



The Clare County Historical Society was founded in 1970 to preserve the county's significant historical artifacts and its cultural heritage. We also seek to tell the story of the people who lived here and the events that shaped our county, and share why their history matters yet today.

Our museum complex includes a museum, historic one-room schoolhouse, a blacksmith shop and the Ott family log cabin.

We are open 1 to 4 p.m., May–Sept. and by appointment. We do not charge admission but donations are gratefully accepted. Our grounds can be booked for your special events.

We also invite you to “Old Fashion Day,” the last Saturday in September for music, demonstrations, tractor rides and more. (Fee applies.)



Location:

*7050 S Eberhart Ave
(Corner of Dover Rd.)*

Website:

clarecountyhistory.org

Email:

museum@clarecountyhistory.org

Visit us on Facebook!



The Clare County Historical Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation.



Clare County Museum Complex

& Historical Society



Clare County's History

Clare County was organized in 1871. Its population grew quickly due to the huge pine and hemlock forests that covered much of the county. Those trees were "green gold," needed to build growing cities like Detroit and Chicago. They just needed men to cut and transport them to sawmills. So people came here to work and to build a new life

The organization of the county coincided with the arrival of the railroad that made it easy for people to get here since roads, especially good roads, were few. Across the county, towns such as Clare, Farwell, Harrison, Meredith, Leota and Lake George sprang up.

In 1878, Winfield Scott Gerrish built a narrow-gauge logging railroad that turned logging from a winter-only business to one that could operate all year. Others adopted his methods and within a dozen years, Clare County had been stripped of its great forests.

Without a source of income, lumbermen left to find work



elsewhere and the county quickly sank into a depression. Many small towns disappeared. At Dover, home of our museum, only the one-room schoolhouse and a few homes remained.

But the end of the logging era also served as a new beginning for others. Farmers and cattle ranchers moved in taking advantage of cheap land. Even industrialist Henry Ford purchased land here, and would visit on occasion.

The discovery of oil in the 1930s brought jobs, and the growing popularity of the automobile brought tourists seeking to enjoy the lakes, rivers and woods. Among the visitors were gangsters like Detroit's Purple Gang who came to relax (and perhaps even launder some of their ill-gotten gains).

Hear their stories; learn about Ol' Spikehorn Meyer and his bears; visit the log cabin in which the Ott family who raised 18 children; see our working blacksmith shop; and more!

We even have a great front porch and chairs made just for relaxing! So, please c'mon by!

Join With Us

Membership in the CCHS is only \$10 per calendar year.

Your support makes it possible for us to support our museum complex, publish our newsletters and host our website and Facebook page, run events and activities, as well as share and promote Clare County's history.

Name : _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State _____

Zip _____

Email: _____

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

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