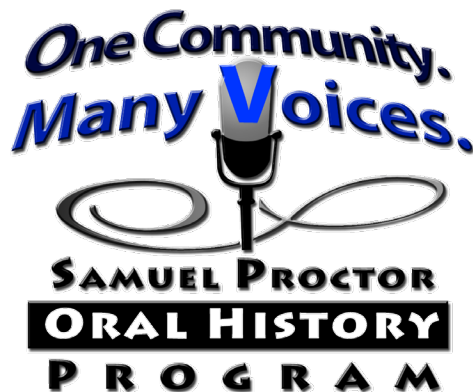


Lavinia Alberta Canty Ferrell

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-122**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
September 30, 1975**



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Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols on September 30, 1975
5 minutes | 4 pages

Abstract: Alberta Ferrell reflects on her and her children's participation in the Catawba pageant at Winthrop College. She sings an Indian love song that was taught to her by Chief Blue, although she does not remember the song's meaning. She states that at the time that she learned it, some of the other Catawba knew the song, but she thinks most have forgotten it by now. She ends by explaining her children's experiences making pottery.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; Chief Samuel Taylor Blue; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Singing; Indigenous languages]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
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University of Florida

CAT 122

Interviewee: Lavinia Alberta Canty Ferrell

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: September 30, 1975

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Route 6, Box 260, Rock Hill, South Carolina, September 30, 1975. I am recording the oral history of the Catawba Indians. I am visiting in the home of Ms. Alberta Ferrell. Her two daughters are here, and I well remember that this family took part in the Catawba pageant that was given in Winthrop College. Mrs. Ferrell walked across the stage. I well remember how very graceful she was with all of her children following behind her. She and the children were dressed in what was considered Indian costumes; she'll tell you more about that. She carried a basket—a big basket of sticks on her head, and each one of her children carried sticks, as if they would have been in the forest gathering these sticks; but I'll ask Ms. Ferrell to tell you more about that. Alberta, how many of your children were with you at that time?

F: All four.

E: And what were their names?

F: Marcia, Denise, Lorna, and Kevin.

E: Now, Marcia, who was at school at Northside at that time, was in the third grade, and your youngest one was little Kevin, and he would be about how old? About four or five?

F: No, I think he was about three or four.

E: Very small. You were made up to look the part of Indians, and I believe your girls were dressed in the traditional Catawba Indian costumes. Is that right?

F: Yes, ma'am.

E: They made you a little bit fancier; you were not dressed that way, were you?

F: No, ma'am.

E: You had long black hair, and they didn't have to darken your hair or spray your hair—is that correct?

F: That's correct.

E: But what did they do to the hair of your girls?

F: They had to spray on the girls' hair. They had to put costume paint on all of the girls—on their faces, their arms, and everything.

E: Now, what about little Kevin? What did he wear, do you remember?

F: He wore the little flap like the Indian men wore. His top was bare. He wore a headband with feathers in it.

E: Did the girls wear headbands with feathers, too?

F: Yes, ma'am.

E: What did they wear on their feet? Do you remember?

F: Nothing. I believe they were barefooted.

E: Now, you had been out to the forest to gather sticks presumably; and each one, while you were coming home with a load of sticks to use for firewood that winter, you sang a song. Now, I believe you can repeat that song now, in a moment or two, maybe you can tell us what it meant. Will you—the three of you—sing that song? Well, first of all, let's see, who is singing with you today? That'd be your daughters.

F: Marcia, Denise, and myself.

E: All right, good. Now, if you will sing the song for us now.

F: And the song is [Catawba Song Name 3:01], and it's an Indian love song.

[Singing Catawba song 3:06 – 3:38]

E: Now, can you tell us what the words meant? That was a lovely song—what did it mean?

F: I don't remember what all the words mean.

E: Do you know any of 'em?

F: All I know, it's an Indian love song.

E: Now, that you had heard for years. Had your mother and father taught you to sing that one?

F: Chief Blue.

E: Chief Blue taught you to sing that—well, that is most interesting. Now, did you know that, or did other Indians in the Tribe know that, too?

F: Some of the others knew it, but most—I imagine most of 'em have forgotten it by now.

E: Did you ever write the Indian language?

F: No, ma'am.

E: When Marcia was in my third grade, she wrote her name in the Indian language for me, and I was surprised a little third-grade child could do that. She never sang for me, but she made—in the third grade, she made pottery for me. I have a little boat that she made. Now, what ones of your family have continued making pottery?

F: Well, Denise can make some. Lorna can make some pottery. Lorna's husband, he makes pottery. Kevin is learning how to make it, which he don't like to fool with it; he says that it's a woman's job, not for men. Marcia can make **do**.

E: Yes, Marcia does. You have not been making any recently because you've been working on a job, haven't you?

F: And before then, I was sick so long, so I haven't made any pottery in about two years.

E: Do you know whether the Indians from the reservation are selling much pottery now?

F: I don't know on that mark.

E: Well, I hope that that can be developed because your youngsters are so talented.

[End of interview]

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