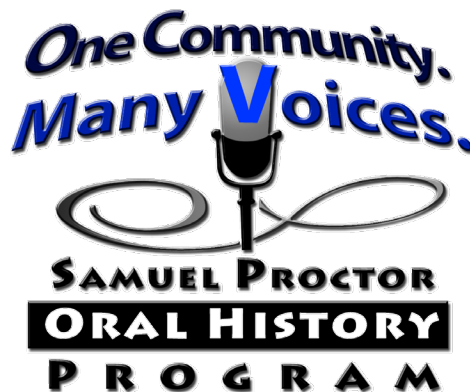


# **Sarah Elizabeth Potts Canty**

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)  
CAT-072**

**Interview by:**

**Emma Reid Echols  
August 1, 1973**



University of Florida • Samuel Proctor Oral History Program • Paul Ortiz, Director  
P.O. Box 115215, 241 Pugh Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-5215  
(352) 392-7168 [www.clas.ufl.edu/history/oral](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/history/oral)

Samuel Proctor Oral History Program  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Program Director: Dr. Paul Ortiz

241 Pugh Hall  
PO Box 115215  
Gainesville, FL 32611  
(352) 392-7168  
<https://oral.history.ufl.edu>

**CAT 072 Sarah Elizabeth Potts Canty**  
**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project (SIOHP)**  
**Interviewed by Emma Reid Echols on August 1, 1973**  
**7 minutes | 6 pages**

**Abstract:** Sarah Elizabeth Canty talks about her family life, beginning with how she met her husband Heywood and married him at the age of sixteen. She speaks about her sisters, talks about the role of the church in her life, and describes what she knows of the Catawba pottery tradition.

**Keywords:** [Catawba Nation; William Sanders; South Carolina--Rock Hill; Religion; Pottery]

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

CAT 072

Interviewee: Sarah Elizabeth Potts Canty

Interviewer: Emma Reid Echols

Date of Interview: August 1, 1973

E: Emma Reid Echols, Route 6, Box 260, Rock Hill, South Carolina. I am recording the oral history of the Catawba Indians. I am visiting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Heywood Canty. Mrs. Canty, give me your full name.

C: Sarah Elizabeth Canty.

E: Sarah Elizabeth Canty. And who were you before you married?

C: Sarah Potts.

E: Sarah Potts. Now, as a young girl you lived near Catawba Junction, is that right?

C: Yes, ma'am.

E: And where did you go to school down there?

C: I went to Catawba, and Lesslie. When I got married, I was in the eleventh grade at Rock Hill High School.

E: Eleventh grade at Rock Hill High School. How many sisters did you have?

C: I had five sisters.

E: And any brothers?

C: No brothers.

E: Five sisters and no brothers. You attended church, I believe, at Catawba?

C: Yes, ma'am.

E: And sometimes over at Neely's Creek Church, is that right?

C: I attended Neely's Creek Presbyterian Church before we moved to Catawba.

E: That's right.

C: That was four or five years ago.

E: Was Heywood in high school when you were there? Did you ever see him in high school?

C: No, he was in service when I was in high school.

E: He was in service, in the navy when you were in high school.

C: I didn't know he was anywhere around, then.

E: You didn't know he was anywhere around.

C: No.

E: Well, how did you happen to meet him? Was it summertime or winter, or what time of year was it?

C: It was in summer.

E: He'd gone down to the river. How did you happen to meet him?

C: Well, my daddy, he never let us go anywhere. When we went, he took us. I don't know what made him want to take us down to the river that Sunday. It might have been to take us for a ride in his truck. We were down there, and Heywood and a bunch of these Indian boys were down there. I remember William Sanders, Sam Beck, I think Perry Sanders. You know how a bunch of young girls are. We saw us a bunch of boys there and we didn't care whether they's Indians or what, just as long as they was boys. [Laughter] They told us to ride in the boat with him and another boy. I was sort of undecided who to ride with, so I ended up riding with Heywood. I think the next Sunday we talked Daddy into taking us back down there again, so we'd get to ride again. [Laughter]

E: Now, was this a canoe he was paddling across the river?

