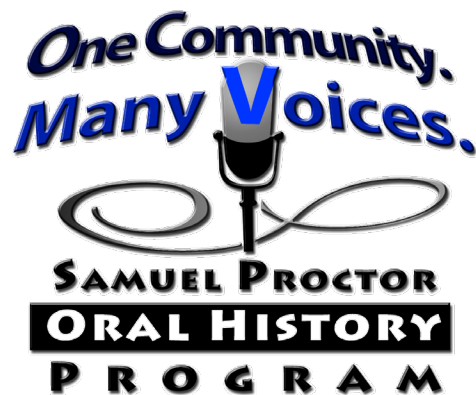


Dr. Edward Glenn Hill

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-080**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
July 31, 1973**



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CAT 080 Dr. Edward Glenn Hill
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols on July 31, 1973
20 minutes | 14 pages

Abstract: Edward Glenn Hill describes his experience as a son of the only doctor to the Catawba Indians. He recalls following his father around and watching him as he practiced medicine. Hill describes the event of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic and the impact it had on the Catawba Community. He goes into detail about the changes and improvements to the Catawba reservation with the help of the Mormon Church.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; Chief Samuel Taylor Blue; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Mormon Church; Influenza Epidemic (1918-1919)]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
PROGRAM
University of Florida

CAT 080

Interviewee: Dr. Edward Glenn Hill

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: July 31, 1973

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Route 6, Box 260, Rock Hill, South Carolina. This is July 31, 1973. I'm visiting at the home of Mr. E. G. Hill. Mr. Hill, tell me what's your full name?

H: My full name?

E: Yes.

H: Edward Glenn.

E: Edward Glenn Hill. And your address is?

H: Catawba, South Carolina, Route 1.

E: Catawba, South Carolina, Route 1. I'm especially visiting you—you're, of course, an interesting person yourself, 'cause you're a painter and you've been all over this community and you've known the Catawba Indians—but I'm especially interested in your father, who was the doctor for the Catawba Indians for thirty-two years. What was your father's name?

H: Dr. George Washington Hill.

E: Dr. George Washington Hill. Where was he born?

H: Carlisle, South Carolina.

E: Carlisle, South Carolina. Where did he take his medical training?

H: In Atlanta.

E: That would be Emory University.

H: Okay, I think that's where it would be.

E: Then, after he finished his medical training, did he come back to Catawba to practice?

H: Yes'm.

E: He practiced here all of his life?

H: That's right, in Rock Hill.

E: And in this area. Now this home where I'm visiting is the site of Dr. Hill's home. This is a little new four- or five-room house, very attractive on the inside that Mr. Hill built and painted himself. But this site was the site on which his father lived and from which he practiced. E. G., I believe, as a little boy you well remember when the knocks would come on the door at night—the Indians asking your father to come for them.

H: I sure do.

E: How did your father travel?

H: First there was a horse and buggy, and then a T model. They didn't have no electric lights at first. They had kerosene lamps. I remember one time when I was small, my mother and I held kerosene lamps and watched him put eighty-some stitches into one Indian that had got cut up Saturday night.

E: Oh my. What Indian was that? Do you remember?

H: I think it was Bill Sanders. I believe it was him.

E: Bill Sanders. Eighty stitches, and he lived, I suppose?

H: He lived. Yes ma'am, he lived. I don't know who cut him, but anyway, he tried to get away or something, they tracked him down in and give it to him good.

E: Did you and your mother often go with your father when he visited on the reservation?

H: Yeah, a good deal.

E: What was the condition of the roads then?

H: There was no cement, no blacktop, nowhere. The roads were red, mostly.

E: Did you like to go with your father, or did he especially ask for you?

H: I didn't especially like it too much at first, but after I got used to it, why then I would.

E: Sometimes your father would spend the night with the Indians. Did you spend the night, too?

H: No, I never would go when I thought that was going to happen. He'd be real shaky, he wouldn't leave them, you know.

E: Oh, but he'd stay. They say he'd put a pallet down on the floor.

