



“Markers In The Mitten”



historical marker was dedicated. It was placed at Michigan State University, during that institution's centennial year.

From then until the present, over 1,600 state historical markers have been erected, of which 1,500 are still in place. Joe & Tamara took it upon themselves to visit all of them over the past 14 months. Traveling the width and breadth of Michigan, from tiny roadside sites to big city institutions, photographing, verifying, and documenting them all.

Joe had been interested in the Markers when he was young, and his interest was renewed recently. Some of the markers were very hard to find, some were at the wrong address, and some hard to get to once they were found. Joe has based much of his research on two sources: Laura Rose Ashley's "Travel Through Time" (a guidebook written in 2005) and a website at www.michmarkers.com. He hopes to publish the journal of their journey, as well as their findings, in 2011. The book will include detailed stories about 150 significant markers, as well as corrections and helpful hints for interested readers.

In January of 2010, the States administration of the

Continues on page 2

Our special guests for the November 3 meeting were Joe Finkbiner and his friend Tamara, with their presentation called "Markers in the Mitten." To start with, here's a little background information:

In 1941, the Michigan legislature authorized the Michigan Historical Commission to begin an historical marking program. This program had to be abandoned when the United States entered World War II, but in 1953, Willis F. Dunbar led an investigation of Michigan historic sites (Dunbar was a professor at Western Michigan College – now Western Michigan University – and a Michigan Historical Commission member.). Backed by Dunbar's research, the Commission again asked the legislature for authority to mark historic sites.

The marking program officially began in 1955. Fifty-five years ago – on October 22, to be precise – the very first Michigan

MINUTES of the November 3, 2010 Membership Mtg

At the November 3 meeting of the ICHS, President Linda Ciangi reviewed recent and upcoming events with the members and guests. Thanks were expressed to Barb Ehlert and Carol Gallagher for staffing the table at the Chili Dog Challenge. They (and their helpers) sold water and gave away free apples (donated by Pierson's Orchard). Funds were split with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, each group gaining \$52.00.

Thanks too to Kris Haskins, Hank Knoop, and Kathleen Larock for yard work, with a reminder that help will be needed again on November 6. Contact Kris H. for more information.

Members were reminded about the Holiday Potluck for our December 1 meeting, and all are encouraged to bring a friend, a dish to pass, and Christmas memories to share.

The WION Food Drive on Thanksgiving Weekend will include a "drop-off station" here at the Blanchard House, thanks to arrangements by Joe & Joan McCord. Final decorations for Christmas will be underway the same day. Volunteers for both will be welcomed.

Stephanie VanderMolen noted that her family has some military memorabilia that is presently in Rockford. They would like to know if the ICHS is interested, since they are relevant to an Ionia resident. The items will be reviewed by the Accessions Committee.

Hank K. presented a plaque recognizing donors for the Carriage House Roof project (skillfully prepared by McCords) - its display location still to be determined.

Thanks to Kline Roofing, who have offered to clean the Blanchard House gutters free of charge! (They were the contractors for the Carriage House Roof.)

Hank also delivered a Treasurer's Report. It was moved to accept by Bob Nixon, supported by Kris Haskins, and accepted by vote, with thanks to Hank for his continuing service.

Hank then introduced the evening's special presentation (see story - pg 1).



NEXT MONTH: December 1
Our Annual Holiday Potluck – Everyone's welcome to share!

MINUTES of the November 17, 2010 Business Meeting

The Board of Directors met at the Blanchard House at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 16, 2010. Present were directors Carol Gallagher, Patty Simpson-Gokee, and Linda Ciangi, plus Secretary David McCord, Treasurer Hank Knoop, and committee person Doni Knoop.

Linda and Doni reported (in chairperson Stephanie VanderMolens absence) on the recent Mind-Body-Soul Expo that was held at the house on November 13 was well received and attended, and the organizers are interested in a repeat of the event - possibly twice in 2011.

President Ciangi also reported that the Michigan-1 / Chamber After Hours event was a success as well (but we didn't win the \$300 door prize). Thanks to everyone who helped with the display and presentation. (A \$30 invoice was submitted to the Treasurer for the logo banner.)

The Ionia Community Foundation met at the Blanchard House recently, with 64 people in attendance, and the meeting was a great success. The Tri-River Museums Group met at the house recently, served with a catered luncheon which was well received with over 40 people at the meeting.

Kris Haskins' report on the grounds-keeping progress was tabled until he can attend.

Sorting and boxing of collections in the Blanchard House continues, with progress being made every week. Access for the public in some of these work areas was discussed, noting that some areas should be cleaned up for visitors during the Christmas open houses. The Thursday work sessions have recently been starting at 1:00 p.m. to give volunteers more time. Linda C. asked if another Board member could be at the house on the 17th for a couple of hours while Linda attended to other obligations. Carol G. and Doni K. will take care of it.

