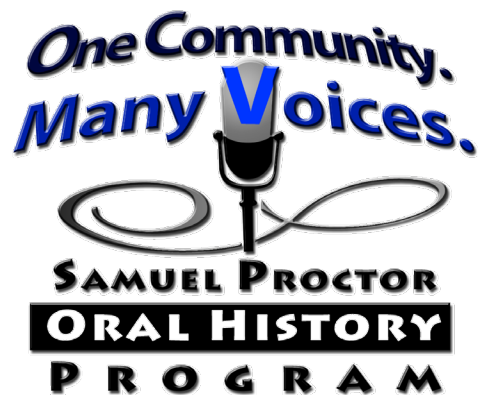


# Gerald Parks

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)  
CAT-184**

**Interview by:**

**Emma Reid Echols  
November 9, 1992**



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**CAT 184 Gerald Parks**  
**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)**  
**Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols on November 9, 1992**  
**6 minutes | 4 pages**

**Abstract:** Gerald Parks, a detention manager at a detention center in Rock Hill, discusses the suicide of Kevin Ferrell, a former inmate of the York County Jail and later the detention center. He speaks about the events surrounding the man's death and his funeral. Parks ends the interview by briefly commenting on a land settlement in the area that he hopes will be settled soon.

**Keywords:** [Catawba Nation; Kevin Ferrell; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Communities; Politics and government]

**SAMUEL PROCTOR**  
**ORAL HISTORY**  
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CAT 184

Interviewee: Gerald Parks

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: November 9, 1992

E: This is Emma Echols, 5150 Sharon Road, Charlotte, North Carolina. I'm working on the oral history of the Catawba Indians with the University of Florida, Dr. Sam Proctor. It is November 9. I'm visiting in the home of Mr. Parks. Mr. Parks, will you tell us your full name and your address?

P: It's Gerald Parks. 1379 Oakdale Road, Rock Hill.

E: How long were you with the department? You were stationed in York first and then in Rock Hill?

P: No, I was with the sheriff's department for thirteen years, but it was all here in Rock Hill.

E: Not many people—young boys—have committed suicide in your recollection, have they?

P: No, not during my term as detention manager at the detention center.

E: Now, I'm interested in the young boy Kevin, who was in school with me. I was his teacher. And then, as a young man, he was married and he committed murder. He murdered the man who was visiting his wife and the little children. Now, he was first of all in the jail in York. Just tell me what you remember about Kevin.

P: Well, basically, most of the time that Kevin was back in York County was spent at the old county jail. I can't tell you too much about that, except he was cook over there and well-liked by all the law enforcement officers. When we opened the new detention center in 1981, they closed the old county jail and all of the prisoners plus the trustee, Kevin, came over to the detention center in Rock Hill.

During the time that he was there he was quiet, excellent worker. We never had to go back to check on him. If he had a job to do he did it. As I said, he was well liked, but really, I didn't get to know him all that well in the short time he was there.

E: Were you surprised when one day he didn't check in and had disappeared?

P: Yes, I was.

E: What measure did you all take to try to find him?

P: Well, it's mandatory when someone doesn't show up you have to list them as an escapee. After all, he was a state inmate. He was reported as an escapee and, to the extent of the search, the sheriff's department was looking for him. Since I was with detention and not the sheriff's department or the officers, I can't say just how far the search went.

E: But instead of being in Rock Hill, he had gone back to York. The body—he was found in the old garage in York.

P: That's correct.

E: A number of the officials in the law enforcement attended his funeral. Did you get to go to his funeral?

P: Yes, I did.

E: You remember who conducted the funeral?

P: I truthfully cannot remember—

E: Probably Carson Blue, maybe. And he was buried in the cemetery next to the church?

P: The Mormon church.

E: What did Kevin look like? He was a young boy, very slight in build, a real Indian?

P: Well, basically, you know, I never paid that much attention to whether he looked like an Indian or not. To me, it's just like a Black person—I don't really pay any attention to that part of it. But, Kevin, he was slightly built. I don't imagine he was much taller than I am. They say he was just quiet. One of those that you never hear anything from.

E: I think you all did a special thing for them in York. He had his own little room, back of it.

P: In York I couldn't tell you what kinda accommodations he had.

E: Then he was moved to Rock Hill to the new facility and that's when you knew him.

P: Right.

E: Have you known any of the other Indians except this one?

P: No, I—well, Mr. Harris. I can't remember his first name. He was never in the detention center, but he used to come up there every once in a while with some family problems. I believe he's dead now.

E: Yes, I think he is. Well, all of this land where your home is, and all this area was once Indian land. We'll be glad to see the settlement, won't we, settled once and for all?

P: Hopefully it is settled.

E: We hope that too.

[End of interview]

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