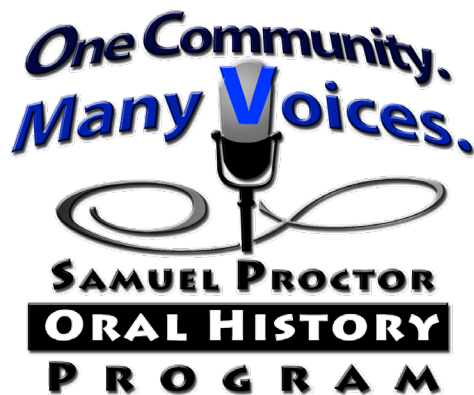


John Idle Sanders

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-010**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
November 9, 1971**



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CAT 010 John Idle Sanders
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols on November 9, 1971
1 hour, 26 minutes | 36 pages

Abstract: John Idle Sanders discusses his life experiences, from time in his childhood to his work as a carpenter. He talks about his marriage and his family, praising his children and their livelihoods. He goes on to discuss about his brief experience as Chief of the Catawba Tribe, and his retirement after he got sick. He also talks about his travels as Chief for government work. Later, he reminisces about his grandmother and grandfather and various events on the Catawba Indian Reservation. He also talks about his hobby of fishing and the various foods that they would eat on the reservation.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Family histories]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
P R O G R A M
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CAT 010

Interviewee: John Idle Sanders

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: November 9, 1971

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Rock Hill, Route 6, Box 260, South Carolina. The date is November 9, 1971, and I'm recording the oral history of the Catawba Indian Nation. I'm visiting in the home of Mr. Sanders. Mr. Sanders, what is your full name?

S: My name is Idle Sanders.

E: How do you spell that word, your first name?

S: I-D-L-E.

E: Mr. Sanders, tell me where were you born, and have you lived in this part of the country all of your life?

S: Only in the Catawba Indian Reservation. I was born in a log cabin home.

E: What do you remember about your early life as a little boy?

S: Well, I reckon there once had a good many pair of the Catawba Indians, full-blooded Catawba Indians.

E: Do you know the date of your birth, your birthday?

S: Yeah, I was born in October 12, in 1892.

E: Did you have many neighbors and friends, little boys you played with, and what kinds of games did you play?

S: Oh, yeah. I had plenty of people, plenty to play with. I had a good many brothers. And Mother was living, you know, for a long time, then she died.

E: What kind of games did you play with your brothers and your other neighbor friends?

S: Well, we used to have a bow and arrow. It was at, you know, about that time, and we would go out and shoot at the little birds.

E: Did you make your own bow and arrows and the bird points that you used?

S: That's right, we make 'em all.

E: Did you go hunting or try to find animals or birds for food?

S: We didn't, no. We just went out hunting, but just to see what we might see, you know, looking around.

E: What kind of foods did you have in the home? Did you raise your foods, or did you buy your foods, or how did you get your foods in those days?

S: Well, we bought most food. My daddy was a carpenter, and he worked the whole time—biggest part of the time—and he'd buy food. We was well taken care of in food, though.

E: Did you mind the cold wintertime, or what did you do during the cold winter days?

S: I didn't worry about the cold, cause Daddy—my daddy—would make me stay in.

E: You started to school, I suppose, when you were about six years old. I'm sure you remember your first teacher and maybe some of the others. Tell me about those school days.

S: School children, where we went to school at, went to school with Ms. Dunlap. She was living on the Indian reservation. She had a—and she was very nice. She used to know all the children, of the Indians. It was all Indians. They had a good bunch of Indians. I don't know how many there were, but there was a good many of them.

- E: What kind of heat did you have in your schoolhouse, and what did you do for lunches?
- S: We'd go home for lunch, cause we didn't have too far to go. They let us out at—they'd turn out at twelve and take up at one. The schoolteacher would eat his lunch, I guess, while we was gone. [Laughter]
- E: I'm sure you remember some of the things you learned. Your father was a carpenter. Did you learn some arithmetic that would help you to be a good carpenter too?
- S: Yes. He's the one who **knowed** all that I ever did know, is carpentry. He didn't care about farming, my daddy did. He'd driven from farm country.
- E: How long did you go to school, and how long did the other children go to school here?
- S: Well, I guess the only ones before I was, they went about a year or maybe longer than that. Then some of 'em—I had a brother who went to Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He went and stayed five years. Spent five years in Carlisle Pennsylvania School.
- E: When you got old enough, I'm sure you began to think about a job. What was your first job? Did you have any trouble getting a job?
- S: Well, I was away with my daddy to work—I wanted to carve, to be a carpenter. I took interest in it. So, I did when I got grown. I was around about eighteen years old, and I used to work for other people, being a carpenter, helping build houses. Doing carpentry was easy to me, to remember how to build something. I guess it was on account my daddy was a carpenter.

E: What about your brothers and your friends? Did they have any trouble getting work? You were lucky getting a job as a carpenter.

S: Well, they went to—some of them—my actual cousin even went to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, went to school. They went and stayed five years, and so they was gone a long time, they'd come back home. My daddy—I'll tell you a little story. When I was a small boy, my daddy build—if some of the people, the Catawba Indians that'd die, there was a small funeral—he'd build the coffins for 'em. And then, he'd also build some nice ones, if he could, for the Catawba Indians. He'd build some homes on the Catawba Indian Reservation.

E: Do you remember your grandmother? I'm sure you do.

S: I sure do, yes ma'am. My wife here, my wife remembers her, too, because we stayed with 'em in 1912, my grandmother.

E: Do you remember a young boy coming to your grandmother's home one time, by the name of Tom? Tom Stevens Harris?

S: That's right. He was the oldest Indian that I saw, at the time. He said he was going to leave the reservation. He wasn't going to stay, but he was going to visit somebody in North Carolina. He went over in the edge of North Carolina, and there come a cold drizzle. What was going to happen to him? And he was walking. In them days and time, that's the only way you'd get anywhere much through the country, is walk, and so he died on his way. He was 110 years old.

