

**a e TRAVEL**

# Canton, Ohio's Football Hof Trek

BY MERLE EXIT

**A**t present a football signed by the New York Sharks Pro Football Team is on display at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. Resting in a case marked "Recent Acquisitions", it is the first item that has ever been on display from a women's tackle football team. Having accomplished this feat, I decided to visit the site, as well as the sights of Sparks County...in about 24 hours.

Although Canton is about an hour from Cleveland, I hungrily flew into Akron and headed for The Amish Door Restaurant and Village, located in the town of Wilmot. The restaurant, known for their Broasted Chicken, serves up great food and all done from "scratch". For less than \$10 including tax and tip, you can enjoy a lunch that includes an untypical salad bar sporting dessert as well. Take in a show at the Dinner Theatre. Could be Mystery or Gospel. Just missed The Isaacs. The village also has gift shops, a bakery, the Hasseman House B&B and an Inn. At the time there was a large nativity scene nearby. I couldn't help but take a photo with a caption, "No room at the Inn".

Canton Classic Car Museum at Market & 6th was surprisingly more interesting than I expected. Aside from classic cars, it is filled with loads of nostalgia. Take the tour with Char Lautzenheiser. Who knows, you may win an historic brick.

Canton is big on President William McKinley. However, I skipped his Presidential Library and Museum and opted for a more important visit to the National First Ladies' Library Education and Research Center and nearby Ida Saxton McKinley House. The Saxton House, open to the public by reservation with the NFLL, houses First Ladies' period costumes, and exhibits that include McKinley era furnishings. The tours are led by docents in First Ladies' period costumes.

The ERC facilities include a First Ladies' research library, visitor orientation exhibits and a public theatre for presentations, workshops and seminars. The topic of the present exhibit was: Spirits, Suffrage & Struggle; A Triangle of Amendments. Check out the gift shop where you can find some great sweatshirts that have an added "tailored shirt" collar.

Akron's Carousel Dinner Theatre was the evening event with "Swing" being the show. I suppose that the show did a run on Broadway and missed it. Okay, it did and was a Tony nominee as well. Loved it here. The show highlights over 30 dance sequences with a swing dance band backing it up. Some comedy too. The food was pretty good for a "getting it out to a large audience all at once thing". You're paying about \$12 more for dinner than if you just see the show and if you don't care for what's included on the menu, you can always pay extra for something else. "I Love You, You're Perfect. Now



The gift shop at National First Ladies' Library Education and Research Center

Change!" is up next for the 2006 season and you've have to wait for September to see "Urinetown".

It was off to Hartville for two stops. Maize Valley Farm is great for family fun and its own winery. I stopped at the market to meet Bill Bakan. The store sports locally-grown produce, farm-raised beef, oven-fresh baked goods and some locally made jams, jellies and salsas. A wine-tasting was in order, especially the ones made with fruit other than grapes. Ruby red raspberries make for a wine that is bottled like ice wine. In addition, there was a cherry, strawberry, blueberry and a Summer Fling blend of black raspberry and strawberry. The winery lends itself to musical entertainment and a maze with

lots of twists and turns and trivia.

Hartville MarketPlace and Flea Market was just down the road apiece. The Flea Market has become one of Northeast Ohio's best-known shopping destinations and one of Ohio's oldest and largest weekly flea markets. It has a 100,000 square foot, heated and air-conditioned indoor market as well as a 12-acre outdoor flea market. And if you can't decide what to eat, you can always have lunch at the abutting Hartville Kitchen. Hint: try their storemade salad dressing.

Rather than lunch at the Kitchen, I opted for Menches Bros. located in Akron. The story was that Charles E. Mench ran out of pork for an 1885 Eire County Fair and decided to

use beef. Finding it bland, they added coffee, brown sugar and other ingredients to create the "hamburger" after Hamburg, NY where the fair was being held.

Brothers Frank A. and Charles E., both born in Canton, were baking cakes in Parisian waffle irons and topped them with ice cream at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. They then had the idea to wrap the warm waffle around a fid, a cone-shaped splicing tool for tent ropes. The waffle cooled and held its shape to provide an edible handle for eating ice cream, thus the waffle cone. You can still enjoy their two delicious "inventions" at the restaurant.

Where did I park my body? The Four Points Sheraton located in Canton. The hotel pays tribute to the Pro Football Hall of Fame with the Wall of Fame Legends. Since I was checking out the football at the HOF, I opted for their Hall of Fame Experience package that included tickets to the HOF, a goodie bag of snacks, and a Wilson NFL football with the insignias of both the Pro Football HOF and the hotel's "Canton's Hall of Fame Experience". Experience it all by calling the Stark County CVB at 800-533-4302 or [www.cantonstarkcvb.com](http://www.cantonstarkcvb.com). ▼

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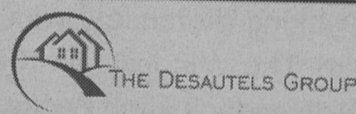
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