

Catchmark

Newsletter of the Clare County Historical Society

Marty Johnson, Editor

Volume 22 Number 1

Sharing Our Past With the Present.

Spring 2022

Museum Opens May 7

Our History Park opens on Saturday, May 7. Hours will continue to be 1-4 p.m. We also will be open by appointment.

This year, we have an upgraded parking areas that includes new entrances that were once apart of historic bridges built during the Depression and part of Clare's streets until they were dismantled and moved to our museum.

Thanks to a generous donor, we were able to repurpose them.

Please come see us. Enjoy our exhibits and maybe enjoy the rocking chairs on our front porch.

Clare County Historical Society

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

Our Society oversees a History Park at Dover and Eberhart Roads north-east of Clare that includes 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 or visit us on Facebook.



CCHS Joins In 2022 Irish Festival

For the first time in a long time, the Clare County Historical Society joined in the Clare Irish Festival Parade.

Many years ago, volunteers created a model of the Dover School to be used in parades and for special occasions. The model, built in sections, had not been used in years and was stored in the attic of the museum gathering dust—until this year. Members pulled it down, assembled, and cleaned it. We appreciate their efforts.

Jon H. Ringelberg provided the use of his truck and trailer (“cleaned,” he told me) to display the building in the parade. We’re hoping it generates interest and brings people to see the real Dover School

and everything else we have in our History Park .

This year, that includes upgraded parking areas. The north lot entrance will have former McEwan St. bridge pieces, and the south lot will have pieces from the WPA bridge on 6th St. Both Clare bridges were replaced in 2021, and the pieces given to us to repurpose. By the way, the WPA bridge pieces may be the only ones of that design in the entire country!

Speaking of the museum attic, it’s where we keep items not on display or items we don’t have any use for. **Dennis Guerrero** and Jon did some cleaning up there. We appreciate their efforts and those of our other volunteers. Please join with us!

Early Clare County Cabin Located

Possibly the oldest standing log cabin Clare County, one more than 150 years old, has been located.

In fall of 2021, CCHS Historian Jon H. Ringelberg began searching for cabin that was built by Farwell Pioneer George Hitchcock. Jon had learned from longtime local residents **Dan McGuire** and **Tony Stanfield** the story that hand-hewn logs of the George Hitchcock's Farwell log cabin were now part of a Crooked Lake cottage.

Hitchcock was a major figure in Farwell's history. He was Clare County's first Treasurer; surveyed the original plat of Farwell; and built the Farwell Grist Mill. He constructed the present day Hitchcock House located at the NW corner of Michigan and Superior, now owned by **Dave Williams**. The Hitchcock cabin, dates

from the latter part of 1870 when Martha Hitchcock arrived in Farwell. The cabin originally stood on the east side of present day Vandecar Road, between Illinois St. and the Pere Marquette State Rail Trail.

In 1918, Alice Fuller, the daughter of George and Martha Hitchcock, disassembled the cabin and transported the logs to Lake, rebuilding them into a summer cottage she called "The Pioneer." At some point, the cabin was encased in a cut stone façade meaning that none of the original logs can now be seen.

In November 2021, Jon and Tony paid a visit to the cottage of **Elliott Broderick**, who purchased the home in 1998.

A tour of the inside revealed about 40 square feet of original hewn 'square' logs, the rest being covered by modern materials. The logs rest on a stone

basement foundation, attesting to the fact that the log cabin was carefully placed there.

The size of the present structure, its roof line, the placement of the chimney and the front door when compared to the original cabin all point to it being the same structure.

The stone façade has protected the logs from the elements for more than 150 years and the Hitchcock cabin should be around for many more, even if few will know of its presence.



Hitchcock Cabin from Forrest Meek Collection

Membership Dues and Mailing Costs

It's time for all members to renew their annual membership dues to support CCHS, our History Park, our publications and website, and our mission to educate residents and visitors about our local history. Please use the form on page 3.

Mailing costs are rising and they especially affect small organizations such as ours that send newsletters to members. Add printing costs and it becomes even more difficult to have much left over of the \$10 we ask as a donation. Add the fact that those 80 years or over don't have to pay dues, and mailing costs per paid membership become even higher.

Luckily, many folks who qualify for a free membership do send in donations, and many others send us more than the dues we request—and we thank you!

