

THE LEDGER

EATON COUNTY'S MUSEUM AT COURTHOUSE SQUARE
&
THE EATON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Santa at Courthouse Square

It was recently learned that the Santa at the Courthouse was acquired in May 1971 from Bronners in Frankenmuth. It was sold to the City of Charlotte for \$1515.25 [a 5% discount]. A set of elves only cost \$295 at that time. The Santa is 17 feet tall and made out of fiberglass. Three years ago, Bronners actually borrowed the Charlotte Santa to recreate a mold that was destroyed in a fire.



A Recent Donation

A cane once owned by former Charlotte mayor Charles Martin was recently donated to Courthouse Square by Gene and Bea Burns, the retiring owners of Paul's Gun Shop. Charles Martin was born around 1847 and served as Charlotte mayor during 1899.



Charlotte's Christmas Kiddies Gift Drive: Its History and Present Operation

Thank you Jonny Fullerton for providing info for this article.

Christmas Kiddies originated in 1906 with gifts consisting of dolls, toys, winter mittens and treats. Fire Department personnel delivered these items after local business merchants raised the funds in order to purchase the items. From 1906 to 1915, deliveries were made by horse drawn fire wagons and since 1915 by fire trucks. All Santas have been firefighters. In 1980 the fire department completely took over the program and the responsibility of raising funds. In recent years, the Charlotte Fire Department has delivered packages to over 500 kids between 150 stops.

Its Present Operation

Around the first of November the fire department begins the process of getting canister and toy bins around so that they can be at local businesses ready to receive donations the day after Thanksgiving. Names are taken for those in need the day after Thanksgiving up through Christmas Eve. The department has six routes broken down which consist of four in the city and two in the rural areas. Each city route has two ward chairmen and each rural route has one ward chairman. Every stop on each route is visited by a ward chairman to ensure that the residents are in need and to verify that the children will be home on Christmas Eve to accept the gifts.

The Fire Department takes donations throughout the year but mostly receives toy donations during the month of December. By mid December, the department will have a pretty good idea of the number of kids they'll be serving. They will then go pur-

chase enough toys to provide for each child. The firefighters and numerous community members wrap all of the toys the Saturday before Christmas.

The days leading up to Christmas Eve involves the firefighters making final checks on houses, kids, and stops, They also begin to assemble the boxes used to deliver the toys. The day before Christmas Eve, all routes are double checked so that no one has been missed. Firefighters and their families assemble at the downtown fire station and begin the task of packing each box according to the number of kids, ages of kids and gender of kids at each stop. The boxes are numbered according to the stop number for each route so the correct packages are delivered to the correct locations.

On Christmas Eve, the firefighters and their families gather around 5:00 p.m. to begin the process of delivering the toys. The Chief advises the Santas on which routes they will be working and the Santas change into their outfits. While the Santas are dressing, the other firefighters load the boxes on the trucks for delivery. The two rural routes leave at the same time as two of the four city routes. Once the city routes are completed, the boxes for the remaining two city routes are loaded and they head out for deliveries. The rural routes have one Santa each and the city routes have two Santas each. The four city route Santas go out for deliveries twice on Christmas Eve. The trucks normally return to the station by 9:30 p.m. with all the toys delivered.

The story of a 1920s Road Trip

By David Martin

My father, Arlin Martin, was born on, and grew up on, a farm, which is now a Centennial Farm, near Charlotte. He graduated from Charlotte High School in 1922.

In the autumn of 1923, my father and a cousin, Joe Halbeisen, both about 18 years old, bought a 1915 Dodge touring car for \$25.00 and converted it into a RV by constructing a wooden frame covered with canvas over the car, as shown in the photographs. Arlin and Joe made a cabinet for cooking utensils and folding beds. They painted an outline of the U.S. (and state outlines) on the side of the RV in order to trace their itinerary while traveling.

In May of the next year they left Charlotte and set out for California intending to work along the way. Arlin and Joe traveled with two shotguns and a rifle. They did purchase food during their trip but also shot small game animals and birds. In Yellowstone National Park they sawed fire wood for the main lodge and were paid \$2.00 and given breakfast and lunch for a cord of wood. Arlin and Joe continued traveling west through Wyoming, Utah and Oregon and then south through San Francisco, Santa Barbara and into Los Angeles for a few days. Along the way they earned money by, among other jobs, picking prunes for a packing company.