E: Did they bring his body back here?

S: They brought it back to the Catawba Indian Reservation. Sam Blue. Sam Blue is well known, and he went in the wagon and went over there and got the body and

brought it back home. That was long about that time, why they had to go away to Rock Hill to get a coffin. They went to Rock Hill and got a coffin and put him away real nice.

E: Where is he buried?

S: He's buried at the Catawba Indian Reservation in the old cemetery. His tombstone is still there, yeah, yeah, in the now. Or, at the present time.

E: I believe you remember some of the old persons, used to live around Neely's Creek Church. You remember Mr. David Leslie? And he said the Indians were good scouts. Can you tell me about that?

S: Mr. Leslie said the Indians was great scouts, and he said he didn't worry when they'd go out looking for the other people. He didn't worry, because he said they knowed, they'd take care of their self and come back. He said they'd all the time come back and tell him what they found. Found other people then that was, had to dig 'em a long trench, as he said. They was in that trench waiting for the other people to come along.

E: They were waiting for the enemy to come? Now, who do you mean by that?

S: That's right. The Indian was a great scout at that time. I mean—the Yankees, that's who they was waiting on.

E: Did these Yankees sometimes attack the Confederate camp and kill during the night?

S: That's right. See, the southern people would still kind of stay together pretty good from what Mr. Leslie told me. Mr. Leslie said that to Sadie Young, that they'd round 'em up. Why, they'd get the biggest part of 'em, get them wounded either,

or either kill 'em one. But after they use the Indian scouts, why they moved away. I don't know—he didn't tell me where they moved to.

E: You told me at one time the story of the Indian who climbed the tree. Tell me about that. I've forgotten that story.

S: Mr. Leslie said that the Indian—I mean the people, kept coming at night. When they'd come at night, they'd be in a sack, walk along, and they'd be grunting like a hog, just like a hog that's coming up to a tree to hunt acorns. He said that's the way they'd get there. And the boys would be—a good many of 'em—would be in the camp, be asleep. So, he said that he'd get 'em, he'd run 'em away. He said he got one of them and didn't even have to shoot him. So, he said that kind of broke him up for a long time, and so ...

E: How did he get this one Yankee who was creeping into the Confederate camp? I believe—did he climb the tree?

S: No, the Catawba Indian was the one who climbed the tree. The Catawba Indian was the one who climbed the tree, so he'd be on the lookout for him when he'd walk up. When he'd come up with that—you know, he'd come up kind of hard, he would, and be grunting around like he was a hog, be on the ground. So, he got him.

E: Did he kill him, or did he just capture him?

S: He just captured him.

E: When you began working for yourself, I believe you got a job with a local businessman here of the name of Mr. Roy Neely, is that correct?

S: Well, I worked the carpenter trade a long time before that. I used to work for the carpenter trade a long time before. I worked with my daddy many a good long time and then I got tired, quit. Daddy lived in Rock Hill for a good long time. So, I got tired of staying in Rock Hill. I come home, stayed with my brother. My brother was running the sawmill all the time. So, I kind of quit working at the carpenter trade, and my daddy said, "Well I'd go on and take a rest." Then, finally, I come back, been twenty some years ago. I come back up here in Friendship Community, and Mr. Neely gave me a job at his place in the carpenter shop. I stayed there twelve years. Mr. Neely was all that time nice to me. Loads of lumber come to be unloaded. He'd never tell me to unload 'em. He'd tell them other people to unload 'em, but he wouldn't tell me. He'd never tell me to go out there and unload 'em. He was real nice. Then I used to go with him when he'd go into sales. We went way down in Georgia, he bought cows. He had a **white** face. He'd buy us the best he could find. And we went to Charlotte, used to go to Charlotte and buy lumber. He'd bring some of it back, what he couldn't put, he'd bring back. He'd send another truck back and get the rest of it. I never had to go to even load the truck. Didn't even load the truck when the truck come back. He'd always get some of the people who was there on the yard working around. He'd get them to unload the truck.

E: You married, I believe, an Indian girl, a very lovely Indian girl. Tell me about your wedding, I'd like to hear about that.

S: Well, it's been a long time. I married in 1912. I married her—I believe we were married at **Pres Alvery** home, I may have married her right close there to her

home. Then I went and stayed with my grandmother a while, until we got us a place.

E: Who performed the ceremony when you were married? Did you have music and refreshments after? What about that wedding?

S: Well, we just went there and getting married, and then we left. I went down to my grandmother's. I went back to my grandmother's, and that's where we had dinner at.

E: Was there a big crowd at your grandmother's for that wedding dinner?

S: No, ma'am. There was no one. As long as I can remember, there was no one. No one but my grandmother was there.

E: I'm sure you wanted a home of your own. This is such a nice little house you're living in now. Tell me, did you build this house?

S: I built this house in twenty years ago. I just took and marked it off to my opinion, to my own idea. Marked down the doors, marked by the windows. We got four rooms in this little house, and it's as big enough for three bedrooms, for three rooms—no, it's big enough for three beds. We don't have any trouble. All our children have done grown up and gone, so they take care of their self. I got some lovely children, boys too. And I got some boys, got some good trades. Now I'm speaking of good trades, I'm speaking of them mechanics. I got a good boy, a good mechanic, and I got a good boy, he's a good painter. And I got some boy, he's—they work in the industrial mill, I mean they used to. So, all of 'em got good trades. My daughters married. They married somebody, they's got good trades. So, we don't—yeah. I got some girls went to school and they finished high

school, and then I got some boys finished high school. So, I don't think that they hurt. Then I got a daughter living in Salt Lake City, Utah. She's got some fine children. There's about a whole crowd of them, there's four of 'em. Let's see, one, two, three, four. They all have went to college. She put 'em into college, and they went through and come out. Now they got good jobs, some of 'em are schoolteachers. They stay mostly in—they go where the Indians are to teach school. They have one way down in Arizona, in the west. She has a home of her own. Her husband is William D. Watts, he works in the machine shop, too. He's the boss in the machine shop, so it's good. My daughter said—I was talking to her a few days ago, she said she was going to try to come over a little later on, stay a few days. She said that if she comes, she's gonna fly. So, she's getting along good, so we don't have her to worry about, she gets along good. Her children are earning good money, working and making good money. They take care of her. If she needs it, they give it to her. They don't hold her to it, they just give it to her.

