And she refers to him though, in a lot of her references. When I bought this book from the bookstore in New Philadelphia that ordered it for me, they also told me, they gave a list of three other books that's been written on the Catawbas and he wrote one of 'em. But they told me that I would have to order them. They gave

me the publisher and if you want me to, when I go home, I'll send you the addresses if you like.

FW: Well, I wish you would.

CW: If you want to get 'em. I'm not saying that for sure, but what I know is of his interest in the Catawbas, and I suspect that he may have had a hand in Uncle Early and them obtaining information concerning these parks and recreation areas where they went to to work.

FW: Well, you were about sixteen when you went? Were you sixteen?

CW: I was sixteen in [19]40, and I went up there in the spring of May 1941. That's where I met my husband. I come home in October of [19]41, and he followed me down here. I come home in September, and he came down in October. We were married in December of [19]41.

FW: And did you give me his name?

CW: Oliver Warner, he doesn't have a middle name.

FW: Where were you married?

CW: Chester, South Carolina, at the courthouse. We eloped. Laughter]

FW: Do you want to talk about the eloping and what it was like then here in Catawba about that time?

CW: Well, my mother and father both liked him. It wasn't that we eloped because they disliked him, but he had looked for employment after he come down here and that was just prior to World War II. He had looked and looked for work and he couldn't find any. My mother told him that he didn't come that far for nothing. She had told him what it was and if when we got ready to be married, she didn't want

him to steal me. She'd like for him to ask for me. He had looked and looked for work and, so I said, "If you ask for me," I said, "She'll make you promise that you'll stay down here." And I said, "You've looked and looked for work and couldn't find any, and I said I would rather do it my way than to promise her promises he wouldn't be able to keep because he had looked for employment and couldn't find it. So, I told him that I don't like to lie, I don't like to be lied to and I don't like to make promises that I know I cannot keep, so that's why we got it my way.

FW: How did Momma and Daddy feel about it?

CW: You know how my daddy's always felt about me. I'm sure I've displeased him at times, but he never did ever slap me or do anything. He'd sit and talk to me. When we came outta the courthouse that day, we had a flat tire. And when he got the tire fixed, my dad was working on the Lesslie schoolhouse out here and we came back. After we got the tire fixed, we come back to Lesslie and stopped and went around the school building where he was working. It was almost time to quit work for the day and I just handed him the marriage license. He looked at it, he didn't scold me or nothing, all he asked was if my mother knew and I told him no. So, we brought him home and, well you know my mother, she was pretty upset. She told me to get out of the car and that I was staying home. He told her to leave me alone. That's my daddy, he's always stuck up for me, good or bad. I guess he loved me. She got over it. The other day when I come home, she told me she said—I don't think she was referring to my sister-in-law—she did that of all of her in-laws, he was the best, but I think she was referring mostly to her

sons-in-law. Don't ever let my sisters hear this on tape! [Laughter] What she meant was how much the gospel has always meant to her and of my other two brother-in-laws, he took me to the temple, and he's tried to be—well, he has been a good husband to me and a good father to my children.

FW: I don't want to say too much about that because I am going to leave this tape with you. And I want you to just talk about religion. It means an awful lot to you. I know which church you belong to, but I want you to put on tape the things that have happened to you because of your religion. I'll just talk to you about other things that's dealing with other portions of your life and then you can put on tape about religion a little later. I would like to talk to you about the time when we were growing up and going to school down here on the reservation. What can you tell about that, Ethel?

CW: Well, there's some things that wouldn't be too nice to put on tape. Not that they were real bad, but we were full of mischief. You know the things that we've done. So, I don't think we outta go into that. [Laughter]

FW: Well, other people wouldn't know the real joys that we had in doing some of the things that we did. [Laughter] And I think that it's really important to know some of the things that we actually did.

CW: The things that I remember most, that I enjoyed the most. I've been asked since I left the reservation, did I find it a handicap being an Indian. I told 'em no, that I got to go a lot of places that I wouldn't have gotten to gone had I just been Caucasian. I don't remember too many activities under Brother Davis because I was small. But I do remember the plays that he always put on at the end of the

school or at Christmas time. He could've been a Hollywood director. He'd have been a success at that. You know yourself that many of the people that lived off the reservation would come at the end of school and at Christmas time to see the plays and programs that he put on. So that's about all I remember about when he was my schoolteacher because he was my schoolteacher only through the third grade. Under Elder Hayes we got to go to Charlotte. Radio was what TV is to the generation of people today. Do you remember when we went to WBT and WSOX. They took us to the **Mecklen** County Jail on a tour of that. One time, I went down to Columbia to WIS. We went to the State Fair one time. And that one time I was talking to you about the other day, going to Columbia.

