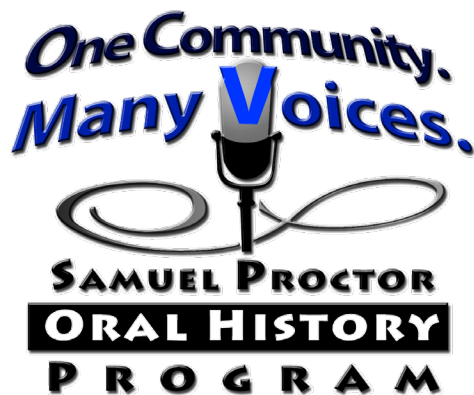


Anthony Scott Canty

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)
CAT-115**

Interview by:

**Edith Frances Canty Wade
August 6, 1975**



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31 minutes | 16 pages

Abstract: Anthony Canty recalls moving several times in his childhood, including living at Frances Wade's house. He is very involved in the church and has worked several jobs in order to go on a two-year mission with the Mormon Church. He has also worked with Wade collect the names of individuals buried in the local graveyard, as well as their stories from older community members. He talks about wanting to continue his education past high school and shows an interest in collecting the history of his Tribe.

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

SAMUEL PROCTOR
ORAL HISTORY
PROGRAM
University of Florida

CAT 115

Interviewee: Anthony Scott Canty

Interviewer: Edith Frances Canty Wade

Date of Interview: August 6, 1975

W: This is Frances Wade. I live on Route 3, Box 304, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Today is August 6, 1975. I'm gathering oral histories of the Catawba Indians for the University of Florida and today I'm talking with Anthony Canty. Anthony, what is your full name?

C: My full name is Anthony Scott Canty.

W: How old are you?

C: I'm nineteen years old.

W: What is your birth date?

C: June 8, 1956.

W: Where do you live, Anthony?

C: Just outside of Rock Hill on parts of the old Indian land.

W: What is your address there?

C: Route 7, Box 32, Rock Hill.

W: You were talking about **it's** parts of the old reservation. Can you tell me just a little bit more about it being parts of the reservation?

C: Well, I think that it was—when it was divided up, it was given in portions to different families according to how many children they had. The land we live on now was part of the land that my mother's mother had when she was raising her children.

W: This land that you're talking about, Anthony, it is not part of what we have always known as the old reservation?

C: No.

W: It's part of the land that was bought maybe in the [19]40s and divided among the Indians. Anthony, who are your parents?

C: My mother is Thelma Ernestine Hendrix. Her maiden name was Thelma Ernestine Canty. My father was Harry William Thompson. He was a White man, and they were not married at the time when I was born and never were.

W: Your mother is an Indian?

C: Yes.

W: A Catawba Indian?

C: Yes, she is.

W: Who are your grandparents on your mother's side?

C: My grandfather is Alonzo Canty, and my grandmother is Fanny Harris Canty.

W: Do you know your grandparents on your father's side?

C: No, I don't.

W: Did you know your father?

C: Yes, I did.

W: Did he recognize you as—did he—well, yes, did he recognize you as his son?

C: Yes, he did. He would come to see us. I have a sister, who is his daughter too, and he would come to see us. He would bring us clothes sometimes, and he would give what money he could to help support us. So, I guess I could say he saw us as his children.

W: What brothers and sisters do you have?

C: I have two sisters and a brother. Lisa Canty, who is seventeen, she's the next oldest. Lisa Hendrix, who is thirteen, and Robert Hendrix, who is eleven.

W: Anthony, what kind of work does your mother do?

C: She is a teacher's aide now. She has worked in textiles mostly, though.

W: What kind of work did your father do?

C: He worked in the lab at Celanese Corporation.

W: Before that?

C: Before that I don't remember.

W: He was a policeman.

C: Oh, he was a policeman, that's right. He was a policeman.

W: Anthony, can you remember any old stories that you've heard your mother, or your grandmother tell, or any of the other elderly people here in Catawba tell that had happened many years ago?

C: Any old stories, like what?

W: Well, just any old stories that you might have listened to when you were growing up.

C: The only thing I remember is the stories my mother would tell about when she was a little girl. How when she was growing up and how rough it was and how they had to—when they were going to school, how they had to take care of the younger brothers and sisters and different things around home.

W: Anthony, what was it like for you at Christmas time when you were growing up?

C: When I was young, I don't remember too much. It all—it wasn't all that big like a lot of kids get, but it was fine. It was good and we didn't always get a lot of stuff, until after I was up in maybe thirteen, fourteen years old. Then we got pretty good

bit of stuff. But when I was a lot younger, we didn't get that much. At least I don't remember getting that much.

W: Did you always live on the reservation, Anthony?