- E: When your children come home to visit, what sort of celebration do you have? Do you just sit around and talk, or do you sing or what do you do when your children come to visit you?
- S: They mostly talk. They all the time have something new to tell, you know, what's going on, and they tell us.
- E: At Christmastime, what do you and your family do, like is there anything different that you Indians do that the white people do not do?

S: No ma'am. The Catawba Indians—like most, they're just like the White people are. They never have any great, you know—there to do. They'd be very quiet. Some of them now raised no—go on a while and raise no racket, but there wasn't nobody, ain't nothing like that.

E: I've heard some people call you Chief, were you Chief of the Tribe here?

S: Yes, ma'am. I was Chief of the Tribe in 1954 'til 1955—1956. Then I was Chief again for another two years. They just elect you for two years. They elected me two years. Before I came up here, I was living in the Catawba Indian Reservation. I was Chairman of the Committee a long time. And I quit. I had to quit, because I wasn't able to attend some meetings. I took sick, and I wasn't able to attend some of the meetings. and so, I quit. I told them I'd quit. I called my cousin, one of the boys, and told him to go and tell the Chief I had quit, so he'd know. So, after I'd told him—sent word to him—he came to see me. Wanted to know what I was sick, and he wanted to know what he could do for me. I told him not anything, I was going to the doctor. It wasn't far to the doctors.

E: Did you get any pay for being the Chief? What were your duties as the Chief?

S: They didn't give no pay. They saw you only as a volunteer. You might say you just volunteered to be, but you had to be elected though and the people voted by hand. Whoever got the most votes—if you was running for Chief and you got the most votes, you was the winner.

E: Who was allowed to vote? Was there an age limit for this?

S: No ma'am, no ma'am. There was no age mentioned.

E: What do you remember at the early days when you used to go to the church? I believe there was a church that was burned many years ago, but what do you remember as a young boy as you went to the church?

S: Well, when you go to church, they teach you to be quiet, you know, until the meeting's over with. Then they'd get—they'd turn out, I mean everything was over with, all go home. Some of 'em would go home with different ones and go for—take dinner with different ones. That's the youngest ones, some of the youngest ones would go.

E: Did you have musical instruments in your church, and did you like to sing?

S: Yes, I like to sing, hear singing, I enjoy it yet. But I never—could very little sing. [inaudible 26:25] I didn't—but I enjoyed hearing good singing.

E: Do you remember any of the hymns or the songs that you sang in your church?

S: Not that far back, I don't.

E: Do you remember your first minister, your first preacher? I believe you call him a lay worker, do you not?

S: What was that?

E: Your first preacher in your church or the first minister in your church.

S: Well, at that time, there's a good many people was visiting church every now and again. There were different ones, and I don't remember the name.

E: Do you remember the cattle and the trees that used to be on this reservation?

S: Oh yeah, there used to be quite a few trees. This land we're living on used to be Mr. Ben **Fewell** track of land, number one. The Indians got it from the state, the state of South Carolina. And so, the Indians live on it, and when they divide the

land up, they all tried to give 'em all equal share out of the land. Them that didn't want to take land, didn't really didn't care about land, why, they took money. Some of 'em moved away then, moved to Rock Hill. Said they'd move to Rock Hill on account they'd be closer to their work. That's where the idea—we had quite a few cattle, we had a bunch of cattle. I don't know how many cattle we had when we sold them. I didn't check into it to find out. I was Chief then, Catawba Indian Chief. Mr. George Ellings and Dip and Montra was down here from Cherokee. They was government men, they was government agency was what they were. So, Dip was down here and somehow, we was all—the whole setup was at that present time when we got this land. It was set up by the government, Mr. Tom Flowers was the Indian agency up there in Rock Hill. He was chief of the Fire Department, and he was real nice to the Indians all the time. Well, he told me he was raised close by the Catawba Indian land, but I don't know where. He didn't tell me, he just only told me that. He went to some school or another. I guess, as I know of—all I could figure out, he went to **Monte Leslie's**. When he was in his young Dip days, he went to school. In the meantime, they and that out there lawn, the government set-up was they'd give the Indians—after awarding the timber, why they'd give them twelve hundred feet of lumber, board feet. They called it board feet, but you had to pay for the—to get the sawmill man to cut the lumber. Pay him, you only pay him thirty dollars. That's all you'd had to pay him, thirty dollars, a hundred. So, the Indians would get to the lumber, use it for some things. Then when they get tired, they would hang on to the used wood and sell it to somebody. Well, the government agency didn't approve of that, but he

wouldn't say nothing very much. And the cattle, when we sold our bunch of cattle, we had a poor leader right back then. He took and sold the cattle. He was offered nine hundred dollars for the bunch of cattle. The cattle was dropping, the price was dropping down right along and so he waited awhile and he took six hundred for that bunch of cattle. The Indians got out—had some government, had some funds in the bank, and they decided then he'd go ahead and get the funds out of the bank. That was the year some of the Indians say, "Well, let's get our funds out of the bank." So, they went ahead and put it to a vote to get it, and they brought them eight dollars and a quarter. That's all they got. They had eight hundred—had eighty, in a year, they had eight hundred dollars left in the bank. I don't know what they did with it. They might have used it to bury somebody with. They used a little, but I didn't know. All of the Indians lost on every corner there at that time. Now, we had a good school. We lose our good school. I hope there'll be coming a time when we get our school back. It'll be in the Catawba Indian Reservation.

