Catchmark

CLARE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CCHS
CLARE, MICHIGAN

Newsletter of the Clare County Historical Society

Angela Kellogg-Henry, Editor

Volume 26 Number 1 | *Sharing Our Past With the Present.* | Spring 2025

Farwell in Winter From the Pages of the Ford Times, Dec. 1960

Thanks to a discovery by David Hutchinson, CCHS member and researcher, four paintings from Rosebush artist Grace McArthur can be enjoyed once more. (Two of the four are shown here)

In an article called written by noted western novelist James B. Hendryx, readers of the Ford Times, a magazine sent to almost every new Ford Motor purchaser in the United States, were treated to tales of skiing, ice fishing, and sledding in and around Mott Mountain. Mentions of JL Littlefield and George Palmer are evidence that Mr. Hendryx did his research. Grace McArthur, the artist behind these four paintings was known as Michigan's Grandma Moses for her work done between 1954 and 1982. She created over 1000 works of art, most which she gave away. She was particularly proud of having a one-person show in Detroit and having one of her works hanging in the state capitol in Lansing. She even did a painting of the Hotel Doherty in the 1960s. Her husband was one of the founders of the hospital in Clare during the Depression Era.

The entire Ford Times article can be accessed via a search in fordheritagevault.com or be viewed at the Clare County Historical Society museum starting in May.

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 northeast of Clare that includes a Museum, the Dover one-room schoolhouse, Ott Family Cabin, Bell/Knapp 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.

Early Settlements Part 5

By ANDREW COULSON

This is the fifth installment of a series looking at the different settlements as they appeared on Michigan state maps in Clare county. Clare county at this point was still in the height of its lumbering era. Almost every, with perhaps a few exceptions, settlement in Clare county, had its beginnings in the lumbering industry.

1881; Harrison - In and around the summer of 1879, Harrison became Clare county's second county seat, after the court house burned in Farwell in July of 1877. By reading newspapers of the time, it is known that the new county seat was not named until the point that actually HAD to be named. The first assumption was that it was to be named after the nearby lake, Budd lake. Indeed there are a map or two that does list Harrison with this name instead. There can also be found a map or two that lists Budd lake as being Harrison Lake. The exact phrase from the June 20, 1879 Clare County Press when announcing the new name for the first time to the world is, "The name is neither pretty nor suggestive." Thus also officially marking, for the first time, Clare's distaste for the county capital.

1882; Summerfield - Summerfield and Winterfield, both townships, also had settlements of the same name in the center of their respective townships. The settlement of Summerfield, the little documented, can be assumed to have originated simply from its geographical position of being in the center of the township. There appears to have been no other reason for it to have been built there; no river, lake, good farm land. In fact, to its direct south lies a huge swamp known as Floodwood. Summerfield, as a settlement, probably never amounted to more than the townhall (which more than likely doubled as a school), a few houses and a cemetery. It appeared on maps until 1896.

1882; Upton - Upton appears on maps until 1903. Indeed, it had a post office from 1872 until 1899. On the state maps, it can be found on both sides of the Muskegon River. Upton was most likely the same places as Jonesville, having changed its name after receiving a post office. Jonesville has never appeared on any map that this author has seen. Curuiosly, Jonesville is rather well documented though appearing much less in the newspapers then Upton. Jonesville's main claim to fame (which amazingly is STILL the case) was that it was a crossing point of the Muskegon River, and it was at this interesection of the Ionia and Houghton Lake State Road and the river that Upton was found. As fate had it, Houghton Lake was not a destination point for travelers until well after other routes had become better established and Upton went the way of other lumbering era towns. Because of its remoteness, it was one of the last areas of the county to remain employeed in the lumbering trade.

1882; Wade - As much as can be surmised, Wade was nothing more than perhaps a central hub and post office, from 1879 to 1883, for the surrounding farming community. Wade was found south of the Thompson cemetery, near the intersection of Rodgers Avenue and Beaverton Roads. This was, even early on, a densely populated area, due to its excellent farmland. To its direct north could be found the Eagle community, one of the first areas of the county to be settled, and to the direct south Colonville.

1883; Frost - Frost was not very well documented, though a few things are known about it. It was found, probably along the southern portion of Frost Lake near where the Meredith division (Meredith Grade) passed its shores. Interestingly, the place is mentioned in June of 1878 as having 350 attending a picnic, not going into any more detail as to the occasion, though it can be surmised from a later article that this most likely was Sunday school related. To put this into context, activities in the Harrison area would not begin until a year after this account, therefor no Meredith grade would have existed at this point. The Frost area is also where the Silkworth "house" was burned by Jim Carr, Silkworth desiring a location between the two places of Carr's business, Harrison and Meredith.

