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Mrs. William N. Cann

[00:00:00]

Interviewer: Mrs. William N. Cann Senior, long active in community affairs in Wilmington. An interview in her apartment at The Devin, in Wilmington on July 27, 1976. Mrs. Cann, when you think back can you remember what might have been your first Wilmington community activity?

Mrs. Cann: Yes as soon as I was married I was asked to join the Washington Eccentric Club. And living on the Boulevard I was close to the club because it was just two blocks away from where I lived on the Boulevard and I was asked to be a member of the board of directors of that club. And that was about 1923 I think.

Interviewer: Could you tell us about the history, your history in terms of that club and your later activities in the women's clubs that you've belonged to?

Mrs. Cann: Well I became president of that club I guess about 1926 and I was president I think two years or two terms rather. And then while I was president then I was asked to join the New Eccentric Club, the Wilmington New Eccentric Club that's the oldest club in Delaware and I was on the board there and later I became president of that club. And then when you are president of a club you are asked to several many other boards and I think that really was the beginning of my community work, having been president of the of those clubs.

Interviewer: Did the club programming change much as you went along for example during the war?

Mrs. Cann: You mean World War II of course. No the clubs really didn't change very much. We had more activities like we all helped with the Red Cross and the USO and war time activities. But our regular programs did continue during the war.

Interviewer: What was your regular type of programming?

Mrs. Cann: Well the Eccentric Club, all those clubs have many objectives. They have programs on Americanism, the family life, political welfare, citizenship, ensuring everybody gets out to vote in election, and you think of some of the arts, fine arts programs and one of the fine arts program. And I think

it was some of the other programs literature, drama, originally they were cultural clubs but now we do more community work than ever.

Interviewer: What about the differences today that you might see in women's outlook going back to 1922, '23 is a long way from 76 and you've been active all along. What are some of your observations?

Mrs. Cann: Well first I think women have come a long way. I do remember when we used to go to the clubs women would say oh I have to rush home and get dinner and I have to be home when the children come home from school, of course a lot of the young girls did that then too. But they talk about their household activities and this one club seemed to be their entire life and well I don't know, they just didn't do what they do these days. They were I wouldn't say held out but they didn't have the freedom in any way that they do now.

Interviewer: Which is better?

Mrs. Cann: Very much better although I'm not one of these libbers.

Interviewer: Now could you please give us your ideas on women's lib?

Mrs. Cann: I don't know, people have asked me that but as I always told my husband I still like to have the door opened for me and I like to have a chair pulled out for me at dinner time and little things like that. I was so glad we have the vote and that we can work for the person for whom we want to. We have that freedom. But as far as some of these women libbers are I don't admire their sense at all.

Interviewer: But you have been known as an active woman and starting to talk about your work in the clubs is only the tinniest part, you would never have expected to just be at home.

Mrs. Cann: No I really wouldn't. We had three children and at that time help wasn't as hard to come by as it is now and I always had full time help so. And my husband was always so cooperative. He was active himself in many things **[inaudible] [0: 05:02]** so many other things and he encouraged me to do these things. So that's such a big job, he's all Liz you can do I'll help you. So he was always cooperative and anxious for me to do things.

[00:05:16]

Interviewer: Well that was very good wasn't it? You've just come from a meeting of is it the Wilmington Development?

Mrs. Cann: Yeah, the Greater Wilmington. It's the greater Wilmington Development Council and they are very interested in all aspects of Wilmington's future. Of course they had a lot to do with all these... oh you've asked me about the greater Wilmington Development Council? It's a very interesting group I believe there about 65 members, mostly men and they are very much interested in everything good for Wilmington.

Today they showed a film of their new park there they are handling building the pond plaza at the Delaware Avenue and Washington, they had the dedication a couple of weeks ago. That's just one new thing you know. And then they talk about the new shops in town. But they have a little interesting story club, Washington Eccentric Club offered an award to each merchant we just *[inaudible]* **[0:06:27]** each merchant who would put something in front of his store to make it really look great. And we gave out 20 certificates and all these merchants on 9th street and also the grand theater when they accepted and they feigned these awards given by Washington Eccentric club is called a Civic Improvement Project and they were just so proud to have them. And we inspected their place to see if they really did what they'd said they were going to do you know, it was really very interesting.

Interviewer: When was that?

Mrs. Cann: We gave them that about six months ago and across that grand theater that's really something it's just wonderful to have that. The Market Street has really improved so much. I'm sorry that so many stores are vacant but they are rapidly being rented or resold you know.

Interviewer: The mall was that an idea of the Wilmington Development Council and what about the Grand opera house refurbishing, how did that happen?

Mrs. Cann: I really don't know the details but I know the mayor had a great deal to do with it. Many of these things were his own ideas. I think he's really to be commended for the ideas that he had. And those ideas are being carried out by so many different groups who are anxious to do something there, you know? But the *Masonic* Club owned that old grand theater and they were very happy to have to made it as beautiful as it is today.

