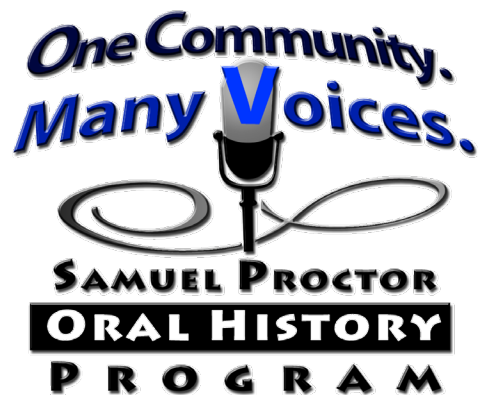


Herbert Blue

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-011**

Interview by:

**Jerry Lee
December 26, 1971**



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1 hour, 13 minutes | 26 pages

Abstract: Herbert Blue speaks about his early life on the Catawba reservation and later years in Rock Hill. He discusses the different schools in the area and the role of federal agents. He shares stories about his father, Chief Samuel Taylor Blue, who was the last person to speak the Catawba language. He recalls some of the Mormon elders who came to the reservation. He also speaks about his grandmother's family and shares a quick story about the relationship between the Catawba and the Cherokee.

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

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
PROGRAM
University of Florida

CAT 011

Interviewee: Herbert Blue

Interviewer: Jerry Lee

Date of Interview: December 26, 1971

L: Well, I'm Jerry Lee, and I'm sittin' in the living room of Mr. Herbert Blue. What is your full name, sir?

B: It's Herbert Blue. That's all **you get**.

L: No middle name. [Laughter] How old are you, sir?

B: Seventy-three.

L: Seventy-three. And what part Indian are you?

B: About three-fourths.

L: Three-fourths Indian?

B: Yeah.

L: Have you always lived around here?

B: Always lived here. And born over there in the little reservation, out on the Catawba reservation, where I spent the early part of my life. About 17—well it was 1917, I come to Rock Hill, went to work.

L: Where did you go to work?

B: Anniston Motor Company. They used to make Anniston cars, yeah. And I worked in the Anniston Motor Company. And I quit that, and I went in the cotton mill. I worked in the Highland Park Mill in the dye department. That's when I got married, and the girl I married, of course, was a White girl. Stayed about thirteen years. Our children were born out there. In later years, I left them and went, was building the foundations of the dam over there [inaudible 01:39] I worked over there for a while, building houses and a railway system **over where Morrison lives now**. We built a bunch of shacks up in there. Then after that, I come back

and went back in the mill for a while. And the mill went to running bad, and I quit, went to work at the bleachery. And I stayed there thirty-three years and eight months, until I retired, and I've been doing nothing ever since. [Laughter]

L: That's pretty good. Was this ever part of the reservation?

B: Oh, this is a part of the new land the state bought for the Indians that they might—rehabilitating it, that's what they promised to do, rehabilitate and give it a better chance to improve upon a way of life. But they never did do very much about it. We couldn't watch or do anything without the say-so of a government agent. **Main point**, I guess, on the reservation are always having our own ideas, own thoughts, and different plans, so we were dissatisfied with it. The way they wanted it, they had the say-so—whatever the Congress, the government, give 'em the privilege to spend whatever money may come in their hands for the Indians, use it the way they want it. Some of the money we supposed to get, went to Cherokee. We never did get it. So, we understood there's a lot of things that happened or didn't please us, so we just asked to be—get out from the federal government, become citizens like everybody else. Of course, the federal government always recognized us as citizens, but the state of South Carolina only recognized us as wards of the state. We didn't have the privilege of voting, owning property outside the reservation, and there's a lot of disadvantage we didn't have. We didn't have the schools to go to, when I went to school, we didn't have—they didn't run about the seventh grade.

L: Was that the old school on the reservation?

B: Yeah, about seventh, eighth grade. I don't think it went through eighth. Maybe later on, but I knew it wasn't but the seventh when I went. I **only** go with just about the fourth grade, that's all the education I've got. Well, they kept on working with the state to improve our conditions. At that time, the appropriated money for the Indians, it was divided up. Every Indian got equal shares. I don't care what the deal [inaudible 04:58] one **fiftieth**.

L: When was this?

