

# ST. CLAIR COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

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[www.stclaircountylibrary.org](http://www.stclaircountylibrary.org)

## St. Clair County Poor Farm / Infirmary / Medical Centre

Traditionally the story of the St. Clair County Poor Farm related the beginning of this institution in 1869 in Smiths Creek, St. Clair Township, and that it was established to aid Civil War veterans. It was widely believed that no records existed. However, in 2017, the St. Clair County Library System received a donation that included a ledger titled *Record of Inmates of St. Clair County Poor-House* covering the years 1857-1893. The name index in the front lists each resident's name, and refers to the page number that lists that person's intake information: township residency, date received, nationality, age, cause of indigence, marital status, and date of leaving or any notes. The first entry in the book revealed that the Poor Farm existed in some form in this county as early as 1857. This spurred further research which revealed that a poor farm existed in this county as early as 1842.

### Timeline

- 1842:** St. Clair County purchased land in China Township for a poor farm.
- 1847:** St. Clair County sold the China township property and purchased land in Section 9, St Clair Township.
- 1850:** County Poor listed on US Census in St. Clair Twp.
- 1859:** "County House" indicated on wall map of Macomb & St. Clair Counties.
- 1860:** County Poor House residents listed on US Census in St. Clair Twp.
- 1867:** Board of Supervisors sold this land to Andrew Palmer and paid a Keeper on the property to board the poor. They bought property in present-day Marysville but there is no evidence that it was ever used as a poor farm before being sold in 1871/1872.
- 1870:** County Poor House residents listed on US Census in St. Clair Twp
- 1871:** St. Clair County purchased the first parcel of land for the Wales Twp location.
- 1872:** St. Clair Twp land sold to George McCormick; Poor House records indicate: "Paupers were removed from George McCormick's to Poor House in Wales June 3, 1872."
- 1914:** County Poor Farm burned, 73 "inmates" rescued. Dempster Cowles, Superintendent
- 1915:** New building dedicated as St. Clair County Infirmary.
- 1961:** Infirmary classification changed to State-approved Medical Facility with a 92-patient capacity; became the St. Clair County Medical Centre.
- 1992:** St. Clair County Medical Centre was closed.
- 1993:** The 1915 building was demolished, leaving only the barns standing as the St. Clair County Farm Museum.

## St. Clair County Poor Farm / Infirmary / Medical Centre

### Resources available at St. Clair County Library System:

#### *Record of Inmates of St Clair County Poor House 1857-1893*

Print record housed in the local history collection at SCCL's Main Library. Available onsite by request; does not circulate. Digital version, transcription, and index on SCCL website: [LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY / stclairlibrary \(stclaircountylibrary.org\)](http://LOCALHISTORY&GENEALOGY/stclairlibrary(stclaircountylibrary.org))

\*Digital version supported in part by an award from the Michigan State Historical Records Advisory Board, through funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), National Archives and Records Administration.

List of people buried in Poor Farm/Infirmary Cemetery, Wales, Michigan 1897-1947

Print version housed in the local history collection at SCCL's Main Library. Available onsite by request; does not circulate.

### Other resources available at Archives of Michigan in Lansing:

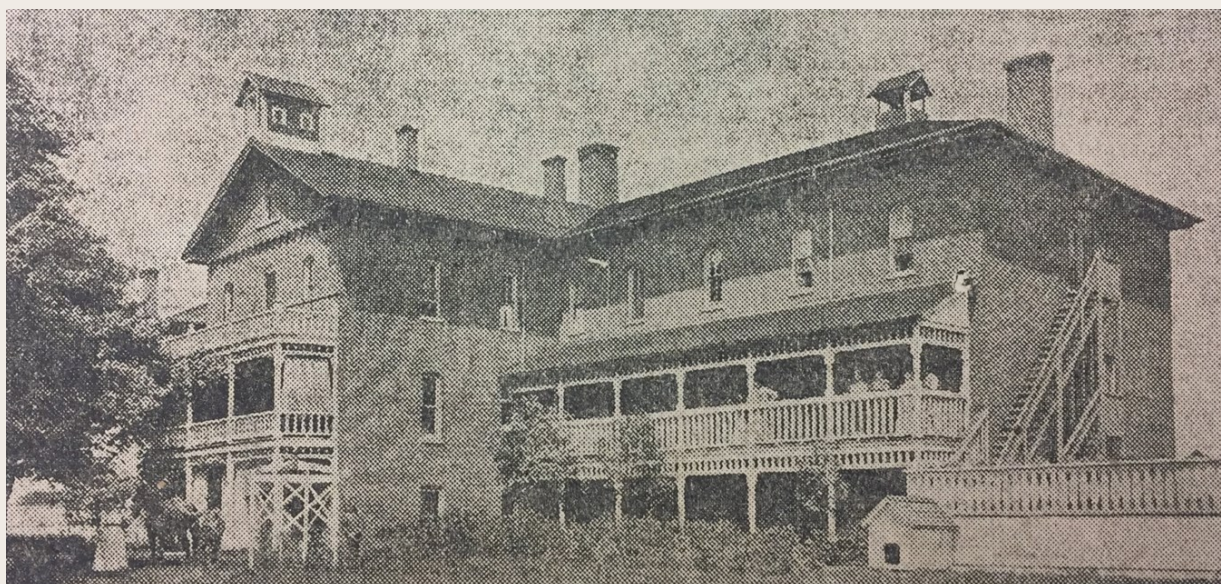
*Record of Inmates in County Infirmary 1915-1933* RG 62-22

Minutes of Superintendent 1925-1939 RG 62-22

Annual Reports 1922-1943 RG 62-22

Expense Ledger 1935-1939 RG 62-22

Expense Ledger 1888-1914 RG 67-7



Port Huron Times Herald, 23 Feb 1914, p1