

# Canton Historical Society News

Canton Historical Society Newsletter No IX

May-June 2000

## MUSEUM OPEN

Tuesday 1 pm to 3 pm

Saturday 1 pm to 4 pm

## Calendar of Events

### May

15<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting 7:00 PM

17<sup>th</sup> Society Meeting 7:00 PM

Harold Sherman to speak on the  
"Building of Willow Run"

### June

19<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting 7:00 PM

22<sup>nd</sup> thru 26<sup>th</sup> Liberty Fest

### July

17<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting 7:00 PM

### August

12<sup>th</sup> Flea Market at Cherry Hill  
School

21<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting 7:00 PM

### September

18<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting 7:00 PM

### October

7<sup>th</sup> DuMouchelle Appraisals

## Reminder

Check your mailing label to see if your dues are current.. If you have recently paid your dues , then disregard the label. We don't want to loose you as a member, so if you haven't paid your dues please do.

## Harold Sherman of the Yankee Air Force to speak on the building of the Willow Run Bomber Plant

The Willow Run Bomber Plant played a significant role during World War II and also affected the Canton area and its people. Housing, as well as labor was needed and Canton provided its share of both.

Harold can tell us about the building of the Willow Run Plant and also why it was built L-shaped.

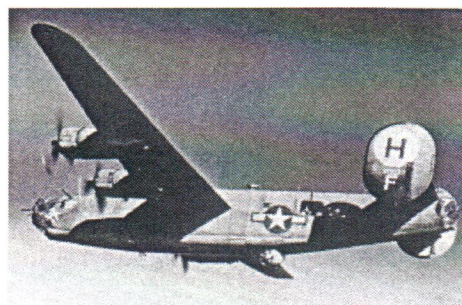
The "Bomber Plant" as it was called built the B-24 Liberator. It took a great deal of effort to build the plant, but once it was up and running it could build one plane an hour. Henry Ford used the same principles that he used to build his Ford automobiles. Come join Harold Sherman and learn more about the Willow Run Plant.



B-24 Liberator during bombing mission.



B-17 Bomber restored by the Yankee Air Force at Willow Run Airport.



B-24 after take off.

## Old Country •Buffet•

Thanks to Elaine Murad from the "Old Country Buffet" for donating four door prize dinners at our March meeting. Her relatives also donated the Bartlett-Travis house for which we are all grateful for.



### 3 New Life Members

The Canton Historical Society has three new Life members. Ronni Curtis, Marie Gentz, and Donald Gill. We should mention that Avis Waldecker also became a Life member last year.

### Help

Our Historical Society is looking for someone for society treasurer, or to write the society newsletter. We will assist anyone interested until they feel comfortable with the job.

This edition of the  
*Canton*  
**Historical Society**  
*News*

was put together by C.D. Mott and done very hastily at that .

For corrections, omissions or something to add, please call:  
734-397-5495

### Come visit our Museum

Repairs have been made and we are now doing some decorating. We want you to come and visit us and see what we have done and also what we are going to do.

If you want information about our society call:

Bonnie Berg.....734-495-0811

or

Ronni Curtis.....734-981-1475

## *Ghost Stories and Other Tales from Canton*

*By Virginia Bailey Parker*

Our best selling book. So don't be left without one.

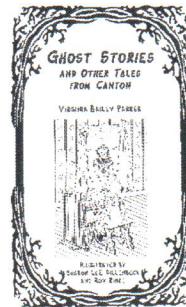
To order by mail, fill out the form below and mail to:  
Canton Historical Society, P.O. Box 87362, Canton, MI 48187-0362

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please make a check for \$14.95 ( Includes \$3.00 shipping and handling ) Payable to:  
**CANTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



© 1998

### Membership Application

Yes, I would like to become a member of the Canton Historical Society. Please complete this form and send \$10.00 to: Canton Historical Society, P.O.Box 87362, Canton, MI 48187-0362

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

You don't have to be a lifelong resident to join, just an interest in history and the desire to preserve it.

