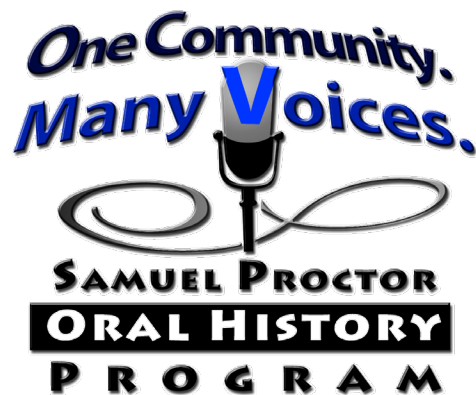


Harry Reed Blue

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-176**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
October 5, 1992**



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CAT 176 Harry Reed Blue
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Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols on October 5, 1992
9 minutes | 8 pages

Abstract: Harry Blue was a former student of Emma Echols and currently works with his brother Carson Blue. He recalls his time at Northside School, stating that during his time there were still issues of prejudice against Indians. He talks about a time where he almost suffered bodily harm at the hands of another student. He's worked in the automotive field since high school and began working for his brother in 1984. Being the grandson of Chief Sam Blue, Harry remembers sitting in his grandfather's lap as he told stories and sung traditional songs. He confesses how devastated he was with his passing, and how he believes that there was not a single bad thing about his grandfather and that Chief Sam Blue was an upstanding person.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; Chief Samuel Taylor Blue; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Traditional medicine; Discrimination]

ORAL HISTORY

P R O G R A M
University of Florida

CAT 176

Interviewee: Harry Reed Blue

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: October 5, 1992

E: This is Emma Echols, 5150 Sharon Road. I'm visiting Harry Blue at Paya Town. Quite an establishment here, operated by his brother Carson Blue, and Harry has been working for him for a number of years. This is very new to me because I taught Harry in the third grade at Northside School. Harry, give us your full name.

B: Harry **Reed** Blue.

E: Who—do you remember your teachers at Northside?

B: Yeah, I remember most of them. I started with Ms. Wayne, then I had Ms. Hayes in second grade, and you in the third grade. I believe I had Ms. Glenn in fourth, Ms. Roddy in the fifth, Ms. Watson in the sixth, and then we had a group of teachers in the seventh, Ms. Parker—oh, not Ms. Parker, Ms. Busby.

E: And Ms. Leslie? Did you have her?

B: I didn't have Ms. Leslie, I had Miss Busby and Ms....think Mr. Rogers.

E: And after school, they tell me, you were a good football player. Did you enjoy that?

B: Yeah, I did enjoy sports.

E: They treated you good at Northside?

B: Yeah.

E: And then you went to the high school?

B: Mhm.

E: And what about high school?

B: High school was fine. As a matter of fact, I was treated better in high school than I was at Northside. I had some rough times at Northside, especially in the early

years. When I was in the lower—I was in the first grade, they still kind of looked down on Indians a lot, and they used to pick on us a lot. I almost lost my eyesight in the first grade—

E: Oh.

B: Because I was an Indian. There was a guy who tried to gouge my eye out with a piece of glass, but he didn't do, and I still got my eyes. [Laughter]

E: Now, after you left high school, you started working?

B: I worked during high school, and I played football. I worked part-time with the A&P at night bagging groceries, and cleaning the store and, you know, stocking shelves and things. I worked on weekends for Star Chambers when he had an Exxon station up on White Street and Oakland. I pumped gas and washed cars and changed oil on the weekends. So, I've kind of been in automotive ever since I can remember.

E: You have always been working?

B: I always worked.

E: Now then, you started working here for your brother how long ago?

B: In 1984.

E: And you've got a good business here, haven't you?

B: Yes, it's pretty busy.

E: Now you tell me you've got a grown son. Twenty-one?

B: Yeah, he's twenty-one. He'll be twenty-two in December.

E: Uh-huh. Do you still go back down on the reservation to church?

B: No, I don't. I'm the black sheep of the family.

E: Oh no! I know better than that because I've seen you working here, and I know your background. I visited your father and your mother the other day, and they're so proud of their children. They say that none of you have been drinking or have gotten into trouble, and they're very proud of you. So, you're proud of yourself in a way too, I know.

B: Yeah, I try to take care of myself and manage myself.

E: And this keeps you busy here. What are your hours here?

B: We usually work Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 5:30, and then half a day on Saturday. The rest of the time I play golf.

E: Golf! Oh my! That's something from football, isn't it?

B: Well, no. I didn't pick up golf until I after I got out of school and was married, as a matter of fact. Well, I piddled around at the driving range **Tiny Tiddling** which used to be back down Cherry Road. I started learning how to hit golf balls in high school, but I never played the game until after I got out of school. And I'm a pretty avid golfer now.

