

CLINTON COUNTY TRAILS

Published by: Genealogists of the Clinton County Historical Society, P.O. Box 174, St. Johns, MI 48879 - Phone: 517-482-5117 Ext. 2



Published Quarterly September 2017 Volume 32 - Issue 3

Historical Society

President – Lynne Gregory Vice President – Julie Peters Secretary – Gayla Phillips Treasurer – Rowlan Smith Directors:

> Ron Matson Myrna VanEpps Don Hinkle

Paine-Gillam-Scott Museum Board

Director— *Vacant*Asst. Dir. - Bill McCarthy
Secretary - Brian Grennell
Treasurer - Jan Upton

CCHS Archivist

Director – Julie Peters

Newsletter Co-Editors

Lynne Gregory Kim Sperry

Contents	Page
Clinton Movie Thea	aters –
Part I.	25
First Professional Fo	otball
Game	29
Joseph Cooper	30
Rochester Colony History	31
Recent Acquisitions	32
Back Thru the Years	



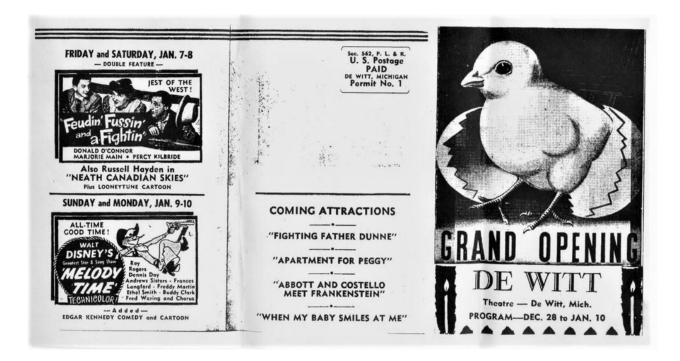
DeWitt Theater

Clinton County Goes to the Movies Part I - DeWitt Theaters

One hundred years ago moving pictures were beginning to make their way into Clinton County. Movie production had begun in the 1890's as a novelty and quickly evolved so that by the early 1900's theaters in St. Johns, Ovid, and Elsie were showing silent movies in addition to live stage performances.

Lagging behind many other county communities due to its close proximity to Lansing, DeWitt didn't get its first movie theater until Jerome Vincent built the DeWitt Theater across the street from his funeral home at 202 East Main Street. The grand opening was on December 28, 1948, and featured *Two Guys from Texas* along with *Letter to a Rebel* and a Disney cartoon.



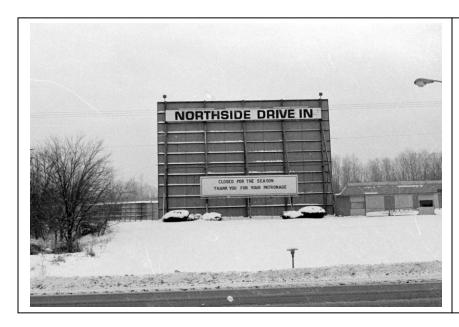


Virgil Zeeb and John Hiatt and their wives leased the theater and ran it for a couple of years until closing it for the summer on June 1, 1956. It may never have reopened. After being used for a short time as an archery range, the building became the home of *DeWitt Furniture and Appliances* in July of 1958 with the marquee repurposed as the store sign. Later the building became the DeWitt Bar and is currently the home of Relli's Sports Bar.