FW: That was in Charleston!

CW: That was in Charleston, at the Frances Marion Hotel.

FW: Yes.

CW: We got to go after we put on the program there. We was there for several days. That's the only time I've ever saw the ocean. We went to Follie Beach; I think that's the name of it. Brother Hayes used to take us over to Ms. **Mccune's**. She was the nurse that lived over here at the edge of the reservation, her and Ms. Malone. We used to go over there and pick cotton in the evening after school. I think she done it because she had a love for the Indians. She could've gotten someone to pick that cotton for a lot cheaper than what we done it for. She paid us for picking the cotton, I know she went in the hole on that deal, she paid us for picking cotton. And then after the cotton was picked, in the evening, do you remember she'd have a marshmallow and wiener roast for us?

FW: Yes.

CW: So, I am sure she went in the hole on that deal, but it was her love of the Indians. When she come here—Momma had told me this story—she come here when I was a baby. She was from California. She was a county nurse. And she said that I caught whooping cough when I was about six weeks old. They didn't think I'd live. Dr. Hill told her that "she'd never live," that they'd never raise me. Ms. Mccune was the county nurse and my mother said that when she come out to the reservation, she'd come to see me every so often. The doctor took care of me, too, but he asked her to come out, and she said she always commented on that I was the first little Indian that she had the experience of caring for as a nurse.

FW: She never married, and was she a young woman when she came, or do you know?

CW: I don't know how old she was, but I know when we went over there to pick cotton, I would say, she was in her fifties then. I'm not positive from what I can remember, so that was probably around [19]35 or [19]36, somewhere around there. I would've been around twelve years old at that time.

FW: You mean at the time that you picked the cotton?

CW: Yes, at the time that I picked cotton. So, you could figure old she was when she come here. She was from California originally. Now, where Ms. Malone was from, I don't know, but I know they lived together. You remember that.

FW: I remember them both living there. Neither one of 'em had any people did they?

CW: They were both old maids.

FW: They didn't have any living relatives close by?

CW: Not to my knowledge.

FW: Not to mine either.

CW: Are they both dead now?

FW: Yes.

CW: My memories of my childhood are very pleasant. I know that I wouldn't have got to go to all of those places had I not been an Indian. Do you remember the schools from Rock Hill, that children would come down on special occasions and bring their lunch with 'em. They'd pick out who they wanted to share their lunch with. It was my luck to get stuck with some little ol' ugly boy 'bout every time they'd come.

FW: Well, that happens, too. I remember that, too, real well. There's just so many things that I know you can tell me. And I just don't even know where to really keep going with that. Do you remember us carrying water from the spring? Do you remember us pushing over the toilet because we wanted a new one?

CW: [Laughter] That's what I didn't want to bring up. We done a lot of things. I know we used to get—maybe this shouldn't go on tape—but, **Blanche**, when I was home in [19]72, when dad had his second leg took off, I told her that I had talked to Brother Hayes while I was here. And this is before I went back, I was telling her I called him. She said some things that wasn't very complimentary, which I won't mention. She said that the reason she felt that she did was he had pets and she said they could do anything they wanted, and he wouldn't say nothing. She says it was you talkin' 'bout me and she said it was Daddy and Frances and

she said, "All I had to do was look at him cross-eyed and I'd get punished for it."

But there's a lot of things that you don't stop to remember she'd done.

FW: Well, that's true, and I said to you that there's a lot of things that, to us, it was fun. Do you remember how we stopped all of the girls from playing with all of the boys because we took Wilfred's hat and threw it up in the tree?

CW: Oh Frances, I remember a lot of things that can't go on tape. [Laughter] But some of the things, they weren't bad by today's standards what the kids do, they weren't bad.

FW: No, they were not bad, and you know really, this is some of the things that really need to go on tape. We really need to know—our children need to know the kinds of games we played. What did we have to play with, did we have anything to play with?

CW: My children know everything. I told my mother the other day, I said in days of judgment, nothing will come as a shock to my children. Because, let me tell you, my oldest sister that lives in Colorado, she's altogether a different person than I am. She's more conservative, and she don't tell them anything. Rachel and my mother went out there. Rachel was telling Bonnie something other, and Bonnie told us, "My mother's never told me any of these things." But my kids, they know everything that I done when I was growing up. I don't know, I done it to let 'em know what a choice **heritage**. I didn't realize, you know, yourself, we were Depression children, and Granny Lily lived with the Smokies. We were livin' it up! All the summer that you and I spent up there with her, I tell people that was during the Depression time and that was where all the wealthy people that did

have any money come to. And there we were living it up right in a resort area. And it wasn't until I got older that I realized what a **choice** childhood that I did have. We would go up in the summer and visit my grandmother and the summer that we spent with her, I look back now and I think, well I really didn't know what the Depression was until I left the reservation, and I heard of bread lines and soup lines and things like that. They were really starving, and here we were living it up. You know what a nice—that Mr. Bryson built that rural home that they lived in. And they had that—

FW: Cave where they kept all of their meats.

