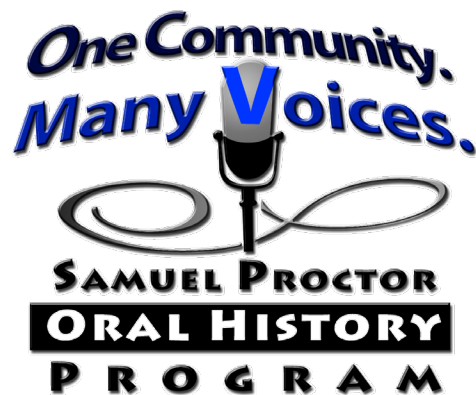


# Harry E. Neely

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)  
CAT-167**

**Interview by:**

**Emma Reid Echols  
September 4, 1992**



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**7 minutes | 6 pages**

**Abstract:** Harry Neely is interviewed in his store, which has been passed down through the years, and which he has been running for twelve years at the time of this interview. He remembers some of the Catawba he met, including Idle Sanders and Chief Sam Blue, and his various interactions with them. He also he shares his thoughts on the recent settlement. He answers questions about some of the developments on the reservation, and some of the people he knows now.

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

**SAMUEL PROCTOR**  
**ORAL HISTORY**  
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CAT 167

Interviewee: Harry E. Neely

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: September 4, 1992

E: This is Emma Echols from Charlotte, North Carolina, 5150 Sharon Road, and today I am visiting down among the Catawba Indians. I'm sitting with Mr. Harry E. Neely at the intersection of Reservation Road and Neely's Store Road. Mr. Neely, will you tell us your full name?

N: Harry Neely.

E: And how old are you?

N: Seventy-four.

E: Seventy-four. Now, you've always lived right here, and this store has been here how long? Your father had the store, and then you had it.

N: Yes. My father had it, and it's been different ones down through the years, but we've been running it about twelve years.

E: When the Indians came up this Reservation Road to trade with you, one of them was Idle Sanders. Tell me what you remember about Idle Sanders.

N: Well, I don't know too much about Idle. He was just—well, as I remember, that name fit him though. He would walk up this muddy road and never get any mud on his shoes. His shoes just stayed shined and good and free of mud.

E: Did the Indians always pay you cash, or did they sometimes charge things?

N: Most of 'em wanted things charged.

E: They did?

N: Yes, ma'am.

E: Were they honest in paying for it?

N: Uh, no, ma'am.

E: Not all of them.

N: Not all of them.

E: [Laughter] Well, that's true of life, isn't it? Now, you remember Chief Sam Blue, too. What do you remember about the Chief?

N: Well, I still remember that he dressed up in an Indian costume pretty often and looked like a real Indian.

E: Did he speak the Indian language? Did you ever hear him say any of the Indian words?

N: Yes, ma'am, he spoke, but I didn't understand what he was saying.

E: Who would he talk to? Some of his family in that language?

N: I don't remember who he talked to unless he's just—

E: Did you ever hear him do his famous dance and song? Sometimes he'd go to the schools and do that.

N: Yes.

E: Now, beside Chief Blue and Idle Sanders, what other Indians do you remember especially? There's the Becks, and the Blues, and the Cantys, and so many down here.

N: Yeah, Fletcher Beck.

E: Now, Fletcher Beck was a famous one, too. What do you remember about Fletcher?

N: Fletcher Beck and Major Beck.

E: Major Beck died a few years ago, I believe.

N: Yeah. Major Beck, he wasn't an Indian.

E: He married an Indian. He married Lula, and she was the Chieftain's daughter. She's the oldest one that's living now, I believe.

N: Yes.

E: The Indians never did do much farming down on the reservation, but they liked to fish and hunt, didn't they? Do you remember what animals would be down here on the reservation when they'd go hunting?

N: Rabbits and squirrels.

E: They tell me there's still deer down on the reservation now.

N: Probably is. Well, there's deer all around this area now.

E: They bother your crops, don't they?

N: They eat up a lot of the gardens and all.

E: Yes. Did you ever go to the Catawba Indian churches? Did you go when they had any funeral services or anything of that kind down there?

N: I've attended funeral services down at the Mormon church.

E: Yes. Were you there when they had the service for Chief Blue?

N: I don't recall. I don't think so.

E: Now that the Indians are getting their settlement, what do you think's going to happen? How are they going to use it? Do you have any idea?

N: Well, a good many of 'em will spend it as soon as they get it—won't save any of it and be broke again.

E: Yeah, that's right. They have done a lot to improve their homes, especially those who have bought off the reservation, haven't they?

N: Yes.

E: Did you ever attend any of the schools that were down at the reservation?

N: No, ma'am.

E: They had their own little private school and were not allowed to go to the public schools for a long, long time.

N: I think so.

E: Do you have any of the Indian pottery that you bought from their women?

N: No, ma'am.

E: They are still making it, I believe, on the reservation?

N: Yes, ma'am, some of 'em are.

E: Who comes to trade with you now from the Indian nation? What Indians?

N: Very few. In fact, I don't know of any.

E: Well, they have cars now, and they go into the city, don't they?

N: Yes.

E: And most of 'em have good jobs. Do you know a Fred Sanders?

N: Yes.

E: I believe he has a job in Charlotte.

N: That's right. He lives in Charlotte.

E: And lives in Charlotte. He is assistant to the Chief, I think. They have moved the old schoolhouse down on the reservation.

N: Yes.

E: And then there's a big government building down there now, so it seems to me they're on their way up in many ways, if you can properly use that.

N: That's right.

E: If you had any word to say about the Indians, what would you say? They are clean. They're—most of the time—they're honest. They're hardworking. And do they get along with the White people most of the time?

N: Yes, ma'am, they do.

E: So you've got friends down on the reservation, haven't you?

N: A few.

E: A few. Well, some of them have gone on. Lots of them have gone on.

N: Yes.

E: Well, I hope we're going to see some improvements and changes and progress down among them and then that they will be a happy, a progressive group of people. They need to pull together, don't they?

N: Yes, ma'am.

E: But different Tribes and different families, it's hard to pull them all together, I'm sure.

N: Yes.

E: But there are some brilliant, smart people among them. Ed Canty lives over near the fire tower road—do you know Ed Canty?

N: Ed Sanders?

E: I believe he's a Canty.

N: Ed Canty? I don't know him.

E: He's one that's made good, and there are a number of them that have really made good. It's quite a change here. I'm sitting here with you, and that road down to the reservation is paved, and the road on down on the reservation

itself—that circle—it's in pretty good shape. All around that circle are the ones that lives in the trailers. The ones who live in the homes—they're in better shape, aren't they?

N: I would think so.

[End of interview]

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