

Catchmark

Newsletter of the Clare County Historical Society
Marty Johnson, Editor

CLARE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Volume 20 Number 2

Sharing Our Past With the Present.

Early Summer 2020

Thanks, Members

Each year, we include a request for you to renew or begin a membership in the Clare County Historical Society. Your generous contributions over and above the \$10 dues we ask, make a lot of projects and activities possible, including this newsletter.

We also want to thank the many Gold Level Members (those 80 years and above), who get their memberships for free, but who send along a donation in support of this organization, your organization. We have printed the names of all donors elsewhere in this newsletter.

If you haven't yet renewed your membership for 2020, see the form on the back page.

Clare County Historical Society

The mission of the CCHS is to preserve, advance, and disseminate the history of Clare County.

The Society oversees a complex located at the corner of Dover and Eberhart Roads northeast of Clare, which includes a Museum, the Dover one-room schoolhouse, Ott Family Log Cabin, and a Blacksmith Shop. We also have photos, books, old newspapers and documents. Access to these is by appointment. Learn more at clarecountyhistory.org or visit us on Facebook.



In 1941, the J.L. Hudson Co. gave Clare a flag. Where the design came from we haven't a clue. What happened to the flag is a mystery: It has disappeared. However, Member Jon H. Ringelberg recently found a replica and bought it for display at our museum. If you know anything about this flag, please let us know!

Meeting and Opening Planned

This year marks our 50th years as an organization and, thanks to Member Herb Byers we have a new logo (see our Masthead) that reflects that fact. We appreciate his efforts.

Although, our museum complex is normally open by now, we have held off in order to comply with state' mandates and help ensure the safety of our visitors and volunteers. We are planning to open on Saturday, June 6 from 1-4 p.m., and be open every Saturday through September.

Our first CCHS meeting of the year will be Tuesday, June 2 at 7 p.m. on the museum grounds. We will meet outside so social distancing will not be an issue (unless it rains). We will be accepting nominations for officers, including:

- ◆ President
- ◆ Vice President
- ◆ Secretary
- ◆ Treasurer
- ◆ Board Members.

CCHS President Joe Bradley, who has served for two terms will not run for reelection.

At this meeting we will also make decisions about several displays; take a look at what our future holds; and projects we need to undertake this year, including our 50th anniversary celebration. Please attend to vote and provide input.

We also hope to see you at our museum on one or more Saturdays. Not only to tour our buildings, but to sit, rock and talk on our porch. We have comfortable chairs and plenty of space for social distancing.

Have Your Grandkids Write a Letter to Their Grandkids

The life we are living through will someday be part of our history and people will talk and write about it, much as we do the great Flu Pandemic of 1918.

Someday, the Clare County Historical Society may host an exhibit on life in Clare County during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020, or a CCHS member—perhaps one not yet born—will write an article about someone who lived through it, or who died from it.

Why not preserve YOUR history: Have your children or grandchildren write a letter to their grandchildren telling those chil-

dren who will be born 40, 50, or 60 years from now about their life in 2020. Write about:

- ◆ How life was different for them and their families.
- ◆ What they different that they liked.
- ◆ What was different that they hated.
- ◆ How they felt whether it was happy, sad, scared, worried or all of those things.
- ◆ What they learned and what they want to share with their grandchildren about how to cope with life when it changes drastically.

The results might be interesting.

History in Clare County

While we are understandably proud of our museum, we are not the only one around. We invite you to visit the Clare Depot and Farwell museums, both of which are housed in local Chamber of Commerce offices.

Clare Depot Museum

Housed in the Clare Depot near the downtown water tower, this collection offers a wealth of items related to railroading.

Farwell Historical Museum

Located in the historic former library on Main St., this museum offers items that reflect the long history of this logging and farming community

Join or Renew Your Membership

Please check the membership label to see if it's time for you to renew your Clare County Historical Society membership. Most memberships expired at the end of December 2019. Membership is only \$10 per cal-

endar year—unless you are 80 or older in which case your membership is free! (but we still ask you mail in the form so we have a record of your interest). Your support makes it possible for us to run our museum complex, publish our newsletters,

host our website, run events and promote Clare County history, tell its stories and protect its artifacts.