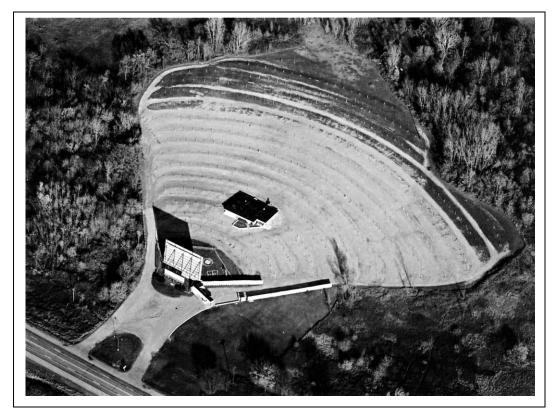
Clinton County Trails Volume 32- Issue 3

Emiel Leon Robbe, who went by Leon, was involved with the creation of the only two drive-in theaters in Clinton County. He had purchased the Elsie Theater in 1948 and built the St. Johns Family Drive-In in 1950. He sold the St. Johns Family Drive-in to Howard William Kortes in 1953 after he had opened a new drive-in in DeWitt Township about two miles north of Lansing.





Robbe received zoning permission to construct the Northside Drive-In theater on July 7, 1952, and almost immediately started grading and construction at the northeast intersection of US-27 and Stoll Roads. Less than two months later the theater opened on Friday, August 29, 1952, with the double feature of *Santa Fe* and *Rookie Fireman* along with a big fireworks show.



Who knows what other theaters Leon Robbe might have opened had his life not come to a tragic end. On November 26, 1955, Leon, along with his wife and 14 year-old son Ronnie, was traveling east on M-21 on his way to Elsie. In front of him was a car driven by Frederick Wadsworth. Coming from the other direction was a tractor driven by Jack Miller hauling a corn picker and a trailer loaded with corn. As Frederick Wadsworth was passing the tractor, the trailer

Clinton County Trails Volume 32- Issue 3

broke loose and hit Wadsworth's car which in turn hit Robbe's. He was killed instantly while everyone else involved escaped serious injury. His widow sued the Miller family for \$251,646 for the wrongful death of her husband. On July 27, 1957, after a four day trial and over five hours of deliberation, the jury found "no cause for action" against the Miller family.

Mrs. Robbe continued to operate the Northside Drive-In after her husband's death. She expanded the theater in 1956 by adding an additional 300 speakers, enlarged the screen, and made other improvements. During the 1950's and 1960's it successfully attracted large crowds of families on weekends from March until October.

In 1967 Mrs. Robbe sold the theater and the 40 acres it sat on to Mark and Orlando Spagnuolo and R. G. and R. D. Ashmun. They planned a major expansion of the theater that would have added a second screen. The million dollar project never happened.

As the 1970's dawned, the heyday of the drive-in theater was ending. Daylight Saving time began in Michigan in 1973. While it gave people an extra hour of daylight in the evening for golfing and outdoor activities, it meant movies that had started no later than 9 pm now were starting as late as 10 pm. This made it difficult to continue to attract families. On top of that, the VCR arrived making it easy for a family to stay at home and watch movies in their family room.

In order to compete, the Northside began special promotions to attract teens and young adults. On May 18, 1974, a rock concert was held from noon to midnight on a stage constructed in front of the screen. The concert, promoted by Kosmic Kowboy Productions and featuring at that time a little known band called RUSH, was expecting an attendance of 6,000 or more. This caused panic among local residents who feared a "mini-Woodstock" with traffic tie-ups, drugs, public nudity, and vandalized property. The reality was less than 3,000 showed up on a damp, cool day. However, drugs and alcohol were abundant, and four concert goers needed to be taken away by ambulance for drug overdoses.

In the early morning of Monday, September 4, 1978, after an all-night series of Sunday night movies, an electrical fire broke out and burned the center of the screen. The screen was quickly rebuilt and the theater put back in business.

Another ill-fated venture was Wednesday Buck Night, a promotional tie-in with radio station WVIC in 1980. The event attracted over 1,000 young people. DeWitt Township police chief Aranow reported, "I went in at about 11:30 p.m. and there were close to 1,000 young people in there. Most of them were pretty heavily intoxicated. They ranged in age from 12 to the early 20s." (LSJ 7 Aug 1980 p 13) As the evening wore on the crowd became rowdy and a brawl broke out. One man was taken to the hospital after being hit on the head with a tire iron.

