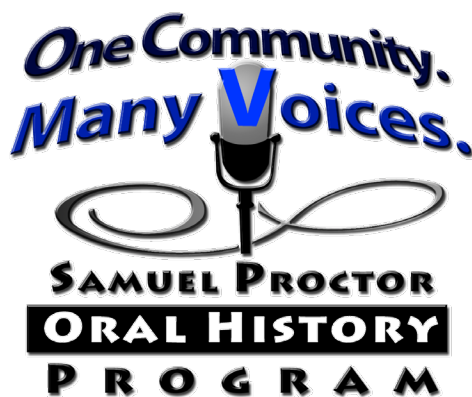


Elizabeth Laverne Blue

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-201**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
April 27, 1993**



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9 minutes | 7 pages

Abstract: Elizabeth Blue is the wife of Chief Gilbert Blue. They met at a dance, where Gilbert Blue played as part of the band. They didn't start dating until much later after they first met and were later married on October 19, 1963. Together they have had three children and now have five grandchildren. One of their children, Denise, is a potter and dancer who participates in group dances. Elizabeth notes that it seems that the Catawba were more united and grew together after her husband became Chief, and she is hopeful for the future.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; Chief Gilbert Blue; North Carolina--Charlotte; Family histories; Communities]

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

CAT 201

Interviewee: Elizabeth Laverne Blue

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: April 27, 1993

E: This is Emma Reid Echols of Charlotte, North Carolina. I'm working on the oral history of the Catawba Indians with Dr. Samuel Proctor, and this is April 27. I'm visiting in the home of Gilbert Blue, the Chieftain, but I'm especially interested because I want to introduce to you his wife, Elizabeth, and she's been my friend for a long time.

[Break in recording]

E: Elizabeth, give me your full name.

B: I'm Elizabeth Laverne Blue.

E: And your home was in Chester?

B: Yes.

E: I believe you went to the high school in Chester, is that right?

B: Yes.

E: And you had finished high school, and you were working in a hospital?

B: I was working in a mill, a textile mill.

E: What was the name of the mill?

B: The Eureka.

E: Oh, yeah. And then a young man by the name of Gilbert Blue was out of the army, and he had a little band organized, and he came to Chester to play. Was that the first time you had seen him?

B: Yes.

E: And he played and then—was there dancing?

- B: Yes. It was a square dance, and I went with my girlfriend. She lived—the dance was across the road from where she lived, and we went.
- E: Do you remember the kind of dress you wore? Was it gingham with ruffles on it or what?
- B: No.
- E: You don't remember?
- B: I had jeans on, probably. [Laughter]
- E: And you saw Gilbert for the first time. Did you dance with him or did you just—
- B: No, he was playing in the band and—
- E: But you were introduced to him, and you saw him.
- B: No, not really. We just talked a little bit, but really he didn't really notice me because he thought I was so young. I looked younger than what I was. [Laughter]
- E: Well, when did you all begin—after that you began to date some, and then you were married?
- B: Well, it was a while 'fore we even dated. He—I liked somebody else at the time and we talked when we saw each other, but it was probably a few months before we ever went out, **and then the two of us**—[Laughter]
- E: And then I'm sure he took you to his church, did he not?
- B: Well, he wasn't active in his church then. I was active in my church.
- E: What was the date of your wedding, do you remember? I have to think of mine.
- B: Well, he wasn't active in the church, and we stopped dating. In the spring of the year, he had got active in his church, and came back and we started dating. This

was in June, and later, in October that year, we got married. It was October 19, 1963.

E: Now you have said you've lived in several homes in Rock Hill, of course, a roundabout. Usually on the reservation, or near the reservation?

B: Near, yeah.

E: Then, you were thrilled when he was able to buy this home, weren't you?

B: Yes.

E: This was a duplex, I believe, and he has converted it into a great big gracious, lovely home. You've done the decorating. I can see your handicraft in the window treatments, in the drapes, and so forth. And your favorite color is rose?

B: Yeah. [Laughter]

E: It's a lovely home. Now, tell me, I want to hear about your children. How many children and grandchildren do you have?

