



# the **CHRONICLE**

The Almost Monthly Publication of  
the Ionia County Historical Society



## MINUTES of the April, 2011 Program Meeting

The monthly gathering of the members of the Ionia County Historical Society for the month of April was called to order by President Linda Ciangi at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday the 6th. After greetings and a welcome to our guests Glenda and Norma Kilpatrick, Linda expressed thanks to Hank and Doni Knoop and Barb Ehlert for their efforts in cleaning up in the Carriage House, and to Stephanie VanderMolen for the fliers she designed for the June 10 Yard Sale and May 15th Concert promotion. Thanks also to the Expo helpers: Patty Simpson-Gokee, Stephanie V., Phillis Lobdell, Joe and Joan McCord, and the Knoops.

Hank Knoop, ICHS Treasurer, reported that the Biggby Coffee contribution from January amounted to \$23.00, and \$380.00 was earned at the Appraisal Road Show on April 2 (with thanks to McCords, Nixons, and others). The Winter expenses have shifted

the financial balances into the negative in recent months.

Under old business, the "Spring Into The Past" museum tours for April 30 and May 1 are being chaired by Stephanie V. and David McCord. There will be lawn games and Victorian Entertainments for our guests - and volunteers to help welcome visitors and conduct tours of the Blanchard House are needed.

The May 15th Country Music Memories concert plans are coming along nicely, and posters and other information are available from "The Ciangi Production Company." (Linda C. is producing the concert for the benefit of the ICHS and at no financial risk to the organization.) Members will be needed to help usher at the Theatre the night of the concert.

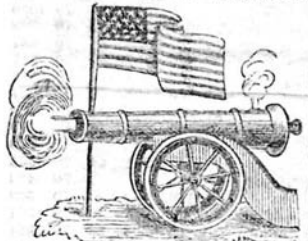
The June 10 "Yard Sale" chairperson Doni Knoop reported that some "advance sales" had already been made, and some of our yard sale contributions have been spoken for - meaning that the event has already generated income! She is still looking forward to vendors to purchase the 10x10 spaces

*Continued on page 2*

### The Ionia Gazette.

Local and Miscellaneous Matters.

### THE CARS HAVE ARRIVED



### IN IONIA!

On Monday afternoon last about 6 o'clock the first Locomotive ever seen in this place, hove into the Ionia Depot. That question which has been asked so much—"when will the cars get here?" will not be asked again. They came on Monday August 10th, 1857. Our citizens have had their attention constantly employed in viewing, contemplating and speculating upon the varied and interesting topics connected with the completion of the Railroad to this place. It is certainly a great era in our history, the importance of which can hardly be contemplated. It is none of your Marshall and Ionia Plank Roads Slack Water Navigation, Saginaw and Grand Rapids Canals, but it is a RAILROAD, connecting us with the world and the rest of mankind. There is to be no more prying over sandbars, trundling around rapids with tows, or freezing up five months at Grand Haven. The day of deliverance has come, let the whole people rejoice. The new timetable has been issued and goes into operation to-day. We notice that the passenger cars are to leave Ionia daily at 11 o'clock A. M., and will arrive at 1 o'clock and 52 minutes.

## IONIA'S RAILROAD HERITAGE

*The April meeting of the ICHS was intended to be a presentation by Mr. Bill Davis on the significant contributions made by the Railroads in Ionia County. However, this presentation did not take place. In it's stead, please indulge the editor to present a few tidbits about the earliest of Ionia's Railroads.*

The Detroit and Milwaukee Railroad was the first to reach Ionia. Here (left) is a photo of the article from the Ionia Gazette of August 12, 1857. (The original is in the archive at the Blanchard House.) The locomotive was very probably like the one pictured above. The rails were "strap rails" - wooden runners with iron straps on top. These were very soon replaced by solid iron rails. Plans are to develop a permanent display in the museum area of the Blanchard House on Ionia's Railroads, which we hope will be previewed at the "Antique Village" exhibit at this summer's Ionia Free Fair.

## Practice your poise for May Day weekend!



**T**he 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 Safta (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!