Interviewer: What are some of the other organizations that you have taken a leadership role in?

Mrs. Cann: Well there have been a great many, I think the first state organization which I was president was the American Cancer Society now called the

Delaware Cancer Society. And over the years that really has grown and they've done so much good. And then the Delaware Society for Crippled Children. We just had a little office on 9th and Washington at first and now we have a beautiful camp at Fairly Maryland for crippled children. They have 40 children every two weeks there. Now these past two weeks, I was just down and they have retarded children this week for the past two weeks. And then they have a building they have in Georgetown where they give treatments for the crippled and it really has grown to great proportions.

And then another is a kidney association that's rather new to Wilmington. I happen to *[inaudible]* **[0:09:04]** see what that does now and I just read the magazine how many people do die of kidney failure because they can't be put on the machine and this committee is buying machines and helping a lot. Some of the hospitals had them but not all and that's going to do a great deal to lengthen people's lives. Then we're studying about transplants too for kidneys. That's a very interesting committee.

And one of the projects of all women's clubs and I forget to say was safety, and I've been vice president of our safety council in charge of home safety I guess for about 25 years. And each year we have a statewide meeting and wonderful speakers on home safety. About 200 women come and it's very interesting. We put out a little monthly magazine called Home Safety. But then our safety council is so cooperative and our staff are really works along with our women so well.

[00:10:03]

I'm trying to think of some other organizations that I think are doing such a good job. The *[inaudible]* **[0:10:11]** I happen to be on that board. And the Blood Bank of Delaware is really great I don't know whether you are familiar with that or not. We have wonderful organization there. And I'm secretary of that. And we have a lot of wonderful meetings and it's just great that thousands or millions I should say pints of blood that are donated you know?

And then the hospitals all have such a prime auxiliaries in which to work. I enjoy being president of the auxiliary to the Delaware State Hospital. And we did volunteer work or do volunteer work there among the patients. And we have a little gift shop there and we all work in the little gift shop. And then another junior board is that at the moment to General Hospital, I should say Wilmington general division now of Delaware. And I was president of that for 13 years at Junior Board and we have a gift shop

there I was chairman of that and now I am a parliamentarian. That should be celebrate at 50 years I was chairman of the events and we had an event each year to put two, to celebrate 50 years and one event we had the grand one with the museum we invited some doctors who were practicing 50 years ago such like Dr Shanz and Dr. Handy and it was a wonderful party. So that's a great group that junior board at the moment is in general Hospital.

And let me think of some other groups that which I find a pleasure to work in. Of course the Red Cross I think we all want to help with the Red Cross whenever we can. I'm chairman of the entertainment there and take entertainments to institutions like the Home of Merciful Rest and a home for aging women that **[inaudible] [0:12:16]** and different organizations and I get people who can sing or play to go [inaudible] of course and then the Red Cross and throw refreshments along to the patients and the patients all enjoy that.

And then there are musical groups, the Delaware Symphony I'm sure you've read them many times. Now we're playing, they play at the Grand Opera House permanently. We were at **[inaudible] [0:12:41]** Delaware Symphony, in fact it's rated one of the best and I was president of that women's committee for two years, just finished with that. And we raised during that year \$6,000 to give to the symphony.

And then the Opera Guild is another group I led **[inaudible] [0:13:04]** the job of the members of the guild was to earn money for the opera society. I'm sure you've seen some of their wonderful plays. Another nice group is the, well I did belong to the Delaware Home and Hospital **[inaudible] [0:13:25]** Georgetown for the retarded children but I'm just on the board. I have never been active in that.

I'm trying to think of some others, Love CARE, that's a great organization. Charles Robinson and I have been co-chairman of that for a long time. We've raised a great deal of money for that. And one of my pet projects was project Hope. I'm still on that board and they have done a great deal in Wilmington for Project Hope you know some of those doctors went on the ship for year, some of them stayed. And we've had some nice trips on the ship Hope **[inaudible] [0:14:05]** but they are still doing a good work among people well from the Indians and people in that country **[inaudible] [0:14:14]** trying to teach people there what they should know.

Another group is the Committee at 39 oh I love that. We have a lot of politics there. But not being in politics I ... although I have been the

president of the Women's Republican Club and we still do, I do a lot of in that we, we try to keep politics clean. And on election day they have people go into the polls to see that there isn't any cryptic work done and we try to hear all the candidates and vote for the best man, and it's definitely non partisan. There was as definitely republican as there are democrats, in fact when they get new members for that committee to make up the 39 they are very particular to either have an even number of republicans and democrats. And we have excellent speakers and it's really that's for clean government, good clean government is the purpose of the committee at 39.

[00:15:17]

Interviewer: How long has that been operating?

Mrs. Cann: I was there for 25 years. Bill Frank was one of the originators of that **[inaudible] [0:15:26]** great person

Interviewer: And is he still a member?

Mrs. Cann: Yeah he's still a member, yes. I know a couple of more interesting groups. Have you ever heard of the Diamond State Home for Boys?

