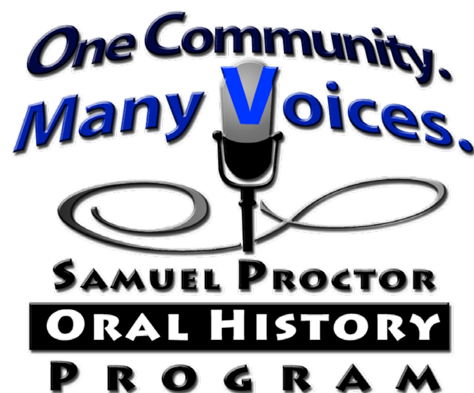
Marcile Elizabeth Blue Cabaniss

Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-049

Interview by:

Jerry Lee
August 15, 1972



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1 hour, 8 minutes | 35 pages

Abstract: Marcile Cabaniss describes her life growing up in Rock Hill. Her mother was in poor health when she was a child, so she carried out many chores and she recalls her father's stories of his childhood on his family's farm. She then discusses the Catawba history programs at the old reservation's school at night that taught traditions such as marriage rituals. She especially goes into detail about the Bear Dance and what she remembers of her grandfather's yodeling. Cabaniss also talks about the death of her uncle when he was a young boy. Then, Cabaniss recalls her experience being one of very few Catawba people in public school and her stance on racial equality. She describes her marriage and her promotion to a typically male-held job during the war. Cabaniss discusses the Mormon church on the reservation. She also recounts the night the reservation had to vote for termination and the high stress that came with it. Cabaniss ends with one last story of her grandfather with the time he and Mormon elders had a run in with a mob of White men.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; Chief Samuel Taylor Blue; South Carolina; Family histories; Discrimination]

Samuel Proctor Oral History Program University of Florida

CAT 049
Interviewee: Marcile Elizabeth Blue Cabaniss
Interviewer: Jerry Lee
Date of Interview: August 15, 1972

L: My name is Jerry Lee and I'm interviewing Marcile Cabaniss who is a Catawba Indian. This is being done for the Oral History Program of the University of Florida. Today's date is August 15, 1972. What is your full name, Ms. Cabaniss?

C: Marcile Elizabeth Blue Cabaniss.

L: Would you tell us where we're at right now?

C: About one mile from the Bypass 21.

L: And how far away from Rock Hill?

C: Three miles from the city limits.

L: And this is considered the new reservation?

C: That's right.

L: Do you own your home here?

C: Yes.

L: What part Indian are you?

C: Oh, when you figure it out, it would be about a nickel or a nickel's equivalent.

L: Who were your parents?

C: Herbert Blue and Addie Mae Blankenship Blue.

L: Do you know who their parents was?

C: My father's father was Samuel Taylor Blue and his mother was Louisa Blue. My mother's parents were Lula Wingate and her father was William Blankenship. They were not Indians.

L: Have your full father and your step always lived in this general area?

C: Yes. Except my mother's people they did not live around here. They came from North Carolina.

L: Do you speak the Indian language?

C: No, I don't.

L: Does any of your family speak it now?

C: No.

L: What year were you born?

C: February 15, 1924.

L: And where were you born?

C: At the Highland Park Mill Building.

L: In Rock Hill?

C: Rock Hill.

L: Did you ever live on the reservation?

C: No, not until they made a settlement. The federal government bought the land and we built out there then.

L: But you were born in Rock Hill?

C: I was born in Rock Hill and attended Rock Hill public school.

L: Do you know the address that you were born at? On what street?

C: I know where the house is, but I can't think of the street. I believe it's called Fifty-First Street. But they changed streets around so, I really don't remember whether it's the same name today or not.

L: Who all lived at this house?

C: My mother and father and sister.

L: What kind of home was this?

C: It's just a four-room frame house.

L: Have running water in it?

C: No or—I think they got their water from a pump up on Jones Avenue. The Mill Company had pumps in different places, and they had to go get the water in buckets and bring it. And they had outside toilets. They didn't have inside toilets back in those days.

L: What's the earliest you can remember of your life? Living at home? Was that the earliest incident that you can remember?

C: Well, I guess the earliest that—I doubt it was around two or three years old, 'cause my brother was born in 1927 and I think I remember about the time he was born and playing. We had moved from where I was originally born down to another house closer to the mill on the—

L: This house had indoor plumbing?

C: Well, we had a spigot out in the backyard where we got our water. In fact, several houses on the mill village got their water from this one spigot. And then our house was the first to have a inside bathroom.

L: What kind of work did your father do then?

C: He worked at the Highland Park Mill.

L: Do you have any idea what kind of money he made?

C: He didn't make too much because—well, we didn't have the finest, but we got along.

L: Did your mother work?

C: No, she didn't work. My mother's health was bad.

L: Have you ever heard your father talking about living on the reservation? [inaudible 5:28] or—

C: Well, I used to remember hearing him talk about how he used to fix the farm when he was a boy and how he used to go out with his grandmother and they—we'd call it pot trade, trading back in those days. They'd take a wagon and leave early in the morning to go down around Richburg and different places and they'd trade their pottery off for just anything that they could get, even if it was food, maybe clothing. In fact, back in those days, I've heard him talk about—in fact, I've seen some of them go up to Winthrop College and they sell their pottery up there and trade their pottery up there and trade their pottery to the college girls for clothes and then their children would wear these clothes. They have taken their pottery from around in the town from house to house and trade to people or sell to the people. Any way of making more money to kind of help. My mother didn't make the pottery because she wasn't Indian.

