

Since 2015

Volume 6, Issue 3

July - August - September 2023

THE CHAIR'S REPORT

DID YOU KNOW?



Philip Gregory, Chairman
Canton Area Heritage Center
Executive Board
Cell: (309) 208-2943

Hope you're having a good summer! A recent post on our Facebook page encouraged Class Reunion groups to contact us in order to schedule tours of the museum while classmates are in Canton. We have copies of Canton yearbooks and elementary school photobooks. A tour for the Class of 1958 was conducted in June.

We're preparing for our annual fundraiser, the **Cemetery Walk**, at historic Greenwood Cemetery. **Save the date of October 1, 2023.** Portable sound systems at each of the walking tour stops will improve the experience for attendees.

We recently acquired artifacts, including Tom Homer's letter sweater, (member of 1963 undefeated Little Giant football team); framed articles about Star Motor Cars/Waugh Motor Co.; the Truax-Traer Coal Co. Honor Roll plaque listing WWII employees and photos of Steve Nagel and his job application to McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Company.

St. David Airport and Fulton County Aviation History, continued

(See *Museum Newsletter*, Vol. 6, #1, January, 2023, for introduction)

During the early 1940s, the airport continued to attract more flying enthusiasts, which necessitated adding a fuel pumping tank, constructing a second runway, and building a second hanger.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the pilots operating from the St. David Airport were quick to offer their services to Sheriff Floyd Morse in case of an emergency. Morse also felt patrol duty by airplanes would be quite effective against sabotage of public utilities, railroads, bridges and other vital public services. On December 8, 1941, the government ordered all airports closed, and new regulations were to be put in place before the airports could reopen. Meeting the new requirements created controversy for the St. David Airport. Emil Sepich of Canton represented the airport to resolve all the new requirements to reopen the airport. The final condition to be met was "providing a fulltime guard."

As the 1940s progressed, the Fulton County Flying Club and their increasing flying activity was rapidly out-growing the St. David airport. Club member W.P. Ingersoll advised the group that he would be purchasing a 200-acre farm adjacent to his existing farm located about two-and-a-half miles northwest of Canton. A portion of the site is now Lakeland Park. He informed the club that he intended to make part

of the property available as an auxiliary landing field to relieve the congestion at the St. David airport. The charge for use of the new field would be one dollar (\$1.00) per member per year.

The club accepted his offer and proceeded with the construction of two hangers; a north-south runway, 2400 feet long, and a similar east-west runway on the Ingersoll property.

On March 28, 1946, the group made a formal application to the State of Illinois to be designated a "certified airport." The application was approved on June 14, 1946. The field became officially known as Ingersoll Airport from that point on.

Source:

Haynes, Jim. (1998). *Shadows of Wings: An Aviation History of West Central Illinois*, Vol. 1, 1910-1945. Bushnell, IL: Robins Nest Co.

Jim Morgan, Treasurer

Happy 4th of July!



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-3pm
Come see us!

RECENT VISITORS AT THE MUSEUM



Two visitors traveling from Torino, Italy, were interested in learning more about one of their great grandfathers who immigrated here to work in the mines in early 1900. **Gianfranco Pomatto and Alessandro Cerutti** (above) shared information about Gian's great grandfather, **Francesco Perardi**, who was a miner and welcomed four children before he and his wife decided to return to Italy. Details provided by Gianfranco below.



My Great Grandfather Francesco Perardi (the miner) and my great grandmother Maria Rolle Perardi (who cooked for miners). Standing next to my great grandmother is my grandfather (the father of my mother), Giuseppe Perardi, was born in Canton in 1913 and died in Italy in 1964. Their daughter Domenica, center, was born in USA in 1908. Another son died at 3 years old while still in the US. Standing left of my great grandfather is Giovanni, born in St. David in 1915. The youngest son, Quinto, was born in Italy in 1926. The family ran a little restaurant upon returning to Favria, Italy, until the Second World War.

Shirley Wicevich, who was raised in St. David, is working with Gianfranco to find out more about the family. Joint research between the Pomatto family in Italy and sources we can tap here will hopefully provide answers for them and will certainly add more unique facts about our own community.

Gianfranco and his mother on the terrace of their family home in Favria. Her shirt was a memento from Gian's recent visit to Canton.



Jennifer Scott Dewar of Bartonville contacted the museum, offering to donate several items chronicling her father's career. **David J. Scott** was a well-known area musician who performed with bands and as a solo act for over 45 years. A year-round entertainer, he would spend June-December in Canton and January-May in Marathon, FL.