B: We have three children, two boys and a girl, five grandchildren.

E: Do most of them live on the reservation?

B: Not on the reservation, but close.

E: There's no room. Now, when you came into the reservation, you didn't learn to make pottery, but it's interesting to me that you are a homemaker— a real homemaker, active in the home and the church and the community, and it's your daughter who's making pottery today. Now what's her name?

B: Denise.

E: Denise. Did she have some pottery on the festival?

B: No, I don't think so.

E: But she's making pottery?

B: Yeah.

E: And she loves to dance, she has her own Indian costume, hasn't she?

B: Yeah.

E: I saw her at the Oakdale school with a group dancing there, and I hope to get to see her do that again. Does she work somewhere?

B: No.

E: She has two small children, doesn't she?

B: Yeah.

E: Now where do her children attend school?

B: Lesslie.

E: Now I'm interested in—last night you had a large group of church people, some of them from out West, some of them from here, and this living room was full of people, and I'm sure Gilbert had his guitar. Did anybody else have a guitar?

B: Yeah, another member of the church had his guitar, and we've got a friend that plays the spoons [Laughter] who was here. Denise had her tambourine.

E: Oh, I bet. And then what songs did they sing?

B: Country-western, rock and roll, some church songs. Gilbert sang some songs that he's written. He's written a couple of songs for me. He's wrote a church song.

E: And it was a wonderful time, wasn't it?

B: Yes.

E: Now were some of those missionaries from out west that were visiting here?

B: Yes.

E: It's good that you're close to your church, and your church is noted for taking care of the needy ones in your own community, isn't that true?

B: Yes.

E: When do you have services, in the morning and evening both?

B: No, we have what we call a block meeting. We start at 9:00 and go through to 12:00. We have three meetings. The first meeting is what we call Sacrament Meeting, or you might call preaching. Then we have Sunday school, and then we have classes for the men. The Relief Society is for the women, for the children we have what we call primary, and for the young people they have their meeting.

E: Well, that's a wonderful thing, and aren't you proud of your new church?

B: Oh yes, it's beautiful.

E: And you're making use of all of it.

B: Yes.

E: What plans are there made to redo the old schoolhouse, and be able to have classes in there? They don't have heat in it, I believe, yet.

B: No, there's a lot of work that's got to be done. I really don't know what all they're going to do.

E: Are you interested in taking basket weaving, or something of that type?

B: Yes, I love baskets. [Laughter] And I'd love to learn how to make them.

E: You've already been making some, haven't you?

B: No. I never have, I just buy. And I love 'em.

E: But you're interested in learning how to make them.

B: Yeah.

E: Well, I'm interested in seeing that go on. You've seen a lot of changes since you were married. You're proud to see the growth in your Tribal people, aren't you?

B: Yes.

E: What do you see, the hope for your grandchildren? They're going to school here in Lesslie. What do you see—hope for them for the future? What are they going to want to do? You don't know, do you?

B: [Laughter]

E: But we're very glad that you came from Chester to marry into this. The women of the Catawba Nation are amazing women. They're homemakers, first of all, they build the homes and train their children, then some of them go out to work. Some of them make pottery. But all, they're wonderful people. I'm glad that I can tell you and introduce you to this one from the Catawba, her name was Elizabeth and she's married to Gilbert Blue.

[Break in recording]

E: Elizabeth, I believe Gilbert has been Chieftain for twenty years. Tell me what it was like when he first became Chieftain, and how were they united?

B: Well they—just, I don't know what to say.

E: He was such a young boy but somehow, they all pulled together, didn't they?

B: Yes.

E: And they united.

B: Yes.

E: You have seen the growth, and there's so much cooperation and love in the Tribe today.

B: Yes, uh-huh.

E: It's amazing that they are pulling together, and that's what you're proud of, isn't it?

B: Yes. Once they started in this festival that they started having three years ago, you could just see 'em come together and just be there together. I don't know how else to explain it, but you can see it and feel it.

E: So, you see a great future ahead, don't you?

B: Yes.

[End of Interview]

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