

**"Winter must be cold for those with no warm memories."** ~Anon.

# Canning's CHRISTMAS TREES & MEMORIES

BY PAT CANNING



In 1969, 2 of our 3 daughters would come over to the Christmas tree lot and play. Kellie Canning (left) was 3 yrs. old and Maureen Canning (right) was 5 yrs. old.

Remember when you bought your Christmas tree from Canning's Christmas tree lot? We were on the corner of Wisteria and New Jersey Avenue in Wildwood Crest. From approximately 1958 to 1977, my dad, Frank Canning and I sold and flocked Christmas trees, and also sold decorations from after Thanksgiving up to Christmas Eve.

Before the building known as the Colony Arms Apartments, which is located on that same lot now, was built in 1978, there were 3 little garages that were on the lot. For many years the garages were used typically for storage, but then in 1958 my dad Frank and Mom Dorothy decided to sell Christmas trees and a few outside decorations for the holidays. Right after Thanksgiving the stakes for the trees would be put in place. My dad and I would travel to Philadelphia and pick up the trees at the Philadelphia train yards. We would bring back beautiful balsams, firs, and pine trees, and also a variety of Christmas decorations which included over 100 wreaths to sell in the end garage which we converted into a little store. We put a space heater in the little store which kept us warm on some of the freezing days and nights of the approaching holidays. Having a full time job during the day, I was only able to help my dad at night, but worked the trees all day Saturday and Sunday. Sometime in the late 60's or 70's we bought a flocking machine. Needless to say the trees were gorgeous with the flocking. Along with the decorations that were sold in the little store, we also sold hand made grave blankets for loved ones.

In 1962 my mom, Dorothy, and my dad's sister Katherine McDonald, decided they

wanted to try their hand at running a take-out kitchen in the summer. So what was a Christmas store and tree business in the winter, became a take-out kitchen in the summer. Seems like my parents and Aunt Kay, may have been early entrepreneurs of their time. But no one was thinking that back then. While the front garage was used for taking orders and selling salads and desserts etc., the middle garage had to be converted into a cooking kitchen. There would be 1 day a week where they would have a "special", such as baked chicken with stuffing and mashed potatoes. Back in the 60's and 70's there was still "no meat on Friday's" in some churches. This made their fish platters so popular that on Friday's there would be a line from the pavement to inside the store. The platters at the time were only \$1.40, and that included French Fries and Cole Slaw, roll, butter and utensils. Wow!!! Most of our help throughout the years were the local High School students.

In 1978 a new era was started. On the lot where the 3 little garages once stood, my wife Rita and I built a new Canning's Take-out Kitchen, our home and the Colony Arms Apartments.

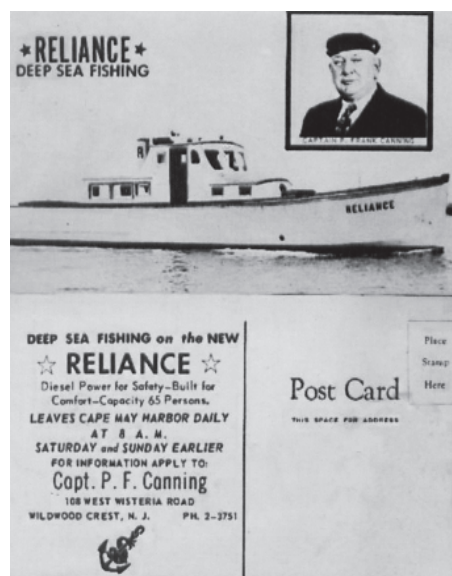
Also in those early years, my dad the late Captain Frank Canning, ran an 8 hr. party boat called "The Angler" out of Sinns dock between Sweetbriar and Wisteria Road on Park Blvd. His Father Patrick (my Grandfather) owned a boat called "The Reliance" which fished out of Cape May. After my grandfather Patrick passed away, my father, Frank, sold his boat, "The Angler", and bought "The Reliance" from his mother, which sailed out of Kurtz's Dock between Sweetbriar and Cardinal Road on Park Blvd. For years because I loved fishing and being a deck hand, I tried to be a deck hand on my dad's boat, but because I suffered from motion sickness, it was never meant to be.

My dad, Captain Frank Canning, also fished commercially in the winter for cod fish. His boat, "The Reliance", was docked at 2 Mile dock for the winter. When Rita and I were in High School we would double date on the weekends with one of my best friends and his date. After we took our girlfriends home (around 11 pm), we would head down to 2 Mile dock, my friend and I would bait-up hooks for my dad to use for his cod fishing. This way we could earn some spending money to take our girlfriends on future dates.

There are so many great memories I have of growing up in Wildwood Crest, but I hope these are just a few that bring back "Happy Memories" in the 100 year celebration of Wildwood Crest.



