

Museum Newsletter

H—CANTON AREA HERITAGE CENTER



Chair's Report



I would like to remind everyone of a major event – the opening of the 1925 time capsule at Canton's Bicentennial. The contents of the capsule are displayed at the Center where they can be viewed behind glass. The items cannot be handled, but copies have been made for reading. Each item is numbered and can be found on a master sheet attached to each display case. The on-duty staffer will be happy to retrieve an item and find you a place to sit and enjoy.

This year we will be celebrating the 250th anniversary of our nation, the United States of America. When the year 1776 is mentioned,

we remember it for the signing of the *Declaration of Independence*.

The great Westward Movement took place in the next 50 years, and it led to the founding of Canton. One of the capsule items tells of one family's traveling the Ohio, Mississippi, and Illinois Rivers to Canton to build their first home, a log cabin with packed dirt floors. Would I have had the courage? I don't know.

One thing we do know, there were a lot of courageous, intelligent people, like Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin. It seems as though they lived a long, long time ago, but when we connect Canton's origin with these significant years, time compresses. George Washington died at age 67 in 1799, just 26 years earlier than our founding. Twenty-six years can be a very short time, esp., as we age – time seems to fly. It was 26 years ago that I drew my last check from an employer – I retired in the last century.

Thomas Jefferson was alive when Canton was founded. He died a year later, July 4, 1826. The Erie Canal was finished in 1825, and Granite Railway,

first commercial railroad, began operation in 1826. Cyrus McCormick, whose legacy was part of IHC history, invented the mechanical reaper in 1831. I'm sure you get the idea that time really flies, whether you are getting older or just having fun!

With summer ahead, let's talk ice cream. Dairy Queen sold soft serve in the early '50s and was located next to the Ludlum Super Market, Ash and Main. So how many of these do you remember? On the square, Cardosi's and the Candy Kitchen; nearby was Roszell's, Sebree's, Senn-Soldwedel's, and the 4-Cent Coffee Shop and Drive-in. Later, Mac's and the Dog N Suds. Hegeles was farther out west and Louie's Dairy Castle to the north, Candyland (Brown's) located across from today's Walgreens and A&W Root Beer to the south. I remember two soda fountains on the square, Kresge's and Ed Lewis Drug Store, where if you were just thirsty, you could get a Green River. Have a wonderful summer!

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Jack Pollitt Chairman

New Acquisitions

1925 Time Capsule Items

IH Time Clock loan - Ted and Martha Strode family

Lions Club records and meeting bell donated - Dr. James Farlik

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Museum Hours

Fridays, 10 am-12 noon

Saturdays, 10 am-2 pm

Sundays, 1 pm-3 pm

Other times by appointment

Call us and leave message,

(309) 647-2242



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www.cantonillinois.org/heritage-center

CANTON AREA HERITAGE CENTER

Meet Volunteer Kay Wenger

Editor's Note. We are fortunate to have interested people step up to volunteer at key moments, and Kay Wenger is just this person. She and Jim Morgan met during the Spoon River Drive, as they were vendors at one of the busy drive sites. Kay and Jim started volunteering together at the museum soon after. They've staffed the museum, greeted participants at events, led tours, and helped wherever needed.

Kay was born January 1, at Graham Hospital. Her parents bought a house in Monterey soon after she started first grade. She graduated from Canton Senior High School in 1959; then, the High Fashion School of Cosmetology. She worked first with Clara Rohrer in Canton; later, at Carson Pirie Scott Hair Salon in Peoria and also in Chicago. She continued, "When I married, we lived in London Mills, and I had my own beauty shop." She and her husband Larry raised three sons. Larry passed away in 2021. She now has eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren with whom she loves spending time.

As for getting involved in the museum, she explained, "Jim and I have similar interests that bring both of us enjoyment. It's also been nice to get to know new people. I've always liked history and am happy I can be helpful and continue learning."

Jim and Kay also travel to other museums. Their most recent visit was the John Deere museum in Grand Detour, IL. They report on the unique items and organization they see to the Heritage Center staff which might help us improve our services. We welcome Kay!



Cemetery Walk DVD

See Canton's leaders as they describe their contributions to this community. Cost is \$15 plus postage.



Chair's Report, continued

In the last issue of the newsletter, I asked you readers to **share your memories of a favorite place.**

The first response we've received remembering by-gone days would have made Guy St. Clair's ready smile even wider. Our first reply was from David Gregory of Peoria, recalling Mr. St. Clair's **Square Deal Market.** We want to create a special column, so we are waiting for more recollections to come in.

Is there a place with special meaning for you? Send your remembrance to me at Canton Area Heritage Center, P.O. Box 526, Canton, IL 61520. Include your full name, (i.e., maiden name), and current city. We reserve the right to edit the remembrance to fit our space requirements but will certainly pass along your favorite places in our beloved community! *Thank you, from Jack*



Canton History & Arts Alliance

The Canton History & Arts Alliance (CHAA) is a new organization designed to carry forward the excitement that emerged during the Bicentennial. The success of the celebration made it clear that the Canton community has a strong interest in entertainment and opportunities to engage with the city's rich history.

"The Bicentennial showed us how deeply our community values coming together to celebrate arts, culture, and history," said Rick Klinedinst, Co-Chair of the Canton History & Arts Alliance. "The Alliance gives us a way to keep that momentum going, making sure the spirit of the Bicentennial continues to benefit Canton well into the future."

As the Alliance begins its work, the community can look forward to new events and more opportunities to learn about and celebrate Canton's history. From May through September, the Alliance will host a variety of community-focused events and gatherings in downtown Canton. These events are designed to bring people together, support local businesses, and provide opportunities for entertainment, connection, and shared experiences.

