

Historical Marker - Branch County / Branch County Courthouse Site (Marker ID#:L1642C)



Front - Title/Description

Branch County

Branch County, named for John Branch, President Andrew Jackson's secretary of the navy, was one of thirteen counties established by the Michigan territorial legislature in 1829. The village of Branch, located three miles southwest of Coldwater, was the original county seat, but in 1842 county commissioners decreed that the seat be moved to Coldwater. In 1848 a courthouse was erected on this site. The Chicago Road (now US-12) and the coming of the Michigan Southern Railroad in 1850 attracted settlers. During the 1850s and 1860s, Coldwater was a horse training and breeding center. Local breeders provided three thousand horses to the Union army during the Civil War. In the 1870s and 1880s, the manufacture of cigars contributed to Coldwater's prosperity. In 1882 some 13.4 million cigars were manufactured in Coldwater.

Significant Date:

Registry Year: 1989 **Erected Date:** 1992

Marker Location

Address: 31 Division St.

City: Coldwater

State: MI **ZipCode:**

County: Branch

Township: Coldwater

Lat: 41.93963000 / **Long:** -85.00104300

Web URL:

Back - Title/Description

Branch County Courthouse Site

Coldwater's first county courthouse was erected on this site in 1848. Forty years later local architect M. H. Parker designed the second courthouse, a High Victorian building. The stately corner tower-visible for miles-housed a thirty-five-hundred-pound bell manufactured by the C. H. Meneely Company of Troy, New York, and a clock manufactured by the Howard Company of Boston. In 1972 the building was destroyed by arson, but the bell and clock were salvaged. Organized in 1974 and reactivated in 1987, the Branch County Clock Committee collected monies from generous citizens and businesses to restore the clock and bell and construct a new tower. The Branch County Clock Tower was dedicated on July 30, 1988. The original finial tops the cupola.