

Here's the latest issue of the...

Ionia County Historical Society CHRONICLE

Ionia County Historical Society
P.O. Box 1776
Ionia, MI 48846

www.ioniahistory.org



BECOME A MEMBER!

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 1776, Ionia, MI 48846.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, St, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Please Check Your Membership Type:

Regular = \$20

Sustaining = \$35

Corporate = \$250

Life = \$1000

Gift = \$ _____

Free Honorary Membership for Students under 18

Please Share a Little Information:

Renewing Member

New Member

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

If you are already a member (thank you!), please pass this membership form on to a friend.

AVAILABLE AT THE
BLANCHARD HOUSE "GIFT SHOP"

A FEW OF THE ITEMS ON SALE
and suggested donation for each:

Meredyth Jones Lithograph,
"Ionia County Court House"...\$15

VHS Videos of Ionia Historical Subjects...\$10

Headlight Flashes 1896 (a publication of the
Detroit, Lansing and Northern Railroad featuring
28 pages of Ionia information)...\$10

Ionia, 1907 Souvenir Book reprints...\$10

City of Ionia Centennial booklet...\$5

3 Blocks of Historic Downtown Ionia...\$3

History of Ionia...\$3.00

... and more souvenirs and information!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND SUPPORT!

Ionia County Historical Society CHRONICLE



The Almost Monthly Publication of the Ionia County Historical Society — June 2007

Ten years ago, teacher Sandy Wolniakowski was working on a classroom project on local history with some teenaged students. The project resulted in some interviews with local residents, photos and documents were collected and identified, a 32-page book was published - and the presentation shared with us this night.

PEWAMO

Sandy introduced her son, Tony, who had refined and adapted the presentation as part of a class he was taking at Lansing Community College. Tony began his slide show, narrating from notes and occasionally calling upon his mom to tell a certain story or two along the way. Photos showed vintage views of Pewamo and contrasted them with modern images. The "then and now" was very interesting.

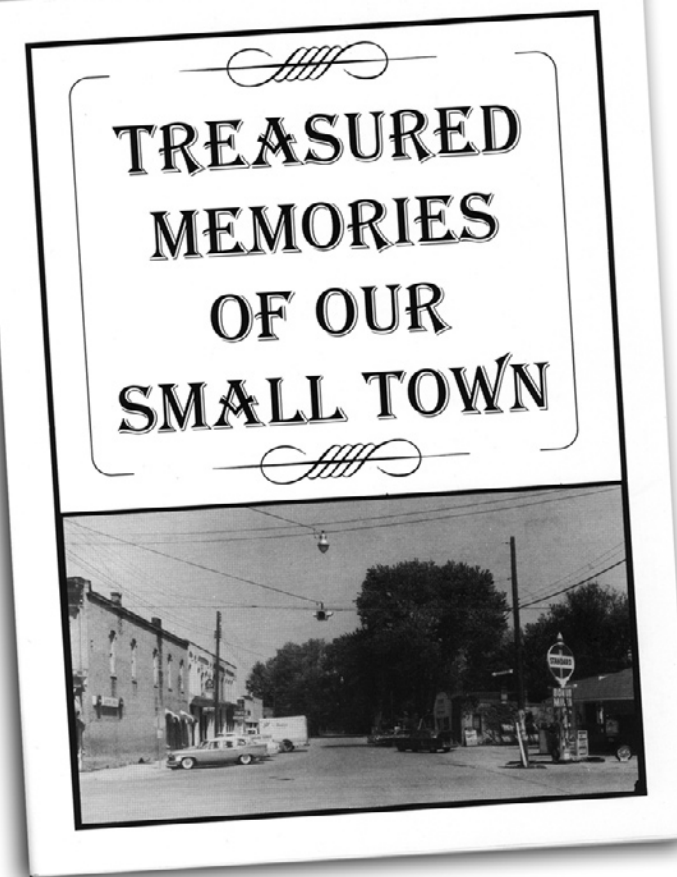
The Pewamo area, according to the Wolniakowskis, attracted the first white settlers from New York State about 1834. John Gee and Thaddeous Warner, meeting up with previous settlers William Hunt and William Burgess in Lyons, scouted for suitable lands to start their homesteads. Gee went back to New York and returned in 1836; he later constructed a sawmill on Stoney Creek.