For more information about the Canton History & Arts Alliance and how to get involved, or to become a sponsor, please e-mail, cantonhistoryandartsalliance@gmail.com. Cheryl Bielema and I represent the museum on the CHAA. Watch for the details on social media and community announcements

Hannah Cox, Programs Committee/CHAA Treasurer

Ultimate Doors at Whiskey A Go Go - An Update

One of the highlights of 2025's Canton Bicentennial celebration was the June 27th performance of The Ultimate Doors tribute band at the Canton High School auditorium... the same stage where The Doors played September 13th, 1967. The Ultimate Doors were well received by the sellout crowd. That wasn't a surprise since when tickets went on sale in late February of last year all 1,004 seats sold out in just six days.

The Ultimate Doors, headquartered near Dayton, Ohio, considered the Canton concert to be one of their most significant stops of the year since playing on the same stage is a big deal to them.

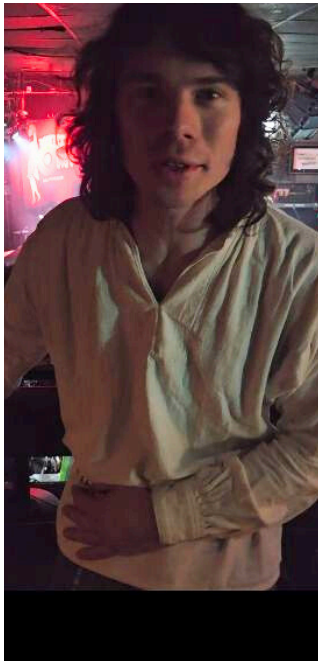
The group plays from coast to coast in the U.S., including a number of famous venues. In March of last year, they were invited to perform as the headliners at Whiskey a Go Go in West Hollywood, California. The world-famous club has been considered the anchor of the Los Angeles rock and roll scene since opening in 1964. It has played host to many of the world's most famous bands...including The Doors who were the house band there in 1966. The Ultimate Doors played to a sellout crowd last March and were invited back to play January 9th of this year. Once again...a sellout.

Canton Area Heritage Center board member Kevin Stephenson was a member of the Canton Bicentennial Committee and worked closely with The Ultimate Doors for more than two years as arrangements were being made for the Canton concert. A few weeks before their Canton appearance, the band told Stephenson they were excited to learn they had just been invited back to "Whiskey", as it is known, for a second concert on January 9, 2026. They told Stephenson and his wife Debbie (also a CAHC board member), they should join them...which they jumped at! The Stephensons said it was a tremendous experience--enjoyed by an audience that appreciated the attention to detail The Ultimate Doors conveyed throughout their more than 2-hour long performance. Many at the concert said you can't get any closer to The Doors experience than what The Ultimate Doors brought to the stage that night.

To say The Ultimate Doors are on a run with Whiskey is a bit of an understatement, evidenced by the fact they've been invited back for a third concert on July 3rd this year! It, too, will likely be a sellout.

The 60th anniversary year of The Doors' September 13th, 1967, Canton concert will be 2027. The Ultimate Doors have made it very clear they would like nothing better than to come back to Canton for a 2027 concert to commemorate the anniversary!

Kevin Stephenson, Promotion Committee



Top: Ultimate Doors in concert at Whiskey a Go-Go, West Hollywood, CA.

Middle: Whiskey a Go-Go exterior

Bottom: Jim Morrison, personified!



CANTON AREA HERITAGE CENTER

...preserving our history

✉ 111 South Main Street, PO Box 526
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2026-2027 CAHC Board of Directors

Current board members include Cheryl Bielema, Janice Bruster, Hannah Cox, Dean Gibson, Philip Gregory, Mary Lou Kuchan, Ken Long, Jim Morgan, Kathleen Myers, Jack Pollitt, Mary Pollitt, John Putman, Harold Rose, Debbie Stephenson, Kevin Stephenson, Mike Walters and Susan Walters.

Board members lead the Heritage Center's working committees, including Acquisitions, Facilities, Fundraising, Programs and Promotion. We also reach out to additional persons to help us complete our work. Let us know if you're interested in helping. We can find a task and fit the time you have available.



Did You Know?

Harry Hurst purchased the Dr. Bell Drug Store in 1876. The store was renamed Hurst Drug Store at that time and he operated the business until his death in November, 1885. In the latter years of his life, Mr. Hurst became addicted to alcohol, and in an attempt to recover, he began taking small doses of bromidia. Bromidia was a potent patent medicine of the day that was laced with alcohol and numerous narcotics. On the night of November 24th, he apparently took an overdose of the drug and died in the arms of the town marshal who had been summoned to take him home.

Harry's brother Jack assumed operation of the drug store and continued to operate the store until December, 1890.

During the last quarter of the 19th Century, prohibition and local "Blue Laws" were ever changing and only drug stores could sell whiskey by prescription. Harry and Jack, as well as most other Canton druggists of the time, were arrested on these "liquor charges" on many occasions. After numerous citations, Jack closed the store in December, 1890. He left Canton in 1912 and died in 1920.

Source: Edward R. Lewis, Jr. (1967). *Reflections of Canton in a Pharmacist's Show Globe.*

More about Blue Laws. "Blue laws (also known as Sunday laws, Sunday trade laws, and Sunday closing laws) are laws restricting or banning certain activities on specified days, usually Sundays in the western world. The laws were adopted originally for religious reasons, specifically to promote the observance of the Christian day of worship. Since then, they have come to serve secular purposes as well.

"Blue laws commonly ban certain business and recreational activities on Sundays and impose restrictions on the retail sale of hard goods and consumables, particularly alcoholic beverages."

Source: Wikipedia, Retrieved March 13, 2026

Jim Morgan, Treasurer