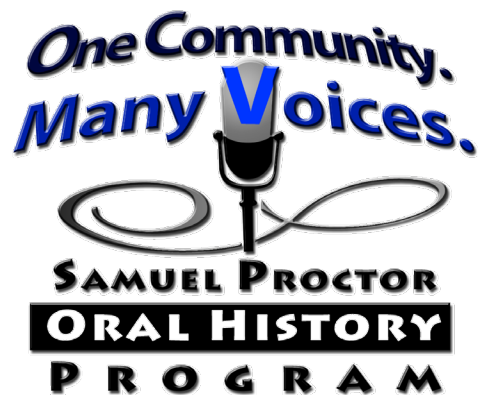


Larry Dogget

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-181**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
October 23, 1992**



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CAT 181 Larry Dogget
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Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols on October 23, 1992
11 minutes | 8 pages

Abstract: Emma Echols speaks with Larry Dogget, principal of Oakdale Elementary School in Rock Hill, South Carolina, in front of a second-grade class at the school. She asks him about his school's philosophy of teaching racial tolerance and how to be the best you can be. He talks about some of the Catawba students he has known, and the perceived special talents and skills Catawba children have. He explains his pottery collection that he obtained through years of working alongside Nola Campbell's husband at another elementary school. Finally, he imparts some advice to the children about how to be friends with people from any background.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Race relations; Pottery]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
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CAT 181

Interviewee: Larry Dogget

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: October 23, 1992

E: This is Emma Echols, 5150 Charlotte, North Carolina. I am visiting in the Oakdale School today, a second-grade class. Ms. Hallmon is away, and the principal is with me. Around the room, they have many things about the Catawba Indians, they've had the Catawba Indians to visit them, and they're very happy to have a demonstration, just a week ago. And so, Mr. Dogget has come to tell you some more things about what he knows about the Catawba Indians. Mr. Dogget, will you put your full name and address on the tape?

D: Okay, my name is Larry **Cantrell** Dogget. I live at 1857 Overbrook Drive, Rock Hill, South Carolina 29730. I'm principal at Oakdale Elementary School.

E: How long have you been in the teaching profession?

D: This is my twenty-fifth year in education.

E: Now, in all these years you've come in contact with lots of Indian children, I'm sure, and yet you've treated them all alike, Black, White, Indian, haven't you?

D: That's right. They're all the same.

E: Do you find that the Catawba Indian children have any special talent or abilities?

D: Well, I've noticed some of the special talents is that they seem to be artistic, and value art. They have a special ability of able to get along with other people in schools. They were always good friends to others and respected other people and each other, and I was just very impressed with the respect that they had.

E: When they're on the playground, they're very athletic, they can almost run faster and play ball better than some of the other children, do you find that true?

- D: Right, they were good athletes. They were—we didn't have the higher-level athletics, but they were very athletic, and it came real easy for them it seemed like.
- E: Throughout these years, do you find that they're increasing and being proud of their heritage, proud to be a Catawba Indian?
- D: Right, I do think that I've noticed that definitely, that they are taking more pride in their heritage, and we try to make all the other boys and girls to give them the opportunity to learn and have an appreciation for the people that were native of our country.
- E: Now, in your office you have quite the display of Catawba Indian pottery, and you brought one to class today. Tell us about where you got this piece, and where you got it.
- D: Okay, this particular piece is a wedding jug, and it was made by Nola Campbell. Her husband had worked with me in the school with me, another school where I was principal, and I knew that his wife made the Catawba pottery, and he would bring pieces up, and so I formed a collection over about a ten-year period while we were working together, and they're some of my most valued possessions, because of the artistic talent and all that went into these pieces of pottery.
- E: Have you ever visited in their home?
- D: Yes, I did. I took my daughter as a matter of fact. And Mrs. Campbell showed her the steps they went through to make the pottery right, and my daughter got a chance to make a piece also, in her home.
- E: Did she fire it a little bit later?

- D: I don't believe she fired that particular one, but it's a very timely process.
- E: It certainly is. I know her very well too, she's one of the talented ones—now you children and everybody's interested in knowing, she went through the fifth grade in school, she was married when she was fifteen, and she didn't ever have classes, anyone to teach her, how to make this, but she learned through another pottery maker: Georgia Harris, who was her sister-in-law. And so, there's a very real bond between these Catawbas. They've passed on their knowledge to each other. And Nola Campbell is not only a talented pottery maker, but a very lovely person in addition to that. How many pieces of pottery do you have, that came from Nola you said?
- D: I probably have around eleven or twelve pieces.
- E: And the story is this that they of course, the bride drinks out of one side, the groom on the other, there are many interesting stories back of that. And she got some beautiful colors in this. Pure accident, you never know what color they are going to be until after they are fired. Now, you mentioned some of the adults you've known. Did you know a Mr. Oxendine?
- D: Right, there was a Ralph Oxendine. As a matter of fact, he was a relative of our—my—Mr. Campbell, a Willy Campbell, I think he was his grandson. But he went to another school I was at, and we had a art contest where the students had to design a school seal, and Ralph Oxendine, which was an Indian, he designed the seal that won, and it's still hanging today in the Ebenezer Avenue Elementary School, as the school seal.
- E: And he's still living on the reservation I believe, Ralph Oxendine.

