



The Origins of the Emmet County Seal

**It's now on vehicles,
letterhead, and official documents ...**

**but where did
Emmet County's seal originate?**

**That's a question the Emmet
County Historical Commission
pondered in 2020, and with
the help of newspaper
archives available on the
Greenwood Cemetery website,**

the seal's history was revealed.

In 1965, after the old courthouse had been razed and architects were finalizing the design of a new county-city building, a copy of the county seal was requested to put on the exterior of the building.

But no one could find one!

It was Ward Walstrom, chairman of the buildings and grounds committee, who then asked the public to submit ideas for an official county seal. He suggested designs be historical and representative of the county.

PETOSKEY news REVIEW

Saturday

July 3, 1965

Petoskey, Mich.

Vol. 79 No. 233

Home of North Central Michigan College

Ten Cents

Emmet Asks Public Help Design Seal For New Building

Emmet county apparently has no official seal and supervisors would like some help from the public in designing one to feature on the new county-city building to be built here this year.

Since it is hoped to have plans ready for bidders this summer, time is important.

Ward Walstrom, Harbor Springs, a chairman of the building and grounds committee, has suggested that people in the area be invited to create a design. Architect Ian Ironside of the Warren Holmes Co. of Lansing, said the building is designed so that recessed lights in the over-hang of the front will "wash the walls with light." He suggested designs be prepared for exterior mounting with the idea that the theme might possibly be carried out in the floor of the entrance vestibule.

The design could be in color, or black and white. It could be a coat of arms type, or a special seal type such as have been adopted on city vehicles at Petoskey and Harbor Springs.

Walstrom said the committee made quite a search for the official Emmet county seal and so far has turned up only the seal of the Emmet Circuit Court which is a pine tree inside a circle. Walstrom feels that the seal should carry either a historical theme or be representative of the county and be adaptable, should it be desired, for other use on official county papers by being able to be reduced.

Walstrom would like people who have ideas for a county seal to prepare sketches and send them to the News-Review. He said the committee would name judges to work with them in trying to pick the most appropriate design.

"We're not offering prizes," Walstrom said, "The county-city building belongs to all of the people of the county and this way people with talent can help us and perhaps one will be able to point with pride to his or her creation down through the years."

Supervisors plan to have shrubbery planted around the new court house. The seal, if one is selected, will be seen by all entering the building--and at night will be spotlighted or could have backlighting.

So if you want to take a crack at it, get your entries to the News-Review office before 4 p.m. on Thursday, July 15. There is no limit to the number of designs any person may enter, in fact the committee says the more the better.

PETOSKEY news REVIEW

Saturday

July 10, 1965

Petoskey, Mich.

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Home of North Central Michigan

Deadline Near for County Seal Design

Deadline for submitting sketches for a proposed county seal or coat of arms for the new County-City Building to be built here this year is 4 p. m. Thursday, July 15.

Ward Walstrom, chairman of the building and grounds committee, of the board of supervisors, has asked people in the county to submit their ideas for a seal to be used on the building to the News-Review.

He is to name judges to go over the ideas sent to the News-Review in the hopes that some citizen will design a seal that could be placed on the building

and back-lighted or flood-lighted, perhaps be used as a design in the vestibule floor at the entrance and be reduced for official county papers.

Ideas have started coming in, but Walstrom is hopeful that there will be many submitted. In fact, anyone may submit as many sketches as he or she likes. "Who knows, some student may come up with the idea that we'll adopt for our official county seal," Walstrom said.

The search for a seal started last week when architects were preparing the exterior final design and asked for the county seal

to be displayed in a design on the building. It turned out that Emmet had no county seal. It has a county flag and it has a circuit court seal, but no county seal.

Any person with an idea for such a design is urged to make at least a rough sketch and submit it to the News-Review by next Thursday. If people don't submit a suitable design, the county will have the Warren Holmes architects create one.

Walstrom has said since the county-city building will belong to the people, he was hopeful that some citizen here would come up with the design for the official county seal.

With just a 12-day notice to the public, more than a dozen designs were submitted.

n PETOSKEY **ews** R E V I E W

Friday

August 13, 1965

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Ten Cents

To choose the best design, Emmet County Board of Supervisors selected a committee which included Dr. Carl Spitler, Harriet Kilborn, Mrs. Lester Johnson, and Robert Engle, an art instructor at Ohio Wesleyan College.