CW: Yeah, and everything. And we was really livin' it up and we didn't—

FW: We didn't realize there was a Depression goin' on, did we?

CW: No.

FW: Do you remember also the time that you found the cigarette somewhere and we halved that thing and smoked it? [Laughter] You went home first and then I went home. We were both deathly ill.

CW: Where we live now, there's a tree like Doris Blue used to have in her yard.

FW: **Catawba?**

CW: Yes, those old beans we used to cut the ends of them off and smoke 'em. Oh, did my tongue burn. [Laughter] They would burn so. If my kids would've done something like that, I would whip 'em if I caught 'em doing that. You see, they were born and they lived in town, and they didn't have the childhood that I had. Me and Buck, I remember my baby brother, we used to—I would like to see some of it, I haven't saw it since.

FW: Rabbit tobacco?

CW: Rabbit tobacco, is there any around?

FW: Yes.

CW: Me and him, we used to get that and roll it and smoke it just to experiment, I guess. I guess that meant to us what marijuana does to the kids today.

FW: Another thing too, I think, it points that, talking about the cigarettes that you and I halved and smoked. Neither one of us would dare tell our parents what had happened. You came home sick, I went home sick, and automatically I got castor oil because my momma didn't know what was wrong with me. It kind of gives you a hint that even then, our parents lived by the standards of the church because we had to sneak to do that. They would not have approved of any such thing.

CW: I have tasted everything there is once. Just about. You know I married out of the church and my husband smoked and he drank coffee. I didn't know how to make coffee when I married him. He had an electric percolator, and he knew how to make it. Oh, that smelled so good to me. And I still love the smell of coffee.

FW: I do, too, but I don't like to drink it.

CW: I tasted it. I wanted to taste it to see if it tasted as good as it smelled, but it don't. My little grandson, let me tell you about him, Bobby. This has been a couple years ago, and he's been brought up in the same manner that we were brought up in. When you got Latter-day Saints parents, they want you to not do these things. But I guess it's part of growing up. You're curious and you have to find out for yourself. They found a neighbor, only about as far from them as it is from here to the **Samie's** out there. It was a short distance, and he found a full beer can.

And the other little boy, he's not a Mormon, but he opened the beer can, it was one of those **tab affairs**. He opened the tab can, and he tasted it. Bobby, my little grandson, know that we're not supposed to drink those things, but he was curious. So he takes the can and poured some on his finger and then he licks his finger! [Laughter] And his brother, his oldest brother, went home and told on him, and Bobby got a licking.

FW: Well, that's just the reason.

CW: That's human nature.

FW: No different than we were. Of course, with good parents who are really interested, it makes a lot of difference. Especially where the parents don't drink or smoke or do any of those things. Then the child can never use the parents as an excuse for going ahead and doing certain things.

CW: Well, in my case, as I said, I married out of the church and my husband at that time, when the kids were growing up, he wasn't a member of the church. But I'm gonna tell you something other, I started teaching those children the gospel from the time—well, when we were at home. Dale was just wee little, and we'd kneel and pray. Before he couldn't even talk, couldn't say anything, he had to kneel and say his prayer. Even though their dad did smoke and drink coffee, they never, either one, had a desire to do it. Maybe, if we'd had been exposed to it more than what we were when we were growing up—To my knowledge, neither one ever did smoke a cigarette. They weren't as curious. See, they grew up with it, but even though their father done those things, he would've tanned their hides if he'd caught them doing it. They respected their dad for it, and never once did

they throw up to their dad saying, "Well, Daddy, you do that, so why teach us not to do it?" They had, I don't know, they had respect for him.

FW: Well, I think I have found this to be true throughout the whole reservation as I've talked to the people about our age. We were taught, I guess very strictly and especially, we were taught respect for our parents and for old people. I find this everywhere.

CW: Well, that's still having respect for older people. Do you remember Aunt **Betsie** Harris?

FW: Yes, but tell me something about her, so that that'll be on tape that you remember about her.

CW: Well, the first I remember of her, she lived—do you remember **Artie's**?

FW: Down below **Clark's**.

CW: Uh-huh, right down there. Pete was at home with her when I first remembered her. But I don't know what—He went away for a while or something, where did he go?

FW: Did he go to C. C. Camp?

CW: I don't know, but he was gone for a while. That was before he was married, I know. He was in service, I know, but that was after he was married.