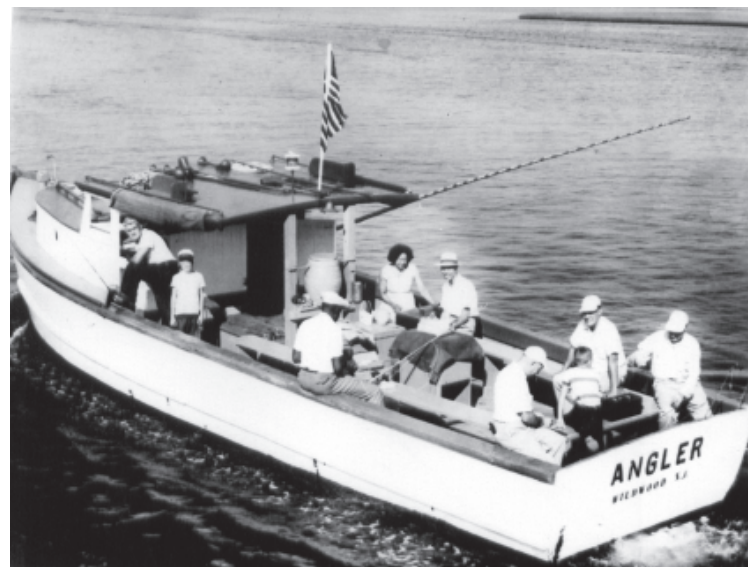
Canning's Take-Out Kitchen, 6300 N.J. Ave., Wildwood Crest in 1972



Here is a great old postcard (front & back) with my grandfather, Capt. Patrick F. Canning in the insert. This was the original "Reliance" which my father, Capt. Frank Canning, purchased from his mom after his dad passed away.

| CANNING'S TAKE OUT KITCHEN<br>6300 New Jersey Avenue<br>WILDWOOD CREST, N. J.  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Chicken In Box</b><br>French Fries<br><b>\$1.30</b>   | <b>Seafood Combination Platter</b><br><b>\$1.80</b><br>Includes ---<br>FLOUNDER-SHRIMP-DEVILED CRAB<br>SCALLOPS-DEVILED CLAM<br>FRENCH FRIES-COLE SLAW-ROLL<br>TARTAR SAUCE & COCKTAIL SAUCE                             | <b>Shrimp In Box</b><br>French Fries<br><b>\$1.30</b>   |
| <b>A La Carte</b><br>45c ea.<br>25c ea.<br>65c ea.<br>20c ea.<br>30c ea.<br>75c - ORDER<br>2 for 35c<br>65c ea.  | <b>FLOUNDER</b><br><b>OYSTER</b><br><b>DEVILED CRAB</b><br><b>FRIED SHRIMP</b><br><b>DEVILED CLAM</b><br><b>SCALLOPS</b><br><b>FRESH FISH CAKES</b><br><b>VEAL STEAK</b><br><b>CHICKEN</b>                               | <b>Platters</b><br><b>\$1.40</b><br><b>\$1.40</b><br><b>\$1.40</b><br><b>\$1.40</b><br><b>\$1.40</b><br><b>\$1.40</b><br><b>\$1.40</b><br><b>\$1.40</b> |
| ALL PLATTERS INCLUDE<br>FRENCH FRIES, COLE SLAW, ROLL, TARTAR SAUCE OR COCKTAIL SAUCE  |  |   |
| <b>French Fries</b> ..... 35c ord.<br><b>Cole Slaw</b> ..... 50c pt.<br><b>Potato Salad</b> ..... 50c pt.<br><b>Pepper Hash</b> ..... 20c 1/2 pt.<br><b>Clam Chowder</b><br>40c pt. - 75c qt.<br><b>Rice Pudding</b> ... 45c pt. | <b>Onion Rings</b> ..... 30c ord.<br><b>Shrimp Cocktail</b> ..... 75c<br><b>Clams on 1/2 Shell</b> ... 60c ord.<br><b>Basket Steamed Clams</b> - \$1.75<br><b>Pizza Pie - Large</b> ..... \$1.50<br><b>Jello</b> 25c pt. |   |
| <b>Try a WING DING</b><br>6 CHICKEN WINGS & FRENCH FRIES \$1.15  |  |   |
| OPEN DAILY 11:30 P.M. - SUNDAY 4 P.M.  |  |   |

The first menu from Canning's Take-Out Kitchen in 1963



I was about 9 yrs. old standing next to my dad, Capt. Frank Canning, on his first party boat "The Angler" (we are on far left)

Have a good old Wildwood story? Contact us at [sun-by-the-sea@verizon.net](mailto:sun-by-the-sea@verizon.net)