

# Catchmark

Newsletter of the Clare County Historical Society  
Marty Johnson, Editor

CLARE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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

Volume 21 Number 1

Sharing Our Past With the Present.

Spring 2021

## We Open May 1

Our museum complex opens on Saturday, May 1. Hours will continue to be 1-4 p.m. We also will be open by appointment. This is an exciting year as we will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the founding of Clare County and the City of Clare.

Last year was an historic year but not in a good way. Due to Covid, we were closed for much of the season and could not hold any special events such as our Old Fashion Day. However, that's all behind us (we hope!)

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



*Presentation of a flag to Clare County to celebrate its 150th anniversary. Accepting the flag that was presented by CCHS President Dennis Carbeno (at far right) are Commissioners (l-r) Rickie Fancon, Samantha Pitchford, Dale Majewski, Stephanie J. Brown, Jeff Haskell, and Sandra Bristol. Photo by Jon H. Ringelberg.*

## 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.

## Clare County Celebrates 150 Years

On March 17, the Clare County Historical Society presented a sesquicentennial flag to the County Board of Commissioners celebrating the 150th anniversary of Clare County. Making the presentation was CCHS President **Dennis Carbeno** and Treasurer **Jon H. Ringelberg**. The flag was created by **Herb Byers**.

Clare County officially became a legal entity on March 16, 1871, with the rights and privileges that entails, including the right to form its own government, and levy and collect taxes. There

wasn't much to the county at that time. In fact, the City of Harrison, now the County Seat, didn't even exist, and most of the county was covered in virgin timber, a resource that would soon bring lumberjacks and families looking to build a better life.

This year also marks the 150th anniversary of the City of Clare, once just a stop on the Pere Marquette Railroad and now a growing city known as the "Crossroads of the North."

We've come a long way in 150 years. Visit us in 2021, and learn more of our exciting history!

## Surrey House/Harrison Library Work Underway



*Surrey House circa 1956*

The transition of the Surrey House transition into a new home for the Harrison District Library has been begun in earnest now that the \$400,000 renovation goal has been reached. It is hoped that the library will be able to move into the building and by the beginning of 2023.

The building has long been part of Harrison's past. It was origi-

nally built in 1880 as a boarding house and restaurant with tavern during Michigan's logging era and called the Lockwood

House. It even had an attached livery. Like many buildings during that era, it was rumored to be used for gambling and its upper floors by "soiled doves."

Later the building was named the Ohio Tavern. The building sat vacant for a time before a Flint businessman bought the building in 1945, hoping to take advantage of the then growing flood of tourists heading north.

He renamed it the Colonial House. In 1949, it received new owners and became The Surrey House, the name it has kept. It closed for the final time in 2011. It is possible that the CCHS may be able to draft an arrangement with the Library to exhibit some of our more popular items during the months we are closed to the public.



*Current Surrey House renovations. Photo courtesy of the Clare County Cleaver.*

## CCHS Receives Donation



This spring, the Clare County Historical Society received a

very generous donation of \$5,000 from long-time member and summer Harrison resident **Jim Crawford**.

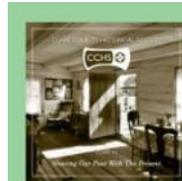
The funds will be used to improve our museum complex, most likely including repainting the Dover Schoolhouse, something that hasn't been done in several decades.

Jim is a former schoolteacher and lives in downstate Michigan during the winter months, but has been returning to his second home on Budd Lake since the 1980s.

He has been with our organization for many decades and has served a variety of roles, including as president. Jim is also an author who has written about several articles about Harrison.

We are very grateful to Jim and other members of our organization who give of their talents, time and monies. We are blessed to have you.

## Website Upgraded



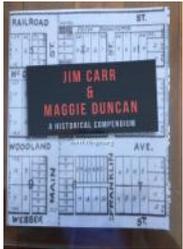
We recently began a long overdue upgrade of our historical society website that can be found at **clarecountyhistory.org**. The site includes articles, old newsletters, and a

more robust search engine. We are also beginning to add photos to the site for you to view.

We invite you to check it out.

## New Local History Books

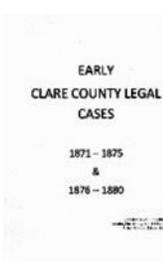
Three new books on local history are available—or will be—for you to add to your collection.



**“Jim Carr & Maggie Duncan: An Historical Compendium,”** by Jon H. Ringelberg.

Jim Carr and his common law wife, Maggie Duncan, ran a combination saloon and bordello outside of Harrison, Michigan in the 1870s-80s. They also engaged in enslaving young girls, robbing drunk lum-

berjacks, murder, firebombing and extortion and more. They died paupers and are buried in unmarked graves. This book collects information from statewide sources. Available from the author at [jhringelberg@hotmail.com](mailto:jhringelberg@hotmail.com).



