



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 ICBS 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 ICBS 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 ICBS Travelogues!

- March 15 — Something Irish
- March 22 — Worlds of the Maya
- March 29 — Los Angeles to Seattle
- April 5 — The Story of Esther
- April 12 — Jamestown Rediscovered
- April 19 — Wonders of the Pacific Coast
- April 26 — Return to Steam Trains

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 — ???
- David McCord, Secretary — 527-3784
- Hank Knoop, Treasurer — 527-3130



100 YEARS OF SERVICE~ THE IONIA POST OFFICE

The members of the ICBS gathered at the Ionia Post Office on Wednesday, March 6, and were welcomed by Ionia's acting PostMaster, Phil Watson - a post he's held for the past three years.

The Ionia Post Office building will be celebrating its hundredth anniversary, completed in the summer of 1902 for a cost of \$70,000.



The building is still largely original, including the lobby décor and fixtures, right down to the gas lamps (converted to electricity) and many of the furnishings. The revolving doors were replaced decades ago, and more security devices installed, but overall it's a historic experience to tour the facility.

Mr. Watson showed members a few of the unique features of the building, including an iron spiral staircase that connected the basement level with the second floor Postal Inspector's office and a catwalk up in the rafters. The original time clock, walk-in vault and several large safes are also still in service.

The members were treated to a tour of the basement storage area as well, which contained many gems of history, including documents from the earliest days of the USPS in Ionia. Among these is a large portrait of Erastus Yeomans, Ionia's first postmaster, appointed in 1833, and a number of early journals, correspondence, and original cabinetry. With the approach of the anniversary, much of this information is being sorted and preserved for display. Some has already been transferred to the Michigan Postal Museum in Marshall. Mr. Watson also noted that they're attempting to fix the exterior lighting in time for the centennial. (It's been out of service for some time.)



Above: 1902 US Postage

We thank Mr. Watson for his time and information, and once again impressed by the heritage of the institutions here in our own community. Next time you go to the Post Office, have a look around!

NEXT MONTH: "Game Night" at the Blanchard House and Library Microfilm information — April 4, 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES of the Board Meeting, February 15, 2012

The Board of Directors of the Ionia County Historical Society gathered at the Blanchard House on Wednesday, February 15th for the monthly business meeting. The meeting was called to order by President Stephanie VanderMolen, who again expressed her gratitude to Kris Haskins for his service, and noted that he had returned his Blanchard House key to her by mail.

The "pro-tem" status of Stephanie's position as President was discussed, with reference to the relevant By Laws, and the Board in attendance voted to make the situation official. Patty Simpson-Gokee agreed to serve as Vice President on a temporary basis until the complete Board can meet to discuss the situation further.

Stephanie V. noted that Barb Hogan had expressed interest in filling the available seat on the Board of Directors, and this appointment was passed by the Board. Jessica Rouch had also expressed interest, and it was suggested that she be asked to serve on the Accessions Committee instead.

Hank Knoop reported that he is listed as the contact for the Chamber of Commerce Calendar, and he suggested that this be switched to Stephanie. The Board agreed and Hank will follow up.

Hank delivered a financial overview to the Board, including a summary of accounts, an interpretation of the Annual Report compiled by Larry Tiejema, and the status of the Society's investments and accounts. (Copies are available on request.) The Board discussed the task of putting together a budget for the organization to help plan for expenses and activities, and better manage the seeking of funds to meet those expenses. Many ideas were brought up, including a rough document from the Accessions Committee predicting a monthly expense for conservation efforts. Interested members are urged to contact President VanderMolen or Treasurer Knoop if they'd like to help with this critical task. This will include Barb Ehler's Household and Cleaning Expenses, and recurring publicity costs based on the various "departments" as suggested by Annette McCord.

Hank presented several bills for payment, including supplies for refinishing some of the wood floors and the season's snow removal costs. It was moved by Patty Simpson-Gokee to pay these, supported by Kathleen Cook, and passed by the Board.

A bill was also received from the Sentinel-Standard for an ad we placed in the Weekender which had been approved by the Board via a phone vote. It will be paid accordingly.

Linda C. said that the Sentinel-Standard will be running their annual "Progress" insert soon, and the ICBS has advertised in that in the

Minutes, continued from page one.

past with some success. Possible content for that advertisement was discussed (upcoming events and programs), and Stephanie V. moved to place the ad. The motion was supported by Patty S. and passed.

WION is offering a special advertising package for the upcoming Ionia Expo, which we have done in the past. Again, discussion ensued and concern expressed for the expense. Kathy C. and Linda C. said that they would cover the cost if the Board approved (which they did).

It was noted that the Board already approved a Blanchard House Rental as a door prize for the upcoming Buckaroo Ball. That committee has asked if the ICHS would sell tickets to the Ball at our booth at the upcoming Boyce School Bazaar. The Board agreed to do so.

