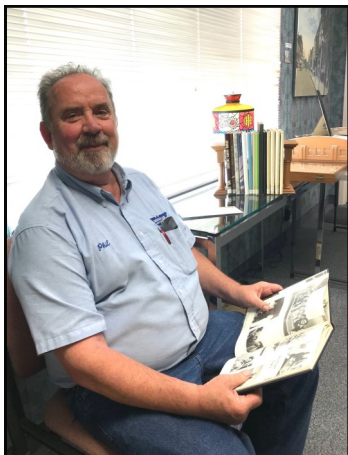


# H—CANTON AREA HERITAGE CENTER

## The Museum Newsletter

Since 2015

Volume 3, Issue 3



New acquisition: Canton Community College Shield yearbooks, 1962-1981, donated by Spoon River College. Chair Phil Gregory was a 1973 graduate of the community college.

Greetings! I hope you are safe and able to enjoy more of your favorite activities again. I'll be reflecting on the COVID-19 Pandemic as well as sharing our plans and guidelines for reopening the museum.

The Pandemic. My family and I have continued working during this shelter-in-place period. My wife is an RN, our sons are engaged in teaching and trucking, and I work in pest control, which were all considered "essential businesses."

On the one hand, we didn't lose our jobs, but my work slowed down with so many of my customers closed (i.e., restaurants, bars, churches, apartment buildings). I'm happy that more are calling again!

Reopening. The State of Illinois is now in Phase 4 when additional venues may open to increasing numbers of people. We're preparing the center and have established guidelines for visitors.

Initial guidelines include the following:

- Guests must sanitize their hands upon entering the building.
- Number of visitors at any one time is ten (10).

### The Chair's Report

- Visitors will maintain social distancing of six feet (unless family members).
- Visitors will proceed in one direction through the center.
- Visitors are not to touch artifacts.
- Masks are required for visitors and staff.

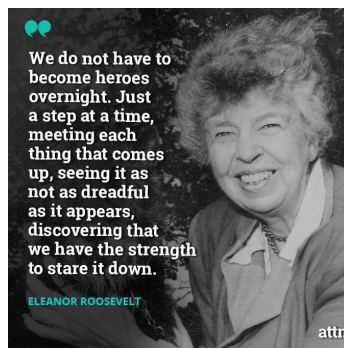
We will clean entry doors, counters and bathrooms at the end of each day. We plan to adjust these guidelines as the infection threat decreases.

Finally, we are pleased to announce two major donors have contributed to the Heritage Center in the past few months. They are George H. Mills, Founder Level, and Jack and Ruth Walker, Benefactor Level. We thank our generous donors!

If you'd like to donate to our building fund or for general maintenance, or if you're interested in loaning or gifting historical items to the center, please call me. I'd be happy to answer questions and put you in touch with our Acquisitions Committee.

#### Philip Gregory, Chairman

Canton Area Heritage Center Exec. Board  
Cell: (309) 208-2943



We do not have to become heroes overnight. Just a step at a time, meeting each thing that comes up, seeing it as not as dreadful as it appears, discovering that we have the strength to stare it down.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

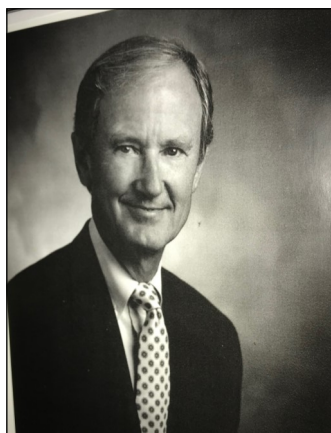
July - August - September

### Special points of interest

- FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS IN THIS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
- MEET MOVERS AND SHAKERS, THEN AND NOW
- LEARN INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY
- DISCOVER HOW TO DONATE OR LOAN ITEMS TO THE HERITAGE CENTER

### New Acquisition

The family of Dr. Jack Gibbs, physician and rural health leader, (Jan. 18, 1926 - Mar. 31, 2020) has loaned several items from his early practice, medical bag, tools, and ledger. Learn about his pioneering surgical procedures, recruitment of doctors, and his compassion for all.