**“Early Clare County Legal Cases, 1871–1935,”** by Jon H. Ringelberg

This book contains a synopsis of every Circuit Court case in the county (nearly 3,500) providing a history of how the county played out in

courts, especially during the logging era. While many business cases are involved so are murders, divorces and family disputes. Available from the author at [jhringelberg@hotmail.com](mailto:jhringelberg@hotmail.com).

**Schools of Clare County,** by Andy Coulson

An extensive history that covers the county's 82 schools, with many photos. Book is divided into 16 chapters, one for each township. At the end of the book is listing of teachers and school(s) at which they taught. The book is scheduled for publication this Spring.

## Join or Renew Your Membership

Memberships for active for the calendar year. 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 mail in the form so we

have a record of your interest). Your support makes it possible to run our museum complex; publish newsletters; host our website; run events promote local history to our youth; and to visitors and residents; promote tourism; protect artifacts and more.

If you “forget” to renew we may, at our discretion, send you a newsletter for one extra year. However, due to increased postage costs we cannot as a regular policy send copies to non members.

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

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

New     Renewal

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

I qualify for a free membership

Address 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 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. 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](mailto:museum@clarecountyhistory.org)

## Check Your Sticker's Ex Date

**Y**our address sticker includes something else of importance than your name and mailing address: It also contains the end date of your current membership. **Most memberships expired at the end of 2020.**

We hope that if your membership is no longer active, that you will mail in the membership form found inside this newsletter, along with your annual dues (and maybe a contribution if you are so inclined). Of course, if you are 80 years or older, no dues are required to keep your membership active!

The funds we receive make it possible for us to produce this newsletter, host our website,



update our exhibits, pay our bills, share our history, host our programs and more.

**Because of rising costs, we can no longer send newsletters to non-members,** although the CCHS board may, at its discretion, continue to mail them to former members for no more than one year past the expiration date.

However, we hope it's not even an issue and that you will send in your form. This is an important year with plenty to celebrate. We need you and hope you find value in belonging in our organization being part of something important.

## Help Needed on Fence



**L**ast year, volunteers installed fencing around much of the museum complex. We plan to complete the project in late May or early June. This phase will include a new steel gate and the installation of some much needed handicap parking spaces by the entrance.

Once again, Jon H. Ringelberg will head up the project. Please help if you can. Details at our May 4 monthly meeting.

# How County Roads Got Their Names

By Andy Coulson

Clare county consists of 16 townships divided into 36 sections. Most county roads are built on section lines—although not always. Sometimes, roads are built through sections. Such roads are usually built in this manner to avoid natural obstructions such as swamps, lakes or valleys.

In Clare County, north/south roads are avenues generally named after a major farm on that section line. East/west roads are generally named after a community that section line. If there was no major community than the road is named after a former U.S. president. In the case of the roads built through a section (most of them are east/west roads) they are named after a type of tree.

## NORTH/SOUTH (AVENUES)

**Kirby** – Kirby family of Winterfield township.

**Garfield** – Garfield township.

**Twin Lakes.**– Twin Lakes of Garfield township.

**Cook** – Probably for the Cook family of Lake Station.

**Lake Station** – Village in Garfield township that was named for our 20th president..

**Grass Lake** – Lake south of Windover Lake in Freeman township.

**McKinley**– Our 25th president.

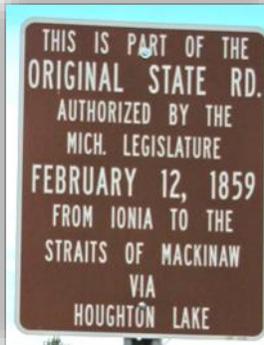
**Hemlock**- Named after the tree.

**Bringold**– The family farm in Greenwood township.

**Jackson**– Our 7th president.

**Harding**– Our 29th president.

**Finley Lake**– Small lake in Greenwood township



**Old State**– Originally the Ionia and Houghton Lake State Road, and for a time the only road in this part of the

state and authorized by the state. Portions of this road do not follow section lines because there were no property owners to complain. Plus road builders sometimes veered to where the best pine timber was because they were deeded land along the way.

**Coolidge** – Our 30th president.

**Harrison** – Western city limits of Harrison.

**Bass Lake** – One of the “mysteries” of Clare county road names as there is no such lake anywhere in the vicinity of this road. However, one of the biggest of the Five Lakes in Grant township was named Bass, and this road would have run through this lake.