Upcoming events require chairpersons, and the following were established by the Board: Community Expo (March 2011): Patty S. — June Yard Sale: Doni K. and Barb E. — Antique Village at the Free Fair: Knoops with Carol G. co-chair — Free Fair Parade Float: Linda C. — It's hoped that Joan McCord will continue to chair Antique Appraisal Roadshow, Upstairs Downtown, and Summer Sunday programs. Other potential events were noted, including Cemetery Tours, Lawn Parties, and something with the Community Theatre and/or Library. Carol suggested promoting a possible Mother-Daughter event as well.

Doni reported that she had seen the doll house being offered by Weavers for a door prize, and wasn't sure about the appropriateness of it as a raffle prize - especially noting that Weavers have apparently raised the price.

Linda shared an example of the ImSmart fliers being circulated around



Ionia County Historical Markers:

- Alvah N. Belding Library
- Belrockton Dormitory
- Benjamin and Lucia Vosper House
- Church of Christ [Muir]
- Fred W. Green House
- Frederick Hall House
- Ionia Church of Christ
- Ionia County Courthouse
- John C. Blanchard House
- John C. Orly Farmstead
- Pere Marquette Railway Depot
- The Roadside Table
- St. John's Episcopal Church and Parish House
- Saranac Grand Trunk Depot
- Smyrna
- St. John the Baptist Church
- White's Bridge

Ionia to advertise local businesses.

The Mrs. Claus Bazaar is coming on December 4th, and the ICHS will participate as usual. Doni reported that gifts to sell were arranged, as well as the usual ICHS souvenirs. David M. noted that Larry Reeder has offered to sell McCord's "Dexter" books at his table as well. Set up is 8:00 a.m. for anyone interested in helping.

Blanchard House Christmas decorations by local businesses will be put in place over the next couple of weeks - Linda C. is making the arrangements. Thanks to Kris for helping bring down (and clean) decorations from the attic - but more help will be needed.

The Buckaroo Ball will be February 2, and last year's donation of a "free rental" of the Blanchard House was very successful. Carol moved that we offer the same this year, which was supported by Patty and passed, with the stipulation that we add an 18-month expiration date to the certificate.

Linda shared a collection of fliers / posters from the Wyandott Museum for their year's activities, and the Board wants to consider this as a model for our own promotions. The samples will be shared with Stephanie V.

Linda C. also shared a pamphlet from the MMI regarding the availability

of "interns" for certain projects whose time is paid for by that agency.

The ICHS was contacted by the Smith family (relations of Judge Geer Smith) who have a bookshelf and settee they would like to donate, if the ICHS is interested. Also, Ian Lockwood (grandson of Walter Lockwood, who lived in the Blanchard House), has a piano that was once in the house. Contact information for both of these has been given to David M. as representative of the Accessions Committee to follow up.

Linda also continues to work with Pastor Kate from the Presbyterian Church on their anniversary plans.

Linda reported her plans to host another Concert Fundraiser in summer 2011 at the Ionia Theatre. She will be the "producer" of the show, and will assume the risk. She is offering the proceeds to the ICHS. Patty S. moved that the ICHS endorse the event, which was supported by Carol G. and passed by the board.

Carol G. asked about the recommendations of the Garden Club that had been decided upon this past summer. No one seems to know what the final decision was, and Kathleen Larock will be contacted for the information.

Hank K. reported that letters are being sent to members whose dues are

MARKERS

from page 1:

Historical Markers program was discontinued, and is now being managed by a third party. Its future is still unsure at this point.

Joe noted that several Michigan markers are actually outside the state, erected by Michigan organizations and related to Michigan history in some way. He said that his favorite sites were the Lang-Mason House in Genesee County (a restored private home), and the Honolulu House in Marshall (a very unique architectural curiosity.) He also noted that there are over 400 Historical Markers in Wayne County, and only 120 in the Upper Peninsula. New Markers are being applied for through the aforementioned third party, so the list continues to grow.

Our thanks to Joe and Tamara for an excellent presentation, and for all their efforts in documenting this wonderful example of how our state's history is shared.

overdue, as well as letters to "business buddies" and other area businesses to solicit their support.

Permission is being sought to serve a punch containing liquor at the Blanchard House for a private party on December 27. Patty moved to allow this, supported by Carol and passed by the Board.

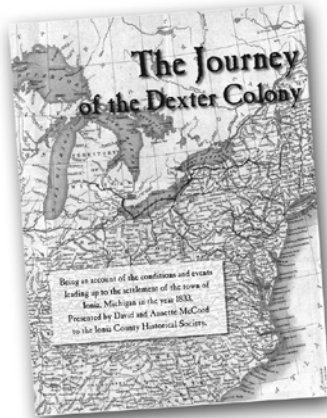
Hank also shared the planned programs for the monthly membership meetings for next year: January: Ionia Hospital Tour — February: Ionia Theatre program — March: Presbyterian Church — April: Ionia Railroads — May: The Civil War Homefront 1861 — June: Blue Star Mothers — July: Independence Day Potluck — August: "If Walls Could Talk" — September: Fashions Past — October: Annual Meeting — November: Local Veteran Stories.