B: Well, it was back there about, **all** our own, far as I can remember, up until about 1940s. It had part of the agents, you see, "Oh, the Indians," and they send them agents, of course look after the school. The school out there had hard teachers teach the Indians, but they wouldn't get the best teachers. Anybody could sort of teach a little or **give up** their job, you see. Wasn't getting a proper education out of that, we should've got. Then the other appropriation they got was not about forty, fifty dollars a year. One time, we got lower than that, because the state they didn't appropriate enough that year. I remember it got down to about thirty dollars a head. But they finally pulled it back up. Then it'd have an agent would pass off once the year. Lot of 'em got in debt with groceries, clothes, and things like that. They'd take our order, **take** it by the Chief, he'd go see some of those grocery men there and asked him about taking some orders from them. If they needed food, they needed clothing, so he'd accept the order to pay him when their money come in, and a lot of 'em got in debt like that. Sometimes it overruns more than it average up. [Laughter] I remember one time they had a [inaudible 06:47] took a bunch of orders, and a lot of 'em got so far behind. Of course, a lot

of those grocers would overcharge—they'd charge interest on it and everything else. Finally, the **Indians** [inaudible 07:08] and they claimed about five thousand dollars, these people did, so they got on the state to get the state to pay it. The state told 'em that they wasn't liable for the debt because the money wasn't appropriated. These orders were no good unless the money was appropriated. They'd **check** the orders before the money was ever appropriated. The state told 'em if they would cancel all the **leftovers** [inaudible 07:45] they would cancel all the overcharges. The state would pay 'em wholesale price on this stuff. And yes, they did that. They appropriated enough money to pay it off at wholesale price.

L: When was this? About what year?

B: Oh, it was back 'bout 19—one of the [19]30s.

L: [19]30s.

B: I remember Idle Sanders got in debt over there, and he wanted something else. They wouldn't let him have it.

L: Who was that?

B: Idle Sanders. John's uncle. And until he couldn't get 'em more, he owed them [inaudible 08:26] they couldn't let him have no more. My dad was Chief, he got Blake Wilson—he was a lawyer—

L: Your father was a Chief?

B: He's dead. My father was Chief.

L: What was his name?

B: Sam Blue.

L: Sam Blue?

B: Mmhm. And he said Idle come to him and told him that **Massey** and **Yodel** was gonna take out a warrant for what he owed. My daddy went and saw Blake Wilson—he was the lawyer in Rock Hill—to get him to go with him over, and they were gonna have a trial over there in the store. That was in Lancaster County, they had a magistrate court there, in the little town of [inaudible 09:10] So, he had a couple lawyers from Lancaster, Stuart and Stuart, come up there. Daddy had Blake Wilson. Going down over there, Blake Wilson turned around to Idle and says, “Idle, do you want to pay Massey and Yodel?” Well, says Idle, “I want to pay ‘em, but they won’t let me have no more. I can’t pay ‘em all because I’ve got to have some money. Get the appropriation so we can get the things we need.” “Did you ever pay ‘em some?” He said, “Yeah.” Daddy said [inaudible 09:56] Blake Wilson walked to the store and called the lawyers up inside and talked to them, and their lawyers called Massey and Yodel out.

L: Called who?

B: Called Massey and Yodel. They was a company store, you see.

L: Massey and Yodel.

B: Massey and Yodel. They come back, and said, “Well, Idle, what you want?” So, they let him have something else. [Laughter] And he paid someone, but the family told me to pay a loan to get it paid up. Blake Wilson understood the condition of the Indians; he knew all the grim states. He’d know how to go buy it out of ‘em to get ‘em to let him have more stuff. He explained to these other lawyers just what he knew, and they had to agree with him, ‘cause he knows what he’s talking about. Well, we have a lot of times like that. The Indians used to

take orders to—several places in town used to take orders from the Indians—clothes and foods that they had to have.

L: You know the names of some of these places?

B: Yeah, there used to be the old **Cradford** Dry Good Company, Hope Dry Good Company. Used to be as children, the store had George **Farro**, he used to take orders from 'em.

L: He was Jewish?

B: Yeah, he was a Jew. He was a good friend of my daddy. And he took orders from the **Cloud** Dry Good Company, they called it from. Smith and Field Dry Good Company. He had sold dry good and **soil** and other stuff, as well. **Closer Waldo's** store at Highland Park used to take orders from him. Lesslie Company. Lesslie used to take orders from 'em, let 'em have what they need. My daddy was, I reckon, the only one that ever did as much work on the reservation. He farmed. We had about forty to five mules, horses. He'd take two of 'em and put on the farm and then put the others on the road, hauling woods across the field to sell it. At that time, you could sell cored wood. That's all people would know to burn to cook with it. Didn't have a cook stove like today, oil and gas and all these things. So, Daddy used wood. And he had customers all over Rock Hill. [inaudible 12:41] would always give 'em good cored. He'd always be straight with 'em. They liked him. I reckon he had twenty-five or thirty customers in Rock Hill, by the time he'd get around, he'd be ready to go right back. I was telling Mr. Bob Bryant the other day, when I was a boy about twelve years old, I hauled wood with my daddy for several years. All over Rock Hill, up and down Oak Valley,

