

Since 2015

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January - February - March 2025

## THE CHAIR'S REPORT



**Jack Pollitt, Chairman**  
Canton Area Heritage Center  
Executive Board  
Cell: (309) 338-5667

**Where Did It Go? –What? –The Year!**  
I'll bet most of you heard that question or thought it yourselves. At the center, we felt 2024 had wings, particularly in the last third of the year.

In the last newsletter, we briefly described our new addition in terms of "added footage" and of some plans for "expansion." We are happy to advise that the newsletter was distributed to 500 partners, members, donors and visitors, as well as contacts through our Facebook and our web pages. This started the exposure we wanted for our expansion.

A goal was set to complete the remodeling of our new area by November 1. It was decided rather than to host an Annual Meeting with entertainment, we would instead attempt to complete our remodeling, rearranging and adding exhibits in early December, allowing an open house and the Annual Meeting at the same time. We hosted the event on December 12, 2024.

We believe the open house was a success. Our attendees were very complimentary, and most stayed longer than usual, indicating they were comfortable in the expanded museum and interested in its contents.

**Changes Made.** We moved mining artifacts to a separate room. That allowed us to spread out the exhibit and be ready for additional pieces. This also left a bigger area for Businesses of the Past.

The old greeting area served us the opportunity to display items from area schools. The new wall built in this area permitted us to hang five photo copies, 3-1/4 feet x 2-1/2 feet, each depicting how a casting was made at the IHC Foundry (which closed in 1960 -1961).

Through the efforts of Mike Walters, Acquisitions Chair, we obtained four large glass-front cabinets for the expanded space. Two cabinets in the new Reception area will house the contents of the 1925 time capsule to be opened at Canton's Bicentennial Celebration, June 20-29, 2025.

In the meantime, Mike and Susan Walters have loaned five hand-crafted horses and wagons, made accurately to scale by Fred C. Moran, a former Cantonite, who eventually worked for Cecil B. DeMille of motion picture fame. One of the wagons sports a familiar name to many of us – the Bennett Ice Co.

Mr. Moran was a talented inventor with artistic talents. He invented such items as a hopper for corn planters and a side delivery hay rake. For Mr. DeMille's movie, *The Ten Commandments*, he created the parting of the Red Sea. Come in and read how he accomplished this realistic illusion of

parting the waves for the Jewish people's escape. You'll be surprised!

**In the New Year.** As the New Year begins, we continue work on our Bicentennial projects as well as our normal efforts to keep the museum alive and effective.

Our Bicentennial projects include creating a room saluting Historic Fulton County Farms and Agriculture, coordinating Tours of Historic Buildings and Sites, and hosting a "Cemetery Walk, Revisited."

I hope to see you at the museum in 2025!

**Jack Pollitt, Chair**



Janice Dare Bruster presented a gavel to our 2025 Chair Jack Pollitt at a recent meeting. Janice also describes a Bicentennial project she leads, the "Salute to Historic Fulton County Farms," on page 3.



## Special points of interest

- FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS IN THIS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
- MEET MOVERS AND SHAKERS, THEN AND NOW
- LEARN INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY
- PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL HISTORY PROGRAMS
- VOLUNTEER WHERE AND WHEN YOU CAN

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Our hours are  
 Fridays, 10am-12 noon  
 Saturdays, 10am-2pm  
 Sundays, 1pm-3pm  
 Come see us!  
 Want a group tour? Call  
 (309) 647-2242 and  
 leave a message.

# The Museum Newsletter

## DID YOU KNOW? PURPOSE OF CAMP ELLIS

The first thought many people have regarding Camp Ellis, located near Ipava, IL, is that it was a prisoner of war camp. Prisoners were indeed held there, but the mission of the U.S. Army Camp was training specialty units to support the overall war effort overseas.

Camp Ellis trained personnel in the Engineering Corp., Quartermaster Corp., Hospital Corp., Signal Corp., and Transport Supply. Everyone learned to live and do their jobs in outdoor and tenting conditions. Becoming infantry soldiers was not the goal, but since they needed to be able to defend themselves, they were given training in all kinds of artillery.

