



2019

## Chief Samuel Taylor (Thunderbird) Blue Papers - Accession 496

Samuel Taylor (Thunderbird) Blue Jr.

Catawba Indians

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in South Carolina

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**WINTHROP UNIVERSITY  
LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

**MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION**

**ACCESSION 496**

**CHIEF SAMUEL TAYLOR (THUNDERBIRD) BLUE PAPERS**

1941-1959

2 Boxes, 7 Folders

**WINTHROP UNIVERSITY  
LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

**MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION**

ACC. NO.: **496**  
ADDITIONS: \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_

PROCESSED BY: George Feindel, III  
DATE: October 27, 1983  
NO. OF SECTIONS: 3

**CHIEF SAMUEL TAYLOR (THUNDERBIRD) BLUE PAPERS**

**I**

The papers of Samuel Taylor Blue, Catawba Indian Chief, were deposited March 23, 1983 by the Museum of York County.

Linear feet of shelf space occupied: .5  
Approximate number of pieces: 1,000

Restrictions: Open to researchers under the rules and regulations of the Louise Pettus Archives & Special Collections at Winthrop University.

Literary Rights: For information concerning literary rights please contact the Louise Pettus Archives & Special Collections at Winthrop University.

Notices Released: Notices released to NUCMC on November 3, 1983. (See also collection control file for additional notices.)

Scope and Content Note: **The collection consists of photocopies of correspondence, genealogical information, financial records, newspaper clippings, photographs, pamphlets, and a scrapbook collected by Samuel Taylor (Thunderbird) Blue (1872-1959), former chief of the Catawba Indians (1931-1938, 1941-1943, and 1956-1958). A large part of the collection relates to mission work with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in South Carolina (Mormon Church), and federal agencies on the problems facing the Catawba Indians.**

Transfer of items: The originals were transferred to the Catawba Cultural Center Archives.

## II

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

#### CHIEF SAMUEL TAYLOR "THUNDERBIRD" BLUE

Samuel Taylor "Thunderbird" Blue, Jr. was born on August 15, 1872. His father, Samuel Taylor Blue, Sr. was a white farmer possibly born in Fort Mill, SC and his mother was Margaret George, a pure Indian from the Catawba Reservation. Chief Blue's Indian name was Namé Patki, which means "Big Bear." The name "Thunderbird" was not his real name, but a name given to him by a reporter.

His father died while he was young and lived most of his life on the Catawba Indian reservation just outside of Rock Hill, SC where he learned about the history and culture of his people. Chief Blue had no formal education and was baptized in the into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in South Carolina (1882?) on the Catawba Indian Reservation near Rock Hill, S.C. He married Minnie Hester George (1871-1897?) from the Catawba Reservation in 1886. They had three children. Minnie George Blue died in 1894. Chief Blue remarried Hester Louisa Jean Canty (1883-1963) of the Catawba Reservation on May 8, 1897. Hester Blue is considered the last "full-blooded" Catawba Indian and was master potter and was fluent in the Catawba language. Chief Blue and Hester had nine children. Chief Blue had as many as 23 children, three by his first wife and twenty by his second, however only ten survived into adulthood, while eleven were stillborn with five having never been given a name.



Chief Marks 83rd Birthday—Chief Samuel Thunderbird Blue, patriarch of the Catawba Indian tribe, is 83 years old today. Yesterday, members of his family and friends gathered at his home on the Catawba Reservation near Rock Hill for a big birthday dinner. The chief, attired in his war jacket and feathered headdress, enjoyed every minute of it. This striking character study of the tribe's grand old man was made while he was in animated conversation with one of the group present for the birthday fête. Chief Blue was born Aug. 15, 1872 and served as chief of the Catawba tribe for more than 40 years. Some years ago the Catawbans adopted a system of electing a chief every other year. (Herald Photo by Dean Crocker).

Chief Blue was elected chief in 1931 and served for three administrations (1931–1938, 1941–1943, and 1956–1958). Chief Blue was a spokesman for the Indians in the capitol in Columbia, S.C. Chief Samuel Blue died on April 16, 1959 and was one of the last of the tribe who could speak the original Catawba language. His wife, Minnie, was one of the last (if not the last) to be fluent in the Catawba language when she passed away in 1963. He is buried on the Catawba Indian Reservation.

### III

#### DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

<u>Box(es)</u>	<u>Folder(s)</u>	<u>Series</u>	<u>Years</u>
1	1	<b>PERSONAL PAPERS</b> Consists of biographical information, family information, and personal letters. Of particular interest are <i>The S.C. Clubwoman</i> and the <i>Bureau of American Ethnology</i> which contains articles on Chief Blue and the Catawba Indians. Also includes the Blue's family data notebook. In chronological order.	1944-1959
1	2-3	<b>LETTERS RELATING TO MISSION WORK</b> Consists of a letter of appointment to missionary service for the Mormon Church. Also included are letters of contributors and supporters of Chief Blue's mission. In chronological order.	1942-1956
1	4	<b>FINANCIAL PAPERS</b> Receipts, and carbon copies of receipts arranged chronologically according to type. (Bank, Business, Church, Farm, Insurance, and Rural Carrier.)	1941-1956
2	5	<b>PAPERS RELATING TO CATAWBA RESERVATION LAND</b> Contains farm conservation reports and letters from Federal agencies on the problems of the Catawba's. Also a letter from Chief Blue on the subject of cutting down trees. In chronological order.	1941-1959
2	6	<b>NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS</b> Contains clippings on Chief Blue and the Catawba Indians.	1943, 1952, 1957
2	7	<b>VARIOUS PAPERS</b> Contains photographs and pamphlets, a scrapbook, and a book on Governors of South Carolina which includes an article on the brief history of the Catawba Indians. In chronological order.	1956-1959