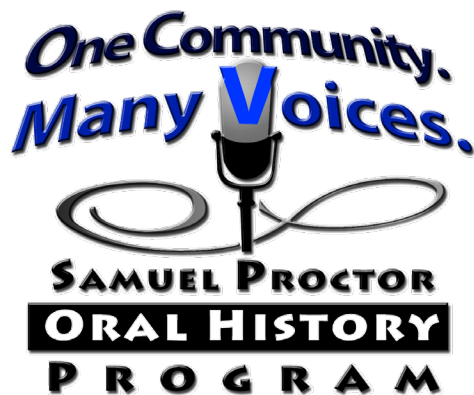


# Mary Carolyn Sanders

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)  
CAT-004**

**Interview by:**

**Emma Reid Echols  
November 1971**



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**CAT 004 Mary Carolyn Sanders**  
**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)**  
**Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols in November 1971**  
**8 minutes | 5 pages**

**Abstract:** Mary Carolyn Sanders speaks about her family and some of her siblings' careers. She discusses her school career and shares that she enjoyed art and music in school. Sanders then describes attending beauty school and living in Charlotte, North Carolina, and her hobbies, which include showing her dogs at dog shows and skiing. She speaks about growing up as a Mormon and her hopes for the future of the Catawba. Sanders describes her hobby of collecting Catawba artifacts and expresses her regret for giving away some artifacts she had as a child to White people.

**Keywords:** [Catawba Nation; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Education; Artifacts]

**SAMUEL PROCTOR**  
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CAT 004

Interviewee: Mary Carolyn Sanders

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: November 1971

E: Rock Hill, South Carolina. I'm visiting in the home of John Idle Sanders, and a visitor has just come in from Charlotte, and I'd like for her to tell her story. Will you tell me your full name?

S: My name is Mary Carolyn Sanders, and I live at 1301 Dresden Drive West in Charlotte, North Carolina.

E: And who were your parents and your grandparents?

S: My parents are Willie A. Sanders and Verdie Sanders. My grandparents are Bill Sanders and Nora Gordon, and my mother's parents were Maggie Harris and David Harris.

E: I'm glad you remember all those. Now about your brothers and sisters, how many brothers and sisters do you have?

S: I have five sisters and two brothers.

E: And where are they working?

S: My oldest brother is an upholsterer, and my youngest brother is a carpenter. I have two sisters working. One's a hairdresser—my youngest sister that I sent to beauty school after I finished—and my other sister works in a factory in Rock Hill.

E: Do your brothers and sisters live in Charlotte, or most of them live here?

S: They all live here in Rock Hill.

E: Now, I'm interested in your school activities. You began school on the Indian reservation, and who was your first teacher?

S: Mrs. Cornish was my first teacher.

E: And then where did you go?

S: Then next door, in the next room, I had Mrs. Robinson. Then we had to transfer to Lesslie Elementary School, and I stayed there 'til the eighth grade. Then we had to transfer on into the city of Rock Hill to Sullivan High School.

E: You remember those years at Lesslie? You were integrated for the first time with other White children. How did you get along with that, and how did you like it?

S: Well, most of the Indian children are very shy, and it's hard for them to get to know people. I had kind of a complex at first. It took quite a few years to get out of that, in fact, until I was out of beauty school, I guess.

E: I believe Mrs. Crawford was one of your teachers. What did she do for you there?

S: Mrs. Crawford, I enjoyed her class more than any class or grade in school. I always loved to go in her classroom because she let me do a lot of artwork—paintings and drawings, which I enjoyed doing. I became more interested in school after that year in her room.

E: Did you like music? Did you sing with her glee club?

S: I like music very much, but I was never able to participate in any of the activities because it was hard to get a way to and from school other than riding the bus.

E: What about high school? Did you do anything with your art interest in high school?

S: Nothing other than just doing posters and different things.

E: And then after high school, where did you take your beauty training?

S: I took my beauty course at Charlotte College of Beauty on North Tryon Street.

E: How long have you been working in the beauty shop in Charlotte?

S: About nine years.

E: I believe you have an apartment with a White girl. You get along very well with the White girl, do you not?

S: Yes, ma'am. She's from the mountains, and we enjoy a lot of things together. We have, especially, activities and things; we enjoy the same thing. We have German Shepherd show dogs and we go to shows and show them. And ski a little bit, her being from the mountains. The mountain people and the Indian people, they seem to love nature, and they have a lot in common.

E: Tell me about your church activities in Charlotte.

S: Well, I'm Mormon, and I go to church at the Mormon church on Hilliard Drive.

E: What about the way your church teaches concerning drugs and whiskey? They're very strict in that area. How do you think that affects your young people?

S: It's taught very strongly in our church and also in the homes. When you're taught like this, you grow up, and it just seems to work with you later on.

E: You find very few young people who use drugs or alcohol in your church?

S: Very few.

E: What do you think the future of your Catawba Indians is? So many of you are working in industry.

S: I think they'll have a better life—better means of living—because there's more to offer them now than back, say, twenty years ago.

E: Do you find that White people are very friendly and interested in you as the individual as well as you as the Catawba Indian?

S: Yes, ma'am.

E: You've come a long way from the Catawba Indian School on the old reservation to the new school and Lesslie School and high school and now a beautician in Charlotte. Are you interested in collecting old Indian pottery and artifacts, things of that kind about your people?

S: Yes, ma'am. I have a small collection now that I've been working on for a short time. I'd like to have a lot more, but it's kinda difficult to get right much. I usually try to pick up whatever I come across if I can get it.

E: Have you got some of the old things that belong to your people, arrowheads or weapons of any kind, too?

S: I have some old arrowheads and tomahawks. I have a couple a those.

E: Do these belong in your family, or have you collected them other places?

S: Collected them other places. I wish I had kept a lot of things that I found when I was a child that some of the White people would come down and—I guess they were collectors, and I used to let them have them when I was a child. I wish I had them back now.

E: What kind of things did you let the White people have?

S: Oh, I had some of the most gorgeous arrowheads you could ever find. When I was a kid, I always tried to—especially where they had plowed up the ground, you could go out and find beautiful arrowheads and things. I'd always hunt for them, especially when I was out like that. Anything. And even now, every time I go out anywhere in the wild, especially up in the mountain areas, I'm always looking for different things. I love to go to the mineral places up in the mountains and hunt different minerals. I'm always just looking for things.

E: Some of the older people on the reservation may still have things. Do they share with you? Maybe you can get some down here.

S: I wish they would. I haven't had the time to come down and check, but I think if they knew that I was trying to collect and get my little collection started, I think they would help out.

E: Well, I'm sure you'll be adding to that from time to time.

S: I'm sure gonna try.

[End of interview]

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