Natchez Indian Tribe of South Carolina

This history is in part compiled by personal notes, official documents, photographs, genealogical research and oral, written and taped recordings of our tribal history from 1880-2006. Documentation on tribal history prior to 1880 not included in this petition for publication at a later date. Throughout this narrative of our people is shown our close proximity to the Edisto, Congaree, Wateree, Broad and Saluda Rivers.

This narrative will reveal only a small part of the tribe’s rich history. It demonstrates how many Native American tribes in this state have intertwined just as the rivers have. It shows changes in economics that forced poor sharecroppers and farmers with large families, to leave the countryside and find work in the city. It also discusses those who stayed on the land to raise families in their ancestral lands by farming and raising livestock as they have done for generations.

1880-1900: The Friendly and Murray families still remained in the area known as the “pocket” situated along the banks of the Four Holes Swamp near Sheridan Township in Colleton and Dorchester Counties, South Carolina. They farmed their lands raised livestock and supplemented their existence by hunting, trapping, and fishing. Native family members owned a ferry known by many in the community as the Friendly Ferry. From 1840 through 1910 the federal censuses list family core blood members as either free person of color, mulatto, white or no race designated at all. This area is our Natchez Tribal ancestral land base from 1738 until the present. Tribal members still live here and our ancestors are buried here.

1896: Olympia Mill Village built in Columbia South Carolina. Olympia Village became a haven to many Native families because of location and job opportunities. But its inhabitants were ostracized by upper class whites who didn’t care much for the dark-skinned lintheads. The company store became the home of three generations of Wilson-Shirley family members who came to reside here. They Shirey/Wilson family came to the village leaving the Wateree River family in 1910. They are of Wateree/Natchez descent. Olympia is considered a tribal village and has had six generations that were born, lived, died and buried there. Several Native families as of 2006 live in this village today and are listed on ours and other tribal rolls within the state.

1910-1919: Various Davis and Friendly family members with their extended families continued to live in the “pocket” near Cottageville. Some of the family then branched out into the countryside of Orangeburg while other descendants went north to Rock Hill and Chester, South Carolina.

1920-1940: Davis family members farm and lived near Neeses, SC for many years. The midwife who filled out the original birth certificate for Albert E. Davis (father of Chief Same E. Redhawk Davis) had him listed as black. This was unknown to him until he was in his thirties. He brought his parents from the country to Columbia and had his birth certificate changed to white. It was later changed to American Indian in 1996.

1940-2006: Davis family members key the Shirey/Wilson families from their visits to Neeses from Columbia. Their families went to visit sisters and brothers raised in Olympia Village, Columbia, SC who then moved to towns such as North, Neeses, Pine Hill, and Bamberg and began raising their families in the low country. Church revivals held at Sunny Vista Church of God in North, SC and in Neeses at the old block church brought families such as Davis, Shirey, Chavis, fields, amongst others together on Sundays. The families in the low country would come to Columbia for family gatherings and church revivals held at the Church of God on Bluff Road in the village.

We as Native Indians have remained for over one hundred years both on the Edisto River (ancestral lands) and the Congaree River (modern era village). Many longtime residents in our neighborhoods recognize us as being American Indian and will attest to this fact when asked.