If you are not a member, we'd love to have you join us.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address 2: 9 State: _____ Zip: _____

\$ _____ Total enclosed*

New Renewal

Qualify for a Free Membership

* Donations in excess of \$10 are greatly appreciated and will be used to improve our museum complex and promote local history. The CCHS is a 501(c)3 organization and your donation may be tax deductible.

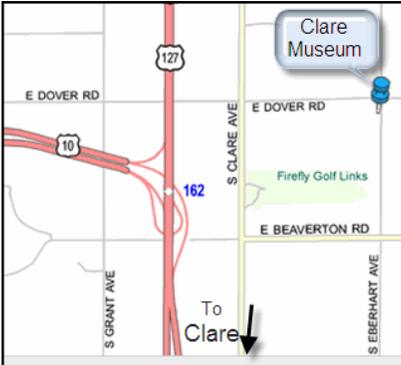
Make checks payable to: Clare County Historical Society and mail them to
CCHS, c/o Jon H. Ringelberg, Treasurer
3062 E Colonville Rd
Clare, Michigan 48617-9448



1970-2020

50 Years... Sharing Our Past With The Present!

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



Our museum complex is at 7050 Eberhart Rd. at Dover, five miles north of Clare. It is open the first Sat. in May to the last Sat. in Sept. from 1-4 p.m.

Like us on Facebook!



Questions, comments? Email museum@clarecountyhistory.org

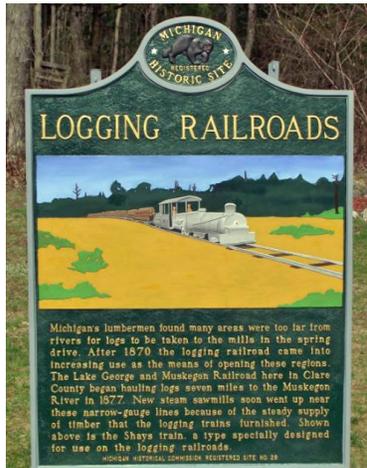
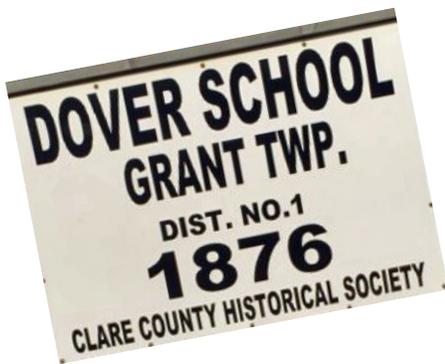
Signs of the Times

There are signs of spring, signs of social distancing and there are also signs of history. The Dover School sign (below left) located on our museum grounds was repaired and repainted by done by members Charlie and Denise Lyons. Denise attended Dover School.

The Museum sign (below right) that is located on the corner of Beaverton and Eberhart Roads was redone by Fussman signs and reinstalled by CCHS volunteers Jon and Micah Ringelberg and Lee Wixom.

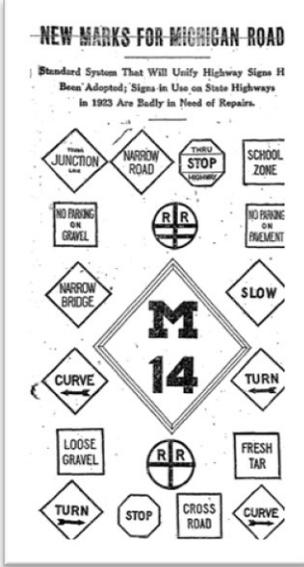
The Logging Railroad sign located on the grounds of the

Roadside Park on Old 27 between Clare and Harrison was cleaned and touched up this past winter. The sign is one of the oldest of its kind in the state and dates from 1957. It is also one of the few that has more colors to it than the usual green and gold found on current state markers.