Main Street, White Street, all down towards Mary Street, Moore Street, Hinton Street, Susie Street. [Laughter] In fact, every street, damn, I knew it because we had customers on it. Some of those customers are still living—some of the old, old ones. Most of 'em are dead. All up and down Main Street, there was a lot of customers we had there. Used to be a sort of [inaudible 13:45] under store—a bakery there on Main Street. We'd haul wood for a bakery, and we'd haul wood for a house. Take it up in the yard. By that, I learned a lot about Rock Hill, and I knowed a lot of the old settlers, actually I could tell you about a lot of [inaudible 14:05] I talked to Bob Bryant here the other day about some of 'em. He knows some of 'em, and I know them. I know his daddy when he **rented** a store here. So, that's the way my daddy used to make a living out there, and then we'd farm for the summer, probably make five or six bales of cotton a year and all the corn we needed. We raised our own hogs, we always had four or five hogs to kill if we wanted. Three or four good milk cows. There was no one else down there had like that. We had a large orchard. Apple trees—we had a lot of apples—fruit, peaches, grapes, and possessions [inaudible 14:59] for living. Some of the elders used to come there, you know. They'd come out and stay with us as a headquarters. They'd walk in from out of the country or somewhere they'd come from, and they'd put up and stay with us for weeks at a time. We'd feed 'em to [inaudible 15:18]

L: What elders were these? What church?

B: Mormon Church, Latter-day Saints. First elders I remember much about were Elder Gibbs, **President** Gibbs, Elder **Ranchin**, I remember Elder Ranchin as the

first elder I went to, and then Elder Smith and Elder Cook. Elder Cook was **Owen Cook, you don't know Owen Cook**, but he's his father. Mills [inaudible 16:07] was baptized when I was eight years old. [inaudible 16:12] long mustache. He was Norwegian. Boy, he was something else.

L: Was your whole family Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

B: Yeah, the whole family.

L: How did they happen to join the church?

B: Well, at that time, I understand that they didn't have no kind of church to come in there and try to teach 'em anything. The Methodist church, right up on the side of present church there, about a mile from the old reservation, they had a church there, but the Indians, they never would let them join the church.

L: Because you were Indian?

B: Yeah, 'cause we're Indian.

L: When was this? 'Bout what year would they not let you join?

B: Well, that was back 'bout in the 1900s or then. I remember going out there one time myself when I was just a little boy; I wasn't probably about eight or ten years old. One night, they had a regular revival, and there was colored people went there, too. They had a bench faced to the end of it by the chimney—colored people up there. I heard my father tell about one of the old Indians came, they had the [inaudible 17:30] and he wanted to go to Mormons' **bench**. They wouldn't let him go. Then after the elders, Mormon missionaries come in here, want to teach them and tell them they had a history of the **full times**. They were members of **house religion**, and they'd taken up the Book of Mormon, taught

'em where they come from, why we're here, and the promise of men who profit of the promises given to them, that the Lord will remember them the last day and bless 'em. Time will come again that they will become a **holy** and **religious** people, and they will blossom as a rose, that's ... And they taught 'em many things pertaining to scriptures in the bible and told 'em that the bible spoke of these things, the ancient prophets. And also [inaudible 18:46] among their forefathers, many promises were made, blessings given. Through this, they were able to convert many of the Catawba Indians to the Mormon faith, you see. Now, this was happening before my time. I imagine—I think they got a record of the Catawba when they first **come** in. About 1800 and something or other when the first elders come in. About 1860 to [18]70, somewhere in there, I think. So, a lot of 'em joined the church, and after they got started getting pretty good ahold, other people hear it in the community, and they sent the Presbyterian missionaries in there to try to convert 'em, bring more Presbyterians. They promised if they would join a Presbyterian church, they would build 'em a better school and give 'em a better chance for a better education. And they would teach 'em religion and told 'em, "Do whatever you want [inaudible 20:13] So, they had a meeting down there, they had events. The Indians come up there, and they talk about it. There was two of the elders there. The elders were the ones that could talk, and they were refusing. Finally, he gave him five minutes, and he made a little talk.

L: Who was this elder, do you know?