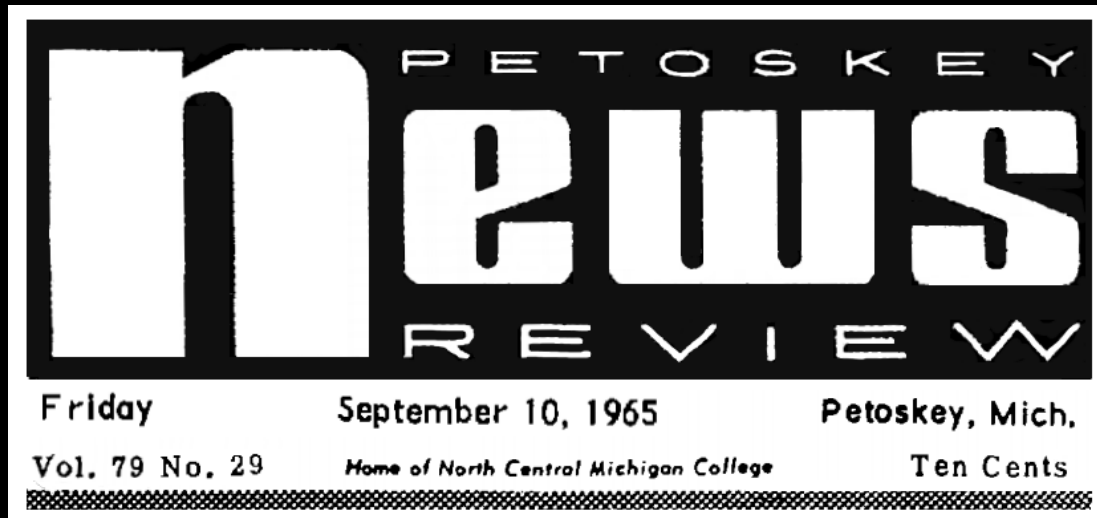
It Happened in Petoskey

The committee selected by the Emmet Board of Supervisors to judge entries submitted for an Emmet county seal from more than a dozen which were submitted, spent a grueling afternoon session yesterday trying to chose the one best-suited to adorn the new city-county building.

According to Dr. H. Carl Spitler, chairman, the best they could do was to pick two and these two drawings will be studied by architects. Following their recommendations, the winning entry will be named.

Assisting Spitler on the committee were Miss Harriet Kilborn, Mrs. C. Lester Johnson and Robert Engle, art director at Ohio Wesleyan College and Bay View. Kenneth Teysen of Mackinaw City was also a member of the committee, but was unable to attend because of the drowning Wednesday of his son, Kenneth, jr.

Spitler said the committee was very impressed with the high calibre of drawings which were sent in, and that the architects would have to break the deadlock of the judges in determining which was most appropriate to be the official emblem on the building.



But, the judges couldn't pick just one design and instead opted for a composite of three entries from the designs of Ed Shafer and Reginald Sharkey, both of Petoskey, and Mrs. Vyola Heise of Pellston.



EMMET'S COUNTY SEAL to be placed on the new city-county building may be a composite of three entries. The judges made this decision and architect Ian Ironsides of Warren Holmes is to prepare a drawing of the combined ideas and return it to the committee. After review, it will be submitted to the supervisors for final approval. Left to right here are the judges: Mrs. C. L. Johnson, Dr. H. C. Spiller, Harriet Kilborn and Robert B. Engle. Engle is art instructor at Bay View Summer College and at Ohio Wesleyan. The judges combined ideas of Ed Shafer and Reginald Sharkey of Petoskey and Mrs. Ken (Vyola) Heise of Pellston.

The county seal is picked by the judges would be a profile of Emmet county showing the inland lakes, cities and villages. Symbols used would be the plowshare, passenger pigeons, pine tree, lumber axe and cant hook, a skier, fisherman and deer. Twelve people submitted ideas.

(News photo by Fred Lovelace.)



The committee asked the building's architect to prepare a drawing highlighting the inland lakes and other symbols of the county as shown in the chosen designs.

