

Since 2015

Volume 7, Issue 4

October - November - December 2024

THE CHAIR'S REPORT



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

What are its dimensions? How much does it weigh? Will it fit through a standard 36-inch doorway? Do you mind if we store it since we currently have no room? Did you say the sign is 12-feet? Did you say a piano?

We knew we were outgrowing our presentation floor area and walls. Discussions regarding buildings near or on the square were not viable when costs of repairs were considered with monthly utility costs, maintenance, insurance, etc.

In order to keep our Heritage Center museum vibrant, we continued small changes to current displays or featured smaller displays for just a few months before switching to others.

For months, we wondered about the adjacent office's availability. While attending a monthly staff meeting, my wife noticed it appeared that our next door neighbor was moving out. We thought, "Could Graham Hospital Association come to our rescue again?"

Conversations with Robert Senneff, President and CEO of Graham, were productive, and he soon presented us with a new lease agreement.

Our current area is 1550 square-feet and 670 square-feet will be added. Since our storage area occupies 209 square-feet, the area we're adding will provide us 50% more floor space and lots of wall area to cover.

Construction began in late-September to reduce three doors to one. One wall will be eliminated and another wall built. A new "greeting" desk will be at the entry door. You'll see more improvements when you visit us this fall and winter.

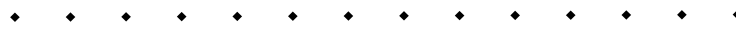
What new "permanent" exhibit areas will be added? Proposed are a Farm/Agricultural space, past County Schools, and former Politicians of the Region. We also plan to outfit a Reading Room.

Why a reading room? In one of our past newsletter issues, we wrote of the growing amount of research material we have available, history books, binders featuring notable people, places and events, Canton Community College, Elem., Jr. and Sr. High School yearbooks, and books written by local authors.

We plan to provide a comfortable room for researching or just reading about our past and those people who were important to the development of this region.

We will be open during regular hours, so hope to see you at our Heritage Center soon.

Jack Pollitt, Chairman



Our Museum in Spotlight



Executive Board Members (front) Roy Hopper, Cheryl Bielema, Jack Pollitt, Kathy Myers, Janice Bruster, Debbie Stephenson; (back row) Phil Gregory, Jim Morgan and Dean Gibson

Canton Main Street (CMS) chose the museum to spotlight in their recent newsletter. Our activities were shared as well as plans to expand into the adjoining office space. The CMS mission is to enhance and revitalize Canton's Downtown. They helped establish our museum in 2015, hosted early meetings, and later, partnered with us to open our doors.

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
- DISCOVER WHERE AND WHEN YOU CAN VOLUNTEER

Inside this issue

DID YOU KNOW: THE ROCK	2
BICENTENNIAL TIME CAPSULE	2
RECENT VISITORS	2
MAJOR DONORS TO-DATE	2
TEACHERS...LIFE IN CLASSROOMS	3
CEMETERY WALK PROFILES	4

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?

The painted rock at the entrance to Canton's Sr. High School has been a permanent fixture for 64 years. Several members of the Class of 1960 were involved in the covert operation and included Jerry Jones, Todd Welch, John Moorhouse, Larry Ernst, Jim Potter, James Reed, David Boughan, and Floyd Henderson. Here is the rest of the story.

The "Rock" was discovered on the hillside of the haulage road in Wee-Ma-Tuk Hills, formerly Truax-Traer Coal Mine. In the moving operation, the rock was positioned just right so a truck could be backed up to it and rolled it into position to be picked up by hoist. Jim Potter's father, owner of Central Butane Gas Co., had a truck and trailer with a hoist that was used to bring the "rock" into the DX gas station at the corner of Main and Locust Street.

Floyd Henderson's father owned the station, and Floyd's brother Lloyd was manning the station the night they arrived with the rock. It was unloaded onto the car hoist, cleaned up, painted on top with the letters, "Class of 1960," and loaded back onto the trailer. After it got dark, these students drove to the Sr. High School to unload "The Rock."

