



# the The Almost Monthly Publication of the Ionia County Historical Society CHRONICLE



## MINUTES of the March, 2011 Program Meeting

The March 2011 meeting was called to order by President Linda Ciangi at the Presbyterian Church of Ionia at 7:00 p.m. She welcomed the members and guests to the meeting, and extended thanks to Pastor Kate Huddleston for hosting us.

The Accessions committee gathered at the Blanchard House on Sunday the 27th of February and spent five hours evaluating items stored in the upstairs reference room. David McCord reported that many books and documents had been sorted - some to sell, some to file, and some which require further research. Interested people are invited to join in the fun, as many, many treasures are discovered in our collections!

As progress is made in sorting and moving things about, one of the challenges will be the improvement of the "gift shop" area (the present "office" off the kitchen). If anyone should have ideas for stock, please notify the Board.

The Treasurer, Hank Knoop, reports that expenses are up (being winter) and income is down (for the same reason).

The Ionia Community Expo is coming up on March 12. The event is co-chaired by Doni Knoop and Patty Simpson-Gokee this year. They report that there is a quilt to be raffled, and help will be needed for the set-up, staffing, and taking-down of the booth.

More upcoming events are listed

*Continued on page 2*

## IONIA'S FIRST PRESBYTERIAN - A PIONEER CHURCH -

The March meeting of the Ionia County Historical Society was held at the Ionia Presbyterian Church on Main St. with our host, Pastor Kate Huddleston. There were artifacts on display from the church's history, including early documents, church registers, member directories, and reprints of newspaper articles. Of course, the crowning glory is the church itself, with its impressive decor and full-size Tracker pipe organ!

A highlight of the display was a set of floorplans from the ICHS archives of original plans of the church drawn up in 1909. These plans showed the architect's concepts for the unique layout of the sanctuary (with the altar in the corner instead of on one wall). The Historical Society membership there assembled voted to donate them to the church for display.

This congregation goes back to Ionia's very early years, and many of Ionia's prominent citizens have been members. Here is a summary of their history from the Church's own website:

"On October 30, 1842, The First Congregational Church of Ionia was organized. By year's end the new church had 17 members. In 1856 the Rev. R.M. Landis became pastor. Soon thereafter, a house of worship was built. The building was dedicated on August 12, 1857. That summer, the congregation adopted the Presbyterian form of government.

"On June 28, 1908 fire destroyed the church building. As a result of much prayer, faith and hard work, a new building was completed and dedicated on March 13, 1910. A new Sunday school and office addition was built in 1969. In 1992-93 the sanctuary and Memorial Room were renovated. An elevator, new bathrooms and heating and air conditioning system were installed. Our building is now barrier free.

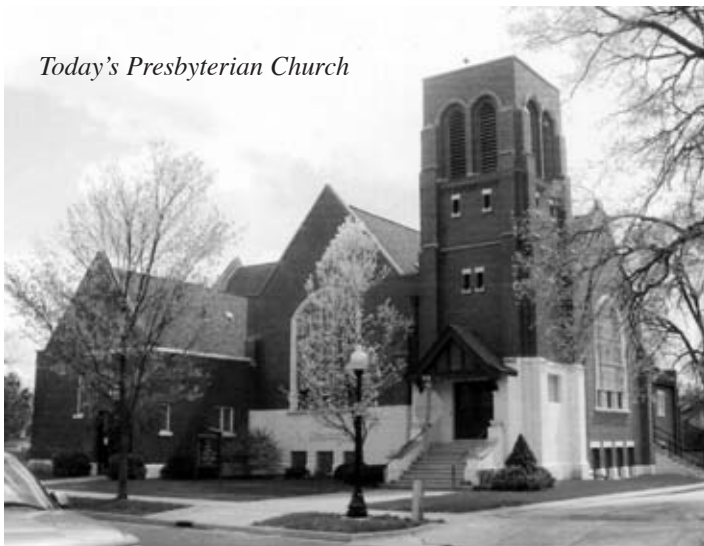
"In 1997 First Presbyterian Church passed the 155 year mark as a committed body of believers faithfully witnessing to God's mighty acts and participating in the mission of God. As the congregation moves into the 21st century, we hope to experience a deeper understanding of our Presbyterian Christian heritage and a strengthening of our faith in God."

