

1980 visit with Catherine Cannon at her “Farm Home” in Cannon, Texas



Front view of Catherine Cannon's Farm Home



Catherine Cannon,
age 84-85

Our first visit to Catherine Cannon came about because Steve and I, along with Mark and David, made a trip from Dallas to Van Alstyne around 1980 for the purpose of finding out anything we could about our ancestor, Elijah Cannon. We found our way to an elderly gentleman who was involved in the area historical society. After talking to him and viewing some literature, he told us about Catherine Cannon, who lived in Cannon, a rural area 5-6 miles outside of Van Alstyne. He got in touch with Catherine and we arranged a meeting with her a few hours later. After lunch, we met Catherine, who had driven into town to meet us. We talked and then followed her by car to her home in Cannon.

Her “Farm Home” was built in 1857 by Elijah Halston “Hoss” and Oscar Cannon, sons of Elijah Cannon, first ancestor to come to Texas. It was built on the original 700 acre lot that Elijah Sr. purchased when he came to Texas in 1852. The home was eventually owned by Jim and Catherine Cannon who farmed the land around it. Jim was the son of Hoss Cannon and Alice Tolbert. The house was built with the wood from Bois D’ Arc trees, which is very hard and strong wood - even difficult to drive a nail into. Steve and I both remember Catherine telling us about this and how hard it was to hang anything in her house because of the hard wood. The strength of the wood is probably the reason the house has stood for so long. When the Livingston family visited Catherine in the early 80s, she lived alone, took care of her house and property by herself and was very physically active and sharp at age 84 or 85 years old. We don’t know if the house is still standing, but we do remember Catherine saying she regretted selling off some of her property. This photo shows Catherine’s car parked in a carport on the side of the house. Obviously the carport was built long after the house was built.

Catherine was born in 1896, so in the early 1980s when we visited, she would have been at least 84 years old. When she met us in Van Alstyne, she was all dressed up with a nice seersucker dress on,

dress shoes, hose, lipstick and a wig. She was so friendly and warm to us. I doubt she had many visitors, so this was something exciting. At her home, she showed us some Cannon family artifacts in the house that she still had. We spent most of the time there in her backyard talking, while our boys played.

The most interesting thing to us was a little bench in the backyard. The seat for the bench was made from the original tombstone of Woddy Cannon, Jim's uncle, who had died on April 20, 1863. Military records show that he was wounded during the Civil War. He was injured in the arm during the Battle of Corinth in Mississippi on Oct. 3, 1862. Medical care was inadequate and opposing troops were getting closer, so Woddy's care was lacking. He was furloughed (released from the military) and sent home, walking much of the way from Mississippi to Texas. He died three weeks after arriving home - most likely from an infection that couldn't be stopped. Woddy was buried on the Cannon family property with an original tombstone which reads "Son of E. and Darcus Cannon - aged 24 y's, 3 m's, 14 d's". This seemed so sad to us. He was still so young when he died and the etching on the stone shows that he was still their "little boy". At some point, a larger tombstone for Woddy was erected in the Cannon family plot area of the Cannon Cemetery, which was land deeded to the city for a community cemetery. Our guess is that once the larger tombstone was erected, this small stone was kept and eventually made into a little bench outside of Catherine Cannon's house in Cannon. We spent a lot of the day sitting on that bench talking.

Catherine was very patient and easy to talk to. She talked about her daughter and son-in-law, who lived in Galveston. I think they had five kids, but Catherine didn't get to see them often. She took delight in our active sons who grew restless and wanted to run around and climb the many bois 'd arc trees, toss the "horse apples" and feed Catherine's horse. We walked a bit of her property, but since it was late in the day, we made plans to return a few weeks later and visit with her and see more of her land.



Backyard view of Catherine Cannon's Farm Home in Cannon, Texas.



Cannon Cemetery

Quarry Area

Catherine Cannon House
Hwy 121 and Jim Cannon Rd.



