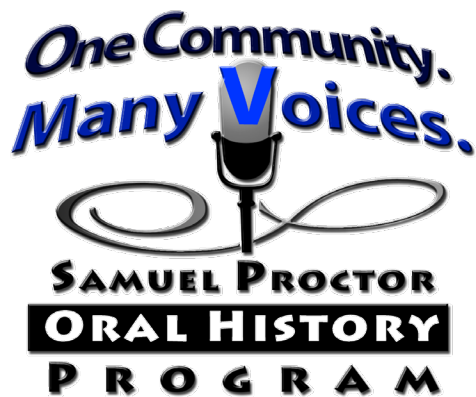


Chief Gilbert Blue

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-001**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
November 22, 1971**



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45 minutes | 30 pages

Abstract: Before he became Chief of the Catawba Nation in 1973, Gilbert Blue reflects on his experiences growing up on the reservation in South Carolina. He describes what life was like on the reservation in regards to school, food and transportation. Gilbert Blue describes his grandfather and the impact he had on the Tribe. Gilbert Blue expands upon his life since he has left the reservation and what his life was at the time of the interview. He performs a few chants. At the beginning of the recording, The members of the Blue family speak briefly, including Gilbert Blue's wife, Elizabeth Laverne Blue, and their children, Christopher Larson Blue, Denise Blue, and Glenn Blue.

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

ORAL HISTORY

P R O G R A M

University of Florida

CAT 001

Interviewee: Chief Gilbert Blue

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: November 22, 1971

E: —in South Carolina and I am visiting in the home Chief Blue's grandson, and I am visiting now with his wife and the children. Can you tell me your name Ms. Blue? Full name.

EB: Elizabeth.

E: And who were you before you married?

EB: Sharpe.

E: And where was your home Ms. Shar—Elizabeth? Where was your home?

EB: Chester.

E: Then I'm interested in knowing how you met your husband?

EB: In Chester. He used to play in square dance, that's where we met.

E: Then you lived in Chester for a while, and then you came to this lovely home. How long have you been living in this home?

EB: A little over a year.

E: And these are your three children. Your oldest boy—let's see what his name is. Can you tell us your name?

CB: Chris.

E: Chris, is that your only name or you got another name?

CB: Christopher—

E: Christopher—

CB: —Larson Blue.

E: Christopher Larson Blue. Say that whole name again, that's a pretty name.

CB: Christopher Larson Blue.

E: And how old are you, Christopher?

CB: Seven.

E: Where do you go to school?

CB: Uh, first grade, Lesslie.

E: Lesslie, is that the first grade?

CB: Yes, ma'am.

E: And who is the teacher?

CB: Ms. Ladd.

E: And you like her very much, don't you?

CB: Yes ma'am.

E: Now your father did some songs and dances for us. Has he taught you some of those songs and dances too?

CB: Yes ma'am.

E: Can you dance a little bit?

CB: Yes ma'am.

E: I bet you can. And here is another pretty girl, tell us what your name is?

DB: Denise.

E: Denise, can you dance too? Now, are you in school yet?

DB: In Kindergarten.

E: Kindergarten, where is that Kindergarten?

DB: In **Lesslie No. 2**.

E: In **Lesslie No. 2**. And you are a pretty, pretty girl. And you are the big boy **who stays home and helps your mother**, what's your name?

GB: Tell her your name, honey. You don't want to talk?

[Laughter]

E: Christopher, can I ask his name? Christopher, what's his name?

CB: Glenn.

E: Glenn, that's a nice name. What are you all wanting for Santa Claus to bring?

Glenn, what are you wanting?

GB: A crazy car.

E: A crazy car. Cristopher, what do you want?

CB: I want a bicycle.

E: A bicycle. Denise, what do you want?

DB: A tea set.

E: A tea set. You're gonna serve tea to all of your friends, aren't you? Well, that's a lovely thing.

[Break in recording]

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Route 6, Box 260, Rock Hill, South Carolina, and I'm visiting in the home of Chief Blue's grandson, and I'm going to let you tell us who he is and his address.

GB: My name is Gilbert Blue. I live at Route 6, Box 426, Rock Hill, South Carolina. I am the grandson of Chief Blue.

E: Gilbert lives in a nice brick home on a nice hill overlooking a little stream down below. He's buying his home and he has a splendid job in Charlotte. Gilbert, will you tell us about your work in Charlotte?

GB: Well, yes, I'm a machinist for General Tire and Rubber Company at present. I was in service for nine years and had a little bit of background in this particular kind of work. After I was discharged from the Navy, I went to a trade school in Columbia, South Carolina, for fourteen months taking up the machinist trade. From there I've graduated up to what I am at present.

