



The Catchmark

Newsletter of the Clare County Historical Society

Volume 14 Number 2

Sharing Our Past With the Present.

Summer 2015

Visit the Farwell Museum Too

Clare County is lucky to have two museums. Along with the Clare County Historical Museum complex, there is the Farwell Museum that concentrates on that town founded in 1876.

The museum is located at 221 West Main St. in the former site of Ladies Library Association built in 1882 and is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 1:30 - 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays May thru Sept. from noon until 4 p.m.

Clare County Historical Society

Our mission 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, and Ott Family Log Cabin.

The park is open Saturdays May through Sept. from 1 - 4 p.m. Along with exhibits, there are also old photos, books, newspapers and documents. Access is by appointment. Learn more at clare-countyhistory.org or visit the Museum page on Facebook.

Our Museum is Open (Including Our School)



Pictured is Arieis Feldpausch, granddaughter of member Ruth Wade. Arieis stopped by opening weekend to clean blackboards and even helped in the Blacksmith shop.

We convinced her to pose for a photo in the "schoolmarm's" chair at the Dover schoolhouse.

The Clare County Historical Complex at the corner of Dover and Eberhart Roads, north of Clare, is now open for the 2105 season. There is no admission charge and donations are gratefully accepted.

The complex is open every Saturday from 1—4 p.m. until the end of September. The final Saturday (Sept. 26) is the group's popular annual Old Fashion Day.

"Our county has an exciting and noteworthy past and we're proud of the museum, log cabin, blacksmith shop and one-room schoolhouse that make up our historical complex," said Joe Bradley, CCHS president. He said that while the museum has a big display on Spikehorn Meyers (probably the most colorful individual who ever called Clare County home) most of the ex-

hibits focus on those who toiled anonymously in the winter cold and summer heat to build the railroads; cut the timber; till the soil, pump the oil; run businesses; teach school; fight wars; and heal the sick. "They built this county and we try to tell their story," Bradley said.

Groups who would like to tour the complex on a weekday or individuals wishing to conduct research should send an email to museum@clare-countyhistory.org or call Jon H. Ringelberg at (989) 439-7912 to schedule a time.

Bradley added that the historical park is more than just exhibits. "The log cabin and schoolhouse should appeal to photographers, and the museum has a big front porch perfect for sitting and talking history or relaxing on a warm summer afternoon. C'mon out Everyone is

Strategy Session



Thanks to the 18 who attended the Clare County Historical Society's Planning session on March 28, and to the Pere Marquette

Library staff in Clare for providing us with the meeting room.

Our group made some short-, and long-term plans that range all the way from new signage and new exhibits, to plans to reroof the Dover School, install new windows and wiring and rebuild the cupola.

Roadside Park

A new sign has been installed at the Old 27 Roadside Park (also called the Gerrish Railroad Park) alerting visitors to the public private partnership that

is keeping the park open. The sign also gives park rules and provides contact information for those who might want to reserve the park for an event (a wedding has already been booked. If you would like to help beautify the park with flowers or reserve the park, please contact Jon H. Ringelberg at 989-429-7912.



A Face to a Name in a Graveyard

Jim Garrity went off to war.

According to family history, he enlisted in Nov. 1917 joining his cousin Arthur Looker at the Naval Training Academy in Illinois.

Jim Garrity went off to war but never saw combat. He died barely two months later while in training of the Spanish flu, a pandemic that would kill an estimated 50 million to 100 million worldwide before disappearing. Many of the flu's victims were young men, like Jim—and like Arthur who also died of the deadly virus one week earlier.

So instead of coming home proud veterans, Jim and Arthur came home in wooden boxes. Jim was buried in his family's cemetery in Hamilton Township and Arthur in a Gladwin cemetery.

So two sisters grieved their two sons. It was a tragic bond they now held with a third sister who had also lost her son from the flu the year before. Ervin Reed had been at Fort Wayne



near Detroit. Reed too is buried in the small Garrity Cemetery.

Last year, Jim Garrity, Arthur Looker and

Ervin Reed were just names. They became the subject of a blog post because I wanted to tell the story of their brief lives. That post caught the attention of Marianne Eyer, a direct descendant of the Garrity's, who lives in Marquette, Mich. She shared a photo of Jim; and suddenly a name I knew only in a graveyard had a face.

A handsome face. The nearly century old photo of Jim is badly faded but shows him staring confidently into the camera.

We don't know exactly why Jim Garrity went off to war, but according to Marianne, the story is that Jim was the only son in a farm household with four sisters. His father would

not let him join the service so Jim convinced his mother to let him go. Perhaps the lure of far off places, the excitement of war despite its dangers, trumped life on the farm.

Did Jim's father ever forgive his wife because she gave their only son her blessing to join the Navy? One wonders, after Jim died, whether his mother blamed herself because she did allow him to go.

Family history also says Jim's sister Hazel insisted Jim be given his high school diploma, although even at 20 he had not graduated. He was smart, his report card from 1916 shows that fact; he just didn't like school—and maybe farming. Maybe he felt he was destined for bigger things than tilling the soil. We will never know.

