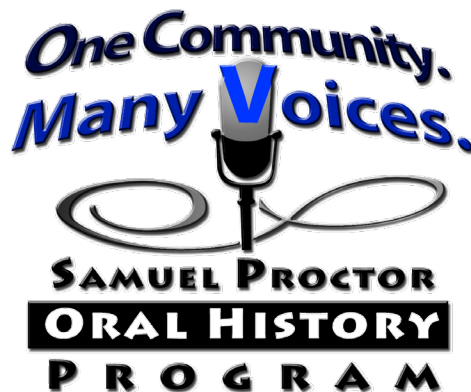


# **Recording of Pottery Exhibition**

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)  
CAT-124**

**Interview by:**

**Emma Reid Echols  
October 17, 1975**



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**CAT 124 Pottery Exhibition**  
**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)**  
**Interview by Emma Reid Echols and Edith Frances Canty Wade on**  
**October 17, 1975**  
**15 minutes | 10 pages**

**Abstract:** A pottery exhibit coordinated by the South Carolina Arts Council is described by Emma Echols, who attended along with Frances Canty Wade. Women of the Catawba Tribe brought pottery to show with the hope that it will be purchased and exhibited state-wide in a tour of South Carolina, alongside two other exhibits that include Gullah craftsmanship and South Carolinian basketwork.

**Keywords:** [Catawba Nation; Chief Gilbert Blue; David Furscott; Doris Bullock Blue; Nola Louella Harris Campbell; Isabel Harris George; Sherry Wade Osborne; Edna Wheelock Brown; Edith Bertha Harris Brown; Arzada Sanders; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Pottery; Communities]

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

CAT 124

Title: Recording of Pottery Exhibition

Interviewers: Emma Reid Echols and Edith Frances Canty Wade

Date of Recording: October 17, 1975

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Route 6, Box 260, Rock Hill, South Carolina. This is October 17, 1975. I am recording the oral history of the Catawba Indians.

U: We have a wonderful display of Catawba pottery here, and of course we want to welcome David from the South Carolina Arts Commission and those people with him. Since most of us are church-connected here, I would like to give a word of prayer. If you would before we get started, just bow your heads please. [Recording starts] Our heavenly father, as we come before thee this night and displaying of the Catawba pottery, we humbly ask that thy spirit be in our mist. That we will be able to conduct ourselves in a manner pleasing and acceptable to thee. We are thankful for the skills of these ladies, that have made this craft. That they will be able to be blessed with health and strength and continue this type of activity that they are doing and be able to teach it to the younger people of the Tribe so that it will be preserved. We ask thee now to guide us and watch over us and direct us in the activities that those things that will be done will be honest and upstanding and will be beneficial for the Tribe. We ask you now to be with us as we do in the name of our son, Jesus Christ. Amen. Now David, do you want to just pick them all this year or do you want to us to maybe get a certain one. How do you want us to work? Frances, do you have a comment?

FW: Yes, since we're putting this on tape, I would like for all of the visitors to make themselves known and their positions. We will start with you David, since you got this whole thing started for them. [Laughter]

DF: David Furscott, and I am the director for the Contemporary Arts Division with the South Carolina Arts Commission. Should I introduce the people I brought?

E: Yes, and their positions, also.

DF: Betty Meyers, who is the—what is your official title?

BM: Museum programs coordinator.

DF: Laura Meyers is my assistant museum programs coordinator.

SR: No relation.

DF: No, no relation. And these ladies will be charged with putting the exhibit together when we have purchased all the pieces here and other things we are going to put on exhibit.

DF: Steve, how about you coming over and introduce yourself?

SR: I am Stephen Richman, field representative with the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. Working out of Washington but living in Cherokee, North Carolina. It's good to be here.

E: I am a visitor tonight. I am Emma Reid Echols and I have lots of friends down on the reservation and I have been recording some of their history. I am very proud of what they're doing.

FW: Right now, I would like for all of the ladies who have pottery here to give your names. I know you, but I want the other people to know of you. I would like for you to talk loud, because I am afraid we might not pick up. All right, we will start here and just go around.

DB: Doris Blue.

E: Doris, how long have you been making pottery?

DB: About twenty-five years.

NC: I am Nola Campbell.

E: How long have you been making pottery, Nola?

NC: Since I was almost twelve years old.