D: Right.

E: In your school, do you have any idea how many Blacks, how many Whites, how many Indians you have?

D: Right now, I do not know of any at this time at Oakdale. We have had Harrises. I know the Harris family has had children here. They're probably related to the Harris that you mentioned.

E: And the Blues—

D: The Blues! Right, we do have a Blue family, I'm not sure if they're related to the, uh—

E: They're Nelson Blue's grandchildren, I think.

D: Oh, are they? I forgot about the Blues.

E: And so, in the relationship of Blacks, Whites, Indians, what is your philosophy of education?

D: We're all the same, you know, we don't look at the color of people. We look at what's on inside and try to make each one be the best person they can on the inside and have the respect for others. You know, there are very, very few Indians left around, and so, but we can all learn from each other. Every one of these boys and girls have a special talent, and a lot of these came from your ancestry, that you might not even know that you had this talent, but we're here to help you develop that talent, and then be the best person you can, and get you to help other people to develop their talents by encouraging them and being their friend and reaching out.

- E: The Tribal group has gone as far as saying that they are pure-blooded Indians—of course, there is no such thing as pure-blooded Indian, but they are very proud of their heritage and their background. So, they're looking forward to getting some more land, and some more money, and making some improvements. So, what do you see as the future of their Tribe, of the people?
- D: Well, if they will stick together and make wise decisions in relation to any awards that they are given, and building the reservation, like you said, expanding the land some, and having something they could be proud of, it would really be some—they have such a talent and a gift they could pass onto the future generations, that there's a good possibility, and a lot of hope there that that's what will happen, they will develop a reservation there, and a more stronger Tribe that will help the people in the future understand them.
- E: The older ones that say to me that they hope they'll have healthcare, and they would like to see a health unit down there, and they would like to see—own their own land. And a number of them, like Albert Sanders, and Doris Blue, and ones like that have—another one is Nola Campbell—they own their little piece of land and they've built it, and they've improved it, and so they are very proud of their future, and they're very friendly when you get to know them, and they are very wonderful people, and the relation of Mr. Dogget to you, and to all the children in the school, show that he believes in you, and he believes in the future of America. What did Willy Campbell tell you about the medicines he found out in the woods? I want you to tell about that one.

D: He had something called arthritis, and when it would start bothering him, he would go out and get something called, a bear root I believe it was, and he would dig it up and they would make a drink out of this, mix it with some water and some other things, and keep it in the refrigerator and it would relieve his arthritis, and they had a special knack of making medicine from the things around them, knowing exactly which plants had certain traits. Now, that's something you should not try to do boys and girls, 'cause you don't know what plant to try to make something out of. There's a lot of the plants that are poison. So, I want y'all to be careful not to be—ever eat anything out in the woods if you don't know what it is exactly, y'all should let your parents look at it. But the Indians do know, a lot of them really do know the special ingredients in plants that have a healing power on the body.

E: I believe Willy Campbell was a White man, wasn't he?

D: Yes, he was.

E: You know, it's interesting that the White people who come to live on the reservation, they learn the things from the Indians. There's a White woman who married an Indian, she learned how to make pottery! And she makes beautiful pottery, and the men have done the same thing. So, there's a sense of loyalty and pride, that they are proud to be American. Like you say, I'm proud to be a student at this school or this country, they're proud **in the very same way**. What can you do the next time you see somebody, of a different color, a different race, in the store or on the playground, how can you show that you are a friend to them? How do you say to that?

D: How would I say they would do it?

E: Yes. How can you—these children be friends?

D: Right. If they listen to the wisdom that their parents teach them at home, and listen to the wise words and wisdom that your teachers teach you at school, and try to be friends to others that you meet everywhere, you'll find you've got friends everywhere you'll go. If you'll reach out your hand first, and give that first smile, and you'll look for a way that you can help others, you'll find that the world is a beautiful and friendly place. I think that the Indians have that attitude towards life, that I've met.

E: We thank you very much for coming to our classroom and speaking today!

[End of interview]

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