The team was having difficulty unloading it, so a chain was wrapped around the rock and the flag pole. The truck was driven out from under the rock, causing it to land upside down, thereby hiding the wording painted on the top.

The next day, word was going around that the parties involved in putting the rock in front of the school would not be allowed to graduate. Happily, that did not happen! Dr. Masters, Principal, made an announcement on the PA system, thanking whoever had given them "The Rock," and he said it would be an everlasting part of the school. How true his words have turned out to be.

Adapted from a story written by Jerry Jones

Jim Morgan, Treasurer

BICENTENNIAL TIME CAPSULE



Pictured is Canton Bicentennial Chair Mike Walters, whom we claim as our Acquisitions Committee Chair at the museum and as one of our excellent local historians.

Mike brought in one of three time capsules (one still being located), which will be opened at Canton's Bicentennial Celebration, June 20-29, 2025. He briefly described its location at the Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library and its contents.

Among letters written to individual family descendants and to future classes at Canton schools, there is a letter written by Colonel Burnett Chipfield, the 1925 Centennial Chair, to the 2025 Bicentennial Chair. Watch for the opening date next June.



RECENT VISITORS

Museum visitors often have their own stories to share. Hannah and Josiah Chatterton, owners of *The Forgottonia Times*, visited to connect our rural communities and to learn stories of our past. Dr. Trenton Ellis, graduate of Canton High School, SRC and WIU, now Professor of Sociology at Black Hills State University, is working with us on a "Salute to Historic Farms" exhibit. Barry Pine and his sister Nancy McMahan brought us the fascinating story of their father, William C. Pine, Jr., born in Canton, who worked in US Intelligence during World War II. Stay tuned for what's next.



2024 Major Donors

Joining our **Founders** group (donations of \$1000 and above) is the **James Elson Law Office**, gifted by his wife **Nancy Elson**. See the complete list of donors on our webpage, www.cantonillinois.org/heritage-center.

FALL IS HERE WITH MORE HOLIDAYS ON THE WAY!



TEACHERS RELATE LIFE IN THEIR CLASSROOMS

Editor's Note: Into another school year, and we've invited retired teachers to share their memories of "life in the classroom." Thank you, fellow educators and friends, for sharing your experiences with us.

Carol Blackfelner, 33-year Tenure

My teaching career started in 1970 at VIT. I taught 2nd grade for 3 years in the Table Grove Elementary School and then taught 4th grade.

Moving to Canton in 1974, I stayed home for a year with daughter, Suzanne, and baby, Christopher. In 1975 I was hired to teach 1st grade at Isaac Swan Elementary which is now the Fulton County Health Department. I taught 1st grade for 6 years after

which I moved to Westview Elementary teaching 2nd grade. I retired in 2004.

A SIGNIFICANT EVENT. Westview received a grant for a program called Museum in the Classroom. Principal Mary Kerr asked me and Barb Carpenter (1st grade) to take the lead. We each had 2 students actively involved -- mine were Christopher Jump and Colin Davis. The six of us went to special workshops. The end result was a computer-based program, created by our students. The final activity was presenting the program in the rotunda of the Illinois State Capitol, where the Senators and Representatives stopped by to see what the students had created. It was a unique, rewarding experience.

FUNNIEST MOMENTS. Science was one of my students' favorite activities as we did a lot of hands-on activities. We were creating wind "cars." They worked in small groups. First, everyone got to eat an orange sherbet push-up. Its plastic base would be the wheels and axle for their cars. A variety of items were set out and they could choose to complete their cars. This took several science classes to complete. We took our cars and a big fan to the gym and they each set their car in front of the fan to see how it would "run". We all laughed as the cars spun around, didn't move much or scooted right along. They cheered for each other, too. It was a fun project as well as a good learning tool.

