

Since 2015

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The Chair's Report



Philip Gregory, Chairman
Canton Area Heritage Center
Executive Board
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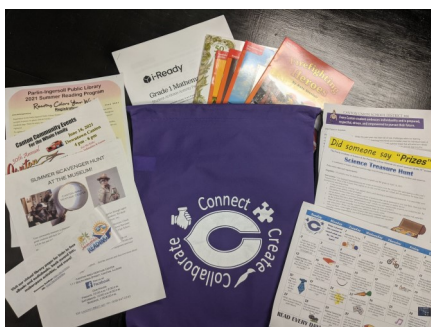
I'm sitting in our reading area at the museum. Find out more about it in this newsletter. You'll also catch up on our activities, displays and new acquisitions. We're looking back at a popular event, the IH Safety Picnics. The picnics featured contests, awards, food and entertainment, free for employees and their families. We're also pleased to announce plans for our fall fundraiser, the Cemetery Walk (page 4).

Recently, we received a Nesbitt's beverage cooler from Vern Liddle, who reported that it dispensed bottled soda pop in the old hotel, now Bistro 101.



Students Scavenger Hunts

We are hosting Scavenger Hunts for PreK-8th grade students this summer. There's a search for specific items for younger ages and fill-in-the-blank searches for middle- to upper-elementary ages.



Christy Semande, Canton Union School District Librarian, asked us to put together an activity to help young people discover more about Fulton County history. She described the initiative, "to keep our students engaged, curious, and excited about learning this summer and to help address learning loss trends and to offset what is described as a summer learning slide."

"The district has sponsored a bag that contains: age appropriate books, a grade level math activity packet (K-8), and information about local events, activities, contests, and opportunities for learning."

Canton students, bring your families to the museum, do these in-house scavenger hunts and collect a prize.

Cheryl Bielema, Chair
Programs Committee

**Enjoy the
Summer!**

Must-See Displays: Charlie Wright & "...Anything Goes"

The Canton Heritage Center has on display an Associated Press (AP) Teletype from Charlie Wright, who owned and operated WBYS Radio Station from 1954 to 1999. The citizens of Canton listened to Charlie every morning at 7:25 a.m. to hear "Around the Square." Our museum has several tapings of Charlie and his morning show. So, if you have some time on your hands and want to reminisce, come visit our museum and our staff will tune into the recordings of Charlie's familiar "Around the Square."



Another of our exhibits is a video recording of the 1975 production of "Almost Anything Goes." The TV show was filmed at the Canton Memorial Stadium and aired on national television on August 14, 1975.

This was a madcap sports competition combining the best elements of slapstick and legitimate sports as Canton's team competed against Hannibal, MO and Keokuk, IA. Each team consisted of six local citizens and 150 volunteers helped make this production successful. You might just recognize one of the players, stagehands, or spectators from 46 years ago.

Mike Walters, Chair
Acquisitions Committee

Special points of interest

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

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Our hours are
Fridays, 10am-12 noon
Saturdays, 10am-2pm
Sundays, 1pm-4pm
Come see us!

IH Mid-Season Safety Picnics of the 1940s



Jack Pollitt, retired IH-Canton Plant Manager, described the International Harvester Safety Picnics after a portfolio of picnic photos was recently loaned to the museum. Pollitt surmises that the album would have been maintained by the IH Safety Department. "What a big deal the annual picnics were--lots of people in Big Creek Park in the 1940s, with games, contests, prizes, local talent shows, professional entertainers and lots of food," Pollitt enthused. "The picture of a Springfield event included makes me believe this folder was maintained by the Safety Manager himself, since it was common practice to share promotional materials among IH plants."



Mr. Johns, Safety Manager, is pictured presenting an award. IH Plant Managers at this time included Ray Atkinson, 1945-1948, and R. Denny, 1949.



Employees Attendance Drawing prizes on display

Vaccinations for a Village and More

"Bar Unvaccinated Children from City Schools!" reads a headline in the *Canton Daily Ledger*. You may think this is a current day article related to the COVID-19 Pandemic, but the front page article was published in the *Ledger* on August 26, 1918, just a few days before the opening day of Canton city schools. The district reported that "first grade would be particularly congested" as there were 171 more school-age students in the district than there had been the previous year. During the summer of 1918, the Cubs were on their way to face off with the Boston Red Sox in the World Series, the United States was deep in the throes of a World War, and Fulton County was grappling with not one, not two, but three epidemics--smallpox, tuberculosis, and Spanish Influenza.

The *Ledger* had reported the initial smallpox outbreak in Canton on August 5; cases were placed in quarantine and other cases were placed on observation. On August 7, 1918, the Canton Health Board reported that one case of smallpox in the Village of Brereton was "the daughter of Frank Johnson." It was found she had never been vaccinated.

Brereton then became the focus of an intense smallpox vaccination campaign with the intent to vaccinate all within the village by township physician W. T. Ziegler. Doses were 50 cents. Ten days later on August 20, taking action to prevent a smallpox epidemic, the Canton Township Board of Health ordered all children to be vaccinated or remain barred from school. It's reported in the *Daily Ledger* on September 7, "City Has But One Case of Smallpox," the patient's name and address was published in the paper, along with the names and addresses of families who were released from quarantine.

