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# Guide to the William B. Cannon Papers 1963-1999



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## **Descriptive Summary**

<b>Identifier</b>	ICU.SPCL.CANNONWB
<b>Title</b>	Cannon, William B. Papers
<b>Date</b>	1963-1999
<b>Size</b>	9 boxes (4.5 linear feet)
<b>Repository</b>	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

**Abstract** William B. Cannon (1920-2006) was a professor at the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration and a University administrator, from 1954 until 1989. He was concurrently involved in the United States Bureau of the Budget during Lyndon B. Johnson's administration. Cannon was a key figure in the development of Johnson's "War on Poverty" policy, including the controversial Community Action Program implemented in 1964. The William B. Cannon Papers contain material related to both his academic and political careers, including correspondence, policy proposals, government task force reports, press releases, teaching materials, and writings.

## **Information on Use**

### **Access**

Series IV contains administrative correspondence that is restricted until 2016.

The remainder of the collection is open for research.

### **Citation**

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Cannon, William B. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

### **Biographical Note**

William B. Cannon (1920-2006) was a professor and administrator at the University of Chicago between 1954 and 1989. He was concurrently involved with national politics, active in the Bureau of the Budget during Lyndon B. Johnson's administration. Cannon was a key figure in the development of Johnson's "War on Poverty" policy, including the controversial Community Action Program implemented in 1964.

Cannon was born in Cascade, Iowa, where he completed a Catholic high school education. Cannon entered the University of Chicago in 1941, but his tenure as a student was interrupted by army service between 1943 and 1946. He received his undergraduate degree in 1947, followed in 1949 by a Master's in Political Science. Between 1954 and 1958 he served as the University's Director of Social Science Development and Assistant Vice President.

By the 1960s Cannon had moved into government administration, where he worked at the Bureau of the Budget. Between 1962 and 1965 he was Assistant Chief of the Office of Legislative Reference for Health, Education, and Welfare Programs. In 1965 he became Chief of the Bureau's Education, Manpower and Science Division, and two years later he was named Director of Operational Coordination and Policy Research. He was active on Presidential Task Forces on education in 1964 and 1967.

President Johnson's Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 instituted new structures for distributing federal resources and administering social welfare programs. Cannon was instrumental in developing the Community Action Program (CAP), which funded anti-poverty initiatives at the local level. Participating agencies were not required to justify their programs to civic or state departments. Although this was designed to ensure "maximum feasible participation" in the "War on Poverty," it created political tensions between the administration and local authorities, as mayoral offices accused Johnson of undermining federalism and politicizing the poor.

Cannon returned to the University of Chicago in 1968, serving as Vice President for Programs and Projects until 1974. He left Chicago for two years act to as Dean of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, but returned in 1976 when he became faculty at the School of Social Service Administration (SSA). Until 1984 he was also the University's Vice President for Business and Finance. He taught SSA courses on public policy until his retirement to Austin, Texas in 1989. Cannon remained involved in social welfare programs outside academia throughout his career, participating in nonprofit corporations such as the Youthwork Corporation.

As an academic, Cannon continued to be an outspoken Democrat and a believer in "maximum feasible participation of the poor." He felt the Reagan administration had destroyed the traditional alliance between the middle-classes and lower classes. In his *New Class Politics* (1986), he argued the Democratic Party should cease to compete for middle-class votes and turn their attention to counter-organizing the non-middle classes. By focusing on party organization at the local "club" level, Cannon hoped the American poor would develop a distinct political and electoral identity, eventually forming a dominant bloc in the Democratic Party which could push new policy directives. He continued to write on government policy through the Clinton administration.

Cannon died in 2006. He was survived by his four children, Julia, Dominic, William, and Robert.

### **Scope Note**

The William B. Cannon Papers span 1963-1999 and are organized into four series:

Series I: University of Chicago, contains correspondence related to Cannon's administrative role at the University of Chicago. This series also contains syllabi for courses Cannon taught at the School of Social Service Administration, and correspondence with colleagues outside the university. It includes reports by external review boards on the National Institute of Education and the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research; Cannon sat on these boards as an affiliate of the University of Chicago. Material spans 1970-1988. Restricted material has been transferred to Series IV.

Series II: Public Policy, contains correspondence, memoranda, policy proposals, government taskforce reports, and press releases related to Cannon's time at the Bureau of the Budget. It includes testimony given by Cannon before House Committees during and after he left the Bureau. Of note are reports on the Watts Riots in 1965 and the Detroit Riots of 1967. Material spans 1963-1970.