In 1857, the first railroad through central Michigan changed the fate of many a small settlement along the route. Stores and workshops sprang up, and A.F. Bell surveyed the village. July 25, 1859, the plat was recorded, and this is celebrated as the birth of the town. The post office was set up, and the town was on the map.

The name, Pewamo, was that of a local Indian who lived in the area at the time. Mr. John C. Blanchard, a relative of Hiram Blanchard who was a merchant in the village, had known and hunted with Pewamo, and suggested that this would be a fine name for the town. Years later, the native was told that he had a town named after him, and was well pleased! Pewamo returned to the town in subsequent years, leaving a legacy of fun and firewater.

Our presenters related tales of local landmarks - homes and hotels, stores and saloons, churches and schools - and also the significance of the grain elevator to the town for many decades. There were celebrations, but also disasters - the most memorable being deadly train wrecks in 1905 and 1944.

As with many towns, it contains some ups and some downs. But to this day, it remains a fine community with a great heritage. Our thanks to Sandy and Tony for their presentation. Copies of their book, "Treasured Memories of Our Small Town," are available for \$5.00. Contact the Historical Society for more information.



Minutes of the June '07 Meeting

President Linda Ciangi opened the membership meeting of the Ionia County Historical Society at approx. 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 6, 2007 at the Blanchard House. She opened with a summary comment about our recent successes with the June Yard Sale (with thanks to Gene Werdehof and her

committee) and the Home Tour (with thanks to Bob Nixon and the several committees).

President Ciangi then asked for two or three volunteers to help advise the Board of Directors on projects at the Blanchard House to help evaluate and prioritize them, and address sources of funding.

She also noted that there would be an event sponsored

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by the Tri-River Museums Group at the Belding Museum on July 6th with a program by Barbara Steele entitled "Mrs. Crifffield in 1885" — a personification of a Victorian woman. Tickets are \$10.00 each.

The Secretary's Report was accepted as published in the recent Chronicle, and the Treasurer's Report was shared by Hank Knoop and also accepted into the record. Among other financial statistics, Hank reported that \$211 was earned at the Yard Sale and nearly \$2000 from the Home Tour.

Under old business, members were reminded of the need for volunteers to welcome guests to the Blanchard House during our Summer Sunday open hours, 1 to 4 p.m. Several persons are needed for each Sunday, and a sign-up sheet is in the office. If anyone is interested, please contact President Ciangi.

There is also a sign-up sheet for volunteers to help at the Free Fair's "Antique Village" display area during the Fair.

Joe and Joan McCord reported that over 90 third grade students toured the Blanchard House in recent weeks.

The July meeting will be the 11th with our usual Pot Luck at 6:00 p.m. and a "show-and-tell" session the rest of the evening. Members are encouraged to bring along some memorabilia and share a story about it with the members.

Under new business, members of the Yeomans family who own a horse and carriage have agreed to share a ride with the ICHS during the Free Fair Parade on July 21st. David and Annette McCord will be representing us, dressed in their Victorian outfits (premiered at the Home Tour). The carriage owners will allow us to display signs on the vehicle to

publicize the Society.

There will be a "Fabulous Fifties" fund raiser at the Ionia Theatre on August 9th, and interested parties are invited to attend AND to participate. President Ciangi shared many activities and displays that are being discussed for the event, including period window dressings along Main Street, music and dancing, and more. And speaking of the Fifties, She also noted that there would be a national Elvis impersonator competition at the Free Fair this year, and she (an avid Elvis fan) will be counting the hours until it commences.

Best wishes were extended to Bob Nixon, recovering from recent surgery.

Also, books purchased in honor of Bob Nixon and Katie Lincoln have been received at the Library (and are apparently quite popular).

Thank you also to Gene Werdehof for donating a 48-star U.S. flag and some antique medical equipment.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45 with the introduction of our guests, Sandy and Tony Wolniakowski, who presented us with the History of Pewamo.

BUT, just before the presentation, Joan McCord presented Hank Knoop with a "fish hat" - which he'd sold at the recent ICHS Yard Sale. Story goes, he didn't really want to part with it.

Minutes of the June '07 Meeting of the Board

The Board Meeting for June 20th, 2007, was called to order by President Linda Ciangi at 10:00 a.m. at the Blanchard House. The first action was a motion to donate \$100 to Habitat for Humanity from the profits of the 2007 Home Tour. This passed, and the Treasurer will take care of it.