In 1984 the theater added two more screens, but it continued to go downhill. Yearly attendance was about 30,000; far less than the 100,000 during the 1960's.

By 1987 Curt Peterson, president of Northside Drive-In Theater, Inc., the owner of the theater at the time, was quoted in the *Lansing State Journal* as saying, "You just can't make it anymore; it's a fruitless attempt to keep...open." (LSJ 30Aug1987 p 68)

The theater ceased operation on August 18, 1988. Nothing remains of the theater on Old US-27 except memories.

[Photos: Jack Miller and the DeWitt District Library]

First Professional Football Game was played in Clinton County Michigan!!



Did you know that the first ever professional football game was (arguably) played in Clinton County on July 4, 1895 at the corner of M-21 and Shepardsville Road!! Each player received \$3.00 for the game after the hat was passed.

In 1976 the Clinton County Historical Society placed a wooden memorial sign at this location and in 1996 a permanent brick memorial was erected by local caring citizens with the CCHS cooperation. Recently a couple of family members requested that the time capsule that had been inserted into the memorial be opened to survey the unknown contents that family members had placed in there.

July 4, 2017 in Shepardsville, during their annual celebration, the "time capsule" was opened and the contents retrieved. The contents were placed on display for the approximately 200 people attending the event.

CCHS board members, Lynne Gregory, Ron Matson, Rowlan Smith & Myrna VanEpps & families, attended this year's celebration of the capsule opening. At the request of the CCHS, copies of all the old and new contents of the capsule are being made and will be available at the CCHS Archives in DeWitt Township for anyone interested. The capsule will be then reinserted into the monument.



Michigan Rusher's Monument The "Time Capsule" is at their feet Ron Matson, Myrna VanEpps, Betty Minsky, Lynne Gregory & Rowlan Smith July 4, 2017

Clinton County Trails Volume 32- Issue 3

Attention Mystery Lovers!!!

Who was the wife of Joseph Cooper of Fowler?

In researching Joseph Cooper of Fowler I have come upon various information regarding the dates and spelling of Joseph Cooper's wife's name as documented following:

1880 - Clinton County Marriage record: Joseph Cooper to Filipen Poole

1935 - Death Record: Philomipene Cooper Michigan Death Record: Philonpine Poole Cooper

Obituary states: Josephine Cook Tombstone states: Philomene Cooper

1880 Census: Josephene Pool

1900 & 1910 Census: Minnie Cooper 1920 & 1930 Census: Phillapine Cooper

Property Deed: Philipene Cooper

Probate Record: Phillipine aka Philipine aka Philomipine Cooper

Children records:

George – Birth record: 1881 only father listed

Death record: 1950 Josephine Afaulter

Marriage record: to Cora Parks his mother is listed as Phenes Affle.

Edward – Birth record: 1885; not listed

Death record: 1960 lists mother Josephine Poole

Lloid E. - Birth record: 1888; Mother listed Penie Cooper Bertha Josephine- Birth record: 1889; mother listed Josephine Paul

Marriage record: to Frederick Hunt; not listed Death record: 26 Jan 1972 in Jackson; not listed

Henry Joseph - Birth record: 1891; mother listed as Mina Cooper

Marriage record: to Blanche Brown; mother listed as Phine Glover

Death record: mother listed as Phine Afler

Mary - Birth record: 1893; mother listed as Phillipins Cooper

Marriage record: to Floyd parks; mother unknown

Ida - Birth record: 1897; mother listed as Pena Cooper

Death record: 1901; mother listed as Philippin Poole

Theodore Louis - Birth record: 1901; mother not listed

Death record: 1967; mother listed as Philippin Poole

William Joseph (Weaver/Wieber) raised as William Joseph Cooper – various records list mother as

Peana/Feana Poole; Philomene Pool/Pohl/Paul; Elizabeth Phool; Plana Cooper

So exactly when was she born in Germany? Records vary from 1854 to 1860. Each census has different age and birthdates for her and different immigration years, from 1860-62.

