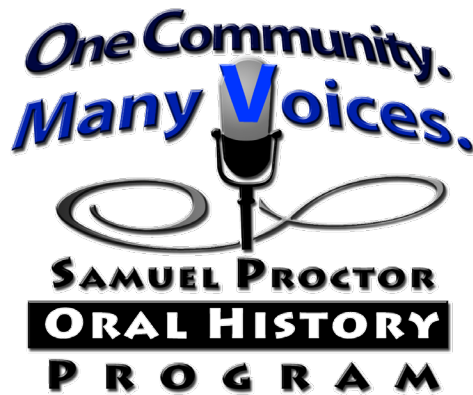


Dean Canty

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-073**

Interview by:

**Emma Reid Echols
July 31, 1973**



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CAT 073 Dean Canty
Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols on July 31, 1973
8 minutes | 8 pages

Abstract: Dean Canty reflects upon his experience going to Catawba Elementary School, Lesslie School, and Sullivan Junior High before joining the army. He then discusses his time in the army, where he was stationed at bases around the United States before beginning to work full-time at Shillinglaw's Heating and Air Conditioning. Finally, he talks about how he hopes to build a house on the lot his family has next to his home.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Education; Military participation]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
PROGRAM
University of Florida

CAT 073

Interviewee: Dean Canty

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: July 31, 1973

E: This is Emma Reid Echols, Route 6, Box 260, Rock Hill, South Carolina. I am recording the oral history of the Catawba Indians. This is July 31, 1973. I am visiting in an Indian home where I hope to make several recordings. Will you give me your name?

C: My name is Dean Canty.

E: Dean Canty. And what's this address?

C: Route 3, Box 303.

E: How old are you, Dean?

C: Twenty-one.

E: Twenty-one. Have you finished high school?

C: Yes.

E: You've finished high school, and I believe you're working for an electrical company. What company are you working for?

C: Shillinglaw's Heating and Air Conditioning.

E: Shillinglaw's Heating and Air Conditioning. I believe you have a younger brother who's also working there, is that right?

C: Yes, he's working there part-time, summer help.

E: Part-time, but you're working full-time.

C: I'm working full-time.

E: I believe you Indian boys like to do things with your hands, any kind of electrical or mechanical work, is that right?

C: Right.

E: Now, you were born on the old reservation. In this house?

C: No.

[Break in recording]

E: Dean, tell me where you went to school.

C: I went to Catawba Elementary School in first through the fourth grade, then I went to Lesslie Elementary fifth and sixth, and to Sullivan Junior High seventh through ninth, and I went to Rock Hill High School tenth through the twelfth grades.

E: Why, you've done a splendid thing! I can remember when boys didn't get an education like that. And your father and mother, who is your father and mother?

C: Mr. and Mrs. Heywood Jackson Canty.

E: Mr. and Mrs. Heywood Jackson Canty. And how many children were there in your family here?

C: Five.

E: Five children. Are you the oldest?

C: No, I got an older brother and an older sister and a younger brother and a younger sister.

E: Well, there are five of you all together. And you went to the Indian, Catawba Indian Reservation School first. Who was your first teacher down there?

C: Mrs. Cornish.

E: And was Mrs. Robinson also teaching here?

C: Yes, ma'am. She taught me in third and fourth grade.

E: Third and fourth, and Mrs. Cornish had you for your first grade, second grade.

C: Mmhm.

E: Do you remember whether you had lunches at school at that time or not?

C: Yes, they served lunches at school. I remember Arzada Sanders cooked us a lunch.

E: I understand that you boys loved to play games around that school. What kind of games did you play?

C: Played football, softball, basketball—just about anything that had any sports to it.

E: Did the school provide the balls and bats and the things like that you needed for equipment?

C: Yes, ma'am.

E: All you needed. And then when you went to Lesslie School—as it is now, Lesslie Number One—I suppose it was a big change for you to go there the first year, wasn't it?

C: Yes, ma'am.

E: Tell me about that first year at Lesslie School. Were you frightened?

C: I was scared at first, 'cause I didn't think anybody'd like me, cause of being an Indian and all. I got along real well with all the kids at school.

E: Did they tease you or make fun of you at first?