Odds and Ends

Very early photo the main residence and gate at the Cornwell farm. The girl sitting on the fence post is probably Jane Cornwell, which would almost certainly date this photograph to 1906.

The original transmitter and mobile home office of WKKM in the 1970s.

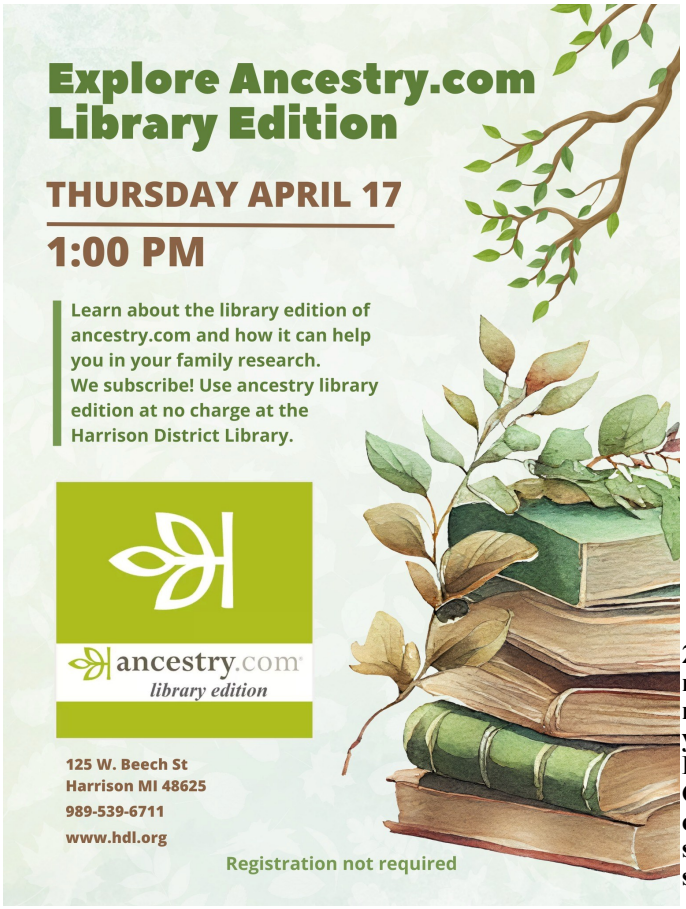
WKKM Turns 25

Stacy Stocking, Board Member of the Harrison Area Chamber of Commerce, congratulates members of radio station WKKM on their 25th anniversary. From left to right: Charlie Cobb, local radio personality, Joyce Jacobs, Sales Manager, Stacy Stocking, and Dave Carmine, owner of WKKM.

The Country King, WKKM is celebrating its 25th anniversary during the month of March. Since its beginning in March of 1975, WKKM has been proud to be a community-minded company. WKKM has been a member of the Harrison Area Chamber of Commerce since going on the air 25 years ago.

Serving a six county area in Central Michigan, WKKM offers news, sports, weather and information on local and regional events, and of course great country music. WKKM wants to give a big thank you to the many businesses that have advertised on WKKM over the years. The Country King is looking forward to another quarter century of serving the area with its same commitment to community service with which it started 25 years ago.

A congratulatory write up in the Clare County Cleaver a March 2000 issue celebrating the 25th anniversary of WKKM.



Angela Kellogg-Henry will lead this session at the Harrison District Library exploring what the Library Edition of ancestry has to offer for family research. Registration is not required and the session is free.

Check with your local library to see if they hold a subscription to the library edition of ancestry.com.

The WKKM office at 209 E. Spruce St. in Harrison was completely remodeled in the last several years by Pastor Gary Biggs of the Hope Baptist Church and now broadcasts as a non-profit conservative Christian radio station.

From Fate to Faith: How WKKM Landed in Harrison

WKKM 50 Years Later

By RON TRIPP
Reprinted with permission from the Clare County Cleaver

Fate has a way of changing plans and reshaping the future; and fate is what brought WKKM radio to Harrison 50 years ago.

In the early days of the modern FM radio band, regulators, in an attempt to encourage owners of AM stations to apply for FM channels, made FM channel assignments to most communities with an existing licensed AM station. The Channel Assignments for FM Stations at that time included three classes. Class B and C (for higher power stations) were assigned to medium and large cities and to communities where an AM was already serving a large region. Class A channels (3 kilowatts with an antenna height of 300 feet) were assigned to smaller, more rural communities where local AM stations already existed.

