



How's Your Penmanship?

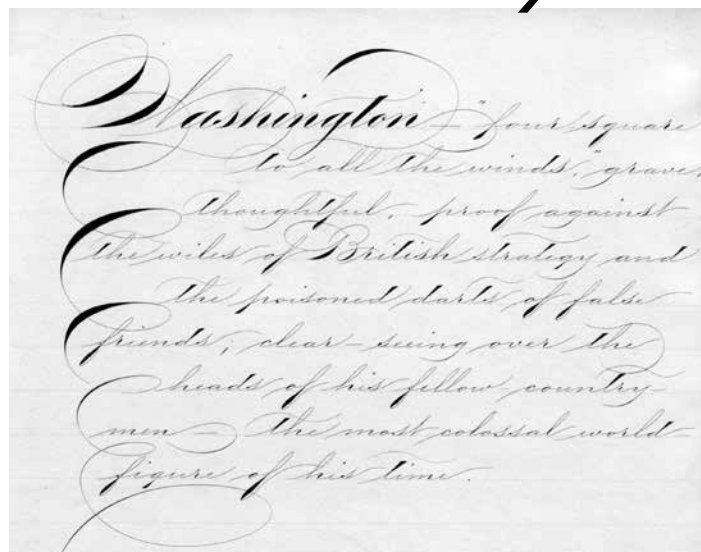
I (David McCord) provided the program for the May meeting on the subject of "Handwriting." Based on recent reports that the educational system is phasing out the teaching of "cursive" handwriting, I did some research on the history of the topic, and parallels in recent history. Here's an overview of what I discovered:

Beginning a few centuries ago, the development handwriting evolved hand-in-hand with literacy in general, and styles of handwriting were established to fill specific niches in society.

There were sophisticated decorative "hands" for official documents, declarations, and certificates; precise hands for business and commercial applications; elegant hands for personal communications by society folk; and common ("vulgar") hands for every day use.

A person's skill at handwriting was said to be a reflexion of their character - their reputation could be discerned from the care and precision they applied to their penmanship. Indeed, a businessman with sloppy handwriting could not be trusted to manage finances accurately, and a slovenly hand reflected a lack of self-discipline.

Teaching of handwriting through the years presents an interesting tale as well. Persons of specific social classes were taught to write the style appropriate to their station, or their profession. Most children with access to an organized education were taught to read - primarily printed matter (not so much hand-written). But they were not taught to write until (in the words of a 18th-century educator) "they have something



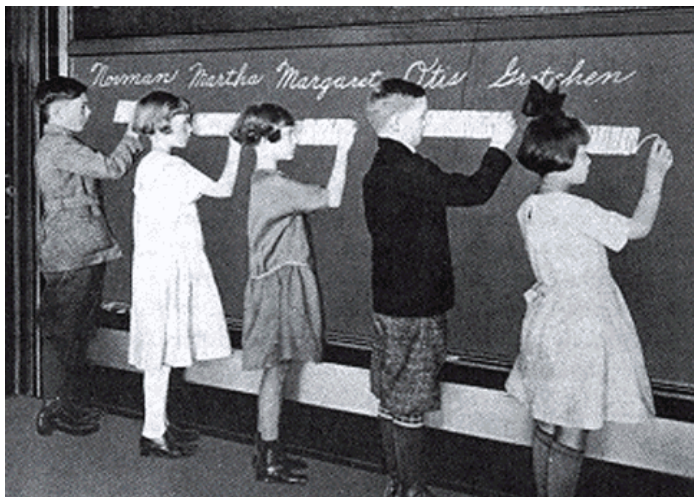
to write about." This was generally equivalent to today's fourth grade level.

This led to a discussion about the printed word, and its relationship to handwriting. The technology of the day - movable type and book-binding machinery - put literature into the hands of the masses like never before. Many "men of letters" considered the technology to be a gross misrepresentation of the author's work: "the cold precision of the print could never convey the personality of the writer." This was true again a century later when the typewriter became popular for correspondence, and then again a century after that when the digital revolution brought the computer to everyone's lives.

