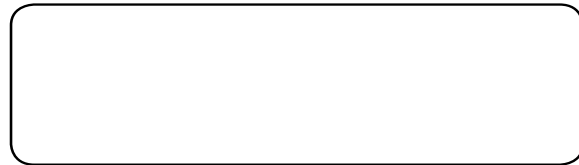




The Chronicle is the official publication of the Ionia County Historical Society. It is written, edited, and published by David McCord, Secretary. Any comments, corrections (of course), or contributions should be directed to the editor c/o the ICHS at P.O. Box 176, Ionia, MI, 48846 or via www.ioniahistory.org.

Ionia County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 176  
Ionia, MI 48846



# Plans, Programs, & Projects

### In this issue:

This Chronicle is summarizing the major projects that have been underway this year, and documenting a few of the upcoming activities on the calendar. Most of these items have been discussed at the regular monthly meetings, but some of the details are new for the fall schedule. We hope to see you all at these future meetings!

### Coming this fall:

Wednesday, September 2nd, 7:00 p.m. —

The monthly program at the Blanchard House will be special guest Chris Engemann, a former automotive engineer and member of the Shelby Auto Club, to talk about the Shelby automobiles that were built here in Ionia in the late 60s. The Historical Society is creating some commemorative T-shirts that will depict these cars as a souvenir of the plant. (These may be ready by the September meeting.)

On a related note, plans are under way to erect a small monument on the site of the factory to mark the site and describe the significance of the factory, from the Ypsilanti-Reed Furniture Company through the final days of GenCorp. And don't forget the documentary DVD about the factory produced earlier this year by students from Ferris State University (available from our souvenir shop for only \$10)!

One more important item for the September meeting: This will be the deadline for nominations for three openings on the ICHS Board of Directors. The election will be at the October annual meeting, and any paid members as of that meeting will be able to vote for those candidates.

(Refreshments will be provided by Kevin Drescher.)

Wednesday, September 16th, 7:00 p.m. —

The Historical Society Business Meeting at the Blanchard House. Everyone is welcome!

Saturday, September 19, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. —

The annual Fall Festival at Bertha Brock Park, including our annual Duck Race fund-raiser! Duck tickets go on sale at the September 2nd meeting, and will be sold during the Festival as well. The sponsor of the winning duck gets prize money and more! Volunteers are needed to staff the Duck Race, especially to follow the ducks down the creek (cold and wet). If you're available to help - even for a little while - please contact the Duck Race chairpersons - Ally or Kathleen Cook. And, of course, enjoy the rest of the Fall Festival activities!



*The Knoop family at the dedication of the Hank Knoop memorial tree, August 15th, with special thanks to Wolber's Landscaping.*

Wednesday, October 7th, 7:00 p.m. —

The ICHS Annual Meeting will be held, which is focused primarily on the election of the new Board members. Three directors are up for re-election: Kathleen Cook, Dave White, and Linda Ciangi. (Other candidates may be announced at the September 2nd meeting.) REMEMBER THAT ONLY PAID MEMBERS CAN VOTE, so get your dues paid up by the start of that meeting!

Following the Annual Meeting, the ICHS welcomes a guest speaker in cooperation with the Ionia Community Library. Author Randy Rassoul will share a program called "Cottages, Castles, Forts & Follies."

(Refreshments will be provided by Kathleen Cook.)

Sunday, October 11, 1:00 p.m. —

The annual Highland Park Cemetery Tour, with ICHS members and friends portraying personalities from Ionia's past. Plans are just coming together now, and if anyone is interested in helping with the event, please contact the Chairman, Kathleen Cook. Help is needed with research, with parking and ticket sales, staffing the refreshment stand, and portraying the historic characters on the tour.

