



CURRENT USE & FUTURE PLANS

Since the Clare Union Railroad Depot opened to the public in October 2018, it has served as home to the Clare County Arts Council, the Railroad Artifact Museum and the Clare Area Chamber of Commerce. The building is also used as a public meeting space and serves as a gallery to show, market and purchase artwork by regional artists.

Future use for the Depot includes the site being used as the new trailhead on the Clare section of the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail as well as offering an outdoor restroom facility and green space available for visitors to enjoy.

WELCOME TO THE CLARE UNION RAILROAD DEPOT



201 W. FOURTH ST.
CLARE, MI 48617



OPEN DURING CHAMBER HOURS
&
CLOSED ON HOLIDAYS

SERVICES AVAILABLE



CLARE COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL

Website: www.clarecountyartscouncil.info
Email: clarecountyartscouncil@hotmail.com




RAILROAD ARTIFACT MUSEUM


Self-guided exploration of the Depot museum artifacts and memorabilia spanning over 120 years.



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CLARE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Website: www.claremichigan.com
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DEPOT HISTORY



Around the time that Clare became a City (1871), the Flint & Pere Marquette Railroad (F&PM) came to serve the waning lumber industry. The F&PM Depot was constructed in 1871 on the southwest corner of where the line crossed McEwan, near the current location of Johnston Elevator.



In the 1880's, the Toledo & Ann Arbor Railroad chose Clare for their continued expansion into Northern Michigan. In 1887, the two lines opened up a joint Depot at the intersection of the two railroads, about 900 feet west of our current location. This Depot was named the "Union Depot" and served Clare until January 1895 when a kitchen fire destroyed the structure and almost all of its contents.



By December 1895, a new "Union Depot" was built using the same design and in the same location as the previous one. It was completed and in full use by the beginning of 1896. The two lines shared the building cost of \$7,000 (in modern days it would cost closer to \$222,000 to construct).



The building was built in the popular (in those times) Queen Anne's style, but in a unique boomerang shape to serve the two railroads. With the building's "witch's hat" cupola, the structure is the only depot left of such design in all of North America.

The second "Union Depot", which is the one that stands today, consisted of nine separate rooms on one floor, as well as the cupola space. Bill Adam's Shop served the hungry and thirsty in a separate nearby building. There are no known photos of the interior of either building while they were in use from 1896 on.

In 1898, the Depot was joined by an interlocking tower built by the Ann Arbor line across the "diamond." That tower stood until 1955.

Early timetables and ads show that no less than sixteen passenger trains and as many as eight freight trains served the Depot daily in the early part of the 20th century. At least a dozen separate railroad tracks led in and out of the Depot in all directions. It is also said that every man from Clare County who served in the Spanish American War, World War I and World War II left and came home through the doors of the Depot.

By the 1930's with the advent of cars, buses, and better highways, passenger service on both lines quickly declined. Soon, only one train a day from each railroad came to Clare, with the Pere Marquette (by then C&O) ceasing its passenger service in late 1949. The Ann Arbor ran its last passenger train to Clare in July 1950.

C&O freight service continued well into the 1980's, but was discontinued and the tracks abandoned. The Ann Arbor Line went through numerous name and ownership changes, and eventually stopped using the Depot altogether in the early 2000's.

The City of Clare purchased the aged building from the Tuscola Saginaw Bay Railway in 2005 and moved it (due to access and safety issues) to its current location in 2014. After several years of rehabilitation using contributions from local citizens, businesses, and organizations, the Depot reopened to the public on October 12, 2018.

FOR MORE HISTORIC
INFORMATION VISIT:
CLARECOUNTYHISTORY.ORG