Thanks again to Pastor Kate and the congregation of Ionia Presbyterian for their hospitality!



*The church prior to the 1908 fire, taken from a stereopticon image in the ICHS collection.*

*Today's Presbyterian Church*



**NEXT MONTH: April 6th  
Ionia's Railroading History**

Minutes, continued from page one.

in the Chronicle calendar.

Duane Todd brought in two loads of additional donations from the family, including some quilt fabrics, to be sold at the June "yard sale" at the Blanchard House. Gerry Perry noted that he had some fabric for sale also. Among the donations was also a quilt from Helen Todd that is around 150 years old.

President Ciangi reminds the members that the April meeting will be back at the Blanchard House where the program will be about Ionia Railroad History presented by Bill Davis and friends. Bill continues to work on a display which will eventually find a permanent place in the museum area of the Blanchard House.

The meeting was then adjourned and the membership moved to take up their place in the pews of the church for a brief presentation.

### MINUTES of the March, 2011 Business Meeting

The Board of Directors met for the monthly Business Meeting at the Blanchard House on Wednesday, March 16th, at 7:00 p.m. Present were the President, Linda Ciangi, Vice President Stephanie VanderMolen, Secretary David McCord, Treasurer Hank Knoop, Directors Patty Simpson-Gokee and Kris Haskins, and guests Phyllis Lobdell, Barb Ehlert, and Doni Knoop.

President Ciangi began with the following list of thank-yous:

To Pastor Kate for hosting the February meeting; to Kris Haskins for his work in transcribing the Civil War letters of Capt. T.G. Stevenson (which are done now); to the Accessions Committee for a productive Sunday afternoon; to Fred Miller for quilting

bags for the "History Rocks" concert coming in May; to Vicki Kennedy for imprinting scarves for the concert also; to Gerry Perry and Duane Todd for the fabrics donated for the June "Yard Sale"; and to Sally Shurlow for donation of household items for the sale.

The "Fit to be Tied" Quilters will partner with the ICHS to assemble the quilt squares donated by Mr. Todd into a quilt that can be raffled and split the proceeds with the ICHS.

Thanks also to Joe & Joan McCord, Hank and Doni Knoop, Phyllis Lobdell, Stephanie V. and Patty S-G for their help at the Expo on the 12th. Comments from those attending had some suggestions for next year. \$87 was brought in for the quilt raffle, which nearly paid for the booth (\$90). Thanks also to WION for their support (and "air time").

President Linda reported that the Alice Springs RV camp ground will be hosting a "Ladies Day" expo on May 21, and offered the ICHS a display space FREE for the afternoon. More information as it becomes available.

Janet Balice has requested to rent the Blanchard House on May 13 for the RAVE organization's annual Wine-and-Cheese fund-raiser. The request is "by popular demand" and attendance grows each year. Kris Haskins moved that they be welcomed with the stipulation that a representative of the ICHS meet with them to ensure that the details of the event are arranged to everyone's pleasure. This was seconded by Stephanie, and passed by the Board. Kris, Steph, Barb and Linda expect to be on site to help with the event. Doni voiced concern about clean-up, as there will be two other events at the House that weekend.

Architect Jeff Parker would like 15 minutes at our April meeting to answer any questions the members might have regarding the extensive remodeling being done for the Resurrection Life

## Upcoming Programs and Events

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

Saturday, April 2nd, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

### APPRAISAL ROAD SHOW

At the Commission on Aging

Wednesday, April 6th, 7:00 p.m.  
Program Meeting at the Blanchard House

### IONIA'S RAILROAD HERITAGE

Wednesday, April 20th, 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!*

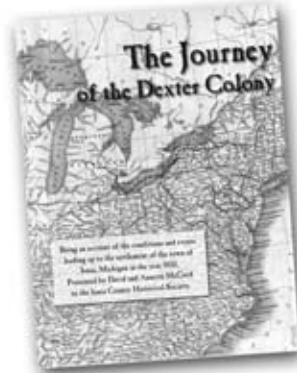
Wednesday, May 4th, 7:00 p.m.  
Program at the Blanchard House:  
"Ionia - On The Home Front, 1861"  
Presented by David & Annette McCord

For other upcoming events - visit the ICHS  
website at [ioniahistory.org](http://ioniahistory.org).