E: Are there any other Indian boys working with you in the machine shops in Charlotte?

GB: Yes, Fred Sanders, who is also an Indian and who also attended a trade school, I believe, out west. But he is a machinist in the same shop that I am.

E: What about your school? Did it help to prepare you, you know, for life work?

GB: Yes. When I went to school—I went to school, of course, on the reservation. We only had two teachers at that time. Mrs. **Ratterree**, when I was a young boy, taught the first and second grade, and Mrs. **Hoke** taught the third through the seventh grade. I remember her very vividly because I thought she was a very wonderful person and she had a way of teaching that impressed me, and many things she taught me helped me in my future life as far as making decisions is concerned, and I think I'll always remember her having been a great influence in my life.

E: At that school on the reservation, did you have lunches provided, or did you bring lunches from home? What did you do for lunches?

GB: The state provided money at one time for lunches that was prepared in the little small lunchroom on one side of the school building, and there we ate our lunches every day.

E: Did you have a cook to prepare those lunches?

GB: Yes, we had a lady that was paid to come and cook our lunch for us every day.

E: Now you're so talented, all of you are, in art and making things with your hands, did you have any art training in your school?

GB: No, in the schools that we had it was strictly—not vocational, but a just regular grammar schooling, as far as the reservation was concerned. No, anything pertaining to vocation or any craft was not taught in our schools on the reservation.

E: Then, after you left Catawba Indian School, what was your next school?

GB: When I left Catawba Indian School, I went to Rock Hill High School.

Unfortunately, I didn't finish high school. I dropped out and joined the navy in 1951. I stayed in the United States Navy for nine years before I came back home.

E: Did you enjoy the sports in high school? I know you Indians are very good in sports.

GB: Yes, I enjoyed sports very well and I was rather a fast runner. The coach was thinking very strongly of putting me on the varsity football team and making me a track man also, but, unfortunately, I dropped out of school and wasn't able to continue in this particular endeavor.

E: Now, when were you married?

GB: I was married in 1963 to Elizabeth, a girl from Chester, South Carolina. She was a Sharpe before she married me.

E: You now have three children. Will you give us the names and ages?

GB: Yes, I have Chris, who is seven years old; Denise, who is five; and Glenn, who is four.

E: I know you remember your grandfather. Can you tell us anything you remember about your grandfather? He was such a wonderful chieftain in this Tribe.

GB: Well, I remember quite a few things about my grandfather. Yet, being able to live around with him, I didn't learn as much about him as I would have liked to. I remember in particular his being a great leader, because all the people on the reservation that had children—he could reprimand any children, regardless of whether they were members of his immediate family or not, and the parents of those children would not say a word about it because they knew he was a just and an honest man. He was a farmer. My cousins and myself used to help him to raise cotton and corn and various things in the river bottoms. And I remember that he was always very strict with us about being honest and doing our fair share in all things. So, for this reason, the people on the reservation, all the Indians, respected him as man and as a leader. And the people in the surrounding area, the White people that he dealt with in his business transactions, respected him and have nothing but good things to say about him now as a man and as a leader of his people.

E: Was he active in the Mormon Church as well?

GB: Yes, ma'am. The missionaries came here to the Mormon—of the Mormon faith back in the early 1890s and my grandfather later became a member of that church. Through the years he helped to hold the church together down there, been a leader in it. We believe in ministering to the sick. And of course, he used

to go out to people's home when they had sick children or anybody and administer to them as a member of the church. And they had a lot of faith in him as a man of this type also.

E: Tell me about the medicines your grandfather used to make and take with him.

GB: Well, Grandfather used to go and get a root. One—I can remember several names of them. They're still here today that we can go out and find—bear root, and yellow root and fireweed. These particular herbs he would gather, and he would boil them and prepare them in a certain manner. Now, he would have to put a certain amount of alcohol with these things to keep them from spoiling over a period of time, but it was only just a very small percentage from spoiling purposes only. I can remember people from far away as Georgia and Tennessee coming to the reservation to buy these things from my grandfather. They were supposed to be things that would help ailing kidneys, I remember that much, muscle aches and things. Evidently, they had quite an effect on some people because up until the day of his death, he used to sell quite a bit of it.

E: And you still know where some of those plants are growing in this area now?

GB: Yes. Albert Sanders, who was one of the chiefs of our Tribe one time, is familiar with this root. He and I were talking just a short time ago about going down and looking up some so I could familiarize myself with it again. It's been quite a while since I, as an individual, have gone to pick it up, but I can remember what it looked like, and he and I together thought we could go down and dig up some. He, of course, knows what it looks like, but I just don't remember quite well enough to pick it out by myself.