If ever you have some interesting tidbit, story, or photograph that you think Chronicle readers would enjoy — particularly as it pertains to Ionia's colorful past, please don't hesitate to let me know. I will be glad to publish it in the Chronicle!

— D. McCord, Editor

The Calendar was brought up to date with Summer Sunday volunteers and other activities that are scheduled at the Blanchard House in the weeks to come.

The program being planned by the Tri-River Group was brought to the Board's attention. Each of the museums involved were given 10 tickets to sell. The activity includes a program by Barbara Steele on life in the 1880s, a lunch, and then appraisal hints on some items. Each ticket is \$10, and six of our members are planning to attend at the Belrocton on July 6th. There are now 15 museums in the Tri-River Group, and brochures about each can be obtained at the Blanchard House.

Thursday's free travelogues at the Ionia Theater have been booked for the next month. Thanks go to Dave Cook for his support of this program.

Both Bob Nixon and Katie Lincoln have now read the books purchased for the Library in their honor.

The McCords donated a single-pit iron sink and a pitcher pump to be used in the Carriage House, if a kitchen scene is part of the displays there.

A motion was made by Doni Knoop and supported by Jim Metzen to have David McCord check over the Blanchard House brochure, make any corrections or updates necessary, and order more to be printed.

A wedding is planned for August 11th at the house and they would like to use the piano. Upon trying the piano, we find it very much in need of tuning. Mr. Hagan will be called to see if he can come look at it. Motion

to do so was made by Jim Metzen and supported by Barb Ehler.

\$22.00 was turned over to the Treasurer as a result of the sale of ICHS picture postcards by the Ionia Area Chamber of Commerce.

A new member, Maureen Drummond, and her husband Bill are about to open a new coffee shop in Ionia, and they are asking to be able to sell our ICHS postcards in their store. Thank you to them, and wishes for success in your venture.

A very nice long black satin funeral coat, circa 1880s, that belonged to the Haynor family, was given as an addition to our collection of clothing. A thank you was sent to Roberta Haynor for the donation.

Joan McCord is making progress on the alphabetical listing of the WWII albums. She is also working on articles for the Sentinel-Standard, and helping Kent McFaden take pictures of what the sites from the 1907 Ionia Souvenir Book look like now.

President Ciangi gave an update on the August 9th "Fabulous Fifties" event.

Summer projects include the repair of the cellar doors on the south side of the house; Hank Knoop will work on that. Bryan Quinn will make a new sign for the south side of the house as well, this time of vinyl so it will not need to be repainted.

Activities at the house include our July 11th meeting, the gathering of the Fair Queens before the Free Fair parade, and an upcoming wedding.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

The Chronicle is the official publication of the Ionia County Historical Society. It is written, edited, and published by David McCord, Secretary. Any comments, suggestions, or contributions should be directed to the editor care of the ICHS at P.O. Box 1776, Ionia, MI, 48846 or via www.ioniahistory.org.

FAIR'S COMIN'!

A few vintage views for your enjoyment!



Upcoming Programs and Events

Sunday, June 24th, 1 to 4 p.m.

The Blanchard House will be open to the public for "Summer Sunday" tours and displays.

Sunday, July 1st, 1 to 4 p.m.

The Blanchard House will be open to the public for "Summer Sunday" tours and displays.

Sunday, July 8th, 1 to 4 p.m.

The Blanchard House will be open to the public for "Summer Sunday" tours and displays.

Wednesday, July 11, 7:00 p.m.

Annual Independence Day Potluck

and regular membership meeting at the Blanchard House

Sunday, July 15th, 1 to 4 p.m.

The Blanchard House will be open to the public for "Summer Sunday" tours and displays.

Sunday, July 22th, 1 to 4 p.m.

The Blanchard House will be open to the public for "Summer Sunday" tours and displays.

Sunday, July 29th, 1 to 4 p.m.

The Blanchard House will be open to the public for "Summer Sunday" tours and displays.

Wednesday, August 1, 7:00 p.m.

Regular Membership Meeting

at the Blanchard House

Sunday, August 5th, 1 to 4 p.m.

The Blanchard House will be open to the public for "Summer Sunday" tours and displays.

Sunday, August 12th, 1 to 4 p.m.

The Blanchard House will be open to the public for "Summer Sunday" tours and displays.

Sunday, August 19th, 1 to 4 p.m.

The Blanchard House will be open to the public for "Summer Sunday" tours and displays.