The final design included a lumbering axe and cant hook, pine trees, the Mackinac Bridge, skiing scene, cross and holy book, a hunting bow, and a passenger pigeon.

The original seal was placed on the outside of the new county-city building that opened to the public in 1967 along with a seal for the City of Petoskey.



**A slate or pewter version
was also created and now
hangs on the wall in the
Board of Commissioners'
meeting room.**





At some point over the years, the seal was altered from the original. One of the biggest changes is noticeable in the top panel of today's version, which looks nothing like the axe and cant hook of the original design. The inland lakes also have a different look in the seal currently being used by county officials and staff.

In late 2020, the Historical Commission suggested to county administrator Mike Reaves that the seal be reviewed and one version be approved for official use.

The county's communications director worked to restore the colorized version to more-closely resemble the original.

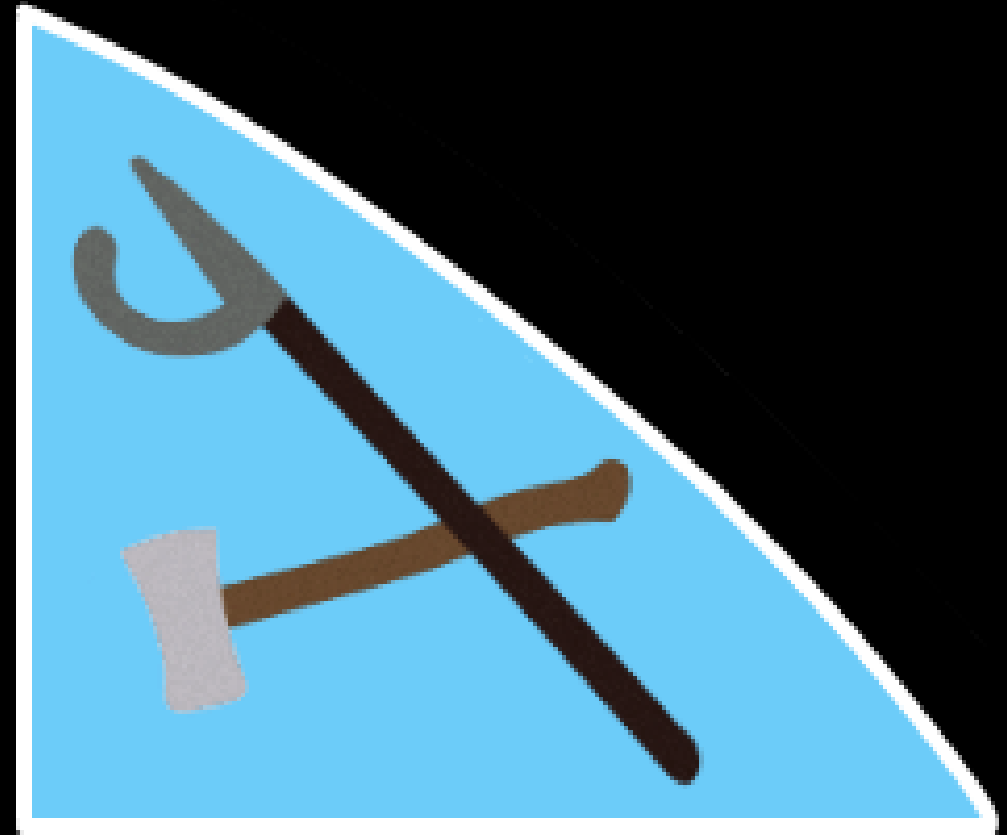
Each inner element of the design was revisited . . .



