



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



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Please Share a Little Information:

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

Thanks!

Have you got something to donate?

The Historical Society accepts most donations of antique and vintage photos, documents, or larger artifacts IF they are relevant to Ionia's history in some way. Please contact a board member for more information, and be sure to get a receipt for your donation—it may be tax-deductible! (We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.)

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- Linda Ciangi, Vice President — 616-527-4945
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- Annette McCord, Treasurer — 616-527-3784
- Barb Ehlert, House Rentals — 616-522-0844

For information on your long-lost relatives in Ionia, please contact the Ionia County Genealogy Society.
<http://ionia.migenweb.net/ICGS/icgshome.htm>



The Blanchards

At the August 3 meeting of the Historical Society, members and guests at the Blanchard House learned a little bit about the man behind the name.

David and Annette McCord did some research into the Blanchard family history, and compiled some facts and stories reaching back into the early 1800s.

From the family's roots in central New York state, to young

John's ambition to make a name for himself, we followed his adventures as he ran away from home at the age of 14. He headed west to the Michigan Territory, the land of opportunity.

He did, indeed, make a fortune, through shrewd land speculation, a talent for criminal prosecution, and a powerful voice for politics. He became a lawyer, railroad man, lumber baron, politician, and more.

The story isn't complete without the stories of the entire Blanchard family. His parents, his wife, and his children each have fascinating lives as well. Fascinating, and sometimes tragic, the stories ranged all across the country.

Even though they traveled the country from Arkansas to Virginia, and north to the Upper Peninsula, the family was always anchored in Ionia County.



The details shared at the meeting are just part of the tale. Those stories and more are being written into a booklet to document and share the true story. This booklet will be available through the Historical Society soon.

John C. Blanchard lived from 1822 to 1905, and left a legacy that reaches far and wide - even though very few people (even in Ionia) have ever heard of him.

It's quite a story, and we hope you can get a copy of the new booklet to read more.



Minutes of the August 3 Meeting

The meeting was called to order at approx. 7:00 p.m. by President Kathleen Cook. (This report is based on her agenda.)

We made new friends at the Ionia Free Fair Parade. We had two gentlemen driving their Shelby Cobras in front of the float and another fellow picking up at the rear of our float in his Woody that was made in Ionia. The three guys volunteered to ride in the parade again next year. The Historical Society won the award for Best Non-Commercial Float for 2016! Thanks to the folks who contributed to the float and rode in the parade this year.

Another order for hardcover IFF books was placed... in other words, they are selling! Thanks to David and Annette for selling down at the Floral Building during the fair. [Thanks also to Joan McCord, Tracy Reynolds, Dave White, the team of Mary Colvin and Kathy Jackson, and the staff of the Antique Village for their help as well.] Have you got yours yet?

We have acquired the quilts that were once hanging in the Courthouse. They will remain on display here for a short time, then carefully stored until such time as we have an appropriate place to show them again.

Thanks to everyone who helped with the Antique Fayre. It was another successful event.

I am happy to announce that the library millage passed. We rely on the library for much of our research needs, especially the Sentinel archives. The library is also hosting three adult programs at the Blanchard house this Fall. Wednesday, September 7: A Reader's Theatre Production, *The Alchemist* performed by Actors del Arte Ensemble of West Michigan. On Tuesday, October 18th Author Ron Rademacher will show slides of unique destinations in Michigan. Wednesday, November 2, Alan Naldrett who is a librarian, historian and writer will discuss information in his book, *Lost Car Companies of Detroit*.

Fall Fest at Bertha Brock Park is Saturday, September 17. We already have volunteers to help clean the creek, sell ducks and make sure they all make it down the stream. There are still more opportunities to volunteer so let us know if you would like to be involved.

Summer Sunday tours have been going well but we really need to get more people helping with this if we want to stay open. Let us know if you want to help. [Note: David McCord has updated the "Docent's Guide," a script for conducting tours of the Blanchard House. Several members offered to proof-read the preliminary document - the final should be ready soon for anyone who would like to learn. The descriptions will be adapted to small frames within each room to facilitate self-guided tours.]

