



the **CHRONICLE**  
The Almost Monthly Publication of  
the Ionia County Historical Society



**MINUTES of the Sept 4th  
Program Meeting**

The September 4th meeting of the Ionia County Historical Society was called to order by president Stephanie VanderMolen at approx. 7:00 p.m. We received word that our program would not be in attendance, so the meeting turned to ICHS events past and future.

The Civil War gathering — “Saturday Social, 1863” — on August 3rd was a success, and all those involved (re-enactors, members, and the public) agreed that we should schedule something similar for next summer as well. Thanks all around, including our neighbor, Gordon, for the ambient music, and Gallaghers for helping with the food, Dave White for driving the “tour trolley” and Dave Blundy for the use of his truck. Also to Hank Knoop for his display and general help for the day.

Ally Cook has volunteered to take over the Museum Store / Gift Shop for the Blanchard

...continues on page 2

**Do you Facebook?**

The ICHS is there, with (as you can see above) 433 “Likes” as of this writing. The Historical Society’s events are generally publicized on this Facebook page, and we invite your comments and contributions to the page as well.

There are several other pages and groups on Facebook that are concerned with Ionia County’s history and heritage, as well as more specialized historical topics. For example, there are Michigan Civil War groups, S.C.A. Medieval History groups, pages set up by collectors and special-interest groups, as well as many other Michigan Historical Societies and Museums.


Websites tend to be informational sites, often with a calendar of events. Sometimes there are links to sign up for events and programs, too, and maybe a “blog” where articles are published. But Facebook tends to be more of a “conversational” resource, with discussions and news and requests for information.

So if you’re an “on-line” sort of person, we invite you to give it a try and leave us a comment or a tidbit of historical interest. But we would definitely like to see you in person at an ICHS meeting! How ever you choose to participate in our mission to preserve and share local history, we thank you for your support.

[www.facebook.com/ioniahistory](http://www.facebook.com/ioniahistory)

[www.ioniahistory.org](http://www.ioniahistory.org) (But we don’t “tweet”... yet.)

**NEXT MONTH: ANNUAL MEETING  
AND ELECTION OF  
THREE NEW BOARD MEMBERS!  
ARE YOUR DUES PAID?**



Ionia County Historical Society  
presents

## Spirits of History Past

**Sunday, OCTOBER 20th - 1:00 p.m.- 3:30 p.m.**

### Highland Park Cemetery


**Grave Site Tour**  
East Main Street, Ionia, MI

You will be intrigued by Ionia’s rich history and interesting spirits you will meet along the way, well known families like Smith, Rice, Vosper-Morgan, Webster, & Webber just to name a few.

Tour will commence at cemetery entrance where you will be transported by a “time machine” into history. “Time Machine” will transport every 20 min. last leaving at 3:30 p.m.

**Admission: \$7.00 adults**  
**Students and Children: \$2.00**

Search [www.ioniahistory.org](http://www.ioniahistory.org) for more information.  
like us on Facebook



House. If anyone has contributions or ideas for the store, please let her know.

Hank noted (amidst occasional outbursts of “quack” from the members) that the annual Duck Race will be held at the Bertha Brock Fall Festival on Saturday, Sept 21st at 3:00 p.m. He asked for volunteers to help before, during, and after the event - including cleaning up the creek and selling ducks. He also said that Pearson’s Orchard would be donating a bushel of apples again to be given away free to visitors.

The “Spirits of Ionia” Cemetery Tour is coming around again on October 20th. Stephanie and Kathleen are beginning to put together the promotion of the event, and McCords offered to help with research once the “spirits” have been identified for this year’s tour. Presenters are still needed, so if anyone is interested in helping, please contact a Board member. Some changes are being made this year to make the tour go more smoothly, and reduce “down time” for presenters along the route. The cost is set at \$7.00 per person. Someone suggested that the committee consider setting up a refreshment station at the event. Fliers will be ready to hand out at upcoming events and posters placed around town. If any members would like to help with this, please contact Stephanie or Kathleen.

Summer Sundays are over for the season - time to get ready for the Holiday open houses next. Other upcoming events include the “Gift Gallery” in early December, a calligraphy class, and several rentals.