Interviewer: No.

Mrs. Cann: Well that's a wonderful home. They have 40 boys down there now **[inaudible] [0:15:43]** toys and when I called they said I need 40 for the 40 boys to go up there and get some little pleasure. And there are boys from broken homes. They're really not bad boys one or two had been at thorough school but I go out there with other girls and we take picnics and we help fix up the home and give them money. And the Lion's club just built them a beautiful crafts house and now they are going to raise, I don't know how many millions of dollars to build a new home for the boys because this was a very old place it's really falling apart. They say it was built very poorly and was used for welfare families before the boys home took it over. But Mr. Fisk is one of the director and he gets money from legislature so I think he's pretty good when legislature will give him money.

Interviewer: Where is this located?

Mrs. Cann: It's Governor Prince Avenue and Lower Avenue, up on a high hill.

Interviewer: How did it happen? Why did we have this facility? Do you know who started it?

Mrs. Cann: Russell Fisk started this I'd say 25 years ago. He had an old house on 3rd and West a terrible house, terrible neighborhood and everything. And he started out with three boys who were from broken homes but they weren't bad enough to go to Paris Industrial School. And I believe one of the judges of family court knew Russell Fisk and talked to him and got him to take this on. And now he is the director and they have gradually gotten more boys. Many of the boys they all go to school there and many of them leave and go to college, are able to get into college and they have all turned out to be such fine young men.

The place itself is called Camelot, C-A-M-E-L-O-T. And the boys just **[inaudible] [0:17:42]** one of our clubs just gave them a great big stove and when I was out there for a picnic with one of our girls, one of the boys said aren't you one of the ladies that gave us this big cook stove? And I said yes so a lot of women and I together from the club. And he said we have the best meals off of this stove and he said we got a great cook. And sure enough I met her and she said, I couldn't do all this without the wonderful big stove. And they appreciate everything we've given them, pictures and they've they have a lot of old furniture given to them. We made, had sleep covers made for them and so they have a real home and the boys just love it.

Interviewer: How are they referred to the home? How do they get there?

Mrs. Cann: I know the family court refers quite a lot and I believe in Paris, now I'm not sure about this and I hope I'm right, some boys have been in Paris school but they really didn't need to be there they were not bad boys and they are over here. And these boys get good religious training, they must go to church every Sunday, the church of their chose. Catholic or any protestant church. I believe they were two Jewish boys there, some were black boys, but they are the most perfect gentleman you've ever seen, they are just wonderful boys. And they call that their home and they just love Mr. Fisk. He is perfectly wonderful to them.

And many of the clubs do things for them. We offer them little card parties in their crafts shop and give them the money. I just had a board meeting here the other night with the board of directors from out there it was a group of men, all men again who are very much interested in these boys and then they do many things for them. They get their various individual clubs to do things too.

I just want to mention one patriotic organization which I could not leave out because it has meant so much to so many people. The American Legion Auxiliary. We have several units here in Wilmington. I just went back and took the presidency of another little unit but I have been state president and the national vice president and I have been on several national committees such as Constitutional By-laws and Rehabilitation, child welfare but they do a wonderful amount of work with the veterans and the hospital.

[00:20:02]

And we have a committee at the hospital called the VS Committee, that's VS Veteran Service Committee and then we take Bingo parties out there and at Christmas we have Christmas shops and they are outstanding. Now for instance there are about 280 boys at the *[inaudible]* **[0:20:20]** so we try to take about five gifts per person and each patient there is permitted to select a gift for every member of his family. And we Christmas wrap them, they sign their own cards if they're able and we mail them and pay the postage. That's one of the big projects of the American Legion Auxiliary.

And then we do that at Perry Point Hospital although it's in Maryland there's so many in that hospital that we take one ward down there of 200 men and go there and do the same thing. Also we take them to dances once a month and we get volunteers for the bands. And then we take one dance to the Delaware State Hospital they have about 80 veterans there, just the veterans we take these Christmas presents.

Another project that the American Legion Auxiliary is the Girls State which is held in Delaware each year and that's to teach girls about the government. And they are there for an entire week and we have an election. So there are legislators who come and talk to them, the governor always entertains for them and we have some of the legislators present bills and they children follow them through.

We take two girls from the third year of each high school in Delaware. We had 107 girls just last year. It's usually the third week of June, and we pay their board and all their expenses. And then we have one of our child welfare project helping children of veterans. We have many wonderful projects in American Legion Auxiliary.

A lot of people think of the legion as a place where they have a bar and the legion home you know and just go for fun. But that's not the case, legionnaires have some fun, members of the American Legion post and

there's some wonderful memories in the auxiliary and it's really a great organization.

Interviewer: How long have you worked with them and how did you become interested?

