



the **CHRONICLE**

The Almost Monthly Publication of
the Ionia County Historical Society



MINUTES of the January, 2011 Program Meeting

The January 5 meeting of the Historical Society was held in the Guild Room at the Ionia Memorial Hospital. President Linda Ciangi called the meeting to order, welcoming guests and members, and with thanks to our hosts for the evening and a "Happy New Year" to all.

Appreciation was extended to Kris Haskins for his leadership concerning the "Christmas in Ionia" concert which raised significant funds for the local food banks.

Thanks also to Sid's Flowers, Ionia Floral, and Eclectic for their decorations at the Blanchard House. All are looking forward to next year.

Many plans are in the works for the upcoming months, so members and friends are encouraged to watch for news and items on the website's calendar page.

Everything's under control for the ICHS booth at the Ionia Expo on March 12, according to co-chairs Doni K. and Patty S-G.

Stephanie V. reported that the the Gallery Event hosted by Chel Leah was a success, with 35 tickets sold and many positive comments. It's quite likely that it will be held again next season.

Treasurer Hank Knoop delivered his report, noting much great publicity from recent events.

Stephanie also noted thanks to Paula Thompson at Bigby Coffee. They will be donating \$1.00 to the ICHS for each special coffee purchase January 10 thru 17.

Steph also reminded members of the Silk City Preservations Society and their "Save the Clock Tower" campaign. She will keep us all notified of meetings and information.

Condolences go out to the family of Barb Sykes who was a member of the ICHS, as well as Bill Franch, long-time member who was known for his annual holiday gatherings at the Blanchard House.

The members present took a quick break for refreshments, then Joan McCord introduced our host for the evening, Lori Tjalsma, for her presentation about the history of the Hospital.

(Story on page one!)

A Bit of Ionia's Health Care History

Our presentation for the January meeting was given in the Guild Room of the Ionia County Memorial Hospital by Hospital P.R. Director Laurie Tjalsma, accompanied by intern John Balice.

Behind a table covered with scrapbooks and memorabilia, Laurie told us a little of the long and colorful history of our local healthcare system.

The earliest record of an "Ionia Hospital" was the office of Dr. McCann located above the Ionia County National Bank offices on Main Street in the 1920s. His office was equipped with the most advanced medical equipment in the town at the time.

Sometime thereafter, a hospital was established by Ms. Belle Sawyer in a former residence on north Jackson Street (pictured here). The institution was run by donations. In March of 1943, the second director of the hospital, Mrs. Grace Elliot, declared that the hospital would be closing due to lack of funds.

The possible loss of the only such facility in the area caused quick action led by Ionia's Mayor Clarence Johnson. A series of special meetings resulted in rapid action to establish the community hospital. By August of 1943, Mrs. Hassie Thornton (owner of the Jackson St. facility) struck a deal to rent the place to the city. The name, Ionia County Memorial Hospital, was suggested by Allan Williams, to be dedicated to the memory of Ionia



Ionia Hospital - Jackson St.

County's men and women in the Armed Services.

Very shortly afterwards, the community began major fund-raising efforts to build a new hospital. With tremendous support, pledges from 50¢ to \$10,000 accumulated to a total of over \$365,000. By 1953, the new hospital on Lafayette Street was dedicated by Mayor Tony Balice. The final cost of the hospital was \$650,000, much of which was granted by the government as part of the "Hill-Burton" legislation, established to assist communities with healthcare construction projects.

Within a few years, more capacity was required and a new 18-bed pediatric wing was added, and in 1958 a new expansion provided greater laundry and kitchen facilities. Throughout the 60s many more changes took place in addition to brick-and-mortar projects. In 1966 a master plan was created outlining future

needs. That same year, the hospital received accreditation, justifying all the community's efforts at providing quality health care. In the 1970s, a new emergency, intensive care, and coronary care units were added. Over the next 20 years, changes in health care funding and insurances caused many changes in how the hospital was run.

Now in partnership with Sparrow Hospital of Lansing, many new services and new technologies are available. Laurie took the ICHS members on a tour of the facility, in parts old and new, and spoke of on-going renovations.

Laurie also summarized plans underway to build a new health care facility south of town, and eventually a new hospital to replace the present hospital to further improve health care services in Ionia County in the coming years.

Many thanks to Laurie for her tour and presentation.

**NEXT MONTH: March 4 Ionia's
Presbyterian Church Celebrates 150 Years**

MINUTES of the January, 2011 Business Meeting

The Board of Directors of the Ionia County Historical Society met at the Blanchard House at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 19.