Also, does anyone know anything about Floid E. Cooper born 1888 in Lebanon Township? I can't find anything on him after his birth. Wonder where is he buried and where he died? If anyone has any information to help solve this mystery----please contact Lynne Gregory, 711 S. Oakland Street, St. Johns, MI 48879

Story of Rochester Colony

P. E. Walsworth Discovered Original Record Book in His office Bought Land in Duplain

Jos. Seaver, Edward R. Everest, Wm. G. Russell Were First Agents Who Transacted Business for Colony.

P.E. Walsworth, in going through the archives of the office of Walsworth & Son a short time ago ran on to the original record of Rochester Colony, together with the treasurer's report. The book is dated 1836. The company was formed in Rochester, NY, to buy a tract of land in some of the western states and shares fixed at \$125 each. Shareholders would not take less than one share or if more was taken it must be in even shares, but two persons were allowed to buy one share is common. The articles were signed on the 29th day of February, 1836, which must have been leap year. Edward R. Everest subscribed for four shares. Joseph Seaver two shares and Oliver Beebe two shares on the record book.

On the above date there was a full meeting of the following persons present: Edward R. Everest, Wm. G. Russell, Joseph Seaver, Wm. P. Stanton, Jacob Martin, Oliver Beebe, Benj. Carpenter, Joseph Atwood, Calvin Brainard, Wm. Chanworth, Sam J. Barkins, M. T. Croade, Francis Fulton, Samuel Graves, John Jerdan, Benjamin Carpenter, Electrus Boarman, Edwin W. Collins, Samuel Brass, Henry Wilson, Rufus Collyer, Jr, Martha Osborne, Van Remsler Cook, P. A. Fors. Rowley & Wilson and Eleazer Rowley.

At this meeting the minutes, seven meetings were approved and the articles of association approve and an adjournment taken to April 2, 1836 at 7 p.m. at the new brick store on State Street, in Rochester. At the April meeting Russell Seaver and Everest were appointed agents and Russell and Seaver were directed to proceed immediately on their tour of discovery.

They started west on April 12th and a copy of a certificate from the land office at Kalamazoo dated May 17, 1836 shows that they purchased for \$3,326.25 the following lands in the township S north of range 1 west, now Duplain, all of sections 29, 31 & 32 and southwest section of 30; west half of section 28 & 33; being 2,661 acres at \$1.35 per acre. This was on certificate No. 18425. They also bought on certificate 16,422 the east half of sections 28 & 33 and the north half of sections 5 & 7, 1,342 acres at \$1.35 per acre

This land was divided into farms and lots and at a meeting at the Eagle Tavern at Rochester, June 29, 1836 there was a drawing to divide the property. The record gives a list of the ownership of the various farms and lots. The question of a dam mgr water power on section 29 was taken up and the height and location of the depth determined.

About the time there was an entry "Rochester Colony, Michigan"; W. H. Saxon, Jr. to one pound tea, \$2; five pounds sugar, \$1.25; this was signed William C. Bennett.

On the 23rd day of January, 1837, there was advertised in two Rochester, NY daily papers a "Valuable Auction Sale", to take place at the Agle Tavern, of all the indisposed of property, consisting of mill privileges, two farms and four lots, and timer on the public square and cemetery and streets in "Mapletown, Clinton County, Michigan" Rachael Beach, Benj. Fish, Samuel Brass, Jacob Martin, Wm. P. Stanton and Edward R. Everest were the purchasers. John Disbour's name also appears as a purchaser.

The records are very complete, nicely written and in a good state of preservation. The treasurer's account is in the back part of the book and shows many transactions. James H. Ramsom's name appears in this account. The record is a very interesting one and will probably be turned over to the register of deeds or the state historical and pioneer society by Mr. Walsworth. (CR 1915)



Recent Acquisitions

The Archives Update...

