

THE LEDGER

Eaton County's Museum at Courthouse Square & The Eaton County Historical Commission

Courthouse Roof Is Back To Its Original Design!



The winter 2018 issue of the Ledger, highlighted the Legacy of Gaylord Edgerly, and his many contributions to Courthouse Square over his life-time. What we didn't know at that time was another gift he and his family generously gifted to Courthouse Square allowing them to realize their long time dream of a new metal roof for the aging historic beauty. With the coordination of Julie Kimmer and many others, Gaylord's dream of a new roof for the 1885 Courthouse was finally realized.

Big Thank you from Julie Kimmer.....

I just want to extend a big thank you to the following people who helped with this huge undertaking:

Neal Mast and Sons for taking the risk to do this extremely complicated, frustrating and difficult restoration of not only installing the roof, but actually building it under the tower/dome to original specifications.

Emanuel Herschberger from Central Michigan Roofing for custom fabrication of each metal piece so there is not a single seam on the building.

John Hulinek for the LED roof lights that illuminate the roof & tower so beautifully.

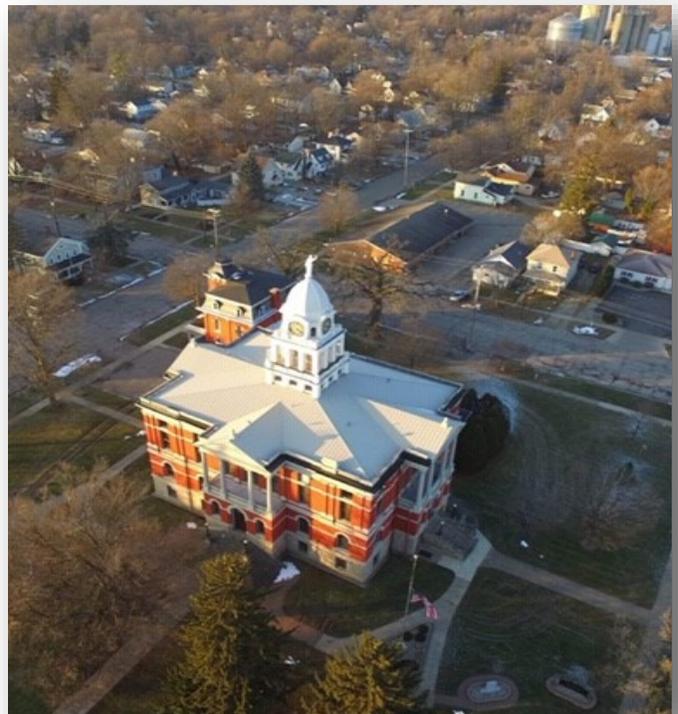
Joe Hubbard from Kane Heating and cooling who reconstructed the metal ornamentation that was missing.

Vincent Brady & Chris Sloan of the CFD for their beautiful photos so we can all enjoy their work.

You all rock!



Photo By Vincent Brady Photography



Drone photo provided by CFD

CHARLOTTE WORLD WAR II HERO



2nd LT. Robert Cooper front row 1st person from left



scheduled for the last week in February. The U.S. bombers were going all out to knock out German facilities and lure the Luftwaffe into a fight. The objective was to destroy Germany's ability to produce aircraft and to reduce the number of German fighters. The greater objective was to minimize German airpower over Europe in preparation for D-Day.

For the 457th Bombardment Group, February was spent in training for combat, with the air crews in ground school training and practice missions, including some diversionary flights out to the English coast. Ground crews also prepared for their roles in support. Finally, the Group was deemed ready, and alerted for their first mission on February 14, 1944. The mission, however, was scrubbed before takeoff. Combat missions to Germany were made on February 21st, 22nd and 24th, but Lt. Cooper's aircraft wasn't scheduled until February 25th, the last day of "Big Week".