**Grant** – Named after Grant township that was named for the 18th president.

**Eberhart** – Named for the Eberhart farm whose exact location is unknown.

**Cornwell** – Named after Cornwell ranch in Hatton and Arthur townships.

Rodgers – Origin is unknown.

**Brand** – The Brand farm of

southern Arthur township, later part of the Packard farm.

**Athey** – Probably after the Athey family of Arthur township.

**Bailey Lake** – Named after the lake in Sheridan township. The lake was named after C.C. or Mark Bailey, early lumbermen.

**Hoover** – Our 31st president.

## EAST/WEST (ROADS)

**Pierce** – Fourteenth president.

**Wilson** – May be named after the 28th president, but there may have been a Wilson lumber camp in Frost township on this section line.

**Haskell Lake** – Named after the lake in Summerfield township.

**Long Lake** – Named for the Frost township lake that is two-miles long.

**Forest** – Unknown. Perhaps a generic name

**Arnold Lake** – Named after the Hayes township lake, which in turn was probably named after an early surveyor

**Stockwell** – Named after farm at Stockwell and Grant.

**Cranberry Lake** – Named after Hayes township lake. Cranberry Lake was a common name for lakes, and Clare county has at least three lakes named Cranberry.

**Townline** – Named after the lake just west of Dodge City, which in turn was named after the section line on the north Harrison city limit.

**Clarence** – Named after a lumber town at Bear Avenue and

## County Roads (cont.)

the Ann Arbor railroad (about ½ mile south of Clarence Rd). It isn't known how this place was named, unless it is a play on the Clare name.

**Mostetler** – One of Clare county's misspelled road names, named after the small settlement of W.H. Mosteller in Hamilton township.

**Gladwin** – Named after the county seat to the east.

**Monroe** – Our 5th president.

**Mannsiding** – Named after the community based around the school on Arthur Road, in Hatton township. The community actually spelled the name Mann Siding as in a track siding. The name Mann is unknown but may have been a lumber camp.

**Ashard** – This name is probably misspelled, as the Achard ranch found at Ashard and Lake Station Avenue in Freeman township.

**Jefferson** – Our 3rd president.

**Brown** – Often seen as plural or possessive, it is singular. Named after the community at Cornwell Avenue.

**Adams** – Our 2nd president.

**Dover** – Clare county's first settlement.

**Beaverton** – Named after the Gladwin county town

**Surrey** – Named after Surrey township, which in turn was named after a county in Ireland.

**Maple Grove** – One of the few section line roads shared by two different communities. The road on the west half of the country is named after the Maple Grove community in northern Surrey township. In the east half the

county the road is Colonville Road.

**Lily Lake** – Perhaps named after the lake in southern Greenwood township. Lily Lake Road is changed to Springwood Lake Road between Rodgers and Athey Roads to reflect the community near there.

**Colonville** – Colonville was named after a settlement at Colonville and Rodgers. It isn't known how the settlement of Colonville was named.

**Washington** – Our 1st president.

The following roads do not follow section lines:

**Meredith Grade** – Portions of this road were once part of the Harrison to Meredith Railroad.

**Kapplinger** – Named after a prominent family north of Farwell, this road had its origins as a very early state sponsored road, hence the diagonal orientation. The original name for the road was the Clare County and Gladwin State Road. Its official purpose was to connect Farwell, the county seat at the time with the county seat of Gladwin county. It probably never reached Gladwin county, Kapplinger used to extend to Dover Road before the expressway cut it off in the early 1960's.

**Ziggy** – Probably Clare county's funniest named road, is named after the zig-zag pattern. Ziggy served the small community around Ferguson Lake, the Ward school on Finley Lake Road to the west and Old State Road to the east.

## Clare County Moonshiners?



**W**hen we think of moonshiners we think of alcohol. But the name means more than that .

ack in the lumbering era, moonshiners were men who stole logs and resold them. Below are excerpts from 1885 newspaper articles on how pervasive the practice of "moonshining" was in our county:

- ♦ "One lumberman says if a man cuts a tree and sit on the log, the moonshiners will contrive some way to get the log to the sawmill and cut it up before he can get a shingle bolt out of it."
- ♦ "A certain Clare moonshiner sold some pine logs to a Saginaw lumberman, the same being cut on land owned by the Saginaw man. Not long after, he sawed ends of the logs as to erase the [log]marks and sold the same logs over again. The thing worked so well that he tried it again with equal success, and kept on doing so until the logs which were originally 16 feet were reduced to 12 feet, then he was made (arrested) because 12 feet was the shortest measure taken. That man is a fair sample of the Clare moonshiner."

Articles courtesy of the *Clare County Cleaver*.