But through the 19th century, the handwriting styles included the popular penmanship we recognize today as "cursive" - the Spencerian letterforms that dominated the field, leading to the well-known Palmer method by the dawn of the 20th century.

The teaching of elementary-level writing (surprising as it may seem) was exclusively in cursive hands during the Victorian era. The idea of teaching "Manuscript" (what we often call "printing") to youngsters was not actually popularized until the first couple of decades of the 20th century. The trend was seen by many as a bizarre idea - teaching youth a certain method of writing, then teaching them a completely different method a few years later seemed quite confusing. (And it surely was.)

Over the years, penmanship went through phases of popularity as a necessity, a luxury, an art form, and a



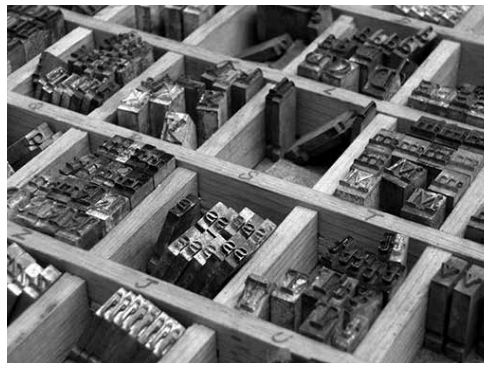
Continued from Page 1

nostalgic hobby. Calligraphy that harkens back to pre-Victorian days (and before) is still used for invitations, announcements, diplomas and certificates - a reflection of the special care, the artistry and the importance of the documents and the events they represent. The personal touch expressed in hand-written letters is a lamentable "lost art" and seldom seen in this 21st century.

With the advent of today's communication technology, "keyboarding" has moved to the forefront of education. "Typing" replaced all hand-written business communications decades ago, and slowly usurped all written documents in higher education since the 1960s. And now, a first-grader who can't find letters on a "QWERTY" keyboard will be at a distinct disadvantage. And traditional methods (as has happened many times in history) give way to newer technology, and newer needs.

The penmanship stressed so seriously in generations passed is now seen as an unnecessary task when educational budgets continue to be sliced thinner, and curricula challenged with new expectations.

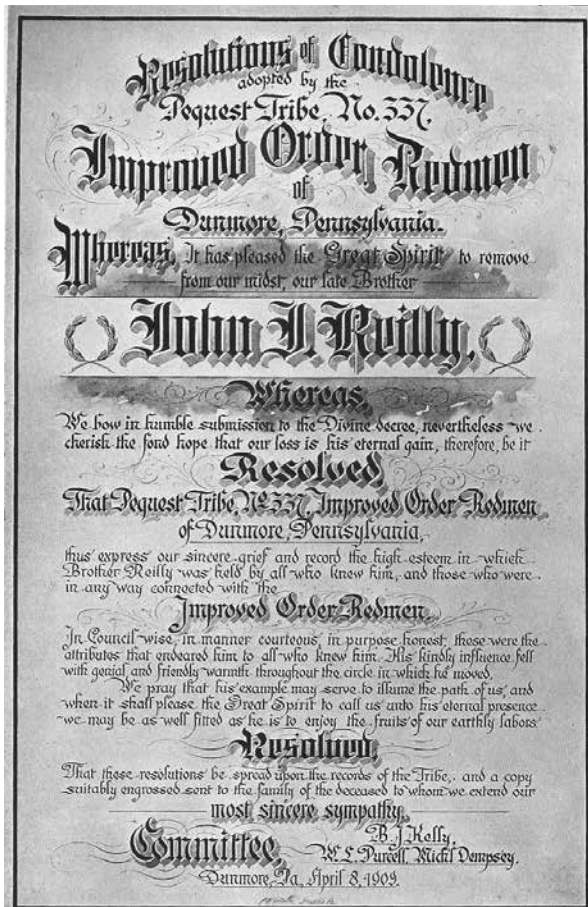
But, as surely as it was 200 years ago — a "fine hand of finely formed characters reflects a writer also possessed of a finely formed personal character." When one sees high-quality handwriting, it is no less admirable than it ever was (regardless of the style), and tells us something of the writer. Handwriting can express personal feelings like the brush strokes of an artist which can never be expressed by a laser printer or computer screen. To compensate for