L: Did your father ever tell you about his father or anyone earlier?

C: Well, his father was the former Chief Blue, who had several names. One was Thunderbird. He was called Chief Thunderbird, and I remember they had a schoolteacher taught school down there for a number of years and he used to take these young folks and teach 'em a lot of old Indian customs. And at school closing, they used to have some real good programs and we used to go down and attend at school closing for them. I'll never forget one program they put on,

they showed how the Indians used to get married and how they'd choose their partners.

L: How did they do that?

C: Well, it’s like I said, I was just a child, and I don't remember how they choose their partner. But when they married, they put their backs to each other when the ceremony **began** and then the young people would give dances and give what they called the Bear Dance and several different dances. But I'm not familiar with them because I never was taught the dances. I never really took an interest in wanting to learn.

L: Did you ever hear any old songs or—

C: Well, Grandaddy used to sing a lot of old songs. In fact, Grandaddy used to play the harp. He wasn’t educated, but he used to play Red Wings. I know you've heard that. He used to play that on the harp. And he would play the harp and he’d kind of yodel and he'd dance. He’d do the Bear Dance.

L: How'd the bear dance go? Can you describe it at all?

C: No, I’ve seen it but I can't actually remember exactly how it started or—

L: Was this just the Tribe’s thing?

C: I don't know. He'd start off putting his hands to his mouth and going [Yodeling] and he'd carry on and dance like.

L: Dance around in a circle like? Around the fire?

C: Well, around the fire and he'd have his tomahawk, holding it, and have his hand out, walking like so, and have his feathers on.

L: Do you remember any other stories about your grandfather?

C: Well, I remember hearing the story when his son was killed. My grandaddy was a farmer and then he sold a lot of wood also, and he had bought a load of wood to town that morning. And he had told some boys not to be going out hunting because there was quite a few men out hunting that day. I don't remember what time of year it was, but it must've been in the fall. So, one of his youngest sons wanted to go after Grandaddy left. And he came up and he asked my dad to go, and Daddy told him no. Said, "You know what Pa told us. We couldn't be going out." So, he said that a little bit and he heard his brother walking off and he was singing—humming the song, "God Be with You 'Til We Meet Again." And, he said, it wasn't too long after that he didn't hear him anymore.

L: What was his son's name?

C: I'm trying to think. Harvey. And so he said a little while after that someone came running and told him that he had been shot. And, from the way that I have understood Daddy and them to talk, that he went up the tree to run out the squirrels and the men shot him out. So, at this time my grandmother was expecting another child, and Daddy said that she'd run. That he'd never forget that she broke and run and got to him, and she brought him home, and she—well, my grandaddy had got just about, from what I can remember, they said up to where a Wiley's store used to be downtown in Fort Mill. And they got word to him there that he was needed at home. And he turned and went back and there he found what had happened. Grandaddy wanted to take revenge at this man. And he—

L: What man shot him? Was he a White man?

C: Well, they were some of the other men of the Tribe.

L: Some of the Indians shot him.

C: And so, he said that he really had a great fight with the devil. And he went to the woods, and he knelt and prayed. Well, at that time, Charles Ray **Kallus** was mission president for the church. And they wired him into staying, and he wired back Grandaddy back and told him not to do anything that he would be sorry for. So, he didn't harm this man. He says, at that time, he wanted to kill him. Which wasn't anything but ol' Satan tempting him to do it. But he lived and been here about—I think he was 'round eighty-six or eighty-seven when he died. Granddaddy.

L: What kind of a man was Chief Blue? You said he wasn't very educated.

C: Well, he wasn't educated at all. In fact, what learning he had he obtained from his daughter, who would sit at night by the fire, or when they got through with the work during the day, she would read to him, and he would memorize. And he memorized scriptures and numbers. In fact, he learned to tell time. He could tell time, but he never had any education. In fact, he never went anywhere except maybe had went anywhere except maybe to Gaffney or maybe to Society Hill down around Columbia. He went to Columbia on several occasions to try to get help for the people of Catawba.

L: This was while he was Chief?

C: While he was Chief. And, at one time the state of South Carolina did pay the Indians a little—what they call a little money—about once a year.

L: Do you know how much this amounted to or—

C: I just really don't remember. I mean, I think they quit doing that. I don't remember what year it was. I remember I was working when everything got in at one time, but it wasn't too much. I don’t remember how much they gave for what they called a head or a family. I just don't remember. In fact, the Indians used to go over to a little place called Van Wyck over across the river and back when I was a child. We used to cross what you'd call a ferry. The ferry used to be located down there near **Van Wyck** and they'd go over there and they'd buy food, a lot of clothing and they'd take up their money and then when their pay day, they called it, would come and the government—the state—paid them this little allotment, people would go then and pay for what they had got.

L: How did the Indians receive this money? Cash or did they mail it to ‘em?