FW: Maybe he went to that N. Y. A. camp.

CW: He was gone for a long time, and I remember use to going down, we carry our water from down there. I dearly loved her and I would beg her to come and stay all night with me. She walked with a cane, and she'd come and stay with us at night. I don't know, I grew up with a love and respect for older people which has

stuck with me 'til this day. Where I live now, she died a couple years ago, my neighbor. But I met her the first summer I went to Ohio. She died in [19]72. We had been friends for thirty some years, and even yet, I feel drawn to older people more so than I do people my own age. I think it goes back to my childhood. Aunt **Betsie's** brother, Johnny George, he was always fond of me, and I was fond of him. When we had the old schoolhouse out here, remember when we had cake walks?

FW: Yes.

CW: I can't remember who played the organ or piano, but they had a cake walk. Wesley Harris, Artemis, and Theo's boy was in front of me. And Johnny stood there with a broom holding it up and when whoever—when the piano player stopped—whoever was under the broomstick got the cake. Well, Wesley was right in front of me, and I was under the broomstick. And Johnny said “Johnny George” and Theo got mad and said Wesley was under it. He said that I was Johnny George's favorite and so I got the cake.

FW: Well, that was real good times, wasn't it, a long ago?

CW: I had a choice childhood, and I didn't realize until my children didn't have, you know, the schoolteachers that we had. I went to visit Brother Davis when I was in Salt Lake City. To top off this trip down there, we went to the temple and my second-grade schoolteacher, him and his wife, had to go through with us, so that was a real choice experience.

FW: Well, I will ask you that, what are you doing here in Catawba, Ethel, and when was the last time you've been down here?

CW: Well, I was home in May of [19]72 when my father had his second leg off. I didn't come home when he had it off. My oldest sister, in Colorado, she came home while he was in the hospital. Even though we're sisters, we're different. I knew if I come home when he had his leg off, I wouldn't get to see much of him. He'd be in the hospital, and I'd only get to see him during visiting hours. So, I called my mother and told her I'd wait until he got out of the hospital, and I could spend more time with him. At that time, I come home and stayed ten days with him. Due to ill health, I haven't been able to get home until now. We come down to take my mother and father to the Washington D. C. temple, to have ordinances done that only a Mormon would understand. Plus coming to see him. The ordinance is done, and I'm still here with him, so it was trip to visit my parents but also it was spiritual pilgrimage, too.

FW: How old are your parents, Ethel?

CW: My dad was eighty-two March 11. He was born in 1893. My mother was eighty-two September 22. She was also born in 1893. So, they're both goin' for eighty-three years and they'll soon celebrate their sixty-first anniversary on the twenty-fourth this December.

FW: What kind of games, Ethel, was played when you was growing up?

CW: Oh, you remember when we used to all get in a long line, I don't know what it was called ... whiplash or whip the lash, something or other. The one on the end would get a long—we'd all line up and start running, and the one on the end would go for a ride. And the night before I left for Ohio on May ub 1941, we was playing a game down at the church. It was **MIA**, I can't remember the name of it,

but we'd all stand in a circle with our hands behind us and a hankie—I think it was—or a paper, I can't remember. One would go around the circle and whoever put the paper or hankie in the hand, they would have to chase him and try to catch him. If they could hit him with the object, he would still have to go around and chase 'em until he found somebody that couldn't catch him. That was one of the games. And then there was another game I can't remember. We jumped rope. And then there was another game that we played, we'd all line up and there would be two lines, so many feet apart. And they'd choose one to try and break through. We'd hold hands and they would run and try to break through. I remember that game.

FW: I remember when Brother Davis was here, and it continued on when Brother Hayes was here, too.

CW: At the end of the week, we'd choose sides and we'd have a spell down. A spelling bee, it was called back then. That was the end of the week, it was always on Friday, if my memory serves me correct. It was something that we looked forward to from the first of the week, we knowed what was comin'.

FW: That was sort of competition.

CW: Yeah, it was competition.

FW: I always liked that. I got pretty good on spelling.

CW: Well, he always, I can't remember now just what it was for, but he'd always give prizes for best attendance, best grades. I remember one year, I must've been in the third grade, I can't remember what it was for, whether it was attendance or

grades, but it was a red dress that he give me for some achievement I had made.

And that same year, Samuel, he got a pocketknife.

FW: Was this Brother Davis?

CW: That was Brother Davis.

FW: What was it like at Christmastime and other holidays, Ethel, at your house? Well, whatever it was like at your house, it was like at all of our houses, too.

