



# the **CHRONICLE**

The Almost Monthly Publication of  
the Ionia County Historical Society



## Ever heard of THAT Car Company?

Author Alan Naldrett delivered a spirited presentation to the assembled guests at the Blanchard House on November 2nd entitled "Lost Car Companies of Detroit." Through many photos, historical facts, and entertaining anecdotes, Mr. Naldrett entertained and educated his audience.

His presentation began with the birth of the auto industry, recounting the earliest pioneers in the engineering of self-propelled land vehicles. Not only gas-powered autos, but steam and electric cars were popular for those customers who could afford the latest means of transportation. It was a sensation that captured the public's interest like the bicycle had in the 1880s and '90s.

Many of the automobile firsts in Michigan were accomplished by hobbyists and tinkerers, creating one-of-a-kind cars for their own amusement. But soon the well-established wagon and carriage companies began to look at motorized carriages as a new market for their craft - plus a major mechanical component.

Due to the commercial and shipping industries already established in Detroit, mechanical expertise and materials were available there to support the interest in motorcars. The famous names such as R.E. Olds, Henry Ford, the Dodge Brothers, etc., invented the industry as we know it with very little precedent to build upon. But hundreds more unfamiliar inventors and innovators developed the technology and manufacturing techniques that gave these dreams life. The aggressive competition between these industrial neighbors pushed each other to improve their

products and production, often imitating each other's innovations as they grew.

Many of the first genuine car companies were bought out, merged with others, absorbed into larger firms, or were mismanaged into oblivion. Among the "lost" car companies were names like Star and Moon. Others survived for decades, either independently or as divisions of others, such as Hudson and Maxwell.

Each of these companies has a fascinating story to relate (and an odd preponderance of "brothers" in their history, too). To bring all this history together, Mr. Naldrett has written a book entitled "The Lost Car Companies of Detroit" (which he had for sale at the meeting). He has also written other books on Michigan history and folk tales.

Many thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Naldrett, and to the Ionia Community Library for another wonderful evening's entertainment.



### **Minutes of the November 2 Meeting**

The monthly meeting of the Ionia County Historical Society was called to order at 8:42 p.m. following the program for the month (see story, page one), president Kathleen Cook presiding. She recounted recent activities for the ICHS. This included a thank-you to the M-1 Credit Union volunteers who helped move some things around, the Accessions Committee's progress in getting a handle on the collections management tasks, and the results of the Board's election of officers (which remained the same as the previous term). She also thanked the Ionia Community Library for co-hosting the October presentation by Ron Rademacher on the "Oddities of Michigan." The Blanchard House was visited by 450 to 500 youngsters on Halloween, treated to treats by David & Annette McCord and Shawna Hoekstra (the ghostly woman in the window).

The ICHS has obtained some artifacts and documents from the old County Jail, a building which will soon be demolished. (It was noted that interested parties may want to attend the Nov. 9 meeting at City Hall regarding the impact of the county's new building project, specifically as it impacts a pair of historic sites in the vicinity.) In regards to the destruction or modification of historic sites around Ionia, the Board has considered issuing a "boilerplate" resolution to express our official position on the subject as an organization concerned with the preservation of local history in its many forms.

More donations are coming in all the time, and an agreement is being drawn up with S&K printing to store some of our new acquisitions in their facility on Main Street.

Regarding upcoming events, the Tri-River Museums Group will hold their November meeting on Tuesday the 15th at 11:00 a.m. in the Blanchard House. Refreshments are being provided by Joan McCord and others. The new 2017 Tri-River Directories will be distributed at this meeting.

The ICHS will have a booth at the First United Methodist Church's Harvest Bazaar on November 12. Kathleen and Ally Cook will staff the table, selling ICHS souvenirs.

Christmas decorations at the Blanchard House will be going up the week of Thanksgiving, and anyone who might have a few hours to help should

please contact Linda Ciangi or another Board member. The decorations will be in place in time for the annual Members' Holiday Bazaar at the Blanchard House on Sunday, Nov. 27 from 1 to 5 p.m.

The Mrs. Claus Bazaar at the Middle School is scheduled for Saturday, December 3, where we will have a booth to sell souvenirs again. The table will be staffed by Ally Cook, Barb Hogan, and Shawna Hoekstra. Other volunteers will be welcomed - especially to help set-up and take-down.