B: Well, I just don't remember who it was. I don't know what elder it was. I heard him speak but I don't—

L: Was your father over this meeting?

B: No, he wasn't at that time.

L: He wasn't Chief?

B: No. First, the goal of the church [inaudible 20:56] they was only painting their head, the Indian, painting their head. John Sanders and another elder, these people are all the worst you could put on John Sanders. Painting their head [inaudible 21:18] Well, that is before my time. But they said that when Idle Sanders' brother was younger than Idle was, his mother had him in her arms, and she got before a congregation of Presbyterians and Indians and all that, and she told 'em before our eye, "Denying one of the Mormon doctors, I let my children grow up in ignorance. Many years, we've been sitting here waiting to be taught to learn something. Now, the Mormons come in to try to teach us, and you all come in here and try to teach us [inaudible 22:06] and force us to join your church. I won't do it." So Idle struggled there. Finally, some of 'em went to the Presbyterian church. The rest remained Mormons. The present day, then, all those old Presbyterians finally come to be Mormons **before it was over**. And there was Baptists come in later on. I remember when the Baptists come in. They tried to do the same thing, but they wasn't ever able to come to [inaudible 22:38]

L: Did they ever get any good schools built?

B: Yeah. They've been in building schools that are better. We got behind the state to build that school, out you know ... Well, they didn't teach no further than the

seventh grade there, but they had the chance to go to other schools, you see.

But they didn't want the Indians to go to these other schools. I was on a committee at that time.

L: What other schools?

B: Lesslie School. Lesslie didn't want 'em out there.

L: The regular public school?

B: Yeah. And it's a grade high, you see. And some in Rock Hill, I don't know which ones they were. But this government agent then was out there, always trying to help 'em to get better things. Mr. Blair was mine; he was a government agent.

L: Mr. Blair was a government agent?

B: Blair was a government agent at that time. I was on the committee.

L: What was the name of this committee? Did it have a name?

B: Chief Harris, Raymond Harris was Chief. I was on the committee. Early Brown, Samuel Beck, I think Ben Beck was the secretary. So, the Indians gathered out to the road to catch a bus to come to school. It drove by and wouldn't pick 'em up. Back then [inaudible 24:02]

L: They wouldn't stop; they just drove right by.

B: So, we went to Columbia. We went down and saw the superintendent of education, went and saw the governor.

L: What year was this? As close as you remember.

B: Let's see. I think it was around about [19]29 or [19]30, something like that, I think. I'm not causing my own [inaudible 24:35] But anyway, it was later, **as I know it**, maybe up in the [19]30s and the [19]40s, probably [19]40s when all this was

going on. We went to Columbia and the superintendent of all the Indians in this area, lived in Cherokee—he come down. He brought him and his wife to Columbia. We went down and saw the secretary of state and the superintendent of education and all. I said, “Have the kids out there Monday morning,” I said, “I’ll see they’re put on the bus.” And I told ‘em if they didn’t, I’d bring a suit against the state. [inaudible 25:17] In the morning, Mr. Blair went out there, told the other what was going on. Well, they come and they stop—they come up to town and been riding it ever since. [Laughter] Well, they didn’t want to associate with a lot of us people in this area, they didn’t—I remember when you’d go do some work on the farm for the farmers in this community, they wouldn’t let the Indian eat at the table. But then, he’d tear it down and fix a table for the Indians, and the Indians would eat. If there’s a colored folk there, he’d put him off with a little table to himself. Douglas Harris worked for the [inaudible 26:12] and dinner time come, they put Douglas off there, a little table to himself. Douglas quit, he went home. He was gonna be treated like a nigger, he wasn’t gonna work for him. [inaudible 26:27] Well, this is something—I know some feel something’s different. I used to go up to my grandmother’s, sell Indian pottery, pipes and things she’d made. I walked the streets of Rock Hill [inaudible 26:43] carrying a basket with little toys and pipes and things. Up there at Winthrop College, stay three or four hours, park out at the gate. [inaudible 26:54] Sometimes she’d sell every bit she had. Then there were some stores in town would buy a lot of it, and she’d go to houses selling, trading for whatever she could get, was useful. We’d go to Richburg down below [inaudible 27:16] down in Chester County. [inaudible

27:19] Two men, they'd go in the store there, and they would buy a lot of pipes from them and sell 'em [inaudible 27:24] tell her they wanted so many pipes and she'd made a bunch of **canned valley**. Go to the wagon and take 'bout two days to go down and back in a wagon, about twenty or thirty miles. That was a long ways with a mule and a wagon. We'd stay at this fella Reid, **Beaugard** Reid. He treated us like he did **something**, his great big **tea** store. We'd stay there a lot, and sometimes it'd be some few others would stay in it, but the majority didn't want us around. But those people really liked us, treated us like a member of their family. [inaudible 28:12] Reid Gas out here?