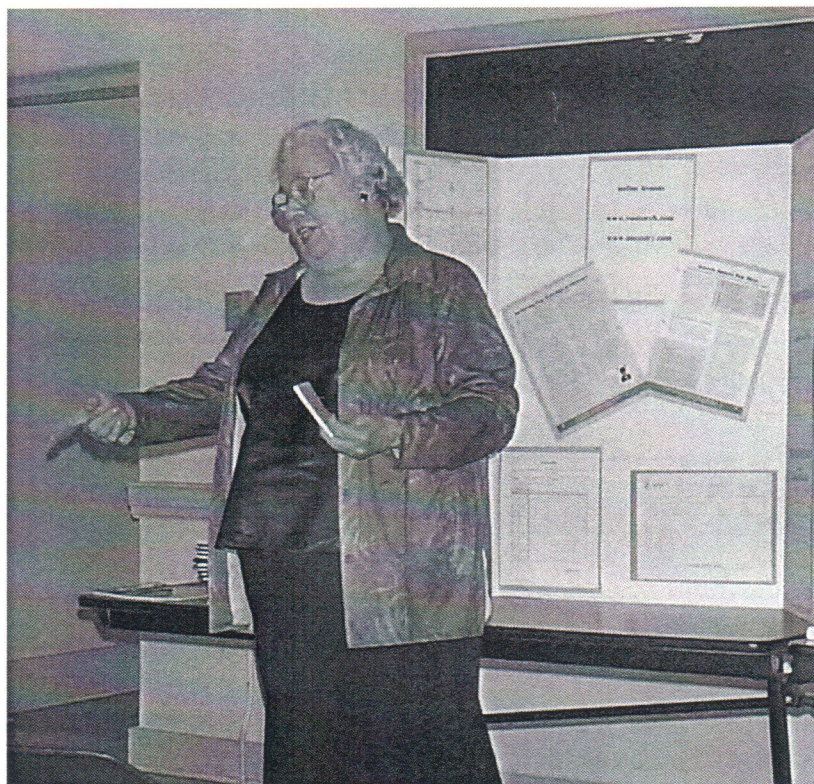
**Thank you**



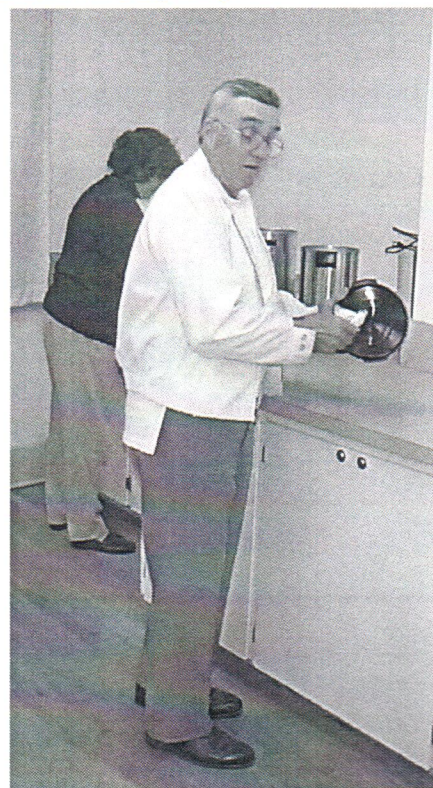
# Society Photo Page



*This photo was from the Michigan Ghost Hunters Society Web Site. Printed with permission of Lucy Keas. Did you see the GHOSTS? I was there and didn't see anything.*



*Mrs. L. (Pat) Dickerson taught us about genealogy at our last meeting.*



*Look Carol, Bob Boyer can do dishes.*





## Adopt a Civil War Soldier

I would like to make a **TAX DEDUCTIBLE** contribution to obtain the pension records of:  
(Please Check One)

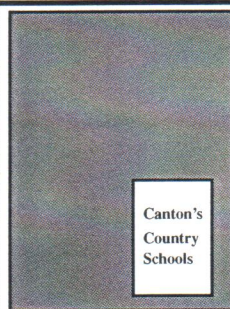
- |  |              |   |                   |
|--|--------------|---|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amrhine, John M.      | 1st MI Inf.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Kelly, Elisha H.     | 4th MI Cav.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anderson, George B.   | 1st MI Inf.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Kelly, William B.    | 4th MI Cav.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artley, John H.       | 24th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> Leng, George         | 24th MI Inf.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ballou, Thomas B.     | 24th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> Lewis, Addison       | U.S Navy          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bartlett, James N.    | 24th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> Lewis, Lloyd         | 20th MI Inf.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bartlett, John A.     | 24th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> Lyon, John W.        | Western Shrpshtrs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baker, Thomas J.      | 4th MI Cav.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lyon, Joseph B.      | 4th MI Cav.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Berdan, Dixon         | 5th MI Inf.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Newkirk, Charles     | 16th WI Inf.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Berdan, Harrison      | 5th MI Inf.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Robinson, Charles    | 1st MI Cav.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carleton, Eliphalet   | 24th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> Safford, Benjamin    | 17th MI Inf.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chaffee, Martin       | 10th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> Safford, Winfield S. | 24th MI Inf.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comer, George C.      | 1st MI Inf.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sterling, James      | 24th MI Inf.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corwin, Amos Bird     | 19th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> Stevens, David B.    | 24th MI Inf.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corwin, Erastus       | 10th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> Stevens, Joseph      | 3rd MI Inf.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corwin, Nelson        | 2nd MI Inf.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tait, John           | 24th MI Inf.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dicks/Dix, Wallace P. | 24th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> Thompson, Isaac D.   | 1st Light Art.    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gregory, Albert       | 20th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> Treat, Thadeus J.    | 54th IN Vol.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hill, Alva S.         | 24th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> Tuller, Calvin H.    | 5th MI Cav.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hough, Ira Albert     | 1st MI Inf.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Walker, Henry        | 6th MI Inf.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Huston, Almon         | 11th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Moore, Amzi</b>   | 3rd MI Cav.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Huston, Dwight        | 16th MI Inf. | <input type="checkbox"/> No Preference        |                   |

