

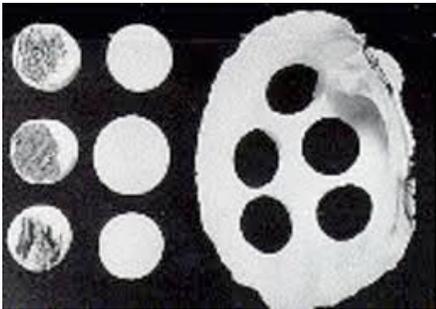


*Speaker JoAnn Funk with some 100 year old treasures from The Pearl Button Boom!*

# The Pearl Button Boom

The "Pearl Button Boom" is a fascinating story of greed, fashion, American ingenuity, ecology and murder. Of course buttons today are made from plastic. But pre-1900, buttons were made exclusively from European oyster shells.

In a quirky twist of fate, from the late 1800s to early 1930s, most of the world's pearl buttons were made from mussels harvested from the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Although a majority of the factories were in Muscatine Iowa, all those along the river, from St Paul to St Louis, became involved in the money filled frenzy of this short lived boom. Up and down the river, thousands of jobs were created. Until it all came crashing down ...



This is a 42 minute presentation, with fantastic pictures and riveting stories.

The telling of this incredible story weaves together the topics of ecology, immigration, manufacturing, the American spirit, labor rights, women's determination and fashion. All present come away with new knowledge.

In college JoAnn received a double major, in piano performance and biology. She is well known in the Twin Cities for her skills as a jazz singer pianist.

## About JoAnn

"I began doing this lecture during the eight weeks a year that I work as a performer and lecturer aboard the luxury paddlewheeler, The Queen of The Mississippi, as it travels the Mississippi River from St. Louis to St. Paul. We pass by Muscatine, Dubuque and Davenport, Iowa and many other river towns involved in the Pearl Button Boom - I became so curious about it. I'm grateful to the Muscatine Button and Industry Museum for their assistance in my research. I've found that this talk fascinates everyone, since it touches on so many points. I love answering all the questions that are asked!" ... JoAnn Funk

## Reviews

*"If you are looking for a great speaker on an unusual topic, we highly recommend JoAnn's "Pearl Button Boom", an interesting and little known piece of history. She is not only warm and articulate but a pleasure to meet. You won't be disappointed." Jan Wolff, Program Committee Member, MN UU Fellowship*

*"Thanks! As a seamstress I so appreciated your talk. I was reminded of a Nancy Drew book where she and her boyfriend found an underground stream filled with shells with holes in them. A former button factory!" Kathy Fischer-Eagle*