L: Yes.

B: That's some of his people, I was talking to him some time back and he said Beaugard Reid was kin to him; his mother raised him. His parents died, I think, when he was young, and his mother raised Beaugard. He liked his liquor, he'd drink a lot, but he's pretty well off. He didn't mistreat us, try to make us feel he's better than we are; made us feel like we were as good as they were. Well, we had a lot of [inaudible 28:50] **country life** there. And I remember when Elder **Varris** first come in, missionaries from the West, building the house where Lula lives now, used to be Varris family there. He stayed there for three years, taught school on the reservation. We had a good school there. And that's when the first primary was organized. First **release** that was organized out there, when the Varris from the West were there.

L: These are all auxiliaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

B: Yeah, but Varris, he flew the mission to [inaudible 29:35] Islands in his young days. They come from Wyoming—that's where they used to live [inaudible 29:33] talk about Wyoming, I remember that. They had children, a boy called Clark, he's about—well, him and the other brother next to me are about the same age, and we used to play together all the time. What we did, he did. [Laughter] He did like that. He finally went back West, and in later years, he came on a mission. He was driving over there at [inaudible 30:00] The Varris family, poor souls are dead now. But we had a good school down. Somebody was interested in us. My daddy said since **President Keller** is about trying to get us a Mormon teacher, so he got it. And then he made him supervisor of all the elders in this part. Mr. Varris organized a **refuge** society, taught women how to do a lot of things they didn't know how to do. They used to bake their own bread, they didn't buy the loaf of bread like we get now. She'd bake bread once a week, a homemade loaf [inaudible 30:55] They fed the children milk, and bread and butter, and preserves, and vegetables. They'd cook the milk and take it, put sugar or whatever on it, and pour the milk over the bread, big slice of bread, hey, it was good. Mr. Varris made the first rice pudding I ever eaten. One summer, Daddy was out at the church with some of the elders, Brother Varris talking [inaudible 31:31] I stepped out the house, and the dressing, they had a dressing they put over there with a little rice pudding, something like creamer stuff, you know, soft. It was good. So, he bought us fifty buckets, you had to make it [inaudible 31:55] So he said, "Here, let's eat this." We all sat down [inaudible 32:11] And she saw them when they left the house with it. Run and told my mother. Took all the

dressing for the pudding. They didn't have [inaudible 32:26] Sunday school.

Mother called him and asked him what he [inaudible 32:34] Well, he says,

“Reverend Andrew didn't have nothing good to eat, and I wanted him to have something good to eat.” [inaudible 32:42] [Laughter] And she had to prepare some more before she could **serve them**.

L: Was y'all's family better off than most of the Indian families?

B: Yeah. My daddy fed a lot of other people. You'd be surprised. Every day there was somebody there for something to eat. I remember when I was picking cotton once, and old man Taylor George, he's the father of old man George who lives over there, come [inaudible 33:16] dad always feed him when he come, give him something to eat. And he said, “You children are well blessed. Y'all have plenty good to eat all the time.” I told him, I said, “Uncle Taylor, we're gonna have enough to eat when the elders come around.” [Laughter] But my daddy always tried to **find** the best because of the elders, I know that. But he always had a plan. Many times, we'd see him coming over here with a bucket, come get some milk, butter, come to borrow flour, meal, anything to eat. My mother [inaudible 34:04] then she get fed up with him. I remember Mr. Taylor come over with his boys to get some milk [inaudible 34:12] want some meat. But he never paid us back. [inaudible 34:20] Mother said, “I ain't got none.” They always called him **“Sight.”** That wasn't his name, but his nickname was “Sight.”

L: “Sight?”

B: “Sight.” He says, “Go on here, let her have some. We'll get more.” [inaudible 34:47] Now, there's an old lady lives there, Betty Harris, [inaudible 35:01] mother.

She's an old maid, her mother was old, I remember she lived about ninety years old. She but she was very [inaudible 35:10] she joined the Presbyterian church. I overheard her mother was Irish. She doesn't look like an Indian, now.

L: Her mother was Irish?

B: Mmhm. She married an Indian, but they were very **sensitive**. They always had plenty. Had a good garden—she was having two gardens, I know that. By the time I [inaudible 35:37] running short on milk [inaudible 35:41] and she'd had a little land she rented out to some poor colored living around there. [inaudible 35:51] They'd give her corn for rent, you see. [inaudible 36:00] Outside of her, the majority [inaudible 36:28]

L: Did y'all have much money, or did you have more food and crops and all?