Wednesday, November 4, 7:00 p.m. —

The November monthly meeting at the Blanchard House will include a program by David & Annette McCord on their trip to southern Alaska this past summer. Being particularly

Continues on page 2

## 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!

*Special note from the Board of Directors: This wonderful program at the Ionia Theatre was started by Joe & Joni McCord seven years ago. It's enjoyed by dozens of residents and guests each week. The ICHS is looking now for a new volunteer to take over this tradition in our town! Any interested folks should contact Joni McCord at 616-527-3369*

### Ionia County Historical Society 2014-15 Board of Directors & Officers

Linda Ciangi, President — 616-527-4945  
Kathleen Cook, Vice President — 616-527-2626  
Patty Simpson-Gokee, Director — 616-527-0676  
Ally Cook, Director — 616-821-1406  
David White, Director — 989-855-2350

David McCord, Secretary — 616-527-3784  
Annette McCord, Treasurer — 616-527-3130  
Barb Ehlert, House Rentals — 616-522-0844



interested in the historical items of the trip, they'll share some of what they experienced of the past along the northwest coast.

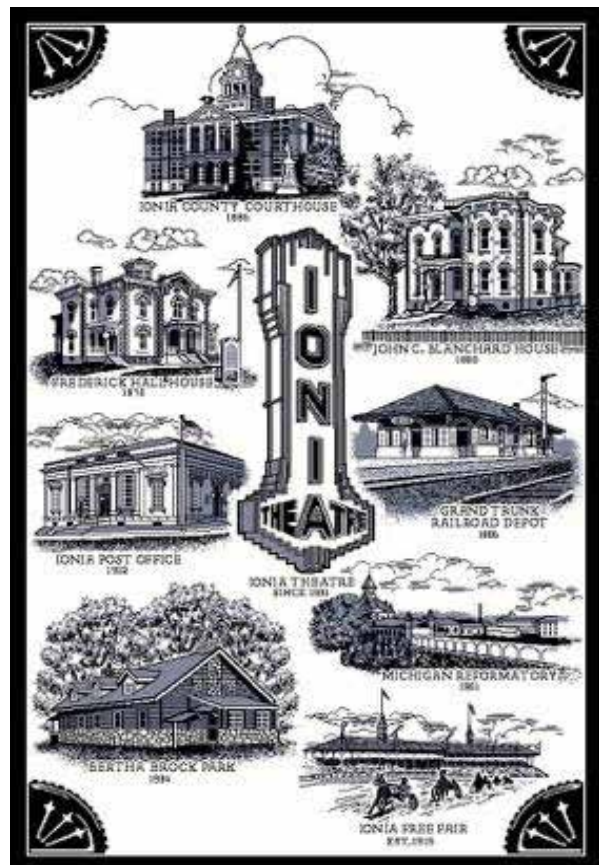
Later in November, the ICHS generally hosts a "gift sale" in preparation for the holiday season. Plans have not been finalized for this yet, but if you're interested, please contact a Board member.

Plans for December and beyond include the following:

- The December 2nd meeting will be the annual Holiday Pot Luck. Seasonal decorations will be in place, sponsored by area non-profit groups, and special music will be presented by Shannon Hughes.
- December also includes the annual Mrs. Claus Bazaar, where the ICHS sponsors a booth with souvenirs and gift items for sale. Volunteers are welcome to help!
- Holiday Open Houses every Sunday in December, at which the Blanchard House is open to the public in the afternoons for tours, and to show off the Christmas decorations.
- The January 6th meeting will be held at the First Christian Church of Ionia. February's meeting is still to be arranged. In March we will once again share a program with the Ionia Community Library.

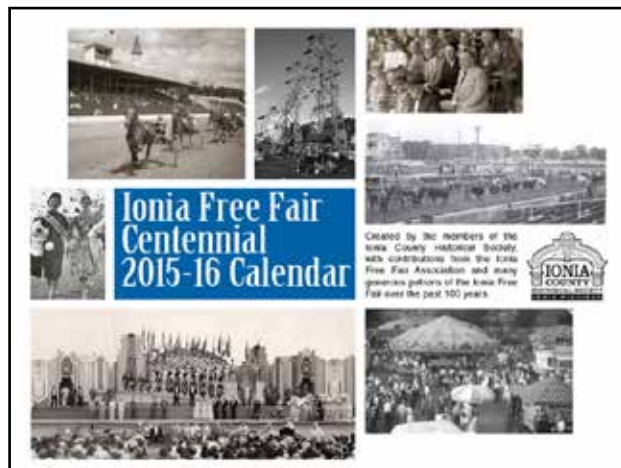
### Other Important Issues

The Historical Society will soon have a "throw" for sale. A small custom-woven blanket depicting several Ionia area landmarks. This throw will be available in several color schemes, and will make a fabulous gift as well as a souvenir of our community. They'll sell for just \$75 each (pictured below), and paid ICHS members get a \$10 discount!