Refreshments for September, October and November? [Dave White offered to provide refreshments for October. The other two months are still open for volunteers.]

The 2016 Cemetery Tour will be held on October 2nd. A committee met at Highland Cemetery to choose a list of prominent and interesting folks to include on the tour. The final decision will be made at the next Board Meeting (August 17). All interested parties are encouraged to attend that meeting at the Blanchard House.

Annette McCord delivered the Treasurers Report. The highlights are as follow: The Silent Auction in June brought in just

under \$1,100; the Antique Fayre brought in just under \$1,000; House Rentals brought in \$900. The Free Fair book sale is going well, with nearly 150 soft-cover books and 50 hard-cover books sold so far. This has generated over \$6800 income for the Historical Society so far. We have about 150 more softcovers and 50 hardcovers in stock to be sold, and more orders are coming in all the time. There have also been some sales through Amazon.com — that report will come later. Thanks again to the family of Katie Lincoln for the donation, plus the calendar sales and auction that covered the initial print run for the books.

We had a \$100 donation from Tim Lockwood and another \$100 in memory of Rus Gregory. We also had a generous gift of \$2,000 from Sarah Hamilton. There was also some income from memberships and a "business buddy."

Expenses for the past two months were paid, including the phone, electric, water, lawn care, and postage. The larger expenses were the repair of the front steps and tuck-pointing for the sandstone. (\$1500 of that was paid from the Hank Knoop Memorial Fund.)

In summary: Total income was \$12,800, and expenses were \$9,800, putting our checking account balance back in the black!

Continued thanks to all the volunteers who are here on Thursday afternoons maintaining the house and grounds, plus those working on the inventory of artifacts and documents in our collections. Anyone who'd like to help is welcomed!

The meeting was adjourned to grab some refreshments, after which the members gathered for the presentation on the Blanchard family story. (See information on page one.)

NOTE: There was a short Board Meeting following the membership meeting. Linda Ciangi had written up thank-you cards for the folks who joined us for the Free Fair Parade. The Board signed these cards. She also submitted a request to the Board for \$164.34 reimbursement for expenses related to the Free Fair float. It was moved by Ally Cook and supported by Linda Ciangi. The motion passed.



Photo of the original Blanchard House, built in 1850 on the same location of the big sandstone mansion. This house was moved to make room for the mansion. The Historical Society bought it in 1988 and moved it to its present location. It was sold to the ISD for their Freedom Acres program.

Upcoming Programs and Events

Wednesday, September 7, 7:00 p.m.
Actor's Guild Presentation
at the Blanchard House, 251 E. Main St.
partnering with the Ionia Community Library.

Wednesday, September 21, 7:00 p.m.
Business Meeting at the Blanchard House
Open to all interested parties.

Sunday, October 2
"Spirits of Ionia's Past"
Our annual Cemetery Tour.
(Watch for more details coming soon!)

Wednesday, October 5, 7:00 p.m.
Annual meeting at the
Blanchard House, 251 E. Main St.
including the election of new Directors.

Tuesday, October 11 (all day!)
Tri-River Museum Group's Annual Bus Trip
Exploring Michigan Museums

Tuesday, October 18
Presentation at the Library by Ron Rademaker
with slides of unique Michigan destinations.

Wednesday, October 17, 7:00 p.m.
Business Meeting at the Blanchard House
Open to all interested parties.

**Don't forget to visit the
Blanchard House and Museum,**
Sundays, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. through August



Check www.ioniahistory.org and
LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!



The August 17 Board Meeting

The meeting was called to order at approx. 7:00 p.m. by Vice President Linda Ciangi. Present were Secretary David McCord and Treasurer Annette McCord, members Bryan and Mary Kimble, Dave White and Barb Ehlert, later joined by Directors Gordon Wright and Ally Cook. President Kathleen Cook had prepared an agenda but could not attend.