B: Well, we had to get more food to have money. But my daddy used to have a little money. I remember when I was a boy—back then, you get silver dollars, you didn't get no paper money. And he had on his whole money sack about that high, and that thing was half-full with silver dollars, I remember. I used to get 'em out and play with 'em on the bed [inaudible 36:58] He always kept his like that, and when he needed wood, he got it. He either bought wood or he cut, and he paid the man he bought it from. About once a month [inaudible 37:22] He made good money compared to what the others did. I know he sold cotton [inaudible 37:33] and would get his team on the road, haulin' **logs** during the whole year. When the farm work was over with, well, he'd put two wagons on the road. He would double-up like that. He used to haul [inaudible 37:52] He used to haul a lot of stuff out **and in there**—had flour coming in by the carloads, lard and meat and

stuff like that. Old country store, that's about all they had, maybe a few candies. Once a week, he'd haul two [inaudible 38:14] he'd haul a lot of stuff out there in the wagon. I hauled flour, tons of flour out there. And molasses, big ol' barrel of molasses about that high. That's what people eat back then [inaudible 38:30] I haul a lot of stuff out there. Daddy made money off that. He didn't have no education, but he knew how to make money.

L: Did he ever go to school at all?

B: Never did.

L: Did he speak the Catawba language?

B: Yeah.

L: Does anyone here able to speak it now?

B: No. My daddy, my aunt, Sarah Gordon—she used to live over in [inaudible 39:16] mother. She died over there next to the railroad—was the last two to talk it. I remember one [inaudible 39:26] there were several of 'em talked it. His other brother, John Brown, he could talk it. Old man Harris, Ben Harris, talked it. Old man Robert Harris talked it. Bill Harris was another one, he talked it. And Sarah Harris, that's my grandmother Harris. [inaudible 39:51] There were a lot of 'em. There's another old woman called Mary Harris, she talked it. [inaudible 40:18] I learned a few little words, I don't know [inaudible 40:29]

L: What are they? Tell us.

B: Well, you take a nigger, a Black man, in Catawba Indian language was [Catawba word 40:44] A mule was [Catawba word 40:52].

L: A what?

- B: You take a dog with [Catawba word 40:59] So [inaudible 41:04] wouldn't learn, you know, like a lot of kids, I wouldn't have time, wouldn't pay attention. Grandmother used to tell [inaudible 41:28] When I would take **my pride** in—you see that little book, right? My daddy and mother and aunt did a lot of talk about the [inaudible 41:49] University of Pennsylvania. And he wrote quite a bit **in** the Catawba Indian language. And he'd go about and study these things, travel to different areas and stay, and he finally had a little book ready. My daddy had one of 'em, it got burned out when his house was burned, I remember. We've been trying to get one since then, so I understand that George was **gonna share**, Charlotte George. She told me, she said [inaudible 42:29] She wanted me to help to explain some of the words, they didn't know the words. I told her if I'd seen the book, I could tell her a little bit. I don't want to say the wrong sounds, you know. [inaudible 42:46] I couldn't do it. If you ever heard him talk and knew the sounds, you could tell, but if a person never heard the sounds. So, she'd bring the book [inaudible 43:02]
- L: I've heard your father—Chief Blue—I've heard him speak it. You know, just one day, I asked him, and he was telling some of it. You said before, didn't someone tape his voice?
- B: Yeah.
- L: Who was this, and who taped it and where is it at?
- B: Well, I think Brother [inaudible 43:27] had it once. I think old Brother Graham, he has one. [inaudible 43:40] but he had one, and he brought it up and played it once. But I think my dad was talking more [inaudible 43:55] But Virginia got ahold

of one of the recordings—I don't know what it was—and she sent it **to George**.

He got it now, they got it. He wrote many [inaudible 44:10] and asked us if she could go. She got [inaudible 44:17]

L: They got a copy from the State Department, somebody?

B: No, just from some of the—

L: Just some of the Indians.

B: Members of the church. Kind of interesting to get 'em, listen to him talk recorded, so that's what they had. Now just what is in English and Indian language, I don't know. Now, one of mine'll have a record of his voice, but I don't guess I do now.

L: Well, there's no one living now that can speak the language?

B: No.

L: Was your father the last one?

B: Yeah.