On the morning of February 25th, Lt. Cooper's airplane was ready to go with Lt. James R. Chinn as pilot with eight additional crew members. They took off before noon from Glatton. The target was a production plant for the Me-210 jet plane located in Augsburg. The Germans were busy producing an aircraft unknown to aerial warfare at the time. The "Jet" would be faster and capable of producing more firepower than any other fighter plane currently in service. Somewhere near the French-German border around 12:30PM, flying at 22,000 feet, Lt. Cooper's B-17 received a direct hit by flack. Two engines were hit and one caught fire. The plane lost altitude, salvoed its bombs and tried to rejoin the formation while being attacked by enemy fighters. Before the airplane crashed near Mont St. Martin, three crew members bailed out. According to one of the survivors, Lt. Cooper was last seen between the co-pilot's seat and the forward escape hatch. Sadly, Lt. Cooper was unable to bail out. In all, seven crew members were killed.

February 25, 2019 will come and pass without much notice; however 75 years ago, February 25, 1944 was the last day of "Big Week" when American bombers carried out concentrated raids against German aircraft bases, factories and assembly plants. It was also the first bombing mission for 2nd Lt. Robert F. Cooper. Lt. Cooper was a young man from Charlotte, Michigan, who up until November 13, 1941 had worked at the local Kroger store on Cochran Avenue as a meat cutter. He was raised on a farm in rural Charlotte by his parents Glen and Hazel Cooper and graduated from Charlotte High School, Class of "37".

Robert Cooper was drafted as a recruit and trained initially at Ft. Custer, later he was sent to Camp Grant in Illinois. But apparently there was something special about Pvt. Cooper. He was selected for flight school and sent to Stockton, California, where he earned his wings and became a 2nd Lieutenant, United States Army Air Corps. After much more training, Lt. Cooper was designated as a co-pilot for a B-17 bomber. In January 1944, Lt. Cooper and his crew flew their B-17 to Glatton Airfield near the village of Conington, England and became part of the 8th Air Force. He was assigned to the 457th Bombardment Group and the 748th Squadron. The aircraft of the 457th Bomb Group left Grand Island, Nebraska on January 17th, 1944, and flew individually to the British Isles arriving at USAAF Station 130, Glatton, between January 21st and February 1st, 1944.

"Big Week" was a massive operation undertaken by the 8th Air Force (England) and the 15th Air Force (Italy)

2ND LIEUTENANT ROBERT F. COOPER

Of the three surviving members one evaded capture and two became POW's. On February 25th, both the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces hit numerous targets in Germany; however they paid a high price. The 8th lost 31 bombers and the 15th lost 33.

The telegram shown below is every parent's worst nightmare. In all, 336 men of the 457th Bomb Group were killed or missing in action during the war. In addition, there were others killed in non-combat service, and 99 who suffered combat injuries but survived, and a large number of men who suffered as Prisoners of War. Eventually, Lt. Cooper's remains were shipped back to the United States with funeral services held November 6, 1948. Lt. Cooper is buried at the West Carmel Cemetery, Eaton County, Michigan. Lt. Cooper was awarded the Bronze Medal for outstanding ability, the good conduct medal and posthumously the Purple Heart. Courthouse Square wishes to honor the memory of Lt. Cooper and the other men and women who served and the sacrifice they made to their country during World War II.



Lt. Robert Frederick Cooper

*Died in the service of his country
February 25, 1944*

SERVICES

*Burkhead Chapel
Charlotte, Michigan
Saturday, November 6, 1948
1:30 P. M.*

OFFICIATING

*Rev. Russell H. McConnell
Alice Chapman, Organist
Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 2406
American Legion Post No. 42*

INTERMENT

*West Carmel Cemetery
Eaton County, Michigan*

BEARERS

<i>Robert Sparks</i>	<i>Thomas Bust</i>
<i>Samuel Combs</i>	<i>Robert Bobier</i>
<i>Ion Randall</i>	<i>Duane Tuckey</i>

