



**Sacramento Ethnic Communities Survey -  
Black Oral Histories  
1983/146**

Oral interview of  
Clarence Bernard Canson

January 18, 1984

**Conducted by Clarence Caesar**

**Transcribed by Lee Ann McMeans**

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The following interview was taped January 18, 1984, at the home of Mr. Clarence Canson, 4216 Lotus Avenue, Sacramento, California. Mr. Canson has been a resident of Sacramento since 1930 and has been active in all phases of the political scene in the Sacramento Black community. Mr. Canson has been active as a community activist, a lawyer, a candidate for public office, and a member of the Sacramento Branch of the NAACP. He is the brother of Robert Canson, Sacramento's first Black policeman and is the husband of Verna Canson, the Western Regional Director of the NAACP in Sacramento. The crux of Mr. Canson's interview will be the early political scene in Sacramento.

**Clarence:** Could you tell us a little bit about yourself and how you came to be in Sacramento?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Well, first of all, my name is Clarence Bernard Canson and I came to Sacramento in 1929. My father had come the year before me, in other words, he dropped the family off in Los Angeles to stay with his parents while he looked the state over to decide where he wanted to settle. He had a brother in Sacramento, who was a tailor. His brother had come here after World War One, having been discharged at Goat Island, which is Yerba Buena Island or they call the thing now

**Clarence:** Treasure Island?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Treasure Island. But anyway, his brother was operating a tailor shop in Sacramento and my brother, in an interview, said he started in 1928, but he was wrong. He started in 1924. My dad joined him in 1928, see? But the balance of the family came up from

Los Angeles in 1929. Now we were from Houston, Texas, to Sacramento and Los Angeles, and prior to that well we were all born in Louisiana. I arrived in Sacramento at the age of ten years old. I attended elementary school at the Newton Booth, Sutter Junior High, Sacramento High, and graduated with a B.S. degree from Tuskegee Institute and J.D. from McGeorge College of Law in Sacramento. I practiced law in Sacramento for approximately, well first of all, before I practiced law, I worked for the federal government at McClellan AFB for 15 years.

**Clarence:** Beginning in what year?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Beginning in 1941. After 15 years at McClellan AFB, well I had graduated from law school and I started practicing law here in Sacramento. I practiced law here in Sacramento until 1967. That is from 55 to 67. Then I went to work as an Attorney for the Small Business Administration from which I retired in 1980. I am currently in retirement. Of course I have two brothers in the town, that is Robert Canson, next to me, and Ari Canson, my baby brother. I am the eldest of the three.

**Clarence:** What in your mind stands out among your childhood experiences or when you first came to Sacramento, what stands out in your mind as to the way Sacramento was at the time?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Well, Sacramento had a lot of overt discrimination, even though state laws forbade it. There were no restaurants downtown, that is the downtown area, that would serve a Black.

**Clarence:** Now that is restaurants owned by Whites?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Owned by Whites. Even a restaurant owned by a Black would not serve Blacks, because his trade was predominately all White. The Blacks, if they ate out, ate either at the Japanese restaurants or Chinese restaurants at the, in the west side of town. And then there was some Chinese restaurants where they had predominately White trade, would not serve you. It was nothing to see a sign in a restaurant or a business establishment, “No Colored Trade Solicited”.

**Clarence:** Right here in Sacramento?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Right here in Sacramento.

**Clarence:** Even though the laws at that time –

**Mr. C. Canson:** Even though the laws at that time would forbid it. Well Black people here were not for pressing their rights. In other words, had to go to White attorneys and they would spend money and lots of things wouldn't be done, and just that, when the word got around

**[counter 50]**

**Mr. C. Canson:** among the Blacks and there were so few of us here, it didn't take long for it to get around, that they didn't treat us right there, we just didn't go. So we didn't face the

embarrassment of being turned away once one or two had been turned away, the word circulated through the community. So we just didn't go. Of course now, theater seating, busses, streetcars, all of that was integrated. Schools were integrated, but it was primarily in the other public accommodations, hotels, didn't cater to Blacks. I recall when such national stars as Marion Anderson, well others I recall, but primarily I speak of Marion Anderson, and Duke Ellington, you might say, had to find lodging in private homes when they came to these parts. Roland Hayes had to find lodging in private homes and when they came to town for a concert.