C: Probably, they—no they used to have an agent that used to look after it. I remember some of the agents that they used to hire. One of ‘em, a Mr. White—in fact, he has a couple daughters that's still living. And their daddy used to be agent at one time for the Catawba Indians. And then they used to have Mr. Tom Flowers, who I remember better than any who was agent, for a number of years. And the state appointed these men to kind of look the affairs and they paid them off every year. And then they had one called Mr. Windsor. They paid these men a little salary. Just how much, I don't know. And then they paid the doctor bill back before all this land settlement was made. They appointed a doctor for the Indian Tribe. Dr. W. R. Blackman was their doctor for years, back ever since about 1918, 1919, he was their doctor. But then his health got bad, and they appointed

Dr. Patton, and he was their doctor. And I think today he's still a lot of 'em's doctor.

L: I'd like to ask you about Sam Blue's father. Do you know any about his mother and father?

C: His father, from what I can understand, about the early Sam Blue from Fort Mill [inaudible 18:09] I understand that he used to be a carpenter. His mother was Martha Jane—now, who she was I really don't know. She was married a lifetime for a while, I believe, and she died, I think about 1921. I don't remember a thing about her. I've seen her pictures, but I don't know.

L: How did Lee Phillips get involved with the Indians?

C: Well, from what I can understand, Lee Phillips's mother was Sam Blue's enemy. So, she was supposed to be my grandfather's father from Fort Mill's daughter. Lee Phillips would either be Sam Blue's grandson or great grandson, one.

L: Where are these people living at now?

C: I understand that Lee Phillips, at one time, was living in Illinois. He used to work for Lenell Orenstein, and he may still be working for him. I think he had a pretty good job. One time he worked here for a local farm. He knew today.

L: You were saying in the story about Chief Blue's mother speaking the language and—

C: Well, I've heard Daddy talk about she used to stay with 'em and they used to sit around the open fire at night and they'd talk to each other in the Indian language. And he said he often felt that they had something to say—talk over things they didn't want the other members of the family to know about, they talked in the

Indian language, because none of Chief Blue's children, nor his wife, could speak the language.

L: Well, did Chief Blue, Sam Blue, did he ever address the General Assembly? In Columbia?

C: On many occasions, in Columbia. He tried to get help for the people staying here.

L: Did it ever do any good?

C: Well, I think it was his intent in his years that he fought for ‘em, and he made so many appearances and went down for ‘em. If hadn't been for him, I don't think that they would have ever come as close to getting what they did get.

L: How did Chief Blue get back and forth to Columbia in those days?

C: Well, back in those days they usually was several of ‘em that went. Someone would carry him in a car. I just don’t know. They paid for it theirselves, I guess.

L: He never did have to make trips on horseback or in a wagon?

C: Not that I know of.

L: Do you remember anything else about your parents or your grandparents or forefathers? Any other little stories?

C: No, they all—Granddaddy used to be in a lot of plays, and he used to go throughout the town and make personal appearances to schools, around school children. And a lot of ‘em have known Chief Blue for this. He used to go, and he'd talk Indian language to ‘em. He would dance for ‘em.

L: Did he try to pass this language on to his sons?

C: Well, it used to be a man that used to come down and visit with him in the summer and he wrote a book. But Chief Blue's house burned, and I think a lot of his things that he had got burned up at that time with it. I don't know. Well I feel sure he tried to, but back then, I guess they was just like they are today. They really wasn't interested in it.

L: Did Sam Blue ever go to school a day in his life?

C: Not that I know of.

L: I would like to get back to you now. When you were just a child did you ever play any Indian type games, or do anything that was particular of the Indians?

C: No, I don't guess so.

L: Do you remember when you first started school?

C: Yes. I went to school down on Jones Avenue. It's called High Park School. There we had the schoolteachers. I had three schoolteachers when I was just a little first, second, or third grade. Well, when I was a little girl, I couldn't talk very plain. Back then, they thought I was tongue-tied. My first-grade teacher that I went to— in fact, I stayed in first grade two years on account of this, being tongue tied. My first grade teacher was a Miss Long, Ms. Annie Long. She taught at Central School for a number of years and then they transferred her the second year I was in the first grade, I had a Mrs. Thompson as a teacher. And then my second-grade teacher was a Gradley and then Ms. Kershaw. She was the sister-in-law of late Dr. Twitty, who used to be an eye doctor here in Rock Hill. And my third-grade teacher was Miss Mary Moore, who died just a few months ago. And after I finished the third grade there, we moved Highland Park over to East White

Street, where the old turn table used to be. In fact, daddy left the Highland Park and went to work at the bleacher in 1936.

L: I'd like to ask you were you the only Indian child in school? Catawba?

C: No. In fact, I think my sister Virginia was the only first White—I mean first Indian child that ever attended public school here in Rock Hill. I understand that some of the rest of them had tried years before her but never could seem to get in. I know that's sad.

L: Did your sister—Virginia?

C: Mmhm.

L: Did she have trouble gettin' in school?

C: Not that I know of.

L: Did you have any trouble?

C: No. They used to holler at us and call us little Indians, but we was taught not to pay it any attention.

L: Who would holler at you?

