



Catchmark

Newsletter of the Clare County Historical Society

Volume 13 Number 1

History, we're still making it!

Winter – Spring 2014

Many Highlights in 2013...

What a year! We don't want to say it was an historical year (that would be corny); however, it was an eventful one. Thanks for the CCHS board and many volunteers, here are just a few accomplishments in 2013:



- Moved and updated Spikehorn exhibit in the museum.
- Completed the Tom Sellers memorial pavilion.
- Stocked a display case at Mid Michigan Community College with information highlighting

an old railroad bed that is part of the school's hiking trail.

- Donated a display to Hamilton Township concerning the great Dodge City fire of 1894.
- Held our annual Old Fashion Day event in Sept.
- Hosted a military history display at the county fair.
- Commemorated the War of 1812 with students at area schools.
- Jon Ringelberg continues publishing his old legal cases in the *Cleaver* giving us weekly publicity.



- Published two fall color/history tours in conjunction with the Farwell Museum.
- Gave area children the opportunity to have one-room schoolhouse experience.

Clare County Historical Society

Our mission is to preserve, advance, and disseminate knowledge of the history of Clare County and the surrounding area.

The Society oversees a complex located at the corner of Dover and Eberhart Roads northeast of Clare, which includes the Dover One-Room School house, Ott Log Cabin and a Museum.

The complex is open Saturdays from 1 –4 p.m. mid-May through Sept. We also have photos, books, old newspapers and documents in our archives. Access is by appointment. Learn more at clarecountyhistory.org or visit us on Facebook.



And More Coming in 2014...

This year, should see even more great activities and events. For example:

- Dedicate an historic plaque north of Hayes Township Hall to mark the location of a logging-era 25-foot high railroad embankment.
- Continue to promote our history in print, on the web,

in social media and other communication channels.

- Additional updates to the museum complex, including repainting signage at key county intersections.
- Posting and categorizing old photos of the county, including those in the Meek collection.

Crime in Early Clare County

The Clare County Historical Society has in its collections the booking record of the first Clare County Jail built in Harrison in 1885. Information in the records not only gives a physical description but also social condition, occupation, education (read and/or write), habits, date of admission and sentence.

For example, the second person booked (see photo at right) was the infamous James Carr who ran the Devil's Ranch bar and brothel on the hill overlooking Harrison. Carr was 34 when he was booked for arson on Oct. 31, 1885 (supposedly for burning the bar/brothel of a competitor.)

According to the booking record, Carr could read but not write, had a "bad" social condition (whatever that meant, although it was a common descrip-

tion for jail inmates).

Carr was 5' 10" and weighed 175 pounds in weight. He had a light complexion and blue eyes.

According to the record, from the day the jail received its first occupant on Oct. 28, 1885 to its last recorded booking on April 1, 1892, there were 421 bookings, which is a small number considering that Harrison and Meredith were two of the worst towns in Michigan. Of course, by the time the jail opened, the logging business was already in decline as was lawlessness.

A few interesting statistics: Occupations of those jailed included lumbermen, bums, prostitutes, house keepers, laborers, sailors, gamblers, shoemakers, blacksmiths and farmers. Only 26 of the bookings were of women.

Two prisoners who escaped by

	NAME	SEX	AGE IN YEARS	COLO.	SOCIAL CONDITION
1	Samuel Johnson	M	23	White	baal
2	James Carr	M	35	White	baal
3	James Rafferty	M	42	White	baal
4	Ed Woods	M	30	White	baal
5	A. J. Bungea	M	55	White	fair
6	Frank Bachelor	M	50	White	baal

jumping from the train on July 1, 1886 were recaptured and another escapee, who "threw pepper in turnkey's eyes" was also recaptured on May 15, 1886. However, a prisoner who used "false keys" on August 30, 1886 was noted as "Still at large." Two others escaped "By cutting hole in floor" on August 20, 1887. Another ingenious escape was "With wooden key" (apparently hand carved) on June 1, 1891. In total, there were seven escapes during the period, with three apparently successful.

Among the jail bookings listed were:

- ◆ 148 for drunk/disorderly
- ◆ 96 for larceny
- ◆ 84 for assault/battery
- ◆ 16 bookings for prostitution
- ◆ 12 for keeping a house of ill fame (but only one arrest for visiting such a house)
- ◆ 12 for murder/attempted murder/assault with intent to murder
- ◆ 9 for rape
- ◆ 10 for vagrancy
- ◆ 10 for forgery
- ◆ 19 for burglary
- ◆ 5 for fraud/false pretense
- ◆ 8 for adultery
- ◆ 7 for arson
- ◆ 4 bookings for "debt" (yes, a creditor back then could pay the daily jail fee and have a debtor held, the proverbial 'debtor's prison').
- ◆ 7 bookings for "insane/out of mind."

Early Clare County Legal Cases

Wherever money, people and commerce go, litigation is sure to follow.

See Clare County through a two-volume set of summarized legal cases that took place during that era. The first set (1871—80) has 195 legal circuit court cases

and a second, (1881—85) includes 349 legal cases. Volumes are \$20 and \$25 respectively, or \$5 on a CD.