**NEXT MONTH: May Program:  
Ionia County: The "Home Front" in 1861**

Minutes, continued from page one.

on the grounds

Dick Baker reported on his work in the Conservatory of the B-House, where he is refinishing and patching the woodwork, and Sue Garrison is patching and painting the walls and ceiling. Dick also reported that the roof over the conservatory and exterior woodwork will need attention very soon. He is also planning to refinish the kitchen floor in the coming weeks, to be ready well before the upcoming rentals and ICHS events. Bob Nixon made a motion to support Dick's continued work, asking for a vote of thanks for all he's done. This was supported by Barb Ehlert and heartily endorsed by the members.

Linda C. reported a few of the amazing finds in the Blanchard House collections that continue to be uncovered. Photos, documents, and other artifacts are constantly coming to light. She once again invites anyone interested in helping with this effort to stop in on Thursday afternoons, or contact her to help at other times with this fascinating work.

She noted that an immediate objective is to clean up some of the works in progress so that the house can be put in order for our upcoming guests.

She concluded her presentation with notice that the Business Meeting would be held on the 13th (not on the third Wednesday as would normally be) due to some schedule conflicts. As always, all members and guests are welcome to these meetings.

The originally scheduled presentation was to be Bill Davis with a program about Ionia Railroad Heritage, but Mr. Davis failed to arrive. So Ms. C. instead introduced Mr. Jeff Parker, Architect, who shared the plans he's been developing for the Resurrection Life Church on the 400 block of West Main (see information elsewhere in this issue). After his presentation, Joan

Nixon shared a collection of quilts recently acquired for the Blanchard House collection, assembled by Fred Miller from donated blocks from Ann Slowins (some dating back 100 years or more).

### MINUTES of the April, 2011 Business Meeting

The monthly Business Meeting of the ICHS was called to order by President Linda Ciangi at 7:15 p.m. on Wednesday, April 13, 2011. Due to the refinishing of floors and painting of walls, the Board decided at the last minute to change the venue to the Lamplight Grill.

The repair and restoration work being done which caused the change in venue is coming along well, and Linda noted that the Board had approved (by phone vote) to allow Dick Baker to have a key to the Blanchard House during the execution of his work there. Treasurer Hank K. asked if the expenses for the estimated \$3,000 roof and woodwork repairs for the House would be coming from the general fund, or did the Board have some notion to put together a fund-raiser for that project. It was decided to check with Dick Baker on the urgency of the outdoor repairs, and if it's possible to postpone that until next spring, we could seek some grant money to help with it. The Board agreed that they would not seek competitive bids for the work, and that Mr. Baker's generosity and expertise is much appreciated.

Inventory work continues, getting more artifacts sorted into general categories. She asked Accessions Committee (David M. and Stephanie V.) when their next evaluation session might be. They reported that none was planned, but the calendars will be consulted.

President Ciangi also reminded the Board and guests that there is plenty of

cleaning up to complete before the upcoming spring rentals, and that Thursday afternoon will probably not be enough time for it all. She invited anyone interested in helping in the cleanup to contact her, or another Board member.

She asked that the Board also check their calendars for Summer Sundays to be sure to schedule hosts, if not programs, for the summer months. Carol G. asked if there was a list of folks who had been trained - or felt capable at least - to give tours of the Blanchard House. There is not, through a brief list was noted ad hoc, namely: Hank Knoop, David, Joe and Joan McCord, Linda Ciangi, Gerry Perry, Kris Haskins, Barb Ehlert, and Carol and Mike Gallagher. (There may be others - this was "spur of the moment.")

On April 28th, ICHS members and guests are invited to the Ionia Theatre at 7:00 p.m. for a "Historical Musical Program" by the group "Three Husbands on the Loose." This presentation was originally scheduled for the February meeting, but snowfall changed those plans. That date being Thursday, members are invited to the Lamplight for dinner before the meeting as well. On April 30th and May 1st will be the annual "Spring Into The Past" museum tours event. (Hosts and helpers are needed!)