CW: It was a happy time. Even though we did get gifts, the central things, the programs that Brother Davis put on, Christ was the center of our Christmases. Even though we did have other festivities besides. What stands out in my memory most was the money that was appropriated every year. They set aside so much to buy fruits, candies, nuts, and things for every member of the Tribe. It was usually at the schoolhouse that they would buy all the fruit. I don't know, but they'd buy crates of apples and oranges, and pounds of nuts, and raisins and all kinds of things, bananas.

FW: That was the State of South Carolina that bought all these things was it not?

CW: Yes, you see, it was the Catawba's money. Every year they allotted so much for doctor bills, schools, and all of that. Then they would set aside so much for Christmastime, to buy fruit and candy and nuts for the whole Tribe. Usually, it was at the schoolhouse. They would select members. Well, most of the things that the government in the Tribe, that concern the whole Tribe, governing the Tribe, was usually done by the church leaders.

FW: That's right.

CW: The sisters and brothers that they called in to fill these bags, they'd buy great big paper bags. They would have each family listened and the number in the family. They would fill a bag full of apples, oranges, bananas, candy, nuts, raisins, and each family would get a bag for the number that was in their family. I remember my mother going many a time to help fill these bags at Christmastime. Though my parents provided fruit, candy, and stuff like that for us at home, I think as a child I enjoyed getting that bag from the school.

FW: We were all the same way, just sitting at home waiting for it.

CW: Yes, we were waiting for them to come home with it. But my parents, they always provided a good Christmas for us at home. I can remember my mother decorating at Christmas time, she'd always have these big Christmas paper bells. She'd have four in the living room. Five, she'd our of the same size—

FW: On the corners.

CW: On the corners, and in the center, she would have a great big bell. The tree—not that one—but the tree that stood in there, before our old house burned down, it had mistletoe in it. We had our own mistletoe, and you know, the holly grew wild in the evergreen cedars. Up where we live, they use spruce and things like that, we don't have cedar up there. Our Christmases were very enjoyable. As I told you, they had me speak last Christmas in Sunday School on what Christmas was like as a child. I have shown a couple pieces of my mother's pottery and my grandmother's pottery.

FW: Do you have some of your grandmother's pottery?

CW: Mmhm.

FW: What do you have of hers? Now you are talking about Aunt Wisey or Granny Lily?

CW: Granny Wisey. I've got a little teeny, weeny canoe that my Grandmother Lily made, that's all I've got of hers. But my Grandma Wisey, that died in 1960 at the age of 86, she made me a pair of loving cups, gypsy bowl and two vases and she gave me several other pieces that I gave Buck.

FW: Do you think that it would possible to send me a picture of those things with who made them?

CW: Yes, Dale could take them.

FW: Ethel, what kind of work does your husband do?

CW: He operates a fork-lift tractor. He works in public steel in Massillon, Ohio. That's about twenty-five or thirty miles from where we live. He thinks that the public steel can't operate without him.

FW: Most people that work feel the same way.

CW: Well, he loves his work and therefore, it's not work to him. He started there in January [19]42. I told you we left and went back to Ohio in [19]42, after we were married in December of [19]41. He immediately got employment there. They counted his seniority from [19]42, even though he served three years and three months in World War II.

FW: Have you ever worked, Ethel?

CW: Housework. That's the biggest job there is. [Laughter]

FW: Oh, that's true. What do you think about women who work today, do you think that's a good idea?

CW: I think it's up to the individual. Some women, like I told you in our previous conversation, some can work and find a quality of time to spend with their children. Some women can sit all day in the house with their children and ignore 'em. Some women can go out and work and spend less time with their children, but it's the quality you spend with your children to me that means the most. Although I felt, well you asked me if I ever did work before. After we were married, before he went in the service, I worked in the Five and Ten up where we lived at Christmastime. When I was out in Kansas with him, I worked a little while, while I was out there. I worked two days, I think it was, one in the industrial mills here in Rock Hill, at one of the cotton mills. I worked two days and the noise was too much for me. [Laughter] That was enough for me. I didn't care for that type of work. After we had the children, I never did work. Since they're gone—My son he's got his own apartment now, but he thinks Mama should be home. Well, he comes home every day, sometimes two or three times a day. He never did want me to work; their father didn't want me to work. Even when he was in service overseas, and even though there was about seven or eight hours between the time zones, he could tell just about what his mom was doing and where she was at and everything. I think even after you grow up, you still want to know where mom and dad is.

FW: This is true, quite often when boys come home the first thing they'll say to their daddy, "Where's Mama?" Gary will automatically say, "Well, you're not gonna ask 'Where's Daddy?'"