The Blanchard House will be open for holiday tours on December Sundays again this year on the 4th, 11th, and 18th. Anyone interested in hosting at the house, (or learning how to conduct a tour!) can stop in to help between 1 and 4 p.m.

The December 7th meeting at the Blanchard House will be our traditional Holiday Pot-Luck. The doors will be opened by 6:30 and we'll start the feast around 7:00 p.m. Bring a dish to pass. All are welcomed!

The Treasurer, Annette McCord, report that there was approx. \$2500 income for the month of October, including sales, rentals and memberships. Expenses included the usual monthly bills. As always, a detailed report is available on request.

The rental schedule is filling up for the holiday season, which means more attention to set-up and clean-up duties. Volunteers are always welcomed at the Thursday afternoon work sessions (except for Thanksgiving day).

Watch for the next "Save The Date" fliers coming soon to see our long-range calendar, and keep watch on the website (Google Calendar) and Facebook for current information.

### **Minutes of the November 16th Board Meeting**

The Board of the ICHS met at the Blanchard House on Wednesday, November 16. The meeting was called to order by President Kathleen Cook shortly after 7:00 p.m. Also present were directors Ally Cook, Dave White, Goose Elliott, and Linda Ciangi, plus Secretary David McCord, Treasurer Annette McCord, and Rental Chair Barb Ehlert.

The first item on the agenda was the Treasurer's report. Due to computer problems there was not a complete report ready for the meeting, but the general fund balance (including funds designated for specific projects) totaled approximately \$18,700. Funds were passed to the treasurer representing income from souvenir sales and rental

# THE WAYBACK MACHINE...

## December 1816

In 1816, President James Madison signed an act of Congress admitting Indiana to the Union as the 19th state, a process that took nearly two decades. The first Governor of Indiana was Johnathan Jennings and the original capital of the state was in Corydon.



The American Colonization Society was organized to assist free black people in emigrating to Africa, the brainchild of the Reverend Robert Finley, a Presbyterian minister from Basking Ridge, New Jersey. Many American leaders were in favor of deportation as a strategy for the dissolution of racial tension in the U.S.

The Treaty of St. Louis went into effect on December 30. Although it dealt with lands located within Michigan Territory and the people of the Three Fires (Odawa, Ojibway, and Potawatomi), the treaty was enacted at Portage Aux Sioux, Missouri (just north of St. Louis). In exchange for \$1,000 in merchandise over a 12-year period, the Indians gave up their rights to lands surrounding the Chicago area.

## December 1866

Although the hostilities of the Civil War were officially over, Indian skirmishes in the territories north of the Missouri River continued. These conflicts had gone on during the war between the states as well. In December of 1866, warriors of the Lakota Nation lured the troops of Col. William Fetterman into an ambush in northern Wyoming. The braves, lead by Chiefs Red Cloud and Crazy Horse, wiped out the entire command of U.S. cavalry within 20 minutes.



Harper & Brothers of New York published a small bound volume entitled "43 Days in an Open Boat" by

an aspiring young author called "Mark Swain." Yes, this was a misprint. Mr. Clemens (a.k.a. "Mark Twain") was still an unknown author to most. His tale of The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calavaras County was just beginning to gain popularity in the newspapers.

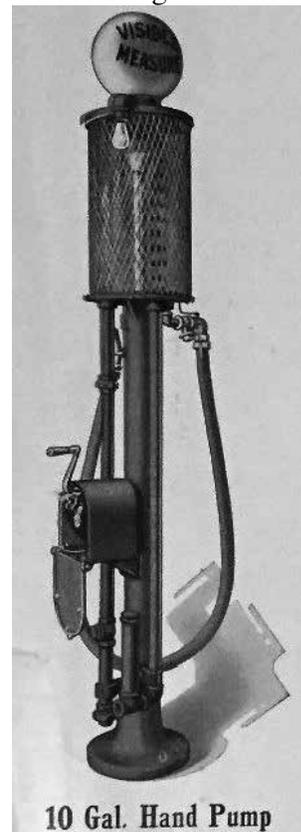


On December 3rd, Congress reassembled, with the Republicans resolved to scrap President Johnson's reconstruction program and replace it with a new one. The ten southern states still outside the Union refused to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. In the New Orleans riot of July 30th, a mob of whites massacred thirty-eight Republicans, thirty-four of whom were blacks. The Freedmen's Bureau reported daily violence against blacks throughout the nation, and post-war economic woes threatened a new wave of financial disaster. In light of all this, Johnson's battles with the Congress sparked discussions of impeachment.