[Break in recording]

L: [inaudible 45:15]

B: My grandmother told me they left from Catawba and went to Virginia and stayed among the Pamunkey Indians up in Virginia a while.

L: What kind of Indians?

B: Pamunkey Indians.

L: Pamunk.

B: Yeah. And when they come back, they **stayed** across the river, went to see the old Indian town. One of the **nails** of the track, they led a cemetery [inaudible 45:45] We didn't find much to go on, but we found some of the graves. But she

said when they come back from Virginia—she left from here when she was just a little girl—and she said they had a lot of little old huts built to live in. Some of them had done rot and tops had fell through, briars [inaudible 46:19] And further down the river from this little place, right straight across the road, over the hill over there and the woods, down the river a couple miles further, an old track line used to be owned by the Johnsons. There's another **blank state** down there. And she said that they would visit one another, used to have the powwows there and then they'd have lunch on this side of the river, where [inaudible 46:54] There's quite a lot of 'em. Smallpox [inaudible 47:03] jumped in the river, thought it'd cure 'em [inaudible 47:11]

L: And they actually jumped in the river thinking it'd cure 'em?

B: [inaudible 47:19] lot of skeletons, you know, washed up down the river.

L: How did your father get to be Chief?

B: Well, I guess it's through his interest in the people. [inaudible 47:41]

L: Yes.

B: [inaudible 47:45] let me bring the book back.

L: Did they have an election for your daddy? Was he elected or just—?

B: Yeah, we have elections. [inaudible 47:55]

L: Who in all voted?

B: All the Indians [inaudible 48:06]

L: Every Indian got a vote? Did the Indian women get to vote?

B: Mhm. Every child that wanted to vote voted.

L: How old did the children have to be? Do you remember?

B: Well, they were seven—about twelve years old or fifteen. We elected by a hand vote, we didn't do it by no ...

L: Did the Chief have much power?

B: Well, it was nothing like Chief in the past. Chief in the past, you know, he had power because there was never no opposition very much, and he had the ruling power. He organized [inaudible 48:59] to live on. I overheard an Indian woman [inaudible 49:15] The old Chief would [inaudible 49:22] But my daddy, he never did do that. He looked at them, the needs and wants of the Tribe, and if they got in trouble, he'd write to 'em to help 'em out. And a lot of 'em didn't like him, a lot of 'em did like him. But when they got in trouble, they always called Uncle Sam. Uncle Sam, he'll get you out. [inaudible 49:53] Sam even drank whiskey down there, get drunk and fight. Every Saturday they got [inaudible 50:42] selling liquor or something. They come back here and fight all up the river.

L: Fighting White people?

B: Fighting one another.

L: One another?

B: I used to hear him coming and riding his wagon—a lot of 'em, he's bringing out of town, you know, **to get locked up**. And they just fight. One time, old man Davis Harris—that's Pete Harris's daddy—was gonna cut on Bob Harris. But [inaudible 51:19] My daddy told Harris to put his knife up [inaudible 51:29] My daddy'd haul and knock him down, take him out. Old man Ben Harris [inaudible 51:38] had a brother [inaudible 51:42] [Laughter] Well, there was a lot of that. I remember the old Chief used to be—my first wife's daddy, he [inaudible 52:01] David Harris.

He'd get drunk, riding high the road down to the reservation, shouting and shooting.

L: Was he on his horse?

B: In a buggy. He had an old buggy, he'd get in there and ride. [inaudible 52:18] little old church on the reservation? Well, back behind that, up on the hill, he lived. [inaudible 52:32] by the schoolhouse up the road there, back down, hollering and cussing and shooting. [inaudible 52:53] and at least get drunk [inaudible 52:53] fighting, cutting one another up, shooting one another. Idle and John, their granddaddy, he'd been shot several times there. [inaudible 53:08] Old man **Lester** Harris [inaudible 53:18] Spencer Harris [inaudible 53:20] Early Brown, and I don't know, some others. I remember one Sunday when I was [inaudible 53:31] get drunk on Sunday [inaudible 53:36] I used to **give up**. Roger says it's the same way out there where he's at now. They do the same thing. He said it's all [inaudible 53:59]

L: Well, do they sell liquor to the Indians? You know, you hear a lot of times—

B: Well, they used to **deny them**. I guess the law is still there, but they all get it.

L: White men sell it to them? The Indians never did make it themselves?

B: No, they only get it from the White people. A lot of time, **he's inebriated**, the operator still down there selling to them [inaudible 54:26] Roger said out there now, there's still [inaudible 54:44] Out there, they're way up in them mountains, you know, but lord, they [inaudible 54:59]

L: These were different Indians from the Catawba?