In June, July, and August we had 37 visitors with the furthest distance being from Durham, North Carolina. Most of June consisted of preparing for the CCHS Potluck on June 22. We had almost 50 people that attended and it was a nice evening for all. Rowlan Smith received the 2017 Volunteer of the Year award and it was greatly deserved. Myrna VanEpps talked about the Early Settler certificates and I told everyone about the new Oral Histories webpage. We have interviews that were conducted in the 1970's. You can hear about the Interurban Story, the local Stagecoach, a murder and hanging story told by Evan Estes, and many other interviews.

[www.dewittlibrary.org/CCHS/audiofiles.html] Please check it out.

Respectfully submitted, Julie Peters, Director, CCHS Archives

- **Oberlay** History & Heritage; 2017; 3 ring binder; 692 pp

MAPS:

- ca 2003 Clinton County Plat Map; Farm & Home Publishers; 3' 11" x 4' 6"; laminated

PHOTOS:

- Mary **(TEMPLE) BLISS**; b/w 2½ x ½"
- Oneta **CRAWFORD**; b/w; 31/4 x 51/2"
- Louise **HILL**, Oneta **CRAWFORD**; b/w; 2¼ x 3¼"
- Oneta & Jessie **CRAWFORD**: b/w; 2½ x 3½" oval
- Jessie & Adah **TEMPLE** (sisters); b/w; 1½ x 2¼"
- Jesse Peter **CRAWFORD**; b/w; 31/4 x 5"
- Jesse **CRAWFORD** (standing rt. end), **Jessie (TEMPLE) CRAWFORD** (sitting 3rd from left); b/w; 4½x 2½"
- Jesse **CRAWFORD** (standing 2nd from left); Jessie **(TEMPLE) CRAWFORD** w/ Oneta; b/w; 5½ x 3 ½"
- Jesse **CRAWFORD** (standing right end); Jessie **CRAWFORD** (sitting 3rd from left); b/w; 51/4 x 3 1/2"
- Jesse & Jessie CRAWFORD (50th Anniv.); b/w; 3 x 3 3/4"
- Willard, Carol, Oneta BARTHEL (standing), Jesse & Jessie CRAWFORD (sitting); b/w; 3 x 3³/₄"
- 1924 Wacousta Graduating Class, Esther Ruth **BLOOM** (lower left); b/w; 7 x 51/4"
- Wacousta School (early 1920's); b/w; 5½ x 4"
- Altie (Pearce) BRINK; 3 x 4"; b/w
- Josephine (Pearce) TUCKER; 5¼ x 7¼"; b/w
- Ethel Gertrude (Smith) MARZKE; 31/2 x 51/2"; b/w
- **SMITH**, Merville David, Caroline Gertrude (**STUDLEY**), Ethel Gertrude, Claude Edmund; 7 x 5"; b/w
- Letha (Lynch) WATSON; 4" x 5"; b/w
- Virginia **WATSON**; 6" x 9"; b/w
- Virginia **WATSON** (dau of Seymour & Jennie Watson); 4" x 6"; b/w

- Jennie (**Parker**) **WATSON**; 4" x 6"; b/w (2 copies)
- Jennie (Parker) WATSON, George PARKER, Fannie (Pheris) PARKER, May WATSON, 7" x 5"; b/w
- Roy & Eloise **STRONG**, 41/2" x 3", b/w
- Iva (**Bond**) **GROFF**, 5" x 8", b/w, brown folder
- Nettie (Taylor) BUCK, 5 1/4x 7 1/4"; b/w
- Lorena KIMBALL; 5" x 7", b/w
- Merle Blanche **MAHAR** (?), 2 1/2" x 3", b/w
- Mertie M. **BOND**, 4 1/4" x 6", b/w (she married Fred **FLEAGLE**)
- Mertie M. **BOND**, 6" x 9", b/w
- Anna Mae (**REED**) **JOSLYN**, 3" x 4 3/4", b/w
- Goldie Fern (Palmer) BROOKS; 5" x 7", b/w
- George Hunt BROOKS; 5" x 7", b/w
- Orin **SMITH**, 3 ½" x 7", b/w
- Alice CREASER, (wife of Mark); 6" x 9 ½"; b/w
- Marvin & Bernice CREASER, 31/4 x 23/4"; b/w
- Percy & Bernice CREASER, 4½ x 3 ½"; b/w
- Percy **CREASER**, 3 ¼" x 5 ¼"; b/w
- Bernice **CREASER**, 3" x 5 ½"; b/w
- Bernice **CREASER**, 3" x 3 3/4"; b/w
- Bernice (CREASER) LeCLEAR; 8 x 10; b/w
- Bernice (CREASER) LeCLEAR; 8 X 10; b/w