Jon Ringelberg, attorney and former Clare County judge who summarized the cases, has generously agreed to donate all pro-

ceeds from CD sales and half the proceeds from printed copies to CCHS.

To obtain a copy or to learn more, contact Jon at jbringelberg@hotmail.com or at 3062 E. Colonville Road, Clare, MI 48617.

We Have Questions, You Have Answers?

There is a wealth of history-related knowledge amongst our members and non-members. But we are still looking for answers to two of the following questions from the last issue and posing a **new** one:

1. What is the first name of the Mann of Mann's Siding?
2. Who were Arthur and Franklin and Freeman townships named after?
3. Does anyone know whether

there are any remains of trestles or bridges from the logging days in our county?

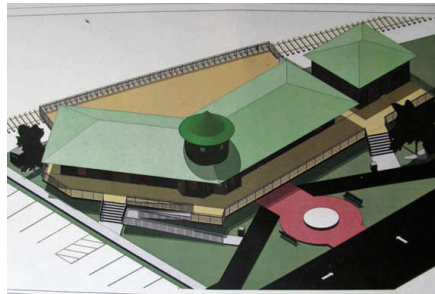
If you know an answer, either email us at *museum@clarecountyhistory.org* or call Marty at (734) 755-2638.

Clare Depot Set to Depart

Usually trains move while train depots remain stationary. That's not going to be the case in Clare, Michigan on April 15, 2014*, when the 119-year old Clare Railroad Depot is tentatively scheduled to move to its new home on Fourth Street across from the Clare Castle, and approximately 900 feet to the east of its current location.

Why all the effort? Because the depot is a big part of our past! The building is of Queen Anne style with two separate wings and is the only one of its kind remaining in Michigan and one of few left in the nation. The depot was the focal point for arrivals and departures until the advent of the automobile. It was the coming of the railroad that allowed access to the interior of the state for lumberjacks, farmers, and businessmen to set up shop and make it their home, creating cities, towns and villages including the City of Clare.

Prep work at the new location is scheduled to begin in mid-March and includes digging a full basement and pouring a concrete floor. This move is just the first step in what is still a multi-year



project that will require at least an additional 500k in funding before the building is completely rehabilitated to become a community resource that will include offices, a meeting room, a museum, the welcome center for the Pere Marquette rail trail, and home to the Clare Area Chamber of Commerce, Clare County Convention & Visitors Bureau and Clare County Arts Council.

The move is an exciting first step in the rehabilitation of the depot and evidence that the efforts of all those who have supported the project are bearing fruit.

We invite everyone to come to Clare in April to experience an opportunity to see a railroad depot in motion. After all, an opportunity like this comes around only once every 119 years!

Books on Tap

Three books on local history are on tap for publication this year.

The first book, *Cut and Run!* by James S. Hannum, explores the relationship of the early railways in Clare County, with special emphasis on the Lake George & Muskegon River Railroad, the first successful logging railroad in the state, and one that changed the logging industry across the country. The book is available at *Amazon.com* for \$20 plus shipping.

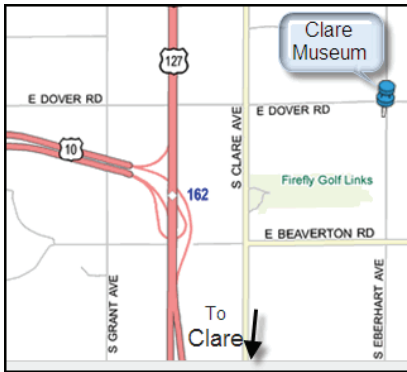
The next book, by Robert Knapp, is called *Mystery Man: Gangsters, Oil, and Murder in Michigan* and centers around the murder of Isaiah Leebove in the hotel in 1938. It is due out in the spring.

The final book, by local residents Angela Kellogg and Cody Beemer, is a photo history of *Harrison*. This book is due out in May.

We hope to be able to sell the books at the museum this summer. While CCHS was not involved in the hard work of writing and publishing these books, we did open our archives to their authors and, in some cases, provided photos from our collection. We also thank the authors for their efforts in promoting our wonderful history.

CLARE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

c/o Jon H. Ringelberg, Treasurer
 3062 E Colonville Rd
 Clare, Michigan 48617-9448



Our museum complex is at 3050 Eberhart Rd. at Dover, five miles north of Clare.

Like us on Facebook!



Questions, comments? Email museum@clarecountyhistory.org

Renew Your CCHS Membership (or Join!)

Membership in the Clare County Historical Society is only \$10 per calendar year.

Your support makes it possible for us to run our museum com-

plex, publish our newsletters, host our website and run events and promote Clare County history within our county and around the region, tell its stories and protect its artifacts.

What would you like to see happen this year to promote our history? We'd love to have you join us and play an active role in CCHS. Contact us!

Name: _____

New **Renewal**

Address: _____

Address 2: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

\$_____ **Total enclosed***

** Donations in excess of \$10 are greatly appreciated and will be used to improve our museum complex and promote local history.*

Make checks payable to: Clare County Historical Society and mail them to
 CCHS, c/o Jon H. Ringelberg, Treasurer
 3062 E Colonville Rd
 Clare, Michigan 48617-9448