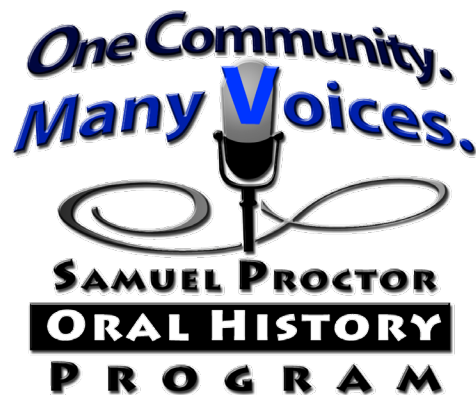


Martin Raymond Harris

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-107**

Interview by:

**Edith Frances Canty Wade
January 13, 1975**



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CAT 107 Martin Raymond Harris
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11 minutes | 8 pages

Abstract: Martin Harris recalls his family tree, including his siblings and their birthdays. He then talks about his marriage and subsequent divorce as well as his three children. Harris talks about being part of the Mormon church as a child and the move from the old reservation to the new reservation. Then, Harris describes his childhood home and his chores as a kid as well as what Christmas and school was like as a child. Harris talks about the Tribal Council, as well as being one of few men on the reservation who knows how to make pottery and his hope that it continues to be passed down between generations.

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

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
P R O G R A M
University of Florida

CAT 107

Interviewee: Martin Raymond Harris

Interviewer: Edith Frances Canty Wade

Date of Interview: January 13, 1975

W: This is Frances Wade. I live on Route 3, Box 304, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Today is January 13, 1975. I am gathering oral history of the Catawba Indians for the University of Florida, and today I'm talking with Martin Harris. Martin, what is your full name?

H: Martin Raymond Harris.

W: What is your address?

H: Route 7, Box 32.

W: Who are your parents?

H: Floyd Raymond Harris and Noah Harris Campbell.

W: Who are your grandparents on your father's side?

H: David Adams Harris and **Della** Harris.

W: They are both Indians, aren't they?

H: Yes.

W: All right. Who are your grandparents on your mother's side?

H: David Harris and Maggie Harris.

W: What brothers and sisters do you have?

H: I have four brothers and five sisters.

W: Would you give me their names and when they were born, if you know, Martin?

H: Betty Blue was born in 1934. March the—I can't even think of it.

W: That's all right, as long as you know the year.

H: Carl Albert Harris was born in 1937, February 23.

W: Before you go any further, Carl was the first Indian—well, he was the first person that was killed in Vietnam from around this area, wasn't he?

H: Yes.

W: All right, go ahead.

H: Grady Crawford Harris born 1939, December 24—25, Evan's is the twenty-fourth. Do you want mine?

W: Yes, I want yours.

H: Mine was 1941, September thirtieth. Della Eleanor Harris was born 1944 on January the first. Willard Leon Harris was born September 16, 1946. Debra Mae Harris was born October 23, 1948.

W: Martin, let's talk about your family. Are you married?

H: I'm divorced.

W: You're divorced. You were married and you have children from that marriage?

H: Yes.

W: What are their names?

H: Ronald Floyd, and Donnie Rae, and Angela Michelle.

W: How old are they Martin?

H: Ronald will be eleven in May. Ronnie is nine and Angela is seven.

W: Martin, did you marry an Indian?

H: No.

W: We'll talk about church for just a few minutes. Are you a member of any church?

H: Yes.

W: What church do you belong to?

H: The Mormon Church.

W: Do you attend church now?

H: No.

W: When you were young, did you attend church?

H: Yes.

W: How did you get to church?

H: I walked.

W: And you lived on the reservation at that time?

H: Yes.

W: Where were you born?

H: On the reservation.

W: Now, when we talk about the reservation, we're all talking still about the old reservation.

H: Yes.

W: The part that's still intact? What can you tell me about the old reservation when you lived there? Have there been many changes made? What was it like then and what is it like now?

H: ... Well, there's been a lot of changes made concerning the reservation that give up the rights to a lot of things, which I didn't think was fair.

W: I'm glad you mentioned that because I'm afraid that I might have forgotten to ask you about that. What things in particular, Martin, do you think that they might have given up that wasn't fair?

H: Well, they gave up their land. They got the deeds to 'em and then they just did away with it. Which, they don't have that now, most of 'em don't, some still do, but there's a lot don't.