CW: When my two children were in school, sometimes this elderly neighbor, the one I was telling you about, she and I used to go to Stanley parties and things in the afternoon. Or sometimes we'd go shopping. But I always made it a point to be at home when my children got home from school. This was through kindergarten, grade school, and high school. After my son got up to college—this was about his second or third year in college—one day I went across the holler from where we lived to visit an elderly neighbor. This was through the summer months in between college semesters. He come home and I took my key, and he didn't have his key. I was about five minutes late getting home, so he must've been about twenty or twenty-one years old at that time, and he's never let me forget that to this day, that he come home one day, and Mama wasn't there when he come home. 'Til this day, well, he's thirty-one years old and he'll still won't let me forget he come home one day and Mama wasn't there.

FW: I know that it's the same all over the United States, about this business of our government not being run right, and this drug problem is for real, what are your thoughts on both of those?

CW: I think we have a lot of communists in the government. When they had a Democrat in there, they killed him. We had a Republican in there and they chased him out of office. This boy that we know, this Caucasian back in Philadelphia where I lived, when Kennedy was in there, he didn't approve of him. When Johnson was in there, he didn't approve of him. He didn't approve of Eisenhower. I asked him, I said, "What do you approve of?" I told him he must've been a communist if he didn't approve of either one. It's true that we have

problems in our government. But I still think it's the best country. My son was overseas for four years and he told me he said, "Mother, if all Americans could go overseas and just visit for six weeks," he said, "When they come back to the United States, they wouldn't criticize." He says we do have problems within our country, but he said, "If they could go over there and just visit or live for six weeks, when they come back, they would not complain one bit about America." I told my Bishop this before I come down. Do you know who Paul Harvey is?

FW: Mmhm.

CW: He always, every day, people send in these bumper stickers to him, and he reads the ones that he thinks is the best. I told my Bishop that I could apply this bumper sticker that he read to my life. Someone sent it in to him and it said, "America is not perfect, but she's not through yet." So, I told my Bishop that we as Latter-day Saints could apply that to our lives. We're not perfect, but our mission here is not complete yet. So, I think America is—I'm proud of my heritage. We as Latter-day Saints know the promises that he has in store for us. So, I'm not worried. I know that God directs. We as Latter-day Saints are admonished to study the issues, study the candidates, learn all we can about 'em and then pray about which one to vote for.

FW: That means you do, you do vote?

CW: Yes, I do. The ones who don't vote, complains the most.

FW: That's true.

CW: We vote, because—you know in this book that I was referring to about the Catawbas written by this Summers woman, the Catawbas have fought on the

White man's side in every war, except one. That was when they was fighting with the Tribe, so you can't blame 'em for not wanting to fight their own brothers. So, they had fought on the White man's side ever since the White man come here. I think we Catawbas can be proud of our heritage, that we have helped make America what it is today. She's not perfect, she's got a lot of problems, but I think God has a hand in who our leaders are. It was founded on religious beliefs. I still think that we do have those in our government, trying to overthrow the government. But we know she'll never fall; she'll never be led by kings or dictators. And the drug problem, I think we just hear—and I know there's a lot of it around—about the bad things in the country more than we hear about the good. I'll use my son, for an example, and I'm sure that was multiplied many times across the country during the Vietnam War. All we heard about was the draft dodgers and the ones that wouldn't serve the country, but we didn't hear about the boys who volunteered to give. My son gave five years of his life to his country.

FW: My son gave four.

CW: We never heard nothing 'bout them. It's human nature, it seems, to wanna publish the bad part. I'm sure that there's more kids that aren't on dope, than there is on dope. It is a problem, but I think it is a problem that can be **licked**. Art Linkletter, I admire him. You know, his daughter was a victim of dope. He goes around the country lecturing. I think back when we were growing up, alcohol was the problem, and it's still a problem. I think the parents and adults are more to blame for the dope problem than the teenagers are. Because the pushers are

grown-ups. You take parents, they have alcohol in their homes, yet they don't want their children to go out and experiment with dope. So, they have a double standard. They have a standard for themselves, and they have a different one for their children. If their children go out and experiment with dope and stuff like that, well, a lot of times the parents are really to blame. When they have alcohol sitting in their own cabinet, what can they expect for their children.

FW: That's true. I know that you grew up here on the reservation and you've been gone for a while. What changes have you noticed since you've been gone from here? Do you think we've made progress, in other words?

CW: Yes, I noticed the church. I didn't make it to Sunday School last Sunday because we got back from the Temple in Washington too late. We was too tired to get up, but we didn't want our Sunday morning to go to waste, religious-wise. So, we had family home evening and we were able to make it for the evening service. You got up and you gave a beautiful lesson the previous Sunday, so, I can see that you have grown spiritually in the gospel. Whoever wants these tapes made, maybe they don't want me to express too much about religion, but all that I am, all that my children are, I owe to the church. Without that I don't know what I'd be.

FW: Well, I think that we as a people down here, I think the biggest progress that we've made, we owe to the church.

