



# At the VanderHeyden Mansion



The March meeting was held at the home of Kevin & Ashley Wilbanks, popularly known as the "VanderHeyden House" - one of the gems of Ionia's Victorian architecture. Kevin and Ashley graciously allowed the members of the ICHS to gather in their dining room for a quick meeting (see notes following) then gave us a tour of the house. Stories were shared by members with memories of the house and its past occupants. Sincere thanks to our hosts for their hospitality, as well as their care for such a unique and beautiful landmark in our town.

*The following was largely taken from a description written by Grayden Slowins in a 1981 issue of the Sebewa Recollector:*

The house was built in 1879, a contemporary with many other Italianate houses in Ionia City and County. This house was designed and built symmetrically for two separate but related families right from the start. There were originally two of everything on each floor except the central halls and the front and rear stairs: two parlors, two dining rooms, two kitchens, two summer kitchen/woodsheds. There are four large bedrooms upstairs and two full baths plus pleasant servants' quarters in the upstairs rear.

The house was built for William H. and Frederick H. VanderHeyden, father and son, although Fred was still a boy when it was designed. William lived in the east half and Fred in the west. After William's death in 1910, Fred used the east half for daily living and the west became a library, study (or office), small bedroom and laundry. Fred passed away in

1954, and his widow Eleanor lived in the house until her death in 1963.

Originally there were two wood-coal furnaces, later stoker-fired, and the original lights were carbide gas, as were both fireplace grates. The basement has brick floors and 10 foot ceilings, upper floors have 12-foot and 13-foot ceilings. The low attic originally led to a 30 foot widow's walk, which has been removed and sealed over to prevent leaking.

William H. VanderHeyden was born in Herkimer County, New York, in 1836 and died in Ionia, August 16, 1910. He was married to Emily E. Wood of Detroit who died in Ionia, 1918. She was a daughter of John Wood, also a brick manufacturer.

William learned the brick trade in New York State, started his own yard in Ionia and then bought the Cornell brickyard about 1866. He also had a branch in Big Rapids for several years and sold the entire business to his son, Frederick H. in 1892. William and Emily are buried in Oak Hill Cemetery, which adjoins the brickyard on the north.

VanderHeyden bricks were turned out at the rate of three to five million per year at peak production and shipped by rail to such projects as the Veterans' Home in Grand Rapids. Many of the most prominent structures in the Ionia area have at least some VanderHeyden building products in them.

## MINUTES of the March 6th Meeting

The members gathered briefly in the Wilbank's dining room for a brief review of current news and activities of the Society.

The Carpet Project for the west parlor was discussed, project chair Kathleen Cook giving some details of the upcoming fund-raising dinner at the Lamplight Grill - Sunday, April 14th, 4:00 p.m. - tickets for \$15 per plate (\$5 of each goes towards the ICHS project). Someone suggested a door prize of a free rental of the Blanchard House at the event. More details will be forthcoming.

The Treasurer's Report was submitted by Hank Knoop (copies available on request, as usual).

A sign-up sheet was passed around to help staff the Community Expo to be held on Saturday March 9th, where the ICHS will have a booth (as usual). At the event will be offered ICHS souvenirs and Quilt Raffle Tickets for sale.

Linda C. reported that the 1947 Ionia Snow Queen was "recrowned" at the Green Acres retirement home. She also noted that Rev. Bob Nixon - long-time Treasurer for the Historical Society - is now living at Green Acres.

She also shared community events info that she acquired from the Chamber Breakfast recently held, including local business news.

Wilson's Heating & Cooling has a display case to donate to the museum, and they are eager to deliver it as soon as possible. It had been used in the old Stevenson's department store where their business is now located.

Linda also noted that current progress in the museum at the Blanchard House includes cleaning up the typewriters in the collection for display.

## MINUTES of the March 20 Business Meeting

The March 20th Business Meeting was called to order by president Stephanie VanderMolen at the Blanchard House. She first asked the Treasurer for the annual report, which he didn't bring with him to this meeting. It will appear again on the agenda for the April meeting. Hank reported that the net income from the Expo was \$235, and that more dues and Business Buddies contributions continue to come in.

There were several items donated to the ICHS recently, including a large Camphor-wood Trunk that belonged to Gov. Green containing a few related documents donated by Beverly Lindberg, and some photos of past ICHS events from Joan McCord. Also, the display cabinet donated by Wilson's will be coming soon to the house.