this individuality, modern "texters" have adopted deliberate misspellings, severely abbreviated language, colloquial abbreviations to convey a sense of personality in their messages. In many cases, this "new literacy" is as illegible to an old-school reader as the Spencerian hand might have been to a traditional "Italic" reader of the 18th century.

Time marches on... and every generation meets its challenges in its own way.

POSTSCRIPT: If any readers of this article would be interested, I can arrange a calligraphy and penmanship workshop through the Historical Society. Please contact the Board if you're interested!



MINUTES of the May 1st Program Meeting

The May 1 meeting of the ICHS was called to order at the Blanchard House at 7:15 p.m. by president Stephanie VanderMolen.

Reporting on the recent events and activities, Stephanie began with the "Let's Floor It!" fundraiser at the Lamplight Grill. This event, graciously hosted at the restaurant, raised \$355 for the new carpet in the front parlor. The Carpet Committee (a.k.a. Kathleen Cook) is now looking for additional fund-raising ideas for the project. Phil Kahl won the door prize: a free rental opportunity at the Blanchard House (which the family will use for a bridal shower).

The Appraisal Roadshow brought in \$335 as well - always a fun event. Thanks again to the Joe and Joan McCord and to Glen Rairigh, the appraiser. (\$25 went to the Commission on Aging for rental of the room.)

"Spring Into The Past" is coming on the 5th and 6th, and volunteers are still needed for Sunday's tours of the House. Quilt Raffle tickets are still on sale, and the drawing will be Sunday afternoon. The quilt (as noted before) was donated by Sandy Todd, made from family heirloom fabrics. Thursday's weekly work session will be a final round of clean up for the event.

Hank Knoop will be giving tours for several Middle School classes on May 8 and 14 at the House, and on the 15th, the Charlotte Baptist Ladies group will be coming through the house.

Looking towards the future, the "Upstairs-Downtown Tour" is coming up on the 18th. Members are asked to sign up as soon as possible so event chair Ally Cook can assign volunteers to the various sites on the tour. Tickets will be sold at the former site of the Dood's store.

The May 31 / June 1 Antique Fayre and Flea Market plans are coming along nicely. Chairman Doni Knoop reported that more vendors are signing up this year, and a lot of items were donated by Bob & Joan Nixon for the sale. Volunteers are needed!

Our June Program (on Wednesday the 5th) will be a presentation from a person whose ancestor served in the Civil War and was in Andersonville Prison for a time.

The weekend of June 22-23, Ionia is arranging a carnival and other events in downtown Ionia. The ICHS is hoping to host a "team scavenger hunt" as part of the event, with a historic theme. David McCord has volunteered to put together the competition, and Linda C. will manage it for the Saturday of the event. There will also be a Silent Auction at the Blanchard House as a fundraiser for the ICHS. Looking for additional donations for the Auction from area businesses, too.

July will include our annual Independence-Day Potluck (this year on the 3rd) at the Blanchard House. Please invite all your friends and family!

The Free Fair begins on July 18. Linda C. is working on the ICHS presence for the parade, and we'll undoubtedly have a display in the Floral Building as well. As always, ideas and volunteers are welcomed.

August 3rd will be our Bus Trip to Greenfield Village for the day. Details are still being worked out, but pricing has been set at \$60 per seat. More details coming soon.