Physician Jack Gibbs spearheaded building of Mason District Hospital in Havana (1958). In 1965, he joined the Coleman Clinic in Canton and retired in 2010.

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### Museum to Open July 17

We plan to reopen to the public  
Friday, July 17, 2020

Hours are

Fridays, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon  
Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Sundays, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.



**Batter up...**

## Pandemic Reflections

**Editor's Note:** Board members were asked to reflect on their experiences during the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic -- what they did and how they felt during sheltering-in-place for 14+ weeks. Their resilience is illustrated in a variety of ways. And, this is the making of history in the midst of change.

### Cheryl Bielema and Husband Ron Kept Busy

"Ron and I read books and cooked meals together. I watercolored and he put together jigsaw puzzles. My emotions have ranged from fear and confusion to hope and optimism, with a little boredom mixed in! My strategies were... keep busy, not dwell on my fears, and do things I enjoy. I like 'challenges,' so in the midst of the pandemic, I signed on to a 30-day cleaning challenge that focused me on tackling areas of our house needing a deep cleaning. *Quarantined So Let's Clean!*, hosted by an enviro-friendly product line (Norwex), utilized Facebook to list cleaning tasks and share photos of our clean spaces. I've also stayed in touch with friends and family using a variety of technology (i.e., Zoom videoconferencing, phone, texts, and written notes)."

### Erika Davis Sewed Face Masks

Erika Davis is a teacher's aide at Ingersoll Middle School. She began this project soon after schools closed in Canton and learning transitioned online, on March 17. She reports having made and distributed over 640 face masks since then. Here is Erika's description of where the hand-made masks have gone: "Nurses, police officers, fire fighters, cancer patients and IRCC correctional officers... I've had big orders, one from Farmington, which I asked about and they were just for family but she ordered 20, and a Kroger employee ordered 24, first 4, another 6, then 4 more, then 10. I am both humbled and wowed. They're not as fancy as some and not 100% effective like nurses' masks are, but 75% is better than nothing. Plus it brings a little joy to have a print for a mask, I've been told."

### Roy Hopper Did 3 Things Every Day

When asked, Roy joked, "The things I've done every day of the pandemic -- I watched TV, I talked to my wife, and I got a day older!"

### Jim Morgan Organized and Gardened

"To say that the timing of the pandemic crisis was good is probably a strange thing to say, but it worked that way for me. Mid to late March is garden action time. Although sheltering in place was a new concept for all of us, it did allow me to be more focused on what I wanted to plant and do more planning and preparing for the gardening season. My soul mate for 51 years passed away in late January. I now have had a huge task of going through closets full of clothes and storage tubs filled with everything imaginable which we had accumulated together over 51 years. The pandemic gave me plenty of time to tackle that project, and I am happy to say that most of the tasks have been completed. And, my garden looks really nice, too. A bountiful harvest is sure to come."

### Jack Pollitt and Wife Mary Worked Outdoors, Enjoyed Blizzards & Celebrated 55 Years of Marriage

"The pandemic seclusion may not have been as bad for us as for others since we are 'homebodies' and enjoy cooking and working outdoors. We mowed every three or four days, improved our flowers and other plants, and planted a small garden. Mary did a thorough spring cleaning, and I helped with the windows. She even took apart our outdoor grill and cleaned it. We actually enjoyed our many Blizzards for lunch that we took to the parks. An occasional Hardee's breakfast biscuit in the parks was a great break, too. The one thing we missed is our church and its comfort and companionship. We celebrated our wedding anniversary the last of May with a private dinner, reminding ourselves that we had prepared for the secluded 'comradship' for fifty-five years."

### Mary Lou Kuchan Assisted a Family Friend

"Being quarantined has not been a bad or boring experience. It was certainly necessary. I missed seeing friends, but with texting and Facebook I think I've been in contact with more people on a weekly basis than I normally would. In the midst of sewing face masks for my family, a family friend, who is a ship's captain, told of his urgent need for face masks for his crew. I got busy and sewed a supply. I was instructed where to mail them (not to the ship). They were then picked up and taken to the ship. Very clandestine! Several weeks later I received a hand-written note of thanks from the Captain. Interesting experience."