Clare County Roads—Part III

By Andy Coulson



Roads have been crucial in the development of Clare County, bringing people to the land and their products to market.

In the last issue we looked at James Hill, an obstacle to building Clare roads. In this issue we look at a State Road called M-14.

In the 1920s, before concrete and expressways, one of those roads connecting Clare and Harrison was a series of small roads that Michigan designated as M-14.

M-14 started in Clare near Cherry Grove Cemetery heading north and crossing a bridge over the Tobacco River. Here

M-14 was also called Dover Road since it passed through an early farming community of that name located four miles north and where our Museum Complex now stands.

From Dover, M-14 turned east, then north becoming Cornwell Avenue, named after W.C. Cornwell, one of the biggest ranchers in the county. It was partly because Cornwell had improved the road that ran past his ranch, (and to bypass James Hill) that the state made Cornwell part of the State road.

At Mansiding Road, M-14 ran west 1.5 miles and then turned onto Larch Road. This corner would eventually be where Old 27 and Gladwin Roads (neither which existed during this period) would intersect, and where Spikehorn Meyer—about a decade later—would open his popular tourist stop.

M-14 meandered west to Larch Road and then to County Farm Road. Early travelers heading into Harrison from Clare would

see the County Infirmary on their right and then cross the Harrison Branch of the Pere Marquette Railroad before entering Harrison's city limits.

When U.S. 27 was finally built, it really opened up Clare County and the north to tourism and became one of the most heavily traveled roads for until the expressway opened in the early 1960s to the west. The expressway took the name of US 27 and the two-lane road that had been the main Clare-Harrison connection became "Old" 27. Then, about 50 years later, this portion of U.S. 27 would become U.S. 127. And the cool thing about that is "Old" 27 was still Old 27, and always will be.

Although M-14 as a State road disappeared when U.S. 27 was built, it's name hasn't disappeared completely. There is still a gravel section of the road bearing the M-14 name that serves several houses. A remnant of a time and road from long ago.

Donate to Preserving Our History



As a 501(c)3 charitable corporation, we have an account (#744) in the

Clare County Community Foundation valued at approximately \$26,200. This is an endowed fund, which means we can only access \$2,845 of it. However,

we hope not to access any of it at present, but to let it grow and use dues and your generous donations to fund needed projects, including repairs to the schoolhouse chimney and perhaps a sidewalk to make it easier for the elderly and people with disabilities to visit our buildings.

If you would like to make a

donation to our endowment or to our treasury for our projects or to freshen up our exhibits, please contact Treasurer Jon H Ringelberg at (989) 429-7912.



Clare and the Flu Pandemic of 1918



James Garrity was a Clare County farm boy, the only boy in a family of four sisters. He was 19 years old

when he convinced his mother, over the objections of his father, to join the Navy. James wanted to join his cousin, Arthur Looker, a Gladwin county resident, who had just joined the Navy. That was in Nov. 1917. In Jan. 1918, Arthur died of the flu at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station in Illinois. Jim Garrity died the next day. Both men were brought home by train for burial. Jim's obituary described him as bright and cheery with a host of friends. It added that he was to have graduated from Harrison High School the following June.

Their deaths occurred before what is now called "the Great Flu Pandemic" had even gotten started. Peaking in the winter of 1918, this worldwide event would sicken more than a half a billion people, killing between 21 million and 100 million of them.

In the U.S., about 28% of the population (then at 105 million) became infected, and 500,000 to 675,000 died. Deaths were especially high in young men, the group that included military men like Garrity and Looker. The flu became pneumonia and the buildup of fluid in their lungs, is what ultimately caused death. However, it was those with the

strongest immune systems who were especially vulnerable. An estimated 43,000 American servicemen died, more than were killed by German bullets. Roughly 1 in 4 military personnel came down with the virus, and of those who did, 1 in 5 died. Death often came quickly, sometimes even within hours of the first symptoms. Pneumonia, not flu, was put on many death certificates of that period.