The winner of the Blanchard House rental that was auctioned off at the Buckaroo Ball is not known (proceeds going to support the Ionia Theatre). Linda suggested that someone ask Linda Curtis at the DDA. The only rental on the schedule at this time is in May.

Kathleen C. reported that the plans for the Lamplight Dinner are now in place to raise funds for the new parlor carpet. Samples will be on display during the Summer Sundays at the Blanchard House for people to vote on (and donate to the cause if they wish). Stephanie will put together some tickets for the event - limited to 100. Promotion for the event needs to get underway soon - it's only a short time until the dinner date: April 14th!

Volunteers are needed to host our visitors for the "Spring Into The Past" museum tour, May 4th and 5th. Contact Stephanie if you'd like to help. Linda Ciangi will arrange for some refreshments. The house needs to be cleaned, and if volunteers don't have the time, we'll need to hire someone. Linda C. will get an estimate from Lori Brooks, who has helped with this before.

Alli Cook shared an update on the Upstairs-Downtown tour, noting that she is still waiting on responses from a few properties on her wish-list for the event. More details coming soon.

Members with items to donate for the "Yard Sale" (a.k.a. "Antique Fayre and Flea Market") for May 31 / June 1 can contact Hank Knoop to gather and transport them.

The Bus Trip to Greenfield Village is arranged and ready to advertise. There was some discussion on pricing for the tickets, and calculation of expenses. A ticket price of \$65 per seat was moved by Barb Hogan and supported by Patty Simson-Gokee, and passed.

The ICHS may have the use of one of Monroe MacPherson's Rolls-Royce for the Free Fair Parade. The Board was very much in favor of this idea, and Patty S. will contact Walt Sprague - the current owner - to see if we can arrange it.

Carol Gallagher has been in charge of purchasing kitchen and cleaning supplies for the past year. These expenses amounted to less than \$100, which had been budgeted by the Board. Carol has agreed to continue in this role, seeking reimbursement for future expenses as approved previously. She will donate the supplies purchased 2012. (Thank you, Carol.)

The notion of a memorial plaque for Dick Baker is still to be defined, but will probably be put in the Carriage House. David M. will pursue this project. He is also keeping in touch with the Farm Power Club who would like to establish a memorial at the Fair Grounds in Mr. Baker's memory.

David McCord is still working out details for hosting the Civil War re-enactors at the Blanchard House. We're targeting Saturday, August 17th, and considering a "social" gathering. More details to follow.

Barb Ehlert asked the Board for \$60 to purchase another storage shelf unit to store boxed artifacts. It was moved by Alli and supported by Patty to do so, and passed.

Hank reported that Gerry Perry is in Sparrow Hospital in Lansing. He has apparently suffered a series of minor heart attacks, which left him very weak - but he is recovering and hoping to be home soon to celebrate his 99th birthday next month!

We have a June program for our monthly meeting: Jeanie Cooper will present some information on her ancestors in the Civil War.

Stephanie V. asks if there should be additional promotion for the Appraisal Roadshow. She will contact Joan McCord and continue to circulate event fliers.

Hank K. noted that there is a local man seeking to fulfill 90+ hours of community service, and Hank recommended him to the Board after an "audition" last week. Linda C. has some tasks needing "muscle" and there's always yard work to complete. Hank will make the arrangements.

Historical Society members are being asked to attend the "Antique Village" displays at the Floral Building during the Free Fair on Sunday, July 22. They would also like to display some historic costumes if possible (Annette McCord?).

Hank reported that the Westphalia Historical Society is just getting started, and seeks the support of the ICHS for a premier meeting on April 23, 7:00 at the Town Hall. All interested parties are invited.

It was brought to the Boards attention that complimentary copies of the Chronicle have not been going out to area Historical groups. These addresses should be on the list, and we will attempt to remedy that situation soon.

The DDA is hosting a "Summer in the City" event near the end of June, and Linda C. suggested that the ICHS organize a Scavenger Hunt for the event (with a

## Upcoming Programs and Events

Wednesday, April 3, 7:00 p.m.

Program Meeting at the Blanchard House  
**Ionia Farm Power Club, and more...**

Saturday, April 13, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Appraisal Road Show  
at the Commission on Aging, Ionia  
Bring your antiques and treasures! \$5 per item.  
Guest appraiser: Glen Rairigh

Sunday, April 14, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Fund-Raiser Buffet at the Lamplight Grill  
Main St. Ionia - to help fund the new  
Blanchard House Parlor Carpet!

Wednesday, April 17, 7:00 p.m.