Larry Tiejema (our ICHS Accountant) prepared the official Annual Report, which Hank delivered. He explained a few of the major points - specifically noting that it was another successful year, with income exceeding expense. Credit is due the many volunteers who gave of their time and talent throughout the year.

The meeting was adjourned, and leftovers from the Tri-River luncheon were enjoyed by the attendees.

THE BOOK that documents the presentation given to the ICHS in May of 2010, IS READY!

David & Annette McCord have now published this carefully researched story of the settling of Ionia, lavishly illustrated with historic photos, maps, and engravings. It includes details from many historic documents, books and artifacts, and now CAN BE IN YOUR LIBRARY!



FOR ONLY \$12.00 EACH

and a portion of each sale will benefit the Historical Society. GET YOURS NOW!

“The Journey of the Dexter Colony” makes a great Christmas gift!

(For Mail-Order copies, please add \$3.00 postange and handling.)

A LITTLE TURKEY DAY HISTORY

We owe the modern concept of Thanksgiving to a woman named Sarah Josepha Hale. Hale, editor of Godey’s Lady’s Book and author of the famous “Mary Had a Little Lamb” nursery rhyme, spent 40 years advocating for a national, annual Thanksgiving holiday. In the years leading up to the Civil War, she saw the holiday as a way to infuse hope and belief in the nation and the constitution. So, when the United States was torn in half during the Civil War and Lincoln was searching for a way to bring the nation together, he discussed the matter with Hale.

On October 3, 1863, Lincoln issued a Thanksgiving Proclamation that declared the last Thursday in November (based on Washington’s date) to be a day of “thanksgiving and praise.” For the first time, Thanksgiving became a national, annual holiday with a specific date.

For 75 years after Lincoln issued his Thanksgiving Proclamation, succeeding presidents honored the tradition and annually issued their own Thanksgiving Proclamation, declaring the last Thursday in November as the day of Thanksgiving. However, in 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt did not. In 1939, the last Thursday of November was going to be November 30. Retailers complained to FDR that this only left 24 shopping days to Christmas and begged him to push Thanksgiving just one week earlier. It was determined that most people do their Christmas shopping after Thanksgiving and retailers hoped that with an extra week of shopping, people would buy more.

So when FDR announced his Thanksgiving Proclamation in 1939, he declared the date of Thanksgiving to be Thursday, November 23, the second-to-last Thursday of the month.

The new date for Thanksgiving caused a lot of confusion. Calendars were now incorrect. Schools who had planned vacations and tests now had to reschedule. Thanksgiving had been a big day for football games, as it is today, so the game schedule had to be examined.

Political opponents of FDR and many others questioned the president’s right to change the holiday and stressed the breaking of precedent and disregard for tradition. Many believed that changing a cherished holiday just to appease businesses was not a sufficient reason for change. Atlantic City’s mayor derogatorily called November 23 as “Franksgiving.”



Upcoming Programs and Events

Thursday Evening Workshops at the Blanchard House. 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 1, 7:00 p.m.
Christmas Potluck at the Blanchard House!

December 4 is the Mrs. Claus Bazaar at the Ionia Middle School.

HOLIDAY SUNDAYS: December 5, 12, & 19 the Blanchard House will be open for guests to see our Christmas Decorations. If you’d like to help host our guests, please contact a member of the Board to sign up!

Thursday, December 16th
Christmas Concert by Local Talent at the Ionia Theatre - Benefits Local Food Pantries
The music is free, but donations will be accepted!

Don’t forget the Thursday Morning Travelogs at the Historic Ionia Theatre!
For other upcoming events - visit the ICHS website at ioniahistory.org.

Huzzah! Huzzah! GOOD NEWS!

Following the annual Fall Festival Duck Race, one of our faithful little polymer ducklings apparently wandered off in search of adventure.

The members and friends of the ICHS will surely be happy to know that **Duck #261 has returned!**



We can all rest assured now that he is happy and safe once more.



the 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.

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!

Join Us at the Ionia Theatre at 9:30 a.m. every Thursday for **FREE ICHS Travelogues!**

December 2: Finnegan Begin Again

Movie written by Walter Lockwood (grandson of the Lockwoods who lived in the Blanchard House from 1934 to 1974), starring Robert Preston and Mary Tyler Moore.

December 9: It's A Wonderful Life

The classic from Frank Capra starring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed.

December 16: The Story of Silent Night

A wonderful Christmas story to wish you Happy Holidays!

Ionia County Historical Society 2009-10 Board of Directors & Officers

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- Kris Haskins, Director — 989-855-3685
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