

# Catchmark

Newsletter of the Clare County Historical Society

Marty Johnson, Editor

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Sharing Our Past With the Present.

Fall 2021

## Historic Bridge Coming to CCHS



The museum may be closed until next spring, but that doesn't mean the work stops. Thanks to a donation by Dr. Robert Knapp, an historic Works Project Administration bridge from the 1930s from the City of Clare will be used at our CCHS Complex. More info in our Winter 2022 issue.

## Clare County Historical Society

Our mission is to preserve, advance, and share the history of Clare County, Michigan.

Our Society oversees a museum complex at Dover and Eberhart Roads northeast of Clare, including a Museum, the Dover one-room schoolhouse, Ott Family Cabin, and a Blacksmith Shop. We also have photos, books, newspapers and documents. CCHS board meetings are the 1st Tuesday of each month at our museum May—Sept at 7 p.m. All are invited. Learn more at [clarecountyhistory.org](http://clarecountyhistory.org) or visit us on Facebook.



(Clockwise from top left): Volunteers greet visitors at the entrance. Nelda Murphy shows off the pin that featured her photo and that everyone wore that day to honor her. Marty Kleinhardt takes a load of visitors on a tour of the countryside. Three generations of guests enjoy the day's festivities.

## Season Closed with Old Fashion Day

Old Fashion Day, the last weekend in Sept., was another great success with good crowds, nice weather and plenty of activities. It was also an opportunity to honor Nelda Murphy, a long time volunteer and important part of our success over the years.

We thank all those who made

the day a great one.

They include Stephanie Terpening, who provided the music; Wendell Hoover, who spoke about life in a Michigan Lumber Camp; Marty Kleinhardt who drove our wagon; Jane Sartor-Key, who provided the buttons; and all those who brought old vehicles and machinery for visitors to enjoy.

## New Local History Books Published

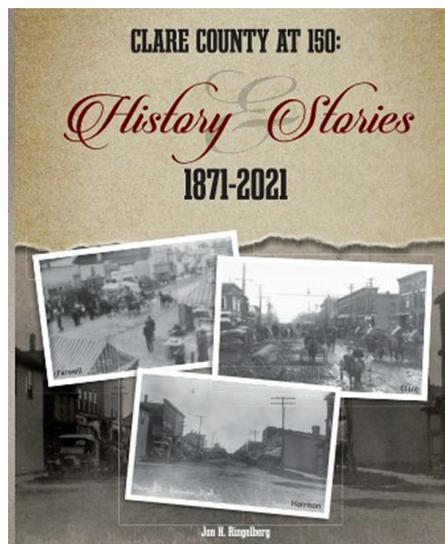
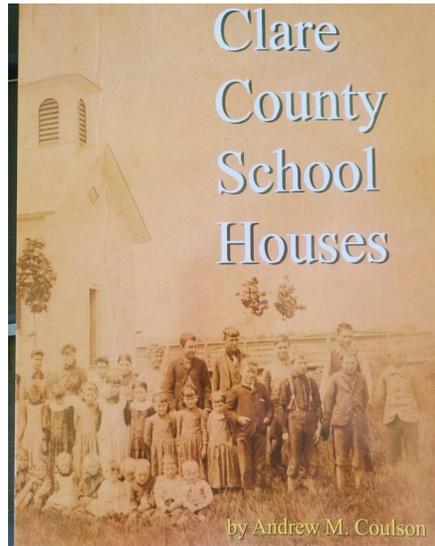
Two new books have recently been published by members of the Clare County Historical Society. They join a growing list of publications about our county.

### CLARE COUNTY SCHOOL HOUSES

by Andrew Coulson

The 360-page book complete with photos lists all one-room schoolhouses in the county along with information on the communities each school served. This book is organized into 16 chapters, one for each of Clare County's townships. Each chapter is then broken down into school districts within that township. There is also information on the larger school districts within the county and a section on Amish schools is also included.