## The Journey of the Dexter Colony, 1833

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!** (Add \$3 for mailing)



Church on Main Street. There will be a meeting at City Hall to present the project to the City for their votes on April 12.

Kris has cleaned up the work bench in the furnace room, and moved it into the closet there, sorting some of what he found there for the Accessions Committee to look through. The "reference room" upstairs will soon be ready to clear out, the idea being to clean and paint and repair the room. It is hoped that some of the wood trim for the door to that room can be found, or matched. The Board discussed adapting that room for use as the ICHS office space, leaving the room off the kitchen for a dedicated "gift shop" area. Other tasks yet to be completed include more sorting and inventorying, including the framed objects in the attic, photos, postcards, and books, and still more stuff in the Carriage House.

Some things are being set aside and donated for the Yard Sale in June. Hank reminds members that he can help in pick-up-and-delivery.

Jeanne Irish is interested in the

old church building at the corner of Bennett Road and M-66. She wants to put in a book store, and is seeking help (grants) to help restore it. The Board has decided to refer her to the State Historical Society in Lansing to see if they can help her find funding.

Maintenance projects continue on the Blanchard House. Sue Garrison has volunteered to help with restoring the woodwork in the Conservatory, and Hank will check the roof on that portion of the house to be sure it's in good shape. There was some mention of painting outside trim this year, and work is still to be done in the Carriage House.

David McCord reminded the attendees of the upcoming Boy Scout's food drive this weekend, and the Scouts Historic Hike coming in May. Also in May, the Spring Into The Past event, and many other things! And the fortunes of the Lyons Historical Society were mentioned, specifically their acquisition of a second storefront, and all the work that's ahead of them in that regard.

## 150 YEARS AGO — MARCH 1861



*This photo of President Lincoln was taken in February of 1861 in Springfield, Illinois two days before leaving on his trip to Washington D.C. for his inauguration.*

### IN THE UNION...

Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address was delivered on Monday, March 4, 1861, after taking the oath of office for his term as the sixteenth President of the United States. The speech was primarily addressed to the people of the South, and was intended to succinctly state Lincoln's intended policies and desires toward that section, where seven states had seceded from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America. In fact, the new flag of the Confederacy—the "Stars and Bars"—had been adopted and raised over Montgomery, Alabama, on this same day.

Lincoln's inaugural address touched on several topics: first, his pledge to "hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government"—including Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens, which are still in Federal hands; second, his argument that the Union is "indissolvable", and thus that secession is impossible; and third, a promise that while he would never be the first to attack, any use of arms against the

United States would be regarded as rebellion, and met with force. In his own words:

"We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

While much of the Northern press has praised or at least accepted Mr. Lincoln's speech, the new Confederacy essentially met his inaugural address with contemptuous silence. The *Charleston Mercury* was an exception: it excoriated Lincoln's address as manifesting "insolence" and "brutality," and attacked the Union government as "a mobocratic empire."

### IN THE CONFEDERACY...

Representatives from six seceding states had moved with dizzying speed in recent months to establish their new country. The deputies from South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana (listed in chronological order of secession) convened as the Provisional Confederate Congress in Montgomery, Alabama, on February 4. Four days after the Congress opened, they adopted a provisional constitution to formalize their new country, the Confederate States of America. The next day, February 9th, they unanimously elected their provisional president: Jefferson Finis Davis. And just like that—in six remarkable days—a new nation was formed, albeit one with a provisional constitution and a provisional president.

Three weeks later, on March 2, the four deputies from the seventh seceding state, Texas, arrived to join the Congress. The Texas deputies participated in the deliberations, and on March 11, the Confederate States of America adopted its formal Constitution. The Confederate Constitution is based very closely on the Constitution of the United States of America. One significant difference is that the Confederate Constitution specifically mentions the word



God, with the phrase “invoking the favor and guidance of Almighty God.” Other significant differences are the more exact specification and limitation of the powers of the central government, and an emphasis on the importance of states’ rights.

A marked contrast between the two constitutions is that the Confederate Constitution specifically discusses slavery—a word that does not appear in the U.S. Constitution. The Confederate Constitution states: “No bill of attainder, ex post facto law, or law denying or impairing the right of property in negro slaves shall be passed.” The Confederate Constitution does ban the foreign slave trade, except slaves imported from the slave states remaining in the Union: “The importation of negroes of the African race from any

## MARCH 1861

foreign country, other than the slave holding States and territories of the United States, is forbidden.”