C: No, I lived here from the time I was born until six years old.

W: And where did you live the early years of your life?

C: I lived with my mother, and we lived with Frances Wade and her family.

W: You were almost like the Wade's child, weren't you?

C: That's right.

W: When you were much younger, what kind of duties did you have to perform around your home?

C: I remember carrying water when we didn't have a well. I remember cutting wood when we used—when we had a wood stove. I remember taking care of the chickens when we had those, and the horses. We always had horses from the time I was about twelve years old until—right up till about a year ago and we always had to take care of the horses and make sure they had a good place to stay in the winter.

W: Did you ride very much?

C: I didn't ride as much as my sister. I didn't like the horses too much, but I have rode and it's fun.

W: Did you ride with a saddle or bare back?

C: Bare back.

W: Anthony, I know that you lived at several places during your life. What can you remember about the memories of your home life?

C: Well, when we lived with the Wades, I remember it was an old house and we had a TV then. And when you wanted to get in a good channel you had to go outside and turn the antenna around on the chimney. I remember that, and you could see the stars at night through the roof, and it was cold in the wintertime. I believe we used a wood stove, I believe, and I remember the kitchen. It had a floor that kind of sloped down, downhill a little at the back room. There were a lot of chickens around outside, I remember that. And once we lived in an old junk bus one time, behind my uncle—another uncle's house, that he had kept his hay in I believe. And we lived in it for a while. Then we lived in, oh, I forgot whose house it was we lived in for another short while. We lived in Idle Sanders' house for a while. He had an old house on the reservation. So, we lived all around when I was lot younger.

W: What can you tell us about church? Do you go to church? Do you belong to a church?

C: Yes, I belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which is—most people call the Mormon church. I have belonged to it all my life. I was raised in it, like my mother was raised in it. I suppose her mother was raised in it and I attend regularly now and always have. I'm still active in it, and I have a two-year mission coming up pretty soon within the next month or so, and I'll be gone away from here for two years.

W: I was going to ask you to tell something about being a missionary. This is something very unique, as far as the time you would stay gone and the **monies** involved and who would pay for your mission while you were gone. I know that

your mother is not able to do this, and I know that it's not compulsory that you go on a mission. So, you've done something extra special to—beside being very active in church. You went an extra mile, so to speak. What have you done toward getting yourself ready to go on a mission?

C: Completed school. I had dropped out at one time, and I completed twelve years and high school.

W: What about work? What did you—

C: I got a job; it was third shift while I was still in school. I worked third shift and went to school for quite a few months, seven or eight at least. I have saved fifteen hundred so far. For the two years it will take thirty-six hundred I believe. I have almost half of it. The rest will come from family, aunts and uncles, and other people in the Ward.

W: You don't know where you will be sent on a mission, do you?

C: No, you never know until they call you, and they'll send you a letter, they'll tell you where you're going, when you leave and when to be there.

W: There is another thing that I would like to say about that. Anthony said he worked on the third shift, and he didn't spend his money. He saved it, and I think this is quite a feat for a young man in this day and age, especially to work so hard, to save his money and then to spend it on a mission for the church. Anthony, now you just said that you finished high school. When you were in the lower grades, or elementary grades, did you go to school on the reservation, or did you go to schools outside of the reservation?

C: I went to school one year on the reservation. That was the first grade. Then I moved and went to school in Rock Hill, at Northside Elementary School starting from the second through the seventh at that school.

W: And how were you treated? Did they know that you were an Indian?

C: Yes, they knew. Most of the teachers knew and a lot of the—I guess all the kids did too. Most of the teachers knew because they had talked to my mother, or her sisters, or some other Indian who had been there before.

W: And how did they treat you? Did they treat you any different from the other students?

C: No, I can't say that they did.

W: What high school did you attend?

C: Rock Hill High School.

W: When you were—while you were in school, did you take part in any sports?

C: Any sports? No.

W: Do you like any sports?

C: Yes, I like football, softball, and that's about it.

W: Since you like these sports so well, why didn't you take any of them in school?

C: Well, always when I was in the lower grades, that's usually where you develop these sports, I always had other things to do at home. Like maybe come home and cut wood or carry water, so, never had time.

W: I know also that you like to fish.

C: Oh yes.

W: And I don't believe you mentioned that.

C: I like to fish, and I like to hunt when I get the chance.

W: I know that you haven't been in the service, and in this day and age quite a few young men, they think that they shouldn't have to go in service. What is your feeling on this?

C: I wouldn't like to be in the service. It's—I just don't think I could get along in there too good but if I had to, I would go. But only if I had to. I wouldn't a draft dodger, or one of those card burners.

W: You say that you have worked. Where did you work?