The first order of business was Stephanie VanderMolen's report on the recent fund-raising program with Biggby Coffee. She noted that it was a great success, but the total donation was not yet determined.

Doni Knoop and Patty Simpson-Goeke are co-chairs for the Ionia Community Expo coming up on March 12, and we will have a booth to ourselves this year. They are seeking suggestions for the displays and volunteers to staff the booth. ICHS President Linda Ciangi is donating a quilt to be given away as a door prize that day.

At the next meeting, the Board and members of the Accessions Committee will study their calendars to attempt to find some dates for committee meetings and workshops. The committee's task load is piling up!

It was noted that an agreement had been made with C&L Trucking to clear the snow from the Blanchard House sidewalks on those days when the Sheriff's Department is not able to staff the job.

President Ciangi and Barb Ehlert have donated some "plastic china" dinnerware for use at the House as needed.

The Board considered the idea of establishing a Donations Chairman to handle the paperwork and notifications connected with that process. The invitation will be extended to the membership at the next meeting.

In regards to Summer Sundays this year, a new Chairperson is needed to make those arrangements. It was suggested that we promote "Read, Relax, and Research" as a theme for the days without specific activities scheduled. The idea of a "sidebar" in the Chronicle to spotlight books in our collection might be an interesting feature, and entice people to come in and scan our book shelves so we can better share our collection.

David and Annette McCord are going to be sharing their "Dexter Colony" presentation with several organization in the area in the next couple of months. They would like to offer some of the Dexter books for sale, but there are only three left. Stephanie moved that we purchase another 25 books. This was supported by Patty and passed. Treasurer Hank Knoop handed the check to David M. to cover the order.

Stephanie V. will be contacting people about arranging a late-summer tour and program at the Highland Park Cemetery. Some discussion was had about the format of that program, still to be defined. There is still talk about doing some kind of "murder mystery" gathering at the Blanchard House in collaboration with the Ionia Community Theatre, but nothing definite yet.

The Tri-River "Spring Into The Past" Museum Tours will be April 30 and May 1 this year. Stephanie V. and David McCord will arrange game-related activities for the weekend, both outdoors and indoors. David will look into doing a May Pole, too.

The June 10 Yard Sale is being Chaired by Doni Knoop, and is expected to be a success. Artisans, crafters, and antique dealers are being contacted

Upcoming Programs and Events

Thursday Evening Workshops at the
Blanchard House. 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 3th, 7:00 p.m.
Program Meeting at the Blanchard House
PROGRAM: blah blah blah blah

Saturday, March 12th
Community Expo at Ionia High School

Wednesday, March 16th, 7:00 p.m.
ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House

Saturday, April 2nd
Appraisal Road Show – Commission on Aging

Wednesday, April 3th, 7:00 p.m.
Program Meeting at the Blanchard House

Wednesday, April 17th, 7:00 p.m.
ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House

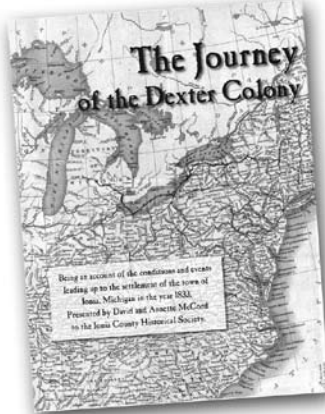
Saturday, April 30th and Sunday, May 1
SPRING INTO THE PAST
Annual Tri-River Museum Tours
A Weekend of GAMES for all ages!

Wednesday, March 16th, 7:00 p.m.
Program at the Blanchard House:
"On The Home Front, 1861"
Presented by David & Annette McCord

For other upcoming events - visit the ICHS
website at ioniahistory.org.

THE BOOK that documents the pre- sentation given to the ICHS in May of 2010, FOR SALE!

David & Annette McCord have published their carefully researched story of the settling of the town of Ionia, lavishly illustrated with historic photos, maps, and engravings. It includes details from many historic documents, books and artifacts, and now CAN BE IN YOUR LIBRARY, TOO!



**FOR ONLY
\$12.00 EACH**
and a portion of each sale
will benefit the Historical
Society. **GET YOURS NOW!**

(For Mail-Order copies, please add
\$3.00 postage and handling.)

- a 10x10 space is only \$10.

