



**THE CENTER FOR POPULAR MUSIC  
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, MURFREESBORO, TN**

**DON CUSIC ORAL HISTORY TAPES**

**91-012**

**Creator:**

Cusic, Don

**Type of Material:**

Audio tape

**Physical Description:**

55 cassette audio tape (TCA 118 A/CCC)

**Languages:**

English

**Dates:**

1978 1987.

**Repository:**

Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN 37132,  
(615) 898-2449

**Access/Restrictions:**

This collection is open for research. *Center staff are able to assist with copyright questions for this material.*

**Preferred Citation:** (Tape ID, Show), Don Cusic Oral History Tapes 91-012, Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

**Provenance and Acquisition Information:**

In March 1989, Don Cusic, a member of the RIM faculty at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN, donated 51 audio tapes of interviews he conducted to the Center. Some of these tapes contained more than one interview; Center audio staff transferred these interviews to separate tapes

**Subject/Index Terms:**

Oral History  
Gospel Music

Country Music  
Interviews

**Agency History/Biographical Sketch:** [as of 2022]

Don Cusic was born in St. Mary's County, Maryland. He attended St. Mary's College and the University of Maryland where he received a B.S. in Journalism. Cusic moved to Tennessee in 1972. His first job in the music industry was with the Country Music Association as a staff writer, then with *Record World*, a trade publication as Nashville editor. From there he joined Monument Records where he served as head of Artist Development and International Liaison (Monument was distributed by CBS International). After leaving Monument, Cusic and Dan Beck formed a management and public relations company where they managed Riders in the Sky and Dickie Lee. After the management/pr company Cusic became the first Nashville editor for *Contemporary Christian Music* magazine, then joined *Cashbox* as Country and Gospel Editor. During this period, he served for three years on the Gospel Music Association's Board of Directors.

Don Cusic joined the faculty at Middle Tennessee State University in 1982 teaching courses in the music business. He earned a Masters and Doctorate in English from MTSU. Since August, 1994 he has been Professor of Music Business at Belmont University and since 2006 has held the professorship of Curb Professor of Music Industry History, endowed by the Mike Curb Family Foundation.

Don Cusic has had over 500 articles published since he began writing. He has been the Country and Gospel Editor for *Record World* and *Cashbox*, a columnist for *Music City News*, editor of *The Western Way* (the quarterly publication of the Western Music Association), album reviewer and special correspondent for *Billboard* and book reviewer for *Music Row Magazine*.

Cusic is the author of twenty-five published books, including the biographies *Roger Miller: Dang Him*, *Elvis and Nashville*, *Eddy Arnold: I'll Hold You In My Heart*, *The Life and Career of Gene Autry*, *The Cowboy Way: Riders In The Sky*, *James Weldon Johnson: Songwriter and The Trials of Henry Flipper*. He wrote an encyclopedia of cowboys, *Cowboys and the Wild West: An A-Z Guide from the Chisholm Trail to the Silver Screen* and edited (and was the primary writer of) *The Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music*. Other books include *Johnny Cash: The Songs*, *The Sound of Light: A History of Gospel and Christian Music* (republished as *Saved by Song*), *The Cowboy in Country Music*, *Music in the Market*, *Baseball and Country Music*, *Poet of the Common Man: Merle Haggard Lyrics*, *Willie Nelson: Lyrics 1959-1994*, *Hank Williams: The Complete Lyrics*, *Reba McEntire: Country Music's Queen*, *Randy Travis: King of the New Traditionalists*, *The Poet as Performer*, and *Sandi Patti: The Voice of Gospel*.

He has written liner notes for albums by Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson, Ray Stevens,

Bobby Bare, George Jones, Eddy Arnold, Sonny James, Gary Paxton, George Beverly Shea, Sheb Wooley, the Oak Ridge Boys, Lulu Belle and Scotty, Jimmy Long, Skeeter Davis, Lynn Anderson, Roy Drusky, Floyd Cramer and others.

As a scholar, Don Cusic has presented academic papers for the Popular Culture Association, the Popular Culture Association of the South, the American Studies Association, the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, the International Country Music Conference, the International Popular Culture Conference (in Oxford, England), the Tennessee Folklore Society, the Western Music Association, the Baseball Symposium, the International Association for the Study of Popular Music and the Music Educators Industry and Entertainment Association (MEIEA).

As a record producer, Cusic has produced albums on Jeannie Seely, Bobby Bare and Melinda Doolittle (with Mike Curb) and co-produced (with Cheetah Chrome) the Eddy Arnold Tribute album, *You Don't Know Me: Rediscovering Eddy Arnold*.

Cusic was a consultant on Ken Burns' documentary miniseries *Country Music*. Cusic appeared a number of times on CMT programs, including the "Controversy" series, "Greatest Patriotic Songs," "Waiting in the Wings: African-Americans in Country Music" and others; he appeared on a number of TNN shows, including "Life and Times of Eddy Arnold" and the A&E Biography Series on Hank Williams. He also appeared on the BBC series "Lost Highway: The History of Country Music" and "White Gospel." He has appeared in three films, *Country Gold*, *Wish Me Away*, the story of Chely Wright and *Country: Portrait of a Music*.

Cusic is a member of the Country Music Association (Lifetime), Western Music Association (Lifetime), the Gospel Music Association (Lifetime), the Recording Academy (formerly the National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences-NARAS), the International Bluegrass Music Association and the Music Educators Industry and Entertainment Association (MEIEA). Cusic is a Commissioner on the Metro Historical Commission in Nashville.

**Scope and Content:**

This group consists of audio tapes of 55 interviews conducted by Don Cusic, 1978-1987. Most were conducted for use in preparing articles for popular music magazines and, therefore, are topical rather than comprehensive. A list of interviewees follows.

**List of Tapes:**

TCA-0118A	Andrus and Blackwood
TCA-0118B	Brown Bannister
TCA-0118C	Blanton Harrell
TCA-0118D	Les Beasley

TCA-0118E	Scott Wesley Brown
TCA-0118F/G	James Bullard (2 tapes)
TCA-0118H	Rory Burke
TCA-0118I	Don Butler
TCA-0118J	Ralph Carmichael
TCA-0118K	June Carter Cash
TCA-0118L/M	Johnny Cash (information about)
TCA-0118N	Cynthia Clawson
TCA-0118O	Rev. James Cleveland (includes sermon, speech and singing)

**Materials Cataloged Separately:**

No items from this collection have been separated.

**Location:**

Audio visual materials are filed first by format, then by tape number in the audiovisual archives.

**Related Materials:**

Special collection press kits, performance documents, trade catalogs, photographs, sound recordings, rare books, and reading room materials related to the subjects of this collection are also held by the Center and searchable through the CPM website database or MTSU Walker Library catalog.

Also related to D.F. Cusic Papers (86-001), Charles K. Wolfe Audio Collection.

Processed 1991,  
Updated Olivia Beaudry, CA May 2024.