### MARCH 1, 1861

Confederate President Jefferson Davis advanced P. G. T. Beauregard to Brigadier General [CSA], and ordered him to take command at Charleston. Texas was accepted as a state by the provisional government of the Confederate States of America, while the U. S. Congress rejected the Washington Peace Conference proposal.

### MARCH 2, 1861

The U. S. Congress proposed a 13th Amendment, stating that the Congress will not abolish or interfere with slavery where it exists, but this version is not ratified. A revision making it illegal to interfere with the “domestic institutions” of the states was passed.

### MARCH 3, 1861

General P. G. T. Beauregard arrived at Charleston and assumed command of Confederate troops.

### MARCH 4, 1861

Confederate Convention in Montgomery adopted the “Stars and Bars” as the nation’s flag. That same day Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated President of the United States. Seven states had seceded at this time.

### MARCH 5, 1861

Texas secessionist convention accepted Confederate statehood.

### MARCH 7, 1861

Salmon P. Chase was appointed Secretary of the Treasury of the U.S.A. The Coinage Bill was passed by the Confederate Congress, authorizing up to 50 million dollars in Confederate currency to be printed.

### MARCH 11, 1861

General Braxton Bragg assumed command of the Confederate forces in Florida, threatening the Union army at Ft. Pickens near Pensacola. The Confederate Congress at Montgomery adopted the Constitution unanimously.

### MARCH 13, 1861

The Confederate States of America attempted a peaceful adjustment of issues arising from separation (Forsyth & Crawford). Secretary of State William Seward, under the direction of the President, refused the South’s olive branch.

### MARCH 18, 1861

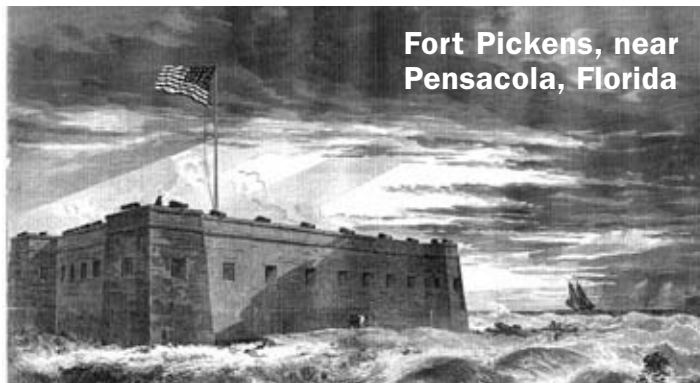
By a vote of 39-35 the Arkansas convention defeated a secession motion. Instead, they voted to allow a general election in August to determine the question of secession.

### MARCH 21, 1861

The Missouri secessionist convention adjourned, having voted 98-1 against secession

### MARCH 29, 1861

Abraham Lincoln decided to reinforce Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, as Mississippi ratified the Confederate Constitution.



Fort Pickens, near Pensacola, Florida



General Beauregard, who was from Louisiana, spoke English with a very heavy French accent.