**Clarence:** So the hotel policies didn't change regardless of the prominence of the person involved, it was –

**Mr. C. Canson:** Did not change. The first hotel downtown that admitted any Black, and this wasn't downtown, it wasn't one of the major hotels, it was a third or fourth rate hotel, the Traveler's Hotel, finally took the Duke Ellington Band there. And that was about the only hotel that took a Black or a group of Blacks in. These things irritated my father because he left the South because of these things. He sought to organize the NAACP. Now, there had been an NAACP in Sacramento prior to that time and I understand that it was a person by the name of Reverend Benjamin Harvey, was the head of it when it went defunct, I may not be correct in this because this was before my time.

**Clarence:** Would that be T. Allen Harvey by any chance? Of Kyle's Temple?

**Mr. C. Canson:** T. Allen Harvey, that's correct. Benjamin was his nephew. [laughs] My father invited William Pickens to come to Sacramento. And I understand that Pickens was a houseguest while he was here, and they discussed reorganizing the NAACP in this town.

**Clarence:** Could you give us some background on Mr. Pickens?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Mr. Pickens was the assistant to Walter White. He was the number two man nationally in the NAACP at that time. He was a field, well I think they called him Field Director, or something of this sort. Or a Chairman of Branch was the thing. I think he had the job that Gloster Current held until recently and currently held by William Penn. But he was regarded as the number two man in the NAACP. While, after discussion, my father was told that he, all he need do was to get 50 members together and they could regain the charter. Which they set out to do. Now at the organizational meeting a new charter was presented and I'm going to try to be certain on the year, but I'm not sure. I think it was about 1933. The charter was presented to the Sacramento branch by Walter Gordon, who at the time was a practicing lawyer in Oakland and also Chairman of the Adult Authority. Walter later became Governor of the Virgin Islands. But anyway, at that meeting, my recollection, is that it was attended by Douglas McFarland, D. D. Mattocks, Alex Moore, Winston Boland, Edgar G. Patterson, Douglas Greer, and that's about all I can recall.

**Clarence:** Were there any women participants?

**Mr. C. Canson:** There were no women present at the original organization meeting, when the Charter was presented. I don't know why but there were none in the picture taken of that occasion.

**[Counter 100]**

**Clarence:** Do you know why the first charter was allowed to –

**Mr. C. Canson:** Membership. Membership fell below the required minimum.

**Clarence:** Which was 50 members?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Fifty members.

**Clarence:** Do you, aside from T. Allen Harvey, do any other names come up in connection with the first charter?

**Mr. C. Canson:** The name Fred Brooks comes into prominence.

**Clarence:** In Beasley's Black, Negro Trailblazer's of California, she mentions a B. A. Johnson?

**Mr. C. Canson:** B. A. Johnson, uh was in Sacramento, the family was in Sacramento, but so far as them having any Civil Rights connections, I'm not sure. But they operated a catering

business. Whether it is still in existence I don't know, but Johnson died oh I imagine 10 or 15 years ago. That is the young one. But I'm sure that Fred Brooks was connected with it. I'm sure that, well I won't be sure that D. D. Mattocks was connected because I'm not sure he was in the town at that time.

**Clarence:** Mattocks wasn't a native Sacramentan either?

**Mr. C. Canson:** No, Mattocks came up here, I don't know the year because our family found him here, but he hadn't been here long. He came up as an agent for Golden State.

**Clarence:** Oh the insurance company?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Insurance company. He remained such until his death. He was a very prominent man in Sacramento, he was also an A.M.E. minister. But paid more attention to business than he did to the ministry you might say.

**Clarence:** What were the major issues among the Black community of Sacramento at that time of the reinstatement of the Charter, aside from discrimination.