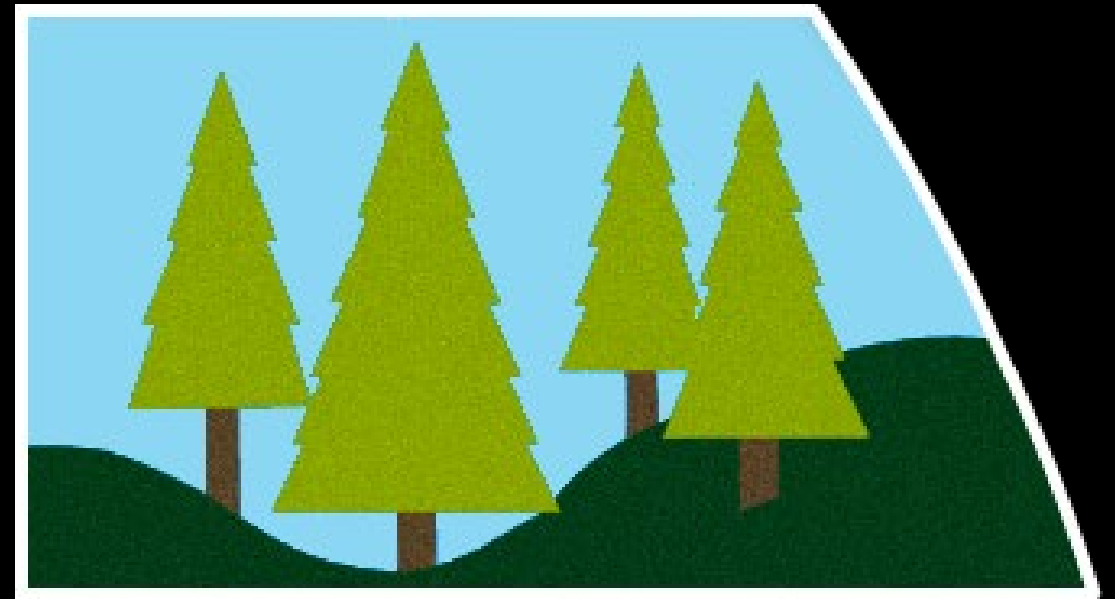


with updates being made to the layout and look of the county's lakes, and to the prominent founding date of 1853, changed to match the original font.

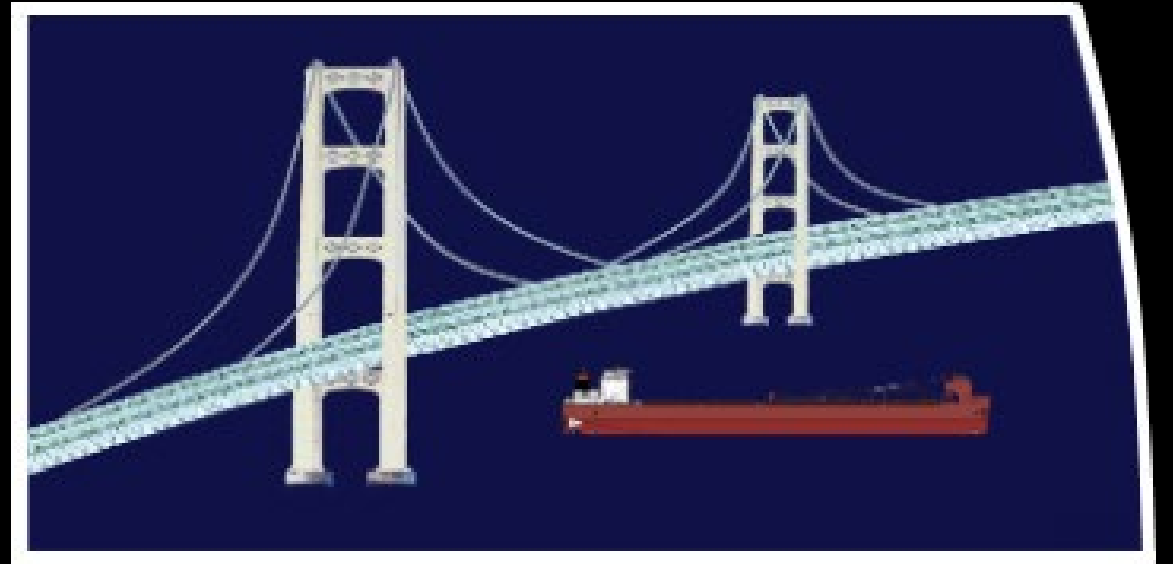
Each of the six panels on the seal's right side were also updated