Garrity was not the only Clare County resident killed by the flu. In total, 22 out of Clare's 450 soldiers and sailors died from the flu, according to local historian Forrest Meek, author of *Michigan's Heartland*, a history of Clare County from 1900 to 1918. Meek also writes that at least 59 county deaths were directly related to the flu. Clare County had only about 8,300 people at the time.

The *Clare Sentinel* during that period is filled with mentions of families and individuals coming down with the flu, battling the flu, recovering from the flu, or dying of it. There were also numerous mentions of church and school closures, sometimes for weeks at a time.

Public service announcements

Coughs and Sneezes Spread Diseases



As Dangerous as Poison Gas Shells

warned of the dangers of coughing and sneezing in public and advertisements hawked products to those stuck indoors. In Heartland, Meek writes that doctors of the community worked overtime during the outbreak. Meek said that Dr. William Clute of Clare, hardly left his car for days. He had a chauffeur who took him on his calls and "those few moments constituted his night's quota of slumber."

There wasn't a shelter in place requirement but then there wasn't much of a need. Clare County was not a vacation destination at that time, and few good roads of any kind.

Although people could travel by train within a state and across the country, travel internationally, other than war related travel, was rare. It was not until after the Second World War that regular international flights began to take place. During WWI, that meant what happened in China and other countries, including health problems, tended to stay in those countries. Of course, soldiers returning from foreign battlefields and lands could carry diseases back with them. But eventually the flu disappeared and Clare County, Michigan, and the world returned to normal.

James Garrity was buried in a small cemetery in Hamilton Township. A marker and an American flag mark his grave. His is a story more than a century old, but also a story that's still relevant today.

Looking Back at an 1889 County Map

By Andy Coulson

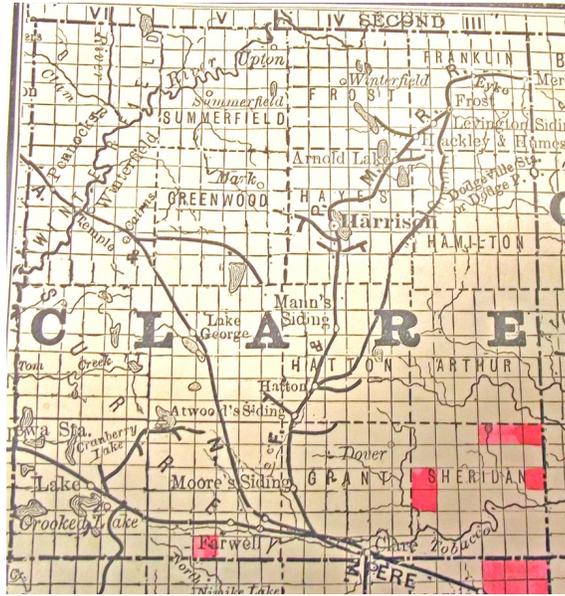
Clare County was nothing but a few towns, cutover forests and a few small farms when Wells, Stone & Co published its map of the county in 1889. It's interesting to take a look at such maps to see what we can learn from them today.

Summerfield: This is the only map that I've seen that places the settlement of Summerfield. While Summerfield does appear on earlier state maps, what makes this 1889 map special is that it is more localized to Clare County.

In the past, we thought Summerfield was roughly in the center of the township, as this is where the town hall and cemetery are located. However, this map shows it further west, not even on a section line, (although it almost certainly was). Inspections of county 1938 aerial photos (we have them at our museum) indicate that most of the activity appears to have been in the northeast corner of Section 21, with some complimentary activity into Section 16.

Eyke: This is also the only map that has the settlement of Eyke in Franklin Township. Here it is located on the east side of the west line of Section 15. This map also appears to show the most accurate location for Levingston's Siding on the south side of the Meredith grade just into section 29.