H: I suppose he would.

E: And spend the night.

H: As long as he'd get that hot coffee, he was alright.

E: They'd put him a pot of hot coffee and pallet?

H: They'd fix him up until he'd spend the night there when they really was sick.

E: Then after the horse and the buggy days, he got a car. What kind of car was that?

H: A T model. It was about 1917, the first one I'd ever been on.

E: Did he have any trouble starting it in the cold, wet weather?

H: Yes, he did. There wasn't no anti-freeze then. He'd get some hot water, or something, pour it in the radiator to get it started. He'd give me a dime to do that for him. I would be glad to get out there and get it started for him. A dime was a

dime then. He'd practice all around here. Some in Rock Hill, some in [inaudible 4:24]

E: He was especially known as the Indian doctor, wasn't he?

H: He was known to practice for the Indians. I believe it was around thirty or thirty-two years.

E: What was the date of his birth?

H: He was born December 20th, 1865.

E: And he died in 1928, is that right?

H: Yes, that's right. June 20th.

E: June 20th. You remember very well what your father looked like. Tell us what he looked like.

H: Well, he was taller than I am and kind of slender. He had a long mustache. Almost all of those people in those days did. He looked taller than what I am. I think I'm about five-nine. He must have been taller than six feet. He wore a long mustache, and I wouldn't be erroneous in that he was the founder of this Methodist church over here.

E: He founded the Methodist church in Rock Hill.

H: Him and a Mr. Spencer and Mr. J. T. Faris.

E: Let's see, W. H. Spencer, J. C. Faris.

H: J. T.

E: J.T. Faris and your father founded the Methodist church.

H: That's right.

E: Well, that's amazing.

H: White and colored.

E: It was integrated then, White and colored.

H: It was integrated.

E: He always kept that little black bag packed and ready to go out there.

H: Oh, all the time. Two of them.

E: Two of them.

H: Long may I remember when I had [inaudible 6:06] I my house burned down, it had his diploma and all kinds of medical tools. Had all that—until I lost the house and everything.

E: You lost his diploma and his medical tools and everything.

H: Oh, everything.

E: Oh, that's such a pity. In those days you didn't have medical tools like they have today either, or medicines, either one. Did he like to kind of mix up his own medicines and his own powders and such things?

H: Sure, he did. He has all the things. He just couldn't get it supplied just anywhere. You mixed your own medicine.

E: How much did he charge the Indians for a visit?

H: Oh, the government paid him by the year.

E: Yes.

H: They paid him, I think, twice a year. It wasn't much, I've forgotten what it was.

E: Did the Indians ever bring him eggs or chickens or things like that?

H: There was somebody that always give him something like that. Not so much Indians as other people would give him hams or a piece of cow or something,

rather than just pay the doctor bills. He didn't make much, but it was enough to get by.

E: He brought a lot of little babies into the world, didn't he? Lots of 'em.

H: Oh, you know that. Sure, there were many.

E: Were any of those little babies ever named for him that you remember?

H: I know of one person. He's not a baby, he's a gown man, Cecil Hill Carter.

You've heard of Stony Lonesome.

E: Yes, I know Cecil Hill Carter.

H: He was named after my father. Now I don't know how many [inaudible 7:49]
some savages lived over there [inaudible 7:56]

E: Well, I make a lot of **rupee names** after him. What Indians do you remember that he would treat or what Indians do you remember? You've been painting and doing work all over this community.

H: Oh, I never did paint much for them Indians, but do you mean the older Indians?

E: Yes, sir.

H: Well, there's John Brown. He's dead and gone. Roy Brown still lives. Chief Blue, Moroni George, Howard Sanders, Clifford Bates, Ben Harris, the one they call Toad Harris, Archie Wheelock.

E: Did you know Archie Wheelock?

H: Sure did. I remember him.

E: I'd like to hear what you remember about Archie Wheelock.

H: Not much enough. I just knew he was coming.

E: He was a different Indian from these Indians here. He looked different than them.