President Ciangi reported that plans are coming along nicely for the May 15 Country Music Concert at the Theatre. She thanked the Board for their support, inviting the members to help staff the event. Proceeds will go to the ICHS.

Alice Whorley has been serving as Refreshments Chair this past year. Linda C. will contact her to see if she wants to continue in this position.

Stephanie V. noted that Belding's "Save The Clock Tower" group would be meeting at Belding on Monday, Jan 24. She and David McCord will be attending, and any other interested parties are encouraged to support our neighboring community in their efforts to preserve their historic districts.

David M. (in the role of "webmaster") noted that the domain names for the website are coming up for renewal again soon. In studying the traffic on

the website, it appears that we can again trim the number of domains we own. Stephanie moved that we eliminate a few, and bring the expense down to \$50 or less. This was supported by Patty and passed. It was also noted that the Blanchard House phone number should be added to the website. Other hoped-for website enhancements were discussed briefly, and will be made as time permits.

In closing the meeting, Linda C. shared some photographs of Ionia's Main Street which were taken during the ORINGAL bricking of the street. She is working on an article for the weekender about the 400 block, and the Resurrection Life Church was interested in the historical appearance of the buildings they occupy now in that area. (They have engaged an architect to help them do some restoration.)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

There are a few
WWII
memoir books
still available!

Memories of local families compiled by the Ionia County Genealogical Society, these keepsakes are only \$53 each. If you would like one for your family, please call Joan McCord at 527-3369.

Attn: Korean War Veterans!

The Ionia County Genealogical Society is now collecting stories and memorials for Ionia County's veterans of the Korean Conflict. This volume will become available soon. If you would like your memoir to be included, please contact the ICGS for your submission forms and more details.

**MINUTES of the
February, 2011
Business Meeting**

The February meeting of the CISH Board of Directors was called to order by president Linda Ciangi at 7:00 p.m. at the Blanchard House. Also present were Secretary David McCord, Treasurer Hank Knoop, Vice President Stephanie VanderMolen, Directors Pat Simpson-Goeke and Kris Haskins, and past Director Barb Ehlert.

The first order of business was a review of the upcoming programs for the monthly meetings. Since the February program was cancelled due to weather, the Board looked forward to the March program at the Presbyterian Church, celebrating its 150th anniversary. In April will be a program on Railroads in Ionia, presented by Bill Davis, and discussion of summer activities. In May will be a presentation on the 150th anniversary of the War between the States - What it was like in Ionia in May of 1861 - presented by David and Annette McCord. June will bring a program on the second world war (details still to be confirmed). July will be the annual Independence Day Potluck, and August will bring a special "Show-n-Tell" meeting to share private collections and stories. September will be a program about Fashions of the Past presented by Barb Ehlert, and November is planned as "Movie Night."

Kris Haskins shared some of his recent work on the transcription of some Civil War letters, written by Capt. T.G. Stevenson (John C. Blanchard's relation) which had been presented to the ICHS by Duane Todd, a descendant of Mr. Blanchard. He is scanning the letters, and will then type the contents into computer files to archive and to share. Kris suggested that we devise a plan to ensure the careful (and professional) preservation of these letters, which contain significant historic

Dear Readers — Someone said it was Valentine's Day again! Seems to happen every year, doesn't it? Well, I could blame the holiday for my busy-ness, but no... I'm just plain busy. And so I apollogeize for missing a January issue. And here's a nice card to make everything all right. All right? Thank you for your kindness. — *The Editor*



notes.

Hank Knoop noted that the lawn care proposal had been received with the same terms as last year. It was moved by Stephanie and supported by Kris to accept the proposal, which passed.

On behalf of the Chair of the June 10 "Yard Sale" (Doni Knoop), Hank reported that plans are under way. Fliers are needed for the public and for potential vendors. Stephanie V. will design these items. Notice should be made in the Chronicle that Hank will collect items for sale from anyone who would like to donate. Also, help is needed to set up the night before and clean up after.

Hank also noted that he will be repairing the cracked plastic in the framed collection of historic carpet samples hanging in the bathroom.

Stephanie asked if money had yet been received from Biggby Coffee from their ICHS fund raiser last month. Hank said no, and Stephanie will contact them. Also, Hank noted that no bill had come from C&L Trucking for their snow-removal services this season.

Stephanie shared an 1891 Ionia Atlas that was received as a donation from a person in Eaton Rapids recently.

Stephanie also has been in touch with Brad Lang about arranging tours of the Highland Park Cemetery, probably to be held on a late September weekend as a fund-raiser for the ICHS.

