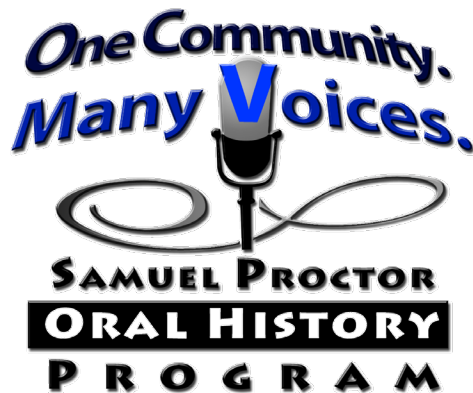


# Ida Harris

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)**  
**CAT-158**

**Interview by:**

**Emma Reid Echols**  
**May 23, 1983**



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**CAT 158 Ida Harris**  
**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)**  
**Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols on May 23, 1983**  
**9 minutes | 8 pages**

**Abstract:** Ida Harris grew up selling pottery before working on the cotton mill. In the interview, she describes her parents and discusses some of the people and experiences she remembers from childhood. She also recalls some of the teachers she had in school as well as her involvement with the Mormon Church.

**Keywords:** [Catawba Nation; Ben Harris; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Family histories; Oral biography]

**SAMUEL PROCTOR**  
**ORAL HISTORY**  
**PROGRAM**  
University of Florida

CAT 158

Interviewee: Ida Harris

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: May 23, 1983

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Route 6, Box 260, Rock Hill, South Carolina. I'm visiting in the home of Reverend Mack Oglesbee. In this home is an Indian friend of mine, Ida Harris. This is May 23, 1983. Ida, tell me your full name.

H: Ida Harris.

E: Were you married?

H: No. Not way back, I wasn't married.

E: You lived on the reservation and went to school on the reservation?

H: Yes.

E: Now, tell me what you remember about your father, Ben Harris.

H: Well, I remember a lot about my daddy. He was a preacher.

E: Tell me all about him. What'd he look like? What'd he do?

H: Well, he looked like a big old man. That's all I can say.

E: He learned to read and write himself, and then he began to teach others, didn't he?

H: That's right.

E: Did your mother ever learn to read or write?

H: No, ma'am.

E: Now, your mother was named Mary?

H: Yes.

E: How many children did Ben and Mary have? How many brothers and sisters did you have?

H: I think there were ten of us.

E: And just you and Sally are the only two left. Is that right?

H: No, I think there are a few of us left besides me and Sally.

E: How old are you now?

H: I'm sixty-nine.

E: Fifty-nine?

H: I'm sixty-nine.

E: Sixty-nine! Well, you look like your mother. Your mother had brown hands like you have, and she made beautiful pottery. Do you make pottery, too?

H: No, ma'am. I haven't made no pottery in ages.

E: Did you ever help your mother scrape and fix the pottery when you were sitting around the fire at night?

H: Yes, ma'am.

E: And then where did you sell your pottery?

H: We sold them at Lesslie.

E: How much did you get for your pottery? Do you remember the prices?

H: Back then, we'd get two and three dollars, you know, apiece.

E: And sometimes would you take them in town to sell, too?

H: Yes, ma'am.

E: Now your father had a farm and raised fruits and vegetables, didn't he?

H: He used to raise grapes in our yard and some things like that.

E: Vegetables. Your sister, Martha, went to work at the industrial mill. Did you go to work at the mill?

H: I went to work later on at the cotton mill on the third shift.

E: It was hard work, wasn't it?

H: Yes, ma'am.

E: You didn't make very much money doing it, did you?

H: Didn't make too much money.

E: I bet you brought your money home to your father, because you had to help out with all those children and grandchildren, didn't you?

H: Yes, ma'am.

E: Whereabouts on the reservation did your father and mother live?

H: Well, we lived kind of out in the **acre** [inaudible 3:43] the place where we lived at, where our home was. So, we lived out there.

E: It was burned. It is no longer standing, is it?

H: No, ma'am. It's no longer standing.

E: Now, did you have any near neighbors?

H: Yes, a few.

E: You can remember going to school on the reservation. Who was your first teacher you remember?

H: The first teacher I remember is Ben Harris. He was the first.