**Mr. C. Canson:** Primarily, well that was it primarily. Overt discrimination, you were pretty well confined to your own, and your own wasn't much. In other words there weren't too many Black businesses in town. Those, most of them that were, were just a shade above legitimacy. You had several nightclubs, after hours clubs. In fact, until World War Two there were no Black

bars in town. It took the Japanese leaving town to surrender some of the licenses that to liquor to Blacks, you know what I mean. But, as I say, we were always patronizing the Japanese, the Chinese and –

**Clarence:** Did you ever find any instances of a reversal of that, where the Japanese or Chinese patronized Black businesses in this community?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Well, let me say yes, my father's business was the kind, that he had a large following of Japanese, Chinese, and primarily Filipinos. Among other racial groups.

**Clarence:** This was a cleaning establishment?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Yes, cleaning, pressing, well he was tailoring. At one time he did alterations for just about every clothing store south of say 9<sup>th</sup> Street, or 8<sup>th</sup> Street, going all the way down K. Just about every merchant up there sent their clothes to him for alterations. When a customer came in and bought something, if it didn't fit, if it would need fixing, they would send him around to my dad, and my dad would make the alterations and do things of that sort. He also at one point in time maintained all the uniforms for the police department. Until he got mixed up in politics. [laughs]

**Clarence:** In other words, until the NAACP became a real force to be reckoned with?

**Mr. C. Canson:** No, well this wasn't the case here, he had a small claims against this prize fighter and he got a writ of execution and put it in the hands of the sheriff, who when he collected the money, shortchanged him. He had a falling out with the sheriff and told him "well I supposed you need this money more than I do", left him in a huff,

**[Counter 150]**

**Mr. C. Canson:** next thing you know this particular sheriff went to the Chief of Police and all of that you know, and pretty soon they drug all that business away from him, the police department.

**Clarence:** This was in the thirties?

**Mr. C. Canson:** This was in the thirties, in fact this was in the forties, or late thirties or early forties.

**Clarence:** So basically the Sacramento you have just described to me was primarily the prewar Sacramento?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Yeah, the prewar Sacramento. Now there were very few of us here. Because in the 1930s, early 1930s, I used to sell the Pittsburgh Courier. I would get a 150 Pittsburgh Couriers and get on my bicycle and cover every Black family in the metropolitan area, and that included West Sacramento, Bryte, and all over in there with, newspapers and out of 150

Pittsburgh Couriers I would have papers left over. You see. I remember when Del Paso Heights only had about six or seven Black families.

**Clarence:** I just interviewed Mr. Harold Wiley, who I guess has lived out there for a number of years. His wife went to school out there, in elementary.

**Mr. C. Canson:** His wife was one of those original families. I knew them. [both laugh]

**Clarence:** I went, she was one of a very few in the picture that she took of her school. So could you give us more or less of an idea of the contrast between what you found prewar Sacramento and what developed after World War Two, what kinds of changes you noticed in Sacramento after the beginning of the war.

**Mr. C. Canson:** Well, with the coming of the war and the coming of so many military in Sacramento, and the military also pressing against discrimination and such, Sacramento became one of the meccas of let's say Civil Rights in the whole state. In fact we were rated, I think at one point nationally as one of the best places on the west coast to live.

**Clarence:** What was that based on primarily as far as what standards they used. Was that for housing and cost of living?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Well it was generally Civil Rights. In other words, one of your first housing cases took place here, where the Supreme Court declared segregation in public housing

unconstitutional. That is a case that came out of Sacramento and joined in by San Francisco, but Matt Colley carried that case locally. Then of course, the first case attacking housing using FHA funds, federal funds, was filed here. And of course there were several filed all the way up and down the state. They were consolidated for hearing in the Supreme Court of the State of California where we won, but it was appealed to the United States Supreme Court and the case they sent up was not our case, but another case that had been filed by a group of Jewish lawyers. That is the case that went to the Supreme Court. I think they call it, the case was Mulkey. The name of it was Mulkey. But of course, Loren Miller, I might say, is the man who, out of Los Angeles, who knocked out the restrictive covenants in Barris versus Jackson. He was an NAACP lawyer. He was at that time the Chairman of the West Coast Legal Committee, a job that Matt Colley now holds.