C: Oh, some of the kids. They'd think they'd would make us mad.

L: Did you ever tell your teachers about 'em worrying you or—

C: No, I used to have a little boy who used to walk me to school, and he used to want to fight 'em if they'd call me names.

L: Was he an Indian?

C: No. He was Neal Green, Paul Green's brother. I'll never forget.

L: Well, how far did you live from school?

C: Not too far.

L: A matter of blocks?

C: Yeah. It was a nice walk when I wasn't tired for it. And then I walked from East White Street to Central, which was on Black Street. Then we moved down on Green Street and we stayed there and I finished grammar school. Well, we had junior high school at that time at Central School and Congressman Gettys was my principal when I went to Central School.

L: What year was this?

C: I was a long time. I finished high school in [19]42.

L: Well, that's close enough.

C: I finished Rock Hill High in [19]43.

L: You did graduate?

C: Mmhm. But Mr. Gettys was the principal when I went to Central School.

L: Then, had very many Indians graduated from high school at the time?

C: Not when I finished. I was the only one finished that year and it would have been one before me which finished, I believe, in 1940, which was Mildred Blue, a cousin of mine. She finished in 1940, and I was the second one to finish high school.

L: Well, when you had to fill out your papers and registration and all this, did you list yourself as being Indian? You know the categories, like White, Negro—

C: Yeah, I just don't remember. Back then, I had registered several years ago and then I—after the registration run out, I didn't register any more until this year. And they didn't ask. They just marked it theirselves when I went to register.

L: Did you ever have any trouble whatsoever at school because of you being an Indian?

C: No.

L: Did any of your friends have any trouble?

C: Not that I know of.

L: Did you study about the Catawba Indians in school?

C: Some of 'em, but no one never made really delight on 'em.

L: They didn't make what?

C: Delight. I mean, you know, make very many remarks about 'em.

L: Well, did what you study about the Indians in school, did it seem correct and favorable to the Indians?

C: Well, naturally Indians today still feel like people owes them a living. But, the way I feel—from my own viewpoint—I feel like that if they didn't want to keep it just like the government when they made a settlement with them in [19]61, or whatever year; I don't remember the exact date. They had all this land and a lot of 'em done away with their land and whereas they could have kept it. So, if they couldn't have kept it in [19]61, how could they expect our forefathers to have kept it?

L: When you were going to school, did you ever get any free supplies?

C: Yes. The state paid for our books. The way we did this was when we had the agent, we would go to the agent and tell him what we needed. But, now our supply fees, my parents paid for that. But my books were paid for by the state.

L: One of the people that I've interviewed said that at one time they had to go to the White Spring Company.

C: Back years ago, it used to be the London Cleanery and we would go, and Mr. Tom Flowers would go over there, and he'd get our books and our supplies for us.

L: And the state would pay for ‘em?

C: The state paid for ‘em and then, after London Cleanery sold out to White, well, it continued. Now, but when all this government came about, all that stopped. From what I can understand.

L: But the government did pay for it?

C: They did pay for my books. But, when I got into high—I mean all, any extras, like money that had to be paid, like supply fees and things—that, my parents paid for that.

L: Did you get any other kind of government support?

C: No.

L: No annual?

C: No, I paid for my own. In fact, I didn't even buy an annual when I finished school because Daddy—my mother's health was failing, and he had a lot of expense, so I didn't even buy one.

L: Was he getting any kind of support from the government at the time for your family?

C: No. No, I don't think he was when I finished school. I'm not sure. I think they got this little money ‘til they made the settlement, which wasn't too much. It couldn't

been over twenty-five or thirty dollars. I just don't remember exactly what it was. And that's not much if you consider a year’s time.

L: Can you, or your sister and brothers—can you make any pottery or are you skilled in any Indian art?

C: No, not that I know of. I've got a nephew that made a little pot one time.

L: Who was that?

C: Roger Emmanuel.

L: Roger **Trimnal**?

C: Mmhm, years ago.

L: Did you ever try to learn or have any interest in it?

C: I never did have no interest in it.

L: Do you have any Indian decorations in your home today?

C: I've got some pieces of pottery that we made. I’ve got some of **those.** I’ve got two candle holders that were made by Arzada Sanders. I thought I'd keep these and then I've got an ashtray that was made years ago.

L: How about in your father’s home when you lived with him? Did y’all have any Indian decorations?

C: Just pieces of pottery. That was all.

L: He happen to have a bow or bow and arrow that was handed down, or a tomahawk?

C: Well, my granddaddy used to make bows and arrow, but we didn't have one.

L: What did he do with his bows and arrows he made?

C: Well, he'd sell ‘em.

L: Do you feel like you have a kindred to other Indian Tribes? That you have a closeness to other Indians even though they aren't Catawbas?

C: I never really thought too much about it.

L: Would you be friendlier or could take up easier with another Indian—

C: Yes.

L: —or a White person?

C: Yeah, in fact during the war I met a couple of Indian boys when they were having maneuvers in through here in [19]42, [19]43 along there—during the war. And they were from the Blackfoot Tribe up in Wisconsin, and they used to come and visit us, and when they went overseas, I wrote to 'em. And they were real nice men—I mean boys, and I enjoyed writing to them. One of 'em, his name was Black Bear.

