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Canton Historical Society
(Michigan)

MUSEUM HOURS

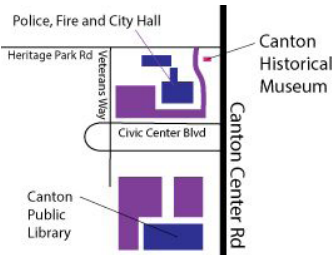
CLOSED FOR THE SEASON

REOPENING SOON!



VISIT THE MUSEUM

1022 Canton Center Rd.
Canton, MI 48188



The Canton Historical Society would like to thank all of the dedicated members who continue to show interest in the museum's education and preservation efforts. We appreciate your ongoing support!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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CANTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Est. 1834

Summer 2024 · Edition CXXI

Canton, Michigan

CHS NEWS

BEAUTIFUL NEW LANDSCAPING AT THE BARTLETT-TRAVIS HOUSE

A big thank you to the MSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers for all their hard work to beautify the landscaping at Bartlett-Travis House! It looks wonderful and adds to the charm of this historical site. Be sure to visit their booth at the Canton Farmers Market or visit their website at canr.msu.edu/master_gardener_volunteer_program/



DONATE YOUR OLD TECH DEVICE



You may have what we need! We are asking our members to check their closets and basements for vintage **communication devices that are no longer in use.** We are interested in smart phones, Blackberrys, Palm Pilots, landline phones with a rotary dial or standard desktop push buttons, and early cell phones such as bag cell phones, flip phones, cell phones without screens, etc. We are also interested in other communication devices such as transistor radios, walkie-talkies, recorder pens, and other small items. You can donate these at our information booth during the Farmers Market on Sunday mornings. Put your item in a ziplock bag and fill out the form inside with your contact information. If your device is in working order, please erase all personal information. Please include chargers if available. There may be other items you have that are of interest so please email us if you have any questions. All donated items will become property of the Canton Historical Society and may be used in upcoming exhibits.

(continued on page 2)

BIG BOY VS THE LAW



On Friday, May 2, 2003, the Big Boy statue in front of the restaurant at 45250 Ford Road was kidnapped! The statue itself was made of fiberglass and had only been there for about two months. The restaurant manager noticed him missing the next morning and called the police. Shortly after the statue was reported missing, one of the police detectives said that a 17-year-old youth admitted to taking the statue with 3 friends to a field in Salem Township as a prank. The statue was recovered but his hamburger was missing and the statue had sustained several injuries. The teens were given a week to replace the statue, costing about \$3,500, in order to avoid criminal charges. Read more about this restaurant's story on page 4.

COMING SOON!

Members are currently in the process of curating items to create a new exhibit at the **Canton Historical Museum** in the schoolhouse exploring communication and the role of technological advances to enhance the ability to share information. We will announce our grand opening in an upcoming email and on Facebook.

The **Pole Barn Farm Museum** will soon open on Farmers Market Sunday mornings. During the planned Canton Township construction at Preservation Park this coming year, the Farm Museum will also get some updates and makeovers so please excuse our mess while we prepare to bring new and exciting exhibits to our collection. We will announce our grand opening in an upcoming email and on Facebook so be sure to check back!

Friday June 21 from 2:00-3:30 PM **STEAM for All Event**

Join us at the Canton Public Library Join us as we team up for their science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics event. The theme is "farming" and we're just the right group to help them out. We will be providing hands on activities with farm machinery for children and adults to demonstrate the innovative ways that farmers accomplish their jobs. Please check with the Canton Public Library for more information about this event at www.cantonpl.org.

Sunday June 23 from 9:30-11:00 AM **Youth Activity- Painting with Nature and Native Vegetation** **Sunday July 21 from 9:30-11:00 AM** **Youth Activity- Paper Airplanes and Local Aviation History** **Sunday August 25 from 9:30-11:00 AM** **Youth Activity- Seed Pictures & Crafts and Canton Agriculture**

Designed for youth aged 4-10 years at the **Farmers Market near the Pole Barn Farm Museum**. There is no registration for this free event. Seating will be first-come, first-served, and an adult guardian must remain with the child throughout the activity. Check out our Facebook page or email us at info@cantonhistoricalsocietymi.org for the latest information.

Tuesday August 20 from 7:00-8:30 PM **Guest Lecture Series- "Timber", Michigan's Logging History** **Tuesday September 17 from 7:00-8:30 PM** **Guest Lecture Series- The People of the Three Fires** **Tuesday October 15 from 7:00-8:30 PM** **Guest Lecture Series- History of Eloise Asylum**

The Canton Historical Society is proud to announce our new initiative, in collaboration with the Canton Public Library, to present our Guest Lecture Series starting this summer. Join us in the **Canton Public Library Meeting Room** for a lively presentation on local and regional history topics by guest speakers. Starting in August, Lisa Parsons of the Huron Clinton Metroparks (www.metroparks.com/) will present on Michigan's logging history, then in September, Charlie Shelton, also from Huron Clinton Metroparks will present on the Indigenous Michigan People of the Three Fires. In October, Tyler Moll, the director of the Wayne Historical Museum (cityofwayne.com/323/Wayne-Historical-Museum), will speak about the history of Eloise Asylum. Come and share the history of our community and some delicious baked goods too! There is no fee to attend.