August 17th will bring a "Saturday Social - 1863." David M. is arranging to host our friends from the Civil War reenactor groups to offer them historic tours, light activities at the Blanchard House, a picnic lunch, potluck dinner, and some "period" 1863 entertainment. Watch for additional information as the plans are finalized.

In the Fall season, the Duck Race at the Fall Festival

will be back, and we'll be planning another Cemetery Tour and Halloween participation. Watch for more!

Projects within the Blanchard House and grounds include:

A new display of Ypsilanti Reed furniture and memorabilia has been set up in the Conservatory and Dining Room. So far, it has proven to be quite popular.

Due to the cleaning and redisplay in the basement Museum, many treasures are being re-discovered that need some TLC. Linda C. and Barb Ehlert have donated many hours of time and effort to clean and sort these artifacts, and assemble them into public displays. Some military-related photos have been retrieved which need special care to get them ready for display.

Ionia Parks & Rec Department is creating the new "Jackson Street" park where the JayCee Center (former city water works) and tennis courts (former city ice-skating rink) were located. Our suggestion that it be named the Gerard Perry Park has been submitted for their consideration.

Dave White, ICHS member, has been doing the lawn care work for us at a discounted rate, and with the help of some individuals needing to do some community service, has kept the grounds looking very nice this season.

Barb E. reported that the new shelving has been installed upstairs and storage boxes packed, labeled, and put in place.

Regarding recent donations to the ICHS collections:

Hank K. presented a couple of finds from the Westphalia Historical Society: a note pad from the "Martin Cleaning" company of Ionia, and an employee badge from the Ionia Manufacturing Co. (c. 1940s).

Linda C. shared several donations of old signs from Ionia businesses from Craig Ferguson that might be suitable for auction or sale. She also received a \$30 donation from the Elvis Fan Club president. She is seeking donations of Tennis Racquets and vintage Typewriter Stands for the museum, and work has begun on a "Class of 1913" display as well.

Wilma Ackerson brought several donations to the Society: A copy of the 1930s sheet music "Alma Mater", a 1931 Ionia Pottery Company Inventory, and more information about the "McKinley Society" silk quilt in the ICHS collection. She also shared a Lyons-Muir Historical Society newsletter article about a "traveling vacuum cleaner company."

MINUTES of the May 15th Business Meeting

The May Business Meeting of the ICHS was brought to order at 7:00 on Wednesday the 15th at the Blanchard House. Present were Stephanie VanderMolen, President; Patty Simpson-Gokee, Barb Hogan, Kathleen Cook and Ally Cook, Directors; David McCord, Secretary; Hank Knoop, Treasurer; plus Barb Ehlert, Doni Knoop, Linda Ciangi. representing various committees.

Spring Into The Past was a big success again with many visitors, and thanks to all who volunteered! The Quilt Raffle was concluded with a drawing on Sunday afternoon. The winner was Pat Salter, and the raffle earned the Society \$424. Thanks again to Sandy Todd for the donation, and Patty S. for running the raffle. (Stephanie noted that we need to be thinking of ideas for the next raffle!)



GET YOUR TEAM TOGETHER!

JOIN US DOWNTOWN ON SATURDAY, JUNE 22ND

Get your thinking caps on to work a few puzzles, learn a little local history - and WIN A PRIZE!

The winning team will be drawn from all the completed entries immediately after the event.



THE PRIZE:
ONE FREE RENTAL OF THE J.C. BLANCHARD HOUSE >> FOR YOUR TEAM! (A \$300 VALUE)

Watch for more information to come soon, and be sure to visit us on the web:
www.ioniahistory.org and www.facebook.com/ioniahistory

Barb Ehlert reported that B. House rentals are set for May 17 & June 6.

The Middle School tours (noted elsewhere) went well, as reported by the tour guide, Hank K., with thanks to Mike Gallagher.