Series III: Writings, contains drafts and copies of books, reviews, and papers written and given by Cannon. These primarily focus on the role of the government in education and social welfare. Papers, proposals, and speeches drafted for specific federal policy initiatives can be found in Series I. Material spans 1964-1999.

Series IV: Restricted, contains University of Chicago administrative correspondence transferred from Series I.

### **Related Resources**

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

University of Chicago. School of Social Service Administration. Records

### **Subject Headings**

- Cannon, William B., 1920-
- United States. Bureau of the Budget
- University of Chicago. School of Social Service Administration

- Public policy
- Race riots
- Social classes -- United States

## **INVENTORY**

### **Series I: University of Chicago**

This series contains correspondence related to Cannon's administrative role at the University of Chicago. This series also contains syllabi for courses Cannon taught at the School of Social Service Administration, and correspondence with colleagues outside the university. It includes reports by external review boards on the National Institute of Education and the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research; Canon sat on these boards as an affiliate of the University of Chicago. Material spans 1970-1988. Restricted material has been transferred to Series IV.

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 1**

Biographical statement, undated

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 2-3**

Correspondence, administrative, 1970-1971

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 4**

Correspondence, professional, 1977-1987

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 5**

Peer review, University of Chicago Press, 1980

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 6**

"Report on Higher Education," 1971

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 7-8**

"Report to the Director of the National Institute of Education," 1975, 1977

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 9**

"Report of the UCAR Administration Evaluation Committee," 1981

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 10**

"Social Science Review," 1981

- Folders 11-12: Syllabus and course materials, "Public Finance and Social Welfare," SSA 461, 1978

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 13-15**

Syllabus and course materials, "Developing New Social Welfare Programs and Policies," SSA 560, 1981-1987

#### **Box 1**

**Folder 16**

Syllabus, "Budgeting, the Federal Budget, Process, and Social Welfare Programs," SSA 465, 1982, 1985, 1987

**Box 2**

**Folder 1**

Syllabus, "The Budgetary Process," SSA 423, 1984

**Box 2**

**Folder 2**

Syllabus, "Contemporary Philosophy and Social Welfare Policy," SSA 470, 1988

**Box 2**

**Folder 3**

"University of Chicago Magazine," 1982

**Box 2**

**Folder 4**

"University of Chicago Record," 1978, 1982

**Series II: Public Policy**

This series contains correspondence, memoranda, policy proposals, government taskforce reports, and press releases related to Cannon's time at the Bureau of the Budget. It includes testimony given by Cannon before House Committees after he left the Bureau. Of note are reports on the Watts Riots in 1965 and the Detroit Riots of 1967. Material spans 1963-1970.

**Box 2**

**Folder 5-10**

Bureau of the Budget, correspondence and proposals, 1963-1967

**Box 3**

**Folder 1-2**

Cannon, interviews, circa 1960s, 1982

**Box 3**

**Folder 3**

Cannon, speech to the Civil Service Commission, 1967

**Box 3**

**Folder 4**

"The Current" magazine, 1970

**Box 3**

**Folder 5-7**

Detroit Riots, reports, circa 1967

**Box 3**

**Folder 8**

Economic Opportunity Act, press release, 1964

**Box 3**

**Folder 9**

"Education, Work, and Leisure," proposal, 1966

**Box 3**

**Folder 10-11**

House Committee on the District of Columbia, hearings, 1980

**Box 3**

**Folder 12**

"Report of the Committee on Labour and Public Welfare," 1967

**Box 3**

**Folder 12-14**

Taskforce on Education, correspondence and reports, 1963-1964

**Box 4**

**Folder 1-5**

Taskforce on Education, correspondence and reports, 1964-1967

**Box 4**

**Folder 6-14**

"War on Poverty," budget, correspondence and proposals, 1963-1969

**Box 4**

**Folder 15**

Watts Riots, reports, 1965

**Series III: Writings**

Series III: Writings, contains drafts and copies of books, reviews, and papers written and given by Cannon. These primarily focus on the role of the government in education and social welfare. Papers, proposals, and speeches drafted for specific federal policy initiatives can be found in Series I. Material spans 1964-1999 and is organized chronologically.