There are many events scheduled for May this year. Wednesday the 4th will be the month program, then on the 6th, a tour group from Ada is coming by. On the 13th, the R.A.V.E. organization is scheduled for a fund-raiser, and the 14th a Prom Party will be at the Blanchard House. The 15th is the Country Memories Concert at the Ionia Theatre (see details elsewhere in this issue). On the 21st the Blanchard House is rented for a Tea Party, and on the 22nd, a Recital. Sometime during May (date TBD), a local Cub Scout Pack will be doing their annual Historical Hike, and want to visit the Blanchard House for a quick tour as well.

Friday, June 10th will be the annual Yard Sale, and Doni K. reports that the stock of goods for sale is filling up the Carriage House very quickly. "But," she says, "there's always room for more!" June is also "Military Month" and Linda C. will be putting together an appropriate display at the house in keeping with that theme.

July will bring the annual Pot Luck Dinner (no presentation, but great food!), and the members will be working on a Railroad-themed float for the Free Fair Parade later in the month.

**2ND ANNUAL  
ANTIQUÉ PAYRE  
&  
FLEA  
MARKET**

**FRI JUN 10TH 8AM  
FROM UNTIL 4PM**

**IONIA**

THE BLANCHARD HOUSE ON THE LAWN

251 E. MAIN ST., IONIA  
RAIN OR SHINE.



Lawn spaces available 10X 10 for \$10 ea.  
Reserved on first come first serve basis.  
Contact Doni Knoop for more information 616-527-3130  
[www.ioniahistory.org](http://www.ioniahistory.org)

Someone asked about putting a banner on the fence along Adams Street during the summer to promote the House's open hours. Kris Haskins reiterated that the key to meeting the financial needs of the Blanchard House is rentals, and that every opportunity should be taken to promote that.

With that in mind, Doni K. reported that she had received a letter from the D.O.T. about having our brochures at the visitors centers, which hasn't been done "officially" in quite a while. Linda C. said she would see to getting printing done for that, if the Board wants to provide brochures to the program. Stephanie moved to print at least a minimum quantity for the program, which was supported by Carol Gallagher. The Board approved the motion, based on the approximate cost of less than \$150 for the printing. Doni K. said she would take care of shipping them to the D.O.T. as required.

A brief discussion was had regarding having a sponsor for the brochures - offering some business advertising space on the back if they paid for printing. Patty S. said she would talk to the Big Boy people to see if they would be interested, and report back next month.

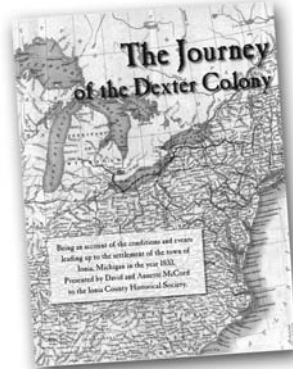
There was further discussion of the ICHS hosting a Cemetery Tour in the fall as a fund-raiser. The calendars consulted, it appears that mid-October on a Sunday afternoon (or a Saturday AND Sunday, depending) would be best. Stephanie VanderMolen is chairing this event, and continues to work on the arrangements for a tour of the Highland Park Cemetery. Watch for more information as it becomes available.

This business concluded, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

## 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)



# 150 YEARS AGO — APRIL 1861

# The Ionia Gazette.



E. R. POWELL, Editor and Proprietor.

\$1.25 Per Annum, when paid strictly in Advance.

VOL. XII.

IONIA, MICHIGAN, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 1861

NUMBER 17

## THE IONIA GAZETTE

Will be issued every Wednesday Afternoon in the Villages of Ionia, Ionia County, Michigan, by  
**E. R. POWELL.**

Office, opposite the Public Square.

### TERMS:

One Dollar and twenty-five cents per annum in advance at the rate of two dollars per year when next paid in advance. Delivered by the Carrier in the Village, 25 extra will be charged.

No paper will be discontinued until all arrearages are paid except at the option of the publisher.

Legal advertisements will be inserted at the rates proscribed by law. Advertisements, other than legal, inserted at the usual prices.