- H: I remember Archie Wheelock, and I guess that's about the old **Indians**.
- E: You remember when the old Indian ferry was down here?
- H: I sure do, I remember when it were down here, too. Been down here—Early Brown.
- E: There were two ferries, weren't there?
- H: Early Brown used to run both of them and his brother helped him in the run-around.
- E: One of them was called Cureton's Ferry?
- H: Cureton's, that's down here.
- E: The other one was called what?
- H: Ashe's Ferry.
- E: Ashe's Ferry, that's right, 'cause it never went to the Ashe Brick Company.
- H: That's it.
- E: Did you ever hear your father tell you the story of the old Indian who came down to cross over the ferry by the name of Thomas Stevens and crossed over the **bandwagon** and froze to death?
- H: No, I never did.
- E: I didn't know whether you ever knew that. I heard that story and I—
- H: You know the first reservation that was down here. It's headed across the river over there, on where they are now?
- E: Yes.
- H: There's smallpox and something broke out. Killed some of them and darn like to kill all of them then. Roy Brown, the one I was telling you about, he painted with

me a long time. In fact, he still paints with me, good stuff. He showed me how many, hundreds and hundreds, Catawba Indians began with going to the Cherokee, a Tribe, they tell me. We had a big war over there next to Fort Mill or somewhere and the Cherokee liked to kill all of the Catawbas out and to divide it up. The Cherokee when to North Carolina. The Catawba stayed.

E: This epidemic of smallpox was before your father was practicing.

H: Before, yeah.

E: Before he came.

H: Right.

E: But did he ever go across the river to treat Indians over there?

H: None that I know of.

E: He'd have to go across the ferry when he did have any patients over there.

H: Uh-huh. He had walked out from down here. He used to know a brick yard on this side of the Seaboard Bridge down here. He had to let his horse and buggy or the car or something—the river would be up where you couldn't cross. He had to walk across over there to see his patients and come back.

E: Walk across on the river?

H: Across the railroad trestle.

E: Oh, the railroad trestle.

H: And then they go up to see the sick one and they walk back.

E: I hope he knew when the train was coming.

H: Oh yeah. He never get caught. He pretty well knew.

E: I never heard that story before.

- H: Well, that's ...
- E: Did you ever hear the story of the Indian who fell off the trestle and was hurt?
- H: One jumped off.
- E: Who was he?
- H: I can't tell you his name to save my life. I knew it as well as I know your name. I just can't recall his name, but I know him.
- E: Can you talk a little louder, I want to make sure I'm picking you up.
- H: I just can't recall the name, but I know him.
- E: I think he's still living, isn't he?
- H: No, he's dead.
- E: Oh, he is?
- H: Uh-huh.
- E: Why did he jump off the trestle?
- H: I don't know. He jumped by the water. There was no water, only dry land around it before you get to the water. It's a way up there. That was down here in conservatory.
- E: That's right.
- H: I can't think of that boy's name.
- E: John Brown ran the ferry awhile and Early Brown ran it for a while.
- H: John Brown ran it to begin with and then Early and then Roy and those, John Brown's boy.
- E: Do you remember when the Indians used to come around peddling their pottery and selling pottery?

H: Yep, sure do. That's what I got in some the house now, pottery. That's where it came from. **Everyone up two out there makes a bit.**

E: Yes.

H: **Earl's** wife. Most of 'em quit it, too, you know, they get jobs, plan some things.

E: When your father practiced medicine down here, these Indians were very, very poor. Poor roads, poor schools, poor everything. You've seen some changes. What do you think about the changes?

H: What changed now, so more than anything else, is these Mormons. They built a Church up there and got these Indians interested in going. The Church of Christ of Latter-day Saints is what it is. We hear from different people, that's the main thing. They built them a good school up there. They're not building any more country schools now. Those are Mormons what changed them up.

E: They used to have at least some drinking and fighting down there and you spoke of your father going down and sewing up the Indian who was injured. You don't think there's that kind of living now, do you?

H: No. You hardly ever hear of anything at all up there. Not up there no more. I feel sure they are checking for changing the laws.