**Clarence:** That first case that you referred to would that be the one they mentioned in Crisis Magazine? I just ran across a Crisis Magazine article published in 1953 concerning River Oaks, the River Oaks Project.

**Mr. C. Canson:** River Oaks, yeah, that was a Sacramento case. That was River Oaks and New Helvetia.

**Clarence:** Was the problem in that particular case one of them not allowing Blacks to live in the area?

**[Counter 200]**

**Mr. C. Canson:** Well, they had so many units set aside for Blacks, two buildings on the far west end of the project, and when those were filled up it was too bad, you know. Blacks could be on a waiting list 6 or 8 years, but if no vacancy occurred in those two buildings that was it. They –

**Clarence:** Low income segregation basically?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Yeah. Well, let's say it wasn't low income in the beginning. It was built for low income, but in the beginning it was filled up with war service employees who came here to work in the various military installations and didn't have housing. Well they filled it up with them originally. See? But then it took a hell of a time to get some of them out so the low income could get in there. And like I said when they filled up, then that was all there was to be had.

**Clarence:** Now what about the attitudes of the people? The general population of Sacramento to 1) the increasing Black population, and 2) to the new thrust of Civil Rights agitation of that time?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Let's say it would be increase in population to the old Sacramentan that was resentment. They didn't want to see the great influx of Blacks coming into Sacramento. In fact I do believe there is always, there was always resentment because the old Sacramentan, most of them were interrelated. You'd have to be very careful who you talked about because someone would say "that is my cousin you are talking about" see. They had been here so many years and

they just intermarried, you know it is legal in California to marry your first cousins, you know. And so, that was the situation even when I came here, you, it took a while for acceptance. But the Blacks started coming in after the war so fast, in other words everybody that served around here in the military when they got discharged stayed here, sent for all of their relatives and their relatives sent for relatives, until there began a great influx and a new society, new societies were forming and leaving all of these old fellows out. Some of them started running out of the woodwork then, you know, trying to get in some of these groups. In fact, social groups and classes didn't start around here among Blacks until well after the war. Because when I grew up as a kid here, when a party was given we didn't send invitations, we sent out "the word".

**Clarence:** The grapevine was sufficient?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Yeah, and everybody Black was invited. [laughs] You showed up if, you know, if he was in the age group, see. And this was pretty well the norm for the whole north. For instance, kids in Stockton, they would send out "the word" and we would get it, send it on up as far as Oroville and places like that, Berkeley, Oakland, Vallejo.

**Clarence:** So we are talking about a lot of pockets of small Black populations?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Small pockets of Black population and the grapevine in those days. I know during the summer months, on weekends we had what we called "around the world" parties, where we would get in our vehicles and travel from one city to the other, partying, and make a circle, and as we started out the circle got larger, I mean the caravan got larger, going from town

to town to party a weekend. Well this is the way we enjoyed ourselves, if the kids were giving a party in Stockton and we heard about it, we went. If we were giving one and they heard about it, they went, Oakland, there weren't too many of us there. Those few, primarily railroad men and fugitives from the lumber mills up north. San Francisco, very few Blacks.

**[Counter 250]**

**Clarence:** So are you saying all of this changed after the war?

**Mr. C. Canson:** All of this changed after the war. In fact, Northern California was almost devoid of Blacks until after the war. Kaiser and his shipbuilding outfit opened up Oakland and brought them in by the boxcar loads.

**Clarence:** And the military establishment here.

**Mr. C. Canson:** Military establishments here, and that's about it. Now so far as employment was concerned, prior to the war, there was hardly any for Blacks. The State had a few Black janitors. Nobody beyond the rank of janitor until about the forties when they hired the first clerk, Black.