Upstairs-Downtown Tour plans are coming together, but there are some last minute concerns about volunteers and promotional efforts. Ally and Kathleen are working out the details. Volunteers will be given name tags, and David M. suggested bottles of water as well. Ticket sales is being managed by Linda C. and Hank will provide some change for the Cigar Box.

Doni K. reports that there are 16 vendors signed up for the Flea Market on May 31-June 1. She's still hoping for more volunteers to help with the event - interested folks please contact her ASAP. There was some discussion about some items in the ICHS collections - specifically some things in the Carriage House - that might be sold during the Flea Market, and some to be offered as part of the Silent Auction later in the month of June. The Board is seeking "easy-up" canopies to use for the Flea Market and potentially other outdoor events. Meanwhile, any kind of canopy will be welcomed for use at the Flea Market (in case of rain, but also to offer shade). The Board also lamented the lack of space to store items not on display but still of historic value, and acknowledged the difficult decisions about de-accessioning some items. This issue will be addressed again soon.

Discussions of arrangements and details for several events coming up were discussed. Refer to the calendar and advertisements elsewhere in this issue for that information. Someone specifically noted advertising at Alice Springs (and similar venues) to capture the attention of visitors and tourists in the area during the summer months.

Estimates are being gathered for carpet cleaning from Clinger's and Stanley Steamer. They will visit the house on the 23rd. Hank will check on our resource doing Community Service about washing windows on the inside - but he says that the man has not been very responsive lately. More to come.

Linda asked David M. if there would be more details available by next Wednesday RE: the Scavenger Hunt, to present the idea to the DDA at their

VOLUNTEERS are always welcomed!

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

On May 8 and 14 the ICHS hosted ALL the 8th Graders from IMS (approx. 230 students). They spent one hour receiving a hands on session on Civil War Infantry weapons and tactics and one hour for a tour of the Blanchard House and an over-view of Ionia History. Thanks to Hank Knoop, Mike Gallagher, Barb Hogan, Doni Knoop and Linda Ciangi for making this happen.



meeting. David said he would try to get info to her in time.

Summer Sundays were discussed also. The idea of arranging unique activities for some of those afternoons was brought up, and a few suggestions mentioned. More to come - if any members would be interested in helping to arrange these, please contact the Board! Themes and specific audiences should be considered so people know what to expect, and will respond to specific interests.

The challenge of keeping the Website and Facebook information up to date was mentioned, and the hope expressed for a better information system someday.

Stephanie mentioned the idea of a "reclaim the creek" project to clean up the banks and plant some appropriate foliage there. Tina (a near neighbor of the Blanchard House) expressed a desire to be involved in landscaping projects - specifically trees and perhaps an arbor in the back yard. She has been invited to come to a meeting to discuss the possibilities.

Linda C. expressed thanks to Joe & Joan McCord for the camera and typewriter collections now on display - along with all the other donations they continue to offer to the Society.

Hank K. reported that one of the ICHS Certificates of Deposit is coming due for renewal soon, and (as decided by the Board several meetings ago) would be transferred to a similar CD at the M-1 Credit Union. It was moved by Kathleen C. and supported by Patty S. to open a \$10,000 CD at M-1 with the money from the Independent Bank CD. The motion was unanimously approved, and Hank K. will make the arrangements.

Stephanie V. met with Chel Lea recently about setting up a "Victorian Spiritualism" event, to present visitors with historic information about the topic (which was a very prominent part of 19th century society) and offer displays of related items and information. Chel Lea would also offer palm reading and spiritual readings. The Board was generally supportive of the idea, and told Stephanie to continue working on the arrangements for an event in the late-Fall time frame.

Patty S. will be leaving for the summer (cottage up north) and therefore will not be here to do the newsletter mailings and other volunteering during that time. Kathleen C. said she could handle the mailings, Hank K. will keep her informed of new addresses for the list and David M. will get the newsletters to her. There are now 66 names on the list, and the next newsletter printing will be increased to cover the higher quantity. Thanks to Patty for her services!