FM channels are actually numbered and channel 221A (92.1 megahertz) was assigned, among other places, to the community of St. Johns (north of Lansing), where an established AM station already existed.

Enter David Carmine (known on radio as Dave Carr). With limited resources, Dave sought to build an FM station on 92.1 MHz in Dewitt (south of St Johns), but using the FM channel (221A) that had been assigned to St. Johns. After contracting with an engineering firm to have the necessary engineering documents prepared to support his request, he filed an application with the FCC for a construction permit. And the owners of the AM station in St. Johns also filed an application for the same FM channel.

That left Dave with three options; enter a costly legal battle, give up, or find another place where the engineering would work and channel 221A would fit. Everyone who knew Dave knew he wasn't a spender, and he wasn't a quitter. He went back to the engineers and learned that he needed to find a community where Channel 221A would fit without too many changes to the engineering, which of course the engineers would then have to modify.

Guidelines dictated that the channel assignment would have to be a certain number of miles north of St. Johns (to avoid same channel interference), and southwest of Roscommon, where there was a construction permit pending for an educational FM on a frequency just below channel 221A (which was subsequently not built).

As fate would have it, Dave got a positive response from the engineers. It would be possible to add channel 221A (92.1 MHz) to the FM channel assignments at Harrison, Michigan. But they cautioned him, to build it, he would have to identify a transmitter site that was north of Mannsiding Road, south of M-61 and not only west of Harrison, but west of Harrison Avenue. Again, as if it were fate, he struck a deal to buy five acres with a hilltop just west of Harrison Avenue on Larch Road.

Dave successfully petitioned the FCC to have the FM Table of Assignments changed to include an assignment of Channel 221A to Harrison, Michigan. Soon thereafter he filed for a construction permit with the FCC, which was subsequently granted. Then, with the help of friends in the business, he started construction of "The Country King", "high-atop-Broadcast-Hill".

As many residents may recall, WKKM went on the air on March 23, 1975, a few days after receiving Program Test Authority from the FCC. That authority allows a new station to begin broadcasting while awaiting their permanent license.

The station started off operating entirely out of a mobile home on Broadcast Hill. Then a separate transmitter building was added in 1977; and later, with memories of the blizzard of '78 still fresh, the offices and studios were moved into the red building on Spruce Street in downtown Harrison.

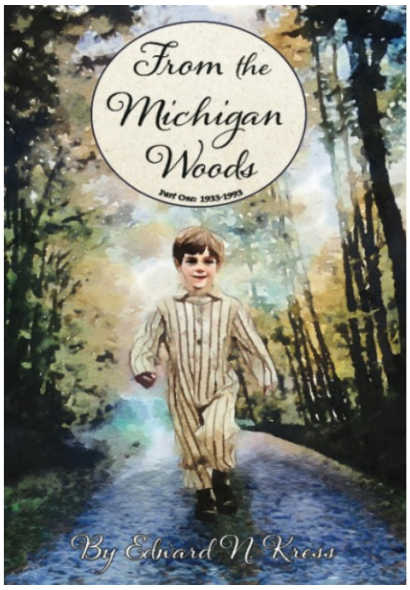
Dave retired in 2002 and sold the station. Actually, he sold the station's license and transmitting plant. The station remained in Harrison for a while as a public radio station and eventually sold again and moved to Houghton Lake.

But when he sold the channel 221A license (92.1 MHz), Dave held on to the red building downtown and operated low-power, non-commercial FM community stations from the building, using the call sign WKKM-LP and airing traditional country music and local information. The most recent of the low power stations broadcast on 106.5 FM. That station continued until Dave Carr passed away in 2022. Today WKKM-LP, the station that fate brought to Harrison, continues to broadcast on 106.5 FM as a Christian station from the same red building.

Ron Tripp was known as Ron Christie as an announcer and manager of WKKM in the 1970s and '80s.

See other side for photos.

From the Michigan Woods



It came to the attention of the Clare County Historical Society over this past winter that a former resident of the area, Edward N. Kress had published a biography. The book is titled, "From the Michigan Woods, Part One." The first few chapters have local significance, as Kress was born in Temple. He tells many tales of his early days growing up in Temple.

During the tale end of the depression era, his family moved to Harrison. And it is at this location Kress tells of his memories of the Harrison railroad turntable. In these recollections can be found what can be regarded as the best recorded recollection of these piece of Harrison history.