Cost is \$20 and the book is available at the Clare County Cleaver office and on *Amazon.com*. You can also contact the author at [amc4576@hotmail.com](mailto:amc4576@hotmail.com).



### CLARE COUNTY AT 150: History & Stories

by Jon H. Ringelberg.

A variety of writings relating to early Clare County history. There are photographs of elected Clare County officials; items that have been lost to history (but which we hope are someday found); historical essays; a listings of bees and socials; communities, past and present; heroes and villains; hotels; and even a listing of prostitutes—all providing a look into the past in Clare County's development.

This 285-page book is available from the author at [jhringelberg@hotmail.com](mailto:jhringelberg@hotmail.com) or at *Amazon.com*. Cost is \$15.

Jon is also the author of several other books this year. They include **Clare County Murders: 1871-2020**, **Golf and Skiing: Clare County, Michigan, 1922 to Present**, and **Jim Carr & Maggie Duncan, an Historical Compendium**.

## Historical Society Donates Plaques

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of both Clare County, Michigan and the City of Clare, Michigan, the Clare County Historical Society presented the Clare County Commission and the City of Clare with plaques from the Historical Society of Michigan.

Generous CCHS donors made the purchase of the plaques possible. They will be displayed in the Clare County Building and Clare City Hall respectively.



*City of Clare Mayor Pat Humphries (center) holds the city's plaque that was presented on behalf of CCHS by Jon H. Ringelberg (left) and Dr. Robert Knapp (right). Photo courtesy of The Clare County Review.*



*CCHS member Lee Wixom (right), presents the plaque to County Board Chairman Mark Haskell. Photo by Jon Ringelberg.*

# Once Upon a Time: Eels in Clare County

**D**o you consider eels a delicacy? Apparently, they are—or at least were. According to an article in a recent issue of *Michigan History* magazine historian LeRoy Barnett reports that in 1877 the Michigan Superintendent of State Fisheries was receiving numerous requests for American Eels. In fact, Barrett writes that of the 12 species of fish the state offered, “that only brook trout exceeded eels in the way of public demand.”

At the peak in 1878, 405,000 eels were imported, mostly from New York state, and placed into Michigan streams.



That includes 9,000 that were placed in Clare County streams over the years. Of surrounding counties, only Osceola received any (or perhaps only asked for) eels.

The article didn’t say who in Clare County requested they be added to our streams, but apparently eels didn’t catch on with Clare County gourmets and eventually the state stopped

offering them. The article also notes that eels, which averaged about 3-pounds, often clogged waterwheels, which were still used at that time.

Because of the spawning habits of eels, odds are they didn’t reproduce and eventually died out, although some were seen in streams in southern Michigan as recently as 1983. It’s also possible some do migrate from the Atlantic to the Great Lakes.

Chances are you won’t find any here in Clare County. However, like with finding an elusive grayling, it never hurts to keep one’s eyes open.

## Join or Renew Your Membership

**M**emberships for active for the calendar year, although all memberships purchased now are **valid to Dec. 31, 2022.**

Please check your address sticker to see your “paid to” date.

**Membership is only \$10 per calendar year**—unless you are 80 or older in which case your membership is free! (but we still ask you to mail in the form so we have a record of your interest).

Your support makes it possible

to run our museum complex; publish our newsletters; host our website; run events; educate residents and visitors on our local history; promote tourism; protect artifacts; and more.

In any event **we hope you'll join with us--or renew!**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address 2:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total enclosed\***

**New**       **Renewal**

**I am 80 or older and so 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.*

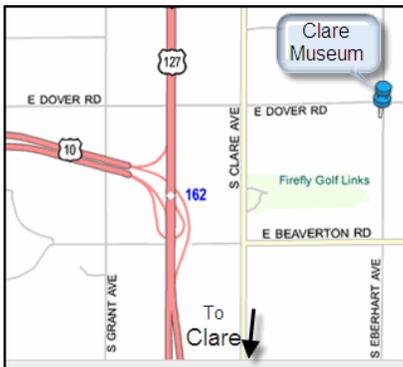
Make checks payable to: Clare County Historical Society and mail them to

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



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](mailto:museum@clarecountyhistory.org)

## Did Medal of Honor Winner Live in Farwell?



**A**ngela Kellogg, publisher of the Clare County Cleaver, recently had her interest “piqued.” Ours is too!

In an article in the June 24th issue of the Cleaver, she writes that she came across a mention of a Wilson W. Brown who once lived in Farwell (and perhaps Roscommon) and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for participating in a risky Civil War raid that sent them nearly 200 miles deep in Confederate territory. How-

ever, she has not been able to find evidence that Brown really lived in Farwell.