L: Black Bear?

C: Uh huh. Really, I think they tried to have their names by—well, you know, the old Indian legend used to be that when a newborn was born that the first thing the mother would see, they'd named their child that.

L: Is this Catawba legend?

C: Well, that's just an old Indian legend. But I do know I have a nephew that was born during a snowstorm, and they named him Snow.

L: This was Roger **Trimnal**?

C: Roger Snow and he was named what they named him because he was born during a snowstorm, and that was just an old Indian legend. Now, it may have

been true because you do find that throughout history that Indian's names have been known as Running Deer and things like that.

L: Did you name any of your children Indian names?

C: No, I sure didn't.

L: Why?

C: Well, I just didn't.

L: You thought off the names that you wanted to name 'em and it just never occurred—

C: In fact, I don't have any Indian name myself.

L: How about the other Indians that lived down on the reservation when you were growing up? I know you lived in town, but did they have a pretty good education and a pretty good school to go to?

C: Well, as far as I remember, they went to school back—they had one teacher that taught maybe six or seven grades. And they would have a little substitute to kind of help you.

L: Do you know the teachers' names?

C: The ones that used to teach? Jim Davis who now lives in Salt Lake City— he was one of the teachers that I remember that used to help these kids a lot.

L: Is he a Mormon?

C: Yeah. Elsie Blue used to kind of help him. She was in the highest grade and she would kind of help him with the, you know, lower grades. As the years went by, well, they had Willard Hayes, who was a Mormon also. He taught school down there for a number of years.

L: He’s from Gaffney?

C: Mmhm. Then they had Ethel Smith who came here from Columbia, and she helped Willard Hayes teach. She taught the lower grades. Well then, they quit having school down at the old reservation and they built the school up on the other lands they'd lost. And, they had, two rooms, I believe, and all the children. They had a lunchroom there for the schoolhouse and, from what I could understand, they had a couple of teachers there. One of those teachers, I understand, used a Negro, a Robinson. And I don’t remember the other one.

L: Well, have you ever heard any of the Indians say that they didn’t get a good education ‘cause they were—

C: Well, I hear them gripe that if they didn’t get it, that the government still owes ‘em, that the state still owes ‘em.

L: What's your reaction to this?

C: Well, I don't have no hard feelings towards the state or nobody else. Thank God, I've had to work for everything I ever got anyhow.

L: You feel like the other Indians had just the same chance as you did?

C: They got the same chance as anybody else. You find that among any nationality.

L: When did you get married? After you came out of high school?

C: Oh, I got married in July 1943.

L: Who did you marry?

C: William Forrest Cabaniss who was born in Shelby, North Carolina, but they moved to York, South Carolina. And he worked at the bleachery, and I went to work at the bleachery in 1942 of October. The year I got out of school—I went to

work that following summer. I went to a couple places accepting applications when I got out of high school. I really didn't care too much about getting to work that summer. So, I went with a lady to care for her son at the hospital named **Marilyn Reid**. I used to babysit for this lady, and I went over to the bleachery to put in my application, and I went to work over there, and I quit in October, about October 22, 1942. And I worked there ‘til the first of 19[47]. January 1, 1947. I quit, and my husband was stationed in Columbia, and I went there and stayed with him. Then our son was born there.

L: When did you go back work at the bleachery?

C: I went back twenty years ago.

L: And you're still working there now?

C: Still working there.

L: When will you retire?

C: I'm planning on working ‘til I'm sixty-five if they’ll keep me that long. If my health holds up.

L: When you first started to work, did you receive the same pay as anyone else would?

C: I received the same pay and in fact I had—

L: And the **pay increases that—**

C: I mean, if I—I changed jobs. I first went to work on the print plant and then I went to work in, back then, in the coral shop office. And, then a job came open back here in the ward, they had—well, they still have what you call service community day. I just jokingly said to my foreman in the coral shop that I liked—they had

girls on back then. One of the girls was joining the WACs in the group, and I jokingly said, “I'd love to have her job,” because it was going through the plant. So really, I thought, well, I never had the opportunity to get. So, it so happened I was sick on a Friday. Daddy came back and got me, and said they said to come ask me, if I want that job, I had an interview at nine o'clock. So, I **crossed the plant to** another part of the plant. So, I went, and he told me that it was three more that was wanting the job and who had had more experience in that type of work than I had. And that he wouldn't **give the** job. But I got the job and I was, what they call “lock safety, pull back” for about three years during the war, which was a man's job. I got along with the people real well.

L: Did your husband's people have any comments about him marrying an Indian girl?

C: Not that I know of. If they had, they kept to themselves.

L: How about your people? Did they have any objections?

C: No.

L: Did you have any trouble getting the marriage license, or getting married?

C: I think when my husband went to York, they wouldn't sell a marriage license, so he went to Chester and got it.

L: Is that the only place that Indians could—White-Indians marriages can be performed—in Chester? Under license, that is.

C: Well, they used to say they wouldn't sell them to them in York, but I think they'll sell them today. But I just told him to go to Chester and get ‘em, because I had heard several of ‘em couldn't get ‘em.