### ALL KINDS OF JOB PRINTING

SUCH AS

HANDBILLS,	BALL TICKETS,
PLATES,	POSTERS,
CIRCULARS,	GRASSHOPPER CARDS,
LABELS,	AC. AC. AC.

EXECUTED WITH NEATNESS AND DISPATCH

## Virginia Secedes, April 17!

President Calls for 75,000 Volunteers to Defend Capital

Washington, April 15 - The President has issued a proclamation that calls for 75,000 volunteers to suppress the rebellion.

## Gov. Blair Offers Full Support from Michigan!

Legislators expected to pass funding bill in June session.

Lansing, Mich, April 18 - Michigan's Governor Blair delivered on the promise he made in January's inaugural address to the State Legislature. Today he pledged his State's full military and civilian support to the preservation of the Union.

Adjutant General John Robertson, commander of the Michigan State Militia, and Major Alpheus Williams of the State Military Board, have begun to accept applications for volunteer units throughout the State.

Offices have been set up in the Headquarters of the Detroit Light Guard at Ft. Wayne to begin the formation of the first regiments. Thus far, with the Legislature in recess, no funding has been assigned to the operation, although Gov. Blair has pledged to provide whatever sums are required.

## RIOTS in the Streets of Baltimore!

4 Soldiers and 12 Civilians Dead

Baltimore Md, April 19 - (Reprinted through the courtesy of the Grand Rapids Eagle) -

A mere five days after Fort Sumter fell, Federal troops from the Sixth Massachusetts boarded a train in Boston, bound for Washington DC, as one of the first regiments to respond to the call for troops. At noon on the 21st, they arrived in Baltimore along with a Pennsylvania regiment. Colonel Edward F. Jones, commanding the Sixth, had some forewarning that Baltimore's secessionist sympathizers and violent political gangs of "Plug-Uglies" and "Blood-Tubs" might try to keep his men from reaching Washington. He issued ammunition and ordered his men to "...pay no attention to the

mob, even if they throw stones, bricks, or other missiles; but if you are fired upon and any one of you is hit, your officers will order you to fire. Do not fire into any promiscuous crowds, but select any man whom you may see aiming at you, and be sure you drop him." The locomotive disconnected and horses quickly pulled carriages containing the first seven companies to Camden Station before the gathering mobs barricaded the tracks, trying to turn back the Yankee infantry. The Sixth's regimental band and four companies of soldiers were stranded and surrounded. Dismounting the stalled carriages, the troopers marched a few short blocks under a barrage of stones, bricks, oyster shells, and other garbage. At Gay and Pratt Streets, a barricade blocked the mob and a soldier fell dead. The Federal soldiers were ordered to fire; or, perhaps they simply panicked and fired. Either way, the ensuing day-long melee killed four soldiers and a dozen civilians and left 100 injured."



Above: Major Robt. Anderson.

## April 12: Assault on Ft. Sumter

During the early months of 1861, the situation around Fort Sumter increasingly began to resemble a siege. In March, Brig. Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard, the first general officer of the newly formed Confederate States of America, was placed in command of Confederate forces in Charleston. Beauregard energetically directed the strengthening of batteries around Charleston harbor aimed at Fort Sumter. Conditions in the fort grew dire as the Federals rushed to complete the installation of additional guns. Anderson was short of men, food, and supplies.

The resupply of Fort Sumter became the first crisis of the administration of President Abraham Lincoln. He notified the Governor of South Carolina, Francis W. Pickens, that he was sending supply ships, which resulted in an ultimatum from the Confederate government: evacuate Fort Sumter immediately. Major Anderson refused to surrender. Beginning at 4:30 a.m. on April 12, the Confederates bombarded the fort from artillery batteries surrounding the harbor. Although the Union garrison returned fire, they were significantly outgunned and, after 34 hours, Major Anderson agreed to evacuate. There was no loss of life on either side as a direct result of this engagement, although a gun explosion during the surrender ceremonies on April 14 caused two Union deaths.