**Box 5**

**Folder 1**

"A Different Approach to Managing Personnel," draft, 1964

**Box 5**

**Folder 2**

Speech, Atlantic City, 1966

**Box 5**

**Folder 3**

"Power and Poverty," address, American Academy, 1967

**Box 5**

**Folder 4**

"Local Government and the Federal Government," draft, 1967

**Box 5**

**Folder 5**

"Education in the Cities," speech, 1968

**Box 5**

**Folder 6**

"Government and the Arts," speech, St. George's School, 1968

**Box 5**

**Folder 7**

Speech, Urban Training Center, 1968

**Box 5**

**Folder 8**

"The New American Political Aristocracy," draft, 1970



**Box 5**

**Folder 9**

Public policy, book reviews, 1970, 1973

**Box 5**

**Folder 10**

"Evaluation Questionnaires Reveal a Gap," speech, 1971

**Box 5**

**Folder 11**

"Graduate Student Aid Market System," draft, 1971

**Box 5**

**Folder 12**

"Outline for a Plan for Operation the National Foundation on Education," draft, 1971

**Box 5**

**Folder 13**

"The Church, the University, and Urban Society," offprint, 1972

**Box 5**

**Folder 14**

"Innovation in Education in a Time of Financial Adversity," speech, 1973

**Box 5**

**Folder 15-17**

The Dangerous Abuse of the Lower Class, draft, 1974-1975

**Box 6**

**Folder 1**

The Dangerous Abuse of the Lower Class, draft, 1974-1975

**Box 6**

**Folder 2**

"National Management of Policy Interconnected Problems," 1975

**Box 6**

**Folder 3**

"Implementation of Educational Policy," address, American Education Research Association, 1976

**Box 6**

**Folder 4**

"The Mission of Higher Education in Human Services for Youth," draft, 1977

**Box 6**

**Folder 5**

"Reform of Federal Financing Policy: A Suggested Guide to Governmental Action," 1977

**Box 6**

**Folder 6**

"Rehearsal Time is Over," and "Revisions of the Social Security Act," drafts, 1980

**Box 6**

**Folder 7**

Politics and Professors, review, 1978

**Box 6**

**Folder 8**

"Memoranda on Revisions of the Social Security Act," draft, 1980

**Box 6**

**Folder 9**

Confronting Youth Unemployment, review, 1980

**Box 6**

**Folder 10**

Ministry of Culture, review, 1980

**Box 6**

**Folder 11**

"Study of the Office of Management and Budget," draft, 1981

**Box 6**

**Folder 12**

"A Proposal to Counter Reagan Youth Policy," draft, 1982

**Box 6**

**Folder 13**

"Balancing the Reagan Budget: A Preliminary Analysis," draft, 1981

**Box 6**

**Folder 14**

"The Budget: the Cockpit of a New Society," draft, 1982

**Box 6**

**Folder 15-16**

Non-Middle Class Politics, the Democratic Party, and Federal Budgets: A New Program of Political Action, draft, 1983-1985

**Box 7**

**Folder 1-2**

Non-Middle Class Politics, the Democratic Party, and Federal Budgets: A New Program of Political Action, draft, 1983-1985

**Box 7**

**Folder 3**

"A Critique of, and Alternative to, the Report of the National Bipartisan  
• Commission on Central America," draft, 1984

**Box 7**

**Folder 4**

New Class Politics: The Polarization of America and What We Can Do About It," copy, 1986

**Box 7**

**Folder 5**

"A Policy Critique of the Tax Reform Legislation of 1986," draft, 1986

**Box 7**

**Folder 6**

"The War on Poverty with Special Reference to Community Action," draft, 1986

**Box 7**

**Folder 7**

"A Proposal to Change Vocational and High School Education," draft, 1987

**Box 7**

**Folder 8**

"A New Way of Dealing with the Federal Budget Crisis," draft, 1990

**Box 7**

**Folder 9**

"Biography of Political Principle," draft, 1990

**Box 7**

**Folder 10**

"Old Directions in American Politics," draft, 1990

**Box 7**

**Folder 11**

"Affirmative Action," draft, 1994

**Box 8**

**Folder 1**

"Memos on Health Care Legislation," draft, 1995

**Box 8**

**Folder 2**

"Impressions of the Clinton Administration 1994 Budget," draft, 1999

**Box 8**

**Folder 3**

"Modern Economics and Community," draft, circa 1990s

**Box 8**

**Folder 4**

"How to Operate a Government," draft, undated

**Box 8**

**Folder 5**

"Reorganization of the Federal Government: Organizing Local Participation," draft, undated

**Series IV: Restricted**

This series contains administrative correspondence from the University of Chicago that is restricted for thirty years. Material has been transferred from Series I.

**Box 9**

**Folder 1-3**

Correspondence, University of Chicago administration, 1983-1986