Mrs. Cann: Right after I was married, knowing that my husband had been in the service was approached to be a member of Delaware Unit and my husband was asked to be a member of Delaware Post, American Legion. He became a commander of that post and he served on the national committee. So we were both very active and it's some of this huge ... and we have puppy day too. We sell puppies and the veterans get the money for the puppies. And you'd see girls standing on the corner standing on the corner **[inaudible] [0:22:52]** my white friends and sell puppies and the puppies are for the veterans too. We have these wonderful projects in the American Legion Auxiliary.

I wanted to tell you one of my loves is the Salvation Army, nobody knows unless they have served on the board as I have for 20 years the wonderful work the Salvation Army does. You know they not only work for the souls but they work for the physical health of families and they give them so much. There's so much that the welfare society I guess or in the welfare committee of Delaware welfare board, so many things they don't give the Salvation Army gives them. And about five years ago I was ...

Interviewer: For example?

Mrs. Cann: Well at Christmas the members interview the people who come and ask for a help Christmas and we give them money for rent, we give them money for clothing at Christmas. Well we do it all year but at Christmas it's a big push. And we give them Christmas baskets and we send sunshine baskets to all the sick. It takes one evening and we have about 100 people there when we pack these sunshine baskets we have a real assembly line and then some of the members of our board take these to the various people who are sick you know the sunshine baskets.

And then we have, we send boxes during the year to all the people in the green bank, in the jails, that's not the word I want to use, jails, but you know all the detention homes and all the people who are in these places we send them, all these **[inaudible] [0:24:49]** Salvation Army there's a magazine called the War Cry they always have to get a copy of that when they get candy and other goodies.

Another nice project in the Salvation Army is the Women's Auxiliary about five years ago one of the organizers in auxiliary and asked me to help, so we have 100 members. And these are the girls who do this interviewing at Christmas and they ring the bell, you've seen the Salvation Army people with their *[inaudible]* [0:25:20] and the bell, they ring the bell at Christmas, these auxiliary members do so much.

[00:25:25]

And we also try to raise money for the Salvation Army. We try to help the golden age group there and send them to camp and perceives me I mean everything *[inaudible]* [0:25:37] I'm telling you we raise money for this and that but that seems to be the object or the objective of most of these groups when they have auxiliaries. I guess that's meaning of the word auxiliary to help. But the motto of the salvation is others. And I just love that group, they do so much for so many people.

You know we have a beautiful building there at 4th and Shapely called the *Citadel* and that was made possible by a gift from someone many, I don't know how many years ago I don't remember when they were building it of a half a million dollars. And it's a magnificent place and you should see the people that go there Sunday night to worship and all day Sunday really. But as I say it's not all religion, it's they help the body here as much as they do the soul.

And then they have another place at 2nd and French Street, that's the trucks go out there they collect papers and old things, they have about 12 trucks. And there are about 40 men there who are alcoholics, who live there. Some have lived there for years and they help there and some of them even go to work from there. But because they have been alcoholics that's their home and they have absolutely been cured of their alcoholism. But our auxiliary doesn't do anything on 2nd and Shapely, that's more, they call that the men's oh the men's central, men's central I think they call it. And that's where all these men who have really been delics and they have helped them so much.

And at Christmas one little job I love, I always get 1200\$ at the major detric at the Salvation Army orders and I give them to all my friends to dress and then Christmas Eve these dollars are sent to children whose names are on the list that Salvation army has. And they give them to these girls to girls who wouldn't have a dollar otherwise. And it's no trouble at all to get 1200\$ fast.

Speaking of that, that reminds me of something else I wonder if many people know about it, toys for tots here in Wilmington. That is usually done by the mayor's committee he appoints a committee to do that and they get money for the toys. And for the last three years the marines have been delivering all these toys for us to these families whose list we have, whose names we have on list and I just love to do that.

We use to do that in the lobby of the city hall, we had toys there for two weeks and we get a list from neighborhood houses they want so many t-shirts, size five so many sizes ... oh we worked for weeks on that. But now the marines they just take right over and do it perfectly. So that's one big thing they do.

Then another thing the same committee does they give candy to all the aging in the institutions in Wilmington that's one of my jobs. I call all the institutions to see how many guests they have there, they call them guests now and then I order all this candy and take it around to all these various institutions. For instance The Home of Merciful Rest gets 100 and the Home for Aging Men gets, they only have 16 aged men, they've now combined with the Home for Aging Women though. And the **[inaudible]** **[0:29:12]** all these various intuitions get a box of candy for each of member for Christmas from the mayor's Christmas committee. And I just love the giving and they are all so grateful and appreciative.

Oh there are so many organizations to which so many women belong. One of the interesting ones and I feel I get a great deal out of it the Parliamentarian Association. It's a national organization but we do have a state group here and a Wilmington group and we meet once a month. And we have this big one parliamentary procedure and it's very helpful. No matter how much you know you can always learn more because Robert's Rules of Order book is always being revised you know? So we keep up with all of that to the National Parliamentarian Society.