According to accounts, in the early hours of April 12, 1862, the group of Union soldiers initiated a plan that became one of the most infamous events of the Civil War. The group, known “Andrews’ Raiders,” planned to steal a locomotive and then destroy railroad bridges and communication lines from Atlanta Georgia to Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Sadly the raid didn’t go as planned. The group did commandeer a train named “The General,” but after a chase of 100 miles was forced to abandon the train. The men escaped the train, but were

eventually captured and sent to a prison camp. Brown and five others managed to escape and make it back to Union lines. Celebrated as heroes, their story was even made into a movie starring Buster Keaton.

Brown was injured at the Battle of Chickamauga and (at age 27) was as a result unable to work the rest of his life. He is buried in Ohio, where he was also born. Did he live in Farwell? Angela (and we) would love to know.



Andrews Raiders Memorial, Chattanooga National Cemetery, Chattanooga TN

## An Indian Mound and Historical Treasure



it might be manmade and so he contacted Dr. Sarah Surface-Evans, an archeologist at Central

Michigan University. high and approximately 150-feet in diameter. This mound stands atop an even larger circular mound that is some 240-feet in diameter. She feels it is artificial and could be from Native Americans who occupied the area hundreds of years ago. If so, it is one of the largest mounds ever found in Michigan and one of the few undiscovered and undisturbed mounds.

Because it is on private land, it's precise location cannot be disclosed and at this point there are no plans to undertake any digs at the site.

**E**arlier this summer CCHS member Jon H. Ringelberg was made aware of an anomaly deep in the woods of Clare County, a large mound in an area of otherwise flat ground. Jon took a ride to the spot with the landowner and decided that

Michigan University.

Dr. Surface-Evans made a trip to the site with several members of the Clare County Historical Society a few weeks later. In her write up, she described finding what appears to be a circular mound approximately 10-12-feet

## CCHS Updates

**W**e accomplished a lot this year. Thanks to a lot of volunteers, we were able to complete the fence around our museum complex. We also painted a portion of the schoolhouse and the museum railings. Trustee **Dennis Guerriero**, took on the task of doing some cleaning and inventorying of items in our attic. Among the discoveries was a listing of the first school kids who visited the museum waaaaay back in 1970 when we opened (the museum then WAS the schoolhouse), and a chunk of Michigan copper that was recently appraised at



\$300. We're not sure where it came from, but it's pretty cool!

We also did some upkeep on the Garrity Cemetery, a historical cemetery in Hamilton Township (see photo at left).

Next year, we hope to update our displays, depending on our finances. Speaking of finances, if you are able to make a donation this holiday season, whether it's to redo displays, repaint the schoolhouse, sponsor a busload of local schoolchildren to visit our museum or help us install a sidewalk to make it easier to walk our Museum Complex, we would be grateful. Contact, Treasurer **Jon H. Ringelberg** for details at [jhringelberg@hotmail.com](mailto:jhringelberg@hotmail.com). You can also make a contribution to the Clare County Community Foundation [clareccf.org](http://clareccf.org).

## A Good bye to a Good Man



**W**e lost a good friend this summer when **Floyd Fair** passed away. Floyd was a mainstay at our blacksmith's shop and could be found at our museum nearly every Saturday. He always had a smile and kind word for everyone.

Floyd was also a gifted artist who enjoyed shaping and crafting items. Our condolences go out to his family and friends, many who are in our CCHS family.