L: What religion is your family? I've heard you talk about the Mormon Church.

C: Well, I was a Mormon. I was brought up in the Mormon church and today all of my family are Mormons. In fact, my husband, he didn't belong to any church. His folks were all Baptist, but he joined the Mormon Church. [inaudible 42:47]

L: Why did the Indians all join the Mormon Church?

C: Because the Mormon church is the only church that really took an interest in ‘em.

L: Had the others—

C: Presbyterian and the Baptists came and tried to establish a church, but—they did have a Baptist church down at the reservation years ago. I remember seeing it. But I never did go to any of the meetings. I remember seeing the Baptists go down there, but the Mormons are the only ones that really ever took an interest in ‘em, it seemed like. I've heard it told that a lot of the mothers got up, they had babes in their arms and said before they'd deny their religion, their children would grow up in ignorance.

L: Who were they telling this to?

C: Well, I understand that the Presbyterians made them all kinds of promises. I understand that they used to try to go to the Presbyterian Church and when they'd go, they'd sit ‘em on the back row just like they would the colored folks.

L: Did any of the colored people join the Mormon Church?

C: Colored people? Not that I know of.

L: How about when you worked at the bleachery? Did any of the colored people work there?

C: Yes, they still work down there. With the way the government has taken over tryin' to give everybody equal rights, the niggers are letting their equal rights, and I feel like other nationalities are also.

L: What about men you first went to work at the bleachery?

C: They had niggers there.

L: What kind of jobs did they have, same as you and the others?

C: No, they didn't. They were more janitors. That cleaned up—

L: That's the only thing—

C: And vacuumed—

L: Did the Indians ever intermarry with Black people?

C: Not that I know of.

L: Did they ever date 'em or even have much to do with 'em?

C: Not that I know of. If they have, it's been in the recent last few years and as far as me seeing them, I've never seen 'em. I've maybe heard of it but as far as me seeing it with my own natural eye, I never have. But I can't say what they do.

L: Do you ever feel any sympathy for the Black people because they were a minority group and discriminated upon and—

C: Well.

[Break in recording]

L: Do you ever feel that the Black people have it real easy or get too much government support while the Indians are being neglected?

C: I think I do.

L: Do you feel like the government is making it too easy for the Black people and ignoring the Indians?

C: Well, in some respects they may be. In fact, I think not only the niggers**,** but I think they're making it too easy for even the Whites, a lot of 'em, to a certain extent. They need to have it where people have to work for what they get. I think they [inaudible 46:25] I think that if they'd put these people to work and give 'em something to do—I know people are knocking the WPA and the food stamps and everything, but that may be people **getting out and working.** If you hand these handouts for people today**,** it's a gone opportunity for people: Whites, niggers, or Indians and anybody.

L: Do you feel like it's important to carry on the Catawba traditions?

C: Well, if a person's interested in that kind of—

L: Are you interested in it?

C: Well, I don't know too much about it. So, really, I'm not ashamed that I'm Indian. I mean, so many people in the world today that don't know what they are. And I'll never deny that I'm not Indian, but as far as getting up there dancing and shouting, well, now that is [inaudible 47:32]

L: Well, have you taught your children what you know about the Catawbas?

C: Well, they know what they have been **a notch in**. As far as they have heard stories and they remember their great-grandaddy, and that's just about all they remember.

L: What do you think will happen to the Tribe now?

C: Well, I imagine it'll survive. Well, you drive down through Catawba today and you really wouldn't know what the Catawbas are when you ride downtown.

L: Well, do most of the Indians have jobs now and work pretty good?

C: I think the majority of 'em do. A lot of 'em are retired now. Older ones. But most of the young ones have jobs.

L: Are many of 'em just plain lazy?

C: Well, I think they get out and work pretty good these last few years. They used to be kind of lazy and shiftless, but I think majority of 'em worked fairly well.

L: You mentioned earlier that you didn't live on the reservation, which is now the new part of the reservation, until the land was divided up and was terminated.

C: That's right.

L: Why did you decide to come back then?

C: Well, they gave all of us so much land. So, I just picked up my share. So, we decided we'd build a house out here. What was the means of having it if we wasn't gonna do something with it?

L: How much land did you—

C: Got a little over six acres.

L: Did all the Indians that had Catawba blood in 'em receive some land?

C: Mmhm, that were living around here, that had been here for so many years. Now, whether those that—some of 'em moved and went west, and whether they received any, I don't know how that worked. I didn't have anything to do with all that, so. I remember going to a meeting once at Catawba when some of the House of Representatives came and gave a talk, and one of them was Faith

Harvey who is now running for House of Representative. At the time he got up and made the speech he said that—well, he was wanting us to accept another plan and he told ‘em if they accepted that like everyone would be on relief and we would do away with Columbia. Well, it made me feel like he thought that people didn't have sense enough to really know what to do. That he felt like we didn't really know what to do with the land and the—

L: Did you and your family vote to terminate the Tribe?

C: Sure, I voted for termination.

L: What advantage did this have?

C: Well, like it was, well, you couldn't borrow money to build a thing. I mean, you could go down to Catawba down at the old reservation there and put up a house, but you couldn't borrow money to do it.