[00:30:01]

Then another interesting group and in this group we raise money for scholarships for business and professional women groups. Now I am not a business woman nor was ever a professional woman, but when they started the Christina branch they asked five of us if we would organize them. So Mrs. Frank Tom, and then Mrs. Clarence Frame and Mrs. Cumming Speekman and Mrs. Garnog Walsh and I were asked to organize this group. Christina VP **[inaudible]** **[0:30:29]** so that's been I guess 30 years ago. So we're still going strong we're going to have

something in the next month to raise money for scholarships for young women. They're just interested in young women scholarships.

Interviewer: About how much would you say you raise per year? Just approximately.

Mrs. Cann: Well each year is different now this year the girl whose resume is chairman has lots of ideas for a lot of things. So we'll raise a few hundred dollars for these scholarships, but it never goes up in the thousands like we do in the symphony really at the guild. Because we only have about 30 women and most of them are business and professional women, we have quite a few professional women. And it's very nice to be with them and to hear everybody's side of the world you know, everybody does something different.

You know I mentioned so many welfare organizations and we can't leave out the March of Dimes. I think they do such a good work and I have raised a lot of money for them and been on the committee and enjoy working with them so much. Same way with Heart. I think all my friends work for Heart and I think they all realize how important that is. I often do broadcasts when they have a drive and help them in that way. Of course on Heart Sunday I have a lot of blocks that I visit and get money from. But I think all of these things are very important. I don't know what's more important than another.

Interviewer: Well can I say speaking of broadcast.

Mrs. Cann: Speaking of broadcasts I guess *[inaudible]* **[0:32:09]** Heart Association. I've been radio chairman for the State Federation Women's close for 36 years. And I used to have one program every Monday morning but the program became rather popular, this is *[inaudible]* **[0:32:24]** and became very popular so now I have three a week.

And then last winter, so many people wanted to go I never asked anybody they come to me and say may I be on your program? And then I arrange the dates for them, I interview them. And the last one we had so many requests and I had to have a program every day. But I really didn't want that really. But I do tape the Monday morning's live and then I do tape the others so I don't have to run way up Shapely Road every morning to do this because it is a volunteer job.

But oh yeah I have a doctor on heart once a month and a doctor on kidney and a doctor on well crippled children. I have all these doctors, I've had lawyers on and it should be called Women in the News and then one day one of the doctors said his wife *[inaudible]* **[0:33:15]** in the news

so the manager *[inaudible]* **[0:33:21]** so we could change it to People in the News. But that's a long time 36 years to do one thing, isn't it? If I'm going to be away a couple of weeks then I tape them all in advance. But we do have good programs. I get a lot of fan mail. Which is sort of fun to read them and I leave them out there at the station for them.

Interviewer: What are some of the honors that you have received during your long career?

Mrs. Cann: Well let me see I think the first one was from the Cancer Society for my work with them, a very beautiful black. I've had two from the Salvation Army, beautiful. I have one for the crippled children and one for the American Legion Auxiliary. Oh and just on the 22nd of May the *Bison* Tango Committee honored me with a great big dinner party for the activities that I did, the things I did in the American Legion Auxiliary. There were a few 100 people there, it was a beautiful party for what I've done in the American Legion Auxiliary.

Then about 25 years ago I was woman of the year, there was a projects month about the Pilot Club of Wilmington. And let me see what else have I, oh and I received the *[inaudible]* **[0:34:39]** award and that's really lovely. It's presented by the Chamber of Commerce. And it's awarded annually to a citizen of Delaware who is... now this I'm reading I shouldn't say this applied to me, who has been selected by his fellow citizens for outstanding service to the state, the community, society and his fellow men and has performed something worthy to be remembered. So that's *[inaudible]* **[0:35:05]** I just adore that.

And then I have quite a few certificates it's all framed in the hanging up in the den. I wasn't going to put mine up because my husband had framed awards all over but I have one little spot so I put a few of mine up there.

[00:35:21]

Interviewer: What are some of his awards?

Mrs. Cann: Oh he had an award from the Kiwanis Club, the American Legion, The 40 & 8, that's a branch of the American Legion in the French, I can't say the French name and oh advertising club and *[inaudible]* **[0:35:39]** that's a Finnish organization and let me see, what are some of his... American Legion I think I said, Kiwanis, oh and the Newer Temple of the Masons. He was *[inaudible]* **[0:35:52]** Newer Temple and he had some awards for that. So I don't know, we've got a few awards in that den.

Interviewer: What about your family, you were going to talk about your family. And also what about who's who in Wilmington?

Mrs. Cann: Well I was in three issues of who's who. I just see a book here and I must look at it. I haven't looked at it for sometime but, oh a lot of my friends are in there that isn't too outstanding being who's who of American woman, women. But the most important thing is my family. Of course I had a wonderful husband and you hear me talk about him. And I have three children and the oldest has three wonderful children, the next girl has four daughters and then my son has a little girl. And then I have a great grandson. So I'm really blessed with a wonderful family.

