

THOMAS JOHN BLUMER COLLECTION ON THE CATAWBA NATION, 1756 - 2009



The **Thomas John Blumer Collection on the Catawba Nation, 1756 - 2009** contains a wide variety of materials that have been created and collected by the donor over a 40-year period as he conducted his research on the Catawbas and other Native American peoples, with a focus on the pottery and culture of the Catawbas.

The Collection contains slides, photographs taken by Dr. Thomas J. Blumer (as well as copies of older photographs that he borrowed from tribal members), audio tapes of interviews with Catawba leaders and potters, originals of diaries and correspondence with these leaders and potters, news clippings and related materials on the Catawbas, notes and research materials for lectures and publications by Dr. Blumer on the Catawba and other Native American tribes of the Southeast, and detailed "journals" (notes, correspondence, emails, clippings, records of conversations, etc.) kept by Dr. Blumer on his interactions with the Catawbas over the past 40 years.

This is a large documentary collection of materials on the Catawbas. The collection also provides documentation on the life, work, techniques, and products of the Catawba potters, an increasingly important group of artisans.

Extent: 101.5 Linear feet

Location: University of South Carolina Lancaster

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

Citation form: Thomas J. Blumer Collection on the Catawba Nation, Native American Studies Collection, The University of South Carolina Lancaster.

Copyright: Information concerning copyright must be secured in writing from the Archivist.

Provenance: The Thomas J. Blumer Catawba Research Collection was transferred to the Medford Library 2004-2005.

Processed: Brent Burgin, Archivist (2006-2011)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Thomas J. Blumer (1937-)

Native of Freeport, NY; educated University of Mississippi (BA 1967, MA 1968) and the University of South Carolina (PhD 1976)

Senior Editor, Office of the Law Librarian, Library of Congress (1993-1998)
Senior Editor, European Law Division, Law Library, Library of Congress (1978-1993)
Archivist, Warren Heritage Society, Front Royal, Va. (2002-2004)
Magistrate, Shenandoah County, Commonwealth of Virginia (1999-2002)

SCOPE AND CONTENT

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, 1970 – 2009

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.

Dr. Blumer also made detailed notes of his telephone conversations and the resultant "verbal correspondence" is included. Of particular note are his 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, emails 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 V, Catawba Indians Legal and Administrative Materials, 1756-2007

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 VI, 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 VII, Reference Collection

A. Monograph Collection – Dr. Blumer 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.

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

Series List (Updated 4/25/2011)

- I – Thomas J. Blumer Correspondence, 1970-2009
- II – Thomas J. Blumer Personal Journals, 1995 – 2006
- III – Thomas J. Blumer Oral History Interviews, 1971 – 2004
- IV – Thomas J. Blumer Writings & Publications, 1977 – 2006
- V – Catawba Indians Legal & Administrative, 1756 – 2000
- VI – Catawba Indians Slides and Photographs, ca. 1890 – 2006
- VII – Reference Collection

I – TJB Correspondence, 1955- (13.75 Linear feet)

Correspondence to and from TJB. Undated letters located at end of series.

General – Arranged chronologically.

Native American - Arranged alphabetically by correspondent, then chronologically.

II – TJB Personal Journals, 1995 – 2006 (11.25 linear feet)

Clippings, correspondence, emails and notes on telephone conversations related to Catawba Indian research and relations. These journals will be sealed until 2024. Arranged chronologically.

III – TJB Oral History Interviews and Audio Recordings, 1971 – 2004 (3.75 linear feet)

Extensive collection of oral history interviews conducted with the Catawba and Pamunkey Indians. Transcriptions, both printed and handwritten, exist for some interviews; occasionally interview indexes are included. Also includes various Blumer family member interviews and other Native American recordings. Divided into major groupings and arranged alphabetically.

IV – TJB, Writings and Publications, 1977 – 2006 (3.75 linear feet)

Drafts and final copies, journal articles, lectures, newspaper columns, radio addresses (printed and oral recordings) along with manuscript copies of published works. Also includes typescripts and undated writings. Arranged alphabetically by title.

V – Catawba Indians Legal and Administrative Materials, 1756-2006 (6.25 linear feet)

Materials relating to Catawba Indians legal and administrative issues. Includes litigation documentation, treaties, and

legislative bills. Newspaper clippings, research notes, photocopies from the National Archives and other depositories are included, along with correspondence from the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) and NARF (Native American Rights Fund). The records grouped by major headings (Legal and Administrative) and arranged chronologically under respective subheadings.

VI – Slides & Photographs, ca. 1890-2000 (14 linear feet)

Images taken or collected by TJB. Includes reproductions of photographs from many different archival and special collections repositories. Images of Catawba pottery are extensive.

VII - Reference Collection (48.75 linear feet)

A. Monograph collection of books collected by Dr. Blumer on Native American research. Arranged and cataloged by Library of Congress classification number and given the special designation NASC (Native American Studies Collection) within the Medford Library Catalog. 300+ works.

B. Topical files on various subjects, relative to Native Americans. Materials are primarily Catawba , but many other Native American groups are also represented, with concentrations of Pamunkey and Cherokee items. Includes correspondence, copies of published articles/books, clippings, hand-written research notes, etc. Arranged alphabetically by topic, name of individual, organization, etc.

C. Native American Biographical files, containing clippings, ephemera, research notes, and various other items. Arranged alphabetically by tribe and name.

CONTAINER LIST (66 pages) [\[PDF\]](#)

PHOTOGRAPHS LISTING (62 pages) [\[PDF\]](#)

SLIDES LISTING (71 pages) [\[PDF\]](#)