Because Jim Garrity went off to war.



How Did Clare County Get Its Name?

By Robert Knapp

Naming Michigan counties was a long process. In 1840 the legislature gave names to 29 new counties in the northern part



of the state. Twenty-six of the 29 names had some sort of Indian derivation. In choosing these names, legislators had turned to Henry Schoolcraft who had been a member of the Michigan Territorial Council (1828-32) and a federal Indian Agent for the Michigan area (1833-1841). His knowledge of Indians was famous. One of his name recommendations was Kaykekee, which means 'pigeon hawk' in Ojibwa. Supposedly this was the name of a Chippewa chieftain, but no such person ever existed.

The standard explanation of the change of name to Clare County is recounted by Forrest Meek in his book *Michigan's Timber Battleground*. Henry Nicholson, Chief Deputy United States Surveyor, was put in charge of surveying the basic range and town matrix for the area including Clare. But a surveyor had nothing to do with naming township or counties; so he simply could not have originated the Clare name.

A second possibility noted by

Meek is that the name came from Irish immigrants. This will



not work, either. Not only were there no such immigrants in the county in 1843; more importantly, people alone or organized simply could not name political units like counties. That decision was in the hands of the state government.

The true story is a bit unclear in detail, but the basic outline is not. As noted, in 1840 Henry Schoolcraft had been instrumental in creating names for many of the 29 new counties. Three years later Schoolcraft had moved on and the legislators decided to be a bit more inventive and give some of their preferred names to counties. Of the 29 original 1840 names, 13 survived the renaming of 1843. Of the 16 that were changed, four of the new ones Schoolcraft had crafted were accepted (Alcona, Alpena, Iosco, and Kalkaska). Four others were named for counties in Ireland (Antrim, Clare, Roscommon, Wexford). Why give Michigan counties Irish names?

The most colorful story about the choice of Clare is the

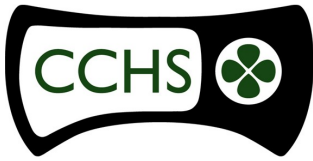


following: Charles O'Malley and his brother, James, were leading citizens of Sault Sainte Marie. O'Malley had had a legal run-in with Schoolcraft in 1840. His brother, James, was a State Representative in 1843. The O'Malley family was strongly Irish in background and sentiment. Charles O'Malley was famously volatile. The story is that O'Malley through his brother substituted four Irish county names for four Schoolcraft-ed names as an insult to the Indian Agent he had locked horns with.

The basic fact is that in 1843 state legislators decided the new county names. Representative Waldron, chairman of the legislature's Towns and Counties committee, had Irish roots. But there may also be some truth to the O'Malley story. It is probable that the Irish Waldron was sympathetic to James O'Malley's request on behalf of his brother for Irish names, and so they were included on the list. But so were four new names wrought by Schoolcraft, so Schoolcraft was not so disrespected, after all.

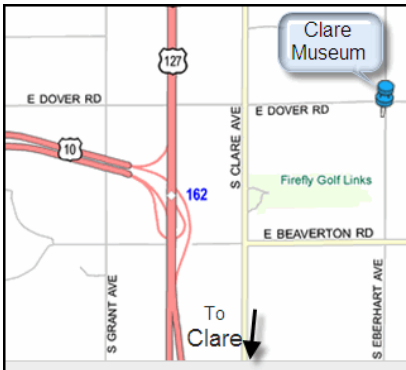
On March 8, 1843 Governor John Barry signed into law the bill changing the name of Clare and the other counties. Personalities and politics had given Michigan its "Irish" counties, and Kaykekee had become Clare.

Robert Knapp is the author of several books on local history, including *Clare: 1865-1940* (Images of America series) and *Mystery Man: Gangsters, Oil, and Murder in Michigan*



CLARE COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

c/o Jon H. Ringelberg, Treasurer
3062 E Colonville Rd
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Our museum complex is at 3050
Eberhart Rd. at Dover Rd., five miles
north of Clare.

Like us on Facebook!



Questions, comments? Email
museum@clarecountyhistory.org

Loggers' Word Match

Match the historical words to
a meaning. A perfect score
means that you might be really
old or a pretty good historian.
Most or all wrong means you are
probably very young or history is
not your thing. Good luck !

Jon H. Ringelberg

Answers: 1.g (think of the
word butter), 2.b (lumberjack
was not used in the 1800's),
3.c, 4d,
5.j, 6.e, 7.i, 8.f. (the 100th anni-
versary of President Washing-
ton's first inauguration), 9.h,
10.a

1. _____ butry
2. _____ shanty boy
3. _____ Elem
4. _____ beat
5. _____ Mason's mark
6. _____ crib
7. _____ pollard
8. _____ Centennial Day
9. _____ mare's nest
10. _____ pill pounder

- A. a druggist
- B. a lumber jack
- C. an elm tree
- D. an area of river bank on a log
drive
- E. a bawdy house
- F. a national holiday
- G. a liquor storage room
- H. a strange discovery and others
make fun of it
- I. a tree with top cut out
- J. pieces of cut glass or mirror
on a building behind which might
be building plans