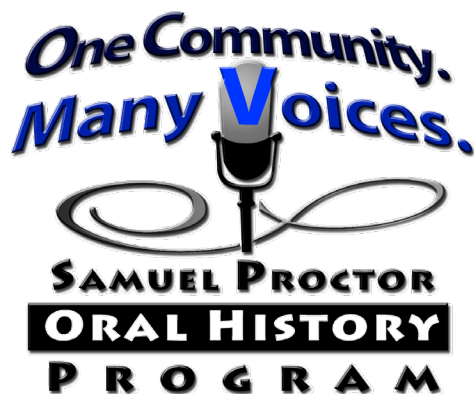


Elizabeth Laverne Sharpe Blue

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-103**

Interview by:

**Edith Frances Canty Wade
November 18, 1974**



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CAT 103 Elizabeth Laverne Sharpe Blue
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols on November 18, 1974
10 minutes | 9 pages

Abstract: Elizabeth Blue describes her immersion in the Catawba community after marrying the grandson of Chief Samuel Blue. She goes into detail on how her and her husband, Gilbert Blue, met. Elizabeth talks about her children as well as her participation in local church and her quilting with the Relief Society. She describes what her and her family do in leisure time and vacation time.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Family histories; Religion]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
P R O G R A M
University of Florida

CAT 103

Interviewee: Elizabeth Laverne Sharpe Blue

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: November 18, 1974

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Rock Hill, South Carolina. Route 6, Box 260. And I'm recording the Oral History of the Catawba Indians. I'm visiting in the home of Mrs. Gilbert Blue, and this is November 18, 1974. Mrs. Blue, what is your full name?

B: Elizabeth Laverne. Blue.

E: And you were, before you married, what was your maiden name?

B: Sharpe.

E: Sharpe. And where did you live before you were married?

B: Chester, South Carolina.

E: Now, that wasn't very far distance from here, and, well, it's a good little distance to meet your husband. How did you happen to meet Gilbert?

B: At a square dance, he used to play music there, he had his own band. I been in there.

E: Were you in high school at that time?

B: No, I had graduated from high school.

E: And you and your girlfriends, or boyfriends too, would go to this square dances to dance, right?

B: Yes.

E: Did you dance with Gilbert? Or did you just enjoy hearing him play in the band?

B: Well, maybe we might get to dance one dance together, but most of the time he had to play.

E: Then, how long after you met him were you married?

B: Well, we dated a couple of months, then we broke up for two months, and we got married in October, so it was about, we dated about nine months, I guess.

E: And you were married in October, what year?

B: 1963.

E: 1963. Now, I must tell you that Gilbert and Elizabeth live in one of the nicest homes in the whole section down here. They're not down on the reservation, but they're nearer Rock Hill. Elizabeth, what is your address?

B: Route 3.

E: Route 3, you have a box number?

B: 395.

E: And her husband, Gilbert Blue, is now the Chieftain of the Catawba Indians. But of course, I'm interested in Elizabeth and what she has done, and the adjustments that you have made, Elizabeth, in this community. When you came as a White girl, marrying a full-blooded Indian, how did people in this community accept you?

[Break in recording]

E: Elizabeth, when you married Gilbert, and came to this community, you were a White girl and married an Indian. How did the people in this community accept you?

B: Well, I'm a very shy person, but everybody really made me feel welcome, you know, and never said anything about, you know me being White. I guess they, now they, I guess, I feel like an Indian myself. You know, one of them.

[Laughter]

E: You fitted into the community, you've gone to the church regularly, and you've entered into all the activities. You have ...

B: Yes.

E: Your husband has been so active in it, I'm sure you've gone to places with him. Then, where did you first live when you came to the reservation?

B: When we first got married, we lived in Chester, 'cause I worked, and we lived there until I got pregnant, and we moved here, and we've been living here ever since.

E: Now, when did you buy this home?

B: I think we've been here five years.

E: And this is a lovely home, a lovely brick home, one of the very nicest in the community. We're just so glad for you, to have a home like this. What work is Gilbert in now?

B: He's a machinist.

E: He works in Charlotte, or works here?

B: General Tire and Rubber Company, in Charlotte.

E: So, what time does he have to leave in the morning?

B: He leaves, he has to be at work at eight.

E: The he gets home around five in the afternoon?

B: 4:30, yeah.

E: And so, you are home all day, and you have to the three children to look after when they come home from school, and so forth, is that right?

B: Yes, uh-huh.

E: Do you have a car of your own?

B: Yes.

E: And now, are you working anywhere now?

B: No.

E: What kind of work did you do before your marriage?

B: I just worked in a mill, inspected cloth, that was all I've ever done.

E: Your three children, all three of them, look like their father, they look like real little Indians, will—are you glad about that?

B: Yes.