CW: Everything that I am, I owe to the church. I express that, too. We'd come back from conference one Sunday back in the winter before they split our estate and we just go to Akron now, but we had come back from a conference in Cleveland and we had some time to spend before the evening service and we was in the

mall in the rest area, sitting, waiting for sacrament service. I got to talking to these people that live just above where our ward is. We got to talking and I told her that we were waiting for church service to start, that we'd been to Cleveland that day, which is eighty miles from where we live. I commented to the women I was talking to, and she made the remark that it must've taken a lot of faith to travel that far. I told her that all I was and all I ever hope to be—good, that is—I owe to the Mormon church, the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter-day Saints. And she knew some people that were of the same faith that I was and she said that spoke highly for my religion.

FW: Now, I know you don't know too much about what's going on down here as far as election of new officers, but from what you know, do you think that's a good idea, such as the Chief and Assistant Chief and those?

CW: I'm glad to see it continue on, because I was kinda—when they made us all wards and citizens of the state—I don't know, in some ways it was good, yet I hated to see the traditions that I had known all my life, I thought they had come to an end. But I'm glad to see that they do still have a Chief and officers of the Tribe, I think it's good.

FW: Do you think it's a good idea—We are trying now to get a project started where some of the older people who really know how to make Indian pottery real well. We are trying to form this organization to get them to teach the young people to make pottery. Do you think that's a good idea?

CW: Yes, I do. I wished there was some way that the language that's on record in Pennsylvania where Professor Speck gets recorded there. I've often thought

about, in our paper we've got a column called Hot Line and they'll investigate anything you want 'em to do. I've often thought about writing in to 'em and find out which university it's on record. It would be nice if some of the people could learn it and teach it back to the children. It shouldn't die completely away.

FW: When you're talking about tape, are you talking about the kind of tape that we're using now? That it would be spoken by someone?

CW: Well, after Mr. Speck quit coming down here, there was another man, I can't remember his name. I was about twelve years old, and Aunt Sally Gordon, my mother's aunt, he had one of these tape machines. And that was right after we got electricity down here on the reservation. And the Gordons, where Aunt Sally lived, they didn't have it. So, he brought her to my mother's house—not this present one, the old one burnt down, and they rebuilt this house in [19]47—but he brought her up here to speak in Indian language and he would play the tape back to her and he'd have her to translate it to English. So, whether the tapes that she made are still available, I don't know.

FW: Well, do you think it would be asking too much, if you—when you got back to your home—would get in touch with the Hot Line and see what they could find out for us?

CW: Yes, I would.

FW: That would be really appreciative. Another thing that I don't really need to ask you because I know that you're proud you're any Indian. But I'll ask it anyway. From the things you already told me, I know that you are. And if you would, I'd

like for you to do a complete tape from the time that you first knew about religion and how it's affected you, if you would do that for me?

CW: Well that goes back to the time I can remember.

FW: This is exactly what I want.

CW: I told my mother—I went to church before I was born. My mother took me to church before I was born. I tell people, especially in our church, where most of 'em are converts, and I realize, and I don't know whether you do or not, how many missionaries do you have here? Working and laboring in this area?

FW: You mean in Catawba?

CW: Yes.

FW: And it's just part-time, too?

CW: We've got ten in our area and there's two more to come in. Since I've been up there in Ohio and been in contact with so many missionaries, I compare. I don't let them know it, but I learn all I can about their background, where they were born in the West where there was more Mormons. I literally grew up not knowing there were anything else but Mormons 'til I got into high school.

FW: I'm the same way.

CW: The Mormon missionaries from the West can't believe that. I tell about Elder Davis and Sister Davis, they laid a field of mission back in their home state. I tell them 'bout Brother Hayes being a state patriarch. When me and my husband went through the temple in [19]71, there was a boy back home who was my son's age and he wanted to know about our trip to the temple. Well, you know that there's certain ordinances—not that we do anything in the temple that we're

ashamed of, but the ordinances are sacred, and certain ordinances we're not allowed to discuss. So, he started to question me about what had took place. I told him as much as I could, and he kept asking questions that I could not divulge the answers to him. Not because there anything we was ashamed of, but because they're sacred. So, when I clammed up, he said to me, "Sister Warner, I know why you won't tell me anymore. You saw an angel while you was in the temple." I wouldn't even answer that. So, I told my husband, "If Darrel goes through and he don't see an angel, he'll think he wasn't worthy to go through." So after I come home, see my Bishop knows Brother Hayes, our former schoolteacher. So, since I come home, Louise told me. I hadn't saw Brother Hayes since 1941. I had talked to him by phone on previous trips home. But Louise, my cousin, told me she said "Ethel, when you see Brother Hayes with that white hair, he looks just like an angel." So, the other day we had the privilege. He went through with my husband and father. His wife went through with us. I told Brother Hayes what this boy had said to me back home and I told him what Louise had told me. So, I told him when I go home, I'm gonna tell Darrell that this time when I went through the temple, I did see an angel and he accompanied me through the temple. Imma tell him that this angel had a wife with him, though. So, he'll be surprised to hear that angels have wives. Brother Hayes laughed about it and he was so happy to go through with us, Frances. He was so overcome that he could hardly get his breath. He put his arms around me, and I told him, I said because he knew how ornery I was when I was in school, I said, "Brother Hayes, you didn't think I'd ever make it, did you?" He was