E: Did you grandfather take this medicine into the homes of the sick as well and sell it?

GB: Yes, on the reservation we had a lot of our older people—of course, medicine wasn't as far advanced in those days as it is now—that had some ailments. My grandfather would use this to give to the people of the Tribe and help with their ailments. And then through this, they would tell people outside the reservation about it, and this is how the word would get around about his medicine. So, as they went, they would spread the word and that's how the knowledge of his medicine got out to the public, so to speak.

E: You helped your grandfather gather apples on the reservation sometime. I think he took them to Rock Hill and sold them, didn't he? Do you remember helping your grandfather gather apples?

GB: Yes, he had quite a few apple trees around his home and pears as well. In raising particular crops—I notice we don't raise much that type anymore—but we used to raise sugar cane as well as peanuts and used to sell all of these things up and around town.

E: How did he travel into Rock Hill?

GB: At that time, when I was just a young lad, my grandfather had a mule and a wagon. That was the only way that he traveled. I can remember we used to leave to take cotton to the gin quite early, real early, in the mornings, in order to get there early enough to have our cotton ginned. Behind **Friedman's** old store in Rock Hill, I can just barely remember an old shed that was where the wagons and mules were tied up and parked. This has been quite some years ago.

E: Well, where was the gin you took the cotton to?

GB: The old gin on White Street, what is referred to now as the Rock Hill Feed and Supply Company, but there was an old gin connecting on to that same building. That's where we took our cotton.

E: Now, I know you heard your grandfather speak the language. I wonder if you remember any of the language and any of the music that you used to hear him sing?

GB: Yes, when people used to come around, schoolchildren—used to be a lot of schools—and people would come to the reservation, curious, I guess, a lot of them, looking to see Indians and hear them sing their songs and dance. My grandfather was quite an entertainer in his own way. He used to sing Indian songs and do war chants, dance around and play his drum. The chants that he used to sing, I can remember several of those. I use them today sometimes when some boys and girls that I have now, we go out and perform for various groups. The language itself, I don't speak it fluently, although I can remember some phrases and some words that I picked up from my grandfather as well as some of the other people of the Tribe.

E: I'd be real interested in hearing you say some words or talk a little bit in the language if you can.

GB: Well, in order to say "Hello, friend," you would say [Catawba phrase 12:42] which is "Hello, friend," in Catawba language. [Catawba phrase 12:46] which means "Where are you going?" This is just a couple of things I can remember. In the Indian songs that I sing when we do our dances, we have a lot of phrases that I

have learned. Some of them I don't remember the meanings of, some of them I do.

E: What about doing one of your chants now, and we'll record it as we go along?

GB: Okay. Would you mind if I stepped over to the closet and get my little small drum? It might sound a little better if I do that.

E: Yes, that'd be fine. You do that.

GB: This particular chant here is one that we use in some of our ceremonial dances. We use it sometime when the girls dance to commemorate some of the braves and warriors that have been out in a particular battle to where they'd be fighting the enemy, or gathering meat. But this is just one of the things that we use.

[Chanting and drum playing 00:13:41]

E: That was good. Now, do you know meaning of any of those words?

GB: Well, some of the words, like I said, I don't remember the phrases of all of them. Unfortunately, enough—ones that I did learn, I've forgotten a lot of them. But basically, it means just commemorating warriors, saying that they were brave and the actions that they had taken against their enemy and that words mean respect for the deeds that they performed.

E: Now that you have got your drum all ready, do you know another chant?

GB: Well, there's one that we do. We do a performance for some of our Scout troops or civic organizations where the girls themselves do a dance. They just do a slow type of walk-type dance and I chant this song that is commemorating some of our warriors that didn't make it back from some of the battles.

[Chanting and drum playing 00:15:10]

GB: There's one thing you have to remember about chants, and if you'll think about it, it really doesn't seem that complicated. A lot of these songs that you hear today—like you have a course of a song or words are repeated quite a bit throughout the particular song—a lot of times the chant is not so much saying different words all the way through. It's just a chant that goes with music, so that you can get a rhythm to do the dancing by. Now, of course, the words do mean something, but a lot of times, you repeat them over and over just to get a rhythmic thing going so that the boys can do their dance, or warriors, or whatever the case might be.

E: You have a little boy, I believe, in Lesslie School. What do you think of the changes in this community from the time you lived here as a little boy? You think the changes in your group of people have been good?