Dave supported the "Food Pantry Jam" which got its start in 1984. He was selected as the 1996 Friendship Festival Parade Marshall and was recognized in 2000 for 15 years of support to Canton's food pantries at St. Mary's Catholic and First Baptist Churches. He went on to help this fundraising effort for five more years.

"One of the biggest accomplishments for Scott was publishing an album of his own songs....The album is named, "It's About Time," according to an article in the Canton Daily Ledger, October, 1996. Scott would say, "I'm really not that great of a musician." He liked to call himself an impersonator, singing covers of Roger Miller, Kenny Rogers, and Willy Nelson. In fact, it was said you could close your eyes and hear the fabled voices as Scott introduced each and sang their songs.

Dave got his first guitar as an 8th grade graduation gift. He struggled financially after a stint in the U.S. Army and a tour of duty in Vietnam. That's when he began impersonating country singers...The voices came so naturally to him and he developed a loyal following and a full-time career. He played for charities and benefits and in nursing homes, too. "David J's last wishes would be for you to make a donation to your favorite Organization," read his obituary. David J. Scott was born December 5, 1940; he died April 16, 2022.

Discover more about this talented musician on your next visit to Canton and to the museum!



BICENTENNIAL ART PROJECT



We asked local artist and museum benefactor Mary Ellen Carver if she would create original watercolors of historic buildings in Canton as one of our Bicentennial projects. She agreed.

Mary Ellen Carver has displayed art work in fine art festivals throughout Illinois and Florida, and she has taught watercolor classes at Spoon River College. Carver was also one of the founders of Canton's Art on Main Fine Arts Festival, which celebrated its tenth year in June of this year.

We'll begin rolling out framed prints and notecards for purchase in the coming year. Here are two of the Carver designs we will have available. Can you name these buildings?

Cheryl Bielema, Editor



CANTON'S WOMEN OF NOTE

We have added women trailblazers from the Canton area to our displays.

This initiative also included a Facebook feature and a presentation for Spoon River College Lifelong Learning Conference. It was launched during Women's History Month in March. Since this year's theme was "Honoring Women Who Tell Our Stories," we went to the library for help.

Parlin-Ingersoll Library Executive Director Jessica Sparenberg and Adult Programs Coordinator Michelle Lockwood collaborated with us to select "notable" women, and they also hosted a Book Discussion on March 8, International Woman's Day.

The following seven women are recognized, having been born and raised here or having worked professionally in Fulton County.

Dr. Marjorie Rich Bordner, author, educator, community leader and founder of Spoon River Scenic Drive. Marjorie was a pilot, World War II veteran, and worked at Camp Ellis. She earned Master's and Doctoral degrees; taught Physics and Chemistry at WIU. She wrote several books about Fulton County and Camp Ellis.

Dorothy I. Fennell, microbiologist, researcher of strains of penicillin for mass production and use during World War II. She later researched the molds adversely affecting grain crops. She authored many journal articles and two scientific books. Plans are to include Fennell in a future Cemetery Walk.

The Honorable Elizabeth Kovachevich, lawyer, Federal District Judge in Florida who has worked with Supreme Court Justices, including Sandra Day O'Connor. Judge K. delivered a significant precedent in 1988 that public schools are required to accommodate students with AIDS. She also ruled in the case of pitcher Denny McLain.

Dr. Barbara Gross Mertz, Egyptologist (Doctoral degree at University of Chicago) and prolific author of both non-fiction and fiction. She wrote under pseudonyms, Elizabeth Peters and Barbara Michaels, over 70 mystery books with Egyptian folklore and settings. In her own name, she wrote scholarly books about Ancient Egypt.

Signa Axcell Thomas was a member of the first graduating class of Graham Hospital School of Nursing. She worked as a private duty nurse and as Metropolitan Life nurse before returning to work at Graham Hospital. She was named its

first female administrator and served 21 years in that capacity.

Harriet Vittum, nurse, politician, community organizer, established first hospital in her Canton home, named Altruistic Hospital. She worked in Chicago settlements, ran for Cook Co. Board, advised Progressive Party candidates on the needs of immigrant populations. She was called the second Jane Addams.

Elizabeth (Lizzie) Magie, inventor of the Landlord's Game, precursor of the Monopoly game, was shut out of a sizable sum of money as she sold her patent to Parker Bros. for \$500, no royalties. The original game was then revised by Charles Darrow. Macomb, her birthplace, is building a tribute to Magie.

