

Since 2015

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NOTE: Our 3000th visitor is Bob Pratten, Champaign, IL. He celebrated Canton's Bicentennial with his siblings. Thank you for your visit!

July - August - September 2025

THE CHAIR'S REPORT



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

At this time we are in the midst of a very busy period at CAHC. We have completed the opening and dinner for our Historic Fulton County Farms exhibit and farm owners. The dinner was well received by sixty guests and the farm owners were presented with copies of posters that will be on display at the Heritage Center.

We hope you were able to visit the display at the Historic Train Depot as antiques and tools were provided by the farm families. There were two items shown that I had to give up and ask what they were. To think about it, if I were tested, there might have been more! Janice Bruster and Cheryl Bielema deserve our thanks!

The Greenwood Cemetery Revisited has just been performed with some very favorable comments. Our staff worked very hard on the event and deserves a "pat on the back." Even though the temperature approached 100-degrees that day, approximately 120 attendees were rewarded with a well-organized, "professional" portrayal of some of Canton's most prominent and influ-

ential citizens. Board members Mike and Susan Walters again led the Greenwood presentation. Great Job!!

Another of the Center's programs offered during Canton's Bicentennial, the Historic Bus Tours, have been well received, and each of the six tours was sold out. We even tried to add an additional trip but time (and lack of bus availability) would not allow it. Compliments, both to guide Harold Rose and the bus driver Bill Leitze, have been heard. Kathy Myers led this effort and we thank her for the idea and her organization. At this time, Spoon River College is planning to reconstruct the tours again this fall.

My Recollections. In the last quarterly newsletter, I did some reminiscing about Canton businesses, particularly the Canton Square and near the square. Auto dealers were mentioned. Looking at an old *Cantonian*, I noticed ads from three Chrysler sources. In addition to Dillman's, there were Zuercher Chrysler, Dodge and Plymouth and Houser Chrysler, DeSoto, and Plymouth. Later, I believe two combined to become Houser-Zuercher Motor Sales.

I was also advised I forgot Buffum's Packard on 168 N. First Avenue. Thanks! Years ago I heard that Canton had more auto owners and property owners than any other city in the State of Illinois. I believe it.

While discussing the Bicentennial, media coverage was mentioned. The Canton Daily Ledger was a real live daily that was filled with Canton news and would have bulged every day. Charlie Wright would have been in a frenzy to cover everything on WBYS while maintaining his regular programs. WBYS was a very popular radio station for many years. It had

dedicated listeners who wouldn't miss "Open Line," which ran for nearly 60 years, extensive local sports programs, Charlie Wright's "Around the Square," "We're Putting You On" (which runs even now), and extensive local news.

I remember when the Canton Park Board had summer playground programs at McCall, Kellogg, and Central Schools, as well as the Athletic Park. WBYS broadcast the "Boy on the Playground." Guess who the Boy was -- OK, it was me!

Jack Pollitt, Chairman

STUDENTS MEET STORM CHASER COLIN DAVIS

Fourth graders from Lincoln School read about tornadoes with teacher Harold Rose. Mr. Rose arranged a trip to the Heritage Center to see newspaper articles about the 1975 tornado that wreaked havoc in Canton. He invited storm chaser Colin Davis who described storms he's seen and changes in storms -- in the southeast drift of "tornado alley" and storms' intensity. Davis shared photos and videos of storms and answered students' questions.



Special points of interest

- BICENTENNIAL PHOTOS ON FACEBOOK, [Canton Illinois Bicentennial 2025](#)
- PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ABOUT GROWING UP IN CANTON
- HISTORIC FULTON COUNTY FARMS NOW ON DISPLAY
- BUS TOUR TO RETURN IN FALL
- CONTACT MUSEUM, PHONE (309) 647-2242 OR EMAIL CAHCPO19@ATT.NET

Inside this issue

HISTORIC FARMS EXHIBIT OPENING	2
HISTORIC FARMS DINNER	3
CEMETERY WALK, REVISITED	3
1925 TIME CAPSULE OPENED	3
HISTORIC BUS TOURS	4
HANNAM'S DAIRY DREAM	4

The Museum Newsletter

HISTORIC FARMS EXHIBIT OPENING

Editor's Note: The Historic Farms Exhibit was visited by 350 people during Canton's Bicentennial. Here are a few photos from the exhibit set-up and opening held on June 17, 2025. Thank you to Canton's FFA for helping host. Photos by Dave Barbknecht, Stilled Moments.



Janice Dare Bruster, project director, cuts the ribbon to open the Historic Farms exhibit, assisted by Cheryl Bielema, programs committee, and Mike Walters, Bicentennial Chair. Family antiques were set up by Sesquicentennial Farm families (above), Janice Dare Bruster and Henry Dare, not pictured; Joe Thum, and Kevin Roberts. Below, Marcia Stephens Breeden, Nancy and Dan Williams, Denis Buchen, Phil and Rye Randolph, Bob Chatterton and siblings, and Clarice and Sheila Blout and family.



HISTORIC FARMS DINNER

Sesquicentennial Farm families and their guests were honored at a dinner following the opening of our latest exhibit, *Historic Fulton County Farms*. Janice Dare Bruster welcomed the group by describing the project she had researched and coordinated. She thanked them for their participation in paying tribute to their ancestors and the agricultural industry in which they're engaged.

Dr. Trenton Ellis, Sociology Professor at Black Hills State University, Spearfish, SD, delivered the keynote address. Dr. Ellis was raised in Canton, graduated from Canton High School, Spoon River College, and Western Illinois University. He connected agricultural innovations, our Fulton County

settlers' perseverance and ingenuity, and the growth of rural communities with successful urban development. Throughout, he interjected stories from the interviews Jan Bruster and Cheryl Bielema had done with the families.