It was at Camp Ellis that "MASH" (i.e., Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) units were developed to a high degree of proficiency to tend to medical needs on/near the battlefields.\*\* The hospital at the camp covered 140 acres with 11 miles of corridors and 1500 beds. The hospital was supplied with the most up-to-date medical equipment of the day in 1943.

Over 125,000 troops were trained at Camp Ellis. Many commending offices wrote back from the Pacific and European Theatres of War that Camp Ellis troops were very well-trained. Can you imagine this all happened in 18 months of active deployment of the camp?

Our museum has an interesting display of Camp Ellis artifacts and general information about the camp. You are invited to stop by and enjoy this exhibit during our normal hours of operation. We can also arrange for private group or individual tours.

Reference: Catherine M. Kerr. 2019. *WWII Camp Ellis: Homefronts and POWs*

**Jim Morgan**, Treasurer

\*\*MASH was a new organization announced on August 23, 1945, at the very end of World War II. The MASH unit was designed to be fully mobile in that the full hospital could be broken down and loaded into trucks along with hospital staff.

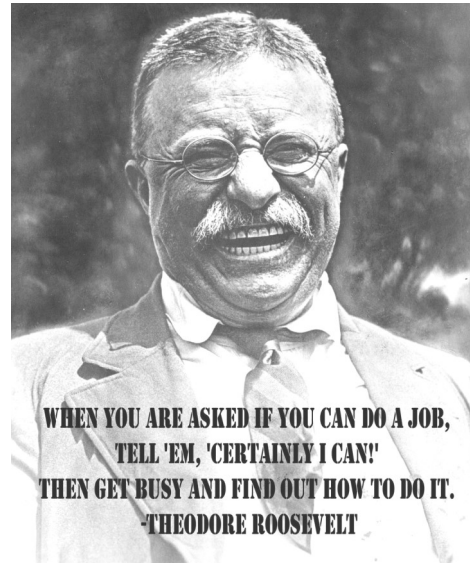


## THE AMAZING THEODORE ROOSEVELT

(October 27, 1858 - January 6, 1919)

Editor's Note. On January 6, 2025, I saw that Teddy Roosevelt had died on that day, 106 years earlier. I share these quotes in his memory.

Upon hearing that our 26th President Theodore Roosevelt had died, Woodrow Wilson's vice president Thomas R. Marshall said, "**Death had to take Roosevelt sleeping, for if he had been awake, there would have been a fight.**"



## 2025 MAJOR DONORS, TO DATE

### Benefactors (\$500 - \$999)

Robin Lynch/Lynch Family  
Kathleen S. Myers  
Dr. Roland Pettit  
Paul and Roberta Reber

### Founders (\$1000 and above)

Jack and Mary Pollitt

### Memorials

Joe D. Stone by classmate, Dr. Larry Stanfel



CAMP ELLIS, ILLINOIS

Photo courtesy of Dickson Mounds State Museum

PHOTO BY SILVESTER WICKOFF, CAMP ELLIS

## MEET JANICE BRUSTER, COORDINATOR, HISTORIC FARMS EXHIBIT

Editor's Note: Agriculture was the industry that brought early settlers to Fulton County. Did you know that land grants were made to veterans of the War of 1812 as pay? Veterans either migrated themselves or sold the grants to others.

Janice Dare Bruster started volunteering at the museum in 2022. We soon talked about creating an exhibit to honor the farming industry. It was Jan's idea to focus on Sesquicentennial Farms, those having received the IL Department of Agriculture designation because families have continuously owned the farm for at least 150 years. Jan is herself part of a Sesquicentennial Farm family and here is her story. -- Cheryl Bielema

I was born on a very snowy day in January, 1953. Mom started having contractions and Dad hurried to put the chains on the Ford. They got to Graham Hospital in time for me to be delivered there, and not on the farm, as my mother had been years before.

I grew up on that farm which was a "working" farm, where everyone had a job to do. Gathering eggs was the first job which advanced to working with livestock and on to field work. I couldn't always keep up, but I did my best.

There were times I missed out on fun activities with friends because I lived in the country. However, I was involved in church functions, 4-H, and school activities, such as band, chorus and plays.

I often followed Dad around to be his gopher. I watched how he fixed and made things, and I believe that was more helpful than the fun I could have had with friends.