- C: Something I guess you'd call like a canoe. It wasn't a motor in it; you had to paddle it.
- E: You had to paddle it. Was he really a good canoeist? Could he really paddle very well?
- C: He got across the river, so that's pretty good.
- E: I don't think he'd be in any hurry to get back across the river.
- C: No, we took our times. 'Course that's all the time we had, 'cause Daddy was on the other side watching us. [Laughter]
- E: Oh, yes. Was your sister interested in an Indian boy, too?
- C: Not at that time, she wasn't. She was just young. She liked who I liked.
- E: But later on, did you have a sister who married an Indian, also?
- C: Yes, I had two sisters marry Indians after I got married. I was the first one. Becky and Jean got married I think the same day.
- E: Who did they marry?
- C: Jean married **Olan** Tyler and Becky married Harold **Fasser**.
- E: Oh, yes. So, the three Potts girls married three Indian boys and you've all established homes, and very happy homes it looks like.
- C: Yes.
- E: You were an eleventh grader in high school when you decided to get married. Where were you married?
- C: We went to Chester and got a license. We was in such a big hurry to get married that we stopped at the first place we was. That was Francis Gregg's house up

here on Main Street. We didn't even know him, the preacher, hadn't met him before, so we paid him.

E: You don't remember how much you paid him, do you?

C: Yes, I think he gave him five dollars.

E: Well, that was good money in those days, very good money. What year was it when you were married?

C: November 8, 1946.

E: In 1946. You were sixteen and Heywood was about twenty-two?

C: Nineteen.

E: Nineteen. Sixteen and nineteen. I believe you lived with his sister for a short time and then some months later you established your own home. Tell me, have there been problems marrying an Indian or have you been very, very happy here?

C: We haven't had any problems with me and my family and his family.

E: Both of you came from church families, Christian families; you were, and Heywood was. Do you think that helped you in establishing your homes?

C: I guess it did, 'cause he's always went to church since I been married. I went when all the children were real young. I wasn't in it. I could of went but I didn't. After I got older, I decided that I'd start going.

E: Have you worked, or have you always been taking care of the home?

C: Always been at home, a housewife.

E: What do you do as a housewife? Do you have a garden, or do you freeze or can vegetables?

C: I don't have a freezer. I have to can when I have anything to can.

- E: Make jellies and things of that kind, I suppose.
- C: Yeah. I'm don't make as much now as I used to, but I used to make quite a bit.
- E: Now, I believe you even like to try your hand at making pottery sometimes, don't you?
- C: I have had clay laying around, but I done some rubbing with Francis up here, and his grandma, Emma—
- E: Who's his grandmother?
- C: Emma Brown, but she's dead now.
- E: Oh, she's dead now. What about your children, do any of them make pottery at all?
- C: No, they never mess with any pottery at all, not unless they're around some of their kin, you know, they might mess with it, but they don't really like it.
- E: It's not possible to sell much of it. Is there no market for it?
- C: Yes, there must be a big market now for pottery from what I hear. Doris Blue, an Indian I know, has big orders now, better than what it used to be four or five years ago. I don't really know for sure, but from what they're telling me, they have big orders.
- E: Who are the Indians that you know that make pottery down here now?
- C: Sally Beck, and Arzada Sanders, and Frances, and Doris Blue, and Edna Brown and Edith Brown.
- E: When you see the pottery, can you tell whose pottery it is because each person has a distinctive kind of pottery?

C: I can't tell anybody's pottery unless it was Aunt Edith's. I might could pick out some of hers, because I haven't really seen too much of the others. Been around a lot of them, way back. I've saw Aunt Edith make quite a few pieces.

E: Do the Indians that you know down here have some of the old pottery that belonged to their mothers or their grandmothers many years ago?

C: If they have, I haven't really seen it. But I've been around where they were cleaning, and they found some old pottery, old pots and stuff that was cracked and chipped up.

E: There was pieces, I hope, that could be saved. I think some of the old pottery is very beautiful.

C: I think they piled it up. I don't know whether they still got it or not, but they piled it up.

E: What do you and your family do for recreation, for fun?

C: For recreation? Well, mostly go to church, church activities, mostly. Ball games.

E: You go to Cherokee sometimes?

C: Yes, we go to the mountains in summer.

[End of interview]

Transcribed by: Rayyan Merchant, September 18, 2021

Audit-edited by: Sofia Echeverry, March 17, 2022

Final edited by: Evangeline Giaconia, July 19, 2022



