

SOUTHEASTERN INDIAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Interviewee: Susan Blue

Interviewer: Emma Echols

August 28, 1993

- E: This is Emma Echols, 5150 Sharon Road, Charlotte, North Carolina. I am recording the oral history of the Catawba Indians, working with the University of Florida, Dr. Sam Proctor. I was in the shop, on Sharon Road, of Carson Blue yesterday and I have a tape of his mother that I am very proud of and I told him that I wanted to come see his wife, that I want to get more tapes of the women that married into the Catawba nation and what they have contributed to it. So that is what I am doing today, August 28th. So, I am going to let her put her name on my tape.
- B: My name is Susan Tennant Blue.
- E: And how long have you and Carson been married?
- B: We were married June 10, 1966.
- E: Carson told me that when he grew up as a young boy on the reservation that there were some pretty girls down here, but if he had married one of them, they would have been his cousins, so he went down [to] South Carolina. Tell me how he happened to find you and how you got together.
- B: Carson and I met at a dance in Cornwell [South Carolina] which is below Chester [South Carolina]. It was near a fire department, it was just sort of a community. Some of his cousins had started coming down and they would play music and so they brought him down and I happened to be there when we met.
- E: Did you dance together that night?
- B: I do not think so, not the first time I had seen him. It was a square dance and then they had some rock and roll music there too for the younger people.
- E: Then after that did you write or did you just visit?
- B: We would just see each other at the dance on the weekends and then we started dating and we would date every weekend.
- E: Then how long was it after you met him before you were married?
- B: It was probably a couple of years. I was still in high school and I had to finish school before we were married.
- E: He had already finished school.
- B: Yes.
- E: Was he already in business then or what was he doing?

B: He was just working.

E: Now, who married you? You were married at Blackstock [South Carolina]?

B: No, we were married here on the reservation at the little church. Douglas Harris married us.

E: Douglas Harris.

B: Yes.

E: That goes back a long a time. Now, you have always lived close here on the reservation, nearby. This is part of the Freedom Tract I believe, is it not?

B: That is right.

E: How much land do you and Carson have here?

B: Well, the Dave Lye Boulevard took part of what he had, so I am not sure just what is left it is not much.

E: How many children do you have?

B: We have six children.

E: Now, name them; start at the top and come down.

B: Kimberly Susan is the oldest, and then there is Charles Patrick, and Jennifer Elaine, and then there is Jeffery Travis, Jessica LeeAnne, and Douglas Keith. I do not think I left anybody out.

E: And your youngest is . .

B: Douglas Keith, and Douglas was named after Douglas Harris, the man that married us.

E: Oh, is that right?

B: That is where we got his name.

E: Well, Doug Harris is one of the chieftains.

B: Well, he was the branch president of the church at the time that we were married.

E: Then where have your children gone to school?

B: They have graduated from Rock Hill High [School, Rock Hill, South Carolina], and they have attended York Tech.

E: I have a tape of your son Travis and he told me that he had just finished high school.

B: That is right.

E: How many of them are married?

B: I have three that are married, the three oldest.

E: And how many grandchildren?

B: Three.

E: I noticed the ones you have here are all dark haired. Are you proud to see that?

B: Yes.

E: Are there any blonds in your family?

B: No.

E: Now, I want to know how you were accepted in the reservation when you came as a white married girl, married to a Catawba Indian. How did they accept you and how did you feel?

B: I had no problems. The first time I came to the reservation it was on a Sunday night, I came up to church for a meeting. It was there that I met a lot of the older people, and I guess the one that I remember the most was Lula Beck. I was always accepted and I was just taken in as part of the family.

E: Where was your first home?

B: It was here in Rock Hill.

E: Not at this present location?

B: No, it was down off the Leslie Highway. We rented a trailer from Homer Blackman and we lived there until we moved up here.

- E: You have done a great deal to improve this here. You have added on to this, have you not?
- B: Yes, we had to, we had so many children we ran out of space. So, we needed extra room.
- E: You have got a big yard and a garden and a front yard, and you have got all kind of space here. I believe next door is where the cattle are, are they not?
- B: Yes, they are next door.
- E: Well, now your children tell me what they are doing is making pottery or baskets, or whatnot. What is Travis doing?
- B: Well, Travis makes pottery and he makes baskets. Kim makes pottery. She has done a little, she has just taken some classes. She makes baskets and she does bead work and she is one of the dancers for the tribe.
- E: The dancers?
- B: Yes.
- E: Was she dancing down on the festival last Fall?
- B: Yes. She did.
- E: I was there and I remember hearing and seeing the dancers, but I did not get up to the top of the hill. I was down in the big building making tapes at that time. But I heard and saw those dancers. You have one still in school?
- B: I have two.
- E: Two in school. What are your special interests? I know you are interested in the history of the tribe. Do you keep up and read and find out all you can about the history of the Catawbas?
- B: Yes, I read all I can. Carson has received different information and so I have tried to read that.
- E: Does your family in Blackstock come to see you and do you keep in touch with your family down in South Carolina?

- B: Oh, yes. My mother lives now in Chester, she no longer lives at Blackstock, and I have two sisters that live there, I have a brother that lives here in town, and I do keep in touch with them.
- E: And they all accepted you and the tribe and your family and you and everybody?
- B: Oh, yes.
- E: That is so good. With the new things that are happening on the tribe, what do you see for the future of you and your family?
- B: Well, there are a lot of changes taking place now with the land claim and all. I guess I want my children to be proud of their heritage. I want them to live a good life and be respected in the outside community. I think so many times the Indians have been looked down upon. I think that is all changing now.
- E: That is a good idea, that you are proud to be a Catawba, married [to] a Catawba, and you are proud that your children have a heritage. So, you are proud of it. So, you see a good future ahead, do you not?
- B: Oh, yes ma'am.