



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



DIGITIZATION?



Sharon VanEtte, the Ionia Library's Director, addressed the Historical Society with news about their latest archival challenge: the "digitization" of their collection of Ionia's historic newspapers.

To accomplish this task, the microfilms they already have for the Sentinel-Standard newspapers will be scanned and read into a computer system which will "read" the type on the pages and create a text file of the content

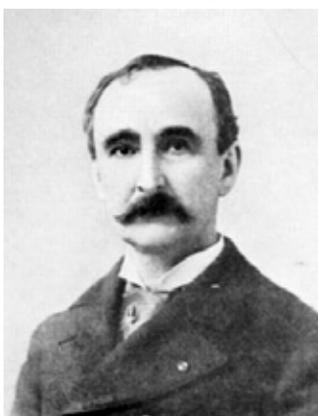
found on those pages. This text can then be read, searched, and (most importantly) indexed to make future research much easier.

The digitization process is not perfect, owing mostly to the quality of the original papers that were microfilmed, and the microfilm itself. Even with that in mind, over 80% of the content of the oldest papers can be successfully translated.

Sharon described her search for a service that could make this happen, and she had checked on several services around the Midwest that could do the job. She finally selected the services of the Clark Historical Library at Central Michigan University. The decision was based on cost as well as convenience, but she also noted that the C.M.U. facility had some editions of Ionia newspapers that the Ionia Library does not, including the County News and others.

The Library received a grant to help pay for the process, which is not inexpensive. Approximately \$1,000 will digitize three years of the editions on file, and a grant has been procured to get the first batch started which was matched by the Friends of the Library.

Newspapers printed after 1963 cannot be freely reproduced due to copyrights, but prior to 1923 all the newspapers are in the public domain (no longer covered by copyright). Therefore, the oldest papers have been chosen for the program.



James H. Kidd, Ionia Newspaperman

Any people who are researching genealogy or historical matters will be able to benefit greatly from this digitization, saving many hours of visual searches on the microfilm viewers and the potential to miss important information. One again, today's technology aids us in our study and understanding of the past.

Thanks to Sharon for her presentation, and her service to the community through the Library. She invites all Ionia residents and visitors to stop by the Library and see the many programs that they have in place for the coming months... and beyond.



Below is a photo of the Ionia Gazette - a newspaper that kept Ionia citizens informed before the Civil War. It was one of a succession of newspapers published in our town in the early years of the settlement. There was also the Ionia Journal, the Ionia Republican, the Express, the County News and a few others. The Sentinel-Standard was a merger of two post-Civil-War papers begun by veterans upon their return home from the War. We have several dozens of these early papers in the collection at the Blanchard House. If you are interested in conservation of these precious historical documents, please contact a Board Member about volunteering for the ICHS



MINUTES of the General Meeting, April 4th, 2012

The April meeting of the ICHS commenced at about 7:10 p.m. At the Blanchard House, called to order by president Stephanie VanderMolen. After welcoming guests, the president called upon Treasurer Hank Knoop for his report.

The Treasurer reviewed the financial overview for February and March, noting that these are among the most expensive months of the year due to utility costs and annual expens

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NEXT MONTH: "The Life and Music of Stephen Foster" by David McCord - at the Blanchard House May 2, 7:00 p.m.

Minutes, continued from page one.

es. Income from several recent events helped, but did not meet those expenses. (Details, as usual, are available on request.) A few outstanding items to share with the membership are:

1. The desktop computer malfunctioned, and the board concluded that this was a good opportunity to upgrade to a new laptop. This was an unforeseen \$400.00 expense. The Board would like to encourage members to donate to this purchase if they can.

2. Lawn care for the coming season may run as much as \$200. Donations, either in money (to hire the work done) or labor (to do the work) will be much appreciated.

3. There are several events coming up this spring and summer that will incur some expenses. If any members would like to come forward to help with those costs, it would be greatly appreciated (and credit will be generously given!).

The Appraisal Roadshow was once again a success, earning more than \$200. Thanks again to the Commission on Aging and Joan McCord for the arrangements.