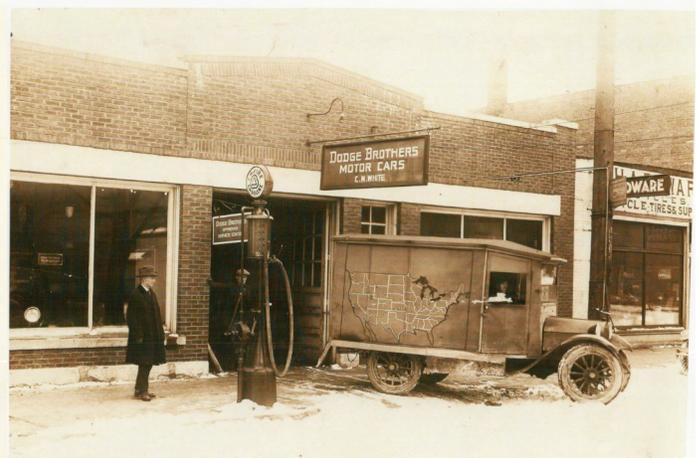
On the return trip a leaf spring (a spring which cushions the ride) broke, which required a blacksmith to make a new one. In most places gasoline was fifteen cents a gallon.

Sincerely,

David Martin



1915 DODGE ARLIN & JOE 1924



EATON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

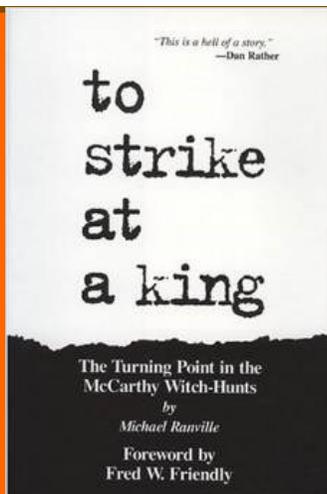
Eaton County Historical Commission Congratulates 2014 Heritage Award Winners

At the Annual Eaton County Historical Commission's Heritage Conference on September 20th, Sharlene Thuma, Keith Harrison, and Phyllis Whidden were given the organization's heritage award. All have contributed greatly in the preservation of the unique heritage of Eaton County.

Since the Autumn of 1995, Sharlene Thuma has served as the librarian for the Eaton County Genealogical Society. As librarian, she has cataloged nearly every item in the society's library and maintained the computer database of their many holdings. Over the past nineteen years, she has used much of her time to help people searching for their Eaton County ancestors.

Keith Harrison serves as president and has been the driving force behind the GAR Memorial Hall and Museum in Eaton Rapids. Keith has worked tirelessly in all aspects of establishing the museum from helping with painting work to documenting each and every item that has been brought into the museum.

Phyllis Whidden has been a member of the Eaton County Genealogical Society since 2006. Travelling to cemeteries across Eaton County, she cleaned and recorded information from thousands of tombstones. In addition, Phyllis has spent countless hours volunteering to help with the Genealogical Society's various projects.



Lecture by Mike Ranville

Author of *To Strike at a King: The Turning Point in the McCarthy Witch-Hunt*

February 19th, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

Free Admission

Contacts:

Courthouse Square (517) 543-6999

1885 Eaton Courthouse Complex Tenant Spotlight

Support from our great tenants directly maintains and cares for the historic buildings.

Eaton County United Way



The Eaton County United Way raises, invests and leverages money from philanthropic contributions to create and support innovative programs and approaches to generate sustained impact in communities across Eaton County.

Joni Risner
Contact Info:
(517) 543-5402

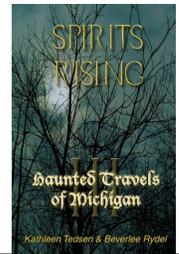
Happy Birthday Charlotte Community Library

This past November, the Charlotte Community Library celebrated its 120th anniversary. The library found its first permanent home when it moved into the old Carnegie Library building in 1903. The library has been in its current building on South Bostwick Street since 1994.



