

We welcomed 400 visitors in 2024 and reached many more with our Facebook page, media articles, and programs in the community. We are busy creating new displays in our expanded, remodeled space. Historical artifacts and memorabilia donated by people here and across the country help us 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.

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 made a difference.

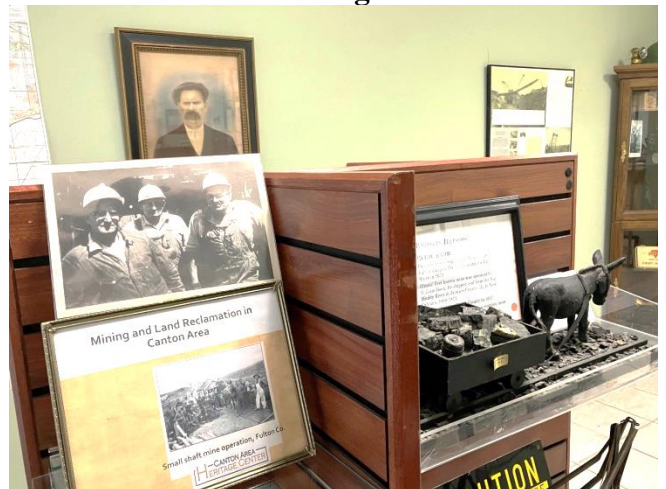
New museum exhibits this year included the 75th year for Gear Jammers; Croatian Fraternal Union early documents; photos and newspaper articles featuring nurse Gertrude Schoon, who put together Graham Hospital’s Intensive Care Unit and served as its first Director.

We also remodeled an adjacent office, which has expanded the museum’s square footage. We thank our landlord, Graham Health System, for their generous contributions to the effort.

New Welcome Desk



New Mining Room



Committee: Phil Gregory and Jim Morgan, Co-Chairs. Jack Pollitt and John Putman

Fundraising Committee

Following are details of our activities this year. Membership grew to 211 individuals/families and 18 businesses/organizations in 2024.

We recognize 15 *Major Donors*: CFC Properties/Cook Medical Company; the City of Canton; Nancy Elson; Graham Health System; George H. Mills; Kathleen S. Myers; and, the Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development (*Founders Level*, \$1000+). Ray Cleer; David and Paula Grigsby; Helping Hands Resale Shoppe; Kevin and Terry Meade; Elizabeth Nausler; Roland Pettit; Paul and Roberta Reber; and, Max and Cheryl Scott (*Benefactor Level*, \$500-\$999).

Three grants were awarded to the museum – City of Canton’s *Hotel-Motel Tax* and *Business Development District Grants* and the Fulton County Board’s *Economic Development Grant* for the promotion of the Cemetery Walk and the Heritage Center, broadly, as well as for remodeling expenses.

The 2024 Cemetery Walk told stories of past illustrious Cantonites, L.D. (Barnie) Barnard, Burnett M. Chipfield, John S. Coleman, Leo Dworak, Lavern (Bim) Estes, and Cody Krulac. DVDs of this outdoor theater presentation are available; request a copy. Reseachers/Writers: Susan and Mike Walters; Actor/Director: Carol Davis. Our co-sponsors: City of Canton and Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development.

Committee: Mike Walters, Susan Walters, Carol Davis, Kevin Stephenson, Debbie Stephenson and Cheryl Bielema

Programs Committee

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

Facebook stories for our 1921 followers included: 80th Anniversary of D-Day, June 6, 1944; Canton’s Schools with Gloria Pschirrer; Celebrating Nurses Week and Gertrude Schoon; Cub Scouts and Class Reunion Tours; Silver Sneakers’ Volunteers at Museum Work Day; Cemetery Walk’s Local Heroes; and Canton’s Notable Women.

Four quarterly newsletters were distributed to 500 partners, members, donors and visitors.

In planning: New exhibit, *Salute to Historic Fulton County Farms*, will focus on Illinois Department of Agriculture’s Sesquicentennial Farms, those owned for 150 years by the same family.

In planning: Tours of historic buildings and places are being coordinated with Spoon River College for Canton’s Bicentennial Celebration in June, 2025.

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, Martha Harr, Kathy Myers, Harold Rose

Promotion Committee

The Promotion Committee used a variety of means in 2024 to increase exposure to the public about the Canton Area Heritage Center. These highlights included:

- Appearances by CAHC volunteers promoting museum exhibits and happenings
- Articles and pictures in *The Fulton Democrat*; feature article in *The Forgottonia Times*
- Stories on WBYS, WILP, and Cable Channel 22
- Numerous posts on social media about museum exhibits and happenings

The Cemetery Walk in September requires many promotion activities. A City of Canton grant of \$1000 was used to increase awareness locally and regionally and to support advertising in these media:

- *The Fulton Democrat*
- *The Mason Democrat*
- *The Forgottonia Times*
- *South Fulton Argus*
- WBYS 1560 AM/94.1 FM
- WILP 98.1 FM



- Posters distributed to area organizations, businesses and local churches
- Tri-fold programs distributed at the Cemetery Walk

A news release was sent to 12 sources to announce the expansion of the Canton Area Heritage Center.

Committee: Debbie Stephenson, Chair. John Froehling, Kevin Stephenson

Acquisitions Committee

The Canton Area Heritage Center continued to receive items through our acquisition program this year. We are very grateful for the eighty-nine individuals who donated keepsakes, antiques and historical records. Here are just a few of these acquisitions.



Two engraved Canton Glass Vases donated by Esther Keefauver



Locker Door from Big Creek Park oval swimming pool locker room donated by Paul and Roberta Reber

Handmade Cradle built in the late 1800's by John H. Baker and his son David S. Baker of Astoria with Baby Quilt (made by family members) and donated by David Baker



Canton Blanket donated by Barry Pine



Vintage Miniature Dolls dressed in different eras of nursing uniforms donated by Jackie Weaver

The historical pieces we accept vary, and we encourage you to contact us before discarding your family memorabilia. Here are additional, unique acquisitions of the past year: Shovel used at Illinois River Correctional Center's Groundbreaking by Mayor Don Edwards, donated by Bruce Edwards; the 4x5-foot Lewis Pharmacy store front sign donated by Bill Buckley; Capitol Movie Theater letters from sign donated by Jeff Rhoades; U.G. Orendorff and P & O Band pictures donated by Steve Graves; cookbook from the office of Congressman Robert Chipfield donated by Diana Wade; and, articles about AIDS research advocate John Keets donated by Elizabeth Powell.

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

Distributed at the museum's Annual Meeting, December 12, 2024

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

CANTON AREA HERITAGE CENTER
 111 SOUTH MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 526, CANTON, IL 61520
 PHONE: (309) 647-2242 – EMAIL: CAHCPO19@ATT.NET