Erika Davis wears one of her popular face mask prints at a recent Executive Board meeting.



The First Presbyterian Church in Canton, above, and the First Presbyterian Church of Lewistown are featured at the museum. Discover more about their joint founding. Also on display are early artifacts and milestones of the Wesley United Methodist Church (1824), Canton Church of the Brethren (1845), The Salvation Army (1883), and Trinity Lutheran Church (1890).

See next page for a brief history of the Presbyterian Churches in Fulton County.



## Founding of Presbyterian Churches in Fulton County

On September 13, 1828, only three years after the founding of the City of Canton, the Reverend John Millot Ellis, a Presbyterian missionary, came to Canton at the request of area pioneers. A church was organized as the Presbyterian Church of Fulton County. On September 14, 1828, William Proctor, Samuel Mallory and Nathan Jones were elected ruling elders and the Lord's Supper was administered in Canton, Rev. Ellis presiding. On September 16, 1828, the Lord's Supper was administered in Lewistown and Nathan Jones was chosen as Presbytery delegate. Church services were held alternately in Canton and Lewistown with missionaries and laypersons serving as ministers. At that time, there were in Illinois only three Presbyterian missionaries and 21 churches, all far to the south of Canton.

By 1830 church membership reached 86 names and in August 1831 two missionaries, the Rev. Romulus Barnes and Rev. Lucien Farnum, were secured as the church's first pastors.

In 1833, Nathan Jones allocated two lots in the southeast section of the Canton Square for a church building. This building was referred to as the "Meeting House." The bodies of Isaac Swan, founder of Canton, and his infant son were taken to this structure following their deaths in the 1835 tornado.

Church membership continued to grow and on December 6, 1835, dismission papers were granted to 14 members for the purpose of forming a church in Lewistown. In 1836, churches were organized in Ipava, Farmington and Vermont, all drawing from membership of Canton.

In 1838, a dispute over governmental policies and theology by the Old School/New School groups led to a split in the Presbyterian Church of Canton.

Of the 200 members of the church at that time, 21 members of the Old School group remained as the First Presbyterian Church of Canton.

In 1839 the church building was dismantled. The New School members received the church bell while Old School members received the building materials. A new structure was built on East Elm Street, just south of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

In 1870 a larger brick church was built on the corner of Pine Street and Van Buren Court. In 1906 a new church was built at 21 West Walnut Street. The congregation moved to its current location at 275 Linden Street in 1968. On July 4, 1976, the people of the church met for regular worship, rededicated the church bell which had been cast 100 years before, and celebrated the 200th Anniversary of the nation's Declaration of Independence. In September, 1978, the church celebrated its Sesquicentennial Anniversary during which a time capsule to be opened in 2028 was buried on church grounds.

In 1996, the congregation named long-term former pastor, the Rev. Dr. Robert Holler, Pastor Emeritus.

In the spring of 1998, the Canton Session accepted an offer to join in association with the St. Andrew's Church of Port Glasgow, Scotland.

Contributed by **Terry Frame, Elder**  
First Presbyterian Church of Canton  
Phone: (309) 647-4402

## Work Goes On at the Center

Several of the Acquisitions Committee, Mary Lou Kuchan, Jack and Mary Pollitt, revised narratives and framed photos of six Fulton County athletes who achieved recognition at state and national levels. They include Ethan Blackaby, Dave Downey, Boomer Grigsby, Harry Jacobs, Rich Johnson and Tom Zaborac. Read about their accomplishments next time you visit.



L-R. James "Boomer" Grigsby and Dave Downey. Grigsby played football at ISU and for the Kansas City Chiefs, Miami Dolphins and Houston Texans, 2000-2009. Dave Downey played basketball at the University of Illinois, 1959-1963; earned a Doctoral degree in 1966; and later founded the Downey Group, a financial and consulting firm in Champaign and Chicago.

Preserving our history...

Mailing address:

209 East Chestnut Street

Suite 2

Canton, Illinois 61520

Phone: 309-647-2242

Fax: 309-647-2712

Email: cahcpo19@att.net

First location is 111 South Main  
Street, Canton, Illinois 61520

## HERITAGE CENTER REPORTS ON WBYS

Board members have initiated another way to reach additional persons with Heritage Center Reports on WBYS Radio. Mike Walters and Harold Rose were recently interviewed regarding the *Importance of Preserving Local History and Comparisons of 1918 Spanish Flu and Current COVID-19 Pandemic*, respectively.