CLASS OF SERVICE	WESTERN UNION	SYMBOLS
This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its special character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.	1201 A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT	DL=Day Letter NL=Night Letter LC=Deferred Cable NLT=Cable Night Letter Ship Radiogram
The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.		
28GD K 47 GOVT		
WMU WASHINGTON DC 451P MAR 15 1944		
MRS HAZEL E COOPER		
RURAL FREE DELIVERY NO 2 BOX 107 CHARLOTTE		
THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEPEST REGRET		
THAT YOUR SON SECOND LIEUTENANT ROBERT F COOPER HAS BEEN REPORTED		
MISSING IN ACTION SINCE TWENTY FIVE FEBRUARY IN EUROPEAN AREA PERIOD		
IF FURTHER DETAILS OR OTHER INFORMATION ARE RECEIVED YOU WILL BE		
PROMPTLY NOTIFIED PERIOD.		
ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL		
544 PM		
THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING THE SERVICE.		

A special thanks is given to Carol A. Cooper and the Cooper Family for recognizing Lt. Cooper's military record by donating photographs, news clippings and other material to the Courthouse Square museum collection. Other sources for this article included: War Department records declassified 1973, Lansing State Journal, americanairmuseum.com, 457th-bombgroup.org, 8thafhs.org/bomber/457bg, wikipedia.org/wiki/BigWeek, and Battle Creek Enquirer.

HISTORIC COURTHOUSE COLLECTIONS

This page will feature some of the historical donations to Courthouse Square Museum

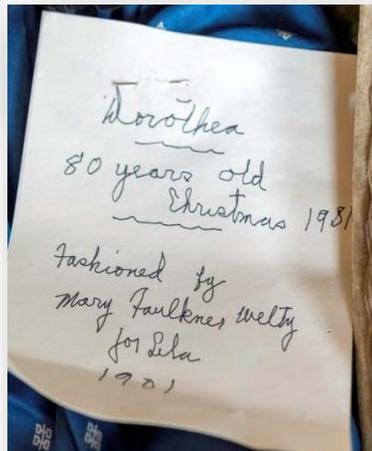
Lela Wilcox-Troutner Childhood Doll



The Doll came with this handwritten note (right)

"Dorothea,
80 years old,
Christmas 1981
Fashioned by
Mary Faulkner Weity,
for Lela
1981

Karrie Baker recently donated an early 1900's doll which she inherited from her grandmother (Dorothea). The interesting part of this story is that the doll was owned by Lela Wilcox Troutner and she gave it to Karrie's grandmother when they were children growing up together.



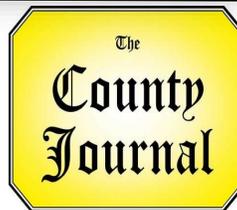
George Bush Slippers

Below is part of a donation from Darrell and Jacqueline Tennis which we thought would be fun to share. Rubber character image of George & Barbara Bush over the toe slippers. His head is laying on a small white pillow with a U.S. Flag design as the bed spread. Size large (tag inside over the heel). Presidential seal at the left side of George's head on the pillow with a brown felt sole.



By Sherry Copenhaver

*Thank you to our
Sponsors*



DAILY DELIVERY TO

241 S. Cochran Suite #1
Charlotte MI 48813

Phone: 517-543-1099
Fax: 517-543-1993

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- *Bellevue
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- *Potterville
- *Sunfield
- *Eaton Rapids

Charles L. Green
Burkhead-Green-Kilgo
Funeral Home

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across the Square*

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Phone (517) 543-3160

**Kiwanis of
Charlotte**



*Proudly Serving our
Community*

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Charlotte, MI 48813
517-543-6794

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

**FULTON LUMBER
COMPANY**



316 N. Washington
Charlotte, MI 48813

*"We are pleased and proud
to be members of the Court-
house Square Association"*



**CHARLOTTE
LIONS CLUB**

100 W. Lawrence, Suite B
Charlotte, MI 48813

517-543-4240 or email
Charlottelionsclub@gmail.com

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

EATON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

“Still on Track” : *Book on Railroads of Eaton County*

Update by Deb Malewski

Contact Julie Kimmer at Courthouse Square (517.543.6999 or csamuseum@yahoo.com) if you have something to share. Personal memories and artifacts are especially desired (not to keep, just to document or photograph).

