In 1825, Mr. Swan felt that this area would be a great place for a town because of the availability of good water and fairly level, rich farm land. On December 10, 1825 he platted the west 40 acres of his land for the town of Canton. In 1831, Mr. Jones bought the original plat and this is where Jones Park and the south half of his land (80 acres) to his brother-in-law Nathan Jones, for the sum of 60 dollars. In the summer of 1824, Isaac Swan arrived in Fulton County with a deed to the southeast quarter section of 160 acres (Section 27). Mr. Swan had served during the War of 1812 but not long enough to earn his veteran status.

Henry Orendorff was the brother of William Orendorff and a brother-in-law of William Parlin, developers of the Parlin and Orendorff (P&O) Plow Works. In his store Henry sold the farm equipment made at P&O. It is still a nice looking building today.

In 1879, a fire destroyed a large part of the north half of the west side of the square. The Orendorff building was constructed on part of the burned out area in 1887. The face of the building was covered with terracotta tile. That was a choice material for that era but was expensive. The beauty of the building is still evident.

During the Civil War, Mr. Donn had exclusive rights to sell guns and powder in this city. James Donn built some of the finest guns in America. He did the engraving on the stocks and barrels for over fifty years. He and his brother Wilber purchased this building in 1873 and opened a gun/hardware store. They dissolved their business in 1908 and sold the building to W.R. Reichert. It remained Reichert Jewelry store until 1994, when it became Fuller’s Jewelry. It has been extensively remodeled inside and out to retain the historic look of the Reichert Jewelry store.

K&L ANTIQUES (2)
54 North Main Street

This building was built after the fire of 1879. The first known business there was Gilroy’s Grocery in 1890. Since then it has been home to a lot of different stores; everything from a crockery shop to several women’s dress shops. Woolworth’s 5 & 10 cent store was here for over 40 years. Due to some excellent natural lighting upstairs, it was the location of a couple different photography studios. The gas pipes for the lights are still in the walls upstairs in the private living quarters.

Orendorff building (1)
82 North Main Street

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BANKS (4)
10 East Elm Street & 8 South Main Street

Sometime prior to 1864 the federal government inaugurated the national bank system. A private bank had been operating off and on in Canton since early 1850. March 23, 1864 the First National Bank was organized under the federal banking laws.

From 1850 until 1858 the bank was located in two different places. Originally it was on W. Elm and in 1855 was moved to the southeast corner of the square on the west side of White Court in the Thompson Maple building and was later the organizing of the First National Bank in 1864. In 1882 another private bank was owned and operated until October 1886 when it secured a charter as the Canton National Bank of Canton, Illinois. This bank opened January 1, 1887 for business in a frame building at 10 E. Elm St. This had been the Walker grocery store. On June 20, 1894, the cornerstone was laid for a new brick building on this site.

In 1907 the Canton National Bank expanded to the Reed-er Drug Store, next door east, and both buildings were extensively remodeled. It was decided to leave the second story front on each building. Notice the difference.

The People’s Bank, a private bank opened in 1873 across the street at S. Main. This building was constructed in 1872. The bank failed October 30, 1884. On October 18, 1888, the First National Bank moved from the Thompson Maple building into this location.

Both the Canton National Bank and the First National Bank of Canton operated in these locations until they were closed by the Federal Bank Moratorium Act under FDR March 4, 1933. These two banks merged in the fall of 1933 and were allowed to reopen under the name of the National Bank of Canton.

RANDOLPH BLOCK (5)
1 East Side Square

John Randolph, one of Fulton County’s largest land owners, constructed this Randolph Block in 1893. It extended the full block, from Main Street to First Avenue, and was two complete floors and had a third story on the back half of the building.

The building cost $16,000 to construct and had the largest showroom in the county at 48X90 feet and was lighted by gas. There were many businesses and offices in the building over the years. The Canton Commercial College moved into the third floor on September 1, 1891. It
is not known how long this school was there but the Harmison Business College opened in December of 1904 and closed in August 1911. In 2007, Bill Cook, a native of Canton and founder of Cook Medical of Bloomington, IN purchased the building. 2008 and 2009 were spent rebuilding and restoring it to the original architecture and it was opened for business in 2009. Currently, there are four luxury apartments on the second story and retail space on the street level.

**OPERA HOUSE (6)**
45 East Side Square

The last residential home on the square was owned by John Graham. The local Graham Hospital was named in his honor due to the generosity of his daughters. The house was built in 1867 and razed in 1891 to make room for the new Opera House. The Morning Star Lodge #734 A.F.&A.M purchased the third floor for their meeting place.

The Opera House burned September 19, 1893. The walls were deemed structurally safe and reconstruction began the next year. In 1898 the building was reopened and served the community until 1922. Part of that time under the name of the Princess Opera House. It has been said that Roy Rogers performed on the stage here. In 1922 it was sold to the Kerasota Theatre chain and was remodeled into a movie theatre and operated as such until 1984 when it closed.

In 1987 it was condemned and in 2000 it was scheduled for razing. In 1999, the Huber Brothers Co. from Peoria stepped forward with plans to reconstruct the building and purchased the property. They remodeled it into three story commercial and office space. In early 2004, it again became an active crown jewel on the square.

**Postscript:** On November 16, 2016, a massive natural gas explosion directly behind the Opera House building wreaked havoc on our historic downtown. Fifty-two buildings in total were affected. The Opera House, which was heavily damaged in the explosion, was demolished on June 21, 2017.

**THE CANTON CENTENNIAL MONUMENT (7)**
East Chestnut Street & East Side Square

Looking north to the corner of East Side Square and Chestnut St. Go to that corner, cross over Chestnut in front of Goodwill and relax on the benches next to the Centennial Monument. The monument, which was dedicated on September 15, 2015, will tell you about Canton’s beginning. The benches and physical space were generously provided by Cook Medical, Inc.

Canton Main Street would sincerely like to thank Emily and Ray Cleer for tireless hours spent researching the history of buildings in downtown Canton and creating the content you see in this brochure. They are pictured above at the dedication of the Centennial Monument, immediately to the right of the