## December 1916

Many leaders of the various allied powers involved in "The Great War" in Europe were replaced, including British, French, Greek, Austrian, and Russian. The Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian, German and Turkish governments notified U.S. Ambassadors in their respective countries that they were interested in initiating peace talks to end the war.

Jackson Fleckenstein of Ionia, Michigan, patented the Visible Gas Meter for gasoline pumps in this year. He was a minor at the time, so his patent is in the name of his mother Adelaide Fleckenstein. The original name of his company was the Old Honesty Gasometer Company. He developed many related products over the years, and held a number of patents. The firm moved to Grand Rapids in later years, selling out the business in 1924.



10 Gal. Hand Pump

The Shadow Ridge Public Golf Course south of Ionia first opened in 1916. It was designed by Donald Ross, credited with the design of over 30 courses throughout North America.



## December 1966

As the manufacture of Corvette Stingray bodies was reaching the end of its contract, the design and prototyping of the 1967 Shelby Mustang models was ramping up. The first completed production model to leave the Ionia plant was in December of the year (car #0139). The car was sent to California, where



Carroll Shelby claimed the red convertible as his “personal driver” and it graced the cover of the first Shelby Mustang brochures.

US & USSR signed a treaty in December of '66 to prohibit nuclear weapons in outer space. However, there were plenty of bombs exploding on the earth. Nuclear tests in the US and Soviet Union were regularly in the headlines, as well as tests in India and China. The first U.S. bombing of Hanoi in Vietnam occurred in this month, too - using “conventional weapons.”



The celebration called Kwanzaa honors African heritage in African-American culture, and is observed from December 26 to January 1, culminating in a feast and gift-giving. The celebration promotes seven core principles (Nguzo Saba). It was created by Maulana Karenga, college professor, activist, and author and was first celebrated in 1966.

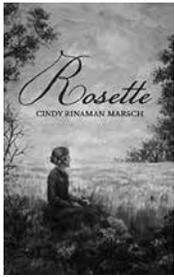
“I’m a Believer” by the Monkees reached #1 in the Billboard popular music charts this month, and remained there for seven weeks. They shared the charts with Jimi Hendrix Experience and their hit “Hey Joe.” Later the same month, Jimi Hendrix wrote the song “Purple Haze” which would become his signature tune. The Jimi Hendrix Experience toured as the opening act for the Monkees in late summer '67.



# 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!

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.



## The Holidays are just around the corner!

Looking for a special something for a friend or family member? Why not pass along a bit of local history this year? Our gift shop has a wide variety of gifts - more than just what's on this page. Stop in on a Sunday afternoon in December and see! All proceeds go to support the Historical Society.

# SOUVENIRS

MEMORIES & MOMENTOS IONIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HERITAGE & HISTORY

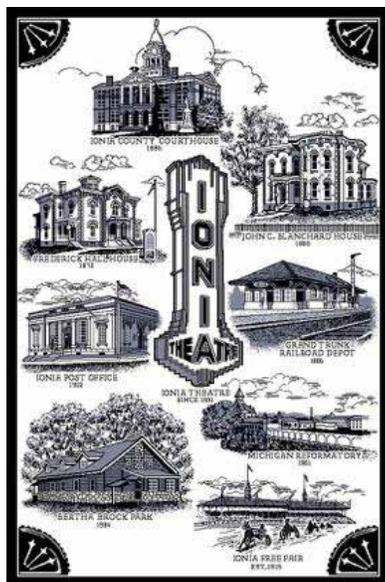
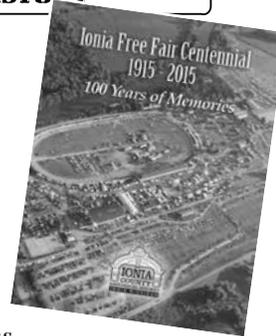
The newest addition to our collection of Ionia County memorabilia, the masterwork for 2016:

## 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)



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

## 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

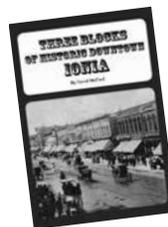
1937 Ionia Airport Inaugural plus Bertha Brock Park's 1940 "Winter Festival"

1973 Ionia Centennial Documentary

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

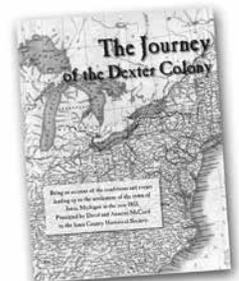
**DVDs are available for \$10 each!**

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)



*Continued from page 2*

agreements. An invoice was presented for the repair of a broken window in the amount of \$29.00.

Regarding on-going expenses, Kathleen noted that the rental agreement with Tyler Basler for storage space was set at \$200 per six months. There was some concern about insurance, and Linda C. will talk to Carr Agency about that. Concern about access to the site due to construction was expressed as well.

The election of Directors at October's annual meeting re-elected Ally Cook to another 2-year term. There was also a second full 2-year term open, and the 1-year remainder of Gordon Wright's term (following his resignation). It was not established at the time of the election which of the two directors elected took on which term of office. The newly elected decided that Dave White would fulfill the 1-year term, and Goose Elliott the two-year term.

The Tri-River Museum Group met at the Blanchard House on Tuesday, Nov 15 with much success. The group has asked to reserve a date in 2017 for a meeting as well.

Ron [?] at the Ionia bowling alley wants some historic Ionia photos for the walls. Linda C. said that we had sold 8x10 prints for \$10 and larger prints for \$15 in the past. After some discussion, the Board agreed that those pricings should be set at \$15 and \$20, respectively. Kathleen and Barb are working with Ron to choose the images.

The ICHS "Blanchard House Holiday Bazaar" is coming up on Sunday, Nov 27, from 1 to 5 p.m. This is an opportunity for members only to set up tables to sell their wares.

Ionia Community Library has proposed a series of presentations to hold at the Blanchard House early in 2017. The success of such collaborations in the past encouraged the board, and Ally C. moved that the Board support the proposed schedule. The motion was supported by Goose E. and passed. The upcoming schedule of programs is currently as follows:

- December 7, 2016, the annual Christmas Pot-Luck Dinner at the Blanchard House
- January 4, 2017, the meeting will be dinner at the Lamplight Grill in Ionia.
- February 1 (tentatively) a tour of the Lantz home on Lafayette St.
- March 1, a presentation on Michigan Lighthouses

(co-hosted by the library)

- March 29, Dutch survivor of the Nazi occupation presents her family's story
- April 5, Goose Elliot will present a photo tour of Route 66
- April 18, author Tracy Groot presents her award-winning historical fiction
- May 3, the Board has invited Three Husbands and One Daughter to entertain once more
- June 7, a visit to Char Sherman's historic antique-filled home in Lyons.
- July 5, the annual Independence Day Pot-Luck

The Rental Committee Report from Barn Ehlert included six rentals scheduled before the end of the year. In addition, Irene Shattuck contacted the ICHS about a rental date for 2017.

Kathleen reported that she had some students from one of the IPS transition programs to help with Christmas decorations at the regular Thursday work session on Nov. 17. The house will then be ready for the season's activities, including holiday tours during December. A call for volunteers to host at the house resulted in the following schedule: Dec 4, Linda Ciangi (more help needed!); Dec 11, McCords (more help needed!); Dec 18, Dave White, Barb Ehlert, Kathleen and Ally Cook.

There was no representative from the Accessions Committee present at the meeting, but others reported that progress is being made towards the presentation of a plan to the Board in January. Also, the furnace / store room is being cleaned up in anticipation of use for accessions (again) and the use of the Tea Room with continue, but reorganized in coming months to be more efficient. David McCord offered storage shelving whenever the committee is ready for it, and he has two folding tables that will be available in a few weeks if needed.

Also coming on December 3 is the annual Mrs. Claus Bazaar at the Middle School. A very popular selling opportunity, the ICHS will have a table to sell souvenirs. Volunteers are welcomed, and the table will be set up by Ally Cook and Barb Hogan. There was confusion regarding the traditional extra free table arrangement we'd had in the past. The Board chose to go with a single table (at a cost of \$40) this year and see how it goes.

