

We end our fifth year at 111 South Main Street in Canton, having welcomed 2400 visitors, to-date, and having reached many more with our Facebook page, media interviews, and programs in the community. We have acquired hundreds of historic artifacts to achieve our mission, “to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of Canton’s and the surrounding area’s history, culture, and industry.”

Following are reports of the Heritage Center committees and activities in the past year. We continued our outreach to Canton alums and hosting of group tours. Sharing the stories of *Notable Women of the Canton* has been a feature of the past year as well as helping celebrate Fulton County’s Bicentennial.

**Facilities Committee**

The committee oversees facility maintenance and the exhibits, collaborating with the other committees. We change out artifacts and re-organize spaces to accommodate additions to the permanent exhibits.

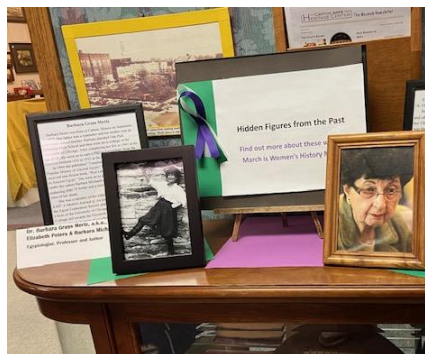
The permanent exhibits include important Industries of the area – Parlin-Orendorff Plow Works; International Harvester; Mining Companies and Miners of Fulton County; Medical Pioneers, Graham Hospital and Graham School of Nursing. Also, Notable People are showcased – those entrepreneurs, business men and women, musicians, athletes, politicians, and philanthropists who have made a difference in this community.

New museum exhibits coordinated with the Acquisitions and Programs Committees this year included:



Canton Park District  
100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Photos Display

Dave Scott, Musician,  
Photos and Newspaper  
Articles Display



Canton’s Women of  
Note/Women’s History  
Month

Plattensburg Apothecary  
Cabinet/Original Boxes  
of Medicinal Herbs



Traveling Museum at Fulton  
County Bicentennial  
September 3, 2023

Canton Corn Sheller  
P & O Plow Works at  
Kansas City, MO

Committee: Phil Gregory, Co-chair, Jim Morgan, Co-chair, and John Putman

## **Fundraising Committee**

Memberships and donations help maintain the museum as visitors, new and sustaining members and donors respond generously to the annual membership drive.

Following are details of our activities:

206 individual/family and 18 business/organization members joined the museum in 2023.

Fourteen *Major Donors* were recognized: Canton First Christian Church; CFC Properties/Cook Medical Company; Robert Chick; Graham Hospital Association; Elizabeth A. Kovachevich; George H. Mills; Kathleen S. Myers; and, the Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development (*Founder Level*, \$1000+). Ray Cleer; Helping Hands Resale Shoppe; Roland Pettit; Kevin and Teresa Meade; Paul and Roberta Reber; and, Max and Cheryl Scott (*Benefactor Level*, \$500-\$999).

We were selected for a *Connecting with Agency Partners Grant* by First Christian Church of Canton. We have welcomed additional volunteers and been able to tell our story more effectively through purchase of information stands for the museum.

We received a City of Canton *Hotel-Motel Tax Grant* to support promotion of the museum and the 2023 Cemetery Walk.

The 2023 Cemetery Walk told stories of past illustrious Cantonites, Charlotte Bennett, beloved teacher and arts and music advocate; Bill Cook, President/CEO Cook Medical Group; Bob Ems, long-time director of the Canton Park District; Dorothy Fennell, penicillin researcher; Kay Ragsdale, flautist and “Lion King” orchestra member; and, Charlie Wright, WBYS owner. Collaborators included excellent local actors, writers Mike and Susan Walters, and director Carol Davis. Performers included Andrea Barbknecht, Carol Davis, Belle Hardy, Bob Juraco, Mike Krulac, Lindsey Larson, David Lewis, Kevin Stephenson, and Pam Willison. DVDs of this outdoor theater presentation are available @ \$15 (plus mailing cost). Request a copy by contacting the museum, (309) 647-2242, or [cahcpo19@att.net](mailto:cahcpo19@att.net). Our co-sponsors: the City of Canton and Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development.

Committee: Cheryl Bielema, Helen Crosby, John Putman, Susan and Mike Walters, Don Heller, adv.

## **Programs Committee**

The Programs Committee coordinates exhibits with the Acquisitions and Facilities Committees. The Facebook page and webpage, [www.cantonillinois.org/heritage-center](http://www.cantonillinois.org/heritage-center), are our responsibility, as are the museum newsletters, programs and volunteers.

Facebook stories in the past year included: Canton’s Women of Note/Women’s History Month; One-of-a-Kind Artifacts; Volunteers at Museum Work Day; CHS Class Reunion Tours; and, Celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fulton County.

