

Queen Hughes Cannon (1893-1992)

By Jerry Long, Owensboro, Ky., 1997

29 April 1997

Diane Keith
6723 Gettsburg Dr.
Sylvania, OH 43560

Dear Ms. Keith:

Enclosed is a copy of the obituary of Queen Hughes Cannon from the Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer of 26 April 1992. She died in Owensboro on 25 April 1992, at the age of 99. She was born in Daviess County, KY on 7 Nov. 1893. Also enclosed is an article from the same newspaper concerning the naming of "Cannon Hall" at Owensboro's River Park Center (issue of 19 May 1992, p.1A).

Shortly I will be sending some other items on Queen Cannon and her family.

Bye for now.

Yours truly,
Jerry Long

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2 May 1997

Diane Keith
6723 Gettysburg Dr.
Sylvania, OH 43560

Dear Mrs. Keith:

Enclosed are 25 pages on Queen Hughes Cannon and her family. Sorry for the poor quality of the copy of her will. I copied it from microfilm copies at the Daviess County Library, not from the original at the Daviess County Courthouse.

I discovered several interesting things that I was not previously aware of. I knew that I was related to Ellen Hart Smith (4th cousins twice removed) but did not know that I am also related to Queen Hughes Cannon (4th cousins 4 times removed). The relationship, however, is through

different families. To Ellen Hart I am related through the Crawford family and to Queen Cannon through the Bruce family (see enclosed diagrams).

I also learned that Queen Cannon was a third cousin to Ellen Hart Smith. Their great-great-grandparents, John McClarty & Nancy Huston, moved from Mifflin County, PA, in the early 1790's to Nelson County, KY. John left a will in Nelson County, KY in 1808 naming his children. Among them were John Jr. & Rachel. John Jr. moved to Hardinsburg, Breckinridge County, KY, where he was a merchant, he married Jane M. Allen. John McClarty, Jr.'s daughter, Mary Ellen, married Henry P. Hart, and moved to Owensboro, during the 1850's; they were the grandparents of Ellen Hart Smith. Rachel, daughter of John McClarty, Sr. & Nancy Huston, on 6 Nov. 1800, in Nelson County, KY married William Hughes, to them was born a son, Rowland/Roland, about 1805. Roland by 1830 was also living in Hardinsburg, KY, near the family of his uncle, John McClarty. Both families are listed in the 1830, 1840 & 1850 censuses of Breckinridge County, KY. About 1830 Roland Hughes married Nancy S. Cox, who was born in Shelby County, KY, about 1807, to David Cox, Jr. & Mehitable Boyd.

In 1856 Roland Hughes moved his family to Owensboro, KY, where he died on 12 May 1862 and his wife on 23 June 1880. Their son, Rowland/Roland Shannon Hughes, was born in Hardinsburg, KY on 22 July 1852, and about 1892 married Clara Nagle of New Albany, IN. R. S. Hughes was a very successful banker and investor, he died in Owensboro on 28 June 1924. He was buried at Owensboro's Elmwood Cemetery, where his parents, his wife, and their only child, Victoria Queen Hughes Cannon (7 Nov. 1893 - 25 April 1992), are also interred.

If you can think of any other areas you would like me to investigate feel free to contact me any time. Please keep me in mind if you discover any items on Ellen Hart Smith's family.

Yours truly,
Jerry Long

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Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 26 April 1992, p2C:

Queen Hughes Cannon, 99, of 506 St. Ann St., Owensboro, died Saturday, April 25, 1992, at Hermitage Manor Nursing Home She was born in Daviess County, was a 1912 graduate of Baldwin College, Pittsburgh, and was a member of the Episcopal church. Her husband, George Cannon, died Oct 5. 1963.

Survivors include a sister-in-law, Kathryn Cannon of Owensboro; a nephew, George A Cannon of Lexington, two great-nephews, Steve Cannon of Los Angeles and James Riley Cannon of Henderson, and a great-niece, Laura Gordon Cannon of Lexington.

Services are at 10 a.m. Tuesday at Haley-McGinnis Chapel, Owensboro. Burial in Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro. Visitation is 2-4 p.m. Monday at the funeral home.

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Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 19 May 1992, p1A:

Heiress leaves millions to arts center RiverPark Center naming concert hall for Cannon

Virginia Queen Hughes Cannon was a very private person. A millionaire heiress she lived quietly in a small downtown house until illness forced her into a nursing home a couple of years ago.

But at her death last month Cannon became the largest benefactor of the new \$17 million RiverPark Center for the performing arts. And when it opens on Sept. 12, the center's 1,532-seat concert hall will bear her name.

Cannon's bequest - estimated at between \$2.5 million and \$3 million is the largest ever received by the City of Owensboro Mayor David Adkisson told a City Hall news conference Monday.

Earlier Monday, the RiverPark Center's board of directors voted unanimously to name the auditorium the "George C. and Queen Hughes Cannon Hall" - Cannon Hall, for short.

Adkisson said Cannon had made the money available anonymously long before the city had planned a performing arts center. Her will was written in 1978. In 1982 when Mayor J. R. Miller was investigating the possibilities of such a facility, Cannon's attorney told the city that an anonymous client would donate at least \$2.5 million, Adkisson said.

When the state agreed in 1988 to kick in \$4.5 million, the project started moving forward.

Terry Woodward, River Park chairman, said the \$2.5 million was included in the \$14.7 million that has been raised so far. If the estate is valued at more, it will be extra money for the center, he said.

Adkisson said \$8.5 million has been raised from private contributions. The other \$6 million came from 2,000 people, he said.

"Now, she has accomplished her dreams," Adkisson said of Cannon.

The concert hall will be used for symphony performances, bluegrass shows, dance theater, dramas, traveling shows and "Josiah!", a \$300,000 outdoor drama moved indoors.