B: Yeah. He said that [inaudible 55:11]

L: Did y'all ever have trouble here on the reservation with the White people? Did you ever fight with 'em?

B: All our life, no. We get along pretty good with the Whites. If there's one thing **that's about** the Catawbas and the Whites, there's always plenty in this part of the **section**. **They** didn't have much trouble. They said way back, a White man had a feather, and the Indians wanted it. And he wasn't [inaudible 56:04] so he killed this Indian, and his wife took his feather. The old Chief—I don't know whether it was Chief Hagler or Chief **Keg**, I believe it was—the wife told him that one of the Indians [inaudible 56:22]

L: Chief **Kid**?

B: Yeah, they had one they called Chief Keg back then.

L: Keg?

B: Yeah. They used to have one they called King Hagler, he was Chief. They called him a king because, see that's when England was over in the United States at that time, but I think [inaudible 56:43] king or King Hagler. And then one they called Chief Keg, I heard 'em speak of him. Said Whites come and told him that one of the Indians had killed this fellow for his feather. They didn't think it was right, he ought to punish him for it. **They blow the old conch shell, had an old conch shell and blow it**, and they brought a thing of Indian bread, and all of 'em eat **at the time** she wanted. [inaudible 57:21] Some of 'em saw him, I think. [inaudible 57:30] and so he come back and says—well, he took him and told him to stay around 'til he come, he wouldn't be long, he'd be back. So, he comes, he had a deer across his back, carrying it. [inaudible 57:53]

L: When did this happen? Way back?

B: Way back. Early part of the **[18]70s**, I guess. [inaudible 58:15]

L: If a Indian did something on the reservation, who tried him? Did he have a trial?

B: Mhm.

L: The Indians themselves would try him?

B: That's right. The Indians have a long [inaudible 58:37]

L: This if hey had a relationship before they were married?

B: That's right. That's why they kept things strict [inaudible 59:11] That was one of those times Bob Varris did take [inaudible 59:20] I heard, it was in the news, they never **went to bed** [inaudible 59:32] [Laughter]

[Break in recording]

L: You were out at the mall one day?

B: At Rock Hill Mall. I was talking to this young lady over there who was putting up some posters there. She's a decorator at the mall. I said, "I understand that you gonna ask some of those Cherokees to put on an exhibit." They said, "Yeah, Chief **Curland**" [inaudible 1:00:11] "Did you know that there are Catawba Indians around here?" She says no, she didn't know. I said, "Well yeah, right down here on the river, there's a little Tribe of Catawba Indians." Someone [inaudible 1:00:32] between here and the river, the Cherokees and Catawba had a war **once it slipped out**. They killed a thousand Catawbas, and Catawba killed a thousand Cherokees. I said [inaudible 1:00:50] they stoned us. Settlers around this country come in at the Catawba and drove right across Broad River, over in Cherokee camp. And then they had another big battle. Some of the French

settlers from up in that part of the country come and help the Cherokees. The Catawba Indians and the settlers from this part go back in the mountains, and they made a treaty: that the Cherokees were to stay on the western banks of Broad River, never come back on this side again, and the Catawba Indians were never to go beyond the eastern banks of Broad River. I said when the treaty [inaudible 1:01:38] In this town, you bring the Cherokee down there, they say, “We’re gonna have trouble.” [Laughter] So I don’t apply Catawbas [inaudible 1:01:49] have another war. She said, “[inaudible 1:01:53] I’ll be gone.” [Laughter] And she knew I was just joking, but that’s true, that’s a true history. But she didn’t know it, and I told her about the Catawbas. One order that I have a costume, an outfit I could wear, she would like for me to be able to meet with ‘em and make our **peaces** together, show it on television. Told her I didn’t have any. My daddy had one—well, his wife did, and she wouldn’t have let him have it, the headpiece [inaudible 1:02:32] So, I told her that I’d try to find out if anyone down on the reservation had it. I learned in time that Gilbert Blue had one. He’d bought it I think in Cherokee, so I invited him up. He told me [inaudible 1:02:50] She said, “Chief, I’m gonna need to check what you told me.” He said, “Ah, that’s fine.” [Laughter] The next day, he brought his **brother**, and she said [inaudible 1:03:19] twenty dollars.

L: That’s pretty good, twenty dollars.

B: Yeah. I think he gave Gilbert twenty. I wandered over there, and she gave me a box of candy, and pat me on the back, and said “I hope you have a **Merry Christmas.**” [inaudible 1:03:39]

[End of interview]

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