**Clarence:** Do you remember who that was?

**Mr. C. Canson:** A woman by the name of Iverna Anderson.

**Clarence:** And she was hired as a?

**Mr. C. Canson:** She was hired as a clerk. With the coming of the war, I had a friend who was working with the Department of Employment as a janitor and they found out he had intelligence and he became an official at the Department of Employment during the war and rose up rapidly, and things were [hard to understand, counter 270]. But they just kept that ceiling of janitor as far as Blacks were concerned.

**Clarence:** Was there any suit, excuse me I'm sorry, was there a suit or anything like that filed to get the clerk hired or anything?

**Mr. C. Canson:** No.

**Clarence:** For the state?

**Mr. C. Canson:** No, it evolved. Blacks who were primarily as I say janitors, shoe shiners. We had a Black man own a big barbershop downtown, and this was one of the richest Blacks in town, by the name of Taylor Walker, who owned, at one time, 10<sup>th</sup> and K Streets. He owned a barbershop on California Street, you know, where the bank, Crocker Bank faces J Street, but he owned the barbershop in the back there. All of his barbers were White, and he shined shoes in the place. He boasted of having shined the shoes of just about every governor California produced during his lifetime. But he owned the place.

**Clarence:** Was most of his trade White?

**Mr. C. Canson:** His trade was all White.

**Clarence:** That's pretty interesting.

**Mr. C. Canson:** Blacks went to Black barbers. [cuckoo clock chimes, they chuckle]

**Clarence:** Were there any entrepreneurs that you can think of?

**Mr. C. Canson:** As I say, those where we had to be catered to by Blacks, such as barbers and you had one Black here who at one time owned about the biggest laundry in the town, the Palace Laundry, and it was owned by Robinson, whose, who later sold out to Whites. But these are Doug Greer's people, Doug Greer's grandfather, Old Man Robinson, and Taylor Walker, was also an uncle or relative to him. You had the Slaughters here, Slaughter was a painter and owned a lot of property in the vicinity of 21<sup>st</sup> and K Street. He owned just about a block or so there. Because one of his grandsons now is a Fire Captain I think.

**[Counter 300]**

**Mr. C. Canson:** But you had several Blacks operating little gambling joints, little restaurants, little pool halls, you know, things of this sort.

**Clarence:** I was given the name by a White friend of mine whose father used to, I guess, frequent the Capitol Avenue area, a Mrs. Boyd who owned a pool hall.

**Mr. C. Canson:** Yes. Charlie Boyd owned the Green Front,

**Clarence:** Green Front –

**Mr. C. Canson:** It was called a restaurant, but it was a gambling type place, that was the primary, you know, you had a little front there, a restaurant, but the back was what kept it going, and Alex Moore, I recalled his name among the organizers

[Tape one, Side one ends, counter 311]

**Mr. C. Canson:** [continuing] And then individual members of the Garbage Department would throw parties that were, you know, social events, they were just a party, they were a social events, you see. And these were the people who were living the best you might say. A lot of those fine brick homes out there were owned by garbage men, by red caps, things of that sort.

**Clarence:** Not by the –

**Mr. C. Canson:** Now being a garbage man in Sacramento, you understand, there were men who where graduates of the University of California. Garbage men in Sacramento, because there was no employment for you. Your degree didn't mean a damn thing to you, see? One person I know

in particular, Beverly Macard, she was a graduate of the University of California and retired from the Garbage Department.

**Clarence:** So there was no use telling a Black youngster at that time –

**Mr. C. Canson:** At that time I saw no advantage whatsoever, in a college education.

**Clarence:** In Sacramento?

**Mr. C. Canson:** In Sacramento. I figured that you didn't need all of that education to pack a garbage can, see? And my dad said to me "If I don't get you out of this town you're not going to be worth a damn." So he put me on a train and sent me down to Tuskegee. Well I played around there for a while before I finally got down to studying. Because I saw boys down there who were aspiring to be somebody. I said, "well maybe, maybe I'm missing the boat", so I started learning, became an honor student.