Sunday September 15 from 8:30 AM-12:30 PM **Annual Rummage Sale**

This fall, we will present our annual rummage sale at **Bartlett-Travis House**. Check out items old and new, reserved all year, just for you!

Thursday October 24 from 7:00-8:30 PM **Ghost Stories!**

This year the event will be held in the Canton Public Library Community Room. We will feature guest readers and storytellers to present spooky stories for teens and adults. This has been one of our longest running events and we look forward to sharing these stories with you and enjoying some fall treats. There is no fee to attend.

Tuesday October 15 & Tuesday November 19 from 1:30-3:30 PM **History and Holiday- A Card Making Activity**

Indulge your creative side (and enjoy a yummy treat) while you make your own holiday-themed card hosted by Stephanie Millross of Stampin' Up. Advanced registration and a small fee are required. Look for more information on these events in the future.

CHS NEWS: WE NEED YOUR EYES AND EARS! (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)



Seeing the beautiful landscaping at BT House was a nice change from other unexpected recent occurrences at Preservation Park. This site has been the target of several vandalism incidents lately. We count on your eyes and ears to protect our community's valuable resources so please notify the appropriate authorities if you see suspicious activity in and around these buildings. Please help us to preserve this important piece of Canton's history!

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Over the past few months, CHS Board Member Evan Hall assisted by volunteers Kathy & Bob Martin has worked tirelessly to get the Bartlett-Travis House ready for visitors during the Farmer's Market Sundays at Preservation Park.

After a visit last fall by Susan Campbell Fournet, volunteers learned some exciting new things about the house. Mrs. Fournet had often visited the house when she was a young girl; her elderly aunt, Ella Travis Rowe, was the last of the Travis family to live in the house.



Based on the memories of Mrs. Fournet & other family members, CHS volunteers began moving furniture & reimagining several of the upstairs rooms to reflect these memories.

Out of storage boxes came quilts which had been donated by local seamstresses. These are now in display in the room Aunt Ella would use with her friends to hold quilting parties. Another room was made into a bedroom because Mrs. Fournet said that was where Uncle Jewel liked to stay when he visited.

Additional work was done to provide extra display space throughout the house.

We are please that a member of one of Canton's historic families is willing to act as docent during tours. Dave Truesdell is enthusiastic about sharing the story of BT House with others, as well as sharing some of his family's history in and around Canton. Visitors are welcome during the Farmer's Market. Groups can arrange a time to visit by contacting 734-391-9352.

Left: Bob Martin installs Plexiglass over the exposed original wallpaper in the BT House parlor.

Right: Dave Truesdell in front of BT House.



HISTORY HAPPENINGS

Since last fall CHS members have been working tirelessly on preparing the Bartlett-Travis House for tours to provide a culturally and educationally rich experience for our community. Please stop by frequently as we continue to make improvements and updates. (*See article above*)

In April, CHS members attended a Ramadan Iftar dinner hosted by the Muslim Community of Western Suburbs at the Medina Activity Center on Haggerty Road. As guests, we were lavished with a tasty late evening meal and had the opportunity to meet many community members who we hope will join us in celebrating Canton's proud and diverse heritage.

In May the Canton Historical Society hosted a short scavenger hunt at the Canton Historical Museum during the Road Rally Fundraiser 2024 benefiting the Canton Cares Fund. Over 60 participants from children to adults enjoyed learning a little about Canton's history while trying out the vintage hand crank phone and ringing the school bell.

FROM THE CHS PRESIDENT

The Canton Historical Society is off to a roaring summer start. The Bartlett-Travis House is open for tours, and we have a full calendar of events planned for our community. Members have been working hard and all committee chairpersons have been selected. The pole barn Farm Museum will open within a few weeks and our new museum committee chairperson is hard at work creating a new exhibit at Canton Center School. We are updating our technology so that we can better serve you and accept online and on-site debit/credit card payments. We also hope to improve our website to offer more information that is user-friendly and provides frequent updates on activities and events. If you haven't visited us lately, please take time to join us at an event, take a house tour, or just drop by our information booth at the Farmers Market to say hi. We love talking with members and sharing information about our township's history. We hope to see you all soon!

Kimberly Mabie, CHS Board President

NOW OPEN! TOURS OF BARTLETT-TRAVIS HOUSE

Bartlett-Travis House is open for tours again! Guided tours by Dave Truesdell are available on Farmers Market Sunday mornings throughout the summer. Tours begin at 9:30, 10:15, 11:00 & 11:45 AM. Tours are FREE and no advanced registration is needed. Visitors can sign up for an upcoming tour at the Canton Historical Society information booth, staffed by our own Bob Wychulis, near the entrance ramp to the house. Featured new rooms include the kitchen, bedroom and sewing room. We are always adding new items from our collections. So, the next time you are in Cherry Hill Village to purchase the freshest produce, baked goods, and meats in Canton, be sure to stop by and check out what's new in the old house.