Hackley & Humes: This is the only map that I've seen that lists this as an actual place, although an older 1890 county map shows



Dr. It seems that we should be able to locate residents whose families have lived in that area for generations and find someone who knows where Moore's Crossing really was located.

Harrison Junction: This map still shows railroads heading west out of Clare in a cluster. This indicates the original route of the Harrison Branch of the Pere Marquette Railroad remained even after a new route to Harrison was built to allow the Ann Arbor Railroad to also come through Clare.

(Originally, the route to Harrison diverted at Harrison Junction, near what is now Washington and Ludington roads. After the Ann Arbor Railroad came through, the new Harrison Branch branched off just east of the Clare Depot, staying north of the Ann Arbor its entire route, also avoiding an intersection a few miles west in the vicinity of Hinkleville.)

Hinkleville: On this map there are two dots above the "II" in Farwell. I believe these are artifacts that appeared in previous versions of this map. There are other indications of this being a reused map. For example, the southern dot would have been Hinkleville, and the northern dot Harrison Junction, although they should really have been located on the map a few miles to the east in Grant township. However, because Hinkleville was closer to, and usually associated with Farwell, this might be the cause of the mislocation

a settlement called Hackley's Siding at the same location.

Winterfield: While the map is generally accurate in its depictions of towns and settlements, it does contain some glaring errors. For example, the settlement of Winterfield is located in here in Frost Township, not Winterfield, and that is wrong.

Cairns: Cairns was a short lived venture and one that does not appear on maps very often. In fact, this is only the second map that I've seen it appear on. The other, from 1888, shows it between a place called Knowles and Temple. On the above map, Cairns appears to be in the location of Clarence, a well documented place.

Moore's Siding: This map indicates that my belief that Moore's Siding was at the crossing of the Harrison Branch of the Pere Marquette Railroad and Surrey Rd. is correct, although the 1938 aerial photos shows more activity around the Harrison Branch and Kaplinger

Thanks, Members and Donors!

Below is a listing of our supporters who have mailed in their dues for 2020 or beyond, as well as our Gold Members (those 80 years and over), many who have continued to support us financially, although their memberships are free. **Thank you so much for your support!**

If your name should be on the list but isn't, we apologize! Please contact us so we can make it right. And if your name isn't showing because you have not yet mailed in your membership dues of \$10 for 2020, please do so when you are able using the form found elsewhere in this newsletter. We will publish updates later in the year.

Dan & Shirley Abbott

Dennis Allen

Mike Allen

Marv Anthony

Bill Beemer

Gene Bodner

Joe Bradley

Marie Brandon

Jerry Burger

Herb & Cheryl Byers

Liz Crafton

Jim Crawford

Damon Dubois

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Elaine & Dale Richardson

Ken & Shirley Wenzel

John & Fern White

A Look at Gangsters 'Up North'

Northern Michigan has for decades drawn millions each year to its beautiful lakes and rivers. *Gangsters Up North* adds a new and exciting dimension to the colorful lore of those lands.

What were gangsters doing in Michigan's vacationlands during the Prohibition years? Al Capone, the Purple Gang, Fred "Killer" Burke, other Public Enemies and many other hoodlums found their way north in fact or in fiction. They became heavily involved in the gambling and bootlegging that were pervasive

in up-scale resorts in Charlevoix, Little Traverse Bay, and Mackinac Island. They kidnapped and murdered. But most usually, they just hung out and relaxed.

Up North, people far and wide claimed to recognize those faces in their various backyards. They said they saw Al Capone in this hotel, that lake, or some cabin. Rumors of John Dillinger coming to town threw citizens into a frenzy of fear.

Gangsters Up North draws on newspaper accounts, numerous interviews, rare images, and unpublished

material to paint the real picture of mobsters and their associates in Michigan's northland.

Robert Knapp, author of books on Isaiah Leebobe and Sam

Garfield, unweaves the tangle of tales and truth. Knapp will be in Clare later this summer for talks and book signings. More details soon!