Museum Chair Jack Pollitt summarized the museum's mission and expressed gratitude for the farm families represented. Sponsors were recognized: Keith Mellert, Compeer Financial Services; Rusty Melhouse, Edward Jones; Jeff and Ben Shelby, Pioneer Seed Corn; and, Austin Tarter, Tarter Feed and Fertilizer. With the help of Bruster and Bielema, each family received a poster, identical to those being placed in the museum's agriculture room.



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Actor David Pires portrayed UG Orendorff.

CEMETERY WALK, REVISITED

Featured citizens were **Isaac Swan**, founder; **Burnett Chiperfield**, 1925 Centennial Chairman; **William Parlin**, steel plow inventor; **Ulysses Grant Orendorff**, chief financial officer of P&O Plow Works; **William Parlin Ingersoll**, Canton benefactor; **Katy and Torrie Petrovich**, grocery store owners; **Altruistic Club members**, medical care advocates; and, **Bill Cook**, medical equipment manufacturer and Canton benefactor. DVDs will be available for purchase this fall.



Claudia Moss and Nancy Stiglich portrayed Katy and Torrie. (Rt) Jean Edwards, Sarah Mathis, Janet Krulac and Lisa Gardner portrayed Altruistic members.

1925 TIME CAPSULE OPENED



© Stilled Moments Photography

Reason #100 to visit museum. Contents of the 1925 time capsule are now preserved at the Heritage Center. You can see a variety of letters, books, buttons, Centennial programs, photos and more.

Thank you, Canton Bicentennial Committee, led by Mike Walters (left), for the excellent programs you planned for all ages and interests. We at the museum enjoyed being part of the celebration!

Preserving our history...

Address:
111 South Main Street
P.O. Box 526
Canton, Illinois 61520

Phone: 309-647-2242
Fax: 309-647-2712
Email: cahcpo19@att.net



We're on the Web:

www.cantonillinois.org/heritage-center

BICENTENNIAL BUS TOURS

The Canton Area Heritage Center in partnership with Spoon River College coordinated Canton's Bicentennial Historic Bus Tours. On buses supplied by Spoon River College, the tours offered a guided, narrated journey through Canton's 200-year history. The tour originated at the iconic Alice Ingersoll Gymnasium where local sports historian and author Roy Hopper gave a short history of the "Alice" and Little Giants Hall of Fame. Riders then got on the bus with tour guide Harold Rose and SRC driver Bill Leitze, both retired Canton High School teachers and lifelong Canton residents. Harold and Bill made a great team as their narration and interaction with riders brought Canton's history to life: Isaac Swan, town's founder; the founding and rise of manufacturing giants like P&O Plow Works and International Harvester; and the contributions of notable people. Many riders commented that they especially liked the relating of little-known facts. Heritage Center member Roland Pettit remarked, "Harold did a wonderful job, and I couldn't have asked for anything better."

Along the route, tour participants passed by three sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the original Parlin Library (now Johnson & Johnson Law Office), Ulysses Grant Orendorff house (Redcrest mansion), and the CB&Q Train Depot. The riders disembarked at the train depot for a short tour of the "Historic Fulton County Farms" display, prior to returning to the gymnasium. Thanks to support from the Chamber of Commerce and Bicentennial Committee, riders also received a commemorative booklet with written highlights of the tour. More detailed information about the tour sites is available on our website.

In total there were six sold-out tours with approximately 140 passengers. "Due to high demand and popularity of the bus tours, SRC's Community Outreach Office plans to offer bus tours in the fall. Watch for dates and sign up via our SRC website," said Andrea Barbknecht, SRC Community Outreach Director/project co-chair.

As with all successful projects there are many people to thank. Here is our list of collaborators.

- Harold Rose, CAHC – primary tour guide
- Phil Gregory and Jim Morgan, CAHC - tour development
- Roy Hopper, CAHC – Little Giants Hall of Fame
- Bill Leitze and Greg Ross, SRC – bus drivers
- Candy Hadsall, SRC – reservations and support

- Carla Bobell, Canton Chamber of Commerce – commemorative booklet development
- Vickie Parry, SRC – booklet set-up and printing
- Bicentennial Committee – media, promotion and financial support
- Mike Walters, CAHC – historic photographs
- Hannah Cox, CAHC – site research and website material
- Barb Long, Fulton County Rehabilitation Center – pilot tour run with FCRC individuals.

Kathy Myers, CAHC Board/Project co-chair

HANNAM'S DAIRY DREAM

Congratulations to Hannam's Dairy Dream -- did you know Canton's ice cream shop is 75 years old, while the Hannam family has operated the shop for 50 years? Vern Lindsey opened Dairy Dream on July 4, 1950, and ran the shop for 18 years. Jeanne Lindsey recalls working with her grandparents every summer.

Gary, Jan and Brad Hannam currently own the ice cream shop on Linn Street, and Brad and Tara Schaub run it. Brad said he has personally worked there for 40 years, having started at age 13. He is its third generation, including Gary's parents, Phil and Millie Hannam. They will celebrate 50 years of family ownership and Dairy Dream's longer heritage of 75 years on July 19, 2025, with ice cream cone sales.



Above, tour group with guide Harold Rose.

Below, Roy Hopper and Kathy Myers at the Little Giants Hall of Fame.



Vern Lindsey at work and Dairy Dream in the 1950s.