Hank also noted that it might be beneficial to investigate alternatives to our present phone service, which seems to be rather expensive for what little use we get from it. The members will do some informal research and report back next month.

The domains for the ICHS website will be coming due very soon. This annual expense will be around \$60. Patty S. moved to pay it when the total comes due; this was supported by Kathy C. and passed.

More historic DVDs are needed! David McCord agreed to replicate more when possible, under the same costs previously set for the media, the cases, and inserts. There will be some available for the Ionia Expo on March 10, and more to follow for stock at the "Museum Store."

The ICHS has been approached about a rental for the House on March 24th at which the renters would like to serve beer and wine. In keeping with our policy, the Board must vote on this on a case-by-case basis. Linda Ciangi said that she will be on site during that event. It was moved by Stephanie V. to allow the event, supported by Patty S. and passed. Linda also noted that she's talking with Dan Balice about the legal ramifications of alcohol on site for private parties like this.

Linda C. offered secure off-site storage for data back-ups and particularly valuable items if the Board desired to do so. The Board will take this into consideration.

Stephanie asked that a few specific items be spotlighted in the upcoming Chronicle, including a "wish list" from the members, ideas for programs and activities, suggestions for Chronicle content, and to ask members more specifically how they would like to help with certain projects. A "volunteer talent survey" was discussed, as well as more direct requests for money to cover small, special expenses (like the recent computer purchase).

Good news was received regarding the Civil War Sesquicentennial in Ionia. The Michigan 21st and the Michigan 3rd Regiments are BOTH interested in an event in Ionia in early September.

Pastor Larry Brown at the FUMC is chairing the event, and will be keeping us in the loop as plans progress.

A day needs to be scheduled for some serious clean-up at the Blanchard House to get ready for the spring events - especially Spring Into The Past in May. Members will be asked to participate at the next meeting, and an email is to be sent out before that meeting to solicit help.

Barb Ehlert had done some research into some shelving that would not be "too industrial" for storing artifacts in the Blanchard House. She presented a couple of alternatives, and Stephanie moved to commit \$120 towards new shelves. This was supported by Patty S. and passed; Barb and Linda C. will purchase the shelves.

The Board of Directors and "info" emails will be updated by webmaster David McCord to delete Kris Haskins and add Barb Hogan and Kathy Cook.

Stephanie V. reported that Joan McCord had verified the sites for the Upstairs-Downtown Tour scheduled for May. Volunteers are needed to host the various sites, and help with ticket sales and publicity.

The Society needs a Chairperson for the Grounds and Maintenance Committee. Interested members can contact a Director to volunteer or nominate someone for the position.

The old computer is now out of service; David M. agreed to remove it from the house and dispose of it properly.

Linda C. shared some "gems" she received from the Public Schools' archives recently, and the School staff has been reassured that the Historical Society can provide a good home for any items of historical significance they might find.

Linda C. also suggested that we

put together a "Snow Train" display as part of the museum's railroad exhibit, which was heartily supported by the Board.

The April meeting will include a presentation from the Library regarding their microfilm system, and members will be invited to participate in a "card party" for the evening. The May program will be on Stephen Foster (presented by David McCord), June will be on the Salem Train Wreck (by Hank Knoop), and for August, Kathy Cook will contact Pam Withrow about doing a program on the Reformatory.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

MINUTES of the March 7th, 2012 General Meeting

The ICHS met briefly at the Ionia Post Office after our tour of the facility on Wednesday, March 7th, 2012. President Stephanie VanderMolen reported that Barb Hogan confirmed that she would serve on the Board.

Doni Knoop passed around copies of Hank's Treasurer's report in his absence.

Stephanie reviewed the list of upcoming events, and noted that volunteers are still needed for the May

19th Upstairs-Downtown event. Joan McCord noted that the Appraisal Roadshow at the Commission on Aging is "on" for March 31st.

Doni Knoop reported that four paid vendors were lined up for the June 1st & 2nd "Antique Fayre and Flea Market" at the Blanchard House. Donations for the sale are needed; members are encouraged to donate flea-market goodies to benefit the Society.

Tickets are still available for the Quilt Raffle, and will be on sale at the Expo on March 10 where the Quilt will be on display. Joan McCord also supplied some fliers for the Expo.

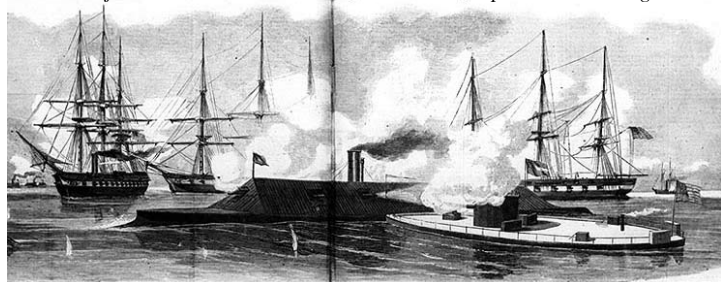
Pastor Larry Brown reported on the progress of the Civil War event coming in September, and that there is a meeting scheduled for April 14th at 10:30 a.m. in the FUMC with representatives of the two reenactor groups involved.