RESEARCH GUIDE:

- Zap The Grandma Gap, Connect With Your Family By Connecting Them To Their Family History; Janet Hovorka, Published by Family ChartMasters; 2013; 6" x 9", soft cover, 193 pp.
- Zap The Grandma Gap, Power Up Workbook, Janet Hovorka, Published by Family ChartMasters; 2013; 8½ " x 11"; soft cover, 103 pp.

SCHOOLS:

- Index Clinton County School Census 1902-1925; red 3 ring binder; 256 pp.

NAMES RESEARCHED:

Batchelder, Bixby, Bleise, Boughton, Carraseo, Chandler, Clark, Clement, Cooper, Cushman, Darling, Doolittle, Downer, Dunning, Eddy, Gage, Gilmore, Gunnison, Hengesbach, Hooker, Kooepfer, Losey, Morton, Oberlay, Oliver, Phillips, Russell, Scott, Shutes, Siegle, Smith, Snow, Stewart, Thompson, Thurston, Root, VanDeuson, Willard. Plat maps, county theaters, Bingham & Essex Twps., St. Johns history, Fairgrounds, Chandler Marsh and Clinton County Veterans were also researched.

BACK THROUGH THE YEARS

Hitch-hiking Is a Fine Art,..... Says Hendershot

Clyde Hendershot, local automobile dealer, mopped his forehead Saturday evening as he related an experience of the day to some friends. Saturday, as everyone in Clinton County knows, was one of the hottest and most oppressive days of the summer. "We've got a man," Clyde narrated, "who will hitchhike to Detroit and drives back a new car for me in half a day. He leaves early in the morning and gets back here soon after noon. This morning I thought I'd try it. I had one of the boys in the shop take me as far as Flint---got there soon after 7 o'clock this morning. By the jumped up --!.*!!*---I stood in the hot sun on US 10 for more than two hours and "thumbed" every lousy cross-eyed ----(!(:*)!! driver without any luck. Finally a loaded truck came along. The driver took me in. His engine was running hot and I nearly baked in that cab. I got into Detroit just at noon. No more hitch-hiking for me. That's one trade that I never learned." (CCRN 27 Jul 1933, p1c3)

JOKS IN JEST (CCRN 27 Jul 1933)

U.S. Investigates Rise in Bread Prices – Headline. Why investigate/ It's known that the bankers knead the dough.

It was once a common belief that the moon affected the minds of human beings--Newspaper items. Judging by all the marriage proposals that take place in the moonlight, there must be some truth in it.

CCRN 27 Jul 1933, p.4, c.5&6

20 years Ago (1913)

The Clinton County Fair Association is erecting a new cement block building for agricultural exhibits and making other improvement at the fair gounds.

James E. Brown, interurban car motorman, is suing the city of St. Johns for \$6000 as the result of a broken leg suffered while hunting for a rat at the corner of Clinton Avenue and Walker Street. A pile of galvanized roofing fell over and struck his leg.

The barn and several out buildings on the E. L. Parker farm, four miles southeast of Ovid, burned during the severe electrical storm Sunday.

