



## 2025 Annual Report

Much of this year was devoted to Canton's Bicentennial Celebration. Committees planned events and hosted programs at the museum, and individual board members assumed leadership roles. We want to recognize the "good work" of our own Mike Walters, Chairman of Canton's Bicentennial Committee. We also extend our appreciation to the members, donors, visitors, and partnering organizations who have supported us since the museum's founding in 2015. Below are the reports of our five working committees.

### Facilities Committee

This committee oversees the general maintenance of the facility while initiating any improvements or rearrangement that may benefit the display of artifacts and memorabilia that have been loaned or donated to the Heritage Center.

In the past year while continuing to enhance our expanded area, we were able to open the Agriculture Room, predominantly showing our salute to Sesquicentennial family farms in Fulton County. Antique household items plus a P & O steel single bottom plow and tools are in the collection.

We were able to obtain three sizable glass display cabinets. This has enabled us to display the contents of the 1925 Time Capsule that was opened in a program at our facility. One of the six sections is being used to rotate new or temporary displays. Currently, a P.E.O. historical exhibit honors their 100-year anniversary. We will continue to find innovative methods and change or modify displays to keep them attractive and vibrant.

Committee: Phil Gregory and Jim Morgan, Co-chairs; Jack Pollitt and John Putman

### Fundraising Committee

The committee organizes fundraising, including the annual membership drive. Donations increased in both number and amounts. Almost \$17,000 was raised from individuals and businesses in FY2025. Several people honored their families with memorials. Former Caterpillar employees have utilized the Caterpillar Foundation's 1:1 Matching Program to increase their donations.

We applied for and received two grants that were used for promotion of the museum and remodeling of our expanded physical space.

- City of Canton Business Development District Grant
- Fulton County Board Economic Development Grant

We are the recipient of donated books written by local author Brooks Carver which are for sale. See the list of books on our web page, [www.cantonillinois.org/heritage-center](http://www.cantonillinois.org/heritage-center).

Also available are DVDs of our "Cemetery Walk Revisited" program, held during Canton's Bicentennial. Twelve notable persons from Canton's founding and growth years are portrayed. Interested persons may request a copy for a donation of \$15 and postage, if mailed.

Note cards and postcards created by local watercolor artist Mary Ellen Carver, in commemoration of Canton's 200 years, are also available.

Committee: Cheryl Bielema, John Putman, Mike and Susan Walters. Carol Davis, consultant

## **Promotions Committee**

The Promotions Committee used a variety of resources in 2025 to increase awareness of the Canton Area Heritage Center. Included in the promotions were:

Tours of the Heritage Center provided by CAHC volunteers for various organizations from throughout Fulton County.

Articles and pictures in the *Fulton Democrat* about Heritage Center activities, and specifically, the presentation of the Cemetery Walk Revisited in conjunction with Canton's Bicentennial Celebration.

A news release was sent in August outlining attendance figures at the museum during the Bicentennial Celebration. News releases are sent to local and regional media outlets and other organizations: The Fulton Democrat, The Mason County Democrat, The Astoria South Fulton Argus, Canton Daily Ledger, Peoria Journal Star, WILP, WBYS, WPZA, City of Canton, Canton Area Chamber of Commerce, Canton Cable TV Channel 22, Forgottonia Times, and Canton Area Heritage Center newsletter and social media.

Social media in the form of Facebook continues to be a primary source for promotion of the Heritage Center. Those figures are shown on a separate sheet.

Committee: Debbie Stephenson, Chair, and Kevin Stephenson

## **Programs Committee**

Activities include publishing the quarterly *Museum Newsletter*, posting to the center's Facebook page, updating the museum's web page, [www.cantonillinois.org/heritage-center](http://www.cantonillinois.org/heritage-center), and coordinating volunteers. Planning programs with other community organizations is also our responsibility.

For the Bicentennial, we planned six historic bus tours, in collaboration with Spoon River College. The committee also led the "Salute to Historic Fulton County Farms" exhibit which was placed at the Train Depot. Nine Sesquicentennial Farm families were featured during the ten-day celebration, and now moved to our permanent Agriculture Room at the museum.