GB: Yes, they definitely have. We as a people were not discriminated against so much in my time as I can remember the people out west. Now, when I speak out west, I mean the Navajos and the Sioux and people of this nature. I have a sister that built a church mission out in New Mexico and Arizona. She married a full-blooded Navajo and they're raising a family now out in Albuquerque, New Mexico. But those people were discriminated quite a bit against, a lot more so than we were here. I know when I first started high school, they wouldn't let the school bus come down through the Indian reservation to pick us up. I had to leave early in the morning to go work with the men that worked in the textile mills. I had to wait around until school opened up. Since that time, of course, the school bus does go through the reservation, and as far as people looking down

on us or anything, you can very seldom hear of any remarks made of that nature anymore.

GB: Your little boy at Lesslie School is perfectly happy in his first grade and he's with Whites and Indians and Blacks always, is that right?

E: That's right. We have, in his class—he has several colored boys, and he has several other Indian girls from reservation down here that's in the same class. So, as far as racial is concerned, they don't have any conflicts in the class. He seems to be quite content.

E: What about your church activities for you and your family?

GB: Well, of course, we're all members of the Mormon Church. I'm a high priest and a leader in the church down here. I'm the first counselor in the bishopry, and it is our responsibility to be concerned about the whole congregation of the church in this particular area on the reservation. Of course, we in the Mormon Church don't believe in smoking or drinking or anything like that that is harmful to your body and, of course, we try to live a religious-type life, as well as working outside the ministry to make a living for our families.

E: Do you find that the drinking problem or the drug problem is a problem with the Indian young people?

GB: No, fortunately, due to the fact that they are members of the church, and our teachings are real explicit as to what we believe and should partake and shouldn't. In fact, we have meetings with our youth quite often, and let them ask questions about drugs and what they think about it, and they tell us. We've had quite a few of them tell us they know who they can go to get drugs if they wanted

it. They know where they can get it, they know what the consequences are, but they listen. So, we have very little problem with our youth down here as far as alcohol or drugs is concerned.

E: Do you use your old schoolhouse for dances and social events, or do you use just your church?

GB: No, the old reservation—the old schoolhouse that I was referring to where I went, of course, has been torn down some years now, and a new one was built out behind our church building that is existing now. We do have dances in that building on Saturday nights, a lot of times, to raise money for our various church functions and organizations. I also have a band that plays country music and rock and roll and all kinds of music, and we play for these functions. I've also produced about four or five country-western shows myself and gotten people that I know personally, amateurs, that come down and help me entertain for about three hours. We charge admission for this—or ask a donation, rather—and we've collected upwards around \$700 or so for these shows that we've put on.

E: What are your plans for Christmas? What Christmas activities will you have in your church?

GB: In our church in Gaffney, South Carolina, which is the headquarters in this area, we will have a Christmas dance. Everyone from the Mormon Church in this whole area—which would include Charlotte or Catawba or Spartanburg and Greenville—all the people in that area will converge in Gaffney, South Carolina, at what we call the steakhouse. We have a real big church building over there with a big auditorium, a gymnasium and we'll go there, and we'll have a band that

will be hired to come in and play music for us. We'll have a Christmas dance there.

E: I believe your grandfather is buried in the cemetery at the new church on the top of the hill here. Do you all—are you responsible for keeping up the cemetery or who does that?

GB: Actually, the people, I think, on the reservation themselves take the pride to keep it clean ordinarily. It is actually the responsibility of the church, as the property that he's buried on is church property rather than reservation property, even though all the people in the church, like I said, are mostly members of our Tribe. But it is mainly the responsibility of the church people to keep the cemetery clean.

E: Then you have an old cemetery, down near the old reservation, are you also responsible for keeping that?

GB: Yes, we haven't had anyone buried on the old cemetery, on the old reservation, so to speak, in quite some time. But we do—we meet every Fourth of July, and at least once, we hope, during the rest of the year, to clean off any excess grass and things that have grown up, and we try to keep it relatively neat down there. Although, I have heard it expressed from a lot of our older people recently that they would like to be buried on the old reservation when they die rather than up on that new place. Not that we have anything against the new place but—and I can understand it, I would kinda like that myself. I don't know, I was raised up on the old reservation and lot of my memories are there, and my people were born

and raised there and suffered through a lot of agonies, and they had a lot of joys there. I would like to be buried myself, I think, on the old reservation.

E: The old well is there, down the old reservation. It that was once used for the school and for the church, and, of course, the church is gone. Do you remember anything of your grandfather's burial?

GB: Yes, this wasn't very long ago, really, in 1959 if I'm not mistaken. I was in service at the time, in Washington D.C., and my mother called me one night and told me my grandfather passed away, so, of course, I got emergency leave and it was no problem, and I came right home to the funeral.

E: And who conducted it, and what sort of a service do you have for that?