E: And how long has that been? [Laughter]

U: She doesn't wanna tell you!

E: No, it doesn't matter!

NC: I do not want to tell you.

E: Nola, it does not matter, I cannot sing.

NC: Well, that is all right.

E: Did you teach yourself?

NC: About forty years or so ago.

E: All right, next?

G: Isabelle George.

E: How long have you been making pottery?

G: I don't know.

E: Next?

SO: Sherry Osborne.

E: How long have you been making pottery?

SO: Two years.

EB1: Edna Brown, I been making it since I was about twelve.

EB2: Edith Brown, I been making it since I been about twenty-five years and I'm eighty-three in June.

E: And she is the oldest living Catawba Indian woman. Now, Arzada, can you talk louder for us to hear you because we want you on tape. Just go ahead, I think we can hear you.

AS: I am Arzada Sanders. I have been making pottery since I was three years old.

E: That's been a long time. How old are you now?

AS: Eighty years old.

E: So, we have many years of pottery making here in this little room tonight. Plus, we have several other young people and not so young people in our midst tonight. This is the first time actually in several years that we have tried to do anything as a group. We are hoping that it will be a real success. David I would like for you to just tell us, before we really get into it, what you're planning to do with pottery that you might get here tonight.

DF: I hope there isn't a "might" to it. [Laughter]

E: Well then, you are "going to get," I'll rephrase.

DF: I'll take it from the top because there's people who weren't here last time. When I came up about a month and a half ago, I explained to those people who were present at the church that day, that the South Carolina Arts Commission applied for a special grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington to display folk art in South Carolina by South Carolinians. This exhibit is going to have three parts to it. The two that I consider the most important parts are centered around craft forms that are done only in this state by people whose backgrounds originated in this area: the Catawba pottery and the Gullah basket weaving which is done on the coast. The third point of the exhibits is going to be

general folk crafts, including some quilts and pine needle basketwork and stuff like that. Sort of a general part of the exhibit. These pieces that we will be purchasing this evening will go into one section of this exhibit, and this exhibit— Betty and Laura Meyers will both be exhibit coordinators. They are going to be putting this into a display format that will explain how the pottery is done. It will be taken through different towns in South Carolina for a month-long exhibit period. We will have the exhibit forever and it will be used to promote the pottery, either with the other two portions of the exhibit or by itself. There is another part to this particular grant that we received. That is the idea that people who are willing, that are purchased from this group, and we are able to afford, we have a certain amount of workshops that we plan on giving along with the pottery exhibits. So, that one person each month, I believe, if my memory serves me correctly, will be able to go to the site of the exhibit and display how it is done and talk to the people there for a day, preferably, probably on the evening the exhibit opens. This will allow, not only people to be exposed to Catawba pottery and read about how it's made but to also be exposed to a Catawba potter, who can explain how the work is done, and show them how it's done, or at least show them part of how it's done. The general idea is it's very important to promote work done by craftsmen in this state, but it is particularly important to promote work done by craftsmen in this state that is not done anywhere else. It is part of our heritage, and it fits right into the bicentennial year. The way it's going to be picked—this is something that I think is gonna be important. First of all, before you even get into that, the idea that so many people contributed to this, and

brought their pottery in, I think the fact that this has happened thus far, this is a real good thing. I think you said this is the first time this much has been assembled in one place at one time.

E: Well, these particular things, yes.

DF: So, that I think it is well worthwhile, myself. I think the idea at this point would be for those people who are making the pottery to make some suggestions about the kinds of things we should purchase. Not so much right now in terms of particular pieces, but examples of work. We are looking for things that are representative of the Catawba people, first of all. Representative of the kind of work they do and have done traditionally. Things we also have to take into consideration, hopefully the best designs of the particular types of work that are represented. And also, what is travelable, what can be taken from place to place without being endangered of being broken. It's difficult, as you know, to transport pottery from place to place anyway, and it's going to be more difficult because these will be exposed to—

SR: Moved around quite frequently.

DF: So those are the considerations. The primary consideration that we are asking the potters themselves to make, is to make some initial decisions about the kinds of things they feel ought to represent them in this exhibit. Then, at that point, hopefully between Betty and Laura Meyer, Mr. Richman and myself, we will be able to make some choices that will be exhibitable. I do have actual cash here.