so short of breath, he was so overcome with emotion, he said, [whispers] "Ethel, I suspected this." He was so happy.

FW: Well, I can imagine because you know he had the kind of love for Gary that very few men have for anybody. If there was ever a pick, Gary was the pick.

CW: Well, I felt special to him.

FW: I felt special too. You could feel that between him and Gary. He would have done anything, I guess, because Gary had even less than either one of us had.

CW: Yes.

FW: He told Gary when he gave him his patriarchal blessing, he said, "Now, I want you to do something about it." He said, "I've prayed for the day when you would go this far" and he wanted him to go farther.

CW: Well, let me tell you something. **Otsie** said he heard Brother Hayes overtelling someone in the Temple—see they must've signed 'em, it's just like any other calling, they're called so long to work in the temple. I don't know how long he's been, but apparently, my bishop told me he's seen him up there quite often. See, my bishop used to live in Charlotte, and he give my bishop's eldest son his blessing. And my bishop's been telling me about seeing him there, but Otsie overheard him telling someone the other day that he had about a year to go into the Washington Temple. See, no assignment's permanent in the church except the general authorities. Their callings are permanent. So, it would be nice if as many of them—because he told me about the **system about** going through with **Peggy Thatcher's**—

FW: Vicky when she got married.

CW: Yes, and he was so thrilled to be able to go into the ceiling room with me and my parents. I hope that many of the people from down here in Catawba can go through while he's in this calling. It would make him, not only him but our heavenly father so happy. Because he knows, I don't know whether you ever did or not, but I sat down and I wrote him and Elder Davis—after going through the Temple in [19]71—I sat down and wrote them both letters thanking them for all that they had done for me. The older I get I realize what an important part of my life they were. They helped form what I am. I told Elder Hayes the other day, "All that I am that's good, I owe a great portion of that to you."

FW: Well, Ethel, I've really enjoyed talking to you. It just seems like I could go on and on and on but I guess all good things have to come to an end. You don't have any objections to the University of Florida using this tape?

CW: No.

FW: I'm going to let you do one other tape for me, if you would. I would like for you to tell me all about the religion that means more to you than anything else in this world. Plus, I would like for you to tell me about some of those things that you told me about on the phone. You know, as we were talking about our ancestors and where they came from. You know you were talking about your daddy's mother and where they came from in Georgia and about how Anthony George and all of those. The kin that they were. Would you do that for me?

CW: Now?

FW: No, not now, but I will leave the tape for you to do.

CW: While I'm down here this time?

FW: Yes.

CW: I don't know whether I'll be able to. Dale's got a tape recorder, Frances, I could do that after I go. You see, I'm going down tonight. I had an appointment with **Major** last Monday night.

FW: Oh yes, I knew you said you did.

CW: I had an appointment with him to get my father's genealogy. As I told you I've written and written and written, but it has been to no avail. So, while I'm here I'm gonna get as much as I can on that. That's tonight I have to do that. Tomorrow we've gotta go into town. We had one of our tires to go bad on us while we were comin' from Washington. And I promised Gwenn. Did you know Gwenn's in the hospital?

FW: Gwenn Beck?

CW: Uh-huh.

FW: No.

CW: I promised her I'd come up there yesterday to see her. Gene's in the hospital, and I never got up to Charlotte to see him. Well, I've only got two more days here.

FW: I would be appreciative if you would do a tape once you've got home and interview for me your daughter and your son. Because I would like for them to be part of this history. This history in the making. I would just like to describe you with your help, Ethel. How tall are you?

CW: I'm about five-one.

FW: How much do you weigh?

CW: One hundred and thirty-five.

FW: Ethel has—her hair was at one time, completely black, and that's, like all the rest of us, is tinged with the gray that automatically comes. She's got big brown eyes and she's not really dark-skinned, she's not really fair-skinned. She has this beautiful, olive complexion. And she, I feel like, is a real credit to the Catawba reservation, where even though she lives many hundred miles away, I think that she represents us well.

[End of interview]

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