

Collection #
P 0859

**CANNON-CARTWRIGHT FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS,
CA. 1890S-1930S, 1957**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 half-size box of photographs; 1 OVA photograph folder

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1890s–1930s photographs; 1957 pamphlet

PROVENANCE: Unknown
(note found with collection stated it was donated by the grandson of Clarence Paul Cartwright) [Clarence Paul Cartwright had two grandsons: Christopher C. Cartwright and Michael Paul Arnold]

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 0000.0615

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In 1887, William Taylor Cannon was one of the founders of the Railroadmen's Building and Savings Association, later known as the Railroadmen's Federal Savings and Loan Association. His son, Fermor S. Cannon, was an architect who designed the Association's building on Virginia Avenue in Indianapolis, as well as the Hinkle Fieldhouse at Butler University. Later, Fermor served as president of the Railroadmen's association. William's daughter, Isabel, married Clarence Paul Cartwright, who also became an executive at Railroadmen's.

William Taylor Cannon was born on 23 April 1856 to George Cannon (1817–1879) and Martha Taylor Cannon (1819–1904) in Logansport, Cass County, Indiana. He appears to have been the youngest of their eight children. By 1860 the family had moved to Wisconsin, where George was a merchant. In the 1870 census, George was listed as a physician, with the family still living in Wisconsin.

William began his railroad career at age seventeen when he worked as a ticket agent in Michigan City, Indiana, for the Indianapolis, Peru & Chicago Railroad, which was later sold to the Wabash Railroad. After moving to Indianapolis, he worked for the Indianapolis Union Railway Company, known as the "Belt." While serving as paymaster for the company, he found himself operating a sort of informal savings bank for the workers from a drawer in his desk. He then initiated the formation of the Railroadmen's Building and Savings Association. Its original purpose was to help railroad men save enough money to build homes for their families. William was treasurer of the company from 1888 to 1900, and secretary, treasurer and purchasing agent from 1900 until his retirement in 1917. In actuality he served as acting president beginning in 1913, operating from an office in Union Station. After retiring from the railroad, he became president of the Railroadmen's Building and Savings Association around the same time that its building was erected on Virginia Avenue. After William's death on 18 January 1931, his son Fermor succeeded him, serving as president until 1954. Fermor then served as chairman of the board until 1958. A change from a state to a federal charter in 1935 led to changing the name to Railroadmen's Federal Savings and Loan Association.

In April 1878 William T. Cannon married Anna W. Adams (1851–1926) in Indianapolis. Only three of their six children survived into adulthood: Fermor, Margaret, and Isabel. It appears that the family attended Quaker meetings at the First Friends Church.

Fermor Spencer Cannon was born on 4 August 1888 in Indianapolis. He graduated from Shortridge High School and then studied architecture at the University of Illinois in Urbana. After earning his bachelor's degree in 1911, Fermor returned to Indianapolis to work for architect Herbert L. Bass before establishing his own practice in 1913. He designed the Flanner and Buchanan Mortuary on Fall Creek and assisted in designing the Interurban Freight Terminal at 500 Kentucky Avenue. He closed his architectural practice in 1929 and began working for the Railroadmen's Building and Savings Association. Beginning in 1941 Fermor also served as president of the Indianapolis Board of Trade.

In May 1913, Fermor married fellow University of Illinois student, Mary Lucetta Goss (1885–1966), in Champaign, Illinois. After her death, he married the widowed Ruth Austin McGinnis Peaslee (1895–1973). Ruth’s mother, Florence Simmons McGinnis, was the older sister of Nellie Simmons Meier, the noted palm reader. In the 1920s, Fermor designed the addition of a sunroom to the Meier home known as Tuckaway. Years later, Ruth inherited the house from Nellie. Fermor died nine months after Ruth did, on 11 December 1973.

Margaret Cannon was born on 24 May 1891. She lived with her widowed father at the time of the 1930 census and lived with her sister Isabel and her husband in 1950. During World War II Margaret worked with the Red Cross. She was a member of the Second Presbyterian Church. She died on 4 January 1973 in Zionsville, in Boone County.