A last-minute call for raffle ticket purchases was announced, and some members came forward for a chance to win the quilt. Our guest speaker, Sharon VanEtte, drew the winning ticket – which belonged to Gail Gesselman. She was called, and came to the meeting to claim her quilt and express her thanks to the ICHS.

The rearrangements of artifacts and display cases in the basement continue, and the walls in the northeast room are being prepared for a coat of paint before the spring's events start. Other rooms in the house are being "put into shape" for public view again. The small room upstairs that had been our "resource room" is being repurposed as a work area for the Accessions Committee. The floor refinishing in the servants rooms is nearing completion as well.

Arrangements are also well underway for some specialized displays in the Museum area of the house: Linda Ciangi is working with the Ionia Post Office to create a display of artifacts to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Post Office building's service to our community. Other displays in the works will showcase the railroads in Ionia, as well as the Bertha Brock Park history (spotlighting the Winter Festivals on the 1940s).

May 2 will bring the regular meeting of the ICHS at the Blanchard House, which will be a presentation by David McCord on the life and music of Stephen C. Foster (1826 – 1864).

May 5 & 6 will bring the "Spring Into The Past" event once more, the coordinated tours of 22 museums in the Tri-River Museum Group. Any members interested in helping to host at the Blanchard House for that weekend please contact Stephanie V.

On May 19th, buildings in downtown Ionia will once again welcome guests for the annual Upstairs-

Downtown tour. There are still openings for help to staff the sites on this year's tour. If any member is available that day, please contact Kathleen Cook. Ask any presenter from years past: it's not only an easy task, but fun too!

June 1 & 2 will be the annual "Antique Fayre and Flea Market" at the Blanchard House again. Event Chair Doni Knoop reported that there are still spaces available for more vendors, and the call is out for any donations of flea-market donations that we can sell to raise money for the Historical Society.

The Thursday work sessions continue, and many thanks to those who have worked very hard on those days (and others) to get the house and grounds in shape. Much progress has been made towards cataloging the collections, too, and very soon a systematic inventory will begin. Anyone interested in helping with this process, please contact Accessions Chairman David McCord.

The Chronicle will include in every issue a "Wish List" of items or services sought for the Society to fulfill its mission in the community. If you or anyone you know might be able to help fulfill this wish list, please contact a Board member!

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 and the podium was turned over to our guest speaker, Sharon VanEtte,

MINUTES of the April 18th, 2012 Business Meeting

The ICHS Board of Directors met on Wednesday, April 18 at the Blanchard House at approximately 7:00 p.m.

The first order of business was to review the coming calendar of events, beginning with several tours for ele-

ments and library-school classes coming up soon. Hank Knoop and Barb Ehlerst will be hosting these tours.

"Spring Into The Past" will be here soon, and getting the house "presentable" is the highest priority for that weekend. For the days of these "Tri-River" tours, volunteers are needed to staff the Blanchard House. The tours are from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. – if we get enough volunteers we can split that time into shifts. Members interested in helping, please contact Stephanie V.

For this event (and the rest of the season), Stephanie also wants to get the Gift Shop area up to date. This will include (if it's done on time) the revised "self-guided walking tour of downtown Ionia" (in process now by David McCord and Amanda Ford, and potentially donated items that are relevant. We also need to be sure we have enough DVDs and copied documents as well.

Upstairs Downtown is coming up soon as well. The event will be scheduled from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. on May 19th. There are presently 10 sites on the tour. Kathleen Cook and Stephanie V. will be meeting to finalize the tour-guide information and fill in the miscellaneous volunteer needs. Kathleen wondered about volunteers (particularly non-members) being allowed to take the tour themselves (given time). The board agreed that would be fine if there was a way to identify said volunteers. Someone (Doni Knoop?) brought out a stack of "guide" ribbons which would suffice (with the help of some safety pins). Amanda F. volunteered to crochet some unique rosettes for the purpose as well. Tickets are being produced by Annette McCord.

The "Antique Fayre and Flea

Market" event is coming along well, too. More vendors can always be accommodated - we now have seven. More donations of stuff to sell will also be welcomed (please, no clothing). This information needs to get onto the website, too!