Several aspects were discussed, specifically the car-parking challenges and potential of shuttling people into and around the Cemetery. More to come.

Doni K. and Pat Simpson-Goeke are co-chairs for the Ionia Community Expo booth, which will be on March 12. Set-up will be 6:00 the evening before the event, and volunteers are needed. Stephanie will put together some fliers which will list upcoming ICHS events and activities.

David M. brought in a new batch of Dexter Journey books from the publisher. Already five of them have been sold. David and Annette will take some with them to the Literary Guild presentation on Saturday the 19th and again on March 12 to the Genealogy Society to sell. David and Annette also plan to attend the Reenactors Fair in Kalamazoo on March 19. Information on several workshops for Historical Organizations and Museums was shared. It is hoped that we can send representatives from the ICHS to some of these.

Also on the calendar: April 2 will be the Appraisal Roadshow, April 30 and May 1 is the Tri-River Museum Tours (games arranged on the lawn by David M. and Stephanie V.), and May 15th brings Linda Ciangi's Country Music Concert to the Ionia Theatre (proceeds going to the ICHS - thank you Linda!). Linda noted a few potential summer Sunday attractions, including some rabbits! Participation in

the Fall Festival is expected, and the "Upstairs Downtown" is again being planned for October.

Noted chairs of various committees include Alice Whorely, Refreshments and Carol Galagher, Summer Sundays. There is still a need for a Corresponding Secretary and a new chairperson is sought for the Accession Committee.

The Board set the date of Sunday, February 27, at noon, as a meeting for the existing Accession Committee to look over many found objects to determine their fate and discuss further plans. **ALL INTERESTED PARTIES ARE INVITED TO HELP!**

Stephanie and David reported on the efforts in Belding to save their historic buildings, and Stephanie also noted that we should be thinking well ahead of the October elections about who might be interested in serving on the board in the future.

David also reported that the "Travel Michigan" website had brought us 16 referrals in the 4th quarter of 2010, and that the domain registration for the ICHS website has been renewed according to the \$50 budget set by the Board in January. An invoice will be forwarded to Hank K. accordingly.

Sympathies were expressed for Mary Metzen on the recent passing of her husband Jim, former ICHS Board Member and active member for many years.

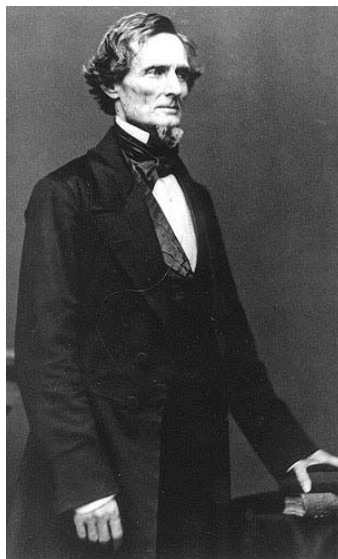
The meeting was then adjourned at approx. 9:10 p.m.

In Memoriam
The members of the Ionia County Historical Society extend sympathies to the family of Dr. James Metzen, dedicated member and former Director of the ICHS. Rest In Peace.

150 YEARS AGO — JANUARY & FEBRUARY 1861

January 1861 The South Secedes.

When Abraham Lincoln, a known opponent of slavery, was elected president, the South Carolina legislature perceived a threat. Calling a state convention, the delegates voted to remove the state of South Carolina from the union known as the United States of America. The secession of South Carolina on December 20, 1860, was followed by the secession of six more states by the first of February: Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. The militias of several of these states began to seize Federal property - arsenals, forts, and government buildings.



February 1861 The South Creates a Government.

At a convention in Montgomery, Alabama, on February 8, the seven seceding states created the Confederate Constitution, a document similar to the United States Constitution, but with greater stress on the autonomy of each state. Jefferson Davis was named provisional president of the Confederacy until elections could be held. On the 13th in Washington, the U. S. Electoral College makes Lincoln's win official. As President-elect Abraham Lincoln begins his journey to Washington D. C. from Springfield, Illinois, President-elect Jefferson Davis journeys from Vicksburg, Mississippi to Montgomery, Alabama to accept the Presidency of the Confederate States.