E: You were allowed to use their lumber and the wood—the timber—for fuel from the reservation, is that correct?

S: Right, right. We were allowed to get wood to use in the home and the government agency would make way for us to get it. All we had to do was to go to the government agency. The government agency stayed around on the reservation all the time and we'd go to him and tell him. He'd let us have a load of timber.

E: Did you use the wood from the reservation? You'd take it to the mill, and did you use that wood to build your own home here?

S: The timber we cut, we'd use it on this other—that old **Fewell** tract, they call it the old **Fewell** tract. We'd get most of the timber to cut for fireplace, using in your home, we'd get most off of that wood, because that was pretty good wood. Some good wood, good oak wood, some good blackjack wood, all like that, real good wood.

E: Did you have a horse or a mule? How did you travel around in those days?

S: Well, I didn't have no mule, but my uncle had a mule. I could get him any time. But I didn't have no mule of my own. The closest store was—from my house to the store up on the roof was two miles. I've walked it many a time, go to the store and get what I need, and come back home.

E: Did you supplement your food by having chickens or pigs or cow, anything of that kind?

S: Oh, yeah. Yes, I just want to tell you a little joke. There's a man over in New York, well he's over in Lancaster County at Van Wyke. His name was Cecil B. York, Mr. Cecil B. York. He runs a big store. So, I went over there and told him that I need a cow or something. One of my children wasn't doing so well because they wouldn't give him the milk. They should have milk, all the children should have milk, the children were small. He said, "That's right. They got to have milk." He said, "I know a man that's got a good cow and he wants to sell it." He says "I'll get the cow and you can take the cow and use it, keep the cow as long as you want to. All you have to do is take care of her. Then, when you want to return her

back, bring her back to me. That's all I'll charge you." So, I got the cow. We kept her about three or four years, about four years. So, I went up and took the cow back to him. He told me where to take the cow to and leave her, and he never charged me anything for using the cow because he said, "You know, you can't raise children without milk." He laughed when he tell me that. He never charged me nothing for the cow. Now he wants to sell me the cow again. So, I had a good friend there.

E: Your wife had chickens, and I'm sure she got chickens and eggs for your table. What about turkey? Did you ever see wild turkeys or shoot wild turkeys?

S: No ma'am, I never did have the privilege of shooting a wild turkey, but I've seen a few and I've seen a few deer, too. It was on the Catawba Indian Reservation, I saw them. You know, a deer—talking about a deer will run, they'll run. But I've seen 'em and the wild turkeys, why, I don't remember any wild turkeys was on the reservation. There might have been some across the river and in the old **Nesbit's** place. There might have been some over there, but I wouldn't say. My wife, we'd raise chickens. We was lucky about raising chickens. We'd raise enough chickens for ourself, family, and raise some for our neighbors. And get eggs. Eggs wasn't no problem, you see.

U: We raised turkeys and guineas.

S: Yeah, we raised a few turkeys and guineas.

E: Guineas, you had some guineas as well as turkeys?

S: Yeah, but we didn't have no guineas, did we?

U: Yeah, I raised some. Pa bought some eggs, but they didn't do as well as the guineas—the turkeys did.

S: My wife said we raised some guineas. Her father gave her the eggs, and she set them under a hen and raised a few guineas.

E: What about fish? I'm sure you went fishing and brought back fish for your wife to cook.

S: Yes, we'd all the time go fishing. I liked to fish, and I would go fishing. We'd catch a fish, we'd bring it home, and—

[Telephone ringing]

S: They wasn't very big [inaudible 39:05]

E: Mr. Sanders—

S: Do you want me to answer this now or later?

E: Later, but right now I want to hear about those fish. What kind of fish did you catch, and how big were they in the river?

S: They weighed in around one pound, two pounds. Catfish, real catfish in them days, and they was real good fish. We'd catch them, bring 'em home. I haven't seen other fish until them big old—

U: Carp?

S: Carp. Well, the carp wasn't very good. They said it wasn't. But you'd see the big old redhorse. I know they have them big-mouth fish. They'd call it a redhorse. I caught one or two of them. Oh them, that thing, you'd be happy when you'd get him. Catch a big fish, a redhorse, because he'd run off with you. You'd have to give him a line, let him run on cause he'd break the line.

E: Who prepared the fish, skinned them and prepared them, when you brought them home, Mr. Sanders?

S: Well, my wife did. I'd bring 'em home and she's the one that'd do the work, most of it, all the time.

E: You've told me so many interesting things that I want to come back and visit you again.

S: Yeah.

[Break in recording.]

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Route 6, Box 260, Rock Hill, South Carolina. November 12, 1971, and I'm recording the oral history of the Catawba Indians. And I'm visiting in the home of Mr. Sanders. Mr. Sanders, will you tell us your full name and your address?

S: Idle Sanders, I-D-L-E.

E: And where did you—

S: Route 3. That's all. People know me so well, the mail never did get lost.

E: I believe you're a full-blooded Indian, isn't that correct?

S: Right. My mother was a full-blooded Indian. My daddy wasn't quite, but my mother was.

E: You told such interesting things about your grandmother. Will you tell me about what you remember about your grandmother, and how she used to cook and do for you all?

S: Yeah, my wife knows that. [Laughter]

U: You **gonna** tell her. [Laughter]

S: Hey, I guess I'll talk a little bit about my grandmother. She was a good cook. She'd cook her favorite custards and pies, cakes. Then she'd stack 'em in the cupboard. We had an old place they called a cupboard in them times. This was 1912. Grandmother was a real good cook. Grandmother was about eighty some years old. First, I remember—first could get out, she must have been eighty-five years old when she passed away. Grandmother was terrific. Thing about my grandmother was had a home of her own, and she had a good place to stay.