Woodward said 30 dates are already booked for the first two months.

Cannon, Adkisson said, "had an interest in doing something very special in Owensboro" Although she had been in poor health in recent years, "she was aware that the project is moving forward," he said.

But who was Queen Cannon?

She was 99 when she died April 25 at Hermitage Manor Nursing Home. Few people of her generation are still living. Her closest relative is Kathryn Cannon, a sister-in-law who represented the family at the news conference.

And few of those gathered for Monday's press conference had heard of Cannon, who lived quietly in a small house at 506 St. Ann St. little more than a block diagonally from City Hall.

Both Kathryn Cannon and Margaret Evans, a neighbor and friend of Queen Cannon, say she was a very private person.

"She was such a down-to-earth person," Kathryn Cannon said. "She was very quiet. But she was very civic minded."

"She didn't volunteer anything and you didn't ask personal questions," Evans said. "She was a solitary person."

But Evans also remembers parties at a cabin on Carpenter Lake the Cannons owned.

Until age prevented it, Cannon loved to play the piano and organ, Evans said.

Cannon was the only child of Rowland Shannon Hughes, one of the city's leading businessmen of the late 19th and early 20th century.

Hughes' fortune was carved from a variety of sources.

Born in Hardinsburg, he moved to Owensboro with his family as a 1-year old in the early 1850s. He was one of the engineers who built the Louisville & Nashville railroad through Owensboro, was a partner in People's Wharfboat & Transfer Co. (located on the riverfront a few feet west of the RiverPark Center) and a tobacco exporter.

But he made his mark as a banker. Hughes was president of Central Trust Co., a director of the Bank of Commerce and president of National Deposit Bank from 1906 until his death in 1924 at age 73.

His business interests also included Owensboro Ice Co., Owensboro Sewer Pipe Co. and Owensboro Ditching & Grading Co. With childhood friend Richard Queen, for whom his daughter was named, Hughes founded the Syrup of Figs Co., which provided a sizable portion of his fortune.

Cannon's mother, Clara Nagle Hughes, was one of the founders of the Mary Kendall Home.

Evans said the Hugheses sent their daughter to Europe for studies in Switzerland and Italy.

"It was the fashionable thing to do then," Evans said.

Later, she attended Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Va.

On Oct. 7, 1926, she married George Cannon, a New Albany, Ind., native who was raised in Owensboro. George Cannon worked a variety of jobs through the years, starting with the San Miguel Rubber Plantation in Mexico in 1906. I

Later, he worked for Owensboro's F.A. Ames Automobile Co., managed a local insurance company, operated an Oriental rug store in Chicago, ran a furniture store in St. Paul, Minn., became a Navy pilot in World War I and then returned to St. Paul and the furniture business.

The Cannons returned to Owensboro in 1938 when he bought the old, J.W. Sourbeer & Co. furniture store, which he operated as Cannon's Furniture until he retired in April 1956. George Cannon died in 1963.

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Roland S. Hughes, son of William Hughes & Rachel McClarty, was born c1805 Nelson County, KY, died 12 May 1862 Owensboro, Daviess County, KY, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY; married Nancy S. Cox, circa 1830. Nancy, daughter of David Cox, Jr. & Mehitable Boyd, was born c1807 Shelby County, KY and died 23 June 1880 Owensboro, Daviess County, KY, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY. He is listed in the 1830, 1840 & 1850 censuses of Breckinridge County, KY, and 1860 census of Daviess County, KY. He moved to Daviess County in 1856. They had eight children:

1. David Cox, born 25 January 1831 Hardinsburg, Breckinridge County, KY, died 14 January 1903 New Orleans, LA, where he was buried, married Mary (Clifford) Dahlgren (1852-1922), 4 January 1877 New Orleans, LA. He served as a captain in the Confederate Army during the Civil War.

2. Graham, born 9 July 1834 Hardinsburg, Breckinridge County, KY, married Betty R., died 17 December 1910 Owensboro, Daviess County, KY, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY. He served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War.
3. Mehitibal R. (“Hettie”), born 22 June 1836 KY, died single 6 October 1890, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY.
4. Jane McClarty (“Jennie”) born 1839 Hardinsburg, Breckinridge County, KY, died single on 25 October 1919 Owensboro, Daviess County, KY, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY.
5. James M., born c1842 Breckinridge County, KY, died single on 14 September 1920 Clarendon, Arkansas, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY.
6. John, born 29 June 1844 Hardinsburg, Breckinridge County, KY, married Celeste Barron, c1872 and Cecelia Virginia (Barron) Boyd, 1 November 1892 Owensboro, KY, died 29 September 1902 Owensboro, Daviess County, KY, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY.
7. Margaret Allen, born c1847 Hardinsburg, Breckinridge County, KY, died single on 5 July 1919 Owensboro, Daviess County, KY, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY.
8. Rowland Shannon, born 22 July 1852 Hardinsburg, Breckinridge County, KY, died 28 June 1924 Owensboro, Daviess County, KY, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY, married Clara Nagle, 31 January 1893 Floyd County, IN. Clara born 7 August 1863 New Albany, Floyd County, IN and died 22 January 1946 Owensboro, Daviess County, KY, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY. They had one child – Virginia Queen Hughes, born 7 November 1893 Owensboro, Daviess County, KY, died 25 April 1992 Owensboro, Daviess County, KY, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY; married George Cary Cannon (24 Feb 1888 – 5 October 1963, son of Frank Austin Cannon & Susan Riley), 7 October 1926 Chicago, Cook County, IL.

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Cannon Hall, RiverPark Center, Owensboro, KY



RiverPark Center, Owensboro, KY