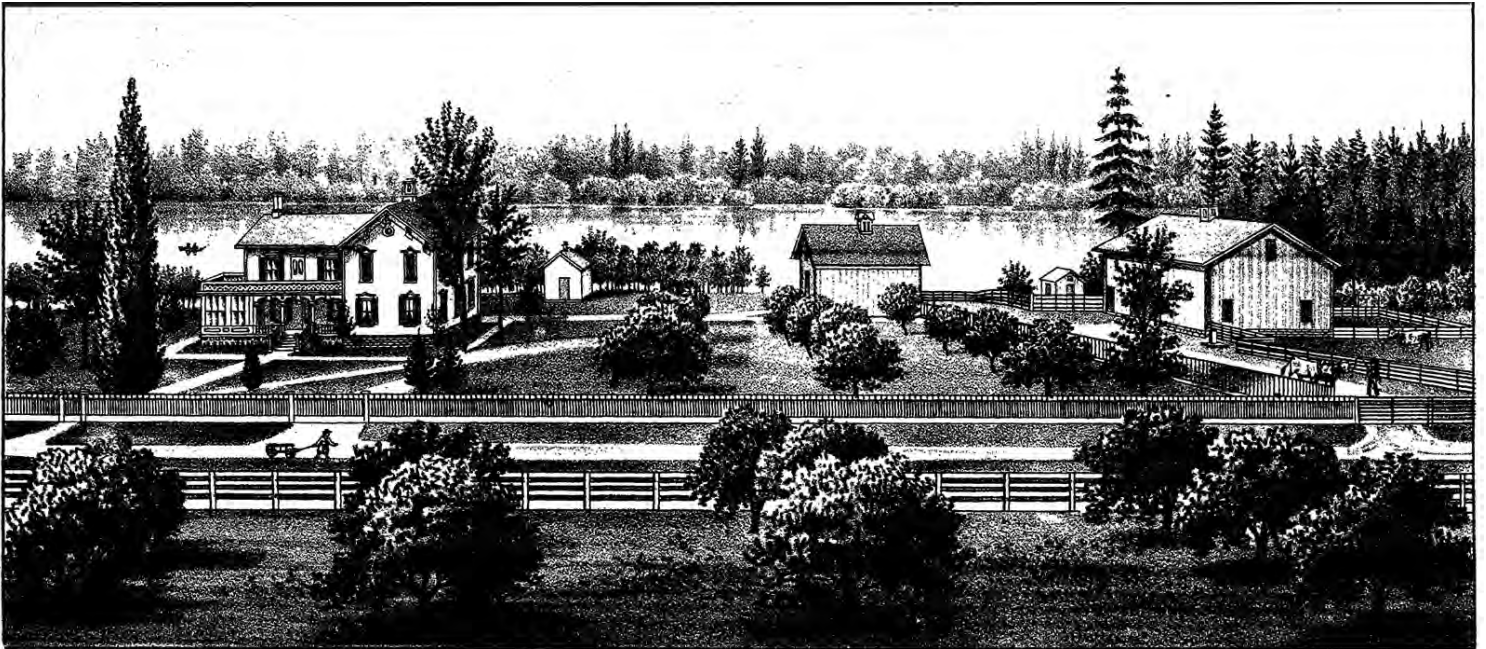




# The Mansion on the Lake



WOODARD LAKE

RESIDENCE OF DR. GEORGE PRAY, RONALD TP., IONIA CO., MICH.  
From "History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties" by John S. Schenck, 1881

George Pray was born August 27, 1825, in Allegheny County, New York. His parents Ezek and Sallie came to Michigan in 1825, when George was five weeks old, and were among the earliest settlers in Superior Township, Washtenaw County. They purchased and improved a large farm there, where George's life up to age fourteen was similar to all boys on the farm. At fourteen he entered the Ann Arbor Academy and prepared for the University. In 1841, when the University opened, he entered the first class at age sixteen, and became a member of the first graduating class of the U of M in 1845.

He pursued the practice of Medicine in Ann Arbor and elsewhere, but in 1856 relocated to Ronald Township, along the shore of Woodard Lake, where he purchased over 500 acres.