Amount of **TAX DEDUCTIBLE** donation:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this slip with your donation and make the check payable to: **Canton Historical Society**  
Mail this slip and check to: Canton Historical Society, PO Box 87362, Canton, Michigan 48187-0362

**Thank you for your support**



## Canton's Country Schools

*Compiled by Joan Cavell Palmer*

Sold at the Museum on Canton Center Rd. This 445 page historical collection of photos and information dates back to the last century. This exciting book tells how the schools merged into the present school systems. Did you know Canton had the last operating one room school in Wayne County? Buy this book, you won't be disappointed.

© 1993



## Harrison Berdan 1829 - 1923

*By David Curtis*



*Harrison Berdan*

**H**arrison was born November 22, 1829 in Plymouth, Michigan. At that time Canton was known as South Plymouth. He was the son of Peter and Mary ( Doolittle ) Berdan.

Harrison married Lurena Hannan of Canton on February 22, 1854. On December 15, 1854 they had their first child, Mary who was born in Canton and died at Charlevoix, Michigan March 5, 1894. A second child Caroline, was born to them on June 27, 1857 in Canton. Caroline died Sept. 8, 1873 and is buried in Canton's Downer Cemetery next to her mother. A third daughter Elra A. Berdan was born to them on August 4, 1860. In 1921 Elra was living in Brooklyn New York.

The 1860 Canton Township census listed Harrison as a farmer.

On August 30, 1862 Harrison enlisted in Company H of the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, leaving his wife and three daughters. His physical description at the time of enlistment was six foot two and one half inches tall, fair complexion, blue eyes, and brown hair. His occupation at this time was listed as a

carpenter. During his time of service he was promoted to the rank of Captain.

At the battle of the Wilderness, May 5, 1864 he fell from his horse. This fall caused chronic kidney problems after the war. In 1890 he was receiving a pension of \$3.75 per month for this condition.

On May 12, 1864 at the Battle of Spottsylvania Courthouse, Harrison was captured by the Confederates. While in a rail car on route to prison Harrison and others escaped from the car. The following excerpts is taken from the Ypsilanti True Democrat July 1, 1864 from an article by Capt. Delos Phillips:

" We were captured on the 12th of May and only ten days elapsed before five of us had formed a plan of escape.... There were 43 commissioned officers in the car... The train was such as one as we transport stock in, in the North. One of the side doors was guarded by four armed men, and the top and both ends were manned by graybacks... After dark a number of the 43 who had not meditated escape went to the center of the car to sing aloud. The guards were charmed. They listened attentively to the never ceasing strain. Unwitting that we were as busy as bees with our trusty pocket knives cutting away the wooden bars and breaking them down...

The party consisted of Lt. Col. Edmund Rice, 19th Mass.; Captain Delos Phillips, 17th Mich. Inf.; Lt. Harrison Berdan, 5th Mich Cav.; Benjamin Safford 17th Mich. Inf.; ( also from Canton ) and Lt. C.W. D. Smetley, 5th West Virginia Cavalry. About 2 am of the 24th, we met a confederate soldier who gave information and the same afternoon a hundred men were hunting us. During this day a negress walked 13 miles to secure us meat and meal. How many white women in the free North would do the same under similar circumstances? Her husband, having served two years in the confederate army, was now detailed to work in a foundry. He obtained much valuable information during the day and at night offered to guide us through their lines. This was no slight proffer, when it is understood that recapture is death or re-

*Continued on next page*



imprisonment... (Delos continues with stories of their trip back to the north. He ends with): You may imagine, I cannot describe with what pleasure we took the proffered hand, after a 300 mile march through hostile country, the most of it performed at night and all of it afoot."

Harrison was honorably discharged at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas July 3, 1865. That same year a fourth daughter, Effie was born in Canton December 31.

Effie married Albert E. Clayden and in 1921 they resided in New York City, New York.