Business Meeting at the Blanchard House

Wednesday, May 1, 7:00 p.m.

Program Meeting at the Blanchard House  
"Handwriting and History"  
presented by David McCord

Friday, May 4 & Saturday, May 5  
11:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.

Spring Into The Past Museum Tours  
**QUILT RAFFLE WINNER ANNOUNCED!**

Sunday, May 6, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Summer Sundays at the Blanchard House  
Open Houses Begin

Saturday, May 18, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Ionia's Upstairs-Downtown Tours

Friday, May 31 & Saturday, June 1  
Annual ICHS Yard Sale / Flea Market

Saturday, August 3rd - All Day!  
BUS TRIP to GREENFIELD VILLAGE  
\$65 per seat, includes your museum ticket

**AND MORE — WATCH THIS SPACE!**

Be sure to stop in on Thursday afternoons to help out with the many projects under way at the Blanchard House. Cleaning and maintenance, yes - but also research and inventory, working on museum displays, and finding wonderful treasures!

Visit the ICHS website at [ioniahistory.org](http://ioniahistory.org) for more!

prize) which encompasses some of the history and historical landmarks in the community. David M. will get started on the idea and bring a proposal to the Board at the next meeting.

The Business Meeting was adjourned soon after.

## 150 Years Ago



### NEWS OF THE REBELLION

February 26, 1863 - The National Currency Act was signed into law by President Lincoln, creating a national banking system, a Currency Bureau and the office of Comptroller of the Currency. The act's goal was to establish a single currency across the entire nation.

March 3 - The Conscription Act (National Enrollment Act of 1863) was signed into law by President Lincoln. Congress required quotas of draftees by state, but allowed wealthier Americans the right to buy their way out of service for \$300.00.

March 5 - The Battle of Unionville. Confederate Cavalry under Earl Van Dorn and Nathan Bedford Forrest drove Union Cavalry off on the 4th, then surrounded and engaged the remaining infantry. After heavy fighting on the 5th, the Union garrison surrendered.

March 26 - West Virginia voters overwhelmingly approved the new state constitution, sealing their secession from the Confederate state of Virginia.

April 2 - A mob demanded bread from a supply wagon in Richmond, starting the so-called Bread Riot. The mob looted stores, and was personally addressed by Jefferson Davis, who tossed the mon-

ey from his pocket into the crowd. Police and soldiers eventually dispersed the crowd.

April 13 - Ambrose Burnside issue General

Order 38 in which he stated "anyone found guilty of committing acts for the benefit of the enemies of our country will be subject to execution."

## Here comes another APPRAISAL ROADSHOW

Bring out your junk and your treasures on Saturday, April 13th between 10 and 2 to the Ionia County Commission on Aging.

Only \$5 per item, to be appraised by

*Glenn Rairigh*

to benefit the Ionia County Historical Society.

**Join us for Dinner!**  
**April 14, 4:00 to 6:00**  
**at the Lamplight Grill**  
**in Downtown Ionia**

**Let's Floor It!**



**It's a fund-raiser**  
**for new carpeting at**  
**the Blanchard House.**  
**\$15-a-plate Buffet!**

## What's Up There?



*No need to wonder any longer!*

**It's time for the annual Ionia**  
**Upstairs/Downtown Tour**

**Saturday, May 18th • 10am to 3pm**  
**\$10 for all 12 sites / \$2 for just one**

All proceeds go to the Ionia County Historical Society

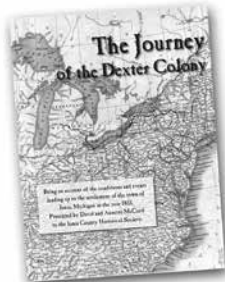
# SOUVENIRS

MEMORIES &  
MOMENTOS



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*



*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*

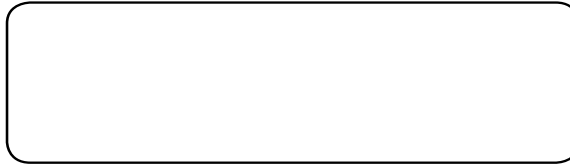
- *1973 Ionia City Centennial Program Book*



# 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 = \$50
- 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 4 – Yosemite National Park*

*April 11 – Great Britain*

*April 18 – Cirque de Soleil*

*April 25 – Ireland*

*May 2 – Australia*

*May 9 – Mt. Rushmore*

*May 16 – Italy*

### Ionia County Historical Society 2012-13 Board of Directors & Officers

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