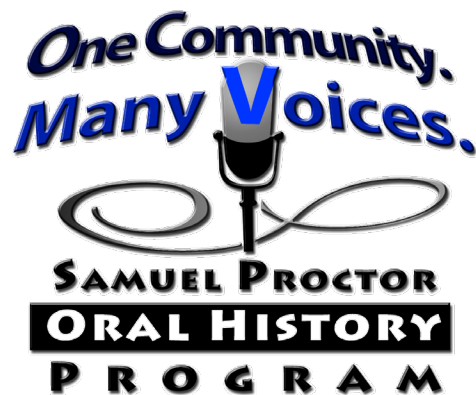


Donna Denise Beck

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-113**

Interview by:

**Edith Frances Canty Wade
August 14, 1975**



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CAT 113 Donna Denise Beck
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
Interviewed by Edith Frances Cauty Wade on August 14, 1975
12 minutes | 11 pages

Abstract: Donna Beck, the eighteen-year-old granddaughter of Chief Samuel Taylor Blue, describes the home she grew up in, one of the oldest in the reservation. Donna is mentioned to be one of a few in the community who completed high school and she was enrolled at York Tech to take secretarial courses. She describes her hopes for a future family. She answers that she is proud of her heritage and advises the next generation to finish school.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; Chief Samuel Taylor Blue; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Family histories; Education]

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

CAT 113

Interviewee: Donna Denise Beck

Interviewer: Edith Frances Canty Wade

Date of Interview: August 14, 1975

W: This is Frances Wade. I live on Route 3, Box 304, Rock Hill, South Carolina. I'm gathering oral history of the Catawba Indians for the University of Florida. Today is August 14, 1975, and I'm talking with Donna Beck. Donna, what is your full name?

B: Donna Denise Beck.

W: What is your birth date?

B: September 28, 1957.

W: And that makes you how old?

B: I'll be eighteen next month.

W: What is your address?

B: Route 3, Box 301.

W: Who are your parents, Donna?

B: Mr. and Mrs. Major J. Beck.

W: Let's go back and clarify just a little bit, Donna. When we talk about Mr. and Mrs. Major J. Beck--they're your grandparents, aren't they?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Are they Indians?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Are they both Catawba Indians?

B: My grandma's Catawba, and my grandpa's Cherokee.

W: All right now, I want to know who your parents are?

B: Lily Wilbur is my mother.

W: All right. Donna, do you have any brothers and sisters?

B: Yes ma'am, I have one brother and one sister.

W: What are their names and what are their ages?

B: Franky, he's about ten. Cassandra, she's eleven.

W: Donna, I know that you've lived with your grandmother and grandfather almost all of your life. What kind of work does your grandfather do?

B: He's a carpenter.

W: What kind of work did your grandmother do?

B: She just cleaned up the house.

W: Well, what about your mother?

B: Well, she's a waitress or cook out at the Dutch Mill.

W: And this is in Rock Hill, isn't it?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Donna, you live in—on the old reservation. You live in an old house--probably the oldest house now on the reservation. Who lived there before you?

B: I'm not sure.

W: What about your grandfather?

B: Yeah.

W: Your grandfather, Chief Blue, lived there for many, many years. Donna, do you remember any old stories or anything that your grandparents have told about what it was like on the reservation a long time ago?

B: Picking cotton, and things like that, that they talked about.

W: Do you remember anything about what it was like for them at Christmas time?

B: I never heard of them speak about Christmas.

W: Well, what was it like for you, when you were growing up at Christmas time?

B: Well, a bunch of toys. [Laughter]

W: [Laughter] Donna, what duties do you have to perform around your house?

B: Clean up, cut grass.

W: If I were to ask you to give me just one of the good memories that you have of your home, what would you tell me?

B: You mean with my family?

W: Yes.

B: All getting together and doing something. Playing ball with each other.

W: Donna, I know that you can describe your house better than I can. Would you—I will start it out for you. You live on the center, just about the center, of the old reservation. Your house has the only well where you draw water out with the bucket on the reservation. All right now, you take it from there.

B: Well, we don't have running water or a bathroom in the house.

W: And how big is your house? How many rooms is what I'm saying?

B: We've got four rooms in it.

W: Do you have television or radio in your house?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: And what do you all heat with?

B: We have a wood stove.

W: And who gets all the wood?

B: Grandpa.

W: And how old is your grandfather?

B: He's about seventy-six.

W: And he's just as spry as almost a young man. Donna, are you active in church?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: What church do you belong to?

B: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

W: Do you hold any positions in the church?

B: No, ma'am.

W: How far have you gone in school, Donna?

B: I've graduated from high school.

W: Did you ever go to school on the reservation?

B: Yes, ma' am.

W: What was it like when you went to school down here?

B: Well, I had a woman principal, and I guess that's what made it different from any other school.

W: Did you have to go and get water, or did you have water here?

B: I had water here.