L: You'd have to pay all of it to pay a fraction—

C: You'd have to pay it all, yeah.

L: And this land here, you couldn't borrow money on—

C: Well, you could now.

L: I mean, before this land was given to **Clans**.

C: That's right. Before you got a clear title you couldn't borrow money on this to build. You couldn't borrow money on this to build. But today if I wanted to build a brick house, I could borrow the money to do it, but this house that we live in

[Break in recording]

C: Well, the government gave six thousand feet of lumber and back then, when this land was given, they had this Mr. Roy Neely, who run the lumber company at that time. He cut the lumber.

L: Where'd this lumber come from?

C: Off of some of the land that we bought.

L: Off the Indians' land?

C: Yeah, that the federal government had. And he would cut the logs and get 'em prepared for you and all. But I didn't have him to do mine. My husband's father run a sawmill and we cut—my husband cut the logs right here off of this strip of land which is a little over six acres. Dad got two acres for our children. This land was valued—see it was all valued at so much. Well, this land right here was valued more than some other sections of land. Mine is valued more than over there where my daddy lives and then on down into the reservation. Mine was valued more than some of the land down there was around Red River. I've got a acre frontage here on the front and the rest of it goes back. I've got about six acres back.

L: Well, if your land was valued at more, you got less land?

C: That's right.

L: And, then someone else might get more land that was valued less.

C: Yes.

L: So, everyone got the same amount.

C: Uh-huh, but it was the holding of the bag. I really don't remember exactly how much it was. It might have been much than six hundred dollars, which you do

with six hundred now, it would be three hundred dollars. Too, we got a little bit of money, I'm pretty sure, after that. But I don't remember exactly how much it was. It was just a little bit.

L: Well, did the Indians have to pay anything for that lumber that Roy Neely gave them from the government?

C: I don't know how that worked because, see, he didn't do mine. So, I don't know how theirs worked. But my husband cut our logs, and his father owned a sawmill, and he hauled our logs up to his daddy's saw mill up in York and cut ours. And then he brought it back and he let it dry, or cure if you want, whatever way one you want to call it.

L: Did he do that—

C: For several months. He did that, he slept, and he built all our house.

L: And this was built after the termination?

C: Yeah. But we didn't borrow on it. The only thing that we had—he didn't spend but over two or three dollars if it was that much because he done all of it. And then, his mother and daddy signed for us to get a note at the bank for I think, either three or five hundred dollars to get our home started because at that time, he was the only one working. So, then we just lived in two rooms until we could get the rest of the house finished and then we put the blank sheet of paper on it. So, when I went back to work, we decided that we would put that asbestos siding on, and we got one of the home improvement loans at the bank. We got that, and we paid that off and then we had our well dug. We paid for that. Well, the government gave you a hand pump if you had a well. They gave you a hand

pump but if you wanted an electric pump, you paid for that yourself. They furnished you a hand pump, and we used the hand pump 'til we raised enough money to pay for our electric pump. Then after we got our electric pump, then we got our bathroom fixtures and we ordered them through Sears and paid the billing at Sears and they loaned us the tools to put the plumbing in.

L: I'd like to go back just a minute to this termination meeting. What could you tell me all about this meeting and who was—

C: They had representatives from the—well, Faith Harvey dealed with the Indians. He was from the House of Representatives. He's running today because now they look for him because of the remarks that he made.

L: Were all the Indians there, or a big majority of them?

C: They were there, and the Chief was there too.

L: Who was the Chief then?

C: Sanders.

L: Albert Sanders Sr.?

C: Albert Sanders.

L: And where was this meeting held at?

C: Down at the schoolhouse at Catawba.

L: Was it all the Indians throughout the audience and who presided over the meeting? Was it the Chief?

C: I just don't remember. Well, he called it to order, I'm pretty sure. But they had men from Washington here too and just what their names were, I don't remember. In fact, they had some agents or some men that they called to

determine who came here and what was the Indians hearing this time on the termination. When they finally made this final settlement, they had men who came and lingered here from Washington from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and they worked with the Indians in trying to get it all settled.

L: Did you all take any votes that night?

C: They voted on it.

L: Was that the night you voted to terminate the Tribe?

C: Uh-huh, I'm sure that it was.

L: Do you remember was it the majority? A big majority?

C: Well, quite a few.

L: I mean, it was overwhelmingly in favor of disbanding.

C: Terminating, that's right. But anytime you find a group of people, you're gonna find some sort of an argument.

L: Was there a lot of arguing going on?

C: Sure. Among the Whites and the Indians.

L: Were they arguing back and forth?

C: Back and forth.

L: It was a real rowdy type meeting?

C: Well, it was two or three, several made kind of smart remarks on both sides.

L: Were there any White people from Rock Hill that—

C: Well, in a manner—

L: —were just kind of onlookers?

C: No. Well, **a few,** but you know, they—

L: Were a lot of women there?

C: Quite a few.

L: And how did they count the votes? Did they count the hands of the people?

C: The hands, uh-huh.

L: Do you remember about how many people were present at this meeting?

C: No, I don't. I went to a couple of meetings, but I just really don't remember.

L: Is this the only time you voted?