Here Doctor Pray and his wife Deidamia (they had married in 1849) resolved to raise their son. They had a large home and array of farm buildings erected

on the site, where their descendants continued to live for several generations.

Some years ago, Terri and Ken Pickett purchased the house from the family, and on January 8th of this year, welcomed members and guests of the Ionia County Historical Society into their home to tour this 160-year-old mansion.

Of the Doctor's life at the estate, he was very active in the community. A leader in the local Grange all his life, he was also Ronald Township Supervisor, Representative to the State Legislature, and active in the University's administration.

After a few years back in Ann Arbor, they returned to the Ronald farm in 1867. Their life there was good, until Deidamia became ill with pneumonia and died childless on March 14, 1875, at the age of 46. After a year of mourning, he married Adele on April 9, 1876, and became the father of a boy on June 16, 1877. George and Adele had five children total, of whom three lived and attended the University of Michigan.

After a day calling on patients in dead of winter, George too caught pneumonia and died January 27, 1890, at age 64. His two youngest children died of whooping cough within four months of his death. Five months after that, in October, Adele died of consumption at age 32, leaving three orphaned children, ages 13, 7 and 5. The children remained at the farm, where parcels were sold off to put them through the University as well.

Eventually the family began to move on, and visit the Woodard Lake property only seasonally. The home being empty much of the year began to take its toll, and ultimately the place remained unvisited for several years.

The Picketts then came on the scene, seeing the great potential in the home. Over several years, they began to rebuild and restore the place as both a home and bed-and-breakfast establishment. The ICHS members agree that the couple have done a marvelous job at it!

*More on page two...*

Continued from pg 1: **The Mansion**

In addition to the fascinating history of the Pray House, the Picketts' own personality has found its way into the decor. This includes not only treasures that date back to the house's origins, but more modern "artifacts." From the oil lamp and player piano

in the parlor, to the barber chairs and pin-ball machines, every room was a delightful discovery. There was a "juke box" which had been in the original Woodard Lake Pavilion (now long gone) and paintings and print ads framed on the walls to connect today with the distant past.

Our heartfelt thanks to Ken and Terri, as we as co-host Mary Perrin (who baked a cake!). We hope we can visit again during the warmer season to see more of this charming mansion on the lake.



**Minutes of the Meeting of January 8th 2014**

On January 8, 2014, the members of the ICHS were hosted at the home of Terri and Ken Pickett. Before the tour and presentation, Vice President Kathleen Cook conducted a brief meeting. The agenda included a reminder to the members that the film "Fear the Crooked Corpse" will be shown at the Ionia Theatre on Saturday, Feb 1st. This film was produced by Aaron Russman, with much of the footage captured at the John C. Blanchard House.

The Blanchard House will be closed during the month of January (no workshops or scheduled meetings) to conserve the cost of heating the house. Hank Knoop and Gordon Wright continue to keep a watchful eye on the house in the meantime.

The "Let's Floor It" fundraiser dinner at the Lamplight Grill will be held Sunday, Feb 23rs from 4 to 6 p.m. The cost of the Prime Rib buffet is \$15.99 (beverages extra) with \$5.00 of each meal going to the ICHS for new carpeting. Stephanie VanderMolen agreed to help with a flier to promote the event.

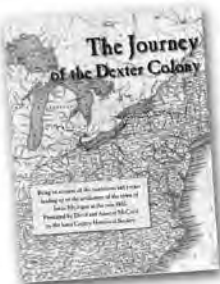
Rose Scheller will be hosting a tea party at the Blanchard House on Feb 16th.

The Ionia Expo will be at the High School on March 15th, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The ICHS will have a booth at the traditional spot, and volunteers are needed to help set up and staff the booth. Please contact event chair Patty Simpson-Gokee.

**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**

## Raffle Tickets available now!

The Ionia County Historical Society is raffling off TWO fully catered dinners for up to 10 people at the historic (and romantic!) Blanchard House. The drawing will be held at the April 2nd meeting, and arrangements made with the winners directly thereafter. These dinners are being provided by:

**The Lamplight Grill  
and  
Gregory's Catering**

Tickets are available from ICHS members, and the costs are:

**\$1   \$5   \$20**

Per Ticket   For SIX   For 25 Tickets!