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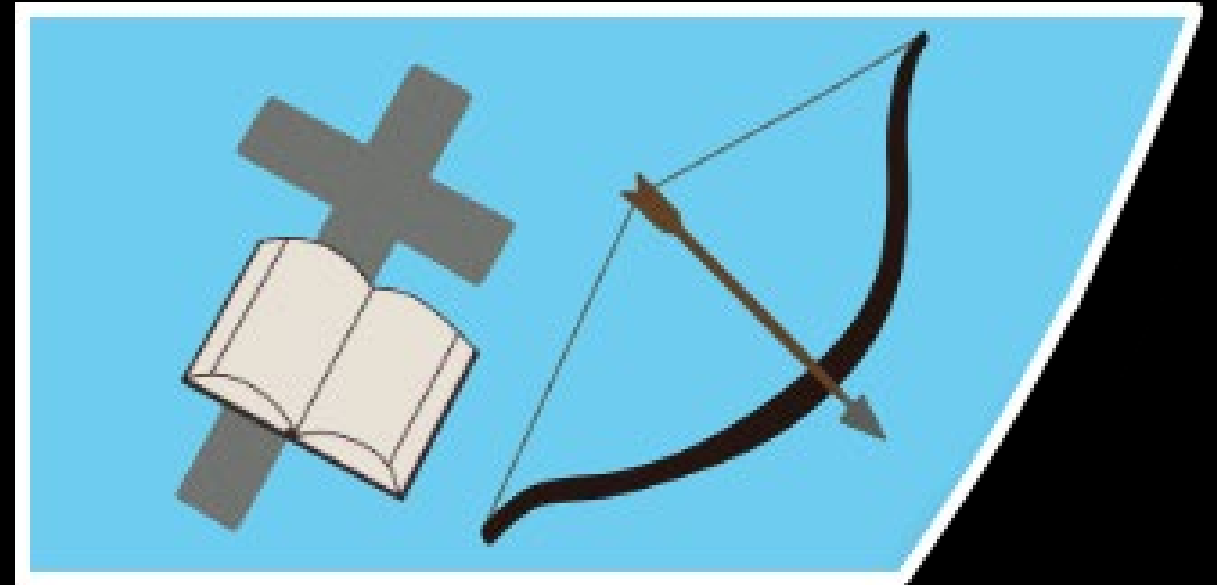
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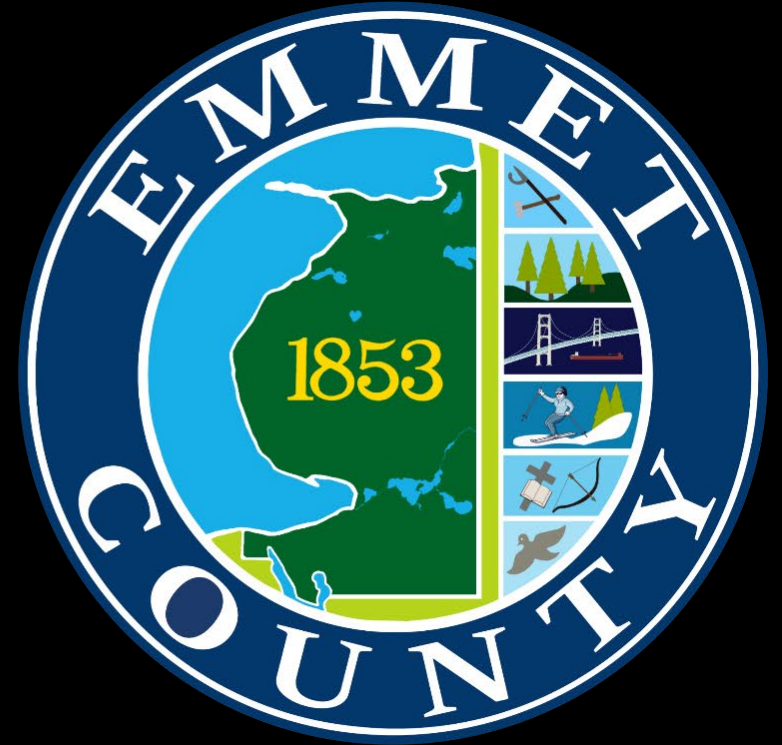
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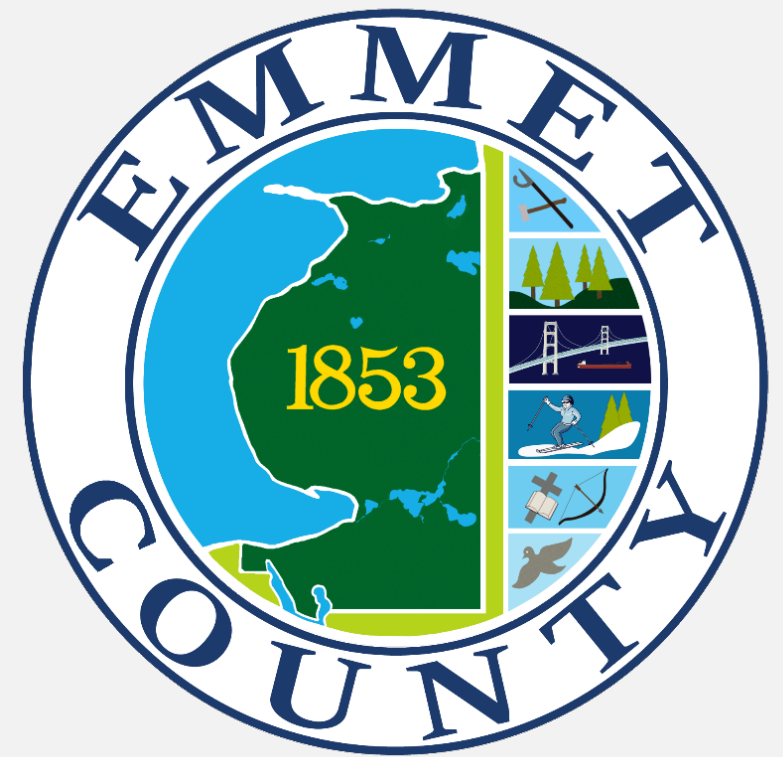
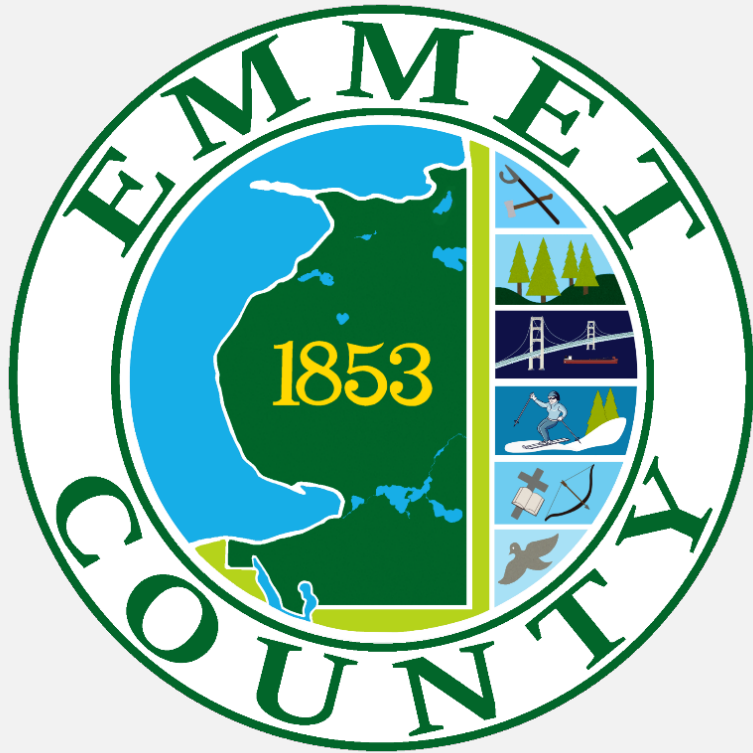
The county name in the outer ring of the seal was also changed to better match the font of the original, though the letters were not stretched as was done in the original design.



The changes and comparison can be seen below



Three choices of an updated seal have been presented to the Board of Commissioners for consideration.



**Stay tuned for the Board's changes,
suggestions, and final decision on
an updated Emmet County seal.**

**Video produced by the
Emmet County
Communications Department**

**Historical information researched and gathered
by former County Commissioner Izzy Lyman
and Communications Director Stacy Cox**

Thanks for watching!