**Clarence:** Were there any Black physicians in the town at the time?

**Mr. C. Canson:** There was one Black physician here when we came, in fact, when we first came we lived on 29<sup>th</sup> and W Street, and he lived on 30<sup>th</sup> and W Street. His name was Richardson. I don't know who his clientele was. But, then I can remember Black physicians coming to town and I remember one by the name of Carl, who almost starved to death, in fact, you know, my dad was putting patches on top of his patches. He eventually had to move on. A

Black dentist came to town by the name of Nichols, he eventually had to move on. There was no support for him here. You finally had a Dr. Brewer who came and operated his dental chair out of the front room of his apartment. If you ever talk to Brewer, he'll say if it hadn't been for the Cansons' he would have left, because he ate many meals with us. Then with the coming of the war, we had a Dr. Kenneth Johnson, who came and opened up an office on 7<sup>th</sup> and P Street and he started treating a lot of Portuguese as well as Blacks and everything, and the Portuguese dubbed him "Black Jesus". Of course he was also an examiner for the Selective Service Boards.

**[Counter 350]**

**Mr. C. Canson:** He got quite a reputation of having taken so many blood tests and never broke a needle and all of these kinds of things. His reputation was spreading fast. He was the first able to stay here and became wealthy here. He retired some years ago, but he is still living out in the north area, out not quite Carmichael but off of Morse Avenue and he's in that area out there. He built a big fine home and the folks put a lot of tract homes up around him. [laughing] So he is over built for his community.

**Clarence:** But he got in the way.

**Mr. C. Canson:** Then as I say, Brewer and Johnson finally built the building together where he operated his dental facilities and Johnson operated his medical offices out of the same building on 8<sup>th</sup> and between P and Q Streets. Eventually Redevelopment put them out, and Johnson came out and built on 16<sup>th</sup> and X and so did Brewer, built on 16<sup>th</sup> and X.

**Clarence:** Were all of these professionals, did they eventually become part of the NAACP?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Oh yes, yes. Most of them. You never see them at a meeting, but they can, most of them can boast life memberships or, you know, they are not going to spend their time at the meeting, but financially they supported it.

**Clarence:** And you see that as maybe a vehicle by which a lot of Blacks were helped in Sacramento as far as the NAACP being able to financially be able to get off in the legal battles that could help the community in the long run?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Yes.

**Clarence:** Could you tell us a little more about D. D. Mattocks as a leader or as an influential person in Sacramento politics?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Well, D. D. Mattocks and I were, in the Canson family and we were very close. In fact, he's like Brewer, he ate many of his meals at the Canson household, cause most of his days around here he was a single man. In other words, he'd married many times unsuccessfully. He was a fraternal leader, in other words he was prominent in the Mason's

**Clarence:** The Philomathean Lodge?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Well he was a past master of the Philomathean Lodge, and I might say that a schism developed surrounding me and the Philomathean. He and myself, and another group pulled out from there and [phone rings] [hard to hear counter 388], Mattocks didn't like it and a couple of other past Masters didn't like it. We pulled out and formed Harmony Lodge and he was the Master on the dispensation of Harmony Lodge and later on I followed him to the chair as Master. But I was the Senior Warden at the Philomathean and I got mixed up in some church politics being practiced in the Lodge Hall, [laughs] and I was blocked by a man who couldn't read nor write, let alone know Masonry.

**[Counter 400]**

**Mr. C. Canson:** So after Harmony Lodge was formed, in order to combat clandestine Masonry, which was growing up in the Del Paso Heights area, and after the death of D. D. Mattocks, I had several members of my Lodge, I talked them into going into Del Paso Heights and forming a Lodge over there and naming it after D. D. Mattocks, which happened. And it's a flourishing Lodge now. So instead of one Lodge now, one Masonic Lodge in the area and it's healthy, you've got three now. You've got Philomathean, which incidentally is the oldest Lodge in the State. It was number one at one time and it lost its charter and San Francisco grabbed the number one rating.

