

# **Thomas John Blumer Collection on the Catawba Nation, 1756 – Present**

(Updated 4/25/2011)

## **Scope and Content Notes**

The collection consists of approximately 100 linear feet of materials documenting Dr. Blumer's studies. The collection is divided into seven major series: Thomas J. Blumer Correspondence, Thomas J. Blumer Personal Journals, Thomas J. Blumer Oral History Interviews, Thomas J. Blumer Writings and Publications, Catawba Indians Legal and Administrative, Catawba Indians Slides and Photographs and the Reference collection. Correspondence, widely ranging documents, photographs, slides, tapes, clippings, monographs, journals, and ephemera comprise this large collection assembled by Dr. Blumer over the last thirty-five years.

### **Series I, Thomas J. Blumer Correspondence, 1955 –**

Dr. Blumer's correspondence is prolific and wide-ranging. For the sake of clarity it has been divided into two major subsets, General and Native American. The Native American series are further divided into Catawba, Cherokee and Pamunkey correspondence.

It should be noted that Dr. Blumer has maintained a long and wide-ranging correspondence with members of the Catawba tribe. These letters represent a virtual cross section of Catawba Society and provide valuable insights to Native American life, culture and politics. Realizing the future value of his Catawba correspondence, Dr. Blumer made copies of almost every letter he sent. Therefore, the correspondence is two-way, a bit of an oddity in the archival world.

Tom also made detailed notes of his telephone conversations and the resultant "verbal correspondence" is included. Of particular note are Tom's letters to Georgia Harris, perhaps the most well known Catawba potter of the modern era, spanning thirty years and numbering over a thousand. All Native American correspondence has been arranged alphabetically by correspondent, then chronologically.

### **Series II, Thomas J. Blumer Personal Journals, 1995-2006**

For a period of approximately ten years Dr. Blumer has kept personal journals. These consist of clippings, correspondence, e-mails and notes on

telephone conversations. Basically political in nature, their contents will be sealed and unavailable until 2024. Arrangement is chronological.

Dr. Blumer's travel journals are another matter. Filled with photographs and ephemera they document his travels to Mexico and other locations around the globe. These materials are available for study.

### **Series III, Thomas J. Blumer Oral History Interviews, 1971-2004**

Dr. Blumer made extensive attempts to document Catawba life, history and culture through the use of oral history interviews. These recordings also cover the Pamunkey Tribe of Virginia, an earlier research interest. Over 150 Catawba audiotapes exist along with 20 of the Pamunkey. Many of these remembrances go back to the early years of the twentieth century and provide links to the Catawba of past eras.

Transcriptions exist for many of these tapes, although most are in an annotated, unpunctuated form. Many are handwritten and on twenty-year-old photocopies that are deteriorating. These documents are currently being typed and reformatted and remastered as funds allow.

### **Series IV, Thomas J. Blumer, Writings and Publications, 1977-2006**

This series includes drafts, final copies, journal articles, lectures, newspaper columns, and radio addresses (printed and oral recordings) along with manuscript copies of published works. Unpublished writings and typescripts are also included. At first glance, apparent duplications exist within the container list. Dr. Blumer has however, often modified an earlier presentation or article for a different media format. While the overall topic may be the same, informational differences usually exist within the writings themselves. All works arranged alphabetically by title.

### **Series VI – Catawba Indians Legal and Administrative Materials, 1756-2006**

This series includes a wide range of materials collected by Blumer for research purposes. Lawsuits, treaties, legislative bills, testimony, and extensive copies from the National Archives and other depositories (notably the Interior Department and the Bureau of Indian Affairs) are included. Correspondence from government agencies, NARF (Native American Rights Fund) and extensive newspaper clippings also are part of this series. Post-settlement records, current disputes, tribal meeting minutes, bingo records, and executive committee meetings records are also included. The

series is divided into two broad categories: Administrative and Legal with sub-headings arranged chronologically.

### **Series VII – Slides & Photographs, ca. 1890-2000**

Several thousand photographs and slides exist in the collection. Dr. Blumer has created preliminary finding aids for both. The photographs are arranged in folders with an overall description and varying numbers of photographs within. The photographs have been digitized. Due to the length of the slide and photograph finding aids a separate list has been provided.

### **Series VIII – Reference Collection**

A. Monograph Collection – TJB collected numerous works for reference purposes in the course of his studies. These works have been cataloged and arranged by Library of Congress classification number. At this time, there are approximately three hundred works. A special catalog designation, NASC (Native American Studies Collection) has been established within the USC Lancaster library catalog.

B. Topical files – A wide range of varying materials, covering many different aspects of Native American studies. This series includes copies of published articles, book excerpts, news-clippings, hand-written research notes, and various ephemera.

C. Biographical files – Files on individual Catawba, Cherokee and Pamunkey tribal members, have been removed from the existing topical files and a new sub-series created. Files contain research notes, ephemera, death certificates, clippings, and various other items, relative to the individual.