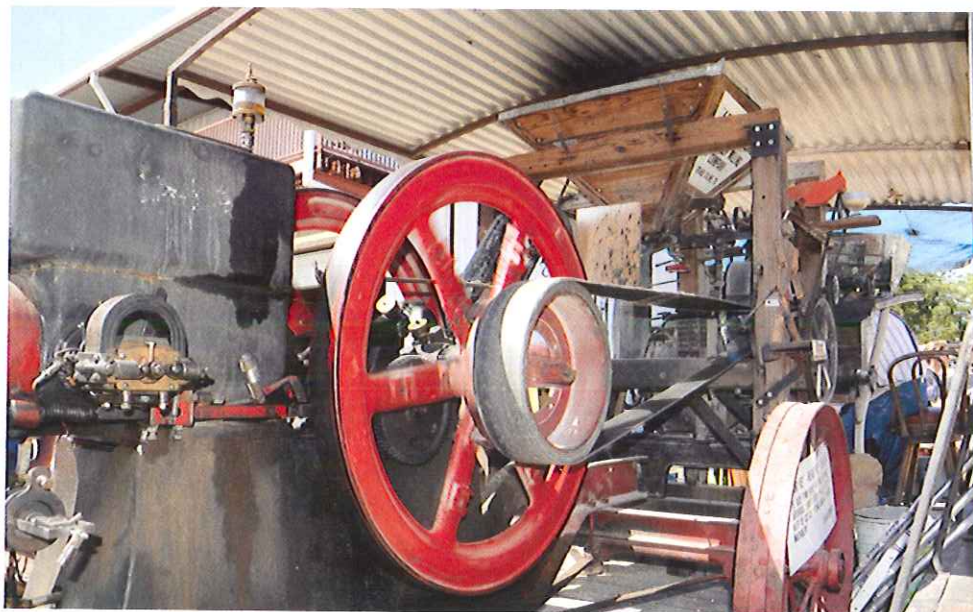


A Place Like No Other

**"If you can't find it in Canton,
then it doesn't exist."**

By Wayne Stewart | PHOTOGRAPHY By Christina Stewart



Leon Clowers of Old Timey Milling Company, Grand Saline, bags up a scoop of corn meal he ground using a grist mill pulled by a 7 horsepower "Economy" gas engine. The engine was built and sold by Sears Roebuck in 1915.



For one weekend every month Canton becomes a focal point for eager shoppers looking for something that can't be found any place else.

"There's an old saying," noted Canton Visitor's Bureau Executive Director Mercy Rushing. "That if you can't find it in Canton, then it doesn't exist."

That's been true for years as vendors from across the country head to Canton every month to sell their wares, offering up bits of treasure here and there. It all started over 150 years ago as horse traders and others with items to trade would gather at the Van Zandt County Courthouse in Canton the first Monday of every month.

"It got to be so big that the county courts couldn't conduct business in the courthouse," Ms. Rushing explained. "So, they found a home not far away. That became the First Monday Grounds, and it has grown from there."

And did it grow. On a slow First



LEFT: A rooster sits among other metal home decor while visitors pass by. ABOVE: Jon Renfro uses a torch to make metal art with household items such as silverware.



Monday weekend there will be 200,000 people descending on the city with a normal population of 5,000. On a busy weekend, like those nearing the Christmas holidays, the crowds swell to over 400,000 people looking for something special.

Of course there are the whatnots, arts and crafts, antiques, collectibles, furniture and sometimes really useful junk, but it all is valuable to somebody, and it all can be found at First Monday, which has greatly expanded over the years from the original lots near the Canton Civic Center to include covered pavilions and "lock and leave" buildings where vendors keep a permanent presence at the First Monday grounds.

Also, there is "The Mountain."

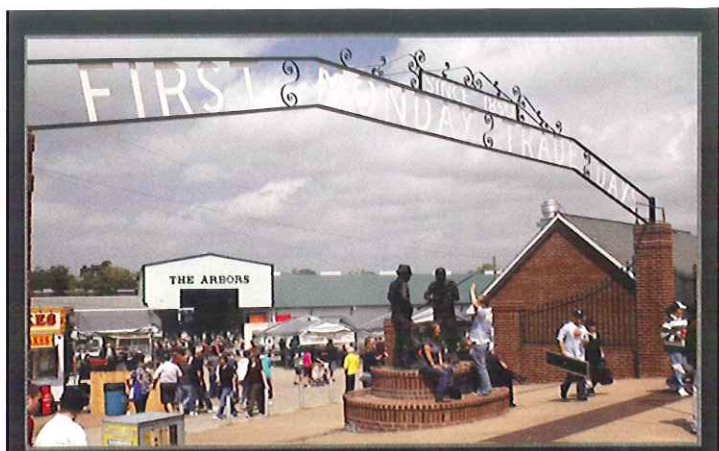
Just to the east of the First Monday grounds, on

the side of a large hill overlooking the city and the Old Mill Market; is a collection of shops, restaurants and bed and breakfasts known as "The Mountain."

"Most of The Mountain is in a western motif," explained Ms. Rushing. "There's a tram that goes up and down to carry guests, they also offer nightly entertainment and things for kids to do while they are there."

There also are plenty of restaurants and other things to choose from in Canton while visiting. Restaurants include Mexican, Italian, barbecue and some tearooms. There also is a fiesta store in the city, providing fiesta ware for people in the party spirit.

To learn more about Canton and First Monday visit the website www.firstmondaycanton.com 



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