This year's Summer Sundays will need to be scheduled soon, so volunteers are encouraged to check their calendars. WE NEED MORE OF YOU TO HELP. If you're not sure what a Summer Sundays Host does, please ask and we'll get you prepared to help. It's just from 1:00 to 4:00 on Sunday afternoons between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Pick a Sunday and get signed up! Some opportunities for Sunday entertainment was discussed, and several Board members said they'd be looking into some of the possibilities.

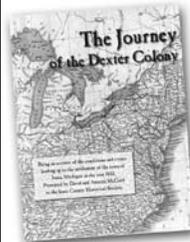
The suggestion was made to invite the Post Office to the Blanchard House for a luncheon to celebrate their building's 100th anniversary. Linda C. will suggest this to them.

Several of the rooms in the basement are ready for a coat of paint, then displays can get moved back into place for the museum season. Barb E. reported that most of the floor staining upstairs is now done, and other moving and storage is also nearing completion. Outside the house, Kathleen is slowly getting the wood chips hauled away one load at a time (from the felling of a few trees in the yard). Carol G. reported that the Garden Club would be stopping by soon to discuss their plans for the flower beds, and Patty S-G. is still working on planting some Lavender along the fences. Other flower bed topics were discussed briefly.

Linda C. is still working on the Post Office anniversary display, as well as other museum themes.



Just a few of the many things available at the Blanchard House / Ionia Museum Gift Shop.



The Journey of the Dexter Colony, 1833, by David and Annette McCord. A detailed history of the settling of Ionia. \$12 each (\$15 with postage)

A History of Bertha Brock Park on its 80th "Birthday" by David McCord. \$6 each



PLUS reproduction and new POSTCARDS of Ionia's Historic Landmarks and outstanding Victorian Architecture!

DVD VIDEO SOUVENIRS!

These movies have proven to be our most popular offerings to date, and recent discoveries have added several popular new titles to the list:

- 1939 "We're In The Movies" A promotional film produced by Ionia businesses and organizations. The soundtrack has been lost, but the images present a wonderful look into our town over 70 years ago.
- 1950s Home Show and Free Fair Movies
- 1976 - The U.S. Bicentennial in Ionia
- 1937 Ionia Airport Inaugural plus Bertha Brock Park's 1940 "Winter Festival"
- 1973 Ionia Centennial Documentary
- "Ionia's First 150 Years" and "Ionia - A Look Back" - Documentaries by Monroe MacPherson

DVDs are available for \$10 each!

ALSO AVAILABLE:

- Reproductions of historic Ionia publications –
- 1887 "Headlight Flashes" Special Edition
 - 1907 Ionia Souvenir Book
 - 1973 Ionia City Centennial Program Book

Upcoming Programs and Events

Wednesday, May 2nd, 7:00 p.m.
Meeting at the Blanchard House

Program: The Music of Stephen Foster
presented by David McCord

Saturday / Sunday - May 5 & 6

“Spring Into The Past” Museum Tours

Wednesday, May 16

Board / Business Meeting
at the Blanchard House - All members invited!

Saturday, May 19th

UPSTAIRS - DOWNTOWN TOURS
in Downtown Ionia!

Friday & Saturday, June 1st & 2nd

The Annual Historical Society Yard Sale!

Wednesday, June 6, 7:00 p.m.

Regular Meeting at the Blanchard House
All members invited!

SUMMER SUNDAYS

will begin very soon. Have you signed
up to host at the Blanchard House yet?

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

Linda C. also mentioned the need to decide on this year's "Queens Reception" at the Blanchard House prior to the Free Fair Parade. Carol G. and Barb E. have volunteered to organize it this year.

Treasurer Hank Knoop presented a pair of advertising bills; the Sentinel-Standard expense had already been approved for payment and the WION bill will be paid by Kathleen and Carol. (Thank you!) He also noted that the annual insurance bill is coming due (\$1200). It was moved by Stephanie and supported by Kathleen to pay this. Linda C. also submitted some receipts for the Board to review, but no action was taken at this meeting. Doni K. also reported that the Quilt Raffle brought in just over \$800.

David M. and Linda C. shared their comments and information about the September 8th Civil War Reenactors' event being planned for Ionia. They had attended a meeting on the 14th at the FUMC with Pastor Larry Brown, who is the main contact for the event. Representatives from the 21st Michigan and the 3rd Michigan

were there, and details were discussed for the event, which looks like it will be a great one! MORE TO COME.