Every day I hear from most of them. Though only a phone call, but they do keep in touch and they... it's a wonderful family. And I thank God everyday for them. What did you say? Are they all local? Yeah so Evelyn and her husband live in Chester Town, Maryland which is only 60 Miles and Miriam lives here and Billy lives here. So they are all very close.

You know there is one thing I do forget to tell you about, I've been chairman of the Delaware Mother's Committee for well ever since its inception I guess about 25 years. And each year it's... well the American Mother's Committee is in New York and then in each state there is a committee with the name of the state which it represent. So I am chairman of the Delaware Mother's committee.

Each year we send a nomination, nominating blanks to clubs and churches asking them to nominate the woman whom they think would make a Delaware mother. And then we have judges and we select that woman as Delaware mother. Then she goes to New York and dines with the mothers of every other state for the national mother. And it's really quite a thing. We've had some outstanding women as Delaware mothers.

And just recently they asked me if I would write up an article about 10 of the Delaware mothers. Now we've had 25 and it's very difficult to select 10. But I had a committee to help me. I couldn't decide myself. And we selected the best so I just received a beautiful book from the American Mother's Committee with 10 mothers in representing each state and Delaware's look beautiful.

Then on the front of it *[inaudible]* **[0:38:21]** picture of the statehouse and has a picture of the governor and all and governor seal, you know his seal and it's quite an impressive part of the book. In fact as I looked at the other states I think me and my committee did very well. So we're very proud of that.

Interviewer: Who were some of your nominees? What kind of person did you put forward?

Mrs. Cann: Well you must be a wonderful mother yourself and be exemplified by your children. The children must have done something outstanding. She must be a good Christian woman and there were many qualifications just to her character and so forth. And as I said her children must have done outstanding things. Now for instance Mrs. Vogs was a mother, well you know her son Kyle Vogs has done such outstanding work. And each mother has had outstanding children and we get together, I just entrained them here for lunch about 4 weeks ago, all the Delaware mothers. Now about six have passed away, we still I think have 18 or 19 and they are just a wonderful group of ladies.

Interviewer: Does the mother's committee originate with something like the federation or is it a separate group?

Mrs. Cann: It was entirely separate and one time they told me it was a Golden Rule Group of New York but that was before 25 years when I got in it. And as our state has only been it for about 25 years I think we have 25 or 26 mothers. Then that was changed to the American Mother's Committee. But it's not better rater, it has nothing to do with the women's clubs. It's just an organization all to itself. And Mrs. Dan Polling was really the one, of course you've heard of Dan Polling and she was the one who originated it. She has passed away but it is carried on by her daughter in law and other wonderful people. Norman Vincent Peal's mother, wife rather of his is very active in it she's running the office and they're all outstanding women.

Oh you just asked me what church I go well *[inaudible]* **[0:40:33]** been members for 55 years that was now *[inaudible]* **[0:40:39]** in Boulevard and I organize a little choir there, about 35 or 40 years ago with Mrs. Robinson whose husband then was Governor, governor Robert Free Robinson. She was such a wonderful Christian we organized these little *cherry's* choir then I was president of the Missionary Society then we all believed in foreign missions you know, not many people believe in foreign missions now. And also the women's league and I was co-superintendent of the young people's Sunday school class with Harry Lou. He was co-chairman for the boys and I was co-chairman for the girls of the young people's Sunday school group.

And I guess that's about all of church and I substitute the organ there once in a while. I don't anymore because they have a brand new one very

very hard to play. I haven't practiced on that yet but I used to play the organ occasional. And I played the piano in Sunday school for the orchestra too.

Interviewer: What about your parents and where you were born, how you developed your interest in music and was your mother a community minded person?

Mrs. Cann: Well when my mother was young I don't think women got into anything. And she when I was born in Camden New Jersey, I was the only child. My mother came up from Petersburg, Maryland, my father was from Philadelphia and we lived in Camden. And I was married from the house in which I was born and my mother didn't do anything but go to church three and four times on Sunday, which I had to do. I had to accompany her there three and four times every Sunday.

In fact I was looking through an old diary of my father not long ago and he, not today's he wouldn't be anything but every Sunday he said went to church, 10:30, Sunday school 2:30, Christian Day 74, 6:45 and church at 7:30. It was there and my mother always insisted that my father and I go. But she was very active in church and after she passed away they have a memorial for her every Sunday, every summer for a tea and I used to go up for it. But I was the only child and I lived there and my husband lived in Camden and that's where I met him.

Interviewer: How did you and your husband happen to come to Wilmington and what was his business here?

Mrs. Cann: Well my husband was in the service, World War I and he was discharged in 1919 when we became engaged and he never worked except for Gab Ducan, a paper house. He sold paper even when he was 17, he was the youngest sales man they had but that's all he ever knew was paper and he sold paper. So his brother who was older and he decided to go in the ruling business, paper ruling business and they tossed a coin... so then he asked my husband to go with him. So my husband just came out of the army, we were not married and we didn't have much money, but they put their money together and they tossed a coin whether they go in business in Wilmington or Nordstrom. And heads was Wilmington and heads came up but they did have relatives here. My husband's mother had a lot of relatives here.