WHAT TEACHING HAS MEANT. I don't remember ever desiring another career....Teaching gave me a sense of fulfillment and purpose. It allowed me to use my imagination in building lesson plans that were engaging for students.



When I think about the many young lives I interacted with over the years, even though daunting, I hope I made a positive difference. Teaching was not a stagnant career as it was very important to continue taking classes and workshops so you were not "stale." I think taking classes to "keep my brain sharp" kept me enjoying my career -- it wasn't just a job. I look back on my many years of shaping young lives and am thankful for the opportunity to have been a teacher!

Martha Harr, 30-year Tenure

I taught English (Literature & Composition) at Cuba High School and Canton High School. I also taught occasional night and summer classes at Spoon River College and Spoon River Academy. I retired in 2012 and live in Cuba.

FUNNIEST MOMENTS. It's really hard to determine *just one* moment of my teaching years that was fun. I was blessed with many, many funny



moments that I will keep in my heart forever. It could be the time I won a contest and "got to" kiss a pig for the FFA. Or, it could be the time another group raised money by selling long strips of tape to be used to tape me to the wall at the Ingersoll gymnasium during a basketball game. Of course, I couldn't say "No" to their plea to sit in the dunk tank for another cause. I will always laugh when I remember students writing and reading their own epitaphs (a la SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY). Another highlight of mine would be the "donkey basketball" game I agreed to play. I believe they chose the most stubborn donkey especially for me! I won't even try to list all of the pranks the teachers played on each other, although I *could* tell some good ones about Bill Leitze and Jane Williams. I think I won't though, because I'm still afraid they'll get even!

WHAT TEACHING HAS MEANT. I was blessed to have chosen such a rewarding career. I never thought about it as being "a job." I thank all of you who helped me take so many good memories with me at retirement time.

Sandy Jacobus Gordon, 34-year Tenure

Born, raised, and graduating from Cuba High School in 1970, I attended both SRC and EIU to receive an Elementary Education Degree in 1975. My first job was at Cuba Unit 3, teaching Title 1 Reading at Smithfield. After a break, I joined Lewistown Grade School and for the next

32 years, taught 7th and 8th grade Language Arts, 4th and 5th grades, and Title 1 Reading.

A SIGNIFICANT EVENT.

The biggest impact on my career was my last year. After 33 years, I needed a new perspective. Title 1 Reading for Kindergarten students gave me that change. The light in a five-year-old's eyes when she or he puts letter sounds



Sandy Jacobus Gordon

together to make a word and the first stumbling efforts to read were very satisfying to me.

WHAT TEACHING HAS MEANT. Through my teaching, I learned patience and acceptance. Nothing is more gratifying than a thank-you from a child, at any age; when light of understanding or love of learning comes.

Douglas Falk, 34-year Tenure

I taught Agriculture, 7th-12th grades, at Cuba Middle/Sr. High School. Classes taught were Intro.

to Agriculture, Advanced Ag. Science, Horticulture, Greenhouse Mgmt., Ag. Mechanics, Conservation Agriculture and Agri-Business. The three components to agriculture are Classroom, the FFA Chapter, and a Super-



vised Agricultural Experience (SAE). The classroom was dynamic and hands-on. Lessons were designed to give students an understanding of careers in Agriculture. The FFA chapter was student-led and gave them a chance to develop leadership skills through conferences, conventions, skill-based competition and community-based events... worked at Scenic Drive, greenhouse sales, and a 200-acre chapter farm. SAE's developed entrepreneurial skills, financial record keeping, note-taking and observations.

A SIGNIFICANT EVENT. Our favorite activity was FFA Week; the final day was the Barnyard Zoo. Back in the day, Brown's Zoo of Smithfield would bring in some interesting wild animals. The live-stock students would bring their animals. Occasionally, a goat, hog, or dairy goat would be found roaming the school. All good fun!