Isabel Cannon was born on 24 November 1894 in Indianapolis. She became a member of the Mu Phi Epsilon sorority. On 14 February 1923 she married Clarence Paul Cartwright at the First Friends Church in Indianapolis. The bride’s attendants were: Clarence’s sister, Grayce Doney (matron of honor); Isabel’s sister, Margaret Cannon (maid of honor); and bridesmaids Bernice Reagan and Nelda Weathers. Isabel and Clarence had two children, Charles C. (1924–2001) and Patricia A. (Arnold) (1926–1993). Isabel died on 23 September 1982 in Zionsville.

Clarence Paul Cartwright was born on 1 June 1892 in Muncie, Indiana, to Charles Cartwright (1857–1930) and Jennie Kettner Cartwright (1863–1945). Charles was a stonemason and a cement worker. Clarence had an older sister, Grayce (Doney) (1885–1943). By 1900 the family lived in Lewisville in Henry County. In 1917 Clarence was living in Lewisville, while working as a draftsman for Maxwell Motor Company in New Castle. In 1920 he was a truck driver. By 1930, he and his wife and children were living in Indianapolis, where he worked as a real estate appraiser. By 1940, Clarence was working as treasurer for the Railroadmen’s Federal Savings and Loan Association. Clarence died on 27 April 1978 in Zionsville.

Vontella Armstrong was born on 24 September 1904 in Eaton, Preble County, Ohio, to Asbury L. Armstrong and Jennie Lee Zeek Armstrong. Asbury worked as a cement contractor for many years. Vontella became an executive secretary for the Ohio State Highway Department. She died on 26 April 1974 in Eaton.

Sources:

Ancestrylibrary.com (Accessed 8 June 2023):

- Find a Grave
- Illinois, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1800–1940
- Indiana, U.S., Death Certificates, 1899–2017
- Indiana, U.S., Marriage Index, 1800–1941
- Indiana, U.S., Select Marriages Index, 1748–1993
- United States Federal Census, 1850–1950
- U.S., City Directories, 1822–1995
- U.S., Quaker Meeting Records, 1681–1935
- U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918

U.S., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942

“Cannon, Savings Body Head, Dies: Founder of Railroadmen’s Association Is Victim of Heart Disease.” *The Indianapolis Star*, 19 January 1931, pp. 1–2.

Indiana Historical Society. “George and Nellie Meier Collection” (P 0060). Collection Guide by Barbara Quigley, 2009.

Indiana Historical Society. “Railroadmen’s Federal Building & Loan Association Records, 1887–1994” (M 0655). Collection Guide by Charles Latham, 1995.

Nicholas, Stacey. “Cannon, Fermor Spencer.” In *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, edited by Bodenhamer, David J. and Robert G. Barrows. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994: p. 384. General Collection: F534 .I55 E4 1994

Obituary for Margaret Cannon. *The Indianapolis News*, 6 January 1973, p. 21.

“Society” (report of the wedding of Isabel Cannon and Clarence P. Cartwright). *The Indianapolis Star*, 15 February 1923, p. 7.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of photographs pertaining to William Taylor Cannon, his son Fermor Spencer Cannon, his daughter Isabel Cannon Cartwright and her husband Clarence Paul Cartwright and his family, as well as the Railroadmen’s Federal Savings and Loan Association (originally known as the Railroadmen’s Building and Savings Association). There is also a pamphlet published in 1957 on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the Railroadmen’s Association, which includes images from the late 1880s of downtown Indianapolis buildings.

The collection is arranged in four series:

Series 1: William Taylor Cannon

Series 2: Fermor Spencer Cannon

Series 3: Railroadmen’s Federal Savings and Loan Association

Series 4: Clarence and Isabel Cartwright

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: William Taylor Cannon

CONTENTS

Halftone printed portrait of William T. Cannon, turned slightly to his right, with his signature reproduced below [ca. 1900]

CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

Portrait of William T. Cannon, turned slightly to his right [ca. 1910s–1920s]

Box 1, Folder 1

Portrait of William T. Cannon, turned slightly to his left (portrait by Master Studio, New York) [ca. 1910s–1920s]

OVA Folder 1 of 1

Black-and-white photograph of a portrait of William Cannon painted by F.W. Wright [Frederick William Wright, 1880–1933]

Box 1, Folder 1

Series 2: Fermor Spencer Cannon

CONTENTS

Snapshot of Fermor Cannon, seen in profile, standing outdoors with a house in the background [ca. 1920s]

CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 2

Snapshot of Fermor Cannon seated on a porch swing with three women, with another woman in a rocking chair [ca. 1920s]

Box 1, Folder 2

Portrait of Fermor Cannon (photograph by Charles Bretzman, Indianapolis) [ca. 1926 or 1927] (2 copies)

Box 1, Folder 2

Portrait of Fermor Cannon seated (photograph by Nicholson) [ca. 1930s]

Box 1, Folder 2

Series 3: Railroadmen's Federal Savings and Loan Association

CONTENTS

CONTAINER

Photograph of the Railroadmen's Federal Savings and Loan Association lobby at 21 Virginia Avenue in Indianapolis. The lobby is decorated with flowers and has signs commemorating the Association's 50th anniversary (photo by Photo-Art Studio) [1937]

Box 1, Folder 3

The Changing Scene / 1887–1957: Indianapolis as it Appeared Before the Turn of the Century. Pamphlet commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Railroadmen's Federal Savings and Loan Association.

Box 1, Folder 3

Series 4: Clarence and Isabel Cartwright

CONTENTS

CONTAINER

Mounted oval portrait of Clarence P. Cartwright [ca. 1912]

Box 1, Folder 4

Mounted photo of Clarence P. Cartwright with a dog pulling a small flatbed cart on wheels on a rocky hillside [ca. 1905]. Written on back: Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from Clarence / Lewisville, Ind.

Box 1, Folder 4

Portrait of Clarence P. Cartwright (photo by Charles Bretzman, 2 November 1923, taken for the Scottish Rite Freemasons)

Box 1, Folder 4

Mounted photo of Clarence P. Cartwright and a young woman who both appear to be working behind the counter at a soda fountain. There is a sign that says: Jessup & Antrim's Pure Ice Cream / Indianapolis, Ind. [ca. 1908]

Box 1, Folder 4

Portrait of Clarence P. Cartwright, signed at bottom: Moorefield / 20 [photo by Robert Chaffin Moorefield, Indianapolis, 1920]

Box 1, Folder 4

Mounted photo of school group in Lewisville, Henry County, shows 24 people posed outside of a brick building. Clarence P. Cartwright appears to be in the back row, in front of the window, wearing a suit [ca. 1909]

Box 1, Folder 4

Mounted photo of group of seven boys and men.
Written on back: Corner of Milton Manual Training
Shop / 1916. Box 1, Folder 4

Twenty-two small snapshots and real photo postcards
that include Clarence P. Cartwright. In some he is
alone or with a dog, in some with one or two
unidentified people, and in some with larger
unidentified groups of people [ca. 1910s] Box 1, Folder 5

Wedding photographs: two of Isabel Cannon
(Cartwright) dressed as a bride and two of unidentified
women who appear to be dressed as bridal attendants
(all photos by Carl Bretzman Jr.) [ca. 1923] Box 1, Folder 6

Cartwright family and friends photographs: nine
unidentified portraits, ca. 1890s–1930s – 1) man in
suit (photo by Bennett Studio); 2) woman turned to
her left; 3) infant (cabinet card photo by Marceau &
Power of Indianapolis) [ca. 1890s]; 4) two children
and an infant (cabinet card photo by J.H. Clark of
Indianapolis) [ca. 1890s]; 5) group of 18 women
standing outside a building (12 November 1936);
6) mounted oval portrait of woman, man, and two girls
(photo by Siegel-Cooper of Chicago); 7) real photo
postcard of four male musicians, seated; 8) portrait of
a man with a cello (same cellist as in previous photo);
9) mounted photo of 25 men and two boys standing by
a banquet table in what is possibly someone's home. Box 1, Folder 7

Cartwright family and friends photographs: 28
snapshots and one real photo postcard – the snapshots
show unidentified people, some spending time at a
lake. One identified person appears in two photos –
Vontella Armstrong, as a child, in Eaton, Ohio [ca.
1910]. There is one photo of a man with a dog and in
the background is a “Cement Burial Vaults” business
[both Charles Cartwright and Asbury Armstrong
worked in the cement business]. There are several
snapshots of houses. The real photo postcard shows
what appears to be the inside of a church – written on
back: “Taken by Joe Forkner / left Lewisville Feb 24,
1910.” Box 1, Folder 8