So they came to Wilmington in business the *[inaudible]* [0:43:57] Street on the second floor and his brother did paper ruling. But my husband didn't have any training, he just was a salesman so then they decided to

put in printing. So he had a friend of his come down from Philadelphia who had a printing machinery. He had his machinery shipped down and he went in business with him. So then they changed their name from Cann Brothers to Cann Brothers & Kendrick. That was the name of their partner. But then he didn't like Wilmington nor did his wife so they moved back to Philadelphia. Then my husband opened his own printing machinery then they moved to 305 Probert Street and they were there for many many years. And it has grown into a very very nice business.

On the way I became interested in the bible. Well before that I took music lessons and I had to practice one hour everyday to the minute which I didn't like but I did. And I've always been glad that I did because I play at the clubs now for our company, all the singers and Chris is wonderful at the parties he would sit down and play all of the old songs and believe me the ones I know are old too. Of course I had to learn some new ones.

And then I took lessons on the *[inaudible]* **[0:45:07]** in the church, the Presbyterian Church where I went to in Camden and after I took the lessons they asked me if I ever played the organ. So after the first year they gave me a check for \$100 for Christmas for playing the organ and my father said you give that right back they owe money for coal, don't you dare take any money for playing. So I never got paid for playing the organ.

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Interviewer: What about your children and grandchildren, is there anything you want to mention about them?

Mrs. Cann: Of course all I can say is that they were great, but Evelyn the oldest one graduated from *Serakis* in Art and she's just been president of the Studio Group. And she's done some lovely paintings I have a couple here that she's done and she's exhibited in many shows. But her husband wouldn't let her sell them. He likes them and would take them to his office, he's got them all over in his office and then she has his son... oh she has a daughter, Donna who's married and they have a little boy who's our great grandchild.

And then she has a son Billy who is also an artist who received the Preston award and went all over Europe visiting the army museums. He teaches art at Penn School. He does portraits of really very important people in Wilmington and he graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy

of fine art. And he has *[inaudible]* *[0:46:30]* studios 1503 Franken Street and he's having the exhibits too.

And then Evelyn also has a wonderful boy named Johnnie, he's in the entertainment business and he's in darling. He just got married. Then Miriam has four wonderful girls and they are all outstanding in their own way you know. And then Billy our son has one little girl, Carol who graduated from college a year ago. So that's my family, three children, eight grandchildren and one great grandchild. And they're all great.

Interviewer: Who were the personalities as you remember helping you particularly in all of your presidencies and board memberships?

Mrs. Cann: Well the one who comes to mind my first is Mrs. A.D. Warner, she was Delaware's club mother as they called her. In fact she was the one that started the girl's college in the University of Delaware. I'm sure she's written many books at the university. And she also organized a group called the Women's Joint Legislative Committee and I was the secretary there, I forgot that. And I used to go down to tour with her every two weeks and we went to legislature and of course we never had much to say, we just listened and then come back and tell everything at that meeting, you know. But she was, oh she was liked by every woman in Delaware. Mrs. A.D Warner, she was wonderful.

Then another wonderful ladies, Mrs. Clarence Frame. She was a past day president, the same I was and she was in the Delaware Federation Committee. And she has done so much for her church and it was her husband who gave the boys pool and the boy's home, not the home I told you before that's the Diamond Estate but the boy's home, boy's club I mean in Wilmington was given by Clarence Frame. And he was an outstanding person really.

And then Mrs. Britney Myer, who is another fine clubwoman. Oh they are so many I really hesitate to name one for fear I'll forget somebody but all these women were really great in their own rights. And they were really pioneers in women's clubs. I can't think of ... oh and Dean Collins of the University of Delaware. She was another darling lady and we used to have her in art club meetings whenever we wanted a speaker who we'd be very proud and wanted by the other clubs we always said Dean Collins. And she was always so free to come. She was a very wonderful woman.

Before Dean Collins way way back was Dean Robinson. She was one of the most outstanding women any of us have ever met. She really was a

lovely. She always wore a real long skirt, almost touching the floor in the daytime, you know we didn't wear long skirts in the daytime. But she always said that was a very significant *[inaudible]* [0:49:34].

Interviewer: What about your work for the flower market over the years?

Mrs. Cann: Well that's one of my pets, I loved it. Mrs. Frank Tallman got me interested in that in 1925. She asked me to be cochairman of candy with her and we made hundreds and hundreds of pounds of candy in her kitchen and my kitchen. And then she asked me to be chairman she wanted to give that up so I was chairman of that for about five years.