Linda C. managed the production of some historic photo prints for the Court House, including framing, and incurred some expense for that operation. While getting copies made, she had an extra set made for the ICHS collection (taking advantage of a quantity discount). The Board supported Linda's submission of a \$75 invoice to the County for their share of the expense. Linda asked for \$26.55 to cover the rest of the expense. The motion was made by Barb H. and supported by Ally C. and passed by the Board.

Stephanie V. was contacted again by J. Dempsey about historical markers in the area. She will respond and ask if he'd contacted Joe Finkbiner about the state markers.

The meeting was adjourned at approx. 9:30 p.m.

Upcoming Programs and Events

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

Wednesday, June 5th, 7:00 p.m.
June Program Meeting at the
Blanchard House - Program by Jeanie Cooper
Civil War Recollections: ANDERSONVILLE

Wednesday, June 19th, 7:00 p.m.
June Business Meeting at the Blanchard House

Saturday, June 22nd, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
HISTORIC SCAVENGER HUNT
in Downtown Ionia (see details elsewhere)

Sunday, June 23, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
HISTORIC SILENT AUCTION
at the Blanchard House

Wednesday, July 3rd, 7:00 p.m.
Annual Independence Day Pot-luck Dinner
at the Blanchard House

Wednesday, July 17th, 7:00 p.m.
July Business Meeting at the Blanchard House

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

Wednesday, August 7, 7:00 p.m.
August Program Meeting at the
Blanchard House - Program TBA

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 for more!





Action in Michigan Territory was intense in the early months of 1813, including the Battle of Frenchtown and the River Raisin Massacre. The British encroachment into Michigan was driven back in subsequent months, with many skirmishes nearer the lakeshore and south into Ohio. The whites on the peninsula being mostly of French decent and most recently employed in American commerce, their loyalties were often opportunistic. Nearer the populated areas, allegiances with local natives were the key to struggles for control of roads and rivers.

The Siege of Fort Meigs took place in northwestern Ohio on May 1st. A small British army with support from Indians attempted to capture the recently-constructed fort to forestall an American offensive against Detroit, which the British had captured the previous year. An American sortie and relief attempt failed with heavy casualties, but the British failed to capture the fort and were forced to raise the siege.

British troops stationed at Fort Erie near Niagara were caught off guard by American troops due to the fort being in the middle of rebuilding. The Americans took the fort in late May, and would hold it for nearly a year. American troops had also driven British forces back to Burlington Heights in Ontario.



On April 27, Union General Hooker crossed the Rappahannock River to attack General Lee's forces. Lee split his army, attacking a surprised Union army in three places and almost completely defeating them. Hooker withdrew across the Rappahannock River, giving the South a victory, but it was the Confederates' most costly victory in terms of casualties.

On the first of May, Robert E. Lee ordered Stonewall Jackson to remove the weapons and equipment from the arsenal at Harpers Ferry, being threatened by the Union Army's advances. On the same day in the southwest, infantry under Benjamin Butler [US] began entering the city of New Orleans, marking the beginning of a controversial occupation of that city.

In a rally intended to be a reaction to Burnside's General Order 38, Clement Vallandigham criticizes Abraham Lincoln for not ending the Civil War, which he characterized as "wicked and cruel." The course of Vallandigham's career in the coming months would be embroiled in legal and political controversy, resulting in his exile to Canada while at the same time running for Governor of Ohio.

Union General Grant won several victories around Vicksburg, Mississippi, the fortified city considered essential to the Union's plans to

regain control of the Mississippi River. On May 22, Grant began a siege of the city. After six weeks, Confederate General John Pemberton surrendered, giving up the city and 30,000 men. The capture of Port Hudson, Louisiana, shortly thereafter placed the entire Mississippi River in Union hands. The Confederacy was split in two.