The upcoming schedule includes July 23 - Erika Davis, *Facebook Stories and Participant Involvement*; August 27 - Jim Morgan, *Heritage Center Displays and Future Plans*; and, September 24 - Phil Gregory, *Cigar-making: Big Business in a Small Town*. Time for the live interviews is 8:45 a.m.

The interviews are streamed and available at [www.1560wbys.com](http://www.1560wbys.com). Click On Demand and scroll for the date and title of the program to listen.

## KUDOS TO LEON GROOVER

We congratulate long-time radio broadcaster and sports commentator, Leon Groover, of WBYS, on his retirement, June 19, 2020. Among awards he has received are the 2018 Canton Sports Hall of Fame Inductee and 2011 Illinois Basketball Coaches Assn. (IBCA) Hall of Fame Media. He was also recognized with naming of the "Leon Groover Press Box" at Ingersoll Gymnasium in 2014.

Here's how Leon bid farewell on Facebook: "My journey of covering Canton/Fulton County will come to an end Friday, June 19 on WBYS with my retirement after 46 years!! Living out my childhood dream, thank you listeners, advertisers, sports athletes, coaches and fellow media — it has been one helluva ride."

The Fulton County Board recently declared June 19, *Leon Groover Day*, as did the City of Canton, making June 19, *Leon Groover Day in Canton*. Thanks for your service to our Canton and Fulton County communities, Leon. We wish you the very best! — from your fans at the museum

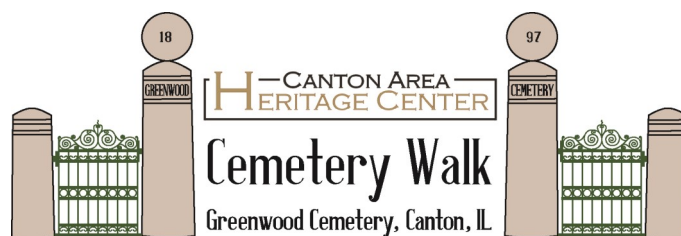


Leon Groover, rt., with Bob Wagner, who also retired, doing their excellent play-by-play at Ingersoll Gym... 2092 games, according to Wagner!



We're on the Web:

[www.cantonillinois.org/  
heritagecenter](http://www.cantonillinois.org/heritagecenter)



## CEMETERY WALK, SEPTEMBER 27, 2020

The Canton Heritage Museum will host the ever popular 6<sup>th</sup> annual Greenwood Cemetery "VOICES OF THE PAST" on Sunday, September 27, with a rain date for Monday, September 28. The Canton Heritage Museum will honor the lives and contributions of past residents at the Cemetery Walk. Participants will walk from headstone to headstone and be met by local performers who portray a select group of individuals buried in Canton's Greenwood Cemetery and recount key episodes of their lives. Among those to be portrayed this year are large families of the 1950s-1960s, still well-represented in Canton, the Gregorays with 14 children, Juracos with 12, Conklins with 11, and Murphys with 9 children.

The Cemetery Walk is a very personal way for residents to celebrate our town's past. Participants hear colorful historical stories about some of our community's most interesting residents by sharing stories that shine a light on the people who made our region what it is today. Everyone is welcome to enjoy this one-hour tour which is offered at various times during the early evening. Golf carts will be available to individuals with special needs to get to and from the parking lot to the mausoleum. The first tour will be a seated version of the performance held at 4:00 p.m. in front of the mausoleum. The other historical stories will be held at sites north of the mausoleum this year beginning at 5:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Spectators are urged to bring a lawn chair for all performances.

The cost of the tour is free; however, donations are greatly appreciated. The Cemetery Walk is one of the Heritage Museum's major fundraising events. A team of researchers, actors and supporters put countless hours of preparation into each year's Walk to create a remarkable experience.

**Mike Walters**, Cemetery Walk author and organizer  
Cell: (309) 338-6272