David M. had also met with Joshua Pardon, a video producer from Ann Arbor who wants to create a documentary on the State Hospital which was located in Ionia for nearly 100 years. His documentary will not only explore the history of Ionia's institution, but also the entire subject of institutionalized mental health care and how it changed over that time period. Linda C. talked with him on the phone about arranging some interviews with former State Hospital employees, and Barb Hogan is standing by to help with tracking down relevant artifacts in the ICHS collection. More to come!

Another video producer is interested in using the Blanchard House as a site for a project. This one is less historical in nature, and it was suggested that the producer be invited to present his ideas to the Board in person so they can decide if the House can be made available for the project. Kathleen C. will contact the inquirer to set something up.

NEWS OF THE REBELLION

150 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH:

After sailing from Washington, D. C. to Fredericksburg, President Lincoln meets with Joe Hooker on April 4th to discuss strategy in Virginia.

On April 6, Confederate forces attacked Union forces under General Ulysses S. Grant at Shiloh, Tennessee. By the end of the day, the federal troops were almost defeated. Yet, during the night, reinforcements arrived, and by the next morning the Union commanded the field. When Confederate forces retreated, the exhausted federal forces did not follow. Casualties were heavy -- 13,000 out of 63,000 Union soldiers and 11,000 of 40,000 Confederate troops were killed.

Island No. 10, in the Mississippi River downstream from New Madrid, was captured on April 7th. More than 5,000 Confederates are taken prisoner. In other Naval activity, Commodore David Farragut led an assault up the Mississippi River. By April 25, he was in command of New Orleans.

On April 16th, President Lincoln signed legislation freeing the estimated 3,500 slaves in the District of Columbia.

Combining the Confederate Army of the Potomac with John Magruder's Army of the Peninsula and a large garrison at Norfolk, President Jefferson Davis creates the Army of Northern Virginia. Before the month is out, the Confederate Congress passes a conscription law to boost their army's strength. It was not a popular act, nor possible to enforce.

General McClellan's troops left northern Virginia to begin the Peninsular Campaign. By May 4, they occupied Yorktown, Virginia. At Williamsburg, Confederate forces prevented McClellan from meeting the main part of the Confederate army, and McClellan halted his troops, awaiting reinforcements.

THE WISH LIST

Being a summary of items or tasks identified by the Board of Directors for which the **MEMBERSHIP** may be involved with donations of money and/or time!

- The ICHS purchased a new laptop **COMPUTER** recently (the old computer expired). Seeking money towards this \$400 expense.
- The ICHS Yard Sale will be held on June 1 & 2 at the Blanchard House. **PLEASE DONATE** anything (expect clothing) that we can sell to raise money for the Historical Society!
- The cost of **LAWN MOWING** by a hired service is \$200 per season. Seeking money or in-kind contributions to help maintain the grounds.
- Several of our upcoming events will incur **PROMOTIONAL COSTS** for advertising and materials. Sponsors are very welcomed and your donation will be acknowledged (if so desired).
- The Museum requires **SUPPLIES** specifically made for storing our valuable historic documents and photographs. If you'd like to help with this effort, either in **MONEY** or **TIME**, please do!

VOLUNTEERS are needed for Summer Sunday hosting at the Blanchard House. It's an easy and fun way to spend a few hours. Please contact the President or a Board Member to sign up **NOW!**



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!**

April 26 – Return to Steam Trains

May 3 – Yellowstone National Park

May 10 – Mackinaw Island

May 17 – Africa: The Serengeti

May 24 – Through the Dunes of Nebraska

May 31 – The Amish

May 38 – The Middle East

Ionia County Historical Society 2011-12 Board of Directors & Officers

Stephanie VanderMolen, President — 616-755-0731
 Patty Simpson-Gokee, Vice Pres. Pro-Tem — 527-0676
 Kathleen Cook, Director — 527-2626
 Carol Gallagher, Director — 527-0961
 Barb Hogan, Director — ??? (Sorry, Barb)
 David McCord, Secretary — 527-3784
 Hank Knoop, Treasurer — 527-3130