The first order of business was the Bertha Brock Park Fall Festival, Saturday, September 17. It appears that the Duck Race will be staffed, both those behind the ticket table and those in the creek "herding ducks." Boy Scouts will clean the creek the Monday before, but other volunteers would be appreciated to walk the creek once more before the event to minimize the snags. (Please support your Historical Society by purchasing your Ducks, and helping out at the event if you can.) The Board approved \$10 to copy some photos for a display at the Fall Festival.

The Cemetery Tour is coming on fast, scheduled for Sunday, October 2nd. Several members surveyed the site and compiled a list of "celebrities" to choose from. The theme is "Street Names" - and all of our candidates will be folks who have streets, avenues, courts, alleys, or highways named after them. Several folks have come forward to be presentors at the event and the research has begun! If you'd like to help, please contact an ICHS Board Member.

A tour group of 50 persons are visiting the Blanchard House on October 13th. A little help that morning would be appreciated. The group only has an hour, so it will be a quick tour!

Speaking of tours, any folks who are proof-reading the new Docent's Guidelines, please get your comments to David McCord as soon as you can so the new documents can be put into service.

Mary Kimble has been sorting and cataloging artifacts in the ICHS collection. She's refining the inventory process and finding some great treasures. If you'd like to help, please do! The Board also approved \$10 for the purchase of a box of "sheet protectors" to file documents and papers in notebooks.

Elections are coming up in October for two Board positions for the next two-year term, and one for a resigning member. If you're interested, contact the Board by the September meeting.

There was a suggestion that we put together a raffle for the end of the year. Treasurer Annette M. will look into the use of the permit that we acquired but did not use earlier in the year.

Linda C. reported that the DDA has approved the monument project to commemorate Gov. Green and his legacy. More to come.

There has been a suggestion to paint murals on the big blank brick walls of some of the buildings in town. Several ideas have been discussed, but nothing yet decided. The idea of decorating within the circular windows in Cornel Alley is going ahead.

Horrock's has invited the ICHS to set up a table at their "Art in the Garden" event coming on August 27th. Anyone interested in helping with that, please raise your hand!

The meeting was adjourned at about 8:30, and those assembled looked through a few items found in storage to decide if they were worth keeping, selling, throwing out, or passing along to other area historical groups. (There was a little of each in the box.)

— D. McCord, Secretary

Also available in the ICHS Gift Shop:
Rosette: A Novel of Pioneer Michigan
 by Cindy Rinaman Marsch.



This wonderful novel is based on the journals of Rosette Cordelia Ramsdell who lived near Lyons, Michigan in the 1850s. In the voices of Rosette and her family, the novel traces how we both choose and suffer our destiny. It brings us enduring themes of friends and family as they make the most of the harsh American pioneer life.

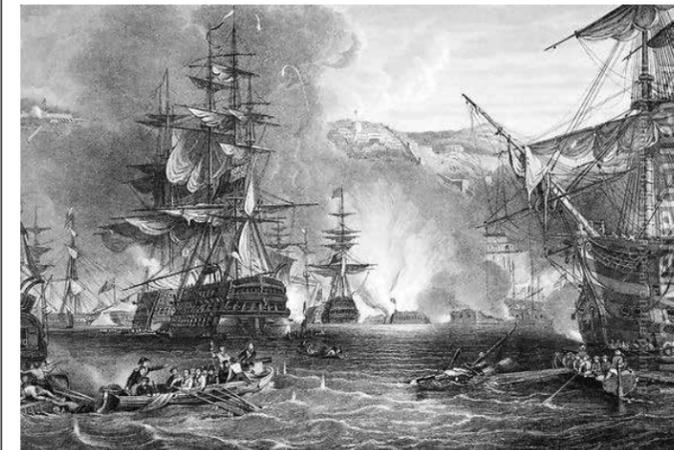
WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Help is desperately needed with **Summer Sundays (greeters and tour guides), maintenance projects, inventory, publicity, and general help!** Please contact the Board of Directors, a friend who is a member of the Historical Society, or visit a monthly meeting to ask what you can do to help keep the Historical Society ALIVE!