E: Did she cook over an open fire?

S: Yes ma'am. She had a full fireplace where she then cooked. It seemed like it didn't worry her, she'd been cooking for a good many years, she said. She kept plenty of something to eat cooked all the time. You didn't have to go hungry with her.

E: Do you remember your grandmother singing to you or telling you any of the stories from the old Indian days?

S: Oh yeah, Grandmother didn't say much about the Indians, very little. I don't think she sang no Indian songs, I don't know. She might have sang them back in her young days, but I didn't hear her sing any. But she could speak the Indian language real good.

E: Your grandfather was a scout, or he helped the soldiers during the Confederate War, is that correct?

S: That's right, his name was Jim Harris. He was down about Charleston somewhere or another, we don't know. But anyway, he came home and then stayed six months, Grandmother said. I never did see him. If I've seen him, I

don't remember him. Grandmother said he stayed home about six months. Then he went back to the post or wherever he was at down in Charleston. And then he—I didn't ask her whether he passed away down there, or he come back home and passed away. I never did find that point out. But anyway, my grandmother would get a pension. They called it a pension. In them times, the money'd come to the bank, and she'd send her son into the bank and get it. Her son had to sign a paper. I think that's the first I remember during that time. It must have been about twelve dollars a month, the pension was. Paid from the **serve**. Father said he was a good scout.

E: Are there any other Indian women in the community who also got pensions or did not get pensions?

S: Some of them, their husbands had went but then the women people didn't get any pension. It was on account of they had never had been married. That's what Grandmother said. In them times, that far back, they had to either go to a magistrate and be married or you had to at least have some preacher and be married. That's all they had to do. You didn't have to go to no courthouse. The license wasn't issued from the courthouse out here in York County, not until 1912 before you could get a marriage license. I happened to be the first one of the Catawba Indians. Well, I was told that the whole county, my name is on the top list in the courthouse today.

E: Your grandfather was brought back and buried here in the cemetery on the reservation?

S: Yes.

E: Was he injured in the war as far as you know?

S: Well, that's just from as far as I could get in there, I guess he was injured. He always, you know, came back home and stayed. I told you the first time, a long time. My grandmother said he stayed about six months. Then he went back down around Charleston. In them times, you know, Charleston just had a big name, but you wouldn't know way the war was, the war proposition was going on at. I know people who'd done a lot of walking. Then they still wanted to have—let's see, Ep Harris. He went up in Virginia, my grandma said, and he carried a dog with him, and he went walking. That's all the way he'd go, went walking. He went up there where them other Indians were, in Virginia. In Virginia, they had a Tribe up there, was called Pamunkey Tribe. So, he went up there and stayed a good while. When he came back, he brought him a wife back with him. He brought his dog back with him, but his dog had done worn all his shoe claws off walking. Another thing I've seen, I've seen my grandmother had an old dog at home. So, I asked my grandmother, I said, "The dog's getting old." So, she said, "Yeah." She said, "Oh yeah, time for him to look old-looking, he's thirteen years old." She raised him and she called him Trey. I said, "Well," I said, "What's he good for?" She said, "He's a good rabbit dog and he's a good possum dog, too." There were plenty of plain things that the people needed to keep for a dog at that time, cause there's a lot of rabbits that come around and destroy some of the things you had. Then if anybody else come around, they'd let you know. He's a big old dog, a regular hound. She said he was thirteen years old. In this day and time, I don't believe you hardly see a dog that's thirteen years old.

E: When you went hunting with your dogs, what sort of animals did you shoot or kill?

S: Well, they'd run rabbits. They'd get after rabbits. Sometimes they'd get them, sometimes they wouldn't. There was always quite a bit of game on the reservation, rabbits, birds, quails, all we had then. On account of the people who would sow. Sow some oats, sow a little bit of wheat. There were quails that'd get something to live on. I have to say the Indians, though, all of us had something at home. They kept plenty of chickens, plenty of peaches, apples, and they had grapes. All that was on the reservation, on the Catawba Indian Reservation. We still got the old Catawba Indian Reservation that's held in trust with the state, granted 652 acres of land and so we're still holding on. The state won't let nobody have it nowhere. The land, this belongs to the Indians. Now we have good roads in there. We have a good hard-surface road, goes all the way around. There are three miles of it. Got a good hard-surface road, come back into another hard-surface road. We have quite a few Indians living there. I think there's about eighteen families, ain't there, **Dida**?

U: Yeah, I think there are.

S: I think last time we counted there were eighteen families, eighteen families of Indians that was there.

E: You used to do some work in Leslie, I believe, plowing gardens for some people. What about your pay for that sort of work?

S: I worked more for Mr. Walsh Locke. My daddy worked then. He had a working then to work at Neely's Creek Church. My daddy was only a carpenter. He loved

carpenter work better than anything else. He worked down at Neely's Creek Church. I don't know what they was remodeling the old church or building a new church at that time altogether. I don't know, cause I didn't go down where he was working at. I stayed around home and then I'd go down, fool around with Mr. Walsh Locke. Mr. Walsh Locke had two mules. They was good mules, and he'd let me plow one of them. He was the one that would plow about three hours a day. But he'd stay around close. He was afraid the mule might get away with me or something. You can't ever tell when a good mule is going to run off and leave you. So, he'd stay there with me. I worked, plowed for him about three hours and then he'd quit, we'd quit. Then we took the mule to the house, and he'd water him and put him up in the barn. So, he'd pay me right then. I remember, he'd pay me forty cents. A lot of people would say well, they'd work for forty cents a day. I didn't work but about three hours, and he paid me forty cents. He was a good man.