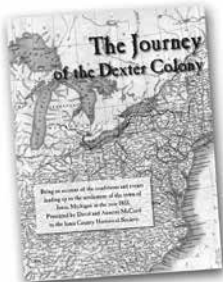
On May 13, 1913, the Michigan Legislature passed the State Reward Trunk Line Highway Act (Public Act 334 of 1913) that created the original state highway system. In that act, Grand River Avenue between Detroit and Grand Rapids was included as Division 9 of the system. It would later (1919) be designated M-16.

In 1913, Michigan adopted a forced sterilization policy which applied to "mentally defective or insane" in public institutions (Paul, p. 372; Laughlin, p. 28). Only one sterilization occurred before the Michigan Supreme Court system declared the law unconstitutional in the Michigan court case of Haynes v. Lapeer Circuit Judge.

The Michigan State Legislature approved funds for the Michigan Reformatory at Ionia to purchase nearly 200 acres - parcels of neighboring farms - to add to their agricultural programs for the inmates.



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**

DODGE BROTHER'S FIRE TRUCK SERVED IONIA



Ionia County Historical Society Monthly Financial Overview for March, 2013 Prepared by Hank Knoop, Treasurer

March Expenses:

Phone	\$ 63
Gas & Electric (Consumers)	\$ 491
Deposit for Bus Trip to Greenfield Vill.	\$ 100
Ad in Sentinels "Progress"	\$ 400
C&L Snow Removal*	\$ 175
March Total Expenses	\$1229

March Receipts:

Interest	\$ 23
Dues	\$ 155
New Member: Tim Hemenway	\$ 20
Business Buddies**	\$ 140
Books & DVD's	\$ 145
March Total Receipts	\$ 483

*Cleared snow nine times; only charged for seven.

**Fred Haight Insurance, Wilson's Heating and Cooling, and M-1 Credit Union



The Heritage of Railroads in Ionia - Images and Artifacts at the Ionia County Historical Society



GREENFIELD VILLAGE

Come with us on August 3rd!
Spend the day experiencing
history life-size and real-time!

Only \$60 per seat. Leaving Ionia in charter-bus comfort
for a full day of first-hand living history at its very best.
Contact a member of the Historical Society for tickets!



*You are
Cordially Invited*

A SATURDAY SOCIAL

Saturday, August 17, 1863

at the John C. Blanchard House

251 East Main Street

IONIA ~ MICHIGAN

INCLUDING:

HISTORIC TOURS OF DOWNTOWN IONIA

POETRY READINGS AND MUSIC

A SIMPLE REPAST PROVIDED BY

THE LADIES OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AUXILIARY

RECENT REPORTS FROM
THE BATTLEFIELD AND FROM
WASHINGTON CITY

For additional information, visit our website

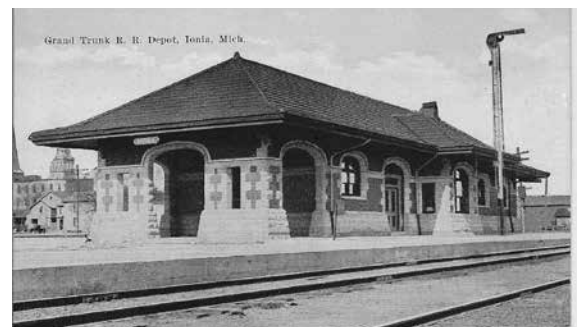
www.ioniahistory.org or

www.facebook.com/ioniahistory

or contact a member through

info@ioniahistory.org

VIEWS OF IONIA'S PAST:



NOTE: Attendees are encouraged to wear mid-19th-century clothing.
If the reader should require assistance in acquisition of period garments,
please contact the event chairman (listed on the face of this invitation)



the CHRONICLE

www.ioniahistory.org

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



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!

May 23 — America's Parks

May 30 — Waldorf Astoria

June 6 — Mongolia

June 13 — An RV Trip from Key West to Alaska, Vol. 1

June 13 — An RV Trip from Key West to Alaska, Vol. 2

June 27 — History of the Oregon Trail

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