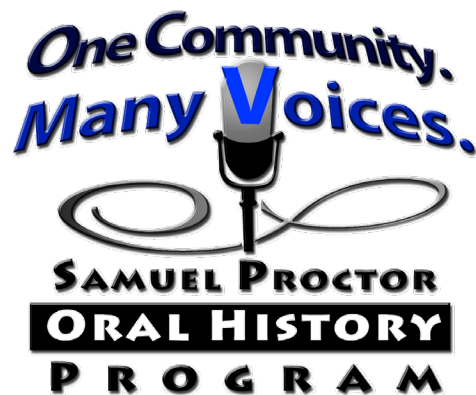


Timothy Dean Canty

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-108**

Interview by:

**Edith Frances Canty Wade
December 29, 1974**



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16 minutes | 10 pages

Abstract: Dean Canty is a young man living with his family and is giving this interview the day before going off to college at Brigham Young University in Pueblo, Utah. He discusses life on the old reservation and his time in school at the Indian school as well as in the Leslie County district. Then, Canty discusses his time in the Navy where he worked as a cook and his work in Charlotte, North Carolina, upon his return. He describes his chores as a child and his love for Christmas, then discusses the stories his family told him when he was a child about a White man who was hanged near his home. He ends by discussing his hope for the Catawba tribe's survival thanks to new programs and opportunities, and the revitalization of pottery-making.

Keywords: [Catawba Nation; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Education; Family histories]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
P R O G R A M
University of Florida

CAT 108

Interviewee: Timothy Dean Canty

Interviewer: Edith Frances Canty Wade

Date of Interview: December 29, 1974

W: This is Frances Wade. I live on Route 3, Box 304, Rock Hill, South Carolina. I'm gathering oral histories of the Catawba Indians for the University of Florida.

Today is December 29, 1974, and I'm talking with Dean Canty. Dean, what is your full name?

C: Timothy Dean Canty.

W: Who are your parents?

C: Mr. and Mrs. Halick Jackson Canty.

W: Are they Indians?

C: Yes. My father is an Indian but, my mother, she's a White.

W: Dean, what is your address?

C: I live on Route 3, Box 303, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

W: Who are your grandparents?

C: My grandparents are Alonzo Canty and John Pots.

W: Well, that is your grandfather on your mother's side and your father's side, now, who is your grandmother on your father's side?

C: Fanny George.

W: And your grandmother on your mother's side?

C: Vergie Riggins Pots.

W: She was also a White lady?

C: Yes, ma'am.

W: Have you always lived on the old part of the reservation?

C: Yes, I've lived here all my life.

W: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

C: I have two brothers and two sisters.

W: What are their names?

C: My older brother's name is Jackie, and my older sister is Lynn. My younger brother is Ronald, younger sister is Ellen.

W: Did you go to school down here on the reservation?

C: Yes, ma'am.

W: Do you remember who your teachers were?

C: Yes, my first and second grade teacher was Mrs. Cornish. My third and fourth grade teacher was Mrs. Robinson.

W: How long did you go to school down here on the reservation?

C: I attended four years on the Catawba Indian reservation.

W: Then you went to Lesslie?

C: Yes ma'am.

W: I want to ask you something about how you got to school when you lived down here and also about the lunch at school. How did you get to school?

C: Well, usually we used to walk to school, the Catawba Indian school.

W: And you didn't have running water in that school, did you?

C: Yes, we had running water.

W: Did you have running water in the school? Well, I really didn't know that! And you didn't have any inside bathrooms, did you?

C: Yes.

W: You'd did? I really didn't think that we had them down here. Now what happened, I'm thinking of the old school right across the hill from here, and you went up near the church, didn't you?

C: Yes, ma'am.

W: To the new schoolhouse. That does makes a difference. Did you pay for lunch?

C: Usually, we'd get our lunches free.

W: Who cooked?

C: We had this little old lady by the name of Arzeda Sanders who cooked our meals for us.

W: She was an Indian too, wasn't she?

C: Yes, she was.

W: She was a good cook too, wasn't she?

C: Yes.

W: You had real good meals, I'm sure. When you went on the outside to go to the Lesslie school, you had been going all the time with the Indians. When you went to Lesslie, you started going with White children. Were you treated any different?

C: Well, at first, when I started going to school, I thought it was gonna to be a lot different. After I started going with the other kids and finding out they were just about the same as I was, except for the color of their skin. I knew I wasn't any different from them, besides being an Indian. I knew that we were all equal and we all could work for the same thing.

W: Did the teachers treat you good?

C: Yes, all my teachers treated me good.

W: What kind of grades did you make in school, Dean?

C: Well, when I was going to elementary school, I made A's and B's until I got to high school, and it started dropping down to C's. I made fairly good grades, I guess.

W: Do you have any reason for your grades dropping when you went to high school? Did it get harder, or did you just slack up on your studying?

C: I believe that one of the causes was I probably slacked up on my studies and it did get a little bit harder.

W: Dean, how old are you?

C: I'm twenty-three.

W: You were born when?

C: November 22, 1951.

W: When you finished high school, you did graduate from high school didn't you? You joined the service, didn't you?

C: Yes, I joined the service right after I graduated in 1970.

W: What branch of service did you go into?

C: I served in the navy.

W: How long was you in the navy?

C: I was in the navy for two years and nine months.

W: Did you get any training in the navy that would help you to get a job once you got out?

C: The training I got in the navy would help you get a decent job outside. The job I had in the navy was a cook. A civilian occupation as a cook is a very good occupation. But it wasn't really the type of work that I enjoyed the most.

W: When you got out of the navy you got a job here in Rock Hill. What kind of job did you get then?