Ovid is to have a new cash grocery, tea and coffee store. It will be operated by E. J. Pierce who has been so successful with similar stores in Lansing, DeWitt and St. Johns.

40 Years Ago (1893)

The first load of new wheat this season was brought in July 25 by Sears Gardner. He got 27 bushels to the acre and sold it to J. S. Osgood for 61 cents per bushel.

Maxwell's axe fell on the necks of two good Republican postmasters in this county last week. N. W. Brass was appointed at Duplain in place of B. E. Teeter, and E. J. Rininger replaced Daniel Turner at Eureka.

The bicycle club was organized at Cooper & Vincent's store Monday evening, with the following officers; President, Frank Hyatt; vice-president, T. G. Reynolds; secretary, George Vincent; treasurer, Charles Casey; captain, Harry Bradner; 1st lieutenant, George Cooper; 2nd lieutenant, Clarence Sumner.

Newspaper items that make you say

- -The delivery wagon of Nelson Brothers was telescoped at the crossing of State Street and Clinton Avenue, on Tuesday, caused by the separation of the circle.
- The St. Johns Dramatic Club will soon reproduce "Ten nights in a Bar-room," at the Newton Hall, for the benefit of the Temperance Reform Club(CI)

Notice: The Archives no longer has the "Postcard Book" for sale and the publication, "One Room Schools" is currently out, but a new updated version will be issued later in the year.

The **Archives of the Clinton County Historical Society** is located at 16101 Brook Road in Dewitt Township Community Center. Volunteers are there to give research assistance from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Mondays and Tuesdays and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday. Phone: 517-482-5117 Ext. 2. E-mail: ccgensoc@yahoo.com Web page: dewittlibrary.org/CCHS. CCHS members have free usage of the Archives, non-member cost: \$5.00 fee per day.

The **Historical Society** meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at 1:00 pm Nov. through March and at 7:00 p.m. Apr. through Oct. at the First United Methodist Church on State Street, at the northeast corner of the courthouse square in St. Johns, with entry through the south backdoors. Regular meetings are not held in June & December.

The **Paine-Gillam-Scott Museum** complex is located on the west side of the courthouse square in St. Johns. **www.pgsmuseum.com**. To join the Friends of the Museum, contact them at: **pgsmuseum@hotmail.com**; or PGS Museum, P.O. Box 174, St. Johns, MI 48879

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Mr./Mrs./Miss		List 5 Names you are Researching:	
Address:			
City:	State: Zip		
Phone:	New Renewal	Do we have permission to share your	information with other
E-Mail Address:		researchers: (please cir	cle Yes or No on each):
Date:		Name & Address: Yes No	E-Mail: Yes No
	Send me Clinton County To	rails by e-mail YesNo	

Annual Dues to join both the Clinton County Historical Society and the Genealogy Committee are \$15.00 single and \$20.00 a couple/family. Membership is based on the calendar year and includes a subscription to the quarterly newsletter, *Clinton County Trails*. Checks should be made payable to the Clinton County Historical Society and mailed to **P.O. Box 174**, St. Johns, MI 48879.

DEED OF CHANDLER MARSH

Was recorded in Register of Deed's Office Wednesday Morning - A Tract of Over 3,000 acres.

The deed for the Chandler Marsh which comprises about 3,040 acres, lying in Bath and DeWitt Townships, was receive and recorded in the register of deed's office, Wednesday morning at 11 o'clock. The property was transferred from Mrs. Mary C. Hale of Ellsworth, ME, daughter of late Zachariah Chandler to John T. Remey and James W. Brooks of Burlington, IA. Revenue stamps to the amount of \$47 were attached to the deed. The consideration was not given on the deed but it is thought that it sold for about \$15 an acre. Work has already been begun on a large drain and system of lateral drains to recover this vast acreage, now almost a waste.

If this results successful, the value of the land will be tripled. (CR 30 Dec 1915)

CLINTON COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
F.O. BOX 174
ST. JOHNS, MICHIGAN 48879