Kathleen and Greg Cook have donated a day’s time to paint the museum (basement) walls. Now it’s time to get the displays back in place and open up the rest of the space to the public. Please contact Linda Ciangi if you’d like to help with the museum. She is planning displays of Ionia’s healthcare history and more!

Kathleen expressed interest in taking on the Carriage House project, to get it in shape for displays and demonstrations when we have open houses or special events. Anyone interested in helping with this project, please contact her.

Three openings for the Board of Directors are up for election this year. Kathleen will be on the ballot for re-election, and three members have expressed interest for the other two: Linda Ciangi, Dave White, and Brenda Cronk. If your annual dues are paid before the ballots are passed out at the October meeting, you can vote for the candidate of your choice.

Historical Society meetings in the upcoming months will include a November presentation by a historic Surveyor group, describing the tools and procedures used to survey the Michigan Territory in the early 1800s. In January we will visit a historic home, and in February to the Catholic Church in Pewamo. Other program plans are being made, and will be published as soon as they are confirmed.

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*The members of the Historical Society grieve the loss of Wilma Ackerson who passed away on September 1st at the age of 90. Her store of knowledge about history, genealogy, and local stories brightened many a conversation, and her help with a wide range of community services has enriched many lives.*

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Report (see elsewhere in this issue). He noted that Menard’s now has the Historical Society information on file, and purchases made there will be tax exempt.

Linda C. reported that the various community groups are planning their 2014 schedule, and the calendar will be settling in very soon. She will continue to represent the ICHS at these meetings when she can.

With the upcoming annual meeting in mind, a discussion of the membership dues ensued. Kathleen Cook has prepared a spreadsheet of member information, and will try to keep the paid member lists as accurately as she can as the dues come in. (It was noted that there are some pre-printed membership cards somewhere, and that this might be a nice touch for ICHS members to carry.)

### MINUTES of the Sept 18th Business Meeting

The Monthly Business meeting of the Historical Society began a few minutes later than usual due to heartfelt congratulations shared with president Stephanie VanderMolen on the recent birth of her new son River (who she brought to the meeting to show off and pass around).

The Blanchard House is rented Oct. 26 by the IHS Choral group for their annual party.

The annual Duck Race plans are going well for Saturday the 21st at the Bertha Brock Fall Festival. Chairman Hank Knoop said that a few more volunteers would be nice if at all possible.

The third annual “Spirits of Ionia” cemetery tour plans are coming together for October 20th. Members are volunteering for various positions (tickets, parking, drivers, tour guides) and actors are still being sought for a few of the “celebrities” for the tour. If anyone is interested, or knows someone who might be, this is a really fun way to share Ionia history with people! Contact Kathleen Cook if you’d like to help. (Stephanie also said that the Township of Ionia has asked her to give the Township Board a presentation about the event. Hank and/or Linda Ciangi will attend with her at their October meeting.)

A group has contacted the ICHS to ask if the Blanchard House could be open for a tour on the day of the “Spirits” event. Linda C. offered to host this tour, and Ally Cook will follow up with the group to arrange the tour directly following the “Spirits” tour.

Stephanie also said that she would contact the Fair Association about using their “tram” for the tour. The Board agreed to donate \$50 to the Fair for the use of the tram for this, as well as the August Civil War event. Hank also said that he would contact WION about publicity for the event.

Linda C. reported much progress in the basement Museum at the Blanchard House, including painting and cleaning. Barb Ehlert says she has the basement windows nearly restored and ready to re-install.

The Board asked if David and Annette McCord would once again greet Trick-or-Treaters at the Blanchard House on October 31st. David said he would check with Annette, but he was fairly sure this would work out again this year. Patty Simpson-Gokee donated \$20 for candy, and the rest of the membership will be asked to donate as well.