Ongoing is a video streaming project which will capture "Canton's Compelling History," as told by local historians who are sharing stories and artifacts important to the Canton community. The first person to be recorded is Jack Pollitt describing the emergence of Parlin & Orendorff Plow Works and later International Harvester – Canton Plant. Pollitt worked at IH for 20 years and had the difficult task of locking the shop doors for a final time when the plant was closed in 1983. We have created a YouTube Channel on which these segments will be hosted.

See the Community Engagement Report that delineates the variety of museum activities on the following page.

Committee: Cheryl Bielema, Chair, Jan Bruster, Hannah Cox, Kathy Myers and Harold Rose

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OCTOBER, 2024-SEPTEMBER, 2025



YouTube



Canton Area Heritage Center  
@CantonAreaHeritageCenter

<b>Museum Members</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>Followers</b>	<b>1967</b>
<b>Museum Visitors</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>Posts</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Newsletters Mailed</b>	<b>1668</b>	<b>Views</b>	<b>65,997</b>
<b>Newsletters Emailed</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>48% of followers are 55+</b>	
<b>EM/Website Inquiries</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>80% are from Canton</b>	

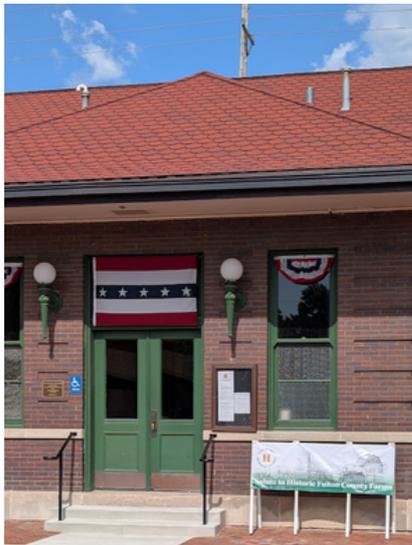
**Subscribers** 4

**Views**  
**P & O Plow** 53  
**Cemetery Walk** 15

**June 26 "Farm Families" post was most popular, 6687 views**

### Attendance at Special Events

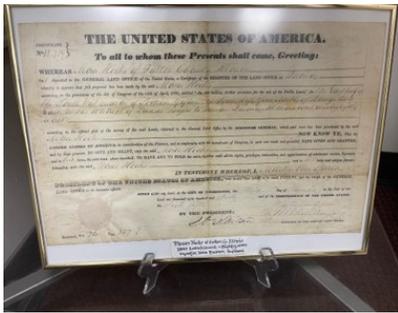
<b>Bicentennial Bus Tours</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Sesquicentennial Farm Exhibit</b>	<b>350</b>
<b>Cemetery Walk Revisited</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>1925 Time Capsule Reveal</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Museum Tours</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Presentations</b>	<b>404</b>



## Acquisitions Committee

The Canton Area Heritage Center obtained additional historic items this year through the acquisition program at the museum. We are very grateful for the thirty-eight individuals who donated historic items to our museum. Here are just a few of the unique, outstanding acquisitions:

Contents of 1925 Time Capsule are now preserved at the museum. The five cases were placed by the Bicentennial Committee. You will see a variety of items, including letters, books, buttons, Centennial programs, newspaper articles, photos, and more.



1840 Fulton County Land Grant Deed for Moses Hicks, signed by Martin Van Buren, President. Donated by Mike and Janet Krulac of Canton.

138 issues of *The Canton Magazine* donated by Carolyn Browning, Canton.



Period Dress and Farm Tools donated by Marla Hedden of Canton.



Clement Hulit's Marriage Certificate, dated 1905, donated by Debra Rigney-Hays, Galesburg, IL.

Several Canton Books, History of the Baptist Church, Dishware, and numerous Canton historic data donated by Bill Brown of Golden, CO.

Portrait of John Orendorff and Camp Ellis Spoons donated by Linda Barker of Brereton, IL.



P. & O. Single Steel Bottom Plow donated by Eastview School in Canton.

WBYS items and miscellaneous business items donated by Kathy Luker, Canton.

Watercolor Painting of Canton donated by Annisa Hamm, Canton.



Oil Painting of Canton Square, done in 1975, by R.D. Thompson donated by the Ryan Rose Family of Canton.

*Cantonian* and Grade School Yearbooks and miscellaneous school papers donated by several individuals.

Committee: Mike Walters, Chair, Debbie Stephenson, Registrar, Mary Lou Kuchan, Dean Gibson, Roy Hopper, Jack and Mary Pollitt