We participated in spring and fall Lifelong Learning Conferences hosted by Spoon River College with sessions focused on “Canton’s Women of Note.” Twelve women have been profiled: Virginia McBroom Barnard, Dr. Marjorie Rich Bordner, Nora Weber Corbitt, Alicia Curtis, Dorothy Fennell, Sarah Taylor Hopwood, the Honorable Elizabeth Kovachevich, Elizabeth Magie, Dr. Barbara Gross Mertz, Nancy I. Rabel, Signa Axcell Thomas, and Harriet Vittum.

Four quarterly newsletters were distributed to 400+ partners, members, donors and visitors; “Museum Reports” were given on 94.1 BYS Radio (1560wbys.com).

Volunteers are always needed for a variety of tasks. Call, email, or message us, if you are interested.

Committee: Cheryl Bielema, Chair, Jan Bruster, Hannah Cox, Erika Davis, Martha Harr, Kathy Myers, Harold Rose, and Christy Semande

### **Promotion Committee**

The Promotion Committee used a variety of means in 2023 to increase exposure and awareness to the public about the Canton Area Heritage Center. Throughout the year, these highlights included:

\*\*\*Appearances by CAHC volunteers talking about museum exhibits and happenings.

\*\*\*Articles and pictures in *The Fulton Democrat* about museum exhibits and happenings; also, feature article in *Peoria Magazine*, September, 2023

\*\*\*Stories and pictures in the CAHC Newsletter about museum exhibits and happenings.

\*\*\*Numerous posts on Facebook throughout the year about museum exhibits and happenings.

\*\*\*News releases about museum exhibits and happenings, such as the Duryea Automobile’s Canton Connection, Notable Women of Canton, the Cemetery Walk, and the CAHC Annual Meeting.

The highest concentration of Promotion Committee activity was in September when Cemetery Walk was being marketed. The activities included: Receiving a \$1,500 grant from the City of Canton Hotel-Motel Tax program was used to increase awareness locally and regionally about Canton events. The funds were used for paid advertising in these media:

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|--|-------------------------------|
| -The Fulton Democrat                       | -WBYS 1560 AM/94.1 FM         |
| -Mason County Democrat                     | -WILP 98.1 FM                 |
| -South Fulton Argus                        | -Peoria Magazine E-Newsletter |
| -Brochures (printed for the Cemetery Walk) |                               |

Flyers were made and distributed to area organizations such as Canton Area Chamber of Commerce to include in emails to their membership and churches to use in their bulletins. A news release was sent to sixteen different organizations in the Fulton County, Havana, and Peoria areas. The Cemetery Walk was promoted in the CAHC fourth quarter newsletter and extensively on Facebook prior to the event.

Committee: Debbie Stephenson, Co-chair, John Froehling, Co-Chair, and Kevin Stephenson

## Acquisitions Committee

The Canton Area Heritage Center obtained several items this year through the acquisition program at the museum. Here are just a few of the outstanding additions:

“**The Canton**” built by P & O Plow Works in the 1880s and well into the 1900s, was a hand-operated corn sheller found on thousands of farms throughout the Midwest. This artifact is on loan from Rusty Melhouse of Canton.



This **Apothecary Cabinet** was donated by the Jim Kuharich family, Canton. The cabinet was originally located in the Plattenburg Pharmacy, later used in the Greenwell and Gray Drug Store. There were still boxes of herbs and medicine in the drawers.

In 1963, Canton’s football team was the second undefeated football team in school history. This **CHS letter sweater** was donated by the Honorable Tom Homer of Naperville, IL, a player on the undefeated football team. Go Giants!!



In 1943, the purple **CHS letter sweater** was proudly worn by Cheerleader Kay Moore during her high school years. This sweater and framed memorabilia were donated by her son, Barry Grove, of Cedar Rapids, IA.

**Cardominoes** was a new educational card game in 1956. This game was manufactured by H. T. Schoon in Canton. Fun for the whole family. These cards were donated by Donna Branchfield of Canton.







The **Red Jacket Pumps metal sign** was advertising for a long-time business in Avon. The R. E. Yocum Plumbing and Pump Service was located on Woods Street. Items donated by Shirley Messick of New Cumberland, PA, include the sign, two wooden children's chairs from the Avon Methodist Church, photos of Avon Grade School, one of two books, *Looking for Cornbread*, by Joe Paradis.

This **Dr. Hays sign** was used when the doctor was in the office without a receptionist to welcome his patients. Early in 1923, Dr. Verne Hays' and his father Dr. L.E. Hays' practice was located in the First National Bank Building located at 2 South Main Street. The sign was donated by Peggy and the late Bill Hays, son of Dr. Verne Hays, of Canton.



The **Civil War-era waistcoat and vest** were recently donated by Glen and Barbara Potter of Avon, IL. This coat and vest complement several 1860s newspaper articles, one of which lists the Civil War soldiers from Fulton County.

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

Annual Meeting, November 9, 2023

*Thank you to everyone who has had a part in supporting our community museum.*

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