Recent Publication with an Eaton County Focus

Haunted Travels of Michigan Volume 3: Spirits Rising by Kathleen Tedsen and Beverlee Rydel discusses historical information about reportedly haunted sites. The 1885 Eaton County Courthouse and Sheriff's Residence are the focus of one of its chapters. Signed copies of the book will be available at the museum starting in January.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- ◆ February 19: 6:30 p.m. - Lecture by Mike Ranville about his book *To Strike at a King: The Turning Point in the McCarthy Witch-Hunt*.
- ◆ Early April The One Room Schoolhouses of Eaton County temporary exhibit will be opening at the museum.
- ◆ June 18-21: Celebrate Charlotte Festival. Events at the Courthouse will occur Friday and Saturday.

"One Room Schoolhouse of Eaton County" a book produced by the Eaton County Historical Commission in conjunction with the Eaton County Genealogical Society will be available this Spring. Please call 543-6999 to reserve your copy today. (volume expected to be 300 pages with an approximate price of \$25)

2015 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Levels of Annual Giving

Individuals		Businesses	
Docent	\$25-99	Scholar (1)	\$250-499
Archivist	\$100-499	Historian (2)	\$500-999
Curator	\$500-999	Conservator I (3)	\$1,000-2,499
Director	\$1,000+	Conservator II (4)	\$2,500+

(Number in parentheses indicates quantity of 1/4 page ads in The Ledger)

I would like to ensure the future of Courthouse Square by becoming a member of Courthouse Square Association at the _____ level of giving. I agree to make a contribution of \$ _____ and in return I will receive all the benefits of membership at that level.

Check here for an additional \$5 donation to the children's summer camp scholarship fund ____

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone () _____

Sign _____ Date _____

____ I would like to receive The Ledger, invitations to events and exhibits, membership reminders, and other notifications via e-mail.

*Make Checks Payable and Mail to:
Courthouse Square Association, Inc.
PO Box 411, Charlotte, MI 48813*

Sign up for E-mail Correspondence

Would you like to receive this newsletter electronically? How about invitations to exhibits and events? Or a reminder that your membership is due? Help us conserve the environment by saving paper! Send your e-mail address to us at csamuseum@yahoo.com to begin! Don't worry, we won't share your contact information with any outside parties.



Charlotte Lions Club

215 S. Cochran Street
Charlotte, MI 48813

Phone: 517-543-4240

Email: Charlottelionsclub@gmail.com

Lions meet the needs of local communities and the world every day because they share a core belief – to serve their community.

Fulton Lumber Company

316 N. Washington
Charlotte, MI 48813
(517) 543-0200

*"We are pleased and proud
to be members of
Courthouse Square Association"*



Daily Delivery to:
Charlotte
Olivet
Bellevue
Vermontville
Potterville
Sunfield
Mulliken
Eaton Rapids RR#6

241 S. Cochran Ave., Suite #1
Charlotte, MI 48813
Phone: 517-543-1099
Fax: 517-543-1993

Charles L. Green

Director/Owner/Manager

Burkhead-Green Funeral Home

Your friends across the Square

206 W. Lawrence Ave.
Charlotte, MI 48813-1498

Phone: (517) 543-3160



Kiwanis of Charlotte

Proudly Serving Our Community

430 S. Cochran Avenue
Charlotte, MI 48813
Phone: 517-543-6794
www.kiwanischarlotte.org

*Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers
dedicated to improving the world ONE child
and ONE community at a time*



**Eaton County's Museum at
Courthouse Square**
100 W. Lawrence Avenue
PO Box 411
Charlotte, MI 48813

WWW.CSAMUSEUM.NET

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Courthouse Square Association is open Monday–Thursday from 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Other times can be arranged for special events and by appointment. The museum is handicap accessible.

Museum admission:

- \$1/person
- Children age 12 and under free
- CSA members free
- Group and family rates available

We would be happy to make special arrangements with sufficient notice. Please call the museum office at (517) 543-6999 for special assistance or for more information. You can always email us at csamuseum@yahoo.com, too.

The Eaton County Genealogical Society is also located in the 1885 Courthouse and is open Tuesday–Thursday from 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Call ECGS at (517) 543-8792 for more information.

Other organizations/businesses located in the 1885 Courthouse include Alpha Video & Computer Services and Ann Prater: Attorney & Counselor at Law. The Charlotte Chamber of Commerce is located in the 1873 Sheriff's Residence, adjacent to the courthouse, along with Potterville Applied Technology.

Remember to bring your family and friends to your favorite museum!

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Photo by Bob Monschein

*Keeping History Alive
on The Square!*