January 6, 1861
Fernando Wood, mayor of New York, proposed that New York City should secede as well, allowing trade with both the North and South

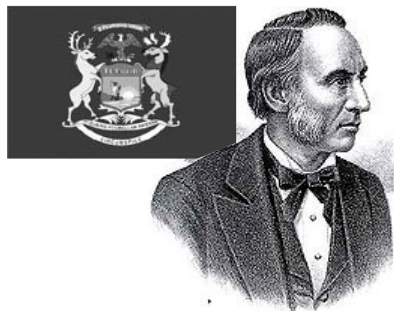
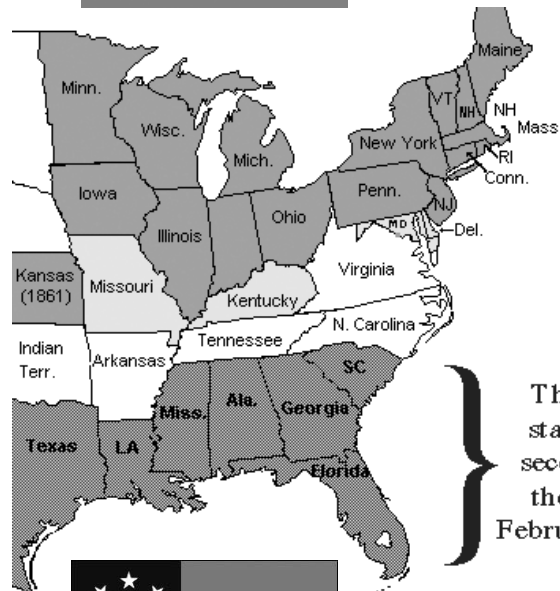
January 24, 1861
Lucy, a female slave from Wheeling who fled to Cleveland, Ohio, is returned to her owner. She is the last slave to be returned under the Fugitive Slave Law

January 29, 1861
Amid the secession of Southern states, Kansas is admitted to the Union - but not without violence and division.

February 5, 1861
"Fort Sumter will not be surrendered" came from various people in the Buchanan Administration in response to a demand for surrender from South Carolina

February 23, 1861
Under the watchful eyes of Allan Pinkerton, Abraham Lincoln travels in secrecy to Washington, D. C. Pinkerton had been worried about the trip through Baltimore, Maryland, a Southern-leaning city

February 25, 1861
President-Elect Lincoln meets with both houses of Congress. On the same day, thousands of miles away, the Saratoga, a ship in the U. S. African Squadron, captured the sloop Express, a slave ship.



And in Michigan...

Austin Blair was a delegate from Michigan to the 1860 Republican National Convention, which nominated Abraham Lincoln. He was also elected Governor of Michigan in that year and reelected in 1862, serving from 1861 to 1865. In his first inaugural address in January 1861, Blair recommended that the state offer its entire military resources to Lincoln for maintaining the supremacy of the U.S. Constitution.





the www.ioniahistory.org **CHRONICLE**

The Chronicle is the official publication of the Ionia County Historical Society. It is written, edited, and published by David McCord, Secretary. Any comments, corrections (of course), or contributions should be directed to the editor c/o the ICHS at P.O. Box 176, Ionia, MI, 48846 or via www.ioniahistory.org.

Ionia County Historical Society
P.O. Box 176
Ionia, MI 48846



JOIN TODAY!

If you'd like to help us preserve the area's heritage, please fill in the form below and send it, with check or money order, to the ICHS Treasurer, care of Box 176, Ionia, MI 48846.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, St., Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Please Check Your Membership Type:

- Regular = \$20
- Sustaining = \$35
- Business Buddy = \$40
- Corporate = \$250
- Life = \$1000
- Free to Students under 18
- Gift = \$ _____

Please Share a Little Information:

- Renewing Member
- New Member

If you're a new member, how did you hear about us?

Thanks!

Join Us at the Ionia Theatre at 9:30 a.m. every Thursday for **FREE ICHS Travelogues!**

February 24 – Italy

March 3 — South America

March 10 — Colorado Scenic Train Ride

March 17 — Hawaiian Paradise

March 24 – Pacific Coast Highway by Car

March 31 — The Holy Land / Thomas Kinkaid

April 7 — Africa: The Serengeti

Ionia County Historical Society 2010-11 Board of Directors & Officers

- Linda Ciangi, President — 527-4945
- Stephanie VanderMolen, Vice Pres. — 616-755-0731
- Kris Haskins, Director — 989-855-3685
- Patty Simpson-Gokee, Director — 616-527-0676
- Carol Gallagher, Director — 527-0961
- David McCord, Secretary — 527-3784
- Hank Knoop, Treasurer — 527-3130