E: Did your father treat the Indians during that flu epidemic of 1918, was it? You remember that?

H: I sure do.

E: What did he do for the Indians?

H: No doctor at that time know what to do. There's one family up there, John Brown, you heard me speak of a while ago. I told you his boy I knew. His parents had

five **dead** in his family at one time with that flu. Five folks in his house at one time. Nobody know what to do at that time.

E: That's true.

H: I had that thing ten and half, twenty-seven days [inaudible 15:14] Well, he was a real doctor for his day, and he knew it.

E: Yes, he was. What about Chief Blue? You remember him? Did your father doctor his family?

H: Yeah. I knew him some. I knew him a little bit, not too much.

E: I expect you knew his children better than you knew him.

H: Yeah, I knew him. [inaudible 15:38] I remember **Pete** Blue.

E: He had one son living in Rock Hill, I believe. Is it Nathan Blue?

H: There's a Nathan Blue, now.

E: You would know some of the younger ones and some of the very old ones, I'm sure.

[Break in recording]

E: Mr. Hill, when you traveled around with your father, visiting on the reservation many years ago, what was it like down on the reservation? Were there any trees much?

H: Just small bushes, mostly, what we call blackjack.

E: Well, what about the houses? What were they like?

H: Some of them were built out of logs and had mud and cement or something else in the cracks. Roof was straw and mud. That's the kind of roof they had. Floors were plank boards.

E: And how would they heat their room?

H: Ma'am?

E: They'd heat their room with one chimney?

H: One chimney and especially the fireplace.

E: I've heard your sister say that when your father left medicines that they'd put in the cracks. Keep the medicine in the cracks of their room. What kind of food would they have?

H: They fished a lot. Some of them made gardens, but the land is so poor we couldn't have much of a garden. Hunted a lot for rabbits and such as that. They got along pretty good.

E: You remember the school? I want to hear about the school down there.

H: I don't remember too much about that school. I think it taught as far as the seventh grade then. I believe it did. The first church they had there was Mormon. A Mormon church built there. The Baptist did have one there and then the Mormons. This last church they've got now it's pretty nice, you know. That's what changes they've made, the Mormons.

E: The school you remember was a little white frame building.

H: That's right.

E: You don't remember, of course, the other one many years go. The other one was just an unpainted plank building with one room to it down near where the church was, I assume.

H: I don't remember it. I knew where it was but I don't remember the house.

E: Over this period of years. You've seen them when they were very poor, when the reservation was in bad shape. Do you think there's been lots of changes for the good today?

H: About everything has changed for the good, from what it was.

E: The Indians you know most, lots of them have good jobs now?

H: Yeah, they work at the bleachery and about all of the younger bunch have good jobs.

E: Have the houses changed, too?

H: Yes. Most of them were built good houses. Those two old type houses, most of them are good.

E: I don't believe they fish anymore in the Catawba River either, do they?

H: No. Sort of dye stuff from out these plants and the Rock Hill fish are not fit to eat.

E: So, they really depend upon their gardens and their jobs to furnish—

H: Jobs mostly.

E: Mostly their jobs. What friends do you have among the Indians that you used to know especially?

H: Roy Brown. Maggie Beck. Idle Sanders and about all of them up there, to tell you the facts, All the young and old, I know all of them.

E: When you go visit among them, are you known as E. G. Hill or do they remember you as Dr. Hill?

H: Both ways.

E: E. G. Hill the painter and doctor—

H: I know the last one of them up there.

E: You do?

H: I sure do. I lived with the families for about the last couple of years or something. You see, I paint for up there twenty years or more.

E: Did you find it a rule that the Indians are very honest and dependable about their work?

H: The ones I knew were.

E: You knew lots of them, I'll bet.

H: I knew a pile of them. In fact, all of them.

E: You have a lots of friends among them now.

H: I got a lot of them now. Some of the best friends I have right today are Indians.

E: Well, they're your friends and they are also your father's friends.

[End of interview]

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