Thursday work sessions are in the midst of the spring cleaning, and the volunteers could sure use some help! Interested members please come by the house when you can.

The next meeting will be game night - cards and party games as the members wish.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15.

Clash of the Iron-Clads — March 9, 1862, Hampton Roads, Virginia



SOUVENIRS

MEMORIES & MOMENTOS IONIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HERITAGE & HISTORY

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

NEWS OF THE REBELLION

150 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH:

March 3 — Abraham Lincoln appoints Andrew Johnson to be military governor of Tennessee and Federal troops under General John Pope lay siege to New Madrid, Missouri, a Confederate stronghold.

March 4 — Over what is generally regarded as a communication problem, General Halleck relieves General U.S. Grant from his command in the west and replaces him with Charles Ferguson Smith.

March 6 — Abraham Lincoln proposes that slaves in the border states be emancipated gradually, with compensation to the owners. The USS Monitor, the first Union ironclad, departs from New York. Barnwell Rhett proposes a flag comprised of "a yellow sun in a blue shield with a ray for each state of the Confederacy" that would eliminate the stars and the red, white, and blue combinations of the Yankee flag.

March 8 — The CSS Virginia (formerly the "USS Merrimac") battles the USS Congress and the USS Cumberland, destroying both frigates and killing more than 240 crewmen. Joseph E. Johnston orders the Confederate Army of the Potomac to withdraw from Manassas to the Rappahannock River based on reports from J.E.B. Stuart of increased Yankee activity.

March 9 — Battle of Hampton Roads: duel of the ironclads, the USS Monitor and the CSS Virginia, marking the first use of a turreted gun.

March 11 — President Lincoln relieves George McClellan as General-in-Chief of the U. S. Army. He continues as commander of the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln puts Henry Halleck in charge of all forces in the West. Lincoln also creates the Mountain Department, covering West Virginia and the mountainous area of Virginia with John Fremont in command. For their disastrous performance at Fort Donelson, President Jefferson Davis relieves John Floyd and Gideon Pillow from command.

March 12 — Jacksonville, Florida is occupied by Union naval forces.

March 13 — Ulysses S. Grant is reinstated to his command and Jefferson Davis orders Robert E. Lee to "...conduct military operations of the armies of the Confederacy."

March 14 — The forces under Ambrose Burnside [US] occupy New Bern (sometimes called Newberne) North Carolina. Following a two week siege, federals under John Pope take New Madrid, Missouri.

March 15 — William Tecumseh Sherman and Stephen Hurlbut arrive at Pittsburg Landing and move inland to Shiloh Baptist Church.

March 17 — Ulysses S. Grant assumes command of the forces at Pittsburg Landing and soon engages the Rebels at Shiloh in one of the bloodiest battles of the entire war.

March 23 — In the first battle of the Shenandoah Campaign, Major General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson [CS] loses to Brig. General James Shields [US]

March 26 — Moving along the Santa Fe Trail, Confederates engaged a group of Colorado volunteers at Johnson's Ranch. Federal forces withdraw to Glorietta.

March 28 — Jefferson Davis proposes a conscription bill, shocking many Southerners.

March 29 — The Central Army of Kentucky and the Army of Alabama and West Florida are merged into the Army of Mississippi in Corinth under Albert Sidney Johnston with P. G. T. Beauregard as second-in-command. Corps commanders are Braxton Bragg, Leonidas Polk, William Hardee and George Crittenden.

March 30 — The B&O Railroad reopens following six months of Confederate control in Maryland and West Virginia.



Upcoming Programs and Events

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

ANNUAL APPRAISAL ROADSHOW

Tentatively scheduled for March 31
at the Ionia County Commission on Aging

Wednesday, April 4th, 7:00 p.m.
Meeting at the Blanchard House includes
Drawing for the Quilt Raffle!
*Card Tables will be set up to
play some GAMES!*

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!

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

THE STORY OF THE GREEN-BACK DOLLAR

With a vote of 93 to 59, in late February of 1862 the Congress of the United States voted to authorize the issuance of \$150 Million in a new "Legal Tender" backed by gold and bearing no interest. New York banks were making loans to the Federal Government to finance the war, and they were charging 36% interest. Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase (namesake of the Chase Manhattan Bank) advised the Lincoln Administration to issue these notes "for the payment of all debts, public and private."

The front face of the bills sports an engraving of Mr. Chase's likeness, alongside the usual filigree and embellishments — but it was the back, printed in a vibrant green ink, that gave the bills their nickname. The moniker was not intended to be complimentary, but was used in a very derogatory manner by the financiers of the day. It was distinctly different than previous interest-bearing notes, and notes issued by individual banks and units of government such as counties and states. Circulation began in March of 1862, and the green-back dollar is still just as precious as ever.