The Historical Commission is a group appointed by the Eaton County Board of Commissioners. One of their main responsibilities is awarding grants to those working to preserve the history of Eaton County. These grants are provided through the fundraising efforts of the commission. An annual cemetery tour and the publication and sale of books are the main sources of revenue for the Commission. The most recent ECHC grant went to the Eaton County Genealogy group to help pay for the indexing of historical County documents, making them searchable and available to the public.

The Commission welcomes our new members Mike Cox of Charlotte & Sarah Jenkins of Dimondale, along with Eaton County Commission Jim Mott. We look forward to working with them all!



M.C. Station Eaton Rapids Michigan

The Eaton County Historical Commission is right on track with plans for a third book illustrating the history of Eaton County. With a book on the one room school houses in Eaton County, and another focusing on alcohol, saloons and brewing, the Commission opted to take a look at the railroads, the people who used them, the depots, crashes and, the huge impact trains had on the economics and way of life in mid-Michigan.

The Railroads were vital to the growth of Eaton County and the entire country. They brought goods and products, and took away farm produce and manufactured items, along with providing much needed transportation. They brought circuses and presidents! Michigan Central, Grand Trunk Western, and Lake Shore and Michigan Southern were some of the railroads that crossed the county. But Eaton County also had the Kent-Barry-Eaton Connecting Railway, which was the first African-American-operated railroad in the United States. It ran between Grand Rapids and Vermontville starting in 1979.

Research for book #3 is in the early stages and publication is expected to be at least a year in the future. As with previous publications the Commissioners are actively seeking input from the community for information, recollections, photos, and any documents pertaining to the of Eaton County over the years.



Lets us help you make your dream of a perfect wedding down memory lane come true!



Above is the restored Circuit Courtroom of the Historic 1885 Courthouse which is a perfect setting for a wedding! The Courtroom has a capacity for up to 180 guests as well as a dressing room for the bride. There are also other rooms available from one room to the entire building and grounds for your special event.

RENTAL PRICING

\$250 Historic 1885 Courthouse (Above)

\$100 Historic 1845 Courthouse (Below)



This Historic 1845 Courthouse offers a \$100 Wedding Special (weekend access.)

This location is in a beautiful setting located next to Bennett Park and has a capacity for up to 80 people.

Contact the CSA office today for reservations at:

Courthouse Square Association

100 W. Lawrence Ave. Charlotte, MI 48813 P.O. Box 411 Phone 517-543-6999



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

WWW.CSAMUSEUM.NET



Keeping History Alive on The Square!

Courthouse Square Association is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Other times can be arranged for special events and by appointment.

Museum Admission

\$1.00 pp
Children 12 and under free
CSA Members Free
Group & Family rates available!

We are happy to make special arrangements with sufficient notice. Please call the museum office at 517-543-6999 for more information. You can always email us at csamuseum@yahoo.com.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Eaton County Genealogical Society is also located in the 1885 Courthouse and is open Tuesday thru Thursday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Call ECGS at 517-543-8792 for more information.

Other businesses located in the 1885 Courthouse include:

- ◆ *Johnson's Framing*
- ◆ *Ann Prater Attorney & Counselor at Law*
- ◆ *Alpha Video & Computer Services*

Located inside the 1873 Sheriff's Resident adjacent to the Courthouse are:

- ◆ *PotterVilla Applied Technology*
- ◆ *Courtney Emerson, LMSW*

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

Printing of this publication provided by The County Journal