[00:50:03]

And then for ten years I was chairman of that wonderful Caledonian market and we made hundreds of dollars for that. And I asked people to save all their stuff for years you know. I mean for months, for the next year and we got beautiful things and so much fun to price them and sold them and watch everybody when they buy something you know. Took us three days to price some. Mrs. Norman Topanje used to let us use her garage and we used to price them. And about ten of us would go there from nine to five for about three days and price all these things. Then somebody would say oh I love it but I can't pay that much and we'd let them have at what they wanted to pay.

And then I was chairman of the exhibits for the last 12 years and we'd ask different companies to have a table there, we had tents. We had fairways and all the exhibitors were along the fairways and they could sell anything, any of their wares there you know we charged them with so much intent. Made an awful lot of money for that.

And I've always been interested in flower market and it's a lot of fun. Now for the last two years they haven't had all of those tents along the fairway they've had one great big tent and all the merchants are in that one tent and it isn't nearly as much fun *[inaudible]* [0:51:14] great big tent it's pretty crowded and all. But they thought that would cut down expenses I guess because the little tents were expensive. And we don't have as many merchants, exhibits as we used to have but they make a lot of money I guess. This is something like the Christmas shop at the hotel you know where they have a little booze there and bring all these beautiful things.

Interviewer: You mentioned you played the piano and you also substituted on the organ, have you been interested in any other musical events or groups?

Mrs. Cann: Well I'm not a vocalist myself but I did organize the Treble Clef of the Washington Eccentric Club in 1925. We had about 30 members, we gave entertainments and the president of that was Mrs. Hebert Drew. Oh she was a great big fat lady and she had a beautiful voice, but she'd always sing songs that the little bird or the little daisy or something you know and she was a great big fat lady and she loved all those songs that didn't apply to her at all.

And then well that club did so, Treble Clef did so well that they asked me to organize a course in the New Eccentric Club. So we had a director from Philadelphia Agnes Ripesnider who was, oh she was a beautiful director. At one time Fred Wired who was well know in Wilmington for his musical talents was our director but we later got Mrs. Ripesnider. And we really sang lots and lots of places and got so they'd give us 25\$ to sing and then we give that to the club. But they're all old ladies now, none of us sing anymore except at parties.

Interviewer: With all your work I don't think you've had any time for hobbies, but if you have what are they?

Mrs. Cann: Although I do some volunteer job almost every morning or go to a meeting or something, I play bridge, and I'm ashamed to say it almost every afternoon. I belong to several bridge clubs and then we have bridge parties you know? And I just love bridge and play some duplicate but I just like the really the regular bridge you know where you can talk a little more. But we have lunches and play bridge most afternoons a week.

Interviewer: What about some of the newspaper people that you have been involved? After all in all of these drives you must have had a lot of relationships with the papers.

Mrs. Cann: Well I've been publicity chairman, I'm still publicity chairman for the Greater Federation of Women's Organizations. Oh I didn't tell you about that. That's an organization composed of delegates from each women's club in the city of Wilmington and the suburbs, so that's greater Wilmington and we meet once a month. I was president of that a long time ago, and we meet once a month and have a speaker and a subject Adventist to all women's clubs. Then these delegates take back all this information to their respective clubs.

But talking about publicity I have been publicity chairperson on many organizations. The papers have always been most cooperative and they really have and it hurts me when somebody says oh the newspapers you

can't get anything in. You can get it in. If you do it the way they like it and abide by their rules, I've never had any trouble really. But I remember Jewel Bestbook, I went to see her shortly before she's passed away. And Winnie Brogden, I remember. Oh I can't think of some of the men who were there, I'm trying to think. Of course I know Mr. Isaacs now but who preceded him? Oh, Creed Black, I remember him and I'm trying to think some.

[00:55:00]

Interviewer: Sanger preceded.

Mrs. Cann: Oh Dick Sanger, yeah he was always nice to work with. And of course Bill Frank. And then the critics, Phil Crosland, I knew him very well. Oh yes his wife was one of the girls whom I admired. She was a doctor, Ernestine Moore before she married Phil Crosland. And she formed a college, Alma Moore College and I was on her board of directors. Almost forgot about that. She had this college she ran on the second floor of the New Eccentric Club and then she had outstanding teachers and had a very good enrollment. And for two years she did great.

Then they put 95 there and the girls couldn't park and just no place to park around the New Eccentric Club. And when they left and she couldn't find a building we all tried to find a nice house that somebody would like to give for Alma Moore College, that was the name for her mother Alma Moore and then, so she had to give it up. But every time I talk to Mrs. Crosland I keep saying oh well we hope you'll find a building so you can start your college again. But Phil Crosland I think is a very a nice critic, we love him to write articles about our symphony and also our opera groups.

Well I hope to always have a part in most of the things I'm doing. I enjoy this. I enjoy volunteer work I think you get a great deal of satisfaction out of helping other people. And that's why as I said before I love the Salvation Army because their motto was others. And if you think about others in your volunteer work and in all the work that you do, you get a great deal of satisfaction out of it. And I love working with all these women, they are great. I've never found one that I couldn't work of whom I didn't love, they're all great. And I take my hat off to all these wonderful women.

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