The annual meeting is coming in October, and this means several very important things to ICHS members: First, dues are due, and if they are paid before the October 2nd meeting begins, paid members can vote in the election of three new Directors to the Board of the ICHS. The candidates are as of this writing: Kathleen Cook (for a second term), Linda Ciangi (after a term off the Board), David White, and Brenda Cronk. After the election, the new Board will convene to elect the slate of officers for 2014. Stephanie V. expressed her thanks to everyone for supporting her presidency over the past year, noting, too, that her new family member will be her major focus for a while.

A suggestion was made to create a sign for the fence at Danny Boy’s Drive-In Theater. Stephanie will contact them about the idea.

Kathleen asked about setting up a schedule of “Research Nights” at the Blanchard House. She also noted that items are still being received from the Library as they sort their collections under the new Library Director’s direction. The Library also is considering a joint grant with the Historical Society to get more technological tools for the two organizations.

David McCord has volunteered to teach a Calligraphy class at the Blanchard House. After some discussion, the date of Wednesday, November 13 was settled upon, from 7:00 until 9:00, with a maximum class size of 12 at \$10.00 each. David will gather some supplies and have some for sale at the class. Stephanie asked David to create a promotional poster for the class (hand written, of course).

Linda C. presented a small Ypsilanti Reed chair that was recently donated by Joan Strickling.

Doni Knoop asked about the December open house arrangements. Barb Ehlert and Linda Ciangi said that they would take charge of this. Linda noted that the Christmas decorations by local merchants was going to happen again this year in the main rooms of the Blanchard House.

Hank K. reported that the contract for this season’s snow removal had been received. The Board approved the signing of the contract for \$25 per visit.

Linda C. also noted that the annual Buckaroo Ball is coming soon - this year set for November 9th. Kathleen C. moved to donate a rental of the Blanchard House to the event’s silent auction, which was supported by Barb Hogan and passed.

The meeting was adjourned about 9:00 p.m. and most of those present visited the basement to see the latest progress being made. There was some discussion of improvements in the electrical system, and storage of some artifacts off-site due to availability of “environmentally stable” storage space at the Blanchard House site.

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## VOLUNTEERS are always welcomed!

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

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## 150 Years Ago



### NEWS OF THE REBELLION

In early September, Union General Burnside's army occupied Knoxville, TN, and Confederate General P.T.G. Beauregard ordered his troops to abandon Battery Wagner and Morris Island at Charleston Harbor. There was also a failed attempt to begin a Union occupation of Texas.

The major focus along the border states was the movement of Union troops into Chattanooga, TN, following its evacuation by Confederates under General Braxton Bragg. General James Longstreet (CSA) left Virginia with his corps to reinforce Bragg's Army of Tennessee.

By the middle of the month, rebel forces under General Sterling Price withdrew from Little Rock, Arkansas, and General George Meade ordered the army of the Potomac to the Rapidan River in pursuit of Robert E. Lee's armies. Union Generals Crittendon and Rosecrans spread out their forces to cover 50 miles near the Chickamauga River.

These movements in southern Tennessee included **several infantry units from Michigan**, assigned to a wide range of duties from the front lines to the supply trains. The forward picket lines began to see the rebel forces advancing in great numbers on September 19.

On September 20th, General Braxton Bragg [CS] tried to split General Rosecrans' [US] forces as they attempted to return to the safety of Chattanooga. The bloodiest two days in American history cost the Federals 1,657 dead, 9,756 wounded, and 4,757 missing for a total of 16,170 casualties out of 58,000 troops. The Confederate losses were 2,312 dead, 14,674 wounded and 1,468 for a total of 18,545 out of 66,000 troops.

On September 21st, Confederate General Benjamin Hardin died from wounds received at Chickamauga. He was Mary Todd Lincoln's brother.

## Upcoming Programs and Events

Wednesday, October 2, 7:00 p.m.  
Annual Meeting at the Blanchard House  
Election of Board Members for 2014

Wednesday, October 16  
ICHS Business Meeting

Sunday, October 20th  
**The "Spirits of Ionia" Cemetery Tour**  
Highland Park Cemetery, Prairie Creek

Thursday, October 31  
Hallowe'en Treats at the Blanchard House!

Wednesday, November 6, 7:00 p.m.  
Program Meeting at the Blanchard House  
**Historical Surveying** Presentation by the  
Michigan Professional Surveyor's Assn.