ALL ABOUT BARTLETT-TRAVIS HOUSE

In the newly formed township of Canton in 1837, Darius Blackman purchased 40 acres of land at the southwest corner of present-day Warren and Canton Center Roads for \$300. A few years later he sold the property to his sister, Maria, and her husband Thomas Bartlett.

The Bartletts had the house built on the property and it was completed in the 1850s. Its original floor plan consisted of a sitting room, a parlor, a dining and kitchen area. It also included a second-floor loft. Thomas Bartlett sold the property to his son George after he retired from farming in 1857. George turned the loft into a full second story on the house a decade later.

In 1908, William S. Travis Sr. and his wife Martha Cook purchased the property for \$5,000. They lived there with their seven children and owned a cheese factory nearby. The bedrooms were all upstairs and reserved for guests only. The signature wrap-around porch was built in the 1910s.

William Travis died in 1924 and the property was split among his children. His daughter Ella Travis Rowe inherited the land parcel that included the house. She maintained ownership and lived there until the early 1960s when she sold the house.

By 1962, Thomas Myers had purchased the property and his wife Clytie operated an antique and secondhand shop in the house. Ownership of the property was transferred several times until 1988 when a local realtor, Ken Dividock, bought the property and donated the house to Canton Township for use as a historical site. It was then moved from its original site to what is now Preservation Park on Ridge Road. Restoration of the house began in 1990 and was completed in 2002. The original property on Canton Center Road was sold, and a 7-Eleven party store now occupies a portion of the former property.

The Bartlett-Travis House has undergone many changes over the last 170 years. It has survived significant changes in the landscape of our township and currently provides visitors with a glimpse into days long ago.

BIG BOY VS. THE LAW (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The property owned by Dave Khoury at 45250 Ford Road just east of Canton Center Road has had quite a journey over the decades. In 1975 Khoury opened a Big Boy, which closed in 1996. The next restaurant in this location was Misty Duck (almost named Mighty Duck Bistro until Khoury was advised against sharing the name with the Anaheim hockey team), which opened on August 19, 1996 but promptly closed on June 29, 1997. Misty Duck's big fine dining sell was the "wild game" aspect which Khoury believes was what people focused on, leading to its quick downfall. The building was then leased to Mesquite Grill which operated from 1997-98, and then Parthenon Express which closed in 2001. The restaurant was reopened as a Big Boy in 2002 and closed again in 2018. National Coney Island then occupied the building but closed in 2021 after not surviving the Covid-19 pandemic. A new House of Umami Ramen restaurant now occupies this very busy piece of real estate.



An image of the 45250 Ford Road property after National Coney Island's closure, from <https://socialhousenews.com/>

BECOME A CHS DONOR!

Your donations can help the work of the Canton Historical Society to grow. We rely on both artifact and monetary donations to continue our work documenting and sharing the rich history of our community!

Donor Levels

The Cherry Hill: \$1000-\$500

The Sheldon: \$499-\$250

The Denton: \$249-\$100

For monetary donations, please email info@cantonhistoricalsocietymi.org or send to P.O. Box 87362, Canton MI 48187.

For history (object) donations, please contact martinrws@gmail.com.

Thank you!



ADD TO OUR COLLECTION

Over the decades the society archives has accumulated hundreds of photos that give us a glimpse into the history of Canton. We are always looking for anyone who has old photos of Canton to add to our collection. We accept photos of businesses, long gone buildings, homes, streets, events and people. If you do not wish to donate your original copy, we are always happy to scan a copy and return the original to you. These photos are a great resource for the archives as well as the community and family genealogist.

If you are willing to donate photos or a copy of them, please contact us at info@cantonhistoricalsocietymi.org. Thank you for helping us to grow our archives!

DID YOU GROW UP IN CANTON?

If you were/are a longtime resident of Canton, we want to hear from you! What are your memories from the township? What was life like for you and your family?

Even if you no longer live locally, we still value your stories and memories! Email the society at info@cantonhistoricalsocietymi.org or call the museum at 734-391-9352 and leave a message. Someone will reach out to you to discuss your memories and you may even see your story appear in a future newsletter!

Ready to join the Canton Historical Society?

We'd love to have you!

Please indicate the level of membership desired and send in this form with payment.

☐ Individual - \$15

☐ Family - \$18

☐ Student - \$5

☐ Patron - \$50

☐ Business - \$75

☐ Sponsor - \$200

☐ Donation - \$_____

☐ Renewal - \$_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

☐ Yes, I am interested in volunteering with the Canton Historical Society.
Please contact me about upcoming/ongoing opportunities.

Please mail completed form to: Canton Historical Society, PO Box 87362, Canton MI 48187