C: No, I vote. No, I voted for President of the United States. I voted for him.

L: Well, I mean is this the only time you got to vote—

C: For the Indians?

L: For the Catawba Indians?

C: Well, some of 'em went to Washington, Gladys Thomas and Douglas Harris and I don't remember who else went to Washington and appeared up there before the final to make a settlement. In fact, it was so much ago I don't really **remember**.

L: Well, could the White people vote?

C: No.

L: Like your husband, he couldn't.

C: No, he couldn't vote, so he stayed home. He never didn't go because he didn't have any business. I told him all what we did and—

L: Well, did anyone there speak out for keeping the Tribe together?

C: Well, Brother Sanders, quite a few.

L: Who were some of these, do you recall?

C: Sam Beck. He went along with **Great Bear Parks** and some of them.

L: Why would he go along with that? Did he receive better benefits?

C: Did he receive better? I feel sure that he received, but I don't that he did. He was secretary.

L: Were the Indians aware that if the Tribe was terminated, that their education and government welfare—well, not welfare, government support would all be cut off?

C: Well, the only support they had was—they may have still paid for schools, I don't know because after I finished, I lost contact with it. But when my children came along, I bought their own supplies and then—

L: Even if they were available, you were not concerned.

C: That's right.

L: You took care of them all.

C: I took them all, and we did go to the doctor that they had coming. In fact, Dr. Blackman was their doctor until he got where he was unable, and they turned ‘em over to Dr. Patton. And I went to Dr. Patton for a while, then I changed.

L: What doctor you go to now?

C: Dr. Thompson.

L: Do you have any other comments or statements you'd like to make, or do you recall any more stories about Sam Blue?

C: No, that’s just about all that I remember.

L: Well, what about the stories about he was mobbed? I’d like to get that.

C: Oh well, you know the Mormons they came, and they taught the Indians their religion. And really the Mormons had a tough time trying to establish their religion among the Indians.

L: Why was this?

C: Well, the White Christians and in fact, I heard my dad talk about how the Mormon elders would spit and they'd mob around here and even in like the town. My daddy and Brother Walter Harris, who used to live in Idaho—in fact, he passed away about three years ago. He lived in South Carolina. He left here in 1932 and went down here and they went with a couple missionaries over to the industrial mill to have a cottage meeting.

L: Do you know what year this would have been, approximately?

C: No, I don't. No, I really don't.

L: How were they traveling?

C: They were in the old steam model, so it must have been about—around [19]21 or [19]20, somewhere along in there. The early parts of twenties, because I may have been the baby of the family then. Because where we were living at that time, Brother Walker stayed. So, as they were coming, he said that he noticed that it was in the summertime and the way he talked to me on the phone, they were sitting on the porch. He said he noticed one of the missionaries who kept acting **mysterious**. **So, he touched the missionary on the coat.** So, at the close of the meeting they could see people within the Tribe and as they were going up Jones Avenue, at the Corner of Jones and Spring they were met by a mob and the missionaries were, one of them was sitting in the front seat and one in the back.

L: Now, this is a White mob?

C: Yes.

L: All townspeople?

C: That's right and they told—they stopped ‘em.

L: How did they stop them? Did they just jump out in front of them?

C: With their horses. They were on horseback, from what I could understand. and they told them—they thought they could tell them to stay away and that they were going to kill ‘em. So, Daddy didn't have a gun because we never owned a gun until several years ago. He didn't bother with one. And they told me that he was peeved off with a bottle of whiskey and he [inaudible 1:05:42] for the land. He reached back and about that time they heard that a cops was comin’, so they left ‘em alone. So, they went on home and Daddy had Brother Harris to take ‘em down to his house because Brother Harris had an old gun and everything. The house that we lived in it was a big open field out in front and it was called Highland Park Field. So, Daddy sat all night **waiting with the group of men walking** but they never offered to come **revive** him. But my grandaddy was offered a thousand dollars if he—

L: Just one question: Do you remember these missionaries’ names?

C: No, I don't. I've heard daddy speak of a Elder Cramer. Whether he was one of them, I'm not for sure. But my granddaddy was offered a thousand dollars by a **farmwork** man and his wife. Years ago, when the Mormon missionaries first came around, if he would deny his testimony—and back then, a thousand dollars was like a million dollars today. If he would deny the Mormon religion, they would give him a thousand dollars, and Granddaddy told them no, he wouldn't deny it.

L: Who was this man?

C: I'd rather not tell.

L: Well, it would be nice to get this information.

C: I’m pretty sure his name was Cowen.

L: Cowen?

C: Cowen. I'm pretty sure he was a Cowen. I remember hearing my granddaddy talk about him. And I believe that was the man's name.

L: Was he a businessman around here?

C: Yeah. He lives up here on the left side. I’m pretty sure that was his name.

L: Melvin Cowen.

C: Cowen. C-O-W-E-N.

L: Why would he want to do this?

C: I don't know.

L: Just to keep the Mormon's out or—

C: That's what I seem to think.

L: That's real interesting. Well, before we close do you have any stories that are similar?

C: Uh-uh.

L: I appreciate you very much you taking your time and your interest in this. We'll close now with a thank you very much.

[End of interview]

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