The Upstairs-Downtown Tour is scheduled for Saturday, May 17, and is co-chaired by Kathleen and Ally Cook. Some new buildings will be on the tour this year, and (as always) volunteers are needed!

Spring Into The Past will be the weekend of May 3 and 4, and the ICHS Antique Fayre (Yard Sale) will be held June 6th and 7th.

We have 91 friends on Facebook! Several members have access to the page and weekly trivia questions are being posted along with some awesome pictures. The Facebook presence is gaining popularity!

Barb Ehlert reports a potential wedding rental of the House for May 10th.

All the small items donated to the ICHS from the Ionia Community Library have been collected at the House, and will need to be cataloged. Anyone interested in helping, please notify the Board.

The Dinner Raffle is under way, and tickets are available! (See ad elsewhere in this issue).

An Antiques Roadshow is being planned for late March or April. (details coming soon).

Treasurer Hank K. delivered his report for the past month, which is on file. The news is good: income was greater than expenses for the month!

The January business meeting will be held at the Knoop's home on N. State Road. The February meeting will be held at St. Joseph's Church in Pewamo. (Members will meet at the Blanchard House to car-pool to the event.)•

## Minutes of the Business Meeting of Jan. 15th 2014

The Board of Directors of the Ionia County Historical Society met on January 15th at the Blanchard House. The meeting was called to order by president Linda Ciangi at approx. 7:00 p.m.

The first item on the agenda was giving a key to the Blanchard House to Gordon Wright, who has been added to the security notification system as well. Linda also noted that Gordon had donated a bag of sidewalk salt to the House as well.

The White's Bridge organization would like to see the files we have from Rus Gregory's research to see what they might learn about the bridge's history. The board agreed to allow them to study the files (under supervision) and arrangements will be made.

Linda asked the Board to be thinking of ideas for next year's Holiday Season, hopefully to boost the success of the activities held here. There were discussions about sharing the season with other non-profits, and build in more family entertainment, etc. David McCord donated four decks of playing cards with the Blanchard House printed on the card backs, to be sold at the ICHS gift shop. If they appear to be a popular item, more can be purchased.

Stephanie VanderMolen volunteered to put together posters to promote the Donner Raffle. Linda C. suggested also that the reverse side of the posters be used to promote the "Let's Floor It" fund-raiser at the Lamplight for Feb 23rd.

Linda also shared other area event information (Chamber Dinner on January 25, Free Fair fundraiser at Steel St. Hall on January 18, etc.)

Linda asked the Board if we could set a modest budget to be used to pay for photo prints which are used for door prizes, silent auction items, and souvenirs. Kathleen Cook moved that \$50 be pre-approved for this activity, which was supported by Ally Cook and passed.

Hank K. shared the 2013 Annual Report with the Board (handing out copies to the Directors). The report was prepared by Larry Tiejema, and Hank pointed out some of the highlights and explained some of the

## VOLUNTEERS are always appreciated!

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

## THANK YOU!

...for your continuing support  
of the Historical Society!

figures therein. The summary of the report was that 2013 was a well-balanced year. The ICHS nearly broke even! Hank also reported that dues and "business buddies" funds are still coming in (slowly). He also reminded David M. that he needed a copy of the December minutes which stated the intended change in the paperwork for our CDs at Independent Bank and M-1 Credit Union. David said he would eMail the minutes ASAP. Kathleen noted that the ICHS still owes some funds to the "Fit to be Tied" Quilt Club as their share of the raffle income from last year. Hank said he will follow up with the group and take care of it. Hank noted that some help is needed to move some display cabinets in the museum (basement). He also noted that some slate is coming loose on the roof and needs to be repaired this spring. He will contact a professional to see what it might cost to have it fixed. David M. also recalled that he would install some new electrical outlets in the museum at some point.

## Have a wish?

The ICHS Board is asking members to make suggestions for a 2014 "wish list" for the Historical Society. Please bring your suggestions to the Board of Directors!