C: Where did I work? Well, I worked at a few jobs. I worked, started when I was about fourteen at summer jobs. And this was in landscaping and different odd summer jobs. When I was sixteen, I got a weekend job at the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Company. That was cleaning up on the weekends. When I was seventeen, I got a job at Springs Mills in Fort Mill. I worked there from June 28, 1973, to June 28, 1974. Exactly one year in a cotton mill, and I did not like it at all. After that I got a job at Lance, which was the last job I had. I quit that job in June of this year, [19]75. Now I work with the Summer Youth Program on the reservation.

W: This is just something to help you make a little more money before you're called on your mission officially?

C: That's right.

W: When you were working at Lance, what was your job there?

C: At Lance I mixed up the dough for all their crackers and cookies, whatever they had to make, we mixed it up.

W: Did you get a good salary?

C: It was a fair salary. It wasn't the best. It was, I would say, \$3.30 an hour.

W: But you did make the same amount of money that other people that were doing the same thing you did were making?

C: Yes, and I think I could say I made a little more than some there.

W: Did they know that you were an Indian?

C: Yes, they did.

W: How did they treat you?

C: They didn't treat me any better or any worse than anyone else. They knew I was an Indian, so they didn't say too much about it.

W: I know that you're not married and since you're going on a mission you won't be married for at least two years. I know that you're living right now in the home of an aunt. I know that you did something else last week that is real fine for a young man. What did you do for your mother? I know that she's trying to build a home to live in. What did you do?

C: Well, I went and bought some lumber for her house. I bought two hundred two-by-fours and gave them to her last week.

W: Anthony, now I know that things have changed a great deal from the time that you were growing up until today even. Do you think the opportunities have changed as far as the Indians are concerned, from the time you were a small child until today?

C: Yes, I think they have. There are a lot more opportunities now. Things are opening up. A lot of people are trying to get out and do things for themselves,

instead of just sitting around and waiting for something to come to them. I believe that's what you've got to do. You've got to get out and get it for yourself, because nobody is going to hand it to you. That's one thing about this mission, that it's something you can accomplish. If you accomplish staying out away from home for two years, you've really accomplished something. It really makes you proud if you can do it and I hope I can do it. These are things that start you on that road to accomplishment.

W: Anthony, are you registered to vote?

C: No.

W: Do you think it's important to vote?

C: Yes, I think it is.

W: Do you have very many friends among the White people?

C: Oh, I have an average amount I guess I could say. Well, in the church among the White people, I have a great many White friends.

W: Do you have many friends among the Blacks?

C: No, not really. Hardly any.

W: Do you get along well with the Blacks?

C: Yes, I never had any trouble with them. They—most of them knew I was an Indian or knew I was something else besides white. I guess that's one reason I got along so well with them. No one at school ever picked on me, White or Black, and I think it's because they knew I was an Indian. And they sort of expected an Indian to be pretty tough and they just never did—never would've messed with an Indian.

W: You know that there seems to be dope everywhere. Have you ever tried to take dope, Anthony?

C: No, I never thought too much about that. I always thought it was really bad for you, so I always tried to stay away from it.

W: Do you have any friends that have taken dope?

C: None that I know of right off-hand.

W: I would like to ask you about what you think about the government today. Do you think that we have a good president?

C: I think we have a fair president. He's probably not the best we've had or will have. At least he's trying to do what he thinks is right. He's probably a little better than the last president we had.

W: Well, what do you think about all the investigations they have going on? They've had the Watergate and they investigating the CIA and the FBI. What do you think about all of those investigations?

C: I think they should have those investigations. I believe the people have a right to know what's going on in their government because it is a government of the people, and if they don't know, then the government someday may not be the government that we know it is today, or has been. So, I believe these investigations are for the benefit of the people and it should be continued.

W: Do you think Anthony it was a good idea for us to be terminated from the federal government?

C: No, I don't. I don't at all. I think it was a very bad idea to get terminated. The United States of America has the whole United States of America to be thankful

for, and they got it from the Indians. This was Indian land before any White man came and I think they owe us something for that land. Many people—a lot of people are rich today because of that. They have so much Indian land, and we have no land. Most of the Indians here, in fact all of the Indians here, I guess I could say they are pretty—well they're not really poor but they're not on the scale with most White people.

W: Anthony, do you—would you like to see this old reservation remain as it is?

C: Remain here you mean?

W: Yes, would you like to see it just remain as it is and not be broken up?

C: Yes, I'd like to see it stay here. I wouldn't want it to be broken up and sold away, because then nothing would remain. Nothing would be left, and I would like to have something when I get old to look at and say, "That's the reservation. That's where I lived for a while."

W: You know that we're working under a new program now, trying to help Indians to better themselves. Do you think that this is a good program?