E: The women down here are interested in pottery making, and your little girl, of course, wants to do so too. Are you, as a mother, interested in that kind of thing too?

B: Yes, I'd love to do it. I'm here, you know, by myself. I was talking to my husband, you know, I would love to learn to do something to occupy my time, you know, I'm here all day by myself and I would love to learn how to do it.

E: Are you impressed in your church, and in your Catawba Indian community, that these people do for themselves, and they don't ask for outside help, or ask for charity?

B: Oh, our church has a welfare program. In our church, it teaches us to, you know, to do for ourselves.

E: You think that's worthwhile, do you?

B: Yes, uh-huh.

E: What vacation do you have with your husband, do you go to Cherokee and [inaudible 5:05] what did you do?

B: Yes, we used to go up there once a year. First time we ever went there, you know, the kids, they were scared of those Indians, you know. And I said, "Well they're just like you, you know, you all are Indians". But they couldn't understand, you know, that they were Indians too.

E: Do you have a lot of friends up there, at this time, in Cherokee? Gilbert would probably know people.

B: He would, he knows some, yeah.

E: What other things do you do for recreation with your family?

B: We like to bowl, and the kids like to go, just go down to the reservation and walk through the woods. I like to do that too. [Laughter]

E: Do you have picnics for the children?

B: Yes, uh-huh.

E: And do they still have square dances here for the Indian young people?

B: We used to have one about every month, but our church, our schoolhouse is sort of run down, and it needs works, so we hadn't had one in a while.

E: And it'd be difficult to heat that school building in the wintertime, wouldn't it?

B: Yes, uh-huh.

E: And do you have any other place for recreation except the church and school areas?

B: No.

E: Nothing, no place down on the river where you could take the children?

B: No.

[Break in recording]

E: Elizabeth, who is the bishop of your church here now?

B: Bishop Osborne.

E: He's been here a number of years, hasn't he?

B: Yes.

E: Now, I know you are active in the church. Tell me what things you do in the church?

B: Uh, we have what we call prime areas for children from age three to twelve, and I teach the nine-year-old children. And Relief Society, it's for the women, I'm the secretary in it.

E: Do you have good literature to help you in teaching those children?

B: Yes, uh huh.

E: Now, I guess it's published in Utah?

B: Yes, uh huh.

E: In Salt Lake City, Utah. And, um, usually how many children will you have in your little class?

B: I have eight on my row.

E: That's good. Then, do those children also, are they taught in any other place besides that? Your religion?

B: Um, we have seminary.

E: Yes, that's what I was asking.

B: For the young people.

E: Now, who teaches that this year?

B: Sister Frances **Late**.

E: And they always enjoy that. Now your little boy, he's in the fourth grade, is he in that too?

B: No, uh, I believe he will start when you're twelve, I'm not sure but I believe it's twelve years of age.

E: They all seem to enjoy it, and you, will you want your little boy to go there? I'm sure you do.

B: Yes, uh-huh.

E: And you hope that your children will be able to go through school and through high school here, right here?

B: Yes.

E: Did you notice any difference at all in the way the White children teach the Indian, treat the Indian children? Are they ...

B: No, I don't.

E: Your children have friends of—with other children in the community, do they not?

B: Yes, uh-huh.

E: In other words, you are verry happy in this community, you are happy you married a Catawba Indian, aren't you?

B: Yes.

E: And are you picking up some of the old stories, and old traditions to make you really proud to be in an Indian family?

B: Well, I don't know much. [Laughter] Just a little bit, you know, when Gilbert interviews somebody, I happen to sit in and, you know, listen to what he says.

E: Well, I'm sure you pick up a lot from Gilbert as he does, and he's so active, and I'm interested in your plan that you would like to take lessons and learn how to make pottery so that you can help your little girl make pottery. That's very fine of you. Thank you.

B: You know, in Relief Society, I've learned how to quilt, and I've really enjoyed it, you know, I've never done anything like that, but we've made, lately, we've made six quilts for this one woman, and now we're on the seventh one, and it's a queen size.

E: And who's making these, who is making these quilts, and where are you making them?

B: Relief Society sisters are making them for, well, whoever gives an order to make them.

E: And you make them, do you meet in the church to do that?

B: In the, the schoolhouse, it's a part of the schoolhouse.

E: But now, what do you charge to quilt a quilt like that?

B: It depends on how fancy it is. This one that we made, it was real fancy, it's the prettiest one I've ever seen. It had daisies, I guess you'd call it. And we charged, I believe, seventy-five dollars for it.

E: I bet it was a beautiful one.

B: It was. It took us over two weeks, I know it took sewing on it about every day we sewed a little, you know, sewed a little here and there.

E: Now that money you make in quilting is put into your Relief Society for funds for anyone who need some?

B: Yes.

E: That's a very worthy cause.

B: Yes.

[End of Interview]

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