The ICHS phone system (presently AT&T) is expensive. It was suggested that we look into more economical phone service to save money. However, there would be some initial set-up cost to install a connection for the EPS security system (approx. \$200). Ally Cook will do some research and report.

Hank shared some miscellaneous items that came in the mail, including some DVDs of 1940s films relevant to Ionia.

A Thank You Card was passed around to send off to the Picketts for hosting our January meeting. The February meeting will be at St. Josephs Church in Pewamo, and the March meeting at the Ionia Township Office.

# 150 Years Ago



## NEWS OF THE REBELLION

January 1863 saw arguably the most important non-political act of the American Civil War. On January 1st 1863 President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Declaration that abolished slavery in those states which had taken up arms against the Union.

January 2nd: The Confederates suffered a defeat at Stone's River, Murfreesboro. They lost a total of 14,560 killed, wounded and missing. However, the North also suffered major losses with 11,578 killed, wounded and missing. This, along with appalling weather that made the movement of troops and horses all but impossible, meant that The North could not follow up its success.

January 11th: A Union force commanded by General McClernand captured Fort Hindman on the Arkansas River. Nearly

4500 Confederate troops were taken prisoner. McClernand was ordered to blow up Fort Hindman as it had no strategic value to the Unionists.

January 20th: It soon became clear that the Army of the Potomac was in no fit state to campaign. Snow had turned to heavy rain and the barracking arrangements simply were not good enough. Many men fell ill due to the conditions they lived in; food was poor, water frequently unsanitary and the whiskey that was provided of dubious quality. One senior Union officer wrote: "I have ridden through a regimental camp whose utterly filthy condition seemed enough to send malaria through a whole military department, and have been asked by one colonel, with tears in his eyes, to explain to him why his men are dying at a rate of one a day."

January 21st: A rainstorm that lasted 30 hours made a crossing of the Rappahannock River extremely hazardous. However, Burnside had to do this if he was to reach Richmond.

January 22nd: Burnside gave up on trying to cross the Rappahannock River as it had become too dangerous. Frustrated that he had not been given all the support he believed he should have got from his senior officers, Burnside decided to sack a number of them.

January 24th: Burnside met with Lincoln and gave him a list of those he wanted dismissed. Burnside told Lincoln if he did not get the support of the President, he would tender his own resignation.

January 25th: Lincoln removed Burnside from his command of the Army of the Potomac. The post was given to General Hooker. Burnside was very supportive of the President's decision as he had always felt that he was out of his depth and he offered Hooker his full support and loyalty.

January 26th: 'Fighting Joe' Hooker formally took charge of the Army of the Potomac. Whereas Burnside had never been confident about his ability to command a whole army of 100,000+ men, Hooker was fully confident about his own ability.

# 100 Years Ago - January 1914

The Ford Motor Company instituted a revolutionary \$5.00-a-day wage for an eight-hour work day. The announcement incited an immediate exodus of employment-seekers to Detroit, clogging the streets with hopeful applicants.

While Henry's primary objective was to reduce worker attrition—labor turnover from monotonous assembly line work was high—newspapers from all over the world reported the story as an extraordinary gesture of goodwill.



**THE DETROIT JOURNAL** LAST EDITION  
THIRTY-NINTH YEAR. DETROIT, MICHIGAN, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 1914. PRICE...

### HENRY FORD GIVES \$10,000,000 IN 1914 PROFITS TO HIS EMPLOYEES

**HOUSES SWEEPED INTO ATLANTIC BY STORM; CREW OF 32 DROWNED**

**NATION-WIDE STRIKE IS BEING DISCUSSED BY LABOR LEADERS**

**Motor Kings Who Share Profits With Worker**

**DOUBLES PAY OF 25,000 IN AUTO WORKS**

**Gov. Ferris is on way to CALUMET**

**STRIKE CONDITIONS**

**Gov. Ferris is on way to CALUMET**

**Gov. Ferris is on way to CALUMET**

**Gov. Ferris is on way to CALUMET**

Increased wages allow more Ford employees to see the debut of the new Charlie Chaplin film, "The Tramp." The film established the iconic Chaplin character that would appear without change in films for over 15 years.