E: He's a Mormon elder.

H: Yes. He was a Mormon elder.

E: And then after that you had Miss Macy Stevenson?

H: Yes.

E: What do you remember about her?

H: I can remember a lot about her if I try.

E: What did she teach you?

H: Well, she teaches me how to read and write.

E: Did you sing with her?

H: Yes.

E: She liked to sing.

H: Yes.

E: And you had a piano in there. Did she play the piano for you?

H: No, she had an organ.

E: Oh, an organ.

H: Yes.

E: And she taught some of the girls how to play the organ.

H: Yes.

E: But you just sang. You didn't play.

H: Yes.

E: Now what others do you remember besides her?

H: I don't remember none—

E: Rosa Wheelock. Did you go to school with Rosa?

H: Yes, I went to school with Rosa. I went to school with Lula Owl.

E: Lula Owl.

H: You remember Lula Owl, don't you?

E: Now, that's a new one. How long did she teach on the reservation?

H: She taught a good while on the reservation.

E: That Owl family was a smart family, weren't they?

H: Yes, ma'am.

E: I believe there are not any Owls on the reservation left now, are there?

H: I don't think there are, either. There might be some in [inaudible 5:48], but not in Catawba.

E: Well, tell me about your church. You went to the Mormon church when you were growing up with the little girls?

H: Yes, ma'am.

E: Who was the Mormon elder or the priest?

H: My daddy.

E: Your daddy. And when you'd have funerals or so forth, he would read and conduct the service?

H: Yes, ma'am.

E: Do you remember the service for the old man who froze to death, Thomas Stevens?

H: No, ma'am. I don't.

E: Your mother remembered that.

H: Yes. I heard my mother and my father both tell that.

E: That was an interesting story. A sad thing that happened to him.

H: Yes.

E: What about food in the days when you were a young girl? Were you hungry sometimes?

H: Sometime I was and sometimes I wasn't.

E: Well, your father had a good garden and raised vegetables, I know.

H: Yes.

E: Did your father ever work at the mill at all?

H: Yes, ma'am. He worked at the cotton mill.

E: Now, is your father buried in the old cemetery?

H: Yes.

E: And your mother, too?

H: No, my mother is buried at the church. It's the new one.

E: Oh, the new one. You've been baptized, I believe now?

H: I've been baptized twice.

E: You were baptized twice. [Laughter] Well, then you know you are on the road to glory, don't you?

H: Yes, ma'am. [Laughter]

E: Do you enjoy the music in your church? Do they sing?

H: Yes, ma'am.

E: They were saying the other day that Martha enjoyed singing, "Will There Be Any Stars In My Crown." Do you like to sing that one, too?

H: We used to sing it a lot.

E: Now your mother remembered some of the old Indian language. Do you remember any of it?

H: No, ma'am.

E: Not any words at all?

H: No. I don't remember no words.

E: Tell me what family you have left.



H: I have Sally.

E: Yes, Sally Wade. What about children?

H: I've got two children. Two boys.

E: What are their names?

H: Melvin and William.

E: Now they live in Rock Hill?

H: Yes.

E: And where do they work?

H: They work in the cotton mills.

E: Oh, yes. Well, there are good old days that you remember. But today is even better, isn't it?

H: Yes, ma'am.

E: You're well-taken care of here.

H: Yes, ma'am. I'm taken care of here.

E: I bet. Of your friends from a long time ago, what ones do you remember especially?

H: Well, the ones that I can remember especially are my momma and my dad. I can remember that.

E: Your mother told me that she'd have to work in the fields, and at night all of you would sit around the fire and scrape pottery. Did you help your mother do that?

H: Yes, ma'am. All of us had to do that.

E: All of you had to do that. Then where would you go to fire that pottery?

H: We'd go to the fireplace.

E: Right there in your own house?

H: Uh-huh.

E: And sometimes they'd be broken and other times it would come out beautiful. Do you have any of your mother's pottery left?

H: No, ma'am.

E: And none of your own.

H: No, ma'am.

E: Well, I hope that you can make some pottery, yet. Your fingers look like you can use them so well.

H: Yes. I might make some one of these days. [Laughter]

E: I hope you do.

[End of Interview]

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