[Laughter]

E: All right.



DF: I will have to, by the way, when we get to that point, make out some sort of a receipt so we know exactly who we purchased what pieces from. This money is signed out in my name to make sure that it is dispersed properly in return.

U: Yes, we have to deal with that thing.

FW: I think that to begin with, since we have not done this type of thing before, I would ask each one of the people who have made pottery here tonight, and brought pottery, that they should come and pick out one piece of pottery to pick out one piece that you think would represent the Catawba. Then you don't have to buy that particular thing, but it's what we think is the best piece of pottery that we would like to have on display.

DF: Can I make a suggestion about your tape recorder?

FW: Yes, yes.

DF: I think that might just pick up sound no matter where it is, and if we can try and see if it does do that, then we can just leave it in one place, and if that's the case then we won't have to be like—

FW: Well, we're not gonna move it around anyway. I'm just gonna leave it sitting here, and hopefully everybody will talk loud enough to hear what's goin' on.

U2: I wanna get out of the way.

FW: Would all of you ladies who have made pottery and brought some here tonight, would just pick one pot that you think would represent you well throughout the state.

U3: I think one thing these ladies really shouldn't be ashamed of, we're trying to get arts and crafts started at the reservation and looking at the people who are here

and their age, I don't think they should be ashamed of it because we're trying to make it known that you are old and we're trying to get young people involved.

Unless you tell us your age, people are not gonna believe us if you're seventy-five and eighty and there's nobody younger making pottery.

U4: [inaudible 10:49]

U3: **Won't you see to that! Doris** is really the youngest one we have, and **Aunt Edith** is the oldest at eighty-four. And you start comparing age, you start comparing generations.

FW: Well, that gives an idea of how long the pottery business has been going. Would you, young ladies, all of you young ladies, please get up—

U5: Y'all can **choose** your own if you want—

FW: — And if you think yours is the best, pick yours!

U5: If you wanna choose your own, if you think that you've made the best, **then pick out one of yours that you've made.** Don't be ashamed **if yours is good work pick it out and bring it over if that's what you think** would be best.

[Break in recording]

E: This is Emma Reid Echols. I am recording my personal impressions of my visit to the Pottery Display on October 17, 1975, held on the Catawba Indian Reservation. Many careful plans have been made for this, the first display of Catawba pottery on the Indian reservation. The people have been most cooperative, only the weather did not cooperate. The winds and heavy rains left broken limbs along the road and the ditches were filled with water, making travel difficult. Even at seven o'clock, it was a dark and lonesome road from my

home to the reservation, but I found lights were on everywhere. The exhibit was scheduled to be held in the schoolhouse, but there, a group of young people under the direction of Bishop Osborn were planning a spaghetti supper. The church, too, was well lighted as some persons were there cleaning. The large trailer used by Mrs. Francis Wade, coordinator of Indian Affairs, was filled with pottery makers and other interested Indians. Each woman chose her best pieces to be placed on a table at the back of the trailer to be purchased by the University of South Carolina representatives. As I watched the faces of the pottery makers, there was a glow of achievement, pride, and serenity easily noted on their faces. All were senior citizens, sixty to eighty-four years of age with one exception: Sherry Osborn. So, one entire generation has failed to show the industry, patience and talent to make the pottery as their mothers have done. The young men had gone to bring these elderly ladies here. Gilbert Blue, the Chieftain, had crossed a little stream along a narrow dirt road to bring his aunt, Edith Brown, aged eighty-four, the oldest one. Red Sanders from Charlotte had made a special trip to bring his mother, Mrs. Arzada Sanders, and her box of carefully wrapped pottery. He had also gone across the river to dig the clay for this pottery last summer. So, there was zeal, pride and enthusiasm on the part of these sons and daughters of the pottery makers. As I started to leave, a group of children, young people, came tramping in, curious to know exactly what was going on and to see the pottery. But this pottery was not made by their mothers, but by their grandmothers and great aunts. Are they interested in learning this ancient art? One generation has not. Will they keep alive the traditions of the past, and by

industry and patience learn pottery making now before it is too late? A new door has been opened because of the interest at the University of South Carolina, a government grant and the possibility of demonstrations and sales of their pottery.

What does the future hold for the Catawba pottery makers? Only time will tell.

[End of Interview]

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