C: I got a job with Converse Sportswear in Charlotte, North Carolina which lasted about two months. Then I started working with **Sharon Laws** heating and air conditioning and I remained with them until December 20 'til I quit to go to college.

W: All right, we're gonna talk about you going to college in just a few minutes. First, I want to ask you what kind of work did you have to do around your house when you were growing up?

C: Well, we had all kind of chores to do but they were usually divided up between the members of the family. My chore was carrying water, cutting wood and carrying it up and sometimes, in the summertime, we had to help in the garden.

W: How far did you have to carry water?

C: I would say approximately about an eighth of a mile.

W: Did you get it from a well or where did you get your water?

C: We got water from a spring.

W: We did the same thing. I remember when we got our well, for several weeks I was sick and couldn't drink the water. We had to go back to the spring to get water for me to drink. Now that you're grown, can you remember any of the

things—what Christmas was like at your house? We just got through celebrating Christmas. What was Christmas like for you when you were just a child?

C: As a child, I think Christmas was a lot of different than the way they celebrate it today. Because we appreciated Christmas a lot more back then, because we usually didn't get that much. We were very thankful for what we got. As a child, I remember my father used to put us to bed about ten o'clock that night. We'd go to bed and wait on Santa Claus to come. About three o'clock in the morning one of us would get up, or Mama and Daddy would wake us up and we'd all go in and see what we got for Christmas. It was really a joyous time around our home.

W: I really agree with you that things have changed, and I think maybe you did have more fun then. Can you remember any old stories that may pertain to Indians that maybe some of your grandparents or your aunts—one of your aunts is standing there, listening—might have told when you were growing up?

C: Not that I can recall right off-hand. I can recall one about this Indian that was hung. 'Bout this White man that was hung by Indians because he was caught going about with this Indian girl and they didn't like it. So, they hung this White man in this tree which is above our house.

W: Oh yes, I remember. And I was always afraid when I walked past it because that big old chain was hanging and had grown into the tree. Well, I'm hearing—you might hear in the background someone talking. Well, it was about another person that had been hung right across the hill from here, so we'll just go ahead and finish talking to Dean right now. Dean, I know that you have worked for a while, do you think you got a good wage for the work that you did?

- C: It was a fairly good wage, but I believe it was worth a little bit more than what my employer paid me. It was enough really to get me by.
- W: Now you said that you had to quit work December 20. Now, I know why you quit. Why did you quit?
- C: I quit because I'll be starting college January 6 at Brigham Young University in Pueblo, Utah.
- W: When are you leaving?
- C: I'll be leaving tomorrow morning, December 30.
- W: Bright and early, won't you?
- C: Bright and early. Seven o'clock.
- W: Are you the only one going?
- C: No, ma'am. This other girl and her brother are going out with me.
- W: What subjects are you taking, Dean?
- C: I will be going into some field of conservation when I get out there.
- W: How is your tuition being paid? Are you paying your own or do you have a grant? Or how are you going?
- C: The biggest part of it will be paid by my GI benefits. I have saved some money of my own, which I'll be able to use, and the school out there will pay for my tuition under the Indian Education Department.
- W: Dean, I know that you worked around White people and colored people. And you were in the navy with White people and colored people, and maybe people of other races. Did you get along well with other groups of people?

C: Yes, I've tried to get along with everybody that I associated with, and I think I always will.

W: Well, knowing you, I'm sure that you will too. How long will you be at BYU?

C: I was planning on going for four years. If it takes me a little bit longer, I guess I'll stay out there that long.

W: You are really a homebody, aren't you?

C: Yes, ma'am.

W: We hopin' that things'll work out real well for you out there and I'm sure that they will. I know that you'll study hard and make real good. I want to ask you about sports. What sports do you like?

C: I like football, basketball, volleyball, baseball, and softball. Basically, I just like about every sport, I guess.

W: You take part in every one that you can, don't you?

C: Yes, ma'am.

W: Do you like to hunt?

C: Yes, I like to hunt and camp.

W: I know that tonight at church, the person that was talking, was telling about you camping out with him. Do you like to fish?

C: Yes, I love to fish, but I believe I love to hunt a little better. I like to be walking around. Fishing takes a little bit more patience.

W: That's true, it certainly does. Dean, you know we, as a Catawba Tribe, we engaged in a different program again now, and it is called **Cenna**. We have several programs going. What do you think about all of these programs?

C: I think these programs are really something that the Indians should take advantage of because it'll be something they can use in their life ahead of them. If they would just take advantage and apply the things that they use and other people also.

W: Well, do you think that the culture of the Catawba should be continued?

C: Yes, ma'am. I truly believe that the culture should be kept within the Catawba Tribe because it gives the next generation that is coming up something to rely on. I believe that if it died away, that if our culture died away, our whole Tribe would die away with it.

W: I think that we the only group of Indians in the whole United States that make this type of pottery. Can you make pots, Dean?

C: I've tried before, and I believe that I could learn pretty easily to make it.

W: There is a program that's going to be under way that will teach the young people to make pottery. I think that this will be a good program because so many young people don't know how to make it and it is a real art. Dean, are you proud to be an Indian?

C: Yes, ma'am, I'm very proud to be a Catawba Indian.

W: Do you think that we have progressed very far from the time that you were small until now?

C: Yes, ma'am, I believe we have because when I was small, I had to go to these public schools that were run by the Catawba Indians, on the reservation. Nowadays, the kids are able to go to these other schools where the education is

a little bit more advanced and we wasn't privileged to have that type of an education then.

W: I have been talking with Dean Canty and I'd like to describe him. He's about five eleven and he is a slim young man. He's got black hair and he's got a nice-looking complexion. You can tell that he's Indian, but if he got out from among the Indians, you wouldn't be certain whether he was an Indian or whether he'd just been down in Florida in the sunshine.

[End of interview]

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