On February 26, 1866 Harrison purchased from his father for \$4,500 the south half of the east half of the southeast quarter of section 25 ( north side of Michigan Ave., west of Hannan Rd. Excepting about three acres known as the Walker Tavern properly lying both sides of the Chicago Road ( Michigan Avenue ) on the east line of the land and excepting one half acre known as the toll house property and one quarter acre known as the school house property.

Harrison's wife Lurena died May 13, 1870 and was buried in Downer Cemetery.

The 1870 census list's Harrison as a farmer.

On February 19th 1872, Harrison received from the State of Michigan for back taxes, forty acres located in section 36. ( south of Michigan Ave, and east of Lotz Road ) also in Canton.

October 19, 1872 he married Janette Hepburn of Romulus, Michigan. In the 1880 census of Canton, Harrison listed his occupation as hotelkeeper and living with him at the time was his wife Phoebe, ( another name for Janette? ) and daughters Mary E., ( Elva ) Effa M. Berdan.

About 1883 he moved to Charlevoix, Michigan. Prior to March 31, 1884 Harrison was admitted to the Baxter GAR ( Grand Army of the Republic ) Post in Charlevoix. He was Post Commander 1897-1901. His wife Janette died May 17, 1891 in Charlevoix.

November 8, 1893 Harrison married at the City of Charlevoix Mary ( Moore ) Budd. On the marriage certificate Harrisons occupation is listed as postmaster. Mary was born August 7, 1853 at Harbor Springs and previously had been married to George Budd who died in 1888.

Harrison died in New York City at the residence of his daughter Effa Clayden March 21, 1923. His

third wife Mary was receiving a pension of \$30 per month at the time she died on February 27, 1927. Harrison and Mary are both buried in Brookside Cemetery, Charlevoix Township, Michigan

**Thanks to the Plymouth  
Canton Civitan's for their  
donation. This helps us  
research Canton's history**

## **Moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

**We have a Web site**

Thanks to Barbara Buchanan who volunteered to put together a web page for our society. Please take the time to look at it and give us your opinion. You can find us at:

**<http://www.canton-mi.org/chs/index.htm>**

## **Thank you Gardner-White Furniture**

Canton Historical Society thanks Gardner-White Furniture Store of Canton, for giving us a great price on our new table and chairs for our museum. We also want to thank the sales staff and delivery people for being so helpful.

## **Kay Hartman-Kuck will replace Jeannie Seifert as she retires from Society Board**

Jeannie will be missed by our Society. She has been active in many community affairs in the past and will still be active in some events in the future. We thank her for all the help she has given this society.

Kay Hartman-Kuck, who replaces Jeannie on our board, has been an active volunteer with our society in the past and we are glad to have her on our board. Welcome!



**Map of Canton early 1940's**  
**Mostly a farming community at that time.**



### Board of Directors

*President* . . . . . Robert Boyer  
*Vice President* . . . . . Bonnie Berg  
*Secretary* . . . . . David Curtis  
*Treasurer* . . . . . Charles Mott  
*Trustee* . . . . . Ronni Curtis  
*Trustee* . . . . . Marie Gentz  
*Trustee* . . . . . Bill Sprengel  
*Trustee* . . . . . Phyllis Patterson  
*Trustee* . . . . . Kay Hartman-Kuck

### Committee Chairs

*Program* . . . . . Bonnie Berg and Charles Mott  
*Membership* . . . . . Marta McCabe and Phyllis Patterson  
*Museum Display* . . . . . TBA  
*Education* . . . . . Marta McCabe  
*Publicity* . . . . . Marie Gentz  
*Vital Statistics* . . . . . Ruth Wiles  
*Hist. Dist. Com. Rep.* . . . . . Ralph Welton and Virginia Parker  
*Dec. bake sale* . . . . . Bonnie Berg and Nancy Nelson  
*Harvest Dinner* . . . . . Bonnie Berg and Ronni Curtis  
*DuMouchelle* . . . . . Marie Gentz and Phyllis Patterson  
*Liberty fest* . . . . . Carol Bodenmiller and Robert Boyer  
*Flea Market* . . . . . Ronni Curtis and Jeannie Seifert

## Cemetery Book

The Society has a *Cemetery Book* listing the people buried in the older cemeteries of Canton Township. If you are doing genealogy, this book is a must. It can be purchased at Canton Historical Museum. The museum is located at the corner of Canton Center Rd. and Heritage Drive, ( next to the new Fire Station No. 1 ). The hours are Tuesday 1 pm to 3 pm and Saturday from 1 pm until 4 pm.



Canton Center School

Canton Historical Society

P O Box 87362 • Canton, MI • 48187-0362