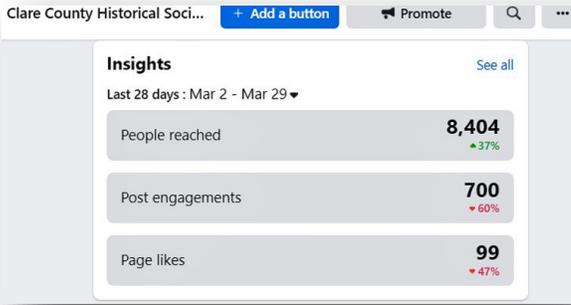
That said, we'd rather be able to use donations on upgrades and maintenance than in printing and mailing a publication .

Some historical societies have done away with newsletters all together or are moving to

strictly online. The Sanford Museum is an example of the latter.

Currently, we will continue to mail newsletters to all members. However, we want to start collecting email addresses from all members (who have one), in the event we make the transition to all online, which we expect we will have to do in time.

CCHS Facebook Posts Gains



Historical Society Facebook page—and it’s been a great success. We now have more than 1,500 followers. The success of our site and the Depot’s means there is a lot of interest in local history. We hope to translate that interest into new members.

The Clare Railroad Depot has a great Facebook page and receives lots of visitors. That’s because Dennis Guerrero constantly posts new and interesting stories to engage readers (check it out!)

Based on his success, we started posting on our Clare County

A lot of our success is due to Jon H. Ringelberg who is a great historian and a prolific history writer who allows us to use of many of his articles (check out his *Lost in History* series).

We invite you to like and follow us on Facebook.

Farewell to a Friend

This winter, we lost a loyal member and good friend with the passing of **Gene Bodnar**. He could be found on our porch every Saturday when we were open, greeting visitors and regaling them with stories of his life and his love of chess and especially of model ship building.

Gene built hundreds of model ships, some as long as 12–feet. Many are in museums. We are honored to have two examples of Gene’s handiwork in our museum. We will treasure them, and his friendship.

Join or Renew Your Membership

Memberships 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: _____

New Renewal

Address: _____

I am 80 or older, live in Clare County and qualify for a free membership.

Address 2: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

\$ _____ Total enclosed*

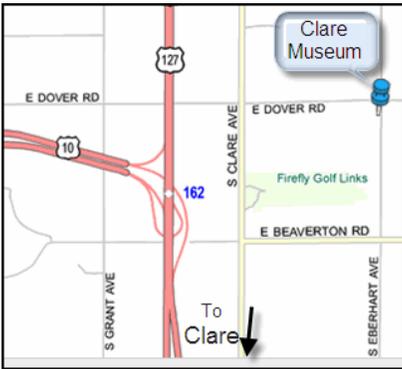
Donations in excess of \$10 are greatly appreciated and will be used to improve our museum park and promote local history. The CCHS is a 501(c)3 organization and your donation may be tax deductible.

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**



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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

Gather Your Elders



Unidentified couple.

In our museum, we have countless photos of individuals with no names, and buildings and places with no names. We are not alone. Most small museums do. Often, we are given old photos that a family does not want, yet does not want to toss because they might be of value to someone.

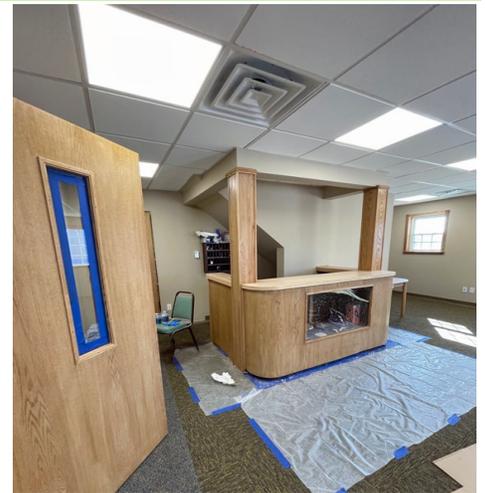
However, without names and locations photos lose much of their value. For example, a beautiful old building means little if we don't know where that building stood.

Most families have boxes of photos in a back closet or attic. In the near future, perhaps on a rainy day, please gather your elders, pull out the photos and ask if they can identify who is in them, and where and when they were taken.

Don't write on the photo itself, as the ink can bleed through or the pressure of the pen can make the writing visible on the front.

And if you don't want your old Clare County photos we do! At least ones taken prior to the 1950. We'll take them with identifying information and without. We can't promise we'll keep them all, but we'd rather take them to look through than have you trash them.

Harrison Library/ Museum Update



The museum space at the Harrison District Library in the former Surrey House location will open this summer for visitors. The library plans to move to the building the end of this year.