The ICHS is working on a commemorative "Coffee Table" book to document the 100-year history of the Ionia Free Fair. The research and writing is presently under way, plus photos and stories are still being collected for the project. There are two ways that interested folks can help with this project:

First, the ICHS has a Centennial Calendar available for purchase which includes historic facts and photographs of the Free Fair. This 16-month calendar is available for only \$15, and the proceeds will go to help finance the publication of the book next spring. (Calendar cover pictured below.)



Another way you can help is to join us to collect and identify photos, and research the historic facts through news, documents, and personal recollections. If you'd like to aid the effort in this way, contact the project chairman, David McCord by email: david@mrwcreative.com, or at an ICHS meeting.

In addition to this book project (estimated to be several hundred pages, available in both hard-cover and paperback), Goose Elliot is working on a picture book through Arcadia Publishing to commemorate the Free Fair. This will be a smaller book, primarily of historic photos, to chronicle the century of "Michigan's Greatest Outdoor Event."

All of these recent projects have brought hundreds of historic Ionia Free Fair photos and documents into the ICHS collections, and volunteers will be needed to help properly preserve these rare and significant artifacts.

The Blanchard House trim was repainted this past summer (thanks to Greg Cook & company) and some less-visible repairs and maintenance performed. If anyone is interested in helping with the maintenance of the house and grounds, please contact the Board of Directors. There's plenty of work to be done!

The Tri-River Museum Group, of which the ICHS is a charter member, holds their monthly meeting. This association of 24 Mid-Michigan Museums has been a tremendous affiliation over the years, sharing ideas, events, and publicity. The ICHS delegate to the Tri-River Group is Joni McCord, who will be stepping down from the position in October. If anyone is interested in taking over as our representative for this organization, please contact Joni at 616-527-3369 for details.

Another of the public services provided by Joni McCord on behalf of the Historical Society are the weekly travelogues at

the Ionia Theatre. These movies have been shown every Thursday morning for the past 7 years free of charge, and have always been a popular program. She'll be stepping down from this program in October, and a new chairman is needed if we hope to continue this popular weekly activity. Interested parties please contact the Board of Directors.

The Historical Society continues to acquire more and more fascinating historical artifacts, from photos to furniture. We also receive requests for information about families, businesses, homes and area landmarks. If anyone is interested in history, this is a chance to get real hands-on experience!

In addition, further plans are being discussed regarding the future of the Museum, the Carriage House, storage space and additional programs. Continuance of annual events including the Upstairs-Downtown Tours, Spring Into The Past, and involvement in other community events throughout the year. Please share your ideas and suggestions, and if at all possible, your time and talent to make the ICHS an important part of our community.

— D. McCord, Secretary, ICHS.

## VOLUNTEERS are always welcomed!

Please contact the Board of Directors, or visit a meeting or program to ask what you can do!



**Sponsor a DUCK for the Annual Fall Festival Duck Race! Only \$1 each, six for \$5, or a bag of 25 Ducks for 20 Bucks!**

*And if you can volunteer to help, please do that too!*



The Ionia Free Fair Centennial Calendar! 16 full months of local history for only \$15 - and it helps fund the Fair Centennial BOOK!

### Add these to your Gift and Souvenir Basket:

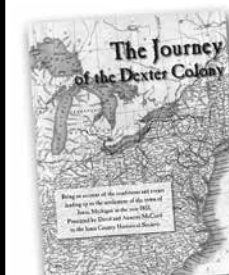
DVD Video on the history of Ionia's major employer for nearly 100 years, produced by students at Ferris State University. Also only \$10 for the former factory employee in YOUR family!



## SOUVENIRS

MEMORIES & MOMENTOS IONIA COUNTY HERITAGE & HISTORY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

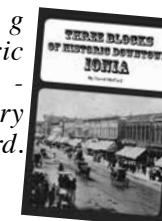


*The Journey of the Dexter Colony, 1833, by David and Annette McCord. A detailed history of the settling of Ionia. \$12 each (\$15 with postage)*

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



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



### DVD Video souvenirs!

• *'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" - 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**