**Catherine Cannon House
Hwy 121 and Jim Cannon Rd.**

Jim Cannon Rd



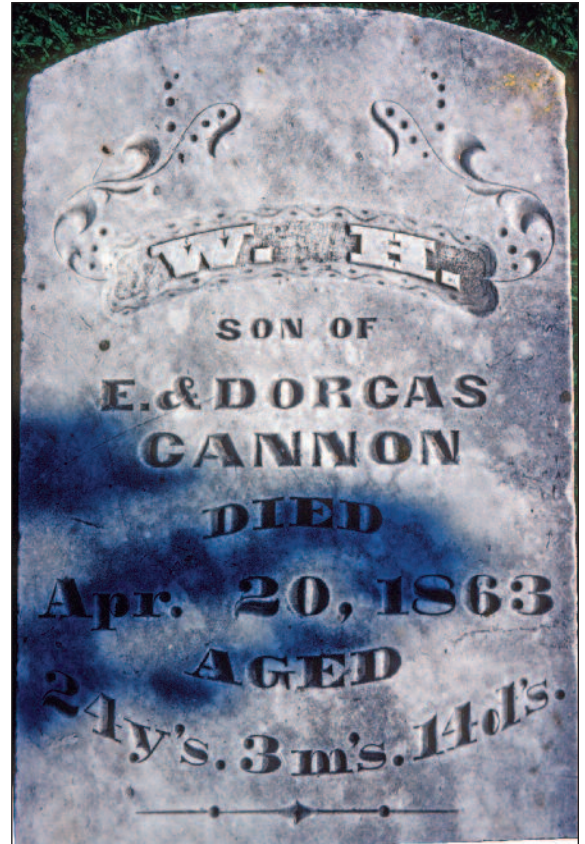
Cindy, Mark, Catherine Cannon and David sitting on Woddy's tombstone bench. (Look at the knee patches on jeans!)



Cindy and Catherine on bench. David in background.



Catherine and Cindy on bench. David and Mark are climbing tree on left.



Original tombstone of Woddy Cannon which was made into a bench in the backyard of Catherine's house.



Original tombstone of Woddy Cannon which was made into a bench in the backyard of Catherine's house.



David and Mark (and Cindy) feeding carrot peelings to Catherine's horse.



David and Mark feeding the horse.



Mark, Cindy, David and Catherine walking her property.



Mark and David standing in front of the back screen door of Catherine's house. Notice the water jug and backpack.



David and Mark sitting on Woddy's bench. Notice the Bois D'Ark trees and the horse apples in the yard.



Close up of David and Mark sitting on Woddy's bench. Notice the Bois D'Ark trees and the horse apples in the yard.

Our second visit to Catherine Cannon's home was a few weeks later. We came prepared for hiking the property. Mark and David brought water jugs and backpacks. The property was so rural and unvarnished. Very isolated.

Catherine greeted us with a plate of warm chocolate chip cookies she had baked. We talked about "the Branch" which was a creek running through her property. Knowing more now, I suspect this is either the Sister Grove Creek that is mentioned often in the research we have read about the 700 acres of property purchased by Elijah Cannon. Or it might be a "branch" of that creek.

