



# Catchmark

Newsletter of the Clare County Historical Society  
*Marty Johnson, Editor*

Volume 19 Number 2

*Sharing Our Past With the Present.*

Spring 2019

## Thanks to our Gold Members

**I**n our last newsletter, we asked you to mail in your \$10 membership renewal dues—and you responded and we appreciate it, especially those who sent in more than the \$10 we ask.

We really want to thank our Gold members, those who are 80 years or over. While your membership is free, many of you mail in a donation anyway. Not only did you help make CCHS the great society it is, but you continue to support us.

We promise you—and all our members—that we will use donated funds wisely.

## Clare County Historical Society

**T**he mission of the CCHS 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, Ott Family Log Cabin, and Blacksmith Shop. We also have photos, books, old newspapers and documents. Access to these is by appointment. Learn more at [clarecountyhistory.org](http://clarecountyhistory.org) or visit us on Facebook.



*Our Museum Complex is quiet now, but won't be when we soon reopen.*

*Come out one Saturday May—Sept., 1 and 5 p.m. to tour our buildings or just sit on the porch and relax.*

## CCHS Obtains Photos from Mid

**T**he Clare County Historical Society has entered into an agreement with Mid Michigan College in Harrison to hold and maintain 81 historical photos in their collection. Some of the photos hung on walls at the college but were removed for construction. There were no plans to rehang them so Mid offered to loan them to CCHS to house and display. The complete collection is to be displayed on a rotating basis.

This is the second time, CCHS has worked with Mid Michigan College on such an arrangement. Two years ago, CCHS agreed to archive Mid's collection of photos it received from the estate of local historian Forrest Meek.

"We're happy to again work with Mid Michigan College to make sure these photos are well cared for and available to the public," according to Jon H. Ringelberg who picked up and cataloged the collection for CCHS. "Displaying and rotating the collection also provides an additional reason for visitors to return to our museum complex." Ringelberg added that CCHS would like to loan some of the photos to other local museums for them to display.



## Familiar Names. Unfamiliar Stories



**Y**ou see their names whenever you drive past the VFW Post in Clare—Pettit and Kapplinger. You might have played or camped at Petit Park on the Tobacco River or driven down Kapplinger Road northwest of Clare, so you are familiar with the names. But are you familiar with their stories? You should be. Both men were from Clare. Both served in the military in WWII and both died serving their county.

**Robert Lee Pettit** was born in Clare in 1906 and enlisted in the Navy in 1927. When the United States was drawn into WWII, Pettit was a Radioman First Class assigned to PBYS, a patrol bomber, and search and rescue seaplane. Twenty days after Pearl Harbor, his plane was shot down in the Philippines while bombing Japanese war and merchant ships. According to the Navy, although the radio compartment filled with burning fuel, Pettit did not leave his post. While some of the crew survived, Pettit did not and was awarded a Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism.



On April 28, 1943, the Navy launched a destroyer escort, the U.S.S. Pettit, named in his honor with his widow in attendance. The ship escorted trans-Atlantic convoys until the European war ended and then moved to the South Pacific where it conducted searches for possible Allied survivors on islands. The Pettit was decommissioned in 1946.

**Jarvis Max Kapplinger**, was born in Clare in 1920 and enlisted in the Marines in 1939. In 1942, Kapplinger, then a corporal was captured when the Philippines fell to the Japanese in 1942. He was one of approximately 20,000 Americans captured, and one of at least two Clare soldiers captured, the other being **Alfred Querback**. Both men took part in what is now called the "Bataan Death March," a 60 mile forced hike through the jungle to a prisoner of war camp. The men on the march received little food and water and many died.



Although Querback appears to

have been one of them who died during that time, Kapplinger managed to survive the march and brutal condition as a POW. However, in Oct. 1944, with the Americans poised to retake the Philippines, Kapplinger and other POWs were placed onboard a ship bound for Japan. Sadly, the ship was sunk by an American submarine which mistook it for an enemy troop carrier since it bore no markings. There were 1800 Americans on board the ship, probably locked below deck. Only eight Americans managed to escape.

While Kapplinger may not had a ship named after him, his brother Morris did name his son in honor of his sibling. Jarvis Max Kapplinger still lives in the area and learned about his uncle who was, among other things, a Golden Gloves champion.

Jarvis Kapplinger is proud of his uncle, who died in the war. We all should be proud of Jarvis Max Kapplinger, Robert Lee Pettit, Alfred Querback and the many others who fought for our country.