This is my favorite part of the newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading the facts I've found. With great resources on the internet and in the Historical Society archives, I offer these glimpses into the past. — D.M.

200 years ago — August 1816

- Piracy on the high seas was of grave concern to the global trading nations. On the 27th of August, 1816, Great Britain and the Netherlands began a joint bombardment of the port of Algiers in an attempt to end the slavery practices of Omar Agha, the Dey of Algiers. The attack was a partial success—the Algerian slave trade continued until the French conquest in 1830. (The action and intent was similar to that of the U.S. Marines in 1805 at Tripoli.)



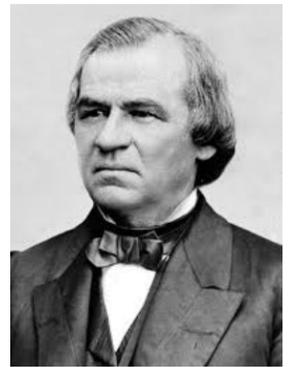
- Though it did not specifically pertain to the inhabitants or lands of our peninsulas, the Treaty of St. Louis was a significant step in the conquest of the region by the U.S.A. The treaty was officially described as follows: "A treaty of peace, friendship, and limits, made and concluded between Ninian Edwards, William Clark, and Auguste Chouteau, commissioners plenipotentiary of the United States of America ... and the chiefs and warriors of the united tribes of Ottawas, Chipawas, and Pottowotomees, residing on the Illinois and Melwackee rivers, and their waters, and on the southwestern parts of Lake Michigan."

- In Michigan, specifically, the General Land Office of the U.S. began surveying the territory during the summer of 1816. Not only did these amazing individuals create more accurate maps and locate the natural features of the region, they also recorded information about the flora and fauna, soil and stone, weather and waters.

150 years ago — August 1866

- President Andrew Johnson issued the official "Proclamation #157" which, among other things, declared that "peace, order, tranquility, and civil authority now exists throughout the whole of the United States of America." Although this was not actually true, the former Confederate States were under martial law and due process was established to reintegrate the states and their citizens into the Union. Some argue that this proclamation declared the end of the conflict, while others cite that the 50 years of turmoil commonly called "reconstruction" was

but a continuance of the war. In either case, the Union was not fully reunited until Georgia was the last state to be readmitted with full rights and representation in July of 1870.



- Meanwhile, under the Atlantic Ocean, the first "permanent" transatlantic telegraph cable was connected between Valentia Island, Ireland, to Heart's Content, Newfoundland on July 27. The first operating cable had been laid in 1858, but only remained in service for six weeks. Although it actually did transmit a signal, the greatest value in that earlier attempt was the experience gain and lessons learned. The new cable, put into service in August of 1866, took nearly a year to install and could transmit a top rate of eight words per minute.

- The railroads were reaching across the nation to connect all the corners of the continent. This visible effort was the result – and the impetus – for an even greater explosion of progress in the industries that served them. Technology in metallurgy, lumber processing, electrical communication, manufacturing, and even office management were all revolutionized to serve the expanding steel rails. In contrast, August 1866 is remembered also for the establishment of a feature of railroad building known as "Hell on Wheels." The first organized service to railroad workers that followed their progress was launched by former sutlers who served army camps during the Civil War. They brought in goods for the workers, provided entertainment and lodging for visitors, and connected the labor force with their former lives back east. And, yes – much of the resulting lifestyle was less than wholesome.



- In Utah, the Mormon Migration was still underway as pilgrims of the faith continued to move west to settle in their promised land. On August 19, 1866, LDS leader Brigham Young declared that polygamy was a higher priority for the body of believers than attaining statehood.

- And elsewhere west of the Mississippi, the U.S. Army struggled to keep the peace between the native nations and the incoming settlers. Most of the troops were veterans of the recent civil war, from both sides of the conflict. Former confederates who had been prisoners of war took an oath of allegiance to join the U.S. Army. These soldiers were often called "galvanized yankees." And, just like in the movies, they manned the forts along the wagon trails from Goshen to Sacramento, protecting the trains of settlers and supplies.