W: The biggest portion of 'em don't. When you lived on the reservation the school was on the reservation?

H: Yes.

W: An Indian school and that is no more. Were there many houses on the reservation when you lived down there?

H: No, there wasn't too many.

W: What kind of a house did you live in?

H: Just lived in a frame house.

W: It was made out of boards or planks?

H: Yes.

W: Do you remember how many rooms you had?

H: Two rooms was all we lived in.

W: How did you keep your house warm?

H: With wood.

W: And you carried water?

H: Carried our water.

W: That meant you were like the rest of us; you didn't have any inside facilities—bathroom facilities or anything?

H: No, we didn't.

W: Martin, when it was Christmas time, what was it like at your house?

H: Well, everyone was always looking for a little, but they never did get much. We always got fruit, candy and maybe one little old toy at Christmas, but we always enjoyed it.

W: You know, of all the people I have talked to, they too tell about such a small amount of material things that they got, but they all enjoyed and seemed to be more happy than we are at the Christmases today. When you talk about your little bags of fruit, did your parents buy it or did you remember getting any fruit when you'd go to the church and pick it up? Do you remember any of that?

H: I don't remember any of that.

W: Maybe they were not doing that when you were growing up. There is another thing that I want to ask you about. So many young people set out pines, were you among the young people who set out pines?

H: Yes, I set out pines.

W: Where did you get 'em?

H: From the 4H club.

W: Did they come through the school? Who got 'em for you? Did you go to the 4H club yourself?

H: Well, they had a 4H club in the school.

W: On the reservation?

H: On the reservation and we got the pines through the 4H club there.

W: Who was your teacher at that time?

H: Miss Sarah J. Robinson.

W: Since we're talkin' 'bout school, how far did you go in school?

H: Seventh grade.

W: Where did you go to school?

H: I went on the reservation up until the fifth grade and then I went to Lesslie for the sixth and seventh.

W: Why did you change schools?

H: Because they cut the grades down to the fifth grade down there.

W: Down on the reservation?

H: Yes.

W: Did you eat lunch at school?

H: Yes.

W: Was it free or did you have to pay for it?

H: It was free.

W: Who cooked down on the reservation?

H: Well, there was certain children at the school each day that would help Arzada, the cook.

W: You're talkin' 'bout Arzada Sanders now?

H: Yes.

W: You had good meals too, didn't you?

H: Yes.

W: Were you ever in the service, Martin?

H: No.

W: Is there any reason why you didn't go into the service?

H: No.

W: You was just never drafted or anything?

H: That's right.

W: You know that now, we have revived the Tribal Council. We have a Chief, two councilmen, and a secretary. Do you approve of that? Do you think that's a good thing?

H: Yes.

W: How do you think it will benefit the people?

H: Well, I think they'll do their duty and see that things are carried out right and from that I think we all can be of benefit from it.

W: Also, you one of the people that's getting some benefit from it right now, aren't you?

H: Yes.

W: Because I believe there was \$50,000 appropriated especially for Catawba Indians. That's the way the money is earmarked, and you are in that program, right now?

H: Yes.

W: You're a part of that program. Martin, can you make pottery?

H: Yes.

W: You're one of the very, very few men who can make pottery aren't you?

H: Yes.

W: I must insert here that Martin makes real nice pottery. I think that he doesn't make large pieces, I haven't seen any real large pieces of pottery. He makes

small and medium, and you couldn't ask for nicer pieces of pottery anywhere.

Martin, are you proud of your Indian heritage?

H: Yes.

W: How do you show it?

H: Well, when anybody asks me if I'm an Indian I say, "Yes." And they say, "Well, you don't look like an Indian." I say, "Well, I still am an Indian. I can't help it. I was born an Indian and I'll always be proud to be an Indian."

W: Do you think that the heritage, the Catawba Indian heritage of making Indian pottery, do you think that should be kept alive?

H: Yes, I do.

W: I'm in agreement with you. I think that the young people should learn to make pottery also. I'd like to describe Martin for you. How old are you, Martin?

H: Thirty-three.

W: Martin is thirty-three, and how tall are you?

H: Six foot, one inch.

W: He's 6'1". His hair is coal black and he's like a lot of other young men, this day and time, who has his hair rather long. Usually, it's well-kept and he has kinda thick sideburns. He is not real dark-skinned, but neither is he White. He has a good-looking Indian complexion.

[End of interview]

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