ABOVE: A recreation (not genuine) of a POSSIBLE front page of the Ionia Gazette; LEFT: Engraving of Ft. Sumter in Charleston Harbor before the attack on April 12. BELOW: From the cover of Harper's Magazine, April 20, 1861



## IN IONIA, APRIL 1861...

It's surprising how few first-hand records can be found regarding Ionia in 1860. The Ionia Newspapers must be in hiding somewhere! Reading many accounts of central Michigan history, I have tried to put together a fair picture of the County and Village for my presentation in May.

April 1861 in Ionia was, for the most part, taking a spectator's point of view. That is, until the call to arms, when it became undeniably real that the rebellion was reaching us here at home. Volunteerism was not only an opportunity for adventurous youth, but a challenge to one's duty to preserve the nation.

According to the 1860 census, the village's population was 1,170, and that of Ionia County was 16,665. Here is reproduced a long paragraph from Clark's 1863 Gazetteer of Michigan. Although it's two years after our target date, it reflects closely the impression that the community presented at the time.

### IONIA.

An important and flourishing post village in the township and county of the same name, situated on the north bank of the Grand river, about 90 miles from its mouth, and, by the Detroit and Milwaukee railroad, 124 miles north-west of Detroit; fare, \$3 75. The village has a population of nearly 1,500, and was formerly incorporated, but has relapsed into the township. It is surrounded by an excellent farming country, and is the seat of considerable trade. The Grand river is navigable to this place, from Grand Rapids, for small steamers, and for flat boats to Lyons, ten miles above, but since the completion of the Detroit and Milwaukee railroad, boating on the river has been entirely discontinued. The village is pleasantly located in a beautiful valley, backed by high and rolling land, which is, for miles, under a high state of cultivation. There are several fine private residences in the village, and considerable taste is displayed by the inhabitants in laying out and adorning their grounds. They have here two flour mills, manufacturing about 18,000 barrels per year; two iron foundries and machine shops, in which are manufactured a large quantity of agricultural implements; two sash and blind factories, one brewery, one steam saw mill, one fanning mill factory, two banking houses, two hotels, about twenty stores, and a proportionate number of trades and professions. During the past season there were purchased here 150,000 pounds of wool, and 200,000 bushels of wheat. The village has a lodge, chapter, council and commandery of F. and A. Masons, a fine union school, six churches, an agricultural society, a United States land office, and a weekly Republican newspaper, (the Ionia Gazette, \$1 25 per year, published every Wednesday, by E. R. Powell). A quarry of superior red sand stone has been opened in the township of Ionia, about four miles east of the village, and about a mile north of the railroad. It has been examined by competent judges, and pronounced a very superior article for building purposes. (For sketch of early history of Ionia, see "Ionia county.")

Our thanks to Mr. Jeff Parker, Architect, for his presentation to the ICHS at our April 6 meeting. He shared with us the process in the development of the new building and improvements being proposed for the 400 block of West Main Street by the Resurrection Life Church. By means of large renderings, Mr. Parker presented floor plans, site plans, and exterior views of the existing site as well as the proposed new construction. This appears to be a very fine update to the area, and will provide a bright new feature in the town, as well as a respect for the existing storefront heritage of the district.

## Upcoming Programs and Events

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

Thursday, April 28, 7:00 p.m.  
**Special Musical Program (with History!)**  
for ICHS members and guests at the Ionia Theatre  
*With special thanks to Lamplight Grill!*

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 McCord

Sunday, May 15, 3:00 p.m.  
at Ionia Theatre *"Country Music Memories"*  
(See advert on this page)

Wednesday, May 18th, 7:00 p.m.  
Business Meeting at the Blanchard House  
**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

Wednesday, June 1st, 7:00 p.m.  
Program at the Blanchard House  
*"Military Memoirs"* presented by  
Linda Ciangi

Friday, June 10, 8:00 a.m to 4:00 p.m.  
**ICHS YARD SALE & FLEA MARKET**  
on the lawn of the Blanchard House  
*Many vendors - Many treasures!*

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

## 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!**

- May 5 — Alpine Adventure
- May 12 — Southwest By Rail
- May 19 — The White House
- May 26 — New Zealand
- June 2 — France
- June 9 — Sea to Sea by Model-T
- June 16 — Hawaii

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

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