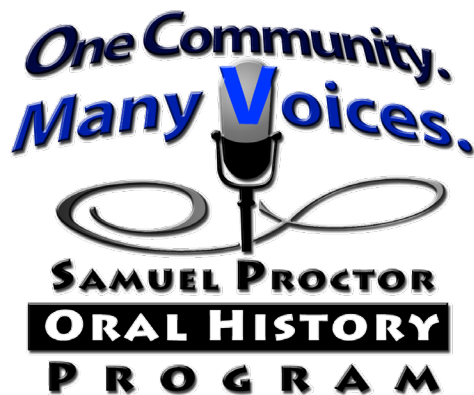


Marlene Pittman

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-138**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
October 3, 1977**



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CAT 138 Marlene Pittman
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols on October 3, 1977
7 minutes | 6 pages

Abstract: Marlene Pittman is the granddaughter of Doris Blue. She discusses her family and her experiences in different schools growing up. She reflects on the women who worked at the Catawba school and how school is different for her children. She discusses her grandmother's pottery. She explains that she lives on Catawba land and states her belief that more people will return to live on the reservation. She discusses different gatherings, and she answers questions about Catawba men's employment.

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

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
PROGRAM
University of Florida

CAT 138

Interviewee: Marlene Pittman

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: October 3, 1977

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Rock Hill, South Carolina, Route 6, Box 260. This is October 3. I'm visiting in the home of a Catawba Indian, and I'll let her tell you her name. Will you tell me your name?

P: I am Marlene Pittman.

E: And your husband is—?

P: Tommy Pittman.

E: Tommy Pittman. I believe you have three children, that right?

P: Right, mmhm.

E: What are their names?

P: Michelle, and **Laurie**, and Shane.

E: And they're all dark brown eyes. Now, people who hear this tape will identify Marlene because she is the granddaughter of Doris Blue. Doris Blue is one of the famous pottery makers down on the reservation and a very interesting and wonderful person. Marlene, where did you go to school?

P: Well, I went from the first grade to the fourth grade, I went to Todd Union School, which is right up the road. Then I went out to Lesslie School for a couple of years, and then I went on to Southern Junior High in Rock Hill, and then on to Rock Hill High. That's where I graduated in 1972.

E: That's wonderful. What did you do when you graduated?

P: Well, I went out to Tech for a couple of months and took a business course out there, but then I got married a couple of months after I graduated.

E: Now, did you marry an Indian boy?

P: No, he's White. [Laughter]

E: But your sweet little children all have the dark eyes and dark hair of Indian children.

P: Right, yeah. They took that much after me.

E: Are you glad, aren't you?

P: Yes. [Laughter]

E: Now, tell me, what do you remember about going to school at the Catawba school out here? Who were your teachers, and what did you do?

P: Well, my first and second-grade teacher was Miss Cornish. We were all in one big class, first and second graders. One hour, she'd teach first graders and second hour, she'd teach second graders. Then we had another, bigger room for third and fourth graders. That teacher was Mrs. Robinson. Both of them are still living, and every time I see them, they're **all kinds of speaking**. We only had one cook, which was Arzada Sanders. She always would get me and a couple other girls to go in there and help pick out the menu for the school. We'd help her cook sometimes; sometimes we'd help her wash the dishes. We just had a bell when it was time for recess. The teacher just had a little hand bell; she'd just ring it and let us go out. Other than that, it wasn't any different from any other schools, really.

E: Who was your first teacher?

[Break in recording]

E: Now, when you went to Lesslie School, who was your first teacher there?

P: Mrs. McNabb. She was my fifth-grade teacher.

E: Was it difficult to transfer from the Indian school to the Leslie School?

P: Well, it was for me, in a way, because I'd been going to a school mostly for Indians. Then when I went out there, we weren't too sure how the White kids would treat us. But once we got out there and everybody got used to it, then we were alright. I made a lot of friends with the White children.

E: And the teachers and pupils treated you just like any other person?

P: Just like anybody else.

E: Your little girl is in the second grade now?

P: Right.

E: Is there any difference in the school children now?

P: Well, things changed when we got up to the other schools. When my sister went to school, there was a lot of difficulty for her because the kids would make fun of her being an Indian. She used to go and fight all the time. People would call her an Indian and make, you know, smart remarks about it, but when I started, it was all changed.

E: I'm glad, that's very good. Now, Arzada, sometimes, at the school would try to show you children how to make pottery. When you would go to school up here, did you learn to make pottery here from Arzada?

P: I've never made any. I made one piece of pottery, and it's been ten years, fifteen years ago, then, my grandmother, Doris Blue, helped me make it. But I'm only getting work part-time—I work at the South Carolina Employment Security Commission, and I'm only getting work part-time right now, so I'm planning on taking up pottery. My grandmother's gonna show me how she does it.

E: I think that would be wonderful. There's still a fair for the pottery down on the reservation, isn't there?

P: Yes, ma'am.

E: Now, you all own your trailer—you've got a great big trailer, and you own your trailer, and this is the Catawba Indian land, I believe?

P: Right. The Indian reservation starts right here by my driveway.

E: Yes, and it goes all the way around the curve and so forth?

P: Mmhm.

E: I see quite a number of trailers. Do you think more and more people are coming back on the reservation to live?

P: Right, mmhm. There's gonna be a lot more probably to come in that will be living back down there.

E: Now, where do all of you go to church?

P: Up here at the Mormon church, right up the road from us. All of our family's a member of the Mormon church.

E: Well, that's good. Now what's your husband—where is he employed?

P: He paints with my father.

E: Oh, that's good. They are good painters, 'cause I know, I've seen 'em do that. Now, your mother went to school up here, too, I believe?

P: Yes, ma'am. She went up here just like I did—first through the fourth grade—but I believe they had another schoolhouse then. They went on through elementary school on to the other Indian school. I believe it's burned down, or somebody tore it down or something.

E: Now your children, you say, are too young to know much about the Indian stories, but your mother told you Indian stories when you were a little girl. Do you remember any of the stories your mother told you? Or your grandmother—what about Doris Blue?

P: No, she never did tell us that many stories, and what my mother has told me I really can't remember right off. Probably if I heard parts of it, then I could go ahead and finish telling you, but right at this moment I wouldn't know. It's been a while since they've told me any stories.

E: Now, tell me what you do for recreation down on the reservation here. Do you have picnics together, or do you have family gatherings?

P: Well, the only kind of picnics we have, you know, with the whole Indian reservation is like on July 4. Then all of us get together at the old Catawba Indian schoolhouse. That's the only picnics we have down here. We have family gatherings up here at my grandmother's, and a lot of younger kids—well, some of the older men, too—we all get softball games up right above the church, in the field out behind the old schoolhouse.

E: That's good, isn't it?

P: Yeah, everybody down here likes to play softball. We have a pretty good team down here, and we all get together.

E: What do most of the men do down here now? I see some of 'em are painters, carpenters. What are some of the other work the men do?

P: I would say most of 'em are textile workers. Most of them work at the Blue Tree Yard at Springs Mill. We have a couple of 'em that work at Westinghouse in Charlotte. Most of them are just painters or carpenters or something like that.

E: I believe you are one person I've met that is enthusiastic about being an Indian. You like that, don't you?

P: Yes, ma'am, I sure do.

[End of interview]

Transcribed by: Lauren King, November 20, 2021

Audit-edited by: Callum Karoleski, March 19, 2022

Final edited by: Evangeline Giaconia, July 29, 2022