E: I know you remember the ferries on the Catawba River, do you not? Are there two ferries across this Catawba River here?

S: There was two ferries—one ferry, the oldest one for the longest time, and then Mr. Ash—when the man, Mr. Bill Ash—he built a ferry up on his place. And the reason he wanted it on account of he'd come down to the old ferry and we'd put him on and all, but he wanted him a ferry of his own. So that's why we put down, went ahead and built him a ferry. My daddy built, let's see, three of them, didn't he, Dida?

U: Yes.

S: He built three—

U: Flats.

S: Three flats. I helped him then, I helped him on two of 'em, the other ones I didn't help him. He got someone else to help him. I should have helped him, but I didn't.

E: Now, during the flood of 1916, the bridge was washed away and both the ferries, is that correct?

S: Yes, ma'am, they was gone. Everything was gone on the Catawba River, I was told.

E: And I understand that you Indians did a wonderful job helping to ferry people across the river. Is that right?

S: That's right. That's up here at the little place you call—the flood was up here at the railroad cedar, Southern Railroad Company. That's where we put 'em across. I helped put them across. I had a brother, and we had a good boat, you know. So, we got a job putting the people across when the train come. We'd get 'em, put 'em over there. Put 'em over, bring them back **either** way.

E: How many people could you take each time on your boat?

S: We couldn't take any more than about ten. If you overload the boat, it might turn over or either something happen and they might get drowned. But we wouldn't let more of 'em go.

E: How long was it that you carried on this ferrying service before another bridge was built?

S: The ferry?

E: Helping people get across after the flood.

S: Oh, we didn't help out too long because the railroad company, they went ahead and put up a bridge. They called it a bridge, a temporary bridge, the railroad company did. It wasn't long, a few days, they had a train crossing. And they brought the big railroad. They had plenty of timber, and the water had done gone down level in the bank, so they just lay 'em there. It's just wonderful to know how quick they can put one down. But they called it a temporary building, a trestle.

E: What did you see coming down that river when it was at height? Did you see houses, or animals, or bales of cotton, anything of that kind?

S: I don't think I saw any animals or anything, but I saw a house. It looked like a man at old barn coming down the river, when the high river. The old barn would turn round and round, just like a windmill. Cause on account the water was so strong, swift. I saw some hay going down, somebody looked like they might have just baled it, stacked it up in a haystack. I saw that going down. Cows, no. I never saw any cows. Some people said they saw some cows, but I didn't see any. I'd go down to the river. We didn't live too far from the river, and I'd go down to the river, watch things go by. All kinds of rafts, everything you might imagine was going down the river. Because the river had done got so high. You'd see a lot of trestles, lots of railroad trestles, they was even going down the river. When they go along, they just opened the way so everything else could get by. They'd got bales of cotton. Cotton—I was told—I didn't know where Belmont was at that time. Belmont, North Carolina, had quite a bit of cotton. It was like it was washed, washed all the little cotton away. Bales and bales washed it away.

E: I believe that's Belmont, B-E-L-M-O-N-T, Belmont, North Carolina.

S: That's right.

E: And I understood in some of the low places in your Indian reservation that some of these bales of cotton came in, that they'd land and lodged there. Did you ever see any of those bales of cotton?

S: No, ma'am. I saw, a fella went down the river here, Catawba Indian Reservation. He got some of that bad cotton and pushed it out to the dry land, but the Indians didn't do it. That was somebody else, you know. So, he went back to push out another bale, and he got drowned and the cotton was down there. That was down Land's Ford. Everybody in this country around here knew where Land's Ford was at that time, and a lot of them still know where old Land's Ford is. That's where it is, that's where he got the cotton out. He pushed it out to dry land. Cause it was cotton, a bale of cotton, he couldn't carry it, and he just pushed them out to land and left it there. Then he'd go back and swim back and get another one. That's while he went back, he didn't come back. That's the way it was. He just went too far.

E: While you were the Indian Chief—Chief of the Indian Nation—you made a trip to Washington. I'd like to hear how you went, you went by train, and about that experience. That must have been a wonderful time for you.

S: Yes. Me and Samuel Beck went together. We went in a car. We went up there to see about some Catawba Indian affairs. Mr. Hemphill was there, Robert W. Hemphill. So, Mr. Robert W. Hemphill treated me real nice. But I had done waited a little bit too long for them to make any success out of me, because they had

that program up about three or four days, about three days before I went. And Mr. Hemphill, he was carrying it. He was down in the subcommittee first. So, Mr. Hemphill, he carried it through. I guess in a way it was all right, but at that time I didn't think too much of it. I sat in there and listened to him when the man turned, he came from over there at the Indian Office, Indian Interior Office. This man was the one that was reading it off a paper about the Catawba Indians. I didn't think it was right at the time. I didn't think too much about him, didn't agree with him in some things he spoke of. But anyway, we know what happened to us, we'd kind of lose and then gain and then we'd lose it all. So that's what happened to us, happened to the Tribe of the Catawba Indians. This man, the one who done the talking, I forgot his name. But anyway, when everything was over with, an election was called on to appoint a new man to go to the Indian Interior Office. He lose his job. Some Cherokees was there. Some down here from Florida, they was there. There was another Tribe of Indians in the west, they was there. It was just filled up with the Indians. So there had to be approval by the Indians. The man, the judge, who was sitting up there at the front just like a judge, and I guess he was in a way. He asked different people what did you think about him. "Suit them all right," and then you might ask the third one, he'd object, "No comment." That's the way they'd go 'til finally they got it through, anyway.

E: How long were you in Washington?