W: You had running water in the school?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: What about your lunch? Did you have lunch at school?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Did you have to pay for it?

B: I don't remember.

W: Well, I know several people didn't have to pay for their lunch, and I didn't remember if everybody did or not. Was it good food?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Who cooked?

B: [inaudible: 05:26]

W: And she was a Catawba Indian?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Do you remember any of your teachers' names down here on the reservation?

B: Miss Cornice and Miss Robinson.

W: Do you think you learned a lot down here?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: When you got out of the school on the reservation, do you think that you were up with the other students in learning when you went to the other school?

B: Yes, ma'am. It was kind of hard, though, getting used to it.

W: 'Cause you had gone to school with all Indians, probably was one thing. How did you like going to a high school?

B: I liked high school.

W: What high school did you go to?

B: Rock Hill High.

W: Did you take part in sports?

B: No, ma'am.

W: Why did you not?

B: I didn't have time.

W: You didn't have time. Do you like sports?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: What sports in particular do you like?

B: Playing ball.

W: What kind of ball?

B: Softball.

W: Do you like to fish?

B: Yes, ma' am.

W: When you complete all the education that you're going to get, and we're going to talk about it right now. You have finished high school. What have you been doing this summer?

B: Working.

W: Where have you been working?

B: For the newspaper.

W: Where?

B: Catawba reservation.

W: What's your job?

B: Secretary.

W: And you worked in the Tribal office?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: In September you're going back to school. What school are you going to?

B: To the tech.

W: York Tech?

B: Yes ma'am.

W: What are you taking, Donna?

B: Secretarial courses.

W: You've already been?

B: One quarter.

W: One quarter. And are you taking shorthand?

B: I'll take it when I go back.

W: And you want to be—what kind of secretary would you like to be when you finish? Private secretary, or just a secretary?

B: Just a secretary.

W: Donna, I know that you're not quite ready to get married either. Have you ever thought about the type of young man you want to marry?

B: Good-looking, **manly**. [Laughter]

W: A good-looking one. Any other—?

B: Well, I would like to marry an Indian.

W: You'd like to marry an Indian. I had a young Indian man just the other day said that he had really given a lot of thought to marrying an Indian, also. Would you like to live on the reservation after you were married, or would you like to move away?

B: I'd like to live right here on the reservation.

W: Do you want children when you—?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Do you want just one or two, or would you like to have a houseful, or do you have any—?

B: Houseful.

W: I had always thought myself when I was just young that I would like to have a football team, and that's a lot of boys, you know. Have you given any thought to the kind of house you would like to have?

B: Just a simple house.

W: Just a simple house. But I bet you'd like to have some running water, wouldn't you? [Laughter]

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: And a bathroom. I know that you can remember hearing a lot of people talk about how different it was for Indians a long time. Do you think you have better opportunities than the old Indians had?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: What are some of the ways that you think you have a better opportunity, Donna?

B: Well, one is going to school and getting a job.

W: And at least you got to ride the bus to school, and we didn't ever get to do that.

Donna, are you registered to vote?

B: No, ma'am.

W: You're old enough, aren't you?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Do you think that you're going to register?

B: Don't know.

W: Do you think it's important to vote?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Well, I'm sure that if you think that it's important, you will register. Do you have friends among the White people, Donna?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Do you have friends among the Black people?

B: No, no.

W: All right. But do you get along with both Whites and Blacks?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Do you think you've accomplished very much, Donna?

B: Yeah.

W: If you could change the government today, if you had an opportunity to change the government, what is the one thing that you would do?

B: I don't know.

W: Did you think that it was a good idea when all of the TV stations had Watergate on? Do you think it's a good idea to air all of those things for everybody to know about?

B: Well, yeah, it was important for everybody to know.

W: Why do you think it was important for everybody to know?

B: Well, that was history going on.

W: All right, it was history going on. Do you know how to make pottery, Donna?

B: A little bit.

W: I know that your grandmother does. Would you like to know how to really make it and become a craftsman?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Are you proud to be an Indian?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: Do all of the people at school and the people you come in contact with know that you're an Indian?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: If you could just give one piece of advice to people that are younger than you, Indians that are younger than you, what would you give them?

B: Finish school.

W: This is very important, isn't it?

B: Yes, ma'am.

W: I have found that this is very important, and I've had the opportunity to help several young people. Most of the places that I've been to asking for help, they require that the young people have high school educations, and we don't have too many people down here with it. Now I'd like to describe Donna. Donna, how tall are you?

B: About 5'1".

W: How much do you weigh?

B: Ninety-nine pounds.

W: And she's got not dark brown hair, what color hair have you got, Donna?

B: Light brown.

W: Or auburn or something like that. And she's got big brown eyes, and they're big. And she's got—she's not dark skin, and she's not fair skin. She's got this real beautiful olive complexion. She's a very lovely young lady, and she's a very quiet person. You have to really talk to her for a while before she'll really open up to you. But she is the kind of young people that Catawba's proud of.

[End of interview]

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