

**CANTON; ITS PIONEERS AND  
HISTORY: A CONTINUATION  
TO THE HISTORY OF FULTON  
COUNTY**

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Canton; Its Pioneers and History: A Continuation to the History of Fulton County by Alonzo M. Swan

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**ALONZO M. SWAN**

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CANTON:

ITS PIONEERS AND HISTORY.

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF

FULTON COUNTY.

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By ALONZO M. SWAN.

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TO MY WIFE,  
**MARY S. SWAN,**

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED:

YOURSELF THE GRANDDAUGHTER OF FOUR PIONEERS, AND ONE OF THE  
FIRST WHITE CHILDREN BORN IN KNOX COUNTY.

A GOOD WIFE, AN AFFECTIONATE MOTHER,  
MAY YOU BE HAPPY THROUGH LIFE, IS THE PRAYER OF  
YOUR AFFECTIONATE HUSBAND,

THE AUTHOR.





## CANTON: ITS PIONEERS AND HISTORY.

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### FIRST SETTLEMENT, BY THEODORE SERGEANT, ISAAC SWAN, AND NATHAN JONES.

PRIOR to 1821, the present site of the Town of Canton was uninhabited. Deer, turkeys, and other wild denizens of the wood and prairie, were the only occupants. In 1822, Theodore Sergeant, Captain D. W. Barnes and Charles Sergeant came into the township, settling on the place now occupied by John Lane, Esq., northwest of Canton.

In 1822, Theodore Sergeant visited the land office at Vandalia and obtained a list of Congress lands in Fulton county. By some mistake, the northeast quarter of section 27, in Township 7 North, 4 East, on which afterward was laid out the original town site, was given, on this list, as Congress and unentered land. Sergeant, being then a single man, decided to "preempt" it; and accordingly erected a cabin near but north of the site of the present High-School building, and broke up and put into cultivation a few acres of ground. Being a single man and not disposed to keep bachelor's hall, he employed a blacksmith, in about 1823, by the name of Harrison Hughland, to occupy his cabin, board him, and carry on blacksmithing. Hughland was a maker of cow-bells, and did the first manufacturing of any kind in the township, manufacturing bells for the few settlers in the county. Hughland carried on the shop only about one year for Sergeant, but afterward worked here for a short time on his own account.

In 1824, Sergeant was visited by Isaac Swan, who exhibited to him a military title for his claim. Sergeant at once vacated the place, and Swan entered into possession. Swan was accompanied by his brother-in-law, Nathan Jones. Jones owned the northwest quarter of section 34, in the same township; and as the two quarters "cornered" with each other, and as Jones's quarter was timber land, considerably broken, and considered of little value for

cultivation, while Swan's was prairie, smooth, and a choice farming tract, they entered into an arrangement by which each quarter was divided through the centre from east to west. Swan took, under this arrangement, the north half of each quarter, and Jones the south half.

Isaac Swan saw the advantage of the location as a town site, and determined at once to lay off a town. He proposed to Jones that they should jointly survey the west forty acres of each one's prairie tract; but Jones objected.

At this time a man by the name of Kinney was living on the northeast quarter of section twenty-seven, since known as the old Coleman farm. Kinney claimed to own the quarter, and proposed to Swan that he would join in the enterprise. To this Swan consented; and accordingly, on the 10th day of December, 1825, the Town of Canton was "staked off" and began its career. Kinney's lots were numbered from one to fifty-four, in consecutive order, and Swan's, beginning at fifty-five, continued up to one hundred and eight.

Some time in the following season, John Coleman, sen., came into the country with a title to the quarter of land claimed by Kinney, and at once ousted him from possession. Prior to this, Kinney, doubtless knowing his claim to be worthless, had proposed to Isaac Swan that they should divide lots alternately through both tracts, in order that, when purchasers presented themselves, they might say that one-half their lots had already been sold. Swan very foolishly consented to this arrangement. At the time Coleman ousted Kinney, he had sold no lots except on Swan's part of the plat. Of course, such sales proved to him clear profit.

Kinney remained in Canton a few years, until, finally, on one occasion, he proposed to Swan that he could make more money manufacturing bogus silver than in any other way, and proposed to Swan that he join him in the business. Swan was an honest man, and no such proposition could be made to him with impunity. He at once notified Kinney that he had just twenty-four hours in which to wind up his business relations with Canton and Canton people, and make his escape from the wrath that was sure to overtake him if he tarried beyond that time. He did not tarry, it is recorded.

The boundary-line between Swan and Kinney was Adelphi

street. When Coleman came into possession, he fenced up Kinney's survey, fencing to the centre of this street; and here originated a controversy that for years was kept up in regard to Adelphi street—one party claiming that Coleman could not, by law, vacate it; the other claiming that he could.

The boundaries of Swan's portion of the town were as follows: beginning at the corner of Fourth and Adelphi streets; thence west to the corner of North-First and Adelphi; thence south to the corner of North-First and Union; thence east to the corner of Union and Fourth streets; thence north to the place of beginning.

Swan soon induced Jones to lay off an addition immediately south of the original town, but at what date the recorded plat does not show. This was Jones's first Addition to the Town of Canton, and extended from the corner of Fourth and Union streets west to the corner of Union and First streets; thence south one block to Elm street; thence east to the corner of Elm and Fourth streets; thence north one block to the place of beginning.

Jones laid off on his the present Public Square, he owning the property on three sides of it, and Swan on one (the north) side. This addition was probably laid out in the spring or summer of 1830.

Canton received its name, given to it by Isaac Swan, from a notion he entertained that in its location it was directly the antipodes of its Chinese namesake. Peking, in Tazewell county, had been laid out a short time previously, and Isaac determined, he said, "that the two celestial cities should be represented at precisely their opposite pole on the earth's surface."

Isaac Swan erected the first building on the original town plat, immediately after it was laid out. This building was a log-cabin, perhaps sixteen by eighteen feet, and was for some time known as "Swan's catch-all." It was designed as a stopping-place for any family that might come in, until they could build; when unoccupied, he used it as a carpenter's shop. This building was situated on Union street, above Fourth.

The first family to avail themselves of this "catch-all" was the family of John Hannan, who came in soon after Swan and Jones. Hannan obtained from Swan a lot on Main street, now occupied by S. Smith, Esq., and built the first house intended for a residence in town. This was a cabin, and was occupied by him until