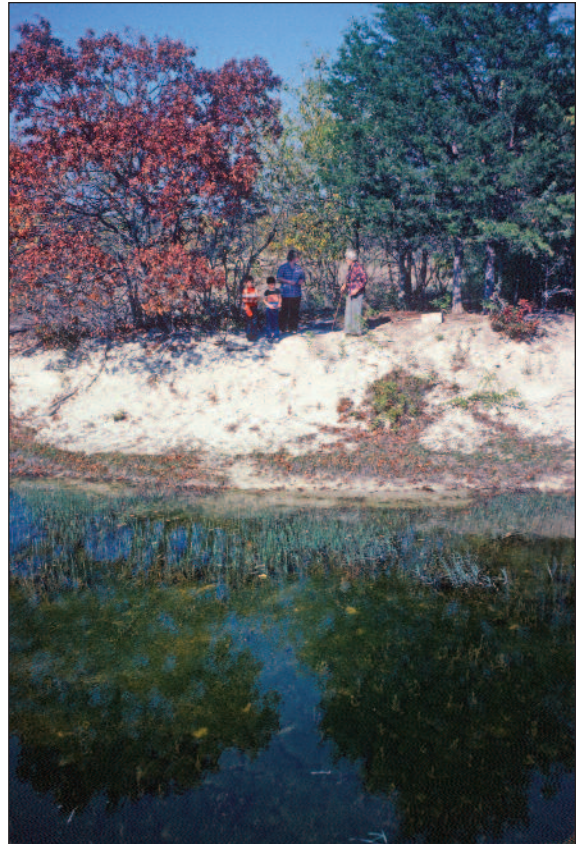
As usual, Steve isn't in any photos because he is the man with the camera! It was a really fun day. I so regret we don't know how Catherine died or even if she lived in her house until the end. We have recently found out that she died in 1986 and is buried with her husband in the Cannon Cemetery. I hope I can get in touch with one of Catherine's five grandkids to find out the rest of the story.



Closeup of Mark and David standing in front of the back screen door of Catherine's house. Notice the water jug and backpack.



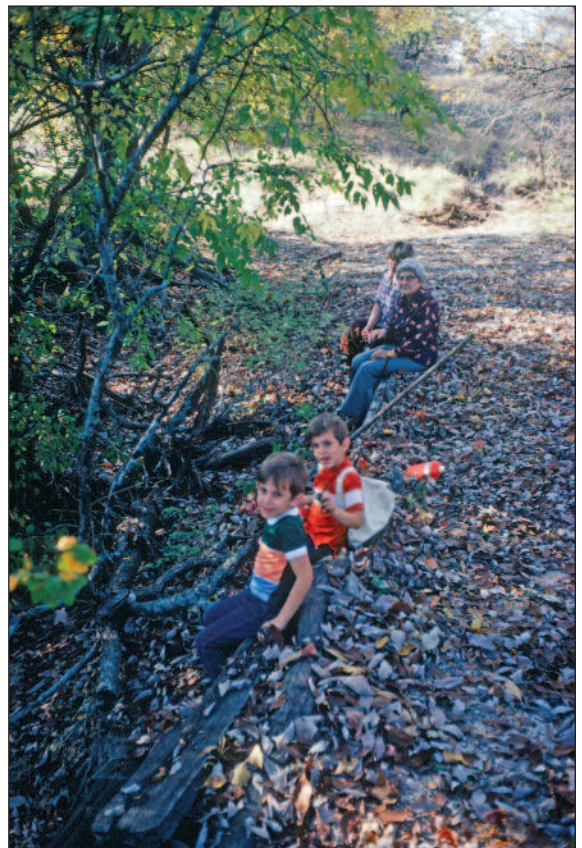
Cindy, Catherine, David and Mark walking the property and standing in front of "the Branch".



Mark, David, Cindy and Catherine walking the property along the banks of the "the Branch". Notice Catherine has a cane that she used, but managed to hike around without much effort.



"The Branch"



David and Mark taking a break with Catherine and Cindy



David and Mark with water jug and backpack. Catherine and Cindy sitting on side of hill. Notice the cat that followed us along the way.



David and Mark hiking the Cannon property.



Mark with his water jug and backpack on the Cannon property.



David with some sticks and the cat who followed us as we walked the property.



Catherine and Jim Cannon spent much of their married life in Van Alstyne, although they moved to Cannon later in life. Catherine, who was born in 1896, died in 1986 at age 90 years old. She is buried next to her husband, Jim (Elijah's grandson) in the Van Alstyne Cemetery (maybe in the Southside Block #1).