Like most farms we had a dog, several cats, and once had a pet chicken named Charlie, who we pushed around in a baby buggy! We later had a pony and two horses. We had a large garden, which was rotated with a chicken



lot, providing good fertilizer. In the summer we canned and froze vegetables and fruit; our food for the winter.

Years passed, I graduated from Canton Senior High School; then graduated from Graham School of Nursing. My work history included 20 years in the Emergency Department in Macomb and Peoria, four with an IV pharmacy company, and 18 years at now OSF Orthopedics. It was a wonderful career, one I would do all over again and miss



every day. I retired and moved home to Canton.

**Importance of agriculture.** If you take agriculture out of the equation of life, we will all die! A farm family sheds blood, sweat and tears to save and pass on to more family. Sacrifices are made and the greatest gifts from God are received.

I want people to know that a box of corn flakes isn't produced in a grocery store. It starts with farm land, a horse or a tractor, a way to till the soil, grain to plant, then prayers that sun and rain will come at the right time. At harvest, a way is found to sell the grain, on to a company to process the corn into flakes. Someone else makes the box and the trucker brings the cereal to the store. I'm sure I've left out some steps, but you get the idea!

Agriculture, or farm land, takes up a large portion of Fulton County acres. It also employs an unknown number of people, either directly on the farms, or collaterally, truckers, livestock feed producers, building contractors, machinery manufacturers and so on. To summarize, farming feeds people and provides many jobs.

**How did I locate our Sesquicentennial farms?** The initial internet search only provided last names of farm owners, their county, city, township. There were 18 farms listed; but, not all of them

have chosen to participate. A phone call to the Illinois Department of Agriculture yielded no help in locating the farmers. I was told contact information was private and could not be released. I obtained the same response from our local Farm Bureau.

So, I made a call to someone who knows almost everyone in the county, my brother Henry Dare. He was a huge help!! I knew people in other areas who also helped. As the project grew, one person called and asked to be included. On a trip to Macomb, I saw a Centennial Farm sign, found out who the family was, and arranged a meeting. The farmer shared information and pictures while he and his wife served coffee and cookies. (Farm families often serve snacks!!). Sesquicentennial Farms in Fulton County are located in Canton, Ellisville, Avon, Bryant, Astoria, Smithfield and Cuba.

Farm people are a very connected group of people who bind together in times of need, especially. Neighborhood farmers used to share labor to bale hay and butcher. A farmer would mow hay, rake, and when dry, the neighbors would come on their tractors pulling a hay rack. When the hay was all baled, iced tea and cookies were served. They shared the work. One spring my dad suffered appendicitis and our neighbors finished the planting for him.



My parents Harold and Anna Mae, nephew Phil, and brother Henry Dare. Phil and Henry are the current farmers.

God has given us six inches of good topsoil, rain and sun. He has left it up to us to take care of and feed the world. "So God made a farmer" [Paul Harvey speech] says it best!

**Jan Bruster**, Historic Farms Project Director

Preserving our history...

## 2025 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Address:  
111 South Main Street  
P.O. Box 526  
Canton, Illinois 61520  
  
Phone: 309-647-2242  
Email: cahcpo19@att.net

Thanks in advance for your willingness to be a part of honoring our area's rich and vibrant history.

**High School Students/ Seniors (age 65+) - \$15**  
**Individuals - \$20/ Family - \$35**  
**Community Organization - \$50**  
**Business/Commercial - \$100**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the appropriate category:

Student/Senior - \$15     Individual - \$20     Family - \$35  
 Community Organization - \$50. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Business/Commercial - \$100. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Donation amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Return form and check to Canton Area Heritage Center, P.O. Box 526, Canton, IL 61520



**We're on the Web:**  
[www.cantonillinois.org/heritage-center](http://www.cantonillinois.org/heritage-center)

## LATEST AT THE MUSEUM



New acquisitions include a cradle, hand-built by John and David Baker of Astoria in late 1800s; on loan, horses and wagons, hand-built to scale, by Fred C. Moran, raised in Canton. Moran had a successful career in Hollywood.



New board member Hannah Cox was inducted during 2024 Annual Meeting. Welcome, Hannah!

You may download a copy of the "2024 Annual Report" on our webpage, [Canton Area Heritage Center](http://Canton Area Heritage Center)