History items can come if many shapes and forms. Two good examples are the Farwell court house; we know for certain that it existed, but there has yet to surface and photographic evidence. Then you have that which comes in the "legendary" form, such as the rumored railroad that linked Lake George with Harrison, which consists of a few written accounts that had previously been passed down via word of mouth, and a few legit maps with its location crudely hand drawn onto the map.

The Harrison railroad turntable falls somewhere in between these two types There can be found mention of it in a few trustworthy publications, but no written newspaper account has been seen and certainly no photographs are known to exist. There are a few people around that remember it, but that is about it. Local area residents will tell you that "they have been told" that they live very near to where the turntable once existed.

In his recollections, Mr. Kress ensures that not only did it exist, he tells almost exactly where it was located. This prompted us to enlist the help of an aerial photograph of Harrison taken in 1938, a few years before Mr. Kress had moved to Harrison. Sure enough, it is plainly visible in the location described. It was located on the south side of East Oak Street, about where the road begins to curve toward Budd Lake.

For those not in the know, for the entire existence, save for about a decade and a half when it extended to Meredith, Harrison was the end of the line for trains headed north from Clare. There is a situation, called a wye, shaped like triangle attached to the main line of the tracks, in which a train turn itself around. This set up is effective and simple, but its drawback is that it takes up a lot of real estate. Where a turntable can eliminate the need of owning a large parcel. In the case of Harrison, the northbound train would have unloaded its passengers and freight in the vicinity of what is today the parking lot of Family Dollar, south of Harrison Lumber. The train would then back south down the tracks until got to a swith that would have been on the north side of Oak Street, which would cause the train to change course onto a spur, and thence onto the turntable. The turntable was not located on the main line, which makes sense in that it would have caused delay of any additional traffic. (This was probably only a problem in the early days of Harrison when lumber was being shipped from Harrison in large quantities.) Once on the turntable, the train would be turned 180 degrees, back north onto the main line again, this time pointed in a southerly direction. It is not known how the turntable was motivated, but it is though that it was perhaps done by hand, either by sheer leverage or by a cranking system.

Thank you Mr. Kress for sharing this story with us.

Join or Renew Your Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address 2: **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

EMAIL ADDRESS:_____

☐ **New** ☐ **Renewal**

☐ **I am 80 or older, live in Clare County and qualify (see above) for a free membership.**

☐ **Yes, email me the newsletter**

$_____ Total enclosed*

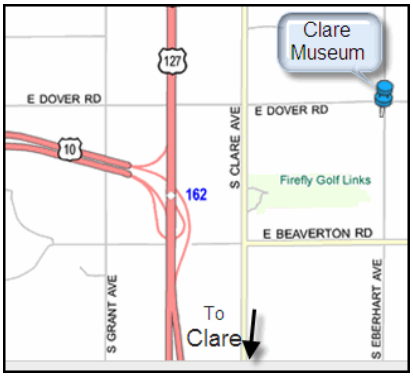
Donations in excess of $10 are greatly appreciated and will be used to improve our museum park and promote local history. The CCHS is a 501(c)3 organization and your donation may be tax deductible.

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

CCHS, c/o Andrew Coulson, Treasurer
P O Box 723
Harrison, Michigan 48625

CLARE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CCHS
CLARE, MICHIGAN

c/o CCHS, Andrew Coulson, Treasurer
P O Box 723
Harrison, Michigan 48625



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 @clarecountyhistory.org

Questions, comments? Email *museum@clarecountyhistory.org*

Clare County History Online

Online Resources for local Clare County History.

Visit the Digital Michigan Newspaper Portal at the Clarke Library at CMU at https://digmichnews.cmich.edu/

Most newspapers in the county have been digitized and the Clarke is currently working on digitizing the last few decades of the Clare County Cleaver.

Our very own website is getting updates by member David Hutchinson. Visit our site at https://clarecountyhistory.org/

History blog on the Clare County Cleaver's website contributed by many writers. Visit at https://www.clarecountycleaver.net/blogs/

Pages to follow on Facebook

Clare Union Railroad Depot

Clare County Historical Society

Clare County Cleaver

Farwell Area Historical Museum

Clarke Historical Library

Coleman Historical Society - Coleman, Michigan

Do you have a few free Saturdays this summer? Consider spending time greeting visitors at the museum complex of the CCHS.

Clare Depot

First Meeting of 2025

The first meeting of the year for the Clare County Historical Society is always our planning meeting. It will be held on Wednesday, April 16 at 6:30 p.m.