With servicemen returning home, Illinois found itself grappling with another public health crisis that summer--tuberculosis. In July, a Fulton County Tuberculosis Association was formed in order to conduct a persistent campaign against tuberculosis including travel to lecture county residents on the need for a TB sanatorium located within the county.

Residents were asked to report known or suspected cases as "your Patriotic duty." They were also asked to vote "yes" on the ballot for a local TB sanatorium in Fulton County to

care for infected servicemen returning home from war. The September 19 *Daily Ledger* reported that from June 1913 to June 1918, of the 2,388 deaths in Fulton County, 216 were from tuberculosis, one of every 11 deaths.

As if these two highly communicable diseases weren't enough strain on the community, records show the beginnings of catastrophic outbreaks of the Spanish Influenza on military bases and camps by September of 1918. Although the residents here were not yet exposed to the flu, recruits from Fulton County were contracting and dying from the Spanish Flu in military camps. The September 21 *Ledger* reported "2,000 men infected and only one death" at the Great Lakes Naval Training Base. Five days later that number rose to 77 deaths. By September 26, the East Coast cases were rapidly escalating, and Illinois was taking a more serious stance. The state then ordered physicians and any health care workers to immediately notify local public health authorities of the flu. Theaters were asked to turn away any patrons who displayed flu-like symptoms.

Beginning in October, the *Canton Daily Ledger* began reporting names of local men who died while at military camps; one of the first recorded was Russell Davis, 22, of Glasford, who died at Camp Grant of pneumonia after contracting the Spanish Flu. The paper reported that Russell's cousin, Miss Lovie McKinley, was a nurse at Graham Hospital. Her mother, Mrs. E.L. Ramsey of Norris, traveled to Camp Grant, near Rockford, to make arrangements to bring Mr. Davis' body home. He had entered Camp Grant as a recruit on September 3, 1918.

Students Pandemic Reflections Update

Summer of 2021- how very different from the summer of 2020! But just because school might be out for the summer doesn't mean that all students have taken a break from learning. There has been significant progress made in a collaborative project of the Canton Area Heritage Center and Canton High School. In May, with the help of several teachers and the administration, the project team gathered data from 230 students. The surveys were intended to capture Canton students' experiences during the pandemic. This summer we plan to reach out to educators and the Class of 2020.

Interesting themes have emerged with some students expressing very little negative impact

The following day, October 3, the *Ledger* reported another death at Camp Grant, Farmington businessman Ed Gagliardio. That same paper documented one case of the Spanish Flu in Canton, Mrs. Frank Suydam of 233 West Spruce St. She was quarantined at home along with her husband Frank who was the janitor at Kellogg School.

What lessons can we learn from this research of past epidemics? Communications among public health, schools and businesses were essential, then and now, in containing these contagious diseases. I also saw the growing alarm and actions taken as infection numbers grew locally. There are differences, as well. In 1918, for example, infected people were named publically and reporting suspected cases was described as doing "your patriotic duty."

Sources: *Canton Daily Ledger*, August 5-October 3, 1918. Canton, Illinois.

Angela Drach, Museum Studies student and museum volunteer



of the pandemic, while others felt that their lives had been altered drastically. Overall, though, students felt they "had lost a year." They also mentioned experiencing mental health issues, depression, fear, and uncertainty about the future. The upside to this is that classmates were more likely to talk about seeking help from professional counselors than ever before.

Positives for these students were finding more time to do the things they really loved, learning or improving on a hobby, more "me-time" to discover themselves. There was an increase in time outdoors, alone or with a few friends and family. - by **Angela Drach**

Preserving our history...

WHAT'S NEW AT THE MUSEUM

Address:

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Reading Area: We've set up a space with Cantonian and Shield yearbooks and miscellaneous Fulton County histories. Visitors may sit and browse or research while using our library.

Acquisitions: School photos and albums from Breeds School, John Dean, Lincoln and Wright Schools have recently been donated to the museum. Several of the students and classroom groups are already identified by the donors. You could help by adding more names to the photos if you attended any of these schools, 1948-1963. Donors Carol Hummel and Gene Stanko.

Breeds School students: (Left Row) Bonnie Smith, Ronnie Williams, Larry Van Middlesworth, Carl Kaler; (Row 2) Ruth Ann Simmons, Joyce Mann, Harold Smith, Judy Kaler; (Row 3) Elaine Kaler, Darren Kaler, Connie Williams, Connie Van Middlesworth, Butch Hedges; (Right Row) Sonny Engle, Dorothy Rawly; Donnie Engle, Bobby Kaler, Anna Mann. Mrs. Tarr, teacher. Identified by donor Carol Hummel.



September 26, 2021



Find us on:
facebook®

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

Almost two years of waiting (thanks to the COVID-19 Pandemic), and we are planning to reprise the 6th annual Greenwood Cemetery "VOICES OF THE PAST" on Sunday, September 26, with a rain date of September 27. The Canton Area Heritage Museum will honor the lives and contributions of past residents at the Cemetery Walk.

Participants walk from headstone to headstone and are met by local performers who portray a select group of individuals buried in the Greenwood Cemetery and recount key episodes of their lives. Among those to be portrayed this fall are large families of the 1950s-1960s, still well-represented in Canton: Gregory family comprised of 14 children, Juracos and Murphys with 12, Conklins and Henslers with 11, and the Urbanc family with 10 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 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 and 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 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