## 100 Years Ago - January 1914

On Jan. 1, 1914, the St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line became the world's first scheduled passenger airline service, operating between St. Petersburg and Tampa, Fla. It was a short-lived endeavor — only four months — but it paved the way for today's daily transcontinental flights.

The first flight's pilot was Tony Jannus, an experienced test pilot and barnstormer. The first paying passenger was Abram C. Pheil, former mayor of St. Petersburg. Their 21-mile (34-kilometer) flight across the bay to Tampa took 23 minutes.



## 200 Years Ago - January 1814

*Friends Good Will* was a ship built in Michigan at River Rouge in 1810 as a merchant vessel. In the summer of 1812, she was chartered by the federal government to take military supplies to Fort Dearborn, a small military and trading post at what is now Chicago.

She was returning with furs and skins when she was lured into the harbor of Mackinaw Island. The British, having taken the island just days before, were flying false colors above the fort ramparts. The British confiscated the vessel, cargo, and crew, renaming her *Little Belt*. She was armed, taken into service, and fought with the Royal Navy until September of 1813, when she was recaptured by United States Commodore Oliver Perry at the Battle of Lake Erie. Within an hour after the great guns fell silent, Commodore Perry mentioned her in his now famous dispatch, "We have met the enemy and they are ours: Two Ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop." That sloop was *Friends Good Will*.

*Friends Good Will* then served in the United States Navy, transporting General William Henry Harrison's troops across Lake Erie in the successful invasion of Southern Ontario. She was driven ashore in a storm south of Buffalo in December 1813. In early **January 1814**, during efforts to re-launch the ship, the British unceremoniously burned the once-proud vessel during a raid on Buffalo.

## Upcoming Programs and Events

**Wednesday, February 5, 7:00 p.m.**

**at St. Joseph Church in Pewamo**

Our February meeting will be held at the Church!

**Wednesday, February 19, 7:00 p.m.**

Business Meeting — Location to be announced.

**Sunday, Feb 23, 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.** at the Lamplight Grill, Ionia

**“Floor-It!” Fund-Raising Dinner!**

\$15.00 a plate for Prime Rib and all the fixin's

Proceeds from each meal will go to the new carpet project.

**Wednesday, March 5, 7:00 p.m.**

The meeting will be held at the Ionia Township Hall.

**Saturday, March 15 — Ionia Expo**

**Wednesday, March 19, 7:00 p.m.**

Business Meeting at the Blanchard House

**Saturday, April 5th — 10:00-2:00**

Annual **“Appraisal Road Show”** with Glen Rairigh  
at the Ionia Commission on Aging!

**Wednesday, April 2, 7:00 p.m.**

“THE JOY OF SOX” at the Blanchard House.

**Wednesday, April 16, 7:00 p.m.**

Business Meeting at the Blanchard House

**Weekend of May 3 & 4**

“*Spring Into The Past*” Tri-River Museum Tours

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

Program at the Blanchard House presented by David McCord.

**Saturday, May 17**

Annual Upstairs/Downtown Tours in Downtown Ionia!

**Friday, June 5 & Saturday, June 6**

**Annual ICHS Antique Fayre and Yard Sale!**

Check [www.ioniahistory.org](http://www.ioniahistory.org) for more info, and

**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!!!**





# 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!**

- January 2 – Big Bend - America's Last Frontier*
- January 9 – The Great Parks of Alaska*
- January 16 – England and Wales (part 1)*
- January 23 – England and Wales (part 2)*
- January 30 – Africa, the Serengeti*
- February 6 – Maui*
- February 13 – Northern Spain (part 1)*

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

- Linda Ciangi, President — 616-527-4945
- Kathleen Cook, Vice President — 527-2626
- Patty Simpson-Gokee, Director — 527-0676
- Alli Cook, Director — 616-821-1406
- David White, Director — 989-855-2350
- David McCord, Secretary — 527-3784
- Hank Knoop, Treasurer — 527-3130
- Barb Ehlert, House Rentals — 522-0844