Note. We plan to recognize Outstanding Women Athletes this fall. You can learn more about these talented women by visiting the museum.

Cheryl Bielema, Jan Bruster, Hannah Cox and Kathy Myers, Researchers



MAJOR DONORS

We continue to salute the generosity of our major donors. Thank you to these three most recent donors, two of whom have contributed faithfully since we opened our doors in 2018 and one who is a first-time donor.

**Founder Level (\$1000 and above)--*
Elizabeth Kovachevich, Tampa, FL

*Founder Level (\$1000 and above)--***George H. Mills**, Bellingham, WA

*Benefactor Level (\$750)--***Ray Cleer**, Canton

**Elizabeth Kovachevich also sent memorials for Daniel Boniface and Emilie Marie Kuchan Kovachevich (her parents) and Charles and Bessie Kuchan Sr. and family (her maternal grandparents).*

Note: Judge K.'s grandfather Charles Kuchan purchased the Capitol Theatre in the early 1920s and her mother Emilie managed the theatre until 1949.

We are a 501(c)3 organization; donations are tax-deductible. Have questions? Email, cahco19@att.net, or call us, (309) 647-2242.

THE FORGOTTONIA PROJECT AND THE MUSEUM

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We're on the Web:

[www.cantonillinois.org/
heritage-center](http://www.cantonillinois.org/heritage-center)

A History teacher and students at Cuba High School undertook an oral history project, as part of "The Rural Experience in America" initiative, led by the National Council for History Education (NCHE) in 2022. Cuba, Illinois, was only one of 11 communities involved in the grant-funded program.

Teacher Joe Brewer collaborated with the Western Illinois Museum in Macomb to research and record presentations by his students. Students selected a history topic, interviewed local persons having first-hand experience and/or researched a variety of written materials.

The topics included *Fulton County in the Civil War--Jayson Stead; Mining in Western Illinois--Braxton Humphrey; Railroads in Western Illinois--Gavin Johnson; Forgottonia's Mayor Neal Gam--Cadie and Courtney Churchill; The Dickson Mounds Protest--Ella Bass; Experiencing a Rural School Closure--Cooper Leonard; and, Dr. Francis Regnier: New Salem Hero--Amber Cannon.*

The project is described by teacher Joe Brewer at <https://rss.com/podcasts/the-rural-experience-in-america-podcasts/803606/>.

We at the museum provided names of knowledgeable people for several of the students. Now, we have signed on as a more formal partner in the next phase of the Forgottonia Project.

What's Next for the Forgottonia Project?

Joe Brewer describes what the project might entail.

- Podcasts continued: We are looking to create a podcast series featuring representatives from the CAHC. Perhaps each interview could simply highlight what is being featured in the most-recent newsletter, various upcoming events, or getting to know members.... For each episode, we could also highlight one primary source and/or artifact featured at the museum and encourage people to visit and support what you do.
- Database: The CAHC could provide a database of local historians and individuals with personal experiences who are willing to participate in a podcast interview with one of our History Club students. This database could include various topics of interest and expertise that local historians have (i.e., Rick Klinedinst, Abraham Lincoln; Bill Leitze, Railroads).
- Efforts to support CAHC: In partnership with Cuba High School's A/V classes and History Podcast Club, we'd like to produce an audio advertisement of the Canton Area Heritage Center that would play at the beginning of each podcast episode. We'd also like to feature a standalone "Support the CAHC" on the [Forgottonia Project](https://forgottoniaproject.com) webpage (<https://forgottoniaproject.com>) to inform the community about how they can support the museum.
- Forgottonia tee shirts: We are hoping to make t-shirts with our Forgottonia Project logo. Perhaps we could have them available at the museum or include purchase information there.

Thank you for the opportunity to partner with you and support efforts to "foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of Canton's and surrounding area's history, culture, and industry."

Joe Brewer, Cuba High School History Teacher

Editor's Note. We want to help youth realize what a unique and exciting history Fulton County communities have lived. We hope to create a passion for preserving that history. If you'd like to participate, please reach out and indicate your expertise/interest. Email, cahcpo19@att.net, or phone and leave a message, (309) 647-2242.



L-R Joe Brewer, Amber Cannon, Jayson Stead, Braxton Humphrey, Gavin Johnson, Cadie Churchill, Courtney Churchill, Cooper Leonard, Ella Bass, and Sue Scott, Western Illinois Museum Director