S: We went over there in that morning, and we was around there 'til about two o' clock afternoon, in the office, down to the subcommittee. Then we got out of there and went home to lunch. So, Mr. Hemphill said, well he treated me nice, he

told me to come back, he wanted to talk to me. I told him I would. Well, anytime we went, I didn't go back. We went on around then. Let's see, we went on to a place where the Indians stayed, where most of the Indians were. A good many Indians from throughout the state was there. We stayed with them a while, and we went to a place where we went and took a rest. I went off to sleep and it was night when I woke up, it was in the evening. I was so tired that I had done gave up. There was an Indian girl was there. She turned in the car for us. She was smart, she was studying to be a lawyer. The Indian girl had two degrees for being a lawyer. She's real smart. She's the one who took charge of the car. She parked the car and then when they had to pay for it, she paid for it. I never did ask her who paid for our lunch, never did ask. I know somebody paid for it. I don't know who, didn't say anything about it. There were several Indians were there but anyway those people were sitting down, so I was sleepy. That evening, Samuel came to me, sat down beside my bed and called me. I was so sleepy I couldn't hardly wake up, tired too, done got tired traveling. So, he told me to get up 'cause we were going to leave from there. So, when I woke, we got up and got ready, going to have to leave from there. Then we went over to another place, then we come back to the White House. But we went over to another place where they were going to have a big supper, that's what they said. I went down there, went over there and the girl was still operating the car. She stayed with us, the Indian girl did. She'd go with us, and we went over there, and we ate supper. I didn't eat much though because I done got so tired, I didn't care about eating any. Samuel Beck, he ate quite a bit. He told me to get some steak, and after a while they

turned and told him, said if he wanted a little drink, why, he could go up there to another place, another door, and get him a drink. Samuel—he thought he was talking about a drink of water. He went up there and it was some whiskey, and we laughed at Samuel, saying, “Sammy, how come you didn't take it?” “No, no,” he said. “I don't drink,” he'd said. But you could get anything you want. They had plenty to eat, oh my goodness. They had plenty to drink, another thing. One Indian was there, he was from way out west. I never did understand whether he could talk, but he'd talk all the time. But I never could understand what he was talking about. He had done too much drinking, he took too much. He said he was going to leave there the next morning, go back home in the west. And so, he'd smoke his old pipe and talk and drink. Then there was another fellow there, he was from some Tribe another too, representing some Tribe. He was there. He done took too much. He'd talk to us, but you couldn't get nothing out of him, nothing that was any good.

E: When you and Samuel Beck came back home, did you make a report to your people here of your trip to Washington?

S: Yes, Samuel come and told them a little bit what happened. I didn't say very much about it. I said, “Wait and see.” We had a man here on the Indian Reservation at that time, Raymond H. Bigby. He was for the help here. He was the one is put to get the Indian, the Catawba Indians, out from under the government. He'd take your shirt off your back if it would help. That's what he'd do, that's the way he done a lot of 'em. He'd let on like he was on their side, and all turned out he wasn't. He went back home. Way, way home. He lived far in the

west, and he went back home. On his way back, he wanted to come back. He didn't live to get back, he died on the way. I mean when he returned, was coming back to the Catawba Indian Reservation, he died. Raymond H. Bigby. I never did learn what he had on, whether he was an Indian or not, he never did say. I didn't ask.

E: Do you remember the doctors you had on the reservation and what they did for you?

S: Oh yeah, I remember the doctors. I remember Dr. Hill. I remember him good.

E: Dr. Hill lived at Catawba I believe.

S: He lived at Catawba, and he was the best [inaudible 1:11:46]. Dr. Hill would come see the Indians any time. He'd come any time when they called him. Way in the night, he'd come.

E: How did he travel?

S: He had a horse and buggy, and he'd ride most any. Well, he was a good doctor. He traveled all around Catawba and everywhere.

E: Then Dr. Blackburn was your next doctor. Do you remember him, too?

S: Well, there was another doctor there before that. There was some doctors drop in between times, I guess. Dr. Hunter, he stayed with us a long time. Way long by, and Dr. Blackburn came in. Dr. Blackburn stayed with the Catawba Indians for twenty-one years, and he was a good doctor. But automobiles had done come in then, and Dr. Blackburn had an automobile driving. Dr. Blackburn and Dr. Hill and them, they didn't fool with the automobiles. They had to take an old horse and buggy.

E: Now by this time, most of the Indians would go to the doctor's office, would they not, or did they go to the hospital sometimes too?

S: Quite a few of them go to the hospital if they have to go. The first place they would go was the doctor's office and then they'd go to the—if the doctor said they had to go to the hospital, they'd go.

E: How about your children, were they all born in the home?

S: Yes. All born on the Indian reservation. Isn't that right, [inaudible 01:13:45]

U: Yeah.

E: How expensive was it to have the doctor, or were your doctor bills paid for by the government?

S: They were paid by the state.

E: State.

S: The state made a contribution, state of South Carolina. The doctor bill was paid by them, by the state. Also, we had—I mean our agency—the Governor of South Carolina appointed an agency, and he'd see after the funds and things. We had a Doctor Fund, Bell Funds, and a—what else did we have? We had some Doctor Fund, Bell. Fund, and oh yeah, we had a fund here, to buy medicine and all. We didn't have too much to give us a hard time about it. We all got along, Catawba Indians got along pretty good, I think. That's what I talking about.

E: Mr. Sanders, when you were a boy, did you make bows and arrows and go hunting for wild animals or birds?

S: I always went hunting for birds. I don't remember whether I was really hunting for anything else, birds and ... We hardly ever would take a bow and arrow and go

hunting for rabbit, cause Daddy wouldn't let us have no gun. So, we might see the rabbit, but we'd run him off anyway. I know of one boy, He was Albert Sanders, he used to make a slingshot, and that boy could kill birds. He'd kill a squirrel with that slingshot. I never was that lucky to kill a bird—to kill a squirrel with a slingshot. But he'd take that slingshot and kill a squirrel, knock him from out of the tree.

E: Then I suppose you made squirrel pie out of that animal?

S: No ma'am, we'd just take him. My family was never was too much about squirrel.