100 years ago — August 1916

- The war in Europe rages on. Romania and Italy declared war on Germany, and (of course) Germany countered by declar-

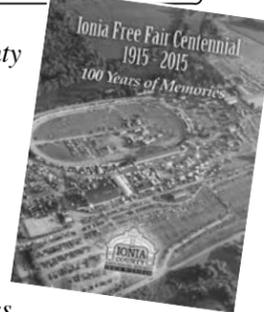


The newest addition to our collection of Ionia County memorabilia, the masterwork for 2016:

Ionia Free Fair Centennial 1915-2015

100 Years of Memories

Compiled by David McCord with the help of many contributors, this 8.5 x 11 inch book contains 328 pages of history and over 1,000 photos and graphics. Softcover: \$29.95 / Hardcover: \$44.95 (add \$5 for postage)



Historic DVD Videos

'**Sno Wonder DVD – 1936 Ionia County Road Commission + 1940 Bertha Brock Snow Festival** Short films that show us a glimpse of the challenges and the fun of Winters in Ionia County a generation ago.

1939 "We're In The Movies" A promotional film produced by Ionia businesses and organizations. It's a wonderful look into our town over 70 years ago.

1950s Home Show and Free Fair Movies

1976 U.S. Bicentennial in Ionia

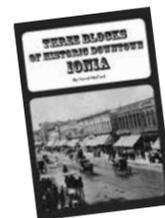
1937 Ionia Airport Inaugural plus Bertha Brock Park's 1940 "Winter Festival"

1973 Ionia Centennial Documentary

"Ionia's First 150 Years" and "Ionia - A Look Back" - Films by Monroe MacPherson

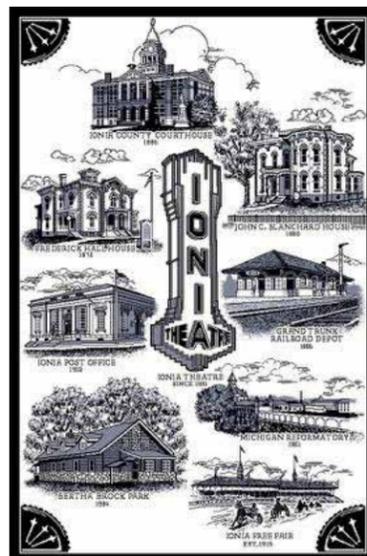
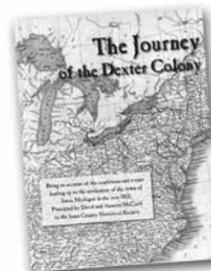
DVDs are available for \$10 each!

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



Walking Tour of Historic Downtown Ionia - 40-pages of history by David McCord. \$5 each

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



Do you have your souvenir Ionia History blanket yet? This attractive heavy throw is large, warm, and looks great in anyone's home. Available in shades of gray or burgundy. \$75 for this beautiful souvenir of Ionia. (\$65 for ICHS Members).

DVD Video on the history of Ionia's major employer for nearly 100 years, produced by students at Ferris State University and shown on public television throughout the country. Only \$10 for the former factory employee in YOUR family!



ALSO AVAILABLE: Reproductions of historic Ionia publications –

- 1887 "Headlight Flashes" Special Ionia Edition
- 1907 Ionia Souvenir Book
- 1973 Ionia City Centennial Program Book
- Antique Ionia Postcards



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100 Years of Memories

Discover the fascinating history behind "Michigan's Greatest Outdoor Event" in this 328-page book - new for 2016! The story reaches back beyond 1915, featuring details from each of the Ionia Free Fairs—the who, what, when, and where. There are over 1,000 photos, personal stories, facts and figures. Take a nostalgic journey through the Free Fairs you might remember, and those you may not. Order yours today! (All proceeds go to the Ionia County Historical Society to aid in the preservation of all aspects of our local history, including the thousands of artifacts, photographs, and documents associated with the Ionia Free Fair.)