E: Now, your father and mother and Carson, and I believe your sister, have a piece of land. Do you have your own land now?

B: Yes, I have land up beside Daddy's.

E: How much land do you have?

B: About three acres.

E: You took this instead of taking the cash money, didn't you?

B: Mhm.

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

B: Yeah, it is.

E: You have your home on that land?

B: No, I don't. Right now, I had a mobile home on it, but I took it off and turned it into pastureland for Daddy's cattle, and I moved away.

E: Oh, and you got your cattle on it?

B: No, Daddy's cattle, they're not mine.

E: You were very wise in doing that. Now, what about the new settlement? Is it going to help you or is it going to help the older ones?

B: I think it will help the younger generation more so. The kids that are coming out nowadays are children and grandchildren and will be benefitted more than anybody, and that's really the best thing. You know, they can get a good education, and they can get a better outlook on life farther down the road, and better advancement.

E: So, all in all, you're rather proud to be a Catawba Indian, are you not?

B: Oh yes.

E: You were not proud when you first started school, when they sort of picked on you, but you're proud now.

B: Oh, I was proud then. I never have—I've always been proud I was an Indian, and if people didn't like me as an Indian, then just tough. But I was an Indian, and I would let them know up front that I was. I never have denied being an Indian, and I've always been very proud of it. I've gotten in several fights because of it.

E: As a young boy did you hear your father or your grandfather telling any of the old stories?

B: Yeah, I used to sit around on my grandfather's lap. We used to go out there Sunday after church and sit in the yard, and he'd tell stories and get his tom-tom out occasionally, and chant some Indian songs and do a little dance for us. He was quite an entertaining fellow.

E: Do you remember any of the stories he told, or do you remember any of the language?

B: Very little. I remember some of the stories, especially the story he told about his son in school. I'm sure Daddy has probably told you that one. He told some stories about my daddy's oldest brother, how he used to run rabbits through the cane fields down on the river bottoms. One of my daddy's brothers stepped on a sugar cane stalk and rammed it through his foot. At the time Uncle Nelson chewed tobacco, so he just took the tobacco and packed it in the hole, and wrapped it with the handkerchief, and it kept infection from getting in it, and his foot healed up.

E: I had never heard that before.

B: They used a lot of old-time medicine back then.

E: People came from far and near to get some of his medicine, didn't they?

B: Mmhm. They used to make an herb he used called bear root for rheumatism and arthritis. They used to have another herb they used, I think it was called fire weed, and they used it when people had kidney infections and stuff. I remember that very well.

E: Does anybody on the reservation now know where those herbs grow in the woods or the fields?

B: Yes.

E: Who knows?

B: My uncle, Albert Sanders, still knows. Daddy still knows where some are. Before Emery Thomas passed away, Emery knew some stuff. Mainly Albert Sanders, he's probably the most knowledgeable person as to where they are at right now.

E: And did your father—when people came to buy it from him, did he sell the herbs just so or did he have it in bottles to sell?

B: Well, Daddy never did. Grandpa always had some bottled herbs he kept in the refrigerator. I don't remember him ever selling it, but I know he gave a lot of it away to help his people. But I don't remember whether he ever sold it or not. I'm sure he probably did, cause he had to have some money to support all his twenty-something kids they had back then.

E: Do you remember any of the dances that he did, or did you ever dance with him?

B: No, I never danced with him. I was too young, really. See, I was only twelve years old when Grandpa died.

E: But you're the one who sat on his lap and heard his stories.

B: I sat on his lap and heard his stories out there under the old oak tree in the front yard. We had an old oak tree in the front yard, and we had a bench right beside it, and I used to go out there and sit on that. That is the bench I also cried my eyes out the day he died. I laid in that same bench. It really hurt, I was really crazy about him.

E: Crowds of people came to that funeral. I well remember that. He was highly respected. You know, as I visit among you, no one tells me anything bad about him. It's always in praise of your family and you've got such—

B: I don't think there's anything that you can tell bad about the man. He just didn't have anything bad about him. He was a very loving, outgoing, understanding person. He loved all his people. He loved his family. It didn't matter what you did to him, he'd still love you. He was just that type of person, a very religious person.

E: You like your work here and you look forward to some future for your people, don't you, on the reservation and all outside. Of course, there is no pure blood Indian yet on the reservation or anywhere, is there?

B: Not anymore.

E: But you claim you still have that wonderful blood.

B: Yes. As long as my name is Blue, it'll still be Catawba.

E: Where did this name Blue come from? Do you know?

B: It came—to the best of my knowledge, it was a name that was taken from the Whites. It was a White man's name from my grandfather's father. I'm not exactly sure how he got it, but I do know it was taken from a White man's name.

E: Well, it has been a joy to talk to you today.

[End of interview]

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