U: We'd fix squirrel.

S: I'm talking about cooking it.

U: Well, okay, okay.

S: Yeah, they'd take and cook 'em. But still, they just liked to take and boil 'em and then take 'em out and kind of fry 'em like. They did dress 'em real good. Some people would take those squirrels and kind of fry and make a pie out of it if they could, but we never did try that.

E: You said that there were deer on the reservation. You saw some. Did you ever see anyone kill the deer on the reservation?

S: No, ma'am. I never did see a dead deer on the reservation, but I saw some live deers up on the old Catawba Indian Reservation. We had them on close by the river. They was in the woods. We was always just going looking for a squirrel, and here comes the old deer come up. There was about three of them, and they headed for the river. When they hit the Catawba River, they just hit it and went on across the river over on Nesbit's place, Dr. Jim Nesbit. They went on over there.

Dr. Jim Nesbit was a great man, fine man. He was a doctor. He had three thousand acres of land up and down the river, and he's still over there yet. He's got timber on that place and river bottoms. His deed—they've got a deed, it just stays in the family Nesbit, or in the Nesbit family. That's the way it is. He used to let the Indians stay on his place. I know a time my daddy stayed on his place. The reason my daddy stayed on it cause he furnished work for my daddy to do. Build buildings, some houses for him. He'd build him most anything he wanted, my daddy would build it for him and Nesbit'd pay him. Nesbit was a good fellow too paid you really more sometimes, I think, than you was worth at that time. He paid you good wages. Doctor was able to pay it. I saw Doctor's mother, too. She was an old lady and she called Dr. Nesbit, she called him Jimmy. She said, "Jimmy, come into the house, I'm going to talk to you a little bit." Dr. Jim Nesbit would get up and go into the house. He was grown in, I guess he was about forty, I guess he was leaning towards fifty years old, but his mother would come call him. He'd go in the house and stay. You might get to see him again that day and you might not.

E: You've been up and down the Catawba River many times as a boy. It's so muddy and dirty looking now. What did the Catawba River look like when you were a young boy?

S: Oh, it looked a whole lot cleaner than it did now, cause they had plenty of water. The river would get up and wash all that old mud and things away. Oh, that planting then in that days and do now. But now it looks rough, yeah, bad looking. Catawba Indians would go fishing, and they'd catch 'em a fish. Catch a small fish,

they'd throw him back and they'd catch a good-sized catfish. Why, they'd keep him in the corner. Got a big old fish, had a big old mouth, but he'd catch him and, why, they'd keep him. Oh, boy, that big old fish would give you a round, though. You'd have to give him the line to keep him, then he'd break the line. Then I saw people who had trout lines, and they'd put in a great line across the river—wouldn't be quite across the river; it'd be a long way, but not all the way—and they'd fish that trout line. They'd catch a lot fish off the trout line. There was always something to get and they had a net. They'd drop it in the river, and they'd catch fish. One time I remember—I don't know how many fish it was they caught. If you caught a big stack, there were a good many fishes, because they had that net. They had an old carp, and they took him and pulled him out. A lot of other fish they kept, some little ones, why, when they'd get bigger, that's why they'd throw them back. "Get out," they'd say, "Get out of here, we don't need you." Kick him, kick him, kick that little fish out of the boat.

E: Do you remember how you would ever cook any of that fish outdoors, make a big fire, roast them outdoors?

S: Oh, yeah. I don't think they roast them. I think most of 'em dress 'em real good and then they might have took 'em and made catfish soup. That's what they'd make to eat.

E: What'd you put in that catfish soup?

S: Well, my wife'll tell you.

E: And you'd cook it in a big iron pot?

S: Yes, ma'am.

E: Outside?

S: Yes.

E: And what was it you put in it?

U: Tomatoes, carrots, **cabbage**, corn. **I already said cabbage**. A bit of seasoning.

S: Meat?

F: Yeah.

E: It cooked a long time. What happened to the bones?

S: Well, the bones would be cooked to pieces. When it'd be done cooked, when you took it out, why, the bones would be nothing but bones. They'd take and kind of strain them all and throw the bones away. They didn't want the children to drink the catfish soup, they were afraid they might get choked. Some think the bones would give them trouble, you know.

E: What would you have to eat with that catfish soup? Would you have cornbread or some kind of bread to eat with that stew?

S: No ma'am, we had some other. Most of them would get some kind of bread, they'd call it—you know what they'd call it?

F: White bread.

S: White bread. They had white bread. They called it white bread, you know. It was a loaf of bread what it was, but they was big loaves, back in them times. You had to go up on Rock Hill to get them, but somebody would go get them, bring them back and have a baked fish stew. Sometimes they'd have a baked fish fry, too, catfish fry. Old eel. You ever seen an old eel?

E: Did you eat the eel, too?

S: No ma'am. They would throw him. They would take him and throw him out, cause the old eel was wiggling around and all around just like he was looking for something, look like an old snake. They'd throw him out. Stomp him real good and throw him out. But stomping him didn't do any good because old eel was so slick. After you grab him, you couldn't hold him, so they just kick him out. They wasn't afraid of him, they're all like, "All right, we don't need you, here you go."
[Laughter] And they'd throw him out of the fish, throw him out of the fish and way out of the boat, permanent.

E: Long time ago, you didn't have any clocks, you just got up by sun time and regulated what you did by the time of day it was?

S: Mostly did when I was coming a little boy. My daddy was always lucky, though, he had a watch. But, you know, he done that on account of he done the carpenter trade, he'd know when to leave home and he'd know when to quit and come back home. He had a watch. We had an old-timey clock stringed on the wall, but I don't even remember what went with it.

E: Did you have a bell at the schoolhouse to remind you to come to school on time?

S: Oh yeah, that's right. They had a bell at the schoolhouse they'd ring. Everyone—

[End of interview]

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