C: No, ma'am.

E: Do you remember your teacher at Lesslie?

C: Yes, ma' am.

E: Who was she?

C: Mrs. Pauline Weaver.

E: Mrs. Pauline Weaver.

C: Yes, ma'am.

E: There were quite a number of you Indian children there, then, weren't there?

C: Yes, there was quite a few of us down there.

E: When you played out on the playground, did you play with the Indians, or did you play with all of the children?

C: I played with all of them, mixed in.

E: What did you like best about school?

C: Best, I liked to learn new things, went there to learn, and to play sports, too.

E: And then now from Lesslie School, you remember any other teachers, let me see, before we leave Lesslie, any other teachers you remember at Lesslie?

C: Yes, I had Mr. Crawford who was the principal, he taught me in sixth grade.

E: You liked him, did you?

C: Yes, ma'am.

E: Did you ever have Mrs. Crawford, too?

C: She substituted sometimes for us, not much.

E: Then from Lesslie you went to high school, I believe.

C: Sullivan Junior High.

E: Sullivan Junior High. And what things did you like especially at high school, at Sullivan Junior High?

C: It was a big change from elementary school, 'cause we was in different age groups. There's a higher level of learning up there. That's what I most enjoyed about that, 'cause of advancing my education, and myself.

E: Did you feel like you could hold your own with the White boys and Black boys and all the children in school?

C: Yes, ma'am.

E: Sometimes there would be some problems between the Blacks and the Whites. Were there any problems between the Indians and the Whites and the Indians and the Blacks?

C: Not as I know of, there wasn't.

E: That's wonderful that you got along so well. And then what'd you do next in school, at the high school then, did you not?

C: I went to high school. After I graduated from high school, went into the Navy then I got out, served two years, nine months in the navy. And I got to get out of the navy this past January, and I started working at Shillinglaw's Heating and Air Conditioning in April.

E: What year did you finish high school?

C: 1970.

E: 1970, And then two years, a little more than two years in the navy. Where did the navy send you?

C: Went to Orlando for my basic training, then they sent me out to San Diego for two months' period in the commissary, and then I went to Newport, Rhode Island. I was based up there for about two years. Went on two cruises down the Caribbean. I was mostly stationed up in Rhode Island and Boston, Massachusetts, during my time in the navy.

- E: Then you've seen quite a bit of the world, haven't you, and all that? And you came back home from the navy last December.
- C: January.
- E: January, and you came back home to get a job with Shillinglaw's Electrical Company. Now, have you had any special electrical training for this job?
- C: No, ma'am. What I did in the navy was, I worked as a cook in the commissary, and I never did have any training in any kind of electrical business.
- E: Who has taught you the things you know, then, in the Shillinglaw Electrical Company?
- C: I work with a guy named Bert Sanders, he's a Catawba Indian too, and I learned most of the stuff from him, that I learned.
- E: What are your hours at Shillinglaw's?
- C: Go in at eight, get off at four-thirty.
- E: And you want this to be a permanent job?
- C: Yes, ma'am. Soon as I learn more, I'll probably stay with 'em.
- E: Now, I understand that you have a very lovely girl that you're interested in. Is this a White girl or an Indian girl?
- C: White girl.
- E: And you hope that you'll make enough money to be able establish a home and marry a White girl.
- C: Yes, ma'am.
- E: Are you proud to be an Indian?
- C: Yes, ma'am. Sure am.

E: You feel like you have a history that you're proud of, don't you?

C: Yes, ma'am.

E: And with the training you've had and the good job you've got, it seems to me you've got a very good future ahead of you! Do you hope to buy a lot and build you a home?

C: We already have the lot made. I'm going to buy a home, though.

E: Where is your lot?

C: It's right beside where we live at, right down the road here.

E: Oh, good. And you hope to build it here.

C: Yes, ma'am.

E: You will not be able to get a deed to this, but you'll be able to build a home, is that right?

C: Right.

E: If you were telling other Indian boys and girls, what would you tell them to do to make a success in life?

C: I guess I'd tell 'em to work hard at what they're doing and not to give up, cause sooner or later they'll make something out of their lives. You'll always come out a success if you work hard at it.

E: Thank you.

[End of interview]

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