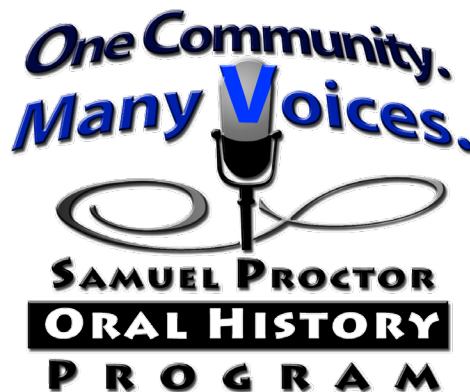


Georgia Henrietta Harris

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-197**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
March 1, 1993**



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8 minutes | 6 pages

Abstract: Georgia Harris gives a brief account of her life that begins with her speaking about her parents and about how she learned to make pottery as a young girl. She then goes on to discuss her school days, particularly the passing of her father and the schoolchildren she was friends with. Harris also discusses the celebrations and games she remembers from when she was a child. Then, she goes on to detail her life after school, when she left to live on the Cherokee Indian Reservation in North Carolina and became a nurse. She talks about her remaining family before ending the interview by giving her reason for visiting the reservation and her thoughts on the future of the reservation and the Catawba.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Oral biography; Art]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
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CAT 197

Interviewee: Georgia Henrietta Harris

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: March 1, 1993

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Charlotte, North Carolina, 5150 Sharon Road. I'm recording the oral history of the Catawba Indians, working with the University of Florida. And today, I have a very special person. I'm visiting a pottery maker that is very well known in the whole area. When I was making a list of the pottery makers, they said, "Be sure that you put Georgia Harris for number one pottery maker." So, here she is.

[Break in recording]

E: Georgia, please give me your full name and your address.

H: My name is Georgia Henrietta Harris. My address is 1372 Poplar Road, Dallas, Georgia.

E: You're living with your brother now and—

H: No, my son.

E: Your son. Tell me, when you first began living on the reservation as a young girl, who were your father and mother?

H: My father and mother was Jim Harris and Margaret Harris.

E: Did you mother make pottery or your grandmother make pottery?

H: Both of 'em made pottery.

E: And which did you learn from?

H: I learned from both of 'em.

E: What were the first kinda pieces that you began making as a little girl?

H: Oh, all I made all kinds of little ducks and little things like cats and—

E: Little animals?

H: Mmhm.

E: That's unusual. You don't see very many animals made now—

H: **We used to** [inaudible 1:41]

E: You know, you never see a squirrel, and you never see, of course, you never see an owl.

H: I still make owls. I still make squirrels.

E: Do what?

H: I still make owls and squirrels.

E: Oh, you do. Did you make 'em then?

H: I made 'em later, but right when I was beginning to learn, I didn't.

E: Then, tell us about your school days. What do you remember about that?

H: Well, my first school days were, I guess, was—I was late getting to school because my dad wouldn't send me to school right away, 'cause he thought I was too little. [Laughter] I went to first year, I believe—the same year that he died was the year I went to school, when I was about seven years old. Professor **Rainey** was the first teacher that I went to. I was easy to learn, I learned fast. That's one thing I remember.

E: Were there any of the children at school that you liked especially, any special friends you remember?

H: Oh, yeah. There was Jeanette George and Doris Blue and Lula Beck—Lula Blue. We used to be great pals together.

E: Do you remember any of the celebrations you had at Christmas, or Thanksgiving, or anything like that?

H: Well, I remember the Fourth of July more than I do—I guess stands out in my mind more than anything else. They always had a big picnic on the Fourth. The whole community would get together and bring their picnic baskets and they usually had someone certain to make the soup for the picnic.

E: Then you children would play games?

H: They'd always have a baseball game. So, we always got to enjoy that baseball game.

E: When you left school on the reservation, where did you go to school?

H: North Carolina, Cherokee Indian Reservation.

E: And then you took training as a nurse, is that right?

H: That was after I came back, after I got old. [Laughter]

E: Yeah? [Laughter] Well, you've had a very—now, tell me about your husband and your children.

H: Well, when we first got married, he was farming. We farmed through the Depression and I thought we had a hard time. But as I look back over the times that we had and compared it with a lotta other people that have told me what times they had, I had a ball, because we had our own chickens, we had our own milk, butter. We had eggs, and we raised our own corn, and we had it—took it to the grist mill and had it ground.

E: Whereabouts was your home on the reservation?

H: Well, it's—

E: In relation to the, say, the old well on the reservation. Where was it in relation to that?

- H: It's a long ways from there. Almost the way I can tell it now, it's where Bobby Blue is built on, my homestead, where we were **living**.
- E: Now, how many children did you have?
- H: There wasn't but—well, there was six in my family—no, five before my daddy died. My mother was pregnant with the last one when he died. She was four, five months pregnant with **Furman** when he died. And he died the thirty-first day of August, and **Furman** was born the first of February.
- E: How many of your children are living now?
- H: There's two of us now. The two youngest, **Furman** and myself.
- E: You're visiting on the reservation and they're so glad to see you here. You came for a special reason, what'd you come for this time?
- H: Come to vote on the settlement.
- E: And you're glad to see it over and settled, aren't you?
- H: Not in some ways, I'm not. Because it's not goin' be like what it should've been. I didn't vote for it.
- E: But we hope there's going to be some changes of the good, I know—
- H: Some of it, it'll do, but some of it won't do.
- E: That's right. Well, you have so many friends among the pottery makers. What do you see the future for pottery making and basket weaving and those kind of things here?
- H: I think it's promising to the younger people if they will stick to it and work hard.
- E: You have taught a number of people to make pottery. I know Nola Campbell said she's learned from you. What other ones do you count as your pupils?

H: Well, I don't know. I guess I've influenced a lot of people.

E: You have. You have, indeed.

H: Uh-huh. I know I influenced Earl a lot. I taught classes on the reservation down there to the younger ones when they first had a pottery class.

E: And your husband was one of the Chieftains?

H: Yeah, he was one time a Chief.

E: That was an honor to have that, and I've heard very fine reports. After this long and useful life of yours, you're now eighty-eight, is that right?

H: Eighty-seven right now, yeah.

E: Eighty-seven. If you had one word of advice to give to the young people coming on now, what would you tell them?

H: I'd tell 'em to go to school and get a good education while they had the chance.

E: That's right, a good education. And then how should they live after that?

H: Live, trust in the Lord, and follow in his footsteps.

E: That's wonderful. And I see the relationship of all of us—Whites, Indians, everybody—is growing in fellowship and love. Do you see that also?

H: A lot more than it used to be, I think.

E: Well, we're glad to have you here for a visitor and a friend. We hope you'll come back again.

H: I plan to.

E: Hope you will.

H: Thank you.

[End of interview]

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