Wednesday, November 13th  
**A Calligraphy Class** by David McCord  
*Learn "fancy writing!" — \$10 per person.*

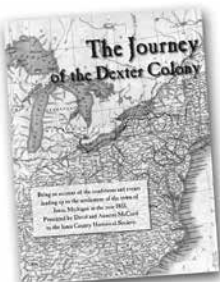
Wednesday, November 13th  
ICHS Business Meeting

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



**MEMORIES & MOMENTOS** **IONIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY** **HERITAGE & HISTORY**

Just a few of the many things available at the  
Blanchard House / Ionia Museum Gift Shop.

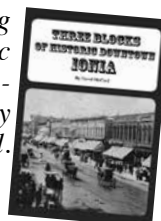


*The Journey of the Dexter Colony, 1833,*  
by David and Annette McCord. A detailed  
history of the settling of Ionia.  
\$12 each (\$15 with postage)

*A History of  
Bertha Brock Park on  
its 80th "Birthday"*  
by David McCord.  
\$6 each



*Walking  
Tour of Historic  
Downtown Ionia -  
40-pages of history*  
by David McCord.  
\$5 each



## DVD Video souvenirs!

• **'Sno Wonder DVD – 1936 Ionia County Road Commission + 1940 Bertha Brock Snow Festival**  
*Short films that show us a glimpse of the challenges and the fun of Winters in Ionia County a generation ago.*

• **1939 "We're In The Movies"** *A promotional film produced by Ionia businesses and organizations. It's a wonderful look into our town over 70 years ago.*

• **1950s Home Show and Free Fair Movies**

• **1976 U.S. Bicentennial in Ionia**

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

• **1973 Ionia Centennial Documentary**

• **"Ionia's First 150 Years" and "Ionia - A Look Back" - Documentaries by Monroe MacPherson**

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

### ALSO AVAILABLE:

Reproductions of historic Ionia publications –

• **1887 "Headlight Flashes" Special Edition**

• **1907 Ionia Souvenir Book**

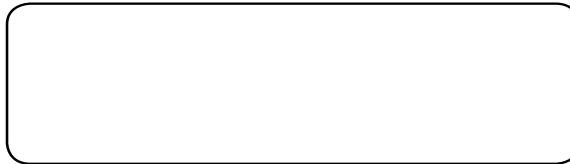
• **1973 Ionia City Centennial Program Book**



# the [www.ioniahistory.org](http://www.ioniahistory.org) **CHRONICLE**

The Chronicle is the official publication of the Ionia County Historical Society. It is written, edited, and published by David McCord, Secretary. Any comments, corrections (of course), or contributions should be directed to the editor c/o the ICHS at P.O. Box 176, Ionia, MI, 48846 or via [www.ioniahistory.org](http://www.ioniahistory.org).

Ionia County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 176  
Ionia, MI 48846



## JOIN TODAY!

If you'd like to help us preserve the area's heritage, please fill in the form below and send it, with check or money order, to the ICHS Treasurer, care of Box 176, Ionia, MI 48846.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, St., Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Please Check Your Membership Type:

- Regular = \$20
- Sustaining = \$35
- Business Buddy = \$50
- Corporate = \$250
- Life = \$1000
- Free to Students under 18
- Gift = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Please Share a Little Information:

- Renewing Member
- New Member

If you're a new member, how did you hear about us?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Thanks!

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

- September 26 – France*
- October 3 – Wild Alaska*
- October 10 – West Wilderness*
- October 17 – Italy*
- October 24 – Coast Starlight Railway*
- October 31 – Cruising Alaska*
- November 7 – The Grand Canyon*

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

- Stephanie VanderMolen, President — 616-755-0731
- Patty Simpson-Gokee, Vice President — 527-0676
- Kathleen Cook, Director — 527-2626
- Alli Cook, Director — 616-821-1406
- Barb Hogan, Director — 527-1525
- David McCord, Secretary — 527-3784
- Hank Knoop, Treasurer — 527-3130
- Barb Ehlert, House Rentals — 522-0844