To document and publicize all these activities, Kathleen stated that she would send a list to Annette McCord to compose and print "Save The Date" fliers that can be distributed around the community.

Linda C. asked if anyone had contacted someone about preserving and capping the chimneys on the Blanchard House. No one had, so she volunteered to pursue the subject and report back to the Board.

She also asked the Treasurer about receiving a contract for the coming winter's snow removal from C&L Trucking. Annette M. said she had, but did not have it with her. It was assumed to be the same arrangement as last year, which was, by all accounts, a good deal. It was moved by Linda C. and supported by Dave W. to accept the contract on that basis. The Board approved the motion.

Linda also noted that the stained glass window from the Derfendorf house was still awaiting repair. The money has been allocated, and the glass worker ready to do the work. She asked the Board to approach Gordon Wright about delivering the pieces, and moved to offer Gordon money for gas and food for the trip. Goose supported the motion, and it passed, and Kathleen will talk to Gordon about the task.

Ally Cook will be taking Gordon's place as "first call" for the Security system should the alarm be triggered.

Linda C. brought out a box containing the modem that was recently replaced by the phone company, wondering what to do with it. Annette M. said that the phone company might want it back someday, and offered to store the device just in case. She also produced a pair of old leather "army boots" in pretty rough shape, asking the Board's advice about them. David M. will take them to see if they are of significance, and if they can be restored for display.

David M. reported that the ICHS website is very much out of date, and exceedingly difficult to maintain. He proposed that the site be redesigned and re-engineered to be up to date and easier to maintain. He had approached a professional about doing the job, and was quoted \$500 (a non-profit rate). Linda C. moved that the Board allocate the \$500 for the task, to be administered by David M. The motion was supported by Ally and passed by the Board.

David M. also reported on progress being made on the display for the 2017 "Antique Village" at the Ionia Free Fair. The display will be of Native American culture, both historical and current information. He has been in touch with several tribal and state organizations on the subject, and is hopeful for a successful program during "Fair Week."

Some discussion was had about other donations

## Upcoming Programs and Events

### **Wednesday, December 7, 2016 Annual Holiday Pot-Luck at the Blanchard House.**

Bring along your tales of seasons past!

### **Wednesday, December 16, 7:00 p.m. Business Meeting at the Blanchard House Open to all interested parties.**

The **Holiday Decorations** at the Blanchard House will be on display for interested visitors.

### **Sunday, December 4, 11, and 18, 2016.**

Come on by and enjoy a touch of Victorian holiday splendor!

### **Wednesday, January 4, 7:00 p.m. All are invited to meet at the Lamplight Grill Main St. Ionia for a group dinner and social. Review of 2016 and talk about plans for 2017.**

### **Wednesday, January 18, 7:00 p.m. Business Meeting at the Blanchard House Open to all interested parties.**

### **Wednesday, February 1, 7:00 p.m. Meeting at a Historic Home in Ionia. More details coming next month.**

### **Don't forget to visit us online for more information.**



Check [www.ioniahistory.org](http://www.ioniahistory.org) and  
**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!**



either accepted or offered, about the challenges of storage and display spaces, and hopes for future developments.

As the meeting was about to close, Dale Parus, Director of the Ionia Community Library, stopped in to hand off some funds to the Treasurer from the Friends of the Library, and reported on recent Library programs and challenges.

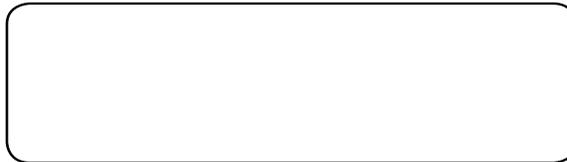
The meeting was adjourned at 9:45.



# 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!

## 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.)

### Ionia County Historical Society 2017 Board of Directors & Officers

- Kathleen Cook, President — 616-527-2626
- Linda Ciangi, Vice President — 616-527-4945
- Ally Cook, Director — 616-821-1406
- Dave White, Director — 989-855-2350
- Goose Elliott, Director — 616 755 2486
- David McCord, Secretary — 616-527-3784
- 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>