GB: Well, usually, we don't have any ceremonial type of funerals, of course, as we did in the olden days. We modernized, more or less, as the church progresses along and people progress. I can't remember to be perfectly honest with you who was the man in charge at the time. There was a lot of people there and I was quite confused about what was going on, being sort of shocked about my grandfather's death, so to speak, but what I do know is that there was several speakers and that's the way we used to have. We used to have an opening song with just—we don't have any congregation singing, it's usually a chorus sung by some ladies or some brethren. And then we usually have two speakers, and they speak about the individual, of course, and the things pertaining to the gospel. I do know that the speakers that spoke commented quite a bit about my grandfather and his—things that he had done for the Tribe and helping the people to grow and come close together in relationship with the people around the reservation.

E: Your grandmother went with him to Salt Lake City on that wonderful trip and he came back very enthused about that. Do you remember them leaving and going on that trip?

GB: Yes, my grandfather, of course, was not a wealthy man—as I said, he was a farmer—and he just lived from year to year, of course. I never can remember the time when my grandfather didn't have a lot of food in the house to eat, or warm clothes. Maybe they weren't expensive, but they were warm. But him and grandmother were members of the church, of course, and we, as Mormons, believe in being married and sealed in a temple. And, of course, grandfather was not able to make this financially, but the missionaries of the Mormon Church that were in this area got together unbeknownst to my grandfather and they collected the money among themselves and sent it up here as a gift and requested that my grandfather and my grandmother go to Salt Lake City with this money to be sealed in the temple. And so, of course, they made the trip, and I know a lot of people have heard the tabernacle there in Salt Lake City, on Tabernacle Square, that you see the conferences from on TV at least twice a year. My grandfather was not an educated man but yet they called him in to speak before that whole congregation of people, which would have been thousands in there, and he was quite impressed about this, and the people that he spoke to out there were really proud of my grandfather as the leader of the church and as the leader of his people.

E: Did he ever make the trip to Washington?

GB: That I'm not really sure of. I'm not positive about that, the times that he was—I don't remember that he did before I went into service. Now, I was gone for nine years. He may have gone in the years that I was gone that I don't know about.

E: After your grandfather's death in 1959, your grandmother lived for a number of years. I'm sure she was very lonely. Do you remember that period of time?

GB: Yes, I can remember parts of it. I was in the Navy for another year and a half after my grandfather died, and after I came home my grandmother was quite lonely. I used to go talk with her and she made the remark to me that she was only waiting for the time when she could join my grandfather again. They, of course, came up through many years in marriage together and they were quite close as a couple, had a lot of respect for each other as individuals. She would spend some time with one of her sons or daughters, and then she would go spend a few other days with another son or daughter. But mainly, I think, she was just waiting for her time to go join my grandfather.

E: Now your grandmother was a full-blooded Indian, is that correct?

GB: That is correct.

E: And I understand that she was a leader in making pottery, that she made individual designs and many different types of pottery?

GB: Yes, she made things that she designed herself. Usually, when the ladies make pottery of that nature, they make what they refer to as a mold, and they try to keep that one particular one as years go along. They can refer back to it to make something of that same type again. But we have several ladies that still make pottery today here, actually, much more than some people realize. Of course, it is

becoming a lost art, because there are not as many people involved in it as there was when my grandmother was living and when I was just a young lad. But we do have, I know, at least three or four people that do a real good job of making our pottery yet. It is unique. You can go to all parts of the United States, to any other Tribe of Indians, and they'll have their own arts, but you will not find anything on the same make or order as we make our pottery here. It is unique in itself.

E: Will you tell me some of the women that make pottery now?

GB: Arzada Sanders is one. She's the wife of John Idle Sanders and the mother of Faye Sanders. She still makes pottery. Doris Blue, who married Andrew Blue, who was the son of my grandfather, she still makes pottery, quite a bit of it. She ships a lot of shipments out of state quite often. Alberta Ferrell, who is a descendant of the Canty family, she does a real good job of making pottery. She's teaching her children to make pottery now.

E: What about the market for selling this pottery? Do you have any troubles with selling it?

GB: No. The ones that make it, in fact, they find quite often that they have more demands than they are able to supply. I know sister Arzada Sanders tells me quite a lot of times that she gets more orders than she can supply. Doris Blue, one of my other aunts, she also says she has a lot of times more than she can fill.

E: Do they still fire it in the holes made in the earth, or do they fire it inside the house in ovens?