## IN IONIA...

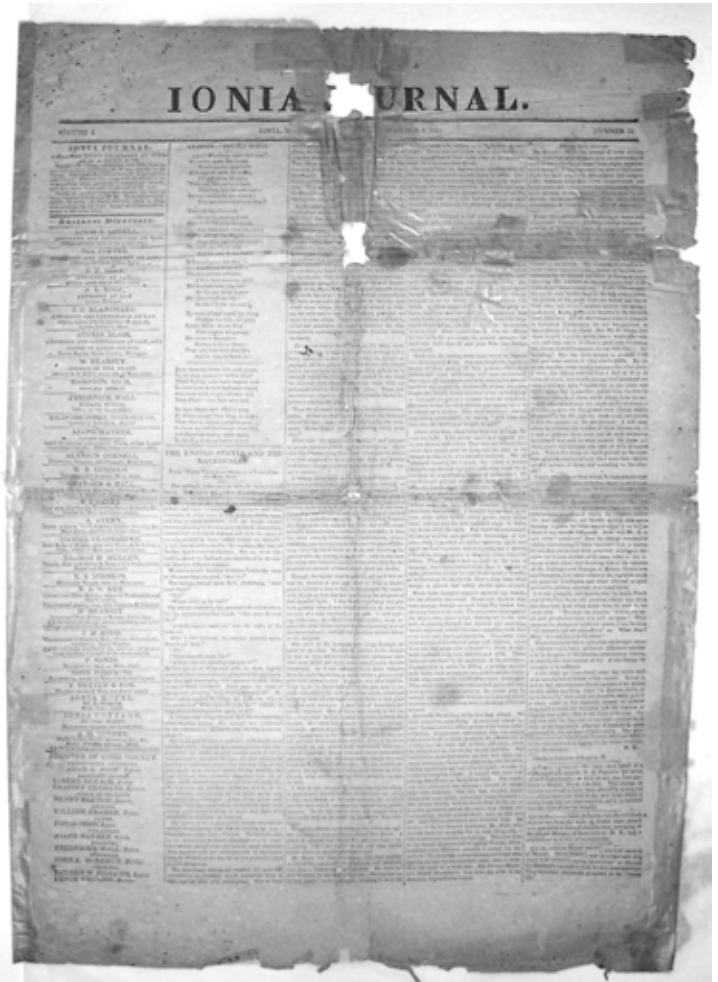
The President of the Board of the Village of Ionia (de facto) is the Hon. Alexander Francis Bell, having been elected to the post in 1857. He has been the law partner of John. C. Blanchard for many years, and helped to establish many Ionia county communities, businesses, and institutions. Mr. Bell was elected to the State Legislature in 1847, and during his time there was instrumental in the moving of the capital from Detroit to Lansing, despite public cries of folly and derision. In 1853 he was appointed Register of the Ionia Land Office under President Pierce, and became a Director and Assistant Attorney for the Detroit & Milwaukee Railroad. In 1860, he was a delegate to the Charleston Convention - a diplomatic effort to curtail the secession of the southern States. Although he was an arduous supporter of Mr. Douglas in the recent election, he has thrown his support to the Lincoln administration and the preservation of the Union. He is a member of the Ionia Presbyterian Church, and his wife Elizabeth (née Boyer of Portland) and his daughters make their happy home here in Ionia.



## ICHS Work Sessions Continue! Many interesting treasures found!



Here are a couple of photos of the work in progress - many, many photos, documents, publications, and artifacts that have been collected and donated over the past 35 years are being categorized and cataloged. One fascinating find is reproduced here (right): An issue of Ionia's first newspaper - the Journal, dated October 1843 and featuring stories of the earliest Ionia pioneers. If you'd like to help with the archives, please contact a Board Member today!



Practice your poise for May Day weekend!



The Tri-River Museum Group will once again present its annual "SPRING INTO THE PAST" on April 30 and May 1 this year. We hope to have Victorian Recreation and Period Parlor Games for you to play, both indoor and outdoor. When you visit the Blanchard House while on your tour of our neighboring museums, pause for a hand of Whist, a round of

croquet, or maybe a turn at Halma, or possibly Salta (the latest parlor sensation from Europe). As always, if you'd like to volunteer, please contact an ICHS Board Member for more information. It will be a day of fun for all, rain or shine!

### COUNTRY MUSIC MEMORIES

*Sunday, May 15 • 3 p.m.*

**Ionia Theatre, 205 W. Main, Ionia, MI**

Steve Floyd as...



**Roy  
Orbison**

Fred Wolfe as...



**Elvis  
Presley**

Allen Scott as...



**Tim  
McGraw**

**Reserved Seating**

**Advance Tickets: \$10.00 & \$15.00**

**\$15.00 & \$20.00 at the Door**

**Meet the Stars After the Show**



Proceeds Benefit the Ionia County Historical Society

[www.ionia-theatre.com](http://www.ionia-theatre.com) or call Linda Ciangi@616-527-4945 for more info



# the [www.ioniahistory.org](http://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](http://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!**

April 7 — Africa: The Serengeti

April 14 —Iceland

April 21 — The Story of Easter

April 28 —Iran, Then & Now

May 5 —Alpine Adventure

May 12 — Southwest By Rail

May 19 — The White House

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

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