**Clarence:** I was wondering about that, I was looking at an old San Jose paper –

**Mr. C. Canson:** The Grand, the Masonry among Blacks started here in Sacramento.

**Clarence:** I'll remember that because I did –

**Mr. C. Canson:** But, when they went defunct, and they back incidentally in a very short time in other words there weren't but two Lodges in the state, that was Hannibal, number two, and Philomathean, number one. Well, when Philomathean went defunct, for a very short period, Hannibal grabbed the number one marking and then Philomathean re-emerged as number two. Then you had Farmer [hard to hear counter 418] Lodge in Vallejo, number three.

**Clarence:** Did you happen to know who any of the early members of the old Philomathean Lodge were, do you have any names?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Who were they?

**Clarence:** Yes.

**Mr. C. Canson:** Oh yes, I know them.

**Clarence:** Of the earliest, 1850?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Oh no, I wouldn't know all of that, I wouldn't know all of that.

**Clarence:** I've been looking for those guys for a long time.

**Mr. C. Canson:** They are part of the archives.

**Clarence:** So as a political leader, in what instances was D. D., what cases was he prominent in, in Sacramento?

**Mr. C. Canson:** As a political leader?

**Clarence:** Uh huh.

**Mr. C. Canson:** I don't know that he was, he would consider himself a political leader. He was just an active member of the community [cuckoo clock chimes] in just about everything. But political leaders in this time, my father ran for City Council in 1947, I think it was. He was the first to do that since that same Harvey we mentioned before ran in the early 1920s. Then I ran for City Council twice in 193, I mean, 1957 and 1959. I ran tenth both times and that's when they elected the Council at Lodge and the first nine were elected. Well in both of those instances I came in tenth. Never enough to make it. The second I had another Colored fellow in, and you may think this don't hurt you, but it does. Doug Greer ran when I ran in 1959, and where you hurt is where you go out for endorsements and you have these debates among these groups and "all right we area going to endorse one of these Blacks, but which one." See [laughs] and that's where it hurts, you know.

**Clarence:** Rather than going for both of you?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Yeah, see, they are not going to do that. We are going to endorse one, but we don't want them taking over the city, see, so which one? Well, this was reported to me that happened at several times.

**[Counter 450]**

**Mr. C. Canson:** I also ran for judge, and being one of the first to file had I known, I'd have waited until last and wouldn't have filed. But I ended up in a race against three judges, who while I was running for a vacant Superior Court Chair, and wound up running against three judges who wanted elevation from Community Court. Sakuma won that chair. I was supposed to be appointed judge once, I was told and when the announcement was made, Sakuma won that chair.

[they laugh] Actually the Governor's Office had told me, called me and told me I had made it, but the next morning when the paper came out, it was Sakuma. I had another story on that too. [they laugh].

**Clarence:** Do you feel that the Black Community of Sacramento at this point in time in history has made progress vis-a-vis what you have seen as far as progress in the early days. Do you think the energy level is still the same?

**Mr. C. Canson:** There's a lot of progress here. I'm proud of the progress of Sacramento. We've gotten more people with foundations under them, Ph.D.s, M.D.s, you know,

professionals, more than you can shake a stick at. It's hell to know them all. School systems, we've got several principals, you know, one or two anyhow. But I wouldn't say as many as need be in some of these schools that are predominately Black, or minority. But –

**Clarence:** People with qualifications as the professional class has emerged?

**Mr. C. Canson:** Yes, in other words a professional class has emerged, you see, years ago there wasn't no Black legislators up there. As a matter of fact, when Gus Hawkins first came up and was the only one there for a hell of a long time. And Gus looked White. [laughs]

**Clarence:** Yeah, and Frederick Roberts before him

**Mr. C. Canson:** What?

**Clarence:** Frederick Roberts before him in the Assembly, in the State Assembly.

**Mr. C. Canson:** Yeah, well, let see, this was years before Gus in other words. But then, Byron Rumford came in

**[Tape one, Side two ends, counter 483]**

**[Interview ends, no additional tape found]**