GB: No, we still make it the way we did years ago. You have to use two types of clay. My aunt would be able to tell you more about that than I would because that's more or less a woman's art than it is a man's. But, nevertheless, you use two types of clay. And across the river, where we get our clay there's two holes. We call them clay holes. You have to get clay from one hole and clay from another and you mix the two, and from this you form your pottery and then after it's formed into whatever shape you want it. It is dried out. Then, of course, it is baked in a furnace outside dug into the ground and covered over in various ways to see if the heat gets to it properly and then, of course, it's scraped and rubbed and one thing and another until the finished product comes about.

E: And now, these rubbing stones that each woman has their own, what happened to your grandmother's rubbing stones?

GB: Grandmother's rubbing stones that they use to smooth the pottery down after it is scraped to a real high sheen, was divided out. Some of them were given to— several of her daughters has a couple of them. Well, it was just mainly distributed out among her daughters that were left to still make pottery.

E: Now, your mother and father are both still living?

GB: Yes, they are.

E: And does your mother make any pottery?

GB: No, my mother is a textile worker, and she does not make any pottery.

E: And what does your father do?

GB: My father is not able to work at this time. His health is not to what he can work.

E: I don't believe there are any log cabins left on the reservation, are there now?

GB: Not to my knowledge. I can remember living in a log cabin when I was just a young boy. I would say maybe five or six years old or maybe a year younger than that. But I can remember, quite vividly—it sticks out in my memory—the one room was everything. It was a living room. It was a kitchen. It was a dining room or a den or whatever you would refer to them today, but we only had one room. My mother did the cooking over a fireplace. She had an old skillet. She used to sit on the coals, and she had put coals on top of it, and there she was making her bread. Of course, she had an old pot she used to hang in the fireplace, over the coals, where she cooked beans and other things that she would make in a pot.

E: Now how many brothers and sisters did you have living in that little old one-room cabin?

GB: I was the oldest and the first child of my mother and father, and I can remember one of my sisters. I believe I'm either two or three years older than she is. She was just a very small baby at the time, so at that particular time there were only two of us. I had only one sister.

E: Do you remember a doctor ever coming to your home or coming to the reservation to see patients?

GB: Yes, there was one doctor that they speak of, but I don't remember him. But Dr. Blackmon during my time, when I was a young lad, was our doctor. And he used to—of course, they don't like to do it anymore, you very seldom see any house calls anymore—but Dr. Blackmon was always forever coming to the reservation whenever we needed him. It was no problem, he was there. People would call and he would be down to see about them. I remember, when I was born—I

mean, I don't remember when I was born, pardon me—but I remember other children being born on the reservation not going to the hospital.

E: Dr. Hill, I believe, was the doctor before?

GB: Dr. Hill. Yes, he was one of the older doctors before my time.

E: Now, the log cabins are gone, but I notice a variety of different types of homes here. Would you tell me about that?

GB: Well, some of the members of the Tribe have been in service, and, of course, they were able to get G.I. loans and, when they first came out of service—a lot of you would remember—they got a certain amount of money for so long having gotten out of the service. And some of them used this money to build frame houses. Since that time, a lot of the men have learned trade outs in industry. Some of them do carpentry work, some paint, some work in construction work. Others, like myself, are machinists or pipe layers, and welders, electricians. And they have, in time, been able to build some nice brick homes. You have brick homes down there, you have homes that have asbestos siding, and, of course, you have regular old frame houses, and you have some older houses that date back quite a few years.

E: Your aunt, I believe, lives among the old houses down on the reservation, doesn't she?

GB: Yes, she does. My uncle, Major Beck, who was a carpenter, has not made a lot of money, as you would say, in his lifetime. But I admire this particular family and, since you mention it, I might mention the fact that they still heat the wood stove in the living room. Of course, the bedrooms aren't heated, as it was in the days

when I was a young boy, and he's never tried, to my knowledge, to get into plumbing or anything of this nature. I guess he's just content to live the old way and they seem to get along real well. But, as you've said before, the old well is still out in the front yard where they draw water from, to take their baths, and to do their cooking with.

E: But I notice how very clean they are. Now this home that you have, you're fortunate in buying it, how did you happen to find this home?

GB: Well, I was—when I came back from service—as I said, I spent nine years in the Navy. Of course, my G.I. Bill was good, and I would have loved to build a house on the reservation, but, unfortunately, you can't build on the reservation unless you build out of your pocket. In other words, you can't borrow money on a home because you can't mortgage it because it doesn't belong to anybody. It belongs to the Tribe as a whole. You couldn't mortgage any land to build a home because that land does not belong to any individual, it belongs to the Tribe as a whole. But through the G.I. Bill, I was fortunate enough to get the house that I'm living in now and to be able to buy it for myself.

E: Now with all the different kind of people, do you feel there's any class distinction among the people themselves?