Stop by the Mid-Michigan Freedom Park in Harrison to view the names of those who lost their lives in WWII and other foreign wars. In addition, the VFW Post in Clare has a number of official documents and medals that were awarded the two men.

*Note: Neither Kapplinger's nor Pettit's names appear on the Freedom Park's markers as they were not Clare County residents at the time of their deaths.*

# Enjoy All Three Clare County Museums

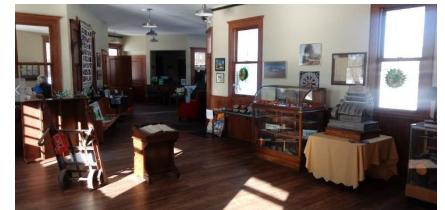
**W**hile we take pride in our Clare County Historical Society museum complex on Dover and Eberhart Roads, we're even more proud of our County's history and want to see even more people take an active interest in our history and learn about the people who came to a rugged wilderness (and it was once a vast wilderness) to carve out a life for themselves and their families, businesses or farms. To the right is information on two other museums in our county, one of which has been around for many years and one that just recently opened.

## Farwell Museum



The Farwell Museum is housed in the former library completed in 1883. It is located at 221 West Main in downtown Farwell. Hours are Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:30-5:30 p.m. and Saturday's May thru Sept. from noon to 4 p.m. There is no admission fee. The museum has a wonderful collection of photos and artifacts and even has a booklet with a walking tour.

## Depot Museum



The newest museum is located at the Clare Railroad Depot in downtown Clare across from the water tower. The museum is open Monday—Friday from 10 a.m.—4 p.m. While the museum doesn't have a strict focus on Clare's railroading history, it does have items that will appeal to any train buff, including photos, old railroad memorabilia and art. There is also a small gift shop with items that benefit the depot.

# Join or Renew Your Membership

**P**lease check the membership label to see if it's time for you to renew your Clare County Historical Society membership. Most memberships expired at the end of December 2018.

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 for us to run our museum

complex, publish our newsletters, host our website, run events and promote Clare County history, tell its stories and protect its artifacts.

**If you are not a member, we'd love to have you join us.**

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

New     Renewal

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

Qualify for a Free Membership

Address 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Email (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed\*

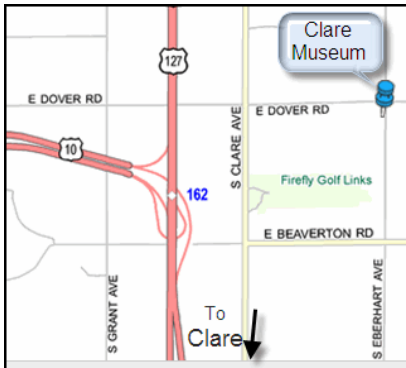
Make checks payable to: Clare County Historical Society and mail them to  
 CCHS, c/o Jon H. Ringelberg, Treasurer  
 3062 E Colonville Rd  
 Clare, Michigan 48617-9448

\* 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.



CLARE COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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



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)

## Logging Railroad Historic Marker Needs Help

In the summer of 1958, the State of Michigan installed an historical marker in the roadside park north of Clare to commemorate logging railroads. It was number 28. Since that time, more than 1700 have been installed. Very few, have graphics to go with the text.

The marker is in the roadside park on Old 27 that our Historical Society has agreed to maintain with help from Cops and Doughnuts Bakery. The park is a popular stopping point for tourists who read the marker, picnic, or use the old style hand pump to quench their thirst.

Now this marker needs restoration, The decades have made the text hard to read and there

has been some minor vandalism. In addition, the graphic is much faded. If the CCHS board approves, we will start raising funds to get it restored.

The cost is approximately \$800, and if we can get 80 people to donate \$10 or 32 people to donate \$25, we can cover the cost. Contributors will get invited to the unveiling later this year and receive a certificate of appreciation with a before and after photo of the marker.

Please stop by the park and take a look and see if it's something you'd like to be part of restoring and we will keep you up to date.



Michigan's lumbermen found many areas were too far from rivers for logs to be taken to the mills in the spring drive. After 1870 the logging railroad came into increasing use as the means of opening these regions. The Lake George and Muskegon Railroad here in Clare County began hauling logs seven miles to the Muskegon River in 1877. New steam sawmills soon went up near these narrow-gauge lines because of the steady supply of timber that the logging trains furnished. Shown above is the Shays train, a type specially designed for use on the logging railroads.  
MICHIGAN HISTORICAL COMMISSION REGISTERED SITE NO. 28