Yes! Please reserve my copy of the new book

"Ionia Free Fair Centennial, 1915-2015 — 100 Years of Memories"

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Will Pick-up Please Deliver

Your book can be picked up at the John C. Blanchard House in Ionia, 251 East Main St, whenever the facility is open. If you'd like the book delivered, please note the \$5 charge per book when you calculate your total order.

The softcover version (full-color laminated cover over high-quality black-and-white interior) will be available in early July. The hardcover (featuring a full-color gloss cover and black-and-white interior on gloss paper) will follow soon after.

Payments may be in cash, by check (made out to the Ionia County Historical Society), or by Credit Card. Please provide the appropriate info here:

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ing war on them. (Romania was quickly overrun by German forces.) The Russians defeated the Turks at the Caucasus, the Brits fought Germans in East Africa, and the Battle of Verdun finally came to an end in northern France. But the United States was still officially neutral, and attempting to remain so, generally. In August of 1916, Congress authorized money for a significant build-up of military capability, especially for the U.S. Navy.

• Michigan's motor car industry was growing like wildfire – but not only in Detroit. The Jackson Motorcar Company (makers of the Cartercar) had just been purchased by General Motors. Also in Jackson, the Marion-Handley Co., the Briscoe Motor Co., The Imperial Car Company, The Hackett Motor Co. (partially built in Grand Rapids) and the Hollier (partially built in Chelsea). The Alter was made in Plymouth, the Argo Electric in Saginaw, the Dort, the Patterson, and the Monroe in Flint, R.E. Olds in Lansing, and the Saxon in Ypsilanti. (Learn more about this fascinating subject at our November 2 Meeting with special guest speaker Alan Naldrett!)



• The second year of the Ionia Free Fair opened on August 16th for a four-day run. The event featured all the usual displays by local merchants, industries, and civic organizations. The racetrack offered a full schedule of competitions and exhibitions. There were aeroplanes and balloons in the air, as well as acrobats and aerialists swinging from their rigging. Proud farm families displayed their livestock and crops, and competed for first prize in a host of categories. But the most significant feature of the 1916 Free Fair was the spirit and pride throughout the community. The great experiment appeared to be a success!

50 years ago — August 1966

• August 1st, 1966, Charles Whitman, a former U.S. Marine sniper and a student at the University of Texas at Austin, took an elevator to the observation deck on the 28th floor of the tower overlooking the campus, and shot 43 people, killing 13 of them. Earlier in the day, he had murdered his mother and his wife. An autopsy showed later that Whitman had a brain tumor.

• Groundbreaking took place for the World Trade Center in New York City on August 5, as jackhammers began breaking pavement at the former site of Radio Row. The first placement of steel construction would begin two years later (August 1968).

• The U.S. Department of the Treasury announced that it would no longer print the American two-dollar bill. At the most recent count a year later 69,660,947 of the bills were in circula-



tion. The denomination had been created in July, 1862, during the Civil War, but the bills (a part of the "greenbacks" series of paper money) were unpopular, and many people considered them to be unlucky. (A special "limited edition" two-dollar bill was printed to celebrate the United States bicentennial in 1976.)

• The Beatles held a press conference in Chicago on August 11, during which John Lennon apologized for his "more popular than Jesus" remark made in a magazine interview in March, saying, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry I said it really. I didn't mean it as a lousy, anti-religious thing. I was sort of deploring the attitude toward Christianity. I wasn't saying the Beatles are better than God or Jesus." The Beatles played their final concert on August 30, 1966. A crowd of 25,000 turned out at Candlestick Park in San Francisco, paying between \$3.80 and \$7.00 to see the Fab Four.

• NASA released the first photograph of the Earth as seen from the Moon in August after Lunar Orbiter 1 transmitted a picture taken three days earlier. Ground control had decided to turn the orbiter's camera toward the Earth, just as the probe was about to travel toward the far side, in order to show both objects in the same photo.