GB: Not on our reservation there aren't. I don't know if it's because we're few in number or if it's just because we've been so close over the years. We keep—we talk about this in church quite a bit, how close we are as a people, and you can feel it. We have a lot of concern for each other. When you go to church on Sundays, of course, you'll find men there that are dressed up in relatively nice

clothes, with ties on. You'll also find those that wear clean work-type clothes, so to speak. But you'll find nobody looking down on any of the other members of the Tribe as far as social standing is concerned.

E: Do they help each other out in time of distress or trouble?

GB: Yes, the church particularly does, but also individual members of the Tribe do. I can remember when I was just a young lad that if a man's house burned down, in just a matter of a week or ten days the man would have his house back again. The Tribe would pitch in and just a short while they would have him something to get back in.

E: Mr. Willard Hayes, who was a schoolteacher here and had a Boy Scout troop, do you remember him?

GB: Yes, brother Hayes left here when I was just a young boy. I was not in his troop because I was not old enough. Now the cousins that are older than I—and, of course, brother Hayes is still living today, and he lives over in Gaffney, South Carolina. He's a patriarch in our church, and I speak to brother Hayes quite a bit. In fact, I invited him down to one of our church meetings not long ago to talk. His subject of talk was his days on the reservation, and how he loved my grandfather and my grandmother, how they helped him as a man, and how he used to teach the Indian children, the hard times they used to give him sometimes, and some of the good times that he has with them also.

E: How much land is left on the reservation proper now?

GB: I believe the size of the reservation is about 625 square acres, if I'm not mistaken. Approximately in that area, anyway.

E: The people, then, do not own those homes on the reservation. They do not own the land. Is that correct?

GB: That's correct. They can't have a deed to the land. Of course, the homes in which they live, most of them are theirs because they built them by themselves out their own hands, and no one else in the Tribe would ever dare or think of trying to take it away from any other individual. The only requirement for building on the reservation—if you're a member of the Tribe, of course—is not to get in the backyard or front yard of somebody else that's already there. Of course, they would use discretion in selecting a place, but we only have about maybe fifteen families living on the reservation at the present time. There's lots of room where other people can and I'm sure will build homes in the future.

E: Do you remember as a boy hunting or fishing, or the animals? Were there plenty of fish here as a boy, and has that changed today?

GB: Yes, unfortunately, it has. I can remember the old Catawba River. We used to get quite a few meals out of there by fishing for the catfish and the perch along the creeks. But, unfortunately, as time has progressed along, they've gotten polluted. We can't even eat the fish out of there now. You can't hardly even stand the smell of them as you catch them. So, as far as eating the fish out of the rivers anymore, it's out of the question. We still hunt for squirrels and rabbits and birds and things of this nature around here, but we don't do it so much as we did when I was a boy, because in those days we did it strictly to get something to eat. Now, as you've noted and as you've said before, they're better off financially and socially than they were in those days. Of course, anything that we kill now—I

guess it's an instinct, more or less. We don't shoot anything for fun. If we kill any animals now, we still eat them. If we don't eat them ourselves, we give them to a family that has need of that particular meat.

E: Are there any deer on the reservation now? Have you seen any of them?

GB: I have heard some reports of deer in the last several years in the river bottoms. I don't know if these deer have migrated up from the lower part of the state or if they come from over across the river where a man, I think, had a game reserve. But I have had reports of several deer down on the river. They are not very prevalent. It would be only a few.

E: Do you remember any of the stories of the flood of 1916, when the river bridge was washed away and you Indians ferried people back and forth across the river? Maybe your father or your uncle had part in that?

GB: I can remember my uncles and my mother and dad telling me about those times, yes, and about the destruction it caused and how the crops were wiped out and how they had to get people back and forth across the river on the ferry. Of course, this ferry, you know, has been discontinued now, because they have a bridge across there. But for many years brother Early Brown, who is a very prominent member of our Tribe and also served in World War II, ran that ferry. He retired from the county government as operator of that ferry. For many years we used to ferry people backward and forward across.

E: All of the ferries, I believe, are gone now. There used to be two, is that correct?

GB: Yes, there was one actually on the reservation and it was gone before my time really. Then the one that Early Brown operated was further down the river and was operated by the county—or the state, rather.

E: Who in your group now would have Indian heads and any Indian materials that you used to use? Anyone of your Tribe preserve those kinds of things?

GB: You mean as far as the arrowheads or the actual weapons that we used?

E: Arrowheads, tomahawks, anything.

GB: No, unfortunately, through the years these things have gotten away from us. We have probably a few people that would have a few relics around as to the type of things that we used back in the old olden days, but for the most part I don't think that you would find very many of them.