C: Yes, I think it is. Because it gives the Indians more opportunities that they didn't have. They don't know these programs exist and if they can't get out and get into them, they're not going to benefit. The programs will bring assistance to the Indians right here on the reservation who probably wouldn't know about it any other way. Now they have chances to get better jobs and kind of move up in the world.

W: Today, Anthony, you and I have been doing something very unusual. In fact, you've started, you and another young man, a couple of days ago. Would you just talk a little bit about that?

C: Okay a couple of days ago, another guy that's working under the same program I am, went to the old graveyard, which is on the reservation, and we counted all the graves that we could count and wrote down all the names that we could read on the tombstones. We're trying to get some kind of idea of how many people are buried there and who is buried there. Today, myself and Frances Wade went around to several of the old—older people and tried to find out some of the unknown people that were buried down there that we could not read their tombstones. We tried to find out who is buried down there besides the ones we know. We talked to four of the older people and they seem to know a great deal about our history and who's who down here and who was who. They can tell us who our relatives were, and what they did when they were young, and just all kinds of history. That's what we did today. We went around collecting history on the Catawbas.

W: Anthony, a big portion of the graves at the old cemetery doesn't have markers at all but you can tell the outline of the graves. Now we were told by one of the elderly ladies today, that at one time that was a huge graveyard. That the graves extended all the way, close to the river, in fact. And so, we won't get to—we won't ever know the exact number of people that's actually buried there I'm sure, but we'll get at least an idea of a portion of them that are there. Anthony, did you ever learn to do bead work?

C: No, I never did.

W: Did you know that we're planning to start a class on bead work here?

C: I'd heard something about it.

W: If you were here, would you have—would you take advantage of it?

C: Oh yes, I think I'd like to learn how to do that.

W: What about Indian pottery?

C: I've made a few pieces. I fiddled around with a couple of my aunts when they were making it. They showed me how to make just a few small things.

W: Last week, I think you did something out of the ordinary that week. What did you do that you had never done before?

C: We dug clay. We went down across the river, down in the woods, way in the woods and dug clay. It was in a pretty big hole we had to crawl up in. It was like a small cave, and we got the clay out. It was **pan** clay I believe, and it was a bluish color. Me and four other guys went down and dug clay all day and distributed it to the elderly ladies who couldn't otherwise go out and dig for themselves.

W: About how far did you have to carry that wet clay from the hole to the truck?

C: Probably a little over a mile.

W: It weighed a great deal too, didn't it?

C: Probably over fifty pounds each.

W: Did that give you an indication as to why your ancestors were supposed to be so strong?

C: Yes, it did. If they had to carry it as far as we did and had to carry it up as steep a hill as we had to carry it, they would be pretty strong.

W: Anthony, do you think that you have accomplished very much in the few short years you've been here?

C: Well, I think I've accomplished a pretty good bit and if not, the things I have accomplished are leading up to greater things that I will accomplish in the near future and throughout the rest of my life. I hope to accomplish a lot of things before I die, and I think I have accomplished a good many things under the circumstances. Considering I had no father—no real father and considering that my mother and her relatives have raised me.

W: Anthony, do you have any goals set in mind that you would like to reach?
Besides going on your mission.

C: Probably getting a little bit better education than—a little more than high school anyway.

W: What kind of work would you like to do when you really settle down for your lifetime job?

C: I don't really know. I've thought and thought about it, but I don't know what I'd like to do. This history gathering is really interesting to me. I've thought about maybe doing research after more education. Maybe a few years in college.

W: You get this feeling, I guess a sense of pride, I found that I do when I start gathering information about my people. I get this sense of pride knowing that my ancestors were not the sloppy, lazy people that people always pictured them as. But as real strong men and women who went through an awful lot for us. Do you think that the Indians should continue their culture of pottery-making, or should they just give it up and live as the White people?

C: I think they should continue it. If they give it up, then it will be gone, and no one will know how to do it. No one will remember and it will just be some memories in the older people's heads. That'll be all and then the Indians will die out and there will be no more Catawbas.

W: Anthony, are you proud to be an Indian?

C: Yes, I am and if anyone would ask or would want to know if I was an Indian, I would tell them without hesitating that I was.

W: I would just like to describe Anthony. I'll probably have to ask him a thing or two. Anthony, how tall are you?

C: Six foot.

W: How much do you weigh?

C: One hundred and sixty.

W: He's a tall, slim, athletic-looking young man and he has—he's not a fair-skinned young man. He's just a very handsome Indian. He has coal black, curly hair, big brown eyes, and he wears glasses. I think that all of the people here in Catawba realize he's a very—he's a good person, and he's a credit to the Tribe.

[End of interview]

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