WHAT TEACHING HAS MEANT. At the end of each year, I was so proud of the accomplishments of each student...contest victories, leadership and academic success...how our community and rest of school was involved. So many great memories.

CEMETERY WALK PROFILES FOR 2024

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

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



**HOMETOWN
HEROES...**



**Colonel Burnett M. Chiperfield -- Portrayed by
Bob Juraco**



My law firm was named Chiperfield & Chiperfield, with my brother, Claude E., my partner. I served as Canton's City Attorney from 1894-1896; then as States Attorney of Fulton County, 1896-1900.

In Canton, I prepared many cases for the Illinois Supreme Court. In 1903, I was elected to the Illinois State Legislature, serving

two terms. I'm told I was respected, admired, feared, obeyed, and had many enemies! In 1925, as Canton celebrated its 100 years, I was chosen the General Centennial Chairman.

L. D. Barnard -- Narrator Andrea Barbknecht

L. D. Barnard, better known as "Barnie," was a Canton farmer, very active in educational organizations. From 1957-1977, L.D. was on the District #66 Board of Education, and eight years on the Canton Community College Board, now known as Spoon River College. L.D. was instrumental in starting the community college. He was on the Canton Agriculture Council when the Canton Friendship Festival was started in 1955. L.D. also liked to donate his time to one of his favorite charities, Jump Rope for Heart, an activity for kids, benefiting the American Heart Association.

**MADE A
DIFFERENCE**



Cody Krulac -- Narrators Colin Davis and Sarah Beam

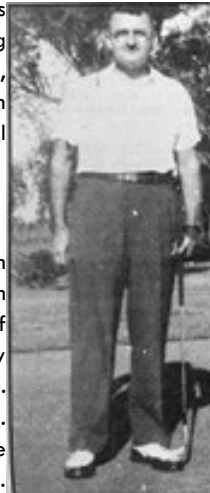
Cody grew up in Canton, loving his trips to the family farm with his Dad and Papa John. Cody was a star athlete in high school, lettering all four years in football and baseball. Cody graduated as co-valedictorian from Canton High School in 2007. He then moved to Urbana-Champaign to attend the University of Illinois where he made lifelong friends and obtained a degree in Agricultural Engineering.

The office staff at Illinois Neurologic Institute got to know Cody over the many years that he was undergoing treatment. From the front desk registration staff to the office assistants, the nurses, doctors, and surgical technicians, they all knew and loved Cody.

John S. Coleman -- Narrator Carol Davis

In the summer of 1826, my grandfather John Coleman along with his second wife Elizabeth and 11 of their 13 children moved from New Jersey to make a home for themselves in Canton. They brought along with them five wagon loads of dry goods and groceries purchased in New York City. Despite all the challenges of traveling in those days, they arrived in the fall of 1826. The Colemans were a very industrious family. After a few years they had developed some of the best farmland in Fulton County. Coleman was also known as an honorable and just man.

Leo Dworak -- Narrator Belle Hardy



Dworak retired from International Harvester in Canton, where he was a blacksmith. His favorite pastime was playing golf at the Canton Country Club. Leo's best year as a golfer was in 1964 when he won club championship and the senior tournament as one of the oldest members. His second favorite pastime was volunteering with the Modern Woodmen of America.



Lavern Bim Estes -- Narrator, son Marc Estes

Bim was always an independent businessman. After he left dairy farming, he owned a music store, a sporting goods store, built houses in and around Canton, and became a livestock trader over many states. He owned two other livestock auctions, besides managing the Estes Livestock Auction, located on the west side of Canton. In 1973, he received the Distinguished Service Award from the Assn. of Commerce and Industry in recognition of his outstanding service and leadership in and for the City of Canton. A



lifelong passion of his was softball. In 1977, he was inducted into the Illinois ASA Softball Hall of Fame. Bim was the first to be inducted in all three categories, player, manager, and sponsor.