E: Now where are you people scattered around here, the reservation or close to reservation? Tell me where else they're scattered over York County.

GB: Well, we have some people that have moved to Charlotte, North Carolina. Some of our Indian people of the Harris family and their children, of course, have gone to school up there and have gotten married. They still come to visit with us and some of their people are still living down here. We have some people that even moved out west to Salt Lake City. In fact, one of Chief Blue's granddaughters just moved out there. My first cousin, Lily Blue, who is a daughter of Nelson Blue, moved out to Salt Lake City, and brother Fred Sanders lived in Salt Lake City for quite a few years. As far as right around here in York County, we have people that are scattered out around Fort Mill, Rock Hill, Chester, and other places.

E: What about Lancaster? Any in Lancaster?

GB: I don't believe we have any actual members of the Tribe living in Lancaster itself, I don't believe.

E: Well, you have no idea how many there are because they're all very scattered, aren't they?

GB: Well, in the tribal roll, I believe we have about four hundred people, if I'm not mistaken.

E: Do you keep a tribal roll?

GB: No, I don't. We don't have a chief anymore. We have what you call a tribal council. Brother Fred Sanders and myself have been together in the last couple of years tryna get a little few things going for the Tribe. And as I've stated before, I've got a bunch of boys and girls that I've gotten together and taught a few dances to, and we've been going out and entertaining some out-of-state people once in a while. We've gone to things of this nature and performed dances for them.

E: You were at the Rock Hill Mall last week, meeting the chief from the Cherokee Indians. I'd be interested in hearing your impressions of that meeting.

GB: Well, Chief John Crow, who is a very fine member of the Cherokee Indian Tribe, came down with several other boys from the Cherokee reservation. He and his wife brought down John John, who is Little Bear on the reservation, and they had John Standing Deer and another young man with whom they performed the ceremonial dances. There was a treaty that was enacted many years ago which even he wasn't aware of and I had forgotten about it, if it ever existed, but they wanted to make some kind of publicity out of it. We had made a treaty with the

Cherokees that they would not cross the Catawba River ever again into our territory here. They brought this up in an interview on TV with Chief Crow and myself, and Chief Crow said he was unaware of it, and he wasn't here to cause any trouble. Of course, I realized this and I talked to him and I told the reporters that there was nothing but love and understanding between our people and the Cherokees now and had been that way for about two hundred years. We have some people on the reservation down here that are from Cherokee. We have intermarried some people down with the Catawba Indians and so, for this reason as well as others, we have nothing but respect and love for each other as a people.

E: Is some of your pottery sold up in the Cherokee reservation?

GB: Yes, we have a few pieces that are sold—we take up there sometimes. Like sister Doris Blue—now, she takes some of our pottery up there to the Owl family, who are members of the Cherokee Tribe, and they in turn give them to some of the souvenir shops and they sell it. But, for the most part, we don't have a real big market for them there. We could probably sell a lot more than we do if we would get up there and get somebody to outlet it for us.

E: Where did you get the colorful costume you had on at the mall the other day?

GB: That was entirely made up by myself and my wife. The bonnet I had made completely by hand. Each feather was individually wrapped and sewn into place. The jacket that I had made was made for me by my wife to wear when the weather was a little cold when I was out doing this particular thing. The leggings and all is hide that was taken from animals that was actually tanned and I just

used it to wrap it around my legs. The moccasins that I bought, I had them ordered and sent from the people down in Seminole country in Florida.

E: It was a very colorful, interesting program you're putting on out there. What superstitions or old stories do you remember about your Tribe?

GB: Well, down on the reservation is an old place referred to as a deer lick. I guess, for those who may not know what a deer lick is, but it's a place where the deer used to come and the salt would come from the earth and they would lick this, just like animals do today. The story goes that a lot of the spirits of the olden Indians used to come back there from time to time and congregate around, I guess, looking for maybe some of the deer they missed when they were living. But we as young people used to be quite afraid to go down by this place late at night, when it was dark, because we thought maybe some of the spirits of some of the old warriors may get us if we get in their way or scare their deer off. But we were quite respectful of this place, so to speak. Some of the older Indian people have told of tales of seeing and hearing things on the reservation that—I don't they put a lot of stock in, most of us—but these stories get around from time to time regardless of what locale you may live in.

E: Do you have many crippled or deformed people on your reservation?

GB: To the best of my knowledge, we only have about two. Herbert Blue has a son who was this way at birth and brother Pete Brown has a young boy that had some problem with his feet. But other than these two, we as a people have been very fortunate. We've not had any deformed people or anything through birth or disease otherwise. We've been very fortunate in our health here.

E: Thank you very much.

[End of interview]

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